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ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

Résumés as selection tool;  
Personality indicators in the content of résumés.

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Résumés as a selection tool: personality indicators in the content of résumés

This paper is a 30 credit thesis to a M.Sc. degree at  
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## **Preface**

This thesis is a research project to complete a master's degree at University of Reykjavik. The weight of the thesis is 30 credits (ECTS) and is a part of 120 credits (ECTS) Master. Thanks to Arney Einarsson, Ásta Bjarnadóttir, Haukur Freyr Gylfason and Gunnar Haugen for good advice and support. Special thanks to my dear friends Haraldur Diego and Fannar Þórðarson for proofreading the thesis. My family, especially my husband, Arnar Guðnason, have my sincere thanks for the tolerance and patience during my studies.

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## **Abstract**

The first introduction of applicants, when applying for open positions, is usually through resumes. The need for applicants possessing a wide range of skills and abilities to meet requirements for fast growing international corporations will most certainly increase. Selection and staffing is one of the most important processes in human resources and can be used as a source of sustained competitive advantage. It is therefore vital for organizations to emphasize on improving recruiting and selection practices which will result in better organizational outcomes. With more effective practices the more likely organizations are in hiring and retaining satisfied employees. Applicants provide information pertaining to their KSOA's (knowledge, skills and other abilities), education and prior work experience in their resumes that recruiters measure and evaluate. This provides recruiters/HR managers with a cost effective and convenient assessment tool that increases the likelihood of hiring individuals who possess the right abilities and skills to be successful at their jobs. The Cranet (2013) research in Iceland shows that the most used hiring practice for managers is the screening of resume/application form, recommendation and a panel interview (Einarsdóttir., Bjarnadóttir., Ólafsdóttir., and Georgsdóttir, 2012). Based on the value of resumes in the selection process and its shortcomings the researcher wondered if there was a link between the content of resumes and the outcomes of personality assessments.

In this explorative study it was investigated whether the presence of information in resumes was related to applicants' ( $N=100$ ) personality assessment (OPQ32). Both practical and significant correlations were found such as personality traits of those who have work experience in supervising others, differences in those who have attained master's degree compared to those who do not have a master's degree. And finally differences in personality traits with those who reported extracurricular activities like being part of professional societies, elected offices and those who have volunteered. The conclusion is that it is valid to use information regarding education, experience in supervising others and extracurricular activities as personality indicators when evaluating resume content. The use of information in resumes in the selection process is discussed.

**Key Words:** Resumes, screening, selection process, personality assessment, hiring practices, candidate selection,

### **Affidavit**

I confirm that I wrote this thesis independently and on my own without using any other sources and aids as I stated. Where other sources were used I clearly marked them as not my own. This thesis has not been received by any examination board, neither in this nor in a similar form. Furthermore I agree to an anonymous test of plagiarism which electronically verifies the validity of my declarations. I am aware that my thesis will not be evaluated in case of not making this statement.

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## **Introduction – Employee Selection**

The most frequent selection tool that organizations use is the resume. Job seekers send their resumes to organizations they are interested in. There they are screened for information that can be relevant for the organization and/or job positions that are available. It has been suggested in prior research, that resume content can provide employers with an inexpensive, quick and fair selection tool that might predict overall abilities (Cole and Gallen, 2003). Recruiters use the resume information to form an opinion regarding whether or not the applicant has certain skills and abilities needed for the available position. As for most available positions there are several applicants who submit resumes, but are excluded from the process. This might be due to lack of abilities of the applicant or even lack of information in the resume that is relevant to the organization. It is how the recruiter perceives the applicant that is a significant predictor of employability (Wright, Domagalski and Collins, 2011). The recruiters' perception can be in regards of the KSA's of the applicant, the experience and/or the applicant personality fit to the organization.

So the important question is how and why some applicants are invited for an interview while others are excluded from the selection process based on the content of their resumes (Cole, Rubin, Giles and Harris, 2007). According to the Cranet research in Iceland (2013) one of the most used hiring practice for all the job categories (managers, professionals, clerical staff and manual workers) is the screening of resume/application form (Einarsdóttir, Bjarnadóttir, Ólafsdóttir and Georgsdóttir, 2012). Although resume screening is so widely used at the first stages of the recruiting process and in the evaluation of candidates, there is surprisingly little empirical research examining how recruiters evaluate the resume content (Brown and Campion, 1994; Bright and Hutton, 2000).

## **The Importance of Hiring the Right People**

Staffing is one of the most important strategic mechanisms for organizations to achieve competitive advantage. Even though the labor availability is quite high in the present economy, the available labor forces can be expected to decrease as the economy improves. It is crucial that organizations recognize the value of choosing the right people (Ployhart, 2006), as the highest organizational cost is usually the labor cost and wrong hiring decisions are both expensive and not easily undone (Heneman III., 2012; Judge et al., 1999; and Kammeyer-Muller, 2012). Hiring the right person does not



necessarily mean hiring the smartest person or the most experienced one. It means to hire the person who will perform the best job, someone who will continue working for an extended length of time, and who will fit with others in the company. Person-organization fit is the compatibility between the organization and people (Kristof, 1996). Recruiting people with similar goal and value congruence leads to positive organizational outcomes. It is essential to make no mistakes in the selection process; neither to decline qualified applicant (false negative) nor to use resources to assess unqualified applicants (false positive) (Bjarnadóttir, 2012). As stated before, for organizations to gain and keep competitive advantage the critical source is to hire the right talent; as better talent will separate the winning companies from the others. It is the talent that increasingly determines success and the demand for highly skilled people often exceeds the supply (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin and Michaels III, 1998). Organizations should strive to use a professional selection method when recruiting for available positions. According to Aðalsteinsson a professional selection is when the selection is conducted on professional grounds with predefined methods which aim to use the best objective approaches available to recruit the most qualified applicant regardless of gender, race or political beliefs (2006). A good hire is essential for any company and certain steps should be taken to eliminate any difficulties so the company can efficiently and successfully succeed. A comprehensive understanding of what types of applicants are needed is fundamental and with that, sound knowledge of what recruiting methods and assessments can be used to find the best fit available.

### **Recruitment Methods and Assessments**

Numerous tools are currently used in the hiring processes. These tools are for example; job analysis, resumes and job applications, interviews, references and background checks, personality-, cognitive ability-, honesty- and integrity tests as well as drug screening. As stated previously the first introduction of the applicant to the organization is the applicants' resume. The result of a study done by Chapman and Webster (2003) shows that most organizations use manual screening of applicant material for example resumes and cover letters, telephone screening interviews and face to face interviews. Job analysis evaluates what qualifications and KSAO's (knowledge, skills and other abilities) are necessary for the available position and should be used in the selection process (Bjarnadóttir, 2012, Heneman III et al, 2012). Initial interviews are often the first contact that an applicant has with an organization. These interviews are usually to screen out all evident incongruity of person/job matches. Structured interviews are

standardized and a job related method of assessment. There is a vast difference between an unstructured interview and a structured one. An unstructured interview has relatively low reliability and decisions are often made by the effect of impressions made by the applicant. In a structured interview questions are based on a job analysis, all applicants are asked the same questions, the responses are numerically evaluated, detailed rating scales are used when scoring each response and notes are taken, focusing on the behavior of the applicant (Heneman III et al, 2012).

Ability measures are used widely and have been recognized as good predictors of both job and training performance (Bartram, 2005). The ability tests measure the applicants' capacity to function in a particular way. The most common ones are cognitive ability tests that assess abilities such as thinking, expression of ideas, reasoning, mathematical abilities and memory. These measures appear to reflect general intelligence (Heneman III et al, 2012, p. 434). The results of an Icelandic research revealed that Icelanders have more negative attitude toward cognitive ability tests compared to applicants from other countries. Icelandic applicants believe these tests are impersonal and cold, not connected to the applied job, and are neither fair nor effective (Jónsdóttir and Hafsteinsson, 2008).

