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Recruitment and Selection in the Public Sector Organizations: A Study based on Qualified and Non-Qualified Applicants

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Abstract

The basic objective of this article is to understand the perceived applicant's experience regarding procedural justice. This study was conducted in the public sector organizations of the State of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Data was collected from those applications which had applied for any post in the public service commission jobs. Further, the sample was divided into two categories, one those who were selected and the other who could not make it through. A research questionnaire ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree on the likert scale was used, which was personally administered. The data were analyzed by using SPSS version 22, where it was found that the overall pattern of results indicates that both of the categories of applicants showed dissatisfaction with the procedural justice and feedback mechanism of the existing selection procedures.

Key Words: Recruitment Perception, Selection, Procedural Justice, Feedback

Introduction

Employee hiring has always been one of the most sensitive areas of every organization to make the right selection of employees for achieving objectives. At the end of the 19th century, there had been a lot of research made on recruitment and selection (Ann & Robber, 2000). There are many researchers who have mentioned that till the early 1990s, there was not focus on conducting research on the fact that actually there are two parties involved in the process of recruitment and selection, one is the organization, and the other one is the applicant as he also decides where to apply and where actually he will serve (e.g., Herriot, 1989; Schuler, 1993). The researchers have noted that most of the researches on selection fairness has been conducted on the basis of a sample comprised of students, and only some have focused on the actual job holders (Horvath, Ryan, & Stierwalt, 2000). This study covers the public sector of Azad Jammu and Kashmir that is comprised of a large public sector and autonomous bodies. The organizations select class one officers through prescribed selection procedures, which comprise a job application, sometimes a short screening test and finally an interview.

In selecting the right selection procedure for the right selection, the authorities have to take great care of the perception that is prevailing among the potential candidates because due to negative perception, the organization may lose well qualified and competent applications. As it is an admitted fact that individual behaves in a different way than how the organization want to see them, actually they see from their inner perspective. They are less concerned about whether the job is interesting, challenging, or the manager is effectively handling the organization; the important is how people see their efforts and how they perceive these selection procedures. Perception is a process through which individuals gather information from various sources and use their sensory impressions to transform it into meanings for them. It is the routine practice that individuals do not act without any reason; they basically think before they make any sort of action. The employment relationship and appearing in any part of the test develop a perception about the system of the organization.

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The Job-relatedness factor of the selection mechanism is very important to study because this has a direct impact on the applicant's fairness perception towards the recruitment and selection of employees (Gilliland, 1993). Feedback is the most important in the whole selection process as candidates want to know about their progress regardless of whether they have qualified in the next phase or not. As long as the probing and sophistication of the selection procedure is concerned, candidates have the expectation to know about their performance in the test or the findings of the assessors. However, it seems difficult to give feedback to the candidates, especially when there is a large pool of applicants, but candidates should be given feedback if they wish to know about them. This is better than forcing the candidates to know about their performance because forced feedback may have a negative impact (psychologically) on the candidates. By doing this, the candidates feel obliged to have the offer of feedback and maintains a good perception about the organization fair doings in using the appropriate selection procedures.

The most important contribution for me would be that it will give me the insight to make a bias for PhD dissertation in the same field. Selection procedures that are adopted by the public sector and autonomous bodies of the Azad Jammu & Kashmiris government are basically a reflection of the Indian civil service act 1935, which was formulated by the British regime to serve their interests. So after this research, we can have some crucial and pragmatic conclusion on the basis of the candidates' perception.

Review of Related Literature

Ann Marie Ryan et al. (2000) conducted a study on "Applicants' Views on Selection Procedures and Decisions: Critical Review and Future Agenda", which was conducted in 2000 and aimed to critically review the period from 1985 to 1999 on the applicant's views on the selection process. This study explains that there has been a surge in interest in studying how job applicants view the employee selection process, especially what Ann Marie Ryan cited in his research (Nassar, 1999) has determined that the low unemployment rate has prompted organizational decision-makers to consider the selection process, how the various components may affect the attractiveness of the organization.

