# The Effectiveness of Recruitment Sources in Attracting Qualified Job Candidates

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#### **ABSTRACT**

There are numerous types of recruitment sources which are utilized by organizations to attract qualified applicants. For instance, online job portals, newspapers, corporate websites, social networking sites or referrals represent some of them. However, it has been stressed by various authors in the field of Human Resource Management that these recruitment sources differ in their effectiveness to generate qualified job candidates. The recruitment agency, being subject to this research, receives numerous applications per day, and still faces difficulties to with regard to targeting and attracting qualified job candidates. Thus, this research elaborates on the differentiating characteristics of recruitment sources in place (i.e. Facebook, job portals, newspapers, job centers, referrals, and the corporate website) and compares them on basis of their quality and efficiency in generating qualified applicants.

250 applicants of the corporate database were emailed an online questionnaire, out of which 60 filled in the survey, and were asked about the individual characteristics of the recruitment source via which they applied, as well as about their own capabilities to do the job they applied for. The characteristics of recruitment sources to be compared have been defined as amount of information within a recruitment source, as well as its informativeness and specificity. On the other hand, the "output" by recruitment sources in terms of applicant qualifications was considered. Person-job fit, person-organization fit and occupational experience were used as indicators for a job candidate's qualifications.

It turns out that only the amount of information within a recruitment source seems to have an effect on applicant qualifications. Additionally, the combined effect of amount of information, informativeness and specificity impacts the overall quality of applicants in terms of all P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience. Considering the recruitment sources which the recruitment agency has in place, a relationship between the individual source and qualifications of applicants could not be significantly detected, as some sources were not sufficiently frequently named by applicants. Still, the general findings may help the recruitment agency to adjust their recruitment channels in a way that they become capable of further influencing applicant quality and targeting qualified applicants more specifically.

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#### **Keywords**

Recruitment Sources, Amount of Information, Informativeness, Specificity, Person-Job Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Occupational Experience

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, recruiters are capable to utilize various versatile recruitment sources which offer diverse, potential advantages to the user. Commonly named recruitment sources are websites, advertisements in newspapers or magazines, referrals, job centers, walk-ins, campus events, social networking sites or organizational brochures (Baum & Kabst, 2014; Carroll, Marchington, Earnshaw & Taylor, 1999; Sangeetha, 2010; Williams, Chalmer, Labig & Stone, 1993; Zottoli & Wanous, 2000). These sources possess different characteristics and for instance, vary in the amount and type of information they offer to job seekers. By choosing from the variety of sources to communicate messages to applicants, "the recruitment function has responsibility for attracting new employees with the appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and aptitudes" (Allen et al., 2004, p. 143). According to Breaugh (2008), recruiters' actions in utilizing recruitment sources intend to win the attention of potential job candidates and to influence them to apply for a vacancy. The author proposed that, after having established recruitment objectives (i.e. filling a certain number of positions), the recruiting strategy is developed, which indicates "whom to recruit", "where to recruit" and "how to reach targeted individuals" (Breaugh, 2008, p. 111).

According to Williamson, King Jr., Lepak and Sarma (2010), "the strategic actions by firms to attract applicants during the initial phases of the recruitment process have important implications for the development of a high quality workforce" (p. 669), meaning that organizations themselves are able to influence the quality of their applicants. The authors hypothesized that especially websites help to attract qualified candidates, as they reveal detailed information on the company and on job attributes. The amount of information presented on the website as well as the website's vividness are assumed to affect applicant attraction; additionally, this relationship is impacted by the organization's employer reputation (Williamson et al., 2010). Baum and Kabst (2014) supported this, having stated that "websites are a richer information source than printed advertisements" (p. 354) and thus are considered to be high-information recruitment practices.

The underlying idea is that recruitment source characteristics may in effect impact which job candidates choose to apply for vacancies, depending on what and how information are communicated and presented to job seekers. Referring to the effectiveness of the recruitment process, the qualifications of applicants as the "output" of recruitment sources is of interest. Existing research on effectiveness of recruitment sources drew for instance on the concepts of person-job fit and person-organization fit (P-J fit, P-O fit) (Breaugh, 2008; Maurer & Cook, 2011; Roberson, Collins & Oreg, 2005). The theory of person-job fit emphasizes the degree of alignment between a job candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities and the requirements of a certain job, while person-organization fit involves the degree of alignment between the job candidate's and the organization's

norms, values and assumptions (Kristof-Brown, 2000). According to Maurer and Cook (2011), websites offer the advantage to provide information about free vacancies and about the organizational culture in general, allowing job seekers to assess whether they meet the requirements of advertised jobs and whether they feel they fit into the existing corporate culture, sharing the organization's values and beliefs.

Therefore, Roberson et al. (2005) pointed out that recruitment message specificity as well as informativeness are of importance with regard to influencing job seekers' attraction to organizations, and therefore, impact effectiveness of recruitment sources. Effectiveness of recruitment sources within this research means to attract high numbers of qualified applicants in terms of person-job fit, person organization fit and experience. For instance, various authors measured organizational attraction or organizational image as attitude measures to explain the behavior measure such as "intention to apply" (Maurer & Cook, 2011; Ryan, Horvath & Kriska, 2005), and thereby, determine recruitment source effectiveness. Williams, Labig and Stone (1993) furthermore investigated the effects of recruitment sources on posthire outcomes, taking the following variables into consideration: prehire organizational knowledge, experience, education, voluntary turnover and performance. The found out that rehires and employee referrals generated higher candidate quality, due to greater experience and prehire knowledge, leading to higher performance (Williams et al., 1993). On the other hand, not only the channel is assumed to affect the quality of candidates, but also the job and organizational attributes presented to the job seeker, as emphasized by Williamson et al. (2010). Thus, existing literature has stressed that the quality of job applicants is influenced by 1) the type of recruitment source; 2) the amount of information presented within the recruitment source; 3) the degree of source informativeness; 4) the degree of source specificity; and that 4) a fit between the applicant and the employer is influenced by more detailed information.

Nevertheless, authors disagree about the most appropriate characteristics of a recruitment source and how to measure recruitment source effectiveness, as there are diverse variables to be taken into account, such as those stated above: organizational attraction, organizational image, pre-hire knowledge, work experience, education, performance and turnover. Some authors measured recruitment source effectiveness by taking a look at applicants, while others measured effectiveness by considering the performance of actual hires. Therefore, gaining new insights into the influencers of recruitment source effectiveness by drawing on recruitment activities of a German recruitment agency is of interest.

To contribute to the on-going scholarly discussion in the field of effectiveness of diverse recruitment sources, this paper investigates the characteristics "amount of information", "informativeness" and "specificity" of different recruitment sources employed by a recruitment agency and seeks to identify

their effect in attracting qualified applicants. Attracting the right job candidates in terms of sufficient qualifications is of importance, as recruitment agencies nowadays receive numerous applications per day. However, many applicants do not possess the minimum qualifications required to do the advertised job. Recruiting objectives of organizations therefore have changed from the goal of attracting large numbers of job applicants to considering a wider range of possible recruitment objectives, such as influencing applicant quality by the way the organizations recruit (Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Other post-hire outcomes may be represented by the job satisfaction of new employees, or by their initial job performance. With regard to the case organization, only few suitable qualified candidates apply for vacancies which have been advertised by the recruitment business via Facebook, the corporate website, job portals, newspapers and job centers. Therefore, the research question is formulated as follows:

"To what extent do recruitment source characteristics affect the attraction of qualified job candidates?"

The aim of this research is to investigate how the aforementioned factors, namely amount of information within the recruitment source, source informativeness and source specificity affect the generation of job candidates at a case organization. Effective recruitment would refer to the attraction of high numbers of qualified applicants in terms of person-job fit, person-organization fit and occupational experience. To find out about recruitment source effectiveness used by the recruitment agency, job openings for various recruitment source types (Facebook, Website, Job Portals, Newspaper, Job Center and Referrals) need to be compared with regard to their characteristics in terms of amount of information presented to the job seeker, the source informativeness and source specificity. Subsequently, applicants who applied for job openings via those sources need to be evaluated with regard to their qualifications in terms of P-O and P-J fit, as well as experience, to be linked to the sources. Hence, effectiveness of recruitment sources may be determined by depicting the characteristics of the source which attract the most qualified applicants. Drawing upon these insights, the recruitment business becomes able to effectively communicate information for recruitment purposes.

Within this Master Thesis, firstly the focus was set on a sound theoretical part which evaluates recruitment source characteristics and their impact on applicant quality. Having emphasized the theoretical relevance of differences between recruitment sources, an empirical study compared all sources the recruitment agency utilizes with regard to their characteristics. Finally, this research

identified which recruitment source characteristics are important in generating qualified employees, in order to stress how this knowledge should be further exploited in the future.

