

## Job Applicant Reactions to Selection Methods in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

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**[Abstract]** This paper examines the bases of the job application process in terms of the favorability/fairness perceptions of 12 personnel selection methods and the consequences of these perceptions on organizational attractiveness and application, recommendation, and litigation intentions. Our paper reveals that face validity, widespread use of selection methods, the employer's right to obtain information, and the opportunity to perform are the strongest predictors of favorability perceptions, while interpersonal warmth, predictive validity, and respect for privacy are the weakest predictors of favorability perceptions. Additionally, procedural justice dimensions and favorability perceptions correlate with organizational attractiveness and application, recommendation, and litigation intentions. This study expands previous research on job applicants' perceptions of the selection methods to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Middle East. Furthermore, this research examines both the antecedents and the consequences of applicants' fairness perceptions of 12 selection methods within the same study.

**[Keywords]** selection methods; fairness; procedural justice; applicant intentions; job search; United Arab Emirates (UAE)

### Introduction

In the past two decades, research on organizational staffing witnessed a notable surge in the issue of applicant reactions to personnel recruitment and selection processes (Anderson, Salgado, & Hulsheger, 2010; Cropanzano & Konovsky, 1995; Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Rynes & Connerley, 1993). *Applicant reactions* research focuses on cognitions, affect, and attitudes of applicants toward the staffing process (Gilliland, 1993; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). The current focus on applicant reactions represents a significant transformation from conventional staffing research, which focused on identifying criterion-related validity and utility of selection methods from the employer perspective (see Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Ployhart & Holtz, 2008; Salgado, Viswesvaran, & Ones, 2003; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

Gilliland (1993), as well as Hausknecht and colleagues (2004), outlined several factors that contributed to the surge of research on applicant reactions. Mainly, researchers have theoretically suggested (e.g. Gilliland, 1993) and empirically demonstrated (e.g. Hausknecht et al., 2004; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000) that applicant reactions influence a number of important individual and organizational outcomes, such as motivation to do well on selection tools (Arvey, Strickland, Drauden, & Martin, 1990; Chan, Schmitt, DeShon, Clause, & Delbridge, 1997), job pursuit decisions (Reeve & Schultz, 2004), job acceptance decisions (Ployhart & Ryan, 1997, 1998; Saks & McCarthy, 2006), applicant self-esteem (Gilliland, 1994; Ployhart & Ryan, 1997; Ployhart, Ryan, & Bennett, 1999), reapplication intentions (Gilliland et al., 2001; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998), recommendation of the organization to other applicants (Ababneh, Hackett, & Schat, in press; Gilliland, 1994; Saks & McCarthy, 2006), and litigation intentions/actions against employers (Ababneh et al., in press; Cascio, 1991; Gilliland, 1993; Goldman, 2001).

Driven by both the noteworthy consequences of applicant reactions and the growing globalized economy, Steiner and Gilliland (1996) drew on Gilliland's (1993) organizational justice model and compared favorability/fairness perceptions (favorability perceptions and fairness perceptions are used interchangeably in our paper) and the bases of these perceptions between French and American students. Specifically, Steiner and Gilliland (1996) asked undergraduate students to evaluate the process favorability of 10 selection methods: interviews, resumes, work sample tests, biodata, written ability tests, personal references, personality tests, honesty tests, personal contacts, and graphology. Students were also asked to rate the degree to which each selection method satisfied seven procedural justice dimensions (rules): scientific evidence (predictive validity), face validity, interpersonal warmth, opportunity to perform, the employer's right to obtain information, respect for privacy, and widespread use of the selection methods.

A host of researchers have utilized Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology to investigate applicant favorability perceptions and the underlying procedural justice dimensions associated with these perceptions for the same 10 selection tools in other countries (Anderson et al., 2010). Overall, the primary studies (e.g., Nikolaou & Judge, 2007; Phillips & Gully, 2002; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996), narrative reviews (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Steiner & Gilliland, 2001), and a meta-analytic review (Anderson et al., 2010) that explored this area of research reported relatively similar findings (detailed later) with respect to process favorability perceptions and the bases for these perceptions across the countries studied. However, the research in this area is predominantly limited to samples from North America and Europe. In light of this, a considerable number of researchers called for extending Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) research to samples of job applicants from countries outside of Europe and the United States (e.g., Anderson et al., 2010; Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Bertolino & Steiner, 2007; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Steiner & Gilliland, 2001).

### Objectives of This Paper

This paper has three main objectives. First, it seeks to extend Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) research to participants from diverse nationalities living and pursuing employment in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is important to stress here that this study is not focusing only on UAE nationals; it targets participants from all nationalities provided that they are living and pursuing jobs in the UAE. The UAE is a Middle Eastern, Arab country located in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula. The UAE has a unique cultural, social, and economic context (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012; IMF, 2012). More than 80% of its labor force consists of expatriates coming from more than 100 nationalities that represent different races, cultures, ethnicities, languages, and religions (Ali, 2010; CIA World Factbook, 2013). The UAE ranks among the top thirty most competitive countries in the world to do business in (World Economic Forum, 2011) and the UAE's GDP per capita has more than doubled over the last decade (World Bank, 2012). Given the UAE's relatively inexpensive skilled workforce (Alserhan, Forstenlechner, & Al-Nakeeb, 2009), open economy, free trade zones allowing 100% foreign ownership and tax-free corporate status, and sophisticated infrastructure (Al-Suwaidi, 2011), the UAE has attracted a number of large international organizations and has become the regional corporate headquarters for a number of these organizations.

