An exploratory study of jobseekers' decision-making styles, recruitment information sources and organisational attractiveness

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Purpose – This exploratory research aims to investigate the consequences of jobseeker decision-making style on information search behaviour, information evaluation and perceptions of organisational attractiveness (OA). In this study, we assess whether, when presented with a realistic job information searching scenario of receiving basic job information from a typical formal short job advertisement, maximisers and satisficers differ on a) need for further information and b) evaluation of further information from informal information sources in relation to valence and tie strength.

Methodology – A scenario-based experiment was conducted on 280 participants from the US, with work experience in retail, using Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Findings – The results show that, compared to satisficers, significantly more maximisers chose to search for further information about the company/vacancy after receiving a typical short advertisement message. Furthermore, the results highlight the moderating effects of decision-making style (maximiser vs. satisficer), tie strength (strong-tie vs. weak-tie provider) and message valence (positive vs. negative) on jobseekers' perceived OA.

Practical implications – Companies seeking to increase their candidate pool should consider accommodating the different decision-making styles of jobseekers by carefully designing the content of recruitment information and utilising recruitment information sources. Although conducted in just one sector, the ubiquity of the maximiser/satisficer decision making-style implies further research to assess the implications for other sectors.

Originality/value – Research on decision-making style in recruitment is relatively limited. This study demonstrates the differences between maximisers and satisficers in terms of job-related information needs, and the evaluation of the source/content, when searching for a retail trade job.

Keywords: Recruitment information sources, staff word-of-mouth (SWOM), organisational attractiveness (OA), decision-making style, maximiser, satisficer.

Article classification: Research paper

'I always take information with a grain of salt and try to consider the source. If I find one negative comment, I don't consider it as fact until I have looked for other information to verify.' – *Maximiser[1]*

'When I find one (job) that fits me, I just go for it.' – *Satisficer[2]*

1. Introduction

Recruiting the right talent has become a crucial issue for organisations in the developed countries of the world. It is especially important for companies in the retail industry, where the turnover rate is relatively high and many employees have low commitment to the industry as a lifelong job (Ulrich *et al.*, 2008). On average in the US, there are approximately 515,000 retail job openings every month waiting to be filled (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Breaugh (2013) proposes that increasing the number of applicants in the application pool is one of the most useful strategies to improve the number of qualified and suitable candidates. In the past six decades, the challenge of how to attract qualified candidates and maximise the candidate pool has become a practical topic that practitioners and researchers have reviewed to find the best solutions (Rynes and Barber, 1990).

Although increasing the number of applicants in the application pool is one of the most useful strategies to increase the number of qualified and suitable candidates, the effectiveness of recruitment information sources varies in relation to attracting jobseekers, stimulating organisational attractiveness (OA) and encouraging acceptance of job offers. Job information sources can be described as different in type between formal vs. informal, this is the major divide between sources such as officially released, authorised by the company, job advertisements and information given to job centres, etc., (that could form part of an official contract between company and employee) and the (mostly unplanned) job information spread or obtained from unofficial sources, such as friends and family, face to face or through online forums such as LinkedIn groups (see Figure 1). However, both formal and informal sources can be further divided. For example, a formal source might be company-controlled advertisements or non-company-controlled recruitment agencies. Informal sources might be non-company-controlled word-of-mouth informants within offline or online social networks, or more company-controlled informal sources, for example when members of staff attend job fairs or staff quotations are included in realistic job previews (see Figure 1). Consequently, informal sources can be friends and family (known as strong-ties) or acquaintances and relative strangers (known as weak-ties).

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[1] The statements are quoted from a qualitative (pre-) study. The maximiser's ID is no. 16.
[2] The satisficer's ID is no. 19.

Past research finds that different recruitment information and information sources can have different impacts on jobseekers' job decisions, but with inconsistent results. Some researchers, such as Werbel and Landau (1996), suggest that formal, company-controlled (FCC) recruitment sources such as advertisements and the company's website are less effective than informal, not company-controlled (INCC) information sources such as word of mouth (WOM) from friends and family. In contrast with this, other researchers, such as Cable and Turban (2001), indicate that FCC source recruitment information generally has a higher level of adoption by jobseekers while searching for job information, as this information is considered more objective and reliable than that from the INCC WOM sources. Thus, in this study we are concerned with FCC and INCC sources (see Figure 1, non-shaded sections).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Judge and Cable (1997) propose that few researchers have considered the aspect of jobseekers' individual differences. Individual differences may be one of the missing pieces of the puzzle that can define the reasons that have led to the inconsistencies in previous research. These differences may be expressed in preferences and decision habits while searching for job information. Judge and Cable (1997) illustrate how individual differences (such as habit and personality) influence personal values and preferences (such as regarding information), which are then expressed in different decision-making styles. This indicates that decision-making style has a link with individual information search depth and the evaluation of information and hence with application choices.

Decision-making style is defined as a habitual attitude of making choices that affects an individual's decision-making process (Scott and Bruce, 1995). A well-known classification of decision-making styles is the concept of maximising and satisficing (first proposed by Simon in 1956), which has been verified in a variety of studies (e.g., Schwartz *et al.*, 2002) and has even previously been applied to career choice (Iyengar *et al.*, 2006). Maximisers prefer extensive comparisons and search for information about an object (e.g., a product or a job), evaluating and analysing information carefully so as to make the best choice. In contrast to this, satisficers prefer to seize chances and possibilities as they arise to make a 'good enough' decision rather than necessarily the 'best decision' (Simon, 1956; Schwartz *et al.*, 2002). Evans (1984) advocates that individuals process information by means of two parallel interactive systems: heuristic processing and analytic processing. Simon (1956) proposes the notion of maximiser (analytic processing) and satisficer (fast and frugal heuristic processing)

based on the bounded rationality, which refines the concept of the two systems (Gigerenzer and Goldstein, 1996; Stanovich and West, 2000) and is able to represent jobseekers' individual information-seeking behaviour.

From the viewpoint of individual differences, the effects of recruitment information sources are not necessarily straightforward due to individual differences in preferences for the type and source of information, for example between INCC information sources (such as from a WOM source) or FCC information sources (such as from typical job advertisements in the media). Organisations that understand maximisers' and satisficers' different needs during their decision-making process have the opportunity to attract more candidates to join the application pool. Nevertheless, full exploration and testing of individual differences in application decision-making styles is still limited.

Consequently, this research aims to explore two issues. First, the research looks at the effect of differences in decision-making style (between maximisers and satisficers) on reactions to a typical formal job advertisement from an FCC source, in terms of a) perceptions of OA and b) need to seek further information regarding the vacancy. Second, previous research indicates that this further information is likely to come from INCC WOM sources (rather than FCC sources), often from members of staff of the organisation (Brown and Reingen, 1987). Here, a further divide can be made between sources of informal information that have a strong-tie (e.g., family or a close friend) or a weak-tie (e.g., an acquaintance such as a staff member at the store) with the information seeker (jobseeker). Informal sources can expose people to both negative and positive information, carrying the risk that some WOM messages may result in jobseekers being unwilling to apply for the vacancy (Van Hoye and Lievens, 2009). This is not inevitable, however, as people vary in the trust and weight they assign to different providers (ties/relationships) and to positive and negative information (Fisher *et al.*, 1979). Thus, the second issue is the effect of a single follow-up WOM message from members of staff of the organisation (aka staff WOM or SWOM) on those who want further information. Specifically, do maximisers and satisficers differ in reactions to SWOM messages varying in valence (positive or negative) and source tie strength (strong-tie or weak-tie)? For this second issue, we expect an interaction among decision-making style, information valence and the type of source of the informal information – that is, the relationship between tie strength and message valence will be moderated by the jobseeker's decision-making style.

