

**The establishment of implicit perspectives of personality among  
Afrikaans speaking people in South Africa**

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Master of  
Commerce* (Industrial Psychology) at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West  
University

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October 2008

## COMMENTS

The reader should keep the following in mind:

- The editorial style as well as the references referred to in this mini-dissertation follow the format described by the *Publication Manual* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University (Potchefstroom) to apply the APA style in all scientific documents.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby express my sincere gratitude and deepest appreciation to everyone of the following, without whom this research would have remained but an aspiration:

- Our Heavenly Father, for blessing me with the talent and privilege to complete this project.
- Prof. Ian Rothmann, Deon Meiring and Prof. Fons van de Vijver for their time, effort, expert advice and encouragement.
- Fellow SAPI students, especially Sonet and Mariaan for their camaraderie and continuous motivation when the road ahead appeared so long.
- My family, friends, and colleagues, for their support and kind words of encouragement.
- Irene Theron, for her invaluable time to read through the voluminous data-set and the professional translation and editing thereof.
- Louismarié Combrink for the professional language editing of this mini-dissertation.

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

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## SUMMARY

**Title:** The establishment of implicit perspectives of personality among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

**Key terms:** Personality, language, Afrikaans, indigenous psychology, cross-cultural assessment.

The application of personality assessment measures for clinical and personnel decisions has long been a major activity for psychologists all over the world. In South Africa personality assessment tools are often used to aid decisions relating to selection, placement, determination of job satisfaction and development. Psychological testing in South Africa was originally initiated with white test-takers in mind, and currently none of the personality questionnaires available have been found to provide a reliable and valid picture of personality for all cultural (and language) groups living in South Africa.

The promulgation of the new South African constitution in 1996 and, more specifically, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 have resulted in a stronger demand for the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests. In this study, the implicit perspectives of personality of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans were determined to further the goal of developing a personality assessment tool that can be applied fairly to all South African cultural (language) groupings.

A qualitative research design was applied with an interview as data-gathering instrument. Afrikaans-speaking fieldworkers were recruited to interview a purposive stratified sample of 120 Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. From the 7 184 responses obtained through this process, *personality-relevant adjectives, nouns and metaphors were identified. Content analysis was subsequently used to analyse, interpret and reduce the descriptors to a total of 378 personality characteristics, which imply the most important perspectives of personality for Afrikaans-speaking individuals.*

The personality characteristics were divided into 12 categories, namely Altruism/ Agreeability, Extraversion, Integrity, Conscientiousness, Emotionality, Intellect, Dynamism, Forcefulness, Humility, Moralism, Conventionality, and Autonomy. While Afrikaans-

speaking persons do not hesitate to pronounce themselves and others as stubborn, impatient and short-tempered, they also generally refer to their agreeable nature by describing themselves and familiar others as friendly, helpful, loving and generous. Valuing the virtues associated with conscientiousness, Afrikaans-speaking respondents also made noteworthy reference to religiousness, a sense of humour and aspects of honesty and integrity.

Limitations in the research have been identified and recommendations for future research have been presented.

## OPSOMMING

**Titel:** Die bepaling van implisiete persoonlikheidskenmerke van Afrikaans-sprekende Suid-Afrikaners.

**Sleutelterme:** Persoonlikheid, taal, Afrikaans, inheemse sielkunde, kruis-kulturele toetsing.

Die toepassing van persoonlikheidsmetingtegnieke ter ondersteuning van kliniese en personeelbesluite was nog altyd 'n belangrike aktiwiteit vir sielkundiges wêreldwyd. In Suid-Afrika word persoonlikheidsassesseringsinstrumente dikwels gebruik vir besluitneming rondom seleksie, plasing, bepaling van werkstevredenheid en ontwikkeling. Psigologiese toetsing is oorspronklik in Suid-Afrika geïnisieer met wit toetsafnemers in gedagte, en tans toon weinig van die beskikbare persoonlikheidsvraelyste 'n betroubare of geldige prentjie ten opsigte van persoonlikheid vir die verskillende kultuurgroepe (taalgroepe).

Sedert die promulgering van die nuwe Suid-Afrikaanse grondwet in 1996, en meer spesifiek die Wet op Gelyke Indiensneming in 1998, is daar sterker vereistes vir kultureel geskikte psigologiese toetsing. In hierdie studie word die implisiete persoonlikheidsperspektiewe van Afrikaans-sprekende Suid-Afrikaners vasgestel, ten einde by te dra tot die ontwikkeling van 'n meer kultuurvrye persoonlikheidstoets vir Suid-Afrikaners.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gebruik met 'n onderhoud as data-insamelingsmetode. Afrikaans-sprekende veldwerkers is gewerf ten einde onderhoude met 'n gestratifiseerde steekproef bestaande uit 120 Afrikaans-sprekende Suid-Afrikaners te voer. Die studiepopulasie is op doelgerigte wyse vanuit verskillende segmente van die Afrikaans-sprekende bevolking geneem. Uit die 7 184 response wat so bekom is, is daardie terme geïdentifiseer wat relevant tot die beskrywing van persoonlikheid is. Inhoudsontleding is vervolgens gebruik om die beskrywings te ontleed, te vertolk en te verminder na altesaam 378 persoonlikheidskenmerke, wat die belangrikste persoonlikheidsperspektiewe van Afrikaans-sprekende individue impliseer.

Die persoonlikheidseienskappe is in 12 kategorieë verdeel, naamlik Altruïsme/ Inskiklikheid, Ekstraversie, Integriteit, Pligsgetrouheid, Emosionaliteit, Intellek, Dinamika, Kragdadigheid, Nederigheid, Moralisme, Konvensionaliteit, en Outonomie. Terwyl Afrikaans-sprekendes nie



skroom om na hulself of ander Afrikaans-sprekendes as hardkoppig, ongeduldig en kort van humeur te verwys nie, is hulle geneig om ook hul insiklike aard te verklaar in terme van beskrywings soos vriendelik, hulpvaardig, liefdevol en vrygewig. Daarbenewens het Afrikaans-sprekende respondente ook merkbare melding gemaak van Godsdienstigheid, 'n sin van humor en aspekte van eerlikheid en integriteit.

Beperkinge ten opsigte van die navorsing is geïdentifiseer, en aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing word aan die hand gedoen.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This mini-dissertation focuses on the establishment of implicit perspectives of personality among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

Chapter one presents the motivation for the research in terms of the problem statement, followed by the aims of the research and the research method. The chapter is concluded by a brief overview of the chapters that follow.

#### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Over the last decade the multicultural nature of populations has become more prominent in many countries (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). This multicultural nature is however not a novel feature of South African society and it has received much attention, both in scientific and public discourse. A feature of multicultural society, namely the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests and their usage, was placed in the spotlight with the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. According to Section 8 of this legislation, only psychological tests and similar instruments of which the validity and reliability have been scientifically proven and that are not biased against any employee or group may be used (Government Gazette, 1998). Subsequent reviews of the status of psychological measurement in South Africa have highlighted two related problems: the questionable applicability of foreign-made tests and the shortage of locally developed tests.

Despite the multicultural nature of our society, the use of psychological tests in South Africa has, since the early 1900's, largely followed international trends in the practice of importing tests from abroad and applying these *mutatis mutandis* in all sectors of the community (Bedell, Van Eeden, & Van Staden, 1999; Foxcroft, 1997; Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). However, in more recent years there has been a growing recognition of the fact that culture exerts subtle and pervasive effects in the testing domain, and that it is not possible to remove culture from the equation (Retief, 1988). The measurement of personality variables in applied settings, such as selection, organisational placement, therapeutic intervention and counselling, is widely used throughout South Africa (Bedell et al., 1999, Van der Merwe,

2002) but, accentuated by the implications of the Employment Equity Act, few studies have been conducted on the comparability of the results of different indigenous cultural groups (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). When basing the development of a multicultural test on any theory, evidence first needs to be gathered to determine whether the theory is appropriate and relevant for the various cultural groups. Given the lack of theory-building research in South Africa, personality researchers will have to conduct their own studies to investigate whether the particular theory can be substantiated here, or whether it first needs to be modified (Foxcroft, 2004).

According to Huysamen (1996), one of the major stumbling blocks regarding the use of psychological tests in South Africa stems from the complexity of creating tests which may be used across a diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Of major concern in this regard are the implications of possible discrimination since fairness to all cultural (and language) groups is an important standard. In addition, test-takers are increasingly becoming more vocal about their rights, and individual psychologists and psychology as a profession will ultimately be held accountable for the (im)proper use of instruments (Meiring, Van de Vijver, Rothmann, & Barrick, 2005). The question can be raised as to whether psychology as a profession in South Africa is ready for the challenge implied by the Equity Act. While the Act may be seen to confront the profession in the short term, Van de Vijver and Rothmann (2004) assert that viewed on the longer term, the Act may serve to enhance the professional level of psychological practice by a) putting multicultural assessment on the agenda of the profession, and b) stimulating the development of new tests and even new testing practices.

One needs to keep in mind that South African society comprises a diversity of cultures in which appreciation for the culture of origin exists alongside variations in acculturation towards a Western norm. In view of the varying cultural distances between cultures and subcultures in South Africa and the influence that culture exerts on behaviour, Claassen (1997) recommends that a “realistic objective in cross-cultural testing is ... to construct tests that presuppose only experiences that are common to different cultures” (p. 306). Retief (1992) adds that not only should multicultural tests yield an index of commonality, but also an index of difference. By this is meant that a multicultural test should have two components: one that taps aspects of the construct that are common across cultures and one that taps aspects of the construct that are unique to each group (Schmit, Kihm, & Robie, 2000). Those dimensions that emerge in all cultures constitute *etic* dimensions, whereas those dimensions

that emerge only in one culture constitute *emic* dimensions. Foxcroft (2004) suggests that the former could be used when cross-cultural comparisons are made, while the latter can be used to obtain a fuller, more culturally contextualised picture of the individual being assessed. This approach was adopted in the development of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI) (Cheung, Cheung, Leung, Ward, & Leong, 2003). The development of this indigenous Chinese personality measure involved a combined etic-emic approach in which culturally relevant dimensions were collected to identify cross-cultural universals as well as culturally unique dimensions. In the South African arena, such an approach may serve to meet the challenge posed by the Equity Act, as the proposed etic-emic strategy may optimise the chances of finding cross-cultural comparability on the one hand and culture-specific dimensions on the other. These issues also accentuate once again the need for increasing sensitivity towards the context in which individuals function and the responsible use of tests and other psychological assessment procedures (Bedell et al., 1999).

There is an urgent need for tests to be developed on the basis of valid, applicable theories for our multicultural context. For too long we have been content to develop or adapt tests based on Western theories that have not been verified for the South African context, a practice that has most probably reduced the accuracy of the test results obtained and, as such, the quality of the resultant decisions made on the basis of these results (Foxcroft, 2004; Meiring et al., 2005). To meet the challenge of developing a South African personality inventory that is applicable, fair and equitable, an in-depth understanding of the nature of South African personality is necessary.

In this study, Implicit Personality Theories (IPTs) are applied to aid the objective to determine personality perspectives among Afrikaans-speaking individuals. IPTs are the general expectations that are formed about a person after certain assumptions about their central traits have been made; in other words, the inferences individuals make about other people's personalities on the basis of little information (Goldstein, 1998). Such theories are implicit since they are often unconscious and not formally stated.

This study will form part of a larger project, which aims at developing a multicultural personality inventory that will provide both a valid and exhaustive description of personality across the various cultural groups indigenous to South Africa.

This larger project has several stages:

- The **first stage** is conceptual in that the current literature will be reviewed and a number of field studies of personality will be conducted among the various indigenous language groups of South Africa. The information obtained from these studies will be integrated with a view to develop a single instrument.
- An investigation into the psychometric properties of the said instrument will comprise the **second stage** of the project.
- In the **final stage**, a test manual will be developed before the instrument will be submitted to the Psychometrics Committee for classification.

The present study will fall within the scope of the first stage of the above-mentioned project and will focus on establishing the implicit perspectives of personality among the Afrikaans-speaking population of South Africa.

Under South Africa's multiracial Constitution of 1996, Afrikaans remains an official language and is reported by 2001 census data as the third most widely spoken home language in the country (Statistics South Africa, 2005). More specifically, Afrikaans is the first language of approximately 60% of South Africa's whites, and over 90% of the coloured population. Large numbers of black, Asian and English South Africans also speak it as a second language.

