The Application of Personality Assessment to Suggest Appropriate Employment in Various Fields Within Economic Development

Brittani Elizabeth Plaisance

University of Southern Mississippi

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

THE APPLICATION OF PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT TO
SUGGEST APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT IN VARIOUS FIELDS
WITHIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

by

Brittani Elizabeth Plaisance

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Approved:

Chad Miller
Director

Brent Hales

Brian Richard

Susan A. Siltanen
Dean of the Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

THE APPLICATION OF PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT TO SUGGEST APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT IN VARIOUS FIELDS WITHIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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August 2011

Personality assessment has been established through previous literature as a viable tool in organizational contexts in different job fields (Hough & Dilchert, 2010; Rothstein & Goffin, 2006). The field of economic development has seen little application of personality assessment to aspiring professionals within the discipline. This research hoped to establish distinct personality typologies within economic development by bifurcating the field into two sectors of (a) business recruitment, retention, and expansion and (b) entrepreneurship developers and community developers. Participants were asked to complete the Personal Preferences Self-Description Questionnaire (Thompson, 1996) after distinguishing within which of the two realms they were employed. Results show no significant difference on any of the four Jungian personality preferences between groups indicating false inferences that the two groups maintain different personalities. Future researchers should consider evaluating economic developers as one entity rather than differentiating sectors.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to give special thanks to Dr. Randolph Arnau of The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Department of Psychology for acquiring permission to apply the Personal Preferences Self-Description Questionnaire (Thompson, 1996) to this research. Also, thanks to Dr. Arnau for running the resulting data sets from participants through the analysis software and educating the writer on how to evaluate the output. The assessment of personalities in this study would have been impossible without Dr. Arnau’s assistance and guidance.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Current Context

Applying personality assessments to the practice of screening potential employees is a growing practice among American companies. These testing instruments are increasingly being administered to applicants to determine employee competency and suitability to positions across many fields and at many different levels (Raymark, Schmit, & Guion, 1997). This application of personality assessment can be seen in many different disciplines from army selection purposes to predicting the success of accounting graduate students. The utilization of personality assessment for predicting success in particular occupations is absent in economic development. Displaying the applicability and probable success of personality testing to economic development embodies the purpose of this research.

Literature Gap

A large amount of research on personality assessment has been performed and exists to show the efficiency of such instruments. The existing literature also contains investigations of assessing personality as a personnel screening tool. The majority of researchers agree that personality assessments can be successful predictors of performance. Response distortion and validity values are criticized for many existing personality assessments, but an overwhelming number of studies suggest these two are not significant issues. There also exists a decent amount of literature within the field of economic development which outlines some different subfields of the subject. Some of these responsibilities might include business recruitment, existing business retention and
expansion, entrepreneurial development, and community development. These different strategies of economic development can be further generalized into two larger realms requiring different tasks of practitioners: business recruitment, retention, and expansion versus entrepreneurship development and community development. These differentiating realms of economic development likely attract interest from employees varying in personality styles. Business recruitment professionals are the promoters of the community, so employees within this realm may be more assertive and extraverted acting as salesmen (International Economic Development Council [IEDC], 2006). On the other hand, entrepreneurial developers may be more introverted and nurturing acting as a guide or teacher in this line of work (IEDC, 2006). The literature on personality assessment and economic development as separate entities is sufficient; however, a literature gap remains connecting these two fields. This research will attempt to fill this hole in the literature and provide insight to the use of personality assessment in economic development contexts.

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to unearth the personality types of economic developers already employed in the field in one of two dimensions: business recruitment, retention, and expansion or entrepreneurial and community development. Then these results were compared to the literature’s suggestion of personality characteristics of each realm. The analysis of these two descriptions can provide insight to the effect of personality on job performance in the field of economic development. A Jungian typologies-based personality assessment entitled the Personal Preferences Self-Description Questionnaire (Thompson, 1996) was emailed to all registered members of
the Mississippi Economic Development Council. The results of these online assessments were compared as a whole (keeping the two divisions separate) to the roles, responsibilities, and personality attributes suggested by the existing literature.

Key Findings

The most imperative finding from this research is that the results show no statistical significant difference between industrial recruitment, retention, and expansion professionals. This means that the personalities of both groups were similar to each other creating a false dichotomy within the field of economic development. The findings imply that, in opposition to the researcher’s hypotheses, economic development consists of one single, analogous entity. Researchers interested in investigating economic development further should consider results presented in this research and reevaluate the composition of the discipline. It seems more appropriate, in evaluating these results, to investigate the personality of economic developers as a whole instead of as two different sectors.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

In beginning a research study, it is necessary to know what information exists regarding the topic of investigation before beginning a research effort. First, in this review of existing literature, personality assessment in general is discussed and existing definitions are explored. The two most common concepts or theories of personality upon which assessments are created, the Five Factor Model (traits) and Jungian Typology (types), are explained and two popularly used assessments, the NEO-PI-R and Myers Briggs Typology Indicator (MBTI) respectively, are elucidated. Second, personality assessment for the purposes of personnel selection is presented providing a brief history, an explanation of why this is important and useful, and an explanation of metrics. The NEO and MBTI are discussed in the context of job selection using personality assessment. Also, the assessment utilized in this study, the Personal Preferences Self-Description Questionnaire (PPSDQ) is discussed. Third, challenges such as response distortion and validity issues are evaluated. Fourth, an overview of the field of economic development in general and a discussion regarding two different sectors is provided. This discussion ends with descriptions of each sector’s roles and equitable personality characteristics, examining a gap in the literature, and stating the study’s hypothesis.