2. Conceptual development

Breaugh (2013) concludes there are two dimensions for pre-hire recruitment outcomes: a jobseeker's intention to apply for the position and the likelihood that they will accept the job if offered. Highhouse *et al.*, (2003) conceptualise three dimensions for OA: *company attractiveness*, which is the degree of liking the organisation; *intention towards the company*, which is a jobseeker's intention to apply for a position in the organisation and their willingness to work for it; and *company prestige*, which is a jobseeker's impression about the reputation of the organisation. Jobseekers who self-report higher OA are likely to have a higher intention of pursuing a job vacancy within a company. Increasing OA, therefore, should increase the candidate application pool and chances for organisations to filter and hire appropriate new employees (Thomas and Wise, 1999; Cable and Turban, 2001).

The two main types of recruitment information content about job vacancies and organisations that may affect jobseeker OA are 'hard' content and 'soft' content. Hard, confirmable information content usually includes verifiable facts such as salary and work location. In contrast to this, soft, personal-experience-based information content includes feelings, perceptions and opinions, for example, one's personal work experience in the organisation and assessments of the organisational climate (Breaugh, 2013).

Many jobseekers first acquire job vacancy information, especially basic hard information content, from FCC information sources such as local newspaper advertisements and job websites (Breaugh, 2013; Zottoli and Wanous, 2001). Such sources provide jobseekers with basic hard information content about the more 'concrete' aspects of employment with a particular company. Nevertheless, jobseekers are also concerned about more 'intangible' issues such as the organisational climate (Ioannides and Loury, 2004), which they cannot accurately predict until they experience it themselves (Breaugh, 2013). To bridge this gap, potential job applicants often seek soft information content on personal experience from job incumbents about the more intangible aspects in addition to the formal information. This corresponds to informal, INCC information from WOM sources. At the same time, the veracity of such information is difficult to establish prior to personal experience. As a result, before making application or acceptance decisions, potential applicants may gather and evaluate the information they receive about the organisation/vacancy from a number of different job-related information sources (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003). Part of this assessment is the credibility of the information. For 'hard' information content, FCC sources may be considered more objective and reliable than INCC sources (Cable and Turban, 2001); for 'soft' information content, INCC sources we know

well (strong-ties) are usually considered more credible than those from strangers and acquaintances (weak-ties), though not always (Keeling *et al.*, 2013).

2.1. Effect of decision-making style – maximisers and satisficers

Notwithstanding this propensity to gather information from a variety of sources, our contention is that jobseekers vary in their pre-hire behaviours, such as the depth of information search needed to make job decisions, and that this variation is a result of their individual decision-making styles. Schwartz *et al.* (2002) describe the concept of 'maximisers' and 'satisficers'. Maximisers are people that undertake thorough information searches to inform their decisions and compare all gathered information carefully to achieve the best results. Maximising traits comprise three dimensions: *alternative search*, which is an individual's willingness to spend time searching for more potential choices; *decision difficulty*, which concerns how easy it is for an individual to make his/her mind up during the decision-making process; and the *high standards* of their decisions. Maximisers not only employ more criteria in the decision-making process than satisficers, but also spend more time going back and forth considering the choices before they make the decision (Besharat *et al.*, 2014). However, this diligence can also lead to them spending too much time on the decision-making process. Misuraca and Teuscher (2013) show that maximisers and satisficers perceive time differently. During the decision-making process, maximisers ignore the time input and focus on the task at hand. Even faced with deadlines, compared to satisficers, more maximisers still avoid making decisions (Bruine de Bruin, *et al.*, 2007). Thus, maximisers have the attribute of decision difficulty. The outcomes of this have positive elements; for instance, new graduates adopting a maximiser approach to career choice receive approximately 20% higher starting salaries than satisficers (Iyengar *et al.*, 2006). There are also negative elements: Iyengar *et al.* (2006) posit that maximisers have lower career choice satisfaction and typically believe that other, better choices could have been made. Satisficers do not have such high standards and ambitions about their decisions and outcomes; they only expect to make a 'good enough' decision. Compared to maximisers, they do not like to waste time getting too much information (Iyengar *et al.*, 2006; Schwartz *et al.*, 2002).

These two decision-making types illustrate two well-known theories extant in the psychology literature. In social psychology, Heider (1958) proposes the theory of 'naïve scientist'. The theory posits that people naturally act like scientists who rationally search for information, weigh costs, evaluate benefits, and match and update their expectations. In contrast with this, based on the idea of heuristics, Fiske and Taylor (1984) propose that people act as 'cognitive misers', utilising mental short cuts to make assessments and decisions.

They argue that acting as cognitive misers does not mean humans are irrational; rather, humans are protecting their mental processing resources and finding different ways to save time and effort when negotiating the numerous choices they face in daily living. While these two cognitive approaches likely come into play for an individual variously across appropriate circumstances and contexts (e.g., consequence of decision), people will differ on their experiences and learning of the efficacy of applying each approach. Thus, people may come to rely on and chronically apply one approach more consistently than the other. Applying these two concepts to those of maximising and satisficing, it is likely that maximisers tend to adopt the approach of the naïve scientists; they avoid making wrong decisions, tend to regret choices once made, and do not make decisions easily based on only one information clue from only one source. Satisficers could be considered to be cognitive misers. They prefer not to put too much effort into decisions if the results cannot be easily predicted.

The differences in the depth of information search and the time involved in decision-making suggest that, at the most basic level, when maximisers and satisficers read a typical short recruitment advertisement from an FCC recruitment source such as a newspaper or a job website, satisficers will be more likely to regard the message as sufficient information to make the job application decision.

Thus,

H1: *After reading about typical job vacancy information that contains hard, confirmable information content from an FCC recruitment source (e.g., an advertisement), maximisers are more likely than satisficers to choose to search for further information about the company/job vacancy.*

As an exploratory study, at this stage, we did not aim to test differences in type and depth of additional information sought by these jobseekers. At this stage, the purpose is to establish the general principle of whether maximisers and satisficers react differently to typical formal recruitment information in seeking further information. It is necessary to establish this, as no existing research has demonstrated whether these two decision-making styles might be different in their reactions to a typical job advertisement.

