

'One size fits all'

**The impact of a standardised recruitment process
on employee engagement in the Public Sector**

Jackie Brennan

Msc in Management

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, May, 2020

Abstract

Purpose: The use of online recruitment systems has become common practice in recent years. Technology is changing how businesses work worldwide and HR departments are embracing new technologies as an aid in all areas of the recruitment and selection process. There has been little academic research into how the use of these systems impact on employee engagement, most notably in the area of promotion and the consequences as a result. The purpose of this study was to examine an online recruitment system and to explore the impact of the process on employee engagement regardless of whether employees were successful or unsuccessful in promotion applications. The study focuses on recruitment in the Civil Service and specifically on the PAS system, an online system used in interdepartmental campaigns for positions that represent promotion opportunities

Design/Methodology/Approach: The study was completed using a qualitative approach. A sample of nine civil servants of various grades across a number of departments were interviewed in relation to the process for applying for promotional opportunities.

Findings: Results indicate that while in a small number of cases there can be a temporary impact on employee engagement, overall, there is no impact as a result of being either successful or unsuccessful in achieving promotion.

Originality/Value: Previous literature has examined the impact of promotion systems in the private sector. Private sector promotions are generally small-scale, with only one or a limited number of promotional opportunities available during a recruitment campaign. This study examines a public sector organisation where recruitment campaigns for promotional opportunities can offer large numbers of positions in the one campaign.

Keywords: recruitment systems, employee engagement, applicant perceptions, fairness

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Jackie Brennan

Student Number: X18156592

Degree for which thesis is submitted: Master Science in Management

Title of Thesis: *One size fits all? The impact of a standardised recruitment process on employee engagement in the Public Sector*

Date: 5th May 2020

Material submitted for award

A. I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself.

B. I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

C. I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online open access repository NORMA.

D. ***Either*** *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor Pauline Kelly-Phelan for her guidance, patience and availability while working on this dissertation. While the prospect of writing a dissertation appeared challenging enough at the outset, the Covid 19 pandemic brought an increased challenge for everyone requiring new ways of working and adapting to new technology in pressurised timeframes. Pauline's consistent support and calm manner was very much appreciated and was instrumental in my achievement of completion for the May 2020 submission date.

Thanks also are due to Laura Fallon who has been a great support in relation to any clarifications needed for submission requirements. Her prompt responses and obliging and approachable manner ensured that administrative requirements were always clear.

Thanks also to the library team, while the library was not accessible on a walk-in basis since early March there was a constant online presence if assistance was required. Prior to lockdown, a meeting with Corey Newbigging outlining referencing requirements proved very helpful when completing the dissertation.

Finally I would like to thank all those who participated in the interviews and provided the data for analysis in this project. I very much appreciate the time that was taken to complete the interviews and the honesty in responses which made for a very rich data set. Without their participation I would have been unable to complete the project and am extremely grateful for their input.

| Table of contents | Page Number |
|---|--------------------|
| Abstract | 2 |
| Declaration | 3 |
| Acknowledgements | 5 |
| Table of Contents | 6 |
| | |
| Contents | |
| | |
| Chapter 1 | |
| Problem Statement | 8 |
| Significance | 8 |
| Introduction | 9 |
| Theoretical Framework | 12 |
| | |
| Chapter 2 | |
| Literature Review | |
| 21 st century Recruitment Methods | 14 |
| Effects of recruitment methods on applicants | 16 |
| Challenges for using online recruitment methods | 19 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Recruitment methods in the Civil Service | 21 |
| Recruitment in the context of promotion | 22 |
| Defining Employee Engagement | 26 |
| Conclusions | 29 |
| Research Question | 31 |
| Chapter 3 | |
| Methodology | 32 |
| Research Approach | 33 |
| The Research Onion | 33 |
| Interpretivist Approach | 34 |
| Quantitative Method | 36 |
| Qualitative Method | 36 |
| Data Collection Method | 37 |
| Chapter 4 | |
| Analysis/Findings | 40 |
| Research Purpose | 48 |
| Data Analysis Method | 49 |
| Research Findings | 52 |
| Recruitment Process | 52 |
| Employee Engagement | 54 |

Chapter 5

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Discussion | 56 |
| Chapter 6 | |
| Conclusion | 58 |
| Appendix A | 60 |
| References | 61 |

Problem Statement

There is currently little academic research into the area of how employees are impacted by recruitment systems, particularly in the area of promotions within organisations and on how organisational performance is affected as a result.

Significance

In my current role in the Civil Service I have observed large numbers of colleagues who are highly competent in their roles and capable of taking on more responsibility. It would appear there is a barrier to these individuals being promoted in the form of

the recruitment methods that are used in the organisation. The most common recruitment method for campaigns is competition via PAS (Public Appointments Service). PAS is the centralised provider of recruitment, assessment and selection services for the Civil Service. The system includes online assessment tests at initial stages which eliminate large numbers of candidates at early stages with many applicants rarely getting to interview stage. The PAS system is used for interdepartmental competitions which would represent the most common route for employees applying for promotions. Individual departments also use internal systems when recruiting. For the purpose of this study the aim is to examine whether the largest Civil Service recruitment system (PAS) has any effect on everyday performance of employees when they are either successful or unsuccessful in promotion applications.

Introduction

Over the past twenty years new forms of technology have been embraced by businesses and used as an aid in all areas of business functions. While it is necessary for companies to keep abreast of changes and update systems and ways of operating in order to remain competitive, it is important that any technological changes introduced as an aid to business performance are compatible with overall company strategy. The use of new forms of technology as an enabler in HR needs to be approached carefully, Jacobs (2018) refers specifically to the use of psychometric testing in recruitment campaigns. She points out that when the tests are used inappropriately both candidate and employee experience can be damaged as a result as it involves 'putting people through extensive assessments and then not being able to provide adequate feedback'. The use of technology must enhance the achievement of company objectives rather than be used purely because it's the fashion to do so. A company relies on its employee's performance in order to achieve its goals and recruitment is the very first step for the company in achieving this. Taking time at the recruitment phase to ensure that the correct people are being hired is crucial and recruitment methods need to be constantly monitored for effectiveness and suitability to the climate the company is operating in.

Recruitment and selection lie at the heart of how businesses procure human resources required to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage over rivals, Heraty and Morley, (1998). Over the past twenty years the way in which companies recruit and select staff has changed totally. Up to the late 1990's newspaper advertisements with requests for written applications were still the norm whereas now vacancies across the board from entry level to senior management level positions in all sectors are advertised via company websites, job boards, social media etc. with online application processes.

Company performance relies on employee performance and can be seriously affected if employees are not meeting required levels of output. An unwillingness to change ineffective recruitment and selection methods impacts heavily on this situation. Smith *et al*, (cited in Heraty and Morley, 1998). If a company is managing with its recruitment methods, unwillingness may stem from the time and cost of implementing new systems and upskilling staff in order to carry out new ways of working. It could also be a case that the company may be unaware of the possible negative impact a system they feel meets their requirements is having on applicants.

This area is worthy of further study as employees are a company's most valuable resource. It is through employee performance that a company gains competitive advantage. Recruitment can be a very time consuming and costly activity for an organisation and for this reason how it impacts on employee/organisational performance is of critical importance. An organisation can gain valuable insights into how effective its recruitment methods are by linking it to employee performance.

Heraty and Morley 1998 discuss the concept of 'vertical mobility' in relation to the internal labour market in organisations. The idea is that organisations have 'ladders' which employees can use as tools to advance their careers. This is perceived as being beneficial to employees as it is 'viewed as a positive motivator by current employees'. The importance of recruitment is acknowledged and is noted as 'having a pivotal role to play in ensuring that the organisation remains competitive', however it is also noted that 'even the soundest of techniques and best practice (in selection) contain scope for error'.

The three factors pinpointed are the 'current employees' and their perceptions of the ability to progress within their organisation. The 'critical role that recruitment plays in an organisation in relation to its competitiveness' and the 'importance of the systems used for recruitment purposes'. If employees aspire to being vertically mobile they must perceive the 'ladders' to be scalable.

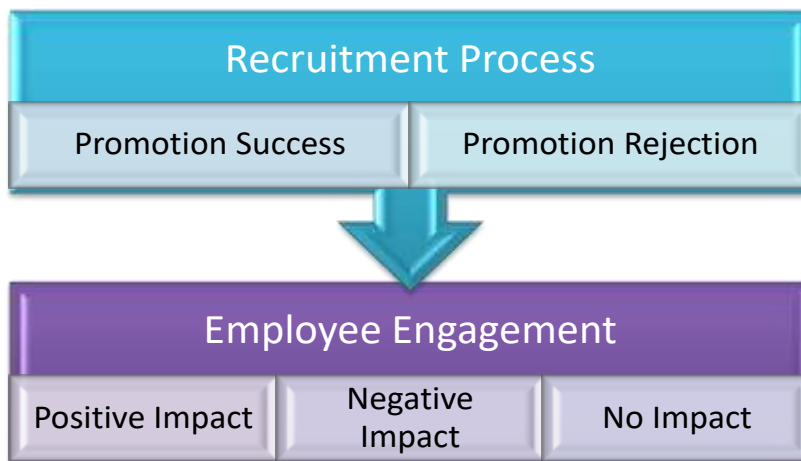


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

The diagram above illustrates the conceptual framework for this study. A simple grid has been chosen even though the subject is a complex one. In keeping with Occam's razor theory that 'entities ought not to be multiplied except by necessity',

Fisher (2010, p.250). The aim is to keep all aspects of the study as straightforward as possible and embracing the concept that 'the simplest argument that fits the evidence will be the best one, Fisher (2010).

The author has taken a 'critical realism' stance as the research focuses on the opinions and perceptions of people. While the concept is not too complicated, the aim being to ascertain if there is a link between recruitment processes used by an organisation and levels of employee engagement. The processes and outcomes depending on whether applicants are successful or not may have an impact on how they engage with the roles they are employed in. Critical realism is an idea developed by Bhaskar, which proposes three levels of reality, i.e. experiences, events and mechanisms, Fisher (2010).

The study aims to explore how employees in the Civil Service are affected as a result of their perceptions in relation to processes used to recruit people into higher positions within the organisation. The perceptions people have will be coloured by their 'experiences' of having been through the process. The recruitment processes can be viewed as the 'mechanisms' that may be perceived as providing opportunities or restricting access. Each recruitment campaign or 'event' has the potential to alter the applicant's perception of that particular reality.

Theoretical Framework

PAS is the centralised provider of recruitment, assessment and selection services for the Civil Service. The 'People Strategy for the Civil Service 2017-2020' sets out the strategic priorities for the Civil Service. Two priorities included are to 'Build a workforce of the future' and to 'Be an employer of choice'. In the case of the first priority the intended outcome is to have 'the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time'. In the second the intended outcome is for the Civil Service to be 'a place where talented people choose to work and stay'. In order to

achieve this the action is to review the effectiveness of recruitment policies and processes to ensure they are fit for purpose in terms of selection, placement and promotion. The intended outcome is that the policies and processes developed as a result are designed to support effective recruitment, selection and promotion in order to meet business needs.

