



# E-Book : Game-Based Assessments - Myth or Reality ?

# Game –Based Assessments

Games are fun, but is it true for the assessments? May be not.

There is a strong interest and hype to use game-based assessments in hiring . On the other hand, there is a skepticism about the overall reliability and validity of the game-based assessments compared to traditional methods of assessments. Let's find out if game-based assessments really all they are hyped up to be?

Gamification is a much talked about topic right now in terms of HR, talent acquisition as well as candidates when it comes to hiring. The idea of gamifying the hiring process has a novelty, charm, and the possibilities feel enormous.

We have just started experiencing the transformation gamification can bring to the entire scene of hiring and organizational development. Game-based assessments are the first one off the block. Being new there is a lot of discussion and comparison with the traditional methods of assessments and if the game-based assessments are actually able to predict the job performance in a scientifically valid and accurate way.



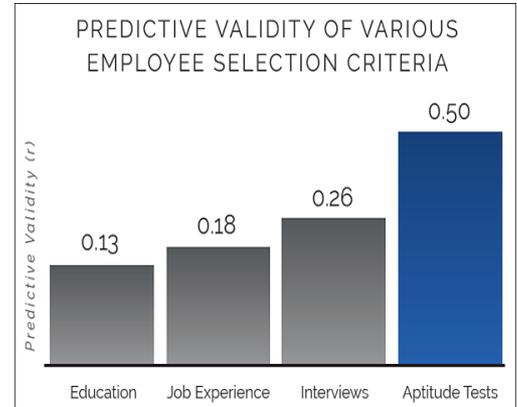
Lets now explore the myths surrounding the game-based assessments and their ability to predict the job performance and whether they hold any ground against the basic principals of validity and accuracy compared to the traditional assessments.

## Myth 1

### Game-based assessments are not valid and accurate in predicting job fitment and performance.

Traditional assessments have been proven for long to predict the job fitment and performance, but the question is whether game-based assessments do that as well without sacrificing the validity. Because, if it's not predicting job performance or isn't validated to do so, then there is no justification to use it for the hiring process.

If we look at the predictors of job performance there are three factors in the play - Cognitive ability, Personality traits, and Acquired skills.



Let's start with cognitive ability. Cognitive ability is the best predictor of the job performance of any hiring factor, and pre-employment tests have always been the best way to measure cognitive abilities.

Game-based assessments create a layer of fun experience while providing important predictive information for employers. While the candidate gets an engaging and enticing experience the employers get a deeper understanding of their strengths. As they are typically modelled on and validated against existing traditional cognitive assessments, they have proved to be valid and accurate in measuring cognitive aptitude as compared to traditional assessments.

Second is the personality traits. Game-based assessments based on the most widely accepted "Big Five Model of Personality" offer great insights into the personality traits of the candidate. As the model is quite good in predicting success for particular types of roles, game-based assessments built on the Big Five model are accurate in predicting job performance and success.

And then are the acquired skills. Since the skills can be acquired, game-based assessments can't offer a long-term prediction but can surely offer a baseline level of knowledge in a particular area.

In summary, game-based assessments can be quite valid and accurate, as they can measure the same predictive measures of performance like traditional assessments. As they can do it by adding an extra layer of fun and engagement in the age of candidate experience and employer branding, game-based assessments have become a medium of choice for the employers.

## Myth 2

### Game-based assessments are prone to biases.

Assessment Bias refers to qualities of an assessment that unfairly penalize a group because of their gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion or other such group defining characteristics.

Game-based assessments use various techniques to deal with bias and adverse impact. Differential Item Functioning (DIF) mechanism is used to identify and remove items functioning differently by the group. Using culturally fair situations and test items, using non-controversial language, and non-stereotypical and easy-to-understand language are a few methods that can be used to ensure bias-free game-based assessments.



The game-based assessments give every candidate an equal chance of success and thus, are bias-free. The assessment's language and context do not result in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to any group based on ethnicity, culture, language or gender.

## Myth 3

### Games are generally good at measuring a narrow range of behaviors.

There are different types of pre-employment tests that can be used for hiring decisions. These include Subject matter knowledge tests, Integrity assessments, Cognitive ability tests, Personality tests, and Skill tests. While they try to measure a certain aspect of candidate's fitment to the job, they get limited by the scope of coverage and organizations trying to measure these would want the candidate to go through multiple assessments to get a fair understanding of the candidates' strengths and areas of improvement. The best hiring decisions are based on multiple assessments.

