

“Graphology: A Technique for Employee Selection”

Dr. Tejashree Deshmukh

Dean-Academics

PTVA’s Institute of Management

Chitrakar Ketkar Marg,

Vile Parle (East),

Mumbai – 400 057

Email: tdeshmukh@ptvaim.com

Abstract:

Importance of Employee Selection is discussed widely by many authors till date. If we believe that the organizational success or failure is dependent on the talent pool of the employees, then we admit that Employee Selection is one of the most important areas of Human Resource Management. Thomas Stone defined Selection as "a process of differentiating between applicants in order to identify (and hire) those with a greater likelihood of success in a job".

Organizations use multiple sources of information that will provide a reliable and accurate picture of the prospective employee’s potential for success on the job. (Snell 2010) Though interviews of different types are the most widely used and popular technique of selection, they are prone to various biases and rator’s errors and hence, need to be supplemented with few other techniques of selection that will enhance the probability of selecting the right candidate for the job. Graphology is one such technique and this research paper aims to study the use of Graphology as a potentially effective selection technique.

Keywords: Employee Selection, Graphology, Hand-writing Analysis

Introduction:

Importance of Employee Selection is discussed widely by many authors till date. If we believe that the organizational success or failure is dependent on the talent pool of the employees, then we admit that Employee Selection is one of the most important areas of Human Resource Management. Thomas Stone defined Selection as "a process of

differentiating between applicants in order to identify (and hire) those with a greater likelihood of success in a job".

Organizations use multiple sources of information that will provide a reliable and accurate picture of the prospective employee's potential for success on the job. (Snell 2010) Though interviews of different types are the most widely used and popular technique of selection, they are prone to various biases and rator's errors and hence, need to be supplemented with few other techniques of selection that will enhance the probability of selecting the right candidate for the job.

Recruiters use various tools and techniques that aid them in selecting the right job-person fit. One such techniques is the use of "Graphology" that can proves to be useful to such recruiters to have a comprehensive personality profile of the prospective employee which cannot be facilitated by most of the other selection tools.

Graphology which is more commonly known as Handwriting analysis, or, , is the study of an individual's handwriting which is used to understand an individual's personality traits and/or the tendencies to behave in a particular way.

Origin of Graphology:

The origin of the handwriting analysis in a published form dates back to seventeenth century. However, the roots of modern science of graphology is found in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The term "graphology" was coined for the first time by a French priest, Michon. According to him, graphology is a science of "fixed signs" in which each aspect of one's handwriting including slants, loops, and spacing of letters, is related with a specific personality trait of an individual on a one-to-one basis.

Two Germans, Wilhelm Preyer and Ludwig Klages are credited for the classic school of graphology that dates back to late-nineteenth-century. They were of the opinion that handwriting analysis is a science because the motor activities, that includes handwriting, are not always performed consciously, but they show certain stable drives, traits, and/or tendencies which speak about the personality of that individual. Preyer and Klages considered handwriting as an expressive movement that could be considered similar to projective techniques including Rorschach's Ink Blot Test used in psychology.

An American named M. N. Bunker coined the term "Graphoanalysis" represents a compromise between the Michon's school of thought and Preyer & Klages's school of

thought. It focuses on how you interpret the unique writing features and establish a consistent pattern within the specific writing characteristics that leads to explain the personality of an individual in totality.

Technique of Graphology:

Graphology is based on a premise that an individual who has cursive and fast writing is result oriented, possesses good communication skills and is generally found to be suitable for jobs in the areas of sales and front office work. Those individuals who have disconnected letters, are found to be calculative in nature, a trait which is useful for the managerial jobs. An individual who writes small letters, is considered to be a quick thinker, and can be considered as a think-tank of the organization or for back office jobs.

Few more characteristics that a graphologist can interpret are:

- **Slant:** Whether an individual is emotionally expressive or restraints from expressing the emotions, can be interpreted by having a close look at an individual's slant while writing.
- **Angles of Lines on an Unlined Paper:** The level of energy that an individual possesses or the level of optimism, can be predicted by studying the angles of lines on an unlined paper.
- **Shapes of the Strokes:** The level of aggression, practicality and creative nature of an individual can be found out by studying the shapes of the strokes
- **Pressure:** An individual who applies more pressure, is considered to have intense emotions and probably experiencing the higher level of stress.

Graphology as a Technique of Employee Selection:

Graphology helps the organizations to obtain a comprehensive personality profile of the prospective employee which can't be done by using other techniques and methods of employee selection. From a sample of handwriting, a graphologist can predict about the writer's personality traits, level of intelligence, level of energy, integrity, inter-personal skills, creative and entrepreneurial skills, emotional maturity, leadership skills, self-image as well as his/her organizational abilities . The organization by using graphology, can find out potentially negative traits which can prove detrimental to them in the long run. Graphology as

a technique of employee selection, can be used at all levels of employee, right from clerical jobs to top management positions.

By using graphology, the organization can weed out the unsuitable candidate right at the outset. Graphology is also found to be much cost effective when compared with other techniques of employee selection that may include psychometric tests and assessment centres. It is also found to be time saving option when compared to employee interviews or other tests and techniques used for employee selection.

Use of graphology in employee selection is quite common in Western Europe and seems to be less common in the United States. However, some studies suggest that around 2,500 organizations in the United States use graphology for at least a part of their employee selection process.

Conclusion:

Employee selection is a very crucial function for any organization as the success or failure of the organization depends on its human assets. Graphology, though cannot be used as a complete solution to employee selection on its own, has proven to be a good techniques that when combined with other selection methods, can help in delivering the more reliable results. However, more studies need to be conducted to find out its applicability in diverse business scenarios.

Bibliography:

- Aron (2017), *Graphology as a Personnel Selection Method*, Effortless HR Blog
- Gatewood R., and Field H. (1998) *Human Resource Selection*. Fort Worth, TX: Dryden Press.
- Klimoski R. and Rafaeli, A. (1983) “*Inferring Personal Qualities through Handwriting Analysis.*” *Journal of Occupational Psychology* 56:191-202.
- Neter E., and Ben-Shakhar G. (1989) “*The Predictive Validity of Graphological Inferences: A Meta-analytic Approach.*” *Personality and Individual Differences* 10:737-745.
- Rafaeli A. and Klimoski R. (1983) “*Predicting Sales Success through Handwriting Analysis: An Evaluation of the Effects of Training and Handwriting Sample Content.*” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 68:212-217.

- Snell S., Bohlander G. and Vohra V., (2010) *Human Resources Management: A South-asian Perspective*, Cengage Learning India Pvt. Ltd.
- Thomas S. and Vaught, S. (2001) “*The Write Stuff: What the Evidence Says about Using Handwriting Analysis in Hiring.*” SAM Advanced Management Journal 66(4):31-35.