



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

## Applicant reactions to selection methods in China

**Citation for published version:**

Liu, X, Potocnik, K & Anderson, N 2016, 'Applicant reactions to selection methods in China', *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, vol. 24, pp. 296-303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsa.12148>

**Digital Object Identifier (DOI):**

[10.1111/ijsa.12148](https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsa.12148)

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Peer reviewed version

**Published In:**

International Journal of Selection and Assessment

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



# APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

## Applicant Reactions to Selection Methods in China

Xuewei Liu

University of Edinburgh,

Kristina Potočnik\*

University of Edinburgh

Neil Anderson

Brunel University

### Author note

Xuewei Liu, Business School University of Edinburgh, UK.

Kristina Potočnik, Business School University of Edinburgh, UK.

Neil Anderson, Brunel Business School, Brunel University, Uxbridge, UK.

\*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Kristina Potočnik  
University of Edinburgh Business School, 29 Buccleuch Place, EH8 9JS, Edinburgh, UK.  
Contact: Kristina.Potocnik@ed.ac.uk

Abstract

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

This study examines applicant reactions to ten popular selection methods in China. Using a sample of 294 graduates we found that Chinese applicants' reactions were highly favorable for work sample tests, interviews, and written ability tests, whereas *Guanxi* (i.e., relying on personal contacts when applying for a job) and graphology were perceived as the least favorable selection methods. *Guanxi* was also perceived as significantly less fair method compared to all others on all seven procedural dimensions studied. These findings suggest that *Guanxi* as an informal selection channel might threaten the fairness of personnel selection in China. Implications for the design of selection systems in Chinese companies are discussed, and ramifications for future research into applicant reactions are considered.

*Keywords:* applicant reactions, fairness, personnel selection, *Guanxi*, China

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

### Applicant Reactions to Selection Methods in China

Chinese personnel selection tends to overly concentrate on *Guanxi*, a phenomenon which exists specifically in China and which may pose a potential threat to the validity, reliability and fairness of selection methods (Li, 2005; Shen & Edwards, 2004). *Guanxi*, when applied in a business context, refers to the interpersonal relationships, personal contacts, or nepotism that may bring people certain work benefits, such as a desirable job or a promotion. Although sometimes the benefits of this are only short-term and might be associated with a risk of social costs (Bian, 1997; Fan, 2002a; Fan, 2002b), this phenomenon is of both interest and potential concern. Although *Guanxi* has received increased attention in the business literature over the last twenty years, it is still a relatively unexplored field that requires further research attention (Chen, Chen, & Huang, 2013).

The present study examines applicant reactions to *Guanxi* as part of personnel selection systems in China, along with reactions to other common selection methods. Although the literature on applicant reactions to selection procedures is vast, the majority of previous research has been conducted in the US and European countries which share a rather similar occidental heritage. To the best of our knowledge, no study to date has explored applicant reactions to selection methods in China, which is an important omission given the rapid economic growth and increasingly more and more important role of China on the global markets. Moreover, findings from the Western countries may not be applicable to countries such as China, which has different cultural values, history, political climate, and personnel practices, including the important role of *Guanxi* in the workplace (Hou & Cheng, 2007). Therefore, the present study aims to explore how applicants react to these different selection methods. In so doing, we particularly address the role of *Guanxi* and its potential influence on the fairness of personnel selection systems in China.

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

### *Guanxi and the Selection Context in China*

An organization's choice of selection methods plays a vital role in attracting, identifying, and maintaining the best pool of applicants (Lyons & Marler, 2011; Potočnik, Anderson, & Latorre, 2015). Most companies in China aim to adopt Western selection practices, as these practices are considered more advanced (Sun, 2004). It must be noted, however, that research on selection in China has increased rapidly since the 1990s, when the market economy was established (Xiao & Ye, 2007). There is a number of popular selection methods, such as biodata, interviews, psychometric tests, references, work sample tests, assessment centers, graphology, and astrology that organizations may use (Furnham & Jackson, 2011), however the research on personnel selection in China has focused mainly on interviews, psychometric tests, assessment centers, and a competency model. In addition to these formal methods, an informal selection approach termed *Guanxi* has existed in China for many decades, for different cultural and institutional reasons (Chen, Chen, & Xin, 2004; Chen et al., 2013).

