

# Selection Fairness Information and Applicant Reactions: A Longitudinal Field Study

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Although laboratory studies have found that selection information can affect applicant perceptions, this has not been tested in the field. The authors followed 2 cohorts of police applicants ( $N = 274$ ) in a longitudinal study to examine the relationship between information, applicant perceptions, and behavior (e.g., turnover). Information was related to perceived fairness measured at the time of testing and 1 month later when applicants received their results. Information moderated the relationship between outcome favorability and test-taking self-efficacy among African Americans but not among Whites. Information was not related to the behavioral measures. The discussion focuses on why certain findings from previous studies were not replicated and on the use of information when applicants have an investment in getting a job.

Interest in applicant reactions has recently increased as applicant reactions models have been developed and tested. Gilliland's (1993) model, which is based in organizational justice theory (e.g., Greenberg, 1990), has received the greatest research attention (e.g., Bauer, Maertz, Dolen, & Campion, 1998; Gilliland, 1994). The model suggests that applicant outcomes and the organization's adherence to fairness rules affect applicants' perceptions of the organization, the selection process, and themselves. Gilliland's model has been supported, with selection fairness relating to such outcomes as job acceptance intentions and organizational attractiveness (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Macan, Avedon, Paese, & Smith, 1994; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998).

One of the largest gaps in this literature, however, is an understanding of practical steps organizations can take to influence applicant reactions. Although research has suggested that organizations can influence applicant reactions by using face-valid procedures (e.g., Rynes & Connerley, 1993), these procedures are expensive and may not be practical, especially for large-scale, entry-level recruitment. Because selection systems must focus on

validity, adverse impact, and costs (Gatewood & Feild, 1998), applicant perceptions may be de-emphasized. Thus, an organization may have a valid selection system that is also less attractive to applicants. In such cases, presenting information to explain the process might be a simple, inexpensive solution.

Although a few studies have explored this issue by using student samples (e.g., Gilliland, 1994; Horvath, Ryan, & Stierwalt, 2000; Ployhart, Ryan, & Bennett, 1999), no research has used actual job applicants. This is a serious gap in the literature for three reasons. First, past studies randomly assigned participants to pass or fail conditions rather than giving feedback based on actual performance. Second, applicants in laboratory settings have relatively little at stake, whereas real applicants may have large investments in career and job choices. This is especially true for applicants interested in police work at a local jurisdiction, because failure at the local level may limit career choices. Under these conditions, outcomes such as organizational attractiveness may be less influenced by fair procedures than by characteristics of the applicant pool, such as willingness to relocate and career aspirations. Third, Greenberg (2001) suggested that people make judgments about organizations on the basis of a number of factors besides fairness information, and Lind (2001) noted that people rely on their fairness judgments more when they have no other information. Therefore, simulated hiring scenarios do not necessarily tell one whether the effects of fairness information will hold in the field, where applicants may have other information about the job and the organization. Given these key differences, field research is critical to fully understand the value of providing information to applicants. Indeed, the three published studies on the effects of selection information (Gilliland, 1994; Horvath et al., 2000; Ployhart et al., 1999) have noted that their results should be confirmed in actual selection situations.

Our goal was to fill these gaps in the literature. We used a longitudinal quasi-experimental design to test whether providing

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selection information (by using a video briefing and a flyer) was related to applicant reactions in terms of fairness, organizational attractiveness, and test taking self-efficacy (see Figure 1) measured at the time of testing and 1 month after applicants had received actual test results. Data were collected in two cohorts of police applicants at four points in the selection process so that initial perceptions and the selection outcome (passed or failed) could be statistically controlled. In addition, we tested the relationship between information and applicants' actually continuing in the selection process and staying in the job.

Potential Benefits of a Selection Information Intervention

Providing information to applicants could have several advantages for organizations. First, organizational justice theory and research suggest that providing information improves fairness perceptions (e.g., Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Leventhal, 1980), and Gilliland (1993) noted that explanations should have a positive impact on the perceived fairness of selection procedures. This has been supported in laboratory studies (Gilliland, 1994; Horvath et al., 2000; Ployhart et al., 1999), but it has yet to be explored in an actual selection context. Second, past laboratory research has found that selection information improves perceptions of the organization (Ployhart et al., 1999). However, given that other environmental factors (e.g., lack of alternatives, unemployment) may influence these variables, this effect needs to be explored in an actual selection setting. Third, information could allow organiza-

tions to use valid selection procedures that may not seem fair to applicants unless they understand the process (e.g., scoring takes time because of detailed procedures). Such information could be given inexpensively through information sheets or as part of the test.

Information and Organizational Justice Theory

The basis for most applicant reactions research has been organizational justice theory (e.g., Greenberg, 1990; Lind & Tyler, 1988). *Procedural justice* or *process fairness* refers to the fairness of procedures used to make decisions. *Distributive justice* or *outcome fairness* refers to the fairness of outcomes or outcome favorability. Outcome favorability (e.g., pass or fail) is a key determinant of fairness (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998), but process fairness is also important to applicant reactions (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Macan et al., 1994) and may interact with outcome favorability (Brockner, 2002; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). That is, although distributive justice is the primary determinant of fairness perceptions, procedural justice often shows incremental prediction of fairness after controlling for distributive justice.

