Department of Psychology

The Role of Implicit Processes in Personnel Selection

- A phenomenological study of implicit processes and the hidden role they play in personnel selectors' decision making.

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Abstract

Many selection methodologies and tools have been developed in attempts to make recruitment processes more accurate and to improve objectivity in this area. However, these methods and tools can only improve objectivity to the extent that they are not affected by unconscious feelings, or implicit processes used by the recruiter. The purpose of this study is to try to discover in what way intuition seems to affect recruitment and personnel selection in the initial meeting between two people. In order to do this we have interpreted professional recruiters' use of language when discussing intuition and its role in the personnel assessment process, and also during a practical photograph selection task. We did this with the help of MCA-Minerva, software specially developed for this cause. Although there was too little information on which to draw conclusions, we felt that further research might strengthen the impressions that trained recruiters were more likely to resist the use of implicit processes.

We have adopted a phenomenological methodology so as to remain as loyal to the phenomenon as possible in its actual context. Today's job market leaves little room for error on behalf of the employer or prospective employee in selection issues. We hope that our research and conclusions will raise awareness and make helpful suggestions in this important facet of personnel recruitment.

Key words
Implicit processes
Intuition
Personnel selection
Recruitment

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1. Introduction

Our decision to examine the process of recruitment, and the effect of implicit processes on this subject, is based upon our personal interest in the processes of personnel selection and recruiting methods.

There are well-defined selection methodologies available for recruiters to try to make selection processes more accurate; and tools and aids to improve objectivity in this area. Personnel selection is not a science and these methods and tools can only improve objectivity to the extent that they are not affected by unconscious feelings, or, implicit processes used by the recruiter. In this study we have concentrated on the effects of impressions experienced in the initial meeting between two people, and the extent to which judgements based on these impressions may affect outcomes.

Our chosen methodology was a qualitative one: it allowed us to focus on relatively few individuals with extremely relevant experience. In order to minimise the effect of our own interviewing and questioning techniques on this extremely sensitive area, we used a phenomenological approach that reduced the chances of our unintentionally interfering with the outcome. The principles of phenomenology are explained later in this essay. The disadvantage of not being able to ask questions that would direct the interview towards the subject of core interest is that a great deal of irrelevant information was also captured in the interview stage. Great patience was required not to steer the conversation and thus 'put words into the subject's mouth'!

Without posing the questions directly, we wanted to analyse how recruiters expressed their thoughts about the possibility of intuition's influence on their selection of suitable employees. Did they or did they not, for example, believe that their intuition affected their judgement? How did they define intuition? How did they reason in situations when they didn't have anything other than their intuition to rely upon? We also wished to look for differences between large and small companies, between private companies and public sector organisations, professional recruiters and managers, and interviewers recruiting alternatively for their own employers or for others, we later refer to these different categorise as "dimensions".

1.1. Purpose of the Research

'Best practice' in personnel selection usually calls for a rigorous attempt to make judgements based on pre-defined criteria and objective observations and deductions. Common sense says

that people judging people will always have a natural tendency to make decisions based on their own experiences and prejudices and will often project these judgements on to the candidate. The purpose of the research is to try to discover if this is happening when people with a recruiting role are making judgements. Further, is there a difference between what they say that they do, and what we believe that they actually do in practice?

The answers may lead us to believe that the interviewers in our sample are aware of the pitfalls and avoid them; or that implicit processes do creep in to their everyday recruitment decisions.

We believe that this is an important area for research since it is worse to use intuition unknowingly than either to not use it, or to use it to a limited extent intentionally when necessary.

1.2. Phenomenology

We made a decision to apply a phenomenological research approach to our study as it is a method that increases our chances of accuracy in our results. The reasons for this, we judge, are that professional recruiters are less likely to admit to the importance of implicit processes in their decision making if they are asked questions that force them to admit to the extent of their reliance upon them. Professional recruiters, we reason, have learned processes for decision making in their sphere that they know to be 'correct'. Our chosen methodology makes it less obvious that we are looking at the extent to which they use 'incorrect' processes – something that we feel they would have a bias against revealing. The initial invitation to our meetings with them explained our subject area and we both felt that the bias described above was in evidence from the beginning of the discussion; after a short time of careful listening without posing direct and 'revealing' questions, we felt that initial aim became less overt and that the interviews reflected actual opinions and attitudes more accurately.

Phenomenology is based on Edmund Husserl's doctrine based on the "intentional object", originally created as an attempt to resist sceptical attacks on rationality. The theory presumes that nothing exists without being experienced through human consciousness, which extends as far as preconscious and unconscious processes. Phenomenology's main endeavour is to remain as loyal to the phenomenon as possible in its actual context and therefore all study of the phenomenon must be based on first-hand experiences "in the now". (Karlsson, 1993)

Phenomenology demands an attitudinal shift called Epoché, which means bracketing. Imagine the interviewer being "within brackets" so as to remain as non-interfering and objective as possible. This approach requires that the experimenter places himself outside of the phenomenon that he is studying. Thus insulated from the subject's own thoughts, values and views, the researcher can build a true picture of the interviewee's opinions without interfering with their purity. The experimenter must leave all previous notions and prejudice to one side and fully experience the phenomenon without judging or influencing it. The goal of this is to establish the individuals life-world. According to Husserl the life-world depicts

"(…) the experience of interrelated meanings-gestalt- that is bound up in a totality. In other words, the human realm essentially entails embodied, conscious relatedness to a personal world of relatedness. Human meanings are the key to the study of lived experiences, not causal variables. In a nutshell, phenomenology insists that the daffodils are indeed different for a wandering poet then they are for a hard-pressed horticulturist" (Smith, 2003)(p.13)

Phenomenology is typically adopted in form of interviews, diaries or other forms of free association that allow the subject of the experiment to give a free-flowing and precise description of their personal experiences. The technique is descriptive and demands that the experimenter ask probing, general questions like "why?" and "how?" in order to find the phenomenon's essential structure. (Smith, 2003)

1.2.1 Validity

Phenomenological research tradition is quite different from the traditional positivistic conception of science. A phenomenological oriented human science research relies on quite different, and sometimes even an opposite set of ontological principles than traditional positivistic research. Despite this, both methods struggle against validity issues in different ways and therefore also must adopt different approaches in order to handle those problems.

Validity concerns the logical connection between the researcher's purpose of the examination and his choice of method. Due to some issues concerning the phenomenological method, problems with validity can and probably will occur.

The aim of validation, from the perspective of phenomenology, is that the understanding of the individual's life-world experiences should come strictly from the point

of view of the individual himself and fit with the theoretical frame of references for the development of the ontological and methodological reflections of Husserlian phenomenology. The lived experience of the individual is considered to be the sole source of valid knowledge. (Lindén & Szybeck, 2003).

As phenomenological research is based on a kind of retrospective description, it is important to be aware of the possibility of error and deceit on the part of the participant. The phenomenological interest is in how the participant experienced situations even if they come through memorial modes because the manner in which situations stand out in memory is also psychologically revealing. The double possibility of error (memory and perception of original situation) does not imply any severe obstacles as long as the participant bases no claims solely on how situations were experienced or remembered. In other words, strong epistemological claims are made only for how things presented themselves to the experiences, not for how they actually were (Smith, 2003).

With longer interviews, as in our case, it usually becomes apparent that something is not quite right. Again, the use of the phenomenological reduction is helpful here since the epistemological claim is only for the experiential structures and not deceitfully contrived ones.

The research within the phenomenological attitude is usually discovery-oriented rather than hypothesis-proving or theory-testing which could also prohibit deceit. That is, the researcher does not base his study on any specific hypothesis or theory in advance, so it is difficult to know why deceit would motivate the participant, unless it was simply to cover up personal failures or embarrassments. (Smith, 2003)

A vulnerability that is quite obvious with this method is the fact that the whole process seems to be dependent upon the researcher's subjectivity. This is especially true regarding the researcher's attempt to interpret the participants' life-worlds.

1.3. Presentation of Theories

This study focuses on what way selectors express their thoughts regarding the possibility of their being influenced by their preconceptions when it comes to selecting suitable employees. Therefore we describe the process of implicit processes and also theories about how the process of personnel selection should be performed, however little research can be found on the interaction of the two.

1.3.1. Implicit Processes

Recruitment and personnel selection is for many reasons an uncertain process. From an early age we have learned to make intuitive judgements about people and it can be imagined that this is an important skill to learn and improve at all stages of human development and human interaction. There are risks however in relying on intuition to an inappropriate degree in the selection process, and even greater risks if the interviewer is unaware of the extent to which the implicit processes are at play. In an extreme case, if a recruiter relies solely on his or her intuition, a person without the required specific competence but with an attractive and charming personality (for example), may be more likely to be selected for a role than a person with the right qualifications who has made less impact at the implicit or intuitive level.

Definition of Implicit Processes.

Implicit processes occur unconsciously and can be determinates of our thoughts, feelings, opinions and choices.

Recruitment and personnel selection involve many different cognitive processes, examples of these are decision making in general and problem solving. The problems of decision making in the selection process are often of lack of information. Ideally we would judge a person's suitability for a job only after he or she had performed the role for a period of time. Clearly this is impossible and so we are continually looking for ways to introduce more certainty into the process of guessing what will happen in the future. Research has shown that peoples' ways of making decisions have certain, systematic preconceptions. These processes are called "cognitive illusions". Another relevant cognitive process is implicit memory: this occurs when our memory unconsciously affects our behaviour. (Galotti, 2004)

We collect information in everyday life from our surrounding environment in order to help us interpret our world. Human beings use rational optimisation to simplify interaction with the world around them. That is to say that we are "homo economicus", meaning that we are rational decision makers that rely on simple heuristics. There are several different factors that affect the cognitive processes that underlie our judgements: two of these are our exemplar memory and rule-based cue abstraction.

Generally speaking, multiple-cue judgements are based on only a few cues, but research also shows that judgements are often inconsistent and that judges frequently have

insufficient knowledge about the processes of the underlying judgement. These are processed with both intuitive and analytical thoughts, this is called quasi rationality (Olsson, 2004). This is of relevance for the process of personnel selection as the recruiter usually gains a first impression of everyone he meets and is tempted to, at least initially, categorize them. As part of the personnel selector's responsibilities he is still expected to make an objective decision of who is the most suitable employee.

Imperfections in judgement sometimes arise from limitations in the working memory's capacity. These heuristics can cause cognitive biases and systematic errors relative to other normative models. Human categorisation relies on a structure of sets of mental rules that consign to a number of explicit features of the objects intentional, conscious and inhibited cognitive processes and portrayals that are explicit cue-criterion rules that represent non-figurative knowledge that is retrieved from the semantic memory. Rule-based cue abstraction is about retrieving precise rules or criteria from memory to determine which elements must be present in order for something to deserve a specific name. Exemplar models assume that the participants make their judgements by retrieving similar examples from the long term memory. Exemplar memory is rapid; similarity-based and relies on holistic memory traces primarily retrieved from episodic memory. An example of this is one's ability to draw a conclusion about an object or a phenomenon, based on something else that is already determined. (Olsson, 2004).

1.3.2. Methodologies of Personnel Selection

The purpose of a Personnel Selection process is to aid in the systematic selection of suitable employees for given roles. A sound process of recruitment and personnel selection is described in "Arbetsanalys och personbedömning", by Kahlke and Schmidt. In this they describe the systematic process of personnel selection as a series of distinct but linked subject areas. The following text describes these steps in the objective and non-intuitive selection of personnel for employment.

Job analysis and description.

The process is initiated with the job analysis, which is the systematic compilation of information about a given role. The goal of a job analysis is to create a clear and coherent picture of which key criteria must be fulfilled in order to be able to perform the job and thus, in the next stage, to be tested for in the applicant. It must be performed before any decisions

can sensibly be made on an appropriate assessment tool, or interview method, or areas of questioning.

When deciding which competences must be present in the successful applicant it can be useful to consider the following definition. Competence refers to a set of characteristics possessed by a person, revealed in the form of behaviour repertoires, which give us grounds to believe that a person can successfully handle a given situation, role or work. Competence can be observed as performance (behaviour) or as a result of performance. Competence is also determined by intentionality, that is to say what one aspires to achieve and the behaviour one has employed in order to arrive at a final goal. (Kalhke & Smith 2002)

Thorough job analysis increases the amount of objective information available about the role and reduces the temptation for an employer to recruit against a preconceived view of the person required to fill the role, especially based on stereotypes or previous jobholders.

Applicant assessment.

The effectiveness of an applicant assessment methodology can be shown by its reliability and forecast validity. A high-quality selection method is reliable: this means that one can trust it to give the same depiction of a person when used repeatedly. A high-quality selection method also has a high degree of forecast validity, that is to say it assesses what it is meant to assess. The method should enable the interviewer to recognise suitable and unsuitable applicants. (Cook, 2004), (Prien, 1992)

Each applicant's abilities to perform the component items listed in the job analysis are now to be judged. Some required competencies will be judged as mandatory, which is to say that their absence in any applicant must lead to his rejection. Some competencies will be 'nice to haves' or present in different degrees; ability to measure these for comparison becomes important where the present / not present does not suffice.

One can judge the applicant's abilities in several ways, for example paper qualifications are a good measure of the exact trait that they are designed to measure. Other methods open to us include the following: interviews, ability testing, taking up references, etc. There are few techniques within personnel selection that are totally independent of the recruiter's experience and judgement but some tests can increase objectivity. Examples of these are: personality-, cognitive- and intelligence-tests, group-exercises, presentation assignments and simulation practices. Where tests are to be used the recruiters must also ask

themselves if the test is reliable or has any real prediction capacity. If the test has weaknesses one must be particularly critical and be careful not to draw false conclusions (Mabon, 2002).

The reason for outlining the above two distinct steps is to reinforce that professional selection theory or "best practice" insists on rigorous role definition and then assessment of the candidate against that specification. It does not favour intuitive or spontaneous judgements based on little evidence but impressions or intuitions.

1.3.3. The Qualitative Interview

Because of the subtlety of the information that we were trying to gain, we decided that using a quantitative analysis with a large sample group and, for example, by questionnaire was inappropriate. Instead we employed a qualitative interview methodology. This means that we contacted a focussed group of those that were involved in recruitment processes for a significant part of their work life, and that were, of course, willing to cooperate with this study.

