

What Matters in the Right Selection of Provincial Government Employees: An Analytical Study based on Employees Perception

Ghulam Nabi^{1*}, Zhu Yuanhua², Ahmad Nawaz Zaheer²,
Abdul Rehman³, Sehran Khan Nisar²

¹ Department of Business Administration, University of Management Sciences and Information Technology Kotli, Pakistan

² School of Public Affairs, University of Science and Technology of China

³ School of Economics & Management, Anhui Agricultural University Hefei

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Abstract

The main focus of this study is to investigate the applicants' perceived insight about the procedural justice of the recruitment and selection procedures in the public sector organizations. Data collection was made from those applicants who have gone through the process of prescribed selection process applicable for the provincial government jobs. A well designed survey questionnaire based on 5 point liker scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree were used to get the responses. It has been identified that the most significant issue for the selection of employees is the issue of feedback and job relatedness. The overall pattern of results indicates that both of the categories qualified and non-qualified employees showed that the fairness of the selection process is a real issue. Secondly, the departmental capacity shows they have less competent staff available for the handling of recruitment and selection process. There is a vital need that future research may focus on the specific measures that are used in making right selection, especially criterion-related validity and construct validity.

Keywords: Recruitment & Selection; Selection Procedure; dissemination of performance; Organizational performance

Introduction

A huge amount of research has been taken place in the end of 19th century focusing on the field of recruitment and selection (Ryan & Polychart, 2000). The major reason of these studies were mainly due to two reasons, one is that the perception about a particular recruitment and selection procedures will have an effect on how they see the organizations and how they behave in their subsequent work behavior (Rynes, 1993). It

has been argued that the main reason for making research on applicants' perception is that these selection process and procedures affect how they view the organization and how they will behave after attending the job (Rynes, 1993). One of a key issue for the recruiting organizations is the increasing claims in the different courts about the discriminatory practices, and since the mid-1990s this has also remained one of the main issues for the organizations in the USA and UK (Harris, 2000). Gilliland, (1993) suggested that fairness reaction by the applicants may have a relationship with the legal action against the recruiter. It has been argued that fairly treated applicants recommend the organization to others while as in case of not fairly not treated may go for litigation for their possible remedy (Bauer et al, 2001). The focus of the recruitment process is to address those individuals who might wish to apply for a given job while as selection focuses on the right applicants who have relevant qualifications and skills to fill a job vacancy (Snell and Bohlander, 2007). It has been noted that most of the researches have been conducted on the basis of student as sample not the actual employees who had been gone through the proper selection experiences (Ployhart et. al., 1999; Truxillo et, al., 2002). Therefore, this present study will be having more advantage as the sample consists upon both of the categories of applicants, those who have been selected for the job and those who couldn't qualify for the job. Secondly this study covers the public sector of governed by the provincial governments which has thousands of employees selected through such selection mechanism.

So it is equally important that the organizations must work to know how people think about their practices, to predict their behavior so that effective ways can be made to get more productive results. The candidates are keenly concerned with the transparency, feedback, dissemination of information and use of technology of the organizations selection procedures. Among the influences on the applicants is the information that is available to them and the concerned media that is used to disseminate this information among the potential candidates. Initially the main source of circulating and conveying the relevant information is the advertisement or this can be achieved through public notices through various Medias and these can be supported by the informational packs available with the selection agency. This strategy is normally used by the large employees who are selecting large numbers of employees on strategic positions. The information that is intended to attract the potential candidates helps them in such a way that they frame their applications accordingly and can assess their suitability for the effectiveness on the job. On the other side this also helps the organization to make short listing among the candidates who have applied for the particular job. Every year the provincial governments select dozens of employees from pay scale 1 to 22 in its different department where as it is the duty of public service commission to make the best selection for grade 17 posts in the public sector. So far no one either within the territory or outside the territory has tried to study and analyze how the candidates perceive the selection procedures of the commission, which is highly essential as many non-selected candidates sue this organization in the higher court of the territory. This research will be highly significant and productive for those who intend to make further research in this area of selection procedures. Secondly it would be a beneficial research for the selection authorities in making their procedures better in which candidate would be addressed properly so that

procedures can be aligned with the needs of the time. Selection procedures that are adopted by the public sector and autonomous bodies in the provinces are basically a reflection of the Indian civil service act 1935 that was formulated by the British regime in that era to recruit employees for different positions in the governments.

