

APPLICANT REACTION TO STRUCTURE: SELF-MONITORING AS MODERATOR

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Abstract

This experimental study examined applicant reaction on different types of interview structure (through structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview transcripts) with further analysis of self-monitoring as moderator variable. Final year undergraduate students ($n=41$) were selected and imagined themselves as applicant applying for the post of research assistant (RA). The results showed a significant effect of interview structure on applicants' reactions with $F(1, 40) = 35.29; p < 0.01$. Particularly, applicants reacted negatively to structured interview compared to semi-structured ($t(41) = -8.67; p < 0.01$) and unstructured interview ($t(41) = -5.94; p < 0.01$). No significant difference was found in applicants' reactions between semi-structured and unstructured interview with $t(41) = 1.56; p > 0.05$ and self-monitoring did not moderate effect of interview structure on applicant reactions with $F(2, 38) = 2.626, p > 0.05; \eta^2 = 0.121$.

Keywords: *Applicant reactions, employment interview, interview structure, interview transcript, self-monitoring*

Introduction

The use of interview in personnel selection process is almost universal (Borman Hanson & Hedge, 1997; Hough & Oswald, 2000; Landy, Shankster & Kohler, 1994). One type of interview use in personnel selection process is structured interview. Structured interview, since it was introduced, has indeed offer a vast improvement over the dark ages of unstructured interview (Judge, Cable, & Higgins, 2000). Scientific research has confirmed the advantage of structured interview over unstructured interview in terms of its validity as shown in several meta-analytic reviews (i.e. Huffcut, & Arthur, Jr., 1994; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994; Wiesner, & Cronshaw, 1988). In others words, selecting applicants to fill in a job position using structured interview predicts job performance better than selecting them using unstructured interview. Unfortunately, structured interview produce more negative reactions among applicants compared to structured interview (Bies, & Shapiro, 1988; Chapman, & Rowe, 2002; Chapman, & Zweig, 2005; Hysong, & Dipboye, 1999; Kohn, & Dipboye, 1998; Latham, & Finnegan, 1993) except a few (i.e. Taylor, & Bergmann, 1987; Turban, & Dougherty, 1992) who found neutral and positive reactions. It can be seen that findings on the effect of interview structure on applicant reaction demonstrated a mix result, and many have compared only between structured and unstructured interview. Therefore, further investigation is needed in this area with addition on examining the effect of moderately-structured interview, as opposed to comparing only structured and unstructured interview.

Interview structure

Interview structure can be defined as “the reduction in procedural variance across applicants, which can translate into the degree of discretion that an interview is allowed in conducting the interview” (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1984, p. 186). A more simplified definition of interview structure is the degree to which interviewers ask the same questions to all applicants and have a systematic ways of rating them based on job-related criteria established from job analysis (Chapman & Rowe, 2002; Dipboye, Wooten, & Halverson, 2004) though Dipboye and Gaugler (1993) suggested 11 elements of interview structure whereas Campion, Palmer, and Campion (1997) suggested 15. An innovative idea introduced by Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) is that interview structure can be either discrete (structured vs. unstructured) or continuous (include semi-structured). These different types of structure may lead to different reactions from the applicants (Chapman & Rowe, 2002).

However, Chapman and Zweig (2005) argued that previous definitions seem operationally vague and unclear. In terms of operationalisation, Kohn and Dipboye (1998) suggest that interview can also be categorised as semi-structured. Not until the research by Hysong and Dipboye (1999) and Chapman and Rowe (2002), semi-structured interview has been considered as one variation of a structured interview in an empirical research, though earlier attempt has been done by Latham and Finnegan (1993) using Situational Interview (SI) which happened to be highly structure and Patterned Behaviour Descriptive Interview (PBDI) which happened to be semi-structured. An attempt has been made by Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) to conceptualise interview structure as a continuous construct based on their meta-analysis, though Chapman and Zweig (2005) argued that the interview structure is still a single variable comprising four levels. It seems that, as of now, research by Hysong and Dipboye (1999) could provide an empirical basis to operationalise interview structure into structures, semi-structured and unstructured. They proposed a plausible three-factor model of structure consisting of job relatedness, question standardisation and applicants’ voice, via

experimental manipulation. This is different from Chapman and Rowe (2002) who used interviewer's subjective ratings and Latham and Finnegan (1993) who used types of interview and structure is the by-product. Therefore, Hysong and Dipboye's model may provide a more controlled study to study applicant reaction to interview structure in an experimental setting.

