

HR Selection Distortions

A theoretical framework for the Fiji Public Service

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Abstract

Despite being frequently perceived as a pertinent issue necessary to critically examine how incumbents are selected on merit, HR selection distortions is typically ill-defined and poorly explained in much debate, hence, more precision in terms of contextualization of practice is needed. Through explaining and synthesizing the work of a number of scholars from different disciplines, the paper develops a theoretical framework for a meta- analysis, which begins with an exploration of the relationship between HR selection, networking and relational ties, employee's justice perceptions, group heterogeneity and worker performance in Fiji's public service institutions. The theoretical framework provides the leeway for the research questions to be answerable and the postulated hypotheses testable.

However, more needs to be done to explain not only the nature and emergence of HR selection distortions but also the very real problems it faces in sustaining itself, let alone transforming the hiring processes in Fiji's public service. The value of the paper lies in its theoretical innovation, drawing on a range of disciplines, and its attempt to situate HR selection distortions precisely, conceptually, theoretically, and practically.

Keywords

Theoretical framework, HR Selection, Distortions, Network theory, Instrumental ties, Affective ties, Fiji, Productivity, Performance, Justice Perceptions

Introduction and Significance

Dubin (1976), found that practitioners and theorists perception of theories differs; hence a strong theoretical model has great value but dissimilar of significance to both. Corporate managers and practitioners are mostly concerned with the accuracy of prediction of a theoretical model so as to guide their decision making in conditions of uncertainty complemented by highly competitive markets. Further, theorists interests are mostly directed to understanding the preconditions and reasoning behind the predictions of the model. Hence, for them, a well grounded theoretical model allows for testing of the model and based on these tests, gaps that may indicate the vulnerability of the model rationalize the revision and upgrade of the model to increase accuracy of predictions (Dubin, 1976).

As per the above context, it is absolutely essential that Fiji public service managers not only be guided by some relevant theoretical framework so as to incorporate and instill elements of rationality to improve accuracy of decision making and strategy formulation. But, they must also understand the preconditions, merits and rationality behind the predictions of the model and its framework, hence it is anticipated that the current framework will be explained to the Fiji civil service via a policy implication chapter of the thesis in due course.

The first part of the paper introduces key theories and ideologies and spells out the significance of the framework. The second section of the paper outlines the key variables and their distinctive functions within the theoretical framework. It also elucidates the specific theoretical base and the validity of its assimilation to the grounded theory in the model, and crucial contributing potential to theory, practice and methodology. Most importantly, this paper outlines and discusses the functions and distinctions among the literature review undertaken to evaluate a key theoretical perspective in HRM for the following research

question: Are selection distortions, introduced by hiring practices in Fiji's public sector associated with a decline in worker performance?

In their study, Rocco & Plakhotnik (2009) stated that as a type of manuscript, a theoretical framework synthesizes existing theories, related concepts and empirical research to develop a foundation for new theory development. They further stated that presentation of a theoretical framework is crucial to quantitative method, theory driven study, which will have been designed to test a theory. On that note, the research design for the Fiji's public service institution's survey will be mostly deductive where the model is dominant (please refer to fig. 1.0), and the theoretical framework for this study has been designed as an enquiry into the social issues distorting the hiring processes in Fiji's public service.

The researcher selected the work of Harrington (2001); Gilliland & Chan (2001); and Eshun & Acquah (2010) on social networks as well as theory on attribution, personnel selection and perceptions of justice (Cohen – Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001) to provide the basis of the theoretical framework. The model by Harrington (2001) was specifically chosen because there is evident and abundance of affective ties in the culture and social systems of Fiji including; community ties, extended family ties, the chiefly system, religious systems, business communities etc. Likewise, there is also evident and abundance of instrumental ties in the culture and social systems of Fiji including; old boys and girls institutions, work mates, political colleagues, including a labour market and culture with diversified heterogeneity.

The literature review for this paper canvasses HR selection distortional issues identified in the literature on social networks and social rules theory and also on justice perceptions and applicant reactions. Specifically, key variables have emerged from social network theory; i.e. instrumental and affective ties (Harrington, 2001) are assumed to have affected the employee's perceptions of justice of the hiring processes in the Fiji government

departments under study. The differing perceptions of justice by employee may have positive or negative impacts on worker performance through group heterogeneity variables such as KSA, age and ethnicity. Justice perceptions are likely to correlate with group heterogeneity variables to trigger variations in productivity and worker performance levels (please refer to fig 1.0).