Existing Review of Literature

The first interaction between an organization and applicant is actually happening on the recruitment and selection stage when a new candidate perceives fairness treatment from the organization which has long lasting effects after this candidate joins the organization as employee (Cropanzana et al, 2007). Organizations that have higher procedural fairness perception among the applicants are able to generate a large pool of applications for selection (Harris, 2000). Gilliland & Steiner, (1999) have mentioned that injustice in selection process may cause economic concerns to the organizations if best performers went away and even if they are very few in number because there is possibility that the one required by the organization may have been from among those applicants who went away. Harris, (2000) found an organizational dilemma in the organizations that how to develop such a selection mechanism that will have procedural fairness to avoid litigation and address all those factors that may have influence on the fairness of applicants' perception. Researchers have been working on the three perspectives that have helped to develop fair selection procedures and in this regard ten procedural rules play a key role to assess the fairness of any selection system (Gilliland, 1993). Cropanzana, (2007) argued that procedural justice can cover the undesired effects of those unfavorable outcomes and fair procedures bring trust and commitment, while as unfair procedures become the cause of mistrust and resentment. Cropanzana, (2007) conducted research on applicants' reaction to examine the violation of the procedural rules and found that job relatedness and interpersonal treatment of the selection procedure were more concerned to the applicants while as applicants showed concerns over not receiving timely feedback and biasness. Taylor, (2006) suggested that the researchers should focus on the political and ethical aspects of the recruitment and selection practices rather than looking into the economic and technical aspects. In the public institutions it has become common that their recruitment and selection practices are facing the issue of unfair practices and in USA & UK nepotism and cronyism is the main acquisition upon these public institutions (Taylor, 2006). Kandola and Fullerton, (1994) have argued that in order to remove the discrimination, the main principle is that process should be made in such a way that applicants will experience sameness in treating them during the whole selection process. Gilliland, (1993) suggested that fairness reaction by the applicants may have a relationship with the legal action against the recruiter. Carl et al, (2004) suggested that researchers should focus on investigating the perceptions of procedural justice impact on many other behavioral aspects for those who get failed to qualify a selection procedure. In a study it has been argued in the support of a research model that the perception about the fairness of procedural rules is occurring because of the various conditions among which the type of test, policy of the human resource managers and the way employees deal the applicants are the leading one (Gilliland, 1993). Hausknecht et al, (2004) found that applicants who have positive perception about the organizational selection procedures view organization

more positive way and also they strongly recommend others for such organizations. Lemmink et al, (2003) have found that both corporate overall image and its employment image has direct relationship with the applicants intention to apply, thus these are very crucial and valuable factors in the labour market. Another research it has been found that corporate image of an organization is one of a major influencer on giving positive response to an advertisement rather than highlighting the components of qualification (Belt and Paolilo, 1982). In a research literature on perceptions of applicants, there are two basic urges to conduct research, one is that of fairness of recruitment and selection process and the other one is selection method an important influencer on the applicants' attraction towards an organization (Gilliand, 1993).

Truxillo et al, (2001) has found that regardless of pass and fail outcome of a selection procedure the perception between when the test was taken and after months of test taking the perceived perception remained the same. In a subsequent study he found that the fairness of the applicants' perceptions towards fairness of the selection procedures and its relevancy with job requirements are being influenced by the applicants' performance which they perceive (Chan et al, 1998). Outcome of a selection procedure directly affects the perceptions of the applicants as those applicants perception that had expectation of being hired were positively related to fairness and those who were not selected had negative fairness perception (Gilliand, 1994). Arvey and Sackett, (1993) mentioned that consistency means that the selection procedure should be consistent in scoring and its interpretation. Many researchers in the past have argued that applicants perceive such procedures more fair in which the candidates have opportunity to have their voice before the final decision is being made (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Later on this has been further elaborated that voice means that the applicants are being given full opportunity to express themselves to prove their potential in various selection procedures and they also argued that the perception can also be influenced by such information that is being available or provided to applicants before the go for selection phase (Arvey & Sackett, 1993).

