

Article

## Enabling Corporate Sustainability from a Talent Acquisition Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

The first three pillars of sustainability relating to economic, social and, environmental domains are being investigated extensively with regards to corporate sustainability with a focus on reporting methods and corporate responsibilities that contribute to the overall corporate strategy. However, there is a lack of research pertaining to the human domain which is the fourth pillar of sustainability, especially from a talent acquisition perspective in improving human capital. The objective of this paper is related to addressing this paucity in research by adopting an exploratory study on the existing employee selection processes in practice using a mixed-method approach. This paper focuses predominantly on the qualitative data from various key stakeholders and uses thematic analysis to study the interview processes. The objective is to present the findings that could contribute towards shared values related to corporate sustainability through reinforcement of the best practices in talent acquisition as well as the establishment of maximum transparency in the process. The findings from this paper are rooted on the grounds of a social initiative that provides a conceptual decision model called DSRVG approach to enhance transparency and improve structure and consistency during the employee selection interview which in turn can contribute towards enhancing corporate sustainability.

**KEYWORDS:** employee selection process; talent acquisition (TA); human resource management (HRM); sustainability; transparency; interview structure; decision making; qualitative thematic analysis

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Received: 10 January 2020

Accepted: 01 March 2020

Published: 13 March 2020

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### ABBREVIATIONS

TAFE, Technical and Further Education; VTA, Victorian TAFE Association; KSC, Key Selection Criteria; DSRVG, Determine KSC-Set weights and scale-Rate applicant-Validate score-Group consensus; HR, Human

Resources; TA, Talent Acquisition; HM, Hiring Member; HRM, Human Resource Management; AART, Applicant Attribution-Reaction Theory

## INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human resource management (HRM) processes play a pivotal role in portraying the commitments an organisation has towards its sustainability [1]. The association between such HRM processes and organisation sustainability grows stronger with the involvement of its stakeholders. Especially when the processes can demonstrate shared values and establish ethical conduct that has a positive impact on improving its stakeholder/employee relationships [2]. A structured focus in recruiting, selecting, developing and maintaining employees of an organisation via the HRM processes plays a vital role in the sustainability of the organisation [3]. Among the four pillars of sustainability pertaining to economic, social, environmental and human domains, the first three pillars are being widely explored in the context of corporate sustainability, predominantly focusing on reporting methods and alignment with the overall corporate strategy and responsibility [4,5]. There is a paucity of research from the human dimension, particularly in maintaining and improving human capital from a talent acquisition (TA) perspective [3]. This paper aims to address this gap in the literature by studying the employee selection process and following a qualitative thematic analysis of information from key stakeholders of the interview process to present shared values related to corporate sustainability.

Staffing can be broadly categorised as the process of gathering via recruitment, choosing the right applicant via selection, and retaining talented employees to work towards achieving the organisational goals [6]. This paper principally explores the decision-making process by interviewers and the perspectives of the applicants. By studying industry practices and theoretically informed and empirically grounded analyses, this research attempts to operationalise the application of a consistent employee selection decision model that can assist interviewers and applicants. This study focuses on current and past employees from 17 TAFE organisations in Victoria. This research aims at continuing work from existing works of literature and explore further along the same lines to understand the selection decisions in the interview process from an Australian context [7]. As the second part of this research, further investigation is carried out to study if there is any potential to increase the objective elements in selection decisions while retaining the necessary elements of subjective hiring decisions as obtained from the first part of this study [8]. This second part of the research aims to explore further the consistent use of a decision model that incorporates the emerging mixed method that involves components of the objective and subjective methods of the hiring process.

The significance for this study in the Australian setting, which assists in developing specific research contribution comes about with the

evidence that there are methodological limitations in existing research, namely limited representative work on the hiring decision process in a real-life scenario outside laboratory simulated events [9,10] and fictional applicants [11–13], specifically in the context of higher education TA. At a time when the TAFE sector is taken by storm with multiple changes and restructuring since 2012, this research would reflect on the experiences of interviewers and applicants during this transition, which can help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current hiring processes. This facilitates in bringing out the potential for the introduction of objective elements into the decision-making process for hiring employees. Further, this research acts as a valuable resource for researchers, academics, and HR practitioners alike to benchmark their interview hiring decision practices against the proposed best approach identified in this study, to improve the transparency [14] and fairness [15] of a hiring decision. This is achieved in this study by providing a comprehensive and representative empirically-based portrait of the employee selection process and decision-making within the TAFE institutions operating in Victoria. In engaging with these research gaps, this study intends to make significant contributions to knowledge; namely: Conceptual—proposing a consistent selection decision-making process for TAFEs based on current industry practices; Empirical—providing the sketch to replicate this study in other sectors facing similar issues with organisational restructure and are interested in reviewing their talent acquisition and decision-making processes.

The research question for this study focuses on critical aspects such as transparency, fairness, validity and reliability in the interview process and hiring decisions made by the TAFE members of VTA present in Victoria. This research engages validation strategies such as data triangulation by obtaining data from multiple sources such as the interviewer, interview applicant and HR. The paper addresses the overarching research aim stated above by asking the following research question: *“1A—How might more objective elements be introduced in the employee-selection process to reduce subjective decision-making? 1B—Can a consistent model of interview structure/employee-selection be introduced across a sector to achieve organisation sustainability?”* This is structured around the recommended future research proposed by Macan [16], where the need for a consistent model of interview structure was listed for immediate research attention. With the focus on following a consistent selection decision process [17–19], this research investigates the potential of the TAFEs in adopting a consistent selection decision process across all its members to assist in establishing corporate sustainability. Through this empirical examination, this research makes a significant conceptual contribution to propose a model for a consistent selection decision process in order to achieve organisation sustainability.

A theoretical framework is used in the research study as a guide, which has an essential role in managing the literary and academic

process of the study. This study rests on Applicant Attribution-Reaction Theory (AART). AART was created in 2004 by Ployhart and Harold [20] and has the central idea that the employee selection process is determined by an attributional process fundamentally driven by reactions originating from the applicant. In the context of this study, the relationship phenomena refer to the TA process and its impact and association with the organisation. With behaviour phenomena, this study attempts to understand the perspectives and behavioural outcomes of the interviewer and the applicant during the employee selection process. With regards to the phenomena related to the event, the study focuses on the event/process of employee selection decision making methods to understand the potential to improve the process. Undertaking this study with the Applicant Attribution-Reaction Theory (AART) as a platform serves to be a directing outline for this investigation that underpins the research question of this study.

This paper begins describing the background of the study from a broader perspective of covering the importance of an employee to an organisation followed by conceptualising the TA process which serves as the gateway for applicants to become an employee as a part of the organisation. This is further narrowed down to explore and identify the selection process adopted by the organisation in the TA of its workforce. This paper then sets out to draw attention on the focus of this study, which pertains to the employee hiring decisions made during the recruitment selection process from the interview stage until the final decision made to offer the job to the successful applicant.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **Conceptualising Talent Acquisition**

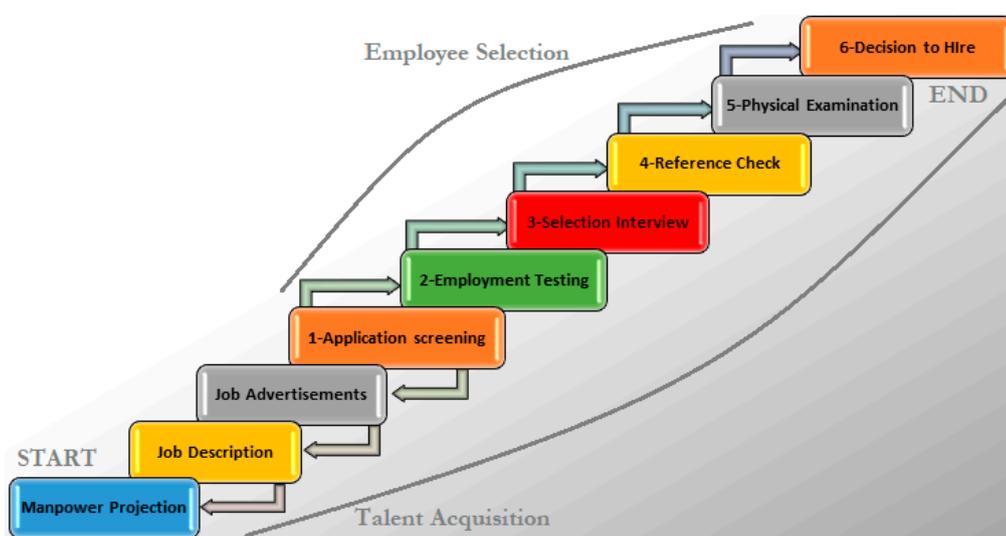
It is essential to understand the meaning of talent in order to study the employee selection process, which is a TA component of HRM in an organisation. Researchers have continuously debated the exact meaning of talent. Some of the discussions involved people not being precise on the term talent in an organisation [21], while some others noted the inability of companies to define talent and manage it [22]. Finally, there was also the argument that there was not yet a standard, single contemporary, a commonly established definition for talent [23]. Despite the lack of a universal definition for talent, there has nonetheless been interesting research related to acquiring, managing and retaining this talent from an organisational perspective (e.g., succession planning).

