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Initial Organizational Images and Recruitment: A Within-Subjects Investigation of the Factors Affecting Job Choices

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Abstract
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Keywords
person, organization, job, recruitment, practice, work, firm, company, image

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Initial Organizational Images and Recruitment: A Within-Subjects Investigation of the Factors Affecting Job Choices

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This paper has not undergone formal review or approval of the faculty of the ILR School. It is intended to make results of Center research available to others interested in preliminary form to encourage discussion and suggestions

Initial Organizational Images and Recruitment: A Within-Subjects Investigation of the Factors Affecting Job Choices

The issue of person-organization fit has garnered increased practitioner and researcher attention during the past decade (e.g., Bowen, Ledford & Nathan, 1991; Chatman, 1989, 1991). For example, practitioners advocate using perceived applicant fit with the organization as a key criterion in hiring decisions (Montgomery, 1996); moreover, research has indicated that assessments of fit determine interviewers' hiring recommendations (Cable & Judge, 1997). Likewise, research indicates that applicants are also concerned with assessing their fit with organizations—greater self-assessed fit with prospective employers is associated with greater attraction to and preference for those employers in job choices (Judge & Cable, 1997).

This interest in person-organization fit during organizational entry has prompted researchers to focus on how applicants assess fit during their job searches. According to Barber (1998), the process has its origins in the ***images*** applicants form of organizations, where such images are initially based on random information derived from secondary sources. This organizational image is compared with applicants' self-images to assess congruence. Greater self–organization image congruence is hypothesized to increase perceived fit and attraction (Tom, 1971), a prediction supported by research (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Turban & Keon, 1993).

Human resource practitioners have several reasons to be concerned about applicants' images of prospective employers. For example, positive organizational images may buffer firms from the deleterious effects of personnel shortages in tight labor markets. Even when applicants are plentiful, firms that effectively convey positive organizational images may generate a larger pool of desirable applicants from which to choose. Furthermore, organizations that effectively leverage their organizational images in recruitment and hiring may increase their return on human resource expenditures, as new employees whose positive

images lead to better fit with the organization are more satisfied with their jobs and have longer tenure (Chatman, 1991).

Although the initial research has been supportive, several important issues must be addressed to guide practitioners who are interested in leveraging their organizational images during recruitment. For example, Barber (1998) has suggested that little is known about the dimensions on which applicants assess organizational images, particularly in the early phases of their job searches. Similarly, to the extent that these images determine prospective applicants' decisions to apply for openings, the mechanisms through which those images can be altered would be an important consideration in organizations' investments in recruitment.

The purpose of this study was to examine the dimensions, influenceability, and consequences of applicants' images of prospective employers early in the recruitment and job search process. Specifically, we examined three questions: (1) On what dimensions do applicants assess organizational images early in their job searches? (2) Which recruitment practices contribute to applicants' organizational images? (3) How do organizational images influence applicants' decisions to apply to organizations?

To answer these questions, we collected data from two samples of graduating students. For the first sample, we used a repertory grid methodology (Kelly, 1955) to identify the dimensions on which prospective applicants assessed their fit with organizations. We then used the dimensions elicited to gather survey data from a different sample of prospective applicants regarding which recruitment practices contributed most to positive organizational images and how these images influenced the decision to apply to organizations. Below, we explain the conceptual rationale for the study by first considering issues associated with the assessment of organizational images, and then discussing how such images might be affected by recruitment practices.

Dimensions and Assessment of Organizational Images

Several studies have attempted to determine what aspects of prospective applicants' impressions of organizations are salient during their job searches. For example, Rynes, Bretz and Gerhart (1991) interviewed 41 graduating students to derive the organizational dimensions on which they assessed fit. Their results indicated that job and organizational characteristics—specifically, features of the prospective job, general firm reputation, attitudes toward the firm's products or services, advancement opportunities, and location—were important determinants. Gatewood, Gowan, and Lautenschlager (1993) used multidimensional scaling of ad attributes to assess prospective applicants' images. Their findings showed that overall reputation (as assessed by *Fortune*), familiarity with the firm, knowing someone who worked at the firm, using the firm's products or services, and exposure to advertisements were all correlated with respondents' corporate images.

