INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
A social inferential processing approach to job applicant reactions: A model and test of the implications of two recruiter behaviors

Davis, Anne Spencer, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990

Copyright ©1990 by Davis, Anne Spencer. All rights reserved.
A SOCIAL INFERENTIAL PROCESSING APPROACH TO
JOB APPLICANT REACTIONS:
A MODEL AND TEST OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF
TWO RECRUITER BEHAVIORS

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Anne Spencer Davis
B.B.A, M.S.I.M.

The Ohio State University
1990

Dissertation Committee:
R. L. Heneman
A. E. Reichers
J. P. Wanous, Chair

Approved by:
J. P. Wanous, Chair
Advisor
Department of Management
and Human Resources
DEDICATION

Where does one find the motivation and inspiration to keep working on a dissertation to its successful completion? In my case, the motivation and inspiration came from my husband, Skip. Throughout the process, he intuitively knew when to listen and when to comment, when to compliment and when to criticize, when to chide and when to empathize.

This dissertation is dedicated, with all my love, to you, Skip, and to your continued success as a leader.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To John P. Wanous, Arnon E. Reichers,
and Robert L. Heneman:

I struggled, I tried,
I reached, I strived,
I learned.
Thank you.

To my parents:

You have given me so many things, not the least of which is your support and understanding, the motivation to achieve, and your values, particularly the importance of knowledge and the contribution of myself to others. Thank you.

To my friends and colleagues:

A special thank you to the wonderfully supportive friends and colleagues who made this massive undertaking a little easier to take.

Crystal Owen          William Todor
David Fearon          Patrick (PJ) Lynch
Jon Pugh
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................ iii
VITA ..................................................................... v
LIST OF TABLES ............................................. vi
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................. vii
INTRODUCTION ............................................... 1

CHAPTER PAGE

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION IN
   THE EVALUATION OF PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT. 5
   A review of applicant research ...................... 8
   The potential influence of the recruiter .......... 13
   The applicant's social inferential process ....... 22
   A model of the applicant's evaluation
   of a job opportunity ................................. 35

II. METHODOLOGY ........................................... 45
   Overview ................................................ 45
   Subjects ............................................... 45
   Design ............................................... 47
   Procedure .......................................... 49
   Analysis .......................................... 53

III. RESULTS ............................................... 70

IV. DISCUSSION ............................................ 84
   Summary and Implications ......................... 91

APPENDICES
   A. Design ........................................... 98
   B. Videotaped Interview Scripts .................. 101
   C. Debriefing Handout ............................ 118
   D. Post-Interview Questionnaires ................ 121
   E. Script Pretest Questionnaire .................. 130

LIST OF REFERENCES ..................................... 133
VITA

September 30, 1954 . . . . Born, Crystal Falls, Michigan

1977 . . . . . . . . . B.B.A. Western Michigan Univ.
Kalamazoo, Michigan

1980 . . . . . . . . . M.S.I.M. Georgia Institute of
Technology, Atlanta, GA

1988 to present . . . . Assistant Professor
Central Connecticut State
University, New Britain, CT.

PUBLICATIONS

attributions contributing to applicant employment
decisions. Proceedings of the Midwest Academy of
Management, 29, 16-20.

coping resources to occupational stress and strain.

Ralston, D., Gustafson, D., Elsass, P., Davis, A., Davis,
cross-national study of U.S. and Hong Kong managerial
values. Proceedings of the Eastern Academy of Management,
26, 68-70.

effects of job status, applicant social attributes,
qualifications, and gender on hiring decisions.
Proceedings of the Midwest Academy of Management, 32, 169-
173.

FIELD OF STUDY

Business Administration -
Management and Human
Resources. . . . . . . . Faculty, John P. Wanous
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Descriptive statistics for intervening and dependent variables</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Script pretest results</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chi square tests for randomization of demographic variables</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ANOVA for test of significance of demographic variables on perceived job attribute attractiveness and the number of inferences</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Correlation matrix</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cell means (and cell sizes) for mean number of inferences</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cell means (and cell sizes) for perceived job attribute attractiveness</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ANOVA results for recruiter affect and job information behavior on number of inferences and perceived job attribute attractiveness</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The effects of recruiter affect and perceived job attribute attractiveness on three criteria, willingness to accept an offer, organization desirability, and interest in pursuing the organization</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hierarchical regression coefficients for predictor variables for applicant satisfaction with the amount of information</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Hierarchical regression coefficients for predictor variables for applicant satisfaction with the interview process</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Hierarchical regression coefficients for predictor variables on three dependent variables</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-1. The experimental design</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2. T-test for group comparisons of order effects (and means) of first viewing and second viewing of the same interview segment</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Job Applicant Inferential Processes</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A Model of Applicant Evaluations of Job Opportunities</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A Revised Model of Applicant Reactions to Job</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The initial "recruitment" interview is both a selection and recruitment tool. It has been researched largely as a selection tool from the perspective of the recruiter. Reviews have focused on the recruiter's judgement of the applicant (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Mayfield, 1964; Ulrich & Trumbo, 1965) and have suggested that recruiters gather more information to improve the validity of their evaluation (Keenan & Wedderburn, 1975; Taylor & Sniezek, 1984). But the interview is a "two-way street" (Feldman & Arnold, 1987) through which applicants also gather information to assess the job opportunity (Downs, 1969; Herriot, 1984).

There are three reasons to study the recruitment interview as an information source for applicants. First, the interview may be the applicant's major source of information about an employer (Herriot, 1984). Hilgert and Eason (1968) report that only a fraction of applicants read company brochures and pamphlets, and then only "briefly". When they do read brochures, applicants often find they are not helpful (Hilgert & Eason, 1968). The literature an organization uses to attract candidates and improve selection ratios may also be inconsistent with real corporate norms, values and image, causing applicants to
discount the validity of such recruitment devices (Herriot, 1984; Wanous, 1980). The interview, then, becomes a critical source of information for the applicant.

The recruitment interview is also an important area of study because it is usually the first contact between the applicant and a corporate representative. Therefore, it is the applicant's first impression of the organization. This impression may affect subsequent judgements about the organization causing a well-suited applicant to make an early (erroneous) decision not to pursue the organization.

The third reason to study the recruitment interview is to understand more clearly the influence of the recruiter on the information the applicant perceives and constructs. The empirical evidence has shown that the recruiter is a source of information (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Feldman & Arnold, 1987; Harris & Fink, 1987; Rynes & Miller, 1983), but how recruiters influence applicants and their judgements is still to be determined.

Proposal for Research

This study attempts three things. First, it identifies recruiter behavior as a source of information. Two recruiter behaviors, recruiter affect (verbal and nonverbal behaviors) and job information behavior (the quantity of information presented by the recruiter), are predicted to affect the applicant's reaction to the job opportunity. Earlier investigations of applicant reactions
were based upon the assumptions that a) recruiter affect influences applicant reactions, b) job attribute attractiveness has greater influence on applicant reactions than recruiter affect, and c) these two variables are independent. The findings from this research with regard to recruiter affect were generally inconclusive. Investigations typically ignored the quantity of information presented by the recruiter, focusing instead on the attractiveness of the information. This study more thoroughly tests the effects of these two recruiter behaviors on an applicant's decision. It does so by proposing a relationship between recruiter behaviors, job attributes and their attraction. This study suggests that job attributes and their attractiveness are, in part, a perception each applicant constructs that is influenced by recruiter behaviors.

Second, this study explains how applicants construct information through their inferential process. A model is developed that identifies the inferential (perceptual) process underlying the applicant's evaluation of job opportunities. This approach has not been addressed by the research. Reviews of interview research argue that we have neglected the social perception process (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Hakel & Dunnette, 1970; Herriot, 1984). Arvey and Campion (1982, p. 312) admonish "in reviewing recent research, one is struck by the almost complete lack of
attention which has been paid to the person-perception literature." Herriot (1984) suggests that past applicant research that focused on applicant psychometric and developmental models was inadequate in explaining the applicant's evaluation process. He, too, proposes more exploration into the perceptual process to understand the nature of assessments that applicants make. This study attempts to do so.

Third, an empirical investigation manipulates recruiter behavior and measures applicant reactions. It tests the propositions that:

1. Applicants may infer the existence of some job attributes, and the number of inferences is positively related to job information behavior.

2. Applicants judge job attributes to be attractive or unattractive, and recruiter affect will be reflected in judgements of job attribute attractiveness.

3. Both recruiter affect and job information behavior indirectly affect applicant reactions of organization desirability, interest in pursuing the job opportunity and willingness to accept a job offer.
CHAPTER I
THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION IN THE EVALUATION OF PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT

The Recruiter and Applicant Information Exchange

Surveyed applicants and recruiters agree that one objective of the recruitment interview is for applicants to receive job information (Downs, 1969). In general, the more information the applicant possesses, the more accurate the evaluation of person-organization fit (Flavell, 1977; West, 1981). Gutteridge and Ullman (1973) found that applicants who obtained more in-depth data about specific opportunities were more satisfied with their search strategy and reported more successful careers. The applicant must be able to use the recruitment interview as a reliable source of unbiased information because more information may mean a more valid evaluation of the organization's desirability (Herriot, 1984).

During the interview, the applicant both "extracts and constructs information" (West, 1981, p. 8). When people extract information, they "are selective in what they notice, learn, remember or infer in any situation" (Markus & Zajonc, 1984, p. 142). People also construct information
through their perceptual processes (Markus & Zajonc, 1984; West, 1981) and each individual constructs reality differently (Schneider, 1983). As Whitehead (1933, p. 177) noted, "Knowledge is the subjective interplay between subject and object" so information is not the same for all persons at all times. What the recruiter tells applicants may be significantly different from what applicants actually know, what they think they know, and what we think they know (Schwab, Rynes & Aldag, 1987).

Perceptual errors or biases occur as information is constructed: "The individual is not so competent after all; rather the perceiver's logic is prone to fatal flaws and self-deception" (Markus & Zajonc, 1984, p. 177). Because the cognitive system is limited in capacity, people use short cuts (Fiske & Taylor, 1984) that limit their ability to make inferences accurately. Like other people, job applicants seek rapid, "adequate" solutions rather than slow, "accurate" ones. These short cuts or heuristics in cognitive processing may have a detrimental impact on the applicant's evaluation of the job opportunity.

The term person-organization fit or match describes the assessment applicants make about whether organizations meet their needs (Herriot, 1984; Lofquist & Dawis, 1969; Wanous, 1980). Applicants form expectations regarding job and organization attributes and will join the organization if a match is perceived between expectations and desires.
One way that applicants fail to make an appropriate match is when they are provided with inaccurate information. The research on realistic job previews suggests "individuals may be motivated to join organizations based on faulty information" (Wanous, 1976, p. 22). An applicant may develop expectations of organizational attributes that are unmet after entry. However, applicants who are given a realistic preview were found to have higher survival rates, increased initial levels of job performance (for audio-visual RJs) and satisfaction. More importantly, RJs increase the number of candidates who drop out from further consideration for a job (Premack & Wanous, 1985).

Presenting realistic information about job opportunities solves only a part of the information problem: the applicant must perceive the information correctly. Herriot (1984) noted that the potential for error in the applicant's assessment is influenced, in part, by the recruiter. Recruiters control how much information is presented to the applicant; the quantity of objective, job-related facts about the organization and job. This has been termed job information behavior (Taylor & Bergmann, 1987). Also important to perception is how recruiters present information using verbal and nonverbal behaviors. This is termed recruiter affect (Rynes & Miller, 1983). This research will demonstrate how these two variables, job information behavior and recruiter affect, influence the
applicant's inferential process and thereby affect the applicant's reactions to a job opportunity. The research may, in part, explain why a job seeker's expectations are not met and why many experience disillusion during the first year of employment (Schwab et al., 1987; Vroom, 1966).

A Review of Applicant Research

Empirical investigations of the applicant's job choice, hereafter termed applicant research, have focused on two sets of variables believed to influence applicant evaluations of job opportunities. The first set consists of the features of the job and organization which encompass all the relevant job-related characteristics, including organizational level attributes, that may influence the applicant. These have been termed by recent authors as "job attributes" (Schwab et al., 1987). The second set consists of recruiter characteristics which encompasses personal traits, behaviors, and demographic factors such as sex, age, and race. Included in this category are perceived characteristics such as recruiter job knowledge, empathy and sincerity.

The earliest applicant research focused on job attributes. Early studies identified and ranked the job attributes most preferred by applicants, assuming that applicants selected positions by weighing and comparing the

Other "job attribute" studies developed and tested the psychometric models of applicants' decision making processes. These models suggested ways that applicants combined favorable and unfavorable job attributes to select a job (Soelberg, 1967; Vroom, 1966; Wanous, Keon, & Latack, 1983). These studies, too, acknowledged the applicant's preference or valence for certain attributes over others.

A second generation of studies recognized and tested the potential influence of the recruiter on applicant decisions (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Feldman & Arnold, 1987; Harris & Fink, 1987; Liden & Parsons, 1986; Powell, 1984; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976). Some studies varied aspects of recruiter behavior and found a positive relationship between recruiter affect and job desirability or the likelihood of job acceptance (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Harris & Fink, 1987; Rynes & Miller, 1983). Alderfer
and McCord (1970), for example, queried subjects about aspects of their best and worst interviews and compared them using t-tests. Interviews were rated as "best" and offers more likely to be accepted from recruiters who were interested in the candidate, knowledgeable, familiar with the candidate's background, willing to answer questions, trustworthy and personally successful.

Most recently, investigators have compared recruiter characteristics and job attributes to determine which are more likely to influence the applicant. Two recent investigations by Powell (1984) and Feldman and Arnold (1987), attempted to determine "whether interviewer behaviors drive out job attributes or job attributes drive out interviewer behaviors on job choice decision making" (Feldman & Arnold, 1987, p. 20). Both studies found that the job opportunity was selected on the merits of its attributes rather than any influence by the recruiter.

Rynes and Miller (1983) conducted two similar investigations. In the first, subjects evaluated perceived organizational desirability after comparing equivalent jobs presented by recruiters who exhibited different styles. The authors concluded that in the absence of information, recruiter behaviors and knowledge influence perceptions of the organization's desirability. However, where one opportunity was obviously more attractive on some job attributes (pay, benefits, travel and advancement
(experiment 2)), the recruiter had no significant effect on organizational desirability or the applicant's willingness to pursue the job.

Harris and Fink (1987) also compared the effects of recruiter characteristics and job attributes on applicant reactions in a field setting. Subjects completed pre- and post-interview questionnaires. The findings indicated that significant additional explained variance in post-interview responses was attributable to recruiter characteristics once the effect of job attributes was removed. Specifically, perceptions of the recruiter's personableness, competence and informativeness positively correlated with one item measures of "regard for the company" and "job attractiveness". Recruiter characteristics had significant influence on post-interview perceptions of job attributes above and beyond the effect of the job attributes themselves.