A vast majority of organizations, that participated in Chapmans' and Websters' study, expect to be increasingly using computer-based keyword searches of resumes as well as scoring of standardized applications, cognitive ability tests and videoconferencing in the recruitment process (2003). Weinstein (2012) states that individual rating biases, stereotyping and errors of the recruiters have impact on the final decision. Weinstein also states that competency based selection programs are more reliable and more valid predictors of performance success than programs that are traditionally used, such as unstructured interviews. By collecting a list of required successful behaviors for each position, recruiters can review résumés with these behaviors in mind, comparing each résumé against the list and each other (Weinstein, 2012). According to the International Cranet survey (2011) managers were mainly recruited through recruitment agencies, job advertisement and word of mouth. These methods are unvarying across the globe. The recruitment methods for professionals and clerical workers are more diverse as company websites and speculative applications are also used (Cranet, p. 52).

The methods that organizations use in their selection varies, some choose to select their employees after person-organization fit (P-O fit), where the compatibility

between applicants and organizational attributes are highlighted. Other organizations are more concerned about the person-job fit (P-J fit), which looks at the compatibility between the applicants knowledge, skills and abilities and job requirements (Higgins and Judge, 2004).

Personality assessments are widely used, though at one time they were not perceived as a valid recruitment method. There are a number of ways that personality can be measured. The most common measures are self report surveys that are usually based on the Big Five personality traits; extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. In the table below the implications of these traits at work are shown (Heneman III, 2012).

Table 1. Implication of Big Five Personality Traits at Work.

Big Five Traits	Advantages	Disadvantages
Conscientiousness	Better overall job performance Higher level of job satisfaction More likely to emerge as leaders Fewer “deviant” work behaviors Higher retention (lower turnover)	Lower adaptability
Emotional stability	Better overall job performers Higher levels of job satisfaction More effective leaders Higher retention (lower turnover)	Less able to identify threats More likely to engage in high-risk behavior
Extraversion	Perform better in sales More likely to emerge as leaders Higher levels of job satisfaction	Higher absenteeism More accidents
Agreeableness	More valued as team members More “helping” behaviors Fewer “deviant” work behaviors	Lower career success Less able to cope with conflict Give more lenient ratings
Openness	Higher creativity More effective leaders More adaptable	Less committed to employer More “deviant” work behaviors More accidents

*Source:* Heneman III et al., 2012, p.430.

As exhibited in table 1, each of the Big Five traits has both advantages and disadvantages. Conscientiousness, emotional stability and extraversion appear to be most useful traits across different range of jobs. The advantage of higher retention (lower employee turnover) is for example the reduction of cost and better cost control (Judge et al., 1999; and Kammeyer-Muller, 2012). One of the advantages of the trait extraversion is higher levels of job satisfaction. Judge and associates found that the true

correlation between job satisfaction and job performance was estimated to be .030 (2001). Templer's research confirms that in a collectivistic Asian society, as in the West, job satisfaction is influenced by conscientiousness, extraversion, emotional stability and agreeableness (2012). This indicates that with greater job satisfaction the employee will outperform those with lower job satisfaction. The Big Five personality traits can be used in the selection processes, with emphasis on what position the selection is for. For example for salesperson position, an applicant high in extraversion could fit the best. Personality assessments will be discussed further, later in this thesis.

The Cranet Research (Cranfield Network on International Human Resource Management) which is a part of an international research collaboration has been conducted in Iceland every third year since 2002 (Reykjavík University, 2013). According to the Cranet research in 2009 the most frequently used methods to evaluate managers were recommendations, or 68%, 64% used panel interviews and 49% used one on one interviews. In the latest Cranet research, published in May 2013, résumés were included as one of the methods used to assess applicants in the recruiting process. Most organizations use résumés and along with recommendations, these two are the most used assessment tools in the process when recruiting managers and professionals. Table 2, below, shows the comparison for these two groups in Iceland between the years 2009 and 2012. There is an evident development in the use of all methods except interviews conducted by one interviewee.

Table 2. Comparison of assessment methods in Iceland 2009 and 2012.

	Managers 2012	Managers 2009	Professionals 2012	Professionals 2009
Panel Interview	71%	64%	66%	59%
Interview by one	35%	52%	41%	52%
Résumé/Application	<b>86%</b>	-	<b>88%</b>	-
Psychology Test	33%	21%	19%	11%
Assessment Center	8%	1%	5%	1%
Recommendation	<b>86%</b>	68%	<b>87%</b>	70%
Ability Test	17%	8%	19%	8%
Technical Test	18%	4%	17%	10%

*Source:* Einarisdóttir, Bjarnadóttir, Ólafsdóttir and Georgsdóttir, 2013.

Preparation in the selection processes involves recognizing the employment environment; the availability of employees in both internal and external markets as well as shortages and surpluses. It also involves evaluating which selection methods fit each position, at each time, the best. Good planning is therefore vital in the selection process;

as it saves time and expenses as well as it can ensure quality and equality (Bjarnadóttir, 2012, p. 48). Recruiters or hiring managers need to be constantly aware of the economic climate, how the applicant pool is, and by what means they can increase the number of qualified applicants. They also need to be aware of new systems and technology that can be helpful in the selection process.

### **New Developments in the Selection Process**

The rise in the use of technology in the selection process refers to various forms such as; electronic selection, web based job applications and tests, and videoconferences (Stone et al, 2013). Keyword enhancing techniques and customized search engines are being used to allow the organization to scan automatically the résumés for relevant keywords (Amare and Manning, 2009). According to the Cranet research in Iceland only 10% of companies did not have computerized employee systems. Out of those who have computerized employee systems in place, only 39% use them to attract applicants and employ (Einarsdóttir, Bjarnadóttir and Oddsson, 2009).

Internet screening technologies are increasingly being used to find available information about job candidates. Staffing professionals use social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn both for evaluation and assessment purposes. These sites can provide more wealth of information than the applicants submitted in their résumés (Smith and Kidder, 2010). These sites provide a special method that allows recruiters to screen, source and contact job candidates (SHRM, 2008). There are numerous reasons for implementing technology-based tools in the selection process. Efficiency, reduction of cost, expansion of the applicant pool, enabling of new assessment tools and increasing applicant convenience are a few of the reasons why the usage of technology has risen (Chapman and Webster, 2003; SHRM, 2008). These methods are also generating applicants that are comfortable using the technology. Even though the technology has led to less face to face time with applicants, it allows more time with the best fitted applicants as the less desirable applicants have been screened out (Chapman and Webster, 2003). Jones and Dages (2003) have noted that the selection process is keeping up the pace with the rapid technological innovations today. Organizations need to keep their hands on the pulse of these future trends.

Caers and Castelyn's research, conducted in Belgium, revealed that 29.1% of recruiters used LinkedIn to increase the volume of information about applicants and 12.1% used Facebook (2011). These numbers can be compared to SHRM survey, that focuses on the use of social media in HR, revealed that only 18% of organization

indicated that they are using social networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook (2011). The SHRM survey also reported that 34% of organizations screen applicants by using online search engines (Google, Yahoo etc.) and 9% more plan to do so in the future (SHRM, 2008). The most recent SHRM survey reveals that 59% of organizations have never used online search engines and 53% do not plan to do so (2011).

The primary reason for organizations not using social media sites when screening applicants are mainly of legal risks, lack of work related information and lack of verifiable data (SHRM, 2011). According to Facebook's policies, an organization might face legal challenges if they use an applicant's Facebook page as a part of the selection process (Smith and Kidder, 2010). Caution of potential legal problems such as the EEO (equal employment opportunity) laws is also necessary when internet screening is used (Davison, Maraist, Hamilton, and Bing, 2012). Organizations should therefore develop policies regarding appropriate uses of the internet screening. For selection purposes the process should be based on recommendations derived from the job analysis. Organizations should also conduct a risk-benefit analysis and verify the accuracy of the information obtained from the internet (Davison et al, 2012, p. 13). Organizations should also bear in mind the fairness of the selection procedures. Applicants could experience the selection procedure in a negative way and develop a negative attitude towards the organization as a consequence. These attitudes can have multiple effects on the applicant's behavior (Jónsdóttir and Hafsteinsson, 2008). Staffing professionals need to be careful in their screening approaches as applicants might be driven away because of invasion of their privacy as their personal sites are being viewed.

