

Introduction

We aim to understand the role of perceived fairness in selection mechanisms. Organizations use different selection mechanisms when recruiting people. The study explores peoples' perceptions regarding the fairness of these mechanisms.



Research Questions

1. Do perceptions of fairness vary according to selection mechanisms?
2. Do these perceptions change depending on whether people are:
 - a) Selected / not selected?
 - b) Offered cash / offered a voluntary position?
3. Do selection mechanisms affect peoples' motivation for a task, even when the level of economic incentive is the same?

Previous Research

Kahneman et al (1986)

- Challenge traditional economic theory by demonstrating the effect of fairness on peoples' decision making.
- People perceive economic actions as fair when others treated fairly.
- People resist unfair changes – even at a personal cost.
- Fairness is influenced by implicit rules deeming what is an unfair.

Savage et al (2010)

- Studied perceptions regarding fairness of different selection procedures.
- Weak first rule is perceived as most fair.
- People regard price change as fair when there is a humanitarian reason behind this change.

Our Research Design

Overview

- Data collected through a survey among MacEwan students.
- Subjects presented with hypothetical scenarios regarding recruitment for a sustainability initiative on campus (fig 1).
- Respondents asked to rate their perceptions of fairness for four possible selection procedures (fig 3).

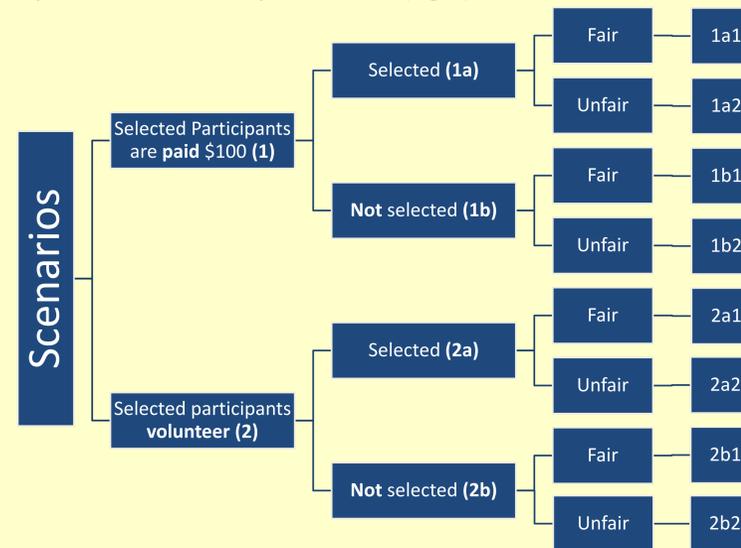


Fig 1: Combinations of Scenarios

Challenges

- Designing a survey to incorporate different combinations of scenarios: 2 X 2 X 2 factor design (fig 1).
- Keeping the survey short & clear: Google docs for questionnaire design.
- Randomizing scenarios: accomplished through Qualtrics platform.
- 8 different versions (fig 2).
- Contrasting paid versus voluntary position to determine if perceptions of fairness change.

Paid Presented First:	Volunteer Presented First:
1. 1a1, 2a1	5. 2a1, 1a1
2. 1a2, 2a2	6. 2a2, 1a2
3. 1b1, 2b1	7. 2b1, 1b1
4. 1b2, 2b2	8. 2b2, 1b2

Fig 2: Different Survey Versions (sample size = 254)

Main Results

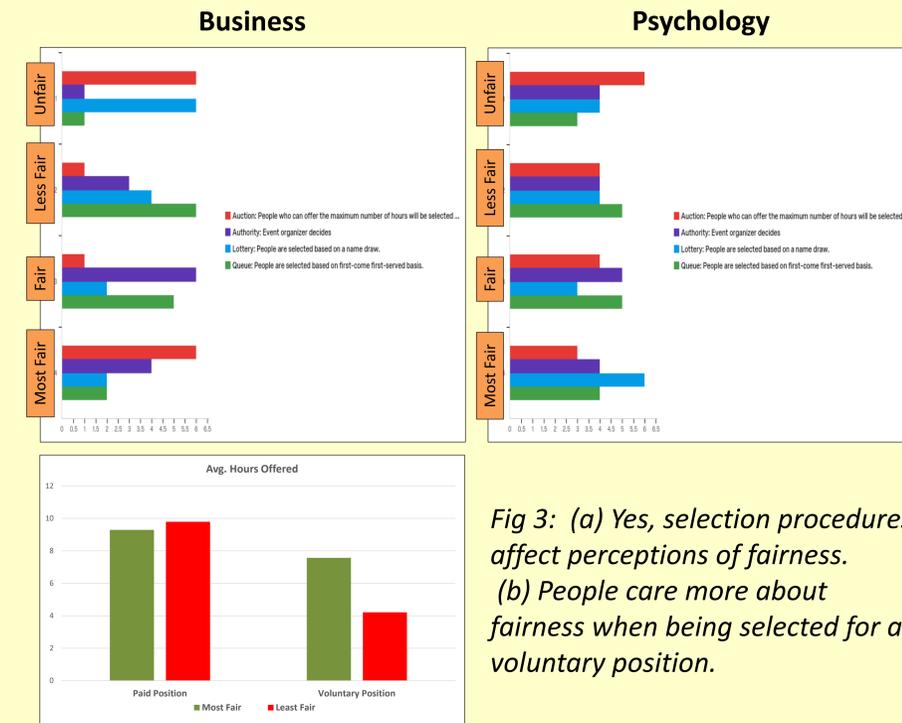


Fig 3: (a) Yes, selection procedures affect perceptions of fairness. (b) People care more about fairness when being selected for a voluntary position.

Significance:

- Organizational behavior: use of fair procedures.
- Public policy: ensuring compliance.
- Theory building: monetary versus non-monetary incentives.

Next Steps

1. More data collection: making the hypothetical real!
2. Comparing results from different scenarios.

References

Kahneman, D., J. Knetsch and R. Thaler. 1986. Fairness as a Constraint on Profit Seeking; Entitlements in the Market, American Economic Review. 76: 728-741.

Savage, D. A., & Torgler, B. 2010. Perceptions of fairness and allocation systems. Economic Analysis and Policy, 40(2), 229-248.

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