These studies have begun to define the dimensions of initial organizational images; yet, as Barber (1998) noted, there are numerous methodological problems that must be considered. One problem is that the organizations whose images are elicited are, in most cases, larger well known firms. As a result, little is known about organizational images for smaller or unfamiliar organizations. A second concern is that organizational images are likely to be hazy or general, especially early in the job search process. Over time, exposure to more information leads applicants' images to become more refined and more positive (Gatewood et al., 1993). Therefore, it is important to include a range of familiar and unfamiliar large and small firms early during applicants' searches to identify the dimensions on which their initial organizational images vary.

Recently, Highhouse et al. (1999) demonstrated one method for identifying the key dimensions of prospective applicants' images of fast food restaurants. Because the fast food industry is growing at a time when its traditional labor pool is shrinking, understanding how such images influence prospective applicants' attraction is of strategic importance. Using an initial

sample of college students, Highhouse et al. (1999) asked respondents to explain why they would prefer to apply to one of two randomly paired local restaurants (some of which were affiliated with national chains). Although the rationales collapsed into 14 categories, ratings provided by subsequent samples of high school students and retired persons showed that six of these were key in differentiating prospective applicants' interest in applying for jobs: respectability, atmosphere, hearsay, coworkers, product image, and customers. Highhouse et al. (1999) suggested that the important dimensions of organizational images may vary by the industry or type of job under consideration.

The current study used a method similar to that used by Highhouse et al. (1999) to study initial organizational images for another high demand labor market—graduating college students. As in Highhouse et al., we provided respondents with sets of familiar and unfamiliar firms and asked them to explain why one was a better fit. None of the respondents had yet begun searching for jobs after graduation, so this enabled us to capture dimensions of their initial images. By categorizing their responses, we could assess the overlap in dimensions with those of Rynes et al. (1991), Gatewood et al. (1993), and Highhouse et al. (1999). As with Highhouse et al., we then used the derived dimensions to evaluate antecedents and consequences of initial organizational images in a second sample of graduating students.

Early Recruitment Practices Effects on Initial Organizational Images

Prior researchers have suggested that organizational images are developed through exposure to secondary sources of information (e.g., social contacts, advertisements, media stories) and through more targeted recruitment efforts (Barber, 1998; Rynes, 1991). Among the mechanisms for influencing such images under organizational control, we concentrated on three broad categories that have been identified in the academic or popular press: general attempts to increase firm or product visibility, social networks, and traditional campus recruitment practices (e.g., brochures).

Visibility. U. S. corporations spend over $1 billion per year on general advertising that is designed to build a favorable image of the organization itself (Alverez, 1991). Barber (1998) suggested that this type of general advertising or public relations can have spillover effects on applicants' impressions of organizations. Organizations that spend money on product or company advertising will be likely to increase job seekers awareness of and familiarity with the organization. Additionally, companies that are frequently in the news or spotlighted in the media will also be more familiar to students.

Social Networks. Coombs and Rosse (1992) suggested that firms are increasingly trying to attract students and build applicant pools by developing stronger and closer relationships with different constituencies at the universities at which they recruit. Firms can build relationships with faculty and career services offices and send back former graduates to talk about the experiences that they had at the organization. This method of early recruitment may affect student's organizational images by providing both concrete information about the organization and evaluative or affective information about others' experiences. Further, faculty and career services staff who have tight social networks within certain organizations may be more likely to mention those firms, thereby increasing students' familiarity with those organizations.

Traditional Recruitment Practices. A number of recruitment practices have traditionally been used by organizations to provide information about employment opportunities. Practices such as job postings (Barber & Roehling, 1993), brochures (Mason & Belt, 1986), and web sites may influence students' perceptions of different attributes of the organization because they directly communicate information. Exposure to these types of tools should make students more aware of and familiar with organizations using these practices.

Hypothesis 1: Exposure to all three early recruitment practices (i.e., visibility, social networking, and traditional practices) will be positively related to students' initial organizational images.

