A Framework for Examining the Effect of Recruitment Information Sources on Organizational Attraction and Intention to Apply: Mediating Role of Person-Organization Fit

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ABSTRACT

Recruitment can be a key component of the value creation process that drives a firm's competitive advantage. Organizations spend huge amounts of time and money to hire qualified and talented graduates. Organizational Attraction (OA) and Intention to Apply (ITA) have remained potential variables of interest as they help in ensuring organizations' productivity by generating a pool of qualified applicants. Among the several antecedents of OA and ITA, studies related to Recruitment Information Sources (RIS) had mixed findings on the extent of their impact on pre-hire outcomes. The present research fills this research gap by examining the impact of four types of RIS (Recruitment Advertising, Recruitment Events, Publicity, and Word-of-Mouth) on ITA of Nepali business school students *via* the mediating roles of OA and Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) in the relationship between RIS and OA. A quantitative method using survey questionnaires was employed for data collection. 372 usable samples were obtained for final analysis. Results indicated that all the four RIS had significant impacts on ITA and OA. However, there was no mediating impact of OA in the relationship between RIS and ITA. The impact of RIS on OA was mediated by P-O Fit. Findings of the study have both theoretical and practical implications. The framework proposed expands domain knowledge in the area of pre-hire outcomes by integrating RIS and their impact on ITA *via* the mediating impact of OA. Findings would be useful to practitioners in examining the individual efficacy of the four RIS (formal versus informal) options and their impacts on OA before making final decisions.

Keywords: Organizational attraction; Intention to apply; Recruitment information sources; Person-organization fit.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hiring qualified individuals has become the interest of utmost importance to every employer. Organizations spend huge amounts of money in their effort to recruit the best graduates (Blackman, 2006). Effective recruiting programs help in attracting high-potential applicants to perform job assignments and also to adjust to organizational expectations (Werbel & Landau, 1996). However, organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to source right people, and this problem is becoming so serious that it is termed as "*war for talent*" by media (Collins & Kanar, 2014). Given that this is real and pertinent, employers

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need to give due attention to staffing, which includes attracting, selecting, and retaining competent individuals to achieve organizational goals (Ployhart, 2006).

Undoubtedly, employers are struggling in identifying the *'best fit'* for their organizations. This is supported by a recent report by Manpower Group (2018), which states that nearly one-third of the employers globally find that the major reason for not being able to fill positions is lack of applicants. Even when availability of graduates is abundant, employers still compete to attract high-potential job applicants (Arachchige & Robertson, 2011). This difficulty is a persistent problem faced by employers. Educated graduates or aspiring applicants who come across many and varied recruitment practices of different organizations have multiple job pursuit options and can choose their preferred employer (Jaidi, Van Hooft, & Arends, 2011).

As potential hires reach graduation, they actively start considering their employment prospects (Arachchige & Robertson, 2011). Hence, recruiters need to focus on early recruitment-related activities such as publicity, sponsorships, Word of Mouth (WoM) endorsements, and advertising (Christopher & Cynthia Kay, 2002) to attract potential new hires to the organization. This is important because those who are not attracted towards organizations will not participate in the subsequent recruitment processes and shall never enter the organization (Van Hoye, 2012). This mandates that organizations need to make themselves desirable or attractive to potential jobseekers so that they develop Intentions to Apply (ITA) towards the organization. It is therefore critical to focus on ITA on early phase of recruitment. If they do not have ITA, it clearly suggests that the applicant has rejected the organization for further steps in the recruitment process (Collins & Stevens, 2002).

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE ARTICLE

This Article is organized into five Sections—

Section-1: It starts with a brief background about the context of the problem and builds justifications for the need for the study by introducing the variables considered. More specifically, it includes a statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and limitations of the study.

Section-2 is concerned with reviewing relevant literature in the domain of this study and comparing the variables under study. Previous empirical evidence collected in the domain of ITA, Organizational Attraction (OA), Recruitment Information Sources (RIS), and Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) is presented separately.

Section-3 includes a detailed explanation on the methodology adopted, variables used and their hypothesized relationship, population and sample, sampling design, and measures/instruments, administration of the questionnaire, data processing, and data analysis technique which are part of data processing.

Section-4 presents the results from the study carried out using the quantitative tools and techniques. Specifically, it includes analyses such as confirmatory factor analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, regression analysis, and mediation analysis. Further, tests of model specification have been performed.

Section-5 summarizes the major findings of the study and puts forward the discussions. Practical, theoretical, and future implications of the study are also discussed.

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SECTION-1: THE CONTEXT

3. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

OA is critical to the success of an organization as it affects the productivity of the organization by means of attracting highly competent and productive employees (Derous & Wille, 2017). Therefore, for the employer, OA has garnered significant attention from both academicians and practitioners (Bakanauskiene, Bendaraviciene, & Barkaushe, 2017). Lievens, Decaesteker, and Coetsier (2001) contended that current labor shortages have made the attractiveness of firms increasingly important. The situation has not changed much even after almost two decades. Competent employees have always been in short supply. Competition in attracting good employees is increasingly getting difficult as there is a huge mismatch between demand and supply (Pastor, 2012). Nepali organizations are no different and are facing similar challenges with regard to hiring suitable recruits in their organizations (Adhikari & Gautam, 2011). Gomes and Neves (2011) rightly suggested that though OA leads to job choice intentions as evidenced in different pieces of literature, not many researchers have looked into the question of how OA leads to ITA.

Among multitude of factors — ranging from organizational to individual based determinants — that leave an influence on ITA, Recruitment Information Sources (RIS) happen to be very much important (Collins, & Stevens, 2002). Likewise, of the several factors that affect OA, RIS happen to be crucial (Jaidi, Van Hooft, & Arends, 2011). Current research on RIS does not explicitly state which among RIS is/are more impactful in attracting potential job seekers toward the organizations that results in greater ITA. Past research also opines that not enough research has been done to understand as to why recruitment activities have different effects (Breaugh, & Starke, 2000). This research therefore aims to look into the impact of various RIS on ITA *via* the mediating role of OA.

Most researches regarding the effectiveness of different RIS have assessed it with regard to distinct outcomes such as turnover, job survival rates, and job performance (Zottoli, & Wanous, 2000). Comparatively, past research on recruitment have focused on post-hire outcomes while what is more significant for recruiters is to understand what drives potential applicants to organizations (Jaidi, Van Hooft, &Arends, 2011). Also, literature on RIS and pre-hire outcomes is still scarce and inconclusive (Kaur & Dubey, 2014). Liu, Keeling, and Papamichail (2016) posit that increasing the number of applicants in the pool is one of the useful strategies in increasing the number of qualified and suitable candidates. To the best of our knowledge, no published research till today has taken into account how these mediating variables impact the extent to which RIS can impact on OA and their ITA.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recruitment can be a key component of the value creation process that drives a firm's competitive advantage (Yu & Cable, 2012). Though recruiting activity is a critical staffing activity for organizations, its impact on the job seeker is hardly understood (Thomas & Wise, 1999). Hence, it is important to understand how early recruitment activities such as RIS have the potential to lure quality applicants and also increase the applicant pool, which ultimately helps in hiring the best fit for the organization. Companies rely heavily on Business Schools for hiring (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014). For this reason, pre-recruitment activities have garnered significant attention because recruiting starts even before the students graduate.

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A key issue in recruitment is bringing the job opening to the attention of individuals that employer would like to recruit and hence attracting the attention of individuals is the first step in the recruitment process (Breaugh, 2013). Attracting qualified individuals is one of the pressing problems for recruiters as applicants today have considerable choice between/among employers (Ployhart, 2006). As rightly noted by Chapman and Mayers (2015), the primary goal of recruiting is attracting high quality job applicants in larger quantity. Hence, organizations are cognizant of this fact and are trying their best to tackle this challenge. Situation of Nepali organizations is no different. In Nepal, though there is the highly persistent problems of unemployment, companies still complain of scarcity of employees who are going to be the best match for their organizations. Onken-Menke, Nuesch, and Kroll (2017) opined that for organizations to be considered as a desirable employer, they need to attract potential new hires to the organization. And one way to influence prospective applicants' attraction and their ITA is through various pre-recruitment activities.

RIS also differ in their effectiveness in attracting qualified candidates (Flecke, 2016). Literature has found mixed findings with regard to relative effectiveness of each of RIS. In the context of Nepal, most of the graduating scholars are generally clueless about the prospective employers till the time they apply for a job in their companies. REs like job fairs or information sessions are uncommon and have not been explored by most B-Schools thus making students rely mostly on RA, publicity, and WoM promotions. In the article "Expert views on HR management in Nepal" (2018), it was stated that recruitment in Nepali organizations is mainly done through advertisement in newspapers, use of social media, personal reference, and outsourcing with HR companies.

