Performance Variation in Assessment Center Methods

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No matter the method of delivery, whether face-to-face or virtual, performance variation in assessment center simulations happens. This study presents how variation in AC ratings has been regarded among AC scholars and practitioners, which limits our ability to develop a deep understanding of individual performance that could benefit participants, organizations, scholars, and coaches.

AC results of 2,968 participants were reviewed to derive a purposive sample of co-researchers to explain performance variation. Each co-researcher had an empirical performance increase (≥95%) or decrease (≤5%) indicated by the simulation vector (simvec), a statistic devised by the author that indicates magnitude and direction of simulation performance and that complements the overall assessment rating (OAR).

This study answers the call for a creative and more person–centric direction in I-O psychology research to advance understanding of individual AC performance variation in non-Western cultures. The explanatory sequential mixed method design used in this study addresses the criticism that most research in I-O psychology has been descriptive, not explanatory. The author further responds to the charge that ACs are a-theoretical by explicating empirical incidences of performance variation from the perspective of andragogy with theories such as reflective learning, whole person studies, discriminative facility, interactionism, and self-theories.

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Patrick J. Smith, Ph.D., PCC, is a leadership and talent consultant. He has been the lead assessor for over 500 participants in face-to-face and web-based assessment centers in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In addition, he has been a role-player and rated as many business simulations. He is a Professional Certified Coach with over 1,500 hours of logged coaching time, and has professional qualification in abilities and personality testing. He lives in Stockholm, Sweden.

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