Gilliland (1993) proposed 10 procedural justice rules that determine applicants' fairness perceptions. According to his model, applicants' perceptions of the selection system's adherence to rules (e.g., job relatedness of procedures, feedback timeliness) affect the perceived fairness of the selection system. Fairness in turn affects

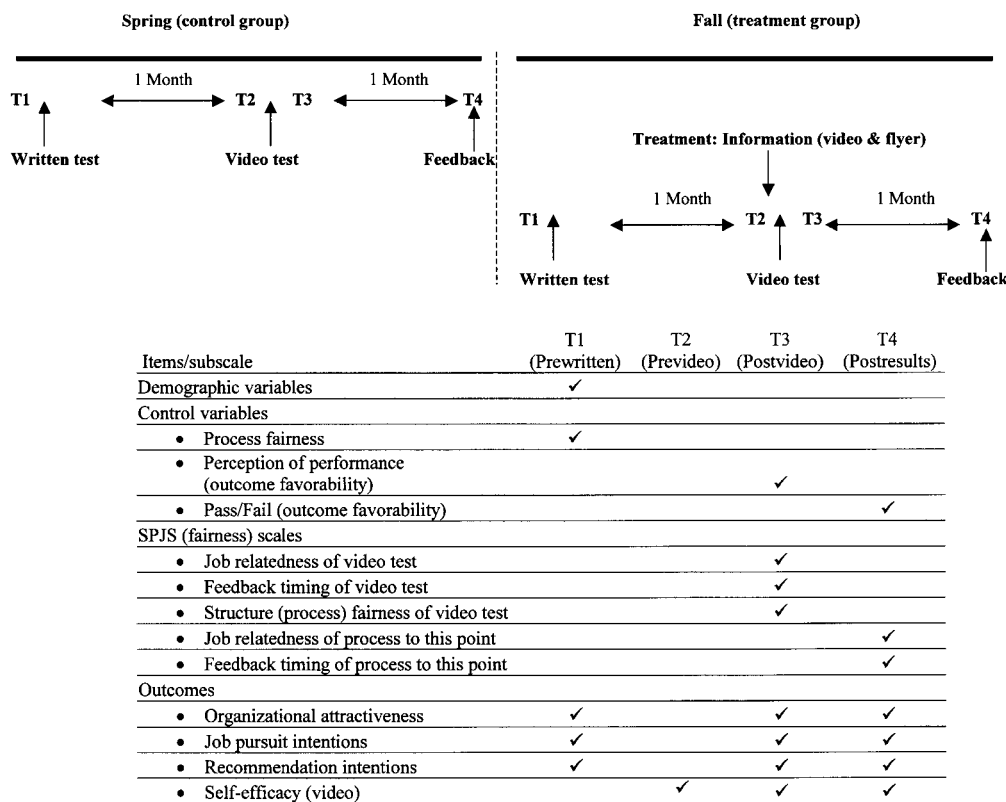


Figure 1. Experimental design and data collection schedule for surveys. T1 = Time 1, premultiple-choice test; T2 = Time 2, Prevideo-based test; T3 = Time 3, Postvideo-based test; T4 = Time 4 after receiving test results. SPJS = Selection Procedural Justice Scale.

key outcomes such as job acceptance. Research has generally supported the model. For example, job relatedness and administrative consistency have been found to affect fairness perceptions and organizational attractiveness (Bauer et al., 1998; Ployhart & Ryan, 1998; Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993). The model provides a framework for developing explanations that should improve applicant reactions.

We focused our information manipulation in this study on two facets of fairness, job relatedness and feedback timeliness, on the basis of input from the organization's human resources staff. These facets of process fairness (as opposed to facets related to interpersonal fairness) could more easily be affected by providing information. The effects of these facets are also suggested by the organizational justice literature. Leventhal (1980) pointed to the importance of accuracy, or to the perception that decisions are made on the basis of good information, in the formation of fairness perceptions. In selection, accuracy would equate to job relatedness, and its effects on fairness (e.g., Gilliland, 1994; Smither et al., 1993) and outcomes, such as organizational attractiveness (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Macan et al., 1994), have been supported. Justice theory also suggests that timeliness is important to fairness perceptions (e.g., Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987; Tyler & Bies, 1990), and job seekers can lose interest in organizations because of delays in the recruitment process (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991).

Therefore, we presented applicants with information about the job relatedness of a video test and the extensive time required to score it. We presented this by means of a video and flyer given to applicants just before the test. We believed that after controlling for initial perceptions and outcome favorability, information would be related to the fairness of the test itself measured at the time of testing, and, as suggested by Gilliland's (1993) model, the fairness of the selection process measured after applicants received their results.

*Hypothesis 1:* Information about a test's job relatedness and the time needed to score it will be positively related to applicants' fairness perceptions related to the selection test (job relatedness, feedback timeliness, and structure or process fairness) measured at the time of testing.

*Hypothesis 2:* Information about a test's job relatedness and the time needed to score it will be positively related to applicants' fairness perceptions related to the selection process (job relatedness and feedback timeliness) measured after they have received their test results.

Fairness perceptions have been found to relate to the important outcomes of organizational attractiveness (Bauer et al., 1998), job acceptance intentions (Macan et al., 1994), and intentions to recommend the organization to others (Smither et al., 1993). These findings are consistent with Gilliland's (1993) model as well as organizational justice theory, as Lind (2001) noted that fairness perceptions are indicative of a person's relationship and identification with an organization. Although Ployhart et al. (1999) found mixed support for effects of fairness information on organizational perceptions, these effects on such organization affiliation variables (i.e., organizational attractiveness, job pursuit, and recommendation intentions) have not been tested in a realistic field setting. We believed information should relate to these outcomes.

*Hypothesis 3:* Information about a test's job relatedness and the time needed to score it will be positively related to organizational affiliation variables (organizational attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and recommendation intentions) measured at the time of testing and after applicants receive their test results.

Organizational justice theory and models (e.g., Brockner, 2002; Gilliland, 1993) suggest that outcomes are more strongly related to self-perceptions under fair rather than unfair conditions because unfair conditions allow people to make external attributions about their performance that are less threatening to their self-perceptions. This interaction of fairness and outcome favorability is supported by applicant reactions research (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998). Similarly, outcomes should be more strongly related to self-perceptions when fairness information is provided than when it is not. Although past laboratory research has found mixed support for this interaction (Gilliland, 1994; Ployhart et al., 1999), the present study tested it in a realistic selection context.

*Hypothesis 4:* Outcome favorability and test-taking self-efficacy will be more strongly related when applicants are given fairness information than when they are not.

Gilliland (1993) posited that fairness perceptions should affect behaviors during and after hiring, such as job acceptance and turnover, and Lind (2001) suggested that fairness is associated with investment in the organization (e.g., turnover). However, no research has tested the relationship between fairness information and such outcomes. Thus, we also explored the relationship between fairness information and applicants' continuation in the selection process and turnover.