#### 2. ATTRACTION OF JOB CANDIDATES

The attraction of qualified job candidates represents the primary objective of recruitment, playing a critical role in overall staffing effectiveness (Rynes & Barber, 1990; Turban, Forret & Hendrickson, 1998; Connerley, Carlson & Mecham III, 2002). According to Sangeetha (2010), "attracting, hiring and retaining qualified workforce is decisive for the growth of an organization" (p. 94), as effective recruitment processes represent an important source for competitive advantage and thus, financial success of an organization. Allen et al. (2004) added that "the recruitment function has the responsibility for attracting new employees with the appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and aptitudes" (p. 143) to perform the advertised job. Recruitment is further considered as a means of attracting applicants; thus, an improved recruitment process is regarded as one potential strategy for enhancing attraction (Rynes & Barber, 1990). Breaugh (2008) stated that the recruitment process consists generally of three steps: recruitment objectives, strategy development and recruitment activities. Recruitment objectives involve decisions about the amount of positions to fill or the type of applicant required to fill the position; while strategy development is about whom and where to recruit, about the timing of recruitment activities, how to reach targeted individuals, what message to communicate, the nature of the job offer and budget considerations. Lastly, recruitment activities include recruitment methods used, information conveyed, and recruiters used (Breaugh, 2008). In this regard, the attraction of job candidates is mainly about communicating messages to targeted individuals, namely qualified job candidates.

While recruitment is regarded as primary tool to attract applicants, recruitment itself "refers to an organization's activities carried out with the aim of identifying and attracting potential employees", thus, "attraction is the first outcome of the recruitment activities" (Acarlar & Bilgic, 2012, p. 50). The authors highlighted that potential applicants may be attracted by job advertisings which communicate information about the organization as well as the job, impacting pre-hire outcomes such as credibility of the source and as satisfaction obtained from the information given. The effect of the credibility of the information and satisfaction gathered from the information presented was found to be significant for the attraction of job candidates to the organization. Furthermore, the following recruitment practices have been proposed as attraction strategies: organizational

representatives, recruitment messages, recruitment sources, recruitment timing (Rynes & Barber, 1990).

Within this paper, recruitment sources as attraction strategies are of importance, which according to Rynes and Barber (1990), "differ in the extent to which they provide detailed and accurate information (to applicants and to employers), as well as in the productivity-related characteristics of the applicants reached" (p. 293), and thus, in their individual characteristics. Acarlar and Bilgic (2012) supported this, highlighting that organizations possess the opportunity to attract increased amounts of attracted applicants by providing more and specific information about the organization and the vacancy. Furthermore, Catanzaro et al. (2010) emphasized that the use of recruitment literature (brochures, websites, and other forms of advertising) is one way to attract job seekers. Roberson et al. (2005) added to that by expressing that recruitment message specificity influences job seeker attraction to organizations, and that the content of recruitment messages affects individuals' intention to apply for a job; while Breaugh and Starke (2000) stated that attention is generated by, for instance, using vivid messages and messages that provide personally relevant information and by utilizing concrete language.

Thus, the type of recruitment source as well as the recruitment message communicated via this source may affect the attraction of applicants. If organizations are aware of the effectiveness of their individual recruitment source characteristics, they might become capable of taking actions to increase the amount of qualified job candidates stemming from these sources.

#### 3. QUALIFICATIONS OF JOB CANDIDATES

Effective recruitment does not essentially mean to attract high amounts of job applicants, but to attract qualified applicants who fit to the organization and who fulfill job demands. Identifying the right person, fitting to the organizational and job-related context of vacancy, is considered to be important as "selecting and recruiting the right people for the job and the organization increases the chances of success for both the individual employee in terms of employee well-being (e.g. job satisfaction) and the organization in terms of firm performance (e.g. productivity and high quality)" (Boselie, 2010, p. 147). According to Sangeetha (2010), recruitment describes the "process of identifying and hiring the best-qualified candidate (from within or outside of an organization) for a job vacancy, in a most timely and cost-effective manner" (p. 93); while Bloisi (2007) stressed the activity of "sifting through the pool of applicants and making decisions about their appropriateness" (p. 107). Boselie (2010) additionally referred to "choosing individuals who have the relevant

qualifications for the job" (p. 147). Alsabbah and Ibrahim (2013) suggested that qualified candidates possess the highest degree of competencies to perform the job, defining competence in this case as "a concept that describes the behavioral prerequisites for job performance and organizational results, indicated by skills attribute, character, quality, ability, capacity and capability" (p. 83). The authors highlighted that well-designed recruiting activities, including the utilization of suitable recruitment sources, generate qualified employees through good selection methods, and therefore, better predict future job performance. Only the recruitment of qualified candidates enables organizations to grow and gain competitive advantage, leading to financial success over the long-term (Sangeetha, 2010). When qualified applicants withdraw from the applicant pool, overall utility is reduced (Cascio & Boudreau, 2010). Moreover, organizations expect investments in recruitment sources to enable them to hire high quality employers (Alsabbah & Ibrahim, 2013), as increasing the proportion of qualified job candidates is advantageous as recruitment costs are reduced, speed of recruitment processes is increased and quality of hired applicants increases (Dineen & Williamson, 2012). As stated by Sangeetha (2010), "there is increasing consciousness among the HR professionals to have an effective recruitment program that helps in hiring the right person for the right job that, in turn, would lead to increased retention, decreased cost of hiring and a good return on investment (ROI) on a company's recruitment program" (p. 94).

#### 3.1 Person-Job Fit and Person-Organization Fit

Person-job fit and person-organization fit both play important roles to be considered within the recruitment process (Sekiguchi & Huber, 2011). As the authors highlighted, "employee selection has traditionally focused on the assessment of the match between job requirements and qualifications of job candidates in terms of their knowledge, skills and abilities" (p. 203). According to Boselie (2010), the alignment between a person (i.e. job seeker) and a job (i.e. the advertised vacancy) is called "person-job fit" (p. 148), and identifying the right person for a vacancy is considered to be important as 'selecting and recruiting the right people for the job and the organization increases the chances of success for both the individual employee in terms of employee well-being (e.g. job satisfaction) and the organization in terms of firm performance (e.g. productivity and high quality)' (Boselie, 2010, p. 147). Additionally, soft, or interpersonal, skills play an important role in determining whether or not an applicant fits to the organization and the position he or she applied for. For instance, according to Meifert (2010), applicants are only capable of identifying themselves with the objective of the position if they have specific personality traits (e.g. being ambitious, determined, creative or being a leader). Kristof-Brown (2000) added that certain characteristics like (un-)

friendliness, dynamism, maturity or extroversion (in contrast to introversion) represent personality traits impacting the degree of fit. Moreover, person-organization fit describes the degree of fit between an applicant and general organizational attributes, involving values and personality traits, as well as the focus is on fit with broad organizational attributes, rather than job-specific tasks (Kristof-Brown, 2000). Cho, Park and Ordonez (2013) highlighted that "during their search, job seekers gather information about future employers, such as organizational philosophy, norms, rules, and policies. Then, they compare these values with their own values and determine their [person-organization fit] based on the [...] information [available]" (Cho, Park & Ordonez, 2013, p. 795). For instance, corporate websites may represent suitable sources of qualified applicants as they offer the ability to present various information to job seekers, enabling the assessment "of the degree to which available options meet employment needs ("needs-supplies" match) and/or offer a match between a person's capabilities and the demands of the job ("demands-abilities" match)" (Maurer & Cook, 2011). Thus, the link between recruitment source characteristics and recruitment of qualified job applicants is to be drawn from this research. Concluding, it is assumed that high degrees of personorganization fit as well as person-job fit characterize qualified job candidates.

### 3.2 Occupational Experience of Applicants

According to Breaugh and Starke (2000), in the past, many organizations intended to attract high amounts of applicants, while by now, more and more organizations seek to influence post-hire outcomes (e.g. job performance) by the way they recruit. Thus, organizations need to consider how to reach targeted individuals who are qualified and interested in vacancies. As measure for applicant quality, the authors suggested work experience. Dokko, Wilk and Rothbard (2009) supported this by their research, as they found out that prior related experience indeed has a positive effect on job performance. They referred to the criticality of "prior occupational experience", measuring the months of work experience in the occupation candidates wish to apply for. Dokko et al. (2009) highlighted that "task-relevant knowledge and skill that can be transferred to a new context is the relatedness of that prior experience"; "prior related jobs, i.e., those comprised of similar work activities, should provide portable experience in that they impart knowledge and skill that a worker can transfer and apply to a new" job (p. 53). As general work experience may include relevant knowledge and skills, it may at the same time include routines and habits which prevent the job candidate from adapting to the new organizational and job-related context. Thus, prior occupational experience is of importance when individuals intend to move across firm boundaries and apply for a new job. Williamson et al. (1993) likewise highlighted number of years of working experience

within the applicant's field of expertise as important determinant of applicant's qualification for a new job. Consequently, prior working experience within the occupational context of the job opening to apply for represents, besides P-J and P-O fit, another indicator for an applicant's qualification to execute the job.