Applicants perception of fairness about the selection procedures may be influenced because of the already familiarity of an applicant about some specific selection procedures (Truxillo et al, 2004). The major cause that influences the perception is the favorable outcome of a recruitment and selection process but at the same time in some cases an applicant does not see his performance well before any feedback, as it is not enough to relate outcome with the perception only (Ryan & Polyhart, 2000), they also noted that applicants perceptions are being influenced by the type of selection procedures, assessment method, and the way applicant assess his performance and other job related information also whatever the outcome one receives has influence on one's perception. Cropanzano, (2003) have suggested that organizations or selection authorities should substitute those tests which is lacking fairness and should not use such test. In many situations it is happening that applicants are being influenced by their experiences from already appeared selection procedures and also how they perform in the present situation (chan et al, 1997). Vianen et al, (2004) argued that in making selection of an employee the situational judgment test has higher rating as compare to the cognitive ability and personality test. Sonja Schinkel et al, (2004) found that feedback has relevance with the procedural fairness but the problem is that how to give feedback of their performance in case of rejection decision which is generally assumed not good for

the organization selection procedures which applicants consider unfair may alienate them from the organization and in some circumstances they may leave the organization to find some other job, while as if they will be dealt in a careful and sensitive manner the result will be higher self-esteem and greater commitment with the organization (Iles and Robertson, 1989). Gilliland, (1993 & 2001) have reported that fairness in the selection procedures can be enhanced by conveying true and accurate information to the candidates. Vianen et al, (2004) that it is highly significant for the organizational internal selection department or external agency to focus on quality feedback to remain attractive among the potential applicants. Pretest perception regarding any selection procedure of an applicant has direct impact on one's performance and is highly significant because it has effects on the post test reaction of an applicant (Chan et al, 1998). Public policy about the selection procedures play a very significant role and it has been suggested if the organization wants to make any effective public policy they have to focus on the procedural justice as an important element of it to impose its law obedience (Gau, 2011).

Research Methodology

The total population comprised all those individuals who had at least applied or appeared once in any part of the selection procedures, i.e., some had gone through the written test but couldn't qualify for the interview. Therefore, all those who had applied for any sort of officer level job fell in the category of defined population. In order to address all the characteristics of population, stratified sampling technique was used and from each segment of the population

20 representatives were selected for the investigation. Keeping in view the nature and characteristic of the population, it was divided into strata according to the quota policy of the government. The response rate of non-selected and non-selected was 73.33 and 81.11 percent respectively. Eva Derous et al., developed and standardized the "Social process questionnaire on selection" in 2004. It consists of 48 items to be responded on the 5 point Likert scale from 1 not important to 5 very important. For the present study the investigator modified this questionnaire and reduced the number of items to thirty six which were to be responded on 5 point Likert scale starting from strongly agrees (5 weight age) and strongly disagree (1 weight age). All the factors were duly addressed in this questionnaire. Along with this an unstructured interview was also used to gather informal data from the various head of the departments. Keeping in view the geographical position a careful strategy was designed to collect the required data from widely scattered population. Most of the data was personally collected by the researcher with the help of the above mentioned instrument. The data have been analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics and frequencies. SPSS version 17.0, MS Excel and MS word software packages were used for getting more refined and valid results. Keeping in view the nature of the study means and Chi-square were used to make the final analysis. Chi square to see the significance of the trend and Z test was calculated to compare the perception of selected and non-selected candidates. Four hypotheses were developed to test the research findings;

Data Analysis and Results**Hypothesis 1:**

Table 1 Fairness of the selection process is a general issue

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Selected candidates	3.94	1.165
Access to Job information		
Certain influences	2.36	1.047
Stand for rights	3.02	1.045
Equal Chance	3.33	1.429
Issuance of Merit list	3.32	1.242
Non-selected candidates	3.54	.862
Access to JR information		
Certain influences	2.24	.824
Stand for rights	2.74	1.027
Equal Chance	4.06	.721
Issuance of Merit list	3.06	1.263

Here the first comparison is whether candidates do have the access with the organizational authorities to know more about the job and its related components. Both selected and non- selected candidates show their positive approach about the provision of job related information if demanded. And Chi-square of both the variables is showing significant probability near to the acceptability. Therefore keeping in view this factor in mind we conclude that there is common perception about the candidates access to the availability of job information, hence we accept this hypothesis.

