The Importance of Predictive and Face Validity in Employee Selection and Ways of Maximizing Them: An Assessment of Three Selection Methods

Kelechi John Ekuma

School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
Correspondence: Kelechi John Ekuma, Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM), School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom. Tel: 44-753-844-5734. E-mail: keccent@hotmail.co.uk

Received: May 27, 2012   Accepted: September 25, 2012   Online Published: October 29, 2012
doi:10.5539/ijbm.v7n22p115   URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v7n22p115

Abstract
The current exigencies and fluidity of the business environment engendered largely by demographic changes, technological advances and globalisation have made it imperative for organisations to possess the brightest talents as a source of competitive advantage, if they hope to survive. The continuing 'talent war' and fierce competition in the global market place; and issues concerning employee branding and candidate attraction, means that organisations and their managers have to carefully review their recruitment and selection processes, ensuring that employee selection methods not only contributes towards enhancing organisational image, but also predicts future job performance to a reasonable extent. There is therefore, the need for chosen methods to be high in both Predictive and Face validities.

This article critically examines the importance of the concepts of Predictive and Face validities to employee selection in a wider context as an HR strategy and as an integral part of organisations’ general strategy, suggesting ways of improving both concepts. The central argument of this article, is that for selection methods to be effective, reliable, valid and minimise costs associated with loosing top talents, poor employee performance and turnover, it must possess high predictive and face value. The article assesses three major selection methods (interviews, work sampling and assessment centres) with a view of maximising their predictive and face validities, arguing that the design, contents and the manner of administrating these methods are major issues. The paper concludes that there is no one best way of selecting new employees, but a combination of carefully chosen methods and well-trained HR professionals will undoubtedly improve face and predictive validities and by extension, the selection method.

Keywords: predictive validity, face validity, employee selection, employee branding, interviews, work sampling, assessment centres

1. Introduction
The effective acquisition and utilization of an organisation’s human resources is central to the growth, viability and survival of any organisation (Jones & George, 2006). Employee selection as an aspect of human resourcing, in a wider context of human resource management (HRM) ‘is the process by which managers and others use specific instruments to choose from a pool of applicants a person or persons more likely to succeed in the job(s), given the management goals and legal requirements’ (French & Rumbles, 2009: 141).

The concepts of predictive and face validity have been identified as critical to employee-selection. Although without a univocal definition, a critical evaluation of many of the definitions offered by various scholars, point to the fact that face validity has to do with how applicants perceive, accept and react to a selection process; while predictive validity centres on how the process is able to correctly measure or predict the future job performance of those selected (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2006; Smither et al, 1993; Ni & Hauenstein, 1998; French & Rumbles, 2009).

Considering the centrality of employee selection to the functioning of organizations, this paper critically examines the importance of ‘predictive’ and ‘face’ validities to employee selection, with a view of highlighting procedures for maximising its utility and efficacy. It argues that both concepts are mutually reinforcing and that