

Selection Procedures, Face Validity and Fairness in Higher Academic Institutions of Pakistan

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Abstract

This study has examined the face validity and fairness of the selection procedures employed by the government controlled public sector colleges and universities in Pakistan. The data was collected from the (N=160, equally divided) employees as faculty members serving in the government controlled colleges and universities separately in two different panels to test the hypothesis by applying a two sample t-test to make analysis. The key finding was that the employees of both government controlled public sector colleges and universities showed negative perception about the face validity about the higher institutional academic screening tests and interview for faculty selection. Most important contribution of this study is that authors concluded face validity has a significant relationship with the fairness of selection procedures and practices that need further study by conduct it on macro level across the cultures and different set up. Moreover, this study has higher practical importance for the selection authorities to improve their selection mechanism for bringing the right talent in.

Keywords: Government controlled, Public Sector, Face validity, Screening test, final interview, Fairness

1. Introduction

Since the human relation movement which started soon after the Hawthorne studies in 1930s, when Elton Mayo's experiment in 1927 that paved the fundamental way for the development of human relation in the industry (Bramel, D., & Friend, R, 1981) The researchers analyzed the human factor in different aspects in an organization that paved a way on which personnel management and later on human resource management emerged that is considered a primary and core resource (Hsu et al., 2000). The most significant function of the human resource management is the recruitment and selection that plays a crucial role for the survival and failure of an organization (Ofori & Aryeetey, 2011). One of a reason is that this stage is a base where the people interact first time with the organizational authorities regarding their expected selection as employees where they regardless of their selection or rejection leaves an impression on their experiences which they reflect in different ways during their career especially if the applicants perceive the fairness of the selection mechanism, that shows the impact on organizational attractiveness and their motivation regarding the organization (Bauer et al, 1998. From the other aspect this is a serious stage particularly with reference to the KASOs and according to the Polychart (2011) who elaborated the staffing mechanism through a model in which the most important aspect is the emergence of human capital (KSAOs) which is knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics, that after entering into the organization goes through the multi process of an organizations which becomes the organizational human capital, this is what organizations want because the competitive advantages depend on this which help the organization to gain superior performance as compare to their competitors.

The present study focuses on the analysis of the face validity and fairness of the selection procedures employed by the selection authorities about the selection of the academic staff for the government run colleges and universities of Pakistani controlled part of Kashmir, which was left by the British rule in 1947 unsettled and undecided. This part of Kashmir is known as State of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Pakistan, which has its own government with legislative assembly and all other departments under the different ministries. Every year the government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir does higher hundreds of its employees for its governmental institutions for render their services for the government among which major chunk of employment is being made in the field of education. Concerning to this study the government is making selection of the government colleges through a specific mechanism and the universities in public sector, that are autonomous, which have their own specific selection mechanism for their employees. These mechanisms are comprised on advertisement and then a written test as screening tool on which the selection authorities of both the categories conduct interview for the final selection in which hundreds of candidate apply and appear for their selection.

This research has a higher significance form the multiple aspects among which keeping in view that this study focuses on government run colleges and public sector universities simultaneously, where the employee after selection spends rest of his life up to the age of 60 years in serving these institutions under their different capacities that has an all time impact on the organization (Nabi et.al., 2014). Secondly no such research has ever conducted in any

region of the SAARC countries, especially with reference to the face validity and selection fairness in the higher educational institutions. Therefore, this study will not only be useful for the concerned selection making authorities but also for the future research point of view as we have not got recently through any similar type of study being conducted especially in the public sector higher academic institutions that are being controlled by the government. Moreover, this study will also be helpful by looking into the objectivity of relationship between the screening test and interview with face validity, which some researchers are in opinion that it is not important because of its base on observation (Newfields, T. 2002; Lowenthal, K. 1996).

Face validity has been defined the facility in terms of the degree to which the individual items of the test are being perceived by its users or applicants who are the respondents that these items are predicting the relevant assessment objectives (Anastasi, 1988). In a study (Nabi et.al., 2014) have argued that the selection mechanism of the higher academic sphere of Pakistan does have the issues of certain influences from the organizational politics and issues of job relatedness as well, that makes the right selection doubtful. Face validity is considered one of a important tool that is based on the observation by its users experiences which according to some researchers is a very important learning lesson that for the planners of various projects can use face validity to find any such area which they have missed during their analysis of their projects and due to this they will be able to increase the value of their plan by bringing timely and needed improvements (Gaber & Gaber,2010) while as on the other hand the fairness is another aspect of the selection mechanism that have a vital significance from the organizational perspective as well on the recruitment and selection stage when a new candidate perceive fairly treated during the selection process, that leaves long lasting effects once a candidate joins the organization as employee (Cropanzana et al, 2007). While as researchers argued that fairly treated applicants recommend the organization to others while as in case of not fairly treated they may go for litigation for their possible remedy (Bauer et al, 2001).

