

Trends and Patterns of Discrimination in Newspaper Job Advertisements in The Philippines from 1985 to 2015 and Other Prevailing Covert Forms of Pre-employment Discrimination*

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Abstract

This descriptive and exploratory study looks into the discrimination trends and patterns in terms of the age, height, sex, and school affiliation requirements over the years by comparing job ads of 1985, 1995, 2005, and 2015. A total of 8,487 job ads were examined. Proportions of job ads were juxtaposed across 10 occupational groups. While results showed a decreasing trend over time for most occupational groups, discrimination, however, has not been completely eliminated. Select recruitment practitioners were engaged through in-depth interviews to uncover the prevailing covert hiring discriminatory practices. Pre-employment discrimination that remains apparent includes history of incarceration, disability, and presence of specific health

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conditions such as HIV/AIDS. The baseline information generated by the study is helpful in formulating and implementing more relevant policies and programs, both at the national and organizational levels, which will combat workplace discrimination and promote equal employment opportunity for all.

Keywords: recruitment, selection, discrimination, job ads, job ad discriminant

The Study in Perspective

Talent acquisition is one of the most essential functions of people management at the firm level. It does not only fill in the gaps in an organization's workforce count requirements, it also brings into the organization those skills and experiences that cannot be easily built from within (Holbeche, 2001). Done correctly, talent acquisition becomes vital and integrated into a coherent "bundle" by organizations in order to support the delivery of business or corporate strategies and goals (Abang, 2009).

A newer concept in human resource management is Employee Value Proposition (EVP). As cited by Bingham (2016), Sejen and Yates (2011) define EVP as "the experience offered by an employer in exchange for the productivity and performance of an employee." To this, Bingham adds that developing a good EVP can improve a company's positive image in the labor market. Furthermore, he notes that sound EVPs have long-term perspectives in handling an enterprise's human resources through recruitment policies that treat employees as precious capital of the organization, among other things. Establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with their employees would enable companies to attract the best prospective employees.

Many laws, especially in terms of employment, protect people from many forms of discrimination that we face today. The International Labor Organization (ILO)'s 1958 Convention on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) defines discrimination as:

"Any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction

or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation.”

As such, the convention urges that member countries have to afford national policies that protect equal employment opportunities and treatment to all individuals. Article 2 states that:

“Each Member [...] undertakes to declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote [...], equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation with a view to eliminating any discrimination in respect thereof.”

Article 13 Section 3 of the Philippine Constitution mandates that:

“The state shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all.”

Similarly, Section 3 of the Philippine Republic Act 9710, or An Act Providing for Magna Carta of Women, clearly provides protection not only of women, but all individuals, stating that:

“All individuals are equal as human beings by virtue of the inherent dignity of each human person. No one, therefore, should suffer discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age, language, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, political, or other opinion, national, social, or geographical origin, disability, property, birth, or other status as established by human rights standards. ”

In addition, Senate Bill No. 29 entitled “Anti-Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 2012” points out that in order to promote equal employment opportunities, the State shall:

- a) Promote employment of individuals on the basis of their abilities, knowledge, skills, and qualifications rather than their age;
- b) Prohibit arbitrary age limitations in employment; and

- c) Assist both employers and employees in devising ways to resolve problems that may take place as a direct or indirect impact of age discrimination on employment.

While the Philippines has these mechanisms to safeguard the people's right to be employed without prejudice, talent acquisition itself remains a discriminating process as organizations have to choose the best candidates who can deliver the job mission and goals. Moreover, workplace discrimination remains prevalent, beginning even during pre-employment through biases in terms of, among other things, job applicants' age, height, weight, looks, color, sex, ethnicity, religion, social class, school affiliation, sorority/fraternity, kinship, and other personal characteristics.

Trevino and Nelson (2014) define ethics as "the principles, norms, and standards of conduct governing an individual or group," and ethical behavior in business as "behavior that is consistent with the principles, norms, and standards of business practice that have been agreed upon by society." As such, organizations should establish guidelines on work-related conduct that would promote good management. Translating this to talent acquisition, organizations are expected to provide equal employment opportunities to job applicants but still hire the right people for the job who can contribute to achieving the organizational goals. The underlying issue therefore that needs to be addressed is how discrimination during recruitment can become ethical and beneficial for organizations. This is to ensure that qualified applicants from the labor market are not marginalized and disenfranchised just because they do not pass the subjective and non-job related criteria that are used in the selection process.

