Corporate Recruiters on College Campuses:

Background, Positions, Itineraries, and Training

Vernon D. Miller
Michigan State University
Departments of Communication and Management
East Lansing, MI 48824-1212
517-355-3280
22359vdm@msu.edu

Philip D. Gardner
Michigan State University
College Employment Research Center
East Lansing, MI 48824
gardnerp@msu.edu

Eric Meiners
Michigan State University
Department of Communication
East Lansing, MI 48824-1212
517-355-3410
meinerse@msu.edu

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ABSTRACT

Despite their importance in the college-to-full time employment transition, little is know about the background and training of interviewers who recruit on college campuses. This study reports the results of a nation-wide investigation involving 11 university campuses and 943 college recruiters. Results revealed that recruiters were primarily white (92%) males (75%) between the ages of 20 and 35. Full-time recruiters comprised only 12% of the sample while 38% recruited part-time, 25% were volunteers, and 25% were directed to recruit by their supervisors. Analyses explored how these four recruiter categories differed by departmental affiliation, work history, number of campuses visited and number of interviews conducted, and interviewer training (e.g., type of training experiences, usefulness of interview training). Implications of interviewer characteristics are discussed in terms of prior research on the screening interview, boundary spanning activities, and their potential impact on job applicant attitudes.

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Corporate recruiters perform critical roles in the employment recruitment and selection process. Organizations rely on recruiters to acquire information from job applicants and to make hiring decisions (Barber, 1998; Harris, 1989; Guion, 1976; Rynes & Boudreau, 1986). Recruiters can influence interviewee employment preferences by conveying impressions of the organization and the nature of the job (Glueck, 1973; Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991; Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980; Wanous, 1980). Recruiters may also obtain information about competitors' recruitment strategies and the general quality of candidates from visits to college campuses (Sutton & Louis, 1987). Further, despite the recent growth of the internet to screen applicants, organizations continue sending employees to recruit on campuses at a robust pace (Lach, 1999; Martinez, 1997).

Despite their centrality to the employment process, with notable exceptions (e.g., Jacquet and Parlin, 1977; Rynes and Boudreau, 1986; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987) researchers often overlook the background and training of corporate recruiters. While Rynes and Boudreau's (1986) investigation of Fortune 1000 recruiters reveals that half are line managers and interview on college campuses part-time (Rynes & Boudreau, 1986), differences between full-time and part-time recruiters' training, work expertise, and role in hiring candidates have yet to be explored. Background differences such as a full-time or part-time recruiting assignment may influence the likelihood that recruiters <u>can</u> provide realistic job previews or answer applicants' job-related questions while training differences may influence recruiters' asking of legal versus illegal and open versus closed questions (Jablin & McComb, 1984; Jablin & Miller, 1990; Stewart & Cash, 1995).

Less information is available on the gender and racial composition of recruiters,

indicators of the extent to which organizations are well-suited to recruit a diverse workforce. The failure to provide recruiters who are suitable to job applicants' race, gender, and job information needs can adversely affect applicants' attitudes toward the organization as a potential employer (Johns, 1993; Rynes et al., 1991). In general, the lack of exploration of the aforementioned differences is surprising given (a) that many essential organizational positions are filled through college recruitment (Rynes & Boudreau, 1986), (b) the volume of college students interviewed (e.g., approximately 37,000 according to Lindquist and Endicott, 1986) and an estimated cost in the thousands for each hire (Martin & Raja, 1992), (c) the historical focus on the on-campus screening interview in personnel research (Eder, Kacmar, & Ferris, 1989), and (d) the recurring and predictable cycles of campus recruiting (Rynes, Orlitzky, & Bretz, 1997). Investigations of corporate recruiters' backgrounds and training are essential if we are to understand their influence on potential hires and move from viewing them as passive agents of the organization (Barber, 1998).

This descriptive study examines a cross-section of corporate recruiters interviewing on eleven university campuses to investigate: (a) characteristics of corporate recruiters, (b) the nature of on-campus visits, and (c) their training. The first section of this paper examines extant information about corporate recruiters and the role recruiters as representatives of the organization. We next report the method of obtaining the sample, data collection measures, and the results of those measures. The final section discusses the implications of the research findings for job applicants, campus placement services, and organizational recruiting directors.

Background Characteristics of Corporate Recruiters

At the most basic level, recruiters perform boundary spanning roles (Adams, 1980; Kreps, 1986) for their organization when they present employment opportunities to applicants, identify qualified applicants, and provide job-related information leading to impressions of the

job and organization. These interactions contribute to applicants' perceptions of the organization and its offerings. Recruiter-applicant interactions also contribute to applicants' self-assessment of their attractiveness and to their attraction to the organization as a potential employer (Strand, Levine, and Montgomery, 1981). As Rynes and Boudreau (1986, p. 735) note,

> Recruiters are one of the main sources of information about organizations and jobs, as well as cues about the likelihood of receiving job offers (e.g., Rynes & Miller, 1983). Applicants may perceive recruiters as "symbolic" of organizational characteristics that can not be known prior to job acceptance (e.g., efficiency or camaraderie)....Finally, an organizational gatekeepers, recruiters have an important role in determining who gets admitted to the final stage of the selection process (Schwab & Olian, 1980).

Research identifies four primary sources for applicants' perceptions of an organization: the advertised position's attributes (e.g., salary, status); the recruiter's demographic background; the recruiter's knowledge of the position; and the recruiter's interviewing skills (Connerly & Rynes, 1997; Maurer, Howe, & Lee, 1992; McComb & Jablin, 1985; Rynes et al., 1991; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976). Prior research provides a partial picture of how these characteristics might be distributed across the population of corporate recruiters. A regional study of 125 college interviewers by Jacquet and Parlin (1977) reveals recruiters to be white (95%), college-educated males (80%) who often did not earn a personnel-related college degree (58%).

