

CHAPTER FIVE

Proposed Scales for the Work Value Questionnaire

5.1 Introduction

In the two previous chapters, I described the primary sources utilised in the development of the Work Values Questionnaire. The theoretical perspectives of Buchholz and Hofstede are condensed to five proposed scales for the Work Values Questionnaire. The five scales are Collectivity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance, Humanist Values and Individualism. The proposed construct of Collectivity includes elements of the African concept of Ubuntu. Uncertainty Avoidance and Power Distance refers to the constructs as described by Hofstede. The Humanist Values are derived from the Buchholz scale. Individualism can be viewed as a combination between the Hofstede dimension of Individualism and the Buchholz notion of the Protestant Work Ethic. In this chapter, all statements describing each of the scales can directly be translated into items of the questionnaire.

5.2 Collectivity

This proposed scale deals with fairness in the workplace, the exploitation of workers and material rewards, worker's participation in organising the workplace, as well as, group work and group participation (Buchholz, 1978). It emphasises the interdependence between organisations and workers that force organisations to assume a broad responsibility in society and for workers. The organisation has a duty to be involved in society's problems (poverty, discrimination and the environment). The organisation should take responsibility for workers, families' health and welfare. The organisation should have a genuine interest in workers' welfare. This leads to a situation where one's private life is of concern to the company.

Within the organization, horizontal relationships are of greater importance than vertical relationships. Bochner and Hesketh (1994) refer to kinship, mutual obligation and reciprocity as the emphasis of Hofstede's description of Collectivity. High value is attributed to group work and group participation. The role of the group and a

person's role within the group is described in this scale. Workers regard their contribution to the group as the most important aspect about their work. The significance of horizontal relationships is expressed through the levels of co-operation between co-workers. It is important to work as part of an organisation even if one does not get individual credit for the work one does. A person would feel that working in the group is better than working alone. As a result of these assumptions the survival of the group is an important aspect and work is seen as a means to foster group interests.

High scorers on this construct have a desire to take care of their co-workers. They are willing to help a co-worker in general or specifically when a co-worker tells them that he or she is experiencing some financial difficulty. Co-workers are informed about each other's living circumstances and family life. They are willing to share the responsibility for co-workers' mistakes and failures and believe that the entire group should be punished for the mistakes of one member. People see it as their responsibility to contribute to a co-worker's happiness. Therefore, people have to consider the impact of their decisions and actions on co-workers (Koopman, 1991).

The fate of the group will impact directly on the fate of individual members. Hence, it is important to place the needs of the group before attending to one's own needs. It is important to know whether workers are satisfied with their working circumstances. It is important to go along with group decisions even if one's personal opinion differs from these decisions. In other words, people conform to group decisions. Conformity can be viewed as necessary for the survival of the organisation.

Due to this conformity and the notion that the rich benefit themselves, exploit people at work, higher levels of trade union involvement are important. There is a feeling that the contribution of the rich to society is not sufficient and as a result, workers do not receive their fair share of economic rewards. An attractive way for workers to secure their jobs is to participate in the labour movement, regarding the protection of workers' rights as important. All workers should have the same rights at work. Membership of a trade union is important for the protection of people's interests. It is important to take an active part in all group affairs. Workers need to participate in the management of the organisation and workers should be represented

on the board of directors in the company. Workers should participate in decision making processes within the organisation.

High scorers on this scale will to a great extent agree with all statements as set out in this paragraph. Low scorers on this scale will to a great extent disagree with all statements in this paragraph. Examples of items are: To what extent do you think it is important that a company should take responsibility for you and your immediate family's health and welfare? To what extent do you view your membership of the trade union as important for the protection of your interests? To what extent do you believe that your co-workers should share the responsibilities for your mistakes? To what extent do you have a desire to work in an organisation that is involved with society's problems (poverty, discrimination, the environment)?

5.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede (1980) identifies three indicators of uncertainty, namely, rule orientation, employment stability and stress. The Uncertainty Avoidance scale refers to a combination of these three indicators on societal, organisational and individual levels.

One aspect of organisational functioning affected by this concept is decision-making. Specific mechanisms that are used to avoid uncertainty can be identified. Effective rituals (or procedures) can alleviate stress for employees within the organisation. (Hofstede, 1980).

An individual worker's capacity to deal with uncertainty underpins Uncertainty Avoidance in society and within organisations. Hofstede (1980) measured three dimensions of Uncertainty Avoidance in individuals, namely, rule-orientation, employment stability and stress. Rule orientation refers to the extent that the organisation expects the employees to follow rules. People believe that there is one way in which work should be done and they want to know exactly what their job description entails.

The second aspect refers to the concept of employment stability. Employees indicate the average time that they expect to be employed by the particular organisation.

People see service to the company as the purpose of work. This results in people staying within the same organisation until the day of their retirement.

Hofstede (1980) describes stress as the third indicator of Uncertainty Avoidance. This refers to the subjective stress levels that people experience at work and the need for people to feel free to live in a stress-free environment. People experience stress when they perceive that the demands put forward to them exceed their capacity to act on these demands. In uncertain circumstances, people will find it difficult to assess demands and their ability to act on these demands. Such circumstances create stress. One example of such circumstances is found during the restructuring or downsizing of organisations.

High scorers on this scale will to a great extent agree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Low scorers on this scale will to a great extent disagree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Examples of items are: To what extent do you need to work in an environment that is organised according to rules? To what extent do you need to know exactly what your job is about? To what extent do you believe that you will stay with one company until the day of your retirement?