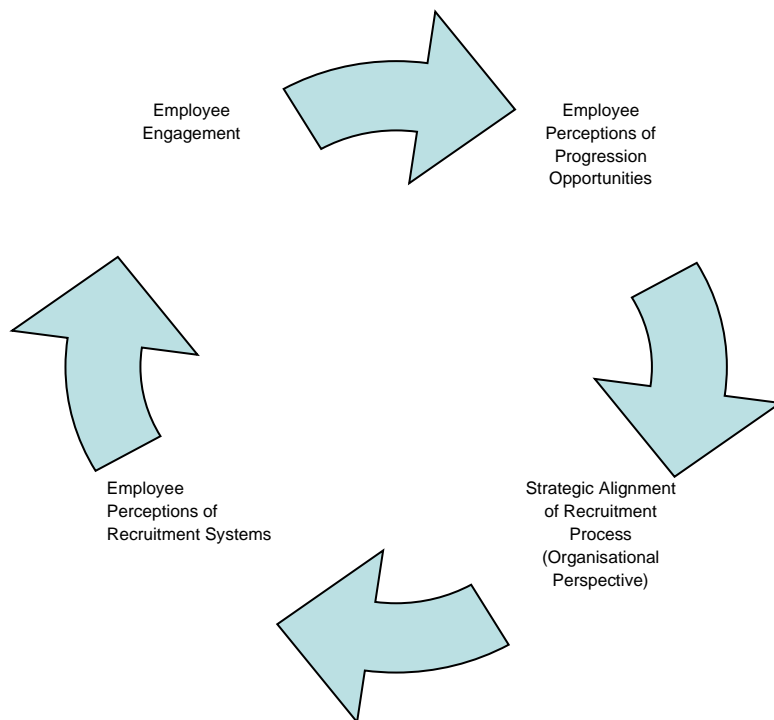


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework Diagram

The diagram represents the continuous nature of the recruitment process. It is a cycle that will affect people differently each time they apply for a position. From an organisational point of view it is critical that it is aligned with the organisations objectives in order to achieve desired outcomes however the effectiveness or suitability of the process is very much decided by those who use it as a tool for advancing their career. As mentioned previously, Heraty and Morley (1998) illustrate the concept of vertical mobility and use a ladder as a metaphor for a tool that is used to progress in their careers. They acknowledge that 'recruitment plays a pivotal role in maintaining organisational competitiveness' but point out that 'even the soundest

techniques and best practice can contain scope for error'. The purpose of this study is to examine an organisation where best practice is used in recruitment procedures to see what if any is the impact of these processes on employee engagement. This will be examined by collecting data related to applicant perceptions of the processes and whether or not participation in the process or outcomes related to the process have any impact on everyday engagement in their roles.

Literature Review

Literature acknowledges the importance of recruitment as being a key element of Human Resources. As technology advances and the world is becoming a global village, companies and organisations are facing increasing challenges in sourcing and retaining employees. It has become the norm for the majority of businesses to use technology, specifically online recruitment methods as a key element and in many cases the only way of attracting and selecting talent.

Today online applications are widely accepted across European civil service organisations, with a CIPD survey estimating 85% of public sector vacancies are advertised on organisation websites, Barber (2006). The motivation for this research attempts to identify if there is a link between recruitment and selection methods and employee engagement. The research will focus on recruitment and selection methods within the Irish Civil Service.

21st Century Recruitment Methods

Heraty and Morley, (1998), cite Kilbarda & Fonda (1997) discussing the problem of inefficiency in the workforce and suggest it may be due to the difficulty of distinguishing 'good practice from common practice'. The suggestion is that if this is the case 'the problem may lie with the processes utilised more than what constitutes effective, valid, recruitment and selection practices'. As the external environment changes with increased use of technology are companies adopting new methods of

recruitment because everyone else is doing it or has their system been analysed to see how it aligns with company needs?

Parry and Tyson (2008) note that online recruitment methods used in the public sector can be used 'as a means of coping with a large candidate pool', this is confirmed by Barber(2006) citing PAS (Public Appointments Service) stating that the key driver for using online recruitment methods is the 'ability to target a wider more diverse pool of candidates'. While there is the 'ability' to target a wider and more diverse pool of candidates whether or not this is being achieved may need to be analysed. By casting the net so wide are valuable candidates within the organisation being overlooked by having to compete with larger applicant volumes at the initial stages of recruitment campaigns?

Faragher (2019) asks, 'how should you respond if an algorithm decides you can't be promoted'? Professor Binna Kandola is cited stating that 'organisations should approach the topic with an idea of where they see themselves: with the ambition of the organisation they want to be'. This poses the question 'are organisations limiting their capabilities by using online recruitment methods only when it comes to recruiting for roles that represent promotion opportunities. Are employees already in situ and performing well in the organisation being overlooked because they don't match the criteria that the bots are using when filtering applications at screening stages?'

Jacobs (2018) discusses the use of psychometric testing as part of recruitment campaigns, Dr Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic is quoted noting that these tests are being used 'increasingly in promotion decisions'. Jacobs (2018) notes that 'adding tests to recruitment process can bring badly needed objectivity' but state that 'when they get it wrong the consequences can be damaging to both organisations and individuals'. In the case of the Civil Service psychometric tests are the norm for all interdepartmental competitions with only the highest achievers making it to the next step in the process. Due to the large number of applicants for each campaign there is a lot of pressure on candidates to score very highly in order to be selected for the next stage of the process.

Wannous, cited in Breugh & Starke, (2000), note that 'several researchers have questioned the wisdom of only trying to attract a large number of applicants. Rynes (1991) is cited stating that rather than emphasis on a wider selection of candidates it would be better to consider a wider number of recruitment objectives. It is suggested that areas to be examined closer could include post-hire outcomes and how they are influenced by recruitment methods. Job satisfaction and speed with which jobs were filled along with the diversity (if any) of new employees are potential areas for further examination. Along with examination of job satisfaction post-hire there is also the possibility of examining job satisfaction of current employees who were unsuccessful in applications for other positions within the company.

Rather than the emphasis being on the large number of applicants for every campaign the focus may need to be on more specific and defined criteria. Ability to do the job is a factor that may be overlooked in the use of psychometric tests and online filtering systems as candidates who are currently employees of the organisation may be excellent performers and have the capability to take on extra responsibility or tasks but may not have the aptitude for psychometric tests. This may result in suitable potential candidates deselecting themselves from competitions on the basis that the tests are perceived to be unmanageable.

Effects of recruitment methods on applicants

Dlugos (2017) discusses how candidates respond differently to rejection. Depending on how far a person gets in the recruitment process for a specific campaign will colour their view and they may/may not see the potential for success in further competitions. If they have got to interview stage in the competition they may feel that they have a better chance of success in subsequent attempts. If they are turned down for appointments that constitute a transfer (different role at same grade) they may see no future in the organisation and may look outside for further opportunities. This would pose the question that if they don't make it through the psychometric tests on numerous attempts will they automatically look outside the organisation for

promotion opportunities. An area also to consider, is the human element being missed for assessing suitability for the roles on offer?

Lam and Schaubroeck (2000) examined how individuals react to rejection for promotion and found that there may be lower levels of output as a result in most cases, but after a period of three months employees return to their previous levels of productivity and engagement. The study however concentrated on employees being rejected for the first time in a promotion competition and does not explore the impact of numerous rejections on employee's behaviour.

Ryan and Ployhart (2000) refer to 'procedural pain' which refers to the 'extent to which negative states of embarrassment, stress and humiliation can be caused by a procedure'. This would be particularly relevant in the terms of recruitment campaigns within the Civil Service as they are public competitions and internal candidates will be aware of colleagues who are applying for the same role and will be aware of how far each candidate gets in the process. The phenomenon of 'procedural pain' may not be as relevant in anonymous settings but is an area for consideration in terms of internal recruitment campaigns within the civil service. Ryan et al (2000) 'urge organisations to pay attention to fairness of selection events' and emphasise the importance in respect of rejected applicants.

Tzafrir and Hareli (2009) discuss the emotional reactions of employees to promotional decisions and make interesting comparisons on how outcomes can affect both promoted and un-promoted employees. They illustrate the difference by referring to the concept of 'peripheral' and 'core' employees and feelings of security and non-security. The employee who has been rejected for promotion may feel that they lack the necessary attributes for promotion and will remain a 'peripheral' employee believing that the organisation does not value them as much as the promoted employee and that they do not have the possibility of progression within

the organisation which leads to feelings of insecurity. The promoted employee on the other hand may believe their future is relatively secure in the organisation, their contribution is valued and they are seen as a 'core' employee.

While the analogy of job security does not apply to employees in the Civil Service the concept of 'peripheral and core' employees is one that is universal to employees working in all sectors. It highlights how, as a result of promotional decisions a definite line can be drawn between two distinctive groups of employees. This does not take into account capabilities and performance of either group but is based purely on feelings and beliefs of the parties involved. The organisation as a whole may be unaware that there are two schools of thought among its employees in relation to promotional decisions as the process is the same for everyone involved. The knock-on effects of the emotional states of employees may impact on organisational performance as a whole without being recognised as being a result of promotional procedures.

Vough and Caza (2017) state that 'literature suggests individuals who are denied promotion often become less engaged and less motivated in their work, however the authors oppose this idea and concentrate their study on the area of resilience. They find that employees who have been denied promotional opportunities can become more resilient and more engaged in their work as a result as they strive to progress their career. The area of the work community is explored and important findings are noted in relation to communication between employees who have applied for promotion. The more people discuss their experiences the more beliefs about organisational systems (in relation to promotion) will be embedded in the culture of the organisation. This would suggest that collective opinions may be formed which will either support or impede the organisations attempts to recruit staff at more senior levels. The authors note that there is not a large body of literature on outcomes in relation to denied promotions and see this as a 'significant oversight'.

There are many factors to consider when implementing systems to aid in recruitment and selection procedures. A balance needs to be maintained between having an

efficient and effective system and ensuring that applicants perceive the system to be an aid in their individual career progression journeys. Trying to achieve this balance poses challenges for any organisation.

Challenges for using online recruitment methods

Parry and Tyson (2008) suggest the public sector also use online methods in order to 'move with the times' and to 'reduce costs to improve efficiencies of the recruitment process. When recruitment is such a vital activity in an organisation the priorities of keeping up with the times and reducing costs may not be the most important focus. By adopting online systems to keep up with the times are organisations using a 'one-size fits all' approach to recruitment? Ulrich (1998), discusses 'intellectual capital' and the challenges organisations face in finding, developing and retaining talent. He states that the companies that are most adept at doing this are the ones who will be most successful. In order to achieve this companies need to have methods tailored to their specific needs.

Barber (2006) highlights the issues of trust in online recruitment methods, with aptitude testing used as an example. Issues around validity and integrity of testing are mentioned which asks the question 'is the right person taking the test'? If the selection process is not valid will the person be capable of performing in the role they are applying for? The reverse also needs to be considered if the person is not capable of performing well in the test but have the ability to perform in the role are they being excluded? (CIPD 2015) note that where 'certain types of candidates respond differently to stressful recruitment environments but are equally likely to perform well on the job, creating this type of environment will systematically weed out great applicants'.

