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Recruitment and Selection

Abstract
[Excerpt] In this chapter, we look to address the second issue by developing a theoretical model of the link between different staffing systems and firm-level performance. We first look to existing theory on organizational design and structure to better understand the role of recruitment and selection. Specifically, we argue that organizations are structured into unique subunits of employees based on the equivocality of available information in their jobs and the resulting need for organizational rationality or openness. Drawing on existing empirical work on strategic human resource management, we argue that unique systems of recruitment and selection practices are necessary to provide the level of employee knowledge, skills, and abilities to match the level of information equivocality faced by the employees in these roles. In particular, we put forth arguments that recruitment and selection systems that match with the mechanistic organizational structure are the best fit for subunits of employees facing low information uncertainty; whereas recruitment and selection systems that match with the organic organizational structure are the best fit for subunits of employees facing high informational uncertainty.

Keywords
recruitment, selection, staffing, performance, human resource management

Disciplines
Human Resources Management | Labor Relations

Comments
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Recruitment and selection

Christopher J. Collins
and Rebecca R. Kehoe

Throughout the end of the twentieth century and into the start of the twenty-first, scholars and practitioners have argued that firms are in a war for talent, and that the firms that are best able to attract and retain employees will be in a position to outperform their rivals (e.g., Michaels et al., 2001; Woodruffe, 1999). In a global economy, companies are seeking new growth opportunities and hiring new staff at a pace to help them achieve this growth. At the same time, labor markets are beginning to shrink as the baby boom generation employees begin to retire and are replaced by a reduced supply of younger workers (Dohm, 2000). In the midst of these significant environmental changes, the staffing function, including recruitment and selection, has emerged as arguably the most critical human resource function for organizational survival and success.

Firms across a wide range of sectors and especially those in knowledge-based industries (financial services, high technology, pharmaceuticals) are finding themselves engaged in fierce and continuing battles with their competitors for the recruitment of the best and brightest new hires. Further, because of the increasing importance of employees in driving competitive advantages (Collins & Smith, 2006), mistakes in selection have potentially catastrophic consequences for organizational success and survival. Across all industries, individual employees must possess the requisite mix of skills, aptitudes, motivations, and so on, that will enable their firms to compete effectively and create competitive advantage in their given market space and to help their organization adapt to future unknown challenges. For many companies, recruiting and selection have become essential tools in ensuring that they have the human resources necessary to achieve their current strategic direction and to continue innovating and growing in the future.

Despite the theoretical importance of recruitment and selection to organizational competitive advantage and performance, there are a number of issues that limit the prescriptive advice that recruitment research provides practitioners regarding these components of staffing. First, the vast majority of the published research on recruitment and selection has been conducted at the individual level of analysis. Indeed, the paucity of empirical research that has examined the effects of recruitment and selection practices at the firm level of analysis is surprising given that researchers have argued that research that examines independent and dependent variables at the firm level is likely to provide better prescriptive advice regarding the choices of recruitment and selection systems (e.g., Rynes & Barber, 1990; Taylor & Collins, 2000).

Second, these studies have drawn on theories that explain individual reactions or outcomes, leaving little understanding of how or if these staffing practices may affect firm-level performance or how the effects of these practices may vary across firms or types of employees. What empirical work that does exist tends to be atheoretical or has lumped recruitment or selection with other human resource functions as part of a larger system of human resource practices. There is no or at best little theory for researchers to draw on to make specific predictions regarding the impact on performance of choices in recruitment and selection practices within an overarching staffing system. Thus, the field needs a theoretical model to serve as a framework for firm-level strategic research on recruitment and selection.

In this chapter, we look to address the second issue by developing a theoretical model of the link between different staffing systems and firm-level performance. We first look to existing theory on organizational design and structure to better understand the role of recruitment and selection. Specifically, we argue that organizations are structured into unique subunits of employees based on the equivocality of available information in their jobs and the resulting need for organizational rationality or openness. Drawing on existing empirical work on strategic human resource management, we argue that unique systems of recruitment and selection practices are necessary to provide the level of employee knowledge, skills, and abilities to match the level of information equivocality faced by the employees in these roles. In particular, we put forth arguments that recruitment and selection systems that match with the mechanistic organizational structure are the best fit for subunits of employees facing low information uncertainty; whereas recruitment and selection systems that match with the organic organizational structure are the best fit for subunits of employees facing high informational uncertainty.

