

# **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IMPLICIT PERSPECTIVES OF PERSONALITY IN SESOTHO-SPEAKING SOUTH AFRICANS**

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of  
Arts in Industrial Psychology at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus

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Potchefstroom

2006

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This mini-dissertation deals with the establishment of implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking South Africans.

In Chapter 1 the motivation for the research is discussed in terms of the problem statement, aims of the research and the research method. The chapter is concluded by giving a brief overview of the division of chapters.

#### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The application of personality assessment techniques for clinical and personnel decisions has always been a major activity for psychologists all over the world and has been expanding over the past decade (Butcher, Lim, & Nezami 1998). In South Africa there is also a growing interest in the measurement of personality variables in applied settings. In the last decade personality variables and issues related to their use, especially in work settings, brought forth a lot of interest, research and publications.

Personality assessment tools are often used for purposes of selection, placement, determining job satisfaction and development in South Africa. It is believed that these tools can contribute to the efficiency of selection, placement and management of human resources (Van der Merwe, 2002). The use of psychological tests in South Africa has largely followed international trends. At the beginning of the 1900s tests were imported from abroad and applied in all sectors of the community (Foxcroft, 1997). Psychological testing in South Africa was originally initiated with white test-takers in mind (Huysamen, 2002) and tests were initially developed separately for Afrikaans- and English-speaking groups (Claassen, 1997), but excluded the speakers of African languages, who comprise the largest population group.

According to Abrahams and Mauer (1999, p. 76), members of historically disadvantaged groups in South Africa suffered similar patterns of discrimination as had minority groups in the United States of America, in so far as they tend to be unfamiliar with the material used in

psychological tests. It is also found that psychological tests measured different constructs from those which tests had been designed and standardised for and all groups in the multicultural society are not adequately represented in the standardisation samples used to derive norm tables.

Personality tests are widely used in South Africa. However, few studies have been conducted on the comparability of the results of different cultural groups. Spence (1982) found that the South African Personality Questionnaire (SAPQ) yielded poor alpha coefficients for black guidance teachers. White (1982) used a number of instruments of American origin to assess job satisfaction, anxiety and job tension. Item analyses and deletion of invalid items failed to yield scales with acceptable internal consistency. Taylor and Boeyens (1991) investigated the psychometric properties of the SAPQ using two black and two white groups of participants. They found moderate support for the construct comparability between the groups, but the majority of items failed to meet the no-bias criteria that had been set. More recently, Abrahams and Mauer (1999) studied the impact of home language on responses to the items of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire in South Africa. They found that problems existed as far as the comparability of items across groups was concerned.

According to Owen (1991) and Maree (2000), the majority of South Africans regard the use of separate tests for different cultural groups as unacceptable. Sibaya, Hlongwane, and Makunga (1996) expressed concern regarding the relevance and effectiveness of some of the assessment tools used in South Africa. The question arises whether construct-irrelevant variance such as that due to language deficiencies or cultural factors, rather than a poor standing on the construct of interest, accounts for poorer performance of some groups (Huysamen, 2002).

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has had a new constitution, and stronger demands for the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests were one of the reasons for the promulgation of the new Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, Section 8 (Government Gazette, 1998) which stipulates the following: "Psychological testing and other similar assessments are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used (a) has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable, (b) can be fairly to all employees; and (c) is not biases against any employee or group."

The onus of proof has shifted to psychologists using these instruments, who now have to indicate that they adhere to the regulations of the Employment Equity Act (55/1998). Given the transformation of the South African society, the integration of schools, universities, the work place, and life in general since 1994, there is an urgent need for measuring instruments that can be used for all cultural and language groups in South Africa and which meet the Employment Equity Act requirements (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004).

Currently, none of the available personality questionnaires used in South Africa have been found to provide a reliable and valid picture of personality for all cultural (language) groups, despite the obvious societal need for such an instrument. The currently used instruments have been imported from elsewhere and little effort has been invested in making these instruments suitable for South Africa (Meiring, Van der Vijver, Rothmann, & Barrick, 2005). The South African Constitution, which refers to the basic human rights of equality, and Acts such as the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (Government Gazette, 1995), Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (Government Gazette, 1998) and Health Professions Act 53 of 1974 (Government Gazette, 1974) have a bearing on psychological assessment, yet currently psychological instruments have not necessarily been developed with a view toward complying with these acts.

The study into the extent to which South African personality shows both universal and culturally specific factors have never been studied systematically (Meiring, et al., 2005). In order to develop a South African personality inventory that is applicable, fair and equitable, an in-depth understanding of South African personality is necessary. The researcher made use of Implicit Personality Theories (IPTs) in attempting to determine personality perspectives in Sesotho-speaking individuals. IPTs are sets of assumptions about what personality traits are associated with one another. These are the general expectations that we build about a person after we know something of their central traits. In other words, people are perceived in terms of traits covariations (Goldstein, 1998). Individuals make inferences about other people's personalities on the basis of little information. Such theories are implicit because they are often unconscious and not formally stated.

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

- How is personality conceptualised?
- What are the problems surrounding personality measurement for the South African context?
- How could personality perspectives be determined?
- What are the implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking South Africans?

## **1.2 RESEARCH AIMS**

The proposed project aims to determine the implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking South Africans.

### **1.2.1 General objective**

With reference to the above formulation of the problem the general objective of this research is to determine the implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking South Africans.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Conceptualise personality from the literature.
- Discuss the problems surrounding personality measurement for the South African context.
- Discuss the different perspectives of personality.
- Determine the implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking South Africans.

## **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study.

### **1.3.1 Literature review**

The literature review will focus on the current models in personality, the problems surrounding the use of these models in a South African context and on the history and characteristics of Sesotho-speaking South Africans.

### **1.3.2 Empirical study**

#### **1.3.2.1 Research design**

This mini-dissertation is based on qualitative research with an interview as the data collection technique. Qualitative research attempts to describe and understand human behaviour, rather than explaining it (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). It differs from quantitative research since it does not rely on the use of numbers or measurements, but is naturalistic, participatory and interpretive (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

The design of qualitative research usually uses an unobtrusive observer. As an unobtrusive observer the researcher makes passive observations and avoids responding to the participants in any way. No variables are manipulated; the researcher just lets natural events occur (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Since this study attempts to understand the personality of Sesotho-speaking South Africans, a qualitative design was the most appropriate design to use.

#### **1.3.2.2 Participants**

The stratified sampling method was used, where the Sesotho-speaking population was divided into certain subpopulations (strata). After dividing the population into strata the researcher selected specific individuals from each stratum.

The study population consists of 120 Sesotho-speaking South Africans ( $N = 120$ ). The sample sizes (strata) are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

*Sample Sizes for the Study*

Socioeconomic status/education	Females		Males	
	Age 18–35 years	Age older than 35 years	Age 18–35 years	Age older than 35 years
Low	10 participants	10 participants	10 participants	10 participants
Medium	10 participants	10 participants	10 participants	10 participants
High	10 participants	10 participants	10 participants	10 participants

The stratified sample was drawn from only the Free State Province, since the majority of Sesotho-speaking individuals in South Africa are located in the Province, with a total of 64% of the province's population consisting of Sesotho-speakers (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The sample sizes were chosen in such a way as to cover a variety of Sesotho-speaking persons of different age, gender, education and socioeconomic status. A total of 10 persons per strata will provide sufficient information to cover all areas of personality in Sesotho-speaking individuals.

### 1.3.2.3 Data gathering

A semi-structured interview was used to determine the implicit perspectives of personality in the participants. The interview is a method of obtaining information and the researcher is led by the nature of the research. The interviewer summarises, reflects, stimulates and asks for clarification (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

A Sesotho fieldworker was recruited to conduct the interviews in Sesotho, which was tape-recorded, transcribed and the transcriptions translated into English. The interview was conducted in such a way and was of such a length that it enabled the interviewee to adjust to the interviewer and the recording device.

The participants were asked the following questions:

- Biographical information (including name, province, home municipality, race, gender,

age, language, highest qualification and economic activity).

- Descriptions of own personality, best friend of the same sex, best friend of the opposite sex, a parent, eldest child or brother/sister, grandparent, colleague or friend from another ethnical group or a neighbour, a person totally opposite to themselves, a teacher or person from their village/town whom they like very much, a teacher or person from their town whom they do not like very much.

The reliability of qualitative research is the result of the consistency and neutrality of the research, and validity is the result of its credibility and transferability (Krefting, 1991). To ensure that the study is valid and reliable the interviewer (fieldworker) clearly identified her role in the research setting and her attitude will be of unconditional and positive regard, allowing the participant to share important information. The interviewer explained the nature of the study to participants and explained the importance of honesty in their responses to ensure valid and reliable information. Participants were also randomly drawn from different sectors of the population to ensure that the study population was representative of the total Sesotho-speaking population. Interviews were conducted in Sesotho to ensure that participants were able to express themselves the interviews were tape-recorded and field notes were taken during the interview. The interviewer made use of probes and asked for clarification to obtain more in-depth answers without biasing following responses.

#### **1.3.2.4 Data analysis**

Content analysis was used to analyse, reduce and interpret the research information. Content analysis is a technique used to examine information. In content analysis the researcher first identifies the material to be analysed and then creates a system for recording specific aspects of it. Finally the researcher records what was found in the material (Neuman, 2001).

The translated personality descriptors obtained from the participants were examined and integrated to form personality characteristics. The first step included reducing the responses by removing all superfluous words in the descriptions, for example: is, are, not, he, she etc. The second step was to interpret the personality descriptors and to divide them into preliminary personality categories. The last step reduced the number of categories by grouping together characteristics with similar meanings.