Sangeetha (2010), cites the Watson Wyatt (2001) study which used the Human Capital Index, highlighted how good human capital practices such as recruitment

excellence and retention are connected to the firms productivity. The study confirms the 'powerful relationship between company performance and recruitment excellence'. This would indicate there is a possibility a company may hamper retention rates if it is not carrying out regular evaluations of recruitment methods.

Walker cited in (Ekwoaba *et al* 2015), states 'recruitment is a process of identifying and attracting potential candidates from inside and outside an organisation. They note that the 'success of an enterprise is directly linked to the performance of those who work for the business'. Candidates inside the organisation are a powerful group. They are the ones responsible for the current performance rates of the organisation and this can be affected by the impact of recruitment processes the company use.

If good performers in an organisation feel that online recruitment methods being used are creating a barrier to their career progression will they continue to perform well in their current role or will they look elsewhere, outside the organisation in order to progress? In a report by (CIPD 2015), it is advised that where companies use online tests for screening they should be verified by linking job performance of candidates selected to performance at selection test stage. They advise that tests should be targeted and linked to person specifications.

Sabha (2018) states that traditional methods should not be replaced by online recruitment but should supplement it. Even though online recruitment gives access to a wider pool of candidates they may not necessarily be the right candidates and when used in conjunction with online selection tests to whittle down numbers it may not be the most effective way to recruit the most suitable candidates. Kaur (2015), argues that recruitment policy should be flexible and proactive to adapt to market changes. Over reliance on a standard online method may affect both the productivity of an organisation and the quality of candidates applying for positions.

Sonnenberg and Green (2017) state that 'Any organisation that is really interested in high performance needs to address their ability to put the right people in the right jobs, and then manage them in a way that plays to their strengths for maximum growth.' The Civil Service has illustrated its commitment to striving for high performance by including a strategic priority in the 'The People Strategy for the Civil

Service 2017-2020' that focuses on building a workforce of the future. The intention being to have 'the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time'. At this point the author will focus on recruitment methods, particularly in the area of promotions in the Civil Service.

Recruitment Methods in the Civil Service

Andrews (2006) in a paper discussing recruitment in the Irish Civil Service stated that at that point in time emphasis was on the concept of hiring generalists to be recruited at junior levels and to grow from within in order to progress. Efficiencies and effectiveness of the technology used are referred to from the point of view of recruiters and new applicants, however, specific reference to internal applicants using the systems for promotion competitions is not highlighted.

Andrews (2006) referred to the 'increasing numbers of appeals and legal challenges on grounds of fairness' from unsuccessful or unhappy candidates and the priority highlighted is a need to ensure that 'our systems withstand these challenges.' It could be argued that the priority should be to ensure the systems meet the brief in terms of campaigns as applicants from the various competitions will not all be external candidates. For those that are already within the organisation and applying for promotion the impact of being unhappy with an outcome has bigger consequences for both the person and the organisation. Using a standard online application process for all vacancies may not be the best way proceed and cannot be viewed simply in terms of how effective and efficient the technology is but rather how effective the system is in selecting the right people for the right positions.

In reference to Sonnenberg and Green (2017) above the Civil Service Statement of Strategy (2017-2020) shows that the organisation is committed to the concept of 'putting the right people in the right jobs'. The author would argue that in this instance the focus of the recruitment system should be to ensure this objective is met rather than a focus on the robustness of a system to withstand challenges of disgruntled applicants. Acknowledgement is given to the time lapse between

Andrews (2006) report and the concurrence of the current strategy with the observations of Sonnenberg and Greene (2017).

Recruitment in the context of Promotion

Promotions serve two roles in an organisation. First, they help assign people to the roles where they can best contribute to the organisations performance. Second, promotions serve as incentives and rewards, Miligram and Roberts (1992, p364)

Ford, Truxillo and Bauer (2009) explore the area of promotion and note that there is 'no dedicated literature which focuses on the complexity associated with the promotion of internal applicants'. They emphasise the fact that there is a strong organisational association for internal applicants when they apply for promotions. External candidates will not have a 'relationship' with the organisation and interestingly do not share the 'group identity' that internal applicants have as a result of working for the organisation. They state that 'results of injustice perceptions will be exaggerated in promotional context in comparison with entry level context'. The review suggests that '*current employees reactions to promotional processes may have organisational consequences far beyond those associated with external job candidates.*'

When considering this observation it poses the question of impact on the Civil Service as Andrews (2006) highlights the growing numbers of correspondence from unhappy candidates and whether or not those candidates form large groups of current employees. The point of note in relation to this research is that Ford *et al* (2009) point out that promotions in organisations are often done individually and not in large batches like external campaigns. In the Civil Service however interdepartmental (open to internal and external candidates) campaigns are conducted using online selection methods to filter large batches of applicants

resulting in large numbers of current employees being rejected sometimes on multiple occasions and who continue to remain employees of the organisation.

Garcia, Moscoso and Ramos (2012) examined 'fairness of promotion methods' concentrating their study in the private sector in Spain. As with most literature they point out that there is a gap in relation to studies related to promotion with the norm tending to concentrate on entry level recruitment. They break down their findings in previous literature relating to fairness and highlight in three key points: 1, perceptions of fairness are influenced by type of criteria used to make promotion decisions; 2, people consider promotions based on performance to be fairer than other channels; 3, promotion characteristics are relevant for perceived fairness.

Future recommendation for study is for 'replication with public organisations'. The recommendation supports the basis for this project in that it is assumed the playing fields are very different in the public and private sector. It could be argued that the implications for perceptions of 'fairness of promotion methods' can have vastly different outcomes depending on which sector an employee is working in.

Traditionally Public Sector workers are seen as having more secure jobs than those in the Private Sector. In the event of a Public Sector employee becoming unhappy with promotion methods in their organisation they may be reluctant to act and feel that they have more to lose by challenging the system in order to progress their career. They may choose to remain in a position that they no longer find challenging or have enthusiasm for as to look outside the organisation in order to further their career is a threat to the job security that they enjoy in the Public Sector. A Private Sector worker may not have the same security and the decision to look outside their organisation is not as difficult to make as it is made simply in terms of career progression where job security is not an issue.

McCarthy, Hrabluik and Jelley (2009) state that the 'ultimate objective of a promotional system is to sustain or increase levels of organisational performance'. By using the same system to recruit for all campaigns from entry level to senior positions open to both internal and external candidates the organisation may not

necessarily be achieving the best outcomes in terms of overall employee performance and satisfaction. McCarthy *et al* (2009) suggest that 'organisations should consider formal internal recruitment strategies' the reason they give for this is that promotions should be seen as something that will be beneficial to employees and that campaigns should 'encourage participation of qualified employees from all groups'. They note that the 'organisational consequences of having highly motivated candidates who are turned down for promotion are likely to be detrimental' and that 'the consequences of rejecting existing employees are likely to be more severe than rejecting external job applicants'. In a climate where it is difficult to attract suitable candidates for vacancies it is imperative that organisations retain the talent they have by nurturing, development and offering fair opportunity for career progression.

Beehr *et al* (2004) examined reactions to promotions in terms of how applicants perceived reasons for both their own and peers promotions/rejections. The point is made that in relation to promotions it is usually the case that only a small number are available in relation to the number of employees who may deserve to be promoted. How people perceive the promotion system is very important to them personally and their own experiences of it will also colour their perceptions further. Beehr *et al* (2004) found that procedural justice or perceived fairness of the promotion rules and system was a factor influencing feelings in relation to the organisation. A feeling of injustice may lead to disenchantment with the employer which in turn leads to lower morale and lower job performance. The tendency in an organisation is for employees to believe they all have similar chances of promotion. This finding is an interesting one in relation to Civil Service promotion systems. If employees feel that they don't have similar chances of promotion due to the systems rather than due to performance will they become disenchanting with the organisation and will their morale and job-performance suffer as a result?

While this study is examining recruitment methods in the civil service the focus is on the method for recruiting to positions within the organisation which represents a promotion opportunity for internal applicants. Benson and Shue (2018) examined the promotion process used in sales companies in the US and found that firms

generally tend to focus on the current job performance of workers when considering them for promotion which is sometimes at the expense of other traits workers may display which may indicate they would be better suited to managerial posts. The candidates who display traits of possible future managers are not necessarily the highest performing sales people. As a result it was found such promotion policies could lead to perceptions of unfairness or that effort in one's job goes unrewarded. While the Civil Service use an online system for recruitment that is most likely perceived by the organisation as the fairest method for selection it may not be perceived as the fairest method by the employees. Furthermore this may inadvertently exclude candidates who possess the traits required for promotion but are unable to perform to the highest standard during the elimination stages of online selection tests.

While exploring concepts in relation to procedural justice in promotion decisions Lemons and Jones (2000) draws a distinction between employee commitment in public and private sector organisations. They state that there are two types of commitment, continuance and affective. Continuance commitment is used to describe employees in public service organisations who remain with the organisation because they feel they have few options otherwise. Affective commitment is used for employees in the private service who remain with an organisation because they want to. The concept is relative in the context of this project as the focus is on a public sector organisation. Lemons research focuses on the effect of procedural justice on affective commitment. The research states that internal promotion candidates have more information about qualifications and abilities of the newly promoted candidate than the external applicants. The implication is that internal employees rejected for promotion and who perceive the process as unfair may demonstrate negative attitudes or behaviour towards work.

This theory along with that of continuance commitment may imply an unproductive and unhappy environment. The research does not focus on the concept of 'continuance commitment' however employees in the public sector are categorised in this as a group who 'see no way out'. The connotation is a negative one. The group could be illustrated in a positive light as one who are aware of the benefits

they enjoy in terms of job security, pensions etc., which may outweigh the perceived disadvantages in relation to career progression. The conclusion is that 'procedural justice' is what affects employee perceptions in relation to promotions. It could be argued that this applies to employees in all sectors.

Harzing (2018) discusses internal and external promotion in relation to an academic setting and makes the point that 'work is an important part of our personal identity'. This is an observation that applies to people in every sector regardless of their role. A person's job is part of their identity and Harzing notes that the rejection of an internal promotion application can be likened to a rejection from someone close to you which hurts a person's feelings and pride. When competitions for promotion within an organisation are run on a regular basis those rejected can frequently feel hurt and embarrassed that they have once again failed in view of their colleagues and managers. The area of employee engagement will now be explored in the context of its relationship with promotion and career progression.

Defining Employee Engagement

Anitha (2013) describes employee engagement as 'the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organisation and its values'. Employees give their all when they are engaged and are prepared to go the extra mile for the organisation. Kahn (1990) originally proposed the idea of 'work engagement' and explained it as 'the harnessing of organisational members selves to their work role'. The concept being that workers reflect their own identities in how they go about their work, by working to the best of their ability it is a reflection on their own personal values and represents them as a person as well as an employee. By the same token they argue that 'amiable organisational policies and procedures' are very important

in fostering employee engagement. Fair recruitment and selection and fair promotional policies are cited as being part of these policies and procedures.