Relationship Between Initial Organizational Images and Intentions to Apply

Barber (1998) argued that it is important to understand the impact of images on critical outcomes of the recruitment process. Several researchers have found a significant relationship between organizational images and the early recruitment outcome of intentions to apply to the organization. Barber (1998) argued that this outcome is critical to later phases of the recruitment process, because applicants who do not apply to an organization implicitly remove themselves from later phases of the recruitment process. Belt and Paolillo (1982) found that subjects were more likely to apply for a job when they held a more favorable image of the organization. Gatewood et al. (1993) also found a significant positive correlation between the image of an organization and job seekers' likelihood of applying to that organization. It seems likely that initial organizational image is significantly related to job seekers intentions to apply to an organization; therefore, we predicted that:

Hypothesis 2: Initial organizational images will be positively related to students intentions to apply to an organization.

Mediators of the Relationship Between Initial Images and Intentions

Rynes (1991) argued that, to better understand the full recruitment process, researchers must identify mediating or intervening steps between initial variables and final outcomes. The findings of previous researchers suggest that the relationship between initial organizational images and intentions to apply to an organization may be mediated by other variables. Specifically, researchers have found a significant relationship between images and attraction (Tom, 1971; Turban and Greening, 1997) and between attraction and intentions (Collins & Stevens, 1999). These findings suggest that organizational images may lead to increased attraction to the organization which, in turn, is related to intentions to apply.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between initial organizational image and intentions to apply to an organization will be mediated by job seekers' attraction to that organization.

Additionally, the initial image of organizations that job seekers hold may affect their perceptions of the likelihood of receiving an offer from an organization. Prior research has suggested that initial images are comprised of familiarity with the organization and its products or services and the reputation or success of the organization, etc. These factors may influence students' perceptions of how likely it is that their skills and abilities fit with the needs of the organization. Vroom (1966) argued that job seekers will be more likely to perceive an increased likelihood of receiving an offer from an organization when they perceive that their abilities match with the needs of the organization. Further, Rynes and Lawler (1983) argued that increased expectancy for receiving an offer should result in the increased motivation to pursue an offer (i.e., apply to the organization). Therefore, we predicted that:

> **Hypothesis 4**: The relationship between initial organizational image and intentions to apply to an organization will be mediated by job seekers' expectancies of receiving an offer.

Method

Identification of Organizational Image Dimensions: Sample & Procedure

The sample used to elicit organizational image dimensions consisted of 12 undergraduate students (50% male) enrolled in a summer organizational behavior course. None of the students had begun searching for a full-time, post-graduation job. They participated in the study as part of a classroom exercise on organizational culture.

To generate the stimulus materials used in the study, we obtained existing recruitment materials (i.e., brochures, flyers, and other documents) for 8 organizations that recruited on campus at a large mid-Atlantic public university. The organizations selected were intentionally chosen to include eight firms that would vary in familiarity to respondents. Respondents were initially provided with the names of these organizations and asked to rate their familiarity with each firm (1 = unfamiliar, 5 = familiar). Analyses indicated that respondents were somewhat familiar with 4 firms (M = 3.10) and unfamiliar with the remaining four firms (M = 1.39).

After obtaining preliminary familiarity ratings, respondents were given each organization's recruitment materials and asked to review them overnight as if they were considering applying for a job in each organization. Upon arrival to class, they were randomly assigned to one of four experimenters. Experimenters interviewed each student individually using a standardized repertory grid protocol (Kelly, 1955), described below, to elicit organizational image dimensions. First, we generated two sets of data collection sheets, each of which presented nine randomly chosen sets of three companies each for comparison purposes. Respondents were presented with each set of three companies and asked to assume that all three had openings for which they would be qualified. They were permitted to review the recruitment materials for each company to help them answer the following questions: (a) which of the three companies they thought was the best fit for them; (b) the characteristic that led them to believe that the company was the best fit for them; (c) a description or explanation of what they meant by that characteristic; and (d) the word or term that in their minds was the opposite of the characteristic in question. Respondents answered this set of questions for each of the nine sets of companies, unless they could no longer think of additional characteristics that helped them determine which firms were the best fit.

Information from the repertory grid data sheets was transcribed and categorized by the authors. Categorization proceeded in two steps: an initial categorization grouped together similar terms or words identified in the characteristics, descriptions, and opposite terms, whereas the higher-order categorization refined these data by identifying themes underlying categories. The initial step yielded 25 categories, which encompassed all of the repertory grid data. The authors then independently derived five higher-order categories that included information from 21 of the initial categories. Agreement on the higher-order categories was 91%. The higher-order categories and their dimensions are shown in Table 1. These higher order categories were used to develop survey items to measure organizational images in the second sample.

