

**THE USE OF INTERNSHIPS FOR SELECTION PURPOSES:
THE “MIDPOINT” BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL SELECTION APPROACH
AND THE TRUE PROBATIONARY MODEL**

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

The current personnel selection literature utilizes a combination of predictor constructs and predictor methods to predict applicants' future job performance, known as the traditional selection approach. Another approach is the true probationary model where all applicants are hired for an extended period of time, and the employer makes a selection decision for a full-time position based on their performance. Both selection approaches have their advantages and disadvantages but using internships for selection purposes can effectively mitigate their respective drawbacks and capitalize on their advantages. If designed properly, internships can potentially be more effective and viable than either the traditional or the true probationary selection systems. Practical and theoretical implications are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

To maintain their competitive advantage, organizations need to successfully select qualified job candidates from the applicant pool who fit best with their culture, values, and goals while also performing at an acceptable standard set by the organization. Traditionally, the selection process consists of various tests to assess applicants on attributes that have been deemed to be required for successful job performance and the information is then used to identify the best applicants (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2016). This approach is widely implemented in today's organizations. However, it is based on the premise of forecasting future job performance and to the extent that the prediction model is not perfect, it sometimes results in misclassifications. Misclassifications are errors in selection decision making outcomes, such as hiring those that will not succeed (false positive) or rejecting those that will succeed (false negative) on the job (Gatewood et al., 2016). Both misclassifications are costly and deleterious to the organization; thus, it is in the organization's best interest to minimize the misclassifications and optimize hiring those who will succeed and rejecting those who will not succeed on the job (Gatewood et al., 2016). This can be contrasted with a true probationary model which is not based on forecasting job performance, but instead makes selection decisions on the basis of actual job performance. In spite of this key advantage and strength, the true probationary model is rarely used in practice because of its high costs and the extensive time required to effectively implement it in organizations. However, the true probationary model significantly increases the accuracy of the selection decision because the organization is selecting full-time employees from an applicant pool that is performing on the job. Each approach has its benefits and drawbacks, but it is essential for organizations to find a mechanism to capitalize on the benefits of both approaches and minimize the drawbacks associated with them.

Internships are widely considered as a work arrangement offered by organizations, and it is rarely regarded as a personnel selection process. Personnel selection is commonly referred to as the traditional selection approach. Meanwhile, an alternate selection approach is the true probationary model that is completely theoretical due to its impracticality. The objective of this paper is to make a distinction between the internship program, the traditional selection approach, and the true probationary model. Although they share some structural characteristics, they are fundamentally different. Thus, another objective of this paper is to explore whether an internship is a selection approach by itself or just an extension of the traditional selection process.

An internship is defined as a short-term contingent work arrangement employer uses to attract and select job candidates (Baron & Kreps, 1999; Beenen & Pichler, 2014; Beenen & Rousseau, 2010; National Associates of Colleges and Employees, 2006). It starts with external recruiting, and then transitions into an internal selection process when the interns are being evaluated for a full-time position (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2013). Most college students seek internship opportunities because they incorporate work-related experience and knowledge into the intern's formal education by allowing them to take part in supervised and planned work in real-world professional environments (Renganathan, Abdul Karim, & Li, 2011). This experience is also beneficial for interns because it provides a "realistic preview" of the job (Eby, Allen, & Brinley, 2005) and the organization. A realistic job preview is a presentation by an organization of both favorable and unfavorable job-related information to job candidates (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991) which has been associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and retention (McEvoy, & Cascio, 1985). Traditionally internships are thought to benefit the students, because they increase the marketability of the students when they graduate (Renganathan et al., 2011) and the students

have the opportunity to develop competencies, such as teamwork, presentation skills, and problem solving to increase their employability after graduation (Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2006). Although the characteristics of internships are commonly studied from an intern's perspective, it should be of equal importance to organizations so that they will be able to understand how to effectively use internships and retain their interns after the internship period.

From the organization's perspective, internships can be used to attract and select the most talented job candidates (Baron & Kreps, 1999) as candidates' present job performance during the internship can be used to determine if they can perform in the same way if hired as full-time employees. If interns meet or exceed the standards, then the organization can extend post-internship job offers to them and the intentions to accept or reject the job offer are influenced by an intern's increase in knowledge about the potential employer's organizational, promotion, and reward practices (Beenen & Pichler, 2014). Thus, it is critical for organizations to increase their efforts to enhance the job-offer-acceptance intentions and behaviors of the interns, because it is less expensive and more efficient to select full-time employees from the pool of interns than an external applicant pool.

