



Getting a Barista Job: Adjudicating the Impact of Human Capital, Social Capital, Age and Gender

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Abstract

This study concerns the role of human capital, social capital, age, and gender in acquiring a job as an entry-level barista. Employment records were coded and analyzed in order to identify the key factors differentiating this applicant pool. The results from multivariate models produce fewer positive associations between human capital and social capital indicators than the literature suggests. Those with greater educational attainment are more likely to have high-status references on their applications. As seen in previous literature, the social capital of applicants is not very relevant in acquiring this entry-level job. Overall, educational attainment was most salient in increasing the odds of being interviewed and hired. The managers responsible for these decisions appear to favor formal higher education over work experience or references. The findings are discussed vis-à-vis women's gains in higher education, the growth of the service sector, and the aging of the U.S. population.

Keywords: job acquisition, human capital, social capital, social networks, service sector.

1. Introduction

The process through which individuals gain employment has been investigated in numerous studies, yet the results are inconsistent. Data and methodological challenges are partially responsible since it is difficult to gather the pertinent evidence and the populations studied and operationalization of concepts vary. Even among comparable research, there are mixed results in basic questions such as who is more likely to use interpersonal contacts to get their jobs (Granovetter, 1995).

While most of the existing scholarship focuses upon high-skilled, professional occupations (Granovetter, 1995; Erickson, 2001; Lin, 2001), this study considers entry-level service work. Low-wage service sector work continues to grow, constituting a large proportion of the jobs that are available at any given time. Four major themes from the literature include the role of human capital, social capital, age, and gender in the job acquisition process. Rare and unique data including employment applications and employer records are used here in an effort to determine which types of applicants are most likely to be hired as a barista at a global coffeehouse chain.

This study's major research questions concern the characteristics of successful applicants into this entry-level work. While the possession of human capital such as college

degrees and work experience are well-known assets in the labor market, the role of the social capital of job applicants may be just as important in jobs that do not require experience or credentials. Have successful applicants acquired greater human and/or social capital than unsuccessful ones? Is there a relationship between human capital and social capital indicators? Do those with more human capital have greater social capital? How do age and gender impact social capital and job attainment?

- Human capital (educational attainment) is more salient than social capital in acquiring these jobs.
- Managers appear to favor formal higher education over work experience or references.
- These barista employees are predominantly young, highly-educated, and female.
- Compared to males, female applicants face no social capital disadvantage here.

Social theory and previous research are drawn upon in the following section to construct the theoretical model to be empirically tested here. Figure 1 depicts five different sets of associations expected to contribute to the job status of barista applicants.