Those finding the typical vacancy advertisement insufficient will seek further information about the vacancy before they make a decision, and this is likely to be obtained from INCC sources (Brown and Reingen, 1987). The dimensions of OA cover company attractiveness and company prestige (Breaugh, 2013), suggesting that the informal information sought could cover any aspect of the vacancy or, indeed, the organisation and

may be positive or negatively valenced. Valence is not the only consideration, however; the relationship with the information provider is also influential in assessing the information. Prior research on the effectiveness of recruitment information sources and pre-hire outcomes (e.g., Van Hoye and Lievens, 2009) suggests that jobseeker application decisions are influenced by both tie strength and message valence.

2.2. Staff word of mouth (SWOM)

As a recruitment strategy, employee referrals are an efficient WOM-based recruitment source. However, Keeling *et al.* (2013) distinguish between this company-initiated and positively valenced WOM recruitment strategy and the other types of WOM sought from job incumbents by prospective employees. A very popular source of informal information, which provides soft, experience-based information content, and much in practical use, is present or recent job incumbents. Keeling *et al.* (2013) term this staff word of mouth (SWOM) and apply it to the retail industry. In comparison to employee referrals, SWOM messages are available to all jobseekers, including those who are not part of staff referral networks (Ryan *et al.*, 2005).

The concept of SWOM is that after reviewing basic job vacancy information from a company-controlled source (e.g., job advertisements), jobseekers obtain SWOM information by contacting current employees, past employees or someone who has work experience in the sector. For instance, a jobseeker can drop into a store and ask the staff about their experience as staff in that organisation, or they can ask a friend about the reality of working there (Keeling *et al.*, 2013). Jobseekers may or may not know the information providers well, but they do know these information providers have work experience in the organisation being considered. An employee telling a jobseeker about their experience in the company or job is informal information, and is not company controlled (Keeling *et al.*, 2013). Hence, this source of informal information is especially relevant to a study of the effect of informal information sources in retail recruitment.

2.3. Tie strength, message valence and decision-making style

Even though jobseekers have a relatively high level of willingness to approach SWOM, as mentioned previously, acceptance of the message varies depending on the information provider–recipient relationship and the message valence.

Tie strength (the relationship between the information provider and the recipient) affects the information receiver's perception of the credibility of the information provider

(Kim *et al.*, 2008). Jobseekers often choose to accept job information from a strong-tie because they believe that those in close relationships will understand their information needs and feel more obligated to give them a credible and truthful description of the job and the organisation (Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Rhoads *et al.*, 2002; Breaugh, 2013). Correspondingly, people tend to discount information and be more sceptical when it is more difficult to judge the trustworthiness of the source (Hovland and Weiss, 1951).

Additionally, scholars demonstrate that negative information usually reduces an individual's intention to pursue an object such as a product, whereas positive information gives the individual more confidence in pursuit behaviour. Weinberger *et al.* (1981) explain that negative information has a stronger impact because it stands out from the greater number of positive cues in the individual's social environment, and this distinction makes negative messages more influential. Richey *et al.* (1975) suggest that negative information is more likely to draw information receivers' attention, and so has greater effect on an organisation's reputation, compared to positive information. Thus, most organisations try to avoid sending negative messages and encourage the sharing of positive experiences (e.g., East *et al.*, 2007). However, this is not entirely true for recruitment information in the retail trade. Booth and Hamer (2007) indicate that usually jobs in the retail trade have common disadvantages such as low wages and long, variable hours, of which most prospective employees are aware. Therefore, research involving the realistic job preview (RJP) suggests that some negative information actually increases a jobseeker's willingness to apply for a vacancy, as these types of messages are considered more credible and give insight into the reality of working for that company (e.g., Shore and Tetrick, 1994).

Thus, both positive information and negative information potentially increase jobseeker willingness to join the organisation, *but only when the jobseeker trusts the information source/provider.* In the absence of a credible relationship, information may be treated with considerable caution. Although objectively the content might be true, the information recipient will not fully accept information if he or she does not perceive the information source to be trustworthy enough (Hass, 1981). When only positive information is provided by a weak-tie, jobseekers are likely to consider whether the work is really as good as the weak-tie describes, especially in the retail sector. For negative information, Fisher *et al.* (1979) show that when job applicants are given negative information from a weak-tie, their intentions to accept a job offer significantly decrease. This is for two reasons. First, compared to positive information; negative information has a relatively stronger effect on jobseekers' decisions: negative messages are more distinctive and persist longer than positive information (Weinberger *et al.,* 1981), especially when an individual is in the beginning stage of a process

and has limited knowledge about it. Second, regarding the source, the recipient of information may doubt whether, given the social expectations of interaction content between people who do not know each other well, the weak-tie information source would tell the whole story; the actual work could possibly be worse than the weak-tie reports. Therefore, information from weak-ties can reduce job pursuit intentions, and, in this regard, the effect of negative information is even stronger than the effect of positive information from weak-ties.

Accordingly, when a message source is a strong-tie, jobseekers are likely to perceive a higher OA than when the message comes from a weak-tie. When a message source is a weak-tie, jobseekers' perceived OA is likely to be lower when the message contains negative information, compared to positive information. Organisations risk losing potential applicants if job advertisement information is found to be inadequate, and so jobseekers source additional information by informal WOM, which increases the risk of receiving messages from weak-ties, especially negative information.

On the other hand, a consideration of the attributes of maximising and satisficing decision-making styles suggests that decision-making style may moderate the effects of message valence and tie strength. Schwartz *et al.* (2002) indicate that maximisers are more careful decision-makers. They put a lot of effort into searching, checking and comparing job information, tending to adopt a central processing route, which leads them to cautiously weigh and evaluate the information (Petty and Cacioppo, 1984). From a risk-aversion viewpoint (Pratt, 1964), compared to satisficers, maximisers have a significantly higher level of uncertainty avoidance (Liu *et al.*, 2015). Maximisers work hard to lower the risk of making a bad decision by comparing all information and options (Polman, 2012). In comparison, satisficers tend to use instinct and feelings and to adopt peripheral processing routes when making choices. Peripheral route adopters are more likely to be attracted by peripheral cues, and they are inclined to evaluate a message by relying on their first and general impressions, such as their relationship with the source and the form of the message (Petty and Cacioppo, 1980).

As a result, maximisers are more likely than satisficers to accept information from weak-tie sources, since they wish to evaluate all information, and to focus more on evaluating the content of the message, instead of relying on making a judgement based on their relationship with the provider and discarding the advice from the message easily. Therefore, it is expected that maximisers will be influenced more than satisficers in terms of OA when they receive positive/negative information from a weak-tie source. In contrast, we can assume that satisficers may be more easily satisfied with the information from a strong-tie source than

maximisers, because a) such information is more readily available, particularly when the peripheral route is used, since message recipients tend to rely on their previous knowledge of the information source, such as their impression of and the relationship with the source, and b) they tend not to wish to expend much effort on getting information or on evaluating information from different sources. Accepting information from trusted information sources can save them time and effort. Thus, satisficers will be influenced more than maximisers in terms of their willingness to join the organisation when they receive positive/negative information from a strong-tie source.

Hence, the joint effects of tie strength and information valence on OA will differ, depending on the jobseeker's decision-making style:

H2a: Maximisers' perceived OA is more likely to be affected by the valence of a (SWOM) message originating from a weak relationship (tie) such that: Maximisers' perceived OA is higher when they receive a positive (SWOM) message from a weak-tie source compared to receiving a negative (SWOM) message.

