

# AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH TO MAP THE APPLICANTS' REACTION TO THE SELECTION PROCEDURE IN TERMS OF THE FAIRNESS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN CHENNAI

Dr. Shameem<sup>1</sup>, R. Jayan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor, AMET Business School, AMET University, Kanathur, Chennai, India

<sup>2</sup> Research Scholar, AMET Business School, AMET University, Kanathur, Chennai, India

Email - shameemanwar2003@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the perception of employees with respect to the selection process in the hospitality industry in Chennai. This is an descriptive study based on primary data collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire has been personally administered on a sample size of 70 chosen from ten top rated hotels in Chennai. The results indicate that applicants' reactions to selection procedure in terms of over-all, they believed that the selection procedure employed by the organization was unfair in selecting the people for the jobs. In addition, demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, work experience and job tenure affect the applicant's assessment on the fairness of the selection process.*

**Key Words:** *Selection process, applicants' reaction, two-way communication, equal opportunity to perform, fairness in selection*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

People are the most important asset of any organisation, and the success of that organisation depends on having people with the right skills and abilities. To make sure that the right people are recruited in the first place, a fair, structured and professional selection procedure must be used. Effective recruitment and selection are critical to organisational success. They enable companies to have high performing employees who are also satisfied with their jobs, thus contributing positively to the firm's bottom line. On the contrary, Poor recruitment and selection often result in mismatches which can have negative consequences for an organisation. A misfit, not in tune with the organisation's philosophies and goals can damage production, customer satisfaction, and relationship with suppliers and the overall quality of work. Poor selection devices can result in increased staff turnover, increased costs for the organisation, the lowering of morale against the existing staff and legal claims against the organisation. Therefore it becomes indispensable to devise an effective recruitment and selection strategy to attract the right person for the right job.

Organisations have started to place high emphasis on Applicant/Employees perceptions of their selection procedures, since the benefits that accrue to the Organisation is manifold. Along the years, the criticisms for the "Traditional approach" increased and one started to realize the several disadvantages of neglecting the perspective of the applicant. Among these criticisms are that Selection is an expression of differences in social power and Selection systems are non-transparent, candidates are not given the relevant information about what is measured and what conclusions made as observed by Schuler, Farr and Smith 1993. Within the context of Selection and Assessment, the welfare of the Individual is for a longtime left out of consideration. Besides ethical considerations, the Organisation can benefit in several ways from taking the perspective of the applicant into account. Low acceptance by the candidates of Selection and Assessment devices used by the Organisation will decrease the efficiency of the selection procedure through Selection ratio, drop-out, job acceptance etc. Moreover, the Selection situation is the first encounter of the applicant with the Organisation. Therefore, it will to a large extent determine the image of the Organisation for the Applicant, Job acceptance intentions, and turnover intentions. These perceptions of the candidates should be considered because they can have direct effects on Applicant's motivation to do well on the test, how much they prepare for the test and how anxious they are during the test. These perceptions of the applicants relate to what they consider as "Fair" or "unfair" with respect to the selection process they have undergone with the organisation. The "Selection process" started to be considered a "Social process" with different parties having different interests and expectations and reacting in different ways. This was better explained by Prieto as a genuinely "Interactive process" between an individual applying for a job and a member of the Organisation that is hiring for the said position. It should be remembered that this "Social process" approach is not intended to replace the "Traditional psychometric approach" but to complement it.

## 2. FAIRNESS PERCEPTIONS:

"Fairness perceptions" also relate to the existing work force in the Organisation as to how they consider the policies of the organisation, whether they are fair or not, what they feel about it, the promotional policies of the

Organisation, what does the Organisation do to improve upon the relationship not only between supervisor and subordinates but also those that exists between peer to peer. In short “Fairness” is a key process value which is aimed at ensuring decisions is made objectively; Practices reflect the just treatment of employees and applicants. “Fairness” covers a number of elements related to selection processes including:

- Initial appointment
- Opportunities for upward and lateral mobility  
For existing employees, “Fairness” may mean and indicate:
- Transparency
- Perceived outcomes, competency etc.

### 3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The information technology sector as well as the Business process outsourcing industry is witnessing an enormous growth in India. Even though this has given rise to increased employment opportunities and potential for advancement, it has resulted in heavy attrition rates. The hotel industry wherein the researchers has undertaken this study is no exception to this, and is witnessing heavy attrition rates in spite of various steps taken by the management to control it, like higher pay benefits, performance based incentives, holiday package for the family of the employees, training programmes to name a few.

