



MASTER THESIS

# IF YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING YOU WILL PROBABLY END UP SOMEWHERE ELSE

A lack of objectivity and strategy in recruitment

**J.R. VAN DE FLIERT**

S0126152

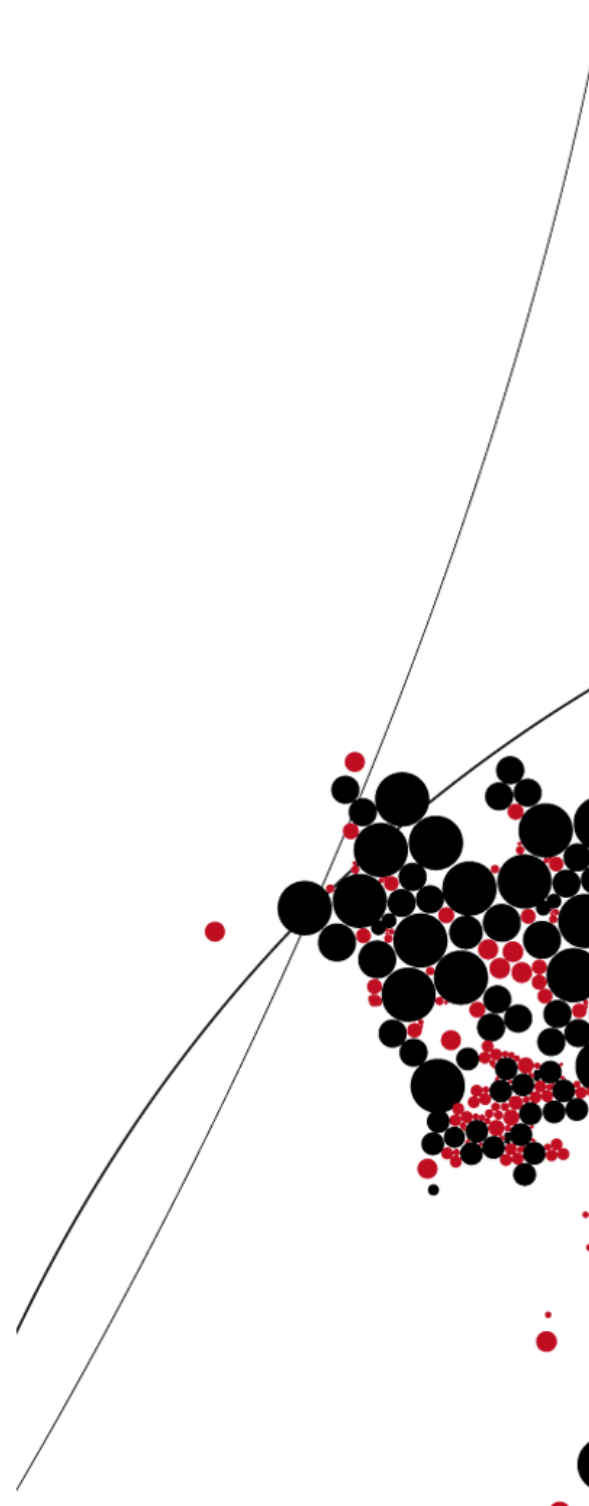
06-10-2014

First supervisor

**PROF. DR. M.D.T. DE JONG**

Second supervisor

**N. BAAS. MSC.**



UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.  
FACULTY OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES,  
COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
*Master Track Corporate Communication*

**UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.**

## **ABSTRACT**

Mismatches in recruitment often result in high costs, friction within an organization and low performance levels. This study aimed at identifying patterns in recruitment mismatches, by analyzing 35 cases of recruitment mismatches using semi-structured interviews with supervisors of the former employees. The supervisors were asked to reflect on the recruitment process and the employment period of the employee concerned. Five patterns, concerning the recruitment mismatches, were derived from the results. (1) The lack of a clear strategy which is defined at the start of the recruitment process and is consistently implemented over the entire course of recruitment; (2) the inability to identify the presence or absence of competencies, especially leadership qualities, of the applicant during the selection phase; (3) the low frequency and non-strategic use in which additional selection methods are being used; (4) the overestimation of the match for internal candidates; (5) the lack of supervision and goal setting in the early onboarding phase. These five patterns shared the lack of objectivity and strategy in recruitment. To prevent future mismatches, or deal with them more effectively, organizations should try more consequently to determine and abide to a predetermined recruitment strategy, which aims at a successfully onboarded employee.

*Keywords: mismatch, recruitment, supervision, employee selection, job interview*

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the current knowledge-based economy the acquisition and development of high-value human capital is essential to organizational success (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, & Ketchen, 2011). Human Capital is largely based on the knowledge, skills and abilities of an organization's employees (Coff, 2002). Employee recruitment is one of the main tools for the acquisition of human capital. The recruitment process is crucial, because hiring the right employees improves the ability of organizations to realize organizational objectives, cope

with future challenges, and increase organizational success (Compton, Morrissey, Nankervis, & Morrissey, 2009; Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2010; Breaugh, 2008; Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Dineen & Soltis, 2011). The right employee should have the ability and commitment necessary for the job and there should be a good fit between the company and the employee (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012).

In a time of crisis, when organizational budgets are tight and unemployment rates are high, the right employees are presumably easy to find. However, finding the right one is still a challenge for organizations. This challenge is exemplified by the estimates pointing towards a more than 25 percent employee-turnover rate within one year and 40 percent not staying at an organization for more than three years of employment (Hom, Roberson, & Ellis, 2008; Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005). Although these figures cannot entirely be attributed to mismatches in recruitment, they do underline the complexity and struggle of recruitment and the presence of mismatches.

Dealing with, or preventing mismatches in recruitment is a challenge for organization, because mismatches often result in, (1) low performance levels, (2) friction between organization and employee and (3) rapid and costly turnovers (Carlson, Connerly, & Mecham, 2002; Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2010). Extended vacancy time and high costs related to advertisement, screening, job interviews, reference processing, lost productivity and training are part of a longer list of negative consequences concerning undesirable recruitment outcomes. These costs often exceed the annual salary for the position being filled (Cascio, 2006 as cited by Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010).

There is still much to gain both for organizations and researchers to investigate and improve organizational abilities to attract, select and keep the right person, and thereby prevent the negative consequences related to mismatches. Despite the vast amount of literature available on recruitment there is still little research on undesirable recruitment

outcomes like mismatches, especially from the view of the supervisor. Most research thus far focused on voluntary or involuntary turnover (Holtom, Tidd, Mitchell, & Lee, 2013; Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008; Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005), which has a more employee-focused perspective.

Organizations should learn from undesired events like mismatches in ways that help them prevent or reduce the possibility of similar events happening in the future or handle them more effectively in case of recurrence (Christianson, Farkas, Sutcliffe, & Weick, 2009). In general, this has not been embedded into organizations yet when it concerns recruitment outcomes (Davidson, 1998; Grossman, 2000). To address this issue, the focus of this research is on mismatches from the view of the supervisor to obtain insights into the difficulties encountered in recruitment and the following employment period. The goal is to identify recurring patterns in recruitment mismatches and to see what improvements can be made from an organizational perspective. Therefore, the following research question is formulated:

*“To what extent can recruitment mismatches be attributed to recruitment process characteristics?”*

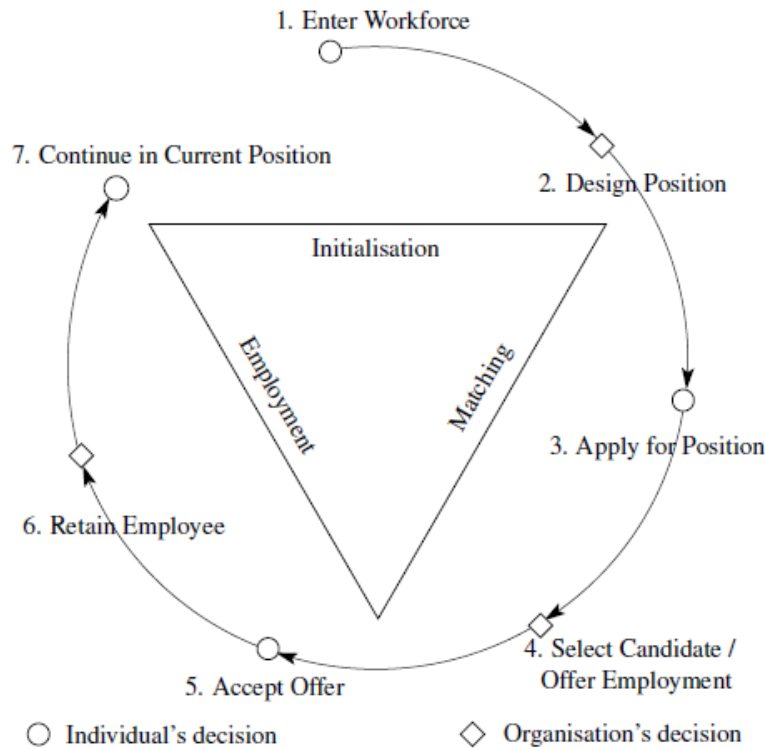
To answer this question, first of all, a short overview will be given concerning the knowledge on recruitment, and more specifically recruitment mismatches. Second, the research method will be discussed to provide insight into the data collection procedure. Third, the results will be discussed. Finally, the conclusion and discussion will be presented.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Before discussing the literature on mismatches in recruitment, it is important to understand that the term recruitment has been used in the literature as a synonym to the attraction of the applicants' pool (Breaugh, 2013; Rynes, 1991), as well as a term to describe the entire process towards, and also including, early employment. In this article, the term recruitment will be used to describe the entire process.