In developing the theoretical framework for the study, key variables were either modified or added onto the model as outlined by Harrington (2001), Gilliland & Chan (2001) and Acquah & Eshun (2001). The modified model adopted in the framework has; new moderating variables (justice perceptions), new intervening variables (group heterogeneity), and separates network ties into two sub-group independent variables (instrumental ties and affective ties) and worker performance as new dependent variable (please refer to fig 1.0). Hence, the paper highlights emerging ideologies from different disciplines synthesized to formulate a theoretical framework of themes. It also addresses the significant differences of opinion among researchers and importantly, the authors of this paper's opinion about the validity of these differences. Further, the framework of themes has ascertained the critical areas in which little or nothing is established. These are the unanswered questions or gaps that provide the leeway for further exploration in the study.

The paper also presents a review and synthesis of the literature on HR selection distortions that molded the respective theories to prop and fabricate a theoretical framework (please refer to fig 1.0) which was specifically designed to organize, control and direct the research investigating distortions affecting HR selection in prominent institutions in Fiji's public service. Empirical materials, based on original secondary data were gathered from the Fiji civil service across different government departments. In addition, the theoretical framework has induced a survey to gather the necessary primary data of the research. In formulating the theoretical framework, the researcher ensured that; it should have current

relevance, be somewhat provocative, and a threat to the established ideologies (Page & Meyer, 2003).

This study is important for the Pacific Region, developing countries and small micro states because it will examine a public service institution's HR selection system in a country with a non-democratically elected government. Commodore Frank Bainimarama overthrew a democratically elected government in Fiji accusing them of being inefficient, ineffective, unproductive and racist, promising stakeholders that he and his regime will clean up the "faults" in the government systems.

Key HRM Challenges facing Public Sector Organizations in Developing Countries

The key Human Resources Management (HRM) challenges facing public sector organizations in developing countries today vary in accordance to their respective doctrines for survival and good governance taking into account their political and economic environment.

In his study, Schuler (2000) examined the circumstances surrounding the internationalization of human resources management and stated that in the new millennium, more and more companies are recognizing the importance of managing their human resources as effectively as possible and that it is almost impossible to do likewise without recognition and incorporation of the global context. In that regards, as the environment becomes more global, managing people also becomes more challenging, more unpredictable, uncertain and subject to rapid change and surprise. To that effect, Schuler (2000) reiterated that we are witnessing within HRM, the rapid appreciation for and development of all aspects of global and international activities and issues associated with and affected by HRM.

The findings by Schuler (2000) have tremendous impact on the implementation and adoption of HRM strategies into the international community especially the developing countries (DCs).

The theoretical framework and study presented in this paper will also contribute to the area of International and Comparative HRM (Stavrou, Brewster and Charalambous (2010) given Fiji is a developing country with developing public sector institutions. This paper will now introduce significant findings and challenges for DCs as per studies conducted in selected civil societies, providing the basis and justifying the formulation of the theoretical constructs for the Fiji Government public service study.

Firstly, in their research on the Algerian civil service, Mellahi & Frynas (2003) found that under the immense pressure for survival, managers in the civil service have desperately searched for new ready-to-implement management concepts as their previous practices have become obsolete and inadequate in the new business environment. To give them a chance to survive in the fiercely competitive global markets, managers have no choice but to mimic western HRM practices. However, because of the inherent difficulty in transferring HRM practices between different cultures and the inability of Algerian managers to understand the potential problems that might be created by applying western HRM practices, the outcome is often subjected to immense scrutiny from stakeholders (Mellahi & Frynas (2003).

This finding is crucial for the Fiji public service since internal pressures for reform emanated from government claims that the public enterprises were operating at unacceptably low levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Some of the reasons identified for this included a lack of accountability, over-staffing, corruption, cronyism, etc. (Fiji Department of Public Enterprises, 1998: 6). Additionally, globalization and other external pressures including donor agencies particularly the IMF, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank insistence on reforms played a key role in public service reforms in Fiji. This pressure cooker

situation capitulate Fiji civil service managers to implement reforms and it is only apparent that the 'change agents' will dictate the reform specifics, discrediting the merits and relevancy of western HRM practices and theories. Hence, one has to critique the rationality of the implementation of western HRM practices and theories in these DCs like Fiji.

