

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
OF
VALIDATION RESEARCH**

SUPPORTING

THE WORK ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

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Purpose of the Executive Summary

This summary of the validation research supporting the Work Attitude Questionnaire (abbreviated within this report as “WAQ”) provides an overview, in non-technical terms, of the research, development and validation of the Work Attitude Questionnaire. Every effort has been made to present this material free from the specialized jargon of statistics and research. The purpose of such jargon is to increase the precision of language used to describe technical work. Therefore, avoiding such technical jargon will, at times, result in more general statements than would otherwise be the case. We accept this limitation in order to clarify the research findings for the non-technical reader. A more technically precise explanation of the issues presented here is available in the full validation report on the Work Attitude Questionnaire (technical report # 1541).

Description of the Work Attitude Questionnaire

Work Attitude Questionnaire is a self-report inventory of an individual’s attitudes and past behavior with regard to these job-relevant risk areas:

- Employee theft and pilferage of both money and company property;
- Drug use that would affect performance on the job;
- Temper Control, both verbal and physical;
- Respect for others in the workplace.

The Work Attitude Questionnaire is the one component of a two-part screening or training program designed to allow employers to:

1. Screen job applicants and incumbents for potential risk in the four areas listed above;
2. Provide basic instruction for employees in appropriate workplace behavior in each of the four areas listed above.

The training and instructional component of the Work Attitude Program is called the Work Pledge. The Work Pledge is not formally scored and, as a result, is not discussed in this report.

Design and Development of the Work Attitude Questionnaire

The Work Attitude Questionnaire is designed to provide employers with an idea of the amount of risk there is that a job applicant or employee could display inappropriate behavior in any one of the four risk areas. Inappropriate behavior in each of the four risk areas was defined as either an admission of past inappropriate behavior, or the extent of agreement

with a statement that there are circumstances that justify inappropriate behavior in a given risk area.

The WAQ’s test items ask a respondent to rate either his or her attitude toward the risk area in question, or about his or her past behavior with regard to that risk area. Additional items were included to provide an index of the accuracy of a test-taker’s responses -- that is, his or her willingness to distort his or her answers in order to form a favorable impression (Motivation to Distort).

The Validation Process

The validation process is a way of determining, through scientific research, whether a test effectively measures what it is designed to measure. The three approaches to test validation are content-related validation, construct-related validation, and criterion-related validation. While validation evidence obtained using any one of the three is acceptable, a stronger case for a test’s validity is built when validation evidence comes from two, or even all three, of these approaches. Consequently, the initial effort of the WAQ validation research focused on providing evidence of content-related and construct-related validity. Evidence of criterion-related validity is being collected during concurrent usage studies.

The WAQ validation research was designed and conducted according to the criteria and standards for test development established by the American Psychological Association in their “Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing.” Data were collected from fifteen participating companies in hospitality, high-tech manufacturing, and service industries. The Work Attitude Questionnaire was administered both the applicants, during the pre-hiring screening process, and to incumbents over a three-year period.

Distribution of Item Responses

Items on the WAQ ask the test-taker about his or her willingness to see inappropriate behavior, in each of the four risk areas, as acceptable, and whether he or she has committed inappropriate behavior in a given risk area in the past. For each item, the test-takers chose a response from a ten-point scale that ranged from “Totally Disagree” “Totally Agree.” The assumption was made that test-takers would make a reasonable effort to make a favorable impression and would therefore avoid admitting to past behavior or attitudes that they believed would be considered inappropriate or unacceptable by interviewers, or that would call into question their ability to act appropriately on the job.

The percentage of test-takers who chose a response other than “Totally Disagree” ranged from two percent (2%) to seventy-five percent (75%), depending on the item. On the average, about twenty percent (20%) of test-takers chose a response other than “Totally Disagree”. This figure of twenty percent corresponds roughly to the figures often cited as reflecting the percentage of the general population that is at risk to engage in inappropriate behavior of some sort and, in addition, provides evidence that the WAQ accurately reflects the diversity of the range of such behavior that exists in the population.

