

Transparency of Assessment Centres: Lower Criterion-Related Validity but Greater Opportunity to Perform?

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Two observations and one question

2

Observation 1: Assessment centre validity **decreases** over time

- AT & T Study 1966 (Bray, & Grant) **$r = .46$**

- Metaanalyses 1987 (Thornton et al.,) $\rho = .37$
 2007 (Hermelin, Lievens et al.) $\rho = .28$
 2007 (Hardison & Sackett) **$\rho = .26$**

Observation 2: Assessment centre transparency **increases** over time

- Transparency 1997 (Spsychalski, Quinones et al.) **23%**
 2009 (Thornton & Krause) **43%**



Question: Do people behave in assessment centres the same as they behave on the job?

3

Non-transparent assessment centres

- Do people adapt their behaviour in assessment centres?
- How do they adapt their behaviour?
- What are the consequences for validity?

Transparent vs. non-transparent assessment centres

- If targeted dimension are disclosed, do people behave differently?
- What are the consequences for validity?
- Do the candidates have a greater opportunity to perform well?

Typical Performance Conditions

4

Employees...

1. are often unaware that their performance might be observed and evaluated
2. are not instructed to perform at their best
3. are observed on their mean performance during an extended period of time

Maximum Performance Conditions

5

Candidates in assessment centres...

1. are aware that their performance is observed and evaluated
2. are instructed to perform their best
3. are observed on their mean performance during a short period of time

Typical vs. Maximum Performance

6

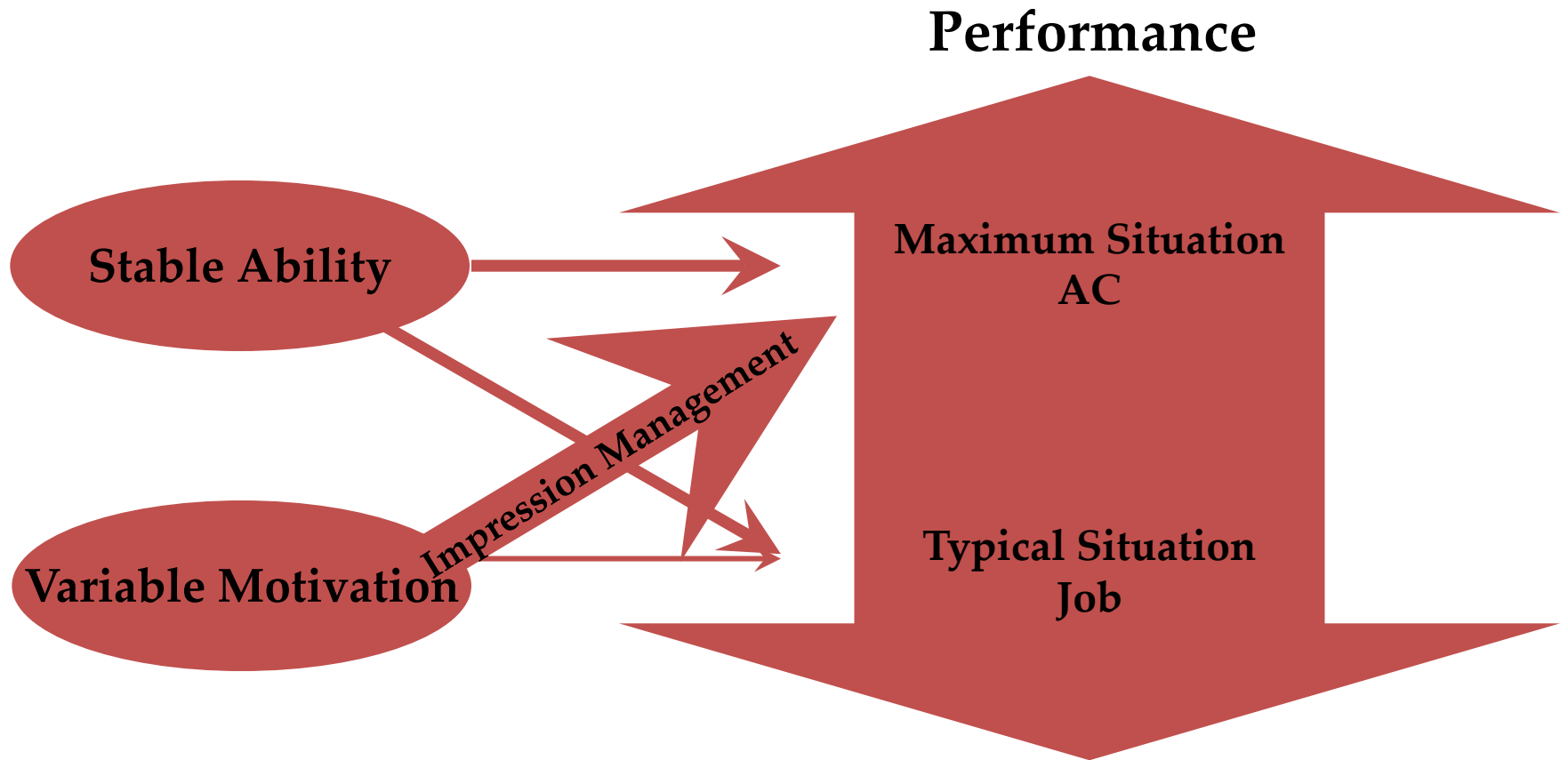
Individuals will show

1. a typical performance on the job
2. a maximum performance in assessment centres