5.4 Power Distance

Power Distance refers to the concepts of prestige, wealth and power. This is evident in the inequality that exists in the so-called boss-subordinate relationships in organisations. Power Distance reflects in the rules within an organisation as well as the formalised hierarchical structures (Hofstede, 1980).

Individuals who obtain high scores on this scale believe that organisations should be structured in the following manner. Certain jobs need to be done by a male person. Promotions should be granted for seniority in the organisation. It is necessary to win the favour of those in a superior position at work. The boss and senior people within the organisation are entitled to more privileges (company car, housing) than the workers. Managers should have the first option to access opportunities arising from outside or within the company. Managers should get higher salaries. It is more desirable to work for a large company than to work for a small company.

Decision making takes the format whereby the decisions of an individual are more important than those made by the group. The boss needs to tell subordinates how to do their work, determine their priorities and supervise work regularly. Managers should reward workers for work successfully done. People feel comfortable with the idea of working for a boss and will find it difficult to express disagreement with the manager. Preference is given to working for a boss, therefore workers will experience discomfort if they are asked for advice, when decisions are made.

High scorers believe that a job can provide them with status and that a person's social status in the organisation is important. Co-workers must be aware of persons' status within the organisation. It is considered as important to become rich. The job must provide a means to become wealthy.

Persons endorsing high scores on this scale will to a great extent agree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Low scorers on this scale will to a great extent disagree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Examples of items are: To what extent do you believe that a job can provide you with status? To what extent do you feel working for a large company is more desirable than working in a small company? To what extent do you need your boss to tell you how to do your work? To what extent do you view it as important to become rich?

5.5 Humanist Values

This proposed scale refers to the higher values of development, knowledge, growth (Buchholz, 1978) and self-directedness. People who obtain high scores on this scale feel it is important to have a job, which allows them to make a real contribution to the success of the company. They value achievement. Work is more than a mere means of survival. It is the most important thing in their lives. Therefore, they respect managers who involve them in the decision making processes within the organisation (Knoop, 1991). The aspect of involvement in decision making can be viewed as counterpoint to the lack of involvement in decision making as described in the Power Distance scale. High scorers view it as important to manage their own affairs. They feel the need to be assertive in their job and enjoy working in a competitive environment.

It is important to high scorers to work in a friendly atmosphere and harmonious environment where they can trust co-workers. They believe that dedication and loyalty are the best qualities in a worker. Their jobs provide them with security. This does not exclude that workers feel the need to take risks to be successful and that they need to be able to take initiative within the organisation (Powell, Almond & Mundt, 1993).

Workers view it necessary to be up-to-date with all aspects of their job and want to be trained for the job they desire to do. They think it is necessary to plan every aspect of their jobs as this will give them the necessary feeling of autonomy they value (Schwalbe, 1985).

High scorers on this scale will to a great extent agree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Low scorers on this scale will to a great extent disagree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Examples of items are: To what extent do you respect a manager who asks for advice before he or she makes a final decision? To what extent do you think it is necessary to be up to date with all aspects of your job? To what extent do you view achievement in your job as important?

5.6 Individualism

Items associated with this construct refer to independence, individualism, hard work and material reward. By working hard, a person can overcome every obstacle that life presents. Independence includes doing things on your own and depending only on yourself. A person has the duty to work like a slave at everything he undertakes (Buchholz, 1978).

Persons who value Individualism are independent from the organisation. There is no expectation that the organisation should take responsibility for the person. They emphasise individual initiative. They value individual control, wealth and status. It is important to have the freedom to follow their own approach on the job. Individual decision making is important (Hofstede, 1980). This scale differs from the Humanist scale with regard to the emphasis that is placed on independence. A high scorer on the Humanist scale values autonomy but views his work to be imbedded in an

harmonious organisational environment. A high scorer on the Individualism scale is self-reliant and in this regard views him- or herself as separated from the organisation.

High scorers on this scale will to a great extent agree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Low scorers on this scale will to a great extent disagree with all statements set out in this paragraph. Examples of items are: To what extent do you need to have the freedom to have your own approach on the job? How often do you feel that decisions made by you as individual are of higher quality than those made by the group of co-workers? To what extent do you view it as important to manage your own affairs?

5.6 Conclusion

This five factor structure was derived from combining the work of Buchholz and Hofstede. The five postulated constructs are Collectivity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance, Humanist Values and Individualism. The postulated constructs account for work as it presents in hierarchical organisations, as well as, for work as it presents in post-industrialised, co-operative organisations. Not all organisations are restructured into the flat organisational structures associated with the postmodern world of work. Therefore postulated constructs that are associated with hierarchical structured organizations are still relevant. Collectivity and Power Distance can be associated with hierarchical organisations. In these organisations experienced leaders make decisions. Managers have broad responsibility and differences in status exist between managers and workers. The postulated constructs of Humanist Values and Individualism are associated with the co-operative organisation. In these organisations peer partnerships are encouraged and people are viewed as beings of equal worth and respect engaging in consensus decision making (Hunter, Bailey & Taylor, 1998). Davidson and Rees-Mogg (1997) in their book *The Sovereign Individual* predict that the impact of technological change and the information age will be that individuals will not work for big organisations as is presently the case. Persons will rather work individually as contractors who invent their own work. This description of work relates closely to the proposed construct of Individualism. The proposed construct of Uncertainty Avoidance cannot be associated with one organisational format.

This postulated factor structure will be tested for validity according to the methodology as set out in Chapter Six.