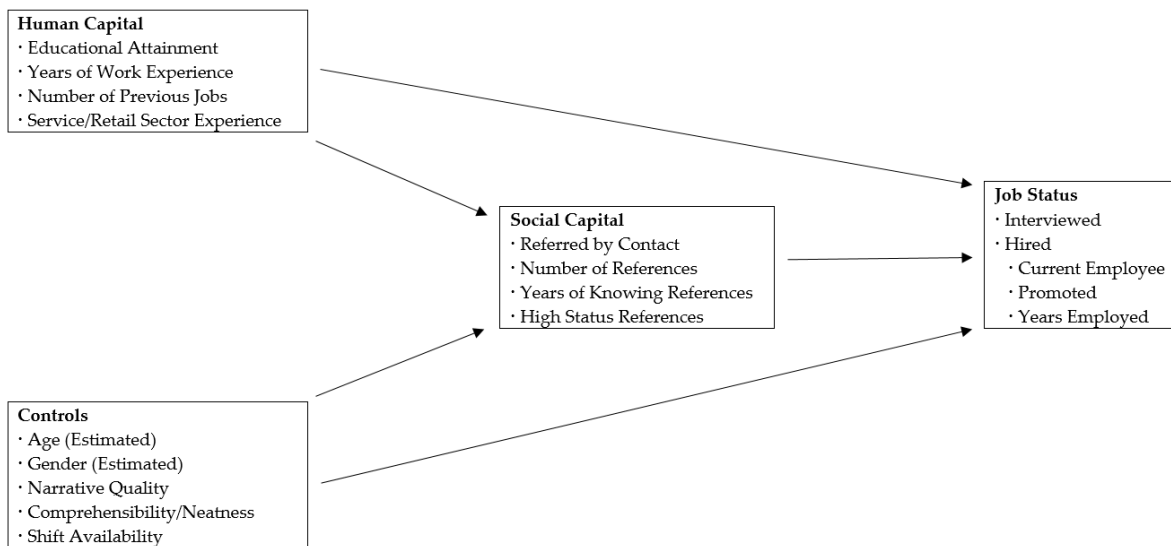


Figure 1. Theoretical model predicting barista job status

The concept of human capital is about an individual’s knowledge and skills that have value in the labor market (Becker, 1993). The idea is that people can invest in knowledge and skills to add value to their labor power. As Figure 1 above demonstrates, four indicators of human capital will be employed here. These include: educational attainment, years of previous work experience, number of jobs previously held, and previous experience in the retail service sector.

Social capital concerns resources embedded in our social networks (Lin, 2001; Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2001; Halpern, 2005). Social capital comes in a variety of forms such as useful information, obligations, someone exerting influence on your behalf, and social credentials seen by others. Some theorists (Lin, 2001) stress that individuals access these social resources through purposive actions while others (Small, 2009) argue that social capital is often nonpurposive and generated unintentionally.

Social capital is operationalized in this study through four indicators: being referred to the barista job by a contact, the number of references listed by an applicant, the length of time that the applicant has known their references, and whether the applicant has any references from a high-status occupation.

Previous research has found a positive association between education and work experience (key indicators of human capital) and social capital. Individuals with greater educational attainment have larger social networks of kin and non-kin confidants with whom they can discuss important matters (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Brashears, 2006). Those who attend college meet more new people and have access to organizational resources, increasing their social capital (Small, 2009). Those with better human capital have greater social network diversity, increasing the likelihood of receiving valuable information (Erickson, 2001). And generally, greater work experience leads to a broader set of work contacts (Bridges & Villemez, 1986; McDonald & Elder, 2006; McDonald & Mair, 2010).

In his foundational study *Getting a Job*, Granovetter (1995) finds that older male professional/ technical workers are more likely to use contacts than younger ones. Yet in his revisit of the literature, he concludes that the evidence is mixed as to who is more likely to use contacts to get jobs. More recent scholarship surrounding age effects demonstrates that these inconsistencies continue to be the case.

On the one hand, and corroborating Granovetter's findings, is the research documenting how employment experience (an indirect measure of age) creates greater job contacts (Bridges & Villemez, 1986; McDonald & Elder, 2006; McDonald & Mair, 2010). On the other hand, scholarship also shows that social interaction and network size tend to decrease with age (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Brashears, 2006; McDonald & Mair, 2010; Fernandez, Castilla & Moore, 2000). An analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (McDonald & Elder, 2006) finds that 47% of "early-career" (younger) workers got their jobs through contacts compared to only 21% of "mid-career" workers. Of particular importance given the applicant pool studied here, a study (Fernandez & Castilla, 2001) of telephone call center workers finds that young people are more likely to know other young people who want an entry-level job.

The effects of gender have been more consistent. Women are less likely to be exposed to weak ties containing job information (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987). They are more likely to have lower social resources and are less likely to get their jobs without a search (McDonald & Elder, 2006; Parks-Yancy, DiTomaso & Post, 2006).

