

WHERE HAS MY RECRUITER GONE?
THE EFFECTS OF TRUSTWORTHY RECRUITER BEHAVIOR
ON APPLICANT JOB INTENTIONS

by

Caleb D. McLaughlin

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Judith Van Hein

Dr. Patrick McCarthy

Dr. Mark Frame

I dedicate this research to Mark, Mike (Coach), Pete, Erick, the Ryans, and Matt from Provisions Group, for helping me and countless others discover their potential.

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ABSTRACT

Research has shown that characteristics of recruiters impact job applicant attitudes, and suggests that these effects change throughout the recruiting lifecycle. This study included 220 participants, and the results of this study indicate that applicants' recruiter perceptions develop throughout the recruitment process, and predict intentions to pursue a job. Recruiter trustworthiness predicted job pursuit intentions in stage 1 of recruitment, the initial conversations and job application, stage 2, the interviews, and stage 3, the time following the final interview. Recruiter timeliness accounted for the most variance in these job pursuit intentions in stage 2, and recruiter helpfulness accounted for the most variance in stage 3. Recruiter trustworthiness mediated the relationship between timeliness, helpfulness and job pursuit intentions in stage 1, between timeliness and job intentions in stage 2, and between helpfulness and job intentions in stage 3, indicating recruiter behaviors impact applicant intentions by building an open and honest relationship.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

History of Recruiting Research

Decades of research has shown that job-applicant attitudes, intentions, and behaviors are significantly related to a variety of factors pertaining to recruitment practices and recruiters themselves (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). Such factors include the characteristics of recruiters and organizational representatives (e.g., Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991), applicant attitudes such as attraction to an organization (e.g., Chapman et al., 2005; Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003), and information provided to the applicant regarding the job and the organization (i.e. Chapman et al., 2005; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987; Thorsteinson, Palmer, Wulff, & Anderson, 2004).

In fact, a recent meta-analysis, conducted by Chapman et al. (2005) found that these and several other recruiter and recruitment characteristics predicted applicants' attraction to organizations as well as their intentions to pursue and accept a specific job offer. The study also found that job pursuit intentions then predicted applicants' final job choice. Furthermore, medium effect sizes for the impact of recruiter and recruitment characteristics were found, signifying that applicants who perceived various types or amounts of these characteristics noticeably differed in their job pursuit intentions and job choice. Yet, with so many recruitment-related variables influencing job-applicant attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, it is crucial for organizations to understand what is uniquely important to attracting the most qualified job applicants during the recruitment process.

Definition of Recruitment

Before elaborating on the recruitment practices of interest to the current study, it is important to first define what is meant by “recruiting.” Rynes et al. (1991) provided a somewhat broad perspective in their definition of recruiting, emphasizing that it “encompass[es] all organizational practices and decisions that affect either the number, or types, of individuals that are willing to apply for, or to accept, a given vacancy” (p. 429). In her book, *Recruiting Employees: Individual and Organizational Perspectives*, Barber (1998) provided another definition of recruitment stating that “recruitment includes those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” (Barber, 1998; p. 5). While relevant to recruiting literature and practice, these definitions are too broadly interpretable for the purposes of the current study. However, Breugh (1992) proposed a definition more directly relevant to recruiting behaviors and characteristics. He proposed that any organizational or recruiter practice is indeed *recruitment* to the extent that it “(1) influence[s] the number and/or types of applicants who apply for a position and/or (2) affect[s] whether a job offer is accepted” (p. 4). This definition focuses on applicant experiences and interactions with recruiters, while also implying that recruiting efforts continue throughout the entire recruitment process, until a job offer is accepted or declined. As the current research will focus on recruiter behaviors that influence job applicants’ intentions to pursue and accept job offers, the Breugh (1992) recruiting definition will be used as context for the present study.

Stages of Recruitment

Despite a seemingly straight-forward recruitment definition, it is evident from the recruiting research that the relationships between job applicant outcomes and recruiter characteristics and behaviors change throughout the *stages* of the full recruitment process. This concept has been empirically supported in various longitudinal studies on job applicant recruitment (e.g., Boswell, Roehling, LePine, & Moynihan, 2003; Carless, 2005). The “stage of the recruitment process,” refers to the natural division of recruitment activities into meaningful phases or steps. For example, the first stage of recruitment involves initial conversations between recruiters and applicants or potential applicants, while the final stage of recruitment is more likely to involve the applicant accepting or declining a job offer.

Researchers have differed on the way they operationalize these “stages of recruitment” for study. Breugh and Starke (2000) have been influential in outlining the recruitment process and proposed a 5-stage model that incorporates the recruitment process itself as well as the planning and evaluation stages. Their model is as follows: Stage 1, setting recruitment objectives such as the skills and the number of employees needed; Stage 2, developing recruitment strategy includes “where to recruit” and the “message” the organization wants communicated; Stage 3, initial recruitment activities such as first contact, campus visits, and initial phone-calls to candidates; Stage 4, the interviewing stage which includes first, second, etc., and final interviews; Stage 5, recruitment outcomes which includes job offers and hires, offer rejections, time to fill positions, etc.

Other researchers (Barber, 1998; Carless, 2005; Rynes & Barber, 1990) have taken to a three-stage model, which includes *only* the recruitment activities that involve direct communications and interactions between recruiters the job applicants themselves. The present study will use the 3-stage model proposed by Rynes and Barber (1990) as an organizing framework, as it is more directly relevant to the variables included in this study which only involve behaviors and interactions of recruiters and applicants. This 3-stage model is as follows: Stage 1: Initial recruitment of applicants; Stage 2: Interviewing of applicants; Stage 3: Job offer and acceptance or rejection.

Why is it so important for organizations and recruiters to understand how the *stage of the recruitment process* impacts job applicant intentions? To begin with, while it is known that job pursuit intentions *and* job acceptance intentions predict applicant job choice (Chapman et al., 2005), it is unknown if the intentions formed during individual stages of the recruitment process predict the final job choice, or whether it is potentially *only* intentions formed in later stages of the process which predict job choice. Similarly, certain recruiter variables, such as *recruiter timeliness* have been shown to predict job choice, but only when studied in the third stage of the recruitment process, that is, the job offer stage (Arvey, Gordon, Massengill, & Mussio, 1975; Becker et al., 2010). The importance of these and other recruitment variables during each individual recruitment stage is still unknown.

A better understanding of this dynamic would be beneficial to the decision-making literature. The results of the current study will shed light on how job applicants create job pursuit intentions and then make decisions based on factors that may be present and may vary at different stages of recruitment. Organizations and particularly recruiting

firms would benefit from this knowledge as well. An understanding of the factors that impact job applicant intentions and *when* these factors are most important will allow recruiters and organizations to focus on only the most important aspects of recruitment during the stage when they are shown to be important to the applicant. While this would serve to direct recruiting efforts on effective practices throughout the process, it would also increase the utility of the process by cutting out unnecessary recruiter efforts and behaviors during recruitment stages when they are not needed, and ensuring the important recruiter behaviors are enacted during the stages in which they significantly impact applicant intentions and decisions.

In the following sections, other recruiter characteristics and behaviors which are relevant to the present study will be discussed. As these are discussed, examples will be provided to illustrate how each of these recruiter behaviors or characteristics change across the three stages of the recruitment process. These examples are intended to provide a context for the current research, as the way recruiters influence job applicants' behaviors *throughout the full recruitment process* is of key importance to this study and will impact this study's data analysis method.

Recruiter Characteristics and Behaviors

Research tells us that a wide variety of recruiter characteristics and practices affect job applicant outcomes during any of these three stages of recruitment (Chapman et al., 2005). For instance, *recruiter timeliness, helpfulness, trustworthiness*, and job or organizational pursuit intentions have all been shown to correlate with organizational attraction, job pursuit intentions, and job pursuit *behaviors* (Chapman et al., 2005;

Highhouse et al., 2003). These are in fact the variables of interest to this study, and they are discussed further in the following sections.

Recruiter Timeliness

Recruiter timeliness is a construct which has been operationalized in many ways (Arvey et al., 1975; Becker, Connolly, & Slaughter, 2010; Carless & Hetherington, 2011; Rynes et al., 1991; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987). For instance, recruiter timeliness has been measured as the objective amounts of time between the communications of information from a recruiter to an applicant (Becker et al., 2010; Rynes et al., 1991). Recruiter timeliness has also been objectively measured as the amount of time between *stages of the recruitment process* (Arvey et al., 1975; Becker et al., 2010; Carless & Hetherington, 2011). Yet, research on recruiter timeliness has shown that it is the applicant's *perceptions* of recruiter timeliness and responsiveness that more often have significant effects on applicant attitudes and intentions (Rynes et al., 1991; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987). Accordingly, in the present study, timeliness will be operationalized as the job applicants' *perceptions of recruiter timeliness* (herein referred to as "recruiter timeliness"), and specifically as the extent to which the recruiter was willing to provide prompt responses and service to the applicant (Lam, 1997; Swider, 2012).

However, perceptions of timeliness and the extent of their impact on job applicant behaviors may change depending on the stage of the recruitment process during which those perceptions are formed. For example, it may be very important to *quickly* extend an official job offer to an applicant as soon as you know they are your candidate of choice; that is, recruiter timeliness would be very important in stage 3 of recruitment. But would the job applicants' perceptions of timeliness during the interview stage be *as* important?

Would recruiter timeliness also be important to the job applicant during stage 2 of the process? This study intends to explore this gap in our understanding of recruitment practices.

Recruiter Helpfulness

Recruiter helpfulness has been compared to recruiter warmth, competence, friendliness, and informativeness (DeBell, Montgomery, McCarthy, Lanthier, 1998; Harn & Thornton, 1985), and research has shown that these “helpful” characteristics have significant impacts on job applicant outcomes. These helpful characteristics are typically perceived by job applicants as a result of helpful recruiter *actions* or *behaviors*. Indeed, many recruiters today have taken to adopting certain practices which have traditionally been provided by outplacement firms or career service centers (Alewell & Hauff, 2013; DeWitt, Trevino, & Mollica, 1998), such as résumé advice, interviewing tips, job search assistance, and professional skills training or certification recommendations. DeWitt et al. (1998) found that a large, multi-division public utilities organization who offered these types of career or outplacement services to various divisions in their organization reduced turnover intentions and increased affective commitment in the divisions receiving the services. However, these types of “helpful behaviors” (e.g., résumé or interview advice) and their effects on job applicants have yet to be thoroughly studied in the context of recruitment. Therefore, this study aims to provide insight into the effects of these “*recruiter helping behaviors*,” (herein referred to as “recruiter helpfulness”)

As with recruiter timeliness, recruiter helpfulness and its influence on job applicant intentions might also change across the three stages of the recruitment process. For instance, a recruiter might offer the job applicant advice on their résumé prior to them

even applying for the job. However, if this advice is offered, it would likely only occur in stage 1 of the recruitment process. But if a recruiter were to help by providing the applicant feedback on their interviews, this would not occur until at least stage 2 of recruitment. Therefore, the impact that the *stage of the recruitment process* has on perceptions of recruiter helpfulness will also be assessed in this study.

Recruiter Trustworthiness

Perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness is a more commonly studied characteristic in the recruitment literature (e.g., Breugh & Starke, 2000; Cable and Turban, 2001; Slaughter, Turban, & Cable, 2014). Fortunately, measures of trustworthiness perceptions have been around for some time (Fisher, Ilgen, & Hoyer, 1979). Recruitment research has shown that perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness are important to effective recruiting, as the information provided from the recruiter to the applicant will be more likely to hold value if it is perceived as honest and believable (Breugh & Starke, 2000; Turban et al., 2014). Furthermore, applicants will make inferences about an organization based on how trustworthy organizational representatives are perceived to be (Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, & Mohr, 2004). In this study, *perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness* (herein referred to as “recruiter trustworthiness”) will be defined as the extent to which the recruiter is perceived as telling the truth about the job and organization as they see it, and as being genuinely honest in their intentions in their interactions with job applicants.

Applicants’ perceptions of trustworthiness and the extent to which they impact applicant behavior may also change from stage to stage of the recruitment process. Some research implies that a recruiter’s trustworthiness is more important at the beginning stages of the recruitment process before the applicant “gets to know” the organization

(Kaur & Dubey, 2014; Thorsteinson et al., 2004). Conversely, as the applicant becomes better acquainted with the company, it is possible that the trustworthiness as well as general helpfulness of the recruiter become less important. In fact, Taylor and Bergmann (1987) found that recruiter characteristics had greater impacts on applicant outcomes earlier on in the recruitment interactions, and job and organizational characteristics had stronger impacts at the end of the recruitment process. But, what happened in-between? Some research has found that although recruiter characteristics seem to have less of an impact on applicant intentions in the final stages of the recruitment process, recruiter timeliness *still* has a significant relationship with applicant intentions to accept a job offer (e.g., Arvey et al., 1975; Becker et al., 2010). To explore this phenomenon, the current study will test the impact of several critical recruiter characteristics on applicant job intentions, at three separate stages of the recruitment process.

While recruiter timeliness and helpfulness relate more directly to behaviors the recruiter may engage in, recruiter trustworthiness relates more directly to an overall assessment made about the recruiter and their behavior. It would seem plausible that helpful recruiter behaviors or *quick* responses from recruiters to job applicant inquiries may affect how *trustworthy* the recruiter is perceived to be. Therefore, recruiter trustworthiness may mediate the effects of both timeliness and helpfulness on applicant job pursuit intentions.

Trustworthiness Mediation across Three Stage Models

Much of the existing recruitment research has examined how organizational and job characteristics might mediate the relationship from recruiter behaviors to applicant attitudes and actions (e.g. Carless & Hetherington, 2011). However, as Sara Rynes (1980)

has argued, there is much value to be gained in understanding how recruiter behaviors and characteristics impact applicant attitudes and intentions, and suggests the existence of mediating variables. Therefore, the current study seeks to extend the knowledge of recruitment and applicant behaviors by examining the potential mediating effects of *perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness*. Additionally, much of the current research on recruiting has tended to focus on one specific stage of the recruitment process, such as the only the initial recruiter interaction (e.g., Carless & Imber, 2007) or only the job offer stage (e.g., Becker et al., 2010). As such, this study will also examine whether recruiter trustworthiness mediates the relationship between recruiter characteristics' (i.e., recruiter timeliness and helpfulness) and applicant job pursuit intentions differently in stage 1, 2, and 3 of the recruitment process.

Organizational and Job Pursuit Intentions

Organizational attraction, one of the most commonly studied constructs in the recruitment research, has been shown to consistently predict job applicant outcomes (Chapman et al., 2005; Highhouse et al., 2003). Organizational attraction has been operationalized as the extent to which the applicant sees the company as a good place to work, *and* as the intentions of applicants to pursue a job at that organization (Highhouse et al., 2003). Indeed, organizational attraction has been operationalized differently throughout the recruitment research.

Yet some research supports the idea that organizational attraction and applicant job pursuit intentions are actually separate, albeit correlated constructs. In fact, Highhouse et al., 2003, conducted a confirmatory factor analytic study on one of the more commonly used measures of organizational attraction. From the analyses of their

results, three separate factors, namely *organizational attraction*, *organizational [or job] pursuit intentions*, and *organizational prestige*, emerged and provided the best fit to the data. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between *job pursuit intentions* and applicant *job choice*, but *organizational attraction* did not significantly relate to applicant job choice. Therefore, the current study will use job pursuit intentions as the dependent variable, and these intentions will be operationalized as applicants' plans regarding pursuing, interviewing for, and accepting a job offer.

Like other variables of interest to this study, job pursuit intentions almost inevitably change over time, during each stage of the recruitment process. It is unlikely that a job applicant would have intentions of accepting a job offer from a company before they ever interview with that company. Similarly, it would be strange for a job applicant to have intentions to interview for a job posting with a company, after they have already finished the full interview process. However, it *would be* very reasonable for intentions of accepting a job offer to be formed after a "final interview" or even after the job offer has been extended. Therefore, the effect that the stage of the recruitment process has on applicant job pursuit intentions will also be evaluated and discussed in this study.

Hypotheses of this Study

To address these research questions, the current study will test three models of recruiter characteristics and applicant intentions. The models in Figure 1 proposes that recruiter trustworthiness, helpfulness, and timeliness will predict job pursuit intentions at stage 1 and stage 2 of the recruitment process, but that only timeliness will predict job pursuit intentions in stage 3. These models follow the extant research regarding the stronger relationship between recruiter characteristics and applicant intentions in the early

stages of the recruitment process, and the unique importance of timeliness in the final stages of recruitment. Accordingly:

Hypothesis 1.A & 1.B: Perceptions of recruiter timeliness, helping behaviors, and trustworthiness will all be significant predictors of job pursuit intentions in (1.A) stage 1 and (1.B) stage 2 of the recruitment process (Figure 1).

Hypothesis 2: Perceptions of recruiter timeliness will significantly predict job pursuit intentions in stage 3 of the recruitment process, but perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness and helping behaviors will not (Figure 1).

