



BI Norwegian Business School - campus Oslo

GRA 19502

Master Thesis

Component of continuous assessment: Thesis Master of Science

How does interview style affect applicants' perception of fairness of the job interview?

Navn: Einar Bruvik Danielsen,
Pontus Erik Ueland

Start: 02.03.2017 09.00

Finish: 01.09.2017 12.00

Table of content

TABLE OF CONTENT..... I

ABSTRACT..... II

INTRODUCTION 1

LITERATURE REVIEW 2

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS..... 2

THE STRUCTURED AND UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW 3

The Content Dimension..... 4

The Evaluation Dimension..... 6

THE UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW 7

Why is the Unstructured Interview more used? 8

APPLICANT REACTIONS 8

PERCEPTION OF FAIRNESS..... 10

Procedural justice 11

LINKING ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE THEORY, THE INTERVIEW AND APPLICANT REACTIONS 13

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES: 14

METHOD 17

RESEARCH DESIGN 17

THE INTERVIEW 17

THE PARTICIPANTS 17

THE SURVEY 18

SAMPLE..... 18

STATISTICAL PROCEDURE 19

MEASURES 19

RESULTS 19

DISCUSSION 22

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS 23

LIMITATIONS..... 23

FUTURE RESEARCH 24

CONCLUSION 25

REFERENCES..... 27

APPENDIX..... 31

APPENDIX 1 31

APPENDIX 2 32

APPENDIX 3 33

Abstract

In this study we examine the differences between the structured and unstructured interview in regards to an applicant's perception of fairness. Despite extensive research on the predictive validity of future job performance of the two interview types, research is limited on how these interviews affect the applicant's perception of fairness of the job interview. In this thesis we conducted both structured and unstructured interviews of students (n=40) to see how applicants' perception of fairness is affected by the two different styles. We also examined the effect of allowance of voice, interviewer warmth and job relevant questions. The results we found, was that it is not possible to conclude that the two different interview styles have any effect on the candidate's perception of fairness. However, we found that it is statistically significant if the candidate is allowed to use voice, meets a warm interviewer and is asked relevant questions. Results suggest that recruiters should involve these factors in order to make candidates perceive the process as more fair. We believe that these results have made a contribution to the field of recruiters in regards to making candidates more comfortable in a job-interview setting. For further examinations of the subject, recommendation of future research is discussed.

Introduction

In today's fast changing business environment, the competition to get hold of the most talented candidates is increasing in an extraordinary pace and thus, the need for good recruitment processes are crucial for organizations to be able to succeed. In our master thesis we aim to develop more research on the recruitment process, and more specifically on the interview and the interaction between the interviewer and the candidate. In today's research on recruitment and interview settings, most of the investigation is done in regards to reliability, validity and other psychometric tools in order to see how they affect the recruitment outcome (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). We want to look at how the relationship between the interviewer and the applicant is affected by the interview style chosen, and how this affects the applicant's perception of fairness of the interview.

In an interview setting, one normally distinguishes between the structured and the unstructured interview. There is substantial amount of research showing that structured interviews have higher predictive validity for job performance and are more reliable than unstructured interviews (Van der Zee, Bakker & Bakker, 2002; Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). However, there is less research conducted on the interaction between applicant and interviewer, and how a structured interview affects the applicant reaction in the interview setting compared to an unstructured interview. In an interview setting the interviewer holds the power to influence how the interview is going. The interviewer controls the amount of time spent talking, the subjects of the conversation, and the formality of the interview. This will further influence the applicant's behavior (Rynes, 1988; Dipboye, 1982).

In existing literature the term *applicant reaction* is used to refer to how the recruitment process influences the applicant. This term examines the "attitudes, affect, or cognitions an individual might have about the hiring process" (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000, p. 566). Research on applicant reactions is of great importance to the field of recruitment. By knowing about the applicant's reactions to these different types of interviews, practitioners can be aware of this in the recruitment process, and this can also help organizations in their employer branding strategy. When candidates feel that they have been treated in a good way during the interview, they will also leave with a better impression of the organization, even if they do not get the job.

On the basis of applicant reaction, it is clear that organizations need more research and knowledge in this field in order to treat people more fairly in a

recruitment process, hire more efficiently, conduct better interviews and work more strategic with employer branding. Our thesis will hopefully provide good practical advice to the field of human resources, recruitment and selection.

Literature review

The Recruitment Process

In order to be able to discuss the impact the structured and unstructured interview has on the applicant's perception of fairness, it is important to put the interview in a broader context. The interview in this setting is related to the recruitment process. Recruitment can be defined as "the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers, and with appropriate qualifications to apply for jobs with an organization" (Mondy & Mondy, 2014, p, 134).

The first step of the recruitment process is when human resource planning realizes the need for a new employee. Recruitment is a big cost for the organization, and it is therefore wise to look for other options before recruiting. Alternatives to recruitment involve measures as outsourcing and perhaps the most common alternative, which is overtime (Mondy & Mondy, 2014). After the decision to hire is definite, the organization decides whether to hire externally or internally. Opening up the competition for a position to external candidates reduces the chance of promotion for existing workers and therefore their incentives to work (Chan, 1996). By recruiting internally, it is easier to evaluate candidates and they already know the company culture etc. Even though recruiting internally can be positive, firms sometimes have to recruit externally. According to Mondy & Mondy (2014, p.140) external recruitment is for example needed to "obtain employees with different backgrounds to provide a diversity of ideas". After advertising of the job and attraction of candidates is finished, the selection process begins.

Selection can be defined as: "the process of choosing from a group of applicants the individual best suited for a particular position and the organization" (Mondy & Mondy, 2014, p.158). The first step of the selection process is the preliminary screening. The main focus of this step is to eliminate those clearly not qualified for the job. The next step involves tests of personality, motivation, aptitude and abilities. Tests alone are not enough to make a decision on hiring or

not, and are therefore used in addition to interviews, etc. Following testing, it is time for the interview (Mondy & Mondy, 2014).

After the candidates have been interviewed, the next step is the background and reference check. The last step is to notify the candidate that is offered the position, and also the candidates that are not offered, in order to treat all applicants with respect (Mondy & Mondy, 2014).

The Structured and Unstructured Interview

One of the oldest and most used tools in selection of personnel is the interview. The main objective for the interview is to reveal the connection between the candidate's answers, and the candidate's future job behavior (Iversen, 2015). There are several definitions of interviews and one of the most common ways to distinguish them is by the degree of structure. The interview can be defined as *“a personally interactive process of one or more people asking questions orally to another person and evaluating the answers for the purpose of determining the qualifications of that person in order to make employment decisions”* (Levashina, Hartwell, Morgenson & Campion, 2014, p. 243). This definition however, presupposes that the interviewer asks the right questions and that the candidate gives honest and sincere answers.

Even though the interview, as a tool for choosing between candidates, have been highly debated, it is still seen as one of the best tools to assess future job performance, and research has shown that this generalizes between jobs, organizations and criteria (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). The reason for the interviews' ability to predict job performance is probably due to the variety of aspects covered by the interview. First of all it gives the interviewer a first impression of the candidate and a chance to market the position to the candidate. Second, it gives the candidate the opportunity to ask questions about the company and the position. Third, it gives the interviewer and the company the possibility to assess the candidate's background and to discover his strengths and weaknesses and how he will fit into the role and the company (Iversen, 2015). However, in order to assess these factors, the quality of the interview will be decisive of how reliable the information the interviewer gets from the candidate really is (Iversen, 2015). This shows the importance of how the interview is conducted. In the following, the interview in relation to the degree of structure will be discussed in depth.

In order to be able to distinguish between the structured and unstructured interview style, one must first define the term structure. There are a lot of different ways to define structure, and how one chooses to define this may have some implications for how one chooses to define a structured interview. Levashina et al. (2014) argues that there is a need for more consensus among scientists on what the definition of the term structure really is. Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) defined structure as “the degree of discretion that an interviewer is allowed in conducting the interview” (p. 186). Based on this, they proposed two dimensions; standardization of interview questions and standardization of response scoring. Similar to this approach by Huffcutt & Arthur (2014), is the approach of Campion, Palmer and Campion (1997), which claims that structure contains two dimensions, the content and evaluation dimension. These two dimensions consist of 15 components, which are argued to represent a degree of structure.

The Content Dimension

The first component that is argued to represent a degree of structure is to base the questions on a job analysis. The purpose of job analysis is to “define each job in terms of the behaviors necessary to perform it” (Cascio, 1991, p. 188). This means that in order to ask the right questions in an interview, one needs to base the questions on a job analysis. Job analysis and the importance of it in order to structure an interview, has been documented way back, and is still heavily emphasized (McMurry, 1947; Levashina et al, 2014).

The second component is that the interviewer asks the same questions to all candidates. In this component of the content dimension there are four different levels to distinguish between the degrees of structure (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). The first level is the unstructured interview, which will be discussed more in depth later. Level two is slightly more structured, with a standardization of the topics that are going to be discussed during the interview. This lays some guidelines for which topics to be covered, but the interviewer is free to discuss and ask what kind of questions he wants as long as it is related to the topic. The third level involves a specification of the questions, but the interviewer can choose among alternative questions and is able to probe responses to the questions. The fourth and most structured level involves complete standardization, with no follow-up questions and all candidates receiving the exact same questions (Campion et al, 1997).

The third component is that of limiting prompting, follow-up, and elaboration of questions (Campion et al, 1997). This is based on the second component. In this dimension there are also four levels to distinguish between the degrees of structure (Campion et al, 1997). The highest level of structure involves the prohibition of asking questions, and the only type of following up and elaborating on the questions is to repeat the questions. The second highest level allows the interviewer to ask questions as; “is there anything else you would like to ask?” and some boundaries may be the number of follow-up questions the interviewer is allowed to ask. The third level involves the allowance of elaborating and follow-up questions. Sometimes the asking of questions may be required in order to explore different sides of the candidates. The fourth and lowest level is no guidance on limiting prompting, follow-up and elaboration on questions (Campion et al., 1997).

The fourth component is that of using better types of questions. What kind of questions one asks may heavily influence the interview. Structured interviews has a better predictive validity for job performance than unstructured, and therefore one is able to increase the validity of the interview by asking better and more structured questions (Campion et al, 1997; Wright, Lichtenfels & Pursell, 1989). Campion et al. (1997) presents four types of questions that research has presented as structured; situational, past-behavior, background and job-knowledge.

The fifth component involves using longer interviews or a larger number of questions. Time and length, within a reasonable time, are variables that help bringing more structure to an interview, due to the fact that it provides more information for the interviewer (Campion et al, 1997). Campion et al. (1997) claims that time are often an overlooked part of structure. When viewing high quality applicants, there is more information to process. Time can be a highly valuable element to gain more structure in situations like this. (Tullar, Mullins, & Caldwell, 1979).

The sixth component is to control ancillary information, which involves transcripts, CV, resumes, previous interviews, etc. (Campion et al., 1997). Uncontrolled use of ancillary information is a threat to structure, and two main problems arise; first, it creates problems in the interpretation of the interview, because validity may be due to the interview or to this ancillary information. Second it creates unreliability if not available for all candidates or given to all

interviewers, or if interviewers evaluate the information differently (Campion et al., 1997).

The last component is to not allow questions from the applicant until after the interview. Even though most candidates have a lot of questions about the role, inquiring about this during the interview will most likely harm the structure. A way to handle this problem is to save all the questions until after the interview is finished (Campion et al., 1997).