H2b: Satisficers' perceived OA is more likely to be affected by the valence of a SWOM message originating from a strong relationship (tie) such that: Satisficers perceived OA is higher when they receive a positive (SWOM) message from a strong-tie source compared to receiving a negative (SWOM) message.

Moreover, WOM messages influence individual decisions through changing the information recipients' evaluation of attributes (Cheung and Thadani, 2012), so we expect the number of jobseekers who report that they would stop searching for further information to increase under these circumstances. Nonetheless, this is just one piece and one source of further information. The traits of maximisers lead us to anticipate that, even though SWOM messages are relatively influential compared to other recruitment information sources, maximisers will still display a tendency to be less satisfied than satisficers and will be more inclined to search for yet further information before they make their decision (Schwartz *et al.*, 2002). In contrast, the characteristics of satisficers suggest that those who wish for additional information to the vacancy advertisement are more likely to be satisfied by even this small amount of additional information and stop the information search. Therefore,

H3: After receiving SWOM source messages, satisficers/maximisers are more/less likely to stop the information search about the vacancy/company.

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3. Method

A scenario-based experiment provided the data to examine the moderation effects of decision-making style, message valence and tie strength on the effects of different recruitment information sources and on a jobseeker's perceived OA and their intention to search for further information.

A three-part pre-test was conducted to verify the experimental manipulations and other material for the scenario design. These were: tie strength with the source (weaker ties vs. stronger ties), SWOM message valence (positive vs. negative) and positive advertisement messages. A total of 30 participants experienced in the US retail industry were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT). AMT is considered to be a reliable data collection source (e.g., Mason and Suri, 2012). A reward of $3 was given to each participant via AMT.

Tie strength: The descriptions of the supposed relationship of the participant with the information source (strong-tie vs. weak-tie) were adopted from Keeling *et al.* (2013). Participants were randomly assigned to read the description of a strong-tie or a weak-tie and evaluate these on a 7-point scale, with the anchors '1 – the person has a very weak relationship with me', and '7 – the person has a very strong relationship with me'. The manipulation was successful: those reading the strong-tie source description [$M = 5.47$, $SD = .99$] reported a significantly higher mean rating for the strength of the relationship than those reading the weak-tie source description [$M = 3.20$, $SD = .94$, $t(28) = 6.43$, $p < .01$].

Advertisement messages: We developed and piloted 25 simple and short advertisement messages based on seven attributes (containing 'hard' information content, including 1) remuneration, 2) location, 3) hours, 4) promotion opportunities, 5) training courses, 6) annual bonuses and 7) basic job skill requirements) found in typical advertisements observed in newspapers (the National Ad Search and the National Business Employment Weekly) and on job websites for retail jobs (including craigslist.com, monster.com, careerbuilder.com and indeed.com; these were indicated in a qualitative pre-study by participants who have work experience in the retail trade as the most widely used job-searching sources in the US). Our developed messages did not mention an exact rate of pay or a salary range; instead, they stated that 'the salary which Company A would offer is close to the average salary level'. The respondents rated each statement about the job on a 7-point scale (from '1 – very unfavourable' to '7 – very favourable'). As companies generally only provide advantages and positive messages in advertisements, the seven statements (containing information on each attribute above) chosen had a mean rating of between 4.5 and 5.5.

SWOM message valence: A total of 24 statements were developed and piloted concerning the personal experience of the source regarding the intrinsic job facets of variety, autonomy and opportunity to use learned skills, plus the extrinsic aspects of pay, promotion and working conditions (based on Fisher *et al.*, 1979). The pilot study participants rated the favourability of each message about the job on a 7-point scale (from '1 – very unfavourable' to '7 – very favourable'). Adopting the criteria of Fisher *et al.* (1979), statement classification was positive if the mean rating was between 4.5 and 5.5; it was negative if the mean rating was between 2.5 and 3.5. The statements used in the experiment came from piloted statements falling into these ranges. Statements with extremely positive ratings of between 5.5 and 7, and extremely negative ratings of between 1 and 2.5, were not used. Selection by these criteria follows the Fisher *et al.* (1979) experimental design that suggests extremely positive or negative information should not be used in the experiment to avoid the overshadowing effect.

3.1. Measures

The 15-item scale for evaluating OA (Highhouse *et al.*, 2003) comprises three dimensions: company attractiveness (e.g., 'this company is attractive to me as a place for employment'), intentions towards the company (e.g., 'I would accept a job offer from this company') and company prestige (e.g., 'there are probably many who would like to work at this company').

The short (6-item) version of the 13-item maximisation scale (MS) (Schwartz *et al.*, 2002) provided the measure of decision-making style. Nenkov *et al.* (2008) report that this outperforms the 13-item version in reliability and validity tests, concluding it should be used in future research. The components are: alternative search questions (e.g., 'when I am in the car listening to the radio, I often check other stations to see if something better is playing, even if I am relatively satisfied with what I am listening to'), decision difficulty (e.g., 'I often find it difficult to shop for a gift for a friend') and high standards (e.g., 'I never settle for second best').

Further, two items were employed for manipulation checks: 'I think the person has a strong/weak relationship with me' (for tie strength), and 'I think the message is unfavourable/favourable' (for message valence). All items were measured using a 7-point scale, and the scale items were anchored at 1 as 'strongly disagree' and 7 as 'strongly agree'.

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3.2. Procedure

After reading the participant information and the ethical terms of the study, participants read the pre-tested positive job vacancy advertisement information on the experiment website, with instructions to read the messages carefully. The participants were then divided into two groups based on their preference for one of the following statements: A. 'spending more time to get to know more about the job' or B. 'prefer not to spend more time looking for further information about that vacancy'. Group B then completed the OA scale to evaluate their attitudes towards the job vacancy.

Group A proceeded to a further stage for random assignment to one of the five groups (four groups were given further information purporting to be from a member of staff differing in combinations of positive vs. negative valence and strong-tie vs. weak-tie source; one control group was given no further information). Participants in the control group in Group A were not assigned to a treatment group and so completed the OA scale at this point. The other Group A participants read the description of one of the four randomly assigned scenarios, and then were asked to answer the two manipulation check questions and complete the OA scale. All four 'treatment' groups also answered whether they *still* wanted to seek more information after receiving this extra communication about the position before making a decision. All respondents provided demographic information and completed the 6-item MS.

The MS was appraised at the end of the study for a combination of two reasons. Although we necessarily designed the study in two stages, we were unable to separate these by time. The participants in the present study were recruited via AMT; these anonymous participants had passed Amazon's censorship, which confirmed that they had met specific data collection requirements (e.g., have work experience in the retail trade in the US and are aged over 19). However, based on our experience, conducting a longitudinal study over two time points loses around 70% of the sample (data mortality) even over relatively short periods. A return rate of less than 30% is low and has other implications for the study outcomes. Due to the lack of separation, the MS measure was introduced after the scenarios to avoid distracting participants from the experimental task with irrelevant items. On the other hand, we judged that this lack of direct relevance meant that MS answers after the manipulations were unlikely to be biased by those manipulations.