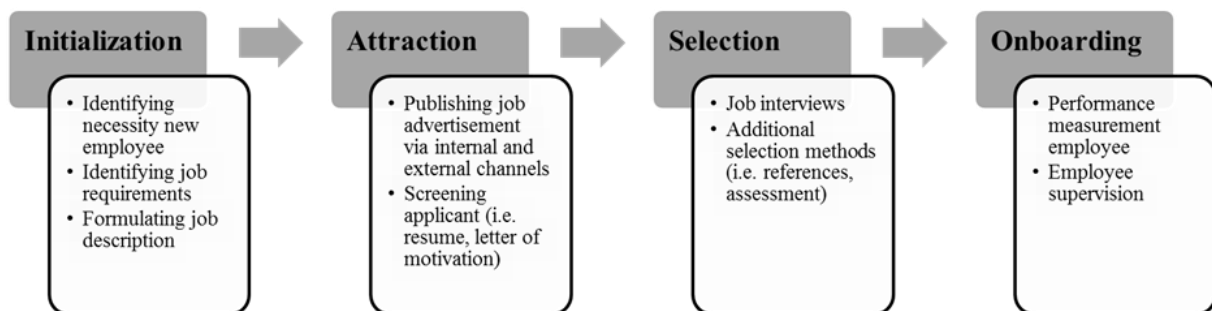
Until now, the literature has focused mainly on the attraction of applicants and the selection of employees (Breaugh, 2013; Klotz, Motta Veiga, Buckley, & Gavin, 2013). However, less attention has been given to what happens before a job opening gets published, or after the selection of an employee, when a mismatch actually becomes visible.

Limited knowledge exists about how selection decision in the recruitment process are actually made in practice (Bolander, & Sandberg, 2013). The literature has generally been lacking an integrated view on the entire recruitment process (Carlson & Connerley, 2003). Carlson and Connerley (2003) proposed the Staffing Cycles Framework (SCF) which is displayed in figure 1. From an organizational perspective, each cycle of the SCF starts with an organization designing a job position which should be filled and it ends with the termination of an employment period.



*Figure 1.* The Staffing Cycling Framework (Carlson & Connerley 2003; as modified by Vormann, Knyphausen-Aufseß, & Laux, 2008)

Although the SCF depicts the intention of this research to grasp the entire process of recruitment, it does not fully depict the actual organizational actions in the recruitment process. Figure 2 therefore presents an overview of how the recruitment process, from an organizational view (i.e. initialization, attraction, selection, and onboarding), is defined in this study.



*Figure 2.* Recruitment Process and Organizational Actions per Phase

## **Initialization Phase**

The initialization phase, encompasses all the actions that involve the identification of the necessity for hiring a new employee by creating a job position and by the formulation of a job description including all its requirements (Carlson & Connerley, 2003; Gatewood, Field, & Barrick, 2010). Literature on recruitment generally underlines the importance of the job description (Hawkes & Weathington, 2014; Levashina & Campion, 2009). Levashina and Campion (2009) describe the identification of the job requirements as the initialization and basis for the entire recruitment process, however, not all recruitment theories include initialization as a separate phase (e.g. Schneider & Schmitt, 1992). These approaches usually view the creation of a job position, and a job description containing the job requirements, as part of the attraction phase. This study, however, will address the initialization phase as a separate phase, because in doing so, the ability to identify organizational actions in the recruitment process start-up can be stronger.

The design of job descriptions during initialization (e.g. job title, responsibilities, hiring requirements) provides guidance for the organization and the applicant (Hawkes & Weathington, 2014), especially regarding the nature of the job and the hierarchical position of the job within the organizational structure. According to Carlson and Connerley (2003), organizations should have a clear picture of their wishes considering the job requirements to formulate a fitting job description. A job description supports following recruitment activities, like selection, by providing clear metrics to base recruitment decisions on (Pavur, 2010). This can enable organizations to make better selection decisions in the recruitment process, which increases the chance of motivated and skilled applicants in later stages of recruitment (Lawler, 1994).

## **Attraction Phase**

When the job requirements have become clear, the recruitment procedure can progress towards the attraction phase, also referred to as the generating applicant phase. This phase is the organization's primary manner to attract talent. It includes all the decisions and practices of organizations that affect either the number, or the kind of individuals that apply for a job (Rynes, 1991). The attraction phase has received a considerable amount of attention in the literature because it directly influences the type of individuals who are hired (Breaugh, 2013). An organization has to determine which recruitment source to use in order to reach the targeted applicants (Breaugh, 2013). Attraction happens via internal or external recruitment sources (Weller, Holtom, Matiaske, & Mellewigt, 2009).

Internal attraction targets employees from the existing workforce to apply for another job position. Still, little research has been done on this subject (Breaugh, 2013). Internal applicants are current employees and a great deal is known about them. Screening, at the end of the attraction phase, might be done via conversations among higher-level managers, who have experience working with the employee and know their current performance (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2010). However, there are also indications of risk about internal attraction in the literature. The recruitment process of internal candidates can be based on variables like seniority, non-systematic opinions of others in the organization, and the ill-defined reputations of candidates (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick 2010).

External attraction is the attraction of applicants outside of the existing workforce. This usually happens via formal recruitment sources, like newspaper advertisements, job fairs, organization web sites, and the organizational recruitment web sites (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007). Online attraction has been a rapidly growing method in the recruitment process, which can reach more people with lower costs (Matsuo, McIntyre, Tomazic, & Katz, 2004) and is a standard use of the organizational website for larger companies.



In both internal and external recruitment, informal and personal ways of attraction are possible. This happens via referrals, personal and social networks or rehires (Zottoli, & Wanous, 2001). Research into attraction supports the claim that informal attraction will systematically provide better information and fit than its formal alternatives (Weller et al., 2009), which results in lower turnover risk and higher job satisfaction (Ployhart, Weekley, & Baughman, 2006). Organizations might therefore consider using a more relational approach during and after the recruitment process, compared to a more formal approach (Allen, 2006; Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005). If the attraction phase produces applicants who do not match the requirements of the job vacancies, the consequences can be harmful to the potential outcomes of the recruitment process (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2010) Thereby presuming, that one of these applicants will be chosen later in the recruitment process.

## **Selection**

When the attraction phase is over, the pool of applicants is known and the phase of selection starts. Selection involves exchanges of information between applicants and the organization, which enables the search for a fit between the goals of the organization and those of the applicant (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012). Selection happens via the choice and execution of different selection methods, like job interviews, which possibly lead to a job offer for an applicant (Sackett & Lievens, 2008). The outcome of the selection phase should be the hiring of an applicant who is committed to the goals of the organization, and has the ability to perform the job in a way that meets the requirements of the organization. Inaccurate perceptions of the competencies or personality of applicants could lead to undesirable recruitment outcomes like mismatches (Carlson, Connerley, & Mecham, 2002).

The job interview is the most prevalent of all selection methods (Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson, & Campion, 2014; Macan, 2009), and it is an extensively researched subject within the literature (Kwon, Powell, & Chalmers, 2013; Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009;

Macan, 2009; Ryan, McFarland, Baron, & Page, 1999). First and foremost, organizations try to accurately assess the ability, personality and commitment of an applicant during the interview (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012). Job interviews can be roughly divided into structured and unstructured interviews. Questions within unstructured job interviews are not as pre-arranged as within structured interviews and are more subject to the reactions of the applicant. Structured interviews are less dependent on the dynamics of conversation, because questions are less open to personal interpretation. Furthermore, structured interviews generally provide a better prediction on the future job performance of an applicant than unstructured interviews (Macan, 2009). This is probably because structured interviews provide more standardized and more job-related information, and they provide organizations with the possibility of a structured use of data to evaluate the candidate (Dipboye, Wooten, & Halverson, 2004).

In job interviews, there is always the risk of sharing inaccurate or untruthful information (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012). With a lack of accurate information regarding the chosen applicant, the chance for a mismatch increases. Applicants might not share accurate information unless it is to their own advantage (Kardes, 2006). This might create the illusion that the match between the applicant and the job or the organization is better than it actually is.

