Comparing the Relative Effectiveness of Campus Recruitment Practices

THESIS

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Abstract

In this paper, the author draws on recruitment and communication theory to compare the relative effectiveness of different types of campus recruitment practices on their ability to increase potential student applicants' level of familiarity with employers. Based on results from multiple regression analysis with data from 180 recruiting companies and 81 Master's students, the author's findings suggest that actively-engaging campus recruitment practices are associated with higher level of employer familiarity than passively-waiting practices. In addition, implicit practices and information-scarce practices are found to be associated with higher level of employer familiarity than explicit practices and information-rich practices, respectively.
Acknowledgments

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Labor and Human Resources
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Introduction

Among all recruitment methods, campus recruitment (or college recruitment) is the most commonly used recruitment method through which firms fill professional, technical and managerial trainee positions (Breaugh, 1992). As high as approximately 40% of new hires and 50% of all managers and professionals with less than three years’ experience are recruited through campus recruitment (Rynes, Orlizky & Bretz, 1997; Lindquist & Endicott, 1986). Like that of other types of recruitment methods, the primary goal of campus recruitment is to identify and attract potential employees (Barber, 1998). To do so, firms conduct campus recruitment practices (hereafter referred as CRPs) which are specific tasks, procedures, and actions taken by organizations (Barber, 1998) in order to recruit college students.

The primary goal of CRPs is to attract potential applicants. Generally, prior research has supported that attraction is positively related to familiarity. Marketing research suggests that "mere exposure" can lead to increased consumer attraction toward a company (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Recruitment research also suggests that job seekers tend to be attracted more by relatively familiar firms than by unfamiliar firms (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993; Turban & Greening, 1997; Turban, 2001; Brooks, Highhouse, Russell, Mohr, 2003). Further, college students rely more on familiarity to determine corporate image (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990) and a better organizational image.
tends to result in higher applicant attraction (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Cable & Turban, 2003). This implies that CRPs function as a primary vehicle for firms to increase student attraction by making the organization and its opportunities more visible to students (Breaugh, 1992).

CRPs require resources and can be very expensive (Breaugh, 1992). The adoption of CRPs as part of a campus recruitment strategy should be informed based on the relative effectiveness of those practices. However, recruitment research has yet to compare practices with respect to their relative effectiveness. Some CRPs may be more effective at generating student familiarity such that these practices offer more value to a company given the resources required. This void in the literature may be due, in part, to the fact that there have been only a few prior studies on CRPs that offer a means of differentiating among recruitment practices in a meaningful way (e.g., Collins & Han, 2004; Collins, 2007; Cable & Yu, 2006). Because the list of possible CRPs is infinite, conclusions with respect to which practices are likely to be more effective must be offered at a level beyond the specific practice itself.

Prior work indicates that the amount of information that a practice contains (e.g., Collins & Han, 2004; Collins, 2007) and the richness and the credibility of a recruitment practice (Cable & Yu, 2006) may serve as meaningful dimensions for differentiating among practices when considering their capacity to generate applicant attraction. The present study builds on this work by differentiating CRPs on the basis of three dimensions (Actively-engaging vs. Passively-waiting, Explicit vs. Implicit, and Information-rich vs. Information-scarce) for the purpose of understanding their
comparative effectiveness at generating student applicant familiarity. More specifically, we expect that CRPs that are actively-engaging, explicit, and information-rich will be associated with higher levels of employer familiarity compared to CRPs that are passively-waiting, implicit, and information-scarce.

