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# The Role of Job Relatedness and Self-Efficacy in Applicant Perceptions of Fairness in a High-Stakes Selection Setting

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This article presents results from two samples of applicants (total  $N = 368$ ) for general practitioner posts in the United Kingdom. The roles of job relatedness and self-efficacy in fairness perceptions were explored, with data gathered at two time points: immediately after testing and 1 month later following outcome (pass/fail) feedback. Overall, results indicated that in two samples, job relatedness perceptions measured at the time of testing predicted fairness perceptions measured following outcome feedback. In addition, the stage in the selection process (shortlisting vs. assessment center) was important in determining the extent to which job relatedness perceptions predicted fairness. Findings also suggest that self-efficacy may be a predictor, rather than an outcome variable, in applicant fairness perceptions in this high-stakes setting. Results are discussed in relation to their practical and theoretical implications.

## 1. Introduction

In the last two decades, an applicant-focused research agenda has been pursued with literature emerging that examines the attitudes, affect, and cognitions that applicants may have about a selection process (Anderson, Herriot, & Hodgkinson, 2001; Chan, Schmitt, Sacco, & DeShon, 1998; Gilliland, 1994; Hülshager & Anderson, 2009; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). The dominant model for research on applicant perceptions is presented by Gilliland (1993, 1995), who proposes organizational justice theory (Greenberg, 1987, 1990), as a framework to consider applicant perceptions of selection processes. The fundamental premise underlying this theory is that applicants' perceptions of selection processes influence personal and organizational outcomes such as organization attractiveness and litigation intentions, and these relationships have been supported in numerous studies (e.g., Bauer et al., 2001; Carless, 2003; Konradt, Warszta, & Ellwart, 2013; Macan, Avedon, Paese, & Smith, 1994; Schinkel, van Vianen, & van Dierendonck, 2013; Truxillo, Bauer, Campion, & Paronto, 2002).

However, gaps in the literature persist, suggesting that further research is warranted. First, many studies have

been laboratory-based using student samples with cross-sectional designs (e.g., Elkins & Philips, 2000; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004). The use of student samples has been criticized because students may respond differently as they are likely to differ in terms of job search experience, commitment to securing employment within an organization and previous exposure to selection methods (Anderson, 2003; Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004). Also, students are likely to have higher intellectual abilities (Landy & Conte, 2009), and are generally younger (Phillips & Gully, 2002) than a large proportion of working individuals. Furthermore, it is suggested that attitudinal and emotional responses might develop over time (e.g., Carless, 2003; Chan & Schmit, 2004): if students have not experienced a particular selection method before, rating it for the first time may appear somewhat different to how they might feel about it in the future (Landy & Conte, 2009), and expectations may evolve as new experiences are encountered (Jones & Skarlicki, 2013). In relation to laboratory-based research, there is a clear difference between being hypothetically rejected in an experiment and *actually* being rejected as an applicant for a job (Landy & Conte, 2009). Drawing conclusions based on answers

65 by students limits the external validity of the research  
66 (Shinkel et al., 2013). Therefore, authors have suggested  
67 that research should be field-based with real candidates,  
68 because reactions may differ with real employment conse-  
69 quences (Bauer, Maertz, Dolen, & Campion, 1998; Trux-  
70 illo et al., 2002).

71 Second, there has been a recent call for more  
72 applicant-focused research specifically in a healthcare con-  
73 text (e.g., Patterson & Ferguson, 2007; Patterson, Lievens,  
74 Kerrin, Zibarras, & Carette, 2012); and this is yet to be  
75 explored extensively. Of the research that currently exists  
76 (e.g., Humphrey, Dowson, Wall, Diwakar, & Goodyear,  
77 2008; Kumar, Roberts, Rothnie, du Fresne, & Walton,  
78 2009), theoretical frameworks have not been used to  
79 underpin the research and explore findings, aside from  
80 one recent exception (Patterson, Zibarras, Carr, Irish, &  
81 Gregory, 2011). Therefore, we report findings from a  
82 field-based study examining the role of job relatedness  
83 and self-efficacy in two samples of applicant for jobs in a  
84 healthcare context in the United Kingdom. Perceptions of  
85 applicants in the current samples were investigated imme-  
86 diately after testing and following the results of applicants'  
87 assessments. The selection of doctors within the NHS is a  
88 high-profile event that attracts both public and media  
89 interest, and, consequently, there is a high level of scrutiny  
90 and public accountability (Harris, 2000; Ryan, Greguras, &  
91 Ployhart, 1996). Therefore selection decisions must be  
92 made fairly and methods must be legally defensible (Carr  
93 & Patterson, 2009; Patterson et al., 2011) and so this  
94 research was deemed important because in this high-  
95 stakes selection process, perceptions of fairness were  
96 crucial.

### 97 1.1. Job relatedness and fairness perceptions

98 Job relatedness as a determinant of fairness perceptions is  
99 well established in research (e.g., Gilliland, 1993; Haus-  
100 knecht, 2013; Macan et al., 1994; Rynes & Connerly, 1993;  
101 Schmitt, Oswald, Kim, Gillespie, & Ramsay, 2004; Smither,  
102 Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993; Truxillo, Bauer, &  
103 Sanchez, 2001; Truxillo, Bodner, Bertolino, Bauer, &  
104 Yonce, 2009). However, studies have been criticized for  
105 predominantly focusing on cross-sectional data rather  
106 than relationships that take into account perceptions fol-  
107 lowing outcome feedback (Sackett & Lievens, 2008).  
108 Indeed, postfeedback perceptions have only been exam-  
109 ined in only a few field-based studies (e.g., Bauer et al.,  
110 1998; Chan et al., 1998; Schinkel, van Dierendonck, van  
111 Vianen, & Ryan, 2011; Schmitt et al., 2004; Truxillo et al.,  
112 2001). Postfeedback perceptions are important to con-  
113 sider as the selection decision may be the most salient  
114 outcome of the process (Schinkel et al., 2011), yet little  
115 research has been conducted that explores the effects of  
116 outcome feedback on fairness perceptions. Of the  
117 research that has been conducted, there is evidence that

118 outcome feedback impacts candidate perceptions, as well  
119 as candidate wellbeing (Bauer et al., 1998; Schinkel et al.,  
120 2011). Additional research is necessary to investigate  
121 these relationships further; therefore this study explores  
122 whether job relatedness perceptions, measured at the  
123 time of testing, are positively related to fairness percep-  
124 tions measured 1 month later following feedback.