Further, Mellahi & Frynas (2003) found that while management justifications for the transfer of western HRM practices capture the economic and technical rationale for western HRM practices, they failed to identify local conditions under which these HRM practices might be transferred. This is again crucial for the anticipated Fiji study because the rationale is to identify those local conditions, and the impact of social network ties, to ensure institutions harness and not constrain the application of western HRM practices. HRM practitioners in developing countries like Fiji may need to modify policies so as to properly suite the infrastructure and capability potentials. Hence, the study has the potential to upgrade, develop and/or modify HR selection policies in the Fiji public service; which is critical for policy reforms, effective and efficient operations of state institutions and improvement of public officer's performance and productivity.

In their study, Tessema & Soeters (2006) highlighted that organizations need to effectively manage their human resources if they are to get the maximum contribution of their employees, and their study critically examined how, when and to what extent HR practices affect worker performance level. Their research on the Eritrea civil service found that in spite of the implementation of civil service reforms, the critical challenge they faced was how to fully realize the potential of their human resources to enable civil service organizations to operate effectively (Tessema & Soeters (2006). Generally speaking, they identified that the environment within which Eritrean civil servants are employed does not seem to attract, motivate and retain competent civil servants, hence the availability and utilization of capable civil servants is of utmost importance. Kim & Hong (2006) supported (Tessema & Soeters

(2006)'s theory by stating that to enhance government performance and national development, efficient management of human resources is essential. To that effect, the HRM synthesis advocated in their report proposes a public service that is impartial, professional and responsive. This finding has significant implication to the Fiji public service and the gauntlet is thrown down now before the managers of the civil services and government as a whole so as to ensure that a civil service reform environment be molded, given Fiji's recent period of the political, economic uncertainties and instability.

In their study on the Maltese public service, Cassar & Bezzina (2005) highlighted another significant challenge facing public sector organizations in developing countries. They found that the structural and operational changes in the Maltese public service were spearheaded through the European Union (EU), due to Malta's accession to the EU. Hence because of the pressure from the EU, the Maltese Public Service Reform Commission Report (MPSCR) mandate was primarily to execute structural and policy changes. The attempt to change old mind-sets of civil servants (Hewitt, Wangwe & Field, 2002) was relatively ignored, except for re-training recommendations. Cassar & Bezzina (2005)'s finding expounded Mellahi & Frynas (2003)'s theories and assert the ideology that when 'change agents' dictate reforms, crucial variables that needs to be addressed are often overlooked deliberately.

The critical challenge facing public sector organizations in DCs, from the Maltese civil service study is "people must change before institutions can" This is again a crucial finding for the Fiji public servants, where the civil servants mind set has to be changed to fully embrace newer ideologies, good governance and for the purpose of this paper HRM concepts that improve and sustain worker performance.

Namazie & Frame (2007) strengthen Cassar & Bezzina (2005)'s work in view of their findings on a study done on the Iranian public and private sector. They elaborated that a

distinctive challenge facing the Iranian public service is their hiring processes. They have specifically identified that a constraint in the Iranian public service recruitment program is nepotism or hiring someone who is known to someone in the organization. They found out that this is due to the Iranian national culture of being family oriented and a distrust of outsiders. It is believed that a known person will be more committed and loyal to the organization than a complete stranger Namazie & Frame (2007). This finding has been incorporated into the theoretical framework for the Fiji study an expanded to include networking relationships (Harrington, 2001). It is also critical for the Fiji civil service because of the collectivist nature of the culture and family oriented societal infrastructure.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) of Fiji is a critical player and institution in this study because it set the parameters (policies and guidelines) within which hiring practices, performances and productivity are implemented for those Public Service institutions under survey. www.psc.gov.fj. Significant HRM challenges faced by the Fiji Public Service Commission includes; incomplete complementary reforms in the public service, political instability and investment uncertainty, loss of human capital through movement off-shore, bad governance and inefficient public sector resources management (Reddy, Prasad, Sharma, Duncan, Vosikata, 2004). Given the nature of local Fiji conditions and HRM challenges faced by Fiji public service managers, the theoretical framework was purposively modeled to act as a vehicle to examine the impact of networking relationships and justice perceptions of current civil servants on the hiring processes in Fiji's public service. Networking relationships and ties are part and parcel of Fiji's culture and have assumed to infiltrate Fiji's labour market, especially the civil service.