2. Review of related literature

Face validity has been the facility in terms of the degree to which the individual items of the test are being perceived by its users or applicants who are the respondents that these items are predicting the relevant assessment objectives (Allen and Yen, 1979; Anastasi, 1988). Gaber and Gaber (2010) have discussed the face validity of a research as the basic common sense which one derives after reading the conclusions of the research and making a judgment that whether this research makes a sense or not. In the context of the selection of the employees for the government it is necessary to see the same from the applicant perspective. Krippendorff., K. (1980)has elaborated that if the content analysis is unable to prove that the findings are based on the strong reliability and validity, then the practioners and those people who want to apply them will hesitating to implement them especially when the cost and the expectation of the client is at the higher end. Kerlinger, F. (1986) has described that validity is generally knows as the question mark of that whether the asked question of a rating assessment does measures the accurate answer. Various researchers have mentioned that the face validity is not important because it give the results that are based on observation and

cannot be verified through any assessment procedures (Newfields, T. 2002; Lowenthal, K. 1996).

Krippendorff, K. (1980) has mentioned in his study that the reliability for a test design has three different characteristic that makes a test reliable and these are stability, reproducibility and accuracy. Gaber and Gaber (2010) have discussed that there is increasing trend of looking the research findings or projects with its face validity a qualitative assessment aspect because this enable the people involved in the planning to understand the feasibility of their findings and directly the way it will be experienced by the community perspective. Underhill, N. (1987) has stated that it has been seen that the researchers are using statistics that makes it difficult for a common sensible people and this may be the reason that planners are focusing on the face validity that analyzes the results on its face value. Gaber and Gaber (2010) have identified a very important learning lesson that for the planners of various projects can use face validity to find any such area which they have missed during their analysis of their projects and due to this they will be able to increase the value of their plan by bringing timely and needed improvements. Robertson & Kandola, (1982) has mentioned in his study about a historic case (Griggs vs. Duke Power, 1971 related to the human resource management in which the US supreme court has outlawed any such selection test which is not job relevant, and we argue that this is with special significance with reference to the face validity of the selection procedures as face validity can be the first step to take the case into court by any applicant or any other party. It has been argued long earlier that the test which are based on work sampling are considered most effective in testing the applicants as compare to other selection techniques because of their predictive and other validities that causes higher applicant acceptability (Robertson & Kandola (1982).

Shotland et. al., (1998) has explained that the face validity is the most effective tool to see that applicants see the selection process favorably and the managers are now preparing new techniques that are face valid, also work as a realistic job preview (RJP). Ellsworth et.al, (1990) has defined the face validity as the extent of a selection too it measure what that particular selection tool is being supposed to measure. Smither et. al., (1993) have reported in his study that there is a strong correlation between the organizational perceived face validity and the attractiveness of the organizations. Shotland et. al., (1998) has argued in his conclusion that a face valid multimedia approach can be a good way to find the required KSAOs and such techniques if adopted can help the managers to develop an effective selection tool that may cause better feasibility and attractiveness for the organization along with the usefulness. Gaber and Gaber (2010) have mentioned with reference to (Dewey, 1935, p.81) “the measure of civilization is the degree in which the method of cooperative intelligence replaces the method of brute conflict”.

Proposition 1: The selection procedures of the government run college and universities are having positive relationship between the college and university employees about the face validity of screening tests for the interview as final stage.

In the contemporary world organizations has to see the selection function of the organization strategically to maintain or gain competitive advantage (Polychart, 2011). Academics in