The Evaluation Dimension

The first component of the evaluation dimension is to rate each answer or to use multiple scales (Campion et al, 1997). According to Campion et al. (1997) there are three levels of ratings to make the evaluation more structured. The first and most structured level is to rate each answer during the interview. The second level consists of making multiple ratings at the end. The third and less structured style is to make one overall judgment at the end.

The second component is the use of anchored rating scales (Campion et al., 1997). These scales have been developed in order to help recruiters evaluate candidates. Anchored rating scales helps to simplify difficult tasks by providing behavioral, descriptive or evaluative examples to illustrate points on the rating scale (Levashina et al., 2013).

The third component is taking detailed notes. This involves taking notes in order to prevent a loss of important information during the interview, and thus increasing the structure of the interview and thereby increase the likelihood of a successful hire (Campion et al., 1997). Kiewra et al's (1991) research on note taking indicates that to take notes during a lecture and not reviewing them is not more effective than just listening without note taking. This is something that can be transferred to the interview setting and shows the importance of taking good notes in order to capture as much information as possible.

The fourth component includes the use of several interviewers. In order to be able to reduce the chances of being subject to different biases, the use of multiple interviewers can help reduce this (Campion et al., 1997). There may be several characteristics of the use of several interviewers. Interviewers can hold interviews together, or they can interview the same candidate separately. An interview with several interviewers is often called a panel interview, and is known as the most structured form of interview (Campion, 1997).

The fifth component claims that the use of same interviewer (s) is essential in order to be able to rank the candidates (Campion et al, 1997). As Campion (1997, p. 682) argues, it is impossible “to distinguish variance due to rating tendencies among interviewers from true score variance among candidates”. This is caused by factors like biases, different interview style, etc. A way to be able to deal with this “problem” is to use a highly structured interview to reduce this element.

The sixth component is to not talk about candidates between the interviews (Campion et al, 1997). By talking about candidates, one easily let irrelevant information enter, and this is especially important in panels, due to the fact that all the interviewers are present (Campion et al, 1997).

The seventh component is training in the interview setting (Campion et al., 1997). In order to practice for the interview, several different options are available; lectures role-play, note taking and practicing interviews. The more trained interviewers are the more likely they are not to be subject to biases when making decisions and conducting interviews (Campion et al., 1997).

The last element is the use of statistical prediction (Campion et al., 1997). In order to enhance structure, the use of statistical tools instead of the interviewer's judgment is crucial. Statistical approaches will help to reduce the likelihood of irrelevant information to enter into the score (Campion, 1997).

The Unstructured Interview

In order to discuss the unstructured interview, the question of how one defines structure arises yet again. In an unstructured interview there is no fixed format, and the interviewer has not planned ahead what to ask the candidate. In addition to this, there is not a fixed procedure, or not a procedure at all for scoring the answers (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Campion et al. (1997) give examples of a typical unstructured question, which could be “questions on opinions and attitudes, goals and aspirations, and self-descriptions and self-evaluations” (p. 668). In most cases an overall evaluation is given to the applicant based on impressions and the judgment of the interviewer (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Schmidt and Hunter (1998) conducted a meta-analysis where they found out that the structured interview has a predictive validity of future job performance of 0.51 compared to the unstructured interview that has 0.38. This last-mentioned

validity, however, applies only to unstructured interviews that are scored out. It is, however, uncommon to score out unstructured interviews, which means it is impossible to calculate a validity coefficient.

Even though scientists and researchers have shown that the structured interview is a better tool for increased predictive validity, research has also shown that the unstructured interview style is the most used in today's work society (Dipboye, 1997; Terpstra & Rozell, 1997).

Why is the Unstructured Interview more used?

According to Van der Zee et al. (2002), there may be several reasons for the not so widespread use of the structured interview. First of all, many people doing recruitment may not be aware of the existing literature supporting the use of structured interviews. Another explanation to this has been proposed as the interviewer's need of freedom and being in charge. When being "stuck" to a structured interview, the interviewer may feel a loss of autonomy and that the job gets less challenging (Van der Zee et al, 2002). A third possibility, according to Dipboye (1997), is that applicants are more in favor of "interviewers who are attentive, warm, and socially perceptive, and unstructured interviews allow the communication of these qualities better than structured interviews" (Dipboye, 1997; Cited in Van der Zee & Baker, p. 176). Fourth, Kossek (1989) claims that one reason for this limited use of structured interviews may be due to social pressure from the organization. Structured processes may be seen as the opposite of the organizations' "way of doing things". Last, but not least, time, budget and lack of HR resources may be important reasons for not prioritizing the structured interview. As mentioned earlier, the structured interview is more time consuming and costly than the unstructured and this may be an important reason for not choosing it. If the company does not have the needed HR competence available, this may also contribute to the use of the unstructured interview (Terpstra & Rozell, 1997).

Applicant Reactions

From the paragraphs above, we see that the structured interview is the best predictor of job performance and that the unstructured interview is the most widely used. It is, however, important to distinguish between the recruiter's most valid selection tool, the most used, and the best tool for attracting potential employees. As Kohn and Dipboye (1998) put it, "unfortunately, the tests and

procedures that are the most effective in achieving valid selection are not always the most effective in recruiting prospective employees, and vice versa” (p. 821). There is a considerable amount of research examining all types of validity, reliability and other psychometric characteristics of selection tools, but this have little meaning if there is no research on how these tools affect the applicant.

Research on recruitment has shown an increasing interest in applicant reactions over the last decade. Ryan and Ployhart (2000) list a number of reasons for the spark in interest. The relatively low unemployment rates, has led organizations to be more reflective about what they do in their selection processes and how this might affect job seekers’ opinion on the attractiveness of the organization. Researchers have felt that the research in the area has been scant, and have therefore been calling for more extensive research on the subject (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). This is combined with more and more researchers trying to apply social justice theory to explain applicant reactions (Gilliland, 1993; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). Globalization has led to a more diverse pool of applicants. Some selection tools may be perceived different, depending on the cultural background of the applicant. It is therefore important to do research to detect procedures that may make the organization less attractive (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000).

The term used in the literature is applicant reactions or applicant perception. It is based on the premise that, in the same way as organizations chooses their employees; the applicants also make a choice of employer. Applicants decide which organization they want to work for, and also decide to accept or refuse an offer of employment (Rynes, 1993; Cited in Hausknecht, Day & Thomas, 2004). Ryan and Ployhart (2000) use the term applicant reaction about “any attitudes, affect, or cognitions an individual might have about the hiring process” (p. 566).

Hausknecht, Day and Thomas (2004), in their meta-analysis on applicant reactions, elaborate five reasons for why applicant reaction is an important topic for researchers of recruitment and selection.

The first reason is that if an applicant feels that parts of the process are invasive, this may alter their perception of the company to be less attractive (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Therefore, the applicant will seek other options and the company must hire a less qualified applicant or, in a worst-case scenario, start the whole process over. Murphy (1986) claims that this will create high costs for the

company, as the productivity of a lesser-qualified applicant will be lower than the best qualified applicant.

The second reason is that other applicants may be warned against applying for jobs at the company in the future, by applicants that may have had a negative experience with the selection process (Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993; Cited in Hausknecht et al., 2004). It is not unusual to seek advice from others when applying for a job. Therefore, if one applicant has a negative experience with a company's selection process, this applicant may advise others against applying at that company.

Third, if an applicant has perceived selection practices unfavorably, the applicant may not accept the employment offer from the company (Macan, Avedon, Paese, & Smith, 1994; Cited in Hausknecht et al., 2004)

Fourth, there is a chance that applicants that feel mistreated may take legal action against the company (Smither et al., 1993; Cited in Hausknecht et al., 2004).

Fifth, the chance of reapplying or buying the company's products may be less likely if an applicant feel mistreated (Hausknecht et al., 2004).

As mentioned above, several recruiting researchers have examined the application of organizational justice theory on applicant reaction. This research will be discussed in the next paragraph. There are, however, other types of research conducted on the subject. Some researchers have made attempts to check how applicant's perception would affect how the applicant performs in a testing situation (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). For instance, research has shown that the racial difference in motivation towards test taking can account for racial differences in cognitive ability test scores (Arvey, Strickland, Drauden, & Martin, 1990). Ryan and Ployhart (2000) also mention "understanding the nature of intelligence, examining the effects of methods of testing and question variants" (p. 568) as directions the applicant reaction research has taken. Other researchers have tried to link the applicant reactions and perception to demographic differences (Ployhart, 2006).

Perception of Fairness

The concept that has achieved the highest amount of attention in the applicant perception literature is how organizational justice theory can relate to perception of fairness (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). It is considered to be the

dominant framework for examining perception of fairness (Chan, Scmitt, Jennings, Clause, & Delbridge, 1998). Organizational justice theory aims at explaining the processes of how an individual's perceived fairness influence the individual's intentions, behaviors, self-perceptions and attitudes (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Gilliland (1993) was one of the first researchers who tried to link organizational justice theories to applicant reactions. Gilliland wanted to examine how applicant's justice perceptions came to exist and how selection outcomes were affected by the applicant's perceptions (Hausknecht et al., 2004).

The organizational justice theories distinguish between two different dimensions; distributive and procedural (Gilliland, 1993). The distributive justice theory is concerned with "the perceived fairness of outcome distribution" (Greenland, 1993, p. 1). The theory examines how applicants compare their inputs and the outcome to others' input and outcome, to see how this affect the applicant's perception of fairness of the allocation of outcome (Greenberg, 1993; Hausknecht et al., 2004). As our thesis mainly focuses on the interview situation, and how this can affect perception of fairness, we will focus more on Gilliland's second dimension of organizational justice theory, the procedural justice.

Procedural justice

Procedural justice is the part of organizational justice theory that focuses on whether or not an applicant perceive the procedures used to determine outcomes, to be fair (Greenberg, 1993). In a selection setting, this concerns procedures, methods and rules used throughout the selection process (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Procedural justice is composed of three different categories; the formal characteristics of the procedures, explanation of the procedures and decision-making, and interpersonal treatment (Greenberg, 1990). The studies of Gilliland (1993) further this, and claims that the three groups are composed of 10 procedural rules. The satisfaction or violation of these rules may contribute to overall perception of fairness in the selection process (Gilliland, 1993). The 10 rules are essential to understand how an applicant perceive an interview (in this thesis), to be fair or not (Hausknecht et al, 2004).

Formal characteristics:

Job relatedness: Job relatedness refers to “the extent to which a test either appears to measure content relevant to the job situation or appears to be valid” (Gilliland, 1993, p. 703).

Opportunity to perform: Research shows that if applicants have a chance to speak and use their voice prior to the decision outcome, they will find the outcome more fair (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Reconsideration opportunity: This rule concerns the opportunity to receive a second chance. If an applicant is given the chance to challenge or modify a result, this is believed to enhance their perception of fairness (Greenberg, 1986a; Leventhal, 1980; Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Consistency: Consistency refers to “ensuring that decision procedures are consistent across people and over time” (Gilliland, 1993, p. 705).

Explanation:

Feedback: Research has claimed that feedback, and that it is informative, is an important aspect for applicants’ opinion in a selection process (Gilliland, 1993). In a testing situation, researchers found empirical evidence that reactions were more favorable when the participants were given a feedback session about their results than for those who didn’t (Lounsbury, Bobrow, Jensen, 1989; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Selection information: Applicants that receive a justification after a negative outcome (rejected from a job or not invited back after a personality test) will have a greater perception of fairness than an applicant that did not get a justification (Gilliland, 1993).