Furthermore, narrowing the focus on talent acquisition, there is a rising awareness that each organisation formulates its perception and implication of talent instead of espousing a universal definition [24]. As a result of this, the myriad TA processes are evidenced in business and management literature, sharing diverse insight on the same objective of wanting to acquire the most talented employee for the organisation.

Mohapatra and Sahu [19] have very categorically represented the dire need for and the growing shift from the traditional intuition-based employee selection process to a more factual and data-driven selection process.

Figure 1 demonstrates the broadly categorised steps of the TA process from start to end and has sub-listed and numbered the employee selection process from 1 to 6. It also establishes an overall picture of how the employee selection process is nested in the TA process. The employee selection process is indicated with upward moving arrows that begin from the applicant screening in response to the job advertisement by the employer. Other stages before selection are indicated with the downward moving arrows. The stages that follow the upward direction are the employment testing and assessment, the selection interview, background verification, qualifications and physical examination, to the final stage of offering the job to the applicant, with the selection interview presented in red to denote the focus of this study. Some of these stages may appear before or after each other and not necessarily in the same order as depicted in Figure 1.

An organisation is best known for the elements that constitute it [25], and the foundation of any organisation is its employees, the human assets [26]. Given the correlation between an organisation and its employees, the TA process can be deemed as a necessary and fundamental process to any organisation [27]. Interviewing has historically been the most common and widely used form of assessment and selection tool used in the employee selection process [28]. Considerable research continues in the area of the interview process, starting from attempts to understand the perspective of its validity [29], reliability [30], transparency [14] and understanding the constructs of structured and unstructured interviews [31,32].



**Figure 1.** Steps of the TA process nesting the selection process.

### **Conceptualising Selection Process in Talent Acquisition**

The employee selection process is a subsystem of the TA process, which covers all activities from the job advertisement as the beginning of the onboarding activities. The selection process starts from the interview stage, which has been the most common method of selection for a job [33]. An employee is referred to as the most critical asset of an organisation and termed as 'human asset' due to its contribution to the successful operation of the organisation. Ensuring quality, consistency, reliability and validity of each subsystem in the overall system of TA would result in establishing a successful and prosperous organisation [34].

Organisations are capable of smooth operations only if they can ensure quality and sufficient quantity output from the human asset [35]. This human asset is known to be the heart of an organisation as it encompasses the ability, skills and the necessary talent to complete the organisation's commitments [36]. The movement of other enterprise resources depends on this asset. The very existence, prosperity and dynamic improvements are collectively affected by the quality of this human asset [37]. Most successful organisations are of the realisation that its employees (the human assets) are their most profitable capital investment [38]. Under this premise, employees have become one of the most expensive and critical factors of production in the organisation, where the organisation's existence and development are pivoted on its employees [39]. The identification and selection of such a talented human asset for any organisation remain a challenge to all HR professionals globally [40].

### **Conceptualising Employee Selection Decision Process**

The ongoing debate in connection to the employee selection decision process is with regards to the inclusive vs exclusive understanding of the TA process [41]. According to the inclusive method, all individuals may be talented in their own way and possess the potential to add value to the organisation [42]. Under this method, each individual will have to be assessed uniquely to provide the opportunity for the individual to elaborate on their specific and different experiences, with the follow-up questions determined based on the responses from the applicant and are predominantly open-ended questions [43]. This method is very closely associated with the principles of the subjective approach of the selection decision. On the other hand, according to the exclusive method, some individuals may be more talented than the rest of the group. Under this method, a select individual's performance would stand out in comparison to the others. For this purpose of comparison, the same interview questions and assessment methods should be used to assist with evaluating each individual against one another [19]. Additionally, some organisations try to incorporate the operations of both methods depending on the position advertised, taking into consideration the

criticality of the job requirements. This methodology contributes to the definition of differentiated workforce strategy, which assists with modelling the approach to be used in the TA, based on each job requirement for the organisation [44].

By and large, in light of the gap of these methodologies and approaches, the past and current literature from academic and industry leans towards the objective, exclusive and metric-driven processes [45,46]. However, taking into consideration the different theoretical perspectives on the methods and approaches of TA discussed above, there is a lack of the fundamental agreement and clarity with regards to the optimal employee selection decision process [13,47,48]. Referring to the acquisition of talent and establishing a concrete employee selection decision, Boudreau and Ramstad [49] mention that it does not involve one single perspective that can be treated better than the others. Each organisation, driven by its Human Resources group, makes variations depending on the specific requirement of the position in an attempt to implement what seems the better alternative in practice for that organisation. This, according to Chuai, Preece [43] and Collings and Scullion [50], results in the lack of a universal consensus on the specific method or an explicit methodology associated with employee selection decision. Each organisation will determine what encompasses TA and what considerations should be given in the employee selection process by the leaders or executives running the organisation [33,51]. Notwithstanding that, as expressed by McDonnell and Collings [52], it is fundamentally indispensable for organisations to partake in a clear understanding on the mechanism of the employee selection decision, as this will decide and provide guidance in identifying and evaluating talent and thereby impacting the TA practices [45].

#### *Subjective selection decisions*

Kennedy-Luczak and Thompson [53] state that unstructured interviews are informal and use “tell me about yourself” type of open-ended questions, attempting to bring out much information from the applicant. Subjectivity occurs when information is open to individual interpretation. A selection decision is subjective if the interviewer’s impression and intuition of the applicant take precedence over the realistic information obtained during the interview [54]. Swan [55] states that in most selection decisions, there are extensive subjective elements used for the assessment of the applicant requirement. He notes that it is the principal means of selection, especially for white-collar jobs.

The phrase “Halo Effect” and “Horn Effect” are psychological terms that are used in the selection context to describe the cognitive bias of the interviewer on the applicant [56]. The halo effect arises when the interviewer’s perception of the applicant’s positive behaviour overrides all other average behaviour qualities and the interviewer, under this favourable influence, gives the applicant a “halo” [57]. For example,

when an applicant has obtained high scores in a knowledge test or is from a famous university, it would tend to influence the interviewer's impression of the applicant positively. The horn effect is the contrary of the halo effect [58], where the interviewer's perception of the applicant's negative behaviour overshadows all other qualities and the interviewer. Under this unfavourable influence, the interviewer gives the applicant "horns" [53]. For example, when an applicant states that they were made redundant or laid off, it would tend to negatively influence the interviewer's impression of them even though there was no fault committed by the applicant.

#### *Objective selection decisions*

This study will use the term "Objective" decisions, but there are other terms that support the same outcome, such as "structured", "systematic", "standardised", "patterned" and "guided". Objective relates to the removal of subjective viewpoints and refers to a systematic process that is purely grounded on solid facts. An objective selection decision is using information or data that is founded in fact and is mostly statistical that can be confirmed by any autonomous moderator [16]. The possibility of measuring and obtaining the same result when repeated makes the information obtained via this method exceedingly useful and trustworthy. Objective facts are indisputable if truthful, but training should be given to ensure the person applying this method could give the correct measurement and end up with a reliable result.

Research has reported that over 80 per cent of organisations from midsize to large companies have implemented the personality and ability assessments for applicants of entry and midlevel positions [59,60]. Fink [61] mention that these tests are predominantly aimed at helping the interviewer to identify a particular kind of individual with specific traits as per the job requirements, or to eliminate those applicants with traits that could lead to job performance failure. Research has demonstrated that the relationship between these tests and the performance of the applicants hired (based on the test scores) are robust and well recognised [62]. In the USA, most researchers and practitioners have acknowledged that applicant cognitive ability tests are effective predictors of future job performance across a wide range of jobs [63].

#### *Mixed-method—Part subjective and part objective*

While reviewing the ongoing discussions by researchers and supporters of structured and unstructured interviews, there was an emerging recommendation for a mixed method that incorporates the value from both types of selection procedures. While this method may not have been in use for long, it has caught the attention of researchers recently. Kuncel [64], converging attention on the weight of the indications from literature, coupled with the importance and seriousness of making the best selection decisions, suggests accommodating

interviewer biases for unstructured interviews while simultaneously attempting to maintain the systematic integrity from the structured interview process. For example, organisations can start with pre-screening to shortlist a set of qualified finalists using objective methods and then forward it to decision-makers who can use subjective methods. These two methods should be brought together in a way that advocates transparency and fairness [65].