Justice Theory: Employees Perceptions

The literature review conducted so far has revealed that justice perceptions of HR selection decisions and procedures by existing employees has not received much attention

since much of the focus has been directed to applicant reactions (Gilliland, 1993, Gilliland & Hale, 2005); hence this gap in the literature justifies the formulation of the theoretical framework (please refer to fig 1.0) in this paper. Bearing in mind that organizational justice addresses perceptions of fairness in organizational decisions and decision making procedures, Gilliland & Chan (2001) expounded on Gilliland (1993)'s study by stating that the perceptions of fairness can be divided into two (2) major categories; fairness of outcomes (distributive justice) and fairness of processes (procedural justice). An additional type of justice was later on added to the two justice constructs as researchers realized that people also consider interpersonal treatment to be a form of justice and this is termed "interactional justice" (Gilliland & Hale) 2005).

The above stated constructs were incorporated into the theoretical framework for the Fiji survey where employee's distributive and procedural justices were assessed. The study by Gilliland et al. (2001) is relevant to the Fiji study and theoretical framework because justice expectation variables will be examined as potential moderating variables to the relationship between some independent (network ties) and dependent variable (worker performance). Further, this finding is also crucial in the examination of the hiring processes in Fiji's public service because the perception of interpersonal treatment, whether they may be positive or negative is crucial in the measurement of applicant's perception of justice in the HR selection models in Fiji's public service.

The instrument in the study by Gilliland & Chan (2001) has been adapted to the theoretical model as the moderating variables (please refer to fig 1.0). After analyzing a set of other theoretically plausible models, Gilliland & Chan (2001)'s model is the best of the set of possible models, since its four specific instruments are particularly important to the advancement of justice research and the four instruments included in the model are; individuals subjective perceptions /self-serving biases (distributive), test content &

methods/selection tools and how they are implemented (procedural), quality of interpersonal treatment received (interactional) and adequacy of information conveyed.

In developing their theory of organizational justice, Bell, Ryan & Wiechman (2004), examined the association between organizational justice and applicant perceptions in a HR selection environment. This piece of literature supports Gilliland et al. (2005)'s work and elaborates the experiences of justice perceptions and its likely impacts on HR selection. They examined and tested the three sources of expectations – direct experience, indirect experience and other beliefs to identify the determinants of justice expectations in a HR selection context. Hence, their research design was formulated around three (3) underlying assumptions. The first assumption was that justice expectations in a selection context is derived and greatly influenced by an applicant's past experience in the same institution, taking into account his/her personal characteristics and the environmental influence. The next assumption was deduced around the idea that justice expectations in a selection context is derived and greatly influenced by a person's existing belief about an organization, taking into account his/her personal characteristics and the environmental influence. Lastly, they stated that the final assumption in the article was that justice expectations in a selection context is greatly influenced by an applicant's indirect experience in the same institution, taking into account his/her personal characteristics and the environmental influence.

The relevancy of (Bell, et al., 2004)'s research on the theoretical framework for the Fiji public service study is quite substantial for the following reasons; firstly an applicant's past experience in a hiring environment in one of the public sector organization in Fiji may influence his or her current justice perception level. Further, a person's extant belief about an organization, taking into accounts his/her personal characteristics and the environmental influence is a strong determinant of justice perception and this is crucial for the Fiji study. Lastly, an applicant's indirect experience in the same institution, taking into account his/her

personal characteristics and the environmental influence, for example, he or she may not be formally advised as to why he/she was not selected for the job, has significant implications on his/her justice perceptions.

Social Networking Theory: Networking Relationships

This aspect of the framework highlights the importance of relationship ties and networking relationships in a public service institution hiring processes and how that subsequently impacts worker performance, drawing on the studies by Harrington (2001) and Acquah & Eshun (2010). Relationship ties are the condition of being related, connected or associated through the same object of interest.