Predictors of performance

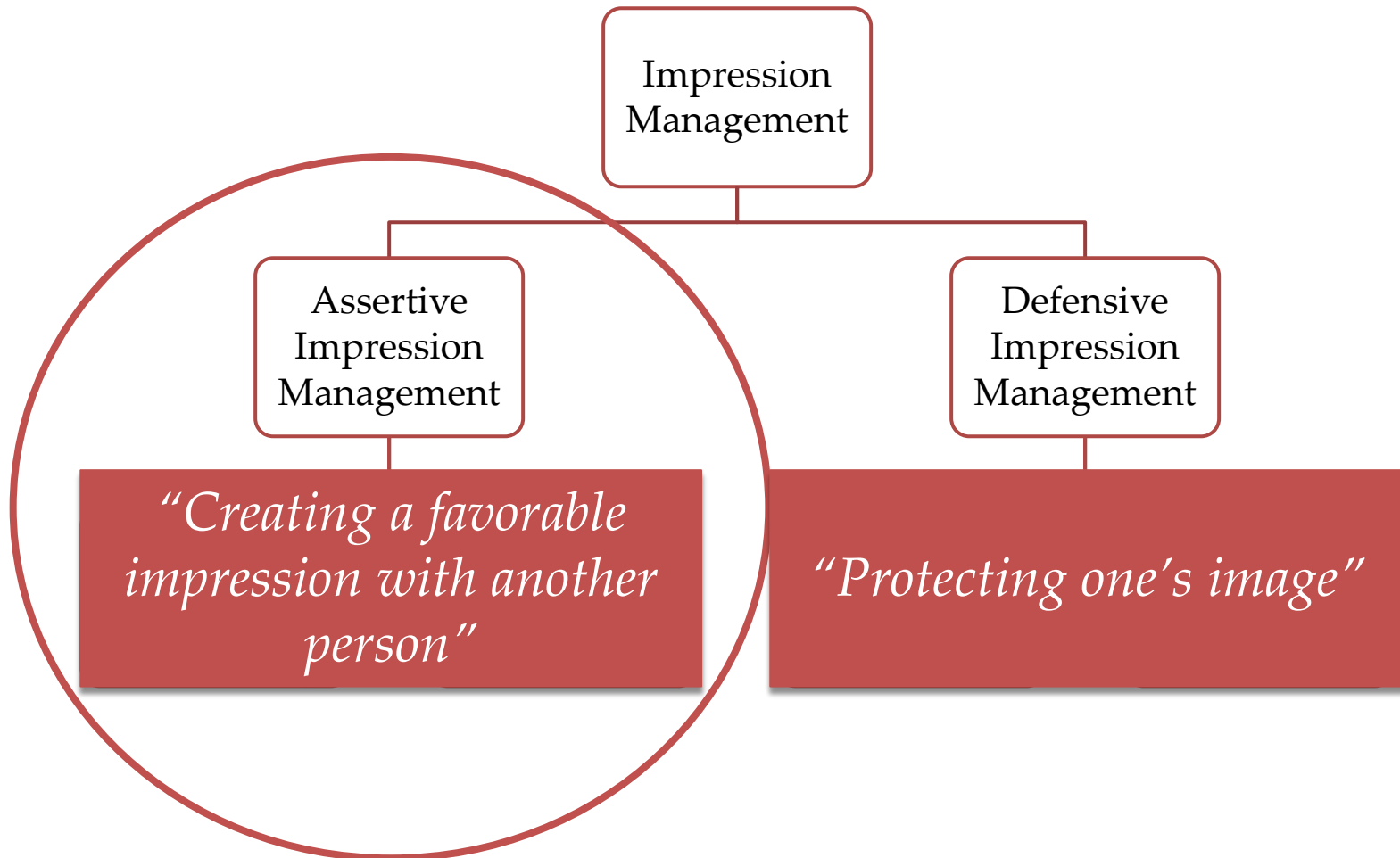
(Klehe & Anderson, JAP 2004)