As preparation for making the qualitative interviews as possible we studied a great deal of academic literature on the subject. By reading books on personnel selection and the steps involved in recruitment, we built a knowledge base so as to ensure our full understanding and to maximize our ability to pick out relevant material when interviewing. This background knowledge was then used as a "schedule" to help us to categorize the topics than arose during the meeting.

Apart from a brief description on what our study was about, the informant was told very little prior to the interview so as to avoid in any way colouring their expectations. The subject was asked to describe their personal experiences of personnel recruitment and to explain the process of selection. Thereafter we said very little and allowed the subject to explain freely the elements of their job that they thought most relevant.

This technique is called a semi-structured interview. The interviewer's initial aim is to confirm the subject of interest, and to put the interviewee at ease: thereafter our function was solely as a guide rather than a leader. By having properly prepared our "schedule" we could concentrate on what the subject was saying, and map it in our heads against the categories in the predetermined schedule. If at anytime the subject seemed unsure we provided cues so as to encourage the respondent, but were careful not to colour how the interview proceeded. (Smith, 2003)

So as to ensure that the entire content of the interview was captured objectively each interview was recorded. Thereafter we transcribed the interviews word for word, in order to transfer them to MCA-Minerva, a description of which will follow further on.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

In a quantitative study the researchers work with small samples because the aim is to describe details about a particular group of people instead of making general claims for larger populations. This requirement for detail takes a long time per interview and it is therefore often better to concentrate on a smaller group. It follows too that the sample is often homogeneous rather than heterogeneous (Smith, 2003*)*.

In determining sample size we were solely interested in gaining knowledge on how professional recruiters experience personnel selection and recruitment, not the experiences of people in general. A general rule that should be applied when determining the sample size is that it should be just large enough to provide enough information about the peoples' thoughts and experiences so as to enable comparisons of both similarities and differences among the participants. The sample size is also, to a certain extent, determined by the amount of people actually willing to participate in the study. (Smith, 2003) For our study we contacted a number of professional recruiters either by mail or by calling them, and ended up with a total of six willing interviewees who would invest their time to share with us their experiences and opinions. Two companies declined our request to interview them.

As mentioned previously a secondary goal of the study was to find any similarities or differences between experiences related to the subject's role an employer. For example: large and small companies, and between private companies and public sector organisations, etc., etc. Table 1 shows which categories the sample's respondents fell into according to our categorisation.

Table 1.

Analysis of Respondents by Role and Employer

Subject	Large/ Small Company	Public/ Private	Professional Recruiter	Recruits for own Employer?
A	large	private	yes	no
B	large	private	yes	yes
C	large	private	no	yes
D	small	public	no	yes
E	large	private	yes	no
F	small	private	no	yes

Note. Letters A-F refer to our interviewees

2.2 Data Collection Method

Before we began interviewing the participants, we established how much time we had at our disposal and explained how the interview was going to be executed. The interviews lasted approximately an hour to an hour-and-a-half, during this time the interviewees openly informed us about their views on personnel selection and were also able to give a description of their recruiting procedure in total. The interviews were carried out one on one.

The key characteristic of a semi-structured interview is that the researcher has a good idea of the areas that he wants to cover ("the schedule") and even what answers would be interesting but, due to his phenomenological approach, is not allowed to ask questions about these specific areas or to guide the discussion in any way. The interview's content should solely reflect the interviewee's life-world.

In essence the respondent can be perceived as the expert on the subject and should be allowed, without any boundaries, to tell their personal story (Smith, 2003). In order to do this we began each interview with a general question about recruitment, for example "How do you go about selecting conceivable employees?" A general question, like this one, is usually enough to help people begin to talk about the subject. As interviewer it is important to facilitate and guide the interviewees through the interview by for example reflective

listening or summarizing in a positive way what the respondent has said or by non-verbal prompts.

2.3. Material

2.3.1. Tape Recording and Transcription

It was necessary that we used a tape recorder in our interviews, so that we could transcribe them at a later stage: the interviewees were informed of this in advance, so as to ensure that there were no objections. Tape recording allowed us to fully listen to what the person said without the distraction of trying to make a transcript simultaneously.

Attempting to make notes leads to the risk that only segments of the interview are noted and only the general gist is apparent- therefore missing out on crucial nuances. Writing during the interview also makes it harder for the interviewer to guide the interviewee so that the interview runs as smoothly as possible.

Disadvantages with using a tape recorder include the risk that non-verbal language clues may be missed and that the transcription of the interview is based on a process of interpretation by the researcher (Smith, 2003).

The six interview transcriptions consisted of a word for word flowing text directly from the tape, including our questions, false starts, significant pauses, laughs etc. Each transcription took approximately seven to nine hours to complete.

2.3.2. Photograph task

To gain a greater understanding about how the recruiters used intuition in the process of personnel selection we presented the following table of fourteen purposely-selected photographs to the interviewees. (See Appendix B). The people in the photographs were chosen to represent possible widely different backgrounds; it is important to note, though, that no other information was presented. The recruiters were then asked to choose one of these people in the photographs for a given role and then to justify why they chose that person in particular. The purpose of these was to see whether they would make a choice based on what should have been perceived by them as insufficient data, and then to see how they attempted to justify their choice.

2.4. Data Analysis Procedure

The data which we collected consisted of interviews from six participants and our goal was to try to better understand their life-worlds. In order to do this we needed to perform a deeper analysis of the data that we had transcribed from each interview. The chosen tool and methodology for this is MCA-Minerva (Meaning Constitution Analysis) based on Husserl's phenomenology that has been developed by Roger Sages at the department for work and organizational psychology, at Lund University. We chose to use MCA-Minerva due to its suitability for phenomenological text analysis. The following section describes how it was used and its importance to this type of research.

2.5. Meaning Constitution Analysis

MCA-Minerva's aim is to detect patterns within individuals' ways of expressing meaning and to find potential correlations between different "meaning constitutions" of a particular phenomenon.

After our tutor had instructed us in the use of MCA-Minerva and we had read the appropriate literature on the subject, we were able to commence our analysis.

The analysis phase.

In *Qualitative psychology*, the author (Smith, 2003) emphasise the importance of knowing the global sense of the text, which one is going to analyse, before one continues with the procedure. This then was our first step: to understand the whole, and to identify those items that required analysis in MCA-Minerva. In the beginning of the analysis phase of the text, one must focus on breaking the text up into smaller meaning units. A meaning unit is a unit that expresses some kind of meaning and each one describes something in a person's life-world. This initial step is called the application of the epochè, it demands that the text should be segmented in every instance the researcher detects even the smallest shift in meaning: this increases the accuracy of the analysis. The meaning does not have to be divided in a grammatically correct way. (Lundsten & Sages, 2004)

Example: "*I prefer reading to watching TV.*"

In this case meaning unit 1 could be '*I prefer reading*", and meaning unit 2 could be '*to watching TV*".

There are no objective meaning units in the text, they are in fact all related to the researcher's attitudes. What really matters is how the meaning units are transformed and not their size. (Smith, 2003).

The next step is a second application of the epochè. At this stage every meaning unit must be categorized with a modality, of which there are seven to choose from: *belief, time, affect, function, will, property,* and *subject*. Each of these has a number of sub-headings that require further analysis and categorisation. (Lundsten & Sages, 2004)

An example would be the following: in the modality belief one can choose from the categories doxa-affirmation, doxa-negation, probability, possibility and question. *'I prefer reading"* is doxa-affirmation, because the meaning unit is expressed without any hesitation. By categorizing each meaning unit we gained a deeper and more objective insight to what the informants were really saying. After careful consideration together with our supervisor we decided only to use the modalities *belief, time, affect and function* as they were the most relevant to our study. In this phase the researcher is forced to place all previous knowledge to one side, and make a conscious effort to remain open minded toward the new information that is revealed in the text.

The third step of this procedure, is called the application of the phenomenological reduction, and involves segmenting the text into the partial intentions that form the constituted meaning. Every partial intention must be derived from the pure meaning obtained by the epochè and every main entity must be emphasised by the partial intention. To do this each unit is given one or more partial intentions, which in turn are given one entity and one predicate each. This is illustrated below in Table 2. The important thing to remember about this step is to segment the units into as small a pieces as possible in order to avoid the researchers forming an opinion that isn't entirely based on facts. (Sages, 1998)

The interpretative phase.

When the analysis phase is finished the phenomenological interpretative phase of the text begins. In this phase the structuring of the obtained partial intentions leads to the formation of the noematic kernel. The first step in this interpretative phase is to define the constitution of the noema. In each partial intention that can be identified there is an entity; this is determined during the synthesis of the noematic kernel. However before explaining this further we will attempt to clarify what an entity is. As explained by Sages, in Papers and articles, an entity is something that appears to "exist" for the individual and the interpretative stage demands that everything that is tied to an entity should be accounted for in all its found variations. The

words and expressions used to speak of the entities, which are called predicates, are tied to their respective entities and highlight their meanings as experienced by the respondent. In other words, this step is about concluding the information that the entities gave us.

Table 2.

Example of Meaning Unit: "I prefer reading"

Entity	Predicate
I	who exists
I	who prefer something
I	who prefer reading

The second step in the interpretative phase is called the synthesis of the modalities. This entails that the researcher forms a description of how the individual expresses himself in the different modalities. This is carried out by placing the modalities in relation to the groups of entities and predicates which has been described in the previous steps. In other words, the researcher selects the entities and predicates which he considers relevant. Thereafter it is time to present those modalities, which constitutes each entity and predicate: this procedure also involves a short interpretation of what all of this means. An example, which was mentioned above, is the entity '*I*' and the predicate '*who prefer reading*' these could be interpreted as that "somebody" has a definite opinion about something *(doxa-affirmation),* the meaning unit is expressed in a way that leaves no room for further questions. "Somebody" also expresses himself in concrete terms *(perceptive),* and the meaning unit is expressed with a positive affect and it is directed to the future *(positive-prospective).*

Hereby the researcher gains a picture of the intended object as the respondent intends it in its full richness, the complete noema, in other words synthesis of the complete noema, which is the third step of the interpretative phase. The synthesis is done in order to single out the horizons of comprehension, what they contain, and what we can see through them. (Sages, 1998)

The fourth step in interpretation is called *formulation of the horizon.* In this step one searches after a greater insight to what the individual actually thinks regarding a specific subject. At this point it is crucial that the researcher chooses the entities and predicates that

are relevant to the individual and the research inquiry. A horizon has a structure, which includes past experiences that are necessary for meaning constitution as well as future experiences. Finally, in order to gain a complete understanding of what an entity means to a certain person, the researcher is to interpret the chosen predicates (Sages, 1998).

The fifth and final step in the interpretative analysis is called *Formulation of the life-world,* and gives the researcher an opportunity to gain insight into the life-world of the individual, and how their surrounding world is constructed and experienced. This step is executed by considering the totality of the horizons. The aim here is to summarize and describe all the information that has been collected concerning the individuals and their thoughts concerning a specific phenomenon. (Sages, 1998)

3. Outcomes

In this section we will present the outcomes of our interviews. We performed six interviews that we have thereafter analysed in MCA-Minerva, in order to gain a deeper insight into the informants' subjective life-worlds and their significance in the personnel selection process.

The section begins with a presentation of the participants' thoughts on intuition followed by a presentation of a MCA-Minerva analysis of their comments on the photograph task. The informants are labelled A-F so as to seclude their identities. For the same reason we use the term he/she to maintain the confidentiality of each participant.

We have documented the following outcomes for each informant:

1. A bar chart describing the informants distribution of modalities
2. An explanation of the modality figures.
3. A short conclusion of how we have interpreted the statistics of modalities, regarding the candidates' general views and tendency to speak of intuition or the photographs.
4. Some examples of each informant's Entity-Predicate, regarding both intuition and the photographs represented in a number of themed tables.
5. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate.
6. An interpretation of the Life-world.

An explanation of the modalities, a short description of each photograph and a summary of the life-worlds can be found in Appendix B, C & E

3.1. Outcomes of Intuition

3.1.1. Outcomes for Informant A

Figure 1. This figure depicts respondent A's modalities (intuition)
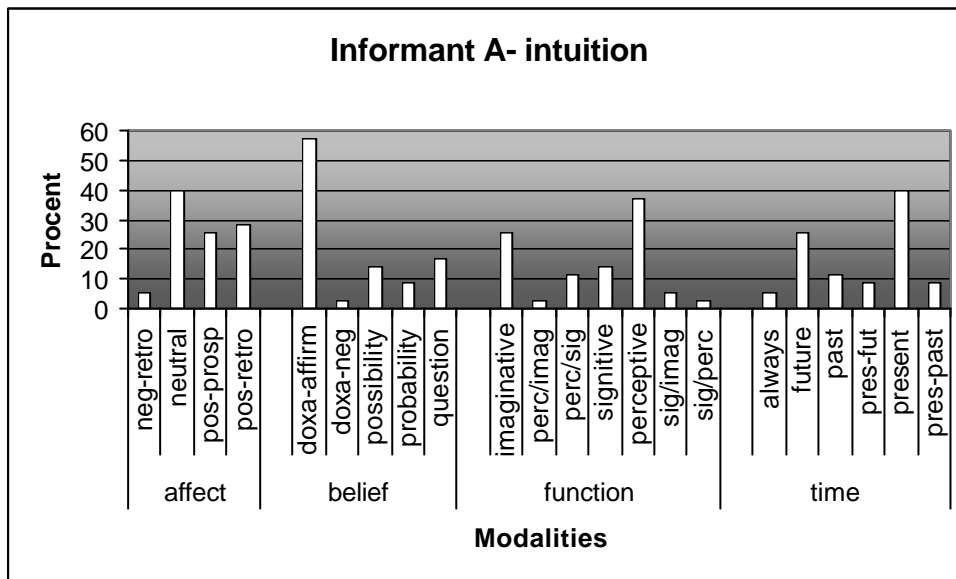
Note. **Affect:** A large proportion of affect meaning units are positive, both retrospectively (28,57%) and prospectively (25,71%). However the majority of the affect modalities were neutral (40%). None of the meaning units within that category and negative-prospective and a very small percentage are negative-retrospective (5,71%). **Belief:** The belief modality shows that the majority of meaning units are stated in the doxa-affirmative form (57.14%). Only one unit was a doxa-negation (2,86%). **Function:** Perceptive is the dominating modality for function with a total of 37,14%. Perceptive is also the most used modality in the units that are "combination modalities" eg. Perceptive-signitive (11.43%). Imaginative is also has a high percentage (25,71%). **Time:** The time modality shows that the present is the most common form of unit (40%).