Theory and Hypotheses

To attract student applicants, companies engage in a variety of practices, such as setting up table at campus career fair, holding information session to introduce the organization and/or to communicate job openings and other opportunities, and donating money in exchange for naming right on building, classroom, or facilities. Research has considered how the practices can influence student applicant attitudes and behavior during the recruitment process. Collins and Han (2004) found that low-involvement practices, activities that require little processing effort on the part of potential applicants and have relatively less information (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989), such as a general recruitment advertisement which conveys positive cues to potential applicants through pictures or logos or donating money for naming rights to associate positive organizational attributes with a sponsoring relationship, are more suitable for companies that have a relatively low level of advertising and reputation. High-involvement practices, activities that provide information on job attributes or organization and normally require more processing effort (Aaker, 1996; MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989), such as giving out detailed brochures to communicate job openings and conducting campus presentations on job opportunities, are more effective in increasing the quantity and quality of applicant pools for a company when the company has relatively higher level of advertising and
reputation. Other research by Cable and Yu (2006), after investigating three types of recruitment media (career fairs, electronic bulletin boards and corporate websites), found that media richness (the ability of an information source to communicate ambiguous information to receivers) and media credibility (the perceived trustworthiness and accuracy of an information source on transferring information) perceptions were associated with the correspondence between job seekers’ image beliefs and firms’ projected image. Their results suggested that CRPs that are high in media richness and credibility, such as career fairs, tend to be more effective in transferring the projected image to potential applicants. Other studies looked at campus recruitment practices as a “whole” and investigated their relationship with applicant attraction and selection (Slaughter et al., 2005; Turban, 2001). Recent research by Saks and Uggerslev (2010) found that providing prompt communication and having a personable and informative recruiter at campus career fairs improved applicant reactions. They also found that “bundles” of CRPs carried out in different stages tended to be more effective than single recruitment activities.

Previous studies on CRPs have provided evidence that such practices can influence applicant attitudes and behavior through two ways: by affecting the perception of job and/or organizational attributes and by increasing the level of students’ familiarity with the organization (Turban, 2001). The current study focuses on the second way. Job seekers' employer familiarity is determined by job seekers’ employer knowledge, defined by Cable and Turban (2001) as the memory and associations that one has with an organization. In their study, three broad dimensions of employer knowledge were
introduced: the awareness that job seekers have of an organization, the content of beliefs toward that organization and the public evaluations of that organization (Lievens, Van Hoye, & Schreurs, 2005; Cable & Turban, 2001). In this way, familiarity is multifaceted comprised of information and awareness of an organization across multiple aspects. Students' employer familiarity, then, is likely dependent on acquiring knowledge and awareness regarding 1) the company's existence and presence on their college campus, 2) the company’s businesses, 3) the company’s employment conditions, and 4) the company’s culture and values. These four aspects cover the main areas of knowledge that a student gains from recruiting experiences about an organization before making a decision to apply. These elements combine to influence the extent to which a student feels familiar with a given organization. Generally, the level of familiarity is found to be moderately associated with applicant attraction in a positive way (Cable & Graham, 2000; Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993; Turban, 2001; Turban & Greening, 1997). However, we have almost no knowledge regarding which types of CRPs are more effective in increasing students' employer familiarity. Given the importance and high cost of campus recruitment, research is needed to examine the relative effectiveness of different CRPs in this regard.

To better understand which types of CRPs are most effective, we need to investigate the factors that differentiate these activities based on their ability to affect employer familiarity. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) provides a basis for CRP differentiation. ELM states that one's new belief or attitude is developed through either a central processing route which leads to the formation of an enduring and resistant attitude
or a peripheral processing route which leads to the formation of a temporary and susceptible attitude. The choice of processing route mainly depends on one's motivation including personal relevance, need for cognition, and personal responsibility, and their ability including concentration, repetition, prior knowledge, and message comprehensibility (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Based on previous research on campus recruitment and the ELM, we argue that CRPs can be sorted on the basis of three dimensions for the purpose of trying to find the underlying factors that differentiate the capability of each recruitment practice to induce student familiarity with recruiting organizations.

