

Applicant Reactions to Hiring Procedures

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Introduction

Over the past century the basic paradigm of personnel selection research and practice has been testing validity and validity coefficients (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014). During the twentieth century consideration of job applicants – to the extent that their viewpoint was considered at all – dealt with the concept of ‘face validity’ (e.g., Schmidt, Greenthal, Hunter, Berner & Seaton, 1977), the idea that tests should at least appear to be job-related to applicants. However, a deeper understanding of job applicants’ opinions of selection procedures and the effects of their attitudes and behaviours towards employers and themselves were given little consideration, and certainly no systematic examination in the industrial-organizational (I-O) literature.

In some of the earliest research on applicant reactions, Gilliland (1993) argues that the study of applicant reactions should be an important aspect of research and practice for three reasons. The first is that, for business reasons, organizations should care about how applicants perceive the hiring process. Their perceptions can impact whether individuals recommend the organization to others, as well as their attitudes towards recommending or purchasing the organization’s products. Gilliland’s second reason is that applicant perceptions of the hiring process may have legal ramifications for organizations. Individuals who perceive the process to be unfair may ultimately pursue litigation. Finally, Gilliland argues that, for ethical reasons, we should care about applicant reactions. It is important to understand how the hiring processes that are developed and implemented impact individuals both positively and negatively.

In recent years this landscape has changed considerably, with an increased focus on job applicants’ perceptions of the hiring procedures used by companies and the treatment of applicants during the selection process. With this has come the recognition that these perceptions on the part of applicants can affect a number of outcomes that organizations care about, from intentions to purchase products from the hiring organization (e.g., Macan,

Avedon, Paese & Smith, 1994) to whether applicants decide to accept job offers (e.g., Harold, Holtz, Griepentrog, Brewer & Marsh, 2015). This recognition of the field of ‘applicant reactions’ has been accelerated by changes in the ways that hiring procedures are now be deployed in organizations, specifically, the use of technological solutions in selection that speed up the process and can even be used as a messaging tool for organizations.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the field of applicant reactions in terms of both where the field is now and where it might go next. We begin by discussing the theoretical models that have shaped this field. Next, we briefly discuss which selection procedures applicants prefer, followed by a description of the antecedents and outcomes of job applicant reactions to selection. We conclude with a discussion of new research avenues that appear to be emerging in this field.

Theoretical Models

Organizational justice theory

Organizational justice theory was originally proposed by Greenberg (1987), who distinguished between two forms of justice: procedural and distributive. Procedural justice can be distinguished from distributive justice in that procedural justice is the fairness associated with the processes for resource allocation in the workplace. In contrast, distributive justice is the fairness associated with the actual resource allocation among employees in the workplace. Organizational justice theory is applied widely across a variety of areas of research in I-O psychology (e.g., Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001) and has been particularly foundational for much of the research in the applicant reactions field. When applied to applicant reactions research, procedural justice refers to the fairness associated with the hiring procedures and distributive justice refers to the fairness associated with the hiring decision.

The increasing academic attention that the applicant reactions research area has garnered since 1990 has been greatly enhanced by the development and publication of Gilliland’s (1993) theoretical ‘Model of applicants’ reactions to employment selection systems’. What makes this model especially compelling is the idea that it blends the theoretical nuances of the literature on organizational justice and selection with the practical context and implications that applicants and hiring personnel face in the field.

At its highest level, the model focuses on the two key aspects of organizational justice that Greenberg (1987) identified. As previously mentioned, procedural justice refers to perceptions of the fairness of the way that individuals are treated. In other words, ‘Am I being treated fairly?’ Second, distributive justice refers to perceptions of fairness in one’s outcomes to a given decision. In other words, ‘Am I getting the outcome I deserve?’ A key point of Gilliland’s (1993) model is that although a fair outcome is important to applicants, as has been consistently observed in the literature (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), the use of a fair processes matter a lot to applicants as well.

Procedural justice The aspect of Gilliland’s (1993) model which has driven a great deal of research is the notion of 10 procedural justice rules which were developed by Leventhal (1980) and had been captured in previous research on applicant reactions (e.g., Arvey & Sackett, 1993; Schuler, 1993). Categorizing and embedding each of the 10 procedural justice rules into the context of selection systems allowed future researchers to remain tied to the literature, theory and practice at the same time. Following Greenberg (1990), the three categories of procedural justice rules include formal characteristics, explanations, and interpersonal treatment.

Table 4.1 Gilliland’s (1993) 10 selection procedural justice rules.

