

E-411 PRMA

LECTURE 21 ASSESSMENTS IN BUSINESS AND CAREERS

Christopher David Desjardins

**HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE A
DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY?**

**WHAT DO ASSESSMENTS IN
BUSINESS AND CAREER PLANNING
MEASURE?**

**WHAT KIND OF ASSESSMENTS
METHODS ARE USED IN THESE
AREAS?**

CAREER INTEREST AND CHOICE

We may want to gauge someone's propensity towards a career

Want to quantify and understand one's level of interests relative to professionals in the field (**interest measure**)

validity claim - if your interest are similar to someone in the field than you would be interested in that field

HOW DO DEVELOP A "STRONG" INTEREST INVENTORY

How would you create such an instrument?

Write and select a bunch of diverse items intended to distinguish
between people in different careers

Administer this exhaustive (i.e. very long) instrument to representatives
from various professional fields

Sort out items by interest group and retain only the most discriminative
items

Administer the test; tell examinees what professions match their
response pattern of interest

Need to make sure the instrument was tailored to your population (e.g.
their education level, age, whether they want a nonprofessional career,
disabilities, etc)

**WHAT CRITERION(S) COULD WE USE TO ASSESS THE
VALIDITY OF SUCH AN INVENTORY?**

DOES INTEREST EQUAL APTITUDE?

**WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO CAREER SUCCESS:
APTITUDE OR INTEREST?**

APTITUDE TESTS

- These may be traditional paper and pencil, on a computer, or involve demonstrating dexterity
- Could measure mathematical skill, abstract thought, spatial skills, use of certain tools, motor skills, etc
- Many different tests; many different styles depending on occupational field

GATB

- The **General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB)**, most widely utilized aptitude test
- **Purpose**: to identify aptitudes for occupations (for just about anyone)
- Administered by many local state offices in the USA
- 12 timed tests (~ 3 hrs), measuring 9 aptitudes (3 composite aptitudes, Figure 1)
- 1/2 psychomotor and 1/2 paper/pencil tasks
- Can be administered partially
- **Validity evidence**: All jobs could be classified into 5 families; regression equations for these families developed; recommendations for various jobs could then be made

VALIDITY GENERALIZATION

The same score could be predictive of aptitude for a cluster of jobs

Must be strong overlap and high homogeneity in necessary within a cluster

Removes the need to do a separate validation study for all the jobs in the GATB (~12,000)!

For example, need to only test if you have the aptitude to be a counseling psychologist to find out that clinical psychology could work for you

Benefits include: don't need to rely on a minimum cut off score but instead can find best-qualified based on their profile; linear relationship between aptitude and job performance; using VG more precise information about examinees' relative standing than an absolute cutoff.

Concern: how can you classify so many jobs into just 5 families?

**WHAT COULD BE THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY IN
BUSINESS?**

PERSONALITY TRAITS

- Employers may wish to administer a personality assessment to see if prospective employees fits within the business
- What might be the problem with this?
- Perhaps the most valid test is the one with the least amount of face validity?
- May wish to administer an integrity test
 - predict honesty, potential for theft/violence, etc
 - screening and retaining employees

PERSONALITY TYPES

Meyers-Briggs has been employed a lot!

Based on Jung work, items measure your "preferences" (e.g. Extraversion or Introversiion) and from your preferences come your **personality type**

MB psychometric soundness is questionable

The link between personality is not clear and depends on definition of **work performance**

However, high conscientiousness and extroversion correlated with high work performance and high neuroticism correlated with low work performance

TRANSITION ASSESSMENTS

- Transition from school to work
 - Students writing assessments for careers they are interested in
 - Then administer that assessment to professionals in that field
- Career transition
- Retirement transition

MORE USES IN BUSINESS

- Can be used to **screen** candidates relative to some criteria
- Can **select** candidates for a position
- Could be used to **classify** candidates in categories
- Could be used to **place** candidates in programs, tracts, etc
- Could use interest, aptitude, ability, or personality tests to do any of these

ASSESSMENTS WHEN APPLYING FOR A JOB/PROGRAM

What do employers' use to screen, select, classify, and place perspective candidates?

- Resume
- Cover letter
- Application
- Letters of recommendation
- Interviews
- Portfolios
- A performance test?
- Physical test?

MEASURES OF COGNITIVE ABILITY

Cognitive ability tests often used in selection and placement

Tend to be good predictors of future performance

Present methods often reinforce cultural stereotypes

Computerized tests that minimize verbal content may prove
fruitful

PRODUCTIVITY

Output relative to effort

Tests and tasks are also used for measuring productivity

Often involve comparing individuals to one another

Could create forced dichotomous that are real or unreal

May be measured by supervisor or peers

Could be measured individually or as a part of a team

MOTIVATION

- We are often interested in
 - Motivates someone to excel at work
 - Motivates someone to apply for a job
 - Motivates someone to stay at a job
 - Is someone **intrinsically** motivated?
 - Is someone **extrinsically** motivated?
 - Basically we are interested in factors related to motivation in a career
- Several models of motivation
 - Could be a hierarchical or tiered system
- Ultimately, want to avoid **burnout**

ATTITUDES AT WORK

Is an employee **satisfied** with their job

Do they feel a sense of **commitment** to the company

Is there a strong sense of **organizational culture**

Why might we have interest in these attitudes?

People that are satisfied at work, do a better job

If they are committed to your organization, they will likely
stick around and do better

Foster an Apple or Google culture

IMPLICIT ATTITUDES

These are your **gut feelings** about something

They are not conscious and automatic

What could be the benefit of measuring implicit attitudes in business?

Underlying theoretical framework, physiological correlates of the measures, and whether they are truly not conscious reactions present measurement issues

SURVEYS

- Surveys are commonly employed to measure attitudes and are delivered by an assortment of media
- Can get a lot from a little
- However, potential major issues?
 - How can you be sure you measure the person that you are trying to measure?
 - How do you ensure a representative sample?
 - What does non-response imply?
- **Tailored Design Method** could be considered to placate these issues

QUALITATIVE METHODS

include focus groups, think alouds, behavior observations,
and other methods that do not seek to assign numbers

Great for getting in depth information about something that
otherwise would be impossible

Great during the piloting, product development, etc

Expensive, time consuming, validity and reliability don't
really exist here

Are these people representative?