Sundaray (2011) describes employee engagement as being 'a measure of an employee's emotional and intellectual commitment to their organisation and its success'. They argue that there are a number of 'critical factors' which lead to employee engagement which are common to all organisations independent of sector. One of these factors is the opportunities available within the organisation for career development. Where there are high levels of engagement it is believed this is due to organisations providing opportunities for employees to develop and realise their potential. The concept of 'investment' is explored both from the point of view of the organisation and the employee. By the organisation investing in the employee the employee will in turn invest in the organisation and this will manifest itself through high levels of engagement. Joshi and Sodhi (2001) concur with this theory as they identify 'six management functions of importance as being critical determinants of executives engagement' and one of these is 'scope for advancement'. They state that the implementation of promotion policies need to be perceived as 'fair and transparent' in order to be successful in fostering engagement.

Sundaray *et al* (2011) cite Brown (2006) viewing engagement in the form of a 'pyramid'. Engagement is achieved as there is 'progression up the pyramid as a result of increasing forms of 'satisfaction, motivation, commitment and advocacy'. The concept of the pyramid implies movement, that engagement is not static, it needs to be nurtured in order to maintain constant levels and subsequently the higher the level of nurturing the higher the levels of engagement. In terms of career development the more an employee feels they have opportunities to develop and progress in their career the more engaged they will be in the roles they undertake along the way.

Schaufeli and Salanova (2005) introduce the idea of 'work engagement' being 'contagious'. When an employee is surrounded by engaged colleagues he cannot

help but be engaged, leading to 'collective engagement'. The concept is interesting and plausible as workers can cheer each other on in their roles and promote feelings of motivation and goodwill towards the tasks in hand however this would also then imply that the opposite can also be true. Disengagement can also be contagious and can spread from one employee being unhappy to an entire group of employees becoming disengaged as a result and 'collective disengagement' manifesting as a result.

Saks(2006) found that research shows that organisational success is dependent on employee engagement and that furthermore the majority of workers at the time were not fully engaged which led to 'an engagement gap'. The common thread in literature in relation to employee engagement was identified as 'emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation'. Rather than being an attitude engagement is described as being the level to which 'an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles'. It is suggested that the amount of resources available to an employee from their organisation determines the level of engagement they are prepared to invest in their roles.

Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker (2002) describe engagement as a 'persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour'. It could be argued that engagement is in fact an attitude and is determined by an employee's values and more in line with Kahn's (1990) observation that it is the values and beliefs that employees attach to their work roles as an extension of themselves that is key. Schaufeli *et al's* (2002) observation in relation to persistence does not appear to factor in the human element whereby employees may have times when they get 'knocked back' in terms of engagement as a result of certain events or behaviours however persistence may be viewed in terms of their ability to bounce back after perceived negative events.

Saks (2006) argue that where there are higher perceptions of procedural justice on the part of employees the higher the chances of improved organisation engagement. If however engagement is as Schaufeli et al (2002) find an attitude that is not swayed by events there should not be any impact on engagement as a result. Saks(2006) note in conclusion that a 'one-size fits all' approach to employee

engagement might not be the most effective and suggest that future research may consider different variables for predicting engagement that might include personality variables such as hardiness and self-esteem.

Conclusions

The literature reviewed shows that an effective recruitment system is fundamental to organisational performance. This requirement is heightened when the system is being used to recruit for positions that represent promotional opportunities for employees. Three key areas for consideration are, a) the **recruitment system** itself and how suited it is to the needs of the organisation, b) the perceptions of suitability of the system by the **internal applicants**, and, c) the impact on **employee engagement** as a result of applying for promotional opportunities through the system.

Recruitment Systems: choosing a recruitment system is not an easy task for an organisation. It is a balancing act that is affected internally by organisational strategy and the availability of resources, both financial and human. Recruitment is affected externally by political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors. In order for the organisations system to work effectively it needs to align it as best as possible with both internal and external factors. The key to sustaining competitive advantage is in the recruitment and selection processes of an organisation, Heraty and Morley (1998).

Public sector organisations are traditionally large and attract large volumes of applications when running recruitment campaigns. The system is used to both target and filter wide candidate pools than those in smaller organisations, Heraty and Morley, (1998), Barber (2006). As technology advances there is pressure on businesses including public sector organisations to move with the times by using online systems, Parry and Tyson(2008). While these methods may be perceived as being more cost effective and efficient they pose new challenges, Barber (2006). Issues such as reliability, validity and appropriateness come into play. The use of

psychometric tests has become a common feature of recruitment campaigns including promotion competitions but care needs to be taken in relation to suitability and the affect they may have on both the organisation and the individual participating in it.

Internal Applicants: applicant perception is a very important factor that may not be always considered by the organisation. Organisational performance can be affected by those who work in it. Internal candidates are a powerful group. Internal applicants have established relationships with both the organisation and colleagues. Their perceptions of how things are done can have a knock-on effect and become 'contagious' within an environment. This can be manifested in both positive and negative ways within the organisation. (Vough and Caza 2017, Ekwoaba et al 2015, Ford et al 2009, Schaufeli and Salanova, 2005).

People who work in an organisation need to know that they can progress in their careers within it and that fairness and equality in terms of procedures are in place to help them achieve their goals. Previous literature shows fairness is a constant theme running through literature (Ryan et al 2000, Garcia et al 2012, Beehr et al 2004, Lemons and Jones 2000).

Employee Engagement: employee engagement is generally referred to as the level of commitment an employee has towards their organisation (Anitha 2013, Sundaray 2011). Commitment levels may be tested if employees perceive themselves as being valued less by their organisation as a result of promotion rejection than those who are successful in gaining promotion (Tfazrir and Hareli 2009). Unsuccessful promotion attempts can also result in an employee becoming more resilient as they endeavour to progress up the career ladder (Vough and Caza 2017). Commitment can be viewed as an employee's investment in their organisation but likewise an organisation needs to invest in its employees. By encouraging employees and providing opportunities to develop their careers it is believed organisations increase levels of employee engagement (Sundaray 2011,

Joshi and Sodhi 2001). The concept of collective engagement implies that employees are influenced by each other and the organisation leading to increased levels of productivity (Schaufeli and Salanova 2005). This is considered an essential requirement for achieving organisational success (Schaufeli and Salanova 2005, Saks 2006).

Research Question

On the basis of literature covered it is acknowledged there is a link between employee engagement, company performance and recruitment methods. It appears however there is a gap in the research relating to the impact of recruitment methods in the context of promotions on current staff within an organisation. The research question will attempt to answer the question:

In terms of promotion how does the recruitment process impact on employee engagement as a result of being, A: successful, or B: unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities?

Hypothesis A:

There is no impact on employee engagement as a result of being, either successful, or unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities.

Hypothesis B:

There is a positive impact on employee engagement as a result of being successful for promotion opportunities.

Hypothesis C:

There is a negative impact on employee engagement as a result of being unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities.

Methodology

This research will focus on the Civil Service as an organisation. The Civil Service has a central recruitment office (Public Appointments Service, referred to as PAS). All interdepartmental competitions for positions are advertised online via PAS along with different departments holding their own internal competitions (which may be online or offline). As the research will be of an exploratory nature, with a focus on gaining new insight into the impact of recruitment methods in a specific area it is proposed to use qualitative analysis. The research approach will be a qualitative study, interpretivist in nature as it will be based on people's perception of methods used and subjective in that it will explore how they feel in relation to certain situations. Saunders *et al* (2016) outlines the 'Induction' method of research which places emphasis on 'gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events'. As this ties in very much with the proposed research topic this is the method that will be used.

In keeping with the Interpretivist approach, a small sample of volunteers have been selected for interview. The interviews will be conducted using open-ended, semi-structured questions in order to acquire maximum information. The sample group are staff at various grades within a number of different Civil Service departments.

Limitations for the approach will include the time it will take to gather information and the possibility that required amounts of responses may not be received. The information received will represent the views of a small proportion of the applicants and will not be represent the overall opinion of all applicants who have been involved

in the recruitment process. This will be documented in the analysis of responses received. Limitations will also include the fact that staff are not representative of all departments within the Civil Service.

Research Approach

The Research Onion

The research onion illustrates the layers that are involved when embarking on a research project. The outer layer reflects the philosophy chosen for the study, with the next layer representing the approach taken and the inner layers show the method chosen for collecting and analysing data. The more layers of the onion that are peeled away the deeper the researcher gets to the heart of the subject.

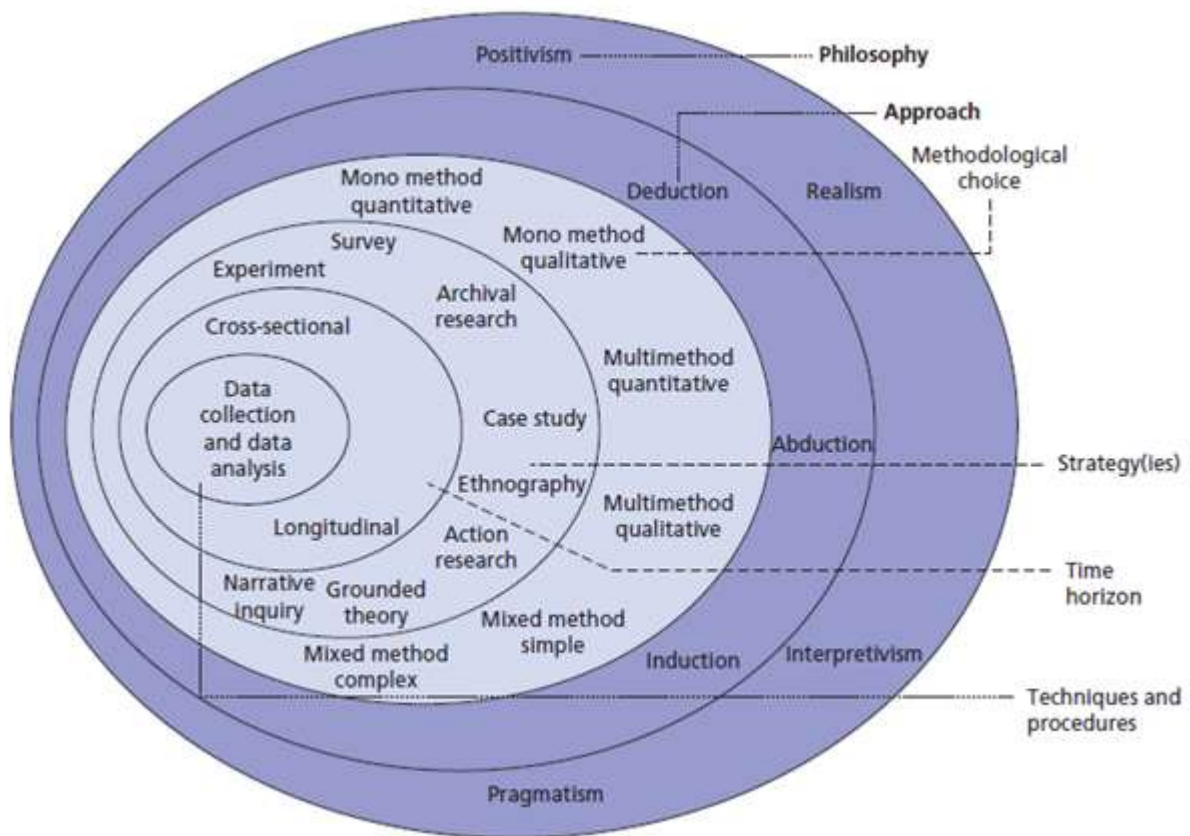


Figure 3: The Research 'Onion'

Source: Mark Saunders, Phillip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill 2011

Interpretivist Approach

Interpretivist philosophy was chosen for this study as it concentrates on people and how they interpret the recruitment systems both in relation to themselves personally and to their organisational peers.

