Web-Based Recruitment: Effects of Information, Organizational Brand, and Attitudes Toward a Web Site on Applicant Attraction

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Recruitment theory and research show that objective characteristics, subjective considerations, and critical contact send signals to prospective applicants about the organization and available opportunities. In the generating applicants phase of recruitment, critical contact may consist largely of interactions with recruitment sources (e.g., newspaper ads, job fairs, organization Web sites); however, research has yet to fully address how all 3 types of signaling mechanisms influence early job pursuit decisions in the context of organizational recruitment Web sites. Results based on data from 814 student participants searching actual organization Web sites support and extend signaling and brand equity theories by showing that job information (directly) and organization information (indirectly) are related to intentions to pursue employment when a priori perceptions of image are controlled. A priori organization image is related to pursuit intentions when subsequent information search is controlled, but organization familiarity is not, and attitudes about a recruitment source also influence attraction and partially mediate the effects of organization information. Theoretical and practical implications for recruitment are discussed.

Keywords: recruitment, attraction, Web sites, branding

In the highly competitive global marketplace, recruitment has emerged as a key antecedent of organizational effectiveness (Barber, 1998; Breaugh, 1992; Rynes, 1991). Recruitment consists of those organizational activities and practices whose primary goal is to identify and attract potential employees and persuade them toward becoming an organizational member (Barber, 1998; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Barber (1998) described three phases to the recruitment process: generating applicants, maintaining applicant interest in the organization, and influencing job choice. We focus on attracting applicant interest in the earliest stages of the generating applicants phase. This part of the process is crucial and may determine the utility of subsequent recruitment phases and overall organizational recruitment practices. For potential applicants who are not persuaded to pursue employment, subsequent recruitment phases will be irrelevant (Rynes, 1991; Rynes & Barber, 1990), reducing the alternatives available to the organization and the utility of recruitment practices (Murphy, 2000).

A great deal of research has shown that the source (e.g., newspaper ads, employee referrals) through which organizations make initial contact with potential applicants is important (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000). Although much of this research focuses on relationships with posthire outcomes, such as turnover and job performance (Barber, 1998; Zottoli & Wanous, 2000), it is reasonable to expect characteristics of the source through which organizations make initial contact to have more proximal effects on applicant attraction (Barber, 1998). For example, there is evidence that features of the sources organizations use to communicate recruitment messages affect prehire outcomes, such as applicant attraction (Allen, Van Scotter, & Otondo, 2004). Very little research, though, has investigated applicant attraction in the context of one of the newest and fastest growing sources that organizations use to communicate with potential applicants: organization Web sites. Thus, the purpose of this research is to develop and test a model of prehire applicant reactions to organizational recruitment Web sites.

Theory and Hypotheses

The early stages of recruitment are a communication process in which organizations attempt to persuade potential applicants to pursue opportunities and job seekers search for information to narrow down the potential opportunities to retain in a consideration set of organizations that they are interested in pursuing (Allen et al., 2004; Williamson, Cable, & Aldrich, 2003). Soelberg’s (1967) generalizable decision-processing model suggests
the importance of understanding these early job pursuit decisions. According to Soelberg’s model, job seekers identify a small number of early favorites on the basis of very limited information; they then engage in a choice confirmation process in which subsequent organizations and information are compared against these initial favorites (Power & Aldag, 1985). Thus, it is critical to understand how job seekers identify their initial consideration sets.

Barber (1998) described early job pursuit decisions in the following manner: Individuals are exposed to recruitment efforts from organizations that they may or may not have some existing mental image about; individuals then use the recruitment contact, whatever information is conveyed, and image to make the first critical job search decision—whether to pursue employment with a particular organization. This description fits well with classic recruitment theory suggesting that attraction is a function of three primary types of antecedents—objective job and organization attributes; subjective considerations, such as image or fit; and critical recruitment contact (Behling, Labovitz, & Gainer, 1968)—and with recent meta-analytic evidence showing that applicant attraction is predicted by job and organization characteristics, recruitment contact in terms of recruiter behaviors and perceptions of the recruiting process, and subjective considerations in terms of perceived fit and hiring expectancies (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005).

In the earliest stages, recruitment contact and information about objective and subjective characteristics are likely to be the result of exposure to recruitment sources. The nature of these early communication exchanges may be changing as technology and the Internet transform recruitment. Most organizations report using their organizational Web pages for recruitment purposes, and Internet recruitment has emerged as a preferred mode for many job seekers (Capelli, 2001; Cober, Brown, Blumental, Doverspike, & Levy, 2000; Kuhn & Skuterud, 2000). Over 90% of large U.S. companies report using their Web site for communicating job and organization information to potential job seekers (Capelli, 2001), and organization Web sites have become the major source of résumés and new hires for many U.S. companies (Cober & Brown, 2006; Slywotzky, 1999).

Although recruiting via organization Web sites may share many characteristics with more traditional recruitment methods, there are also likely key differences. From the organization’s perspective, Web sites provide the opportunity to communicate practically unlimited information about organization and job characteristics, to communicate this information via multiple channels (e.g., plain text, graphic images, audio files, interactive links), and to communicate this information to a large number of geographically dispersed job seekers at a relatively low cost (Cober et al., 2000; Cober, Brown, Keeping, & Levy, 2004). Further, job seekers can determine the nature and order of their information search, although organizations retain control over the content and design of information provided. Thus, recruitment Web sites differ from traditional formal and passive sources (e.g., newspaper ads) by making more information available, using more communication channels, and having potentially greater reach and interactivity. They differ from traditional formal and more active sources (e.g., job fairs) by allowing seekers more control over information search and potentially providing different types of information and greater reach. They differ from more informal sources (e.g., referrals) in that the organization retains control over the content and design of information presentation.

We are not suggesting that Web sites are necessarily better than other sources, which may be more appropriately targeted or may provide important types of information that Web sites cannot (e.g., the inside, realistic information provided by referrals). However, for job seekers in the early information-gathering stage, recruitment Web sites may be particularly important as the job seekers attempt to narrow down a manageable consideration set of organizations with which to pursue employment. Web sites provide these seekers the ability to engage in extremely cost-effective searches to garner extensive information about numerous organizations. Still, there is concern about the extent to which high recruitment Web site hit rates translate into motivated job seekers (Capelli, 2001; Cober et al., 2000), and there is very limited research evidence concerning how job seekers respond to Web-based organizational recruiting (Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002). A key question, then, is the extent to which organization Web sites are useful for attracting potential applicants to the organization.