It has been noted that Harrington (2001) examined the impact of net instrumental ties through task orientation and group heterogeneity on performance, rather than selections decisions. The significant gap emerging from her work was capitalised by this study and subsequently expanded this model to critically examine the influence of net instrumental ties on HR selection decisions taking into account employee's justice perception of the influence. Further, her studies was also utilised in the theoretical framework to showcase how employee justice perceptions control group heterogeneity variables to induce the relevant worker performance level. She classified network ties into two (2) ideal types: instrumental bonds, which is the network ties among co-workers and affective bonds, which is the network ties based on similarity/attraction processes, such as those between family and friends.

Agneessens & Wittek (2008) supported Harrington (2001)'s ideology by stating that social relationships improve individual and organizational performance, because they positively affect the satisfaction and well-being of employees. Further, when associating Agneessens & Wittek (2008)'s work with Harrington (2001)'s study, one may deduce that social relationships or some form of network ties may be transformed into social capital

which is important for individual and organizational performance. This finding is crucial for the Fiji public services study because of the heterogeneity in Fiji's labour market and the potential within the heterogeneity ethnicity mix.

Further, key variables emerging from social network theory: instrumental and affective ties are assumed to have affected employee perceptions of justice of the hiring processes in Fiji's public service (Harrington, 2001). The differing perceptions of justice by employees may have positive or negative impacts on worker performance through group heterogeneity variables such as KSA, age and ethnicity. Employee justice perceptions are likely to correlate with group heterogeneity i.e. knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA), ethnicity and age to deduce variations in worker performance levels and subsequently organizational productivity (please refer to fig 1.0).

Acquaah & Eshun (2010) complimented (Harrington, 2001)'s research findings and re-inforced the theoretical framework through their research theme. They found that only managerial social networking relationships with top managers of other firms, government bureaucratic officials, and community leaders enhance organizational performance. The ideology entrenched in Acquaah & Eshun (2010)'s work has identified a gap to be capitalised in the Fiji Government research via the theoretical framework in that a situational analysis of all employees irrespective of organizational status will be conducted. Further, they found that the effect of networking relationships on performance is not always positive but contingent on organizational as well as environmental characteristics; hence firms could not establish networking relationships with other firms without considering the characteristics of those firms and the environment under which they operate. This finding is also crucial for the anticipated study on Fiji civil service because if positive networking relationships are contingent on an organization's internal and external environment; this will have a significant

bearing on the anticipated performance. Likewise, negative networking relationships are also contingent on an organization's environmental situations.

Hence, the major propositions of the study accentuated from these findings allowed the theoretical framework to direct the research question of the study to the postulated hypotheses which are as follows:

Hypotheses A:

Hi: The positive impact of instrumental ties on worker performance will be greater in organizations with perception of justice than in organizations with perception of injustice.

Hypotheses B:

H2: The negative impact of affective ties on worker performance will be greater in organizations with perception of injustice than in organizations with perception of justice.

Group Heterogeneity

Davidson & Friedman (1998) stated that demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, age and competency levels may likely to influence an individual's expectations of justice because they capture some issues between groups variability in past fairness experience or beliefs systems. This will also provide further insight into the consequences of justice expectations, particularly how it affects employee performances and productivity.

In their study, Ployhart & Ryan (1997) used the organizational justice and attribution theory frameworks as their discipline base to understand the processes by which applicants perceive and react to selection procedure and decisions. The theoretical constructs for their study included adapting portions of Gilliland's (1993) model of organizational justice to examine applicant's pre-application and post-offer perceptions. Ployhart & Ryan (1997) argued that each stage of the selection decision may present different types of perceptions and reactions and the relationships between process fairness and behavioural intentions at both

the pre-application and post-offer stages of the selection process has not been examined with actual applicants and that was one of the focus in the study. They further stated that behavioural intention variables used in the study were chosen because they have been studied in past research and have practical significance to organizations. Ployhart & Ryan (1997)'s work complimented and reinforced Davidson & Friedman (1998)'s contribution to the theoretical framework of this study in stating that employees perception of the selection procedure and decisions of the organization will correlate a similar reaction with the heterogeneity variables (KSA, Age, Ethnicity etc)