Saunders *et al* (2012) draw comparisons between 'Interpretivism' and theatre in that 'as humans we all play a part on the stage of human life'. This analogy applies perfectly to the role of employees in an organisation and the roles they play in the lifespan of their organisational careers. Actors play various parts on stage, sometimes small background roles, sometimes main characters and the experience is invariably always an emotional one. Similarly while some employees in an organisation have support roles others are in the limelight playing the lead parts. This project aims to explore how employees feel about being rejected for the roles they would like to play on the organisational stage and if it impacts on how they perform in the part they currently have and continue to play for the foreseeable future.

Fisher (2010) describes interpretive research as a process that 'seeks peoples accounts of how they make sense of the world and the structures and processes within it'. This description fits in with the object of this study as it is an attempt to understand how the employees of the organisation make sense of the processes used to select applicants for promotion. A description is given by (Gellner 93) of a man sitting on a chair and explains that 'according to the interpretivist the man knows he is sitting down, meaning he has the concept of sitting down, which he has acquired by taking part in a community with a certain culture. The chair in the example becomes more than a physical object but depending on the circumstances can represent the culture in which it is situated. For example when meeting someone in a position of authority permission may be required before sitting down, a chair may offer place to relax or may symbolise the importance of the person sitting on it for example a king sitting on a throne.

The recruitment system used within an organisation may offer a person the chance to progress in their career, sometimes illustrated in terms of a ladder. Depending on the culture of the organisation not everyone will use the ladder but everyone will have an understanding of the concept of it. For some it may be too steep to even consider trying to climb or they may feel they do not have permission to use it. For others it may represent a challenge that must be overcome regardless of how many

times they are pushed back. Regardless of how it is perceived by the employees everyone understands it is the route to promotion and while it has the same appearance for everyone it conjures up different personal images and feelings for individual employees.

Quantitative Method

Research can be approached in a number of ways. A quantitative research philosophy is generally associated with positivism particularly when used with predetermined and highly structured data collection techniques. The researcher is independent to the people being researched and the focus is on using data to test theory which is the deductive approach. The research explores the relationships between variables and these are measured numerically and analysed using a variety of statistical techniques. Quantitative research uses numeric data to analyse findings and uses large sample groups usually basing findings on probability, Saunders *et al* (2012).

Qualitative Method

For the purpose of this study the chosen research methodology is qualitative. The diagram below highlights the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data. While quantitative data focuses on numbers and the meanings derived as a result, qualitative data focuses on words. The fact that qualitative data is non-standardised means it must be classified into categories as opposed to standardised data and analysis is based on conceptualisation of information collected. The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of the perceptions and the feelings of the respondents to the recruitment system used within the organisation and what impact it has if any on their attitude to work. In order to gain as much insight as possible into the topic a focus group was selected as the best way of exploring the topic with a group who have both an interest in the topic and experience of being applicants who

used the recruitment system previously. Saunders *et al* (2012) describes the participants in a focus group as ‘being selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic being discussed’ and this reinforces the reason for the selection method in this case.

(2009, 482).

| Quantitative data | Qualitative data |
|---|--|
| Based on meaning derived from numbers | Based on meanings expressed through words |
| Collection results in numerical and standardized data | Collection results in non-standardized data requiring classification into categories |
| Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics | Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualization |

Figure 4: Quantitative and Qualitative Data (Saunders et al 2012)

Data Collection Method

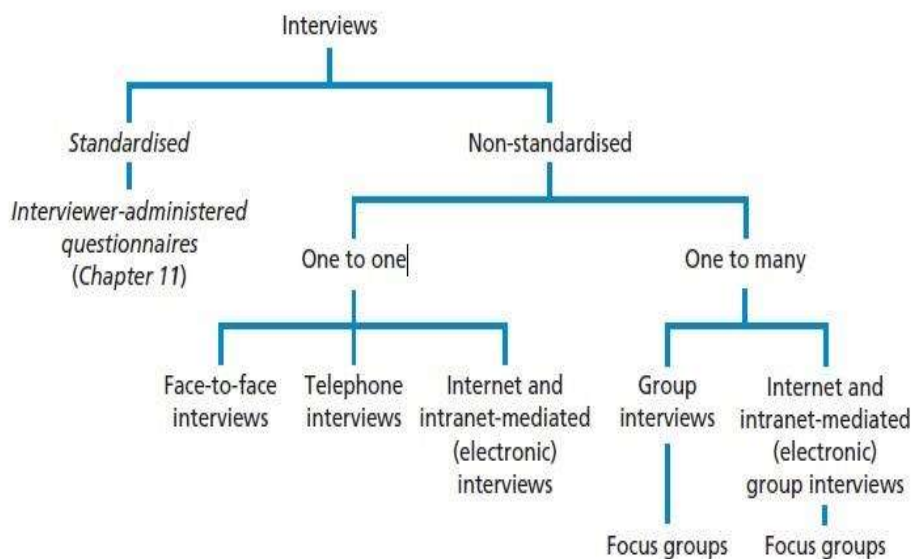


Figure 5: Interview Styles, Saunders et al (2012)

The purpose of this study is exploratory and for this reason the chosen method for data collection is interviews. Interviews can take on many forms as illustrated in the diagram above. The preferred type of interview for the subject being explored is a focus group as this would allow for the sharing of opinions, experiences and

observations. Due to the current, unprecedented, situation in relation to the COVID19 pandemic a group interview cannot be conducted either now or in the near future. An alternative method for eliciting information has been selected which will consist of multiple methods.

Interviews will initially be conducted by telephone. The information gathered by the researcher will then be shared with the group via email to allow for any further thoughts, observations to be expressed. In a normal focus group setting this would occur naturally as participants would be discussing the topic together and as a result of hearing other views may change their opinions or wish to add to the topic being discussed.

A semi-structured style will be applied to the interview format. A mixture of open ended and closed questions will be sent to participants in advance of the telephone interview. The reason for the mixture of question styles is to first elicit exact information from the participants and then to further explore their views and opinions on the subject. This is to allow for time to consider responses which will allow for maximum information to be gathered at interview stage. As the project is following an inductive approach, exploratory, qualitative interviews are best suited to collecting data, Saunders *et al* (2012).

The questions used in the interviews are listed below. A questionnaire in a study by Sheaffer, Levy and Navot (2017) was used as a guide to compose questions which would elicit information required in order to analyse the subject as accurately as possible. In their study they concluded that 'workplace promotions or career ambitions are innately embedded and should be viewed in light of any perceived impediment'. Promotion is seen as an essential part of the workplace for employees. In order to ensure that the questions were pitched correctly a pilot questionnaire was first sent to a small group of volunteers. The author invited feedback and any suggestions or improvements that could be made to the phrasing of the

questionnaire before it was distributed to all volunteers. As a result some minor adjustments were made to phrasing.

1. Do you feel that you have good opportunities for promotion in your organisation?
2. Have you applied for a promotion in your organisation in the last 6 years?
3. Have you been successful in securing a promotion in your organisation in the last 6 years?
4. How would you describe the process for promotion in your organisation?
5. Do you feel that it is easy to get ahead in your organisation?
6. Has being turned down for promotion had any effect on you in relation to the process?
7. Has being successful in promotion had any effect on you in relation to the process?
8. Has being turned down for promotion had any effect in relation to your current role?
9. Has being successful in promotion had any effect in relation to your current role?

Analysis/ Findings

This research is based in grounded theory. Fisher (2010) describes this theory as an 'attempt to make subjects implicit beliefs explicit'. The categories used for analysis are drawn from themes within responses from interviewees and in keeping with the theory coding for these categories is applied informally.

Axial coding is a process of relating codes (categories and properties) to each other through inductive and deductive thinking. Borgatti (2006) states that grounded theorists emphasise casual relationships and fit things into a basic frame of generic relationships. This frame has four sections; the phenomenon, the causal conditions, the context and the action strategies. When applied to this study the framework produces the pattern in the diagram below. The framework sets out the basis for the theoretical framework (figure 2).

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Phenomenen | Employee Engagement |
| Causal Conditions | Success or rejection as a result of competing for promotion in the recruitment process |
| Context | Active Variables: Process Background Variables: Emotions |
| Action Strategies | Continue to apply |
| Consequences | Increased Engagement Decreased Engagement |

Figure 6: Frame of Generic Relationships

Bryman and Bell (2007) outline the tools of grounded theory and state that 'researchers interpretations of data shape emergent codes in grounded theory'. Data collected is treated as potential indicators of concepts and the indicators are constantly compared, axial coding has been used in this research to assemble themes and categories which are key elements in grounded theory. Coding is based on themes the researcher intended to explore prior to conducting interviews and new items that emerge as a result of data collected. Themes are identified as theories as a result of data collected from interviews.

Bryman and Bell (2007) describe induction as a method of 'drawing generalizable inferences out of observations'. While induction is a strategy for linking theory and data there is also a deductive element to it. When applying the inductive method there is constant reviewing taking place between data and theory. In this study data was received gradually over a period of time and each new piece of data received was compared to previously received data and against theory. The underpinning theory in the analysis process was that highlighted by Bryman and Bell (2007) of 'phenomenology' referring to 'how individuals make sense of the world around them'.

The author used a random sample. Interviewees were invited to participate in a voluntary capacity, the volunteer group formed a stratified sample group as staff are employed at all grade levels across various departments within the Civil Service from clerical to senior management level. Nine people participated in the interview process and all nine responded to all questions posed.

This research set out to explore the following question:

In terms of promotion how does the recruitment process impact on employee engagement as a result of being, A: successful, or B: unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities?

Hypothesis A:

There is no impact on employee engagement as a result of being, either successful, or unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities.

Hypothesis B:

There is a positive impact on employee engagement as a result of being successful for promotion opportunities.

Hypothesis C:

There is a negative impact on employee engagement as a result of being unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities.