## 1. Résumés

### **Résumés as Key Gatekeepers**

Résumé form and content norms have been developing and changing for the last 50 to 60 years and will continue to change with time. These adjustments are result of changes in different industries, new laws and demographic locations. As there are millions of résumés sent to organizations in the hope of employment, job applicants must think ahead and enhance their résumés to make them stand out from the crowd. In addition to basic information such as name and contact details, résumés usually include professional objectives, educational qualifications, grade point averages, awards and employment history (Weinstein, 2012).

As mentioned before the most frequently used selection practice is the reviewing of applicants' résumés (Ross and Young, 2009). This practice is used both by organizations as well as recruiting agencies. Recruiters serve the organization as employment gatekeepers as they determine which applicant will go further in the selection process (Weinstein, 2012). Most organizations use résumés, as their initial screening tool, prior to implementing other more expensive selection methods. Résumés provide information about the applicants' education, knowledge, skills and experiences as well as indicators of other characteristics. The information found in résumés is the first introduction to potential employer and it provides the means for self marketing for applicants (Udechukwu and Manyak, 2009). In résumés applicants try to paint as good a picture of them as they can by reporting the summary of what they believe are their most important life experiences (Cole, Field and Giles, 2003). In a research conducted in Iceland many of the HR professionals interviewed mentioned that they had difficulties with screening résumés. They also noted the importance of a well done résumés and that the most important content, in their view, was the work experience, or more specifically how long and where an applicant worked for previous employer as well as what education the applicant has acquired. One mentioned that he liked to read what applicants do in their spare time as it says much about the person (Sigfúsdóttir, 2010). By screening résumés, organizations and recruiting agencies, can acquire an extensive overview over applicants, their abilities, knowledge and even some of their personality traits.

### **Types of Résumés and Preferred Method of Delivery**

The most common type of résumé is a *chronological résumé*. In this type of résumé the applicants list the work history in reverse chronological order (the most recent job is presented first). Skills are organized in a *functional résumé*. A functional résumé is often used by people who have less experience, applicants who are looking to enter a new field, applicants who have gaps in their work history, older applicants that are belittling their experience and applicants that have relevant experience in unpaid areas e.g. education or volunteerism. The third type of résumé is a *combination duo résumé*, which first displays experience and skills then follows by work history (Weinstein, 2012). *Behaviorally focused résumés* display competencies that are required from the employer. These behaviors are easily identified by recruiters as well as for job

applicants/seekers and are often set up as bullet points e.g. problem solving, determine and prepare (Weinstein, 2012). *Electronic résumés* are the newest form of résumés. It is the delivery mechanism that applicants use to provide potential employers/recruiters with their résumés (Akpan and Notar, 2012). A study comparing electronic versus paper résumés, revealed that the applicants that had paper résumés were perceived as more friendly, while those with electronic résumés were perceived as more intelligent, more technologically advanced and having overall better qualifications (Elgin and Clapham, 2004). Elgins' and Claphams' results indicate that recruiters/hiring managers might be using the method as an indicator for personality.

The result of a survey conducted in USA showed that a large majority (71%) of employers (recruiters at Michigan University) prefers to receive standard chronological résumés. The most preferred mode was through email 46%. The second most preferred mode was through entry at the organizations web site or 38%. Only 7% preferred paper résumés. The majority or 56% of organizations prefers to receive cover letters as well as the application or résumé (Schullery, Ickes and Schullery, 2009). No compatible research has been executed in Iceland.

### **Assessing Personality Attributes in Résumés**

As stated before, the résumé is a critical tool in evaluating an applicant's qualifications (Ross and Young, 2005) and for them to decide if the applicant will be invited for additional screening. It is desirable for employers to be able to predict personality attributes by training their recruiters to reliably detect and assess specific résumé content, instead of making generalizations or be affected by their prejudices and biases (Cole et al, 2003). Recruiters should look at information that goes beyond the experience and educational qualifications (Nemanick Jr. and Clark, 2002).

In a study done by Thoms, McMasters, Roberts, and Dombkowski (1999) specific characteristics in résumés were examined and an attempt was made to identify what form and characteristics would provide competitive advantage for the applicants. Their findings indicated that one page résumés were better than two page résumés, specific objective statements were better than general ones. Cole and his colleagues also concluded that recruiters connected grades in résumés as a reflection of intelligence, motivation and other abilities that are required on the job (2007). Education, the level of education, grades, quality of school, major field of studies and extracurricular activities are among the content that recruiters look for. Ross and Young (2005) also



state that the inclusion of grades was not perceived important, and that only grades that are high or over 3,25 GPA (equivalent to 8,125 in Icelandic grading system ( $3,25/4 \times 10 = 8,125$ ) were of importance. Christiansen's (2012) research revealed that recruiters assess applicants with higher grades as more qualified and that the recruiters are more likely to offer applicants with higher grades an interview and are more likely to hire them.

Some studies suggest that recruiters should use information on extracurricular activities to draw conclusions about applicants and that their inferences are based on relationships between attributes and activities (Nemanick Jr. and Clark, 2002; Brown and Campion, 1994). Evidence has also shown that participation in extracurricular activities demonstrate interpersonal skills, which can be valid for jobs that require certain social components (Heneman III et al, 2012). Brown and Campion's (1994) suggest that information in résumés may be reliably judged, when assessing applicant personality dimensions. In their study the range of reliabilities between individual recruiters was from .62 to .76. Their conclusion was also that information contained in the résumé was interpreted differently for different jobs (Brown and Campion, 1994).

Applicants can use impression management when writing their résumés, and by that influence the effect their résumés has on recruiters. With impression management the applicant emphasizes the qualifications, knowledge and work experience that make them seem more professional and more qualified for the work applied for (Tsai, 2011). The similar-attraction effect is another bias that may influence recruiters (Byrne, 1971). That happens when recruiters tend to recruit applicants who are similar to them, who reflect their self image (Tsai, 2011). Previous studies have shown that information in résumés significantly correlates with applicants' personality (Cole et al, 2003) and that applicant's traits, reflected in résumés impact recruiter's judgment on the employability of the applicant (Brown and Campion, 1994; Cole et al, 2004). As applicants control what content they apply in their résumés, recruiters need to be aware what information is reliable and correlates to the applicant's personality.

### **Objective and Research Questions**

The objective of this research is to explore whether résumé content and structure provides reliable and valid indicators of applicant's personality. The results will add to the limited research field on the first stage of the candidate assessment; the analysis of résumés. Additionally, the results can provide recruiters with more reliable information

on how they can systematically and purposefully assess the content and structure of résumés. Substantial savings could be made by developing a screening tool, before investing in more expensive and time consuming selection techniques (Cole, Field and Giles, 2003). By using these results, recruiters can be better apt to interpret the candidates' personality attributes, instead of making generalized assumptions based on instincts and biases. To the researchers' knowledge, a similar research has not been conducted in Iceland before. Neither has a similar research been done using the OPQ32 personality assessment test. In the light of the explorative nature of this research there are no formal hypotheses. Instead this research question is presented: Can the content of résumés systematically be used to infer about applicants' personality? In the light of prior research it is expected to find correlation between grades and conscientiousness; higher grades will conclude in higher measures of conscientiousness and more participation in social activities will conclude in higher scores in extraversion. Résumé content of  $N=100$  applicants will be compared to their personality assessments.