Honesty: Honesty and trustworthiness communicated to the applicants are important components deciding how they react. If the applicants feel that that the company is honest throughout the company, they will perceive the process as fairer (Gilliland, 1993).

Interpersonal treatment:

Interpersonal effectiveness of administrator: This component concerns parts of the behavior of the administrator (the interviewer or test administrator). The degree of warmth and respect given to the applicants will influence their perception of fairness (Gilliland, 1993).

Two-way communication: Similar to *opportunity to perform*, applicants should have the opportunity to have their views considered and the opportunity to give input (Tyler & Bies, 1990; Cited in Gilliland, 1993). The difference, however, is that two-way communication concerns the interaction between applicant and interviewer. Research has found higher dissatisfaction with computerized interviewing tools than with the classic face-to-face interview (Martin & Nagao, 1989; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Property of questions: Questions asked to applicants should be factual and relevant. Questions that are perceived by the applicants to be an invasion of their privacy will reduce perceived fairness (Gilliland, 1993).

Linking Organizational Justice Theory, the Interview and Applicant Reactions

Although the literature on applicant reaction/perception is starting to increase, the amount of research looking at the interviews' role is relatively scant. This is unfortunate as interviews are considered more favorable by the applicants than other selection tools (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Kohn and Dipboye (1998) are some of the researchers that try to go deeper into this subject. Their research shows that applicants consider the structured interview less favorable, and that the structured interviews may harm recruitment efforts (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998).

Based on Gilliland's 10 procedural rules (1993) they emphasize, that two components of the structured interview, consistency and job-relatedness, can create a sense of fairness for the applicant. The structured interview only uses questions that are job related, which are perceived as fairer by applicants (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Chan et al. (1998) found that an important determinant of the perceived fairness of a test was the job relevance of the test. Since the structured interview uses the same questions in the same order for all applicants, this creates consistency and ensures equality for the applicants. This will also help create a perception of fairness (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998).

Kohn and Dipboye (1998) highlight components of the unstructured interview that can engender a sense of fairness by the applicants. These components relates to the interpersonal rules of Gilliland (1993), the interpersonal effectiveness of the administrator and a two-way communication (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Because the unstructured interview is more of a conversational-type interview, this allows the applicants to use voice (Greenberg & Fogler, 1983;

LaTour, 1978; Lind, Kurtz, Musante, Walker & Thibaut, 1980; Cited in Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Tyler and Bies' (1990) research shows that if an applicant feels free to ask questions this will create a perception of fairness. Additionally, the unstructured interview style can create an impression that the interviewer is warm, friendly and likable, which is more likely to form a positive impression of the recruiter (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Liden & Parson, 1986; Rynes, 1991, Schmitt & Coyle, 1976; Cited in Kohn & Dipboye, 1998).

The results of Kohn and Dipboye (1998) suggest “ participants preferred interviews that were low on job-relevance, high on voice, and high on warmth” (p. 821). These findings suggest that applicants perceive the unstructured interview more favorably, as these are all characteristics one find in the unstructured interview. Job relatedness and standardization, which characterize the highly structured interview, was perceived as narrowing and a hindrance for revealing uniqueness (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). These results match the results of Latham and Finnegan (1993). They found that (student) applicants had a preference for the unstructured interview. The reasons given support the study of Kohn and Dipboye, as the opportunity for two-way communication (use of voice) was very important for the applicant (Latham & Finnegan, 1993). The study of Schuler (1993) also supports these results (Cited in Latham & Finnegan, 1993). Schuler (1993) found that student applicants had a more favorable impression of interviewers, who used the unstructured interview style. They were easier to talk to and made the applicants feel more comfortable (Cited in Latham & Finnegan, 1993).

On the basis of these results one can clearly see a gap in the research regarding structured and unstructured interviews. There is a considerable amount of research within the field of recruitment examining all types of validity, reliability and other psychometric characteristics of selection tools, but this have little meaning if there is no research on how these tools affect the applicant. This is something we will look at in our research question and hypotheses in the next chapter.

Research Question and Hypotheses:

As mentioned earlier, research within recruitment and selection has mainly focused on psychometric characteristics of different selection tools and not on the interaction between the interviewer and the candidate. However, some research

has been conducted in order to better understand applicant reaction in an interview setting (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). This is an important area as it focuses on human interaction in regards to psychometric features as reliability, validity etc. Many of the studies in this area serve as a basis for our research question and hypotheses, but unfortunately, none of the mentioned references above, used real interviews in their studies. The participants were given an interview transcript, and asked to answer questions related to the interview. This is unfortunate, because there may be large differences when a participant actually experiences the interview. In our thesis we will conduct real interviews with the applicants, both unstructured and structured. This will hopefully give them a better and more realistic impression of the interview setting, and therefore better assumptions to rate their perception of fairness.

As discussed earlier, there is a substantial amount of research showing that structured interviews have higher predictive validity for job performance and are considered more reliable than unstructured interviews (Van der Zee, Bakker & Bakker, 2002; Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). However, there is less research on how the candidates being interviewed perceive the different interview styles. A better understanding of this area is of great importance for both organizations and recruiters. As mentioned earlier, the competition for the smartest and best people is increasing and employer branding has been an important area for organizations to work with in order to attract these people. There is a substantial amount of research backing that unstructured interview procedures may signal a variety of positive organizational characteristics, such as being people-oriented (Robertson, Iles, Gratton, & Sharpley, 1991; Rynes & Miller, 1983), whereas a structured interview may signal negative organizational characteristics, such as rigidity and a lack of autonomy (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Due to this research, we have chosen the following research question and main hypotheses:

How does interview style affect an applicant's perception of fairness of the job interview?

Hypothesis 1: *The unstructured interview will be perceived as fairer than the structured interview*

According to several researchers, unstructured interviews should allow the interviewer to appear warm, friendly, and likable, factors that appear crucial when forming impressions about recruiters and organizations (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Liden & Parsons, 1986; Rynes, 1991; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976). As discussed in the literature review, Kohn and Dipboye (1998) found that “participants preferred interviews that were low on job-relevance, high on voice, and high on warmth” (p. 821). These findings suggest that applicants perceive the unstructured interview more favorably, as these are all characteristics of the unstructured interview. Based on this, we have developed the following three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: *The allowance of voice will increase perception of fairness*

Hypothesis 2b: *The allowance of warmth will increase perception of fairness*

Hypothesis 2c: *High degree of job relevance will decrease the perception of fairness*

Additionally, we wanted to look closer into some moderating hypotheses. It is of interest to investigate if gender influences the perception of fairness. This would be a useful piece of information for recruiters. Also, due to the fact that we are interviewing students with different degree of experience with interviews, we wanted to focus on this. Some students have gone through a lot of interview-processes for internships, part-time jobs, etc. while others, however, may lack experience with these kinds of processes. We believe that those who have been through several interview processes may perceive interviews as more fair, than those lacking experience. Based on this our last two hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 3a: *Perception of fairness is moderated by gender*

Hypothesis 3b: *Perception of fairness is moderated by degree of experience with interviews*

Based on these six hypotheses, we feel that we are able to examine if an applicant's perception of fairness is affected by the style of interview, and also how an applicant's perception of fairness is affected by the characteristics: voice, warmth and job relevance.

Method

Research design

In our thesis, we conducted a quasi experiment. To test for applicant reaction, a job position was invented and participants were brought in for an interview. We divided our participants into two groups; one group was interviewed using an unstructured interview style, and the second group was interviewed using a structured interview style. There were 20 participants in each of the two groups, and the distribution of the participants was randomized. After the interview, participants were given a survey to measure their reactions.

The Interview

Because of ethical and legal considerations, the experiment could not be performed in a real recruitment setting. Therefore, we had to create a simulated recruitment setting. We chose a situation where a consultancy firm was looking to hire new trainees, and created a job description based on real job descriptions consultancy firms' use when looking for candidates. The job description can be seen in Appendix 1. Every participant was fully aware that the job was not real, and that the interview was a simulated setting.

We conducted the interviews with the participants ourselves. Before the interview we did "trial interviews", which were not used to measure applicant reactions. This was to practice our interview techniques, and to get feedback on what we would need to improve before the actual experiment. Both the trial interviews and the experiment interviews were held in Norwegian. The experiment interviews were conducted in a private room, so that we could assure privacy and no disturbances during the session. The interview lasted approximately twenty minutes per participant.

The Participants

The participants used in the study were students, either in their first or second year of their masters. Participants' qualifications had to match the required

qualifications in the job description, and therefore all of the participants were business students. As previously mentioned, the participants were divided into two groups, where each group consisted of twenty participants. The participants were not informed about the purpose of the interview. They were, however, informed that nothing they said during the interviews would be used as part of the master thesis, in any way. The participants were handed the job description in advance, and were encouraged to bring their CV to the interview. This was not, however, obligatory.

The Survey

Our survey was developed, using items from a previous research study by Kohn (1995). We only picked the items that measured the variables in our hypotheses, as the original questionnaire also measured other variables. After developing the questionnaire in English, we translated it into Norwegian. We used focus groups in order to ensure that the meaning of the question did not change in the translation process. The items used a Likert scale, ranging from one to seven. The questionnaire, both in English and Norwegian, can be seen in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

Sample

Our sample consisted of 40 participants and was made up of 50% men and 50% women. The participants in this study are all master students at BI Norwegian Business School. Being students of the same school, we carefully avoided interviewing people we know, in order to reduce the bias of our experiment as much as possible. The age of the participants was divided into three categories: category 1 (age 21-25), category 2 (age 26-30), and category 3 (age 31-35). Category 1 consisted of 57.5% of our sample (n=23) and category 2 consisted of 42.5% of our sample (n=17).

The students' previous experience with interviews (in numbers) was divided into six categories: category 1 (1-5 interviews), category 2 (6-10 interviews), category 3 (11-15 interviews), category 4 (16-20 interviews), category 5 (21-25 interviews), and category 6 (26-30 interviews). Category 1 consisted of 42.5% of our sample (n=17), category 2 of 35% (n=14), category 3 of 15% (n=6), category 4 2.5% (n=1), category 5 0% and category 6 of 5% of our sample (n=2).

Statistical procedure

In order to test the hypotheses we conducted an ANOVA analysis. We used the software SPSS to conduct the ANOVA. The hypotheses were tested using both a one-way variance analysis, and a two-way variance analysis to check for moderating and interaction effects. ANOVA tells us if our independent variables make a significant difference in the mean scores on the dependent variable (Field, 2009).