7



Impression Management

8





Impression Management Behaviour

9

When applying for the job

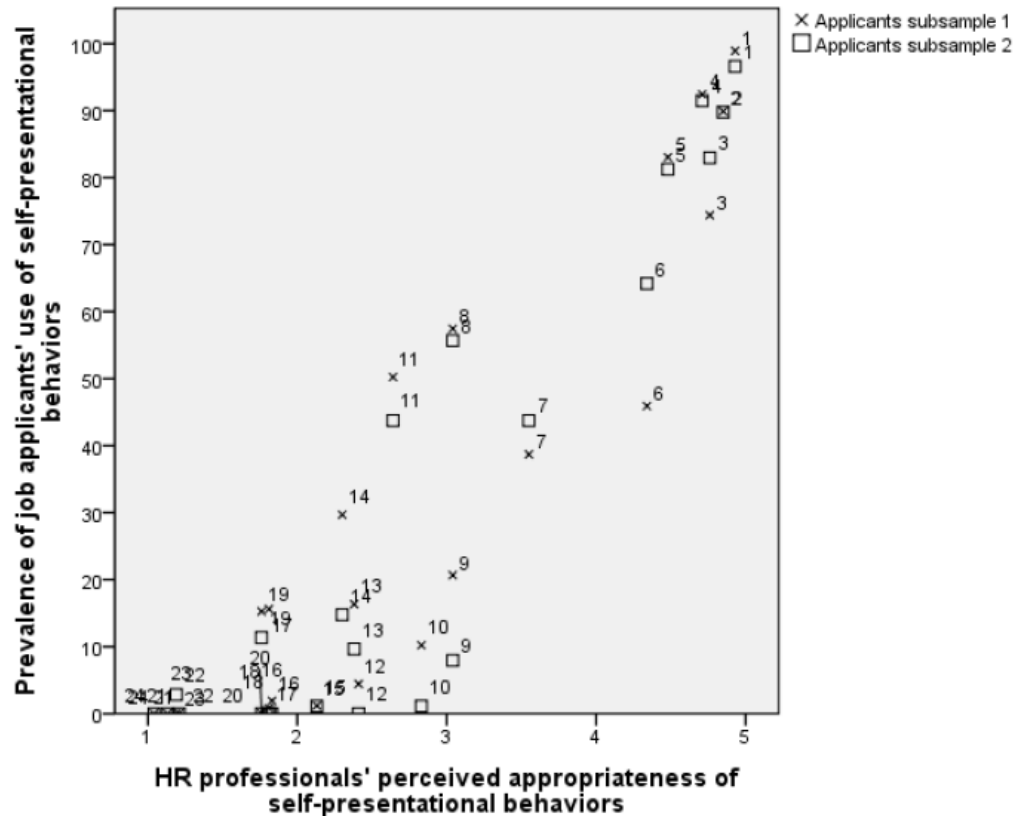
- ...I indicated my interest in the position and company (item 1)
- ...I indicated my enthusiasm for working for this organization (item 4)
- ...I praised the organization (item 7)
- ...I exaggerated my skill to my benefit (item 17)
- ...I handed in faked certificates or documents (item 24)

Expected and exhibited Impression Management

Jansen, A., König, C. J., Stadelmann, E. H., & Kleinmann, M. (2012, JPP)

10

Figure 1. Relationship between frequency of applicants' use of self-presentational behaviors and recruiters' perceived appropriateness of these behaviors.



Impression Management in Personnel Selection

11

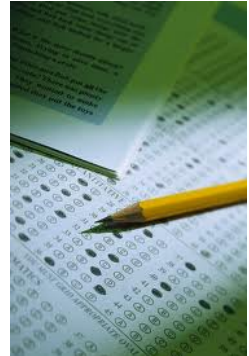
Personality inventories

Higher values (Birkeland et al., 2006)

Ideal employee factor (Schmit & Ryan, 1993)

Interviews

“Levashina and Campion (2007) reported that the probability of a successful interview outcome rose from 31 to 77% when extensive image creation was utilized.” (Huffcutt et al. 2011)



Assessment Centres

Contradicting results (MC Farland et al., 2005)

On the job

Influence tactics e.g. “ingratiation” (Higgins et al. 2003)

Consequences of Impression Management for Criterion Validity

12

Personnel selection

Accurate Test Scores → Impression Management → Faking

On the job

Accurate Test Scores → Impression Management → Faking

Differences in motivation!

How do people behave in assessment centres?

Study 1: Do people behave differently in ACs compared to daily job situations?

Study 2: Do people behave differently in transparent ACs compared to nontransparent?

Impression Management in ACs

(Klehe, Kleinmann et al., 2014, HP)

14

Behaviour is activated by a situation's trait-relevant cues

- Assessment Centre:
offers cues for IM
- Comparable, non-
evaluative daily situation:
offers fewer cues for IM



