

THE STRUCTURED BEHAVIOURAL INTERVIEW AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN SPANISH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES AND FAIRNESS REACTIONS

Jesús F. Salgado*, Mikel Gorriti** and Silvia Moscoso*

*University of Santiago de Compostela

**Autonomous Government of the Basque Country

This paper reports on the results of two studies on the use of a structured behavioural interview (SBI) in panel format for promoting managers in the Public Administration of the Basque Country (Spain). The first study presents the psychometric properties (inter-rater reliability and criterion validity) of the SBI. The second study shows the fairness reactions of applicants, interviewers and supervisors to the use of the SBI. The results support the use of this assessment tool for personnel decision-making in public administration

Este artículo informa sobre los resultados de dos estudios en los que se ha utilizado una entrevista conductual estructurada (ECE) de panel para la promoción de jefes de unidades en la Administración Pública española. El primer estudio presenta las propiedades psicométricas (fiabilidad entre evaluadores y validez de criterio) de la ECE. El segundo estudio muestra las reacciones de los solicitantes, los entrevistadores y los miembros del panel al uso de la entrevista. Los resultados apoyan el uso de esta herramienta de decisión para la toma de decisiones en la Administración Pública.

The interview has rarely been used in selection processes for the Spanish public administration. This is in clear contrast to the situation in industry and other types of organization both in Spain and in other countries, where interviews are widely employed. Recent surveys on the use of personnel selection instruments have shown that the interview is the instrument most commonly used for recruiting personnel in all organizations and in all countries. For example, Ryan et al. (1999) found that the interview is the most widely used method across all countries (see Salgado, Viswesvaran & Ones, 2001). The scarce use of this instrument in public administration in Spain is related to the negative view of the interview on the part of recruiters, of unions and of civil servants themselves. Among the reasons mentioned are the subjective nature of the interview, its low reliability and validity, its low level of acceptance by senior staff and candidates, and the possibility of its being used for recruiting candidates pre-determined for the job.

This negative view of the interview in public administration in general appears to be based on the

classic reviews on the validity of the interview, from that of Wagner (1947) to that of Hunter and Hunter (1984), and contrasts with the results of various meta-analyses from the last 12 years with regard to its reliability and validity, which conclude that structured interviews are among the best predictors of job performance, and that their validity can be generalized to different jobs, criteria and organizations (Salgado, 1999; Salgado, Viswesvaran & Ones, 2001; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). However, although human resources managers tend to talk about the interview in general, there are different types of interview. Salgado and Moscoso (2002) suggest that interviews can be classified with regard to the content and degree of structure, the structured behavioural interview being the best option among the different formats of personnel selection interview.

According to Salgado and Moscoso (2001, 2002), the Structured Behavioural Interview (SBI) can be defined as a set of interviews characterized by the following common features: (1) the interview questions are based on a job analysis and on the critical incident technique as the most widely used method, (2) job analysis also serves for identifying the main dimensions to be measured in the interview, (3) each candidate is asked all the questions drawn up according to point 1, (4) the same interview process is repeated with all the candidates; (5) in the majority of cases, candidates' responses are assessed using behavioural anchoring rating scale, (6) the interviewer is trained in this

The original Spanish version of this paper has been previously published in *Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones*, 2007, Vol. 23, No 1, 39-55

.....
Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jesús F. Salgado. Departamento de Psicología Social, Básica y Metodología. Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. Campus Universitario Sur. 15782 Santiago de Compostela. Spain.
E-mail: jesus.salgado@usc.es

technique, (7) the decision to hire is taken after all the candidates have been interviewed. These features guarantee that all the candidates have the same interview experience. The most well known behavioural interview models are the situational interview (Latham, 1989), the behaviour description interview (Janz, 1982), the multimodal interview (Schuler, 1989; Schuler & Funke, 1989) and the structured behavioural interview (Motowidlo, Carter, Dunnette, Tippins, Werner, Burnett & Vaughan, 1992; Salgado & Moscoso, 2001).