The following research questions arise on the basis of the description of the research problem:

- How is personality conceptualised in the literature?
- What are the contemporary theories and models applied in personality assessment?
- Can these theories and models be applied fairly within the multicultural South African context?
- What are the implicit perspectives of personality in Afrikaans-speaking South Africans?

## **1.2 RESEARCH AIMS**

The proposed project is aimed at capturing everyday conceptualisations of personality as found among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. To this end, a general objective and specific objectives have been formulated.

### **1.2.1 General objective**

With reference to the above formulation of the problem, the general objective of this research project is to determine the implicit perspectives of personality among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific research objectives of this study are to:

- Conceptualise personality from the literature;
- Discuss the contemporary theories and models in personality assessment;
- *Scrutinise and discuss the cross-transferability of these theories and models to the multicultural South African context; and*
- Determine the implicit perspectives of personality in Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

## **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method comprises a literature review and an empirical study. The results obtained will be presented in the form of a research article.

### **1.3.1 Literature review**

The literature review will consist of information (published and unpublished), which relates closely to the arena of personality theories and research. Both primary and secondary sources will be included. The literature review will be undertaken for the following reasons: Firstly, it is useful to conduct a review of available literature prior to the investigation to determine the

nature of research that has been conducted with regards to the issue under investigation. Secondly, to explore existing knowledge and contemporary practices pertaining to the study of personality and thirdly, to ensure that effective questions are developed for use during interviews to tap into Afrikaans-speakers' implicit personality perspectives. To this end, the literature review in this study will focus on the current theories and models in personality, the problems and opportunities surrounding the fair usage of these in the South African context and the history of the Afrikaans language in South Africa.

### **1.3.2 Empirical study**

#### **1.3.2.1 Research design**

Strauss and Corbin (1990) propound that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. Considering the emergent (as opposed to predetermined) focus of the research, this exploratory project will follow a qualitative approach where personal interviews are conducted among a stratified sample of 120 Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. The participants will include a variety of persons from both genders, representing different age groups, educational levels, urban versus rural regions and socio-economic strata.

#### **1.3.2.2 Participants**

Patton (1990) advocates the use of a purposive sampling strategy where respondents are strategically and purposefully selected to represent information-rich cases for in-depth study. With the specific purpose of the research in mind, this study will be conducted among 120 adult Afrikaans first language respondents (male and female) from different provinces, comprising a purposive stratified sample representing persons from different age groups, educational levels, socio-economic strata and urban versus rural regions.

#### **1.3.2.3 Data collection**

This project will not depart from well-known conceptualisations of personality such as Costa and McCrae's "Big-Five" (McCrae & Costa, 1997) or Eysenck's "Giant Three" (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1983), but rather from everyday conceptualisations of personality as found among

Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. To this end, participants will be asked a series of open-ended questions to solicit person-descriptive terminology.

A semi-structured interview schedule will be used to enable the interviewer to take each respondent through the same set of questions in a systematic fashion.

In addition to certain biographical information (*age, race, gender, home language, highest level of qualification, economic activity, provincial domicile and home municipality*), each participant will be asked to provide a description of each of the following persons: The self (own personality), best friend of the same sex, best friend of the opposite sex, a parent, a child or sibling, a grandparent, a colleague or friend from another ethnic group or a neighbour, a person totally opposite to themselves, a teacher (if schooled) or person from their community whom they like very much, a teacher (if schooled) or person from their community whom they do not like.

With reference to the above, the participants will be requested to convey what kind of person the individual in question is or was by describing the typical aspects, behaviours or habits characteristic of the person in mind. Church (2001) comments in this regard that in addition to eliciting responses which are based on the active, salient vocabulary of respondents, such “free” descriptions offer a number of other advantages: it serves to also provide indigenous information about a person that is embedded in the ecocultural context and moreover, the task should prove to be familiar to all populations, including non-literate ones.

#### **1.3.2.4 Data analysis**

The focus of this study is not geared toward statistical integration, but rather aimed at the adequate coverage of the implicit theory of personality in Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. In light of this, means and correlations will make way for saturation, the stage where new informants no longer present new information relevant to the study.

According to Patton (1990), inductive qualitative analysis involves the discovery of patterns, emerging themes and categories from the research data. Further to this goal, basic content analysis will be applied to analyse the concrete personality descriptives generated by the participants.



### **1.3.3 Research procedure**

First language Afrikaans-speaking students in Psychology will act as field workers in this study and will be thoroughly briefed by the researcher on the interviewing procedure to be used for this research. The data will be collected by means of individual interviews that the fieldworkers - who are presumably sensitive to the cultural norms of the Afrikaans-speaking population and familiar with the motivation of respondents - will conduct with each of the 120 participants on a face-to-face basis. The interviews will be audio tape-recorded and will subsequently be transcribed in the original language. The transcriptions will then be translated into English. The output of this stage will be a list of person-descriptive adjectives in Afrikaans and its corresponding translation in English. The researcher will subsequently form categories and cluster these person-descriptive terms to represent a taxonomy of implicit personality among Afrikaans-speaking individuals.

## **1.4 CHAPTER DIVISION**

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and objectives

Chapter 2: Article

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

## **1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the problem statement and research objectives. The data gathering and research method applied in this research were explained, and the chapter division was indicated.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IMPLICIT PERSPECTIVES OF PERSONALITY AMONG AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING PEOPLE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this qualitative study was to determine the implicit perspectives of personality of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. The study population consisted of 120 adult Afrikaans-speaking individuals who were purposively drawn from different sections of the Afrikaans-speaking population. Participants included white and Coloured individuals representative of both genders, different age groups, educational levels, urban and rural regions and socio-economic strata across the Western and Northern Cape, the Free State and North-West Provinces. Semi-structured interviews were used as data collection method and Afrikaans fieldworkers conducted face-to-face interviews with each of the participants. A total of 7 184 personality descriptions were obtained from the participants. Content analysis was applied to analyse, interpret and reduce the descriptors to 378 personality characteristics, which served to conceptualise the most important perspectives of personality for Afrikaans-speaking individuals.

## **OPSOMMING**

Die doel van hierdie kwalitatiewe studie was om die implisiete persoonlikheids-perspektiewe van Afrikaans-sprekende Suid-Afrikaners vas te stel. Die ondersoekgroep het bestaan uit 120 volwasse Afrikaans-sprekende individue wat op 'n doelgerigte wyse getrek is uit verskillende segmente van die Afrikaans-sprekende bevolking. Respondente het blanke en Kleuringindividue ingesluit, verteenwoordigend van beide geslagte, verskillende ouderdomsgroepe, opvoedkundige vlakke, stedelike en landelike gebiede en sosio-ekonomiese strata vanoor die Wes- en Noordkaap, Vrystaat en Noordwes-provinsies. 'n Semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud is as data-insamelingsmetode gebruik en Afrikaans-sprekende veldwerkers het persoonlike onderhoude met elk van die respondente gevoer. 'n Totaal van 7 184 Afrikaanse persoonsbeskrywings is van die respondente bekom. Inhoudsontleding is aangewend om die beskrywings te ontleed, te vertolk en te verminder na 378 persoonlikheidskenmerke, wat aangewend is om die belangrikste persoonlikheidsperspektiewe van Afrikaans-sprekende individue te konseptualiseer.

Despite the multicultural nature and linguistic diversity of South African society, the use of psychological tests in this country has largely followed the global trend in the practice of importing tests and applying these in all sectors of the community (Bedell, Van Eeden, & Van Staden, 1999; Foxcroft, 1997; Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). The attractiveness of using transported measures across multiple cultures can surely be understood by contemplating the alternative; developing tools from scratch for each culture to be studied implies considerable costs in terms of time, money and other resources.

Importing and adapting psychological tests (an approach known as an imposed-*etic* strategy) provide clinicians with usable assessment techniques within a brief period of time, but of major concern is the implication of possible discrimination, since fairness to all cultural (and language) groups is an important ethical and legal standard (Foxcroft, 1997; Van der Merwe, 2002). Accentuated by the implications of Section 8 of the Employment Equity Act (Government Gazette, 1998), only psychological tests and similar instruments of which the validity and reliability have been scientifically proven and that are not biased against any employee or group, may be used. Subsequent reviews of the status of psychological measurement in South Africa have highlighted two related problems: the questionable applicability of foreign-made tests and the shortage of locally developed tests.

The measurement of personality variables in applied clinical and organisational settings is widely used (Bedell et al., 1999; Van der Merwe, 2002), yet relatively few studies have been conducted in South Africa on the comparability of the results of different indigenous cultural groups (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004).

Further to the growing recognition that culture and related language issues exert subtle and pervasive effects in the testing domain (Dana, 1998; Retief, 1988), cross-cultural differences in test results and gaps in cultural constructs in imported and adapted measures have indicated the need for indigenous (or *emically* derived) tools in personality assessment.

Alluding to the application of a combined etic-emic approach, Meiring, Van der Vijver, Rothmann, and Barrick (2005) assert that the extent to which South African personality exhibits both universal and culturally specific factors, has never been studied systematically. In such a combined emic-etic approach, the identification and measurement of culture-specific personality characteristics would indicate idiographic patterns and within-culture

relevance, whereas the identification of universal personality characteristics would allow for the discovery of nomothetic trends and cross-cultural comparisons of similar constructs (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2001).

In a multicultural society, there may be few acceptable reasons for the continued use of imported or adapted tests predicated exclusively on imposed theories (Dana, 1998). By focusing on producing test instruments that are reliable, valid and suitable for the South African population, psychologists will not only improve the quality of instruments in reducing sources of bias or inequality; they will also improve their understanding of indigenous South African cultures, as well as the quality of decisions based on the results of such assessments.

Considering the lack of theory-building research in South Africa, personality researchers will thus have to conduct their own studies to investigate whether any particular theory can be substantiated here, or whether it first needs to be modified (Foxcroft, 2004). As a consequence, research priority dictates that when basing the development of a multicultural test on any theory, evidence first needs to be gathered that the theory is appropriate and relevant for the various cultural groups. With this requirement in mind, the present study covers the methodological approach of an emic investigation in the construction of a taxonomy of descriptors of personality in the Afrikaans language.

### **Definition of personality**

Personality has different meanings in different disciplines. This is evident from literature where definitions about the construct abound.

After reviewing 50 different definitions explicitly and implicitly related to personality, Gordon Allport (cited in Laher, 2007) offered the following definition: “Personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment” (p. 82). Somewhat different from Allport, Funder (2001) defined personality as an individual’s “characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behaviour, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns” (p. 198).

Personality may also be conceptualised as the “unique configuration of cognitions, emotions, and habits that generally determines the individual’s adjustment to the world” (p. 136) (Triandis & Suh, 2002).

Rather than citing more examples of the diversity of definitions, this study will consider one definition which appears to encompass the major notions related to the concept of personality: In the words of Child (1968), personality refers to “the more or less stable, internal factors that make one person’s behaviour consistent from one time to another, and different from the behaviour other people would manifest in comparable situations” (p. 83). In a few words, this definition manages to underpin the major assumptions of the concept of personality that seems to be generally accepted by many psychologists today; that personality is relatively stable, internal, consistent and different for each individual.

### *Stability*

The definition begins by stating that personality is more or less stable. By referring to personality as stable, Hampson (1988) remarks that it should not be assumed that personality is static, but rather that it can to some extent, undergo changes. If one agrees with this statement, this view allows for the possibility of long-term personality growth and adaptation over the life-span of the individual and short-term fluctuations in personality from day to day.

### *Internal*

This assumption asserts that personality is typically regarded as internal and hence not directly accessible. It can only be measured indirectly by making inferences and abstractions of that which is available externally (Stagner, 1977). These inferences are made by observing the ways in which individuals behave; since the way in which people behave, are in part, determined by personality.

### *Consistent*

The definition further states that personality makes one person’s behaviour consistent from one time to another. As possibly the most contested and debated assumption, consistency over time in Child’s (1968) context refers to the similarity between a person’s behaviour across occasions. Personality is assumed to explain behavioural consistency because it is assumed to be a major determinant of behaviour and, since personality is regarded to remain relatively stable, the behaviour it asserts to determine will be consistent. Challenging this



view, Mischel (1996) argue that the sweeping assumption of cross-situational consistency should make way for one of temporal specificity to acknowledge that behaviour is situation-dependant. In his argument, Mischel advocated that behaviour is merely predictive of itself and thus that situational factors – and not personality traits or dispositions – determine behaviour.