We are aware of only one published study that has used Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology on a sample from an Arab country (Anderson, Ahmed, & Costa, 2012). However, Anderson et al.'s (2012) study, despite its contribution, focused only on Saudi national participants without including expatriate participants employed in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the researchers (Anderson et al., 2012) focused only on applicant reactions toward 4 selection methods (interview, resume, work sample tests, and references) out of the 10 selection methods used by Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) study. In brief, the UAE's context differs from prior studies that utilized Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology in terms of cultural, social, and economic context, as well as workforce composition and human resource management practices. As a result, a sample from the UAE's workforce is likely to provide a valuable opportunity to examine the generalizability of prior research findings regarding applicant reactions to various selection methods.

Second, this study aims to expand on the 10 selection methods traditionally used in Steiner and

Gilliland's (1996) study by including ethnicity/nationality (Phillips & Gully, 2002) and medical examinations as 2 additional selection methods. We included these two methods because our pilot interviews with job applicants and investigations of employers' application forms and procedures indicate that medical examinations and questions regarding ethnicity/nationality are frequently used directly or indirectly by employers as part of the staffing process in the UAE.

Third, this study examines the influence of procedural justice dimensions and process favorability perceptions of 12 selection methods on four important organizational outcomes (organizational attractiveness, application intentions, recommending the organizations to other applicants, and litigation intentions). Prior research that used Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology examined job applicant process favorability perceptions and the bases of these perceptions without examining the consequences of these perceptions on organizational outcomes. However, from a practical perspective, employers are more concerned with the *consequences* of the perceptions rather than the perceptions themselves. Therefore, we examine within the same study both the antecedents of applicant favorability perceptions and the consequences of these perceptions on four vital organizational outcomes in order to offer additional insights on these relationships.

### **Theoretical Background and Empirical Research Findings**

Researchers have suggested a number of frameworks to identify the antecedents and the consequences of applicant fairness perceptions. In a pioneer model, Schuler (1993) underlined the concept of "social validity" (applicant perceptions of the selection methods) rather than criterion-related validity (appropriateness of the selection methods to identify the best applicants). Schuler (1993) proposed that applicant reactions are driven by four aspects of the selection process: (a) the degree to which information is offered about the vacant position and the organization, (b) the degree to which applicants participate in the development of the selection process, (c) the extent to which the selection process is transparent, and (d) the availability and adequacy of feedback provided to selected and rejected applicants. Similarly, Arvey and Sackett (1993) suggested that the perceived fairness of the selection process is driven by the content of the selection system, awareness of the system development process, administration of the selection process, and the organizational context. However, Gilliland (1993) noted that the above two models did not pay sufficient attention to the psychological processes underlying applicant perceptions.

Given the limitations of prior models, Gilliland (1993) drew on the organizational justice framework (e.g., Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1986; Leventhal, 1980) and developed a justice-based model to understand the antecedents and consequences of fairness perceptions in the context of personnel selection. In brief, Gilliland's model predicted that procedural justice dimensions, such as job relatedness, consistency of administrations, and opportunity to perform, directly influence the overall perceived fairness of the selection process, while distributive justice dimensions, such as equity and equality, influence the overall perceived fairness of the selection outcomes. Gilliland's (1993) model also proposed that overall fairness perceptions of selection processes and outcomes determine: (a) self-perceptions (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy); (b) reactions during hiring (e.g., recommending the organization to other applicants and accepting/rejecting a job offer); and (c) reactions after hiring (e.g., organizational citizenship behavior).

In line with Gilliland's (1993) model, a meta-analytic review (Hausknecht et al., 2004), narrative reviews (Anderson, Born, & Cunningham-Snell, 2001; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000) and primary studies (e.g., Bauer, Maertz, Dolen, & Campion, 1998; Bauer et al., 2001; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998; Schleicher, Venkataramani, Morgeson, & Campion, 2006) provided evidence that justice rules, such as opportunity to perform, job relatedness, and consistency of administration, are all positively related to applicants' process fairness perceptions. A number of studies also revealed a positive relationship between overall process fairness perceptions and organizational outcomes. For example, Gilliland (1994) and Bauer et al. (2001) found that applicant perceptions of fairness are positively associated with intentions to recommend the organization and its jobs to others. Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, and Stoffey (1993), as well as Truxillo and Bauer (1999) reported that organizational attractiveness is positively correlated with process

fairness perceptions. Empirical research also supports the notion that when selected applicants perceive a selection process as unfair, they are more likely to decline a job offer (Macan, Avedon, Paese, & Smith, 1994; Singer, 1992). Similarly, Ployhart and Ryan (1998) identified a positive relationship between overall fairness perceptions of selection outcomes and intentions to accept a job offer. Furthermore, fairness perceptions were negatively related to intentions/behaviors of pursuing litigations against the employer (Ababneh et al., in press; Goldman, 2001, 2003; Lind, Greenberg, Scott, & Welchans, 2000).

Steiner and Gilliland (1996) built on Gilliland's (1993) organizational justice model and proposed two major factors that capture overall justice reactions to selection methods: a) process favorability and b) procedural justice. Process favorability reflects applicant fairness perceptions or acceptability of the selection methods. The procedural justice factor consists of seven procedural justice dimensions. Six of these dimensions – scientific evidence (predictive validity), face validity, opportunity to perform, employer's right, respect for privacy, interpersonal warmth – were adopted mainly from Gilliland's (1993) model and Bies and Moag's (1986) research. The seventh procedural justice dimension – widespread use – was proposed by Steiner and Gilliland (1996). Steiner and Gilliland (1996) argued that if a method is widely used, applicants will be more likely to perceive that method as acceptable and valid.