Research model A, which is presented below, represents an operationalization of qualified job applicants. Qualified job applicants ideally possess high degrees of person-organization and person-job fit, as well as a high level of occupational experience. Relating to research model B, which in the following section illustrates the characteristics of recruitment sources attracting job applicants, the ideal case would be to attract the best qualified job applicants via these sources.

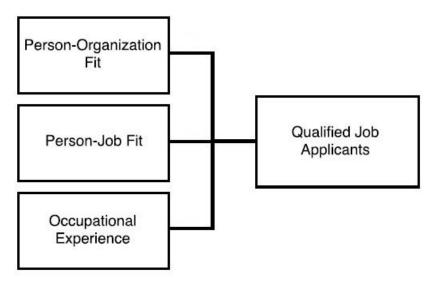


Figure 1. Research Model A

#### 4. RECRUITMENT SOURCE CHARACTERISTICS TO ATTRACT JOB CANDIDATES

Effective recruitment sources are proposed to possess characteristics which attract high numbers of qualified job applicants, in terms of high degrees of P-O and P-J fit, as well as occupational experience. Recruitment sources are the "means through which job seekers learn about job openings or organizations" (Horvarth, 2015, p. 126) and which attract job candidates to a certain extent. Sangeetha (2010) stated that advertisements need to include the number of vacancies, job profile, and qualifications required for applying for the job in order to address the right target group of job seekers. Thus, in order to effectively attract qualified job applicants, the amount of information presented within the recruitment source, as well as recruitment source informativeness and specificity, play an important role in communicating job attributes and organizational attributes to job seekers, and hence, are elaborated in within the subsequent sections.

#### 4.1 Amount of Information presented within Recruitment Sources

One of the reasons that recruitment sources differ in effectiveness is because they provide different amounts of information to the reader (Allen et al., 2007). According to Allen and his colleagues, text can convey large or small amounts of information, stressing that more information lead to more satisfaction and a higher intention to apply on side of the job seekers. The amount of information plays "an important role in influencing attraction in the early stages of recruitment", as "recruitment messages and materials that provide more information about job and organization characteristics should positively influence applicant attraction to the organization" (Allen et al., 2007, p. 1698). Acarlar and Bilgic (2012) supported this by stating that the amount of information given in an advertisement is expected to influence the decisions of the applicants to apply for a position in a certain organization. The recruitment image of an organization, which is represented in job advertisements, is enhanced as the volume of information increases, thereby affecting job seekers' intentions to apply for the job (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993).

Moreover, Maurer and Cook (2011) highlighted that recruitment sources, which provide many information on the organization, job openings and job requirements, and "address job candidates assessments of the degree to which available options meet employment needs (needs-supplies match) and/or offer a match between a person's capabilities and the demands of the job (demands-abilities match)" (p. 113), are supposed to be more effective than those representing only few information. This way, potential job applicants become more capable of evaluating the degree to which they fit to the organization and the job. Being able to assess the individual degree of fit due to the amount of information presented within a recruitment source, unqualified applicants may choose not apply for a vacancy as they do not possess the minimum qualifications which are demanded for the job and explicitly stressed by a source, while qualified applicants may indeed apply for a vacancy if they determined to possess the required qualifications to fulfill job demands.

Thus, it appears logical to assume that recruitment sources offering a high amount of information on job attributes and organizational attributes attract mainly qualified job applicants in contrast to unqualified applicants, who are supposed not to enter the applicant pool if they recognize not to fit to the job and organization. Therefore, the following hypotheses may be derived from general to more specific, addressing relevant qualifications:

Hypothesis 1: Presenting more information within a recruitment source will attract applicants who are better qualified.

Hypothesis 1a: Presenting more information within a recruitment source will attract applicants with a higher degree of person-organization fit.

Hypothesis 1b: Presenting more information within a recruitment source will attract applicants with a higher degree of person-job fit.

Hypothesis 1c: Presenting more information within a recruitment source will attract applicants with more occupational experience.

#### 4.2 Informative Recruitment Sources

Next to amount of information, Ryan, Horvarth and Kriska (2005) proposed to classify sources on the basis of informativeness, as not only the volume of corporate and job-related information is relevant, but also the quality of these information in terms of how informative and useful they are to job seekers. This means that sources differ in their accurateness in informing job seekers about the position advertised in job openings. Thus, informativeness "relates to what the organization gives the applicant in terms of information about the job and organization" (p. 246). Whether job seekers apply for a job or not, is affected by organizational and job attributes advertised in the job opening (Rynes & Barber, 1990, Turban et al., 1998, Catanzaro, Moore & Marshall, 2010). Therefore, job openings should communicate relevant information about the organizational culture and structure, payment, training and development opportunities, opportunities for advancement, and job characteristics (Williamson et al., 2010), enabling job seekers to assess whether they fit to the organization and the job. The attraction process involves a job seeker's estimate of how well their personal needs and values fit the organization's culture, which is defined as "beliefs, values and basic assumptions that are shared by organizational members" (Catanzaro et al., 2010). Cultural values include, for example, an emphasis on rewards, aggressiveness, diversity, supportiveness and teamorientation (Catanzaro et al., 2010). According to Rynes and Barber (1990), vacancy characteristics such as attractiveness of the organization, ability to pay, the organizational strategy and values additionally affect attraction. Cable und Judge (1996) added to that by stressing that the location of a job (e.g. with good opportunities for a social life), its promotion opportunities, the pay level, security, co-workers, supervisor and the type of work as well as its challenges represent job attributes which may or may not attract job candidates to an organization. Therefore, informative job specifications and descriptions are of importance (Acarlar & Bilgic, 2012), helping job seekers to assess whether they are capable of executing the job adequately.

While low information strategies involve few information and are processed rather unconsciously or with little effort, without requiring any search on sides of the applicant, high information strategies involve the attempt to influence potential applicants by providing arguments and information about the organization (Collins & Han, 2004). Low information sources are represented by newspaper advertisements, posters, banners, or advertisements on websites; whereas high information sources are represented by organizational brochures, detailed recruitment ads or campus events. Adding to that, Breaugh (2008) suggested that "many job applicants (a) have an incomplete and/or inaccurate understanding of what a job opening involves, (b) are not sure what they want from a position, (c) do not have a self-insight with regard to their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and (d) cannot accurately predict how they will react to the demands of a new position" (p. 105). Therefore, candidates who do not possess the right qualifications may apply for a job opening, as a result of uninformative advertisements communicated by a recruitment source. Thus, detailed and accurate job descriptions as advertised by certain recruitment sources directly affect quality and quantity of the applicant pool. Informative recruitment sources, such as brochures, websites, detailed recruitment ads or campus events (Collins & Han, 2004), are hypothesized to generate better qualified job applicants compared to low information recruitment sources.

Consequently, informative recruitment sources, aiming to attract qualified job candidates effectively, may communicate organizational attributes as well as job attributes to applicants in order to affect their intention to apply. Providing information about the organizational culture, structure, value and beliefs (e.g. aggressiveness, diversity, supportiveness), rewards, training and development opportunities, as well as job characteristics such as supervision, pay level, promotion opportunities and location assist applicants in assessing whether they fit to the organization and if they fulfill the job requirements (Cable & Judge, 1996; Catanzaro et al., 2010; Williamson et al., 2010). Being able to assess the alignment between their skills and the job demands, the quality of job candidates may be affected, as the recruitment messages provide the basis for applicant self-selection (Baum & Kabst, 2014). Thus, informative recruitment sources which provide information on job attributes and organizational attributes, seem to attract qualified job applicants as they enable them to reliably assess their degree of fit. Consequently, the following hypotheses have been derived:

Hypothesis 2: More informative recruitment sources will attract applicants who are better qualified.

Hypothesis 2a: More informative recruitment sources will attract applicants with a higher degree of person-organization fit.

Hypothesis 2b: More informative recruitment sources will attract applicants with a higher degree of person-job fit.

*Hypothesis* 2c: More informative recruitment sources will attract applicants with more occupational experience.

#### **4.3 Specific Recruitment Sources**

Besides the amount of information and recruitment source informativeness, recruitment source specificity plays an important role in attracting job candidates. According to Roberson et al. (2005), "through their added detail, specific advertising messages become more tangible to receivers and are therefore, more likely to be perceived as directly relevant to receivers and to enhance their abilities to process message content [which is why] specific messages are likely to be processed through the central route of persuasion" (p. 323). Dineen and Williamson (2012) stated that if job advertisements include specific demands for the vacancy to be filled in, applicants are better able to assess whether they are suitable for the vacancy. Furthermore, Acarlar and Bilgic (2012) added to that by stating that "giving specific information will satisfy the ad readers more than general ads", likewise "satisfaction" with the entire process of recruitment and the likelihood of accepting a job offer were significantly related to the content of the information provided to the applicants (compensation/benefits, job/career, security/success issues" (p. 54). According to Acarlar and Bilgic (2012), information about a vacancy, which are presented within an advertisement, should clearly point out what potential applicants need to know about the job. Moreover, if specific applicant qualifications required to do the job are mentioned within job openings, the number of unqualified applicants decreases, compared to unspecific information. Consequently, Acarlar and Bilgic (2012) summarized that organizations have the opportunity to attract more qualified employees and to decrease the number of unqualified ones by providing more specific information.