3.1.1.1. Conclusion of Modalities

From the modalities one can interpret that A speaks in *positive* terms when discussing intuition, a total of 54,28% of his "intuition- affects" were *positive* modalities. This leads us to the conclusion that not only is he/she confident about his judgements in the past, but is also sure about him/herself in his/her future role in relation to intuition. His/her exceptional high percentage of *doxa-affirmative* meaning units tells us that Informant A speaks without hesitation of their views on intuition. This is probably due to the fact that A was particularly

aware of his/her own weak points and had no problem in discussing these in an honest and upfront manner. The *function* of A's meaning units were, to a great extent, *perceptive,* meaning that he/she stated his/her views in concrete terms. This is because A gave many examples and presented tangible instances to describe their impressions of intuition. His/her tendency to give examples and draw parallels however, are most likely also the source of his noticeable use of *imaginative* modalities, as attempted to describe cases in which the intuition would have relevance.

3.1.1.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 3.

Theme: intuition

Entity	Predicate
Gut feeling	that one naturally must go on
Personal chemistry	that can be perfect

Table 4.

Theme: impression

Entity	Predicate
Impression	that someone can get
Register	that someone can when someone comes through the door
Body language	that is wrong

Table 5.

Theme: Physical aspects

Entity	Predicate
Handshake	which is how
Gaze	which is how
Hair	which is how
Nails	that someone is biting

Table 6.

Theme: Prejudice

Entity	Predicate
Prejudice	that someone has
Prejudice	that can be thrown in somebody's face

3.1.1.3 Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant A was aware of the role that intuition could play in his line of work. He/she described themselves as particularly observant and made a point of taking as many aspects as possible into consideration upon the first meeting with an applicant. He/she emphasized however that it he/she made an effort to work against prejudice, and was in fact happy to find that his/her original impressions could in fact be proven wrong. The informant also emphasized that although of course he/she may or may not like a candidate, his/her job was to recruit for customer and his/her personal opinion was often irrelevant. However he/she did say that one was perhaps more inclined to help those when one felt a connection with, then those who made no particular personal impression at all. The informant discussed body language, nails, clothes, hair and posture as aspects that he/she thought to effect intuition.

3.1.1.4. Life-world

A is a positive and self assured person and therefore it is not surprising that the modalities reflect this. A works with head hunting and did not feel threatened by the role intuition could play in the recruitment process. This could be due to the fact that A was so aware of how intuition could influence him/her and was therefore more resistant. A speaks positively in general, not only with regards to intuition and this shines through as a confident and upfront attitude. A seemed to enjoy describing his/her work and elaborated these descriptions with many examples which helped us to understand it what way intuition influenced As personnel selection. A was realistic about the extent to which one could ignore implicit reactions but aspired to prove them wrong and be able to see beyond those first impressions.

3.1.2. Outcomes for Informant B

Figure 2. This figure depicts respondent B's modalities (intuition)
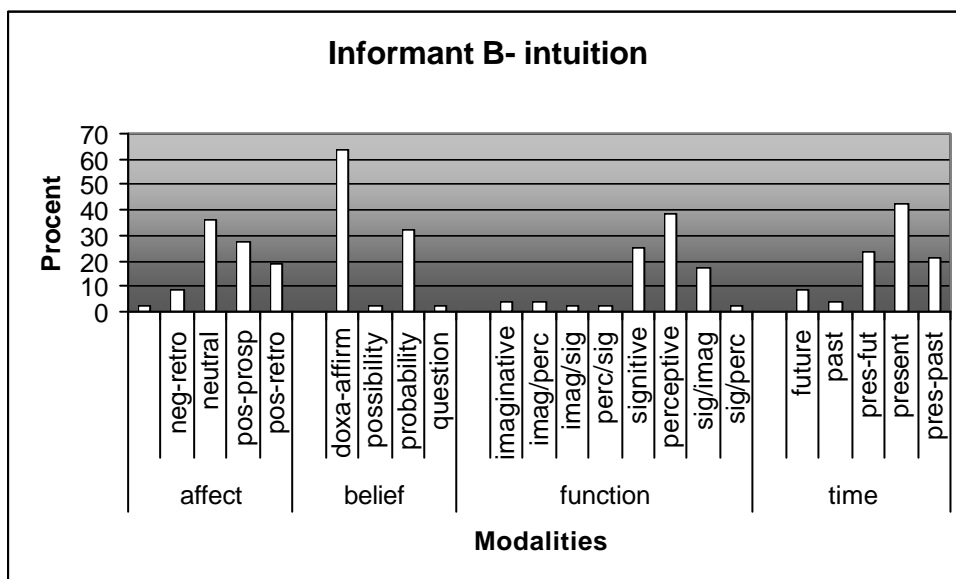
Note. **Affect:** 27,66% of informant B's affect meaning units were used in the positive-prospective tense, 19,15% in the positive-retrospective tense, giving a total of 46,81% of the units. 36,17% of the remaining units were neutral. **Belief:** Question and possibility were only relevant for 2,13% of the belief meaning units each, leaving 31,91% as probability alternatives and the majority (63,82%) as doxa-affirmative. **Function:** 38,30% of B's function statements are perceptive. **Time:** 42,55% of the time units were present and 23,40% were in the present/future tense.

3.1.2.1. Conclusion of Modalities

From the above we have concluded that Informant B was generally positive when talking about intuition although more so about the future (*prospective*) then the past (*retrospective*), his/her low use of *possibility* and *question* meaning units suggests that the informant lacks in tendency to speak of potential. A vast segment of his/her thoughts on intuition were *doxa-affirmative* which leads us to the conclusion that the informant was very confident on those points which matches the statistics from the *function* modality which shows that 38,30% of his/her meaning units were *perceptive*, that is to say, in concrete terms without room for further questions. Informant B tends to speak in *present* terms, which could account for the certainty in both the *belief* and *function* meaning units.

3.1.2.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 7.

Theme: Intuition

Entity	Predicate
A small gut feeling	that someone can have
Feel right in ones heart	as something can
Feel right in ones stomach	as something can

Table 8.

Theme: Impression

Entity	Predicate
A conception	that someone can have
Wrong	that someone can be
Ways of expressing oneself	which someone can weigh up
Attributes	that something can be about

Table 9.

Theme: Physical aspects

Entity	Predicate
Ways of dressing	that there are
Objective	which someone thinks that someone can be
Preconceptions	that someone can fight against

Table 10.

Theme: prejudice

Entity	Predicate
Prejudice	which someone can work against
Prejudice	that can be worked against

3.1.2.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant B's view on intuition was that it was likely to be an issue of decisive importance. He/she however considered there to be a large pitfall in basing opinions on intuition. Bs example of this was choosing a candidate that was too similar to oneself based on the fact that he/she had a lot in common with the candidate and that he/she got on very well with them. B pressed that this was very dangerous as these aspects didn't necessarily make the person suitable for the job and could also conceal other elements that were less attractive.

Informant B explained that he/she worked hard at trying to disprove his/her original prejudice and described this as not "finishing" that is to say not letting oneself form a complete opinion of someone from the start. However informant B emphasized that he/she had been in the business for many years and felt that intuition was an important part of the process, and that the initial gut feeling was a very important element in the recruitment process. He/she felt that one should trust the heart more and common sense less.

3.1.2.4. Life-world

B has worked with personnel selection for many years and has a broad spectrum of experience of personnel assessment. B feels confident in his/her role as a recruiter and depends to a great extent on what he/she has learned over the past years. Despite this B is apprehensive about to what extent intuition should be a reliable source for judging possible employees. B seemed to battle between his/her strong will to remain open-minded and his/her implicit reaction towards applicants. B hoped to be able to integrate traditional assessment models with other more practical methods to try and find some common ground between the two.

3.1.3. Outcomes for Informant C

Figure 3. This figure depicts respondent C's modalities (intuition)
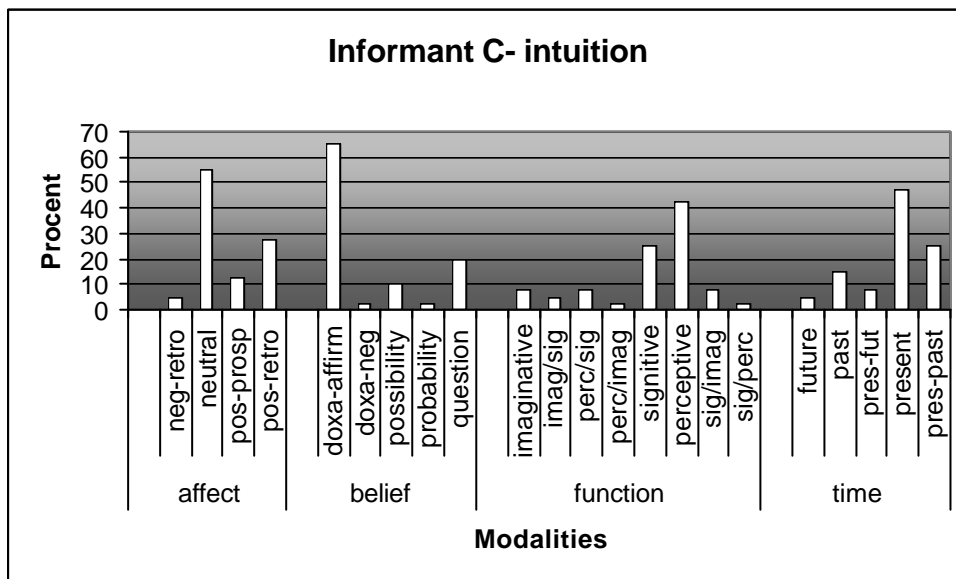
Note. **Affect**: The majority of Informant C's affect modalities were retrospective, 27,5% were positive, and 5% were negative. **Belief**: The belief modality shows a predisposition to select a doxa-affirmative point of view or form of speech and a further 20% of the meaning units were questions. **Function:** Function shows that 42,5% of Informant C's units were perceptive. **Time:** A very small fraction of C's time modalities reflect the future whereas "present" stands for 47,5% of the units

3.1.3.1. Conclusion of Modalities

In total 40% of informant C's meaning units are *positive*, both *prospectively* and *retrospectively*. Informant C was in general very positive to the use of intuition and was not only aware of the part it played in personnel selection and everyday life, but also encouraged it. C felt that intuition was a reliable source to base assessment on. 65% of informant C's *belief* modalities were *doxa-affirmative*, meaning that he/she was confident in their opinions on intuition. A further 20% of the meaning units were *questions*, which reflect C's critical preconceptions and tendency to ask why one developed first impressions. Besides the 42,50% *perceptive functions*, no real trends can be read from this modality, this is probably due to the fact that the informant discussed freely about things that he/she had experienced to the same degree as things or scenarios that he/she could hypothetically imagine.

3.1.3.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 11.

Theme: Intuition

Entity	Predicate
Wrong	which something can feel
Stomach	that something can feel wrong in
Intuition	that tells someone that something is wrong

Table 12.

Theme: Impression

Entity	Predicate
Look down	that someone can
A message	that someone can send me

Table 13.

Theme: Physical aspects

Entity	Predicate
Straight backed	that someone can walk
Steady handshake	that someone can have
Looks	that someone can be conscious of

Table 14.

Theme: Judgement

Entity	Predicate
Emotional aspects	that some pay more attention to
Hard fact	that some don't take notice of

### 3.1.3.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

For informant C intuition was an essential part of the selection process. He/she felt that the only times he/she had not gone with their gut feeling, the result had been very wrong. He/she based opinions on all sorts of different aspects e.g. Handshake, self-presentation and clothing. He/she based the main part of his/her decision on the intuitive impression the candidate made on him/her.

3.1.3.4. Life-world

C paints a confident picture of his/her role as a recruiter. Although C utilises different assessment tools C is adamant that his/her gut feeling is the one true judge of whether or not an applicant is suited. C takes a variety of different aspects into account upon the first meeting with a candidate and sums these things up to form a general impression. Cs modalities show that not only is he/she confident of his/her assessments in the past, but is also sure that the same methods will be reliable in the future. C poses hypothetical questions about intuition, C makes no attempt to disguise his/her use of first impressions as he/she feels it is thanks to them that his/her business is so successful today.

3.1.4. Outcomes for Informant D

Figure 4. This figure depicts respondent D's modalities (intuition)
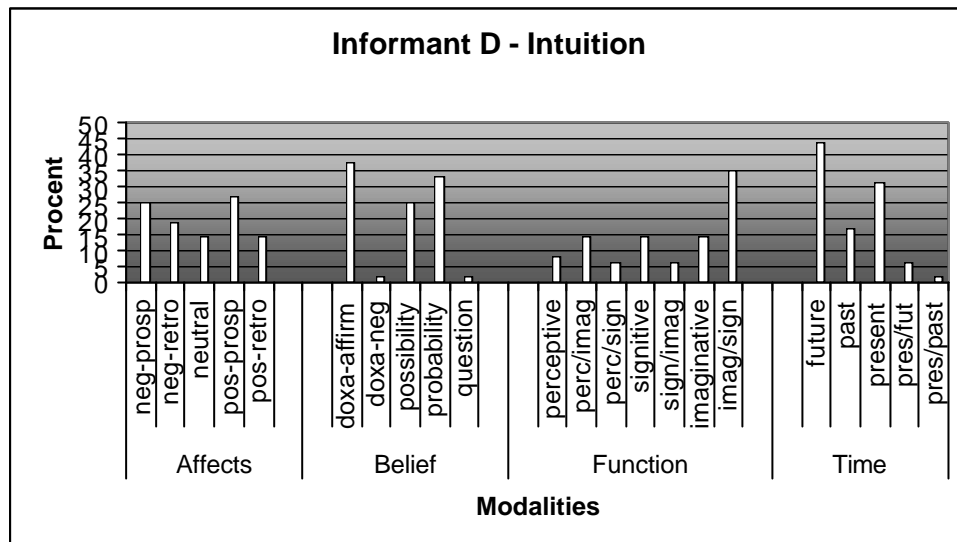
Note. **Affect:** D talks more with a negative affect (a total of: 43,75%) than with a positive affect (a total of: 41,66%). When D talks with a negative affect D was more negative towards the future, in other words in a negative-prospective (25%), than D was in a negative-retrospective (18,75%), in other words negative about the past. **Belief:** For the most D uses expressions, which tells that D has a definite opinion, in other words doxa-affirmation (37,50%). But the person also uses expressions, which can be defined as probability (33,33%) and possibility (25%). Doxa-negation only (2,08%). **Function:** D's meaning unit is expressed general as imaginative/signitive (35,42%). This means that the expressions are abstract and makes room for imagination. Also D uses categories like signitive, imaginative and perceptive/imaginative. They are all used in the same frequency, (14,58%). Perceptive (8,33%). **Time:** Mostly D talks about the future (43,75%) but also in present time (31,25%). Past is only (16,67%).