*Research Question:* Will information be related to applicant continuation and later turnover?

## Method

### Design

The selection context precluded direct comparison of information and no information with a true experimental design because giving information to some applicants and not to others during the same recruitment could be viewed as disparate treatment by applicants. Also, giving information to some applicants and not to others could evoke feelings of actual unfairness among applicants in the control condition. Therefore, we used a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design to compare the reactions of two subsequent cohorts of applicants. For each cohort, survey data were collected at four points in the selection process. Cohort differences in terms of initial perceptions were statistically controlled. Cook, Campbell, and Peracchio (1990) referred to this as a cohort design with pretests from each unit and noted its similarity to the nonequivalent control group design with pretest and posttest. Figure 1 shows the study design and timing of surveys. Later, the organization also provided data on applicant continuation and turnover among those hired.

### Participants and Procedure

Participants were police recruit applicants from two consecutive selection waves in a large southern city. The first recruitment (in the spring) served as the control (no-information) group ( $n = 310$ ), and the second recruitment (in the fall) served as the treatment (information) group ( $n = 204$ , after removing the 70 applicants whose data were also included in the

first cohort). During each recruitment, data were collected from the applicants at four times during the selection process. Time 1 (T1) data were collected before the first selection procedure, which consisted of a written, multiple-choice test. Time 2 (T2) and Time 3 (T3) data were collected before and after the second test, respectively, which consisted of a video test that applicants took about 1 month after the written test. For the video test, applicants' answers to open-ended questions about police scenarios were audiotaped and later scored by teams of trained raters. Finally, Time 4 (T4) data were collected when applicants received their results (pass or fail) by mail, about 1 month after the video test. T1, T2, and T3 data were collected at the test site, and T4 data were returned to Donald M. Truxillo via U.S. mail. Survey data were matched by the last six digits of applicants' social security numbers. Participation was voluntary.

No applicants were eliminated by the organization as a result of the written test, so everyone taking the written test was allowed to take the video test. Applicants had no knowledge of their scores on either test until after they received their results at T4. The test results gave applicants' scores on each test, their overall score (i.e., combination of the written and video tests), and their band based on the overall score. Specifically, scores were grouped into ranges called *bands* (in the present case, a 95% confidence interval based on the standard error of measurement) so that scores within bands were considered statistically equal (see Campion et al., 2001). Applicants were told at this time which bands were to be considered for further selection hurdles.

Applicants who participated in surveys from both recruitments ( $n = 70$ ) were dropped from the second (treatment) condition. Thus, matched data were available for 274 applicants at all of the first 3 times (219 men, 54 women, 1 nonresponse; 224 White, 35 African American, 14 other, 1 nonresponse; 53% response rate; 144 from the control condition and 130 from the treatment condition) and for 100 applicants at all 4 times (78 men, 21 women, 1 nonresponse; 82 White, 14 African American, 4 other; 19% response rate; 38 from the control condition and 62 from the treatment condition). In comparing the standardized test scores of White and African Americans, Whites scored higher on the written test (10.17,  $SD = 0.98$ , vs. 9.59,  $SD = 1.05$ ),  $t(256) = 3.24$ ,  $p < .05$ , but not the video (9.96,  $SD = 1.00$ , vs. 9.84,  $SD = 0.98$ ),  $t(256) = 0.63$ ,  $ns$ .

Those who passed the written and video tests then took an honesty test, psychological exam, background check, polygraph, and interview. Those who passed these hurdles were given a conditional offer (because of the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]) pending completion of the final three hurdles (medical, stress test, and physical ability test). The organization provided data by cohort on applicant continuation in these final hurdles, ultimate job acceptance, and turnover among those hired.

We ran a power analysis by using SPSS SamplePower (Borenstein, Rothstein, & Cohen, 1997) to determine the effect size ( $\Delta R^2$ ) that could be detected in a hierarchical regression with a sample of 274 cases, a power level of 80%, and  $p < .05$  significance level. In the analysis, we assumed three control variables would be used on the first step. Our analysis indicated that an effect size of  $\Delta R^2 = .03$  could be detected under these conditions, suggesting that the sample of 274 was sufficient to detect relatively small effect sizes. For the sample of 100, an effect size of  $\Delta R^2 = .06$  was detectable with 80% power, and even greater power was achieved when the covariates accounted for greater than zero variance (which would be expected from the applicant reactions literature; see Ryan & Ployhart, 2000).

## Measures

*Time 1 (prewritten test).* Demographic variables collected included age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, education, and whether the applicant had taken a test for this jurisdiction before. Overall selection system process fairness ( $\alpha = .91$ ) was measured by 3 items based on Smither et al. (1993) and Macan et al. (1994; e.g., "I think that the Civil Service hiring process is a fair way to select people for the job of police recruit"). Organizational attractiveness ( $\alpha = .88$ ) was measured by 5 items adapted from Smither et al. (1993; e.g., "The \_\_\_\_\_ police department is

a good place to work"). Job pursuit intentions ( $\alpha = .81$ ) was measured by 3 items adapted from Macan et al. (1994) and Smither et al. (1993; e.g., "I intend to accept a job if one is offered"). Recommendation intentions ( $\alpha = .91$ ) was measured by 3 items adapted from Macan et al. (1994) and Smither et al. (1993; e.g., "I intend to encourage others to apply for a job with the \_\_\_\_\_ police department"). Measures used 5-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

*Time 2 (prevideo test).* Time 2 video test-taking self-efficacy was measured for use as a control variable ( $\alpha = .86$ ; 3 items, e.g., "I am confident in my ability to do well on video tests").