In the present study, we develop and test a model of Web-based applicant attraction in the early applicant generation phase of recruitment that incorporates information about objective job and organization characteristics, the subjective consideration of a priori brand image, and recruitment contact in terms of attitudes toward a Web site. Previous research has emphasized the importance of information about job and organization attributes (e.g., Barber, 1998; Chapman et al., 2005). Signaling theory suggests that information is important because job seekers facing uncertainty and incomplete information use the information available as signals about job and organizational attributes (Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). Further, research on source effects suggests that sources differ in terms of the amount and type of information communicated (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000). However, very little research has explored information in a Web-based context. We provide the first test of the role of amount of information using actual organization Web sites while controlling for a priori perceptions of organization image.

Previous research has also found that organization reputation and image play a role in applicant attraction (e.g., Cable & Turban, 2001; Tom, 1971). We draw from brand equity theory (e.g., Balmer & Gray, 2003) to extend theory in this area and argue that, just as branding provides incremental preferences for an organization’s products or services beyond the attributes of those products or services, organization branding may also provide incremental preferences for an organization’s employment opportunities beyond job and organizational attributes. Previous research on Web-based recruitment has relied largely on fictitious companies, making it impossible to assess the influence of image. We provide the first test of the role of image using actual organization Web sites while controlling for subsequent information search.

We also incorporate critical recruitment contact in terms of reactions to recruitment Web sites. Previous research on recruitment contact has focused on reactions to initial screening interviews (Barber, 1998). In the earliest stages of recruitment, however, the only interaction potential applicants may have with the organization is with recruitment communication from sources such as Web sites. Signaling theory suggests that these early communications may serve as signals about other job and organization
attributes, and Cober et al. (2004) offered that attitudes toward a recruitment Web site may be directly related to applicant attraction. We provide the first test of this contention with actual organization Web sites. In our proposed model of applicant attraction in a Web-based recruitment context (see Figure 1), a priori organization familiarity and image, the amount of job and organization information on the Web site, and attitude toward the Web site influence intentions to pursue employment through positive relationships with attitude toward the organization. Further, the amount of information on the Web site influences attitudes toward the Web site.

**Information and Attraction**

A great deal of research suggests that job and organization attributes play an important role in job pursuit and decisions and that more information about job and organization attributes during recruitment is related to attraction (Allen et al., 2004; Barber, 1998; Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991). For example, Rynes and Miller (1983) manipulated the amount of information provided by a recruiter while holding the attractiveness of job features constant and found that more information was positively related to willingness to follow up. Barber and Roehling’s (1993) verbal protocol analysis found that potential applicants attended to the amount of information provided in job postings. Allen et al. (2004) found that amount of information was related to satisfaction with a recruitment message and indirectly related to attraction when they controlled for four other features of the recruitment message.

Information has long played a key role in two of the most heavily researched areas of recruitment: source effects and realistic job previews (RJPs). For example, the explanation for source effects that has received the most support is the realistic information hypothesis (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000). According to this perspective, sources differ in effectiveness because they differ in the amount, type, richness, and realism of the information they provide. For example, employee referrals are thought to outperform other sources in terms of subsequent turnover and performance largely because of the amount of rich and realistic information that an organizational insider is able to provide. The importance of information to recruitment is also emphasized by the substantial body of research showing that RJPs are consistently related to subsequent turnover (Phillips, 1998).

Information is also likely important for attraction. We focus on amount of information as playing an important role in influencing attraction in the early stages of recruitment, although we recognize that other aspects of information (e.g., realism) may also be important for understanding attraction and other outcomes (e.g., posthire outcomes, such as turnover). Recent meta-analytic evidence shows that job and organization characteristics are among the most important predictors of applicant attraction (Chapman et al., 2005). One of the primary organizational goals during the initial phase of recruitment is the communication of information about jobs (e.g., job openings, job characteristics) and organizations (e.g., work environments, work climates; Popovich & Wanous, 1982). At the same time, applicants are attempting to reduce the uncertainty associated with making important decisions with only incomplete information available. Signaling theory suggests that in the face of incomplete information and uncertainty, job seekers use the information they do have available to make inferences about unknown job and organization characteristics (Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). Thus, recruitment messages and materials that provide more information about job and organization characteristics should positively influence applicant attraction to the organization. More information provides stronger signaling to job seekers, reducing their uncertainty and aiding in the development

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**Figure 1.** Proposed theoretical model of Web-based applicant attraction.
of mental models of what it would be like to work for a particular organization, thereby increasing positive attitudes toward the organization and the idea of pursuing employment there (Allen et al., 2004).

However, very little research has investigated the role of information in the context of Web-based recruitment. Feldman and Klaas (2002) surveyed business school graduates retrospectively about their job search experiences and found that one of the primary responses indicative of dissatisfaction with Internet job hunting was a lack of detailed information. Dineen et al. (2002) had students browse the careers section of a fictitious company and found that information concerning organizational fit influenced attraction. Cober et al.’s (2004) conceptual model of recruitment Web sites suggests that the amount of information garnered from a Web site is one of the most important and proximal determinants of applicant attraction. Given the importance of information in previous recruitment research, we believe it is worthwhile to consider the extent to which information plays a role in a Web-based recruitment context. Job and organization information may be particularly important in this context, because Web sites have the potential to vary so widely in the type and amount of information provided. Further, job seekers may have higher expectations for information availability from Web sites, which makes the actual availability or lack thereof even more salient. Also, job seekers in a Web-based context have more control over the nature and order of their information search and so may be more likely to attend to information characteristics.

Hypothesis 1: The amount of organization information presented on an organization Web site is positively related to job seekers’ attraction to the organization.

Hypothesis 2: The amount of job information presented on an organization Web site is positively related to job seekers’ attraction to the organization.