Taylor and Bergmann (1987) found that recruiter empathy was related to applicants' reactions to organizational attractiveness and the probability of accepting an offer, but only in the initial recruitment interview. In their study, however, the effects of job attributes were not assessed. They conclude that applicant reactions are more likely to be influenced by recruitment activities (recruiter demographics and recruiter empathy,
among others) when applicants receive little direct information about job attributes.

The Contribution of These Studies to Research

The most recent studies demonstrate the effects of two important variables, job attribute attractiveness and recruiter behavior, upon the applicant's reactions, typically organization desirability or attractiveness (Feldman & Arnold, 1987; Harris & Fink, 1987; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987), interest in pursuing the job opportunity (Schmitt & Coyle, 1976), and willingness to accept an offer (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Feldman & Arnold, 1987; Harris & Fink, 1987; Liden & Parsons, 1986; Powell, 1984; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987). The research may be summarized by the following statements: a) Recruiter affect has a direct (but weak) effect on the applicant reactions, b) job attribute attractiveness and recruiter affect are independent of one another, c) job attribute attractiveness is objective and measurable by researchers (such as the difference in salary offers), and d) job attribute attractiveness explains more variance in applicant reactions than recruiter affect. These assumptions may be questioned because they do not incorporate the inferential process that is the foundation of applicant evaluations.
The Potential Influence of the Recruiter

Earlier studies (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Feldman & Arnold, 1987; Harn & Thornton, 1985; Keenan & Wedderburn, 1975; Liden & Parsons, 1986; Powell, 1984; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976) speculated that a predominant source of variance in applicant reactions may be the recruiter. The effect of recruiter behavior is explored further in this study for three reasons. First, recruiter behavior has two separate components, recruiter affect and job information behavior. Second, the earlier findings on recruiter behavior were inconclusive. Third, job information behavior was not adequately tested.

Recruiter Affect

Recruiter affect involves the verbal and nonverbal behaviors the recruiter exhibits during the recruitment interview. Recruiter affect may occur naturally, reflecting the recruiter's personality or it may be artificially adopted for a particular reason. In the latter case, for example, recruiters may choose an interview strategy that causes them to act in a prespecified manner. An investigation by Lindvall, Culberson, Binning, & Goldstein (1986) found that recruiter affect differed with different selection ratios. When selection ratios are favorable (few openings, many applicants), recruiters may utilize a stress or hostile interview to weed out under-qualified candidates.
Recruiters using this interview strategy act disinterested, critical, unfriendly or even hostile to applicants. However, when selection ratios are unfavorable (many openings, few applicants), recruiters tend to use a more public relations approach to attract applicants. In this approach, the recruiter may act friendly, interested, and show more empathy to the applicant.

Studies have verified that applicants often react unfavorably to stress or hostile interviews (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Downs, 1969). The seductive interview or public relations interview can also be poorly received because the applicant may infer the recruiter is not being honest (Downs, 1969). Fisher, Ilgen and Hoyer (1979) found that "selling" the organization leads the applicant to mistrust the source and suspect the motives of the organization.

Recruiter affect may also differ between the highly structured interview where exactly the same questions are asked of each candidate (Downs, 1969; Hilgert & Eason, 1968) and the highly unstructured interview where each applicant is asked unique questions. Structured interviews limit the recruiter’s ability to react to applicant comments or pursue interesting lines of questioning. This may reflect indifference or aloofness. Recruiters selecting unstructured interviews may be perceived as unprepared, unfocused and unknowledgable. Both of these
interview strategies were also found to be unappealing to job applicants (Downs, 1969).

Recruiter affect takes two forms, verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Verbal behavior is the medium through which a message is transmitted. Verbal behaviors are speech patterns, e.g., grammatical phrasing, the use of pauses, and word usage such as "um" or "okay". Supportive verbal behavior may contain phrases such as "that's great", "I agree with you", or "I understand". Negative verbal behaviors can include interruptions, obscenities, and depreciatory comments such as "that's ridiculous", "you're wrong", or "that's your problem" (Lewis, 1980).

Nonverbal behaviors such as gestures, facial expression, and voice intonation are perceived as somewhat involuntary and therefore more credible than verbal messages (Argyle, Salter, Nicholson, Williams, & Burgess, 1970; Mehrabian & Weiner, 1967). Studies have revealed that nonverbal behavior can both distort and clarify written or verbal messages (c.f. Nagata et al., 1983). A gesture such as a smile or frown can counter a verbal message by reducing its veracity, or may lend credence or emphasis to it. In one study, voice intonation explained 22 times more variance in message interpretation than did its verbal content (Argyle et al., 1970).

Positive nonverbal behaviors are likeable behaviors such as smiling, nodding and eye contact (Keenan &
Wedderburn, 1975). They lead to impressions of warmth, thoughtfulness, friendship, understanding, acceptance and sincerity (Lewis, 1980; Harn & Thornton, 1985), because they reinforce applicant behavior, suggest concern for the applicant, and fuel the applicant's need for acceptance and feedback (Keenan & Wedderburn, 1975; Lewis, 1980). They also stimulate liking for the recruiter which influences the applicant's positive assessments of job desirability (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953).

Negative nonverbal behaviors include lack of eye contact, frowning, head shaking, and hands, arms, and legs held closely to the body. These behaviors together with negative verbal statements may lead applicants to impressions of recruiter disinterest, aloofness, and insincerity or even dishonesty (Lewis, 1980) and they may also counter verbal messages (Nagata et al., 1983).

The recruiter is more credible and has more influence over the applicant when perceived as competent and knowledgeable (Fisher, Ilgen & Hoyer, 1979). Perceived recruiter knowledge of the company, the position and the applicant is important to the applicant's assessment of the job opportunity (Sutton & Carleton, 1962). Recruiter affect can influence perceptions of a recruiter's competence and knowledge (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Hilgert & Eason, 1968; Liden & Parsons, 1986; Rogers & Sincoff,
1978; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Sattler, 1970; Wyse, 1972) and the applicant's assessment of the job opportunity.

In summary, recruiter affect contributes to impressions of recruiter knowledge, competence, as well as other characteristics. Recruiter affect may make information more or less credible, may cause the applicant to like or dislike the recruiter, and may cause the applicant to assess organizational characteristics. The way in which recruiter verbal and nonverbal behaviors influence an applicant is explored in the discussion of the applicant's inferential process.

**Job Information Behavior**

Job information behavior is the recruiter's choice of how much information to provide to the applicant. It is the quantitative aspect of the message content. This is measured by the number of job attributes presented to the applicant.

The recruiter's primary responsibility in the recruitment interview is to evaluate the applicant (Heneman, Schwab, Fossum, & Dyer, 1983), but this may be at cross-purposes with the applicant's need to acquire information. The time constraint placed upon most interviews forces even well-intentioned recruiters to withhold information from the applicant. The recruiter can provide information only within the confines of the allotted interview time. In addition, recruiters who
believe that applicants are not influenced by the interview information or get their information elsewhere, may disregard the applicant’s need for information (Downs, 1969; Gerstner, 1966; Glueck, 1973; Hilgert & Eason, 1968; Matarazzo, Wiens, Jackson & Manaugh, 1970; Thronson & Thomas, 1968). Therefore, the recruiter may limit information during the interview.

There are three reasons why the amount of relevant, useful information is important to job applicants. First, applicants may make better job decisions with more relevant and useful information (Flavell, 1977; Gutteridge & Ullman, 1973; West, 1981), which improves both the applicant's knowledge and assessment of fit. Second, job information behavior may affect applicant assessments of the organization. Applicants have reported greater satisfaction with interviews when information is abundant (Downs, 1969; Herriot, 1984). Finally, the quantity of information may affect applicant perceptions (Downs, 1969; Herriot, 1984). The inferential process is thought to be influenced by the amount of information, suggesting that applicants infer more attributes with more information. For these reasons, job information behavior may have potentially interesting and important ramifications for research and practice.

Job Attribute Attractiveness
Job attribute attractiveness is the qualitative aspect of message content. Job attribute attractiveness has stood out among variables in the previous research as the one having the greatest effect on applicant reactions to job opportunities. Generally, the studies have manipulated job attribute attractiveness (i.e., salary levels, weeks of vacation, and types of benefits vary between two job opportunities) and measured the difference reflected in organization desirability, willingness to accept an offer and other reactions.

Manipulating job attribute attractiveness in this manner may not be externally valid, however, because it fails to be a realistic model of interview situations. This is true for two reasons. First, based upon their own perception of fit, people select themselves into or out of situations (Schneider, 1983). More specifically, the assumptions of the job choice literature suggest that applicants will self-select to job interviews with the more attractive attributes (Behling, Labovitz, & Gainer, 1968), will ignore opportunities that do not meet personal preferences (Jurgensen, 1947; 1978), and will not exert effort toward opportunities where the valence of the attributes is low (Vroom, 1966; Wanous et al., 1983). Therefore, previous studies that artificially manipulated a set of job attributes to be more or less attractive did not reflect the reality that applicants initially choose to
interview only those organizations whose attributes they have already determined to be attractive.

Second, manipulating levels of job attribute attractiveness is somewhat artificial because the opportunities available to a job applicant, particularly a new college graduate, are generally homogeneous on attribute levels. That is, across job opportunities, differences in many of the most salient organizational attributes such as pay, benefits, travel and advancement are small. Industries unwilling to lose the best graduates compete with roughly equivalent compensation and benefit packages (Behling et al., 1968). Entry level jobs also are similar with respect to attributes such as task demands, ability and skill requirements, and responsibilities. Thus, the applicant has little means to discriminate between the attributes composing each opportunity.

This study holds job attribute attractiveness uniform across experimental conditions and thereby improves the methodology of earlier investigations. This provides two benefits. First, it provides a better test of the effect of other interview variables. It is neither interesting nor surprising to learn that in each of the earlier studies that pitted recruiter behavior against job attribute attractiveness, applicants selected the opportunity with the more attractive attributes. Since the position with higher pay, more vacation and better benefits led to higher
21

perceived organization desirability (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Feldman & Arnold, 1987; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976), the applicant had no reason not to pursue the organization. The findings regarding the variables that were pitted against job attribute attractiveness, then, may be spurious. To provide a more valid test of other potentially influential variables, the research question should be "to what extent does the variable influence job applicant evaluations when job attribute attractiveness is held constant?"

Another reason to hold job attribute attractiveness constant is to measure the recruiter's influence on perceived job attribute attractiveness. In the earlier studies, both recruiter behavior and job attributes were manipulated. Because these two independent variables were assumed to be independent, the researchers chose a methodology in which the recruiter presented the attributes. However, the reported absence of an interaction between recruiter behavior and job attribute attractiveness suggests that the two variables may not be independent. Instead, the recruiter's behavior may have affected perceptions of job attribute attractiveness. By holding job attribute attractiveness constant across conditions, differences in perceived job attribute attractiveness may be discovered.
In summary, applicant reactions may be influenced by two recruiter variables, recruiter affect and job information behavior. The information applicants receive from the recruiter is used to evaluate the job opportunity. But that information may be, in part, a construction of the applicant's inferential process. Before testing this proposition, the applicant's social inferential process is explored.

The Applicant's Social Inferential Process

Social inferential processing is the domain where cognitive psychology and social cognition merge. Cognitive psychology is the study of how people make sense of observed objects and events by forming inferences about them. It provides an understanding of how individuals construct information through inference and preference. It is the basis for social cognition which specifically studies how people make sense of their interaction with others and themselves (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

Social inference is comprised of two processes: cognitive encoding and cognitive judgement. The products of these two processes are inferences and preferences, respectively (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Mandler, 1975; West, 1981; Zajonc, 1980). Evidence has shown that these processes are independent systems that arouse both thoughts and feelings about objects and people (Fiske & Taylor,
1984; Schachter & Singer, 1962; Schneider, Hastorf & Ellsworth, 1979; Zimbardo, Ebbesen & Maslach, 1977). The two systems form inferences and preferences under the direction of heuristics which are patterns or plans that simplify and reduce the amount of cognitive processing. Figure 1 illustrates the cognitive encoding and judgement processes and their products.

-----------------------
Insert Figure 1 approximately here
-----------------------

Cognitive Encoding and Inference

Cognitive encoding is the process whereby individuals observe a person or an object and make assumptions about the existence of its attributes (Figure 1) (Markus & Zajonc, 1984). The encoding process uses the available data and extends the data through inference to create information. Inferences, the products of the encoding process (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Markus & Zajonc, 1984), are beliefs about the attributes of the object based upon false premises.

Although the number of inferences is related to the amount of information an individual possesses, the direction of the relationship is a subject of controversy. Some researchers suggest that more information results in greater numbers of inferences (Newton, 1977; Piaget,
Figure 1. Job applicant inferential processes.

Beliefs about the existence of attributes of the event based upon false premises; inferred job attributes.

Subjective attitudes toward perceived attributes of the event; perceived job attribute attractiveness.
1974), while others argue that more inferences are formed in the absence of information (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973).

The latter researchers suggest that inferences are used to fill gaps in information. The less information available, the more the cognitive encoding process must fill in gaps to make sense of the object-event (Kelley, 1973; Jones & Davis, 1965; Markus & Zajonc, 1984). However, inferences are more readily made if a schema or cognitive map already exists to which new information can be related. For example, the word "waiter" conjures up a multitude of attributes associated with the scenario of a restaurant. Similarly, the adjective "large" associated with the word "organization" may conjure up inferences about the organization's climate, flexibility and promotional opportunities. Thus, when information is limited, the schema is developed, and the desire "to know" is great, the inferential process may cause an individual to make inferences on very little information.

Studies by Newtson and colleagues (c.f. Newtson, 1978) support the opposing position that more information provides the basis for forming more inferences. They presented subjects with information divided into two sizes, large discrete units (large-unit analyses) and small discrete units (fine-unit analyses). Newtson concludes that "given more data points (fine-unit analysis), persons
are able to make more differentiated attributions" (p. 245, emphasis added). Piaget (1974) also suggests that generalizations proceed from a specific action and that the more actions one observes, the more generalizations one makes.

There are two reasons why this latter position holds for the job applicant. First, job applicants have relatively undeveloped schemas. "Schemas are a mental codification of experience that includes a particular organized way of perceiving cognitively and responding to stimuli" (Webster's, 1983). The more one learns about an object/event, the more developed the schema about the object/event becomes. Individuals use their schemas to understand similar objects or events they encounter. When an event is familiar, the schema supplies information so there is little necessity to make inferences. However, in new settings where no schema exists, cognitive encoding creates multiple inferences to make sense of the event. Applicants may not have a clear perceptual schema. Even applicants experienced at interviewing must develop a schema for each new job opportunity.