*Time 3 (postvideo test).* We used two facets of Bauer, Truxillo, Sanchez, Craig, Ferrara, and Campion's (2001) Selection Procedural Justice Scales (SPJS) to tap fairness of the video test in terms of job relatedness ( $\alpha = .84$ ; 2 items, e.g., "A person who scored well on the video test will be a good police officer") and feedback timeliness ( $\alpha = .91$ ; 3 items, e.g., "I am satisfied with the amount of time it will take to get feedback on my test results"). To measure structure fairness (process fairness) we used the Structure Fairness subscale ( $\alpha = .70$ ; 17 items, based on the five facets that comprise it) of Bauer et al.'s SPJS. The SPJS was developed by using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to tap the selection fairness dimensions of Gilliland's (1993) model. We also measured organizational attractiveness ( $\alpha = .91$ ), job pursuit intentions ( $\alpha = .83$ ), recommendation intentions ( $\alpha = .95$ ), and video test-taking self-efficacy ( $\alpha = .90$ ) at T3. Applicants had not yet received feedback about their performance at T3, so we used applicants' perceived performance on the video test as a control variable for T3 analyses ( $\alpha = .96$ ; 3 items, e.g., "I believe I did well on the test that I took today").

*Time 4 (postresults).* At Time 4, we measured fairness of the overall selection process, as opposed to fairness of the video test alone. Specifically, we assessed perceptions of the job relatedness ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and feedback timeliness ( $\alpha = .87$ ) of the selection process. We also measured organizational attractiveness ( $\alpha = .88$ ), job pursuit intentions ( $\alpha = .77$ ), recommendation intentions ( $\alpha = .94$ ), and video test-taking self-efficacy ( $\alpha = .92$ ). As a measure of outcome favorability for use as a control in T4 analyses, we used actual performance in terms of whether the applicant was in a high enough band to be considered for future selection hurdles (pass or fail). In the T4 sample, 71 applicants passed and 29 failed the process.

*Archival data.* Because of ADA, applicants were given a conditional offer ( $n = 83$ ) pending their completion of the final hurdles (medical, stress test, and physical ability test). On the basis of archival data, we assessed continuation in the process by whether applicants came to the final hurdles and accepted an offer. We also assessed actual applicant turnover.

## Information Manipulation

The information intervention was tailored to fit the needs of the organization. Because the human resources staff had observed in prior recruitments that some applicants were anxious about the use of the video test, the manipulation was directed at reactions to the video test. The manipulation focused on facets of structure or process fairness as defined in the research (e.g., Bauer et al., 2001; Colquitt, 2001) because these seemed most likely to be affected by information (as opposed to interpersonal fairness). Specifically, the information intervention emphasized two aspects of structure fairness, the job relatedness of the process and feedback timeliness.

To ensure that the information was salient to applicants, information about the test was presented in two ways: a 5 min video and a written flyer. Applicants viewed the video and were given the flyer just before the video test. The video narrative presented an explanation of the job relatedness of the test (e.g., "The video-based test is predictive of how well a person will perform as a police officer") and the reason feedback was not immediate (e.g., "Carefully trained teams of police experts will evaluate the responses to the video-based test"). The video concluded with bullet points that summarized the narrative. These bullet points (see Appendix) were also given to applicants in a flyer that they could refer to while waiting for and after receiving their results. To check the content of the narrative, six subject-matter experts (faculty and graduate students in the fields of

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	27.54	5.55	—									
2. Gender	0.20	0.40	-.06	—								
3. Ethnicity (White/African American)	0.86	0.34	-.08	-.16**	—							
4. Education	2.18	1.09	-.05	.01	.04	—						
5. Employment status	0.93	0.26	-.04	-.04	.12	.06	—					
6. Test experience	0.43	0.50	.19***	-.11	-.04	-.02	.03	—				
7. Information	0.47	0.50	.09	-.12**	.09	.02	.06	.04	—			
8. T1 process fairness	3.85	0.73	-.07	.04	.07	-.05	.07	-.13**	.03	(.91)		
9. T1 org. attractiveness	4.20	0.65	-.02	.00	.13**	-.12**	.08	.04	.12**	.40***	(.88)	
10. T1 job pursuit intentions	4.70	0.54	-.03	.02	.03	-.14**	.06	.02	-.04	.35***	.53***	(.81)
11. T1 recommendation intentions	4.07	0.72	-.06	-.01	.14**	-.15**	.04	-.05	.05	.39***	.70***	.46***
12. T2 self-efficacy (prevideo test)	3.61	0.72	.16**	-.08	.03	.12**	.07	.15**	.05	.24***	.26***	.16***
13. T3 job relatedness (video test)	3.14	0.83	.02	.00	.04	.05	.05	.09	.23***	.19***	.13**	-.05
14. T3 feedback timeliness (video test)	3.96	0.76	-.12**	.11	.09	-.07	.05	.00	.20***	.35***	.34***	.16***
15. T3 structure fairness (video test)	3.52	0.54	-.04	.03	.12	.01	.03	.07	.18***	.35***	.39***	.13**
16. T3 self-efficacy (video test)	3.44	0.79	.15**	-.11	.07	.12**	.02	.19***	.05	.22***	.17***	.11
17. T3 org. attractiveness	4.19	0.64	.03	.08	.03	-.12**	.19***	.04	.08	.25***	.59***	.20***
18. T3 job pursuit intentions	4.68	0.58	-.02	.10	.05	-.09	.13**	.01	-.07	.23***	.34***	.42***
19. T3 recommendation intentions	4.13	0.74	-.07	.04	.14**	-.12	.13**	.03	.07	.29***	.58***	.27***
20. T3 outcome favorability (perceived performance)	3.72	0.88	.12**	-.10	.08	.05	-.01	.15**	.01	.28***	.21***	.19***
21. T4 job relatedness (overall selection process)	3.18	0.90	.01	-.09	.14	.02	.10	-.02	.16	.17	.24**	.00
22. T4 feedback timeliness (overall selection process)	4.18	0.70	.04	-.02	.10	-.04	.01	-.03	.16	.28***	.41***	.33***
23. T4 video test self-efficacy	3.56	0.90	.09	-.19	.18	.11	-.03	.16	.01	.17	.11	-.13
24. T4 org. attractiveness	4.27	0.62	-.14	.04	.09	-.17	.14	-.05	.09	.20	.56***	.17
25. T4 job pursuit intentions	4.68	0.61	-.09	.17	.13	-.24**	.03	-.06	.08	.07	.28***	.27***
26. T4 recommendation intentions	4.31	0.72	-.27***	-.04	.32***	-.15	.09	-.16	.00	.25**	.48***	.18
27. T4 outcome favorability (pass/fail)	0.71	0.46	.02	-.07	.24**	.27***	.02	-.01	-.13	.09	.02	-.24**