Further, part of the theoretical constructs of their study included Weiner (1986)'s attribution frameworks. Attribution or people's causal ascriptions of events and behaviours are a fundamental part of social perception, and are considered "the underpinnings of further judgments, emotional reactions, and behavior" (p.54) (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Attributions are important because what a person perceives to be the cause of some event can influence how that individual will respond to the event (Weiner, 1986). In adopting Weiner (1986)'s theory, Ployhart & Ryan (1997) argued that the theory makes clear predictions about how an individual should respond to a selection decision and also provides information about why the reaction occurs (i.e. the nature of causal ascriptions). Ployhart & Ryan (1997)'s research design included combining portions of Gilliland's (1993) model of organizational justice and Weiner (1986)'s attribution framework purporting to explain an applicant's reactions of the organization's selection decisions from an organizational justice and an attribution framework. As per Gilliland's (1993) organizational justice model, the variables were initially operationalised from two (2) starting stances; process fairness to measure pre-application reactions and outcome fairness to measure post-offer reactions.

Weiner's (1986) attribution framework is critical in assessing the impact of heterogeneity variables in inducing worker performance, given the employees perception of

HR selection decisions and procedures. An applicant's knowledge of the selection decision influences the outcome affect regarding that decision and people will spontaneously search for causal ascriptions when an outcome is unexpected, negative, or important (Weiner, 1986; Wong & Weiner, 1981). The individual will also have a positive or negative affective reaction to the outcome (Kluger & Rotherstein, 1993). Hence, the three (3) causal dimensions of attributions were specifically measured and these included the variable of locus of control which was initially examined to ascertain whether a cause is perceived to be due to factors internal or external to the person. The second variable assessed is stability, which indicates the extent to which the cause is seen as stable or unstable in the future (Weiner, 1979). Finally, the third variable, controllability was also assessed to examine the amount of control the individual has over the outcome (Weiner, 1986). Expectations, self-perceptions, and intentions were then determined as a result of the levels of these dimensions, and there are differential relationships between these variables for a selection applicant. Even though Brockner and Wisenfield (1996) summarized a large body of literature that had found that procedures matters most when outcomes are unfair or undesirable, an important finding in the work by Ployhart & Ryan (1997) suggests the opposite, i.e. that procedures matter most when outcomes are perceived as fair.

Ployhart & Ryan (1997) and Weiner's (1986)'s study is relevant to the Fiji public service study because of the following issues; firstly, an outcome of the study highlights that procedures matter most when outcomes are perceived as fair. This finding has important implications to the current study because the perceptions of the key stakeholders to the hiring process and in particular the hiring practices play a crucial role in the build-up of their respective justice perceptions. Secondly, the process of gathering applicant's pre-application and post-offer perceptions is crucial for the Fiji case study scenario because it will ascertain whether Fiji's public sector has been engaging on a recruitment process and not selection

process. This issue ties in well with the situational analysis organised and spearheaded by the theoretical framework in this paper because employees perception of current and past HR selection processes will be analysed.

Worker Performance and Productivity

As earlier stated, Harrington (2001) examined the impact of net instrumental ties through task orientation and group heterogeneity on performance, rather than selections decisions. This study expanded her ideology to critically examine the influence of net instrumental ties on HR selection decisions taking into account employee's justice perception of the influence. Further, her studies was utilised in the theoretical framework to showcase a theoretical stance on how employee justice perceptions control group heterogeneity variables to induce the relevant worker performance level.

In her study, Greiling (2006) stated that promoters of performance measurement are convinced that performance measurement can greatly contribute to an efficiency boost in the field of public service. Her study examined the potential offered by performance management and performance-based contracting for increasing the efficiency of public service delivery. However, she found that the mere existence of performance measurement does not automatically produce an increase in efficiency as a side effect. She reiterated that whether performance measurement will work as an add-on for rationalization can be doubted from the standpoint adopted by Max Weber, and it may even be more likely that the stability and predictability of public service delivery will decrease with the introduction of performance measurement and performance contracts. This finding is crucial for the Fiji public service survey and justifies the importance of analyzing the current performance measurement instruments employed by the Fiji Public Service Commission, as per the direction of the theoretical framework.