Some organizations use internships as a way to decrease the heavy workload without the liabilities of hiring permanent employees (Beenen & Pichler, 2014). Considering that the organization will already be investing in selecting and training the interns, the costs and financial expenses will accumulate even more if the organization decides to not select a full-time employee from the interns and undergo the entire selection process again to fill the full-time position with an external applicant. Furthermore, the accuracy of the selection decision can potentially be much lower for the new job candidate, because the new job candidate's

performance is solely based on prediction from the selection tests, while interns offer actual information of their job performance.

A survey conducted by the *Wall Street Journal* (2013) showed that about one-third to one-half of masters of business administration students reported going to work after graduation for the organization for which they interned. Interns are a growing portion of the job-candidate pool (Jones, 2006; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2006), but internships are also a context that has largely been overlooked in the selection literature (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998). Therefore, this paper makes an important contribution to the selection literature by comparing internships with the traditional selection approach and the true probationary model. Moreover, this paper will also indicate how internships highlight the strengths of both the traditional selection approach and the true probationary model while minimizing their drawbacks. In conclusion, this paper emphasizes the importance of using internships for selecting full-time hires in organizations.

TRADITIONAL SELECTION APPROACH

Selection has a strong influence on an organization's ability to generate a strategic competitive advantage because the unique knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) that comprise the human capital resources (Coff & Kryscynski, 2011) are difficult to imitate and replicate by rival companies. Thus, the benefit of having a selection system is that the employer can select applicants effectively rather than hiring based on a "gut feeling" and provide documentation to prevent potential legal issues, such as wrongful hiring or discrimination. Moreover, a formal selection system is essential in advancing an organization's overall goals and objectives because it is interconnected with other human resource practices, such as compensation, training, and performance appraisals (Campion, Fink, Ruggeberg, Carr, Phillips, & Odman, 2011; Shippman et al., 2000). The main objective of selection is to differentiate the applicants who have the KSAOs to perform well on the job from the applicant pool. In order to determine who is qualified or not, the selection specialist conducts a job analysis or uses established job analysis by the organization to determine predictor constructs that are required to successfully perform on the job. The job applicants are then assessed using predictor constructs via predictor methods and the information collected is used to make a selection decision.

As noted by Arthur and Villado (2008), there is a clear distinction between predictor constructs and predictor methods. Predictor constructs primarily focus on the behavioral domain of the predictor in the form of psychological variables, such as general mental ability, personality, and spatial ability, or they can also take the form of situational or on-the-job behaviors, such as word processing or troubleshooting an F-16 jet engine (Arthur & Villado, 2008). In contrast, predictor methods pertain to the method of obtaining information on the behavioral domain, such as interviews, paper-and-pencil tests, and computer-administered,

video-based, or simulation-based modes of assessment (Arthur & Villado, 2008). Predictor constructs and predictor methods are often used as selection tools interchangeably, but it is important to note that they are fundamentally different. A predictor construct can be assessed by different predictor methods. For example, general mental ability has been measured with methods such as performance tests (Arthur & Villado, 2008), interview (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001), and even biological and physiological measures (Arthur & Villado, 2008; Matarazzo, 1992). Conversely, a predictor method can be used to assess different predictor constructs. For example, an interview can be used to assess interpersonal skills, job-related knowledge, and problem-solving skills (Salgado & Moscoso, 2002). Essentially, predictor constructs are the characteristics identified by a job analysis that are critical to successful job performance and predictor methods are the medium that are used to assess the constructs.

As mentioned previously, the traditional selection approach is essentially an inferential model that utilizes predictor constructs to forecast the future job performance of all applicants. Based on the inferences derived from empirical research, the process of validating the predictor construct-performance relationship is fundamentally important to determine if the inferences made are valid or not. Hence, a job analysis is utilized to identify predictor constructs that are deemed requisite for successful performance on the job (Arthur & Villado, 2008). Moreover, it is fundamentally important to ensure that the linkages between the predictor construct domain and job performance domain are accurately represented by the underlying psychological construct (Arthur & Villado, 2008). Subsequently, a predictor method is used to assess the identified predictor construct(s). If the predictor method accurately reflects the underlying psychological construct derived from the job analysis, it is known as construct-related validity evidence (Binning & Barrett, 1989). If the construct-related validity evidence is high, then the inferences

about job performance from the test scores are valid (Binning & Barrett, 1989). If the predictor construct is deemed unrelated to the job performance domain, the subsequent hires will be ineffective at performing on the job and the potential results will be detrimental to the organization, such as poor job performance and turnover. A summary of the linkages is provided below in Figure 1. Moreover, the organization may potentially face lawsuits, as seen in Griggs vs. Duke Power (1971) court case where the predictor constructs inferred from the selection tests were not proven to be related to job performance.