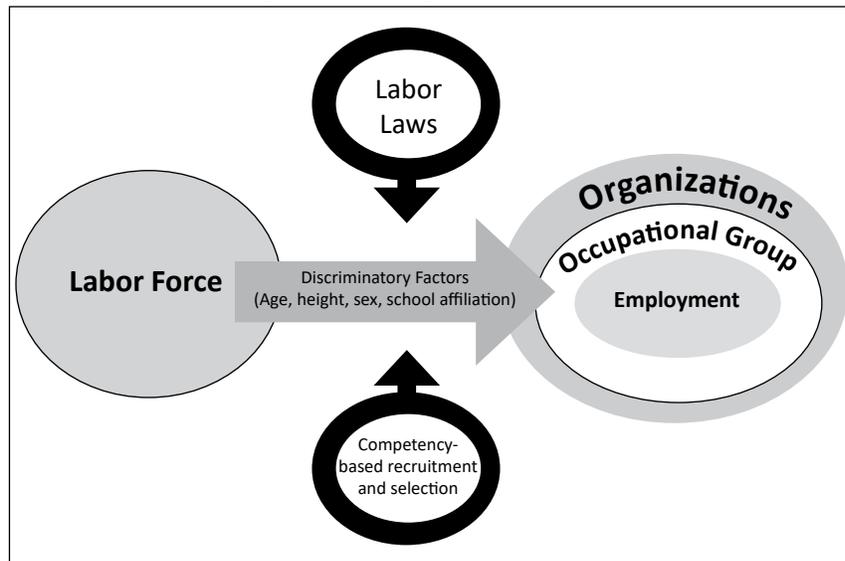
Research Objectives and Framework

Talent acquisition nowadays includes many modalities of sourcing and selecting talents, and is becoming more creative and electronic. While talent acquisition has gone increasingly digital, this study focused on recruitment practices in printed job ads because everyone has access to printed broadsheets. Also, since digital information is more easily accessed and revised, printed broadsheets offer historical information that are figuratively cast in stone.

The general purpose of this study is to compare discrimination trends and patterns in printed job ads from 1985 to 2015. As such, it aims to specifically look into the following agenda:

1. To measure discrimination in printed national job ads in terms of age, sex, and school affiliation at the national level and per occupational group from 1985 to 2015;
2. To describe discrimination trends and patterns in printed national job ads in terms of age, sex, and school affiliation at the national level and per occupational group from 1985 to 2015; and
3. To identify covert forms of pre-employment discrimination that prevail in the actual practice of employee recruitment and selection.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The labor force undergoes a recruitment and selection process in organizations in order to be employed. This process determines the best candidates for certain positions based on criteria that may include discriminatory factors such as age, height, sex, and school affiliation. Laws are put in place to safeguard the rights of the labor force in spite of the organizations' preferences and the nature of work possessing

certain criteria and discriminating factors for choosing the best candidates for the jobs. This recruitment process is where individual interests primarily become evident as each organization, occupational group, and even industry tries to get the best candidates through criteria and discriminating factors, while the labor force itself also tries to have optimum employment guided by labor laws. To balance the interests of the parties, the competency-based recruitment and selection model aims to tone down or totally eliminate discrimination as it focuses on job-related behaviors as primary basis for selecting the best job candidate.

Research Method

The descriptive analysis of documents measures the similarities and trends of four discriminant factors—age, height, sex, and school affiliation—in printed national job ads at the national level and per occupational group from 1985 to 2015. In terms of sources of data, this study covered only the first Sunday issues of March, June, September, and December of the Manila Bulletin, a leading national newspaper in the Philippines, for the years 1985, 1995, 2005, and 2015. These gaps in the months are there to address or eliminate the possible duplication of job ads.

The study limited itself to occupational groups as there are at least 600 job titles categorized into 10 occupational groups. Organizations that advertised their job openings deviated from using the 600 job titles, which made it even harder for specific job titles to be included in this study.

Thus, the 2012 Philippine Standard Occupation Classification (PSOC) by the National Statistical Coordinating Board was utilized in classifying the job ads under 10 occupational groups, namely:

1. Managers;
2. Professionals;
3. Technicians and associate professionals;
4. Clerical support workers;
5. Service and sales workers;
6. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers;
7. Craft and related trades workers;
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers;
9. Elementary occupations;

10. Armed forces occupations.

Discriminatory ads were classified as age-biased (with specified age range), height-biased, sex-biased (male- or female-preferred), or school affiliation-based (applicants preferably coming from identified schools). Frequency count, computation of proportions, and descriptive statistics were done to analyze the data.

To validate the trends and patterns of discrimination in recruitment practices, in-depth interviews were conducted. Nine recruitment practitioners composed the first set of one-one-one interviews, while eight talent acquisition specialists and recruitment process outsourcing practitioners participated in the second set of interviews.

Findings and Discussions

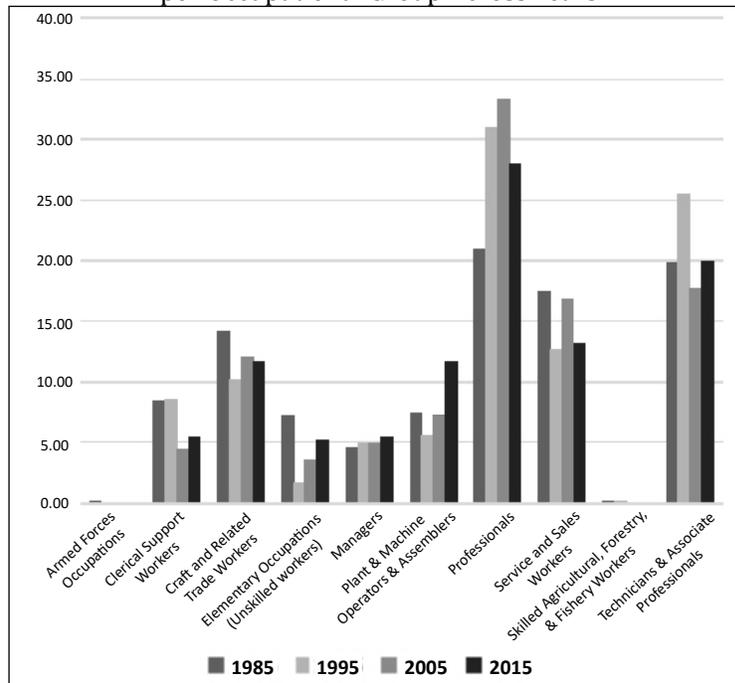
More jobs generally became available as years progressed. The *Manila Bulletin* had a total of 8,487 job ads across 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015, with 1,654 (19.6%) in 1985, 1,701 (20.0%) in 1995, 1,271 (15.0%) in 2005, and 3,861 (45.5%) in 2015.