3.1.4.1. Conclusion of Modalities

D is generally more negative than positive towards intuition in regards to its possible effects on personnel selection. D also expresses both positive and negative affects for intuition in the future, however, for the most part positive. D talks very little about his/her attitude toward intuition in the past and future. The "belief-categories" *doxa-affirmative, probability and possibility* are used equally. We can interpret from this that D is for the most part quite certain when D talking about intuition. D has a definite opinion about it but can also see *possibilities* and *probabilities* with intuition. D has almost never hesitated to give his/her opinion about intuition but hesitation occurs sometimes. The mostly used category, in the

modality "Function", is imaginative/signitive. Perceptive is on the other hand not used particularly often. This can be interpreted as when D talks about intuition D is often imaginative and abstract and not so often concrete. D talks mostly about the future but also to some extent in the present tense, when it comes to intuition.

3.1.4.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 15.

Theme: Intuition

Entity	Predicate
Intuition	which someone is not sure if he/she believe in
Gut feeling	which is based on the experiences one has
Somebody	who can not just follow his/her gut feeling

Table 16.

Theme: Impression

Entity	Predicate
The first visit	upon which one can like someone instantly
Personal charm	which somebody knows he/she can fall for

Table 17.

Theme: Physical aspects

Entity	Predicate
A lot of jewellery	which some people can wear

3.1.4.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant D said that he/she was not sure if he/she believed in intuition. D considered intuition to be was based on ones personal experiences and that one therefore should one

make use of those experiences. However, one cannot simply rely on the intuition, one must remain as objective as possible. But D also emphasised the difficulty with ignoring ones intuition. He/she thought that the important thing is to be aware of why a sensation originates from. Perhaps there is a reason for this feeling. He/she also told us that he/she could sometimes be instantly critical of people who wore excessive amounts of jewellery, however tried hard to see beyond such things. D said that he/she always consulted co-workers for a second opinions, this was done to prevent unfair decisions etc.

3.1.4.4. Life-world

Informant D has a tendency to be negative towards intuition and its possible effects on personnel selection. D's job is to employ people suitable to work with patients that are ill. D tells us repeatedly about the importance adequate qualifications and frowns at guess work. This profession is about taking care if patients, therefore it is crucial to hire people with an ability to so. Employing incompetent employees can result in severe consequences. D prioritises asking questions that can to some extent reveal how much the applicant actually knows and how much experience the applicant has when it comes to difficult situations that need to be handled correctly. He/she always asks other people for a second opinion, which implies that he/she wishes to be certain before making any decisions. Even though D is negative towards intuition he/she thinks that one can not always escape it. In those situations one has to acknowledge one's prejudices and try hard not to be influenced by them. D is also a person with very strong opinions and expresses a great certainty when he/she talks. For example even though intuition is a vague phenomenon, D has an opinion, which is that intuition is based on one's experiences and therefore can be of use. D seems to be a realistic person who tries to make sense of a lot of things.

3.1.5. Outcomes for Informant E

Figure 5. This figure depicts respondent E's modalities (intuition)
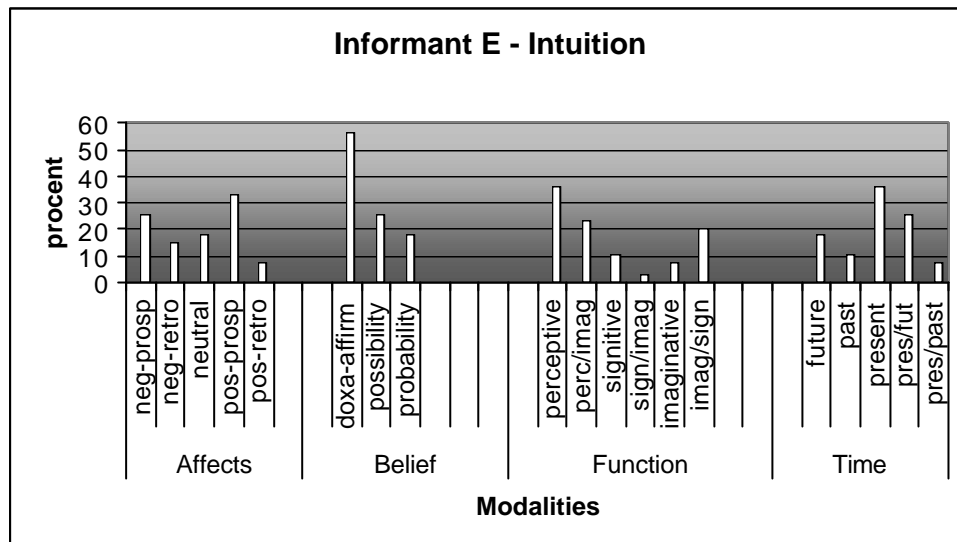
Note. **Affect:** E has the same frequency when E talks with a negative affect (a total of: 41,02%) as with a positive affect (a total of: 41,02%). When one looks closer one can see that E is more negative in a future perspective (25,64%) than in a past perspective (15,38%) and at the same time also more positive in a future perspective (33,33%) than in a past perspective (7,69%). E is more negative-retrospective than positive-retrospective. E is also more positive-prospective than negative-prospective. **Belief:** E's expressions in the text are for the most doxa-affirmation (56,41%). E's expressions are sometimes also possibility (25,64%) and probability (17,95%). **Function:** E is mostly perceptive (35,90%) but also perceptive-imaginative (23,08%) and imaginative-signitive (20,51%). Signitive (10,26%) and imaginative (7,69%). **Time:** E talks mostly present (35,90%), present-future (25,64%), future (17,95%), and not so much past (10,26%).

3.1.5.1. Conclusion of Modalities

E mostly adopts *positive-prospective* affects but almost never *positive-retrospective* affects. This can show a tendency to talk more about the future when it comes to intuition. E talks also quite often in a *negative-prospective* affect but not so often in a *negative-retrospective* affect. This can be interpreted as E has a negative attitude towards intuition in the *future* but E is for some reason not so negative towards intuition in the *past*.

The "belief-category" *doxa-affirmative* is most often used. This result can be interpreted as E is for the most quit certain when E talks about intuition. E has a definite opinion about it but can also see *possibilities* and *probabilities* when it comes to a conversation about intuition.

The mostly used category, in the modality "Function", is *perceptive. Signitive* and *imaginative* is on the other hand not used particular often. This can be interpreted as when E talks about intuition E is often concrete and specific and not so often abstract. E is not particular imaginative either.

E also likes to talk about the *present* and the *future* when it comes to intuition. But intuition in the *past* is not something E prefers to talk about.

3.1.5.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 18.

Theme: Intuition

Entity	Predicate
A person	who can have a coloured conception
Conscious	which someone does not think something is
Unconscious conclusions	which we can come to about each other
The decision	which can be based on something other than…

Table 19.

Theme: Physical aspects

Entity	Predicate
A defined jaw line	which can portray trustworthiness
A jaw line	which people are not always aware of

Table 20.

Theme: Prejudice

Entity	Predicate
Prejudices	which somebody can have
Prejudices	which someone do not want to apply

3.1.5.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant E did not rely on his/her intuition. He/she acknowledged that one's conception could be coloured and that this was a phenomenon, which were not conscious. Particular when you meet someone for the first time one draws unconscious conclusions on each other.

He/she also says that it would be a lie to think that it did not effect one at first, but it should not effect one in the decision-making process. He/she told us that it was very important for him/her to stick to a person's "competencies" because he got paid to do this and it would be unprofessional of him/her to base the decision on anything else. Informant E finished the discussion with the conclusion that one has to be humble before the task because personnel selection is no science

3.1.5.4. Life-world

Informant E regards intuition as something that influences us unconsciously. However as a personnel selector, on a professional level, he/she thinks one should do ones best to not let oneself be influenced by it. E works with selecting suitable candidates for other companies and therefore has obligations towards them. E was adamant that the best way to avoid being forced to rely on intuition, was to be as accurate as possible throughout all stages of the assessment process therefore eliminating the likelihood of judging applicants on probabilities. Instead one should focus on those competencies that are necessary for a particular job and base ones decision upon those. Informant E also thinks that the process of personnel selection is not a true science and therefore it is crucial to be humble and to be aware of its difficulties. Informant E appears to be a systematic person who likes to work from a lot of different angles and by using a lot of tests he/she can reveal if the person is as good as it seems.

3.1.6. Outcomes for Informant F

Figure 6. This figure depicts respondent F's modalities (intuition)
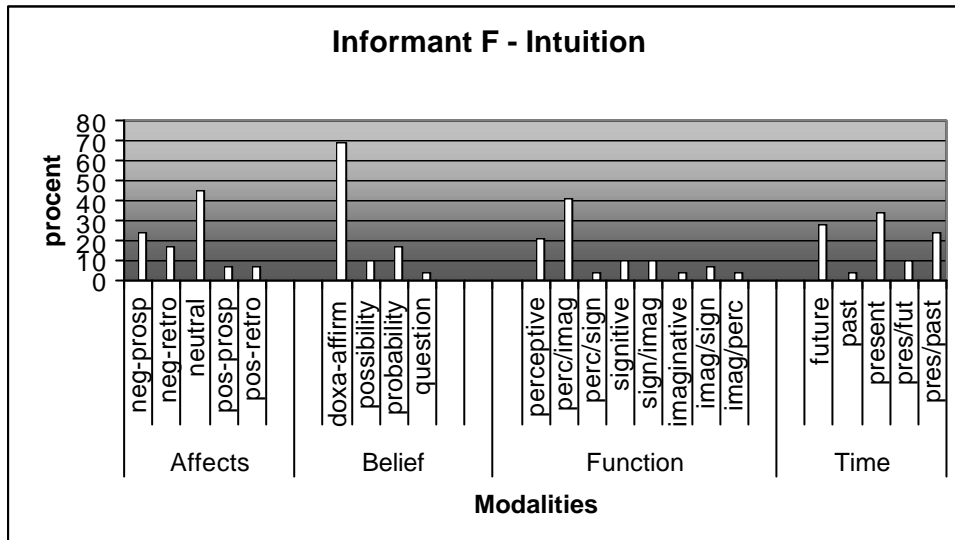
Note: **Affect:** F is for the most neutral (44,83%). F uses more negative (a total of: 41,38%) expressions than positive (a total of: 13,80%). F has the same frequency for both positive-prospective (6,90&) and positive-retrospective (6,90%). F is more negative-prospective (24,14%) than negative-retrospective (17,24%). **Belief:** F uses mostly expressions, which are doxa-affirmative (68,97%), but also expressions, which are categorised under the category, probability (17,24%), and sometimes also possibility (10,34%). **Function:** F is mostly perceptive/imaginative (41,38%) and perceptive (20,69%). Sometimes also signitive (10,34%) and signitive/imaginative (10,34%). Imaginative (3,45%). **Time:** F talks a lot about the present (34,48%), future (27,59%), present-past (24,14%). Sometimes, but not quit often, also about the present-future (10,34%). Past only (3,45%).

3.1.6.1. Conclusion of Modalities

F is mostly neutral towards intuition. F is also more negative than positive towards intuition and it's possible effect on personnel selection. When F is negative F is more negative towards intuition in the future than intuition in the past. When F is positive F is equally positive towards intuition in the future and in the past

The "belief-category" *doxa-affirmative* is almost always used in every meaning unit. This result can be interpreted, as F is almost always certain when F talks about intuition and almost never hesitates. F has a definite opinion about it but can also see *possibilities* and *probabilities* when F expresses his opinions about intuition.

The mostly used categories, in the modality "Function", is *perceptive/imaginative and perceptive. Signitive* and *imaginative* is on the other hand not used particular often. This

can be interpreted as when F talks about intuition F is often concrete and imaginative and not so often abstract. The reason why the category *imaginative* (alone) is not often used is probably the fact that those categories, which are *imaginative,* are also *perceptive* and therefore are under the category *perceptive/imaginative.*

F talks for the most about the *present* and the *future* when it comes to intuition. But intuition in the *past* is almost never mentioned.

3.1.6.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 21.

Theme: Intuition

Entity	Predicate
Intuition	which one chooses to rely on very much
The surface	which can look a bit different from reality
A feeling	which one can rely on

3.1.6.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant F chose to rely on his/her intuition. He/she described intuition as a, sometimes, unconscious feeling, which is difficult to define because it is very subtle. E thought that the situation was so complex that it was anyway almost impossible to know if a person was suitable for a particular job. F emphasised that his/her trust in intuition depended on how formal the demands to a particular job were. For example if the job had no particular demands then he/she could rely more on his/her intuition. If there were, on the other hand, very specific demands then you have to look at the applicant's competencies, to a greater extent. Informant F consulted with co-workers for second opinions and because he/she thought it was important that employees could work together as a team. His/her conclusion was that there are no short cuts, because intuition is based on ones experiences. There are no simple ways, one has to try to get to know the people at the interviews, and that is impossible to do.