Roberson et al. (2005) supported that the specificity, besides the informativeness of recruitment sources, would affect applicant perceptions with regard to applying for a job. The authors found out that perceptions of organization attributes would be higher when recruitment messages are specific rather than general, stressing the importance of recruitment ad specificity for attracting job candidates. They highlighted that "more detailed advertisements may provide job seekers with sufficient information to directly process information about the organization and persuade applicants to generate favorable perceptions of what the organization may offer potential employees and of their fit with the organization and its culture" (Roberson et al., 2005, p. 333). Therefore, it is assumed that more specific information presented within recruitment sources will attract higher numbers of

qualified applicants, as they are in a better position to judge whether they fulfill the requirements of the advertised position. Thus, the following hypotheses have been derived:

Hypothesis 3: More specific recruitment sources will attract applicants who are better qualified.

Hypothesis 3a: More specific recruitment sources will attract applicants with a higher degree of person-organization fit.

Hypothesis 3b: More specific recruitment sources will attract applicants with a higher degree of person-job fit.

Hypothesis 3c: More specific recruitment sources will attract applicants with more occupational experience.

Model B illustrates the relationship between recruitment source characteristics as independent variables, and the attraction of job applicants as dependent variable. It is assumed that the independent variables on the left side of the model impact the dependent variable positively, yet is it unknown to what extent the recruitment source characteristics' impact on the attraction of qualified job candidates differs. Additionally, it is assumed that recruitment sources scoring high with regard to amount of information, informativeness and specificity, represent sources of high quality.

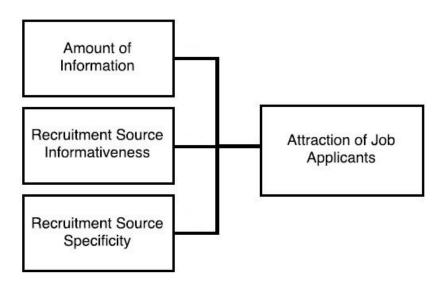


Figure 2. Research Model B

#### 5. EFFECTIVENESS OF RECRUITMENT SOURCES

The amount of information presented within a recruitment source, as well as recruitment source informativeness and specificity are assumed to be recruitment source characteristics affecting the attraction of job candidates. The more informative and specific information are provided to the job seeker, the better job candidates in terms of their qualifications may be recruited by an organization. Especially providing the job seekers with information on organizational and job attributes, such as the organizational culture, structure, value and beliefs, rewards, training and development opportunities, as well as supervision, pay level, promotion opportunities and location, helps job seekers to assess whether they fit to the organization and are capable of fulfilling the job requirements. Therefore, amount of information, informativeness and specificity represent indicators of recruitment source quality. More of each of them is assumed to attract better applicants. To put it more specifically, effective recruitment sources are assumed to potentially attract high numbers qualified candidates who possess occupational experience, as well as high degrees of person-job and person-organization fit.

Hence, P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience represent indicators of applicant qualifications. A higher degree of fit and more months of experience characterize qualified applicants compared to applicants with low levels of fit and experience. To elaborate on the relationship between recruitment source characteristics and applicant qualifications, research model C has been developed, and illustrates all hypotheses to be tested. The left section represents the recruitment source characteristics which are hypothesized to affect the applicant qualifications on the right side. Not only have the hypotheses per variable been tested on individual effects (H1a-c, H2a-c, H3a-c), but also their combined effect (H1, H2, H3). Hypotheses 1-1c are about the amount of information within a recruitment source and its effect on applicant qualification, hypotheses 2-2c are about recruitment source informativeness and its effect on applicant qualification, while 3-3c are about recruitment source specificity and its effect on applicant qualification, as presented below:

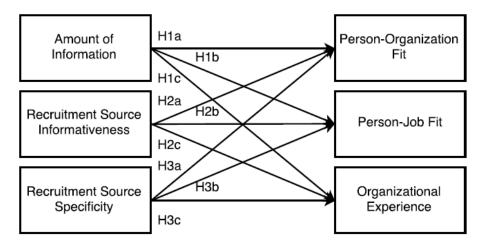


Figure 3. Research Model C

#### 6. METHODOLOGY

To test the hypotheses stated above, a quantitative approach to data collection was chosen, emphasizing the statistical testing of these hypotheses. The applicants of a German recruitment agency formed a basis for the sampling. By means of online questionnaires, all applicants of April and May 2016, having indicated their E-Mail address, were asked about the job opening they applied for and about the recruitment source in which they found the job opening. In order to compare the types of recruitment sources, the indicated job openings were grouped among the sources of Facebook, newspaper, job portals, job center, website and referral, and rated according to the amount of information provided, as well as on the basis of their informativeness and specificity.

Subsequently, applicant qualifications in terms of P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience have been assessed by evaluating their CVs. Both ratings of source characteristics as well as applicant qualifications have been done by recruiters of the case organization, who discussed the factors and came up with a score of one to five (see Table 1). Additionally, applicants were asked to rate the same variables, namely amount of information, informativeness and specificity of the recruitment source on a scale from one to five, as well as their perception of P-O fit and P-J fit, and their own occupational experience in months.

This way, objective ratings as posed by the recruiters, as well as subjective assessments of the applicants themselves could be linked to recruitment source characteristics and qualifications. For instance, it might be the case that applicants consider themselves to be qualified in terms of their P-O and P-J ratings, however, the recruiters might provide another rating. Similarly, recruiters might rate a certain recruitment source informative or specific, however, job applicants still may miss relevant information. Considering only one opinion, by either the recruiter or the applicant, might lead to

different outcomes with regard to the quality of recruitment sources. Therefore, comparing their points of view, richer insights are gained. As organizations "can reduce the recruitment cost by finding their effectiveness through the use of right metrics and fine-tuning their recruitment strategy" (Sangeetha, 2010, p. 105), identifying factors, which lead to the attraction and recruitment of qualified job candidates, is of crucial importance. The underlying assumption of this research is that if organizations know about the relationship between the factors, which have been examined above and which are illustrated within Table 1, they become capable of taking actions to increase the amount of qualified applicants and thereby, the recruitment source effectiveness.

## **6.1** Measures of Recruitment Effectiveness

Recruitment sources are defined as "channels/mediums that are extensively used in the process of recruitment either to promote skilled persons within the organization or people with diverse talent outside the organizations" including newspapers, magazines, word-of-mouth promotion, or online recruitment (Sangeetha, 2010). To measure recruitment source, employees have been asked to indicate the type of source presenting a certain job opening which triggered their application. After having generated a sample of recruitment sources to be evaluated, the quality of these sources in terms of amount of information, informativeness and specificity needed to be determined.

The amount of information describes how much aspects of the position and the organization are presented to the job seeker within a job opening (Allen et al., 2007). The amount of information has been measured by asking recruiters of the case organization to rate the amount of information presented within this job opening (recruitment source) on a Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = totally insufficient, 5 = totally sufficient). Ryan et al. (2005) stressed that, "while some studies have asked for applicants to report their perceptions of the informativeness of recruitment sources, applicants are not necessarily in the best position to judge how informative or accurate a source is [as] applicant perceptions of informativeness may be unrelated to the accuracy or usefulness of information given" (p. 236). This is why recruiters, who are considered to be experts in their field, were asked to rate recruitment source characteristics.

Furthermore, as some sources provide more and potentially more accurate information, differences in recruitment source informativeness lead to different recruitment outcomes (Ryan et al., 2005). Informativeness has been measured by asking recruiters of the case organization to rate the informativeness of a job opening (recruitment source) on a Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = very uninformative).

Recruitment source specificity was measured by asking recruiters of the case organization to rate the degree of specificity of job openings on a Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = very unspecific, 5 = very

specific) Recruitment source specificity involves that specific advertising messages are very detailed and thereby become more tangible to receivers, being perceived as directly relevant to receivers and enhancing their abilities to process message content (Roberson et al., 2005).

After having determined an average score for the quality of the recruitment source, based on the three aforementioned variables (amount of information, informativeness, specificity), applicant qualifications needed to be rated.

Occupational work experience has been seen as proxy for the knowledge and skill that contributes to performance (Dokko et al., 2009), meaning that job candidates with occupational experience are expected to perform better. Occupational work experience has been measured by asking recruiters to evaluate applicants' CVs based on how much prior occupational work experience the applicant had (in months).