Personality Assessment

In order to understand the use of personality assessment in recent studies, researchers must first form generally accepted definitions of concepts within the study of personality. Costa and McCrae (2001) offer that “most definitions of personality refer to features that characterize an individual and distinguish him or her from others” (p. 235).
While this definition is quite general, it provides the basic understanding necessary to comprehend assessment. Personality assessment has been defined as “procedures designed to identify and evaluate enduring psychological qualities, including modes of thinking, feeling, and acting that characterize the individual” (Caprara & Cervone, 2004, p. 11). This mode of testing evaluates those traits that make individuals unique and differentiate among others, and usually attempts to compare these characteristics to the average individual (Cervone & Caprara, 2001; Costa & McCrae, 2001). Assessing personality endeavors to systematically appraise the opinions the general public has of themselves and of others in order for professionals to fully capitalize upon the strengths and limit the weaknesses of laypeople (Costa & McCrae, 2001). The scientific execution of personality assessment strives to determine individual differences, to accurately measure individual attributes, and to investigate the true meaning and applicability of the resulting data (Ozer & Reise, 1994). The administration of personality assessments is not confined to the field of psychology due to the variety of available testing types and applications. Caprara and Cervone (2004) write, “through a great variety of quantitative and qualitative techniques, personality assessors serve both basic and applied research needs in settings in which descriptive, predictive, and explanatory information about people is required” (p. 11). Understanding the overall definition(s) of assessment and the underlying concepts that are measured in assessments is the key to the application of personality testing to their full potential.

Ozer and Reise (1994) write that although there are many other concepts that might be considered in personality assessment (i.e., motives, beliefs, styles), trait measurement is one dominant and often utilized concept. The Five Factor Model of
Personality Structure (also called the Big Five) is the predominant and most widely recognized representation of this concept (Caprara & Cervone, 2004; Ozer & Reise, 1994). Costa and McCrae (2001) defines the Five Factor Model as “an organization of personality traits in terms of the broad factors of neuroticism versus emotional stability, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness” (p. 235). This model assumes that all five of these characteristics are present, in varying levels, in each individual (Caprara & Cervone, 2004). Barrick and Mount (1996) describe in detail the five dispositions that make up the Five Factor Model and provide behavioral representations of each:

1. Extraversion – sociable, talkative, active, ambitious
2. Agreeableness – courteous, trusting, cooperative, empathic
3. Conscientiousness – dependable, organized, persistent, and achievement-oriented
4. Emotional Stability – calm, unemotional, secure, not angry
5. Openness to Experience – imaginative, cultured, broadminded, flexible

The published assessment that is considered to be the most closely associated with the Five Factor Model is the NEO Personality Inventory (Ozer & Reise, 1994). The Revised NEO Personality Inventory is a 240 statement questionnaire in which participants rate their agreement from one to five on a Likert scale. The significantly shorter assessment, the NEO Five Factor Inventory, is the most widely used trait assessment in many contexts (Kroec & Brown, 2004). The advantages of the NEO assessments include the relevance to various contexts and empirical support of reliability and validity (Kroec & Brown, 2004). Costa & McCrae (1991) state that “studies
suggest that NEO-PI scales are both reliable and valid in clinical samples as well as normal samples” (p. 5). An important disadvantage of these trait model assessments is the absence of both lie and validity scales, which can be used to eliminate inaccurate responses (Kroeck & Brown, 2004).

Jungian Theory of personality typologies is another concept upon which several assessments are built. This researcher theorized that personality types are present in every individual, but that each person has preferences that they utilize on a daily basis (McCaulley, 1990). Psychological type theory speculates that individuals maintain preferred methods of perception, judgment, and attitudes that influence their energy (extraversion/introversion) and their orientation to the outside world (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). Each type is a choice between Extraversion/Introversion, Sensing/Intuition, Thinking/Feeling, and Judging/Perceiving. Stricker and Ross (1964) define these four scales:

1. Extraversion/Introversion: Extraverted subjects’ interests are more oriented toward the exterior world while introverted subjects’ interests lie in the interior environment.
2. Sensing/Intuition: Sensation refers to perception of the world directly through the five senses while intuition refers to indirect perception through hunches, possibilities, and gut feelings.
3. Thinking/Feeling: Thinking denotes making impersonal judgments through formalized, logical progressions. Feeling implies formulating conclusions subjectively based on personal values resulting in acceptance or rejection (like or dislike).
4. Judging/Perceiving: Those with preferences for judging live out life in an orderly manner while those hosting a preference for perceiving live in a less controlled way.

The interaction of these four stable preferences in each category interact to create individual differences and distinct personalities (Stricker & Ross, 1964).

The most commonly used personality assessment based on type theory is the Myers Briggs Typology Indicator (MBTI) which is taken annually by approximately three million people (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). These authors also report that 40% of the three million is administered by major corporations (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). Stricker and Ross (1962) define the MBTI as a “self-report inventory which classifies people into dichotomous categories along four scales: extraversion-introversion, sensation-intuition, thinking-feeling, and judgment-perception” (p. 1). Advantages of using MBTI include easy administration and application along with relative levels of reliability and validity. Disadvantages include common misinterpretations of the meanings of results and several shortages in personality type theory providing the assessment’s basis (Gardner & Martinko, 1996). Although the MBTI is an extremely common assessment utilized in the business world due to its simple and inexpensive nature, several weaknesses are reported. Some suggest that the MBTI’s ability to “identify vocational interest and creativity is limited” (Stricker & Ross, 1962, p. 1). Stricker and Ross (1964) also concluded that the types (four digit codes) were only moderately stable, and only vaguely supported the theory of origin.

The PPSDQ (utilized in this study) is another Jungian theory based personality assessment that is quite similar to the MBTI (Thompson, 1996). The PPSDQ contains
115 items that result in a number value for each of these four constructs. The number value insinuates variations in degree of preference rather than distinct categorical types. The number ranges are as follows:

- Extraversion/Introversion: 24 – 168 (Higher scores indicate introversion; lower scores indicate extraversion)
- Sensing/Intuition: 27 – 189 (Higher scores indicate more intuitive; lower scores indicate more sensing)
- Thinking/Feeling: 24 – 168 (Higher scores indicate more feeling; lower scores indicate more thinking)
- Judging/Perceiving: 25 – 175 (Higher scores indicate more perceiving; lower scores indicate more judging)

Representing preference in this numerical range has been suggested to be more appropriate than the MBTI’s depiction of variation simply by kind of preference (Arnau, Green, Rosen, Gleaves, & Melancon, 2003). While this assessment has not been widely or exceedingly administered, one study shows highly reliable (consistent) scores when using the PPSDQ (Thompson & Arnau, 1998). These authors also report that the PPSDQ “may be useful in assessing normal variations in personality” (Thompson & Arnau, 1998, p. 8)

The researchers in the field of psychology have found that there indeed exist distinct categories of characteristics that give individuals variable personalities. Also, these researchers have found that personality affects behavior and actions, and that these differences are important in successful functioning in many aspects of life. The debate rages on how these characteristics of personality should be measured and which
assessments are the most efficient, valid, and reliable. For this study, Jungian typology assessment was utilized due to the highly frequent use in personnel selection contexts. Common trait measurements measure abnormality, but assessments such as the MBTI and PPSDQ measure normal variations making these applicable to more businesses and situations (Thompson & Arnau, 1998). Due to the high cost and complex analysis of the commonly administered MBTI, the PPSDQ is the chosen test for this research.