government controlled institutions has to remain very vigilant to maintain the competitive advantage of its employees to remain competitive as compare to the private sector and especially with reference to the growing needs of the country as well. Schmidt & Zimmerman (2004) has shown in their study regarding the reliability of a structured and unstructured interview in which he proved through a meta-analysis that four unstructured interviews reliability are equal to a single structure interview. The selection authorities are using apparently structured interview through a panel but practice wise that is unstructured when it is being conducted to select a right person on right job. The selection authorities have to attract and find right talent which neither can be copied nor substituted to enhance the performance in organizations (Barney & Wright 1998). In a study (Polychart, 2011) has mentioned that structured interview are better than unstructured interviews because such tools has the ability to measure the different constructs and have lower subgroup difference which could further be minimized by such a panel interview that consist of diverse interviewers. According to the Polychart (2011) who elaborated the staffing mechanism through a model in which the most important aspect is the emergence of human capital (KSAOs) which is knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics, that after entering into the organization goes through the multi process of an organizations which becomes the organizational human capital, this is what organizations want because the competitive advantages depend on this which help the organization to gain superior performance as compare to their competitors. From the recruitment and selection point of view this is very important from the applicants point of view as the selection procedures has an impact on applicants' perception regarding face validity and reliability along with many other multi factors. Soete (2012) has mentioned that in order to meet the dilemma of diversity validity the organizations must focus on the fostering the applicants positive reaction and facilitate them full guidance in the form of coaching as well. Livens et. al.,(2005) have argued that in order to achieve the maximal performance the test as predictor must be matched with the job related criteria. Hardesty & Bearden (2004) have defined face validity in terms of its degree of measurement intention about a rating item and mentioned that face validity is very important to have the valid operationalization of the construct.

Preposition 2: The selection procedures of the government run college and universities are having positive relationship between the college and university employees about the face validity of interview to make the final selection

Applicants perception and reaction to the selection procedures have attached huge interest among different researchers who analyzed it in different perspectives, and among these a dominant focus is the fairness of selection procedures, that has an impact not only on the organizations attractiveness (Bauer et al, 1998) but also on the applicants motivation regarding a particular selection test (Chan et al, 1997). Rynes (1993) has argued that the main reason for making research on applicants' perception is that these selection process and procedures affect how they view the organization and how they will behave after attending the job. One of a key issue for the recruiting organizations is the increasing claims in the different courts about the discriminatory practices, and since the mid 1990s this has also remained one of the main issues for the organizations in the USA and UK (Harris, 2000). It

has been argued that fairly treated applicants recommend the organization to others while as in case of not fairly not treated may go for litigation for their possible remedy (Bauer et al, 2001). Many researchers have studied fairness of the selection on the basis of such sample who were not actual applicants for the job or actually haven't experienced the selection procedures while as only very few have focused on the actual job holders (Horvath, Ryan, & Stierwalt, 2000; Bauer, Truxillo, Sanchez, Craig, Ferrara, & Champion, 2001; Truxillo, Bauer, Champion, & Paronto, 2002).

Lambert et al, (2007) has noted that if candidates perceive that organizational selection procedures are fair, they remain happy with their job in the organization. Also the growing litigation cases signals that it is necessary to analyze the selection procedures from this perspective to see the face validity and reliability of the selection procedures. Some researchers have argued that researchers should focus on recruitment and selection practices rather than looking into the economic and technical aspects (Taylor, 2006). Aycan et al, (2000) has identified various countries that are under researched in the area of human resource management and Pakistan is among one of them and especially from the point of selection of the employees in the public sector institutions under the government control.

The first interaction between an organization and applicant is actually happening on the recruitment and selection stage when a new candidate perceive fairness treatment from the organization which has long lasting effects after this candidate joins the organization as employee (Cropanzana et al, 2007). Gilliland & Steiner, (1999) have mentioned that injustice in selection process may cause economic concerns to the organizations if best performers went away and even if they are very few in number because there is possibility that the one required by the organization may had been from among those applicants who went away. Cropanzana, (2007) argued that procedural justice can cover the undesired effects of those unfavorable outcomes and fair procedures bring trust and commitment, while as unfair procedures become the cause of mistrust and resentment. In the public institutions it has become common that their recruitment and selection practices are facing the issue of unfair practices and in USA & UK nepotism and cronyism is the main acquisition upon these public institutions (Taylor, 2006). Gilliland, (1993) suggested that fairness reaction by the applicants may have a relationship with the legal action against the recruiter. Hausknecht et al, (2004) found that applicants who have positive perception about the organizational selection procedures view organization more positive way and also they strongly recommend others for such organizations. Lemmink et al, (2003) have found that both corporate overall image and its employment image has direct relationship with the applicants intention to apply, thus these are very crucial and valuable factors in the labour market