A certain degree of human capital is required in many types of work. However, human capital may be less salient in entry-level work. No previous experience nor educational credentials are required of the baristas working for this chain retailer. As Figure 1 above demonstrates, I will statistically test the impact of four indicators of human capital upon the applicant's job status. Human capital theory (Becker, 1993) suggests that the first two indicators will be positively associated with obtaining a job. That is, those with greater education and greater work experience may be expected to be more likely to be hired as a barista. The impact of the number of jobs previously held is less clear. Having held many different jobs, particularly in a short time period, may reflect an applicant's lack of performance or commitment. The type of previous job experience will also be considered. Those with experience working in the retail service sector are expected to be more likely to be hired as baristas. Again, while human capital theory is expected to be relevant here, the fact that this is entry-level work makes its impact less known.

The role of the age and gender of the barista job applicants upon job status will also be investigated. On the one hand, a relationship may be expected. Given that the barista position is low-paying, entry-level, retail service work, it is likely that most of those interviewed and hired will be relatively young. Yet the question is whether younger applicants will be hired at a greater rate than older ones. If they are (net of other factors), age discrimination may be playing a role. Employers in the retail service sector may be seeking to project a hip and contemporary image which is more likely to be displayed by younger employees.

Job segregation by gender has been well-documented by sociologists (Reskin & Padavic, 1994). While it is in decline, as more women make inroads into historically male-

dominated professions (and vice-versa), this retail food service work is expected to be carried out mostly by women. Yet again, the question is whether female applicants are hired at a greater rate than male applicants. Retail food service employers may assume that customers prefer to be served by a woman and therefore may be more likely to hire women.

On the other hand, organizational demography theory (Baron & Bielby, 1980; Huffman, 1995) suggests that age and gender will not play a role in job status here. The employer in this case is a large corporation that surely seeks to create a positive public image to gain customers. Larger companies face more scrutiny in their implementation of equal opportunity laws and likely wish to avoid any charges of discrimination.

Two of the other job status variables concern turnover (whether the hired baristas are still employed and their length of employment). Previous research has indicated that younger people have higher turnover rates as they experiment with different jobs and seek better ones (Hellman, 1997). Also, women have generally been found to have higher turnover rates than men since they tend to provide the majority of the unpaid household labor such as childcare (Moen, Kelly & Hill, 2011).

The last job status variable differentiates those baristas who were eventually promoted to become a supervisor. As in the case of being interviewed and hired, it is not clear if a relationship can be expected. Discrimination theory suggests that younger and male baristas would be more likely to be promoted. However, organizational demography theory suggests that this large corporation would likely ensure that protected groups would not be disadvantaged in promotion opportunities.

Research indicates that social capital can produce positive employment outcomes. Contacts within our social networks may have knowledge, reputation, wealth, and/or power that can be useful to us in getting a job. Thus, the size or extensivity of one's personal network has been hypothesized to be positively associated with status attainment and labor market outcomes (Lin, 2001). Those with larger networks have potentially greater resources available that are useful in getting a job. The role of acquaintances ("weak ties") has also been stressed since they are more likely to have novel information (Granovetter, 2003; Erickson, 2003). Being referred to a job by a good contact within the firm is often productive since referrals reduce uncertainty for the employer (Granovetter, 1995; Marsden, 2001). The "better match" hypothesis (Fernandez & Castilla, 2001) also predicts that those who are referred to their jobs will have lower turnover rates.

Granovetter (1995) found in his classic study of male professional/technical workers that 56% of his respondents used personal contacts to obtain their jobs and that the use of referrals increases the chances of getting a job. More recent firm studies have also shown that applicants who were referred to the employer were more likely to receive job offers than those who were not (Fernandez, Castilla & Moore, 2000; Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997; Petersen, Saporta & Seidel, 2000). However, some evidence from survey research has found that there is no general effect. That is, for randomly-sampled employees, the use of job contacts is not statistically related to getting an offer (Mouw, 2003). Thus, it is not the use of contacts per se that matters, but the quality and quantity of the social resources of the applicant (Marsden, 2001). Also, referrals are not as useful to the candidate when lower-level jobs are concerned (Erickson, 2001).