There are multiple meanings and definitions of the term *Guanxi*. For example, *Guanxi* has been defined as the relationships between two or more parties (Chen et al., 2013), as dynamic social activities performed for professional advancement (Chen et al., 2004; Fan, 2002b), and as an organizational strategy to secure competitive advantage (Li & Zhang, 2007; Peng & Luo, 2000). In the area of HRM, Chen et al. (2004) define *Guanxi* in terms of the extent to which selection, appraisal, and reward management practices are grounded on interpersonal relationships (i.e., *Guanxi* ties). Fan (2002a) classifies *Guanxi* into three main categories: family *Guanxi*, helper *Guanxi*, and business *Guanxi*. These three types of *Guanxi* are different in nature and social roots.

Family *Guanxi* is driven by emotion and is significantly influenced by Chinese traditional culture – Confucian values and Confucian 'relationalism', which advocates a commitment to relationships in which the intrinsic personal relationship is more important

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

than extrinsic benefits or costs (Chen et al., 2013). Helper *Guanxi* is similar to family *Guanxi*, but more instrumental whereas business *Guanxi* is utility-driven, opportunistic, and of pure instrumental value. There are only a few affective factors, such as trust and commitment, in this type of relationship. Business *Guanxi* can be seen as a special phenomenon derived from the contemporary political and socio-economic systems in China (Fan, 2002a). Helper *Guanxi* and business *Guanxi* are relevant to the current study in the field of selection. For example, an applicant who has *Guanxi* with a senior manager in a company may be offered a position in that company as a result of the senior manager's recommendation. Therefore, in addition to commonly used selection techniques, such as biodata, interviews, and psychometric tests, *Guanxi* may act as an informal recruitment and selection approach in China, despite often being ignored in Chinese academic literature. When *Guanxi* becomes part of recruitment and selection, it can occur through both internal (i.e., referral from an existing employee) and external (i.e., recommendations made by people outside the organization) recruitment channels. Considering these arguments, in this study, the term *Guanxi*, as used in the selection and recruitment, is defined in terms of personal relationships that graduates use and rely on when looking for a job (i.e., "*Knowing someone influential whose connections can help you get the job*").

Apart from the influence of Confucian culture, the prevalence of *Guanxi* in the field of selection is also impacted by Chinese national history and the country's institutional environment, beginning in the late 1940s, when China started to adopt communism. In the 1949-1979 period China had a completely centrally planned economy, whereby enterprises in all industries were owned by the state (Shen & Edwards, 2004). At that time employees were assigned to posts by the central government, which strictly controlled HR planning, instead of seeking jobs on their own (Han & Han, 2009; Leung & Kwong, 2003). Because there were no channels or opportunities to apply for jobs, job seekers relied upon existing social

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

networks to gain influence from job-allocation officials and authorities (Han & Han, 2009). Moreover, contemporary medium and large sized enterprises in China have mostly developed from traditional family businesses that use no personnel selection practices, and thus recommendations and referrals from family, friends, and existing workers remain common and popular (Yang & Yang, 2002). These institutional factors have had a profound impact on Chinese HRM practices and recruitment methods, even in today's open job market (Chen et al., 2004; Han & Han, 2009). However, the use of *Guanxi* in selection procedures is often deemed unethical and related to 'side-door' or 'back-door' allocation (Helburn & Shearer, 1984; Fan, 2002a). Furthermore, taking into account that China is one of the most populous countries in the world with increasing importance on the global markets, it is surprising there is no published study into Chinese applicant reactions to different selection methods. The present study addresses this gap.

### *Applicants' Perspectives on Selection Methods*

Research into applicant reactions to selection methods is relatively new, with a growing interest observed only over the last two decades (Hülshager & Anderson, 2009; Salgado, 2001). Internationally, primary studies and narrative reviews have been published to address important research questions, summarize key findings, and provide directions for future research (Chan & Schmitt, 2004; Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004; Truxillo, Bodner, Bertolino, Bauer, & Yonce, 2009). Hülshager and Anderson (2009, p. 336) have argued for the importance of studying applicant reactions to selection methods, saying 'it is clear that there are compelling economic, performance-related, organizational reputation-dependent and psychological reasons for studying applicant reactions in employee selection procedures'. Recognition of the importance of applicant reactions to selection procedures has led to a notable switch in the focus of selection research, moving from a focus on the organizational angle to applicants' perspectives (Salgado, 2001; Truxillo et al., 2009). Anderson, Salgado

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

and Hülsheger (2010, p. 292) summarize the positive effect of research on applicant reactions to selection processes, asserting that it has ‘contributed significantly to a more comprehensive and multi-perspective understanding of the processes, effects, and outcomes of selection procedures’.