3.1.6.4. Life-world

Informant F is the managing director of a small company, F tells us that if a job does not require any specific qualifications, it is vital that his/hers employees have social competencies. F has no preconceptions about intuition being positive or negative but however relies on it a great deal when assessing possible employees, due to the fact that he/she is of the opinion the general guidelines do not suffice when selecting personnel. F believes that group dynamics are very important and tries therefore to find complementary candidates. In order to do this he/she takes other employees opinions into account, and would preferably only employ staff on references if possible.

F believes that intuition is based on our experiences and therefore should not be completely ignored. He/she thinks personnel selection is about getting to know people and by asking a lot of open questions one can get some insight to who that person is. But he/she says that one should not think one could get to know someone based on a short meeting. And this is what makes personnel selection so difficult.

3.2. Outcomes of the Photograph task

3.2.1. Outcomes for Informant A

Figure 7. This figure depicts respondent A's modalities (photographs)

Informant A - photographs
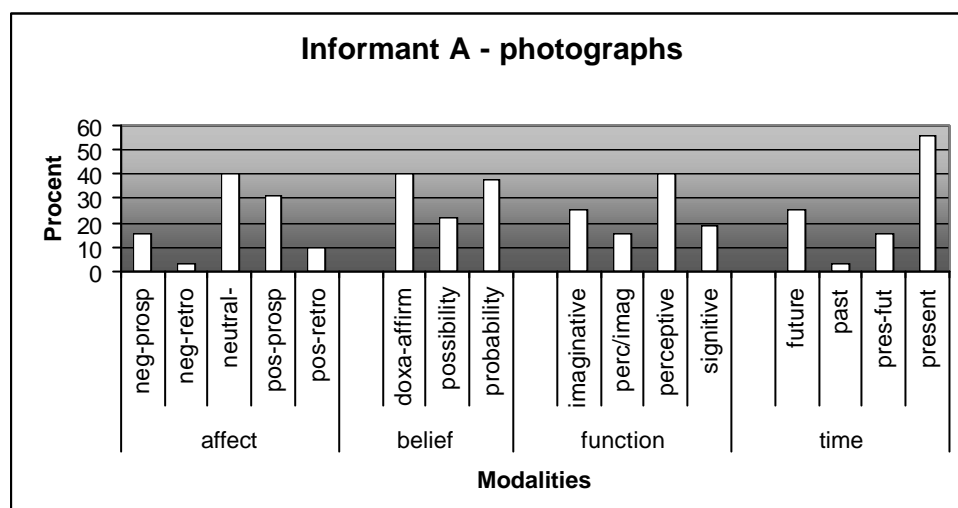
Note: **Affect:** 40,63% of the informants affect modalities are neutral. The informant uses all the other affect alternatives but positive-prospective is the most interesting with 31,25%. **Belief:** The belief modalities are fairly evenly spread between doxa-affirmative (40,63%) and probability (37,5%). **Function:** Perceptive is the function modality most used (40,63%) however imaginative also represents a fair segment (25%. This can also be seen in the only combined function, perceptive/signitive (15,63%). **Time:** 56,25% of the meaning units are in the present tense and 25% are represented by the modality "future".

3.2.1.1. Conclusion of Modalities

In general, informant A has a positive outlook on the pictures. Although 40,63% of the meaning units were neutral, a further 40,63% were stated as positive affects (31,25% prospectively & 9,38% retrospectively). Informant A discussed each picture individually and the role they could play in a company and why or why not he or she could consider them for that role. The informant was very confident in their opinions which explains the 40,63% doxa-affirmations. However A put much emphasis on probabilities but carefully considering each person, we can see this in the belief function and the 37,50% probability modalities. By visualising each candidate the informant therefore painted a picture for him/herself of their suitability as employees.

3.2.1.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 22.

Theme: Pictures

Entity	Predicate
Number 13	who someone could imagine
Number 4	who seem great
Number 1	who could be excellent

Table 23.

Theme: Prejudices

Entity	Predicate
Prejudices	which can tell something

Table 24.

Theme: Criteria

Entity	Predicate
Somebody	who could look a bit dorky
A role	which someone could be to young to handle
He	who looks like an engineer
A business woman	who someone looks like

3.2.1.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant A decided to imagine a particular position that he/she needed to recruit a candidate for. The candidate was to be a director of a factory in the manufacturing industry with 500 employees. Based on this he/she proceeded to select a suitable person from the pictures he/she was presented with. A then gave a running commentary on several of the photos, justifying why or why not each would be suitable. Informant A used expression such as "looks like" "could be" and "seems". He/she also used his/own personal stereotypes to categorize the candidates e.g. "Looks like an engineer". Informant A told us very little about

his/her personal opinions about the candidates, other than age-related qualities and sporadic comments on clothing, these were also applied to the scenario regarding the factory.

3.2.1.4. Life-world

A was generally quite positive toward the pictures and took on the task with great enthusiasm. Informant A gave a brief description of a tangible job scenario and then continued to justify his/her interpretation of the photographs based on that scenario. The informant took great care to describe why a particular person would be a suitable candidate based on the little information he/she could gather from the photo in front of him/her.

However informant A showed a tendency to categorise each photo, based on his/her own stereotypical views, either because of the environment the photo was taken in or the clothes the person was wearing, this was not necessarily to the persons disadvantage.

3.2.2. Outcomes for Informant B

Figure 8: This figure depicts respondent B's modalities (photographs)
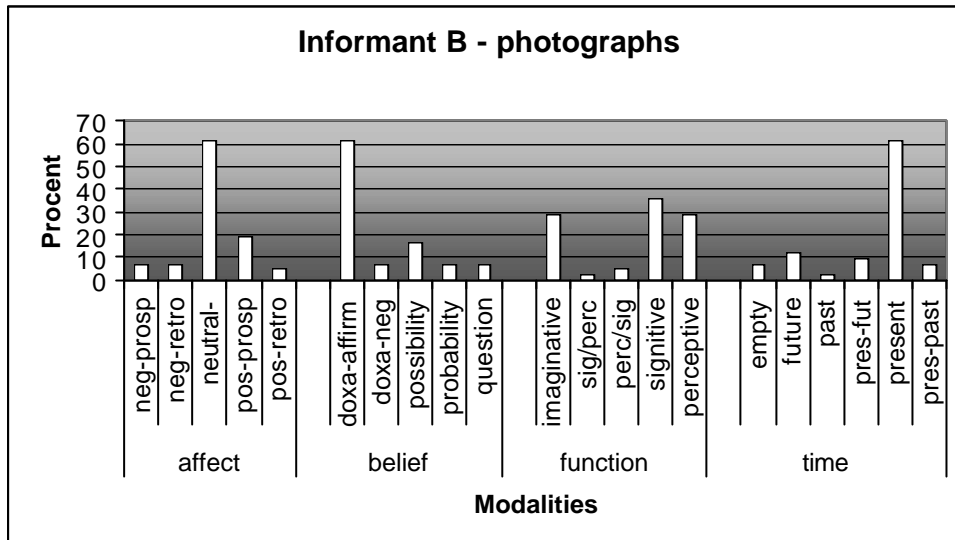
Note: **Affect:** A vast extent of informant B's affect modalities are neutral (61,9%). Very few meaning units are stated as negations, (7,14% each). **Belief:** Doxa-affirmative represents 61,9% of the belief modalities, apart from which the percentages are extremely small for the other options. **Function:** Function meaning units were signitive 35,71% of the time. Imaginative and perceptive were used equally (28,57% each). **Time:** Present was the time modality most used (61,9%), nothing significant can be said about the remaining meaning units.

3.2.2.1. Conclusion of Modalities

The high rate of *neutral affect* modalities is more than likely a result of the informant's original unwillingness to apply his or her opinions of the pictures to his or her reality. This was more than likely based on a fear of being perceived as prejudice. However the informant was confident in their views on the pictures. Eventually the informant chose to describe where he or she imagined that the people in the pictures were in their lives today portrayed 61.9% of the belief modalities were doxa-affirmative and also accounts for the 28,57% that are *imaginative.* The informants strategy of placing the picture candidates in current scenarios is also reflected in the *time* modality (61,90%) present.

3.2.2.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 25.

Theme: Pictures

Entity	Predicate
Someone	who looks like number 4 & 9
They	who looks like number 12

Table 26.

Theme: Prejudices

Entity	Predicate
Associations	which of course I make

Table 27.

Theme: Opinions/Criteria

Entity	Predicate
Someone young	who I apprehend as a foreign girl
They	who looks different
Someone	who I hope does not exit in my company
Someone	who is cool to have in the business
She	who I think would fit in

3.2.2.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant B began describing which of the candidates were typical within his/her line of business and explained how they fitted into the company's hierarchy. The informant then went on to give a short comment on each of the photos, depicting where they were today, the jobs they had, the type of person they were and why he would or wouldn't like to employ

them. Based on this he described stereotypical roles based on age, clothing and physical attributes.

3.2.2.4. Life-world

Despite informant Bs original scepticism toward the pictures, he/she then went on to place each of the people into preconceived roles. As a recruiter B felt that he/she had significant experience and felt that he/she could determine where the people in the photographs were in their lives today. The high percentage of doxa-affirmative statements illuminates Bs confidence in who he/she believed the people to be. B showed no hesitation in categorising the photographs based on his/her preconceptions, despite the fact that he/she had nothing to objective to base these assumptions on. B justified his/her ability to read the photographs as a result of many years of experience of recruitment.

3.2.3. Outcomes for Informant C

Figure 9: This figure depicts respondent C's modalities (photographs)
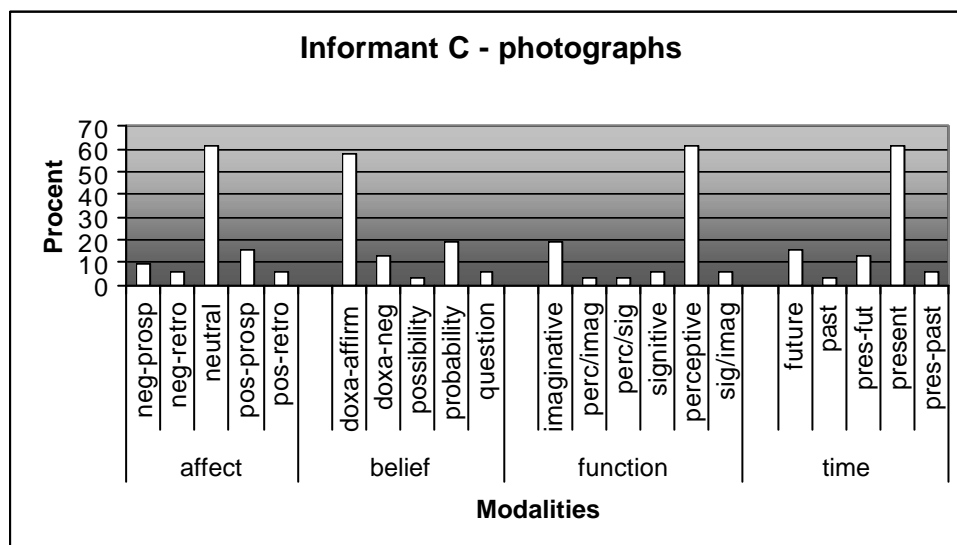
Note: **Affect:** 61,29% of the meaning units were neutral. Apart from the 16,13% of the units stated positive-prospectively, not much else can be said for the other affect modalities. **Belief:** 58,06% of the belief modalities were doxa -affirmative and 19,35% were probabilities. **Function:** Although several function modalities were applicable, they were used only sporadically. However 61,29% of them were perceptive and 19,35% were imaginative. **Time:** The majority of the time modalities were in the present tense (61,29%) and 16,13% were in the future tense, this also explains the 12,9% present-future modalities.

3.2.3.1. Conclusion of Modalities

The informant shows an inclination to use words and a form of speech that regards that that is to come, both from a *positive* and a *negative* point of view. The informant's *doxa-affirmative* "trend" shows that he/she talks in a style that leaves little room for questioning, this may reflect the fact the concrete examples are applied of which shines through as confidence. This self assured outlook also rhymes with the *perceptive* outlook that clearly be seen in the *function* modality. The informant discusses the question at hand in the *present* tense giving tangible comments and criticism to the pictures before him/her, which explains the high rating in the *time* modality.

3.2.3.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 28.

Theme: Photographs

Entity	Predicate
Someone	who can recognize him/herself in them
Somebody	who has a strong gaze
Somebody	who has a smile on their face
Somebody	who has taken responsibility for their life
Somebody	who does not have a favourable photo
Somebody	who does not look representative
Someone	who thinks the eyes and the smile are important
Somebody	who smiles because someone else has asked them to

3.2.3.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant C, in a similar manner to Informant A, visualized a position that he/she needed to recruit someone for. He/she imagined that they needed a new branch manager for one of the offices. Thereafter informant C considered all the candidates and then selected three that he/she found appealing. He/she based his/her choice partly on the fact that they had strong gazes and smiles, but also because he/she felt that they recognised themselves in the candidates. From this we can conclude that informant C, based a large proportion of his/her

judgement on physical aspects and felt that a positive look correlated with success and responsibility.

3.2.3.4. Life-world

A large proportion of Cs meaning units was doxa-affirmative, this is most probably due to the fact that like informant A, C visualised an imaginative position that needed to be filled by an employee. By doing this C formulated a mall of criteria that he or she already knew to be necessary for the job. However, having done this, C could not escape the fact that there was little to base to decision on and ended up choosing a photo based on physical attributes. C selected three photos who he/she perceived as smiling, explaining that he/she considered these to have taken responsibility for their lives. C also said that those particular photos were appealing as he/she recognised him/her self in them. This reflected once again Cs confidence that he/she could assess a person's likelihood to succeed based on their photo, even though he/she was fully aware that much else must be taken into consideration.