Applicant reaction

Applicant reaction according to Moscoso (2000) and Anderson and Ostroff (2001) include a number of reactions: (1) perceived attraction of organisation and acceptance intention, (2) recommendation of the job to other people, (3) perceived organisational justice, (4) applicant decision making, (5) perceived organisation's reputation, and (6) applicant legal action. However, Bauer, Truxillo, and Paronto (2004) treat some of the elements as precursor and some of them as outcomes. This shows that applicant reactions are perhaps not a single construct and its elements should be measured separately using different measures. There are a number of theories/models suggested to understand applicant reactions (Gilliland, 1994; Herriot, 1989; Rynes, 1991; Schuler, 1993) but the most promising theory (Borman et al., 1997; Kohn & Dipboye, 1997; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998) and the most used applicant reaction measures are based on Gilliland's organisational/ procedural justice theory (Bauer, Truxillo, & Paronto, 2004). Gilliland (1993) proposed that negative applicant reaction may be resulted from applicant perceptions on the fairness of the selection procedure. It was argued that if the applicant perceived the selection procedure as unfair, consequently they might withdraw from the selection procedure. This proposition has been supported by empirical literature (e.g. Bauer, Maertz, Dolen & Campion, 1993, Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman & Stoffey, 1993). Therefore, based on Gilliland's procedural justice proposition, in the present study, applicant may perceive that structured interview where it limits applicant voice might place them at disadvantage and thus the interview procedure can be perceived as unfair.

Effect of interview structure on applicant reaction

Rynes (1989, 1991) has noted the important to consider the issue of applicant reaction to personnel selection process as she suggested "assessment and selection can be improved by viewing applicant as customers and by better management of recruitment process (Rynes, 1989, p.38). Considering how applicants would react to structured interview is important especially in a job market where the number of positions available is more than the number of applicants (Herriot, 1989; Rynes, 1989). In this situation, organisation will be expected to ensure applicants do not have negative reaction toward the selection structured interview. But again, one may argue that applicant reaction is an issue only when job/applicant ratio is in favour of the organisation, and validity is the main focus in the selection process. This focus on validity is again not totally justified because negative applicant reaction would indirectly lower validity (Boudreau, & Rynes, 1983; Murphy, 1986; Rynes, 1993) of the structured interview, for example 'what if the best applicants are unmotivated during the structured interview or reject the job offer?' It will also lead to loss of money in terms of utility (Boudreau, & Rynes, 1983; Murphy, 1986) of the structured interview and its legal costs (Robertson & Smith, 2001) resulting from negative applicant reaction. Since validity and cost are usually major concerns of most organisations, then applicant reaction should also be one of their concerns regardless of the job market situation. Therefore, it is important to understand applicant reaction to interview structure, which is the primary aim of the present study.

Earlier research that has studied correlationally applicant reaction to interview structure has been done by Taylor and Bergmann (1987). The study involved 38 college students (more background on the sample) and found that they reacted positively in terms of perceived likelihood of receiving job offer ($R^2 = 0.20$, $p < .01$), but no effect found on perceived organizational attraction ($R^2 = .00$, $p > .05$) when the interview is highly structured. Another research by Turban and Dougherty (1992) studied applicant reaction to interview structure on 182 student applicants. Research results showed mixed results by which interview structure yielded positive effects on perceived expectation on accepting job offer ($R^2 = .15$, $p < .05$) but in the meantime, no effects found applicants' perceived job and organizational attraction. ($R^2 = -.03$, $p > .05$). This shows that interview structure predict different applicant reaction outcomes. However, in both research, interview structure is measured by interviewers' perception of the degree their interview is structured rather than by experimental manipulation of the interview structure. Harris (1989) noted that this dependency on subjective judgement of interview structure from the interviewer's perspective may not correspond to applicants' perception of interview structure. In other words the researchers have not successfully operationalized the interview structure.

