

The Importance of Applicant Perceptions When Recruiting Employees to Teams

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Abstract

This study examined the recruitment of employees to work in teams through an investigation into the impact of perceptions of teams on pre-hire recruitment variables in team and individual positions. A repeated measures design with a sample of 123 college students produced evidence to support the idea that perceptions of teams do influence pre-hire recruitment variables. This study provides evidence for the effect of recruitment information concerning job requirements, such as the high interdependence required for team jobs, and previous experiences with teams on applicant perceptions and behaviors. Though studies have looked at perceptions of teams and recruitment individually, none have combined the two areas to investigate the effect of perceptions on traditional pre-hire recruitment variables.

Key Words: recruitment; teams; applicant perceptions; perceptions of teams; pre-hire variables

Introduction

Teams are central to contemporary organizations (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Piña, Martinez, & Martinez, 2008). In fact, some estimates suggest that more than 80% of organizations use teams in some way (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Leach, Wall, Rogelberg, & Jackson, 2005; Sundstrom, 1999). Although there are certainly more conservative estimates (e.g., 50% according to Devine, Clayton, Phillips, Dunford, & Melner, 1999), modern organizations undeniably place considerable emphasis on teams. This reliance on teams has largely contributed to improved organizational performance, specifically in efficiency and quality (Applebaum & Blatt, 1994; Banker, Field, Schroeder, & Sinha, 1996), and increased employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Cordery, Mueller, & Smith, 1991; Goodman, Devadas, & Hughson, 1988; Stewart & Barrick, 2000).

A great deal of previous team research has focused on topics such as team selection, composition, performance, processes, and outcomes (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008). Though these topics are of obvious importance, researchers have generally neglected events that occur prior to the selection phase of the team creation process (i.e., recruitment of individuals into teams). This is unfortunate insofar as the interdependent nature of teams and the unique characteristics necessary for individuals to be effective team members potentially makes the recruitment of individuals to teams theoretically different than recruitment for non-team positions. For example, previous authors have suggested that team members require certain competencies that allow them to perform interdependent tasks well in order to complete team goals (Hertel, Konradt, & Voss, 2006; Stevens & Campion, 1994). These competencies would not necessarily be required, or expected, for individually oriented jobs.

Owing to the dearth of literature focused on recruiting team members (Mathieu et al., 2008), the purpose of the current study was to investigate how the recruitment of team members may differ from recruitment for individually oriented jobs. The primary hypotheses were built upon literature drawn from the study of teams and traditional recruitment. The following sections summarize and integrate the relevant aspects of these research bodies.

Teams

For purposes of the current study, a team was defined similar to Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) as:

“two or more individuals who socially interact; possess one or more common goals; are brought together to perform organizationally relevant tasks; exhibit interdependencies with respect to workflow, goals, and outcomes; have different roles and responsibilities; and are together embedded in an encompassing organizational system, (p. 79)”

As compared to individually oriented jobs, teams reflect an operationally different means for structuring work tasks. There are, however, some important similarities. For example, teams and individuals often operate under a similar process: receive inputs, process inputs, and produce outputs (Mathieu et al., 2008). Additionally, individual workers and teams represent a work unit that is part of a larger organizational entity made up of other teams and/or individuals who must work together in order to adapt to economic and competitive pressures (Katzenbach & Smith, 1992). In fact, in some cases the basic tasks required for performing a job (e.g., creating reports or manufacturing a specific product) may be the same for both individuals working alone and individual team members.

In spite of these similarities, however, teams do operate differently than individuals working alone in some important ways. Of particular interest, the differences that exist between individuals working alone and those working in teams are represented in the characteristics that are required for individuals to perform well as team members (i.e., accomplishing interrelated tasks or goals). Specifically, employees hired into individually oriented positions are generally expected to complete tasks associated with the job in relative isolation with outputs then being passed on to another unit (i.e., individual or team) within the organization. By contrast, team tasks require individuals to work together and combine inputs or ideas in order to complete a valued team level output. Consequently, the interdependence of members is a key element by which team positions are different from non-team positions (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). In order to complete tasks, team members must exhibit degrees of cooperation, social skills, and teamwork KSAs that, though helpful, are not essential to the completion of tasks for individually oriented positions (LePine, Hanson, Borman, & Motowidlo, 2000; Stevens & Campion, 1994). Therefore, because of the unique competencies required by team members, the selection of applicants for team positions should be based on the presence of teamwork competencies (Stevens & Campion, 1999). Of particular interest in the current study, the interdependent nature of teams may serve as a primary reason why individuals may be more attracted to, or prefer, one type of position to another. These perceptions of teams and their impact on applicant attraction to positions may be an influential factor in the recruitment process