**Passively-waiting (PW) versus Actively-engaging (AE)**

Passively-waiting practices rely on student applicants to initiate and pursue the recruiting relationship by merely inviting the applicants to recruiting opportunities. These practices tend to engage only students who are already somewhat interested in the firm. For example, setting up a table at a university job fair is a passively-waiting practice because after students are invited only those who are interested in the firm may approach the organization to exchange information with company representatives. Students who have no knowledge or no interest in the organization are less likely to exchange information with the representatives through this type of practice. Actively-engaging practices refer to practices that attempt to engage or connect with students regardless of their initial interest in the firm. These practices present job and company information with the intent of engaging both students who have an interest in the organization and students who do not. For example, when firms send recruiting e-mails to all potential
applicants that they can reach the intent is to translate a lack of familiarity into having a sense of familiarity with the organization. Similarly, when a company sends a guest speaker to a class to participate it is actively-engaging with student applicants. Regardless of their initial interest, all of the students in the room are exposed to the organization and privy to information exchanged. Different from passively-waiting practices, actively-engaging practices present company and job information to students in a way that acknowledging such information is somewhat unavoidable.

Actively-engaging practices should be more effective at generating familiarity in student applicants than passively-waiting practices because they force applicants to engage with the information presented whereas passively-waiting practices rely on the applicant himself to seek information and attend communication opportunities. As a result, actively-engaging practices should reach more students including those who are completely unfamiliar with the organization, thus expanding the number of students who are knowledgeable of the firm. Additionally, when the organization aggressively broadcasts and markets opportunities it also induces a sense of personal relevance to students, because they now know that the organization is interested in building a relationship with them. This personal relevance, according to ELM, can trigger central route processing which will help build a long-lasting sense of employer familiarity.

Above all, we predict:

Hypothesis 1: Actively-engaging practices will be associated with higher levels of employer familiarity relative to passively-waiting practices.

Explicit (EX) versus Implicit (IM)
Explicit practices are ones in which a company’s intent to recruit new employees is explicitly expressed. The focus on hiring within the practice is highly salient with the organization advertising an interest in hiring and the practice providing a means to engage in an active dialogue about job opportunities. For example, an information session on a firm’s job openings is an explicit practice. Implicit practices are activities wherein the intent of recruiting is subtle and likely never stated. For example, serving as the target organization for a case competition is an implicit practice. Organizations agree to this experience because it offers an opportunity to connect with current students in a meaningful and engaged manner. Organizations have the opportunity to learn about student capabilities while showcasing organization features, however hiring is typically not discussed as a formal part of the event. Instead, it is hoped that the practice leads to a dialogue about job opportunities in the future.

According to ELM, explicit practices should be more effective because they present information that is more personally relevant to college students who are generally seeking employment. This triggers central route processing which increases familiarity and forms a more stable belief. In contrast, implicit practices present information that is perceived as less personally relevant. This speculation is also supported by Celani and Singh (2009). They indicated that applicants who see potential future membership in an organization will pay closer attention to the information that organization presents or signals. Above all, we predict:

Hypothesis 2: Explicit practices will be associated with higher levels of employer familiarity relative to implicit practices.
Information-rich (IR) versus information-scarce (IS)

Information-rich practices are CRPs that contain a relatively larger amount of information about jobs or a company. For example, an information session is information-rich because it presents much more information to students than a general advertisement. Information-scarce practices contain less information mostly just the name or a statement about a company’s image and reputation. Companies use this type of practice in the hope that students will process a few pieces of positive information with less effort and in a subconscious way (Collins & Han, 2004). For example, naming a classroom communicates only the company’s name and donation to students, and is considered an information-scarce practice.

Prior research has suggested that to distinguish CRPs on the amount of information that they contain is meaningful. As discussed early in this paper, high- versus low-involvement CRPs affect the quality of the applicant pool as moderated by company reputation and advertising investment (Collins & Han, 2004). Collins (2007) similarly proved that moderated by product awareness, high- and low-information recruitment practices (earlier termed high- and low-involvement practices) influence application intentions and decisions through familiarity, employer reputation, and job information. However, neither of the two pieces of research examined the main effect of this dimension. In other words, they did not investigate whether more information is better that less information or the other way around.