Indeed, existing research on applicant reactions is of considerable importance for various reasons. From a business case perspective concerned with the organization’s profitability, it is necessary to note that knowledge of applicant reactions may contribute greatly to the design of better selection procedures (Truxillo, Bauer, Campion, & Paronto, 2002; Truxillo et al., 2009). The issue of applicant reactions is also important for economic reasons. There are two types of economic costs associated with situations where candidates withdraw their applications because of dissatisfaction with the selection process: the immediate costs of what has already been spent on recruitment and selection to that point, and the long-term cost of losing a potentially high-performing employee to a competitor (Murphy, 1986). A well-designed selection system is beneficial in reducing or avoiding such costs. In addition, studies on applicant reactions may help protect an organization’s image and reputation. Applicants might share their unfavorable experience with others, which may negatively impact the future behavior of the organization’s stakeholders, such as investors and customers (Hülsheger & Anderson, 2009; Truxillo, Bauer, McCarthy, Anderson, & Ahmed, in press).

These issues aside, applicant reactions research also plays an important role in increasing recruiters’ awareness of legal issues surrounding selection procedures (Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993), such as equal opportunities, discrimination, bias errors, and data confidentiality, thereby decreasing corresponding appeal costs. Moreover, the way in which potential employees perceive selection procedures and their outcomes might influence their motivation, attitude, and behavior, and thus the organization’s overall

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

performance (Gilliland, 1993).

One of the most important theoretical frameworks to influence the field of applicant reactions is Gilliland's (1993) justice model. This framework draws on Greenberg's (1990) justice theory and has guided the vast majority of empirical studies in this area (Anderson et al., 2010). In fact, the most frequently used applicant reactions' questionnaire is based on this model (Steiner & Gilliland, 1996). According to this framework, there are two aspects associated with the fairness of selection systems (Gilliland, 1993): (1) procedural justice (i.e., related with the process, for instance the extent to which an applicant thinks he/she is treated warmly by the recruiter) and (2) distributive justice (i.e., related with the outcome). Applicant perspectives of both, procedural and distributive justice determine their evaluation of the overall fairness of the selection process and outcome (Anderson et al., 2010; Hülsheger & Anderson, 2009).

### *Reaction generalization vs. situational specificity*

Studies of applicant reactions to different selection methods have been carried out in numerous countries, including the USA (Hoang, Truxillo, Erdogan, & Bauer, 2012; Nikolaou & Judge, 2007; Phillips & Gully, 2002, Steiner & Gilliland, 1996), France (Steiner & Gilliland, 1996), Singapore (Phillips & Gully, 2002), Spain and Portugal (Moscoso & Salgado, 2004), South Africa (De Jong, 2000), Germany (Marcus, 2003), Belgium (Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, & Brancart, 1999), Greece (Nikolaou & Judge, 2007), Italy (Bertolino & Steiner, 2007), the Netherlands (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008), Turkey (Bilgiç & Acarlar, 2010), Romania (Ispas, Ilie, Ilescu, Johnson, & Harris 2010), Vietnam (Hoang et al., 2012), and Saudi Arabia (Anderson, Ahmed, & Costa, 2012). However, applicant reactions are yet to be explored in China, despite the fact that China is an important economic driver and one of the most important global economies (Han & Han, 2009; Shen & Edwards, 2004). An inspection of previous findings reveals that applicant reactions widely concur in their

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

favorability ratings for popular methods across countries. A recent meta-analysis has explored whether applicant reactions are different or consistent across different cultures (Anderson et al., 2010). The results have supported the ‘reaction generalizability’ hypothesis, showing a notable similarity in applicant reactions across countries. This counters past suggestions that applicant perceptions vary by country due to differences in culture, legislation, and HRM practices (Marcus, 2003; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004). Overall, these studies show interviews and work sample tests to be the most favorable, whereas résumés, cognitive tests, personality tests, and references are considered as quite favorable methods, and honesty tests, personal contacts, and graphology are the least preferred methods (Anderson et al., 2010). Two recent studies found a similar pattern of applicant reactions (Anderson et al., 2012; Hoang et al., 2012).

