

A Qualitative Exploration of Recruitment Practices for Part-Time Business Faculty at Saint Paul School of Professional Studies

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ABSTRACT

The increasing reliance on part-time faculty in higher education requires institutions to adopt strategic and proactive recruitment practices. This qualitative case study examined the recruitment strategies for part-time Business faculty at Saint Paul School of Professional Studies (SPSPS) and explored how human resource (HR) marketing and employer branding influence recruitment effectiveness. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with HR personnel, academic administrators, and current part-time faculty, supplemented by document analysis of job postings and institutional materials. Thematic analysis revealed that recruitment practices remain largely informal and reactive, relying heavily on referrals and last-minute hiring. Key challenges include limited applicant pools, competition with industry, relatively low compensation, and underutilized employer branding. Findings suggest that strengthening digital recruitment campaigns, formalizing referral systems, articulating a clear employer value proposition, and enhancing candidate experience can significantly improve recruitment effectiveness. The study concludes that strategic HR marketing, aligned with institutional values and reputation, is essential to positioning SPSPS as an employer of choice for qualified part-time Business faculty.

Keywords: HR marketing, employer branding, part-time faculty, recruitment effectiveness, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Higher education institutions worldwide increasingly depend on part-time or adjunct faculty to deliver academic programs. In business education, this reliance is particularly pronounced because institutions seek instructors with current industry experience. Part-time faculty contribute professional expertise, practical insights, and career networks that enhance student learning. However, despite their importance, adjunct faculty often experience limited institutional support, modest compensation, and marginalization within academic structures.

In the Philippine context, part-time faculty are frequently engaged on a contractual basis without long-term security or benefits. This structural condition poses recruitment challenges, especially when institutions compete with private-sector employment opportunities offering higher compensation and greater stability. As a result, traditional recruitment approaches—such as informal referrals or passive job postings—may no longer be sufficient.

Human Resource (HR) marketing and employer branding offer alternative strategic approaches. Recruitment marketing applies marketing principles to talent acquisition, treating candidates as target audiences requiring engagement and value communication. Employer branding, meanwhile, positions the institution as an attractive workplace by highlighting its culture, mission, and benefits.

At Saint Paul School of Professional Studies (SPSPS), recruitment of part-time Business faculty presents strategic challenges. The institution operates in a competitive regional environment and must attract professionals who can balance industry commitments with academic responsibilities. Understanding and improving recruitment practices is therefore essential for sustaining program quality.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to:

1. Describe current recruitment practices for part-time Business faculty at SPSPS.
2. Examine faculty perceptions of these recruitment strategies.
3. Analyze the role of employer branding and institutional reputation in influencing recruitment.
4. Identify recruitment challenges.
5. Propose strategic HR marketing improvements.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in:

1. **Employer Branding Theory** (Ambler & Barrow, 1996) – emphasizing the role of institutional image in attracting employees.
2. **Person–Organization Fit Theory** (Chatman, 1989; Schneider, 1987) – highlighting alignment between individual and institutional values as critical for attraction and retention.

These frameworks support the argument that recruitment effectiveness depends not only on visibility but also on value alignment and institutional image.

METHODS

Research Design

A qualitative case study design was employed. This approach enabled in-depth exploration of recruitment practices within the specific institutional context of SPSPS. The case study design was appropriate because recruitment processes are embedded in organizational culture, reputation, and local labor market conditions.

Research Setting

The study was conducted at Saint Paul School of Professional Studies in Eastern Visayas, Philippines. The focus was on Business programs that regularly employ part-time instructors.

Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select participants directly involved in recruitment or affected by it:

- 2 HR personnel
- 2 academic administrators (Dean/Program Heads)
- 5 current part-time Business faculty

Participants had direct experience with recruitment processes within the past two academic years.

Data Collection

Three methods were used:

1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews lasted 30–60 minutes and explored:

- Recruitment procedures
- Advertising methods
- Candidate experiences
- Challenges encountered
- Perceptions of institutional branding

Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

One FGD with four part-time faculty was conducted to explore shared experiences and collective suggestions for improvement.

3. Document Analysis

Institutional documents analyzed included:

- Job postings
- Recruitment announcements
- HR guidelines
- Website content related to faculty hiring

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used. Data were coded inductively and organized into themes aligned with the research questions. Triangulation across interviews, FGD, and documents enhanced credibility.

Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent was obtained.
- Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonyms.
- Participation was voluntary.
- Data were securely stored.

RESULTS

Five major themes emerged from the analysis.