3.2.4. Outcomes for Informant D

Figure 10: This figure depicts respondent D's modalities (photographs)
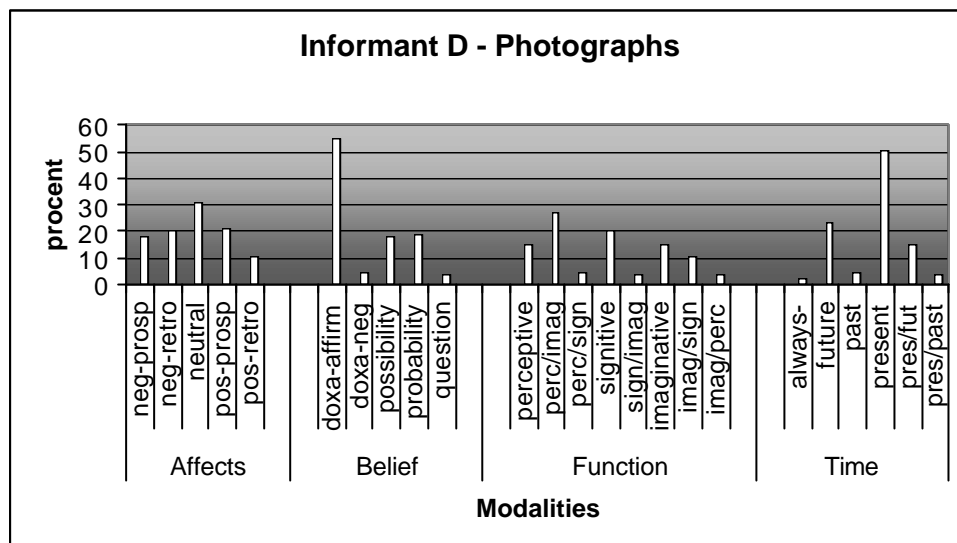
Note. **Affect**: D uses more negative (a total of: 37,65%) expressions than positive (a total of: 31,77%). D is more negative-retrospective (20%) than negative-prospective (17,65%). In situations where D talks with a positive affect D is more positive-prospective (21,18%) than positive retrospective (10,59%). **Belief**: D is most of the time doxa-affirmative (55,29%) when expressing views on the photos. D only uses probability 18,82% of the time and possibility 17,65%. Doxa-negations stand for only 4,71% of the modalities and Question 3,53%. **Function** D talks a lot in a perceptive-imaginative way (27,06%). Signitive has a frequency of 20%. D sometimes also uses expressions, which are only imaginative (15,29%) and perceptive (15,29%), which have the same frequency. **Time** D speaks mostly about the present (50,59%). The future is also mentioned a couple of times (23,53%). The past is on the other hand not mentioned quit so often (4,71%).

3.2.4.1. Conclusion of Modalities

D is mostly negative towards some of the pictures. But the difference between his/her negative and positive affect towards some of the pictures is not very big. When D is negative D is more negative directed towards the past, for some of the pictures, than to the future. When D is positive D is more positive directed towards the future for some of the pictures than to the past.

The "belief-category" *doxa-affirmative* is most often used. This result can be interpreted, as D is almost always certain when D talks about the pictures and almost never hesitates. D has a definite opinion about it but can also see *possibilities* and *probabilities* for the people in the pictures. D can sometimes question the people in the pictures.

The mostly used categories, in the modality "Function", is *perceptive/imaginative, signitive, imaginative and perceptive.* This can be interpreted as when D talks about the people in the pictures D is often concrete and imaginative and sometimes also abstract.

D talks mostly about the *present* and quit often about the *future* when it comes to the people in the pictures. The people in the pictures are almost never mentioned in the *past-*category.

3.2.4.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 29.
Theme: Photographs

Entity	Predicate
Number 1	who looks both kind and intelligent
Somebody	who thinks number 2 looks awful
Number 6 and 8	who have chosen the wrong outfits
Somebody	who does not like number 7's looks
Somebody	who does not want to employ nr 9
Nr 14	who someone gladly could consider

Table 30.
Theme: Opinions

| Entity	Predicate
Look great	which one could do before the employment-interview
Somebody	who thinks nr 4 is to old and therefore could have difficulty learning new things
Looks	which don't have to mean anything

3.2.4.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant D tried to select a candidate who he/she thought would be a suitable nurse from the pictures he/she was presented with. D then gladly gave a running commentary on several of the photos, motivating why or why not each would be suitable. Informant D told us very much about his/her personal opinions about the candidates. He/she could in fact consider hiring some of them, but in the end he/she decided to choose number 14 because she looked like a nice and intelligent girl. He/she could also imagine number 14's clothes to be a nurse-uniform and therefore in some way he/she thought that the person was perhaps already in the profession. Informant D did a lot of interpretations of the pictures like "I think he is too old and therefore could have difficulty learning new things" etc. Informant D said that looks do not have to matter but D confessed that he/she could fall for charming people. D also said that he/she knew this about him/herself and tried really hard not to be influenced by it.

3.2.4.4. Life-world

Informant D took on this task with great enthusiasm. Despite the difficulty of the assignment, D did their best to reason about the photographs in a logical. D emphasised how difficult it was to choose a person without knowing anything about that person. But with that said he/she tried seriously to decide which of the photographs represented a suitable candidate, which in this case was working under pressured conditions with other humans. He/she began with choosing who he/she thought would be suitable and then finally he/she decided that nr 14 looked kind and intelligent. This implies that he/she based his/her decision on a systematic procedure. D was very straightforward and honest and did not hesitate to tell us exactly what he/she thought of the people in the pictures.

3.2.5. Outcomes for: Informant E

Figure 11: This figure depicts respondent E's modalities (photographs)
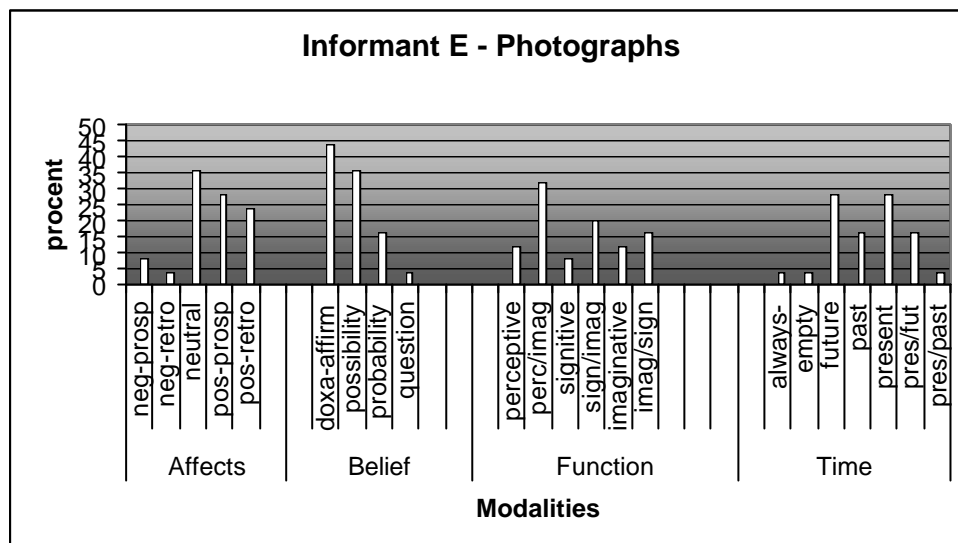
Note. **Affect:** E talks about the pictures in a positive affect a total of 52% and with a negative affect a total of 12%. With a neutral affect 36%. The person is a bit more positive-prospective (28%) than positive-retrospective (24%). The same is true regarding negative-prospective which is 8% in comparison to negative-retrospective which is 4%. **Belief**: E talks mostly in a doxa -affirmative way about the photographs (44%) but the possibility modalities also a fairly high frequency (36%). Probability only stand for 16% and Question even fewer with 4%. **Function**: Most of the time the expressions are perceptive/imaginative (32%) and signitive/imaginative (20%). Perceptive (12%), imaginative (12%), signitive (8%). **Time**: E talks equally of things in the future and of things in the present (both have a frequency of 28%). Things in the past have a frequency of 16%.

3.2.5.1. Conclusion of Modalities

E is mostly positive towards the people in the pictures. E expresses rarely anything negative about the people in the pictures. When E is negative he/she is more negative towards the people in the pictures in the future, than in the past. When E is positive he is also more positive towards the people in the pictures in the future, than in the past.

The "belief-category" *doxa-affirmative* is most often used but also *possibility* is quit often used. This result can be interpreted, as E is almost always certain when E talks about the people in the pictures and almost never hesitates. E has a definite opinion about it but can also see *possibilities* for the people in the pictures.

The mostly used category, in the modality "Function", is *perceptive/imaginative. Signitive* is on the other hand not used particular often. This can be interpreted as when E

talks about the people in the pictures E is often concrete and imaginative and not so often abstract.

E talks with an equally amount of time about both the *present* and the *future* when it comes to the people in the pictures. The people in the pictures are, sometimes but not so often, mentioned in the *past*-category.

3.2.5.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 31.
Theme: Pictures

Entity	Predicate
Number 10	who possibly has a good jaw line

Table 32.
Theme: Physical aspects

Entity	Predicate
Jaw lines	that could be important
Someone	who could have a distinct jaw line
Trustworthy appearance	which one could have

3.2.5.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant E was at first really sceptical towards the task and told us that he/she did not understand the purpose of it. He/she also told us that it was impossible for him/her to select a person just from looking at them. Although he/she recognized the difficulties of preconceived prejudices, he/she was still reluctant to choose one of the photographs. Informant E then tried to define what could be attractive and came up with an idea about the importance of the shape of jaw lines. He/she mentioned that a person with a rectangular jaw line could send other people a message of trustworthiness. Informant E said that perhaps

number 10 had the right shape of his jaw line but E still did not say if he/she could consider employing this person.

3.2.5.4. Life-world

Informant E took his/her role as a professional recruiter extremely seriously, talking great care to emphasise the importance of remaining objective on all occasions. Informant E was very reluctant to tell us anything at all about the photographs, in fact he/she refused to select a suitable employee candidate. He/she explained said that he/she could not base a decision on such grounds and that he/she found our request ridiculous. Eventually E attempted to reason a little about the importance of an applicants' appearance, or if in fact one could learn anything about a person based on what they looked like, however he/she was extremely vague and would not apply any theories to the photographs. Informant E related a story that he/she knew of, regarding a study that showed that people with bold jaw lines were associated with being trustworthy. E could see that one of the photographs could in fact be representative of a significantly strong jaw. E's reluctance to select a photograph implies that he/she is uncomfortable with prejudices. E emphasised the importance of being professional and was somewhat offended by our request.

3.2.6. Outcomes for: Informant F

Figure 11. This figure depicts respondent F's modalities (photographs)
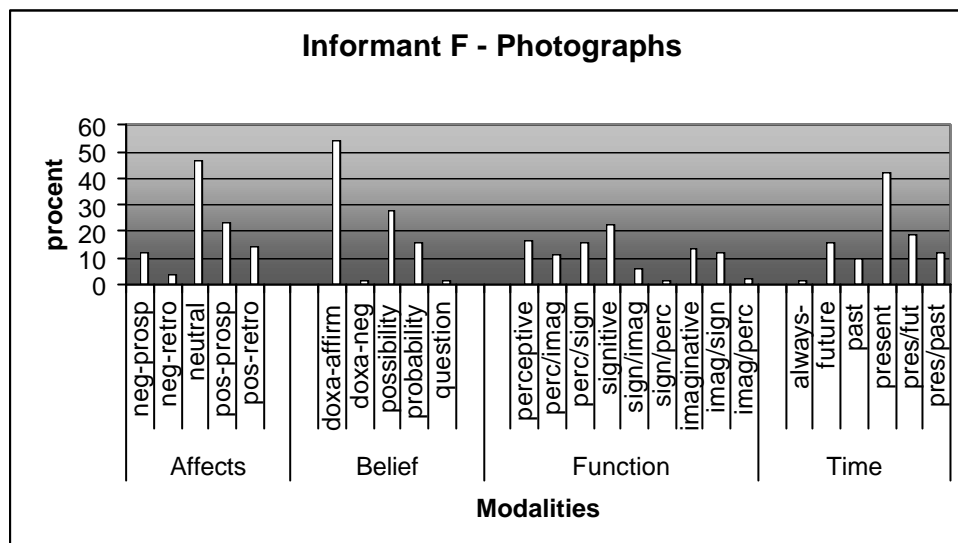
Note. **Affect**: F is a lot more positive (a total of 37,77%) towards the pictures than negative (a total of 15,55%). F is also often neutral (46,67%). F is more positive-prospective (23,33%) than positive-retrospective (14,44%). F is further more negative-prospective (12,22%) than negative-retrospective (3,33%). **Belief**: F talks mostly with a doxa-affirmative belief (54,44%). Sometimes also possibility (27,78%) and Probability (15,56%). Not so often Doxa-negation (1,11%) and Question (1,11%). **Function**: In this modality F is mostly Signitive (22,22%). Also perceptive (16,67%) and perceptive/signitive (15,56%). Imaginative (13,33%). **Time:** F talks most of the time of things in the present (42,22%), sometimes about present-future (18,89%), future (15,56%), past (10%).

3.2.6.1. Conclusion of Modalities

F is mostly positive towards the people in the pictures. When F is negative he is more negative towards the people in the pictures in the future, than in the past. When F is positive he is also more positive towards the people in the pictures in the future, than in the past.

The "belief-category" *doxa-affirmative* is most often used but also *possibility* is quit often used. This result can be interpreted, as F is almost always certain when he/she talks about the people in the pictures and almost never hesitates. F has a definite opinion about it but can also see *possibilities* and probabilities for the people in the pictures. F can sometimes question the people in the pictures, but it happens very rarely.

The mostly used category, in the modality "Function", is *signitive.* But sometimes also *perceptive.* This can be interpreted, as when F talks about the people in the pictures he/she is often abstract but sometimes also concrete.

F talks most often about the *present* and sometimes about the *future,* when it comes to the people in the pictures. The people in the pictures are, sometimes but not so often, mentioned in the *past*-category.

3.2.6.2. Entity-Predicate

Table 33.

Theme: Pictures

Entity	Predicate
Number 10	who would have got the job at the Warehouse
A great administrator	that number 5 looks like
Number 1, 14, 12	who someone also could hire

Table 34.

Theme: Prejudices

Entity	Predicate
Prejudices	which someone could have about something
Prejudices	which someone only has a few of

Table 35.

Theme: Opinions

Entity	Predicate
Employed	which probably anyone could be

Table 36.