In an investigation of the recruiting practices of 145 recruiting directors representing Fortune 1000 firms visiting 47 campuses, Rynes & Boudreau (1986) report that directors sought recruiters with strong interpersonal skills, enthusiasm for the company, knowledge of company and jobs, and credibility with students and coworkers. They also report that half of these recruiters were human resource professionals while the rest were line managers and that a third of the typical corporate recruiter's 13 hours of training was devoted to interviewing and interpersonal skills. Taylor and Bergmann (1987) report a similar recruiter profile with a greater portion being male (63%) than female and half (52%) working in personnel positions.

These investigations, however, leave a number of questions unanswered regarding the

profile of recruiters on college campuses. First, these studies rely on samples limited in size and/or elements (e.g., Human Resource Directors, accountants). Aside from Rynes and Boudreau (1986), there is little evidence of attempts to attain a nationwide profile of corporate recruiters on college campuses. Second, while they provide an array of information about recruiters' demographic characteristics such as sex, age, race, and educational level, information critical to understanding recruiters' basis for probing and evaluating interviewee answers is largely overlooked. For instance, information on recruiters' job descriptions, work histories, or years of recruiting experience, factors potentially impacting the conduct and outcome of interviews, are generally unavailable.

Explorations into differences between full-time and part-time recruiters' backgrounds, work experiences, and training may be particularly helpful in understanding their interviewing ability and knowledge of the job opening. For example, full-time recruiters are likely to receive more hours of training and thus be better prepared to conduct employment interviews in terms of asking open-ended questions and not asking illegal questions (Stewart & Cash, 1997). Yet, part-time recruiters with their hands-on job knowledge may better inform candidates of the job requirements and better evaluate candidates' fit to the job. While Rynes and Boudreau (1986) report that their sample of Fortune 1000 recruiters visited an average of 47 campuses yearly, it is reasonable to assume that part-time recruiters visit fewer campuses than full-time recruiters. For instance, some managers recruit only when a company representative is needed at their alma mater. Other employees may recruit occasionally when the organization wishes to utilize their expertise during a "slow" period in their work unit or when a full-time recruiter is ill. Given the expense associated with the cost of recruiting new hires (Martin & Raja, 1992), organizations may assign relatively few employees to full-time recruiting and, instead, train a cadre of managers to recruit part-time in specific regions or for certain types of job candidates.

In sum, little is known about the myriad of corporate recruiters who each year interview prospective employees on college campuses. Further, there may be considerable differences between full-time and part-time recruiters in terms of their gender, race, and educational background, employment expertise, and interview training. In light of the lack of information on recruiter profiles, the initial research questions ask:

RQ1:   What are the defining background, employment experience, and interview training

characteristics of corporate recruiters on college campuses?

RQ2:   How do these characteristics vary (a) between full-time and part-time recruiters and

(b) among part-time recruiters?

Campus Itineraries

In their role as boundary spanners (Adams, 1980), corporate recruiters' visits to campuses involve a number of responsibilities in addition to interviewing. For instance, recruiters may participate in career fairs, speak before student organizations, and visit with their members at wine and cheese receptions (Rynes & Boudreau, 1986). While showcasing career opportunities in their industry, recruiters may use these opportunities to identify potential candidates and promote their firm. Recruiters may also use their campus visit to discuss specific concerns such as knowledge or experience deficiencies among recent hires or trends among college graduates.

Less visible aspects of recruiters' visits to campuses are their interactions with faculty, administrators (e.g., Deans), or co-op office staff. Recruiters' itineraries may also include appointments with the placement center's director and staff to receive instructions on changes in procedures for identifying students, to solicit feedback on their interviewing performance, or to learn of student perception of their corporation's image. At other times, recruiters may inform placement center personnel of desired changes in procedures or reasons for interviewing fewer (or more) students than in previous years due to budget cutbacks or perceptions of fewer

qualified applicants at the university. Recruiters with frequent visits to a campus may develop close information ties to placement center staff and/or faculty and be prompted regarding high potential candidates. In contrast, those who infrequently visit the same campus or fill-in for full-time corporate recruiters may be at a disadvantage for gaining insight into particularly well-qualified candidates.

In sum, recruiters' itineraries are important clues to the extent to which they perform additional boundary spanning roles outside of 30 minute interviews with graduating students in a cubicle. However, most research to date on recruiters tends to sample a localized set of recruiters or sample a limited set of recruiters in conjunction with a sample of job candidates. The absence of a broader sample that includes non-interview specific activities on campuses limits our understanding of recruiters' role as a boundary spanner. Thus, this research asks:

RQ3:   What are recruiters' itineraries on university campuses?

Interview Training and Preparation

As noted earlier, the employment interview offers a setting where recruiters and applicants exchange information and mutually assess applicants' fit to the position as well as to the organization (Jablin, 2001; Kristof, 1996). Most who consider these interactions attest to their complexity as well as their impact upon recruiters' selection decisions and applicants' job choice decisions (e.g., Jablin, 2001; Jablin, Miller, & Sias, 1999; Stevens, 1998). Recruiters can make poor decisions and select job candidates who are a poor fit to the job's requirements and/or the organization. Their verbal and nonverbal behaviors during the interview can also reduce candidates' interest in the position/organization.

Recent research suggests that training can have significant impact on the reliability of recruiters' decisions. For instance, Huffcutt and Author (1994) report that highly structured interviews as well as highly standardized/structured interviews are more valid than non-

structured and moderately structured interviews. They also report that highly structured and structured/standardized interviews perform more favorably than psychological ability composites in predicting supervisory ratings of new employee performance. Further, research suggests that interview training can significantly improve recruiters' questioning behaviors (Jablin, Miller, & Lee, in press).

