

Task Attitude: Searching for alternatives or following procedures?

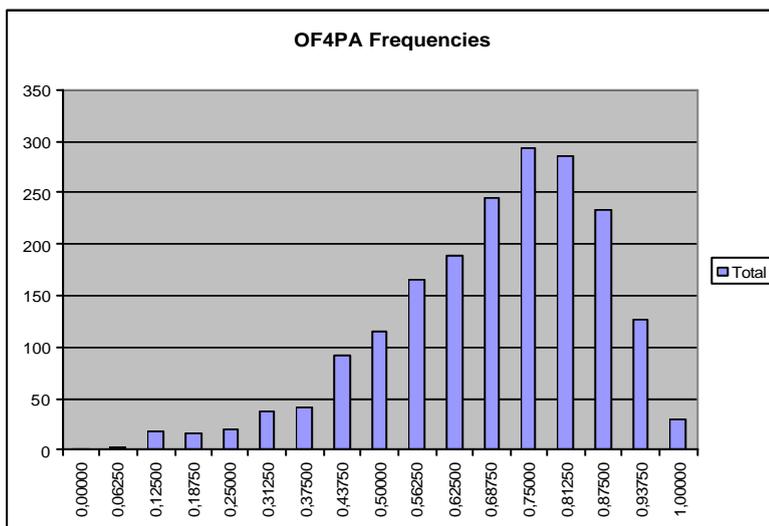
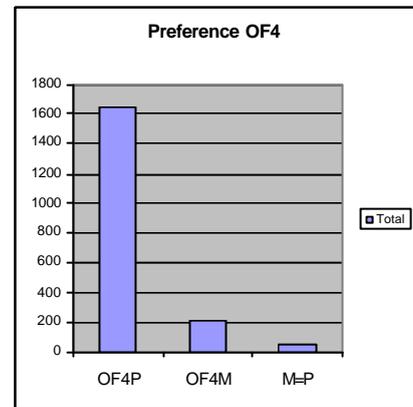
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This metaprogram pattern consists of two parts: The amount of options, or **Alternatives** (Metaprogram OF4PA) and the amount of structure, or **Procedures** (Metaprogram OF4MA). The combination (BP4) refers to how people perform their tasks.

Using the LAB Profile, we learned to test for this pattern by asking a person the question¹: “Why did you choose your present job?” The reason itself doesn’t matter – we are searching for the pattern behind the words. If we just listen to and evaluate the answer itself, then our evaluation is subjective. Furthermore, normal interview answers can be faked, especially given the current “interview training” many people get. For instance, June Sandercock, author of the “Career Skills Tip of the Day”², warns the job searchers that interviews questions change and refers to the type of answers candidates should give. She borrows of these tips from Marilyn Moats Kennedy:

- Question:** Why did you take your last job?
Advice: “Stay positive. Talk about the opportunities that the job provided for you to learn, take on more responsibilities, etc.”

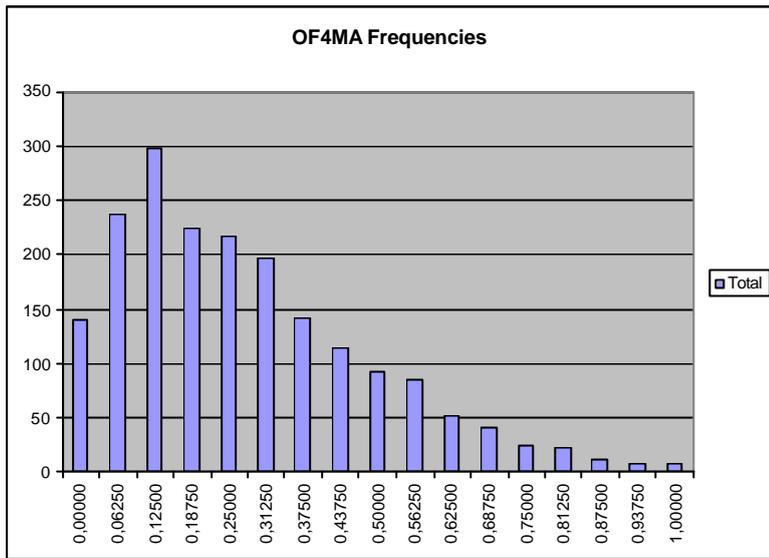
The figure to the right shows how respondents subjectively viewed themselves. As you can see, most people think they prefer alternatives. In fact, only 200 people out of 1,911 (10.5%) declare that following procedures is “more like them” than looking for options. The two figures below indicate the frequencies of the scores (in absolute scores), and the answers for alternatives lay in the upper half of the scale, while those for procedures lay in the lower half of the scale. This means that most test takers indicated that sentences measuring for alternatives were “most like them” while sentences concerning following procedures were “least like them.” As you can see below, this bias is also reflected in the frequency charts for the scores for both parameters.



Frequency chart indicating scores for “alternatives” (OF4PA). A high score indicates a preference for alternatives or options, a low score indicates that having options doesn’t motivate.

¹ See “Words that Change Minds”, Shelle Rose Charvet, 1995

² an e-zine from Amazing.com see <http://www.amazing.com/career.jsp>



Frequency chart indicating scores for “procedures” (OF4MA). A low score indicates a low motivation for procedures. A high score indicates that the person finds it’s important to follow procedures.

If we combine the scores for the 2 parameters (see the table below), it indicates that **far more people clearly prefer alternatives** (45.1% of the population can be found in the lower left quadrant. They scored OF4P higher than average and OF4M lower than average). Some 20% of the population has a preference for procedures (upper right quadrant: OF4MA higher than average, OF4Pa lower than average), while the remaining 35% is able to do both (the 2 other quadrants).

| | 4M<0.06 | 4M<0.27 | 4M>0.27 | 4M>0.48 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4P<0.51 | 2.9% | 3.1% | 5.2% | 8.3% |
| 4P<0.69 | 5.9% | 11.4% | 0.7% | 5.8% |
| 4P>0.69 | 18.1% | 20.5% | 9.1% | 3.3% |
| 4P>0.87 | 2.9% | 3.6% | 1.1% | 0.6% |

Table : Frequencies for “Alternatives” (OF4P) versus “Procedures” (OF4M)