Based on the reaction generalization assumption, previous research findings, particularly those from Vietnam and Saudi Arabia could serve as an instructive model for China, as these share certain common cultural characteristics. For instance, they are all highly collectivistic and place a strong value on personal relationships (Anderson et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2013). However, it is necessary to explore applicant reactions to selection procedures specifically in the context of China to address aspects specific to the Chinese context, such as the use of *Guanxi*, which are likely to influence applicant reactions and also to advance our knowledge in this field in other Asian countries. Therefore, the main aim of the present study is to explore applicant reactions to different selection methods specifically in China.

### Method

#### *Sample and procedure*

A total of 294 Chinese graduates participated in the study. One hundred and sixty (54.4%) were female, and their average age was 24.40 years ( $SD = 1.95$ ). Regarding their

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

educational background, the majority of the participants held a Bachelor's degree (60.9%) followed by a Master's (33.0%), junior high school (4.1%), senior high school (1.4%), and doctoral (.6%) degrees. When asked about their work experience, 85.4% reported having some work experience. Importantly, all of them had had experience with at least one selection method, and had been evaluated by 4.69 methods on average ( $SD = 1.98$ ). Table 1 presents further information about the proportion of our sample assessed by each of the ten methods.

An online questionnaire was designed to measure applicant reactions to the ten selection methods listed in Table 1. We translated Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) questionnaire into Mandarin. Back-translation was carried out to ensure there were no ambiguities or inaccuracies in the translated questionnaire. Each selection method was presented first, along with a brief description of its nature and purpose. The descriptions used were almost identical to Steiner and Gilliland's (1996) descriptions of the ten selection methods. The only difference related to the 'personal contacts' method, which was changed to *Guanxi* because these two methods have similar meaning in English. This procedure was intentionally adopted in order to maximize the comparisons between our findings and those published in previous studies using samples from other countries.

After each method was described, two questions were used to assess its process favorability using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (least favorable) to 7 (most favorable). Specifically, these two questions asked: 'How would you rate the effectiveness of this selection method for identifying qualified people for the job?' and 'If you did not get the job based on this selection method, what would you think of the fairness of this procedure?' In this study, the internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) for the two-item process favorability scale across the ten selection methods was .89.

-----  
Table 1 about here  
-----

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

Seven questions were then asked to assess the procedural dimensions of each selection method using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). The procedural dimensions included: (1) scientific evidence (the selection method is based on solid scientific research); (2) face validity (the selection method is a logical one for identifying qualified candidates for the job in question); (3) opportunity to perform (the selection method will detect individuals' important qualities, thereby differentiating them from others); (4) employers' rights (employers have the right to obtain information from applicants using the selection method); (5) interpersonal warmth (the selection method is impersonal and cold); (6) respectful of privacy (the selection method invades personal privacy); and (7) widely used (the selection method is appropriate because it is widely used). The items measuring 'interpersonal warmth' and 'respectful of privacy' were reversed so that higher values represent higher 'interpersonal warmth' and 'respect of privacy'.

### Results

We first explored differences across ten selection methods in terms of process favorability (see Table 2). A within-subjects ANOVA showed that the ratings of process favorability significantly differed across the ten methods ( $F(9, 2628) = 75.68, p < .01$ ). Bonferroni *post hoc* tests showed that work sample tests, interviews, and written ability tests were perceived most favorably by Chinese graduates. The next most acceptable ratings were those for honesty tests, biographical information, and personality tests. All three had a significantly higher process favorability rating than résumés, personal references, *Guanxi*, and graphology. Résumés and personal references followed, both of which were rated significantly higher than *Guanxi* and graphology. Having received significantly lower scores compared to all other methods, *Guanxi* and graphology were found to be perceived as the most unfavorable and unfair selection procedures.