### 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To map the applicants' reactions to selection procedure in terms of the fairness of selection based on the select five procedural justice rules namely, job relatedness, consistency of administration, feedback, interpersonal treatment and provision of information in the chosen 5 Star Hotels in Chennai.

### 5. METHODOLOGY:

The research design is empirical and the tool used for the study is a questionnaire. The sources of data were both primary and secondary and the sample size was limited to seventy respondents chosen from the hospitality sector in Chennai.

### 6. MODEL USED IN THE RESEARCH:

Gilliland's (1993) model of Applicant's reaction to the selection process has been used as the basic framework for this research. Gilliland (1993) proposed ten procedural justice rules in his “Applicants reactions model” and concludes that the satisfaction of all the ten procedural justice rules or the dimensions would lead to overall fairness of the selection process carried out by an organization as perceived by the applicants and violation of these procedural justice rules would lead to the selection process to be considered as unfair. They are job relatedness, opportunity to perform, reconsideration opportunity, consistency of administration, feedback, justification for the decision, honesty, interpersonal effectiveness., two way communication and propriety of questions.

Among the ten dimensions proposed by Gilliland the researcher has considered five dimensions to determine the employee's fairness perceptions of the selection process in the organization where the researcher has undertaken the research. They are:

- Job relatedness
- Consistency of administration.
- Feedback.
- Interpersonal treatment.
- Provision of information

The researcher was attracted toward this end in finding out what the employees (the then applicants to the selection process) perceive about the selection process carried out by the organisation. In other words the researcher wanted to study whether low productivity, absenteeism, attrition, now witnessed by the organisation is due to ignoring the perceptions of applicants/employees about the various selection tools used in the selection process by the organisation, wherein the researcher has undertaken this study and finally the researcher comes out with some recommendations to be implemented to improve upon the said selection process as perceived by the employees of the said organisation.

The researcher tries to find out how far the employees perceive about the selection process, whether they consider it as “Fair” or “Unfair” in terms of the five dimensions, namely Job relatedness, consistency of administration, Feedback, Interpersonal treatment, Provision of information with respect to the demographic variables such as age, marital status, educational qualification, experience, tenure with the organisation as these variables can exert an influence on how employees perceive about the selection process being carried out by the organisation.

### Job Relatedness

Job relatedness pertains to the content of the tests which should measure relevance to the job situation. Table 1 describes the applicants' perception on the job relatedness of the selection procedure used by the hotel.

**Table 1 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test on Job Relatedness**

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	The application blanks asked for all relevant details, which would help the selectors choose the right candidate.	-5.253	0.000*
2.	The application blanks asked for more information that what is required for the job.	-1.297	0.195
3.	Applicants' should not be asked to fill the application blanks until they are selected.	-1.983	0.047*
4.	Application blanks are duplication of information as applicants have already sent their resumes for the jobs.	-0.266	0.790
5.	Aptitude test is the best way to select applicants for the job(s).	-4.413	0.000*
6.	Personality tests are a good way to select applicants for the job(s).	-4.965	0.000*
7.	All the tests that I went through the selection process, measured my suitability for the job.	-0.076	0.940
8.	The technical interview contained questions which tested factors necessary for the performance of the job.	-4.786	0.000*
9.	Technical interviews are better way to select applicants for technical positions.	-0.925	0.355
10.	HR interview asked the applicants to expand on the projects they have done, their strengths and weaknesses, generic issues etc.	-5.565	0.000*
11.	Selection tools which are scientifically validated and consistent can help the organization to choose the right applicants for the job.	-5.169	0.000*
12.	Personality tests need not be conducted as these tests contain similar questions which are asked in the HR interview.	-1.993	0.046*
13.	The HR interview contained questions which tested factors necessary for the performance of the job.	-0.182	0.856

Note : \* significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 1 shows the responses obtained for statements 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12 may not reflect the true response of the majority of applicants at 5% level of significance. Applicant blanks, tests and interviews have failed to receive good feedback from majority of the applicants.

### Consistency of Administration

Consistency of administration is consistency in scoring or interpretation of scores over a group of people and over time.