In addition to use of a contact, I will also investigate whether the number of references job seekers list on their application has an impact upon their job status (see Figure 1). The length of time that one has known their references is another measure that will be tested. Finally, the status of one's social ties is also important (Lin, 2001). A single high-status reference may be enough to make an application stand out.

2. Method

Unique, unpublished data sources are employed to adjudicate the salience of human capital, social capital, age, and gender in getting a job as a barista. Data resulting from a Maine Human Rights Commission investigation of Maine branches of a global coffeehouse chain were acquired. The first dataset is an employer database on 1,306 baristas from all Maine locations of this retailer over an 8-year period (2000-2008). This data file contains the start date, separation date (if applicable), promotion status, and birth date for each barista hired in this period. The Job Status outcome variables (seen in Figure 1) are able to be constructed from this data file.

The second data source consists of a pool of 599 employment applications from job seekers at several coffeehouse locations in the Portland, Maine area. These come from a three-year period (January, 2005 – December, 2007) surrounding the Maine Human Rights Commission investigation. These employment applications were coded by the author to create a dataset containing the four indicators of Human Capital, the four indicators of Social Capital, and the five control variables listed in Figure 1. Moreover, evidence that candidates were offered job interviews are also available from the paper applications. While this data has limitations (the employment applications cover only a short, non-random period from several Portland-area stores), the information yielded will be rich as the characteristics of the successful applicants from the pool will be identified. Moreover, with 599 applications, multivariate statistical modeling will be possible.

The employment application used by this company is a standard application form. The first Human Capital indicator is educational attainment. Candidates were provided blank fields to list high school and college attendance and graduation status. This permitted the construction of a degree variable distinguishing those without any formal degree (coded “0”), those with high school degrees (1), those with some college experience (2), and those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher (3). The employment experience portion of the form contains fields requesting dates of former employment, employer name, salary, position, duties performed, reason for leaving, and supervisor contact information for up to four previous employers. The total years of previous work experience were summed for each applicant. The number of previous jobs (0-4) was also coded. Finally, the position name and duties performed fields enabled estimation of whether the candidate had any previous experience in the retail or food service sector.

Five control variables were also coded from the applications. First, the age of the applicant was estimated. By law, employment applications cannot directly request the applicant’s date of birth. The birth date of those hired was available from the employment records. Analysis of the 1,306 baristas from all Maine locations of this retailer indicate that 88.8% of baristas hired in this period were 34 years of age or younger on their start date while only 11.3% were 35 years of age or older. Using this as a guideline to distinguish younger applicants from older ones, evidence to estimate whether an applicant was age 35 or older was searched for in the applications. If the oldest date of the candidate’s first employment was 19 or more years before the date of the application, they were considered to be at least 35 years of age (this assumes that the applicant was at least age 16 at first employment). Some applicants listed graduation dates in the education fields. Those who had graduated from high school 17 or more years before the application date were coded in the “35+” category (assuming an age of 18 at graduation). In the references field, applicants were asked to state the number of years that they have been acquainted with each reference. If any of these responses was 35 or greater, the applicant was coded “35+” on the estimated age variable. The application also contains a date field under the “personal information” section. Some applicants mistook this for a birth date field and provided their exact birth date there. Others attached resumes containing birth dates on them. Thus, five different pieces of potential evidence were employed to estimate age. The number of those identified as age 35 or older are absolute minimums. That is, there are likely other applicants over the age of 35 who could not be identified.

The gender of the applicant was also estimated. In most cases this was fairly clear from their stated first name or from the “other names you are known by” field. In the case of gender-ambiguous names, the employment experience fields were searched. Oftentimes gendered job titles were listed by the applicants there (“waitress” versus “waiter,” etc.). Three other control variables were coded from the applications. First, the quality of the narrative section of the application (which requested responses to three specific questions) was coded as low (1), average (2), or high (3). The comprehensibility or neatness of the handwritten applications was also coded as poor (1), average (2), or high (3). The seven-day shift availability fields were employed to determine if the applicant had limited availability (1), moderate availability (2), high availability (3), or complete availability (4).