The design was further influenced by the need for external validity and to control potential memory confound in an exploratory study. The first part of this study is necessary to produce the reduced sample of people not satisfied with the formal advertisement information. Separating the two parts of the study brings into question potential confounds, such as

memory effects, in addition to the loss of respondents. As an exploratory study, we chose to test and set the baseline effects of minimal time delay between the receptions of the two messages.

3.3. Results

Recruitment via AMT produced 146 male and 134 female US participants, aged over 19, working in the retail trade ($3 incentive). Matching user IDs ensured no participant had also responded to the pre-test. This was a well-educated and experienced sample: 64% had a college or university degree and 91% had more than a year of retail work experience. Over half of the participants (58%) received a salary below $3,000 per month, which corresponds with standard retail industry salary levels. There were no significant differences among the randomly assigned groups in terms of demographic variables, indicating successful sample random assignment.

The responses to the six items on the MS show good internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = .81). Combining and averaging provide a single composite score, ranging from 2.2 to 6.6. In line with other research using this scale, a median split differentiated maximisers and satisficers. The median of 4.14 is close to that in previous research (e.g., 4.20 in Schwartz *et al.*'s (2002) dataset; 4.15 in Love's (2009) dataset).

Although there are some critical concerns regarding the use of median splits, MacCallum *et al.* (2002) allow that for a single independent variable (as in this case), statistical tests will tend to be more conservative after dichotomisation. There is also substantial support in the literature for the MS decision-making styles. Two-step cluster analysis automatically selects the number of clusters: for these data, it produced two clusters perfectly reproducing the median split result and providing support for the median split. On these grounds, we continued with the median split classification.

Principle component analysis extracted one component for OA (eigenvalue 10.87; 72.5% of variance), with all loadings over .70, supporting Keeling *et al.*'s (2013) argument that the three components of the OA scale comprise a single, second-order factor. Hence, the 15 item responses (Cronbach's Alpha = .91) were combined to make a single mean score. Manipulation checks showed the scenarios of SWOM message valence ($M_{positive} = 5.32$ vs. $M_{negative} = 2.89$) and tie strength ($M_{strong\text{-}tie} = 5.62$ vs. $M_{weak\text{-}tie} = 3.20$) were successful.

3.3.1. Testing hypothesis 1

After reading the advertisement messages, 96 participants reported that they preferred not to search for further information, while 184 requested more position and company-related information. Supporting H1, the participants' requests for more information differed according to the decision-making style [χ^2(1, N = 280) = 19.72, p < .01]. Satisficers comprised nearly 70% of the 96 participants satisfied by the advertisement information and deciding not to search for further information (see Table 1). (Note, however, that this short but typical advertisement was not particularly effective in meeting applicant needs: 184 (66%) of the respondents wanted further information, including 53% of the total number of satisficers.)

Insert Table 1 about here

3.3.2. Testing hypothesis 2

A 2 (maximiser/satisficer) by 2 (positive/negative SWOM) by 2 (strong-/weak-tie) ANOVA test showed a significant three-way interaction [F(1, 142) = 42.77, p < .01] (see Table 2). A significant three-way interaction means that there is a two-way interaction that varies across levels of a third variable (Kirk, 1995). In order to explain clearly the results of the significant three-way interaction in H2, the dataset was split by the variable decision-making style to test the simple main effects. A pair of two-way ANOVA then tested the two-way interaction (between message valence and tie strength of the source) at each of the two decision-making styles (maximiser/satisficer).

The first two-way ANOVA examined the two-way interaction between message valence and tie strength for maximisers. The result showed that the interaction effect was significant [F(1, 83) = 34.24, p < .01] (see Table 2). A Scheffe post-hoc test with 95% confidence level compared the four combined scenario groups (positive + strong-tie, positive + weak-tie, negative + strong-tie, negative + weak-tie) and revealed that when the SWOM message was provided by a weak-tie provider, maximisers reported significantly higher OA when the information was positive, compared to the negative information [$M_{(maximiser)\ positive\ +\ weak\text{-}tie}$ = 3.78 vs. $M_{(maximiser)\ negative\ +\ weak\text{-}tie}$ = 2.82, p < .01]. No difference was found when the SWOM message provider had a strong relationship with the maximiser-style jobseeker [$M_{(maximiser)\ negative\ +\ strong\text{-}tie}$ = 5.81 vs. $M_{(maximiser)\ positive\ +\ strong\text{-}tie}$ = 5.42, p = .14] (see Figure 2 and

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Table 3). Therefore, H2a was supported.

The second two-way ANOVA tested the interaction for satisficers. The result showed that the message valence/tie strength interaction had a significant effect on the OA [$F(1, 59) = 13.25$, $p < .01$] (see Table 2). The Scheffe post-hoc test with 95% confidence level demonstrated that when the SWOM message was provided by a strong-tie, satisficers perceived significant higher OA when the information was positive compared to negative information [$M_{(satisficer)\ positive\ +\ strong-tie} = 6.09$ vs. $M_{(satisficer)\ negative\ +\ strong-tie} = 5.45$, $p < .01$]. Furthermore, satisficers reported no significant difference in evaluation of positive and negative SWOM information that was provided by a weak-tie [$M_{(satisficer)\ negative\ +\ weak-tie} = 3.57$ vs. $M_{(satisficer)\ positive\ +\ weak-tie} = 3.34$, $p = .62$] (see Figure 3 and Table 3). Thus, H2b was supported.

Insert Figure 2 and Figure 3 about here

Insert Table 2 and Table 3 about here

It is also worth making comparisons to the control group (participants who reported that they wanted to search for more information but were not provided with any further information, see *3.2 procedure*) [$M_{(maximiser)\ control\ group} = 4.89$, $SD = .53$ vs. $M_{(satisficer)\ control\ group} = 4.63$, $SD = .61$, $t(32) = 1.30$, $p = .20$ (n.s.); $M_{(overall)\ control\ group} = 4.78$, $SD = .57$], receiving negative information does not necessarily lead to a negative result. Indeed, negative information from a strong-tie source actually increased both maximisers' [$M_{(maximiser)\ negative\ +\ strong-tie} = 5.81$, $t(40) = 5.57$, $p < .01$] and satisficers' [$M_{(satisficer)\ negative\ +\ strong-tie} = 5.45$, $t(28) = 4.21$, $p < .01$] OA. Furthermore, positive information from a weak-tie source [$M_{(maximiser)\ positive\ +\ weak-tie} = 3.78$, $t(41) = 6.69$, $p < .01$; $M_{(satisficer)\ positive\ +\ weak-tie} = 3.34$, $t(27) = 5.95$, $p < .01$] decreased willingness to join the company. The findings indicate that negative information does not always lead to a negative result and not all positive information leads to an increased job apply and accepting willingness (OA). It depends on the relationship between the information receiver and the provider.

