Do you like me or not?

No matter how our explicit prejudices looks like we all have preferences for what we like and what we don't like. Most people would agree upon that all human beings are as worthy as everybody else and that you deserve the same chances in life. Your age, sex or ethnicity has nothing to do with your competencies for how you would perform in a specific work. Even recruiters would agree that these variables are irrelevant. Though the reality in selection is not as bright as one might think.

We know that most people who have the power to assess people when companies hire have the intention to judge upcoming performance and nothing else. Our brain has been developed through evolution and this has kept us from harm by making quick judgments in an enormous information influx. We can quickly categorize objects and people as either harmful or friendly, and if it will gain our survival or not. Unfortunately evolution has not been able to take organizational settings into account. Our modern society with interviews, social media, quarterly based reports and profit margins has not jet affected our development in judgment.

We still judge information in the same manor as if we were living together in caves trying to keep the fire burning. This gap obviously takes it´s tool in many aspects in modern life, especially our behaviors at work. We are by every mean developed long before modern recruitment was ever thought about.

The same thing goes with how we make decisions. Our decision-making was developed thousands of years ago but our aim for more profitable organizations is a new phenomenon.

This makes the recruiters work extremely difficult when hiring new staff or planning the succession-ladder. When a recruiter chooses to hire a candidate that resembles him or her despite more suitable candidates the hiring decision is by all means faulty. If this happens systematically it is known as discrimination, no matter if the recruiter does it explicit or implicit.

Today there are solutions that keeps you from discrimination and bad decision making when selecting your staff.

During six month two selection-methods was compered against each other with astonishing results. In a study from Uppsala University in Sweden the most common selection-methods was compered to personality and ability testing together with digital interviews through smartphone or tablet. Half of the candidates applying for job in an international company in retail were randomly assigned to either get assessed by a classical interview on site at the company and also judged through screening of résumés, or assessed through a combination of personality and ability testing and thereafter by digital interview through smartphone or tablet.

When the selection was finished the two different selection-groups was compered against each other, with great differences regarding to ethnicity. The results of the comparison showed that if you had been assigned to get assessed by a classical interview and your résumé your ethnicity really mattered, even though the company had an explicit policy never to discriminate

On the other hand, if you were assigned to get assessed through testing and digital interview your ethnicity didn't matter at all. The combination of testing and interview through your smartphone didn't took your age or sex into account neither.

That ethnicity affects the recruiters decision-making is nothing new but is backed up by earlier research. What is astonishing though was how much ethnicity actually mattered for the probability to get hired. If you were selected by classical interview and assessed by your résumé you had 80% less chance of getting to the final interview if you had a foreign name.

80%

Less probability to get to the final interview if you had a foreign name.

The reason for why this occurs despite the company´s policy against discrimination may be explained by one of the most famous people in psychology – Daniel Khaneman. In 2002 he was rewarded the Nobel prize in economy for his research in decision-making. He explains his research in his best-selling novel Thinking fast and slow. He gives great examples for why you choose as you do.

Khanemans conclusion is that we choose among alternatives based on previous experiences.

We have a steady influx of information and to be able to survive we categorize it. The categorization is based upon previous events in our life. What makes this categorization faulty is that appearance for instance is more likely to affect how to

categorize than other more relevant categories, even if we have objective information just ahead of us.

Kahneman gave light to this question by a simple experiment. He asked a couple of hundred people to answer one question: *"If you have a group with 100 people, 70 of these are engineers and 30 of these are lawyers. If you were to choose one of these randomly how big is the probability that the one you would choose is an engineer?"*. Almost everybody answered the question correctly, that it was 70% probability that the one chosen was an engineer.

Kahneman also asked a couple of hundred other people the same question but with an additional description. The description was *"assume that the same person you choose will be good at what he/she does, interested in a career but with a balance between work and family"*. The experiment-group was asked the same probability question but the results were quite different. The majority answered that the probability that the person was an engineer was 50%.

Which according to mathematical rules of probability is false. The probability would not change just because one would add a description containing the person's choice of balance between work and family for instance. The probability will still be the same, 70% probability that he or she is an engineer.

What Kahneman tried to show is that people in general is bad in making judgments based on intuitive statistics. Even though we have the objective facts right in front of us, we still make the wrong conclusion.
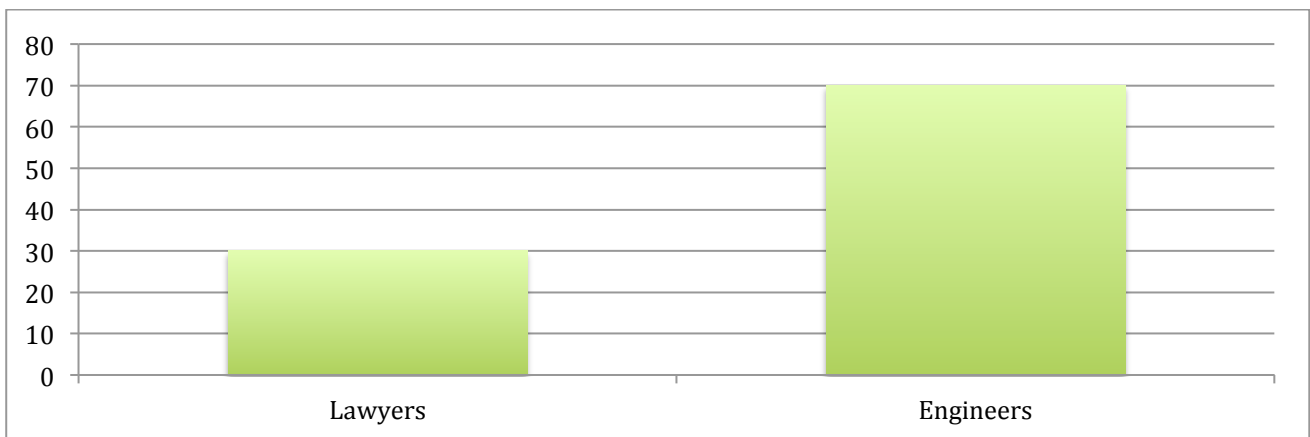
Kahnemans conclusions on faulty decision making can explain why the recruiters in the study discriminated people with foreign names. It is not likely that these people have extremist opinions and discriminate explicitly. The most probable reason is that the assessment method used is highly correlated with risk for discrimination. In this specific instance the method used – classical interviews and screening of résumés is the cause of the discrimination.

Extended research have shown that to make accurate decisions when hiring you should use structured methods as ability and personality testing and structured interviews. The accuracy for predicting upcoming work-performance is about twice as accurate as more extensive on-site-interviews together with screening of résumés.

The definition of structu red interviews is that you only assess the candidate on the questions decided on before the interview.

This is the same process as the digital interviews used in the present study.

Therefore ZeroLime as provider for digital interviews is concurrent with today's research on how to make accurate interviews in recruitment. This combined with the test-publishing company Assessios test PJP (Predicting Job Performance) – combines the most crucial aspects of personality and ability. PJP and ZeroLime therefore makes an accurate way when selecting new staff, and gives a fair chance to all applicants. The recruiters difficulties in pronouncing a foreign name or looking the other way when less privileged candidates applies for job therefore becomes impossible.

The conclusion is that assessments when structured through objective methods can be both economic as human. Hopefully this present research will give light to what one should do when working in HR. Or what one should demand when applying for job.

Method of selection

ASSESSIO

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