Based on contingency theory, we argue that there are likely to be multiple recruitment and selection systems that fit with either the mechanistic or organic structural principles. Further, the alternative recruitment and selection systems may be based on competing management philosophies that lead to greater or lower levels of role specialization and required skills and abilities. Specifically, as shown in Figure 13.1 below, we identify two recruitment and selection systems that fit with the mechanistic structure: an autocratic system of recruitment and selection practices that is a fit for subunits requiring lower skill specialization, and a bureaucratic system

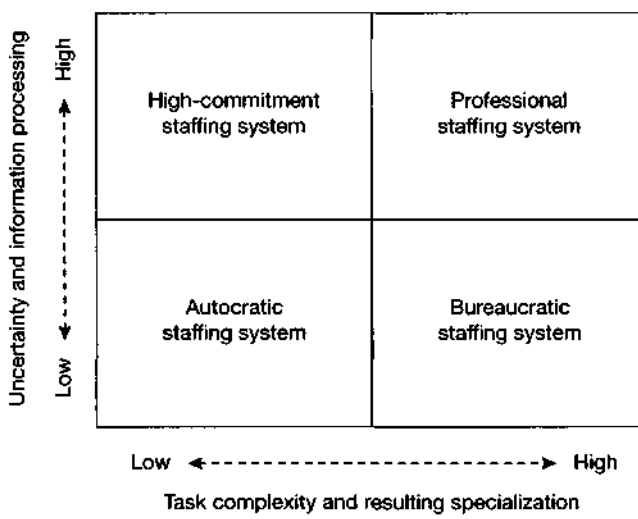

Figure 13.1 Alternative staffing system models

of recruitment and selection practices that is a better fit for subunits requiring higher levels of skill specialization. We also identify two recruitment and selection systems that fit with the organic organizational structure: a commitment system that is a better fit for subunits with lower levels of skill specialization and a professional system that is a better fit for subunits with higher levels of skill specialization. Finally, we draw conclusions and identify areas for future empirical research in the area of strategic recruitment and staffing.

Organizational structure and information processing

In the strategic human resource management literature, a growing number of researchers have noted that organizations are made up of different groups of employees; and organizations are likely to achieve optimal levels of performance by matching employment systems to the unique set of characteristics associated with the responsibilities tied to these roles (Collins & Smith, 2006; Lepak & Snell, 1999). Further, work by Baron and colleagues (Baron & Hannan, 2002; Baron et al., 2001) suggests that there are a multitude of philosophies regarding how to best manage employees that result in a potentially wide array of HR systems even within a single industry and within individual firms.

While not directly focused on recruitment and selection systems, this body of literature suggests that there may be a wide array of alternative recruitment and selection systems that companies can use to attract and select employees with the right knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required to drive maximum firm performance. Research on contingency theory (e.g., Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967) would also suggest that there is not a single best recruitment and selection system and not all of the potential systems will be ideal for every type of employee. Thus, our first priority is to identify different groups of employees and to clearly articulate the differences in KSAs between these positions. Our second priority is to identify the best recruitment and selection systems that will ensure that the employees in these unique subunits have the requisite skills, abilities, and aptitudes required to deal with the level of information uncertainty that they face. To accomplish this task, we draw on organizational theory research to identify two broad groups of employees and identify the KSAs tied to each.

Management scholars have long been arguing and writing about the purpose of organizations and the resulting implications for organizational design and structure. Indeed, there has been an extensive line of research in the field of organizational theory that has looked to identify the different organizational designs and structures that will be most effective under alternative conditions. Etzioni (1964), for example, noted that organizations are often in a perpetual struggle in regard to organizational structure and are continually trying to balance choices between the formal and informal, the rational and non-rational, and controlling and freeing up employees to make decisions. These constant tensions and struggles are the result of work-related uncertainties created by the combination of pressures and changes from the external environment (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) and the complexity of organizational technology and coordination inter-dependencies in the internal environment (Galbraith, 1973; Hage & Aiken, 1969). Therefore, the critical task of the organization is to create the ideal organizational structure to collect and process information.

Taking these ideas a step further, Thompson (1967) noted that organizations face differing types of pressures across the different elements of the external environment with which they interact. Further, he argued that organizations should seek to isolate parts of the organization from external pressures to achieve optimal efficiency, while simultaneously structuring other parts of the organization as boundary spanners to deal with the uncertainty of the external

environment. In particular, the organization can be optimally structured by separating those subunits of the organization that face less change and uncertainty in the external environmental pressures from those subunits that face higher degrees of external environmental turbulence and uncertainty (March & Simon, 1958; Thompson, 1967).

