

Paper 1

The practice of science in candidate assessment: are our choices informed by science?

In our first paper, we considered whether talent acquisition specialists are using the wealth of evidence available to them when making choices around candidate selection methods. We were exploring this as a recent research article (Woods, et al. 2019) has argued that digital selection procedures have forged ahead of research and are being introduced with organizations blind to their effectiveness.

We shared data from the Institute of Student Employers (ISE, 2019) showing the rank order of the prevalence of selection tools used in graduate assessment to 'screen' applications (so before candidates get to the more expensive face-to-face stages).

We then compared this with the rank order of the utility of these different tools. By 'utility' we mean the return on investment that is realized from identifying higher caliber candidates and the extent to which this outweighs the cost of using the assessment.

We calculated utility through modelling a typical graduate recruitment process and using a combination of:

- ✔ the validity of the assessment method
- ✔ the number of people to be assessed/hired
- ✔ the cut score which can be typically used to sift candidates using this tool - guided by best practice from the British Psychological Society (Psychological Testing Centre, 2006)

Table 1 shows the outcome of our analysis.

Screen Method	Rank order in terms of % graduate employers using this method (ISE, 2019)	Rank order in terms of the utility of this method (Waugh, Kavanagh & MacIver, 2020)
Online Applications/CVs	1st	5th
Aptitude Tests	2nd	3rd=
Situational Judgment Tests	3rd	2nd
Critical Reasoning Tests	4th	3rd=
Personality/Motivation Questionnaires	5th	1st

Table 1. Comparing the prevalence of different 'screen' methods with their utility.

Whilst it couldn't be included in Table 1, as we followed the ISE classifications, our research found a combined score made from personality/motivation questionnaires and aptitude tests has the highest utility in terms of screening out candidates in a high-volume selection process.

We concluded that choices around which assessment methods to use in candidate selection are not informed by science. We encouraged attendees to:

- ✔ Avoid low utility screeners (application forms and CVs)
- ✔ Use combinations of high utility screeners (personality questionnaires combined with aptitude tests)
- ✔ Continue to adopt ways of using the most valid assessments to power later stages of a selection process