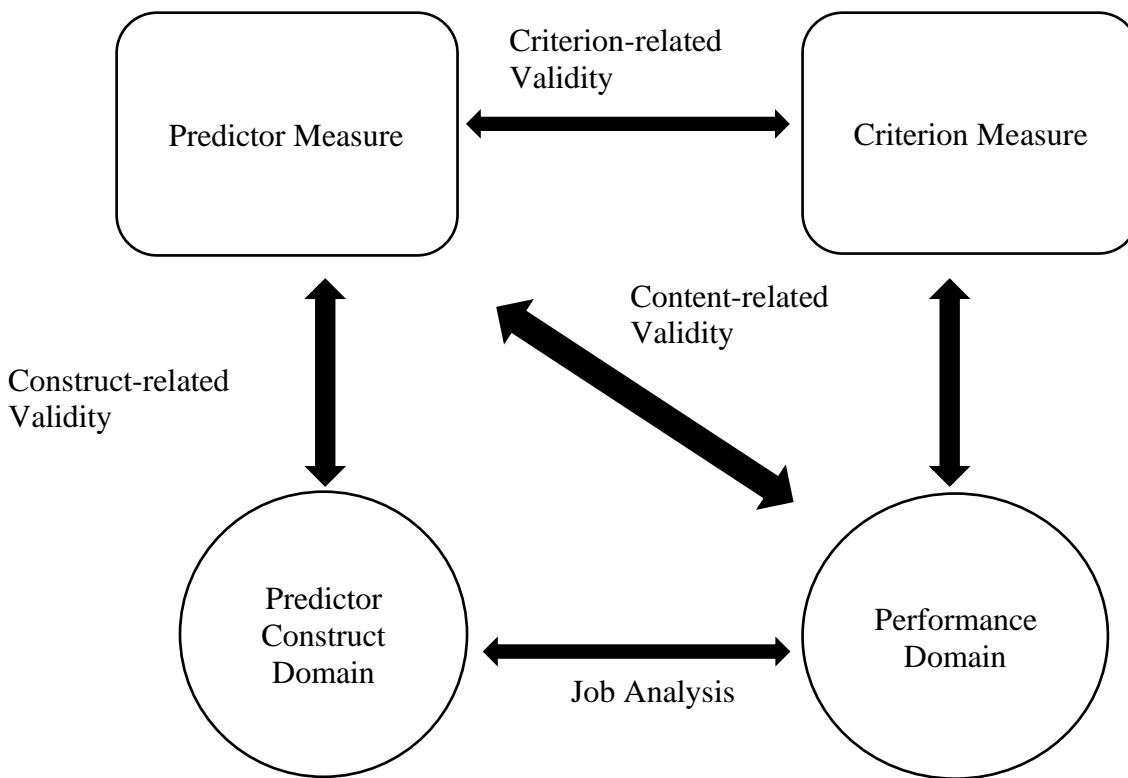


Figure 1. Model of inferences for the personnel selection (Adapted from Binning and Barrett, 1989)

In the personnel selection literature, predictors are frequently compared in terms of their criterion-related validity evidence (Arthur & Villado, 2008), which involves developing some operational measure of behaviors in the performance domain and then identifying or developing

predictor measures that will relate with the operational criterion measure (Binning & Barrett, 1989). The higher the validity of the predictor, the applicant who scores higher will perform better on the job compared to the applicant who scores lower. Cognitive ability, job knowledge, and conscientiousness are the strongest predictor constructs of job performance with validity coefficients of .51, .48, and .31 respectively (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998), and they can be assessed using different predictor methods. The predictive validity coefficient is directly proportional to the practical economical value of the assessment method (Brogden, 1949; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Schmidt, Hunter, McKenzie, & Muldrow, 1979). After conducting a job analysis, there is typically more than one predictor construct that is vital for successful job performance. Using multiple constructs will increase the validity, incremental validity, and this will potentially translate into an increase in the utility of the selection approach (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Thus, the use of selection system with increased predictive validity leads to substantial increases in employee performance as measured in percentage increases in output, increased monetary value of output, and increased learning of job-related skills (Hunter & Schmidt, 1990). The traditional selection approach provides the organization with the flexibility of using different predictors of their choice to assess the applicants by taking account of the associated time and costs needed to implement the assessment. With more predictors, the value and effectiveness of the selection system will increase as it provides the organization with more relevant information on the applicants. Furthermore, this makes the final selection decision easier for the organization as it can effectively differentiate the applicants and narrow down the applicant pool. However, the increase in predictors may also be detrimental to the organization if they utilize selection assessments that are not proven to be valid. These assessments may result in wrongful hiring.