Further to Mischel's critique; granting that behaviour may not always be strictly consistent across time and situations, but can to some extent still be understood and predicted, contemporary personality psychology seems not so much concerned with exact consistency as with *coherence* (Hampson, 1988). The use of the term coherence signals the recognition that while people may show cross-situational variability in their behaviour, this can be explained when other factors are taken into account (expectancies, values, preferences, motivation, goals). Presupposing the compelling nature of traits and the relatively stable underlying core of personality, coherence does however; still recognise that a person's behaviour is meaningful in respect of predicable patterns in responding to situational stimuli (Funder, 2001).

### *Different*

Finally, the definition by Child (1968) states that personality makes a person's behaviour different from the behaviour other people would manifest in comparable situations. It is a major assumption underlying the personality concept that there are individual differences in behaviour which are large enough to warrant investigation. People respond to the same situation in different ways. Individual differences in response to the same situation are thus assumed to be the product of variations in personality. Being a unique combination of features, personality thus differentiates individuals (Hampson, 1988).

### **The lexical approach in determining major dimensions of personality**

Personality researchers have long been engaged in attempts to find the optimal structural model of human personality variation. According to Ashton, Lee, and Goldberg (2004), the chief problem associated with efforts to identify the major dimensions of personality has been that of obtaining a representative set of personality variables. To this, Goldberg (1982) offers one of the most promising potential solutions based on the lexical hypothesis. According to the logic of the lexical strategy, the most important elements of personality variation should

be represented, in any language, by a large number of similar but distinct words (generally adjectives) that are used by lay people in everyday description of their own and others' personalities (De Raad & Peabody, 2005; Saucier, Hampson, & Goldberg, 2000).

The lexical hypothesis is founded on two basic assumptions: firstly, that the frequency of use of any specific term has a rough correspondence with its importance, and secondly that the number of words referring to a particular personality attribute will be a rough guide to the importance of that attribute for the speakers of the language (Di Blas, 2005; Goldberg, 1982; Saucier & Goldberg, 2001). Careful analyses of everyday personality descriptives found in any specific language would, therefore, be expected to reveal the fundamental vectors of personality significant to speakers of the language in question.

Although some critics of the lexical approach have argued against studying in everyday language (e.g. Block, 1995), there are several sound reasons for beginning the search for personality dimensions in the natural language (McCrae & John, 1992). For the layperson, personality is defined by such terms as, for example, *friendly*, *generous*, *even-tempered*, and *punctual*. These terms are the basic ways in which individuals understand themselves and others (Stagner, 1977). A complete theory of personality must ultimately explain the phenomena to which these terms refer and the ways in which they are used in everyday life. And because psychologists must often rely on self-reports and peer ratings to gather their data, they must speak the language of their informants.

Trait psychology offers an approach to personality that is concerned with the study of enduring individual differences in overt styles of thinking, feeling, and acting. Trait theory is a view of the world that sees the essence of human nature in individual differences (McCrae & John, 1992). McCrae, Costa, and Peidmont (1993) state more specifically that traits are "consistent patterns of individual differences in thoughts, feelings and behaviours" (p. 4) whereas Pervin (1994) conceptualises a trait as that which "represents a disposition to behave expressing itself in consistent patterns of functioning across a range of situations" (p. 108). People in every culture characterise themselves and others in trait terms, and this culturally influenced sampling of trait terms is not only intrinsically interesting, but can allow researchers the opportunity to study the domain of personality in a more meaningful way.

People often assume that certain behaviours and personality traits go together, for instance

that talkative individuals are also sociable and outgoing. These expectancies of co-variation of traits and behaviours are known as implicit personality theories (IPTs). IPTs are the general expectations that are formed about a person after certain assumptions about their central traits have been made. In other words, the inferences individuals make about other people's personalities on the basis of little information (Goldstein, 1998). Since these theories are often unconscious and not formally stated, the general theme inherent to this paradigm is that when describing or rating others, or even themselves, people will rely on their own personality theories to infer what personal characteristic(s) can be ascribed to a person.

### **Theories, models and measurement of personality**

To study personality, it must be measured. However, in the words of Church (2001), this straightforward assertion belies the complexity of the task.

In reviewing theories, models and assessment instruments borne from trait psychology, it is noted that Eysenck remained a strong advocate of three super-traits to describe human personality (Psychoticism, Extraversion, and Neuroticism) (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1983). Cattell, on the other hand believed in 16 primary factors (Hampson, 1988), which formed the template for a highly influential and widely used (Van der Merwe, 2002) personality inventory, the Sixteen Personality Factor Inventory (16 PF).

More recently however, the emergence of a five-factor model of personality has sparked an *intensive amount of research in the area of personality theory and its assessment.*

The Five Factor Model (FFM) presents a hierarchical structure of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions or factors (the so-called "Big Five"). Although there has been considerable dispute over the accepted nomenclature of these dimensions, they are most commonly called: Extraversion (I), Agreeableness (II), Conscientiousness (III), Neuroticism or Emotional Stability (IV) and Openness to Experience or Intellect (V) (McCrae & John, 1992). According to Saucier et al. (2000), Warren Norman is credited as the first to use Roman numerals to identify the Big Five factors. In Norman's work published in 1963, the five factors were ordered roughly by the number of reasonably familiar trait-descriptive adjectives in English available to describe that domain: I (Extraversion) and II

(Agreeableness) with the most such terms, followed by III (Conscientiousness) and IV (Neuroticism) and V (Openness to Experience) with the least number of adjectives.

As detailed in more lengthy reviews (Saucier & Goldberg, 2001; Saucier et al., 2000), lexical studies have yielded structures resembling the Big Five most consistently in languages originating in northern Europe, including German, Dutch, Polish and English. After its identification in early lexical studies, the Big Five has formed the template for a number of personality measures and questionnaires, including the Five-Factor Personality Inventory (FFPI), the Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ) and the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI). Designed specifically by Costa and McCrae to measure personality in terms of the five-factor model, the NEO-PI is, to date, the most widely validated instrument to assess the five dimensions (Rolland, 2002). Comprising 240 items to assess personality across the five broad domains, the measure includes six facet scales for each factor. The facet scales allow for a distinction to be made between persons who may have the same broad personality profile, but differ in terms of how each factor is expressed (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

As the most widely tested structure in lexical studies to date (Saucier & Goldberg, 2001), the Big Five model has not escaped criticism. Perhaps the most pertinent concern regarding the FFM is the lack of agreement on labels for the five factors. Johnson and Ostendorf (1993) comment in this regard that the five factors fall victim to imprecise specification in that they are not defined precisely and that there is a lack of correspondence between various definitions of the factors. Block (1995) also suggested that the five constructs should be sufficiently elaborated in order for consensus about their meaning to be reached. The most important issue according to Funder (2001) however, concerns whether the Big Five subsume all there is to say about personality.

Rebutting arguments raised in critique of the FFM, Saucier et al. (2000) report that even those most closely allied with the model indicate that “the five-factor framework is a working hypothesis rather than a final solution” (p. 1). These researchers state that the primary goal of the FFM is, like any scientific model, to stimulate research and does not necessarily imply accuracy or completeness. With this statement, these researchers acknowledge that additional dimensions could emerge in studies of different cultures, other forms of personality language (e.g. type nouns) or studies with different kinds of personality data.

Given the predominance of the Big Five and the related Five-Factor Model of personality, lexical researchers have usually favoured the five-factor solution. In recent years, however, an increasing number of psycholexical studies considered alternative solutions.

In addition to one-, two-, and three very broad factor structures, researchers have identified other non-Big Five structures that could be placed in competition with the Anglo-Germanic Big Five (Boies, Lee, Ashton, Pascal, & Nicol, 2001; Di Blas & Forzi, 1998; Goldberg & Somer, 2000).

Yet further review of the findings of previous lexical studies suggested that at least seven languages apparently contain a common set of six personality factors (Ashton, Lee, & Goldberg, 2004). In these studies, an additional factor to (variants of) the Big Five has emerged as a major component in a remarkably similar form in psycholexical studies conducted in different languages, including Dutch, German, Italian, French, Hungarian, Korean and Polish. This factor has been defined by such adjectives as *truthful*, *honest*, *fair*, and *sincere* versus their opposites (Boies et al., 2001). The structural model of personality based on the set of six replicated dimensions mentioned above, has been named the HEXACO model of personality structure to describe Honesty-Humility (H), Emotionality (E), eXtraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), and Openness to Experience (O) (Ashton, Lee, Marcus, & De Vries, 2007). The six HEXACO factors have been operationalised in a questionnaire called the HEXACO Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI).

Alternative seven-factor solutions have also been offered to challenge the comprehensiveness of the Big Five. Tellegen and Waller's (1987) study of English descriptors found seven factors; in addition to variants of the Big Five, these researchers identified two other factors that appear to tap positive and negative aspects of self-evaluation. The two additional factors were respectively labelled Positive Valence (with illustrative markers such as *outstanding*, *impressive*, *special*) and Negative Valence (with representative markers including *awful*, *terrible*, *disgusting*). Follow-up studies of Spanish (Benet & Waller, 1995) replicated this "Big Seven" structure. The alternative structure found by Saucier (2003) also involves seven factors. In his research with the "Multi-Language Seven" (ML7) factor model, Saucier suggests that the factors Gregariousness, Self-Assurance, Even Temper (versus Temperamentalness), Concern for Others, Conscientiousness, Originality/ Virtuosity, and

Negative Valence (or Social Unacceptability) are viable competitors to the Big Five because of their superior replicability in languages such as Italian, Hebrew, and Filipino.

Not surprisingly, the verdict on the universality of any one model of personality is still unclear. Although the overall evidence in support of the FFM is impressive, it appears as if the Big Five has been noticeably more replicable in studies with languages of northern European origin than in other languages. Although a study in Turkish (Goldberg & Somer, 2000) also found a structure with much resemblance to the Big Five, studies of other non-Northern European languages (Church, Katigbak, & Reyes, 1998; Di Blas & Forzi, 1998; Szirmák & de Raad, 1994) have led to results that are less clearly supportive and sweeping cross-cultural generalisations therefore still require caution. Saucier et al. (2000) remind in this regard that if the Big Five is replicated in etic studies, it does not constitute irrefutable evidence for the cross-cultural ubiquity of the personality factors, but only that people in other cultures are able to employ those dimensions.

While the replication of a corresponding factor structure across multiple languages would have special status, any premature assertion of the universality of such a structure might be under-inclusive of the construct of personality in different cultures.

### **Cross-cultural and indigenous measurement of personality**

Cross-cultural personality research has focused extensively on the five-factor model from Costa and McCrae and Eysenck's three factor model. Whereas the focus of cross-cultural research is aimed at determining the similarities and differences across cultural and language groups, indigenous or cultural research aims at establishing constructs that most optimally describe the individuals within a certain culture (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2001).

Ho (1998) (cited by Cheung, Cheung, Wada, & Zhang, 2003) defines indigenous psychology as "the study of human behaviour and mental processes within a cultural context" in which cultural "conceptions and methodologies rooted in that cultural group [are] employed to generate knowledge" (p. 280). A key aspect of indigenous psychology is the emphasis on contextualised understanding rooted in a particular setting and the discovery and use of natural taxonomies. To this, Church (2001) adds that indigenous trait approaches increase the likelihood of identifying culture-specific constructs, and, in combination with imported

approaches, will increase the likelihood that a more comprehensive personality psychology will emerge.

To date, the most active movements of indigenous psychology are found in India, the Philippines, Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Psychologists from these locations have identified unique personality constructs relevant to their cultural experiences that have largely been ignored by imported psychological theories. Examples include the Japanese concept of “*amae*” (sweet indulgence), the Korean concept of “*chong*” (affection) and the concept of the “selfless self” in Taosim, Buddhism and Hinduism (Cheung, Cheung et al., 2003).

