

predominate this column in the exhibit because relatively few studies have directly investigated the utility of these methods. However, based on the argument that validity should be directly related to utility, it is likely that high validity methods will also realize large financial benefits to organizations that choose to use them. Research does indicate that training and experience requirements have moderate (or even high) levels of utility, and reference checks have moderate levels of utility.

Applicant Reactions

Applicant reactions refers to how favorably individuals feel about a given selection practice. Applicant reactions has been suggested as an important criterion because applicants who feel positively about selection methods and the selection process might be more inclined to join or recommend an organization, and they have more positive attitudes toward the organization once hired. Some have argued, however, that evidence suggesting that applicant reactions matter is scarce. One review concluded, "Evidence for a relationship between applicant perceptions and actual behavioral outcomes was meager and disappointing."⁵⁵

Research suggests that whatever their centrality to the selection process, selection measures that are perceived as job related, that present applicants with an opportunity to perform, that are administered consistently, and that provide applicants with feedback about their performance are likely to generate favorable applicant reactions. Moreover, a meta-analysis of 26 studies revealed that explanations justifying the use of selection measures shape applicant perceptions of fairness of the selection process and their affective reactions to the organization.⁵⁶ Although research on applicants' reactions to specific selection procedures is lacking, evidence has been accumulating and suggests that applicants react more positively to some initial assessment methods, such as interviews, résumés, and reference checks, than to others, such as biodata or background checks.⁵⁷

Adverse Impact

Adverse impact refers to the possibility that a disproportionate number of protected-class members may be rejected using this predictor. Several initial assessment methods have moderate degrees of adverse impact against women and/or minorities, including level of education, quality of school, training and experience, biographical information, and the initial interview. Reference and background checks appear to have moderate adverse impact.

LEGAL ISSUES

Initial assessment methods are subject to numerous laws, regulations, and other legal considerations. Five major matters of concern pertain to using disclaimers, conducting reference checks, conducting background (credit and criminal) checks, making preemployment inquiries, and making BFOQ claims.