### **1.3.3 Research procedure**

The Sesotho-speaking fieldworker conducted the 120 interviews in Sesotho. All interviews were tape-recorded and field notes taken during the interview. Afterwards, recorded interviews were transcribed and compared to field notes to ensure accurate recall of data. All transcriptions were translated into English by professional translators to ensure minimum information loss.

The personality descriptors obtained from the interviews were analysed, interpreted and clustered into categories according to personality characteristics. The number of personality characteristics was reduced by grouping similar characteristics together to highlight only the most important perspectives of personality for Sesotho-speaking persons.

## **1.4 CHAPTER DIVISION**

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and objectives

Chapter 2: Article

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

## **1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter the background and motivation for the research were discussed, followed by a description of the problem statement and general and specific objectives were formulated. The research design and method were discussed, followed by the chapter division.

Chapter 2 consists of the research article.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IMPLICIT PERSPECTIVES OF PERSONALITY IN SESOTHO-SPEAKING SOUTH AFRICANS**

## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to determine the implicit personality perspectives of Sesotho-speaking South Africans. The study is based on qualitative research and an interview was used as data collection method. The study population consisted of 120 Sesotho-speaking individuals who were purposely drawn from different sections of the Sesotho-speaking population in the Free State Province. A Sesotho fieldworker conducted personal interviews with each of the participants. A total of 4873 Sotho personality descriptors were obtained from the participants, which were then translated into English. Content analysis was used to analyse, interpret and reduce the descriptors to a total of 94 personality characteristics, which highlight the most important perspectives of personality for Sesotho-speaking individuals. These characteristics were divided into seven categories, namely sociability, interpersonal relatedness, emotionality, meanness, conscientiousness, dominance and other. The majority of characteristics are representative of communalism or the collective consciousness in African communities.

## **OPSOMMING**

Die doelstelling van hierdie studie was om die implisiete persoonlikheidsperspektiewe van Sesotho-sprekende Suid-Afrikaners vas te stel. Die studie is op kwalitatiewe navorsing gebaseer en 'n onderhoud is as data-insamelingsmetode gebruik. Die ondersoekgroep het bestaan uit 120 Sesotho-sprekende individue wat op 'n doelgerigte wyse geneem is uit verskillende segmente van die Sesotho-sprekende bevolking in die Vrystaat-provinsie. 'n Sesotho-sprekende veldwerker het persoonlike onderhoude met elk van die respondente gevoer. 'n Totaal van 4873 Sotho-persoonsbeskrywings is deur die respondente bekom, wat toe in Engels vertaal is. Inhoudsontleding is gebruik om die beskrywings te analiseer, te vertolk en te verminder na 'n totaal van 94 persoonlikheidskenmerke, wat die belangrikste persoonlikheidsperspektiewe van Sesotho-sprekende individue beklemtoon. Hierdie eienskappe is in sewe kategorieë gegroepeer, naamlik sosialiteit, interpersoonlike verwantskap, emosionaliteit, gemeenheid, pligsgetrouheid, dominansie en ander. Die meerderheid kenmerke is verteenwoordigend van kommunalisme of die kollektivistiese bewustheid in Afrika-gemeenskappe.

Personality assessment can serve many purposes and is used in clinical practice, educational settings and for purposes of selection, placement, determining job satisfaction, and career and personal development in industry. The importance of personality to industrial, work and organisational psychology is apparent, with meaningful relationships between personality variables and criteria such as job satisfaction, supervisory ratings and the development of job-specific criteria, counterproductive behaviour and organisational citizenship. Criterion-related validities for predicting work-related constructs reveal the importance of personality variables in understanding and predicting work performance (Van der Merwe, 2002).

In the years preceding the 1990s, personality tests were not held in high regard as personnel selection instruments, because it was believed that such tests do not demonstrate sufficient predictive validity when used to predict job performance criteria (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). However, during the past one and a half decades there has been a revival in the use of personality tests by industrial/organisational psychologists worldwide, as well as in South Africa. The present increased popularity of personality measures can be ascribed to the various meta-analytical study outcomes indicating that personality traits are effective predictors of employee performance and other behaviour in the workplace (Mount, Barrick, & Stewart, 1998; Ones & Viswesvaran, 2001; Paunonen & Ashton, 2001; Van der Walt, Meiring, Rothmann, & Barrick, 2002).

Personality tests are widely used in South Africa. However, the reliability and validity of cross-cultural personality assessment is questionable. The need for change has developed gradually throughout the history of psychometric testing in South Africa. Psychometric testing has mainly followed international trends and at the beginning of the 1900s tests were imported from abroad and applied in all sectors of the community (Foxcroft, 1997). Cross-cultural issues emerged in 1920s, and in the 1940s and 1950s psychological testing focused on the educability and trainability of black South Africans. In the 1980s, certain aspects of fairness, bias and discriminatory practices received more attention, in line with international developments. Separate psychological tests were initially developed for the Afrikaans- and English-speaking groups in South African society (Claassen, 1997). At a later stage, bilingual test were constructed for English- and Afrikaans-speakers, and separate tests were constructed for speakers of African languages (Meiring, Van de Vijver, Rothmann, & Barrick, 2005).

The cultural appropriateness of psychological test and their usage came under the spotlight with the promulgation of the new Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (Government Gazette, 1998) which stipulates that: "Psychological testing and other similar assessments are prohibited unless the test or assessment being used - (a) has been scientifically shown to be valid and reliable, (b) can be applied fairly to all employees; and (c) is not biased against any employee or group."

According to Van de Vijver and Rothmann (2004), the onus of proof has shifted to psychologists using these instruments, who now have to indicate that they adhere to the provisions of the Employment Equity Act. It is probably fair to say that the law is ahead of daily practice. One of the main goals of the assessment profession in South Africa is to bring current practice into line with legal demands, for example by developing new instruments and validating existing instruments for use in multicultural groups.

Multicultural personality research in South Africa is limited (Abrahams, 1996, 2002; Abrahams & Mauer, 1999a, b; Meiring, 2000; Spence, 1982; Tact, 1999; Taylor & Boeyens, 1991; Wallice & Brit, 2003). Research by Abrahams (1996) on the cross-cultural comparability of the Sixteen Personality Factor Inventory (16PF) has received most of the attention to date in South Africa (Prinsloo & Ebersohn, 2002). Little support was found for the equivalence of the 16PF across the different cultural groups in South Africa. Individuals whose first language was not English experienced problems with the comprehensibility of the items. It was concluded that this test was not suitable for use in South Africa (Meiring, et al., 2005).

A few studies have been conducted in South Africa, investigating the five-factor model (FFM) across cultural groups. Heuchert, Parker, Strumf, and Myburg (2000) applied the NEO-Personality Inventory-Revised (NEO-PI-R) to college students. The authors found a clear five-factor solution for both black and white students. An unpublished thesis (Horn, 2000) examined an isiXhosa translation of the NEO-PI-R. Horn reported that translation had been difficult and that various items could not be translated into isiXhosa because of its restricted vocabulary. Taylor (2000) carried out a construct comparability study of the NEO-PI-R for black and white employees in a work setting. The Neo-PI-R did not work as well for blacks as it did for whites. In particular the openness factor could not be extracted in the black sample. Meiring, et al. (2005) investigated the adequacy of the 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.

Currently, none of the available personality questionnaires used in South Africa have been found to provide a reliable and valid picture of personality for all cultural (language) groups in South Africa, despite the obvious societal need for such an instrument. Even an instrument that was developed specifically for South Africa (the South African Personality Questionnaire, SAPQ) showed shortcomings. Taylor and Boeyens (1991) investigated the psychometric properties of the SAPQ using two black and two white groups of participants. They found moderate support for the construct comparability between the groups, but the majority of items failed to meet the no-bias criteria that had been set.

Heaven and Pretorius (1998) have argued that certain universal dimensions of personality arise in each society, in response to biological or evolutionary imperatives or to universal socio-cultural dilemmas, for which language terms are then developed. A different set of language terms must be locally developed and used to reflect the unique cultural life experiences of black South Africans.

Importing and adapting Western psychological tests provide clinicians with usable assessment techniques within a brief period of time. However, cross-cultural differences in test results and gaps in cultural constructs in these measures have led to the need for indigenous tools in clinical assessment.

### **Definition and measurement of personality**

Personality is the continuously changing but relatively stable organisation of all physical, psychic and spiritual characteristics of an individual which determine his/her behaviour, in interaction with his/her context (Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 1997).

According to Plug, Louw, Gouws and Meyer (2000), personality is a term used in its broadest meaning that indicates an integrated and dynamic organisation of an individual's psychological, social, moral and physical characteristics as portrayed in the interaction of the



person with the environment, and especially with other people. Considering the fact that personality takes time to form during a person's life and is never static, the term would indicate a matrix of characteristics at a given time in a person's life, although personality is constant.

Personality theories differ in their fundamental assumptions about human behaviour. Although this is an oversimplification, all personality theories can be classified roughly into five general perspectives. The *psychodynamic approach* emphasises the influence of unconscious processes (e.g. Freud and Jung), the *learning approach* focuses on people's histories of reinforcement and punishment (e.g. Watson and Skinner), the *humanistic approach* stresses people's natural tendencies toward personal growth and fulfilment (e.g. Rogers, Maslow and Allport), the *cognitive approach* examines people's beliefs and ways of thinking (e.g. Rotter and Bandura), and the *biological approach* studies the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system (Eysenck and Buss) (Derlega, et al., 2005).