Cox et al. (1993) found that increasing the diversity of the workforce may have a negative impact on the minority groups to apply for such jobs. In addition to this, the researchers were interested to see the impact of the research procedures on the performances of the minority and majority candidates. Later in the same study, the author said Rynes (1993) that the basic premise of studying the applicant's views on the selection process and procedures is that these opinions affect how the applicant views the organization, his or her decision to join the organization, and Subsequent actions (for example, future product/service purchases, the recommendation to others). Therefore, understanding when and why applicants have a more or less good impression of the selection process may increase the ability to influence these perceptions and the attitudes and behaviors of related applicants.

Margaret Dale has written a book on "The Art of HRD, successful recruitment and selection" published through Crest Publishing house in 2005 in which the author has said that the research has proved that, It has urged that selection methods should explore the required skills, abilities and aptitudes to add up the organization's image. The methods need to reflect the content and context of the job. The author has referred to the observation of Iles and Robertson (1989) which I quote "Individuals who feel unfairly assessed by invalid techniques presented in ways that fail include their active consent, participation or involvement may feel alienated from the organization, uncommitted to it, think of leaving it and actively seek another job. Their work performance may also suffer if they feel insensitively treated and their future options closed off. On the other hand, if the yare accurately and sensitively assessed and give unconstructive feedback, individuals may feel a rise in self-esteem, enhanced self-efficacy, great sense of personal agency, greater commitment to their organization and greater motivation to undertake further training and work experience".

Iles and Robertson (1989) have been referred further by the researcher that it has shown that if the candidate like the people acting as assessors and interviewers, the outcome of the selection is likely to be more positive for both parties. Moreover, the candidates should feel they have been subjected to any direct or indirect discrimination. Alimo-Metcalfe (1994) has expressed concern about the choice of activities that favour predominately male traits. The author has mentioned that technology must be used carefully because it must be understood by the candidates. A more important observation is that these tests should measure the knowledge and skills relevant to the job, and also, a mechanism is needed to ensure that marking is fair and consistent.

Chambers (2002) stated that organizational justice is an important contribution to the field of choice. "Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of the distribution of organizational

results, as mentioned” by Brad A. Chambers in 2002 (Bierhoff et al. 1986). This type of organizational justice refers to all aspects of work, such as salary, promotion and even job opportunities. According to (Folger and Greenberg 1985; Lind and Tyler 1988), procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the procedures used to achieve resource allocation decisions). Eva Derous et al. (2004) that pre-test perception has an impact on the test performance and has further mentioned that applicants pre-test perceptions are highly significant as it has a direct impact on the post-test reactions. Eva Derous et al. (2004) have worked hard and gave the following observations, which have helped me to prepare my questionnaire.

Work relevance is generally considered to be the most influential procedural fairness rule. It refers to the degree to which the test appears to measure work-related content and should be distinguished from surface validity, which involves the degree to which the test appears to be effective for job applicants (Gilliland, 1993). According to (e.g., Bauer, Maertz, Dolen, & Campion, 1998; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996), applicants generally prefer procedures that they consider work-related rather than seemingly unrelated tests. Sonja Schinkel et al. mentioned Gilliland in 2004 and found performance opportunities in 1993. Another important procedural fairness rule is related to the applicant’s opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities and the possibility of exerting control during the test. Since situational factors can cause instantaneous changes in a person’s evaluation of oneself (Schroth & Shah, 2000), this study regards self-evaluation as a dynamic and state-based structure. In addition, it will study the procedures for rejected applicants and the role of the concept of fairness in distribution.

Motowidlo & Van Scotter (1994) pointed out that cognitive ability testing as a selection tool has some important shortcomings. First, while cognitive ability can predict overall job performance, cognitive ability may not be able to predict different aspects of performance and other structures, such as personality. Hunter & Hunter (1984) further pointed out that cognitive ability tests have been shown to have adverse effects. According to Moscoso (2000) on the fairness of interviews, empirical research and interviews on adverse effects are not extensive. However, what has been done is largely reassuring. Huffcutt and Roth (1998) show that interviews have almost no negative impact on ethnic minorities, and structured interviews are better than unstructured interviews in this respect.