As regards the reliability of the SBI, a first examination by Salgado and Moscoso (1995) found an average reliability of .75 in 20 studies that used the SBI. McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt and Maurer (1994) also looked at the reliability of the interview, though in this case it was not exactly the SBI, but rather job-related interviews, including SBIs and others based on job analysis. McDaniel et al. (1994) found an average reliability of .84. A third meta-analysis of reliability was carried out by Conway, Jako and Goodman (1995). These researchers found an average reliability of .70. More recently, Salgado, Moscoso and Gorriti (2004) found a reliability of .83 in a group of 20 structured behavioural interviews. Structured behavioural interviews are sometimes used in panel format. Two meta-analyses have studied the reliability of the SBI in panel format. Conway and cols. (1995) found an inter-rater reliability of .92, and Salgado et al. (2004) found the same figure. On the basis of these meta-analytic results, it could be concluded that the SBI is a reliable procedure for personal selection, with reliability levels similar to those of the best selection instruments (e.g., cognitive ability tests or personality inventories). This is in clear contrast to the conclusions of classic reviews and to the results of recent meta-analyses on the reliability of non-structured and conventional interviews, which have shown coefficients of between .30 and .40.

As far as the validity of the SBI is concerned, in the first meta-analysis specifically carried out to determine the criterion validity of the SBI, Salgado and Moscoso (1995) obtained an observed validity of .28 for predicting performance. When this value was corrected for criterion unreliability ($r_{yy} = .52$) and for range restriction in the interview ($u = .61$), the resulting operational validity was .61 (see Salgado & Moscoso, 2005). In their meta-analysis, McDaniel et al. (1994) obtained an observed validity of .27 for situational interviews. After correction of these values for criterion reliability and for range restriction, the operational

validity is practically the same as that obtained by Salgado and Moscoso (1995; 2005). For their part, Huffcutt and Arthur, (1994) found that for structured interviews (the majority consisting of structured behavioural interviews) the observed validity was .34. Mean observed validity weighted for sample size was .30, and operational validity was .64. Based on the results of the meta-analyses of SBI criterion validity, it can be stated that the SBI is one of the best predictors of job performance, with excellent validity. With the results of previous meta-analyses in mind, then, we can put forward our first hypothesis.

H1. The structured behavioural interview predicts global performance in senior jobs in the Basque Civil Service.

A feature of public administration jobs is the importance of the contextual requirements in which the work is done. Those working in public administration are public servants, and are expected to show good attitude to be at the service of citizens. In this sense it is quite possible that they have to carry out tasks over and above the formal requirements of their job, and to show a degree of commitment with the organization, even though no such expectations of work behaviour are formally set down in the official job description. These three characteristics are closely related to what is known as *contextual performance*, as described by Borman and Motowidlo (1993; Borman et al., 2001), who extended the traditional notion of performance to include facets of performance that go beyond mere skill in the execution of tasks. According to these researchers, the criterion domain can be considered as being made up of two dimensions: task performance and contextual performance. Task performance was defined by Borman and Motowidlo (1993, p. 73) as the effectiveness with which job incumbents perform activities that contribute to the organization's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services. For its part, contextual performance is defined as the activities that support the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which the technical core must function (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, p. 73). Borman and his colleagues (Borman et al., 2001; Penney & Borman, 2005) suggested that contextual performance included activities such as voluntarily doing extra tasks and assignments; persisting with effort and enthusiasm; helping and cooperating with others following organizational rules and procedures;

supporting the organization (Penney & Borman, 2005, p. 376). Thus, contextual performance and task performance would differ in three aspects: (a) task performance varies according to the specific job, while contextual performance is similar for all occupations; (b) task performance is expected, as a requirement, whilst contextual performance is not expected in an formal sense; and (c) it is hypothesized that task performance is more closely related to cognitive abilities, and that contextual performance is more associated with personality characteristics (e.g., agreeableness and conscientiousness). However, it is also true, as research has shown, that task and contextual performance are not totally independent dimensions of performance, but rather are inter-related. For example, Borman, Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1995) found a correlation of .80 between measures of task and contextual performance. Similar correlations were found by Avis, Kudisch and Fortunato (2002; $r = .77$), Beaty, Cleveland and Murphy (2000; $r = .75$), Chan and Schmitt (2002; $r = .77$), Ferris, Witt and Hochwarter (2000; $r = .73$), Gutkowski and Osburn (1999; $r = .77$) and Salgado and Rumbo (1997; $r = .52$), by way of some examples.