Second, inferential processing of a job opportunity is a complex mental task. Job opportunities are complex entities, composed of scores of job and organizational characteristics, many of which the applicant must infer because information is not readily available (e.g.,
organization climate, coworkers compatibility, job autonomy). Fiske and Taylor (1984) suggest that the complexity of the object to be assessed determines the amount of cognitive encoding that takes place. The more complex the assessment (as in evaluating an organization), the more inferences will be formed.

Applicants must analyze a complex entity, the job opportunity, without a clear schema. Therefore, the more information the applicant is provided, the more this information will be used to infer additional information.

**Cognitive Judgement and Preference**

The second inferential operation is cognitive judgement or preference (Figure 1) (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Zajonc, 1980). Cognitive judgement is a process that forms attitudes about the object or its characteristics (Markus & Zajonc, 1984). The product of the cognitive judgement process is an attitude or a preference. Preferences are formed for objects, individuals, events, and their attributes and involve the individual's feelings, likes, dislikes, or perceptions of attractiveness.

The cognitive judgement process was first proposed by Schachter & Singer (1962) who determined that individuals who are emotionally aroused feel compelled to explain their emotional states. Zillman (1978), modifying Schachter's proposition, suggests that a) individuals will be motivated
to explain their heightened levels of arousal with plausible causal attributions and b) once an explanation is adopted, the search ends. Since no other attributions are generated, individuals are unlikely to change the assessment of their emotional state.

Aroused applicants will search the interview environment for cues to explain their emotions. In the interview setting, applicants attribute their emotional states to the cues provided by the recruiter, thus forming like and dislike judgements of the recruiter. Once the emotion is explained, the search for cues ends.

Cognitive encoding and judgement processes are believed to be independent cognitive operations. Preference or affect toward an object is believed to occur with "mere exposure" (Zajonc, 1968, 1980), therefore, applicants need not be aware of all the facets of the job to make emotional judgements of like or dislike. Several studies were conducted to test the mere exposure effect. In one, Japanese ideographs were presented to subjects who then reported their attraction to them independent of recognition for them (Moreland & Zajonc, 1977). In a second study, frequently heard tone sequences were preferred without simultaneous recognition of the tone as familiar (Wilson, 1979). Similar studies have been conducted with polygons, photographs, and other objects (c.f. Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Zajonc, 1980). The conclusion
is that "liking need not depend on accurate memory" (Fiske & Taylor, 1984, p. 335).

These latter studies demonstrate that affective judgements occur independently of encoding or recall. For the recruitment interview, this means applicants may infer attributes and judge attributes, inferred or not, as attractive or unattractive.

The Heuristics That Direct Encoding and Judgement

Unlike the "normative process" which scientifically explores alternatives, analyzes each, and rejects them in lieu of the best explanation, social inference is a quick, time-saving device that sacrifices accuracy for speed. Social inference reduces information complexity (Markus & Zajonc, 1984) by circumventing the evaluation of each of millions of stimuli. This is done by categorizing or classifying data. Categorizing or classifying relies on heuristics or generalizations to quickly process the millions of stimuli. The heuristics assist the perceiver to make complex judgements when conditions are uncertain and do not allow for thoroughness. Heuristics reduce complex tasks to more simple judgmental tasks (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). The inferential process asks "what is it" or "what is it like?". In order to answer, the inferential process assigns meaning to actions and identifies objects through classification. The more complex the action or
object, the greater the need to use shortcuts to reduce the mental task to a simpler one (Fiske & Taylor, 1984).

Landmark research by Tversky and Kahneman (1974) identified several heuristics individuals use to make generalizations. Two are integral to the inferences and judgements job applicants are likely to make. They are representativeness and anchoring or referencing.

The Representativeness Heuristic

Representativeness is the cognitive assignment of a probability estimate to the likelihood that an object belongs to a category (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Kahneman & Tversky, 1972; Markus & Zajonc, 1984). How probable is it that A is an instance of category B? A representative is perceived as a typical instance of its class. The representative is observed, a few characteristics are obtained, and the rest are inferred as the perceiver ascribes the characteristics of the class on its representative.

Stereotyping is a specific instance of representativeness. Studies too numerous to list provide empirical examples (c.f. Markus & Zajonc, 1984; Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Two separate studies by Taylor, Fiske, Close, Anderson, and Ruderman (1977) found that within groups, black stimulus persons or stimulus women were perceived to play specific roles consistent with minority-typed and sex-typed categorizations. Women were "motherly"
while blacks were more likely group comedian than group leader. These two studies indicate the strong influence of the member's representative status on inferences formed about the representative.

In a similar vein, three studies illustrated the effect of representativeness as applied to an occupation and its members. In one study by Cohen (1977), subjects watched a videotape of an actress miming a daily routine. Some subjects were told the actress was a waitress, others a librarian. Subsequent recall of behaviors from the videotape was consistent with what the subject believed was the woman's occupation (Cohen, 1977). In a second study, a videotape presented two men exploring a room while discussing theft and drug use. Subjects viewing the videotape were given one of three scripts: the men were burglars, the men were students awaiting a friend, or the men were concealing illegal drugs. Subjects later recalled more theft-related objects in the house and more theft-related comments when they were told the men were burglars (Zadny & Gerard, 1974). In a study reported by Ostrom, Lingle, Pryor and Geva (1980), subjects were presented with a list of traits describing an individual and asked to predict the success of the individual in a specified occupation. Later, subjects were more likely to recall the traits that were relevant to the occupation.
Properties of the representative heuristic. The representative heuristic is both transitive and reversible (Piaget, 1974). Reversibility is "equal operations in the opposite direction" (Piaget, 1974, p. 23). This may be mathematically represented by $A = B$, then $B = A$. This property suggests that as members of a category are ascribed with the traits of the category in the inferential process, so, too, is the category ascribed with the traits of its members.

Studies by Rothbart and his colleagues (Rothbart, Evans, & Fulero, 1979; Rothbart, Fulero, Jensen, Howard, & Birrell, 1978) illustrate reversibility. Subjects in the Rothbart experiments were given trait-name pairings of group members (i.e., Joe - Lazy), then asked to describe the group. Groups were likely to be ascribed with the members' traits (the group is lazy).

Applicants make judgements subject to reversibility, too. In one direction, applicants infer that recruiters are members of an organization and possess the attributes of the organization. More importantly, in the other direction, applicants may infer that the organization and job are composed of attributes represented by the recruiter.

Transitivity is a property of the representative heuristic, whereby inferences are formed not only about the object but also about the object's attributes (Piaget,
In mathematical terms, $A = B$, $B = C$, therefore $A = C$. To the applicant then, the recruiter represents not only the organization but also its attributes. Observed features and actions of the recruiter represent specific characteristics of the organization and job (i.e., its climate, the friendliness of coworkers, and capability of the supervisor).

The Reference Heuristic

The second heuristic is called anchoring or referencing. This heuristic suggests that the observer uses a starting point from which to evaluate observations (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Fiske & Taylor, 1984). When uncertain about information, individuals will begin with a reference for comparison. Inferences are then made which compare and contrast the observation and the reference point. Disconfirming inferences occur when the referent and observation fail to correspond while confirming inferences occur when they are comparable.

Referencing also is used in the cognitive judgement process to form preferences or judgements (Goethals, 1976). The judgement an individual makes that is supported by others has an effect on the individual's perception of the judgement. In one experiment individuals were found to be more satisfied and confident about their judgement when it was supported by respected others with widely varying perspectives. Individuals also were found to be more
confident and satisfied with their judgements when unsupported by others who are disliked (Goethals, 1976).

According to Piaget (1974) and Newtson (1976), individuals simultaneously consider two (or more) systems of reference (e.g., the recruiter's verbal messages and nonverbal behavior). Comparing these two systems may result in a single judgement. The more independent the two reference points or the more differentiation between them, the greater the individual's confidence in the inference. Job applicants, then, verify an inference constructed from a verbal message with a second source, the recruiter's nonverbal behaviors.

The difference between representativeness and referencing is not immediately obvious. The primary difference is that the former process ascribes the attributes of the classification upon the object because the object is perceived to be a member of its class. Referencing, on the other hand, is the use of the classification to compare its attributes to those of the object. However, the object need not be perceived as a member of the classification in order for comparisons to be made.

Both heuristics are similar in outcomes. The referent and representative influence the formation of inferences and preferences about the observed person or object. For applicants, the recruiter acts as either representative or
referent causing applicants to form inferences about job attributes and job attribute attractiveness.

In summary, the social inferential process is used by applicants to generate information about the recruiter, organization and job. The recruiter is the representative or referent. The job opportunity is the complex object composed of attributes (some of which have been inferred) to be evaluated by the applicant. As a representative or referent, the recruiter provides the cues from which inferences about those attributes and preferences for them are formed.

A Model of the Applicant's Evaluation of a Job Opportunity

As noted earlier, recruiters often limit the amount of information they present. Inferences about job attributes are formed by applicants through cognitive encoding (Figure 1). According to the literature, fewer inferences may be made when information is limited (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Newtson, 1976; Piaget, 1974). To test this relationship, a measure of inferences must be calculated. This is the difference between the number of attributes presented by the recruiter and the number the applicant says have been presented. The following prediction tests the formation of inferences.
1. Subjects are predicted to make a greater number of inferences about unstated job attributes when the recruiter presents many job attributes (high recruiter information behavior) than when the recruiter presents few job attributes (low information behavior).

Applicants also evaluate recruiter affect. The applicant’s cognitive judgement process forms preferences influenced by recruiter affect. For example, an applicant may evaluate a $20,000 per year salary more positively when presented by a recruiter who exhibits warmth, interest in and knowledge of the applicant than one who is aloof or disinterested.

Holding job attribute attractiveness uniform across different conditions of recruiter verbal and nonverbal behavior should allow a post-interview measure of job attribute attractiveness that reflects the influence of the recruiter. Random assignment should alleviate any prior differences among individuals’ preferences. So, the variance in recruiter affect should be reflected in subjects’ affective judgements of job attribute attractiveness. Post-interview job attribute attractiveness ratings should be more positive under conditions of positive recruiter affect than under the influence of negative recruiter affect. Therefore,

2. Subjects are predicted to give significantly higher mean ratings on perceived job attribute attractiveness when recruiter affect is positive than when recruiter affect is negative.
A direct test of the formation of preference for job attributes has never been conducted. At best, a few applicant studies tapped attribute attractiveness after exposure to the recruiter (Feldman & Arnold, 1987; Harris & Fink, 1987; Rynes & Miller, 1983). The findings of these studies may be explained by representativeness and its property of transitivity. Affect toward the recruiter may have determined the direction of feeling for the organization and its attributes. Job attribute attractiveness, previously thought to be an objective, measurable entity, may be a subjectively constructed judgement influenced by the recruiter.

In the earlier studies, job attribute attractiveness was shown to explain significant variance in applicant reactions to the job opportunity. The variables used to tap applicant reactions are organization desirability, interest in pursuing the job opportunity, and willingness to accept a job offer. Hypothesis two suggests that job attribute attractiveness is not as objective as these studies would lead us to believe. Instead, job attribute attractiveness is a subjective construction which is influenced by the recruiter's behavior. Therefore, in this study, applicants' perceived job attribute attractiveness is compared to their reactions to the job opportunity. A positive correlation between perceived job attribute attractiveness and the criteria indicates an effect.
correlation close to zero would indicate no effect.

Therefore, to determine if applicants use their subjective ratings, hypothesis three states:

3. Perceived job attribute attractiveness is predicted to be positively and significantly correlated with organization desirability, interest in pursuing employment with this organization, and willingness to accept a job offer.

Additionally, the previous literature would predict greater explained variance in these three criteria from perceived job attribute attractiveness than from recruiter affect. To test this outcome, hypothesis four states:

4. Greater variance in organization desirability, interest in pursuing employment with this organization, and willingness to accept a job offer will be explained by perceived job attribute attractiveness rather than by recruiter affect.

The preceding hypotheses suggest that perceived job attribute attractiveness is a function of recruiter affect and the former has the greater influence on applicants’ evaluations.

Recruiter behaviors may not have a direct effect on the applicant’s evaluation. Instead, two variables mediate their effect. These are the applicant’s satisfaction with the quantity of information and the applicant’s satisfaction with the interview process. They may provide additional explained variance in the reaction variables.

Logically, applicants should report greater satisfaction with interview information when information
quantity is high. Two surveys identified a positive correlation between applicants' reported satisfaction with interview information and satisfaction with their job choice (Gutteridge & Ullman, 1973) and interviews (Downs, 1969). These studies did not compare subjects' satisfaction under high and low conditions of information quantity, however, and the applicants' reported satisfaction was based upon their perception of the information they were provided. Inferences, too, may be construed by the applicant as information and may be related to the applicant's satisfaction with the amount of information received. But, are applicants satisfied with the amount of information from the interview because multiple job attributes have been presented or because multiple inferences have been made? To test the relationship between the information presented, the inferences constructed and satisfaction with the amount of interview information, a fifth hypothesis is proposed:

5. Subjects' satisfaction with the amount of information will be positively and significantly correlated with both recruiter job information behavior and the number of inferences the subject constructs. Greater variance in subjects' satisfaction with the amount of information will be explained by job information behavior than by the number of inferences formed about job attributes.

The first hypothesis predicts that more attributes are inferred when the recruiter presents more information. Hypothesis five tests the effects of inferences and
recruiter presentation on applicant satisfaction with the amount of information. The latter suggests that providing more information to applicants has both a direct and an indirect effect on satisfaction with interview information. That is, applicants' satisfaction with information quantity is not only attributable to recruiter information behavior but also to their inferential processing. That is, applicants are more satisfied when they receive more information and when they are able to infer more attributes.

Satisfaction with the interview process may increase with increased satisfaction with the quantity of information. Applicants are also likely to be more satisfied with the interview process if their interviews are with a congenial, interested, and friendly recruiter. In fact, recruiter affect may have a greater effect than satisfaction with the quantity of information on the applicant’s satisfaction with the interview process. This may occur for two reasons. First, recruiter affect may be more salient than the recruiter information behavior. People are more likely to perceive and remember the nonverbal and verbal affect behaviors, and disregard the verbal messages. Attention to information can be distracted by attention to other stimuli such as improper grammar or hand gestures. Applicants may miss informative messages unless they are able to ignore distracting sensory
stimuli. Second, recruiters make informative messages more or less believable with their behaviors. A verbal message may be countered by sarcasm or a shake of the head. Recruiter affect, then, may have the more powerful effect on satisfaction with the interview process. The following hypothesis tests the relationship of satisfaction with the quantity of information and recruiter affect on satisfaction with the interview process and compares their effect.

