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The Prospective of Situational Judgement Test in Assessing Individual Performance

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Abstract

The Situational Judgement Test (SJT) is one of the evaluation instruments that is often used nowadays. Usually, SJT is used for evaluating performance on an individual level. In an SJT, a hypothetical situation is presented, and the candidate is asked to rate possible responses or choose one from a list of options. There are two different categories of response options: knowledge-based and behaviour-based. Additional response formats for the SJT include rating, ranking, and multiple choice. These formats are helpful for assessments because different response formats have varying relationships with knowledge, cognitive ability, and other constructs. These relationships depend on the test's specifications as well as the context or stage of the education and training pathway that the SJT is targeting. By using SJT, it offers reliable and valid implicit evaluation. Secondly, SJT have minimal cost impact and are simple to administrate. Thirdly, SJT is a well-liked method for evaluating emotional abilities. As a result, SJT enhances assessment by providing a reliable and economical instrument for gauging non-academic abilities. Besides having numerous advantages, there are still several issues in using the SJT including gender inequalities and measurement difficulty. Therefore, future research may focus on using SJT in assessing individual performance such as leadership. In addition, SJT may also be used to assess how job seekers behave while submitting their applications. When someone applies to enroll in any college to further their education, the SJT can also be utilised to evaluate their expertise.

Keywords: Situational Judgement Test, Response Options, Response Formats, Advantages, Issues.

Introduction

Information can be gathered using a range of tools and techniques, including interviews, observations, rating scales, checklists, and standardized and non-standardized tests (Benson et al., 2019). Besides checklists, other instruments used such as rubrics and questionnaires (Papadakis et al., 2020). However, checklists and other formal assessment methods cannot evaluate if an individual is accurately depicted (Croix & Veen, 2018). Because of this, the

Situational Judgement Test (SJT) is being presented as an alternative for a thorough assessment of a person's actions.

SJT is an additional choice for evaluating performance on an individual level (Heier et al., 2022). SJT is a technique made up of difficult work-related scenarios and many courses of action (Lievens & Motowidlo, 2016; Muck, 2013; Oostrom et al., 2015; Zibarras, et al., 2016). The respondent who completes the SJT selects the best response from a range of alternatives (answer possibilities) offered in situations that can be verbally, visually, or in writing (Christian et al., 2010). SJT offers a trustworthy and affordable tool for measuring non-academic qualities (Knight, et al., 2016; Zibarras, et al., 2016).

It has been determined that the SJT methodology is a useful approach for assessing significant non-academic traits (Zibarras, et al., 2016). SJTs are used to evaluate a person's blend of experience, aptitude, and ability (Lievens et al., 2008; Motowidlo & Beier, 2010). SJTs ask participants to make decisions on the suitability of various answers in light of events that they would probably experience at work (Sackett & Lievens, 2008).

There are two forms of SJTs. SJTs are text or videotaped scenario-based tests that rate the test taker's ability to make decisions that are frequently required in a regular working situation (Smith et al., 2020). Another different type of format is combination, which can be either video with text or video without text (Bardach et al., 2021). Nowadays, video-based SJTs are a common method for research and selection (Frohlich et al., 2017; Juster et al., 2019).

SJTs that use videos may feature live-action performers or animated characters (Bruk-Lee et al., 2016). One benefit of the animated medium is that creators may easily manipulate the facial expression and body language of characters (Bardach et al., 2021). The negative effects of a video-based SJT were much lower than those of a text-based SJT (Chan & Schmitt, 1997).

This indicates a need to understand the SJT's function in evaluating an individual's performance in a situation that is knowledge-based or behaviour-based. For example, SJT may be used to evaluate applicants' behaviour during the application process. The SJT may also be used to assess a candidate's skills when they submit an application to attend any college to pursue their studies. As a result, the discussion in this article will be centred around the:

- SJT's functions, theory, response options, response formats, benefits and issues.

Functions Of SJT

Mumford (2015) explains SJT is a test that presents a hypothetical situation and asks the candidate to rate responses or select one response from a range of possibilities. Low-fidelity simulations known as SJTs are utilised in the hiring process for many different sectors. Applicants are often given the opportunity to reply to an explanation of a hypothetical work-related event by rating several replies based on how probable they are to do so and which are the most appropriate in the given circumstances.

The SJTs are believed to predict workplace behaviour based on concepts of behavioural consistency (Mumford, 2015). Low-fidelity simulations, like the SJT, gauge responses related to procedural knowledge and abilities, which are considered as stepping stones to later, more

productive job behaviour (Motowidlo et al., 2006b). Although an applicant may be aware of the appropriate behaviour and intend to follow it (as demonstrated in an SJT response), they could react differently when forced to carry out the behaviour (Mumford, 2015).

It should be emphasised that a large body of social psychology research supports the notion that behavioural intentions greatly increase the likelihood that those intentions will be fulfilled (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). When evaluating competency rather than what is commonly thought to be intellect, the SJT is a prospective measure that can evaluate domain-independent and significant features of professional behaviour (Mumford, 2015).