However, few other studies (Hoye & Lievens, 2007; Hoye, 2012) have looked into both graduating students and those who are employed. But this particular research aims to examine the impact of RIS on first year and final year business students as potential job seekers or students start forming an initial impression about an organization first and get attracted later towards a certain organization. They develop their ITA during their college days as they get exposed to different RIS that make some employers more desirable over others. Given this backdrop, the primary research questions the present research study is directed to are as follows:

1. Do RIS (RA, REs, publicity, and WoM) affect intention to apply?
2. Does organizational attraction mediate the relationship between recruitment information sources and intention to apply?
3. Do RIS RA, REs, publicity, and WoM) affect OA?
4. Does P-O Fit mediate the relationship between RIS and OA?

4.1 Objectives of the Study:

With reference to the issues brought out in the problem statement, the basic purpose of this study is to examine the direct effect of RIS on ITA. We contend that the effect of RIS on ITA is not always direct but through some mediating variable such as OA. More specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the effect of RIS on ITA
2. To examine the mediating impact of OA on the relationship between RIS and ITA.
3. To examine the effect of RIS on OA.
4. To examine the mediating effect of P-O Fit on the relationship between RIS and OA.

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4.2 Significance of the Study:

The findings of the study have both theoretical and practical implications. On the theoretical front, it has helped expand the domain knowledge in the area of pre-hire outcomes, such as ITA and OA. In line with the argument put forward by Ployhart, Schmitt, and Tippins (2017), this research aims to contribute to the theoretical understanding rather than trying to be one that is just in alignment with the immediate need of practitioners, which was the case prior to 1980s. On the theoretical front, the proposed framework attempts to integrate RIS and their impact on ITA *via* the mediating impact of OA. Similarly, it aims to measure the impact of RIS on OA through the mediating impact of P-O Fit. Hence, this research aims to fill in the research gap by means of providing an integrated framework by which impact of RIS on ITA to apply is measured through the mediating impact of OA. Furthermore, as we contend, the impact of RIS on OA is not direct but through the mediating impact of P-O Fit. Earlier models in the domain of recruitment and pre-hire outcomes have looked into these variables separately. Also, no previous models have looked into the mediating impact of P-O Fit on pre-hire outcome, namely, OA and no Model has looked into the mediating impact of OA on ITA by integrating them in one single model. Though interest in 'fit' research has increased in the recent times, it has mostly focused on the job choice than job search itself (Saks & Ashforth, 2002).

The present research has taken P-O Fit as a predictor to pre-hire outcome as OA is the beginning of the job search process. Hence, this study aims to add to the current literature by examining mediating impact on two important pre-hire outcomes as was stated earlier. On the practical front, the findings from the study are going to be useful to practitioners to examine which among the RIS viz., formal versus informal or from among the four sources of recruitment viz., RA, Res, Publicity, and WoM would impact OA and ITA more. Hence, Nepali organizations can focus on how to consider their RA to make it a credible source of information to the graduates. Employers can devise ways to make an impact among students/graduates through positive WoM endorsements from their direct points of contact, i.e., their friends, immediate seniors, alumni, family, and other acquaintances. Information regarding how the match between the applicant personality/values to those of the organization is influencing their OA will help practitioners formulate successful strategies and tactics.

4.3 Limitations of the Study:

The sample consists of business students within Kathmandu valley. Due to time and cost constraints, it is drawn from one geographical region without providing for wider geographic representation. We contacted and considered only prospective but not real job applicants due to the time constraint. This definitely limits the scope for generalization of the findings. The design of this study is not experimental in examining the impact of RIS at different points of time.

SECTION-II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

OA and ITA have been studied as potential pre-hire outcomes in the research on recruitment and also have garnered significant research attention in the recent times. Organizations are focusing increasingly more attention on early recruitment activities such as RIS. They are concerned about attracting their potential candidates by building and developing an ITA

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towards them. P-O Fit has been recognized as a potential variable that impacts OA. Furthermore, the relationship between RIS and ITA may be mediated by OA. Hence, this Section focuses on earlier research studies in the domain of pre-hire outcomes viz., OA and ITA and those in the domain of P-O Fit.

5. INTENTION TO APPLY (ITA)

As rightly argued, ITA is one of the key outcomes in the early stages of recruitment (Barber, 1998 as cited in Sovina & Collins, 2003). Most of the past research in the area of pre-hire outcomes have taken OA as a predictor of ITA or 'Job Pursuit Intentions' (JPI) — an individual's intent to pursue a job in an organization by submitting his/her application (Derous & Willie, 2017). Gomes and Neves (2011) contend that ITA has been studied in two areas of research: Job choice and OA. Hence, there are primarily three major types of intentions as studied in the recruitment literature, i.e., ITA to a job vacancy, IPJ, and intention to accept a job (Cable & Judge, 1994 as cited in Gomes & Neves, 2011). They argue that in the context of pre-recruitment activities, ITA is a stronger predictor of actual applications to job vacancies. Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991) explains that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes and norms and has been used to explain an applicant's ITA.

Asseburg, Homberg, and Vogel (2018) found, in another study, how inspirational and rational recruitment message impacted on P-O Fit of individuals which, in turn, translated to ITA. Behrend, Baker, and Thompson (2009) found that OR mediated the relationship between pro-environmental recruiting message and JPI basing their arguments on Signaling Theory. Cable and Turban (2003) suggest that job seekers' reputation perception impacted their JPI because reputation leads to pride that individuals develop with their association in the organization.

Another predictor of ITA is the information contained in job advertisement. Acarlar and Bilgic (2013) found that such information impacted an applicant's willingness to apply to job vacancy through the mediating roles of credibility and satisfaction in the given advertisement. Hence, literature on ITA reveals that most predictors of ITA have indirect relation to ITA or JPI via some mediating variables such as P-O Fit, OR, credibility, satisfaction, OA and so on.

5.1 Organizational Attraction (OA)

OA is one of the most popular outcome measures in the literature on recruitment as it involves an applicant's overall evaluation of the attractiveness of the job and the organization (Chapman *et al.*, 2005). Rynes (1989) argued for and mandated the inclusion of OA as most studies focused on other pre-hire outcomes and ignored it as an important pre-hire outcome. Most definitions of OR incorporate an individual's affective and attitudinal thoughts about particular organizations as potential places for employment (Derous & Wille, 2017). Notwithstanding the fact that OA is a construct that is multi-dimensional in nature, Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003) have conceptualized it as comprising of three components, namely, general attractiveness, intentions to pursue, and prestige.

OA has varied definitions and bears similarity to constructs like applicant attraction, organizational image, OR, job attraction, P-O Fit, Person-Job (P-J) Fit (Derous & Wille, 2017). In simple terms, the area of OA research explains what variables affect an

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individual's perception of organization and how this perception makes an individual apply for a job in an organization (Rocky & Dahesihsari, 2016). Among various theoretical underpinnings to OA, environmental processing meta-theory, inter-actionist processing meta-theory, and self-processing meta-theory provide us rationale as to why individuals get attracted to organizations (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). According to them, environmental processing theories center on how individuals process information about the actual environment to develop perceptions of the organizational environment finally leading to attraction. In the inter-actionist processing meta-theories, fit between the person and the environmental characteristics contributing to attraction is studied. In the self-processing meta-theories, how information about oneself can influence relationship between perception of fit and attraction is studied.

The reason behind why an applicant is attracted to organizations has also been explained with Signaling Theory (Rynes, 1991 as cited in Celani & Singh, 2010), which suggests that an applicant may interpret recruitment related activities as signals of organizational characteristics which in turn influence on applicant attraction towards the organization.

5.2 Recruitment Information Sources (RIS)

RIS are the most effective avenues for reaching potential employees (Pulakos, Dorsey, & Borman, 2003). According to (Barber, 1998, as cited in Bissonnette, 2010) "recruitment source" or "job information source" is the organizations' first opportunity to make a "first impression" on potential candidates and is as such a key aspect of recruitment. Early studies looked into RIS also known as Job Information Sources (JIS) into two categories, namely, formal and informal. Kirnan, Farley, and Geisinger (1989) also categorized them as formal and informal. Formal sources include public and private employment agencies, trade unions, school and college placement bureaus, and advertisements through radio, television, newspapers or professional journals and informal sources include employee referrals, referrals by friends or relatives, and self-initiated applications such as walk-ins or write-ins.

