ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Recruitment in personnel psychology and beyond: Where we've been working, and where we might work next

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Abstract

Effective recruitment of talent remains extremely critical. As part of *Personnel Psychology's* 75-year anniversary celebration, we review the state of recruitment research, emphasizing the journal's extensive contributions to this literature. Specifically, we review contributions and opportunities in terms of the recruitment outcomes that have been studied, theoretical progress that has occurred, and methodologies that have been employed to inform scholarship and practice. Throughout, we particularly highlight trends that have occurred over the years in the pages of *Personnel Psychology*. We conclude with several implications for practice and directions for ongoing recruitment research.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen unprecedented transformations in labor market dynamics. Between the changing values and expectations of those in the labor market (Ellis, 2022), social media use (e.g., Carpentier et al., 2019), and flexible work arrangements in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Samuel, 2021), among other notable changes, these seismic shifts are both real and enduring in present times. Hence, the importance of generating scientific knowledge to guide effective recruitment of talent is more critical than ever.

In reference to this special issue's celebration of *Personnel Psychology's* 75-year legacy of contributions to scientific management, one needs to look only at its recent pages to unearth many pressing challenges accenting the need to effectively recruit talent. For example, the 2020 behavioral ethics special issue portends a need for firms to portray their ethical footprint to job seekers. In the corporate social responsibility (CSR) space, Ng et al. (2019)

suggests encouraging job seekers to perceive company CSR efforts earlier in their job searches. Moreover, regarding what has been termed the "affective revolution" (e.g., Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017), recent work has natural implications for recruiter-job seeker interactions (e.g., Bartels et al., 2022; Liao et al., 2022). Thus, the task of studying recruitment is clearly substantial and expanding.

Throughout its 75-year history, and particularly since 1980, *Personnel Psychology* has contributed prominently to the recruitment conversation, in areas such as person-environment fit (e.g., Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005); diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI; e.g., Dutz et al., 2022; Hollenbeck et al., 1987); the candidate experience in terms of applicant reactions; (e.g., Hausknecht et al., 2004), and brand image (e.g., Collins & Han, 2004). One of *Personnel Psychology's* many recruitment contributions, cited over 400 times,[1] was visionary 10 years ago:

> The recruitment process in the next decade and beyond will be about providing prospective talent with the information they desire to make decisions about their job pursuit and job choices…and striking the balance between an adequate supply of qualified talent and avoiding the costs associated with generating too many or unqualified applicants (Uggerslev et al., 2012, p. 598).

Similar to what reviews in other prominent journals have noted (e.g., Ployhart et al., 2017), recruitment research did not emerge in the pages of *Personnel Psychology* to much extent until the 1980s, likely in concert with increased employee qualifications and mobility, and decreased company loyalty. In that year, Rynes et al. (1980) provided the first known recruitment review, concluding that "recruiting representatives, administrative practices, and procedures used to evaluate applicant qualifications are all potentially important influences on job seeker attitudes and behaviors" (p. 529), but also that the field lacked sound theory and relied largely on undergraduate samples. Including and since that landmark article, *Personnel Psychology* recruitment research has been cited more than 17,000 times, over 1500 more than the next-closest top tier journal. Average citations per recruitment article do not significantly differ from any other top tier outlet. However, of all the articles published in *Personnel Psychology* between 1980-present, across disciplines, 4.2% are recruitment-related, versus between only 0.6% and 1.4% of articles published in other top outlets. In the past 10 years, recruitment-related publications in *Personnel Psychology* have remained nearly constant at 4.0% of all articles, compared with a slight drop among other top outlets (between 0.7% and 1.4% from 1980–2011 to between 0.3% and 1.2% from 2012-present).[2] Recruitment related sessions and posters at the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology conference were fairly steady between 2004 and 2019.[3] Combined, this might suggest that scholarly interest has remained steady whereas it is possible that journal acceptances have decreased slightly. We hope our review can reinvigorate if not enhance the prominence of recruitment scholarship going forward.

Though recruitment scholarship did not take off until the 1980s, it is interesting to note that the second empirical article in *Personnel Psychology's* very first issue was titled "Testing programs draw better applicants" (Stromberg, 1948). Foreshadowing the tradition of applicant reactions and applicant pool quality research that emerged several decades later, he found that the existence of testing programs as part of a selection process yielded better applicants, while discouraging poorer ones. Later that year, Jurgensen (1948) authored a piece titled, "What job applicants look for in a company." Examining men and women applicants, he found what we might term "results of yesteryear:" women were more interested in temporary work pleasantness factors, whereas men were more interested in lifelong work to support their families. While it would be 27 years until other recruitment related articles appeared (Arvey et al., 1975; Rogers & Sincoff, 1978), *Personnel Psychology* has been at the center of recruitment research throughout its formative and ongoing years, from 1980 to the present. We will expand upon *Personnel Psychology's* role in the larger recruitment conversation throughout this article.

We also recognize the broader work that has come before this review. Indeed, in the past 25 years, more than 10 recruitment reviews have appeared in many of the top outlets in the field. Various useful and intriguing ideas have flowed from these reviews, spawning additional research. We intend no duplication of these efforts; instead, we see our review as timely, in that it has been over five years since Ployhart et al.'s (2017) brief anniversary recruitment review in *Journal of Applied Psychology*, and a decade since other major reviews (e.g., Breaugh, 2013; Dineen & Allen,

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2013; Harold et al., 2013). In the meantime, we have seen explosive digital growth and shifts in the aforementioned recruitment landscape. We also recognize the extensive work in employee selection, yet we maintain a firm boundary between recruitment and selection, leaving the special issue selection review in Van Iddekinge and colleagues' capable hands.

Despite all the significant progress made in recruitment scholarship, considerable work remains, as the science continues to lag behind practice. This suggests a need to both inventory the work accomplished to date and propose future work that can quickly guide ongoing efforts to study trends as they occur. To guide our efforts, we define recruitment as "the actions organizations take to generate job applicant pools, maintain viable applicants, and encourage desired candidates to join those organizations" (Dineen & Allen, 2013, p. 382).

We strive to complement the rich prior reviews by examining the scientific underpinnings of recruitment. That is, we critically evaluate the extent to which the research comes together as a field of scientific inquiry instead of merely providing a straightforward summary of findings or a chronology of stages, as many past reviews have. Thus, our review will proceed as follows. First, we evaluate key outcomes that have been studied under a recruitment lens. Second, we cover major theoretical approaches that have guided recruitment research. Third, we review primary methods of inquiry, highlighting some we view as particularly promising. Finally, we outline practical implications that can be gleaned at this stage of the literature's maturity, and offer several broad future research directions. Throughout, we strive not to comprehensively cover each recruitment article published; rather we selectively review the literature, providing relevant examples throughout and emphasizing articles published in *Personnel Psychology*.[4]

2 | KEY RECRUITMENT OUTCOMES

We begin our review by critically evaluating recruitment outcomes studied to date. We focus not only on outcomes for the job seeker such as attraction and application decisions, but also those for the organization, such as overall applicant pool and DEI outcomes. Thus, our review strives to encapsulate the two key stakeholders in the employee-employer relationship.

2.1 | Job seeker-related outcomes

Unlike most other HR areas, the recruitment process involves several serially dependent sub-outcomes throughout its lifecycle. For example, before a job seeker will ever consider applying for a job or accepting an offer, they must be initially attracted to the opportunity and have intentions to apply. Then, one must apply before they can remain an active applicant, receive a formal job offer, and then ponder whether to accept the offer. Once they have accepted an offer and begun to work in the organization, the outcomes they achieve or their tenure may have implications for the utility of the recruitment approaches originally used.

Across this lifecycle, we continue to see a wide variety of job seeker-related outcomes studied. For example, Uggerslev et al. (2012) notes that recruitment research tends to emphasize attitudinal and intentions outcomes more than behavioral outcomes, and we believe this is still true. Theirs was a critical *Personnel Psychology* contribution to the recruitment conversation and reported, for example, that perceived fit most strongly related to attraction, but curiously not to job choice. Recruiter behaviors, recruitment process characteristics, and hiring expectancies followed in order as the next most predictive factors, whereas perceived alternatives were not a significant predictor of attraction. Chapman et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis noted the strength of organizational image effects and suggested that smaller job choice effects may be due to range restriction in those still interested at that stage. They noted that incremental fit effects are lower, suggesting that it is perhaps not as important to target well-fitting individuals as to provide the right mix of job and organizational information and use a good process.

2.1.1 | Attraction

At the front of the recruitment process, job seeker attraction continues to be an oft-studied outcome, more so in other scholarly outlets (e.g., Swider et al., 2015; Turban & Greening, 1997; Turban & Keon, 1993). In line with the rise of employer branding approaches to recruitment, Lievens and Highhouse's (2003) landmark symbolic/instrumental framework study, cited over 1200 times, found incremental prediction of symbolic employer images on attraction. Symbolic images also served to differentiate companies from competitors which highlights organizational identity as critical to attracting potential talent (Banks et al., 2016; Griepentrog et al., 2012). Building on these insights, recent research has also highlighted specific mechanisms like person-organization (PO) fit and signaling that help to link organizational activities like CSR to attraction (Jones et al., 2014). Furthermore, other research has also emphasized characteristics to do with the content of the message and the medium used to communicate it like media richness, source credibility, diagnosticity, and fit feedback as other key processes associated with attraction (Cable & Yu, 2006; Dineen et al., 2002, 2007; McFarland & Kim, 2021).

2.1.2 | Intentions

Personnel Psychology scholarship has tended to address job pursuit or application intentions to a relatively greater extent than attraction. Closely linked to the above studies on attraction, such intentions have been predicted by social identity concerns as well as first-hand experiences of injustice (Rupp et al., 2013). Consistent with a life cycle view of recruitment, attraction has also been positioned as a mediator between various antecedents like CSR-linked values featured in ads as well as job seeker personality (e.g., openness) and pursuit intentions (Gully et al., 2013; Phillips et al., 2014). For example, Gully et al. (2013) found that social responsibility values portrayed in recruitment ads interacted with a relevant individual difference (the desire to have significant impact through work) to positively predict fit, attraction, and subsequent pursuit intentions. Similarly, Phillips et al. (2014) found that job seeker global openness and willingness to travel globally interacted with business needs for travel to impact pursuit intentions, via perceived fit and attraction.