Four indicators of the Social Capital of the applicant were coded. Under the “personal information” section of the application, there is a “referred by” field. Those who listed a name there were coded as being referred by a contact. The references section requested information on three professional references. Most applicants did list three, those who did not were coded “0” on the maximum references variable. The total number of years of knowing references was calculated by summing the years acquainted fields. Finally, the occupational status of the references was considered. The reference fields requested the “business” that the reference was in. Applicants often listed job titles there. Those who had listed at least one reference that was identified as being a doctor, lawyer, professor, engineer, or president or CEO were coded as having a high-status reference.

3. Results

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the 18 variables listed in Figure 1. The Job Status variables are the outcomes here and provide some important context. First, 13.9% of the applicants are coded as having been interviewed.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
<i>Human Capital</i>						
Education	1.67	2	2	0.91	0	3
Years Worked	3.63	2	1	4.02	0	34
No. of Jobs	2.61	3	3	1.19	0	4
Service Experience	0.76	1	1	0.42	0	1
<i>Controls</i>						
Over Age 35	0.05	0	0	0.22	0	1
Female	0.65	1	1	0.48	0	1
Narrative Quality	1.85	2	2	0.48	1	3
Neatness	1.98	2	2	0.27	1	3
Availability	3.03	3	4	0.94	1	4

Social Capital

Referred	0.09	0	0	0.28	0	1
Max. References	0.78	1	1	0.41	0	1
Reference Years	14.02	11	0	12.94	0	98
High Status Refs.	0.06	0	0	0.23	0	1

Job Status

Interviewed	0.14	0	0	0.35	0	1
Hired	0.09	0	0	0.29	0	1
Current Employee ^a	0.41	0	0	0.50	0	1
Promoted ^a	0.30	0	0	0.46	0	1
Days Employed ^a	399.53	332	38	322.52	2	1095

^a n = 54; all others n = 599

Some of the applications had attached interview scoring sheets, post-it notes, or written notes on the application itself indicating that the candidate had been interviewed or offered one. All of those who were hired were coded as having been interviewed as well. Yet 13.9% seems to be a particularly low interview rate, so this variable should be approached with caution. Nine percent of the applicants were hired (when coding the applications the employer database was searched for matches). The current employee variable identifies the 40.7% of hired applicants who were still active employees at the time the employer database was produced (in mid-2008). The promoted variable indicates that 29.6% of the hired baristas were eventually promoted to supervisor or beyond. The average employee hired from this three-year batch of applications had worked for the company for about 13 months (400 days).

The results from the four Human Capital variables indicate that the applicants to this entry-level work have noteworthy experience. Nearly half (46.1%) of the applicants have attended some college (median and mode = 2) and 17.0% have a Bachelor's degree or higher (one missing case was assigned the median/mode of 2). The average applicant has worked for 3.63 years in 2.61 jobs. Around three-quarters (76.5%) have previous experience in the retail or food service sector.

The result of the age estimation exercise is that 5.2% of applicants are identified as being at least 35 years of age or older. This appears to be low (and recall that this estimate is an absolute minimum) given that 11.3% of the baristas statewide in the 2000-2008 period were 35 or older at the time of hire. There are several possible explanations for this discrepancy, none of which can be tested. However, as a means of testing the representativeness of this batch of applicants to the statewide employees, a one-sample t-test was computed. The average age of baristas in the state of Maine hired in 2005-2007 (the same year-range of the applications) was 26.1. The average age of the 54 hired applicants to Portland-area stores was 26.2 (t = .07; not significant). Thus, there is some evidence that this particular application batch is representative of all of this company's employees in the state.

