

7-18-2005

The Role of Embeddedness Factors in Predicting the Paths of the Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover

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THE ROLE OF EMBEDDEDNESS FACTORS IN PREDICTING THE PATHS OF THE
UNFOLDING MODEL OF VOLUNTARY TURNOVER

by

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School of the

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI- ST. LOUIS

In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

PSYCHOLOGY

with an emphasis in Industrial and Organizational

August, 2005

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Abstract

A great deal of research has been conducted to determine the relationship between the job satisfaction of employees and the likelihood of their leaving or intending to leave an organization. However, research addressing other reasons why employees may leave their organizations has been lacking. Lee and Mitchell (1994) created the unfolding model of turnover to better define and classify the process employees go through in making decisions to leave their organizations. This model suggests that many people decide to leave their jobs/organizations for reasons other than job dissatisfaction.

In a separate stream of research, Lee and Mitchell and their colleagues also began to examine a concept of embeddedness. They described embeddedness as the attachment employees have to the organization and surrounding environment (e.g., church, community organizations). Although Lee and Mitchell had not integrated their two lines of research, there was adequate evidence to indicate that the connections should be made. As a result, the goal of this dissertation was to extend the unfolding model of turnover by including embeddedness factors as predictors of how individuals decide to quit their jobs and organizations. Three studies were conducted in order to examine several hypotheses related to this goal. The findings indicated that conscientiousness was the embeddedness factor that was most consistently related to the way in which participants decided to leave their jobs. The implications of these findings and considerations for future research are discussed.

The Role of Embeddedness Factors

In Predicting the Paths of the Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover

Much of the research focused on voluntary turnover prior to 1994 was conducted to determine the relationship between the job satisfaction of employees and the likelihood of their leaving or intending to leave an organization. Until 1994, research addressing other reasons why employees leave their organizations had been lacking. Lee and Mitchell (1994) created the unfolding model of turnover to better define and classify the process people go through in making decisions to leave their organizations. This model suggests that earlier perspectives of turnover do not fit the decision processes of many individuals who quit their jobs. Rather than focusing on feelings of dissatisfaction, Lee and Mitchell proposed that jarring events referred to as *shocks* often initiate thoughts about quitting.

Independent from their research on the unfolding model, Lee, Mitchell and their colleagues also began to form a concept of embeddedness to describe the attachment employees have to the organization and surrounding environment. Embeddedness includes elements of personal and organizational fit, sacrifice, and links. Although Lee and Mitchell have not formally integrated their two lines of research, there is ample evidence to indicate that the connection should be made. As a result, the goal of this project is to extend the unfolding model of turnover by including embeddedness factors as predictors of how individuals decide to quit their jobs and organizations.

Voluntary Turnover Research Prior to the Introduction of the Unfolding Model

Early turnover models focused on a variety of antecedents (content) and on a few different processes (process) underlying the decision to leave a job. According to a review of the research conducted by Maertz and Campion (1998), one of the most widely studied groups

of antecedents of voluntary turnover included withdrawal intentions and thoughts about quitting. The relationships between these withdrawal cognitions and turnover were strong, positive, and consistent in the studies that were reported. In addition to withdrawal cognitions, most of the content models of turnover also included affective variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which typically have had moderately negative relationships with actual turnover. Another major antecedent included in most turnover models was the perception of other alternatives to the job. Although the positive relationship between perceived job alternatives and turnover has been found consistently by researchers, the magnitude has typically been small. Other antecedents that have been included in earlier content models of turnover were the future expected utility of quitting, normative pressures from family and friends, and several other variables representing different types of attachment to aspects of the work environment.

Maertz and Campion (1998) also reviewed the various process theories of turnover researched prior to 1994. Most often these theories focused on the links among dissatisfaction, withdrawal cognitions, and actual turnover. The process model that has received the most consistent support was a simplistic model, loosely based on the intermediate linkage model initiated by Mobley (1977), in which dissatisfaction → withdrawal cognitions → turnover. However, most of the process models have also included perceived job alternatives as either an indirect or a direct influence on turnover. Lee and Mitchell (1994) argued that these traditional models of turnover did not account for the decision processes utilized by many individuals. As a result, they proposed the unfolding model to address the previous inadequacies of process models of turnover.

The Unfolding Model of Turnover

Lee and Mitchell's (1994) model of turnover addresses many of the limitations of earlier, more traditional theories of turnover. In their unfolding model of turnover, Lee and Mitchell proposed several reasons why individuals quit their jobs that are not directly due to dissatisfaction or negative job attitudes, which are often the cornerstone of other voluntary turnover models (Hom & Griffeth, 1991, Price & Mueller, 1986). The unfolding model consists of four main paths, one of which is separated into two subpaths, that can be used to classify turnover decisions made by the majority of individuals in various jobs and industries. Only the two decision subpaths outlined by Lee and Mitchell describe quit decisions that result from feelings of job dissatisfaction. The other three decision paths involve factors such as shocks, image violations, and/or searches for alternatives to the job rather than diffuse feelings of dissatisfaction. Inclusion of these paths for turnover decisions that do not necessarily result from job attitudes or dissatisfaction represents a significant theoretical advance in understanding voluntary turnover.

Unlike other models of voluntary turnover, the unfolding model of turnover is based upon image theory and does not assume that all quit decisions develop out of a rational decision-making process. Image theory presents a decision-making model that differs from the rational process by making use of a "screening" mechanism rather than a choice among options. This mechanism occurs rapidly in determining whether incoming information or potential changes in a person's behavior actually become options to be considered in a decision process. Rather than proposing that all people go through a very deliberate process in making the decision to leave an organization, Lee and Mitchell's (1994) model utilizes ideas from image theory to suggest that some people may make relatively quick decisions to leave that do not require much cognitive deliberation. In addition to incorporating ideas from image theory,

Lee and Mitchell also included in their model many of the same factors upon which more traditional models of turnover are based. For example, perceptions and consideration of alternatives to the job are taken into account in both the unfolding model and traditional models, as are job attitudes and withdrawal cognitions. The focus of the unfolding model may make it more useful than other theories from a practical standpoint as well. It differs from other turnover models in that it can be used for understanding and classifying quit decisions into one of four main categories. If the variables that best predict the employees who are most likely to make each type of quit decision can be determined, organizations may be able to better intervene and retain productive employees. This point will be discussed in greater detail in a later section of the paper.

Definitions and Clarification of the Unfolding Model

Before describing each of the paths of the unfolding model, it is necessary to define the main components of the unfolding model. The first component is what Lee and Mitchell referred to as a *shock*. Lee, Mitchell, Wise, and Fireman (1996: 6) describe a shock as “a particular, jarring event that initiates the psychological analyses involved in quitting.” The shock prompts a process of interpretation and must be integrated into the person’s system of beliefs, values, and images. Examples of shocks include marriages, job transfers, serious conflicts with coworkers, and unsolicited job offers. Shocks can be perceived as positive, negative, or neutral; they can be expected or unexpected; they can be associated with the job or work or with factors outside the work. A shock that could be perceived as positive might be a job transfer or the birth of a child. However, different individuals can perceive the same shock or event differently. The shock of a job transfer could be perceived negatively or neutrally, rather than positively. Additionally, whether events are even perceived to be shocks varies

with people's beliefs, values, and frame of reference.

The second component of the model and of several decision paths involves *image violations*. According to Lee and Mitchell (1994), these violations result from some event that leads an individual to determine that he or she cannot integrate his or her values with the shock. As a result, the individual perceives a lack of fit with the organization or with the job and decides to either change the image or to leave the organization. Some general dissatisfaction may result from image violations. However, in the unfolding model, these violations are discussed mainly as resulting from some type of shock.

Scripts are also an important component of the unfolding model of turnover. Scripts are cognitive plans for automatic behavioral sequences in well-known situations. The nature of scripts is such that they are most likely to develop out of past experiences in similar situations. One of the paths of the unfolding model focuses primarily on this scripted behavior.

Another important component of the model is a search for and/or evaluation of alternatives to the job. In their original paper, Lee and Mitchell (1994) did not specify what the alternatives to the job might include. However, in the Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, and Hill (1999) paper they specifically recognized both work and non-work alternatives. Non-work options may include going to graduate school or deciding not to work outside of the home. In their original paper, Lee and Mitchell also hypothesized that the search for and the evaluation of alternatives to the job were processes that occurred simultaneously rather than independently. Lee et al. (1999) modified their hypotheses about search and evaluation in that they recognized that the processes could be intertwined or that each could occur independently. As a result, individuals could be faced with an alternative to their job for which they did not search but to which they give some consideration, and alternatively, they could also search for

alternatives but not find any to be evaluated.

Decision Paths of the Unfolding Model

The main components and distinguishing features of the decision paths are:

- Path 1--a shock triggers enactment of a particular pre-existing plan or script; the person leaves the organization without researching or considering alternatives.
- Path 2--a shock prompts ideas of image violations and leads a person to reconsider his/her attachment to the organization; alternatives are not researched or considered before the individual leaves the organization.
- Path 3--a shock produces image violations that prompt the individual to search for and/or consider other alternatives prior to leaving the organization.
- Path 4a--an individual gradually becomes dissatisfied and leaves without search for or consideration of other alternatives.
- Path 4b--an individual gradually becomes dissatisfied which leads to a search for and/or consideration of alternatives prior to leaving the organization.

Figure 1 displays the important variables in the unfolding model. The paths are defined by whether each of the important variables is present (yes) or absent (no).

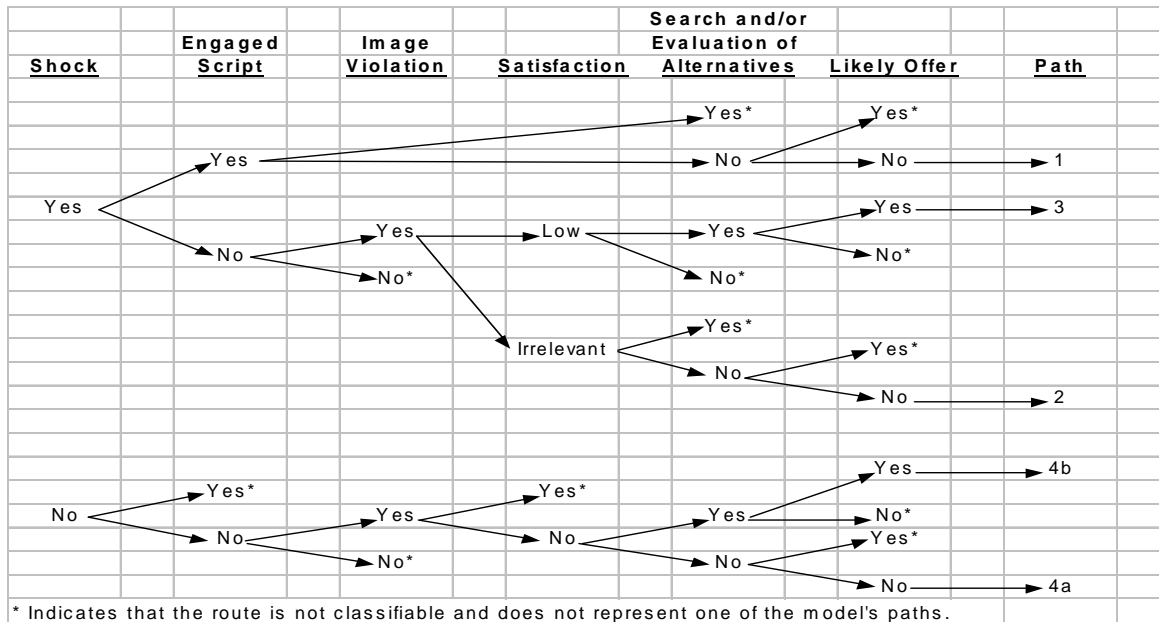


Figure 1: Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, (1999). The unfolding model of voluntary turnover: a replication and extension. Academy of Management Journal, 42, 451.

Path 1 involves an individual's decision to leave the organization as a result of a shock that precipitates a scripted or planned set of behaviors. Lee et al. (1999) use the terms "script" and "action plan" to refer to the same phenomenon. However, there may be some benefit to distinguishing the two. Script is defined as a cognitive plan for automatic behavioral sequences in well-known situations that most likely develop out of past experiences in similar situations. Conversely, an action plan is a pre-determined sequence of behaviors that is not automatic and does not necessarily result from past experience with similar situations. An individual may have a script he or she will enact in response to being passed over for a promotion if it is a situation with which he or she has had experience in other settings or at other times. However, if a person has not had experience with this type of situation in the past, he or she may still have developed an action plan for what he or she would do in response to being passed over for a promotion. Action plans can be developed on the basis of reading about or observing what others have done in similar situations or can be developed from social expectations or normative pressures.

Decision paths 1, 2, and 4a can be distinguished from paths 3 and 4b by a lack of search for or evaluation of alternatives to the job. Although individual decisions classified into paths 1, 2, and 4a may include some consideration of general perceptions of alternatives to the job (e.g., labor market or economic conditions), specific alternatives are not sought or considered. Path 1 decisions are easily distinguishable from those of other paths in that they are the only ones that include a well-defined script or plan of behavior in response to a shock. Paths 4a and 4b are also easily distinguishable from the others because they are the only paths that do not include specific shocks or events that prompt thoughts of quitting but instead focus on gradual dissatisfaction.

Although there are many features that distinguish the decision paths from one another, Lee et al. (1999) have admitted that each of the paths may include some of the features of the other paths to a small degree. For example, they have recognized that individuals may have scripts or plans of action developed to respond to a particular shock. However, if for some reason they cannot enact the script or plan but still decide to quit the job, the decision would actually be classified as either a path 2 or path 3 decision depending on whether or not alternatives to the job were sought and/or considered. Furthermore, dissatisfaction may also play a role in the turnover decisions of paths 1, 2, and 3; however, to be correctly classified, the actual decisions for these paths must stem directly from a specific shock.

The Unfolding Model--Predictors of Voluntary Turnover

The most significant contribution of the unfolding model is the acknowledgement of factors other than satisfaction and job attitudes having an impact on individuals' decisions to leave an organization. Lee and Mitchell have proposed the concept of *embeddedness* to help integrate their ideas about how turnover decisions are made with the existing literature that demonstrates how job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement relate to voluntary turnover decisions.

In the Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, and Erez (1999a) paper, embeddedness is described as the attachment employees have to the organization and surrounding environment. Many factors help to embed individuals in their jobs and organizations. As a result of these factors, people may be encouraged to stay rather than to leave their jobs. These embeddedness factors include elements of personal and organizational fit, sacrifice, and links. More specifically, fit refers to an individual's perceived match or comfort with the organization and with the surrounding environment, including the community. Sacrifices are the benefits and

perks that would be given up if the individual chooses to leave the organization. They include travel opportunities, rewarding work assignments, and retirement benefits. According to Lee and Mitchell, links refer to both the formal and informal ties that an individual has to the job and organization and to the community. Examples of links include memberships in churches and other community organizations as well as any work-related groups.

