

# Selection decision based on first impression in recruitment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Selection Decision is a very strategic activity. In the global and increasingly competitive market for skilled professionals, employers are seeking to employ the best candidates.

The Candidates on the other hand, are seeking to be hired and retained by these organizations. Due to the usual large turnout of candidates during a recruitment exercise, employers seek ways to narrow down the number of candidates applying for a position.

A Key factor that determines if a candidate would be hired and retained by an organization, lies in the first impression the candidate puts across to the employer.

## **WHAT IS SELECTION DECISION**

Selection is the process of picking individuals (out of the pool of job applicants) with requisite qualifications and competence to fill jobs in the organization. A formal definition of Selection is:- " It is the process of differentiating between applicants in order to identify (and here) those with a greater likelihood of success in a job.

Selection decision involves assessment of application and determining if the applicant has met selection criteria or not. One of the most consistent findings is that interviewers tend to jump to conclusions, make snap judgments about candidates during the first few minutes of the interview or even before the interview starts, based on test scores or resume data (Citeman, 2007). According to Mehrabian (1972), it takes only 30 seconds for someone to form an impression of us, and this is attributed to how we look, what we say and voice cues.

<https://assignbuster.com/selection-decision-based-on-first-impression-in-recruitment/>

For many organizations, interviews are the only or most important selection tool used to make selection decisions. But many companies that rely heavily on the interview for their selection decisions may not realize that some types of structured behavioral and competency interviews can be problematic and may result in missing out on hiring the best person for the job. It's important to understand the limitations of these types of interviews and how to effortlessly overcome and “upgrade” them by using performance-based interviews (Stephen Jackson, 2001).

## **FACTORS GUIDING SELECTION DECISION**

**Conducting job analysis:** An effective interview should be premised on a thorough job analysis to outline the context, score, and determine the primary work domains of the positions being examined (Cesare, 1996). A structured interview based on a job analysis, using rating guides, could achieve up to 87% reliability in predicting job performance (Weisner, Cronshaw, S. F. 1998)

**Gender and Attractiveness:** A study shows that highly attractive male candidates were consistently rated as more suitable for higher than marginally attractive male candidates or female applicants. In addition, marginally attractive females were at the greatest disadvantage. Finally men were perceived to be more suitable for hire or advancement than equally qualified women. (Marlowe, Schneider, Nelson 1996)

**Use of Consensus ratings for the interviewers:** Consensus ratings is the average of multiple interviewers ratings or estimates for a particular period. The consensus ratings play a key role in getting the right candidate. When

interviewers and raters know they will have to meet and be accountable on the reasons for the fit of the candidate, they become more objective and thorough in their interviewing efforts. (Pulakos, Schmitt, Whitney 1996)

Legal consideration: In 1978, the EEOC and three other federal agencies-the Civil Service Commission (predecessor of the Office of Personnel Management) and the Labor and Justice Departments-jointly issued the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures. The Guidelines incorporate a set of principles governing the use of employee selection procedures according to applicable laws. They provide a framework for employers and other organizations for determining the proper use of tests and other selection procedures which includes; uniform guidelines on employee selection procedures, adverse or disparate impact, approaches to determine existence of adverse impact, job-relatedness, business necessity, biased assessment procedures.

## **SIGNALING THEORY**

Signaling theory (Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973) is commonly used to explain how applicant attraction to a recruiting organization may, in part, can be influenced by information, or signals, about an organization's characteristics revealed during recruitment activities. It is recognized that applicants construe many recruitment-related activities and information as signals of unknown organizational characteristics (Collins and Stevens, 2002; Turban and Cable, 2003), and recruiter characteristics and/or behavior (Rynes, 1991; Turban et al., 1998).

## **SELECTION DECISION BASED ON FIRST IMPRESSION**

Although selection research (e. g., Dipboye, 1992) identifies several applicant behaviors before during and after the selection interview which may influence interviewer decision making, appearance is typically cast as part of the applicant's nonverbal communication during the interview and can be further framed as a static nonverbal cue versus a dynamic nonverbal cue such as eye contact or gestures (Knapp & Hall, 1992). In a culture which promotes best dressed lists, advice on grooming, and numerous examples of what is considered physically attractive as well as unattractive, it is not surprising when selection interviewing education promotes appearance as a product to be attained yet minimizes study of the judgmental process. While attention to product may enhance effective impression management, allied research on social attraction and first impressions provides material for examining the decision making process or, just how and when such judgments of attractiveness are likely to occur (Richard J. Ilkka, 1974).

### **How First impression influences selection decisions**

Judging people in the first few seconds of meeting them is part of our survival response as humans. Two Major Character Variables that helps shape one's instant perceptions.

Warmth: Does this person feel warm or cold to me? This is the first and most important interpersonal perception. It is rooted in our survival instincts.

Warmth accounts for more of someone's overall evaluation than competence.

Competence: How well does the individual know the role he/she is applying for.

Halo Effect: The Halo Effect is a principle of psychology which states that our perception of others can create a perception halo above their heads, which can often be misguided. That is to say, We often see only what we want to see.

Attribution: Attractiveness is processed in different ways.