The effect of interview structure on applicant reaction has also been investigated through experimental studies. The earliest experimental research conducted on applicant reactions towards interview structure has been conducted by Bies and Shapiro (1988) on a sample of postgraduate Business students ($n=96$). Results showed that participants react more positively to unstructured interview compared to structured interview - though no statistical results are report. Latham and Finnegan (1993) also conducted an experiment to study applicant reaction to interview structure from a sample of 24 employees and another sample of 31 college students. However, interview structure here is defined as three types of interview: situational interview (SI) which is structured, patterned behaviour descriptive interview (PBDI) which is semi-structured, and unstructured interview. The findings show that student sample reacted more favourably to unstructured interview and in contrast the employee sample favoured structured interview. In another study Kohn and Dipboye (1998) also found positive applicant reaction to unstructured over structured interview. In addition, Hysong and Dipboye (1999) had manipulated interview structure into structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview and found that applicants reacted more positively to unstructured and semi-structured interview. But, applicants reacted negatively to structured interview. With all these findings, it can be seen that different types of structure has led to different applicant reactions. As procedural justice theory proposed by Gilliland (1993) argued that applicant reaction can be the outcome of applicant perceived fairness on the section procedure, different interview structure might result into different perceived fairness (i.e. fair and unfair). Therefore, the present study hypothesized that:

H1: Applicants will perceive highly structured interview as less fair than less structured interview

The research focus of applicant reaction to, rather than validity of, interview (and other selection methods) are even encouraged by a number of experts (Anderson, Born & Cunningham-Snell, 2001; de Wolff, & van den Bosch, 1998; Gilliland, 1994; Herriot, 1989; Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002, Rynes, 1993; Schuler, 1993) in personnel psychology and human resource management. Ryan and Ployhart (2000) further noted that applicant reaction to selection procedure might also be influenced by individual differences factors such as their own past experience and personality. In fact, one study has examined individual differences like self-monitoring (i.e. Chapman, Uggerslev & Webster, 2003) as

moderator to the effect of interview structure and applicant reaction. It was found that applicants who are high in self-monitoring reacted positively to interview than applicants who are low in self-monitoring. Therefore, the second aim of present study is to examine the moderator effect of self-monitoring on the influence of interview structure applicant reaction. According to Snyder and Gangestad (1986) individuals with high-self monitoring are usually interested and thought to regulate their self-representation in order to meet the desired public appearance. Hence, they are more reactive to both social and interpersonal cues of any given situationally appropriate presentation. Conversely, individuals who are low in self-monitoring neither interested to pay attention to any social and interpersonal cues nor would they be interested to regulate their self-representation. In the context of the influence of interview structure on applicant reaction, it is possible that applicants with high level of self-monitoring will react negatively to structured interview (since it limits applicant voice and questions asked are structured and job related) whereas applicant with low self-monitoring will react more positively to structured interview (since they are not interested to regulate their self-representation). Therefore, with this assumption and given the empirical support by Chapman, Uggerslev and Webster (2003), the present study also hypothesized that:

H2: Applicants with high self-monitoring will perceive highly structured interview as less fair than less structured interview, but applicants with low self-monitoring will perceive highly structured interview as fairer than the less structured interview.

Method

Participants

Forty one final year undergraduate Psychology students (7 males, 34 females) from one of the public university in Malaysia were conveniently selected as participants of the present study with age range between 21 to 27 years ($M=22.97$; $SD=0.95$). Post hoc power analysis was conducted and the power yielded was $(1 - \beta) = 0.94$; $F(2, 80) = 3.11$, indicating that the sample size error is only 6%.

