



## An Analysis of Working Styles in Different Professions in Russia

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### Abstract

*A convenience sample of 861 people (451 female, 410 male) working in a range of organisations and professions in Russia completed a translation into Russian of the Working Styles Questionnaire (Hay 1992). Statistical analysis indicated adequate discrimination between styles and it was possible to create norm tables based on the full sample. Average patterns are presented for each of 15 occupations including engineers, information technology, public relations, secretarial, sales, accounting, economists and HR roles. It can be seen that Be Perfect style predominates in every occupational pattern, with Please People a close second in most and Hurry Up least evident in most.*

### Key words

Working styles, questionnaire, assessment and development centre, professions, engineers, information technology, public relations, secretarial, sales, accounting, economists, human resources management, transactional analysis

### Introduction

The study reported here is an investigation conducted over several years into the use of the Working Styles Questionnaire (Hay 1992) as a contributor to assessment and recruitment decisions for a variety of professional roles within multinational and Russian organisations in St Petersburg and other regions of Russia.

An account of how Hay (Hay & Williams 1989, Hay 1993/2009) developed the concept of working styles appeared recently in Pavlovska (2013) so will not be repeated here. It may be summarised as “Hay acknowledges that her work was based on the early work

of Kahler but stresses that she opted for a focus on healthy functioning rather than pathology. She explains that working styles are positive manifestations of an unconscious set of behaviours learned in early childhood..... [she] introduced a Working Styles Questionnaire that reflected the concept of working styles being the ways in which drivers were often regarded as strengths within organisational settings, particularly when they were within the conscious awareness of the individual rather than being subconscious attempts to get recognition from others; the questionnaire also reflects that the strengths come with some pitfalls.” (p.30).

Pavlovska also commented on the paucity of previous research on organisational applications of transactional analysis theory, and how prior research into Kahler’s concepts tended to be within educational settings.

Pavlovska demonstrated differences in working styles, as measured by the questionnaire, in terms of economists, legal advisors and IT experts, all working in Macedonia. This study extends that to Russia and covers a total of 15 different occupations spanning engineering, information technology, public relations, secretarial, sales, accounting, economists and HR roles.

### Research Objective

The objective of the research was to investigate the usefulness and practicality of the Hay (1992) Working Styles Questionnaire (WSQ) in recruitment, assessment and development centres as well as for individual consulting/coaching, and in particular to provide statistical analysis as a basis for further application of the questionnaire for such purposes.

## Methodology

### The Sample

Standardization sampling was random. The study involved 861 people aged from 20 to 55 years, having different status and educational background (mostly with higher University education), who work in more than 30 Western and Russian companies and organizations in St. Petersburg and other regions of Russia (such as Coca-Cola, Ford, Admiralty Shipbuilding Yard, etc). There were 451 women, and 410 men.

### The Questionnaire

Hay's (1992) WSQ was translated into Russian by the author. Subjects were given a relatively short time (5 minutes) to complete a pencil and paper version, so that they would be more likely to respond to the questions without considering social expectations.

Subjects were required to complete the questionnaire as part of:

- an assessment and development centre process; or
- preparation for a training programme; or
- individual assessment at the request of company HR or recruitment agency during the analysis of several candidates for a position.

Narrative explanatory reports were generated based on the on WSQ results as part of the process of assessment and development centres and when requested for recruitment purposes. When associated with training programmes the results were reviewed orally with the participant. Simple theoretical explanation was provided to all participants and users of the data (see Kasyanov 2013). The intention was to provide open communication between interested parties (management – employees, company – potential candidate, supervisor – supervisee, etc.) and a non-judgmental approach concerning the results was emphasised.

### Ethical Considerations

We insisted that the results were made available to the individuals as well as HR and/or management. Accordingly, we contracted with customer organisations that participants would have the opportunity to ask questions, express different opinions and challenge any perceived 'wrong' results.

Anecdotally, we observed an employer discussing the veracity of the report with a potential candidate; in another case an individual who had rejected the results returned after a few months to request a copy to present to a new employer.

