

**Click Here to Apply: Job Ad Content, Anticipated Organizational Support,
and Applicant Attraction**

by

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ABSTRACT

CLICK HERE TO APPLY: JOB AD CONTENT, ANTICIPATED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT, AND APPLICANT ATTRACTION

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The present study explores whether job ads emphasizing information about organizational supplies (i.e., what the organization can offer to its employees) versus organizational demands (i.e., what the organization requires from its employees) will differentially influence applicants' job pursuit intentions (JPI). Furthermore, anticipated organizational support (AOS) was evaluated as a partial mediator in this relationship, and applicant quality as a moderator for the relationship between AOS and JPI. Our results indicated that information emphasizing organizational supplies (as opposed to organizational demands) led to greater AOS, which in turn was positively correlated with JPI. Additionally, it was found that AOS fully mediated the relationship between job ad emphasis and JPI. Contrary to our predictions, applicant quality did not moderate the relationship between AOS and JPI. The results from this study will ultimately help organizations to craft better job ads that will allow them to attract more, and potentially higher quality job applicants.

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Click here to apply: Job ad content, anticipated organizational support, and applicant attraction

Recent reports by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) identified employee recruitment as a major obstacle for small businesses; an alarming 48 percent of small business owners disclosed that they were unable to find suitable candidates to fill job openings the past year (NFIB, 2016). Issues surrounding employee recruitment are especially pronounced among small businesses competing with larger organizations that are likely to have better organizational branding and salary offerings. Both factors have been found to predict prospective job applicants' attraction to an organization as a place for employment (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007; Cable & Turban, 2003; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Cunningham, 2009).

Although organizational familiarity and salary are important to prospective job applicants, research has found that other organizational- and job-related characteristics such as positive employee relations and treatment, challenging work, and opportunities for skill development are greater predictors of applicant attraction (Uggerslev, Fassina, & Kraichy, 2012). This suggests that small businesses might compete more effectively in hiring if they build these aspects into their workplaces and relay this information to prospective job applicants.

Furthermore, there is some empirical research evidence that the framing of information provided to prospective job applicants can influence applicant attraction (e.g., Dineen & Williamson, 2012; Schmidt, Chapman, & Jones, 2015). For example, Schmidt et al. (2015) found that including information about needs-supplies fit (i.e., what an organization can offer to its employees to help fulfill their needs) in an online job ad attracted more job applications than including information about demands-abilities fit (i.e., what skills are required of employees to help fulfill the needs of an organization).

Through the manipulation of information provided in job ads, the present study will evaluate how emphasizing information about organizational supplies (i.e., what the organization has to offer to its employees) versus information about organizational demands (i.e., what the organization requires from its employees) influences applicant attraction. Furthermore, we will evaluate the role of anticipated organizational support as a mediator in this relationship. Lastly, applicant quality will be evaluated as a potential moderator in this relationship. A review of relevant research literature is presented in the following sections.

Overview of Recruitment Research

Over the past few decades, considerable research on employee recruitment has been conducted (e.g., Barber, 1998; Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). This research has typically focused on one of Barber's (1998) three recruitment stages: generating applicants, maintaining applicant status, and influencing job choices. In the generating applicants stage, employers attempt to establish a large and/or strong applicant pool by using different strategies (e.g., job ads) to attract attention from job seekers (Barber, 1998). In the maintaining applicant status stage, employers attempt to persuade individuals in their applicant pools to remain committed to the job application process until it is completed (Barber, 1998). Lastly, in the influencing job choices stage, employers try to encourage successful job applicants to accept the job offers that they have received (Barber, 1998). In this section, I will present a general overview of topics covered in the research literature pertaining to the generating applicants stage as this is the focus of my research.

Generating applicants. Research pertaining to the generating applicants stage of recruitment has recently garnered more attention than the other two stages (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Jones, Willness, & Madey, 2014; Schmidt et al., 2015). One potential reason for this is that

in the present labour market, highly qualified job applicants expect to receive multiple job offers (MRINetwork, 2016), and therefore, they can be more selective in applying for job opportunities (Chapman & Webster, 2006). With applicants being more selective, organizations need to improve their job advertising to encourage applications from large numbers of qualified applicants. While the process of generating a strong applicant pool may seem relatively straightforward, there are many key decisions that an employer must make before they begin to recruit employees; some of these decisions are outlined below.

Targeting applicants. The generating applicants stage begins with employers deciding who they wish to target as potential applicants (Barber, 1998). When targeting applicants, employers need to consider the type of applicants they wish to hire and their geographic boundaries. Employers first need to consider what types of applicants they want to hire to effectively seek out these individuals. For example, some employers may want to focus on hiring individuals with specific technical skills (e.g., engineering degree), personality traits (e.g., high conscientiousness), or visible minorities to increase diversity in their workplace.

Furthermore, the geographic boundaries for recruitment need to be thoroughly considered by employers based on what type of position they are hiring for because searching for applicants outside of an organization's local area is more costly (e.g., the organization would need to pay for the new hires' relocation costs). Since it is more difficult to find qualified individuals to fill positions for higher-level jobs, it has become common practice for employers to recruit locally when trying to hire for lower-level jobs and to extend their search nationally or world-wide for higher-level jobs (Barber, 1998). While both geographic boundaries and preferred applicant type are important factors that employers need to consider when recruiting, Barber reported there being no empirical research on the consequences of applicant targeting prior to 1998.

Recruitment methods. Once an organization has decided the type(s) of applicants they wish to recruit, they must then decide what recruitment methods (also called recruitment sources) to use to reach these desired applicants (Barber, 1998). The recruitment method chosen by an organization can be influenced by several different factors, such as: how much money the organization is willing to invest into recruiting, how much competition there is among employers to fill similar job openings, and how quickly an employer needs to fill a job opening. Examples of recruitment methods that have been studied extensively by scholars include: newspaper and radio advertisements, employee referrals, employment agencies, and walk-ins (Zottoli & Wanous, 2000); these are typically referred to as ‘traditional recruitment methods’ in the research literature (e.g., Allen et al., 2007).

More recently, recruiting online has become popular among organizations, with some of the first studies on online recruitment emerging in the early 2000s (e.g., Cober, Brown, Blumental, Doverspike, & Levy, 2000; Cober, Brown, Keeping, & Levy, 2004; Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002). As many authors have mentioned, this is not surprising considering that online recruitment is, on average, much more cost effective than other recruitment methods (Cappelli, 2001; Cober et al., 2000; Kay, 2000). An online recruitment method that has been widely adopted by employers is the *organizational website* (Braddy, Thompson, Wuensch, & Grossnickle, 2003). Employers can use their company website to attract and engage prospective job applicants by providing them with information about the organization and about job openings.

Employers can also recruit employees online using third-party job search websites, such as www.workopolis.com, www.monster.com (Braddy et al., 2003) and more recently www.indeed.com. On these third-party websites, organizations can post text-based job ads in a

large search engine where they will be available to millions of prospective job applicants (Cappelli, 2001). These text-based job ads generally contain information about: (1) the employing organization, (2) the job that they are recruiting for, and (3) requirements (e.g., educational background and past work experience) that should be met by applicants before they apply for the job.

When employers use third-party job search websites for recruitment on their own or in conjunction with organizational websites, their job opportunities are made visible to a large pool of prospective job applicants. In contrast, having only an organizational website makes recruiting more difficult for organizations (particularly small businesses and/or start-up companies) because they must first find ways of distributing their website link to prospective job applicants who are likely not familiar with their company. Despite their popularity among employers as a recruitment method, relatively few studies have examined how third-party website job ads influence recruitment outcomes. Thus, the present study will focus on how the content of these job ads can influence applicant attraction.

Measures of applicant attraction. Given the importance of effective recruitment for organizations, measuring the impact of these activities on applicant attraction is important. Since our study focuses on early-stage recruitment practices, we will focus specifically on the early-stage measures of applicant attraction.

In the recruitment research literature, early-stage applicant attraction has been operationalized and measured in numerous ways. For example, some early-stage recruitment studies measured applicant attraction behaviourally as the decision to apply for a job or not (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003). Other early-stage recruitment studies measured applicant attraction indirectly as applicants' attitudinal perceptions of a(n)

job/organization (i.e., whether they perceive the job/organization to be attractive; Baum & Kabst, 2014; Braddy, Meade, & Kroustalis, 2008; Jones et al., 2014), or as applicants' intentions to pursue employment with an organization (Allen, Biggane, Pitts, Otondo, & Van Scotter, 2013; Cable & Turban, 2003; Catanzaro, Moore, & Marshall, 2010; Collins & Stevens, 2002). There are also many examples of studies that evaluated applicant attraction using a combination of the measures previously indicated (e.g., job pursuit intentions and applicant behaviours, job-organization attraction and applicant behaviours; Collins, 2007; Fisher, Ilgen, & Hoyer, 1979; Harold & Ployhart, 2008; Schmidt et al., 2015).

I had previously mentioned that early-stage applicant attraction has been measured as applicants' attitudes toward a(n) job/organization, as applicants' intentions to pursue employment with an organization, and/or as applicant behaviours (e.g., submitting a job application). When considering these different measures of early-stage applicant attraction all together, parallels can be drawn between these measures and the intention and behaviour aspects of Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behaviour. This theory posits that an individual's attitudes, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms will determine their intentions to engage in a behaviour, and these intentions in turn are the best predictor of an individual's choice to ultimately engage in a behaviour.

Although the recruitment literature does not use the term subjective norms, these are discussed as organizational prestige. For example, studies have measured how an organization's prestige (also referred to as corporate social performance, organizational reputation, or organizational image) influences applicant attraction, and found that greater prestige is related to greater attraction (Cable & Turban, 2003; Jones et al., 2014; Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998). Since organizational prestige is defined as "social consensus on the degree to which [a]

company's characteristics are regarded as positive" (Highhouse et al., 2003, p. 989), then organizational prestige would be considered a potential subjective norm.

Furthermore, Highhouse et al. (2003) found strong support for considering each of these constructs (i.e., perceptions of organizational attractiveness, job pursuit intentions and organizational prestige) as distinct, yet interrelated. To elaborate, they found support for a three-factor model of applicant attraction, but also found that organizational prestige and organizational attractiveness were moderately correlated ($r = .40$), organizational attractiveness and job pursuit intentions were highly correlated ($r = .82$), and job pursuit intentions, in turn, were moderately correlated with actual job pursuit behaviours ($r = .44$). Relationships between these constructs were further supported by findings from other studies (Chapman & Webster, 2006; Gomes & Neves, 2011).

There have also been a few studies examining the role of perceived marketability (i.e., a prospective job applicant's perception of the availability of job alternatives based on their qualifications, skills, and experience) and applicant quality (i.e., the extent to which a job applicant is qualified for a job based on their qualifications, skills, and experience) on applicant attraction. These variables map onto the perceived behavioural control (i.e., an applicant's belief that they can successfully pursue a job) aspect of the theory of planned behaviour (Chapman & Webster, 2006; Schmidt et al., 2015); however, since Bauer, Maertz Jr., Dolen, and Campion's (1998) call for more research in this area, little progress has been made and is still needed. In the next section, I will present an overview of variables that have been studied in the recruitment literature and have been found to be related to applicant attraction.

Variables related to applicant attraction. In 2012, Uggerslev et al. conducted a meta-analysis to evaluate the relation between seven categories of predictors (i.e., job characteristics,

organizational characteristics, recruiter behaviours, recruitment process characteristics, perceived fit, hiring expectancies, and perceived alternatives) and applicant attraction. Applicant attraction was measured differently across the included studies (i.e., as job-organization attraction, job pursuit intentions, and acceptance intentions) but were aggregated to form a single outcome variable.

Based on their findings, perceived fit (e.g., person-organization fit, person-job fit) was the strongest predictor of applicant attraction ($r_c = .63$, 95% CI [.60, .66], where r_c represents the coefficient value corrected for sampling error and unreliability of the predictor and criterion). However, all categories of predictors previously mentioned (except for perceived alternatives) also accounted for unique variance in applicant attraction. For example, organizational characteristics (e.g., employee relations/treatment, teamwork, prestige) and job characteristics (e.g., autonomy, opportunities for development, benefits) were the second and third largest predictors of applicant attraction ($r_c = .36$, 95% CI [.34, .38] and $r_c = .36$, 95% CI [.33, .39], respectively), and although hiring expectancies was the least predictive of applicant attraction, it still accounted for some unique variance ($r_c = .25$, 95% CI [.21, .30]). An older meta-analysis by Chapman et al. (2005) had similar findings, despite there being fewer studies on predictors of applicant attraction prior to 2005.

It is important to highlight that in Uggerslev et al.'s meta-analysis, applicant attraction was distinguished from job choice, which they measured as a separate outcome variable. Based on their results, two of the seven categories of predictors were not significant predictors of job choice: perceived fit ($r_c = .05$, 95% CI [-.13, .23]) and perceived alternatives ($r_c = .03$, 95% CI [-.14, .20]). This was unexpected considering they found that perceived fit was the strongest predictor of applicant attraction. While the other five categories of predictors were significant

predictors of job choice, job characteristics was the largest predictor ($r_c = .25$, 95% CI [.13, .38]). This suggests that while perceived fit might be more important in the early stages of recruitment, job characteristics are more important at the later stages of recruitment. In the next sections, I will discuss signaling theory and how it relates to early stage applicant attraction.