Gallupe, DeSanctis [66] have listed the significant findings from their study on group decisions making, stating that the objective approach demonstrated an enhanced quality of decision while the decision time was not affected. Slightly in contrast to this finding is the result from a more recent study related to decision making by In-Uck, Mike [67], where they state that if decision-makers are asked to be as objective as possible then they will have no room to use their prior knowledge and experience, which could be valuable to make judgements when providing their final suggestions. In addition, they recommend that a degree of subjectivity is allowed to enhance the final judgement of the decision-makers. Their results indicate that the best decisions were made when subjectivity was exercised to the halfway mark of the assessment process. However, it is essential to note that, their findings clearly state that higher levels of subjectivity boosted the risk for loss of factual information and lower levels, restricting valuable prior experience and knowledge application in decision making. Finding this half-way mark will be a pursuit in this research.

A close examination of the research literature designates that empirical findings have, to a great extent (although not entirely), substantiated benefits of using measures and ratings to quantify the decisions [68]. Methods such as training the interviewer may be useful in eliminating biases to an extent, but not entirely [65]. Favouring behavioural interviewing method to competency-based method, which rated the applicants on pre-defined competencies, Barclay [69] stated that of the 63% who claimed to score applicants during an interview, less than 33% were willing to share their analyses. Again, the result of these analyses was not a systematic rating but merely pages recording evidence, thereby leaving doubt about the nature of scoring practice used in organisations. This, thereby reinforces a need for a well-established, simple, and commonly used scoring process, as highlighted by Macan [16]. The principal contribution of this paper is the generation of a scoring process that follows a mixed method approach by incorporating both subjective and objective elements of the selection. This is the research gap this study intends on addressing.

The primary focus of this research will be associated explicitly to study the area related to the employee selection in terms of understanding the potential to improve the interview decision-making process of the employee selection in the TA process, such that it can contribute to an improved selection model with more objective measures.

This research will attempt to understand the feasibility of these measures to serve as a framework to guide the interviewer's intuition in considering all the necessary aspects required for making an informed decision that can support the quantitative comparison of all the applicants, enhances applicant feedback and also serve as justification and a defence for making an evidenced-based hiring decision.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A research method can be entirely qualitative method, fully quantitative method or a combination of both these methods called the mixed method. The mixed-method is identified as the appropriate research method for this study with more emphasis given to qualitative analysis while taking supportive evidence from the quantitative responses. The procedure for data collection and analysis is conducted rigorously for both forms of the data obtained [70]. There are multiple ways and techniques in the mixed method where the data is combined from sophisticated to concurrent and straightforward to sequential forms of data collection and data analysis.

For this study, internal reliability is obtained by ensuring the same questions are used for all participants of the study involved in the survey questions, for the quantitative data collection and the semi-structured open interview questions for the qualitative data collection. This research also entails external reliability where, if this study is repeated with a different sample set for the test of reliability, then similar results can be expected by using the existing highly structured online survey and semi-structured interviews, where the format and layout is set up to assist participants in responding coherently, consistently and in a correlated format. Regarding this study, internal validity was established by adapting questions after a pilot test is executed, and necessary changes are implemented. External validity is associated with generalisability where for this study, generalisability is targeted by ensuring sufficient participants are recruited from each Institute for the interviews and extensive attempts made to construct a comprehensive population consisting of applicants, Hiring Managers, HR representatives and interviewers across multiple levels of the organisation. Also, in this study, concurrent validity, which is a form of criterion validity, is utilised by implementing the practice of testing two groups such as the successful and unsuccessful applicants' perspectives concurrently using the same questions. More than one independent source of information, such as interviews, observations, surveys and public reports and records, are utilised as data collection methods. This is to enrich complex findings and add breadth and depth in reporting the findings.

For the quantitative analysis, the anonymous online survey link is circulated to the participants after obtaining consent that the participant had experienced the employee selection process of a shortlisted TAFE Institute, resulting as a current/ex-employee of the institute. Similarly,

with the qualitative interviews, semi-structured questions are prepared in three parts:

1. The first part focusing on the participant's personal experience of the employee selection process, involving times of being successful and unsuccessful in acquiring the job;
2. The second part captures hiring member perspective if the participant has hiring experience; and
3. The final part focus on suggestions for improvement to the employee selection process.

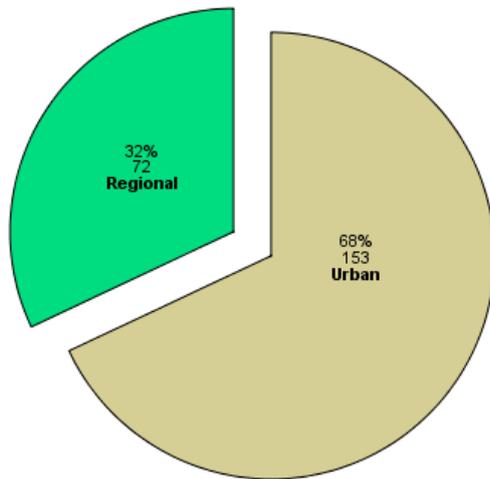
Upon acquiring the necessary access, the targeted respondents involving the HR professional, the interviewers, other current employees and previous employees are contacted by email requesting a 45–60 min appointment for the interview. Following this, and as per the appointments made, site visits are made for data collection involving focus interviews, observations and individual interviews and surveys, which contributes to the primary data of this research. The nature of these interviews is open-ended and semi-structured with an informal and friendly conversational tone. Some participants provided additional information related to this research which included public documents, media releases, organisational websites and investigative reports, which contributes to the secondary data of this research. From VTA worked favourably for this research in getting additional qualified participants for this study. The data obtained from the qualitative interviews are analysed using the thematic analysis and cross-case analysis to study the themes arising from the interview data collected from 74 participants and 1 focused interview group from 17 TAFEs. This helps to complement the data reported from the survey with enriching individual experiences reported during the interview. A cross-case analysis is used to further enhance the findings by providing additional dimensions from each TAFE's practises. NVivo is a software that is used for processing the transcribed audio files where content analysis, thematic analysis and cross-case analysis are performed. Table 1 enlists all questions that are used in the semi-structured interviews that are conducted with the 74 participants for this study. These questions are the basis on which other related questions are branched out to cover further depth for this analysis. Many questions were repeated to get the applicant's response from 3 different perspectives, Successful, Unsuccessful and as a Hiring member.

**Table 1.** Semi-structured interview questions.

<b>Successful and Unsuccessful Applicant</b>	
1	How was your personal interview experience when you applied for this job?
2	Have you been rejected for a job? At what stage of the hiring process was it, and how did you feel?
3	What more information would you have liked when the hiring decision was conveyed to you
4	What are your thoughts about the current hiring process, the advantages and disadvantages?
5	Do you always ask for feedback on the interviews, please explain why?
6	What is the information you seek and what is it you get when you ask for feedback?
7	How useful was the feedback provided?
8	Can you describe the best interview you have had as an interviewee? Why is it the best?
9	Can you describe the worst interview you have had as an interviewee? Why is it the worst?
<b>Hiring Interviewer experience</b>	
1	How many years have you been interviewing people being in the hiring team?
2	How often do you interview applicants, and for which roles?
3	What recruitment management system are you using?
4	What strategies do you use to shortlist for interviews?
5	What key elements will you be looking for in those resumes of interview applicants?
6	How do you evaluate candidacy against the requirements?
7	What key elements will you be looking for in the shortlisted interview applicants to hire?
8	What feedback do you provide to the candidates?
9	Can you describe the best interview you have had as an interviewer?
10	Can you describe the worst interview you have had as an interviewer?
<b>Hiring Process Improvement/Suggestions</b>	
1	Do you think the hiring process should be improved from its current state? If yes, how?
2	What are your thoughts on having a standardised interview structure with a scoring measure that can be shared with applicants?
3	How do you think we can underpin fairness, equity and transparency in the hiring process?
4	Is there anything else you would like to note, regarding the hiring process?

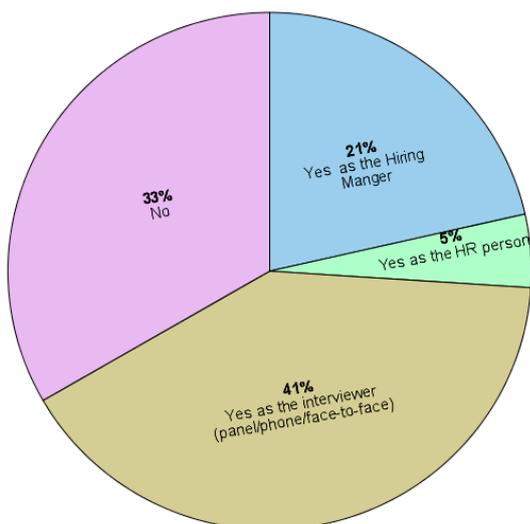
## RESULTS

This section presents the cross-section of the data collected from the survey to enhance the overall understanding of the findings presented. All 74 participants of the qualitative interviews also participate in the survey. Therefore, the demographic information is representative of all participants involved in this study. As identified earlier current and previous employees of the 17 TAFE/Dual sector organisations participated in this study. These are broadly categorised as urban and regional members of the Victorian TAFE Association as illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Geographical distribution of survey data collection in Victoria.