<i>Justice Rules</i>	<i>Definitions</i>
<i>Formal Characteristics</i>	
Job-relatedness	The extent to which a test is thought to measure aspects of the actual job situation.
Opportunity to perform	Giving applicants a chance to express themselves before a decision is made.
Reconsideration opportunity	The ability of applicants to challenge or modify the decision-making process.
Consistency	Ensuring consistency across all candidates for the selection procedures.
<i>Explanations</i>	
Feedback	Provision of both timely and useful information.
Selection information	Giving applicants a justification for a given decision.
Honesty	Truthfulness of information given to applicants during the selection process.
<i>Interpersonal Treatment</i>	
Interpersonal effectiveness of the administrator(s)	Respect and warmth given to applicants during the selection process.
Two-way communication	The opportunity that applicants have to offer input or to have their views considered during the selection process.
Propriety of questions	Being asked appropriate and non-prejudicial statements during the selection process.

Source: Truxillo, D. M., Bauer, T. N., & McCarthy, J. (2015). Applicant fairness reactions to the selection process. In R. Cropanzano & M. Ambrose (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Justice in the Workplace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Reproduced with permission.

Table 4.1 summarizes the 10 selection procedural justice rules. Under the *formal characteristics* heading are job-relatedness, opportunity to perform, reconsideration opportunity and consistency of administration. Job-relatedness refers to the extent to which a selection procedure, or set of procedures, is perceived to measure aspects of the job the applicant is applying to do. Opportunity to perform refers to the perception of applicants that they are able to express themselves and show what they can do before a final selection decision is made. Reconsideration opportunity refers to the ability of applicants to appeal a selection decision, either at a given hurdle or at the end of the process. Consistency refers to all job applicants being equally treated throughout the selection process.

Under the *explanation* heading are feedback, selection information and honesty. Feedback refers to the perception that applicants are provided with both timely and useful information about their application. Selection information refers to the perception of the reasons given for a selection decision. Finally, honesty refers to the perception that applicants are given accurate and truthful information about their application process and status.

Under the *interpersonal treatment* heading are interpersonal effectiveness of administrator, two-way communication and propriety of questions. Interpersonal effectiveness of the administrator(s) refers to the perception of the warmth and respect that those administering the selection procedure(s) show applicants. Two-way communication refers to the applicants’ ability to voice concerns, perspectives or input throughout the hiring process.

And propriety of questions refers to the perception that administrators, such as interviewers, ask appropriate and non-prejudicial questions during the selection process.

Distributive justice The distributive justice rules included in Gilliland's (1993) model are equity, equality and needs. The idea is that applicants may hold different views regarding which rules constitute 'fair' outcomes. If applicants focus on equity, then their focus is on the fact that people should receive rewards that are consistent with the inputs they contribute in a distribution situation in comparison to a reference comparison other. Equality, on the other hand, refers to the idea that everyone should receive an equal chance of receiving the outcome, regardless of their effort or inputs. Finally, needs distribution refers to the idea that rewards should be distributed based on the individuals' situation rather than solely on merit. Examples of this include affirmative action programmes or for those needing accommodations to perform the job.

Relationship between procedural and distributive justice Another key component of Gilliland's (1993) model is the relationship between procedural and distributive justice. There are two key points here. First is the assumption that the outcomes applicants receive (distributive justice) are major components of applicant reactions, but that the fairness of procedures could have an effect on applicant reactions as well. In other words, what was new about Gilliland's model was that applicants' reactions could be affected above and beyond these outcomes by the selection process; that is, how they were treated by the selection procedures and the organizational personnel. It is for this reason that subsequent applicant reactions research has generally examined the effects of procedural justice from the applicant's perspective above and beyond the outcomes the applicants received (e.g., Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). Second, Gilliland's model notes that procedural and distributive justice may interact, such that the effects of distributive justice may be stronger when procedural justice is high. This is consistent with prior notions of organizational justice (e.g., Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). For example, applicants' self-perceptions may be more negatively affected by the outcome they receive when they believe that the process was fair. Such interactive effects on self-perceptions have been generally supported by subsequent research (e.g., Bauer, Maertz, Dolen & Campion, 1998).

Critiques and updates of Gilliland's model Since its development, Gilliland's model of applicant reactions has been critiqued by several researchers, and many of these critiques have been addressed by subsequent research, which included updated models.

In their review, Ryan and Ployhart (2000) note that a nomological network in the applicant reactions field was missing in that there was a lack of empirical evidence testing the relationships among these variables and applicant perceptions. They also argued that while the justice rules that are central to Gilliland's model have strong theoretical foundations, they may not be such strong predictors of fairness perceptions since there had been few manipulations of these rules in research up to that point. Additionally, Ryan and Ployhart argue that test-taking attitudes may be important determinants of applicant perceptions. Another critique of Gilliland's model is that there was a lack of empirical evidence linking justice perceptions to subsequent outcomes for both individuals and organizations. Finally, Ryan and Ployhart argue that the application of organizational justice theory to applicant reactions may differ from applications of justice theory to other research in I-O psychology in that in the selection context, applicants are usually external to the organization. Therefore, applications of organizational justice theory to applicants during selection may be different from how it is applied to employees internal to the organization. In order to address some of these issues, Ryan and Ployhart expanded Gilliland's model.