Table 2

Selected Candidates						Non-selected Candidates				
	Access to J R information	Certain influences	Stand for rights	Equa l Chance	Issua n ce o f Merit list	Access to J R information	Certain influences	Stand for rights	Equa l Chance	Issua nce of Merit list
Chi-Square	40.212 ^a	11.333 ^b	24.061 ^b	25.970 ^a	28.545 ^a	21.636 ^b	32.667 ^b	41.121 ^a	66.485 ^b	19.758 ^a
df	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	4
Asym p. Sig.	.010	.010	.002	.001	.000	.001	.000	.010	.0010	.001

Now the next dimension of the selection fairness that candidates are treated fairly without any political discrimination, both the categories selected and non-selected candidates mean shows trend near to the disagreement leading towards uncertainty. In other words we can say that candidates who are selected their trend is more significant than the non-selected trend. However the mean trend is same towards uncertainty. Therefore the hypothesis that selected and non-selected candidates are sharing the same perception about the political influence on selection procedures is accepted. This means that candidates are uncertain that whether the outcome of the selected candidates have political influence. Taking the same hypothesis no.1, now the next component of the fairness is the how much one feels that he or she has the right to stand up for his or her stand about anything in the selection procedures. Again both have the uncertainty trend, that majority of the people are not sure that they have the right to claim for their rights. Therefore the perception that there exists similar perception between the selected and non-selected candidates perception is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Applicants perceive the selection process does have an adverse impact

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Selected candidates	3.36	1.145
WI help certain disciplines		
W&I performance Quota	3.27	1.431
Non-selected candidates	2.85	1.041
WI help certain disciplines		
W&I performance Quota	2.03	1.037

Selected Candidate			Non-selected Candidate	
	WI help certain disciplines	W&I performance Q	WI help certain disciplines	W&I performance Q
Chi-Square	111.576 ^a	18.848 ^a	34.303 ^a	13.758 ^b
df	4	4	4	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.001	.003	.003

The above mentioned hypothesis no 2, that there is a similar relationship between the candidates perception about the adverse impact of selection procedures is rejected because the trend of the mean in the selected case is positive with strong Chi-square with no significance, while as non-selected seems that they are looking uncertain whether there is such impact, table 1.3 & 1.4 This means that the selected candidates are favoring the statement that candidates of some disciplines are getting more advantages than the other, while as non- selected are uncertain about such opinion.

However in another case, as far as the next statement is concerned that some of the candidates having particular background are getting affected by these selection procedures, their statistics shows the situation is same that selected candidates view the same perception as they are showing strong trend towards positive attitude that prevailing selection procedures has an

impact on a particular class of people, while as non-selected are with the perception that they don't have any opinion in this regard. So again in both of the cases the hypothesis 1 is rejected. Another interpretation of this results can be that the selected candidates share the same perception on having adverse impact by the selection procedures which is that these tools are becoming the cause of rejection of the candidates and advantageous to some, while as non- selected in both the cases are uncertain about having any sort of adverse impact. Therefore we can say selected candidates share similar perception and non-selected share different perception. In order to see whether adverse impact is there or not because in both the above mentioned cases we can conclude that there is such impact on the lower influenced group or quota. Roughly I have found that in some categories like AC & ASP cadre, every year the authority have conducted written test and interview and almost these vacancies are filled as per quota, but still no body from a specific group has been selected in spite of all of their academic qualification.

Hypothesis 3: Information Exposure is a serious issue of the selection process

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
PC to Cand	3.23	1.120
JD dissemination	2.15	1.010
Tec information collection	2.58	.895
Information Change Sch	3.30	.928
PC to Cand	2.62	.957
JD dissemination	2.75	1.010
Tec information collection	2.55	.915
information change sch	3.03	5.011

With reference to the hypotheses that performance criteria are disseminated by the selection authority among the potential candidates, trend of those who have been selected are showing positive direction towards dissemination of performance criteria which is stronger than the trend of non-selected candidates which seems uncertain about the provision of performance criteria. Therefore this hypothesis is rejected because both have different perception trends with lower probability score.