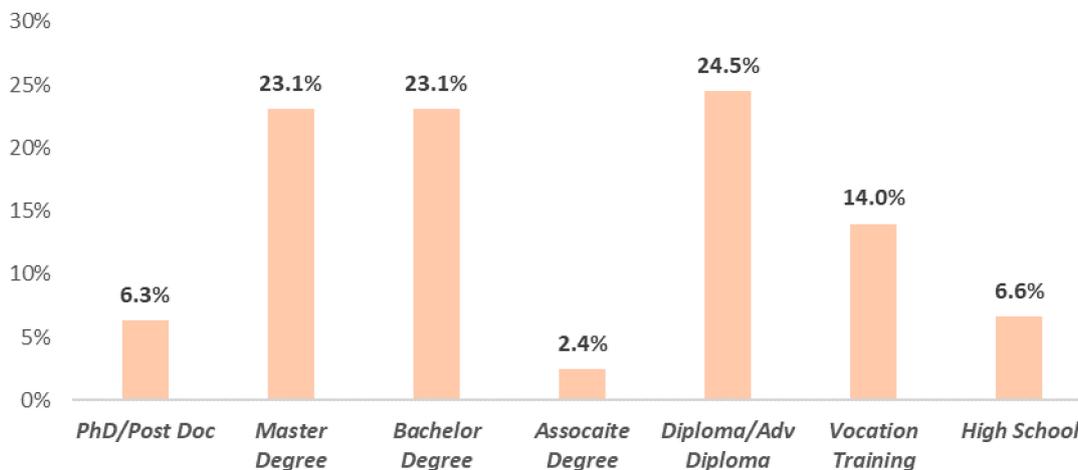
Figure 3 illustrates a breakdown of information by providing additional information on the nature of the participant's involvement as a hiring member. Most of the participants who identified themselves as hiring members are those who had experience as an interviewer in a panel, face-to-face or phone interview (41%). Immediately after this are those participants, who were hiring managers (21%) who are usually also known as the Chair of the interview panel. This study also had a representation from the human resources department's members grouped as hiring members (5%). Also, a section of the participants who did not have any hiring experience responded from an applicant's perspective (33%).



**Figure 3.** Hiring experience distribution.

The educational distribution of those participants who responded to this question is illustrated in Figure 4. The frequency distribution depicted below demonstrates that collectively the Bachelor and Masters qualifications (23% & 23%) appears to be the highest with 46% and those

with a Diploma or Advanced Diploma is around 25%. This study also involves participants with educational qualification of PhD/Post Doc (6%), Associate Degree (2%), vocational training (14%) and high school (7%). This information helps in establishing that the participants of this study are from across various types of educational background.



**Figure 4.** Education distribution.

The following discussion presents information pertaining to the potential of setting up a consistent and objective hiring decision-based employee selection process. To do so, this section presents the research findings in four parts: firstly, this section investigates the various employee interview selection methods and processes that are currently being practised in the TAFE sector. Secondly, it extends to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the current process. In the third part, it presents suggestions for improvements to the employee interview selection process. Finally, the fourth part of this section focuses on empirically evaluating the potential to establish a consistent hiring decision model incorporating objective elements in it.

### **Current Practices of Interview Selection Methods**

The employee interview selection methods have been slowly evolving by introducing various practices that can aid in the hiring decision-making process. Participants (coded as Pn) recollect their personal experiences of being successful and unsuccessful after an employee selection interview in the TAFE or dual sector and some of them are experienced hiring members.

#### *Existing processes and procedures of the selection process*

Majority of the participants share the opinion that in the TAFE/Dual sector the selection interview procedure was structured well and in accordance with the expectation of the applicants. Many applicants have worked across multiple organisations within the sector and note that the selection interview process was very similar in procedure across the

sector for most positions, except sessional employee hiring which uses a more informal and casual arrangement of interviewing applicants. In most cases, the position is advertised internally or externally requesting applicants to apply to ensure that they address all the key selection criteria along with submitting their resume. At least 50% of the organisations use some form of calculation based on metrics and scores to assess and shortlist the applicants for the interview. For regional institutes in both these instances, the participants mention that they were given the metrics and scoring sheets. However, in urban campuses, the participants note that they use scoring sheets that were devised by them and not given to them by the organisation in most instances. During the interview, most organisations relied on the assistance of the rough notes that the panel members jotted down during the interview and in the context of the methods to shortlist for interview, the same participant who had experience working in 3 different urban organisations mentions,

*“At (withheld) we just get the application forms, but no matrix is given... so we developed the matrix, where we, each of the members of the panel, participate in the shortlisting process and later on in the interview process ... Again at (withheld) it is something which we (panel members) usually do personally. For the selection criteria, we put the actual names of each candidate. And during the interview, the interviewer actually gives a number, a numerical value again between zero to five. This method was developed by us not given to us.”*

In all cases, the applicants report appearing before a panel interview and hiring members note that most organisations ensure there was gender distribution in the panel. The panel completes a selection report and submits it to the Human Resources department, which notifies the applicants of the outcome of the interview. In most cases, the unsuccessful applicant does not get any constructive feedback volunteered to them. However, if the applicant requests feedback, the HR Department provides the information from the selection report or forwards the request to the chair of the panel to provide feedback for the applicant during the interview. In such cases, the chair then relies on the notes that were taken during the interview to provide feedback to the applicant. Almost all hiring members believe that feedback was being provided to the applicants upon request by the chair or the HR Department, as P61 and P64 mentioned,

*“the chair of the panel would have done that [provided feedback], so I wouldn't have a clue.”*

*“If the process was underway, I wouldn't try to short circuit or mislead it. But I'd be guided by, who's been delegated as the person to provide feedback.”*

In summary, it appears from this evidence that it may be true that most applicants did not get feedback.

#### *Possible variations to the existing selection process*

The possible variations to the existing selection process are to the extent where some applicants believe that the entire selection interview process is a staged performance, where the decision is already made on the successful applicant even before the interview being conducted. In most instances, this was a case involving the internal applicants who were known to the hiring panel, which meant that the external applicants were likely at a significant disadvantage as noted by P01.

*“I sometimes think because of the rules that organisations make they may have to interview 3 people even if they have got the job and want you to have it, they still have to advertise to show they are going through their process.” (Male, Teacher)*

There are, however, a few participants who share an opposite view to the above opinions, where they note the hearsay of such practises, though they have not experienced or witnessed it firsthand.

#### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Existing Selection Processes**

The previous section presented information on the existing selection process, starting from the key selection criteria being published to the final outcome being conveyed to the applicant. This section focuses on the different advantages and disadvantages of all the stages, from shortlisting the applicant to making the final decision that is conveyed to the applicant. This section focuses on the stage when the organisation receives the applications. That stage commences with the applicant's response to the key selection criteria from the job description, to the outcome communicated to all applicants.

#### *Key Selection Criteria (KSC)*

The concept of Key Selection Criteria (KSC) has been adhered to very strictly since early 2000 as an industry practise and is relied upon extensively by the hiring members in shortlisting the applicants. The implementation and use of KSC in the selection process is considered both advantageous and disadvantageous. Elaborating the time involved in writing the KSC P14 explains,

*“Just the online application is 45 minutes, an hour, two hours depending on how much effort you put into this key selection criteria, and you want to put in a lot of effort into the key selection criteria because that's what it is to get the job. So, you're wasting two hours of someone's life there. You're wasting an hour of someone's life for the interview plus the half-day that they've got to have to take off*

*their work. It's a huge waste of time for anyone who's not going to get that job."*

The applicant must clearly understand the potential to fulfil the requirements of the job description (as published). This will enable the applicant to visualise their capacity to carry out the job requirements based on their knowledge, skills, behaviours, experience and qualifications. The KSC structures and facilitates the applicant to communicate their trade with hiring members, which is fundamental in the selection process. The KSC must be established by an organisation to provide proper guidance and documentation between the hiring member and the applicant by requiring a KSC for each particular job. This ultimately gives the applicant a higher level of clarity on whether they meet the job requirements. Similarly, for the hiring member, this helps in consideration of the applicant for an interview.