Signaling Theory

Signaling theory is a prominent and highly cited theory in the recruitment literature (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Celani & Singh, 2010; Maurer & Cook, 2011; Schmidt et al., 2015). First proposed by Spence in 1973, it has often been used to describe behaviour where information asymmetry exists between two parties (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011). To elaborate, when two parties have access to different information, one party (i.e., the sender) must decide what information they want to share with the other party (i.e., the receiver) and how they want to communicate this information. The receiver is then responsible for interpreting the information that was communicated to them (Connelly et al., 2011). In this model, the way the sender's information is communicated is called the *signal*, because the method of communication can influence the receiver's interpretation of the information that was sent.

In the context of recruitment, an organization or employer often acts as the sender, and prospective job applicants would act as receivers. Thus, the employing organization is responsible for deciding what kinds of messages they want to send to prospective job applicants. When deciding what messages they wish to communicate, the employing organization must first consider what type of applicants they are looking to hire. For example, most organizations are focused on recruiting applicants who are qualified for the jobs that they are hiring for (e.g., by requiring a minimum number of years of work experience). Thus, the employing organization

must determine how to effectively communicate this information to repel unqualified job applicants and attract qualified ones.

As previously mentioned, online recruitment has increased in popularity over the years. Although recruiting through one's organizational website presents different avenues for communicating information (e.g., through image, text, video), recruiting via third-party job search websites is more limiting (i.e., communication is limited to text). However, because job search websites allow information about job openings to be more accessible to a large audience of prospective job applicants, they are often preferred by smaller and/or less familiar organizations (e.g., start-ups, local businesses). In the next section, I will use signaling theory as a framework to discuss how job ad information influences applicant attraction. The studies cited below will be discussed in greater detail since they help to form the foundation of the proposed study.

Job ad information and applicant attraction. In an effort to help organizations attract different types of applicants (e.g., qualified job applicants, applicants from minority groups, millennials), researchers have recently begun to investigate how job ad content influences applicant attraction. For example, Catano and Morrow Hines (2016) examined how the presence of information regarding an organization's corporate social responsibility and psychologically healthy workplace policies in job ads influenced applicant attraction among millennial job applicants.

In their study, corporate social responsibility was operationalized as an organization's efforts in improving its relationship with society, such as through community involvement and the promotion of environmental sustainability. Additionally, psychologically healthy workplace policies were operationalized as an organization's "practices related to work-life balance,

employee growth and development, health and safety, employee recognition, and employee involvement” (Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016, p. 144). Furthermore, the researchers considered individuals born between 1979 and 1994 who were seeking new work opportunities to be millennial job applicants. And lastly, applicant attraction was operationalized as job applicants’ perceptions of an organization’s general attractiveness, intentions to pursue employment with an organization, and perceptions of an organization’s prestige (i.e., reputation).

In relation to signaling theory, the authors hypothesized that presenting information about an organization’s corporate social responsibility and psychologically healthy workplace policies in a job ad would provide a signal to job applicants regarding the organization’s values. Job applicants could then use these signals about an organization’s values to determine if the organization’s values match with their own (Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016). Since value congruence has been found to be positively related to applicant attraction (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), the authors hypothesized that providing this information could positively influence applicant attraction among millennials (Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016).

To test their hypotheses, the authors created four different job ad conditions: one control with no information provided about corporate social responsibility (CSR) or psychologically healthy workplace policies (PHW), one with only information about CSR being provided, one with only information about PHW being provided, and one in which information about both CSR and PHW were provided. There were four job ads per condition (e.g., for the control condition, they created four job ads for different job positions that contained no information about CSR or PHW), and participants (who were undergraduate students) were assigned to one of the four conditions. As part of the data collection process for their study, participants were asked to fill out an applicant attraction scale for each of the four job ads they were presented with.

The results of the study supported the hypothesis that job ads providing information about both CSR and PHW led to greater applicant attraction among millennial job applicants. In addition, the incorporation of information about CSR or PHW alone did not lead to greater applicant attraction among millennial job applicants as hypothesized. Given the larger amount of total information provided to participants in the CSR and PHW job ads, it is possible that the amount of content itself produced this difference. The positive relationship between the amount of organizational information provided and applicant attraction has been found in previous studies that focused on organizational websites as a recruitment source (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Gregory, Meade, & Thompson, 2013). Thus, perhaps independent of the type of information that was provided (i.e., information about CSR and PHW), providing more information about the organization, in general, increased applicant attraction.

As another example of research conducted on the relationship between job ad content and applicant attraction, Gully, Phillips, Castellano, Han, and Kim (2013) examined whether providing information about an organization's social and environmental responsibility values in a job ad would help to attract a greater number of individuals who desire to have a significant societal impact through their work. Using signaling theory to frame their hypotheses, the authors proposed that job applicants would assess their fit with an organization based on the information communicated to them through job ads. If a job ad were to emphasize an organization's social and environmental responsibility values, then this would send signals to the job applicant that the organization cares about making a positive impact on society (Gully et al., 2013). If the job applicant has desires to make a significant impact in society, then the job applicant would perceive a good fit between their values and the organization's (Gully et al., 2013). As previously mentioned, perceived fit has been found to be the strongest predictor of applicant

attraction (Chapman et al., 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Thus, it was hypothesized that perceived fit with an organization (i.e., person-organization fit) would be positively related to applicant attraction (measured as organizational attraction and job pursuit intentions). The authors also hypothesized mediation such that person-organization fit and organizational attraction would sequentially mediate the relationship between job ad content emphasizing an organization's social and environment responsibility values and job pursuit intentions.

The researchers collected data from 332 participants, who were job seekers on an online job board that were interested in pursuing a job position as a driver. Their analyses supported the major hypotheses outlined above, such that person-organization fit was positively related to organizational attraction ($b = .52$) and job pursuit intentions ($b = .41$). Furthermore, applicants' desire to have a significant impact on society moderated the relationship between emphasizing the hiring organization's social and environmental responsibility values and person-organization fit, such that this relationship was stronger among those who had a high desire for significant impact in society. Lastly, their sequential mediation hypothesis was supported, such that person-organization fit and organizational attraction fully mediated the relationship between emphasizing an organization's social and environment responsibility values in a job ad and job pursuit intentions. Altogether, these results provided support that perceived fit, specifically person-organization fit, can explain how "fit"-related information in job ads influences applicant attraction.

Schmidt et al. (2015) also examined the mediating role of perceived fit on the relationship between job ad content and applicant attraction. They investigated whether emphasizing needs-supplies (N-S) fit (i.e., when a(n) job/organization can fulfill the psychological needs of an individual; Kristof, 1996) information in a job ad as opposed to

demands-abilities (D-A) fit (i.e., when an individual possesses the skills to meet the requirements of a(n) job/organization) information would elicit larger and higher quality applicant pools. They hypothesized that applicants' perceptions of N-S fit information in a job ad, and their perceived N-S fit with the job/organization being advertised in a job ad, would sequentially mediate the relationship between the type of fit information emphasized in a job ad and applicant attraction. Furthermore, they hypothesized that the relationship between perceived N-S fit and applicant attraction would be greatest among job applicants who perceived themselves as more marketable (i.e., perceived that they would have multiple job opportunities available to them given their skills, experience, and/or knowledge).

Using a mixture of attitudinal and behavioural measures, Schmidt et al. (2015) found support for their hypotheses. Firstly, job ads emphasizing N-S fit information produced a larger number of job applications from actual job seekers than ads emphasizing D-A fit information, and they also elicited a greater proportion of job applications from highly qualified candidates (i.e., job applicants with strong resumes). Further, the sequential mediation hypothesis was supported, such that the perceived amount of N-S fit information in a job ad and applicants' perceived N-S fit with the job/organization being advertised sequentially mediated the relationship between the type of fit emphasized in a job ad and applicant attraction, which they measured as applicants' general attraction to the hiring organization and their job pursuit intentions. Lastly, applicants' perceived marketability moderated the relationship between perceived N-S fit and applicant attraction, such that this relationship was stronger among applicants who perceived themselves as highly marketable. Thus, like the study by Gully et al. (2013), the results from this suggest that perceived fit, specifically N-S fit, can explain the relationship between the presence of fit-related information in a job ad and applicant attraction.

While perceived fit is one mechanism by which fit-related information in a job ad influences applicant attraction, Schmidt et al. (2015) suggest that there may be other mechanisms at work. Since N-S fit information is focused on what a(n) job/organization can offer to its employees, it is possible that N-S fit information signals to applicants that the organization cares about its employees' well-being and is willing to support their needs (Schmidt et al., 2015). On the other hand, D-A fit information is focused on what a(n) job/organization requires from its employees, and could signal to applicants that the organization is focused on employee productivity. Thus, it is possible that application attraction increased as a result of applicants' perceptions that the hiring organization is supportive and caring of its employees (i.e., perceived organizational support).

Perceived organizational support and applicant attraction. Only a small number of studies have explored perceived organizational support in the context of recruitment. In these studies, perceived organizational support was referred to as *anticipated organizational support* to differentiate employed individuals' organizational support perceptions from prospective job applicants' organizational support perceptions. However, the construct remains largely the same, such that it measures individuals' beliefs regarding the extent to which an organization cares about their well-being and is willing to support them (Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001). Thus, we will use the terms anticipated organizational support and perceived organizational support to refer to the same construct, with the former term being used when referring to recruitment-related research and the latter term being used to refer to organizational research (i.e., research with employed individuals).

One of the few studies to examine the role of anticipated organizational support in applicant attraction examined whether providing information about (1) work schedule flexibility

and (2) dependent care assistance, in a job ad would lead to greater anticipated organizational support and in turn, greater applicant attraction (Casper & Buffardi, 2004). The first of their findings was that anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions were highly correlated ($r = .59$, $N = 371$). Furthermore, work schedule flexibility and dependent care assistance were correlated with anticipated organizational support ($r = .27$ and $r = .42$, respectively) and job pursuit intentions ($r = .25$, and $r = .20$, respectively). Lastly, anticipated organizational support fully mediated the relationships between work schedule flexibility and job pursuit intentions, and dependent care assistance and job pursuit intentions.

An interesting aspect of these findings is that 67.1-percent of participants did not have children. Since dependent care assistance is a benefit that is offered to employees by the organization, information about dependent care assistance could be considered an example of N-S fit information as per Schmidt et al.'s (2015) study. However, if most participants did not have children and perceived N-S fit supposedly mediated the relationship between the type of fit information provided in a job ad and applicant attraction, then one would expect applicant attraction to be lower when dependent care assistance information is provided in contrast to work schedule flexibility information (which has been found to be universally appealing; Grover & Crocker, 1995). Since Casper and Buffardi (2014) found that both dependent care assistance and work schedule flexibility were positively correlated with job pursuit intentions, then perceived fit would not adequately explain the relationship between dependent care assistance information and applicant attraction.

Anticipated organizational support was further examined as a mediator between job ad information and job pursuit intentions in a study by Holliday Wayne and Casper (2012). The authors investigated how information about a firm's (1) compensation, (2) work-family, and (3)

managing diversity reputations influenced job pursuit intentions, with anticipated organizational support as a hypothesized mediator (Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012). Compensation reputation was operationalized as a hiring organization's rankings (in comparison to other organizations) in terms of their compensation packages (e.g., salary, dental/health insurance). Work-family reputation was operationalized as a hiring organization's rankings (in comparison to other organizations) in terms of their work-family policies such as day care, flexible scheduling, and telecommuting opportunities. Lastly, diversity reputation was operationalized as a hiring organization's rankings (in comparison to other organizations) in terms of their managing diversity programs, such as cultural awareness training. In the high reputation conditions, the hiring organization had a high reputation (e.g., 4th out of 100) for each of the variables previously operationalized, whereas in the low reputation condition, the hiring organization had a low reputation (e.g., 94th out of 100) for those variables.

Based on data from 232 participants (undergraduate students), anticipated organizational support was positively related to compensation reputation ($r = .54$), work-family reputation ($r = .49$), and managing diversity reputation ($r = .16$). Furthermore, anticipated organizational support partially mediated the relationships between job pursuit intentions and: (1) compensation reputation, and (2) work-family reputation, and anticipated organizational support fully mediated the relationship between managing diversity reputation and job pursuit intentions.

Together, findings from both studies by Casper and Buffardi (2004) and Holliday Wayne and Casper (2012) provide further support for signaling theory, such that job ad information about organizational benefits and characteristics (e.g., work schedule flexibility, managing diversity reputation) signaled to prospective job applicants about what it would be like to work for the organization. For example, when an organization's reputation was higher for managing

diversity (Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012), prospective job applicants perceived the organization as being more caring and supportive of its employees than when the organization's reputation was lower for managing diversity. Since job pursuit intentions were also positively related to the various organizational benefits and characteristics evaluated (i.e., work schedule flexibility, dependent care assistance, compensation reputation, work-family reputation, managing diversity reputation) and anticipated organizational support, then prospective job applicants must find it attractive to work in a supportive and caring environment.

The Present Study

To contribute to the recruitment literature, the present study will further investigate how job ad information influences applicant attraction. Using a similar methodology as Schmidt et al.'s (2015), we will evaluate whether framing job- and organization-related information as an organizational supply or as an organizational demand will lead to greater applicant attraction. In our study, organizational supplies will be operationalized as what an organization can offer to its employees (similar to the N-S fit information manipulation in Schmidt et al.'s (2015) study), whereas organizational demands will be operationalized as what an organization requires from its employees (similar to the D-A fit information manipulation in Schmidt et al.'s (2015) study).

As we have previously discussed, job and organizational characteristics are strong predictors of applicant attraction (Chapman et al., 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Because they are strong predictors of applicant attraction, information about these characteristics are likely to influence prospective job applicants' decisions to pursue or not pursue a(n) job/organization. Across our two job ads, we will frame information about job autonomy, opportunities for development, and employee relations/treatment as either organizational supplies, or organizational demands. We decided it was important for us to keep the job/organizational

information constant across both job ads to more accurately evaluate if the framing of information in a job ad influences applicant attraction, and not because of some other variable (i.e., differences in the type of job/organizational information being emphasized in a job ad).