The second model that will be tested proposes that recruiter timeliness and recruiter helpfulness will predict applicant job pursuit intentions, but also that that recruiter trustworthiness will *mediate* the relationship between these predictors and applicant job pursuit intentions, during stage 1 and stage 2 of the recruitment process. However, it is also hypothesized that this mediation will not occur in stage 3 of the process, as recruiter characteristics such as trustworthiness tend to have weaker effects on applicant intentions in later stages of recruitment. Therefore, the hypotheses regarding these relationships are as follows:

Hypothesis 3.A, 3.B & 3.C: Perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness will mediate the relationship between perceptions of recruiter timeliness and recruiter helpfulness and job pursuit intentions in (3.A) stage 1 and (3.B) stage 2 of the recruitment process, (3.C) but not during stage 3 (see Figure 2).

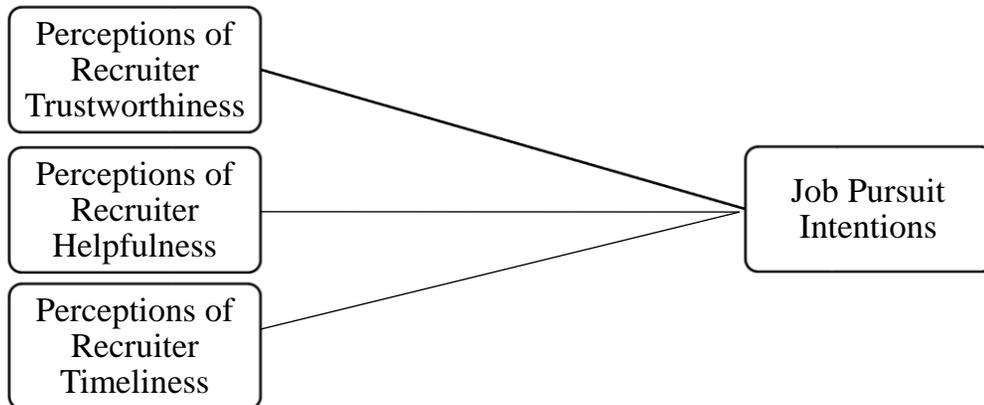
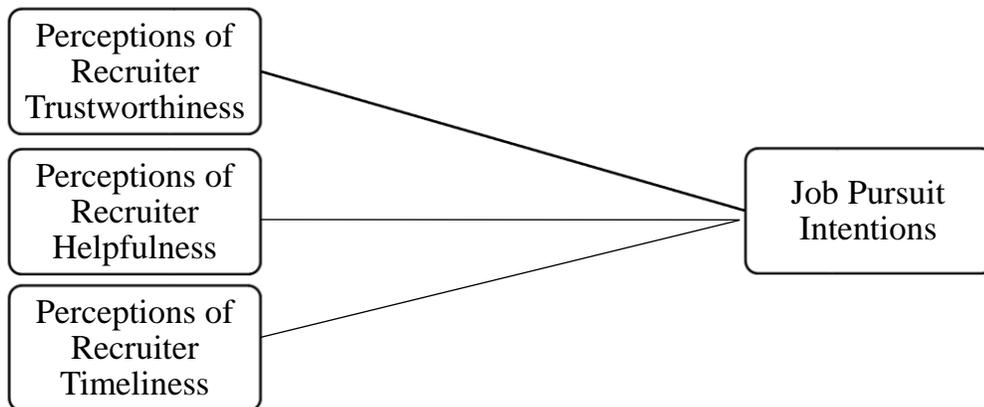
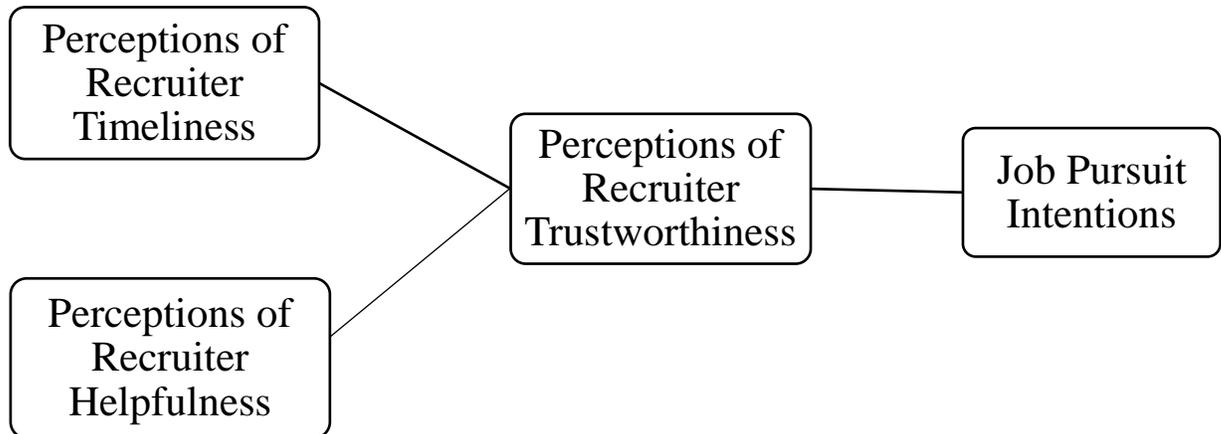
HYPOTHESIS 1.A MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODEL: STAGE 1***HYPOTHESIS 1.B MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODEL: STAGE 2******HYPOTHESIS 2 MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODEL: STAGE 3***

Figure 1: Hypothesized regression models for predicting job pursuit intentions using perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness, recruiter helpfulness, and perceptions of recruiter timeliness in recruitment stages 1, 2, and 3.

HYPOTHESIS 3.A MEDIATION MODEL: STAGE 1



HYPOTHESIS 3.B MEDIATION MODEL: STAGE 2

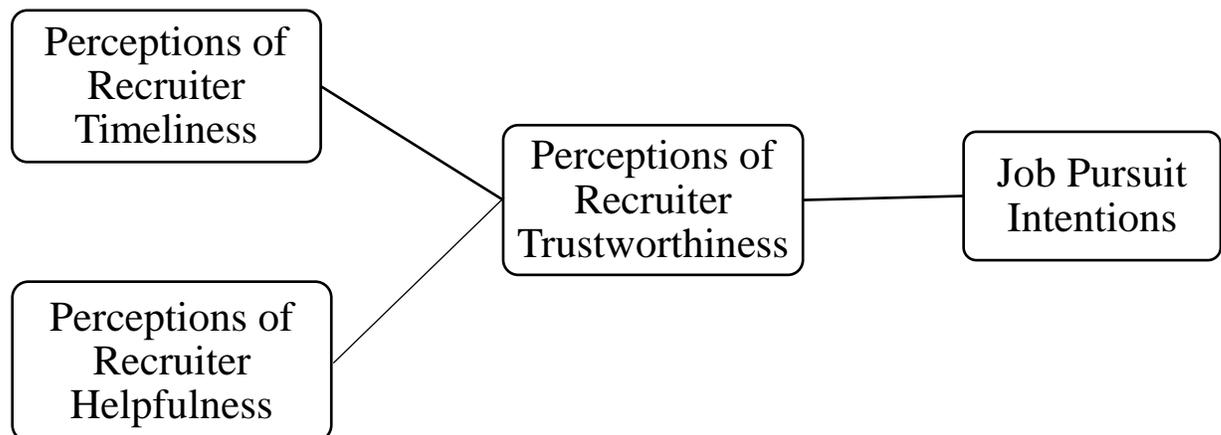


Figure 2: Hypothesized regression model with perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness as a mediator for recruitment stages 1 and 2.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

The participant sample for the current study was obtained using Amazon Mechanical Turk. Each participant was rewarded between \$0.20 and \$0.50 for their completion of the survey. The subjects of the study included individuals who have worked with *professional recruiters* in the past, specifically in the context of a job search. For the purpose of this study, a "Professional Recruiter" is defined as one who holds an occupation dedicated to finding job applicants for job openings within a specific organization or many organizations. A professional recruiter typically *initiates* contact with the candidate (*as opposed to just-responding to a résumé or application*), because they believe that candidate has the knowledge, skills, abilities, and talent they need for the job opening they have been commissioned to fill. A key point is that the kind of professional recruiter being referenced does much less "responding to applications" and focuses more on "finding the potential applicants" and the *professional recruiter* will typically be the person contacting the candidate first, as opposed to responding to candidate inquiries about a job opening. To ensure this sample characteristic, every person recruited for the study was first instructed to indicate whether they had worked with a professional recruiter, as defined in this study during a previous job search (this participant-qualification item can be found in Appendix A). Any person who indicated they had *not* done so was exited out of the online survey immediately and not included in the participant sample.

The total number of participants included in the present study totaled 220 individuals ($n = 220$). As will be explained further in a later section, the current study examined the relationship between recruiter behaviors or characteristics and applicant job intentions during *three different stages* of the recruitment process. As occurs in actual organizational recruitment processes, some participants (i.e., job seekers or job applicants) experienced all three stages of the recruitment process, which includes the application (stage 1), interviewing (stage 2), and job offer (stage 3) stages. Yet, some participants only experienced the application stage and did not progress to the interview or job offer stage. Similarly, some participants experienced the application and interviewing stages, but did not progress to the job offer stage (i.e., they were not presented a job offer for the position to which they applied). Therefore, the total participants sample ($n = 220$) decreased in each stage of the process, reducing the number of cases included in the *analyses* at each stage. At stage 2 of the recruitment process, our sample size dropped to 177. At stage 3, the final stage, the remaining sample totaled 172. The demographic distributions for those who reported demographic information were normal and representative, with the exception of ethnicity; 80 % of our sample indicated they were white. Relevant demographic information collected in this study can be found in Appendix B.

Research Study Design

A correlational research design was used to explore the relationships hypothesized in this study, using a questionnaire developed in Qualtrics Survey Software©. This survey was administered to measure participant scores on the independent and dependent variables for each included in the study. The questionnaire began by asking participants

about their past experience with recruiters, and specifically *recruiter timeliness* and *recruiter helpfulness*. Other items relating to the hypothesized mediating variable, *recruiter trustworthiness*, were presented to participants, followed by the dependent variable items to measure applicants' *job pursuit intentions*. Other items were included at various points in the survey to measure applicants' *job search motivation*, *organizational attraction*, and other attitudes regarding their recruitment experience(s). The questionnaire concluded with items intended to gather participant demographics.

Procedure

All variables were measured using one questionnaire (see Appendix A), administered to participants immediately after they followed the URL-link provided through Mechanical Turk and agreed to the consent form provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. Participant anonymity and confidentiality was ensured and specified in the consent form each participant read and agreed to. Anonymity was achieved through anonymous questionnaire links and non-identifying demographic items.

The online questionnaire was compatible with desktop computers, laptop computers, and mobile devices (i.e., smart phones, tablets) to increase the likelihood of participation. Participants were provided with a brief description of the study, which is as follows: “*The Effects of Trustworthy Recruiters on Job Application and Acceptance Intentions: This survey will take you about 20 minutes. The purpose is to examine how certain behaviors recruiters engage in relate to trustworthiness and job applicants' attraction to a company and a job opening. We are conducting academic research on how job applicants who work with professional recruiters perceive the experience from applying for jobs through accepting job offers.*” Upon completion of the questionnaire, an

“End of Survey” message was displayed to informing participants that they had completed the survey, providing them an article reference to learn more about the variables included in the study, and instructing them as to how they may contact the study’s principle investigator should they have any questions or concerns. This message is included in Appendix A.

Effect Size and Power Considerations

Per a recent meta-analysis of recruitment research studies, the correlation between recruiter and recruitment characteristics and job applicant outcomes generally show medium effect sizes, typically ranging from .40 to .50, (Chapman et al., 2005). Considering this study’s focus on two predictor variables (*recruiter timeliness and recruiter helpfulness*), while also accounting for tests of mediation (of *perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness*), the target sample size was 200 participants.

Measures

Participants who met the qualifications for the present study (i.e., experience working with a recruiter or recruiters during a job search), were administered the questionnaire containing several items related to their demographic characteristics, experience working with a professional recruiter, and their perceptions of recruiter timeliness, recruiter helpfulness, recruiter trustworthiness, job pursuit intentions, and job choice. These items were adapted to specifically reference recruiters or taken directly from previous job applicant-recruitment studies. The only exception to this is with the survey’s *recruiter helping behavior* (i.e., recruiter helpfulness) items, which were created, using the results of a pilot study conducted prior to the present study’s full

implementation. This pilot study is explained more thoroughly in a later section of this paper which describes the *measure* used to assess recruiter helpfulness.

Demographics

Demographic items, which were included at the end of the questionnaire, requested that participants indicate their age group, their gender, ethnicity, race, highest educational degree, GPA, career field, total years of job experience, and current salary level. See Appendix A, items 102 through 109, for these demographic items.

Frame of Reference Items

Prior to taking the questionnaire, participants were instructed to “*Respond to all items as they relate to your **most recent** experience working with a recruiter.*” This instruction was intended to encourage participants to think of *recent* experiences with recruiters, in order to avoid errors in recalling more distant memories, or a preference for recalling more positive or negative recruitment experiences. Participants were also provided with a definition of a “professional recruiter” as operationalized for the current study, to orient them with the type of recruitment experience relevant to the present research. See Appendix A to review these frame of reference instructions and definitions.

Motivation Check

When job applicants entertain or pursue job openings, many of them differ in how motivated they are to find a new job (e.g., a currently unemployed job applicant may be more motivated to find a new job quickly than one who is currently employed who is simply looking for a *better* job opportunity than the one they currently hold). Similarly, participants in the current study could have differed in how *active* or *passive* they were in their most recent job search. Therefore, a motivation check was employed, using three

items rated on 5-point scales ranging from “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*” (taken from Swider, 2012), such as “*It was critical for me to obtain new employment during this recruiting period,*” (see Appendix A, items 15, 16, and 17). These items resulted in an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .75$ when used in the current study.

Manipulation Checks

Items intended to determine whether the survey participants were being attentive in their responding were also included in the questionnaire. The first of these items appears in the survey immediately following a set of instructions directing the participant to respond to items regarding their “*Most recent recruiting experience*”. This item is “*For the remainder of this survey, I am supposed to respond to questions as they relate to my:*” with the following response-options: “*Worst Recruiting Experience,*” “*Most Recent Recruiting Experience,*” and “*Best Recruiting Experience.*” Participants who did not answer correctly (i.e., “*Most Recent Recruiting Experience*”) were deemed inattentive responders and were not included in analyses. The second manipulation check was a question at the end of the “stage 2” items and requested that participants respond to, “*Stage 2 of the Recruitment process refers to:*” with the response-options of “*The stage beginning at the final interview, lasting until a job offer or rejection is made,*” “*The stage that involves the initial contact between the recruiter and job applicant,*” or “*The stage beginning at the first interview, and ending after the final interview.*” Participants who answered incorrectly to this item (i.e., did not answer: “*The stage beginning at the first interview, and ending after the final interview.*”) were also determined to be inattentive responders and were excluded from analyses. These two attentiveness checks

resulted in 251 survey respondents being eliminated for either incomplete or inattentive responding.

Primary Variables of Interest

The following sections of the questionnaire related to the primary variables of interest to this study, which are recruiter timeliness, recruiter helpfulness, recruiter trustworthiness, and applicant job pursuit intentions. As previously noted, these items were all asked three separate times throughout the questionnaire administered to each participant, in the context of the three primary stages of the recruitment process (Stage 1: the initial recruitment and application stage; Stage 2: The interviewing stage; Stage 3: The stage between the final interview and the job offer or rejection). At the beginning of each section, a descriptive definition of the recruitment stage was provided, to inform the participant as to which stage of the recruitment process they were meant to be considering when responding to items. These recruitment stages are described further in the following section, “*Stage of the Recruitment Process*”.

Stage of the Recruitment Process

Stage of the recruitment process was measured in this study in an implicit manner, in that items related to the primary variables in this study were asked in in the context of three separate stages of recruitment. Survey participants responded to all items in three (3) sections, each after being provided frame-of-reference instructions for which stage they were responding to. A description of the recruitment stage was provided at the top of the survey page containing the items specifically for that stage of recruitment, and the descriptions of these stages are as follows: “**STAGE 1:** From your first contact with the recruiter about your job search to your first interview with the company that the

recruiter described to you.”, “**STAGE 2:** From your first interview, until your last interview (i.e., the "interviewing stage")”, and “**STAGE 3:** From your last interview until you received a job offer or stopped pursuing this particular job opening.”

Furthermore, items were presented to participants to ensure as much as possible possible that they had experienced the stage of the recruitment process being measured, before they could respond to the rest of the items related to that stage. The first of these was the qualifying item for the study and stage 1, asking participants “*Have you ever worked with a professional recruiter?*” The second of these qualifying items was included prior to “stage 2 items” and requested participants indicate whether they had attended at least one interview for the job the recruiter presented to them. By default, any applicant who interviewed once had also experienced stage 3 of the recruitment process, which involves the time between the applicant’s last interview (whether that is the 1st, 2nd, 3rd... 20th interview) and whenever they accepted or declined the job offer or otherwise stopped pursuing the position (assuming a job offer was presented by the recruiter). Individuals who had experienced stage 2 and 3 were also presented one final item, “*Were you presented with a job offer (verbal or in writing) for the specific job the recruiter described to you?*” The clear separation of stage 1, 2, and 3 items by frame-of-reference instructions and stage-specific survey questions allowed for analysis of survey responses relating to how recruitment experiences differed across recruitment stages. See Appendix A, items 11, 20, 42, and 67, for the descriptions of each stage of the recruitment process.