6. Recruiter affect and satisfaction with the quantity of information are both significantly and positively related to the applicant's satisfaction with the interview process, however, greater variance in subjects' satisfaction with the interview process will be explained by recruiter affect than by satisfaction with the quantity of information.

Satisfaction with the interview process is predicted to affect applicant reactions to the job opportunity. Applicants satisfied with the interview process may be more willing to accept an offer, pursue employment with the organization, and find the organization more desirable. The hypothesis to test this is:

7. Satisfaction with the interview process will be positively and significantly correlated with organization desirability, interest in pursuing employment with this organization and willingness to accept a job offer.

Figure 2 represents a model of the previous seven hypotheses. Figure 2 and hypotheses one through seven suggest that: a) the inferential processes of cognitive
encoding and cognitive judgement result in inferences and perceived job attribute attractiveness; b) for applicants, two recruiter behaviors, job information behavior and recruiter affect, provide the environmental stimuli for the inferential process; c) job attribute attractiveness is not an input but rather an outcome of the judgement process; and d) recruiter affect has an indirect effect on the applicant's evaluation of the job opportunity. Recruiter affect operates through either a) perceived job attribute attractiveness or b) the applicant's satisfaction with the interview process.

Hypothesis seven has several important implications for research and recruitment. Hypothesis seven verifies that applicants' satisfaction with their interviews affects the evaluations they make. Recruiter affect and satisfaction with the quantity of information may be found to improve satisfaction with the interview process. This finding benefits the recruitment process by suggesting a prescription for improving applicant evaluations.

If hypotheses two, three, and four are supported, research must consider the effects of perceived job attribute attractiveness on applicant reactions. The factors contributing to an applicant's perception of job
Recruiter behaviors

Figure 2. A model of applicant evaluations of job opportunities.
attribute attractiveness must be further explored. Recruitment practices, including recruiter characteristics, may play a more important role than the research previously considered.
CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY

Overview

The laboratory experiment tests the effects of two independent variables, recruiter affect and job information behavior, on the applicant’s reactions to a job opportunity. The model presented in Figure 2 suggests that there are four intervening variables and three dependent variables. The intervening variables are perceived job attribute attractiveness, the number of inferences the subjects construct, satisfaction with the amount of information from the interview and satisfaction with the interview process. The dependent variables are organizational desirability, the applicant’s willingness to accept a job offer and interest in pursuing employment with the organization.

Subjects

The subjects for this research were 158 college students from a small northeastern state university. Fifty-seven percent were males, eighty-four percent had three or more years part-time work experience and fifty-eight percent had more than one year full-time work experience. The average student was 21 years of age and a
junior. Most of the subjects (61%) had at least one interview during the last year and 65 percent had one or more job offers during the same period.

The sample size meets the following three criteria. First, a power analysis indicates a minimum sample of 84. A power table was used to locate N at conventional and conservative estimates of $r = .30$, where $\alpha = .05$, and $1 - \beta = .80$ (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). A sample size of 158 also meets a second convention recommended by Cohen and Cohen (1983) of a $k/n$ ratio of one to 40, where $k$ is the number of independent variables. For this experiment, $k = 2$. The third criterion to be met was cell size. Since an order effect was expected, a counter-balanced design was used (see Design). This increases the number of cells from four to twelve (see Appendix A). With a minimum of eight subjects per cell, $N$ should exceed 96. Collapsing cells across the order effect yields minimum cell sizes of 24 for the experimental manipulations.

Undergraduates were chosen over graduate students and other job seekers because they are more likely to have little or no work experience or interview experience. As naive subjects, they are less likely to be influenced by what they know about organizations and interview procedures. The subjects are volunteer participants.

Design
All subjects observed videotaped interviews and completed questionnaires after each interview. The research design is a post-test only design calling for equivalent groups achieved by randomization (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Random assignment provides the greatest probability that the groups will not differ prior to exposing them to the manipulation and maximizes the experiment's internal validity (Kidder, 1981). It is particularly important to randomize to ensure equivalent groups with regard to their preferences for job attributes. Random assignment was achieved by alternately assigning students to groups.

The two independent variables, job information behavior and recruiter affect, were manipulated in the stimulus videotapes. Subjects viewed and evaluated one of four taped interview segments. Subjects viewed and evaluated a second videotaped interview to test for an order effect. This is a $2 \times 2$ between-subjects factorial design.

Counterbalanced Design

A counterbalanced design was used to increase the number of subjects. Each subject viewed two videotaped interviews. In this way, each of the four different interview segments followed each of the remaining three interview segments. This resulted in twelve sessions (Appendix A).
To use data from subjects who viewed a second videotape, no order effect could exist. That is, responses from subjects who viewed a particular segment first should not differ from those who viewed the same segment second. However, the inferential process suggests that an order effect may occur. The first videotape will provide experience used to establish the applicant's schema about the job opportunity and the recruiter. The schema should cause reduced inferences, and practice should moderate the effect of the same interviewer on job attribute attractiveness. Data from segment viewed in the second position should reflect fewer inferences and reduced effect of recruiter affect than responses to the same segment when viewed first. Therefore, the prediction is that subjects' responses will differ on the same segment viewed in the first and second positions. T-tests were used to compare subjects' responses on the two criteria, the number of inferences and perceived job attribute attractiveness.

An order effect was found to exist but in the opposite direction. Subjects viewing the high information/positive affect condition in the second position made significantly more ($t_{(1,80)} = -4.80, p<.001$) inferences ($m = 8.39$) than those seeing the same interview in the first position ($m = 6.53$). So, high job information behavior caused even more inferences when it followed another videotaped segment.
For both positive affect interviews, subjects rated job attribute attractiveness higher if they saw the interview in the second position than those who saw them in the first position. Subjects who first viewed the low information/positive affect interview rated perceived job attribute attractiveness significantly lower (\( m = 3.50 \), \( t(1, 81) = -2.07, p < .05 \)) than those who saw this interview second (\( m = 3.80 \)). Subjects who first viewed the high information/positive affect interview rated perceived job attribute attractiveness lower (\( m = 3.93 \)) than those who saw this interview second (\( m = 4.41 \)). This, too, was a significant difference (\( t(1, 80) = -4.40, p < .001 \)). Positive affect had an even stronger effect on perceived job attribute attractiveness in the second position. The remaining interviews had nonsignificant response differences on either the number of inferences or perceived job attribute attractiveness. These are reported in Appendix A.

This analysis suggests that for some interview segments an order effect does exist. For this reason, subjects' responses to the second interview they viewed and evaluated were not used in the analysis because these data were not comparable to subjects' responses to the first interview segment they viewed and evaluated.

Procedure
Manipulations in the Videotape Interviews:

The Independent Measures

The videotaped interview segments contain one level of each of the two independent variables. Each segment lasts approximately seven minutes and is filmed over the shoulder of the applicant to get a frontal waist-up view of the recruiter. To prevent contamination from recruiter and applicant differences, the same actors played the recruiter and applicant in each segment. To provide ecological validity, each interview opens with the recruiter's interrogation of the applicant. Then, the applicant asks questions and the recruiter presents company and job information. Appendix B contains the scripts for each videotape segment.

Recruiter Job Information Behavior

In the two interviews representing the low job information condition, the recruiter presents information about five job attributes, specifically salary competitiveness, insurance coverage, length of vacation, organization location, and travel requirements. To lengthen the discussion in the low quantity conditions, the recruiter discusses irrelevant topics (i.e. the weather, the interview facilities, and college athletics). To avoid appearing incompetent in the low quantity, positive affect condition, the recruiter is knowledgeable about the topics discussed even though they are irrelevant. In the other
two segments representing high information quantity, the recruiter presents the applicant with a large quantity of information (30 job attributes). These include the above plus more information about job responsibilities, information about coworkers and organizational attributes including training programs, climate, industry position, and advancement potential.

**Recruiter Affect**

Recruiter affect is manipulated through the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the actor in the stimulus videotapes. In two of the videotapes, the actor exhibits positive behaviors. These include nonverbal behaviors such as eye contact, nodding, and smiling. The recruiter sits forwards, keeps his hands in view, and uses positive voice inflection. The recruiter opens and closes the interview by standing and shaking the applicant's hand. Verbal behaviors in the positive condition include asking the applicant/actor if he understands, using phrases like "as you know...", "in this position, you will...", and generally being upbeat about the organization and job attributes. The recruiter's verbal signals reflect knowledge of the organization and job, interest in the candidate and excitement about the organization. The recruiter makes verbal comments to indicate he is well organized, attentive and agreeable.
In the negative recruiter condition, the actor exhibits both negative verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Nonverbal behaviors include limited eye contact, no acknowledgement of applicants' comments, frowning, and maintaining physical distance to indicate withdrawal. During most of the segment, the recruiter holds his hands beneath the table. Verbal behavior includes statements such as "with your lack of experience...", "in spite of your background...", and a generally sarcastic and unfavorable attitude toward the organization and job. Verbal behavior includes interruptions and inattentive comments.

Data Collection

Twelve sessions were run, each session presenting two videotape segments for subjects' observation and evaluation (see Appendix A for a breakdown of session contents). Some sessions were run simultaneously in two rooms with the aid of a research assistant. Subjects reported to one of the two rooms and were handed a folder containing instructions, two color-coded questionnaires, and a white, one-page (demographic) questionnaire. After reading the instructions with the research director or assistant, subjects viewed the first videotape segment. At its completion, subjects were instructed to open their folder, remove and complete the color-coded questionnaire that corresponded to the videotape they observed (see Appendix
A). Once each subject completed the questionnaire and replaced it in the folder, half of the subjects were asked to move to the other room. These subjects were identified by the color of the second questionnaire contained in their folder. In this fashion, half of each room of subjects switched places. The second videotape segment was then observed, followed by completion of the remaining color-coded questionnaire and the one-page, demographic questionnaire.

Debriefing

After both sets of subjects returned their completed folders, the research director debriefed the subjects. This entailed a description of the study, predicted results, and an opportunity to ask questions. Appendix C contains a handout that each subject received.

Analysis

Questionnaire

The intervening and dependent variables were measured with a 37-item questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three parts and color-coded (see Appendix D) and can be completed in 10 to 15 minutes. A one-page, white questionnaire was completed last and asks for demographic data including the number of interviews attended and the number of job offers obtained within the last year, and full-time and part-time work experience. These questions
are included to determine the job applicant's experience with work and interviews.

**Number of Inferences**

The first part of each color-coded questionnaire measures the number of inferences the subject makes. The 15 items in this section are written to include the five job attributes presented to all subjects in each videotape segment. The other 10 attribute items are not presented in any videotape to any subject. This means all subjects have an equal opportunity to make up to 10 inferences. The 15 items were selected from attributes found in earlier studies to influence job applicant decisions (Jurgensen, 1968; Powell, 1984; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976). Items were also adopted from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire because recruitment studies often overlook attributes that contribute to employee satisfaction (e.g. climate, promotion potential, skill variety, and autonomy). The stem of each attribute item is either neutral or positive and the phrasing consistent with that of the videotape. For example, when the recruiter states "the salary for this position is above industry average", the question asks "I believe the salary for this position to be above industry average". Subjects are asked to choose from three responses: -1 (disagree), 1 (agree) and 0 ("I have no information about this"). Subjects reporting a score of 1 or -1 on items 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 15 have
made an inference about the item. Subjects reporting -1 are not differentiated from those scoring 1. A "correct" score of 0 is ignored. Absolute values on these items are summed for the total number of inferences. Subjects may make from 0 to 10 inferences.

Table 1 reports the mean, standard deviation and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each calculated scale. For the number of inferences, Cronbach's alpha was .72.
Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Intervening and Dependent Variables (Number of Scale Items in Parentheses).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived job attribute attractiveness (10)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of inferences (10)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant satisfaction with the interview process (2)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant satisfaction with the quantity of information (3)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization desirability (1)</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in pursuing the job opportunity (1)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to accept an offer (1)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cronbach's alpha (α) for reliability is reported. Reliability estimates for one-item scales are not available.

Perceived Job Attribute Attractiveness

Job attribute attractiveness is held constant across each condition (each stimulus videotape). Subjects are randomly assigned to view one of the videotapes. Any
personal preferences for specific attributes should be compensated for by random assignment. Therefore, any differences in perceived job attribute attractiveness ratings may be attributed to the stimulus videotape.

The second section of the questionnaire contains 10 items, numbered 16 through 25, constructed to test attraction to both real and inferred attributes. Subjects are asked "based upon the videotaped job interview I just saw, I find this aspect of the job:" and indicate their response from 1 (very unattractive) to 5 (very attractive). Subjects are also given the choice to respond with 3 (neutral) or 6 (I have no opinion on this item). Category 6 is provided for subjects who believe they do not have enough information on the item to make the judgement.

Scores of 1 through 5 are averaged for a mean job attractiveness rating for each subject. Scores of 6 (I have no opinion on this item) are not be included in the calculation of the mean because including them would artificially inflate perceived job attribute attractiveness. The mean on the remaining items is calculated. Subjects scoring a mean greater than 3 are indicating an attractive judgement while scores under three indicate an unattractive rating. Cronbach's alpha for perceived job attribute attractiveness scale is .79.

The third section of the questionnaire is designed to measure the other five variables: applicant satisfaction
with the amount of information, applicant satisfaction with
the interview process, the applicant judgement of the
desirability of the organization, interest in pursuing
employment and willingness to accept an offer. Here, most
of the scale items, format, and anchors have been provided
by prior research (Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Feldman &
Six-point Likert-type scales are anchored by strongly
disagree and strongly agree. Six-point scales were chosen
for two reasons (Jurgensen, 1947; Jurgensen, 1978; Lacy,
First, a six point scale does not contain a midpoint.
Subjects are required to respond with at least some
directionality. Second, scales developed in similar
research are not consistent; some use a five-point scale,
others use a seven-point scale. A six-point scale is used
as a compromise to both sets of studies. For these last
items, a "no information" option is omitted to ensure that
subjects respond with their subjective opinion.

Satisfaction with the Amount of Information

Items 26, 29 and 30 tap the subjects' satisfaction
with the amount of information they receive from the
videotaped interview. The three items are averaged for a
mean score for each subject. Cronbach's alpha coefficient
for this scale is .82.

Satisfaction with the Interview Process
Two items, numbered 27 and 28 measure the subjects' satisfaction with the interview process. A mean score will be calculated for each subject. The alpha coefficient for this scale is .93.