The estimated gender variable resulted in 33.1% males, 65.1% females, and 1.8% unknown. To dichotomize this for statistical analyses, a female variable was created with males and the unknown group coded as "0." The narrative quality and neatness variables indicate that the vast majority of applicants were coded as average ("2"). Shift availability is high among these applicants: 33.6% have high availability and 38.6% are completely available for every shift.

Finally, descriptive statistics for the four Social Capital indicators are presented in Table 1. Only 8.5% of applicants listed a name in the “referred by” field. More than three-quarters (78.3%) filled all three spaces for references on the application. The average applicant listed 14.02 total reference years. Only 5.5% of applicants had a high-status reference.

The analysis begins with bivariate testing. Pearson’s r correlation coefficients from five of the 18 variables are not reported in Table 2. There were no statistically significant associations between the groups of variables depicted in Figure 1 for five of the indicators. Three of these are the outcomes variables for the 54 applicants who were hired. Current employee status, promotion status, and length of employment are not correlated with any of the human capital, social capital, nor control variables. Also, the female and shift availability variables are not correlated with any of the social capital or job status variables. Therefore, these variables will be excluded from the multivariate models.

Each human capital indicator is statistically and positively correlated with at least two of the social capital indicators and one of the outcome variables. Applicants with greater educational attainment are more likely to list the maximum number of references, have a high-status reference, be interviewed for the position, and be hired. Those with greater work experience are more likely to list the maximum number of references, have greater total reference years, and be interviewed. Those who have held a larger number of previous jobs are more likely to have been referred to the job, have the maximum number of references, have greater total reference years, have a high-status reference, be interviewed for the position, and be hired. Applicants with previous experience in the retail or food service sector are more likely to have maximum references, greater reference years, and to have been interviewed.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
(1)	1	.238***	.455***	.211***	-.014	.308***	.140***	.066	.202***	.029	.176***	.189***	.179***
(2)	.238***	1	.359***	.096*	.515***	.170***	.093*	.065	.194***	.237***	.037	.100*	.073
(3)	.455***	.359***	1	.388***	.088*	.348***	.161***	.089*	.380***	.148***	.090*	.178***	.126**
(4)	.211***	.096*	.388***	1	-.030	.274***	.111**	.028	.233***	.111**	.048	.120**	.065
(5)	-.014	.515***	.088*	-.030	1	.024	.014	.037	.032	.233***	-.023	.037	.005
(6)	.308***	.170***	.348***	.274***	.024	1	.407***	.081*	.406***	.181***	.151***	.194***	.158***
(7)	.140***	.093*	.161***	.111**	.014	.407***	1	.063	.192***	.135***	.042	.060	.041
(8)	.066	.065	.089*	.028	.037	.081*	.063	1	.045	.050	-.021	.085*	.029
(9)	.202***	.194***	.380***	.233***	.032	.406***	.192***	.045	1	.374***	.092*	.117**	.067
(10)	.029	.237***	.148***	.111**	.233***	.181***	.135***	.050	.374***	1	-.045	.045	.028
(11)	.176***	.037	.090*	.048	-.023	.151***	.042	-.021	.092*	-.045	1	.030	.001
(12)	.189***	.100*	.178***	.120**	.037	.194***	.060	.085*	.117**	.045	.030	1	.785***
(13)	.179***	.073	.126**	.065	.005	.158***	.041	.029	.067	.028	.001	.785***	1

(1) Education; (2) Years of Work Experience; (3) Number of Jobs; (4) Service Experience; (5) Over Age 35; (6) Narrative Quality; (7) Neatness; (8) Referred; (9) Maximum References; (10) Reference Years; (11) High Status References; (12) Interviewed; (13) Hired

n = 599
 ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

The three control variables in Table 2 have several significant correlations with the social capital indicators and one does with the outcome variables. Those applicants who are age 35 or older are more likely to have greater reference years. Those who have a higher quality written narrative in their application are more likely to have been referred to the job, to have maximum references, greater reference years, a high-status reference, to have been interviewed, and hired. Those who submitted neater applications are more likely to have the maximum number of references and greater reference years.