ELM indicates that CRPs which contain more information should increase familiarity relative to those which contain less. First, providing more information to
students through a CRP increases the possibility of inducing a sense of personal relevance which can trigger central route processing. Students possess different personal experience; one piece of information that is regarded as personally relevant to one student might not be considered as relevant by another. Thus, information-rich CRPs are more likely to contain information that is personally relevant to a student. Second, information-rich practices have a higher possibility of presenting messages that are easier to understand by students. Such practices offer idea repetition that should increase message comprehensibility, which can also trigger central route processing. Because the purpose of CRPs is to attract potential student applicants to apply for an organization, they usually communicate only a few topics such as the background of the organization, its business, its job opportunities, and its organizational values. As more information is presented, certain topics should repeat helping to form a more stable base of knowledge about the employer. In addition, in order to present relatively large amounts of information to students, companies tend to use various language forms and/or different types of media. This can also increase message comprehensibility which should trigger central route processing. Above all, we predict that:

Hypothesis 3: Information-rich practices will be associated with higher levels of employer familiarity relative to information-scarce practices.
Method

Sample and Procedure

This study was conducted at a major northwestern university using data gathered from two sources: (a) firms that recruit on campus through CRPs and (b) students who are exposed to those firms’ CRPs. Data on firm CRPs constituted the independent variables; data from students exposed to those CRPs constituted the dependent variable.

Dependent Variable. To constitute the dependent variable, the literature on campus recruitment practices (Collins & Han, 2004; Rynes & Boudreau, 1986; Turban, 2001; Turban, Campion & Eyring, 1995; Collins, 2007) was examined to cull together a list of the various CRPs used by firms. Next, representatives from the Office of Career Management on campus were asked to identify from the list those CRPs that firms currently use when recruiting students on this campus. This produced a final list of 14 CRPs as shown in Table 1, and linked the various CRPs to 180 firms. The recruitment practice profiles for the 180 firms were highly redundant with many firms adopting the same set of CRPs on campus. More specifically, the 180 firms displayed only 39 different CRP profiles. Thus, for organizations that used the same combination of CRPs, one firm was randomly selected to represent that pattern in order to maximize the variance among firms with respect to CRPs. This process produced a final sample of 40 firms currently recruiting on campus.
Table 1. List of campus recruitment practices and their ratings on each dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRPs</th>
<th>Explicit vs. Implicit</th>
<th>Active vs. Passive</th>
<th>Information-rich vs. Information-scarce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Place advertisements in student news media such as newspapers, magazines, and bulletin boards to communicate who they are as an employer and their talent philosophy.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Invite students by email via Office of Career Management to apply online for the job opportunities described in the message.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fund scholarships for students.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Contribute money in exchange for naming rights on capital investments such as classrooms and sport venues.</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Set table at the campus career fair to communicate information about job openings.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hold an information session during which a recruiter communicates information about job openings and opportunities in the company.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Provide informal receptions or lunches for current employees to share their experiences with students on campus.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Send company representative to serve as a guest speaker for a student-education event on campus.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Provide the content and judges for a live student-team case-competition.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Visit classes as guest speakers to discuss course material with students.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Provide mentors for current students.</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Invite students to visit the company for a speaker or special event.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Offer internships for students.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Post a job opportunity on Fisher Connect.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* All numbers are rounded values from original ratings by SMEs (44 undergraduate students).
The final step measured the level of student familiarity with these 40 firms. Eighty-one Master’s students completed an online survey for course credit which assessed their level of familiarity with the 40 organizations. In order to obtain data at the firm level, student responses were averaged across students within firms. Seventy-four percent of the students were female, 66.7% were White, 24.7% were Asian, 7.4% were African American, and 1.2% were Hispanic. The average age was 26 years and the average work experience was 3.2 years.

Independent Variables. To constitute the independent variables, each CRP used by the 40 firms to recruit students on campus had to be scored with respect to the three dimensions. To do so, a sample of subject matter experts (SMEs) were given a description of each dimension and the 14 CRPs and asked to position the CRP on a 5-point continuum ranging from -2 (Passively-waiting, Implicit, or Information-scarce) to 2 (Actively-engaging, Explicit, or Information-rich). SME raters were undergraduate students majoring in human resource management who are knowledgeable of firm recruiting techniques. Rating averages were used to score each CRP on the basis of each of the three dimensions. As displayed in Table 1, CRPs rated as more actively-engaging, explicit, or information-rich received a score of 2 or 1. CRPs rated as more passively-waiting, implicit, or information-scarce received a score of -2 or -1. CRPs rated as occupying the midpoint of the continuum received a score of 0.