Based on their refinement to Gilliland's (1993) model, Steiner and Gilliland (1996) developed measures that capture both process favorability and procedural justice dimensions. They then used these measures to assess the process favorability perceptions of 10 selection methods and the bases of these perceptions according to undergraduate students from France and the United States. The researchers found that interviews, work-sample tests, and resumes received the highest process favorability ratings in both cultures. Graphology (i.e., hand writing analysis) was perceived negatively in both countries, though it was viewed more favorably in France than in the United States. For the American sample, perceived face validity had the highest correlation with process favorability, followed by widespread use of the selection method, employers' rights to obtain information, and opportunity to perform. For the French sample, perceived face validity had the highest correlation with process favorability, followed by employers' rights to obtain information, opportunity to perform, and widespread use of the selection method. For both American and French participants, respect for privacy and interpersonal warmth had the lowest correlations with process favorability.

A number of researchers have utilized Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) measures and procedures in different countries to investigate applicant favorability perceptions and the underlying procedural dimensions associated with these perceptions for the same 10 selection tools. These countries include the United States (Nikolaou & Judge, 2007; Phillips & Gully, 2002; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996); France (Steiner & Gilliland, 1996); Singapore (Phillips & Gully, 2002); Spain and Portugal (Moscoso & Salgado, 2004); Germany (Marcus, 2003); Greece (Nikolaou & Judge, 2007); India (Snyder & Shahani-Denning, 2012); Italy (Bertolino & Steiner, 2007); the Netherlands (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008); Romania (Ispas, Ilie, Iliescu, Johnson, & Harris, 2010); and Vietnam (Hoang, Truxillo, Erdogan, & Bauer, 2012). For example, Phillips and Gully (2002) followed Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology and compared the favorability perceptions of 11 selection methods and the bases of these perceptions between samples from the United States and Singapore. Phillips and Gully (2002) included ethnicity/nationality as an additional selection method because of its regular use as a selection method in Singapore. For both samples, interviews, resumes, and work sample tests received the *highest* favorability rating, while ethnicity/nationality, graphology, and personal contacts received the *lowest* favorability ratings. For both samples, perceived face validity, opportunity to perform, widespread use of the selection method, and employer's rights to obtain information were the strongest predictors of process favorability.

In their narrative review of the studies that employed Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) measures and procedures, Anderson and Witvliet (2008) reported that the ranking of process favorability for the 10 selection methods from most favorable to least favorable were interviews, resumes, work sample tests, biodata, written ability tests, personal references, personality tests, honesty/integrity tests, personal contacts, and graphology. Based on their review, Anderson and Witvliet (2008) concluded that there are large similarities across the reviewed countries in terms of applicant reactions to various selection methods.



Likewise, in a meta-analytic review on applicant reactions to common selection methods, including both studies that used and did not use Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology, Anderson et al. (2010) also reported that favorability perceptions are structurally similar across countries and offered a three-tier clustering of overall favorability perceptions – *most preferred* (work samples, interviews), *favorably evaluated* (resumes, cognitive tests, references, biodata, personality inventories), and *least preferred* (honesty tests, personal contacts, graphology). With respect to the seven procedural justice dimensions, although Anderson et al.'s (2010) meta-analytic review revealed some different patterns of applicant perceptions by selection method among the existing studies, the researchers indicated that applicant perceptions of an employer's right to obtain information, face validity, and opportunity to perform have relatively similar patterns. However, as noted earlier, almost all of the previous research in this area has used samples from North America and Europe. Therefore, it is important to assess the generalizability of prior research findings to other countries such as the UAE, which has a unique cultural, social, and economic context (Al-Suwaidi, 2011; Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012; IMF, 2012; World Bank, 2012).

In light of the findings of prior reviews (Anderson et al., 2010; Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Steiner & Gilliland, 2001) and primary empirical studies (e.g., Bertolino & Steiner, 2007; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996) regarding the favorability perceptions of selection methods and the bases of these perceptions, we propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* Interviews, resumes, and work sample tests will receive the highest process favorability ratings, while graphology, nationality, personal contacts, and honesty tests will receive the lowest process favorability ratings.

*Hypothesis 2:* Face validity, widespread use, employer's rights to obtain information, and opportunity to perform justice dimensions will be the strongest predictors of process favorability perceptions, while respect for privacy and interpersonal warmth justice dimensions will be the weakest predictors.

In line with Gilliland's model (1993) and prior empirical research findings (discussed earlier) that process fairness perceptions influence organizational outcomes (Hausknecht et al., 2004; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), we offer the following hypotheses:

*Hypotheses 3a-d:* Process favorability (fairness) perceptions of selection methods will have *positive* associations with (a) organizational perceptions, (b) application intentions, (c) recommendation intentions, and (d) *negative* association with litigation intentions.

In addition to the above specific hypotheses, we explore the following two research questions:

*Research Question 1:* What is the prevalence of the 12 selection methods in the UAE, according to the experience of senior undergraduate students of various nationalities?

*Research Question 2:* Which procedural justice dimensions will be the strongest predictors of a) organizational perceptions, b) application intentions, c) recommendation intentions, and d) litigation intentions?

We chose to explore these questions rather than offering specific hypotheses because of insufficient theoretical ground and/or empirical findings. For example, with respect to the prevalence of the 12 selection methods, although the majority of prior research found that interviews and resumes are the most commonly used selection methods and graphology and honesty tests are the least commonly selection methods; research did not find a consistent pattern for the remaining selection methods across the examined countries. With respect to the effect of the seven procedural justice dimensions on organizational outcomes, we are unaware of any study that simultaneously examined the relationships between all of the seven procedural justice dimensions and organizational outcomes as done in this study.