Organization Brand and Attraction

Although applicant attraction is certainly influenced by observable job and organization characteristics, it is also influenced by more subjective judgments and prior schemas, such as organizational image and reputation (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993). Tom (1971) applied Super’s (1953) theory of vocational choice to organizational choice and argued that employment is one means of implementing one’s self-image; thus, organization preferences are likely related to organization image. Subsequent empirical research has supported this idea (e.g., Gatewood et al., 1993; Keon, Latack, & Wanous, 1982), and Chapman et al.’s (2005) meta-analysis showed that image is one of the most important antecedents of applicant attraction.

Organizational branding, drawn from brand equity theory (e.g., Balmer & Gray, 2003), may have important implications for understanding how organizational reputation influences initial attraction. There is evidence that branding provides incremental preferences for an organization’s products or services beyond the attributes of those products or services (Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994; Keller, 1993; Park & Srinivasan, 1994). We argue that organizational branding may also provide incremental preferences for an organization’s employment opportunities beyond job and organizational attributes. Organizational brand can be defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of these that identifies an organization and differentiates it from competitors (Kotler, 1991). Brand equity theory suggests that consumers prefer to be associated with products or services offered by organizations with a strong brand (Keller, 1993). Extending this perspective to the recruitment context is consistent with Tom’s (1971) emphasis on self-identity and image in organization choice as well as with theory suggesting that individuals seek to belong to attractive groups and that the prestige of a group increases the motivation to seek belonging in that group (Tajfel & Turner, 1985).

Brand equity theory suggests two dimensions of organization brand: organizational familiarity (i.e., organizational recognition and recall) and organizational image (i.e., perceptions and evaluations of the organization; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Keller, 1993). Organizational familiarity is the job seekers’ ability to retrieve the organization’s name from memory with little difficulty. Marketing research has consistently found that organizational familiarity generally has a positive impact on attitudes toward the organization (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993), while psychology research documents the positive impact of familiarity on affect and attitudes (Bornstein, 1989; Zajonc, 1968). In the recruitment literature, Cable and Turban’s (2001) theoretical model of recruitment equity suggests that familiarity is an important component of job seekers’ employer-related knowledge and should influence attraction to the organization. Some empirical research has supported this link (e.g., Collins & Stevens, 2002; Turban, 2001).

Organization image refers to the perceptions, attributes, and associations connected with a brand in job seekers’ memories (Keller, 1993). Image is another component of employer-related knowledge in Cable and Turban’s (2001) model, and research evidence has also supported the link between image and attraction to the organization (e.g., Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al., 1993). Image is expected to influence attraction to the organization for several reasons. As noted above, individuals prefer to be associated with groups or organizations that have attractive or prestigious reputations (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Acquiring membership in a socially desirable organization with a publicly positive image generally improves self-image (Cable & Turban, 2003). Further, signaling theory suggests that generally positive or favorable impressions of organizational image are likely to be used as signals about unknown job and organization characteristics. Thus, job seekers may be more likely to make favorable inferences about these unknown attributes. Finally, brand equity theory and research suggest that individuals have more positive affect toward the products and services of organizations with more favorable images. Thus, job seekers may also hold more positive affect toward the employment opportunities of organizations with more favorable images.

To date, no published research has examined the impact of familiarity and image on attraction to the organization in the context of Web-based recruitment. Cober et al.’s (2004) model suggests these links, but extant research on recruitment Web sites (e.g., Dineen et al., 2002; Williamson, Lepak, & King, 2003) has largely used fictional companies and Web sites, making it impossible to assess the effects of job seekers’ preconceived familiarity and image perceptions. Cable and Yu (2006) used real Web sites to explore the development and accuracy of image perceptions but did not relate these to attraction. Research also has not established
that reputation continues to play a role in attraction after exposure to the potentially large amount of rich information available on organization Web sites. Given the potential amount of information available to job seekers using these Web sites, it is important to assess the extent to which familiarity and image are related to applicant attraction even after job seekers have the opportunity to search for job and organization information.

**Hypothesis 3:** Organization familiarity is positively related to job seekers’ attraction to the organization beyond the effects of job and organization information.

**Hypothesis 4:** Organization image is positively related to job seekers’ attraction to the organization beyond the effects of job and organization information.

**Web Sites and Attraction**

Previous research on recruitment contact has shown that interactions with the organization (e.g., process characteristics such as interview focus and time lags) and with organization agents (e.g., recruiter characteristics such as warmth, competence, and informativeness) can influence attraction to the organization (Barber, 1998). These interactions are generally thought to serve as signals about the organization. In the earliest stages of recruitment, however, the only interaction potential applicants may have with the organization is with recruitment communication from sources such as Web sites. In this context, reactions to the source may represent critical recruitment contact, and source characteristics may serve as important signals that influence attraction. Allen et al.’s (2004) findings support this contention, although these authors did not include Web sites as a source.

Cober et al.’s (2004) model of Web site recruitment suggests that attitude toward the Web site is a proximal predictor of applicant attraction. Evaluations of the Web site may influence attraction beyond the effects of branding or job and organization attributes for several reasons. As noted, for applicants, the early stages of recruitment typically involve uncertainty, anxiety, and incomplete information. As such, potential applicants use whatever information they do have as signals about the organization (Rynes, 1991). Thus, evaluations of a Web site may influence evaluations of unknown attributes of the organization (e.g., professionalism, organization, technological savvy). Further, Barber (1998) noted that reactions to recruitment materials and advertisements may influence attraction. Marketing research shows that attitudes about advertisements influence organization attractiveness and intentions to build a relationship with the organization (e.g., Coulter & Punj, 1999; Muehling & McCann, 2003), and recruitment Web sites are, in effect, a form of advertising for organizational jobs.

We also posit that information influences attitude toward the Web site. Research on technology use and adoption shows that perceptions of usefulness are a primary determinant of attitudes (Davis, 1989), and usability has also been conceptually linked to the attitudes job seekers develop toward a Web site (Cober et al., 2004; Nielsen, 2000). Because the early stages of recruitment are, in part, an information search task, Web sites that facilitate the search for and accumulation of relevant knowledge and information should be seen as more useful. Thus, more information about job and organization attributes should be an important feature influencing attitudes toward the Web site. If so, this would suggest that attitudes toward recruitment sources may partially mediate relationships between information and attraction.