Moreover, person-job fit, which Boselie (2010) defined as the alignment between a person (i.e. job seeker) and a job (i.e. the unoccupied vacancy), has been measured by asking recruiters to rate the degree to which applicants' skills and abilities matched those required by the job on a Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = not at all, 5 = completely), as proposed by Cable and Judge (1996).

Lastly, person-organization fit is defined as the degree of fit between an applicant and general organizational attributes, involving values and personality traits, as well as the focus is on fit with broad organizational attributes, rather than job-specific tasks (Kristof-Brown, 2000), and has been measured by asking recruiters of the case organization to rate the degree to which they felt that applicants values matched or fit the organization and the current employees in the organization, on the same Five-Point Likert Scale as P-J fit.

Variable	Definition	Measure	Scale
Recruitment	Recruitment sources are "channels/mediums	Which type of recruitment	Nominal
Source	that are extensively used in the process of	source triggered you to	
	recruitment either to promote skilled persons	apply for a job? (Sangeetha,	
	within the organization or people with diverse	2010)	
	talent outside the organizations" including		
	newspapers, magazines, word-of-mouth	For which job opening did	
	promotion, or online recruitment (Sangeetha,	you apply?	
	2010).		
	1	l .	1

Amount of Information within	The amount of information describes how much aspects of the position and the organization are presented to the job seeker within a job opening,	How do you rate the amount of information presented within this job opening	Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = totally
Recruitment Source	playing "an important role in influencing attraction in the early stages of recruitment", as "recruitment messages and materials that provide more information about job and organization characteristics should positively influence applicant attraction to the organization" (Allen et al., 2007, p. 1698).	(recruitment source)? (Allen et al., 2007)	insufficient,  5 = totally sufficient)
Recruitment Source Informativeness	Differences in knowledge obtained about the job and organization lead to different recruitment outcomes, as some sources provide more and potentially more accurate information (Ryan et al., 2005).	How informative do you rate the information you received about the organization and the job? (Ryan et al., 2005)	Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = very uninformative, 5 = very informative)
Recruitment Source Specificity	Specific advertising messages are very detailed and thereby become more tangible to receivers, being perceived as directly relevant to receivers and enhancing their abilities to process message content (Roberson et al., 2005).	How specific do you rate the information you received about the organization and the job? (Roberson et al., 2005)	Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = very unspecific, 5 = very specific)
Person- Organization Fit	The alignment between a person (i.e. job seeker) and a job (i.e. the unoccupied vacancy) is called 'person-job fit' (Boselie, 2010)	To what degree do the applicant's values "match" or fit this organization and the current employees in this organization? (Cable & Judge, 1996)	Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = not at all, 5 = completely)
Person-Job Fit	Person-organization fit describes the degree of fit between an applicant and general organizational attributes, involving values and personality traits, as well as the focus is on fit with broad organizational attributes, rather than job-specific tasks (Kristof-Brown, 2000).	To what degree do the applicant's skills and abilities "match" those required by the job? (Cable & Judge, 1996)	Five-Point Likert Scale (1 = not at all, 5 = completely)

Job candidates with occupational experience are	How much prior	Number of
expected to perform better, and therefore, may	occupational work	Months
be seen as proxy for the knowledge and skill	experience does the	
that contributes to performance (Dokko et al.,	applicant have (in months)?	(1 = < 12, 5 = >
2009).	(Dokko et al., 2009)	48)
	expected to perform better, and therefore, may be seen as proxy for the knowledge and skill that contributes to performance (Dokko et al.,	expected to perform better, and therefore, may occupational work be seen as proxy for the knowledge and skill experience does the that contributes to performance (Dokko et al., applicant have (in months)?

Table 1. Measurements of Recruitment Effectiveness

#### **6.2** Sample and Procedure

Located in the Euregio region, the German recruitment agency currently employs about 600 employees in different industries. Employing more than 250 people, the organization qualifies as large organization in terms of the amount of employees, according to the existing definition proposed by the European Commission (ec.europa.eu). However, based on the turnover of about 20 million euros, the organization qualifies as a medium-sized organization (< 50 million euros). According to the European Commission, only about 10 percent of all businesses within the European Union are large organizations, while the major part (i.e. 90 percent) of European organizations is either small-or medium-sized. In Germany, even 99.6 percent represent small- or medium-sized organizations which employ about 60 percent of all employees in Germany. Therefore, the organization in principal represents a typical European and German business, which faces increased recruitment efforts due to the large amount of employees and the type of business. Since the recruitment effort is especially relevant to this research, the organization has been considered as suitable for drawing upon a sample of applicants, and for measuring effectiveness of the different recruitment source characteristics.

As a personnel service provider, employees are employed by the recruitment agency, but work at the facilities of a client organization in form of a leasing arrangement. While the organization mostly operates within the West of Germany, it sought to enter the Dutch market step-by-step and now, is steadily growing across borders. Still, due to high competition and a locally limited range, generally few qualified applicants are reached. Although numerous job candidates apply per day, via various means, the recruitment agency wishes to increase the amount of qualified job candidates, and thereby, the effectiveness of the recruitment sources in place. Utilized sources currently are represented by the following: the organizational website, Facebook, job portals, career fairs and other events (e.g. open days, campus presentations), job centers, newspapers and referrals. Through the evaluation of the effectiveness of existing recruitment sources, the organization learns about the characteristics of recruitment sources which generate qualified job candidates and thus, becomes able to recruit more efficiently and targeted.

#### **6.3 Data Collection**

The recruitment sources Facebook, the corporate website, job portals, the local job center, the local newspaper and referrals represent the units of analysis being subject to this research. To determine the link between recruitment source characteristics (amount of information, informativeness, specificity) and applicant qualifications (P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience), about 250 applicants, who applied in April, May and the beginning of June 2016, were sent E-Mails including an online questionnaire which asked for the job opening and recruitment source chosen by the applicant. This way, the job openings were grouped into the categories of recruitment sources. Moreover, on the one hand, applicants were asked to rate the amount of information presented in a source, as well as its informativeness and specificity. On the other hand, a recruiter of the organization assessed these three variables according to their opinion. The same was done for the variables P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience indicating qualifications of applicants, having been assessed by both applicants and the recruiter. Knowing which applicant applied via each type of recruitment source, effective source generating highly qualified job applicants might be determined.

#### 7. DATA ANALYSIS

To test all hypotheses stated above, the program smartPLS by Ringle et al. (2015) has been utilized and emphasized a structural equation modeling approach. The first columns of the tables 2-12 below show the relationship between the different source characteristics and applicant qualification, the second columns show the path coefficients, which are standardized versions of linear regression weights used for examining the possible causal linkage between the statistical variables, the third columns shows the standard deviation and the last columns show the p-value, giving an indication for the significance of the relationship between the variables. "R" stands for the rating by the recruiter, "A" stands for the rating by applicants, while "R-A" considers the combined ratings of both recruiter and applicants.

To test hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, the relationship between (1) amount of information, (2) informativeness and (3) specificity on the one hand, and applicant qualifications on the other hand, has been investigated. In this regard, applicant qualifications were measured by the degree of personorganization fit and person-job fit, and the level of occupational experience in months, as indicated by combined applicant and recruiter ratings, as well as either applicant or recruiter ratings.

For testing hypotheses 1a-c, 2a-c and 3a-c, the relationship between all variables has been tested, meaning between (1) amount of information on the one hand, and P-O, P-J fit and experience on the

other hand; as well as between (2) informativeness and (3) specificity, and the three aforementioned qualification measures (as illustrated in Figure 3). This way, it could be examined whether individual source effects impacted individual applicant qualifications, before testing their combined effects for hypotheses 4.

To test hypothesis 4, the combination of amount of information, informativeness and specificity was regarded as general source quality and considered in its relationship to the general quality of applicants, as a combination of their P-O and P-J fit, as well as their occupational experience. For all tests, a combination of recruiter and applicant ratings, as well as the individual applicant and recruiter ratings have been applied as indicators.

#### 8. FINDINGS

By using a structural equation modeling approach, all hypotheses stated above have been tested. The values written in bold represent significant values. First, hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were tested to find out if (1) presenting more information within a recruitment source, (2) having more informative recruitment sources, or having (3) more specific recruitment sources would attract more qualified applicants. The results of the statistical testing indicated that only Hypothesis 1, 1c, 1b and H4 are significant based on the combined applicant and recruiter rating, meaning (1) the relationship between amount of information of a recruitment source and overall applicant quality, (2) between amount of information and P-J fit, (3) between amount of information and occupational experience, and (4) between overall source quality and overall applicant quality. On the first sight, this means that that factor "amount of information" has the highest impact on applicant quality. Therefore, independently from the type of recruitment source, the text presented within the advertisement should show many information.