### **Recruiters' Biases and Applicants' Faking**

The hiring of qualified applicants and successful recruitment is contingent on the recruiter's ability to read résumés. Recruiters often build impressions base on the type of information that is not related to educational achievements, skills or experiences at work nor in regards to the applicant's employability (Brown and Campion, 1994; Cole et al, 2004). As some recruiters only scan the résumés for a few seconds to see if the applicant might be the best fit for the job (Akpan and Notar, 2012), applicants should tailor their résumés to best fit the organization they apply to (Ross and Young, 2005). Recruiters may have biases when they evaluate applicants. Those biases can either be known or unknown to the recruiter. One of them is the generalist bias, which is the tendency to select general skills when more specialized skills are required. Biases can effectively interfere with decisions of both staffing and compensation (Wang and Murnighan, 2013) and therefore, an awareness of them is essential to recruiters during the selection process. Cotton, O'Neill, and Griffin stated that people with unique first names went further in the hiring process (1986), some recruiters have biases for the physical attractiveness and the sex of the applicant (Jawahar and Mattson, 2005) and other have biases against hiring overweight job applicants (Pingitore, Dugoni, Tindale and Spring, 1994). Recruiters need to be aware of their potential biases and HR managers/recruiters should thoroughly investigate the reliability of relevant content in

résumés and applications such as employment history, education degree, job titles, responsibilities and pay grades. An Icelandic research revealed that US applicants are more prone than Icelandic applicants to exaggerate positive qualities, information regarding salaries and work experience in the selection process (Hafsteinsson og Vigfúsdóttir, 2005). In the screening process of résumés, recruiters should always be aware of cultural differences between countries and profession when screening résumés. Recruiters should as well be aware of cultural differences in self presentational behavior, as research results recommend against using the same selection strategies for applicants from different cultures (König, Hafsteinsson, Jansen and Stadelmann, 2011). Their research revealed that there was a vast difference in self presentations between applicants from the USA and applicants from Swiss and Iceland, where the latter group of applicants scored significantly lower than the US applicants. These differences may be due to low competition in the job market, as unemployment rates were lower in Swiss and Iceland at the time of the research (König et al, 2011).

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory can also be put to good use when assessing applicants from different cultures. Those five dimensions are; Power/distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long term versus short term orientation (added in 1991) and finally the sixth dimension indulgence versus restraint was added in 2010 (The Hofstede Centre, 2012). Employers can and should protect themselves against faking by verifying the information in résumés (Harvey-Cook and Taffler, 2000). Because the hiring of a wrong candidate can be expensive, harmful and disruptive, recruiters should develop formal processes and policies to be better able to detect fake information in résumés and not to let recruiters' biases have influence when hiring decisions are taken.

## **2. Personality Assessments**

### **The Big Five Personality Model**

Personality is an important domain of organizational behavior, including leadership and job performance, as it plays a meaningful role in almost all facets of both life and work (Barrick and Mount, 2005). HR professionals are increasingly using personality measures to evaluate the suitability of applicants (Rothstein and Goffin, 2006). The general acceptance of the Big Five personality model, combined with results from various meta-analytic studies is indicators of the validity of those measures in order to

predict job performance (Wright et al, 2011). The Big Five factors and their prototypical characteristics are: *Extraversion* (sociable, assertive, talkative), *agreeableness* (trusting, cooperative, good natured), *conscientiousness* (achievement oriented, responsible, dependable, persistent), *emotional stability* (from a negative pole: nervous, tense, insecure), *openness to experience* (intellectual, artistically sensitive, imaginative) (Barrick and Mount, 1993).

Within the Big Five personality traits, conscientiousness is the strongest predictor of job performance (Barrick and Mount, 1991; Barrick and Mount, 1993; Judge et al, 1999; Perry et al, 2010; Bjarnadóttir, 2012). Conscientiousness is connected with the individuals' degree of self control, achievement, persistence and the need for order. It is also linked to both retention and attendance (Judge et al, 1999). Employees that perform better than others receive more rewards and recognition, which leads higher levels of job satisfaction (Judge, Thoresen, Bono and Patton, 2001). In Barricks' and Mounts' (1991) study, conscientiousness relates to all job performance criteria for all occupational groups. Attributes closely related to conscientiousness are dependability, honesty, integrity and prudence (Bjarnadóttir, 2012). O'Neill and Allen (2011) state that conscientiousness and its facets; organization, cognitive structure, achievement and endurance, were the best predictors of team performance, while other Big Five factors had no prediction. The results of Cole et al (2004) study was that conscientiousness is an important factor in jobs that require attention to detail and working with numbers while extraversion is an important factor for jobs where interpersonal skills are valued highly. The results also indicate that recruiters inferred personality traits to specific types of jobs. Templers' research confirmed that conscientiousness, extraversion, emotional stability and agreeableness were all related to job satisfaction (2012). This is contrary to Judge et al. findings from 2002, where agreeableness was not identified as a predictor of job satisfaction. The differences in these results are related to cross cultural differences between the East (Templers' research) and the West (Judge et al. research).

Connections between conscientiousness and academic achievement have also been found. Number of studies have shown that conscientiousness is most strongly and consistently associated with academic success (Nofle and Robins, 2007; O'Connor and Paunonen, 2007; Vianello, Robusto and Anselmi, 2010; Vries et al, 2011). Thoms et al. suggest that it is better to list grades on a résumé than not listing them at all and listing higher grades was better than not listing any grades or low ones (1999). In addition, it is

better to list relevant coursework than none at all and listing accomplishment statements was better than not listing them (Thoms et al, 1999; Bright's and Hutton, 2000). High grades can give the recruiter the idea that the applicant is intelligent, conscious, and diligent and is less likely to be absent from work (Christiansen, 2012). According to Kuncel, Hezlett and Ones (2004) work performance and academic achievements have positive correlations and that those correlations might both be related to conscientiousness. Other studies such as Poropat (2009) state that academic achievement correlates significantly with agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness. Academic achievement has also been shown to be a strong and important determinant of job performance. Research indicates that there are positive relations between academic achievement and salary rates, where the salary increases with higher grade point average (Wise, 1975). As stated above it has been established that there are connections between grades and conscientiousness as well as conscientiousness and job performance.

There are as well other personality factors to be looked at. Individuals that score high on extraversion tend to be more sociable, impulsive and active than those who score low. Evidence have shown that participation in extracurricular activities demonstrate interpersonal skills, which can be valid for jobs that rely on social components (Heneman III et al, 2012). The extracurricular activities strengthen recruiters' inferences of the applicant personality and quality (Cole et al, 2003; Nemanic and Clark, 2002). Those who participate in extracurricular activities are often seen as extraverts. Extraverts are more likely to take on leadership roles; they relate to positive emotions and have more close friends (Judge at al., 1999). Barrick and Mount found that extraversion is a valid predictor where social interaction is a significant part of the job, as extraverts have been found to perform better at those kinds of jobs. Their study also revealed that conscientiousness and extraversion were valid predictors of managerial performance, but emotional stability, agreeableness and openness to experience had weak and inconsistent results (1991). Other researches have also revealed relations between extraversion and salary level, career success, career satisfaction and promotions (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). In a longitudinal study examining the association between innate temperament and the perception of long term work stressors the results showed that a higher negative emotionality and along with lower sociability systematically predicted higher job strain. Activity had no effect on job strain as it related to higher control and higher perceived demands (Hintsanen et al,

2011). These results can easily be generalized as participants were from various occupational as well as educational domains.

Openness towards diversity is an important trait in today's business environment where organizations are increasingly expanding across borders and/or working on international assignments. In order to increase levels of performance, and to minimize the risk of damaged relationships with local employees, customers and suppliers, recruiters should take personality traits into account when recruiting expatriates (Peltokorpi and Froese, 2012). Stable personality traits are important predictors of international assignment effectiveness. Expatriates who are agreeable, outgoing, emotionally stable and score high on openness to experience, function better than those who score lower on these traits (Shaffer, Gregersen, Harrison, Black and Ferzandi, 2006). Studies done by Yakunina, Weigold, Weigold, Hercegovac and Elsayed (2012) and Peltokorpi and Froese (2012) suggests that social initiative and emotional stability contribute directly to adjustment, while flexibility and open mindedness contribute indirectly. In a study of Yakunina et al. those international students that appeared to be more open-minded, empathic and flexible, demonstrated greater openness to diversity which led to better adjustment skills. The latter study indicated that both cultural intelligence and ethnocentrism were predicted by agreeableness and openness, as well as foreign language ability, multicultural upbringing and international orientation (Peltokorpi and Froese, 2012). As stated above, numerous research suggests that personality traits have significant correlations to both academic achievements and job performance.

### **OPQ32 Personality Assessment: An Introduction**

The Occupational Personality Questionnaire 32 (OPQ32) is a work style assessment for managerial and professional staff, evaluating 32 specific personality characteristics in three personality dimensions; *Relationship with people*, *Thinking style* and *Feeling and Emotions* ("The Occupational," 2013). These traits can be seen below in table 3.