Mitchell et al. (1999a) hypothesized that individuals who are more embedded in their organizations and their communities generally will be less likely to leave their organizations. However, by including personal ties to and fit with the surrounding community in addition to the organization, the researchers may have reduced the power of their overall measure of embeddedness for predicting whether an individual will leave their current organization to obtain work at another organization in the surrounding community. Mitchell et al. (1999a: 11) indicated that they used a composite variable to represent the embeddedness construct because it is a new construct, and “simplicity was deemed critical.” However, their studies showed that the facets of fit with community, stability (non-job) links, and sacrifices associated with the community had the weakest average relationships with participants’ intention to leave their current organizations. Conversely, sacrifices, links, and fit associated with the organization had stronger average correlations with the intention to leave the organization.

Results of Studies Conducted to Test the Unfolding Model

Lee and Mitchell, along with several of their colleagues, have conducted studies to test parts of their unfolding model of turnover. They have found that, in general, individuals’ turnover decisions can be classified into one of the four main paths they specified. They have also found that more people leave their jobs and organizations due to shocks (Paths 1-3) than due to dissatisfaction (Paths 4a & 4b).

Lee et al. (1996) conducted the first empirical test of the unfolding model with a relatively small sample of 44 nurses who had voluntarily quit their jobs at hospitals. They interviewed the nurses using questions that assessed the major components of the unfolding model, including shocks and search for alternatives to the job. They also sent out follow-up surveys to the nurses in order to assess the reliability of the information that was obtained in the interviews. Responses from the interviews were categorized into one of the decision paths by two of the paper's authors who had not conducted the interviews. The responses from 11 of the nurses did not fit a particular path. Overall, the results of Lee et al. (1996) showed that 20 of the 33 classified turnover decisions were due to shocks rather than to dissatisfaction. Even with a small sample of participants and a high percentage (25%) of unclassifiable decisions, the study made a significant contribution to research on turnover by defining specific paths for quit decisions stemming from particular events rather than from diffuse job dissatisfaction. The study also highlighted many opportunities for future research and clarification of the unfolding model of turnover.

The Lee et al. (1999) study was conducted with a sample of 229 individuals who had quit their jobs at one of the Big 6 public accounting firms. Information about the factors that led to the decisions to quit were obtained through a questionnaire that included items assessing the major components of the unfolding model. Quit decisions were then categorized into one of the main decision paths by the four authors and a volunteer who had no connection to the study. The categorization process was based upon predetermined decision rules for the participants' responses to the questionnaire items. The results of Lee et al. (1999) were even more skewed than the results of the Lee et al. (1996) study, with 149 of the 212 classified decisions resulting from shocks rather than from dissatisfaction. This is not to say that those

who left via dissatisfaction paths did not experience any events that could be considered shocks; however to be classified as dissatisfaction paths, the reasons for leaving must include some form of dissatisfaction that was not the result of a single, particular event.

Several modifications were made to the unfolding model, including the addition of consideration of non-work alternatives and the clarification of the distinction between job search and evaluation of an offer, that did subsequently lead to improved classification of the turnover decisions in the Lee et al. (1999) study. However, even though the classification rate was better when compared with the study done in 1996, 17 individuals in the 1999 study could not be classified. Twelve of these unclassified decisions could have been categorized as path 3 decisions if they had reported image violations. As a result, there seems to be a considerable group of individuals who report shocks but do not experience image violations even though they do search for or evaluate alternatives to the job.

In the study conducted by Mitchell, Holtom, and Lee (1999b) with 232 grocery store employees, embeddedness was measured along with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, and intent to turnover. In this study, embeddedness was measured with 43 items that loaded onto 6 factors. These six factors represented the job-related and non job-related components of fit, links, and sacrifice that Mitchell et al. hypothesized as making up the construct of embeddedness. In this study, embeddedness was considered both as a global measure and as a composite of the six more specific factors. Mitchell et al. (1999b) found that embeddedness had significant incremental prediction of voluntary turnover over job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement. More specifically, the fit with the organization and the sacrifices from leaving the organization factors showed the strongest relationships with people's intention to leave.

Although results of the initial studies support much of Lee and Mitchell's unfolding model, they have yet to conduct a full test of their model. Their studies of classifying turnover decisions into one of the four main paths described previously and studies investigating the appropriateness of predicting voluntary turnover with measures of their concept of embeddedness have remained relatively separate. Lee and Mitchell (1994) made some informal predictions about what characteristics of the individual may lead to use of the different decision paths, but have not formally hypothesized or tested any of these relationships. Since they have only begun to examine how the different paths may be differentially predicted by various factors including those associated with their concept of embeddedness, age, marital status, and occupation, making these links is the next important step. This will be the focus of the current study.

Issues to Consider in Predicting Voluntary Turnover

Although Lee, Mitchell, and their colleagues have developed the construct of embeddedness in order to predict turnover decisions that often do not result from negative job attitudes or dissatisfaction, there are some drawbacks to focusing solely on that construct and its subcomponents. One limitation is that the construct is made up of several smaller constructs (fit, sacrifice, and links) that do not represent the entire array of variables that might *embed* individuals in their jobs or organizations. For example, personal characteristics such as willingness to take risks and conscientiousness might reflect how embedded a particular person would be in any job, while the embeddedness associated with ties to and fit with the circumstances may be more closely associated with a particular job.

As mentioned earlier, another limitation to the use of the Mitchell et al. (1999b) construct and measure of embeddedness is the inclusion of links and fit with the community.

This part of the measure has very little power to predict which individuals might have strong ties to the community but may still leave their organizations to find employment with other companies in the surrounding area. The view of Mitchell et al. was that embeddedness should be discussed as a global construct for the sake of simplicity; however, their own paper (Mitchell et al., 1999b) examined the extent to which each of the six factors predicted intent to turnover. As a result of this study, it was apparent that the non-job related factors were less predictive of intent to turnover than the job-related factors. This finding suggests that fit, links, and sacrifice associated with the organization have a stronger relationship to decisions made about leaving the organization, while the fit, links, and sacrifices associated with the surrounding area have a much weaker relationship with the decisions made about leaving the organization. More recently, Lee, Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton, and Holtom (2004) separated the embeddedness construct into two major components, on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness. In this study, they found that the two components differentially predicted work outcomes of absences, turnover, job performance, and organizational citizenship.

Another drawback of focusing solely on embeddedness for predicting voluntary turnover is that the organizational parts of the construct really can not be accurately measured until the individual has spent at least some minimum time working for the organization. For example, the items developed by Lee and his colleagues to measure the fit with the organization include statements such as “My coworkers are similar to me,” and “I believe that my values are compatible with the organization’s values.” In the studies conducted on this topic, respondents to these measures were asked to rate their agreement, on a five-point scale, with many statements similar to those listed above. Employees who had not been on the job or with the organization for very long would have fewer experiences upon which to base their

ratings. As a result, the ratings made by relatively new employees would be held with less confidence than ratings made by employees who had more time with the organization.

From a practical standpoint, many organizations would be most interested in assessing constructs that could help predict turnover decisions, and even the path for the turnover decision, during the hiring process or at a very early stage of employment. If an organization is able to predict which applicants are more likely to leave the organization via path 1, meaning that the decision to leave is a scripted or planned response to a particular shock, the organization may be able to avoid hiring those applicants. The organization may choose to measure in the selection process the characteristics that predict path 1 turnover decisions. It may then decide not to hire those applicants who, based on those characteristics, would be more likely to quit via path 1 in order to reduce unpredictable or unavoidable turnover. Alternatively, the organization may attempt to intervene and try to retain employees who would be most likely to use other decision paths in deciding to leave the organization. For example, if the organization hires individuals who would be predicted to quit via paths including a search for or consideration of alternatives to the job, the organization may be able to communicate a willingness to work with employees who consider leaving the organization in order to pursue other alternatives. This type of intervention may include discussions about opportunities for development and career advancement, the possibility of flextime or part-time accommodations, or the possibility of an increase in salary or bonuses within the current organization. The current studies will address this issue further by allowing employees who have left their jobs to describe any potential interventions the organizations could have utilized to prevent them from leaving their organizations.

Knowing which paths applicants or employees would most likely use in making a

decision to quit may also give the organization some information about how much time there may be to intervene before the individuals actually leave the organization. The Lee et al. (1999) study with accounting firms demonstrated, as expected, that the elapsed time between the first thoughts of quitting and the ultimate decision to leave was longer for the dissatisfaction paths (4a & 4b) than for any of the other paths (1-3). This finding supports Lee and Mitchell's suggestion that an organization may have more time to intervene with those employees who become gradually dissatisfied and decide to leave the organization than with those who decide to leave in response to a shock.

Hypotheses

Past research suggests various personal and situational characteristics will differentially predict the decision paths that people will use in deciding to leave an organization. Findings in the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) literature lend support to predictions about how certain personality characteristics influence intentions and behaviors at work. According to Motowidlo, Borman, and Schmit (1997), personality characteristics represent basic tendencies that affect individuals' habits, preferences, attitudes, and behavior patterns. The meta-analysis conducted by Barrick and Mount (1991) indicated that personality characteristics such as conscientiousness and openness to experience were reliable predictors of turnover across a variety of occupations. Rosse and Noel (1996) also argued that personality characteristics such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, and others relating to perceived control could have direct effects on employee withdrawal behaviors, including voluntary turnover.

According to the results from Barrick and Mount (1991) and to the ideas put forth by Rosse and Noel (1996), personal characteristics with high predictive potential for work habits leading to different paths for turnover decisions include willingness to take risks, openness to

experience, and conscientiousness. These characteristics are important determinants of how confident, persevering, and deliberate individuals may be in the decision process. Highly conscientious individuals are likely to be more deliberate and persevering in their work habits and behaviors, as are individuals who are low in risk taking and openness to experience. As a result, they should be more likely than people who are low in conscientiousness or high in risk taking or openness to experience to consider or search for alternatives before leaving their jobs. Rosse and Noel (1996) also suggested individuals who are highly open to experience may be more likely to perceive alternatives to their current job. As a result, they may not feel that it is necessary to search for other alternatives before leaving their current job.

Hypothesis 1a: Individuals low in conscientiousness will be more likely to leave an organization without searching for or considering other alternatives (i.e., they will use paths 1, 2, and 4a) than will individuals who are high in conscientiousness.

Hypothesis 1b: Individuals who are high in risk taking will be more likely to leave an organization without searching for or considering other alternatives (i.e., they will use paths 1, 2, and 4a) than will individuals who are low in risk taking.

Hypothesis 1c: Individuals high in openness to experience will be more likely to leave an organization without searching for or considering other alternatives (i.e., they will use paths 1, 2, and 4a) than will individuals who are low in openness to experience.

Other personal characteristics that may predict different paths of turnover decisions include demographic variables, such as age and marital status, as well as other measures of commitment and responsibility, such as number of dependents, tendency to save money, and jobs worked at a young age. The results of Hom and Griffeth's (1995) meta-analysis indicated that family responsibilities and number of children were related to lower rates of turnover. Various combinations of personal characteristics such as age, family responsibilities, amount of work experience at a young age, and long tenure at previous jobs reflect how committed and responsible individuals feel for other people, places, and events outside of their work

environment. Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model of turnover provides several ways in which these responsibilities could lead to various types of shocks that prompt thoughts of quitting. For example, an employee may decide to leave an organization in order to relocate to a new community where his or her spouse has gotten a job. However, it has been demonstrated in research on performance appraisal decisions that people who are held accountable (who are more responsible) behave carefully and deliberately when making decisions.

Hypothesis 2a: People having more responsibilities (e.g., older, owning a home) will be more deliberate about making a decision to leave an organization and more likely to seek out or consider other alternatives to the job (i.e., they will use paths 3 and 4b).

Hypothesis 2b: People who report more responsible behavior in the past (e.g., longer tenure at previous jobs, tendency to save rather than spend money, more experience with work at young age) will be more likely to repeat that type of behavior by seeking out and considering alternatives to the job than those who report less responsible behavior (i.e., they will use paths 3 and 4b).

Hypothesis 3 is based on the idea that decisions to leave an organization via path 1 are less deliberate and more automatic (Hom & Griffeth, 1995), especially when the situation is similar to other situations in which the individual has quit in the past. For example, if an individual has previously taken a job, only to leave when a better offer has come along, future quitting decisions under similar circumstances will become more scripted and automatic. Additionally, Rosse and Noel (1996) suggested that individuals who have a history of quitting jobs are less likely to value work and less likely to have reservations about quitting in the future, even if it means being without a job.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals who have voluntarily left many jobs in the past are more likely to use path 1 and a script for leaving the organization than are people who do not have as much experience in quitting previous jobs.

An additional important personal variable is the extent to which an individual believes it would be difficult or easy to find another job. There will be some individuals who believe

that the labor market is very good and that they will be able to find another comparable job easily. These individuals are more likely to perceive fewer consequences of leaving a job than are individuals who perceive few other opportunities. As a result, these individuals will also be less likely to conduct a thorough search for other alternatives before leaving their current job.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals who perceive there to be many alternatives to their jobs will be less likely than those who perceive there to be few alternatives to leave via paths that include search for or consideration of other jobs or opportunities (i.e., they will use paths 3 and 4b).

There are several situational variables that may also influence which decision paths are used. One such factor is the extent to which individuals have an expectation that the job will or will not fully utilize personal skills and abilities. Although the perception of the skill utilization of the job has not been used as a predictor of voluntary turnover, Hom and Griffeth (1995) showed that job involvement was related to voluntary turnover. In this meta-analysis, the more involved the individuals were with their jobs, the less likely they were to quit. In addition, if the job is not one that the individual believes is fully utilizing his or her skills and talents, he or she is more likely to quit with very little deliberation or planning. For example, individuals who work lower level, part-time jobs, such as those in fast food, retail, or customer service, while they are attending college are more likely to quit their jobs without a lot of planning. This may be due to a belief that personal skills and abilities are being underutilized and, as a result, these individuals experience lower involvement in their jobs. In some cases the decisions to leave the organization may be almost automatic; for instance, a college student may automatically quit a job for which he or she is overqualified in terms of skills and abilities at the end of the summer, knowing that classes will be starting again.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals who expect that their jobs will allow them to fully utilize their skills and abilities will be less likely to quit automatically or with little deliberation (i.e., they will use path 1) than individuals who have the opposite

expectation.

Related to the previous hypothesis, there are some people who believe that they have a large number or variety of skills to offer. These people may be more likely to believe that they have several other alternatives to the current job. Especially in lower-paying, unskilled jobs, people who perceive themselves as having many skills might believe they could quit their jobs at any time and for any reason and still have viable alternatives. As a result, they would have no reason to continue to work in the jobs if they face some type of shock that initiates either a scripted response or image violations.