Summary of responses to interview questions:

- 1. Do you feel that you have good opportunities for promotion in your organisation?**

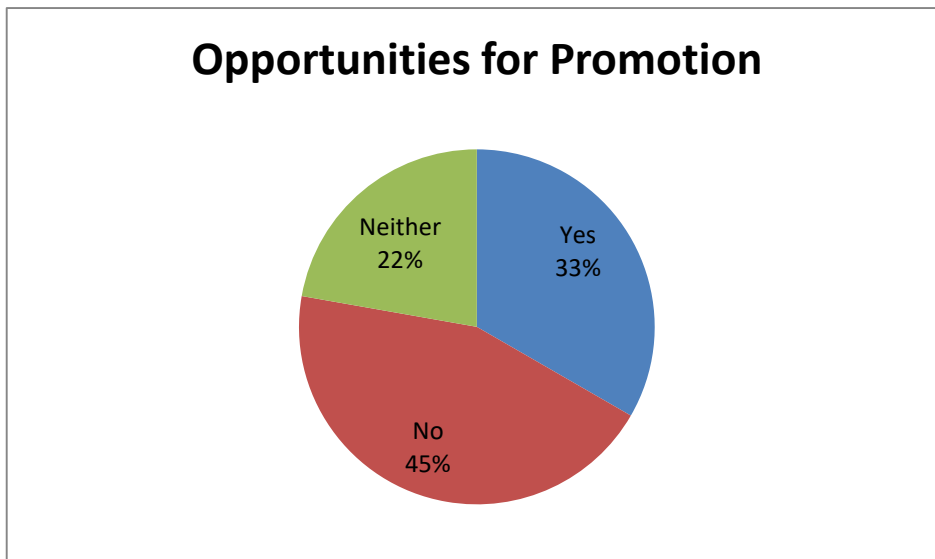


Figure 7: Opportunities for promotion

Responses for this question revealed that 33% felt there are good opportunities for promotion in the organisation. 45% believe there are not good opportunities, while 22% believe that while there are opportunities the perceived barriers make them very difficult to achieve. An interesting observation is that it does not necessarily follow that those that believe there are good opportunities are those who have been successful in promotion applications and vice versa. A number of reasons were given by those who feel that they do not have good opportunities for promotion and they are as follows:

While there are a number of opportunities available in the organisation at various times it can be difficult to progress due to:

The system is very competitive

There are a very large amount of applicants compared to a very limited number of positions

There are a number of different stages in the process, a candidate must pass each stage in order to progress to the next

Scoring of selection tests based on average score of participants competing in each campaign therefore score changes with each test and campaign

Due to the limited amount of practice tests available it is difficult to improve ability ahead of recruitment campaigns

2. Have you applied for a promotion in your organisation in the last six years?

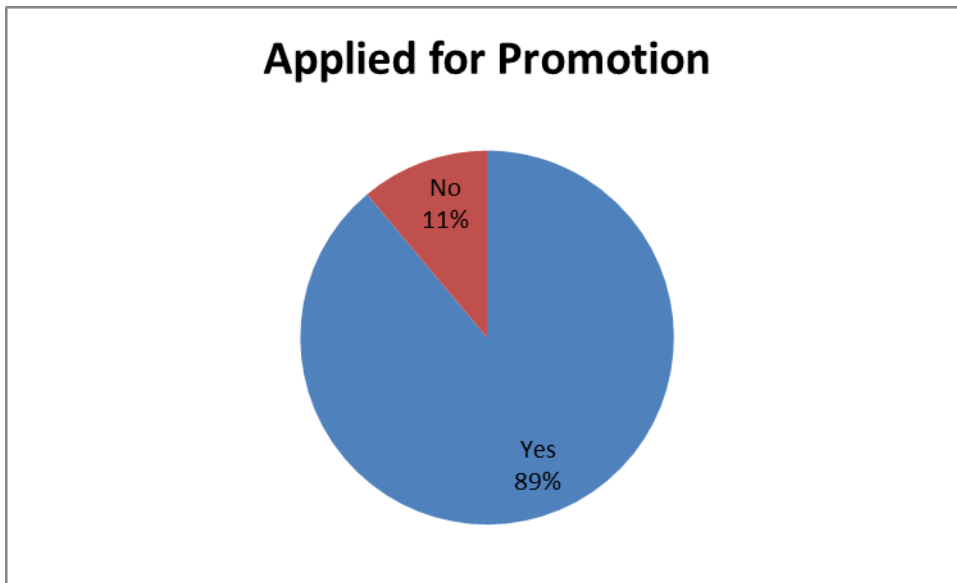


Figure 8: Applied for promotion

Responses to this question show that 89% have applied for a promotion in the last six years while 11% have not. The reasons cited for not applying refer to the difficulties of the recruitment process.

3. Have you been successful in securing a promotion in your organisation in the last six years?



Figure 9: Promotion Success

56% of respondents have been successful in securing a promotion in the organisation within the last six years while 44% have been unsuccessful. A point of note in the responses is that of those who were successful 45% had applied via internal systems while 11% had applied via interdepartmental (PAS) system. Of those who were successful via the internal system 75% stated that they would not apply via interdepartmental (PAS) system as they feel the process is too difficult.

4. How would you describe the process for promotion in your organisation?

There was a similar theme running through all responses to this question again regardless of whether respondents have been successful or unsuccessful in their attempts at securing promotions. The themes are as follows:

Overly reliant on psychometric/aptitude tests and less about the right person for the job

A long process, better suited to school leavers and college graduates

Not suited to people who have been out of education system for some time despite the fact that they are very experienced in their roles

Does not appear to be based on merit or suitability

Unfair in that it only measures certain attributes and does not measure ability

Does not take experience into account

Merely measures aptitude for maths comprehension and verbal ability

Very much competency based and traditional

Too complicated

5. Do you feel it is easy to get ahead in your organisation?

Respondents appeared to be divided in their response to this question, at first glance it appeared some feel it is easy while others feel it is not. When looking at the reasons given to support the idea it becomes apparent that in general the majority feel it is not easy and main themes are listed as follows:

Easy if you're good at assessment tests

Easy if you're from a younger generation, (familiar and comfortable with assessment tests)

Easier in some departments than others

Not easy if you do not have an aptitude for assessment tests

Not easy if you are more distant from formal education

Ability to do job not considered

Academic/specialist skill requirements can be a barrier

Face same barriers each time apply for a promotion

6. Has being turned down for promotion had any effect on you in relation to the process?

While the majority of respondents felt that there were negative aspects to the process the overriding theme from the majority was that despite any difficulties they will continue to apply for positions that area of interest to them. Common themes included:

Reduced confidence - will continue to apply

Success and failure a part of life – will continue to apply

Can feel demoralising – will continue to apply

Very time consuming and at times can feel futile – will continue to apply

7. Has being successful in promotion had any effect on you in relation to the process?

Despite being successful in promotion respondents to this question again cited similar themes in relation to the process including:

Still view process as being more suited to younger people

Too complicated

8. Has being turned down for promotion had any effect on your current role?

In this instance despite being unsuccessful in promotion applications the majority of respondents stated the overriding response was no while there was a similar theme running through the comments as follows:

Continue to perform my role to the best of my ability

Initially a feeling of demotivation

Feeling of disappointment

Feeling that work contribution not valued despite positive support from managers

Feeling of frustration that regardless of performance appears no opportunity to advance career

Feeling of being stunted no longer challenged in role

Feeling of having outgrown role, capable of more responsibility

9. Has being successful in promotion had any effect on your current role?

Respondents to this question were unanimous in their answer. All respondents stated that being successful in promotion did not affect how they carry out their current role with the majority acknowledging a boost in confidence as a result of being promoted, outlined below:

Confidence boost but not altered how I work or ability to do so

Confidence boost in the acknowledgement of ability to take on a more senior role

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of recruitment systems organisations use on employee engagement. Over the last twenty years technology has changed how businesses in all sectors operate. It has become the norm to have applicants applying for positions of all types from junior level part-time positions to senior level management positions via job boards and company websites. The focus of this study is the Civil Service where applications for interdepartmental positions are advertised and applied for via the PAS system. This is an online method of recruitment. The sample group comprise staff across a number of departments and all are familiar with the PAS system, while internal competitions are held in individual departments the research focuses on the interdepartmental system which is the online system (PAS).

Parry et al (2008) note that the online method can be used 'as a means of coping with a large candidate pool' which seems logical when taken in context of its use for interdepartmental competitions which would attract large numbers of applicants. Farragher (2019) explored the idea of algorithms deciding on success or failure of promotion applications and this study intended to take a further step to see if there was an impact on employee engagement as a result. If as Parry et al (2008) suggest 'the public sector use online methods in order to 'reduce costs to improve efficiencies of the recruitment process' how are these efficiencies measured? Ulrich (1998) refers to 'intellectual capital' and the challenges organisations face in retaining this capital. It can be argued that an organisations recruitment system can add or decrease value to its intellectual capital depending on how it is perceived both by its employees and external applicants.

Participation in the interviews was on a voluntary basis. The researcher did not have prior knowledge of whether or not respondents had been successful or unsuccessful in the given timeframe in promotion attempts. The researcher was also unaware of which recruitment system those who were successful in promotion attempts had applied through. A question was asked in relation to whether or not respondents had been successful in a promotion application in the last six years. Some respondents replied that they had been successful and qualified their answer by highlighting that the competition was an internal one. At this point the researcher clarified the process with all those who were successful as to which system they had applied through. All remaining responses in relation to the system for recruitment pertain to the PAS system. This was established at the outset of the interview process and reclarified on compilation of the data.

Data Analysis Method

The author had intended to compile and analyse data using a recommended qualitative analysis software package. Having reviewed the various applications, the overview of the NVivo software analysis tool by Bryman and Bell (2007) appeared to suit this project best. The package allows the researcher to import and record data such as interview transcripts which can then be sorted into categories relating to

particular themes and then further broken down into specific codes. Unfortunately permission restrictions on the author's computer did not allow for this course of action so improvisation was necessary. A table produced by Dr April Hargreaves (2018) and used as a sample in a lecture on Research Methods was used as a template to assist the author in compiling and coding data. Dr Hargreaves used the table to display findings in a research project which is very similar to the way information is categorised using Nvivo. The author set up a Word file and followed this pattern in order to analyse and code data collected from interviews. By working in this way it was possible to also establish patterns and relationships in and between data. Following Dr Hargreaves example, responses were coded, in this instance from A to I to show that they were individual viewpoints from each of the nine interview participants and are traceable back to the original Word files. All details have been recorded anonymously and identification is recorded alphabetically (known only to the author) from A to I in random order of how it was received.

