

## **New Integrity Test: South African Integrity Scale (SAIS)**

### **Introduction**

Counterproductive work behaviour is a pervasive and expensive dilemma for organisations and society in general. It has many different manifestations, for example, theft of company products and equipment, lying, taking excessive breaks, leaving early, intentionally working slow, poor quality of work, destruction of property and drug use, to name a few.

Since the decline of the polygraph from the late 1980s, integrity tests, a paper and pencil instrument or sometimes computerised versions that purport to measure honesty, dependability, reliability and moral/ethical behaviour, have become increasingly popular.

Over the last two decades a large body of research has emerged regarding the theoretical bases and practical significance of these tests. One area of practical interest that emerged was and still is the relationship between these tests and counterproductive work behaviour. The relationship between integrity test scores and counterproductive work behaviour are today well established and no longer disputed.

The South African Integrity Scale (SAIS) has been developed in South Africa using a large multicultural South African sample. The scale has a well-defined factor structure (i.e. construct validity), shows high reliability, significant relationships with personality factors (i.e. convergent and discriminant validity) and correlates significantly with admissions of counterproductive work behaviour (i.e. criterion related validity). Furthermore, the SAIS is a relatively short scale (36 items) that can be completed in about 10 to 15 minutes.

In terms of SAIS, integrity is defined as the degree to which an individual is honest, norm abiding, punitive towards rule breaking, responsible and trustworthy. The SAIS has been developed using research subjects (samples) from the retail and security industries. The SAIS is applicable to job applicants with at least a grade 10 education at non-managerial level (i.e. norm group). Further statistical analyses with regard to the applicability of the scale for managerial level will be conducted soon.

## **Definition of Integrity**

Integrity refers to the degree to which individuals act in accordance with relevant moral values and norms. In particular, integrity refers to the degree to which an individual is honest, norm abiding, punitive towards rule breaking, responsible and trustworthy. According to this moral perspective of integrity, moral values and norms embody the belief that employees are consistent and do not behave opportunistically in what they think, say or do.

## **Scales of the SAIS**

**Honesty:** Honesty refers to the view that lying, stealing and rule breakings are uncommon.

**Norm abidance:** Norm abidance refers to a positive attitude towards rules and norms.

**Punitiveness:** Punitiveness refers to the belief that individuals who break rules should be punished.

**Responsibility:** Responsibility refers to not considering rule breaking, dangerous, careless and impulsive acts.

**Trustworthiness:** Trustworthiness refers to sustaining a reputation of being a conscientious and reliable individual.