Hypothesis 6: Analysis of turnover decisions will show that people who have a large number of work-related skills (computer-related, interpersonal, etc.) will quit more often due to shocks (paths 1-3) than due to dissatisfaction (paths 4a and 4b).

Other variables important for predicting which paths would be most likely used in different situations include candidates' perceptions of organizational fit and sacrifice aspects of the embeddedness construct. According to Kristof's (1996) review of the literature on person-organization fit, individuals' perceptions of fit with the organization predict satisfaction and commitment, in addition to predicting intentions to quit and actual turnover. Similarly, Schneider's (1983) Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework suggests that people who do not see themselves as fitting into an organization will be more likely to feel increasingly dissatisfied and eventually leave the organization. This lack of fit does not refer to a perceived mismatch between the skills required for the job and the person's skills. Instead, it refers to perceived differences in values. This framework suggests that a perceived lack of fit, in terms of values, should lead to more quit decisions based on dissatisfaction than in response to a particular shock.

Hypothesis 7: Low perceptions of fit (compatibility of values) will lead to more quit decisions based on dissatisfaction (paths 4a & 4b) than on particular shocks (paths 1-3).

According to the findings of the Lee et al. (1999) study, some individuals reported shocks, did not experience image violations, but did search for and/or consider other alternatives to the job before they quit. In such a situation, an individual reports a particular shock that prompts a search for or consideration of other alternatives; however, unlike the other decision paths, this path would not lead to image violations in which the individual's values are perceived to be incongruent with the shock. Lee and his colleagues refer to this situation as a misspecification of the unfolding model; however, it could be viewed as a reasonable addition to the model. This may especially be the case in situations where positive shocks are experienced that do not lead to image violations. As a result, this additional path will be included in this study.

Hypothesis 8: Shocks that are perceived to be positive will be more likely than negative shocks to lead to a decision path that does not include the experience of image violations but does include a search for or consideration of other alternatives to the job.

The final hypothesis is based on the consistent findings from both the Lee et al. (1996) and Lee et al. (1999) studies. The results of both studies showed that more quit decisions were classified as resulting from shocks rather than from dissatisfaction. As a result, the same pattern of findings is expected for this study.

Hypothesis 9: More of the quit decisions will be classified as resulting from shocks (paths 1-3) than from dissatisfaction (paths 4a & 4b).

Method

Three studies were conducted to address the hypotheses. The research was conducted in two settings. The first study was retrospective and involved MBA students. The second was a field study that included two jobs from different industries. Both of these studies used a similar assessment of individual and situational characteristics and the same measure for

classifying turnover decisions. The third study was developed after the first two had been conducted in order to strengthen the overall research. Study 1 and Study 2 were designed to test the same sets of hypotheses; however, hypotheses 4-7 were not tested in Study 1. This difference was due to the retrospective nature of Study 1 and the difficulty of assessing past personal characteristics and circumstances. Study 3 involved asking participants to respond to questions about hypothetical work scenarios that could prompt some people to quit. The initial questionnaire for Study 3 was the same as was used in Study 1. As a result, I was able to test a subset of the hypotheses by utilizing information from the initial questionnaire and participants' reports of how they would respond to various work situations.

Definition of Voluntary Turnover

The definition of voluntary turnover that was used for this study was the same as that cited by Hom and Griffeth (1995). This definition states that voluntary turnover is a “voluntary cessation of membership in an organization by an individual who receives monetary compensation for participating in that organization.” The operationalization of this definition for the current study did not include those individuals who are retiring. Although many researchers have included retirees in their groups of voluntary leavers, I believe that retirement decisions are often not entirely voluntary and therefore would be inappropriate to include in a test of the unfolding model of turnover.

Study 1

Study 1 was designed to utilize MBA students who had voluntarily left a job in the recent past in order to test a subset of the hypotheses. Personal and situational characteristics were assessed in an initial questionnaire. This was followed by a second measure, which focused on the reason and the process that supported the decision to leave the job. Quit

decisions were classified into the appropriate paths. Following the classification of these decisions, analyses were conducted to determine whether there was support for the predicted relationships between the embeddedness factors (personal characteristics) and the paths that were used by participants.

Participants

Participants were recruited for this study from MBA classes at Midwestern universities. Only those individuals who had voluntarily left a job in the past two years were included in the study. The decision to use the two-year time limit was made to reduce problems with recall of the circumstances surrounding the quit decisions. A total of 40 participants completed both sets of questionnaires (one assessing personal and situational characteristics and another assessing the circumstances associated with the decision to leave a previous job and organization).

Procedures

Participants were asked by their instructors to complete two sets of questionnaires either during or outside scheduled class time. The two sets of questionnaires were distributed in separate sessions that were conducted approximately one week apart. This method of separating the two sets of questionnaires in time allowed for some of the measures to be repeated in the second session, thereby providing information that could be used to assess retest reliability.

The first set of questionnaires included 33 items measuring situational and personal characteristics such as conscientiousness, openness to experience, and willingness to take risks. The assumption that these personal characteristics are stable was made in order to avoid rewording the questions to ensure that the respondents answered based on their situations and

circumstances at the time of the quit decision.

The measures of conscientiousness, openness to experience, and willingness to take risks that were included in the initial questionnaire were adapted from various scales of the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP), an online database of internationally-developed personality items. Lewis Goldberg initiated this project and has since compared various scales of the IPIP items to the scales of more traditional personality inventories such as NEO-PI, 16PF, CPI, and HPI. Goldberg showed high correlations between the IPIP scales and the majority of the scales from the more well-known personality instruments. As a result of the high correlations and the better face validity of the IPIP questions, the items from the IPIP scales were utilized in all three studies.

The items assessing these personality characteristics were given as statements to which respondents indicated the degree to which the statement was accurate on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being very inaccurate to 5 being very accurate. For example, one of the conscientiousness items asked respondents to indicate the extent to which the following statement was accurate: "I stick to my chosen path." The conscientiousness measure was made up of 10 items in the initial questionnaire, while the willingness to take risks variable was assessed with 6 items and the openness to experience variable included 9 questions.

The first questionnaire also included a demographic item regarding age, which was measured through five response options (18-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years, 46-55 years, and over 55 years). Several situational variables were also covered in this questionnaire. These variables included: whether or not the person worked outside the home (yes coded as 1, no coded as 2), how many years of experience the person had in that type of job (continuous variable), how much work experience the person obtained before 18 years old (none coded as

1, less than a year coded as 2, 1-2 years coded as 3, more than 2 years coded as 4), and how many jobs the person had voluntarily left in the last five years (continuous variable). Money-related issues, including whether or not the person owned a home (yes coded as 1, no coded as 2) and tended to save (coded as 1) or spend (coded as 2) their money, were also assessed.

All of the items for this questionnaire are presented in Appendix A.

The second questionnaire assessed the presence or absence of shocks, scripts, image violations, job satisfaction, and search for and/or consideration of other alternatives to the job with approximately 40 questions. The specific number of questions depended on which of the personality measures was included for the test-retest correlations; the additional items assessing one of the three personality characteristics provided 6 to 10 extra questions on each of the second questionnaires in this study. The other questions used for this phase of the process were adapted from the Lee et al. (1999) study. Several different types of questions were utilized. The items included a small number that were open-ended, many yes-no, and a large number of questions to be rated on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 indicated the lowest amount or most negative response and 5 indicated the highest amount or most positive response. The Lee et al. (1999) questionnaire is displayed in Appendix B. The questionnaire for this study was modified in order to clarify the meaning of some of the items and to ensure that the items clearly assessed their designated features. This modified questionnaire is located in Appendix C. Appendix C1 shows the questionnaire as it appeared to a participant, while Appendix C2 shows the questionnaire with each of the features labeled. The specific changes to the questionnaire are described in a later section.

The answers to the questionnaire were then used to classify each turnover decision into one of the four main paths of the unfolding model or into the additional path introduced in the

rationale for Hypothesis 8. The guidelines and processes used for classifying the turnover decisions in this study modeled those used by Lee et al. (1999). In the 1999 study, Lee and his colleagues created a set of decision rules to follow based on the answers participants gave to the questions included in the exit survey. Application of these decision rules resulted in the classification of turnover decisions. A defining feature for a particular decision path was determined to be present if the participant responded yes to one or more of the set of questions that assessed the defining feature and if the participant's other responses did not contradict the prior yes responses. For example, if a participant responded that he or she used a script or action plan in making the decision and did not contradict the path 1 classification by responding that alternatives were searched for or considered, the decision would be correctly classified as a path 1 decision.

Two sets of judges were asked to classify the quit decisions for this study. These judges were colleagues who were unfamiliar with the hypotheses of the study and with the details of the unfolding model of turnover. The judges were trained to use the rules created by Lee et al. (1999) to classify each quit decision. The rules for deciding how to classify a quit decision were explained and demonstrated by using completed exit questionnaires as examples. Once the rules had been explained to the judges, they individually classified the decisions from the other completed exit questionnaires. The classification decisions by the two judges were compared. Differences between judges were discussed until an agreement was reached. This occurred in only 4 of the 40 situations, resulting in 90% agreement between judges.

Modified Questionnaire

Some of the most minor changes made to the questionnaire were the deletion of the words "in hand" used to describe "job offer(s)". These words were deemed to be unnecessary

in most cases; as a result, they were deleted from several items in the questionnaire. In some of the items asking about unsolicited job offers or inquiries, the wording was changed to focus mainly on unsolicited inquiries, since completely unsolicited offers are less likely to occur. Wording changes were also made in the “image violation” category of questions, with the word “organization” taking the place of the word “firm.” There were changes made in the wording of the “search” questions as well. These items were reworded to focus more specifically on a search conducted with some effort to find another job or non-work alternative. In addition, item number four in the “shocks” category was modified by the elimination of the phrase “related to litigation” in order to make the item more understandable to the study’s participants.

Some questions were also eliminated from the original questionnaire to make it more relevant for these studies. The first item (item #1) from the “scripts” category of questions was eliminated because it was asked in another section of the questionnaire and it did not relate directly to the script feature of the unfolding model. In the “job satisfaction” category, all of the items were condensed into two questions, one assessing overall job satisfaction and the other assessing satisfaction with the organization and the work environment. Item number two from the “evaluation” category and item number five of the “job offers” category were removed because they seemed to assess general perceptions rather than specific evaluation of alternatives or specific job offers.

Four items were added to the questionnaire. One question was added to assess the participant’s evaluation of the shock as positive, negative, or neutral. A question assessing whether the organization could have done anything to prevent the individual from quitting was developed in order to determine one or more possible interventions the organization could have made to retain the employee. In addition, two items assessing expectations about the job and

the organization were also included in the questionnaire for Study 2.

The modified questionnaire was pilot tested with a group of individuals unfamiliar with the unfolding model of turnover. The pilot-testing group was asked to participate in the study and, in addition to responding to the questionnaires as if they were true participants, they were also asked to report on any unclear or confusing items. The results of this pilot testing led to the addition of a question asking about whether the quit was voluntary and one asking for a brief description of the reason for the quit decision.

Results

In total, 40 participants completed both questionnaires in Study 1. The majority of the respondents (78%) were between the ages of 18 and 35. Thirty-three (83%) were working outside the home. Of those 33, seventy-six percent had five or fewer years of experience in the job in which they were working. The majority of participants also tended to save their money, did not own a home, and had obtained up to 2 years of work experience before they were 18 years old. The mean number of jobs they had voluntarily left in the previous five years was 2.6, with 5 participants having left 5 or more jobs and 9 having left only 1 job. The descriptive statistics for the variables included in this study are provided in Table 1.

The personality variables assessed in the initial questionnaire included conscientiousness, openness to experience, and willingness to take risks. In order to ensure that these measures had an acceptable level of reliability, both Cronbach's alpha and test-retest correlations were calculated for each. These analyses showed that all of the measures had reasonable levels of reliability. The reliability coefficients for each measure are displayed in the Table 1. The items that made up each of the measures were averaged into a single scale score for the measure. The average conscientiousness level of the participants in this study was

3.88 on the five-point scale (1 = very inaccurate to 5 = very accurate). The average levels of willingness to take risks and openness to experience were 2.62 and 3.47, respectively. Overall, the resulting means and standard deviations of the personality variables in this study are similar to those found in other studies (Palmer & Loveland, 2004; Ployhart, Lim, & Chan, 2001) using Goldberg's (1999) personality inventory. The means for the rest of the embeddedness variables measured in the first questionnaire are also presented in Table 1.

Of the 40 completed second questionnaires, only 25 could be classified into one of the paths of the unfolding model of turnover by the judges who classified the quit decisions. The other 15 were unclassifiable with the Lee et al. (1999) rules. The most frequent reason for the decisions not being able to be classified was that there was a script or action plan that was utilized in making the quit decision along with a search for other alternatives. According to the classification rules, the decision cannot be classified as path 1 when a script is used if there is a search for or consideration of other alternatives to the job. Of those quit decisions that could be classified, four decisions were classified as path 1, 13 were classified as path 3 and 8 were classified as path 4b.

In order to address the research questions for this study, correlations between the embeddedness variables and the quit decision paths were calculated. These correlations are presented in Tables 2 and 3. Because of the low power associated with the small number of classifiable decisions, a $p < .10$ level of significance was used. Even by using the less restrictive alpha level of $p < .10$ for the correlations utilized to test hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c, the power was only .26 for each of those tests (based on an effect size of .20), meaning the probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis was only .26. However, an alpha level greater than .10 was not considered appropriate, as every increase in the alpha level also increases the

probability of a type I error (showing an effect, when there is none).

Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c stated that conscientiousness, willingness to take risks, and openness to experience would be related to the decision paths used by participants. I predicted that individuals low in conscientiousness would be more likely to use paths that did not involve searching for another alternative (paths 1, 2, and 4a). The correlation between conscientiousness and paths (those involving a search and those with no search) was significant ($r = .353, p < .10$) based on 25 classifiable quit decisions. This finding suggested that the less conscientious the person was, the less likely he or she was to search for an alternative before quitting the job. This does provide some support for the hypothesized relationship between conscientiousness and path of quit decision. Hypothesis 1b predicted that those high in risk taking would also be more likely to quit without searching for alternatives. Contrary to this hypothesized relationship, the resulting correlation between risk taking and quit decision path was small and not in the predicted direction ($r = .179, p > .10$). Finally, hypothesis 1c also predicted that those high in openness to experience would be more likely to leave without searching for alternatives. Again, the correlation between openness to experience and quit decision path was not significant and not in the predicted direction ($r = .282, p > .10$).