Perceptions of Recruiter Timeliness

Items related to recruiter timeliness were presented to participants at the beginning of each recruitment stage, *before* items related to recruiter helpfulness to avoid

internal validity threats related to demand characteristics (i.e., influencing participants to assume recruiter timeliness is a “helpful” characteristic). Perceptions of recruiter timeliness were measured using four items adapted from Lam (1997). These items initially reflected the timeliness and accessibility of *any* organizational representative, but were adapted to reflect on recruiters specifically for their use in this study. These items assessed the extent to which the recruiter was willing to assist and provide prompt service. These items related to timeliness and accessibility; one example item used in this study was “*I was given information about the specific job promptly by the recruiter I worked with*”. Response choices ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In the current study, these items resulted in an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .68$ in stage 1, $\alpha = .73$ in stage 2, and $\alpha = .81$ in stage 3. These items can be found in Appendix A, items 25-28, 47-50, and 72-75.

Perceptions of Recruiter Helpfulness

Next, items related to applicant perceptions of recruiter helpfulness were presented to participants. These items requested participants to respond to items regarding specific “helpful recruiter behaviors,” such as offering résumé advice. These items are also found in Appendix A, items 38-41, 62-65, and 86-90. As these items have not been used in recruitment research prior to this study, a pilot study was conducted to determine the most *common* helpful behaviors recruiters offer to job applicants. First a review of outplacement firm and career service center literature (e.g., Alewell & Hauff, 2013; DeWitt, et al., 1998; Hill & Fannin, 1991) was undertaken to create a list of possible helpful job search-aiding behaviors recruiters might offer (i.e., résumé help, interview guidance, searching for other job openings, skills or training recommendations,

credential or certification recommendations, job offer negotiation recommendations, etc.). Each “helpful behavior” was then translated into an item relating to specific recruiter behaviors (e.g., “As a professional recruiter I provide job applicants general advice for their résumés”). These items were scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from “*Never*” to “*To almost all applicants*”. These items were then presented to a convenience sample of currently employed professional recruiters ($n = 6$) at a local third-party recruitment and staffing firm, to determine what helpful recruiter behaviors these recruiters most commonly offered to job applicants. Those behaviors with the highest mean rating were deemed as the recruiter helping behaviors most relevant for exploration in the current research study. Items were then developed, based off these results to represent the construct “Recruiter Helpfulness.” These were the items presented to participants in the current study of job applicant recruitment experiences. The item ratings from the pilot study can be found in Appendix C.

The helpful recruiter behaviors rated to be the most common were developed into items used in the present study. These items related to recruiters providing helpful résumé or interview advice, information about company culture, and interview feedback (i.e., “*The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful interviewing advice, during the interview process*”). These items resulted in an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .75$ in stage 1, $\alpha = .85$ in stage 2, and $\alpha = .88$ in stage 3.

Perceptions of Recruiter Trustworthiness

Following the assessment of recruiter timeliness and helpfulness, items intended to measure the hypothesized mediating variable, *perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness*, were presented to study participants. These three items were taken from Fisher et al.

(1979), and were adapted to fit the “recruitment” context by specifically referencing a “recruiter” in each item (see Appendix A, items 22-24, 44-46, and 69-71); for example, the following item was used to measure trustworthiness: “*I believe the recruiter or recruiters I worked with were telling me the truth as they saw it*”. These items produced internal consistencies of $\alpha = .88$ in stage 1, $\alpha = .82$ in stage 2, and $\alpha = .81$ in stage 3.

Job Pursuit Intentions

The next section of the questionnaire intended to measure participant scores on the dependent variable, *job pursuit intentions*. While each job pursuit intention item was derived from Highhouse et al. (2003), certain items were included, excluded, or adapted in each item-set to match the stage of the recruitment process that item-set focused on. Items that were included or excluded from certain stages of the recruitment process were done so to best reflect that stage. For instance, the item relating to *accepting a job offer* was not included in stage 1 of the recruitment process, and similarly, the item relating to *applying for the job* was not included in stage 2 or stage 3 of the recruitment process. Job pursuit intentions were reflected through items relating to *thoughts about applying to a job* in stage 1 of the recruitment process, and *thoughts about interviewing for or accepting or declining a job offer* in stage 2 or 3, such as “*I would interview with the company the recruiter described to me, based on what I knew at this stage*”. The same items were used to assess job pursuit intentions in stage 2 and stage 3, as well as the addition of one item relevant to these stages, “*I would accept a job offer from the company the recruiter described to me, based on what I knew at this stage.*” These items can be found in Appendix A, items 34-37, 56-61. 81-85. In the present study, these job

pursuit intentions items resulted in an internal consistency coefficient of $\alpha = .77$ in stage 1, $\alpha = .88$ in stage 2, and $\alpha = .83$ in stage 3.

Job Choice

Two final items were presented to the participants who made it to stage 3 of the recruitment process: “*Were you presented with a job offer (verbal or in writing) for the specific job the recruiter described to you?*” and “*Did you accept this specific offer?*” Due to the lower base rates of occurrence (Arvey et al., 1975; Chapman et al., 2005), the applicant’s actual job choice is *not* the dependent variable in this study; however, participants’ responses were recorded for supplementary analyses. Only the *job choice* data from participants who indicated they *received* an offer were included in these supplementary analyses. This resulted in a subsample of $n = 51$, representing a significant restriction of range limiting the inferences that could be made. The restriction of range is a clear result of the fact that while the 220 participants in this sample worked with professional recruiters, only about 23% of the total sample received job offers for the position(s) their recruiter presented to them, and could therefore be included in analyses of final job choice.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Data Analysis Plan

Scores on perceptions of recruiter timeliness, recruiter helpfulness, recruiter trustworthiness, and job pursuit intentions measures as well as participant demographics were collected using Qualtrics Survey Software©. All data was exported into SPSS for the primary and supplementary analyses to be conducted. The primary analyses intended to test the hypotheses of this study involved calculating the descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression coefficients for the primary variables of interest (i.e., recruiter timeliness trustworthiness, helpfulness, and job pursuit intentions), as well as tests for mediation of recruiter trustworthiness. An alpha level of $\alpha = .05$ was used for these, as well as supplemental analyses. Each primary analysis was conducted for all three stages of the recruitment process to determine how the relationships between these variables differed throughout all three stages of the recruitment processes.

Supplementary analyses included the use of *job choice* as the dependent variable, for the participants of this study who received a job offer. However, only 23% of the participants in this study received a job offer for the position their recruiter presented to them, and 92% of applicants who received an offer accepted it. This resulted in job choice data which was significantly skewed, and therefore inappropriate for analysis or interpretation.

The second supplementary analysis for this study focused on one variable included in this study uniquely relevant to applied recruiting practices. This was the applicants' willingness to "work with the same recruiter again." This item in the

questionnaire intended to measure how willing job applicants were to go through another job search in the future working with the same recruiter they describe throughout the questionnaire. This is a topic very relevant to recruiters, and particularly, third party recruiting or staffing firms, as it related to how likely a candidate is to re-engage the recruiter in a new job search, regardless of whether the recruiter presented them a job offer the first time they worked together. Therefore, each primary recruiter and organizational variable was correlated with the questionnaire item “I would work with this same recruiter again during another job search”. Each of the primary and supplementary analyses are described further in the following sections, and are organized by the recruitment stage to which they are related.

Recruitment Process Stage 1 Analyses

Stage 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics and correlations between job search motivation, recruiter trustworthiness, recruiter timeliness, recruiter helpfulness, organization attraction, and applicant job pursuit intentions for stage 1 of the recruitment process are show in Table 1. The results show that all variables significantly correlate with one another at the $p < .05$ level, in stage 1 of the recruitment process. This indicates that, in stage 1 of recruitment, all of the recruiter characteristic and behavior variables included in analyses (i.e., timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness) significantly relate to all applicant variables such as their *job pursuit intentions*, as well as those not included in this study’s hypotheses such as the applicant’s motivation to find a new job (i.e., *job search motivation*) and their attraction to the organization the recruiter presented to them (i.e., *organizational attraction*).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for Stage 1 variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Pearson's Correlations				
				JSM	Trust	Time	Help	JPI
Job Search Motivation	4.05	0.89	215	-	.21*	.27*	.32*	.36*
Trustworthiness	4.07	0.92	217	.21*	-	.48*	.53*	.52*
Timeliness	4.00	0.73	206	.27*	.48*	-	.58*	.36*
Helpfulness	3.60	0.93	211	.32*	.53*	.58*	-	.35*
Job Pursuit Intentions	4.00	0.82	213	.36*	.52*	.36*	.35*	-
Organizational Attraction	4.08	0.77	209	.22*	.57*	.37*	.31*	.76*

p < .05*Stage 1 Multiple Regression Model*

To test Hypothesis 1.A, that recruiter timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness would predict job pursuit intentions in stage 1 of recruitment, multiple regression analysis was used to develop a model for predicting *job pursuit intentions* based on *recruiter trustworthiness*, *recruiter timeliness*, and *recruiter helpfulness* in stage 1 of the recruitment process. The analysis indicated that we can predict applicants' job pursuit intentions using some combination of recruiter trustworthiness, timeliness, and helpfulness, $F(3, 186) = 23.11$, $MSE = 0.51$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{Adj} = .26$. See Table 2 for the full regression model. I tested for collinearity using a cutoff of $< .10$ for tolerance values, a cutoff of > 30 for condition indices, and a cutoff of $> .50$ for variance proportions. This same collinearity test was also conducted for stages 2 and 3 of the recruitment process, and the results indicated there were no issues with collinearity between predictors in any stage. This indicates that each of the independent variables is useful for predicting job pursuit intentions, yet in the stage 1 multiple regression model, only recruiter trustworthiness had an individually significant regression coefficient when controlling for

the other predictors (i.e., timeliness and helpfulness) in the model. Our stage 1 correlation results indicate that both recruiter timeliness and helpfulness significantly correlate with job pursuit intentions ($r = .36$; $r = .35$, respectively) as well as recruiter trustworthiness ($r = .48$; $r = .53$, respectively). Similarly, timeliness and helpfulness significantly correlate with each other ($r = .58$). The correlations these predictors hold with job pursuit intentions support that they do in fact share variance with the dependent variable, but the greater correlation they share with each other indicate that each share more variance with each other than with job pursuit intentions, and our predictors in the multiple regression model may be competing for variance accounted for in job pursuit intentions in stage 1 of recruitment. These results together provide partial support for Hypothesis 1.A; in particular, significant bivariate relations of these independent variables with the dependent variable are supporting, but betas from the multiple regression reveal that only recruiter trustworthiness, is uniquely related to job pursuit intentions.

Table 2

Multiple regression model for predicting Job Pursuit Intentions in Stage 1

Variable	Job Pursuit Intentions			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (β)	Beta	95% CI
(Constant)	1.80	.301		1.21, 2.40
Recruiter Trustworthiness	0.34	.068	0.39*	0.21, 0.48
Recruiter Timeliness	0.15	.091	0.13	-0.03, 0.33
Recruiter Helpfulness	0.06	.071	0.07	-0.76, 0.21

* $p < .05$

Stage 1 Trustworthiness Mediation Model

To test Hypothesis 3.A, Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure to test whether recruiter trustworthiness mediated the relationship of recruiter timeliness and helpfulness to applicant job pursuit intentions. This involved regressing the independent variables (timeliness and helpfulness) on the dependent variable (job pursuit intentions), then regressing the independent variables on the hypothesized mediator (trustworthiness), and finally regressing the independent variables and mediator together on the dependent variable. If the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable *and* the mediator, and the regression coefficient for the independent variables decreases or becomes non-significant when regressed together with the proposed mediator on the dependent variable, then mediation may be assumed. Full mediation may be assumed if the coefficient becomes non-significant in the combined model.

Recruiter Timeliness and Helpfulness significantly predicted Job Pursuit Intentions, $F(2, 189) = 19.56$, $MSE = 0.57$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.16$, and both predictors' regression coefficients were significant ($\beta = 0.25$, $p = .002$; $\beta = 0.21$, $p = .009$, respectively). This satisfied the first requirement for the mediation test. Similarly, timeliness and helpfulness significantly predicted recruiter trustworthiness, $F(2, 192) = 52.07$, $MSE = 0.57$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.35$, and both predictors' regression coefficients held significantly ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 0.35$, $p < .001$, respectively). This fulfilled the second step of the mediation test. Finally, when combined using multiple regression, timeliness, helpfulness and trustworthiness significantly predicted job pursuit intentions, $F(3, 186) = 23.11$, $MSE = 0.51$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.26$; but, the relationship between timeliness and job pursuit intentions, as well as the relationship between helpfulness and

job pursuit intentions became non-significant ($p = .105$; $p = .37$, respectively), indicating they had no direct effect on job pursuit intentions in stage 1, but only indirect effects through recruiter trustworthiness. See Table 3 for mediation test regression models. Trustworthiness full mediated the relationship of timeliness and helpfulness to job pursuit intentions in stage 1, providing strong support for Hypothesis 3.A.

Table 3
Linear regression models testing Trustworthiness' mediation of Helpfulness and Helpfulness to Job Pursuit Intentions in Stage 1

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (β)	<i>Beta</i>	95% CI
Total Sample (N=192)				
Constant	2.19	0.31		1.58, 2.80
Time Regressed on JPI	0.29	0.09	0.25*	0.11, 0.47
Help Regressed on JPI	0.19	0.07	0.21*	0.05, 0.33
Total Sample (N=195)				
Constant	1.18	0.31		0.57, 1.78
Time Regressed on Trust	0.41	0.09	0.32*	0.23, 0.59
Help Regressed on Trust	0.35	0.07	0.35*	0.21, 0.49
Total Sample (N=190)				
Constant	1.80	0.30		1.21, 2.40
Help, Time and Trust Regressed on JPI				
Time	0.15	0.09	0.13	-0.03, 0.33
Help	0.06	0.07	0.07	-0.08, 0.21
Trust	0.34	0.07	0.39*	0.21, 0.48

* $p < .05$.

Recruitment Process Stage 2 Analyses

Stage 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics and correlations between the scales used to measure job search motivation, recruiter trustworthiness, recruiter timeliness, recruiter helpfulness, organization attraction, and applicant job pursuit intentions computed for stage 2 of the recruitment process are shown in Table 4. Once again, the results of the correlation analysis for stage 2 indicate that all recruiter variables and applicant variables included in this study's hypotheses significantly correlate with one another at the $p < .05$ alpha level. Similarly, other variables not included in hypotheses (i.e., *job search motivation*, *organizational attraction*, and *job choice*) significantly correlate with one another as well as the variables included in the study's hypotheses, with one exception. The results of the correlation analyses indicate that in stage 2 of the recruitment process, *recruiter trustworthiness* does not significantly correlate with applicants' *job search motivation*. This would seem logical considering that how trustworthy a recruiter is perceived to be should not necessarily relate to how motivated an individual is to search for a new job.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for Stage 2 variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Pearson's Correlations				
				JSM	Trust	Time	Help	JPI
Job Search Motivation	4.16	0.87	173	-	0.09	0.18*	0.21*	0.32*
Trustworthiness	4.27	0.79	172	0.09	-	0.43*	0.44*	0.41*
Timeliness	4.02	0.73	169	0.18*	0.43*	-	0.59*	0.41*
Helpfulness	3.78	0.98	170	0.21*	0.44*	0.59*	-	0.31*
Job Pursuit Intentions	4.26	0.74	172	0.32*	0.41*	0.41*	0.31*	-
Organizational Attraction	4.20	0.75	170	0.17*	0.42*	0.38*	0.33*	0.76*

$p < .05$

Stage 2 Multiple Regression Model

To test Hypothesis 1.B, multiple regression analysis was used to develop a model for predicting job pursuit intentions based on recruiter trustworthiness, recruiter timeliness, and recruiter helpfulness in stage 2 of the recruitment process. The analysis indicated that we can predict applicants' job pursuit intentions using some combination of recruiter trustworthiness, timeliness, and helpfulness, $F(3, 152) = 15.73$, $MSE = 0.42$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{Adj} = .22$. See Table 5 for the full regression model. However, the regression coefficient for recruiter helpfulness in the combined model was not significant when controlling for trustworthiness and timeliness. In our stage 2 correlations, recruiter helpfulness significantly correlated with job pursuit intentions ($r = .31$) showing that the independent variable *does* share variance with the dependent variable; however, helpfulness shared greater variance with trustworthiness and timeliness than with job pursuit intentions ($r = .44$; $r = .59$, respectively), indicating that there is an overlap between the predictors in the multiple regression models, and each is competing for variance accounted for in job pursuit intentions in stage 2 of the recruitment process. The results as a whole provide partial support for Hypothesis 1.B.

Table 5

Multiple regression model for predicting Job Pursuit Intentions in Stage 2

Variable	Job Pursuit Intentions			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (β)	Beta	95% CI
(Constant)	1.94	.346		1.26, 2.63
Recruiter Trustworthiness	0.28	.075	0.30*	0.13, 0.43
Recruiter Timeliness	0.24	.092	0.23*	0.06, 0.42
Recruiter Helpfulness	0.05	.069	0.06	-0.09, 0.18

* $p < .05$.

