

Mobile Assessment in Recruitment: Key Concerns from practitioners and academics...

Introduction

Technology solutions are becoming more popular across the talent lifecycle, especially in the space of assessment and development. Online solutions, such as e-learning and the digital delivery of psychometrics, have gained momentum in the last decade. The next trend on the horizon is mobile assessment.

The psychological industry must carefully examine this relatively new delivery mechanism to ensure that a mobile device can serve as a problem for scientifically rigorous measures that incorporate key psychological principals outlined in published guidelines such as those previously established by the BPS.

Key Considerations

From formal and informal research, a few key considerations have arisen from the psychological community which can be categorised in the three themes discussed below.

1. Core principles of psychological assessments: validity and reliability

To ensure basic validity and reliability on a mobile platform, new tests can be designed specifically for delivery on a mobile device, or existing tests can be 'retrofitted' into a mobile-enabled format. A methodological benchmarking exercise can determine if a difference exists between administering a test online versus on a mobile device. Despite research showing no significant difference between mobile and non-mobile unproctored assessment (Illingworth et al., 2015), it is important to consider the item description and response scale. For example, if a numerical reasoning test requires interpretation of a large graph or table, it may be difficult to change the dimensions for the image to fit on a smaller screen. In this case, a new item may need to be developed, but it simply depends on the item type. In any event, validity and reliability are concerns for all psychological assessment, regardless of the delivery mechanism.

2. Controlling for the environment on a mobile device

Test-takers may be in virtually any setting when taking a mobile assessment, thus raising the risk of interruption from the constant feed of notifications on mobile devices. In this case, a native app may be more beneficial than a web-enabled mobile device, because it removes the reliance on internet connection by downloading data onto a server (Jobe, 2013) and therefore would prevent interruptions. This would be important to maintain the integrity of the assessment and would also address any potential connectivity issues with respect to internet speed and strength.

3. Accessibility and administration

Naturally, some people may feel less comfortable – or even special – taking an assessment on a mobile device, because it may feel less ‘serious’ or because of a lack of proficiency with the technology. Conversely, the technology allows for increased accessibility to an underrepresented population, and especially to younger generations accustomed to technology, both significant target areas for recruitment.

In conclusion, there are a number of concerns to address before using new technology to deliver assessments. If we recall the transition from paper to pencil to online, similar considerations were raised just over a decade ago when the transition was made to online testing.

New methods invariably offer benefits and limitations and the most important action to take it one of the critical analysis, especially since many other technologies are boasting new methods of assessment. Is it the best way forward? Plenty of questions remain as the assessment industry continues to develop its technology solutions.

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