**Table 2 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test on Consistency of Administration**

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	All the applicants were treated in the same way during the selection process.	-4.983	0.000*
2.	There was no bias or partiality shown during the selection process.	-1.791	0.073
3.	I had ample time to complete the technical test.	-0.566	0.571
4.	I had ample time to complete the aptitude test.	-1.845	0.065
5.	I had ample time to complete the personality test	-5.297	0.000*
6.	The instructions for doing the tests were very clear.	-0.460	0.646

Note : \* significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

The Wilcoxon test shows that majority of the applicants are not be satisfied with the time allotted to the tests given. In general, the applicants felt that no bias was shown to any group and they were treated equally as expected in a selection process. Table 2 reflects that the response on partiality may not be true.

### Interpersonal Treatment

Interpersonal treatment of the recruiters is very important in making the applicants feel welcomed in the hotel.

**Table 3 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic on Interpersonal Treatment**

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	Recruiters tried to reduce the applicants stress level during the conduct of the tests.	-0.616	0.538
2.	The test administrators treated the applicants politely during the selection process.	-2.784	0.005*
3.	Selectors were empathetic and created optimal test conditions.	-0.292	0.771

Note : \* significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

Applicants have indicated that the recruiters respected and treated them well. Majority of the applicants agreed that the recruiters succeeded in reducing their stress during the tests. They were treated politely by the test administrators. The statement that they were treated politely by the test administrators may not represent the true response of the applicants. Also, they agreed that the selectors had shown concern and had provided the most advantageous test conditions.

#### Provision of Information:

Another important dimension included in the study is provision of information. It is considered vital since it would give the applicants knowledge about the organization, specifically its goals and core values, the expectations for the job applied for and the mechanics of the selection process.

**Table 4 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic on Provision of Information**

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	Recruiters provided a general overview of the selection process which made candidates overcome their stress and anxiety.	-0.782	0.434
2.	Applicants' were informed about the tasks, roles and responsibilities of the positions they are applying at the beginning/during the selection process.	-1.592	0.111
3.	Applicants were given an overview of the organization's structure and all relevant details.	-4.840	0.000*
4.	There is no need to provide the details of the organization to all the applicants' until they are selected.	-1.765	0.078
5.	Applicants were informed beforehand about the question pattern and time allotted for each test.	-0.481	0.631
6.	Applicants were aware of the cut-off scores for selection.	-1.790	0.073
7.	Applicants were informed of the career prospects within the organization.	-1.081	0.280
8.	The recruiters introduced themselves to all applicants' by expanding on their educational qualification, experience, roles etc.	-0.617	0.537
9.	It is not necessary for recruiters to introduce themselves to applicants, as it does not affect the performance of the applicants during the selection process.	-3.129	0.002*
10.	Applicants were informed about the scientific validity of the various selection tests used at the beginning of the selection process.	-1.308	0.191

Note : \* significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

Wilcoxon test shows that the majority's response may not entail disagreement on the presence of the recruiter's self-introduction during the selection. Majority of the applicants felt that the recruiters did not talk about how the selection process would go along which could have reduced their stress and anxiety. Also, the validity of the selection process was not discussed. The technical aspects of the tests which include the question pattern, time allotted for the test and cut-off scores were not presented by the recruiters. These could have given the applicants a target of the result that they could expect..

#### Providing Feedback

Providing feedback is important to give the applicants an idea of their performance.

#### . Table 5 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic on Providing Feedback

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	Applicants received immediate feedback on their performances in the tests.	-0.737	0.461
2.	Giving feedback to the applicants' helps the applicants to improve upon their performances in the future.	-0.183	0.855

Table 5 reflects that the responses obtained are significantly true. Besides failing to provide feedback, the hotel also fell short in considering two-way communication. It is giving the applicants a chance to air their input or views in the selection process. It can also mean providing the applicants an opportunity to ask about the organisation, position applied for or the selection procedure employed.

### Two Way Communication

**Table 6 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic on Two Way Communication**

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	The applicants were asked to give feedback on their experiences in the selection process.	-0.131	0.896
2.	The applicants were asked to give their opinion about the different tests.	-0.510	0.610

Table 6 shows that the ratings obtained are significantly true.

### Opportunity to Perform

Opportunity to perform is the dimension which measures the applicant's knowledge on the job applied for. It is a very important measure that should be included in selection tests administered.

**Table 7 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic on Opportunity to Perform**

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	Application blanks asked for applicants to demonstrate with relevant examples as to how they met the job requirement	-1.721	0.085
2.	The selection process offered enough opportunity for the applicant to demonstrate their unique knowledge, skills and abilities.	-4.478	0.000*

Note : \* significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 7 shows that according to the applicants, the selection process was not an avenue for them to display their distinct skills, knowledge and abilities as opposed to what the Wilcoxon test showed which reflects the insignificance of the response.