Training recruiters in interviewing skills can also improve their ability to attract candidates. Stevens (1998) reports that trained interviewers (i.e., those who attended half-day workshops or college courses) engaged in fewer sidebars and fewer exchanges devoted to sidebars during the interview. Trained interviewers also tend to conduct longer interviews, ask a higher percentage of secondary, open, and differentiating questions than untrained interviewers. These findings follow Jablin's (2001) summary that,

> Interviewee satisfaction, attraction to an organization, and perceptions of recruiter effectiveness appear related to the quality and amount of organizational and job information the recruiter provides and the degree to which the recruiter asks the interviewee open-ended questions that are high in "face-validity," allows him or her sufficient "talk time," and shows warmth toward and interest in the applicant. (p. 749)

In light of the importance of the campus interview interaction and improved interviewer performance in question-asking, conversational management, and reliability, it seems natural that training in interviewing would be prerequisite for recruiters visiting college campuses. However, as Harris (1989) noted over a decade ago, there is little systematic research into the effects of interviewer training programs. Since then, several studies suggest that formal training for recruiters is not a common place event. Rynes and Boudreau (1986) find that fewer than half of the fortune 1000 organizations sampled offered standardized recruitment training programs, and less than half of those required recruiters to attend training sessions before beginning their assignment. Stevens (1998) reports that approximately one-fourth of a sample of 78 recruiters had not received any meaningful interview training. In short, most studies do not inquire beyond

length of recruiters' training.

Yet, not all training is effective. In a study assessing the impact of different types of training, Connerley (1997) finds that administrative, legal issues, practice, what to ask, what to tell, observational, and being observed training had little impact on applicant perceptions of interpersonal effectiveness. In Connerly's (1997) case, measuring the proportionate amount of time in specific types of training may not be a sufficient indicator of training effectiveness. Consequently, it is important to examine the not only the types of interview training, but also their usefulness to recruiters. It is possible that recruiters may receive inadequate exercises or experience repetitive, "canned" presentations covering the same material instead of developing skills that they find valuable during their interviews. Given the importance of assessing recruiters' training experiences, this study asks:

RQ4: What characterizes recruiters' interview training and preparation?

Method

Sample

In order to obtain a representative sample of recruiters, eleven university placement officers throughout the country agreed to distribute surveys to employer representatives visiting their campuses. In 1991, nine campuses distributed 100 surveys in a manner that maximized the randomness of their samples.[1] Efforts were made to insure that women and minorities were properly represented. Two other placement offices conducted more extensive sampling, distributing 750 and 900 surveys respectively. A total of 2,550 surveys were distributed.

A total of 943 responses (37%) were received. The response rate from the nine offices ranged from 24% to 46% while the response rate from the remaining two offices were 28% and 44%, respectively. No statistical differences were found on key demographic variables (e.g., age,

sex, type of company) and work experience variables (e.g., number of years recruiting) between the samples.

Survey Measures

A number of survey measures were used to obtain information on recruiters' background, full-time versus part-time recruiting position, itineraries, and training.

Recruiting Background. Questions assessing recruiter background were divided into three sets: personal background; their organization; and background within the organization. Regarding their personal background, recruiters reported their age, sex (Jacquet & Parlin, 1977; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987), ethnicity, highest education level attained, area of principal educational training. Questions pertaining to their organization were: the type of organization (manufacturing, finance, service) for which they recruited; the number of employees in that organization; and how long the organization had recruited on college campuses. To assess their background within their organization, respondents indicated their principal job assignment (Taylor & Bergmann, 1987), years of recruiting, and years of recruiting for current employer (Rynes & Boudreau, 1986). In addition, if participants considered themselves to recruit on a regular basis, they were asked to report the number of other recruiters employed by their organization

Full-Time versus Part-Time Positions. Distinctions between full-time and part-time recruiters were measured by asking research participants to indicate whether they recruited because: it was part of their regular job; it was part of their regular job; they volunteered for the assignment; or they were asked or directed to recruit. For the purpose of clarity, subsequent references to their recruiting assignment is referred to as "type of recruiter."

Recruiter Itineraries. Explorations of recruiter itineraries investigated the nature of their campus assignments, typical activities on campus, and recruiting interactions with students.

Regarding the nature of their campus assignments, recruiters were asked who chooses the campuses to be visited (i.e., the recruiter, supervisor, hiring manager, personnel office, recruiting committee) and if they recruited on campuses from where they graduated. In terms of typical activities on campuses, recruiters reported the number of (a) formal interviews with college students in the last year, (b) career fairs on college campuses participated in a year, and (c) college campuses typically visited in a year. For recruiting interactions with students, participants were asked to report the number of students recruited each day on a campus visit and the percentage of time spent recruiting in a typical day on campus.

Recruiter Training. In an effort to assess the extensiveness of recruiters' training for the employment interview and interactions with students, faculty, staff, and administrators on campus, survey questions targeted three areas: formal training programs, informal training programs, and the usefulness of various interview training exercises. Recruiters were asked to indicate the approximate number of hours of recruiting or interview training received from company seminars (in-house), workshops in-house, workshops by consulting services, university courses, and convention sessions (organized by professional organizations). Response categories were arrayed from none to 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17-24, and 25 or more hours. Regarding informal training opportunities, participants were asked to report the number of hours they received recruiting or interview training from mentors and reading manuals or books. The same response categories as for formal opportunities were used.

Since recruiters are exposed to a number of sets of materials during training, participants were asked to indicate the usefulness of various training methods for their professional development as recruiters. Responding to indicators arrayed from not very useful = 1 to very useful = 5, participants reported on the usefulness of (a) a review of company procedures on recruiting and interviewing, (b) review of job descriptions, (c) sequencing interview questions,

(d) role playing interviews, (e) feedback techniques for evaluating interviews, (f) techniques for asking questions, (g) checklist of applicant qualifications, (h) review of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations, (i) listening techniques, (j) evaluation of rating errors, and (k) screening videos of actual interviews. Applicants were asked to rate only those training methods that they had experienced.

Results

Research Question One

The first research question inquired into the background and employment experience of corporate recruiters. In terms of personal background, recruiters in this sample could be described as about 36 years of age (M = 36.43, Median = 35.0), mostly white (93%) males (75%) with either a bachelor's degree (54%) or some form of graduate work (42%). Minority recruiters were distributed as follows: Asian-Americans, 1%; African-American, 3%; Hispanic, 1%; Native-Americans, 2%. Female recruiters were younger (M = 31.79) compared to male recruiters (M = 38.00, t = 9.64, p<.0001). Many recruiters held either business (47%) or engineering (19%) degrees.

Fifty-one percent of recruiters worked for organizations in manufacturing (e.g., automobile, mechanical equipment, electronics, chemical and allied products), 18% for finance (e.g., banking, insurance, finance), and 31% for service (e.g., food and beverage, merchandise) industries. The average number of employees in these organizations was over 8,000 (M = 8,096), but most organizations employed around 500 workers (Median = 550, Mode = 500). Most of these organizations had considerable experience recruiting on college campuses. While 9% of the organizations had recruited two years or less on campuses, 13% had recruited three to five years, 16% from five to ten years, 18% from 11 to 20 years, and 44% more than 20 years.

Regarding their employment experiences, most (73%) recruiters had worked for one or

two organizations since graduating from college. Their years of recruiting experience ranged from less than a year to thirty-three years, with a mean of 5.41 (Median = 4.0) while they recruited an average of 4.41 years (Median = 3.0) for their current employer. Thirteen percent were currently assigned to engineering positions, and 33% were in human resources positions, 47% were in management positions, and 7% held various positions in their organizations. Among research participants who reported regularly recruiting for their organization (N = 400), most (66%) were the sole organizational member hired to recruit. In turn, 13% of full-time recruiters had one colleague who was employed to recruit, and 21% reported between two and five colleagues and 19% reported six or more colleagues as hired to recruiting positions.

Research Question Two

The second research question investigated differences in recruiters' backgrounds and employment experiences due to the nature of their recruiting assignments (i.e., type of recruiter). Results indicated that recruiting was the full-time job of 12% (N = 112) of research participants. Thirty-eight percent (N = 352) recruited on college campuses as part of their regular job, 25% (N = 232) volunteered to recruit on campuses, and 26% (N = 239) were asked or directed to recruit on campuses (χ^2 (3) = 125.85, p<.001). Given the distinctions between full-time and the various forms of part-time recruiting and potential insights into recruitment activities, a number of follow-up analyses were conducted.

Personal Background. In reconsidering personal background, a 1 X 4 analysis of variance indicated that recruiters' age varied significantly among types of recruiters (F (3, 930) = 916.82, p<.0001, R^2 = .04). Scheffe post-hoc analyses indicated that individuals who were full-time and asked/directed recruiters (M = 32.04, M = 33.41, respectively) were younger than part-time and volunteer recruiters (M = 36.95, M = 36.35, respectively). Significant differences in total years of recruiting experiences were also present due to recruiting position (F (3, 926) = 449.75,

$p < .0001$, $R^2 = .05$). Scheffe post-hoc tests indicated that asked/directed recruiters (M = 3.55) had less experience recruiting compared to full-time (M = 5.71), part of their regular job (M = 6.63), and volunteer (M = 5.27) recruiters. Further, a chi-square test revealed that more females recruited full-time than expected, and more males recruited as volunteers than expected (χ^2 (3) = 29.42, $p < .0001$). Twenty-one percent of all females were full-time recruiters compared to 9% of all males. A chi-square test for differences for ethnicity due to recruiter type was not significant, indicating that ethnic proportions did not vary among recruiters beyond what was expected by chance.

Organization. With regard to organizational campus recruiting history, a chi-square analysis revealed significant differences due to types of recruiters (χ^2 (12) = 58.15, $p < .001$). An inspection of the distribution revealed that a greater proportion of organizations that had been recruiting on campuses for 20 years or more were more likely to make use of part-time (32%), volunteer (34%), or asked/directed (28%) recruiters as opposed to full-time recruiters (6%).

Background with the Organization. In terms of participant's current organizational position, significant differences were present due to recruiter type (χ^2 (6) = 272.55, $p < .001$). Recruiters assigned to human resource positions were more likely to recruit full-time or as part of their regular job while those in engineering positions were more likely to recruit as volunteers or directed. Recruiters in management positions were unlikely to recruit full-time.

Given the scope of influence due to recruiting type, subsequent research questions were analyzed both as simple frequencies and as appropriate due to type of recruiters.

Research Question Three

The third research question explored recruiter itineraries in terms of the nature of their campus assignment, interactions with students, and typical activities on campus.

Campus Assignments. Regarding the nature of their campus assignments, recruiters were

asked who chose the campuses to be visited. The overall pattern of results indicated that recruiters selected which campuses that they would visit 45% of the time. Sixteen percent of recruiters named their supervisors as responsible for selecting the campuses to be visited by recruiters with 3% naming the hiring managers, 19% the personnel office, and 17% the recruiting committees (χ^2 (4) = 47.00, p<.001). A subsequent analysis of those responsible for choosing college campuses for recruitment revealed several distinctive patterns (χ^2 (12) = 130.13, p<.001). Specifically, 66% (N = 79) of full-time recruiters, 55% (N = 203) of part-time recruiters, 48% (N = 90) of volunteers selected which campuses that they would visit. Fittingly, only 18% (N = 40) of asked/directed recruiters selected their campuses. Asked/directed recruiters named personnel officers (31%), recruiting committees (24%), their supervisor (23%), but not the hiring manager (4%) as choosing the campuses where they would recruit.

In terms of recruiting on campuses where they graduated, a slight majority (55% to 45%) of recruiters did not recruit at their alma maters (χ^2 (1) = 8.16, p<.05). Subsequent analysis revealed that there were no significant differences among full-time, part-time, volunteer, and asked/directed recruiters in whether they recruited at their alma mater.

Over the course of a year, most interviewers visited five or fewer campuses. In fact, 29% of only visited one campus in the last year, 47% visited two to five campuses, and 11% visited six to ten campuses, and 13% visited between 11 and 50 campuses (χ^2 (3) = 33.60, p<.001). However, the number of campuses visited varied greatly in keeping with recruiter type (χ^2 (9) = 385.66, p<.0001). Forty-nine percent of full-time recruiters visited more than 11 campuses in the previous year while 53% of part-time recruiters visited two to five campuses. Ninety-seven percent of volunteer recruiters and 68% percent of asked/directed recruiters visited between one and five campuses yearly.

Recruiting Interactions. With regard to their interactions with students, 11% of recruiters

reported that they had conducted fewer than ten interviews during the past year. Twenty-five

percent had conducted 11-25 interviews, with 30% conducting 26-50 interviews, 15%

conducting 51-100 interviews, 12% conducting 101-250 interviews, and 7% conducting 251 to

over 1000 interviews in the past year. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test showed that the

variability in this distribution was greater than by chance (χ^2 (5) = 22.04, p<.001). Subsequent

analysis also revealed significant differences in the number of formal interviews in the past year

due to recruiter types (χ^2 (24) = 322.49, p<.0001). Specifically, 76% of full-time recruiters

reported conducting 51 - 1000 formal interviews, 70% of part-time recruiters conducted 26 – 250

interviews, 68% of volunteers conducted 11 – 50 interviews, and 72% asked/directed recruiters

conducted 11- 50 interviews in the last 12 months.

While recruiters reported averaging 11.76 interviews (SD = 2.45) per campus visit, it is

important to note that a subsequent 1 X 4 ANOVA found no significant differences in the

number of students interviewed on a campus visit due to recruiter type. In terms of the

percentage of time in a typical day on campus, half (52%) of recruiters reported that more than

80% of their time was spent interviewing job candidates. Nineteen percent spent more between

61-80% interviewing while 7% spent 41-60%, 5% spent 21-40%, 17% spent 0-20% of their day

interviewing (χ^2 (4) = 71.04, p<.001). While half of all part-time, volunteer, asked/directed

recruiters spent more than 80% of their day interviewing (58%, 55%, 51%, and 52%,

respectively), the percentage of time devoted by full-time recruiters to interviewing was more

variable (χ^2 (18) = 123.68, p<.0001). By comparison, 28% of full-time recruiters spent more than

80% of their day interviewing while 30% of these recruiters devoted 20% or less of their time

interviewing.

Activities on Campus. Another aspect of campus recruiters' itinerary was participation in

career fairs. While 39% of campus recruiters reported that they do not participate in career fairs

in the past year, 20% participated in one career fair, 24% participated in two to three, 9% participated in four to five, 5% participated in six to ten, and 3% participated in more than 11 career fairs (χ^2 (5) = 54.76, p<.0001). Further analysis revealed significant differences in participation in career fairs among recruiter types (χ^2 (18) = 320.24, p<.0001). While approximately half of volunteer and asked/directed recruiters never attend career fairs (48% and 58%, respectively), 77% of full-time recruiters participate in two and ten fairs per year. Thirty percent of part-time recruiters never attend career fairs, but close to half (48%) attend between one and three career fairs yearly.

Recruiters also interacted with a wide range of university representatives during the campus visits. Recruiters reported having contact placement directors (22%), placement staff (26%), co-op offices (11%), student organizations (11%), academic deans (9%), faculty (17%), and university administrators (5%) (χ^2 (6) = 20.46, p<.01). Subsequent analyses revealed that recruiter type significantly influenced whom recruiters contacted on campus (χ^2 (18) = 29.72, p<.05). For example, while full-time recruiters interacted more evenly across the above named university representatives, asked/directed recruiters were more likely to contact placement center directors and staff (25% and 31%, respectively). Volunteer recruiters reported contacting placement directors (19%), staff (30%), and faculty (21%).

Research Question Four

The fourth research question addressed characteristics of recruiters' interview training and preparation.

Training Experiences. As reported in Table 1, recruiters reported considerable variability in the amount of time experienced in formal training programs and informal training opportunities. In most cases, significant differences in recruiters' training experiences were attributable to the lack of or a minimal amount of training (company seminars, χ^2 (6) = 19.18,

p<.01; company workshops, χ^2 (6) = 51.01, p<.001; university courses, χ^2 (6) = 227.40, p<.001;

consultants' workshops, χ^2 (6) = 158.99, p<.001; convention sessions, χ^2 (6) = 169.71, p<.001;

mentors, χ^2 (6) = 35.32, p<.001; and reading manuals or books, χ^2 (6) = 20.48, p<.001).

Recruiters' reporting receiving over 25 hours of training in company seminars appeared to be an

exception to this pattern.

Given the lack of overall recruiting and interview training experiences and in an effort to

simplify the reporting of these experiences, participants' response categories were combined so

that comparisons across types of recruiters were based on no hours of training versus one to over

25 hours of training. Subsequent resulting chi-square analyses indicated that asked/directed

recruiters were less likely to have participated in company workshops than expected (χ^2 (3) =

28.22, p<.001). Across university courses, consultants' workshops, and conventions sessions,

volunteer and asked/directed recruiters were less likely to have participated in these experiences

than expected while full-time and part-time recruiters were more likely to have experienced this

training than expected (χ^2 (3) = 36.40, p<.001; χ^2 (3) = 60.95, p<.001; χ^2 (6) = 29.42, p<.001,

respectively). Differences in company seminars, mentoring, and reading (e.g., manuals, books)

due to recruiter type failed to reach significance.