Measures

Applicant reaction. Perceived Fairness scale adopted from Truxillo and Bauer (as cited in Bauer et al., 2005) with a slight modification was used to measure level of applicant reactions. It is a three items measure rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1= *Strongly Disagree* to 5= *Strongly Agree*. The higher score the fairer. Present study reported an acceptable Cronbach alpha value of $\alpha=0.69$ for this scale.

Self-monitoring. Self-monitoring scale developed by Snyder and Gangestad (1986), the scale was used for the applicants to rate their level of self-monitoring. The scale has 18 items rated on either “yes” or “no”. The higher the score will indicate high level of self-monitoring. Cronbach alpha? The higher the score will indicate high level of self-monitoring. Analysis done on the scale shows that the scale has high internal consistency ($\alpha=0.82$).

Procedure

The experiment was conducted using a repeated-measure experimental design. Following a briefing, participants were asked to imagine themselves as an applicant who currently applying for a job as a RA and they were given a written job description (JD) to be

read. The JD is the modified version of O*NET's (Occupational Information Network) JD of a research assistant. The JD was firstly examined by the subject matter experts (SMEs) on its cross-cultural relevancy and clarity of language. After everyone finished reading the JD, the JD was collected, and counterbalanced interview transcripts were distributed to the participants. Interview questions' transcripts were constructed based on the modified Job description.

For structured interview transcript condition, the participants were informed (in written form) that in the interest of fairness and objectivity, exactly the same questions were asked to all applicants and questions constructed are job-related and there was no extra space provided for additional comments or questions. For semi-structured interview condition, the transcript also was constructed based on the modified JD but questions that are not related to any of the tasks of RA were also included in the transcript (e.g., "*Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses*"). Additionally, a space is also provided at the end of the transcript to allow the participants to write any comments or to ask any questions. For unstructured interview condition the participants were informed (in written form) interviewer will begin by telling the participants that they should feel free to interrupt if they have any comments or questions by writing it at the space provided, and no particular formats will be followed in the conduct of the interview. The transcript was ranged across a variety of issues that are not directly related to the job as RA such as questions related to applicant's hobbies and favourite subjects (e.g., *How do you spend your free time?*, *What undergraduate subjects/ courses did you like the best? Least?*). A space is provided after every question in the transcript to allow the participants to comment or to ask any questions as to make it fully unstructured.

A 7-point scale manipulation check was used for the purpose of checking the success of the structure manipulation. It consisted of two items; "How relevant are the questions in this interview transcript for assessing the applicants' ability to perform the job duties?" (*Not all relevant to highly relevant*) and "To what extent does the interview permits the applicants to voice any comments and ask further questions?" (*Not at all to great amount*). The scale has a moderately acceptable Cronbach alpha value of $\alpha=0.69$.

Once the participants finished undergoing all interview conditions, they were given a question booklet consisted of two questionnaires to be completed (perceived fairness scale and self-monitoring scale). The first was the applicant reactions' questionnaire followed by a questionnaire that measures the success of the interview structure manipulation and self-monitoring scale. Once all participants completed the question booklet, the booklet was checked before the participants handed it to researcher, and subsequently they all were debriefed.

Results

Manipulation checks

A repeated-measure ANOVA was conducted on the interview structure composite measure (the mean of two items in the manipulation check) to check the effectiveness of the manipulation. The differences between the conditions on the composite measure revealed a strong support for the success of the manipulation of interview structure that varied into structured, semi-structured and unstructured ($M= 0.29$ vs. 0.20 vs. 0.13 respectively) with $F(2, 39)= 157.94$; $p<0.01$ (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Repeated-measure ANOVA test on the Manipulation of Interview Structure

Source of variance	SS	Df	MS	F
Interview Structure	0.57	2	0.28	157.94**
Error	0.14	39	1.79	

Note. **p <0.01; N=41

Post-hoc test via related sample t-test shows that participants in the highly structured interview condition perceived their interview to be significantly more structured (M=0.29; SD=0.03) than the unstructured interview (M= 0.13; SD= 0.17), with $t(41)= 0.17$; $p<0.01$ and semi-structured interview (M=0.20; SD= 0.03), with $t(41) = 0.09$; $p<0.01$, who in turn found their interviews to be significantly more structured than participants in the unstructured condition (M=0.13; SD= 0.05), $t(41) = 0.07$; $p<0.01$ (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Pairwise Differences in Mean Changes in Manipulation of Interview Structure