The distinction between contextual and task performance is highly relevant to the exploration of the SBI's validity. Salgado and Moscoso (2002; see also Huffcutt et al., 2002) have shown that the SBI is strongly related to job knowledge ($\rho = .53$), job experience ($\rho = .71$), situational judgement ($\rho = .46$) and general mental ability ($\rho = .28$). However, the correlation between the SBI and the Big Five personality factors is very weak (e.g., the correlations between SBI and the personality factors conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, emotional stability and extraversion were .17 and .12, .09, .08 and .21, respectively). This nomological network suggests that the SBI primarily measures variables related to task performance, and to a lesser extent those related to contextual performance. Therefore, a second question of interest is whether or not the SBI predicts these two dimensions of performance. Basing ourselves on previous studies, we put forward these two hypotheses:

H2. *The structured behavioural interview predicts both task performance and contextual performance in senior occupations in the Basque Civil Service.*

H3. *The structured behavioural interview will show greater correlation in predicting task performance than in predicting contextual performance.*

A third question of interest in relation to the role of the SBI in personnel selection concerns the reactions of

candidates and applicants (Anderson, 2004). Research on candidates' reactions has shown that they affect how applicants perceive the organization, the intention to join the organization, performance during the selection process and the subsequent behaviour (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). For example, applicant' reactions are related to how attractive they perceive the organization using the SBI to be (e.g., it can lead to their accepting or rejecting a job), to satisfaction with the selection process and to the job itself (Gilliland, 1993; Imus & Ryan, 2005). Previous studies have examined the reactions of applicants to different selection procedures in various countries (e.g., the USA, Spain, France, Portugal, Germany, Greece, Italy or South Africa), and unanimously concluding that – according to perception scales – people hold the interview in the highest regard (Gilliland, 1994; Marcus, 1999; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Nikolau & Judge, 2006; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996; see also the review by Steiner & Gilliland, 2001). This positive view of the interview contrasts with its negative image in the Spanish public administration, as referred to above. Moreover, as many as five limitations can be identified in the previous research. First, the study samples were made up of students, who did not have much experience of selection processes. Second, participants were not involved in a selection process at the time of responding to the questionnaire. Third, applicant' perceptions were examined using global assessments, rather than examining the specific characteristics of the method. Fourth, previous research did not explore the reactions of those who administer the tests, of other employees in the same jobs and of supervisors in relation to the use of the SBI in the selection process. And finally, a fifth limitation is that previous research did not distinguish between conventional (non-structured) interviews and structured interviews. Up to now there have been no studies that examined simultaneously the perceptions of applicants, interviewers, peers and supervisors with regard to the SBI. Therefore, and given the implications for perceptions of equity in relation to the use of the SBI in public administration, the issue should be explored from this perspective. On the basis of previous work, then, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H4. *Applicants and the other participants in the selection process will show positive perceptions of equity in relation to the structured behavioural interview.*

In sum, the present work has three main objectives. First, to examine the validity of the SBI in predicting

general performance in senior jobs within the Civil Service of the Basque Country (*Administración General del País Vasco*). Second, to analyze whether the SBI differentially predicts task and contextual performance. And third, to explore the perceptions and reactions of applicants, interviewers, peers and supervisors in relation to the SBI. With these goals in mind we carried out two independent studies.

STUDY 1 METHOD

Sample. The sample consisted of 311 members of Group A of the Basque Civil Service who were participating in a competitive selection process for higher positions in the Service. They were applying for jobs at levels 26, 27 and 28 (level 30 is the maximum in the Spanish public administration). Age range was 32 to 48 years. All were interviewed by a panel made up of 3 members (except in five cases, where there were 4 people on the panel). A total of 95 employees were promoted, but we could only obtain performance assessments on 93 to correlate them with the SBI scores. Thus, the final sample size was 93, which included 51 men and 42 women.