One of the few examples of indigenous measures that has received significant international attention is the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI) (Cheung, Kwong, & Zhang, 2003). As a combined emic-etic instrument, the CPAI (standardised in 1993) consists of 22 personality scales designed to assess a wide spectrum of personality traits. The personality scales overlap those covered by Western tests (etic scales) and, more specifically, also include those that are considered to be of specific importance and relevant to Chinese culture (emic scales). The CPAI provides an example of the development of a culturally relevant instrument in a non-Western culture and its development followed the use of standard psychological assessment methods in mainstream psychology. The CPAI researchers learned from their experience of translating Western tests, recognised the gaps in those measures, and addressed the needs of practitioners for a comprehensive measure that covers both normal and diagnostic personality assessment. It illustrates the importance of a combined emic-etic approach encompassing the universal and culturally salient personality dimensions that make up the personality structure of the Chinese people (Cheung, Cheung et al., 2003). Four personality factors are extracted from the personality scales of the CPAI, namely *Dependability*, *Social Potency*, *Individualism*, and *Interpersonal Relatedness*. In particular, the Interpersonal Relatedness (IR) factor consists of mainly indigenous scales that depict the emphasis on implicit rules in relationships, such as Harmony and Face, and *Ren Qing* which focus on interdependence concerns emphasised in the Chinese cultural context (Kwong & Cheung, 2003). The IR dimension of the CPAI is considered unique in that it represents a personality dimension that has been omitted in traditional Western personality measures. Originally believed to be exclusive to the Chinese culture, subsequent research with the CPAI and its revised version, the CPAI-2 (restandardised in 2001), suggested that Western theories could be adapted to reflect the neglected interdependent nature of Western

cultures; and the CPAI-2 has since been renamed the Cross-Cultural Personality Assessment Inventory (Cheung, Cheung et al., 2003).

When personality measures are applied cross-culturally – especially when scores for different cultural groups will be compared – issues of measurement bias and equivalence must be considered to validate comparative conclusions.

Van de Vijver and Leung (2001) make a distinction between three different types of bias: construct bias, method bias, and item bias. *Construct* bias occurs when the construct measured is not identical across cultural groups or when behavioural indicators of the construct are not identical across cultures. *Method bias* refers to problems caused by the method applied or manner in which a study is conducted; it can result from sample incomparability, instrument characteristics or even test administration effects. Van de Vijver and Leung (2001) report that method bias often introduces between-group differences that can easily be misinterpreted as valid cross-cultural differences when they are, in fact, measurement artefacts. The third type, *item bias*, is also known as *differential item functioning*. This type of bias refers to anomalies in an instrument at the item level, possibly caused by poor translations or the inclusion of items that are less relevant in certain cultures (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004).

Whereas bias refers to the presence of nuisance factors or systematic error in score comparisons across cultures, equivalence refers to the effects of bias on the comparability of constructs and test scores across cultural groups.

Making a hierarchical distinction between different levels of equivalence, Van de Vijver and Leung (2001) assert that at the first level, *construct equivalence* implies that the same attribute or construct is measured across cultures. *Structural equivalence* is obtained if the construct measured by an instrument show similar internal structures and corresponding relationships with other variables. *Measurement unit equivalence* is present when the measure has the same unit of measurement across cultures, but different origins. This implies that although the measurement unit is identical across cultural groups, the mean scores cannot be directly compared due to the scale offset. At the highest level of equivalence, *scalar* (or *full score*) *equivalence* implies that a measure has the same measurement unit and origin across



cultures, which allows for direct comparisons to be made (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004).

In the absence of sufficiently developed indigenous measures in the multicultural South African society, potential bias and unproven equivalence of imported and adapted measures applied across cultures are of central importance. Imported personality instruments are more likely to run into bias problems because they may be inadequate in tapping personality constructs outside their culture of origin; also, without tests of equivalence it is impossible to know to what extent scores or constructs underlying an instrument can be compared across cultures. A study conducted by Meiring, Van de Vijver, and Rothmann (2006) investigated the adequacy of the Fifteen Factor Questionnaire Second Edition (15FQ+) personality measure in a group of police applicants from all major South African ethnic groups. The authors concluded that the 15FQ+ was not suitable as an instrument in the South African multicultural context because of the low internal consistencies of some scales and the lack of construct equivalence.

In the assessment of multilingual persons (a common feature of the South African population), the language of assessment is a potential source of method bias where concerns about language fluency are raised. The complexity of this issue is revealed in Nell's (cited by Foxcroft, 1997) assertion that "the language in which the test is administered may make a range of concepts available to a non-native speaker of that language that are inaccessible in the speaker's home language, or conversely, the translated version of a western test may deny the testee access to the language medium through which he or she has acquired the most of his or her knowledge and experience." (p. 233). One study conducted on the role of language in assessment was performed by Abrahams and Mauer (1999) to investigate the impact of home language on responses to items of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF). They reported little support for the equivalence of the 16PF across different cultural groups in South Africa, as individuals whose first language were not English, experienced problems understanding the test items. As such, it was concluded that this measure was not recommended for use in the South African context.

In light of the above, Van de Vijver and Rothmann (2004) advise that in order for psychology as a profession to live up to the demands implied by the Equity Act, much more research is

needed on establishing the level of equivalence and impact of bias of assessment tools used in South Africa.

### **Origin of the Afrikaans language**

Southern Africa provides a fascinating laboratory in which the complex dynamics of multicultural and multilingual societies can be studied.

In his contribution to publications on South African languages, linguist Roberge (1995, 2002) proclaims that the three groups primarily responsible for the formation of Afrikaans – European settlers (from 1652), the indigenous Khoikhoi, and enslaved peoples of African and Asian origin (from 1658) – were quite distinct during the first decades of the Cape Colony. This distinctness was defined by physical appearance, culture, religion, and language. By the end of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) era in 1795, a number of processes had eroded these boundaries (*inter alia* the incorporation of the Khoikhoi into the European-dominated society as wage-labourers subject to Dutch Law; conversion of slaves and free blacks to Christianity or Islam; and intermarriage among groups) and descendants of these groups had come to share in a common vernacular that was unique to southern Africa. However, exactly how this new language came into being has been a hotly disputed question for more than a century.

One aspect of consensus amongst linguists is that Afrikaans is linguistically closely related to 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch, and to modern Dutch by extension (Gordon, 2005; Mesthrie, 2002; Roberge, 1995, 2002). Since the late 1600's, the form of Dutch spoken at the Cape developed differences in pronunciation and accent and, to a lesser extent, in syntax and vocabulary, from that of the Netherlands. From the literature, it is generally accepted that the process of language change was influenced by the languages spoken by the erstwhile slaves, Khoikhoi, as well as by Cape Malay, Zulu, English and Portuguese. Afrikaans has, however, not been only on the receiving end of the influential chain and has exerted its own influence on the development of South African English (Branford & Claughton, 2002). Many Afrikaans loanwords have found their way into South African English, such as “veld”, “braai” and “lekker”. A few words in standard English are derived from Afrikaans (Bosman, Van der Merwe, & Hiemstra, 1984), such as “kloof”, “trek”, “springbok”, and, of course, *Apartheid*.

Today regional dialects differentiate Afrikaans-speaking people from different areas, much like any other country. These dialects may be recognised to range from slight differences in pronunciation and accent, to a rather unique variation of Afrikaans and English used in everyday speech. Although it is impossible to fix precise geographical boundaries to the dialects, generally accepted varieties include Eastern Cape Afrikaans (*Oosgrens-Afrikaans*), Cape Afrikaans (*Kaapse Afrikaans*) and Orange River Afrikaans (*Oranjerivier-Afrikaans*) (Roberge, 2002).

In tracing its origin, Afrikaans belongs to the Indo-European, West Germanic language family<sup>1</sup> and shares roots with English, Flemish, Dutch and German (Gordon, 2005; Mesthrie, 2002). Demonstrating the striking similarity in pronunciation and meaning at the lexical level, Table 1 presents clear evidence of the genetic relationship between Afrikaans and some of its West Germanic siblings.

Table 1

*Lexical Similarities between Afrikaans, Dutch, German and English*

<b>Afrikaans</b>	<b>Dutch</b>	<b>German</b>	<b>English</b>
Aksie	Actie	Action	Action
Bed	Bed	Bett	Bed
Maak	Maak	Mache	Make
My	Mijn	Mein	My
Oop	Open	Offen	Open
Skool	School	Schule	School
Vir	Voor	Für	For
Voël	Vogel	Vogel	Bird (compare 'fowl')
Vry	Vrij	Frei	Free
Vyf	Vijf	Fünf	Five
Winter	Winter	Winter	Winter

*Note.* Dutch, German and English translations obtained from Applied Language Solutions (2006).

As the third most widely spoken home language in the country (Statistics South Africa, 2005), Afrikaans enjoys official language status under South Africa's 1996 Constitution,

<sup>1</sup> Language families are groups of languages with a common historical origin that have similar terms and share certain features of grammar and syntax.

along with IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, English, Xitsonga, Siswati, Tshivenda and IsiNdebele. Confirming its status as a living language, Afrikaans is used by around 5 983 426 South Africans as their home language. More specifically, Afrikaans is the first language of approximately 60% of South Africa's whites, and over 90% of the Coloured population. Large numbers of black, Asian and English South Africans also speak it as a second language. The language is also spoken in the Republic of Namibia and certain districts of Botswana, Malawi and Zambia (Gordon, 2005).

## **STUDY AIM**

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the implicit perspectives of personality among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. As an emic investigation, the aim is exploratory by nature and does not involve the imposition of a priori structural hypotheses.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A qualitative approach was decided upon, since this approach is specifically suitable when the research takes place in a natural setting. Qualitative research attempts to make sense of and interpret constructs and phenomena in terms of the meaning that people ascribe to them, thus seeking to give meaning to social experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Crabtree and Miller (1992) also point out that the qualitative approach allows the researcher the opportunity to explore meanings, variations and perceptual experiences of the phenomenon from a rich and in-depth perspective of the subjects as observed and recorded through their words, actions, behaviours and practices. Merriam (2002) furthermore recommends that a qualitative approach be used when the research objectives are exploratory and descriptive. Since the primary research question pertains to understanding and describing a particular phenomenon about which little is known, the qualitative approach appeared to be the most suitable for gaining insight about the implicit perspectives of personality held by Afrikaans-speaking respondents.

## Participants

Qualitative research requires that the data to be collected must be rich in description of people and places (Patton, 1990). Sampling was thus aimed at obtaining insight into the implicit personality perspectives across the spectrum of Afrikaans speakers; to capture and describe the central themes that cut across participant variation on other variables. For these reasons, purposive stratified sampling was used to obtain Afrikaans first-language speakers from both genders, representing different age groups, educational levels, urban and rural regions and socio-economic strata. The characteristics of the participants are reported in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Home Language	Afrikaans	120	100
Gender	Male	42	35
	Female	78	65
Race	White	75	62,5
	Coloured	45	37,5
Age Group	18 – 35 years	79	65,8
	Older than 35 years	41	34,2
Province	Western Cape	35	29,2
	Northern Cape	35	29,2
	Free State	28	23,3
	North-West	22	18,3
Urbanisation	Urban	84	70
	Rural	36	30
Level of education	General Education and Training	32	26,7
	Further Education and Training	64	53,3
	Higher Education and Training	24	20

As can be seen from Table 2, a total of 120 participants took part in the study. Both genders were represented in the sample with a split of 78 females (65%) and 42 males (35%). Only Afrikaans-speaking individuals were included in the study, and all respondents indicated

Afrikaans as their lingua franca. With a mean age of 32,14 years (range 18-71) for all the participants, the majority (65,8%) of the participants were between 18 and 35 years of age. The study population included participants from both urban and rural areas (70:30 ratio), residing in various municipal districts demarcated within the Western and Northern Cape, Free State and North-West provinces. In total, 73,3% of the sample population received more than ten years of formal schooling and have thus obtained Further or Higher Education level qualifications. Whilst the aim of this study was geared more towards board coverage than representivity, Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain that the more widespread the sampling, the more conditions and variations that will be discovered and built into the theory, and therefore the greater generalisability of the research findings.

### **Data collection**

This project did not depart from well-known conceptualisations of personality such as Costa and McCrae's "Big-Five" (McCrae & Costa, 1997) or Eysenck's "Giant Three" (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1983), but rather from everyday conceptualisations of personality as found among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. To this end, individual participants were asked a series of open-ended questions to solicit person-descriptive terminology.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the research, four Afrikaans-speaking students in Psychology were recruited to act as field workers in this study. Capitalising on the fieldworkers' interviewing skills and intimate knowledge of the requirement of rigour in scientific research, each one was thoroughly briefed by the researcher on the interview procedure to be followed.