In order to analyse the information received the researcher developed the template below based on themes. Responses were grouped into themes, then subthemes and broken down into categories which were then given codes. The codes were created as a result of similarities linked to particular themes.

| Themes | Subthemes | Code | Illustrative Quotations |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Recruitment Process | Potential for promotion | Opportunity | 'most promotion competitions are very competitive with thousands of people vying for a limited number of places, most competitive processes involve a number of different stages which includes an examination process at each stage' (c) |
| | Suitability of process | Difficult/Complicated | 'The process can be long' (a) 'it's very bureaucratic' (i) 'Too complicated' (f) |
| | | Unfair/Graduate Focused | 'If you are a recent graduate you have an unfair advantage on someone who finished education some years earlier' (b) 'more suited to people who are fresh out of school |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | or college' (c) |
| | | Ability/Experience | <p>'no acknowledgement or account taken of your ability to do a job' (b)</p> <p>'There is no consideration to the work ethic and experience of the candidate' (i)</p> <p>'The process for promotion is unfair and measures only certain attributes – not ability. It does not take into account the experience a person may have' (c)</p> <p>Overly reliant on psychometric/aptitude tests and less about the 'right person for the job' (b)</p> |
| | Emotional Impact | <p>Frustration</p> <p>Confidence increase</p> <p>Confidence decrease</p> | <p>'I do feel frustrated and stunted at not moving forward' (g)</p> <p>'it just frustrates me' (d)</p> <p>'getting promotion is definitely a boost in confidence' (b)</p> <p>'being successful can increase confidence' (e)</p> <p>'The rejection is hard you have to build yourself back up' (f)</p> <p>'a negative impact on my self-confidence' (e)</p> <p>'I felt disheartened' (h)</p> |
| | Continue to engage in process | Resilience | <p>'I will continue to apply for promotions that I feel I am suited for and have something to offer' (b)</p> <p>I will continue to apply' (d)</p> |
| | | Disillusionment | <p>'I will never apply again' (l)</p> <p>'I completed an application form but didn't sit the tests as I felt there was no point' (a)</p> |
| Employee Engagement | Impact on Engagement when successful | Commitment | 'getting promotion is definitely a boost in confidence but it has never altered how I work or my ability to do so' (b) |
| | Impact on Engagement when rejected | | <p>'I continue to conduct myself in my role to the highest standard' (i)</p> <p>'I continue to do my job to the best of my ability' (a)</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | <p>'I will always try to carry out my current role to the best of my abilities' (g)</p> <p>While it is disappointing it has not affected how I do my job (b)</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

Figure 10: Themes Template

Research Findings

Recruitment Process

a) Potential for Promotion

The main finding in relation to potential for promotion is that while respondents believe there is opportunity for promotion the perceived barriers to the process influence decisions to compete and colour perceptions in relation to opportunities available to progress.

As quoted in Farragher (2019) Professor Binna Kandola questions the role of technology in the decision on whether or not people are promoted. If the organisation has aligned it's process to its strategy as is the case in the Civil Service this would concur with the Professors belief that 'organisations should approach the topic of where they see themselves'. If the process the organisation is using for selection is proving to be more of a hindrance than a help on the promotional ladder in the opinions of employees it may not be giving itself the best chance of placing the right people in the right jobs.

As Dr Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic notes in an article by Jacobs (2018), while psychometric tests bring 'badly needed objectivity, the consequences of getting it wrong can be damaging to both the individuals and the organisation'. The emotional impact on the respondents in this study shows that the procedure can be a perceived

barrier to applicants with some resolving not to engage with the process in the future. The findings in this study in relation to success with internal competitions which use traditional methods and external competitions which use the PAS system appear to agree with Sabha's (2018) statement that 'traditional methods should not be replaced by online methods but should supplement it. This may be a key to organisations striking a balance between processes and perceptions of fairness by those who must achieve successful outcomes in order to progress on their career paths.

b) Suitability of the Process:

The findings in relation to suitability of the process show that it is perceived as a time consuming, difficult and bureaucratic process which seems at odds with literature which promotes technology as an aid in recruitment campaigns in terms of efficiencies.

Perceptions of the system being unfair are highlighted by employees in two main areas. 1) The belief that the system is more suited to younger candidates or graduates and 2) that ability is not recognised or accounted for as part of the process. This finding reflects Ryan et al's (2000) call for organisations to 'pay attention to the fairness of selection events' and emphasise the importance in respect of rejected applicants. Their acknowledgement of procedural pain as a phenomenon appears to be evident in the findings in this study.

A strong theme emerges in terms of the emotional impact on applicants as a result of engaging in the recruitment process. The main emotion respondents describe feeling is frustration with the process and how they feel they are not being challenged or progressing as they may wish to on their career path.

Whether applicants are successful or not confidence is affected with those successful confirming a boost in confidence. Those who confirm a negative impact in confidence admit it takes time to regain it. This finding relates to Tzafrir and Hareli (2009) concept of the 'peripheral employee' who feels less valued by the organisation than the promoted employee and feels they do not have the possibility of progression within the organisation. Lam and Schaubroeck (2000) found there may be lower levels of output in most cases of promotion rejection but that generally employees revert to normal productivity levels after a period of three months. The author would argue that it is difficult to put a specific timeframe on the duration of impact. Respondents in this study have indicated that 'rejection is hard and it takes time to build yourself back up', but unless it is possible to observe participants individually in their normal role, from the time of rejection it is difficult to predict a timeframe.

C) Engagement with the Process:

Two strong themes emerge, one is resilience and a willingness to continue engaging with the process. However disillusionment also emerges as a strong theme with some respondents resolving not to engage with the process in the future.

Employee Engagement:

The main finding in relation to the impact of the process in terms of employee engagement is a strong sense of commitment regardless of whether applicants are successful or rejected. This reflects Anitha (2013) observing that 'employees give their all when they are engaged'. The wording of the responses e.g. 'I continue to conduct myself in my role to the highest standard' and 'I work to the best of my ability' imply that respondents do not only 'go through the motions' of their role but fully engage regardless of whether they have been successful or not in promotion applications. The

findings suggest similarities to the concept of 'harnessing oneself and ones values to ones work role, (Khan 1990).

In terms of promotion how does the recruitment process impact on employee engagement as a result of being, A: successful, or B: unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities?

Hypothesis A:

There is no impact on employee engagement as a result of being, either successful, or unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities.

The findings for Hypothesis A would appear to show that there is no impact on employee engagement as a result of being, either successful or unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities.

Respondents were unanimous in their confirmation that they continue to perform their roles to the best of their ability regardless of outcomes. There are however similarities in the qualifications to these statements. Those who were successful in promotion stated they continued to work in the same manner as always but most acknowledged there was a boost to confidence as a result of being successful in promotion.

Those who were unsuccessful equally responded that there is no change to their work practices however some did feel that there was some impact at the initial stage, immediately after rejection. Feelings were expressed of being initially demotivated and that there was a process of having to 'build oneself back up' to normal output levels as a result. This observation mirrors Lam & Shaubroeck (2000) findings that there may be lower levels of output as a result of rejection to promotion but that after a period of time employees return to previous levels of productivity and engagement.

Hypothesis B:

There is a positive impact on employee engagement as a result of being successful for promotion opportunities.

The findings for Hypothesis B appear to show that while there is a confidence boost for those who are successful in promotion there is not difference to work engagement as all respondents convey similar theme of work as usual despite achievement of promotion.

Hypothesis C:

There is a negative impact on employee engagement as a result of being unsuccessful, for promotion opportunities.

The findings for Hypothesis C appear to show that despite being rejected for promotional opportunities there is no change to work ethic or engagement as a result. There is however a strong a theme running through all responses in terms of feelings of disappointment, frustration and not being valued. This theme reflects Ryan and Ployhart's (2000) acknowledgement of 'procedural pain', the negative feelings expressed appear to be a result of the process. The impact effects the persons emotions as opposed to their work engagement. The theme of resilience as proposed by Vough and Caza (2017) seems to be the overriding one in this scenario.

Discussion

Sundaray (2011) outlines the critical factors which lead to employee engagement and cite 'opportunities in the organisation for career development' as being one such factor. Joshi and Sodhi (2001) are in agreement with this theory stating that 'a critical

determinant of engagement is 'scope for advancement'. Less than half the respondents in this study (37%) feel there are good opportunities for promotion, however all report constant engagement in their roles despite success or rejection in promotion attempts. Schaufeli and Salanova (2005) refer to engagement and disengagement being 'contagious' and leading to collective feelings of one or the other. As this study has taken a random sample of participants and is a snapshot of a certain point in time it is not possible to analyse if the theory applies to this particular project however from the findings there is the possibility that when a large group of people are experiencing similar emotions at a specific point in time there is the potential for those emotions to become a collective feeling which may impact on collective engagement for a certain period of time. Saks (2006) state that levels of engagement employees are prepared to invest is determined by resources available to the employee by the organisation. The findings in this study contradict the theory due to the large number believing there are not good opportunities for advancement compared to the numbers reporting engagement regardless of events taking place.

Brown (2006) refers to the 'engagement pyramid' being in a state of constant motion and needing to be nurtured to maintain constant levels. While respondents reported feelings of disappointment and frustration with being rejected in promotion applications as previously stated the overriding theme is that there is no overall change in levels of engagement. Engagement may be temporarily affected but it would appear there is no evidence of nurturing, rather a strong attitude of resilience which ties in with Schaufeli et al (2002) describing 'an attitude that is not swayed by events should not impact on engagement as a result'. There is a strong theme of resilience in the responses concurring with Vough and Caza (2017) however in the case of Vough and Caza (2017) the main focus of resilience is increased engagement in current role in order to succeed. In the case of this study the resilience appears to be more focused on there being no impact of rejection on engagement. Engagement is a given regardless of success or failure, and to continue to apply for promotion despite perceived hurdles

It would appear the strongest findings in the theme of this study are in line with those of Khan (1990) who believed that engagement is the 'harnessing of organisational

members selves to their work role'. The concept of this theory is that workers reflect their own identities in how they go about their work. A strong theme emerging from this study is that employees work to the best of their ability regardless of whether they are successful or unsuccessful in promotion attempts and whether or not they suffer emotional boosts or setbacks as a result. In keeping with Khan's theory that workers 'working to the best of their ability is a reflection of their own personal values and represents them as a person as well as an employee' is very much reflected in the responses received.

Conclusion

This study embraced the concept that 'the simplest argument that fits the evidence will be the best one' (Fisher, 2012). The author explored the impact a standardised recruitment system may have on employee engagement. The focus of the study was to ascertain if there was any impact on employee engagement as a result of being either successful or unsuccessful in promotion applications. An induction method was used as it 'places emphasis on gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events', (Saunders, 2012) which matched the author's concept for the investigation.

McCarthy *et al* (2009) stated that 'promotion campaigns should encourage participation of qualified employees from all groups'. The findings in this study show that not all employees appear to feel encouraged to participate in all recruitment campaigns. CIPD (2015) found that 'certain types of candidates respond differently to stressful recruitment environments but are equally likely to perform well on the job'. Responses given to interview questions confirm that this is the case in this study. While some resolve to continue trying to achieve promotion others are of the opinion that in the case of the online recruitment competitions they will not continue as they feel the process is not suited to them. The findings show that regardless of positive or negative outcomes 'employee engagement' is not affected. The finding concurs with CIPD (2015) noting that 'stressful environments will weed out great applicants'.

Sabha (2018) recommended that 'traditional recruitment methods should not be replaced by online methods but should support them'. The findings in relation to respondent's perceptions of internal recruitment campaigns which may use more traditional methods support this view. Fairness of promotion procedures and acknowledgement of ability is a strong theme running through responses. This reflects Garcia *et al* (2012) noting that 'people consider promotion based on performance to be fairer than other channels'.

