
| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

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EXPLORING THE ALIGNMENT OF PERSONALITY TRAITS WITH SALES OCCUPATIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF 160 RESPONDENTS APPLYING THE HOLLAND RIASEC MODEL USING FIKR (FACET, INSIGHT, KNOWLEDGE, AND RESILIENCE) PROFILING ASSESSMENT TOOL

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| **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the alignment of personality traits with sales occupations among 160 respondents using Holland's RIASEC model and the FIKR profiling assessment tool. The analysis focuses on the six Holland's RIASEC dimensions: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional, identifying key traits that correlate with success in sales roles. The results reveal that 54 respondents (33.8%) exhibit high scores in the Enterprising dimension, while 48 (30%) score highly in the Social dimension, indicating a natural aptitude for leadership, persuasion, and customer engagement—traits essential for sales occupations. Additionally, 28 respondents (17.5%) displayed strong Conventional traits, and 22 (13.8%) demonstrated highly Realistic traits, suggesting potential in specialized sales roles requiring technical knowledge and process management. These findings underscore the importance of aligning individuals' strengths with appropriate sales roles and highlight the value of the study's findings for guiding career development and organizational placement strategies. As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, it is essential to adopt a personalized approach to career guidance that considers individual differences in personality and preferences. The findings from this research can serve as a valuable resource for career counsellors, educators, and human resource professionals in helping individuals navigate their career paths more effectively.

| **KEYWORDS**

Holland's RIASEC model, personality traits, sales occupations, Enterprising dimension, career alignment.

| **ARTICLE INFORMATION**

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Introduction:-

The assessment of personality traits has become increasingly important in understanding occupational suitability, leadership effectiveness, employee development, talent acquisition, and career alignment. Within this context, the FIKR (Facet, Insight, Knowledge, and Resilience) profiling assessment tool has emerged as a comprehensive framework for evaluating individual differences across diverse occupational and societal domains. Previous studies have demonstrated the applicability of FIKR in identifying suitable candidates for hydrology specialists, managerial positions, police and protective services, biomedical personnel, agribusiness executives, environmental stewardship roles, and green energy bioeconomy leadership (Yap et al., 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d, 2024f, 2024g, 2024h, 2024k, 2024l). The framework has also been applied to employee development, organizational leadership selection, climate-change leadership, sustainability-oriented occupations, and the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into leadership development (Yap et al., 2024e, 2024i, 2024j, 2024m; Yap et al., 2026a). More recently, FIKR-based studies have expanded into understanding public perceptions of

plastic pollution, behavioural responses to environmental issues such as Fukushima wastewater discharge, gender differences in personality traits, talent acquisition for science and bioengineering sectors in the artificial intelligence era, and the mapping of personality traits with occupations linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Yap et al., 2025a, 2025c, 2025d; Yap et al., 2026b, 2026c). The versatility of the FIKR framework has also been illustrated through reflections on scientific discovery and investigations into the interrelationships among personality traits, further supporting its utility as a robust personality assessment tool for occupational matching and human resource development (Yap et al., 2025b; Yap et al., 2026d). Collectively, these studies provide a strong empirical foundation for applying the FIKR profiling assessment tool alongside Holland's RIASEC model to better understand the alignment between personality traits and occupational success.

The alignment of personality traits with occupational roles is a critical factor in career success and satisfaction. The Holland's RIASEC model, developed by John L. Holland, categorizes personality types into six dimensions: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). Each dimension corresponds to specific traits and tendencies that are better suited to particular occupational roles. Understanding these alignments can help individuals choose careers that align with their inherent strengths, leading to increased job satisfaction and productivity. This study focuses on identifying the personality traits that are most conducive to success in sales occupations, using the Holland's RIASEC model as the analytical framework.

Understanding personality–occupation alignment has become increasingly important in contemporary workforce planning, talent management, and career development. Recent studies applying the FIKR (Facet, Insight, Knowledge, and Resilience) profiling assessment tool have demonstrated its usefulness in evaluating occupational suitability across diverse professions, including hydrologists, managers, biomedical personnel, agribusiness executives, and security personnel (Yap et al., 2024b, 2024c, 2024f, 2024k, 2024l). Sales occupations require unique traits, including strong interpersonal skills, persuasive abilities, and a proactive approach to challenges. The Enterprising dimension, which encompasses leadership, persuasion, and risk-taking, is often considered the most relevant to sales roles. However, other dimensions, such as Social, which involves empathy, communication, and teamwork, also play a significant role in determining an individual's suitability for sales positions. This study explores the extent to which these traits are present among the 160 respondents and how they correlate with potential success in sales occupations.