Pair	Mean	SD	t
1. STI vs. SSI			
STI	0.29	0.03	0.09**
SSI	0.20	0.03	
2. SSI vs. USI			
SSI	0.20	0.03	0.07**
USI	0.13	0.05	
3. STI vs. USI			
STI	0.29	0.03	0.17**
USI	0.13	0.05	

Note. **p <0.01; N= 41; STI= Structured interview SSI= Semi-structured interview USI= Unstructured interview

Main findings

A repeated-measure ANOVA was conducted with the factor being interview structure and the dependent variable being the applicants' reactions scores. The means and standard deviations for applicants' reactions scores are presented in Table 3 below. The results of one way repeated measure ANOVA indicated a significant structure effect with $F(2, 39) = 38.89$, $p<0.01$. Further, follow up polynomial contrasts indicated a significant linear effect with means increasing over structure, $F(1, 40) = 35.289$; $p<0.01$.

Table 3. The effect of Interview Structure on Applicant Reaction

Source of variance	SS	Df	MS	F
Applicants' reactions	0.25	2	0.10	38.89**
Error	0.21	39	2.64	

Note. **p <0.01; N= 41

Since the ANOVA yielded a significant result, an analysis of pairwise comparisons were conducted via paired-sample t-test (see Table 4 below). The results showed that there is a significant difference between structured interview and semi-structured interview in terms

of applicants reactions with mean for semi-structured interview (M=0.28; SD= 0.05) significantly greater than the mean of structured interview (M=0.19; SD= 0.06), $t(41) = -8.67$; $p < 0.01$. A significant difference was also found also between structured and unstructured interview with the mean of unstructured interview (M=0.27; SD= 0.06) greater than mean of structured interview (M= 0.19; SD= 0.06), $t(41) = -5.94$; $p < 0.01$. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference found between semi-structured interview and unstructured interview in terms of applicants reactions with $t(41) = 1.56$; $p > 0.05$. The moderating effect of self-monitoring was examined through analysis of co-variances (ANCOVA), and results showed that self-monitoring did not moderate the effect of interview structure on applicant reactions with $F(2, 38) = 2.626$, $p > 0.05$; $\eta^2 = 0.121$.

Table 4. Pairwise Differences in Mean Changes in Applicant Reaction

Pair	Mean	SD	t
1. STI vs. SSI			
STI	0.19	0.06	-8.67**
SSI	0.28	0.05	
2. SSI vs. USI			
SSI	0.28	0.06	1.56
USI	0.27	0.06	
3. STI vs. SSI			
STI	0.19	0.05	-5.94**
SSI	0.27	0.06	

Note. ** $p < 0.01$; N= 41; STI= Structured interview SSI= Semi-structured interview USI= Unstructured interview

Discussion

The findings demonstrated a significant effect of interview structure on applicant reactions as initially predicted. It was found that applicants reacted negatively to structured interview compared to semi-structured and unstructured interview. This result suggests that structured interview will leads to negative reactions compared to semi-structured and unstructured interview. Consistent with findings of previous studies that had examined two extreme end of structure (e.g., Chapman & Rowe, 2002; Chapman & Zweig, 2005; Kohn & Dipboye, 1998; Hysong & Dipboye, 1993), the present result further strengthen the idea that structured interview will leads to negative reaction. However, present study had also examined the effect of semi-structured interview like Hysong and Dipboye (1999) did, but contradictorily, present finding supported the positive reaction to semi-structured interview but not to unstructured interview. The present study also closely related to Hysong and Dipboye in terms of operationalization of structure whereby structure is manipulated in terms of job-relatedness, question standardisation and applicant voice.

