



Office for
National Statistics

Sorting the Wheat from the Chaff: Are Assessment Centres a Good Predictor of Interviewer Performance?

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Background

- Longstanding problem of interviewer turnover
 - Lose between 20 and 30% each year
- Have used a number of different methods for selecting recruits
 - Simple interview process
 - Rigorous testing
 - Outsourced

What are Assessment Centres?

- Replaced previous process in mid 2006

Paper sift → Clerical test → 1:1 interview
No minimum qualifications

- New process

Paper sift → 1:2 interview → clerical test → laptop test → role play → Q&A session

Candidates scored on

- Personal effectiveness
- Communication skills
- Flexibility and availability

Results (1)

- Assessment Centre scores:
 - Are not a good predictor of whether an interviewer resigns

However,

- Lower scores on flexibility and communication may predict likelihood of making transition from passing course to starting work as an interviewer

Results (2)

- Assessment Centre scores:
 - Were not a good predictor of achieved response rates
 - Data problems may explain the absence of a relationship
 - Based on 6 months recruitment; small numbers may have limited chance of identifying relationship

Conclusion

- Solve many problems if could have a mechanism for identifying the perfect interviewer
- Assessment Centres don't do that, but better than previous system
- Biggest achievement is that Managers (of interviewers) believe in the system