## Methods

### Participants

Senior undergraduate business students of various nationalities who were pursuing a bachelor degree in the UAE voluntarily completed a written questionnaire. To enhance the realism and generalizability of this study, only individuals seeking jobs at the time of completing the questionnaire were included in the

study. The final sample ( $n = 166$ ) consists of 56% males. Participant's mean age was 20.71 years ( $s.d. = 1.65$ ). The sample composition is 15% UAE nationals, 37% other Arabs (e.g., Egyptian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Syrian), 17% Indian or Pakistani, 13% American or European, and 12% Iranian, with the remaining reporting other nationalities. Sixty-one percent of the participants indicated that they had previous work experience.

### Measures

All components of the questionnaire developed by Steiner and Gilliland (1996) were used in our study to assess a) the prevalence of the 12 selection methods (see Table 1), b) process favorability perceptions, and c) procedural justice dimensions associated with these perceptions. As stated earlier, Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) questionnaire has been used in several studies exploring applicant reactions to selections methods (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008). In addition to the 10 selection methods used in Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) study, we also included ethnicity/nationality (Phillips & Gully, 2002) and medical examinations as two additional selection methods. In line with our goal to assess the impact of applicant fairness perceptions on organizational outcomes, we included items that measured organizational attractiveness, application intentions, recommendation intentions, and litigation intentions.

Table 1

#### *Descriptions, Prevalence, and Process Favorability of Selection Methods in the UAE*

Selection method	Description	Percent of participants evaluated by the selection method	Process Favorability	
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Interviewe <sup>a</sup>	A face-to-face interaction in which employers ask you a variety of questions about your background and qualifications	71.1	5.52 <sup>a</sup>	1.13
Resumes/CVs <sup>a</sup>	A written description of information on all of your professional experiences, your education, etc.	73.5	5.09 <sup>b</sup>	1.25
Work sample tests <sup>a</sup>	Test in which you actually perform a part of the job so that your success in doing that part of the job can be determined	33.9	5.00 <sup>b</sup>	1.31
Biodata <sup>a</sup>	Forms requesting very specific information about your work experience, education and skills. They often include questions about your hobbies, interests, and past accomplishments. The questions are frequently in multiple-choice format where you check the appropriate answer	25.3	4.15 <sup>c</sup>	1.38
Written ability tests <sup>a</sup>	Paper-and-pencil tests that evaluate your intelligence or your reasoning, verbal, or mathematical skill	27.7	4.23 <sup>c</sup>	1.37
Personal references <sup>a</sup>	In this method, you must request letters of reference or provide the names of your prior employers so that the employer can obtain information about your suitability for the job	41.2	3.89 <sup>c</sup>	1.41
Personality tests <sup>a</sup>	Paper-and-pencil tests that ask you questions about your opinions and past experiences to assess your personality traits	30.1	4.14 <sup>c</sup>	1.29
Honesty tests <sup>a</sup>	Tests that ask you about your thoughts on theft and experiences related to your personal honesty	12.0	3.94 <sup>c</sup>	1.61
Personal contacts <sup>a</sup>	Knowing someone influential in the company whose connections can help you get the job	30.2	3.27 <sup>d</sup>	1.50
Graphology <sup>a</sup>	The analysis of aspects of your handwriting, including style and form, to determine personal characteristics	8.4	2.56 <sup>e</sup>	1.40
Ethnicity/ Nationality <sup>b</sup>	Using your nationality or ethnicity and characteristics thought to accompany it to assess your fit with the job	41.1	2.49 <sup>e</sup>	1.66
Medical examination <sup>c</sup>	With this method, you are required to complete a medical examination at a hospital or a doctor office. It evaluates your general health and mainly includes blood or urine sample analyses.	28.9	3.43 <sup>d</sup>	1.51

Note:  $n = 166$

<sup>a</sup>Adapted from Steiner and Gilliland (1996); <sup>b</sup> adapted from Phillips and Gully (2002); <sup>c</sup> this method was not used in prior relevant research, we included it in this study because it commonly used in the Middle East.

Means with different superscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$

Participants completed a three-page, pen-and-paper questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire explained the general purpose and the procedures of the current study. The second page collected general information about participants, such as gender, age, nationality, work experience, and current job search status. In addition, participants were asked to identify the title of the job that they were likely to apply for upon graduation. Participants then were asked to evaluate the 12 selection methods with respect to the job that they had identified as their target job. A brief description of each selection method's nature and objectives, as adapted from Steiner and Gilliland (1996) and Phillips and Gully (2002), was provided to all participants (see Table 1).

The third page of our questionnaire presented each selection method along with a series of items/questions (detailed below) and required participants to answer the same items/questions for each of the 12 selections methods. Two items assessed perceptions of process favorability (fairness) for each selection method. The first item asked, "How would you rate the effectiveness of this method for identifying qualified people for the job you indicated above?" The second item asked, "If you did not get the job based on this selection method, what would you think of the fairness of this procedure?" Participants responded to these two items using seven-point Likert-style scales ranging from 1 (*least favorable*) to 7 (*most favorable*). Steiner and Gilliland (1996) reported coefficient alpha of .73 for these two items across all participants and selection methods. In our study, the coefficient alpha for the two items across all participants and selection methods is .67. After completing the two process favorability questions, participants responded to seven items assessing procedural justice dimensions of each method. In particular, the items assessed the degree to which (1) the method is based on solid scientific research (scientific evidence/predictive validity), (2) the approach is a logical one for identifying qualified candidates for the job in question (face validity), (3) the method will detect the individual's important qualities differentiating them from others (opportunity to perform), (4) the selection instrument is impersonal and cold (interpersonal treatment/warmth), (5) employers have the right to obtain information from applicants by using the method (propriety of questions), (6) the method invades personal privacy (respect for privacy), and (7) the method is appropriate because it is widely used. Participants reported their perceptions for these seven items using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). Item 4 (impersonal and cold) and item 6 (invasion of privacy) were reversed to reflect positive meaning, i.e. interpersonal treatment/warmth and respect for privacy.