Stage 2 Trustworthiness Mediation Model

The same set of procedures used in stage 1 mediation tests were used to test Hypothesis 3.B and the mediating effects of trustworthiness on the relationship between recruiter timeliness and helpfulness and applicant job pursuit intentions in stage 2 of the recruitment process. The combination of recruiter timeliness and helpfulness significantly predicted job pursuit intentions, $F(2, 156) = 16.53$, $MSE = 0.47$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.16$; however, while timeliness's regression coefficient was individually significant ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .001$), helpfulness was *not* a significant predictor of job pursuit intentions when controlling for timeliness ($\beta = .12$, $p = .185$). As stated previously, this is likely partially due to the large amount of variance shared between timeliness and helpfulness ($r = .60$), as indicated by the stage 2 correlations. Therefore, the next two steps of the mediation test for stage 2 were only conducted to determine if recruiter trustworthiness mediated the relationship between timeliness and job pursuit intentions, as helpfulness does not significantly predict job pursuit intentions and there is no relationship to be mediated.

I then regressed timeliness and helpfulness on recruiter trustworthiness.

Timeliness and helpfulness significantly predicted trustworthiness in stage 2, $F(2, 157) = 26.14$, $MSE = 0.49$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.24$, and both predictors' regression coefficients were significant ($\beta = 0.25$, $p = .004$; $\beta = 0.31$, $p < .001$, respectively). It is worth noting that although helpfulness did not have a direct effect on job pursuit intentions in stage 2, it did have a direct effect on recruiter trustworthiness, which in turn directly effects job pursuit intentions (see Table 6). While this does not provide support for Hypothesis 3.B which states that trustworthiness would mediate the relationship between both helpfulness and timeliness and job pursuit intentions, it does suggest that recruiter helpfulness impacts the relationship between recruiters and applicants in stage 2, though it does not seem to directly impact their job pursuit intentions.

Finally, I regressed timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness on job pursuit intentions, and this combination significantly predicted job pursuit intentions, $F(3, 152) = 15.73$, $MSE = 0.42$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.22$. The regression coefficient for timeliness decreased, but remained significant ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = .011$) signifying that recruiter trustworthiness partially mediates the relationship between timeliness and job pursuit intentions in stage 2. This provides partial support for Hypothesis 3.B, in that trustworthiness partially mediated the relationship between timeliness and job pursuit intentions, but there was no direct relationship to be mediated between helpfulness and job pursuit intentions. See Table 6 for the regression models from these analyses.

Table 6
Linear regression models testing Trustworthiness' mediation of Helpfulness and Helpfulness to Job Pursuit Intentions in Stage 2

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (β)	<i>Beta</i>	95%CI
Total Sample (N=159)				
Constant	2.49	0.31		1.87, 3.12
Time Regressed on JPI	0.35	0.09	0.34*	0.17, 0.53
Help Regressed on JPI	0.09	0.07	0.12	-0.04, 0.23
Total Sample (N=160)				
Constant	2.21	0.31		1.58, 2.83
Time Regressed on Trust	0.27	0.09	0.25*	0.09, 0.46
Help Regressed on Trust	0.26	0.07	0.31*	0.12, 0.40
Total Sample (N=156)				
Constant	1.94	0.35		1.26, 2.63
Help, Time and Trust Regressed on JPI				
Time	0.24	0.09	0.23*	0.06, 0.42
Help	0.05	0.07	0.06	-0.09, 0.18
Trust	0.28	0.08	0.30*	0.13, 0.43

* $p < .05$.

Recruitment Process Stage 3 Analyses

Stage 3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics and correlations for the scales used to measure job search motivation, recruiter trustworthiness, recruiter timeliness, recruiter helpfulness, organization attraction, and applicant job pursuit intentions computed for stage 3 of the recruitment process are shown in Table 7. As was found in stage 1 and stage 2, in stage 3 of the recruitment process all the recruiter and applicant variables included in the hypotheses of this study significantly correlate with one another at the $p < .05$ alpha level. Variables included in correlation analyses, but not in this study's hypotheses (i.e., *job*

search motivation, organizational attraction, and job choice) also significantly correlate with each other and the variables included in hypotheses, with one exception. In stage 3, applicants' *job search motivation* did not significantly correlate with *recruiter timeliness*. This suggests that an applicant's motivation to find a new job does not directly relate to how timely they perceive their recruiter to be.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for Stage 3 variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Pearson's Correlations				
				JSM	Trust	Time	Help	JPI
Job Search Motivation	4.15	0.88	168	-	0.18*	0.13	0.27*	0.25*
Trustworthiness	4.25	0.83	167	0.18*	-	0.55*	0.49*	0.52*
Timeliness	3.99	0.83	167	0.13	0.55*	-	0.67*	0.36*
Helpfulness	3.86	1.02	157	0.27*	0.49*	0.67*	-	0.48*
Job Pursuit Intentions	3.93	1.07	167	0.25*	0.52*	0.36*	0.48*	-
Organizational Attraction	4.08	0.90	166	0.20*	0.62*	0.39*	0.47*	0.81*

p < .05

Stage 3 Multiple Regression Model

To test Hypothesis 2, stating that only recruiter timeliness would predict job pursuit intentions in stage 3, multiple regression was used to test a model containing recruiter trustworthiness, timeliness, and helpfulness for predicting job pursuit intentions for the stage 3 data. The analysis indicated that we can predict applicants' job pursuit intentions using some combination of recruiter trustworthiness, timeliness, and helpfulness, $F(3, 143) = 24.59$, $MSE = 0.75$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{Adj} = .33$. See Table 8 for the full regression model. Yet, upon examination of individual regression coefficients in the model, recruiter timeliness does not significantly predict job pursuit intentions when

controlling for recruiter trustworthiness and helpfulness. This suggests that recruiter timeliness was possibly *not* as important to applicants in determining their job pursuit intentions in stage 3 of the recruitment process, a finding that differs from the hypothesized relationship in this study.

Table 8

Multiple regression model for predicting Job Pursuit Intentions in Stage 3

Variable	Job Pursuit Intentions			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (β)	Beta	95% CI
(Constant)	0.96	.400		0.17, 1.75
Recruiter Trustworthiness	0.49	.102	0.40*	0.29, 0.69
Recruiter Timeliness	-0.09	.121	-0.07	-0.33, 0.15
Recruiter Helpfulness	0.34	.096	0.33*	0.15, 0.53

* $p < .05$.

The correlations conducted for stage 3 provide greater insight into the relationships that are present in the multiple regression model. As in stage 1 and 2, timeliness significantly correlates and shares variance with recruiter helpfulness ($r = .67$) as well as recruiter trustworthiness in stage 3 ($r = .55$). While the regression coefficient for timeliness in the stage 3 model may be lowered due to competing for variance in job pursuit intentions with recruiter helpfulness and timeliness, it also share variance with job pursuit intentions ($r = .36$). The results noticeably contradict the predicted stage 3 relationship in Hypothesis 2, in that timeliness was expected to be the *only* significant predictor in the stage 3 model; however, timeliness is not irrelevant, due to its correlation with both recruiter trustworthiness and job pursuit intentions.

These results provide partial support for Hypothesis 2, but do not support the majority of the hypothesis, which was that trustworthiness and helpfulness would *not* predict job pursuit intentions in stage 3. Instead, the results suggest that the foundational concept underlying Hypothesis 2 may have been misconceived. That is, that timeliness (e.g., getting a job offer to the applicant quickly) would be much more important at stage 3, and other recruiter variables would be less relevant since the applicant has presumably had time to get to know the organization better by the end of the recruitment process, giving less weight to recruiter characteristics in comparison to organizational variables such as the timeliness of a job an offer from the employer. However, recruiter trustworthiness and helpfulness significantly predicted job pursuit intentions in stage 3, contrary to this assumption.

Stage 3 Trustworthiness Mediation Model

This study's final hypothesis, Hypothesis 3.C, proposes that recruiter trustworthiness would *not* mediate the relationships between recruiter timeliness or helpfulness with applicant job pursuit intentions. To test this hypothesis, Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures for testing mediation effects were used, once again. The combination of recruiter timeliness and helpfulness significantly predicted job pursuit intentions in stage 3, $F(2, 148) = 22.04$, $MSE = 0.85$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.22$. Timeliness' regression coefficient was not significant ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = .337$) but helpfulness' coefficient was significant ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .001$). The stage 3 correlations support that timeliness is competing for variance in job pursuit intentions with helpfulness, as they shared significant variance with each other in the stage 3 correlations. Therefore, the next two

steps of the mediation test were only conducted to determine if trustworthiness mediated the relationship between helpfulness and job pursuit intentions in stage 3.

The combination of timeliness and helpfulness significantly predicted recruiter trustworthiness, $F(2, 146) = 37.95$, $MSE = 0.49$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.33$, and both predictors' regression coefficients were significant ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .001$; $\beta = 0.23$, $p = .012$, respectively). Once again, while not directly relevant to the hypotheses of this study, the finding that timeliness has a direct effect on recruiter trustworthiness in stage 3, despite it having no direct effect on job pursuit intentions, is worth noting and suggests that timeliness is still important to the recruiter-applicant relationship at the end of the recruitment process.

Finally, I regressed timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness on job pursuit intentions. The multiple regression indicated that some combination of timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness significantly predict job pursuit intentions in stage 3, $F(3, 143) = 24.59$, $MSE = 0.75$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{adj} = 0.33$. Furthermore, when recruiter trustworthiness was included in the model, the regression coefficient for recruiter helpfulness decreases ($\beta = 0.33$) though it remained significant. This indicates that trustworthiness partially mediates the relationship between helpfulness and job pursuit intentions in stage 3. Hypothesis 3.C was partially supported in that trustworthiness did *not* mediate the relationship of timeliness to job pursuit intentions. However, the hypothesis was *not* supported by the finding that trustworthiness partially mediated recruiter helpfulness and job pursuit intentions. See Table 9 for these regression models.

Table 9
Linear regression models testing Trustworthiness' mediation of Helpfulness and Helpfulness to Job Pursuit Intentions in Stage 3

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i> (β)	<i>Beta</i>	95%CI
Total Sample (N=151)				
Constant	1.89	0.37		1.15, 2.63
Time Regressed on JPI	0.12	0.12	0.09	-0.12, 0.35
Help Regressed on JPI	0.42	0.10	0.41*	0.23, 0.62
Total Sample (N=149)				
Constant	1.85	0.29		1.28, 2.41
Time Regressed on Trust	0.42	0.09	0.41*	0.23, 0.60
Help Regressed on Trust	0.19	0.08	0.23*	0.04, 0.34
Total Sample (N=147)				
Constant	0.96	0.40		0.17, 1.75
Help, Time and Trust Regressed on JPI				
Time	-0.09	0.12	-0.07	-0.33, 0.15
Help	0.34	0.10	0.33*	0.15, -.53
Trust	0.49	0.10	0.40*	0.29, 0.69

* $p < .05$.

Supplementary Analyses: Prediction of Job Choice

As has been referenced throughout this paper, predicting applicant job choice is difficult due to a variety of factors, and primarily, restriction of range (Arvey et al., 1975; Chapman et al., 2005). However, previous studies (e.g., Chapman et al., 2005) have found that job pursuit intentions have one of the strongest relationships with applicants' actual job choice, despite the issues resulting from range restriction. Therefore, as a supplement to the primary analyses of this study, I intended to test whether job pursuit intentions was a significant predictor of final applicant job choice (i.e., whether the applicant accepted a job offer for the position their recruiter presented to them) in stage 2 and stage 3 of the process.

However, after filtering out all participants who indicated that they did *not* receive an offer for the position their recruiter was presenting to them, the data contained only 51 cases in stage 2, and 50 cases in stage 3. More importantly, the data was substantially skewed toward accepting the offer (48 of the 51 participants in stage 2 accepted the offer; 48 of the 50 participants in stage 3 accepted the offer). The data was therefore not appropriate for analyses, and no tests of recruiter or applicant variables' relationships to job choice were conducted.

Supplementary Analyses: Willingness to Work with the Same Recruiter Again

All participants in this study who progressed past stage 1 of the recruitment process, into either stage 2 or stage 3, were asked toward the end of their survey whether they would be willing to work with the same recruiter they had been working with, in another job search in the future. There are a variety of insights that this supplemental analysis might bring to light, such as whether it is the applicants attraction to an organization, or their positive perceptions of a recruiter that are more or less important to whether they would be willing to work with the same recruiter again. It is also possible that the applicant may make determinations of whether to work with the recruiter again, based on whether they received a job offer for the position or not, a variable that is more often outside of the control of the recruiter, and if anything, more in the control of the applicants themselves.

Willingness to Work with the Recruiter Again in Stage 2

I ran correlations for all the primary recruiter, organizational, and applicant variables from stage 2 in this study with applicant's *willingness to work with the recruiter again*. See Table 10 for the descriptive statistics and correlations. Each variable was

significantly correlated with willingness to work with the recruiter again at the $p < .05$ level. The results suggest that variables related to the recruiter behaviors and characteristics hold stronger relationships with willingness to work with the recruiter again, than organizational attraction or job pursuit intentions. This also supports that while the attractiveness of the job and company to the applicant are important to the recruiter-applicant relationship, variables such as trustworthiness, timeliness, and helpfulness in stage 2 of recruitment are more important to ongoing collaboration.

Table 10

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for Willingness to Work with the Same Recruiter Again in Stage 2

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Pearson's Correlations				
				WRA	Trust	Time	Help	OA
Work with Recruiter Again	3.96	1.18	174	-	.53*	.53*	.60*	.42*
Trustworthiness	4.27	0.79	172	.53*	-	.43*	.44*	.42*
Timeliness	4.02	0.73	169	.53*	.43*	-	.59*	.38*
Helpfulness	3.78	0.98	170	.60*	.44*	.59*	-	.33*
Organizational Attraction	4.20	0.75	170	.42*	.42*	.38*	.33*	-
Job Pursuit Intentions	4.26	0.74	172	.34*	.41*	.41*	.31*	.76*

* $p < .05$

Finally, I ran a t-test to determine whether applicants' willingness to work with the same recruiter again differed by whether they received a job offer for the position the recruiter presented to them. This is a variable considerably outside of the control of the recruiter. The t-test produced very interesting results. The test indicated that the willingness of applicants to work with their recruiter again when they did *not* receive an offer ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.08$, $n = 122$) significantly differed from those who did receive an

offer ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.24$, $n = 51$), $t(171) = -4.10$, $p < .001$. This tells us that applicants who did *not* receive an offer were actually more willing to work with that same recruiter again on another job search than those who *did* receive a job offer. This could be due partially to the fact that those who did not receive an offer were still “looking for a job” and more in need of a recruiter at that point, and are therefore more willing to work with “any” recruiter, so long as they find them job openings to which they can apply.

Willingness to Work with the Recruiter Again in Stage 3

The same set of procedures were used to assess the relationships of organizational and recruiter variables to applicants’ willingness to work with the same recruiter again, using the data from stage 3 of the recruitment process. See Table 11 for the descriptive statistics and correlations. As in stage 2, each variable in stage 3 was significantly correlated with willingness to work with the recruiter again at the $p < .05$ level. While the organizational and job variables correlate more strongly with willingness to work with the recruiter again in stage 3 than in stage 2, the recruiter variables still share more variance with willingness to work with the recruiter again in stage 3, with one exception; recruiter trustworthiness correlated equally highly with organizational attraction as it did with willingness to work with the same recruiter again.

Table 11

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for Willingness to Work with the Same Recruiter Again in Stage 3

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Pearson's Correlations				
				WRA	Trust	Time	Help	OA
Work with Recruiter Again	3.95	1.18	172	-	.62*	.58*	.63*	.54*
Trustworthiness	4.25	0.83	167	.62*	-	.55*	.49*	.62*
Timeliness	3.99	0.83	167	.58*	.55*	-	.67*	.39*
Helpfulness	3.86	1.02	157	.63*	.49*	.67*	-	.47*
Organizational Attraction	4.08	0.90	166	.54*	.62*	.39*	.47*	-
Job Pursuit Intentions	3.93	1.07	167	.48*	.52*	.36*	.48*	.81*

* $p < .05$

Following the correlation analyses, a t-test was conducted to determine whether applicants' willingness to work with the same recruiter again in stage 3 differed by whether they received a job offer for the position the recruiter presented to them. As in stage 2, the analysis for stage 3 indicated that the willingness of applicants to work with their recruiter again when they did *not* receive an offer ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.08$, $n = 121$) significantly differed from those who did receive an offer ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.25$, $n = 50$), $t(169) = -4.08$, $p < .001$. Once again, applicants who did *not* receive an offer were more willing to work with the same recruiter again than those who *did* receive an offer.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Existing recruiting research covers a wide array of relationships between applicant behaviors and attitudes and organizational recruitment practices, as well as the behaviors and characteristics of the recruiters themselves (e.g., Chapman et al., 2005). However, the understanding of how these relationships vary in their relevance and importance throughout the entire recruitment lifecycle is somewhat limited. While recruiting research has been conducted that focuses on each of the primary recruiting stages, that is the application, interviewing, and job offer stages, there has been very little research that focuses on the same job applicants' experiences in all three stages, and can therefore compare how the job applicants' experiences differ in each recruitment stage. Furthermore, as recruiters and staffing firms continue to use more targeted recruitment strategies to find hard-to-find or high-demand talent (Ployhart, Schneider, & Schmitt, 2006), it is crucial to better understand what recruiter characteristics and behaviors most impact the job applicant experience. Therefore, the present study contributes to our understanding of applicant experiences throughout each stage of the recruitment lifecycle, as well as recruiter characteristics important to applicant intentions to pursue a job opening, including recruiter timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness. The current study's findings present strong relationships between recruiters and applicant job pursuit intentions, despite scale reliabilities for some of the variables measured, that were lower than would normally be preferable.