Interview. A structured behavioural interview developed for the processes of promotion was used. In developing the interview, the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) served as the basis for drawing up the behavioural questions. Although all the jobs were senior ones, there were slight differences between them. Therefore, a specific set of questions was designed for each job. On average 40 critical incidents were assessed for each for job (over 900 in total). The assessment of the critical incidents was carried out by experts, and covered two dimensions: frequency and importance. The interviews measured five dimensions, and at least three of these dimensions were common to all the jobs: (a) organizational capacity, (b) problem-solving capacity and (c) team coordination. The interview covers these dimensions using two questions for each dimension (with re-questioning).

Fourteen interviewers carried out the interviews in panel format. In accordance with the regulations of the Basque Civil Service, the panel consisted of three people (e.g., the interviewer and two other judges). The role of the interviewer is to conduct the interview and assess the interviewees. The other assessors also give scores to the interviewee, but do not interview him/her. All the interviewers had experience in the SBI and had completed a 100-hour training course. Each interview

lasted an average of 45 minutes and was recorded. Responses were scored on a 5-point behavioural anchoring rating scale. In this way, three independent measures were obtained for each interviewer and used for estimating the inter-rater reliability of the interview. Salgado, Moscoso and Gorriti (2004) reported an inter-rater reliability of .83 for a single interviewer and .92 for the panel. Mean score of the three members was the final score for each interviewee. The dimensions were weighted equally, and the final score could be between 1 and 10, a score of 5 being required to pass the interview.

Criterion measures. Criterion measures were taken between 8 and 21 months after the candidate had been promoted. In this study, the criterion measures were made on 10 behavioural anchoring rating scales that measured the individuals' competence in 10 performance characteristics. Their immediate superior was used as rater. The scales had five points: inadequate, scarcely adequate, satisfactory, good and excellent. The characteristics measured were: problem-solving, decision-making, leadership, job knowledge, organisational competence, resistance to stress, productivity, personal initiative, interpersonal competence and extra-rol performance. Three performance indices were drawn up with these scales: general performance, task performance and contextual performance. General performance consisted in the mean of the scores on the 10 scales. Task performance consisted in the mean of the scores for problem-solving, decision-making, leadership, job knowledge, organizational competence, resistance to stress and productivity. Contextual performance was calculated as the average of the scores in initiative, interpersonal competence and extra-rol performance. Internal consistency of these three indices was: .90, .87 and .74 (Cronbach's alpha) for global, task and contextual performance, respectively. Twenty employees were assessed by two supervisors. This allowed us to calculate the inter-rater reliability, and we found correlations of .80, .72, and .81 for task, contextual and global performance, respectively.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation for each variable included in the study (i.e., interview, general performance, task performance and contextual performance) for men and women. As it can be seen, the results are very similar in the two groups in the descriptive statistics for the total sample, though the values for women are a little higher in all four variables. It is important to

stress that the results in the interview indicate that it does not have a negative effect for women, but rather the contrary ($d=.92$ in favour of women). Similar results were found for job performance, where the women's group scored slightly higher than that of the men.

The observed correlations between the interview and the three performance measures are shown in Table 2. This table presents the descriptive statistics for the total sample and the correlations between the three job performance measures. Table 3 shows the operational validity of the interview for predicting global, task and contextual performance. Operational validity is the observed validity corrected for criterion reliability and range restriction of the predictor. This table also includes the 95% confidence interval for the operational validity.

| Variable | Men | | Women | |
|------------------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| | Mean | S _x | Mean | S _x |
| Interview | 6.95 | 1.03 | 7.15 | 1.04 |
| General Performance | 3.88 | 0.72 | 4.22 | 0.53 |
| Task Performance | 3.92 | 0.74 | 4.22 | 0.53 |
| Contextual Performance | 3.82 | 0.81 | 4.21 | 0.68 |
| | N= 51 | | N= 42 | |

| | Mean | S _x | SBI | GP | TP | CP |
|-----------------------------|------|----------------|------|-----|-----|----|
| Interview (SBI) | 7.04 | 1.03 | — | | | |
| General Performance (GP) | 4.03 | 0.66 | .32* | — | | |
| Task Performance (TP) | 4.05 | 0.66 | .34* | .97 | — | |
| Contextual Performance (CP) | 4.00 | 0.77 | .22* | .89 | .74 | — |

N = 93; * p <.05; SBI: Structured Behavioural Interview; GP: General Performance; TP: Task Performance; CP: Contextual Performance.

| | ρ | 95% IC |
|---|--------|-----------|
| General Performance ($r_{xy}=.81$) | .60* | .38 - .82 |
| Task Performance ($r_{xy}=.82$) | .62* | .42 - .83 |
| Contextual Performance ($r_{xy}=.72$) | .47* | .18 - .75 |

N= 93; p < .01 (using the Bobko and Rieck (1980) standard error formula for the corrected correlation). ρ = operational validity. CI = Confidence Interval (formula provided by Guilford and Fruchter (1978, p.147) based on the formula derived by Hotelling (1940) for correlated correlation coefficients (non-independent).