**Applicant Reaction Variables**

Three one-item questions serve as the dependent variables to measure the subject's reaction to the job opportunity. Each of the three have been used in earlier applicant research as a proxy for the applicant's evaluation of the organization. Despite the high intercorrelations among them, these variables were analyzed separately because they are conceptually different. This is consistent treatment with prior research (Rynes & Miller, 1983; Taylor & Bergmann, 1987).

**Organization desirability.** Item 31 asks the subject to agree or disagree with the statement, "I find this organization very desirable." This item is the dependent variable for organization desirability as in earlier applicant research.

**Interest in pursuing employment with this company.** This one-item measure is question 32 in the questionnaire. This serves to measure subjects' interest in following up the interview.

**Willingness to accept a job offer.** The subject is also asked to respond to the statement "If offered, I would accept a job with this company". This is the third
dependent variable to tap the subject's evaluation of the organization.

**Manipulation Checks**

**Script Pretest**

Before the videotapes were produced, thirty-eight subjects read and evaluated the four scripts. Evaluation forms asked the subject questions about each segment and then asked the subject to rank the segments on the two criteria, recruiter behavior and information quantity. The scripts are provided in Appendix B and the script questionnaire in Appendix E. The script manipulations for recruiter affect and job information behavior were effective. For the affect manipulation, the subjects evaluated recruiter affect as positive in the positive scripts ($m = 5.31$) and the recruiter affect as negative ($m = 2.03$) in the other two negative scripts. This was a significant difference in behavior ($t_{(1,37)} = 28.60, p < .001$).

Job information behavior in each script was also pretested. Subjects correctly rated the high information condition ($m = 4.97$) and the low information condition ($m = 2.16$). The t-test revealed that this was a significant difference ($t_{(1,37)} = 15.36, p < .001$). Table 2 reports these results. The script pretest subjects also judged all four scripts to be realistic.
Table 2

Script Pretest Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative affect</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>28.60***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High information</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>15.36***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low information</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 38 for all conditions. t values are for two-tailed test.

***p < .001.

Expert Evaluation

After the videotape scripts were pretested and the videotapes produced, three experts were asked to view and evaluate the videotaped segments for a manipulation check and ecological validity. Three faculty were selected for their experience with and knowledge of the selection and interview processes. They determined the four taped interviews were realistic and the manipulations effective.

Pilot Test

Fifty-five student subjects served as pilot test subjects. They were asked to view two of the four
videotaped interviews and evaluate each with the questionnaire. Here, too, the manipulations were found to be effective. Results of the pilot test indicated that recruiter affect was perceived significantly more positive ($F(1, 57) = 87.53, p < .001$) in the two positive conditions ($m = 5.13$) than in the two negative conditions ($m = 1.36$).

The job information behavior manipulation was also effective. Subjects rated job information significantly lower in quantity ($F(1, 57) = 16.33, p < .001$) in the low information conditions ($m = 1.93$) and reported that more information was presented by the recruiter in the high information conditions ($m = 4.25$).

The pilot test was also used to check for ecological validity. Subjects responded to the question "I believe some real interviews could be similar to this one". Pilot test subjects evaluated all four videotapes as realistic ($m$ (low information/positive) = 4.50, $m$ (high information/positive) = 4.58, $m$ (low information/negative) = 4.07, $m$ (high information/negative) = 3.76). These means were not significantly different ($F(4, 54) = .788, p < .538$).

Tests of the Hypotheses

Data were collected from twelve sessions. Only subjects' responses to the first interview they viewed and evaluated were analyzed. Each of the four videotaped
interview segments was shown in the first position in three sessions so the responses were collapsed for the analysis.

Hypotheses one through seven were tested with correlations and hierarchical regression analysis. The latter procedure selects and examines the variables for inclusion and exclusion to the regression equation. It does so by comparing significance levels to established entry and exit requirements. For this analysis, the required significance level of .05 was used for entry consideration and .01 for removal.¹

The first variable considered for entry into the equation is the one with the largest positive or negative correlation with the dependent variable. From this point, stepwise selection also examines to see whether it should remove any variables according to removal criterion. Processing stops if there are no other variables that meet the entry or removal criteria. The resulting equation is the one which explains the most variance in the dependent variable, accounting for intercorrelation among the variables (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Norusis, 1985).

Once the equation has been extracted through the stepwise process, two additional analyses are conducted. First, all other variables are entered into the equation and the $R^2$ and $F$ statistics reported. Second, a new

¹ The entry criterion must be larger than the removal criterion.
regression equation is run using forced entry to indicate the change in $R^2$ and its significance for each variable added to the equation. A significant change in $R^2$ indicates that a variable contributes unique information about the dependent variable that is not available from the other independent variables in the equation. This statistic is provided as additional support that the independent variables with significant change in $R^2$ are the variables that best explain the variance in the dependent variable.

Test for Randomization

An analysis was conducted to test the randomization of the subject groups in each session. This was an important analysis because of the assumption of randomization to the study effects. That is, randomization suggests that applicants' preconceived preferences for job attributes will cancel each other out. Thus, while attributes were designed to be neutral, randomization will help ensure that the only effect on perceptions of job attribute attractiveness will be explained by one of the experimental manipulations.

Data from the demographic portion of the questionnaire was analyzed using chi-square tests to ensure similarity between subject groups. The demographic variables tested for randomization were age, sex, part-time work experience, full-time work experience, the number of interviews the
subject had in the last year, and the number of job offers the subject had within the last year. Table 3 indicates the results of the chi-square analysis. Subjects in each of the twelve sessions did not significantly differ on any of these variables.

Table 3

Chi-square Tests for Randomization of Demographic Variables on the Four Conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time work exp.</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time work exp.</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews in the last year</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers in the last year</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All chi-square values are nonsignificant.

Tests for the Effects of Demographic Variables

The subjects in this study varied on several potentially important demographic variables. Most critical are the subjects' experiences with work and job interviews.
The social inference literature would suggest that subjects with more experience in these areas would have a more developed schema. Subjects with interview and work experience may make fewer inferences and not be as influenced by recruiter affect as those without experience.

Before testing the hypotheses, the demographic variables were tested to determine any significant effects that might confound the research results. Neither the age nor sex of the subject had an effect on number of inferences or perceived job attribute attractiveness. Likewise, interview experience and work experience made no difference on these two variables. Table 4 reports these results.
Table 4
ANOVA for Test of Significance of Demographic Variables on Perceived Job Attribute Attractiveness and the Number of Inferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perceived job attribute attractiveness</th>
<th>Number of inferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of offers in last year</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of interv. in last year</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number years part-time work experience</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number years full-time work experience</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** All reported F values are nonsignificant.

**Test for Multicollinearity**

The correlation matrix (Table 5) reflects a low nonsignificant intercorrelation between the affect manipulation and the job information manipulation (r = .16). This suggests the two manipulations are independent and that multicollinearity, which could confound the results, may not exist.
However, multicollinearity can exist even when none of the correlation coefficients is very large. For this reason, the tolerance level of variables in the equation is analyzed. This statistic warns us when tolerance is unacceptably small (less than .01) for any variable entered in the equation and those remaining after its entry. In other words, the tolerances are recomputed in a stepwise regression after each step. At no time during the analyses did the tolerance reach an unacceptable level. This indicates that multicollinearity did not exist (Norusis, 1985).

The remaining variables were all significantly correlated with each other (Table 5). This is not surprising since each is derived from one of the two independent variables. However, the correlations reflect that the variables should be tested carefully to remove the effects of intercorrelations.
Table 5

Correlation Matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recruiter affect</td>
<td>.18 *</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job information behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of inferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perceived job attribute attractiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Applicant Satisfaction with the quantity of information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Applicant satisfaction with the interview process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organization desirability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Interest in pursuing the job opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Willingness to accept an offer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Point biserial correlations are provided for the nominal independent variables of job information behavior and recruiter affect. All correlations are significant at \( p < .001 \) unless noted.

* 1 & 2 are independent, nominal variables. The phi coefficient of association was calculated.

* \( p \) not significant.
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Analysis of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis one predicted that subjects would make a greater mean number of inferences about job attributes when job information behavior was high. The correlation matrix (Table 5) reveals a highly significant positive correlation between the quantity of information presented by the recruiter and the total inferences made by the subject ($r = .48, p < .001$). Subjects in the high information condition made a greater mean number of inferences ($m = 6.18$) than in the low information condition ($m = 3.73$). Cell means and sizes are reported in Table 6. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test revealed that this difference was statistically significant ($F(1, 156) = 47.27, p < .001$).
Table 6

**Cell Means, Standard Deviations (and Cell Sizes) for Mean Number of Inferences.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job information behavior</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter affect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(44)</td>
<td>(73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(47)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(37)</td>
<td>(84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(76)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(81)</td>
<td>(157)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis two stated that subjects would evaluate job attributes as more attractive when recruiter affect was positive and less attractive when recruiter affect was negative. This hypothesis was supported. The cell means are reported in Table 7. In the positive affect condition, subjects perceived job attributes to be attractive (m = 3.75) while in the negative condition subjects perceived attributes to be less attractive, rating them almost neutral (m = 3.05). These means were found to be significantly different ($F_{(1,155)} = 49.73, p< .001$).
Table 7

Cell Means, Standard Deviations (and Cell Sizes) for Perceived Job Attribute Attractiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job information behavior</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter affect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(29)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(44)</td>
<td>(73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(47)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(36)</td>
<td>(83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(76)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(80)</td>
<td>(156)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the means in Tables 6 and 7 suggest that reported effects might be greater in one condition than in another. For that reason, an ANOVA was conducted on the two dependent variables, number of inferences and perceived job attribute attractiveness. Table 8 reports the results. There was no interaction between recruiter affect and job information behavior indicating no difference in the strength of the effect of either variable under different conditions. Recruiter affect had the same effect on perceived job attribute attractiveness under low and high...
information behaviors. Job information behavior had the same effect on the number of inferences under positive and negative affect conditions.

Table 8

ANOVA Results for Recruiter Affect and Job Information Behavior on Number of Inferences and Perceived Job Attribute Attractiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of inferences</th>
<th>Perceived job attribute attractiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS  df  MS  F</td>
<td>SS  df  MS  F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter affect</td>
<td>38.75  1  38.75  8.05 **</td>
<td>13.61  1  12.61  44.35 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job info. behavior</td>
<td>200.70  1  200.70  41.70 ***</td>
<td>11.01  1  11.01  36.36 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect x information</td>
<td>.33  1  .33  .07</td>
<td>.51  1  .51  1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>275.56  3  91.85  19.08 ***</td>
<td>30.09  3  10.03  32.14 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>736.37  153  4.81</td>
<td>46.01  152  .30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1011.92  156  6.49</td>
<td>76.11  155  .49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p< .001  **p< .01.

Hypothesis three tested the effect of perceived job attribute attractiveness on three applicant reactions, interest in pursuing employment with this organization (pursue), organization desirability (desire) and willingness to accept a job if offered (accept). Perceived job attribute attractiveness was positively and
significantly correlated with each of these dependent variables ($r_{pursue} = .70$, $r_{desire} = .72$, and $r_{accept} = .67$; $p < .001$).

Hypothesis four predicted that perceived job attribute attractiveness would explain more variance in the same three applicant reactions than recruiter affect. This hypothesis was also supported for all three dependent variables. Table 9 indicates the results of the stepwise regression used to test this hypothesis. In all three cases, perceived job attribute attractiveness (attract) accounted for more variance in the criteria than recruiter affect.
Table 9

The Effects of Recruiter Affect and Perceived Job Attribute Attractiveness on Three Criteria: Interest in Pursuing the Job Opportunity, Willingness to Accept an Offer, and Organization Desirability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
<th>Interest in pursuing the job opportunity</th>
<th>Willingness to accept an offer</th>
<th>Organization desirability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived job attribute attractiveness</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>63.52 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter affect</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>11.45 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>67.18 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Table statistics were adapted from Taylor & Bergmann, 1987.

Hypothesis five stated that subjects' satisfaction with information will be positively and significantly correlated with both job information behavior and the number of inferences the subject constructs. Further, greater variance in satisfaction with the amount of information will be explained by job information behavior than by inferences. The first part of this hypothesis was
supported. Subjects' satisfaction with the amount of information presented in the interview is positively and significantly correlated with job information behavior ($r = .50$, $p < .001$) but also significantly and positively correlated to the number of inferences made ($r = .58$, $p < .001$).

Hierarchical regression was used to compare the effect of these two variables for the latter part of hypothesis two (Table 10). The number of inferences the subject makes explains greater variance in satisfaction with the amount of information, contrary to the prediction of hypothesis five. The number of inferences explained $34\%$ of the variance in satisfaction with information ($F_{(1,156)} = 38.43$, $p < .001$). The additional variance explained by job information behavior was also significant ($F_{(1,154)} = 16.75$, $p < .001$). The variance explained by these two together was $41\%$ ($F_{(2,153)} = 52.44$, $p < .001$).
Table 10
Hierarchical Regression Coefficients for Predictor
Variables for Applicant Satisfaction with the Amount of
Information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of inferences</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>38.43 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job information behavior</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>16.75 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td></td>
<td>52.44 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Table statistics adapted from Taylor and Bergman (1987).
***p< .001; **p< .01; *p< .01.

Hypothesis six compared the effects of recruiter affect and the applicant's satisfaction with the quantity of information on the applicant's satisfaction with the interview process. While both were predicted to be significantly positively correlated with the dependent variable, satisfaction with the quantity of information was predicted to explain more variance. This hypothesis was
partially supported. Recruiter affect is significantly positively correlated with satisfaction with the interview process ($r = .65$, $p < .001$). Satisfaction with the quantity of information is also significantly positively correlated with satisfaction with the interview process ($r = .76$, $p < .001$). However, counter to predictions, satisfaction with the quantity of information explained more variance in satisfaction with the interview process than recruiter affect ($F(1, 156) = 211.01$, $p < .001$) though the change in explained variance when behavior was added to the model was also significant ($F_{\text{change}} (2, 156) = 68.22$, $p < .001$). Together these variables accounted for 84% of the variance in satisfaction with the interview process.

A hierarchical regression was run to further examine this relationship (Table 11). The results were somewhat different. Satisfaction with the amount of information still explains the most variance in satisfaction with the interview process (58%). Recruiter affect explains an additional 13%. However, perceived job attribute attractiveness also contributed unique explanatory power to this variable (2%). This change in $R^2$ was significant ($F (1, 156) = 9.71$, $p < .01$). Together, these three variables explained 73% of the variance in satisfaction with the interview process.
Table 11
 Hierarchical Regression Coefficients for Predictor Variables
for Applicant Satisfaction with the Interview Process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant satisfaction with the amount of information</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>102.60 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter affect</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>47.73  ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived job attribute attractiveness</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>9.71   **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
<td>134.58 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Table statistics adapted from Taylor and Bergman (1987).