These processes increase the veracity of assessment results. This is due to the fact that respondents must select their response based on a real-world event they may encounter. Respondents must thus make a decision based on their own knowledge or behaviour. Furthermore, by providing variation for the exam format, these features enhance the SJT. Researchers have the chance to diversify the SJT's defined objectives by having a selection of test formats.

Theory of SJT

SJTs' usefulness is theoretically supported, with the supposition that in this situation, they serve as a tool for eliciting and assessing 'implicit trait policies' (ITPs) (Motowidlo et al., 2006a). Tiffin et al (2020) explain a collection of implicit beliefs regarding the relationships between personality qualities and behavioural efficiency is what is meant by an ITP. The advocates of this idea give an example that relates to the personality attribute of agreeableness as an illustration.

They contend that more agreeable persons will give answer agreeableness more weight if acts shown in the SJT response alternatives that convey high agreeability are indeed more successful than actions that display low agreeability. Contrarily, less agreeable individuals will tend to view identical replies as being comparatively less successful.

The creation of construct-driven SJTs has been greatly influenced by 'trait-activation theory' (Tett & Burnett, 2003). This blends situationism (Upton, 2009), personality-job fit theory (Chatman, 1989), and trait theory (Allport, 1927). Assuming that people have reasonably stable 'personalities,' Tiffin et al. (2020) claim trait theory emphasises that such predispositions result in fairly consistent strategies of responding to the outside world. Different personality characteristics are primarily defined and measured by this field of psychological study.

Conversely, Tiffin et al (2020) clarify 'situationists' contend that behaviour is mostly influenced by external circumstances as opposed to relatively fixed underlying features. An interactionist approach, which assumes that both qualities and situations have a role in influencing the likelihood of a person behaving in a given manner, has helped to reconcile these seemingly conflicting viewpoints. Depending on the specific conditions seen, one can perceive a dynamic relationship between their respective contributions. In fact, it is simple to see how features can influence behaviour more strongly in some situations than in others.

According to the personality-job fit theory, people who possess specific qualities in combination may be more suited to particular jobs than others (Judge & Zapata, 2015). Therefore, a better match should result in greater job satisfaction and increased productivity at work (Tiffin et al., 2020). Prosocial personality characteristics may significantly explain performance variations in SJTs that reflect interpersonal interactions, according to recent data (Motowidlo et al., 2018).

Response Options of SJT

The relative merits of answer forms based on knowledge-based (what is the best option) versus behavioural tendency-based (what would you be most likely to do) formats have been the subject of research (McDaniel et al., 2007; McDaniel & Nguyen, 2001). Response guidelines for SJTs often fall into one of two categories: knowledge-based (e.g., which choice is the best) or behavioural inclination (i.e. what would you be most likely to do) (Zibarras, et al., 2016).

Different answer formats are connected to knowledge, cognitive capacity, and other dimensions differently, therefore the type of response format utilised relies on the test specification and the context or level in the education and training route that the SJT is addressing (Zibarras, et al., 2016). An argument in favour of a knowledge-based format is that regardless of whether an SJT employs a knowledge-based or behavioural tendency structure, it will still gauge how well candidates understand what the "right" behaviour is in a certain circumstance (i.e. knowing what you should do) (St-Sauveur et al., 2014).

Greater assurance about the test's objectives is provided by knowledge-based response forms (Zibarras, et al., 2016). Compared to SJTs with behavioural tendency instructions, SJTs with knowledge-based instructions had a stronger correlation with cognitive capacity (Whetzel & McDaniel, 2009). McDaniel et al (2007) revealed that knowledge-based answer formats had a greater association with work performance. Therefore, behavioural tendency instructions may be used in an SJT's assessment of personality components (Zibarras, et al., 2016). However, it may be preferable to administer a test with knowledge-based instructions in order to maximise the variation in SJT scores depending on cognitive capacity within an SJT (Whetzel & McDaniel, 2009).

Response Formats of SJT

Different SJT item types may be employed. An individual could, for instance, choose the most or least suitable response to situational judgement scenario or separately rate the importance of a number of distinct elements (Patterson et al. 2019). Another three formats of items on an SJT are: (1) rating, (2) ranking, or (3) multiple choice. These formats are helpful for assessments because different response formats have varying relationships with knowledge, cognitive ability, and other constructs. These relationships depend on the test's specifications as well as the context or stage of the education and training pathway that the SJT is targeting (Zibarras, et al., 2016).

When rating response forms are utilised, particularly in construct-driven SJTs, it is known that people who identify as belonging to particular ethnic groups may exhibit a ‘extreme response style’ (a propensity to select extreme points on a scale) more frequently (Peterson et al., 2014). Tiffin et al (2020) explain the format of the answer might change but frequently entails

rating possible behavioural reactions in ranking of perceived appropriateness or effectiveness. Another method for choice that is frequently used asks candidates to select the "best" and "worst" behaviours seen. An option that is frequently used is a rating-scale answer structure, which includes grading samples of behaviour according to a certain characteristic, such appropriateness.

Within each of these categories, different response formats may be employed, such as ranking potential course of action in ascending or descending order, rating every response option separately, selecting the top three responses from a larger pool of responses (multiple choice), or selecting the best and/or worst response options (Zibarras, et al., 2016). One single response choice is provided as part of the scenario in the single-response SJT format that some researchers have devised (Motowidlo et al., 2009).

