

Abstract

This study examined the construct validity of the semi-structured behavioral description interview in two developmental assessment centers, one from an international consulting firm and another from a multinational organization, using the multitrait multimethod (MTMM) approach. Both the consulting firm and organizational MTMM matrixes consisted of an interview, a personality inventory, two cognitive tests and several simulations, measuring six dimensions. Mixed findings emerged for construct validity of the interview in both samples. Convergent validity was moderate, with mean monotrait-heteromethod correlations of .30 and .26 for the consulting firm and the organizational samples respectively; whereas the discriminant validity was relatively weak, with mean heterotrait-monomethod correlations of .41 and .47, and mean heterotrait-heteromethod correlations of .21 and .18 for the consulting firm and the organizational samples respectively. Possible reasons for the unsatisfactory construct validity were discussed. Correlations between interview ratings and other assessments suggested that the interview might be measuring constructs related to general job knowledge, motivation and communication skills. Finally, mean interview ratings had higher correlations with simulations than with general cognitive ability tests, suggesting that semi-structured behavioral description interviews tapped predominantly non-cognitive aspects of performance.