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How does applicant's perception matter?

This paper presents two studies on the relations between factors influencing the applicant's perception of selection procedures (i.e. acceptance) on the one hand, and the potential outcomes in business context on the other. Based on the Procedural Justice Rules from Gilliland (1993), and the Heuristic Model from Ryan and Ployhart (2000) it was predicted that the applicant's personal characteristics will relate to the applicant's perception. As personal characteristics the applicants' previous experiences with application procedures and the individuals' personality dispositions were considered. It was also predicted that the applicant's perception would relate to their behavior following the selection process. Especially the applicants' self-selection (withdrawal) was considered as behavioral outcome measure.

To measure the applicant's perceptions a questionnaire was developed and validated, which allowed both an overall assessment and an assessment of various subfacets. The questionnaire was used in two field studies with different companies. Participants of the first study were 163 applicants at a household appliances manufacturer. Participants of the second study were 118 applicants at a medical technology manufacturer.

As predicted, relations between applicant's personality characteristics and the applicant's perception were found, whereas prior experience of selection processes played a negligible role in the applicant's perception.

Above and beyond several intentions, there was a link between the applicant's perception and his or her self-selection, i.e. whether a job offer was accepted or not. Results of both studies are compared, and implications for future research and for the selection practice are discussed.