Moreover, the associated time, financial costs, and human resources needed to carry out the selection system will increase accordingly.

The primary objective of traditional selection is to match an individual's KSAs with the specific characteristics that the job demands, also known as the person-job fit (Ployhart, Schneider, & Schmitt, 2006). In the same vein, the individual and organization are "made whole" by each other, termed complementary fit (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). The organization and applicant complement each other when the organization provides specific resources that the person needs, wants, and desires, and the job applicant provides specific knowledge, skills, and abilities in order to perform what is required of the job. In selection, the person-job fit is rarely directly measured, but instead, it is implicitly stated in the job description (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). Applicants will self-select himself or herself out if they do not qualify for the job or the organization does not provide sufficient resources that the individual needs. The organization will also not select the applicant if the applicant does not meet the minimal job requirements. If the individual has additional qualifications that are beyond what is required of the job, this is viewed as advantageous to the applicant rather than a misfit (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

Conceptually, person-job fit (P-J fit) is analogous to traditional selection. However, organizations may also be interested in other types of fit, such as person-organization fit (P-O fit). P-O fit is defined as "the compatibility between people and organization that occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both" (Kristoff, 1996, p. 45). When there is a higher congruence between an applicant's and the organization's values, the applicants will display more favorable work attitudes, increase job performance, and less likely to quit the job when hired by the organization. Organizations increasingly attempt to assess an applicant's P-O fit using employment interviews

(Arthur, Bell, Villado, & Doverspike, 2006; Judge, Higgins, & Cable, 2000) among other predictor methods. However, a meta-analysis conducted by Arthur et al. (2006) showed that P-O fit is a weak predictor of job performance with a criterion-related validity of .15, strong predictor of turnover with a validity of .24, and even a stronger predictor of work attitudes with a validity of .31. Thus, if organizations choose to use P-O fit as a predictor construct, they may be selecting individuals on the basis of well-being (e.g., satisfaction) rather than work performance (Arthur et al., 2006). In other words, if organizations choose to assess an applicant's P-O fit, they may be predicting their work attitudes, such as job satisfaction, rather than their future work performance. The overreliance on traditional selection to assess every predictor constructs of interest without proving that they are empirically valid may be detrimental to both researchers and practitioners. Thus, researchers are faced with how each construct should be measured.

Therefore, selection researchers have noted the importance of “expanding the criterion space” (Campbell, 1990; Ryan & Ployhart, 2014) or the need to define success at work more broadly than just task performance (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014). For example, studies on predicting turnover with selection tools have been a greater focus (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2009) and meta-analysis on the relationship between personality, organizational citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behavior have been examined (Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, & Gardner, 2011; Le, Oh, Robbins, Ilies, Holland, & Westrick, 2011). However, there are still psychological constructs within the selection literature that have yet been studied despite their relative importance, such as adaptive performance (Dorsey, Cortina, & Luchman, 2010; Ryan & Ployhart, 2014). Moreover, selection researchers attempt to broaden the criterion domain by including nonwork-related constructs, such as health status or family satisfaction (Cleveland & Collela, 2010) to further predict an applicant's behaviors at work. The assessment of

“inappropriate constructs” might potentially lead to issues related to invasion of employee privacy and discrimination (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014). Thus, the problems of what other dimensions of the performance domain are important still remain unsolved and problematic to both researchers and practitioners.

Another major critic of the traditional selection is the unresolved, pre-existing criterion problem. Deadrick and Gardner (2008) having observed that “after more than 70 years of research, the ‘criterion problem’ persists and the performance-criterion linkage remains one of the most neglected components of performance-related research.” The recurring issue with criterion is how performance is conceptualized and measured in practice, given that it can be measured by subjective performance ratings from relevant stakeholders, or objective measurements through organizational indices, such as sales figures, or a combination of both. Thus, the problem of how performance should be measured remains unsolved.

Theoretically, it is nearly impossible to design an ideal selection system that predicts all aspects of job performance because of the challenge of obtaining accurate and complete assessments of individual behaviors at work. Furthermore, poor-quality, contaminated, and mis-specified measures of performance hinder researchers and practitioners from understanding the true importance of individual differences as predictors (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014). Moreover, the hurdles, how should each construct be measured, how should performance be measured, and what else should be assessed, are intertwined with each other which contributes to the complexity of selection. Although traditional selection is an effective method of assessing most predictor constructs, not all constructs can be assessed effectively. On the other hand, the true probationary model serves as the ideal selection model that is not affected by the constraints identified in the traditional selection approach.