Besides job interviews, there are additional methods, like references and assessments, which support the selection process. According to Bartram et al. (1995), references are most often used to check the authenticity of the information provided by the applicant rather than to help with the selection decisions made by the supervisor. References provide specifically useful information about the personality characteristics and the applicant's ability to learn. Additionally, qualities like honesty, reliability, and time management are most common to ask in references (Branine, 2008). Keenan (1995) also acknowledge that the majority of the

references are used at the end of the selection phase to verify the provided information by the applicant. Although references could also be potentially valuable for the pre-selection of applicants and other stages in the recruitment process (Keenan, 1995).

Assessments for recruitment are used by organizations to measure the potential of future employees, which enables organizations to increase their effectiveness (Bartram, 2004). Assessments are additional selection tools to confirm if the required level of knowledge, skills and abilities are present or whether the personal characteristics of the applicant match the required demands from the organization. In the review of Bartram (2004) concerning the use of assessments for recruitment, a distinction has been made between competency-based assessments (i.e. relevant work-related constructs for job performance) and personality assessments (i.e. individual characteristics for job position). This distinction was made to measure the general ability, or the personality of the applicant, as a predictor of future job performance. The competency-based assessments are usually intended to separate top performers from the average ones (Olesen, White, & Lemmer, 2007). The personality assessments for selection focus more on the relation between the most relevant personality characteristics, such as honesty, integrity, conscientiousness, and interest in the job (Coyne & Bartram, 2000), which can be attributed to predicting job performance.

The assessment center (AC) method is a common and popular form of assessment, which combines traditional assessment techniques (e.g. interviews, psychological tests) with written simulation exercises (e.g. in-baskets, analytical case studies) or interactive tasks (e.g. group discussions, role-plays, presentations) (Schmitt & Chan, 1998). However, the discussion about the validity of assessment centers is still strong, especially concerning whether ACs actually measure the relationship of individual AC dimensions to cognitive ability, personality, and/or job performance (Arthur et al., 2008; Lance, 2008; Lievens & Christiansen, 2012).

Despite intensive research in recent years in assessments, there is still no consensus on the validity of assessments in general as well. (Dilchert & Ones, 2009; Gibbons & Rupp, 2009; Jones & Born, 2008; Putka & Hoffman 2013). The criticism on assessments is mainly based on personality measures being poor predictors of job performance (Murphy & Dziewieczynski, 2005). Despite possible differences in the characteristics of a job position, organizations use the same assessments that are quite general and not job-specific. The problem with many selections devices like assessments, is therefore that they measure a very broad scope of knowledge, skills and abilities instead of a job related specific scope (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2010). Furthermore, applicants might distort their scores by social desirability and faking (Murphy & Dziewieczynski, 2005).

### **Onboarding**

Onboarding is the final phase of recruitment and has the purpose to reduce the time it takes for new employees to “*hit the ground running*” and advance to the stage at which they are fully functioning members of the team and able to contribute to the goals and objectives of the organization (Serbin & Jensen, 2013). During onboarding, both the new employee and the organization can judge whether the employment is considered successful (Klehe & De Goede, 2012). Successful onboarding in the recruitment process, requires good communication and well-defined expectations. Organizations should therefore focus on sharing organizational culture, structure, and procedures (Ross, Huang, & Jones, 2014). Ross et al. (2014) argue that providing feedback early in the onboarding process offers an opportunity for course corrections before unwanted behaviour, both relational and job-related, might be institutionalized.

The onboarding process has a higher chance of success when an employer is very aware of, and clear about, desired qualifications, demands of the job and performance measurement (Serbin, & Jensen, 2013). Unsuccessful onboarding is often caused by a lack of

assimilation, or a lack of agreement on desired goals and timelines, which can lead to poor employee performance (Ross et al., 2014). The supervisor plays an important role in identifying these possible problems and has the responsibility of performance management and mentoring during onboarding (Major, Davis, Germano, Fletcher, Sanchez-Hucles, & Mann, 2007). The tasks of the supervisor belonging to performance management and mentoring are displayed in Table 1. These task can improve the onboarding process of the employee.

Table 1

*Organizational Actions of Supervisors during the Onboarding Phase (Major et al., 2007)*

<b>Actions</b>
<b>Performance Management</b>
Clarify expectations and roles
Engage in collaborative goal setting
Use performance appraisal
Link to organizational mission
Provide recognition, reward, and acknowledgement
Encourage learning from mistakes
<b>Mentoring</b>
Provide career development support
Offer psychosocial support
Facilitate peer mentoring

## METHOD

In the present study the attribution of recruitment mismatches to the recruitment process is examined from an organizational perspective by the use of semi-structured interviews with supervisors. After a short description of the instrument and interview techniques used in this research, the setting and procedure of the data collection are described. After that, the participants and research criteria used for the selection of these participants are explained. At the end, the procedure of analysis to gain useful information from the gathered data is described.

## **Instrument**

To get more insight in the specific characteristics of the recruitment process that underlie possible recruitment mismatches, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews based on the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) were held with all participants. The CIT was used as a starting point for the semi-structured interviews. This research method starts with the undesired outcome, in this case the recruitment mismatch, and then tries to go back from there to what specifically went wrong in the different phases of the recruitment process. In that way, the participants were encouraged to extensively reflect on the specific mismatch and the associated recruitment process from an organizational perspective. By using CIT-based interviews the feelings of the participants, including thought processes and frame of reference, can be captured (Chell, 2004). After the use of the CIT, which provided a short description about the problems encountered in the onboarding phase, a set of pre-determined questions per recruitment phase was asked to understand, as much as possible, the recruitment mismatches and the difficulties encountered in each phase.

## **Procedure**

Before the start of the interview, a short introduction was given by the author concerning the research goal, the data collection, and the data analysis. First, participants were assured of both their own anonymity in this research and that of the discussed organization and the former employee. In addition, participants were encouraged to use a fake name for the former employee if this made them feel more comfortable. Second, the researcher explained the different phases of recruitment used in this research to the participant. They were then provided with a hand-out with a short description of each phase. This enabled the participant to briefly reread the given description of the phases when necessary. Finally, participants were asked for their permission to record the interview, to which they all agreed.

At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were asked to provide a short description of the organization, their job, and the job position of the former employee. The participants were then asked to think back to an undesirable recruitment outcome. The participants were asked to tell the researcher, as comprehensively as possible, what went wrong in the case of the specific employee and the recruitment process concerned. After a general description of the encountered problems during employment, a detailed discussion per phase of the recruitment process followed. This discussion aimed to get more in-depth knowledge about the specific characteristics of the mismatch and associated choices that had been made during the recruitment process. The participants were therefore asked to give a description of every recruitment phase for the particular case and to look back on this phase to identify what went wrong. Finally, the participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences by asking them if they would do something different in the future, to prevent a possible recruitment mismatch.

### **Participants**

A total of 22 supervisors from different organizations participated in this study. The majority of them were selected via purposive sampling within the author's personal network (Patton, 1990), four supervisors were reached via snowball sampling (Atkinson & Flint, 2001) originating from other participants. All the supervisors had experienced at least one example of an undesirable recruitment outcome, which was checked beforehand during the sampling by verifying the following three research criteria.

First, the employment period of the discussed former employee did not last longer than two years. If an employment period lasted more than two years, the nature of a mismatch could be questionable. Additionally, the incidents or shortcomings during the recruitment process are likely to be less visible and less dominant if they had occurred longer than two years ago. Second, the participant was part of the committee that was responsible for the

selection of the former employee. This restriction was used to make sure that the participant could provide information about the selection procedure. Third, the participant was responsible for the direct or indirect supervision of the discussed former employee during his or her employment period.

No selection criteria were formulated in terms of age and gender of the participant, or about the size and type of the organization. Participants' job positions varied from middle management to CFOs and CEOs. The participants were active as supervisors in various sectors: culture, finance-economic, industrial, IT, education, government, and health care.

## **Analysis**

Eleven participants provided a single case, ten participants provided two cases and one respondent provided four cases, which resulted in a total of 35 cases of a mismatch in recruitment. The interviews of the 35 cases were transcribed verbatim. The codebook used to analyze the data was both inductively and deductively based. The codebook was based on the four phases of recruitment (i.e. initialization, attraction, selection, and onboarding) and covered both the literature as well as the data provided by the interviews. The codebook, including the main codes and sub codes, can be found in Appendix A.

The transcription of the interviews with all comments was analyzed via the software program Atlas.ti to find recurring patterns within the data. After the complete transcription was coded by the researcher, a sample of five cases was randomly selected to be recoded by the second coder. The sample represented 16% of the total data and was restricted by one case per participant. The sample was coded on main code level (per recruitment phases) and sub code level (subjects within the recruitment phases).