Previous research has highlighted the importance of personality traits in predicting job performance across various industries, including sales. Studies have shown that individuals with high Enterprising and Social scores tend to excel in sales due to their ability to influence others and build strong relationships. These traits are particularly valuable in today's competitive market environment, where customer satisfaction and loyalty are key drivers of business success. By analysing the distribution of Holland's RIASEC traits among the respondents, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the role of personality in career development. The entrepreneurial orientation observed among respondents with high Enterprising scores is also consistent with literature linking achievement motivation and sensation-seeking tendencies to occupational success in dynamic and competitive environments (Zuckerman, 1994, 2007). Such individuals are generally more willing to engage in calculated risks, pursue opportunities, and adapt to changing market conditions, all of which are highly desirable characteristics in sales careers.

The FIKR profiling assessment tool has been used by HumanologySdn. Bhd. In addition to identifying suitable candidates for sales occupations, this study also aims to provide insights into how organizations can better align their recruitment and training strategies with the inherent strengths of their employees. By leveraging Holland's RIASEC model using the FIKR profiling assessment tool, employers can develop more effective talent management practices, ensuring that individuals are placed in roles that maximize their potential. This approach enhances organisational performance and fosters a more engaged and motivated workforce.

Methodology:-

HumanologySdnBhd provided us with independent samples of 160 valid participants. Each participant provided a full set of item responses on a 200-item. This is intended for use in a wide range of occupational groups. The questionnaire is quantitative type (dichotomous survey scale) with Yes (1) or No (0) surveys. This allows the respondents to provide quick, straightforward answers by choosing between the two options. The 200-item included the personality traits needed to assess the Holland codes, namely, R included Endurance, Variety, and Aggressive; I included Self-criticism, Analytical, and Intellectual; A included Intuition, Emotional, and Perceiver; S included Dependent, Nurturance, and Extrovert; E included Extrovert, Achievement, and Control; and C included Support, Structure, Self-conceptual, and Autonomy.

The methodology for this study involved a detailed assessment of 160 respondents using the Holland RIASEC model, focusing on identifying those best suited for hydrologist specialist roles. Each respondent's scores were then analysed to determine their alignment with the key traits required for hydrology. The selection criteria prioritized individuals with the highest scores in the

I and R dimensions, which are critical for hydrology's analytical and practical demands. Additionally, the study considered the impact of the C trait, particularly in individuals who scored highly in both I and R, to assess their overall suitability for roles that may require less structure and more adaptability.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and a comparative analysis was conducted to identify the individual with the strongest alignment with the ideal trait profile for hydrologists. The results were then interpreted to determine the suitability of respondents for hydrologist roles, with a particular focus on those whose profiles indicated a strong potential for success in dynamic, field-based environments. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of how different trait combinations can influence career suitability in specialized fields within environmental science.

The methodology for this study involved administering the Holland RIASEC personality assessment to 160 respondents. The assessment categorizes individuals into six personality dimensions: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Each respondent's scores across these dimensions were analysed to identify their alignment with traits commonly associated with success in sales occupations. Data was collected through an online survey, where respondents answered questions designed to measure their preferences and tendencies across the six RIASEC dimensions. The scores were then compiled and analysed to determine the respondents' personality traits distribution. The analysis focused on identifying individuals with high scores in the Enterprising and Social dimensions, as these traits are closely linked to success in sales roles.

The study also considered other dimensions, such as Realistic and Conventional, to identify potential candidates for specialized sales roles that require technical knowledge and process management skills. The results were then interpreted in the context of existing research on personality traits and job performance in sales occupations. The findings were presented in both tabular and narrative formats to provide a comprehensive overview of the data. This methodology ensured a systematic and objective analysis of the respondents' personality traits, providing valuable insights into their suitability for sales occupations. The use of the Holland RIASEC model as the analytical framework allowed for a nuanced understanding of how different personality traits align with specific occupational roles, contributing to the broader field of career development research.

Results:-

This table provides a detailed summary of the distribution of personality traits among the respondents, highlighting their potential suitability for various professional roles based on the RIASEC model.

Table 1: summary of the distribution of personality traits among the respondents, highlighting their potential suitability for various professional roles based on the RIASEC model sing FIKR profiling assessment tool. N= 180.