Formal sources are divided into (i) Company Controlled (FCC) including JA, company website, and recruitment fairs and (ii) not Company Controlled (FNCC) including job centers, career advice. Informal Sources are divided into Company Controlled (ICC) including staff comments in Realistic Job Previews on the company website and not company controlled (INCC) including WoM and e-WOM such as blogs, online discussion forums, and communities. In their Book Chapter, Rynes and Cable (2003) discussed the underlying relationship between RIS and outcome by offering two hypotheses: (i) Realistic information hypothesis, which proposes that some RIS provide more or better information to candidates (ii) pre-screening or individual difference hypothesis, which proposes that different sources attract individuals with differing qualifications and other outcome-related attributes. Literature looking at the impact of both formal and informal RIS are therefore limited and have inconsistent findings too.

5.3 Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit)

Interaction between a human and his/her work environment is still very popular stream of research in psychology (Merecz & Andysz, 2012). P-O Fit represents a specific facet of Person-Environment (P-E) Fit and studied within the P-E Fit paradigm (Merecz-Kot & Andysz, 2017). Person-Environment Fit theories suggest that positive responses occur when individuals Fit or match the environment (Carless, 2005). Different types of Fits are discussed in the Fit literature such as person organization Fit, person job Fit, person group Fit, person-supervisor Fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Among different

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types of Fit, the most common are P-O Fit and person-job Fit (Carless, 2005). In the context of recruitment, as per the image congruity theory, prospective job seekers are attracted to organizations whose personalities are perceived by job seekers to be similar to their own actual and ideal self (Noland, & Harold, 2010).

Likewise, P-O Fit was more strongly related to job choice intentions when individuals experienced low demand-abilities Fit or were highly conscientious. Also, P-O Fit was related to job offer acceptance for highly conscientious individuals. Timothy and Judge (1996) found that P-O Fit perceptions are predicted by the congruence of applicants' values and their perceptions of the recruiting organization's value and not by their demographic similarity with organizational representatives. Also, P-O Fit perceptions predict both job choice intentions and work attitudes after controlling for the attractiveness of job attributes. P-O Fit has also been used as a moderating variable in the recruitment context. Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow and Si (2001) found that P-O Fit moderated the effects of organizational attributes on a firm's attractiveness.

5.4 Recruitment Information Sources (RIS) and Intention to Apply (ITA)

Bissonnette (2010) argued that RIS should focus on proximal outcomes such as ITA. Most of the early studies have focused on the relationship between RIS and post-hire outcomes (Rynes, and Cable, 2003). Not many studies till today have investigated the impact of RIS on ITA. Jaidi, Van Hooft and Arends (2011) found that there is an effect of different RIS on job pursuit intention or ITA of highly educated graduates. They found that recruitment advertising and positive WoM are related to ITA. Interestingly, on-campus presence is related negatively to ITA (Collins & Stevens, 2002). Another study by Agrawal and Joseph (2010) conducted on the impact of early recruitment activities such as publicity/media presence on business students' ITA found that RA and sponsorships were not significant in predicting a student's application intention whereas publicity/media presence was. Hence, past research on RIS has yielded mixed findings with regard to their impact on ITA.

5.5 RIS and ITA: Mediating Role of OA

Van Birgelen, Wetzels, and Van Dolen (2008) found that OA mediated the relationship between the attitude towards the corporate employment website and ITA. Kashive and Khanna (2017) found that early recruitment activities such as RA, sponsorships, publicity and WoM significantly impacted on OA. Few studies (Jaidi, Van Hooft, & Arends, 2011; Agrawal, & Joseph, 2010) have established the direct relationship between RIS and ITA. Few studies (Carless, 2005; Gomes, & Neves, 2011; Lee, Huang, & Yeh, 2013) have established OA as the predictor of ITA. Carless (2005) found that both P-O FIT and Person-Job Fit perception impacted on OA which ultimately impacted on applicant ITA. Based on the rationales noted above, OA can be taken as a mediating variable in the relationship between RIS and ITA.

5.6 RIS and Organizational Attraction (OA)

The first stage of recruitment is all about companies trying to identify potential applicants, mostly the high-flyers, and getting them attracted to organization by ensuring that they are exposed to a wide array of recruitment practices (Furnham, & Palaiou, 2017). Breaugh and Starke (2000) noted that the relationship between RIS and OA has not been sufficiently researched. Moser (2005) noted that most studies on RIS have looked into the relationship between sources and post-hire outcomes. Hoye (2012) found out that all RIS were positively related to OA.

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5.7 RIS and OA: Mediating Role of Person-Organization Fit

Saks and Ashforth (1997) found that the use of multiple sources of job information lead to an assessment of P-O Fit. Individuals' perception of subjective Fit has been found to impact on OA based on the theory of Attraction-Selection-Attrition Theory by Schneider (1987), which has been widely used in attraction studies. People tend to get attracted to organizations which are in sync with their own perceptions (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). Yu (2014) suggested that applicants who experience value congruence during the early recruitment process develop certain expectations about the workplace and employer relationship which positively impact OA. Subjective P-O Fit has been found to correlate positively with attraction in the context of web-based recruitment (Dineen, Noe, & Ash, 2002). Ehrhart, Mayer, and Ziegert (2012) found that P-O Fit mediated the relationship between web-based recruitment and OA.

As per the Signaling Theory, individuals receive information about their prospective organization from various sources and develop perception of P-O Fit. Such information obtained during the early stage of recruitment helps to develop OA. The given conceptual framework proposes a double mediation: (i) effect of RIS, the independent variable, on ITA as mediated by OA and (ii) relationship between RIS and OA as further mediated by P-O Fit.

SECTION-III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6. RESEARCH APPROACH

The philosophical underpinning of this research is the positivist paradigm. The ontology of this study is objectivism and the epistemology is positivism. Positivism could be regarded as a research strategy and approach that is rooted on the ontological principle and doctrine that the truth is free and independent of the viewer and observer (Aliyu, Bello, Kasim, & Martin, 2014). This study essentially has focused on establishing correlation among the proposed independent, mediating, and dependent variables and also has examined the impact of independent variable on the dependent variable.

6.1 Research Design

Within the framework of positivist ontology, this study was designed around a quantitative research methodology using the cross-sectional research method for data collection and analysis. The study is co-relational investigation and was carried out in a non-contrived work setting. Unit of analysis for the study were individuals. i.e., Master's-level Business students. The basic design combines the review of literature related to intentions to apply, organizational attraction, recruitment information sources, and P-O Fit constructing conceptual framework which was tested using questionnaire survey of students studying in different business schools in the Kathmandu valley.

6.2 Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses can be defined as logically conjectured relationships between two or more variables expressed in the form of testable statements (Sekaran & Bougie, 2012). Zikmund (2003) state that hypothetical statements assert probable answers to research questions. In

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order to study the relationships and their strengths, the following hypotheses were framed for testing based on literature review:

1. ***Hypothesis 1:*** RIS (i) recruitment advertising, (ii) recruitment events, (iii) publicity, and (iv) WoM positively affect IA.
2. ***Hypothesis 2:*** OA mediates the relationship between RIS and IA.
3. ***Hypothesis 3***: RIS (i) recruitment advertising (ii) recruitment events (iii) publicity, and (iv) WoM positively affect OA.
4. ***Hypothesis 4:*** P-O Fit mediates the relationship between RIS and OA.

6.3 Population and Sample

The population for this study contains all Master's-level business students enrolled in the business schools (B-Schools) in Kathmandu valley. Though there are 25 B-Schools, no precise data on the number of students enrolled were given on their websites, which made it difficult to set the sampling frame. However, by visiting websites such as *edusanjal*, formed.edu.np, ugc.edu.np, moe.gov.np, and making telephone inquiries, we decided on an approximate sampling frame of around 2,200. After inquiring about the admissions made in each of these colleges, we determined the total size in each college by finding out the size of each batch and the number of batches (Appendix: Estimated Sample Frame). We then applied probabilistic sampling to determine the correct sample size as a correct sampling method is an important pillar for sound research (Cornish, 2006). We used precision-based sampling to determine the sample size, which was estimated by the following formula:

$$N = Z^2 P (1-P)/d^2 \quad \text{(i)}$$

where, N = sample size, Z = the Z-statistics for a level of confidence, P = the expected prevalence or proportion, and d = the precision or the level of significance.