Candidates are asked to rate all potential replies in order of appropriateness in the response format, which requires them to make a variety of sophisticated judgments (Zibarras, et al., 2016). SJTs may assess a wide variety of professional qualities by providing many situations in a test (Zibarras, et al., 2016). These scenarios require a candidate to make a complicated set of decisions about how to handle certain difficult interpersonal issues (Zibarras, et al., 2016).

Advantages of SJT

A few benefits of SJT exist. First of all, SJT offers reliable and valid implicit evaluation. Second, SJT have minimal cost impact and are simple to administrate. Thirdly, SJT is a well-liked method for evaluating emotional abilities. SJT provides a more circumstantial and implicit assessment of the replies that respondents believe to be suitable (Motowidlo et al., 2006a; Motowidlo & Beier, 2010). Hooper et al. (2006) concluded that SJT faking effects are less significant than those shown in personality self-report measures, even if SJTs are still susceptible to fake. Previous research using these text-based SJTs showed good evidence of concurrent validity with other non-cognitive assessment methods and excellent levels of reliability (Klassen et al., 2017, 2020).

SJTs are excellent for measuring non-academic skills since they are easy to administer and reasonably priced on a large scale (Zibarras, et al., 2016). In contrast to trying to measure cognitive capacity, where there has historically been a significant lot of experience and the features under assessment are well defined, evaluating non-academic personal qualities is definitely more difficult (Tiffin et al., 2020). High stakes exams, such as SJTs, may be anticipated to more accurately represent maximum performance than average performance and it is difficult to develop metrics that accurately reflect typical performance in high-stakes circumstances (Webster et al., 2020).

SJTs are a valid and reliable method for assessing students' emotional domain competencies, such as leadership and professionalism (Goss et al., 2017; Zibarras, et al., 2016). SJTs have been used in personnel selection for many years, but after being rebranded as low-fidelity simulations, their popularity soared (Lievens et al., 2008; Motowidlo et al., 1990)

Issues in SJT

a) **Gender Differences**

No study has compared gender disparities in the results of different SJT formats, however earlier research on video-based SJTs has indicated a scoring pattern that favours female test-takers (Juster et al., 2019; Lievens, 2013). Video formats could make SJT performance more unequal between male and female (Bardach et al., 2021). SJT scores favoured females when they were associated with the personality qualities of conscientiousness and agreeableness, which are gender-specific distinctions (Whetzel et al., 2008). As for example, the text-based SJTs created for the selection of future teachers exhibit moderate gender disparities favouring females (Klassen et al., 2020).

Gender socialization theories by Eagly (1987) that suggest communication disparities based on unequal gender socialization suggest that female do better than male in identifying basic facial expressions (Kret & de Gelder, 2012). The SJT performance differences between male and female respondents may widen as a result of the interpersonal cues provided by video formats over text forms (such as the capacity to understand facial expressions and body language) (Wingenbach et al., 2018).

b) Measurement

The SJT approach has not been employed in any studies as a formative assessment as a component of an educational intervention for student populations (Patterson et al., 2019). There is a dearth of knowledge on how the predictive validity of SJTs may change depending on the circumstance (Webster et al., 2020).

The topic of "internal consistency," also known as reliability, of SJT items frequently leads to misunderstanding in the literature and calls for discussion. The internal structure of a test is often validated using traditional reliability criteria, such as Cronbach's alpha (Sijtsma, 2009). Tiffin et al (2020) explain any deviation from the test results' unidimensionality will definitely have an effect on these reliability indicators.

Lower reliability scores would indicate more qualities are tapped into by classic selection SJTs. One meta-analysis reported a pooled alpha coefficient value of about 0.46 of conventional SJTs (Catano et al., 2012). However, the majority of high-stakes tests that only measure one 0.7 or higher values would be predicted for the build (Tiffin et al., 2020).

Conclusion

One of the evaluation instruments that is more used nowadays is the SJT. This paper will discuss SJT features, including both its benefits and drawbacks. SJT is a useful tool for assessing an individual's performance in terms of knowledge or behaviour overall. In addition, it offers additional response options than the checklist and likert scale, such as rating, ranking, or multiple choice. There are some problems with SJT, though, which require more thought. Evidently, gender inequalities and measurement are two concerns with SJT that have been discovered in this work. The third potential difficulty is expert consensus, which may be connected to SJT development. Therefore, it will be helpful if researchers can modify SJT development models anywhere in the globe for future research. It will be more exciting if further SJT development models are discovered in a range of situations and areas. Other scholars who are interested in creating SJT for other purposes will find this to be a useful

guide. For instance, creating SJT to evaluate new personnel in the military and medical fields. SJT can also be used as a technique for evaluating whether students are qualified to enroll in particular courses, such teacher training. The other researchers will select the most appropriate model and modify it in accordance with their own findings. In conclusion, this paper will provide a clear image of SJT for researchers interested in utilizing it as an assessment tool, allowing them to foresee any problems with their study.

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