Theme 1: Recruitment Practices are Informal and Reactive

Participants consistently reported that adjunct hiring is largely driven by immediate need rather than long-term planning.

Subthemes:

- Heavy reliance on personal referrals
- Limited use of formal digital recruitment platforms
- Hiring initiated close to semester start dates

HR personnel admitted that vacancies are often filled through word-of-mouth within faculty networks. While referrals produce trusted candidates, this practice restricts diversity and limits reach.

Theme 2: Limited Marketing Reach and Underutilized Digital Platforms

Although SPSPS occasionally posts openings online, there is no coordinated digital recruitment campaign. Findings revealed:

- No targeted LinkedIn campaigns
- Minimal social media promotion
- Lack of centralized recruitment webpage for adjunct faculty

Part-time faculty reported discovering opportunities primarily through colleagues rather than online post-

ngs.

Theme 3: Employer Branding is Implicit but Not Strategically Articulated

While SPSPS possesses strengths (values-driven mission, supportive culture, strong community ties), these are not systematically communicated as part of a recruitment strategy.

Faculty participants cited:

- Alignment with institutional values
- Opportunity to mentor students
- Personal fulfillment from teaching

However, these motivations emerged organically rather than through deliberate employer branding messaging.

Theme 4: Recruitment Challenges

Four key challenges were identified:

1. Small Candidate Pool

Limited availability of professionals with graduate degrees in the region restricts applicant numbers.

2. Competition with Industry

Business professionals often prioritize full-time corporate roles.

3. Compensation Constraints

Adjunct pay is perceived as modest compared to industry rates.

4. Short Lead Time

Last-minute hiring reduces candidate search depth.

Theme 5: Institutional Reputation Moderates Recruitment Success

Participants emphasized that SPSPS's positive academic reputation increases interest among candidates.

Adjunct faculty expressed that:

- Institutional credibility influenced their decision to apply.
- Perceived ethical culture enhanced attraction.
- Alumni pride contributed to positive perception.

Thus, reputation amplifies recruitment efforts, even when marketing is minimal.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm literature suggesting that higher education institutions often rely on informal recruitment methods for adjunct faculty. While referrals provide trust and convenience, they limit strategic expansion of candidate pools.

Recruitment Marketing Implications

The absence of structured digital recruitment aligns with prior studies indicating underinvestment in adjunct hiring processes. Proactive strategies—such as LinkedIn sourcing, targeted advertisements, and employer branding campaigns—could significantly increase applicant numbers.

Employer Branding and P–O Fit

Consistent with Employer Branding Theory, participants valued intangible factors such as institutional mission and culture. This aligns with Person–Organization Fit Theory, which posits that shared values enhance attraction.

SPSPS possesses strong cultural assets but lacks systematic articulation of its employer value proposition (EVP). Formalizing and promoting EVP could enhance competitive positioning despite compensation constraints.

Addressing Compensation Challenges

While salary increases may be limited, institutions can strengthen non-monetary incentives:

- Flexible scheduling
- Professional development opportunities
- Public recognition of adjunct contributions
- Inclusion in academic activities

Such measures reinforce psychological and social benefits of employment.

Institutional Reputation as Moderator

The moderating role of reputation supports findings in employer branding research. Even limited marketing efforts yield better results when institutional credibility is strong. However, reputation alone is insufficient without visibility.

CONCLUSION

This study examined recruitment practices for part-time Business faculty at SPSPS through a qualitative case study approach. Findings reveal that recruitment is predominantly informal, reactive, and referral-based. While institutional reputation and cultural alignment positively influence attraction, digital recruitment marketing and employer branding efforts remain underdeveloped.

To enhance recruitment effectiveness, SPSPS should:

1. Develop structured digital recruitment campaigns.
2. Create a dedicated adjunct recruitment webpage.
3. Formalize referral programs.
4. Articulate a clear Employer Value Proposition.
5. Improve candidate engagement and onboarding processes.
6. Expand non-monetary incentives.

Strategic HR marketing, grounded in employer branding and P–O fit principles, can expand applicant pools, strengthen faculty quality, and ensure sustained academic excellence in Business programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a year-round adjunct talent database.
2. Launch LinkedIn-targeted recruitment campaigns.
3. Develop branded recruitment materials highlighting mission and impact.
4. Conduct annual adjunct recruitment planning sessions.
5. Implement structured onboarding and mentorship programs.

Future research may include quantitative evaluation of recruitment outcomes post-intervention or comparative studies across institutions.

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