Impact of background characteristics and gender-role attitudes on Chinese perceptions of selection criteria in employment

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A random sample of 699 (327 men and 372 women) currently employed Chinese subjects participated in a study that examined their perceptions of common selection criteria in employment. Results of factor analysis showed that various selection criteria could be grouped under four underlying factors. In general, participants rated the Psychological Attribute factor as the most important criterion, followed closely by the Experience and Skill factor, and viewed the Physical Attribute and Demographic factors as the least important. Results of hierarchical regression analyses showed that participants' gender-role attitudes, especially those towards men's and women's roles in education, marriage and social interactions, were the most salient predictors of their perceptions towards the selection criteria. This remained true even after controlling for participants' background characteristics. Participants' gender, age and educational attainment were also predictive of their appraisal of various selection criteria in employment.

Key words: Chinese gender bias, Chinese selection criteria, employment gender stereotypes, employment selection bias, employment selection criteria.

Introduction

Researchers have emphasized the importance of gender-associated stereotypes in explaining and perpetuating bias in employment selection (Martinko & Gardner, 1983; Glick et al., 1988; Sheets & Bushardt, 1994; Perry, 1997), which have important negative consequences for employers, employees and organizations. As gender bias in human resources practices is relatively unexplored in contemporary Chinese societies, the present study aims to examine how gender-role attitudes affect Chinese perceptions of selection criteria in employment.

Studies have found that people seem to possess schemas of applicants’ characteristics associated with their perceptions of good person-job and person-organization fit (Bretz et al., 1993; Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof-Brown, 2000), which are often included as criteria for hiring decisions. People tend to emphasize applicants’ knowledge, skills and abilities in assessing the person-job fit; and view personality traits and values as more representative...