***p< .001; **p< .01; *p< .01.

Hypothesis seven predicted that applicant's satisfaction with the interview process will be positively and significantly correlated with their reactions to the job opportunity. This hypothesis was supported for each reaction. Satisfaction with the interview process is
positively and significantly correlated with willingness to pursue the organization ($r = .73, p < .001$), organization desirability ($r = .70, p < .001$), and willingness to accept a job if offered ($r = .67, p < .001$).

Table 12 reports the results of the hierarchical regression on each of the applicant reaction variables.
### Table 12

Hierarchical Regression Coefficients for Predictor Variables on Three Dependent Variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
<th>Organization desirability</th>
<th>Willingness to accept an offer</th>
<th>Interest in pursuing the job opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>R²</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived job attribute attractiveness</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>36.11 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant satisfaction with the interview process</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>6.40 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant satisfaction with the amount information</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>4.61 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job information behavior</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiter affect</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of inferences</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All variables</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>46.15 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Table statistics adapted from Taylor and Bergman (1987).

***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.
Perceived job attribute attractiveness explained the most variance in organization desirability (52%) \(\left( \frac{F}{1,156} = 36.11, p < .001 \right)\), followed by satisfaction with the interview process (11%) \(\left( \frac{F}{1,156} = 6.40, p < .05 \right)\) and satisfaction with the quantity of information (2%) \(\left( \frac{F}{1,156} = 4.61, p < .05 \right)\) (Table 12).

Willingness to Accept an Offer

The stepwise insertion and deletion of the variables that explained the greatest variance results in willingness to accept an offer revealed that perceived job attribute attractiveness explained the most variance (32%) \(\left( \frac{F}{1,156} = 23.36, p < .001 \right)\) followed by satisfaction with the interview process (21%) \(\left( \frac{F}{1,156} = 19.22, p < .01 \right)\). These two account for 53% of the variance in willingness to accept an offer (Table 12).

Interest in Pursuing the Job Opportunity

The explained variance in the third dependent variable, interest in pursuing the job opportunity with the organization, was related to satisfaction with the interview process and perceived job attribute attractiveness. Sixty percent of the variance was explained by satisfaction with the interview process \(\left( \frac{F}{1,156} = 21.50, p < .001 \right)\) and perceived job attribute attractiveness \(\left( \frac{F}{1,156} = 20.93, p < .001 \right)\). Once these two variables were entered, the remaining variables did not add
significant explanatory power to the variance in interest in pursuing the job opportunity (Table 12).

Other Findings

An additional finding is the influence of recruiter affect on the number of inferences the subject made (see Tables 6 and 8). Recruiter affect had a significant positive effect on the number of inferences applicants made \((F(1, 155) = 8.05, p < .01)\). Subjects made more inferences when recruiter affect was positive \(m = 5.56\) than when the recruiter acted in a negative manner \(m = 4.18\).

Also interesting is the discovery that job information behavior was related to perceived job attributes attractiveness (see Tables 7 and 8). Subjects rated job attributes significantly more attractive \((F(1, 155) = 36.36, p < .001)\) when the recruiter provided more information \(m = 3.75\) than when the recruiter limited information \(m = 3.11\).
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The results of the study suggest that applicants' social inferential processes affect their evaluation of a job opportunity. The inferences and preferences constructed by the inferential process directly and indirectly affect the applicant's evaluation of the job opportunity as measured by perceptions of organization desirability, willingness to accept an offer, and interest in pursuing employment with the organization.

This study tested the effect of two recruiter behaviors, job information behavior and recruiter affect, on applicant reactions to a job opportunity. The two behaviors were predicted to influence the applicant's construction of inferences and preferences, respectively. These, in turn, were predicted to influence the applicant's evaluation of the job opportunity.

The effect of recruiter information behavior was tested by hypotheses one, five, six, and seven. The results suggest that more information leads to more inferences which, in turn, increase the applicant's satisfaction with interview information. This level of
satisfaction is significantly related to satisfaction with the interview process and together the two explain 13% of the variance in organization desirability. Satisfaction with the interview process also explains 21% of the variance in willingness to accept an offer and 52% of the variance in interest in pursuing the job opportunity.

Inferences, however, are subjective constructions that may or may not reflect real facts. Subjects were asked to report information they believed they received. Though the stimulus videotape provided some information, subjects' assumed the existence of other job and organization attributes. The inferences were constructed without real knowledge or presentation.

This is a paradox for the applicant. Applicants require more realistic information to construct knowledge about the job opportunity, thereby improving their job decision. But, inferences arise from inferential processes are sometimes imperfect. While it was beyond the scope of this study to measure the accuracy of applicant inferences, the findings imply that accuracy may be a problem. Applicants may infer unrealistic expectations, thus, applicants who are better at processing information and constructing inferences (those who make fewer inferential mistakes) will be better judges of job opportunities while those whose inferential processes are flawed may not be able to accurately judge a person-organization match.
Accurate or not, the subjects in this study relied on this subjective knowledge to make judgments of the job opportunity.

Hypotheses two, three, four, six, and seven tested the effect of the second recruiter behavior, recruiter affect, on the applicant's evaluation. These findings were also conclusive.

Job attributes were perceived as more attractive when presented by a recruiter displaying positive affect. Positively perceived job attributes explained more variance in applicant's perceptions of organization desirability, willingness to accept an offer, and interest in pursuing the job opportunity than recruiter affect. Recruiter affect and perceived job attribute attractiveness led to applicant satisfaction with the interview process which, in turn, also increased the explained variance in the three criteria. Perceived job attribute attractiveness explained the most variance in organization desirability and willingness to accept an offer.

The study suggests that the applicant's perceptual process used recruiter affect as a representation or reference from which the attractiveness of job attributes was constructed. The same job attribute presented by a warm, friendly recruiter was evaluated as more attractive than when presented by a cold, unfriendly recruiter.
Rather than a direct relationship, the present study revealed that recruiter affect has an indirect effect on applicant reactions. Using the hierarchical procedure, recruiter affect dropped out of the equations for each reaction variable. Recruiter affect either operates through perceived job attribute attractiveness or through satisfaction with the interview process. The model presented in Figure 3 depicts the applicants evaluation process. It illustrates the importance of job attribute attractiveness to applicant reactions of desirability and willingness to accept an offer. Satisfaction with the quantity of information explains variance in organization desirability. Applicant's satisfaction with the interview process contributes the most explanatory power to willingness to pursue the job opportunity. Likewise, the model further displays the importance of job information behavior which influences the creation of inferences about attributes that, in turn, increase satisfaction with information.

Interestingly, applicants also made significantly more inferences when recruiter behavior was positive (Table 6). They also perceived job attributes as more attractive when the recruiter presented more information (Table 7).
Figure 3. A revised model of applicant evaluations of job opportunities.
Manipulation checks verified that the methodology did not explain these two phenomena. (The two behaviors manipulated in this study, recruiter affect and recruiter information behavior, were not found to be correlated. Further, comparisons of the manipulations of the same behavior (the two low information conditions, the two high information conditions, the two positive recruiter affect and the two negative recruiter affect) did not significantly differ.) Thus, an alternative explanation must be sought for these findings. For the former, one explanation may be that positive feelings stimulate more cognitive encoding resulting in more inferences than negative feelings. This is an interesting proposition requiring further research. In the latter case, applicants apparently use additional information to evaluate, as more attractive, attributes already presented or inferred. For example, simple knowledge of corporate culture may improve the perceived attractiveness of salary or location. Here, too, more research is required.

The present study held job attribute attractiveness constant, varied recruiter behavior, and measured the outcome as perceived job attribute attractiveness. This study found that it is perceived job attribute attractiveness that explains applicant reactions. The interpretation that may be made from this study is that the recruiter's behavior has a major influence on the
perception of job attribute attractiveness which, in turn, affects the applicant's reaction to the job opportunity.

For recruiting purposes, then, more information contributes to more positive evaluations. Recruiters are likely to interest a job applicant simply by providing more information. Recruiters may also choose to attend to their verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Their positive behaviors lead to increased perceptions of job attribute attractiveness, greater satisfaction with the interview process and positive reactions to the job opportunity.

Another interesting finding is difference in the size of the explained variance (R²) for each of the dependent variables (Table 12). The predictors contributing to organization desirability explained 65% of its variance. Those contributing to interest in pursuing the opportunity contributed 60% to its explained variance. However, those contributing to the variance in willingness to accept an offer explained only 53% of the variance. This may indicate the willingness on the part of the applicant to judge the desirability of an opportunity, yet hesitancy to accept or decline the opportunity based upon a single seven minute interview. This also supports the methodology of maintaining separate measures of applicants' reactions. To applicants, offer acceptance is conceptually different from interest in pursuing the opportunity and organization
desirability as indicators of their reaction to the organization.

Intuitively, we expect subjects with interview experience and/or work experience to be less naive, and therefore, less influenced by recruiter behavior. The experienced subject should have a more developed schema of interviews and organizational life. Their experience with recruiters as representatives of an organization and job should make them more cautious. However, these differences did not occur in this population. One explanation may be that most of the subjects were under 22 years of age. They may not have had the kinds of experiences necessary to prepare them to ignore some cues while attending to others. A second explanation may be that age and experience do not change our inferential and preferential processes. The processes may continue to operate on our judgements even when we know better. A test on an older, more experienced subject population should be conducted to see if differences do exist. This will also improve the generalizability of these findings to populations other than students.

Summary, Benefit, Implications and Future Research

Summary of the Inferential Process

This study illustrates that inferences and preferences are formed by applicants. Cognitive encoding and cognitive
judgement use heuristics which take the cues provided by the recruiter's behavior and the information presented by the recruiter to form inferences and preferences. The cues provided by the recruiter are subjected to short cuts or heuristics. Inferred job attributes and job attribute attractiveness are the outcomes of the applicant's encoding and judgement processes. The applicant constructs perceptions of attributes using representative and reference heuristics. The perceived job attributes are constructed from what the recruiter says and how the recruiter acts and reacts with verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

Benefits of the Cognitive Approach

In addition to responding to authors' pleas to address person-perception literature in studies of the interview, this study also provides four additional benefits to research. For the first time, a cognitive psychological model of cognition and social interaction is applied to job applicants. It provides a framework for a process that has not been explained before. The result is a model depicted in Figure 3 which illustrates the cognitive steps applicants use and the cognitive traps that may inhibit an accurate evaluation of the person-organization match. This research may explain why some applicants make the choices they do - some that are made in error.
Second, this research taps the construction of inferences. Through a comparison of the data provided to applicants with the information they believe they possess after the interview, a measure of inferences may be made. This provides a greater understanding of the applicant's evaluation of the job opportunity that is not afforded by earlier applicant research. It aids our understanding as to why what the recruiter tells the applicant differs from what applicants actually know, what they think they know and what we think they know (Schwab et al., 1987).

Third, this research indicates that post-interview attitudes toward job attributes are, in part, constructed by the applicant during the interview. This is a departure from past research which suggests that preferences for job attributes are fixed and unaffected by the recruiter's presentation. It is evident from this research that applicants do construct preferences for attributes and these influence their evaluations. This study demonstrates that exposure to the recruiter alters preferences. For example, applicants may report a preference for a $25,000 salary over a $20,000 salary. But when held constant, the same $20,000 will be judged more attractive when presented by some recruiters than others. This research suggests that applicants not only use attractive job attributes to evaluate opportunities, but also manipulate their
perception of the attractiveness of the attributes and use their perception to evaluate opportunities.

Finally, studying the inferential process has uncovered the two recruiter behaviors that indirectly affect applicants' evaluations, recruiter affect and job information behavior. The previous research suggests that applicants evaluate only the available visible factors (e.g., recruiter characteristics and job attributes). Now there is evidence that other variables may be at work.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has five limitations. First, students served as subjects. Some authors argue that use of student subjects restricts the generalizability of the research findings to the broader population (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Gordon, Slade & Schmitt, 1986). However, the use of students in this study is valid for three reasons. First, use of student subjects is generally considered appropriate (preferred) in instances of theory-building where greater attention must be paid to experimental controls and internal validity than to the generalizability of the sample (Farber, 1982; Greenberg, 1987). Second, the results of this study are, at a minimum, externally valid for the population of college graduates seeking employment each year. College graduates comprise a large percentage of job seekers (Monthly Labor Review, 1989). Third,
experienced students in this sample (those with interview and work experience) reacted the same as inexperienced students. It appears, then, that interview and work experience may not excuse individuals from making inferences and forming preferences based upon recruiter behavior. Regardless of the appropriateness of using students in this study, additional studies on other organizational samples should be conducted to improve the validity of these results.

A second and more critical threat to external validity is the use of artificial interviews produced on videotape. While artificial interviews were used to prevent any confounding variables and thereby improve internal validity, and though subjects reported that the interviews were realistic, actual interview settings may prompt a different set of reactions to job opportunities. Additional research should be conducted using authentic interviews to support the validity of these findings.

This research illustrated the potential effect of two recruiter variables on applicant reactions to job opportunities. In this respect, it was limited in scope. There may be many additional variables that influence applicants that remain untested by this research. Future research may incorporate additional variables such as the interview environment, corporate literature, and additional
recruiter characteristics to add to our knowledge of applicant reactions.

A fourth limitation of this study is the potential for common method variance. All of the variables in this study with the exception of the two manipulated independent variables were measured with the use of a questionnaire. Future research should address this problem with methodological or statistical processes.

A final limitation of this study is that it only addresses the recruitment or screening interview. It does not attempt to explain applicant reactions to interviews in which multiple recruiters are present, in which job incumbents conduct the interview, or where plant visits are utilized. These forms of interviews can have a significantly different impact on applicants and their reactions.

An additional consideration for future research for this and other applicant reaction models is to conduct path analysis to verify the model. For this study, the sample size was inadequate for the number of variables for a path analysis to be conducted. Future studies should overcome this deficiency to allow for analysis of applicant reaction models.

Summary

The inferential process suggests an explanation of why applicants' evaluations of person-organization fit may
be imperfect and why applicants may find their job expectations unmet. This may suggest that we restudy and reevaluate the recruitment interview as an appropriate source of information for the applicant.

Applicants and organizations may benefit from understanding the inferential processes. First, applicants may be trained to acknowledge their inferential process and its heuristics and improve their judgements. They may learn to seek more sources of information and not rely too heavily on recruitment interviews. Applicants may be made aware of recruiter behaviors that influence their preferences. They may be taught to refrain from drawing too many conclusions or making assumptions about the recruiter as a representative of the organization.