According to our first hypothesis the interview should predict general performance, and we found an operational validity of .60 (see Table 3). That is, the hypothesis is confirmed. Using the formula provided by Bobko and Rieck (1980), we calculated the standard error of the corrected correlation, and with this value we created the 95% confidence interval for the operative validity, following the recommendations of the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2004; Wilkinson et al., 1999). As it can be seen, only 2.5% of the possible values of the validity of the SBI would be below a coefficient of .38 for general job performance.

We also hypothesized that the interview would predict task and contextual performance (Hypothesis 2). In Table 3 it can be seen that the hypothesis was confirmed. The operational validity for predicting task performance was .62, and for contextual performance was .47. The lower limits of the confidence interval were .42 and .18 for predicting task and contextual performance, respectively. That is, only 2.5% of the correlations would be lower than these values.

Our third hypothesis states that the operational validity for task performance is higher than the operational validity for contextual performance. The difference between these two operational validities is 19 points of correlation. Applying the formula given by Guilford and Fruchter (1978) for non-independent correlation coefficients (based on the formula derived from Hotelling, 1940), we found that the difference between the validity of the SBI for predicting task performance and the validity for predicting contextual performance is significant ($t_{dr}= 3.14$; $df=90$; $p< .001$). That is, our third hypothesis is also confirmed.

DISCUSSION

The general objective of this study was to examine the validity of the structured behavioural interview for predicting job performance for Group A jobs corresponding to levels 26, 27 and 28 of the Basque Civil Service. All the jobs were senior or managerial jobs, and were at the highest levels of the Service. A predictive design was used, and the time lapse between the collection of the interview measure and the collection of job performance measure ranged from 8 to 21 months. Examination of the validity of the interview is of interest to the Basque Civil Service authorities because it is undergoing a transition from the classic civil service system to a human resources system based on new methodologies and techniques (suitability of

persons for jobs; difference management). The traditional view of the interview in this context is generally negative. It is seen as an instrument involving many problems (e.g., its subjective nature, its low reliability and validity, its low level of acceptance by senior personnel and candidates, and its liability to be used for recruiting pre-selected candidates), which is why it is quite scarcely used.

The results of the study showed that the structured behavioural interview predicts performance very well, and that the magnitude of this validity is similar to that of the best selection instruments. We found an operational validity of .62, which is similar in magnitude to that found in various meta-analyses on interview validity (McDaniel et al., 1994; Huffcutt et al., 1994; Salgado & Moscoso, 1995; 2005). The validity found for the structured behavioural interview is also similar to the operational validity found by Salgado and his colleagues in Europe for tests of general mental ability (Salgado & Anderson, 2003; Salgado, Anderson, Moscoso, Bertua & De Fruyt, 2003; Salgado, Anderson, Moscoso, Bertua, De Fruyt & Rolland, 2003). The result for validity obtained in this study is higher than that found by Roth, Bobko and McFarland (2005) for work samples, which are typically acknowledged as the best predictors of job performance.

A second interesting result is that the interview predicts both task and contextual performance. To the best of our knowledge, no study has previously explored whether the structured behavioural interview predicts these two dimensions of performance. Our results suggest that the SBI predicts contextual performance very well ($\rho=.47$) and task performance excellently ($\rho=.62$). Consequently, the result is of practical interest insofar as the SBI can be used in a process in which contextual performance has to be predicted. This result is also of interest from a theoretical point of view. Meta-analyses of SBI construct validity have shown that this type of interview measures job knowledge, work experience, situational judgement and, to a lesser extent, general mental ability (see Salgado & Moscoso, 2002; Huffcutt et al., 2002). All of these variables are closely related to task performance and to the capacity to respond to the responsibilities of one's job. However, they are scarcely related to contextual performance at all. A possible explanation for this is that task performance and contextual performance are not totally independent dimensions of performance, so that experience, knowledge, situational judgement and cognitive ability are also necessary for good contextual performance.