125 In this study, perceptions of job relatedness are focused  
126 on, rather than other justice principles for three reasons.  
127 First, job relatedness is considered the justice principle  
128 that has the greatest influence on overall fairness percep-  
129 tions as compared to any other characteristics of a selec-  
130 tion method; and this has been supported in a number of  
131 studies using a number of different occupational samples  
132 (e.g., Bauer et al., 2001; Gilliland, 1993; Macan et al., 1994;  
133 Rynes & Connerly, 1993; Smither et al., 1993; Schmitt  
134 et al., 2004; Truxillo et al., 2001; Van Vianen, Taris, Schol-  
135 ten, & Schinkel, 2004), however, this relationship has not  
136 yet been extensively explored in doctors within the NHS  
137 context (Patterson & Ferguson, 2007). Second, in the  
138 present selection context most of the methods were  
139 administered to applicants in large group sessions and  
140 therefore many of the other justice principles in Gilliland's  
141 (1993) model were likely to be restricted in their effects  
142 due to lack of variance (Chan et al., 1998). For instance,  
143 because the administration of tests was standardized, the  
144 justice principles relating to consistency of administration,  
145 selection information and explanation may have been  
146 relatively constant for applicants in the group session.  
147 However, job relatedness perceptions are likely to vary  
148 across applicants even when the same selection method is  
149 used (Chan et al., 1998). Third, Chan and Schmitt (2004)  
150 suggest that questionnaire measures should direct appli-  
151 cant attention to aspects of the selection method where  
152 they are naturally likely to have focused their perceptions.  
153 Within the present selection context it was anticipated  
154 that job relatedness would be salient for candidates  
155 because the selection methods were recently-developed  
156 and relatively new methods of assessment (Patterson,  
157 Baron, Carr, Plint, & Lane, 2009; Patterson, Carr, Zibarras,  
158 Burr, Berkin et al., 2009); all of which were based on an  
159 extensive analysis of the general practitioner (GP)  
160 (Patterson et al., 2000; Patterson, Ferguson, Norfolk, &  
161 Lane, 2005). Owing to the changes in the GP role over  
162 the last two decades (Patterson et al., 2000), a need to  
163 create and assess candidates against a more clearly  
164 defined set of criteria arose. Traditionally, GP posts have  
165 been awarded based on curriculum-vitae and unstruc-  
166 tured interview methods, which have their limitations in  
167 terms of selecting the right person for the job (Patterson  
168 et al., 2000). Consequently, the GP selection process has  
169 been completely developed over the past few years to  
170 introduce more predictive methods of selection (Patter-  
171 son, Baron et al., 2009; Patterson, Carr et al., 2009), with  
172 each method being newly created and introduced in a  
173 context where they have not commonly been used

174 before. Therefore, it was important to assess candidates'  
175 perceived job relatedness towards these new methods,  
176 and the impact that this had on their perceptions of  
177 fairness.

178 We examined the association between job relatedness  
179 perceptions and fairness perceptions in two samples;  
180 therefore, the following Hypothesis was posed for both  
181 Samples 1 and 2:

### 182 1.1.1 Samples 1 and 2, Hypothesis 1

183 Job relatedness perceptions of selection methods, meas-  
184 ured at the time of testing (T1), will be significantly and  
185 positively related to fairness perceptions of the selection  
186 process measured 1 month later following outcome feed-  
187 back (T2).

## 188 1.2. The role of self-efficacy in fairness 189 perceptions

190 Gilliland's (1993) organizational justice theory model pro-  
191 poses self-efficacy as a possible outcome variable where  
192 aspects of procedural justice such as job relatedness and  
193 outcome (pass/fail) interact to influence an applicant's  
194 self-efficacy. This is supported by research (Gilliland,  
195 1994) which found that when job relatedness was high,  
196 job performance self-efficacy increased for selected par-  
197 ticipants, but decreased for rejected participants. How-  
198 ever, when job relatedness was low, there was no effect  
199 on job performance self-efficacy. Similarly, Bauer et al.  
200 (1998) found a positive relationship between fairness and  
201 test-taking self-efficacy for applicants who passed the test  
202 and a negative relationship for those who had failed. This  
203 represented an interaction effect between fairness per-  
204 ceptions and test outcome. A further study (Truxillo  
205 et al., 2001) reported that increased perceptions of test  
206 fairness led to lower test-taking self-efficacy for those  
207 who failed the test. In these studies, the concept of self-  
208 efficacy is viewed as something that can be influenced by  
209 the experience of the selection process and the methods  
210 themselves. Job performance self-efficacy relates to a per-  
211 son's confidence in their ability to perform at a given level  
212 (Gilliland, 1994) and test-taking self-efficacy relates to a  
213 person's evaluation of their ability to cope with the actual  
214 testing process (Bauer et al., 1998), both of which are rel-  
215 atively context-specific self-efficacy constructs (Ployhart  
216 & Ryan, 1997).

217 However, these authors (Bauer et al., 1998; Gilliland,  
218 1994; Truxillo et al., 2001) take a considerably different  
219 perspective to other researchers (Nikolaou & Judge,  
220 2007; Oostrom, Born, Serlie, & van der Molen, 2010;  
221 Ryan et al., 1996) in the view of self-efficacy as a depend-  
222 ent variable. Instead, authors such as Nikolaou and Judge  
223 (2007); Ryan et al. (1996) and Oostrom et al. (2010)  
224 have suggested that self-efficacy may be a predictor vari-  
225 able in fairness perceptions. This is because when looking  
226 at broader conceptualizations, such as generalized (e.g.,

Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998) or occupational  
227 self-efficacy (e.g., Schyns & von Collani, 2002), self-efficacy  
228 is assumed to be an aspect of personality or stable trait  
229 (Nikolaou & Judge, 2007). Generalized self-efficacy relates  
230 to evaluations that individuals make about themselves,  
231 perceptions about their fundamental ability to cope life's  
232 demands (Judge et al., 1998; Nikolaou & Judge, 2007);  
233 while occupational self-efficacy is considered a global per-  
234 sonality construct and relates to 'one's belief in one's own  
235 ability to perform successfully and effectively in different situa-  
236 tions and across different tasks in a job' (Schyns & von Col-  
237 lani, 2002, p. 227). These definitions assume self-efficacy  
238 to be a trait and therefore stable over time; and as such  
239 may be viewed as an individual difference that could pre-  
240 dict fairness perceptions, rather than an outcome. 241

242 This conceptualization of self-efficacy has rarely been  
243 examined in applicant perception research to date, except  
244 for three notable exceptions (Nikolaou & Judge, 2007;  
245 Oostrom et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 1996). Ryan et al. (1996)  
246 consider self-efficacy to be a predictor of applicant per-  
247 ceptions and self-efficacy was found to positively correlate  
248 with perceptions of job-relatedness. Furthermore, individ-  
249 uals with higher self-efficacy perceived physical agility tests  
250 to be fairer and consistently administered than those with  
251 lower self-efficacy. In both the studies by Nikolaou and  
252 Judge (2007) and Oostrom et al. (2010), self-efficacy by  
253 itself was not examined, however, the role of core self-  
254 evaluations (CSE; encompassing self-efficacy, self-esteem,  
255 locus of control, and neuroticism) was explored. Nikolaou  
256 and Judge found that CSE was positively related to partici-  
257 pants' preferences for both interviews and CVs and also  
258 positively related to procedural dimensions of interviews  
259 and personal contacts; indicating that participant person-  
260 ality, and potentially self-efficacy, has some relationship  
261 with perceptions of selection methods. Oostrom et al.  
262 (2010) found that CSE was positively related to percep-  
263 tions of predictive validity of a cognitive ability test and  
264 perceptions of the face validity of a multimedia situational  
265 judgment test (SJT). However, more research is needed in  
266 this area for two main reasons: first, Ryan and colleagues  
267 used a sample of incumbent fire-fighters as their partici-  
268 pants and Oostrom et al. (2010) used a sample of stu-  
269 dents, meaning that findings may not extend to applicant  
270 samples; and second, in two studies (Nikolaou & Judge,  
271 2007; Oostrom et al., 2010) CSE was explored and so the  
272 relationship found may be due to the other personality  
273 constructs encompassed within CSE, rather than self-  
274 efficacy per se. Therefore, research is warranted to exam-  
275 ine the precise nature of the relationship between self-  
276 efficacy and fairness perceptions, and furthermore,  
277 whether self-efficacy can be construed of as a predictor of  
278 fairness perceptions.