#### *Pre-determined applicant selection*

Having studied the present methods followed by the selection panel and to seek means of improving those methods for future benefits, a study is required to analyse the advantages and disadvantages to understand the efficiencies of the system and reduce the difficulties faced by the panel and the applicants in the process. It is now evident that an applicant meeting and addressing the key selection criteria is the foremost requirement in the selection and appointment of an applicant in this sector. This method clearly demonstrates the capacity of the applicant disclosing their practical experiences, outcomes and achievements in the previous jobs allotted to the person. Therefore, this system assists with reducing the risks of employing an unsuitable person for the job advertised, while also ensuring a considerable reduction in the time taken for shortlisting applicants for the interview. This is evidenced in the thoughts that P40 shares,

*"The advantage is that it's very process-driven. The disadvantages are the people that are selected are not always necessarily the people the institution needs."*

The effect of the selection process loses its integrity, consistency and credibility when factors such as favouritism and bias are practised. So, the selection process should be comprised of panel members who are entirely unknown to the applicant to ensure an independent and credible process. Every member of the panel should have the right to clarify any doubt or action taken by the committee, and the final decision must be voted by all panel members to ensure there are balance, evidence and equal input into that selection decision. This is particularly valid when cases of nepotism are evident, and panel members are unable to challenge the power of the chairperson of the selection panel. This, of course, is a significant disadvantage for the other applicants who prepare their application and present themselves in the interview but are up

against nepotism, cronyism and favouritism. Unsuitable candidates may be hired not on merit, resulting in questions of integrity, transparency, favouritism, structured and consistent procedures and compromising internal policy, all of which can result in demoralised workers and deceptive practices across the whole organisation. To assist with this, a regulated panel should include a member of the HR Department to ensure relevant and required policies are adhered to and overseen. It also ensures that no single member on the panel can unfairly or detrimentally affect the process of the employee selection decision.

### **Considerations for Improving the Selection Process**

The TAFE/dual-sector, in particular, has been striving to improve through their repeat organisational restructures. However, it is essential for these changes to be advantageous to the conditions of the stakeholders, management, owners, clients and business viability. One of the fundamental pillars of the organisation involves the employee selection process, which is currently in need of review and upgrades. The current procedures must be reviewed, analysed, realigned, redeveloped and scrutinised to establish methods and strategies more benefiting to the organisation and to ensure that they are being implemented as intended. Overall, the selection process is appreciated by many participants who made favourable comments. However, as presented in the previous sections above, the personal interview experiences of many participants in this study had a variety of undesirable stages in the selection process which comes to light. Panel members' rude behaviour and disinterested hiring members on the panel can demoralise the applicant who has an impact on the overall efficiency of the applicant and the performance of the process. Likewise, applicants who got encouragement and support in the form of approachable and pleasant attitude from hiring members report a healthy atmosphere during the interview, which results in a positive outcome. In such a practice, applicants report on having full confidence which in turn manifested in their improved efficiency resulting in the applicants demonstrating their full potential and capacity during the interview. Some of the interesting practices that are in use at one of the organisations in this study can easily be replicated consistently across all the 17 organisations in this study.

### **Proposal for a Consistent Hiring Decision Model Incorporating Objective Elements**

In the previous sections, extensive discussions related to the current practices of the selection methods with its advantages and disadvantages are elaborated. With that information as the background, this section attempts to understand the potential to establish a consistent hiring decision model that can be used in assisting the interviewers in assessing the applicants during the interview stage. Participants of this study,

which includes hiring members, have shared their thoughts on having a consistent decision model that can be used across all the organisations involved in this study. Participants are asked to share their thoughts on having a scoring sheet in the form of the matrix that was based on the key selection criteria advertised, with the option to assess the applicant on a predetermined scale. Further to this, participants are asked if the cumulative score from the panel members can be shared with the applicant as feedback on the interview completed. These questions were based on the participant's perspective of ensuring fairness, equality and transparency in the selection process.

Almost all participants agree to the benefits of having a consistent selection decision mechanism. However, they all firmly believe that bias will still be an inherent part of the process, although they believe attempts to establish such mechanisms may reduce such variations in the decision-making process. Significantly, almost all hiring members who favour consistency in the selection decision mechanism do not feel the need to share that information as part of the applicant feedback process. However, there were a few hiring members who feel there is value in sharing the score as feedback that can assist in the improvement of the applicant during their future interviews.

#### *Consistent interview performance scoring matrix—Based on KSC*

In reference to having a consistent scoring sheet, P19 mentions,

*“Yeah. I think that would be very good. I think that will be very helpful too. It would give a framework to work towards. I think we should be aware of the problems with subjectivity.”*

Referring to the scope of the utility in establishing a consistent scoring model for selection decisions, P9 believes it would be most beneficial to a new or inexperienced interviewer and states,

*“That could be of some assistance depending on the experience of the panel member sitting on the selection panel. So, someone experienced would probably normally carry that out well. Someone that's a little bit more inexperienced could look at that and say this is what I should be really checking.”*

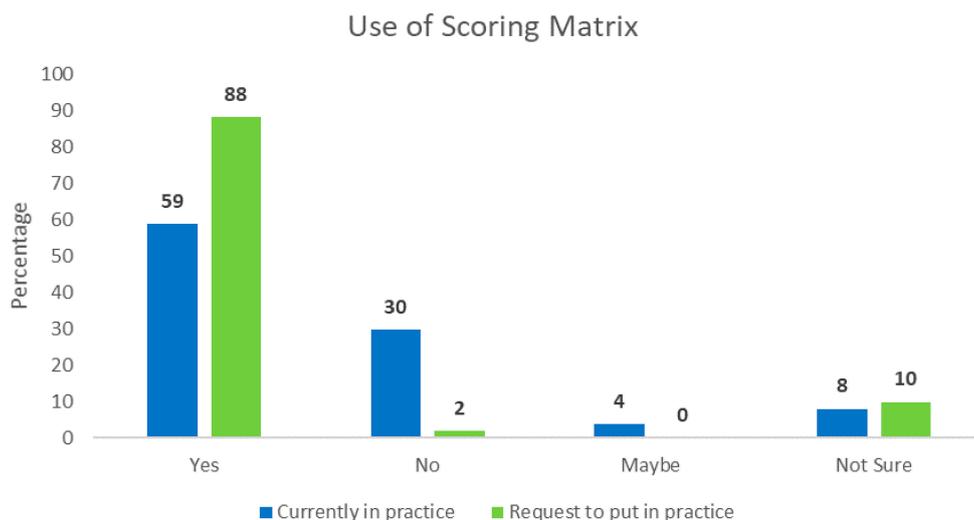
On the application of a consistent model, participants request for the allowance of some flexibility in the model and encouraged organisations of the same sector to have a consistent selection process. However, some participants such as P29 adds in some additional concerns regarding manipulating the model and states,

*“Oh, yes, it does have merit. Then it becomes a system, and you then find a way to work the system.”*

As a solution for these concerns raised, other participants such as P31 notes that it is about training the members who use this model and knowing the consequence in the lack of it states,

*“Anything which simplifies the process is fine. The dangers with that process are you have to make sure that people are trained and experienced at using the scale; otherwise, the results may not be as attained.”*

Overall, most participants are in favour of establishing a consistent hiring decision model that can be of assistance during the interview. Based on the survey respondents for this study, which also includes all the participants of this qualitative interview, Figure 5 demonstrates the distribution of the responses on the use of a scoring matrix in some form or the other during their selection interview process. The survey question reads “Does your organisation provide you with a scoring or rating system in the interviews to assist in the hiring process?” Additionally, this detail is presented in association with the percentage of participants who are requesting an interview scoring sheet to be used to assist in the selection decisions. The survey question reads “Based on your overall personal hiring experiences, do you suggest an interview scoring sheet to be used to assist in hiring decisions?” It is interesting to note that 59% have noted the use of such aids. Furthermore, another interesting observation is that around 88% of the participants feel that there is value in using a scoring matrix and are therefore requesting an establishment of such a model.