Organizations must also deal with differences in complexities across groups of employees in terms of task complexities and task interdependencies in completing work. For example, there are differences in task complexity and task interdependencies across groups of employees depending on the work being completed, resulting in differences in information-processing needs across units within the organization (Galbraith, 1973; March & Simon, 1958). Therefore, organizations may be best viewed as a collection of employee groups or subunits, each with specialized organizational design needs given the complexity of the information-processing needs created by the uncertainty and complexity of the external and internal issues faced by the particular unit. Below, we examine separately the organizational structure and resulting employee KSAs for those subunits facing low uncertainty and information-processing needs and those subunits facing high uncertainty and information-processing needs.

Structure and positions with low information uncertainty

While organizations are open systems that face uncertainty in their external environment, there are some subunits within the organization that may be isolated to achieve a greater degree of rationality when there is a high level of stability on the part of the external environment with which they interact (Thompson, 1967). There are several reasons that would lead organizations to seek greater rationality in some subunits. For example, some subunits have a lower need for information-collection and processing capability because they face a consistent pattern of information in the external environment. In addition, other subunits in the organization face low uncertainty and information-processing demands because this subunit is using particular existing technology or process that matches well with the external environment and can be exploited for a particular period of time (Galbraith, 1973; Hage & Aiken, 1969). Thus, while the overarching goal of organizations is information processing, organizations should look to ensure repeatability for as long as the environment stays stable in those subunits where information processing has been completed and shown positive results (Weick, 1969).

In each case where subunits are pursuing the exploitation of an existing technology or process or where the subunit clearly understands and has accurately responded to a stable set of external environment conditions, the job roles in these subunits require reliable replication for the efficient production of existing products and services (Thompson, 1967). Indeed, the main concern for these subunits should be a focus on organizational structure that increases the consistency of execution of routines, and repetitive processes which ensure the consistent execution of the existing processes and technology that is being exploited. In particular, these subunits of the organization are looking for an organizational form that increases consistency, as mistakes are costly, and deviation from standards is undesirable.

The subunits in this category are clearly looking to exploit the stability in their external environment and this necessitates that employees fully understand and adhere to the defined requirements of their work roles (Galbraith, 1973). There are a number of key KSAs associated with the roles in these types of subunits. First, efficiency and reliability are key capabilities that will drive employees' performance if they are to consistently perform tasks without mistakes. Similarly, employees would be expected to be willing to meet standards and have a strong ability to carry out pre-determined routines with a high level of attention to detail. Because of the

low variability in external conditions, the company would also gain increased efficiency and consistency by keeping decision making at higher levels, increasing the importance of the ability to take and follow directions.

A mechanistic organizational structure is likely to be the best organizational structure for subunits that face low uncertainty and in which the organization is trying to exploit an existing technology or process. In fact, there is empirical evidence that the mechanistic structure is conducive to a strategy in which an organizational subunit is looking to exploit an existing technology or process (Hage, 1980). Specifically, the mechanistic structure involves high centralization, high formality, and the use of vertical communication (Burns & Stalker, 1994; Hage, 1965, 1980). High levels of centralization allow a few individuals at the top of an organization to set precise rules and standards. Vertical communication is then used to alert employees at lower organizational levels of the uniform rules and standards to be followed. A high degree of formalization ensures that employees in a particular position are extremely familiar with the expectations and standards for their role, allowing work roles to be routinized in a way that ensures maximum efficiency and reliable quality (Hage, 1965, 1980). Based on these findings we argue that recruitment and selection systems that match the prescriptions of the mechanistic model will be the best fit to organizations and subunits that face relatively stable environments or that are looking to exploit an existing technology or process.

Based on the above, we propose that organizational subunits with low information uncertainty will achieve the highest level of performance when instituting recruitment and selection practices that match with the mechanistic organizational structure.

Recruitment and selection systems matching with mechanistic structure

As we noted, a mechanistic structure is likely the best fitting organizational structure to support a strategy of exploitation. However, the mechanistic structure is really an archetype and prescription of required elements of an organizational structure rather than an implemented system or set of HR practices. Based on the arguments of contingency theory, it is likely that multiple systems of HR practices exist that match the attributes of the mechanistic structure. Contingency theory holds that there is likely not a single best practice or system that would achieve optimal outcomes across all conditions; instead the best results are achieved by matching the particular system or systems of practices to the environmental or competitive conditions faced by the firm (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Applying this proposition more specifically to recruitment and selection, it is likely that firms can implement different systems of recruitment and selection practices, each of which match with the key attributes of the mechanistic structure. Further, the best results will be obtained by matching the system of recruitment and selection practices to both the internal and external conditions faced by the subunit of employees. For example, research by Baron et al. (2001) suggests that there are at least two unique systems of HR practices – autocratic and bureaucratic – that are mechanistic in nature. Below, we outline these two systems of HR practices and develop specific outlines of the recruitment and selection requirements that would be associated with each.

