Chapter 04 - Assessing individual differences

Answers to end of chapter questions

1. Why are Assessment Centres less effective than might be expected, given the resources usually invested in them by organizations?

First, in assessing interactive exercises the processes of 'person perception' come into play. Second, is there is what is known as the exercise effect.

2. What is adverse impact? To what extent can it be reduced in assessment procedures?

Adverse impact is the extent to which an assessment methodology produces different mean score or success rates for different groups (social, ethnic, gender, religious). This is often expressed by the proportion of a standard deviation that the minority group’s mean score is different to the mean score of the majority group. Psychometric tests are usually seen as the major source of adverse impact in an assessment process. However, adverse impact has also been demonstrated in other assessment techniques such as the interview and Assessment Centres. Adverse impact can be reduced by making assessment processes more open, participative, transparently fair, and relevant.

3. What are the key ways of evaluating selection processes?

Through their reliability and validity. Reliability represents the accuracy of an assessment methodology and is normally expressed as a correlation coefficient ranging from 1 to 0. Validity represents the relevance of an assessment methodology. Although the concept is normally encountered in the context of psychometric tests it can be applied to evaluate any assessment methodology.

4. What concepts are at the heart of the complaints by the Chief Constable about the assessment centre for Sergeants and Inspectors in the police force?

Validity

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of role-play as an assessment technique?

The advantages of role play are that competencies can be assessed in real life situations; however, in the case of individuals that have worked in the environment which is being simulated, there may be some cynicism and rejection.
6. **Why does structuring interviews improve their criterion validity?**

Because a consistent number of competencies is being tested that have been pre-designed.

7. **What problems are associated with the use of personality tests in selection?**

Personality varies with context and environment, and you can’t always predict a work environment exactly.

8. **What functions other than selection and development does assessment serve nowadays?**

Assessment of individual differences is also likely to occur not just at ‘point of entry’ but will serve a number of other organizational and individual functions.