Further, Greiling (2006)'s study concentrate on the question whether performance measurement leads to increase efficiency of public service delivery. In that context, she stated that efficiency is understood as a ratio of output to input. Hence, a public service is efficient if a defined output is reached by minimizing the input factors, or if, given a defined amount of input factors, an output maximum is reached. All in all, a satisfying efficiency level is achieved if the benchmark for a feasible input/output ratio is met.

The theoretical framework presented in this paper also guides the researcher to analyze and formulate a performance benchmark which should be utilised by the Fiji Public Service Commission. Courty & Marschke (2004) stated that an important challenge in the design of performance measurement, accountability, and incentive systems is the establishment of relevant benchmark levels of performance, also known as performance standards. The construction of performance standards is central to the legitimacy and success of performance measurement systems. Courty & Marschke (2004) also stated that performance standards establish benchmarks to guide the evaluation of actual performance and to construct measures of value-added, and performing above or below the standard can have important short-term consequences (rewards, budget revision) as well as long term ones (promotion, structural reorganization).

As of now, the Fiji Public Service Commission (FPSC) has set in place worker performance benchmarks for civil servants; however, the efficiency of these worker performance instruments needs to be critically examined. The Fiji Public Service performance assessment for contract officers (PACO) initially analyses workplace assessment using the following variables: punctuality and attendance, interpersonal communication, flexibility, commitment to PSC values and code of conduct, presentation, team relationship, and these are measured on a five point likert scale. Further, worker performance is then assessed using the following variables: professional attributes,

supervisory and leadership, skills and abilities, standard and quality of work performance, initiative and resourcefulness, judgments, attitude, responsiveness and qualification, training and competencies www.psc.gov.fj.

However for those who were appointed prior to 2009, their performances are assessed using the Annual Confidential Report (ACR). The ACR of the public servants are written with a view to adjudge their performance every year in the areas of their work, conduct, character and capabilities. By convention, the system of writing confidential reports has two main objectives. First and foremost is to improve performance of the subordinates in their present job. The second is to assess their potentialities and to prepare them, to be filled by the reporting, reviewing and accepting authorities in an objective and impartial manner. The current Annual Confidential Report (ACR) of the Fiji Public Service are using the following variables to assess worker performance: quality of work, quantity, knowledge required by the job, initiative and resourcefulness, judgment, degree of supervision required, responsibility and ability to communicate www.psc.gov.fj.

As per the above, the study on Fiji's public service will critically examine worker performance and productivity particularly on the institutions under examination, specifically analyzing the effectiveness of the current performance and productivity measurement mechanisms. The ACR and PACO format will be assessed in terms of how they accurately measure the tasks and roles of appointed officers. Hence, the essence of critiquing a model is to build on the founding principles so as formulate newer models which are relevant to the current circumstances where organizations are operating with the view of not only meeting but exceeding customer expectations. These newer models provide the basis for the formulation of organization polices and regulations to ensure that inputs are efficiently utilized, costs contained and productivity enhanced and sustained.

Practicable Contribution of the Framework

The theoretical framework introduced in this paper has set the parameters to critically analyse the HR selection processes in Fiji's public service and examine pieces of legislation that have constitutional significance for the Fiji Government and in particular the Fiji Public Service Commission (FPSC). Hence it is only obvious that the researcher begin with the analysis of legislations governing HR selection in Fiji's public services.

In their study, Konig et al. (2010) highlighted that the scientist-practitioner gap in personnel selection is large. Thus, it is important to gain a better understanding of the reasons that make organizations use or not use certain selection procedures, rules and regulations. Based on institutional theory, they predicted that six variables should determine the use of selection procedures: the procedures' diffusion in the field, legal problems associated with the procedures, applicant reactions to the procedures, their usefulness for organizational self-promotion, their predictive validity, and the costs involved. Klehe (2004) argued that the general predictions made by institutional theory can also be applied to the use of personnel selection procedures. She further stated that if the use or non use of selection procedures is considered to be one specific strategic decision an organization can make, then institutional theory should help to explain which procedures are used and which are not.