Next, participants indicated their attraction to the organization, application intentions, recommendation intentions, and litigation intentions for each selection method. Participants rated these outcomes using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). To assess organizational attractiveness, the item "An organization that uses this method for the job indicated above is attractive for me as place of employment" was used. Application intentions were assessed by one item: "I would apply for an organization that uses this type of selection method to select employees for the job I indicated above." Recommendation intentions were assessed by one item: "I would recommend an organization that uses this type of selection method to other job applicants looking for the job I indicated above." The items for the above organizational outcomes were adapted from prior research in the area of applicant reactions (Bauer et al., 2001; Gilliland, 1994; Ployhart & Ryan, 1997). Litigation intentions were assessed by one item adapted from Seitz, Truxillo, and Bauer (2001): "If I did not get the job based on this selection method, I would sue the organization." Finally, participants were asked to identify past experience with each selection method by circling "yes" or "no" options.

## Results

Research Question 1 explores the prevalence of the 12 selection methods based on the experience of senior undergraduate students from diverse nationalities living and pursuing employment in the UAE. To

examine this research question, we calculated the percentage of respondents who reported that they had been evaluated by each selection method in the UAE. The percentages are reflected in Table 1. As shown, resumes (74%) were the most encountered selection method, followed by interviews (71%), references (41%), and ethnicity/nationality (41%). On the other hand, graphology (8%), honesty tests (12%), biodata (25%), and written ability tests (28%) were the least encountered selection methods. These results, except for nationality and medical examinations, were relatively similar to findings from prior research conducted in other countries (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Bertolino & Steiner, 2007; Nikolaou & Judge, 2007; Snyder & Shahani-Denning, 2012)).

With respect to ethnicity/nationality, we are aware of a Romanian study (Ispas et al., 2010) and a Canadian study (Ababneh & Chhinzer, 2011) that each examined the prevalence of this selection method. Relative to the experience of the Canadian (5%) and Romanian (0%) participants, our study participants report higher frequency (41%) of being asked to provide ethnicity/nationality information during the selection process. With respect to the only study that followed Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology and evaluated the prevalence of medical examinations as a selection method in Canada (Ababneh & Chhinzer, 2011), our study participants report higher encounters with medical examinations (29%) than the Canadian participants (14%).

To test Hypothesis 1, we conducted a within-subject analysis of variance (ANOVA).<sup>1</sup> The analysis demonstrates that process favorability ratings differ significantly across the 12 selection methods [ $F(11, 1815) = 79.52, p < .001$ ]. The mean and standard deviation of each selection method on process favorability perceptions are presented in Table 1. As predicted, interview, resumes, and work sample tests secured the highest process favorability perceptions. These findings align with previous findings in this area (Anderson et al., 2010; Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Nikolaou & Judge, 2007). The lowest process favorability perceptions were for graphology, ethnicity/nationality, medical examination, and personal contacts. Favorability perceptions of honesty tests, written ability tests, biodata, personality tests, and personal references were concentrated around the middle point of the scale and did not differ significantly from each other. Overall, these results provide support for Hypothesis 1.

To determine which justice dimensions are the strongest/weakest predictors of process favorability (Hypothesis 2), we followed prior research procedures (Snyder & Shahani-Denning, 2012; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996). We first calculated, for each participant, the correlations between the procedural justice dimensions and process favorability perceptions across the 12 selection methods. Then, we averaged these correlations to produce a correlation coefficient which reflected each justice dimension's correlation with process favorability perceptions across all 12 selection methods (see Table 2). Steiner and Gilliland (1996) noted that they used correlation analysis instead of regression analysis because regression analysis would obscure the results for the justice dimensions. As can be seen from Table 2, face validity ( $r = .56$ ), widespread use ( $r = .49$ ), employer's rights ( $r = .48$ ), and opportunity to perform ( $r = .41$ ) are the strongest predictors of process favorability perceptions. On the other hand, respect for privacy ( $r = .24$ ), predictive validity ( $r = .28$ ), and interpersonal warmth ( $r = .31$ ) were the weakest predictors of process favorability perceptions. Overall, these results provide support to Hypotheses 2 and align with the categorizations reported by prior studies (Phillips & Gully, 2002; Snyder & Shahani-Denning, 2012; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996).

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<sup>1</sup> We conducted several ANOVAs in which we included each of gender, experience with the selection method, work experience, age, work status, and job search status as covariates. These analyses did not reveal any significant effects for these variables on any of our study dependent variables; hence, we did not include them in our subsequent analyses.



Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations on Procedural Justice Dimension Correlations with Process Favorability Perceptions*

Procedural Dimensions	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Face validity	0.56 <sup>a</sup>	0.36
Widely used	0.50 <sup>ab</sup>	0.34
Employer's right to obtain information	0.48 <sup>ab</sup>	0.34
Opportunity to perform	0.41 <sup>b</sup>	0.38
Predictive validity	0.28 <sup>c</sup>	0.38
Interpersonal warmth	0.31 <sup>c</sup>	0.41
Respectful of privacy	0.25 <sup>c</sup>	0.41

Note: *n* = 166

Means with different superscript are significantly different at *p* < .05

Table 3

*Correlations between Process Favorability (Fairness) and Organizational Outcomes for Each Selection Method*

Selection method	Attractiveness	Application Intentions	Recommendations Intentions	Litigations Intentions
Interview	.25**	.25**	.32**	-.24**
Resume	.39**	.33**	.25**	-.19*
Work sample	.50**	.24**	.32**	-.07
Biodata	.24*	.30**	.18*	.13
Written ability test	.36**	.17*	.23**	-.02
Personal references	.25**	.36**	.28**	-.36**
Personality test	.35**	.44**	.37**	-.10
Honesty test	.44**	.34**	.50**	-.05
Personal contacts	.21**	.17*	.33**	-.20*
Graphology	.32**	.35**	.33**	-.34**
Nationality/Ethnicity	.47**	.46**	.38**	-.27**
Medical Exam	.47**	.56**	.48**	-.19*
<b>Average <i>r</i></b>	.35	.34	.33	-.16

Note: *n*=166. Average correlations between process favorability and

Organization outcomes across all selection methods are reported in the list row.