Based on Equation (i), the sample size is derived at the 5% confidence level, where p=0.05. With a 5% precision, the sample size is 385. Past research using this precision-based sampling for a population of 2,000 have derived a sample size of 333 (Israel, 1992). Hence, using the formula in case of a finite population helps estimate the correct sample size. After the sample size was derived using precision-based sampling, proportional sampling per strata was employed. For the proportional sampling per strata, first the number of colleges under the affiliation of different universities was estimated. After that, the number of colleges affiliated to local universities, namely, Tribhuwan University (TU), Kathmandu University (KU), Pokhara University (PU) and Purbanchal University, and the number of colleges affiliated to foreign universities were calculated. We then calculated the number of students in each of the colleges affiliated to TU, KU, PU, Purbanchal, and foreign universities as follows:

$$\frac{n}{N} = \frac{n_{TU}}{N_{TU}} = \frac{n_{KU}}{N_{KU}} = \frac{n_{PU}}{N_{PU}} \ldots . = \frac{n_{ForeignUniversity}}{N_{Foreign\ University}} \quad \text{(ii)}$$

where, n = the sample size calculated using the precision-based Equation (i)

N = Total sampling frame

n_k = Sample size of kt university

N_k = Total sampling frame of kt university

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The total number of students in TU-affiliated colleges was 426. KU had 140 students, Pokhara University affiliated colleges had 720 students, Purbanchal had 360 students, while other foreign related universities had 564 students. Based on stratified sampling, the proportion of the sample required from each of the colleges from Tribhuwan University was 426/2200 = 0.19x385 = 73, that from Kathmandu University = 140/2200 = 0.06x385 = 23, that from Pokhara University = 720/2200 = 0.32x385=123, that from Purbanchal University = 360/2200 = 0.16x385 = 61, and that from other foreign affiliated universities = 564/2200 = 0.25x385 = 96. This is how the samples were distributed. Finally, when individual students were chosen, the sample was chosen based on convenience, i.e., the availability of students at classrooms during or after their class time.

6.4 Measures/ Instruments

Responses to this study's survey were collected using self-reported questionnaires as it is easy to contact the respondents directly to achieve greater participation. Also, self-report measures are a ubiquitous form of data collection in organizational behavior and management research (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). In this research, it is entirely the perception of students towards organizations that they find attractive, which affects their intention to apply and their exposure to varied recruitment sources. Hence, self-report measures are most appropriate in the case of this study. In most cases, it is better to use self-report measures rather than non-self-report measures when one is assessing constructs that are self-referential perceptions such as job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and perceived fairness (Brannick, Chan, Conway, Lance, & Spector, 2010).

6.5. Variables

The independent variables for this study are RIS while the dependent variable is ITA in the first step of the analysis where OA is the mediating variable. Likewise, in the second step, RIS is the independent variable while OA is the dependent variable and P-O Fit is taken as the mediating variable in the relationship between RIS and OA.

6.5.1 Organizational Attraction (OA)

OA refers to the degree to which a person favorably perceives an organization as a place to work (Rynes *et al*., 1991 as cited in Gomes, & Neves, 2011). OA or Attractiveness to Organization focuses on attractiveness rather than explicit intentions towards the organization (Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003). Thus, items that assess preliminary attitudes about the organization as a potential place of employment are taken. OA is measured with a five-item scale developed by Taylor and Bergmann (1987); Zeithaml *et al.* (1996); Brewer and Henscher (1998); van Birgelen, Wetzels, and van Dolen (2008). The composite reliability of the scale was 0.87. The sample items in the scale are: "Overall, I think this company is an attractive potential employer" and "In my opinion, this company is a good place to work". Responses were captured using a 7-Point Likert scale with 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree.

6.5.2 Intention to Apply (ITA)

ITA refers to an individual's intention to pursue an application in the organization (Derous & Willie, 2017). ITA was measured using a four-item scale developed by Taylor and Bergmann (1987); Harris and Fink (1987) and Zeithaml *et al.*, (1996) (van Birgelen, Wetzels, & van Dolen, 2008). The composite reliability of the scale was 0.92. The sample items include: "I intend to apply for a position in this organization" and "I consider this

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company as a potential future employer." Responses are captured using a 7-point Likert scale with 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree.

6.5.3 Recruitment Sources

Recruitment sources are defined from two theoretical dimensions (Hoye, 2012). The first dimension is the dependent-independent dimension which refers to the degree of control that the organization has over the sources. Based on this definition, RA and Res are the organization dependent sources as they can be managed and controlled to communicate intended messages to job seekers. Likewise, Publicity and WoM are the company independent sources which are not under control by the organization and can only be indirectly influenced by other recruitment activities of the organization. In the recruitment context, WoM refers to interpersonal communication independent of the organization's recruitment activities (Van Hoye, & Lievens, 2005).

6.5.4 Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit)

Past literature defined P-O Fit in numerous ways. Some past studies have looked into the pre-hire P-O Fit while some others have looked into the post-hire P-O Fit. Cable and Judge (1996) defined P-O Fit as the degree to which a job seeker subjectively perceive a fit between his/her values and the organization's values. In this study, this subjective fit formulated by Cable and Judge (1996) is taken. The perception of fit is measured with a four-item 5-point Likert scale with 1 = to a very little extent and 5 = to a large extent. The sample items include: "To what extent are the values of the organization similar to your own values?" and "To what extent does your personality match the personality or image of the organization?" The reliability scores of the scale taken at different points of time were 0.90 and 0.84.

7. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

7.1 Administration of the Questionnaire

As per the stratified sampling plan, we approached the following colleges for sampling: one college under Tribhuwan University, namely Minbhawan Campus, School of Management of Kathmandu University; five colleges under Pokhara University, namely Ace, Apex, Uniglobe, Quest International College and Excel Business College; one college under Purbanchal University, namely Himalayan Whitehouse College; and two colleges under the foreign affiliated universities, namely CG Institute of Management and Kings College. As per the sampling plan, questionnaires were distributed at Tribhuwan University (80), Kathmandu University (30), Pokhara University (330), Purbanchal University (60), and other foreign affiliated universities (100). A total of 554 questionnaires were collected from the ten business schools out of 600 questionnaires distributed, i.e., the response rate was 76 %. Out of the 554 questionnaires returned, 183 questionnaires were unusable as most of them had missing values. After subtracting the unusable responses, the number of usable questionnaires was 372. Such a large sample size of $N > 300$ is considered to be appropriate for factor analysis (Comrey and Lee, 1999).

Note that only paper questionnaires were distributed to the respondents as surveys by email are known to have very low response rates. Nulty (2008) stated that online surveys are less likely to receive a high response rate compared to paper-based surveys (also refer to Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003). This justifies our choice of sending out the questionnaires only in paper copies that are less likely to be ignored by respondents. Also note that prior

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approval and consent were obtained from the participating business schools and students before approaching them for the survey.

7.2 Data Processing

Each returned questionnaire was alloted a number for the purpose of data input (SPSS). Also, each questionnaire was manually screened to detect for any missing values input by the the respondent.

7.3 Data Analysis

The Cronbach Alpha of each measure was calculated in order to check the reliability of the data. Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to determine the model fit. In order to ensure a minimum level of relibility, a standardized path coefficient was computed using CFA. After running CFA for all the independent, dependent and mediating constructs separately, if the path coefficent was found to be too small, the associated items were dropped to ensure the reliability of the scale. The CFA was conducted using SPSS Amos-21. Model specification tests, descriptive statistics, correlations, and scale reliabilties were also conducted. Hierarchial regression analysis was estimated to test for the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Mediation analysis was conducted using the four-step approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), which requires that the relationship between the independent variable, i.e., the recruitment information sources, and the dependent variable, i.e., the intention to apply, is statistically significant. At the first stage, a regression was estimated between the independent variable (X) and dependent variable (Y) to see if the coefficient is significant. In the second step, a regression of the independent variable (recruitment information sources) on the mediating variable (M), i.e., organizational attraction, was estimated to see if the coefficient remains to be significant. In the third stage, a regression of the mediating variable (organizational attraction) on the dependent variable (intention to apply) was estimated.

After completing the above three steps, it can be said that the mediation effect is possible if all the relationships are found to be statistically significant. In stage 4, the mediation effect of M exists if M remains to be significant after controlling for X. If X is no longer significant, it implies that the full mediation of M exits, i.e., the condition in which the effect of X on Y is entirely mediated through M. In another case of partial mediation, the direct effect of X on Y remains to be significant after controlling for M. The same process is repeated for the mediation analysis between recruitment information sources (X) and organizational attraction (Y) in subsequent stages with person-organization fit (M) as the the mediating variable.

SECTION-IV: RESULTS

This Section reports and interprets the results of hypotheses testing. Data collected from the survey using questionnaires were used to conduct several statistical analyses including confirmatory factor analysis, reliability analysis, and descriptive statistics and correlations. Hierarchical regression was also estimated to test for the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Moreover, a test of mediation was separately conducted to check for any mediating effect. Finally, a test of model specification was conducted.

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8. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a confirmatory technique in which a hypothesized model is used to estimate a population covariance matrix that is compared with the observed covariance matrix to minimize the difference between the estimated and the observed matrices (Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora, & Barlow, 2006). CFA explicitly tests for a priori hypothesis about the relations between the observed variables (e.g., test scores or ratings) and the latent variables, i.e., the unobserved factors (Jackson, Gillaspy, Jr., & Purc-Stephenson, 2009). Another purpose of CFA is to test for the validity of the constructs and scales.