Hypothesis 1



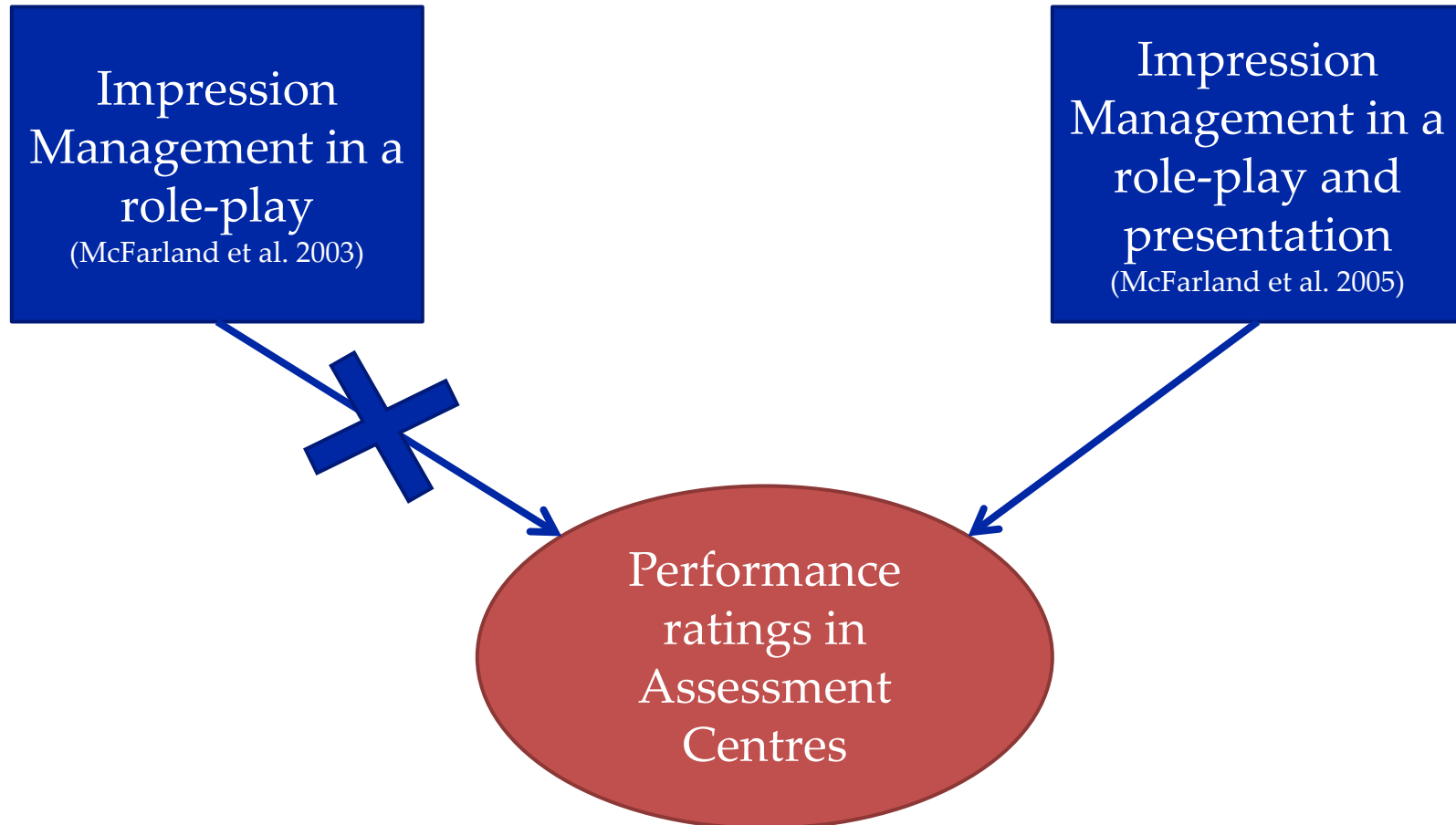
Candidates show more

- (a) ingratiation and
- (b) self-promotion behaviours

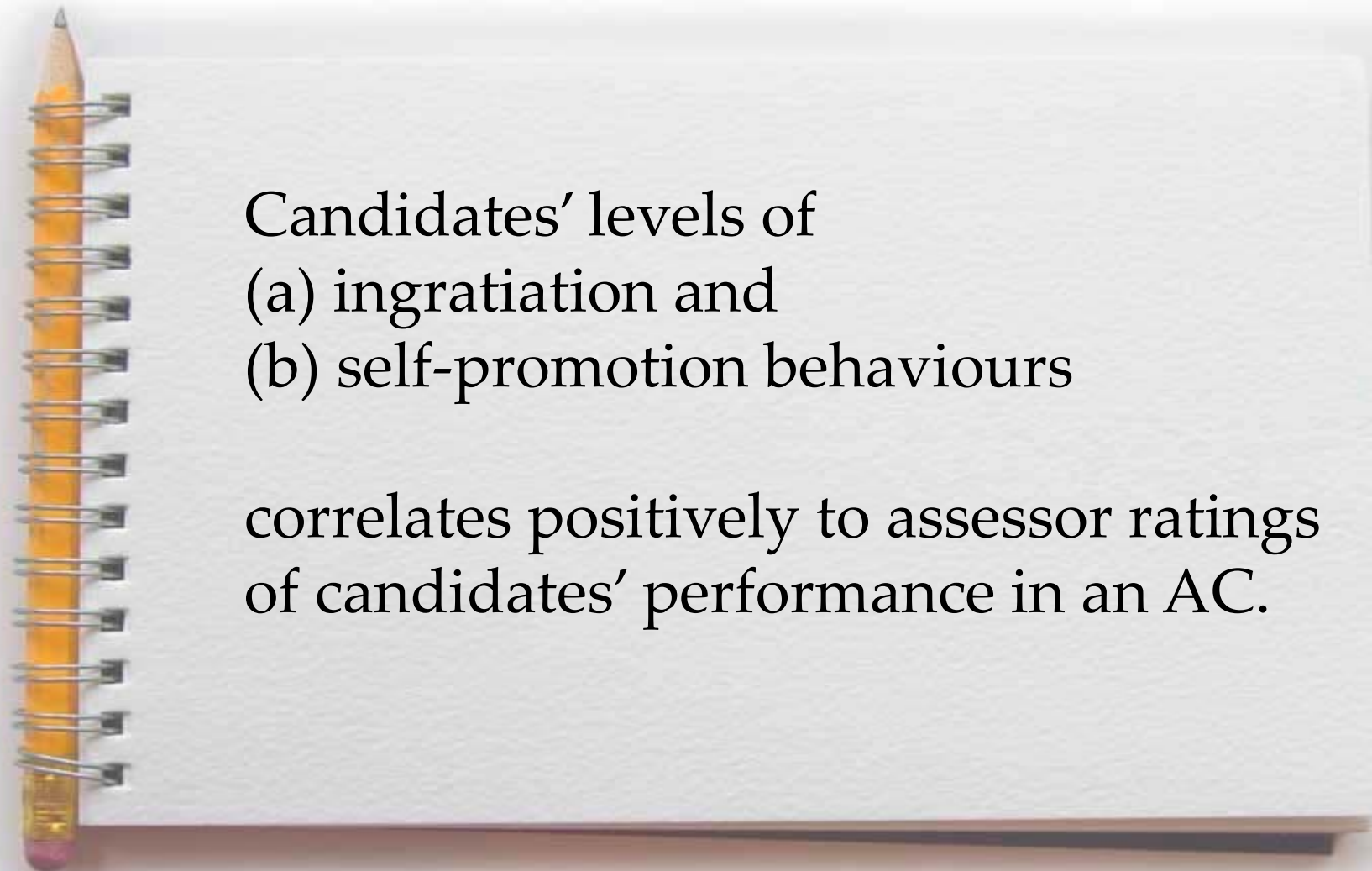
during an AC than during otherwise comparable but non-evaluative situations.