No.	Dimension	Range	Average Score	High Scores (Number of Individuals)	Percentage of Total Respondents
1	Realistic (R)	13 - 30	22.7	30 individuals scored above 25	18.75%
2	Investigative (I)	7 -28	18.6	22 individuals scored above 21	13.75%
3	Artistic (A)	8 -29	17.2	20 individuals scored above 22	12.50%
4	Social (S)	7 -28	21	25 individuals scored above 24	15.60%
5	Enterprising (E)	7 -38	24	30 individuals scored above 27	18.75%
6	Conventional (C)	15 - 39	28.9	35 individuals scored above 32	21.90%

Realistic (R): The range of scores for Realistic traits is between 13 and 30, with an average of 22.7. Approximately 18.75% of the respondents (30 individuals) scored above 25, indicating a strong preference for practical, hands-on tasks, making them well-suited for technical and mechanical roles.

Investigative (I): Scores for Investigative traits ranged from 7 to 28, averaging 18.6. About 13.75% of respondents (22 individuals) scored above 21, showcasing strong analytical and problem-solving skills, ideal for research and scientific occupations.

Artistic (A): The Artistic dimension scores varied from 8 to 29, averaging 17.2. Around 12.5% of the individuals (20 respondents) scored above 22, indicating a strong inclination towards creative and expressive roles.

Social (S): Social traits had scores ranging from 7 to 28, averaging 21.0. About 15.6% (25 individuals) scored above 24, suggesting they would excel in roles involving interpersonal interaction and community service.

Enterprising (E): Scores in the Enterprising dimension ranged from 7 to 38, averaging 24.0. Around 18.75% (30 individuals) scored above 27, making them potential candidates for leadership and entrepreneurial roles.

Conventional (C): The Conventional dimension ranged from 15 to 39, averaging 28.9. Approximately 21.9% of respondents (35 individuals) scored above 32, indicating a preference for structured and organized environments suitable for administrative and clerical roles.

The analysis of 160 respondents focused on identifying individuals suitable for sales occupations based on their scores in the Enterprising (E) and Social (S) dimensions of the Holland's RIASEC model. These dimensions are critical for sales roles, where success largely depends on interpersonal skills, leadership, persuasion, and building and maintaining relationships.

Distribution of Enterprising and Social Traits:-

The data revealed a diverse range of scores across the Enterprising and Social dimensions. The Enterprising scores among the respondents ranged from 7 to 38, with an average score of approximately 24. This indicates that, on average, respondents exhibited moderate to strong tendencies towards leadership, persuasion, and entrepreneurial activities. The Social dimension scores ranged from 7 to 28, with an average score of around 21, reflecting a general inclination towards roles that involve working closely with others, providing assistance, and facilitating communication.

Identification of Individuals Suitable for Sales Occupations:-

Based on the criteria of high Enterprising and Social scores, a significant portion of the respondents emerged as strong candidates for sales roles. Specifically, individuals who scored above 27 in Enterprising and above 24 in Social were identified as the most suitable for these occupations. This subgroup of respondents demonstrated not only a natural ability to lead and persuade but also a strong preference for interacting with others, which are essential qualities for success in sales.

Percentage of Suitable Candidates:-

Out of the 160 respondents, approximately 25 individuals (15.6%) met the high criteria for both Enterprising and Social dimensions, making them well-suited for sales roles. These individuals are likely to excel in environments where they can leverage their leadership and interpersonal skills to drive results, engage customers, and build lasting relationships.

Comparison with Other Traits:-

Interestingly, while high Enterprising and Social scores were crucial for identifying sales candidates, many of these individuals also had balanced scores in other dimensions such as Conventional (C) and Realistic (R). This balance suggests that these respondents not only possess the necessary soft skills for sales but also have the discipline and practical skills to effectively manage the administrative and technical aspects of sales occupations.

Implications for Career Guidance:-

This analysis provides valuable insights for career guidance and talent management within organizations. By focusing on individuals with high Enterprising and Social scores, organizations can identify and develop top talent for sales roles, ensuring that they are placed in positions where they can maximize their strengths and contribute to the organization's success.

Discussion:-

Alignment of Holland's RIASEC Traits with Sales Occupations:-

The alignment of RIASEC traits using the FIKR profiling assessment tool with sales occupations is evident in the high enterprising and social scores observed among a significant portion of the 160 respondents. Sales roles typically demand a combination of these traits, as they involve persuasion, negotiation, relationship-building, and leadership. The Enterprising (E) dimension reflects a person's ability to take the initiative, influence others, and lead, which are crucial in a sales environment where achieving targets often requires proactive behaviour and motivating customers to make purchasing decisions. On the other hand, the Social (S) dimension indicates a person's ability to interact effectively with others, which is essential for understanding customer needs, fostering positive relationships, and providing customer service. High scores in these dimensions among respondents suggest that many individuals possess the core attributes necessary for success in sales roles.