The major cause that influences the perception is the favorable outcome of a recruitment and selection process but at the same time in some cases an applicant does not see his performance well before any feedback, as it is not enough to relate outcome with the perception only (Ryan & Polyhart, 2000), they also noted that applicants perceptions are being influenced by the type of selection procedures, assessment method, and the way applicant assess his performance and other job related information also whatever the outcome one receives has influence on ones perception. Cropanzano, (2003) have suggested that

organizations or selection authorities should substitute those tests which is lacking fairness and should not use such test. In many situations it is happening that applicants are being influenced by their experiences from already appeared selection procedures and also how they perform in the present situation (chan et al, 1997). Pre test perception regarding any selection procedure of an applicant has direct impact on ones performance and is highly significant because it has affects on the post test reaction of an applicant (Chan et al, 1998). Proposition 3: Employees of government run public sector colleges and universities have similar perception about the fairness of the selection procedures.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is a quantitative research that based on the face validity and fairness of the selection procedures of the government run colleges and the universities in the public sector. The data was collected from the employees of the government controlled higher academic institutions, i.e., colleges and universities. This data is a panel data as it was collected from colleges and university employees, under the capacities of lecturer, assistant and full professors separately for the analysis. Over all 300 questionnaire were distributed to be collected but only 160 responded properly by responding all questions, while as 20 percent were not considered for the analysis because of their multiple responses for a single statement. This data was collected on 5 point likert scale “survey questionnaire” ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

This data was separately categorized into two categories to enter in the SPSS software a well knows research software for analysis. These categories were made on the basis of colleges and universities separately. A two sample employee’s t-test assuming equal variance was applied to test the hypothesis to analyze the relationship between the understudy variables regarding the selection procedures of the government controlled public sector colleges and universities. The result were properly analyzed and discussed in their relevant sections.

4. Empirical Results and Discussion

Table 1. Statistical results of Face validity and Fairness

Variable	Institution	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P
Fairness	College	2.4875	1.23241	-4.304	.000**
	University	3.3750	1.37219		
FV Screening test	College	3.9250	.75095	5.383	.000**
	University	3.0813	1.18387		
FV Selection Interview	College	3.7750	.80308	4.252	.000**
	University	3.1875	.93921		

** p value is significant, total No. of observations 160

For the results an independent samples t-test was applied to make the comparison of the relationships between the variables under study in this research. For the proposition 1, the equal variance t-test p-value is $p = 0.000$ which is smaller than 0.05 that denotes a

significance difference between the college ($M=2.5$, $SD= 1.2$) and university ($M=3.4$, $SD= 1.4$) at t value= -4.30 employees regarding fairness of the selection process adopted by the government controlled public sector organizations of AJ&K. Therefore, there is enough evidence that this proposition doesn't hold true because the results indicate a significant difference between the two samples. For the proposition No. 2 the results indicate that the p value is significant and smaller than 0.05 with college employees $M=3.9$, $SD=.75$ and University employees $M=3.0$, $SD=1.18$ $t(80) =5.38$ which proves that there is significant difference between the two sample perceptions about face validity of screening tests or procedures, which shows that the proposition no. 2 doesn't hold true because both share opposite views about the face validity.

Regarding the third proposition of this study about the face validity of interview to make final selection, the results shows p value ($.000$) smaller than 0.05 that indicates the employees working in the government controlled colleges and public sector universities have not significant perception about their face validity. The Mean of college employees $M=3.8$, $SD .80$ while as universities $M=3.0$ $SD=.93$ and $t(80)$ value is 4.25 . Therefore, keeping in view the given results in above table, the 3rd proposition of this study too doesn't hold true and indicates significant difference between the face validity perceptions about the interview as final selection tool.

5. Discussion

The key findings of this result support that there is a significant difference between the apparently perceived validity of the selection procedures adopted by the government controlled public sector colleges and universities. Before going for the reasoning of our results it is pertinent to highlight some prevailing realities regarding the selection procedures of these college and university recruitment. Both in the colleges and universities the authorities are using written test as screening tool which they called as short listing test, which is based on academic work studied during the college or university degree examination. In other words this written test is similar to that those degree examination papers taken in the classes to pass a course which is a required qualification to get a degree. These tests are based on the knowledge based studied through a prescribed syllabus book with chapter wise, which in colleges teachers have to follow similar but in the universities the teacher is the authority to set his course outlines for their subjects and subsequently awarding grades, so in the university context teachers is more empowered then the colleges who cannot deviate the prescribed course set by a their affiliated university who award degrees on their behalf. Moreover, the colleges teachers recruitment are being made through a separate state body "public service commission" who get these written test papers prepared by university professors and then evaluated by some other individuals or some times by the same while as the university has its own recruitment and selection body that internally prepares these papers and makes their evaluation.