Personality approaches can also be classified into two major categories, namely descriptive (trait) theories and causative theories. Descriptive (trait) theories focus on describing personality in terms of traits or dimensions; they do not consider factors that cause a person to acquire their personality traits. Examples of descriptive theories include Allport's trait-factor theory of personality and Costa and McCrae's Five Factor Theory. Causative theories attempt to account for how personality traits are acquired; examples include Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Bandura's cognitive theory (Derlega, Winstead, & Jones, 2005).

For the purpose of the current study the focus will be on descriptive (trait) theories. Allport can be seen as the first trait-theorist and he defined personality as: "...the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment" (Allport, 1937, p. 48). A psychophysical system is a readiness to act in a certain way, and it comprises a physiological and psychic component. Personality traits are regarded as the best psychophysical system to describe the personality of an individual (Allport, 1937).

Allport argues that all traits are individual and no trait can be observed in more than a single individual, i.e. they are all unique, but he says that if individuals could not be compared with each other, then the whole science of personality would be impossible. To rectify the

dilemma, Allport allows for all their ultimate differences, normal persons within a given cultural area tend to develop a limited number of roughly comparable modes of adjustment. The original endowment of most human beings, their stages of growth and the demands of their particular society are sufficiently standardised and comparable to lead to some basic modes of adjustment that are approximately the same from individual to individual. In short, people in different cultures or social sub-groups within society may exhibit behaviours that could be justifiably labelled and measured under the heading of common traits (Allport, 1937).

Cattell (1947) was one of the first researchers to develop a taxonomy for the classification of personality traits. His taxonomy consisted of 16 primary factors and eight second-order factors (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1992). Fiske (1971) reanalysed Cattell's results, but he was able to find confirmation for only five of the second-order factors. In a separate study, Norman (1967) obtained similar results to Fiske, and the scale names for the five factors that he identified became known as the Big Five, namely Extraversion, Emotional Stability, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience.

The “Big Five” personality structure model can be seen as the most significant progress in understanding personality (Allport & Odbert, 1936; John, Angleitner, & Ostendorf, 1988). This model has been proposed by many researchers (e.g. Goldberg, 1990; John, 1990; Norman, 1963) according to the lexical hypothesis of personality structure. Several scales and questionnaires measuring the Five Factor Model (FFM) have been established (Costa & McCrae, 1989; Goldberg, 1990; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) and widely applied in Western and other cultural backgrounds. In South Africa four studies have investigated the applicability of the model for South African population groups, but these studies produced conflicting results (Heaven & Pretorius, 1998; Heuchert, et al., 2000; John, 1990; Van Eeden & Prinsloo, 1997).

The FFM Model can only be applied where it comes from, that is, where the individuals use English as their native language because, as Piedmond (1998) indicated, “different cultures may emphasise certain qualities over others, or may not exhibit various characteristics that are apparent in other cultural contexts. Thus, word-based models [of personality] may lack of generalizability” (p. 22). Psychologists should explore the common characteristics of personality across cultures; however, they should also acknowledge the uniqueness of

different cultures (Maccoby, 2000; Triandis & Suh, 2002).

Berry (1969, 1989) distinguished two basic approaches in cross-cultural psychology. The *etic* approach assumes that methodologies and concepts developed in one culture are universally applicable to other cultures. On the other hand, the *emic* approach uses locally developed methodologies and concepts, which emphasise the examination of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the local culture and its members. The terms “etic” and “emic” were originally proposed by Pike (1967) to denote two different approaches to language and culture. The etic approach may provide a broad and unified framework to understand similarities and differences of a phenomenon across different cultures. The emic approach, on the other hand, may provide a perspective concerning a phenomenon that is highly relevant to members of a particular culture in terms of their attitudes and personality.

Van der Vijver and Leung (1997) proposed the adoption of a convergence approach in cross-cultural psychology. They considered indigenously derived measures to be maximally relevant for particular cultures. However, if culturally diverse instruments yield similar results, these results are likely to be universal. In the combined emic-etic approach, the measurement of culture-specific personality characteristics would provide within-culture relevance, whereas the measurement of universal personality characteristics would allow cross-cultural comparisons of similar constructs.

An example of an emic-etic approach is the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI), which was developed with the intent of providing a comprehensive personality inventory suited to the local needs while retaining the psychometric standards of established assessment measures (Cheung, Leung, Fan, Song, Zang, & Zang, 1996). A combined emic-etic approach was adopted to include both indigenous and universal personality constructs that would be relevant to describing person characteristics and predicting behaviours in the Chinese cultural context. Personality constructs were derived from a review of contemporary Chinese literature as well as research on Chinese personality and empirical surveys of everyday-life experiences (Cheung, et al., 1996).

The CPAI consisted of 22 normal personality scales, 12 clinical scales and three validity scales. Four factors were extracted from the normal personality scale: Dependability, Interpersonal Relatedness, Social Potency and Individualism. To examine how CPAI differed

from existing personality measures in the West, the CPAI factors were compared to the Five Factor Model. In a joint factor analysis between NEO-PI-R and the CPAI (Cheung, Leung, Zhang, Sun, Gan, Song, & Xie, 2001), it was found that three of the CPAI factors converged with four of the Big Five factors. However, none of NEO-PI-R facets loaded on the CPAI Interpersonal Relatedness factor. The Interpersonal Relatedness factor may be considered an indigenous factor. On the other hand, none of the CPAI scales loaded on the Openness factor of the NEO-PI-R. Thus, the Big Five Openness factor may be considered an etic factor imposed upon the Chinese culture.

Other active movements of indigenous psychology are found in India, the Philippines, Korea and Japan. Psychologists from these locations have identified unique personality constructs relevant to their cultural experiences that have been ignored in imported psychological theories (Cheung, Cheung, Wada, & Zhang, 2003). Examples include the Japanese concept of *amae* (sweet-indulgence); the Korean concept of *chong* (affection) (Kim, Park, & Park, 1999); and the concept of selflessness or selfless self in Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism (Ho, Peng, Lai, & Chang, 2001). In the field of psychotherapy, indigenous Japanese ways of thinking and behaving have raised Western interest in forms of “quiet therapies” (Reynolds, 1980), such as the *Morita* and *Naikan* therapies. Many of the indigenous personality constructs reflect the relational nature of human experience, which defines selfhood in a social and interpersonal context (Ho, et al., 2001).

### **Determining personality perspectives**

Allport (1937) considered personality characteristics/traits, due to their range and especially due to their pro-active nature, as the most suitable and useful psychophysical system to describe the personality of an individual (Meyer, et al., 1997). People describe the personality of individuals according to their central traits, which are those traits that are pervasive and outstanding. They are so dominant that there are few activities that cannot be traced directly or indirectly to their influence. No such trait can remain hidden for long; an individual is known by it, and may even become famous for it (Allport, 1937).

People often assume that certain behaviours and personality traits go together, for instance that talkative individuals are also sociable. This co-occurrence of expectancies concerning traits and behaviours are known as implicit personality theories (Werth & Förster, 2002).

This is the general expectations that we build about a person(s) after we get to know something of their central traits. According to Goldstein (1998), individuals make inferences about other people's personalities on the basis of little information. Such theories are implicit because they are often unconscious and are not formally stated, and moreover they are not tested.

### **Personality in Sesotho-speaking persons**

Sesotho is one of the 11 official languages in South Africa and people originated from the Basotho tribe, which consists of a number of groups, including the Kwenya, Khatla, Tlokwa, Taung and others who live both inside and outside Lesotho's borders. Today numerous Sesotho people live in major cities, and others are scattered over reserves and white-owned farms, mainly in the Free State. Although many Sothos live and work outside their country, their attachment to their local village and traditional culture is still strong (West, 1996).

Research regarding the personality of Sesotho-speaking South Africans is very limited and therefore the focus will be on the personality of black<sup>1</sup> Africans, with specific reference to the Sotho people where possible. With this in mind and in order to get an understanding of the personality of Sesotho-speaking South Africans, a few traditional approaches of black Africans will be discussed.

Sono (1994) states that Africans' thoughts proceed not dialectically but communally. Communalism or collective consciousness in African communities can be traced back over many centuries. Its pervasiveness originates from a particular kind of experience or living condition. In a traditional context, trying circumstances such as natural disasters, famine, tribal wars and starvation have physically and spiritually unified African groups or tribes. This communalism is also evident in the perspective of *Ubuntu*. According to West (1996), *Ubuntu (botho, human dignity)* is a figure of speech that describes the importance of group solidarity on issues that are pivotal to the survival of African communities, who as a consequence of poverty and deprivation have to survive through group care and not only individual self-reliance.

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<sup>1</sup> The term black was adopted to refer to indigenous African people because this term is commonly used in South Africa and internationally, both in public discourse and in scientific writings.

The cardinal belief of *Ubuntu* is that a person can only be a person through the help of others. The important values of *Ubuntu* are group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity. All and sundry know that charity begins at home. Respect is reciprocal irrespective of race, ethnicity, class, age and gender. *Ubuntu* requires one to respect others if one is to respect oneself.

In a modern context, circumstances such as deprivation, low income, unemployment, instability, lack of proper education and malnutrition contribute to activating collective consciousness in black Africans (Pretorius, Louwrens, & Motshegoa, 2004). Kotze (1993) pointed out that people with a collective consciousness define time socially and in terms of the immediate present. Time is viewed as something that is subordinate to people.

Traditional Africans' economic orientation was more socialistic than capitalistic. Van Rooy (1978, p. 90) makes the following statement about the attitude towards wealth that he found in his research among Sotho people: "The Africans themselves frown upon accumulation of wealth by an individual. To put one's money away in the bank, where the family or community cannot benefit from it, is regarded as stinginess and a great evil."

Van Rooy (1978) further stresses the point that an African man would traditionally rather invest in wives and children and cattle, which belong to the extended family, than any number of private types of investments. Real prosperity to him is not to possess much, but to control many.