Furthermore, we selected the three job/organizational characteristics previously mentioned for two reasons. Firstly, meta-analytic data suggests that applicant attraction is moderately to highly correlated with job autonomy ($r_c = .22$, 95% CI [.15, .29]), opportunities for development ($r_c = .49$, 95% CI [.25, .73]), and employee relations/treatment ($r_c = .58$, 95% CI [.52, .63]; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Secondly, these three job/organizational characteristics overlap with the three basic psychological needs as dictated by Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT posits that individuals are motivated by opportunities to fulfill autonomy needs, relatedness needs, and competence needs for personal growth and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and thus should be universally attractive across prospective job applicants.

Drawing from signaling theory (Spence, 1973), we expect that when job applicants lack information about a(n) job/organization, they will make inferences about the job/organization based on signals they receive from the information that they have. When a job ad emphasizes information about organizational supplies, this should act as a signal to prospective job applicants that the organization supports and cares about its employees. On the other hand, when a job ad emphasizes information about organizational demands, this should act as a signal to prospective job applicants that the organization is focused on employee productivity. Thus, we expect anticipated organizational support, which we operationalize as “the expectation that an organization will value and care about its employees” (Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012, p. 129), will be greater when a job ad emphasizes organizational supplies.

H1. Information emphasizing organizational supplies in a job ad will lead to greater anticipated organizational support among prospective job applicants than information emphasizing organizational demands in a job ad.

Additionally, past research has found that prospective job applicants are more attracted to organizations that support and care about their employees (Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016; Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012). Thus, we expect anticipated organizational support to correlate with applicant attraction, which we will measure as job pursuit intentions.

H2. Among prospective job applicants, higher anticipated organizational support will be positively correlated with job pursuit intentions.

Combining the aforementioned hypotheses, we postulate that anticipated organizational support will mediate the relationship between the type of information emphasized in a job ad (i.e., organizational supplies or organizational demands) and job pursuit intentions. Since this hypothesis is exploratory, we will hypothesize partial mediation rather than full mediation.

H3. Among prospective job applicants, the relationship between the manipulated type of information emphasized in a job ad (i.e., organizational supplies versus organizational demands) and job pursuit intentions will be partially mediated by anticipated organizational support.

Our final hypothesis pertains to the role of applicant quality as a moderator in the

relationship between the type of information emphasized in a job ad (i.e., organizational supplies of organizational demands) and applicant attraction. Schmidt et al. (2015) hypothesized and found that emphasizing N-S fit information in job ads attracted a greater proportion of higher quality applicants. The authors suggested that because highly qualified job applicants are more likely to qualify for multiple job positions available on the job market, they have the option to be more selective with which jobs to apply for, whereas less qualified job applicants would not. Since highly qualified job applicants have the option to be more selective, they will be more likely to seek out jobs/organizations that have attractive characteristics, such as a supportive and caring work environment (Ravlin & Meglino, 1989).

To further support our contention that job applicants find supportive and caring work environments to be attractive, a recent study evaluating the work-related priorities of millennial workers ($N = 11,398$) found that having good people to work with, good people to report to, good training opportunities/opportunities to develop new skills, and work-life balance were among the top 5 most desirable workplace characteristics (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). All of these characteristics are also antecedents of perceived organizational support (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Thus, because highly qualified job applicants will be more likely to seek out jobs/organizations that have attractive workplace characteristics (in comparison to less qualified job applicants), we expect that applicant quality will moderate the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions.

H4. The relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions will be moderated by applicant quality, such that this relationship will be

stronger among prospective job applicants who are more qualified for the job being advertised.

Summary of Proposed Study and Model

The purpose of this study is to evaluate how the framing of job ad information influences applicants' perceptions of how caring and supportive an organization is, and how this in turn influences prospective applicants' job pursuit intentions. First, it is expected that emphasizing information about organizational supplies, in contrast to information about organizational demands, should increase job pursuit intentions among prospective job applicants. Further, it is expected that this relationship should be partially mediated by prospective job applicants' anticipated organizational support. Finally, we expect applicant quality, which will be measured using an objective rating scale, to moderate the indirect relationship between the manipulated type of information emphasized in a job ad (i.e., the independent variable; organizational supplies versus organizational demands) and job pursuit intentions (i.e., the dependent variable), such that the relationship between the mediator (i.e., anticipated organizational support) and the dependent variable will be stronger among higher quality prospective job applicants. The proposed model for this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

Methods

Participants

A total of 330 participants were anonymously recruited from the University of Guelph SONA system in the Fall 2017 semester. Participants were granted a credit of 0.5-percent towards their final grade in an introductory psychology course as an incentive to participate in this study. Five participants had started the online survey for our study but did not complete any

items past the manipulation check. Since these participants did not complete the majority of the study, they were removed from the data file used for analysis. As a result, the final number of participants included in our analyses was 325.

Although researchers have cautioned the use of student samples for conducting psychological research due to issues of generalizability (e.g., Peterson & Merunka, 2014), we justify the use of a student sample for this study since Chapman et al. (2005) did not find that the relationships between predictor variables (e.g., organizational reputation, recruitment process characteristics) and early-stage applicant attraction (e.g., job pursuit intentions) varied significantly between actual applicant and non-applicant samples in their meta-analytic study. Furthermore, because many employers seek out college and university students to fill internship, co-op and entry-level job positions within their companies, conducting recruitment research with student samples can help us develop a better understanding of what variables influence applicant attraction among students. Thus, even if recruitment research conducted with student samples cannot be generalized to the entire population of prospective job applicants, we contend that it has its own merit and contributions to research and practice.

Procedure

For convenience, consenting participants completed our study online via Qualtrics. A survey link was provided to participants after they signed up for the study on the University of Guelph SONA system.

Since we opted for a between-subject design, the Qualtrics survey was set up to randomly assign participants to one of two study groups. One group was shown the job ad manipulation emphasizing organizational demands and then asked to complete the various questionnaire items for our study; the other group was shown the job ad manipulation emphasizing organizational

supplies. We also selected the Qualtrics function that allowed us to ensure that the distribution of participants across the two groups would be relatively even (i.e., ~165 participants per group).

A between-subjects design (rather than within-subjects) was chosen for this study for several reasons. For one, we chose to keep the two job ads nearly identical to control for potential confounds such as differences in job ad length, type of work, and required job qualifications. Thus, the only difference between our job ads is our manipulation of whether the job ad emphasizes organizational supplies or organizational demands. If we had the same participant view both job ads, it would become obvious to participants what we had manipulated between the two job ads and this could lead to response bias. Furthermore, we wanted participants to be fully engaged in the study to minimize issues with random responding. If we asked participants to read through two different job ads and complete the same survey items for each job ad, they could easily become bored with the study and respond carelessly. Thus, a between-subjects design seemed more appropriate for evaluating our research questions than a within-subjects design.

The surveys began with an introduction to the study, and followed with a consent form for prospective participants to read through on the next page. If an individual agreed to participate, they were instructed to click on a button that read, "I agree to participate in this study". Upon consent, participants were presented with either the job ad manipulation emphasizing information about organizational supplies, or the job ad manipulation emphasizing information about organizational demands. Participants were instructed to carefully read through the job ad. After reviewing the job ad, participants completed the following measures: a manipulation check, an anticipated organizational support scale, a job pursuit intentions scale, and an objective scale of how qualified they are for the job being advertised (i.e., our measure of

applicant quality). The survey concluded with a demographics questionnaire and a page thanking students for their participation. Most participants were able to complete the study in under 15 minutes. Details regarding our job ad manipulations, measures, and other survey items are described below.

Materials

Job ad manipulations. We created two job ads for a hypothetical full-time summer marketing assistant position with an unnamed online marketing company in Guelph, Ontario (see Appendix A). Firstly, most of the content across the job ads is held constant to reduce the possibility of confounds in our study (e.g., job ad length, type of work). Additionally, we chose not to include information about the identity of the employer to which each job ad is attached, since employer reputation and familiarity are both variables that can influence applicant attraction (Chapman et al., 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Lastly, we chose to create job ads for a summer marketing assistant position because it is an entry-level position that could appeal to students coming from a variety of academic backgrounds (e.g., accounting, psychology, and marketing); this, in turn, helped to increase the ecological validity of our study.

For our manipulation, a paragraph toward the end of our job ads was included that either emphasized (1) what the company can offer to its employees (i.e., organizational supplies) or (2) what the company requires from its employees (i.e., organizational demands). This manipulation is similar to what was used in the study by Schmidt et al. (2015), whereby they evaluated if emphasizing needs-supplies fit information (which we refer to as information about organizational supplies) in a job ad would attract a greater proportion of highly qualified job applicants in comparison to a job ad emphasizing demands-abilities fit information (which we refer to as information about organizational demands). However, unlike Schmidt et al. (2015),

we are not evaluating perceived fit as a mediator, so it was more appropriate for us to refer to our manipulated elements as (1) information emphasizing organizational supplies and (2) information emphasizing organizational demands.

To create the manipulations used in this study, we modified the fit manipulations originally created by Schmidt et al. (2015). These manipulations were obtained from the researchers directly and were not provided in their published study (see Appendix B). We created the manipulation for organizational supplies first, using self-determination theory (SDT) as a framework (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Because SDT posits that individuals are motivated by opportunities to fulfill their three basic psychological needs (i.e., the need for competence, the need for autonomy, and the need for relatedness), then a job ad emphasizing opportunities to fulfill these three needs should be attractive to most people (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, our organizational supplies manipulation contains multiple statements (adapted from Schmidt et al.'s original manipulations) emphasizing how the company can offer the employee with opportunities to fulfill their three basic psychological needs. An example organizational supplies statement that represents an opportunity to fulfill one's autonomy needs is: "this job will provide you with the freedom to decide how you accomplish your work since you will have the opportunity to complete many of your tasks with minimal supervision".

Next, we created our organizational demands manipulation to mirror our organizational supplies manipulation. To elaborate, the organizational demands manipulation also contains multiple statements that can be interpreted as opportunities to fulfill one's psychological needs. However, the statements are framed differently such that they emphasize what the company requires from its employees, rather than what the company can offer to its employees. For example, the following organizational demands statement, "the successful applicant will be a

self-starter who can initiate and complete tasks with minimal instruction or supervision”, is a mirror of the organizational supplies statement mentioned in the previous paragraph. While framed differently, both statements suggest to prospective job applicants that one’s autonomy needs could be fulfilled by the job/company being advertised. By keeping the statements across both manipulations as similar as possible and only slightly modifying the wording to change the framing of each manipulation, we can more accurately gauge if the framing of information in a job ad (as organization supplies versus organizational demands) influences prospective job applicants’ job pursuit intentions.

Pilot study survey. We conducted an informal pilot with our job ad manipulations to ensure that:

- (1) the job ad manipulations we created are representative of typical job ads that prospective job applicants would find online,
- (2) the different statements we included in our manipulation of the type of information emphasized in a job ad (i.e., organizational supplies versus organizational demands) would be perceived as potential opportunities to satisfy one’s autonomy, competence, or relatedness needs, and
- (3) participants can perceive differences between our two job ad manipulations (i.e., that one contains information framed as what the company can offer to its employees, whereas the other contains information framed as what the company requires from its employees)

The items included in our informal pilot survey are in Appendix C. After analyzing the results from our informal pilot survey (with feedback from approximately 15 participants who were graduate students in psychology), we slightly adjusted the wording in our manipulations to make the distinction between organizational demands and organizational supplies clearer.

Manipulation check item. Participants answered the following manipulation check item that was also used in the study by Schmidt et al. (2015): “Please rate how much information in the job ad was about what the job/company required of you as an employee versus what the job/company could offer you as an employee”. This item was rated on a scale from 1 (*almost entirely about what was required of me as an employee*) to 5 (*almost entirely about what was offered to me as an employee*).

Anticipated organizational support (AOS). To measure prospective job applicants’ anticipated organizational support from the company being advertised in our job ads, we used the five-item anticipated organizational support scale developed by Holliday Wayne and Casper (2012; see Appendix D). To our knowledge, this scale has only been used in the original developers’ study but was found to have good reliability ($\alpha = .94$). Furthermore, a strength of this scale is that it seems to generate a good amount of variability in responses among respondents (i.e., the mean score for this measure was 3.90 out of 7, with a standard deviation of 1.60; Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012). The construct validity of the scale was also evaluated through confirmatory factor analysis, with the results indicating that anticipated organizational support was distinct from the other constructs that Holliday Wayne and Casper (2012) measured (e.g., organizational prestige, job pursuit intentions).

Job pursuit intentions (JPI). Prospective job applicants’ job pursuit intentions were measured using a modified version of the job pursuit intentions scale developed by Aiman-Smith, Bauer, and Cable (2001; see Appendix E). This scale has been used in several recruitment studies and has been found to have good reliability (e.g., $\alpha = .91$ in the study by Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; $\alpha = .91$ in the study by Catanzaro et al., 2010; $\alpha = .97$ in the study by Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012). Furthermore, the scale seems to generate a good amount of variability in

responses among respondents (e.g., the mean score for this measure was 4.50 out of 7, with a standard deviation of 1.75; Aiman-Smith et al., 2001). Furthermore, the original developers of the scale conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate if job pursuit intentions is a distinct construct from organizational attractiveness and found support for a two-factor model.

While we retained most of the original scale, we chose to make two modifications to potentially increase the variability in responses among participants. First, we added the following item to the scale: “I would apply for this job” since it fits in well with our operationalization of job pursuit intentions. Further, we modified the item, “I would accept a job offer from this company” to say, “I would only accept a job offer from this company as a last resort” (reverse keyed). These modifications were made to help us more accurately evaluate the magnitude of participants’ job pursuit intentions, since they are being asked to compare the job being advertised to other jobs they would apply for.

Applicant quality. To measure applicant quality, we used an original objective rating scale (see Appendix F). We operationalized applicant quality as the extent to which a prospective job applicant is adequately qualified for the job being advertised in our job ads. Judgments of prospective job applicants’ quality was based on the *required qualifications and experience* information provided in the job ads. Although we originally considered aggregating the scores on each item of this scale to create an overall scale score out of 45 points, we ended up choosing to treat the scale as a formative measure (i.e., examined how each item in this scale uniquely contributed to the overall measure of applicant quality). We made this decision prior to commencing our data analyses because we wanted to accurately evaluate the reliability of our applicant quality measure using structural equation modeling.

Demographics and other items. Participants were asked to provide the following demographics information: gender, age, their ethnic background (e.g., Southeast Asian, Caucasian), year of study (e.g., first year, second year), and their major (e.g., psychology, marketing).

Data Analysis and Results

Preliminary Sample Size Analyses

Hypothesis 1. Our first hypothesis was that information emphasized in the job ad (i.e., organizational supplies versus organizational demands) would lead to greater anticipated organizational support. To determine the number of participants our study required in order to achieve a power of .8 for our analysis of Hypothesis 1, we used the G*Power software to conduct a sample size analysis for a two-tailed independent samples *t*-test with a hypothesized effect size of $r = .16$, since according to Bosco, Aguinis, Singh, Field, and Pierce (2015), this value would be considered a medium effect size in industrial-organizational and is a reasonable effect size estimate for testing new hypotheses. Since G*Power requires us to enter effect sizes as standardized mean difference values (d), we converted the r value into a d value, where $d = .32$. G*Power determined that the sample size needed to achieve a power of .8 is 310 participants (155 participants per group).

Hypothesis 2. Our second hypothesis was that anticipated organizational support would be positively correlated with job pursuit intentions. To determine the number of participants our study required in order to achieve a power of .8 for our analysis of Hypothesis 2, we conducted a safeguard sample size analysis using the R package “**psych**”. The safeguard approach involves calculating a confidence interval around a correlational estimate retrieved from a past study, and then using the lower bound of the confidence interval in the sample size analysis. Casper and

Buffardi (2004) found the correlation between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions to be .59 with a sample size of 371 participants, so we calculated the confidence interval around this correlational estimate. The lower bound of the confidence interval was .52, so we used this value in our sample size analysis. The sample size analysis revealed that we would need 26 participants to achieve a power of .8.

Hypothesis 3. Since Hypothesis 3 suggests that anticipated organizational support will mediate the relationship between the type of information emphasized in a job ad (i.e., organizational supplies versus organizational demands) and job pursuit intentions, we conducted a Monte Carlo simulation sample size analysis since this method has been recommended as a best practice for mediation models (e.g., Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017; Thoemmes, MacKinnon, & Reiser, 2010).

To run the Monte Carlo simulation, we used an R application developed by Schoemann et al. (2017). The values we input into the application, based on recommendations made by Schoemann et al. (2017), are displayed in Appendix G. For the correlation values, we input the following: (1) for path $M \rightarrow Y$, we input the value $r = .52$ because this was the lower bound of the 95% confidence interval surrounding the correlation value $r = .59$, which was found in the study by Casper and Buffardi (2004), (2) for path $X \rightarrow M$, we input the value $r = .16$ for an estimated medium effect size, and (3) for path $X \rightarrow Y$, we input the value $r = .16$ for an estimated medium effect size. Additionally, we retrieved the standard deviation values for our mediator variable (anticipated organizational support) and dependent variable (job pursuit intentions) from the study by Casper and Buffardi (2004). We input a standard deviation of .50 for our independent variable since it is dichotomous.

After running the Monte Carlo simulation, it was determined that a minimum of 307 participants would be required to achieve a power value of .8 when testing our mediation model.

Hypothesis 4. Our fourth hypothesis was that applicant quality would moderate the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions. To determine the number of participants our study required in order to achieve a power of .8 for our analysis of Hypothesis 4, we used the G*Power software to conduct a sample size analysis for an interaction with an estimated medium effect size ($r = .16$). According to calculations done in G*Power, the sample size needed to achieve a power of .8 would be 301 participants.

Summary of Sample Size Analyses. Based on the individual sample size calculations we conducted above, the estimated total number of participants we needed for our study to achieve a power of .8 for all our hypotheses was 310 participants.

Main Analyses

Outliers. We assessed for outliers in the data by generating z -scores. Outliers were flagged using z -scores as a cutoff, where values less than -3.29 or greater than +3.29 would be considered outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For one participant, their z -score ($z = -3.55$) for job pursuit intentions was below the cutoff value of -3.29. We performed analyses of the data with and without the outlier included.¹ After removing data from this participant, no other outliers were detected in the data.

Normality. Univariate normality was assessed for our data using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Results from the Shapiro-Wilk test suggest that data for our manipulation check, anticipated organizational support, job pursuit intentions, and applicant quality deviated from normality.

¹ We ran all analyses with and without the outlier included. However, the results were relatively the same (i.e., the values did not change our interpretation of the results or their significance) so we did not report the results with the outlier removed. Our full data file will be made available on the Open Science Framework for those interested in analyzing the data without the outlier included.

Further inspection of skewness and kurtosis values indicate the $z_{Skewness}$ and $z_{Kurtosis}$ scores for the variables analyzed were: (1) $z_{Skewness} = 2.69$ and $z_{Kurtosis} = -2.49$ for the manipulation check item, (2) $z_{Skewness} = 0.09$ and $z_{Kurtosis} = -0.03$ for anticipated organizational support, (3) $z_{Skewness} = -4.68$ and $z_{Kurtosis} = 0.92$ for job pursuit intentions, and (4) $z_{Skewness} = 4.22$ and $z_{Kurtosis} = 0.18$ for applicant quality. Using cutoff values (± 2.58) for large sample sizes determined by Field (2009), all the variables analyzed other than anticipated organizational support violate normality assumptions. Putting these findings together, we decided to use non-parametric statistical tests for our data when violations in the assumptions of normality are likely to influence the results.

Participant demographics. Our participant sample (325 with the outlier included) was primarily white (80.4%), female (81.8%), and first year university students (79.4%) between the ages of 16 and 24 years (98.8%). In regard to area of study, psychology majors made up a large proportion of the sample (36.6%), marketing majors made up 13.2% of the sample, and the remainder of participants were majoring in other disciplines (44.3%) or had undetermined majors (5.9%).

Descriptive statistics. Means, standard deviations and Cronbach alphas (where necessary) for our survey measures (i.e., manipulation check item, anticipated organizational support, applicant quality, job pursuit intentions) are displayed in Table 1. Additionally, 162 participants were presented with the job ad manipulation emphasizing organizational demands, and 163 participants were presented with the job ad manipulation emphasizing organizational supplies; thus, group sizes were relatively equal.

Manipulation check. To evaluate the effectiveness of our job ad manipulations (i.e., organizational demands versus organizational supplies), we conducted an independent samples t -test. We chose the t -test as opposed to non-parametric methods such as the Mann-Whitney U test

since the *t*-test is robust to normality violations (Boneau, 1960). Furthermore, using the *t*-test, we would be able to establish a confidence interval for the effect size that we extrapolated from the data; this would not be possible with the Mann-Whitney *U* test, which compares mean ranks rather than mean values between groups.

Firstly, Levene's test confirmed that the data being analyzed did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption; thus, we were able to conduct a *t*-test assuming equal variances between groups. Our findings indicated that participants exposed to the organizational supplies job ad ($M = 2.46, SD = 0.95$) rated the job ad as containing more information about what the organization could offer to its employees than participants exposed to the organizational demands job ad ($M = 2.04, SD = 1.00$), $d = 0.43$, 95% CI [0.21, 0.65], $t(323) = 3.85, p < .01$. The confidence interval width indicates a plausible population *d*-value range of 0.21 (a small effect) to 0.65 (a medium-to-large effect). Overall, these results suggest that our job ad manipulations were successful, such that the organizational supplies job ad was perceived as containing more supplies-oriented information than the organizational demands job ad².

Hypothesis 1. To evaluate hypothesis 1, that information emphasizing organizational supplies in a job ad will lead to greater anticipated organizational support among prospective job applicants than information emphasizing organizational demands in a job ad, we conducted another independent samples *t*-test as Levene's test indicated that the data being analyzed did not violate the homogeneity of variance assumption.

Participants exposed to the organizational supplies job ad ($M = 3.46, SD = 0.49$) reported greater anticipated organizational support than participants exposed to the organizational

² Please note that we also conducted a Mann-Whitney *U* test and found statistically significant results as well.

demands job ad ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.46$), $d = 0.57$, 95% CI [0.35, 0.79], $t(323) = 5.16$, $p < .01$. The confidence interval width indicates a plausible population d -value range of 0.35 (a small-to-medium effect) to 0.79 (a medium-to-large effect). Overall, these results provide support for hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2. To evaluate hypothesis 2, that higher anticipated organizational support among prospective job applicants is positively correlated with job pursuit intentions, we conducted a non-parametric Spearman correlation analysis. To establish 95% confidence intervals, we conducted bias-corrected bootstraps with 5000 resamples. Our correlation matrix suggests there to be a medium-to-large (Bosco et al., 2015), positive correlation between these two variables, $\rho = .25$, 95% CI [.14, .35], $p < .01$ (see Table 1). Additionally, the confidence interval width indicates a plausible population ρ -value range of 0.14 (a medium effect) to 0.35 (a large effect). Overall, this finding provides support for hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3-4. We tested our model (as depicted in Figure 1) using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). This multivariate analysis approach was selected for several reasons. For one, structural equation modeling methods have become increasingly popular since they address several concerns and limitations (e.g., accounting for measurement error; Chin, 1998) of traditional multivariate analytic approaches (e.g., multiple regression; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017).

Furthermore, in comparison to traditional covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), which focuses on “reproducing the covariance matrix [i.e., minimizing the difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrix], without focusing on explained variance” (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011, p. 139), PLS-SEM is the preferred approach for exploratory research, since it focuses analyses on the variance explained in the dependent variable(s) of

interest by the independent variable(s) introduced into the model (Hair et al., 2017); this was the primary goal for our study, since few studies have examined the relationships between the variables included in our model (i.e., job ad information framing, anticipated organizational support, applicant quality, job pursuit intentions). In addition, unlike CB-SEM, PLS-SEM is a non-parametric analytic approach and thus does not assume data to be normally distributed; since the data for our variables of interest violated the assumption of normality, a non-parametric analytic approach such as PLS-SEM was more appropriate for our analyses.

Also, because our model includes a moderator (i.e., applicant quality), we had to consider the appropriateness of various multivariate statistical techniques for interaction analyses. In comparison to other multivariate approaches, a Monte Carlo simulation study by Chin, Marcolin, and Newsted (2003) found that PLS-SEM is more likely to capture “true” interaction effects. To elaborate, the researchers found that other multivariate approaches such as ANOVA and ordinary least squares regression underestimated true interaction effects by 16 to 37%, whereas PLS-SEM could capture true interaction effects within a range of 5 to 10%.

Lastly, in comparison to CB-SEM, PLS-SEM can readily handle formatively measured constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Since the construct of applicant quality was created to be specifically relevant to our job ad manipulations (i.e., the items we created for applicant quality were directly related to information about the qualifications and skill requirements of the job being advertised) and the items used to measure applicant quality are unlikely to be related (e.g., GPA and past work experience in a customer service role), applicant quality was considered a formatively measured construct.

Thus, putting these considerations together, we chose PLS-SEM as the statistical technique for analyzing our model, since it provided several advantages over other multivariate

statistical techniques given our data and research goals. It is, however, important to acknowledge there are some disadvantages to using PLS-SEM as opposed to CB-SEM. One disadvantage stems from the fact that the PLS-SEM algorithm works to maximize measurement models (and not structural models), whereas CB-SEM does the opposite (Hair et al., 2017). Thus, some research suggests that PLS-SEM will often underestimate path coefficients between model constructs (Hair et al., 2017). However, since our research is still in the exploratory phase, we believe that taking a conservative approach (i.e., underestimating path coefficients) would be less worrisome than potentially overestimating path coefficients using alternative analytic methods (e.g., CB-SEM).

To analyze our data using the PLS-SEM method, we used the SmartPLS 3 software (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). We drew out our model in the software, and used the following functions to get our results: (1) the PLS algorithm function, (2) the bootstrapping function, and (3) the blindfolding function. The PLS algorithm function provided us with most of our results, but since PLS-SEM is non-parametric, we needed to use the bootstrapping function to create 95% confidence intervals for our results and to test for statistical significance. As recommended by Hair et al. (2017), we focused on the bias-corrected confidence intervals since they correct for bias and skewness which were inherent in our data. The blindfolding function provided us with Stone-Geisser's Q^2 values (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1974), which can be used to evaluate whether our path model has predictive relevance.

Measurement model. After running the PLS-SEM algorithm in SmartPLS 3, we evaluated our measurement model using steps provided by Hair et al. (2017). We evaluated the following areas of our measurement model:

- (1) the internal consistency of our reflectively measured scales (i.e., anticipated organizational support, job pursuit intentions) by recording both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (i.e., a measure of reliability that prioritizes indicators based on outer loadings, or in other words, according to each indicator/item's individual reliability; Hair et al., 2017) values;
- (2) outer loadings (i.e., standardized path weights that connect reflectively measured latent constructs to indicator variables, and can take on any value between -1 and +1; Hair et al., 2017) for the previously mentioned reflective measures and average variance extracted (AVE) values (i.e., a measure of communality of the indicators used to measure a construct, whereby an AVE of 0.5 for a construct suggests that it accounts for approximately half of the variance among its associated indicators; Hair et al., 2017) values to evaluate the convergent validity of these constructs;
- (3) outer weights (i.e., standardized values ranging from 0 to +1 that can be used to interpret the relative contribution of an indicator to a defined formatively measured construct; Hair et al., 2017) for our formative measure (i.e., applicant quality) to examine the content validity of the construct;
- (4) heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio (i.e., a ratio of the correlations between indicators measuring different constructs in comparison to the correlations between indicators measuring the same construct; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015) for the previously mentioned reflective measures to evaluate the discriminant validity of the constructs; and
- (5) outer and inner variance inflation factor (VIF) values to assess for collinearity between the constructs in our model.

Firstly, internal consistency and composite reliability for our reflectively measured constructs were within a reasonable range (i.e., above .70 for internal consistency reliability, and between .80 and .90 for composite reliability; Hair et al., 2017). For anticipated organizational support, the composite reliability was .87, 95% CI [.84, .89], and the internal consistency reliability (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) was .80, 95% CI [.77, .84]. For job pursuit intentions, the composite reliability was .86, 95% CI [.83, .88], and the internal consistency reliability was .80, 95% CI [.76, .83]. However, further inspection of the outer loadings for these constructs revealed that one item used to measure job pursuit intentions loaded negatively onto the construct (i.e., item 3 from Appendix E, "I would request more information about this company"; value of -.06). Perhaps one reason why this item did not load onto our job pursuit intentions construct was because it did not accurately reflect an applicant's desire to pursue the job being advertised, but rather it reflected an applicant's uncertainty about whether or not they intended to pursue the job. To elaborate, we did not include many details about the hiring organization (i.e., no information about the company name or size). Thus, applicants may want to know more about this company, simply because they feel as though they do not have enough information to accurately determine if they would pursue a job with that company. Based on this logic and Hair et al.'s (2017) recommendation that items should have at least statistically significant ($p < .05$) loadings onto a construct to justify that the measurement model is adequate, we decided to remove this item from our measure of job pursuit intentions. After re-analyzing our measurement model to exclude item 3 from Appendix E (equivalent to JPI2 as coded in our data file), the composite reliability for the job pursuit intentions construct was .90, 95% CI [.88, .91], and the internal consistency reliability was .85, 95% CI [.83, .88].

The outer loadings for each of the reflectively measured constructs and outer weights for our formatively measured construct are reported in Table 2. The results indicate that outer loadings for our reflectively measured constructs were statistically significant with $p < .01$ for all outer loadings. Additionally, the AVE values for the reflectively measured constructs are as follows: .57, 95% CI [.52, .61] for anticipated organizational support, and .60, 95% CI [.55, .64] for job pursuit intentions. These AVE values are above the threshold value of .50 (Hair et al., 2017). Together, these results provide support for the convergent validity of the anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions construct.

Outer weights for our formatively measured construct (i.e., applicant quality) were only statistically significant for three of nine items (i.e., proficiency with using Facebook, experience with a marketing-related job, and proficiency with using Microsoft Powerpoint). However, we decided not to remove any of the non-significant items from our measurement model (i.e., GPA, proficiency with using Microsoft Word, experience in a customer service-related job, proficiency with using Microsoft Excel, and proficiency with using Instagram and Twitter). Our rationale for this is that in order to accurately assess how qualified participants were for the job being advertised in our job ad manipulations, we would need to be able to assess them on the key qualifications and skill requirements that were listed in the job ad. We consider issues with our formative measure and directions for future research in the discussion section.

Additionally, we examined HTMT values to assess the discriminant validity of our reflectively measured constructs. Hair et al. (2017) provided a rule of thumb that HTMT values between constructs should be less than .85 if the constructs are indeed distinct entities. The HTMT value between the anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions constructs

was .33, 95% CI [.20, .44], $p < .01$ providing support for the discriminant validity of these constructs.

Lastly, we evaluated for collinearity in our measurement model by looking at inner and outer VIF values. As a rule of thumb, Hair et al. (2017) indicated these values should be less than 5. The highest VIF value in our dataset was 2.58, suggesting there were no significant issues with collinearity in our data (i.e., the constructs in our model are distinct and should not be combined).

Structural Model. To evaluate the structural model in general, we focused on the following output: (1) R^2 (i.e., coefficients of determination) values, (2) path coefficients, (3) f^2 (i.e., effect size) values, and (4) Q^2 (i.e., predictive relevance) values. Our structural model with some relevant values is displayed in Figure 2.

Firstly, the coefficients of determination values are measures of the predictive power of our model (Hair et al., 2017). They provide us with information regarding the amount of variance accounted for in an endogenous construct by the exogenous constructs that are connected to it (Hair et al., 2017). For anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions, these values were $R^2 = .08$, 95% CI [.03, .14], $p < .01$ and $R^2 = .16$, 95% CI [.12, .28], $p < .01$, respectively. Additionally, it is important to note that incorporating a greater number of exogenous variables into a model will always lead to larger R^2 values, even if the exogenous variables are not significant in the model (i.e., the path coefficients between these variables and the endogenous variable(s) are not significant). Thus, Hair et al. (2017) recommend also reporting adjusted R^2 values to correct for biases toward more complex models. For anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions, these values were adjusted $R^2 = .07$, 95% CI [.03, .14], $p < .01$ and adjusted $R^2 = .15$, 95% CI [.11, .27], $p < .01$, respectively. Using previous consumer behaviour

research results as benchmarks, these R^2 values would be considered medium-to-large in size (Hair et al., 2017).

Second, we examined the path coefficients for our model. These are displayed in Table 3. These results suggest that only the path between our job ad manipulation and job pursuit intentions was not statistically significant, and it is unclear whether there is a negative relationship, positive relationship, or no relationship between these variables when examining the confidence interval around the path coefficient. For the remainder of the paths, there appears to be positive medium-to-large relationships between the variables analyzed, since the 95% confidence intervals do not include zero.

Third, we evaluated f^2 (i.e., effect size) values in our results output. The effect of the job ad manipulation on job pursuit intentions was negligible, $f^2 = .00$, 95% CI [.00, .02], $p = .89$, the effect of the job ad manipulation on anticipated organizational support was $f^2 = .08$, 95% CI [.03, .16], $p = .02$, the effect of anticipated organizational support on job pursuit intentions was $f^2 = .06$, 95% CI [.02, .14], $p < .04$, and the effect of applicant quality on job pursuit intentions was $f^2 = .09$, 95% CI [.05, .22] $p < .03$. According to Hair et al., (2017), $f^2 = .02$ indicates a small effect size and $f^2 = .15$ indicates a medium effect size. Thus, other than the effect of the job ad manipulation on job pursuit intentions, the other effect sizes reported above would represent small-to-medium effect sizes.

Fourth, we evaluated Q^2 (i.e., predictive relevance) values. This value is similar to the R^2 value, except it represents out-of-sample predictive power whereas R^2 represents in-sample predictive power (Sarstedt, Ringle, Henseler, & Hair, 2014). For anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions, these values were $Q^2 = .04$ and $Q^2 = .08$, respectively. Since these values are larger than 0 (Hair et al., 2017), there is some support for the predictive

relevance of our model (i.e., that values for the exogenous variables can help to predict the values of the endogenous variable to which they are connected).

Mediation. To further evaluate for mediation, we examined t and p values for our bootstrapped indirect effect. Overall, the indirect effect of the job ad manipulation variable on job pursuit intentions (through the mediator variable anticipated organizational support) was .07, 95% CI [.04, .11], $t = 3.67$, $p < .01$. Since the direct effect of the job ad manipulation variable on job pursuit intentions was not significant, path coefficient = .03, 95% CI [-.08, .13], $t = 0.52$, $p = .6$), then the results suggest that anticipated organizational support fully mediated the relationship between the job ad manipulation variable and job pursuit intentions. This provides partial support for hypothesis 3, since we hypothesized partial mediation; these results are further explained in the discussion section.

Moderation. To evaluate for moderation, we examined the moderating effect of applicant quality and compared that to the simple effect of applicant quality on our dependent variable, job pursuit intentions. As previously indicated, there was a main effect of applicant quality on job pursuit intentions, path coefficient = .28, 95% CI [.13, .34], $p < .01$. However, the results indicate that the moderation effect was negligible, $f^2 = .00$, 95% CI [.00, .02], $p = .99$. The negligible moderation effect is also apparent when looking at the path coefficient value for the interaction effect, path coefficient = -.01, 95% CI [-.09, .10], $p = .88$, and through visual inspection of the simple slope graph. Thus, we did not find support for hypothesis 4. These findings are explained in the discussion section.

Exploratory analyses. Firstly, because we only found partial support for hypothesis 3, we conducted additional analyses to explore our findings. Firstly, we split our data file to examine skewness values for the organizational supplies manipulation in comparison to the

organizational demands manipulation. The values we found are as follows: $z_{Skewness} = -3.99$ for the organizational supplies manipulation and $z_{Skewness} = -2.69$ for the organizational demands manipulation. We also calculated mean job pursuit intentions values between the groups, $M = 3.48$, $SD = .69$ for the organizational supplies manipulation ($N = 163$) and $M = 3.34$, $SD = .66$ for the organizational demands manipulation ($N = 162$). An independent samples t -test found that these means were not statistically significant, $d = 0.21$, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.43], $t(323) = -1.91$, $p < .06$.

Additionally, we conducted two exploratory analyses in SmartPLS to examine whether the path coefficients in our model differed for (1) male versus female participants, and (2) marketing majors versus other majors. We used the PLS multigroup analysis function to compare our groups of interest, and we compared bias-corrected confidence intervals for the group specific estimations of parameters in the path model to evaluate if there were significant differences between groups. According to Hair et al. (2017), the path coefficients between two groups are significantly different if the bias-corrected confidence intervals do not overlap.

Firstly, we compared path coefficients for male versus female participants. To conduct these analyses, we had to revise our model to exclude the moderating effect of applicant quality, since we found that the moderating effect did not contribute significantly to our model; however, since applicant quality had a significant direct effect on job pursuit intentions, we still included it as a latent variable in our revised model. The path coefficients for the various paths in the proposed model for male versus female participants are displayed in Table 4. Because the bias-correlated confidence intervals overlapped in each of these cases, we did not find there to be significant differences in the path coefficients for males versus female participants. Additionally, a test of significance for the PLS multigroup analysis indicated the differences were not

significant ($p > 0.29$) for all the path coefficient comparisons. However, we had a much smaller sample size of male participants ($N = 58$) than female participants ($N = 266$), and this resulted in uneven group sizes; thus, these results should be interpreted with that in mind, since multigroup analyses typically assume that group sizes are relatively equal (Hair et al., 2017).

Next, we compared path coefficients for marketing majors versus other majors among our participants. To conduct these analyses, we had to revise our model to exclude the moderating effect of applicant quality and the main effect of applicant quality, since the PLS multigroup analysis function indicated that it could not calculate differences between the groups with applicant quality included due to singular matrix problems (most likely due to the small sample size of our marketing majors group). The path coefficients for the various paths in the proposed model for marketing majors versus others majors are displayed in Table 5. Since the bias-correlated confidence intervals overlapped in the first two cases (for the path between the job ad manipulation and job pursuit intentions, and the job ad manipulation and anticipated organizational support), we did not find there to be significant differences in these path coefficients for marketing majors versus other majors.

For the path coefficient between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions, on the other hand, there appears to be a significant difference between these path coefficients, since the overlap in the confidence intervals was relatively small. Additionally, a test of significance (obtained from the PLS multigroup analysis) indicated the difference between groups in terms of path coefficients for the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions to be significant, $p < .01$, whereas the differences for the other path coefficient comparisons were not significant ($p > 0.22$). These results suggest that the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions is stronger

among participants who are marketing majors in comparison to participants who are majors in other disciplines. However, we had a much smaller sample size of participants who were marketing majors ($N = 43$) than participants who were majors in a discipline other than marketing ($N = 282$), and this resulted in uneven group sizes; thus, these results should be interpreted with that in mind.

Discussion

The purpose of our study was to examine whether the framing of job ad information could influence applicants' perceptions of how supportive and caring an organization is of its employees (i.e., anticipated organizational support), and in turn influence their job pursuit intentions. Additionally, our study examined whether applicant quality would moderate the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions. Firstly, we expected that emphasizing organizational supplies in a job ad (i.e., what the organization/job could offer to its employees) in contrast to organizational demands (i.e., what the organization/job required from its employees) would lead to greater subjective reports of anticipated organizational support among prospective job applicants. Our results provide support for this hypothesized relationship. Additionally, we investigated if anticipated organizational support would be positively correlated with job pursuit intentions, which our findings also support.

Moreover, we hypothesized that anticipated organizational support would act as a partial mediator in the relationship between the framing of job ad information and job pursuit intentions. We found partial support for this hypothesis, since our results indicated that anticipated organizational support fully mediated this relationship. Our original rationale for expecting only partial mediation was to be conservative given the exploratory nature of this hypothesis (i.e., few

studies have examined this relationship), and other studies have found that perceived fit was also a mediator in the relationship between job ad information and applicant attraction (e.g., Gully et al., 2013; Schmidt et al., 2015). It appears, however, that anticipated organizational support was a stronger driver in the relationship between the framing of job ad information and job pursuit intentions than we had expected.