Finally, two of the social capital indicators are correlated with the interview variable. Those who were referred to the job and those who listed the maximum number of references are more likely to have been interviewed.

To better assess the theoretical relationships in Figure 1, multivariate models are employed. All of the model assumptions of multiple regression were met and multicollinearity did not pose a problem. Table 3 presents the regression models of the human capital indicators and control variables predicting social capital.

Table 3. Standardized coefficients from multiple regression of social capital indicators on human capital and control variables

	Maximum References ^a	Reference Years ^b	High Status ^a
<i>Human Capital</i>			
Education	.937	-.079	2.477**
Years Worked	1.093	.123**	.997
No. of Jobs	1.641***	.049	.995
Service Experience	1.237	.061	1.273
<i>Controls</i>			
Over Age 35	.640	.162***	.573
Narrative Quality	4.943***	.118**	3.184**
Neatness	1.217	.070	.666
Constant	.035***	-	.002***
R-square	.210	.109	.047

^a Odds ratios and Cox & Snell R-square reported

^b Beta weights reported

n = 599

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05

The first thing to notice is that the model predicting use of a reference for the barista position is not included. While two of the variables had weak correlations with reference use in Table 2, neither the logistic regression model nor any predictor was statistically significant in the multivariate test. The maximum references model is presented first. Applicants with a greater number of previous jobs and those with a higher quality written narrative are more likely to have listed the maximum number of references on their applications. This model is rather strong with 21.0% of the variance explained. It is sensible that those who have held more jobs will have met more people and have a greater number of work references. Also, those who carefully constructed a high-quality narrative are likely to recognize the importance of references.

The next model in Table 3 predicts reference years. Applicants who have worked longer are more likely to have known their references for a longer period. Since many use co-workers and supervisors from previous jobs as references, this correspondence seems clear. Applicants aged 35 or older are more likely to have known their references for a longer period. This is also reasonable as older people will have had more time to know and use their references. Those with a higher-quality narrative are also more likely to have known their references longer. This may reflect the fact that some applicants are more professional and carefully craft their applications and maintain good relationships with their references over the years.

The last model indicates that applicants with greater educational attainment are much more likely to list a high-status reference on their application than those with lower education. Those who attend college have greater opportunities to meet high-status people (such as professors) who may eventually serve as job references for them. Also, applicants with a higher-quality narrative are more likely to have a high-status reference. This may again be related to college as those who write better are using professors as references.

Table 4 presents the models predicting the interviewed and hired outcomes. These were run in batches with the first set containing only the human capital and control variables, the second set only the social capital variables, and the last all 11 predictors. In the first set of multivariate models the results differ from the bivariate analyses in Table 2 as several of the human capital indicators are no longer statistically significant in predicting interview and hire status. While education and narrative quality continue to have positive effects on both outcomes, the number of years worked, the number of jobs, and possession of service experience are no longer significant in the interviewed model. This is very interesting since there is no minimum educational requirement for this entry-level work. It appears that managers are favoring formal higher education over work experience in selecting whom to interview and hire.

Table 4. Odds ratios from logistic regression of job status on human capital, control variables, and social capital indicators

	<u>Interviewed</u>	<u>Hired</u>	<u>Interviewed</u>	<u>Hired</u>	<u>Interviewed</u>	<u>Hired</u>
<i>Human Capital</i>						
Education	1.533**	1.815**			1.552**	1.870**
Years Worked	1.001	1.008			.998	1.009
No. of Jobs	1.273	1.140			1.242	1.147
Service Experience	1.810	1.224			1.812	1.231
<i>Controls</i>						
Over Age 35	1.484	.951			1.555	.912
Narrative Quality	2.665**	2.586**			2.553**	2.716**
Neatness	.800	.683			.767	.664
<i>Social Capital</i>						
Referred			1.991*	1.338	1.650	1.059
Max. References			2.811**	1.932	1.342	.902
Reference Years			1.000	1.001	.998	1.001
High Status Refs.			1.273	.933	.781	.525
Constant	.005***	.006***	.062***	.056***	.005***	.006***
Cox & Snell R ²	.072	.049	.022	.006	.076	.051

