

MULTICULTURAL VALIDATION OF CHALLY ASSESSMENT TOOL

By: James H. Killian, Ph.D.
Chief Psychologist &
Director of Consulting Services

Introduction & Background

Chally currently serves nearly 2,500 customers worldwide in a wide variety of employee selection and development efforts. We were formed by the United States government in 1973 to design a tool that would predict business outcomes better than standard personality tests, which typically have a low range of predictive accuracy when used by themselves (Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck, Murphy, & Schmitt, 2007).

Chally uses combinations of items from a proprietary personality, motivational preferences, sales style and cognitive ability assessment to predict real-world behaviors and job-related outcomes. The advantage of the Chally methodology is that we leverage the stability of factors like personality and cognitive ability, but through a scientific process, arrange those items to predict job performance. This process is known as empirical keying, and is similar to how the insurance industry uses various combinations of seemingly unrelated pieces of data to predict outcomes related to insurance rates. For example, being 17 years old is not a predictor of anything concrete when used by itself. But, when using age and pairing with other data points such as being male, a smoker, having poor grades in school, having poor vision and receiving a sports car for his 17th birthday, the insurance industry knows that this combination of various data points means accidents, speeding tickets or worse. We believe that any assessment should avoid simply describing a person and actually provide an indication of what people will do on the job – just as the insurance industry predicts what someone will do based on numerous pieces of data.

With nearly 400 custom criterion-referenced validation studies and a research archive of over 300,000 sales professionals and managers, Chally has the world's most thorough archive for understanding sales behavior and predicting job-related outcomes.

Global Research, Global Presence

The Chally methodology follows the guidelines put forth by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP), the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. But, with Chally being a U.S.-based company, there is often a question about how our methods translate (literally and figuratively) in international markets. It should be noted that Chally is first and foremost a research institution and not a consulting firm. As such, our research psychologists and scientists are dedicated to ongoing reviews of all data to ensure that Chally's clients are receiving the most accurate and useful information to help them make solid business decisions.

As part of our ongoing global expansion, Chally has conducted validation studies for sales, sales management and management roles across countries such as: Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and others.

A summary of positions assessed in international research studies is presented below:

Industry	Summary
Consulting Services	Sales Consultants
Industrial Professional Services	Territory Account Managers; Regional Sales Managers & District Managers; Distributor Account Managers; Key Account Managers
Financial	Territory Account Managers
Manufacturing	Sales Representatives
Telecommunications	Sales Managers
Media Sales	Account Representative
Industrial Manufacturing/Service	Service Supervisors; Service Technicians; Branch Administrators; Branch Managers
Insurance	Strategic Account Manager; Sales Force Manager

In every circumstance, Chally research scientists thoroughly review our own assessment data and the performance metrics supplied to us by our clients to ensure the strongest predictive accuracy. There are a number of components that are important to address. First, the assessment itself must go through a rigorous translation and back translation process by native bilingual translators. This first step is followed by an item analysis of assessments completed by 30 to 50 in-country bilinguals to ensure that respondents across multiple cultures are truly responding to the same items. The translation process is carefully managed to ensure that people from multiple countries completing the assessment for the same role are compared on as close a metric as possible. The assessment is currently available in 19 languages, with Japanese and Korean planned for 2010.

The most recent Chally assessment technical manual (April, 2009) presents average score by each scale (competency) across 12 common languages to showcase similarities and differences across assessment scores in multicultural uses. In many cases, the average scores for North Americans are comparable to other nationalities. In some cases, North Americans scored higher than those from other countries, but the reverse is also true. The results suggest that Chally serves well as a common measurement system across multiple cultures. One of the biggest reasons for this is that Chally focuses on measuring business outcomes through our competencies, rather than simply trying to force every assessment taker into a broad and oversimplified model such as the DiSC, Myers-Briggs Type Inventory or any Five Factor Model of Personality (Cronbach & Gleser, 1965; Herrmann, Paunonen, Rothstein & Jackson, 1999.). That being said, it is important be transparent about the fact that no common yardstick across all countries and cultures has been identified, and it likely never will be. However, the current Chally results are encouraging and we continue to amass more data every month to help us refine our database and answer some of these questions regarding multicultural similarities and differences.

In all cases where Chally has been used globally for selection, development, or Talent Audit™, the results have been very successful. We work with each client to capture performance data that are most critical for business success. Although we attempt to use as much data as possible to help us give good advice to our clients, we also focus on those things that actually matter to each client. In other words, if a client tells us they only have 4% turnover, but they are very concerned about their average profitability per salesperson, then we would focus on their “pain points” to make sure the Chally methodology is adding value.

One final point related to the globalization of assessment results is that validation is a very misunderstood concept. Many people think validation is a number, or a stamp of approval. The term valid means that scores on the assessment should correspond to performance on the job, and if the results tell you the person will not be a failure, then that should be evident in daily performance. If we validate the Chally tool on current performance metrics, we should be monitoring changes to performance over time and make adjustments, or calibrations, to scoring so the assessment reflects the changing needs of the company or industry. As Chally continues to capture more data on the use of our assessment tool in global activities, we will continue to monitor how the assessment is performing in each of those countries and make adjustments (e.g., local norm groups) when the data suggest that is the proper course of action.

References

Cronbach, L. J., & Gleser, G. C. (1965). *Psychological tests and personnel decisions* (2nd ed). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Herrmann, A. (2009). *Using broad vs. narrow personality measures to predict leadership success: Does keeping it simple have an impact on predictive power and utility?* Oxford Psychologists Press, Ltd.

HR Chally (2009). *The HR Chally Assessment Technical Manual*. The HR Chally Group.

Morgeson, F.P., Campion, M.A., Dipboye, R.L., Hollenbeck, J.R., Murphy, K., & Schmitt, N. (2007). Reconsidering the use of personality tests in personnel selection contexts. *Personnel Psychology*, 860, 683-729.

Paunonen, S. V., Rothstein, M. G. & Jackson, D. N. (1999). Narrow reasoning about the use of broad personality measures for personnel selection. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20(3), 389–405.