Chapter 5
Analysis and Use of the Life Styles Inventory 1 and 2
by Human Synergistics International

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ABSTRACT
The Life Styles Inventory, developed by J. Clayton Lafferty, uses a combination of respected psychological and managerial theories to help individuals identify their beliefs, values, behaviors, and assumptions. This instrument presents twenty statements for each of the twelve life styles believed to influence the way we think and behave. The LSI 1 instrument is a self-assessment whereas the LSI 2 uses the same format and life styles to assess an individual through input from five or more other people. When used in combination, the two instruments use consensual validity to identify strengths and weaknesses for the development of a self-improvement plan. This chapter discussed the theoretical background of the Life Styles Inventory, as well as instrument validity and reliability. A description of the results upon taking the instrument is included, along with commentary on the instrument’s utility. Web address, cost, terms, and definitions appear at the end of the chapter.

ANALYSIS OF THE INSTRUMENT

Introduction

In recent history, self-assessment has become a basic component in management assessment and leadership development. A large number of self-assessment surveys and instruments are now available to help individuals understand and modify their personal behavior and thinking patterns. However, self-assessment is only as effective as the assessed individual’s truthfulness. Often the assessed individual will respond with answers he or she thinks are the correct response rather than give a truthful response that may reveal a perceived weakness. Self-deception is an all too common practice that negates the validity and reliability of many self-assessment instruments. As human beings, we have a great capacity to deceive ourselves into thinking we are a better leader than we are in reality.

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By adding consensual validity to the assessment process, the results of an individual’s analysis can be much more effective. Consensual validity is the measure of agreement between self-assessment and assessment by others (Cooke, Rousseau, & Lafferty, 1987). This form of assessment is particularly important when the assessment is focused upon leaders and managers whose effectiveness depends upon interaction with subordinates, coworkers, and clients. The *Life Styles Inventory™* (LSI; Lafferty, 1973) makes use of both self-assessment and assessment by others to identify the degree of consensual validity and provide structured feedback for the assessed individual. This chapter offers an evaluation of the theoretical background, validity, and reliability of the LSI 1 (self-report) and the LSI 2 (description by others) instruments. In addition, the web location and cost associated with the LSI instrument appears at the end of the chapter, followed by a list of the twelve life styles and their definitions. A suggested reading list also appears at the end of the chapter.

### Background

Leaders and managers often confuse perception of self with how they think they should act (Sullivan, 1953). An often subconscious process occurs with many leaders and managers wherein they attempt to match their leadership and management style to the perceived expectations of others. This creates a complex process of psychological self-deception and self-delusion, the result of which is an inaccurate self-appraisal of an individual’s leadership abilities. Therefore, it is unlikely that self-assessment alone will lead to effective insights and behavior modification, particularly those insights that some individuals are not willing to accept or acknowledge about themselves (Horney, 1945). However, constructive feedback from trusted others can provide valuable insight for the assessed individual, thereby prompting the adoption of suggested changes to make improvements to his/her behavior. Well-structured feedback on an individual’s communication styles, personal orientation, behaviors, and values can provide a benchmark for change, growth, and development. For this reason, Human Synergistics International (HSI) offers the *Life Styles Inventory 1 and 2*. *Life Styles Inventory 1* (LSI 1) is a self-assessment instrument, while *Life Styles Inventory 2* (LSI 2) uses the exact same questions and life styles to conduct assessment by others. Although the LSI 1 can be used as a standalone assessment, the two assessments (LSI 1 and 2), when used together, provide consensual validity, a comparison of agreement between assessment by self and assessment by others. This process is deeply revealing and highly effective in the examination of an individual’s thinking and behavior styles.

The theoretical basis for the *Life Styles Inventory*, created by Lafferty (1973), comes largely from Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of human needs. Maslow postulated a rank order of needs from strongest to weakest. He ranked physiological needs as the strongest among human needs, followed by safety needs, acceptance/belonging needs, self-esteem/self-importance needs, and finally fully developed personality needs (Cangemi, 2009). Lafferty supplements his approach to leadership and management behavior with material from other need theorists, management theorists, and personality psychologists (Nediger & Chelladurai, 1989) in order to develop a more well rounded instrument.

While Lafferty, founder of Human Synergistics International, developed the *Life Styles Inventory* as a general assessment to help individuals understand and modify their behavior and thinking styles, this assessment has been especially useful in manager and leader development. He writes, “Because it measures what drives your behavior (your thoughts and self-concept), the inventory is your tool for self-discovery” (*Life Styles Inventory Self-Development Guide*, 1973/2004, p. 5). Lafferty delineates twelve life styles on the *Life Styles Inventory*, which he originally placed within four broad categories. His twelve life styles are...