

How Effective are Interviews in The Selection Process

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Scientific research has established three findings concerning selection interviews. According to several surveys carried out in different countries and with all types of organizations, the interview is the most frequently used procedure and it is the most relevant in the decision-making of practitioners (Alonso et al., 2015). Research has also found that structured interviews have proven to be a valid procedure for predicting job performance (Huffcutt et al., 2014). The third finding has been to demonstrate, across the world, that interviews are overall the instrument which is most positively regarded by candidates (Liu et al., 2016).

A rarely researched issue concerning the selection interview is the degree to which interviewers feel confident about their decisions when they use a specific type of interview (unstructured vs. structured). A second issue is to identify what structured interview content (conventional vs. behavioural) shows a better capacity to identify candidates' suitability for a job. A third less investigated issue is related to two biases that can affect the assessments: a) the degree to which sex similarity between candidate and interviewer affects interview decisions and b) the effect of having additional information about the candidate for example test results, resume, and recommendation letters.

Employment Interviews: Types and Psychometric Properties

Three main interview types are depending on their content and degree of structure (Salgado & Moscoso, 2002):

- Conventional Unstructured Interview (CUI), which is the most used refers to an informal conversation between the candidate and the interviewer, who formulates the questions according to the course of the conversation and without following any script (Dipboye, 1992);
- Structured Conventional Interview (SCI), in which the interviewer works from a series of guidelines about the information that must be obtained from each interviewee and it typically includes questions about credentials, technical skills, experience, and self-evaluations (Janz, Hellervik, & Gilmore, 1986);
- Structured Behavioral Interview (SBI), which is based on the evaluation of past behaviours (Salgado and Moscoso, 2011).
- Meta-analyses have shown the reliability and construct and criterion validity of the different types of interviews (Huffcutt and Arthur, 1994) Other studies have also reported on content validity (Choragwicka and Moscoso, 2007).

Concerning reliability, Huffcutt et al. (2013) carried out a new meta-analysis to update the results found by Conway, Jako, and Goodman (1995). The results for low structure interviews (CUI) were .40 when they were evaluated by separate interviewers and .55 in panel interviews. For the interviews with a medium level of structure (SCI), the values increase to .48 (serial interviews) and .73 (panel of

evaluators). Finally, in the category of “high structure” (SBI), they found a reliability of .61 in the case of serial interviews and .78 when the evaluation is performed by a panel of evaluators. In their meta-analysis, Salgado, Moscoso, and Gorriti (2004) found a coefficient of .83 for SBI. These results are like those found by Conway et al. (1995), that is, the higher the degree of structure, the greater the reliability among interviewers.

Several studies have found that structure is also an important moderator of validity since as the level of structure increases, the interview validity increases. Recently, Huffcutt et al. (2014) found higher validity coefficients. Specifically, their results showed a coefficient of .20 for non-structured interviews (CUI), .46 for conventional structured interviews (SCI) and .70 for those with a higher level of structure (SBI). This last result is very similar to the value of .68 found by the meta-analysis of Salgado and Moscoso, 2006, in which they concluded that the SBI was valid for all occupations with validity ranging from .52 for managers to .80 for clerical occupations.

Research vs. Practice Gap

Despite the empirical evidence on the psychometric properties of the SBI, there is still a gap between research findings and professional practice (Alonso et al., 2015). Nowadays, most medium and small companies continue using unstructured interviews rather than structured behavioural ones.

In this regard, there are some issues related to professional practices that have been insufficiently researched. For instance, research is scarce concerning the degree to which interviewers feel confident about the decisions based on SBI or SCI. Two small-sample studies carried out by Salgado and Moscoso, 1998 found that the interviewers have more confidence in their assessments with SBI than with SCI. However, additional studies are necessary.

Research has also shown that access to previous information about candidates (resume, recommendation letters, academic record, and test scores) can produce impression bias in appraisals (Paunonen et al., 1987). For example, Macan and Dipboye (1990) found that the interviewer's prior impressions on candidates correlated .35 with the ratings given to interviewees. The frequency of this kind of bias seems to be larger for unstructured interviews than for structured ones (Dipboye, 1997). Research on highly structured interviews recommends against having access to the candidate's prior information (Latham et al., 1980). This recommendation has been supported by the meta-analytical studies of McDaniel et al. (1994) and Searcy, Woods, Gatewood, and Lace (1993), who found higher criterion validity when the interviewers did not have access to cognitive test scores.

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