Impression Management in ACs

16



Hypothesis 2



Candidates' levels of
(a) ingratiation and
(b) self-promotion behaviours

correlates positively to assessor ratings
of candidates' performance in an AC.

Impression Management as a Trait

18

Usual concerns:

- IM biases performance appraisal
- Threatens accuracy of hiring decisions

Possible alternative:

- IM as meaningful interindividual disposition
- Behavioural pattern, that is also relevant for job



Hypothesis 3

A spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and a yellow pencil with a pink eraser, positioned vertically on the left side of the notebook. The text is written on the notebook's page.

Candidates' assertive IM
behaviours during an AC
show internal construct-related validity.

Setting

20

- AC training program for prospective university graduates



2 Group-discussions
1 Role-play



1 Group-discussion
1 Role-play

Procedure

21

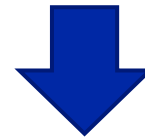
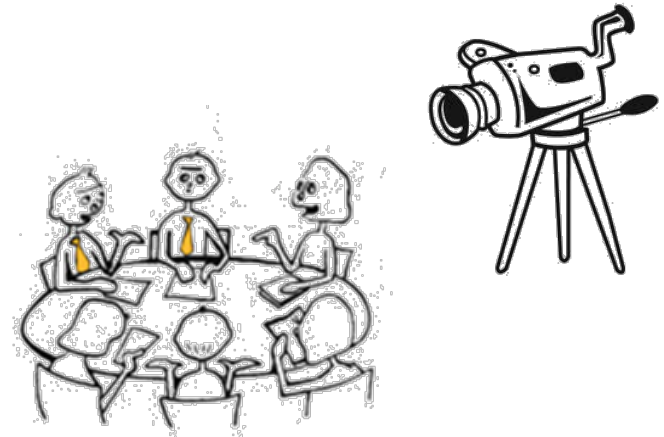


Two trained observers rate IM behaviours:

- Self-promotion
- Ingratiation

Two trained observers rate performance

- Leadership
- Cooperation
- Planning



Two trained observers rate IM behaviours:

- Self-promotion
- Ingratiation

Two trained observers rate performance

- Leadership
- Cooperation
- Planning

Hypothesis 1

Candidates show more assertive IM

a: ingratiation ✓ (3.55 vs. 2.72; $t = 11.42^{**}$)

b: self-promotion ✓ (3.47 vs. 2.99; $t = 7.24^{**}$)

during AC than during otherwise comparable but non-evaluative situations.

Hypothesis 2

Ingratiation ✓ ($r = .61^{**}$)
and self-promotion ✓ ($r = .27^{**}$)
correlate positively with assessor's overall
performance ratings in the AC.

Self-promotion especially with leadership.

✓ $r = .69^{**}$ vs. $.27^{**}$ ($t = 5.19^{**}$) vs. $.50^{**}$ ($t = 3.68^{**}$)

Ingratiation especially with cooperation.

✓ $r = .37^{**}$ vs. $.12$ ($t = 2.39^{**}$) vs. $.12$ ($t = 2.94^{**}$)

Hypothesis 3

Candidates' IM behaviors during AC show internal construct-related validity.

✓ IM: $r_{\text{MTHM}} = .50$ vs. $r_{\text{HTMM}} = .39$

vs. Performance: $r_{\text{MTHM}} = .43$ vs. $r_{\text{HTMM}} = .48$

How do people behave in ACs?