The proportion of job ads per occupational group from 1985 to 2015 was also computed across four years. Among the 10 occupational groups, Professionals had the highest total percentage at 28.0 percent, followed by Technicians and Associate Professionals at 20.7 percent, and Service and Sales Workers at 14.4 percent. Comparatively, the three occupational groups with the lowest proportions of job ads were Elementary Occupations (Unskilled Workers) at 4.5 percent; Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, and Fishing Workers at 0.1 percent; and Armed Forces Occupations at 0.0 percent. Furthermore, when comparing by years, Professionals had the highest proportion of job ads with 20.9 percent in 1985; 33.4 percent in 2005; and 28.0 percent in 2015. Technicians and Associate Professional had 25.5 percent in 1995.

While Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Service Sales Workers had the highest percentages of job ads, most of the other occupational groups were clumped together at less than 15 percent of job ads per year. Also, the general decrease in printed job ads such as Technicians and Associate Professionals, Clerical Support Workers, and Elementary Occupations may indicate that other forms

of job announcements, such as online posting, may have been utilized by more organizations.

Figure 2: Percentages of National Printed Job Ads per Occupational Group Across Years



Age Discriminant

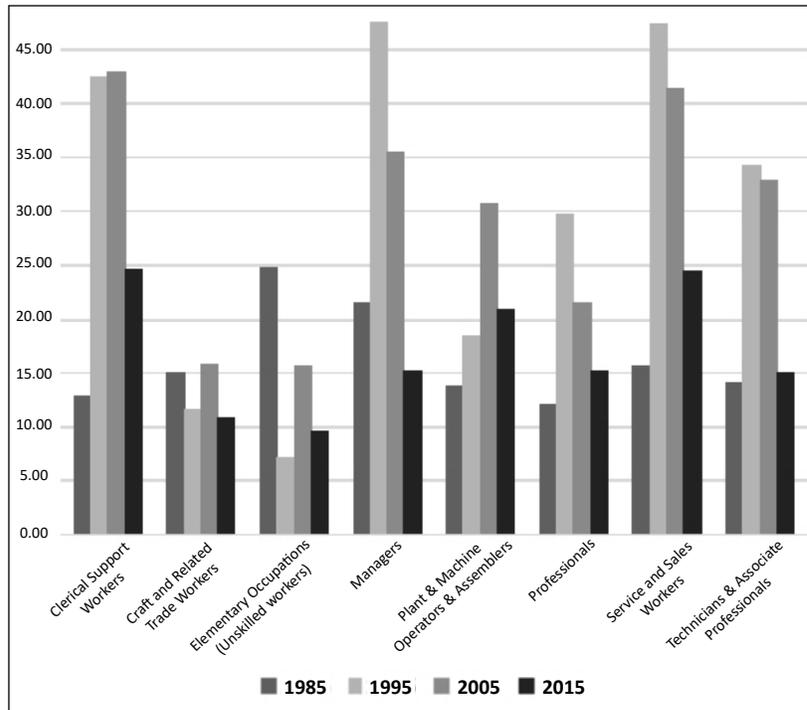
Age Requirement in Job Ads. Tabulating the proportions of job ads with age requirements at the national level from 1985 to 2015 revealed that there were more job ads that did not set a required age, and 78.8 percent of all the job ads did not specify any age requirement. Based on the results, Professionals at 25.1 percent had the highest proportion of job ads with an age requirement, followed by Technicians and Associate Professionals at 21.3 percent, and Service and Sales Workers at 19.9 percent.

Age in Printed Job Ads from Each Occupational Group. Proportions of job ads with age discriminant per occupation group were compared from 1985 to 2015. The proportions of most

occupational groups that had age discriminants in printed job ads were bell-shaped, with the highest proportions in 1995 except for Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, Elementary Occupations, and Craft and Related Trades Workers.

In addition, proportions of printed job ads with age discriminant for Managers, Craft and Related Trades Workers, and Elementary Occupations were lower in 2015 than in 1985, while the opposite is true for Clerical Support Workers, Professionals, Service and Sales Workers, and Technicians and Associate Professionals. Only Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers had proportions of age discriminant job ads increasing over the years. This means that proportions of job ads for most occupational groups generally decreased from 1995 to 2015.

Figure 3: Trends in Proportions of Job Ads with Age Discriminant per Occupational Group



Age in Actual Recruitment Practice. The interviews with eight talent acquisition specialists and recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) practitioners regarding recruitment practices revealed that majority of rank-and-file Clerical Support Workers, RPO, Service and Sales Workers, Professionals, and Technicians and Associate Professionals were in their 20s, and most supervisors of Clerical Support Workers and Service and Sales were in their 30s. Supervisors of Technicians and Associate Professionals start when they are in their 20s, and for Professionals, in their 40s. Comparatively, managers of Clerical Support Workers, Service and Sales Workers, Professionals, and Technicians and Associate Professionals start in their 30s. This means that age might still be highly related to position.

Current practices are still in line with Seidler's (2014) findings that older employees were rated as more deserving of a promotion with increased responsibilities, perceived as more intelligent, rated as performing better on the job, perceived as more highly qualified for their job, and were also recommended to be paid a higher wage than younger employees.