**Hypothesis 5:** Attitude toward the Web site is positively related to job seekers’ attraction to the organization.

**Hypothesis 6:** The amount of job and organization information presented on an organization Web site is positively related to attitude toward the Web site.

**Applicant Attraction to the Organization**

Applicant attraction can be defined as interest in an organization as a potential employer and the probability of pursuing employment opportunities and is the most immediate objective of the early stages of recruitment (Barber, 1998; Cober et al., 2004; Rynes, 1991). As opposed to job choice decisions, when applicants decide whether to accept job offers, early job pursuit decisions serve as screening mechanisms that reduce the set of potential opportunities without requiring the individual to forgo all other possibilities. Soelberg’s (1967) generalizable decision-processing model suggests that early screening judgments may be critically important. According to this model, job seekers identify early favorites, often on the basis of very limited information, and the rest of the decision process is largely about confirming and rationalizing those early judgments.

Allen et al. (2004) drew from the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) to suggest that attitudes and intentions are likely the best predictors of behaviors associated with applicant attraction. In their model, antecedents such as amount of information influenced attitudes toward the organization, attitudes influenced intentions to pursue employment, and intentions were positioned as the most proximal predictors of behavior. Similarly, marketing researchers have followed this approach in describing how other forms of persuasive communication influence outcomes, and considerable meta-analytic evidence supports this process approach (Kim & Hunter, 1993a, 1993b). Chapman et al. (2005) meta-analytically tested several process models of applicant attraction and found that mediated models, in which the effects of antecedents on job choice were mediated by attitudes and intentions, fitted better in every case than a direct effects model, in which antecedents directly influenced job choice. As such, we propose that attitudes toward the organization and intentions to pursue employment are useful indicators of attraction and that familiarity, image, job information, organization information, and Web site attitude directly influence attitudes toward the organization and only indirectly influence intentions through effects on attitudes. Attitudes toward the organization directly influence intentions to pursue employment.

**Hypothesis 7:** Attitudes toward the organization mediate relationships of familiarity, image, job information, and organization information with intentions to pursue employment.

Hypothesis 7 is consistent with Chapman et al.’s (2005) attitudes mediated model. However, plausible arguments could be made for more direct relationships with intentions. For example, job characteristics may directly influence job pursuit intentions,
since the referent focus of both is on the job instead of on the organization. Also, Han and Collins (2002) found that organization brand directly influenced intentions to pursue employment. Chapman et al. (2005) compared their attitudes mediated model with an intentions mediated model in which antecedents were directly related to both attitudes and intentions and concluded that the best fitting model differed depending on the antecedents. Therefore, we also test several less constrained alternative models, consistent with Chapman et al.’s (2005) intentions mediated model, that allow direct paths with intentions, allowing us to assess whether relationships are mediated. These alternative models include direct paths from familiarity, image, job information, and organization information to intentions to pursue employment.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Participants were voluntarily recruited from undergraduate (95.8%) and graduate business courses at a large southern university. Students participated during class time and were offered small amounts of course extra credit for participation. We administered the survey to 816 students who were in class the day of the study (out of approximately 900 students on the class rosters; 90.7%) and obtained usable data from 814 respondents. The average age of respondents in the survey was 23.43 years, and the sample included an almost equal percentage of women (51%) and men. The majority of the participants were White (52%) or African American (30%). The majority were also employed (83%) and searching for a new or better job (88%).

Unlike previous research that has used fictional sites, participants in this study were randomly assigned to 1 of 73 actual organizational Web sites. These organizations represented a total of 51 (four-digit Standard Industrial Classification) industries, and no industry constituted over 6% of the total sample. Although it limited our control, using real sites provided greater fidelity to the data collection exercise and increased generalizability to the recruitment context. Further, organizational familiarity and image can only be meaningfully assessed with actual organizations. We randomly selected 100 of the Fortune 500 companies for possible inclusion. After screening, 28 organizations were dropped because they did not maintain an employment or careers function on their Web site or did not appear likely to hire business school graduates. This process resulted in a sample of 72 sites plus 1 site belonging to a sponsoring organization. Although using Fortune 500 companies could lead to organizations that tend to be more familiar, there was substantial variance in reported organizational familiarity.

Participants were provided a CD with the name of the organization and automatically routed to a pretest assessing organization familiarity and image. After completing the pretest, participants were automatically routed to the Web site of the organization and instructed to search for a job with the organization. Participants were allowed to search for as long as they desired (average browsing time = 7.76 min) to increase the realism of the task. The inclusion of time searching did not affect results and so was excluded from the model. When finished searching, participants were automatically routed to a posttest assessing job and organization information, attitudes, intentions, and demographics.

Measures

Organization familiarity. Organization familiarity was measured before participants used the Web site with five yes–no items adapted from Barber and Roehling (1993). A sample item is “Have you ever heard of this organization?”

Organization image. Organization image was measured before participants used the Web site with seven Likert-type items adapted from Gatewood et al.’s (1993) and based on the criteria used in Fortune magazine’s survey of most admired companies. A sample item is “Please rate this organization in terms of social responsibility” (1 = very negative, 5 = very positive).

Job information. Job information was measured with four Likert-type items drawn from Abernethy and Franke’s (1996) scale. A sample item is “How much employment or job opportunity related information did the Web site provide compared with what you expected to find?” (1 = not much at all, 5 = a very great amount).

Organization information. Organization information was measured with four Likert-type items drawn from Abernethy and Franke’s (1996) scale. A sample item is “How much information about the organization did the Web site provide compared with what you expected to find?” (1 = not much at all, 5 = a very great amount).

Attitude toward Web site. Attitude toward the Web site was measured with four Likert-type items. Items assessed respondents’ attitude toward the use of the organizational Web site. A sample item for capturing respondent attitude is “Using this Web site is a satisfying experience” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Attitude toward organization. Attitude toward the organization was measured with three Likert-type items. A sample item is “In your opinion, how does this organization compare with other organizations of the same type and size?” (1 = much worse, 5 = much better).

Intention to pursue employment. Intentions to pursue employment were measured with 13 Likert-type items. A sample item is “What are the chances that you will pursue employment with this organization within the next 12 months?” (1 = no chance, 5 = 100% chance).