Table 1

Trait versus Typology Measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trait Measurement</th>
<th>Typology Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Trait: relatively unchanging patterns of behavior and mental configuration</td>
<td>Type: separation of individuals into different categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructs</td>
<td>Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism</td>
<td>Extraversion/Introversion Sensing/Intuition Thinking/Feeling Judging/Perceiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>NEO-PI-R</td>
<td>MBTI, PPSDQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages</td>
<td>Contextually relevant, reliable, valid</td>
<td>Common, reliable, valid, easy administration/analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
<td>No lie or validity scale</td>
<td>Misinterpretation of results, categorization too strict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Personality Assessment for Personnel Selection

The use of personality assessment to assist in hiring selection practices has its roots in the late 1800s (Scroggins, Thomas, & Morris, 2008a, p. 188). It was not until the research of the last two decades that personality was largely considered to only measure psychopathology and remained absent within other fields, including personnel selection (Goodstein & Lanyon, 1999). In the more recent past, researchers have found evidence that personality in selection can lead to hiring on more productive workers which in turn
can mean an increase in “output, the monetary value of output, and the learning of job skills” (Scroggins et al., 2008a, p. 188).

Psychological research in the 1990s produced verification that personality assessments could indeed predict performance in the workplace; this evidence led to quick rise in the use of personality testing in vital employee selection (Morgeson et al., 2007b; Rothstein & Goffin, 2006). Now in the 2000s, the 100 top ranked British companies use some type of personality assessment in their hiring process, and the personality assessment industry is a $400 million entity in America increasing at ten percent annually (Rothstein & Goffin, 2006). As much as two-thirds of large companies utilize personality assessment in the screening of potential employees, and research has shown that using these practices has led to a lower turnover rate of employees from 20% to as much as 70% (Rothstein & Goffin, 2006). Companies of all kinds have the historical research of past psychologists to credit with recognizing that personality characteristics can be used to determine and predict performance. Thanks to this finding, professionals now have the ability to explain behavior and forecast job performance that was not an option previously (Hough & Dilchert, 2010).

Personality traits and inventories have proven to be helpful in forecasting and explaining workplace attitudes, behavior, and employee performance, and this understanding has influenced a steep increase in the use of personality measures to evaluate job candidates at different levels and within different fields (Barrick, Parks, & Mount, 2005; Ones, Dilchert, Viswesvaran, & Judge, 2007; Rothstein & Goffin, 2006). Ones et al. (2007) claim that there have been hundreds of studies since the mid 1980s that provide evidence of the benefits of utilizing personality assessment in employee hiring.
decisions. If personality characteristics are relevant to a specific occupation and future performance, a measurement instrument should be used to avoid overlooking these aspects of hopeful candidates (Raymark, Schmit, & Guion, 1997). Matching a person’s personality traits to the needs and description of the job can be a very useful tool in hiring (Goffin & Boyd, 2009). Personality inventories are more likely than other measures to produce a final result that is more related to the specific jobs which provides a higher face validity, or job context relevance of items, to employers and potential employees (Jenkins & Griffith, 2004). In order to maintain this benefit of face validity and to promote positive applicant reactions, the applicant pool and specific job description should be taken into consideration when choosing an assessment (Oostrom, Born, Serlie, & van der Molen, 2010; Rothstein & Goffin, 2006).

In the utilization and application of personality assessment, administrators should be aware of an important metric of the instruments. Predictive validity, which is the ability of an assessment to forecast performance, is considered by many to be the most important psychometric value of personality assessments used in employee selection. Hunter and Schmidt (1998) explain the importance of validity in simple terms:

The validity of the personnel measure used in hiring is directly proportional to the practical value of the method whether measured in dollar value or percentage of increased output. In economic terms, the gains from increasing the validity of hiring methods can amount over time to literally millions of dollars. However, by using methods with low validity, an organization can lose millions of dollars in reduced production. (p. 273)
The coefficient of predictive validity is directly correlated with economic benefits or
downfalls, and different methods of assessment (and combinations of these) have very
different validity measures (Hunter & Schmidt, 1998). Personality assessment is at its
most useful for selection when testing is specified to the job requirements. Other
important aspects to note, along with psychometrics, are the meanings of the actual
measures.

An important suggestion is that the implementation of personality assessment in
employee selection offers unique findings not measured by other options. Goffin and
Boyd (2009) state that personality assessments can “predict the choice to perform, or
‘will do’ aspects of job performance” (p. 151). Most other assessment methods measure
a “capacity to perform or ‘can-do’ attitude” (Goffin & Boyd, 2009, p. 151). These
authors make another interesting point arguing for the use of personality assessment in
workplace contexts to predict behavior. If employers omit personality measures from the
hiring process, they risk hiring employees that will decrease in productivity after the
initial challenges of the job slow down. When employees enter a “maintenance” stage at
work, the “will-do” personality traits would motivate continued efficiency (Goffin &
Boyd, 2009).

The Five Factor Model

The existing literature provides many instances in which the Five Factor Model
(FFM) is proven as a useful tool in predicting job performance. Salgado (2003) reports
that FFM-based assessment has a greater operational validity than do other assessments
not based on this theory. These inventories based on the FFM can improve the validity of
personality assessment in predicting performance (Salgado, 2003). A 2006 evaluation of
fifteen previous meta-analyses found “convincing evidence” of the usefulness of FFM based personality inventories in personnel selection (Chet, 2006, p. 1233). Most FFM researchers agree that these traits are an efficient tool in predicting career performance (Kroeck & Brown, 2004). The FFM traits are significantly linked to job success, and personality measures based on the FFM have been found to be especially predictive (Goodstein & Lanyon, 1999; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). Goodstein and Lanyon (1999) conclude from research comparing the utilization of FFM assessments on two different occupations that predictive success can be realistically reached and that the FFM offers a sound framework with which to achieve this goal.