Hypotheses 2a and 2b predicted that more responsibilities and more responsible behavior would lead to more quit decisions involving a search for other alternatives (paths 3 and 4b). Each of the variables associated with responsibility or responsible behavior (currently working outside the home, age, owning a home, years of experience in job, money, and early work experience) were correlated with the quit path, which was split into two categories, paths with no search and paths with a search. The results are shown in Table 3. The analyses showed that none of the relationships between the responsibility variables and

quit paths were significant. Although the predicted relationships were not significant, the actual numbers of quit decisions with and without a search for alternatives are presented for each of the responsibility variables in Table 4 (unclassifiable decisions are not included). The results show that more responsibilities and responsible behavior as represented by these variables did not lead to more quit decisions that included a search for alternatives than did fewer responsibilities and less responsible behavior. Some of the relationships were in the predicted direction, despite the lack of significance. However, the effect sizes of these relationships (between age and search paths and whether the respondent worked outside the home and the search paths) were very small, with squared correlations of approximately .07.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that individuals who had quit many jobs in the past would be more likely than those who had not quit many jobs to quit via path 1. A correlation between the number of jobs quit in the past five years and quit decision path (path 1 versus the others) was calculated. The results showed that there was no relationship between the two variables, with a correlation of $r = -.01$, based on the 40 participants.

Hypotheses 4-7 were not tested in this study. Hypothesis 8 was developed in order to extend the unfolding model of turnover by adding a path in which participants would experience a shock but would not perceive image violations and would still engage in a search for alternatives to the job. However, in this study, none of the participants reported this type of decision process. Several of the participants reported using a script or action plan in making their decision to quit while experiencing no image violations and then putting effort into a search for other alternatives. Nevertheless, the prevalence of this decision process (shock → no image violations → search) was also examined in the second study.

Finally, consistent with the previous studies by Lee and his colleagues, hypothesis 9

stated that more of the quit decisions would result from shocks than from dissatisfaction. The results of this study support those earlier findings with 17 of the classifiable quit decisions stemming from shocks and 8 stemming from dissatisfaction. In order to determine whether this difference was significant, a chi-square goodness of fit test was conducted. The result was significant ($\chi^2 = 3.24$, $p < .10$), suggesting that there is a tendency for people to quit as a result of shocks rather than dissatisfaction.

Further examination of the unclassifiable quit decisions showed that there were 10 of 15 that involved a script as defined by the classification rules and included a search for or evaluation of other alternatives to the job. Quit decisions having both a script and a search for or evaluation of alternatives were considered to be misspecifications of the unfolding model of turnover. However, in accordance with the ideas put forth by Maertz and Campion (2004), it may be that some people plan in advance to leave a job at the point of a certain event or a specific time rather than using an actual script. In those cases, participants could be more likely to consider alternatives or to search for another job before making the final decision to quit. As a result, an additional path of a shock leading to use of a pre-derived action plan to search for or consider other alternatives before quitting the job was examined in an exploratory manner.

The exploratory analyses were conducted to determine whether the addition of a path involving an action plan and a search for alternatives would change any of the hypothesized relationships between variables. The correlations between each of the embeddedness variables and quit decision paths (those including a search vs. those that did not include a search) were re-calculated, with the new path adding 10 more quit decisions involving a search for alternatives. The results for the exploratory analyses including the 10 additional quit decisions

are shown in Table 5.

The results, based on 35 classified quit decisions, show that the findings are similar to those from the preliminary analyses, in which conscientiousness was the only variable to have a significant relationship with the decision path. This gives further support to the hypothesis that those who were high in conscientiousness were more likely to search for other alternatives before leaving their jobs. In addition, analysis of the relationships between the other dichotomous variables (money and home ownership) and the decision paths were also not significant, suggesting that the variables associated with responsibilities and responsible behavior were not good predictors of the quit decision paths used by participants in this study.

Discussion

Although there was a large percentage of quit decisions that were unclassifiable in this study, some of the hypothesized relationships did receive support. The most consistent finding based on the initial and the exploratory analyses was that conscientiousness had a significant relationship with the quit decision path utilized by participants. The relationship was such that those who were high in conscientiousness were also more likely to conduct a search for alternatives before leaving the job. Conversely, several of the predicted relationships between the embeddedness variables and the different quit decision paths were not found to be significant.

Another noteworthy finding was that there were no quit decisions that were classified as the new path hypothesized for this research. In the Lee et al. (1999) study, there were 12 of 17 unclassified quit decisions that could have been classified as the new hypothesized path (shock → no image violations → search). Contrary to the approach of Lee and his colleagues who defined this decision process as a misspecification of the unfolding model, I predicted that

this path would be more likely for those individuals who perceived the shock that initiated the quit decision to be positive. Although 10 of the shocks that initiated the quit decisions in this study were reported to be positive, none of them led to the hypothesized path. This was a surprising result that was examined again in the second study.

Unfortunately, there were several factors that may have contributed to problems with this study. Study 1 was retrospective in nature. This method of asking people to retrospectively report their reasons for deciding to leave an organization is associated with problems such as memory decay and biases that may distort perceptions (Campion, 1991). However, use of a structured “exit interview” tool, such as was used for the second questionnaire, should produce more accurate information than unstructured assessments (in Griffith & Hom, 2001). In addition, the number of participants was smaller than expected, which led to fewer classifiable quit decisions and less power for examining the hypothesized relationships. However, the purpose of Study 1 was to capture information from a group of individuals having many different jobs and backgrounds and to serve as an initial test of a subset of the hypotheses described earlier. This purpose was achieved.

Study 2

The choice of the two jobs for the field study was based upon several factors. Two considerations were the selection and quit base rates. A low quit base rate was mentioned as one of the limitations of previous studies cited by Hom and Griffeth (1995). The jobs that were included in this study had annual turnover rates over 50%, and the selection rate was high, which allowed for a large number of people who would be eligible to participate in a reasonable amount of time. Another objective in choosing the jobs for this study was to expand the types of industries and jobs that have been included in turnover research. Many studies of

turnover have involved jobs in the healthcare industry. Turnover studies that have focused mainly on the healthcare industry may have inadvertently ignored groups of people who varied more widely in terms of demographic and personal variables. Study 2 was designed to take into account more of the natural variation among individuals in regard to characteristics such as age, status, and several other personal factors.

Participants

The jobs included in this study were long-haul truck driving and customer service-related jobs. After contacting more than 70 organizations to participate in this study, I was able to persuade six companies to be included. Four of the participating organizations were long-haul trucking companies from different regions of the country. The other two companies were located in the Midwest and utilized a variety of customer service-related positions. New employees in both of these jobs were asked to participate in the study.

The sample included people of various ages and backgrounds. The largest number (12) of participants were between the ages of 18 and 25. However, there were 6 participants who were in the 26-35 year age range, 9 in the 36-45 range, and 5 in both the 46-55 range and the over 55 category. In terms of educational attainment, almost 50% of the respondents had taken some college courses or attended technical school, 38% had a high school diploma or less, and fewer than 15% had earned a college degree. Approximately 62% of the respondents were married; about 50% reported having dependents.

Although over 1000 individuals participated in the initial phase of the study, only 37 complete sets of data were obtained from employees who left their organizations while the study was being conducted. Twenty-six of the completed data sets were from truck drivers, while 11 sets of data were from individuals who were in customer service-related jobs. One of

these 37 respondents could not be included in most of the analyses as a result of incomplete data on the second questionnaire. Part of the explanation for the low return rate of the second questionnaire is that one of the participating customer service companies refused to forward their turnover information for those people who had originally participated in the first part of the study. Before the study began, this organization had agreed to provide the turnover information at specific intervals, but as the study progressed, the organization became less and less cooperative. Not only did this eliminate the possibility of sending the second questionnaire to those individuals who had left the organization, it also made it impossible to look at differences in embeddedness factors for those who stayed with the organization opposed to those who left. The low return rate of the second questionnaire for the other companies participating in the study prompted follow-up phone calls to those individuals who had provided their contact information on their initial questionnaires. However, these phone calls resulted in very few additional responses.

Procedures

As part of their new-hire paperwork, employees were asked to complete a questionnaire that would not have any influence on their status with the organization but was for research purposes only. A letter stating these issues accompanied the initial questionnaire (see Appendix D).

The questionnaire was very similar to the one used in Study 1. However, it also assessed respondents' recollections of fit with the organization and expectations about benefits by including items from the Mitchell et al. (1999b) embeddedness questionnaire. These items were presented as statements with an associated 5-point rating scale. Respondents indicated by circling a rating of 1 to 5 how accurate they perceived each statement to be. A rating of 1

represented a very inaccurate statement, while a rating of 5 represented a very accurate statement. Other variables assessed in this study included marital status, number of dependents, perceived alternatives to the job, highest level of education, and work-related skills. Marital status was a yes/no question, where yes was coded as 1.0 and no was coded as 2.0. The number of dependents and highest level of education variables were assessed with several choices of responses. As a result, the coding of the responses to these variables was consistent with the increasing value and order of the responses as they were presented. The variable assessing perceived alternatives to the job was based on three possible responses: no alternatives, few alternatives, and many alternatives, which were coded as 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The work-related skills variable was assessed with an open-ended question; however in the analyses, the variable was defined as the number of different skills that were listed. All of the items for this questionnaire are shown in Appendix E. Appendix E1 shows the questionnaire as it looked to participants, while Appendix E2 shows the questionnaire with each of the measures labeled.

At regular intervals, the participating organizations were asked to provide turnover reports that showed which of the employees who participated in the first part of the study had voluntarily left their jobs. These individuals were mailed a second questionnaire assessing their reasons for leaving the organization. The questionnaire items were essentially the same as in the first study; however, rather than asking about a past decision to leave an organization, the focus was on the current decision to quit. Additionally, participants were also asked whether the former organization could have done anything to prevent them from leaving. A space was included on the questionnaire for recording the details of what could have been done to prevent the quit.

Follow-up phone calls were made to those individuals who did not respond to the mailed questionnaire. In most cases, these follow-up phone calls did not result in additional completed second or exit questionnaires.

Once the exit questionnaires were received, each turnover decision was classified into one of the four main decision paths or in the additional path outlined in Hypothesis 8. The processes for classifying the turnover decisions applied the same set of rules used in Study 1. Only one pair of judges who classified decisions in Study 1 was utilized in this study. Classification decisions by the two judges were compared. In 5 of the 36 situations there was a disagreement between judges, which means 86% of the time the judges agreed with one another. The differences between judges were discussed until an agreement was reached.

Results

The initial questionnaire for this study (which was very similar to that used in the first study) assessed the personal and situational characteristics (conscientiousness, risk taking, openness to experience, perceived organizational fit, and expectations about benefits) of new employees. The scales for each of these variables consisted of several items. For each of the variables, responses on individual items were averaged to obtain a mean value based on a 1 to 5 scale, with a value of 1 being very inaccurate and a value of 5 being very accurate. The descriptive statistics for the variables involved in this study are presented in Table 6.

The means scores of the 37 individuals who completed both questionnaires, suggest that the participants were moderately conscientious and open to experiences, and less willing to take risks. In addition, they had favorable perceptions of fit with the organization and good expectations about benefits associated with the job. As a group, the participants had relatively little experience in their current jobs and reported having several work-related skills.

The main purpose of the second questionnaire was to determine how study participants made their decisions to leave their organizations. Each of the turnover decisions was classified, if possible, into one of the paths put forth by Lee and Mitchell (1994) or the additional hypothesized path. Using the guidelines for classification resulted in the following numbers of each decision path: Path 1—3, Path 2—2, Path 3—17, Path 4a—0, Path 4b—1, new hypothesized path—3, and unclassifiable—10. These findings were similar to previous studies conducted by Lee, Mitchell, and their colleagues in that more of the quit decisions were classified as resulting from shocks than from dissatisfaction. However, contrary to the improvements made in classifying decisions in the 1999 study, a large percentage (28%) of the decisions in this study could not be classified into any of the proposed paths.

Another objective of this study was to examine opportunities for organizations to prevent employees from leaving. Participants in the study were asked whether anything could have been done to prevent them from leaving their former organizations. Over 70% of the respondents indicated that their former organizations could have done something to prevent the quit. The suggested interventions are listed in Table 7. The largest percentage (34%) of suggestions for interventions from those who indicated that their organizations could have prevented them from quitting focused on the organizations keeping their promises to employees. In some cases, these promises had to do with pay and in others, were associated with work expectations or the working environment. Some employees did not believe they were being paid what they had been told they would earn (7%), were not doing the exact work they believed they would be (7%), or the work environment was not as they expected (21%). Two people also reported a need for better supervisors, while two other respondents indicated that additional or better training was needed. Interestingly, only 3 of the 26 respondents who

said that the quit could have been prevented indicated that higher pay would have prevented the decision to quit. This is contrary to the thinking of some of the managers who participated in the study who stated that money is often the best intervention for voluntary turnover.

Hypotheses. All of the hypothesized relationships involved the paths of the turnover decisions from respondents who completed the second questionnaire. Correlational analyses were utilized to examine the hypothesized relationships. Due to the small number of respondents and high number of unclassifiable quit decisions, and in order to maximize power for identifying relationships among variables while also minimizing type I errors, a .10 significance level was used.

Hypothesis 1 stated that certain personal characteristics would be related to a lack of search for other alternatives when deciding to leave the organization. Specifically, the prediction was that those individuals low in conscientiousness, high in risk taking, and high in openness to experience would be more likely to leave the organization via paths 1, 2, and 4a than those individuals who were high in conscientiousness, low in risk taking, and low in openness to experience. The results of the analyses, which are provided in Table 8, showed that the correlations between the personality variables and the decision paths were not significant. In fact, only the correlation between conscientiousness and the quit decision paths was in the expected direction. Those who were lower in conscientiousness were more likely to leave without searching for another alternative. For the openness to experience and the willingness to take risks variables, the correlations with decision paths were in the opposite direction of what was predicted. As a result, none of the hypotheses involving the relationship between personality characteristics and quit decision paths received support.

In order to analyze these data further, the correlations between each of the personality

characteristics and the comprehensiveness of the search for alternatives to the job, as measured in the second questionnaire were calculated. The resulting correlations are provided in Table 9. Since there were so few classifiable decisions that did not include a search for other alternatives (5 of 26), the analysis of the correlations between the level of search and the personality characteristics could suggest underlying relationships that could not be detected by the analyses that focused on decision paths. The results of these correlational analyses showed that only conscientiousness was significantly related to the extent of the search for alternatives to the job ($r = .348, p < .05$).

Hypothesis 2 stated that people who had more responsibilities and reported more responsible behavior in the past would be more likely than those who reported fewer responsibilities and less responsible behavior to quit only after searching for alternatives to the job. The resulting correlations, displayed in Table 10, showed that having more responsibilities (being older, being married, owning a home, and having dependents) was not associated with more quits involving a search for other alternatives. However, the effect size for the relationship between the number of dependents and the use of path involving a search was .09. Although it is a small effect size, it does suggest that there is some relationship between number of dependents and tendency to search for alternatives before quitting. Reporting more responsible behavior in the past (saving money and early work experience) also did not translate into more quit decisions involving a search than did past behavior that was less responsible.

Additional analyses also showed no significant relationships between responsibilities (being married, having dependents, owning a home, and being older) and the extent to which individuals searched for other alternatives to the job. Table 9 includes the descriptive

information and correlations between these variables. The relationships between responsible behavior (saving money and early work experience) and the extent of search were also contradictory to predictions. The relationship between money and extent of search was significant at the $p < .10$ level. However, it was in the opposite direction than predicted, indicating that the tendency to spend money was associated with greater search than was the tendency to save money. This suggests that the hypothesized relationships would not likely have been found given a larger number of classified decision paths in each category (those involving search and those that did not involve search).

Hypothesis 3 proposed that individuals who had voluntarily left many jobs in the past would be more likely to use path 1 for leaving than would people who did not have as much experience quitting previous jobs. The correlation between the number of jobs quit in the past five years and the quit decision paths (path 1 versus the others) was significant, ($r = .420$, $p < .05$). This result is displayed in Table 11. As a result, hypothesis 3 was supported in this study, which suggests that people who have left more jobs in the past will also be more likely to use a script or predefined action plan to leave a subsequent job without searching for alternatives.

The prediction stated in hypothesis 4 was that people who believed they had many alternatives to the job would be less likely than those who perceived few alternatives to quit using decision paths that included a search for other alternatives. The correlation between the perceived alternatives and the search decision paths (shown in Table 11) was not significant, ($r = .266$, $p > .10$). In fact, the correlation was also in the wrong direction, indicating that more perceived alternatives were associated with decision paths involving a search for alternatives to the job. In addition, the correlation between the perceived alternative job opportunities and the level of search for other alternatives was also in the wrong direction and was not statistically

significant ($r = .215$, $p > .10$).

Hypothesis 5 stated that those participants who expected their jobs to fully utilize their skills would be less likely to leave the job automatically or with little deliberation (path 1) than those who did not expect their skills and abilities to be utilized. Although the results displayed in Table 11 showed that the correlation was in the right direction ($r = -.174$, $p > .10$), the relationship between the two variables was small and not significant, with an effect size of .03. As a result, it is impossible to conclude from these data that there was support for this hypothesis.

The prediction for hypothesis 6 was that people who reported having a large number of work-related skills would quit more often in response to shocks than to dissatisfaction. The resulting correlation between number of work-related skills and quit decision paths (shocks coded as 1.0 and dissatisfaction coded as 2.0) was small and not significant ($r = -.079$, $p > .10$). However, one major reason this correlation may have been so small is that there was only one person who left as a result of dissatisfaction, rather than a particular shock. As a result, it is not possible to presume a meaningful result from this information.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that low perceptions of organizational fit would lead to more quit decisions based on dissatisfaction than on particular shocks. Organizational fit was measured by several items in the initial questionnaire. The descriptive information for this variable is included in Table 5. The resulting correlation is presented in Table 11. Although the correlation between perceived organizational fit and quit decision paths was in the predicted direction, it was not significant ($r = -.197$, $p > .10$). Again, the problem associated with having only one quit decision based on dissatisfaction in the entire group of participants most likely restricted the value of the correlation.

In order to examine the relationship between the perceived organizational fit and dissatisfaction more globally, the correlations between organizational fit and satisfaction with both the job and the organization were calculated. The correlations with job satisfaction ($r = .455, p < .01$) and organizational satisfaction ($r = .489, p < .01$) were both positive and significant. This suggests that even though there was only one quit decision that was classified as resulting from dissatisfaction, the overall ratings of dissatisfaction were related to the level of perceived organizational fit. Therefore, future research should further examine the relationship between perceived organizational fit and quit decision paths.

Hypothesis 8 proposed an additional path that included a shock, no image violations, and a search for or evaluation of other alternatives. More specifically, the hypothesis purported that shocks that were perceived positively would be more likely than shocks perceived negatively to lead to quit decisions that followed this new path of shock → no image violations → search/evaluation of alternatives. The correlation between shock evaluation (positive coded as 1, neutral coded as 2, and negative coded as 3) and the quit decision paths was very small and not significant, $r = -.009, p > .10$. Only three decisions were classified as the new path. As a result, the correlation was again most likely restricted by the small number of quit decisions classified as the new path.

Finally, the last hypothesis, in support of the previous findings by Lee and his colleagues, was that more of the quit decisions would be based on shocks than on dissatisfaction. The results of this study are consistent with those findings, in that 25 of the 26 classifiable quit decisions were due to shocks and only 1 was due to dissatisfaction. A chi-square goodness of fit test showed that this result was significant ($\chi^2 = 22.15, p < .01$), indicating that there was a tendency for people to quit as a result of shocks rather than

dissatisfaction.

In order to address the large percentage of unclassifiable decisions, an additional path was added for exploratory analyses. However, unlike the first study, there was not a clear majority of the 10 unclassifiable decisions that could fit into a new path. Three of the quit decisions followed the path that was added in Study 1, which included the use of a script or action plan in addition to a search for alternatives. In order to determine whether the addition of this path would affect the predicted relationships, correlations were re-calculated between some of the embeddedness variables and the quit decision paths (those involving a search and those that did not). The resulting correlations are shown in Table 12.

These exploratory analyses did not lend any additional support for hypotheses 1 or 2. Although the correlation between openness to experience and the quit decision paths was significant at the .10 level, it was in the wrong direction. This seems to suggest that if there is a relationship between openness to experience and the quit decision path, it is of the nature that those who are more open are also more likely to search for alternatives before leaving their jobs. However, the literature does not reveal any theoretical reason why this would be the case.

Although there was not a formal hypothesis outlining a relationship between the expectation about benefits in the organization and the quit decision paths, an exploratory analysis was conducted to determine whether this variable predicted how respondents would decide to leave their jobs. The correlations were calculated for the relationships between the expectations about benefits variable and 1) path 1 (versus all the others), 2) paths due to shocks versus paths due to dissatisfaction, and 3) paths which involved a search versus paths which did not involve a search. The correlation between the expectations about benefits and the use of path 1 was significant ($r = -.364$, $p < .10$), indicating that better expectations about the benefits

in the organization were associated with a lower likelihood of leaving the organization via path 1. The other correlations were not significant. However, the significant finding between the expectations and use of path 1 is interesting and worthy of further study. It suggests that expectations about benefits embed employees in an organization in a way that leads to fewer automatic or immediate decisions to leave in response to a shock.

Discussion

The results from this study generally did not support the hypotheses. However, there were several cases in which there were not enough data to make a good determination about the predicted relationships. One notable finding was that there was a significant relationship between the number of jobs quit in the past five years and the likelihood of utilizing a script or action plan in the quitting process. Because this process (path 1) is more automatic in that it does not include a search for or evaluation of alternatives, organizations may have very little time or opportunity to intervene before the person quits. As a result, it would be useful for organizations to be aware that those individuals who have had more experience quitting other jobs in the past, are more likely to leave automatically in response to some type of shock.

Another interesting finding was the strong relationship between perceived organizational fit and both job and organizational satisfaction. Even though this relationship did not translate into more quit decisions due to dissatisfaction for those who perceived there to be less of a fit with the organization, I believe this could be a fruitful area for future research.

Analyses of the suggestions provided by participants who responded that the organizations could have done something to prevent them from leaving also provided interesting and potentially useful information. Many suggestions centered around the need for the organization to keep its promises. Such information indicates a need and an opportunity for

organizations to reduce the chance of unrealistic expectations by improving communication with employees and applicants.

The organizations that were chosen for this study historically had high levels of annual voluntary turnover. However, during the course of this study, which spanned a period of time that included the events of September 11, 2001, the voluntary turnover rates were much lower than usual. In fact, several of my participating organizations reported that voluntary turnover was no longer a key issue, reflecting the changes in the economy after September 11th. As a result, there were not as many people as anticipated who participated in the first part of this study and then subsequently left their jobs during the time the study was being conducted. In addition, the one organization that refused to provide any turnover information after participating in the first part of the study, further exacerbated the problem of having a small number of respondents who completed both questionnaires. In summary, both the economy and obstacles associated with certain participating institutions contributed to the small number of participants in this study. Therefore, future research would be more beneficial if it were conducted longitudinally with organizations that are committed to the process and to providing the needed data.

Despite the select hypotheses that received some support in this study, there were several times when the low number of classifiable quit decisions did not allow for a meaningful analysis of the data. Several of the small correlations between variables could have been due to the fact that the quit decision categories were very unevenly split. According to Breaugh (2003), sample splits that are very uneven result in maximum correlations that are often much less than ± 1.00 . Therefore, many of the hypothesized relationships are still worth addressing in future research where there is a much higher number of participants and more equitable

numbers of various quit decisions.

As a result of the low numbers of participants and classifiable quit decisions in the first two studies, a third study was proposed to examine the relationships between embeddedness factors and participant reactions to hypothetical work situations. More specifically, Study 3 was designed to determine how various embeddedness factors influenced participants' willingness to stay or leave a job in response to various shocks.

Study 3

This third study was designed in much the same way as the first two studies. The first questionnaire was the same as was used for the first study with MBA students. It assessed conscientiousness, willingness to take risks, and openness to experiences, in addition to several other situational characteristics. However, the second questionnaire focused on responses to hypothetical work situations, rather than asking about a job the person had quit in the past. As a result, the hypotheses for this study were tested based on how the participants indicated they would react to each of the scenarios presented to them.

Participants

Undergraduate students from three Midwestern colleges were asked to participate in the study. A total of 62 people, of whom nearly 80% were between the ages of 18 and 25, completed both questionnaires. Ninety-two percent of this group was working outside the home at the time of the study. Their jobs ranged from food service to carpentry to marketing. Less than 20% owned a home, and approximately 50% reported the tendency to spend rather than save their money.

Procedures

Students were asked to voluntarily participate in the study, which would require them to

respond to two different questionnaires. The initial questionnaire was essentially the same as was used in the Study 1. It assessed conscientiousness, openness to experience, and willingness to take risks, in addition to work outside the home, number of jobs quit in the past five years, age, tendency to save or spend money, whether or not they owned a home, and the amount of early work experience. The only difference between this initial questionnaire and that used in Study 1 is that the question asking how many years of experience the respondents had in their current job was eliminated. Since the participants for this study were undergraduates, they were not necessarily expected to be working or have much work experience. As a result, a question about how much experience respondents had in their current jobs did not seem relevant.

The second questionnaire was very different from those used in the first two studies in that it presented hypothetical work situations to the participants. This questionnaire is shown in Appendix F. Six hypothetical work scenarios were developed based on real-life situations taken from several Study 2 participants' responses on their second questionnaires (which they completed after leaving their jobs). The particular scenarios that were included on the second questionnaire for this study were designed to provide a broad range of work situations to which the respondents would react in order to determine the stability of behavior across several situations. Although all of the scenarios were intended to be jarring to the respondents, four of them were designed to be negative in nature, and two others reflected positive situations. The six scenarios included the following: one describing a situation where the participant was accepted into a graduate program, one that outlined an unsolicited job offer, and four other scenarios that described various problems in the work environment. Following each of the scenarios was a series of questions asking how the individual would respond to the specific

work situation given in the scenario.

The questions following the scenarios were developed using the unfolding model of turnover. More specifically, the questions assessed how the participants would deal with the situation in relation to their job and whether they had actually ever experienced the situation in their own work history. After each scenario, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the situation represented a “jarring event” (on a 1 to 3 scale, where 1 was to no extent and 3 was to a large extent) that would prompt them to think about quitting the job. I also asked whether the person would quit the job immediately, quit only after searching for another alternative, stay with the organization even though he/she was disappointed by the situation, or plan to leave if another opportunity came along. These response options reflected some of the elements of the unfolding model of turnover including the search for or consideration of other alternatives and job dissatisfaction. However, these response options did not fit the two scenarios that presented positive opportunities (graduate school and an unsolicited job offer). As a result, the two scenarios (scenarios 3 and 5) required different response options and were also evaluated separately from the other four scenarios.

In addition to having the respondent choose a specific response option (one of four) for each scenario, they were also asked to rate the likelihood that they would engage in each of the possible responses to the scenario on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely. This was done to ensure that respondents would provide their best estimates as to how they would respond in the given situations, in addition to asking them to choose one option for their response. A question assessing the extent to which the respondents felt obligated to stay with the organization was also included following each scenario to allow further analysis of the reactions to the presented situations. The coding for the responses to these questions was yes

coded as 1 and no coded as 2.

A complete draft of the second questionnaire was pilot tested with a group of 7 students at a college that was not included in the subsequent study. They were asked to respond to the scenarios as the instructions suggested and to also note any confusing or unclear questions. The results of this pilot-testing led to some minor changes in the format for rating the likelihood of each of the response options that were given following each of the scenarios. Other than formatting changes, the group of students appeared to understand each of the questions and were able to respond accordingly.

Some of the respondents were given time in class to participate in the study, while others were asked to do it on their own time. Participants were provided with envelopes in which the completed questionnaires could be returned to their instructors. After giving students the opportunity to participate in the study, instructors returned the completed questionnaires, which were sealed in individual envelopes, by mail.

Results

In this study, the three personal characteristics were again measured with several items, each based on a 1 to 5 scale, that were averaged to obtain a score for each measure. The mean levels of conscientiousness, openness to experience, and willingness to take risks were $M = 3.38$, $M = 3.53$, and $M = 2.88$, respectively. The average number of jobs that respondents had voluntarily quit in the past five years was $M = 1.35$, with a range of 0 to 5 jobs and over 50% leaving 1 or fewer jobs. The descriptive statistics for the embeddedness variables assessed in the initial questionnaire are provided in Table 13.

Each of the scenarios included in the second questionnaire was judged by the participants to represent to some or to a large extent jarring events that would prompt thoughts

about quitting the job. The means, based on a one to three scale with one being to no extent and three being to a large extent, for each of the scenarios are listed in Table 14. The mean values in this table suggest that the events presented in the second questionnaire were considered to be serious enough to prompt the participants to think about quitting the job. As a result, it should be easier to find evidence that supports relationships between the personal characteristics and the reported reactions to the scenarios. The descriptive information for each of the scenarios is displayed in Table 15.

The data in Table 15 show that, overall, the largest number of participants in the study chose the fourth option as a response to the presented scenarios. However, in scenarios 2, 5, and 6, the most frequently chosen option was the first. Both the second and third options were chosen much less frequently than the others. In terms of whether participants felt obligated to stay with the organization in response to each scenario, the majority of participants indicated that they did not feel obligated. Finally, the majority of respondents did not have previous experience with the situations that were presented; however 27 people did indicate that they had been in a situation similar to the first scenario, in which the supervisor yelled at the employee in front of coworkers.

Hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 focused on the difference between those low and high in conscientiousness, openness to experience, and willingness to take risks in terms of leaving the job with or without searching for other alternatives. In order to determine whether people chose the response that represented leaving with or without conducting a search for alternatives across situations, the response options first had to be categorized. Since the same response options were used for scenarios one, two, four, and six and these scenarios represented similar types of negative situations, the response options were classified into four types of decisions:

search for alternative, stay in the job, no search for alternative, and passivity. In order to determine patterns in responses across scenarios, the ratings of how likely respondents would be to do each of the options were summed over the four scenarios.

The summation process was used in order to determine the preferred tendency across situations; as a result, the personality characteristics were correlated only with the summed ratings for each decision option. However, just to be sure the relationships were not obtained at the situational level, the personality variables were correlated with the rating of likelihood given to the search option for each of the four scenarios. The results showed that none of the relationships were significant.

In order to determine whether conscientiousness, risk-taking, and openness to experience were related to the search for an alternative decision option, a correlation was calculated between each of the variables and the likelihood of search (ratings of which were summed over the four scenarios). The results showed that none of the correlations were significant. Table 16 presents the correlations. However, when the ratings for the other decision options (no search, stay, and passivity) were correlated with the personality variables, conscientiousness had a significant negative relationship ($r = -.356, p < .01$) with the passivity response. This can be interpreted as those who were higher in conscientiousness were less likely to endorse a decision option that involved waiting for a better opportunity. However, overall, the findings suggest that the relationships between personality variables and decisions regarding job status may be difficult to detect.

Scenarios 3 and 5 presented situations that were designed to be perceived positively. As a result, the response options for these scenarios differed from the other four scenarios. More specifically, rather than including a response option that included quitting a job only after

searching for another alternative, the responses in scenarios 3 and 5 had to show some consideration before leaving the job for an alternative that was actually presented as part of the scenario (graduate school in scenario 3 and an unsolicited job in scenario 5). Therefore, in order to examine these scenarios, each of the personality variables was correlated individually with the choice of this option, which included consideration before leaving (consideration response option). The coding for these calculations was 1.0 for those who chose the consideration response option and 0 for those who chose any other response option.

The results for scenario 3 were that conscientiousness was significantly related to the choice of the consideration response option ($r = -.214, p < .10$), such that higher conscientiousness was associated with less likelihood of choosing to leave the job after starting graduate school. However, the effect size associated with this relationship was only .046, indicating a very small association between the two variables. For scenario 5, willingness to take risks was significantly correlated with the choice of the consideration response option, $r = -.336, p < .05$. This correlation can be interpreted as suggesting that people who are more willing to take risks are less likely to advocate leaving a current job after discussing a new job offer with their boss. The other correlations between the personality variables and the consideration response options in scenarios 3 and 5 were not significant.

The second hypothesis, which proposed that those with greater responsibilities and more responsible behavior in the past would be more likely to choose to leave the job only after searching for an alternative, was analyzed in the same manner as the first hypothesis. Each of the responsibility variables was correlated with the summed ratings for the search decision option across the four scenarios presenting negative situations. The results of the analyses, presented in Table 16, showed that the relationship between early work experience (before the

age of 18) and the ratings of the search decision option was statistically significant ($r = .248$, $p < .10$), such that more early work experience was associated with a greater likelihood to search before leaving the job. The relationship between age and the ratings of the search option was also statistically significant ($r = -.226$, $p < .10$), suggesting that those who were older were less likely to advocate the search before leaving approach.

When the responsibility variables were correlated with the ratings for each of the decision options summed across the four scenarios in an exploratory manner, several of the relationships were significant. There was a negative relationship between age and the ratings for the passive decision option ($r = -.296$, $p < .05$), which suggests that older students were less likely to advocate the passive approach (plan to leave the job if another opportunity comes along) to the scenario. There were also negative correlations between early work experience and the ratings for the stay decision option ($r = -.308$, $p < .05$) and the ratings for the no search decision option ($r = -.316$, $p < .05$). These correlations suggest that those students who had more work experience at a young age were less likely to condone staying in a dissatisfying situation or quitting the job immediately without searching for an alternative. Whether the respondent worked outside the home was also significantly related to the no search decision option ($r = .517$, $p < .01$), suggesting that those who worked outside the home were less likely to choose the no search approach to the situation. These correlations, though most are not large, do seem to provide a small amount of support for the idea that certain variables representing responsible behavior are related to how people would respond to negative work situations.

Scenarios 3 and 5 were again analyzed separately from the other four. Each of the responsibility and responsible behavior variables was correlated with the choice of the

consideration response option. Results showed that none of the relationships were significant in either scenario 3 or scenario 5. This finding may indicate that the variables associated with responsibility and responsible behavior are less likely to have an influence on the decision regarding what to do in response to a positive situation or opportunity.

The third hypothesis was focused on whether individuals who had voluntarily left more jobs in the past would be more likely to quit via path 1. The no search decision option does have some of the same attributes, including a fast or immediate quit decision and lack of search for alternatives, as path 1 of the unfolding model. As a result, a correlation of the ratings for the no search decision option and the number of jobs quit in the last five years was computed. However, the resulting correlation was small and not significant ($r = .15, p > .10$). The remaining hypotheses (4-9) could not be reasonably tested with the data from this study. However, additional analyses were conducted to determine whether the personal and situational variables assessed in the first questionnaire were related to different aspects of the unfolding model that were captured in the second questionnaire. One notable finding from the correlation matrix that was produced was that conscientiousness and willingness to take risks were significantly correlated with the number of times (over the six scenarios) the respondents indicated they felt obligated to stay with the organization. The correlation between conscientiousness and feelings of obligation was $r = .314, p < .05$, which suggests that higher levels of conscientiousness are associated with greater feelings of obligation to the organization. Conversely, the relationship between risk-taking and feelings of obligation was negative ($r = -.26, p < .05$), meaning the more willing to take risks, the lower the feelings of obligation to the organization.

I also wanted to determine whether the embeddedness variables were significantly

related to how respondents perceived the scenarios. In order to examine these relationships, each of the embeddedness variables were correlated with the rating of the extent to which the situations were perceived as jarring, which was a total based on all six scenarios. The results of this analysis showed that only age ($r = -.560, p < .01$) and home ownership ($r = .218, p < .10$) were significantly related. The relationships were such that those who were younger, perceived the situations as more jarring and those who owned a home perceived the situations as less jarring. However, there was also a strong, significant relationship between age and owning a home, $r = -.658, p < .01$, which suggests that there was overlap in the relationships with the perception of the situations presented in the scenarios. Still, a reasonable interpretation of the correlations may be that those who are younger (and who are less likely to own a home) are less likely to have experienced a wide range of work situations and, as a result, are more likely to perceive situations like those presented in the scenarios as jarring.

Although these additional findings are interesting, they must be interpreted with caution since they were not hypothesized before the study. The correlations between these variables are still relatively small, and as a result, they may not be easily replicated.

Even though I did not focus on the scenarios individually in order to test the hypotheses for the study, it was interesting to examine the relationships between the perception of the situation and the other variables assessed in each scenario. As a result, a correlation matrix for each scenario was produced. The correlations are provided in Table 17. There were many similarities among the scenarios in terms of the findings. In the first scenario, the relationship between the extent to which the situation was perceived as “jarring” was significantly correlated with the choice of response to the situation. This relationship was such that those who perceived the situation to be more jarring were more likely to choose the first or fourth

response option, which was to quit after searching or to leave if another opportunity arose, respectively.

In Scenario 2, the relationships differed slightly. Specifically, the relationship between the extent to which the scenario was perceived as jarring was negatively related to response option 2 and positively related to response option 1. This suggests that the more jarring the situation was perceived to be, the less likely the respondents would be to choose to stay dissatisfied in the job and the more likely they would be to leave after searching for another alternative.

For scenario 3, the relationship between the extent to which the situation was perceived as jarring and the choice of response option was significant. These relationships were strongest for response option 1 and response option 2. The correlations seemed to indicate that the more jarring the situation was perceived to be, the more likely the respondents were to advocate response option 1 (quit the job after starting graduate school) and the less likely they would be to advocate response option 2 (stay concerned in the job). This finding was the same in Scenario 4. However, the response options for Scenario 4 differed in that response option 1 was to leave after searching for an alternative and response option 2 was to stay dissatisfied in the job.

Scenarios 5 and 6 also showed a statistically significant relationship between the extent to which the situation was perceived to be jarring and the choice of response option. However, the exact nature of these relationships varied. In Scenario 5, the results suggested that respondents were more likely to advocate response option 1 (quit after discussing situation with boss) and response option 3 (quit job immediately) when the situation was perceived to be more jarring. The results were more inconclusive for Scenario 6. Although the overall

correlation between perception of the extent to which the situation was jarring and choice of response option was significant, there were no significant relationships between the perception of the situation and any of the ratings for the various response options.

Four of the six scenarios (2, 3, 4, and 6) also showed a statistically significant relationship between the extent to which the situation was perceived as jarring and the feelings of obligation to stay with the organization. This relationship was such that the more jarring the situation was perceived to be, the less obligated people felt to stay. The finding seems to suggest that some situations, which are considered more jarring or shocking, may actually influence people to feel less obligated to stay with the organization and may subsequently lead to more turnover. One last interesting finding from this analysis was in Scenarios 3, 5, and 6 where those respondents who were less likely to have had experience with a similar situation, were more likely to perceive the situation as jarring. This finding seems reasonable given that one would expect a situation to be more shocking if the person had no previous experience with it; however, what is interesting is that the relationship was significant only in Scenarios 3, 5, and 6, rather than in all of the scenarios.

Discussion

Study 3 was designed to examine people's responses to various work situations. The focus of the study was to analyze the relationships between the embeddedness variables and the decision options that included many of the elements of the unfolding model of turnover. Six scenarios were developed from actual responses received on the second questionnaire in Study 2. The responses to these scenarios were then analyzed as a group and individually. Although most of the analyses were exploratory in nature, the findings were interesting.

The findings that focused on the relationships between the extent to which the situations

were perceived by the respondents to be jarring and the different responses to the situations are likely to be useful in developing future research on models of turnover involving shocks or other jarring events that precipitate thoughts about quitting. These findings suggest that it may be as important to determine how shocking the event or situation was perceived to be as it was to determine whether a shock was responsible for the eventual quit decision. It may be that more shocking events have a greater likelihood of leading to the use of certain decision making paths, as was suggested by the correlations with the ratings of different decision options in this study.

Discussion

The unfolding model of turnover developed by Lee and Mitchell (1994) made a significant contribution to the understanding and research of voluntary turnover. They introduced the concept of shocks as precipitating events that lead to thoughts about quitting. They conducted two empirical studies in 1996 and 1999, which allowed them to develop a comprehensive set of rules for classifying quit decisions into one of the four main paths they outlined in the model they originated. Their results indicated that people were more likely to leave their organizations as a result of specific shocks, rather than general dissatisfaction. Their inclusion of non-rational quitting processes and their findings regarding the experience of shocks have led to the incorporation of many of their ideas into more recent studies of turnover (Maertz and Campion, 2004).

The goal of this research was to expand the unfolding model of turnover by incorporating factors that tend to “embed” employees in their jobs and organizations. The three studies presented in this paper constitute the first empirical tests of the relationships between these variables and the various paths of the model. Despite the diminished overall

power of the studies as a result of low numbers of participants and high numbers of unclassifiable quit decisions, there is still much valuable information that can be taken from the process and the obtained data.

In order to increase the power to detect significant relationships, an alpha level of $p < .10$ was used in all three studies. Utilizing this alpha level for statistical significance inherently means that 10% of the results could be found significant by chance, regardless of whether any real relationship between variables exists. However, this did not seem to be a major issue in this research where several of the results which were not statistically significant were the same across studies. For example, even though the relationship between openness to experience and the search paths was not significant in either Study 1 or Study 2, the correlations were of similar magnitude (.282 and .278) and were in the same direction for both studies.

One unusual finding that should be noted was that in Study 2 the correlations between the conscientiousness variable and the openness to experience and the willingness to take risks variables had the opposite sign (were in the opposite direction) of the correlations calculated in Study 1 and Study 3. The accuracy of the data was verified. As a result, no theoretical explanation can be offered for this unusual result.

In specific instances, the findings of the three studies did provide information about how individual differences relate to some of the pieces of the quit process. Not surprisingly, conscientiousness was the overall best predictor. Although the relationships between conscientiousness and the quit decision paths were not always statistically significant, they consistently approached significance, with effect sizes ranging from $r^2 = .065$ to $r^2 = .125$. Even though such effect sizes are considered small by Cohen's (1988) definitions, the fact that the relationships were relatively consistent across studies, suggests that conscientiousness is related

to the decision paths used to leave a job. As a result, there could be important implications for the understanding and use of conscientiousness measures in relation to voluntary turnover.

According to the findings from these studies, it appears that conscientiousness may predict the process used to quit a job, in addition to predicting turnover in general. As the results of Study 3 suggested, conscientiousness could be used to predict how likely people would be to wait for a better opportunity to come along after experiencing a shock. If organizations are aware that individuals who are more conscientious are more likely to quit only after searching for other alternatives, as shown in Study 1, this allows opportunities for intervention. However, the exact nature of these interventions would depend on the issues for the particular organization, as was demonstrated in the responses given to the question of how organizations could have prevented the quits in Study 2.

Considering that over 70% of the participants in Study 2 indicated that their former organizations could have done something to prevent them from quitting, organizations seem to have a solid opportunity to intervene. The more difficult question is how organizations can best direct their efforts to prevent unwanted quits. The majority of respondents in Study 2 (most of them truck drivers) suggested that their organizations could have prevented them from leaving if they had followed through on their initial promises regarding pay, nature of work, and work environment. This suggests a possible larger problem of miscommunication or lack of communication, which could be addressed by the organization clearly articulating expectations and presenting realistic information. However, other respondents commented on the need for a better work environment, higher pay, or better supervisors. In fact, several of the remaining suggestions were very specific to the particular organization the respondent had left. It seems that it would be helpful for organizations to conduct exit interviews in order to obtain

information that would allow them to determine trends and specific needs for their own workforce.

After examining the results from these three studies, there are some hypothesized relationships between the “embeddedness” variables and the quit decision paths that should be reconsidered. For example, the other two personality characteristics, openness to experience and willingness to take risks, did not relate to the quitting process in the predicted ways. Perhaps the measures were invalid for assessing the actual constructs, or it may be that these variables really do not embed individuals in their jobs in the way I had imagined.

Because there were no national norms available for the personality characteristics utilized in this research, which were assessed with the items from Goldberg’s (1999) inventory, the resulting means and standard deviations from all three studies were compared with those obtained in other studies (Palmer & Loveland, 2004; Ployhart et al., 2001). All of the personality characteristics measured had similar means and standard deviations to the same variables measured in other studies. This suggests that there were not dramatic differences between the personality characteristics of the participants included in this research and those of others studied previously.