Table 3. OPQ32 Dimensions.

<b>Relationship with people</b>	<b>Traits</b>
Influence	Persuasive, controlling, outspoken, independent minded.
Sociability	Outgoing, team building, socially confident.
Empathy	Modest, democratic, caring.
<b>Thinking style</b>	<b>Traits</b>
Analysis	Data rational, evaluative, behavioral.
Creativity and change	Conventional, conceptual, innovative, variety seeking, adaptable.
Structure	Forward thinking, detail conscious, conscientious, rule following.
<b>Feeling and emotions</b>	<b>Traits</b>
Emotions	Relaxed, worrying, tough-minded, optimistic, trusting emotionally controlled.
Dynamism	Vigorous, competitive, achieving, decisive.

*Source:* SHL, 2013a.

The OPQ 32 was originally developed in 1999. It has been widely used around the world; and has been translated and adapted to more than 30 languages. The OPQ32 personality test measures work related personality traits which can be produced from Big Five scale scores and shows the typical behavior of an individual at work. The question is a forced-choice item which provides control over systematic rating biases that can have affects on both cross cultural and cross country comparisons. To increase the chances of finding valid correlations, the UCR (Universal Competency Report) from OPQ32 was also used in this study. This report includes twenty competencies that are shown in the following table 4 and a more detailed definitions is presented in Appendixes A, B and C to further introduce the comparison of the Great eight competencies, the Universal Competency Report and the Big Five personality traits.

Table 4. Summary of UCR Potentials.

Leading and deciding	1.1 Deciding and Initiating Action 1.2 Leading and Supervising
Supporting and Co-operating	2.1 Working with People 2.2 Adhering to Principles and Values
Interacting and Presenting	3.1 Relating and Networking 3.2 Persuading and Influencing 3.3 Presenting and Communicating Information

Analysing and Interpreting	4.1 Writing and Reporting 4.2 Applying Expertise and Technology 4.3 Analysing
Creating and Conceptualising	5.1 Learning and Researching 5.2 Creating and Innovation 5.3 Formulating Strategies and Concepts
Organising and Executing	6.1 Planning and Organising 6.2 Delivering Results and Meeting Customer Expectations 6.3 Following Instructions and Procedures
Adapting and Coping	7.1 Adapting and Responding to Change 7.2 Coping with Pressure and Setbacks
Enterprising and Performing	8.1 Achieving Personal Work Goals and Objectives 8.2 Entrepreneurial and Commercial Thinking

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*Source:* SHL, 2013b.

The UCR reports' main purpose is the understanding of people's behaviors at work, and how likely people are in succeeding in certain environments and roles. The report summarizes how the preferred styles of the applicant/testee are likely to influence the potential performances at work. The UCR report describes the preferred way of behaving rather than actual ability levels.

### **Faking in Personality Assessments**

Personality measures have proven to be both effective and practical tools in the selection procedure. Concerns have been addressed about applicants using socially desirable responses in personality tests instead of giving answers that fairly describe them. Faking occurs when applicants distort their responses to look better in the eyes of the prospective employer and by doing so, try to increase their chances of employment. Even though psychologists and recruiters arm themselves with difficult formats, applicants' can alter their answers so they do not justly reflect who in fact they are (Griffith and McDaniel, 2006). Study results suggest that a substantial number of applicants fake their responses on personality tests, but between 30% and 50% of applicants elevate their scores when taking personality tests (Donovan, Dwight and Hurtz, 2003; Griffith, Chmielowski and Yoshita, 2007). At present, there are several popular guides on how to optimize one's score on personality tests. As a result the practicality of using personality test might fall short because of faking (Rothstein and Goffin, 2006). By choosing to be dishonest on a personality test it might be suggested that the applicant is able to engage in a counterproductive behavior to the organization although no evidence support that position (Griffith and McDaniel, 2006). Some studies



suggest faking occurs less when intelligent people are involved even though they have an increased capacity to fake. Whereas other studies suggest that as intelligent people have more capacity to fake they tend to do so. The latter statement was proven in a research that suggested that with higher levels of mental ability, job applicants fake in less detectable, more subtle ways (Levashina, Morgeson and Campion, 2009).

One of the ways to reduce faking on personality tests is to warn participants that a social desirability scale will be embedded in the test. This procedure has been shown to substantially reduce faking, without having any negative consequences when using personality measures (McFarland, 2003; Rothstein and Goffin, 2006). Bartram and Brown (2004) suggest that a lack of supervision has little impact on scale scores when web based administration was compared to a more traditional paper and pencil version of OPQ32. Though there have been concerns about applicant faking, one study results indicate that there is little evidence to that cheating, on an un-proctored test, when it was followed by a proctored confirmation test (Nye, Do, Drasgow and Fine, 2008). This suggests that the probability of faking is lower when the proctored confirmation test is embedded, than when it has not been embedded. In light of the discussion on faking in personality assessments it is important that recruiters/hiring managers know how to use assessments that are designed to detect faking and their results. It is also critical that the assessments are chosen carefully in regards of their relevance to specific job related requirements.

The next section is about the methodology of the study. The section includes a description of participants, the method used to assess résumés and the personality assessment, as well as statistical data, discussion and limitations of the study.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **Method and participants**

For this study, data was collected by a recruiting agency in Iceland through résumés and OPQ32 Universal Competency's Reports (UCR). Résumés received ratings to the extent to what specific data was present on them. The ratings were then compared to the results from the OPQ32 UCR. All data was from the years 2011-2013. Applicants ( $N=100$ ) that had submitted their résumés and participated in an OPQ32 test. The applicant sample was from 56 men and 44 women. All were native Icelanders. The average age was 45 years of age. The accessible population in this research is mostly professionals and

managers that had sent their résumés and had taken the OPQ personality assessment test at the recruiting agency. The sample was thus a convenience sample.

## Measures

### Résumé scoring form

The researcher scored the extent to which applicants had reported certain information on their résumés, using a modified version of a scoring form developed by Brown and Campion (1994) and Cole et al (2003). Specifically, some items were removed as they did not fit in Icelandic cultural context. Judgment was made regarding the extent to which information was present on a résumé. Here the ratings were either a dummy variable (yes or no), or a 5 point Likert scale. Variables were defined as follows:

*Academic achievement and educational background.* A two items scale was used (received scholastic awards, grades present on résumé, was on Deans' list. B.Sc.-, M.Sc.-degree, Doctor). A 5 point Likert scale was used for those who mentioned grades (1= Did not mention, 5= grades in highest quartile), *Computer experience* (1=did not mention, 5= programming), *Language knowledge* (1=one language, 5=five languages or more). Although past research did not include educational background (i.e. bachelor/master/doctor), those items were added to this category.

*Work Experience.* A 5 point Likert scale was used (1=No work experience/did not mention, 5=over 10 years) and two item scale for *Has Supervised Others*.

*Extracurricular activities.* A two item scale was used for all extracurricular activities (Does/has been a member of professional society. Does/has held an elected office. Does/has volunteered). Given that social sorority and fraternity establishments are not common in Iceland, they were excluded.

### Personality scoring form – OPQ 32

The personality assessment was used to assess applicant's personality dimensions. The assessment used was a OPQ 32 framework that provides a practical, rational and consistent basis to understand people's behaviors at work and the likelihood to succeed in certain environments and certain roles (Bartram, 2012). These characteristics are: persuasive, controlling, outspoken, independent minded, outgoing, team building, socially confident, modest, democratic, caring, data rational, evaluative, behavioral, conventional, conceptual, innovative, variety seeking, adaptable, forward thinking, detail conscious, conscientious, rule following, relaxed, worrying, tough minded, optimistic, trusting, emotionally controlled, vigorous, competitive, achieving and

decisive. The characteristics are arranged into three different main groups: relationships with people, thinking style and feelings and emotions. Each main group is divided into 2-3 sub groups, each containing 3-4 of the above mentioned traits. For the 32 basic characteristics a 10 points Likert rating scale is used.

