

Employee Selection: References and Testing

Industrial/Organizational Psychology (PSY 32012-2)

Predicting Performance using References and Letters of Recommendation

- An employer must obtain information about the quality of previous performance by relying on an applicant's references, either by calling those references or asking for letter of recommendations from previous employers
- Reference Check – is the process of confirming the accuracy of information provided by an applicant
- Reference – the expression of an opinion, either orally or through a written checklist, regarding an applicant's ability, previous performance, work habits, character, or potential for future success
- Letter of Recommendation – letter expressing an opinion regarding applicant's ability, previous performance, work habits, character, or potential future success

Reasons for using references and recommendations

- ✓ Confirming details on resume
 - Avoiding resume fraud
- ✓ Checking for Discipline Problems
 - Avoiding Negligent Hiring – if an organization hires an applicant without checking his references and background and he later commits a crime while in the employ of an organization, the organization may be found liable for negligent hiring if the employee has a criminal background that would have been detected had a background check been conducted.
- ✓ Discovering New Information about the Applicant
- ✓ Predicting Future Performance
 - Low validity in predicting future employee success because:
 - 1) Leniency – applicants choose references that would help them in application by showing only positive sides
 - 2) Knowledge of the Applicant – the person writing the letter often does not know the applicant well
 - 3) Reliability – the lack of agreement between two people who provide references for the same person

- 4) Extraneous Factors – method used by the letter writer is often more important than the actual content

Ethical Issues

1. Explicitly state your relationship with the person you are recommending
2. Be honest in providing details
3. Let the applicant see your reference before sending it

Predicting Performance using applicant training and Education

- It is common that the applicants must have a minimum level of education or training to be considered

Predicting Performance Using Applicant Knowledge

- Job Knowledge Tests – designed to measure how much a person knows about a job
- Excellent content and criterion validity; high face validity

Predicting Performance using Applicant Ability

- Ability tests – tap the extent to which an applicant can learn or perform a job-related skill
- 1. Cognitive Ability – dimensions such as oral and written comprehension, oral and written expression, numerical facility, originality, memorization, reasoning, and general learning
 - Result in high levels of adverse impact and lack face validity
 - Difficulty of setting a passing score
 - Wonderlic Personnel Test – widely used cognitive ability test in the industry
 - Siena Reasoning Test
- 2. Perceptual Ability – consists of vision, color discrimination, depth perception, glare sensitivity, speech, and hearing
- 3. Psychomotor Ability – finger dexterity, manual dexterity, control precision, multilimbed coordination, response control, reaction time, arm-hand steadiness, wrist-finger speed, and speed-of-limb movement
- 4. Physical Ability – used for jobs that requires physical strengths and stamina

Employee Selection: References and Testing

Industrial/Organizational Psychology (PSY 32012-2)

- a. Job Simulation
- b. Physical Agility tests
 - Nine Basic Physical Activities: dynamic strength, trunk strength, explosive strength, static strength, dynamic flexibility, extent flexibility, gross body equilibrium, gross body coordination, stamina
 - Criticized due to job relatedness, passing scores, and the time at which they should be required

Predicting Performance using Applicant Skill

1. Work Samples – the applicant performs actual job related tasks
 - Directly related to job tasks, they have excellent content validity
 - Tend to predict actual work performance and thus have excellent criterion validity
 - Samples have excellent face validity
 - Lower racial differences
 - Can be expensive to both construct and administer
 2. Assessment Centers – selection techniques characterized by the use of multiple assessment methods that allow multiple assessors to actually observe applicants perform simulated job tasks
 - Assessment methods are all job related and multiple trained assessors help guard against many types of selection bias
 - ✓ Assessment center activities must be based on the results of thorough job analysis
 - ✓ Multiple assessment techniques must be used
 - ✓ Multiple trained assessors must be used
 - ✓ Behavioral observations must be documented at the time the applicant behavior is observed
 - ✓ Assessors must prepare a report of their observations
 - ✓ Overall judgement of an applicant must be based on combination of information from the multiple assessors and multiple techniques
 - ✓ Overall evaluation of an applicant cannot be made until all assessment center tasks have been completed
1. Do a job analysis
 2. Develop exercises that measure the different aspects of the job

3. Rate the applicants going through assessment centers
 - In-basket Technique – designed to simulate the types of daily information that appear on a manager's or employee's desk
 - Simulations – include diverse activities as role plays and work samples, place an applicant in a situation that is similar as possible to one that will be encountered on the job
 - Work Sample – if simulation does not involve situational exercise
 - Leaderless Group Discussions – applicants meet in small groups and are given a job-related problem to solve or a job-related issue to discuss
 - Business Games – exercises that allow the applicant to demonstrate such attributes as creativity, decision making, and ability to work with others

Predicting Performance using Prior Experience

1. Experience Ratings – past experience will predict future experience
 - In giving credit for experience, one must consider the amount of experience, the level of performance demonstrated during the previous experience, and how related the experience to the current job
2. Biodata – selection method that considers an applicant's life, school, military, community, and work experience
 - Application blank or questionnaire containing questions that research has shown measure the differences between successful and unsuccessful performers on a job

Predicting Performance using Personality, Interest, and Character

- Personality Inventories – they predict performance better than once thought
- Tests of Normal Personality – measures the traits exhibited by normal individuals in everyday life
 - Can be based on a theory (MBTI), statistically based (16PF), or empirically based (MMPI)
 - Big Five or Five Factor Model:
 - ✓ Openness to experience

Employee Selection: References and Testing

Industrial/Organizational Psychology (PSY 32012-2)

- ✓ Conscientiousness
- ✓ Extraversion
- ✓ Agreeableness
- ✓ Emotional stability
- Test of Psychopathology – determines whether individuals have serious psychological problems
 - Projective Tests – provide the respondent with unstructured tasks such as describing ink blots and drawing pictures
 - Objective Tests – structured so that the respondent is limited to a few answers that will be scored by standardized keys
- Interest Inventories – tap vocational interest
 - Strong Interest Inventory (SII)
 - Useful in vocational counseling
- Integrity tests – honesty tests; tell an employer the probability that an applicant would steal money or merchandise
 - Personality-based integrity tests – are more general in that they tap a variety of personality traits thought to be related to a wide range of counterproductive behavior
- Conditional Reasoning Test – to reduce the inaccurate response and get a more accurate picture of a person's tendency to engage in aggressive or counterproductive behavior
- Graphology – handwriting analysis

Predicting Performance Limitations due to Medical and Psychological Problems

1. Drug Testing
2. Psychological Exams
3. Medical Exams

Rejecting Applicants

- Rejected applicants should be treated well because they are potential customers and potential applicants for another positions
- Applicants who were rejected “properly” were more likely to continue to be a customer at organization and apply for future job openings
- Best way: Rejection Letter

end

Employee Selection: References and Testing

Industrial/Organizational Psychology (PSY 32012-2)