Height Discriminant

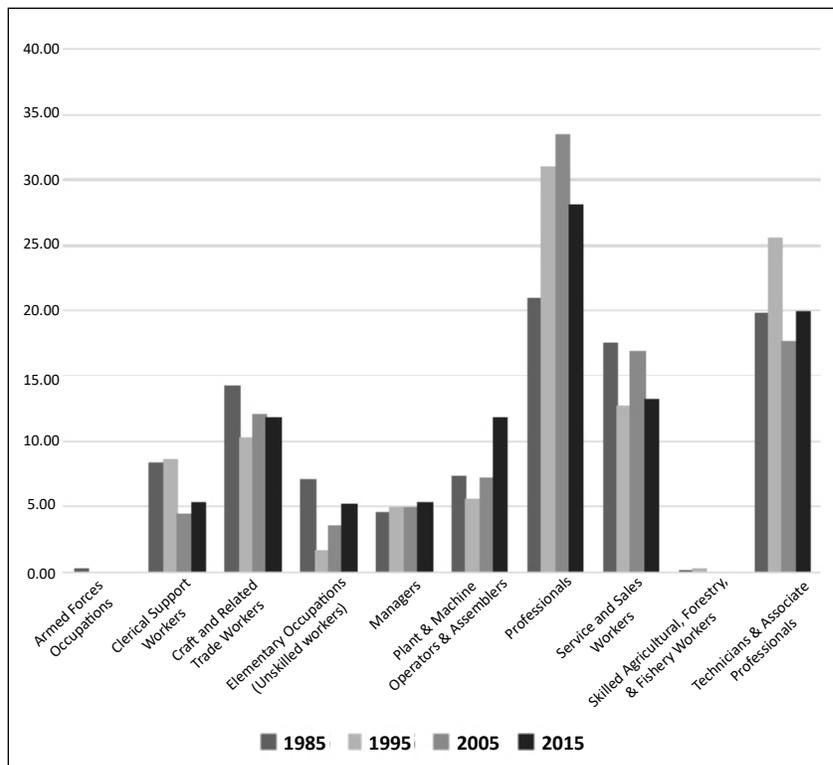
Height Requirement in Job Ads. Tabulating the proportions of job ads with height requirements revealed that there were more job ads that did not require a certain height, and 98.9 percent of all the job ads did not specify any height requirement. Based on the results, the proportion of job ads requiring a certain height decreased to 0.9 percent in 2005, and remained there until 2015. Service & Sales Workers at 36.8 percent had the highest proportion, followed by Professionals at 21.1 percent, and Technicians & Associate Professionals at 14.7 percent.

Height in Job Ads from Each Occupational Group. The proportions of occupational groups who had height discriminants in printed job ads were flat, except for Managers, Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, and Service and Sales Workers. For these groups, their 2015 proportions were lower than in 2005. In 1995, only Managers and Service and Sales Workers had surges in proportions, while the rest of the groups had small proportions. It appears that most occupational groups did not require height over time, and, for

those that required height, the proportions of height-specific job ads decreased over time.

Height in Actual Recruitment Practice. Based on the interviews with talent acquisition specialists and RPO practitioners, height is not one of the most important requirements in most occupational groups. Height requirements seem to be more apparent, though, in unskilled and semi-skilled work.

Figure 4: Trends in Proportions of Job Ads with Height Discriminant per Occupational Group



Sex Discriminant

Sex Requirement in Job Ads. Tabulating the proportions of job ads with a sex requirement at the national level from 1985 to 2015 revealed that there were more job ads that did not require a particular sex, and 79.0 percent of all the job ads did not specify a required

sex. The proportion of job ads not requiring a specific sex generally increased from 75 percent in 1985 to 85.7 percent in 2015, with a slight dip to 69.5 percent in 1995.

The proportion of job ads requiring males generally decreased over time from 5.7 percent to 3.8 percent, except for a sudden surge from 5.7 percent in 1985 to 7.7 percent in 1995. Meanwhile, the proportion of job ads requiring females also generally decreased from 13.1 percent in 1985 to 5.4 percent in 2015. On the other hand, the proportion of job ads requiring both sexes increased from 6.2 percent in 1985 to 12.9 percent in 1995, then plateaued to 12.7 percent in 2005 before decreasing greatly to 5.1 percent in 2015.

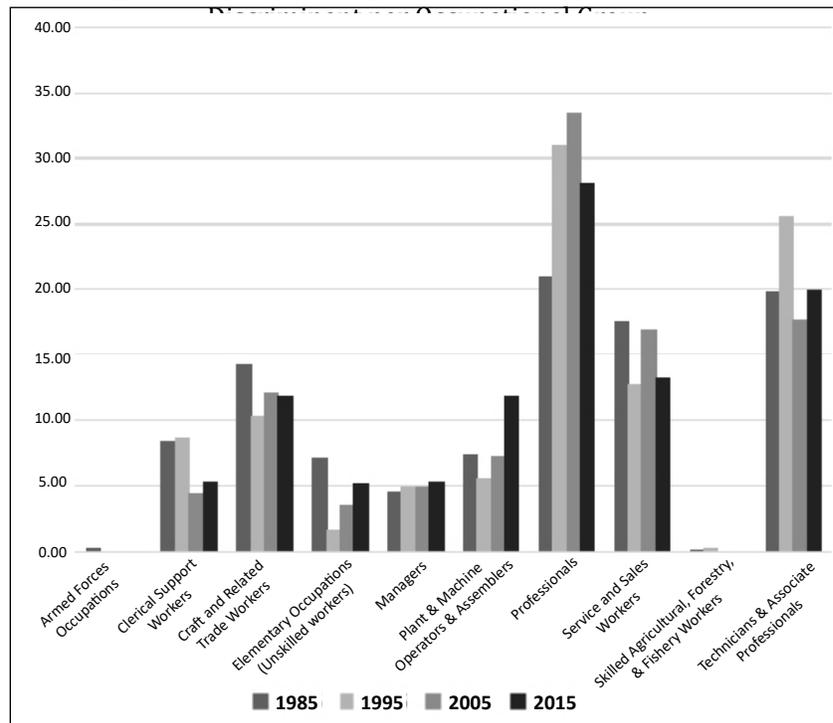
Professionals had the highest proportions for job ads with requirements for male, female, and both sexes at 22.3 percent, 24.2 percent, and 37.8 percent, respectively. Also, at 27.7 percent, it has the highest proportion for job ads that do not require a particular sex.