\*Significant at *p* < .05; \*\* Significant at *p* < .01

Hypotheses 3a-d predicted that process fairness perceptions of the 12 selection methods would be associated with specific organizational outcomes. To test these hypotheses, we conducted bivariate correlations between process favorability perceptions and each of: organizational attractiveness, application intentions, recommendation intentions, and litigation intentions for each of the 12 selection methods. As can be seen from Table 3, process fairness perception has positive significant correlations with organizational attractiveness, application intentions, and recommendation intentions for each selection method. However, the analysis reveals that process favorability has a significant negative correlation (as predicted) with litigation intentions only when the selection methods are personal references, graphology, ethnicity/nationality, interview, personal contacts, and medical examinations (see last column of Table 3).

Regarding research question two, we conducted bivariate correlations between each of the seven procedural justice dimensions and each of organizational attractiveness (Table 4), application intentions (Table 5), recommendation intentions (Table 6), and litigation intentions (Table 7) for all 12 selection methods. As per the last row of Table 4, the average correlations between each procedural justice dimension and organizational attractiveness across the 12 selection methods, from the strongest to the weakest, are widely used, (average *r* = .42), face validity (average *r* = .39), employer's rights (average *r*

= .33), opportunity to perform (average  $r = .33$ ), predictive validity (average  $r = .29$ ), interpersonal warmth (average  $r = .20$ ), and respectful of privacy (average  $r = .19$ ).

Table 4

*Correlations between Procedural Justice Dimensions and Organizational Attractiveness for Each Selection Method*

Selection method	Predictive validity	Face Validity	Opportunity to perform	Interpersonal warmth	Employer's right	Respectful of privacy	Widely used
Interview	.10	.40**	.51**	.22**	.42**	.38**	.63**
Resume	.21**	.54**	.34**	.36**	.31**	.02	.39**
Work sample	.25**	.40**	.45**	.25**	.38**	-.03	.37**
Biodata	.10	.35**	.36**	.28**	.38**	.26*	.45**
Written ability test	.33**	.31**	.26**	.13	.24**	.01	.35**
Personal references	.11	.27**	.31**	.05	.37**	.12	.41**
Personality test	.24**	.43**	.31**	.10	.31**	.33**	.50**
Honesty test	.42**	.27**	.29**	.23**	.33**	.31**	.37**
Personal contacts	.22**	.19*	.28**	.09	.23**	.03	.17*
Graphology	.16*	.48**	.17*	.22**	.24**	.33**	.38**
Nationality/Ethnicity	.32**	.58**	.32**	.29**	.31**	.24**	.45**
Medical Exam	.33**	.50**	.38**	.19*	.44**	.22**	.61**
<b>Average <math>r</math></b>	.23	.39	.33	.20	.33	.19	.42

Note:  $n = 166$ . Average correlations between each procedural justice dimension and organizational attractiveness across all selection methods are reported in the last row.

\*Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .01$

Table 5

*Correlations between Procedural Justice Dimensions and Application Intentions for Each Selection Method*

Selection method	Predictive validity	Face validity	Opportunity to perform	Interpersonal warmth	Employer's right	Respectful of privacy	Widely used
Interview	.21*	.26**	.32**	.13	.54**	.37**	.58**
Resume	.16*	.48**	.33**	.25**	.47**	.07	.59**
Work sample	.13	.22**	.18*	.17*	.21**	.01	.33**
Biodata	.22**	.37**	.24**	.20*	.44**	.07	.42**
Written ability test	.10	.31**	.24**	.20*	.21**	.10	.30**
Personal references	.02	.16*	.16*	.24**	.48**	.03	.21*
Personality test	.22*	.39**	.29**	.13	.43**	.22**	.51**
Honesty test	.60**	.29**	.23**	.21*	.26**	.19*	.51**
Personal contacts	.25**	.33**	.34**	.11	.15*	.00	.31**
Graphology	.38**	.51**	.18**	.27**	.28**	.34**	.24**
Nationality/Ethnicity	.27**	.44**	.22**	.14	.32**	.12	.40**
Medical Exam	.33**	.51**	.26**	.27**	.53**	.29**	.54**
<b>Average <math>r</math></b>	.24	.36	.25	.19	.36	.15	.41

Note:  $n = 166$ . Average correlations between each procedural justice dimension and application intentions across all selection methods are reported in the last row.