One of the more notable characteristics of their model is that it distinguishes between different types of applicant perceptions (perceptions of the hiring process, perceptions of the individuals' affective/cognitive state, perceptions of the hiring decision and overall perceptions of the hiring processes/procedures).

Others sought to further understand Gilliland's propositions. Bauer and colleagues (2001) empirically confirmed the existence of the 10 procedural justice rules of Gilliland's model (plus an additional rule: job-relatedness-content), and that these rules could be explained by two higher-order factors focused on the structure of the selection system and how applicants are treated. They also found that the procedural justice rules affected later applicant outcomes (e.g., intentions to take legal action against the organization) beyond the outcomes that applicants received. Building on both Gilliland's (1993) model and Ryan and Ployhart's (2000) model, Hausknecht, Day and Thomas (2004) devised another updated model of applicant reactions based on a meta-analytic examination of the literature. Hausknecht and colleagues categorized antecedents of applicant perceptions into four categories: person characteristics, perceived procedure characteristics, job characteristics and organizational context. These antecedents predict applicant perceptions (procedural justice, distributive justice, test anxiety, test motivation, attitudes towards tests and towards selection). In turn, these perceptions predict four categories of outcomes: selection procedure performance, self-perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards the organization, and work attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, the links between antecedents and perceptions and the links between perceptions and outcomes are moderated by variables such as job desirability and stage in the selection process. Addressing Ryan and Ployhart's concern about lack of empirical support for these relationships in applicant reactions research, Hausknecht and colleagues tested these relationships in their meta-analysis of 86 independent samples, finding support for the relationship between justice perceptions and applicant outcomes such as perceptions of the organization.

Finally, some justice rules have proved to be consistently related to applicant attitudes and behaviours. For example, research supports the view that perceived job-relatedness (i.e., whether the selection procedure seems job-related to applicants), consistent treatment of applicants and opportunity to 'show what you know' (opportunity to perform; Schleicher, Venkataramani, Morgeson & Campion, 2006) are related to applicant reactions. That said, all the justice rules have been shown to relate to applicant reactions to some degree (Bauer, Truxillo, Sanchez, Craig, Ferrara & Campion, 2001; Hausknecht et al., 2004). The continued challenge for the field is to demonstrate whether the justice rules relate to more 'hard' outcomes such as applicant behaviours for although some support in this arena (e.g., job offer acceptance; Harold et al., 2015) has been found, other behaviours proposed by Gilliland's model, such as actual litigation, have remained almost entirely unexamined.

Other theoretical approaches

In addition to Gilliland's (1993) model of applicant reactions, there are several other theoretical approaches used in this literature. Although these theories have received far less attention in terms of empirical research and support, they are still of value in the applicant reactions field and may prove useful as research and knowledge continue to develop in this area.

Social validity theory Schuler's (1993) social validity theory strongly emphasizes the applicant's perspective of the selection procedures and the extent to which they perceive they have been treated with dignity and respect. According to Schuler, social validity consists of four dimensions: *informativeness* – whether applicants are provided with

meaningful and useful information; *participation* – whether applicants feel that they have sufficiently been a part of the process and to show their abilities; *transparency* – whether it is clear what procedures are being used and how; and *feedback* – whether applicants are given adequate feedback, even if they do not receive a job offer.

Interestingly, Anderson, Salgado and Hülshager (2010) note that while much of the applicant reactions research in the United States has been grounded in Gilliland's model, most of the applicant reactions research in Europe has been grounded in Schuler's social validity theory. While there are different preferences for theories in the US versus Europe, when both Gilliland's and Schuler's models are compared, there is significant similarity between the aspects of social validity and Gilliland's procedural justice rules, suggesting that these theories function similarly in providing a basis for applicant reactions research.

Arvey and Sackett's model Another influential model of applicant reactions was developed by Arvey and Sackett (1993). Although this model does not have a single unifying theoretical approach, in their model the fairness perceptions of applicants *and* the organization and its decision makers are considered. Overall, this model is similar to Gilliland's and conceptualizes multiple sources of antecedents of fairness. In their consideration of the organization and its decision makers, Arvey and Sackett include characteristics of selection tests and organizational context as contributing to fairness. As previously mentioned, most of the applicant reactions in the US has foundations in Gilliland's model, most likely because of its strong theoretical basis. However, it is important to note that there are still some studies that use Arvey and Sackett as their basis (e.g., Madigan & Macan, 2005; Nicolaou & Judge, 2007; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2004).

Fairness theory A third alternative to Gilliland's model is Folger and Cropanzano's fairness theory (2001). According to their theory, applicants' reactions are impacted by their interpretation of the situation based on three counterfactuals about the situation: could, would and should. Applicants ask themselves questions such as: *Should* the organization have provided more feedback? There are two types of explanations that are used when answering counterfactuals: excuses and justifications. Excuses are used to reduce *could* counterfactuals and justifications are used to reduce *should* counterfactuals. Overall, research shows that excuses tend to be more effective than justifications (Shaw, Wild & Colquitt, 2003), although a meta-analysis of these explanations, specifically in the context of applicant reactions research, did not find that one type of explanation was more effective than the others (Truxillo, Bodner, Bertolino, Bauer & Yonce, 2009).