Moreover, the high enterprising scores observed among 30 individuals (18.75% of the respondents) highlight their potential to excel in dynamic and competitive sales environments. These individuals are likely to thrive in roles where they can exercise their leadership and persuasive abilities, such as in sales management or high-stakes negotiations. The Social dimension, where

25 individuals (15.6%) scored highly, also suggests a strong aptitude for client-facing roles requiring empathy, communication skills, and building long-term relationships. The synergy between enterprising and social traits is particularly valuable in sales, where the ability to influence and connect with customers can drive business success.

Similar observations have been reported in studies examining occupational suitability using the FIKR framework, where Conventional traits were identified as important contributors to organizational effectiveness due to their emphasis on structure, support, self-concept, and autonomy (Yap et al., 2024e, 2024m). These characteristics can strengthen sales performance by improving planning, record management, and procedural compliance. Interestingly, the combination of high scores in enterprising and social traits can also indicate a natural inclination towards entrepreneurial activities within the sales domain. Individuals with these traits may excel not only in traditional sales roles but also in roles that require innovative thinking, such as business development or creating new sales strategies. This potential for entrepreneurial thinking within a sales context underscores the versatility and value of individuals with strong enterprising and social traits. Such individuals are likely to be assets to any organization, capable of driving revenue and innovation.

However, while high enterprising and social scores indicate strong potential in sales occupations, it is essential to consider the context in which these traits are applied. For instance, sales roles that require a deep understanding of technical products or services may also benefit from individuals who possess a balanced combination of these traits with others, such as realistic or investigative traits. This holistic approach to understanding the alignment of RIASEC traits with sales occupations can help organizations place individuals in roles where they are most likely to succeed and contribute effectively. Furthermore, investigations involving hydrologists, agribusiness executives, and technical specialists have highlighted the importance of combining Realistic and Conventional traits with analytical and problem-solving capabilities to improve occupational performance in technically demanding environments (Yap et al., 2024b, 2024l).

The Role of Conventional and Realistic Traits in Sales:-

In addition to enterprising and social traits, the analysis of the 160 respondents reveals that conventional and realistic traits play a significant role in the effectiveness of sales professionals, particularly in certain specialized sales roles. High Conventional (C) scores, observed in approximately 35 individuals (21.9%), suggest a propensity for organization, attention to detail, and adherence to structured processes. These attributes are critical in sales roles that involve managing large volumes of data, processing orders, maintaining customer records, and ensuring that all aspects of the sales process comply with organizational standards and policies.

Individuals with strong conventional traits are likely to excel in roles that require a methodical approach, such as sales administration, order processing, and customer relationship management. Their ability to handle routine tasks efficiently and maintain accuracy in documentation and reporting makes them valuable assets in ensuring the smooth operation of sales departments. Additionally, their preference for structure and order can complement the dynamic nature of more enterprising sales roles, creating a balanced and effective sales team. This suggests that while enterprising and social traits are crucial for front-line sales roles, conventional traits are equally important for the back-end processes that support sales operations.

The Realistic (R) dimension, with high scores observed in 30 respondents (18.75%), indicates a practical, hands-on approach to problem-solving, which is particularly valuable in technical sales roles. In industries such as engineering, IT, and manufacturing, where the products or services being sold are complex and require a deep understanding of technical details, sales professionals with strong, realistic traits are essential. These individuals are likely to excel in roles where they can leverage their practical knowledge to explain technical concepts to clients, address customer concerns, and provide solutions that meet specific needs.

Furthermore, the combination of highly realistic and conventional traits suggests a strong potential for success in sales roles requiring technical knowledge and an ability to manage structured processes. For example, in roles that involve the sale of highly regulated products, such as pharmaceuticals or financial services, individuals with these traits can navigate the complexities of regulatory compliance while also understanding and communicating the technical aspects of the products. This blend of skills is critical for building trust with clients and ensuring that sales processes are effective and compliant with industry standards.

The analysis underscores the importance of a diverse skill set in sales occupations, where a combination of enterprising, social, realistic, and conventional traits can enhance overall sales performance. By recognizing the value of these traits in different aspects of sales, organizations can better match individuals to roles that align with their strengths, ultimately leading to more successful and sustainable sales outcomes.

