

How to improve candidate assessment with analytics

Businesses need to do more to understand how to get the most out of candidate assessment



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Potential for emotional and social Intelligence can be inferred from a combination of personality, values and general ability testing

The most significant area of development around candidate assessment research has been the use of meta-analytic studies, which has increased confidence in the validity of selection methods. Meta-analytic studies pull together a range of research findings in order to create a clear, integrated picture of what the research presents through thorough statistical analysis. These studies remove the impact of sampling errors, range restrictions and measurement unreliability – which paints a picture that psychometric testing is much more valuable than originally thought. In fact, these studies tell us that psychometric assessment is the most objective and reliable method of selection for the recruitment of individuals because it is able to predict their performance and the amount of support they may need in their role.

Moreover, these studies show that general ability test scores predict performance, despite continual attempts to downplay the importance of general mental ability tests. This is not surprising since general ability is essentially an individual's ability to learn and make sense of their environment. General ability is most effectively assessed by the use of a well-designed and validated general ability test.

Emotional Intelligence and the more recently propounded Social Intelligence are not new concepts. They were originally described by Thorndike in the 1920s in his tripartite theory of intelligence.

Although proponents of emotional and social intelligence claim that these intelligences are more important for success in managerial roles than general ability, scores on emotional and social intelligence are significantly correlated with general ability scores. Emotional and social intelligence are essentially interpersonal skills or competencies. As such they can be learned. Consequently, it is not surprising that they are correlated with general ability, considering that general

ability is the capacity to learn. People with higher general mental ability are likely to be faster and more adept at understanding complex concepts and relationships. Understanding the social, emotional and cultural context is a very complex business.

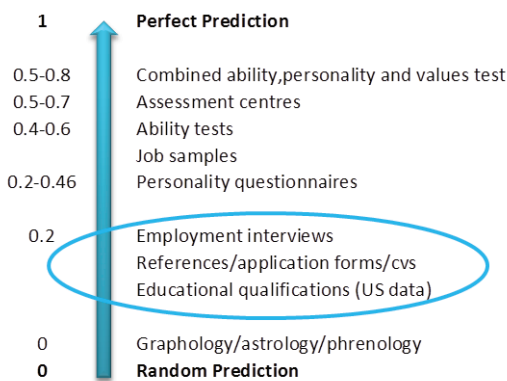
Potential for emotional and social Intelligence can be inferred from a combination of personality, values and general ability testing. However, since these are learned skills or competencies, the extent of the individual's current skill can only be observed through behaviourally based assessment, such as interactive exercises – group discussions, role plays, situational judgment exercises, structured competency based interviews. The extent of current skill in these areas can also be identified through a 360-degree appraisal. Given the potential for learning, emotional and social intelligence can be developed through coaching and experiential training.

There has been concern among psychologists about what is measured by an Assessment Centre. Scholz and Schuler (1993) conducted a meta-analysis of Assessment Centre data, which explored the key constructs measured in the overall assessment ratings. They found that overall assessment ratings were highly correlated with general intelligence (0.43), achievement motivation (0.4), social competence (0.41), self-confidence (0.32) and dominance (0.3). These results suggest that the primary construct measured within Assessment Centres is mental ability. There is also concern about the extent to which Assessment Centres provide added value in the selection process, as they are expensive and require constant monitoring. When well designed, Assessment Centres can identify an individual's current level of skill and development needs. When combined with psychometric assessment they provide strong predictive validity. However, they are costly and time consuming. If the predictive ability of Assessment Centres is equal to methods such as psychometric testing, what is the point of such a costly exercise?

Psychometric assessment is the domain of the expert psychologist. These meta-analytic studies suggest that, in order to improve the reliability and predictive validity of selection methods, psychologists should be involved in both their design and their implementation.

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Predictive Validity of Assessment Methods



The most commonly used techniques are also the least effective ones