TRUE PROBATIONARY MODEL

The traditional selection model uses an inferential model to forecast future job performance to select full-time employees, a true probationary model does not require the use of predictor constructs and is fully dependent on the performance domain to select full-time employees. After performing on the job for an extended period of time, the employer can then make a decision to offer a full-time position to the employee or not. Essentially, the true probationary model assesses an employee's capability and fit for permanent employment which emphasizes one's performance on the actual job without any pre-employment testing requirements.

Typically, organizations assess an applicant's past behavior patterns through interviews and other means in an effort to predict their future typical behavior pattern (Cronbach, 1960). If the applicants use examples of maximum performance as the indicators of past behaviors, the organization will be predicting their maximum performance rather than typical performance after employment. Furthermore, applicants are more likely to describe past experiences that represent maximum performance rather than typical performance during pre-employment assessment because these occasions will help them stand out from other applicants. On the other hand, the true probationary model encompasses all dimensions of actual job behaviors (Wernimont & Campbell, 1968) as it measures both "can do" (maximum performance) and "will do" (typical performance) of the individuals (Compton, Morrissey, & Nankervis, 2009). With knowledge of an employee's typical performance, the employer can decide to extend full-time employment to the employee or not.

For a selection system to have a high validity, it must share the same psychological constructs that underlie predictor measure and performance domain (Tenopyr, 1977), and the

inferences about future behavior are better justified if the applicant performs behaviors in the performance domain (Binning & Barrett, 1989). In reference to Binning and Barrett's (1989) model, the content and construct validity of the probationary model is proven when there is a complete overlap of both the predictor construct measure (present job performance) and the criterion domain (future job performance). Moreover, the overlap between present job performance and future job performance can be represented as fidelity, whereas high fidelity represents a closer overlap between the two and conversely, low fidelity represents a distant overlap between the two. The Social Security Administration concludes that the true probationary model provides the indispensable test of an applicant's performance which no other selection technique can reach its validity (MSPB, 2005).

The true probationary model is a conceptual model in the selection literature that has received limited, if any, attention in the selection literature. Its hypothetical high validity is desired by many practitioners, but the high costs of implementing it and infeasibility make it impractical in organizations. A true probationary model does not discriminate any applicants and hires all applicants, and then, the employer evaluates each applicant for an extended period of time. The cost of hiring every applicant can potentially be very expensive and the evaluation of all applicants will potentially result in a heavy workload and time-consuming for the employer. Furthermore, this model assumes that all applicants hired will have the ability to perform on the job, but this is rarely the case, not all applicants will possess the required KSAs to perform on the job. Moreover, low job performance can result in substantial economic losses. Secondly, if the availability of job positions is limited, should all of the applicants be hired for a few months and evaluated just to hire one or two full-time employees? Consequently, these drawbacks are costly and risky for the organization that it is rarely implemented despite its high validity.

Although the true probationary model is the ideal selection system for organizations to select employees, it is too risky and costly to implement. However, some attributes of the true probationary model can be implemented along with the traditional selection approach so that it can be more practical and effective for organizations. Thus, an internship for selection purposes can be represented as the “midpoint” between the traditional and true probationary selection approaches as it draws the strengths from both systems.

INTERNSHIP FOR SELECTION PURPOSES

Internships are “structured and career relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program” (Taylor, 1988, p. 393). For the purpose of this paper, the definition of internships is not solely limited to students from academic programs or institutions, but also any individuals who are placed in a trial period with an organization, or predominantly known as interns. After working side-by-side with permanent employees for weeks or months, interns gain valuable work experience to help them with their future job search (Zhao & Liden, 2011). Moreover, after the internship, interns have the opportunity to be presented with more permanent job offers from the organization. For example, about 89% of J.P. Morgan’s and Goldman Sachs’ new hires during 2008 and 2009 were former interns (Gerdes, 2009; Zhao & Liden, 2011). According to an Internship & Co-op survey report by NACE (2019), intern hiring is expected to increase by 2.6% in 2019. Internships are increasing in popularity due to the fact that interns are an ideal pool of job candidates who are relatively well-educated and have acquired a substantial amount of organization-specific knowledge from working in the host organization (Zhao & Liden, 2011).

The conventional structure of an internship program starts with a traditional selection approach that predicts the most qualified intern(s) out of the applicant pool using predictor constructs, and then the interns are evaluated based on their job performance over an extended period of time similar to the true probationary model. If the interns’ performance is deemed acceptable or exceeded the standards set by the organization, then the interns are extended a post-internship job offer for a full-time position in the organization. On the other hand, if the interns did not perform to the standards set by the organization or the organization does not

decide to extend a job offer to the interns due to organizational policies, then the interns are terminated by the organization after the internship period ends.