Interviews were conducted on a single person face-to-face basis between the fieldworker and each respondent in natural settings of their choice. The respondents were approached individually and invited to be part of the study after the nature and purpose of the study was explained to each of them. All respondents agreed to participate.

In each case, the interview was introduced by means of an explanation of the nature and purpose of the study, a commitment to confidentiality and an opportunity for questions to address any possible concerns regarding participation in the study. Permission was obtained to audio-tape the interview so as to allow the interviewer the freedom to be attentive to the

individual and participate in the process. All participants gave their consent. A semi-structured interview schedule was used which enabled the interviewer to take each respondent through the same set of questions in a systematic fashion. The semi-structured format helped to keep the interaction focused, and also allowed the interviewer to explore the opinions and perceptions of respondents more fully as the interviewer summarised, reflected, stimulated and probed where clarification was needed. Huysamen (1993) advises that interviewers should be aware that factors such as speech, status, dress, grooming, age, race and frame of mind can affect and influence responses of the participants. Special attention was paid to the aforementioned and the necessary precautions were taken to attempt to counteract any undue impact.

On average, each interview lasted approximately 40 to 90 minutes. While the interviews were conversational in nature, field notes were taken during the process to ensure accurate recall of all information and as a precaution against the possible loss of data due to equipment malfunction.

Although this method of data-collection incurred substantial costs when totalling the time spent conducting the interviews, training the fieldworkers, analysing data and adding travelling expenses and equipment costs (sound recorders, audio cassettes and batteries), the face-to-face interview method yielded high quality responses and provided the invaluable control and adaptability in the interview situation as described by Huysamen (1993).

In addition to collecting certain biographical information (age, race, gender, home language, highest level of qualification, economic activity, provincial domicile and home municipality), all participants were requested to provide a description of the self, liked peers, diversely evaluated peers and parental figures. More specifically, each participant was asked to provide a description of each of the following persons: The self (own personality), best friend of the same sex, best friend of the opposite sex, a parent, a child or sibling, a grandparent, a colleague or friend from another ethnic group or a neighbour, a person totally opposite to themselves, a teacher (if schooled) or person from their community whom they like very much, a teacher (if schooled) or person from their community whom they do not like.

With reference to the above, the participants were requested to convey what kind of person the individual in question is or was by describing the typical aspects, enduring behaviours or habits characteristic of the person in mind.

Following the interview process, the audio-taped interviews were transcribed in the original language. This was done in electronic format to facilitate data storage and retrieval, by populating a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to optimise navigating and browsing capabilities. During this process, all entries were checked repeatedly against the tape recordings and field notes to ensure accuracy. Responses were subsequently translated into English. Following the translations made by the native Afrikaans-speaking fieldworkers with training in Psychology, a professional Afrikaans-English language expert also checked and compared the audio-recorded interviews against the transcribed translations, to ensure that the responses of the participants were correctly interpreted and to protect against contextual distortion or loss of information during the translation process.

The focus of this study was not geared toward statistical integration, but rather aimed at the adequate coverage of the implicit theory of personality among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. In light of this, means and correlations made way for saturation, the stage where *new informants no longer presented new information relevant to the study*.

In addressing the reliability and validity of qualitative research, Straus and Corbin (1990) believe that the “usual canons of ‘good science’...require redefinition in order to fit the realities of qualitative research” (p. 250).

In the present context, reliability does thus not refer to the verification of research findings through the replication of the study, but rather involves the conscious revealing of the decisions and procedures followed in the various stages in the study to demonstrate consistency and neutrality. As Dey (1993) states: by explaining the procedures followed in obtaining the results, the reader has the opportunity to scrutinise the procedure and decide in principle on the reliability of the research. To enhance the neutrality of the research, a period was set aside during the analysis process in which the data was arranged and clustered without making use of special knowledge of the literature. By allowing the participants' responses to guide the research, neutrality was achieved as the findings are a function solely



of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives.

The validity of a qualitative research study refers to the credibility and transferability of the results and as “one which can be defended as sound because it is well-grounded conceptually and empirically” (Dey, 1993, p. 253). The core meaning still involves the absence of random and systematic errors, as one might have reliability without validity, yet not validity without reliability. Validity in this study was enhanced by audio taping and transcribing each interview. Furthermore, the procedures followed in obtaining the data, the transcriptions of the interviews, and the analysis and interpretation of the data are comprehensively explained to add credibility to the research findings.

Once the results were obtained, the data set was also submitted to the study leader and project collaborators to review the interpretation and subsequent validity of the emerging clusters as a measure of triangulation. According to Patton (1990), the use of such an analyst triangulation strategy will serve to enhance the validity of studies of this nature.

### **Data analysis**

Data analysis is the means by which the researcher brings “order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 111). The purpose of data analysis is thus to transform the acquired data obtained from the personal interviews into rich descriptions of the findings. In this study, the analysis consisted of words – mainly adjectives and nouns - in natural language.

Basic content analysis was selected as the vehicle for analysing the qualitative personality descriptives generated by the participants. By the end of the data collection and transcription process, a preliminary understanding of the data had been obtained. Initiating the content analysis process, the researcher firstly had to determine whether the responses were relevant to personality and adequate for personality description. From the initial 7 184 responses obtained through interviews, 6 779 (94.4%) were categorised as personality-relevant and thus retained by applying the criterion of utility for describing personality. Discarded responses included those descriptions related to physical appearance denoting purely anatomical

characteristics and broad, vague evaluative terms (e.g. “tall”, “adorable”, “sweet”, “wonderful”, and “impressive”).

Data analysis commenced with the elimination of superfluous words from the translated dataset, for example “is”, “are”, “he”, “she”, etc. and the removal of unnecessary context words and quantifiers such as: “very”, “most”, “definitely”, and “always”. The output of this stage was a list of person-descriptive adjectives, nouns and contextual phrases. Applying the *open coding process* described by Strauss and Corbin (1990), the next step involved interpreting the personality descriptive words, phrases and metaphors in due consideration of the context and assigning these to categories most applicable to the original description given. The researcher subsequently performed a more exacting analysis in the axial coding phase by grouping together those categories containing characteristics with similar meanings and where conceptual overlapping occurred.

In the last step, the number of categories was reduced by classifying synonyms with corresponding antonyms, leaving most of the emerging trait clusters as bipolar dimensions. The creation of such bipolar categories was intentional and meant to aid in refining and conceptualising later possible facets and dimensions.

Following this process, 12 distinct personality categories emerged from the data to represent a taxonomy of everyday conceptualisations of personality found among Afrikaans-speaking individuals.

For the sake of simplicity, labels were given only to the evaluatively favourable pole of each category. In general however, the categories are bipolar and there are thus also evaluatively unfavourable opposites.

Considering the frequency-importance association believed to be integral to the lexical approach, it should be noted that no synonym deletion took place. Bearing in mind that the most important attributes are likely to generate a large number of synonyms, it would defeat the goal of representative sampling to cull such occurrences from the final set of terms to be studied. This stance follows the comments on previous lexical research by researchers such as Goldberg (1982), who remarked that the results presented by earlier studies may have suffered in the sense that the extensive reductions accomplished by adjective clustering or

selection, may have been achieved at some cost in terms of representativeness of the final variable sets. In this regard, Ashton et al. (2004) also caution that in spite of reasonably formulated and carefully executed procedures for reducing any set of language personality variables to manageable proportions, there remains the possibility that reduced variable sets may tend to over- or underrepresent some aspects of the personality lexicon. As such, the conscious decision was taken to present the findings of this study in its most natural form. The viewpoint was thus adopted that all terms should be retained until such time as empirical data bearing on their potential usefulness warrant the decision to remove any of them.

## RESULTS

Considering the relatively small sample size, the sheer quantity of descriptors obtained from the participants suggests that the Afrikaans language abounds in personality-relevant terms and metaphorical phrases. A list of the 378 personality characteristics, indicating their frequency of occurrence, is presented in Table 3.

In the first, third and fifth columns the personality descriptive terms are given in descending order, where those terms which yielded the highest number of responses are presented first.

Table 3

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms*

<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Friendly	298	Introverted	58	Amiable	36
Helpful	249	Patient	58	Dedicated	36
Loving	247	Sensitive	58	Neat	36
Humourous	204	Sincere	54	Selfish	36
Honest	169	Quiet	53	Family oriented	33
Sociable	169	Impatient	52	Bad-tempered	33
Hardworking	163	Supportive	51	Critical	31
Strict/stern	124	Reserved	48	Gossiping	31
Intelligent	117	Considerate	47	Perfectionistic	31
Gentle/kind-natured	154	Cheerful	46	Attention-seeking	30
Religious	96	Dependable	46	Domineering	30
Caring	94	Focussed	46	Fickle/inconsistent	30
Talkative	88	Ambitious	44	Rude	30
Extroverted	82	Arrogant	44	Self-reliant	30
Stubborn	81	Calm	44	Surly/grumpy	30
Spontaneous	77	Listen	44	Unfriendly	29
Straightforward	72	Dishonest	41	Open-handed/sharing	28
Generous	68	Short-tempered	41	Conservative	27
Advisory	66	Fair	40	Emotional	27
Trustworthy/reliable	65	Humble	39	Sympathetic	27
Loyal	63	Peace-loving	39	Adventurous	26

Table 3

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Forgiving	26	Self-confident	20	Opinionated	16
Deceitful	25	Variety-seeking	20	Sarcastic	16
Leader	25	Assertive	19	Sharp-witted	16
Self-assured	25	Driven	19	Hurried	15
Strong	25	Haughty	19	Motivating	15
Confidential	24	Jealous	19	Nice	15
Lazy	24	Principled	19	Nosy	15
Persevering	24	Serious	19	Optimistic	15
Prejudiced/biased	24	Stingy	19	Positive	15
Individualistic	23	Underhanded	19	Understanding	15
Aggressive	22	Belittling	18	Unreasonable	15
Approachable	22	Pensive	18	Diplomatic	14
Dependent	22	Sacrificing	18	Resilient	14
Exemplary	22	Authoritative	17	Resolute	14
Respectful	22	Impulsive	17	Responsible	14
Conscientious	21	Insecure	17	Unreliable	14
Consistent	21	Unfair	17	Wise	14
Punctual	21	Boastful	16	Anxious	13
Vivacious	21	Lonely	16	Bombastic	13
Aloof	20	Moralistic	16	Creative	13
Imaginative	20	Negative	16	Encouraging	13

Table 3

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Enthusiastic	13	Proud	11	Adaptable	8
Pleasant	13	Talented/artistic	11	Argumentative	8
Self-centered	13	Autocratic	10	Discriminating	8
Accepting	12	Energetic	10	Greedy	8
Determined	12	Irresponsible	10	Happy	8
Disciplined	12	Manipulating	10	Honourable	8
Immature	12	Meticulous	10	Hypocritical	8
Insensitive	12	Open	10	Ill-mannered	8
Moody	12	Persuasive	10	Impartial	8
Nasty	12	Unintelligent	10	Independent	8
Outgoing	12	Untidy	10	Inspiring	8
Protective	12	Active	9	Mischievous	8
Uncomplicated	12	Available	9	Outspoken	8
Charitable	11	Dynamic	9	Passionate	8
Egoistic	11	Immoral	9	Polite	8
Indecisive	11	Inhumane	9	Uncertain	8
Jovial	11	Naughty	9	Unselfish	8
Know-it-all	11	Open-minded	9	Absent-minded	7
Materialistic	11	Organised	9	Competitive	7
Naïve	11	Outspoken	9	Dignified	7
Practical	11	Steadfast	9	Giving	7

Table 3

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Homely	7	Disloyal	6	Judgemental	5
Indulgent/cosseting	7	Disorganised	6	Liberal	5
Loud	7	Easy-going	6	Lively	5
Mature	7	Eccentric	6	Logical	5
Meddlesome	7	Integrity	6	Motherly	5
Melancholic	7	Objective	6	Offensive	5
Narrow-minded	7	Resourceful	6	Orderly	5
Neglectful	7	Secretive	6	Praising	5
Nurturing	7	Sensible	6	Private	5
Passive	7	Tolerant	6	Racist	5
Pessimistic	7	Unconventional	6	Self-starter	5
Philanthropic	7	Unhelpful	6	Short-sighted	5
Plans ahead	7	Visionary	6	Strong-willed	5
Provoking	7	Accusing	5	Zealous	5
Rigid	7	Cautious	5	Apologetic	4
Systematic	7	Compassionate	5	Avoidant	4
Thick-skinned	7	Courteous	5	Complex	4
Unsympathetic	7	Dreamer	5	Curious	4
Admonishing	6	Faithful	5	Ethical	4
Decent	6	Finicky	5	Exploitative	4
Demanding	6	Inquisitive	5	Extremist	4