Konig et al. (2010) reiterated that the idea that organizations try to achieve legitimacy has major implications for personnel selection because it predicts that legal considerations, applicant reactions, and the extent of diffusion of a procedure in the field should be important aspects HR selection. They further stated that institutional theory can also be used to derive the hypothesis that organizations may consider HR selections as an opportunity to promote themselves. Schuler (2000) clearly stated that under institutionalist theory, organizations operate in a manner consistent with the rationalized myths that will garner them legitimacy in their external environment. In this respect, it is assumed that once justice is perceived in the

HR selection model, stakeholders in the external environment will render legitimacy, hence exerting trusts in management and overall operations.

This issue has important implication for this paper and the Fiji study because Commodore Frank Bainimarama overthrew a democratically elected government in Fiji accusing them of being inefficient, ineffective, unproductive and racist, promising stakeholders that he and his regime will clean up the “faults” in the government systems. In other words, in December 2006, the perceived illegality of the HR selection processes of the then government of the day is assumed to have triggered the over throw and change of government.

Klehe (2004) also stated that if organizations face legal claims against them, this could mean serious damage to the legitimacy of the organization, not only due to losing a case in court, but also financial losses. She also stated that legal considerations could also produce fear in organizations that the use of certain selection procedure may not be legally defensible. In their study, Beatty et al. (2003) compounded the argument by stating that HR has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure laws are followed. Failure to do so puts the organization and government for that matter in legal jeopardy. The above has important implication for the current regime in Fiji and importantly, the perceptions of the Fiji public servants on the current HR selection processes employed by the government. Over the years, different stakeholder perceptions of the Fiji government public policy, rules and regulations triggered the period of political instability which began in 1987.

Theoretical Framework of the Future

Bell, et al. (2004) proposed certain theoretical limitations which will have positive implications for future research; firstly, that “future research is needed to better understand exactly how expectations fit into the larger organizational justice framework and the

implications of justices expectations for understanding and enhancing applicant perceptions. In addition they also proposed that further studies needs to be done on the role of expectation strength in determining the effects of justice expectations because as the strength of an expectation increases, so does its impact on an individual's cognitions, attitudes, and behaviours.

The relevancy of (Bell, et al., 2004)'s research on a future theoretical framework is quite substantial for the following reasons; firstly an applicant's past experience in a hiring environment may influence his or her current justice perception level. Further, a person's extant belief about an organization, taking into accounts his/her personal characteristics and the environmental influence is a strong determinant of justice perception. Lastly, an applicant's indirect experience in the same institution, taking into account his/her personal characteristics and the environmental influence, for example, he or she may not be formally advised as to why he/she was not selected for the job, has significant implications on his/her justice.

Further, Ployhart & Ryan (1997) has highlighted that it is probable that future researchers may examine how process fairness relates to the diagnosticity of procedural information, (for example; fair procedures are more diagnostic) i.e. the more diagnostics a procedure is, the higher the probability that it is fair. They also revealed that "future research should attempt to more directly examine possible theoretical reasons for the interaction between process fairness and the selection outcome (or perceived outcome) on self perceptions, perhaps by considering the role of "self – verification".

It is also prudent for future researchers to dwell further on the theoretical framework presented in this paper and conceptualise on specific variables that integrate the specific agents and elaborate on their theoretical stance. Rocco & Plakhotnik (2009) stated that a conceptual framework relates concepts, empirical research, and relevant theories to advance

and systematize knowledge about related concepts or issues. They further stated that such a framework would help researchers define the concept, map the research terrain or conceptual scope, systematize relations among concepts, and identify gaps in the literatures. Hence, since the current study concentrates on the public service, it would be prudent for future researchers to examine public sector institutions.

Conclusions

This integrated literature review has examined a selection of published knowledge about HR selection distortions and in particular a theoretical framework stance. The intention of mapping the framework was to organise and conceptualise it in regards to who the theorists are and in which sites of engagement they create. Likewise, our framework has highlighted an effort to describe the significant contribution of each theory in formulating the model. Using the appropriate framework will improve the quality of manuscripts and increase the likelihood of favourable critiques by reviewers and editors.

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Appendix

FIGURE 1.0 – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FIJI CASE MODEL