Applicant Attribution-Reaction theory Ployhart and Harold's (2004) Applicant Attribution-Reaction theory (AART) postulates that individuals make attributions about the hiring process that result in applicant reaction outcomes such as fairness, motivation and test perceptions. Attributions made can be about the individual's behaviour or the behaviour of someone else (e.g., the hiring organization). Ployhart and Harold argue that these attributions are automatic and tend to occur immediately following the event. Attributions are formed when individuals compare their situation to their expectations, which Ployhart and Harold purport are shaped by the justice rules proposed by Gilliland. Although justice rules do play a part in AART, what distinguishes it from Gilliland's model is that it largely focuses on applicants' attributions largely driving applicant reactions (although justice rules do play a role in this process). Some research (Ployhart & Ryan, 1997) has established the usefulness of the attribution approach to applicant reactions,

but AART has not ‘grown legs’ compared to other applicant reactions approaches, perhaps because of the complexity of measuring applicants’ varied attributions about selection procedures.

Summary of other theoretical approaches In large part these other theoretical approaches to applicant reactions research are similar to Gilliland’s (1993) model. These approaches all involve fairness of the selection procedure in one way or another. They differ, however, in terms of what determines the fairness perceptions for applicants (e.g., attributions vs. actual characteristics of selection procedures), how these fairness perceptions relate to outcomes for individuals and organizations, and their depth of theoretical underpinnings. Additionally, Gilliland’s model is more comprehensive and includes a wide variety of antecedents and outcomes that should be related to applicant perceptions of the hiring process, making his model very attractive to researchers in this field. Ultimately, what may drive choice for certain theories over others for research in this field may be individual preference. For example, as previously mentioned, there is a strong preference for social validity theory in Europe, whereas researchers in the US have tended to prefer Gilliland’s model (Anderson, Salgado & Hülsheger, 2010).

Effects of Different Selection Procedure Characteristics on Reactions

Gilliland’s largest contribution from his model of application reactions was the 10 procedural justice rules. Since the development of this model, there have been many studies that have provided empirical support for the role that these rules play in determining applicant reactions.

Foundational for much of applicant reactions research, Gilliland’s model has paved the way for other models of applicant reactions. For example, some more recent models have built on Gilliland’s model by adding more antecedents (e.g., organizational characteristics like selection ratio) and moderator variables (e.g., stage in the selection process) to the framework; see Hausknecht et al., 2004; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). It is important to note that these updated applicant reactions models still include Gilliland’s procedural justice rules as central components. Other research (Bauer et al., 2001) has found that Gilliland’s rules can be divided into two dimensions. The first is structure fairness, which relates to the logistical components of the actual selection process (e.g., timing of feedback). The second dimension is social fairness, which taps into more interpersonal aspects of the selection process (e.g., communication with applicants).

In terms of how each of Gilliland’s 10 procedural justice rules relate to applicant reactions and both individual and organizational outcomes, job-relatedness has by far received the most attention in the literature. In their meta-analysis, Hausknecht and colleagues (2004) show that job-relatedness is the most studied rule in the literature and, across studies, it tends to relate to outcomes such as product purchase intentions, offer acceptance intentions, recommendation intentions and organizational attractiveness.

Other rules that have been given some attention in the literature, although notably less than job-relatedness, include interpersonal treatment, propriety of questions and opportunity to perform (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Interestingly, Schleicher, Venkataramani, Morgeson and Campion (2006) found that after receiving negative feedback, opportunity to perform was the most important rule. For individuals who were not hired,

opportunity to perform was a strong driver of fairness perceptions. Given the number of procedural justice rules that seem to be less studied in the literature, these may provide fruitful areas of research.

Which selection procedures do applicants prefer?

One question that often arises when discussing the topic of applicant reactions is: which selection procedures do applicants prefer? Given that we know that applicant reactions largely derive from the satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) of justice rules, it is easy to see how some types of selection procedures would be more likely to satisfy these rules and thus be preferable to applicants. This was the basis of many studies that have examined applicant preferences for different selection procedures and across many cultural contexts, starting with a study by Steiner and Gilliland (1996), which compared US and French students' preferences for different selection procedures. Since then, applicant reactions have been studied with a variety of samples from different countries, including Italy (e.g., Bertolino & Steiner, 2007), Vietnam (e.g., Hoang, Truxillo, Erdogan & Bauer, 2012), South Africa (e.g., De Jong & Visser, 2000), Singapore (e.g., Phillips & Gully, 2002), Germany (e.g., Marcus, 2003) and Greece (e.g., Nikolaou & Judge, 2007), to name a few.