Results

Measurement Model

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 8.51 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) to assess convergent and discriminant validity. We used the sample covariance matrix as input for LISREL 8.51, allowing items of each unidimensional measure to load only on their appropriate factors. As chi-square is sensitive to sample size (Cudeck & Henly, 1991), which was large in this study (N = 814), we followed Bollen’s (1990) recommendation of using multiple fit indices for interpreting the fit of the model with data. In addition to the chi-square statistic, we examined the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR), normed fit index (NFI), nonnormed fit index (NNFI; Bentler & Bonnett, 1980), and comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler & Bonnett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1999). We also assessed the significance of each path in the measurement model by examining the associated t value of the path to assess the reliability of specific items of the measure (e.g., Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).
Results of the CFA showed that all paths in the measurement model loaded significantly on their respective factors (lowest t value = 19.77). Although the chi-square, $\chi^2(681) = 4,605.52, p < .05$, was significant, the ratio of chi-square to the degrees of freedom was less than 10, indicating a moderately good level of fit of the measurement model with the data (Hughes, Price, & Marrs, 1986). The other measures of fit also indicated a moderate to good level of fit of the measurement model with the data (RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .04; NFI = .86; NNFI = .88; CFI = .89).

Our measures also satisfied the most constrained criteria of convergent and discriminant validity suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The average variance extracted (AVE) for all measures was greater than .50 (AVEs: familiarity = .58; image = .52; job information = .74; organization information = .62; attitude toward the Web site = .68; attitude toward the organization = .64; intentions to pursue employment = .75), suggesting convergent validity for our measures; however, the shared variance among these constructs was less than the AVE, suggesting that our measures also exhibited discriminant validity.

We further assessed the discriminant validity by conducting a series of chi-square difference tests using measures of each pair of constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998). In this procedure, for each pair of constructs, we first tested a two-factor CFA model, and then we imposed a single-factor solution. In each case, the single-factor model resulted in a significantly larger (greater than 3.84 with 1 degree of freedom) chi-square value for all pairwise tests in each group. Hence, when a single-factor solution was imposed on the two sets of measures, the model fit deteriorated significantly ($p < .05$), suggesting that our measures exhibited discriminant validity. The internal consistency reliabilities for all measures were .80 or higher (see Table 1).

**Structural Model**

The means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables are shown in Table 1. Organization image, job information, and organization information were all significantly correlated with attitudes toward the organization, attitude toward the Web site, and intentions to pursue employment; organization familiarity was only correlated with attitudes toward the organization. Two pairs of correlations were relatively high: job and organization information (.67), and attitude toward the organization and attitude toward the Web site (.58). However, in both cases, CFA results indicate that the measures of the constructs exhibited discriminant validity.

Next, we evaluated the structural model shown in Figure 1. Following Williams and Hazer (1986), we evaluated a latent model with a single indicator for each latent construct, using the covariance matrix as the input while fixing measurement loadings (standard deviation of scale × square root of scale reliability) and error variances ($1 - \text{reliability} \times \text{scale variances}$). Again, we used LISREL 8.51 to evaluate model fit and the significance of the hypothesized paths. The proposed theoretical model exhibited good fit with the data. Even though the chi-square statistic was significant, $\chi^2(7) = 42.15, p < .05$, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom was equal to 6, indicating a good fit (Hughes et al., 1986). The other fit indices also indicated good fit between the proposed model and the data (RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .03; NFI = .98; NNFI = .95; CFI = .98). Other than two paths (organizational familiarity → attitude toward the organization and job information → attitude toward the organization), all paths in the model were significant and in the expected direction. Thus, Hypotheses 1, 4, 5, and 6 were supported. Organization information ($\beta = .31$) was positively related to attitude toward the organization when we controlled for a priori image. Organization image ($\beta = .32$) was positively related to attitude toward the organization when we controlled for subsequent search. Attitude toward the Web site ($\beta = .49$) was also positively related to attitudes toward the organization. Job information ($\beta = .34$) and organization information ($\beta = .32$) were positively related to attitude toward the Web site. However, Hypothesis 2, suggesting a positive relationship between job information and attitude toward the organization, and Hypothesis 3, suggesting a positive relationship between organization familiarity and attitude toward the organization, were not supported. Organization image, organization information, and attitude toward the Web site together explained 60% of the variance in attitude toward the organization. Job information and organization information together accounted for 37% of the variance in attitude toward the Web site. Attitude toward the organization ($\beta = .34$) was positively related to intention to pursue employment with the organization, explaining 11% of the variance in intentions to pursue employment.

We performed the test of Hypothesis 7, the mediating role of attitude toward the organization, by analyzing several alternative
models consistent with Chapman et al.’s (2005) intentions mediated model. In each alternative model, a direct path was added from organizational familiarity (Model 2), organizational image (Model 3), job information (Model 4), and organization information (Model 5) to intention to pursue employment. We compared these alternative models against the proposed theoretical model on the basis of chi-square difference tests, as well as examining changes in fit indices and path significance (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Only the direct path from job information to intention to pursue employment was significant and resulted in significant improvement in model fit. Organization familiarity, organization image, and organization information had no significant direct impact on intention to pursue employment. Hence, attitude toward the organization mediated the relationship of organization image and organization information with intention to pursue employment. Organization familiarity did not influence intention to pursue employment either directly or indirectly. Job information was related directly to intention to pursue employment ($\beta = .08$). Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was partially supported. The results of the nested alternative models tests are shown in Table 2. As the addition of the path from job information to intention to pursue employment significantly improved model fit, the theoretical model was revised to include this path. The revised model with completely standardized parameter estimates is shown in Figure 2.