**Jungian Typology Measures**

The MBTI has been met with much criticism (discussed further) throughout the existing literature, but Gardner and Martinko (1996) suggest that this bad reputation is unfounded as the past studies have been insignificant and of a low quality. Employees that have utilized the MBTI in selection processes report that the assessment is at the very least moderately beneficial (Garrety, 2007). An interesting note is that the Nippon Recruitment Center in Tokyo has for years been using an adjusted version of the MBTI to place workers within businesses and industries. This fact suggests, according to Myers and Myers (1995), that “the relationships between type [of personality] and occupation transcend the boundaries of language and culture” (p. 158).

As previously mentioned, the use of personality assessment for personnel selection is relatively novel. The PPSDQ has been seldom administered and has no history of being utilized for employee selection; however, due to its similarity to the MBTI, the test’s usefulness in this context seems promising. As with all innovative
ideas, several researchers have challenged the use of assessment to predict performance. Much debate still exists among professionals regarding the efficiency and dependability of these tests in a corporate setting despite the growing use in hiring practices.

Challenges and Suggestions for Overcoming Issues

Both personality assessments in general and the application of personality assessment in personnel selection have been met with criticisms since their inception and rise in personality. These challenges and weaknesses along with several suggestions for fixing or correcting these flaws are discussed in this section. Also, some existing arguments against these suggested flaws are reviewed.

There are many issues that have been unearthed through the research and discussions regarding personality assessment as a behavioral predictor. First, a main issue with personality testing (as with the entire study of personality) is a lack of consensus among psychology professionals regarding a universal definition of personality (Scroggins et al., 2008a; Scroggins, Thomas, & Morris, 2009). These authors discuss, in a three part paper, many issues with personality testing, and they regard a lack of a universally accepted definition of personality or set of personality characteristics as a fundamental problem. Second, another challenge with personality assessment discussed in this extensive review include confusion and disagreement among professionals about what these tests actually measure or should measure (Scroggins et al., 2008a, 2009). Third, Ozer and Reise (1994) also propose the challenge of representing diversity in personality testing. Since the origin of testing personality, these authors write that assessment has focused primarily on individual differences and while group diversity was evaluated in terms of mean differences (Ozer & Reise, 1994). Bringing together these
two diversity issues so that studying one assists in the study of the other is suggested as an important goal to enhance the assessment of personality (Ozer & Reise, 1994). Fourth, Cervone and Caprara (2001) suggest another challenge of personality assessment is to create instruments that shed light on underlying psychological characteristics in addition to overt behavior patterns. Generating assessments that can produce even more insightful results will assist in enhancing the “consistency and coherency of personality” (Cervone & Caprara, 2001, p. 11286).

The practice of administering personality assessments for employee selection purposes has been criticized and upheld by many researchers, and discussing each of these in depth in this discussion would be impossible. A comprehensive review of the existing research that offers evidence for both the existence and insignificance of problems with applying personality tests to hiring practices follows.

Response Distortion

In the employee selection process, the administration of personality assessments might motivate the job applicants to attempt to present themselves as the idea employee, instead of answering truthfully (Griffith, Peterson, Quist, Benda, & Evans, 2008; Rosse, Stecher, Miller, & Levin, 1998). This occurrence can also be referred to as faking, or “the tendency for test takers to deliberately provide inaccurate responses to personality items in a manner that they believe will increase their chances of obtaining valued outcomes, such as a favorable hiring outcome” (Goffin & Boyd, 2009, p. 151). An influential study in 1996 suggested that the blatant nature of some questions leads to two different categories of response distortion: self-deception and impression management (Barrick & Mount). The authors make the distinction between the two in regard to
motivation; one is inherent while the other conscious. Self-deception is an innate disposition to consider oneself in a higher esteem in the context of self evaluation, and impression management is an intentional effort to control the image presented to others (Barrick & Mount, 1996). These two issues, also sometimes referred to as social desirability, lead to employee concerns about the accuracy of applicant responses and to empirical concerns for selection researchers and administrators (Converse, Peterson, & Griffith, 2009; Ellingson, Sackett, & Hough, 1999). However, Barrick and Mount (1996) suggest that the self-deception fakers are actually well adjusted individuals who are success oriented; self-deception is said to not be a concern in employee assessment (Viswesvaran, Deller, & Ones, 2007). Furnham’s (1990) research found that “[personality] questionnaires are all highly susceptible to faking” which reiterates the concern for academic and employment uses (p. 46). Goffin and Boyd (2009) report that their findings of weak correlations between personality and job performance may be due to the existence of faked responses. Faking on personality assessment may indeed negatively impact hiring decisions and processes (Goffin & Boyd, 2009). Some report unsettling data that suggests faking answers on pre-hire personality assessments results in significant ranking differences which are often used to make hiring decisions (Griffith, Chmielowski, & Yoshita, 2007; Viswesvaran et al. 2007). He found similar results a year later stating that faking on these assessments affects the outcomes and calls into question the efficiency of using such testing (Griffith et al., 2008). Research on the subject demonstrates that the activity of faking can negatively influence the validity of the assessment as a whole (Stark, Chernyshenko, Chan, Lee, & Drasgow, 2001).
Although response distortion has been found to be an important challenge in personality assessment application, other research has found results suggesting that the issue of faking could be taken out of the equation or corrected when assessing applicant personality. One suggested correction to response distortion is the utilization of lie scales to alert assessment evaluators of response distortion (Barrick & Mount, 1996). If the score on this scale is significant enough, the assessment administrator will apply a correction to the overall score (Ellingson et al., 1999). Some of the more popular, commonly used assessment already contain corrective scales to find high levels of faking (Goffin & Christiansen, 2003). However, another investigation suggests these corrections be ceased due to results indicating that the average rate of faking is minimal and not a significant issue in real world applications (Hogan, Barrett, & Hogan, 2007). Goffin and Boyd (2009) conclude that a better understanding of core psychological processes causing response distortion could lead to a more efficient utilization of personality assessment. Another interesting fact is that the majority of these studies are done using volunteer participants; volunteers have little motive to fake, so the high frequency of response distortion reported in previous research may be skewed (Smith, Hanges, & Dickson, 2001).