This issue of which procedures are preferred by applicants was one of the questions that Hausknecht and colleagues (2004) addressed in their meta-analysis. In their study, there were 12 samples that asked individuals to rate the favourability (job-relatedness or fairness) of a variety of selection procedures. Rated most favourably were interviews, work samples, résumés and references. Individuals rated cognitive ability testing, personality testing and biodata as moderately favourable. Personal contacts, honesty tests and graphology were rated as the least favourable selection procedures.

In an effort to update this meta-analysis and determine whether there are cross-cultural differences in preferences, Anderson, Salgado and Hülshager (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of 38 samples from 17 countries. Additionally, they measured preferences according to eight dimensions relating to Gilliland's justice rules: overall favourability, scientific evidence, employers' right to use, opportunity to perform, interpersonal warmth, face validity, widely used, and respectful of privacy. Overall, the results showed that preferences for selection procedures were similar to those Hausknecht and colleagues found. The most preferred methods were work samples and résumés. Favourably evaluated were cognitive ability tests, references and personality tests. The least preferred were honesty tests, personal contacts and graphology. Moreover, there were no differences across countries in these preferences.

Overall, these findings are somewhat reassuring in that applicants tend to prefer the valid selection procedures. Unfortunately, though, organizations are not always able to use the most preferred procedures in the selection process. This could be for reasons such as cost, validity and other practical constraints such as time. For example, an organization would not realistically be able to interview everyone in a pool of 2,000 applicants. Thus, organizations and HR professionals may want to consider ways to make some of the less preferable methods more favourably evaluated by applicants, for example, providing explanations about the selection procedures – an issue we discuss below.

Antecedents of applicant reactions

Perhaps the most consistent determinant of applicant reactions is outcome favourability, that is, the outcome received by an applicant from the selection process (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). This could mean the test score the applicant received, whether or not they are asked to go on in the selection process (e.g., to a selection interview or some other hurdle)

or whether they got a job. It is for that reason that most current applicant reactions research considers applicant reactions after applicants have received their outcome, as reactions can be quite different before and after a selection decision, and applicants are generally poor at guessing how well they actually performed on a selection procedure (i.e., actual and perceived test performance are not highly correlated). In addition to outcome favourability, surrogate variables for actual test performance are sometimes used in this research, such as perceptions of distributive justice or outcome fairness and measures of perceived performance.

In addition to these measures of applicant outcomes, applicant reactions models such as Gilliland's (1993) go a step further: while acknowledging that outcomes affect applicants' perceptions, the model points out that procedural justice dimensions (e.g., job-relatedness, opportunity to perform, as discussed earlier) can also affect applicant reactions. This is a core assumption of organizational justice theory more generally: although the final outcome (e.g., a performance rating) is important, the process used and the way a person is treated are important as well (e.g., Colquitt, 2001).

In addition to outcome received and procedural justice dimensions derived from the selection context, a number of other antecedents of applicant reactions have been identified (see Hausknecht et al., 2004 for a more detailed review). For example, some authors have noted that applicant reactions are not only a function of selection system characteristics, but also of individual differences. Truxillo and colleagues (2006) found that Big Five personality measured at baseline was related to fairness, self-perceptions and organizational attractiveness later in the process in conceptually logical ways, with, for instance, agreeableness related to positive reactions and neuroticism related to negative reactions. Viswesvaran and Ones (2004) found that a number of individual differences were related to the importance placed on different selection system characteristics. For instance, cognitive ability was related to applicants perceiving greater importance being placed on the content of the selection procedure. However, these authors found relatively few differences between men and women in the importance placed on selection system aspects, and only a few differences in the selection system characteristics of most importance to different ethnic groups. More recently, Honkaniemi, Feldt, Metsäpelto and Tolvanen (2013) found that certain personality profiles, such as being resilient, were related to positive applicant reactions. Taken together, these findings suggest that reactions are partly determined by applicant characteristics and not only by the selection process itself.

Effects of Applicant Reactions on Individual and Organizational Outcomes

The effects on 'soft' versus 'hard' outcomes

Truxillo, Steiner and Gilliland (2004) note that outcomes of applicant reactions can be broken down into 'soft' outcomes, that is, attitudes and behaviour proximal to the hiring procedure, and 'hard' outcomes that occur later, on the job. This classification continues to be useful, with the most consistent effects of applicant reactions on a number of 'soft' outcomes. Here we provide a general overview of the effects of applicant reactions on a range of outcomes, although we also point the reader to detailed meta-analyses and reviews (Hausknecht et al., 2004; Truxillo & Bauer, 2011; Truxillo, Bauer, McCarthy, Anderson & Ahmed, in press; Truxillo, Steiner & Gilliland, 2004).