Sex in Job Ads from Each Occupational Group. Proportions of job ads with a sex discriminant per occupation group were compared from 1985 to 2015. Generally, trends show that proportions of job ads with either male, female, or both sexes as discriminant have decreased over time. Proportions of printed job ads with male sex as discriminant peaked in 1995 for Managers, Service and Sales Workers, Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Clerical Support. For Craft and Related Trades Workers and Elementary Occupations, proportions peaked in 2005. Although some occupational groups' proportions peaked in 1995 or 2005, the general trend was decreasing, except in Clerical Support Workers and Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers. In contrast, most occupational groups' proportions of printed job ads with female sex as discriminant formed bell shapes, which either opened upwards or downwards, decreasing over time. More specifically, proportions for Service and Sales Workers, Professionals, Craft and Related Trades Workers, and Elementary Occupations opened upwards, while proportions for Clerical Support Workers, Technicians and Associate Professionals, Managers, and Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers opened downwards. This means that companies may have also eased off preferring females in job ads over the years.

Sex Requirement in Actual Recruitment Practice. Interviews with talent acquisition specialists and RPO practitioners unveiled that most rank-and-file Clerical Support Workers and Service and

Sales Workers are single females; most rank-and-file Professionals are married men; and most rank-and-file Technicians and Associate Professionals are single males. Single women dominated supervisory positions for Clerical Support Workers and Service and Sales Workers. On the other hand, managers and Technicians and Associate Professionals were mostly married men.

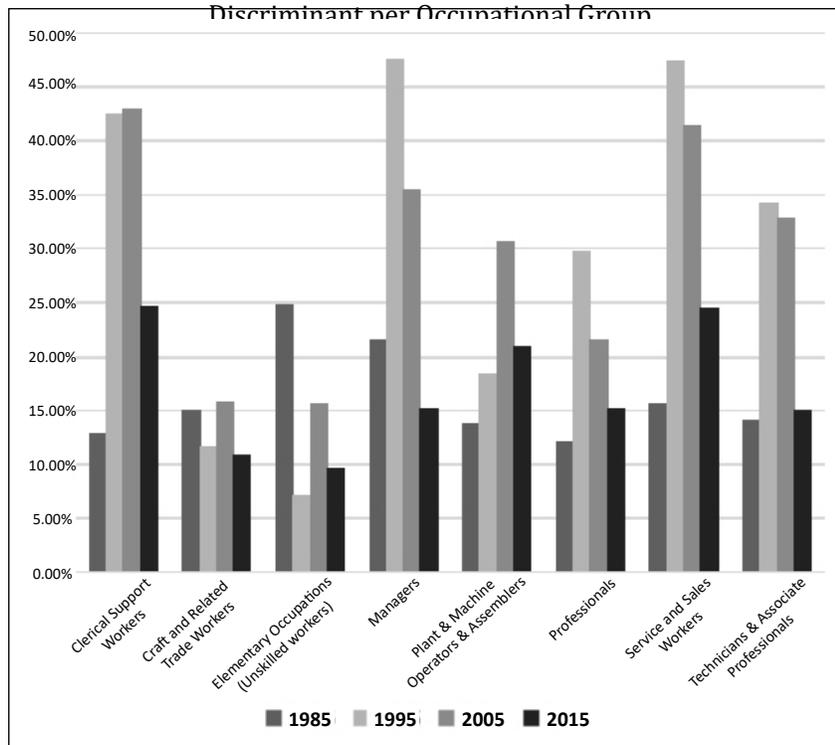
Figure 5: Trends in Proportions of Job Ads with Male Sex



Current practices are still in line with the findings of Schein et al. (1989, 1996) as cited by Kniveton (2008) that management students in many parts of the world view the characteristics of a manager as more similar to their stereotype of men than women. The answers from the interviews are consistent with Morada & Santos' (2000) findings that in spite of declining overall proportion of advertisements in the Philippines showing gender preference for 17 occupations, the decreasing gender discrimination may not indicate decreasing trends

of discrimination in actual jobs. Although the level of “traditional” gender preferences for some occupations had decreased from 1975 to 1995, they furthered that some jobs remain more or less “exclusively (fe)male,” and that in 2001, females were still preferred as cashiers, household helpers, nurses, teachers, waiters, and weavers, and males as drivers, engineers, managers, messengers, mechanics, supervisors, and security guards.