Survey Sample and Procedures

Respondents included 144 students graduating with Bachelor's or Master's degrees in engineering from four universities (two in the South, one in the Midwest, and one in the mid-Atlantic). These programs were selected because they were among the top 20 engineering programs in the country (U.S. News & World Report, 1977) and their graduates were in high demand. Thus, respondents were likely to be exposed to the full range of recruitment practices we targeted for investigation. Nearly 72% of the respondents were men, but the sample was ethnically diverse (61% white, 27% Asian, 4% African-American, and 8% other) with an average GPA of 3.18, 2.27 years of full-time work experience and 1.66 years of engineering work experience. Available demographic data on the graduating student populations at two of the four engineering schools indicated that our sample did not differ significantly from the graduating population in gender (t_{144} = 1.32, ns) or GPA (t_{144} = 1.04, ns).

Table 1

Dimensions of Prospective Applicants' Initial Organizational Images

Higher Order Category	Initial Categorization of Respondents' Repertory Grid Information
Innovation & risk-taking	1. Technology or high tech nature of firm 2. Firm allows for creativity 3. Firm emphasizes innovation 4. Firm's products show innovation 5. Firm has been innovating versus doing the same thing for a long time
Reputation & product knowledge	1. Familiarity with products 2. Company is well-known or respected 3. Company is socially responsible 4. Company is professional or customer-oriented
People-orientation	1. Employee focus or commitment 2. Training opportunities 3. Opportunities for advancement 4. Good benefits 5. Company cares about employees
Team orientation or work structure	1. Team focus 2. More/less bureaucratic 3. Management opportunities & flat structure
Stability versus growth	1. Firm is successful or expanding 2. Firm is dynamic or fast-paced 3. Firm offers diverse products that allow for expansion or growth

A mailing list of potential respondents was generated from lists of graduating students that were made available through the career services office of each university. The criteria for inclusion on this list was that students would be graduating during the year of the study and were actively looking for jobs. Surveys were sent to the school mailing addresses of students at the beginning of the fall semester, after students had registered for the services of the schools' career services offices. A cover letter was attached to each survey explaining the purpose of the study. In addition, a letter of support from the director of the career services office at the students' university was included with each mailing. Completed surveys were returned directly to the researchers to ensure respondent confidentiality.

Previous studies of the effects of organizational image have been criticized because they have used only organizations with which respondents are familiar (Barber, 1998). Therefore, we used a within-subjects design in which respondents evaluated 15 companies that were randomly selected from a list of companies registered to recruit at the different universities. Thus, respondents evaluated a mix of organizations with which they had varying levels of familiarity. For each organization listed, respondents rated the recruitment practices to which they had been exposed and their perceptions of initial image, expectancies, attraction, and intentions.

Independent Variable Measures

***Visibility*.** This measure tapped the use of product advertising and public relations for increasing visibility among both consumers and potential applicants. The scale was used by Collins and Stevens (1999) and was comprised of three items ($\propto$ = .83). Sample items included: "I have seen advertisements for this organization" and "Top officials from this organization are often quoted in newspapers or trade journals," (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Social network. This measure, also used by Collins and Stevens (1999), captured organizational attempts to influence applicants by building relations through a social network of alumni, faculty, and career services officials. The scale was comprised of four items ($\propto$ = .84)

including "The engineering faculty think that this is a great place to work" and "This organization has a good relationship with the career services office at my university," (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

***Traditional recruitment practices*.** This 4-item measure, from Collins and Stevens (1999), included practices that are commonly used by organizations during the initial recruitment phase, such as job fairs, recruitment brochures, and job postings, used to convey information and attract interest. A sample item from this scale is "Company brochures or their web site gave me detailed information about its products and services" and "at the job fair, organizational representatives provided me with new or interesting information about their job opportunities," (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

Mediating and Dependent Variable Measures

We collected data on three mediating variables (initial organizational image, organizational attraction, and expectancies of receiving offers) and one primary outcome (intentions to apply).

Image. This 9-item measure was developed to measure the components of image that were identified in the initial sample of graduating students. A sample item from the scale is "This organization is well-respected within its industry" (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; $\propto$ = .86).

Attraction. This 4-item measure was adapted from the scale used by Harris and Fink (1987). A sample item from the scale is "I have a very favorable impression of this company" (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; $\propto$ = .86).