Recruitment

According to Barber (1998), recruitment is broadly considered to be the activities carried out by an organization for the purposes of attracting potential employees. This process can involve recruiting current employees for new positions (internal recruitment) or recruiting individuals from outside the organization (external recruitment). Although both types of recruitment warrant attention, the focus of the current research was on external recruitment. Breaugh (2008) defined external recruitment as employer actions designed to: (a) bring a job opening to the attention of potential applicants not currently employed by the organization, (b) influence these individuals to apply for the position, (c) maintain applicant interest in the position, and (d) influence job offer acceptance. Presumably, internal applicants will have prior organizational knowledge and experiences that may influence their perceptions of team and non-team positions existing within their organizations (Moser, 2005). A focus on external applicants with no exposure to an organization, its policies, and specific job types (team and non-team) limits the impact of these prior influential factors and facilitates a greater potential impact from information provided during the recruitment process (Gatewood, Gowan, & Hoyer, 1993; Rynes, 1991).

Although many variables can potentially affect the recruitment process, the current study focused on five commonly considered in recruitment research: applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, person-job fit, acceptance intentions, and applicant perceptions of organizational honesty. These variables represent measures of pre-hire recruitment success and are precursors to overall recruitment success (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Furthermore, these variables capture critical aspects of the first attitudinal level of the previously mentioned four criteria (i.e., bringing a job opening to the attention of applicants) associated with external recruitment (Breaugh, 2008).

Applicant Attraction. For more than half a century, researchers have investigated the best ways to attract applicants to jobs (Barber, 1998, Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991). Applicant attraction to a job (and/or an organization) is based on objective information the applicant obtains from recruitment sources, as well as subjective perceptions and experiences (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007). Barber (1998) proposed that applicants determine their interest in job openings based on their preexisting knowledge of the organization and the information they gain about the job through recruitment sources. This information provides applicants with the knowledge necessary to determine whether or not they wish to continue to seek employment with a particular organization.

Job Pursuit Intentions. Although job pursuit intentions and applicant attraction have been viewed as somewhat interchangeable (Rynes, 1991), evidence for the uniqueness of these two constructs does exist (Aiman-Smith, Bauer, & Cable, 2001). Rynes (1991) suggested the similarities between job pursuit intentions and applicant attraction stem from a focus on the first phase of the recruitment process (i.e., generating applicants). During this phase, applicant attraction captures the affective reactions individuals have toward a given job. Beyond these affective reactions, job pursuit intentions have been defined as applicant intentions to initiate or continue to pursue a position (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001). These behaviors include intentions to submit an application, attend an interview, or a willingness to remain in the applicant pool (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005; Rynes, 1991). This conceptualization reflects the distinction that job pursuit intentions relate more to the second phase of recruitment (i.e., maintaining applicant interest). Job characteristics (e.g., type of work), organizational attributes (e.g., image and reputation), and perceptions of person-organization (P-O) fit have been shown to predict job pursuit intentions (Behrend, Baker, & Thompson, 2009; Chapman et al., 2005). In the context of recruitment for team positions, individuals who are more team-oriented should be more likely to pursue team positions than individuals who are less team-oriented.