Measures

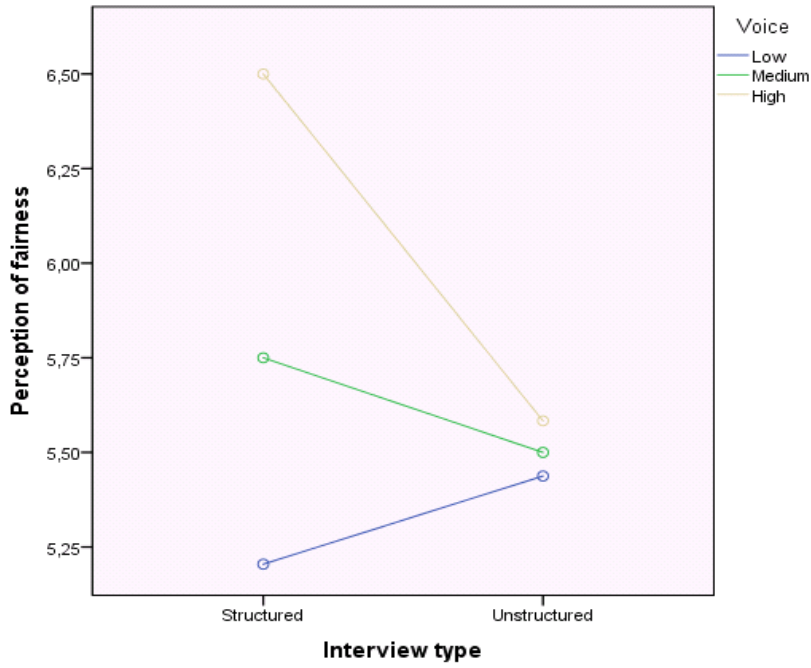
In our investigation we use perceived fairness as the dependent variable. As mentioned, the variable was measured using four separate questions, on a Likert scale ranging from one to seven. We then computed the overall mean of the four items combined. This was also done to voice, warmth and job relevance, which we used as independent variables. We then needed to transform these three variables into categories. To do this, we used Visual Binning in SPSS to transform the ordinal variables into three groups. Each group consisted of 33.33 % of the variable. This was done to the three independent variables, to compute three new variables, each consisting of three groups. The last independent variable was structured or unstructured interview style. The participant had either a structured (category 1) or an unstructured interview (category 2). Age and interview experience were used as moderators.

Results

Hypothesis 2a: *The allowance of voice will increase perception of fairness*

There was a statistically significant effect of voice, $F=2,949$, $p=0,033$. It has a large effect size with a partial eta squared = 0,148. If a variable has a partial eta squared above 0,14, it is considered to have a large effect (Field, 2009). The graph in Figure 1 (next page) illustrates the effect voice has on perception of fairness.

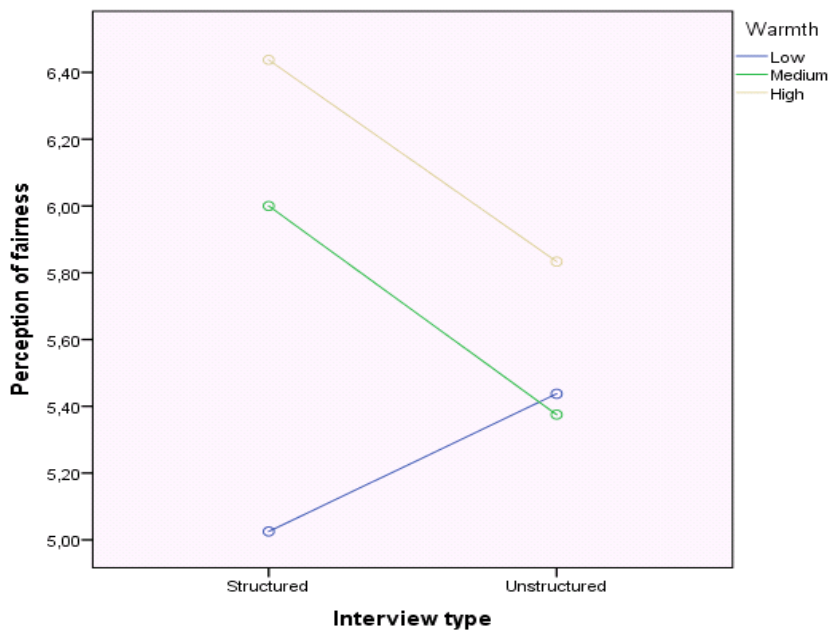
Figure 1:



Hypothesis 2b: *The allowance of warmth will increase perception of fairness*

There was a statistically significant effect of warmth, $F=5,059$, $p=0,006$. It has a large effect size with a partial eta squared = 0,229. The graph in Figure 2 illustrates the effect voice has on perception of fairness.

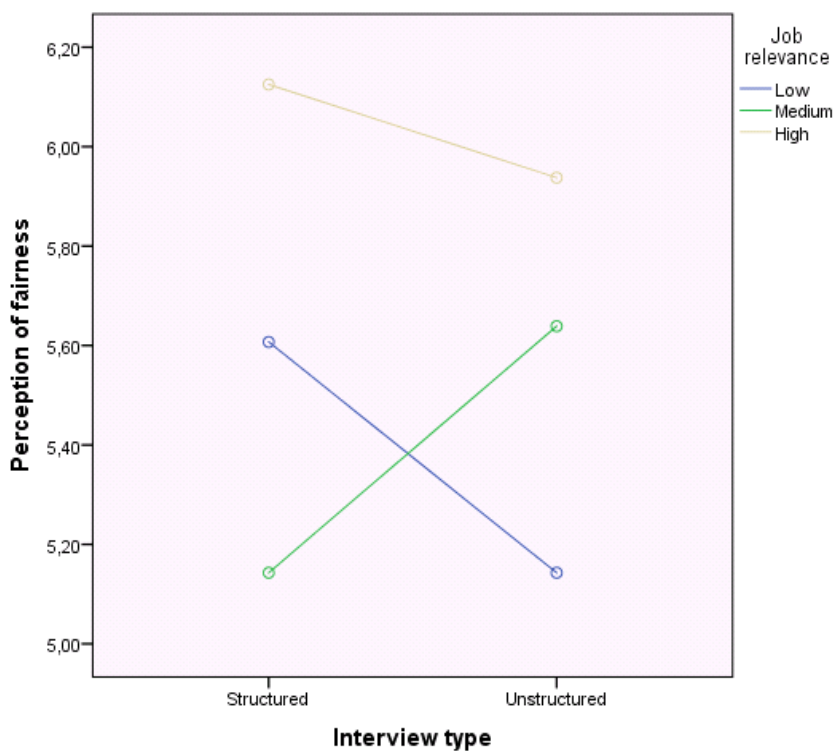
Figure 2:



Hypothesis 2c: *High degree of job relevance will decrease the perception of fairness*

There was a statistically significant effect of high degree of job relevance, $F=2,986$, $p=0,032$. It has a large effect size with a partial eta squared = 0,149. However, if one looks closer on the graph in Figure 3, we see that job relevance has a somewhat opposite effect on perception of fairness than hypothesized. This will be further discussed in the discussion part.

Figure 3:



Hypothesis 1: *The unstructured interview will be perceived as fairer than the structured interview*

Hypothesis 3a: *Perception of fairness is moderated by gender*

Hypothesis 3b: *Perception of fairness is moderated by degree of experience with interviews*

There was no statistically significant effect to support any of these three hypotheses. The results hence lead to the rejection of these three alternative hypotheses.

Discussion

The findings in this study suggest that interview style, either structured or unstructured, does not have any significant effect on a person's perception of fairness. This is a surprising discovery; in the sense that it goes against earlier research supporting that an unstructured interview style is perceived as fairer than the structured interview style (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Based on this result, one does not need to distinguish between the two interview styles in regards to fairness. It is important to remember that this is just in relation to fairness, and that the structured interview is still the best predictor of job performance (Van der Zee, Bakker & Bakker, 2002; Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). This surprising result could, of course, be caused by our sample and data collection. This is discussed more in depth in the limitation part below.

Despite the lack of significant findings of our main hypothesis, there were interesting results regarding the characteristics of allowance of voice and warmth. Supporting the findings of Kohn and Dipboye (1998), we found that both voice and warmth had an increasing effect on perception of fairness. This underlines the importance of, what Gilliland (1993) called Interpersonal Treatment, which is for people to feel that they are fairly treated. Our findings of these characteristics were independent of interview style.

High degree of job relevance was hypothesized to decrease the perception of fairness. Although, the analysis support that job relevance has an effect on perception of fairness, it does not have the hypothesized decreasing effect. Figure 3 shows a more ambiguous effect. What we can conclude from this figure is that the group with high degree of job relevance is also the group with the highest perception of fairness. From this it would seem that people find it important that the questions they are asked, are relevant for the job they are applying for.

As for our moderating hypotheses, there was no statistical significant effect of gender or interview experience as moderators of perception of fairness. It was surprising for us that, especially, experience with interviews had no effect. One should think that, just as with school exams, one grows accustomed to interviews the more one experiences them, but this did not seem to have any effect on their sense of fairness.

From these findings we can draw an interesting conclusion. The type of interview is not a deciding variable in creating a sense of fairness for the

candidate. How they are treated, however, and if they feel that they are contributing in the conversation, engender the sense of fairness. If candidates get the opportunity to use their voice (e.g., ask questions and further explain examples), he or she will feel that they are treated fairer. Also if the interviewer acts warm, polite and helpful this will create a higher perception of fairness, than if the interviewer is cold and distant. The candidate also needs a strong connection between the questions asked and the job he or she is supposed to do. High relevance of questions is also decisive for the perception of fairness.

Practical implications

Our results may have some practical implications for the interview process in organizations. For recruiters this can serve as a guide of what the interviewee finds important when having a job interview. Being friendly and warm towards the candidate, and letting the candidate ask questions and elaborate on issues, will make the candidate perceive the interview as fairer. This may make the candidate open up more towards the interviewer, which again makes it easier to understand if this is a candidate worth hiring. It is also important for the reputation of the organization, as candidates speak to other relevant future candidates. This may give the organization an advantage in reaching the best candidates.

This study shows that the difference between structured and unstructured interviews does not affect a participant's perception of fairness. This creates an argument for organizations to use a structured interview style, as this will be a better predictor of job performance. However, as voice and warmth is clearly characteristics of the unstructured interview, and this has an increased effect on perception of fairness, it creates an argument for the unstructured interview. If researchers could incorporate these concepts into the structured interview, without making a drastic decrease in predictive validity, this would create an interview type that would perhaps be a better option for recruiters.

Limitations

There are several limitations to our current research. First of all, the interview was not conducted in regards to a real job, even though we tried to make it as realistic as possible. Despite providing the participants with a job description before the interview, the fact that the participants knew that it was not a real hiring situation might have influenced their behavior during the interview. Some participants may not have taken the situation as serious as they would have in a

real hiring situation, and this could have influenced how they answered. The pressure a real hiring situation creates, and how this will affect the participants, is a setting that is difficult to create in a simulated environment. It is often very stressful to be in a job-search situation, and people put a lot of pressure on themselves before interviews. There could also be pressure from their surroundings stemming from multiple sources, like friends and family. This pressure will have great impact on how the interviewee act and perform during an interview. This impact was lacking in our interview setting and this may possibly have affected our results in some way.

Another limitation of our study is that we did the interviewing ourselves. Despite practicing before the interviews, our lack of experience may have hindered us in performing the interviews properly. Both interview styles demands a degree of experience. There may have been bigger differences between the unstructured and structured interview, if a person with experience performed the interview. Interviewing experience and the fact that we were not responsible for the outcome of the hiring process, like we would have been if we were hiring for a real position in a real company, may have had an influence, on both the people we interviewed and us. The participants' awareness of the purpose of the interview for a master thesis, may have led them to take it less serious than a real job interview.