Note. *N*s for T1–T3 variables range from 261 to 274. *N*s for T4 variables range from 97 to 101. Correlations for T4 variables with other variables are based on the smaller sample. Gender is coded 0 for male and 1 for female. Ethnicity is coded 0 for White and 1 for African American. Education = highest level of education achieved; 1 = high school, 2 = some college, 3 = associate’s degree, 4 = bachelor’s degree or higher. Employment status was coded 0 for not employed and 1 for employed. Test experience = whether the applicant had taken a public safety test for the city; 0 = no, 1 = yes. Information is coded 0 for no information provided and 1 for information provided. T4 outcome favorability (pass/fail) is based on the pass rate of the T4 subsample only. Alpha reliabilities are in parentheses along the diagonal. T = time; Org. = organizational.  
\*\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .

psychology and management) reviewed Gilliland’s (1993) fairness rules and the video narrative and indicated that the rules were a salient part of the narrative.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations are presented in Table 1. Means and standard deviations by condition for each dependent variable are given in Table 2.

Equivalence of the two conditions on pretests, controls, and demographics. We compared participants in the treatment and control conditions in terms of T1 perceptions, age, gender, ethnic-

ity, employment status, and education. There was a difference in terms of T1 organizational attractiveness,  $t(265) = 2.05, p < .05$ , such that those in the control condition ( $M = 4.13, SD = 0.72$ ) were less attracted to the organization than those in the treatment condition ( $M = 4.29, SD = 0.56$ ). Therefore, as planned, T1 organizational attractiveness was used as a control for analyses using organizational attractiveness. In addition, the two samples differed in terms of participant gender,  $t(268) = 2.07, p < .05$ , such that there were more women in the second cohort, and thus gender was also used as a control. We also asked applicants about their previous experience with taking a police or fire test for this city and found no difference between the control (41%) and treatment (45%) groups,  $\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 0.37, ns$ .

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
(.91)																
.22***	(.86)															
.06	.30***	(.84)														
.36***	.32***	.22***	(.91)													
.31***	.48***	.72***	.65***	(.70)												
.14**	.79***	.37***	.31***	.54***	(.90)											
.51***	.27***	.18***	.45***	.44***	.14**	(.91)										
.34***	.25***	.03	.35***	.26***	.14**	.50***	(.83)									
.63***	.27***	.19***	.41***	.45***	.16***	.73***	.46***	(.95)								
.17***	.66***	.25***	.30***	.48***	.77***	.18***	.22***	.20***	(.96)							
.13	.29***	.39***	.30***	.44***	.42***	.19	.04	.16	.32***	(.91)						
.42***	.23**	.20**	.56***	.38***	.32***	.20**	.17	.21**	.23**	.32***	(.87)					
.02	.63***	.45***	.23**	.51***	.68***	.04	.01	.07	.56***	.49***	.34	(.92)				
.35***	.04	.04	.43***	.30***	.03	.73***	.39***	.54***	.10	.22**	.30***	.11	(.88)			
.29***	-.01	.08	.15	.11	-.11	.30***	.60***	.31***	-.04	.09	.15	.01	.56***	(.77)		
.48***	-.04	.07	.39***	.30***	-.02	.53***	.40***	.66***	.08	.17	.21**	.05	.72***	.61***	(.94)	
-.06	.13	.10	.13	.15	.22	-.01	-.05	.09	.10	.18	.15	.29***	-.05	-.14	.02	—

*Response and nonresponse analysis.* We compared those who had complete data for all four surveys ( $n = 100$ ) with those who had complete data for only the first three surveys ( $n = 173$ ). There were no differences in terms of demographics, the fairness measures, self-efficacy, or job pursuit intentions. Not surprisingly, there was a difference for organizational attractiveness and recommendation intentions. Those who responded to all four surveys were more attracted to the organization than were those who did not at T1 ( $M = 4.34, SD = 0.60; M = 4.13, SD = 0.67$ , respectively),  $t(271) = 2.61, p < .05$ , and at T3 ( $M = 4.32, SD = 0.56; M = 4.12, SD = 0.67$ , respectively),  $t(267) = 2.44, p < .05$ , and were more likely to recommend the organization at T1 ( $M = 4.18, SD = 0.70; M = 4.00, SD = 0.73$ , respectively),

$t(270) = 1.97, p < .05$ , and at T3 ( $M = 4.25, SD = 0.64; M = 4.06, SD = 0.78$ , respectively),  $t(272) = 2.08, p < .05$ .

*Control variables.* In our regression analyses we controlled for applicant outcome favorability (pass or fail) because it has been shown to be a primary determinant of applicant reactions (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), and information manipulations of process fairness are only important to the extent that they account for incremental variance beyond that accounted for by outcome favorability. Because of gender differences between the two cohorts, we used gender as a control variable as well. To control for any potentially preexisting differences between the two groups (e.g., Cook et al., 1990), we used the corresponding premeasures for each dependent variable (e.g., fairness, organizational attractiveness) as controls.

Table 2  
Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Measures, by Condition

Dependent measure	Control group		Information condition	
	M	SD	M	SD
T3 (postvideo test) variables				
Job relatedness of video test	2.96	0.82	3.33	0.80
Feedback timeliness of video test	3.82	0.83	4.12	0.64
Structure fairness	3.42	0.54	3.62	0.52
Organizational attractiveness	4.15	0.65	4.25	0.63
Job pursuit intentions	4.71	0.58	4.64	0.58
Recommendation intentions	4.09	0.77	4.19	0.70
T4 (postfeedback) variables				
Job relatedness of selection process	3.00	0.78	3.29	0.95
Feedback timeliness of selection process	4.04	0.74	4.27	0.66
Organizational attractiveness	4.19	0.72	4.31	0.55
Job pursuit intentions	4.79	0.38	4.72	0.49
Recommendation intentions	4.25	0.58	4.26	0.66

Note. For T3,  $N = 274$ , and  $ns = 144$  and  $130$  for the control group and information condition, respectively. For T4,  $N = 101$ , and  $ns = 38$  and  $63$  for the control group and information condition, respectively. T = time.