CFA also allows us to check the model fit of the data. To run CFA, 372 samples without missing observations were input into AMOS. CFA was conducted on the data to detect and control for common method bias through statistical remedies. Note that a CFA was conducted separately on each of the independent, mediating, and dependent variables. Moreover, another CFA was conducted with all the variables pooled into a single model. In general, a model tends to be unfit if the sample size is smaller than 200 under the normality assumption (Dogan, Ozaydin, & Yilmaz, 2015). Hence, this study's sample size (> 300) is large enough to be qualified for CFA.

Table 1: **Fit Statistics and Reliability Coefficient**

Model	Chi-square	Df	CMIN/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	Alpha
Recruitment Sources	26.17	13	2.01	0.98	0.95	0.94	0.05	0.83
Organizational Attraction	5.23	5	1.046	0.99	0.98	1	0.011	0.84
Intention to Apply	3.99	2	1.99	0.99	0.97	0.98	0.05	0.86
P-O Fit	3.42	2	1.71	0.99	0.97	0.99	0.04	0.86
Model	440.91	179	1.55	0.93	0.91	0.96	0.03	

8.1 CFA (Recruitment Sources)

One purpose of CFA on each individual item is to test for the multi-dimensionality of the multi-item construct and to remove unreliable items (Calantone, Cavusgil, & Zhao, 2002). The factor loading of all the items under the four specific sub-dimensions of RIS is above 0.30. The lowest factor loading is found to be 0.42 for the item of "time spent on inquiring about the institution with family, friends, or acquaintances". The initial model fit of the construct RIS is not acceptable as the p-value is significant at 0.000. Other indicators (such as the Normed chi-square (CMIN/df) = 2.59, GFI=0. 97, AGFI=0.93, CFI=0.89, and RMSEA=.0.06) are all acceptable. Therefore, in order to improve the model fit, the

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covariance of errors was estimated on items that have the highest values in terms of the modification index. The co-variance was estimated between the error terms viz., time spent on: (i) "going through media messages of the institution" and (ii) "inquiring about the institution with family, friends, and acquaintances". A revised version of RIS displays that CMIN/df = 2.01 which does not exceed 5, and that GFI=0.98, AGFI= 0.95, CFI=0.94, and RMSEA=0.05. Also, the p-value increases to 0.016. The CFI, GFI, and AGFI values are all greater than 0.90 and the RMSEA value is less than 0.08, representing a good fit (Tabouli *et al*., 2016). Hence, all the sub-dimensions of RIS are found to have good fit with the data. The final values are reported in Table 1 above. First, for OA, ITA, and P-O Fit, the factor loading for each individual item is computed separately. The final model fit was computed for the independent, dependent, and mediating variables. For OA, the factor loadings of all the five items are larger than 0.30. Hence, no item is required to be removed.

The chi-square value is 5.23 with df=5, and the values of GFI=0.99, AGFI=0.98, CFI=1, and RMSEA=0.01, which are all significant at p=0.388. Hence, there is no need to run a co-variance test on the error terms to enhance the model fit. The value of chi-square/df is smaller than 2.0 that represents a good fit (Sousa *et al*, 2009). For ITA, the factor loadings of all the four items are computed and they are all larger than 0.30. Note that the factor loading of the third item is -0.38, which has to be subtracted from the total (DiStefano, Zhu, Mindrila, 2009). Also, the sign of the factor loading is indeterminate and would lead to the same correlation matrix (Velicer, & Jackson, 1990). Hence, no item is needed to be removed. The initial model fit is therefore satisfactory [the normed chi-square (CMIN/df) =1.99, GFI= 0.99, AGFI=0.97, CFI=.98, and RMSEA=0.05]. All the values are acceptable at p-value = 0.135, and hence, the construct of ITA shows a good fit with the data. Finally, for P-O Fit, the factor loadings of all the three items are larger than 0.30. The construct of P-O Fit is acceptable with CMIN/df =1.71, GFI= 0.99, AGFI=0.97, CFI=0.99, and RMSEA=0.04 at p-value=0.18. Hence, it is suggested that the construct of P-O Fit has a good fit with the data. After that, another CFA was run on the entire model consisting of RIS, OA, ITA, and P-O Fit, with RIS consisting of eight items, OA consisting of five items, ITA consisting of four items, and P-O Fit consisting of four items. The results of this CFA initially indicate that the model is not fit (CMIN/df=3.071, GFI=0.85, AGFI=0.81, CFI=0.86, RMSEA=.0.07) as the p-value is insignificant.

With chi-square = 561.93 and df =183, the covariance of the error terms was estimated multiple times for items with the largest modification indices. These items are time spent on going through: (i) "the recruitment brochure/website of the institution" and (ii) "job advertisements of the institution". Then the covariance was estimated on the time spent on attending: (i) "information session of the institution" and (ii) "events or job fairs where the institution was present". The covariance was also estimated for the time spent on: (i) "talking to people about the institution" and (ii) "going through the recruitment brochures/website of the institution". Again, the covariance was estimated for the time spent on: (i) "attending events or job fairs where the institution was present" and (ii) "going through the recruitment brochure/website of the institution". The model fit was improved with CMIN/df=2.56, GFI=0.89, AGFI=0.86, CFI=0.90, and RMSEA=0.06. Subsequently, the covariance was estimated again among the error terms as the model is insignificant. It was estimated for the time spent on going through: (i) "the recruitment brochure/website of the institution" and (ii) "job advertisements of the institution". The covariance was also estimated between the time spent on "going through information about the institution on TV, radio, newspaper, and magazines" and that on "going through recruitment brochure/ websits of the institution".

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In addition, the covariance was estimated for time spent on: (i) "attending information sessions or open house events of the institution" and (ii) "going through the recruitment brochure/website of the institution". The covariance was also estimated for time spent on going through: (i) "information about the institution on TV, radio, newspaper, and magazines" and (ii) "media messages of the institution". The covariance was then estimated for time spent on "inquiring about the institution wtih family, friends, or acquaintances" and that for "readiness to accept the job offered by the institution". Successive estimation results show that CMIN/df=2.3, GFI= 0.90, AGFI=0.87, CFI=0.92, and RMSEA=0.05. Since the model is not yet significant, the covariance from error terms was estimated again for the time spent on going through: (i) "recruitment brochure/website of the institution" and (ii) "job advertisements of the institution". The same procedure was also repeated for the time spent on: (i) "attending information sessions or open house events of the institution" and (ii) "going through the recruitment brochure/website of the institution".

The whole procedure was done again for the time spent on "attending information sessions or open house events of the institution" and also for the "readiness to accept the job offered". The factor loading of each item was calculated using descriptive statistics, correlations, and scale reliabilities for all the scale variables. Again, the covariance was estimated among the items including the time spent on "going through job advertisements of the institution" and the "readiness to accept the job offered". The results show that CMIN/df=1.59, GFI=0.93, AGFI= 0.91, CFI=0.96, RMSEA=0.04. Again, the covariance was estimated as the model was not yet significant with p-value=0.000. Similarly, the covariance was estimated for: (i) "the time spent on attending information sessions or open house events of the institution" and (ii) "the extent of similarity between the values of the organization and those of the prospective applicant". Finally, the covariance was estimated for the ITA regarding the position in this organization and the acceptance of the job if it is offered by the organization. Thus, after running the covariance test for multiple times, the results yielded a satisfactory model fit with CMIN/df= 1.55, GFI=0.93, AGFI=0.91, CFI=0. 96, and RMSEA=0. 03. As seen in the table, the Cronbach Alpha for all the items measuring the independent variable (RIS), the dependent variable (ITA), and the mediating variable (P-O Fit) are higher than the suggested threshold of 0.70. A rule of thumb suggests that an Alpha level higher than 0.70 indicates internal consistency among the items of the scale (Dunn, Seaker, & Waller, 1994).

Cronbach Alpha, or internal consistency, is the most widely used index of scale reliability (Streiner, 2003; Cortina, 1993). It measures the extent to which the items inside the scales of a questionnaire are correlated (Terwee *et al.*, 2007). It is imperative to calculate and report the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for internal reliability when Likert-type scales are used in the questionnaire (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Scale reliabilities along with the means and standard deviations of the individual scales were calculated for all the sub-dimensions of RIS for regression purpose (see Table 2).

Among the four dimensions of RIS, internal reliability of RA is 0.71 and that of WoM is 0.70. However, the Cronbach Alpha for the remaining two sub-dimensions of RIS, namely REs and Publicity, was just below the threshold of 0.70.