\*Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .01$

Table 6

*Correlations between Procedural Justice Dimensions and Recommendation Intentions for Each Selection Method*

Selection method	Predictive validity	Face Validity	Opportunity to perform	Interpersonal warmth	Employer's right	Respectful of privacy	Widely used
Interview	.07	.42**	.37**	.20*	.41**	.41**	.70**
Resume	.17*	.48**	.30**	.20*	.28**	.14	.38**
Work sample	.32**	.22**	.18*	.38**	.10	.19*	.25**
Biodata	.12	.31**	.29**	.28**	.42**	.22*	.34**
Written ability test	.19*	.19*	.21*	.16*	.33**	-.07	.42**
Personal references	.20*	.16*	.25**	.24**	.33**	-.08	.27**
Personality test	.25**	.44**	.31**	.03	.38**	.14	.52**
Honesty test	.48**	.58**	.34**	.28**	.41**	.20*	.48**
Personal contacts	.24**	.33**	.29**	.10	.10	.09	.37**
Graphology	.17*	.61**	.26**	.29**	.34**	.26**	.45**
Nationality/Ethnicity	.23**	.55**	.28*	.10	.42**	.12	.37**
Medical Exam	.35**	.57**	.35**	.25**	.52**	.08	.58**
<b>Average <i>r</i></b>	.23	.41	.29	.21	.33	.14	.43

*Note:*  $n = 166$  Average correlations between each procedural justice dimension and recommendation intentions across all selection methods are reported in the last row.

\*Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .01$

As reflected in Table 5, procedural justice dimensions generally correlate positively with application intentions. The average correlations between each procedural justice dimension and application intentions (see the last row of Table 5) across the 12 selection methods, from the strongest to the weakest, are widely used, (average  $r = .41$ ), face validity (average  $r = .36$ ), employer's rights (average  $r = .36$ ), opportunity to perform (average  $r = .25$ ), predictive validity (average  $r = .24$ ), interpersonal warmth (average  $r = .19$ ), and respectful of privacy (average  $r = .15$ ).

Similarly, as reported in Table 6, procedural justice dimensions in general correlate positively with recommendation intentions. The average correlations between each procedural justice dimensions and recommendation intentions (see the last row of Table 6) across the 12 selection methods, from the strongest to the weakest, are widely used, (average  $r = .43$ ), face validity (average  $r = .41$ ), employer's rights (average  $r = .33$ ), opportunity to perform (average  $r = .29$ ), predictive validity (average  $r = .23$ ), interpersonal warmth (average  $r = .21$ ), and respectful of privacy (average  $r = .14$ ).

Table 7

*Correlations between Procedural Justice Dimensions and Litigation Intentions for Each Selection Method*

Selection method	Predictive validity	Face Validity	Opportunity to perform	Interpersonal warmth	Employer's right	Respectful of privacy	Widely used
Interview	.11	-.20*	-.25*	-.21**	-.18*	-.17*	-.10
Resume	.13	-.28**	-.10	-.01	-.16*	-.20*	-.18*
Work sample	.05	.13	-.08	-.25**	.04	-.22**	-.02
Biodata	.23	.02	.03	-.07	-.07	-.17*	-.11
Written ability test	-.09	-.08	-.01	-.05	.07	-.17*	-.07
Personal references	-.02	.02	-.08	-.08	-.19**	-.22**	-.01
Personality test	-.01	-.22*	-.20*	-.23**	-.14	-.49**	-.18*
Honesty test	-.03	-.14	-.14	-.21**	-.25**	-.25**	-.18*
Personal contacts	-.20*	-.08	.10	-.05	.11	-.24**	-.15
Graphology	.10	-.27**	-.06	-.19*	-.25**	-.30**	-.23**
Nationality/Ethnicity	-.06	-.22*	-.25**	-.46**	-.17*	-.24**	-.09
Medical Exam	-.03	-.16*	-.18*	-.20**	-.02	-.16*	-.01
<b>Average <i>r</i></b>	.04	-.13	-.10	-.17	-.08	-.24	-.11

Note:  $n = 166$ . Average correlations between each procedural justice dimension and litigation intentions across all selection methods are reported in the last row.

\*Significant at  $p < .05$ ; \*\* Significant at  $p < .01$

With respect to the relationship between the seven procedural justice dimensions and litigation intentions, our correlation analyses (see Table 7) show that the associations between the privacy justice dimension and litigation intentions are significant for all 12 selection methods. For interpersonal warmth, the correlations between the interpersonal warmth justice dimension and litigation intentions are significant for seven of the 12 selection methods (see Table 7). On the other hand, the correlations between litigation intentions and each of predictive validity, opportunity to perform, and widespread use of the selection method are mostly non-significant (see Table 7).

### Discussion

An important goal of this study was to explore the prevalence of the 12 selections methods according to the experience of a diverse sample of senior undergraduate students living and pursuing jobs in the UAE. The results of our study reveal that interviews, resumes, personal references, and ethnicity/nationality are the most encountered selection methods in the UAE, while graphology and honesty tests are the least encountered selection methods. Although there are some differences between the percentages of our study and previous research regarding the prevalence of the examined selection methods (e.g., Anderson & Witvliet 2008; Ispas et al., 2010; Bertolino & Steiner, 2007), the patterns of the most and the least prevalent selection methods are similar.

Another major goal of this study was to examine favorability (fairness) perceptions of the 12 personnel selection methods according to a sample of job applicants from the UAE. Our study reveals similarities with those of previous research regarding the highest-rated selection methods (Bertolino & Steiner, 2007; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996). Specifically, similar to Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) seminal work in this area and Anderson and Witvliet's study (2008), the highest rated selection methods in terms of favorability perceptions are interviews, resumes, and work-sample tests. An important practical implication of these findings is that employers should include selection tools, such as interviews, resumes, and work sample tests, in their selection process to generate higher levels of process fairness perceptions and, consequently, favorable reactions toward the organization. The results regarding the work sample test favorability perceptions are important since this method also has a high criterion-related validity (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

The lowest rated selection methods in terms of favorability perceptions are graphology, ethnicity/nationality, medical examination, and personal contacts. While graphology (8%) is very rarely used by employers in the UAE, our study shows that medical examinations (29%) and ethnicity/nationality (41%) are more frequently used by employers in the UAE as part of their staffing process. Medical examinations are frequently used in the Middle East, especially in the Gulf region, most often as part of government requirements for work visas. With respect to ethnicity/nationality, most governments in the Gulf region have established programs and policies aimed at increasing the participation of national citizens by encouraging or requiring employers to increase the percent of nationals in the workforce, especially in the private sector (Al-Waqfi & Forstenlechner, 2012; Forstenlechner, 2010; Katou, Budhwar, Woldu, & Al-Hamadi, 2010).