Organizations may learn to carefully select members to represent them in the recruitment process. Representatives, especially recruiters, may be trained to recognize (and alter) the effects of their behavior and information on applicants' evaluations. Together, recruiters and applicants may improve the applicant's ability to evaluate the person-organization fit thereby improving the organization's retention rates.
Table A-1

The experimental design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIDEOTAPE</th>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>COLOR-CODE</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>HIGH/POSITIVE</td>
<td>PINK</td>
<td>8:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>LOW/POSITIVE</td>
<td>GREEN</td>
<td>7:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>LOW/NEGATIVE</td>
<td>BLUE</td>
<td>6:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>HIGH/NEGATIVE</td>
<td>YELLOW</td>
<td>8:29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUBJECT CODES:
A = GROUP STAYS IN ROOM ONE FOR TWO SEGMENTS.
B = GROUP STAYS IN ROOM TWO FOR TWO SEGMENTS.
C = GROUP MOVES FROM ROOM 1 TO ROOM 2.
D = GROUP MOVES FROM ROOM 2 TO ROOM 1.

PERMUTATION:  $4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 / 2 = 12$ CELLS

Therefore,  
01 = yellow/pink  
02 = green/blue  
03 = pink/green  
04 = yellow/blue  
05 = pink/blue  
06 = yellow/green  
07 = blue/pink  
08 = green/yellow  
09 = blue/yellow  
10 = green/pink  
11 = blue/green  
12 = pink/yellow
Table A-2

T-tests for group comparisons of order effects (means (and standard deviations) of first viewing and second viewing of the same interview segment.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Inferences</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low information</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative affect</td>
<td>(2.42)</td>
<td>(1.87)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low information</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect</td>
<td>(2.53)</td>
<td>(2.63)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High information</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative affect</td>
<td>(1.72)</td>
<td>(2.41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High information</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect</td>
<td>(1.93)</td>
<td>(1.32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceived job attribute attractiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low information</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative affect</td>
<td>( .60)</td>
<td>( .58)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low information</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect</td>
<td>( .60)</td>
<td>( .69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High information</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative affect</td>
<td>( .52)</td>
<td>( .61)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High information</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive affect</td>
<td>( .48)</td>
<td>( .47)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All two-tailed t values are nonsignificant unless otherwise noted.

***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05.
APPENDIX B

VIDEOTAPED INTERVIEW SCRIPTS
Script 1: Positive recruiter affect and low job information behavior.

Scene opens with the recruiter sitting at a desk. The applicant enters. Recruiter walks toward applicant, hand extended. He shakes the applicant's hand, smiles and nods.

Recruiter: Hello, John, I've been looking forward to meeting you since I saw your resume; I'm Jack Smith.

Applicant: Thanks, it's nice to meet you.

Recruiter: Have a seat, would you like some coffee?

Applicant: No, thanks.

R: Did you have any trouble finding our office?

A: No, but I had some trouble finding a parking space.

R: Yes, parking is tricky here; the owners of the building are promising a new parking deck. I'll believe when I see it. Well, let's get started. Did you read the literature I mailed to you?

A: Yes.

R: Do you have any questions on it?

A: No, it was very clear.

R: Okay, first, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your background. Some of the things in your resume look very interesting and applicable to the job we have open. Then, I'll give you some information about the company. After that, I'll be happy to entertain any questions you have, okay?

A: That sounds good.

R: John, I noted in your resume that you worked for the College fund raising committee. Tell me a little about that.

Applicant: Well, I worked with a project team to design and run different advertising campaigns. Since it was University sponsored advertising, we had to keep our costs within a budget. We thought up the ad campaigns in committee and then we were each responsible for some part of following up. I generally chose to work with the printed media; you know, coordinate with the printers,
design mailings, put together mailing lists, and place posters.

Recruiter: (looking interested) Say, that's great. It's nice to meet an applicant with some experience. Let's discuss your classes - which ones did you do well in and which did you like?

Applicant: Well, I preferred the classes that were project oriented. I never cared for the "lecture only" type. I didn't seem to get a lot out of those. I seemed to do better and learn more when I participated in projects and could see results of what I did.

Recruiter: That makes a lot of sense. I bet you get along well with people, too.

Applicant: Yes, I enjoy working with people and I belong to a couple of social organizations, too. I participate in intramural and I'm the vice-president of my fraternity and treasurer of the business club.

R: Oh really, what sports do you participate in?
A: Basketball in the winter, and softball in the summer.

R: That reminds me, I saw in the paper that this College has a pretty good basketball team this year. Do you think they will make the NCAA playoffs?
A: Yes, I think so. The team has some strong talent.

R: Yes, I understand that center, Steve Smith has quite a scoring record.
A: Yah, he's pretty good, all right.

R: Let's get back to you (smiling). Vice-president of your fraternity and treasurer of the business club. Hmm... sounds like you have some good leadership experience. How's your grade point average?
A: I have a 3.3 in my major and 2.9 overall.

R: (nodding) Well, John, it sounds like your background will suit this position nicely. Your grade point average from such a reputable college makes you well qualified for our company. Speaking of college, my daughter attends there, too. She's a sophomore majoring in psychology. Maybe you know her - Sarah Jones?
Applicant: Uh, no, I don't think so. I've never taken a psychology course so I wouldn't have had an opportunity to meet her.

Recruiter: Ah, that's understandable. She really likes the campus. And I think she's doing very well this year. Last year she had some trouble, especially with the required first year courses. This seems like a nice place to go to school; how do you like it?

Applicant: I've learned a lot and enjoyed my classes. The climate is nice and I've enjoyed my extracurricular activities.

Recruiter: It sounds like you've had a good college experience, John. Let's talk about the position we have open and our organization. Please, feel free to stop me and ask questions. I want you to leave with as much information as possible, okay?

Applicant: Sure.

R: The position we hope to fill is for assistant project manager. Most of our employees start in this position, in fact, I did a number of years ago. I sure enjoyed it; it seems like young people learn the job a lot faster now, though. What do you think about the job?

A: It sounds great but can you tell me more about the specific job responsibilities? and is there a training program to introduce me to these projects?

R: Well, the job has changed a lot since I had it and it varies from department to department. I can't give you details but I will find out what it involves. As for training, I think there is a program but I'm not positive. The salary for the position is above industry average; and we provide a full medical benefits package, including dental and eyecare, as well as two weeks vacation per year. Do you have any other questions about the job?

A: Yes, your headquarters are located in Pellton. Will I be working there or at another office?

R: (smiles and nods) Yes, you will be working in Pellton. Its a nice place to live. My wife and I have been there for six years now and are very comfortable.

A: What are the travel requirements for this job?

R: I would say a moderate amount of travel, about one week per month. I really enjoyed the travel when I was in the
job. My wife and I were able to visit a number of places. We have family in California, Florida, New York, and Ohio. We were able to visit each of them on a regular basis. Any other questions? Have you been to southern California? We loved it there; summer all year long.

A: yes, I visited San Diego two years ago. It was great!

R: Let me tell you what to expect about promotional opportunities. It really depends on how much we expand and who leaves. I personally moved up in two years but they tell me that was faster than most. The assistant project manager program is designed to last for two years.

A: What your time frame for making a decision?

Recruiter: I'm glad you asked. I know how hard it is to be waiting to here about job opportunities. So, here's our decision process. We will be interviewing a number of applicants here and at other campuses. Then, my wife and I are taking advantage of low air fares and going to Malibu for vacation. I won't be back in my office until later this month and probably won't have a chance to invite applicants for a second interview until then. I don't want to keep you hanging, however. So, in the meantime, if you need any more information, please don't hesitate to call. Will you do that?

Applicant: Sure.

R: Well, we're almost out of time. Here's my card with my number; I call in for messages every day and I'll be sure to return your call. Is there anything else we need to cover today?

A: I can't think of anything.

R: (Stands, shakes John's hand and walks him to the door, smiling). Well, John, it was really nice to meet you. Keep up the good work at school, OKAY?
Script 2: Positive recruiter affect, high job information behavior.

Scene opens with the recruiter sitting at a desk. The applicant enters. Recruiter walks toward applicant, hand extended. He shakes the applicants hand, smiles and nods.

Recruiter: Hello, John, I've been looking forward to meeting you since I saw your resume; I'm Jack Smith.

Applicant: Thanks, it's nice to meet you.

R: Well, let's get started. Did you read the literature I mailed to you.

A: yes.

R: Do you have any questions on it?

A: No, it was very clear.

R: Okay, first, I'd like to ask you a few questions about your background. Some of the things in your resume look very interesting and applicable to the job we have open. Then, I'll give you some information about the company. After that, I'll be happy to entertain any questions you have, okay?

A: That sounds good.

R: John, I noted in your resume that you worked for the College fund raising committee. Tell me a little about that.

A: Well, I worked with a project team to design and run different advertising campaigns. Since it was University sponsored advertising, we had to keep our costs within a budget. We thought up the ad campaigns in committee and then we were each responsible for some part of following up. I generally chose to work with the printed media; you know, coordinate with the printers, design mailings, put together mailing lists, and place posters.

R: (looking interested) Say, that's great. It's nice to meet an applicant with some experience. Let's discuss your classes - which ones did you do well in and which did you like?

A: Well, I preferred the classes that were project oriented. I never cared for the "lecture only" type. I didn't seem to get a lot out of those. I seemed to do
better and learn more when I participated in projects and could see results of what I did.

R: That makes a lot of sense. I bet you get along well with people, too.

Applicant: yes, I enjoy working with people and I belong to a couple of social organizations, too. I participate in intramurals and I’m the vice-president of my fraternity and treasurer of the business club.

Recruiter: Oh really, what sports do you participate in?

A: basketball in the winter, and softball in the summer.

R: Vice-president of your fraternity and treasurer of the business club. Hmm... sounds like you have some good leadership experience. How’s your grade point average?

A: I have a 3.3 in my major and 2.9 overall.

R: (nodding) Well, John, it sounds like your background will suit this position nicely. Your grade point average from such a reputable college makes you well qualified for our company.

Let’s talk about the position we have open and our organization. Please, feel free to stop me and ask questions. I want you to leave with as much information as possible, okay?

A: Sure.

R: The position we hope to fill is for assistant project manager. Most of our employees start in this position, in fact, I did a number of years ago. The job is very interesting but also very demanding because of the number of products that we produce. You’ll never work on the same project for more than a couple of months at a time. It makes the job very stimulating. In addition, the job holds considerable responsibility. You’ll be responsible for project prioritizing, meeting deadlines, and maintaining a budget. You’ll also have exposure to top management, for example, you’ll have to prepare reports for the Vice-President twice a year and present them. The company atmosphere is pleasant. The President knows everyone’s name. He comes around each department about once a month and asks our opinion on questions he’s concerned with. So, what do you think?

A: It sounds great. Is there a training program to introduce me to these products?
R: Yes, you’ll enter a three-month training program which will teach you all aspects of the business, including an introduction to our product line and your job responsibilities. After the training program is complete, you’ll work with others who have similar educational backgrounds and three to five years of work experience. Your supervisor will provide you with feedback on your performance with a performance appraisal twice a year.

The salary for this position is above industry average, and we provide a full medical benefits package, including dental and eyecare, as well as two weeks vacation per year. After three years, you’ll have three weeks of vacation. Do you have any questions about the job?

Applicant: Yes, your headquarters are located in Pellton. Will I be working there or at another office?

Recruiter: You will be working in Pellton. As you probably know, it has a population of about one half million which means there is a lot of entertainment available from cultural activities to professional sports.

As a matter of fact, I’m glad to hear you play softball - we can use you on our corporate league. Our employees get together once a year for a game at the company picnic. We also have an annual Christmas party.

A: What are the travel requirements for this job?

R: I would say a moderate amount of travel, say about one week per month.

A: What about promotional opportunities?

R: They depend on expansion and who leaves. The assistant project manager program is designed to last for two years. Some people accelerate that while others require more time to learn about the organization. Anytime after two years, however, you can expect to move into project management and head a team of three to five people. After project management, most employees move into department supervision, however, you have a choice of career paths at that point.

A: What is your profitability picture for say, the next ten years.

R: (smiles and nods) Very good. As a matter of fact, we’re the industry leader in metals and wood, and second in plastics and paper. We also have good public relations; we spend a lot of money in the community.
A: What your time frame for making a decision?

R: I'm glad you asked. I know how hard it is to keep waiting to hear about job opportunities. Here's our decision process. We will be interviewing a number of applicants here and at other campuses. I won't be back in my office until later this month and probably won't have a chance to invite applicants for a second interview until then. I don't want to keep you hanging, however. So, in the meantime, if you need any more information, please don't hesitate to call. Will you do that?

A: Sure.

R: Well, we're almost out of time. Here's my card with my number; I call in for messages every day and I'll be sure to return your call. Is there anything else we need to cover today?

A: I can't think of anything.

Recruiter: (stands, shakes hands with John and walks him to the door, smiling.) Well, it was really nice to meet you, John. Keep up the good work at school, okay?
Script 3: Negative recruiter affect and low information behavior.

Scene opens with the recruiter sitting at a desk. The applicant enters. Recruiter ignores the applicant and continues to read. After 15 seconds, the recruiter looks up, motions to the chair and begins.

Recruiter: Hello.

Applicant: Hi.

Recruiter: (frowning) I can't believe the parking situation here. I don't understand why campus visitors can't have a reserved place to park. I had to park 3/4 of a mile away in this rain! And look at this room, no door for privacy? I've never seen such poor accommodations. (pause) Did you read the literature I sent?

A: Yes.

R: Do you have any questions on it?

A: No, it was very clear.

R: (raised eyebrows, sarcastically) Right! Well, let's get started. Why are you interested in working for us?

A: I understand that the position is assistant project manager. I feel qualified by my experience and course work to fill the position.

R: Oh really? Do you have any work experience?

A: Well, I worked with a project team to design and run different advertising campaigns. Since it was University sponsored advertising, we had to keep our costs within a budget. We thought up the ad campaigns in committee and then we were each responsible for some part of following up. I generally chose to work with the printed media; you know, coordinate with the printers, design mailings, put together mailing lists, and place posters.

R: (looking away with boredom). I see. Do you have any other job experience?

A: No, but I have had courses in management and I learn quickly. Is there a training program?

R: I'll get to that later. Let's discuss your classes - which ones did you do well in and which did you like?
A: Well, I preferred the classes that were project oriented. I never cared for the "lecture only" type. I didn't seem to get a lot out of those. I seemed to do better and learn more when I participated in projects and could see results of what I did.

Recruiter: How well do you get along with people?