3.3.3 Testing hypothesis 3

Overall, after reading SWOM messages, 86 of the Group B participants stated that the information (advertisement + SWOM) satisfied their information needs and was enough for them to make a decision. This increased the number from the first phase by 27%, showing that SWOM messages are influential and effective and can accelerate jobseeker decisions. (Note, however, that some of these decisions were likely to be negative, based on the OA scores.) Supporting H3, over half (45/87, 52%) of the maximisers who wished for more information after reading the initial advertisement still found the additional SWOM message insufficient information and preferred to search for more information, compared to 30% (19/63) of satisficers [$\chi^2(1, N = 150) = 6.95, p < .01$].

Interestingly, the percentage of maximisers requesting further information after receiving the SWOM messages differed according to the source tie strength and according to the message valence scenario [$\chi^2(3, N = 87) = 10.20, p < .05$]. When the SWOM messages were negative and provided by a strong-tie source, the maximisers were less likely to search for further information (just 23% wanted more information), indicating a differential weighting for this combination (see Table 4).

For the satisficers, overall there was no significant difference in their likelihood of requesting further information after receiving SWOM messages according to source tie strengths and message valences [$\chi^2(3, N = 63) = 5.60, p = .13$]. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that when the SWOM messages were positive and provided by a weak-tie source, half of the participants (53%) decided to search for further information, again suggesting a differential weighting for a particular combination (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

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4. Discussion, conclusions and implications

4.1 General results and theoretical implications

The results of the present study provide evidence that maximiser and satisficer decision-making styles of jobseekers exhibit different reactions and behaviours when they

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respond to a) a typical formal job advertisement and b) follow-up SWOM messages from informal sources differing in tie strength and message valence.

The results reveal that a typical short formal job vacancy advertisement message for retail jobs is not fit for purpose; the information was insufficient for 66% of the respondents, especially for maximisers. About 79% of maximisers reported that they would search for more information about the company/job vacancy before they made the decision to join, or not join, the candidate pool for the organisation. In contrast, 53% of satisficers would search for more information, so 47% of the satisficers were likely to make a decision on whether to join the candidate pool after receiving a short and positive advertisement message. Hence, it is confirmed that in a typical job information search context, maximisers generally require more information than satisficers and actively seek further information before making job application decisions. To the best of our knowledge, this difference between decision-making styles when reacting to job advertisements has not previously been reported in the literature.

Moreover, satisficers are more likely than maximisers to be influenced by strong-tie information sources, such as family and close friends. Most satisficers stop searching for further position-related information after they have received the advertisement information and SWOM messages, especially when the messages come from a strong-tie source. This reflects the characteristic of satisficers in that they make 'good enough' decisions. Conversely, maximisers do not ignore SWOM messages from a weak-tie source so directly. Indeed, weak-ties have a greater influence on the level of OA for maximisers than they do for satisficers.

The research results also reveal that maximisers and satisficers may evaluate positive and negative information differently. Two parallel results suggest differential weightings for some types of information: for maximisers, negative information from a strong-tie (perhaps more credible), and, for satisficers, positive information from a weak-tie (perhaps less credible, given the rather poor views people hold about retail jobs and satisficers' propensity to get information from strong-ties), both point to a reduction for decision-making search costs from receiving credible information. Corresponding with the defined characteristics of maximisers that always want to search for more information, when the SWOM message was provided by weak-tie sources (positive or negative information), or the message was provided by a strong-tie source with positive information, over 60% of maximisers still preferred to search for more information. However, the results also show that negative information from a strong-tie (trusted source) is more effective than positive information from the same source in reducing the number of maximisers wanting more information. This suggests maximisers may use a differential weighting for trusted negative information. Researchers define maximisers

as people who always pursue the best solutions. When looking at this characteristic from another angle, maximisers, compared to satisficers, accept the reality that a flawless solution does not actually exist (Schwartz *et al.*, 2002). We may surmise that maximisers are persistent in considering the defective parts of a decision, which entails choosing the best (or perhaps least worst) option amongst those that are available to them. Therefore, they are likely to search for more balanced information (both positive and negative information).

This may explain why even when there is a disparity between negative SWOM messages and the positive advertisement, maximisers' intentions towards joining the company may be higher than satisficers. This also reveals that maximisers may be more cynical when evaluating job recruitment information and job decisions, but they are also more likely to accept the reality of imperfection, especially in retail-trade job decisions. This indirectly provides a clue that contrary to some existing research that argues that maximisers are more unhappy than satisficers (e.g., Iyengar *et al.*, 2006), the results of this research suggest that maximisers should at least be no less happy than satisficers in their decisions; maximisers generally search for as much information as they can about the job and evaluate the information rationally, and only more balanced information from trusted sources/providers can stop them. They are able to expect any negative situations that they might face when they go to work because they should have accepted the advantages and especially the disadvantages of the job position before making the final decision.

On the contrary, after receiving SWOM messages, most of the satisficers reported that the information is sufficient for them to make the application decision, and they preferred not to search for further information. Even though the Chi-square test shows a non-significant result among the four scenarios (tie strength*message valence), an interesting observation is that around 50% of satisficers keep searching when the information is positive and from a weak-tie source. A possible explanation for this is that weak-tie sources are considered to be less trustworthy. Therefore, receiving only positive information from such sources makes satisficers to feel suspicious about whether the job position is as good as the weak-tie source describes it. By demonstrating that a jobseeker's decision-making style is a moderator of the effectiveness of recruitment information sources and contents, the results provide an explanation of the inconsistency in the existing research, whereby some studies show that formal sources attract more jobseekers than informal sources do, whilst other studies show the opposite results.

Furthermore, the results show that negative information from a strong-tie source actually increased both maximisers' and satisficers' willingness to join the company, and

positive information from a weak-tie source decreased willingness to join the company. This finding is consistent with Van Hoye and Lievens' (2009) conclusion that not all negative information leads to a negative result, especially in the retail trade, where most of the jobs have some drawbacks (Rhoads *et al.*, 2002). The negative scenarios that we used were not very extreme negative messages; jobseekers may be prone to accept what strong-tie sources tell them, and accept the imperfect and realistic parts of the job (Thorsteinson *et al.*, 2004). On the other hand, when receiving positive SWOM information from a weak-tie source (considered less credible), credibility of the information provider may decrease. In this case, one group of participants firstly received positive information from the first scenario (company-controlled advertisement) and then received a positive SWOM message from a weak-tie source (considered less credible). By adopting the idea 'too good to be true' (Thorsteinson *et al.*, 2004), this group of people may not have been sure if they should fully believe the information they received, and considered that the information from the two sources was too good to be true, which thus decreased their OA. It is also this group that had the highest percentage (of both maximisers and satisficers, especially maximisers) reporting that they prefer to keep searching for more information after receiving the SWOM message. This result provides a clue that source credibility could have a moderating effect on jobseekers' perceived OA. This indirectly supports the results of previous research suggesting that source credibility could be both a mediator and a moderator (e.g., Roy *et al.*, 2013). However, this has not been fully demonstrated in recruitment research. Future studies could explore the possible moderating and/or mediated moderation effect of source credibility.

