

Content

The substance or content of what is being assessed with a predictor varies considerably and may range from a sign to a criterion.² A sign is a predisposition of the person that is thought to relate to performance on the job. Personality as a predictor is a good example here. If personality is used as a predictor, the prediction is that someone with a certain personality (e.g., abrasive) will demonstrate certain behaviors (e.g., rude to customers) leading to certain results on the job (e.g., failure to make a sale). As can be seen, a sign is very distant from actual on-the-job results. A sample is closer than a sign to actual on-the-job results. Observing a set of interactions between a sales applicant and a customer to see if a sale is made is an example of a sample. The criterion is very close to the actual job performance, such as sales during a probationary period for a new employee.

Form

The form or design of the predictor may vary along several different lines.

Speed Versus Power. A person's score on some predictors is based on the number of responses completed within a certain time frame, for example, the number of bench presses an individual completes in a given period of time. This is known as a speed test. A power test, on the other hand, presents individuals with items of increasing difficulty. For example, a power test of numerical ability may begin with addition and subtraction, move on to multiplication and division, and conclude with complex problem-solving questions. A speed test is used when speed of work is an important part of the job, and a power test is used when the correctness of the response is essential to the job. Of course, some tests (see the *Wonderlic Personnel Test* in Chapter 9) can be both speed and power tests, in which case few individuals would finish.

Paper and Pencil Versus Performance. Many predictors are of the paper-and-pencil variety; applicants are required to fill out a form, write an answer, or complete multiple-choice items (the term "paper-and-pencil" is used loosely here given that many predictors are assessed electronically). Other predictors are performance tests, where the applicant is asked to manipulate an object or equipment. Paper-and-pencil tests are frequently used when psychological abilities are required to perform the job; performance tests are used when physical and social skills are required to perform the job. Although many organizations may use one or the other, some use both, as when NFL recruits are timed in the 40-yard dash (a performance test) and also given an intelligence test (a paper-and-pencil test).

Objective Versus Essay. An objective paper-and-pencil predictor uses either multiple-choice questions or true/false questions. These tests should be used to