From the above stated sorted and organized literature, the main focus of the researchers had remained up to the applicant’s reaction and perception. The basic is that it is not only the organization that selects the individual, but the individual also takes the decision in choosing his desired organization. For this reason, it is the perception that helps the individual whether to apply for the job in a particular organization. The candidates are more concerned with the fairness in the selection procedures, and the research has proved that fairness has a larger impact on individuals’ interest to apply and join the organization; moreover, the literature also emphasizes that this perception may affect the performance of an individual while working after selection. Further in the research, it has been suggested that in order to form a fair assessment, the individual rely on the cues from the different sources about which organization must be working on.

A most interesting finding is that the candidates tend to prefer procedures that are forward-looking rather than those that concern the past only; it should be job-related. The researchers believe that candidates should be offered feedback as it helps them to make their perception about the selection procedures more fair and sophisticated. There is no controversy among the researchers that the main characteristic of the selection procedures is that it must explore the required skills, abilities, aptitudes and other characteristics necessary to perform the requirement of the job, but more important is that it should be seen by those whom they are going to address transparent, fair and job-relevant. Some researchers have proved that their results showed that perceived job- relevance affects perceived fairness, and it is also the fact that test performance affects both perceptions indirectly through perceived performance.

Research Methodology

This study is an exploratory study where the population consists of all those who had at least applied for the job above basic pay scale level 17. The sampling technique that the researcher applied was the geographical sampling technique, where the total sample was 200 applicants divided into two categories equally.

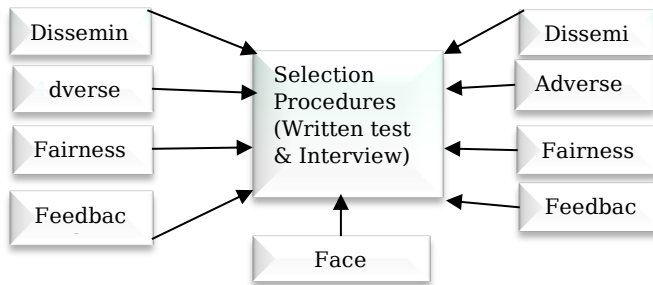
Table 1. Data Collection Details

Strata	Selected		Non selected	
Survey Status	Distributed	Received	Distributed	Received
Muzaffarabad	10	10	10	10

Bagh	10	9	10	6
Rawalkot	10	8	10	9
Sudnoti	10	8	10	6
Bhimber	10	8	10	7
Mirpur	10	10	10	6
Kotli	10	8	10	8
Refugee 1990	10	3	10	9
Refuge Pak	10	9	10	5
Total	90	73	90	66
Response rate	100	0.811111111	100	0.733333333

The data collection tool adopted by the researcher was a questionnaire that was used by [EVA Perous et al. \(2004\)](#) that contains 48 items based on a 5-point Likert scale. For analyzing the data, SPSS latest version were used to derive results. Both descriptive and Chi-Square were used for the analysis.

Research Model



Results

Face Validity

Hypothesis 1: Both the groups of applicants share similar perception regarding face validity.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Selected Candidates	66	3.82	.927
Focus on PQ	66	2.83	1.235
KSA job related	66	1.59	1.022
JRQ in Inter	66	2.55	.845
crucial factors JR	66	3.23	.921
Non selected	66	2.03	1.052
Focus on PQ	66	2.36	.905
KSA job related	66	2.80	1.011
JRQ in Inter	66		
key factors JR	66		

Table 3. Chi-Square Analysis

	Selected Candidates				Non selected Candidates			
	Focus on PQ	KSA job related	JRQ in W&I	key factors JR	Focus on PQ	KSA job related	JRQ in Inter	Crucial factors JR
Chi-Square	15.333 ^a	50.515 ^b	84.152 ^b	45.394 ^a	33.758 ^a	69.303 ^b	81.727 ^b	32.333 ^b
df	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000