Because the unit of analysis is the organization, these CRPs scores were then used to score each of the 40 firms on the basis of the three dimensions. On one dimension, for example, explicit vs. implicit, a firm received 2 scores; one was the additive composite of
scores of explicit CRPs that the firm had used, describing how explicit its recruiting strategy was, and the other was the additive composite of scores of implicit CRPs that the firm had conducted, describing how implicit its strategy was. Thus, each firm received a total of 6 scores, on which employer familiarity was later regressed.

Measures

Employer Familiarity. Consistent with prior literature (Yoo et al., 2000; Collins, 2007), employer familiarity was measured using a 5-item scale that assessed the extent of familiarity with an organization and its job opportunities, industry, products and/or services, employment package, and culture and values. A sample item from this scale is, “I am aware that this organization hires students from my school.” Respondents rated each item using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Disagree) to 5 (Agree). Scale scores were obtained by calculating an additive composite of responses to the items. Hence, respondents who indicated that they were not at all familiar with an organization recorded a composite scale score of 5.0. Coefficient alpha indicated an acceptable level of scale internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$).

Prior Familiarity. Prior familiarity was controlled in this study and was operationalized as student participants' level of familiarity with a given firm prior to exposure to any of the CRPs studied within this research. This study is interested in the increment of employer familiarity resulting from the use of CRPs, therefore prior familiarity was controlled in order to remove the effect of any knowledge that students had about the 40 firms before arriving on campus. Students’ prior familiarity with the 40 firms was measured using a single item adapted from Turban (2001), “How familiar were
you with this organization before starting graduate school here?” Respondents rated this item using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Not at all familiar) to 5 (Very familiar).
Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the studied variables are presented in Table 2. Several values are of particular interest. First, the mean values of actively-engaging, explicit, and information-rich were much higher than those of passively-waiting, implicit, and information-scarce, respectively. This indicates that generally companies are more likely to conduct CRPs that are actively-engaging, explicit, or information-rich than to conduct CRPs that are on the other end of these dimensions. Second, the correlation between overall familiarity and prior familiarity was large and significant, supporting the decision to control for prior familiarity in the analyses.

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Prior familiarity and company scores on the CRP dimensions were entered into the equation to predict overall familiarity and the specific, item-level aspects that constitute overall familiarity. Even though the correlations between overall familiarity and each of the five item level familiarity measures were large and significant, each item level familiarity measure was regressed on each dimension to investigate whether certain dimensions were predictive of specific aspects of familiarity. According to the discussion on employer familiarity earlier, the various aspects that constituted the item-level familiarity measures are theoretically exclusive to each other. For example, being aware of a company's presence on campus does not mean that the student knows the employment package that this
Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between all studied variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Active</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Passive</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explicit</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.93**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Implicit</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Information-rich</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.92**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Information-scarce</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.90**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.94**</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Prior familiarity</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Employment opportunity familiarity</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.73**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Industry familiarity</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.94**</td>
<td>.84**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Product/service familiarity</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.93**</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.99**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Employment package familiarity</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.82**</td>
<td>.93**</td>
<td>.88**</td>
<td>.89**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Culture and value familiarity</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.84**</td>
<td>.91**</td>
<td>.90**</td>
<td>.90**</td>
<td>.96**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Overall familiarity</td>
<td>13.24</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.89**</td>
<td>.94**</td>
<td>.96**</td>
<td>.97**</td>
<td>.96**</td>
<td>.96**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* n =40 for all variables. *p < .05. **p < .01. All significance tests are two-tailed.
company generally offers. As a result, CRPs that are effective at increasing the awareness of an organization may not be effective at increasing familiarity on employment package. Since each of the five item level familiarity measures captures a different aspect of employer familiarity, their relationships with the use of CRPs should be examined separately in addition to the composite measure, overall familiarity.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that CRPs that were actively-engaging would be more effective in terms of increasing familiarity than passively-waiting practices. As shown in Table 3, actively-engaging was significantly related to overall familiarity, employment opportunity familiarity, product and/or service familiarity, and industry familiarity but not related to employment package familiarity and culture and value familiarity, whereas passively-waiting was not significantly related to any familiarity items. Such results support Hypothesis 1.