A third result related to the previous one is that the SBI differentially predicts task and contextual performance. This type of interview is a remarkably better predictor of task performance than of contextual performance, which suggests that it should include some specific dimensions for measuring facets of contextual performance (e.g., commitment) in order to improve the prediction of this type of performance. Since the interview is a measurement method rather than a construct it is possible to add new dimensions or features without the loss of psychometric properties (e.g., reliability, content validity).

The present study also indicates that the panel format produces better reliability, very similar to or even higher than the reliability found in the best psychological measures in personnel selection (e.g., cognitive tests, personality inventories)

Another important discovery is related to the reliability of the performance measures. We found the inter-rater reliability of the three performance measures to be .81, .82 and .72 for general, task and contextual performance, respectively. Previous meta-analyses have shown the reliability of performance to be .52 (Salgado et al., 2003; Salgado & Moscoso, 1996; Viswesvaran, Ones & Schmidt, 1996). We found a remarkably higher reliability, which may be due to two factors: (a) the use of behavioural anchoring rating scales for assessing the SBI questions, and (b) having obtained the criterion measures with the purpose of research. Previous studies have shown that these two factors improve the reliability of the performance measures.

A limitation of our study should be noted. The sample is not large, so that, due to sampling error, the estimations made may vary with larger samples (see Salgado, 1998). Nevertheless, the magnitudes of the validity we found are sufficiently high to support substantial variation and maintain robustness and relevance for the use of the instrument in public administration hiring decisions.

STUDY 2

METHOD

Participants

The sample in this study was made up of 125 individuals who participated actively in the promotion process in different capacities, including 35 Supervisors, 12 Chairs of Committees (panel), 23 panel members, 45 interviewees who were promoted and 33 unsuccessful interviewees. The sample represents 50.4% of the population (N= 248).

MEASURES

Perceptions of and reactions to the SBI. Participants were given a questionnaire with 30 items and two sections for obtaining their reactions in relation to the SBI and the promotion process. Fifteen questions explored different areas of individuals' feelings, attitudes, beliefs and reactions with regard to the SBI. They were asked whether they were satisfied, dissatisfied or undecided about the content of the interview.

Procedure. Four months after the interviews, the questionnaire was sent via the corporative net to the 248 individuals who had participated in the promotion process with the SBI. A total of 125 responded, representing a ratio of 50.4%. In general, responding to the questionnaire took no more than 5 minutes. Once the results had been analyzed an internal report was drawn up and the results were published on the Intranet.

RESULTS

The results of the survey can be seen in Table 4. The main result is that the absolute majority responded favourably to all the items, two-thirds stating that they were satisfied with the SBI. This result is very interesting, since more than 25% of the sample was made up of individuals who did not get through the selection interview successfully. A second discovery is that three-quarters of the sample consider that the SBI questions are job-related, that the final decision is fair, that the results are the same for men and women, and

that the SBI respects privacy. It is also interesting to note that for two-thirds of the individuals it is difficult to deceive in the SBI. As regards the interview process, close to three-quarters of the sample maintain that it is good to record it because this guarantees a better decision, and the recording can be used as evidence in possible litigation. Seventy per cent of the sample believes that those who are successful in the SBI will show better performance. Likewise, the majority believe that the SBI improves the promotion process, making the final decision easier. They also trust the decision more, and think it is not difficult to answer the questions.

As it can be seen, in general, the proportions of satisfactory responses to the survey suggest that all the groups participating in the process with the SBI (supervisors, panel members, interviewers, successful interviewees, unsuccessful interviewees) see the SBI as a good instrument for decision-making about promotion, and as an improvement to public administration selection processes.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to examine individual' perceptions and reactions with regard to the use of the SBI in public administration. The results suggest two conclusions. First, the SBI is perceived positively by all participants in the interview process. Second, compared to other types of interview (e.g. conventional interview, non-structured interview) and the previous promotion method used in the Basque Public Administration (i.e. training-and-experience evaluation), the SBI is held in higher regard.