Importance of Recruiter Trustworthiness

One of the most significant findings this study produced, both statistically and theoretically, is the mediation of Recruiter Trustworthiness between recruiter timeliness and applicants' job pursuit intentions in stage 1 and 2, and trustworthiness' mediation between helpfulness and job pursuit intentions in stage 1 and 3 of the recruitment process. There is evidence to support that applicant *job pursuit intentions* is the most proximal variable to actual job choice (Chapman et al., 2005; Highhouse et al., 2003), placing it as one of the most relevant dependent variables to consider for any study of job applicant recruitment. In the present study, not only did recruiter timeliness (including accessibility) and helpfulness (e.g., offering résumé or interviewing advice; providing valuable information about the company's culture) predict applicants' intentions to pursue a job opening, in all three stages of recruitment (with the exception of timeliness in stage 3 and helpfulness in stage 2) but perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness partially or fully mediated these relationships at various points throughout the entire recruitment process. This is an important finding for several reasons. First, trustworthiness reflects heavily on how "honest" a recruiter was perceived to be, which is a variable very much in the control of individual recruiters (Rynes et al., 1991). It is plausible that how honest a recruiter was perceived to be impacted how "trustworthy" their timeliness or helpful behaviors were perceived to be. Clearly timeliness and helpfulness predict perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness, but the relationship may be bi-directional.

Secondly, recruiter trustworthiness or honesty is based on concepts similar to those of RJPs (realistic job previews). Research on RJPs (realistic job previews) supports that job applicants are no less likely to accept job offers for highly "positive" job

previews (i.e., not realistic) than for more straight-forward, realistic job previews (Premack & Wanous, 1985). Beyond just attracting applicants, RJPs have been shown to predict longer employee retention (Breugh & Starke, 2000) and so it could be inferred that more trustworthy recruiting practices (such as timeliness and helpfulness) might predict longer employee retention, once applicants are hired. Future research on recruiter trustworthiness should explore the long-term effects on employees who get hired by the organizations to which they are recruited, such as employee retention or organizational commitment.

Finally, our supplementary analyses found a stronger predictive relationship with job pursuit intentions for organizational attractiveness than for recruiter trustworthiness. Yet, the perceived trustworthiness of recruiters still had a very significant impact on applicants' job pursuit intentions in all three stages of recruitment. Considering that recruiters or staffing firms are often commissioned by organizations to find the "hardest to attract" or "hardest to find" talent (Ployhart, Schneider, & Schmitt, 2006), it is comprehensively "attractive" recruitment processes that could make the difference between hiring your best candidate and losing them to your competition (Breugh, 2008). Therefore, the *urgency* of finding this highly sought-after talent should be balanced appropriately with the need for accessible, helpful, and honest recruiting practices.

Difference Across Stages

There were certain differences found in the relationships between recruiter variables and applicants' job pursuit intentions that are worthy of note. The first of these is the smaller amount of variance in job pursuit intentions accounted for by trustworthiness in stage 2 of the recruitment process ($R^2 = .16$), relative to stage 1 ($R^2 =$

.29) and stage 3 ($R^2 = .26$). Figure 3 provides a visual representation of these differences. Further research should be conducted to understand this fluctuation more fully, but speculations can be made that recruiters should be particularly attentive to being honest, timely and accessible, and helpful to job applicants in their initial conversations at the *beginning* of the recruitment process, and *at the end* of the process, when job offers are being made and job applicants are deciding whether to accept the offer. While more than 92% (47 out of 51 total offers) of the job applicants in this study who received a job offer for the position the recruiter presented to them accepted that offer, their intentions to do so were clearly impacted by how trustworthy they perceived their recruiter to be at the end of the recruitment process.

In a similar vein, it is important to note that while recruiter trustworthiness had its weakest mediating effect in stage 2 of the recruitment process, timeliness accounted for the most variance in job pursuit intentions in stage 2 ($R^2 = .16$) and helpfulness accounted for as much variance during stage 2 as it did in stage 1, and Figure 4 visually represents the differences across stages. Though trustworthiness might be relatively less important during the interviewing stages of the recruitment process (i.e., stage 2), timeliness was *most* important during this phase and both helpfulness and trustworthiness still accounted for meaningful variance in stage 2.

Finally, recruiter helpfulness accounted for more variance in job pursuit intentions during stage 3 of the recruitment process ($R^2 = .20$), than in stage 1 ($R^2 = .12$) and stage 2 ($R^2 = .09$). Upon a closer evaluation of recruiter helpfulness items included in the questionnaire, it is clear that providing helpful advice to applicants, and continuing to provide valuable information regarding the company culture are still very critical to

keeping a job applicant engaged in pursuing a job opportunity even at the end of the recruitment process.

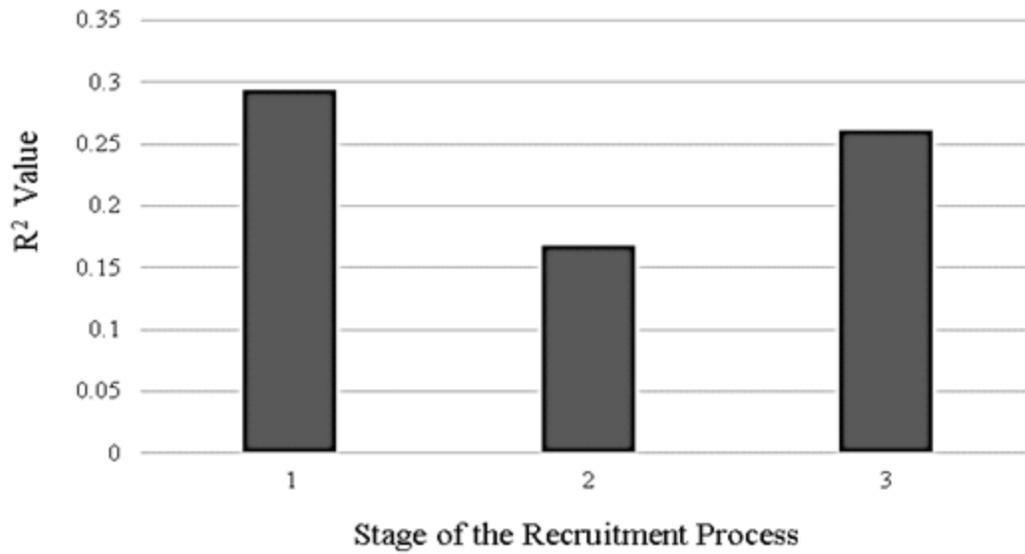


Figure 3: *Relationship of perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness with job pursuit intentions across recruitment stages.*

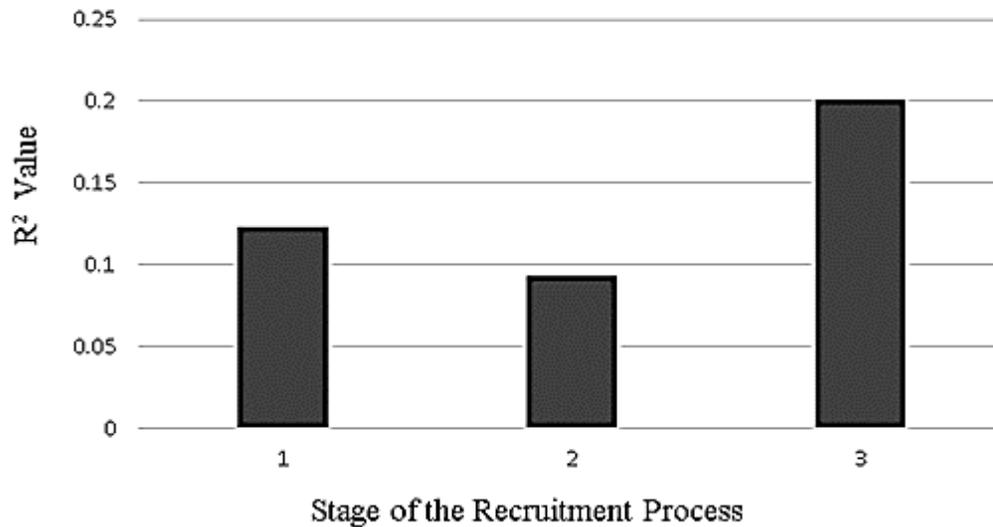


Figure 4: *Relation of perceptions of recruiter helpfulness with job pursuit intentions across recruitment stages.*

Recruitment Process Stage 3 Insights

Hypothesis 3.C, stated that recruiter trustworthiness would *not* mediate the relationship between recruit timeliness and helpfulness and applicants' job pursuit intentions in stage 3 of the recruitment process. Not only was full mediation found between helpfulness and job pursuit intentions, but timeliness also significantly predicted trustworthiness in this stage, contradicting the hypothesized findings. The hypothesis reflected a logical assumption that once a job applicant has made it through the full recruitment process, they have had the opportunity to get to know the organization and the job they are pursuing enough to make recruiter characteristics such as helpfulness and trustworthiness less relevant to how job pursuit intentions are formed. Hypothesis 2 similarly predicted that recruiter helpfulness and trustworthiness would not predict job

pursuit intentions in stage 3 of the process, based on the idea that recruiters could not or would *still* be offering helpful advice or information after the final interview; however, it was predicted that timeliness *would* still play a role in the job applicant's final decision in stage 3, as has been seen in previous studies (Arvey et al., 1975; Becker et al., 2010). What has been found instead is that recruiter helpfulness is *most* important in stage 3, and that recruiter trustworthiness continued to play a very significant role in applicant job pursuit intentions at the end of the recruitment process.

Furthermore, recruiter timeliness had no direct effect on job pursuit intentions in stage 3 of the recruitment process. This seems somewhat counter-intuitive in that it would seem more logical for applicants to base their job decisions on organizational factors at the end of the recruitment process, instead of recruiters' personal characteristics. In fact, supplementary analyses show that organizational attraction does in fact have its strongest impact on job pursuit intentions in stage 3, is represented by Figure 5. Yet these results considered with other findings regarding the recruiter variables in this study suggest that both recruiter and organizational characteristics are salient to job pursuit intentions throughout the *entire* recruitment process, and recruiter variables do not lose their importance as the applicants learn more about the organization.

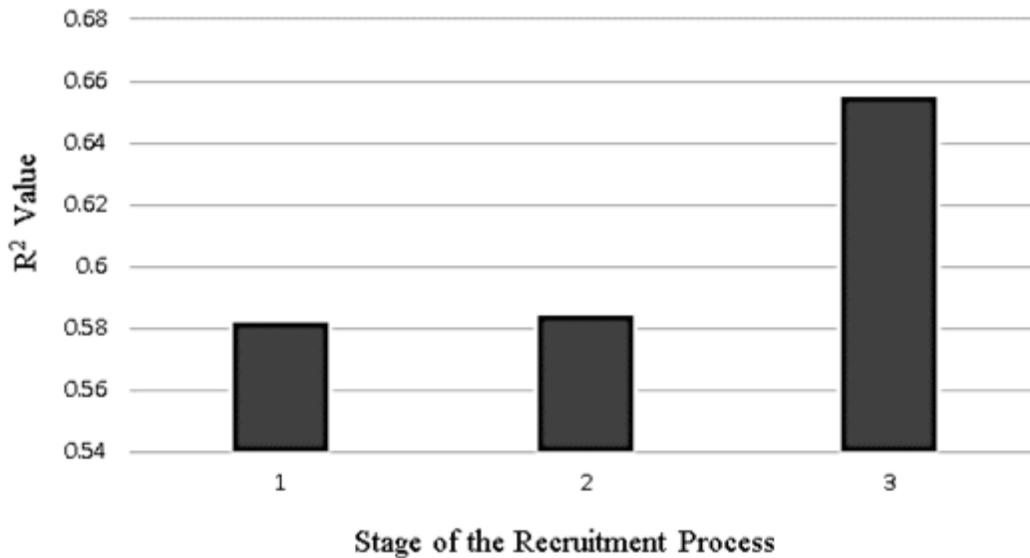


Figure 5: *Relation of organizational attraction with job pursuit intentions across recruitment stages.*

Willingness to Work with the Same Recruiter Again

The discussion up to this point has presented a variety of practical implications for both recruiters and employers. Understanding what factors impact why an applicant pursues a job opening or an organization allows any organizational representative involved in the recruitment process to behave in a way that keeps job applicants engaged and interested throughout each stage of the process. As described in the results of the present study's supplementary analyses, participants were also prompted to respond to the item "I would work with this same recruiter again during another job search." This item is of specific interest to individual recruiters (as opposed to hiring managers or employers). Recruiters may not place the job applicant they worked with in a new job the first time they work together, but may wish to continue working with that same applicant

in their continued job search, towards other job openings with the same company, or even a different company. The results of this study indicate that recruiter timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness in both stages 2 and 3 significantly predicted job applicants' willingness to work with the same recruiter again. What can be understood from this is that not only do these recruiter behaviors and characteristics impact applicants' likelihood to pursue a job opening but also their intentions to *continue* working with that same recruiter should they not get an offer for the initial opportunity the recruiter presented to them. Similarly, if an applicant *does* receive and accept an offer, they may still return to the same recruiter should they begin a new job search in the future.

Limitations

There are some limitations to the current study that should be considered. First, there are several ways a recruiter may be required to perform in their position. Some recruiters spend most of their time responding to résumé applications, and completing more administrative duties. Other recruiters spend most their time reaching out to potential applicants, to get them to pursue a job opening the recruiter has been commissioned to fill. Some recruiters focus on specific industries, or may only recruit for director or executive level roles. Participants in this study were asked to recall a specific type of recruitment experience, in which their recruiters typically initiated communication about the job, moved them through each stage of the recruitment process, and maintained some form of contact until the end of the process. As there is variability in how recruiters function, the results of the present study should be considered *most* relevant to recruiters as they were described in the frame-of-reference instructions

provided to each participant: “A [professional recruiter is a] *person dedicated to finding job-applicants for job openings within an organization, or many organizations. A professional recruiter initiates contact with the candidate (as opposed to just responding to a résumé-application), because they believe that candidate has the knowledge, skills, and talent they need for the job opening they have been commissioned to fill.*” (See Appendix A).

Regarding the recruiter characteristic variables, timeliness and helpfulness, it is possible that there was some overlap in participants understanding of the constructs. Although measures were taken to avoid demand characteristic internal validity threats, it is possible that some participants assumed timeliness to be a “helpful recruiter characteristic”. In fact, significant correlations between these variables, as well as their shared variance in predicting job pursuit intentions could be indicative of such as validity threat. While both variables accounted for unique variance in job pursuit intentions at various stages of the recruitment process, further research should seek to clarify the distinction versus overlap of these two constructs.

Another limitation to recognize is the use of participants’ memory to recall their recruitment experience, instead of studying their perceptions in real-time, as they were experiencing the recruitment process. Participants were asked to recall their perceptions at three different points during the recruitment process, and it is possible that participants’ memory of stage 1 of the recruitment process may overlap with their memory of stage 2, or even stage 3. While frame-of-reference instructions were provided throughout the study, and visual cues to remind participants of which recruitment stage they were supposed to be remembering were included on each page, memory deficiencies could

impact the results of their responses. To address this issue further, participants were asked to recall their “most recent recruitment experience”, but the reliance on memory for responses to questionnaire items limits the interpretation of results.

Regarding the participant sample, 80% of the study’s participants indicated they were white. A more diverse sample would be desirable to achieve more generalizable results. However, participants’ salary-level, age, industry, gender, and education levels were more evenly distributed, providing a more representative sample. One final issue with the sampling procedure was that it was possible for survey participants from Amazons Mechanical Turk who were excluded from the survey for indicating they had not worked with professional recruiters in the past to attempt to take the survey again. Multiple precautions were taken to exclude inattentive responders from the results, and to ensure that all participants had the experience required to be included in the study. However, it is possible that some participants who initially indicated they had never worked with a recruiter attempted to take the survey again, and did so successfully by indicating they had worked with a professional recruiter in their second attempt.

Future Research

This study extended the recruiting literature and provides more specific insight into how applicant attitudes develop throughout the full cycle of their recruitment experiences. Recruiter trustworthiness was also shown to be very important to the applicant-recruiter relationship, both for short and long-term working relationships. Similarly, specific “helpful” behaviors a recruiter might offer, such as résumé or interview advice, as well as “insider information” about the culture of a company were shown to affect how strongly applicants intend to pursue job offers. Yet even more

questions can be proposed for future research. For instance, while this study supports the importance of trustworthiness, helpfulness, and timeliness for applicants working with recruiters, these factors may be more or less important if the job applicant is working directly with the hiring manager or a different HR representative. Similarly, organizational attraction may be even more important for applicants who are not working with a recruiter, as this could receive more of their attention when recruiter characteristics are not influencing applicant attitudes. The differences between job seeking applicants who are working with recruiters and those who are not should be more closely examined in future research.