-----  
Table 2 about here  
-----

Next, we explored correlations between procedural dimensions and process favorability across all ten selection methods to determine which dimensions were most predictive of process favorability (see Table 3). An inspection of Pearson correlations indicated that ‘scientific evidence’ ( $r = .91$ ) and ‘face validity’ ( $r = .89$ ) exhibited the strongest associations with process favorability. The next most predictive procedural dimensions of process favorability were ‘opportunity to perform’ ( $r = .84$ ) and ‘interpersonal warmth’ ( $r = .81$ ), followed by ‘widely used’ ( $r = .77$ ). These three were all significantly more strongly associated with process favorability than ‘employer’s right’ ( $r = .63$ ) and ‘respectful of privacy’ ( $r = .42$ ) which showed the weakest correlations with process favorability. To check the robustness of these findings we computed partial correlations between procedural dimensions and process favorability across ten methods whereby we introduced gender, age, work experience, and number of selection methods experienced to date as control variables. The findings were almost identical to the coefficients presented here.<sup>1</sup>

-----  
Table 3 about here  
-----

Next, in order to address the *Guanxi* method in greater detail, we compared the ratings of procedural dimensions of *Guanxi* against other selection methods. As can be seen in Table 4, ratings on all procedural dimensions of *Guanxi* were significantly lower than those for other selection methods, implying that Chinese graduates perceived *Guanxi* as having significantly less ‘scientific evidence’, ‘face validity’, and ‘opportunity to perform’, and being significantly lower on ‘employer’s right’, ‘interpersonal warmth’, ‘respectful of

---

<sup>1</sup> The results are available upon request.

privacy’, and ‘widely used’. With the exception of ‘respectful of privacy’, the effect sizes of these differences ranged from medium (‘employer’s right) to large.

-----  
Table 4 about here  
-----

## Discussion

The present study aimed to explore Chinese applicant reactions to ten selection methods. We were particularly interested in addressing *Guanxi* – close in meaning to nepotism in the West - as an informal channel that may form part of Chinese selection practices.

Our findings show that Chinese graduates perceived work sample tests, interviews, and written ability tests to be the fairest selection procedures, followed by honesty tests and biographical information. Their reactions were more negative towards personality tests and résumés, and *Guanxi* and graphology received the most negative evaluations. These findings suggest that Chinese applicant reactions are to some extent different compared to other countries (Anderson et al., 2010; Bertolino & Steiner, 2007) and as such, provide support for the ‘situational specificity’ assumption for predicting differences in applicant reactions across countries (Marcus, 2003; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004).

The most notable difference was observed for résumés, which have consistently been perceived as one of the most favorable procedures in the West, but rank among the three least favorably perceived methods in our Chinese sample. Another notable difference in our sample compared to previous research relates to written ability tests. Whereas previous research in the West has consistently reported this method to be somewhere in the middle of the fairness scale (Anderson et al., 2010), our Chinese graduates perceived it as one of the most favorable selection methods. This may be explained by the fact that written ability tests

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

can be seen as a continuation of Chinese *keju* (the imperial examination system), which was a fair and open system used to select officers in Ancient China from the *Sui* dynasty to the *Ming* dynasty (Wang, 2002). This period lasted for 1,298 years and thus continues to have a profound impact on contemporary selection methods in China (Wang, 2002). Our Chinese applicants also showed rather favorable perceptions of honesty tests compared to previous research. Future research is needed to further corroborate favorability of honesty tests on Chinese applicants and uncover the underlying reasons for their favorability.

Furthermore, our findings suggest that *Guanxi* can threaten not only subsequent predictive validity, but also more proximal perceived fairness of personnel selection. We found that more than one third of the sample had experienced this method when applying for a job in China which suggests that even in today's open job market the historical patterns of assigning jobs using *Guanxi* have a profound impact on Chinese selection and recruitment methods (Han & Han, 2009; Leung & Kwong, 2003). We could argue that even in contemporary Chinese society *Guanxi* still exists in selection for deeply-rooted cultural reasons and although its use in the business context might be interpreted as favoritism, it may be difficult to avoid (Chen et al., 2013). Importantly, we would like to note the inconsistency between the high prevalence of the use of *Guanxi* and its favorability. Indeed, *Guanxi* was perceived as the least favorable and fair selection method by Chinese graduates. Paradoxical consequences of *Guanxi* have been evidenced in previous research, where *Guanxi* might be perceived as helpful to the *Guanxi* initiator, but may be both helpful and harmful to the organization, and is almost always harmful to the wider community (Chen et al., 2013). While *Guanxi* can serve as a shortcut for the minority who rely on it when applying for a job, it lowers the chances of success of those who do not have, or do not take advantage of, *Guanxi* while job searching. Even though people who use *Guanxi* may not be able to secure a position directly, it cannot be denied that the use of *Guanxi* aggravates unscrupulous

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

competition among applicants in the job market. Therefore, companies should consider and prevent the potentially negative consequences of the use of *Guanxi* in selection and recruitment in order to protect the fairness of their selection processes.