Zhao and Liden (2011) defined internships as an elongated type of work sample test that provides opportunities for interns and organizations to obtain realistic information and to evaluate each other before making long-term commitments. A work sample test is a test in which the applicant performs actual tasks that are physically and/or psychologically similar to those performed on the job (Ployhart, Schneider, & Schmitt, 2006). Both internships and work sample tests are similar in the sense that the applicants are evaluated based on their performance on actual job tasks that closely resemble those performed on the job. Since there is an overlap between the predictor construct measure (present job performance) and the criterion domain (future job performance), the validity of the work sample test is relatively high, .54 (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). However, a work sample test and internship are fundamentally different in nature. A work sample test is usually implemented in the traditional selection setting along with other predictor methods in order to differentiate applicants from each other, and an internship is conceptually a selection model by itself. Moreover, a work sample test is primarily used to assess an applicant's job knowledge. On the other hand, internship is an extension of the work sample test over a longer period of time, and during this period, it can be used to assess job knowledge and other predictor constructs of choice.

In Zhao and Liden's (2011) definition of internship, the process of obtaining realistic information and the evaluation by the interns and organization is relatively important. This aspect is fundamentally similar to a realistic job preview (RJP), the presentation by an organization of both favorable and unfavorable job-related information to job candidates (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991). During the process of recruitment, organizations often provide biased

and overly optimistic information to job seekers in order to build the best possible applicant pool (Buckley, Fedor, Carraher, Frink, & Marvin, 1997; Premack & Wanous, 1985). Therefore, the new hires commonly possess unrealistically positive expectations regarding the organization's ability to satisfy their needs and desires for employment (Wanous, 1976). Thus, an exposure to realistic work information can reduce negative organization outcomes, such as voluntary turnover. Multiple meta-analyses have also examined the relationship between RJP and other key outcomes, specifically initial job expectations, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Earnest et al., 2011; Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985). The reported corrected mean correlations between RJP and job expectations range from -.12 to -.18 (Earnest et al., 2011; Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985). The reported corrected mean correlations between RJP and job satisfaction range from -.01 to .06 (Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985). The reported corrected mean correlations between RJP and organizational commitment range from .01 to .09 (Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985). Ultimately, the reported corrected mean correlations between RJP and performance range from .03 to .05 (Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985).

Although the meta-analytic evidence on RJP's have shown a relatively weak effect overall, Premack and Wanous (1985) concluded that RJP's are a worthwhile turnover management technique considering the relatively insignificant investment to create and implement them. RJP is not interchangeable with an internship program. An internship program usually lasts weeks or months; meanwhile, RJP is less time-consuming, as it can take the form of a booklet, conversation, or film (Breaugh & Billings, 1988). During an internship period, the intern is exposed to more information about the organization, such as job tasks and environment, from multiple sources, such as supervisor and other employees, and the intern can further

evaluate if he or she wants to continue working for the organization. Similar to RJP, multiple sources of work-related information should be utilized to ensure that the information provided to the applicant is credible and accurate (Breugh & Billings, 1988). However, the organization does not always provide the applicants with opportunities to interact with multiple sources. Secondly, the timing of the RJP is also important to the applicant. Earnest et al. (2011) concluded that post-hire RJP are more effective than pre-hire RJP at influencing overall turnover and voluntary turnover, which shows that the exposure of realistic work conditions is more effective after the applicant is hired. Essentially, the applicant is exposed to realistic work conditions during an internship and the information accumulates over an extended period of time. Therefore, an internship should theoretically be more effective at reducing voluntary turnover, overall turnover, greater job satisfaction, better performance, and greater organizational commitment.

Most research on recruitment and selection have been performed under maximum performance and high-risk situations which can only reveal what the applicants *can do* but not necessarily what they *will do* after hiring (Klehe & Anderson, 2007; Sackett, Zedeck, & Fogli, 1988; Zhao & Liden, 2011). Hence, an internship is an opportunity for organizations to examine an applicant's typical performance. A situation in which typical performance can be observed is when the applicants are normally not attuned to the fact that they are being evaluated, are not explicitly being instructed to perform their best, and are observed over an extended period of time (Sackett et al., 1988). In general, typical performance is described as the level of performance an individual usually achieves over a period of time ("will do"), while maximum performance is observed as the level of performance an individual can achieve when highly motivated, and the difference between these two measures is believed to be a function of

motivational level (Campbell, 1990). This could be explained by the reasoning that when individuals know that they are being monitored for a brief period of time, they will be highly motivated and exert all of their effort into the tasks. Conversely, when individuals know that they are not being evaluated, they are less motivated, do not need to focus solely on the tasks and stretch out their effort over the extensive period of time.