In contrast, present finding is inconsistent with studies by Taylor and Bergmann (1987) and Turban and Dougherty (1992) where their findings demonstrated neutral to positive reaction to structured interview. To note, methodologies used by these two studies are very much similar whereby both operationalised structure through interviewer's rating of structure and multidimensional scoring of applicant reaction. Contradictorily, present study has directly manipulated elements of structure and globally scored applicant reaction for better prediction as suggested by Chan and Schmit (2004). Therefore, it can be said that, the inconsistent result is due to different operationalizations of structure and applicant reaction.

In other words, when different elements of structure were manipulated and different scoring of applicant reaction was used, it resulted into different reactions (neutral, negative and positive reactions). These further confirmed the earlier assumption that different structure can produce different reaction, and different scoring produces a better prediction.

With structured interview, applicants were asked the same questions, questions constructed are highly related to the job and applicants are not allowed to inquire or voice further comments or questions (Dipboye, 2005; Dipboye & Gaugler, 1993). This may provides possible explanation why structured interview has been perceived negatively by the applicants. Perhaps, with such feature of structured interview, applicants perceive that they were not given the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics. In other words, structured interview was perceived as rigid and thus unfair. On the other hand, semi-structured interview still retains some features of structured interview like the job relatedness and question standardisation, but it allow some applicant voice (Hysong & Dipboye, 1999; Kohn & Dipboye, 1998). Thus, it can be said that with strict features of structured interview included in semi-structured interview, yet it allow some applicant voice, in turn applicants reacted positively to semi-structured interview just like how they reacted to unstructured interview.

It can also be said that, with semi-structured interview, although standardised and job related questions were asked to the applicants, but since it welcomes the opportunity for the applicants to 'sell' themselves, it has soften the negative effect of structured interview. At the same time, semi-structured also able to maintain its predictive validity especially because it is highly standardised and questions asked are job related. However, caution is needed when commenting on the validity of interview structure. Meta-analytic results (e.g., Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; McDaniel et al, 1994) demonstrated that structured interview is highly valid than unstructured interview, mainly because of its job relatedness and high standardisation. Nevertheless, it can be safely assumed that, since semi-structured interview consists of job-relatedness and standardised questions, it might also be a valid interview since interview structure with job relatedness was found to have high validity (McDaniel et al, 1994). Further, Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) has innovatively defined the interview structure as both dichotomous (structured and unstructured) as well as continuous (includes semi-structured), yet it was not clear whether semi-structured interview is also a highly valid although it is highly job-related and standardised. Therefore, future research on interview structure validity can also examine the validity of semi-structured interview.

Furthermore, with semi-structured interview where applicants are allowed to voice out any comments or inquiries, in such a way, it is actually meant to attract them as done in previous studies (e.g., Barber, Hollenbeck, Tower, & Philips, 1994; Stevens, 1998; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987). Hysong and Dipboye (1999) also mentioned that with some room for applicant voice, it actually create a room for attraction to organization .Therefore, the present finding substantiated the idea that when some voice is allowed, applicants not just reacted positively to the semi-structuredness of the interview, but they also reacted to their perceived ability to sell themselves and thus induce their attractiveness to the organization. It can also be said that, semi-structured interview not only being perceived as fair but can make one attracted to the organization that use it. This consequently contributed for useful practical application especially when there is a concern on "What if the organisation misses out hiring potential applicants because they reacted negatively to structured interview?" Semi-structured interview can be assumed to be a relatively valid interview as it retains the job relatedness in its questions but also flexible for the applicants as it allows applicant voice in the interview.

Thus, with semi-structured interview, organisation can attain positive applicant reaction without sacrificing the validity of the interview itself.

Past research also found that structured interview may affect applicant reaction to interviewer. Kohn and Dipboye (1998) and Hysong and Dipboye (1999) showed that interviewers that interview applicant with structured interview were perceived as unfriendly and not likeable. Additionally, Chapman and Rowe (2002) have found that structured interview not only yielded negative reaction to interviewer's friendliness but interviewer's performance was also rated negatively by the applicants. These show that structure also has influence on applicant reaction to interviewer. As the present result suggests that semi-structured was perceived more favourably than structured interview, perhaps due to permission of applicant voice, it is also possible that applicant will react positively to interviewer that employs semi-structured interview.