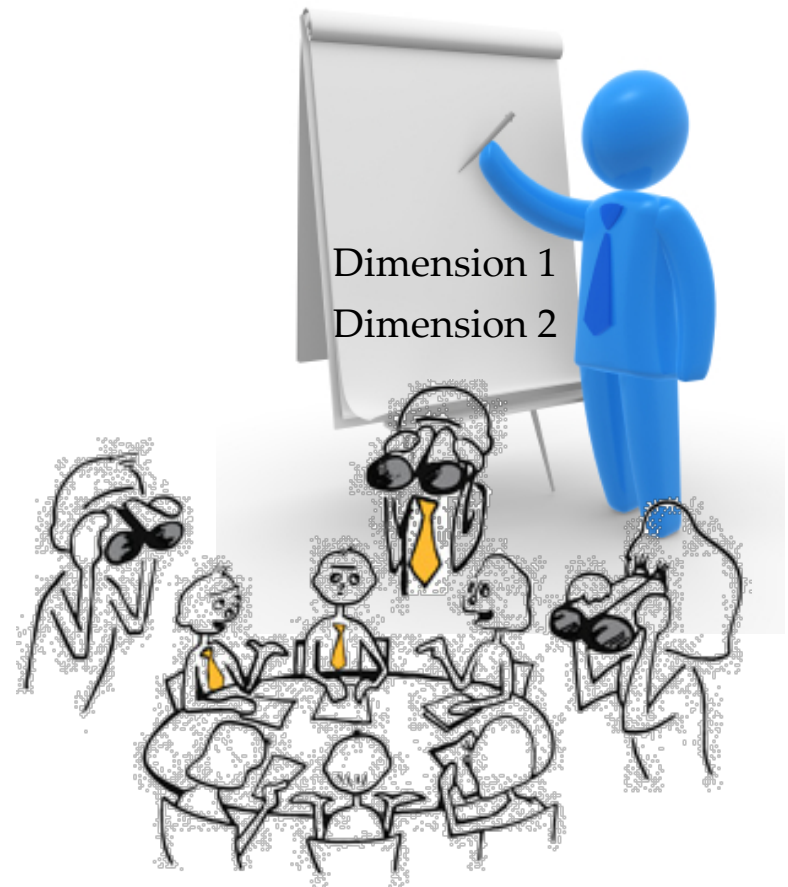
25

Study 1: Do people behave differently in ACs compared to daily job situations?

Study 2: Do people behave differently in transparent ACs compared to nontransparent?

