


Human Resource Selection



Robert D. Gatewood
Hubert S. Feild

Second Edition



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Robert D. Gatewood
University of Georgia

Hubert S. Feild
Auburn University

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*The dedication in the first edition addressed our families
and happy days of our youth spent enjoying rock-and-roll.
Fortunately, our families are still the same wonderful individuals
and we say “hey” and love to*

*Betsy, Jennifer, and Nat Gatewood
Claire and Taylor Feild*

*In addition to the Duke of Earl, we now remember
sport, and nearly sport, teams of our past—
the Eager Beavers, NADS, Business School Bombers,
Mississippi State Baseball Team, Higgen Hogs, and
Least Preferred Coworkers of the Auburn Management Department.*

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P R E F A C E
■ ■ ■ ■ ◆ ■ ■ ■ ■

All of us have been involved in the selection program of an organization at one time or another. We have either been applicants to schools or businesses; or we have been on the other side, one of the organization members making decisions about applicants. From either perspective, a common reaction to selection is uneasiness and uncertainty. How many times have we heard an applicant say something like, “I wonder what he was looking for?” or an organization decision maker mutter, “How can I tell the difference among these people? I hope I made the right choice.”

The procedure of selection is familiar to most of us. We all know that it is necessary to collect information from applicants about themselves. Such devices as applications, interviews, and various kinds of tests are used for this purpose. We also know that this information is then used to make comparisons among applicants in the hopes of identifying strong future performers. Even so, the question often arises, “If selection procedures are so commonly known, why do uneasiness and uncertainty still occur?”

We think there are two reasons: (a) there are some inherent features of selection – in evaluating applicants and predicting future performance – that cannot be totally controlled, and (b) even though selection procedures are well known, the more important parts of selection, such as what characteristics of applicants should be examined, which devices should be used to gather information, and how information should be combined to identify desirable applicants, are not well understood. Understanding the variables in each of these aspects is critical to building an effective selection program and, to a lesser extent, being comfortable with its operation. We think of these aspects as the technical components of selection – technical in the

sense that psychometric procedures, statistical analyses, the conceptual framework of selection, the findings of previous empirical research, and the various legal constraints all contribute to a scientific understanding of the field.

It is the purpose of this book to present this technical information in a manner that will be useful and, we hope, interesting to those who are or will be involved in the development and implementation of a selection program for an organization. In our writing, we have summarized the most important research in selection, with an emphasis on the conclusions and only minimal discussion of the research steps and procedures. We have incorporated these results into recommendations for the actual development of a selection program. The book, therefore, is intended to be both generally informative and directly useful to those working in selection. The text is divided into the following five sections which systematically present the technical aspects of selection.

Part I: *An Overview of Human Resource Selection.* This section presents the nature of selection programs and their legal context. Chapter 1 describes the purpose of selection—the identification of high-performing individuals—and outlines the major steps that must be taken to develop an effective selection program, concluding with the limitations that must be addressed in these programs. Chapter 2 presents the legal constraints that must be considered in selection by discussing laws, federal guidelines, court cases, and methods used to determine discrimination.

Part II: *Foundations of Measurement for Human Resource Selection.* These chapters treat the psychometric measurement concepts that are basic to selection. Chapter 3 introduces the topic of measurement and discusses its definition and nature. Chapter 4 is devoted entirely to the importance of reliability and methods of estimating reliability. Chapter 5 discusses types of validity and focuses on the interpretation and meaning of empirical validation.

Part III: *Job Analysis in Human Resource Selection.* This section describes the first steps in developing a selection program. Chapter 6 gives an overview of job analysis in selection and the implementation of a job analysis program in an organization. Chapter 7 thoroughly describes the most common job analysis methods and how they are used. Chapter 8 discusses the identification of worker knowledge, skills, abilities, and other employee specifications using the various job analysis methods. The emphasis is on how these data are translated into selection instruments.

Part IV: *Predictors of Job Performance.* This section, composed of seven chapters, is the longest. Each chapter discusses major selection instruments. The discussion reviews the research about the validity of the instruments and treats their appropriate construction and use.