Table 3

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Frugal	4	Brusque	3	Self-righteous	3
Fun	4	Bully	3	Self-sufficient	3
Hospitable	4	Charming	3	Snobbish	3
Humiliating	4	Cold	3	Wild	3
Insulting	4	Comforting	3	Acceptance-seeking	2
Intimidating	4	Diligent	3	Appreciative	2
Meek	4	Disrespectful	3	Brave	2
Mentor	4	Exuberant	3	Conceited	2
Not Religious	4	Impressionable	3	Criminal	2
Opportunistic	4	Modest	3	Decisive	2
Overprotective	4	Noisy	3	Disobedient	2
Particular	4	Petty	3	Entrepreneur	2
Self-pitying	4	Placid	3	Frivolous	2
Slack/lax	4	Playful	3	Grateful	2
Spendthrift	4	Possessive	3	Industrious	2
Structured	4	Quitting	3	Observant	2
Suspicious	4	Realistic	3	Partial	2
Unforgiving	4	Rebellious	3	Participative	2
Unimaginative	4	Reticent	3	Radical	2
Analytical	3	Self-absorbed	3	Rowdy	2
Balanced	3	Self-conscious	3	Self-determining	2



Table 3

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Simple	2	Handy	1	Reproachful	1
Submissive	2	Humanistic	1	Righteous	1
Subservient	2	Indolent	1	Self-assessing	1
Unethical	2	Insightful	1	Self-aware	1
Ungrateful	2	Intrusive	1	Self-controlled	1
Acknowledging	1	Listless	1	Self-critical	1
Attentive	1	Loafer	1	Self-disciplined	1
Bitter	1	Magnanimous	1	Self-indulgent	1
Cheeky	1	Modern	1	Selfless	1
Choosy	1	Noble	1	Self-motivated	1
Competent	1	Obedient	1	Snappy	1
Conforming	1	Obscure	1	Spineless	1
Cruel	1	Obsessive-compulsive	1	Spiteful	1
Cunning	1	Open-hearted	1	Sullen	1
Denying	1	Over-eager	1	Superstitious	1
Destructive	1	Overruling	1	Task-orientated	1
Detail conscious	1	Particular	1	Undisciplined	1
Disdainful	1	Pedantic	1	Unpatriotic	1
Dissatisfied	1	Pleasing	1	Untouchable	1
Fake	1	Presumptuous	1	Warm/engaging	1
Flexible	1	Radiant	1	Warm-hearted/hearty	1

Table 4 presents the categorisation of the 378 personality descriptive terms into the following broad categories:

- **Altruism/Agreeability** – This composite category includes descriptions relating to the tendency to express care about others' well-being, showing concern for others, demonstrating compassion, warmth, and sensitivity towards others' feelings and needs. The cluster is characterised by traits referring to positive and negative aspects of Generosity, Helpfulness, Courteousness, Kind-heartedness and Peace-lovingness.
- **Extraversion** – This category reflects trait descriptions relating to social interaction, interpersonal relations and communicativeness. It includes references to friendliness, a desire to be involved in situations with high opportunity for interpersonal interaction, and the general enjoyment of other people's company. This cluster is characterised by traits referring to both poles of Gregariousness, Congeniality and Talkativeness.
- **Integrity** – The cluster interpreted as Integrity is defined by adjectives differentiating normatively desirable trait descriptions from undesirable ones. At the evaluative positive pole are descriptions such as *honest, sincere, trustworthy, loyal, dependable, ethical, righteous* and *fair*, whereas terms such as *dishonest, unreliable, unethical* and *deceitful* are posted at the opposite pole.
- **Conscientiousness** – This composite category includes references to orderliness, and a meticulous approach to performing tasks. Responses also refer to being planful and organised, structured, exacting and precise. Trait descriptions include the terms *neat, organised, hardworking, industrious, diligent* and *self-disciplined* versus their opposites.
- **Emotionality** – This category contains references to general affect, temperament and demonstration of emotions. Trait descriptions include references to the tendency to be even-tempered by not demonstrating extreme positive or negative mood swings. The cluster is also defined by traits related to emotional Sensitivity (described as the propensity to be receptive and excitable on an emotional level), and Optimism (positively characterised by being *cheerful, positive, happy* and *appreciative* versus being *pessimistic, melancholic, dissatisfied* and displaying a general negative attitude).
- **Intellect** – Containing terms such as *intelligent, sharp-witted, sensible, logical* and *wise* on one pole, and *unintelligent* and *narrow-minded* on the inverse pole, the core of this dimension suggests Intellect as an appropriate label. Without any proven correlation to measured intelligence, this cluster denotes perceptions of intellectual vigour, charisma

and creativity which can be grouped into three subcategories: Cleverness, Imaginativeness and Reflectiveness.

- **Dynamism** – This dimension is defined in part by terms suggestive of ambition, drive, energy and boldness. Positive descriptions include *dynamic, ambitious, driven, active, energetic* and *adventurous*. This label also includes references to competitiveness, in evaluating one's own performance in comparison to others.
- **Forcefulness** – The terms grouped under this label refer to the tendency to lead or direct the activities of others; to get others to view and do things in a different way. It is characterised by terms referring to impacting on the thoughts and actions of others, for example by being *persuasive, domineering* and *manipulative*, to the extreme of presenting a *bullying* style. Traits grouped under this cluster also include references to use power in a threatening way, suggesting perceptions of an *autocratic* approach.
- **Humility** – The defining content of this dimension include adjectives such as *humble, modest* versus *arrogant, haughty* and *boastful*.
- **Moralism** – This conceptual factor is dominated by content related to a sense of moral obligation and conviction. It includes trait references related to the perception of doing what is considered right, an adherence to moral codes and devoutism. Terms include *principled, moralistic* and *religious*.
- **Conventionality** - This category includes trait terms to describe individual differences in the tendency to adhere to societal norms and traditional values. Descriptors such as *conservative, conforming, obedient* and *traditional* define one pole of this dimension, while the terms, *unconventional, eccentric, rebellious* and *liberal* are clustered to represent the inverse pole.
- **Autonomy** – This category reflects trait descriptions relating to the tendency to be autonomous. Descriptors such as *self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-determining* and *independent* indicate the preference of Afrikaans-speakers to not be dependant on others. By expressing a sense of pride in the belief in one's own abilities/skills, this cluster reflects the perception of feeling competent in the belief that one is capable and self-determined.

Table 4

*Categorisation of the Afrikaans Personality Characteristics*

<b>Altruism/ Agreeability</b>	<b>Extraversion</b>	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Conscientiousness</b>	<b>Emotionality</b>	<b>Intellect</b>	<b>Dynamism</b>	<b>Forcefulness</b>	<b>Humility</b>	<b>Moralism</b>	<b>Conventionality</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
Generous	Extrovert	Righteous	Neat	Moody	Intelligent	Dynamic	Domineering	Humble	Principled	Individualistic	Independent
Open-handed/ sharing	Sociable	Fair	Perfectionistic	Short-tempered	Sharp-witted	Ambitious	Assertive	Modest	Moralistic	Eccentric	Self-sufficient
Giving	Outgoing	Impartial	Punctual	Bad-tempered	Sensible	Driven	Authoritative	Arrogant	Decent	Unconventional	Self-reliant
Magnanimous	Participative	Objective	Meticulous	Snappy	Logical	Competitive	Autocratic	Haughty	Dignified	Liberal	Self-determining
Sacrificing	Wild	Judgemental	Finicky	Impatient	Unintelligent	Focussed	Intimidating	Boastful	Exemplary	Rebellious	Dependent
Selfless	Attention-seeking	Partial	Orderly	Patient	Open-minded	Self-starter	Demanding	Self-centered	Noble	Conservative	
Charitable	Introvert	Unfair	Particular	Calm	Narrow-minded	Zealous	Strong-willed	Egoistic	Religious	Obedient	
Indulgent/ cosseting	Reserved	Prejudiced/ biased	Structured	Placid	Analytical	Inquisitive	Bully	Self-absorbed	Not religious	Disobedient	
Unselfish	Surly/grumpy	Particular	Detail conscious	Simple	Practical	Entrepreneur	Overruling	Snobbish	Immoral	Naughty	
Stingy	Aloof	Honest	Pedantic	Uncomplicated	Realistic	Self-motivated	Leader	Conceited		Conforming	
Greedy	Private	Sincere	Organised	Complex	Dreamer	Over-eager	Decisive	Know-it-all		Modern	
Selfish	Lonely	Honourable	Plans ahead	Immature	Imaginative	Energetic	Opinionated	Self-righteous		Unpatriotic	
Helpful	Homely	Integrity	Systematic	Naïve	Creative	Active	Meek	Choosy		Radical	
Advisory	Talkative	Ethical	Obsessive- compulsive	Mature	Talented/ artistic	Hurried	Submissive			Mischievous	
Supportive	Loud	Open	Attentive	Superstitious	Unimaginative	Lively	Subservient			Family oriented	
Listen	Rowdy	Outspoken	Observant	Fickle/ Inconsistent	Short-sighted	Passive	Spineless				
Sympathetic	Quiet	Straight-forward	Untidy	Consistent	Wise	Slack/lax	Avoidant				
Understanding	Reticent	Dishonest	Absent-minded	Steadfast	Visionary	Indolent	Apologetic				
Encouraging	Noisy	Cunning	Neglectful	Extremist	Insightful	Listless	Pleasing				
Available	Friendly	Unethical	Disorganised	Balanced	Pensive	Loafer	Indecisive				

Table 4

*Categorisation of the Afrikaans Personality Characteristics (continued)*

<b>Altruism/ Agreeability</b>	<b>Extraversion</b>	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Conscientiousness</b>	<b>Emotionality</b>	<b>Intellect</b>	<b>Dynamism</b>	<b>Forcefulness</b>	<b>Humility</b>	<b>Moralism</b>	<b>Conventionality</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
Comforting	Amiable	Secretive	Persevering	Anxious	Handy	Adventurous	Manipulating				
Motivating	Nice	Obscure	Determined	Jealous	Competent	Brave	Persuasive				
Admonishing	Pleasant	Criminal	Resolute	Suspicious		Opportunistic	Impressionable				
Unreasonable	Hospitable	Confidential	Strong	Spiteful		Impulsive	Mentor				
<i>Unsympathetic</i>	<i>Jovial</i>	Trustworthy/ reliable	Resilient	Possessive		Cautious	Outspoken				
Unhelpful	Fun	Loyal	Resourceful	Petty		Variety- seeking					
Polite	<i>Playful</i>	<i>Dependable</i>	<i>Disciplined</i>	<i>Sensitive</i>							
Courteous	Frivolous	Faithful	Responsible	Emotional		Flexible					
Respectful	Warm-hearted/ hearty	Deceitful	Conscientious	Thick-skinned		Adaptable					
Charming	Unfriendly	Underhanded	Frugal	Cheerful		Rigid					
Rude	Nasty	Unreliable	Irresponsible	Optimistic							
Ill-mannered	Brusque	Hypocritical	Undisciplined	Positive							
Offensive	Bombastic	Disloyal	Spendthrift	Happy							
Disrespectful	Humorous	Fake	Denying	Appreciative							
Cheeky	Sarcastic		Hardworking	Pessimistic							
Disdainful	Serious		Diligent	Negative							
Loving	Spontaneous		Industrious	Melancholic							
Gentle/kind- natured	Vivacious		Task-orientated	Bitter							
Caring	Enthusiastic		Dedicated	Sullen							
Considerate	Passionate		Self-disciplined	Dissatisfied							

Table 4

*Categorisation of the Afrikaans Personality Characteristics (continued)*

<b>Altruism/ Agreeability</b>	<b>Extraversion</b>	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Conscientiousness</b>	<b>Emotionality</b>	<b>Intellect</b>	<b>Dynamism</b>	<b>Forcefulness</b>	<b>Humility</b>	<b>Moralism</b>	<b>Conventionality</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
Humanistic	Exuberant		Self-controlled	Stubborn							
Compassionate	Radiant		Strict/stern	Ungrateful							
Philanthropic	Self-assured		Quitting	Grateful							
Protective	Self-confident		Lazy	Self-assessing							
Motherly	Proud		Easy-going	Self-aware							
Nurturing	Uncertain		Self-indulgent	Materialistic							
Overprotective	Self-pitying										
Diplomatic	Self-conscious										
Exploitative	Insecure										
Cruel	Self-critical										
Inhumane	Acceptance-seeking										
Cold	Meddlesome										
Insensitive	Nosy										
Peace-loving	Curious										
Forgiving	Intrusive										
Unforgiving	Presumptuous										
Argumentative	Gossiping										
Provoking											
Aggressive											
Destructive											
Approachable											
Accepting											
Praising											
Inspiring											

Table 4

*Categorisation of the Afrikaans Personality Characteristics (continued)*

<b>Altruism/ Agreeability</b>	<b>Extraversion</b>	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Conscientiousness</b>	<b>Emotionality</b>	<b>Intellect</b>	<b>Dynamism</b>	<b>Forcefulness</b>	<b>Humility</b>	<b>Moralism</b>	<b>Conventionality</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
Warm/engaging											
Open-hearted											
Acknowledging											
Critical											
Belittling											
Humiliating											
Reproachful											
Accusing											
Insulting											
Untouchable											
Tolerant											
Racist											
Discriminating											

To further facilitate comprehension of the 12-factor structure described above, Table 5 is intended to serve as a summary of the derived Afrikaans taxonomy. Table 5 indicates the subcategories identified within each of the 12 domains, with examples of the defining adjectives representative of the bi-polar trait clusters.