The autocratic recruitment and selection model

The autocratic model of recruitment and selection, identified by Baron et al. (2001), is one system of management that fits with the definitions of a mechanistic structure as it reflects

a strict centralized managerial philosophy. The autocratic system follows specific philosophical guidelines around entry into the organization, management control, and employee attachment (Baron & Hannan, 2002; Baron et al., 2001). The autocratic model specifies employee selection on the basis of specific task abilities which enables the subunit of the organization to fill job roles with employees who are already qualified in a relevant area. Also matching with a mechanistic structure, subunits following an autocratic management style seek to achieve control of employees through direct managerial supervision of tasks. Further, this style of control would lead to jobs that are narrowly defined in scope and responsibilities; therefore, employees filling these roles are likely to be of lower skill and easily replaceable. Finally, employee attachment in the autocratic model is created through monetary rewards linked to individual performance in a given work role. While we would expect that the individual monetary rewards would motivate employees to achieve specific, measured objectives, we do not expect particularly high levels of employee tenure under the autocratic model. Based on these defining philosophical attributes, as shown in Table 13.1 below, we next identify specific recruitment and selection practices that fit with this HR management system.

Recruitment under the autocratic management philosophy

In terms of the scope of the recruitment effort, organizations and sub-units under this model will focus on recruitment and employment brand building efforts only in the local labor market because they are looking to fill low skilled jobs managed with tight control. Further, the main source of employee affiliation is pay, suggesting that employment brand building efforts should be based on establishing the relative strengths of the pay versus labor market competitors. Because companies following the autocratic model are likely to experience higher turnover

Table 13.1 Components of alternative recruitment and staffing models

Models	*Recruitment and selection practices*
Autocratic	Local recruitment – low-skilled labor sources Continuous recruitment in expectation of high turnover Employment brand based on individual pay Select for skills to perform immediately in job Select for willingness and ability to follow direction
Bureaucratic	Targeted recruitment at labor sources with specialized skills Employment brand based on development opportunities Recruitment and selection are centralized Selection based on skills to perform immediately in job Selection for ability to follow rules and procedures
Commitment	Targeted recruitment at labor sources that match company culture Employment brand based on development opportunities and long-term employment Selection based on fit to company culture and values Selection carried out by peers in position Selection based on adaptiveness and ability to grow with company
Professional	Targeted recruitment at labor sources with specialized skills Employment brand based on challenging work National search and employment brand-building efforts Selection based on certification of specialized skills Selection based on ability to collaborate and work across teams Components of alternative recruitment and staffing models

than those following other management philosophies, there will likely be pressure on the company to continually source applicants to fill openings. Therefore, recruitment is more focused on building a continual stream of applicants than on attracting applicants with specific skill sets or attributes. In other words, recruitment should be focused on attracting a continuous stream of applicants who are able to immediately fill open vacancies, rather than conducting extensive searches for applicants with specific skill sets.

Selection under the autocratic management philosophy

As noted above, companies and subunits that follow an autocratic management philosophy rely on a high degree of constant, direct oversight, resulting in jobs that require limited or easily found skills and abilities. Further, this philosophy would suggest that employees that are hired will be seen as relatively interchangeable and expendable, so the organization is also unlikely to expend resources on employee development. Based on these premises, organizations or subunits under this philosophy will exert little resources on selection activities, because mistakes in selection will be quickly terminated from the role and have limited ability to impact performance because of continual direct oversight. For those that do invest some effort on selection, the selection practices should be focused on two aspects. First, because there will be no investment in employee development and the relatively low skills required, selection practices would be used to test for any specific limited skills or attributes required for the job. Second, because of the style of management, companies should also look to select based on ability and willingness to follow direct supervision. Finally, to maintain tight control, any selection activities will be conducted by the senior managers of the company or subunit.

Based on the above, we propose that organizational subunits with low information uncertainty and low task and role specialization will achieve the highest level of performance when instituting an autocratic recruitment and selection model.