The purpose of this study however was to establish if engagement in terms of commitment to a person's role was affected as a result of applying for promotion opportunities. Saks (2006) states that 'engagement is the level to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles'. Candidates emphasise their commitment to their roles in their responses by using phrases such as 'highest standards' and 'best of my ability' which shows that they are attentive and take their role seriously regardless of any influences positive or negative as a result of applying for promotions. The findings appear to contradict Saks (2006) who noted that 'where there are higher perceptions of procedural justice by employees, the higher the chances are of improved organisational engagement'.

In conclusion 'the simplest argument that fits the evidence will be the best one' (Fisher, 2012). The findings in this study show that there is no impact on employee engagement as a result of being either successful or unsuccessful in promotion opportunities.

Implications for future research: The results of this study suggests employee engagement applies to more than the concepts of engagement with the organisation or a specific role. While this study concentrated on the link between the promotion process and employee engagement in the traditional sense an area that emerges for further study as a result is that of engagement with the actual recruitment process itself. The initial study was focused on employee engagement in terms of commitment to the organisation or role and how that may be impacted by applying for promotional positions. As a result of the findings a strong theme emerges in

relation to the links between perceptions of and engagement with the recruitment process itself.

Appendix A

Personal Learning Statement

The task of researching and composing a dissertation seemed a challenging one at first. The area of recruitment and recruitment practices is one that has been of particular interest to me for many years. My work roles have always involved dealing with various areas of recruitment in a variety of settings and as a result reviewing the literature in relation to the topic was an interesting and enjoyable experience. It is interesting to see how literature reflects real-life situations and to see how findings from experts in the field are supported by responses of participants in the research process.

The research and methodology stage of the process was a huge learning curve as there are so many components to take into account. It is really interesting to see how everything comes together once a specific research approach and methodology has been selected and how it leads the author to a conclusion along with highlighting further questions that can be explored in future research. It was also really interesting to see how necessary it was to have a specific approach and methodology in order to stay focused on the research question once the task of analysis began. The method of coding data was really interesting and a fantastic aid in pulling all the information gathered together and deciphering what it actually meant. The entire process was a very valuable learning experience and is something that can be applied practically in work situations in the future.

References

Andrews, B., (2006) 'Recruitment and Selection in the Irish Civil Service' Seminar on 'Civil Service Recruitment Procedures', 21-22 March 2006, Vilnius

Anitha J., (2014) "Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance", *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, Vol. 63 Issue: 3, pp.308-323, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008>

Barber, L,(2006) 'e- Recruitment Developments', *Institute for Employment Studies*, <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk> [Accessed 15/10/19]

Beehr, T.A., Vandana, N.N., Gudanowski, D.M. and Such, M., 2004. Perceptions of reasons for promotion of self and others. *Human Relations*, **57**(4), pp. 413-438.

Benson, A., Li, D., Shue, K., *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 134, Issue 4, November 2019, Pages 2085–2134, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjz022>

Breaugh, J., A., Starke, M., (2000) 'Research on Employee Recruitment: So Many Studies, So Many Remaining Questions', *Journal of Management*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 405–434, <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630002600303> [Accessed 4/12/19]

Bryman, A., Bell, E., (2007) *Business Research Methods*, second edition, New York, Oxford University Press

Dlugos, K., E., (2017) When losers become leavers, *Rejection and turnover in internal labour markets*, Msc/dissertation, USA, Cornell University, available at <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMBPP.2017.15032abstract> [accessed 6/2/20]

Ekwoaba, J., O., Ugochukwu, U., I., Ndubuisi, U., (2015) 'The Impact of Recruitment and Selection Criteria on Organisational Performance', *Global Journal of Human Resource Management* Vol.3, No.2, pp.22-33, Published by European Centre for Research Training and *Development* UK (www.eajournals.org) 22 ISSN 2053-5686(Print), ISSN 2053-5694(Online) [Accessed 4/12/19]

Faragher, J., (2019) 'Is AI the enemy of diversity?', *People Management*, June 2019 CIPD, p.48, peoplemanagement.co.uk

Fisher, C., (2010) *Researching and Writing a Dissertation*, England, Pearson Education Ltd.

Ford, D. K., Truxillo, D. M. and Bauer, T. N. (2009) 'Rejected But Still There: Shifting the focus in applicant reactions to the promotional context', *International Journal of Selection & Assessment*, 17(4), pp. 402–416. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2389.2009.00482.x.

García, I. A. L., Moscoso, S. and Ramos, V. P. J. (2012) 'Reactions to the Fairness of Promotion Methods: Procedural justice and job satisfaction', *International Journal of Selection & Assessment*, 20(4), pp. 394–403. doi: 10.1111/ijsa.12002.

Hargreaves, A., Daly-Ryan, A., Dillon, R., Donohoe, G. J., (2018) 'Independent computerised cognitive remediation for psychosis: An investigation of patient experiences, available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30020205>

Harzing, A., W., (2018) 'Internal versus external promotion [1/4], *Harzing.com, Research in International Management*, 01/09, Available at url:

<https://harzing.com/blog/2018/09/internal-versus-external-promotion-1-of-4>

[accessed 02/04/20]

Heraty, N. and Morley, M. (1998), "In search of good fit: policy and practice in recruitment and selection in Ireland", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 17 No. 9, pp. 662-685. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621719810244490>

[Accessed 15/10/19]

Jacobs, K. (2018) 'Psychometric testing no longer meets my business needs', *People Management*, March 2018, CIPD, p.28, peoplemanagement.co.uk

Joshi, R.J. and Sodhi, J.S. (2011), "Drivers of employee engagement in Indian organizations", *The Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 162-182.

Kahn, W.A. (1990), "Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 692-724. **Published Online:**30 Nov 2017 <https://doi.org/10.5465/256287>

Kaur, P., (2015) 'E-recruitment: A conceptual study', www.allresearchjournal.com, ISSN Print: 2394-7500, ISSN Online: 2394-5869 [Accessed 4/12/19]

Lam, S., K., Schaubroeck, J., (2000) 'The Role of Locus of Control in Reactions to Being Promoted and to Being Passed Over: A Quasi Experiment', *The Academy of Management Journal*, 43(1), p. 66. Available at:
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.1556386&site=eds-live&scope=site> (Accessed: 6 February 2020).

Lemons, M. and Jones, C. (2001), "Procedural justice in promotion decisions: using perceptions of fairness to build employee commitment", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 268-281. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940110391517>

McCarthy, J., Hrabluik, C. and Jelley, R. B. (2009) 'Progression through the Ranks: Assessing Employee Reactions to High-Stakes Employment Testing', *Personnel Psychology*, 62(4), pp. 793–832. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2009.01158.x.

Parry, E. and Tyson, S. (2008) 'An analysis of the use and success of online recruitment methods in the UK', *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(3), pp. 257–274. doi: 10.1111/j.1748-8583.2008.00070.x. [Accessed 15/10/19]

Ryan, A. M., & Ployhart, R. E. (2000). Applicants' Perceptions of Selection Procedures and Decisions: A Critical Review and Agenda for the Future. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 565–606. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014920630002600308>

Sabha, S., (2018) 'Impact of Online recruitment on recruitment', *International Journal of Education and Research Vol. 6 No. 4* [Accessed 4/12/19]

Saks, A. (2006), 'Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement', *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 21 No. 7, pp. 600-619.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940610690169> [Accessed 6/4/20]

Sangeetha, K., (2010) 'Effective Recruitment: A Framework', *The IUP Journal 94 of Business Strategy*, Vol. VII, Nos. 1 & 2, [Accessed 4/12/19]

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., 2012, *Research Methods for Business Students*, 6th edition, Pearson, England

Schaufelli, W., B., Salanova, M., Gonzalez-Roma, V., Bakker, B., (2002) 'THE MEASUREMENT OF ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT: A TWO SAMPLE CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYTIC APPROACH' *Journal of Happiness Studies* **3**: 71–92,

Schaufeli, W. B. *et al.* (2019) 'An ultra-short measure for work engagement: The UWES-3 validation across five countries', *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 35(4), pp. 577–591. doi: 10.1027/1015-5759/a000430.

Sheaffer, Z., Levy, S. and Navot, E. (2018), "Fears, discrimination and perceived workplace promotion", *Baltic Journal of Management*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 2-19.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/BJM-05-2017-0165>

Sonnenberg, D., Green, A., 'Too many employers are overlooking people's natural talents', *People Management*, CIPD, July 2017, peoplemanagement.co.uk, [Accessed 30/01/20]

Spence, A.; Ulrich, D.; Fry, B., Fishman, A.,' (2015) A Collection of Thought Pieces', *CIPD* [Accessed 15/10/19]

Sundaray, B., K., Employee Engagement: A Driver of Organizational Effectiveness, *European Journal of Business and Management* www.iiste.org
ISSN 2222-1905 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2839 (Online),Vol 3, No.8, 2011, | P a g e 53
www.iiste.org

Tzafrir, S. and Hareli, S. (2009), "Employees' emotional reactions to promotion decisions: The role of causal attributions and perceptions of justice", *Career Development International*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 351-371.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910979844>

Ulrich, D., A new mandate for Human Resources, *Harvard Business Review*, Jan/Feb 1998 [Accessed 15/10/19]

Vough, H. C. and Caza, B. B. (2017) 'Where do I go from here? Sensemaking and the construction of growth-based stories in the wake of denied promotions', *Academy of Management Review*, (1), p. 103. Available at:
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.476653118&site=eds-live&scope=site> (Accessed: 10 March 2020).

Appendix: A - Sample Candidate Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent

My name is Jackie Brennan and I am conducting research as part of a Master of Science in Management at the National College of Ireland. I am researching the impact of the online recruitment process for promotions within the Civil Service. I am particularly interested in developing further understanding of the impact of the process on employee performance.

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask for clarification if needed or if you would like further information in any area relating to participation.

Participation in the research would involve an interview at a location of your choice. You have been invited to participate as you are employed as a Civil Servant and may have applied for promotions at various stages of your career. My interest is to explore your perception of the recruitment process from the perspective of a candidate. It is expected the interview would last approximately one hour and may require possible follow up if there is a need for clarification.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time for whatever reason. This includes your right to withdraw your interview from the research after it has taken place. If you exercise your right to withdraw your participation, you will not be asked to give your reasons.

You will not be named or otherwise identified in any publication arising from this research, and no unpublished opinions or information will be attributed to you. On completion the Thesis will be stored in the Thesis library, SDU, DEASP and will be available for lending to any staff member who may wish to read it. All results of the research will be used solely for the submission of the Thesis for final grading.

‘Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in [*specify location, security arrangements and who has access to data*] until after my degree has been conferred. A transcript of interviews in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years after this. Under freedom of information legislation you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.’

Agreement to consent.

X18156592

I have read and I understand the purpose of this research and my part in it; I understand my rights to withdraw my participation at any point during or after the interview and all materials will be withdrawn. I here hereby voluntarily agree to take part in this research.

Signature of participant: _____ Date:

Impact of Online Recruitment on Employee Performance

Consent to take part in research

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves an interview of approx. one hour with possible follow up for clarification if needed
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the final thesis.

X18156592

I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone