Recruitment Source Usage and Decision-Making Styles: An Examination of the Individual Differences Hypothesis

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Abstract

The individual differences hypothesis suggests that individuals with varying characteristics are attracted to different recruitment sources, which leads to differences in relative effectiveness of recruitment sources. In our study, we will examine the recruitment sources participants use and their decision-making styles to investigate whether there is a relationship between decision-making styles and the sources used when job searching. Though research has been conducted on employees’ performance differences and recruitment sources, these studies generally use the source which employees were hired through, and assume employees prefer that source. Due to the possibility of multiple sources being used, this could be inaccurate. In this study, to measure source preferences, the extent to which job seekers engage in several behaviors relating to different sources when searching for jobs will be analyzed using data that was previously collected through Amazon MTurk (N=255). After categorizing job searching behaviors in a way that reflects different recruiting source preferences using factor analysis, the extent to which individuals using different recruitment sources employ different decision-making styles will be examined.
One approach to studying employees’ performance differences based on the recruitment sources they are recruited through is the individual differences hypothesis, which suggests that individuals with varying characteristics are attracted to different recruitment sources (Zottolli & Wanous, 2000). In one study testing this hypothesis, Breaugh (1981) found source differences in terms of job performance, work attitudes, and absenteeism such that individuals recruited through college placement offices and newspaper ads were inferior in performance as opposed to individuals who initiated contact with the employer themselves or those recruited through a professional journal or convention advertisement. In terms of absenteeism, individuals recruited through newspaper ads missed almost twice as many days, compared to those referred from any other source. In regards to work attitudes, individuals recruited from college placement offices reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than those recruited from other sources. In another study, Taylor and Schmidt (1983) found that individuals who were rehired by the organization had higher job performance scores and also differed in terms of several characteristics including height, weight, age, sex, prior pay, and shift preference compared to those who were hired through other sources.

Studies examining the individual differences hypothesis generally used the source through which employees were hired to examine source differences. However, this approach may be deficient in examining applicants’ source preferences. Specifically, the assumption underlying under this approach is that the employees prefer the source they were hired through over other sources, which may not be accurate. It is possible that candidates use multiple sources when searching for jobs and are hired through the one used by the organization; in which case the source differences observed would not be attributable to applicants’ preferences. In the proposed study, a different approach will be employed to testing the individual differences
hypothesis. Specifically, we will examine the recruitment sources participants use and their decision-making styles to investigate whether there is a relationship between decision-making styles and the sources of information used when searching for jobs. There is evidence that those employing different decision-making styles are likely to have varying levels of several work outcomes including job satisfaction, job stress, job performance, innovative performance, and managerial performance (Riaz, Riaz, & Batool, 2014; Russ, McNeilly, & Comer, 1996). Accordingly, to the extent that decision-making styles are related with the choice of recruitment sources, this will be evidence that individuals with varying levels of important work outcomes are likely to be recruited through different recruiting sources.

In measuring source preferences, this study will use a measure of job search behaviors developed for this study pertaining to different sources of information individuals use when searching for jobs. The measure includes 72 behaviors job seekers perform when searching for jobs, which were derived through an extensive review of academic literature and popular media. The data for this study was collected through Amazon MTurk (N=255), and includes measures of job search behaviors, decision-making styles (Scott & Bruce, 1995), and demographic information. The first goal of the study will be to categorize job searching behaviors in a way that reflects different recruiting source preferences. This will be accomplished by conducting a factor analysis of the data that will help us to group together the different types of job search behaviors. This will lead to characterizing different job search methods. Next, we will examine the extent to which individuals utilizing different recruitment sources employ different decision-making styles.
References