4.2 Limitations and suggestions for future research

As suggested by one of the reviewers, the dataset reveals possible general differences in OA thresholds for maximisers and satisficers of searching for or not searching for further information. For maximisers, the 'always wanting to pursue the best result' characteristic leads to a general inclination to search further, even after receiving a SWOM message. However, relatively fewer maximisers (23%) report a further search in the negative/strong-tie source group, suggesting the 'not wanting to search for more information' threshold of the associated mean for OA for maximisers is 5.81 (7-point scale). On the other hand, corresponding with the 'good enough' characteristic, satisficers do not need to have a high OA, just good enough to fit criteria satisfying their needs. Therefore, they generally report a low willingness to search for further information after reading a piece of SWOM. However, in the positive/weak-tie source condition, 53% wish to do a further information search. Thus, the associated mean of 3.34 for OA (7-point scale) could be the OA threshold for satisficers to 'search for more information'. The present study is a scenario-based experiment; the mean

values themselves are not able to be considered definitive 'tipping points' for a real advertising design. Nevertheless, the relative scale of the findings strongly indicates that this trend should be further tested to find such tipping points for real companies and real advertisements.

Some limitations also need to be acknowledged. Firstly, our sample worked in a range of different stores in the retail trade. Even though the work conditions are fairly similar in this sector, some stores may still offer better conditions than others. Therefore, the developed messages for scenarios did not provide exact information about the job attributes, such as a specific salary range; instead, the scenario used words such as 'close to the average salary level' and 'briefly provided information about…'. Future studies might focus on one company and use the company recruitment messages in the scenario to avoid this potential experimental design issue. Moreover, although the scenario advertisement messages were based on real recruitment messages, which were mostly short and only superficially described the basic position information, the use of the word 'briefly' in the scenario content might have had some influence on the respondents with respect to the question of searching for more information. Nevertheless, the study results demonstrate that significantly fewer satisficers are willing to search for more job-related information than maximisers.

In addition, we return to the problem of median splits. Schwartz *et al.* (2002) defined maximiser and satisficer based on a median split concept and proposed the MS scale, and many existing maximiser and satisficer studies have used median splits in their data analysis (e.g., Schwartz *et al.*, 2002; Iyengar *et al.*, 2006; Misuraca and Teuscher, 2013). However, custom and practice are not sufficient arguments for the use of dichotomisation (MacCallum *et al.*, 2002). Although for our data and for this study a series of cluster analyses produced support for the median split groupings, future research could use different research designs and compare the results of analysing the scale as a continuous variable and as a categorical variable, thus demonstrating the usability and/or the limitations of the use of MS.

The present exploratory research is just a starting point and foundation for further study. The findings demonstrate that maximisers and satisficers do react differently to recruitment information and sources and that decision-making style is a variable worth considering as a moderator that affects the effectiveness of recruitment information sources. The next stage of study should aim to investigate whether these differences extend to the type and attributes of information sought by maximisers and satisficers before making their application decision. Future research could investigate what specific initial and additional information maximisers and satisficers feel they need and, relatedly, which criteria satisficers

and maximisers take into account. In terms of credibility, future research should investigate any differences in influence between online and offline job-related information sources. In addition, it is worth investigating differences within online sources, for example by exploring whether popular social media websites like Facebook and Twitter and online job discussion forums such as LinkedIn can become good recruitment information sources, and whether maximisers and satisficers perceive and evaluate these sources differently.

4.3 Practical implications

Understanding maximisers' and satisficers' information needs also empowers employers to customise their recruitment information. Employers can attract more candidates by taking into account the different preferences of maximisers and satisficers, providing them with appropriate types of information. So, by carefully designing the content of recruitment information and utilising recruitment information sources they can help increase the candidate pool of applicants. This may be achieved by providing not only more informative initial job advertisements than presently the norm to meet the needs of both many satisficers as well as maximisers, but also by incorporating choices in acquiring differing types and sources of additional information when designing a recruitment website. Furthermore, there may be circumstances when designers could simply ask a few questions to identify a jobseeker's decision-making style when registering a new account, for example, when already gathering similar personality or work orientation information. Companies can then provide recruitment advertisements tailored to the specific decision-making needs of that user. For example, should a jobseeker be categorised as a maximiser, the website may provide moderately negative/balanced information from a source likely to be trusted by maximisers, such as a future colleague. The site might also provide specific named contact information should applicants wish to inquire further about the organisation or the position. For satisficers, the balance should be towards providing a greater number of positive messages (from trusted sources).

In addition, even though no research has ever demonstrated whether maximisers and satisficers may fit better into particular job types/sectors, it is likely that employers could use the 'always looking for the best', low-risk-taking characteristics of maximisers to recruit for jobs such as controlling stock and shipment. For satisficers, the 'good enough' characteristics may fit better with work such as purchasing representatives, which requires flexibility and sometimes the need to take risks and seize chances in order to comply with the fast-changing retail market. Therefore, employers that aim to recruit more maximisers or satisficers for specific job types can attract them by appealing to their different information preferences.

The research results also indicate that SWOM messages affect jobseekers' attitudes towards a job vacancy and a company. SWOM messages can significantly increase or decrease jobseekers' willingness to join an organisation. Employers are advised to listen carefully to their current employees when recruiting new employees. In effect, a satisfied current employee could be the company's best recruiter, as the employee shares their experiences with a potential candidate when they have a close relationship with the jobseeker.

Essentially, recruiting staff is an integral part of any business. Despite extensive research on recruitment over the last 60 years, literature concerning full exploration and testing of individual differences in application decision-making styles is scant. It is hoped that this exploratory study of decision-making styles in recruitment will attract further attention from researchers and practitioners.

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Table 1: Maximiser-satisficer need for further information after reading a typical retail job advertisement

		Decision-making style		Total
		Maximisers	Satisficers	
Want more	No*	29 (30%)	67 (70%)	96
information?	Yes**	107 (58%)	77 (42%)	184

*NO: After reading the information in the advertisement, the information shown is NOT ENOUGH for me to decide whether TO APPLY FOR that vacancy or not. Before I go to the application process, I prefer to SPEND SOME MORE TIME to get to know more about the job until I feel satisfied I know enough.

**YES: After reading the information in the advertisement, the information shown has provided ENOUGH information for me to decide whether TO APPLY FOR the vacancy. Thus, I prefer NOT TO SPEND TIME looking for further information about that vacancy.