**Figure 5.** Scoring matrix for consistency.

#### *Interview performance feedback—Sharing the scoring matrix with applicants*

The next step after studying the potential for a consistent decision-making model is to share the information as feedback to the applicant based on the model as a medium of assessment, which could

assist the applicant in doing better in future interviews. In this regard, it is interesting to note that not all participants who are interested in and advocate a consistent decision model are particularly interested in sharing that information with the applicant in its raw numerical form, even though that numerical form is appreciated in the decision-making process. In the context of providing constructive feedback with the interview applicants, various suggestions and thoughts are shared by the participants. One such suggestion is to provide this feedback on an as-needed basis, with an option available whereby the applicant can request for this information, if interested. Many participants also share the necessity to back up the score provided with qualitative information and comments that can elaborate the score further to ensure that the applicant understands it expectedly. Additionally, referencing the standard stereotyped feedback that applicants get, P22 likes this mechanism of feedback, thinking it will be more customised to the applicant. There were a few participants who were not in favour of using this model as a feedback mechanism, such as P24 and P28 who states,

*“I think it would be very confronting to see that when you are unsuccessful, to be rated poorly on personality or something would be very hurtful.”*

*“I don't think that it's very helpful to the applicant necessarily.”*

Similarly, there are a few hiring members not entirely in favour of this model as they believe that decisions made on gut feeling are still an essential and necessary part of the selection decision process. And P13 who also explains,

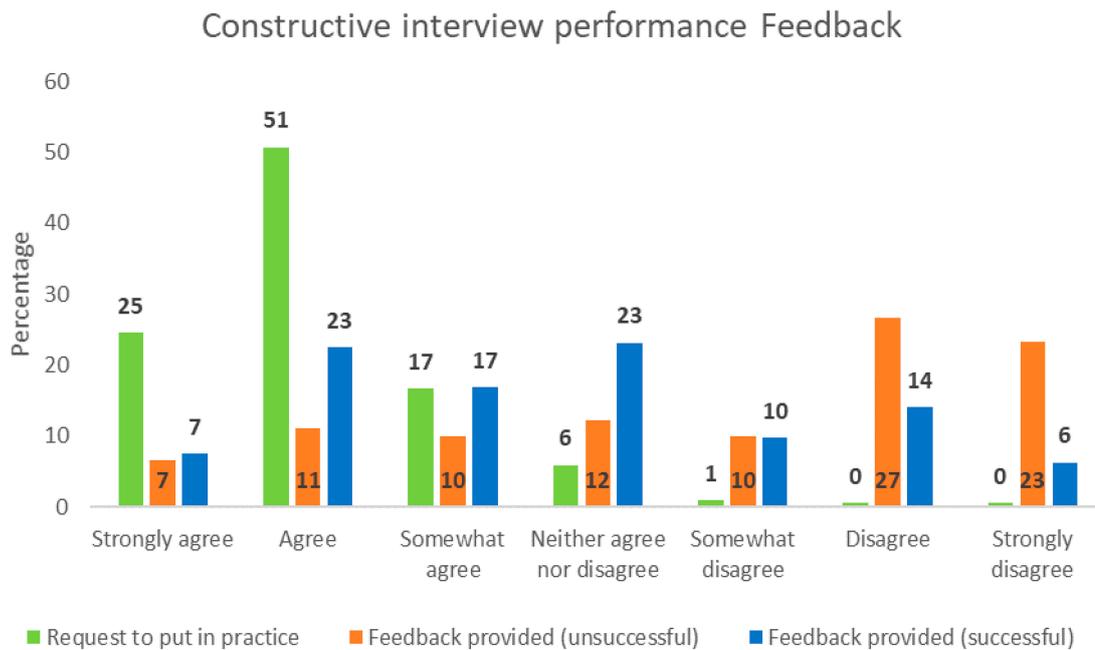
*“I think it's good, but the structure is that the individual elements of the structure are still gut feeling on each one of them, not the overall thing, on each individual thing. And so in the end, it's all based on the gut feeling.”*

Likewise likening the gut feeling to an 'X' factor that needs to be present during the interview process, P14 mentions,

*“As long as there's room in that process for the x-factor or that additional information can be brought in, that could work.”*

From the responses to the survey question “Should constructive interview performance feedback be provided?” Figure 6 demonstrates the increased need for applicants to obtain constructive interview feedback from their organisation. This collectively resulted in 93% of the participants requesting this step to be built into the selection process. Additionally, this information is provided along with the information related to the survey question “Constructive interview feedback was provided after the interview”. The figure depicts that close to 60% of the unsuccessful applicants and 28% of the successful applicants did not get any constructive feedback. 93% of participants requesting constructive

feedback establishes the business need for this mechanism to be built-in to the selection process.



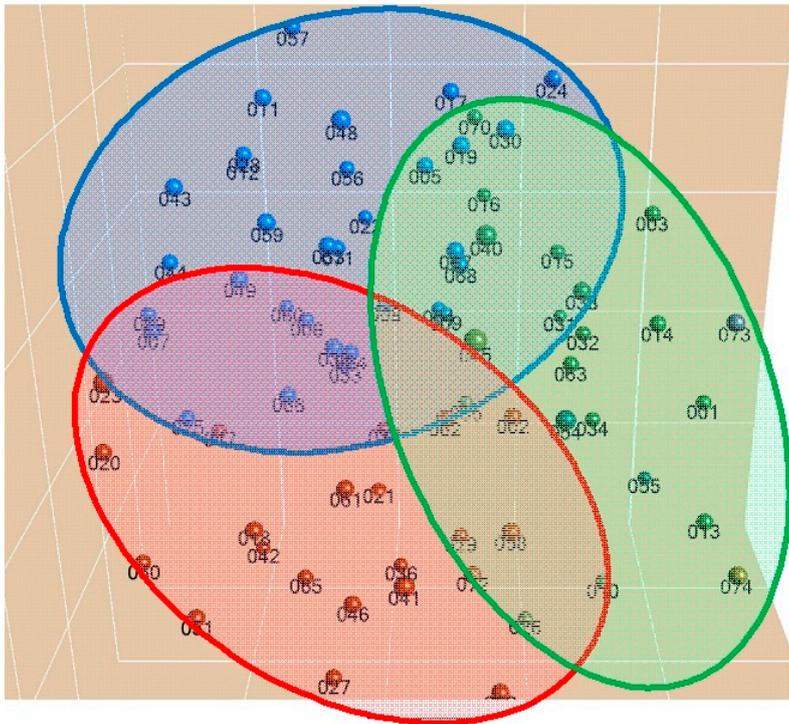
**Figure 6.** Applicant interview performance feedback.

#### *Ensuring fairness, equality and transparency in the selection process*

The discussions with the interview participants concluded with their assessment and suggestion on the existing selection decision methods from the perspective of ensuring fairness, equality and transparency in the selection process. Participants share a variety of thoughts that can broadly be categorised into providing feedback to the applicant, retaining the panel interviews, using scoring mechanisms for making selection decisions and above all, ensuring a standard and consistent selection process is adhered to for all positions across the organisation without any (local) variation. In this regard, many participants feel that the existing process has catered for elements such as fairness, equality and transparency in the selection process as much as possible. While on the other hand referring to the importance of retaining the panel interviews as a way to ensure fairness and equality.

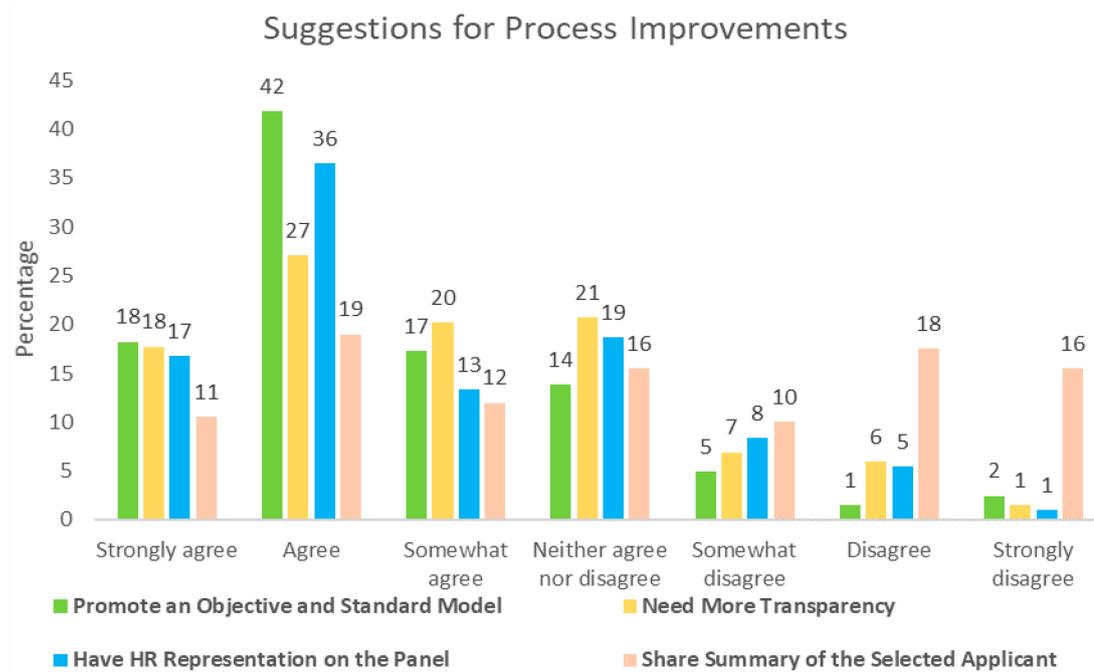
Overall, almost all participants are interested in enhancing the selection process in order to establish a more fair, equal and transparent process to the extent possible. Interestingly, some participants referred to these processes as a minefield and a cesspit of horror and state that they require a magic wand to identify the best applicant due to the complexities and difficulties inherent in the process. Using NVivo software and processing the responses in the semi-structured interviews (from all 74 participants) with Pearson's correlation for the word similarity results in three distinct clusters as illustrated in Figure 7 which is outlined below:

- Ensuring the integrity of the interview selection process;
- Enhancing applicant feedback process with enriched information; and
- Contributory elements towards the overall satisfaction of the interview selection process.