The bureaucratic recruitment and selection model

As with the autocratic model, the bureaucratic model of recruitment and selection is also consistent with the ideals of the mechanistic structure and would create the workforce characteristics that would be supportive of the requirements of a subunit that is exploiting an existing technology or process and/or competing in a stable environment. As defined by Baron et al. (2001), the bureaucratic management philosophy also follows specific guidelines regarding entry into the organization, employee coordination and control, and employee attachment. Organizations following this management philosophy typically have centralized control regarding entry of new employees into the organization and entry decisions emphasize narrow expertise and skills required for a particular role. This type of strict control of entry into the organization clearly fits with the control and formalization of the mechanistic structure.

Employee coordination and control in the bureaucratic model is handled through formal policies and procedures that are strictly adhered to through managerial supervision. The regulation of employees and tasks by management can help to ensure that employees are not straying from organizational routines at the cost of efficiency. Opportunities for development, promotion within functional or departmental roles, and challenging work are the bases for attachment in the bureaucratic model. Promotions within a particular task domain provide rewards for individual performance in a given job. Consequently, we would expect employees working under a bureaucratic model to report greater job involvement and fewer intentions to turnover than employees working under the autocratic management philosophy. The

components of the bureaucratic approach help to ensure that employees in any given role are experts with regard to their particular job and are, therefore, more likely able to efficiently and consistently carry out their tasks. Based on these defining philosophical attributes, we identify specific recruitment and selection practices that fit with the bureaucratic management philosophy.

Recruitment under the bureaucratic management philosophy

Subunits of employees under the bureaucratic model are likely to develop and invest in more advanced recruitment efforts than are their autocratic counterparts. First, in terms of scope, bureaucratic recruiting efforts should span a broader geographical region yet simultaneously be targeted at a specific pool of labor in order to attract applicants with expertise in the specific areas needed for open positions. The philosophy guiding the bureaucratic model calls for less direct supervision of tasks than in the autocratic model and emphasizes the availability of internal development opportunities for employees. While the organization provides training over the long run, new employees should already possess sufficient skills to enter and succeed in their job roles at the time of hire. For these reasons, the attraction of employees with more advanced and specialized skill sets is especially important.

Because of the nature of how this model of management seeks to create employee attachment, companies following the bureaucratic model should look to build an employment brand with a focus on opportunities for challenging work and long-term internal development and promotion. Additionally, bureaucratic organizations and subunits may incorporate an emphasis on order and structure into branding efforts to attract applicants particularly drawn to more organized, controlled work environments. Overall, recruitment should take the form of targeted messages emphasizing challenge and development, directed at a skilled labor pool qualified for the company's current job openings.

Selection under the bureaucratic management philosophy

Selection decisions, like all other significant decisions, are centralized under the bureaucratic model. Hiring procedures are standardized and rule-based and favor candidates whose skill sets best match the requirements of open positions. As noted, bureaucratic units aim to immediately place new hires into their positions with minimal initial training. For this reason and because job tasks are likely to require more complex knowledge and understanding than are job tasks performed by employees in autocratic organizations, the bureaucratic unit is likely to weight the levels and appropriateness of applicants' skill sets heavily. Additionally, because this model relies on employee adherence to organization or subunit standards and managerial oversight is not as close or direct as in the autocratic model, the bureaucratic organization or subunit should consider applicants' ability to follow rules and procedures in selection decisions.

Based on the above, we propose that organizational subunits with low information uncertainty and higher task and role specialization will achieve the highest level of performance when instituting a bureaucratic recruitment and selection model.

Rapidly changing environment and high information-processing uncertainty

Where there is a high degree of uncertainty, organizations need to follow communication-behavior cycles in which participants exchange information and develop interpretations of the

new or changing information to which they are exposed (Weick, 1969). These outcomes require flexibility, creativity, and appropriate mechanisms to handle uncertainty (Hage & Aiken, 1969). Organizations facing this type of external environment must be flexible enough to adapt to the changing demands of their competitive environments in order to meet the unstable and emerging needs of consumers typically through pursuing continuous innovation (Hage, 1965, 1980; Zammuto & O'Connor, 1992). Further, the ability to deliver continuous innovation requires creativity in solutions to environmental demands, which is driven through the exchange and creation of knowledge and investigation of uncharted intellectual territory – tasks typically considered as very high in uncertainty (Hage, 1980).

Employees in a subunit that is more adaptable and innovative must be able to effectively mobilize skills, ideas, and knowledge across departments (Hage, 1965, 1980). Communication and collaboration are effective tools for achieving these objectives of increasing creative efforts by allowing for the incorporation of ideas from diverse perspectives and can enhance information-processing capacities by employing multiple skill sets in problem-solving tasks (Collins & Smith, 2006). The cross-fertilization of ideas across an organization is often most effectively achieved by having employees take active roles in projects in multiple departments. For this boundary-spanning to be most productive, more adaptable organizational subunits must also employ workers with diverse areas of expertise (Hage, 1965).