2.1.3 | Application decisions

Unlike attitudinal outcomes like attraction or intentions that are quite similar and require little if any investment on the part of job seekers - particularly participants asked to act as job seekers in experimental settings - application decisions require some level of effort and commitment (Harold et al., 2013). Work examining this outcome reports significant effects for recruitment activities like publicity, advertising, and word-of-mouth (Collins, 2007; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009). Other activities associated with recruitment like the provision of early practice employment tests and explanations in rejection letters also increase the likelihood of application and re-application behavior respectively (Campion et al., 2019; Gilliland et al., 2001). The mechanisms linking these practices to application decisions are similar in some respects to those highlighted for attraction and intentions outcomes above. In particular, perceptions of organization and job-based fit as well as employer brands, engendered via appropriate combinations of high versus low involvement recruitment practices and prior firm knowledge, have been identified as key mediators in this process (Collins, 2007; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Dineen et al., 2018).

2.1.4 | Withdrawal

Another important recruitment outcome is when a job applicant withdraws from the process before a job offer or rejection decision is made. While limited research has studied continued attraction or withdrawal during the

maintenance stage, scholars who do find interesting results. Early research first pinpointed practical issues, such as delays encountered between initial application and selection procedures increasing applicant withdrawal (Arvey et al., 1975). Furthermore, candidates that withdraw during the hiring process tend to have more negative views of the employer organization as well as lower expected commitment to the job. Perceived fit, identity, social and family support, and the presence of other job options also appear to affect withdrawal behavior (Griepentrog et al., 2012; Ryan et al., 2000; Schmit & Ryan, 1997). More recent research has further highlighted the importance of justice perceptions developed through interactions with employers during the recruitment process which serve to reduce uncertainty regarding work relationships upon joining the organization (Walker et al., 2013). Moreover, applicants who highly identify with the recruiting organization in terms of sharing aspects of the prospective employer's characteristics with their own personal identity are less likely to withdraw (Griepentrog et al., 2012).

2.1.5 | Job choice

Moving to more consequential recruitment outcomes requiring binary decision making, a few studies have addressed job offer acceptance intentions (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Liden & Parsons, 1986). Beyond acceptance intentions, and arguably one of the most consequential outcomes, actual job choice is difficult to study given that range restriction occurs naturally as job seeker characteristics are confined only to those who have offers. Overall, recruitment characteristics seem to have a small impact on these later stage outcomes. For example, Maurer et al. (1992) and Powell (1984) both found that job attributes predicted likelihood of acceptance better than recruiter characteristics and behavior. Other studies also found meager support for the effects of recruitment practices on later stage acceptance and actual job choice (Powell, 1991; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987). Hausknecht et al.'s (2004) meta-analysis found that a positive view of selection processes relates to stronger acceptance intentions and recommending the employer to others. Finally, McKay and Avery (2006) provided a conceptual model of racioethnic differences and job acceptance decisions following site visits.

With recruitment being an extended process, significant insight has been gained through longitudinal approaches capable of capturing its richness and dynamism. In their landmark study cited over 1100 times to date, Rynes et al. (1991) highlight the powerful influence of timing delays between recruitment phases that generate negative inferences of prospective employers, especially for the most qualified job seekers who end up taking other offers when delays are too pronounced. Similar insights on the importance of timeliness have been reported recently, suggesting that job offers that are extended earlier end up being accepted at a greater rate for student job seekers. In contrast, later offers yield quicker decisions. These effects were, however, not observed for experienced job seekers. Hence, quicker offers to students led to either relatively quick acceptances or long decision times ending in rejections (Becker et al., 2010).

In another well-cited article, Cable and Judge (1996) studied job seeker PO fit from early job search through job choice intentions and into early job tenure, finding continued fit effects, beyond job attribute attractiveness, on intended choices and post-entry attitudes. Recent longitudinal evidence also suggests that applicant initial preferences have an inordinate effect on eventual job choice (Swider & Steed, 2021). This has important implications for firm recruitment efforts to be "first to market"; that is, whatever recruitment information reaches job seekers first may carry more weight in eventual job choice, even if the second opportunity is somewhat (but not severely) better in an objective sense. This is potentially even more critical given the explosion of online information availed to job seekers about job opportunities. Finally, Uggerslev et al. (2012) found that recruiter behaviors mattered more in the first two recruitment stages, but not for job choice. Conversely, organizational characteristics linked more strongly to maintaining applicant status. Recruitment process factors mattered more at later stages, perhaps because there is greater variance in such practices then. However, job characteristics best predicted ultimate job choice.

2.1.6 | Post-hire outcomes

Other recruitment studies have assessed distal outcomes that occur post-hire. Most prominently, much of the RJP tradition has assessed outcomes such as turnover, with mixed results. While Reilly et al. (1981) offered a more pessimistic view of RJP effects, Wanous (1989) argued that utility analyses suggest that RJPs can still lead to sizeable employee-replacement cost savings. He outlines how organizations can best implement RJPs and therefore capitalize on those benefits. Research has further highlighted the intervening mechanisms that underlie RJP effects. In particular, RJPs increase the chances of met expectations for job seekers who eventually become employees through alleviating perceived organization concerns and encouraging more effective coping mechanisms (Hom et al., 1998). A more recent meta-analysis also highlighted a signaling theory perspective wherein RJPs reduce voluntary turnover through engendering perceptions of employer honesty (Earnest et al., 2011).

Similar research has also looked at the usage of various recruitment sources and their impact on post-hire outcomes. Such investigations provided support for what is termed the "individual differences" hypothesis (Barber, 1998; Breaugh & Starke, 2000), such that different recruitment sources tend to reach different applicant populations. Less support has been observed for a competing "realism hypothesis," also known as a prescreening effect such that, for example, for referrals, the referrer will pre-screen who they refer, such that referral quality is better (Taylor & Schmidt, 1983). An important contemporary question here involves whether the individual differences hypothesis remains relevant in today's largely digitalized context of job search where most job seekers have access to many recruitment information sources, particularly online. Research has also honed in on specific sources like employee referrals, looking at referrer characteristics as a predictor of referral's turnover and performance. Pertinently, hires from high-performing referrers performed better on the job but also had higher turnover likelihood. Longer-tenured referrers also tended to recommend better performing hires (Pieper, 2015). Despite these insights, an overall dearth of work studying longer term recruitment outcomes remains.

2.1.7 | Summary

While firm conclusions remain elusive when it comes to predicting these various job seeker-related outcomes, it does seem apparent that identity-related concerns are evident, such as the importance job seekers place on symbolic characteristics and fit early in the recruitment life-cycle (e.g., when assessing attraction and pursuit intentions). Process-related issues such as recruiter disposition, media richness, and perceived process fairness also seem critical. Cutting across these issue categories is the importance of organizational trustworthiness during recruitment, encapsulated in Klotz et al.'s (2013) literature review on this topic. We believe this holds significant potential for understanding how employer engagement during recruitment occurs through developing relationships with future talent. Similar trustworthiness themes are found in Slaughter et al.'s (2014) research on belief confidence, both as an outcome and moderator of effects of recruiter characteristics/behaviors on changes in organizational image. When belief confidence is lower, job seekers are more amenable to these effects.

For actual application decisions, macro firm-level publicity concerns appear to come into play, but for similar identity-based reasons. Identity and process-related concerns continue through the middle stages wherein job seekers have applied but are at risk of withdrawing from recruitment processes. In this stage, as well as at the job choice stage, timeliness also appears to emerge as critical, and we believe this will only become more so as job seeker access to information and mobility continues to increase.

Some final takeaways we believe we can tentatively offer are that recruiter and organizational characteristics tend to yield attraction and continued attraction, but it is ultimately job characteristics, as well as these timeliness issues, that best close the deal at the job choice stage. Regarding longer-term outcomes, it still appears that greater realism at earlier recruitment stages translates into employee longevity once on the job. We encourage researchers to continue

embracing these critical topics, emphasizing objective behavioral outcomes (e.g., application decisions, withdrawal, job choice) over attitudinal ones.

2.2 | Organization-focused outcomes

Ever since Carlson et al.'s (2002) foundational call to examine job applicant quality, and De Corte's (1996) utility analysis study taking into account applicant pool quality from various recruitment sources when examining selection process utility, many have claimed the importance of applicant pool quality, but few have actually addressed this critical outcome. Rynes et al. (1997) provided one of the first attempts, studying a more generalized "success with experienced hiring" outcome measure. Though finding small effects, they did find that perceived success in hiring experienced workers was associated with greater use of effective recruitment sources, older work forces, and more competitive salary offers. In a later breakthrough and oft-cited study, Collins and Han (2004) examined both applicant pool quality and quantity. They found that low involvement recruitment practices (e.g., general ads, sponsorships) influence applicant pool quality and quantity only when advertising and reputation are lower. When these are higher, high involvement practices (e.g., detailed ads with information on the employer and jobs, employee endorsements) have more of an effect. This followed earlier work demonstrating the effects of firm reputation on applicant pool quantity and the selection of higher quality applicants (Turban & Cable, 2003), as well as applicant pool homogeneity (e.g., Bretz et al., 1989).

More recent studies highlight characteristics of the recruitment message and how providing ordered information according to job seeker preferences, as well as feedback on potential fit led to fewer but better objectively fitting applicants (Dineen & Noe, 2009; Schmidt et al., 2015). Employer brands have also been linked to higher quality applicant pools, where Best Places to Work (BPTW) certifications displayed significant positive effects among smaller firms especially when industry jobs were scarcer (Dineen & Allen, 2016). Work also emphasizes the influence of timing of recruitment engagement when it comes to occupation-specific applicant pools. Specifically, reaching applicants through sources that provide detailed information on jobs early in an educational path (e.g., high school) urged them to invest more in their occupation-specific human capital, creating higher quality applicant pools (Campion et al., 2017). Lastly, it is important not only to garner high quality applicants, but also to avoid overqualified applicants, as some have found negative outcomes for overqualified workers (e.g., individual well-being, job performance, turnover; Simon et al., 2019).

Overall, we believe applicant pool quality is and will continue to be one of the most critical recruitment outcomes going forward. In terms of some key takeaways, it appears important to try to match organizations' advertising approaches to what job seekers likely already know about the organization, as well as to provide useful information to job seekers to aid them in making good application decisions. We also recognize a key challenge we believe will continue to be critical. Specifically, true pool quality cannot be known until after hires begin working in jobs and performance levels are known. Moreover, quality can mean very different things across companies (Boudreau & Rynes, 1985). In many cases, pool quality has been assessed perceptually using single company representatives (e.g., Dineen & Allen, 2016; Rynes et al., 1997), although others have paired this with more objective indicators (e.g., GPA, work experience; Collins & Han, 2004). We believe one way forward is for researchers to focus on yield ratio; that is, what percentage of applicants eventually proceed to the job offer stage (and conversely, what percentage of applicants organizations must reject). In addition, the well-cited *Personnel Psychology* exchange on measurement error associated with informant responding (Gerhart et al., 2000; Huselid & Becker, 2000) seems highly relevant to choices recruitment researchers face in this regard, and we encourage researchers to fully embrace this debate and develop better ways to assess this. Finally, we highlight the continued need for more attention to business/organizational unit outcomes and to studying recruitment outcomes linked to firm competitive advantage that organizational decision makers will buy into (Ployhart, 2006).

2.3 | Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) outcomes

Another important outcome category comprising both individual and organizational levels is DEI. Several studies, many in *Personnel Psychology*, have specifically addressed applicant pool DEI-related outcomes. In one of the earlier studies, Kirnan et al. (1989) found that women and African Americans used formal recruiting sources (e.g., employment agencies, newspaper ads) more frequently compared to men, non-minorities, and Hispanics. However, informal recruiting resources including employee referrals yielded higher quality applicants and more successful hires across all groups. This is in line with the prescreening hypothesis that job incumbent referrers are able to screen potential applicants and recommend only the best because they know the job better. McFarland and Kim's (2021) recent research found, consistent with the homophily principle, that non-white job seekers used less diagnostic recruitment sources overall, reducing minority attraction and thus explaining DEI shortcomings. For example, white individuals tended to use diagnostic sources such as word of mouth more, likely because such information is more available to them through their social networks. Yet, perhaps their most important finding was that accrued recruitment source diagnosticity mediated the relationship between race, and performance in tests of listening and knowledge.

Another study using homophily theory (Kazmi et al., 2021) further highlighted the importance of minority representation in hiring decision making, and its implications for applicant pools. Specifically, search committees chaired by women and with greater women representation produced more women applicants. These patterns were even more pronounced for underrepresented minorities (URMs). Women and URMs were also more actively engaged in ways to reach out to a more diverse set of applicants compared to men and non-URMs. Finally, in line with the increased attention on employer branding, Avery and McKay (2006) reviewed integrated impression management, marketing, and social psychological approaches to outline specific tactics for employers to use in the attraction of women and ethnic minority talent. Such tactics could be evidenced in the content of job ads. In fact, research has also observed that agentic wording in job advertisements (e.g., promoting typically male dominated strengths such as achievement and taking charge) was linked to enhanced expectations of men in the jobs, and, in turn, less women applicants due to their reduced sense of belonging (cf. Hentschel et al., 2021).

While it is important to attract URMs to apply for jobs, it is perhaps even more important to maintain their interest during later recruitment stages. To this end, Schmit and Ryan (1997) found higher withdrawal incidences among URMs, which they attributed to URM feelings of underqualification, and personal reasons that included, among other things, tests for the job in question occurring on Mother's Day. Similarly, even though URMs reported higher acceptance intentions at earlier stages in Griepentrog et al.'s (2012) work, they were ultimately more likely to withdraw. Along with the above work on URM representation on hiring committees, McKay and Avery's (2006) work may shed some light on this pattern, indicating that recruitment process signals could be a factor, such as discrimination cues which may occur post-application. Campion et al.'s (2019) work further suggests the benefits of practice tests to perhaps mitigate the underqualification concerns identified by Schmit and Ryan (1997).

Thus, overall, making more diagnostic sources available to minority job seekers, as well as practice test opportunities, may be key to unlocking better test performance, increasing qualification perceptions and thereby leading to more robust selection of minorities. Organizations should also strive to increase information source access for minorities, as well as better-balance search committee and recruitment message representation.

3 | THEORETICAL APPROACHES

We next review theoretical approaches to how the previously discussed outcomes are affected during recruitment. To structure this section, we propose an organizing framework based on the level of analyses and medium used during the recruitment process. We also recognize how *Personnel Psychology* has progressed in terms of theory building and

conceptual development. As one illustration of increased theory building emphasis, empirical articles have comprised significantly more pre-methods section (i.e., theory building) pages from 2000-present (9.26), compared with 1980–1999 (4.86; $t = 4.91$; $p < .001$).[5]

3.1 | Levels of analysis

3.1.1 | Individual level theory

Objective and subjective factors theory (Behling et al., 1968) help to describe attributes that influence job choice (Harold et al., 2013). Factors like pay, location, and advancement opportunities are considered objective because they can be measured as such. Job seekers hence weigh the respective pros and cons associated with job opportunities based on these objective factors when deciding which jobs are most desirable. However, subsequent evidence also suggests that psychological need fulfillment can be more influential compared to objective factors when it comes to job choice (Yu, 2014). Thus, subjective factors dealing with more perceptual and social constructs like autonomy, prestige, and security were argued to play a more influential role in determining attraction relative to objective factors due to their ability to address these emotional and psychological needs.

The role of job seeker perceptions and subjective job attributes is further emphasized in image theory (Beach, 1990), which describes how individuals interpret job attributes and organizational environments encountered during recruitment. Individuals have desired images in terms of what jobs should be like, relying on these images to evaluate and weight attributes about encountered job alternatives, to narrow their choice set of potential jobs. For example, Walker et al. (2011) found weaker effects of web site characteristics on organizational image among more familiar firms. This highlights prior familiarity as a critical issue in recruitment research that is often downplayed. In essence, the desired image is used to frame and interpret information about jobs when assessing organizational attraction (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012).

A more recent focus on sensemaking that occurs during recruitment draws on signaling theory, which describes job seekers as reliant on environmental cues and employer behaviors during their recruitment experience to develop expectations about what it would be like to work for that organization (Connelly et al., 2011). Originally developed to understand how organizations use salient job seeker details (e.g., GPA) to infer suitability, recruitment research has employed signaling theory to explain how job seekers interpret experiences, such as interactions with recruiters, employer timeliness, or perceived selection process fairness, as symbolic pieces of information used to draw inferences (Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Rynes et al., 1991; Smither et al., 1993). Thus, because job seekers generally have limited information on a prospective employer, they engage in sensemaking (Gully et al., 2013; Turban & Greening, 1997; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Overall, individual-level recruitment theory indicates that both objective and subjective factors matter for attracting talent. The latter is further subject to the cognitive processing of both current target employer knowledge as well as interpretations of information signals via observed behavior of recruiting employers and their representatives.

3.1.2 | Organizational level theory

Other theories adopt the perspective of organizations in their role as employers (e.g., Rynes & Barber, 1990). Although significant research at the organizational level has focused on specific recruitment practices and information sources, most of it has evaluated the effectiveness of recruitment means without testing specific theoretical predictions (Powell, 1984; Rynes & Boudreau, 1986; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987). The incorporation of branding concepts from the marketing field represented a shift toward focusing on the psychological representation of employers in the minds of potential talent that they hope to attract (Cable & Turban, 2001). The key components of employer knowledge that

contribute to the value of an employer brand comprise employer familiarity, reputation, and image, and have guided research attempting to link recruitment practices to attraction via the influence of employer brand equity (Collins & Han, 2004; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003).

A similar line of research has adopted a broader strategic lens to understand tactics that employers use to shape how they are viewed by potential talent. Drawing on classic research on impression management, organizational impression management (OIM) outlines proactive, assertive, and reactive defensive tactics as means by which impression management activities influence how job seekers think about employer organizations (Mohamed et al., 1999; Yu, 2019). Avery and McKay (2006) have specifically employed this framework to explain how certain OIM tactics can be particularly effective for developing employer images suited to attracting minority and women job applicants. Hence, although pitched at the firm level, these theories also highlight the importance of cognitive representations of employers in the form of brands and images when predicting recruitment outcomes.

3.1.3 | Multilevel theory

Other theories are multilevel. For example, Schneider's (1987) widely cited (over 7000 times) ASA framework proposes a three-stage process outlining the key role of attraction during the recruitment process. That is, ASA proposes that attraction is driven by similarity or congruence in terms of matching goals or values between the job seeker and the recruiting organization. Subsequently, through their recruitment and selection procedures, employers also end up selecting or choosing people who share these common attributes. Finally, those who feel that they do not share these characteristics will leave. Ultimately, the ASA framework proposes that organizations grow increasingly more homogenous through repeated iterations of this ASA process over time (Rynes et al., 1997).

A perspective related to the ASA and prominently featured in *Personnel Psychology* is PO fit (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; over 13,000 citations). Based on fundamental ideas of interactional psychology, theories falling under this perspective argue that attraction and associated behaviors potentially leading to an employment relationship result from actual or perceived compatibility between aspects of the job seeker and potential employer. It is multilevel because it considers both the individual in terms of disposition (e.g., personality), psychological (e.g., needs and values), and ability related dimensions; and environment aspects like organizational culture, rewards, and job demands (Judge & Bretz, 1992). These theories have spawned research establishing how PO fit drives organizational and job attraction and choice from a job seeker perspective (Uggerslev et al., 2012). They have also explained how recruiters and employers evaluate the suitability of potential hires (Dutz et al., 2022; Rynes et al., 1997). A key takeaway from the levels of analysis discussion is thus the need to model what is inherently a multi-level phenomenon of organizations identifying, attracting, and hiring individual talent.

3.2 | Communication

Transitioning from levels of analysis, theories have also focused on how information is communicated during the recruitment process. Here we outline how theories have focused on explaining the sources or media that are used to communicate recruitment information and how the information that is communicated is cognitively processed.

3.2.1 | Sources and media

The first set of theories in this section address various media used to communicate information about the job and employer. Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) for instance argues that different media used to communicate recruitment information vary in their ability to convey personal focus using multiple cues (e.g., emotion and body lan-

guage), as well as facilitate interaction and feedback between job seekers and recruiting companies. These differences in richness lead to sources generating varying levels of effectiveness when it comes to shaping attitudes toward hiring organizations and even intentions to join organizations (Allen et al., 2004; Cable & Yu, 2006).

Highlighting credibility as another key differentiating quality, the source-credibility framework argues that information credibility mediates the relationship between recruitment source and pre-hire outcomes like organizational attraction (Fisher et al., 1979), where credibility refers to "the trust recipients are willing to extend to the message and source; that is, whether they believe them to be true" (Dineen et al., 2019, p. 184). Similarly, Cable and Turban's (2001) model of recruitment equity described credibility as a function of two factors: trustworthiness and expertise, and proceeded to highlight how different information sources can vary in credibility. They make several important propositions, such as internal sources of information (i.e., sources within or under the control of the recruiting organization) being perceived as less trustworthy than external sources when they present only positive information. Moreover, these internal sources are usually seen as higher in expertise than external sources (Cable et al., 2000).