Fit. Fit refers to the degree to which an individual is well matched to an organization or job (Cable & Judge, 1996; Resick, Baltes, & Shantz, 2007). Applicants use information provided during recruitment to assess potential fit and, subsequently, make job choice decisions (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Congruence between applicant and job characteristics is referred to as person-job (P-J) fit and is often divided into two dimensions: abilities-demand fit and needs-supplies fit (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). Abilities-demand fit refers to the congruence between the skills and abilities of the individual and the demands of the job (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). Individuals with the skills required to meet the demands of the job will more likely be attracted to, perform better, and remain on the job than those who lack key skills. Needs-supplies fit occurs when the needs of the individual are met by the job. Individual needs can include affiliation, autonomy, and financial security (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). In turn, a job can supply the individual with colleagues, flexible schedules, and reasonable compensation. Though conceptually distinct, these dimensions have often been combined into an overall perception of P-J fit (Cable & DeRue, 2002). Overall P-J fit has been positively related to performance and tenure (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), job satisfaction, and commitment (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Cable & DeRue, 2002; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In short, perceptions of P-J fit appear to play an influential role in applicant recruitment.

Perceptions of Organizational Honesty. Perceptions of organizational honesty represent the degree to which an applicant believes an organization is trustworthy (Earnest, Allen, & Landis, 2011; Phillips, 1998). Though a relatively new and understudied area of research, perceptions of organizational honesty have been identified as a possible mediator in the relation between realistic job previews (RJPs) and turnover (Earnest et al., 2011). Because RJPs present applicants with realistic (i.e., negative and positive) job information, applicants develop perceptions that the organization is honest and trustworthy (Phillips, 1998). Though weak, a relationship has also been observed between perceptions of honesty and acceptance intentions and attraction (Phillips, 1998; Saks & Cronshaw, 1990). Whether realistic or not, applicants derive perceptions based on the information they are provided. Logically, these perceptions should influence the effectiveness of the recruitment process for both team and individual jobs. In terms of applicant perceptions, by presenting information about the degree of teamwork required for the job organizations may influence applicant perceptions of the organization in a positive way. Though applicants may not accept the advertised job, these positive perceptions may lead to other positive outcomes such as increased customer loyalty, word of mouth, referrals, and interest in applying to different but future jobs in the organization.

Acceptance Intentions. Though attracting applicants is a necessary part of the recruitment process, it is meaningless if applicants attracted to the position fail to accept offers of employment.

Applicant acceptance is defined as the proportion of individuals presented with offers that accept offers of employment. Though acceptance might be identified as the ‘ultimate’ criterion in recruitment research, actual job choice data is not always available. As a result, applicants’ reported intentions to accept an offer of employment is often used (Chapman et al., 2005). Even though an applicant’s attraction to the position does not guarantee the applicant will accept a job offer, moderate positive relationships have been observed between job attractiveness and acceptance intentions (Chapman et al., 2005; Truxillo, Bauer, Campion, & Paronto, 2002).

Perceptions of Teams

Just as individuals develop perceptions about fit and honesty, they may also have pre-existing beliefs about job characteristics. One such characteristic is the extent to which a job requires substantial interdependence (i.e., working as part of a team). The current study defined perceptions of teams as an individual’s attitudes towards working with others in teams. Previous research has examined similar constructs including collective orientation (Triandis, 1995) and preference for teamwork (Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993; Kiffin-Peterson & Cordery, 2003). Not surprisingly, these preferences have been empirically linked to team performance (Bell, 2007).

Group or team projects have become commonplace in education systems around the world (Payne & Monk-Turner, 2006). As such, by the time an individual is ready to enter the workforce there is a very good chance he or she has already been exposed to some degree of group or teamwork experience. Although educationally based team projects may better prepare individuals for working in teams, these classroom experiences may also result in the development of negative preferences for working in teams (Hansen, 2006). In large, student surveys of group work perceptions are generally positive, though some students do indicate negative experiences and views related to group activities (Duin, 1990; Payne & Monk-Turner, 2006). These negative perceptions of teams are generally associated with occurrences of social loafing, lack of leadership, and lack of team development (Hansen, 2006). Because negative aspects of student teams may also be common in workplace teams, these early negative experiences with teams may discourage individuals from seeking jobs that require substantial interdependence.

