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The formulation of a peer evaluation measure for special forces: operational forces operator traits and attitude questionnaire (SFO-TAQ)

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ABSTRACT:

Operational Forces are a separate and unique unit of the South African Defence Force. This Unit operates under the auspices of joint operations and is viewed as being very elite. Soldiers in this group are exposed to great physical and mental stressors. Due to challenge of improving recruiting and retaining, one needs to have competent measures in place in order to ensure that this process is successful. In addition to instructor ratings and other 'objective' measures (e.g., psychometric tests), selection programmes for SFOs often rely on peer evaluations to identify desirable (and undesirable) characteristics of prospective trainees. Peer evaluations require SFO candidates to either (a) assess their fellow candidates on pre-identified task-related dimensions and rating scales, that is, peer-ratings, or (b) asks them to choose from among their fellow candidates a specified number judged to have the most, and the least, potential in various areas. Peer evaluations are rich sources of contextual information about how candidates perform when they are amongst their peers (Brutus, Fleenor, & London, 1998). It was due to this that a formulation of a new clear and concise measure could be sanctioned in order to provide a new perspective as well as making things easier for instructors and students. It was therefore important to design a successful peer evaluating system which could be used in addition to instructor ratings and other existing measures.