Traditionally, among the living, the chief is the highest in the hierarchy of forces in African cultures. He is regarded as the representative of the ancestral spirits in the community of the living. He is also the guardian of the land and the traditions of the tribe. The chief is the pivotal point of the life-force of the tribe (Van Rooy, 1978; Mönnig, 1967).

Among most African people, women were traditionally responsible for cooking, gathering firewood, the water supply, cleaning and brewing beer, while men were involved in hunting, controlling cattle herds, building of cattle or sheep kraals and attending meetings at the chief's court. African cultures were characterised by extreme patriarchies and women were not afforded the same rights as men in community life (Mereotlhe, 1998). In modern society

women are being recognised and uplifted in the workplace (Pretorius, et al., 2004).

African people are traditionally socially open and can sometimes even be regarded as rowdy by Western-orientated people. It is socially acceptable and even correct for a group of African-orientated people who are happy to act accordingly and to laugh, talk loudly and even possibly dance out of cheerfulness. In the African culture, it is also believed that one must talk loudly to show that one is not gossiping (Pretorius, et al., 2004). According to Koopman (1991), African culture has traditionally been passed on by means of the spoken word. Knowledge and wisdom were transferred through oral art creations such as folklore, proverbs, idioms, riddles and praise poems. Therefore, African people will be inclined to reflect verbally as well as emotionally on people. It is rather a case of thinking and arguing aloud while reasoning out the case for themselves.

All African cultures have traditionally had great respect for older people and people in higher positions, and to treat them accordingly. For example, an inferior never greets a superior first, or in some strict traditional communities the inferior person's head may never be in a physically higher position than that of his or her superior. To the person from an African culture it is a form of luck to have many people at your side with whom to spend your time. To have children or other relatives who can care for people in their old age and for them to look after the grandchildren are important. Grandparents, especially grandmothers, play an important role in the education of children in a traditional society. They are the people responsible for the transference of cultural values and beliefs to younger generations. They have been taught to respect their own values and cultural heritage. They are also very well disciplined (Pretorius, et al., 2004).

According to West (1996), the family is the dominant unit in Sotho culture, and respect for the elder generation is important. Sotho culture is centred around village life, and most traditions and festivals relate to local village life and the seasons of the year. With regard to religion, Gill (1993) found the Sesotho people were very religious. Traditionally in the Southern Sotho people no high god enjoyed the allegiance of the people. Rather, the family ancestors as a corporate reality, often known by name, were the focus of religious feelings, be it adoration and thanksgiving, or fear and dread. In a modern context, millions of Africans have adopted a kind of compromise between some traditional beliefs and Western values (Pretorius, et al., 2004).

According to Pretorius, et al. (2004), it is of the utmost importance that we should be aware of the fact that Africans are currently in a phase of transition from a traditional to a more Westernised existence. This acculturation does not necessarily imply development from a lower to a higher level, nor does it mean that the modern existence is better than the traditional one. It is just important to know that most Africans are somewhere on the continuum between the two ways of existence.

## **STUDY AIM**

The aim of this study was to investigate the implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking South Africans.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

Qualitative research, with an interview as the data-gathering technique, was used to reach the objectives of this research. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), qualitative research attempts to describe and understand human behaviour, rather than explain it. Qualitative research does not rely on the use of numbers or measurements like quantitative research, but is naturalistic, participatory and interpretive (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The emphasis is on the social context for understanding the social world, therefore qualitative researchers argue that the meaning of a social action or statement depends in an important way on the context in which it appears. Qualitative researchers are more concerned with giving a candid portrayal of social life that is true to the experiences of the people being studied (Neuman, 2001). In qualitative research an unobtrusive observer is used to make passive observations and avoid manipulating or biasing participants in any way (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

### **Participants**

The study population consisted of 120 Sesotho-speaking South Africans from the Free State Province ( $N = 120$ ). The stratified sampling method has been used, by means of which the Sesotho-speaking population were divided into different sections (strata) according to age,



gender and socio-economic status. Specific individuals were drawn from these strata to ensure representatives. Purposive sampling uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind (Neuman, 2001). It is impossible to list all the Sesotho-speaking individuals in South Africa and then draw a random sample from this list; instead, the researcher identified specific individuals to interview. The characteristics of the participants are reported in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Compilation of the Study Population (N=120)*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	74	61,7
	Female	46	38,3
Race	African	120	100
Language	Sesotho	120	100
Age	18–35 years	74	61,7
	Older than 35 years	46	38,3
Province	Free State	120	100
Economic activity	Employed	31	25,8
	Unemployed	49	40,8
	Not economically active (students, homemakers, disabled, those too ill to work, anyone seeking work)	40	33,4

A total of 61,7% of the participants consisted of males. All the respondents were Sesotho-speaking and lived in the Free State Province. A total of 31 respondents were employed, 49 were unemployed and 40 were not economically active. The majority of respondents fell into the 18–35 years age group (61,7%), with the minority (38,3%) of respondents older than 35 years.

### **Data collection**

Information was gathered through a personal interview with the participants. The interview is a “speech event”, closer to a personal conversation than the stimulus/response interview found in survey research. The interviewer summarises, reflects, stimulates and asks for clarification. Detailed data is gathered through open-ended questions that provide direct

quotations. The interviewer is an integral part of the investigation. This differs from quantitative research, which attempts to gather data by objective methods to provide information about relations, comparisons and predictions, and attempts to remove the investigator from the investigation (Neuman, 2001).

A Sesotho-speaking fieldworker was recruited and conducted the 120 interviews in Sesotho. All interviews were recorded and field notes were taken during the interview to ensure all information was captured. The interviews were conducted in such a way and at such a length as to enable the participants to adjust to the interviewer and the recording device.

The participants were asked the following questions:

- Biographical information (including name, province, home municipality, race, gender, age, language, highest qualification and economic activity).
- Descriptions of own personality, best friend of the same sex, best friend of the opposite sex, a parent, eldest child or brother/sister, grandparent, colleague or friend from another ethnic group or a neighbour, a person totally opposite to themselves, a teacher or person from their village/town whom they like very much, a teacher or person from their town whom they do not like very much.

The reliability of qualitative research is the result of the consistency and neutrality of the research (Krefting, 1991). Reliability was ensured by explaining the nature of the study to the participants and highlighting the importance of honest answers. The interviewer also maintained a positive, unconditional attitude throughout the interviews to ensure that her presence did not affect the process. Participants were purposely selected from different sections in the Sesotho-speaking population to ensure that the study population was representative. The interviewer took field notes during the interview and all interviews were recorded to ensure accurate recall of information.

The validity of qualitative research is the result of its credibility and transferability (Krefting, 1991). To ensure credibility, the interviewer spends sufficient time with the participants to establish rapport and to increase the willingness of the participants to share information. Interviews were conducted in Sesotho to enable the participants to express themselves freely

and professional translators translated the Sesotho responses into English to ensure minimum information lost. Questions were rephrased and repeated to ensure participants understood them and the interviewer asked participants to clarify unclear responses, without biasing them.

The data obtained in this research were compared with the available literature on the personality of Sesotho-speaking individuals to ensure that interpretations made were reliable and valid.

Participation in this study was voluntary, no-one were coerced into participating and all participants were informed of the purpose of the study beforehand. All participants' responses were treated confidentially. The information that is publicised does not link specific individuals to specific responses.

### **Data analysis**

A total of 4873 personality descriptors were obtained through the interviews. These responses were analysed, interpreted and reduced by means of content analysis. Content analysis is a technique used to examine information or content. In content analysis the researcher first identifies a body of material to analyse (e.g. pictures, interviews, newspapers, etc.) and then creates a system for recording specific aspects of it (Neuman, 2001).

The researcher first read all the different responses to get a sense of the whole. The next step was to reduce responses by removing all the superfluous words in the descriptions, for example the description: A person who looks down onto other people was reduced to: who looks down on others.

All descriptions were then interpreted. Each description were categorised into a personality characteristic most applicable to the description given. Interpretations were made on grounds of the social context of the description, which is the reason why similar descriptions may fall into different categories, for example when a young child was described as "listening" it was interpreted as obedience and was placed under the category of submissiveness, while the description of "a good listener" for a parent, friend or colleague was interpreted as someone who listens to your problems, which was then categorized under "understanding". A total of

196 personality descriptors were discarded because they were not personality descriptions and included terms describing physical appearance and terms that were evaluative. After all of this, the categories were then sorted alphabetically.

The last step in the data analysis process was to reduce the number of categories by grouping categories together where there was a large overlap in meaning. In the end, a total of 94 distinct personality characteristics were obtained, some of them homogeneous, while others were heterogeneous. Each characteristic included a number of related descriptions.

## **RESULTS**

A list of the 94 distinct personality characteristics, together with their descriptions, is presented in Table 2. In the first and third columns the personality characteristics are given in alphabetical order. The second and fourth columns consist of the different personality descriptors, obtained from the interviews, which led to the labelling of the different personality characteristics.