Table 5  
*Representation of the Afrikaans 12-factor Structure*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Positive pole</b>	<b>Negative pole</b>
Altruism/Agreeability	Generosity	Generous	Stingy
	Helpfulness	Helpful	Unhelpful
	Courteousness	Polite	Rude
	Kind-heartedness	Loving	Cruel
	Peace-lovingness	Peace-loving	Aggressive
Extraversion	Gregariousness	Sociable	Aloof
	Talk	Talkative	Quiet
	Congeniality	Friendly	Unfriendly
	Confidence	Self-assured	Insecure
Integrity	Fairness	Fair	Unfair
	Honesty	Honest	Dishonest
	Trustworthiness	Trustworthy	Deceitful
Conscientiousness	Orderliness	Neat	Untidy
	Persistence	Persevering	Quitting
	Responsibleness	Responsible	Irresponsible
	Industriousness	Hardworking	Lazy
	Strictness	Strict	Easy-going
	Emotionality	Temperedness	Patient
Stability		Consistent	Inconsistent
Sensitivity		Sensitive	Thick-skinned
Optimism		Optimistic	Negative
Sophistication		Mature	Naïve
Intellect	Cleverness	Intelligent	Unintelligent
	Imaginativeness	Creative	Unimaginative
	Reflectiveness	Pensive	Short-sighted



Table 5

*Representation of the Afrikaans 12-factor Structure (continued)*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>Positive pole</b>	<b>Negative pole</b>
Dynamism	Ambition/Drive	Ambitious	Slack
	Energy	Energetic	Passive
	Boldness	Impulsive	Cautious
Forcefulness	Assertiveness	Assertive	Apologetic
	Decisiveness	Decisive	Indecisive
	Leadership	Leader	Subservient
Humility	Modesty	Humble	Arrogant
Moralism	Religiosity	Religious	Not religious
	Principled	Principled	Immoral
Conventionality	Conservativeness	Conservative	Liberal
	Conformity	Conforming	Individualistic
Autonomy	Autonomy	Self-reliant	Dependant

**DISCUSSION**

The general aim of this study was to determine the implicit perspectives of personality among Afrikaans-speaking individuals by means of the lexical approach. The crucial significance of research results from emic lexical studies of personality structure, is that such investigations are based on variable sets that are (a) indigenous to the culture and language being studied (rather than imported), and (b) representative of the domain of subjectively important personality characteristics.

The majority of personality descriptors obtained from the participants in the study clearly indicate that Afrikaans-speaking individuals value demonstrations of friendliness, being helpful, loving and displaying a sense of humour.

Consistent with several previous lexical studies of personality structure in other languages, the present study found that some dimensions were considerably larger than other composite clusters. Based on the frequency of descriptors grouped under each heading, Altruism/ Agreeability and Extraversion emerged as the two biggest categories, followed by Integrity,

Conscientiousness and Emotionality (in descending order). In addition, several smaller categories appeared which defining content suggested the dimensions respectively labelled Intellect, Dynamism, Forcefulness, Humility, Moralism, Conventionality, and Autonomy.

As indicated above, the Altruism/Agreeability cluster clearly encompassed the majority of personality descriptors with a total of 1 691 responses (25 per cent of the total response set). This composite category reflects descriptions related to providing support or taking care of others in need, the willingness to listen to, understand and respond to others in a way that is considerate and respectful. The personality-descriptive terms referring to traits such as *helpful*, *loving* and *gentle/ kind-natured* obtained more than 100 occurrences each, suggesting that these are normatively valued personality traits among Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

From the response set, it is quite evident that the two largest composite categories both have a strong interpersonal component. While both the Altruism/Agreeability and Extraversion clusters concern the nature of one's relationships with others, Altruism/Agreeability differs from Extraversion in that the first mentioned dimension refers more to the relational sphere and the tone of relationships with others (*kindness*, *empathy* versus *hostility*). The content of Extraversion, on the other hand, refers more to the individual's conduct when engaging others in an interpersonal context. As such, the dimension interpreted as Extraversion was defined by adjectives such as *outgoing*, *extrovert*, *talkative* and *spontaneous*, versus *reserved*, *introvert* and *quiet*. The Extraversion cluster also contains "friendly" as the single most prevalent term with 298 references, followed by "humorous" and "sociable". The content of this category is therefore semantically consistent with an interpretation of the Big Five Extraversion (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

An important result of this study is the finding that the Afrikaans lexicon presented unmistakable evidence of the Honesty-Humility dimension that has been observed in other languages, such as Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, and Polish (Ashton et al., 2004; Boies et al., 2001). Reported in this study as two separate clusters, respectively labelled *Integrity* and *Humility*, the derived categories in Afrikaans contain many terms that had defined the analogous factor in other languages, including adjectives such as honest, sincere, trustworthy, loyal, dependable and ethical, and humble, modest versus their opposites. The sheer frequency of responses related to the category christened Integrity,

indicate that Afrikaans-speaking people place a high premium on honesty, sincerity and trustworthiness. Representing a total of 764 responses relating to positive and negative descriptions of fairness and honesty, the Integrity category emerged as the third largest cluster.

The Conscientiousness dimension emphasises orderliness, persistence, industriousness, and also strictness, thrift, and constraint to some degree. These emphases suggest an orientation (whether in attitudes or behaviour) to rules and standards (especially internally imposed ones) as an important theme. It appears as if the contextual descriptions of Afrikaans terms underscoring this dimension, concern the regulation of behaviour, especially by the self (e.g. self-controlled, self-disciplined).

A distinct category emphasising Intellectual content appeared as the sixth largest cluster. In comparison with the other derived dimensions, there appear to be more adjectives associated with this factor's positive pole (e.g. sensible, logical, wise, visionary, insightful) than with its negative pole - where most such terms are negations of the positive roots (e.g. unintelligent, uncreative). Containing perceptions of intellectual vigour (intelligent, sharp-witted) and creativity (creative, imaginative, dreamer, talented-artistic), it appears as if this category resembles the Intellect-Imagination dimension (also known in questionnaire-based research as Openness to Experience) (Costa & McCrae, 1992) of the Big Five. Some researchers like Ashton et al. (2004) assert that terms describing intellectual ability, unlike intellectual orientation, fall outside the domain of personality and are thus not personality characteristic. While these researchers seem to agree that most cultures do encode intellect-related content in their personality lexicons, they prefer descriptions of an intellectual and aesthetic orientation, rather than references to intellectual ability, to be included in studies on personality. Further to the above, it should be emphasised that the Intellect cluster derived from the Afrikaans lexicon is not purported to be equivalent to measured intelligence. The label Intellect as applied in this study refers to a dimension of personality based on self and other descriptions and not of intellectual ability as denoted by IQ.

The Dynamism category includes trait references describing the tendency to be ambitious in the advancement of one's career. Prominent themes include the determination to succeed and a continual desire to get ahead, to better on one's current status. Contextual descriptions of Afrikaans terms underscoring this dimension seem to indicate a favourable perception of the

tendency to be highly active and energetic, a need to keep busy doing something at all times, and the preference for a fast-paced lifestyle. This cluster also features references to competitiveness, implying the desire to do better than others, indicating an orientation where people are differentiated by accomplishments, and the relative enjoyment of situations that can lead to a clear winner versus loser environment.

Another noteworthy result of the present study was the emergence of a Religiosity sub-category, grouped in this study under the broader dimension of Moralism. It appears as if Religion is highly valued by speakers of Afrikaans, and many respondents referred to a belief in God and devoutism. In comparison with other sub-categories grouped under the different factors, this sub-category is somewhat narrow in terms of the content of its defining terms as respondents tended to describe themselves and others as either very religious or not religious at all. Most researchers would probably agree that Religiosity is a very important dimension of individual differences, but some might consider Religiosity to be qualitatively different from the major dimensions of personality, and thus to fall outside the domain of personality proper (Goldberg, 1982). Saucier (in Ashton et al., 2004) explains that Religiosity is unlike those personality factors in the sense that it is based on systems of beliefs and social attitudes. Nonetheless, the Religiosity dimension may be particularly salient in, or associated with, the Afrikaans-speaking community.

The category labelled Conventuality, included descriptors related to conformity and traditionalism. In this regard, the content of the eleventh Afrikaans factor resembles that of the fifth dimension of the Dutch five-factor solution (Saucier et al., 2000). This observation is however not all that surprising when the historical origins of the Afrikaans culture and language are taken into consideration.

The individualistic nature of Afrikaans-language speakers is quite apparent from the results of this study. Valuing independence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency, positive reference is often made to aspects pointing towards autonomy. The emergence of a homogenous category of descriptors relating to Autonomy is not surprising when taking into consideration that in Western-influenced cultures (like the Afrikaans-speaking culture in South Africa), the focus is on an independent, autonomous self characterised by motivation, analytical and abstract thinking, and an internal locus of control. Dumont (cited in Laher, 2007) suggests that the Western conception of the self is characterised by individualism in terms of which the

*individual is of paramount value (more egocentric), while the non-Western conception is one of holism and collectivism in terms of which society as a whole is of paramount value (more sociocentric).*

A noteworthy observation relating to the Autonomy cluster is that while there was a reasonable balance between the relative frequencies of terms associated with each of the two poles for the majority of the eleven stated factors, this was not true for the Autonomy cluster. From the response set, there appeared considerably more adjectives associated with the evaluatively “positive” pole of Autonomy (e.g. Independent, Self-sufficient, Self-reliant, Self-determining) than with its inverse pole (e.g. Dependant). As a consequence, it is possible that the relative fragility of the Autonomy dimension compared to the other eleven categories may be a function of its unbalanced content. Even though this category emerged as the smallest of all dimensions in this study, the result suggests that Afrikaans-speaking South Africans value the perception of self-determination and being able to operate outside of a collective. Subsequently, they may seek to maintain their independence from others by attending to their individual selves, believing in their individual abilities/skills and expressing their inner attributes.

Following a comparison between the Afrikaans speakers' personality perspectives and the Five Factor Model (FFM) (Costa & McCrae, 1992) it was found that the Extraversion dimension of the FFM shows strong similarity with the Afrikaans language characteristics of extroversion versus introversion, assertiveness, energy, optimism and independence, and that the Conscientiousness dimension of the FFM corresponds with characteristics such as drive, dependability, talented, perfectionism, strictness and controlling. Personality descriptors related to the characteristics of fear, inferiority, sadness, argumentativeness and temper can resort under the Big Five dimension of Neuroticism, while characteristics such as kindness, helpfulness, selfishness, co-operativeness, stubbornness and arrogance may fall under the space of the Agreeableness dimension of the FFM.

Although at least five of the twelve categories in Afrikaans can be associated with the Big Five dimension markers, the Afrikaans Integrity, Moralism and Autonomy clusters appear to be relatively unassociated, suggesting that the Five-Factor Model may not be a comprehensive summary of personality.