The UCR (Universal Competency Report) from OPQ 32 was also used to attempt to increase the chances of finding valid correlations. This report includes eight competencies, which are divided into 2-3 sub groups. The eight competencies are leading and deciding, supporting and co-operating, interacting and presenting, analyzing and interpreting, creating and conceptualizing, organizing and executing, adapting and coping and finally enterprising and performing. A further description of these eight competencies and their sub groups can be found in Appendixes A and B. For the UCR report, respondents use a 5 point rating Likert scale. Indicating that 1 is “Key limitation” to 5 being “Key strength”.

### Statistical analysis

Independent T- Tests, Levene’s tests and Spearman’s tests were used to compare means. The significance threshold was 0.05 to detect 95% significance of results. To calculate the effect size the Spearman’s correlation was used to evaluate the strength of influences. According to Field (2005) the influences are low where  $r=0.10$ , medium influences when the  $r=0.3$  and large influence when  $r=0.5$ .

## 4. Results

By doing series of t-tests, few significant correlations were found in regards to those who reported that they had a master’s degree and those who did not include such information. Those who reported master’s degree in their résumé were significantly associated with the following traits; *Leading and Deciding*, *Enterprising* and *Dynamism*. See Table 5.

Table 5. Comparison of applicants who reported/did not report that they had master's degree

	With Master's degree		Std.Dev		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean						
	Yes (N=75)	No (N=25)	Yes(N=75)	No (N=25)			
Leading and Deciding	3,4600	3,1000	,66658	,75000	37,460	2,266	,026**
Supporting & cooperating	3,3465	3,5200	,74422	,79687	38,918	-,991	,324
Interacting & presenting	3,3600	3,2667	,75090	,95743	34,382	,501	,617
Analyzing & interpreting	3,4044	3,4533	,87387	,79279	44,983	-,248	,805
Creating & conceptualizing	3,1511	3,1600	,97151	,86667	45,715	-,041	,968
Organizing & executing	3,4400	3,4533	,69998	,75080	38,864	-,081	,936
Adapting & coping	3,2133	3,2000	,66867	,80364	35,738	,082	,935
Enterprising & performing	3,1667	2,6400	,78986	,77082	42,069	2,904	,005*
Influence	5,9467	5,7100	1,05770	1,11262	39,476	,956	,341
Social activities	6,0133	5,9200	1,29846	1,59071	35,280	,294	,770
Empathy	5,7644	6,1067	1,09842	1,03064	43,588	-1,369	,174
Analysis	5,9800	5,9100	,96191	,72125	54,663	,333	,739
Creativity & change	5,4400	5,2560	,59910	,59307	41,545	1,333	,186
Structure	6,1233	6,1900	1,09620	1,17544	38,873	-,259	,796
Emotions	5,6911	5,4867	,63120	,86190	33,006	1,274	,206
Dynamism	5,8067	5,1200	1,06271	1,02602	42,472	2,821	,006*

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Note: differences in scales. A 5 point Likert scale was used for the first eight great competencies (leading & deciding – enterprising & performing, but a 10 point Likert scale was used for the rest of the traits (influence – dynamism).

In the light of these findings, a Pearson analysis was conducted to see if there was a linear results correlating higher education and thinking style of the applicant. See below in Table 6.

Table 6. Higher education/ higher Thinking style

	Pearson	Sig. (2-tailed)
Data rational	,054	,595
Evaluative	-,096	,344
Behavioral	,074	,466
Conventional	-,033	,743
Conceptual	,119	,239
Innovative	,035	,733
Variety seeking	,240	,016*
Adaptable	-,090	,375
Forward thinking	,088	,382
Detail conscious	-,109	,278
Conscientious	,049	,627
Rule following	-,096	,340

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

By doing series of Levene tests significant correlations were found in extracurricular activities. These activities are the following; Is/has been a member of professional society, does/has held elected office and finally does/has volunteered. See Table 7.

Table 7. Extracurricular activities

Is/has been a member of professional society	Mean		Std.Dev		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Yes(N=50)	No(N=50)	Yes(N=50)	No(N=50)			
Leading and Deciding	3,5400	3,2000	,67643	,69253	97,946	2,483	,015*
Supporting & cooperating	3,4800	3,3000	,74203	,76931	97,873	1,191	,237
Interacting & presenting	3,3933	3,2800	,82393	,78639	97,788	,704	,483
Analyzing & interpreting	3,5533	3,2800	,84007	,84746	97,992	1,620	,109
Creating & conceptualizing	3,2467	3,0600	1,01197	,86685	95,742	,991	,324
Organizing & executing	3,4733	3,4133	,77398	,64439	94,884	,421	,674
Adapting & coping	3,2800	3,1400	,70102	,70015	98,000	,999	,320
Enterprising & performing	3,1500	2,9200	,75085	,86520	96,095	1,420	,159
Influence	5,9850	5,7900	,91391	1,20940	91,201	,910	,365
Social activities	6,0667	5,9133	1,3450	1,40425	97,809	,558	,578
Empathy	6,0533	5,6467	1,10935	1,03545	97,538	1,895	,061
Analysis	5,9000	6,0250	,90351	,91089	97,994	-,689	,492
Creativity & change	5,4560	5,3320	,58420	,61493	97,744	1,034	,304
Structure	6,3150	5,9650	1,18646	1,01146	95,605	1,587	,116
Emotions	5,7300	5,5500	,46765	,86390	75,446	1,296	,198
Dynamism	5,8050	5,4650	1,04282	1,12032	97,501	1,571	,119

  

Does/has held elected Office	Mean		Std.Dev		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Yes(N=47)	No(N=53)	Yes(N=47)	No(N=53)			
Leading & deciding	3,4681	3,2830	,60257	,77528	96,405	1,340	,190
Supporting & cooperating	3,4787	3,3113	,74423	,76728	97,196	1,106	,272
Interacting & presenting	3,3688	3,3082	,76844	,83933	97,893	,377	,708
Analyzing & interpreting	3,5177	3,3270	,90838	,79392	92,059	1,111	,265
Creating & conceptualizing	3,2270	3,0881	1,01939	,87254	91,153	,727	,465
Organizing & executing	3,5745	3,3270	,78236	,62186	87,646	1,763	,082
Adapting & coping	3,2979	3,1321	,71216	,68746	95,654	1,181	,239
Enterprising & performing	3,1064	2,9717	,87809	,7558	91,402	,817	,412
Influence	5,9255	5,8538	,99716	1,14084	97,983	,336	,740
Social activities	6,1702	5,8302	,14742	1,26191	91,155	1,231	,217
Empathy	6,0993	5,6289	1,09878	1,03705	94,960	2,194	,030*
Analysis	5,9468	5,9764	,86435	,94724	97,913	-,163	,871
Creativity & change	5,3191	5,4604	,64155	,55827	91,874	-1,167	,242
Structure	6,3883	5,9198	1,15956	1,02701	92,613	2,127	,035*
Emotions	5,7411	5,5503	,62921	,74649	97,763	1,387	,173
Dynamism	5,7660	5,5189	1,19488	,98529	89,434	1,120	,260

Does/has volunteered	Mean		Std.Dev		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Yes(N=39)	No(N=61)	Yes(N=39)	No(N=61)			
Leading & deciding	3,4103	3,3443	,69653	,71029	82,289	-,459	,649
Supporting & cooperating	3,2787	3,5641	,74456	,75376	80,387	-1,856	,066
Interacting & presenting	3,3333	3,3388	,81291	,80391	80,455	,033	,974
Analyzing & interpreting	3,5983	3,3305	,80633	,86432	85,213	-1,751	,088
Creating & conceptualizing	3,2051	3,1202	,90681	,96998	85,092	-,444	,663
Organizing & executing	3,5641	3,3661	,76148	,66862	73,400	-1,329	,175
Adapting & coping	3,2179	3,2049	,75039	,67316	74,647	-,088	,928
Enterprising & performing	3,1028	3,0492	,85446	,79428	76,749	,213	,832
Influence	5,8590	5,9057	1,0111	1,11539	86,840	,217	,829
Social activities	5,9915	5,9891	1,59950	1,21406	65,520	-,008	,993
Empathy	6,1624	5,6503	1,14930	1,00448	73,133	-2,281	,021*
Analysis	6,1218	5,8607	,83876	,93711	87,543	-1,450	,160
Creativity & change	5,2103	5,5115	,62984	,50461	92,979	2,639	,014*
Structure	6,3333	6,0164	1,15897	1,07031	76,360	-1,374	,165
Emotions	5,7222	5,5874	,64701	,72751	87,891	-,967	,348
Dynamism	5,5641	5,6803	1,13659	1,06666	77,318	,511	,606

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note: differences in scales. A 5 point Likert scale was used for the first eight great competencies (leading & deciding – enterprising & performing, but a 10 point Likert scale was used for the rest of the traits (influence – dynamism).