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Accepting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- accepts people the way they are</li> <li>- accepting person who loves people and accepts them as they are</li> </ul>	Irritable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- annoying</li> <li>- irritating</li> <li>- easily irritated</li> </ul>
Admonitory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves to reprimand children</li> <li>- loves to punish learners</li> <li>- would reprimand me and show me the way</li> <li>- loves giving us a hiding</li> </ul>	Jealous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- jealous person</li> </ul>
Aesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes nice things</li> </ul>	Judgmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- judgmental</li> <li>- judges people</li> </ul>
Appreciative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- appreciates me the way I am</li> <li>- appreciates people whom she loves</li> <li>- appreciative</li> </ul>	Kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- kind</li> <li>- soft-hearted</li> </ul>
Approachable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- approachable, I could speak to her about anything</li> <li>- learners could not ask her questions</li> </ul>	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- guides the learners and teachers</li> <li>- likes to be a leader</li> <li>- strong person</li> </ul>
Argumentative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes fighting and arguments</li> <li>- who quarrels a lot</li> <li>- never had an argument</li> <li>- argumentative</li> </ul>	Loving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves learners</li> <li>- warm heart</li> <li>- loving</li> <li>- sweet</li> <li>- love each other</li> <li>- cold-hearted person</li> <li>- does not love that easily</li> <li>- does not have any feelings</li> <li>- loves children</li> <li>- loved by everyone</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Arrogant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a person who look down on others</li> <li>- a person who doesn't look down on others</li> <li>- humble</li> <li>- sees himself as a better person than others</li> <li>- thinks he is better that all other people</li> <li>- doesn't think he is better than other people</li> <li>- thinks he knows a lot</li> <li>- acted like he was the principal</li> <li>- things that he did was best</li> </ul>	Mannered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves good manners</li> <li>- does not like kids with bad manners</li> <li>- polite</li> </ul>
Assertive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stand up for himself</li> <li>- doesn't take crap from anybody</li> <li>- has a standpoint</li> <li>- not easily intimidated</li> <li>- fights for the rights of others</li> </ul>	Materialistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves possessions more than his children</li> </ul>
Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- always there for me</li> <li>- has time for learners</li> </ul>	Mature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is mature</li> <li>- is childish</li> </ul>
Caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- caring</li> <li>- cares for children</li> <li>- looked after me</li> <li>- can share my problems with him</li> <li>- has a good heart</li> <li>- warm heart</li> <li>- takes care of us</li> <li>- has a big heart</li> <li>- does not want children to be overworked</li> <li>- worked for the community</li> </ul>	Mean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wishes bad things upon others</li> <li>- makes fun of others</li> <li>- rude</li> <li>- takes advantage of someone's kindness</li> <li>- cruel</li> <li>- enjoys to see others hurt</li> <li>- happy when others makes mistakes</li> <li>- used hurtful words to me</li> <li>- who sees bad in others</li> <li>- did not speak nicely to others</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive Terms</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive Terms</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
Caring (continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- he is comforting</li> <li>- he is careless</li> </ul>	Mean (continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- did not feel sorry for others</li> <li>- who does bad things to others</li> </ul>
Cheerful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves smiling and laughing</li> <li>- always happy</li> </ul>	Merciful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a merciful person</li> <li>- has mercy</li> </ul>
Compassionate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- feels pity or feels sorry for others</li> <li>- listens to my problems</li> <li>- who does not feel sorry for others</li> <li>- whenever I have problems I go to her</li> <li>- can solve other people's problems</li> </ul>	Moralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a good man/woman/person</li> <li>- does not like bad things</li> <li>- encourages good things</li> <li>- does not encourage bad things</li> <li>- likes to preach</li> <li>- does not smoke or drink</li> <li>- can show the right way</li> <li>- naughty</li> <li>- beautiful person – inside</li> <li>- not a good person</li> </ul>
Conformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not like changes</li> <li>- follow the rules set in the house</li> <li>- does whatever he likes</li> <li>- flexible</li> <li>- weird</li> </ul>	Negative behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not like learners</li> <li>- did not know his place</li> <li>- abuses girls psychologically</li> <li>- destroying their lives</li> <li>- has no shame</li> <li>- shouted at/ beat the learners</li> <li>- used obscene language</li> <li>- behaved badly</li> <li>- always complaining</li> <li>- abuses others</li> <li>- like a monster</li> <li>- does not listen to others</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Conservative	- doesn't understand modern things	Negative behaviour (continue)	- drinks alcohol during working hours - swearing - who is always in trouble - not satisfied with anything
Controlling	- behaves accordingly - if he wants something he wants it now - wants you to pay attention all the time - likes/does not like disorder - likes cleanliness - formulate rules and everyone should follow them - forces you to do things - neat person - always late/on time - bossy - silly person	Noisiness	- noisy/ doesn't like noise - doesn't like noise
Co-operative	- co-operative	Nosy	- likes matters that does not concern him/her - puts his/her nose in others' business - nosy - likes other people's business
Courageous	- a brave person - a coward	Open-handed	- likes sharing - likes giving - who does not share with others
Cruel	- a cruel person - not a cruel person	Openness	- he/she is open - when she has problems, she does not feel free to talk about them - keeps things inside



Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves culture and tradition</li> <li>- wants to learn more about culture</li> <li>- proud of his language</li> <li>- not crazy about culture</li> </ul>	Optimistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- positive</li> <li>- always ready for action</li> </ul>
Decisive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- makes a decision</li> <li>- choose between situations</li> </ul>	Patience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves to take things slowly</li> <li>- patient</li> <li>- impatient</li> </ul>
Dependable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am dependent on him</li> <li>- always there when you need him</li> </ul>	Perfectionism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- like things to be done in the correct manner</li> <li>- does not like mistakes</li> <li>- loves accuracy</li> <li>- makes sure the job is done properly</li> </ul>
Discriminating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a person who discriminates</li> <li>- does not discriminate</li> <li>- takes sides</li> <li>- loves all her children the same</li> <li>- treat people the same</li> </ul>	Pleasure-seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves alcohol/ beer</li> <li>- loved delicious food</li> <li>- who smokes</li> <li>- who likes nice times</li> <li>- shows me the good things in life</li> <li>- enjoys life</li> </ul>
Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes to see learners succeed in life</li> <li>- has determination</li> <li>- hard worker</li> <li>- does not like sitting</li> <li>- lazy</li> <li>- loves studies/working</li> <li>- person who has a purpose in life</li> </ul>	Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tells you when you do something good</li> <li>- likes to be praised</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive Terms</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive Terms</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
Drive (continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- diligent</li> <li>- loves people to set goals for themselves</li> <li>- knows what he/she wants</li> <li>- determined</li> <li>- does not like her job</li> <li>- who does not have dreams</li> </ul>	Predictable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- you would not know what my next step would be</li> </ul>
Encouraging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- encourage us</li> <li>- a motivator</li> <li>- discourages me</li> </ul>	Pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a person who has pride</li> <li>- Proud of him-/herself</li> <li>- has dignity</li> </ul>
Energetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- active</li> <li>- energetic</li> <li>- lively</li> </ul>	Relationship orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- did not like him</li> <li>- good thing to have him/her in my life</li> <li>- satisfies others</li> <li>- wishes good things for others</li> <li>- wanted others to succeed</li> <li>- would never turn his back on you</li> <li>- thinks about other people</li> <li>- good to everyone</li> <li>- cares about other people's feelings</li> <li>- does not like to hurt other people</li> <li>- talks nicely to other people</li> <li>- did not get along with other people</li> <li>- true friendship</li> <li>- makes me happy</li> <li>- builds up relationships</li> <li>- feels sorry for other people</li> <li>- did not have good co-operation with people</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Expressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- could express his feelings</li> <li>- say whatever is on my chest</li> <li>- would not say what was on his chest</li> </ul>	Relationship orientation (continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- who does not get along with other people</li> <li>- has interest in others</li> <li>- gets along/does not get along with others easily</li> </ul>
Extroversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes to be among people</li> <li>- people person</li> <li>- always talking</li> <li>- likes going around visiting</li> <li>- likes going out</li> <li>- talks too much</li> <li>- has many friends</li> <li>- loves socialising</li> <li>- well known</li> <li>- enjoys meeting people</li> <li>- outgoing</li> </ul>	Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes going to church</li> <li>- religious/not religious</li> <li>- believer in God</li> <li>- fears God</li> <li>- loves prayer</li> </ul>
Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not beat learners for no apparent reason</li> <li>- gives appropriate marks</li> <li>- unfair</li> </ul>	Resourceful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gives good advice</li> <li>- shares her knowledge</li> </ul>
Family orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes his children to be educated</li> <li>- cares about his family</li> <li>- likes/loves her/his family</li> <li>- a family person</li> <li>- good parent</li> <li>- likes being among family members</li> <li>- does not take care of her children</li> </ul>	Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- honourable person in the community</li> <li>- respected by people</li> <li>- respectful</li> <li>- a person who does not respect other people</li> <li>- disrespectful person</li> <li>- you could look up to him/her</li> <li>- loved respect</li> <li>- taught learners respect</li> <li>- does not like a person who does not respect him-/herself</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- who is feared by others</li> <li>- afraid of nothing</li> <li>- who is scared</li> </ul>	Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- put important things first</li> <li>- irresponsible</li> <li>- responsible</li> <li>- taught us responsibility</li> </ul>
Friendliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- friendly person</li> <li>- unfriendly</li> </ul>	Rude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- he/she is rude</li> <li>- not that rude</li> </ul>
Gossip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- talks behind my back</li> <li>- talks about other people's business</li> <li>- who always/never gossips</li> <li>- thinks twice about gossiping</li> <li>- says bad things about others</li> <li>- did not say bad things about others</li> </ul>	Sadness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sometimes sad</li> <li>- always unhappy</li> <li>- does not laugh easily</li> </ul>
Greedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- greedy person</li> </ul>	Self- acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- self-confidence</li> <li>- believes in him-/herself</li> <li>- who doesn't appreciate and love himself</li> <li>- accepts her mistakes</li> <li>- has self-respect</li> <li>- who doesn't accept his mistakes</li> </ul>
Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- forgiving</li> <li>- caused harmony in the classroom</li> <li>- likes/doesn't like trouble</li> <li>- who hates me</li> <li>- problematic/difficult</li> <li>- always on good terms</li> <li>- does not like to anger people</li> <li>- peaceful/not peaceful</li> </ul>	Selfish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- thinks all good things are meant for her</li> <li>- only thinks about him-/herself</li> <li>- thinks what she says is more important than what anyone else says</li> <li>- considerate to self only</li> <li>- self-centred/selfish</li> <li>- had time for himself only</li> <li>- does not think of other people</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- always there to help</li> <li>- assists others</li> <li>- loves helping others</li> <li>- willing to help</li> <li>- likes helping those in need</li> </ul>	Serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- serious about life</li> <li>- doesn't like funny things</li> <li>- serious person</li> <li>- doesn't like nonsense</li> <li>- who does not take life seriously</li> <li>- who talks nonsense</li> </ul>
Hobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves singing/sport/cooking/knitting/reading/working in the garden/soccer/ music</li> </ul>	Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- loves women/men</li> <li>- playing with men</li> <li>- he is a chick</li> <li>- he is a true man</li> <li>- he is afraid of girls</li> </ul>
Honesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- straight/smooth talking</li> <li>- spreads rumours</li> <li>- thief</li> <li>- snake</li> <li>- hides his personality</li> <li>- deceitful</li> <li>- does not practise what he preach</li> <li>- will never misguide you</li> <li>- does thuggish deeds</li> <li>- liar</li> <li>- dishonest person</li> <li>- speaks his mind</li> <li>- who pretends</li> <li>- full of tricks</li> <li>- tells the truth</li> </ul>	Shy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shy person</li> <li>- not shy</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Honesty (continue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- honest</li> <li>- pretender</li> <li>- does not like underhanded dealings</li> <li>- person who does things behind my back</li> <li>- talks openly</li> <li>- secretive</li> </ul>	Stingy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stingy when it comes to marks</li> <li>- loves delicious food, but doesn't want to pay for it</li> <li>- stingy person</li> </ul>
Humour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes jokes</li> <li>- likes cracking jokes</li> <li>- funny</li> </ul>	Strict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is strict</li> <li>- is not strict</li> <li>- strict, does not take no for an answer</li> </ul>
Imaginative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- can foresee things</li> <li>- has a good imagination</li> <li>- loves to explain dreams</li> </ul>	Stubborn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- he/she is stubborn</li> <li>- he/she is not stubborn</li> <li>- he made learners stubborn</li> </ul>
Impulsive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- says/does things without thinking</li> </ul>	Submissiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listens when you talk to him/her</li> <li>- she loves children who listen</li> <li>- she listens to instructions</li> <li>- he/she liked to be listened to</li> <li>- he/she does not listen</li> <li>- a person that does not do what he is told to do</li> <li>- he/she is cheeky</li> </ul>
Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does things him-/herself</li> <li>- likes people to look after themselves</li> <li>- wants people to do everything for him</li> <li>- can't think for himself</li> <li>- loves people to give him/her advice</li> <li>- talks to others before making a decision</li> <li>- an independent person</li> </ul>	Substance abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- he/she drinks a lot</li> <li>- a person who abuses drugs and alcohol</li> <li>- she is always drunk</li> <li>- a drunkard</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