To help explain why we found a statistically insignificant direct effect for the relationship between the framing of job ad information and job pursuit intentions, we considered it important to review our study design. One of the challenges with this type of research is ensuring that the manipulations were different enough for us to evaluate whether the framing of job ad information has an effect, while also trying to present information that is equally attractive to applicants across two job ad manipulations. To accomplish this, we held the information across our job ads constant, and only slightly changed the wording across our two job ad manipulations to emphasize either organizational supplies or organizational demands. For example, to emphasize organizational supplies, we indicated that successful applicants would have the opportunity to work on a variety of tasks and develop their skills in many areas, whereas to emphasize organizational demands, we indicated that successful applicants must be able to handle working on a variety of tasks that would require the use of several different skills. Thus, while the information presented across the manipulations is relatively the same, the framing (i.e., the wording) of the information differs slightly, such that the organizational supplies manipulation emphasizes that applicants *will have opportunities* for task variety and skill development whereas the organizational demands manipulation emphasizes that applicants *must be able to handle* task variety and skill development.

In addition, we ensured that the statements in both our job ad manipulations were created to appeal to applicants' basic psychologically needs as dictated by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), since one would expect that participants would find both job ad manipulations to be relatively attractive. This is consistent with our findings that prospective applicants' subjective reports of job pursuit intentions were skewed negatively (i.e., prospective applicants' reported job pursuit intentions were generally on the high-end of the rating scale), independent of whether the participants were exposed to the organizational supplies or organizational demands manipulation, and mean values for job pursuit intentions across the two manipulations were not statistically different from one another. Thus, while we did not hypothesize an insignificant direct effect, such a finding can lend support to the design of our study, and suggests that the job ad information provided across the two job ad manipulations were relatively equal in attractiveness (i.e., differences in the attractiveness of information provided across the job ad manipulations was not a confound).

Putting all of this together along with our finding of full mediation by anticipated organizational support, our results suggest that while the type and amount of information communicated in a job ad matters and can influence applicant attraction (Allen et al., 2007; Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016; Chapman et al., 2005; Gully et al., 2013), the framing of job ad information also matters. Specifically, framing job ads with an organizational supplies orientation can increase prospective applicants' perceptions of how supportive and caring the hiring organization is, which in turn is positively related to their job pursuit intentions.

Although increasing applicants' intentions to apply for open positions supports organization recruitment efforts, organizations want only highly qualified applicants to apply. Therefore, we also explored whether applicant quality would moderate the relationship between

anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions. Specifically, we hypothesized that this relationship would be stronger among higher quality applicants since these applicants are likely to be more selective of the jobs they apply for, and therefore may seek out jobs/organizations with attractive workplace characteristics based on high perceived organizational support (Ng et al., 2010; Ravlin & Meglino, 1989) and perceived need-supplies fit (Schmidt et al., 2015). Our results, however, did not provide support for this hypothesized relationship, but some issues with our measure could have contributed to our null findings.

For one, the outer weights for the items used to create our formative measure of applicant quality were relatively unstable (i.e., few of the items had statistically significant outer weights, and many contributed negatively to the construct). We could not rationalize removing any of the items, since they were created to map onto the required skills and qualifications that were listed in the job ad manipulations (e.g., minimum GPA requirements) to support its objectivity and relevance for the job being advertised. Moreover, we did not include perception measures of applicant quality (e.g., perceived marketability; Chapman & Webster, 2006), but in retrospect, these would have been useful to include in our study to at least examine whether there is a relationship between perceived and objective measures of applicant quality (i.e., did objectively qualified job applicants perceive themselves as being qualified for the job being advertised?). To our knowledge, research in this area has not yet been conducted.

Although we did not find that applicant quality moderated the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions, we did find a main effect of applicant quality on job pursuit intentions. These results suggest that higher quality applicants had greater intentions to pursue the job being advertised, independent of which job ad they

viewed. It is still important to keep in mind, however, that our measure of applicant quality was poor and that these results should be interpreted with caution.

In addition to applicant quality as a moderator, we conducted exploratory analyses to examine the potential moderating effects of gender and academic major. Although we found no statistically significant differences in our model's path coefficients for males versus females, we did find statistically significant differences for participants who were marketing majors in comparison to participants who were majors in another discipline (e.g., psychology, biology). Specifically, the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions was significantly stronger among marketing majors in comparison to other majors. This could potentially align with our hypothesis that applicant quality would moderate this relationship.

To elaborate, it is expected that an individual who is majoring in marketing would eventually pursue a marketing-related career. Additionally, having taken primarily marketing-related classes for their degree, they would likely have greater knowledge and skills related to marketing than individuals who majored in a degree outside of marketing (e.g., biology). If these individuals perceived that they had a strong skillset and knowledge related to marketing, they would probably also perceive themselves to be qualified for many entry-level marketing jobs (such as our advertised job). If they perceived themselves to be qualified for many entry-level marketing jobs, then they may be more selective in which jobs they would pursue. Therefore, tying this argument back to our original hypothesis, marketing majors would feel more qualified for our marketing job and therefore, would be more likely to seek out jobs/organizations that have attractive characteristics such as a supportive and caring work environment (Ravlin & Meglino, 1989). This relationship would not be as strong for other majors, since they are less

likely to have the skills and knowledge required for a marketing-related job and thus would have fewer marketing-related job opportunities to choose from.

Theoretical Implications. The present study contributes to the recruitment literature by demonstrating how the framing of job ad information differentially influences applicant attraction outcomes (e.g., job pursuit intentions). Although many studies have documented that applicant attraction increases when greater amounts of job and organizational information are provided to prospective job applicants (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Chapman et al., 2005; Gregory et al., 2013), few studies have examined how applicants' attitudinal perceptions of job and organizational information differentially affect applicant attraction outcomes.

Of the studies that have been conducted, researchers have typically focused on the mediating role of perceived fit (i.e., perceived person-environment fit, which is the perceived congruence between one's desires and/or abilities and the supplies and/or demands of the environment) in explaining how job and organizational information influence applicant attraction (e.g., Carlson, Connerly, & Mecham, 2002; Gully et al., 2013; Schmidt et al., 2015). However, since different types of job and organizational information can send a variety of signals to job applicants about the job/organization (Gregory et al., 2013), we investigated the mediating role of anticipated organizational support as an alternative mechanism in this relationship. Our results support the contention that while past research has found that perceived fit can help to explain why prospective applicants are more attracted to certain jobs and organizations (e.g., Schmidt et al., 2015), applicants' perceptions of how supportive and caring an organization is can also help to explain this phenomenon.

Furthermore, in research, parsimonious models are generally preferred over complex models for predicting important phenomena (e.g., Hair et al., 2017; Tinsley, 2000). Tinsley

(2000) proposed that more parsimonious models, such as present status models (e.g., models that ignore the desires of a worker/applicant and only focus on information about the supplies provided by the environment), have been found to be as predictive of work outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction and performance) as person-environment fit models. However, it is unclear under what circumstances this holds true and thus more research in this area is required. There has also been debate as to how best to measure the perceived fit of job applicants and employees, since there are many different dimensions to person-environment fit (e.g., person-organization fit, person-job fit, person-supervisor fit, needs-supplies fit, demands-abilities fit; Kristof, 1996; Piasentin & Chapman, 2006). This further complicates models of perceived fit and can render them less parsimonious than present status models (Piasentin & Chapman, 2006; Tinsley, 2000).

Additionally, since our findings indicate that anticipated organizational support acts as a mediating variable between job and organizational information and applicant attraction, the present study contributes to the literature on perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). As mentioned earlier, while many studies have investigated how perceived organizational support influences work outcomes among employed individuals (Kurtessis et al., 2017), few studies have examined how perceived organizational support influences recruitment outcomes (e.g., Casper & Buffardi 2004; Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012). Our findings suggest that applicants form perceptions about how much organizations care and support their employees based on job ad information, and this in turn influences their intentions to pursue employment with them. Specifically, greater anticipated organizational support was found to be positively correlated with job pursuit intentions.

This finding aligns with the existing literature on perceived organization support and its outcomes among employed individuals. A recent meta-analysis consisting of 237 effect sizes found a strong, positive correlation between perceived organizational support and affective commitment, $r = .60$, 95% CI [.60, .61] (Kurtessis et al., 2017), with affective commitment being defined as an employee's desire to remain with an organization and pursue organizational goals (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Thus, in the context of recruitment, if an applicant indicates that they have strong intentions of pursuing employment with an organization, this might suggest that they are also emotionally committed to pursuing the organization as an employer. However, to our knowledge, longitudinal research on how applicant attraction outcomes (e.g., job pursuit intentions) relate to work outcomes (e.g., affective commitment) has not yet been conducted, so this is potentially an area that warrants more research.

Finally, our study provides support for signaling theory (Spence, 1973). We found that prospective applicants seem to receive different signals based on the framing of information within the job ads. To elaborate, when job ad information is framed with an organizational supplies orientation, applicants perceive the employing organization to be more supportive and caring of its employees. In contrast, when job ad information is framed with an organizational demands orientation, applicants perceive the employing organization to be less supportive and caring of its employees. Future research should investigate other signals that applicants receive when viewing job ads (e.g., signals about organizational prestige, diversity). This research, in turn, can help us identify which signals are more likely to influence applicant attraction outcomes. In addition to these theoretical and research implications, this study contributes to recruitment practices.

Practical Implications. The results from our study emphasize that in order to attract job applicants, it is not only important to decide what kinds of job and organizational information to include in job ads, but that it is also important how that information is framed. This has practical value for employers who typically use job ads to help generate applicant pools. To elaborate, employers who wish to indirectly increase the size of their applicant pools (i.e., by eliciting greater perceptions of organizational support among applicants) may want to frame their job ads with an organizational supplies orientation. This can be done by including information about different psychological benefits that applicants can expect from the job being advertised and/or from the employing organization (e.g., opportunities to work autonomously, opportunities to build work-related competence, opportunities to work collaborative with others; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Moreover, results from the present study suggest that applicants who are earning a degree that matches the job (i.e. a marketing major applying for an entry level marketing position) pay more attention to signals about organizational support. To elaborate, exploratory analyses revealed that marketing majors' job pursuit intentions were more positively correlated with their perceptions of how supportive and caring the employing organization (i.e., a marketing company) is in comparison to non-marketing majors. Since these exploratory results provide preliminary support for the contention that the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions is stronger among qualified job applicants (at least from their academic training), providing information about psychological benefits (with an organizational supplies orientation) that applicants can expect from the job being advertised and the employing organization should help employers to attract not only a greater number of job applicants, but more qualified job applicants as well.

Lastly, while we did not investigate whether instrumental benefits (e.g., compensation, dependent care assistance, work schedule flexibility) could also indirectly increase applicant attraction outcomes, previous research suggests that including these types of benefits in job ads can also be helpful in increasing applicant pool sizes (Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012). However, smaller organizations may have difficulty competing with larger organizations in providing instrumental benefits (e.g., salary) to employees, whereas this is less of an issue when focusing on the psychological benefits (e.g., competence) that an organization can provide. Additionally, it is unclear which instrumental benefits are universal and which only appeal to a small subset of applicants, whereas there is ample support for the universality of basic psychological needs (Chen et al., 2015; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Tay & Diener, 2011). Thus, we suggest that smaller organizations focus on emphasizing psychological benefits with an organizational supplies orientation.

To summarize, we provide the following advice to employers on how to implement our research findings in a practical manner to potentially secure both a larger applicant pool and a higher quality applicant pool:

- (1) First, it is important to review your current job ads. You should be including information about the job demands/requirements, since this will help to weed out unqualified job applicants (Dineen & Williamson, 2012), but it is also crucial to identify points in your job ads where you can frame your job ad content to emphasize organizational supplies. You may need to add new components to your job ads, or you might be able to modify some of the job demands in your current job ads to take on an organizational supplies orientation.

- (2) Second, to help identify what organizational supplies information to include in your job ads, you would want to conduct interviews with or administer surveys to present employees of your organization. In these interviews/surveys, you should ask employees to identify a few (perhaps 3 to 4) different aspects of their jobs that they enjoy, and/or aspects of the organization that they value. Based on what you find from these interviews/surveys, you can then make decisions as to what organizational supplies information to include in your job ads, emphasizing key aspects of jobs/the organization that most employees enjoy and/or value. The results from these interviews/surveys are vital, since you would not want to include organizational supplies information in your job ads that are not reflective of the jobs being advertised and/or your organization. Research on realistic job previews supports this contention, whereby providing more information about what a job is actually like (as opposed to misinformation about job duties) is positively related to job satisfaction and employee turnover (Premack & Wanous, 1985).
- (3) Lastly, once you have identified the organization supplies information you want to emphasize in your job ads, it is important to consider how to balance this information with other information in your job ads. As previously mentioned, you want to have some information about job requirements/demands to weed out unqualified applicants. Thus, we encourage that you keep the ratio of job requirements/demands to organizational supplies information approximately the same, or have slightly less organizational supplies information. Having less organizational supplies information than job requirements/demands information might be the preferred approach, since research theory (i.e., the elaboration likelihood model; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986)

suggests that higher quality applicants are more motivated to read through job ads thoroughly than lesser quality job applicants. Thus, interspersing some organizational supplies information throughout your job ads could help to attract those higher quality job applicants, whereas lower quality job applicants might miss out on these pieces of information and be less attracted to the jobs being advertised.

Limitations and Future Directions. Although there were many strengths of our study design, there are also some limitations that should be addressed and acknowledged when interpreting the findings. The first potential issue concerns the generalizability of our findings to long-term job opportunities, since we created our job ad manipulations for a short-term summer position that we thought would be most relevant for students who were early on in completing their university degrees. While it is unclear whether we would find different results for long-term job opportunities, we expect that the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions would be stronger for a long-term job role.