Tests of Hypotheses

Time 3 analyses (postvideo, prefeedback; Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4). To test Hypothesis 1, we ran three hierarchical regressions with the three T3 fairness measures as the dependent variables. Gender, T1 process fairness, and T3 outcome favorability (performance perceptions) were entered in Step 1 as controls, and information condition was entered in Step 2 (see Table 3). The addition of information condition resulted in a statistically significant increase in  $R^2$  for job relatedness ( $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ),  $F(1, 266) = 16.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ; feedback timeliness ( $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ),  $F(1, 266) = 14.44$ ,  $p < .01$ ; and structure fairness ( $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ),  $F(1, 257) = 12.16$ ,  $p < .01$ . The betas confirmed that fairness perceptions were more positive for the information intervention group. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported for all three fairness measures.

To test Hypothesis 3, we ran three hierarchical regressions with T3 organizational affiliation variables (organizational attractiveness, job pursuit intentions, and recommendation intentions) as the dependent variables. Gender; T1 organizational attractiveness, job pursuit, or recommendation intentions; and T3 performance perceptions (outcome favorability) were entered in Step 1 as control variables, and information condition was entered in Step 2 (see Table 4). The information condition did not significantly increase  $R^2$  for the three organizational affiliation variables ( $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ,  $F_s = 0.19-0.52$ ,  $ns$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported at Time 3.

To test Hypothesis 4, we ran a hierarchical regression with T3 test-taking self-efficacy as the dependent variable. Gender, T2 test-taking self-efficacy, T3 performance perceptions (outcome favorability), and information condition were entered in Step 1, and the Information Condition  $\times$  Outcome Favorability interaction (product term) was entered in Step 2. Hypothesis 4 was not supported, in that the addition of the interaction term did not significantly increase  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ),  $F(1, 265) = 0.58$ ,  $ns$ .

Time 4 analyses (postfeedback; Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4). These analyses were similar to those for Time 3, except that actual pass or fail was used as the outcome favorability control variable rather than perceptions of performance. The addition of information condition resulted in a statistically significant increase in  $R^2$  for the job relatedness of the selection process ( $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ),  $F(1, 95) = 2.88$ ,  $p < .05$ , and feedback timeliness of the selection process ( $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ),  $F(1, 95) = 3.89$ ,  $p < .05$ . Betas indicated that the effects of information were in the hypothesized direction (see Table 5). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. However, as seen in Table 6, the information condition did not result in a significant increase in  $R^2$  for the three organizational affiliation variables, ( $\Delta R^2 = .00-.01$ ,  $F_s = 0.11-1.19$ ,  $ns$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. In addition, Hypothesis 4 was not supported in that the addition of the interaction term did not significantly increase  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2 = .00$ ),  $F(1, 93) = 0.02$ ,  $ns$ .

Supplementary analyses at T3: Information and unfairness. Because actual unfairness may be most associated with outcomes such as litigation (e.g., Gilliland & Chan, 2001; Steiner & Gilliland, 2001), we compared the two conditions in terms of the proportion of applicants who gave ratings indicating unfairness

Table 3  
Hierarchical Regression Analyses With Control Variables and Information Condition Predicting Time (T) 3 Measures of Video Test Fairness

Variable	T3 job relatedness of the video test			T3 feedback timeliness of the video test			T3 structure fairness of the video test		
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 1	.08***			.19***			.27***		
Gender			.05			.15***			.10
T1 process fairness			.12			.28***			.21***
Outcome favorability (T3 perception of performance)			.21***			.24***			.42***
Step 2	.13***	.06***		.23***	.04***		.30***	.03***	
Information			.24***			.21***			.18***

Note.  $N = 271$ . Gender was coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Information was coded 0 = no information condition (control group), 1 = information condition (experimental group). Betas are for the final equation.  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  values may appear inconsistent because of rounding. \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 4  
*Hierarchical Regression Analyses With Control Variables and Information Condition Predicting Time (T) 3 Organizational Attractiveness, T3 Job Pursuit Intentions, and T3 Recommendation Intentions*

Variable	T3 organizational attractiveness			T3 job pursuit intentions			T3 recommendation intentions		
	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
Step 1	.37***			.21***			.41***		
Gender			.09			.10			.06
T1 organizational attractiveness			.58***			—			—
T1 job pursuit intentions			—			.38***			—
T1 recommendation intentions			—			—			.61***
T3 outcome favorability (perception of performance)			.07			.16***			.10**
Step 2	.37***	.00		.21***	.00		.41***	.00	
Information			.02			-.04			.03

Note. N = 271. Gender was coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Information was coded 0 = no information condition (control), 1 = information provided. Betas are for the final equation. Dashes in cells indicate that the variable was not included in the equation.  
 \*\* p < .05. \*\*\* p < .01.

(i.e., less than three on a five-point scale; see Table 7). At T3, a smaller proportion of applicants in the information condition indicated that the video test was unfair for all three fairness measures,  $\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 6.61-15.28, p < .05$ . Similarly, at T4, a smaller proportion of applicants in the information condition indicated the test was unfair, although, perhaps because of low power, this was not statistically significant.

*Research Question: Information, Applicant Continuation, and Turnover*

For applicants given a conditional offer of employment (n = 83), results indicated no differences on continuation in the process between the information (45/48 or 94%) and control conditions (35/35 or 100%),  $\chi^2(1, n = 83) = 2.27, ns$ . Among those applicants actually appointed (n = 74), results indicated no statistically significant differences in turnover between the information (5/43 or 12%) and control (5/31 or 16%) conditions,  $\chi^2(n = 74) = 0.31,$

ns. Thus, no relationship was found between information and these behavioral outcomes.

