



Curtin University



Faculty of Business and Law

2020 Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships

Strategic Project Profile

PROJECT TITLE: Understanding Applicant Reactions to Modern Personnel Selection Procedures using a Self-Determination Theory Approach

FIELD OF RESEARCH CODE: 1503 1701

PROJECT SYNOPSIS: Background:

While the dilemma of choosing who to employ will forever remain relevant to organisations, technological advancements have led to the continued development of new and innovative ways to assess the strengths and weaknesses of job applicants. For example, traditional face to face interviews are being replaced by computer-scored digital interviews, traditional paper and pencil psychological tests are being replaced by 'game-based' mobile apps, and traditional private CVs are being replaced with information already in the public domain through social media websites. It remains unclear, however, how applicants to jobs collectively perceive these new selection techniques and technologies; that is, to what extent do applicants find these new techniques engaging and empowering versus frustrating and invasive, and to what extent does it even matter how applicants feel about them? Given that in the information age, applicants can anonymously share their experiences with organisations via 'reputation' websites such as Glassdoor.com, seek.com.au, and Google, it may be that understanding applicants' experiences is more important today than ever before!

Project Summary: While a body of literature exists on the study of ‘applicant reactions’ to selection procedures, classical theory in this area has not kept up with the rapid developments in selection technology. This project seeks to develop a generalised theory of applicant reactions by drawing from the tenets of Self-Determination Theory, which posits that all individuals have three fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, belongingness, and competence. The ultimate goal of this project is to develop a framework that is useful for predicting which aspects of any selection technique could be expected to be perceived favourably versus unfavourably by applicants. To this end, the project will include a review of the literature on applicant reactions, self-determination theory, technology acceptance, and modern selection techniques with the goal of devising a generalised framework. From there, the project can incorporate quantitative experimental or field studies to evaluate some of the propositions of the framework.

FEASIBILITY AND RESOURCING – DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT WILL RECEIVE:

A considerable portion, if not all, of the empirical research can be conducted via experimental studies. These studies can be completed at relatively low cost via online participant recruitment sites such as Mechanical Turk or Prolific. Field studies, if required, will be conducted in partnership with FOWI's vast network of industry collaborators. The supervisory team is proficient in methodological and statistical skills required to provide support to the candidate. The faculty will provide a laptop, shared workspace and research training.

WHAT MINIMAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS EXPECTED BY THE CANDIDATE BE COMPETITIVE:

Honours I or higher. Some research experience with a first author output is desirable, but not essential.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT/ PROGRAM FOR THE ENROLLING SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION:

The Future of Work Institute is the leading research institute in the Faculty of Business and Law. Aligning to FOWI'S research themes, this project will contribute new knowledge in the interface between technological advancement in HRM practices and external end users of these technologies (job applicants). The topic is highly relevant to both academia, through its advancement of theory, but will have practical implications for the deployment and implementation of technology in HRM. The project has the potential to create new demand for further research from various industries including: recruiting companies, job seeking websites, assessment system developers, large employers, and tertiary education providers who offer career development services.

Students are advised to contact the Project Lead listed below prior to submission of their scholarship application to discuss their suitability to be involved in this strategic project.

PROJECT LEAD CONTACT

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