Figure 6: Trends in Proportions of Job Ads with Female Sex



One possible explanation for the increase in proportions of job ads requiring age for Clerical Support Workers, Managers, Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Service and Sales Workers is the promulgation of the omnibus rules and regulations of RA 8042 known as Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995, which improved standards

of protection and promotion of the welfare of migrant Filipino workers. This implies that the area of work of some jobs that require age may have been overseas. Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) 1997 labor statistics show that “[a]bout 22.8[%] of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) belonged to age group 25-29 during the reference period. [...], the biggest portion of the female OFWs was in age bracket 25-29 years old, while the biggest portion of male OFWs was in the 30-34 age grouping.” Furthermore, the number of male and female OFWs increased in 1996, reversing the decline from 1994 to 1995. Male OFWs increased by 21 percent from that of the previous year. A similar trend was observed in female OFWs.

Domestically, another reason for the surge in 1995 in the proportions of job ads indicating age for Clerical Support Workers, Managers, Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Service and Sales Workers, and those indicating male sex requirement for Clerical Support Workers, Managers, Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Service and Sales Workers may be the structural transformation of the Philippine economy from 1970 to 2000 as pointed out by Villamil & Hernandez (n.d.). The same authors remark that the change is quite unusual for an industrializing economy. Instead of expanding, the share of industry, particularly manufacturing, has declined. In turn, it was the services sector which expanded. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share at market prices of the Industry sector started to decrease from 38.5 percent in 1980 to 35.9 percent in 1985. It was also in 1975 when the GDP share at market prices of the Services sector started to increase, a trend that continued for the next 25 years after a decline in 1975 from 1970.

The employment data from the study of Villamil & Hernandez (n.d.) also mirrored the structural transformation in the economy. While the Agricultural sector used to account for over half of sectoral employment in the 1970s, by the year 2000, it accounted for less than 40 percent of total employment. They noted that the Industry sector share to total employment shrank even further. In comparison, the Services sector experienced a large increase in employment shares and has now replaced Agriculture as the principal employer of the country’s labor force.

Translating this phenomenon to printed job ads, it might mean that occupational groups might have tried to increase competitiveness among workers by publishing more job ads with their preferred age ranges and even male sex preference, which became pronounced in

1995. This notion might have been driven by Metcalf & Thompson's (1990) observation, as cited by McGoldrick & Arrowsmith in 1993, that "[t]here is some evidence that recruiters operate under a received set of age-related assumptions and generalizations, in which the negative suppositions of older employees' inflexibility, resistance to change, unwillingness to learn, poor health and lack of drive, energy and ambition subsume the more positive associated characteristics of reliability, maturity, loyalty and commitment."

School Affiliation Discriminant

School Affiliation in Job Ads. Proportions of job ads with school affiliation requirements in the national level from 1985 to 2015 were tabulated. Based on the frequency, however, less than five out of 8,847 job ads indicated preferred schools. In 1995, three job ads indicated the school of the applicants that companies preferred. One job ad identified the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University for a Professional position, and two Technicians and Associate Professional job ads identified Technological University of the Philippines and University of Santo Tomas, Miriam College, and Far Eastern University as preferred schools. Despite the lack of data, this finding remains interesting as this could mean that no bias in preferred school could be found in printed job ads; however, in the recruitment screening and practice itself, bias may be present but not properly documented.

Comparatively, bias in terms of school affiliation could be found in the interview answers of recruitment practitioners. One recruitment practitioner who comes from a recruitment agency for international employment mentioned that those coming from top schools do not usually apply for rank-and-file positions, and that better schools are given more preference. Another one stated that it is easier to be employed when there is a social bias toward graduating from top-performing schools. An interviewee from a headhunting firm even mentioned that some clients prefer getting students from the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University. Meanwhile, the other interviewees stated that while school affiliation might be a basis for employment, skills, attitude, and work experience remain more important.

Aligning this to current recruitment practice, Rodriguez (2016) reports that, based on a survey conducted by Jobstreet.com Philippines in 2016, fresh graduates from 10 schools, namely Adamson University, University of the East, Mapua Institute of Technology, Technological Institute of the Philippines, De La Salle University, Far Eastern University, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Ateneo de Manila University, University of Santo Tomas, and Polytechnic University of the Philippines, were preferred according to the 550 companies under the study.

Other Forms of Covert Discrimination

Most interviewees did not consider common law marriages, having illegitimate children, gender preference, ethnicity, nationality, height, religion and political affiliation, and union membership as factors in discriminating among applicants. However, discrimination existed for applicants who were previously incarcerated, with disabilities or who have had health problems.

One interviewee said that:

“We don’t hire previously incarcerated applicants because we are handling money. We handle investments, *trust ng tao*. You want your money to be handled by trustful people. Trust is also one of our key performance indicators, *kaya* it is better if our employees have clean records.” (We don’t hire previously incarcerated applicants because we are handling money. We handle investments, people’s trust. You want your money to be handled by trustworthy people. Trust is also one of our key performance indicators, which is why it is better if our employees have clean records.)

Meanwhile, another interviewee said that:

“*Depende sa magha-hire unless kilalang-kilala ko. Trust-based kasi yung business and critical na mapagkakatiwalaan yung agents because of client payments kaya mas maganda talaga kung walang records yung employees.*” (It depends on the people who do the hiring unless I really know them. The business is trust-based and it is critical that the agents are

trustworthy because of client payments. That's why it is better if employees don't have criminal records.)