Our study consists of a relatively small sample. Only 40 participants were involved in the experiment, with 20 participants in each group. There may have been a larger difference in perception of fairness between the structured and unstructured interview style if the experiment had been conducted on a bigger sample. Unfortunately, the length of time it took to interview each participant meant that the experiment as a whole was very time consuming. It also proved a challenge to get people to participate, because of the length of each interview.

Future research

Future research should focus on conducting the same experiment in a real interview setting. By creating a real interview setting some of the limitations mentioned earlier, would be avoided. In addition, one would ensure the distinction between a structured and unstructured interview by using experienced interviewers.

It would be difficult to find ways to conduct this experiment in a real setting, because of the ethical guidelines in both recruitment and research. One way could be to collaborate with two different organizations that need the same type of position filled.

Another suggestion for future research would be to create an interview style that incorporate the allowance of a larger degree of voice and interviewer warmth, still including job relevant questions, without doing considerable harm to the predictive validity of the interview. This article has only focused on two types of interview style, structured and unstructured. The semi-structured interview style is also widely used in recruitment today. Future research should look into the semi-structured interview, and how to incorporate voice, warmth and job relevance into the structure while still maintaining an acceptable predictive validity.

A final suggestion for a subject of further research is to study if the gender of the interviewer will have any impact on a candidate's perception of fairness. In this study, both the interviewers were males, and we were therefore unable to look at this in our study.

Conclusion

Research on applicant reactions has increased drastically the last twenty years. Knowledge on this subject is important for organizations and recruiters in their recruitment process in order to understand how people perceive the interview. First, the human aspect demands that all people that are interviewed are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. As the competition for the best people increase and the focus of organizations on employer branding intensifies, our findings are contributing to the comprehension of how candidates perceive the different interview styles. This can also help recruiters and people working with employer branding to give the candidates a better impression of the organization.

This study takes a different approach than other studies on this subject to find how interview style will affect the candidate's perception of fairness, by testing through a simulated interview. We uncovered some results that both support our hypotheses and previous research. In addition, we suggested directions for further research. Surprisingly, we cannot conclude that interview style has any significant effect on perception of fairness. However, we can

conclude that a candidate's perception of fairness will be increased if the candidate is allowed to use voice, meets a warm interviewer and is asked relevant questions. We believe that we have made a small contribution to this area in order to better be able to understand applicant reactions in an interview setting both in regards to structured and unstructured interviews.

References

- Arvey, R. D., Strickland, W., Drauden, G., & Martin, C. (1990). Motivational components of test taking. *Personnel Psychology, 43*(4), 695-716.
- Bies, R. J., & Shapiro, D. L. (1988). Voice and justification: Their influence on procedural fairness judgments. *Academy of Management Journal, 31*, 676-685.
- Campion, M. A., Palmer, D. K., & Campion, J. E. (1997). A review of structure in the selection interview. *Personnel Psychology, 50*(3), 655-702.
- Cascio, W.F. (1991) *Applied psychology in personnel management*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Chan, W. (1996). External recruitment versus internal promotion. *Journal of Labor Economics, 555-570*.
- Chan, D., Scmitt, N., Jennings, D., Clause, C. S., & Delbridge, K. (1998). Applicant Perceptions of Test Fairness: Integrating Justice and Self-Serving Bias Perspectives. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 6*(4), 232-239.
- Dipboye, R. L. (1982). Self-fulfilling prophecies in the selection-recruitment interview. *Academy of Management Review, 7*(4), 579-586.
- Dipboye, R. L. (1997). Structured selection interviews: Why do they work? Why are they underutilized. *International handbook of selection and assessment, 13*, 455-473.
- Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. Sage publications.
- Gilliland, S. W. (1993). The perceived fairness of selection systems: An organizational justice perspective. *Academy of management review, 18*(4), 694-734.

- Greenberg, J., & Cropanzano, R. (1993). The social side of fairness: Interpersonal and informational classes of organizational justice. Justice in the workplace: Approaching fairness in human resource management, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.
- Greenberg, J. (1990). Organizational justice: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Journal of management*, 16(2), 399-432.
- Hausknecht, J. P., Day, D. V., & Thomas, S. C. (2004). Applicant reactions to selection procedures: An updated model and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 57(3), 639-683.
- Huffcutt, A. I., & Arthur, W. (1994). Hunter and Hunter (1984) revisited: Interview validity for entry-level jobs.
- Iversen, O. I. (2015). Rekrutterings- og intervjueteknikk. Fagbokforlaget
- Kohn, L. S. (1995). *The relative effects of interview structure and person-organization fit on recruiting outcomes: An individual differences perspective* (Doctoral dissertation, Rice University).
- Kohn, L. S., & Dipboye, R. L. (1998). The effects of interview structure on recruiting outcomes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28(9), 821-843.
- Kiewra, K. A., DuBois, N. F., Christian, D., McShane, A., Meyerhoffer, M., & Roskelley, D. (1991). Note-taking functions and techniques. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(2), 240.
- Kossek, E. E. (1989). The acceptance of human resource innovation by multiple constituencies. *Personnel Psychology*, 42(2), 263-281.
- Latham, G. P., & Finnegan, B. J. (1993). Perceived practicality of unstructured, patterned, and situational interviews. In H. Schuler, J. L. Farr, & M. Smith

(Eds.), *Personnel selection and assessment: Individual and organizational perspectives* (pp. 4 1-57). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Levashina, J., Hartwell, C. J., Morgenson, F. P., & Campion, M. A. (2014). The structured employment interview: Narrative and quantitative review of the research literature. *Personnel Psychology*, *67*(1), 241-293.
- Liden, R. C., & Parsons, C. K. (1986). A field study of job applicant interview perceptions, alternative opportunities, and demographic characteristics. *Personnel Psychology*, *39*, 109-122.
- McMurry, R. N. (1947). Validating the patterned interview. *Personnel*.
- Mondy, R. W. & Mondy, J. B. (2014). Human Resource management 13 ed.
- Murphy, K. R. (1986). When your top choice turns you down: Effect of rejected offers on the utility of selection tests. *Psychological Bulletin*, *99*(1), 133.
- Ployhart, R. E. (2006). Staffing in the 21st century: New challenges and strategic opportunities. *Journal of management*, *32*(6), 868-897.
- Robertson, I. T., Iles, P. A., Gratton, L., & Sharpley, D. (1991). The impact of personnel selection and assessment methods on candidates. *Human Relations*, *44*, 963-982.
- Ryan, A. M., & Ployhart, R. E. (2000). Applicants' perceptions of selection procedures and decisions: A critical review and agenda for the future. *Journal of Management*, *26*(3), 565-606.
- Rynes, S. L. (1988). The employment interview as a recruitment device. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*, 439.
- Rynes, S. L. (1991). Recruitment, job choice, and post-hire consequences: A call for new research directions. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of*

industrial and organizational psychology (pp. 399-444). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Rynes, S. L., & Miller, H. E. (1983). Recruiter and job influences on candidates for employment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 147-154

Schmitt, N., & Coyle, B. W. (1976). Applicant decisions in the employment interview. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 61, 184-192

Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological bulletin*, 124(2), 262.

Terpstra, D. E., & Rozell, E. J. (1997). Why some potentially effective staffing practices are seldom used. *Public Personnel Management*, 26(4), 483-495.

Tullar, W. L., Mullins, T. W., & Caldwell, S. A. (1979). Effects of interview length and applicant quality on interview decision time. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 64(6), 669.

Tyler, T. R., & Bies, R. J. (1990). Beyond formal procedures: The interpersonal context of procedural justice. *Applied social psychology and organizational settings*, 77, 98.

Van der Zee, K. I., Bakker, A. B., & Bakker, P. (2002). Why are structured interviews so rarely used in personnel selection?. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(1), 176.

Wright, P. M., Lichtenfels, P. A., & Pursell, E. D. (1989). The structured interview: Additional studies and a meta-analysis. *Journal of occupational psychology*, 62(3), 191-199.

Appendix

Appendix 1

We are seeking Graduates within Business Consulting

Business Consulting:

We are currently looking for graduates to our Business Consulting department. This is a heavy consulting environment with long experience within change-management, organizational development, IT-consulting and project management. We are currently hiring 5 graduates to our office in Oslo where you from day one will be able to work with different clients and industries within your area of expertise

Targeted qualifications:

- Master's degree within business, marketing, organizational psychology or equivalent.
- Good grades (GPA 3.5 or higher)
- An excellent team player
- Demonstrated ability to learn, apply and communicate business-related concepts and ideas
- A good business and market understanding
- Fluent Norwegian and English, both written and oral
- Experienced user of MS Office

We can offer you:

- A unique and exciting graduate year, which will kick-start your career
- Varied job-tasks with customers from a broad-range of industries
- A lot of responsibility from day one
- Competitive conditions
- A culture where knowledge sharing is top priority.
- Good insurance and pension schemes.
- Competence development

How to apply

Please send us your application, CV, diplomas and references to:

Pontus Ueland

Einar Danielsen

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Previous experience with interviews (number): _____

Study level (year): _____

1. How fair was the interview process this company used?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very unfair		Moderately fair				Very fair

2. How fair would the interviewer's employment decision be about applicants?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very unfair		Moderately fair				Very fair

3. How fair was the procedure that this interviewer used to interview applicants?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very unfair		Moderately fair				Very fair

4. How fairly did the interviewer treat the applicants during the interview procedures?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very unfair		Moderately fair				Very fair

5. Overall, how would you rate the interview this company used?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very poor		Average				Very good

6. To what extent did the interviewer have a warm personality?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all		A moderate amount				A great amount

7. To what extent was this interviewer cold?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all		A moderate amount				A great amount

8. On the basis on this interview, how accurate do you believe the interviewer will be in determining the best applicants for the job?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very inaccurate		Moderately accurate				Very accurate

9. To what extent does the tone and style of this interviewer represent what the company is like?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

<i>Not at all</i>		<i>A moderate amount</i>				<i>A great amount</i>
<i>10. To what extent was this interviewer interested in the potential contributions of the applicants they interviewed?</i>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all</i>		<i>A moderate amount</i>				<i>A great amount</i>
<i>11. To what extent did this interviewer understand the applicant's point of view?</i>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all</i>		<i>A moderate amount</i>				<i>A great amount</i>
<i>12. To what extent was the interviewer interested in determining the outside interest of applicants?</i>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all</i>		<i>A moderate amount</i>				<i>A great amount</i>
<i>13. How relevant were the interviewer's question for assessing the applicant's ability to perform the job duties?</i>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all relevant</i>		<i>Moderately relevant</i>				<i>Highly relevant</i>
<i>14. A structured interview is one in which the interviewer uses the exact same questions in the exact same order for all applicants. Also, a structured interview includes only those questions that are directly related to the job. To what extent was this interview structured?</i>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all structured</i>		<i>Moderately structured</i>				<i>Highly structured</i>

Appendix 3

Spørreskjema

Alder: _____

Kjønn: _____

Tidligere erfaring med intervju (antall): _____

Studienivå (antall år): _____

1. Hvor rettferdig var intervjuprosessen som ble brukt?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Urettferdig rettferdig</i>		<i>Moderat rettferdig</i>				<i>Veldig</i>

2. Basert på intervjuet, hvor rettferdig vil ansettelsesavgjørelsen være?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Urettferdig rettferdig			Moderat rettferdig			Veldig

3. I hvilken grad vil du si intervjueren hadde en varm personlighet?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ikke i det hele tatt			Middels			I svært stor grad