Personality and its assessment are intimately bound with natural language. All human cultures include words for describing individual differences in personality, and a large part of the process of socialisation consists of learning these terms and how they are applied to oneself and others. Unlike physical characteristics, personality traits are abstractions that cannot be directly measured and must instead be inferred from complex patterns of overt and covert behaviour. Human judges are needed to make these inferences, and in psychological studies, they typically do so by responding to checklists or questionnaire statements that use natural language (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Even clinical judgements, such as psychiatric diagnoses, ultimately rely on natural language: To diagnose a narcissistic personality disorder, one must understand the meaning of such terms as, for instance, *grandiose*, *exploitative*, *envious* and *arrogant*; and the gist of adjectives such as *deceitful*, *impulsive* and *aggressive* to describe an antisocial personality pattern (Barlow & Durand, 1995).

In closing, the present research, taking a semantic-conceptual rather than a factor analytic perspective, suggests that the structure of the Afrikaans personality lexicon is broadly similar to that obtained in most other Indo-European languages, with some Afrikaans factors being readily recognisable as the Big Five dimensions. Further research is however needed before we can opt that these results are conclusive.

There are limitations to this study that require consideration. Firstly, the study population was limited to members of the Afrikaans first language-speaking population from four of the nine South African provinces, which implies that the results may not be representative of all Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. It should, however, be kept in mind that the focus of the study was to explore and describe the implicit personality characteristics of individuals and not to generalise the results to the entire Afrikaans-speaking populace of South Africa. Secondly, although conscious efforts have been made to preserve the context and quality of the original reports, it is possible that some meaning or context of the personality descriptive terms was lost between the initial interviews and the final reporting of these characteristics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research may benefit from using a more representative sample of the universum of Afrikaans-speaking people. Future samples should include individuals from other provinces in South Africa and even Namibia and Botswana to enable generalisation of findings to the

sub-Saharan Afrikaans-speaking population. Exploration of the influence of various individual differences (e.g. race, gender, age) on the obtained inferential structure is also an avenue for additional investigation.

Future researchers may wish to regroup the personality characteristics to form fewer, broader categories, which could be grouped into even fewer personality dimensions. It is also recommended that a quantitative approach be applied to verify the correlations between terms grouped under the different constructs statistically. This will serve to determine whether the inferential structure presented in this study is congruent with a factor analytically derived structure in terms of content validity.

The results from the present study invite comparison with information from other language groups in South Africa with a view to identify common and language-specific clusters. Such terms may then be used in the development of a personality questionnaire that is valid and reliable for use in the multicultural South African context.

In closing, much stands to be gained from further research on personality in South Africa. To enhance understanding and in order to develop a fuller appreciation of the uniqueness of this country's people, it is imperative that research into the intrinsic differences and similarities between members of the various language and cultural groupings gain critical momentum.

### **Author's Note**

The material described in this article is based upon work supported by the National Research Foundation.



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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter conclusions are drawn based on the results of the empirical study. Furthermore, certain limitations of the present study are pointed out and recommendations for future research are made.

#### **3.1 CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions with reference to the specific objectives as set out at the beginning of the study are arrived at:

##### **Conceptualisation of personality**

Ever since the inception of personality psychology as a field, theorists have recognised that personality is a complex organisation of individual patterns or consistencies in behaviours, thoughts, and feelings.

In the late 1960's, Child (1968) defined personality as "the more or less stable, internal factors that make one person's behaviour consistent from one time to another, and different from the behaviour other people would manifest in comparable situations" (p. 83). In a few words, this definition encapsulates the major assumptions of the concept of personality that seems to be generally accepted by many psychologists today; that personality is relatively stable, internal, consistent and different for each individual.

##### **Contemporary theories and models in personality assessment**

Theories in psychology about personality abound. Based on their respective predominant focus, Laher (2007) states that most theories can be said to fall into one of six theoretical approaches, namely psychodynamic, cognitive/social learning, humanistic/existential, behavioural genetics, the radical behaviourist approach, and trait theory.

Following the demise of psychoanalysis as the dominant paradigm in personality psychology

during the early 1900's, the personality field has witnessed a resurgence of interest in traits (McCrae, 2000). Trait psychology is concerned with the study of enduring individual differences in overt styles of thinking, feeling and acting. In sharp contrast to the unconscious determinism of psychoanalysis, contemporary trait theory holds that human beings are fundamentally rational: that is, the psychology that works best by scientific criteria is broadly consistent with common sense. Perhaps the most important consequence of this notion is that laypersons can be relied on, within limits, to provide useful information on personality characteristics. Implicit personality theory constitutes one way of looking at personality by focussing on the knowledge and beliefs about the construct held by the individuals under investigation. As such lay theories have become embodied in the language of personality description, *personality concepts in every day use inevitably form a substantial part of the subject matter of personality psychology* (McCrae & John, 1992).

The lexical tradition in trait psychology is based on a specific set of theoretical assumptions: that traits can be inferred with reasonable accuracy by laypersons on the basis of daily experience, and that they are of sufficient social significance to be recognised by every culture and become encoded in every language. Lexical studies of personality attributes thus have as their purpose the identification of the most salient aspects of human personality, based on representation of these aspects in the lexicon of a language (Saucier & Goldberg, 2001).

### **The cross-transferability of personality assessment theories and models to the South African context**

The cross-cultural comparability of personality constructs has become central to the field of contemporary personality research and assessment. While cultural studies in personality aim at establishing constructs that most optimally describe the individuals within a certain culture, cross-cultural studies aim at determining the similarities and differences across cultural and language groups (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2001).

However, before personality characteristics can be compared across cultures, it has to be established whether or not the characteristics being compared are in fact inherent to the respective cultures.

Without cross-cultural comparisons, personality research and assessment would be limited to cultural boundaries (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2001). Unless it has been empirically established that a personality theory or inventory that is appropriate for one culture would also be appropriate in another, the usefulness and fairness of etic tools might be suspect. To determine whether the personality constructs have the same meaning across cultures, the theoretical structure underlying the measured constructs should be specified, so as to provide a basis for comparison.

Van de Vijver and Leung (2001) indicated that even if an imported instrument yields a structure identical to that found in the culture of origin of the instrument, it might still be possible that the instrument is “under-inclusive” and does not cover all aspects relevant to the construct in the new culture. In this regard, many non-Western psychologists have described indigenous constructs that resemble dimensions of individual difference that are not accounted for by traditional Western models of psychology. The Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI) (Cheung, Cheung, Wada, & Zhang, 2003) was developed to provide an indigenous personality inventory for normal as well as diagnostic assessment of the Chinese people. The goal was to construct an inventory relevant to the local culture while retaining the high standards of test validity and reliability expected of established assessment instruments. The personality constructs included in the CPAI were developed from multiple input covering a wide range of daily life experiences. Personality descriptions were obtained by using different methods, including a review of contemporary Chinese novels, informal surveys of people in the street, self- and other descriptions by professionals, and a review of the relevant psychological literature (Cheung, Kwong, & Zhang, 2003).

There has been a limited amount of research on multicultural personality assessment in South Africa and there is a great need to establish an instrument for personality assessment that is suitable for cross-cultural use. Personality testing in South Africa is currently largely carried out by means of imported or adapted personality instruments, which may not always be valid for the total South African population. Research on the cross-cultural comparability of the constructs of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) has revealed, for example, that individuals whose first language was not English experienced problems with the comprehensibility of the items (Abrahams & Mauer, 1999). Furthermore, in a study investigating the adequacy of the Fifteen Factor Questionnaire Second Edition (15FQ+) with a group of police applicants from all major South African ethnic groups, Meiring, Van de



Vijver, Rothmann, and Barrick (2005) concluded that the 15FQ+ was not suitable as an instrument in the South African multicultural context because of the low internal consistencies of some scales and the lack of construct equivalence.

### **The implicit perspectives of personality in Afrikaans-speaking people in South Africa**

A total of 7 184 personality descriptors were obtained, which were categorised into 378 different personality characteristics. These characteristics were divided into twelve categories, namely Altruism/Agreeability, Extraversion, Integrity, Conscientiousness, Emotionality, Intellect, Dynamism, Forcefulness, Humility, Moralism, Conventionality, and Autonomy.

When the personality characteristics elicited from Afrikaans-speaking persons were compared to the Five Factor Model (FFM) (Costa & McCrae, 1992), evidence was found of the terms resorting under the space of the Big Five's Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Intellect. It was however also found that, considering the frequency and number of synonym terms presented, the importance of honesty and truthfulness for Afrikaans-speaking South Africans is not adequately covered in the FFM, nor the characteristics reflected by terms describing autonomy, humorousness and religiosity.

### **3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The following limitations regarding this research have been identified:

The sample is limited to only a few members of the Afrikaans first language in four of South Africa's nine provinces, which implies that the results may not be representative of all Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the sampling strategy was primarily aimed at adequate coverage of the implicit perspectives of personality of Afrikaans first language speakers. Since the study population is geographically widely distributed across South Africa, the sampling strategy was aimed at the inclusion of those areas with the highest prevalence of Afrikaans first language speakers. According to 2001 census data (Statistics South Africa, 2005), Afrikaans first language speakers dominate in the western half of South Africa. With 2,500,748 speakers living in the Western Cape and 559,189 speakers in the Northern Cape, these two provinces jointly represent more than 51%

of the total number of Afrikaans first language speakers in the country. In addition to these two provinces, sampling also included respondents from the Free State and North-West provinces based on the prevalence of Afrikaans first language speakers per capita in both these areas.

Similar to most studies of this nature, the sample size of the Afrikaans first language group was small. Although 120 is a relatively small sample size for quantitative research, Patton (1990) asserts that in qualitative research, sampling is subject to the richness of the information gathered and that there are thus no strict criteria for sample size. Considering the primary research goal of this study, the sampling strategy applied in this research took into account the need to achieve sufficient depth with each individual interview, whilst also obtaining appropriate sampling breadth through the inclusion of adequate variation of the study population's individual differences (i.e. age, gender, race, geographical location, etc.). To this, it should be added that as the number of completed interviews grew, saturation occurred through the emergence of regularities where descriptions started to repeat themselves, with very little or no new information presented by later interviewees.

Another possible objection to the method of the present study might be raised on the grounds that categories were formed following the researcher's subjective interpretation of the personality descriptors. Although the researcher's own theories, preconceptions or values can never be completely eliminated from any study, the researcher continuously studied the transcribed interviews, field notes and the translated dataset without applying specialised knowledge of the literature. The researcher consciously strived to enhance neutrality as the degree to which findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives. In doing so, the researcher ultimately allowed the participants' responses to guide the research. Further to the goals of enhancing credibility and demonstrating neutrality, the research method, data collection and analyses processes are described to facilitate the ability of the reader to authenticate how and why decisions were made and thus authenticate the research findings and results underscored by the data. In addition, it can be mentioned that in order to reduce possible subjectivity, the researcher attended a number of workshops in methodology and submitted all data for review by the study leader and project collaborators to triangulate the findings. According to Patton (1990), the inclusion of such an analyst triangulation strategy will serve to increase the rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative research findings. Credibility will also be achieved when

participants are able to recognise their experience in the research findings.

Finally, however, it should be accepted that the conceptualisation applied and categorisation procedures used to generate *any* compilation of personality-descriptive terms of a language may be criticised, simply because researchers might reasonably disagree about the precise boundaries of the personality domain.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

*The following recommendations regarding the research can be made:*

Future studies could benefit greatly by utilising a sample with proportionate inclusion of geographical distribution across all South African provinces.

Future researchers should regroup the personality characteristics to form fewer, broader characteristics, which could be grouped into even fewer personality dimensions. It is also recommended that a quantitative approach then be applied in order to verify the items assigned to the different constructs statistically.

The information obtained from this study can be compared with information from other language groups in South Africa to identify common and language-specific clusters. These terms can then be used to develop a personality questionnaire that is valid and reliable for *South African conditions*.

In closing, it is recommended that test development in South Africa should move into a more dynamic state; one where it is not simply acceptable to adapt and translate imported instruments in place of creating new instruments. Considering the variety of cultures and languages present in South Africa, it appears an incredibly daunting task to develop a personality inventory that would be cross-culturally valid for use in this country. An understanding of the similarities and differences between different language and cultural groups can aid the identification of meaningful personality constructs, as well as specific item development for such an inventory. It is hoped that the present study may serve as the basis for more theoretically driven research into the development of psychological theories innate to South Africans.

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