One of the early promises of applicant reactions models was that job applicants' perceptions of the selection process might affect their later attitudes and behaviour on the job if they

were hired. Truxillo, Steiner and Gilliland (2004) referred to these as ‘hard’ outcomes. For the most part, these types of outcome have not been found to be affected by applicant reactions, at least for external job applicants (see Gilliland, 1994, for a laboratory study that suggests the relation between reactions and job performance). For example, Truxillo, Bauer, Campion and Paronto (2002) found that while providing police officer candidates with a fairness explanation did affect their fairness perceptions, it did not affect their later turnover during the training period. One of the explanations for this lack of results is that these on-the-job outcomes are too distal from the hiring process to be affected by applicant reactions. In other words, how a person is treated in the hiring process is less likely to affect their job attitudes six months after they are hired; rather, job satisfaction is likely to be affected by other factors more proximal to the actual job situation, such as characteristics of the job and treatment by the supervisor. However, it is notable that recent research (Harold et al., 2015) has found a relationship between justice perceptions and job offer acceptance (see below). Moreover, it is important to note that applicant reactions may affect these ‘hard’ outcomes among promotional candidates (Ambrose & Cropanzano, 2003), an issue we discuss as an avenue for future research.

In the sections that follow, we describe the effects of reactions on outcomes that are relevant to the organization versus those that are relevant to the individual applicant.

Organizational outcomes

Gilliland (1993) noted that one of the drivers of applicant reactions research comes from an organizational perspective. Organizations want to attract and hire the most qualified applicants, and especially to avoid litigation. Indeed, the research indicates that applicant reactions do have an impact on outcomes such as organizational attractiveness, recommendation intentions and litigation, for example.

Organizational attractiveness Numerous studies, including meta-analyses (e.g., Hausknecht et al., 2004) have shown that organizational attractiveness is related to perceptions of justice, both procedural and distributive. There is also evidence to indicate that the impact of fairness on organizational attractiveness persists over time (e.g., Bauer, Maertz, Dolen & Campion, 1998).

Recommendation intentions Much like the research regarding organizational attractiveness, there is support for a positive relationship between fairness and whether individuals would recommend that organization to others (e.g., Ababneh, Hackett & Schat, 2014; Bauer et al., 1998; Hausknecht et al., 2004). Unlike the relationship between organizational attractiveness and fairness, though, the relationship between fairness and recommendation intentions tends to weaken over time (Bauer et al., 1998).

Litigation As previously mentioned, an organization’s litigation concerns are a primary driver for its interests in applicant reactions research. Unfortunately, researchers have not yet examined the relationship between applicant fairness perceptions and actual litigation (Truxillo & Bauer, 2011). However, there is evidence to suggest that, not surprisingly, there is a negative relationship between fairness perceptions and litigation intentions (e.g., Ababneh et al., 2014; Bauer et al., 2001; Bauer et al., 2004).

Job offer acceptance Until 2010, research had only examined the relationship between fairness and job acceptance intentions, and the findings have been mixed. Some have found a negative relationship (e.g., Hausknecht et al., 2004; Macan et al., 1994) and

others have found no relationship (e.g., Ployhart & Ryan, 1997). Recent research, however, has examined the relationship between fairness perceptions and actual job offer acceptance. In a field study of military job applicants, Harold and colleagues (2015) found that procedural justice significantly predicted job offer acceptance and provided an incremental prediction over other variables such as person–organization fit. Moreover, interactional justice was also a significant predictor of job acceptance. This provides further evidence of the value of applicant reactions research to organizations.

Test performance and validity One of the key questions is whether applicant reactions affect test performance and test validity. For example, some early research (Schmit & Ryan, 1992) found that candidate motivation could increase the validity of a cognitive ability test and decrease the validity of a personality test. However, a more recent paper by McCarthy and colleagues (2013) examined this issue for six different types of selection procedures (e.g., cognitive ability, work sample) in four studies in North America, South America and Europe. McCarthy and colleagues indeed found that candidate reactions were related to the level of test scores (which is consistent with previous research; e.g., Bauer et al., 2006; Hausknecht et al., 2004). However, in none of the samples did they find that reactions moderated the criterion-related validity of the test. Although more research may be warranted, the comprehensive nature of this study suggests that reactions have relatively few effects on test validity.

Individual outcomes

In addition to the importance of studying applicant reactions from an organizational perspective, Gilliland (1993) argued that, from an ethical perspective, we should care about the well-being of applicants and thus study their reactions to selection procedures. Research suggests that applicant reactions impact self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Self-efficacy Some research has found that fairness perceptions are positively related to self-efficacy (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Truxillo et al., 2002; Truxillo, Bauer & Sanchez, 2001). This is important because applicants with higher test-taking self-efficacy tend to perform better on selection procedures. For example, McCarthy, Hrabluik and Jelley (2009) demonstrated that in four studies using six selection procedures, self-efficacy had a positive relationship with test scores on these selection procedures. Interestingly, an interaction effect between procedural justice and selection outcome has found that when individuals perceive unfairness and do not receive a job offer, self-efficacy is lowest (e.g., Ployhart & Ryan, 1997).