The overall coding was performed on main code level. When the researcher and second coder labeled a comment as the same main code, so the same recruitment phase, they were considered to be in agreement on main code level. In addition, coding was performed on



sub code level, so the subcategories within the four recruitment phases. The researcher and second coder were considered to be in agreement on sub code level when they agreed on both the recruitment phase (main code level), as well as the subcategory within the recruitment phase (sub code level).

After a review with the second coder, the codebook was slightly adapted. Codes were merged because they were describing similar things, (e.g. the codes on *structured job interviews* and *unstructured job interviews*, were merged into a code *structure of job interviews*), or they were separated, because a code was used so often that an own subcode was created (e.g. the sub code *job interview* was created, instead of being placed under the subcode *method*). When the final version of the codebook was established, the entire sample was coded for the second time. This provided a final intercoder reliability on main code level of .88, which is also displayed in Table 2 along with the other values.

Table 2  
*Cohen's Kappa*

Main Code	Cohen's Kappa First Time	Cohen's Kappa Second Time
Initialization	.69	.85
Attraction	.71	.79
Selection	.62	.79
Onboarding	.65	.84
<b>Overall</b>	<b>.72</b>	<b>.88</b>

## RESULTS

The aim of the study was to identify recurring patterns in recruitment mismatches and to see what improvements can be made from an organizational perspective. The 35 case interviews provided insights into when and how decisions were made during the recruitment process and what the consequences were in the eye of the participant.

Although the focus of this study is on the organizational view of recruitment mismatches, the information given on the discussed employees cannot be ignored. It provides an initial indication of the encountered problems in the recruitment process. Therefore the next sub section will discuss the *observed problems with former employees*. After this, the four phases identified in the introduction and theoretical framework (i.e. *initialization, attraction, selection and onboarding*) will be discussed as separate sub sections. The result section will be concluded with the sub section on *problems in the entire recruitment process*, to provide a more general, phase-transcending view. The entire section will discuss problems identified by the participants reflectively during the interview as well as problems which they were already aware of during the recruitment process of the discussed case.

### **Observed problems with former employees**

In 20 of the 35 cases, problems concerning the employee were contributed to competence-related issues. In case 20 the participant described competence-related issues by stating that there was a *“high workload which she couldn’t handle. The amount and complexity of information was not processed properly into the right actions. After two months I first got the feeling that she could not handle it.”* Most competence related issues resulted in an unsatisfying performance related to productivity. In case 9 the participant describes that he constantly needed to *“provide structure, assistance and examples how to perform certain task. The employee lacked performance in both quantity and quality and he could not keep his*

*end of made agreements.*” In case 11, the participant concluded that the job activities were “*simply too complicated*” for the employee.

Relational or communicational issues were contributed to the mismatch in 17 cases. In cases 5,6,12,16,17,18 and 26 the participant indicated that the he or she and the members of the organization either disliked the way in which the former employee started bossing around, or instantly tried to change working procedures within the organization. In case 16, the participant indicated that he and his boss “*knew within one week that he would never be able to fulfill this position in proper fashion. He should not have started, upon entrance, to tell everybody that he was going to change the way the organization works towards his own vision. He simply did not consider all the existing management links within the organization.*” In the cases 15,28,30 and 34 some form of misbehavior was identified as a reason for the mismatch. These were related to prohibited behavior in the workplace or an excessive level of calling in sick. In the remaining case 3, an employee was discussed who quit due to the experienced high workload. Table 3 shows the overview of the *case related shortcomings of former employees*, which partly illustrates the nature of the mismatch.

Table 3  
*Case-Related Shortcomings of Former Employees*

Case	Competence	Attitude	Relation	Other
1		X		
2			X	
3				X
4	X			
5			X	
6		X	X	
7			X	
8	X			
9	X			
10	X			
11	X			
12	X		X	
13			X	
14	X		X	
15				X
16	X		X	
17	X		X	
18		X		
19			X	
20	X			
21		X		
22	X			
23	X		X	
24	X		X	
25	X			
26			X	
27			X	
28	X			X
29			X	
30	X			X
31	X			
32	X			
33	X			
34				X
35	X			

*Note.* X indicates employee's shortcoming(s) in the eye of the participant.

## Initialization Phase

In the interviews the participants described, and reflected on, the initialization phase of the specific recruitment process. Regarding the initialization phase, no problem indications were provided by the participants in 27 of the 35 cases. The general pattern in the data was that participants would use the same job description as before, which is illustrated by the participant in case 1 *“I would re-use the formulated job description again for the next advertisement for such a job position.”* Positive opinions about the formulation of a job description were generally supported by the experience of previous satisfying recruitment outcomes following the same procedure.

However, exceptions are present in the data. In eight cases the supervisor acknowledged that the initialization phase did not result in a clear and complete job description. In case 8, the participant described the job description as *“really incomplete”* and in case 9 the participant indirectly refers to the same issue by stating that *“the pre-determined selection criteria should have been more strict and more precise.”* A reason indicated by the participants for the lack of an accurate and complete job description was the *“simple acknowledgement of the need for a person and instantly following it up with a job vacancy without giving it further thought”*, like in case 19. Another participant told in case 20 that despite knowing that the job position would become a vacancy two months ahead of the actual publishing of the vacancy, he did not act accordingly by *“looking for more input from colleagues for the formulation of the job description, to discover what is needed from the position in their opinion”*.

This, more bottom-up, approach of initialization with the addition of people from multiple levels within the company for the job formulation is considered important by multiple respondents. In case 8, the participant stated *“I think that if I would be allowed to do it all again I would involve more people into this process”*, which is supported in case 20 by

the participant. *“I would try to obtain more feedback about the job requirements from different people within the company, instead of instantly re-using the existing job description.”* Participants gave these indications because they expressed their concern about how frequently job description are created or copied without giving it real thought. Some participants indicated that the search for a new employee was more aimed at finding *“the identical twin”* of the former, well-functioning, employee.

A lack of effort and used time for creating a job description were indicated as organizational shortcomings by multiple participants. This was also described in case 8 by the notion that *“as a supervisor you cannot instantly restart a recruitment process following a mismatch. You should first reconsider the organization structure and job description to re-evaluate the necessary preparations for a recruitment process. It is the ideal moment for problem solving.”* Still, this critical view upon an organization’s job description and initialization phase seemed to occur primarily after multiple mismatches for the same job position, or when problems were clearly related to the initialization phase.

Not only the lack of effort and used time were indicated as points of improvement, but also how specific a job description includes the job requirements. According to the participants, like in case 26, the current tendency is that new employees should be *“extremely all-round, possessing work experience, leadership experience etcetera”*. In cases 20, the participant supported this idea by describing that *“recruitment nowadays is often the search for a five-legged sheep.”* He emphasized that *“you cannot find such a person, we should go back to actual job requirements.”* Multiple respondents, like in case 26, indicated that *“a job description should be more specific and less all-round, the necessary competencies for the job should be described.”*

Summarizing the results concerning mismatches in the initialization phase there seems to be a tendency to re-use possibly inaccurate and incomplete job descriptions, to miss out on

the input and involvement of multiple employees and to lack a clear idea and formulation about the hierarchical position in the firm. So in general, initialization appears to be a process which is more based on habits and less on strategy.

### **Attraction Phase**

Multiple methods were used for the publication of a job vacancy in the 35 cases. In 15 cases the method which resulted in the chosen applicant was by publication on a professional website or the organizational website. In the other 20 cases the method which resulted in the chosen applicant varied between personal networks, internal channels, professional agencies and in one case by open application.

Supervisors indicated no doubts or issues in the attraction phase specifically related to the cases. The only exception was, that the participant in case 28 said that he would have taken different actions when he reflected upon the phase. He specifically acknowledged that, when looking back upon this recruitment process, *“the organization was not familiar with the necessary job requirements for the vacant position and therefore should have outsourced the recruitment process, including attraction.”* To be more precise, they required a financial manager, but the firm was lacking financial knowledge, which kept them back during the entire recruitment process. They did not notice this during the attraction phase, but only afterwards. The company did acknowledge, in the initialization phase, that they were lacking knowledge about the job position. However, they did not follow this up with different actions in the attraction phase.

In most cases multiple channels were used for attraction. Most supervisors indicated that they chose, or were instructed via company protocol, to use internal channels in the attraction phase. This either occurred before, or simultaneously with external attraction. Multiple participants criticized the standardized procedure of internal attraction. In most of the discussed organizations, like mentioned in case 32, *“applicants generated via internal*

*attraction are often given priority above external applicants*”. According to the participants, internal applicants are often overestimated by the organization, regarding the match between the applicant and the new position. A participant suggested in case 17 that the organization should judge internal applicants in a more objective manner. In case 7, the participant mentioned a way to counter the lack of objectivity. He described that his *“organization used assessments to get a more objectively based view whether the current employee is suited for the job”*. In multiple cases, like in case 18 and 26, *“the standard procedure was to start internal attraction before external attraction was executed.”* Participants, like in case 24, also emphasized that the attraction via internal channels could be considered as a formality, because they were certain that this would not generate the right applicant. Although in case 21 the selected employee was generated via external attraction channels, the participant said *“I am strongly against internal procedure, usually it only troubles you. A current employee who is suitable for the position would have been asked by me already. Now we are only getting responses from people we do not deem suitable for the position.”* In cases 13 and 30, internal attraction did not occur, because it was clear that internal candidates would not be suited for the job position and the participants were not forced by regulations to use internal channels of attraction.