Investigations of the impact of applicant perceptions support the argument that perceptions act as catalysts for generating recruitment outcomes (Schreurs, Derous, Proost, & De Witte, 2010). For example, perceptions of organization warmth (Schreurs et al., 2010), web site usability (Pfieffmann, Wagner, & Libkuman, 2010), corporate citizenship (Evans & Davis, 2011), and organization culture (Braddy, Meade, Michael, & Fleenor, 2009) have been identified as important factors in the recruitment process. Consistently in these studies, applicant perceptions influenced pre-hire recruitment outcomes such as attraction and fit. Specifically, Schreurs et al. (2010) observed that perceptions of warmth/respect affected the relation between applicant expectations and attraction and job pursuit intentions. Taken together, these studies suggest that applicant perceptions have the potential to influence the success of recruitment outcomes.

Given the importance of applicant perceptions in the recruitment process and previous research, we expected the following:

Hypotheses: The relation between job posting and (a) attraction, (b) job pursuit intentions, (c) P-J fit, (d) perceptions of organizational honesty, and (f) acceptance intentions will be moderated by perceptions of teams. Specifically, perceptions of teams will be positively related to each of the proposed criterion measures for team positions and unrelated to each of the proposed criterion measures for individual positions (i.e., an ordinal interaction).

Method

Participants and Design

Participants were 123 undergraduate students at a mid-sized, urban university in the mid-south region of the United States. Of these individuals, 29% had full-time jobs, and 64% reported part-time employment. Further, 74% of the sample had previously worked in teams in both classroom and work settings, and only 2% reported never having worked in a team in any context. This sample was predominantly female (76%) with a mean age of 20.44 years ($SD = 4.07$ years) and an approximately equal number of Caucasian/White (46%) and African American (43%) respondents.

A one-way (position type: individual or team position) within-subjects design was used in which all participants were exposed to conditions. A repeated measures design was chosen to mimic how applicants conducting job searches likely experience postings from various organizations and jobs.

Though real-world applicants may only be interested in a particular type of job (individual or team based) they may be exposed to a variety of job opportunities during their search. To reduce carryover effects, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two counterbalanced position types.

Stimuli and Measures

Recruitment Postings: Fictitious job postings were created for individual and team positions. Recruitment postings contained identical types of general information about a project consultant position (i.e. job title, job description, job requirements, recommended skills and KSAs, compensation) and associated organization with the exception of basic descriptive information (e.g., company name) and were created based on information presented in job postings on sites such as Wal-Mart.com and Monster.com. Two versions of the posting were created with one version containing a job posting for a position involving an individual working alone and the other version consisting of a position requiring team member interdependence. The focus of the job on either individual or collective team tasks was presented throughout the posting and included differences in completion of job tasks at various levels and performance appraisal.

After viewing each posting, participants responded to items designed to measure the perceptions of interest. These scales are described in the following paragraphs. Except where noted otherwise, items were measured on seven-point Likert-type scales with responses that ranged from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 7 “Strongly Agree.”

Perceptions of Teams: The measure of applicant perceptions of teams included fifteen items ($\alpha = .91$) adapted from measures presented by Kiffin-Petersen and Cordery (2003), Kirkman and Shapiro (2001), Campion et al. (1993), and Pineda, Barger, and Lerner (2009). These items included measures of preference of teamwork, resistance to teams, and perceptions of positive outcomes from teamwork. A sample item was “I generally prefer to work as part of a team.”

Attraction: Applicant attraction to the job was measured using five items developed by Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003), but altered to measure attractiveness to the job. A sample item was “I would not be interested in this job except as a last resort.” Coefficient alpha in the current study was .91 for individual and team positions.

Pursuit Intentions. Job pursuit intentions were measured using six items developed by Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996). A sample item was “I would request more information about this job.” Coefficient alpha in the current study was .95 and .96 for individual and team positions respectively.

Perceived Job Fit: Fit items included measures of person-job (P-J) fit. Perceived P-J fit was measured using a scale developed by Brkich, Jeffs, and Carless (2002). A sample item was “I feel that my goals and needs will be met in this job.” Coefficient alpha in the current study was .95 and .96 for individual and team positions respectively.

Perceptions of Honesty: Applicant perceptions of organizational honesty were measured using two items (Saks & Cronshaw, 1990). A sample item was “The organization was direct in dealing with me as a prospective employee.” The correlation between the two items was .75 and .77 for individual and team positions respectively.