Usefulness of Training. In addition to reporting hours engaged in formal and informal

modes of training, respondents also rated the usefulness of the various methods of professional

development to which they had been exposed. As reported in Table 2, recruiters rated techniques

for asking questions as the most useful training method, followed in descending order by

listening techniques, review of company procedures on recruiting, review of job descriptions,

feedback techniques for evaluating interviews, review of EEOC regulations, checklist of

applicant qualifications, sequencing interview questions, role playing interviews, evaluation of

rating errors, and screening videos of actual interviews.[2]

A series of one-way ANOVA's revealed significant differences among the group means for the usefulness of reviewing the job descriptions ($F(3, 802) = 10.15$, $p<.001$, $R^2 = .04$), sequencing interview questions ($F(3, 761) = 5.74$, $p<.01$, $R^2 = .02$), role playing interviews ($F(3, 780) = 3.92$, $p<.01$, $R^2 = .01$), feedback techniques for evaluating interviews ($F(3, 768) = 3.33$, $p<.05$, $R^2 = .01$), techniques for asking questions ($F(3, 746) = 5.76$, $p<.01$, $R^2 = .02$), checklist of applicant qualifications ($F(3, 766) = 4.24$, $p<.01$, $R^2 = .02$), review of EEOC regulations ($F(3, 779) = 8.867$ $p<.001$, $R^2 = .03$), listening techniques ($F(3, 753) = 8.71$, $p<.001$, $R^2 = .03$), and evaluation of rating errors ($F(3, 656) = 13.81$, $p<.001$, $R^2 = .06$). No significant differences in group means were present for a review of company procedures on recruiting and interviewing and screening videos of actual interviews due to recruiter type.

Tukey's HSD post-hoc analyses (see Table 1) identified significant differences in group means. As evident in Table 1, in general full-time and to some degree part-time recruiters reported the various methods of professional development as more useful than volunteer or asked/directed recruiters. Volunteer and asked/directed recruiters never rated their training as more effective than full-time or part-time recruiters.

It is important to note, however, that recruiters varied in their ratings of the evaluation of training usefulness. For example, review of job descriptions and listening techniques were the two most important training methods for full-time recruiters while part-time recruiters found techniques for asking questions and listening techniques to be highly useful. In contrast, volunteer recruiters identified the review of company procedures and listening techniques as the two most useful training methods while asked/directed recruiters reported review of company procedures and techniques for asking questions as most useful.

Discussion

Organizations are dependent upon their environments for survival and prosperity

(Adams, 1980; Miles, 1980; Scott, 1987). Organizations' need for new employees and their use of recruiters to visit campuses to interview job candidates exemplify this dependency. Further, while research remains limited, recruitment studies from utility (i.e., overall usefulness), firm performance, and financial gain perspectives indicate that recruitment "does matter" and can positively impact the "bottom line" (Barber, 1988).

Several points should be kept in mind when considering the importance of this study's contribution to the recruiting literature. First, the results of this study should be viewed cautiously, in part due to the dated nature of data but also due to its cross-sectional nature. While corporate recruiting patterns modulate over time, there is no indication that that organizations' need to interact with applicants on campus for recruitment and screening purposes will diminish (Eder & Harris, 1999). If anything, the robust economy and abundant employment options for candidates make recruitment even more important. Technological exchanges of information through web sites and e-mail are likely to enhance information sharing (Jablin, 2001), but symbolic and real recruitment purposes are likely to continue. However, as data in this study suggest, a number of individuals who participated in this study may no longer be recruiting or recruiting in the same capacity. Thus, the date of data collection is an important consideration with applying the findings to current recruiters.

Second, the large sample size offers one of the most extensive and comprehensive cross-sectional analyses of college campus recruiters to date. The uniqueness of the study also lies in its distinguishing not only among full-time and part-time recruiters, but also among those who volunteer to recruit and those who are asked or directed to recruit. While previous studies sample both full-time and other recruiters (e.g., managers, line recruiters) (e. g., Connerly, 1997; Connerly & Rynes, 1997; Rynes & Boudreau, 1986; Taylor and Bergmann, 1987), distinctions between full-time, part-time, volunteer, and asked/directed recruiters provide greater insight into

recruiters' experience, orientation, training, and patterns than previously unavailable. Third, the demographic nature of this study restricts some of the conclusions on recruiter effectiveness that normally can be drawn from samples pairing recruiters and job candidates (Graves & Karren, 1999) or interaction processes (Jablin et al., 1999). While the prior lack of a nation-wide study profiling recruiters hampered our ability to see broad trends and assist applicants in the interview, this study provides job applicants and those assisting their development (i.e., placement training directors) information on deployment and training patterns across industries and single settings. Information deployment and training can both directly and implicitly inform scholars about communication exchanges during campus interviews and may be useful in job applicant's interview preparation. The following discussion addresses three of these outcomes: Recruiter boundary spanning activity, interview activity, and training.

Recruiter Boundary Spanning Activity

As noted earlier, the interview represents a viable means for screening prospective recruits who might fit the job skill and social-emotional requirements for the position (Jablin, 2001; Kristof, 1996). Recruiters visiting campuses also transmit information about their organization that may make the company more attractive to applicants and university representatives. While interview textbooks often emphasize the trained and professional nature of recruiters, only about half of the sample report that they are full-time (12%) or part-time (38%) recruiters. Organizational members who volunteer and are asked or directed to recruit each compose a quarter of the sample. Further, individuals who recruit full-time are more likely to be younger than other recruiters and more likely to be assigned to Human Resources departments. In turn, a greater proportion of engineers than expected recruit as volunteers or are asked/directed to interview on campuses.