Part V: *Criteria Measures.* This section presents only one topic. Chapter 16 is an overview of the essential characteristics and methods of measuring work performance for use as criterion data in validation. This is a critical component in developing a complete selection program.

New to This Edition

There are a number of significant differences between the material in this edition and that of the first. First, all of the chapters have been updated incorporating research work done in the last three years on each chapter topic. Furthermore, some major additions and changes have been made. Chapter 15, Honesty Testing, Graphology, and Drug Testing, has been added to discuss selection devices that are increasing in use. The chapter addresses major current concerns of organizations regarding theft, alcohol, and drug usage. Chapter 2, Legal Issues in Selection, has essentially been rewritten. The chapter now emphasizes the differences between disparate treatment and adverse impact discrimination in terms of evidence presented in court cases and appropriate defense tactics of organizations. It also now includes discussion of affirmative action programs, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, recent selection court cases, and a full reprint of *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1978)*. Chapter 11, The Selection Interview, has been expanded to include more complete discussion of question development. In doing this, sample questions from The Situational Interview, Behavioral Description Interviewing, and the Job Content Method have been included. Finally, Chapter 16, Measurement of Job Performance, has also been expanded to include details on the development and examples of various behavioral rating formats.

Significant revisions have been made in the *Instructor's Manual* as well. Author Mark L. Lengnick-Hall of the University of Minnesota-Duluth has placed special emphasis on providing quality testing items for all chapters. Additionally, exercises designed to provide students with “hands-on” experience in the field of human resource selection have been included.

Acknowledgments

One of the nicest aspects of writing a book is that it presents a formal opportunity for the authors to thank individuals who have had positive influences on both them and their text.

Robert Gatewood would like to thank two couples for long-term contributions. Maurice and Sophie Gatewood, my parents, have, of course, guided me from the start. However, their actions during my teens and early twenties were especially necessary. Robert and Evelyn Perloff directed most of my graduate and early professional activities. From them I learned not only technical knowledge, but also professional and ethical behavior that has been even more lasting.

Hubert Feild would like to thank Hubert and Bernice Feild, my parents. Their love, support, and sacrifice will always be remembered. Bob Teare and Bill Owens served as important role models early in my career. Their work with me will always be appreciated. I am indebted to Art Bedeian, Bill Giles, Stan Harris, Bill Holley, and Kevin Mossholder for their encourage-

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To all of the above individuals, we simply say, “Thank you. We have benefited from and sincerely appreciate your efforts.”

Robert D. Gatewood
 Athens, Georgia

Hubert S. Feild
 Auburn, Alabama

A B O U T T H E A U T H O R S



Robert D. Gatewood

Robert Gatewood received his Ph.D. in industrial psychology from Purdue University and is currently an Associate Professor of Management at the University of Georgia. Before that, he worked for IBM, the American Institutes for Research, and the University of Pittsburgh. In addition, he has served as the Visiting Professor of Business at the Netherlands School of Business in Breukelen, the Netherlands. His major areas of professional interest are in human resource selection and human resource planning. He has presented papers at the national meetings of the Academy of Management and the American Psychological Association, and has published articles in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, *Human Resource Planning*, *The Personnel Administrator*, and the *Personnel Journal*.

He has also recently served as a co-principal investigator on a two-year NSF funded grant entitled "Impact of Human Resource Management on Productivity and Minority Employment." The major thrust of the grant was to develop a forecasting simulation model useful for human resource managers.

Professor Gatewood has done consulting for several organizations, including PPG Industries, Westinghouse, Gulf Power Company, the Department of Transportation, and the Savings and Loan Institute.

Hubert S. Feild

Hubert S. Feild is the Edward L. Lowder Professor of Management in the Department of Management at Auburn University. He has published numerous journal articles covering such topics as performance appraisal, personnel research methods, and legal issues in human resources management.

His consulting activities have involved more than 30 profit and not-for-profit organizations including SONY, PPG Industries, West Point Pepperell, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Professor Feild received a B.S. degree in management and M.S. degree in economics from Mississippi State University. He received a Ph.D. in industrial psychology from the University of Georgia, where he worked as a research associate for the Institute of Behavioral Research and the Paraprofessional Utilization Project.

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