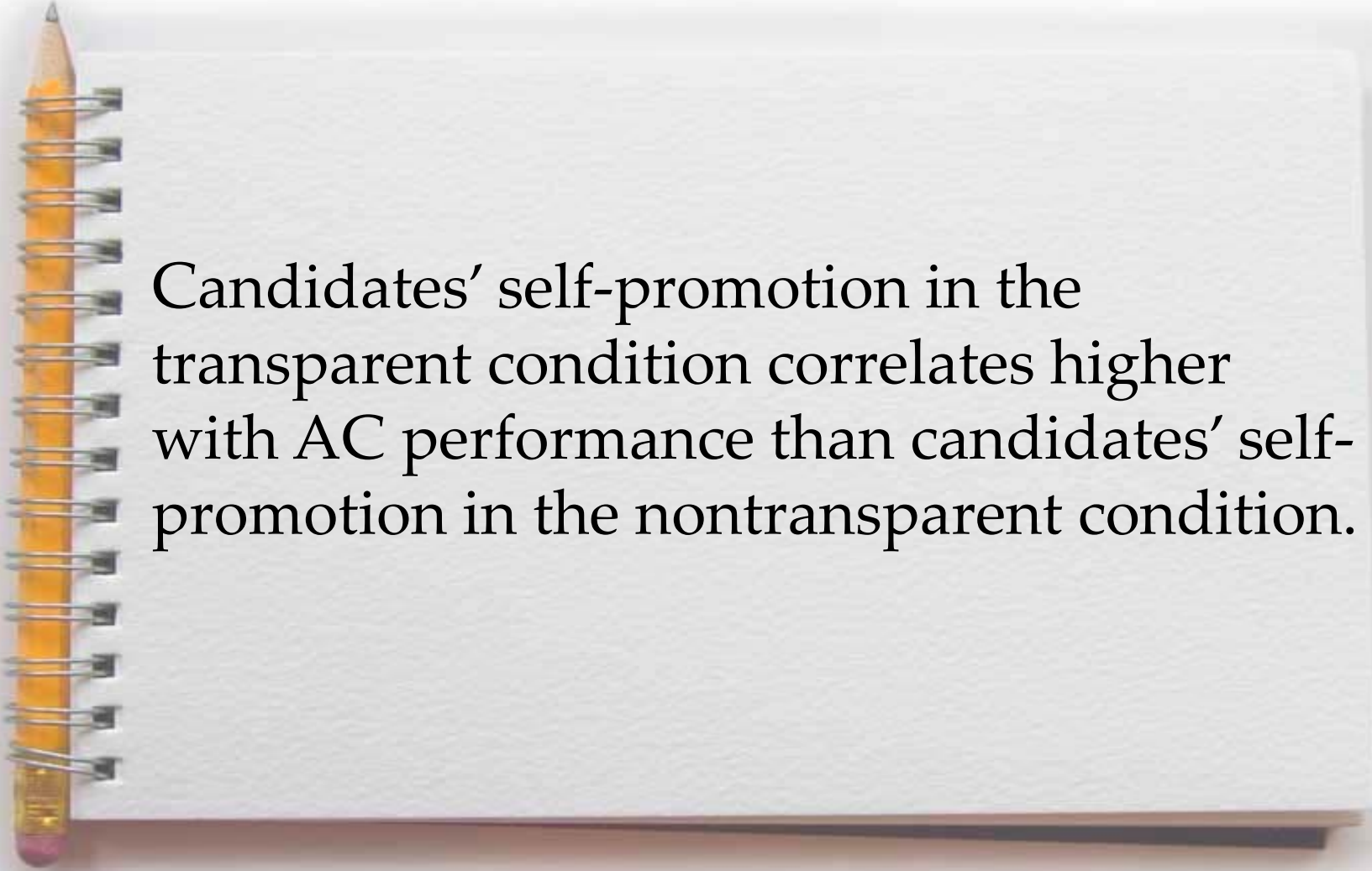
Transparency of Assessment Centres

26



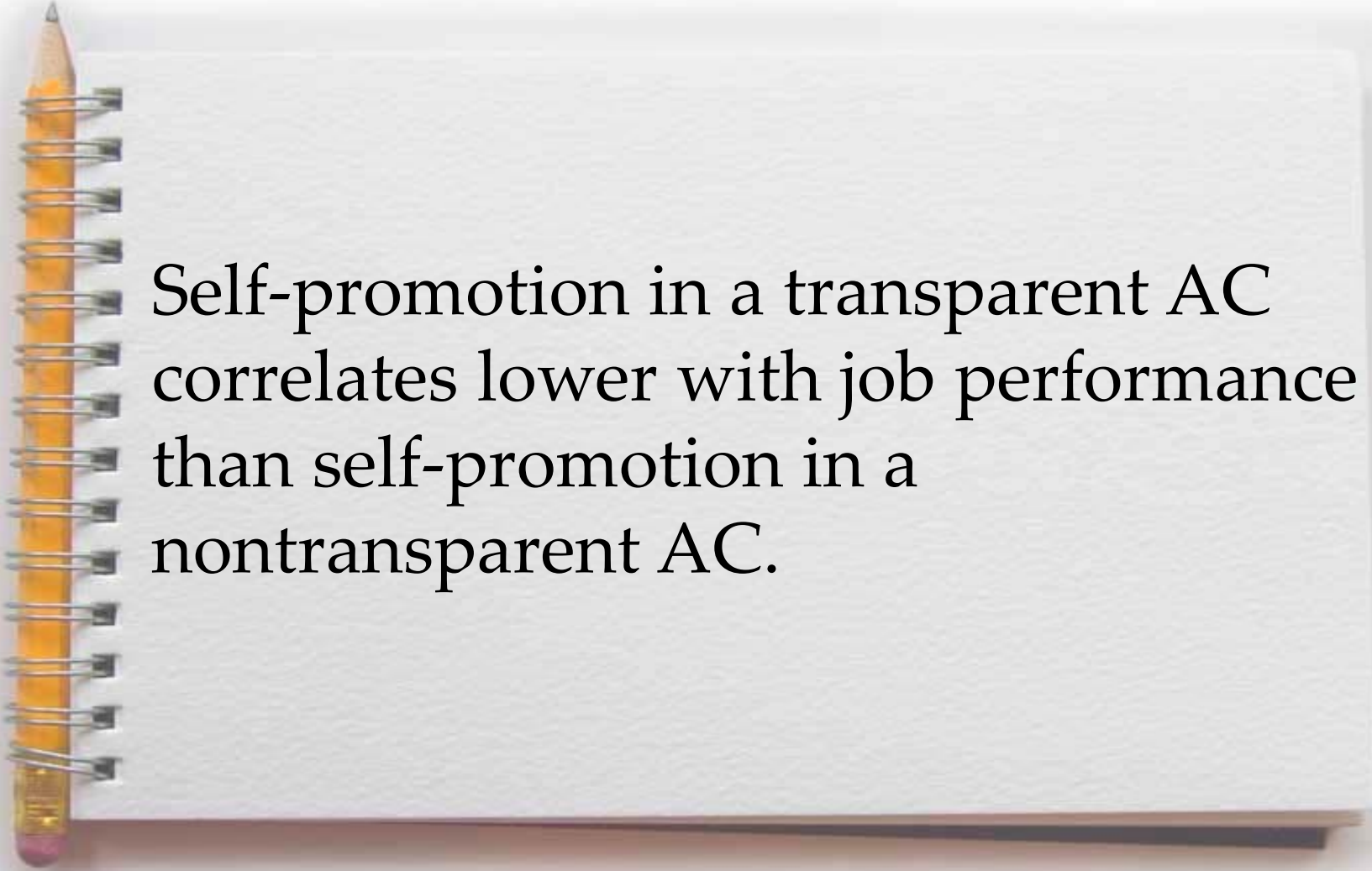


Hypothesis 1

A spiral-bound notebook with a yellow pencil resting on it. The text is written on the notebook page.