4. Hvor rettferdig var intervjuprosedyren intervjueren brukte i intervjuet?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Urettferdig rettferdig			Moderat rettferdig			Veldig

5. I hvilken grad var intervjueren kald?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ikke i det hele tatt			Middels			I svært stor grad

6. På bakgrunn av dette intervjuet, hvor egnet tror du intervjueren vil være i å avgjøre den beste kandidaten for jobben?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Veldig unøyaktig		Middels nøyaktig				Veldig nøyaktig

7. I hvilken grad var intervjueren interessert i eventuelle bidrag fra deg?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ikke i det hele tatt			Middels			I svært stor grad

8. Hvor rettferdig ble du behandlet under intervjuet?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Urettferdig rettferdig			Moderat rettferdig			Veldig

9. I hvilken grad forstod intervjueren dine synspunkter?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ikke i det hele tatt			Middels			I svært stor grad

10. I hvilken grad var intervjueren interessert i å få vite om dine interesser?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ikke i det hele tatt			Middels			I svært stor grad

Preliminary master thesis

Study program:

**Leadership and Organizational
Psychology**

*- How does interview style affect
applicant's perception of fairness of the
job interview? -*

By:

**Pontus Ueland
Einar Bruvik Danielsen**

Supervisor:

Ole Iversen

Table of content

TABLE OF CONTENT.....	I
ABSTRACT.....	II
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	2
THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS.....	2
THE STRUCTURED AND UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW	3
<i>The content dimension.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The Evaluation Dimension.....</i>	<i>6</i>
THE UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW	7
<i>Why is the Unstructured Interview more used?</i>	<i>8</i>
APPLICANT REACTIONS	8
PERCEPTION OF FAIRNESS.....	11
<i>Procedural justice.....</i>	<i>11</i>
LINKING ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE THEORY, THE INTERVIEW AND APPLICANT REACTIONS	13
RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES:.....	15
METHOD	15
INTRODUCTION	15
THE INTERVIEW	15
THE PARTICIPANTS	16
A PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION AND THESIS PROGRESSION.....	16
REFERENCES.....	17
APPENDIX.....	21
APPENDIX 1	21

Abstract

In this thesis we will go through the literature on the interview and the two main forms; structured and unstructured. Research on this area agrees that structured interviews have a higher predictive validity of future job performance compared to the unstructured interview. However, research is scant on how these different interview styles affect the applicant's perception of fairness of the job interview and this is something we will examine in our master thesis.

Introduction

In today's fast changing business environment, where the competition for the most talented people are increasing in an extraordinary pace, the need for good recruitment processes are key for organizations to be able to succeed. In our master thesis we want to develop more research on the recruitment process, and more specifically on the interview and the interaction between the interviewer and the candidate. We want to look at how the relationship between the interviewer and the applicant is affected by the interview style chosen, and how this affects the applicant's perception of the fairness of the interview.

In an interview setting, one normally distinguishes between the structured and the unstructured interview. There is a substantial amount of research showing that structured interviews have higher predictive validity for job performance and are more reliable than unstructured interviews (Van der Zee, Bakker & Bakker, 2002; Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). However, there is less research conducted on the interaction between applicant and interviewer, and how a structured interview affects the applicant reaction in the interview setting compared to an unstructured interview. In an interview setting the interviewer holds the power to influence how the interview is going. The interviewer has the power to control how much time are spent talking, the subjects of conversation, and the formality of the interview (Rynes, 1988). This will further influence the applicant behaviors (Dipboye, 1982).

In the existing literature the term *applicant reaction* is used to refer to how the recruitment process influence the applicant. This term examines the “attitudes, affect, or cognitions an individual might have about the hiring process” (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000, p. 566). By knowing about the applicant's reactions to these different types of interviews, practitioners can be aware of this in the recruitment process, and this can also help organizations in their employer branding strategy. When candidates feel that they have been treated in a good way during the interview, they will also leave with a better impression of the organization, even if they don't get the job. Our thesis will hopefully provide good practical advices to the field of Human Resources and recruitment and selection.

Literature review

The Recruitment Process

In order to be able to discuss the impact structured or unstructured interview has on applicant's perception of fairness, it is important to put the interview in a bigger context. The interview in this setting is related to the recruitment process. Recruitment can be defined as "the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers, and with appropriate qualifications to apply for jobs with an organization" (Mondy & Mondy, 2014, p, 134).

The first step of the recruitment process is when human resource planning sees the need for a new employee. After this need has been exposed, the organization will first start to look for alternatives to recruitment. Recruitment is a costly and fixed cost for the organization, and it is therefore wise to look for other options before recruiting. Alternatives to recruitment involve outsourcing, onshoring, offshoring and perhaps the most common alternative, which is overtime (Mondy & Mondy, 2014). After the decision to hire is definite, the organization must decide if they are going to hire external or internal. Opening up the competition for a position to external candidates reduces the chance of promotion for existing workers and therefore their incentives to work (Chan, 1996). By recruiting internally, it is easier to evaluate candidates and they already know the company culture etc. Even though recruiting internally can be a good thing, firms sometimes have to recruit externally as well. According to Mondy & Mondy (2014, p.140) "external recruitment is needed to (1) fill entry-level jobs, (2) acquire skills not possessed by current employees, and (3) obtain employees with different backgrounds to provide a diversity of ideas". After advertising of the job and attraction of candidates is finished, the selection process begins.

Selection can be defined as: "the process of choosing from a group of applicants the individual best suited for a particular position and the organization" (Mondy & Mondy, 2014, p.158). The first step of the selection process is the preliminary screening. The main focus of this step is to eliminate those that clearly aren't qualified for the job. This can be done in several different ways like reading resumes, a short interview or a test. Following, or preceding the preliminary screening follows the review of applications and resumes. Several

larger companies are using scanning-programs in order to screen for both resumes and applications. The next step involves tests as personality, motivation, aptitude and abilities. Tests alone are not enough to make a decision on hiring or not, and are therefore used in addition to interviews, etc. Usually, after testing, it is time for the interview. (Mondy & Mondy, 2014) It is worth noticing that the recruitment process can vary from company to company. The interview can be done in many different forms, which will be discussed more in depth later on in this thesis.

After the candidates have been interviewed, the next step is the background and reference check. This involves checking for criminal records, social networking, etc. (Mondy & Mondy, 2014). When this has been done, the organization has to make a decision on whom to hire and if necessary, have a medical examination of the candidate if it is necessary for the work. And the last step is to notify the candidate that is offered the position, and also the candidates that are not offered, in order to treat all applicants with respect (Mondy & Mondy, 2014).

The Structured and Unstructured Interview

One of the oldest and most used tools in selection of personnel is the interview. Even though the interview as a tool for choosing between candidates have been highly debated, it is still seen as one of the best tools to assess future job performance, and research has shown that this generalizes between jobs, organizations and criteria (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). There are several definitions of the interview and one of the most common ways to distinguish them is by the degree of structure. The interview can be defined as “*a personally interactive process of one or more people asking questions orally to another person and evaluating the answers for the purpose of determining the qualifications of that person in order to make employment decisions*” (Levashina, Hartwell, Morgenson & Campion, 2014, p. 243). In the following, the interview in relation to the degree of structure will be discussed in depth.

In order to be able to distinguish between the structured and unstructured interview style, one must first define the term structure. There are a lot of different ways to define structure, and how one chooses to define this may have some

implications for how one chooses to define a structured interview. Levashina et al. (2014) argues that there is a need for more consensus among scientists on what the definition of the term structure really is. Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) defined structure as “the degree of discretion that an interviewer is allowed in conducting the interview”(p. 186). Based on this, they proposed two dimensions; standardization of interview questions and standardization of response scoring.

Similar to this approach by Huffcutt & Arthur (2014), is the approach of Campion, Palmer and Campion (1997), which claims that structure contains two dimensions, the content and evaluation dimension. These two dimensions consist of 15 components, which are argued to represent a degree of structure.

The content dimension

The first component that is argued to represent a degree of structure is to base the question on a job analysis. The purpose of job analysis is to “define each job in terms of the behaviors necessary to perform it” (Casco, 1991, p. 188). This means that in order to ask the right questions in an interview, one needs to base the questions on a job analysis. Job analysis and the importance of it in order to structure an interview has been documented way back, and is still heavily emphasized today as well (McMurry, 1947; Levashina et al, 2014).

The second component is that the interviewer asks the same questions to all candidates. In this component of the content dimension there are four different levels to distinguish between the degrees of structure (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). The first level is the unstructured interview, which will be discussed more in depth later. Level two is slightly more structured, with a standardization of the topics that are going to be discussed during the interview. This lays some guidelines for what topics to be covered, but the interviewer are free to discuss and ask what kind of questions he wants as long as it is related to the topic. The third level involves a specification of the questions, but the interviewer can choose among alternative questions and are able to probe responses to the questions. The fourth and most structured level involves complete standardization, with no follow-up questions and all candidates receiving the exact same questions (Campion et al, 1997).

The third component is that of limiting prompting, follow-up, and elaboration on questions (Campion et al, 1997). This builds on the second

component. In this dimension there are also four levels to distinguish between the degrees of structure (Campion et al, 1997). The highest level of structure involves the prohibition of asking questions, and the only type of following up and elaborating on the questions is to repeat the questions. The second highest level allows the interviewer to ask questions as “is there anything else you would like to ask?” and some boundaries may be the number of follow-up questions the interviewer are allowed to ask. The third level involves the allowance of elaborating and follow-up questions. Sometimes the asking of questions may be required in order to explore sides of the candidates, explore negative sides etc. The fourth and the lowest level are no guidance on limiting prompting, follow-up and elaboration on questions (Campion et al., 1997).

The fourth component is that of using better types of questions. What kind of questions one asks may heavily influence the interview. Structured interviews has a better predictive validity for job performance than unstructured, and therefore one is able to increase the validity of the interview by asking better and more structured questions (Campion et al, 1997; Wright, Lichtenfels & Pursell, 1989). Campion et al. (1997) presents four types of questions that research has presented as structured; situational, past-behavior, background and job-knowledge.

The fifth component involves using longer interviews or larger number of questions. Time and length, within a reasonable time, are variables that help bringing more structure to an interview, due to the fact that it provides more information for the interviewer (Campion et al, 1997). Campion et al. (1997) claims that time are often an overlooked part of structure. When viewing high quality applicants, there is more information to process. In order to gain more structure in situations like this, time can be a highly valuable element (Tullar, Mullins & Caldwell, 1979).

The sixth component is to control ancillary information, which involves transcripts, CV, resumes, previous interviews, etc. (Campion et al., 1997). Uncontrolled use of ancillary information is a threat to structure, and two main problems arise; first, it creates problem in the interpretation of the interview, because validity may be due to the interview or to this ancillary information. Second it creates unreliability if not available for all candidates or given to all

interviewers, or if interviewers evaluate the information differently (Campion et al., 1997).

The last component is to not allow questions from the applicant until after the interview. Even though most candidates have a lot of questions about the role, a lot of questions about this during the interview will most likely harm the structure. A way to handle this problem is to save all the questions until after the interview is finished (Campion et al., 1997).

The Evaluation Dimension

The first component of the evaluation dimension is to rate each answer or using multiple scales (Campion et al., 1997). According to Campion et al. (1997) there are three levels of ratings in order to make the evaluation more structured. The first and most structured level is to rate each answer during the interview. The second level consists of making multiple ratings at the end. The third and less structured style is to make one overall judgment at the end.