Finally significant correlations were found when looking at those who had reported experience in supervising others. Here Levene tests were conducted. Four significant relationships were found in the analyses, see below in Table 8.

Table 8. Supervising others

Has supervised other	Mean		Std.Dev		df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Yes(N=74)	No(N=26)	Yes(N=74)	No(N=26)			
Leading and deciding	3,4459	3,1538	,68530	,71790	42,093	1,806	,068
Supporting & cooperating	3,4257	3,2884	,77937	,69531	48,694	,838	,430
Interacting & presenting	3,3468	3,3077	,79465	,84287	41,662	,207	,832
Analyzing and interpreting	3,5405	3,0641	,87708	,66679	57,373	2,873	,013**
Creating and conceptualizing	3,3018	2,7308	,93660	,83809	48,552	2,896	,007*
Organizing & executing	3,4459	3,4359	,71785	,69774	44,925	,063	,951
Adapting & coping	3,2095	3,2115	,75402	,53241	62,091	-,015	,990
Enterprising & performing	3,0608	2,9615	,83565	,76057	47,762	,558	,595
Influence	6,0439	5,4423	1,01053	1,13205	39,887	2,395	,013**
Social activities	5,9459	6,1154	1,32075	1,52007	39,080	-,505	,590
Empathy	5,9369	5,6026	1,12894	,93342	52,548	1,485	,179
Analysis	6,0101	5,8269	,89657	,93212	42,362	,871	,377
Creativity & change	5,4568	5,2154	,54949	,70637	36,201	1,582	,078
Structure	6,1182	6,2019	1,11129	1,12920	43,197	-,326	,743
Emotions	5,5878	5,7885	,67417	,75212	40,015	-1,201	,208
Dynamism	5,6182	5,6827	1,09265	1,10353	43,424	-,257	,797

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note: differences in scales. A 5 point Likert scale was used for the first eight great competencies (leading & deciding – enterprising & performing, but a 10 point Likert scale was used for the rest of the traits (influence – dynamism).

## 5. Discussion

The correlations in Table 5 (Comparison of applicants who reported/did not report that they had master's degree) indicate that applicants with a master's degree take more responsibility for actions, projects and people, are better at providing clear and quick decisions, and are more able to provide others with clear directions, motivation and empowerment, accept and tackle demanding goals, work hard when needed, keep up with competitor information and have better awareness of developments, financial awareness and cost controls. These applicants are more variety seeking, vigorous, competitive, achieving, and decisive, than those without a master's degree. There were no differences between the genders of those with a master's degree, in the sample used for this thesis. 75% of both male and female applicants had a master's degree.

The results of this study did not confirm results of previous research that grades are positively associated with applicants' conscientiousness scores. One reason might be attributed to the small sample size in this study. Another reason might be that few applicants include grades in their résumés, only 18% of applicants did so. The third reason might be that there was no distribution in the grades presented, because they were all in the highest quartile. The fourth reason for that no correlation was found between grades and conscientiousness might be that all participants were managers and professionals, with considerable experience in their fields of work. Those may not have felt it was necessary to include grades in their résumés. These results can be related to Bretz Jr findings which state that there are only relative weaknesses in the relationship between grades and job performance. According to him these relationships are tenuous at best (1989). The results are however not in accordance with the Cole et al. study from (2003), where the grade point average was positively related with applicants' conscientiousness scores.

The results from Table 6 (Higher education/ higher Thinking style) show only shows one significant correlation, *variety seeking*. That indicates that the higher educated people tend to seek more variety, try more new things and they dislike iteration in their occupation.

Results regarding those that revealed in their résumés that they were participants in professional societies (see Table 7 - *Extracurricular activities*), indicate that they are better at leading and supervising others (taking responsibility, initiatives, introducing changes, making clear decisions, providing others with clear directions, as well as

providing development opportunities and coaching to co-workers, than those who did not disclose such information.

Both those who do/have volunteered and those who have held or do hold elected offices score higher in empathy as well as creativity and change, than those who do not include such experience in their résumé. This indicates that these individuals are more empathetic, modest, democratic and caring than those who did not include that kind of information. They are also more conventional, conceptual and innovative, variety seeking and adaptable.

Interpretating the results in Table 8 (Supervising others), it is assumed that those having experience in supervising others are stronger in traits such as taking responsibility, providing others with clear directions, introducing changes, motivating and empowering others. They are better at writing and reporting, applying expertise and technology, and analyzing numerical data. Learning and researching skills, creativity and innovation, as well as formulating strategies and concepts also suits them also better. The last set of data, influence, is interpreted in that way that those individuals are better at persuading and controlling others, and they are more outspoken and independent minded than those who did not include experience in supervising others. The question here is whether they achieved these traits with the experience of supervising others or were they selected to supervise because of these traits? This study may provide benefit to organizations and recruiters before biases or other errors manifest.

The ability to attain qualified applicants is rapidly becoming the core competency of high performance organizations. The submission of a résumé is most often the first step in introducing applicants to a desired employer. The purpose of this study was to investigate if there was a relationship between résumé content and personality assessment. It is clear that recruiters should be trained to identify and judge résumé content, especially the indicators of applicants' traits, instead of making generalizations based on unsystematic screening. Empirical evidence has shown that conscientiousness is a valid predictor of job performance (Barrick and Mount, 1991; Barrick and Mount, 1993; Judge et al, 1999; Perry et al, 2010; Cole et al, 2003; Bjarnadóttir, 2012), suggesting that recruiters should focus on academic achievement in relation with conscientiousness, and possibly require it be included in résumés. As conscientiousness is not a specific trait relating only to certain professions, organizations and recruiters could request information about academic achievement in



their application forms, even when advertising jobs open for application. Other studies have shown that certain jobs i.e. managers and sales representatives correlate with extraversion. Therefore recruiters should place emphasis on social interaction, extracurricular activities and academic achievements (Rubin, Bommer and Baldwin, 2002; Cole et al, 2003, Cole et al, 2007). Other extracurricular activities could also be useful such as membership in sports teams and/or other activity clubs. Some types of experience may be better suited than others as predictors of job performance, but nevertheless, an active social life indicates that the applicant's social competence is on par or even better than average. A tool that would allow systematic categorization or valuing of extracurricular/social interaction activities could be a great utility for recruiters/HR managers.

## **Conclusion**

When considering the generalizability of this study, potential limitations should be noted. All applicants were Caucasian and Icelandic. The research only applies to managers and professionals as those were the target group in this research. All applicants have extensive work experience so the result does not apply to young and less experienced job seekers. Only 18% of applicants submitted grades in their résumé, distribution of data of insufficient to reach conclusion through statistical analysis.

A verification of the validity and reliability of the OPQ32 personality assessment for Iceland was not found. That fact raises the question of how valid this assessment is for Icelandic applicants as the reliability and validity is not congruous between all types of cultures. And then there is the question if personality assessments always measure what they are supposed to measure? It should though be noted that the OPQ32 has been translated and adapted to 30 languages, and a few years ago some work related validation was conducted in Iceland, but either verification of the procedure or results were found.

Future research should therefore use more diverse samples of applicants. This research was conducted by one master's level student. Most studies abroad have been conducted by numerous recruiters, where résumés were scored by a number of researchers and participants received incentives for taking part. This might be a good idea for future research in Iceland; to have trained recruiters to evaluate résumé content and preferably more than one assessing each résumé. It would also be interesting to conduct research of different types of managerial experiences and their influences on

personality. This research only gives insight into how recruiters can assess applicants they receive résumés from. The author thinks it is of great importance for applicants to be ambitious when writing their résumé and having all relevant information presented in a concise way. It is also of great importance for recruiters to be aware of potential biases when assessing résumés and find ways to circumvent them.