Three variables that did seem to warrant further investigation with regard to their effect on the quitting process were the number of jobs quit in the past, the perceived fit with the organization, and the expectations about benefits. All three of these variables showed potential for predicting the way in which respondents decided to leave their jobs. However, in order to improve the detection of these relationships, it would most likely be helpful to have a simplified process for classifying quit decisions and for identifying the key elements.

The large number of unclassifiable quit decisions in the first two studies was a major

area of concern. Unfortunately, the modifications in the guidelines for classifying decisions made by Lee and his colleagues did not lead to more clarity or better classification in this research. Although the judges who classified the quit decisions agreed on whether certain attributes of the unfolding model were present in the responses to the questionnaire, their conclusions, based solely on the rules for classifying, often were that the paths were unclassifiable. However, these judges also indicated that many of the unclassifiable decisions were based on the response to one particular item, which may or may not have contradicted a previous response. Their feelings were that sometimes the classification rules made no sense in certain contexts. For example, since the presence of either “searching for” or “considering other alternatives” to the job are considered one attribute in the unfolding model, a respondent may conduct no search at all and still be classified as doing a “search” as a result of considering non-work alternatives. This particular situation accounted for more than one of the unclassifiable decisions in this research.

Maertz and Campion (2004) conducted a study that simplified the classification process for quit decisions. In their study, they focused on four quit processes that differed in whether there was a job offer in hand at the time of the quit decision and whether there was advanced planning associated with the quit decision. The elimination of many of the additional factors of the unfolding model (scripts, image violations, and evaluation and search for alternatives) were associated with easier and better classification of decisions. Future research in this area may benefit from a simplification of the classification procedures derived from the unfolding model of turnover.

The second major area of concern was the low number of participants, which in many cases did not allow for meaningful statistical analysis. It may have been that the requirements

for participation in Study 1 were too restrictive to produce a large number of respondents. Precautions were also taken in Study 2 to ensure that a good response rate for the second questionnaire was obtained. However, follow-up phone calls to the participants' homes did not lead to many additional responses once they had left their organizations. Although it may have been helpful to include some type of reward for those who returned their second questionnaire, I think that simplifying the second questionnaire would have produced better results. Even though the questionnaire was pilot-tested with a group of new employees and changes did result from that process, it is likely that there were still some questions that were confusing or unclear.

Future directions for research on the unfolding model should include additional paths for classifying certain quit decisions. Whether or not image theory can be utilized to support additional decision paths, which include the use of a pre-determined action plan and subsequently a search for alternatives, as well as others, these alternatives must be considered to ensure the comprehensiveness of the unfolding model. There has to be some way to explain and to classify those decisions that do not match exactly the paths outlined in Figure 1 of this paper. For example, there were quit decisions that could have been classified as path 1 if the respondent had not indicated that he or she had considered a non-work alternative or that an unsolicited job offer was accepted. In either of these circumstances, the quit process would match path 1 in terms of the key elements (engaged script or action plan and lack of search for alternatives), but would fail to be classified as such due to the use of a rigid set of classification rules and designated path elements.

Another area that deserves greater attention in future research is examination of the nature of the relationships between embeddedness variables, the extent to which situations or

shocks are perceived as jarring, and the choice of quit decision path. According to the findings of the exploratory results in Study 3, the extent to which situations were perceived as jarring not only affected respondents' feelings of obligation to stay with the organization, but also the nature of the reaction to the situation. It becomes a question of how these separate groups of variables interact to lead to the eventual paths chosen by those people who decide to leave the organization.

Since this was one of the first sets of studies examining the relationships between personal and situational characteristics and the paths people utilized in leaving their organizations, several changes could be made to the methodology to improve future research in this area. As mentioned previously, a longitudinal study that assessed these variables over time would allow researchers to determine whether certain characteristics would have more of an effect over time as people decided to leave their organizations. In addition, the process for classifying quit decisions needs to be simplified and possibly made more flexible to include additional paths in order to better understand the ways people choose to leave their jobs. Finally, the low response rate for the first two studies was a huge obstacle. Future research might benefit from the inclusion of some type of incentive or reward for completing the study. Until larger numbers of participants are included in this type of research, the power to detect the relatively small expected relationships will continue to be low.

Table 1: Study 1 Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Test-Retest Correlation
Conscientiousness	40	3.88	na	.66	.86	.77
Openness to experience	40	3.47	na	.66	.87	.85
Willingness to take risks	40	2.62	na	.71	.81	.93
Work outside the home ¹	40	1.18	Yes	.38	na	na
Years of experience	33	3.5	1.0	2.92	na	na
Jobs quit (last 5 yrs.)	40	2.55	2.0	1.68	na	na
Money—save/spend ²	37	1.38	Save	.49	na	na
Own a home ³	40	1.63	No	.49	na	na
Age	40	1.88	18-25 yrs.	1.04	na	na
Early work experience	40	2.98	1-2 yrs.	.97	na	na
Search paths ⁴	25	.84	Search	.37	na	na

Table 2: Study 1 Correlations between Personality Variables and Search Paths

Variable		A	B	C	D
Conscientiousness (A)	r Sig. N	1 40			
Willingness to take risks (B)	r Sig. N	-.336 p < .05 40	1 40		
Openness to experience (C)	r Sig. N	-.292 p < .10 40	.485 p < .01 40	1 40	
Search paths (D)	r Sig. N	.353 p < .10 25	.179 ns 25	.282 ns 25	1 25

¹ Variable coded as follows: yes coded as 1.0 and no coded as 2.0.

² Variable coded as follows: save coded as 1.0 and spend coded as 2.0.

³ Variable coded as follows: yes coded as 1.0 and no coded as 2.0.

⁴ Variable was coded 1.0 for those decision paths that involved a search and 0 for those paths that did not involve a search.

Table 3: Study 1 Correlations between Other Situational Variables and Search Paths

Variable		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Age (A)	r Sig. N	1 40						
Money (B)	r Sig. N	.275 p < .10 37	1 37					
Own a home (C)	r Sig. N	-.395 p < .05 40	-.037 ns 37	1 40				
Early work experience (D)	r Sig. N	.073 ns 40	-.035 ns 37	-.128 ns 40	1 40			
Work outside the home (E)	r Sig. N	-.136 ns 40	-.192 ns 37	.085 ns 40	.080 ns 40	1 40		
Years of experience in job (F)	r Sig. N	.337 p < .10 33	.106 ns 31	-.319 p < .10 33	.202 ns 33	.338 p < .10 33	1 33	
Search paths ⁵ (G)	r Sig. N	.257 ns 25	.025 ns 22	-.065 ns 25	.073 ns 25	-.266 ns 25	-.263 ns 19	1 25

⁵ Variable was coded 1.0 for those decision paths that involved a search and 0 for those paths that did not involve

Table 4: Study 1 Numbers of Quit Decisions for Each Responsibility Variable

Variable	Sub-category	Quit Decision Including Search?	
		No search	Search
Current Work Outside the Home	Yes	2	17
	No	2	4
Age	18-25 years	3	9
	Over 25 years	1	7
Home	Own home	1	7
	Do not own home	3	14
Years of Experience in Job	3 or fewer years	0	12
	Over 3 years	4	9
Money	Save	2	12
	Spend	1	7
Early Work Experience	2 years or less before 18	3	14
	Over 2 years before 18	1	7

Table 5: Study 1 Exploratory Correlations between Embeddedness Variables and Search Paths

Variable	Correlation with Search Paths (Search paths coded as 1.0, others coded as 0)	Significance
Conscientiousness	.341	p < .05
Willingness to take risks	.156	ns
Openness to experience	.222	ns
Age	.214	ns
Money	.068	ns
Own a home	-.050	ns
Early work experience	.050	ns
Work outside the home	-.313	p < .10
Years of experience in job	-.108	ns

a search.

Table 6: Study 2 Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Conscientiousness	37	3.15	na	.85	.88
Openness to experience	36	3.61	na	.55	.74
Willingness to take risks	36	2.55	na	.83	.75
Perceived organizational fit	37	3.94	na	.77	.89
Expectations about benefits	37	3.74	na	.78	.83
Marital status (yes/no) ⁶	37	1.38	Yes	.49	na
Dependents (none / 1 / 2 / 3-5 / more than 5)	37	2.05	None	1.22	na
Educational level	37	2.81	Some college	1.17	na
Number of work-related skills	28	4.18	na	3.39	na
Perceived alternatives (none/few/many)	36	2.33	Few	.59	na
Years of experience in job	37	2.09	na	4.47	na
Jobs quit (last 5 yrs.)	37	2.49	na	3.62	na
Money (save/spend)	34	1.29	Save	.46	na
Own a home (yes/no)	37	1.57	No	.50	na
Age	37	2.59	18-25 yrs.	1.42	na
Early work experience	37	3.46	Over 2 yrs.	.77	na
Search paths ⁷	27	1.82	Search	.40	na

⁶ Variable coded as follows: yes coded as 1.0 and no coded as 2.0.

⁷ Variable coded as 2.0 for those decision paths that involved a search and 1.0 for those paths that did not involve a search.

Table 7: Study 2 Suggested Ways to Prevent Respondents from Quitting

Organization Could Have Prevented Quit by:	Number of Respondents
Sending a trainer when they said they would	1
Continuing previous contract	1
Providing a route that fit life, as promised	2
Asking employees about expectations and driver training	1
Getting driver home, as promised	5
Paying what was promised	2
Having driver doing shorter routes or during day	1
Providing better or more training	2
Making transition in driver status easier to attain	1
Telling the truth	1
Taking financial responsibility for injury on the job	1
Allowing driver to work, rather than waiting around	1
Having better supervisors who listen to concerns	2
Providing better/higher pay	3
Improving work environment and equipment	2
Treating people equally and with respect	2
Pay for work (performance)	1

Table 8: Study 2 Correlations between Personality Variables and Search Paths

Variable		A	B	C	D
Conscientiousness (A)	r Sig. N	1 37			
Willingness to take risks (B)	r Sig. N	.298 p < .10 36	1 36		
Openness to experience (C)	r Sig. N	.428 p < .01 36	.144 ns 35	1 36	
Search paths ⁸ (D)	r Sig. N	.255 ns 27	.266 ns 27	.278 ns 27	1 27

⁸ Variable was coded 1.0 for those decision paths that involved a search and 0 for those paths that did not involve a search.

Table 9: Study 2 Correlations between Embeddedness Variables and Extent of Search

Variable	N	Correlation with Extent of Search (mean = 2.05, sd = 1.35)	Significance
Conscientiousness	37	.348	p < .10
Willingness to take risks	36	.131	p > .10
Openness to experience	36	-.124	p > .10
Age	37	-.234	p > .10
Marital status (yes/no)	37	.261	p > .10
Dependents	37	.065	p > .10
Money (save/spend)	34	.302	p > .10
Own a home (yes/no)	37	.158	p > .10
Early work experience	37	.029	p > .10
Years of experience in job	37	-.026	p > .10

Table 10: Study 2 Correlations between Other Situational Variables and Search Paths

Variable		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Age (A)	r Sig. N	1 37							
Money (B)	r Sig. N	-.017 ns 34	1 34						
Own a home (C)	r Sig. N	-.408 p < .05 37	-.076 ns 34	1 37					
Early work experience (D)	r Sig. N	.074 ns 37	.088 ns 34	-.047 ns 37	1 37				
Marital Status (E)	r Sig. N	-.291 p < .10 40	-.072 ns 34	.569 p < .01 37	-.032 ns 37	1 37			
Number of Dependents (F)	r Sig. N	.220 ns 37	.059 ns 34	-.549 p < .01 37	-.116 ns 37	-.497 p < .01 37	1 37		
Years of experience in job (G)	r Sig. N	.043 ns 37	-.131 ns 34	.207 ns 37	.222 ns 37	.214 ns 37	-.203 ns 37	1 37	
Search paths ⁹ (H)	r Sig. N	-.034 ns 27	-.042 ns 25	.078 ns 27	.076 ns 27	-.108 ns 27	.301 ns 27	-.016 ns 27	1 27

⁹ Variable was coded 1.0 for those decision paths that involved a search and 0 for those paths that did not involve a search.

Table 11: Study 2 Correlations for Hypotheses 3-7

Variable		Correlation with Path 1 ¹⁰	Correlation with Search Paths ¹¹	Correlation with Paths including Shocks ¹²
Jobs quit (in last five years)—Hypothesis 3	r Sig. N	.420 p < .05 26		
Perceived alternatives to the job—Hypothesis 4	r Sig. N		.266 ns 27	
Skill utilization—Hypothesis 5	r Sig. N	-.174 ns 26		
Number of work-related skills—Hypothesis 6	r Sig. N			-.079 ns 21
Perceived organizational fit—Hypothesis 7	r Sig. N			-.197 ns 26

Table 12: Study 2 Exploratory Correlations between Embeddedness Variables and Search Paths

Variable	Correlation with Search Paths (Search paths coded as 1.0, others coded as 0)	Significance
Conscientiousness	.281	ns
Willingness to take risks	.268	ns
Openness to experience	.316	ns
Age	-.121	ns
Marital status (yes/no)	-.019	ns
Dependents	.234	ns
Money (save/spend)	-.015	ns
Own a home (yes/no)	.107	ns
Early work experience	.029	ns
Years of experience in job	.003	ns

¹⁰ Path 1 coded as 1.0, other paths coded as 0.

¹¹ Search paths coded as 1.0, others coded as 0.

¹² Paths including shocks coded as 1.0, paths including dissatisfaction coded as 2.0.

Table 13: Study 3 Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Conscientiousness	62	3.38	na	.60	.80
Openness to experience	62	3.53	na	.62	.78
Willingness to take risks	62	2.88	na	.86	.82
Work outside the home (yes/no)	62	1.08	Yes	.27	na
Jobs quit (last 5 yrs.)	59	1.35	na	1.35	na
Money (save/spend)	59	1.53	Spend	.50	na
Own a home (yes/no)	62	1.81	No	.40	na
Age	62	1.32	18-25 yrs.	.70	na
Early work experience	62	3.06	Over 2 yrs.	.97	na
Search decision option rating ¹³	61	15	na	3.70	na

Table 14: Study 3 Mean Values of Evaluation of Event by Scenario

Scenario	Means: Extent to which event was perceived as jarring (1 to 3 scale)
Scenario 1	1.98
Scenario 2	2.40
Scenario 3	2.32
Scenario 4	2.34
Scenario 5	2.58
Scenario 6	2.82

¹³ Variable was created by summing the ratings for the search decision option over four scenarios.