Finally, although the brand variables (familiarity and image) were measured on a separate survey prior to exposure to the Web site, all variables were measured via survey, and job information, organization information, and attitude toward the Web site were measured on the same survey as were the outcomes. To assess the extent of common method bias present in our data, we conducted Harman’s single-factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) by forcing all indicators to load on a single factor. Results of this test indicated that common method bias was not a severe problem in our data, as the single-factor model did not fit the data well. Further, following Podsakoff et al. (2003), we included common method as a latent construct in our model and forced the indicators of all study constructs to load on this construct. As suggested, we also forced the correlation between the latent common method construct and other constructs to be zero. The resulting model had an identification problem and could not be executed, a limitation of this approach noted by Podsakoff et al. (2003). To overcome the identification problems, we first obtained the covariance matrix of involved latent constructs, including a common method construct, by performing confirmatory analysis using their indicators. In this procedure, indicators of each latent construct were allowed to load only on their respective construct. However, all indicators were allowed to load on the method construct, and the correlations of the method construct with other study constructs were restricted to zero. The resulting covariance matrix was free from measurement error and the effects of common method bias (Jonsson, 1998; Jöreskog, 1998). We used this covariance matrix as input to assess the influence of common method bias in our model. Results of repeating study analyses with this input were consistent with the analysis of our revised model, providing evidence that our findings were not a result of common method bias. None of the paths changed in terms of statistical significance, and changes in path estimates were minor: job information $\rightarrow$ Web site attitude (beta changed from .34 to .31), organization information $\rightarrow$ Web site attitude (no change in beta), familiarity $\rightarrow$ attitude toward the organization (no change), organization information $\rightarrow$ attitude toward the organization (beta changed from .33 to .32), job information $\rightarrow$ attitude toward the organization (no change), organization information $\rightarrow$ attitude toward the organization (beta changed from .32 to .34), attitude toward the Web site $\rightarrow$ attitude toward the organization (beta changed from .49 to .40), job information $\rightarrow$ intentions to pursue employment (beta changed from .08 to .07), and attitude toward the organization $\rightarrow$ intentions to pursue employment (beta changed from .29 to .24).

### Discussion

This study contributes to the recruitment literature and our understanding of applicant attraction in the earliest phase of recruitment in a number of ways. We tested the role of key components of traditional recruitment theory, such as information and organization image, in the context of organization Web pages, which are rapidly becoming a critical component of organizational recruitment practice. We provide the first test of the effects of these constructs on attraction with actual organization Web sites, especially important to understanding the influence of preexisting perceptions of organization image. We integrate marketing research on branding to strengthen the theoretical base for understanding the effects of organization image. We provide the first test of the key antecedents of attraction in Cober et al.’s (2004) model of recruitment Web site effects on attraction and present evidence concerning Chapman et al.’s (2005) mediated models of attraction.

### Theoretical Implications

Overall, our findings are supportive of classic recruitment theory, suggesting that attraction is influenced by information about objective job and organization attributes; subjective assessments, such as organization image; and recruitment contact, such as interactions with sources. In particular, prior research has found that subjective schemas with which individuals approach recruit-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model: Path added</th>
<th>$\Delta \chi^2(1)$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1: Theoretical model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2: Organization familiarity $\rightarrow$ employment intention</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>−.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3: Organization image $\rightarrow$ employment intention</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>−.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 4: Job information $\rightarrow$ employment intention</td>
<td>4.06*</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 5: Organization information $\rightarrow$ employment intention</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>−.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$.
ment communication influence their reactions. Corporate reputation, in terms of organization familiarity and organization image, has been shown to be one important aspect of subjective schema that influences applicant attraction (Cable & Turban, 2003). We drew from brand equity theory to provide a richer explanation for these effects. This is the first study to examine these effects in the context of Web-based recruitment using the actual Web sites of real organizations. Our findings are consistent with brand equity theory and confirm previous research showing that organization image is important for shaping applicant evaluations of an organization and its employment opportunities, in that image was positively related to attitudes toward the organization and indirectly related to intentions to pursue employment through attitudes, even after participants were exposed to subsequent job and organizational information. This is particularly striking in a Web-based context, wherein job seekers could access a great deal of information of many different types in the order in which the information interested them.

We found that organization familiarity was not related to applicant attraction directly or indirectly. Organization image and subsequent exposure to job and organization information might have overwhelmed any effect of familiarity on attraction. These results suggest that mere familiarity with an organization may not be sufficient to positively influence attraction. Thus, this may represent a boundary condition to the generalizability of brand equity theory to the recruitment context. However, it is possible that image is partially a function of familiarity, something beyond our scope of interest in this case. Future research may be able to draw more from the marketing literature on branding to explore the dynamics underlying the development of perceptions of organization image. It may also be worth noting that in the context of Web-based recruitment, job seekers may be more likely to visit the Web sites of organizations with which they are more familiar, a possibility this study was not designed to examine.

Previous research has also stressed the importance of information about job and organization attributes in attraction. Consistent with signaling theory and previous research, job and organization information played a role in attraction even when we controlled for the effects of a priori familiarity and image. Some of this research has suggested that job information takes primacy over organization information in job seekers’ decisions (e.g., Rynes et al., 1991). Our findings suggest a more nuanced process, at least in this context. Organization information had a direct effect on attitudes toward the organization as well as indirect effects on intentions to pursue employment. Thus, the effects of organization information on attraction appeared to be mediated through attitudes toward the organization. While job information did not have a significant effect on attitude toward the organization, there was a significant direct effect on intentions to pursue employment. The total effects of job information on intentions to pursue employment were smaller but more direct than those of organization information. Signaling theory may need to be refined to consider that different types of information may send different types of signals and relate differently to outcomes. For example, organization information may be more strongly related to attitudes toward the organization because they share a common referent.

It may also be the case that organizations use different types of signals differently. We aggregated scores on amount of job and organization information to the Web site level (n = 73) and found that these Web sites presented significantly more organization than job information. t(72) = 8.78, p < .05. Although it is not a focus of this study, there is research showing the importance of person–job (PJ) and person–organization (PO) fit in the recruitment process. Future research may be able to determine whether different types of information relate differently to fit (e.g., job information and PJ fit, organization information and PO fit). In this study, it appears that organizations may be leaning toward using their recruitment Web sites more for providing organization information, perhaps in an attempt to influence PO fit.