The reliability of REs is 0.62 while that of Publicity is 0.68. One reason for the low internal consistency is the low correlation among the items in the construct of REs and Publicity. Since the Cronbach Alpha is also dependent on the number of items in the scale (Terwee *et al.*, 2007), this might result in a lower internal consistency. Despite the low Alpha value, we did not drop any item from the REs and Publicity constructs because dropping any items from a construct may affect the test validity (Nunnally, & Bernstein, 1994 as cited in Wibowo, 2016). Another reason for not dropping any item is that the factor loading of each

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individual item is still acceptable (> 0.30). Peterson (1994) suggested that an Alpha value of 0.60 is the "criterion-in-use" and thus is acceptably reliable. Likewise, at an early stage of this research the reliability Alpha of 0.50 to 0.60 is also considered to be acceptable (Nunnally, 1967 as cited in Streiner, 2003). Another possible reason for the relatively low level of internal consistency is that the item may not be culturally relevant to the respondents. The correlations show that the expected association between the variables is significant at the p-value < 0.01. Since the correlation coefficient is below 0.70, multicollinearity is not an issue in the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996 as cited in Alfes, Shantz, Truss, & Soane, 2013). The mean values of all the sub-dimensions of RIS, RA, REs, Publicity, and WoM are all higher than the average level, indicating that all these dimensions are relevant to the context of this study.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics Correlations and Scale Reliabilities (N=372)

	Alpha	Mean	SD	RA	RE	Pub	WoM	OA	ITA	P-O Fit
RA	0.71	3.18	0.92							
RE	0.62	3.03	0.81	.60**						
Pub	0.68	3.23	0.82	.27**	.46**					
WoM	0.70	3.24	0.87	.29**	.38**	.51**				
OA	0.83	3.82	1.22	.63**	.65**	.52**	.59**			
ITA	0.86	4.93	0.52	.43**	.46**	.39**	.42**	.44**		
P-O Fit	0.86	3.66	0.59	.30**	.26**	.16**	.26**	.35**	.27**	

*Note: **p <0.01. RA- Recruitment Advertising, RE- Recruitment Events, Pub-Publicity,* WoM-Word of Mouth, OA-Organizational Attraction, ITA- Intention To Apply, P-O Fit- Person-Organization Fit

OA and ITA which were measured with a 7-point Likert scale have mean values higher than the average. These high average values could be due to the fact that applicants are likely to rate higher the organizations of their choice. The P-O Fit value was also found to be higher than the mean value, indicating that the pre-hire P-O Fit values and employee personality are similar to those of the organization they intend to join. The correlation results indicate that there exist statistically significant relations between RA and RE (γ = 0.60, p<0.01), between RA and Pub (γ = 0.27, p<0.01), and between RA and WoM (γ = 0.29, p<0.01). Similarly, there are statistically significant and positive relations between RA and OA (γ =0.63, p<0.01), between RA and ITA (γ = 0.43, p<0.01), and between RA and P-O Fit (γ =0.30, p<0.01). Likewise, all the other sub-dimensions of RIS viz., RE, Publicity, and WoM have statistically significant relations with OA, ITA, and P-O Fit. The correlations results indicated that the relationship of the independent variables with the criterion variables was in the expected positive direction.

8.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents' gender, age, level of study, and work experience were taken as the major demographic variables in this study. Likewise, participants from both the first and second years of the Masters' program were taken as a part of the study because postgraduate business students start getting attracted towards a particular organization and developing their intentions to apply for a job since the first day they join the business school. Out of all

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the respondents, 46% of them are male and 54% are female. The average age of the respondents was about 24 years with the minimum age of 19 and the maximum age of 32. 49% of the respondents were studying in the first year and 51% of them were studying in the second year of their Master's program. The average age of 24 may imply that, in the country's cultural context, majority of the respondents had no prior work experience – it turned out that only 29% of the respondents had work experience while 71% had no work experience. The socio-demographic profile of the respondents is provided in Table 3.

Table 3
Frequency Characteristics of the Sample (N-270)

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
	Male	171	46
Gender	Female	201	54
	Year I	182	49
Masters Level	Year II	190	52
	Yes	106	28.5
Experience	No	266	71.5

9. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hierarchical multiple regressions were estimated to test for the hypotheses. Regressions were estimated to test the predictive power of the independent variable, i.e., RIS, on the dependent variable, i.e., ITA. Mediation analysis was conducted to test for the indirect impact of OA on ITA. Regression of OA was run on RIS in the second stage. Finally, regression was run to test for the mediating impact of P-O Fit on the relationship between RIS and OA.

9.1 Control Variables

From past studies, age, gender, work experience, and academic degree were found to impact a job applicant's level of organizational attraction (Hoye, 2012). Likewise, age, gender and work experience were found to impact an applicant's ITA (Agrawal, & Joseph, 2010). Hence, all these variables should be controlled for in estimating the relationship between RIS and ITA and the relationship between RIS and OA.

9.1.1 Do Recruitment Information Sources Predict Intention to Apply?

In this regression, all sub-dimensions of the independent variables, i.e., RA, REs, Publicity and WoM, have positive and significant impacts on the dependent variable, i.e., intention to apply, after controlling for age, gender and work experience. The interpretation of the equation is as follows: holding other dimensions of RIS constant, a one unit increase in RA increases ITA by 0.126 unit. Holding other dimensions of RIS constant, a one unit increase in REs increases ITA by 0.119 unit. Similarly, holding other dimensions of RIS constant, a one unit increase in Publicity increases ITA by 0.080 unit.

9.1.2 Regression Model

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The regression model is:

Intention to Apply (Y) = β_0 + β_1 (Recruitment Advertising) + β_2 (Recruitment Events) +β_3 (Publicity) + β_4 (Word of Mouth) + β_5 (Age) + β_6 (Gender) + β_7 (Work Experience) + Error (U)

Hold other dimensions of RIS constant, a one unit increase in WoM increases ITA by 0.134 unit. Note that all the three control variables, namely gender, age, and work experience are included in the regression, where work experience is coded as 1 for those with work experience and coded as 2 otherwise. Similarly, gender is coded as 0 for male and coded as 1 otherwise. As seen from the regression results, age and gender have significant effects on the intention to apply while the effect of work experience is insignificant. Also from Table 4, the overall regression model is statistically significant (F=27.79, p=0.000) in predicting the impact of the perceived RIS on ITA. All the four sub-dimensions of RIS namely, RA, REs, Publicity and WoM, together with age and gender explain 34 percent of the variance in the intention to apply as indicated by the R-square value. Among the four sub-dimensions, WoM has the largest impact on ITA. To explain the results further, a one-standard-deviation increase in RA increases ITA by 0.225 standard deviation, suggesting that, among all RIS dimensions, RA is the most powerful predictor for a student's intention to apply for a job ($p<0.01$). Moreover, RA significantly impacts ITA among the job applicants. Based on the results described above, Hypotheses 1(i) – (iv) are all supported.

Table 4
Effect of RIS (RA, RE, Pub, and WoM) on ITA)

		Un-standardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.727		.000
	RA	.126	.221	.000
	RE	.119	.183	.002
	Rpub	.080	.126	.017
	RWoM	.134	.225	.000
	Gender	-.101	-.096	.030
	Present Age	.036	.106	.019
	Work Experience	-.036	-.031	.471
	F	27.79		
	R2	.34		

Note. Independent variables: RA- Recruitment Advertising, RE- Recruitment Events, Pub-Publicity, WoM-Word of Mouth, ITA- Intention to Apply

9.2 Does OA mediate the relationship between RIS and ITA?

To measure the mediating impact of OA on the relationship between RIS and organizational ITA while controlling for age, gender, and work experience, the four-step mediation analysis proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was adopted in this study. The general test of

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mediation was conducted to examine: (i) the relationship between the predictor and the criterion variables, (ii) the relationship between the predictor and the mediator variables, and (iii) the relationship between the mediator and criterion variables. All of these relationships should be statistically significant for the mediating impact to exist (Guchait, & Cho, 2010). The relationship between the predictor and criterion variables is likely to decline after controlling for the relationship between the mediator and criterion variables (Baron, & Kenny, 1996 as cited in Guchait, & Cho, 1996). The first step of the mediation analysis is fulfilled as all the four RIS variables have significant and positive impacts on the dependent variable, i.e., ITA (as exhibited in Table 5). The next step is to measure the impact of the independent variable RIS on the mediating variable OA. The findings are provided in Table 5.

Table 5
Effect of Recruitment Information Sources (RA, RE, Pub, WoM) on Organizational Attraction

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Model	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	-.841		.226
RA	.459	.345	.000
RE	.398	.262	.000
Pub	.228	.153	.000
WoM	.435	.311	.000
Present Age	-.010	-.012	.713
Work Experience	.017	.006	.846
Gender	.029	.012	.716
F	116.5		
R^2	.65		

Note. RA- Recruitment Advertising, RE- Recruitment Events, Pub-Publicity, WoM- Word of Mouth, OA- Organizational Attraction, Beta- Standardized beta coefficient, t- t-value.

9.2.1 Regression Model

The regression model is given by:

$$\text{Organizational Attraction (Y)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Recruitment Advertising}) + \beta_2 (\text{Recruitment Events}) + \beta_3 (\text{Publicity}) + \beta_4 (\text{Word of Mouth}) + \beta_5(\text{Age}) + \beta_6(\text{Work Experience}) + \beta_7 (\text{Gender}) + \text{Error (U)}$$

The overall regression model is found to be significant (F=116.54, p=.0.000) in predicting the impact of the independent variables (RA, REs, Publicity, WoM) on OA, where the impacts of the control variables, namely, age, gender, and work experience are insignificant. It is also found that the independent variables altogether explain about 65% of the variance

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in OA, which further confirms the fitness of the regression model. In this regression equation, the independent variables have positive impacts on the dependent variable (OA) after controlling for the effects of age and work experience. The condition of the mediating analysis is fulfilled in step 1. In the second step, the result of the mediating analysis as shown in Table 6 suggests that, if a regression is conducted between the predictor variable (RA, REs, Publicity, and WoM) and the mediating variable OA, they together explain 65% of the variance in OA and the regression coefficient is statistically significant at the 1% significance level (F=116.5, p=0.000), which supports the second step of the mediation analysis.

In the third step, regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the mediating variable OA and the criterion variable ITA (refer to Table 6 for the findings).

Table 6
Effect of Organizational Attraction on Intention to Apply

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Model	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	3.396		.000
OA	.186	.436	.000
Present Age	.036	.106	.025
Gender	-.107	.102	
Work Experience	-.023	-.020	.674
F 32.2			
R^2 .20			

As shown in Table 7, the mediating variable OA explains 20% of the variance in the criterion variable ITA and the overall regression model is found to be statistically significant (F=32.23, p=0.000). Finally, in the fourth step, the relationship between the predictor variables (RA, REs, Publicity, and WoM) and the criterion variable ITA is tested by running a regression that includes the mediating impact of OA.

As all the four independent variables are included in the regression while controlling for the possible effect of the mediating variable OA, the effect of OA on ITA is no longer statistically significant (p=0.354). This indicates that OA has no mediating impact on RIS and ITA, i.e., Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

9.3 Do Recruitment Information Sources Predict Organizational Attraction?

The direct relationship between RIS and OA is examined in Table 8 as well. Note that all the four independent variables have significant impacts on OA.

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Table 7
Effect of Recruitment Information Sources on IT after controlling for OA

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Model	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	2.836		.000
RA	.137	.240	.000
RE	.131	.203	.001
Pub	.088	.138	.011
WoM	.147	.245	.000
OA	-.029	-.067	.354
Present Age	.028	.081	.065
Gender	.101	-.095	.032
Work Experience	-.024	-.021	.627

Table 8
Effect of Recruitment Information Sources (RA, RE, Pub and WoM) on Organizational Attraction

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Model	B	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	.841		.226
RA	.459	.345	.000
RE	.398	.262	.000
Pub	.228	.153	.000
WoM	.435	.311	.000
Present Age	-.010	-.012	.713
Work Experience	.017	.006	.846
Gender	.029	.012	.716
F	116.5		
R^2	.65		

Note. RA- Recruitment Advertising, RE- Recruitment Events, Pub-Publicity, WoM- Word of Mouth, OA- Organizational Attraction, Beta- Standardized beta coefficient, t- t-value

9.3.1 Regression Model

The regression model is specified as follows:

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$$\text{Organizational Attraction (Y)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Recruitment Advertising}) + \beta_2 (\text{Recruitment Events}) + \beta_3 (\text{Publicity}) + \beta_4 (\text{Word of Mouth}) + \beta_5(\text{Age}) + \beta_6(\text{Work Experience}) + \beta_7 (\text{Gender}) + \text{Error (U)}$$

The above equation suggests that on average, if other dimensions of RIS are held constant, a one unit increase in RA increases OA by 0.460 units, a one unit increase in REs increases OA by 0.398 units, a one unit increase in Publicity increases OA by 0.228 units, and a one unit increase in WoM increases OA by 0.435 units. In this regression equation, all the four independent variables have positive impacts on the dependent variable OA after controlling for the effects of age, gender and work experience.

The overall regression model predicting the impact of the independent variables on OA is found to be statistically significant (F=116.54, p=0.000), where the impacts of the control variables – age, gender and work experience – are all insignificant. It is also found that the independent variables explain about 65% of the variance in OA as indicated by the R-square value. Among the four RIS variables, RA has the largest impact on OA. Explaining the results further, a one-standard-deviation increase in RA increases OA by 0.34 standard deviation and therefore RA is the most powerful predictor among the RIS variables on an applicant's intention to apply for a job ($p<0.01$). WoM has the second largest impact on OA. The regression results suggest that all the dimensions of RIS are significant predictors of OA. This provides full support for Hypotheses 3(i) - (iv).

9.4 Does P-O Fit mediate the relationship between Recruitment Sources and OA?

To measure the mediating impact of P-O Fit on the relationship between RIS and the criterion variable OA while controlling for the effects of age and work experience, the four-step mediation analysis developed by Baron and Kenny (1986) is adopted in this study. The first step in the mediation analysis is to fulfill the requirement that all the four RIS variables have significant and positive impacts on the dependent variable, i.e., organizational attraction (as exhibited in Table 9). The second step is to measure the impact of the independent variable on the criterion variable, i.e., RIS, and the mediating variable, i.e., P-O Fit. The results are reported in Table-9.

Table 9
Effect of Recruitment Information Sources (RA, RE, Pub, and WoM) on Mediating Variable (P-O Fit)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.295		.000
	RA	.136	.210	.001
	RE	.055	.074	.265
	Pub	-.017	-.024	.692
	WoM	.127	.186	.002
	Present Age	.016	.042	.419
	Gender	.036	.030	.554
	Work Experience	.007	.005	.913
	F	9.44		
	R^2	.13		

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The step-1 pre-condition for the mediating analysis is fulfilled. In step 2, the mediation analysis is conducted by examining the impact of the independent variables on the mediating variable as shown in Table 10. Among the four RIS variables, only two of them, i.e., RA and WoM, have significant impacts on P-O Fit. Taken together, the predictor variables RA and WoM explain 13% of the variance in P-O Fit and the overall regression model is significant at the 1% significance level (F=9.44, p=0.000), which supports the second step of the mediation analysis. In the third step, a regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the mediating variable P-O Fit and the criterion variable OA. Refer to Table 10 for the findings.

Table 10
Effect of Mediating Variable (P-O Fit) on Organizational Attraction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.377		.360	.719
	Present Age	.029	.036	.724	.470
	Gender				
	Work Experience	.038	.014	.284	.777
	P-O Fit	.736	.359	7.358	.000
	F	18.56			
	R^2	.13			

Note. Dependent Variable: OA-Organizational Attraction; Independent variable: Person-Organization Fit

As shown in Table 11, the mediating variable (P-O Fit) explains 13% of the variance in the criterion variable OA and the overall regression model is found to be statistically significant (F=18.56, p=0.000). The second step shows that, out of the four RIS variables, only RA and WoM have significant impacts on ITA. Hence, only RA and WoM will be considered for the final step of the mediation analysis.

Table 11
Effect of Recruitment Information Sources (RA, WoM) on OA

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.030		.967
	RA	.674	.506	.000
	RWoM	.619	.443	.000
	Present Age	-.014	-.018	.604
	Gender	.007	.857	.932
	Work Experience	-.005	-.002	.961

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Finally, in the fourth step, the relationship between the predictor variables (RA and WoM) and the criterion variable OA was tested by running a regression that controls for the mediating variable P-O Fit (refer to Table 12 for the results).