The above data about whether the selection test and interview are looking about the previous qualification or forward-looking, the results of the selected candidates show a fully positive trend towards this that these selection procedures are backwards-looking with slightly strong chi-square value. While a nonselected candidate also shows a positive trend, hence keeping in view that trend is the same, we accept this hypothesis that the written test and interview are academic-oriented, not job oriented. Therefore with reference to this, we accept the hypothesis. The second aspect of the face validity is that whether KSA is job-relevant or not; the selected candidate's response in this regard is that they are not sure that whether this is job-related or not, but the non selected candidates are showing a disagreement trend. However, the chi-square of the non selected has a more significant probability. Therefore this hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is no similarity between the perception of selected candidates and nonselected candidates about the relevancy of KSA.

Job relevant question in the interview results reveal that selected candidates fully disagree; their trend is towards the negative side. However, the trend of non-selected candidates seems uncertain; they are no sure about this. Therefore, this hypothesis is rejected because both have a different approach. Finally, on the question that do they believe that those crucial factors of the job have been addressed in the written test or in an interview, the response was similar in the perception. The results of both groups show an uncertain trend. Therefore we will accept this hypothesis, which means that both have no opinion in this regard.

Hypothesis 2: Selected and nonselected candidates have a common perception about the feedback provided by the selection authority.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics (Selected Candidates)			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
feed from authority	66	3.21	1.045
Descriptive Statistics (nonselected candidates)			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
feed from authority	66	2.70	1.037

Table 5. Chi-Square Analysis

Test Statistics (nonselected candidates)	
	feed from authority
Chi-Square	50.667 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.002
Test Statistics (selected candidates)	
	feed from authority
Chi-Square	58.848 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.12

This hypothesis that whether the organizations are providing timely feedback to the candidates about their performance on their test or interview. It is clear from the above-mentioned statistics that both have a different point of view. The candidates who have been selected seem to have a positive perception about the provision of feedback to the candidates of their test or interview performances. However, the non selected candidates are uncertain about this situation. Their data shows an uncertain trend. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no similarity in the perception of selection procedures feedback.

Hypothesis 3: Candidates Selected and not Selected Both have the Common Perception about the Selection Procedures Fairness.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Selected candidates			
Access to Job information	66	3.94	1.165
Certain influences	66	2.36	1.047
Stand for rights	66	3.02	1.045
Equal Chance	66	3.33	1.429
Issuance of Merit list	66	3.32	1.242
Non selected candidates			
Access to JR information	66	3.54	.862
Certain influences	66	2.24	.824
Stand for rights	66	2.74	1.027
Equal Chance	66	4.06	.721
Issuance of Merit list	66	3.06	1.263

Table 7. Chi-Square Analysis

	Selected Candidates					Non selected Candidates				
	Access to JR information	Certain influences	Stand for rights	Equal Chance	Issuance of Merit list	Access to JR information	Certain influences	Stand for rights	Equal Chance	Issuance of Merit list
Chi-Square	40.212 ^a	11.333 ^b	24.061 ^b	25.970 ^a	28.545 ^a	21.636 ^b	32.667 ^b	41.121 ^a	66.485 ^b	19.758 ^a
df	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.010	.010	.002	.001	.000	.001	.000	.010	.0010	.001

Regarding equal chance and time provided to applicants to prove their capabilities, both selected and non-selected candidates seem positive in this regard. However, the chi-square of the selected shows that this trend is more positive as compared to the non selected candidates. Therefore this hypothesis is also accepted, which means that this is the fact that in terms of chance and time, the procedures seem fair. On the issue of merit list, the outcome is that both selected candidates and non-selected candidates seem to have a similar trend of perception, which is uncertainty. However, the selected candidates have a stronger chi-square value which shows that their trend is stronger than non-selected candidates, but the trend is the same uncertainty. So this hypothesis is also accepted. Fairness in the selection procedures will be analyzed by keeping the above two statistical tables in mind.

