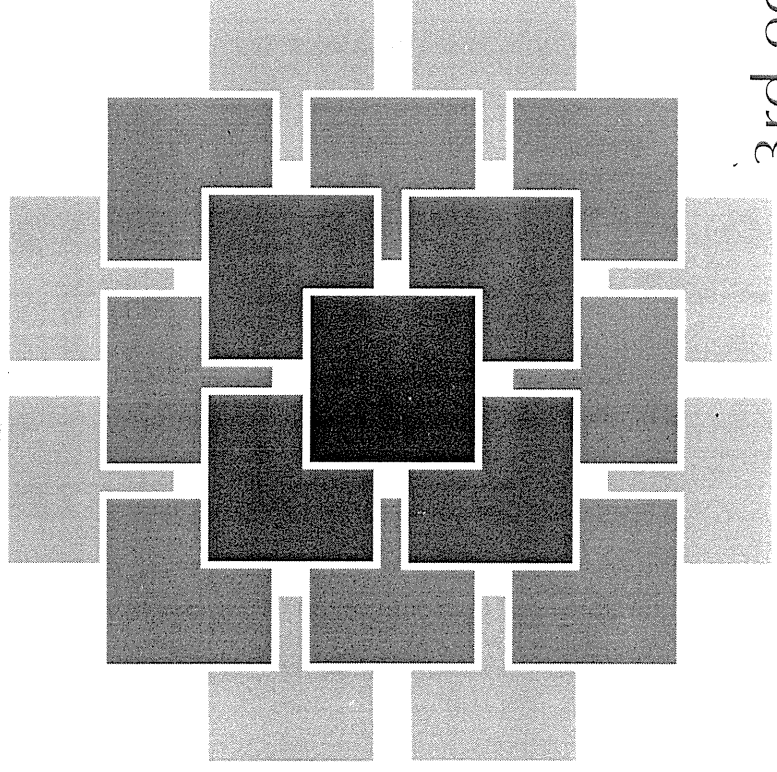

A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments

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DESCRIPTION

The Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ) is designed to assess vocational needs and values of individuals 16 years of age and older. The MIQ measures the importance of 20 psychological needs along with six underlying values associated with work environments.

Needs reflect values in that they are thought to affect choices of environments, and perceptions of and satisfaction with environmental conditions (Rounds, Henly, Dawis, Lofquist, & Weiss, 1981). For instance, a work environment that encourages accomplishment is one which is Achievement oriented. A work environment that is comfortable and non-stressful is one which is Comfort oriented. Environments which provide recognition and prestige are Status oriented. Altruistic environments foster harmony with and service to others. Safe environments are ones which are predictable and stable, and environments which stimulate Initiative foster autonomy. The MIQ is designed to indicate satisfaction in each of these work environments.

The MIQ is available in two self-administered forms that use one statement to represent each of the 20 needs. The paired form of the MIQ may be completed in 30-40 minutes while the ranked form only requires 15-20 minutes. The test can be administered individually or in groups. The manual (Rounds et al., 1981) states that the MIQ requires only a minimum of supervision. Respondents must provide an answer for every item, "even if he must guess" (Gay, Weiss, Hendel, Dawis, & Lofquist, 1971, p.3). In the ranked form, statements are grouped in 21 sets of five. Thinking about their "ideal job," respondents rank the five statements in order of importance. In the paired form, a statement is paired once with every other statement, creating 190 paired comparisons. Each respondent decides respondents decides which statement in the pair is more important in an "ideal" job. Needs are then determined by the number of times an individual selects a statement as important in relation to others. Values are defined by a cluster of related needs.

According to the manual (Rounds et al., 1981), the MIQ can be used in vocational counseling, career planning, and job placement. By utilizing the MIQ, counselors can help individuals identify the importance of psychological needs and relate this to expectations of work settings. For career planning, the MIQ profile can be compared with Occupational Reinforcer Patterns (ORPs) to provide a systematic way to identify those occupations that are most satisfying for the person. In order to maximize productivity and reduce turnover, absences, and tardiness, the authors claim that employers can use the MIQ for job placement.

High scale values on the MIQ may be viewed as signifying a high level of the specific reinforcer represented by the scale or as indicating a need for a more general reinforcer for which the scale is one of several indicators (Rounds et al., 1971). By examining the pattern of high scale scores, counselors can be able to discern which of the six values is more preferred by the respondent. The authors caution that the scale scores must be interpreted with the respondent in mind. The MIQ scores may also be used in terms of the likelihood of satisfaction in a specific occupation. For example, satisfaction (Satisfied, Likely Satisfied, and Not Satisfied) is linked to specific occupations for which ORPs have been established. By examining the MIQ scores, counselors can determine which occupations are most satisfying. *Occupational Classification System II*, the user is provided with a list of occupations and a much larger number of occupations classified according to their patterns.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The MIQ does not use norm groups; rather, each individual's score is determined by his/her responses to the questions. Since the intention is to use the MIQ as the frame of reference, the MIQ employs ipsative scoring. In this approach, two people with identical scores may differ in the strength of their needs.

Scoring of the MIQ results in adjusted scale scores for the 20 values, error bands, and a Total Circular Triad (TCT) score (paired form only). Error bands are calculated around the individual adjusted scale scores. Adjusted scale scores range from -4.0 to +4.0, with a maximum individual being half this total range. Values greater than 0 indicate areas of high importance to the person and values below 0 are needs which are less important. All scale values are adjusted for the individual in that they are standardized in such a way that the zero point indicates the same subjective level for all individuals (Gay, et al., 1971).

One internal check built into the instrument (paired form only) is the consistency of responses to the MIQ. Scores of 255 or higher represent a high level of consistency. Scores of 255 or higher represent a high level of consistency. Error bands indicate the range of indecision for each dimension and are computed for each adjusted score. MIQ scoring service will also report the degree of correspondence between respondent's profile and the ORPs for a specific occupation. Low correspondence while high scores indicate weak relationships.