Table 2 ANOVA results (for testing hypothesis 2)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Three-way ANOVA)

[Dependent Variable: OA]	Type III SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Tie Strength (TS)	194.521	1	194.521	744.161	.000
Message Valence (MV)	2.122	1	2.122	8.118	.005
Decision-Making style (DMS)	.883	1	.883	3.379	.068
TS * MV	.532	1	.532	2.035	.156
TS * DMS	.000	1	.000	.002	.966
MV * DMS	.064	1	.064	.246	.621
TS * MV * DMS	11.180	1	11.180	42.772	.000
Error	37.118	142	.261		
Corrected Total	255.087	149			

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: *DMS = Maximiser* (Two-way ANOVA)

[Dependent Variable: OA]	Type III SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
TS	115.907	1	115.907	400.230	.000
MV	1.748	1	1.748	6.035	.016
TS * MV	9.915	1	9.915	34.238	.000
Error	24.037	83	.290		
Corrected Total	150.122	86			

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: *DMS = Satisficer* (Two-way ANOVA)

[Dependent Variable: OA]	Type III SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
TS	83.854	1	83.854	378.202	.000
MV	.622	1	.622	2.807	.099
TS * MV	2.937	1	2.937	13.249	.001
Error	13.081	59	.222		
Corrected Total	102.570	62			

Table 3. Differences in Organisation Attractiveness by decision-making style, tie strength and message valence

Dependent Variable: OA

Decision-Making style	Tie Strength	Message Valence	Mean	Std. Deviation	SE Mean	N	Sig.
Maximiser	Strong-tie	Negative	5.81	.54	.11	22	.14
		Positive	5.42	.51	.11	21	
	Weak-tie	Negative	2.82	.55	.12	21	.00
		Positive	3.78	.55	.11	23	
Satisficer	Strong-tie	Negative	5.45	.46	.11	16	.00
		Positive	6.09	.37	.09	18	
	Weak-tie	Negative	3.57	.50	.13	14	.62
		Positive	3.34	.56	.14	15	

Table 4. Maximisers and satisficers information search intentions after SWOM message

		Still want more information?		
		No*	Yes**	Total
Maximiser	Positive + Strong tie	9 (43%)	12 (57%)	21
	Positive + Weak tie	8 (35%)	15 (65%)	23
	Negative + Strong tie	17 (77%)	5 (23%)	22
	Negative + Weak tie	8 (38%)	13 (62%)	21
	Total	42	45	(N=87)
Satisficer	Positive + Strong tie	15 (83%)	3 (17%)	18
	Positive + Weak tie	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	15
	Negative + Strong tie	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	16
	Negative + Weak tie	10 (71%)	4 (29%)	14
	Total	44	19	(N=63)

*No: After reading the advertisement information and SWOM messages, it is enough for me to decide whether to apply for that vacancy. Therefore, I prefer not to search further information about the job/company.

**Yes: After reading the advertisement information and SWOM messages, I prefer to search further information about the job/company.
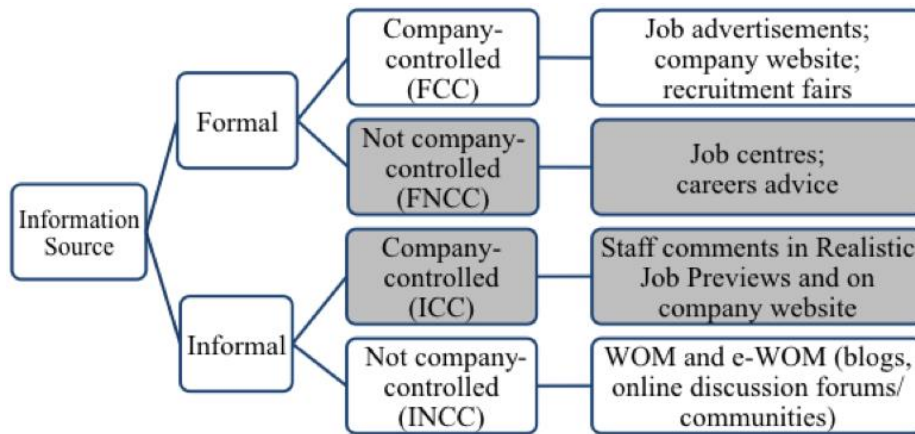
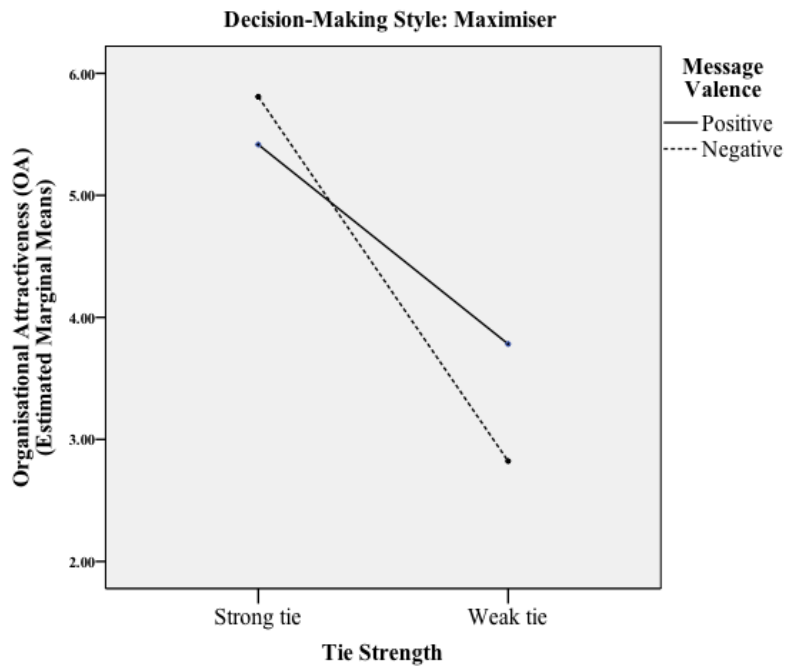**Figure 1: Jobseeker sources of information with examples**

Figure 2. Decision-Making Style (Maximiser): Interaction between tie strength and SWOM message valence.
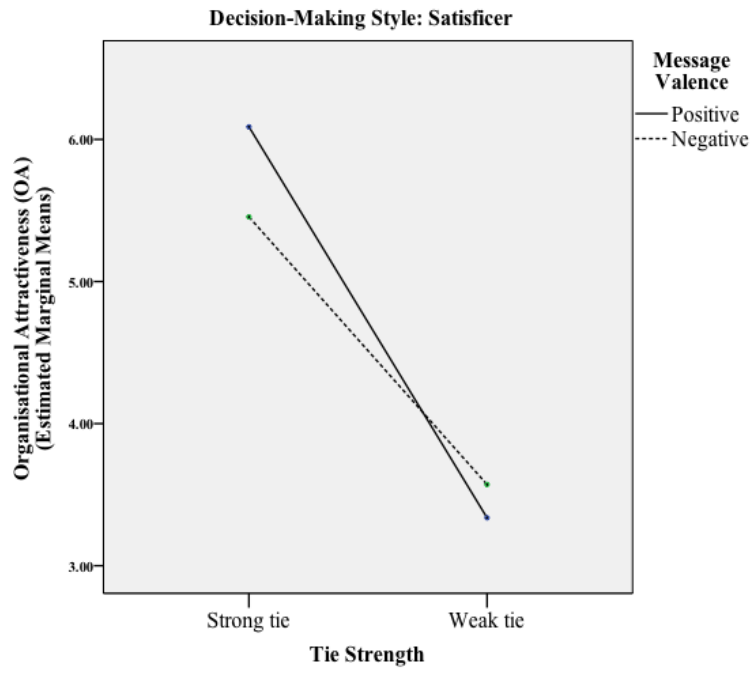
Figure 3. Decision-Making Style (Satisficer): Interaction between tie strength and SWOM message valence.