## Results

*Table 1. General statistics of sampling (N = 861 people).*

	Hurry Up	Be Perfect	Please People	Try Hard	Be Strong
Mean	21	29	26	25	23
Median	21	29	26	25	23
Mode	20	30	28	24	23
Std. Error of Mean	.18	.15	.18	.17	.15
Standard deviation	5.3	4.5	5.2	5.0	4.2
Minimum value	0	12	6	8	6
Maximum value	39	40	40	40	37
Total	18128	24735	22499	21681	19544
Percentiles:					
25%	17	26	23	22	20
50%	21	29	26	25	23
75%	25	32	30	29	25

**Table 2: Correlations (n = 861)**

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

		Hurry Up	Be Perfect	Please People	Try Hard	Be Strong
<b>Hurry Up</b>	Pearson	1.000	.139	.198	.351	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
<b>Be Perfect</b>	Pearson	.139	1.000	.262	.300	.280
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
<b>Please People</b>	Pearson	.198	.262	1.000	.329	.188
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
<b>Try Hard</b>	Pearson	.351	.300	.329	1.000	.251
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
<b>Be Strong</b>	Pearson	.144	.280	.188	.251	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.

**Figure 1. Graphical Representation of Preferred Working Styles n = 861**

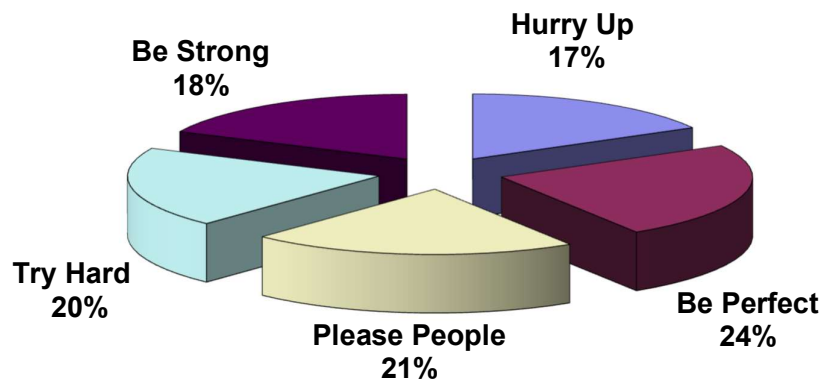
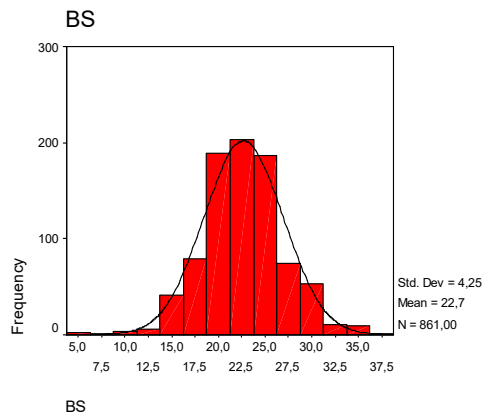
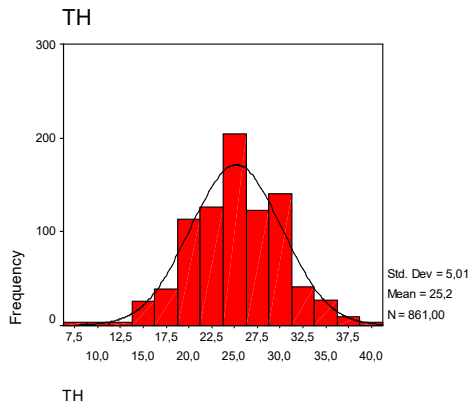
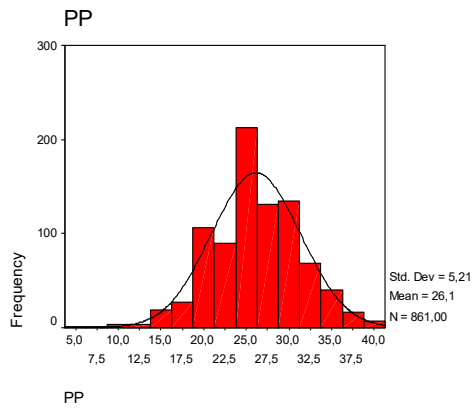
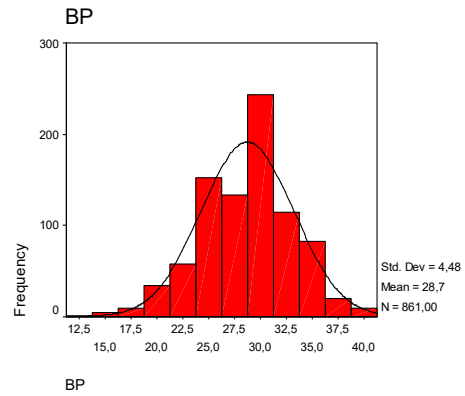
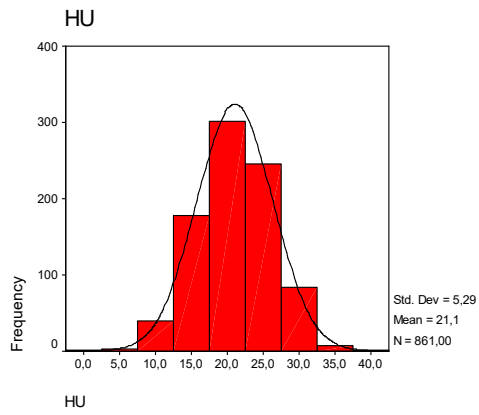