Avoiding the use of *Guanxi* is also important in improving an organization's image and reputation, which might, in turn, attract applicants with a higher potential to perform well. Based on our findings, we suggest Chinese organizations should be encouraged to use work sample tests, interviews, and written ability tests to select personnel, since these three methods are perceived most favorably by Chinese applicants. From a business argument angle, the use of selection methods that are perceived as fair by applicants can improve applicants' attitudes towards work and performance once appointed (Hülsheger & Anderson, 2009), and thus can contribute greatly to the fulfillment of the organization's objectives.

### *Limitations and Implications for Future Research*

The above recommendations have to be considered in light of certain limitations. First, as in most existing research on applicant reactions, the sample of applicants consisted of relatively young respondents. The use of junior and student samples in research on applicant reactions has been criticized because students may not be familiar with selection techniques (Truxillo et al., 2009). However, considering that the majority of our respondents did have experience with different selection methods, using a sample of graduates should not represent a major problem in this study. Furthermore, we used a convenience sample that was limited in size and therefore, our findings may not be representative of the population of Chinese graduates. In order to maximize our sample size, we used the snowball technique of data collection which prevents us from computing the response rate. Future research should address this possibility by the use of larger, stratified samples.

Future research could also explore the possible reasons as to why the applicant reactions to selection methods in China differ from those from other countries. Having a clear

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

understanding of these reasons could contribute to the development of explanatory mechanisms behind the ‘reaction generalization’ vs. ‘situational specificity’ hypotheses (see also Truxillo et al., in press).

Finally, although there has been a notable increase in scholarly interest in the study of Chinese *Guanxi* during the past years (Chen et al., 2013), the role of *Guanxi* in the business context in China needs to be clarified further. This is important not only to ensure the fairness of selection procedures within organizations, but also to maintain the harmony of human relations in Chinese society.

### References

- Anderson, N., & Witvliet, C. (2008). Fairness Reactions to personnel selection methods: an international comparison between the Netherlands, the United States, France, Spain, Portugal, and Singapore. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 16*, 1-13.
- Anderson, N., Salgado, J. F., & Hülsheger, U. R. (2010). Applicant reactions in selection: comprehensive meta-analysis into reaction generalization versus situational specificity. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 3*, 291-304.
- Anderson, N., Ahmed, S., & Costa, A. C. (2012). Applicant reactions in Saudi Arabia: organizational attractiveness and core self-evaluation. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 20*, 197-208.
- Bertolino, M., & Steiner, D. D. (2007). Fairness Reactions to selection methods: an Italian study. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 15*, 198-205.
- Bian, Y. (1997). Bring strong ties back in: indirect ties, network bridges, and job searches in China. *American Sociological Review, 62*, 366-385.
- Bilgiç, R., & Acarlar, G. (2010). Fairness Perceptions of selection instruments used in Turkey. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 18*, 208-214.
- Chan, D., & Schmitt, N. (2004). An Agenda for future research on applicant reactions to selection procedures: A construct-oriented approach. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 12*, 9-23.
- Chen, C. C., Chen, X. P., & Huang, S. S. (2013). Chinese *Guanxi*: An integrative review and new directions for future research”, *Management and Organization Review, 9*, 67-207.
- Chen, C. C., Chen, Y. R., & Xin, K. (2004). *Guanxi* practices and trust in management: A procedural justice perspective. *Organization Science, 15*, 200-209.
- De Jong, A. V. D. (2000). Black and white employees' fairness perceptions of personnel selection technique. *South African Journal of Psychology, 30*, 17-24.