Table 12
Effects of RIS on OA after Controlling for P-O Fit

		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.454		.530
	RA	.641	.481	.000
	RWoM	.592	.424	.000
	PO fit	.207	.101	.005
	Present Age	-.018	-.023	.510
	Work Experience	-.006	-.002	.948
	Gender			
	F	106.6		
	R^2	.12		

Note. RSS- Recruitment Sources, P-O Fit- Person Organization Fit, OA- Organizational Attraction, b- Standardized beta coefficient; t- t-value

As shown in the table, the coefficient on RIS decreases after controlling for P-O Fit and the overall model is statistically significant (F=106.6, p=0.000). The reduced values are indicated by the standardized beta coefficients and the '*t*' values. When RA and WoM enter the regression to capture their impacts on OA, their impacts are found to be significant. RA's significant impact on OA is given by t=14.34 and b=0.506. Likewise, WoM's significant impact is given by t=12.49 and b=0.443. In the next regression where the impacts of RA and WoM on OA are estimated while controlling for P-O Fit, the relationship is still significant at p=0.01. RA's significant impact on OA is given by t=13.35 and b=.481 after controlling for P-O Fit. Likewise, the significant impact of WoM is given by t=11.806 and b=424. These lowered t and beta values indicate that P-O Fit has a significant and partial mediating effect on the relationship between RIS and OA. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Table 13
Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	IDV	DV	Hypothesized Relationship	Findings
H1i), 1ii),1iii),1iv)	RA, RE, Pub, WoM	ITA	Direct and positive	All Supported
H2i), 2ii), 2iii), 2iv)	RA, RE, Pub, WoM	ITA	Mediation	Not Supported
H3	RA, RE, Pub, WoM	OA	Direct and Positive	Supported

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H4	RA, WoM	OA	Mediation	Partial Mediation Supported

Note. IDV- Independent Variable (RA- Recruitment Advertising, Recruitment Events, Publicity and Word-of-Mouth) DV- Dependent Variable (OA- Organizational Attraction, ITA- Intention to Apply) and Mediating Variable- P-O Fit- Person-Organization Fit.

SECTION-V: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This Section integrates, discusses, and sheds light on the major findings of this study with empirical support from earlier literature besides exploring their contextual reasons. Theoretical and practical, current as well as future implications of the findings are also discussed toward the end.

10.1 Major Findings

All the dependent, independent, and mediating variables have a slightly above mean score. The average scores are: 3.18 for Recruitment Advertising, 3.03 for Recruitment Events, 3.23 for Publicity, 3.24 for Word-of-Mouth, 3.82 for OA, 4.93 for ITA, and 3.66 for P-O Fit. OA and ITA were each measured using a seven-point Likert scale whereas RIS and P-O Fit were each measured using a five-point Likert scale. The high mean values of the constructs suggest that the existence of RIS has an impact on the job applicants' OA and ITA that may have managerial and theoretical implications – organizations need to consider that RIS do matter in enhancing the OA by leaving an impact on the job applicants' ITA. The mean value of pre-hire P-O Fit was found to be higher than the mean value of RIS, suggesting that the applicants find that their values and personalities match with those of the organizations of their choice. As the mean values of RIS and P-O Fit are higher than average, it suggests that the exposure to different RIS helps the job applicants to assess their levels of P-O Fit.

Two hypotheses related to the impacts of RIS on P-O Fit and OA are both statistically significant, which concludes that recruitment advertising, word-of mouth, and P-O Fit are significant predictors of OA in our social context. Likewise, all the sub-dimensions of RIS have direct and significant impacts on OA. Concerning the demographic variables, age and gender have significant impacts on ITA while work experience does not impact either OA or ITA. However, in contrast to some earlier research evidence, our study suggests that OA does not mediate the relationship between RIS and ITA. Hence, OA cannot be established as a predictor of ITA in our social context. This suggests that RIS might lead the applicants to get attracted to some organizations but not necessarily resulting in developing ITA with those organizations. Conversely, OA and ITA are significant pre-hire outcomes and OA does not necessarily lead to ITA.

In using a self-report measure, respondents have a tendency to project a higher image on themselves which is known as the "social desirability bias" (Van de Mortel, 2008). Therefore, a high mean value for each of the independent and dependent variables probably suggest that the average score might have been inflated. Findings also revealed that the sample respondents were on average 24 years old and that only 29% of them had work experience. This indicates a general tendency for the students to finish their graduate studies before starting their careers in our social context. This tendency might have influenced their perceived levels of OA and ITA.

10.2 Discussion

The findings from this study with regard to the direct relationship between RIS and OA are in line with those from past studies (Van Hoye, 2012; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009; Kashive,

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& Khanna, 2017). However, in this study, OA does not mediate the relationship between RIS and ITA. This finding is in contrast to findings from past research, where OA did act as a predictor of ITA. This also implies that potential applicants may be attracted to some organizations but not necessarily develop ITA with those organizations. OA may lead to other distal outcomes but may not always predict proximal outcomes such as ITA. Hence, it may not be a good idea to surmise that if an applicant is attracted to an organization, he or she will surely develop ITA with that particular organization.

10.3 Implications

10.3.1 Practical Implications

Findings from the study have some practical implications for companies to focus on various sources of recruitment. Nepali employers should think about how their recruitment websites and job advertisements can be designed to help prospective applicants find their degree of fit with the organizations. This gives them a reason to depict organizations in the way that appeals to students and prospective applicants. Likewise, employers should plan how to communicate while they mark their presence in job fairs and information sessions such that prospective applicants can identify their fit with the organizations which ultimately leads to attraction. Also, Saks and Ashforth (2001) suggested that job search and choice are interrelated processes and that pre-entry fit predicts one third of the variance in post-entry fit, it is thus suggested that HR managers and practitioners should understand the importance and relevance of pre-entry P-O Fit.

10.3.2 Theoretical Implications

Findings from this study will be useful in guiding future research in the area of recruitment sources and pre-hire outcomes. From the theoretical standpoint, this study has established a P-O Fit mediating variable between RIS and OA. This has extended the current literature by proving that RIS have a potential to impact on the P-O Fit of employees. RIS can impact OA of employees directly. However, the indirect impact of RIS on OA cannot be neglected. Most studies measuring the impact of RIS on OA have measured both the direct and indirect impacts. Saks and Ashforth (1997) asserted that the use of multiple job information sources helps in assessing the perception of fit with the organization much before a prospective applicant joins the organization. Hence, from the perspective of job seekers, it will help them in assessing their level of fit with organizations so that they can make informed decisions. Also, this research has studied the direct impact of RIS on two important proximal outcomes viz., OA and ITA independently. Most of the earlier studies have taken OA as a mediating variable or predictor of ITA (Gomes & Neves, 2011). Therefore, this study has extended the current literature by showing that RIS can directly impact on OA and the applicant's ITA.

10.3.3 Implications for Future Studies

We believe that a mixed method of data collection would also be suitable for future research of this nature as there is no uniformity in the sources of recruitment information. The RIS variables are vast and varied. A qualitative inquiry into the sources of job information in the Eastern context is suggested as there is no qualitative research conducted in this domain yet. Qualitative inquiry into the kinds of RIS in our social and cultural context followed by quantitative inquiry to establish the impact among various attitudinal and behavioral outcomes will definitely increase the value of this research. We examined the impact of RIS on OA and ITA which are important proximal outcomes in recruitment research. However, future research can study the impact of RIS on job choice decisions. Future studies may also

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aim to design their own constructs, carry out exploratory factor analysis, and test for the mediating and moderating effects in one single model either through a mediated moderation model or a moderated mediation model.

APPENDIX-I

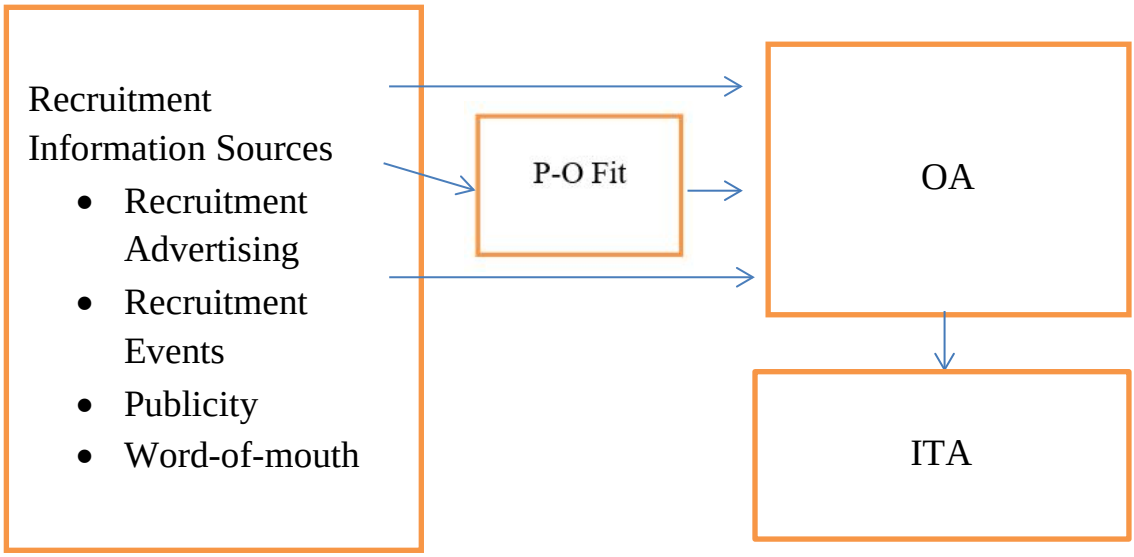

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

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