279 Therefore, the present study was designed to test  
280 whether self-efficacy is better conceptualized as a *trait*  
281 *that predicts* fairness perceptions, or an *outcome variable*  
282 *negatively influenced* by failing a selection process. If self-



283 efficacy is better conceived of as a trait than one would  
 284 expect it to be relatively stable over time (hence it was  
 285 measured at two time points). Furthermore, one would  
 286 expect self-efficacy measured at the time of testing to add  
 287 incremental variance to the prediction of fairness percep-  
 288 tions (over and above that accounted for by job related-  
 289 ness) measured 1 month later following outcome (pass/  
 290 fail) feedback. Conversely, if self-efficacy is better con-  
 291 ceived of as an outcome variable, then one would expect  
 292 self-efficacy to be negatively influenced by experiencing  
 293 the selection process. As outlined above, this has been  
 294 tested in previous research (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998) by  
 295 exploring whether procedural justice perceptions and  
 296 outcome favorability (i.e., pass/fail) interact to influence  
 297 T2 self-efficacy. Thus the following research question was  
 298 posed:

299 **1.2.1. Sample 1 and 2, research question**

300 Is self-efficacy better conceived of as a trait (and therefore  
 301 predicts fairness perceptions) or an outcome variable  
 302 (and therefore negatively influenced by an interaction  
 303 between job relatedness and pass/fail)?

304 **1.3. The present study context**

305 This article presents a study conducted in an operational  
 306 selection setting, using two applicant samples. The sam-  
 307 ples were qualified doctors applying for GP posts in the  
 308 United Kingdom (UK) National Health Service. This is a  
 309 high-stakes setting as the posts are highly coveted jobs  
 310 with a monopoly employer (Lievens & Patterson, 2011;  
 311 Patterson & Ferguson, 2007). The applicants have already  
 312 completed many years of training as doctors (with 4–6  
 313 years in medical education followed by 2 years of basic  
 314 training in junior posts) and have invested a great deal of  
 315 time and effort in their careers. A three-stage process is  
 316 used to select candidates for posts. Stage 1 included eli-  
 317 gibility checks, using an electronic application process. Stage  
 318 2 entailed shortlisting using two validated tests: a job  
 319 knowledge test (JKT), where candidates apply clinical  
 320 knowledge to solve problems; and a SJT, where candidates  
 321 are presented with written work-related scenarios to  
 322 which they have choose an appropriate response from a  
 323 list of alternatives (Patterson, Baron et al., 2009; Patter-  
 324 son, Carr et al., 2009). Stage 3 was an assessment center  
 325 including three selection methods: a group exercise (GE)  
 326 which involved a group discussion exercise relating to a  
 327 work-related issue; a simulated patient consultation (SPC)  
 328 where candidates play the role of doctor and an actor  
 329 plays the patient role; and a written exercise (VVE) where  
 330 candidates prioritize a list of work-related issues and jus-  
 331 tify their choices (Patterson et al., 2005). Extensive  
 332 research has shown that this selection process is reliable  
 333 and valid (e.g., Lievens & Patterson, 2011; Patterson et al.,  
 334 2005; Patterson, Baron et al., 2009). The first sample pre-  
 335 sented in this study used applicants from the shortlisting

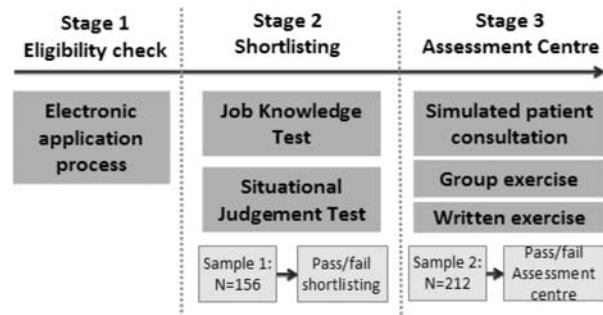


Figure 1. Selection process and associated samples.

336 phase (stage 2), while the second sample used applicants  
 337 from the assessment center phase (stage 3); see Figure 1. 337 FI  
 338 In both, job relatedness perceptions of the selection  
 339 methods were measured at the time of testing, along with  
 340 self-efficacy. Then, 1 month later following outcome feed-  
 341 back, fairness perceptions were measured, along with self-  
 342 efficacy. For stage 2, outcome feedback entailed candi-  
 343 dates finding out whether they had been accepted for fur-  
 344 ther consideration in the selection process and for stage  
 345 3, candidates found out whether they had been accepted  
 346 for GP posts.

347 **2. Sample 1: Method** AQ4

348 **2.1. Participants**

349 Participants were applicants for GP posts during the  
 350 shortlisting stage of selection. Data collection occurred at  
 351 two time points, T1 was immediately post testing and T2  
 352 was post outcome (pass/fail) feedback. A total of 385 par-  
 353 ticipants provided data at T1; of these, 156 provided data  
 354 at T2 and therefore formed the sample. Of the 156, 40%  
 355 were female, 55% were male (data was missing from 5%);  
 356 their mean age was 30.5 years ( $SD = 6.2$ ). The partici-  
 357 pants' ethnic origins were as follows: White (49%), Asian  
 358 (33%), Black (2%), Mixed (1%), Chinese (3%), and other  
 359 ethnic groups (6%), data was missing from 6% of the  
 360 participants.

361 **2.2. Procedure**

362 Data were gathered during shortlisting where candidates  
 363 were invited to participate in the research on a voluntary  
 364 basis. They were assured that information would be used  
 365 for research purposes only and not in any selection deci-  
 366 sion; all who took part gave their consent to be involved  
 367 in this research. Applicants attended one of 15 testing  
 368 centers throughout the United Kingdom where they  
 369 completed two tests: a JKT and a SJT. Surveys were col-  
 370 lected from applicants at two time points: (T1) after candi-  
 371 dates had completed the two tests they completed a  
 372 paper-based questionnaire distributed by trained invigila-  
 373 tors; and (T2) about 1 month following the assessment

374 day and after applicants had received results indicating  
 375 whether or not they were eligible for further considera-  
 376 tion in the selection process, they were contacted via  
 377 their email address and sent an online questionnaire. One  
 378 hundred and fifty-six applicants completed the T2 ques-  
 379 tionnaire, representing a 43.6% response rate. There  
 380 were no significant differences between the response and  
 381 nonresponse groups on age, gender, and ethnic origin.

382 **2.3. Measures**

383 The first section of the questionnaire contained demo-  
 384 graphic questions including gender, age, and ethnic origin;  
 385 these were collected at T1. Items in the questionnaire  
 386 outlined below were rated on a 5-point Likert scale rang-  
 387 ing from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree,  
 388 unless otherwise stated.

389 **2.3.1. Job relatedness<sup>1</sup>**

390 A measure of job-relatedness was used based on items  
 391 from Bauer et al. (2001) and Gilliland et al. (2001) but  
 392 adapted to fit a healthcare context. For example, an origi-  
 393 nal item from Gilliland et al. (2001) was: 'The methods this  
 394 company used to screen applicants were appropriate', and  
 395 this was adapted to read: 'The content of the Job Knowledge  
 396 test seemed appropriate for the entry level I was applying for'.  
 397 In Sample 1, there were four items measuring job related-  
 398 ness of the JKT (e.g., *The content of the Job Knowledge Test*  
 399 *paper was clearly related to the role of General Practitioner*)  
 400 and four items measuring job relatedness of the SJT (A  
 401 *person who scored well on the SJT would be a good GP*).

402 **2.3.2. Self-efficacy**

403 Self-efficacy was measured at both T1 immediately after  
 404 testing, and T2 after candidates had received their results  
 405 1 month later. Six items were adapted from Schyns and  
 406 von Collani (2002); for example, 'If I am under pressure at  
 407 work, I can usually think of something to do.' Responses were  
 408 rated on a 6-point Likert scale, from 1 = not at all true to  
 409 6 = completely true.

410 **2.3.3. Pass/fail**

411 Whether the applicant was selected for further consider-  
 412 ation at the next stage of selection was assessed using  
 413 one item at T2 (e.g., 'Have you been selected for further con-

sideration at the assessment center?'). Responses were 414  
 measured as yes (=2) or no (=1). 415

2.3.4. Fairness perceptions 416

Fairness perceptions were measured at T2 after candi- 417  
 dates had received their results using the four-item scale 418  
 developed by Gilliland (1994; e.g., 'Whether or not I 419  
 advanced to the selection center, I am satisfied with the use of 420  
 the shortlisting assessment papers,' and 'Overall, I feel the 421  
 shortlisting assessment papers were fair.'). 422

**3. Sample 1: Results** 423

The means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients of 424  
 and correlations between all the study variables measured 425  
 at both T1 and T2 are displayed in Table 1. Partial correla- 426 T I  
 tions were calculated to control for the effects of age, as 427  
 age correlated with both T1 and T2 self-efficacy 428  
 ( $p < .001$ ). All study scales demonstrated good alpha reli- 429  
 abilities (all  $\alpha > .80$ ), as shown in parentheses in Table 1. 430  
 T1 and T2 self-efficacy correlate highly ( $r = .70, p < .001$ ), 431  
 suggesting that self-efficacy is relatively stable over a 1- 432  
 month period. 433

**3.1. T1 job relatedness, self-efficacy and T2 434  
 fairness perceptions** 435

According to Hypothesis 1, job relatedness perceptions 436  
 at T1 would positively predict fairness perceptions meas- 437  
 ured at T2 (after applicants had received their test 438  
 results). To test the research question (can self-efficacy be 439  
 conceived of as a trait that predicts fairness perceptions), 440  
 we examined the extent to which self-efficacy added 441  
 incremental variance to perceptions of fairness over and 442  
 above job relatedness perceptions. 443

A number of assumptions had to be met to indicate that 444  
 the data were suitable for regression (Field, 2005). For the 445  
 assumption of independent errors, the Durbin-Watson 446  
 statistic was checked to ensure it was close to 2. The vari- 447  
 ance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance statistics were 448  
 checked to ensure that there was no multicollinearity in 449  
 the data. Plots of standardized residuals against standar- 450  
 dized predicted values were checked to ensure that the 451  
 assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were met. 452

AQ7 Table 1. Descriptive statistics, alpha reliabilities, and partial-correlations between study variables in Sample 1

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. JKT job relatedness	15.62	3.30	(0.89)					
2. SJT job relatedness	13.57	3.43	0.57***	(0.88)				
3. Self efficacy (T1)	29.73	3.49	0.17*	0.17*	(0.85)			
4. Pass/fail <sup>a</sup>	1.88	0.33	0.14	0.02	-0.04	-		
5. Fairness perceptions <sup>a</sup>	14.90	3.00	0.31***	0.35***	0.27***	0.19*	(0.84)	
6. Self-efficacy (T2) <sup>a</sup>	30.10	3.60	0.05	0.14	0.70***	-0.04	0.27***	(0.91)

Note: N = 147, due to missing age data. <sup>a</sup>Variables measured at T2. Numbers in parentheses indicate alpha reliability coefficients. JKT = Job knowl- edge test; SJT = Situational judgment test. \* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  (2-tailed).

453 Additionally, histogram and normal probability plots were  
 454 checked to ensure that residuals were normally distrib-  
 455 uted. All these assumptions were met, indicating that the  
 456 data were suitable for regression. Finally, the number of  
 457 cases needed to be checked to ensure that there were  
 458 enough to run these regression analyses. Field (2005) sug-  
 459 gests 10 cases for each predictor: there were six predic-  
 460 tors, therefore 60 cases would have been sufficient. A  
 461 further method for calculating the sample size required is  
 462 given by Miles and Shevlin (2001). For this, the number of  
 463 predictors, power and effect size values are checked  
 464 against tables that indicate the sample size necessary for  
 465 the regression analysis. In this instance with six predictors,  
 466 to achieve a medium effect size with a power of 0.8, the  
 467 look-up tables suggest that a minimum sample size of 100  
 468 is needed. Thus, once again, the sample size was sufficient.

469 Following preanalysis checks (e.g., Field, 2005; Miles &  
 470 Shevlin, 2001), a hierarchical regression equation was cal-  
 471 culated with fairness perceptions as the dependent vari-  
 472 able. Gender, age and pass/fail were entered in the first  
 473 step as control variables. Outcome favorability (pass/fail)  
 474 is important in determining fairness perceptions as candi-  
 475 dates perceive selection processes as more fair if they  
 476 perform well (Bauer et al., 1998; Greenberg, 1987).  
 477 Therefore pass/fail was controlled for in this regression  
 478 equation to ensure any relationships found were related  
 479 to predictor variables alone. JKT and SJT job relatedness  
 480 perceptions were entered in Step 2, and self-efficacy<sup>2</sup> was  
 481 entered in Step 3.

T2 482 Table 2 shows that the addition of JKT and SJT job relat-  
 483 edness perceptions in Step 2 added to the overall predic-  
 484 tion of fairness perceptions,  $\Delta R^2 = .13$ ,  $F(2, 136) = 10.95$ ,  
 485  $p < .001$ ; the beta-weight for SJT job relatedness was stat-  
 486 istically significant ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $p = .003$ ). The addition of self-  
 487 efficacy in step 3, significantly added to the prediction of  
 488 fairness perceptions at T2,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $F(1, 135) = 5.82$ ,  
 489  $p = .02$ ; with a significant beta-weight for self-efficacy  
 490 ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p = .02$ ).

491 These findings support Hypothesis 1 and also show  
 492 that self-efficacy can be considered a trait variable that

Table 2. Hierarchical regression for control variables, JKT/SJT job relatedness perceptions and T1 self-efficacy on fairness perceptions at T2

	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1, $R^2 = 0.06$			
Constant	9.73	2.36	
Age	0.06	0.04	0.12
Gender	-0.67	0.54	-0.11
Pass/fail	1.87	0.84	0.19
Step 2, $\Delta R^2 = 0.13$			
JKT job relatedness	0.10	0.09	0.11
SJT job relatedness	0.26	0.09	0.29**
Step 3, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$			
Self-efficacy	0.17	0.08	0.20*

Note:  $N = 142$ . JKT = Job knowledge test; SJT = Situational judgment test. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

predicts fairness perceptions. However, the increase in  
 variance in step 3 is only a small effect, consistent with  
 previous research (Hausknecht et al., 2004).

### 3.2. Is self-efficacy an outcome variable at the shortlisting stage?

To test the research question, we used Bauer et al.'s  
 (1998) methodology to explore whether JKT and SJT job  
 relatedness perceptions measured at T1 interact with  
 outcome favorability (pass/fail) to predict T2 self-efficacy.  
 This would indicate whether an applicant's self-efficacy is  
 impacted by the selection process. Therefore, two regres-  
 sion models were run with T2 self-efficacy as the depend-  
 ent variable. For both equations age, gender and T1 self-  
 efficacy were entered into step 1, as control variables.  
 For the first equation, JKT job relatedness perceptions,  
 outcome favorability and their interaction term were  
 entered into step two. The addition of the variables did  
 not add to the prediction of the model,  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  $F(3, 128) = 0.59$ ,  $p = .62$ . For the second equation, SJT job  
 relatedness perceptions, outcome favorability and their  
 interaction were entered into step two. The addition of  
 the variables did not add to the prediction of the model,  
 $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F(3, 128) = 0.28$ ,  $p = .84$ . Therefore, findings  
 indicate that job relatedness perceptions and outcome  
 favorability do not interact to predict self-efficacy meas-  
 ured at T2.

The research question was also tested by examining  
 the difference between T2 self-efficacy for those who had  
 passed the shortlisting process ( $N = 137$ ) and those who  
 had failed ( $N = 19$ ). If self-efficacy is influenced by failing  
 the shortlisting process, one would expect T2 self-efficacy  
 to be significantly lower for those who failed than those  
 who passed the shortlisting process. To test pass and fail  
 group differences for T2 self-efficacy, a nonparametric  
 Mann-Whitney  $U$ -test was used, rather than a parametric  
 $t$ -test, because the 'fail' group had only 19 participants  
 (below the suggested minimum of 20 for parametric tests;  
 Field, 2005). Findings indicated no significant difference in  
 T2 self-efficacy between those who passed ( $Mdn = 30.00$ )  
 and those who failed shortlisting ( $Mdn = 31.00$ ,  
 $U = 1093.00$ ,  $p = .25$ ,  $r = -.09$ ); thus it appears that those  
 who fail shortlisting do not appear to have lower self-  
 efficacy than those who passed shortlisting.

It is also conceivable that what is influenced is the  
 change in reported self-efficacy from T1 to T2, which can  
 be calculated by subtracting T2 self-efficacy from T1 self-  
 efficacy. Therefore the change in self-reported self-efficacy  
 was examined, and findings indicated no significant differ-  
 ence between pass and fail groups ( $U = 1297.50$ ,  $p = .98$ ).

Finally we also explored whether there was a difference  
 in self-efficacy between those who completed the ques-  
 tionnaire at T1 only (mean = 29.82), and those who  
 responded to the questionnaire at both time points



546 (mean = 30.09). We found no significant difference  
547 between the two means ( $p = .19$ ). Overall therefore, con-  
548 trary to what has been found in previous research (e.g.,  
549 Bauer et al., 1998; Gilliland, 1994), it appears that occupa-  
550 tional self-efficacy is *not* an outcome negatively influenced  
551 by failing the shortlisting process in this sample.

## 552 4. Sample 2: Method

### 553 4.1. Participants

554 Participants were applicants for GP roles during the  
555 assessment center stage of the selection process (see Fig-  
556 ure 1). Data collection occurred at two time points, 483  
557 participants provided data at the time of testing (T1); of  
558 these, 212 provided data at T2 and therefore comprised  
559 the second sample for this study. Of the 212, 47% were  
560 male, 50% were female (data was missing from 3%); their  
561 mean age was 29.1 years ( $SD = 4.9$ ). The participants  
562 described themselves as: White (55%), Asian (33%), Black  
563 (2%), Mixed (3%), Chinese (2%) and other ethnic groups  
564 (3%); data was missing from 2%.

### 565 4.2. Procedure

566 Data were gathered during the assessment center phase  
567 of selection. Like with the first sample, candidates were  
568 invited to participate on a voluntary basis, were assured  
569 that information would be used for research purposes  
570 only and not in any selection decision and all who took  
571 part gave their consent to be involved. This was the third  
572 and final stage of the selection process and applicants  
573 attended assessment centers where they completed three  
574 selection method exercises: a GE; a SPC, and a WE. Ques-  
575 tionnaires were collected from applicants as follows: (T1)  
576 after candidates had completed selection exercises they  
577 completed a paper-based questionnaire which was distrib-  
578 uted by trained invigilators; and (T2) about 1 month fol-  
579 lowing the assessment day and after applicants had  
580 received results indicating whether or not they had been  
581 offered a post, they were contacted via their email address  
582 and sent an online questionnaire. Two hundred and twelve  
583 applicants completed the T2 questionnaire (42.4%  
584 response rate). There were no significant demographic  
585 differences between the response and nonresponse.

### 586 4.3. Measures

587 The measures used for Sample 2 were identical to those  
588 used for Sample 1. The first section of the questionnaire  
589 included demographic questions that were collected at  
590 T1. Items in the questionnaire were rated on a 5-point  
591 Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to  
592 5 = strongly agree, unless otherwise stated.

### 4.3.1. Job relatedness 593

The same items relating to job relatedness perceptions of  
594 selection methods were used; thus, four items measured  
595 the job relatedness of each of the exercises (GE; SPC;  
596 WE); e.g., 'The content of the Group Exercise was relevant to  
597 General Practice.' 598

### 4.3.2. Self-efficacy 599

Self-efficacy was measured at T1 and T2 using the same  
600 six items as used in Sample 1, adapted from Schyns and  
601 von Collani (2002). 602

### 4.3.3. Pass/fail 603

Whether the applicant had been selected for a GP role  
604 was assessed using one item at T2, (e.g., 'Have you been  
605 selected for a general practitioner post?'). Responses were  
606 measured as yes (=2) or no (=1). 607

### 4.3.4. Fairness perceptions 608

Fairness perceptions were measured at T2 using the same  
609 four-item scale developed by Gilliland (1994) as used for  
610 Sample 1 (e.g., 'Whether or not I was accepted for a general  
611 practitioner post, I am satisfied with the use of the assessment  
612 center exercises'). 613

## 614 5. Sample 2: Results

The means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients of  
615 and correlations between all the study variables are dis-  
616 played in Table 3. Partial correlations were calculated to  
617 control for the effects of age, as age correlated with both  
618 T1 and T2 self-efficacy ( $p < .001$ ). All study scales demon-  
619 strated good alpha reliabilities (all  $\alpha > 0.80$ ). Self-efficacy  
620 was highly correlated between the two time points  
621 ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ) suggesting that it is relatively stable  
622 over the 1-month period. 623

### 624 5.1. T1 job relatedness, self-efficacy and T2 625 fairness perceptions

According to Hypothesis 1, job relatedness perceptions  
626 for the three selection methods measured at T1 would  
627 be positively related to fairness perceptions measured at  
628 T2 (after applicants had received the outcome results). To  
629 test the research question, self-efficacy (as a trait) would  
630 add incremental variance over and above job relatedness  
631 perceptions. A hierarchical regression equation was calcu-  
632 lated with fairness perceptions as the outcome. Age, gen-  
633 der, and pass/fail were entered into Step 1 as control  
634 variables; GE, SPC and WE job relatedness perceptions  
635 were entered into Step 2; and T1 self-efficacy was entered  
636 into Step 3. 637

Although Step 1 variables were entered into the regres-  
638 sion equation as control variables, it is noteworthy that  
639 this step predicted 33% of the variance in fairness  
640

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, alpha reliabilities, and partial-correlations between study variables for Sample 2

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. GE job relatedness	15.94	2.61	(0.82)						
2. SPC job relatedness	17.37	2.45	0.45***	(0.85)					
3. WE job relatedness	15.58	2.63	0.56***	0.41***	(0.86)				
4. Self efficacy (T1)	29.58	3.04	0.17*	0.15*	0.13	(0.84)			
5. Pass/fail <sup>a</sup>	1.79	0.41	.02	.08	-.00	-.02	—		
6. Fairness perceptions <sup>a</sup>	15.35	3.26	0.13	0.14*	0.13	0.12	0.54***	(0.91)	
7. Self-efficacy (T2) <sup>a</sup>	29.37	3.61	0.11	0.12	.04	0.65***	-0.12	0.11	(0.86)

Note: N = 206 (due to missing data). <sup>a</sup>Variables measured at T2. Numbers in parentheses indicate alpha reliability coefficients. GE = group exercise; SPC = simulated patient consultation; WE = written exercise. \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001 (2-tailed).

641 perceptions, and in particular that the variable pass/fail  
 642 was significant ( $\beta = 0.60, p < .001$ ). This indicated that  
 643 passing the selection process significantly and positively  
 644 predicted perceptions of fairness.

T4 645 Table 4 shows that the addition of job relatedness  
 646 perceptions (SPC, GE, and WE) in step 2 added to the  
 647 overall prediction of T2 fairness perceptions,  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  
 648  $F(3, 192) = 2.78, p = .04$ . However, the beta weights for  
 649 the three selection methods were not statistically signifi-  
 650 cant indicating that none of them had unique variance in  
 651 predicting fairness perceptions. The addition of self-  
 652 efficacy in step 3 added to the prediction of fairness  
 653 perceptions,  $\Delta R^2 = .02, F(1, 189) = 3.65, p = .04$ ; the  
 654 beta-weight for self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.13, p = .04$ ) was  
 655 significant.

656 These findings partially support Hypothesis 1, and also  
 657 show that self-efficacy can be considered a trait variable  
 658 that predicts fairness perceptions. However, the increase  
 659 in variance in step 3 is a small effect; consistent with  
 660 research (e.g., Hausknecht et al., 2004; Oostrom et al.,  
 661 2010).

662 **5.2. Is self-efficacy an outcome variable**  
 663 **at the assessment center?**

664 As with Sample 1, we explored whether GE, SPC and WE  
 665 job relatedness perceptions measured at T1 interacted

Table 4. Hierarchical regression for control variables, job relatedness perceptions and T1 self-efficacy on T2 perceived fairness perceptions

	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1, $R^2 = 0.33$			
Constant	5.23	1.72	
Age	0.07	0.04	0.11
Gender	-0.89	0.40	-0.13
Pass/fail	4.78	0.49	0.60***
Step 2, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03$			
GE job relatedness	0.10	0.10	.08
SPC job relatedness	0.02	0.09	.02
WE job relatedness	0.13	0.09	0.10
Step 3, $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$			
Self-efficacy	0.14	0.07	0.13*

Note: N = 197. GE = group exercise; SPC = simulated patient consultation; WE = written exercise. \**p* < .05; \*\*\**p* < .001.

with outcome favorability (pass/fail) to influence T2 self-  
 efficacy. Three regression models were run with T2 self-  
 efficacy as the dependent variable and age, gender, and T1  
 self-efficacy entered into step 1 as control variables. For  
 the first equation, GE job relatedness perceptions, out-  
 come favorability and their interaction term were entered  
 into step two. The addition of the variables did not add to  
 the prediction of the model,  $\Delta R^2 = .01, F(3, 189) = 1.48$ ,  
 $p = .22$ . For the second equation, SPC job relatedness  
 perceptions, outcome favorability and their interaction  
 were entered into step two. The addition of the  
 variables did not add to the prediction,  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  
 $F(3, 190) = 1.66, p = 0.18$ . Finally, for the third model,  
 WE job relatedness perceptions, outcome favorability and  
 their interaction term were entered into step two. The  
 addition of variables did not add to the prediction of the  
 model,  $\Delta R^2 = .01, F(3, 190) = 1.60, p = 0.19$ . Therefore,  
 findings indicated that job relatedness perceptions and  
 outcome favorability do not interact to predict self-  
 efficacy measured at T2.

As with Sample 1, the differences between T2 self-  
 efficacy for those who had passed the assessment centre  
 (N = 162) and those who had failed (N = 50) was also  
 examined to test the research question. Again, if self-  
 efficacy is influenced by 'failing' the assessment centre,  
 one would expect T2 self-efficacy to be lower for those  
 who failed than those who passed. However, age appears  
 to be a covariate because there was a significant associa-  
 tion between age and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.26, p < .001$ ) and  
 a significant difference in age between the pass  
 (M = 28.33) and fail (M = 31.98) groups. Therefore, an  
 ANCOVA was used to examine the difference between  
 the pass and fail groups for T2 self-efficacy, while partial-  
 ling out the effect of age. The covariate, age, was signifi-  
 cantly related to T2 self-efficacy,  $F(1,204) = 9.23$ ,  
 $p = .003$ . After controlling for the effects of age, there  
 was no significant effect of the pass/fail outcome on T2  
 self-efficacy,  $F(1,204) = 3.43, p = .09, \eta_p^2 = .02$ . Thus,  
 there is no significant difference between pass and fail  
 groups on T2 self-efficacy while controlling for age; thus it  
 appears that those who fail the assessment centre do not  
 have lower self-efficacy than those who passed it.

As was mentioned for Sample 1, it is also possible that  
 the change in reported self-efficacy from T1 to T2 is

710 influenced and this can be calculated by subtracting T2  
711 self-efficacy from T1 self-efficacy. Therefore the *change* in  
712 self-reported self-efficacy was explored, using a nonpara-  
713 metric Mann-Whitney *U* test to examine differences  
714 between pass and fail groups due to the uneven sample  
715 size in each group (age was not a covariate in this  
716 instance). Findings indicated no significant difference  
717 between pass and fail groups for change in self-efficacy  
718 between T1 and T2 ( $U = 4710.00, p = .10$ ).

719 Finally, we also explored whether there was a differ-  
720 ence in self-efficacy between those who completed the  
721 questionnaire in T1 only (mean = 29.60), and those who  
722 responded to the questionnaire at both time points  
723 (mean = 29.42). We found no significant difference  
724 between the two means ( $p = .33$ ). Overall therefore, con-  
725 trary to what has been found in previous research (Bauer  
726 et al., 1998; Gilliland, 1994) it appears that self-efficacy is  
727 *not* an outcome negatively influenced by failing the assess-  
728 ment centre process.

## 729 6. Discussion

### 730 6.1. Job relatedness and fairness perceptions

731 In Sample 1, job relatedness perceptions of the individual  
732 selection methods – the JKT and the SJT measured at the  
733 time of testing predicted fairness perceptions measured a  
734 month later, even after controlling for whether applicants  
735 passed or failed the shortlisting stage. These findings sup-  
736 port previous research (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Chan  
737 et al., 1998; Schmitt et al., 2004; Truxillo et al., 2001).  
738 However, only the SJT had unique variance in predicting  
739 fairness perceptions following feedback. By contrast, in  
740 Sample 2, although job relatedness perceptions for the  
741 three selection methods – the GE, SPC and WE – made a  
742 joint contribution in predicting fairness perceptions, no  
743 single selection method contributed unique variance. In  
744 other words, the selection methods together had predic-  
745 tive power in explaining fairness perceptions, but no single  
746 selection method uniquely explained fairness perceptions.

747 The selection process examined in this study is particu-  
748 larly high-stakes, where the outcome of the selection pro-  
749 cess is important to candidates, as not getting a post may  
750 have a significant negative impact on future careers  
751 (Patterson & Ferguson, 2007; Truxillo et al., 2002).  
752 Indeed, following the final stage assessment center, the  
753 outcome (pass/fail) rather than procedural factors better  
754 predicted perceptions of fairness perceptions. Thus, pass-  
755 ing or failing is more important in determining fairness  
756 perceptions than job relatedness perceptions, although  
757 job relatedness still has some incremental value. Con-  
758 versely at the shortlisting stage, pass/fail was not a signifi-  
759 cant predictor of fairness perceptions. In combination,  
760 these results suggest that failing the process at the final  
761 stage of the selection process has a greater influence on  
762 applicants' perceptions of fairness; this may be because

they have invested more time and effort in the process at 763  
this stage. This supports previous research where, follow- 764  
ing feedback, fewer procedural justice rules predict vari- 765  
ous outcomes (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998); and those who 766  
'passed' the process evaluated testing more positively 767  
than those who failed (Schleicher, Venkataramani, Morge- 768  
son, & Campion, 2006). However, it seems that at early 769  
stages in the selection process, job relatedness percep- 770  
tions are more important in explaining fairness percep- 771  
tions. These findings support the notion that cross- 772  
sectional data may inflate the importance of job- 773  
relatedness. For example, Gilliland and Steiner (2012) sug- 774  
gest that procedural justice rules such as job relatedness 775  
are more important when selection outcomes are 776  
unknown than once outcome feedback has been pro- 777  
vided. Taken together, these findings support Hausknecht 778  
et al.'s (2004) assertion that a key variable to be consid- 779  
ered in applicant fairness perceptions is the stage of the 780  
selection process. As applicant perception variables have 781  
been measured at different selection process stages, 782  
important differences in the magnitude of relationships 783  
between variables could potentially have been obscured 784  
in previous research (Hausknecht et al., 2004). 785

### 6.2. Self-efficacy – trait or outcome? 786

This study explored whether self-efficacy can be con- 787  
ceived of as a trait that predicts fairness, or an outcome 788  
that is influenced by the selection process. Results 789  
showed that occupational self-efficacy was not influenced 790  
by failing the selection process, despite previous research 791  
indicating that *test-taking* self-efficacy is (e.g., Truxillo et al., 792  
2001). Instead, a key finding was that self-efficacy explains 793  
variance in fairness perceptions across two samples, 794  
beyond that accounted for by job relatedness perceptions. 795  
Although effect sizes were small, a strength of the present 796  
study was that findings replicated across two samples. 797  
This study therefore makes an important contribution to 798  
the applicant perception literature: it has shown that self- 799  
efficacy can be conceived of as a trait that *positively predicts* 800  
fairness perceptions, rather than an *outcome negatively* 801  
*influenced* by the selection process. This indicates that 802  
applicants who report higher self-efficacy are more likely 803  
to perceive selection processes as procedurally fair fol- 804  
lowing outcome results. Similarly, Ployhart and Ryan 805  
(1997) found a positive relationship between perceptions 806  
of fair processes and self-efficacy regardless of whether 807  
applicants were accepted or rejected. 808

Self-efficacy relates to a person's evaluations of their 809  
ability to perform successfully in a variety of situations and 810  
generally; empirical research shows that self-efficacy 811  
relates positively to work attitudes such job satisfaction 812  
(e.g., Judge, Van Vianen, & Pater, 2004) and also job per- 813  
formance (e.g., Judge & Bono, 2001). Individuals high on 814  
self-efficacy deal effectively with difficulties (Gist & 815



816 Mitchell, 1992) and persist when challenges arise (Myers,  
817 1999). Furthermore, substantial positive relationships  
818 have been found between occupational self-efficacy and  
819 internal locus of control ( $r = .49$ ; Schyns & von Collani,  
820 2002) supporting Bandura's (1977) assertion that people  
821 with high perceptions of self-efficacy tend to attribute  
822 favorable performance to internal factors such as person-  
823 ality or disposition.

824 Our findings may be explained by the self-serving bias  
825 mechanism, where applicants who perceive themselves  
826 positively, internalize their ability to perform well on  
827 selection methods and therefore, consider the process to  
828 be fair. Studies that have examined the relationship  
829 between test performance and applicant perceptions have  
830 provided evidence that post-test reactions may in part  
831 reflect the operation of a self-serving bias (e.g., Chan &  
832 Schmitt, 1997; Chan et al., 1998; Truxillo et al., 2009):  
833 applicants who perceive that they have performed well  
834 during the selection process report higher favorability  
835 perceptions than those who perceive that they did not  
836 perform well. If self-efficacy relates to how individuals *gen-*  
837 *erally* feel about themselves (i.e., better able to cope and  
838 perform successfully in a wide array of situations), then  
839 they may believe they will perform well during selection  
840 and therefore rate the process fairer.

841 In addition, Consistency Theory (Dipboye, 1977) may  
842 also help to explain these findings. This theory suggests  
843 that people strive to maintain a positive self-image. If indi-  
844 viduals have high self-perceptions they reject negative  
845 feedback (that is, failing the selection process) because it  
846 is inconsistent with their self-image. Because the sample's  
847 self-efficacy was particularly high, it could be that individu-  
848 als who failed the selection process discounted this to  
849 maintain a positive self-image and as such self-efficacy was  
850 not negatively influenced (Schleicher et al., 2006). An  
851 alternative explanation, and one that cannot be corrobo-  
852 rated because information was not sought from partici-  
853 pants, is that rejected candidates had alternative job offers  
854 and therefore their self-efficacy was not negatively influ-  
855 enced by failing because the alternative offer attenuated  
856 the negativity of rejection (Anderson & Goltsi, 2008; Ploy-  
857 hart & Ryan, 1997).

### 858 6.3. Implications

859 Our findings have a number of important implications  
860 relating to both research and practice. In relation to  
861 research, this study highlighted the importance of  
862 collecting post outcome (pass/fail) data as in one of the  
863 samples (during the final stage assessment center), job  
864 relatedness perceptions only moderately predicted fair-  
865 ness perceptions following outcome feedback, with the  
866 outcome (pass/fail) being more important in predicting  
867 fairness perceptions than job relatedness perceptions.  
868 This suggests that perceptions may be less stable than

869 alluded to in previous cross-sectional designs (Hausknecht  
870 et al., 2004); that is, once outcome feedback is received  
871 the perceptions of job relatedness are no longer impor-  
872 tant in predicting fairness perceptions. A second implica-  
873 tion relates to the importance of considering the stage of  
874 the selection process in applicant perception research  
875 (Hausknecht et al., 2004; Gilliland, 1993), as findings  
876 showed that procedural justice rules may be more or less  
877 important depending on the stage of the selection pro-  
878 cess. For instance, job relatedness perceptions accounted  
879 for more variance in fairness perceptions at the shortlist-  
880 ing stage (15% for Sample 1), than they did at the assess-  
881 ment center stage (3% for Sample 2). In addition, at the  
882 assessment center stage the outcome (pass/fail) explained  
883 33% of the variance in fairness perceptions. Conversely, at  
884 shortlisting once outcome feedback was received, percep-  
885 tions of job relatedness remained important in predicting  
886 fairness perceptions. It is plausible that the outcome is  
887 more important at the final stage of selection as applicants  
888 have invested more time and effort in the process than at  
889 earlier stages in the selection process; as such, failing has a  
890 significant negative influence on fairness perceptions. This  
891 may be particularly significant in high-stakes settings such  
892 as the present context.

893 Third, this research demonstrates a role for individual  
894 differences in perceptions of fairness. Individual differen-  
895 ces relating to self-efficacy accounted for a proportion of  
896 variance in fairness perceptions. Although these effects  
897 were small, it could imply that there is a stable compo-  
898 nent to applicant perceptions. Indeed, findings were con-  
899 sistent across two field-based samples; and potentially  
900 may generalize to other organizational settings. As such,  
901 self-efficacy and other individual differences should be  
902 included in future studies so that researchers can obtain a  
903 more complete understanding of the factors that influ-  
904 ence applicant perceptions of selection methods and  
905 processes (Oostrom et al., 2010; Truxillo, Bauer, Cam-  
906 pion, & Paronto, 2006).

907 Fourth, findings may also suggest that self-efficacy can  
908 be conceived of as a trait that *positively predicts* fairness  
909 perceptions, rather than an *outcome negatively influenced*  
910 by the selection process. Although test-taking self-efficacy  
911 has been shown to be negatively influenced by a selection  
912 process (e.g., Truxillo et al., 2001), it is plausible that  
913 broader conceptualizations of self-efficacy (that is, general  
914 or occupational) are predictors of fairness as, operational-  
915 ized as traits, they are stable over time (Schyns and von  
916 Collani, 2002). If the occupational self-efficacy constructs  
917 relates to how individuals *generally* feel about themselves,  
918 then it is perhaps not surprising that this influences their  
919 perceptions of selection. These findings may be extrapo-  
920 lated to other similar high-stakes contexts. Unlike previ-  
921 ous research (e.g., Nikolaou & Judge, 2007) that has  
922 tended to focus on student samples or selection that was  
923 not particularly high stakes, this research provides a  
924 unique insight into the role of self-efficacy in a selection



925 context that has significant implications for a candidate's  
926 future career prospects.

927 Fifth, passing or failing the final stage of selection pro-  
928 cess (Sample 2) predicted a significant amount of the var-  
929 iance in fairness perceptions following pass/fail results.  
930 From a practical perspective, this indicates that organiza-  
931 tions will have to 'work hard' to overcome the disappoint-  
932 ment that comes from being rejected from a highly  
933 desirable job. It may suggest that organizations with high-  
934 stakes selection processes have limited control to improve  
935 applicant perceptions because failing will negatively influ-  
936 ence fairness perceptions, whether or not selection meth-  
937 ods are procedurally fair. Achieving greater conceptual  
938 understanding of the nature of applicant perceptions has  
939 further practical implications. If negative perceptions of  
940 selection methods are primarily a result of a method's  
941 content or the way it was administered, then it may be  
942 possible to encourage positive perceptions through  
943 amending content or administration (Chan & Schmitt,  
944 2004; Van Vianen et al., 2004). Conversely, if applicant per-  
945 ceptions are due to stable individual differences among  
946 applicants, such as self-efficacy, then employers may only  
947 be able to influence applicant perceptions to some extent.

948 Finally, the finding that job relatedness is more impor-  
949 tant in terms of its impact on fairness perceptions in the  
950 first stages of selection could indicate that organizations  
951 may wish to explicitly state how selection tests are job-  
952 relevant from the onset. This may be particularly impor-  
953 tant for high-stakes candidates where reactions can be  
954 heightened due to the potential negative impact on a per-  
955 son's career if the selection process is not passed. The  
956 fact that this study explored real candidates in an opera-  
957 tional selection setting increases the external validity of  
958 the research (Schinkel et al., 2013) and is likely to be a  
959 better representation of applicant perceptions in selection  
960 than student studies that are merely imagining their  
961 responses. Therefore research in operational contexts is  
962 extremely important for a greater understanding of the  
963 processes behind applicant reactions.

#### 964 6.4. Limitations

965 There are a number of potential limitations of the stud-  
966 ies presented in this study that should be noted. First,  
967 the selection methods in this research were specifically  
968 created for the GP selection process. However, these  
969 types of methods are fairly commonly-used in selection  
970 processes (e.g., Zibarras & Woods, 2010), so to the  
971 extent that other selection methods are similar, these  
972 results are likely to be generalizable. Second, one could  
973 argue that perception measures should have been col-  
974 lected both before and after completing the selection  
975 methods because otherwise participants' base-rate for  
976 these variables cannot be controlled for, which might  
977 confound the ability to isolate the effects of applicant

characteristics (Chan & Schmitt, 2004; Schmitt & Chan, 978  
1999). However, in this instance pretest perceptions 979  
would have been meaningless, because it would have 980  
been impossible for candidates to assess job relatedness 981  
of the method *before* it was completed. Nonetheless, 982  
the self-efficacy questionnaire may have been better 983  
completed prior to the selection process. Ideally, future 984  
research should aim to access this information; how- 985  
ever, in the present testing context, it was not possible 986  
to collect pretest perceptions due to time and logistical 987  
constraints of an operational setting. Finally, researchers 988  
(e.g., Truxillo et al., 2001) have suggested that multid- 989  
dimensional measures of fairness (as suggested by Gilli- 990  
land, 1993) should be used, in addition to employing 991  
broader measures. In the present study, a specific mea- 992  
sure of one procedural factor, job relatedness, was 993  
used. In the context of this research, however, it was 994  
deemed appropriate to focus on job relatedness as it 995  
was anticipated that this would be a salient feature for 996  
candidates in this context as the selection methods 997  
were relatively new methods of assessment. However, 998  
further research is needed to explore the relative 999  
impact of various justice rules on fairness because this 1000  
will provide more specific insight into the rules crucial 1001  
in applicant perceptions, as procedural rules may be dif- 1002  
ferentially weighted (Anderson et al., 2001; Schleicher 1003  
et al., 2006). 1004

#### 1005 6.5. Conclusion

Overall, the results from this study show that in two sam- 1006  
ples, job relatedness perceptions measured at the time of 1007  
testing predict fairness perceptions measured following 1008  
outcome feedback. However, findings also indicated that 1009  
the stage in the selection process was important in deter- 1010  
mining the extent to which job relatedness perceptions 1011  
predicted fairness. Job relatedness perceptions were 1012  
more important at the shortlisting stage than the assess- 1013  
ment center stage in predicting fairness perceptions; at 1014  
the final assessment center stage, passing or failing the 1015  
process was more important. Findings also indicated that 1016  
self-efficacy may be a predictor that influences applicant 1017  
fairness perceptions, supporting the theory that there 1018  
may be a stable component to applicant perceptions. 1019

#### 1020 Notes

1. Note that a factor analysis revealed that the two job relat- 1021  
edness scales and the fairness items all loaded separately 1022  
onto three factors. 1023
2. Note that T1, rather than T2, self-efficacy is used. In these 1024  
analyses it is conceived of as a trait, being relatively stable 1025  
over time ( $r = .70$ ). This also reduces common method 1026  
bias. 1027

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