

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

1.1 Introduction

“Read between the lines!”

In layman’s terms, this expression means the individual (who is being spoken to) has to infer something about what the person (who is talking) is trying to say. Thus reading between the lines requires the individual to ‘look further’ than what was blatantly stated and to make subsequent assumptions.

Graphology, in layman’s terms, relates strongly to the concept of reading between the lines, because the individual who has supplied a sample of handwriting has given the graphologist written material. From this written material the graphologist makes certain inferences about the character of the individual in question. However, the inferences in this instance are educated deductions about personality traits, according to the methodology of this assessment technique (Grandin; 1994). They are not wrongful assumptions coloured by the individuals reference framework, as is often the case, if the person had to ‘read between the lines’ (Owen; 1998, pg. 934).

1.2 Aims

This dissertation is firstly an endeavour to increase the awareness of the availability of graphology as an assessment technique. There are few professionals in South Africa that are aware of this technique, and the wealth of information it can provide. The information furnished to the graphologist by this technique can be used in numerous

ways, by numerous different professionals, not only psychologists. It can also be used by medical doctors, personnel managers, human resource officials, etc.

The second aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate the efficacy of graphology as an assessment tool. Graphology does not only provide information about the individual's personality, but can also provide facts about the individual's sexual preference; in certain handwritings, there are even indications of childhood abuse; in other instances, emotions can be defined. Thus, the information gleaned from an assessment contains a multitude of data about personality, about emotional status, about sexual propensity, about ambitions, about drive and future aspirations, about convictions, about limitations, about ethical behaviour, about background, etc. Hence, short of predicting the future, graphology is a science that supplies a vast variety of knowledge and data regarding the individual. Not all of the information gained from this technique is obviously important for a job application. Consequently, the graphologist can also assess only those aspects necessary to the specific job or career in question. For instance, the sexual preference of an individual is not relevant to the job or position he or she is applying for, then this would obviously not be mentioned in the written report. However, if the position is for a child-minder or a teaching position at a school and the graphologist does happen to detect any sexual deviances (i.e. features within handwriting samples that allude to these anomalies), then the graphologist, obviously within ethical boundaries, can allude to such deviations (Marley; 1972).

Graphology has, in other parts of the world, gained a great foothold within many fields of study (psychology, criminology, personnel selection, career guidance, assisting medical doctors, etc.). In other words, there are many professionals overseas that utilize the beneficial information gathered through the assessment of the individual's handwriting. In Germany and in Italy, this science is considered to be so remarkable, that it is offered as a degree at University level (Grandin; 1994).

Graphology has many advantages, as will be highlighted in chapter three, for any person wanting to learn more about the self. This self-exploration can include anything from his

or her work preference, to marriage compatibility, to compatibility for a business arrangement, or for psychotherapeutic reasons. It offers a wide range of applications for anyone wanting to explore the self or gather information about someone else.

Graphology does have an ethical standing in that it may not be used for malicious purposes, nor can the graphologist do an assessment without consent or mandate being supplied by an individual. The intention of principled graphologists is to serve the individual or the company to his or her best ability.

A further aspect that is discussed in chapter three, is the concept that has evolved over the years and that is considered another dimension of graphology, namely Grapho-therapy. Grapho-therapy is exactly the aspect of graphology that makes it an exceptional tool for many a professional, especially for the psychologist. Briefly, Grapho-therapy is an undertaking between graphologist and client to change a personality feature (of the client) by means of changing writing movements or features (Roman; 1952).

1.3 Delimitation of study



In the first chapter Introduction and Aims, a short introduction acquainting the reader with the term graphology is given. The second chapter Graphology as a Projective Technique, describes the history and defines the projective technique, as it is employed in the psychological sphere. A more in depth depiction of how graphology complements psychology as an assessment tool is also presented, including its advantages and disadvantages. In addition, a number of other professional fields are listed, within which graphology can be, and has been, applied successfully.

The third chapter of this dissertation includes the history of handwriting and the resulting evolution of handwriting analysis – graphology. This section aims to highlight the importance of graphology as an assessment tool in conjunction with other assessment tools within the field of psychology. In other words, this section aims to highlight the importance and ability of graphology being used together with other tools in psychology,

as well as being able to stand on its own as a complete assessment tool. The fourth chapter is the Methodology chapter. This section (very clearly) describes the different areas of analysis of the graphologists' assessment whilst analyzing a handwriting sample or the case study. Examples are provided to highlight the amount of different types of handwriting features that can occur in one single sample. The second last part, chapter 5, is the actual Comparison of Tests. This section is the heart of the dissertation and gives a comparison of the graphological assessment technique, as well as the Personal Profile Analysis (PPA), as used by Thomas International (1988). The PPA is a test that is specifically applied in the business sector, when people are evaluated for specific work positions. The graphological assessment is also applied to this area, for the purpose of this dissertation. The findings of both tests (or assessment tools) are compared in this section.

In conclusion, the last chapter Conclusions and Recommendations, considers how graphology is beneficial to psychology, as well as many other related fields of study, such as criminology, business, etc.



1.4 Hypothesis

My intention with this field of study, with the chosen topic, is to determine and support the following:

- I. Graphology as an assessment tool, is as effective, if not more so, as many of the standard projective techniques used in assessment today, such as the Rorschach and the Thematic Apperception test (Lindzey; 1959).
- II. Graphology as an assessment tool, is a viable projective technique and should prove invaluable for the psychologist (or any other professional).

1.5 Objectives of this study

The intention of this study is to highlight the importance and uses of graphology in many professional fields of occupation.

This study specifically investigates the correlational study of personality and how the graphologist can determine a good fit within the working environment. In other words, determining if the personality is a suitable fit for the position that the individual is applying for (Grandin; 1994). This assessment can then be further utilized to give the employer the option to enhance the individual's good points and offer training for the individual's weak points. Often enough tests such as the Holland's Trait-Factor Approach, Person-Environment Fit Model, and to a lesser degree the RIASEC and the MBTI (Grave; 1997) are used to determine a person's fit for a specific job. These tools assess certain personality traits and how they 'fit' with a given position. Nevertheless, in retrospect these models are limited in that they only give a broad fit of personality to a given job. This study (using graphology, however) will allow an employer to observe the capabilities that the individual possesses, as well as being able to address deficiencies through training and skills development. Graphology has the ability to assess such a job-person fit, as well as determining areas of strength and domains of weaknesses. These can then be attended to, thus 'bettering' the individual by working on his/her faults.

In conclusion, this study does not only hold true for the individual wanting to be employed, but for any person seeking greater personal knowledge (Amend & Ruiz, 1980; Saudek, 1978), as well as wanting to improve certain (personal) traits. Therefore, the study to follow is a venture not only in introducing this new field of expertise, but also in giving the reader in-depth knowledge and hopefully an appreciation of the wealth of information that can be gained from utilizing this type of assessment technique.