Attraction research (e. g., Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) provides support for the claim that when people encounter individuals who are decidedly attractive or unattractive, according to widely held cultural stereotypes (e. g., Iliffe, 1960), various attributions may be processed. For example, attractive males and females are viewed as more sociable, friendly, competent, self-confident, popular, more likely to succeed, as well as being better adjusted than people judged to be unattractive.

Another study offers support for the view that attractive people have greater interpersonal influence (Longo & Ashmore, 1992)

Gilmore et al. (1986) also found that attractive candidates were likely to be judged as having a more appropriate personality for the job, would be expected to perform better, and would be more likely to be hired. And incidentally, once hired, physical attractiveness may also have modest influence on promotion consideration (Morrow, McElroy, Stamper, & Wilson, 1990).

Primacy effect: Primacy Effect is a cognitive bias – a psychological tendency for us to draw incorrect conclusions based on the ways our brains are wired rather than on the objective evidence (John Wray, 2010). Sometimes interviewers make decisions to hire early in the interview

Farr and York (1975) reported that when one final rating is to be made, and when information in the interview sequence is equally favorable from start to finish, the earlier information (primacy effect) influences the final judgment about the candidate more than does the information presented later (recency effect).

Research also suggests that negative first impressions have more impact than positive ones on hiring when the negative occurs early in interviews (Rowe, 1989; Springbett, 1958).

Job Relevance: Some research (e. g., Beehr & Gilmore, 1982) supports the claim that physical appearance does not influence hiring decisions unless attractiveness is also a job relevant criterion, for example, a fashion model versus an accountant. Beehr and Gilmore (1982) also found that while attractiveness does influence hiring decisions for positions where attractiveness is job relevant, attractive people are not hired only or even mainly because of their looks, even for attractiveness-relevant positions.

Occupational and sex role Stereotyping:

Ashmore and DelBoca (1981) defined a stereotype as a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people. Stereotypes are pictures in the

head that shape perception of reality and aid individuals in recognizing members of various social groups.

For example, Snyder, Berscheid, and Matwychuk (1988) found that physical attractiveness may not always be more influential than that appearance which fits a stereotypic view of a job, for instance, a librarian.

Heilman and Saruwatari (1979) found that attractive females were less likely to get management positions than unattractive ones, underscoring a bias against female managers in general and attractive ones in particular.

There is some research (Izraeli & Izraeli, 1985) which argues that sex role biases are diminishing. Of course, even if the sex role biases are diminishing, it does not mean that "beautyism" is also diminishing. In effect, with more women breaking through management "glass ceilings," it may simply mean that the "beautyism" may now begin to function across an even greater spectrum of jobs levels (Richard J. Ilkka, 1974).

Tie breaker: First impression can be used as a tie breaker between applicants of equal standing. Young and Beier (1977) claim that nonverbal behaviors (dynamic cues) are more influential than attractiveness but that attractiveness may become something of a relevant tie breaker when the dynamic nonverbal behaviors of two applicants are similar.

Dress and Grooming:

Being physically unattractive and/or obese are in part related to genetics, and while change is possible through surgery and/or diet, such changes are often difficult to accomplish. However, dress provides an opportunity for <https://assignbuster.com/selection-decision-based-on-first-impression-in-recruitment/>



more manageable change and at least some research suggests that dress which reflects prevailing cultural expectations for the employment interview, may be more influential than physical attractiveness (Richard J. Ilkka, 1974).

For example, research by Bardack and McAndrew (1985) indicates that attractive applicants still retain an advantage over unattractive applicants when both dress appropriately. Specifically, the authors found that an unattractive person who dressed appropriately only slightly improved chances for being hired whereas an attractive person who also dressed appropriately improved chances for being hired significantly more

Cash (1985) discovered that grooming by women which reflects what was termed, a managerial style, e. g., shorter, simpler hairstyles, hair away from face and lacking adornments, moderate facial cosmetics, tailored blouses and jackets, and simple gold jewelry, was favored by raters, especially male raters.

In brief, body type, dress, and grooming also contribute to interviewer decision making.

## **IMPROVING FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

**Punctuality:** Arriving late for the interview would show the sort of person you are. People tend to take you as seriously as you take yourself.

**Have a Positive Attitude**

**Dress Professionally**

Smile: A real Smile speaks Volumes. If you look grim, unhappy or anxious, people will assume that's how you are.

Make Sure your right hand is free for a handshake: A study carried out at the University of Iowa came up with the conclusion that " A Solid handshake is more important than dress or appearance when establishing an impression in an interview

Eye contact with the Interviewer

## **CONCLUSION**

Even though first impression such as appearance, dressing, grooming, etc. have a significant influence on selection decision, it should not be the only basis by which decisions are made, as it gives room for bias. Bias and error by interviewers is a key reason to interviewing failure. The first impression façade is often as unreal as the façade of a movie set, looks good but little behind it (Stephen Moulton).

Some research support the claim that physical appearance does not influence hiring decisions unless attractiveness is also a job relevant criterion. (Beehr & Gilmore, 1982). Even where attractiveness is not legitimately job relevant, employers may hold occupational stereotypes regarding certain kinds of positions.

Interviewers should endeavor to check the qualification of the candidates before making decisions. A sound interview should be psychometrically adequate, legally defensible, and cost effective (Stephen Moulton).