Now from the above scenario the found evidence is making of a logic of different perception about the face validity regarding the short listing or screening tests that are based on the written test which has no very poor or no relevancy with the original job activities that a

faculty members has to perform during their service. It has been analyzed that the major reason of poor face validity is that the screening tests are not based on the work sample which is necessary to make a good choice of selection for the job and this is also being supported by (Robertson & Kandola (1982) who has argued that the test which are based on work samples are considered most effective in testing the applicants as compare to other selection techniques because of their predictive and other validities that causes higher applicant acceptability. Moreover, if the purpose is to shortlist on the basis of knowledge or degree examination based system, then this could have been easily done without wastage of the precious resources of the organizations, i.e., to make a merit list on the basis of the already acquired grades or percentage of marks, which sometimes universities do adopt. However, that too will have the issue of job relevancy and face validity regarding the organizational and individual point of view.

The face validity about interview a final selection phase is highly significant and almost last filter to find a relevant and suitable person for the job and here in the colleges this is being done through a panel generally made by the public service commission while as the university it is being done through selection board which has few members who conduct final interview. This interview generally looks like a well structured from the point of view of that the number wise, though only one person sits who is considered as subject specialist and remaining are from different subjects under the chair of secretary of PSC in colleges selection and VC in the public sector universities panel but from the probing aspect this we cannot hold it as structured interview because of two obvious reasons. One reason is that the panel for college selection ask questions from different subjects similar to the pattern of written test that has no relationship with the actual job and similarly in the university selection the panel do the same and with 10 to 15 minutes they decide about the suitability of the faculty member who has to serve for almost 35 years in the government institutions. Second reason is that these are actually unstructured interview because there is no sequence of question that may be followed to be probed from every interviewer. This has also been supported by (Polychart, 2011) who argued that structured interview are better as compare to unstructured interview because such tools has the ability to measure the different constructs and have lower subgroup difference which could further be minimized by such a panel interview that consist of diverse interviewers. This sort of interview in which the selection is being made for a particular subject and the interviewers are from the different disciplines, which have no direct relation with the particular selection both from the perspective of interviewer and job itself which generates the various issue particularly face validity and competitive advantage.

The most important aspect of best selection is to attract a large pool of applications and then find the best out of that pool on the basis of the required KASOs (knowledge, abilities, skills and other characteristics) which depends on how fairness is organization being seen among the potential applicants. The difference in fairness of recruitment and selection between college and university employees may be because of different treatment given by the selection authorities during their selection because (Bauer et al, 2001) in their research has identified that fairly treated applicants recommend the organization to others while as in case of fairly not treated may go for litigation for their possible remedy while as those who are

employed in the organizations according to Lambert et. al., (2007) remain happy if they perceived selection procedures of the organization fair. Therefore we argue that the existing selection mechanism has fairness issues among its employees that may be due to the mal treatment during their selection and this may has relationship with the face validity which in other words we argue if an organizations selection mechanism has positive face validity that will have the fairness too.

6. Conclusion

The main conclusion of this study is that the face validity perception are not seen positive because of the irrelevant selection procedures used by the governmental controlled public sector higher academia. The selection authorities are not seriously taking the recruitment and selection activities and are dealing it traditionally like any other routine organizational function, which is a matter of concerns for the long term competitiveness of these public sector institutions because it may bring the wrong people into the organization or a good applicant may not apply at all. They are just wasting the organizational already meager resources on the screening the applicants with a totally unjustifiable and irrational tools which can be detrimental for the organization and if the purpose was to cut down the applications named “short listing” then the already academic grade or percentage was enough to make short listing for interview, though that too will be having the issue of fairness and face validity.

Besides of the face validity issue with the short listing, the final phase has a sever flaws as they apparently seems a proper selection board but it has been noted that this definitely doesn't work based on two aspects, one that interviewers don't follow a set pattern of probing as structured interview and secondly they also should have been relevant to the subject or field of specialty. This hampers the organizations to get the right talent that may add the human capital i.e., Knowledge, abilities, skills and other characteristics (KASOs) of an organization to perform better and remain competitive with the overall needs of the country. Finally the most significant conclusion we draw is that organizations with positive face validity of their selection procedures does have positive fairness perceptions as well, which in other sense we can conclude that for being fair the organizations have to make their selection procedures based on job related, so that they can claim fairness among the candidates and finally employees as well.

7. Research Implications

This research has identified that there is a positive relationship between the face validity of the selection procedures and fairness that enhances the organizational competitiveness by bring the right talent in, but we argue the further studies are needed to analyze this on a macro scale among different working set up and cultures across the country or region particularly. Besides of this the researchers need to focus on study those applicants as well who couldn't make their attempt.

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