The results also have important practical implications for personnel selection in public administration. First of all, individuals prefer to be interviewed with the SBI because they believe the final decision is fairer than a decision made by means of the previous method. And secondly, they believe the SBI respects privacy.

In sum, individuals perceive the SBI positively, and express greater preference for this type of selection process.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

On the whole, the present work has three main objectives. First, to examine the validity of the SBI for the prediction of general performance in senior jobs of the Basque Civil Service. We found that the SBI was an excellent predictor of performance, and that its operative validity was very similar to that found in previous meta-analyses (e.g., Salgado & Moscoso, 1995, 2005) and

Table 4

Percentage of respondents satisfied with different aspects of the SBI

| | % Satisfied |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Considered overall, I am satisfied with the SBI: | 67.4% |
| 2. Considered overall, the SBI has improved the promotion process: | 53.3% |
| 3. Those who passed the SBI show better performance at work: | 59.8% |
| 4. For making decisions, the SBI is more objective than other interviews: | 51.1% |
| 5. I have more trust in the SBI and the final decision: | 50.0% |
| 6. The questions in the SBI are related to the job: | 76.1% |
| 7. It is not difficult to answer the behavioural questions: | 52.2% |
| 8. The final promotion process is fair: | 74.0% |
| 9. It is good that the interviews are recorded: | 71.7% |
| 10. The SBI is exhaustive and it is difficult to lie: | 65.2% |
| 11. The results of the SBI are the same for men and women: | 77.1% |
| 12. I feel comfortable with the SBI questions: | 58.7% |
| 13. The SBI respects privacy: | 82.6% |
| 14. The SBI facilitates decision-making: | 71.7% |
| 15. It is difficult to prepare one's responses to the SBI in advance: | 58.7% |
| N= 125 | |

similar to the operative validity of tests of general mental ability – which have emerged as the best predictors of performance in entry-level posts in jobs Europe and the USA (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Salgado & Anderson, 2003; Salgado et al., 2003, 2003b).

The second objective was to analyze whether the SBI differentially predicts task performance and contextual performance. This is a unique contribution of the present work. As far as we know, no previous studies have explored the relationship between SBI and task and contextual performance. We discovered that the SBI predicts both task and contextual performance, though it is a better predictor of the former than of the latter, as proposed in our hypothesis.

The third objective was to explore the perceptions and reactions of applicants, interviewers, co-workers and supervisors in relation to the SBI. As with the previous goals, we found that the SBI is looked on favourably as a method for making decisions in promotion processes in public administration.

As stated above, one limitation of the study is that validity was explored with a small sample, so that the conclusions drawn from this work should be considered provisional. There is a need for further research with larger samples and for different kinds of jobs, which would permit a meta-analysis with all the results. Likewise, future studies could allow researchers to study differences in the perceptions of supervisors, interviewers, peers and successful and unsuccessful interviewees.

To summarize, the two studies reported in the present article have shown that the SBI is a good predictor of global performance and of its two dimensions (task and contextual), and that perceptions of this instrument and reactions to it are highly positive. Therefore, the results endorse the use of this technique for personnel decision-making in the Spanish Civil Service.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research reported in this article was partially founded by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science research grant SEB1098-2005 to Jesús F. Salgado.