The advertisement's informativeness and specificity seems to be less important, what may be explained by the fact that applicants are hardly able to assess informativeness and specificity without having executed the advertised job. The same accounts for recruiters, who are considered to be experts for assessing informativeness and specificity of recruitment sources, however, they themselves have not worked within those jobs. Recruiters usually receive the basic information about a vacancy from their clients, however, the way they advertise this job is up to them. Hence, informativeness and specificity may be affected by recruiters writing and publishing the final job description as they consider it relevant. With regard to the recruitment sources, no significant correlation between the type of source and the quality of applicants could be find. However, it still can be said that the website's quality scores highest compared to the other types, although highest

applicant quality is generated by the job center. Below, all tables illustrating the results of the statistical testing are explained more detailed.

Firstly, referring to table 2, the effect of each amount of information (H1), informativeness (H2) and specificity (H3) on the overall quality of applicants was tested. Only for amount of information, significant relationships were detected based on the combined recruiter and applicant ratings ( $\beta = 0.497$ ,  $\alpha = 0.014$ ), and based solely on the applicant rating ( $\beta = 0.398$ ,  $\alpha = 0.050$ ).

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Amount of Information -> Quality of Applicant $(R - A)$	0.497	0.014
Amount of Information -> Quality of Applicant (A)	0.398	0.050
Amount of Information -> Quality of Applicant (R)	0.568	0.129
Informativeness -> Quality of Applicant $(R - A)$	0.192	0.395
Informativeness -> Quality of Applicant (A)	0.129	0.626
Informativeness -> Quality of Applicant (R)	0.100	0.658
Specificity -> Quality of Applicant $(R - A)$	-0.184	0.430
Specificity -> Quality of Applicant (A)	-0.028	0.901
Specificity -> Quality of Applicant (R)	-0.354	0.197

Table 2. Testing Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

Hypothesis 1a tested whether presenting more information within a recruitment source would attract more applicants in terms of a higher degree of person-organization fit. However, all three tests with combined and individual ratings indicated that no significance could be found.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Amount of Information -> Experience (R – A)	0.187	0.511
Amount of Information -> Experience (A)	0.282	0.142
Amount of Information -> Experience (R)	-0.251	0.291

Table 3. Testing H1a

Hypothesis 1b tested whether presenting more information within a recruitment source would attract applicants with a higher degree of person-job fit. The combined ratings of recruiters and applicants indicated a significant relationship ( $\beta = 0.453$ ,  $\alpha = 0.019$ ), but taken their responses individually, tests resulted in non-significant p-values.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Amount of Information -> P-J Fit (R – A)	0.453	0.019
Amount of Information -> P-J Fit (A)	0.229	0.196
Amount of Information -> P-J Fit (R)	-0.158	0.517

Table 4. Testing H1b

Hypothesis 1c tested whether presenting more information within a recruitment source would attract more applicants with occupational experience. The combined ratings and the individual applicant ratings resulted in significant p-values below 0.05 ( $\beta$  = 0.419,  $\alpha$  = 0.032;  $\beta$  = 0.358,  $\alpha$  = 0.021), however, checking for recruiter responses, the p-value was higher. Probably, recruiters evaluated applicants' degree of P-O fit less positively compared to applicants themselves.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Amount of Information $\rightarrow$ P-O Fit $(R - A)$	0.419	0.032
Amount of Information -> P-O Fit (A)	0.358	0.021
Amount of Information -> P-O Fit (R)	0.154	0.442

Table 5. Testing H1c

Hypothesis 2a tested whether more informative recruitment sources would attract more applicants with a higher degree of person-organization fit. All three tests resulted in non-significant values.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Informativeness -> Experience $(R - A)$	-0.245	0.366
Informativeness -> Experience (A)	-0.293	0.188
Informativeness -> Experience (R)	0.093	0.677

Table 6. Testing H2a

Hypothesis 2b tested whether more informative recruitment sources would attract more applicants with a higher degree of person-job fit. All three tests resulted in non-significant values.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Informativeness -> P-J Fit $(R - A)$	0.262	0.169
Informativeness -> P-J Fit (A)	0.232	0.222
Informativeness -> P-J Fit (R)	0.133	0.584

Table 7. Testing H2b

Hypothesis 2c tested whether more informative recruitment sources will attract more applicants with occupational experience. The three test results were non-significant.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Informativeness -> P-O Fit $(R - A)$	0.035	0.884
Informativeness -> P-O Fit (A)	-0.044	0.832
Informativeness -> P-O Fit (R)	0.056	0.790

Table 8. Testing H2c

Hypothesis 3a tested whether more specific recruitment sources will attract more applicants with a higher degree of person-organization fit. Again, all three tests resulted in non-significant values.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Specificity -> Experience (R – A)	-0.024	0.895
Specificity -> Experience (A)	-0.034	0.835
Specificity -> Experience (R)	0.047	0.775

Table 9. Testing H3a

Hypothesis 3b tested whether more specific recruitment sources will attract more applicants with a higher degree of person-job fit. All three tests resulted in non-significant values.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Specificity -> P-J Fit $(R - A)$	-0.288	0.095
Specificity -> P-J Fit (A)	-0.090	0.593
Specificity -> P-J Fit (R)	0.071	0.665

Table 10. Testing H3b

Hypothesis 3c tested whether more specific recruitment sources will attract more applicants with occupational experience. The three test results were non-significant.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Specificity $\rightarrow$ P-O Fit $(R - A)$	-0.004	0.988
Specificity -> P-O Fit (A)	0.152	0.436
Specificity -> P-O Fit (R)	-0.049	0.794

Table 11. Testing H3c

Hypothesis 4 tested whether recruitment sources scoring high with regard to amount of information, informativeness and specificity would attract more qualified job applicants (in terms of P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience). The combined recruiter and applicant ratings, as well as the individual applicant ratings resulted in significant p-values scoring lower than 0.05 ( $\beta$  = 0.486,  $\alpha$  = 0.006;  $\beta$  = 0.420,  $\alpha$  = 0.019). However, the individual recruiter ratings resulted in a non-significant p-value higher than 0.05.

Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	P-Values
Quality of Source -> Quality of Applicant (R – A)	0.486	0.006
Quality of Source -> Quality of Applicant (A)	0.420	0.019
Quality of Source -> Quality of Applicant (R)	0.206	0.459

**Table 12. Testing Hypothesis 4** 

The table below (Table 13) presents an overview of all hypotheses tests and their results. The significant values are written in bold text.

Hypotheses	Relationship	P-Values	Significance
H1	Amount of Information -> Applicant Quality	0.014	Significant
H1a	Amount of Information -> P-O Fit	0.511	Non-significant
H1b	Amount of Information -> P-J Fit	0.019	Significant
H1c	Amount of Information -> Experience	0.032	Significant
H2	Informativeness -> Applicant Quality	0.395	Non-significant
H2a	Informativeness -> P-O Fit	0.366	Non-significant
H2b	Informativeness -> P-J Fit	0.169	Non-significant
H2c	Informativeness -> Experience	0.884	Non-significant
НЗ	Specificity -> Applicant Quality	0.430	Non-significant
НЗа	Specificity -> P-O Fit	0.895	Non-significant
НЗь	Specificity -> P-J Fit	0.095	Non-significant
Н3с	Specificity -> Experience	0.988	Non-significant
H4	Source Quality -> Applicant Quality	0.006	Significant

**Table 13. Overview Hypotheses Testing** 

#### 9. DISCUSSION

Within this research, it was firstly proposed that the effectiveness of recruitment sources depended on the amount of information displayed within a recruitment source, as well as informativeness and specificity of the source in question. All three factors affect the attraction of job candidates to an organization, as they communicate messages about the job and the organization to the applicant. Theoretically, the degree of attraction caused by a recruitment source, or a specific advertisement, impacts the number of applicants. On the other hand, the "input" by the applicant plays a role in determining the effectiveness of a recruitment source: a recruitment source should generate the highest quality of applicants possible, based on their individual degree of person-job fit, person-organizational fit and occupational experience. Hence, effective recruitment sources in terms of high values for amount of information, informativeness and specificity were said to attract qualified candidates scoring high with regard to P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience.

Consequently, every recruitment characteristic (i.e. amount of information, informativeness, specificity) was tested for its individual relationship to applicant quality, namely P-O fit, P-J fit and experience. Drawing on the findings of the statistical testing, only amount of information as a recruitment source characteristic generated applicants of high quality. Nevertheless, the overall testing of the combined effect of source characteristics had a significant impact on the overall applicant quality (all characteristics taken together). This result shows that the individual effect of certain source characteristics is not strong, still, the combination of the amount of information displayed, as well as informativeness and specificity of a source seems to affect the overall quality of applicants in terms of P-O fit, P-J fit and occupational experience taken together. However, elaborating on the actual sources in use, it is to be highlighted that no significant relationship between recruitment source quality (i.e. amount of information, informativeness, specificity) and candidate quality (i.e. P-O fit, P-J fit, occupational experience) could be found. This means that the ultimate recruitment source in use seems not to affect the quality of job candidates at the case organization.