Table 3. Regression results predicting employer familiarity (dimension 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Overall familiarity</th>
<th>Employment opportunity familiarity</th>
<th>Product/service familiarity</th>
<th>Industry familiarity</th>
<th>Employment package familiarity</th>
<th>Culture and value familiarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior familiarity</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>.91**</td>
<td>.92**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.79**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively-engaging</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passively-waiting</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-square</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = 40.  * p < .05.  ** p < .01. All significance tests are two-tailed. Coefficients reported are standardized Beta coefficient.
Hypothesis 2 proposed that explicit CRPs would be more effective in terms of increasing employer familiarity than implicit practices. As shown in Table 4, we found that explicit practices were significantly related to only product and/or service familiarity whereas implicit practices had significant relationships with overall familiarity and all other item level familiarity measures. These results suggested that implicit CRPs were more effective compared to explicit practices. Such findings were opposite of Hypothesis 2.

Table 4. Regression results predicting employer familiarity (dimension 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Overall familiarity</th>
<th>Employment opportunity familiarity</th>
<th>Product/service familiarity</th>
<th>Industry familiarity</th>
<th>Employment package familiarity</th>
<th>Culture and value familiarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior familiarity</td>
<td>.81**</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>.88**</td>
<td>.89**</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.74**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-square</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* n =40.  *p < .05.  **p < .01. All significance tests are two-tailed. Coefficients reported are standardized Beta coefficient.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that CRPs that were information-rich would be more effective in terms of increasing employer familiarity than practices that were information-scarce. As shown in Table 5, we found that information-rich practices were significantly related to only product and/or service familiarity, whereas information-scarce practices
were significantly related to overall familiarity and all item level familiarity measures. These results showed that information-scarce CRPs were more effective compared to information-rich practices, which failed to support Hypothesis 3.

Table 5. Regression results predicting employer familiarity (dimension 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Overall familiarity</th>
<th>Employment opportunity familiarity</th>
<th>Product/service familiarity</th>
<th>Industry familiarity</th>
<th>Employment package familiarity</th>
<th>Culture and value familiarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior familiarity</td>
<td>.83**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.89**</td>
<td>.90**</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>.76**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information-rich</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information-scarce</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-square</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = 40.  *p < .05.  **p < .01. All significance tests are two-tailed. Coefficients reported are standardized Beta coefficient.
Discussion

Previous literature has noted that employer familiarity can lead to applicant attraction. However, the extent to which different types of CRPs affect employer familiarity and their relative effectiveness in doing so were never examined. Turban (2001) recommended that research should continue to investigate which type of CRP has the greatest utility in influencing applicant attraction. This study created three new dimensions (actively-engaging vs. passively-waiting, explicit vs. implicit, and information-rich vs. information-scarce) to meaningfully differentiate CRPs on their ability to increase employer familiarity which is positively related to applicant attraction (Turban & Greening, 1997; Brooks et al., 2003).

Actively-engaging practices were found to be more effective in raising student familiarity with employment opportunities, products and/or services, and industry, whereas passively-waiting practices were not significantly related to any of the employer familiarity measures. This suggests that when potential student applicants are engaged in a conversation with an employer regardless of their interest in the firm, they are more likely to develop an awareness of the firm's job opportunities, business, and industry than when they are merely invited to such an opportunity. Unlike passively-waiting CRPs, actively-engaging practices are designed to reach potential applicants who may not be interested in learning more about the firm thus creating an opportunity for
communicating company information, which leads to increased overall familiarity. A practical implication of this result is that firms should consider conducting actively-engaging practices, such as sending guest speakers to classroom or serving as examples for case competition events in order to increase the level of familiarity that students have with the company.

