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AN EVALUATION OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

FOR PERSONNEL SELECTION IN NEW ZEALAND

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Psychology at Massey University

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ABSTRACT

Personnel selection decisions in New Zealand and other countries are commonly made by the employer. Although applicants have as much, if not more to gain or lose from a selection decision, they are rarely allowed to contribute to the decision making process as an equal party to a contract. Psychological theory and research shows that while there are a number of factors which moderate the accuracy of self-judgments, individuals are capable of assessing their own abilities and performance, particularly in work and work related settings. To examine the acceptability and validity of self-assessment for New Zealand institutional personnel selection, 69 organisations were asked to include self-assessment in their selection procedures. Self-assessment was implemented in 14 of the 69 organisations. These organisations had agreed to cooperate and expected sufficiently large recruitment levels to make the research feasible. Of the 14 settings, four completed the project providing sufficient data for an evaluation of validity of self-assessment. In addition to examining the relationship of self-assessment with work performance criteria, a number of possible moderator variables were examined. The results of this research showed firstly, that few New Zealand practitioners considered self-assessment could be a useful part of their selection procedures, secondly, the validity offered by self-assessment was poor, and thirdly, no moderator effects were detected consistently across the studies conducted in different settings. It appears that until practitioners in New Zealand and elsewhere allow candidates to collaborate in selection decisions, the demand characteristics of the traditional selection situation will hamper accurate self-assessment.

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