Still it can be stressed that the corporate website, scoring 4.1 (on a scale from 1-5) on average source quality, represents the recruitment source of highest quality in terms of amount of information, informativeness and specificity, followed closely by referrals (3.9). The applicants scoring highest on average applicant quality are generated by the job center (4.1) and the website (3.8). Although there is no significant relationship between both variables, the pure numbers might give insights into the sources which should be improved or adjusted to be more effective. Especially job portals and newspapers score relatively low with regard to recruitment source quality (3.6, 3.2), and thus, should be subject to potential changes. By looking only at amount of information as most important factor to attract qualified job candidates, the corporate website was also rated best, which can be explained by the fact that this recruitment source includes the most detailed information about the organization, compared to other sources which are restricted in the number of words by their nature as source (e.g. newspaper advertisements cost per word or line).

#### 10. CONCLUSION

This research hypothesized that applications of qualified job candidates may be the result of high quality recruitment sources in terms of the characteristics amount of information, informativeness and specificity – the better the source, the better the applicants. Thus, it was proposed that qualified applicants shall score high with regard to the person-job fit and the person-organization fit, and should as well have a high level of occupational experience. Applicants with a high person-job fit

would be able to fulfill job demands satisfactorily, and those with a high person-organization fit would additionally align with the organizational values and beliefs. Several months, or years, of occupational experience by a job candidate would as well be relevant to perform the job adequately. On the other hand, it was anticipated that qualified job candidates with the appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and values would apply via certain sources, which they gave them reliable information about vacancies, involving job requirements and demands to be fulfilled. It was hypothesized that high quality recruitment sources, offering a lot of information, as well as being informative and specific, would generate a large number of qualified job candidates. If recruitment sources presented all relevant information in an informative and specific manner, job seekers would better be able to assess whether their own qualifications fit to the job which is advertised via certain recruitment sources. For instance, uninformative or unspecific job openings, including only few information, may attract job seekers who do not fulfill the necessary requirements, just because they were not able to assess their own qualifications in relation to the requirements described.

Moreover, there is a relationship between the combined recruitment source characteristics and overall applicant qualifications, indicating that combined recruitment sources characteristics scoring high on average in fact generate qualified job applicants (considering all P-O fit, P-J fit and experience). This means, that there is evidence that high quality recruitment sources may overall be effective in generating qualified applicants, and that organizations should pay attention to the combined effect of the source characteristics amount of information, informativeness and specificity.

#### 10.1 Limitations

Despite its careful statistical testing, these findings are not without its limitations. Firstly, the sources which have been considered and evaluated are unevenly distributed over the sample. There have more applicants applied by using the corporate website than, for example, via the newspaper. Moreover, only applicants of the last two months have been sent the online questionnaire, representing about 250 potential responders, out of which 60 filled in the questionnaire. Only those, who indicated a valid E-Mail address received the questionnaire at all, excluding the applicants who did not indicate any E-Mail address. Thus, the sample, whose responses were considered for statistical testing, is not generalizable for the whole population. Besides this, the results account only for the case organization and are not applicable to other organizations whose applicant structure could differ from that of the case organization. As questionnaires were treated confidentially, no control variables such as age, gender, nationality or origin were considered.

Additionally, another limitation comes at the expense of the measurement of the variable occupational experience. Occupational experience was measured in months of experience and

accordingly rated from 1 to 5. However, most job openings did not clearly point out the degree of experience which was required to do the job. This would mean that a candidate with less than 1 year of occupational experience scored a 1, although it might be the case that the organization searching for applicants is not demanding candidates with much more experience. Low skilled workers, like for instance production workers, do not necessarily many years of experience to do their job properly. As the required amount of experience was usually not clearly indicated within the recruitment source, applicants' occupational experience was judged by the number of months, but not in relation to the work they would have to do. This way, applicants' qualifications could have been indicated worse than they would be if experience was considered in terms of individual positions.

Another noteworthy limitation is represented in the fact that various recruiters publish job openings via the recruitment sources in question. This means that recruitment sources do not only differ with regard to the amount of information, informativeness and specificity as result a result of the source itself, but also because different recruiters write different pieces of text for different vacancies. Looking at the 60 job openings for which the sample of applicants applied (while some were mentioned more than once), it became clear which recruiter wrote and published certain vacancies and accordingly, differences in formulations, length, details and with regard to different sectors, were identified. This leads to the limitation that recruitment source quality was judged on basis of the surveyed sample of 60 applicants, but distributed unevenly among recruiters. Certainly, clearer formatting, as well as adding standard phrases and "required" information may be helpful to standardize job advertisements published via various recruitment sources, taking source differences into consideration.

Furthermore, when taking a closer look at the results for informativeness and specificity of recruitment sources, it needs to be stressed that job applicants may not be in the position to assess these factors accurately, as they have not worked within the advertised position at the recruiting organization. Informativeness and specificity could potentially be more accurately assessed by employees working in a certain position, compared to applicants applying for that position. While applying, applicants could simply consider an advertisement as informative and specific due to its formulations, although they would find the job to be different while carrying it out, and rate the advertisement as more or less informative or specific than before. To overcome this limitation, further research may consider not apply applicants' ratings, but also survey employees who already work in the position in question for a longer time.

Similarly to the fact that job applicants may, based on a lack of experience, have difficulties to assess the degree of fit with a job and an organization, which leads to candidates with a low degree of fit applying, there may also be applicants who in fact determined a low degree of fit but applied nevertheless in order to prove their efforts to the job center. This could not be counted as a serious attempt to apply, however, these applicants are still within the applicant pool, although they have no motivation to work and are considered unqualified by the recruiters. Thus, the ratings of these applicants lead to a lower average of applicant quality.

#### **10.2** Theoretical and Practical Implications

Knowing about the effect of recruitment sources and their characteristics, current recruitment source may be adjusted to work more effectively, generating more qualified job applicants. For instance, the results of this research indicate that the amount of information presented within a recruitment source is of high importance. Meanwhile, the website scores highest with regard to its recruitment source quality, which may indicate that websites remain means to present rich information about not only the advertised jobs, but also the organization itself. Other recruitment sources lack a high amount of information about the organization, as they usually are limited in their amount of words or the design of the advertisement (e.g. as for newspapers and job portals). Referrals score second to highest with regard to recruitment source quality, probably also as applicants gather richer information about jobs and the organization, compared to printed advertisements or online ones.

Furthermore, this research stressed the limitation that different recruiters publish different information within job advertisements, implying that a uniform design and format of job advertisements would present always present the desired amount of information. As recruitment sources' amount of information has been shown to generate qualified applicants, a certain "minimum amount of information" may be helpful for writing job advertisements. Still, informativeness and specificity, which in this case were not shown to affect applicant quality, should be considered as prepositions for a qualitative job advertisement, as the combined recruitment source quality in fact affects the generation of qualified applicants.

As it was suggested to measure informativeness and specificity by surveying employees who currently perform a certain job, further research may consider differences in ratings of informativeness and specificity. Similarly, it would be of high interest to see whether the job candidates who have been rated as qualified, could prove in the position they applied for. This way, they could also be asked about differences in terms of what they expected they job to be and what they job was described like in the job advertisement.

#### 10.3 Recommendations

The research question, posed at the beginning of this paper, addresses which recruitment sources are effective to increase the amount of qualified external job candidates. Considering the results from the

statistical tests, effective recruitment sources are the ones which offer a wide range of information to the job seeker. Due to a large amount of information about the organization and the positions which are advertised, job seekers become capable of assessing to which extent they align with the values and beliefs of the organization (P-O fit), as well as the degree to which they fulfill the job demands of position (P-J fit).

Moreover, offering much information about the position may assist potential job candidates in assessing accurately how much occupational experience they should possess. For the case organization this implies that all their job postings should incorporate a sufficient amount of information on job-related and organization-related matters. Looking at the ratings of job postings and the advertisements itself, it was pointed out that some job advertisements on the corporate website were much shorter than some others. Considering such differences among one type of recruitment source, it becomes clear that there can be no significant relationship between the sources in use and the qualifications of applicants.

Therefore, it would be recommended that the recruitment agency stressed a standardization of the amount and type of information that should be published in job advertisements. Although informativeness and specificity of recruitment sources has not been shown to be significantly related to the generation of qualified applicants, these factors should still be considered as prepositions to the formulation of job advertisements. More informative and specific information further assist job seekers in assessing their qualifications in relation to the job demands. When standardizing job advertisements with regard to the amount of information, both informativeness and specificity should be evaluated as the research findings indicate that the combined effect of many informative and specific information has the highest effect on attracting qualified applicants.