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the scores for the 5 working styles

Note: scales vary



**Table 3: Averaged Working Style 'Patterns' by Profession/Roles**

<b>Profession/Role</b>	<b>Hurry Up</b>	<b>Be Perfect</b>	<b>Please People</b>	<b>Try Hard</b>	<b>Be Strong</b>
Engineers (all categories)	20	28	25	24	23
IT	19	28	25	25	23
Programmers	20	28	25	25	23
PR	22	27	25	26	23
Marketing	22	28	24	27	21
Secretaries	21	29	26	22	24
Sales Persons	20	29	26	24	24
Sales Managers	22	30	28	26	23
Sales FMCG	21	32	31	27	22
Heads of Regional Sales Offices	21	28	26	24	24
Chief Accountants	21	29	25	24	22
Accountants	21	29	27	24	23
Economists	23	31	27	26	20
HR-Specialists	23	28	26	26	22
Recruiters	21	29	27	25	23

### Discussion

The Sig. (2-tailed) tests in Table 2 indicate that the correlations between the styles are significant but the Pearson coefficients are low enough to indicate reasonable differentiation, although Try Hard is the least differentiated.

The charts comprising Figure 2 provide a clear visual representation of how each style has a different scoring pattern within the questionnaire.

Figure 1 shows the proportions of primary working styles identified; when viewed against Table 3 it is apparent that Be Perfect has the highest scores for every occupation assessed. Please People comes in at second place for

most of the occupations, and Hurry Up is least prominent for most occupations.

We might speculate that this reflects the Russian culture, either nationally or within large organisations. Pavlovska (2013), researching in Macedonia, found Be Perfect first and Please People second for her sample of IT Experts but this order was reversed for Legal Advisors and for Economists the Be Perfect and Please People styles tied for first place with a significant second style of Try Hard.

### Limitations

One obvious limitation is that the research was conducted in Russia so the results may not be transferable to other countries.

Furthermore, the WSQ was translated by the author and no checks were made to ensure equivalence to the original English version. However, the author has attended training by Hay in St Petersburg so has had exposure to the originator's intentions. The translated version has also been used by Hay and UK colleagues when teaching in Russia and the Ukraine.

The WSQ has not been validated statistically in the English version; Hay (2009) produced it originally as a training aid rather than an assessment tool.

There has not yet been any follow-up research to ascertain whether the individual results of the WSQ have proved to be accurate in the working environment. However there has been ongoing contact over the years with many participants and the organisations that commissioned the use of the questionnaire and no challenges have been raised – indeed, several companies have continued to commission the ongoing use of the questionnaire.

## Conclusion

The main outcome of this work has been the production of a Russian version of the WSQ, norm tables based on a sample of 861 women and men in a variety of roles associated with large Russian and multinational companies in St Petersburg, and some patterns relating the WSQ scores to specific occupations.

It is hoped that this may provide the basis for further researches using this instrument, both within Russia and as a method for investigating potential national cultural differences in working styles. Such research might also compare the patterns of working styles as healthy manifestations versus drivers (Kahler 1975) as pathological adaptations.

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