REFERENCES

Borman, W.C. & Motowidlo, S.J. (1993). Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance. In N. Schmitt, & W.C. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selection in organizations* (pp. 71-98). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Borman, W.C., Penner, L.A., Allen, T.D. & Motowidlo, S.J. (2001). Personality predictors of citizenship performance. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 9, 52-69.
- Conway, J.M., Jako, R.A. & Goodman, D.F. (1995). A meta-analysis of inter-rater and internal consistency reliability of selection interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 565-579.
- Flanagan, J.C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological Bulletin*, 51, 327-358.
- Guilford, J.P. & Fruchter, B. (1978). *Fundamental of statistics in psychology and education*. New York: McGraw.
- Hotteling, H. (1940). The selection variables for use in the prediction, with some comments on the general problem of nuisance parameters. *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, 11, 271-283.
- Hunter, J.E. & Hunter, R.F. (1984). Validity and utility of alternative predictors of job performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 96, 72-98.
- Huffcutt, A. I. & Arthur, W. Jr. (1994). Hunter and Hunter (1984) revisited: interview validity for entry-level jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 184-190.
- Janz, T. (1982). Initial comparisons of patterned behavior description interviews versus unstructured interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67, 577-580.
- Latham, G.P. (1989). The reliability, validity and practicality of the situational interview. In R.W. Eder & G.R. Ferris (Eds.). *The Employment interview: Theory, research and practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- McDaniel, M.A., Whetzel, D.L., Schmidt, F.L. & Maurer, S. (1994). The validity of employment interview: A comprehensive review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79, 599-617.
- Motowidlo, S.J., Carter, G.W., Dunnette, M.D., Tippins, N., Werner, S., Burnett, J.R. & Vaughan, J. (1992). Studies of structured behavioral interview. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77, 571-588.
- Penney, L.M & Borman, W. C. (2005). The prediction of contextual performance. In A. Evers, A. Anderson & O. Voskuijl (Eds). *Handbook of personnel selection* (pp 376-396). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Ryan, A. M., McFarland, L., Baron, H. & Page, R. (1999). An international look at selection practices: nation and culture as explanations for variability in practice. *Personnel Psychology*, 52, 359-391.
- Salgado, J.F. (1999). Personnel Selection Methods. In

- C.L. Cooper and I.T. Robertson (Eds.). *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Vol. 12. (pp 1-53). London, UK: John Wiley and Sons.
- Salgado, J.F. & Anderson, N. (2003). Validity generalization of GMA tests across countries in the European Community. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 12, 1-17.
- Salgado, J.F., Anderson, N., Moscoso, S., Bertua, C. & de Fruyt, F. (2003a). International Validity Generalization of GMA and Cognitive Abilities as Predictors of Work Behaviors. *Personnel Psychology*, 56, 573-605.
- Salgado, J.F., Anderson, N., Moscoso, S., Bertua, C., de Fruyt, F. & Rolland, J.P. (2003b). Criterion validity of General Mental Ability measures for different occupations in the European Community. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 1068-1081.
- Salgado, J.F. & Moscoso, S. (1995). Validez de las entrevistas conductuales estructuradas. *Psicología del Trabajo y las Organizaciones*, 11, 9-24.
- Salgado, J.F. & Moscoso, S. (2005). *Entrevista conductual estructurada de selección de personal. Teoría, práctica y rentabilidad*. 2ª edición. Madrid: Pirámide.
- Salgado, J.F. & Moscoso, S. (2002). Comprehensive meta-analysis of the construct validity of the selection interview. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 11, 299-324.
- Salgado, J.F., Moscoso, S. & Gorriti M. (2004). Investigaciones sobre la Entrevista Conductual Estructurada (ECE) en la Selección de Personal en la Administración General del País Vasco: Meta-análisis de la Fiabilidad. *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones*, 20, 107-139.
- Salgado, J.F., Moscoso, S. & Lado, M. (2005). Reclutamiento y Selección. In Bonache, J. & Cabrera, A. (directores). *Dirección de personas. Evidencias y perspectivas para el siglo XXI*. Financial Times-Prentice Hall.
- Salgado, J.F., Viswesvaran, C. & Ones, D.S. (2001). Predictors used for personnel selection: an overview of construct, methods and techniques. In N. Anderson, D.S. Ones, H.K. Sinangil & C. Viswesvaran (Eds.). *Handbook of Industrial, Work and Organizational Psychology*. Vol 1 (pp 165-199). London: Sage
- Schmidt, F.L. & Hunter, J.E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124, 262-274.
- Schüler, H. (1989). Construct validity of a multimodal employment interview. In Fallon, B.J., Pfister, H.P. & Brebner, J. (Eds.). *Advances in industrial and organizational psychology*. New York: North Holland.
- Schüler, H. & Funke, U. (1989). The interview as a multimodal procedure. In E.W. Eder & G.R. Ferris (Eds.). *The Employment interview: Theory, research and practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Viswesvaran, C., Ones, D.S., Schmidt, F.L. (1996). Comparative analysis of the reliability of job performance ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 557-574.