In terms of self-monitoring, the study did not find moderator effect of self-monitoring on the influence of interview structure on applicant reaction. The absence of moderating effect of self-monitoring was probably due to the interview process variable being interview structure. Past research on interview process has examined the role of self-monitoring on the influence of interview medium where they found applicant rated face-to-face more fair and favourable as oppose to telephone and videoconferencing interview (Chapman et al, 2003). However, since no moderating effect was found in the present study, it can be safely assumed that regardless whether the applicant is a high self-monitor (those who will monitor themselves for the sake of desired public appearances) or low self-monitor (those who could not care less about regulating their self-representation may not have any effect on applicant reaction if the organization were to employ any types of interview structure in selection. In other words, it is the different structure that may affect different reactions even if the applicant may differ in terms of self-monitoring.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The present study is not without its own limitations. The employment of laboratory experiment has reduced the external validity of the findings but it is deemed necessary as field study can be very difficult and impractical to be conducted (Arvey & Campion, 1982) and since the participants of the present study were sampled conveniently from the population of undergraduate psychology students, the results neither can be generalized to real job applicants nor to non-psychology undergraduate students. Nonetheless, control of individual differences variables (such as participant academic background) is more essential in experimental study (Coolican, 2009). Additionally, the use of interview transcript can be artificial as the interaction took place was between the applicants and the paper, which definitely different with real interview that usually conducted via face-to-face interview. Nonetheless, results of previous studies had demonstrated insignificant difference in applicants' reactions on the use of face to face interview and transcript interview (c.f. Chapman & Rowe, 2002; Hysong & Dipboye, 1999). Finally, as the measurement of applicant reaction was done as global score and was based solely on the partial part of Gilliland's (1993) organisational justice theory i.e. (procedural justice) different aspects of applicant reaction cannot be tapped rather, the reactions are more inclined on the general aspects like reactions on overall procedure and process of the interview that need more future inquiries. Future research can even try to investigate other types of applicant reaction that rarely been investigated such as applicants' legal intentions and actions, or whether the

applicants perceived the interview as comfortable, ethical or even “fun” as noted by Rynes Barber and Varma (2000).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study has found a significant difference in applicant reaction on these three types of structure with applicants’ reacted positively to semi-structured and unstructured interview compared to structured interview. Consequently, it has pointed more inquiries for separate examination of interview structure’s elements and types of applicant reactions. It also has showed that applicants reacted positively to semi-structured interview as how they reacted to unstructured interview that begs for validity inquiry of semi-structured interview and more research to further examine the effect of structured, semi-structured and unstructured interview in order to provide balance between providing applicants the opportunity to sell themselves and imposing sufficient structure to ensure the psychometric integrity of interview as noted by Hysong and Dipboye (1999).

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Appendix A

JOB DESCRIPTION OF A RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Job Summary

Research assistant assist social scientists in conducting experiment and non-experimental social research. The individuals may perform publication activities, laboratory analysis and quality control or data management. Normally these individuals work under the direct supervision of a social scientist and assist in those activities which are more routine.

Work Activities:

The work activities of a research assistant are divided into six main functional areas:

1. Analyzing Information

Identify the underlying principles, reasons, or facts of information by breaking down information into separate parts.

2. Processing Data

Compile, code, categorize, calculate, clean data, analyze, tabulate, audit and verify data

3. Communicating with Relevant Parties

Provide information to supervisors, co-workers, subordinates, participants and outside contacts related to research conducted by telephone, in written form (e.g., memo, letters), e-mail, or in person.

4. Getting Information

Observe, receive, and otherwise obtain information from all relevant sources.

5. Using Computers

Using computers and computer systems (including hardware and software) to program, set up functions, enter data, and/ or process information.

6. Documenting/Recording Information

Enter, transcribe, record, store, or maintain information in written or electronic form (e.g. CD-Rom)