The second component is the use of anchored rating scales (Campion et al., 1997). These scales have been developed in order to help recruiters evaluating candidates. Anchored rating scales helps by simplifying difficult tasks by providing behavioral, descriptive or evaluative examples to illustrate points on the rating scale (Levashina et al., 2013).

The third component is taking detailed notes. This involves taking notes in order to prevent a loss of important information during the interview, and thus increasing the structure of the interview and thereby increasing the likelihood of a successful hire (Campion et al., 1997). Kiewra et al's (1991) research on note taking indicates that to take notes during a lecture and not reviewing them is not more effective than just listening without note taking. This is something that can be transferred to the interview setting and the importance of taking good notes in order to capture as much information as possible

The fourth component includes the use of several interviewers. In order to be able to reduce the chances of being subject to different biases, the use of multiple interviewers can help reduce this (Campion et al., 1997). There can be several characteristics on the use of several interviewers, interviewers can hold interviews together, or they can interview the same candidate separately. An interview with several interviewers is often called panel interview, and is known

as the most structured form of interview in regards to the use of several interviewers (Campion, 1997).

The fifth component claims that the use of same interviewer (s) is essential in order to be able to rank the candidates (Campion et al, 1997). As Campion (1997, p. 682) argues, it is impossible “to distinguish variance due to rating tendencies among interviewers from true score variance among candidates”. This is due to several reasons like biases, different interview style, etc. A way to be able to deal with this “problem” is to use a highly structured interview in order to reduce this element.

The sixth component is no talk about candidates between the interviews (Campion et al, 1997). By talking about candidates, one easily let irrelevant information enter, and this is especially important in panels, due to the fact that all the interviewers are present (Campion et al, 1997).

The seventh element is training in the interview setting (Campion et al., 1997). In order to practice on the interview, several different options are available; lectures role-play, note taking and practicing interviews. The more trained interviewers are the more likely they are to be able to not be subjects to biases when making decisions and conducting interviews (Campion et al., 1997).

The last element is the use of statistical prediction (Campion et al., 1997). In order to enhance structure, the use of statistical tools instead of the interviewer's judgment is crucial. Statistical approaches will help to reduce the likelihood of information that are not relevant will enter the score (Campion, 1997).

The Unstructured Interview

In order to discuss the unstructured interview, the question on how one defines structure arises yet again. In an unstructured interview there is no fixed format, and the interviewer has not planned ahead what to ask the candidate. In addition to this, there is not a fixed procedure, or not a procedure at all for scoring the answers (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Campion et al. (1997) gives examples on typical unstructured question, which could be “questions on opinions and attitudes, goals and aspirations, and self-descriptions and self-evaluations” (p. 668). In most cases an overall evaluation is given to the applicant based on

impressions and the judgment of the interviewer (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

Schmidt and Hunter (1998) conducted a meta-analysis where they found out that the structured interview has a predictive validity of future job performance of 0.51 compared to the unstructured interview that has 0.38.

Even though scientists and researchers has shown that the structured interview is a better tool for increased predictive validity, research has also shown that the unstructured interview style is the most used in today's work society (Dipboye, 1997; Terpstra & Rozell, 1997).

Why is the Unstructured Interview more used?

According to Van der Zee et al. (2002), there may be several reasons for the not so widespread use of the structured interview. First of all, a lot of people doing recruitment may not be aware of the existing literature supporting the use of structured interviews. Another explanation to this has been proposed as the need for freedom and being in charge for the interviewer. When being "stuck" to a structured interview, the interviewer may feel a loss of autonomy and that the job gets less challenging (Van der Zee et al, 2002). A third possibility, according to Dipboye (1997), is that applicants are more in favor of "interviewers who are attentive, warm, and socially perceptive, and unstructured interviews allow the communication of these qualities better than structured interviews" (Dipboye, 1997; Cited in Van der Zee & Baker, p. 176). Fourth, Kossek (1989) claims that one reason for this limited use of structured interviews may be due to social pressure from the organization. Structured processes may be seen as the opposite of the organizations "way of doing things". Last, but not least, time, budget and lack of HR resources may be important reasons for not prioritizing the structured interview. As mentioned earlier, the structured interview is more time consuming and costly than the unstructured and this may be an important reason for not choosing it. If the company does not have the needed HR competence available, this may also contribute to the use of the unstructured interview (Terpstra & Rozell, 1997).

Applicant Reactions

From the paragraphs above, we have learnt that the structured interview is the best predictor of job performance. We also learnt that the unstructured

interview is the most widely used. But it is important to distinguish between what is the most valid selection tool the recruiter has, the most used, and what the best tool for attracting potential employees is. As Koth and Dipboye (1998) puts it, “unfortunately, the tests and procedures that are the most effective in achieving valid selection are not always the most effective in recruiting prospective employees, and vice versa” (p. 821). There is a considerable amount of research examining all types of validity, reliability and other psychometric characteristics of selection tools, but this have little meaning if there is no research on how these tools affect the applicant.

Recruitment researchers have shown an increasing interest in applicants over the last decade. Ryan and Ployhart (2000) list a number of reasons for the spark in interest. The relative low unemployment rates, has led organizations to be more reflective over what they do in their selection processes and how this might affect job seekers’ opinion on the attractiveness of the organization. Researchers have felt that the research on the area has been scant, and has therefore been calling for more extensive research on the subject (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). This is combined with more and more researchers, trying to apply social justice theory to explain applicant reactions (Gilliland, 1993; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). Globalization has led to a more diverse pool of applicants. Some selection tools may be perceived different depending on the cultural background of the applicant. It is therefore important to do research to check for procedures that may make the organization less attractive (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000).

The term used in the literature is either applicant reactions or applicant perception. It is based on the premise that, in the same way as organizations chooses their employees, the applicants also makes a choice of employer. Applicants decide which organization they want to work at, and also decide to accept or refuse an offer of employment (Rynes, 1993; Cited in Hausknecht, Day & Thomas, 2004). Ryan and Ployhart (2000) use the term applicant reaction about “any attitudes, affect, or cognitions an individual might have about the hiring process” (p. 566).

Hausknecht, Day and Thomas (2004), in their meta-analysis on applicant reactions, elaborate five reasons for why applicant reaction is an important topic for researchers of recruitment and selection.

The first reason is that if an applicant feels that parts of the process are invasive, this may alter their perception of the company to be less attractive (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Therefore, the applicant will seek other options and the company must hire a less qualified applicant or, in a worst-case scenario, start the whole process over. Murphy (1986) claims that this will create high cost for the company, as the productivity of a lesser-qualified applicant will be lower than the best qualified applicant.

The second reason is that other applicants may be warned of applying for jobs at the company in the future, by applicants that may have had a negative experience with the selection process (Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993; Cited in Hausknecht et al., 2004). It's not unusual to seek advice from others when applying for a job. Therefore, if one applicant has a negative experience with a company's selection process, this applicant may advise others against applying at that company.

Third, if an applicant has perceived selection practices unfavorably, the applicant may not accept the employment offer from the company (Macan, Avedon, Paese, & Smith, 1994; Cited in Hausknecht et al., 2004)

Fourth, there is a chance that applicants that feel mistreated may take legal action against the company (Smither et al., 1993; Cited in Hausknecht et al., 2004).

Fifth, the chance of reapplying or buying the company's products may be less likely if an applicant feel mistreated (Hausknecht et al., 2004).

As mentioned above, several recruiting researchers have examined the application of organizational justice theory on applicant reaction. This research will be discussed in the next paragraph. But there are also other types of research conducted on the subject. Some researchers have tried attempted to check how an applicant's perception would affect how the applicant performs in a testing situation (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). For instance, research has shown that the difference in motivation towards test taking can account for racial differences in test scores (Arvey, Strickland, Drauden, & Martin, 1990). Ryan and Ployhart (2000) also mentions "understanding the nature of intelligence, examining the effects of methods of testing and question variants" (p. 568) as directions the applicant reaction research has taken. Other researchers have tried to link the applicant reactions and perception to demographic differences (Ployhart, 2006).

Perception of Fairness

The concept that has achieved the most amount of attention in the applicant perception literature is how organizational justice theory can relate to perception of fairness (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). It is considered to be the dominant framework for examining perception of fairness (Chan, Scmitt, Jennings, Clause, & Delbridge, 1998). Organizational justice theory aims at explaining the processes of how an individual's perceived fairness influence the individual's intentions, behaviors, self-perceptions and attitudes (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Gilliland (1993) was one of the first researchers who tried to link organizational justice theories to applicant reactions. Gilliland wanted to examine how applicant's justice perceptions came to exist and how selection outcomes were affected by the applicant's perceptions (Hausknecht et al., 2004).

The organizational justice theories distinguish between two different dimensions; procedural and distributive (Gilliland, 1993). The distributive justice theory is concerned with "the perceived fairness of outcome distribution" (Greenland, 1993, p. 1). The theory examines how applicants compare their inputs and the outcome to others' input and outcome, to see how this affect the applicant's perception to fairness of the allocation of outcome (Greenberg, 1993; Hausknecht et al., 2004). As our thesis mainly focuses on the interview situation, and how this can affect perception of fairness, we will focus more on Gilliland's second dimension of organizational justice theory the procedural justice.

Procedural justice

Procedural justice is the part of organizational justice theory that focuses on whether or not an applicant perceive the procedures, used to determine outcomes, to be fair (Greenberg, 1993). In a selection setting, this concerns procedures, methods and rules used throughout the selection process (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Procedural justice is composed by three different categories; the formal characteristics of the procedures, explanation of the procedures and decision-making, and interpersonal treatment (Greenberg, 1990). The studies of Gilliland (1993) further this, and claims that the three groups are composed of 10 procedural rules. The satisfaction or violation of these rules may contribute to overall perception of fairness in the selection process (Gilliland, 1993). The 10

rules is essential to understand how an applicant perceive, in this thesis an interview, to be fair or not (Hausknecht et al, 2004).

Formal characteristics:

Job relatedness: Job relatedness refers to “the extent to which a test either appears to measure content relevant to the job situation or appears to be valid” (Gilliland, 1993, p. 703).

Opportunity to perform: Research shows that if applicants have a chance to speak, voice themselves, prior to the decision outcome they will find the outcome more fair (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Reconsideration opportunity: This rule concerns the opportunity to receive a second chance. If an applicant is given the chance to challenge or modify a result, this is believed to enhance their perception of fairness (Greenberg, 1986a; Leventhal, 1980; Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Consistency: Consistency refers to “ensuring that decision procedures are consistent across people and over time” (Gilliland, 1993, p. 705).

Explanation:

Feedback: Research has claimed that feedback, and that it is informative is an important aspect for applicants’ in a selection process (Gilliland, 1993). In a testing situation, researchers found empirical evidence that reactions were more favorable when the participants were given a feedback session about their results than those who didn’t (Lounsbury, Bobrow, Jensen, 1989; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Selection information: Applicants, that receive a justification after a negative outcome (rejected from a job or not invited back after a personality test), will have a greater perception of fairness than an applicant that did not get a justification (Gilliland, 1993).

Honesty: Honesty and trustworthiness communicated to the applicants, is an important component of how they react. If the applicants feel that that the company is honest throughout the company, they will perceive the process as fairer (Gilliland, 1993).

Interpersonal treatment:

Interpersonal effectiveness of administrator: This component concerns parts of the behavior of the administrator (the interviewer or test administrator).