*Post Hoc Subgroup Analyses at Time 3 (Prefeedback)*

*Gender and ethnicity.* For each hypothesis, we explored the moderating effects of gender and ethnicity (African American or White) at T3 by using moderated regression. These analyses indicated no differences by gender ( $\Delta R^2$ s = .00-.01),  $F_s(1, 265) = 0.08-1.75, ns$ . Although there were no differences by ethnicity for most analyses ( $\Delta R^2$ s = .00-.01),  $F_s(1, 250) = 0.05-1.84, ns$ , there was an Ethnicity × Information interaction for job relatedness ( $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ),  $F(1, 250) = 7.24, p < .01$ , such that information was related to job relatedness for Whites ( $\Delta R^2 = .08$ ),  $F(1, 217) = 21.43, p < .01$ , but not for African Americans ( $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ),  $F(1, 30) = 0.94, ns$ . In addition, there was a three-way Ethnicity × Information × Outcome Favorability interaction ( $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ),  $F(1, 247) = 10.65, p < .01$ . Follow-up tests showed

Table 5  
*Hierarchical Regression With Control Variables and Information Condition Predicting Time (T) 4 Fairness of the Overall Selection Process*

Variable	T4 job relatedness of the selection process			T4 feedback timeliness of the selection process		
	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
Step 1	.06			.10†		
Gender			-.04			.04
T1 process fairness			.15			.28††
Outcome favorability (T4 pass/fail)			.18†			.15
Step 2	.09†	.03†		.13††	.04†	
Information			.17†			.20†

Note. N = 100. Gender was coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Information was coded 0 = no information condition (control group), 1 = information condition (experimental group). T4 pass/fail was coded 0 for fail and 1 for pass. Betas are for the final equation. R<sup>2</sup> and ΔR<sup>2</sup> values may appear inconsistent because of rounding.  
 † p < .05, one-tailed. †† p < .01, one-tailed.



Table 6  
*Hierarchical Regression With Control Variables and Information Condition Predicting Time (T) 4 Organizational Attractiveness and Turnover Perceptions*

Variable	T4 organizational attractiveness			T4 job pursuit intentions			T4 recommendation intentions		
	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
Step 1	.33***			.11**			.24***		
Gender			.15**			.20*			.03
T1 organizational attractiveness			.57***			—			—
T1 job pursuit intentions			—			.25**			—
T1 recommendation intentions			—			—			.50***
T4 outcome favorability (pass/fail)			-.04			-.06			.05
Step 2	.34***	.00		.12**	.01		.24***	.00	
Information			.07			.11			-.03

Note. N = 100. Gender was coded 0 = male, 1 = female. Information was coded 0 = no information condition (control group) and 1 = information condition. T4 pass/fail was coded 0 = fail, 1 = pass. Betas are for the final equation. R<sup>2</sup> and ΔR<sup>2</sup> values may appear inconsistent because of rounding. Dashes in cells indicate that the variable was not included in the equation.  
 \* p < .10. \*\* p < .05. \*\*\* p < .01.

that Hypothesis 4 was supported for African Americans (ΔR<sup>2</sup> = .10), F(1, 29) = 8.51, p < .01, such that outcome favorability was more strongly related to self-efficacy when information was provided; this was not found for Whites (ΔR<sup>2</sup> = .00), F(1, 214) = 2.78, ns.

*Test-taking experience.* For each hypothesis, we explored the moderating effects of test-taking experience with this organization at T3 by using regression. There were no differential effects because of applicant test-taking experience, ΔR<sup>2</sup>s = .00, F<sub>s</sub>(1, 264) = 0.02–1.40, ns. Among the 113 who had taken the test before but had not been hired, there were no differences between those who had passed the process and those who had not, ΔR<sup>2</sup>s = .00–.01, F<sub>s</sub>(1, 103) = 0.00–2.46, ns.

Discussion

This study extends the literature on selection information in four important ways. First, participants were actual applicants who had applied for a job typically associated with a career (police work) and for which they presumably had a great deal at stake. Second, feedback about applicants' performance in the process was based on their actual test performance, not on random assignment to pass or fail conditions as in past studies. Third, the context for this study

was one in which applicants would have considerable information about the hiring organization (the city's police department) through the media and living in the community (in the present case, applicants could also attend information sessions about the tests and the job). Because applicants often do have advance information or preexisting perceptions about employers, the present study provided a realistic context for exploring the effects of information in which there are many sources of information about the organization available to applicants. Finally, it is the only study to test the relationship between selection information and applicant continuation in the selection process and later turnover.

A central finding of this study is that applicants who were given information about the video test rated it as more fair at the time of testing on three dimensions of fairness (Hypothesis 1). They also rated the selection process to this point more positively on two dimensions of fairness 1 month later when they received their test results (Hypothesis 2). These results were found after controlling for pretest fairness perceptions and outcome favorability. In addition, applicants provided with information were less likely to rate the process as unfair.

Despite the consistent and lasting relationship with fairness, relationships with other outcomes were limited. Contrary to the

Table 7  
*Percentage of Applicants Indicating Unfairness (Ratings Less Than 3) in Each Condition*

Dependent variable	Control group (% unfair)	Information condition (% unfair)
Time 3 (postvideo test) variables		
Job relatedness of video test	32.6	12.3
Feedback timeliness of video test	10.4	1.5
Structure fairness	21.4	7.2
Time 4 (postfeedback) variables		
Job relatedness of selection process	31.6	17.5
Feedback timeliness of selection process	5.3	1.6

Note. For Time 3, N = 274 and ns = 144 and 130 for the control group and information condition, respectively. For Time 4, N = 101, and ns = 38 and 63 for the control group and information condition, respectively. All differences in frequencies are significant at Time 3, χ<sup>2</sup>(1, N = 274) = 6.61–15.28, p < .05.