To support this contention, previous research on the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions found very strong correlations between these variables among prospective applicants applying for a long-term position (i.e., the positions had no end date and there was no indication that the positions were only temporary), $r = .59$ (Casper & Buffardi, 2004) and $r = .75$ (Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012), whereas we found a relatively weaker relationship between these variables, $r = .25$. Considering the meta-analytic evidence that employees' perceptions of organizational support are correlated with job satisfaction, $r = .61$ (Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009), intentions to leave, $r = -.49$ (Riggle et al., 2009), and stress, $r = -.38$ (Kurtessis et al., 2017), we contend that applicants' initial perceptions of organizational support should be more correlated with their job pursuit intentions when searching

for long-term job opportunities because they will consider the potential long-term consequences of working for a less supportive organization (e.g., having to find a new job due to prolonged work-related stress). We suggest that more research be conducted to evaluate if length of employment acts as a moderator for the relationship between anticipated organizational support and job pursuit intentions.

Another limitation of our study was that we could not directly measure applicant behaviour (i.e., whether or not an applicant applied or did not apply for the job being advertised in across our two job ad manipulations). Instead, we measured applicants' job pursuit intentions, which is theorized to precede job pursuit behaviours according to Ajzen's (1985) theory of planned behaviour, but is not a perfect predictor of actual applicant behaviour. To elaborate, structural analyses from Highhouse et al. (2003)'s study revealed that applicant attraction preceded job pursuit intentions, which in turn preceded job pursuit behaviours. Furthermore, job pursuit intentions and actual job pursuit behaviours were highly positively correlated, $r = .44$ (Highhouse et al., 2003). Thus, future research should examine how anticipated organizational support influences actual applicant behaviours. With the increasing use of job ad websites (e.g. Indeed), research assessing the impact of these variables on job seeker applications is quite feasible.

Additionally, as previously mentioned in the results section, our formative measure of applicant quality was relatively unstable. Some concerns have also been raised regarding the validity and rationale behind using formative measures (Edwards, 2011). Specifically, Edwards (2011) suggests that the objectives of formative measures can often be fulfilled by creating measurement models that include a mixture of formative and reflective indicators. Including reflective indicators of applicant quality (e.g., perceived marketability; Chapman & Webster,

2006) would have also allowed us to assess the convergent validity of our formative applicant quality construct (Hair et al., 2017), allowing us to better assess the overall validity of our measurement model. Thus, future research should be conducted to evaluate applicant quality using a combination of reflective and formative indicators. This research will also contribute to the literature by shedding light on whether applicants' perceptions of their job marketability map onto objective indicators of their job marketability (i.e., quality as an applicant).

Another area for future research that we already touched upon was whether job information relating to instrumental supplies (e.g., dependent care assistance) in comparison to psychological supplies (e.g., autonomy) would differentially influence applicants' perceptions of organizational support. For example, Casper and Buffardi (2004) found that information about dependent care assistance (i.e., an instrumental gain; $r = .42$) had a stronger correlation with anticipated organizational support than information about work schedule flexibility (i.e., a psychological gain corresponding to autonomy; $r = .27$), providing some preliminary support for outcome differentiation between instrumental and psychological gains. Furthermore, it may also be of value for researchers to investigate whether instrumental or psychological gains are more important for individuals sitting at different career stages. To elaborate, someone who is just starting off their career may be more interested in jobs/organizations that emphasize opportunities for developing new skills (i.e., psychological gains). On the other hand, someone who has followed the same career path for several years and already has ample career-related experience may be more interested in job/organizations that emphasize instrumental gains (e.g., dependent care assistance, salary).

In summary, based on our findings and study limitations, we propose the following research directions for the recruitment and/or perceived organizational support literatures:

- (1) Investigating the amount of congruence between perceived marketability (i.e., perceived applicant quality) and objective applicant quality to improve current measures of applicant quality
- (2) Examining whether anticipated organizational support is as predictive of recruitment outcomes as perceived fit, and under what circumstances (i.e., examining moderators of these relationships such as length of employment or career stage, for example)
- (3) Conducting longitudinal research to further understand how applicant attraction outcomes relate to work outcomes (e.g., does greater initial attraction to a job/organization predict affective commitment among employees?)
- (4) Exploring other signals that applicants receive from job ads to identify which signals are most predictive of applicant attraction outcomes (e.g., signals about organizational prestige, diversity, rigidity of structure)
- (5) Examining the extent to which anticipated organizational support influences applicant behaviours (i.e., applying for a job, job choice) among a sample of actual job seekers
- (6) Exploring if instrumental supplies (e.g., dependent care assistance) in comparison to psychological supplies (e.g., autonomy) would differentially influence anticipated organizational support among job applicants

Conclusion

As a summary of our major findings, our study revealed that a job ad emphasizing information about organizational supplies (i.e., what the organization has to offer to its employees) led to greater reports of anticipated organizational support among prospective job applicants when compared to a job ad emphasizing information about organizational demands (i.e., what the organization requires from its employees). Additionally, anticipated organizational

support was found to be positively associated with applicants' job pursuit intentions. Putting these two findings together, our analyses revealed that anticipated organizational support fully mediated the relationship between job ad emphasis (i.e., organizational supplies versus organizational demands) and job pursuit intentions. To make practical use of our research findings, employers should focus on framing their job ads with an organizational supplies orientation to attract more applicants.

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Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and Spearman correlations with confidence intervals with outlier included

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Job ad manipulation ¹						
2. Manipulation check	2.26	0.99	.21** [.11, .31]			
3. Anticipated organizational support	3.32	0.49	.27** [.17, .37]	.42** [.33, .51]	.80 [.77, .84]	
4. Job pursuit intentions	3.42	0.67	.12 [.01, .22]	.05 [-.06, .16]	.25** [.14, .35]	.85 [.83, .88]
5. Applicant quality	3.56	0.51	.04 [-.07, .15]	-.05 [-.16, .06]	.04 [-.07, .15]	.19** [.08, .29]

Note. ** indicates $p < .01$. ¹ Our job ad manipulations were dummy coded, such that the demands-oriented job ad manipulation was coded 0 and the supplies-oriented job ad manipulation was coded 1. All scale items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). Cronbach's alphas are along the diagonal. A Cronbach's alpha value was not included for applicant quality, which is a formative measure and therefore correlations between the scale items are not expected (Podsakoff, Shen, & Podsakoff, 2006).

Table 2

Outer loadings for anticipated organizational support (AOS) and job pursuit intention items (JPI), and outer weights for applicant quality items

Variable	Item	Outer loading/weight
Anticipated organizational support	AOS1	0.77** [.70, .82]
	AOS2	0.78** [.72, .83]
	AOS3	0.74** [.65, .80]
	AOS4	0.78** [.69, .83]
	AOS5	0.70** [.60, .77]
Job pursuit intentions	JPI1	0.83** [.77, .87]
	JPI3	0.87** [.83, .90]
	JPI4	0.65** [.55, .74]
	JPI5	0.86** [.82, .89]
	JPI6	0.56** [.42, .67]
	JPI7	0.81** [.75, .85]
	Applicant quality	Customer service
Marketing		0.40** [.23, .67]
Powerpoint		0.80** [.41, 1.24]
Word		-0.37 [-.88, .12]
Excel		-0.01 [-.39, .36]
Facebook		0.42* [.05, .77]
Twitter		0.30 [-.09, .73]
Instagram		-0.11 [-.54, .35]
GPA	-0.02 [-.34, .33]	

Note. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% bias-corrected accelerated confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014).

Table 3

Path coefficients for the defined paths in the proposed model

Path	Path coefficient
Job ad manipulation → JPI	.03 [-.08, .13]
Job ad manipulation → AOS	.28** [.16, .37]
AOS → JPI	.24** [.14, .34]
Applicant quality → JPI	.28** [.13, .34]

Note. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% bias-corrected accelerated confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014).

Table 4

Path coefficients for the defined paths in the proposed model for male versus female participants (i.e., multigroup analysis)

Path	Path coefficient (females)	Path coefficient (males)
Job ad manipulation → JPI	.02 [-.09, .12]	.18 [-.03, .43]
Job ad manipulation → AOS	.27 [.14, .37]	.34 [.05, .51]
AOS → JPI	.24 [.13, .35]	.17 [-.07, .38]
Applicant quality → JPI	.28 [.11, .35]	.48 [-.08, .60]

Note. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% bias-corrected accelerated confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014).

Table 5

Path coefficients for the defined paths in the proposed model for marketing versus other majors (i.e., multigroup analysis)

Path	Path coefficient (marketing majors)	Path coefficient (other majors)
Job ad manipulation → JPI	-.17 [-.49, .19]	.01 [-.11, .13]
Job ad manipulation → AOS	.36 [.08, .55]	.27 [.16, .37]
AOS → JPI	.67 [.20, .83]	.27 [.14, .36]

Note. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% bias-corrected accelerated confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014).

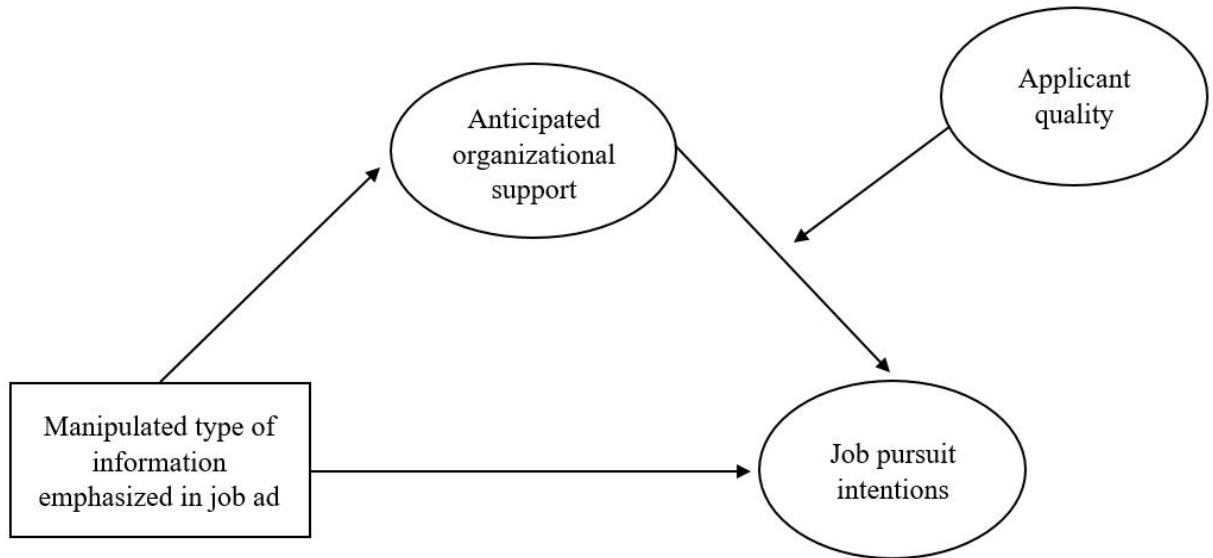


Figure 1. Hypothesized conditional process model for the relationship between the manipulated type of information emphasized in a job ad (i.e., organizational supplies versus organizational demands) and job pursuit intentions, whereby anticipated organizational support acts as a mediator and applicant quality acts as a moderator.

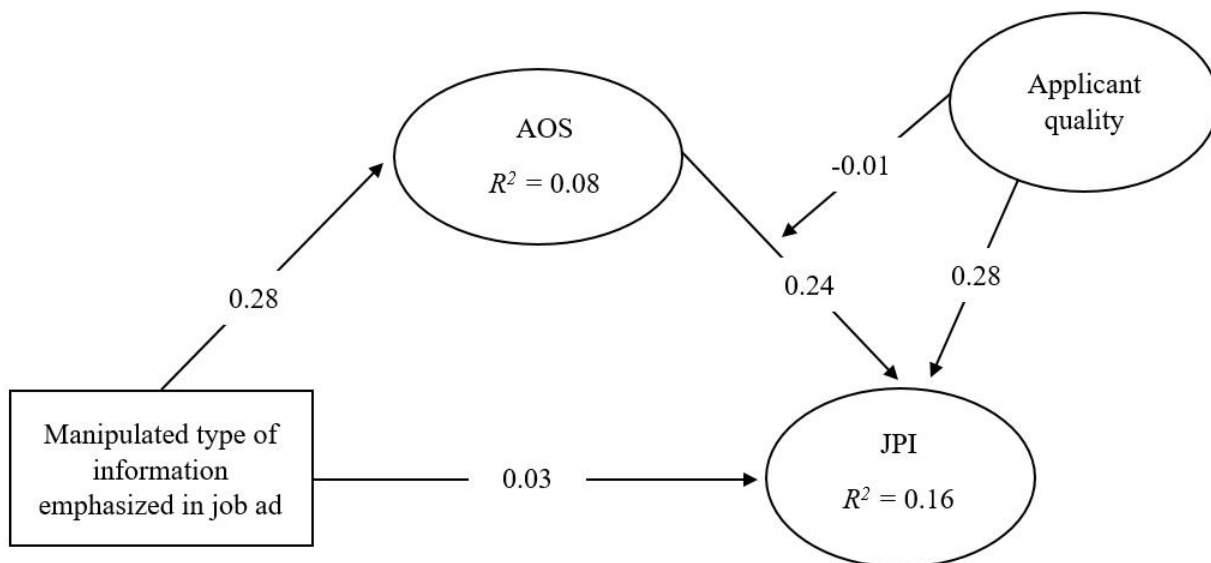


Figure 2. Proposed structural model with R^2 values displayed within the latent variables, and path coefficients displayed between latent variables.