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

- Fan, Y. (2002a). *Guanxi's* consequences: Personal gains at social cost. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 38, 371-38.
- Fan, Y. (2002b). Questioning *Guanxi*: definition, classification and implications. *International Business Review*, 11, 543-561.
- Furnham, A., & Jackson, C. J. (2011). Practitioner reactions to work-related psychological tests", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 26, 549-565.
- Gilliland, S. W. (1993). The perceived fairness of selection systems: An organizational justice perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 18, 696-734.
- Greenberg, J. (1990). Organizational justice: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Journal of Management*, 16, 399-432.
- Han, J., & Han, J. (2009). Network-based recruiting and applicant attraction in China: Insights from both organizational and individual perspectives. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20, 2238-2249.
- Hauskencht, J. P., Day, D. V., & Thomas, S. C. (2004). Applicant reactions to selection procedure: An updated model and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 57, 639-683.
- Helburn, I. B., & Shearer, J. C. (1984). Human resource and industrial relations in China: A time of ferment. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 38, 3-15.
- Hoang, T. G., Truxillo, D. M., Erdogan, B., & Bauer, T. N. (2012). Cross-cultural examination of applicant reactions to selection methods: United States and Vietnam. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 20, 209-219.
- Hou, G. L., & Cheng, D. F. (2007). Analysis on the difference in the trend of human resource management between China and some other countries. *Modern Business Trade Industry*, 19, 26-27. (In Chinese)
- Hülshager, U. R., & Anderson, N. (2009). Applicant perspectives in selection: Going beyond preference reactions. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 17, 35-345.

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

- Ispas, D., Ilie, A., Ilescu, D., Johnson, R. E., & Harris, M. M. (2010). Fairness reactions to selection methods: a Romanian study. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *18*, 102-11.
- Leung, K., & Kwong, J. Y. Y. (2003). Human resource management practices in international joint ventures in mainland China: A justice analysis. *Human Resource Management Review*, *13*, 85-105.
- Li, G. Z. (2005). Analysis and thinking on the situation and countermeasures of human resources of our country. *Journal of Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities (Social Sciences)*, *31*, 68-7. (in Chinese)
- Li, H., & Zhang, Y. (2007). The role of managers' political networking and functional experience in new venture performance: evidence from China's transition economy. *Strategic Management Journal*, *28*, 791-804.
- Lyons, B. D., & Marler, J. H. (2011). Got image? Examining organizational image in web recruitment. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *26*, 58-76.
- Marcus, B. (2003). Attitudes towards personnel selection methods: A partial replication and extension in a German sample. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *52*, 515-532.
- Moscato, S., & Salgado, J. E. (2004). Fairness reactions to personnel selection techniques in Spain and Portugal. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *12*, 187-196.
- Murphy, K. (1986). When your top choice tunes you down: Effect of rejected job offers on the utility of selection tests. *Psychological Bulletin*, *99*, 133-138.
- Nikolaou, I., & Judge, T. A. (2007). Fairness reactions to personnel selection techniques in Greece. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *15*, 206-219.
- Peng, M. W., & Luo, Y. (2000). Managerial ties and firm performance in a transition economy: The nature of a micro-macro link. *Academy of Management Journal*, *43*, 486-501.

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

- Phillips, J. M., & Gully, S. M. (2002). Fairness reactions to personnel selection techniques in Singapore and the United States. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *13*, 1186-1205.
- Potočník, K., Anderson, N. R., & Latorre, F. (2015). Selecting for innovation: Methods of assessment and the criterion problem. In I. Nikolaou & J. K. Oostrom (Eds.), *Employee Recruitment, Selection, and Assessment: Contemporary Issues for Theory and Practice* (pp. 209-227). London: Psychology Press.
- Salgado, J. F. (2001). Some landmarks of 100 years of scientific personnel selection at the beginning of the new century. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *9*, 3-8.
- Shen, J., & Edwards, V. (2004). Recruitment and selection in Chinese MNEs. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *15*, 814-835.
- Smither, J. W., Reilly, R. R., Millsap, R. E., Pearlman, K., & Stoffey, J. W. (1993). Applicant reactions to selection procedures. *Personnel Psychology*, *46*, 49-76.
- Steiner, D. D., & Gilliland, S. W. (1996). Fairness reactions to personnel selection techniques in France and the United States. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *81*, 124-141.
- Stinglhamber, F., Vandenberghe, C., & Brancart, S. (1999). Reactions of job applicants to personnel selection techniques: An investigation in a French-speaking context. *The Human Work*, *62*, 347-361.
- Sun, W. M. (2004). *Recruitment and selection*. Jinan: Shandong People Press. (In Chinese)
- Truxillo, D. M., Bauer, T. N., Campion, M. A., & Paronto, M. E. (2002). Selection fairness information and applicant reactions: A longitudinal field study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*, 1020 - 1031.
- Truxillo, D. M., Bodner, T. E., Bertolino, M., Bauer, T. N., & Yonce, C. A. (2009). Effects of explanations on applicant meta-analysis review. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *17*, 346-361.