Expectancies. Expectancies for receiving job offers were assessed with a three item scale. A sample item is "This organization will probably want to hire me" (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; $\propto$ = .92).

Application intentions. The 2-item application intentions measure was adapted from one used by Taylor and Bergmann (1987). A sample item from the current scale is "I intend to apply for a position with this organization" (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; $\propto$ =.94).

Results

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations for the early recruitment practices, initial organizational image, expectancies, attraction, and intentions measures. Respondents answered identical questions for up to 15 organizations, thus we created a panel data set with multiple responses for each respondent. Greene (1997) argued that the most appropriate analytic method to evaluate panel data is fixed-effects regression, which controls for the natural covariation between measures of different observations within a single respondent. Fixed-effects regression allowed us to control for individual differences that affected decision-making by separating person effects with dummy coding.

Hypotheses 1: Relationship Between Early Recruitment Practices and Initial Organizational Image

Hypothesis 1 predicted that there would be positive relationships between each of the three early recruitment practices and initial organizational image. As shown in Table 3, we found that the overall regression model explained significant variance in students' perceptions of initial organizational image (R^2 = .76, p < .001). Further, each of the individual early recruitment practices were significantly related to initial organizational image: visibility t = 24.17, p < .001; social networking t = 18.62, p < .001; and traditional practices t = 11.57, p < .001. Thus, the data supported the hypothesized relationships between early recruitment practices and initial organizational image.

Hypothesis 2: Relationship Between Initial Organizational Image and Intentions to Apply

Hypothesis 2 predicted that initial organizational image would be positively related to individual's intentions to apply to an organization. As shown in step one of Table 4, we found

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas, and Intercorrelations of Study Variables (n=144)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Intentions	2.69	1.14	.94						
2. Attraction	3.14	.71	.56***	.86					
3. Expectancy	2.37	.92	.55***	.41***	.92				
4. Initial Image	3.16	.67	.40***	.55***	.33***	.86			
5. Visibility	2.90	.87	.28***	.53***	.26***	.60***	.83		
6. Social Networking	3.18	.55	.35***	.57***	.27***	.62***	.62***	.84	
7. Traditional Practices	2.97	.75	.32***	.54***	.38***	.57***	.50***	.55***	.77

TABLE 3
Results of Regression Analysis Predicting Initial Image[a]

Variable	Model R^2	b-weights	t-value
	.76***		
Visibility		.320***	24.17
Social Networking		.439***	18.62
Traditional Practices		.225***	11.57

[a] For within subjects regression n=144.
*** p < .001 All significance tests are two-tailed.
** p < .01 Model R^2 includes person effects, however the β-weights for each individual person are not listed because of
* p < .05 space constraints.

that initial organizational image was significantly related to intentions to apply to an organization ($t = 29.70$, $p < .001$). Further, the overall regression step explained a large amount of the variance in students' intentions to apply ($R^2 = .75$, $p < .001$). Thus, the data strongly supported the hypothesized relationship between initial organizational image and intentions to apply.

Hypotheses 3 and 4: Attraction and Expectancies as Mediators of the Relationship Between Initial Organizational Image and Intentions to Apply

Hypothesis 3 predicted that attraction would mediate the relationship between initial organizational image and intentions to apply to an organization. As shown in step Table 5, initial organizational image was significantly related to attraction. Further, when attraction was added to the regression model predicting intentions to apply (step 2, Table 4), initial organizational image was no longer significantly related to intentions ($t = 1.53$, $p < .05$). Thus, the data supported the hypothesis that attraction mediates the relationship between initial organizational image and intentions.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that expectancies would mediate the relationship between initial organizational image and intentions to apply to an organization. As shown in Table 5, initial organizational image is significantly related to expectancies ($t = 22.68$, $p < .001$). When expectancies are added to the regression model predicting intentions (step 3, Table 4), initial organizational image is still significantly related to intentions ($t = 18.91$, $p <.001$). However, when testing for partial mediation (see Clogg, Petkova & Shihadeh, 1992), we found that the β-weight for the relationship between initial image and intentions was significantly reduced when expectancies were added to the equation. Thus, the findings support the hypothesis that expectancies mediate, at least partially, the relationship between initial organizational image and intentions to apply.