Appendix A

Job ad with organizational supplies orientation

POSITION SUMMARY

Located in Guelph, Ontario, our company specializes in online marketing for small businesses. We harness the influence of social media, brand development, and online advertising to give local businesses the tools and services they need to increase customer engagement.

Our company is seeking highly motivated undergraduate students who are interested in gaining valuable work experience over the summer. We currently have a summer job opening (May to September) for a full-time marketing assistant.

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Scheduling and booking appointments
- Updating and maintaining social media pages
- Proofreading and editing
- Scanning and printing materials
- Maintaining financial records for marketing campaign costs

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Applicants should have a minimum cumulative GPA of 70%
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Experience with popular social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Previous experience in marketing and/or customer service is preferred

In addition to the qualifications and technical expertise that we require for this role, our company has much to offer to our employees. Specifically, you will have the opportunity to work on a variety of tasks and develop your skills in many areas. Additionally, this job will provide you with the freedom to decide how you accomplish your work since you will have the opportunity to complete many of your tasks with minimal supervision. Finally, the successful candidate will join a friendly group of team players where members go the extra mile to help each other out.

Job ad with organizational demands orientation

POSITION SUMMARY

Located in Guelph, Ontario, our company specializes in online marketing for small businesses. We harness the influence of social media, brand development, and online advertising to give local businesses the tools and services they need to increase customer engagement.

Our company is seeking highly motivated undergraduate students who are interested in gaining valuable work experience over the summer. We currently have a summer job opening (May to September) for a full-time marketing assistant.

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Scheduling and booking appointments
- Updating and maintaining social media pages
- Proofreading and editing
- Scanning and printing materials
- Maintaining financial records for marketing campaign costs

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Applicants should have a minimum cumulative GPA of 70%
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Experience with popular social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Previous experience in marketing and/or customer service is preferred

In addition to the qualifications and technical expertise that we require for this role, our company also requires that employees possess several characteristics. Specifically, the successful applicant must be able to handle working on a variety of tasks that will require the use of several different skills. Additionally, the successful applicant must be a self-starter who can initiate and complete tasks with minimal instruction or supervision. Finally, the successful applicant must be friendly and a team player who will go the extra mile to help other employees.

Appendix B

Demands-Abilities Fit (Job)

In addition to the technical expertise that is essential for this role, this position requires that employees possess a number of characteristics. Specifically, the successful applicant will have excellent written and verbal communication skills and be a motivated, self-starter who is able to complete tasks in a timely manner. Job incumbents will also be required to show initiative in prioritizing tasks and carrying them through to completion. Finally, we are seeking people who want to contribute to the collective effort of their group and are committed to helping XX and the project team achieve their goals. If you feel that you are a fit for this role, please apply through the link below.

Demands-Abilities Fit (Organization)

In addition to the technical expertise that is essential for this role, XX seeks employees that possess a number of characteristics. Specifically, we have developed some guiding principles that will allow XX to continuously grow while sustaining a positive corporate environment. These principles require that XX personnel are committed to ethical conduct and strive for a healthy and safe work environment. It is also important for XX personnel to value diversity within the organization, respect the communities in which we live and work, and endeavor protect the environment whenever possible. Finally, XX seeks people who are interested in constantly expanding their skill set and developing their potential. If you feel that you will fit within our organizational culture, please apply for this position through the link below.

Needs-Supplies Fit (Job)

In addition to the technical expertise that we require for this role, this position can offer you satisfying work and opportunities to further develop your career. First, you will have the opportunity to work on a variety of tasks and develop your skills in many areas. The job will also provide you with autonomy as you will be required to complete tasks with minimal supervision. This position is on a large and important project for XX so the successful applicant will have the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the organization and see the project through to its completion. Furthermore, superior performers are also given many opportunities for advancement within the organization. If the opportunities offered by this position are appealing to you, please apply through the link below.

Needs-Supplies Fit (Organization)

In addition to the technical expertise that we require for this role, XX has a lot to offer its personnel. Our organization seeks to hire friendly and positive staff members, which translates into an environment where team members go the extra mile to help each other out. We also seek to ensure that all personnel are treated ethically, that we respect the diversity of each individual, and that all employees are provided with opportunities to develop their talents and reach their potential. Furthermore, XX is striving to protect the environment and give back to the communities where we live and work; small steps that we hope will go a long way to improving the lives of those we contact.

Appendix C

1. Is the content in this job ad comparable to other job ads you have seen (i.e., is it realistic)? Please use the following scale to respond to this item.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all comparable				Very comparable

2. Compared to other online job ads you have seen, how does the length of this job ad compare? Participants will be asked to respond to this survey item using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = “Much shorter” to 5 = “Much longer”).

1	2	3	4	5
Much shorter than other job ads				Much longer than other job ads

3. According to self-determination theory, one of the three basic needs which motivates people is the **need for competence**. The **need for competence** is defined as the desire to master one’s environment (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Competence need satisfaction has been measured using items such as: “I have been able to learn interesting new skills on my job” and “On my job I do not get much of a chance to show how capable I am (reverse scored)” (Deci et al., 2001; Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, & Ryan, 1993; Kasser, Davey, & Ryan, 1992).

Please rate the degree to which each of the statements below is consistent with the definition and competence need satisfaction items given above:

- a. The successful applicant will be able to handle working on a variety of tasks that will require the use of several different skills.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all consistent				Very consistent

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it more consistent with the definition and example competence need satisfaction items provided above? (open-ended, optional)

b. You will be able to work on a variety of tasks and develop your skills in many areas

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all consistent				Very consistent

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it more consistent with the definition and example competence need satisfaction items provided above? (open-ended, optional)

4. According to self-determination theory, one of the three basic needs which motivates people is the **need for autonomy**. The **need for autonomy** is defined as the desire to act with volition and to have choice over one's behaviours and outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

Autonomy need satisfaction has been measured using items such as: "I feel like I can make a lot of inputs to deciding how my job gets done" and "When I am at work, I have to do what I am told (reverse keyed)" (Deci et al., 2001; Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, & Ryan, 1993; Kasser, Davey, & Ryan, 1992).

Please rate the degree to which each of the statements below is consistent with the definition and autonomy need satisfaction items given above:

- a. This job will provide you with the freedom to decide how you accomplish your work since you will complete many of your tasks with minimal supervision

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all consistent				Very consistent

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it more consistent with the definition and example autonomy need satisfaction items provided above? (open-ended, optional)

- b. The successful applicant will be a self-starter who can initiate and complete tasks with minimal instruction or supervision

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all consistent				Very consistent

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it more consistent with the definition and example autonomy need satisfaction items provided above? (open-ended, optional)

5. According to self-determination theory, one of the three basic needs which motivates people is the **need for relatedness**. The **need for relatedness** is defined as the desire to feel connected with others (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

Relatedness need satisfaction has been measured using items such as: “I really like the people I work with” and “People at work are pretty friendly towards me” (Deci et al., 2001; Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, & Ryan, 1993; Kasser, Davey, & Ryan, 1992).

Please rate the degree to which each of the statements below is consistent with the definition and relatedness need satisfaction items given above:

- a. The successful applicant will be friendly and a team player who will go the extra mile to help other employees accomplish their work and meet their goals

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all consistent				Very consistent

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it more consistent with the definition and example relatedness need satisfaction items provided above? (open-ended, optional)

- b. Our company seeks to hire friendly and team-oriented staff members, which translates into a collegial team environment where members go the extra mile to help each other out

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all consistent				Very consistent

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it more consistent with the definition and example relatedness need satisfaction items provided above? (open-ended, optional)

6. Please rate the extent to which you perceive each of the following statements to be an organizational demand (i.e., what the company requires from you as an employee) versus an organizational supply (i.e., what the company can offer you as an employee).

- a. You will be able to work on a variety of tasks and develop your skills in many areas.

1	2	3	4	5
Organizational demand		Neutral		Organizational supply

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it seem more like an organizational supply? (open-ended, optional)

- b. This job will provide you with the freedom to decide how you accomplish your work since you will complete many of your tasks with minimal supervision.

1	2	3	4	5
Organizational demand		Neutral		Organizational supply

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it seem more like an organizational supply? (open-ended, optional)

- c. Our company seeks to hire friendly and team-oriented staff members, which translates into a collegial team environment where members go the extra mile to help each other out.

1	2	3	4	5
Organizational demand		Neutral		Organizational supply

If you scored the item less than 5, how can we modify this statement to make it seem more like an organizational supply? (open-ended, optional)

- d. The successful applicant will be able to handle working on a variety of tasks that will require the use of several different skills.

1	2	3	4	5
Organizational demand		Neutral		Organizational supply

If you scored the item more than 1, how can we modify this statement to make it seem more like an organizational demand? (open-ended, optional)

-
- e. The successful applicant will be a self-starter who can initiate and complete tasks with minimal instruction or supervision.

1	2	3	4	5
Organizational demand		Neutral		Organizational supply

If you scored the item more than 1, how can we modify this statement to make it seem more like an organizational demand? (open-ended, optional)

- f. The successful applicant will be friendly and a team player who will go the extra mile to help other employees accomplish their work and meet their goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Organizational demand		Neutral		Organizational supply

If you scored the item more than 1, how can we modify this statement to make it seem more like an organizational demand? (open-ended, optional)

Appendix D

Unmodified anticipated organizational support scale (Holliday Wayne & Casper, 2012)

1. If I were working at this company, I would feel supported at work
2. This company does little to support its employees (reverse scored)
3. This company provides adequate support for its employees
4. This company treats its employees well
5. This company cares about its employees

Modified anticipated organizational support scale

Instructions: The following questions concern your feelings about the marketing assistant job and company advertised in the job posting that you just read. Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements based on what you learned about the job and employer from the job posting. Remember that your responses to these questions will not be shared with the employer. Please use the following scale in responding to the items.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree		neutral		strongly agree

1. If I were working at this company, I would feel supported at work
2. This company does little to support its employees (reverse scored)
3. This company provides adequate support for its employees
4. This company treats its employees well
5. This company cares about its employees

Appendix E

Unmodified job pursuit intentions scale (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001)

1. I would accept a job offer from this company
2. I would request more information about this company
3. If this company visited campus I would want to speak with a representative
4. I would attempt to gain an interview with this company
5. I would actively pursue obtaining a position with this company
6. If this company was at a job fair I would seek out their booth

Modified job pursuit intentions scale

Instructions: The following questions concern your feelings about the marketing assistant job and company advertised in the job posting that you just read. Please indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements based on what you learned about the job and employer from the job posting. Remember that your responses to these questions will not be shared with the employer. Please use the following scale in responding to the items.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree		neutral		strongly agree

1. I would apply for this job
2. I would only accept a job offer from this company as a last resort (reverse keyed)
- ~~3. I would request more information about this company³~~
4. If this company visited campus I would want to speak with a representative
5. I would attempt to gain an interview with this company
6. I would actively pursue obtaining a position with this company
7. If this company was at a job fair I would seek out their booth

³ Based on the results from our PLS-SEM measurement model analyses, we removed this item from the scale and re-analyzed the data without it

Appendix F

Objective measure of applicant quality

1. What is your cumulative GPA? (Please estimate if you are unsure)
 - a. 59.9% or below (scored as 1)
 - b. Between 60.0 to 69.9% (scored as 2)
 - c. Between 70.0 to 79.9% (scored as 3)
 - d. Between 80.0 to 89.9% (scored as 4)
 - e. 90.0% or above (scored as 5)

2. How proficient are you with each of the following software?
Please use the following scale in responding to the items.

	1	2	3	4	5		
	not at all proficient		moderately proficient		extremely proficient		
a. Microsoft Excel			1	2	3	4	5
b. Microsoft Word			1	2	3	4	5
c. Microsoft PowerPoint			1	2	3	4	5
d. Facebook			1	2	3	4	5
e. Twitter			1	2	3	4	5
f. Instagram			1	2	3	4	5

3. Do you have experience working a marketing-related job?
 - Yes
 - No (scored as 1)

If yes, for how long did you retain a marketing-related job?

- a. 4 months or less (scored as 2)
- b. Between 4 to 8 months (scored as 3)
- c. Between 8 to 12 months (scored as 4)
- d. 1 year or more (scored as 5)

4. Do you have experience working a customer service-related job?
 - Yes
 - No (scored as 1)

If yes, for how long did you retain a customer service-related job?

- a. 4 months or less (scored as 2)
- b. Between 4 to 8 months (scored as 3)
- c. Between 8 to 12 months (scored as 4)
- d. 1 year or more (scored as 5)

Appendix G

Model

Objective

Target Power

Minimum N

Maximum N

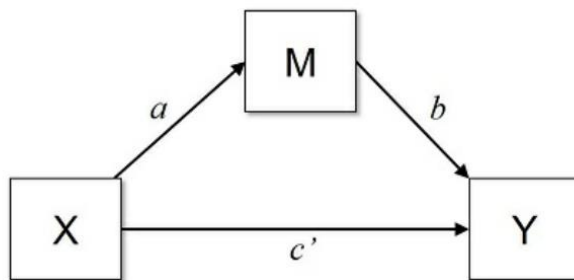
Sample Size Steps

of Replications

Monte Carlo Draws per Rep

Random Seed

Confidence Level (%)



Input Method

	X	M	Y
X	1.00		
M	<input type="text" value="0.16"/>	1.00	
Y	<input type="text" value="0.16"/>	<input type="text" value="0.52"/>	1.00
Std. Deviation	<input type="text" value="0.5"/>	<input type="text" value="0.71"/>	<input type="text" value="0.81"/>