Hiring people on the basis of a predictor method of maximum performance could be one cause for the weak relationship that is subsequently found between the results of that selection decision and a person's typical performance on the job (Campbell, 1990). During the recruitment and selection period, applicants tend to show what they *can do* in order to get hired, and the *will do* aspect is harder to predict. Furthermore, the organization uses an applicant's past behavior patterns to predict their future behavior patterns (Cronbach, 1960). If the applicants reports their maximum performance as past behaviors during the pre-employment assessments, the organizations will possibly be predicting their maximum performance in the future. Moreover, applicants are knowledgeable about using maximum performance as descriptive of typical behavior, because they are motivated to be employed by the organization and in doing so, it helps them stand out among the applicant pool. However, typical performance is best predicted using past behavior based on the notion that "the more long-standing the applicant's behavior pattern in the past, the more likely it will predict behavior in the future" (Janz, 1989, pp. 159-160). During the internship period, the organization can further assess what an intern *can do* and *will do*.

The nature of work is constantly changing resulting in the expansion of the performance domain such as the inclusion of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), counterproductive behavior (CWB), and adaptive performance. OCB is defined as "individual behavior that is

discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, pp. 4). CWB refers to “any intentional behavior on the part of the organizational member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests” (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, pp. 69). Adaptive performance is defined as the deliberate change in the thinking or behavior of an individual because of an existing or anticipated change in the work activities or work environment (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2000). The tendency to engage in CWBs and OCBs are influenced by antecedents, such as job satisfaction (Dalal, 2005), organizational commitment (Dalal, 2005), and positive affect (Dalal, 2005). Moreover, CWBs and OCBs are not formally included in the job description, and the behaviors are also inherently discrete, the question arises to whether organizations should make a selection decision based on those contextual behaviors. When selecting for full-time employees using an internship program, the organization does not need to assess applicants’ likelihood of engaging in CWBs and OCBs, but instead use them as an evaluation criterion for post-internship job offer purposes.

Another vast change ongoing in the world of work is the increase in ambiguity and complexity of work tasks (Tjosvold & Tjosvold, 1995). Teams are generally assembled so that team members are required to share information and work interdependently to compensate for the complexity and ambiguity of the tasks. Therefore, organizations emphasize the importance of the ability to work in teams to accomplish projects and tasks. Moreover, internships offer the opportunities for interns to work in teams and organizations can readily observe their behaviors in a team setting, which is theoretically more valid and accurate than traditional selection assessments. For example, the personality trait, agreeableness, is desired in a team, because if the team members are low in agreeableness, it is difficult for the team to formulate a uniform

decision. Thus, organizations use personality tests to assess one's agreeableness among other traits before placing them on teams. Conversely, if the entire team is high in agreeableness, there is this tendency for group think, which is when groups make poor decisions in order to maintain its harmony and conformity (Janis, 1971). An internship with multiple tasks that require teamwork can alleviate this problem and determines how an intern can potentially work in future team settings. The present behaviors in teams can be a potential indicator of future behaviors in teams.

As mentioned previously, person-organization fit is a poor predictor of job performance but has a strong effect on turnover and an even stronger effect on work attitudes (Arthur et al., 2006). It is in the organization's best interest to decrease turnover and maintain the employees' favorable attitudes towards work. Individuals who are less satisfied or committed as a result of poor fit are more likely to leave the organization (Arthur et al., 2006; Griffeth, Hom, Gaertner, 2000; Tett & Meyer, 1993). Moreover, research has shown that turnover disrupts various productivity-related outcomes (Hausknecht, Trevor, & Howard, 2009; Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017; Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005) and reduces financial performance (Heavey, Holwerda, & Hausknecht, 2013; Hom et al., 2017; Park & Shaw, 2013). During the internship period, the interns can learn about the organization from their supervisors or coworkers using socialization tactics, and with the newly obtained information, the intern can reduce their uncertainty about the organization and adjust to the contextual, technical, and social aspects of their role (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, & Tucker, 2007; Beenen & Pichler, 2014). After learning more about the organization, the interns can form a precise P-O fit perception. If the interns perceive a misfit between themselves and the organization, they can choose not to accept a job offer extended to them. On the other hand, if the interns perceive a fit between themselves

and the organization, they are more likely to be satisfied and committed to the organization if they choose to accept a full-time job offer.