It is interesting that both types of information positively influenced attitude toward the Web site, and Web site attitude was a significant predictor of attitude toward the organization. Recruitment theory
indicates that recruitment contact is an important element of attraction; in the earliest stages of recruitment, this contact may consist largely of interactions with the sources organizations use to communicate recruitment messages. Much of the research on source effects has focused on posthire outcomes, such as turnover and job performance; however, a growing body of research suggests that sources have direct effects on prehire outcomes, such as attraction (Allen et al., 2004). Cober et al. (2004) argued that attitudes toward a Web site may be one of the most proximal predictors of attraction in a Web-based context. Our findings support this contention and extend recruitment theory by suggesting that objective characteristics, subjective considerations, and critical contact may not be independent. In this case, critical contact, in terms of reactions to a recruitment source, partially mediated the effects of information about objective characteristics. Our findings also extend source research by showing that reactions to the source of a recruitment message influenced attraction. Future research may benefit from more closely examining those characteristics that lead job seekers to evaluate recruitment sources and messages positively. Our findings suggest that information is one, but Cober et al. (2004) suggested several other characteristics that may positively influence attitudes toward a Web site, and Allen et al. (2004) suggested several features that may influence reactions to sources in general.

As noted, this is the first empirical test of the main tenets of Cober et al.’s (2004) model of Web-based attraction. Generally, our findings are supportive of their model. They proposed that the three most proximal predictors of attraction are information (called familiarity in their figure, but described as the amount of information garnered from searching a Web site), image, and attitude toward the Web site. All three of these links are supported by our results. Cober et al.’s (2004) model also includes a number of antecedent characteristics of Web site design, such as aesthetics and playfulness, that we did not address. Future research that examines specific Web design characteristics might have important practical implications for Web-based recruitment.

Our mediation tests also address Chapman et al.’s (2005) mediated process models of attraction. They found that the effects of antecedents on job choice were mediated by attitudes and intentions rather than direct. However, they found that some antecedents influenced attitudes and intentions directly, while others influenced only attitudes directly. None of the studies in their meta-analysis involved Web-based recruitment. We found that in this context, the attitudes mediated model fitted better for organization image and organization information; however, the intentions mediated model fitted better for job information. As noted earlier, job information may be more closely related to PJ fit, while organization information is more closely related to PO fit. In the early stages of recruitment, when individuals are narrowing down their consideration set of implicit favorites, job information and PJ fit may be more directly related to pursuit.

Although they were not directly comparable, we examined some of our path estimates in relation to relationships in the Chapman et al. (2005) meta-analysis that appeared analogous. For example, they reported sample-weighted meta-analytic relationships with attraction of .26 for familiarity and .40 for image (neither confidence interval included zero). The magnitudes we found for familiarity (−.05, ns) and image (.33, p < .01) relating to attitudes toward the organization were lower. We believe our results are conservative because we incorporated both image and familiarity and controlled for subsequent information search and attitudes toward the recruitment source. Future research on image and familiarity should incorporate more comprehensively specified models.

Our findings regarding amount of job information and intentions to pursue employment (.08, p < .05) were smaller than Chapman et al.’s (2005) findings regarding job characteristics and intentions to pursue employment (.27), while our findings regarding amount of organization information and attitude toward the organization (.32, p < .05) were larger than their findings regarding organizational characteristics and attraction (.26). We speculate that this is a function of recruitment phase: Early in the recruitment process, general organization information may be more helpful in narrowing down a consideration set; later, when only a few organizations remain, specific job characteristics may become more important.

Finally, we have argued that early in the recruitment process, sources (in this case, Web sites) may be analogous to recruitment contact, which has most often been studied in terms of recruiter effects. Again, although they are not directly comparable, we note that we found a stronger relationship between attitude toward the Web site and attitude toward the organization (.49, p < .05) than Chapman et al. (2005) reported between recruiter effects and attraction (.23). It would be striking to think that reactions to a recruitment source could have stronger effects on attraction than interactions with an organizational agent; however, it is possible that recruitment sources, particularly Web sites, are seen as stronger signals about the organization than a recruiter. Future research addressing the relative strength of signals from different sources would be valuable.

**Limitations and Future Research Directions**

One potential limitation is the reliance on survey measures. A possible issue this raises is that relationships are a function of common method variance. Brand constructs were measured on a different survey at a different point in time than were other constructs, and follow-up analyses (Harman’s single-factor test and Podsakoff et al.’s, 2003, latent common method construct) suggested that common method bias is not a likely explanation for our findings. However, future research that collects data from different sources or methods would provide important additional evidence as to the extent to which these findings will replicate. The other issue raised by the reliance on survey measures is the lack of a behavioral outcome. For example, measuring actual application behavior (i.e., applying for a job) as opposed to only intentions would be extremely valuable. However, Chapman et al.’s (2005) meta-analysis concluded that the effects of antecedents on job choice were mediated by attitudes and intentions in every case. Further, a great deal of research has shown that intentions are excellent predictors of actual behavior across contexts (e.g., Kim & Hunter, 1993a, 1993b) and that measures of applicant attraction relate to actual job pursuit behaviors (Williamson, Lepak, & King, 2003). Thus, we believe our findings have important implications for understanding attraction, especially given that this is one of the first studies of attraction in this context. Still, future research that links these model constructs to actual behaviors is needed.

The issue of behavioral outcomes becomes particularly important when one considers the longer term impact of recruitment on organizationally important outcomes. We have focused on attraction through a selling or marketing lens. However, in addition to attracting applicants, organizations care a great deal about the subsequent job
performance and retention of those hired. Previous theory and research on RJPs suggests that, at least in terms of long-term effects on retention, a more realistic approach to recruitment is more beneficial than a selling approach. In this study, we are not able to draw conclusions about the impact of attractive messages on important posthire outcomes, such as performance and retention. Future research that focuses on the relative efficacy of attraction and realism on a variety of outcomes across the recruitment process would be valuable. We propose that organizations are likely to focus more on attraction in the early stages of recruitment and to present realistic information later in the process. Such an approach is consistent with research showing that RJPs administered even after organization entry are still effective in managing turnover.