More recent work on recruitment sources in *Personnel Psychology* extends the above to identify factors driving the use of different sources. For example, McFarland and Kim (2021) highlighted that certain racial groups, minorities in particular, are less likely to have access to some of the most diagnostic sources of job information like word-of-mouth, which in turn disadvantages them during the recruitment and selection process. Such research emphasizes the need to consider social network features together with recruitment source use during talent attraction, especially when it comes to understanding what it takes to recruit a diverse workforce. Overall, these theories suggest that it is important to consider media characteristics used to communicate employer and job-related information along richness and credibility dimensions. However, the accessibility of these sources may also vary across different job seeker types according to their social status and networks.

3.2.2 | Information processing

Theories in this section build on the ability of recruitment sources to communicate the amount and quality of information on jobs and employer organizations, explaining how job seekers process such information. The realistic information hypothesis and use of RJPs promotes candidness as a means of providing candidates an accurate idea of the job and organization (Wanous, 1989). Assuming that many employers try to market themselves as great places to work by providing overly positive descriptions of their workplaces, job seekers tend to develop inaccurate perceptions of potential jobs (e.g., Cable et al., 2000). This has deleterious consequences as individuals deal with unmet expectations which engender dissatisfaction and eventually turnover (Caldwell & Spivey, 1983; Earnest et al., 2011; Kirnan et al., 1989; Taylor & Schmidt, 1983). Thus, providing RJPs helps to avert this as individuals who do not perceive a good fit self-select out of the recruitment process (McFarland & Kim, 2021).

Another theoretical perspective applied frequently to describe cognitive underpinnings of processing job and organizational information during recruitment is the elaboration likelihood model (ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The frequent use of this theory owes largely to its ability to explain how job information is processed in different ways and the implications of these different processing paths for attitude change in the form of prehire attitudes and choices (Cable & Turban, 2001). The theory outlines a central processing route which involves motivated and effortful consideration of the details of presented information. An alternative peripheral route involves a more heuristic and even shallow processing of the information at hand, where little effort is spent on scrutinizing details (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). This distinction between central and peripheral processing is important because central processing results in knowledge that is retained longer, as well as belief change that is more impactful. When applied to recruitment research, this implies that recruitment sources that facilitate communicating job and organizational information to a relatively high level of detail (e.g., job talks, information sessions, interviews) are more effective compared to sources that only carry information in the form of symbolic phrases, images, and other visual cues (e.g., non-detailed job ads, career event souvenirs, company banners; Collins & Han, 2004; Maurer et al., 1992; Powell, 1991). More

recent contributions in *Personnel Psychology* further highlight that even though central effortful processing of detailed job information occurs when motivation and ability are present, other parallel processes stemming from initial job seeker preferences can still systematically bias assessments of subsequent information presented throughout the recruitment process (e.g., Swider & Steed, 2021; Uggerslev et al., 2012). In all, these theories highlight the motivation and capability to process encountered recruitment information, but also assume that employers do not always communicate accurate information about prospective jobs and organizations.

3.2.3 | Integrating information source and processing

ELM principles have also been extended to other theories pertaining to managing employer knowledge and branding. Specifically, Cable and Turban's (2001) model of recruitment equity highlights the role of individual ability and motivation to process information as key to determining whether central or peripheral processing occurs. In particular, their model identifies three components of employer knowledge that both influence and are influenced by job and employer information processing. These include: (i) employer familiarity or the level of awareness and recognition that job seekers have of an employer; (ii) employer image or the beliefs about organizational practices and job attributes that job seekers associate with the employer (Highhouse, Zickar, et al., 1999, Highhouse, Stierwaltb, et al., 1999); and (iii) employer reputation referring to the job seeker's perception of how the firm is evaluated by the public. These components interact to influence processing. For instance, familiarity may motivate central processing as individuals look to deepen their knowledge of firm image and reputation. Furthermore, existing employer knowledge in these areas can affect motivation to centrally process certain information, especially if individuals feel they already have sufficient understanding of the prospective employer (Cable & Turban, 2001; Collins & Han, 2004).

3.3 | Assessing theoretical progress

To assess the state of theory in this field, we apply criteria based on several principles in the management sciences for evaluating theory (Bacharach, 1989; Whetten, 1989). Specifically, most of them highlight the need for theories to (i) define constructs of interest; (ii) describe, explain, and predict how constructs are related to each other; and (iii) identify boundaries specifying when and for whom predictions apply. The strength and maturity of theories are evidenced by the degree to which they display these attributes (Edwards, 2008).

The various theories reviewed above generally do well in defining their focal constructs. Partly due to the fact that recruitment research has historically been driven by phenomena that are salient to both job seekers and employers, there is broad agreement on the nature and definition of behaviors (e.g., application behaviors, job choice), attitudes, and perceptions (e.g., attraction, familiarity, image, reputation), as well as organizational activities (e.g., HR practices) and communication media used. In terms of ability to describe and predict relationships between constructs, we were able to detect relatively cogent and clear logic used to outline the various processes linking key components of each theory. However, most theorizing was limited to relatively simple linear effects that predict either positive or negative relationships between various antecedents and outcomes. That is, theories seldom explored more complex curvilinear relationships, such as between organizational attraction and job choice (Yu, 2014). Furthermore, theories have not generally provided concrete predictions for the strength of certain effects, or the relative strength of different practices or experiences when predicting outcomes. This is to the detriment of practical application, as decision-makers are often faced with key resource allocation choices across a range of recruitment channels or practices. Thus, there remains much room for improvement regarding theoretical precision in this field (Edwards & Berry, 2010).

Next, current theory is relatively silent about specifying boundary conditions under which predictions apply, suggesting the field is generally not accustomed to systematically questioning whether predicted relationships hold universally. Boundaries describing relationship limits between constructs are an important part of theories because

they add precision through detailing the populations, contexts, and time frames for which predictions are relevant (Edwards & Berry, 2010; Resick et al., 2007; Turban & Keon, 1993). Thus, there are also opportunities to strengthen recruitment theories through more explicit specification and testing of their limits.

3.4 | Recommendations for theoretical development

With our assessment of the current state of theory, we now highlight specific areas in need of development. Our recommendations are chiefly influenced by Edwards and Berry's (2010) and Aguinis and Edwards' (2014) critiques on the lack of theoretical precision in the management sciences, and associated suggestions. First, recruitment theory should develop beyond the directional predictions that are commonplace in management theory. Hence, researchers should work toward specifying lower and upper bounds within which theoretical parameters representing the strength of recruitment practice and experience factors should fall. Furthermore, comparison predictions may also be useful for recruitment areas where multiple competing factors (e.g., recruitment sources, job seeker behaviors, design features of media) can be modeled in concert to derive their impacts on outcomes.

Recruiting organizations are also subject to prevailing political, economic, and global conditions that influence access to talent. Moreover, employers must adapt to the changing work landscape and increasing diversity in employment relationships in particular. That is, we must seriously question how recruitment theory can evolve to accommodate talent identification and attraction to jobs that have limited expectations of long-term employment and are predominantly remotely performed (Ashford et al., 2007, 2018).

At the individual level, theory also should account more explicitly for underlying phenomena influencing how people search for and evaluate jobs. In line with the predominant view that job search is a motivated process driven toward the accomplishment of individual employment goals, we propose that current theory incorporate individual differences as moderators for how recruitment sources are used and experienced. For instance, Dineen et al. (2018) provide evidence suggesting that avoiding goal orientation (AGO) affects how individuals experience demands-abilities fit, with effects on application behavior stronger when AGO is higher. Yu and Verma (2019) also highlight that a different form of learning-approach goal orientation can be associated with individuals feeling more comfortable with the *lack* of PO fit in terms of values congruence. In all, these recent studies point toward how the effects of important psychological experiences during recruitment can either be accentuated or weakened depending on individual predilections such as motivational goal striving.

Past experiences also deserve more attention in recruitment research, having long been overlooked or passed off as sample-based artifacts to be statistically controlled. In particular, prior exposure or experience with information about particular vocations, even as early as high school, can influence employment goals and behaviors individuals engage in during job search (Campion et al., 2017). Moreover, students from different academic streams can also display different preferences for career paths that accompany job opportunities, which in turn could portend how they process recruitment information as well as the decisions they make based on such information. Therefore, theory should work to clarify in more detail how such experiences on the part of prospective talent affects the predictions made by extant recruitment theories.

The third and final area for theory development stems from concerns raised about the lack of a general theory of recruitment that covers various aspects of the recruitment process from the perspective of different stakeholders (e.g., job seekers, employers, hiring managers, coworkers; Breaugh, 2013). Researchers also seem to be considering a broader range of phenomena associated with the increasing diversity and complexity of recruitment processes across organizations and jobs. Some of these constructs-of-interest may not be considered part of the mainstream recruitment field, but still may be relevant to understanding recruitment. For instance, advancements in the cognitive biases and decision-making literature have led to more examinations of fairness judgments within a personnel selection and hiring context (e.g., Munguia et al., 2022). Similarly, recent research on internal hiring, or filling vacancies from within the organization, also can involve similar processes used to identify and attract internal applicants (Campion

et al., 2022; Keller, 2018). These examples characterize a fragmented state of knowledge where there is piecemeal information on certain aspects of recruitment, but lack of a deep overall understanding of the process of identifying, attracting, and hiring the right talent.

We believe that one way to tackle such concerns requires contextualizing our theories to better address recruitment manager concerns. In other words, we need to make our theories applicable for recruitment managers. This requires developing theory based on relevant research questions. We suggest adopting, Aguinis et al. (2022) system-level thinking to ensure that theories consider the constituent parts of the entire hiring process and how recruitment interacts with other HR and organizational processes over time within the context of the organization's business and operations. This could involve developing theory that explains how recruitment interacts with other talent management functions in an organization's HR system like compensation and benefits, socialization, and performance management. System-level theorizing would also describe and explain how an organization's recruitment strategy and practice is influenced by the broader economic and social context. For instance, frameworks could be developed to explain how firms compete using recruitment practices and other corporate practices including salary and benefits in markets for specific talent (Cennamo, 2019). Similarly, theory is also needed to explain how social attitudes toward CSR and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) activities influence what kind of talent is targeted and what practices are used to attract such talent (Jones et al., 2014). Hence, we should endeavor to build theory around recruitment managers that extends beyond their role as organizational representatives to highlight them as decision-makers and key mediators in the recruitment process, charged with managing organizational resources to identify, attract, and hire the most suitable talent.