Validity

Researchers suggest that faking on personality inventories cannot be controlled and that the focus should be turned to low validity. A general definition of assessment validity is “the accuracy with which an assessment instrument measures its intended construct” (Costa & McCrae, 2001, p. 235). Predictive validity, or the ability of personality assessments to predict job performance and success, is of utmost importance
to the application of testing to personnel selection (Hunter & Schmidt, 1998; Morgeson et al., 2007a; Scroggins et al., 2008b). A major issue with personality assessment is that the tests might be poor predictors of job performance (Hogan et al., 2007). The data suggesting that correlations between personality characteristics and job success are weak presents a challenge in gaining a widespread acceptance of personality assessment (Goffin & Boyd, 2009; Morgeson et al., 2007b). Most personality assessments were designed originally to be applied in clinical settings and are not necessarily appropriate for use in personnel selection further suggesting a low validity value (Scroggins et al., 2008a).

Although validity is commonly called into question when critiquing personality assessment, many researchers have found evidence that validity can be manageable and an insignificant issue. Much evidence exists attesting that personality inventory results are significantly predictive of future job performance (Goffin & Boyd, 2009). Empirical solutions might be utilized to correct for both mentioned criticisms (response distortion and validity), and using personality analyses that are occupationally relevant can increase the predictive validity (Goffin & Boyd, 2009; Hogan et al., 2007; Jenkins & Griffith, 2004). In conclusion, the majority of the existing research agrees that applicants indeed distort scores, but despite this, distortion does not (always) affect predictive validity of the assessments (Barrick & Mount, 1996; Tett & Christiansen, 2007).

Despite the challenges to personality assessment, these tests have been applied to the selection of employees and prediction of behavior in different industries. A potential field in which personality assessment prediction could be helpful is in economic
development. The following section will describe economic development as a field and illustrate a bifurcation of the field into traditional and newer economic development.

Economic Development

The field of economic development is a relatively new entity striving to enhance an area’s economy through several different strategies and by measuring various facets of the community (Goetz, Deller, & Harris, 2009). Blakely and Leigh (2009) provide a definition of economic development in which they make three distinct points:

Local economic development is achieved when a community’s standard of living can be preserved and increased through a process of human and physical development that is based on principles of equity and sustainability. (p. 75)

These authors point out that economic development establishes a minimum living standard, lessens inequality, and promotes the use of sustainable resources (Blakely & Leigh, 2009). They also note that of utmost importance is the understanding that economic development and economic growth are not synonymous. Blair and Carroll (2009) state that economic development requires that qualitative alterations occur while economic growth is the general increase in an area’s economy. Three main goals of an economic development plan for an area are suggested to be: creating quality jobs, economic stability, and maintaining diversity in the labor force and economic base (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). Development of an area’s economy is typically measured using job creations, an increased tax base, income growth, and by quality of life indicators (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). These authors also suggest four individual strategies commonly used to achieve successful economic development. These four strategies are called locality development (“built environment”), business development,
human resource development, and community-based employment strategies (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). These strategies can be generalized into the two larger categories of (a) business attraction, retention, and expansion versus (b) entrepreneurship and community development.

_Economic development is product marketing_. The focus on business recruitment and business retention and expansion represent more traditional ideas (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). Business attraction is considered the marketing of a region or community to relocating industries in order to entice them to locate in the desired site (IEDC, 2006). The goal is to “promote the community as a viable location for economic activity [because] attracting new businesses and investments to a community is a major source of economic development stimulation” (IEDC, 2006, p. 33). On a similar note, business retention and expansion includes the efforts of the community to maintain its existing companies and help keep them in the area. Community leaders focus on assisting existing businesses with financial issues and increasing the business’s competitiveness in general while also assisting with expansion projects (IEDC, 2006). This focus is due to statistics intimating that 80% of employment is thanks to a community’s existing industries (IEDC, 2006). These two similar realms of economic development compliment each other nicely and have comparable interests, employee positions, and goals.

_Economic development is nurturing_. On the other hand, entrepreneurship and community development strategies are newer concepts in the field of economic development due to a common inadequacy of previous efforts to assist rural and small communities (Walzer, 2009). Entrepreneurial development strategies focus on assisting
small businesses in the process of getting started and staying alive in the community (IEDC, 2006). Small business development strategies often offer assistance with finding business space, finances, technical issues, developing business plans, workforce issues, and marketing (IEDC, 2006). Community development strives to proactively improve an area beyond the accepted baseline standard and to promote a feeling of camaraderie amongst residents. This strategy is a “process in which people act together to promote the social, economic, political, and physical well-being of their community” (IEDC, 2006, p. 139). At the community level the focus tends to be directed toward developing quality of life facets such as innovative businesses, leisure activities, safe environments, and creative opportunities for entertainment (IEDC, 2006). These two development strategies are starting to gain popularity and are increasingly being utilized, especially in smaller communities.

**Personality Traits and Attributes**

These two discussed realms of economic development efforts, the more traditional versus the newer strategies, each contain distinct characteristics and mandate different responsibilities and roles of the professionals within them. These distinctions and tasks can be equated or connected with specific personality descriptors and traits specific to each realm. Some personality attributes of these two domains within economic development are suggested in this section.

The more traditional economic development strategies, as previously mentioned, will require more business-like oriented skills and attributes. Those professionals specializing in business recruitment are marketing the area to outside industries; therefore they must provide credible, honest information (IEDC, 2006). The economic
development practitioner must be a spokesman for the community and a promoter of assets with refined interpersonal skills and professionalism (American Economic Development Council, 1991; IEDC, 2006). These practitioners should be able to adapt to changes in business climates and be well educated on red tape issues such as politics, finances, and regulations (Blair & Carroll, 2009). Also, those professionals charged with retention and expansion efforts have similar responsibilities. These practitioners must be a negotiator or sorts between existing industries and the community and government; they are an advocate for their concerns and a broker between these two entities (IEDC, 2006). The focus of these developers is to assist existing industries in the area with dealing with the enemy, in their opinion, the government (Blair & Carroll, 2009). A mutual trust must be established between economic developer and industry leaders, and also between the practitioner and different area entities such as financial institutions, government bodies (Blair & Carroll, 2009; IEDC, 2006). In terms of personality traits regarding the aforementioned duties, economic development professionals within this category must be trustworthy, social, organized, assertive, confident, and they should have the temperament of a salesman and mediator. Specifically, in regard to Jungian preferences, these professionals are expected to be more oriented to the external environment (Extraversion), directly perceiving (Sensing), make decisions in logical processes (Thinking), and live life in an orderly fashion (Judging). These personality traits differ greatly from those that are associated with newer concepts of economic development.