Applicant: I enjoy working with people and I belong to a couple of social organizations, too. I participate in intramurals and I’m the vice-...

R: (interrupts) What sports do you participate in?

A: Basketball in the winter, and softball in the summer.

R: That reminds me, I saw in the paper that this College has a pretty good basketball team this year. Do you think they will make the NCAA playoffs?

A: Yes, I think so. The team has some strong talent.

R: (stares hard at the applicant) Yah, I understand that center, what’s-his-name, has quite a scoring record?

A: Steve Smith, yah, he’s pretty good, all right. Excuse me, can you tell me about salary and benefits?

R: I’ll get to that in a moment. So, how are your grades?

A: I have a 3.3 in my major and 2.9 overall.

R: (Shakes his head, frowning) Well, fortunately you’re at a reputable college. Speaking of college, my daughter attends here, too. She’s a sophomore majoring in psychology. Maybe you know her – Sarah Jones?

A: Uh, no, I don’t think so. I’ve never taken a psychology course so I wouldn’t have had an opportunity to meet her.

R: Oh well. She likes the school; what do you think of it?

A: I’ve learned a lot and enjoyed my classes. The climate is nice and I’ve enjoyed my extracurricular activities.

R: Well, about the position we have open and our organization: the position we hope to fill is for assistant project manager. Most of our employees start in
this position. Brrr - it is so cold in this room, how come the window doesn't close better? (pause - looking at notes) To be honest, we had someone in mind with more experience.

A: What are some of the specific job requirements?

R: (At this point, recruiter begins taking notes. The applicant's questions appear to be a bother, interrupting his train of thought). About the same as any other starting position, I guess.

A: Is there a training program to introduce me to your products?
Recruiter: I don't know, I guess so.

Applicant: What's the salary and benefit package?

R: (answers impatiently) The salary is about the same as anywhere else, maybe a little higher than industry average. The benefits include a full medical benefits package, including dental and eyecare, as well as two weeks vacation per year.

The job is located at our headquarters in Pellton. My wife and I have been comfortable there for six years.

A: What are the travel requirements for this job?

R: I would say a moderate amount of travel, say about one week per month. I didn't enjoy the travel when I was an assistant project manager. Some people like it, but personally, it disrupts my routine and I really don't like to fly.

A: Yes, what can I expect for promotional opportunities?

R: It's hard to tell; depends on how much we expand and who leaves. It took me two years but that was unusually fast (he brags).

A: What's your profitability picture like for, say, the next ten years?

R: I don't really know. That was in the information I sent you, wasn't it?

A: Uh, no. What's your time frame for making a decision?

R: Well, I'll be busy; it may be awhile before I contact applicants. We will be interviewing a number of applicants here and at other campuses. I'll be visiting three more states and ten different colleges before I get back to my
office later this month. I probably won't have a chance to invite applicants for a second interview until then.

Well, we're out of time. Is there anything else we need to cover today?

A: I can't think of anything.

R: All right, I'll be in touch. (Looks down at paper, ignores applicant's outstretched hand and departure.)
Script 4: Negative recruiter affect, high information behavior.

Scene opens with the recruiter sitting at a desk. The applicant enters. Recruiter ignores the applicant and continues to read. After 15 seconds, the recruiter looks up, motions to the chair and begins.

Recruiter: Hello.

Applicant: Hi.

R: Well, let's get started. Did you read the literature I sent?

A: yes.

R: Do you have any questions on it?

A: No, it was very clear.

R: (raised eyebrows, sarcastically) Right! Well, let's get started. Why are you interested in working for us?

A: I understand that the position is assistant project manager. I feel qualified by my experience and course work to fill the position.

R: Oh really? Do you have any other job experience?

A: Well, I worked with a project team to design and run different advertising campaigns. Since it was University sponsored advertising, we had to keep our costs within a budget. We thought up the ad campaigns in committee and then we were each responsible for some part of following up. I generally chose to work with the printed media; you know, coordinate with the printers, design mailings, put together mailing lists, and place posters.

R: (looking away with boredom). I see. Do you have any other job experience?

A: No, but I have had courses in management and I learn quickly. Is there a training program?

R: I'll get to that later. (looking bored) Lets discuss your classes - which ones did you do well in and which did you like?

A: Well, I preferred the classes that were project oriented. I never cared for the "lecture only" type. I didn't seem to get a lot out of those. I seemed to do
better and learn more when I participated in projects and could see results of what I did.

R: How well do you get along with people?

A: I enjoy working with people and I belong to a couple of social organizations, too. I participate in intramurals and I'm the vice-

Recruiter: (interrupts) what sports do you participate in?

Applicant: basketball in the winter, and softball in the summer. Excuse me, can you tell me about the salary and benefits for this job?

R: Let me ask the questions. So, how are your grades?

A: I have a 3.3 in my major and 2.9 overall.

R: (shakes his head, frowning). Well, fortunately you're at a reputable college.

About the position; most of our employees start as assistant project managers. The job can be very interesting but also demanding because of the number of products that we produce. Someone in this position never works on the same project for more than a couple of months at a time which makes the job very stimulating. In addition, the job holds considerable responsibility. The job requires project prioritizing, meeting deadlines, and maintaining a budget. There is also exposure to top management, for example, the position requires report preparation for the Vice-President twice a year. To be honest, we had someone in mind with more experience.

The company atmosphere is pleasant. The President knows everyone's name. He comes around each department about once a month and asks our opinion on questions he's concerned with.

A: I assume there is a training program to introduce me to these projects?

R: Yes, there is a three-month training program which teaches all aspects of the business, including an introduction to our product line and job responsibilities. After the training program is complete, new employees are assigned to work with others who have similar educational backgrounds and three to five years of work experience. A supervisor provides each employee with feedback on performance with a performance appraisal twice a year.

A: What is the salary and benefit package?
R: (answers impatiently). The salary is a little higher than industry average, I guess. The benefits include full medical benefits, including dental and eyecare, as well as two weeks vacation per year. After three years, employees get three weeks of vacation.

The job is located at our headquarters in Pellton which has a population of about one half million which means there is a lot of entertainment available from cultural activities to professional sports.

Our employees get together once a year for a ball game as well as the usual Christmas parties, and company picnics.

A: What are the travel requirements for this job?

Recruiter: (At this point, the recruiter begins taking notes. The applicant's questions appear to be a bother, interrupting his train of thought). A moderate amount, maybe one week per month.

Applicant: What about promotional opportunities?

R: It's hard to tell; depends on how much we expand and who leaves. Most people move out of the assistant project manager program after two years. Some people accelerate that while others require more time to learn about the organization, especially those without experience. Anytime after two years, however, most people move into project management and head a team of three to five people. After project management, most employees move into department supervision, however, there is a choice of career paths at that point.

A: What is your profitability picture for say, the next ten years.

R: (stifles a yawn) We're the industry leader in metals and wood, and second in plastics and paper. We also have good public relations; we spend a lot of money in the community.

A: What your time frame for making a decision?

R: Well, I'll be busy; it may be awhile before I write you. We will be interviewing a number of applicants here and at other campuses. I won't be back in my office until later this month and probably won't have a chance to invite applicants for a second interview until then.

Well, we're out of time. Is there anything else we need to cover today?

A: I can't think of anything.
R: All right, I'll be in touch. (Looks down at paper, ignores applicant's outstretched hand and departure.)
APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING HANDOUT
Debriefing

Debriefing sheet: to be handed to participants upon study completion.

Thank you for your participation in this experiment. You have been valuable help in studying the recruitment process. The following is a description of the purpose of the experiment.

Each of you viewed two videotaped interviews. There were four videotapes in all. Each videotape was different in recruiter behavior (positive or negative) and the quantity of information you were provided about the job. We were testing to see what effect these two variables had on your evaluation of the organization. We are interested to know if job applicants will make up characteristics about a job when information is limited and the recruiter’s behavior is very positive or very negative.

This phase of the experiment is complete but research continues to improve and enhance the recruitment of job applicants such as yourself. This experiment and many others like it help applicants make better choices about careers. They also help corporations understand how to attract and retain valuable employees.
Thank you again for your help. If you have any comments or questions about this research, contact Anne S. Davis, Research Director, (address).
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE
Instructions: The process of recruiting and placement is always undergoing changes for improvement. Research is required to ensure that changes are beneficial to both you, as a future job applicant, and the organization. We would like to ask your assistance in improving the recruitment process by watching the videotapes and filling out the questionnaires. This will be brief and give us valuable information. YOUR RESPONSES ARE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. THEY WILL BE USED BY THE RESEARCHER ONLY.

You should find one white and two color-coded questionnaires in the folder you have been provided. If you do not, inform your research assistant NOW. You will be asked to watch and evaluate two videotapes. Each videotape is an interview. While watching these interviews, pay careful attention to the recruiter and to what the recruiter is saying. Place yourself in the role of the applicant attempting to evaluate the job opportunity. Simply listen; do not take notes. Once the first videotape is observed, you will be instructed to remove a color-coded questionnaire from this packet. Complete the questionnaire quickly and put it back in the folder. Sit quietly until everyone has finished. You will then view a second videotape. After it is complete, you will again be instructed to remove a color-coded questionnaire from this packet and complete it. Again, complete the questionnaire as quickly as you can and place
it back into the folder. Once you have done this, you may complete the third, one-page questionnaire provided. Return it to the folder and give your folder to the research assistant.
1. Age ____  2. Full time work experience
__________years

3. Sex ____  4. Part time work experience
__________years

5. Class (circle one): freshman  sophomore  junior  senior
grad

6. Number of interviews you have had in the last
year?_________ (Put 0 for none.)

7. Number of job offers you have received in the last
year?_________ (Put 0 for none.)

8. Where did you learn about this workshop (list specific
lass)?_____________________________________________________

(To be copied on white paper.)
QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I: Answer the items below as if you are the job applicant. For each item circle only one response.

-1 = Disagree
0 = I have no information
1 = Agree

Based upon the videotaped job interview I just saw, I believe

1. there will be an opportunity to learn on the job.
   -1 0 1

2. the job requires a training program.
   -1 0 1

3. this organization is very large.
   -1 0 1

4. the supervisor will be cooperative and helpful.
   -1 0 1

5. this organization's salary offer is above industry standard.
   -1 0 1

6. there is high job security.
   -1 0 1

7. the job includes supervising people.
   -1 0 1

8. the medical benefits include dental and eyecare coverage.
   -1 0 1

9. there will be responsibility for decisions.
   -1 0 1

10. the job will be located at corporate headquarters.
    -1 0 1
Answer the items below as if you are the job applicant. For each item circle only one response.

-1 = Disagree
0 = I have no information
1 = Agree

Based upon the videotaped job interview I just saw, I believe

11. there will be an opportunity to see results.
   -1   0   1

12. the job includes a moderate amount of travel.
   -1   0   1

13. the job will utilize abilities and education.
   -1   0   1

14. this organization is very progressive.
   -1   0   1

15. the coworkers will be friendly and cooperative.
   -1   0   1
Section II: Placing yourself in the applicant's position, please answer the following questions about the videotaped job interview you just observed. For each item circle only one response.

Based upon the videotaped job interview I just saw, I find this aspect of the job:

1 = very unattractive  
2 = somewhat unattractive  
3 = neutral  
4 = somewhat attractive  
5 = very attractive  
6 = I have no opinion on this item.

16. organizational climate 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. Coworkers 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. Supervisor 1 2 3 4 5 6
19. Working conditions 1 2 3 4 5 6
20. Degree of job security 1 2 3 4 5 6
21. Salary level 1 2 3 4 5 6
22. Level of Benefits 1 2 3 4 5 6
23. Starting position 1 2 3 4 5 6
24. Job responsibilities 1 2 3 4 5 6
25. Organizational profitability 1 2 3 4 5 6

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE
Section III: As if you were the applicant, please answer the following questions about your assessment of the organization and job. Circle one response for each item.

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = slightly disagree
4 = slightly agree
5 = agree
6 = strongly agree

Based upon the videotaped job interview I just saw:

26. I was very satisfied with the information provided in the interview.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

27. I was very satisfied with the interview process.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

28. I enjoyed the interview.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

29. I believe I have enough information to make a decision about the job.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

30. I feel I have enough information to make a decision about the organization.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

31. I find this organization very desirable.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

32. I would be interested in pursuing employment with this company.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

33. If offered, I would accept a job with this company.
   1  2  3  4  5  6

CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE
Section IV: Answer the following questions about the videotape.
Circle one response for each item.

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = slightly disagree
4 = slightly agree
5 = agree
6 = strongly agree

Based upon the videotaped job interview I just saw, I believe:

34. the recruiter behaved in a friendly, positive and warm manner.

   1  2  3  4  5  6

35. this videotape provided considerable information about the job and the organization.

   1  2  3  4  5  6

36. some real interviews could be similar to this one.

   1  2  3  4  5  6

37. If your response to question 36 was 1, 2, or 3, why?

_________________________________________________________________

(to be copied on color-coded paper.)
PAGE 1: Circle one response for each question below.

This script is very realistic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Slightly Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this script, I believe the recruiter behaved in a friendly, positive and warm manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Slightly Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This script provided considerable information about the job and the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Slightly Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I believe the recruiter in this script is a nice person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Slightly Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I could imagine this interview really taking place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Slightly Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I feel I know a lot about this organization from the information the recruiter provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Slightly Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PAGE 5: Answer the following questions by comparing all four scripts. You may refer back to all scripts if you require.

Rank the scripts 1, 2, 3, or 4 on the following.

Rank them for the most positive behaviors exhibited by the recruiter. (Rank 1 indicates the most warm, friendly, nice recruiter while a rank of 4 indicates the most negative, uninterested, bored recruiter.)

25. _____ Yellow script
26. _____ Blue script
27. _____ Pink script
28. _____ Green script

Rank the scripts with regard to providing the most (1) information about the job and organization to the least (4) information.

29. _____ Yellow script
30. _____ Blue script
31. _____ Pink script
32. _____ Green script

Rank the scripts with regard to the most (1) realistic perspective of an interview to the least (4) realistic perspective of an interview.

33. _____ Yellow script
34. _____ Blue script
35. _____ Pink script
36. _____ Green script

37. What is your gender? ____Male; ____Female

38. Have you had experience with job interviews? ____yes; ____no.

39. Are there any comments about the scripts or the experiment that you would like to make to the researcher?

40. Do you have any suggestions for script content to 1) make it more realistic or 2) provide more information?

UPON COMPLETION OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, PLACE YOUR NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON THE BLANK SHEET OF LINED PAPER PROVIDED. PLACE SCRIPTS AND QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENVELOP. TURN IN THE ENVELOP AND LINED PAPER TO THE ASSISTANT.
LIST OF REFERENCES


