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Interview Mistakes: Job Applicants' Perspective

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Abstract

Interview mistakes are common. However, the significance of the mistakes done by interviewees and interviewers affect job seekers as well as organizations badly. Therefore, as an interviewee or interviewer, interview mistakes should be minimized or removed. As an interviewee, there may be interview mistakes faced at the interview. However, there are no any Sri Lankan research findings regarding this phenomenon. Therefore, the problem of the study was to examine what are the common interview mistakes done by interviewees and interviewers at the interview process. Using snowballing sampling methods, 152 undergraduates from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura were used to gather the primary data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyses the primary data using SPSS version of 16. The findings of the study were that lack of interest or enthusiasm, arriving unprepared, understanding worth of applicant, no shows and acting hapless were the common mistakes done by interviewees at the interview process. Hello effect, central tendency, personal prejudice and first impression error were common interview mistakes done by interviewers perceived by the interviewees. The recommendation of the study is that before facing an interview, interviewee should be enhanced the theoretical and practical aspects of interview for better results.

Key words: Interviewee, Interviewer, Interview mistakes

Introduction

At the present time, the global context of the business field is undergoing many unexpected effects (Ramsey, online). In such a situation the impotency of personnel in the entity has radically improved. Human resources are the most important resource (Stockley, online) that managers utilize to achieve goals and objectives of an organization; quality of other functional fields of management heavily depends on quality of HRM in an organization. HRM is the responsibility of every manager in an organization (Opatha, 2009). There is a series of functions to be followed to get the HRM a success. Job designing, Job analysis, HR Planning, Selection, Hiring and Induction, Performance Management, Pay Management, Training and Development, Employee Movements, Welfare Administration, Management of Incentives and benefit, Safety and Health Management, Discipline Administration, Grievances Handling and Labor Relations are those functions followed by an organization (Opatha, 2009).

Among these functions, selection has become a crucial point in achieving objectives and goals of HRM. Without a proper selection no organization can have the most qualified and suitable employees for their organizations. Interviews play a major role in this aspect. For many decades interviewing has been one of the main selection methods

when it comes to selecting employees from candidates. That might be the reason which made some authors to describe interview as the 'Heart' of the selection process. However, Interviewing gives many advantages besides few disadvantages (Opatha, 2009).

An interview process is structured on few stages (Opatha, 2009). In the opening session, an in - depth conversation between a prospective employer and an applicant is emerged. At this stage, applicants might have to face some unpleasant incidents when dealing with the interviewers. This could happen due to applicant's mistakes, employer's mistakes or due to the way of interviewing (Staff, online; Wellenstein, 2009). In this article, the main focus is to find out 'how the applicants face bad experiences due to interview mistakes'.

Problem of the Study and Objective

As employee selection is a negative engagement of organizational matters, organization has to carry out the selection strategies strategically (Kumara, 2006). An organization usually uses different kinds of selection strategies such as application evaluation (Opatha, 2009; Arachchige and Kottawatta, online; Kottawatta, 2008), interview (Opatha, 2009; Arachchige and Kottawatta, online; Mathis and Jackson, 2003; Cascio, 2004; Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003), employment test (Opatha, 2009; Arachchige and Kottawatta, online; Mathis and Jackson, 2003; Cascio, 2004; Milkovich and Boudreau, 2003), assessment center (Opatha, 2009), background investigation (Opatha, 2009; Arachchige and Kottawatta, online). Among these selection strategies, interview is the most popular method for many jobs in practice. Interview is a process and there are many tips to evaluate the real nature of applicants. However, in the interview process, many mistakes are done by both the interviewee and interviewers. The errors done by the interviewers and the errors occurred at the interview may be the root causes to create bad experiences for the interviewees. In the available literature, there are no any theoretical and empirical facts to find out the mistakes of interviewees in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, considering the research gap, researchers aimed to find out the mistakes at the interview faced by the interviewee as an objective of the study. Then, to find out the interview mistakes done by the interviewees and at the interview process are the main problem of the study.