Entrepreneurial and community developers have different common responsibilities than the previously mentioned traditional professionals. These
practitioners assist, train, teach, and celebrate those small locally owned businesses that are overlooked by traditional strategies of economic development (IEDC, 2006). They provide recognition of achievements and celebrate the success of entrepreneurs in the local area, much as a parent does a child (IEDC, 2006). They act as guide to small business owners “holding their hands” through the process of getting started, but these professionals let entrepreneurs make the decisions and mistakes for themselves showing them what should be learned through the experience. These developers must understand the concerns of the entrepreneur and the community when assisting in enhancing the business or area (Goetz et al., 2009). So, personality characteristics that might be derived from these roles include: nurturing, paternal, patient, empathetic, and compassionate. These professionals should have the character of a teacher or mentor. Individuals within this realm would be expected to orient themselves toward the internal world (Introversion), perceive indirectly through impressions and instincts (Intuition), make decisions subjectively based on personal values (Feeling), and lead a less structured, sporadic lifestyle (Perceiving).

This review of existing literature has demonstrated that personality assessments are a generally accepted psychological testing instrument, and that they can indeed be utilized to predict performance and assist in selecting employees. Personality assessments based on Jungian theory are one of the most used and most efficient tests of this nature. The existing research in economic development has yet to investigate the possibility of utilizing personality assessment in assigning employees to different strategies. However, the literature in the field does provide a nice basis and explanations of roles upon which to structure the use of personality assessment in economic
development. For this study, the researcher hypothesizes that those participants in business recruitment, retention, and expansion will have a lower average score as a group on all four numerical ranges indicating extraversion, sensing, thinking, and judging.

Particularly, the researcher theorizes that Group One will be more externally oriented, make decisions based on direct sensing using the five senses, make impersonal and objective judgments, and live systematical, processed lifestyles. On the other hand, another hypothesis is that the participants identifying with entrepreneurship and community development will have a higher average score as a group on all four numerical ranges indicating introversion, intuitive, feeling, and perceiving. Specifically, Group Two will be more internally oriented, make subjective and value based decisions, and live more sporadic and less systematic lifestyles. These hypotheses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis 1:</th>
<th>Industrial recruiters and retention and expansion professionals (Group 1) will be more extraverted than entrepreneurship and community developers (Group 2).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2:</td>
<td>Industrial recruiters and retention and expansion professionals (Group 1) will be more sensing than entrepreneurship and community developers (Group 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3:</td>
<td>Industrial recruiters and retention and expansion professionals (Group 1) will be more thinking than entrepreneurship and community developers (Group 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4:</td>
<td>Industrial recruiters and retention and expansion professionals (Group 1) will be more judging than entrepreneurship and community developers (Group 2).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

Applicable members listed on the Mississippi Economic Development Council online database were sent a request to participate in this study via email. Out of 384 sent request emails, 76 complete responses were received meaning at 19.8% response rate. They will not be compensated for their participation. The participants were provided the results of the study if such information was requested. The Institutional Review Board has approved this research study prior to beginning data collection (see Appendix B).

Materials

Each participant was emailed the link to an online survey consisting of an informed consent page, a demographic questionnaire, and the Personal Preferences Self-Description Questionnaire (PPSDQ) personality test. This assessment contains 115 questions in a Likert style format of two different types. The first type of question asks participants to choose between two words indicating personal preference of one over the other. For example,

Popularity 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Happiness

The second type of question asks participants to agree or disagree with a statement ranging from one to seven. For example,

I like ice cream.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree
Fifty-five items are of the first type while sixty items are of the second type, and the assessment takes approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The participation request email also offered contact information to participants interested in receiving the results of the study.

Procedure

Before taking the personality assessment, the participants agreed to the terms and descriptions spelled out in the informed consent. Following this agreement, participants moved on to the demographic and basic information questions. These questions included the following:

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Employed in current position ____________ years
4. The majority of your time at work is spent regarding:
   a. ____________ business recruitment, expansion, retention
   b. ____________ entrepreneurial/community development
5. Please rate your opinion of your success in your position 1(lowest) to 5 (highest) _________
6. Please rate how much you enjoy your current position 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) _________.

This short questionnaire served to gather a demographic profile of the participant pool in order to distinguish generalizability of results. These questions also provided the researcher with information regarding the participants own perceived success and happiness in their current employment situation. Most importantly, answering question
four of this section classified participating individuals into the two realms of economic
development for which the researcher hopes to specify differentiating personality
differences.

Once the participants completed the demographic portion, they began the PPSDQ.
Upon completion of this section, results were recorded anonymously through the online
program utilized to host the research survey (www.psychsurveys.org). Each participant,
regardless of which realm of economic development in which they were employed, were
administered the same questionnaires. The participants were evaluated based on which
realm they identified with, and several calculations were performed for each category for
each group. In each category, both groups’ mean and median scores were calculated as
well as the standard deviation and normality measures (kurtosis and skewness). The
differences between both group means were evaluated by computing a t-test for
independent means (Salkind, 2007). These statistical evaluations were performed to
decipher statistical significant differences between the personalities of the two, unrelated
groups.

Limitations

Several limitations have influenced the design of the methods of this research
study. First, the number of professional economic developers within the area and within
the researcher’s network is limited. Twelve was deemed to be an achievable number for
both discussed realms of economic development, and 24 (or numbers close to 24)
participants have been utilized in previous valid studies of a similar nature. A 1990
research study administered a predictive personality assessment to 24 army recruits
applying for nine categories of jobs (McHenry, Hough, Toquam, Hanson, & Ashworth).
Similarly, Goffin and Christiansen (2003) surveyed a participant pool of 36 professionals with publications in their name regarding personality assessment and correcting for faking. The final number of participants that submitted complete survey responses is 77.