Table 6

Chi Square values for the job dissemination related dimensions

Selected Candidates					Non-Selected Candidates			
	PC to Cand	JD dissemination	Tec information collection	Information Change Sch	PC to Cand	JD dissemination	Tec information collection	information change sch
Chi-Square	53.242 ^a	43.509 ^a	50.606 ^b	44.000 ^a	33.758 ^b	42.909 ^a	37.636 ^b	30.364 ^c
df	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	5
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.000	.002	.004	.003	.012	.002	.045

Now with reference to the updating about the selection schedule there seems consensus in the perception regards the informing the candidates about any type of change in the selection schedule. Because those who have been selected show the uncertainty trend about dissemination of any sort of change in their selection schedule, while as the non-selected candidates are also showing that they also are uncertain about the provision of any change in the selection schedule. This means they are not in a position to make a clear comment on this, hence as per this parameter the null hypothesis is accepted because both have the similar perception, although that is not towards positive ness. In other words we can say that the authorities are not fully updating the potential candidates about the change in schedule. Whether selection authorities are disseminating the job description to the potential candidates to see their compatibility with the job characteristics, the above statistics shows little different results. The selected group of the candidates are positively looking that organizations are providing the job description to the candidates, while as non-selected group of candidates are slightly different because according to them they are uncertain about the provision of job description. Therefore the hypothesis that both the categories are sharing similar view on the job description dissemination is rejected. This means that selected candidates believe that organization are providing the job description and those who have not been selected are not clear about the disseminating of the job description. Now, whether the organizations are using the latest technology in disseminating and collecting the information about the jobs and information about the candidates, both selected and non-selected candidates share almost the same trend in their perception. This means that selected and non-selected are uncertain about the use of latest technology. Therefore, this hypotheses that selected and non-selected

candidates have the similar perception regarding to the use of latest information technology. However the selected candidates have stronger trend towards to uncertainty.

Hypothesis 4: Job relatedness is one of a man obstacle in selection process

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Selected candidates	2.58	1.024
W assessment level		
Competent HR	2.56	1.254
Non-selected candidates	2.85	.899
W assessment level		
Competent HR	1.79	1.130

	Selected Candidates		Non selected Candidates	
	W assessment level	Competent HR	W assessment level	Competent HR
Chi-Square	18.121 ^b	12.545 ^a	23.939 ^b	13.091 ^a
df	3	4	3	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.009	.000	.011

Whether selected candidates and non-selected candidates have the similar perception on the issue of having competent human resource by the selection authorities to make the right selection. Here selected candidates are uncertain about the assessment level of the written test papers by the relevant experts, however the people of non-selected candidates hare showing strongly disagreeing trend. The Chi-square of the selected indicates more positive trend towards uncertainty as compare to non-selected candidates. This implies that there is not similarity in the perception between the people of both the categories.

Discussion of Findings

The first findings of this research are that both categories of candidates whether selected or non-selected candidates, have almost negative perception about the job contents of the selection procedures, which means that face validity is questionable. Their perception is vivid that the existing selection procedures written test or interview is not forward looking. Now when we compare it with the practice in the organizations we find that most of the organizations have adopted two pattern, one written test and second interview. In written test almost one has to go for nine papers which consists questions from prescribed books of various subjects, like English, Urdu, and other such books. Therefore the perception of the candidates about the selection procedures is genuine and near to the reality. While as experts also believe that selection a procedure does not match with the evaluation of the job related dimension like KSA etc. These results are partially consistent with the study of (Schmidt et al.,(1977) whose studies have shown that selection procedures that simulate actual job behaviors such as situational interviews, work samples, in-baskets, and role-plays are viewed as having more face validity, and are perceived more favorably than pencil-and-paper methods

The next findings is that although candidates are informed about the selection related details like change in schedule but in the era of information technology, technology itself is not being utilized. Second things are that candidates doesn't not perceive or believe that organizations are providing job description to the candidates. Actually the organizations are sending surface mails or giving in some of the Urdu newspapers but they don't use any short of latest technology for the dissemination of candidates required information, if any body needs more information regarding to organization, job etc., they have to travel by person to the head offices of the authorities. As far as job description is concerned they just advertise the title of the job and job specification, nothing is mentioned about the job description. These findings are aligned with the findings (Ann Marie Ryan et al., 2000) in which he found that providing information on why an individual was accepted or rejected (e.g., due to what particular procedure in the process) influenced perceptions of process fairness. Applicants value/expect information on their performances during assessment.