Method

Bad experiences faced by the interviewees at interview are the main focus of this study. Therefore, the survey method was used in this study. The sample of the study was limited to the persons who had the experience of facing at interviews. The sample was drawn from the undergraduates from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The size of the sample was 152 and the sampling method was snowballing sample method. Data were collected from a questionnaire which consisted of 27 question statements. Among the 27 question statements, 23 questions were asked to assess the bad experiences of interviewee at the interview. Data were analyzed by using simple statistical method like percentage analysis.

Literature Review

Nowadays they are enjoying the hottest job markets in decades. Mistakes, which happen in business world, will be cost higher than past days. It would be the same for the functions of HRM such as job design, job analyze, etc. So, when coming for the activities such as interviewing it should clearly consider about effectiveness of them (Aschermann, Mantwill and Kohuken, 2006). This study will find out what affect the effectiveness of an interview, what mistakes appear in an interview? Mistakes done by interviewer and interviewee will make bad experiences to the job applicants in the interviews. Some of the interview mistakes are given in the table No 01.

Table 01: Interview Mistakes

Halo effect:	The interviewer generalizes his or her view of the candidate based on just one aspect of the candidate's performance (whether good or bad)	Online: SC dept. of Public Safety, USA. Robertson, 2001 Searle, 2003
Central tendency:	The interviewer tends to use the middle of the scale to rate all candidates even when the answers actually deserve a higher or lower rating	Online: SC dept. of Public Safety, USA.
First impression error:	The rater develops an initial positive or negative judgment of a candidate and allows that impression to distort the ratings	Online: SC dept. of Public Safety, USA.
Stereo typing error:	This occurs when the interviewer generalizes the rating based on the group or type of person rather than individual's answers to the questions	Online: SC dept. of Public Safety, USA.
Similar-to-me error:	The interviewer evaluates the candidate who resembles himself higher than they do others	Online: SC dept. of Public Safety
Contrast error:	The rater evaluates the candidate by comparing him or her to another candidate rather than to a standard	Online: SC dept. of Public Safety
Personal prejudices:	Unfair preference or dislike for a candidate. Preference is given to a candidate owing to the same race, same religion, same sex, same class or any relationship with him/her	Opatha, 20009.
Premises of pseudo-sciences:	A premise is something that the interviewer assumes as true and he/she uses it as a basis for making the decision of selection or rejection	Opatha, 2009.

Arriving unprepared:	The candidate faces to the interview without any idea about the company and its products or services.	Jim, online.
Wearing the wrong clothes:	The candidate is wearing unprofessionally. Such as heavy fragrance, loud clothes or flashy jewellery	Jim, online.
Talking too much during the interview:	Being so eager to impress the interviewer that they scarcely allow questions to be asked	Jim, online.
Undervaluing or overvaluing your	Being unaware about skills, attitude, knowledge that himself/herself has or showing	Jim, online.

worth:	himself/herself has greater skills, attitudes, knowledge, etc.	
No-shows and tardiness:	Failing to take appropriate actions to be at the interview at the given time	Careerservices, online
Cell phones:	Taking a cell phone with the candidate even on silent mode or switched - off into the interview	Careerservices, online
First impression	Not taking any inappropriate steps to make a good first impression.	Careerservices, online
Negativity:	Not maintaining a positive image about the job	Careerservices, online
Not asking questions:	Not showing the commitment and desire to work towards the particular job (either not seeking any clarification)	Careerservices, online
Dishonesty	Misleading the interviewer or false information	Careerservices, online
		Careerservices, online
Rude behavior to others	Rude behavior showed to other organizational stuff during the visit	Careerservices, online
Lack of interest or enthusiasm:	Lack of interest or enthusiasm shown to the interviewer	Careerservices, online
Inappropriate language:	Using inappropriate language o express ideas being vulgar and obscene	Careerservices, online
Sloppy appearance:	Showing an unprofessional appearance in the interview	Careerservices, online

Some of the interviewee errors are as follow. Arriving unprepared, wearing wrong clothes, talking too much during the interview, undervaluing or overvaluing your worth, acting desperate for the job (Jim, online) , No shows, Tardiness, Cell phones, First impression, Negativity, Not asking questions, Dishonesty, Rude behavior to others, Lack of enthusiasm or interest, Inappropriate language, Sloppy appearance (Online: SC dept. of Public Safety, USA.*).*