While this study provides evidence that job applicant attitudes change throughout specific stages of the recruitment process, this evidence is based on a cross-sectional assessment, as opposed to a longitudinal study that takes multiple measurements of applicant attitudes *as they experience* the recruitment process. The present study provides an important base for future research which should examine how applicants view their recruiters in real-time, when they do not know the outcomes of their job search yet and are experiencing recruitment stages as their attitudes and perceptions are measured. However, clear differentiation between recruitment stages should be defined and emphasized throughout the data collection process, should longitudinal studies of active job applicants be conducted. Using clearly defined recruitment stages not only provides parsimony to longitudinal recruitment research, but also allows for study replication, and more readily applicable results and interpretations for organizations seeking to improve their recruiting practices.

Perceptions of recruiter helpfulness was a variable that was operationalized for this specific study. The literature review and pilot study conducted before developing the helpfulness scale likely aided to its reliability ($\alpha = .75$ in stage 1, $\alpha = .85$ in stage 2, and $\alpha = .88$ in stage 3). Yet, recruiter helpfulness is a variable that could be defined in a variety of ways, and future research should seek to establish a more concrete, time-tested measure of perceptions of recruiter helpfulness or “helpful behaviors”.

One peculiar finding that warrants further research was the result of the t-tests examining how a willingness to work with the same recruiter again differed between the group of applicants who received a job offer and those who did not. In the present study, applicants who *did not* receive a job offer were significantly more willing to work with that same recruiter again. It is possible that this represents the job applicants’ desires to just “get a job” working with whatever recruiter is willing to help. It seems unlikely that job applicants who had positive perceptions of their recruiter would be less willing to work with them again in the future, but the contrary results of this study are a sign that this variable should continue to be explored in future recruitment research.

Finally, 47 of the 51 participants in this study *who received a job offer* from the recruiter they were working with, decided to accept that offer. The small sample of participants who accepted an offer ($n = 51$) already presents a restriction of range making analyses using *applicant job choice* as a dependent variable less useful. The fact that over 92% of this small sample accepted the job offer presents an even greater restriction. The current study provides many insights into how differing recruiter behaviors or characteristics affect applicants’ job pursuit intentions, but does little to differentiate applicants who accepted their job offer versus those who did not. Future research should

seek to compare recruitment experiences between job applicants who decided to accept a job offer and those applicants who turned down the offer. This sort of research could lead to a greater understanding of recruiter or organizational variables that differ between these two groups, allowing organizations to focus on those most critical aspects of their recruitment process that predict an applicant turning down a job offer. This sort of study would likely require a very large sample to account for the restriction of range occurring from study attrition and a job offer acceptance, but the results would allow employers to develop more tailored, consistently effective recruitment processes.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that recruiter trustworthiness is a significant predictor of applicants' job pursuit intentions in each stage of the recruitment process. Furthermore, trustworthiness mediates, or explains the relationship between recruiter characteristics such as timeliness and helpfulness and job pursuit intentions in stage 1, timeliness in stage 2, and helpfulness in stage 3 of the recruitment process. From a broader perspective, this study provides evidence that a recruiter's ability to be accessible and aid the job applicant at every step of the application, interview, and job offer process builds an open and honest relationship, that ultimately leads the job applicant to more directly and actively pursue a job opening. Organizations should capitalize on this by selecting and training professional recruiters to focus on this aspect of the recruit-organization-job applicant relationship.

This study also found that these same recruiter characteristics meaningfully relate to how willing job applicants are to work with the same recruiter again. Organizations and recruiters gain advantage from this finding; an employer may not hire an applicant

for one job opening, but might still be interested in hiring them for other job openings. Similarly, a professional recruiter may not place a job applicant into the first job they present, but might still wish to work with the job applicant to place them into another job opening. The straight-forward and helpful relationship a recruiter can build with a job applicant will make it much more likely that a job applicant will continue to work with that same recruiter in their continued, or a future job search.

This research also brings to light a potential conflict in the literature. Timeliness at stage 3, the job offer stage, did not significantly predict job pursuit intentions, as has been found in several previous studies (e.g., Arvey et al., 1975; Becker et al., 2010). It is possible that previous research has found significant relationships between timeliness and job pursuit intentions as a result of *not* controlling for variables such as recruiter helpfulness and trustworthiness. Further research should be conducted on this topic clarify the true importance of a “timely” job offer for job applicants making their final job choice decisions. Future research should also examine the importance of timeliness, helpfulness, and trustworthiness during the job application, interview, and job offer process when an organization does *not* use a professional recruiter, compared to companies who *do* use professional recruiters.

Finally, although restriction of range was an issue in this study and many others (Chapman et al., 2005), recruitment researchers should continue to explore the difference in recruiting experiences for job applicants who accept a job offer compared to those who receive an offer but do *not* accept it. Each of these areas for future research will continue to bring light to what truly attracts job applicants to jobs and organizations, and how

organizations and recruiters alike can most effectively impact the intentions job applicants form throughout each stage of the recruitment process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RECRUITER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Informed Consent

Middle Tennessee State University

Principle Investigator: Caleb McLaughlin

Institution: Middle Tennessee State University

Title: Where has my recruiter gone? The effect of trustworthy recruiter behaviors on applicant intentions

Purpose: The purpose of my thesis study is to determine whether recruiter timeliness and responsiveness as well as other “helpful” behaviors, such as offering résumé advice or interview feedback, predict organizational attractiveness and intentions to pursue a job vacancy or an organization. The study will also explore during which stage of the recruitment process these relationships hold the greatest significance, if they exist at all. The study is also intended to see whether perceptions of recruiter trustworthiness mediate relationships between recruiter behaviors and job pursuit intentions.

The findings may help employers, and especially recruiting and staffing firms, know how important timely recruitment processes and helpful, “extra-mile” behaviors (e.g., résumé advice) can be to attracting qualified candidates for current job openings. The study will also bring light to the stages of the recruitment process that impact job applicants’ intentions the most, if the applicants perceive timely or helpful recruiter behaviors. Finally, organizations may be able to learn more about how timely, helpful recruiters become trustworthy in the eyes of candidates, and how that also impacts their intentions to pursue a job opening.

Procedures: A sample of working-professionals (all older than 18 years), recruited through pre-existing résumé databases, will take the survey developed for this study and respond to items on a five-point scale indicating the level to which they agree with statements about specific recruitment experiences they have had. Other items which will be excluded from primary analysis will use other answering scales, but will only be used in post-hoc analyses and for demographic purposes.

The participants will be required to agree to a standardized consent form and explicitly indicate they are 18 years or older. Participants will also be reassured of the confidentiality of their responses. The full survey is estimated to take about 20 minutes, and will be provided to participants via an email which includes a link to the secure, online survey. Once the survey is completed, the participants will receive an automated message letting them know they have completed the pilot study survey, and thanking them for their participation.

Risks/Benefits: No risk or discomfort is anticipated from this study. Participants will only respond to non-intrusive items regarding topics that are not deemed to be “sensitive” or “imposing on privacy.” Participants will be able to exit and cancel their survey and responses at any point, up until the moment they submit their final survey. Benefits include increased knowledge of recruiting practices and further insight for individuals and organizations into recruiting characteristics that attract job applicants and improve their perceptions of the recruitment process.

Confidentiality: Minimal personal information will be collected. All data will be stored on the faculty advisor's computer for a minimum of three years following study completion.

Contact Information: Caleb McLaughlin | cdm7y@mtmail.mtsu.edu or Dr. Van Hein | judith.vanhein@mtsu.edu

Participating in this project is voluntary, and refusal to participate or withdrawing from participation at any time during the project will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised, for example, your information may be shared with the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board.

In the event of questions or difficulties of any kind during or following participation, you may contact the Principal Investigator as indicated above.

For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact the MTSU Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

I have read the above information and my questions have been answered satisfactorily by project staff. I believe I understand the purpose, benefits, and risks of the study and give my informed and free consent to be a participant.

If you consent with the above statements, please select "Yes, I consent and choose to participate" below to proceed to taking this survey.

If you do not agree and consent with the above statements, please select "No, I do not consent."

- Yes, I consent and choose to participate
 - No, I do not consent
-

Are you 18 years or older?

- Yes
 - No
-

Thank you for participating in our research!

This study intends to discover the experiences you may or may not have had working with a professional recruiter either **(A) during a job search that led to you taking a new job, or (B) a job search in which you went through the recruitment process, but possibly did not take any new job.**

NOTE:

This does NOT mean that you took the job the recruiter described to you, but simply that you entertained and at least partially pursued the job that the recruiter described to you.

While we encourage full participation, you may skip items if you prefer.

Finally, there is one ***term we need to define*** before you begin your survey. That is the term "Professional Recruiter" or "Recruiter."

For the purpose of this study, a "Professional Recruiter" or "Recruiter" is:

"A person dedicated to finding job-applicants for job openings within an organization, or many organizations.

A professional recruiter *initiates* contact with the candidate (*as opposed to just responding to a résumé-application*), because they believe that candidate has the knowledge, skills, and talent they need for the job opening they have been commissioned to fill."

With that definition in mind, you are ready to begin! Please answer the following two (2) questions, and then click "NEXT" at the bottom-right of this page to continue to the survey.

1 Have you ever worked with a professional recruiter?

- Yes
- No

2 Did you attend at least one interview with the organization the recruiter described to you?

NOTE: This does NOT mean you took the job the recruiter described to you. It only means you worked with a recruiter on at least one job opening you were actively considering.

- Yes
- No

3 The time of day that a recruiter reaches out to me impacts whether I respond or not.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

4 Overall, my preferred mode of communication with recruiters is (select all that apply):

- Text Message
- Phone Call
- Email
- LinkedIn Message
- N/A
- Other (please type in the communication method you prefer): _____

5 I prefer to check for emails from recruiters (select all that apply):

- Before work hours
- Before lunch
- On my lunch break
- After lunch
- After work hours
- N/A
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided here): _____

6 Approximately how many emails do you receive from recruiters per month?

- Less than one per month
- 1-10 per month
- 11-20per month
- 21-30 per month
- More than 30 per month
- N/A
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided here): _____

7 I prefer to be called on the phone by recruiters (select all that apply):

- Before work hours
- Before lunch
- On my lunch break
- After lunch
- After work hours
- N/A
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided here): _____

8 Approximately how many phone calls (including voicemails) do you receive from recruiters per month?

- Less than one per month
- 1-10 per month
- 11-20per month
- 21-30 per month
- More than 30 per month
- N/A
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided here): _____

9 What is your preferred method of initial (first) contact from recruiters (select all that apply)?

- Email
- Phone Call / Voicemail
- Text Message
- LinkedIn Message
- In-Person Introduction
- N/A (I prefer NOT to have contact with recruiters)
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided here): _____

10 What is your preferred method of CONTINUED communication with Recruiters, once you are already working with them (select all that apply)?

- Email
- Phone Call / Voicemail
- Text Message
- LinkedIn Message
- In-Person Introduction
- N/A (I prefer NOT to have contact with recruiters)
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided here): _____

11 For the remainder of this survey, please respond to all items as they relate to your MOST RECENT experience working with a recruiter. It is very important that all of your responses throughout the rest of this survey relate to the same recruiter and the same job opening the recruiter described to you. ONE LAST NOTE: We are VERY interested in understanding how your recruitment experience developed throughout the process. And so, you will be asked the following questions about your recruitment experience three (3) times, each time as they relate to the three stages of recruitment: 1. STAGE 1: From your first contact with the recruiter about your job search to your first interview with the company that the recruiter described to you. 2. STAGE 2: From your first interview, until your last interview (i.e., the "interviewing stage"). 3. STAGE 3: From your last interview until you received a job offer or stopped pursuing this particular job opening. DON'T WORRY! Each time we ask you about a "different stage" of the recruitment process, we will provide brief instructions so that you know which of the Three Stages we are referring to.

12 For the remainder of this survey, I am supposed to respond to questions as they relate to my:

- Worst recruiting experience
- Most recent recruiting experience
- Best recruiting experience

13 I was already looking for a new job when the recruiter I worked with contacted me.

- Yes, I was already looking for a new job
- No, I had NOT been looking for a new job when first contacted
- Other (please describe the state of your job search when you began working with your recruiter): _____

14 I was NOT looking for a new job at first, but the job the recruiter described to me caught my attention.

- Yes, I was NOT looking at first, but this job caught my interest
- No, other factors contributed to me pursuing the job the recruiter presented to me
- Other (please describe why you pursued the job the recruiter described to you in the space below): _____

15 It was critical for me to obtain new employment during this recruiting period.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

16 I was motivated to gain new employment during this recruiting period.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

17 I took the recruitment process seriously.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

18 The recruiter reached out and initiated contact with me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

19 On the next page of this survey, you will begin responding to items regarding Stage 1 of the Recruitment Process. Please click "Proceed to Stage 1 Items" below to continue.

20 STAGE 1 ITEMS As you respond to this entire page of items, think about your experience with the recruiter you worked with, during the time between your very first contact with them (the recruiter), and the time you officially applied for the job opening the recruiter was presenting to you.

21 The recruiter reached out and initiated contact with me.

- Yes, the recruiter contacted me first.
- No, I contacted the recruiter first.
- Other (please describe how communication with your recruiter began):

22 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was trustworthy.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

23 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was telling me the truth about the job opening as they saw it.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

24 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was NOT being honest with me about the nature of the job opening.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

25 The recruiter I worked with told me a time when they would contact me next.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

26 I was given information about the specific job promptly by the recruiter I worked with.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

27 The recruiter I worked with was always willing to help.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

28 The recruiter I worked with was never too busy to respond to my requests regarding the recruitment process.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

29 For me, the company the recruiter described to me would be a good place to work, based on what I knew at this stage.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

30 I would NOT be interested in the company the recruiter presented to me except as a last resort.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

31 The company the recruiter presented to me was attractive to me as a place for employment.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

32 I was interested in learning more about the company the recruiter described to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

33 A job at the company the recruiter presented to me was very appealing to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

34 I would interview with the company the recruiter described to me, based on what I knew at this stage.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

35 I would make that company one of my first choices as an employer.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

36 I would exert a great deal of effort to work for the company the recruiter described to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

37 I would recommend the company the recruiter described to me to a friend looking for a job.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

38 The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful interviewing advice, before I went to my first interview.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

39 The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful advice on my résumé.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

40 The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful information about the culture of the organization (i.e., company values; company mission statement; the management style, etc.)

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

41 Overall, advice and assistance efforts that the recruiter provided were more helpful than hurtful.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

42 STAGE 2 ITEMS As you respond to this entire page of items, think about your experience with the recruiter you worked with, during the time between your first interview with the company the recruiter described to you and your final interview for the job opening. This stage encompasses the entire interview process.

43 Did you interview with the company for the job opening the recruiter described to you?

- Yes
- No

44 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was trustworthy.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

45 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was telling me the truth about the job opening as they saw it.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

46 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was NOT being honest with me about the nature of the job opening.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

47 The recruiter I worked with told me a time when they would contact me next.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

48 I was given information about the specific job promptly by the recruiter I worked with.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

49 The recruiter I worked with was always willing to help.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

50 The recruiter I worked with was never too busy to respond to my requests regarding the recruitment process.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

51 For me, the company the recruiter described to me would be a good place to work, based on what I knew at this stage.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

52 I would NOT be interested in the company the recruiter presented to me except as a last resort.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

53 The company the recruiter presented to me was attractive to me as a place for employment.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

54 I was interested in learning more about the company the recruiter described to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

55 A job at the company the recruiter presented to me was very appealing to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

56 I would interview with the company the recruiter described to me, based on what I knew at this stage,

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

57 I would make that company one of my first choices as an employer.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

58 If the company I was being recruited for invited me for a job interview, I would have gone, based on what I knew at this stage.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

59 I would exert a great deal of effort to work for the company the recruiter described to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

60 I would accept a job offer from the company the recruiter described to me, based on what I knew at this stage.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

61 I would recommend the company the recruiter described to me to a friend looking for a job.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

62 The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful interviewing advice, before my interviews.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

63 The recruiter I worked with provided me helpful information about the culture of the organization (i.e., company values; company mission statement; the management style, etc.)

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

64 The recruiter provided me helpful feedback from the company, after my first interview.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

65 Overall, advice and assistance efforts that the recruiter provided were more helpful than hurtful.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

66 Stage 2 of the Recruitment process refers to:

- The stage beginning after the final interview, lasting until a job offer or rejection is made.
- The stage that involves the initial contact between the recruiter and job applicant.
- The stage beginning at the first interview, and ending at the final interview.

67 STAGE 3 ITEMS As you respond to this entire page of items, think about your experience with the recruiter(s) and organizational representatives you worked with, during the time between your final interview with the company the recruiter described to you, and when you received a job offer from that company or when you decided to stop pursuing that specific job opening.