The results for Hypotheses 2 and 3 were counter to expectations. With respect to explicit and implicit practices, CRPs that hid their purpose for recruiting were more effective in increasing employer familiarity than CRPs that explicitly stated the intent to recruit. This may be due to the fact that although implicit CRPs do not offer much job related information, such practices can offer personally relevant information. For example, a case competition provides education relevant information which may also trigger central route processing that can subsequently lead to increased familiarity. Further, it may be the case that any exposure at all, regardless of its nature, may increase familiarity even if a practice never explicitly states its recruiting purpose. Regarding information-rich and information-scarce practices, CRPs that were information-scarce were associated with higher levels of familiarity than information-rich practices. One of the reasons for this result is that inducing a feeling of familiarity with a company might not require much information.

Upon further reflection, company characteristics may have played a greater role in the observed results than initially anticipated. If organizations that are large and financially strong are more likely to conduct implicit and/or information-scarce CRPs because they are more likely to have the capability to do so and the patience to win
recruiting outcomes in the long run, then it is not the nature of the practice that drives familiarity, but rather firm characteristics closely associated with the choice to adopt these types of practices. Although a company's prior familiarity was controlled in the analysis, these other factors such as size of an organization, reputation, and financial strength were not explicitly controlled for. These elements could affect student decisions to attend a CRP and how they process information presented during a CRP. The formation of students' familiarity with an organization is complex. Future research should build a more complex model when examining the effect of certain types of CRPs.

Surprisingly, the regression models tested explained an unusually large percentage of employer familiarity as shown in Table 3 to 5. This is mainly because the model included prior familiarity, a variable very similar to overall familiarity but reflecting the level familiarity due to prior exposure. Compared to CRPs as a whole, prior familiarity had a much greater effect on employer familiarity. This implies that CRPs are generally not very effective in making potential student applicants more familiar with a firm. This could be due to the fact that the respondents were graduate students who likely possess more years of work experience and thus have greater knowledge about firms prior to coming to graduate school. Future research should examine whether CRPs as a whole have similar lack of effectiveness in increasing employer familiarity in undergraduate students.

It is important to note several limitations of this study. First, the nature of the SMEs chosen to rate the CRPs on the basis of the dimensions may have affected the results. The undergraduate students were knowledgeable of human resources and campus
recruiting practices. However, counter-intuitive ratings were observed, especially around the ratings for CRPs on the dimension of information-rich vs. information-scarce. For example, it was expected that an in-class speaker event should be perceived as containing large amount information about a company, but it was rated very low on that dimension (see Table 1). It might be that although both graduate and undergraduate students are exposed to the same CRPs, some CRPs, such as the case competition, might be carried out differently between the two student levels. Another explanation could be that the SMEs may have experienced some level of rater fatigue when rating CRPs on the dimensions. This could account for the counter-intuitive findings discovered for Hypothesis 3. Future research should draw SMEs who match the sample of students who provide the familiarity ratings.

Second, the measure of prior employer familiarity, a single item measure which asked participants to self-report their employer familiarity prior to coming to graduate school, might be problematic. The measure required participants to accurately recall their initial level of familiarity anywhere from 6 months to 2 years after arriving on campus. Thus, prior employer familiarity likely existed in participants' minds intermingled with current employer familiarity making it extremely difficult for participants to accurately self-report. This measurement bias may explain the unusually high R-square values observed for the regression models. Future research should adopt a longitudinal design that measures prior familiarity both when students arrive on campus and then later after students have been exposed to the various CRPs.
Finally, because the study was conducted in the business school within a single university and the level of employer familiarity of each firm was accessed by graduate students mostly majoring in human resource management, it is possible that the results of this study may not generalize to campus recruitment in other universities. The mean values of CRPs dimensions indicated range restriction on the independent variables. Some types of CRPs that exist in theory or were identified in other studies were not used by firms on this campus or had very few occurrences across the studied firms. This limited our ability to uncover additional meaningful relationships. Future research should examine the dimensions of CRPs within multiple universities and colleges, with a larger respondent sample size, and with a larger company sample size.
References


Collins, C. J., & Stevens, C. K. (2002). The relationship between early recruitment-related activities and the application decisions of new labor-market entrants: A