Acceptance Intentions: Acceptance intentions were measured with modified versions of items used by Saks and Cronshaw (1990). One item (with anchors ranging from “Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely”) was “How likely are you to accept a job offer for this position?” and the other (response options “No” or “Yes”) was “Would you accept a job offer for this position?” Because of the nature of these items, responses were not collapsed into a single scale. Instead, each item was used as an independent indicator of the likelihood of accepting an offer.

Procedure

All data were collected online. Upon accessing the experimental website, participants viewed each job posting in random order, completing items associated with attraction, perceptions of organizational honesty, fit, job pursuit intentions, and acceptance intentions after each posting. Participants were also asked to rank job postings on attraction, fit, perceptions of honesty, and acceptance variables and complete a brief questionnaire that included the demographic items and the Perceptions of Teams scale.

Results

Means and standard deviations are provided for position type (team and individual positions) in Table 1. Omnibus MANCOVAs followed by univariate and simple main effect tests were used to test the hypotheses with specific interest on main effects of team perceptions and the interaction between team perceptions and type of position.

Multivariate tests (see Table 2) did not indicate a main effect for perceptions of teams, $p = ns$, but did indicate a main effect for position type, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .11$. An interaction effect was observed between position and perceptions of teams, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .12$.

Test of Primary Hypotheses

Our primary hypotheses were that the relation between perceptions of teams and applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, P-J fit, perceptions of organizational honesty, and acceptance intentions would be moderated by position type (team or individual position). Specifically, perceptions of teams were expected to be positively related to applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, P-J fit, perceptions of organizational honesty, and acceptance intentions in team positions and unrelated to pre-hire recruitment variables in individual positions. Results provided partial support for these predictions.

Results indicated significant interactions (see Table 3) between position type and perceptions of teams on applicant attraction ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .08$), job pursuit intentions ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .12$), P-J fit ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .09$), perceptions of honesty ($p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$), and acceptance intentions ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .09$). Additionally, significant main effects were observed for position type as a predictor of applicant attraction ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .09$), job pursuit intentions ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .11$), P-J fit ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .09$), perceptions of honesty ($p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$), and acceptance intentions ($p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .09$). Conversely, main effects were not observed for perceptions of teams as a predictor for pre-hire recruitment variables.

Additional Analyses

When asked to rank job postings, participants ranked individual job postings higher than team positions on attraction (56%), perceived job fit (55%), perceptions of organizational honesty (51%), and acceptance (58%). Significant correlations were only observed between perceptions of teams and applicant acceptance intentions to individual positions (see Table 4). No demographic variables were correlated with perceptions of teams (see Table 5). Further, no differences were observed between university status, gender, race, or age, with respect to the primary outcome variables and position type. Differences were observed, however, between employment status and attraction ($F(2,122) = 4.56$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .07$), likelihood of acceptance ($F(2,122) = 4.32$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .07$), and job pursuit intentions ($F(2,122) = 3.16$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .05$), and P-J fit ($F(2,122) = 3.75$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .06$) for team-based positions and job pursuit intentions ($F(2,122) = 3.79$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .06$), and P-J fit ($F(2,122) = 3.98$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .06$) for individual positions. All post-hoc tests were conducted using Tukey's HSD test. Post-hoc tests indicated that applicants with full-time ($M = 18.74$, $SD = 6.11$) and part-time jobs ($M = 20.02$, $SD = 5.50$) were less attracted to team positions than applicants currently not working ($M = 24.23$, $SD = 4.72$). Post-hoc tests further indicated that applicants with full-time ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.54$) and part-time jobs ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.39$) were less likely to accept to team positions than applicants currently not working ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 1.24$).