Self-esteem In addition to placing importance on understanding how the selection process impacts self-efficacy, Gilliland (1993) placed value on understanding how fairness and selection outcomes might predict self-esteem. In general, research has indicated that there is a positive relationship between the two (e.g., Bauer et al., 2001; Hausknecht et al., 2004).

Future Research

Privacy concerns

One of the largest areas of new development in relation to online testing is privacy concerns. Bauer and colleagues (2006) examined these in the lab with students in a simulated employment situation and in the field at a large state agency. Consistent with

their predictions, they found that procedural justice moderated the relationship between privacy concerns and important outcomes such as test-taking motivation, organizational attraction and organizational intentions. Furthermore, more internet-savvy job applicants are more satisfied with online application procedures than those who are less familiar with this technology (Sylva & Mol, 2009).

These concerns become much more specific when employers use information available on social media accounts (Stoughton, Thompson & Meade, 2015; Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth & Junco, in press) or use credit score information, or both (Bernerth, Taylor, Walker & Whitman, 2012) in their selection processes. These factors are consistent with Alge's (2001) work, which shows that individual value control over their public persona when it can be damaging. Thus, there is fertile ground to further examine how the digitalization of data is influencing applicants and their perceptions of selection processes.

Social networking and applicant reactions

Relatedly, in recent years the popular press has made much about the use of social networking sites (SNSs) in personnel selection, both in recruitment and as a potential selection tool. In that time, a research literature on SNSs for these personnel uses has begun to develop, illustrating both the value and risks of using SNSs for selection. Use of SNSs for recruitment appears to have grown rapidly and research suggests that it is especially useful for attracting 'passive' job seekers, that is, those who are not actively looking for work (Nikolaou, 2014; Nikolaou, Bauer & Truxillo, 2015). In fact, SNSs such as LinkedIn are becoming part of the standard networking landscape.

However, the use of SNSs for making selection decisions is more problematic. First, the research thus far suggests that the use of SNSs may not lead to valid selection decisions. Van Iddekinge and colleagues (in press) provided recruiters with job applicants' Facebook profiles and asked them to rate the profiles. These ratings were unrelated to supervisors' job performance ratings and turnover, and provided no incremental validity beyond personality and cognitive ability tests. Moreover, they found that the ratings tended to favour White and female applicants, suggesting that there could be some adverse impact. In other words, this research suggests that ratings of SNSs may not be valid and may make an adverse impact.

However, applicant reactions are a separate issue, since applicants may not always prefer the most valid selection procedures, such as unstructured interviews. Nevertheless, the research thus far generally suggests that applicants do not react very positively to the use of SNSs for selection. In a sample of participants at a career fair for the hospitality industry, Madera (2012) found lower perceived fairness and intentions to pursue a job for organizations that used SNSs as a selection tool compared to those that did not. Stoughton, Thompson and Meade (2015) examined applicant reactions to SNS in selection across two studies. In Study 1, which involved people who applied for a research assistant position, they found that SNS screening led to applicants feeling that their privacy had been invaded and to have lower organizational attraction. In Study 2, which involved participants in a simulated hiring scenario, the use of SNSs to screen applicants led to increases in perceived invasion of privacy, decreased organizational attraction and increased intentions to litigate. Overall, these studies suggest that using SNSs is perceived negatively by job applicants and may affect important outcomes such as litigation. Indeed, Roth, Bobko, Van Iddekinge and Thatcher (in press) point out a number of potential concerns with the use of SNSs for personnel selection, including the possibility of adverse impact and the likelihood of recruiters over-relying on negative information about applicants – issues which, if known to applicants, should lead to fewer applicant reactions.

Although the use of SNSs for applicant screening is of concern at this point, one can foresee how their careful use, especially those focused specifically on professional issues such as LinkedIn, could lead to more positive applicants. Roulin (2014) found that *faux pas* postings on SNSs (i.e., showing inappropriate content) on the part of applicants is lower when candidates are informed that employers may use SNSs for hiring decisions. Thus, if the general use of SNSs in recruitment and selection continues such that all applicants use them, and if SNS content were to be in some way standardized across applicants, and if recruiters could be trained in the standardized evaluation of SNSs, much as they are with structured interviews, one could argue that SNSs could lead to acceptable validities and acceptable applicant reactions. While these may be worthy goals we are not there yet, and using SNS for making selection decisions seems risky for reasons related to legal issues, validity and applicant reasons.