68 Did you attend more than one (1) interview with the company the recruiter described to you?

- Yes
- No
- N/A

69 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was trustworthy.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

70 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was telling me the truth about the job opening as they saw it.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

71 I feel the recruiter I worked with during my job search was NOT being honest with me about the nature of the job opening.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

72 The recruiter I worked with told me a time when I would be contacted next.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

73 I was given information about the specific job promptly by the recruiter I worked with.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

74 The recruiter I worked with was always willing to help.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

75 The recruiter I worked with was never too busy to respond to my requests regarding the recruitment process.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

76 For me, the company the recruiter described to me would be a good place to work.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

77 I would NOT be interested in the company the recruiter presented to me except as a last resort.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

78 The company the recruiter presented to me was attractive to me as a place for employment.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

79 I was interested in learning more about the company the recruiter described to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

80 A job at the company the recruiter presented to me was very appealing to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

81 I would interview with this company again, based on what I knew at this stage.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

82 The company the recruiter described to me was one of my first choices as an employer.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

83 I would exert a great deal of effort to work for the company the recruiter described to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

84 I would accept (or "I did accept") a job offer from the company the recruiter described to me.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

85 I would recommend the company the recruiter described to me to a friend looking for a job.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

86 The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful interviewing advice for my final interview.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

87 The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful information about the culture of the organization (i.e., company values; company mission statement; the management style, etc.)

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

88 The recruiter I worked with provided me helpful information about the culture of the organization (i.e., company values; company mission statement; the management style, etc.)

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

89 The recruiter I worked with during my job search provided me helpful feedback from the company, after my final interview.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

90 Overall, advice and assistance efforts that the recruiter provided were more helpful than hurtful.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

91 Were you presented with a job offer (verbal or in-writing) for the specific job the recruiter described to you?

- Yes
- No
- Not Yet

92 Did you accept this specific job offer?

- Yes
- No
- Not Yet

93 What was the result of this particular job search?

- I took a new job
- I stayed in my current job
- I am still looking for a new job
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided): _____

94 I would work with this same recruiter again during another job search.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
- N/A

95 I most commonly search for job openings using (select all that apply):

- Job Boards (such as but not limited to Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com)
- Industry or Field specific job boards
- Job search mobile apps
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Online or Newspaper job ads
- Other (please explain by typing in the space provided): _____

96 My two most preferred sources for finding postings of job openings are:

Most preferred choice _____

Second most preferred source _____

97 What were the top TWO things you liked most about the company you ended up getting hired by from this job search?

Favorite thing about the company _____

Second favorite thing about the company _____

98 What were the top TWO things you liked most about the job you ended up taking at the end of this job search?

Favorite thing about the job _____

Second favorite thing about the job _____

99 All other things held equal, I would prefer to work with a recruiter who is also employed by the hiring-company instead of a third-party recruiter.

- Yes
- It does NOT matter to me
- No
- I do NOT know the difference between the two

100 What were the top TWO things you liked MOST about the recruiter or your recruitment experience?

Favorite thing about the company _____

Second favorite thing about the company _____

101 What were the top TWO things you liked LEAST about the recruiter or your recruitment experience?

Least favorite thing about the company _____

Second least favorite thing about the company _____

102 What age range best describes you?

- 20 years or younger
- 21-30 years old
- 31-40 years old
- 41-50 years old
- 51-60 years old
- 61 years or older
- I prefer not to say

103 Gender

- Man
- Woman
- Other
- I prefer not to say

104 With which of the following do you most identify?

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Two or more races
- I prefer not to say
- Other _____

105 Highest educational degree

- Less than high school
- Hi school Diploma or GED
- Associate Degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- I prefer not to say

106 What was your GPA in the highest educational degree you completed?

- 4.00 or greater
- 3.00-3.99
- 2.00-2.99
- 1.00-1.99
- Less than 1.00
- I prefer not to say

107 Please indicate the field or industry you work in. If not listed below, please type in your response under "Other."

- Goods-Producing Industries
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Service-Providing Industries
- Information (e.g., publishing, telecommunication, data processing, data hosting, etc.)
- Financial Activities
- Professional and Business Services
- Education and Health Services
- Leisure and Hospitality
- I prefer not to say
- Other (please explain in the space provided): _____

108 Years of professional working experience:

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 5 years
- More than 5 years, up to 10 years
- More than 10 years, up to 15 years
- More than 15 years, up to 20 years
- More than 20 years, up to 25 years
- More than 25 years

109 Current Salary (specifically, your base wages, NOT including bonuses, benefits, or other types of compensation)

- Less than \$20,000 per year
- \$20,000 to \$39,999 per year
- \$40,000 to \$59,999 per year
- \$60,000 to \$79,999 per year
- \$80,000 to \$99,999 per year
- \$100,000 or more per year
- I prefer not to say

You have reached the end of this survey. Thank you for your time and efforts. Your responses will aid my research and help to uncover how we can improve recruitment practices and applicant experiences during recruitment.

Want to know more about the topics in this study?

If you are interested in learning more about how recruiter behaviors impact job applicant behaviors, I recommend that you consult:

Chapman, D. S., Uggerslev, K. L., Carroll, K. P., & Jones, D. A. (2005). Applicant Attraction to Organizations and Job Choice: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Correlates of Recruiting Outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 90(5), 928-944. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.90.5.928.

If you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this experiment, please contact the principle investigator, Caleb McLaughlin, cdm7y@mtmail.mtsu.edu, 615-854-3592.

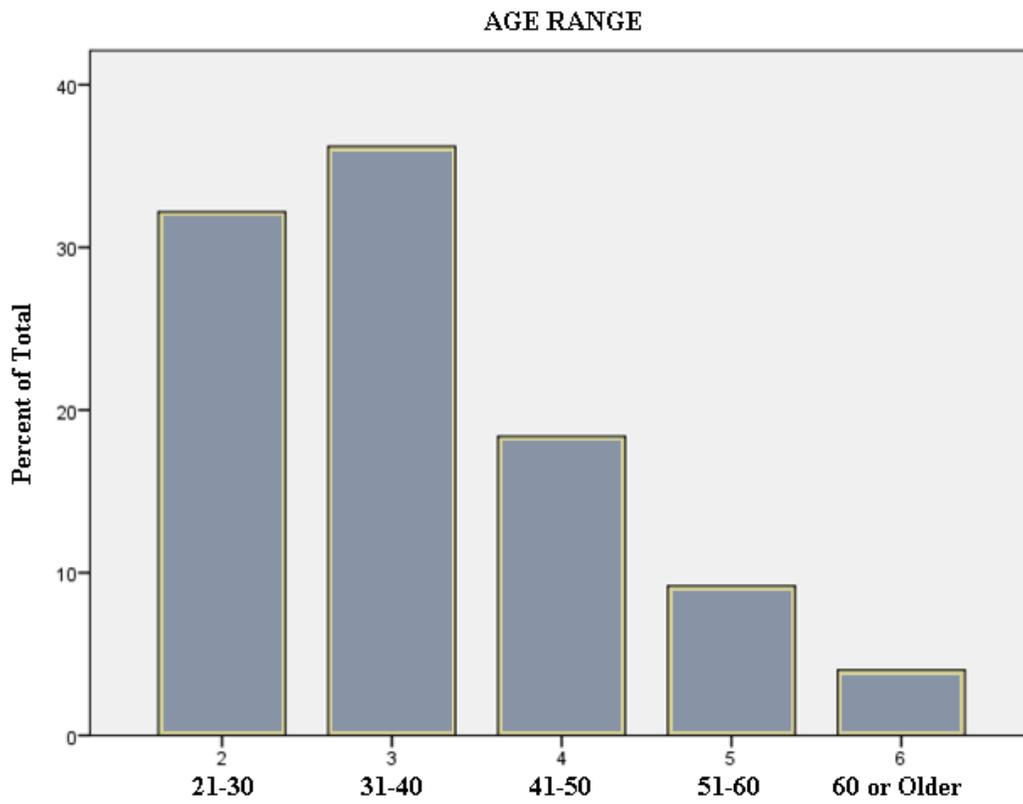
Thank you again for your participation.

Caleb McLaughlin

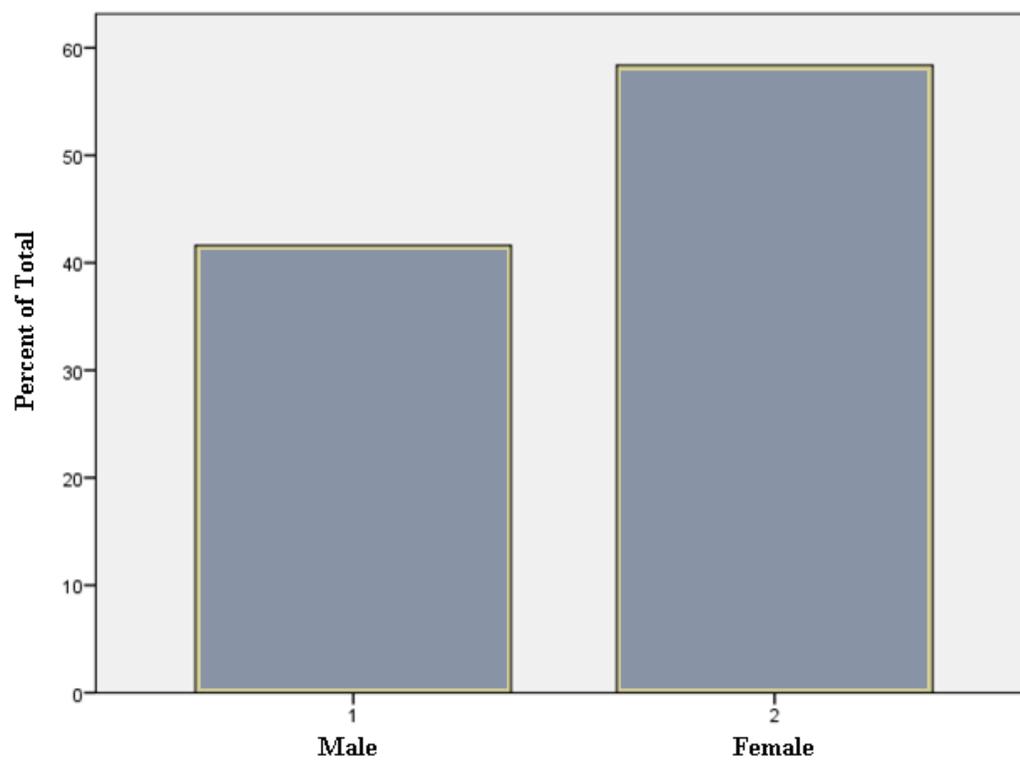
Master's Candidate – MTSU – I/O Psychology

APPENDIX B

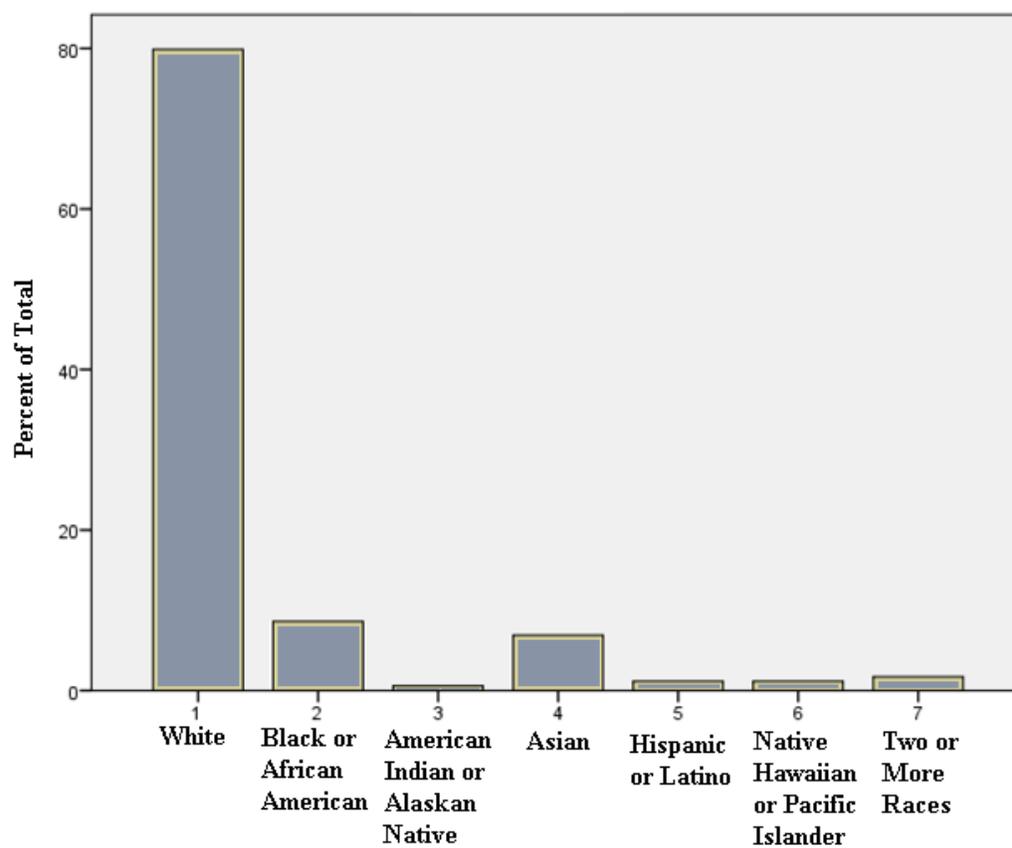
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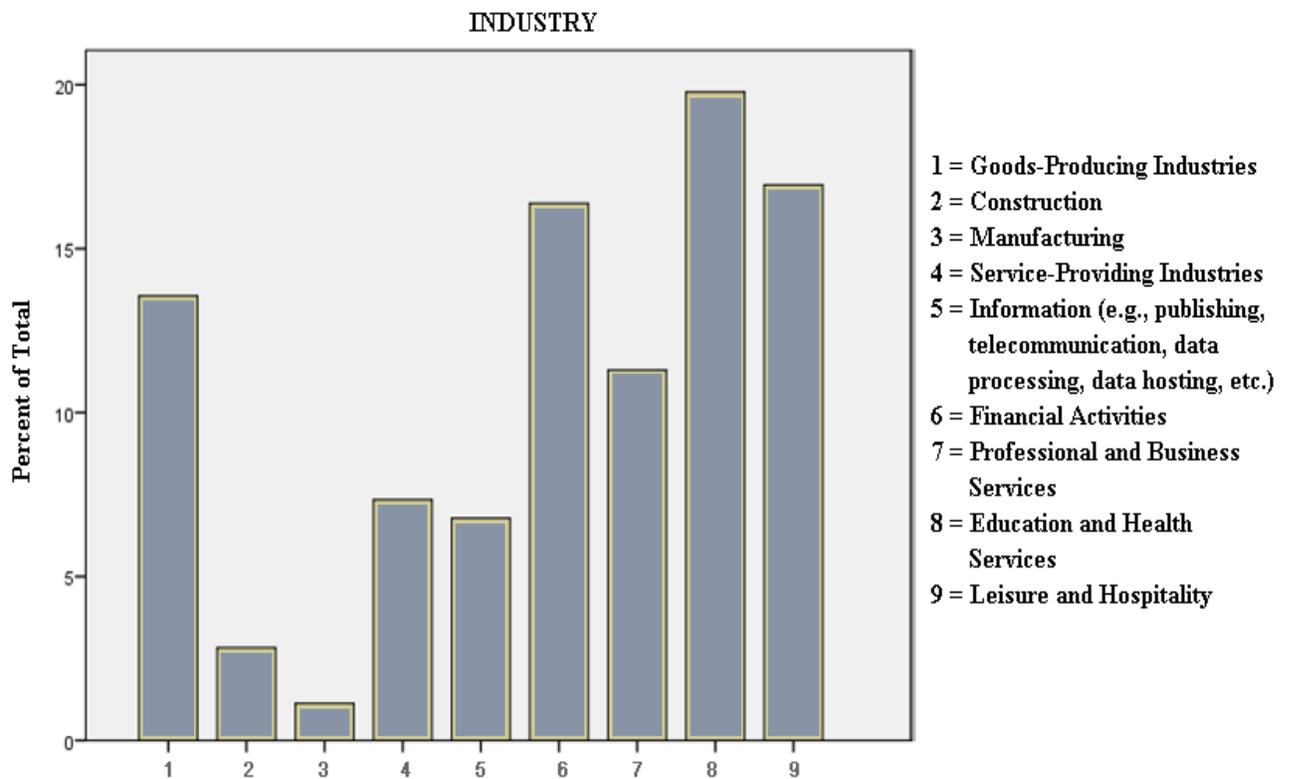
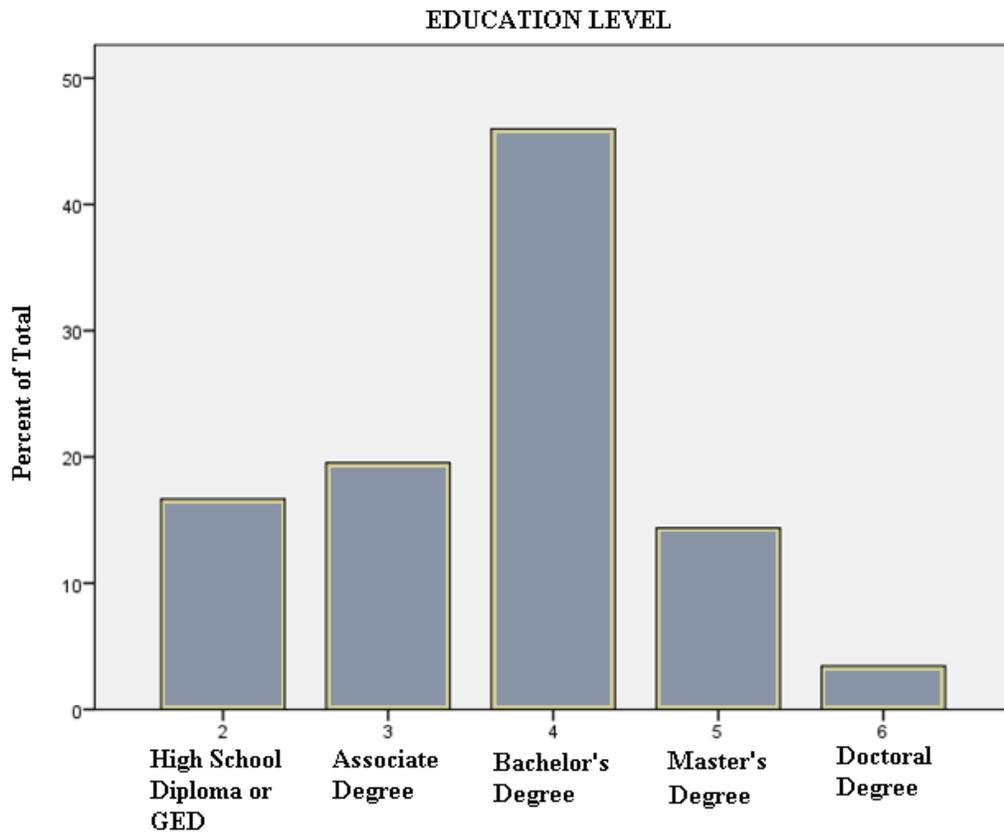