A second limitation is that of available personality assessments. While very few legitimate personality assessments are available for free online, the selected one for this study was provided by a member of the psychology faculty. The author of PPSDQ (Thompson, 1996) granted the researcher permission to use the assessment, and Randolph Arnau analyzed the results with the PPSDQ analysis software. The PPSDQ (Thompson, 1996) is based on Jung’s theory of personality types which is supported as a valid basis for personality assessment in the literature.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Applicable members on the Mississippi Economic Development Council online database were sent email requests to participate in this study. Seventy-six complete responses out of 384 request emails were returned including demographic and basic information survey responses which mean a 19.8 % response rate. Over half of the participants (57.89 %) were male, while 42.11 % of respondents were female. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 81 (median age 51.5), with the majority of participants being employed in the current position for over seven years (39.47 %). A large majority of subjects (89.47 %) were Caucasian with 10.53% being African American. When asked about their personal feelings of success in their current position, on a scale of one to five (five being very successful), the majority (57.89 %) selected a four. When requested to relate their enjoyment in their current position, on a scale of one to five (five being very happy) 68.42 % responded with a five. Forty-seven of the respondents placed themselves in the business recruitment, retention, and expansion group with 29 respondents selecting the entrepreneurship and community development group. These results are displayed in Table 3.
Table 3

*Demographic and Basic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Length in Position</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42.11%</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Old</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>23-81</td>
<td>7+ years</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>89.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enjoyment in Position</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Success in Position</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Highest</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
<td>5 Highest</td>
<td>22.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.32%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.95%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.31%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Lowest</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1 Lowest</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each participant was given a numerical score for each of the four constructs. The possible numerical range differs for each category: Extraversion/Introversion 24-168, Sensing/Intuition 27-189, Thinking/Feeling 24-168, and Judging/Perceiving 25-175. Higher scores on each scale correspond to more introversion, more intuition, more feeling, and more perceiving on the respective scale. Lower scores on each scale mean more extroversion, sensing, thinking, and judging. The participants’ responses were separated by realm selection, and mean scores for each group on each construct preference were calculated. Group One (business recruitment, retention, and expansion) had a 72.60 mean score while Group Two (entrepreneurship and community development) showed a mean of 71.07 on the Extraversion/Introversion Scale. On the Sensing/Intuition Scale, Group One showed a 119.43 mean with Group Two having a
123.17 mean score. On the Thinking/Feeling construct, Group One’s mean score equaled 100.30 and Group Two’s mean was 99.34. Group One’s mean score was 85.43 and Group Two’s mean was 87.31 on the Judging/Perceiving construct. Individual participant and group mean results are displayed in Table 4 along with standard deviation and median score calculations for each.

Descriptive statistics were also computed for both groups in each category, and the values of Skewness and Kurtosis are included in Table 4. Salkind (2007) defines skewness as the “measure of the lack of symmetry, or the lopsidedness, of a distribution” (p. 58). Normal skewness would have relatively equal occurrences throughout the entire distribution while positively and negatively skewed results will have higher occurrences of low scores and high scores respectively (Salkind, 2007). Kurtosis is an additional measure of the distribution of results describing how flat or peaked the scores are scattered (Salkind, 2007). Normal kurtotic scores create a bell shaped graph while flatter shapes are more diffused. Largely grouped scores create a taller graph shape. For both skewness and kurtosis, acceptable scores fall between 1.00 and -1.00 indicating relatively normal distribution of result scores.
### Table 4

*Individual Results and Group Calculations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra/Intr</th>
<th>Sens/Intui</th>
<th>Think/Feel</th>
<th>Judge/Perc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Group 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>115.00</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extra/Intr</th>
<th>Sens/Intui</th>
<th>Think/Feel</th>
<th>Judge/Perc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SD</em></td>
<td>16.45</td>
<td>15.62</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>13.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median</td>
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<td>99.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>72.60</td>
<td>119.43</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualitative differences between groups one and two for each of the four constructs were not found to be substantial statistically. The researcher performed a t-test between Groups One and Two for each of the four categories to determine if the differences between groups are statistically significant. Scores were determined to show a statistically significant difference (p < .05). For the Extraversion/Introversion variable p = 0.79 while for Sensing/Intuition p = 0.33. Within the Thinking/Feeling construct p = 0.77, and for Judging/Perceiving p = 0.63. Since all four categories resulted in a t-test of p > .05, the differences between the groups are so miniscule that they may be due to chance. These t-test results are displayed for each of the four categories in Table 5.
Table 5

*T-test Results (p < .05)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraversion/Introversion</th>
<th>Variable 1</th>
<th>Variable 2</th>
<th>Thinking/Feeling</th>
<th>Variable 1</th>
<th>Variable 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>72.59574468</td>
<td>71.46428571</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>100.2978723</td>
<td>99.34482759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>270.4634598</td>
<td>360.40606847</td>
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CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

This study attempted to discern whether or not personality assessment can be an effective way of directing economic development professionals to those jobs they would be best suited for success. The researcher tried to do this by unearthing a distinction in the personality characteristics among existing economic development professionals in the two separate realms of (a) business recruitment, retention and expansion or (b) entrepreneurship and community development. This research asked participants to distinguish within which realm they worked and then complete a personality assessment, the PPSDQ. The researcher aimed to find distinct differences between economic developers in either realm similar to those personality characteristics suggested by previous research. It was suggested that those professionals in recruitment, retention, and expansion would be confident, well-organized, knowledgeable, and honest with the character of a salesman. This led to a hypothesis that these professionals would be more extraverted, sensing, thinking, and judging. Previous research also suggests that entrepreneurship and community developers will have the persona of a mentor or parent being nurturing, patient, concerned, and escorting. This led to a secondary hypothesis that these economic development professionals would have more introverted, intuitive, feeling, and perceiving results from the PPSDQ. Statistical results show that these hypotheses may not be correct.

Group One (recruitment, retention, and expansion) displays a mean of 72.60 on the Extraversion/Introversion construct (numerical range of 24-168 with a middle value of 72) while Group Two (entrepreneurship and community development) had a mean of
While both of these mean scores are in the middle of the numerical range between extraversion and introversion, Group Two’s mean is lower than Group One. On the Sensing/Intuition construct, Group One’s mean score equaled 119.43 while Group Two’s was 123.17 on a numerical range of 27-189 (middle value 81). Both group means are much higher than the middle value indicating professionals in both realms are more intuitive than sensing. The mean for Group One on the Thinking/Feeling preference was 100.30 and Group Two’s was 99.34. This category’s numerical range spans from 24-168 (middle value 72) which means that, again, both group means are well above the middle value. Lastly, on the Judging/Perceiving construct with a numerical range from 25-175 (middle value 75), Group One’s mean was 85.43 while Group Two’s equaled 87.30.