Theme: Physical aspects

Entity	Predicate
The ring	which someone could, by all means, wear when they aren't at work
A job	which is easier to get when one looks nice
A look	which isn't noticeable once one gets to know each other
Nr 8	who isn't wearing appropriate clothing for an employment-interview

Table 37.

Theme: First impression

Entity	Predicate
Something	that means more than the first impression

3.2.6.3. Conclusion of Entity-Predicate

Informant F decided to recruit a candidate for every department of the company. The candidates were to be working in the warehouse, in the administration, in the garden-department and in the shop. Based on this he/she proceeded to select a suitable person to each of these departments, from the pictures, we showed him/her. F then gave small commentaries on several of the photos, motivating why or why not each would be suitable. He/she also used phrases about the candidates e.g. "Looks like an administrator". Informant E commented some of the peoples clothing and looks. He/she said that it could be easier for those who looked nice in a situation when they applied to a job. But he/she did not say if he/she did prefer people with great looks. He/she said that the thing of most importance for him/her was that the person had social competence and if there were formal demands for a specific job then he demanded that the person, who was going to be hired, had those.

3.2.6.4. Life-world

When we initially presented informant F with the photographs he/she laughed. The informant explained that naturally he/she could be as prejudice as possible to fulfil our expectations. He/she selected four photographs, each of them were to be suitable for a different position among the four different departments his/her company was made up of. F justified each choice based on the fact that h/she interpreted those candidates to be open and pleasant looking. As there was nothing objective to base a decision on. F supposed that he/she could consider employing any of the people as he/she was certain that their looks were irrelevant once one had got to know them. However F she said that it was probable that an attractive person was at an advantage when applying for a job.

4. Discussion

During the last decades, many methods have been developed to increase the chances of success of the selection of competent and suitable employees, however to what degree are these methods used and relied upon and how much is in fact determined by the recruiter's implicit intuition? As has already been established, personnel selection is not a reliable science and so although the many methods and tools are meant to improve objectivity, they are only of use to the extent that they are not affected by unconscious feelings, or, intuition used by the recruiter.

By attempting to analyse personal accounts of implicit attitudes of those that work with personnel selection at a professional level, we wished to compare what characteristics they profess to look for in relation to what they in fact find desirable in employment candidates.

In this study we have concentrated on the effects of impressions experienced in the initial meeting between two people, and the extent to which these intuitive judgements may affect the possible employment of a job applicant.

Our aim was to study the extent to which intuition seemed to affect recruitment and personnel selection. We must emphasise however that our goal is not only to assess to what extent our interviewees use intuition as a source for recruitment decisions, but also to look at the extent to which this is happening unconsciously. It is here that implicit processes are potentially dangerous: where the recruiter is unaware of their effect on the process. In order to go beyond what the subject reported as a professed attitude to intuition for example, we employed more subtle methods of interview to look for inconsistencies between the professed and actual beliefs of the subject. Phenomenological methods allowed us to look for these signs of 'true beliefs' without interfering with them by clumsy questioning, and the analysis of language used allowed us again to look for correlations between professed and actual values and beliefs. In addition, we have also taken a close look at the way the interviewees chose to discuss fourteen different photos that we presented them with. By taking all these aspects of the interview into consideration we attempted to depict a picture of the participant's life worlds.

In this section we will discuss what we have been able to conclude from our results and also attempt to draw parallels to the theories that we first presented and we also intend to evaluate the validity of our research design. At the end of this section we will also present a

discussion on the implications and consequences of our essay for future assessment of personnel recruitment.

4.1. Discussion of the Outcomes

In order to fully understand the following discussing, we recommend referring to the summary of all the life-worlds, participating companies and a description of each photograph which can be found in the appendix at the end of this essay.

4.1.1 Intuition

Our original ambition was to see to what extent the different participants were aware that implicit processes could affect their work, were they even aware of the dangers intuition could entail, and if so how did they, if at all, go about trying to reduce those effects. Although we were unable to ask any specific questions regarding intuition, due to our phenomenological method, we paid extra attention to all areas of the interview which regarded these matters. We were particularly interested in hearing what they initially looked for in a candidate, and if there were any specific traits that they found appealing, that perhaps were obvious during that first meeting.

It became apparent that there were two main groups regarding attitudes toward intuition. Those that felt that it contributes positively to their personnel assessment and that it could be considered as just another source of useful information about the applicant, but on the other hand there are those who consider it extremely unprofessional to even consider intuitive impressions and go out of their way to try to work against their implicit reactions.

4.1.2 Photograph task

At the end of each interview we asked our interviewees to take a look at fourteen different photographs. The photographs showed people of varying ages, ethnicity, gender and styles. We asked each individual to imagine a recruitment scenario, that is to say a position that they needed to find an employee for. We then asked the interviewee to justify why one or each and every one of the people in the photographs would be suitable to fill this position. The interviewee had no prior information about the photos and could only base their judgements on what they saw.

As with the intuition section of our study, we extracted this segment of the interviews and analysed them in Minerva, this was to once again take a look at the language and expressions the interviewees used when discussing the photos.

Naturally the interviewees were slightly unsure and uneasy about this task. Not only did they fell somewhat uncomfortable with selecting an employee from a piece of paper, they also had trouble separating their personal opinion from what they knew to be a professional attitude to the task at hand.

Conclusion.

It can be seen that our sources of information on the extent to which Implicit Processes are used are threefold:

1. Subject's expressed opinion – conscious response and desired profile
2. Subject's use of language (MCA-Minerva) – unconscious clues
3. Subject's response to the photograph task (MCA-Minerva) – slightly disguised question on attitudes

Of those that were negative toward intuition's role in the assessment process there were a few who were aware of the fact that they formed first impressions, and could even recognise how these might influence their opinions of the applicants, however they considered this an opportunity to set prejudice aside and continue to search for a candidate that fit the predetermined profile. These people were also aware of the risks of attempting to find a candidate too similar to the prior job holder, or even themselves. Some of them, whose jobs were solely to recruit on another companies behalf thought that their personal opinions were irrelevant, due to the fact that they would never work alongside the candidate. Others questioned what their intuition was based on, where did these implicit impressions come from and were they really reliable sources?

The interviewees had a tendency to associate the people in the photographs to people they already knew of. That is to say, that they reminded them of other people they had seen or met in a different context. This however caused them to assume that the person in the photo possessed similar traits to the person they originally associated them with. Many used expressions like "she looks like she could work in an office" or "we have someone like that who works as a technicians". In other words the interviewees attributed the photos with traits that they could impossibly know of without ever having met the person.

Several of our participants told us that they thought that attractive or at least not unattractive photos stood a better chance of being likely candidates, but emphasised however that this was due to the fact that they had nothing else to base their opinions on. Most of the interviewees tried to be scientific in their decisions, either by considering a suitable age or perhaps even gender. In general open and positive looking people were the most popular choices. We did however feel that some of our participants were attempting to give us the answers we wanted to hear, selecting what they assumed to be minority groups.

Table 38.

Attitudes to use of intuition in personnel selection

1	2	3	4	5
Subject	Professed attitude (overt)	Minerva analysis (covert)	Photo task (covert)	Researcher's composite judgement
A	N	N	Y	N
B	N	N	Y	Y
C	Y	Y	Y	Y
D	N	N	N	N
E	N	N	N	N
F	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note. In this table, a "Y" in column 2 denotes that the subject professed overtly to using intuitive or implicit processes to a substantial degree in recruitment situations. Columns 3 and 4 show where our covert methods, analysis with the MCA-Minerva program and / or the photograph task, suggested that the professed opinion was untrue. The final column, 5, shows our final judgement on whether each subject did or did not rely on the processes in question.

In conclusion we can say that the two subjects that professed to use intuition in recruiting seemed to stay consistent to that style during all parts of the interview. The four other subjects professed not to allow intuition to intrude in their judgements, but in the case of B we felt that his performance on the photograph task suggested that this might not be true. Other subjects

were also quite quick to fall into the trap of projecting personalities and experiences on to photographs, but were mostly quite careful to preface their comments by saying that this was only for the sake of the exercise and they seemed to be using intuition and guesswork in a conscious manner: not as an implicit process.

Dimensions.

We also set out to look for correlations or differences between subjects with different backgrounds and roles, and the extent to which they used implicit processes in recruitment decisions. The following table maps the preferences shown above against other factors. A "Y" denotes the subject as being a user of Implicit processes as defined and detailed in Table 38. No entries are made for subjects who are judged not to use implicit processes to a large degree in their selection choices.

Table 39.

Attitudes toward intuition and their distribution across the "dimensions".

Subject	Large org.	Small org.	Public sector	Private sector	Trained recruiter	Manager	Own use	Recruit for others
A								
B	Y			Y	Y		Y	
C	Y			Y		Y	Y	
D								
E								
F		Y		Y		Y	Y	
Total	2	1	0	3	1	2	3	0

Note. A "Y" denotes the subject as being a user of Implicit processes as defined and detailed in Table 38.

What conclusions can be drawn from this table? There is too little information on which to draw conclusions, but we feel that further research might strengthen the impressions that:

   a) Trained recruiters are more likely to resist the use of implicit processes

   b) Recruiters hiring for own use´(for their employer) are more likely to use implicit processes. If this were confirmed it would raise interesting questions of whether all

recruiting should be done 'at arm's length', and why the more immediate and important the decision the greater the tendency to use methods that were not thought of as 'best practice'.

c) The public sector organisation is not represented in this chart as a user of intuition. However due to the fact that it is only represented in one case, we were unable to draw any further conclusions regarding this dimension.

Despite the above we did not find any real evidence that suggested that there were any definite differences between the larger and the smaller companies in our study. Perhaps the size of the company is not what matters, we find it more likely that the personnel selectors' education or whether or not they are recruiting for their own use or for a customer is of relevance.

4.2. Methodologies of Personnel Selection and our Outcomes

Due to the fact that our essay is of a qualitative nature, we are unable to see any statistical correlations, however, we can draw some conclusions from the participants' answers. In this section we will reflect further, on to what degree our outcomes are related to the theories, which we presented in the introduction.

One thing, which became clear was that not all the participants had any suggestions about how to reduce the risk of relying too much on one's intuition. Although they had some vague ideas on how to increase objectivity, such as for example using more structured interview or employing psychological tests, some even admitted to paying less attention to the results of these if they did not reflect their own impressions. Other personnel selectors' performed the process of selection by "the book". They began with a job analysis (Kahlke & Smith, 2002) and ended with performing some tests just to verify the applicants' competence. All the informants agreed that the process of personnel selection was extremely complex and wished they could rely further on set methods. Most were aware that they must try hard to ignore their gut feelings and were even conscious of the psychological and cognitive processes that were behind this influence.

Most personnel selectors we interviewed told us that they always checked the applicants' references despite that fact that reference checking has a very low validity and reliability according to the literature that we have consulted. (Kahlke & Smith, 2002). They generally contemplated references in order to have an informed second opinion.

We found no real evidence of recruiters' tendency toward discriminating people of other ethnicities. Similar conclusions were drawn by Bergh and Hagsten (2005). This may be related to the fact that this is a very sensitive subject and no professional person wants to be acknowledged as a racist. We also felt that that some of our participants were inclined to tell us what we wanted to hear and in some cases selecting what they assumed to be minority groups.

We did however find some tendencies towards preconceptions. For example some said that they did not like how some of the people in the photographs was dressed. They said that some were not suitably dressed as if a bad dresser was indicating that one was not a suitable employee (Nisser, E., Rydberg, L., 2003). Another thing of interest regarding the photographs was the informants' tendency to associate freely, for example, "she looks like she could work in an office" or "we have someone like that who works as a technicians". The interviewees attributed the photos with traits that they could impossibly know of without ever having met the person. This implies peoples' willingness to construct categories (Olsson, 2004).

At least two of the informants performed some kind of intelligence testing. They probably did this because they wanted to form a more accurate picture of the applicant but this is in fact something, which can be discriminating against some minority groups. In *Culture and Psychology* (Juang & Matsumoto, 2004) they bring attention to the fact that the cultivation of intelligence is biased, as some cultures have greater potential than others.

Regarding the photographs some of the respondents also told us about the importance of body language. Intuitively they were more sceptical towards people who had a restricted body language than to those who had a more open body language. That statement reflects what the authors of *Culture and psychology, 2004* are talking about. For example how unspoken messages portrayed by facial expressions and body language can converse true intention and thoughts but they can also embellish, minimize or disguise them. One thing, which we also found quite interesting, was that those people in the photographs who smiled were more popular among the personnel selectors, who we interviewed, than those who did not smile. In *Culture and psychology, 2004,* it is mentioned that smiles are universally associated with mildness. Smiles forecast a lack of threat and a non-dominant disposition.

4.3. Validity

Validity refers to if a method examines what it intends to examine. That is to say, if our observations really reflect those phenomenon which we are interested in (Kvale, 1997).

We are altogether satisfied with our choice of method and how we carried out the analysis. Our purpose was to try to understand different personnel selectors' thoughts about intuition and it's hidden role in personnel selection. We therefore asked them questions about their general opinions about it and we also used photographs of different people in order to examine how they justified their choice of photograph, or if in deed they agreed to selecting a candidate, based on a photo, despite the fact that they knew nothing anything about them. In order to analyse the respondents' expressions we chose to apply MCA-Minerva, which is a suitable method for our purpose because it analyses texts produced by individuals and it emphasise how individuals constitutes meaning based on their own experiences. MCA-Minerva allowed us to look for what the individuals thought and their experiences of intuition. And by that said, we are of the opinion that our observations have well reflected the phenomenon, in other words intuition, which we intended to examine.

It is of great importance to be critical and to control every step in all research. We have tried to do this and in the following section will we highlight some sources of error in our study, particularly in our method section.

4.4. Sources of Error

In this section we will present relevant sources of error which can have affected our outcomes. Most of them are related to how we performed our analysis and interpretations in MCA-Minerva.

The first thing, which could have affected our outcomes, is the fact that we did the transcriptions separately. This could have lead to different interpretations but in an attempt to avoid this we included every little thing the informants expressed in our transcriptions. This included even the smallest "mmm" or "ehm" etc. one thing that was particularly difficult with this procedure was that it was sometimes impossible to hear what they said. It is difficult to analyse what this could mean for our results but it happened on the other hand quite rarely.