In this research it has been found that candidates are not looking feedback mechanism of the organizations positively. The selected candidates showed positive trend but that might be that due to their selection the authorities remain interactive with them, but non-selected candidates are showing concerns about the conveying feedback of their test performance, which is their right. When compared with the prevailing feedback mechanism of the organizations, there are different approaches in different organization, like in PSC, after their written test, only four candidates are sent letters for interview and remaining remain in darkness, while as autonomous bodies they sometimes adopt similar approach and sometimes only short listed are asked for interview. So overall if we will conclude one thing is common, non-selected are not provided any feedback at all. This result is partially consistent with the findings of (Roebuck, 1999) where they emphasize that feedback must be provided to the candidates to avoid many complications. Candidates are doubtful about the fairness in the

selection procedures of the organization as they believe that test outcome (procedural fairness) are influenced by the political affiliation. Although there seems positive approach about the equal chance provision and taking any stand on any issue but that is quite difficult, time taking and costly, because one can stand for his or her rights through court which may take a longer time and need heavy cost as well. Merit list is a concern as only few names probably 4 against each post are shown in merit list which is not circulated in press or etc. This finding is partially consistent with the (Rynes, 1993) finding that situational characteristics affect the perception of the candidates about the selection procedures fairness.

Recommendation & Conclusions

On the basis of the above research I don't hesitate to state that the original motive of my research to work on the validities of the selectors' selection procedures could not be matured due to the non-cooperation by the relevant authorities. However I have not diverted my focus and set my target to analyze the perception of the candidate. Therefore following are some of the recommendations for the organizations to see how external environment preserve them. While collecting data when I approached to the authorities a number organizational people told me that they do not want to ask about things like the fairness of their selection process for fear that it "will plant seeds in applicants' minds" as they already are facing may cases in the high court of the area. Therefore I would recommend to the authorities that they must regularly monitor the perceptions of the public so that they can alert an organization to shifts in the quality of selection process administration as well. Secondly this will help them to improve the content of the selection test and interview, so that organizations can protect themselves from litigation. This result has also been congruent with the observation of Anderson, Born, & Cunningham-Snell, (2001); Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), who has mentioned that if organization will not be share with candidates it they adapted behavioral strategies like career withdrawal, negative recommendations of the organization, cease of purchasing products or services, and even litigation

Secondly they must cooperate those who are asking the data for research purposes because they will be ultimately beneficiaries of these researches. The real issue is not the total elimination of negative perceptions, but an understanding of whether those who hold negative perceptions are desirable applicants and, if so, how to make certain that this will not affect their important behaviors (e.g., accepting job offers). This research has no only opened the new sphere to make the research in the underdeveloped area to contribute in their development but also helped to understand what are the crucial areas from applicant side that must be studied. Finally a full fledge research is needed to analyze the different validities, because the selection procedures, i.e., written test and interview needs to be thoroughly analyzed with reference to above mentioned validities. Because majority candidates had shown their reservations which makes the process doubtful.

Conclusion

The only major conclusion of this study is that the selection authorities are using the old fashioned traditional sort of recruitment and selection methods. These existing recruitment and selection methods are having many challenges among which the most important one is the fairness which is one of a most important dimension of organizational image. On the other hand this may have an impact on the overall employees' performance because people are conscious about the fairness. Second aspect of this conclusion is that organizational authorities have to give maximum focus in improving the capacity level of making right selection of the public sector employees in the public offices. Lack of qualified employees to handle the recruitment and selection process is a serious challenge for these authorities to enhance the effectiveness of the selection outcome. There is a strong need of conducting research on the different validities of the selection procedures at a larger sample and how effective these employees are in the eyes of general public whom they serve.

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***Corresponding Author: Ghulam Nabi, Department of Business Administration, University of Management Sciences and Information Technology Kotli, Pakistan.
Email : ghulam@mail.ustc.edu.cn**