The above also highlights the need for more theory incorporating strategic approaches to recruitment. Such theory must be multilevel in nature to highlight the mediating processes linking individuals to organizational activities and outcomes (Phillips & Gully, 2015). This also means prehire outcomes (e.g., attraction, application intentions, job choice) need to be integrated with post-hire outcomes beyond turnover, such as individual KSAOs. Incorporating post-hire outcomes is important as we need more theory explaining how various aspects of recruitment strategy, policy, and practice ultimately contribute to firm competitive advantage through the mediating effects of types of talent and their KSAOs that the firm hires (Ployhart & Kim, 2014). Multilevel theory is thus needed to account for these cross-level processes that stem from what the recruiting organization does and the qualities it possesses (e.g., employer brand, size, resources), to the type of talent hired, and eventually to how that talent and its attributes translate to competitive advantage in a process of human capital resource emergence. In this respect, theory is especially needed to account for the cross-level processes that link recruitment activities across individual, meso (e.g., teams, departments, divisions), and organizational (i.e., corporate) levels. For instance, Phillips and Gully (2015) first proposed the existence of a psychologically-based strategic recruitment climate that mediates the effects of individual cognitions about values – that is, beliefs that are the result of recruitment – on workgroup and broader organizational outcomes. Correspondingly, organizational systems, processes, and practices are effectively implemented and aligned with overall business strategy when there is broad agreement about such a climate for recruitment among all organizational members.

4 | METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW

Given critical outcome choices and theoretical research questions and hypotheses, scholars must then conduct rigorous research. The tale of recruitment research methodology is complex and somewhat meandering, and we intend to review it in terms of the samples used, contexts studied, and designs employed. We note some areas of concern, emphasis, and promise, and also review several exemplar studies that have attempted to triangulate via multiple methods. Interestingly, while all but two recruitment articles (Cable & Judge, 1994; Macan et al., 1994) published in *Personnel Psychology* between 1975 and 2010 comprised one study, 55% of those published since have comprised two or more triangulating studies.

4.1 | Samples

4.1.1 | Students

Students have certainly had their place in recruitment research. Many of these studies have attempted to establish basic relationships in lab settings using mock recruitment information (e.g., Avery, 2003; Dineen et al., 2002, 2007, 2018). Others used students who were not necessarily active job seekers, but who observed actual job postings (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2014). Still others have used students, but who were pursuing actual jobs in at least one of their studies. For example, Walker et al. (2013) used students in all three of their studies, but in two of them they were actually searching for the jobs in question. Swider and Steed (2021) similarly tracked undergraduates searching for actual jobs over an extended period (see also, Swider et al., 2015). Collins and Han (2004) assessed applicant pool quantity and quality based on college recruitment and marketing efforts in actual companies.

Overall, at least in the pages of *Personnel Psychology*, student sampling concerns seem largely overstated. Indeed, across the 44 empirical articles published in *Personnel Psychology* between 1975-present that reported at least one recruitment-related study, only five comprised a single study of students who were not actually pursuing the jobs in question. Of the 55 total recruitment studies reported in these 44 articles, 10 (18.2%) used students evaluating mock recruitment material in a lab-type (controlled) setting. Notably, student use of any kind has decreased, comparing pre-2000 (45% of studies) to 2000-present (31%), and many of these studies used students pursuing actual jobs. We believe students will continue to be important to recruitment research, simply because they still draw the most recruitment attention in practice. We urge researchers to continue exposing these subjects to the most realism possible, and to material associated with jobs they are actually pursuing, balancing this against the strong control afforded by lab-based settings when research questions appropriately match this approach.

4.1.2 | Experienced job seekers

Despite the continued use of students in recruitment research, increased job changes throughout careers as well as fundamental differences between young and more experienced employees in terms of what they seek portends the need to also target more experienced job seekers (e.g., Rynes et al., 1997). There has been some encouraging work in this regard. For example, Becker et al. (2010) used interesting archival data from an actual company on acceptance rates based on the timing of offers post-interview. They parsed their sample into student and experienced job seekers, as the samples were quite different in terms of time to offer, time to decision, and job offer acceptance rates. Pieper (2015) sampled call center referrers and referrals to investigate the efficacy of this recruitment source. Such work would be more difficult with students, as many have little prior experience on which to base referrals.

Six of the 44 empirical recruitment articles published in *Personnel Psychology* since 1975 comprise what might be called specialized non-student samples. For example, these studies have addressed withdrawal among military job seekers (Griepentrog et al., 2012) and police and correctional officer applicants (Meglino et al., 1993; Schmit & Ryan, 1997), the role of accrued source information on prospective firefighter attraction, withdrawal, and test scores (McFarland & Kim, 2021), and justice perceptions and job acceptance decisions of military recruits (Harold et al., 2016). Overall, these studies effectively draw on sometimes large samples to show that effects can occur, but one must be cautious in generalizing these results more broadly. For example, one might withdraw from a military recruitment process for very different reasons than from an accounting position process.

4.1.3 | Human intelligence task (HIT) samples

On a somewhat opposite spectrum to specialized populations, yet often comprising experienced job seekers, human intelligence task (HIT) samples are nascent, but we expect them to grow sharply. In one of the few known HIT

recruitment samples to date, Kappes et al. (2018) used Prolific to study motivated reasoning and entitlement beliefs among job seekers (see also Phillips et al., 2014). In many ways, we believe HIT samples could replace students as the "sampling realm of greatest interest and convenience" in the recruitment area.

Here again, we believe there are important tradeoffs (e.g., Aguinis et al., 2021). For example, despite growing attempts to check for careless responding, concerns remain about how invested HIT workers are in accurately assessing and responding to recruitment material, or whether they truthfully answer screening questions (e.g., are they truly a current job seeker?). It might also be difficult for HIT samples to assess actual organizational material rather than mock material. Meanwhile, potential advantages include their diversity of backgrounds and industries. This allows one to generalize across contexts more readily, whereas specialized samples often come from a single firm or industry, or from an occupation such as the military. HITs may also be an opportunity to reach under-represented populations, such as hiring managers, non-standard workers, or boomerang job seekers, for which researchers can screen.

4.1.4 | Big or archival data

Whereas HIT samples can often allow researchers to quickly access a large amount of data in real time, big data or archival data is another way to accomplish this. Like Ployhart et al. (2017), we believe this area is ripe for ongoing investigation, and 27% of *Personnel Psychology* recruitment articles since 1975 have comprised at least one archival sample element. As with most of the ground covered so far, we believe this depends on research questions and degree of required predictor and outcome specificity (i.e., objective behavioral data such as job applications, withdrawal, or job choice are typically more readily available and accessible in archival form).

Archival data seems particularly relevant for addressing recruitment strategy type questions. For example, Rao and Drazin (2002) used archival data from the mutual fund industry to study talent poaching prevalence among younger or poorly connected firms. Dineen and Allen (2016) used a combination of archival BPTW competition data and survey data from organizational representatives to examine BPTW certification impacts on applicant pool quality. Brands and Fernandez-Mateo (2017) used longitudinal archival data from a search firm, along with a survey of executives and an experiment to show effects of prior rejections on women's future applications. Campion et al.'s (2017, 2019) big data studies have shown that practice tests can predispose job seekers to not only apply but score higher on actual tests, and that getting information to possible applicants earlier and in a more diagnostic fashion encourages them to develop requisite skills that increases applicant pool quality. *Personnel Psychology's* archival studies have included time lags and applicant withdrawal (Arvey et al., 1975) and source usage and applicant demographics and quality scores (Kirnan et al., 1989). Other examples include Stevens' (1998) interview transcript analysis of recruitment versus screening-oriented interviews and attraction, which followed Macan and Dipboye's (1990) earlier work on pre-to-post interview impressions, and the aforementioned Becker et al. (2010) study using company data on acceptance rates based on timing of offers post-interview. We see much promise in the continued pursuit of Big Data samples, including the vast and minable information available online via sources like career-related social media sites. Overall, we encourage researchers to continue building their samples around the questions they are asking and answers they are seeking.

4.2 | Contexts

4.2.1 | Lab or field

Two meta-analyses have addressed lab versus field differences. Chapman et al. (2005) endorsed using the lab for earlier stage research, but noted that it is more difficult to use it effectively for later stage job choice, as you lose fidelity given the self-selection from earlier stages that occurs among actual job seekers. Uggerslev et al. (2012) report that job characteristics are more predictive in field studies, whereas recruiter behaviors, process characteristics, hiring

expectancies and perceived alternatives yield larger effects in the lab. *Personnel Psychology* has shifted over the years to more of a balance between lab and field recruitment studies; 11% of pre-2000 articles were entirely lab-based; compared with 41% of 2000-present studies.

Following Chapman et al.'s prescriptions, but extending beyond Uggerslev et al.'s, Harold et al. (2016) used two field surveys, albeit in a military context, to find fairly robust effects of recruitment process justice perceptions on job acceptance. Used in part to arrive at Uggerslev et al.'s conclusions, Judge and Cable (1997) employed a three-period field study, finding that subjective PO fit mediated the relationship between objective PO fit and attraction. A subsequent time-lagged field study by Yu (2014) further highlights that PO fit experienced early in the recruitment process is key in setting job seeker expectations for opportunities for value expression and need fulfilment with prospective employers, which in turn lead to organizational attraction. McFarland and Kim's (2021) field results examining attraction, but also later stage withdrawal and test performance as a function of accrued recruitment source diagnosticity, are also in line with Chapman et al.'s (2005) prescriptions for later-stage field research.

4.2.2 | Mock or actual job openings

Whereas field studies use actual recruitment information (e.g., job ads) by definition, lab studies can utilize either actual or mock information. On the one hand, some lab studies have used mock recruitment material to simply demonstrate that proposed effects can occur (e.g., Dineen et al., 2002, 2018; Dutz et al., 2022; Sumanth & Cable, 2011). Using mock company information in the lab affords researchers the ability to isolate effects and hold other company aspects constant. The tradeoff, of course, is in terms of realism; that is, lack of differentiation on things like pay and other instrumental characteristics. However, researchers sometimes also use actual company information in the lab. For example, although not strictly in a physical lab, Williamson et al. (2010) had participants rate multiple firms' actual web sites and reputations, establishing links between web site characteristics and attraction, moderated by reputation (see also, Allen et al., 2007). Yu's (2019) subjects viewed actual websites representing OIM strategies. Yet, even in these exemplar studies, random assignment to conditions is artificial, whereas actual job seekers will self-select into viewing certain job advertisements.