<b>Personality Descriptive Terms</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Personality Descriptive Terms</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
Inferiority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hopeless about everything</li> <li>- allows people to do what they want with him</li> <li>- always in the back seat</li> <li>- pitiful</li> </ul>	Supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- my pillar of strengths</li> <li>- he/she is supportive</li> </ul>
Inquisitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- likes asking questions</li> </ul>	Suspicious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- he is always after me</li> <li>- watching my every move</li> </ul>
Intellect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clever</li> <li>- thinks</li> <li>- does not think</li> <li>- intelligent</li> <li>- clever</li> <li>- slow</li> </ul>	Talented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- plays with his talent</li> </ul>
Interfere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- who likes to interfere in matters that do not concern him/her</li> <li>- interfering</li> <li>- hinders others</li> </ul>	Temper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an emotionally unstable person</li> <li>- he/she is gentle</li> <li>- gets angry quickly</li> <li>- gets upset easily</li> <li>- she does not stay angry for a long time</li> <li>- does not get angry</li> <li>- a short-tempered person</li> <li>- a very easy person</li> <li>- an uptight person</li> <li>- does not like to be provoked</li> <li>- soft-spoken person</li> <li>- he/she is relaxed</li> <li>- he/she is moody</li> <li>- not an easy person</li> </ul>

Table 2

*List of Personality Descriptive Terms (continued)*

Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions	Personality Descriptive Terms	Descriptions
Intimidating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- was always intimidated by him</li> <li>- intimidates people</li> </ul>	Trustworthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- you can trust in him</li> <li>- good and trustworthy</li> <li>- if he promises to do something, he doesn't disappoint</li> <li>- a person who is not trustworthy</li> <li>- I trust him/her</li> <li>- she/he is not trustful</li> <li>- he could keep other people's problems to himself, he would not tell others</li> </ul>
Introversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not like other people</li> <li>- likes to be alone</li> <li>- quiet person</li> <li>- like staying at home</li> <li>- sometimes afraid of people</li> </ul>	Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- he would not explain it properly</li> <li>- he likes clarity</li> <li>- he likes people to listen to what they say when they talk to him</li> <li>- if you do not understand you are welcome to ask her</li> <li>- he/she is understanding</li> <li>- sometimes I do not understand him/her</li> <li>- he did not listen to reasoning</li> <li>- she understood our feelings</li> <li>- he/she listens</li> <li>- he/she is someone you can talk too</li> <li>- she could see when I had problems</li> <li>- he/she knows where I come from</li> <li>- we talked about many things that affect my life</li> <li>- I don't like a person who is not understanding</li> <li>- he and his learners did not have a good understanding</li> <li>- she understands me even more than my own mother</li> <li>- he/she is a good/ not a good listener</li> <li>- he does not like being asked questions</li> </ul>



In Table 3 the 94 personality characteristics obtained from the interviews, are divided into seven categories, namely sociability, interpersonal relatedness, emotionality, meanness, conscientiousness, dominance and other.

The following personality characteristics that manifested during the interviews labelled as follows:

- **Sociability.** This includes energetic, extroversion, expressiveness, independence, introversion, noisiness and shyness and refers to the social nature of individuals and the way they behave when in the presence of others. It also refers to the degree to which a person can tolerate sensory stimulation from people and situations.
- **Interpersonal Relatedness.** This includes accepting, appreciative, approachable, availability, caring, compassionate, co-operative, encouraging, fairness, family oriented, friendliness, harmony, helpfulness, honesty, humour, kindness, lovingness, mercifulness, moralism, open-handedness, openness, patience, praise, relationship orientation, resourcefulness, respectfulness, supportiveness, trustworthiness and understanding and refers to the positive way people react towards others. This category contains characteristics that are related to positive interpersonal relationships.
- **Emotionality.** This includes argumentativeness, cheerfulness, fearfulness, irritability, impulsive, inferiority, optimism, sadness, self-acceptance and temper and refers to the affects that are experienced by Sesothos.
- **Meanness.** Characteristics include admonitory, aesthetic, cruelty, discriminating, gossip, greedy, intimidating, interfere, judgmental, jealousy, materialistic, meanness, negative behaviour, nosy, pleasure seeking, rudeness, stubbornness, strictness, selfishness, stinginess, substance abuse and suspicious. These characteristics describe the negative way Sesothos interact with each other. These characteristics can be seen as negative or harmful for interpersonal relationships.
- **Conscientiousness.** This includes drive, dependable, inquisitive, intellect, leadership, mature, perfectionism, seriousness, responsibility and talented and refers to the way we

push towards goals at work. This also includes the way people control themselves when handling tasks or assignments.

- Dominance. The characteristics include assertiveness, arrogance, controlling, conformity, decisiveness, pride and submissiveness and refer to the tendency to rise in interpersonal relationships and to control other.
- Other. Characteristics that did not fall into any of the above-mentioned categories are conservative, courage, cultural, hobby, imaginative, mannered, predictable, religious and sexuality.

It became apparent in Table 3, that Sesotho-speaking South Africans put great emphasis on the way they interact with each other. The majority of characteristics gained in the interviews seemed to be about the interpersonal relatedness or meanness categories, the first describing positive interaction and the latter negative ways to interact with others. When looking at the conscientiousness category it can be said that Sesotho-speaking South Africans have a great sense of duty and strive towards achieving their goals. They are also emotional and a variety of emotions and moods were mentioned.

Table 3  
Categorization of the Sesoiho Personality Characteristics

Sociability	Interpersonal Relatedness	Emotionality	Meanness	Conscientiousness	Dominance	Other
Energetic	Accepting	Argumentativeness	Admonitory	Drive	Assertiveness	Conservative
Extroversion	Appreciative	Cheerfulness	Aesthetic	Dependable	Arrogance	Courage
Expressiveness	Approachable	Fearfulness	Cruelty	Inquisitive	Controlling	Cultural
Independence	Availability	Irritability	Discriminating	Intellect	Conformity	Hobby
Introversion	Caring	Impulsive	Gossip	Leadership	Decisiveness	Imaginative
Notiness	Compassionate	Inferiority	Greedy	Mature	Pride	Mannered
Shyness	Co-operative	Optimism	Intimidating	Perfectionism	Submissiveness	Predictable
	Encouraging	Sadness	Interfere	Seriousness		
Fairness	Self-acceptance	Judgemental	Responsibility		Religious	
Family-oriented	Temper	Jealousy	Talented		Sexuality	
Friendliness			Materialistic			
Harmony			Meanness			
Helpfulness			Negative behaviour			
Honesty			Nosy			
Humour			Pleasure seeking			
Kindness			Rudeness			
Lovingness			Subbornness			
Mercifulness			Strictness			
Moralism			Selfishness			
Open-handedness			Stinginess			
Openness			Substance abuse			
Patience			Suspicious			
Praise						
Relationship orientation						
Resourcefulness						
Respectfulness						
Supportiveness						
Trustworthiness						
Understanding						

## DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the implicit perspectives of personality of Sesotho-speaking individuals. The personality characteristic extroversion received the majority of personality descriptors (402), followed by loving (319) and understanding (260) in the third place. The personality characteristics moralism, caring, drive and honesty had more than 150 descriptors each, while the characteristics accepting, available, conservative, co-operative, courage, decisive, energetic, expressive, imaginative, inquisitive, intimidating, judgmental, materialistic, mature, optimistic, predictable, suspicious and talented received five or less descriptors each.