GENDER

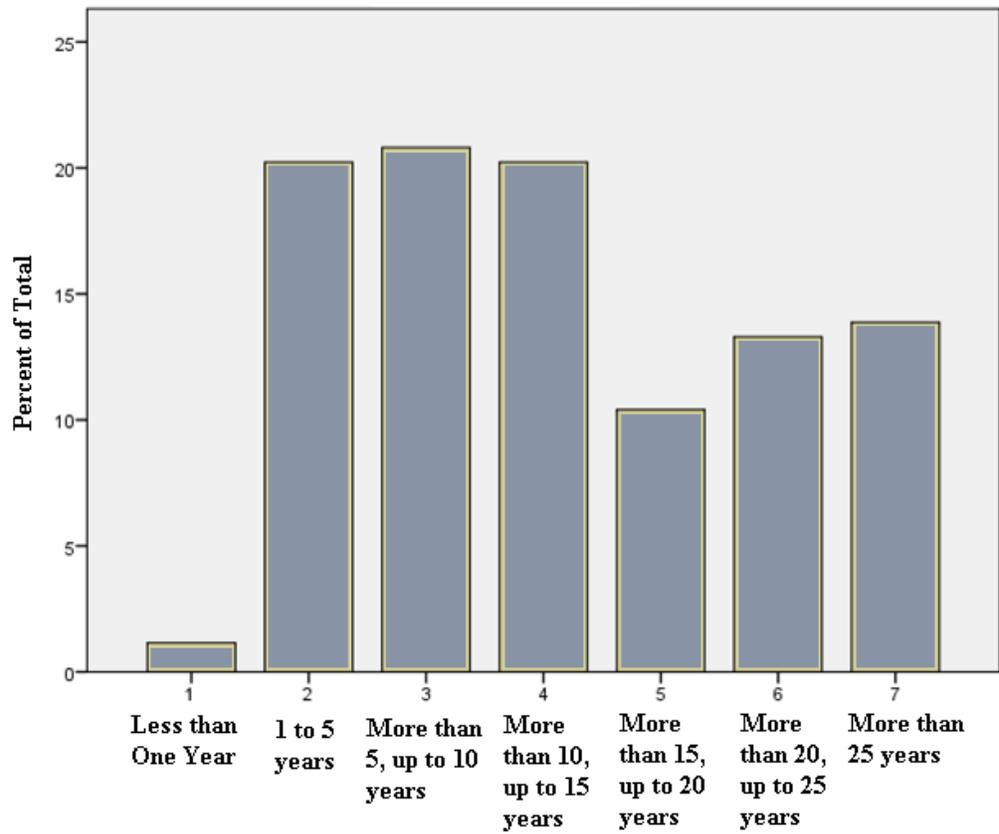


ETHNICITY

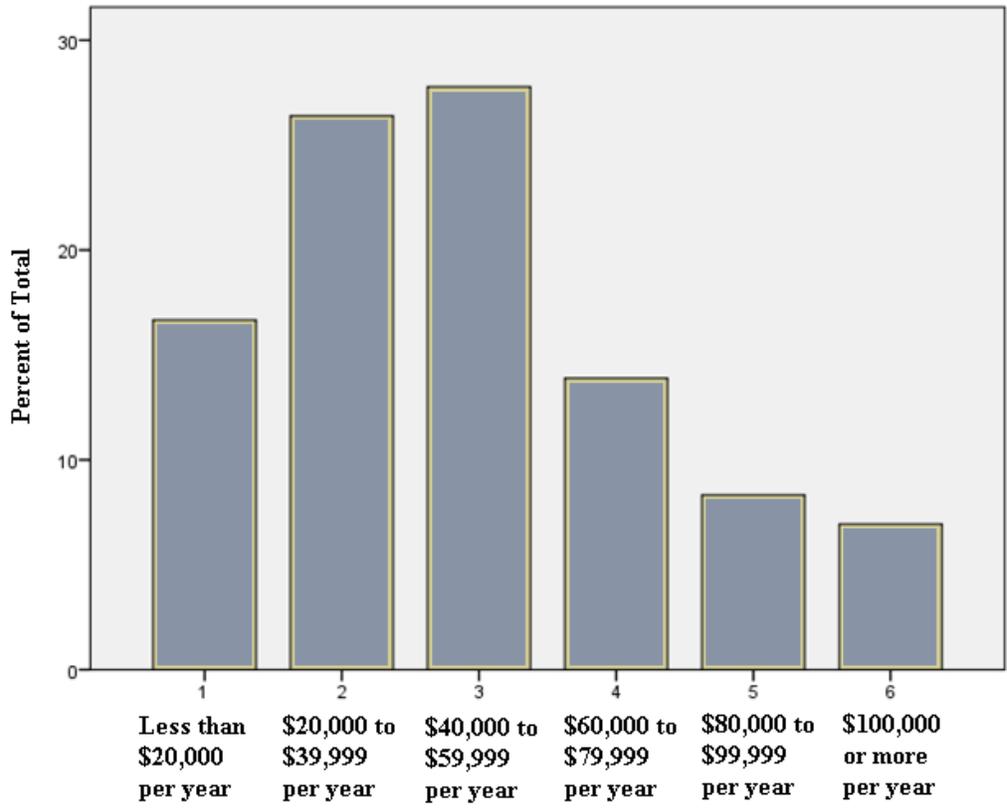




YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE



ANNUAL PAY RANGE

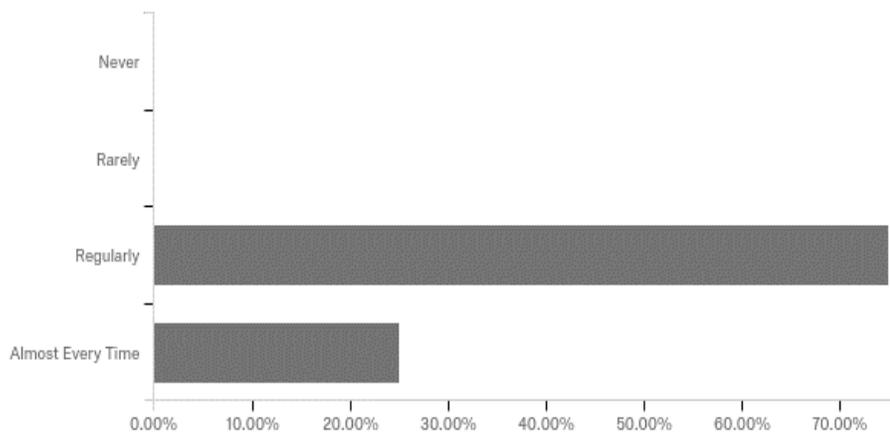


APPENDIX C

Pilot Study - Recruiter Experience Survey

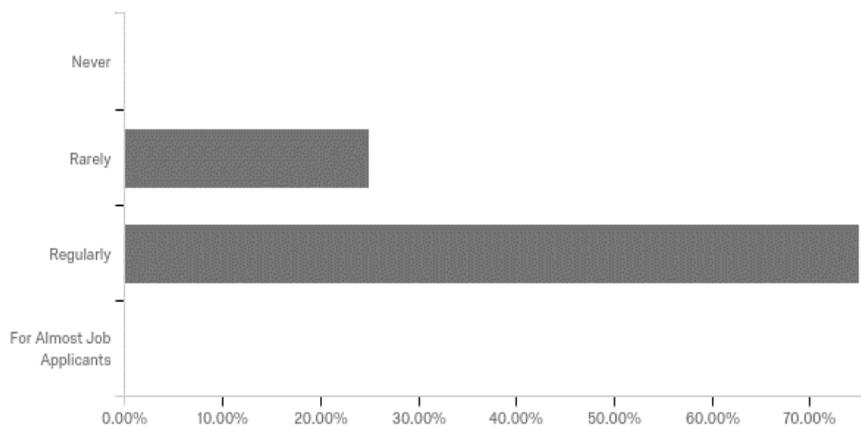
Results Report

Q3.2 - As a professional recruiter I provide job applicants interviewing advice prior to their company interview.



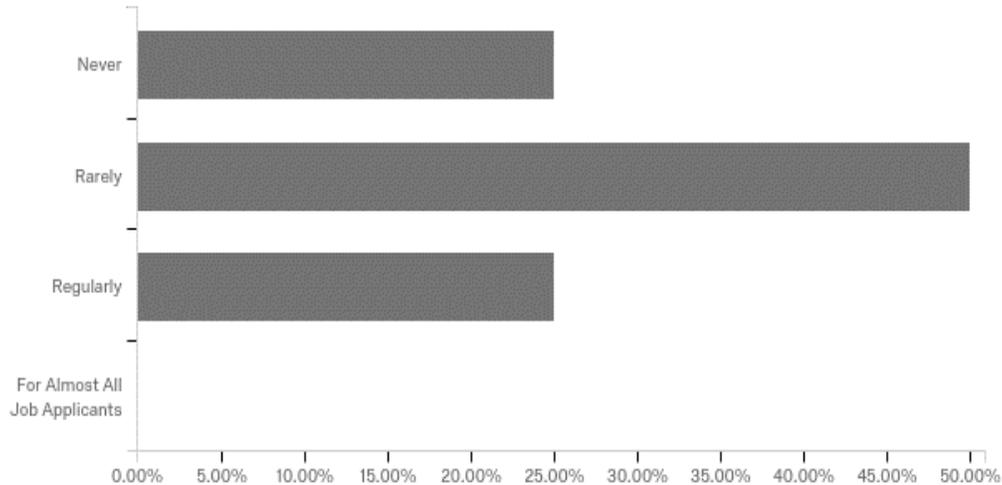
N = 6

Q3.3 - As a professional recruiter I provide job applicants general advice for their résumés.



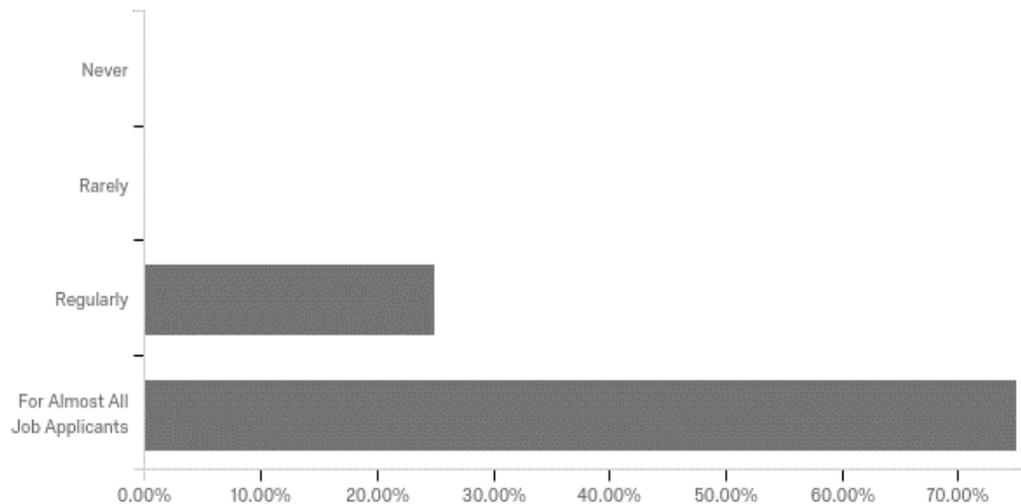
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Q3.4 - As a professional recruiter, I provide suggestions or recommendations for job applicants' professional development (i.e., skills training, professional certification, "user groups", and similar programs).



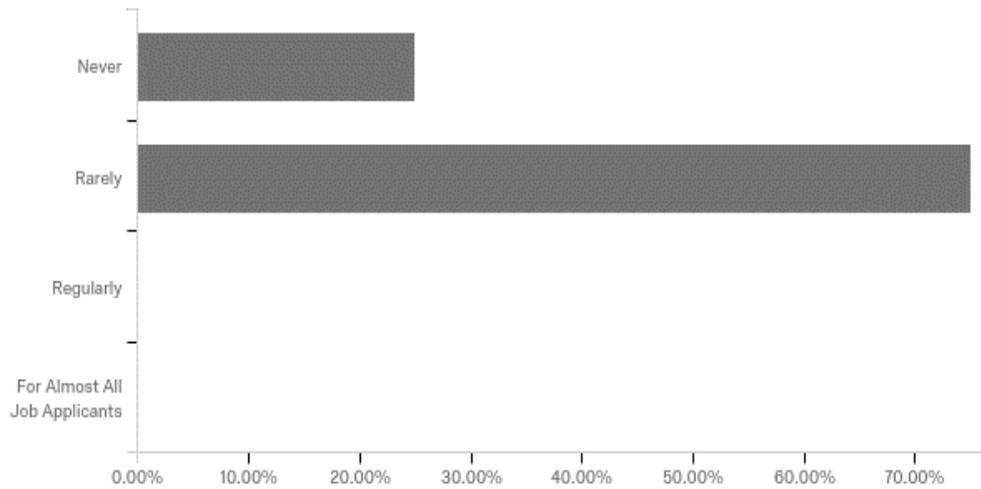
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Q3.5 - As a professional recruiter, I provide information to job applicants about the culture of the organization I am recruiting them for (culture: company values; company mission statement; the management style, and similar characteristics).



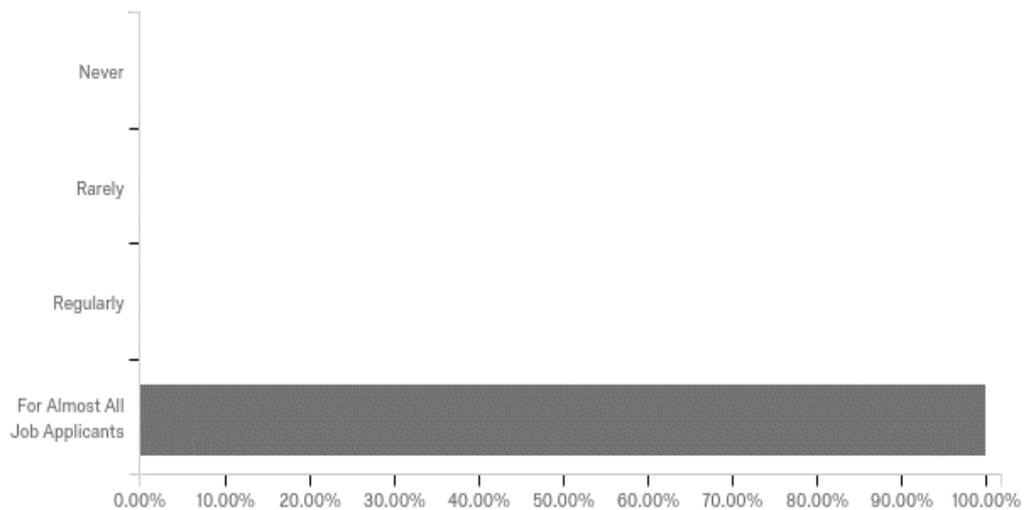
N = 6

Q3.6 - As a professional recruiter, I make in-person introductions between the job applicant and hiring manager when they go in for an interview.



N = 6

Q3.7 - As a professional recruiter, I provide job applicants feedback on their interviews, when I get that information from the company they interviewed with.



N = 6