In five cases the attraction phase was outsourced to a recruitment agency. A participant stated that he *“made use of a recruitment agency four times in his career and that they all resulted in a mismatch”*, of which cases 3 and 4 were examples. In multiple other cases the human resource department of the firm was responsible for the job publication. This may have resulted in a lack of insight or lack of involvement from the supervisors point of view concerning the attraction phase, however, this remains unclear in the data. In general, the attraction phase was not indicated as a contributing factor, or as an aspect of improvement,



to the case-related mismatches, by the participants. However, non-case related statements about the attraction phase were made, especially concerning internal attraction.

### **Selection Phase**

In all the 35 cases, the selection phase led to the choice of a single individual. In 13 cases there was already doubt during the selection phase whether the hiring of the selected candidate would be the right choice. In case 9, the participant indicated that his thoughts at that time were that the applicant “*might be given training and coaching to possibly make it work. That is not a good start at all*”, the participant emphasized. In case 20, there was also doubt concerning the applicant because “*she did not match the selection criteria concerning leadership experience, but this was pushed aside by a perceived good match on a relational, and communicational level.*” In six cases, the relational and communicational skills of the applicant were doubted by the participant during the selection phase. In case 13, for instance, this was compensated by the level of competence of the applicant. The participant stated that “*although on the competence level everything seemed to be fine, we had our doubts concerning his didactic and communicational skills.*” Another reason why applicants were still chosen in multiple cases, despite their doubts, was the difference of opinion within the selection committee. The participant in case 9 explained that “*the rest of the selection committee did consider the applicant to be capable enough to perform the job.*” So despite the doubts whether certain selection criteria were present concerning the applicant, either the pressure of time and/or costs, different opinions in the selection committee or the positive evaluation of other selection criteria led in these cases towards hiring the person.

This brings up the issue of non-hiring as an outcome of the selection phase. Although multiple respondents suggested or claimed that non-hiring should occur when there is no suitable candidate for a job available, some difficulties were addressed by the respondents concerning this issue. The actual likelihood of non-hiring occurrence seems low, according to

the professional experience from the respondents. The reasons indicated by the respondents were twofold. First, time and costs are usually related to the choice of non-hiring or hiring during the selection phase. Respondent 21 described this phenomenon, in case 33, by stating that *“in the back of your mind is always the underlying pressure of the alternative to reboot the entire procedure.”* Second, non-hiring might imply to employees that the job vacancy is not seriously addressed by the executive board, which can be considered as a signal of non-activity. In case 2, for example, the respondent clearly stated that there were strong doubts about the candidate, and that non-hiring and restarting the recruitment process should have been the selected option, however he noted that *“hiring nobody, leaves you with no results and an unfinished task. Your employees will notice this as well and might think that the issue is not being addressed properly by the board of the organization.”*

Participants made reflective statements about the selection phase in 19 different cases, by which they indicated that they would take different steps if a similar situation would reoccur. These steps were mainly related to the job interview or to additional selection methods like references and assessments. Job interviews were the main selection tool in all of the 35 cases discussed in the interviews. In general, respondents described the preparation and structure of the job interviews as sufficient, however, comments were regularly made on the loss of objectivity due to the dynamics of the job interviews. According to different respondents this resulted in a lack of insight on the level of competence of the applicant. In case 18, the respondent referred to this issue by noting that *“If you cannot get to the competence-related job requirements, the danger exists of an art play featuring the applicant in the lead role, which certainly happened in this example.”* The composition and quality of the selection committee was mentioned several times. Participants stressed that it is important to have a committee which consists of multiple persons from multiple hierarchical levels within the organization. Organizations can thereby stimulate that multiple opinions are heard,

and that people who need to work together with future employee have a say during the selection phase, which can possibly stimulate the assimilation process later on.

Additional selection methods used were assessments and references. References were consulted in 13 cases and in four other cases participants thought that if this option had been used, it could have helped to possibly prevent the mismatch. In some cases the check was done by the HR department or the recruitment agency. In these cases, participants noted that they had no real indication of the way this was done and to what information was obtained. They usually just assumed that this reference given was considered satisfying. In some of these cases the participants stressed that in future recruitment processes they would like to consult references themselves and also consulting them after the job interview. In case 23 the participants told that *“they never had the chance to consult references ourselves. You often get a lot of information and signals during a job interview. Based on these signals and information you would like to act by consulting references based on your interpretations and doubts following the job interview.”* To possibly prevent the mismatch in case 32, the participant would have liked to *“really question a referent whether my doubts, following the job interview, were correct. By the way people formulate their answer you can truly discover whether doubts are correct.”* In general these participants were positive about the use of references, however, they would have liked to obtain more important information about the applicant after the job interview to support the decision making progress.

In 18 cases references were not consulted. Two different views were present on the reason not to use this method. The first view is that references are not of good use to recruitment processes, because they are not considered to provide a critical and honest opinion about the applicant. The second view, as presented in case 1, is that people argue that *“asking references makes other people and organizations aware that someone is actively searching for a job, which might be inconvenient for the applicant.”*

Participants indicated assessments to be expensive and primarily used for high-level managerial positions. Assessments were used in four of the 35 cases. In six other cases, the participants, reflectively, indicated that they would have liked to use an assessment and would use one in the future for similar occasions. The data does not provide enough information about assessments to provide a result concerning the quality of assessments in the recruitment process. Still, multiple participants did indicate, like in case 19, that *“it is better to first have the job interview and then determine whether you would like to make use of an assessment. Otherwise you are missing information about the person or that you are having doubts. Instead of just providing every applicant with some sort of standard, general assessment.”*

Table 4 provides an overview of the encountered organizational problems in the selection phase.

Table 4  
*Case-Related Problems concerning the Selection Phase*

Case	Doubt	Background Check	Procedure Deviation	Rating of Applicant	Additional Selection Methods
1					
2	X				
3		X			
4					
5					
6					
7					X
8	X				
9			X		X
10				X	
11					
12	X				
13	X				
14			X	X	X
15					
16		X			
17					
18					
19					X
20	X		X	X	
21					X
22	X				X
23	X			X	
24	X		X		X
25					
26			X		
27	X			X	
28				X	
29	X		X		X
30		X	X		X
31					
32			X		
33	X		X		
34				X	
35					

*Note.* X indicates organizational issues encountered in the specific case

## Onboarding Phase

In six of the cases the participant reflected upon organizational actions in the onboarding phase with case-related suggestions for improvement. The main issue addressed in these cases concerns the low level of supervision and feedback provided in the early stages of onboarding. In case 31 the participant stated that *“you have to monitor the onboarding process much closer from the start. As a supervisor you are trusting upon the good feeling obtained during selection, which results in a lack of control and supervision.”* He also noted that *“restraining someone liberties in the work place or directing them to do task differently is far more difficult than setting clear goals from the start with close supervision which is slowly decreased when the job performance is satisfying.”* The supervision discussed in the cases intensified as a result of unsatisfactory performance by the employee. This was indicated by participants as a common phenomenon. For example, in case 28 the participant suggested that *“there is so much to gain in the process after selection, which I really want to emphasize. Probably more important than selection itself. The supervision given to the employee is crucial to both the organization as the employee itself. It gives both parties a transparent view of the process.”* In this specific case, the participant indicated that there were no clear expectations towards the employee and that he, following this experience, nowadays *“keeps much more contact with new employees. The frequency and the quality of the supervision have increased by doing this.”*

Multiple participants suggested that the aspect of supervision should be more present in the early stages of onboarding. During this period supervisors tend to be overconfident regarding the new employee. In case 14, the participant said that *“you should think less that he or she will come around. My feedback and supervision should have been more specific from the start, more output-related.”* In case 32 the participant tells that *“especially at the start, you always have confidence in that person, because you just hired this person and*

*otherwise you would not have agreed to hire him. However, this confidence might trick you into less objective supervision and rating of the employee.”* The same participant also said about early onboarding that *“you often try to coach people initially; however we discovered that this often pushes result-based supervision to the background. You don’t correct people on results, you are instead coaching them.”* It is a recurring pattern in the data that participating supervisors emphasize the importance of supervision during the early stages of the onboarding process.