In addition to free and open collaboration across departments, subunits of employees are also more adaptable and innovative when employees embrace risk-taking attitudes. Without confidence in taking risks, employees are less likely to produce profitable ideas and solutions to problems (Collins & Smith, 2006). In sum, the workforce characteristics most advantageous to a boundary-spanning subunit are open and active cross-departmental communication networks, the possession of unique and diverse skill sets by many employees, and a risk-taking culture that facilitates creative experimentation.

An organic organizational structure appears to be the most effective structure for eliciting the workforce characteristics required by boundary-spanning activities and the need to adapt to rapidly changing environments. For example, empirical research has demonstrated that organizations competing on innovation have fared better with organic-like structures (Damanpour, 1991; Hage, 1965). Organic structures are characterized by low centralization, low formalization, high specialization, and the regular use of horizontal communication throughout the firm (Hage, 1965, 1980; Zammuto & O'Connor, 1992). The characteristics of the organic structure also lead to employees constantly crossing job and departmental boundaries in their everyday work roles and facilitate horizontal communication between employees across the same level of an organization which increases the degree to which information and advice is shared (Hage, 1980; Zammuto & O'Connor, 1992).

The characteristics of the organic structure complement each other and support the level of adaptation and innovation required by subunits facing environments with high levels of uncertainty and change. Specifically, the decentralization of power allows for more department-level decision making, enabling employees at non-managerial levels to contribute more directly to decisions regarding the products and processes on which they have the most expertise and in meeting the changing demands of the respective competitive environments. The use of horizontal communication combined with high levels of employee specialization fosters a creative environment where employees with diverse skill sets can combine and create knowledge freely. The low level of formalization also contributes to the flexible movement of employees and employee knowledge across departmental boundaries and promotes an organization-wide environment of collaboration. In sum, the organic structure facilitates the flexibility, adaptiveness, skill mobilization, and creative problem solving required by an innovation strategy.

Based on the above, we propose that organizational subunits with high information uncertainty will achieve the highest level of performance when instituting recruitment and selection practices that match the organic organizational structure.

Recruitment and selection systems matching organic structure

As we noted, the organic organizational structure is likely the best fitting organizational structure to support subunits facing a high degree of information uncertainty or pursuing a strategy of innovation. As with the mechanistic structure, the organic structure is really an archetype and prescription of required elements of an organizational structure rather than an implemented system or set of HR practices. Further, based on contingency theory, it is likely that there are multiple systems of HR practices that match the attributes of the organic structure, each of which may be a better fit for a particular subunit given other important subunit characteristics. For example, research by Baron and colleagues (Baron & Hannan, 2002; Baron et al., 2001) suggests that there are at least two unique management philosophies – commitment and professional – that are organic in nature. Below, we outline these two management philosophies and develop specific outlines of the recruitment and selection requirements that would be associated with each.

The commitment recruitment and selection model

The commitment model, as identified by Baron and colleagues (Baron et al., 2001), is one management approach that is consistent with the characteristics of an organic structure. As with the other models of management, the commitment model follows a specific set of guidelines regarding organizational entry, employee coordination and control, and employee attachment. In particular, the commitment model aims to facilitate a family-like environment and emphasizes an employer–employee relationship in which long-term commitment to and tenure with the organization are emphasized. Companies following a commitment model of management are looking to attract and select new employees to the organization who fit with the organization's culture. Further, these firms complement attraction and selection based on company-fit by implementing socialization events and regularly held social activities to promote strong, family-like employee relationships throughout the organization.

Firms following the commitment model also look to achieve employee coordination and control through the use of peer feedback and performance management. As an outcome of peer group control, subunits of employees under the commitment model of management will have a work environment that facilitates horizontal communication and decentralization of authority. As noted above, we expect these processes to lead to higher levels of collaboration among employees. Further, collaboration in the commitment model will be based on trust among employees and mutual commitment to the goals of the organization. Finally, the basis for attachment in the commitment model is based on employees' love of their job and work environment and sense of ownership and belonging to the organization as a whole. This form of attachment is driven and facilitated by creating a family-like environment through participation, close-knit and similar cultural fit between employees, and incentive pay that creates an ownership stake in the firm. Because of their close attachment to the firm, we would expect a lower likelihood of employee turnover in the commitment model compared to levels found under other management models.