Another interviewee also mentioned that their company does not accept previously incarcerated applicants, stating that:

"Hindi kami nagha-hire ng previously incarcerated applicants. Bawal. We require NBI Clearance to make sure walang records yung applicants. Medyo stressful and technical kasi yung work especially sa project sites. Kung magkakainitan ng ulo, baka mag-away, kaya to prevent worst-case scenario, mas maganda kung walang criminal records yung employees." (We don't hire previously incarcerated applicants. It's prohibited. We require NBI Clearance to make sure applicants do not have records. The work is a little stressful and technical especially in project sites. If workers become hot-headed, they might fight. That's why it is better if employees do not have criminal records to prevent worst-case scenarios.)

An interviewee said that they also did not accept formerly incarcerated applicants, citing that:

"Wala kaming employees na previously incarcerated. Bawal sa amin yan. Hindi namin tatanggapin although wala pa kaming na-e-encounter." (We do not have employees who were previously incarcerated. That's not allowed in the company. We do not accept such applicants although we have yet to encounter such applicants.)

Similarly, an interviewee mentioned that the possibility of employment depended on the criminal case of the applicant, specifically stating that:

"Wala pang nag-a-apply pero depende sa criminal record. Medyo mag-aalangan kami kung pagnanakaw yung crime or worse. Mas maganda talaga kung walang record kung pwede."

(We haven't had applicants with history, but accepting them depends on their criminal record. We might be cautious if the crime is theft or worse. It really is better to have applicants who do not have criminal records.)

Lastly, two interviewees said that they are required to do a thorough background investigation of candidates prior to employment. To expound, one of them said that:

“Wala kaming employees na nakulong na. Lahat get clearance from POEA kasi strict ang standards ng POEA. For local clients naman, they also prefer candidates who don’t have criminal records.” (We do not have employees who have been previously incarcerated. Everybody gets clearance from the POEA because its standards are very strict. For local clients, they also prefer candidates who don’t have criminal records.)

Based on the interviews, recruitment discrimination based on previous criminal records remain strong as companies and clients prefer employees with clean backgrounds.

Comparatively, talent acquisition specialists from different occupational groups felt that hiring people with disabilities (PWD) was dependent on the disability the applicants had. One interviewee mentioned that:

“We hire depending on the function. If it is office-based, then we consider PWD applicants, but if it is for the field, PWD employees with dystonia or muscle problems or people with abnormal physical appearance, for example, might become limited.”

This response is similar with one interviewee who said that:

“Depende sa disability. Kung halimbawa hearing impaired o bulag, hindi kami tumatanggap, pero tumatanggap kami ng may mga cleft pero dapat napro-pronounce yung words nang maayos.” (We hire depending on the disability. We don’t hire blind or hearing-impaired applicants, but we hire applicants who have a cleft lip as long as they can pronounce words correctly.)

Specific health conditions were also a discriminant factor. An interviewee mentioned that they did not employ people with HIV, saying that:

“Dumadaan ng pre-employment medical exam yung mga applicants namin. Kung non-contagious diseases, pwede naman, pero kung HIV hindi pwede although wala pang nag-a-apply.” (Our applicants undergo pre-employment medical exam. We might accept applicants with non-contagious diseases, but we don’t accept applicants who are HIV positive although nobody has applied yet.)

There were criteria by which health conditions were deemed acceptable. One interviewee said that:

“We do not know if our employees have HIV. We do not require HIV testing. Hindi lang tinatanggap yung TB and other contagious diseases. Tatanggapin namin yung mga aplikante basta hindi current yung condition.” (We do not know if our employees are HIV positive. We do not require HIV testing. We do not accept applicants with tuberculosis though and other contagious diseases. We may consider accepting applicants if their conditions are not current.)

Furthermore, another interviewee responded that:

“Wala kaming employees with contagious diseases pero mas strict kami about health with our recruits. Our clients are also very strict and require medical clearance.” (We do not have employees with contagious diseases, but we are stricter about health with our recruits. Our clients are also very strict and require medical clearance.)

Conclusion

Trends in Age, Height, Sex, and School Affiliation in Job Ads. Overall, Professionals, Technicians and Associate Professionals, and Service and Sales Workers have the most number of Manila Bulletin printed job ads from 1985 to 2015.

Age Discriminant. Proportions of printed job ads requiring a certain age for occupational groups were mostly bell-shaped, with highest proportions in 1995. In general, the proportions of job ads with age requirements have decreased from 1995 to 2015. These results weaken McGoldrick & Arrowsmith’s (1993) findings that, through

discrete advertising in selected newspapers and journals, some employers prefer younger workers over older applicants' possible offer of commitment, attitudinal maturity, and mentoring.

Height Discriminant. Proportions of printed job ads with height requirements were flat except for Managers, Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers, and Service and Sales Workers. This means that most occupational groups did not require a certain height over time. For those that required height, the proportions have decreased over time.

Sex Discriminant. Generally, trends show that proportions of job ads with either male or female as discriminant have decreased over time. In general, the trend for most occupational groups' proportion of printed job ads with male sex discriminant was decreasing. These results support the findings of Morada & Santos (2000) that decreasing gender discrimination in job ads does not indicate eliminated trends of discrimination in actual job settings. As they observed, some jobs appeared to remain more or less "exclusively (fe)male," although the level of "traditional" gender preference for some occupations had decreased from 1975 to 1995.

School Affiliation Discriminant. Five out of 8,847 job ads indicated preferred schools. The interviewed recruitment practitioners placed importance on the level of experience of the applicant. Although both educational attainment and level experience serve as basic standards of measuring capability to perform the job, to some extent the former is secondary to the latter. A candidate with no related experience is unlikely to get accepted. This may be the reason school affiliation is not highlighted in printed job ads aside from educational attainment and work experience.