One way to bridge this issue is by combining lab and field studies. For example, Rupp et al. (2013), had MBA students assess a mock company's CSR practices and their intention to apply. In a second, albeit non-recruitment study, participants rated their current company's CSR practices and OCBs. Thus, even though the recruitment part of their article was purely scenario-based, their second study provided a degree of corroboration without controlling away contextual factors that accompany actual organizations (see also Swider & Steed's 2021 longitudinal field study followed by a lab study to explore a vital mechanism). On the other hand, Van Hoye and Lievens's (2009) field study using actual organizations showed no effects of negative WOM, although it did show positive WOM effects. Yet, a 2007 lab study (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007) using mock organizations did show them. This implies that negative WOM only matters for lesser-known companies. Known companies do not appear as affected by negative WOM, although positive WOM still helps them.

Overall, 80% of *Personnel Psychology* recruitment articles since 1975 have used actual recruitment material (65% since 2000). Whether researchers use mock or actual information is only vital insofar as the tradeoff between a known organizational image or not. This of course assumes high quality mock information with fidelity to real recruitment information. Researchers simply need to acknowledge the scope of what can be gleaned from findings, based on the medium (e.g., if mock, then findings might apply only to unknown firms).

4.2.3 | Mock or actual job seekers

Researchers also must decide whether to utilize job seekers actually seeking employment, versus asking participants to act as job seekers. Here, 77% of *Personnel Psychology* recruitment articles have used subjects actually

seeking the jobs in question (59% since 2000). For example, ambitious extended recruitment process simulations have yielded important insights on justice perceptions as well as how earlier-stage predictors can cumulate in their effects on attraction across stages (e.g., Saks & Uggerslev, 2010; Walker et al., 2013). Yet, these simulations have naturally precluded using participants actually searching for these jobs, which introduces a degree of uncertainty regarding their true risks in making choices to proceed in recruitment processes. Others have used actual job advertisements, yet student participants were not actually searching for these jobs when assessing intentions to pursue (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). On the other hand, Cable and Judge (1994) combined mock scenarios and students, along with actual jobs and job seekers, to assess pay preferences and attraction.

Noting the positive features in all of these studies, we still believe researchers need to be exceptionally transparent about what conclusions may safely be drawn given the identified limitations. For example, we believe there is a misnomer whereby "field" studies are sometimes classified as such when they merely involve actual organizational recruitment efforts. However, oftentimes non-job seeking students react to these actual organizations, rather than actual job seekers pursuing those jobs. Thus, we believe one must question the degree to which these are field studies in a pure sense. Perhaps results from studies with those who are not actually searching the jobs in question are conservative. Like the lab versus field evidence discussed earlier, we believe meta-analytic evidence bearing on this issue would be beneficial.

4.3 | Designs

4.3.1 | Data collection medium

Although much recruitment research has occurred primarily via survey (84% of *Personnel Psychology* articles), many of these studies use experimental manipulations prior to survey responses, and we share some work employing extensive interviews and/or combining with archival data. Collins and Han (2004) is an exemplar *Personnel Psychology* article, insofar as they used data from multiple sources, including college students, companies, and secondary marketing databases. This followed earlier (e.g., Caldwell & Spivey, 1983; Schmit & Ryan, 1997; Taylor & Schmidt, 1983) and more recent (e.g., McFarland & Kim, 2021; Swider & Steed, 2021) *Personnel Psychology* work that used multi-source data.

Some early work also employed rigorous longitudinal structured interviews. For example, Rynes et al. (1991) gathered impressions from job seekers about recruitment activities' effect on job search decisions. Stevens (1998) analyzed interview transcripts for recruitment versus screening-oriented interviews, finding no differences in attraction based on type used. In other outside work, Boswell et al. (2003) also used longitudinal structured interviews to ascertain the factors that play into job choice decisions. Wilhelmy et al. (2016) provided another good example of grounded theory of interviewer impression management by examining what forms it takes and why they use it, with a non-student sample of interviewers and applicants.

With the explosion of online recruitment-related information, such as job seeker social media posts or company website recruitment information, other approaches such as natural language processing seem ripe for exploration, and could richly enhance our understanding of organizational image development (e.g., Theurer et al., 2022). Other technological advancements in eye tracking, skin conductance, and other neuroscience-based approaches may allow recruitment researchers to move beyond subjective participant perceptions to more objective physiological reactions to recruitment media, branding, and candidate experiences. Overall, a takeaway from these examples appears to be their relative age; that is, the structured interview approach seems to have waned in recent years, and we urge researchers to return to these roots, whereas natural language processing and physiological advances are nascent and in need of further leveraging.

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4.3.2 | Within- or between-subjects

A final design choice is whether to expose participants to a single company or set of recruitment information, akin to one job opportunity, or to multiple opportunities. In most cases, a within-subjects approach more clearly mirrors an actual job search situation whereby seekers encounter and must decide between multiple opportunities. For example, Collins and Martinez-Moreno's (2022) within-subjects design assessing message claim credibility was appropriate because such an assessment is more accurate when compared across messages. Yet, there is a tradeoff between the practical reality that job seekers nearly always consider multiple opportunities at once, yet possible demand characteristics if a participant is exposed to multiple experimental conditions. For example, though highly cited, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) used only one survey point and had participants rate only one company, perhaps because they were trying to simply establish the veracity of the framework. Williamson et al. (2010) on the other hand had participants rate multiple firm web sites and reputations, finding a link between web site characteristics and attraction, moderated by reputation.

As a way of addressing many of the choices reviewed already, some have combined studies using both designs (e.g., Dineen et al., 2002, compared with Dineen & Noe, 2009). Others have used either within- or between-subjects approaches, but with longitudinal designs (used at least in part of 50% of *Personnel Psychology* recruitment articles). For example, Pieper (2015) tracked call center employees over two years to gauge referral hire turnover and performance as a function of referrer characteristics. Swider and Steed (2021) assessed what they termed attraction trajectories and effects of an initial favorite on eventual job choice for four job opportunities over five months. Swider et al. (2015) assessed PO fit changes over eight periods with up to four real accounting jobs (see also Judge & Cable, 1997). Earlier multi-time point work included Taylor and Bergmann (1987; although this comprised separate cross-sectional surveys at five points during a recruitment process), the Rynes et al. (1991) work cited above, and Harris and Fink's (1987) pre-post design allowing for a cleaner look at recruiter characteristic effects, finding that they predict intentions over job attributes. Overall, while many of these studies are older, we are encouraged by the more recent longitudinal work.

In terms of overarching prescriptions, it seems wise to use within-subjects designs to study earlier recruitment stages, where job seekers are likely considering many jobs at once. Perhaps between-subjects designs are better in later stages, or among passive job seekers who might be considering only one opportunity in isolation. In line with any study endeavoring to examine distinctiveness phenomena, we suggest using within-subjects designs. Moreover, experience sampling method (ESM) designs seem particularly well-suited to tracking job seeker psychological, affective, and behavioral changes that occur through an extended recruitment process bridging several stages; for example, to gauge how predictors of applications may differ from predictors of eventual job choice. Or, perhaps an ESM design could be used to follow day-to-day decision-making processes within one stage. For example, combining ESM with social network analysis may provide unique insight into how job seeker preferences change during the generating applicants stage as others in their network experience success or failure in their job searches (Porter et al., 2022). Hence, ESM approaches offer significant promise when it comes to tracking change trajectories at the individual level in conjunction with changes in the context across different stages of the recruitment process. Finally, researchers might consider the extent to which a particular phenomenon is exploratory versus mature. That is, one may use between-subjects designs for more exploratory research needing crisp conceptual definition while using within-subjects as a phenomenon's exploration matures, to address external validity concerns.

5 | DISCUSSION

Having covered key outcomes, theories, and methodological aspects in our previous sections, we conclude by highlighting practical takeaways and future research directions.

TABLE 1 Summary of practical implications for recruitment

Strategic Organizational Concerns
- Focus on employer branding by tracking and enhancing employer familiarity and reputation. Monitor and leverage your firm's presence and performance on social media and third-party employer-rating sources.
- Understand that distinct recruitment sources (e.g., general vs. detailed ads, word-of-mouth, sponsorships) influence job seekers in unique ways and work best in concert with certain organizational characteristics. For example, consider employer size and brand (e.g., familiarity and reputation) to choose the most effective recruitment practices capable of communicating the right amount and type of information.
- Distinguish one's organization from competitors through creating distinct images based on relevant job and organizational characteristics. Images should emphasize symbolic personality-linked traits (e.g., sincerity, innovativeness, competence) which clearly differentiate one's organization, and with which potential talent can identify.

Operational Concerns
- Engage with potential talent pools early – potentially before formal recruitment begins. Information provided during this period should be detailed enough to help potential talent discriminate among different employers and the careers and jobs on offer.
- Maintain engagement with applicants early and throughout the recruitment process, such as by providing customized PO or DA fit feedback to increase applicant pool quality. Fit feedback can be particularly impactful when provided earlier in the recruitment process.
- Recognize that all interactions or touch points with job seekers can be interpreted as signals for how they will be treated as employees of the organization.
- Communicate realistic information about the job and what working for the organization will be like, to enhance perceptions of trustworthiness and honesty.

DEI Considerations
- Recognize that minority candidates and underrepresented groups may not have equal access to job and organizational information, which can affect their knowledge of potential jobs, access to job openings, and perceived qualification for jobs.
- Identify and use word-of-mouth (WOM) from current and former employees, especially as a means of reaching diverse and traditionally underrepresented communities.
- Consider the firm's history and reputation for managing diversity and equity-based hiring when communicating with minority and underrepresented groups. Customize recruitment messages, using tactics and messages designed to create a positive and credible impression among job seekers from these groups.

5.1 | Practical implications we can draw at this juncture

Table 1 provides an overview of several practical implications we can draw from the extant recruitment literature.

