



# Understanding Applicant Reactions to Modern Personnel Selection Procedures using a Self-Determination Theory Approach

## 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!

## The project

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.

For more background information, see the suggested readings below.

## Why you should do this project

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.

## Want to know more about the project?

Feel welcome to send Associate Professor Patrick Dunlop ([patrick.dunlop@curtin.edu.au](mailto:patrick.dunlop@curtin.edu.au)) an email.

## Suggested readings

Gilliland, S. W. (1993). The perceived fairness of selection systems: An organizational justice perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 18, 694-734. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/258595>

Gagne, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, 331-362. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/job.322>

Nikolaou, I., Georgiou, K., Bauer, T., & Truxillo, D. (2019). Applicant reactions in employee recruitment and selection: the role of technology. In R. Landers (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Technology and Employee Behavior* (pp. 100-130). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108649636.006>