Based on an Internship & Co-op survey (2019) by the National Association of College and Employers (NACE), 70.4% of full-time job positions are extended to the interns after the internship and the intern acceptance rate of the offers is 79.6%. The acceptance rate is increasing slowly and shows that students are being selective in their job choices even when job offers spiked (NACE, 2019). This conveys the importance of the intentions, decisions, and behaviors indicative of a candidate's interest in the organization, also termed as job pursuit (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). After undergoing the process of recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating the interns, the organization would have to extend the job offer to the next top performer if the top performing intern does not accept the full-time position. They are potentially losing their competitive advantage when the top-performing intern commits to rival organizations. Furthermore, in situations when there is only one intern, the organization needs to perform the same recruitment and selection process again which requires additional time and costs. Although not all post-internship job offers will potentially be accepted by the interns, it is in the organization's best interest to maximize its intern job acceptance rate from a financial standpoint.

In the selection literature, job acceptance decision has not received much attention yet; it is important to note that there are other factors, such as salary, job location, the applicant's perceived person-organization fit (Beenen & Pichler, 2014), and the applicant's justice perception of the selection system (Harold, Holtz, Griepentrog, Brewer, & Marsh, 2015) that may influence the job applicant's decision to accept the job offer. Future research should look at

other factors influencing job acceptance after the internship so that organizations can be aware of these factors while designing the internship program.

An internship program capitalizes on the advantages of both the traditional selection approach and the true probationary model; while, it also minimizes the drawbacks associated with both approaches. In comparison to the true probationary model, internship programs are realistic and practical considering that multiple organizations in various fields are readily utilizing internships in their systems. Furthermore, present job performance is arguably a better predictor of future job performance, thus the traditional selection approach may not be as effective as internship programs in assessing or predicting an applicant's present job performance. Thus, it can be argued that internship performance captures the focal construct of interest to the organization, such as typical performance, person-organization fit, and team performance.

Internships are typically considered as an extension of the traditional selection approach, because they start by assessing job candidates using predictor methods. Moreover, the predictor methods are validated before use so that they appropriately reflect the predictor constructs that are deemed important for success on the job via a job analysis and the applicants' scores on the assessments or tests would hypothetically translate to their job performance in the future. That means a high score on the assessment would result in an increase in job performance. RJPs and work sample tests are both selection methods that organizations can choose to implement in their selection system, but the same theoretical characteristics that underly both mechanisms are built into the structure of internship programs and extended over a longer duration of time to further assess the constructs of interest. Essentially, the performance during the internship period can reduce misclassification errors that are byproducts of forecasting future job performance. The

aspects of an internship program can significantly reduce negative organizational outcomes, such as turnover, absenteeism, and low job performance, while maintaining or increasing positive organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, high job performance, and organizational commitment. Thus, it can be viewed as the “midpoint” between the selection methods, in which the practicality, effectiveness, and accuracy of the selection decision will be enhanced, in comparison to both the traditional selection approach and true probationary model.

However, internship programs for selection purposes will face difficulties in situations in which the organization’s policy is to not hire full-time positions from their interns or simply views internships as temporary solutions to a heavy workload over a busy period of time. It is also problematic if the top performing intern does not accept the post-internship job offer, because the organization would then have to undergo the internship process again or select the next top performing intern. Thus, it is important for organizations to increase job-acceptance intentions overall. Although these undesirable outcomes or situational contexts cannot be avoided, the internship program remains a very viable selection approach.

CONCLUSION

Internship for selection purposes remains a viable selection approach, because it utilizes present job performance during the internship period to predict future job performance. Although internship shares some structural characteristics with both approaches, it is still fundamentally distinct from them, which makes it a unique selection approach. Furthermore, it mitigates the disadvantages of both traditional selection approach and true probationary model and enhances their advantages. Table 1 (provided below) shows a summary of the comparisons between traditional selection approach, true probationary model, and internship programs. Thus, it is conceptually the “midpoint” between both selection approaches, rather than an extension of the traditional selection approach.

Table 1		
<i>Comparisons between traditional selection approach, true probationary model, and internship programs</i>		
Traditional selection	True probationary model	Internship programs
Differentiates applicants based on assessments of KSAOs deemed to be related to successful job performance.	Does not differentiate applicants. All applicants are accepted.	Differentiates applicants based on their KSAOs to perform on the job using assessments
Candidates are hired permanently based on their performance on the assessments.	Candidates are hired permanently based on their performance during the trial period.	Candidates are hired permanently based on their performance during the internship.
Uses an inferential model to predict how the applicants will perform on the job.	Uses present job performance to predict how the applicants will perform in the future.	Uses an inferential model to predict how the applicants will perform during the internship and then uses job performance from the internship to predict future job performance.
Susceptible to misclassification errors.	Too costly and risky which makes it impractical.	Top-performing intern does not accept the job offer.

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