Game-based assessments, on the other hand, have the ability to mix multiple assessments into one to judge the candidate based on a single assessment alone. There are assessments which are designed to evaluate basic employability, job fit, and a strong basis for coaching around career development. Game-based assessments measure the subconscious behaviours and are not dependent on the candidate's self-perceptions. This enables game-based assessments to measure a mix of personality, cognitive, and affective skills.

## Myth 4

### Candidates don't take game-based assessments seriously.

Games are fun. It's a common perception that the candidates don't take game-based assessments seriously.

Traditional assessments often lead to inducing stress and test anxiety and often detest it. Then, there are recruitment games to get candidates attracted, create a better image of the organization and great candidate experience. But they are not to be used for hiring as candidates of any age don't like the idea of getting shortlisted based on how many levels, they were able to cross in a game or how fast they were able to clear obstacles.

Last but not least is the game-based assessments which combine the powers of traditional assessments and gaming elements. A recent study showed that 76% of candidates in India in top B - schools prefer a game-based assessment over a traditional psychometric test. A second study suggested over 90% positive responses from candidates in terms of employer branding, employee engagement, attention span, and being fair to them. These studies further strengthen the fact that candidates take game-based assessments more seriously.

**A study with a consumer brands business measured applicant perceptions of its new gamified assessment compared to the more traditional online assessment they had previously experienced.**

The results showed that:

- 91% reported it gave a better or the same impression of the company.
- 94% said it was better at (or the same as) engaging them.
- 93% reported that the game-assessment held their attention more (or the same as) traditional tests.
- 88% thought it as being fair if not better.



## Myth 5

### Candidates with gaming experience are likely to perform better on game-based assessments.

Any person with any acquired skill is expected to perform better in the application of that skill. Does that hold good for the game-based assessments also? Are candidates with prior gaming experience expected to perform better on game-based assessments? Let's have a look.



Game-based assessments need not be confused with the typical hiring games or the non-contextualized games that measure some aspects of the cognitive ability in a canned one-fit-all structure. These are enticing as well as entertaining and people with prior gaming experience might do well in these but they are rarely validated or are a true predictor of success at the job.

On the other hand, game-based psychometric assessments are more about injecting gaming elements into traditional assessments thus making the candidate experience become more engaging and enticing. They offer more interactive experience but not an unfair advantage to someone with prior gaming experience.

In nutshell, game-based assessments don't offer any undue advantage to a candidate with prior gaming experience.

## Myth 6

### Response can be faked in Game-based assessments like traditional assessments.

In a traditional assessment, a candidate can try to fake or manipulate one's answers as there are no right or wrong answers and a particular pattern of answers can lead to desired scores and inherent portrayal of strengths. For example, it is easy for any candidate to figure out the set of competencies that the employer looks for by looking at the Job Description and sometimes it's made easily available by the unsuspecting recruiter who is running behind candidates to fill the vacancies. Take for instance a sales role where Empathy, Networking, Communication skills, and Resilience are some of the competencies that anyone could figure out.

By intelligently guessing it, the candidate can somehow try and adjust their responses in a way that matches with the expected competencies. To top it all, there are several guidelines and tips and tricks available on the internet to fake the psychometric tests.

In contrast, game-based assessments make it difficult for a candidate to fake the responses since the candidate is never asked directly for a response. Because of the gaming elements, the candidates get immersed in the game without realizing the competencies getting measured and brings out their natural responses to situations. And, since they don't know what and when they are getting measured in a game, it's difficult for them to manipulate it.

So, game-based assessments offer a powerful tool for recruiters to objectively find the fitment for the position while ensuring that the assessment cannot be manipulated or faked.

**In summary, the reality is that game-based assessments are valid and accurate and are devoid of any biases. They measure a mix of personality, cognitive, and affective skills without offering any advantage to someone with prior gaming experience. Unlike, traditional assessments they make it difficult for the candidate to fake it. So the skepticism surrounding the game-based assessments is unfounded.**

**Game-based assessments are the future of assessments and help HR leaders to transform hiring and talent development.**



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