A second limitation is that we chose to focus on the amount of information provided, to the exclusion of other potentially important aspects related to information, such as fit and realism. Fit is an important construct in understanding applicant job choice decisions (Chapman et al., 2005; Keon et al., 1982; Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Franke, 2002). An argument could be made that amount of information in itself may not directly influence attraction if that information does not influence perceptions of fit. It is possible that presenting a lot of information could convince some applicants that they do not fit and thus reduce applicant attraction. Some research shows that Web sites that provide fit information influence attraction (Dineen et al., 2002), and some organizations provide online “fit checks” on their Web sites (e.g., Texas Instruments at www.ti.com). Clearly, incorporating fit into this model is an important avenue for future research. Conceptually, fit is a critical component of subjective considerations. Again, classic recruitment theory may need to be revised to consider that objective characteristics, such as amount of information, may influence or interact with subjective assessments, such as fit. However, we think the evidence is clear that amount of information does matter as well. A great deal of previous research and theory supports the notion that providing a lot of information about job and organization characteristics influences attraction, and our findings support this as well, at least in the early stages of recruitment. Chapman et al. (2005) suggested that perhaps fit becomes more important as the recruitment process progresses and applicants get closer to job choice decisions. Future research that incorporates amount of information and fit at multiple stages of recruitment would be extremely valuable.

Similarly, substantial research has shown that realistic job previews influence posthire recruitment outcomes, such as turnover and performance (e.g., Phillips, 1998). Some research has suggested that RJPs may slightly reduce applicant attraction to the extent that alternative opportunities are available (Barber, 1998). It may be that future research could identify facets of information (e.g., amount, type, realism, credibility) that influence both prehire and posthire outcomes. A related question may be the extent of realistic information presented on recruitment Web sites. Our survey contained one question asking, “To what extent did the Web site provide you with both positive and negative information?” (1 = not at all, 2 = rarely, 3 = somewhat, 4 = to a fair extent, 5 = to a very great extent). We aggregated responses to the Web site level (N = 73) and found little indication of realism (M = 2.28, SD = 0.33). Only one Web site was rated above the scale midpoint. Given the extensive research showing positive posthire outcomes associated with realism during recruitment, it is interesting that these firms appeared to be focusing on using their Web sites to provide a very positive attraction message. Future research that examines the uses of different types of information on recruitment Web sites would be valuable.

Another potential limitation is the use of a large number of randomly selected Fortune 500 organization Web sites. Using the Fortune 500 as a sampling frame may limit the generalizability of the results to only large organizations. Future research should consider how these relationships may vary across organization size. Using actual organizations and their Web sites was intended to increase the realism of the task and was the only way to assess the effects of preexisting familiarity and image. However, this approach also limited our control and our ability to actively manipulate independent variables, thus limiting our ability to directly test for cause and effect relationships. In effect, we sacrificed some internal validity in exchange for increased external validity. We randomly selected a large number of Web sites and randomly assigned participants to Web sites to attempt to minimize any potential selection biases associated with particular Web sites or participants. Again, though, this limited our ability to manipulate independent variables. An alternative strategy could have been to strategically select Web sites that differed on one or more key independent variables and then assign participants to different conditions of those variables. Future research may benefit from this or other strategies for maintaining some external validity while increasing internal validity, such as manipulating independent variables on simulated Web sites of real organizations.

Another potential limitation is the reliance on a student sample in a contrived task, as opposed to actual job seekers. Chapman et al.’s (2005) meta-analysis of attraction assessed the extent to which applicant type (i.e., actual applicants vs. nonapplicants) moderated relationships with attraction. They found that relationships of organization image with attraction were not moderated by applicant type. They found some evidence that relationships of job and organization characteristics with attraction were moderated by applicant type, but the 95% confidence intervals for applicants and nonapplicants overlapped in each case. In general, relationships were slightly stronger for applicants than for nonapplicants. Thus, to the extent that the relationships in this study are not representative of actual applicants, the results are likely slight underestimates of expected relationships among actual applicants. There were also several characteristics of this sample and study that may increase the generalizability of the results. Most participants were currently working and also currently searching for a new or better job, we used actual Web sites of real organizations, and we allowed participants to search each Web site for whatever amount of time they felt appropriate or necessary. Further, the primary demographic group in this sample is likely generalizable to a large percentage of job seekers, especially those targeted by and likely to use the Internet for job searching. Still, future research that examines Web-based attraction among actual applicants would be extremely valuable. Also, one advantage of Web-based recruitment is the ability to reach an extremely wide audience. Thus, future research is needed to examine whether these findings generalize to other types of participants.

**Practical Implications and Conclusion**

Our results indicate that image mattered, even after participants had an unlimited opportunity to search for information. From a practical...
perspective, this reinforces the importance to organizations of actively shaping and maintaining their organizational image. Subsequent information does not overwhelm the effects of preexisting images of an organization, so organizations cannot depend on quality recruitment materials and positive job attributes to attract job candidates. These findings suggest that efforts to garner recognition, such as lists of best places to work or identification as an employer of choice, may be well worth the effort. However, familiarity alone may not be sufficient to positively influence attraction. Organizations need to make sure they are actively and carefully managing their image. Our findings, though, do not address the possibility that familiarity is necessary to motivate job seekers to visit an organizational Web page in the first place. Constant advertising of an organizational Web address, for example, may still be warranted.

Our results also stress the importance of providing sufficient information about job and organization attributes. This information appears to influence attraction beyond the effects of preexisting image through engendering positive attitudes about the Web site, positive attitudes about the organization, and intentions to pursue employment. Given the capacity for Web sites to provide large amounts of job-related information in different and searchable formats, future research may be able to specify which formats and types of job information are most effective in which contexts. There is a growing body of research on Web site design, and organizations would be well served to invest in understanding how to design their Web-based information presentation to attract and engage applicant interest.

Another important practical finding is that attitudes toward a Web site had sizable direct effects on attitudes toward the organization and indirect effects on intentions to pursue employment. Thus, professional, well-designed Web sites may help prospective applicants find the information they are most interested in and provide positive signals about the organization and its potential as an employer. In terms of critical recruitment contact, research has shown that contact with organizational agents, such as interviewers, influence early attraction; this study shows that contact with recruitment sources, such as Web sites, may also matter. Paying attention to Web site design may be akin to training interviewers, and future research that focuses on recruitment Web site design features would be very valuable.

In sum, this research both supports and refines recruitment theory by showing how preexisting image, information about job and organization attributes, and reactions to a recruitment Web site influence attraction to the organization in the early recruitment phase of generating applicants. In particular, organization image, organization information, and attitude toward a Web site influenced attitudes toward the organization and indirectly influenced intentions to pursue employment, while job information directly influenced intentions to pursue employment.

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