Additional post-hoc tests indicated that applicants with full-time positions ($M = 23.09$, $SD = 8.75$) had lower job pursuit intentions towards team positions than applicants currently not working ($M = 29.49$, $SD = 6.14$). Post-hoc tests also indicated that applicants with full-time ($M = 31.03$, $SD = 10.64$) and part-time jobs ($M = 31.14$, $SD = 9.79$) had less perceived P-J fit to team positions than applicants currently not working ($M = 39.15$, $SD = 9.70$) and that applicants with part-time jobs ($M = 19.94$, $SD = 5.72$) were less attracted to individual positions than applicants currently not working ($M = 24$, $SD = 5.16$). Post-hoc tests results for job pursuit intentions indicated that applicants with full-time ($M = 23.08$, $SD = 7.57$) and part-time jobs ($M = 23.44$, $SD = 7.66$) had less job pursuit intentions towards individual positions than applicants currently not working ($M = 29.47$, $SD = 7.28$). Finally, post-hoc tests indicated that applicants with part-time jobs ($M = 30.90$, $SD = 10.33$) had less P-J fit towards individual positions than applicants currently not working ($M = 39.41$, $SD = 9.77$).

Discussion

The current study investigated recruitment of individuals to team-based positions. Importantly, support was observed for the moderating effect of position type on the relations between perceptions of teams and several pre-hire recruitment variables. The following discussion presents summaries of the current findings as well as discussions of theoretical and practical contributions and study limitations.

Primary Contributions

Results of the current study provided support for the primary hypothesis.

Specifically, relations between perceptions of teams and applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, P-J fit, perceptions of organizational honesty, and acceptance were moderated by position type (team or individual position). As expected, tests of the effects of position type and perceptions of teams on pre-hire recruitment variables did indicate significant interaction effects for applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, P-J fit, perceptions of organizational honesty, and acceptance. From these results, perceptions of teams appear to play a role in applicant perceptions of several important pre-hire variables. Specifically, more positive perceptions of teams is related to increased applicant attraction, job pursuit intentions, P-J fit, perceptions of organizational honesty, and acceptance to team positions. Conversely, pre-hire recruitment variables associated with individual positions increase as perceptions of teams decrease. These results indicate that perceptions of teams play influential roles in applicant pre-hire variables. Therefore, organizations should focus not only on the recruitment source used, but also the impact applicant perceptions may have on recruitment process success.

Results also provide evidence regarding the similarities and differences between recruitment to team and individual positions. Importantly, significant main effects for position type and the consistent, though statistically non-significant, differences observed between pre-hire recruitment outcomes to team and individual positions support the idea that position type plays a role in shaping individual perceptions of several important pre-hire variables. Practically, these differences mean that organizations must be sensitive to how job requirements are communicated. Just as organizations may alter information presented in a recruitment source to influence applicant perceptions of fit; so too, can organizations alter information to attract individuals better suited and desiring team-oriented positions. Given the somewhat exploratory nature of the current study, further investigations are necessary to support stronger claims about the relations, effects, and implications of different types of recruiting. However, current results do provide some evidence that further investigation of the unique aspects of recruitment to team positions is warranted.

Of additional importance, relations were observed between applicant employment and previous experience with teams and pre-hire recruitment variables. Results indicated that applicants not currently working and who had previous experience with teams in the classroom or at work had more positive perceptions of team jobs. This finding provides encouraging results to organizations looking to hire recent college graduates. Because most college students will have had prior experience with teams through classroom interactions, organizations may find a readily available pool of applicants with more favorable perceptions towards team jobs. Conversely, the ranking of individual jobs higher across all recruitment variables does provide some evidence to support the idea that team positions may be less attractive to applicants overall and particularly those who are currently employed.

Limitations

Although the recruitment postings used in the current study were based on real jobs and mimic those used in natural settings, these sources were presented in an experimental context. Therefore the information presented in these postings may have been interpreted by applicants in different ways than real world postings. However, in keeping with the purpose of the study and the use of online recruitment ads, the postings did incorporate information that was assumed to most influence the recruitment to teams (i.e., information related to employee interactions).

Finally, though not unusual, the current study did rely on undergraduate students as participants. On one hand, this could be seen as an advantage due to the fact that these individuals will be soon entering the workforce, and in many cases already had. On the other hand, undergraduate participants may not accurately mimic the behaviors of individuals actively seeking jobs. For example, the undergraduate participants in the current study did not actively seek out these companies or positions. Participants were motivated by class extra credit unlike actual applicants who may be motivated by compensation and various other factors.

