



The McQuaig Word Survey®

Research Overview

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Four Personality Domains & The “Big Five”

The McQuaig Word Survey (WS) is a measure of four personality domains that capture core aspects of the widely established “big five” personality factors. It is organized into 21 word sets, each consisting of four descriptors (a tetrad) – one from each of the four personality domains. Respondents rank order the trait descriptors within each of the 21 sets based on the degree to which they are self-descriptive. WS interpretations and recommendations are based on seven basic profile patterns and their subsets.

Developed for Selection

The WS is a personality inventory, not to be mistaken with “clinical assessments” of mental or psychological health. It has been developed within the guidelines of human rights’ regulatory bodies such as the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Specifically, the WS measures trait dimensions that are related to on-the-job performance and shows no evidence of adverse impact or differential prediction across protected groups.

The WS demands reading ability at about the grade 5 level and can be completed by most people in 15 - 20 minutes. It is available on-line in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German.

The four personality domains measured by the WS are subsumed under the broader “big five” personality factors and are defined to provide a more precise matching of personality to the psychological demands of the workplace. There is an abundance of research, as reported in the Technical Manual to the WS, in support of its psychometric integrity, fairness and usefulness in workplace applications.

Norms

Norms have been established for each of the four WS dimensions and for the seven basic personality profiles based on a total sample of over 8100 respondents. Sub-group norms are provided for each of: entrepreneurs, managers, sales, life insurance agents, service providers, administrators, skilled workers, university students, males, females, Spanish, French, English, Asian American, African American, Mexican American, East Indian, Romanian, North American, Chinese, White, Non-white, age category, educational level and marital status.

Developmental Highlights

The development of the WS followed a sequence of steps:

- Define the 4-domain personality typology to represent established clusters of personality trait descriptors.
- Sort hundreds of common trait descriptors into the four WS personality domains.
- Identify the top 21 traits most descriptive of each of the four domains.
- Establish reliability and construct validity.
- Establish criterion related (predictive) validity.
- Develop norms by occupation, gender, age, race, language, country.
- Establish test fairness.





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Reliability

Split-half and test-retest reliabilities for each of the four personality domains of the WS meet professionally recommended standards of .70 or greater. Respondents show considerable consistency over time in their WS profile typing.

Validity

Support for the validity of the WS has come from several sources:

- Consistent and strong positive associations of WS dimension scores and profiles with performance outcomes and occupational achievements.
- Positive and substantial WS dimensions score correlations with supervisor-completed checklists of behavioural indicators of these dimensions.
- Positive and substantial WS dimension score correlations with similar measures taken from other well-established instruments such as the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) and the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI).

Test Fairness

WS dimension scores and profile types show considerable similarity across gender, race, age groupings and country, and show no evidence of adverse impact or differential prediction across these categories.

Scoring Options

The WS is usually completed online although a paper-and-pencil alternative is available.

Major Applications

- Job profiling
- Job benchmarking
- Selection
- Behavioural interviewing
- Managing and coaching
- Succession planning
- Teambuilding
- Career counselling
- Personal and team development

About the Author

Dr. Hackett received his Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psychology in 1985 from Bowling Green State University (Ohio) and is Professor of Human Resource Management at the DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University (Ontario) and President of Hackett & Associates Human Resources Consultants Inc. He is a Fellow and Past-President of the Canadian Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology of the Canadian Psychological Association and Editor-in-Chief of The Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences.