

TED DEBATE CLUB

supplemental working sheet

d e b a t e a r t i c l e s

Debate topic: Blind Recruitment

What is 'Blind' Recruitment?

There are many types of blind recruitment, which in its purest sense involves being hired without your future employer knowing your name, age, gender, race, educational background or work experience.

The Advantages?

Although the process may seem a tad 'risky' on the surface, 'blind' recruitment does have its advantages. For example, when carried out correctly, it should go a long way to eliminating any potential bias that might otherwise exist in the hiring process. A real advantage of blind recruitment is that it makes a candidate's skills the first impression for the employer; rather than the candidate's 'brand' - things like school or University, gender, former employers, age or nationality. It can also in theory, prevent hiring decisions being influenced or tainted by the hiring manager's preferences.

One industry where blind hiring should be quite successful is IT – an area where certain individuals who are extremely gifted may not always have the skillsets (at least on paper) to reach the interview stage. Indeed, some IT companies looking for extraordinary talent may find blind hiring techniques - such as a coding challenge, for example – to be the ideal way to find their next skilled employee.

The Disadvantages

'Blind' recruitment does present some real challenges and disadvantages within the hiring process. For example, it does not allow a candidate to showcase his or her personality traits - so any 'idiosyncrasies' in their character do not play a part in the assessment. The blind hiring method is also by no means fool proof. For example - previously concealed biases held by the hiring manager may still emerge when he or she finally meets the candidate. Thus, there is always a chance the 'preferred' candidate may be rejected at the final interview or face-to-face meeting - despite a previously 'stellar' performance on paper.

Additional Articles

Does Blind Hiring Blind Discrimination?

South Korean President Moon Jae-in has announced the implementation of the “blind” hiring system to all public sectors starting in July, in an effort to promote equality in employment procedures. He also showed his hopes that the new regulation be expanded to private sectors as well. The Moon administration has called for such a system in order to eliminate hiring discrimination in a society where connections based on school and hometown may mean more than it should. In the Korean job market, it has been common for employers to question applicants about possible discriminatory factors such as age, gender, physical information and even marital status.

The new system will serve as a device that guarantees fair opportunity for employment and breaks down academic cliques. Unlike the past, the new resume will not require a photo, academic background or other personal information unrelated to the job. It will focus more on evaluating candidates’ job experiences and relevant qualifications. The majority seems to welcome the new regulation that solves many existing prejudices.

The policy, however, gives the impression that it was too hastily made, no matter how good its intention is. The government made a huge shift in policy that could possibly change Korean society’s paradigm in a single day without any public discussion. It would be difficult to form a social consensus if the administration just hurries to pursue justifications without any specific plans in hand.

The regulation is already facing harsh skepticisms. Many job seekers educated in prestigious universities have angrily asked why they should hide their school and high GPA since such factors reflect the result of their efforts. Moreover, President Moon has declared he would apply quota systems, which would require

that 30 percent of new hires be from regions outside of the capital area and 5 percent must be young adults. It is contradictory that both give chances to local talent and young people and adopt a blind employment system at the same time.

Ambiguous recruitment standards can cause greater inequality rather than overcoming academic thresholds. If the criteria of the applications are vague, the difficulty of the written test will increase immediately and the interview screening process will become more complicated. It will cause chaos for both employers and employees, as firms have to spend more of their budgets on recruitment and job seekers will have to seek out countless experiences for their resumes to be qualified.

Equality and justice are precious values. Nonetheless, if the value's efficiency is too low, we need to spend greater time to think again. The answer to all these problems is to improve the blind hiring system. It should not merely remain as a populist policy, but be a cornerstone of fair competition centered on ability and skills in Korean society.

Blind hiring brings hopes to jobseekers

The background-blind recruitment, which seeks to hire people based on skills rather than educational background and other credentials, is becoming a source of hope and confidence for many jobseekers.

Under this system, state-run companies are forbidden from asking questions not directly related to the job including the applicants' family background, age, sex and the school they attended on the initial application form. Some private companies have also adopted the practice.

This is especially good news for graduates of universities outside of Seoul, who have not been faring so well in the excessively heated job market. "Now I feel like I can get a job if I just prepare myself well," Baek Seung-hak, 26, told The Korea Times, Wednesday. A graduate of the Chungnam National University, Baek is among an emerging group of young people seeking to land jobs through the blind recruitment system.

As a graduate of a university outside of Seoul, he felt he was at a disadvantage in the job market. The system has brought him hope, as he believes his background will no longer play a critical role.

"Under this new system, I think my chances of getting a job depend on how well I do on the written test and interviews _ so I'm focusing on doing well on those," he said.

Doubts remain about corruption

But many of his peers, Baek noted, have little faith in the actual process, even as they choose to give it a shot. "Most of my friends don't trust the blind hiring system. When looking at the people who got jobs at companies, they are mostly from the high-ranking universities based in Seoul. So when my friends fail to pass the first round of the hiring process, they begin to think it's because of their lack of credentials that have led to disappointing results," he explained.

Twenty-five-year-old Yoon Kyung-sik, a senior attending the same university as Baek, also cited some concerns prevalent among his peers, such as the possibility of discrimination against graduates from top-ranking universities, or competition in other ambiguous criteria.

Yoon also questioned whether the smaller state-run companies are following the new rules. "After seeing the news about corruption in the hiring process at some of these companies, my friends and I decided not to apply to smaller state-run companies, assuming they may already have candidates in mind."

Second chance

Despite these concerns, Yoon and his friends feel they have a better chance in the job market because of the blind recruitment system.

"There's an increasing feeling among my peers that as long as we study and work hard, we can land jobs, at least at state-run companies. It relieves us from the pressure coming from attending a university outside of Seoul," he said.

Yoon believes it also provides him an opportunity to seek a job in an area outside of his major.

"I studied in the department of humanities and arts, but I have been studying by myself to prepare for a different field. The new system allows me to capitalize on the skills I have gained outside of my major."

For some, the system has already provided them with good opportunities.

A 28-year-old Kim, a graduate of Chonbuk National University, feels confident about the system which has won him a job at Lotte Cinema this year.

"It was a way to show my authentic self," Kim said, adding that he was not asked about his credentials during the hiring process.

Those recruited through the system had diverse backgrounds and were from different universities — from abroad as well as within and outside of Seoul.

"And because the recruiters were not given any typical information, such as university attended, pictures, gender, and even age, they also tried harder to really see through us," he said. "It was a difficult process.

Within a short span of 10 to 20 minutes, I had to win over the interviewers. Yet, if you are really fit for the position, I believe it is a great chance to show yourself."

Reference

1. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/blind-recruitment-pros-cons-professor-gary-martin-faim-face>
'BLIND' RECRUITMENT: PROS AND CONS, LINEKEIN, Gary Martin
2. http://www.theargus.org/gisa_view.asp?no=1240
DOES BLIND HIRING BLIND DISCRIMINATION?, THE ARGUS BYUN HEE-JIN
3. http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2018/01/371_241297.html
BLIND HIRING BRINGS HOPES TO JOBSEEKERS, THE KOREAN TIMES, You Soo-sun