findings of past laboratory research (e.g., Ployhart et al., 1999), information was not related to organizational affiliation variables such as organizational attractiveness and job pursuit and recommendation intentions (Hypothesis 3). However, these variables may not be malleable in this context because police applicants have probably considered the advantages and disadvantages of the job. Note that job pursuit intentions were high (about 4.7) over the entire selection process. In contexts in which applicants are career focused, this phenomenon is probably not unusual. As noted by theorists (e.g., Greenberg, 2001; Lind, 2001), fairness information may have a greater impact on organizational affiliation variables when applicants have little other information available about the job or organization, as they would in laboratory simulations. These findings underscore the importance of assessing applicant reactions in a realistic context to control for actual performance in the selection process and actual, real-world outcomes, something not done in prior selection information research. Interestingly, contrary to past research (e.g., Ployhart et al., 1999), the Information  $\times$  Outcome Favorability interaction (Hypothesis 4) was not supported for the overall sample. However, this interaction was supported among African Americans, which could have important implications for organizations trying to recruit minority applicants and reduce adverse impact, in that providing information could encourage African American candidates who do well on tests but may have the opposite effect on those who do poorly.

Although it has been theorized that fairness should be related to job acceptance and organizational investment (e.g., Gilliland, 1993; Lind, 2001), applicants given fairness information continued in the process and stayed in the organization at the same rate as their control condition counterparts, although few applicants in either group dropped out of the process or quit the organization. Although the relationship between fairness and these variables should be further explored, fairness information may be of limited use for influencing such outcomes for professional sorts of jobs as in the present study.

### *Potential Limitations*

This study had some potential limitations. First, the quasi-experimental design did not allow for the control of some extraneous variables in the selection context. Cook et al. (1990) noted that this design is susceptible to some threats to internal validity, particularly history and selection. Although most threats were controlled by this design, four were not. Because some applicants participated in both cohorts, diffusion of the treatment to the second (treatment) cohort should be considered. However, the diffusion of the actual treatment was not possible because no information was given to the first (control) group, and thus they did not have the information to share. Some contamination could have occurred by some applicants noticing a difference between the two administrations and pointing this out to others. However, we believe this was less likely to occur because the video intervention was given in small groups of applicants who then went directly into individual administrations of the test. Although history effects could have differentially affected applicants in the two conditions, discussions with the testing staff did not uncover any plausible contextual issues that would have changed the reactions of participants (e.g., community employment rates, politics). Although selection was not controlled, the statistical control of cohort differences through the use of pretests helps overcome this threat.

Fourth, differential selection could have interacted with the treatment, but controlling for pretest differences and relevant demographics between the groups should help to overcome this threat.

A second potential limitation is the differential response rate for T4, in that one could argue that the fairness ratings for the control condition were lower because more disgruntled applicants responded in the control condition. However, we believe this is not a serious problem for three reasons. First, this seems an unlikely scenario because the failure rate for the control condition (first cohort) was actually lower (31%) than it was for the information condition (second cohort; 54%), so that there should have been fewer disgruntled applicants at T4 for the control condition. Second, although the failure rate for the treatment condition was higher than for the control condition, T4 analyses indicated that applicants in the treatment condition rated the process as more fair. Third, even if the different response rates were somehow related to outcome favorability, this variable was used as a control in all analyses.

Third, the possibility of demand characteristics should be noted, specifically that candidates in the information condition may have indicated greater fairness because they believed this was expected of them. However, the fairness measures assessed not just whether applicants understood the manipulation but whether they actually believed the test was more fair. In addition, all surveys were from the researchers, not the civil service department. The results from T4 (postfeedback) fairness are particularly compelling because the referent in this case was not the video test per se (the focus of the manipulation) but instead the set of tests and the selection process.

Finally, presenting information did not have substantial effects on other outcomes. However, the information intervention used in this study was salient. That the results of past laboratory studies were not replicated illustrates the importance of considering the field context where applicants have other sources of information for forming their judgments. We believe this situation is not uncommon in contexts where applicants are pursuing a chosen career.

### *Implications*

This study has several implications for research. First, it shows the importance of exploring applicant reactions issues in actual selection contexts. Research should explore the factors that may moderate the effects of information on applicant reactions, such as ethnicity, characteristics of the applicant pool, the hiring organization, job, or selection procedure. In addition, the effects of information on outcomes that are most closely related to the fairness of the selection process itself, such as litigation intentions, should be studied (see Goldman, 2001). Moreover, whereas in the present study we attempted to influence perceptions of the fairness of the process itself, interventions that could affect interpersonal fairness (e.g., training of the human resources staff) should also be explored because such interventions may have a stronger effect on outcomes such as organizational attractiveness or the citizenship behavior of new hires (see Lind, 2001). We encourage the exploration of these hypotheses in other types of real-world selection contexts.

With regard to practice, this study demonstrates that a simple and relatively inexpensive approach to presenting information to applicants may influence the perceived fairness of the selection method at the time of testing and the fairness of the overall process

measured after applicants have received their test results. Moreover, presenting information may reduce the proportion of applicants perceiving the process as unfair, something that may be important given the relationship between fairness and outcomes such as litigation (Goldman, 2001). Information about a test or process and explanations for delays in scoring can be easily and inexpensively presented to applicants. Information may be especially useful when procedures that are inherently unattractive to applicants (e.g., cognitive ability tests) must be used. However, whereas past laboratory studies have found many effects for fairness information, some outcomes may be less affected in settings where applicants have considerable information about the job and a substantial investment in getting hired.

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(Appendix follows)

## Appendix

## Quick Facts About the Police Recruit Video-Based Test

- The video-based test has been carefully designed to assess the relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities required by \_\_\_\_\_ police officers. The process was developed based on extensive research into the job of police officer.

- The video-based test is predictive of how well a person will perform as a police officer.

- The video-based test gives you a chance to show how you would handle a real police situation. Respond as you would in the actual situation.

After you have taken the test:

- Carefully trained teams of police experts will evaluate the responses to

the video-based test. This is to assure that each applicant is graded using the same standards.

- It will take about one month to score the video-based test because Civil Service checks and double-checks the scores for accuracy.

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