This distribution has several important implications in terms of information exchange during campus visits. First, the distribution suggests that there are likely to be differences in what information is shared and gained on campuses. Full-time recruiters are likely to provide job candidates with more information about the organization as a whole and be more knowledgeable about hiring procedures and processes. In contrast, those volunteering or assigned (asked/directed) to recruit may be more knowledgeable about the nature of the advertised position's work. Second, volunteer recruiters may be the most enthusiastic recruiters and the least subject to interview burnout or exhaustion. At this point, it is unclear if being asked or directed to recruit is an onerous task. Some employees may be sent at a moment's notice (i.e., inconveniently) to fill in for a colleague or ill full-time recruiter. For others, recruiting assignments at tourist locales (e.g., San Francisco, Orlando) may be interpreted as a reward for productive work.

Third, compared to recent studies reporting the number of female and/or minority recruiters (e.g., Connerly, 1997; Connerly & Rynes, 1997; Rynes & Boudreau, 1986; Taylor and Bergmann, 1987), this study reports comparatively small numbers of female recruiters and very few minority recruiters. Females make up 20% of full-time recruiters in this sample, but this number represents 40% of all females in the sample. Minorities represent seven percent of the sample, but they are evenly distributed across the four types of recruiters. While these results may reflect a somewhat dated sample, results suggest that comparatively younger females are employed as recruiters in Human Resources departments. Further, this study reports the same percentage of females as recruiters Jauquet and Parlin's (1977) mailing to industries over twenty years ago. Given the mismatch in the proportions of females and minorities entering the workforce and female recruiters (particularly, full-time recruiters), there is a greater likelihood

that female and minority applicants will display a lack of satisfaction with their dissimilarity to male recruiters (Graves & Powell, 1996; Harris & Fink, 1987; Mauer et al., 1992).

Recruiter Interview Activity

In terms of recruiters' itineraries on campus, several distinctions among the types of recruiters are worth noting. While all recruiters typically see approximately 12 job candidates per campus visit, full-time recruiters have more variety in their day. They report contacts with an array of individuals outside of students in interview settings, including placement directors, placement staff, co-op offices, student organizations, academic deans, faculty, and university administrators. As expected, full-time recruiters also visit almost twice as many campuses and attend more career fairs. In contrast, most part-time, volunteer, and asked/directed recruiters spend 80% of their day interviewing candidates. Volunteer and asked/directed recruiters appear more likely to "check in" with placement directors or staff than part-time recruiters. Further, a greater proportion of volunteer recruiters than expected are likely to visit with faculty, suggesting established linkages between industry and academia.

Overall, these patterns suggest that distinct sets of boundary spanning activities take place during recruiters' visits to campus. Full-time recruiters visit with a broad variety of individuals (e.g., placement directors, academic deans, faculty) while other recruiter types are more likely to confine themselves to interviewing students. (A notable exception to this pattern, of course, is the greater proportion volunteer recruiters than expected who interact with faculty.) Given their recurring visits to campuses, it is possible that full-time recruiters may be cultivating relationships and both acquiring and sharing information with members of the campus community. They may learn of competitors' recruiting activities and inducements as well as disseminate information regarding organizational and industry trends.

Another potentially important boundary spanning activity is volunteer and asked/directed recruiters' interactions with students. These interviews are likely to provide these recruiters with vital information regarding current course curriculum as well as skill training gained through co-ops or internships, which may be useful in their evaluation of the recruiting pool. Volunteer recruiters who interact with faculty may also seek specific information about highly qualified students, recent research investigations, and faculty interest in cooperative ventures with their organization. While information exchanges occur between recruiters and a variety of university members, the importance of those visits and the nature of information that is given or gained is unclear. The investigation of such information exchanges may be timely as university and corporate relationships become more integrated in the 21st century through joint ventures, donations, and the development of the workforce. In conjunction with calls for broader research on interviewer training (Jablin et al., in press; Palmer, Campion, & Green, 1999), future investigations should also investigate the extent of recruiters' training that is applicable to their boundary spanning activities to faculty, administrators, and student organizations.

Recruiter Training

One of the most surprising outcomes of the study is the lack of training reported by many recruiters. While university courses on interviewing are not readily available to college students who later recruit for their employers, it seems especially troublesome that 23% and 38% of recruiters do not report being trained at company seminars and company interview workshops, respectively. In the case of asked/directed recruiters who had less experience in interviewing on campuses, the lack of training may lead to a number of problems. For instance, asked/directed employees who experienced EEOC training report that it was less useful compared to full-time and part-time recruiters' reports. While a poor delivery of EEOC training materials may contribute to its low usefulness rating, the possibility that asked/directed employees do not

comprehend its significance and resulting legal entanglements can not be ignored. In addition, asked/directed employees may be the least likely to use properly structured interview formats, which are critical to interview reliability and validity (Huffcutt & Author, 1994).

Regarding the communicative dimensions of training, full-time and part-time recruiters report techniques for asking questions and listening as more useful than volunteer and asked/directed recruiters, although materials on asking questions and listening are highly rated by volunteers and asked/directed recruiters (see Table 2). However, it is important to note that volunteer and asked/directed recruiters perceive that the review of company procedures as being the most useful training materials received. This rating may reflect their lack of familiarity with their company's philosophy and strategy of recruiting. In turn, the overall value assigned to the communicative aspects of interview training by all recruiters supports both the difficulty of managing employment interview interactions. However, in a recent summary, Schmitt (1999) identifies several key practices to follow in order to conduct reliable and valid interviews, including (a) developing a structured interview in which all applicants are asked the same questions, (b) basing questions on a job analysis and focusing on job-relevant information, (c) providing interviewers with rating scales anchored in previously determined good and bad answers, and (d) providing recruiters with information on the purpose of the interview, common sources of rater errors, and explanations of the questions and ratings required. As the content of recruiter training on asking questions and listening techniques from this study is unclear, future research should investigate the extent to which information on job analyses and ratings of employee responses are presented.