5.1.1 | Strategic organizational concerns

We first highlight research at the organizational level that helps employers recruit higher quality applicant pools. For instance, continued interaction and engagement during the recruitment process, especially in terms of providing feedback customized to the individual job seeker on their prospective fit on values (i.e., PO) and abilities (DA) and other aspects may foster greater central processing of job information (Uggerslev et al., 2012) and result in higher quality applicant pools (Dineen et al., 2002, 2007, 2009). High quality applicant pools in turn have critical consequences for downstream organizational outcomes. Moreover, fit information is best delivered early in the recruitment process, as most job seekers have already assessed likely fit and are less likely to deviate later in the process. Evidence also points to the need to adapt recruitment practices to fit the current firm profile in the eyes of potential talent. That is, different recruitment practices from job advertisements to more detailed word-of-mouth messages communicate distinct information which helps employers better engage job seekers. Specifically, this is via choosing practices that are best equipped to communicate job and organizational information depending on existing levels of employer

familiarity and reputation among job seekers (Cable & Yu, 2006; Collins, 2007; Collins & Han, 2004; Collins & Stevens, 2002), organization size (e.g., Barber et al., 1999), or applicant experience (Rynes et al., 1997).

The above focus on familiarity and reputation is symptomatic of the rising prominence of employer branding. In this respect, Maurer et al. (1992) were remarkably prescient by identifying several advantages of conceptualizing corporate recruiting as job marketing. Key insights from extant branding research include highlighting employer familiarity, reputation, and image as distinct trackable components that form employer brands (Cable & Turban, 2001). Furthermore, research also highlights that different brand images independently contribute to prehire outcomes like attraction by distinguishing an employer from other organizations that compete for the same talent (Griepentrog et al., 2012; Highhouse, Stierwaltb, et al., 1999; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Practitioners now must also fastidiously track and manage their external brand images, as information is readily transmitted entirely out of the organization's control (Dineen et al., 2019).

In general, it behooves practitioners to foster a sense of organizational identity among prospective hires, or perhaps target those with already-existing identity (e.g., loyal customers). Differentiation appears to be key, specifically along symbolic or organizational personality dimensions (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Slaughter et al., 2004). It is also important to pair recruitment efforts with the appropriate level of likely information processing. For example, recruiters should use high information recruitment approaches only when firm reputation is higher and central processing is more likely (e.g., Collins & Han, 2004).

5.1.2 | Operational concerns

Research also highlights the importance of initial engagement timing with potential talent. Recruitment sources should provide detailed information helping individuals discriminate and choose between different career paths. This will encourage individuals to take steps to invest in their human capital, which eventually develops them into more qualified applicants (Campion et al., 2017). Early engagement with potential talent, sometimes even before formal recruitment begins, can also prove beneficial as a "first to market" strategy, as first impressions of potential employers can bias preferences, application behavior, and eventually job choice (Swider et al., 2015; Swider & Steed, 2021). Furthermore, novel findings suggest that extending quicker offers helps boost acceptance rates, where reduced vacancy times also do not appear to have negative consequences on subsequent performance and new hire turnover (Becker et al., 2010).

Next, employers should attend to signaling effects from their interactions with potential hires, as these experiences serve as influential indications of how individuals will be treated as employees (e.g., Dutz et al., 2022; Walker et al., 2013; Yu, 2014). This is especially relevant considering the current talent crunch, which emphasizes prioritizing the candidate experience throughout the recruitment process. It would be important to identify the various practices (e.g., candidate experience surveys, increasing personal touchpoints, communicating to improve fairness and transparency) employers have added to enhance such experiences, and whether their use persists when talent supply becomes more available.

Moreover, meta-analyses also continue to emphasize the importance of communicating a realistic picture of job offerings via RJPs during recruitment. Despite the small but significant effects of RJPs on voluntary turnover, effectively designed RJPs can be delivered both in writing and orally, and when delivered posthire after job acceptance but before job start, can engender important perceptions of organizational trust and honesty (Earnest et al., 2011). Finally, recruiter behaviors and treating applicants well are more important than ever with the ubiquity of social media and word of mouth (e.g., McCarthy et al., 2017; Uggerslev et al., 2012). How companies leave things with job seekers can also have implications for potential boomerang applications or a continued relationship (e.g., Brands & Fernandez-Mateo, 2017).

5.1.3 | DEI considerations

There is also practical insight to be gained for addressing societal challenges such as improving DEI in the workplace. Minority and under-represented groups may not have equal access to recruitment sources and information, which may compromise their ability to choose among employers. Thus, as part of DEI initiatives employers should draw on distinct strategies that involve more formal use of current and former employees to reach diverse communities to share information and experiences, instead of relying on standard recruitment practices (McFarland & Kim, 2021). This might also raise qualification perceptions among URMs and reduce discriminatory cues, which may assist in decreasing URM withdrawal (McKay & Avery, 2006; Schmit & Ryan, 1997). In terms of message content, targeted DEI recruitment must consider a firm's history and reputation when it comes to managing diversity and equality-based hiring. Additionally, we recommend that organizations seeking to attract a more diverse pool of applicants include stigmatized-identity safety cues in their recruitment materials. These cues, or signals that one's "stigmatized identity *is* valued" (Chaney et al., 2019), may include asking applicants their preferred pronouns, emphasizing diversity programs, or including a diverse group of recruiters as organizational representatives (Avery et al., 2013; Chaney et al., 2019). Although we recognize it is likely impossible to include safety cues for all stigmatized identities, initial research demonstrates that stigmatized-identity safety cues aimed at one group may transfer to other groups (Chaney et al., 2016). Overall, when it comes to DEI in recruitment, organizations must carefully strategize and select appropriate tactics and messages to develop a credible, convincing, and genuine impression among URM job seekers (Avery & McKay, 2006; Yu, 2019).

To conclude this section, we think that in spite of the practical takeaways outlined above, the recruitment literature still has limited and fragmented prescriptive insights to offer recruitment practitioners. Wanous' (1989) set of recommendations in the form of ten issues concerning the initiation, development, and implementation of RJPs was certainly a positive step *Personnel Psychology* took in offering practical advice to professionals. However, advice in the same vein is less available in much of the other knowledge areas outlined in our review. We concur with Aguinis et al. (2022) recommendations that more explicit focus on the individuals involved in recruitment is needed to provide useful insights to practitioners. Thus, it may be useful to include hiring managers and recruitment professionals earlier in the theory building process to ensure we are answering research questions that are relevant. Our next section outlines several areas for future research that may help in this respect.

5.2 | Future research directions

Table 2 provides an overview of future research directions, upon which we expand here.

5.2.1 | Recruitment strategy

First, we call for more research focusing on the strategic aspects of recruitment and its implications for organizational success. Akin to Ployhart's (2006) call, there is a need for more research to address organizational level outcomes, covering not only the financial impact of recruitment activity but also its implications for firm competitive advantage (Ployhart & Kim, 2014). At the organizational level, future research should explain how recruitment and hiring interact with other organizational processes over time. Such research will contribute to an improved appreciation of the recruitment function and its relative contribution to supporting or driving an organization's long-term HR strategy. Along the same lines, we especially need research that assesses external versus internal recruitment tradeoffs. Whereas research has established that internal hires generally outperform and are even paid less compared to external hires (e.g., DeOrtentiis et al., 2018), there is still a lack of research directly investigating how recruitment strategy, practices, and outcomes per se differ between these two modes of hiring. Moreover, research investigating the

TABLE 2 Summary of future recruitment research suggestions

Recruitment Strategy
- Explore recruitment outcomes at the organizational level that include both financial and non-financial outcomes linked to firm competitive advantage, both from internal and external recruitment initiatives.
- Employ multilevel theory to understand how recruitment practices generate human capital at the individual level and how that human capital emerges to contribute to overall competitive advantage at the organizational level.
- Investigate how recruitment and hiring processes interact with other organizational and HR practices over time to influence firm-level outcomes.
- Establish the strategic importance of managing employer branding for the organization by investigating the link between organizational impression management tactics and employer branding in recruitment messages. Such research should especially model the impact of these activities on the recruitment of minorities and underrepresented groups in order to serve organizational DEI goals.
- Leverage artificial intelligence (AI) in researching more effective recruitment strategies and approaches.

Recruitment Practice
- Investigate the evolution of recruitment as a process that involves changing and adapting practices for employers and evolving expectations and behaviors for candidates over time from the early to late stages of recruitment and eventual hiring.
- Conduct research during the interim period of recruitment between offer acceptance and the start of work to understand how organizations can ensure that those who accept actually join rather than ghost the organization altogether.
- Explicitly consider the subjective experience of time during the recruitment process by investigating how job seekers incorporate past, present, and future work experiences and identities into their behavior and decision-making during recruitment.

Recruitment Context
- Investigate social network influences from family and peers on job search behaviors and job choice during recruitment. Extend such studies to explore and compare their impact with respect to that of online social media on the same types of behavior.
- Describe recruitment practice and experiences for non-traditional job seekers (e.g., job losers, retirees, boomerang employees, free agents, gig workers, stigmatized workers). Compare and contrast how their experiences and behavior differ from that of candidates going through "traditional" recruitment processes. Evaluate if current theories in recruitment are capable to explaining these experiences and behaviors.
- Highlight the influence of compensation and the accompanying negotiation processes on job choice particularly at the later stages of recruitment. Investigate how these processes differ according to types of jobs and employment relationships (e.g., full-time employment versus contract work).
- Describe how recruitment activities vary across cultures. Examine how these practices are influenced by cultural and societal work and relationship values. Discover how firms can recruit across cultures to adapt to the globalization of their workforce.
- Develop recruitment theory that takes into account the globalization of the workforce and values of different cultures, such as individualistic and collectivist cultures.

interplay between recruitment and other aspects of talent management is also needed to improve understanding of how recruitment is managed as part of an overall HR strategy. For instance, talent shortages causing employers to relax certain hiring qualifications during selection, or investing in apprenticeships and training to upskill post hire can impact recruitment messaging via focusing on alternative or wider talent pools.

Recognizing the importance of strategically managing employer brands will continue to grow as employers seek to differentiate themselves from fellow competitors in the war for talent. Thus, we also call for more research tying the communication of recruitment messages to OIM. Going forward, we believe that insights from such research can inform how recruitment might be a leading force for employer DEI goals such as attracting and hiring talented URMs (Avery & McKay, 2006; Yu, 2019). Methodologically, future investigations of DEI recruitment efforts in particular would do well to take advantage of the growing archival text mining and natural language processing capabilities via social media, which also provides access to larger more diverse samples to add greater richness and precision to work in this area.