n = 599
 ***p<.001, **p<.01,
 *p<.05

The second set of models focus only on the social capital indicators. The results here mirror the bivariate ones: those who were referred to the job are about twice as likely and those who listed the maximum number of references are 2.8 times more likely to be interviewed. In the last set of models containing all of the predictors, these social capital indicators are no longer statistically significant. In the end, it is only education and narrative quality that increase one's odds of being interviewed and hired. The total variance explained is rather low with only 7.6% in the interviewed model and 5.1% in the hired model. The results indicate that human capital is more salient in producing favorable job outcomes than social capital.

4. Discussion

The results of the multivariate analysis of human capital predicting social capital produced fewer positive associations among these applicants than the literature suggests. Only 3 of the 16 possible relationships are statistically significant. None of the human capital indicators (nor the control variables) predicted the key example of social capital focused on in much of the previous research: being referred to the job by a contact.

The relationship between work experience and social capital found in earlier research did receive additional empirical support here. Those with a greater number of previous jobs are more likely to have listed more references and those with greater years of work experience have a higher number of total reference years. One's work is an important source of one's social capital. Also, those with greater education are found to be more likely to have a high-status reference. Colleges and universities can serve as rich organizational contexts for students to develop influential ties (Small, 2009).

Age and gender were treated as key control variables here. Surprisingly, the gender variable was not statistically significant in the models predicting social capital levels and job outcomes. While it was estimated that nearly two-thirds of the barista applicants were women, they did not differ from the male applicants in terms of social capital nor job outcomes. The fact that female applicants face no social capital disadvantage has important implications. It may reflect the entry-level labor market studied or be a by-product of the gains women have made in higher education. In either case, it is an area ripe for future research.

Previous research investigating the association between age and social capital has exhibited mixed effects. Here, there were mostly noneffects as the estimated age variable was only correlated with the total number of reference years. Moreover, the age variable was not significant in the job outcomes models. This is positive news as age discrimination does not appear to be playing a role here. The aging of the U.S. population and the expansion of the service sector are well-documented trends. They are particularly salient in Maine, the U.S. state with the highest median age and a decimated manufacturing sector and paper and pulp industry. Some of the elderly are delaying retirement or reentering the labor force in order to maintain their desired standards of living and others recognize the social and health benefits of working (Bjelland, Bruyère, von Schrader, Houtenville, Ruiz-Quintanilla & Webber, 2010). Thus, there could be a potential "win-win" situation with older people filling jobs in the growing service sector. This would ameliorate staffing shortages for service sector employers while providing elderly employees with additional income and social interaction.

5. Conclusion

This study has concerned the role of human capital, social capital, age, and gender in acquiring a job as an entry-level barista. Employment applications and employer records were coded and analyzed in order to identify the key factors differentiating this applicant pool. The

effects of social capital on the odds of these applicants being interviewed or hired disappeared in the final multivariate models. In the end, educational attainment, the key indicator of human capital, was more salient. These results support Erickson's (2001) finding that social capital's role is less relevant in gaining an entry-level job.

The role that education plays in this entry-level work is noteworthy. In this case, it seems that managers favor formal higher education over work experience or references. These findings correspond with the larger mismatch in the labor market of too many over-qualified applicants for work that does not require any credentials or experience (Kalleberg, 2007). Presumably, most college graduates desire better jobs than that of a barista. With this level of competition, lesser-qualified applicants are edged out and have fewer opportunities. While this study has only focused upon one job in one region during one time period, the findings demonstrate that future research on the process of job acquisition and its implications across various sectors is still sorely needed.

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