Interviewees and the way in which we originally came into contact with them could also have affected our outcome, but in our defence the selection of our sample is inline with phenomenology.

When it comes to how we performed the interviews there are a couple of things, which can have lead to sources of error later on in our outcomes. An example of this is the fact that we divided the interviews up between us, and that we therefore posed different questions. It is a possibility that our instructions in some way influenced the participants' way of expressing themselves. This was of course an affect, which we tried to reduce by for example not interrupting the informants.

Another source of error could occur if our questions turned out to be of no validation. In order to make them as valid as possible we tried to phrase them accordingly to the phenomenological approach. Before we performed the interviews we also asked our supervisor for some advice, which we tried to stick to.

Questions regarding implicit processes can be sensitive and professional recruiters may have inhibitions about admitting to their habits and the role that intuition plays in their work. Due to this it is also possible that the informants did not tell the whole truth, in order to hide their real thoughts regarding implicit reactions and it's role in personnel selection, because they did not want us to think that they had prejudices. In an attempt to reduce the informants' chance of deceit we decided to perform a long interview, which would make it easier for us to reveal inconsistent answers from the informants. When it comes to the respondents' opinions about the photographs, the fact that people may be holding back, or saying too much, can also be a source of error.

The fact that two separate people performed the analysis of the different steps of MCA-Minerva has probably lead to different interpretations of the outcomes. This is also a source of error. There is no right or wrong, or any set criteria for how one should go about interpreting Minerva, it was up to us to judge and justify our results ourselves. We interpreted the individuals' life-worlds based on our total impressions of the interviews however we only used segments of the interviews in Minerva to reach our statistics. Our interpretations can therefore be affected by our personal impressions of the participants.

Finally the fact that we in originally had no real training on using MCA and therefore made beginners' mistakes can also have lead to errors in our outcomes. Many of the descriptions of the modalities were hard to interpret which probably lead to mistakes. It is really difficult to estimate to the extent these errors have affected our outcomes and this is something which we are aware of.

4.5. Future

It is a fact that personnel selection is not yet a reliable science and mistakes can occur and decisions can end being based on implicit processes. This was something that all of the participants in our study agreed upon. Relying on one's intuition in the assessment process can result in serious consequences, examples of these are discrimination, and unemployment for some candidates. However it can also have to consequences for the employer, like for example, the risk he takes when he hires people who later on can not live up to the employer's expectations.

This is a matter that concerns most people as we are all either employees, employers or hoping to one day belong to one of these two categories. As students, soon to enter the job market we should be extra concerned about today's competition and risks of discrimination. Through this essay, we wish to make people more aware of implicit processes and the role they may play in some peoples struggles to find employment.

We also chose to compare large and small companies, and private companies and public sector organisations in order to examine if the process of personnel selection were similar or different in some ways. Our aim here was to discover if the personnel selectors in some way differed in how they were affected by their intuition.

We think that although no significant correlations can be detected in our study, we have laid the foundation for further research in this area. It would for example be interesting to examine if different tests could decrease the influence of personnel selectors' intuition. Another thing of interest could be to examine if there were any obvious cultural differences in attribute preferences in employees, for example regarding intelligence.

One thing, which became more clear to us a long with the procedure, was the impossible task of controlling one's prejudices and how one is to even be aware of the role it plays in our decision making. Our hope is that we, in the future, can minimize tendencies to trust our intuitive impressions due to an increased knowledge of underlying implicit processes.

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Appendix A.

Project Description

Background

We are students studying at the department of Psychology at Lund University. We are currently in the process of writing our Bachelor essay on work- and organizational psychology. The focus of our essay is personnel selection and employee assessment.

Purpose

The purpose of our essay is to examine the interplay between the implicit cognitive processes and the explicit use of personnel selection methods. We hope that our research and conclusions will raise awareness and make helpful suggestions in this important facet of personnel recruitment.

Method

Our essay is based on a phenomenological methodology which means that we intend to gain a greater understanding for the individual's personal experiences of his life-world. In order to do this we are interested in hearing professional recruiters' personal thoughts on the personnel selection process and the assessment procedure. Our intention is to allow the recruiters to freely express their views and opinions in an unstructured interview. We are also wish to present them with a number of photographs which we hope the recruiter will be willing to discuss with us. We further which to analyse the outcomes of these interviews in a software programme called MCA-Minerva (Meaning Constitution Analysis), which has been developed by assistant professor in psychology, Roger Sages at the Department of Psychology, Lund University.

We must emphasize that this study is voluntary and that all interviews will be treated with total confidentiality. We will also strictly follow the Swedish laws regarding "confidential and personal information".

The interviews will be analysed in Lund during the latter part of 2005 and a summary of these will be presented in our final Bachelor essay in January 2006. We will be happy to send you the outcomes of your interview together with a copy of our essay, if you so wish.

Please feel free to contact us for any further information.

Best regards,

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Appendix B.

The Photographs

Picture 1: shows a young girl with black hair and brown eyes. She has her hair in a ponytail. She appears to of from a foreign ethnicity. She is looking straight into the camera.

Picture 2: shows a middle-aged man. He has dark, greased hair that is combed back and a moustache. He is wearing a string vest and looks somewhat surprised.

Picture 3: shows a young man who is smiling. He has short dark hair and is wearing glasses and a chequered shirt.

Picture 4: shows an older man with short grey hair and glasses. He is wearing a white shirt and a dark suit and a tie. He is looking straight into the camera.

Picture 5: shows an older woman with short grey hair and glasses. She is wearing a red jacket. She is looking away from the camera.

Picture 6: shows a woman in her mid-twenties. She has blonde braids and is wearing a pink top.

Picture 7: shows a middle-aged woman with reddish hair and glasses. She is looking straight into the camera.

Picture 8: shows a girl in her twenties with long blonde hair. She is wearing a lot of make-up and has a top on.

Picture 9: shows a man in his mid-twenties. He has short brown hair and is wearing a white shirt and black suit with a red tie. He is looking away from the camera.

Picture 10: shows a man in his mid-thirties. He has dark hair and is wearing a black T-shirt. He is smiling at the camera.

Picture 11: shows a man in his mid-twenties. He has short dark hair and is unshaven. He is looking straight into the camera.

Picture 12: shows a girl in her mid-thirties. She has long dark hair and is wearing a pink shirt and a dark suit. She is smiling into the camera.

Picture 13: shows an older man who seems to be of foreign ethnicity. He has short black hair and a moustache. He is wearing a chequered shirt. He is looking straight into the camera.

Picture 14: shows a young woman of foreign ethnicity in her mid-thirties. She has dark hair, and brown eyes. She is wearing a black top underneath some kind of cape. She is smiling at the camera.

Appendix C.

Description of the Modalities

In order to plot the profile of our candidates, we have taken four modalities into account: affect, which we find extra interesting for our study, belief, function and time.

Affects

Positive-prospective: the meaning unit is expressed with a positive affect and it is directed to the future

Positive-retrospective: the meaning unit is expressed with a positive affect and it is directed to the past

Neutral: the meaning unit is expressed with a neutral affect or no affect at all

Negative-prospective: the meaning unit is expressed with a negative affect and it is directed to the future

Negative-retrospective: the meaning unit is expressed with a negative affect and it is directed to the past

Belief

Doxa-affirmation: the meaning unit is expressed without any hesitation. The person is sure about something.

Doxa-negation: something is not known for the person. The person says that he/she does not know.

Possibility: Something is not sure but it is probable

Probability: something is possible

Question: the person asks a question about something

Function

Perceptive: the meaning unit is expressed in a way that does not leave any room for further questions. The expression is made in concrete terms.

Signitive: the meaning unit is expressed in a way that leaves room for further question. The expression is made in abstract terms

Imaginative: the meaning unit demands that someone imagines something

Time

Past: the expression depicts something, which took place in the past

Present: something is taking place in the present time

Future: something will take place in the future

Present-past: something took place in the past but has effects in the present time

Present-future: something is taking place in the present time but will have effects in the future

Always- recurrent: something is always happening

Empty: something is said without any time-dimension

Presentation of the Participating Companies

To preserve anonymity of the respondents, there is no obvious correlation between the order of the following company descriptions and the respondents A-E

1.

This is a Swedish, consultancy company, which has, for the past 20 years, worked with finding and developing leaders for specific vacancies in their customers' organisations. Their main areas of competence are Executive Search and People & Business Development delivered through offices in four cities in Sweden. As such, the recruitment and selection process is crucial to their success. Their clientele are both average-sized and larger companies, and are both Swedish and international

2.

This is a young and expansive company that supplies call-centre services for their customers. Traditionally, call centre operations have a high rate of personnel attrition which means that recruitment is an ongoing and important task crucial to the success of the company. The company has grown by 60% annually for the last three years to a current level of 150 employees distributed between three contact centres. We interviewed the managing director who takes personal responsibility for the hiring of key managers and all sales leaders.

3.

The third company has 12,000 employees in 18 countries and is a global supplier of network services. The company constructs, installs and maintains fixed, mobile and enterprise networks for many of the world's leading operators and system vendors and other customers that have chosen to focus on their core business. We interviewed an HR executive heavily involved in recruiting and selection.

4.

The fourth company is a hospital in a small town in southern Sweden. It has ten departments and six receptions and about 1200 employees. The department which we visited has about

thirty-five employees. They recruit about 1-3 people per year and 10 substitutes. Although part of a large hospital group we class this department as a small organisation and noted that the respondent was a medical professional first and foremost – not an HR professional.

5.

Company five is a cooperative owned by its members and employing 30 staff and situated in a small town in southern Sweden. The company has revenues of 120 million Swedish kronor of which around half originates from construction and hardware related retail outlets. Their customers are both private consumers and building contractors. We interviewed the managing director who takes a significant role in all recruitment processes.

6.

This company is a pan-Nordic recruitment agency consisting of more than 10 000 employees. It specializes in personnel recruitment, outsourcing and career- and development programs. Their shares are listed on the Stockholm stock exchange. The company supplies staff to meet customers' job requirements where an out-sourced alternative is seen as a better solution than own employees. We interviewed the company's personnel manager.

Appendix E.

Summary of Life-worlds

Informant A

A works with headhunting, which means that he/she recruits personnel for a customer. This means that A is less likely to be influenced by some intuitive reactions, partly because A never has to consider how he/she would get on with the candidate in a work place but also due to the very formal criteria that A has to base his/her assessment on. A's customer will already have produced a very thorough and specific set of qualifications and qualities that the candidate must hold. It is then up to A to determine whether or not the applicant fits these criteria. However A pays a lot of attention to detail upon his/her first meeting with each applicant and bares all that he/she perceives in mind. A initially adopts this frame of mind when going about selecting a photo, creating an imaginary job and selecting an employee. Despite this, once A begins to look at the photos, he/she begins to associate the photos with preconceived associations that fit his/her stereotypical ideas about who the different photos represent.

Informant B

B depends a great deal on his/her many years of experience within the recruitment business, to make decisions regarding personnel selection even though he/she is fully aware of the dangers involved in doing so. B seems to be indecisive about whether or not to succumb to his/her intuitive impressions or whether to stick to the rules and perhaps even develop a more practical, hands on form of testing. Bs greatest concern it that he/she ends up selecting an applicant that is similar to him/her self as B is aware that this does not mean that the applicant is a suitable employee. Despite his/her original caution and somewhat sceptic approach to the picture task, B had no problem in speculating on where about the people in the photos were in their lives at current. B justified all his/her assumptions by previous assessment experiences.

Informant C

C has much confidence in his/her intuitive impressions and holds them above all other assessment. C employs several other evaluation tools, but at the end of the day will nearly always rely or his/her personal impressions to make a call. He/she is very satisfied with

previous outcomes of his/her employee selections based on these methods and intends on continuing to work this way, he/she feels that on the occasions he/she has gone against gut instinct, the results have been poor. Generally speaking C was not interested in formal qualifications and therefore personal attributes and other qualities that can be measured intuitively were of greater value to him/her. All of the above points became apparent during the picture task when C selected photographs based on their smiles and whether or not he/she perceived them to have taken responsibility for their lives. C also showed a preference for people in which he/she recognised him/herself.

Informant D

D was opposed to recruiting personnel based on intuitive impressions, the is due to the fact that he/she employs nurses at a hospital. There is no room for mistakes in Ds line of work as any faults could have very serious consequences. D is aware that one can never fully avoid intuitive feelings, but tries hard to remain conscious of them and the role that they play in his/her decision making. D rationalises that our gut feelings are based on experiences and are there for a reason and should therefore never be totally ignored. D attempted to go about the picture task in a logical and systematic way, this was however very difficult as there was nothing objective for him/her to base decisions on. Ds main concern was that the candidate should be caring and be good with people, which obviously was impossible to determine from the photographs. Eventually D selected a photograph that he/she perceived to represent an intelligent woman this was mainly on the fact that the person appeared to be wearing a white coat which D associated with working with care.

Informant E

E was fully aware of the dangers entailed in depending on intuitive impressions and works hard at remaining uninfluenced by them. E recognised however that personnel selection is not a true science and that it is only natural to form implicit opinions of people as a human being. E was adamant that the best way to avoid being forced to rely on intuition, was to be as accurate as possible throughout all stages of the assessment process therefore eliminating the likelihood of judging applicants on probabilities. E emphasised that it is vital to focus only on competencies that are of relevance to the job in question and to use many different methods to assess these. E continued to state by his/her original views on personnel selection and refused thereby to select a photograph upon request. This was due to Es constant professional outlook

and his/her unyielding notion that an employee could never be selected even hypothetically, based on a photograph.

Informant F

F runs a hardware shop that consists of among other things, a warehouse, a gardening department and an administrative side. Aside from any specifically required qualifications, F values social competence in his/her employees, however he/she acknowledges that an ability to have such qualities is really only of value if one works in certain areas of his/her business. F has no preconceptions about intuition being positive or negative but however relies on it a great deal when assessing possible employees, due to the fact that he/she is of the opinion the general guidelines do not suffice when selecting personnel. F believes that group dynamics are very important and tries therefore to find complementary candidates. In order to do this he/she takes other employees opinions into account, and would preferably only employ staff on references if possible. F selected four photos as possible candidates, one for each department of the store, justifying these decisions by their appealing looks.