Also pertinent to DEI goals as well as broader recruitment outcomes, artificial intelligence (AI) should be integrated with existing recruitment scholarship. For example, recent work in the computer sciences area shows that AI, while perhaps beneficial in some ways, can unwittingly create racial and gender biases in whom job advertisements target (Ali et al., 2019). Perhaps scholars could examine AI not only in terms of the audiences that job advertisements should reach, but also job advertisement and recruitment media characteristics that best attract qualified job candidates. Regardless of specific research directions pursued, management scholars should align with computer scientists to better understand potential AI benefits and drawbacks in recruitment. Along with other emerging methodological trends such as big data access and natural language processing, we believe this is an especially promising avenue toward enhancing recruitment scholarship in the coming years.

5.2.2 | Recruitment practice

Next, more recruitment process timing research is needed. In particular, we need more research not only capable of describing how recruitment practices change during the early to late recruitment stages, but also directly tracking the evolution of candidate psychology, experiences, and behavior throughout this process. Such research is in line with Ehrhart and Ziegert's (2005) call for temporal issues to be featured more strongly in research to properly document how employers and individuals refine their evaluations of one another leading up to crucial offer and job choice decisions. For example, the limited available research seems to support the benefits of early engagement with potential candidates for eventual job choice (Campion et al., 2017; Swider et al., 2015, 2021). Similarly, Becker et al. (2010) highlight the importance of extending offers as soon as possible after a hiring decision has been made.

More insight is also needed to understand the interim period between having accepted an offer and joining a firm. This is especially important since it is now relatively easy to apply for jobs with the benefit of digital online systems, which has significantly leveled the playing field during early recruitment when it comes to providing information to attract applicants (Acikgoz, 2019). We note the phenomenon of *ghosting*, or the act of suddenly ceasing all communication and disappearing entirely from the recruitment process, which has garnered significant interest in the workplace but has received little attention from academics (Kelly, 2021). Thus, we call for future research to study the causes of such behavior in the interim period. Lastly in reference to the role of time in research, there is also opportunity to draw attention to the subjective experience of time as job seekers move through the recruitment process. Additionally, such research should also consider the underlying mechanisms that govern if, when, and how people incorporate their past, present, and future work experiences and identities into their behavior and decision making during the recruitment process (Shipp & Jansen, 2021).

5.2.3 | Recruitment context

Next, we call for more efforts to contextualize recruitment and job seeking behavior better within the current world of work with its social, institutional, and technological influences. Despite arguably being a social-driven process where behavior and choice are invariably influenced by others in one's social sphere like family and peers, there has been little research on the normative pressures on job pursuit and job choice. Research more than three decades ago provided initial modest evidence for the role of peer or parental influence on job acceptance decisions (Liden & Parsons, 1986). However, to our knowledge there has been little research in this area since, in spite of the powerful influence that subjective norms can have on evaluation and decision-making (Acikgoz, 2019). In particular, such research should be updated with a clearer appreciation of the digital online environment in which a large amount of information about jobs and employers is now encountered, highlighting the powerful influences of social media and third-party employer rating sources (Dineen & Allen, 2016; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). For example, just as millennials expect quick "likes" of their online posts, they may relish and even expect equally quick evaluations of their job candidacy. In general,

the plethora of online information portends research on customized, footprint-driven approaches to recruitment. To develop relevant theory, we suggest looking to the marketing literature.

Increased diversity and fluidity in employment relationships also needs more explicit consideration. For example, distinct segments of job seekers at different career stages, like new job market entrants, job losers, employed passive job seekers, labor market re-entrants, retirees, and even boomerang employees could differ significantly in how they respond to and navigate recruitment activities (e.g., Boswell et al., 2012). Future research sampling passive job seekers and boomerang employees, in terms of what attracts them back to the labor market or to their original firms, and whether these recruitment sources parlay into success for firms that use them thus seems promising. Similarly, research on those who "boomerang" back to the workforce as former retirees who return, or returning former members of the workforce who have been away for a time (e.g., stay at home parents who return) is also sorely lacking. Moreover, recruitment research has largely overlooked the proliferation of employment relationships that deviate from traditional full-time employment (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). The rise of the free agent contractor or gig economy for instance may cause some to question whether long-held assumptions of PO fit, value congruence, and accurate information provision even matter for firms managing a workforce with such arrangements (e.g., Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). As such, some may question the need for carefully crafted recruitment messages or even personal interactions during the recruitment process for these nonstandard jobs (Ashford et al., 2007). Other important questions associated with talent recruitment that needs to be answered due to the changing nature of work and jobs include: How do flexible and remote working arrangements affect recruitment strategy and practice? Will firms respond by broadening recruitment across previously defined physical boundaries? What role do digital platforms like social media play in facilitating the identification and attraction of new talent groups across geographies? For example, when workers do not need to move to a different geographical area for a new job, it exponentially expands opportunities while decreasing the time they may need to turnover from a current position. Overall, we believe that to boost scholarly interest in recruitment research, we need to extend existing research beyond its traditional focus on standard full-time employment arrangements to incorporate hiring practices regarding increasingly popular alternate arrangements, such as platform-based gig work, short-term contracts, and the use of employment intermediaries (Ashford et al., 2018)

Noting also that compensation has surprisingly been overlooked in recruitment research (for exceptions, see Cable & Judge, 1994; Williams & Dreher, 1992), such work is especially needed to better understand talent acquisition for nonstandard work arrangements and the gig economy. For example, the emphasis on PO fit and symbolic images in current theory may be quite overstated for jobs where people (e.g., contractors, part-timers) are mainly concerned with renumeration and/or job learning experience. Moreover, job seekers are typically able to gather copious amounts of information on their future employer throughout their job search, but only find out the specifics of their proposed pay and benefits package later during the recruitment process, though some state statutes now require companies to post salary ranges up front. Hence, research is also needed to highlight the potentially strong influence of compensation and concomitant negotiation processes on job choice at the crucial job offer stage.

Similarly, research has tended to over-emphasize glamorous jobs where attraction may not be as much of a pressing issue. On the other hand, not much has been said on how to recruit and attract talent for tainted occupations or dirty work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Related to this, jobs with fewer educational requirements, or jobs traditionally considered "blue collar," may call for different recruitment strategies, yet these types of jobs have been underemphasized in recruitment scholarship.

More focus on small-firm recruitment efforts is also needed. For example, small businesses often have particular and singular hiring needs, such as hiring only one person for a particular job rather than hiring a cadre of entry level engineers. This ties also, in general, to needed work that examines not only differences between known and unknown employers, with the assumption being that known employers have good images, to including negative information and its effects on recruitment endeavors, given the proclivity for negative word of mouth or social media delivered information. Lastly, we also think that research is especially needed to document and update current knowledge on recruitment practice in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, relatively permanent shifts toward increased

flexible work arrangements and the possibility of expanded talent pools from remote work could have significant implications for how firms identify and attract talent (Rau & Hyland, 2002).

Lastly, the lack of cross-cultural recruitment research is concerning given the increasing globalization of the workforce. We believe there is a strong need to explicitly develop theory that considers how and why recruitment activities may differ across cultures given that what may be positively distinguishing in the recruitment process in one culture may be received negatively in another (Allen & Vardaman, 2017; Caligiuri et al., 2010; Oh et al., 2014). For example, drawing on regulatory focus theory, Han and Ling (2016) discovered that the type of emotional content in recruitment advertisements (e.g., ego-focused versus other-focused) attracts individuals differently depending on their dominant cultural values (i.e., individualism or collectivism) due to their regulatory focus. That is, those from individualistic cultures tend to be promotion-focused while those from collectivist cultures tend to be prevention-focused. This suggests that specific cultural values may elicit different types of motivation in the recruitment process. Additionally, Banks et al. (2019) provided a conceptual starting point for looking at the standardization of recruitment signals across MNE locations based on cultural distance between the locations, proposing, for example, that localized recruiting may yield larger applicant pools and better qualified applicants (see also, Ma & Allen, 2009). Overall, given the recent rise of virtual work, recruitment research needs to take a more global perspective to recruiting which involves understanding the values of different cultures.

We conclude by highlighting three general themes needed to elevate future research. First, we are heartened by the recent focus on mediating mechanisms and urge continued focus here. For example, Uggerslev et al. (2012) suggest more explicit accounting for recruitment information processing depth (e.g., earlier stage information and recruitment process and recruiter information tend to yield peripheral processing). Griepentrog et al. (2012) point to fit, distinctiveness, and prestige as key precursors to organizational identity, with distinctiveness squarely related to branding concerns. Second, future research should endeavor to provide more details from research output for practitioners to act upon, including those emphasizing practical significance and vetting whether findings are noteworthy and significant enough to matter. Finally, we call for a redoubling of efforts to accentuate the impact of research in our field by using it to tackle societal grand challenges (George et al., 2016). Under the purview of recruitment and talent acquisition, such challenges might include achieving greater diversity and gender equality, or better-matching individuals with good and meaningful work. For example, we might begin to address this latter challenge by engaging in continuous recruitment of former employees, customers, and other associates. However, depending on the organization or industry in question, recruiting former employees or customers may be at odds with diversity goals. Overall, we particularly think that future recruitment research can play a central role in driving DEI initiatives toward increasing workplace diversity to better reflect qualified applicant pools (Banks et al., 2016). We look forward to what the next several – if not 75 – years will bring to recruitment scholarship, both in the pages of *Personnel Psychology* and in the broader academic resources in our field.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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ENDNOTES

[1] All citation statistics reported in this article are from Google Scholar, as of June 3, 2022.

[2] Recruitment related articles identified between 1980 and June 3, 2022 via abstract searches of *Personnel Psychology, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Management, Academy of Management Journal*, and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* using the following recruitment-related keywords or phrases: recruitment, recruiting, attraction, applicant, application, job choice, recruit, pursuit intentions, attractiveness, job seekers, employment branding, employer brand, application decisions, recruiter.

[3] Pre-COVID years in which an online program was available. Specific analysis conducted at five-year intervals (2004, 2009, 2014, 2019), wherein recruitment-related sessions/posters were 1.9%, 2.1%, 1.5%, and 1.8% of all sessions/posters, respectively, using nine single-word recruitment-related keywords.

[4] Whereas we cite every recruitment-related *Personnel Psychology* article we found from 1980-2022, we also selectively include key recruitment articles from other sources during that time frame if we determined that they were (1) important theoretical pieces, (2) major reviews or meta-analyses, (3) novel topics, (4) under-researched yet critical topics such as DEI, or (5) other well-cited work.

[5] This accounts for the *Personnel Psychology* article format change beginning in 2018.

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