Moreover, it was depicted that few applicants indicated to have applied via newspapers, and although Facebook was suggested as one type of recruitment source besides the others (newspapers, job portals, job center, referrals, website), no respondent indicated to have applied based on the Facebook ads. Firstly, these insights imply that the recruitment agency should think about the usefulness of newspapers, and especially of the efficiency related to the high price of newspaper ads. Secondly, the insights with regard to Facebook as a recruitment source make it questionable if putting effort into this social media platform is useful, as it seems to bring no return. On the other hand, it might be the case that applicants noticed the advertisements on Facebook, but still applied via the other means as there was no option on Facebook to apply directly. Respondents may then have indicated that source and not Facebook, making the results biased.

In general, it can be recommended to think about how applicants could be targeted more efficiently. This would not only mean to consider amount of information, informativeness and specificity of certain recruitment sources, but also to use individual sources to its full potential. For instance, they may be formal referral systems be introduced which give rewards to employees who refer distinctively qualified applicants to the organization. On Facebook, job seekers may be encouraged to message the recruitment agency to ask for details before applying with insufficient qualifications. The corporate website already offers a wide range of information about the organization to job seekers, thus may these advertisements be more focused on the job demands, while other recruitment sources should indeed present advertisements with information about the job and the organization. More clearly, the recruitment agency may not use the recruitment sources besides each other, but in alignment with each other.

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## 13. APPENDIX

## 13.1 Online Questionnaire (German)

Bewerberfr	ragebogen	
Sehr geehrte Bewerberin, seh	hr geehrter Bewerberl	
Stellenangebote gefunden ha	erlich zu verbessern, sind wir sehr daran interessiert, wie Sie unsere aben und wie Sie sich bei uns beworben haben! Leider gibt unser System wie Sie auf unser Unternehmen und unsere Stellenangebote aufmerksam	
unten stehenden Fragen auf I gewählte Medium ergänzen k häufigsten von Bewerbern ge Ihre Bewerbungsquelle ergän	lamen ist aus dem Grund wichtig, damit wir von Ihren Antworten zu den ihr Bewerberprofil in unserem System schließen können und das önnen. So wollen wir erfahren, welche Bewerbungsmedlen am nutzt werden. Nachdem wir in Ihrem Bewerberprofil in unserem System uzt haben, wird Ihr Fragebogen von unserem Server gelöscht. Alle tenschutz und beeinflussen Ihre Bewerbung nicht.	
Im Voraus vielen Dank für Ihr	re Mühel	
Ihr Team von Job find 4 you		
* Required		
Wie lautet Ihr Vor-	und Nachname?*	

Auf welches Stellenangebot haben Sie sich beworben?*
О П-Service Techniker/-in
O Bürokauffrau/-mann oder Steuerfachangestellte/r
O Büroassistent/-in
O Sachbearbeiter/-in Vertrieb / Vertriebsassistent/-in
O Industriekaufmann/-frau
O Industriemechaniker/-in
O Zerspanungsmechaniker/-in
O CNC-Fräser/-in
O Holztechniker/-in
O Metallbauer/-in Konstruktionstechnik
O Maschinen- und Anlagenführer/-in
O Mechatroniker/-in
O Lackierer/in - Spritzlackierung
O Produktionsmitarbeiter/-in im Nutzfahrzeugbau
O Logistikmitarbeiter/-in im Nutzfahrzeugbau
O Fachlagerist/-in
O Lager- und Transportmitarbeiter/-in
O Technischer Konfektionär/Schlosser
O Schweißfachingenieur/-in
O Schweißer/-in
O Staplerfahrer/-in

O Facebook
O Firmenhomepage (jobfind4you.de)
O Agentur für Arbeit
O Online Jobbörse (z.B. indeed.de, kimeta.de oder ähnliche)
O Empfehlung durch Freunde oder Bekannte
O Zeitung
Über welches Medium haben Sie sich bei uns beworben?*
O Firmenhomepage (jobfind4you.de)
O Agentur für Arbeit
O Online Jobbörse (z.B. <u>indeed.de</u> , <u>kimeta.de</u> oder ähnliche)
O Post
O E-Mail
O Persönlich
Wie bewerten Sie die Menge an Informationen, die Sie über dieses Medium erhalten haben? *
O absolut ausreichend
O ausreichend
O moderat
O nicht ausreichend
O überhaupt nicht ausreichend
Alassia informativa alban Cia diagga Madium ang *
Als wie informativ sehen Sie dieses Medium an?*
O sehr informativ
Oinformativ
O moderat
O wenig informativ
O gar nicht informativ
Als wie spezifisch sehen Sie die Informationen an, die Sie über dieses Medium über den Job und das Unternehmen erhalten haben? *
O sehr spezifisch
O spezifisch
O moderat
O wenig spezifisch
O gar nicht spezifisch
Inwieweit denken Sie, dass Sie Ihre Fähigkeiten zu der Stelle passen? $^{\star}$
O vollkommen
O größtenteils
O etwas
O kaum
O überhaupt nicht

Über welches Medium sind Sie auf das Stellenangebot aufmerksam geworden?  $\!\!\!\!\!\!\!^\star$ 

von Job find 4 you passen? *
O vollkommen
O größtenteils
O etwas
O kaum
O überhaupt nicht
Wieviel Berufserfahrung haben Sie, die für die Stelle relevant ist? *
ist? *
ist? * O < 12 Monate (weniger als ein Jahr)
ist? *  O < 12 Monate (weniger als ein Jahr)  O 12 - 18 Monate (ein bis anderthalb Jahre)

Inwieweit denken Sie, dass Ihre Werte und Normen zu denen

## 13.2 Job Openings

#### 13.2.1 Job Opening on Facebook



#### 13.2.2 *Job Opening in the Newspaper*



#### 13.2.3 Job Opening in a Job Portal





Für einen Kunden im RaumVreden suchen wir zum nächstmöglichen Termin eineh Montagemitarbeiter in der Fertigung von Kühlgeräten im Nutzfahrzeugbau (m/w)

#### Montagemitarbeiter im Nutzfahrzeugbau (m/w)

Ihre Chance: Wir finden den Traumjob für Sie! - Sprechen Sie mit uns - Wir freuen uns auf Ihre Bewerbung!

#### Ihre Herausforderung

- · Montagetätigkeiten in der Fertigung von Kühlgeräten im Nutzfahrzeugbau
- Schichtbereits drait
   ggf. Lesen von Zeichnungen
   Kenntnisse in der Logistik von Vorteil

#### Ihre Qualifikation

- Abgeschlossene Ausbildung als Anlagenmechaniker m/w, Kfz-Mechatroniker m/w oder eine vergleichbare Qualifikation
   gute elektrische Vorkenntnisse wünschenswert.
- · oder gute Lötkenntnisse
- Zuverlässigkeit

#### Ihre Vorteile

- Option auf eine Festanstellung
   Langfristige, sichere und qualifiziertere Arbeitsplätze
   Eine übertanflich faire Bezahlung
   Urlaubs- sowie Weinhanchtsgeld
   Kamiere- und Weiterbildungsmöglichkeiten
   Erhöhung der Urlaubstage nach Betriebszugehörigkeit

Wir bieten erstklassige Jobs für Ihre Karriere mit persönlicher Betreuung. Als inhabergeführtes mittelständiges Unternehmen sind wir seit 2003 erfolgreich am Markt. Wir legen großen Wert auf eine zukunftsorientierte Zusammens

besonders schnell erreicht? Dann bewerben Sie sich online auf

Bewerbungsunterlagen per Email oder

Bitte bedenken Sie, dass bei der Einsendung von schriftlichen Bewerbungsunterlagen diese nicht an Sie zurückgesendet werden.





#### 13.2.4 Job Opening via the Job Center

## Stellenangebot - Produktionsmitarbeiter (m/w) im Nutzfahrzeugbau (Kraftfahrzeugmechatroniker/in - Nutzfahrzeugtechnik)



#### 13.2.5 Job Opening on the Corporate Website

Montagemitarbeiter im Nutzfahrzeugbau (m/w) (STELLEN-NR.: 2551705)



Ihre Chance: Wir finden den Traumjob für Sie! - Sprechen Sie mit uns - Wir freuen uns auf Ihre Bewerbung!

#### Ihre Aufgaben

- Montagetätigkeiten in der Fertigung von Kühlgeräten im Nutzfahrzeugbau
- Schichtbereitschaft
- ggf. Lesen von Zeichnungen
- · Kenntnisse in der Logistik von Vorteil

#### Ihr Profil

- Abgeschlossene Ausbildung als Anlagenmechaniker m/w, Kfz-Mechatroniker m/w oder eine vergleichbare Qualifikation
- gute elektrische Vorkenntnisse wünschenswert
- · oder gute Lötkenntnisse
- Teamfähigkeit
- · Zuverlässigkeit

#### Ihre Vorteile

- · Option auf eine Festanstellung
- · Langfristige, sichere und qualifiziertere Arbeitsplätze
- Eine übertariflich faire Bezahlung
- Urlaubs- sowie Weihnachtsgeld
- · Karriere- und Weiterbildungsmöglichkeiten
- Erhöhung der Urlaubstage nach Betriebszugehörigkeit