Empirical Data

In the sample, 134 of the responses indicated that they uncounted mistakes at the interview. The percentage here is 88.15%. The rest of the responses indicated that the interviews were faire. However, among the majority of the sample perceived that the interviews generate bad experiences/mistakes to the interviewees. The mistakes occurred as a result of the interviewee and the interview process is summarized in the table No 01 and 02. The table No 01 presents the mistakes which were done by the interviewees at the interview.

Table 01: The mistakes which were done by interviewees at the interview process

	Bad experience	No of responses	%
1	Arriving unprepared	48	31%
2	Wearing the wrong cloths	12	7.89%
3	Talking too much during the interview	24	15.79%
4	Undervaluing your worth	52	34.21%
5	Overvaluing your worth	16	10.53%
6	Acting desperate/hopeless for the job	48	31.58%
7	No shows (presents yourself)	52	34.21%
8	Tardiness (late arrivals)	24	15.79%
9	Cell phone interruptions	32	21.05%
10	Presenting negative first impression	32	21.05%
11	Negativity (bad experience of pervious boss or employment)	12	7.89%
12	Dishonesty	20	13.15%
13	Rude behavior to others	20	13.15%
14	Lack of interest or enthusiasm	64	42.10%
15	Inappropriate language	44	28.95%
16	Sloppy (inappropriate) appearance	24	15.79%

According to the table No 01, lack of interest or enthusiasm (42.10%), arriving unprepared (31%), understanding you're worth (34.21%), no shows (34.21%) and acting hopeless for job (31.58%) are the most common mistakes done by the interviewees at the interview process. However, wearing the wrong cloths (7.89%), negativity (bad experience of previous boss or employment) (7.89%), overvaluing your worth (10.53%), rude behavior to others (13.15%) and dishonesty (13.15%) are some of the rare of mistakes done by the interviewees at the interview process.

Table 02: The mistakes which occurred at the interview process

	Bad experience	No of responses	%
1	Hello effect	72	47.37%
2	Central tendency	60	39.47%
3	First impression error	48	31.58%
4	Stereotyping error	40	26.31%
5	Similar to me error	24	15.37%
6	Contrast error	36	23.68%
7	Personal prejudice	52	34.21%

According to table No 02, hello effect (47.37%), central tendency (39.47%), personal prejudice (34.21%) and first impression errors (31.58%) are significant mistakes done by the interviewers at the interview process. However, similar to me error (15.37%), and contrast error (23.68%) are some of the rare mistakes done by the interviewers at the interview process.

Findings of the Study
According to the empirical evidences of the study, the following findings can be drawn.
1. Interview mistakes are common in the Sri Lankan context, because, 88.15% of the sample had identified the interview mistakes.

2. Interviewees' mistakes done at the interview process are lack of interest or enthusiasm, arriving unprepared, understanding your worth, no shows and acting hopeless.

3. Interviewers' mistakes done at the interview process are hello effect, central tendency, personal prejudice and first impression errors.

Discussion and Recommendation

According to the empirical data gathered from the sample, interview mistakes of the interview process are common in the Sri Lankan context. However, a few occasions can be found where no any interview mistakes were done by the interviewees and interviewers. The research findings can confirm that the opinion given by Robertson in 2001 and Searle in 2003.

The recommendation of the study leads to two aspects. One of them is that interviewees who hope to face an interview should enrich their good behavior aspects and should be aware about the mistakes that can occur at the interview process. Specially interviewees should follow the proper guidelines such as rereading of bio data you proceeded to the interview, memorizing the previous experiences gained from the interviews, analyses the reasons of successfulness and unsuccessfulness of those interviews, identify the strategies of removing the bad consequences of interviews, good preparation like searching about company, its products, place of interview, date of interview etc, sharing peer experiences of interviews, identifying the culture of the company, anticipate questions and prepare the appropriate answers (Kottawatta, 2008).

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