**Figure 7.** Items clustered by word similarity from 74 participants.

Further to the discussions above on the qualitative interviews with participants, Figure 8 demonstrates that the survey responses on some of the suggestions for improvements that align with the findings from the qualitative analysis. Of the four suggestions illustrated in the Figure 8, the option to promote an objective and standard model has 77% support, which is the highest percentage of request, followed by the option of having an HR representative on the panel and the need for increased transparency in the process, both of which have 66% and the final option of sharing a summary of the successful applicant with all other interview applicants as a means of benchmarking has 42%.



**Figure 8.** Suggestions to improve the selection process.

## DISCUSSION

The findings suggest progressive efforts in enhancing the workforce selection process. To obtain the best results possible, organisations have attempted to structure the selection process over a period of time, which is evident from:

- consistent use of panel interviews across all organisations;
- introduction of the key selection criteria (KSC) in the early 2000s;
- current high dependency on addressing the KSC by the applicants;
- reliance on the submitted KSC by the hiring members.

It is evident that both parties are well aware of the efforts taken by the organisations in establishing well-organised selection processes that can enhance the TA methods and process. This aligns with the thoughts shared by Whitacre [71], who has mentioned that both parties are currently involved in tackling the changing employment landscapes.

The analysis from this current research indicates that the focus of the TA process amongst all members in this sector is predominantly governed by the KSC. This finding suggests that the majority of the surveyed participants are adopting a structured interview approach which is more objective in nature as it is being guided by the KSC, rather than leaving it to the interviewer entirely. This approach to the selection process is an indication that the organisations in this sector are employing or leaning towards more objective, selective and possibly measurable outcome-based interviews. An explanation for this outcome may be that in this sector the organisations (and associated governance) are held more accountable for their actions and decisions and hence there is a need for proper evidence-based decisions that are documented

for legally defensible reasons. Focusing on the format and structure of the interview, 80% of the participating organisations used a panel interview format, and most of them mentioned ensuring gender balance on the panel. In particular, when the interview is for sessional employees, these practices are not adhered to—instead of using a more subjective approach, it was informal across all these organisations.

The analysis also finds one notable difference between the urban and regional settings when it comes to preferential treatment for existing employees to serve as a form of career progression and employee recognition. For example, almost 50% of the regional organisations had policies that required them to advertise positions internally for a certain period, to give the opportunity for the current employees to be given priority for the advertised position before the organisation advertised externally seeking successful applicant from this pool. Only if unsuccessful, it allows the organisations to advertise externally looking for applicants from the job market. On many levels, these processes are highly appreciated by the staff, which, according to the participants, in turn, increased their loyalty to the organisation. In complete contrast to this, the urban organisations mostly advertised externally directly soliciting applications from internal staff as well as external applicants. However, there is a general belief among most participants from the urban sector that quite often an internal applicant was earmarked to be given the job even before the process was initiated. In such a scenario, the entire selection process becomes a wasted effort for an external applicant. The elements such as fairness, equality and transparency are so clouded (and disregarded) that most applicants requested for an immediate review of the policy requiring the position to be advertised externally directly.

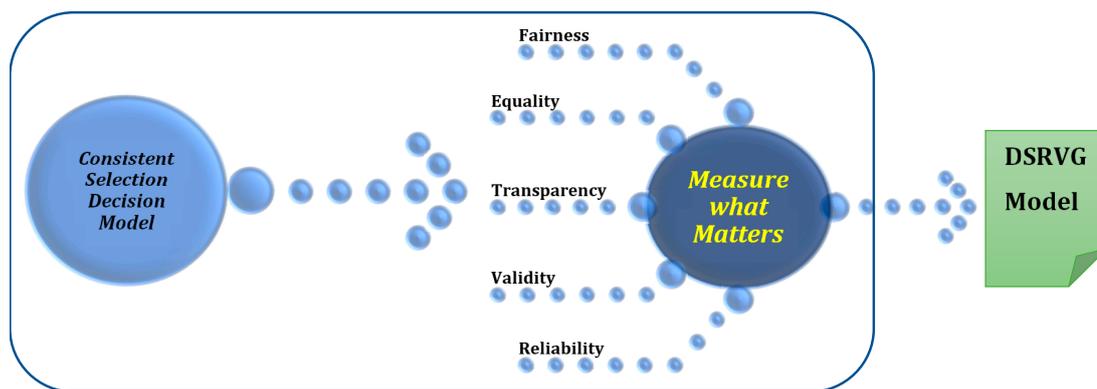
These analyses are further supported by Schmidt and Zimmerman [72] that highlight structured interviews would provide better rationality for forecasting job performance, in comparison to unstructured interviews, due to the reliability of rating scales used in structured interviews. However, while their findings showed mixed support for their hypothesis, most participants of this study are in support of this approach. This aligns with the literature on the related topic which states when testing with assessment tools that are effectively applied, it will assist identification of applicants with the true potential to spur improvements in the organisation and its services [61].

There are also instances when the organisations have policies around these selection procedures and methods; however, those organisations did not conduct formal training in this regard. This analysis finds that most members of this sector are in favour of using a consistent scoring matrix (assessment tool) across all organisations. This is demonstrated in the response of all participants on reliance on structured methods such as the use of KSC combined with mostly panel structures and pre-prepared interview questions. Accordingly, the findings of this study

actively support the implementation of the decision-making matrix with a scoring measure for employee selection that can be consistently used by all members in this sector.

### Proposal and Implementation of a Consistent Hiring Decision Model

With the supporting empirical evidence discussed above taken into consideration, this study proposes establishing a consistent selection decision model using a scoring matrix for rating applicants based on their responses and performance during the interview. It provides a framework for key elements such as fairness, equality, transparency, validity and reliability to be incorporated in the conceptual model as an enhancement to the current selection process. Based on this framework, the DSRVG Model is proposed as shown in Figure 9.



**Figure 9.** Proposed conceptual model with key elements.

It is to be noted that not all participants were entirely in favour of establishing a consistent selection decision model as they felt that with time, people would find ways to manipulate the system and force-fit the model to work in their favour. Nevertheless, the participants of this smaller group were willing to consider the establishment of such a model. Additionally, most participants are firmly in favour of setting up and following the proposed model to strengthen the decision-making process. In this regard, participants request for some allowances to be incorporated in the proposed scoring model, such as:

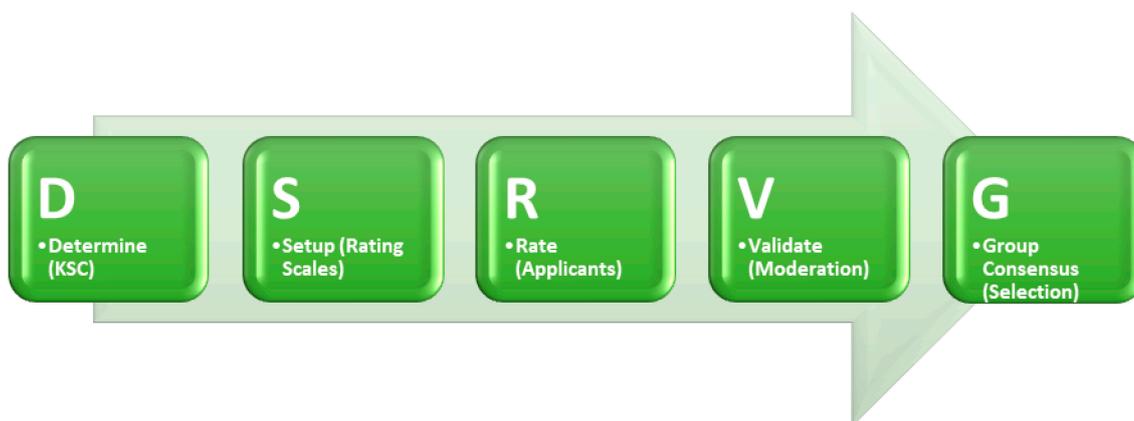
- inclusion of a comments section to make notes;
- flexibility for the panel to decide on the weight for each KSC;
- a provision to incorporate additional questions, if necessary (apart from the KSC); and
- support for the panel to apply discretion to override the outcome of the scoring tool, if there is a consensus that the best applicant as suggested by the model is not the best fit for the organisation.