Limitations

In an effort to gather a variety of information on the background and experience of campus recruiters, research measures in this study emphasize breadth over depth. The use of

single-item measures to assess, for example, recruiters' training experiences and their usefulness is an improvement over previous global measures of training (e.g., Connerly, 1997; Connerly & Rynes, 1997), but they provide a general indicator of an experience instead of multiple aspects of an experience. As such, while we obtain valuable information on interviewer assignments and itineraries, additional information on the content of their campus interactions associated with their campus visits is beyond the scope of this study. Future studies of campus recruiters would benefit by focusing on specific aspects of recruiters' campus experiences or training. In addition, while this study provides valuable insight into the nationwide recruiting patterns, future research would benefit by extrapolating on key findings from this study – such as those pertaining to the four types of recruiters – through investigations using more traditional psychological and communicative measures.

This study also relies solely on recruiters' self-reports. While self-reports are the only reasonable way to sample recruiters nationwide, subsequent studies would benefit from supplementing recruiter self-report data with the sampling of other sources, such as recruiters' immediate supervisors and placement directors. Sampling corporate Personnel or Human Resources directors (Rynes & Boudreau, 1986) may also provide additional perspectives on employees' part-time, volunteer, and asked/directed recruiting assignments, recruiters' training, and the nature of job applicants sought.

Directions for Future Research

In addition to research directions proposed above, future investigations should focus on message exchange processes (Jablin, 2001). Based on the distinctions among types of recruiters, researchers should ask how recruiter type affects the types of questions asked of applicants. Given the surprising dearth of training reported by recruiters, those experiencing more well-developed question-asking training (including structured interview training) may ask for

information in a different manner (and more effectively) than those with less training. Similar concerns apply to recruiters' persuasive ability. Volunteer recruiters may have more credibility than representatives from Human Resources when discussing the nature of the job opening and its duties. Further, it is important to discover if recruiter background (e.g., full-time recruiter from Personnel versus a line manager from engineering), when known to applicants, will lead applicants to respond differently to the same question.

Finally, results indicate that organizations with 25 years or more of recruiting history on college campuses are more likely to use part-time, volunteer, and asked/directed recruiters. It is unclear at this point if this distribution has been constant or changing over the years. A shift from relying on full-time recruiters to forms of part-time recruiting may indicate a growth in the organization's awareness of the importance of managers and employees interacting with students and serving as corporate representatives. In turn, organizations may use employees from a number of positions to recruit in an effort to supplement their recruitment force. As such, our knowledge of the interview process would benefit from investigations into historical changes in the nature and amount of training of its full-time, part-time, volunteer, and asked/directed recruiters.

Endnotes

[1] Data were collected and results were distributed by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University. No portion of the data has been submitted to peer review for publication, and prior commitments prevented the prior submission of this study for review.

[2] Subsequent paired t-tests revealed that training techniques for asking questions, listening techniques, and review of company procedures on recruiting were significantly more useful than the review of job descriptions (t (791) = 2.93, p<.004). In turn, the review of job description training was significantly more useful interviews (t (746) = 3.77, p<.0001) than feedback techniques for evaluating interviews, review of EEOC regulations, checklist of applicant qualifications, and sequencing interview questions. Training for sequencing interview questions was reported to be more useful than role playing interviews (t (741) = 3.20, p<.001). Role playing was perceived as significantly more useful than the evaluation of rating errors (t (657) = 10.18, p<.0001), which in turn was reported to be more useful than screening videos of actual interviews (t (528) = 4.28, p<.0001).

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Table 1.

Percentage of Respondents Participating in Recruiter Training by Time Interval

Type of Training	None	Number of Hours						
		1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-24	25+	
Formal Programs:								
Company Seminars	23%[a]	22%	14%	9%	7%	6%	19%	
Workshops (Company)	38%	18%	13%	7%	5%	5%	14%	
University Courses	71%	7%	6%	4%	2%	2%	9%	
Workshops (consultant)	62%	9%	9%	6%	5%	3%	7%	
Convention Sessions	61%	11%	8%	7%	3%	2%	8%	
Informal Opportunities:								
Mentor	21%	31%	16%	10%	5%	3%	14%	
Reading (Manuals/Books)	13%	30%	17%	14%	9%	5%	13%	

[a] Percentages reflect proportion of responses across training source.

Table 2.

Summary of Means and Tukey HSD Post Hoc Analyses for Differences in Group Means for

Reported Usefulness of Methods of Professional Development.

		Recruiter Type			
	Overall Mean	Full-Time	Part-Time	Volunteer	Asked/ Directed
Techniques for Asking Questions	3.50	3.69^a	3.70^a	$3.29^{a,b}$	3.25^b
Listening Techniques	3.40	3.86^a	$3.57^{a,b}$	$3.32^{b,c}$	2.96^c
Review of Company Procedures on Recruiting	3.38	3.57^a	3.32^a	3.44^a	3.29^a
Review of Job Descriptions	3.20	3.87^a	3.27^b	3.02^b	2.91^b
Feedback Techniques for Evaluating Interviews	2.93	3.27^a	$3.02^{a,b}$	2.78^b	2.70^b
Review of EEOC Regulations	2.86	3.41^a	$3.01^{a,b}$	$2.67^{b,c}$	2.50^c
Checklist of Applicant Qualifications	2.83	3.15^a	$2.97^{a,b}$	2.64^b	2.62^b
Sequencing Interview Questions	2.75	2.97^a	2.96^a	2.44^b	$2.57^{a,b}$
Role Playing Interviews	2.55	2.91^a	$2.66^{a,b}$	2.38^b	2.30^b
Evaluation of Rating Errors	1.69	2.37^a	1.96^a	1.23^b	1.31^b
Screening Videos of Actual Interviews	1.46	1.61^a	1.52^a	1.47^a	1.21^a

Note. Group means with similar superscripts are statistically equivalent at $p<.05$.