Insights from Recruitment Practitioners, Talent Acquisition Specialists, and Recruiting Process Outsourcing Practitioners. The interviews revealed that they do not discriminate based on being part of common law marriage, having illegitimate children, gender, ethnicity, nationality, height, religion and political affiliation, and union membership. However, discrimination is strong against previously incarcerated individuals as even clients prefer employees to have clean backgrounds. Despite prevailing laws and ordinances on equal employment opportunities, discrimination based on health status, especially about HIV/AIDS and disability, remain apparent yet conditional.

Moving Forward

The decline in proportion from 1985 to 2015 with respect to the three discriminant variables is perhaps indicative that a lot of companies and many HR practitioners are now conscious, more than ever, of projecting a more “politically correct” image to their companies’ various publics, especially in a medium as enduring as a printed job ad in a national newspaper. In actuality, however, stories about job application discrimination are still abundant even up to these modern days.

Since discrimination in job advertisements in terms of age, height, sex, and school affiliation, and in actual recruitment and selection practice still exist, albeit decreasing, existing laws and local ordinances may have yet to be fully implemented through stronger penalties or sanctions to violators. While laws protecting LGBTs have been promulgated at the LGU level, there is an urgent need to do the same for PWDs who may be qualified but are immediately discriminated against because of their differently-abled bodies and looks, and for the HIV/AIDS-stricken who are strong enough to work despite their condition.

Labor organizations through the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) should improve their grievance and complaints machineries for this purpose. The DOLE’s Bureau of Working Conditions, through their Labor Compliance Officers, should strictly monitor discriminatory practices in the workplace. As such, they should go beyond their traditional audit checklist by incorporating discriminatory practices as a crucial subject for investigation.

In addition, with more proposed anti-discrimination laws in the pipeline, better implementing rules and guidelines are recommended to ensure that these laws are properly embedded. Also, revisiting and strengthening anti-discrimination laws through amendments should be prioritized both by national and local policymakers. More attractive non-monetary rewards and incentives, such as public recognition for those who provide equal employment opportunities in their companies, should be considered by DOLE, local governments, and labor organizations alike.

Talent acquisition practitioners can make their companies more globally competitive by promoting sound EVP that is reflected, among others, in the professional and ethical manner of executing the talent sourcing and selection function. In effect, they should

promote workplace diversity starting pre-employment through equal employment opportunity philosophy, especially since the Philippines is gearing towards full ASEAN integration in the immediate years to come. This is not just for the large enterprises to subscribe to, but also for the small businesses that are the backbone of the Philippine economy.

The academe should also do its fair share in decreasing discrimination in hiring by teaching students about modern HR technologies that engender more objective mechanisms to select the best job applicant. The Philippines has a good number of universities and colleges that offer degrees in HR. In this case, it is important that the curricula both at the undergraduate and graduate levels be standardized, particularly with respect to ethics relative to talent acquisition. This standardization can be orchestrated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for purposes of pedagogy consistency.

HR is a multi-disciplinary field of specialization, yet it is critical that practitioners are equipped with the competencies to perform well on the job. HR competencies should be established, and each practitioner should be assessed accordingly via licensure examination. It is high time to professionalize the HR practice in the Philippines. The Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC) can serve as the government regulatory body to perform the accreditation and the imposition of sanctions to those who would violate the professional code of ethics and norms.

One of the HR practices that should be hammered in is “competency-based recruitment and selection,” which is about using competencies as a framework for recruitment and selection system. It is part of the horizontal integration of the competency model to specific human resources management practices (Sienkiewicz, 2014). For Dubois & Rothwell (2008, as cited in Sienkiewicz, 2014), it shifts the focus to comparing “the skills of candidates with the competency model” instead of finding candidates who match the job description. Using competencies helps structure the recruitment and selection process by improving accuracy in assessing people’s suitability for different jobs (Centre for Professional Learning and Development, 2010) and by making it possible to make more rational decisions at subsequent stages of the selection process (Sidor-Rzadzowska, 2011, as cited in Sienkiewicz, 2014). To elaborate, it not only allows candidates to be assessed based on their knowledge and experience,

but also prevents the assessment of candidates on the basis of characteristics that are not relevant to the job. Sienkiewicz (2014) maintains that the selection process will be considerably easier for the employer “who knows what competencies are sought and should be emphasized the most.”

Key documents needed in the selection process are the job description and person specification. According to the Centre for Professional Learning and Development (2010), a person specification “identifies the qualifications, skills, experience, and competencies needed for effective performance.” In order to clarify the personal qualities and workplace behaviors expected of the post holder, a maximum of five core competencies will be appropriate. Juchnowicz & Sienkiewicz (2006, as cited in Sienkiewicz, 2014) suggest that the competency model be used at all stages of the selection process, particularly in “preparing the recruitment advertisement, selecting the recruitment source and the appropriate form, planning the process of selection and choosing the selection tools, preparing the selection tools, executing the selection procedure, and monitoring and increasing the quality and efficiency of the process of choosing employees.”

Future related research could target a wider audience through a more ambitious scope that could include a comparison of printed job ads across national broadsheets or a comparison of printed job ads in national versus local newspapers. A study could also dwell on comparing discriminant patterns and trends across modalities and mechanisms in talent acquisition, most especially the electronic job ads recruitment such as those in the company websites, social media and professional network. It would be interesting to incorporate more and more discriminant variables into further studies in order to have a more holistic view of the phenomenon.

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Appendix