Reactions of internal candidates for promotion

Perhaps one of the greatest missed opportunities in the field of applicant reactions is the issue of internal candidates. Although relatively little research has examined this area, there are three reasons that it may be a particularly fruitful avenue for research. First, although external job applicants typically do not become organizational members (except for the few that are hired), internal applicants for promotion remain with an organization. That is, they are 'rejected but still there' (Ford, Truxillo & Bauer, 2009). That is, internal candidates remain as organizational members, with potentially negative effects on outcomes such as job attitude and performance. In other words, while the research has generally not found that selection procedures used with external candidates affect their job attitudes and behaviours once they are hired, this has received little scrutiny in promotional contexts, where job attitudes and behaviours are more proximal to the selection processes. Second, because internal candidates experience social consequences if they are not promoted when they face their co-workers (Ford, Truxillo & Bauer, 2009), arguably they may face greater consequences than external candidates who can simply move on. Third, because of these high stakes in the promotional context – internal candidates have some investment in the organization and their membership of it – the effects of applicant reactions on various outcomes are likely to be amplified.

The few studies that have examined the effects of candidate reactions to promotions suggest that this is a promising area. First, fairness perceptions of promotional procedures do appear to affect important outcomes and last over time. Using a sample of academics up for tenure and promotion, Ambrose and Cropanzano (2003) found that fairness perceptions associated with the process were related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Not surprisingly, and consistent with the demonstrated importance of outcome fairness in applicant reactions (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), they found that the effects of the distributive justice of the promotion decision lasted over time. Second, applicant reactions appear to be amplified in the promotion context compared to the external hiring process. Truxillo and Bauer (1999) used three samples of police applicants (two external samples; one internal sample of promotional candidates) to examine applicant reactions to test score banding (Sackett & Wilk, 1994). They found that the belief that banding is associated with affirmative action interacted with race to affect applicant reactions. However, these effects in the promotional sample were approximately double those found among external candidates.

Although there have been frequent calls to examine applicant reactions to promotions, the empirical studies have been relatively scant (for exceptions see García-Izquierdo,

Moscoso & Ramos-Villagrasa, 2012; Giumetti & Sinar, 2012; McCarthy et al., 2009). However, we think that reactions to promotional decisions continue to beg further studies because of the potentially larger effect sizes, broader range of outcomes (e.g., performance, well-being, job attitudes) likely to be affected and more direct impact on the organization (due to disaffected applicants staying with the employer) compared to external selection.

Reactions in the digital age of selection

Over the years selection theory and technology have evolved. However, the last two decades have seen explosive growth in new techniques and procedures designed to process a large number of applicants using technology and automation. Because of these radical changes it is not always clear what testing and selection procedures mean in a high-tech context. For example, applicants may be pre-qualified for multiple jobs across multiple organizations through a central 'clearing house' that resides with a single organization or a consortium of hiring organizations. To our knowledge, this type of process has not yet been examined in terms of the key factors studied in application reactions to selection procedures such as fairness, security and/or privacy concerns. Other procedures, such as potential applicant self-assessments of fit based on reading about or watching videos about life within the organization, are another interesting example. Technically, these individuals have not yet applied for any jobs so there is no way of knowing how these bits of information help or hinder the selection process.

One area of practice that has seen a little more attention is that of information given to applicants during the selection process. Like Allen, Mahto and Otondo (2007), Walker and colleagues (2013) found that communication during the recruitment process has signalling value and that organizational attraction increases and decreases over time based on these signals and other factors. However, overall it is clear that there is a great deal of catching up that researchers in the area of applicant reactions have still to do, given how quickly the field of selection is evolving.

Overcoming negative applicant reactions

Although applicants' reactions may be beyond the organization's control, there are things employers can do to influence applicant reactions. As noted earlier, applicants prefer certain selection procedures to others (e.g., Anderson et al., 2010; Hausknecht et al., 2004; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996); however, the selection procedures applicants prefer may not always be the most valid (e.g., unstructured interviews) or most practical for organizations to use on a large scale (e.g., work samples). For this reason, research has also examined providing explanations to applicants to improve their reactions (e.g., Gilliland, Groth, Backer, Dew, Polly & Langdon, 2001; Truxillo et al., 2002). A meta-analysis (Truxillo et al., 2009) showed that providing explanations to applicants about selection procedures to show that they are valid appears to affect applicant fairness perceptions, self-perceptions, test-taking motivation and test performance. In other words, providing explanations to job applicants about selection procedures shows promise as a way to improve applicant reactions. Although some of these effect sizes were small ($r = 0.10$), we believe that this area shows promise for future research. As noted by Truxillo and colleagues (2009), the research on applicant explanations has included a broad range of explanations (e.g., those that focus on the job-relatedness of the test or on respectful treatment of applicants), and more research is needed to determine which explanation types are most likely to affect applicant reactions.

Conclusion

Applicant reactions research has evolved considerably since 1990, with a move away from simple considerations of face validity to more sophisticated, theory-based models. In that time, applicant reactions have been shown to relate to a number of important outcomes proximal to the selection procedure, such as attitudes to the employer and actual job acceptance decisions on the part of applicants. Recent developments in the online deployment of HR systems have opened a number of avenues for future research. For these reasons, we see this area as continuing to blossom in the coming decades.

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