The collectivistic nature of Sothos was apparent from the literature (Kotze, 1993; Pretorius, et al., Sono, 1994; West, 1996), as well as from the study. The personality characteristics extroversion, relationship orientation and family orientation each received between 70 and 402 descriptions, which clearly indicate the importance of relationships to Sesothos. Characteristics such as independence and introversion were also mentioned which may be due to the fact that Sesotho-speaking persons, like other Africans, are in a transitional phase and are adopting certain Western characteristics.

The majority of personality descriptors obtained from participants in the study clearly indicate that the Sesotho-speaking individuals are willing to become involved in the feelings, problems and welfare of others. Sesotho-speaking persons are socially active and are sympathetic, caring and tolerant towards others. Personality characteristics that emerged that are indicative of this are caring, compassionate, co-operativeness, discriminating, friendliness, harmony, helpfulness, kindness, loving, mercifulness, open-handedness, supportiveness, understanding, encouraging and fairness, while characteristics such as gossip, nosy, discriminating, judgemental, selfish, stingy, greedy, suspicious, cruelty and jealousy were used to describe someone that the interviewee did not like.

Pretorius, et al. (2004) stated the importance of respect towards others, especially elders, in the Sesotho community. This phenomenon was also found in the study, where 74 personality descriptors relating to respect surfaced. The characteristics openness, noisiness and expressiveness emerged in the study, and this correlates with the findings of Pretorius, et al. (2004) that African people are traditional socially open and can sometimes even be regarded

as rowdy. Religion also plays an important role in the Sesotho community (Gill, 1993) and during the present study 71 personality descriptors related to religion surfaced.

A lot of personality descriptors related to emotionality surfaced in the study, such as sadness, cheerfulness, impulsiveness, argumentative, inferiority, fearfulness, optimism, self-acceptance, temper and irritability. These characteristics are indicative of the important role that emotions play in the Sesotho community. According to the study, Sesothos can be regarded as conscientious, with characteristics such as drive, perfectionism, dependable, inquisitive, intellect, leadership, mature, seriousness, responsibility and talented, that were used frequently to describe others. Originally, the Sesothos lived in tribes, with one person regarded as the chief or leader (Van Rooy, 1978), this phenomenon can be seen with descriptors related to dominance such as submissiveness, controlling, pride, assertiveness, arrogance, decisiveness and conformity.

In a comparison between the Sesotho-speakers' personality perspectives and the Five Factor Model (FFM) (Costa & McCrae, 1989) it was found that the Extraversion dimension of the FFM correlates with the characteristics extroversion, introversion, assertiveness, energetic, optimism and independence, and that the Conscientiousness dimension of the FFM correlates with characteristics such as drive, dependability, talented, perfectionism, strictness and controlling. Personality descriptors related to the characteristics fear, inferiority, sadness, argumentativeness and temper can fall under the dimension of Neuroticism, while characteristics such as kindness, helpfulness, selfishness, co-operativeness, stubbornness and arrogance fit into the Agreeableness dimension of the FFM. On the other hand very few characteristics among Sesotho-speaking individuals could be found for the Openness to experience dimension, and it was also found that the FFM does not cover the importance of family and other relationships in the Sotho culture, there is no provision for characteristics such as family orientation, relationship orientation, honesty, harmony, understanding, loving, mercifulness, respectfulness, approachable, compassionate, friendliness and moralism. Other important characteristics in Sesotho-speaking individuals that are not covered in the FFM are reflected in the terms admonitory, discriminating, fair, judgemental, humour, religion, resourceful and submissiveness.

The personality characteristics of the Sesotho-speaking individuals correspond with 17 of the 22 personality scales of the CPAI. The 17 scales include: practical mindedness, emotionality,

responsibility, inferiority versus self-acceptance, optimism versus pessimism, meticulousness, family orientation, harmony, *Ren Qing* orientation, flexibility, thriftiness extravagance, leadership, introversion versus extroversion and self- versus social orientation. However, no personality descriptors match the external versus internal control, modernization, face, logical versus affective orientation and defensiveness mentality scales of the CPAI. Important characteristics that were not covered in the CPAI include: admonitory, submissiveness, discriminating, fair, judgmental, humour, resourceful, strict and religious. The study supports the findings of Cheung and colleagues that the interpersonal relatedness factor of the CPAI, which reflects a strong orientation toward instrumental relationships, emphasis on occupying one's proper place and engaging in appropriate action, avoidance of internal, external and interpersonal conflict and adherence to tradition and norms are particularly important in Chinese and other collectivistic cultures (Cheung, et al., 2003).

Important personality characteristics that emerged from the study but do not correlate with the FFM or the CPAI include are reflected in the following terms: admonitory, resourceful, religion, humour, fair, discriminating and judgmental. These characteristics may be considered indigenous characteristics of the Sotho culture. A possible reason for the importance of the characteristics fair, discriminating and judgmental could be due to South Africa's political history and the oppression of black Africans during the "apartheid" years.

There are limitations to this study that should be highlighted. First, the study population was limited to members of the Sotho culture in the Free State Province, which implies that the results may not be representative of all Sesotho-speaking South Africans. On the other hand the focus of the study was to explore and describe the personality characteristics by individuals and not to generalise the results to Sesotho speaking persons in the whole South Africa. Second, it is possible that some meaning of the personality descriptive terms was lost between the initial interviews and the final reporting of these characteristics. However, only fieldworkers who can speak Sesotho was employed to conduct the interviews. Furthermore, professional translators were used to check the quality of the data and translations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For future research it is recommended that a more representative sample of the Sotho culture be used, which could include Sesotho-speaking individuals from other provinces in South

Africa as well as from Lesotho, from where Sothos originate. The study population could also include even more sections of the population (e.g. urban versus rural representation).

Future researchers should regroup the 95 personality characteristics to form fewer, broader characteristics, which could be grouped into even fewer personality constructs. It is also recommended that a quantitative approach then be used to verify the items in 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.

#### **Author's Note**

The material described in this article is based upon work supported by the National Research Foundation (Grant number 2053344).

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## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter conclusions drawn regarding the results of the empirical study are given, limitations are pointed out and recommendations for future research are made.

#### 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

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

- **The problems surrounding personality measurement for the South African context.** In the last decade the multicultural nature of populations has become more prominent in many countries (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). However, there are very few countries in which this is more visible than in South Africa. The study by Meiring, Van de Vijver, Rothmann, and Barrick (2005) clearly demonstrated that psychological instruments imported from abroad could have limited suitability for South Africa. Similarly, the study by Taylor and Boeyens (1991) showed that even an instrument that was developed specifically for South Africa (the South African Personality Questionnaire) showed shortcomings in various items. There has been a pressing societal need to develop more culture-sensitive psychological instruments since the first democratic elections in 1994. South Africa has a new constitution and stronger demands for the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests and the onus of proof has now shifted to psychologists using these instruments, who have to indicate that they comply with the demands (Van de Vijver & Rothmann, 2004). Currently, in South Africa it seems that there is virtually no personality test that has been shown to be adequate for the multicultural and multilingual South African context. Hence there is a growing need for the development of a culturally appropriate personality test.
- **Conceptualisation of personality.** Personality theories can be roughly classified into five general perspectives, namely: the psychodynamic approach, the learning

approach, the humanistic approach, the cognitive approach and the biological approach. All these theories differ in their assumption about human behaviour. These personality theories can be divided into two major categories, namely descriptive or causative theories. Descriptive theories describe personality in terms of characteristics, while causative theories try to account for how personality traits are acquired (Derlega, Winstead, & Jones, 2005).

The focus of this study was on descriptive (trait) theories. Allport can be seen as the father of trait theories, and he defined personality as the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment (Allport, 1937). Personality traits are regarded as the best psychophysical system to describe the personality of an individual.

- **The different approaches to personality measurements.** One of the first researchers to develop a taxonomy for the classification of personality traits was Cattell (1947), whose taxonomy consisted of sixteen primary factors and eight second-order factors (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1992). Fiske (1971) and Norman (1967) reanalysed Cattell's results, but only found confirmation for five of the second-order factors, these factors became known as the Big Five. Several scales and questionnaires measuring the Big Five have been established (Costa & McCrae, 1989; Goldberg, 1990; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) and widely applied in Western and other countries.

Despite widespread use across the globe of measuring instruments to assess the five-factor model, Cheung and Leung (1998), Cheung, et al. (2001), Lather and Leibowitz-Levy (2003) and Triandis and Suh (2002) cautioned that claims of the universality of the Big Five personality factors are premature. According to Cheung, Leung, Fan, Song, Zhang, and Zhang (1996) the biggest problem in cross-cultural personality assessment is the failure to address the issue of the omission of important emic (culture-specific) constructs that are indigenous to a particular country. This was the rationale for the development of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI). The aim is to provide an instrument that is relevant to the Chinese people. The CPAI consisted of 22 normal personality scales, 12 clinically scales and three validity scales (Cheung, et al., 1996). Psychologists from India, the Philippines, Korea

and Japan also identified unique personality constructs relevant to their cultural experiences that have been ignored in imported psychological theories (Cheung, Cheung, Wada, & Zhang, 2003).