Since applicants from North America, Europe, and some other countries are likely unaware of such requirements if they have not previously worked in the Gulf region, employers need to take actions to minimize the negative effects of these selection methods on job applicants. For example, research in North America demonstrates that providing legitimate justifications, such as increasing workforce diversity or complying with government regulations for the use of specific staffing procedures, can lessen negative reactions among job applicants (Ployhart et al., 1999; Richard & Kirby, 1998). Hence, to reduce applicant negative reactions to ethnicity/nationality and medical examinations, organizations in the Gulf region could provide applicants with justifications for why these methods are used. However, further research is required to confirm the generalizability of the positive effect of providing justifications by using samples from the UAE. Moreover, future research needs to confirm the generalizability of our findings to other countries where medical examinations and ethnicity/nationality are also commonly used during the selection process.

Regarding procedural justice dimensions, our results indicate that face validity, widespread use, employer's right to obtain information, and opportunity to perform have the strongest correlations with process favorability perceptions, which is generally consistent with previous research from other countries (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Snyder & Shahani-Denning, 2012; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996). Overall, these results are also in line with Gilliland's (1993) organizational justice model, which proposes justice rules as important predictors of process fairness predictions. On the other hand, justice dimensions of privacy and interpersonal warmth have the weakest relationship with process favorability.

Another important goal of this research was to explore the influence of procedural justice dimensions and fairness perceptions on a number of important organizational outcomes. From a practical viewpoint, organizations want to know not only the applicant favorability perceptions of selection methods or the procedural justice dimensions associated with favorability perceptions as done by previous research, but more importantly, what the consequences are of these perceptions on important organizational outcomes, such as application intentions and litigation intentions. Overall, our study demonstrates that face validity, employer's right to obtain information, widespread use, and opportunity to perform are the strongest predictors of organizational attractiveness and applicant intentions to apply and to recommend the organization to others. Recall that these four justice dimensions also have the strongest correlation with process favorability perceptions. Notably, our study shows that despite the fact that respect for privacy and interpersonal warmth justice dimensions were the weakest predictors of process favorability perceptions, they were the strongest predictors of applicant litigation intentions. These findings are important as they suggest that some justice dimensions can have relationships with organizational outcomes despite the fact that they have a weak relationship with process favorability.

With respect to the relationships between process favorability and organizational outcomes, we found that process favorability has significant effect on organizational attractiveness, application intentions, and recommendation intentions for each of the 12 selection methods. However, process favorability has effects on litigation intentions only when the selection methods were personal references, graphology, ethnicity/nationality, interview, personal contacts, and medical examinations. These results are consistent with Gilliland's (1993) justice model.

In brief, our findings are important as they demonstrate within the same study that procedural justice dimensions and fairness perceptions of selection methods are linked with important organizational



outcomes, namely organizational perceptions, application intentions, and recommendation intentions. The findings of this study also contribute to the research into applicant reactions to selection methods by investigating two selection methods (nationality and medical exams) that were not examined in prior research that followed Steiner & Gilliland's (1996) methodology. In addition, our sample offers findings from a region that has traditionally been overlooked in the area of application reactions. Overall, our study results provide support for the generalizability hypothesis (Anderson et al., 2010) suggesting that similar patterns of applicant reactions toward selection methods exist in different countries despite the variations in employment practices and cultural, social, economic, and political factors.

### Limitations and Future Research

While the findings of this study contribute to the understanding of applicant perceptions of personnel selection methods and the consequences of these perceptions by using a unique sample of diverse participants seeking jobs in the UAE, some limitations must be noted. First, since our study used a cross-sectional questionnaire, causality between our variables cannot be assured. However, the relationships studied here align with Gilliland's (1993) organizational justice model and other related research in the area of applicant reactions (Anderson et al., 2010; Hausknecht et al., 2004; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996).

Second, some readers may argue that the findings of this study may not be generalizable to real-world selection contexts because of the use of undergraduate students in a scenario-based design. It should be noted that we only included senior undergraduate students who were seeking jobs and instructed them to complete all study materials as if they were going through a real selection process. Senior graduates students are very important as many organizations hire them to fill many of their positions. However, future studies can highly contribute by investigating the generalizability of our results to different cohorts, including older applicants or field samples.

Another limitation of this study is the use of a single item to measure procedural justice dimensions and organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, previous research in this area (Anderson & Witvliet 2008; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996) has used the same practice and measures. Since our study evaluated reactions toward the 12 selection methods, it was not practical to increase the number of the questions/items for an already long questionnaire. Furthermore, it is important to note that researchers suggest that a single item measure can provide reliable measurement (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997).

### Conclusion

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, this study contributes to the literature on applicant perceptions to various selection methods by extending Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) methodology to a unique sample of diverse participants targeting jobs in the UAE. This study also contributes by examining applicant reactions to nationality/ethnicity and medical examinations, two selection methods that were not examined in prior research that used Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) approach. Moreover, in addition to examining applicant process favorability perceptions and the bases of these perceptions as done by previous research, our study also examines the consequences of these perceptions on important organizational outcomes.

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