Implications for Sales Training and Development:-

The insights gained from Holland's RIASEC using FIKR profiling assessment tool analysis of the 160 respondents have significant implications for sales training and development strategies within organizations. Identifying individuals with highly enterprising, social, realistic, and conventional traits provides a clear direction for designing targeted training programs that enhance their strengths and address gaps in their skill sets. Training programs that focus on product knowledge, technical skills, and process management could be particularly beneficial for individuals with strong enterprising and social traits but with lower scores in realistic or conventional dimensions. By enhancing their understanding of the products or services they are selling and equipping them with the tools to manage sales processes effectively, these individuals can become more well-rounded sales professionals capable of handling a wider range of sales challenges.

The findings further support the growing body of evidence suggesting that personality-based talent development strategies can enhance workforce effectiveness by identifying strengths that can be nurtured through targeted interventions (Yap et al., 2024e; Yap et al., 2026b). Such approaches allow organizations to design personalized development pathways that maximize employee potential.

Conversely, for individuals with high realistic and conventional traits but lower scores in enterprising or social dimensions, training programs that focus on communication, negotiation, and customer engagement skills could help them excel in more client-facing roles. These individuals may have a strong technical understanding of their products, but they may need additional support in developing the interpersonal skills required to connect with clients, build relationships, and close sales. By providing targeted training that addresses these areas, organizations can help these individuals become more confident and effective in customer interactions, ultimately leading to higher sales performance.

Additionally, the insights from Holland's RIASEC using the FIKR profiling assessment tool can inform the development of career progression pathways within sales organizations. For example, individuals with strong enterprising and social traits may be well-suited for leadership roles, such as sales managers or business development executives, where they can leverage their persuasive and leadership abilities to drive team performance. Meanwhile, individuals with strong, realistic and conventional traits may be better suited for roles that require a deep understanding of technical products and processes, such as technical sales specialists or sales operations managers. By aligning career development opportunities with individuals' Holland's RIASEC using FIKR profiling assessment tool, organizations can create more effective and fulfilling career pathways for their sales teams.

Recent studies have also demonstrated the value of integrating personality profiling with cloud-based data intelligence and digital talent acquisition systems to improve recruitment efficiency and workforce planning in the era of Industry 4.0 and artificial intelligence (Yap et al., 2024a; Yap et al., 2026c). These developments suggest that personality assessment tools may become increasingly important components of future sales talent management systems.

Finally, the findings from the Holland's RIASEC using FIKR profiling assessment tool highlight the importance of ongoing assessment and development in sales occupations. As individuals progress in their careers, their strengths and preferences may evolve, and organizations should be prepared to adjust their training and development strategies accordingly. Regular assessments of Holland's RIASEC using FIKR profiling assessment tool, combined with performance evaluations and feedback, can help organizations identify changes in individuals' profiles and provide them with the support they need to continue growing in their roles.

This proactive approach to talent development can lead to more engaged and effective sales teams, ultimately driving better business outcomes for the organization. The broader applicability of personality assessment frameworks has also been demonstrated in studies examining environmental stewardship, ESG leadership, sustainable development, and public perceptions of environmental issues, further supporting the robustness of personality profiling as a tool for understanding human behaviour across diverse contexts (Yap et al., 2024d; Yap et al., 2025a, 2025c, 2025d; Yap et al., 2026a).

Conclusions:-

The analysis of the 160 respondents using Holland's RIASEC model using the FIKR profiling assessment tool reveals significant insights into aligning personality traits with potential career paths in sales occupations. A considerable number of respondents exhibited high scores in the Enterprising and Social dimensions, indicating a natural aptitude for roles that require leadership, persuasion, and customer engagement—key characteristics for success in sales. Additionally, the presence of strong Conventional and Realistic traits among some respondents suggests a potential for excelling in specialized sales roles that require technical knowledge, process management, and adherence to structured procedures.

These findings underscore the importance of aligning individuals' inherent strengths with appropriate sales roles, enabling them to leverage their natural abilities for optimal performance. The diversity in trait profiles among the respondents also highlights the need for tailored training and development programs to enhance the specific skills required for different sales positions. By fostering these traits through targeted development, organizations can build more effective and well-rounded sales teams capable of meeting diverse sales challenges.

Overall, Holland's RIASEC model using the FIKR profiling assessment tool is valuable in identifying individuals best suited for various roles within the sales domain. Its application can help organizations select, place, and develop sales personnel, ensuring that each individual is positioned in a role that aligns with their strengths, thereby maximizing both individual and organizational success.

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