Now from the below mentioned descriptive statistics and Chi-square values in table no 4.5.2 and 4.5.3, respectively, the issue that whether selected candidates and non-selected candidates have a similar perception on the issue of assessment level by the senior experts in the relevant field or not. Here selected candidates and non-selected candidates are uncertain about the assessment level of the written test papers by the relevant experts; their trend shows that selected candidates and non selected both are uncertain about the assessment level of the written test by the relevant experienced professionals in the field; therefore this hypothesis is accepted. This means no such relationship in perception exists.

Discussion

The first finding of this study is that no matter whether they are selected or unselected candidates, these two types of candidates almost have a negative view of the work content of the selection process, which means that the face validity is questionable. They clearly recognize that the current selection process, written examination or interview, is not forward-looking. Now we compare the practice in the organization, we find that most organizations have adopted two models, one is a written examination, and the other is an interview. In the written test, almost one person must take nine essays. These essays include questions from prescribed books in various disciplines, such as English, Urdu, and other such books. Therefore, candidates' views on the selection process are true and close to reality. Experts also believe that the selection process does not match the evaluation

of work-related dimensions such as KSA. These results are partially consistent with the research of Macan, Avedon, Paese, & Smith (1994); the research of Schmidt et al. (1977) shows that selection procedure that simulates actual work behaviors, such as situational interviews, work samples, and inboxes And role-playing is considered to have higher surface validity and is considered to be better than the pen-and-paper method.

In this study, it was found that candidates did not view the organization's feedback mechanism positively. The selected candidates show a positive trend, but this may be due to their choice. The authorities still maintain interaction with them, but the unselected candidates express concern about feedback on their test performance. This is their right. Compared with the current feedback mechanism of various organizations, different organizations have different approaches. For example, in PSC, after the written test, only four candidates received the interview notice and are still in the dark. As an autonomous organization, they sometimes adopt a Similar approach. Method, sometimes only the finalists are required to conduct an interview. So, in general, if we conclude that one thing in common, then the unselected person will not provide any feedback at all. This result is partly consistent with the findings of [Roebuck and Van Oudenhoven \(1999\)](#), who emphasized the need to provide feedback to candidates to avoid any complications.

Candidates expressed doubts about the fairness of the organization's selection process because they believed that the test results (procedural fairness) were influenced by political factions. Although there seems to be a positive attitude towards the equal opportunities clause and taking any position on any issue, it is quite difficult, time-consuming, and costly because a person can defend his or her rights through the courts, which may take longer time does not require a lot of costs brilliantly. The merit list is a problem because only a few names of each position, about 4, are shown in the merit list, and the list has not been disseminated in the media. This finding is partly consistent with Rynes, who found in (1993) that situational characteristics affect the fairness of the selection process to candidates.

The first limitation of this study is having access to the secondary data from the selection authority. According to the laws of the territory, if somebody wants data, even his personnel records has to get that through court orders. This problem has also been faced by many researchers in this field. So the results of this research can't generalize these results unless an empirical study will not be made on the predictive and other validates of their selection test and interview. However, the results have been seen with the conformity of the available data of the selection procedures. Another limitation of this study is the fact that perception of procedural fairness was measured after subjects had appeared in any part of the test. Therefore, subjects' procedural fairness perceptions might have been influenced by their perceptions of the outcome, which might have been one of the cause that selected candidates were looking more positive at many places. The most important limitation of this study was that people who were employed showed their reluctance for giving sharing their perception or opinion on variable studied in this research. Therefore again, the information they gave in the questionnaire might be biased and can not be relied on for any final judgment.

Conclusions

Though pessimistic conclusion regarding whether perceptions really matter to take this research as food for thought. One factor is clear that candidates' perception matter because almost all the categories of the candidates, whether selected or not selected, form an opinion which they share with the environment. And if they will speak positively about the outcomes and procedures it-self, it will restore confidence in organizational systems because the people ultimately run the organizations.

At last, this research has a higher value because this is the first such study in the field of selection under the whole area of Azad Jammu & Kashmir or even in the whole of Pakistan. The matter is clear that organization have to change their pattern and enhance the quality of their written test and interview to make it job oriented.

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