The degree of warmth and respect given to the applicant's will influence their perception of fairness (Gilliland, 1993).

Two-way communication: Similar to *opportunity to perform*, applicants should have the opportunity to have their views considered and the opportunity to give input (Tyler & Bies, 1990; Cited in Gilliland, 1993). The difference, however, is that two-way communication concerns the interaction between applicant and interviewer. Research has found dissatisfaction with computerized interviewing tools than the classic face-to-face interview (Martin & Nagao, 1989; Cited in Gilliland, 1993).

Property of questions: Questions asked to applicants should be factual and relevant. Question that are perceived by the applicants to be invasion of privacy or improper will reduce perceived fairness (Gilliland, 1993).

Linking Organizational Justice Theory, the Interview and Applicant Reactions

Although the literature on applicant reaction/perception is starting to increase in amount, the amount of research looking at the interviews' role is relatively scant. This is unfortunate, as the interview is considered more favorably by applicants than other selection tools (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Kohn and Dipboye (1998) are some of the researchers that try to go in depth on the subject. Their research shows that applicants consider the structured interview less favorably, and that the structured interviews may harm recruitment efforts (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998).

They emphasize, based on Gilliland's 10 procedural rules (1993), that two components of the structured interview, consistency and job-relatedness, can create a sense of fairness for the applicant. The structured interview only uses questions that are job related, which are perceived as fairer by applicants (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Chan et al. (1998) found that an important determinant of the perceived fairness of a test was the job relevance of the test. Also, because the structured interview uses the same question in the same order for all applicants, this creates consistency and ensures equality for the applicants. This will also help create a perception of fairness (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998).

Kohn and Dipboye (1998) also highlight components of the unstructured interview that can engender a sense of fairness by the applicants. These components relates to the interpersonal rules of Gilliland (1993), as the

interpersonal effectiveness of the administrator and two-way communication (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Because the unstructured interview is more of a conversational-type interview, this allows the applicants to use voice (Greenberg & Fogler, 1983; LaTour, 1978; Lind, Kurtz, Musante, Walker & Thibaut, 1980; Cited in Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Tyler and Bies' (1990) research shows that if an applicant feels free to ask questions this will create a perception of fairness. Also, the unstructured interview style can create an impression that the interviewer is warm, friendly, likable, which is more likely to form a positive impression of the recruiter (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Liden & Parson, 1986; Rynes, 1991, Schmitt & Coyle, 1976; Cited in Kohn & Dipboye, 1998).

The results of Kohn and Dipboye (1998) suggest “ participants preferred interviews that were low on job-relevance, high on voice, and high on warmth” (p. 821). These findings suggest that applicants perceive the unstructured interview more favorably, as these are all characteristics one find in the unstructured interview. Job relatedness and standardization, which characterize the highly structured interview, was perceived as narrowing and a hindrance for revealing uniqueness (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). These results match the results of Latham and Finnegan (1993). They also found that (student) applicants had a preference for the unstructured interview. The reasons support the study of Kohn and Dipboye, as the opportunity for two-way communication (use of voice) was very important for the applicant (Latham & Finnegan, 1993). Also, the study of Schuler (1993) supports these results (Cited in Latham & Finnegan, 1993). Schuler (1993) found that student applicant had a more favorable impression of interviewers, which used the unstructured interview style. They were easier to talk to and made the applicants feel more comfortable (Cited in Latham & Finnegan, 1993).

Unfortunately, none of the mentioned studies used real interviews in their studies. The participants were given an interview transcript, and asked answer questions related to the interview. This is unfortunate, because the studies were mainly conducted on students with no real experience with interviews. There could be difficulties in imagining the interview setting for participants that have never experienced it. In our thesis we will conduct real interviews with the applicants, both unstructured and structured. This will hopefully give them a

better and more realistic impression of the interview setting, and therefore better assumptions to rate their perception of fairness.

Research Question and Hypotheses:

How does interview style affect applicant's perception of fairness of the job interview?

Hypothesis 1: The unstructured interview will be perceived as fairer than the structured interview

Hypothesis 2a: The allowance of voice will increase perception of fairness

Hypothesis 2b: The allowance of warmth will increase perception of fairness

Hypothesis 2c: High degrees of job relevance and standardization will decrease the perception of fairness

Hypothesis 3a: Perception of fairness is moderated by gender

Hypothesis 3b: Perception of fairness is moderated by degree of experience with interviews

Method

Introduction

In our thesis, we will conduct a quasi experiment. To test for applicant reaction, a job position will be invented and participants will be brought in for an interview. We will divide our participants into two groups; one group will be interviewed using an unstructured interview style, and the second group will be interviewed using a structured interview style. After the interview, participants will be given a survey to measure their reactions.

The Interview

Because of ethical and legal considerations, the experiment cannot be performed in a real recruitment setting. Therefore, we'll have to create a fake recruitment setting. We have chosen a situation where a consultancy firm is looking to hire new trainees, and created a job description based on real job descriptions consultancy firms' use. The job description can be seen in Appendix

1. Every participant will be fully aware that the job is not real, and a fake setting. However, they

Before the experiment, we will participate in an executive course that will teach us the necessary techniques need to conduct the interviews. Then we will conduct the interviews with the participants ourselves. The interviews will be held in Norwegian, and we will use approximately thirty minutes per participant.

The Participants

In our experiment, participants will be students at either first or second year on their masters. Participants' qualifications must match the required qualifications in the job description. The participants will be divided into two groups, where each group will consist of twenty participants. As previously mentioned, the participants will be fully aware that it is not a real situation. They will, however, not be informed of the purpose of the interviews.

A Plan for Data Collection and Thesis Progression

16.01.2017: Preliminary thesis hand-in

02-03.03.2017: Attend course in interview technique (Executive Master of Management).

31.03.2017: Finish the experiment

15.04.2017: Analyze data collected

15.05.2017: Hand in first draft

01.09.2017: Hand in master thesis

References

- Arvey, R. D., Strickland, W., Drauden, G., & Martin, C. (1990). Motivational components of test taking. *Personnel Psychology, 43*(4), 695-716.
- Campion, M. A., Palmer, D. K., & Campion, J. E. (1997). A review of structure in the selection interview. *Personnel Psychology, 50*(3), 655-702.
- Cascio, W.F. (1991) *Applied psychology in personnel management*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Chan, W. (1996). External recruitment versus internal promotion. *Journal of Labor Economics, 555-570*.
- Chan, D., Scmitt, N., Jennings, D., Clause, C. S., & Delbridge, K. (1998). Applicant Perceptions of Test Fairness: Integrating Justice and Self-Serving Bias Perspectives. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 6*(4), 232-239.
- Dipboye, R. L. (1982). Self-fulfilling prophecies in the selection-recruitment interview. *Academy of Management Review, 7*(4), 579-586.
- Dipboye, R. L. (1997). Structured selection interviews: Why do they work? Why are they underutilized. *International handbook of selection and assessment, 13*, 455-473.
- Gilliland, S. W. (1993). The perceived fairness of selection systems: An organizational justice perspective. *Academy of management review, 18*(4), 694-734.
- Greenberg, J., & Cropanzano, R. (1993). The social side of fairness: Interpersonal and informational classes of organizational justice. Justice in the workplace: Approaching fairness in human resource management, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.

- Greenberg, J. (1990). Organizational justice: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Journal of management, 16*(2), 399-432.
- Hausknecht, J. P., Day, D. V., & Thomas, S. C. (2004). Applicant reactions to selection procedures: An updated model and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 57*(3), 639-683.
- Huffcutt, A. I., & Arthur, W. (1994). Hunter and Hunter (1984) revisited: Interview validity for entry-level jobs.
- Kohn, L. S., & Dipboye, R. L. (1998). The effects of interview structure on recruiting outcomes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 28*(9), 821-843.
- Kiewra, K. A., DuBois, N. F., Christian, D., McShane, A., Meyerhoffer, M., & Roskelley, D. (1991). Note-taking functions and techniques. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 83*(2), 240.
- Kossek, E. E. (1989). The acceptance of human resource innovation by multiple constituencies. *Personnel Psychology, 42*(2), 263-281.
- Latham, G. P., & Finnegan, B. J. (1993). Perceived practicality of unstructured, patterned, and situational interviews. In H. Schuler, J. L. Farr, & M. Smith (Eds.), *Personnel selection and assessment: Individual and organizational perspectives* (pp. 4 1-57). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Levashina, J., Hartwell, C. J., Morgeson, F. P., & Campion, M. A. (2014). The structured employment interview: Narrative and quantitative review of the research literature. *Personnel Psychology, 67*(1), 241-293.
- McMurry, R. N. (1947). Validating the patterned interview. *Personnel*.

-
- Mondy, R. W. & Mondy, J. B. (2014). Human Resource management 13 ed.
- Murphy, K. R. (1986). When your top choice turns you down: Effect of rejected offers on the utility of selection tests. *Psychological Bulletin*, 99(1), 133.
- Ployhart, R. E. (2006). Staffing in the 21st century: New challenges and strategic opportunities. *Journal of management*, 32(6), 868-897.
- Ryan, A. M., & Ployhart, R. E. (2000). Applicants' perceptions of selection procedures and decisions: A critical review and agenda for the future. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 565-606.
- Rynes, S. L. (1988). The employment interview as a recruitment device. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*, 439.
- Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological bulletin*, 124(2), 262.
- Terpstra, D. E., & Rozell, E. J. (1997). Why some potentially effective staffing practices are seldom used. *Public Personnel Management*, 26(4), 483-495.
- Tullar, W. L., Mullins, T. W., & Caldwell, S. A. (1979). Effects of interview length and applicant quality on interview decision time. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 64(6), 669.
- Tyler, T. R., & Bies, R. J. (1990). Beyond formal procedures: The interpersonal context of procedural justice. *Applied social psychology and organizational settings*, 77, 98.
- Van der Zee, K. I., Bakker, A. B., & Bakker, P. (2002). Why are structured interviews so rarely used in personnel selection?. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(1), 176.
-

Wright, P. M., Lichtenfels, P. A., & Pursell, E. D. (1989). The structured interview: Additional studies and a meta-analysis. *Journal of occupational psychology*, 62(3), 191-199.

Appendix

Appendix 1

We are seeking Graduates within Business Consulting

Business Consulting:

We are currently looking for graduates to our Business Consulting department. This is a heavy consulting environment with long experience within change-management, organizational development, IT-consulting and project management. We are currently hiring 5 graduates to our office in Oslo where you from day one will be able to work with different clients and industries within your area of expertise

Targeted qualifications:

- Master's degree within business, marketing, organizational psychology or equivalent.
- Good grades (GPA 3.5 or higher)
- An excellent team player
- Demonstrated ability to learn, apply and communicate business-related concepts and ideas
- A good business and market understanding
- Fluent Norwegian and English, both written and oral
- Experienced user of MS Office

We can offer you:

- A unique and exciting graduate year, which will kick-start your career
- Varied job-tasks with customers from a broad-range of industries
- A lot of responsibility from day one
- Competitive conditions
- A culture where knowledge sharing is top priority.
- Good insurance and pension schemes.
- Competence development

How to apply

Please send us your application, CV, diplomas and references to:

Pontus Ueland

Pontus.ueland@gmail.com

41568669

Einar Danielsen

einardanielsen91@gmail.com

47649163

Looking forward to hear from you!