Recruitment under the commitment management philosophy

The recruiting efforts used by organizations and subunits following the commitment model will aim to attract employees who will fit well with the organization's existing culture and who are likely to remain with the organization for an extended period of time. Subunits following the commitment model will best be served by implementing recruiting initiatives that primarily focus on openings in entry-level positions and are targeted at labor sources that closely match the organizational culture. Because of the nature of employee attachment and organizational entry in the commitment model, companies should look to build an employment brand that focuses on the specific unique aspects of their company culture and the long-term development opportunities available in the organization. This form of employer brand-building effort will help to attract applicants who are the right cultural fit to the organization and help to provide a realistic preview that may lead others who are not a fit to self-select out of the recruitment process.

Selection under the commitment management philosophy

As previously indicated, while other employment models emphasize the importance of employees' knowledge and skills, the primary selection criterion in the commitment model is applicants' fit with organizational culture and values. Because the commitment model places a great emphasis on family-like relationships and trust among employees in the organization, it is important for new employees to naturally fit with existing employees to some extent upon hiring. To help ensure this fit, selection decisions are often made by peer employees, the likely colleagues of potential hires.

An additional consideration in selection in the commitment model is an applicant's ability to adapt and grow with the organization. Job tasks are likely to be modified with the changing demands of the environment. Therefore, applicants who appear able and willing to adapt to the changing needs of the organization are likely to be greatly valued. Finally, the commitment model's emphasis on employee development and extended tenure play an additional role in selection considerations. Organizations following this model are likely to select employees who seem committed to and likely to succeed in a long-term career with the firm. Only through the hiring of this type of employee is an organization able to promote the trust-filled, family-like relationships on which its culture and success are based.

Based on the above, we propose that organizational subunits with high information uncertainty and lower role and task complexity will achieve the highest levels of performance when instituting a commitment recruitment and selection model.

The professional recruitment and selection model

The professional model (originally called the engineering model by Baron and colleagues) also appears to be reflective of the organic structure and supportive of the employee outcomes desirable under an innovation strategy. Based on the work of Baron et al. (2001), the professional model specifies selection based on specific task abilities, peer-group control, and employment attachment through challenging work. The professional model is characterized by loose definitions of job roles, employee relationships based on expertise and task interdependence, and high levels of employee flexibility and discretion. The professional model's specification of selection on the basis of specific task abilities promotes the high levels of specialization that are characteristic of the organic structure and fruitful for the cross-fertilization of diverse ideas which drives the innovation approach. This basis for selection is also likely to result in an

employee base with high levels of industry experience, as employees who have spent the most time in the industry are most likely to have developed the advanced skill sets sought by organizations using this approach. Additionally, selection for task abilities is likely to result in greater productive task conflict among employees, as diverse functional and educational backgrounds lend themselves to different strengths and perspectives in problem-solving contexts.

The use of peer-group control requires and facilitates the horizontal communication and decentralization of power implicit in an organic structure. Horizontal communication is likely to create increased opportunities for collaboration, and involvement in peer control mechanisms is likely to instill greater interest among employees in other employees' work. The attachment mechanism of the professional model, challenging work, is consistent with the multitude of novel tasks in the innovation strategy. Additionally, it reflects the strong task focus that is prevalent in an professional model approach. Taken together, the various dimensions of the professional model select and connect employees primarily for the work they perform. Hence, it is likely that employees working in the context of this model are likely to report greater job involvement than employees working under other models of management.

Recruitment under the professional management philosophy

The recruitment efforts of organizations following the professional model are likely to be widespread in scope and well funded. Because organizational success under this model depends on the diversity and quality of employees' skill sets, organizations following this model should invest heavily in recruitment efforts directed at labor sources with advanced, specialized skills. National brand-building efforts are likely to be used in an attempt to attract the most skilled applicants from a wide variety of specialties. Companies should also focus the message of their employment branding along the dimension of the challenging work offered by the organization in order to better attract top talent to the firm.

Selection under the professional management philosophy

Selection under the professional model is based on applicants' specialized knowledge and skill sets. While recruiting efforts are aimed at attracting specialized talent to apply, selection decisions consider which applicants' skill sets best complement and uniquely contribute to the skill base of existing employees in the firm. Therefore, organizations following the professional model are likely to invest substantially in the certification of applicants' skills. Additionally, organizations under this model may consider applicants' abilities to collaborate with colleagues, as collaboration is essential to the cross-fertilization of ideas and knowledge required for these organizations' success.