Although on some constructs, the means between groups differ slightly, the results of the t-tests intimate that none of these differences are significant. This statistical analysis makes it impossible to guarantee that the between group differences in means is not due to chance. These results intimate that, in contrast to the hypotheses, industrial recruitment, retention, and expansion professionals and entrepreneurship and community developers should be in fact considered one, homogenous group. It seems a false dichotomy exists between these two sectors of economic development, and they should be investigated as a whole.

These results indicate that as a whole, economic development professionals are a similar group with personality characteristics consistent throughout the entity. Through evaluating the distribution of scores on all constructs for both groups, some qualitative deductions are possible. Both groups’ scores were distributed along the middle of the range of possible scores on the extraversion/introversion scale meaning that that both
groups are somewhere in the center between being internally and externally oriented. However, both groups scored highly on the sensing/intuition and thinking/feeling scales indicating higher identification with the intuition and feeling entities. This indicated that all subjects feel they make judgments based on gut feelings, hunches and first impressions. This also indicates that all participants believe they make subjective decisions usually based on morals or ethic. These results offer interesting implications intimating that all economic development professionals share these common personality traits. The distribution of scores on the judging/perceiving construct fell near the middle value of the possible numerical range indicating that the majority of participants felt in between leading an organized, processed life and a more sporadic, irregular lifestyle. In summation, the entire group of participants scored closer to the way the researcher expected entrepreneurship and community developers to score. Group distributions for each of the four categories are depicted in Appendix A on histogram graphs.

Although p-scores indicate no statistical significance, the study’s results are still interesting due to the information provided by previous literature. The majority of previous research within the field of economic development leads one to believe that developers in the two realms designated in this study would have distinctly varying personalities. Industrial recruiters and retention and expansion professionals have been described as marketers of a community, promoters, salesmen, and brokers between businesses and the law (IEDC, 2006). Conversely, community developers and entrepreneurship cultivators are described as facilitators of collaboration, mentors, guides, and paternal figures (IEDC, 2006). So, why do these statistical results illustrate a different conclusion? Perhaps the variation in personalities is not a distinctly measurable
value or a distinction does not exist. The results point toward a false dichotomy in assuming two distinct entities exist within the field of economic development. Another possibility is that those professionals who distribute personality characteristics not demonstrated in the resulting data self-selected themselves out of the study and opted not to participate in the survey. For example, since introversion is relatively exempt in the study’s results, those economic development professionals who in fact are more internally based did not desire to participate.

Another possible explanation of the surprising results of this study is the wave theory of economic development. The progress within the field of economic development has been described in three waves. This metaphor is used to incorporate the idea that waves on the sand build upon each other as have the three movements within economic development. The first wave includes the practice of attracting outside industries into a community largely through the offering of incentives (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). The second wave begins to incorporate the entity of business retention and expansion along with new business incubation. The third wave focuses on the labor force, networking, regionalism, globalization, and clustering of businesses and is considered the newest, still emerging methodology (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002). These three waves are considered to all still play a part in the practice of economic development and build upon one another to create strategic plans for development. Since all three methods are still in existence, perhaps economic developers still perform tasks in all three areas of economic development. If economic developers indeed maintain responsibilities in many different facets of the field, splitting economic development into two realms would be counterproductive.
As is common regarding research design, this study exhibits several limitations. First, in order to get data for this study, economic development professional were requested to make a small time commitment. The results might be different if the researcher were able to administer more than one personality assessment measuring different personality characteristics in different manners. A similar limitation is the high cost of and access to many personality assessments. While the PPSDQ has been shown to be reliable and valid, the assessment is relatively short and measures only four preferences (Arnau et al., 2003). Second, a more diversified subject pool may provide different results; the participants in this study were mainly white and all living in the state of Mississippi. Third, while 77 responses are more than what was expected, a larger sample size would also create different, more generalizable results. Fourth, since the PPSDQ is a self-report method administered online, participants may have randomly answered the assessment instead of actually evaluating the content. Also, the responses may have been distorted by subjects desiring to answer in a more socially acceptable way. Response distortion has been suggested to present itself in both well-adjusted and deceiving manners (Barrick & Mount, 1996). While necessary to consider as a limitation, response distortion may not guarantee altered predictive validity (Tett & Christiansen, 2007). Fifth, previous research utilizing the PPSDQ on different populations and in different contexts is very limited. This creates the issue of limited comparability of this study’s results to additional, previously evaluated groups. The results of this study would provide greater insight with a control group of sorts to evaluate data against.
Future research in this area should attempt to acquire more participants of a more diversified background. Also, qualitative information gathering in the form of personal interviews may be a more appropriate manner in which to study this distinction between realms in the future. Structured conversations with professionals within the two different realms may lead to more insight into daily activities, responsibilities, and tasks therefore into the personality traits of these developers. In future studies, the splitting of the field of economic development into two realms should be reevaluated. Perhaps further study should focus upon varying personalities among different job titles (i.e., project manager versus local mainstreet director). By continuing research striving to distinguish among personalities within the field of economic development, this discipline can better understand its own professionals and job responsibilities. Therefore, economic developers could then be provided with better direction when searching for jobs or when hiring potential clients. Once these differences in personality characteristics are understood, personality assessments can be implemented to systematize the employee selection process within economic development. Other researchers interested in this topic should also consider evaluating the personality characteristics of an economic developer in general rather than splitting the field in two and investigating the individual entities.
APPENDIX A

SCORE DISTRIBUTION HISTOGRAMS

**ExtInt Group 1**

**ExtInt Group 2**

**SensInt Group 1**
APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board
118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6020
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the “Adverse Effect Report Form”.
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
- Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11042804
PROJECT TITLE: The Application of Personality Assessment to Suggest Appropriate Employment in Various Fields within Economic Development
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 02/01/2011 to 06/10/2011
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Brittanai Plaisance
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Scient & Technology
DEPARTMENT: Department of Economic and Workforce Development
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 06/02/2011 to 06/01/2012

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

Date
REFERENCES