Candidates' self-promotion in the transparent condition correlates higher with AC performance than candidates' self-promotion in the nontransparent condition.

Hypothesis 2

A spiral-bound notebook with a yellow pencil resting on the left side. The notebook is open to a blank page with the text of Hypothesis 2 written on it.

Self-promotion in a transparent AC
correlates lower with job performance
than self-promotion in a
nontransparent AC.



Hypothesis 3

A photograph of a spiral-bound notebook with a white cover and a yellow pencil resting on the left side. The notebook is open to a blank page, and the text is written on this page.

Transparent ACs are less criterion
valid than nontransparent ACs.



Hypothesis 4

The perceived *opportunity to perform* is higher in a transparent AC than in a nontransparent AC.

Procedure

31



nontransparent AC



job performance

Self-rated (honest)

- Self-promotion
- Opportunity to perform

Observers assessed
AC performance

Supervisors assessed
job performance

Procedure

32



transparent AC



job performance

Self-rated (honest)

- Self-promotion
- Opportunity to perform

Observers assessed
AC performance

Supervisors assessed
job performance

Hypothesis 1

Candidates' self-promotion in the transparent condition correlates higher with AC performance than candidates' self-promotion in the nontransparent condition.

AC transparent $r = .26$

AC nontransparent $r = -.01$

✓ ($Z = 1.90^*$, $p < 0.05$)

Hypothesis 2

Self-promotion in a transparent AC correlates lower with job performance than self-promotion in a nontransparent AC.

AC transparent $r = -.20$

AC nontransparent $r = .17$

✓ ($Z = 2.46^{**}$, $p < 0.01$)

Hypothesis 3

Transparent ACs are less criterion valid than nontransparent ACs.

	Transparent	Nontransparent
Analytical skills	.04	.29**
Organizing & planning	.06	.18 ⁺
Consideration of others	.09	.14
Persuasion	-.01	.18 ⁺
Presentation skills	.15	.18 ⁺
Mean validity	.09	.20*

✓ $t(8) = 3.84^{**}, p < 0.01$

Hypothesis 4

The perceived *opportunity to perform* is higher in a transparent AC than in a nontransparent AC.

AC transparent M = 3.30

AC nontransparent M = 3.26

$t(192) = 1.02, n.s.$

Conclusions

37

- Do people behave in assessment centres the same as they behave on the job?

Non-transparent assessment centres

- Do people adapt their behaviour in assessment centres? Yes
- How do they adapt their behaviour? More IM
- What are the consequences for construct-validity ? Reliable IM

Transparent vs. non-transparent assessment centres

- If targeted dimension are disclosed, do people behave differently? Yes
- **What are the consequences for validity?** **Significant difference**
- Do the candidates have a greater opportunity to perform well? No

Conclusions

38

1. The validity of assessments centres seems to decrease over time
 - AT & T Study 1966 (Bray, & Grant) $r = .46$
 - Metaanalyses 1987 (Thornton et al.,) $\rho = .37$
 2007 (Hermelin, Lievens et al.) $\rho = .28$
 2007 (Hardison & Sackett) $\rho = .26$
2. The transparency of assessment centres seems to increase over time
 - Transparency 1997 (Spsychalski, Quinones et al.) 23%
 2009 (Thornton & Krause) 43%

Conclusions

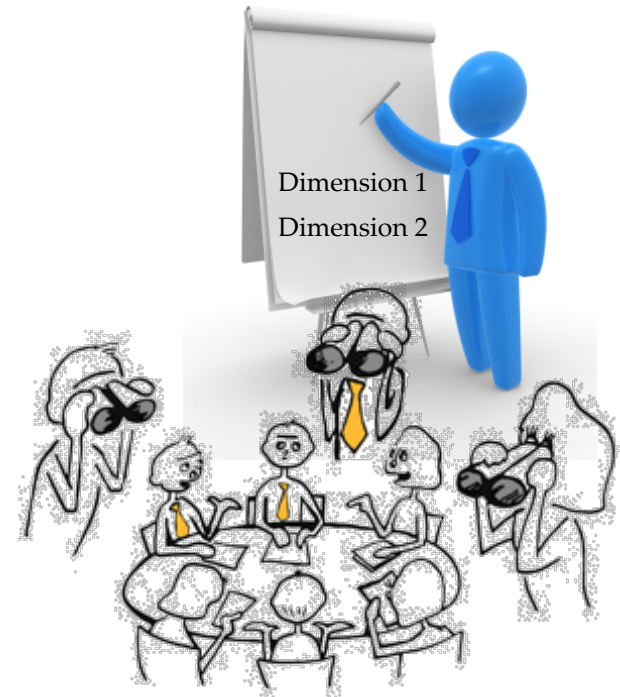
39

Nontransparent AC



More natural behaviour

Transparent AC



More artificial behaviour

Recommendations

40

- Nontransparent ACs lead to more *natural behaviour*.
- Nontransparent ACs seem to be *more valid*.
- The perceived *opportunity to perform* is not higher in a transparent AC than in a nontransparent AC.
- **Use for *personnel selection* nontransparent ACs.**