In contrast to organizations following the commitment model, organizations following the professional model do not invest substantially in skill-specific employee development and do not expect particularly long tenure by employees. Therefore, organizations under the professional model are more focused on selecting for skill sets immediately required for the completion of current business goals and that match with current market needs. Instead, these firms are likely to tolerate and even encourage turnover among employees whose skill sets are no longer required because of changes in the external environment. In fact, turnover of this variety helps to ensure that the organization is able to fill open jobs with new talent that has skills and knowledge that match with the company's dynamic market conditions. Finally, firms following the professional model should also look to select employees based on their ability to collaborate and work across teams as this is an essential component to the knowledge sharing required to adapt and innovate.

Based on the above, we propose that organizational subunits with high information uncertainty and higher levels of role and task complexity will achieve the highest levels of performance when instituting a professional *recruitment and selection model.*

Conclusions

The goal of this chapter was to provide a new, macro-level model of strategic staffing to close the gap in our knowledge regarding how practices within recruitment and selection systems can work to provide companies with a competitive advantage. In particular, we were looking to identify multiple systems of recruitment and selection systems that would be the right fit for attracting and selecting employees with the right KSAs that fit the strategy or business context faced by particular organizations. To meet this challenge, we felt that it was first necessary to identify groups of employees where there are potentially meaningful differences necessitating different recruitment and selection systems. We drew on research in the area of organizational theory (e.g., Thompson, 1967; Weick, 1969) to make the argument that companies should create distinct subunits of employees based on the extent of information equivocality in their jobs.

Further, we noted that some subunits of employees will experience relatively low information uncertainty either because of stability in the external business environment or because the company is looking to exploit an existing technology or process on a continuing basis. In contrast, other subunits of employees face high information uncertainty because of the dynamism in the external environment and the resulting need for continued innovation and change internally. Drawing on emerging research in the area of strategic human resource management, we went on to argue that unique systems of recruitment and selection practices are necessary to create a workforce with the requisite level of knowledge, skills, abilities, and motivation to match the differing levels of information equivocality faced by the subunits of employees. We went on to argue that recruitment and selection systems that match the mechanistic organizational structure are the best fit for subunits of employees facing low information uncertainty; whereas recruitment and selection systems that match the organic organizational structure are the best fit for subunits of employees facing high informational uncertainty.

Finally, based on contingency theory, we noted that there are multiple systems of recruitment and selection systems that may match the employee workforce requirements created by information equivocality depending on the extent to which tasks within the subunit differ in terms of complexity. We went on to present four models of management – two that match a mechanistic structure and two that match an organic structure – as a basis for identifying specific systems of recruitment and selection practices. First, we presented the autocratic model of recruitment and selection and argued that this is the best fit for subunits that face low information equivocality and lower role complexity. Second, we presented the bureaucratic model of recruitment and selection and argued that this model is the best fit for subunits facing low information equivocality and higher levels of role and task complexity. Third, we presented the commitment model of recruitment and selection and put forth the argument that this model is the best fit for subunits facing high levels of information equivocality and lower levels of role and task complexity. Finally, we presented the professional model of recruitment and selection and argued that the professional model is the best fit for subunits that face high levels of both information equivocality and role complexity.

While we feel that this chapter helps to provide an important stride forward in terms of macro-level theory for staffing, there are a number of important areas for future research

in this field. First, there is a great need for empirical research on the effects of recruitment and selection at the macro-level of analysis. In particular, we feel that it is critical to test the ideas put forward in this chapter in order to empirically test our contingency argument that particular systems of recruitment and selection will be more efficacious given the nature of the information equivocality and role and task complexity faced by a particular subunit of employees. However, there is such a lack of empirical research at the macro-level of analysis that any empirical work examining the effects of recruitment and selection on key organizational outcomes would be welcome. Second, there is a great need for continuing theoretical development of our understanding of how systems of recruitment and selection practices affect firm performance and firm-level employee outcomes (e.g., human capital, employee engagement). For example, we would encourage researchers to identify additional systems of recruitment and selection practices. Further, more research and thinking is needed to identify employee profiles and outcomes that may be a match to other organizational conditions and then identify the matching systems of recruitment and selection practices.

We believe that we have presented an interesting set of propositions to encourage readers to think about and theorize the effects of recruitment and selection at a more strategic, macro-level of analysis. However, we strongly encourage readers to view our chapter as a start in moving the field of strategic staffing forward and to take this as a challenge to continuing pushing forward our knowledge of how different systems of recruitment and selection practices affect firm performance through the workforce attributes of different subunits of employees.

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