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

- Truxillo, D., Bauer, T., McCarthy, J., Anderson, N. R., & Ahmed, S. (in press). Applicant perspectives on employee selection systems. In D. Ones, N. R. Anderson, C. Viswesvaran & H. K. Sinangil (Eds), *Handbook of Industrial, Work and Organizational Psychology*, Second Edition. London and New York: Sage.
- Wang, B. Z. (2002), *Zhong Guo Keju Zhi Du Yan Jiu (Research about Chinese keju)*. Hebei: Hebei People Press. (In Chinese)
- Xiao, S. Y., & Ye, S. M. (2007). Recruitment and selection research in China. *Scientific and Technological Information*, 28, 62-63. (In Chinese)
- Yang, H. J., & Yang, B. J. (2002). The pros and cons analysis of Chinese small and medium sized family enterprises. *Inquiry into Economic Issues*, 1, 70-73. (in Chinese)

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

Table 1

*Selection methods and their prevalence of use on the current sample*

Selection method	Percent of participants evaluated by the method
Interviews	92
Résumés	80
Work sample tests	41
Biographical information	67
Written ability tests	65
Personal references	31
Personality tests	35
Honesty tests	10
<i>Guanxi</i>	35
Graphology	3

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

Table 2

*Means and standard deviations on process favorability for selection methods*

Selection method	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Work sample tests	4.92 <sub>a</sub>	1.14
Interviews	4.71 <sub>a,b</sub>	1.01
Written ability tests	4.63 <sub>a,b</sub>	1.20
Honesty tests	4.53 <sub>b,c</sub>	1.38
Biographical information	4.38 <sub>c</sub>	1.17
Personality tests	4.37 <sub>c</sub>	1.24
Résumés	4.04 <sub>d</sub>	1.18
Personal references	3.90 <sub>d</sub>	1.38
<i>Guanxi</i>	3.44 <sub>e</sub>	1.54
Graphology	3.25 <sub>e</sub>	1.52

*Note:* Means with different subscripts are significantly different at  $p < .05$ .

## APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

Table 3

*The correlations between procedural dimensions and overall process favorability.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Scientific evidence							
2. Face validity	.92						
3. Opportunity to perform	.85	.89					
4. Interpersonal warmth	.84	.88	.83				
5. Widely used	.80	.84	.78	.81			
6. Employer's right	.68	.70	.70	.65	.67		
7. Respectful of privacy	.42	.44	.42	.53	.45	.20	
8. Process favorability	.91 <sub>a</sub>	.89 <sub>a</sub>	.84 <sub>b</sub>	.81 <sub>b, c</sub>	.77 <sub>c</sub>	.63 <sub>d</sub>	.42 <sub>d</sub>

*Notes.* All correlation coefficients are significant at  $p < .01$ .

We have averaged the responses on procedural dimension and process favorability across the ten methods prior to computing the correlations.

Using Fisher  $r$ -to- $z$  transformation we computed  $z$  values to assess the significance of the difference between correlation coefficients concerning process favorability and each procedural dimension. Correlations with different subscripts are significantly different at  $p < .05$ .

APPLICANT REACTIONS IN CHINA

Table 4

*Descriptive statistics and effect size differences on procedural dimensions for all selection methods but Guanxi versus Guanxi.*

Procedural dimensions	<i>M</i> - all selection methods but <i>Guanxi</i>	<i>SD</i> - all selection methods but <i>Guanxi</i>	<i>M</i> - <i>Guanxi</i>	<i>SD</i> - <i>Guanxi</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>SD</i> <sub>ratio</sub>
Scientific evidence	4.40	.81	3.11	1.59	1.02	.51
Face validity	4.29	.80	3.20	1.58	.87	.51
Opportunity to perform	4.34	.81	3.22	1.66	.86	.49
Employer's right	4.41	.90	3.75	1.66	.49	.55
Interpersonal warmth	4.12	.79	2.89	1.54	1.01	.51
Respectful of privacy	3.48	1.02	3.10	1.51	.29	.68
Widely used	4.22	.83	3.18	1.65	.80	.50

*Note.* All means are significantly different at the  $p < .01$ . Cohen's *d* statistics suggests effect sizes range from moderate to strong. Positive *d* values suggest that all selection methods combined except of *Guanxi* receive higher scores on all procedural dimensions compared to *Guanxi*. *SD*<sub>ratio</sub> of all selection methods to *Guanxi* standard deviations.  $N = 294$ .