Conclusions

The current study investigated the previously ignored area of team member recruitment. Results providing support for the prediction that the perceptions of teams serve as a moderator of the relations between position type and important pre-hire recruitment variables suggest that future research in this area is warranted. In addition, individuals with previous classroom experience working with teams indicated greater perceptions of team positions than individuals with work experience in teams. Areas of future research should include investigations into the effect of perceptions of teams on team recruitment and post selection outcomes (e.g. performance and tenure) while controlling for individuals differences such as personality traits.

Given the likely continued reliance on teams to accomplish primary organizational tasks, future research is needed that uncovers how recruitment practices facilitate the hiring of individuals who are best suited for these jobs.

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Table 1 Summary of Variable Scores

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Perceptions of Team	76.24	13.61		
	Team		Individual	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attraction	20.1	5.77	20.46	5.63
Job Pursuit Intentions	24.29	8.19	23.97	7.77
P-J Fit	31.95	10.25	32.21	10.3
Perceptions of Honesty	9.89	1.83	9.74	1.77
Acceptance	4.01	1.46	3.98	1.41

Note. *N* = 123

Table 2 Multivariate Results for Perceptions of Teams

Step	Predictors	Pillai's Trace	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
1.	Position type	.11	3.58*	4,118	.01	.11
2.	Perceptions of Teams	.01	.37	4,118	.83	.01
3.	1 x 2	.12	3.98*	4,118	.01	.12

Note. * *p* < .05.

Table 3 GLM for Perceptions of Teams and Posting Type

Variable	Step	Predictors	MS	F	df	η^2
Applicant Attraction	1.	Posting Type	141.01	11.64**	1,121	.09
	2.	Perceptions of Teams	2.47	.05	1,121	.00
	3.	Interaction	133.77	11.04**	1,121	.08
Job Pursuit Intentions	1.	Posting Type	248.39	14.986**	1,121	.11
	2.	Perceptions of Teams	24.11	.221	1,121	.00
	3.	Interaction	270.48	15.99**	1,121	.12
P-J Fit	1.	Posting Type	403.24	11.23**	1,121	.09
	2.	Perceptions of Teams	79.40	.46	1,121	.00
	3.	Interaction	401.34	11.17**	1,121	.09
Perceptions of Honesty	1.	Posting Type	3.90	4.23*	1,121	.03
	2.	Perceptions of Teams	1.88	.34	1,121	.00
	3.	Interaction	4.93	5.35*	1,121	.04
Likelihood of Acceptance	1.	Posting Type	7.54	11.43**	1,121	.09
	2.	Perceptions of Teams	.277	.081	1,121	.00
	3.	Interaction	8.10	12.27**	1,121	.09

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 4 Intercorrelations between Perceptions of Teams and Pre-hire Variables for Team & Individual Positions

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Team Perceptions	--	-.15	-.18	-.18*	-.03	-.15	-.19*
2. Attraction	.11	--	.93**	.88**	.40**	.90**	.78**
3. Job Pursuit Intentions	.09	.95**	--	.88**	.42**	.92**	.82**
4. P-J Fit	.07	.90**	.88**	--	.26**	.88**	.77**
5. Perceptions of Organizational Honesty	.13	.29**	.36**	.19**	--	.40**	.35**
6. Acceptance (Likelihood)	.10	.92**	.92**	.89**	.38**	--	.84**
7. Acceptance (Actual)	.07	.78**	.80**	.71**	.31**	.81**	--

Notes. Values above the diagonal are correlations between variables for individually-oriented jobs and values below the diagonal are correlations between variables for team-oriented jobs. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 5 Intercorrelations between Perceptions of Teams and Demographic Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Perceptions of Teams	-						
2. University Status	-.06	-					
3. Graduation Date	.05	-.75**	-				
4. Employment Status	-.03	-.19*	.11	-			
5. Previous Experience in Teams	.05	.05	-.05	-.16	-		
6. Gender	-.16	-.07	-.04	.12	.03	-	
7. Age	.06	.32**	-.11	-.43**	-.19*	.01	-

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Variables were codified as follows: university status (1 = freshman; 2 = sophomore; 3 = junior; 4 = senior); employment status (1 = full-time; 2 = part-time, 3 = not employed); and gender (1 = male; 2 = female).