- **Different perspectives of personality.** According to Allport (1937) the best way to describe someone's personality is through his/her personality traits/characteristics. Everyone possesses certain central traits, which are those traits that are outstanding and influence most of a person's behaviour. When asking someone to describe a person, he/she will describe that person according to their central traits (Allport, 1937).

People often assume that certain personality characteristics/traits go together, which assumption is referred to as implicit personality theories (Werth & Förster, 2002). These implicit personality theories are unconscious and are not formally stated, but they help us understand individuals after we have come to know something about their central traits (Goldstein, 1998).

One way to determine the personality perspectives of an individual or group is to study their central personality traits, after which assumptions can be made according to the researcher's implicit personality theories.

- **The implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking persons.** A total of 4873 personality descriptors were obtained, which were categorised into 94 different personality characteristics. These characteristics were divided into seven categories, namely: sociability, interpersonal relatedness, emotionality, meanness, conscientiousness, dominance and other. The emergence of the collectivistic nature of Sesotho-speaking persons was apparent from the literature (Kotzé, 1993; Pretorius, Louwrens & Motshegoa, 2005, Sono, 1994; West, 1996), as well as from the study. The majority of personality descriptors obtained from participants in the study clearly indicate that the Sesotho-speaking individuals are prepared to become involved in the feelings, problems and welfare of others. Sesotho-speaking persons are socially active and are sympathetic, caring and tolerant towards others. Personality characteristics that emerged and that are indicative of this are reflected in the terms caring,



compassionate, co-operative, discriminating, friendliness, harmony, helpfulness, kindness, lovingness, mercifulness, open-handedness, supportiveness, understanding, encouraging and fairness.

When the personality characteristics of Sesotho-speaking persons were compared to the “Big Five”, evidence was found of the terms extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness, but there is no evidence of the openness factor. It was found that the importance of family and other relationships to Sothos is not adequately covered in the Five Factor Model, nor in characteristics reflected in terms such as admonitory, discriminating, fair, judgmental, humour, religion, resourcefulness and submissiveness.

Similar findings were obtained when Sotho personality characteristics were compared to the CPAI. The personality characteristics of the Sesotho-speaking individuals correspond with 17 of the 22 personality scales of the CPAI. The 17 scales include: practical mindedness, emotionality, responsibility, inferiority versus self-acceptance, optimism versus pessimism, meticulousness, family orientation, harmony, *Ren Qing* orientation, flexibility, thrift versus extravagance, leadership, introversion versus extroversion and self- versus social orientation. However, no personality descriptors match the external versus internal control, modernisation, face, logical versus affective orientation and defensiveness mentality scales of the CPAI. Important characteristics that were not covered in the CPAI include characteristics reflected in the terms admonitory, submissiveness, discriminating, fair, judgmental, humour, resourceful, strict and religious.

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

The following limitations regarding this research have been identified:

- The sample size is limited to only a few members of the Sotho culture in the Free State Province, which implies that the results may not be representative of all Sesotho-speaking South Africans. Although 120 is a relatively small sample size for quantitative research it is sufficient for qualitative research (Neuman, 2001). It was also found that saturation occurred and descriptions started to repeat themselves, with

very little or no new information that was found with new interviewees. According to (Statistics South Africa, 2001) data the majority of Sesothos live in the Free State province (1736140), therefore the research were limited to this province only.

- The subjective interpretation of the personality descriptors when categories were formed. In order to reduce the subjectivity the researcher attended several workshops in methodology and all data were cross validated by various persons concerned with this project.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations regarding the research can be made:

For future research it is recommended that a more representative sample of the Sotho culture be used, which could include Sesotho-speaking individuals from other provinces and even Lesotho, where Sothos originate from. The study population can also be divided into even more sections of the population in order to include all the different individuals in the Sesotho culture.

Future researchers should regroup the 94 personality characteristics to form fewer, broader characteristics, which could be grouped into even fewer personality constructs. It is also recommended that a quantitative approach then be used to verify the items in 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.

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## NOTE

- The reader must note that the publication and reference style used in this mini-dissertation is in accordance with the instructions for publication (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This is in accordance with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology at the North-West University to use the APA style in all scientific documents since January 1999.
- In this mini-dissertation, the article option has been chosen.

## **PREFACE**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people, without whom, this research would not have been possible:

- My Creator and Lord, for giving me the talent to do this study.
- Prof. S. Rothmann, Mr. D. Meiring and Prof. F. van de Vijver for their time, effort and sincere interest, as well as their help.
- My husband, Flippie, for love and support and constant encouragement.
- My father and mother, who never stopped believing and always supported me.
- Mr. J. Blaauw, for the language editing.

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## SUMMARY

**Subject:** The establishment of implicit perspectives of personality in Sesotho-speaking South Africans.

**Key terms:** Personality, Sesotho, implicit personality theories, qualitative research, language.

The application of personality assessment techniques for clinical and personnel decisions has always been a major activity for psychologists all over the world. In South Africa personality assessment tools are often used for purposes of 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 available personality questionnaires used in South Africa have been found to provide a reliable and valid picture of personality for all cultural (language) groups.

Since 1994 South Africa has had a new constitution and there are stronger demands for the cultural appropriateness of psychological tests. In this study, the implicit perspectives of personality of Sesotho-speaking South Africans are being determined in order to develop a more culturally fair personality assessment tool for South Africans.

A qualitative research design was used with an interview as data-gathering instrument. A Sesotho-speaking fieldworker was recruited to interview 120 Sesotho-speaking South Africans from the Free State Province. The study population was purposely drawn from different sections of the Sesotho-speaking population. A total of 4873 Sesotho-speaker personality descriptors were obtained from the participants and then translated into English. Content analysis was used to analyse, interpret and reduce these descriptors to a total of 94 personality characteristics, which highlights the most important perspectives of personality for Sesotho-speaking individuals.

The personality characteristics were divided into seven categories, namely sociability, interpersonal relatedness, emotionality, meanness, conscientiousness, dominance and other. The majority of the characteristics are representative of communalism or the collective consciousness in African communities. Sesotho-speaking persons are socially active and are

sympathetic, caring and tolerant towards others, they are willing to become involved in the feelings, problems and welfare of others.

The findings of this study were compared to the Five Factor Model and evidence were found for the extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and agreeableness factors, but not for the openness to experience factor. In comparison with the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory support were found for 17 of the 22 personality scales. Characteristics such as admonitory, resourcefulness, religion, humour, fair, judgemental and discriminating can be seen as characteristics indigenous to the Sesotho culture.

Limitations in the research are identified and recommendations for future research are made.

## OPSOMMING

**Onderwerp:** Die bepaling van implisiete persoonlikheidskenmerke in Sesotho-sprekende Suid Afrikaners.

**Sleutelterme:** Persoonlikheid, Sesotho, implisiete persoonlikheidsteorieë, kwalitatiewe navorsing, taal.

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

Sedert 1994 het Suid-Afrika 'n nuwe grondwet en is daar sterker vereistes vir kultureel geskikte psigologiese toetsing. In hierdie studie word die implisiete persoonlikheids-perspektiewe van Sesotho-sprekende Suid-Afrikaners vasgestel, wat sal bydra tot die ontwikkeling van 'n meer kultuurvrye persoonlikheidstoets vir Suid-Afrikaners.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is gebruik met 'n onderhoud as data-insamelingsmetode. 'n Sesotho-sprekende veldwerker is gewerf om onderhoude met 120 Sesotho-sprekende Suid-Afrikaners vanuit die Vrystaat-provinsie te voer. Die studiepopulasie is doelgerig vanuit verskillende dele van die Sesotho-sprekende bevolking getrek. 'n Totaal van 4873 persoonlikheidsbeskrywings van Sesotho-sprekers is van die respondente bekom, wat toe in Engels vertaal is. Inhoudsontleding is gebruik om die beskrywings te ontleed, te vertolk en te verminder na altesaam 94 persoonlikheidskenmerke, wat die belangrikste persoonlikheids-perspektiewe van Sesotho-sprekende individue beklemtoon.

Die persoonlikheidseienskappe is in sewe kategorieë verdeel, naamlik sosialiteit, interpersoonlike verwantskap, emosionaliteit, gemeenheid, pligsgetrouheid, dominansie en ander. Die meerderheid kenmerke is verteenwoordigend van kommunalisme of die kollektivistiese bewustheid in Afrika-gemeenskappe. Sesotho-sprekende persone is sosiaal

aktief en is simpatiek, besorg en verdraagsaam teenoor ander en hulle is bereid om betrokke te raak by die emosies, probleme en welstand van ander.

Die bevindinge van hierdie studie is vergelyk met die Vyf Faktor Model en bewyse is gevind vir die ekstroversie, pligsgetrouheid, neurotiese en instemmendheidsfaktore, maar nie vir die ontvanklikheid vir ondervinding-faktor nie. In 'n vergelyking met die Chinese Persoonlikheidsassesserings-vraelys is daar bewyse gevind vir 17 van die 22 persoonlikheid-skale. Eienskappe soos vermanend, vernuftigheid, geloof, humor, regverdigheid, diskriminerend en veroordelend kan beskou word as persoonlikheidskenmerke inheems aan die Sesotho-kultuur.

Beperkinge in die navorsing word geïdentifiseer, en aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing word aan die hand gedoen.