This is an interesting finding as it suggests that despite incorporating objective and measurable elements in the selection decision process, hiring members still wanted some room for the subjective elements that

are inherent in the process. This finding highlights a mixed-method approach for decision-making, as presented earlier. The mixed-method approach is essential to an effective decision model that encapsulates elements from the objective and subjective decision processes. It correlates well with other research by Bowles, Hattie [73], Gallupe, DeSanctis [66] who argue that organisations should place greater importance on a mixed-method to decision making, an approach that can constitute the creation of a useful employee selection tool. Even among the participants who support establishing a consistent selection decision model using scores for ranking the applicants based on their performance at the interview, the results show that most of them are not in favour of publishing the results as raw scores to the applicant as a means of constructive interview feedback.

### PROPOSED DSRVG MODEL

Taking support from the existing literature and empirical evidence obtained from participants of this study to establish a consistent scoring matrix to assist in the interview selection decision process, the following DSRVG (pronounced Deserving) model is proposed as illustrated in Figure 10. This model is designed to enhance the selection decision process in the context of a panel interview, which is predominantly utilised in the TAFE sector. Therefore, to implement this model, the panel should comprise of at least two hiring members. It is inspired by existing industry best practices in this sector.



**Figure 10.** Proposed DSRVG mode for employee selection.

The process starts with “determining” key selection criteria for the position, followed by “setting” the scales and weights for each KSC as applicable. Samples of how best to write a KSC is provided by VTA in their ‘Best Practice HR Manual’ that is made available to their members. While the proposed conceptual model takes into consideration existing industry practices and procedures, it brings to light the lack of pre-defined order of importance or weighting for each designated KSC. The weighting prioritises the key competencies essential to perform the job. Critically

evaluating current practices, and in order to address this existing gap in industry procedure, a strategic approach may consist of determining the importance (and weighting) of each KSC at the time of reviewing and preparing the job description before advertising the position. One proposed solution is to list and advertise the KSC in order of importance, ensuring the most critical criterion is listed as number one and henceforth cascading in importance for the rest of the KSC for the position. In addition to this, assigning weighting for each criterion (which is driven by the level of importance, based on competencies required to do the job adequately) for each of the KSC is proposed. This weighting is also incorporated into the shortlisting and interview/selection scoring matrix model proposed above, to ensure consistency throughout the process and standardisation of assessment.

During the interview stage, each panel member “rates” the applicant individually with the use of a scoring sheet based on Table 2 to assess the performance of the applicant. This is followed by a short discussion among panellists to “validate” and moderate any variations in their assessment. The moderated score is then recorded in the same table along with reasons for a change. In the event of not arriving at a consensus, the individual scores are to be retained as a moderated score. The average of moderated scores across all panellists is then recorded in the matrix table as depicted in Table 2 for the final “group” consensus to decide on the most suitable applicant to hire. The cumulative score and the comments from each interviewer can serve as guidance in the discussion among the panel members in identifying the most suitable candidate.

The proposed scoring matrix uses a scale of 1 to 5 to score each KSC as outlined in Table 2, where:

- 1 = Does not meet Expectation;
- 2 = Below Expectation;
- 3 = Meets Expectation;
- 4 = Exceeds Expectation; and
- 5 = Outstanding.

As requested by many participants, provision for writing additional comments for each question is provided in this conceptual model. While some participants suggest that the decision to share the applicant’s score/rating as a form of feedback is left to the discretion of the chair/hiring manager of the panel, it is advisable not to allow a single member of the panel to override such an important policy decision. Participants also highlight that, for the model to be successful, training must be provided for new hiring members on the usage of the tool as well as regular refresher training provided to all hiring members to reinforce the principles of the model. Table 3 provides a combined moderated selection using the scoring rating matrix for each KSC against each candidate. It is also suggested that to assist the hiring members with

applying the score consistently in filling Table 3, some guidance is included in the scoring matrix on the kind of responses expected for each level of the scale. This should ideally be incorporated in the scale at the time of determining the KSC for the position. This will, in turn, give all panel members and applicants more evidence-based, robust and a well-informed selection decision. Additionally, this can then serve as an evidence-based validation from which feedback can be provided to the applicants.

**Table 2.** Individual applicant assessment sheet with moderation.

KSC 1: State the Key Selection Criteria here		Performance Score	Moderation Comments	Moderated Score
Observation and comments from interviewer to be entered here		5 - Outstanding	Provide reasons for change if applicable	5 - Outstanding
		4 - Exceeds Expectation		4 - Exceeds Expectation
Observation and comments from interviewer to be entered here		3 - Meets Expectation	Provide reasons for change if applicable	3 - Meets Expectation
		2 - Below Expectation		2 - Below Expectation
Observation and comments from the interviewer to be entered here		1 - Does not meet Expectation	Provide reasons for change if applicable	1 - Does not meet Expectation
		5 - Outstanding		5 - Outstanding
KSC 2: State the Key Selection Criteria here		4 - Exceeds Expectation	Provide reasons for change if applicable	4 - Exceeds Expectation
Observation and comments from interviewer to be entered here		3 - Meets Expectation		3 - Meets Expectation
		Observation and comments from the interviewer to be entered here		2 - Below Expectation
Observation and comments from the interviewer to be entered here				1 - Does not meet Expectation
		KSC 3: State the Key Selection Criteria here		5 - Outstanding
Observation and comments from the interviewer to be entered here		4 - Exceeds Expectation	4 - Exceeds Expectation	
		Observation and comments from the interviewer to be entered here		3 - Meets Expectation
Observation and comments from the interviewer to be entered here				2 - Below Expectation
		Observation and comments from the interviewer to be entered here		1 - Does not meet Expectation
Total Interview Performance Score				N

**Table 3.** Combined moderated selection—scoring rating matrix.

Applicants	KSC 1	KSC 2	KSC 3	Total
Applicant 1				
Applicant 2				
Applicant 3				

Overall, the analysis shows that the majority of the organisations are extensively looking for ways of ensuring and following a correct employee selection process. The need for such a process is confirmed by the various existing selection matrices in use in some organisations. Furthermore, it has provided an insight into the potential of a consistent selection decision model for all organisations in this sector by implementing a uniform format as proposed in this conceptual model. Besides, by also considering the incorporation of the weighting discussed above, this proposal can have a significant influence on the selection decision assistance available during the interviews to the hiring

members and a good source of validated evidence-based feedback for applicants who desire it.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK**

This paper considered one of the least researched pillar of sustainability, namely human resource, in particular from TA perspective. It presented the findings of an empirical study conducted to investigate the employee selection process adopted by the Victorian education sector in Australia. The study adopted a mixed-method approach using quantitative analysis of the survey responses and qualitative thematic analysis of the participants' interviews covering various stakeholders. The study identified the key objective elements to be introduced in the employee-selection process in order to reduce subjective decision-making. The results of the study were valuable in proposing a consistent model (DSRVG model) and its implementation was presented. The structured employee-selection process of DSRVG model using a scoring matrix of KSC could be introduced across a sector in order to achieve organisation sustainability.

This paper identifies two significant contributions that also lead to further research directions. Firstly, it draws attention to the discussions on the evolving mixed method for hiring decisions that incorporated the value from both objective and subjective types of selection procedures. However, what percentage is to be borrowed from each method remains an unanswered question and may continue to be so due to the complexities and variations in the process, thereby opening it up as an avenue for further research and introspection. Secondly, it strengthens the argument on the need for a consistent model incorporating a structured employee selection process for TA, particularly in the context of organisations subject to an influx of organisational change that challenge the organisational sustainability. The proposed DSRVG model was presented with the support of existing literature and empirical evidence from participants. A thorough evaluation of this model in the real world for various sectors would constitute for future research areas.

## **DATA AVAILABILITY**

The dataset of the study is available from the authors upon reasonable request and only if it is compliant with the ethics approval granted.

## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

Conceptualization, SDR, SV, M-TC and AA; methodology, SDR and SV; software, SDR.; validation, SDR, SV, M-TC, and AA; formal analysis, SDR; investigation, SDR; writing—original draft preparation, SDR; writing—review and editing, SV; visualization, SDR.; supervision, M-TC, SV and AA.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank all the participants of this study who took time to complete the survey and the interviews. Acknowledgement are also due to Mr Peter Christie, HR Consultant at Victorian TAFE Association (formerly HR Director Services at Melbourne Polytechnic) and Mr Donald Cooke, HR Consultant (formerly HR Senior Advisor at Whittlesea Council) for their support during the data collection and analysis phases of this research.

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How to cite this article:

Rozario SD, Venkatraman S, Chu M-T, Abbas A. Enabling Corporate Sustainability from a Talent Acquisition Perspective. *J Sustain Res*. 2020;2(2):e200014. <https://doi.org/10.20900/jsr20200014>