

**Abstract Title:** Leadership assessment: Usage trends, perceptions, and choice factors amongst South African companies

**Word Count:**

347 words

## **Introduction**

Many describe South Africa's socio-economic problems as essentially a leadership problem (Mabotha & Ngcamu, 2024; Nkosi, 2022). Studies have shown that combining high-quality assessment with developmental programs can significantly boost leadership bench strength (Neal & Rhyne, 2021). While the benefits of using assessments are clear, it remains uncertain whether these benefits are fully realised in practice, particularly for leadership development. According to a study by DDI, 86% of organisations report using formal leadership development programmes, but only 57% make use of leadership assessment (Neal & Rhyne, 2021).

## **Objectives**

The aims of this study were to:

- Explore the utilisation of leadership assessment in SA, focusing on usage trends, perceptions of benefits and limitations, method of assessment, and the criteria and information sources used by companies when choosing assessments

## **Method/Approach**

The study employed survey research to obtain quantitative data on the use of leadership assessments. The target population included HRM practitioners and IOPs employed in SA, with only one participant per company selected. A total of 547 participants meeting the study's criteria were contacted individually through LinkedIn, with 104 respondents completing the anonymous questionnaire.

## **Results and Conclusions**

In the sample of companies, only 50% actively use leadership assessments. Of the non-users, 77% admitted the main reason being a lack of knowledge of leadership assessments, with other reasons including costs and not believing in the efficacy of assessments. For the active users, the most important criteria when choosing assessments were online availability, competency-based reporting, ease of use, and integration with training and development programmes. Based on the mean importance rating, psychometric properties had to settle for 8th place. Likewise, only

15% of users reported that they consult information from scientific journals and independent review bodies when choosing assessments.

### **Practical Significance & Contribution**

The findings from the study can help test developers and publishers to tailor their assessments to user needs, and thus increase a greater uptake of leadership assessment. Moreover, the study is a call to test publishers, professional bodies and universities to better educate test users to make informed decisions to fully reap the benefits of leadership assessment.

### **References**

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