## Appendixes

### Appendix A. Universal Competency Profile Definitions.

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#### **1. Leading and Deciding**

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##### **1.1 Deciding and Initiating Action**

Takes responsibility for actions, projects and people; takes initiative and works under own direction; initiates and generates activity and introduces changes into work processes; makes quick, clear decisions which may include tough choices or considered risks.

##### **1.2 Leading and Supervising**

Provides others with a clear direction; motivates and empowers others; recruits staff of a high calibre; provides staff with development opportunities and coaching; sets appropriate standards of behaviour.

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#### **2. Supporting and Co-operating**

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##### **2.1 Working with People**

Shows respect for the views and contributions of other team members; shows empathy; listens, supports and cares for others; consults others and shares information and expertise with them; builds team spirit and reconciles conflict; adapts to the team and fits in well.

##### **2.2 Adhering to Principles and Values**

Upholds ethics and values; demonstrates integrity; promotes and defends equal opportunities, builds diverse teams; encourages organisational and individual responsibility towards the community and the environment.

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#### **3. Interacting and Presenting**

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##### **3.1 Relating and Networking**

Easily establishes good relationships with customers and staff; relates well to people at all levels; builds wide and effective networks of contacts; uses humour appropriately to bring warmth to relationships with others.

##### **3.2 Persuading and Influencing**

Gains clear agreement and commitment from others by persuading, convincing and negotiating; makes effective use of political processes to influence and persuade others; promotes ideas on behalf of oneself or others; makes a strong personal impact on others; takes care to manage one's impression on others.

##### **3.3 Presenting and Communicating Information**

Speaks fluently; expresses opinions, information and key points of an argument clearly; makes presentations and undertakes public speaking with skill and confidence; responds quickly to the needs of an audience and to their reactions and feedback; projects credibility.

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#### **4. Analyzing and Interpreting**

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##### **4.1 Writing and Reporting**

Writes convincingly; writes clearly, succinctly and correctly; avoids the unnecessary use of jargon or complicated language; writes in a well-structured and logical way; structures information to meet the needs and understanding of the intended audience.

##### **4.2. Applying Expertise and Technology**

Applies specialist and detailed technical expertise; uses technology to achieve work objectives; develops job knowledge and expertise (theoretical and practical) through continual professional development; demonstrates an understanding of different organisational departments and functions

**4.3 Analyzing**

Analyses numerical data and all other sources of information, to break them into component parts, patterns and relationships; probes for further information or greater understanding of a problem; makes rational judgements from the available information and analysis; demonstrates an understanding of how one issue may be a part of a much larger system.

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**5. Creating and Conceptualizing**

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**5.2 Creating and Innovating**

Produces new ideas, approaches, or insights; creates innovative products or designs; produces a range of solutions to problems.

**5.3 Formulating Strategies and Concepts**

Works strategically to realise organisational goals; sets and develops strategies; identifies, develops positive and compelling visions of the organisation's future potential; takes account of a wide range of issues across, and related to, the organisation.

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**6. Organizing and Executing**

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**6.1 Planning and Organizing**

Sets clearly defined objectives; plans activities and projects well in advance and takes account of possible changing circumstances; identifies and organises resources needed to accomplish tasks; manages time effectively; monitors performance against deadlines and milestones.

**6.2 Delivering Results and Meeting Customer Expectations**

Focuses on customer needs and satisfaction; sets high standards for quality and quantity; monitors and maintains quality and productivity; works in a systematic, methodical and orderly way; consistently achieves project goals

**6.3 Following Instructions and Procedures**

Appropriately follows instructions from others without unnecessarily challenging authority; follows procedures and policies; keeps to schedules; arrives punctually for work and meetings; demonstrates commitment to the organisation; complies with legal obligations and safety requirements of the role.

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**7. Adapting and Coping**

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**7.1 Adapting and Responding to Change**

Adapts to changing circumstances; tolerates ambiguity; accepts new ideas and change initiatives; adapts interpersonal style to suit different people or situations; shows an interest in new experiences.

**7.2 Coping with Pressures and Setbacks**

Maintains a positive outlook at work; works productively in a pressurised environment; keeps emotions under control during difficult situations; handles criticism well and learns from it; balances the demands of a work life and a personal life.

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**8. Enterprising and Performing**

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**8.1 Achieving Personal Work Goals and Objectives**

Accepts and tackles demanding goals with enthusiasm; works hard and puts in longer hours when it is necessary; seeks progression to roles of increased responsibility and influence; identifies own development needs and makes use of developmental or training opportunities.

**8.2 Entrepreneurial and Commercial Thinking**

Keeps up to date with competitor information and market trends; identifies business opportunities for the organisation; maintains awareness of developments in the organisational structure and politics; demonstrates financial awareness; controls costs and thinks in terms of profit, loss and added value.

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*Source:* SHL, 2013b

## Appendix B. The Great eight competencies, OPQ32 and Big Five in comparison.

	<b>Competency domain title</b>	<b>Competency domain definition</b>	<b>Hypothesized Big Five, motivation, and ability relationship</b>	<b>OPQ32</b>
<b>1</b>	Leading and Deciding	Takes control and exercises leadership. Initiates action, gives direction, and takes responsibility	Need for power and control, extraversion.	Controlling, persuasive, decisive
<b>2</b>	Supporting and Cooperating	Supports others and shows respect and positive regard for them in social situations. Puts people first, working effectively with individuals and teams, clients, and staff. Behaves consistently with clear personal values that complement those of the organization.	Agreeableness	Caring, democratic, affiliative
<b>3</b>	Interacting and Presenting	Communicates and networks effectively. Successfully persuades and influences others. Relates to others in a confident, relaxed manner.	Extraversion, general mental ability	Socially confident, outgoing, modest
<b>4</b>	Analyzing and Interpreting	Shows evidence of clear analytical thinking. Gets to the heart of complex problems and issues. Applies own expertise effectively. Quickly takes on new technology. Communicates well in writing.	General mental ability, openness to new experience	Evaluative, data rational, conceptual
<b>5</b>	Creating and Conceptualizing	Works well in situations requiring openness to new ideas and experiences. Seeks out learning opportunities. Handles situations and problems with innovation and creativity. Thinks broadly and strategically. Supports and drives organizational change.	Openness to new experience, general mental ability	Innovative, independent, conventional
<b>6</b>	Organizing and Executing	Plans ahead and works in a systematic and organized way. Follows directions and procedures. Focuses on customer satisfaction and delivers a quality service or product to the agreed standards.	Conscientiousness, general mental ability	Conscientious, detail conscious, forward planning

<b>7</b>	Adapting and Coping	Adapts and responds well to change. Manages pressure effectively and copes well with setbacks.	Emotional stability	Tough minded, relaxed, optimistic
<b>8</b>	Enterprising and Performing	Focuses on results and achieving personal work objectives. Works best when work is related closely to results and the impact of personal efforts is obvious. Shows an understanding of business, commerce, and finance. Seeks opportunities for self- development and career advancement.	Need for achievement, negative agreeableness.	Achieving, competitive, vigorous

*Source:* Bartram, 2005, p. 26-27.

#### Appendix C. OPQ32 Scales Used to Produce Each of the Big Five Measures.

<b>Big five scale</b>	<b>OPQ scales w/positive loadings</b>	<b>OPQ scales w/negative loadings</b>
Emotional stability (neuroticism reversed)	Relaxed, tough minded, optimistic, Socially confident	Worrying
Extraversion	Outgoing, socially confident, affiliative, persuasive, controlling	Emotionally controlled
Openness to experience	Variety seeking, innovative, conceptual, Behavioral	Conventional
Agreeableness	Caring, democratic, trusting	Competitive, independent-minded
Conscientiousness	Conscientious, detail conscious, vigorous, forward thinking, achieving	

*Source:* Bartram, 2011, p. 67.

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