Although in all of the 35 cases the specific employee’s employment period ended within two years, none of the discussed employees were fired during the trial period. Many participants were sceptical about the use of the trial period. This is supported by multiple clear statements concerning the use of trial periods. The participant in case 1 also supports the generally dominant view from the data that *“if you enter an organization it usually includes a trial period of one month. If you totally mess it up or don’t portray any self-esteem, you can be fired without consequence. However this almost never happens.”* In case 16, the participant also discussed that the organization never really uses the trial period. He points out that *“everybody can get through that short period of time”*.

In summary, a general recurring pattern of organizational shortcoming in recruitment mismatches happens especially during the early onboarding and supervision of employees.

### **The Entire Recruitment Process**

Although the 35 cases differed concerning the type of organization and the indicated cause of mismatch, several recurrent patterns were visible in the data. The participants were asked, during the reflection on each phase, whether the organization should have done something better or differently. Although it is complex to reflect on all these cases, Table 5 provides an insight into where in the recruitment process participants indicated organizational shortcomings. It enables the reader to get a quick insight, per case and per phase, where

participants identified, either by reflective insights or by indicating problems which were already clear to the supervisors during the recruitment process, where organizational shortcomings were indicated. Whether the supervisor was already aware of indicated problems during the recruitment process, or if he or she gained this insight by reflection during the interview, is indicated by different icons in Table 5.

One of the oddities visible in Table 5 is that in nine of the 35 cases there was no indication of organizational shortcomings. In these cases, despite discussing organizational actions in the interview, the participants indicated the problems to be related primarily to the former employee. However, organizations still hired these employees, resulting in a mismatch. This might be explained by two aspects of the recruitment process: the lack of evaluation and self-reflection by organizations towards the recruitment process and its outcomes, and second, the lack of predictability concerning the outcomes of recruitment. It is not possible to obtain 100% certainty during the recruitment process about the match of a new applicant regarding the job and the company.

Within the interviews, each phase of recruitment was addressed to gain insight into the different processes concerning the specific cases of mismatching. Despite the low amount of explicit negative reflective statements about the initialization phase, multiple respondents reported a lack of insight into the competence levels of the applicant during the selection phase. Respondents reflected on the organizational actions during the selection phase and related them to the initialization phase. In case 20, the respondent reflected on the selection phase as a situation in which he somewhat let go of the job requirements from the initialization, by which he enabled the possibility of disappointment for this applicant. He stated that *“when I reflect upon my actions I must admit that I made concessions in the procedure regarding the key aspect that we formulated in the job requirements, being experience in leadership. By doing so, I also enabled the big disappointment experienced by*



*the former employee.”*

The data show that the chosen strategies and applicant's criteria defined during the initialization phase often get sidetracked by the dynamics of the job interview or other aspects during the attraction or the selection phase deviating from the pre-determined criteria. This link between initialization, and especially selection is a subject which is regularly discussed by the respondents during the interviews and provides an important findings of this study

In the interviews, participants mentioned the observed personality and the presentation of the applicant during the job interview and during the employment as a difficulty. Supervisors, like in case 33, indicated that the sympathetic personality and the professional presentation during the job interview persuaded her into hiring this person. *“I remember clearly that I considered her somewhat inexperienced for the job, however she was a nice lady who seemed to possess a great mix of professionalism and personality.”* Further on, the same respondent reflects upon this with a brief statement which emphasizes to stick to the procedure of selection which is already outlined via the initialization phase. *“Stick to the procedure. Don't get too distracted by a nice conversation with an applicant or a too easily realized shared opinion within a group about an applicant.”* The same kind of issues were identified, like in case 32, concerning the employment period. *“He was not keeping promises he made concerning performance. He always came up with some nice story, but the results never met his story.”* Impression management and faking were general difficulties identified as organizational difficulty in the recruitment process., which negatively influenced the ability of organizations to determine to what extent a match was present between the applicant or employee and the organization.

Table 5

*Case-Related Problems per Phase*

Case	Participant	Initialization	Attraction	Selection	Onboarding
1	1				
2				X/O	
3				O	
4					
5	2				
6	3				
7	4			O	O
8		O		X/O	
9	5	O		X/O	
10		O		O	
11	6				O
12	7				O
13	8			X/O	
14	9				
15				O	
16	10				
17	11				
18	12			O	
19		X/O		O	
20	13	O		X/O	
21	14			X	X/O
22	15			X/O	
23	16	O		X	
24	17			X/O	
25					
26	18	O			
27				X	
28	19	X	O	O	O
29				X/O	
30	20			O	
31				O	O
32	21			O	
33				X	
34	22			X	
35					

*Note.* X indicates a problem identified by the participant during the recruitment process

*Note.* O indicates a problem identified by the participant by reflection on the recruitment process afterwards

## DISCUSSION

In the present study the attribution of recruitment mismatches are examined throughout four phases of the recruitment process: initialization, attraction, selection, and onboarding. The purpose of this study was to identify and clarify patterns in the recruitment process of mismatches from an organizational perspective. This could provide starting points for more specific research in the field of recruitment, and more specifically on the subject of undesirable recruitment outcomes. Because of the impact of the recruitment outcomes on organizational success (Dineen & Soltis, 2011), the simultaneous goal was to provide practical implications which enable organizations to improve their recruitment strategies.

In this study five recurring patterns were derived from the results which partially enabled the mismatch in the recruitment process. The five patterns identified are: (1) the lack of a clear strategy which is defined at the start of the recruitment process and is consistently implemented over the entire course of recruitment; (2) the inability to identify the presence or absence of competencies, especially leadership qualities, of the applicant during the selection phase; (3) the low frequency and non-strategic use in which additional selection methods are being used; (4) the overestimation of the match for internal candidates; (5) the lack of supervision and goal setting in the early onboarding phase.

The first important pattern identified is the lack of strategy in recruitment determined in the initialization phase. Within this phase there is a lack of well-constructed job descriptions which encompass the requirements, complexity and the hierarchy of the available job positions within organizations. Properly designed job descriptions, as a part of a fitting and overall strategy for all phases, could lead to successful recruitment outcomes. The study shows that the chosen strategies and applicants' criteria defined at the beginning of the recruitment process in the initialization phase often get sidetracked by the dynamics of the job interview or other aspects during the attraction or the selection phase which deviate from the

pre-determined criteria.

Second, the selection phase, often carried out in the form of a job interview, revolves around the search for a match between the applicant, the job requirements, and the goals of the company of which the strategy is identified in the initialization phase. Macan (2009) indicated that the selection phase, and more specifically the job interview, should measure indeed the constructs defined in the initialization phase. A lack of this link between initialization and especially selection is a subject which was defined by the participants as a contributing factor to the mismatch. Supervisors indicated that the predetermined selection criteria and strategy often got deviated from due to the overvaluation of personal appreciation of the applicant during job interviews. This personal aspect of selection cannot be excluded from the selection phase and especially not from the job interview. Nonetheless the predetermined criteria (e.g. leadership experience, brand knowledge or software program) should not suffer as much from the consequences of personal appreciation during a job interview as the data showed to be the case. This study confirms that the state of the recruitment strategy strongly relies on previously used job descriptions and organizational habits, where a more critical strategy seems more appropriate.

The third issue is the lack, and non-strategic use, of additional selection methods like references and assessments. These selection methods are specifically designed to confirm if the applicants have the required level to perform the job, concerning ability or personality and therefore to check if the applicants are a good match for the job and organization (Bartram, 2004; Bartram et al., 1995). According to the supervisors assessments are more used for high level management positions, whereas they can also be very useful for lower positions in the organization. The high costs of assessments was often mentioned as a difficulty. However, it might be possible to use more specific, less expensive, or certain aspects of assessments to still obtain the needed information.

The fourth pattern is the overestimation of internal applicants . This pattern is another depiction of how different personal factors can influence the objectivity and the pre-determined strategy in recruitment. The recruitment of internal applicants is often influenced by variables like seniority, non-systematic opinions of others in the organization, and ill-defined reputations of applicants (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2010). The presence of a satisfactory job performance in a current job position does not however assure the same performance level for a different job position in the same organization. Therefore the new job requirements, especially related to competencies, should be tested in a more objective form by internal applicants based on the job description instead of previous experiences.

Finally, the supervision of new employees seemed to be suffering from a sort of “honeymoon effect” from an organizational perspective. Supervisors generally seem to assume that the recruitment process ends with the signing of a contract. However, this study shows that due to a lack of supervision in the early stages of onboarding, a lack of job performance and difficulties in work relations might arise and also be overlooked. This is in line with the argument of Ross, Huang and Jones (2014) as well as Serbin and Jensen (2013), who emphasize the importance of early feedback in the onboarding process. New employees can otherwise become confused or uncertain about both their hierarchical position within the firm as well as the output expectations. The possibility of course corrections on the basis of early feedback, both for relational and output-related difficulties, was often missed in the cases of the recruitment mismatch. Thereby, the possibility to perhaps prevent or identify the mismatch in an earlier stage had passed by already. However, the data of the present study does not provide information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities of former employees. Therefore it is not clear whether the mismatch was a result of bad selection or was more related to missed opportunities, like early feedback, in the onboarding phase.