TABLE 4

Regression Analysis Predicting Intentions to Apply[a]

Step	Variables	Model R^2	b-weights	t-value
1	Initial Image	.75***	.596***	29.70
2		.81***		
	Initial Image		.045	1.53
	Attraction		.710***	23.61
3		.81***		
	Initial Image		.370***	18.91
	Expectancies		.590***	25.41

[a] For within subjects regression n=144.
*** $p < .001$
** $p < .01$
* $p < .05$
All significance tests are two-tailed.
Model R^2 includes person effects, however the β-weights
for each individual person are not listed because of space constraints.

TABLE 5

Results of Regression Analysis Predicting Attraction and Expectancies[a]

	Attraction			Expectancies		
Variable	Model R^2	b-weights	t-value	Model R^2	b-weights	t-value
	.75***			.76***		
Initial Image		.776***	58.50		.383***	22.68

Discussion

This research project examined three issues: the dimensions on which prospective applicants would assess organizational images, the role of various recruitment practices in affecting applicants' organizational images, and the impact of images on whether prospective applicants decided to apply to those organizations. Our results echoed those of prior researchers (Highhouse et al., 1999; Rynes et al., 1991) with regard to many of the key dimensions on which applicants assessed initial fit: firm reputation and product knowledge played an important role. In addition, innovation and the emphasis on people and teams emerged as dimensions on which prospective applicants differentiated firms. This finding overlaps with those of Rynes et al. (1991) and may reflect the longer-term focus of our sample in evaluating job opportunities relative to the sample of part-time workers studied by Highhouse et al. (1999). Alternatively, because the sample involved organizational behavior students, their awareness of such issues may have been increased through exposure to class material. Additional research is needed to pinpoint the more common aspects of initial organizational images and those that are unique to particular labor pools.

The study results also highlighted the role that various early recruitment mechanisms may play in shaping prospective applicants' organizational images. Specifically, visibility, social networking, and traditional practices all contributed significantly to applicants' perceptions of 15 randomly chosen familiar and unfamiliar organizations. Social networking, in particular, had strong effects on how potential applicants perceived organizations. This finding suggests that human resource practitioners should be attuned to the longer-term benefits social contacts at universities may bring—although organizations cannot directly control what outsiders say about them, such contacts can be cultivated relatively inexpensively with long-term reputation benefits.

One concern in interpreting these results is whether prospective respondents accurately perceived each firm's early recruitment practices. That is, the findings may reflect (a) common method variance or (b) cognitive consistency bias (i.e., in which organizational images led to

retrospective ratings of firms' recruitment practices). Although we cannot definitively eliminate these two alternative explanations, we have conducted preliminary interrater agreement analyses of respondents at each university for three of the 15 firms. The average within-university agreement on visibility, social networking, and traditional practices for these three firms ranges from .72 to .83, suggesting that respondents show substantial agreement about which practices these firms use. Note that, to assess the impact of various early recruitment practices on organizational images, large scale experimental studies in which practices are manipulated will be needed to eliminate method and cognitive consistency bias as explanations.

The study also found evidence that initial organizational images may influence potential applicants' decisions to apply to organizations through their effects on attraction and expectancies. Rynes (1991) and Barber (1998) have called for greater attention to the means through which organizational images influence job seekers' decision process. Our findings suggested that such images influence attraction, which affects intentions to apply. (Follow-up data are being collected to assess whether actual decisions show any relationship to initial organizational images.) This is consistent with prior research showing that positive organizational images increase attraction and interest in pursuing employment (Gatewood et al., 1993). Moreover, our findings also indicated that initial images influence prospective applicants' expectancies for receiving job offers, which in turn predict intentions to apply for openings. The role of organizational images in influencing applicants' expectancies for receiving job offers has received scant research attention.

In summary, the study findings contribute to a growing body of research on applicants' assessments of fit during organizational entry. The results suggest that firms have many avenues through which to convey information leading to positive organizational images: beyond traditional recruitment practices (e.g., brochures, web pages, job postings) and advertising, the network of social relationships derived from employees and built through campus contacts can foster positive images. Managing these relationships proactively, and capitalizing on the

spillover effects of advertising and recruitment campaigns can help human resource practitioners leverage their recruitment and selection expenditures by creating and sustaining interest in more and better applicants.

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