Content validity

Content-related validation evidence is provided by examining the extent to which the items on a test are representative of the content areas that the test is designed to measure. All of the items on the Work Attitude Questionnaire, with the exception of items on the scale that measured a respondent’s Motivation to Distort, were constructed to match as closely as possible in content, presentation format and terminology the opinions or behavior that the item addressed (i.e., theft, drug use, temper control, and respect for others in the workplace.) Thus, the fact that the content, format and terminology of items on the Work Attitude Questionnaire focus directly and unambiguously on the subject matter of the intended content domains provides evidence for the content-related validity of the Work Attitude Questionnaire.

Construct validity

Construct-related validation evidence is provided by determining how well the scales on a test positively correlate with similar scales on other established tests, and negatively correlate with scales that measure different content. The four content areas addressed by the WAQ are different enough from one another that each content area was examined independently for evidence of construct validity.

- 1. Theft:** Performance on the Theft Scale of the WAQ was correlated with performance on the Theft Scale of the Orion Audit. The Theft Scale of the WAQ showed strong positive correlations with the Theft Scale of the Orion Audit, and less strong correlations with the Orion Audit Drug Use Scale, providing both convergent and divergent evidence of the construct-related validity of the WAQ’s Theft Scale.
- 2. Drug Use:** Performance on the Drug Use Scale of the WAQ was correlated with performance on the Drug Use Scale of the Orion Audit. The Drug Use Scale of the WAQ showed strong positive correlations with the Drug Use Scale of the Orion Audit, and less strong correlations with the Orion Audit Theft Scale, providing both convergent and divergent evidence of the construct-related validity of the WAQ’s Drug Use Scale.
- 3. Temper Control:** Performance on the Temper Control Scale of the WAQ was correlated with performance on two scales on the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey: the Ascendance Scale and the Friendliness Scale. The Temper Control Scale of the WAQ showed positive correlations with the Ascendance Scale, and negative correlations with the Friendliness Scale. These correlations are in the expected direction and provide both convergent and divergent evidence of the construct-related validity of the WAQ’s Temper Control Scale.
- 4. Respect For Others:** Performance on the Respect For Others Scale of the WAQ was

correlated with performance on five scales on the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey: the Masculinity Scale, the Objectivity Scale, the Emotional Stability Scale, the Friendliness Scale and the Personal Relations Scale. The Respect For Others Scale of the WAQ showed positive correlations and negative correlations with these Scales, providing both convergent and divergent evidence of the construct-related validity of the WAQ's Respect For Others Scale.

Legal and Ethical Concerns

The Work Attitude Questionnaire is designed to be used as one part, and only one part, of the pre-employment evaluation of prospective applicants at all levels of employment. It is intended to give an employer an indication of the degree of risk for inappropriate behavior in the areas of employee theft, drug use, temper control, and respect for others indicated by an applicant or incumbent endorsing questionable opinions or admitting past inappropriate behavior. **Questionable WAQ results do not**

necessarily predict that the person will act inappropriately in the risk area in question. The individual should always be provided with the opportunity to clarify his or her responses.

The Work Attitude Questionnaire is intended to be used as only one part of a selection process that should include information about the applicant obtained, but not limited to, such relevant sources as: interviews, background and reference checks, drug screening, and physical examinations.

Recent litigation concerning the concept of "negligent hiring" has taken the position that it is the employer's responsibility to be aware of the degree of risk that any of its employees might commit inappropriate workplace behavior that would result in an employee's harming a co-worker, customer or purveyor, and to deal with that risk through appropriate selection decisions, training, or work assignments. The Work Attitude Questionnaire, and its training complement, the Work Pledge, are designed to be used as one part of a comprehensive, continuing training program to help employers educate employees about appropriate behavior on the job.

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