To summarize, all these five patterns share a lack in creating and abiding to a predetermined recruitment strategy by the organization. The study shows that there are many distracting factors within the recruitment processes which led companies and supervisors to exit the pre-defined route to selection and enable poor decision making in all recruitment phases. The goals of the recruitment strategy were often aimed towards the end of the selection phase by the selection of an applicant. Instead, the goals of the recruitment strategy should have a more holistic approach towards recruitment and should prevent, as much as possible, the loss of objectivity and strategy throughout all phases of the recruitment process. So overall, a more clear, critical and objective approach towards the intended and actual used strategy of the recruitment process seems necessary.

### **Implications**

This exploratory research provides insights into recurring patterns in mismatches. Each of these patterns should be subject to more thorough and more specific scientific research to be able to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of different characteristics of recruitment process. Special attention should be given to the initialization phase, which appeared to be undervalued in scientific research looking at the small amount of literature present compared to the phases of attraction and selection. Other important areas for future research are the link between the initialization and selection phase and the specific use of additional selection methods like references and assessments.

The data of the present study supports the claim there is a lack of evaluation within organizations concerning the recruitment process and more specifically undesirable recruitment outcomes (Carlson et al., 2002; Breaugh, 2008). Organizations should try more consequently to determine and abide to a predetermined recruitment strategy. Furthermore, organizations should address the possible doubts concerning applicants following the job interview more properly by using additional selection methods. Using additional selection

methods, such as references and assessments, can serve as a tool to clarify or falsify possible doubts following the job interview when they are used in a less general and more job and person-specific way.

The absence of proper supervision in the early stages of employment seems a recurring pattern in this research. At the start of employment, supervisors often overestimate the performance levels of new employees. Supervision shows shortcoming in its frequency as well as in its quality. Supervisors should therefore create clear expectations, both in hierarchy and performance expectations, to prevent early friction between employees and between the employee and supervisor. Major et al. (2007) mention this clarification of expectations and roles, and the engagement in collaborative goal setting as important organizational actions of supervisors during the onboarding phase. When relationships turn sour really quickly, they seem to be really difficult to repair as where enhancing employee's independence following satisfying results is perceived as a more natural process. The actual use of trial periods could serve as a useful tool for both the applicant and supervisor to find a balance between supervision and independence based on job performance. A re-evaluation concerning the usage, length and consequences of trial periods seems an important implication for organizations to prevent mismatches due to this absence of proper supervision.

### **Limitations**

Multiple limitations to the study are worth noting. The first limitation is the one-sided input of the supervisors in the 35 cases of mismatching. The story of the employee was not heard and included in the research. Both ethic and confidentiality issues made it very difficult to speak to the former employees of whom the identity must remained unknown to the researcher. The line of thought supporting this organizational scope was necessary for organizations to reflect critically on mismatches to prevent or minimize the chance of reoccurrence.

The second limitation concerns the nature of the sample. The number of cases

investigated was only 35, from the input of 22 participants, whom were spread across a great diversity of organizations. This makes it difficult to provide solid, general conclusions and to be able to generalize these results to organizations of different sizes, types and sectors.

The third limitation concerns the lack of insight concerning organizational structure and recruitment procedures of the organizations involved. All information was obtained via interviews. No background research was done considering the organizational structure or the discussed job positions.

## **Conclusion**

This study supports the idea that organizations should have a recruitment strategy which ends with a satisfying and successful performing employee, instead of the procedure ending with the selection of an applicant. The present study shows that recruitment mismatches share the characteristic of an organizational lack in creating and abiding to a predetermined recruitment strategy. A more holistic approach in all the phases towards recruitment should prevent, as much as possible, the loss of objectivity and strategy.



## REFERENCES

- Allen, D. G. (2006). Do organizational socialization tactics influence newcomer embeddedness and turnover? *Journal of Management*, 32, 237-256.
- Allen, D. G., Mahto, R. V., & Otondo, R. F. (2007). Web-based recruitment: effects of information, organizational brand, and attitudes toward a Web site on applicant attraction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1696-1708.
- Allen, D. G., Bryant, P. C., & Vardaman, J. M. (2010). Retaining talent: Replacing misconceptions with evidence-based strategies. *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24(2), 48-64.
- Arthur Jr, W., Day, E. A., & Woehr, D. J. (2008). Mend it, don't end it: An alternate view of assessment center construct-related validity evidence. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 1, 105-111.
- Bangerter, A., Roulin, N., & König, C. J. (2012). Personnel selection as a signaling game. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97, 719-738.
- Barrick, M. R., Shaffer, J. A., & DeGrassi, S. W. (2009). What you see may not be what you get: relationships among self-presentation tactics and ratings of interview and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94, 1394-1411.
- Bartram, D. (2004). Assessment in organisations. *Applied Psychology*, 53, 237-259.
- Bartram, D., Lindley, P. A., Marshall, L., & Foster, J. (1995). The recruitment and selection of young people by small businesses. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 68, 339-358.
- Bolander, P., & Sandberg, J. (2013). How employee selection decisions are made in practice. *Organization Studies*, 34, 285-311.

- Branine, M. (2008). Graduate recruitment and selection in the UK: A study of the recent changes in methods and expectations. *Career Development International*, 13, 497-513.
- Breaugh, J. A. (2008). Employee recruitment: Current knowledge and important areas for future research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 18(3), 103-118.
- Breaugh, J. A. (2013). Employee recruitment. *Annual review of psychology*, 64, 389-416.
- Breaugh, J. A., & Starke, M. (2000). Research on employee recruitment: So many studies, so many remaining questions. *Journal of management*, 26, 405-434.
- Carlson, K. D., Connerley, M. L., & Mecham, R. L. (2002). Recruitment evaluation: The case for assessing the quality of applicants attracted. *Personnel Psychology*, 55(2), 461-490.
- Carlson, K. D., & Connerley, M. L. (2003). The staffing cycles framework: Viewing staffing as a system of decision events. *Journal of Management*, 29, 51-78.
- Christianson, M. K., Farkas, M. T., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Weick, K. E. (2009). Learning through rare events: Significant interruptions at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum. *Organization Science*, 20(5), 846-860.
- Coff, R. W. (2002). Human capital, shared expertise, and the likelihood of impasse in corporate acquisitions. *Journal of Management*, 28(1), 107-128.
- Compton, R. L., Morrissey, W. J., Nankervis, A. R., & Morrissey, B. (2009). *Effective recruitment and selection practices*. CCH Australia Limited.
- Crook, T. R., Todd, S. Y., Combs, J. G., Woehr, D. J., & Ketchen Jr, D. J. (2011). Does human capital matter? A meta-analysis of the relationship between human capital and firm performance. *Journal of applied psychology*, 96, 443-456.
- Davidson, L. (1998). Measure what you bring to the bottom line. *Workforce*, 77(9), 34-40.

- Dilchert, S., & Ones, D. S. (2009). Assessment Center Dimensions: Individual differences correlates and meta-analytic incremental validity. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 17, 254-270.
- Dineen, B. R., & Soltis, S. M. (2011). Recruitment: A review of research and emerging directions. *APA handbook of industrial and organizational psychology: Selecting and developing members for the organization*, 2, 43-66 Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Dipboye, R. L., Wooten, K., & Halverson, S. K. (2004). Behavioral and situational interviews. *Comprehensive handbook of psychological assessment*, 4, 297-316.
- Gatewood, R. D, Feild, H. S., & Barrick, M. R. (2010). *Human resource selection*. Cengage Learning.
- Gibbons, A. M., & Rupp, D. E. (2009). Dimension consistency as an individual difference: A new (old) perspective on the assessment center construct validity debate. *Journal of Management*, 35, 1154-1180.
- Grossman, R. J. (2000). Measuring up: Appropriate metrics help HR prove its worth. *HR magazine*, 45, 28-35.
- Hawkes, C. L., & Weathington, B. L. (2014). Competency-Based Versus Task-Based Job Descriptions: Effects on Applicant Attraction. *Journal of Behavioral & Applied Management*, 15, 190-211.
- Holtom, B. C., Tidd, S. T., Mitchell, T. R., & Lee, T. W. (2013). A demonstration of the importance of temporal considerations in the prediction of newcomer turnover. *Human Relations*, 66, 1337-1352.
- Hom, P. W., Roberson, L., & Ellis, A. D. (2008). Challenging conventional wisdom about who quits: revelations from corporate America. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(1), 1-34.