**Table 8 Descriptive Statistics on the Overall Fairness of the Selection Process**

S. No.	Statements	Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Statistic (Z)	P Value
1.	This selection procedure was a fair way of selecting people for the said jobs.	-1.540	0.123
2.	The transparency of the selection process convinced me of the fairness of the selection process.	-0.012	0.990
3.	The selection process needs to be reviewed and changed.	-1.714	0.087
4.	The selection process is related to the jobs.	-0.771	0.441
5.	I felt very good about the selection process.	-1.765	0.078

Table 8 presents that over-all, the applicants saw the selection procedure employed in the hotel as unfair.

**Test of Independence between the responses and demographic variables****Table 9 Chi-square ( $\chi_c^2$ ) test statistic and P-value**

	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Educational Qualification	Work Experience	Tenure
The selection procedure was a fair way of selecting people for the said jobs.	21.594 (0.000*)	34.861 (0.000*)	21.594 (0.000*)	41.774 (0.000*)	42.151 (0.000*)	37.260 (0.000*)
The transparency of the selection process convinced me of the fairness of the selection process.	5.558 (0.062)	26.691 (0.000*)	5.558 (0.062)	13.441 (0.009*)	26.493 (0.000*)	32.479 (0.000*)
The selection process needs to be reviewed and changed.	13.185 (0.004*)	23.054 (0.006*)	13.185 (0.004*)	19.158 (0.004*)	65.831 (0.000*)	40.019 (0.000*)
The selection process is related to the jobs.	12.310 (0.015*)	28.123 (0.005*)	12.310 (0.015*)	30.650 (0.000*)	58.399 (0.000*)	55.686 (0.000*)
I felt very good about the selection process.	7.117 (0.068)	22.283 (0.008*)	7.117 (0.068)	26.860 (0.000*)	44.500 (0.000*)	38.304 (0.000*)

Table 9 shows that the response on the fairness of the selection process is dependent on gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, work experience and job tenure of the applicants. Same results were observed on statements regarding the appropriateness of the selection process with the job and the need for changes in the process. Gender and marital status do not affect the applicant's response on the transparency of the selection process and the over-all assessment of the process.

The above table shows that demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, work experience and job tenure affect the applicant's assessment on the fairness of the selection process as shown below.

**7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**

In general, majority of the applicants believed that job relatedness, consistency of administration and interpersonal treatment were considered in the hotel's selection procedure. However, the hotels failed to communicate with the applicants in terms of presenting details about the selection procedures, the position currently open and the organization itself. Also, the applicants were not granted the opportunity to perform as well as give feedback on the whole selection process. Since communication was taken for granted in the selection process, the applicants did not feel good about it. They believed that the selection procedure was not transparent enough in selecting whom to hire. Thus, they recommend that changes be made in the whole process. Over-all, they believed that the selection procedure employed by the organization was unfair in selecting the people for the jobs.

**8. SUGGESTIONS:**

The hospitality industry should try to provide more information with respect to the selection process in the following areas:

- Details about the hotel
- Selection tools - sequence and relevance.
- Career and professional opportunities within the organisation.
- Structure of the hotel

Some of the respondents have indicated a need for further improvement in the treatment extended to the prospective employees during the selection process. It would be useful to the candidates if they could be provided immediate feedback on their performances in the selection tests and probability of selection. More transparency if introduced would better the applicants' perception about the selection process. Transparency is desirable in the following areas:

- Weightage assigned to the various selection tests and interviews.
- Justification for selection of the candidate or for their non-selection.

With respect to work experience, candidates with work experience of more than five years could be directly called for the interviews. The reason being those candidates would have already faced similar tests. The hospitality industry would be able to attract and retain the best talents if it could consider introducing "Situational judgment test" which tests candidates on aspects like candidates' ability to be a team player, candidates' ability to work under stress etc.

## 9. CONCLUSION:

Selection process being the first encounter of the applicant/employee with the hotel n passes on many messages either intentionally or otherwise to the applicants/employees about the organization. If the recruitment and selection process does not consider the perceptions of the applicant/employees it could leads to high employee turnover, low morale among the employees, absenteeism, low productivity and lack of commitment among the employees etc. Therefore it becomes indispensable for any organisation to consider the perceptions of the applicants/employees about the selection process employed by it, not only to avoid the aforesaid unfavourable outcomes which are detrimental to the success of the organisation but also to attract and retain the best talents within the industry.

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