- Jones, R. G., & Born, M. P. (2008). Assessor constructs in use as the missing component in validation of assessment center dimensions: A critique and directions for research. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 16, 229-238.
- Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., Wanberg, C. R., Glomb, T. M., & Ahlburg, D. (2005). The role of temporal shifts in turnover processes: it's about time. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(4), 644-658.
- Kardes, F. R. (2006). When should consumers and managers trust their intuition?. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 16, 20-24.
- Keenan, T. (1995). Graduate recruitment in Britain: a survey of selection methods used by organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 16, 303-317.
- Klehe, U. C., & De Goede, M. (2012). The Influence of Economic and Social Factors on the Choice of Search Procedures Used by Third Party Recruiters. *Psychological Topics* 21, 425-453.
- Klotz, A. C., Motta Veiga, S. P., Buckley, M. R., & Gavin, M. B. (2013). The role of trustworthiness in recruitment and selection: A review and guide for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(1), 104-119.
- Kwon, J. H., Powell, J., & Chalmers, A. (2013). How level of realism influences anxiety in virtual reality environments for a job interview. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 71, 978-987.
- Lance, C. E. (2008). Why assessment centers do not work the way they are supposed to. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1(1), 84-97.
- Lawler, E. E. (1994). From job-based to competency-based organizations. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 15(1), 3-15.

- Lee, T. H., Gerhart, B., Weller, I., & Trevor, C. O. (2008). Understanding voluntary turnover: Path-specific job satisfaction effects and the importance of unsolicited job offers. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51, 651-671.
- Levashina, J., & Campion, M. A. (2009). Expected practices in background checking: review of the human resource management literature. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 21(3), 231-249.
- Levashina, J., Hartwell, C. J., Morgeson, F. P., & Campion, M. A. (2014). The structured employment interview: Narrative and quantitative review of the research literature. *Personnel Psychology*, 67(1), 241-293.
- Lievens, F., & Christiansen, N. (2012). Core debates in assessment center research: dimensions' versus' exercises. *The psychology of assessment centers*, 68-94.
- Macan T. (2009). The employment interview: A review of current studies and directions for future research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 19(3), 203–218.
- Major, D. A., Davis, D. D., Germano, L. M., Fletcher, T. D., Sanchez-Hucles, J., & Mann, J. (2007). Managing human resources in information technology: Best practices of high performing supervisors. *Human Resource Management*, 46, 411-427.
- Matsuo, H., McIntyre, K. P., Tomazic, T., & Katz, B. (2004). The online survey: Its contributions and potential problems. In *ASA Proceedings of the Section on Survey Research Methods*, 27, 3998-4000.
- Murphy, K. R., & Dzieweczynski, J. L. (2005). Why don't measures of broad dimensions of personality perform better as predictors of job performance?. *Human Performance*, 18(4), 343-357.
- Olesen, C., White, D., & Lemmer, I. (2007). Career models and culture change at Microsoft. *Organization Development Journal*, 25(2), 31–36.

- Pavur Jr, E. J. (2010). Use job descriptions to support leadership. *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, 13(2), 119-122.
- Ployhart, R. E., Weekley, J. A., & Baughman, K. (2006). The structure and function of human capital emergence: A multilevel examination of the attraction-selection-attrition model. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 661-677.
- Povah, M. N., & Thornton, M. G. C. (Eds.). (2012). *Assessment centers and global talent management*. Gower Publishing, Ltd.
- Putka, D. J., & Hoffman, B. J. (2013). Clarifying the contribution of assessee-, dimension-, exercise-, and assessor-related effects to reliable and unreliable variance in assessment center ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(1), 114-133.
- Rollag, K., Parise, S., & Cross, R. (2005). Getting new hires up to speed quickly. *MIT Sloan*.
- Ross, W. E., Huang, K. H., & Jones, G. H. (2014). Executive Onboarding: Ensuring the Success of the Newly Hired Department Chair. *Academic Medicine*, 89, 728-733.
- Ryan, A. N. N., McFarland, L., Baron, H., & Page, R. (1999). An international look at selection practices: Nation and culture as explanations for variability in practice. *Personnel Psychology*, 52, 359-392.
- Rynes, S. L. (1991). Recruitment, job choice, and post-hire consequences: A call for new research directions. *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 2, 399-444.
- Sackett, P. R., & Lievens, F. (2008). Personnel selection. *Annual Review Psychology*, 59, 419-450.
- Schmitt, N., & Chan, D. (1998). *Personnel selection: A theoretical approach*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.
- Schneider, J. R., & Schmitt, N., (1992). *Staffing organizations* (3rd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co.

- Serbin, K. M., & Jensen, S. (2013). Recruiting, Hiring, and Onboarding Case Managers: Communication and Setting Expectations Are Keys to Success. *Professional case management, 18*(2), 95-97.
- Thornton, G.C., & Rupp, D.E. (2006) Assessment centers and human resource management. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Vormann, C. C., zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, D., & Laux, L. (2008). *Decision making in personnel selection: A policy-capturing analysis in emerging German IT-firms* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Weller, I., Holtom, B. C., Matiaske, W., & Mellewigt, T. (2009). Level and time effects of recruitment sources on early voluntary turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 94*, 1146-1162.
- Zottoli, M. A., & Wanous, J. P. (2001). Recruitment source research: Current status and future directions. *Human Resource Management Review, 10*, 353-382.

## Appendix A      Codebook

Main Category	Sub Category	Description	Code Name
<b>Initialization (I)</b>	Cause of vacancy	Describing the motive for the vacant job position	I_cause
	Job description	Use of existing job description	I_jobd_ex
		Formulating a job description/requirements	I_jobd_form
	Confidence	The presence of confidence during the initialization phase	I_conf
	Doubt	The presence of doubt during the attraction phase	I_doubt
	Time pressure	Decisions influenced by time pressure during attraction	I_time
	Costs	Cost influenced situations during the initialization phase	I_costs
	Reflection	Reflective statements considering the initialization phase	I_refl
	Other	Not belonging to others subcategories in this phase	I_other
<b>Attraction (A)</b>	Channels	Use of (local) newspaper advertisement	A_ch_newsp
		Use of own website	A_ch_web
		Use of professional recruitment websites	A_ch_prow
		Use of recruiting agency	A_ch_agen
		Generating applicants from within the company	A_ch_Int
		Generating applicants from organizational and personal	A_ch_netw
	Quantity	Quantity of the applicant pool	A_quan_pool
	Quality	Quality of the applicant pool	A_qual_pool
	Screening	Screening of applicants to invite for selection	A_scr
	Confidence	The presence of confidence during the attraction phase	A_conf
	Doubt	The presence of doubt during the attraction phase	A_doubt
	Time pressure	Decisions influenced by time pressure during attraction	A_time
	Costs	Cost influenced situations during the attraction phase	A_costs
	Reflection	Reflective statements considering the attraction phase	A_refl
	Other	Not belonging to others subcategories in this phase	A_other
<b>Selection ( S )</b>	Job interview	Information on the structure of interviews	S_ji_str
		General information on job interviews	S_ji_jobg
	Methods	Use of assessments	S_me_as



		Use of other methods	S_me_oth
	Opinion on applicant	Based on characteristics of competence/ curriculum vitae	S_op_com
		Based on characteristics of personality	S_op_pers
	References	Asking someone for a reference about an applicant	S_ref_ask
		Giving someone a reference about an applicant	S_ref_giv
	Non-hiring	The choice of not selection a candidate in this round	S_nh
		Consequences of non- hiring	S_nh_con
	Initialization - selection	Link between initialization and selection	S_islink
	Confidence	The presence of confidence during the selection phase	S_conf
	Doubt	The presence of doubt during selection	S_doubt
	Time pressure	Decisions under influence of time pressure during selection	S_time
	Costs	Cost influenced situations during the selection phase	S_cost
	Reflection	Reflective statements considering the selection phase	S_refl
	Other	Not belonging to others subcategories in this phase	S_other
<b>Onboarding (O)</b>	Assimilation problems	Misbehavior or general assimilation issues	O_ap_mis
		Competence related problems on the job during	O_ap_com
		Relatedness related problems on the job during assimilation	O_ap_rel
		Autonomy related problems on the job during assimilation	O_ap_aut
		Attitude/Commitment related problems on the job during	O_ap_att
	Methods of supervision	Feedback	O_me_feed
		Goal settings	O_me_gose
		Task alteration or taking over as a supervisor	O_me_task
		Exit related actions or issues	O_me_exit
		General issues concerning supervision	O_me_sup
	Managing impressions	Presentation of justifications or excuses by employee	O_mi
	Trial period	Usage of trial periods	O_trial
	Confidence	The presence of confidence during the onboarding phase	O_conf
	Doubt	The presence of doubt during the onboarding phase	O_doubt
	Time pressure	Decisions under influence of time pressure during onboarding	O_time
	Costs	Cost influenced situations during the onboarding phase	O_costs
	Reflection	Reflective statements considering the onboarding phase	O_refl
	Other	Not belonging to others subcategories in this phase	O_other