Table 15: Study 3 Frequency of Responses by Scenario

Scenario	Response to Situation				Obligated to Stay		Previous Exp. with Situation	
	Option1 ¹⁴	Option 2 ¹⁵	Option 3 ¹⁶	Option 4 ¹⁷	Yes	No	Yes	No
Scenario 1	5	21	0	36	13	49	27	35
Scenario 2	26	14	3	18	17	45	9	53
Scenario 3	4	10	3	42	21	41	8	54
Scenario 4	20	11	0	24	6	56	16	45
Scenario 5	28	2	2	22	19	42	4	57
Scenario 6	32	1	13	8	2	60	12	50

¹⁴ For scenarios 1, 2, 4, and 6, response option 1 was, “Quit the job, but only after searching for another alternative.” For scenario 3, the response was, “Quit the job, but only after you begin your graduate courses.” For scenario 5, the response was, “Quit your current job but only after discussing the situation with you current boss.”

¹⁵ For all of the scenarios, response option 2 was to stay in the job.

¹⁶ For all of the scenarios, response option 3 was to quit the job immediately.

¹⁷ For scenarios 1, 2, 4, and 6, response option 4 was, “Plan to leave the job if another opportunity comes along.” For scenario 3, the response option was, “Inquire about the possibility of working part time while attending graduate school.” For scenario 5, the response was, “Consider the new job offer, but plan to leave your current job only if you do not receive the appropriate recognition in the future.”

Table 16: Study 3 Correlations between Embeddedness Variables and the Ratings for the Decision Options for the Four Scenarios Presenting Negative Situations

Variable		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Conscientiousness (A)	r Sig. N	1 62						
Willingness to take risks (B)	r Sig. N	-.419 p<.01 62	1 62					
Openness to experience (C)	r Sig. N	.017 ns 62	.180 ns 62	1 62				
Age (D)	r Sig. N	.184 ns 62	-.187 ns 62	.053 ns 62	1 62			
Money (save/spend) (E)	r Sig. N	-.229 p<.10 59	.081 ns 59	.204 ns 59	.049 ns 59	1 59		
Own a home (yes/no) (F)	r Sig. N	-.146 ns 62	.136 ns 62	.039 ns 62	-.658 p<.01 62	-.106 ns 59	1 62	
Early work experience (G)	r Sig. N	.044 ns 62	.104 ns 62	.112 ns 62	.211 ns 62	-.089 ns 59	-.348 p<.01 62	1 62
Work outside the home (yes/no) (H)	r Sig. N	.178 ns 62	-.130 ns 62	.034 ns 62	.119 ns 62	-.198 ns 59	-.155 ns 62	-.143 ns 62
Search option ratings (I)	r Sig. N	-.070 ns 61	.022 ns 61	.031 ns 61	-.226 p<.10 61	-.069 ns 58	.034 ns 61	.248 p<.10 61
Stay option ratings (J)	r Sig. N	-.149 ns 61	.033 ns 61	.146 ns 61	-.033 ns 61	.197 ns 58	.073 ns 61	-.308 p<.05 61
No Search option ratings (K)	r Sig. N	.134 ns 61	-.037 ns 61	-.007 ns 61	-.209 ns 61	-.037 ns 58	.121 ns 61	-.316 p<.05 61
Passive option ratings (L)	r Sig. N	-.356 p<.01 61	.137 ns 61	-.038 ns 61	-.296 p<.05 61	-.045 ns 58	.021 ns 61	.107 ns 61

Variable		H	I	J	K	L
Conscientiousness (A)	r Sig. N					
Willingness to take risks (B)	r Sig. N					
Openness to experience (C)	r Sig. N					
Age (D)	r Sig. N					
Money (save/spend) (E)	r Sig. N					
Own a home (yes/no) (F)	r Sig. N					
Early work experience (G)	r Sig. N					
Work outside the home (yes/no) (H)	r Sig. N	1 62				
Search option ratings (I)	r Sig. N	-.033 ns 61	1 61			
Stay option ratings (J)	r Sig. N	-.016 ns 61	-.041 ns 61	1 61		
No Search option ratings (K)	r Sig. N	.517 p<.01 61	-.049 ns 61	-.041 ns 61	1 61	
Passive option ratings (L)	r Sig. N	-.014 ns 61	.446 p<.01 61	-.003 ns 61	-.050 ns 61	1 61

Table 17: Study 3 Relationships Between Evaluation of Situation and other Variables

Scenario	Variable/Question	Correlation with Evaluation	Significance
Scenario 1	Response to situation	.251	p < .05
	Rating of response option 1	.367	p < .05
	Rating of response option 2	-.090	p > .10
	Rating of response option 3	-.090	p > .10
	Rating of response option 4	.315	p < .05
	Feeling of obligation	.122	p > .10
	Experience with situation	.032	p > .10
Scenario 2	Response to situation	-.151	p > .10
	Rating of response option 1	.317	p < .05
	Rating of response option 2	-.444	p < .05
	Rating of response option 3	.189	p > .10
	Rating of response option 4	.114	p > .10
	Feeling of obligation	.348	p < .05
	Experience with situation	.198	p > .10
Scenario 3	Response to situation	.247	p < .10
	Rating of response option 1	.619	p < .05
	Rating of response option 2	-.532	p < .05
	Rating of response option 3	.294	p < .05
	Rating of response option 4	.295	p < .05
	Feeling of obligation	.305	p < .05
	Experience with situation	.228	p < .10
Scenario 4	Response to situation	-.228	p < .10
	Rating of response option 1	.575	p < .05
	Rating of response option 2	-.215	p < .10
	Rating of response option 3	.025	p > .10
	Rating of response option 4	.165	p > .10
	Feeling of obligation	.359	p < .05
	Experience with situation	.201	p > .10
Scenario 5	Response to situation	-.409	p < .05
	Rating of response option 1	.475	p < .05
	Rating of response option 2	-.160	p > .10
	Rating of response option 3	.233	p < .10
	Rating of response option 4	.013	p > .10
	Feeling of obligation	.244	p < .10
	Experience with situation	.364	p < .05
Scenario 6	Response to situation	-.259	p < .10
	Rating of response option 1	.110	p > .10
	Rating of response option 2	.165	p > .10
	Rating of response option 3	.055	p > .10
	Rating of response option 4	.135	p > .10

	Feeling of obligation	.305	p < .05
	Experience with situation	.238	p < .10

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Appendix A

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Please read each statement and circle the answer (1-5) that best describes how you are now, rather than how you would like to be in the future.

1. I avoid mistakes.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

2. I choose my words with care.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

3. I stick to my chosen path.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

4. I jump into things without thinking.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

5. I make rash decisions.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

6. I like to act on a whim.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

7. I rush into things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

8. I act without thinking.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

9. I do unexpected things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

10. I often make last-minute plans.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

11. I act wild and crazy.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

12. I do dangerous things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

13. I am willing to try anything once.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

14. I take risks.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

15. I love excitement.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

16. I avoid dangerous situations.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

17. I prefer variety to routine.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

18. I dislike changes.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

19. I like to visit new places.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

20. I prefer to stick with things that I know.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

21. I am interested in many things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

22. I do not like the idea of change.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

23. I like to begin new things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

24. I am a creature of habit.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

25. I am attached to conventional ways.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Circle or fill in the appropriate answer to each of the following questions.

26. Do you work outside the home? Yes No

27. If you work outside the home, what is your job? _____

28. How many years of experience do you have in this type of job? _____

29. How many jobs have you voluntarily left in the last five years? _____

30. Do you tend to save or spend your money? Save Spend

31. Do you own a home? Yes No

32. What is your age?

- a) 18-25 years
- b) 26-35 years
- c) 36-45 years
- d) 46-55 years
- e) over 55 years

33. How much work experience did you obtain before you were 18 years old?

- a) none
- b) less than 1 year
- c) 1-2 years
- d) more than 2 years

Appendix B

Items for Classification of Turnover Decisions

Shock: At least 1 of the following must indicate shock [items 1, 3 & 4 answered yes, no]. 1.

Was there a single particular event that caused you to think about leaving?

2. Please describe that event. [open-ended response format]

3. If you accepted a job offer you had in hand, was it originally an unsolicited offer or inquiry (please answer only if you had a job offer in hand)?

4. Was there a particular event or series of particular events related to litigation that influenced your decision to leave? If yes, please describe briefly.

Script: At least 1 of the following must indicate an engaged script [item 1 answered yes, no; 2 & 3 on a 5 point Likert scale, anchored from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree].

1. If you accepted a job offer you had in hand, was it originally an unsolicited offer or inquiry? (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.)

2. I have left a job before for essentially the same reasons (i.e., very similar circumstances).

3. At the time I left my job, I had already determined that I would leave the firm **IF** a certain event were to occur (e.g., being accepted to graduate school).

Image Violation: At least 1 of the following must indicate violation, which was operationalized as a 1 or 2 response [items 1-4 answered on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-not compatible to 5-compatible; 5-8 on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree]. For hypothesis 5, these items were reverse scored.

1. How compatible were your personal values/ethics with those of your former firm? (value)

2. How compatible were your professional values/ethics with those of your former firm? (value)

3. How compatible were your personal goals with those of your former firm? (value)

4. How compatible were your professional goals with those of your former firm? (value)

5. If I had stayed, I would have been able to achieve most of my career goals. (trajectory)

6. If I had stayed, I would have been able to achieve most of my personal goals. (trajectory)

7. At my former firm, my career was progressing as I expected. (strategic)

8. At my former firm, my personal goals were progressing as I expected. (strategic).

Job Satisfaction: At least 1 of the following must indicate dissatisfaction, which was operationalized as a 1 or 2 response [all answered on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-very dissatisfied to 5-very satisfied].

1. At your former firm, how satisfied were your with:

- 1) the supervision you received;
- 2) firm as an employer;
- 3) career opportunities;
- 4) financial rewards;
- 5) your co-workers;
- 6) nature of the work;
- 7) recreational activities;
- 8) fringe benefits (e.g., vacation, holiday time, insurance coverage, retirement plans, sick leave, family leave)

2. At your former firm, how satisfied were you with the work environment related to:

- 1) generating new client business;
- 2) competitive pressures;
- 3) autonomy of the work;
- 4) pressures at work;
- 5) time flexibility

Search: At least 1 of the following must indicate search [Items 1 & 2 answered yes, no; question 3 on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-no search to 5-very comprehensive search].

1. Did you have at least one job offer in hand when you decided to leave?

2. If you didn't have a job offer in hand when you actually left, did you believe that getting an offer was very likely?

3. Before you left the firm, how comprehensive was your search for another job (e.g., did you gather lots of information on other job opportunities or search on a daily basis)?

Evaluation: At least 1 of the following must indicate evaluation of job alternatives [answered yes, no].

1. After your first thoughts about leaving, did you evaluate any specific job alternatives before deciding to leave?

2. After your first thoughts about leaving, did general job availability affect your decision to leave (e.g., you were pretty sure you could get another job, thought you didn't have a specific job in mind)?

3. In making your final decision to leave, did you seriously consider non-work options (e.g., staying at home, returning to school, taking a sabbatical)? If you responded yes, please indicate the type of non-work option you actually pursued.

Job Offers: At least 1 of the following must indicate offers [items 1-5 answered yes, no & 6-7 fill-in].

1. Was an unsolicited job offer or inquiry the event that first led you to think seriously about leaving?

2. Did you have at least one job offer in hand when you decided to leave?

3. Did you ultimately accept a job offer that you had in hand? (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.)

4. If you accepted a job offer you had in hand, was it originally an unsolicited offer or inquiry? (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.)

5. If you didn't have a job offer in hand when you actually left, did you believe that getting an offer was very likely?

6. How many acceptable alternatives to your job did your search produce before you left your former firm?

7. How many total offers did you have before you left your former firm?

Appendix C1

Revised Items for Classification of Turnover Decisions

Circle or fill in the appropriate answer to each of the following questions.

1. Was there a single particular event that caused you to think about leaving? YES NO

2. Please describe that event: _____

3. If you accepted a job offer, did it originate as an inquiry by a company that you did not pursue (unsolicited)?
 (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.) YES NO

4. Was there a particular event or series of particular events that influenced your decision to leave?
YES NO

If yes, please describe briefly: _____

5. Would you say that the event or series of events that influenced your decision to leave was positive, negative or neutral? _____

6. I have left a job before for essentially the same reasons (i.e., very similar circumstances).
YES NO

7. At the time I left my job, I had already determined that I would leave the organization **IF or WHEN** a certain event were to occur (e.g., birth of child, spouse accepting a job in another location).

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. How compatible were your personal values/ethics with those of your former organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Incompatible	Moderately Incompatible	Neutral	Moderately Compatible	Compatible

9. How compatible were your professional values/ethics with those of your former organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Incompatible	Moderately Incompatible	Neutral	Moderately Compatible	Compatible

10. How compatible were your personal goals with those of your former organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Incompatible	Moderately Incompatible	Neutral	Moderately Compatible	Compatible

11. How compatible were your professional goals with those of your former organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Incompatible	Moderately Incompatible	Neutral	Moderately Compatible	Compatible

12. If I had stayed working for my former organization, I would have been able to achieve most of my career goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

13. If I had stayed working for my former organization, I would have been able to achieve most of my personal goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. At my former organization, my career was progressing as I expected.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. At my former organization, my personal goals were progressing as I expected.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. At your former organization, how satisfied were you overall with your job?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

17. At your former organization, how satisfied were you overall with the organization and work environment?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

18. Did you have at least one job offer that resulted from a job search when you decided to leave?

YES NO

19. If you didn't have a job offer when you actually left, did your job search lead you to believe that getting an offer was likely?

YES NO

20. Before you left the organization, how comprehensive was your search for another job or other non-work alternatives (e.g., did you gather lots of information on other job opportunities or search on a daily basis)?

1	2	3	4	5
No Search	Minimal Search	Moderately Comprehensive Search	Comprehensive Search	Very Comprehensive Search

21. After your first thoughts about leaving, did you evaluate any specific job alternatives before deciding to leave?

YES NO

22. In making your final decision to leave, did you seriously consider non-work options (e.g., staying at home, returning to school, taking a sabbatical)?

YES NO

If you responded yes, please indicate the type of non-work option you actually pursued: _____

23. Was a job inquiry that you did not pursue (unsolicited) the event that first led you to think seriously about leaving?

YES NO

24. Did you have at least one job offer in hand when you decided to leave?

YES NO

25. Did you ultimately accept a job offer that you had in hand? (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.)

YES NO

26. If you accepted a job offer, was it originally an offer or inquiry that you had not pursued (unsolicited)? (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.)

YES NO

27. How many acceptable alternatives to your job did your search produce before you left your former organization? _____

28. How many total offers did you have before you left your former organization? _____

29. Did your former job meet your initial expectations? YES NO

30. Did your former organization meet your initial expectations? YES NO

31. Could your former organization have done anything to prevent you from leaving?

YES NO

If yes, please explain: _____

Appendix C2

Labeled Revised Items for Classification of Turnover Decisions

Shock: At least 1 of the following must indicate shock [items 1, 3 & 4 answered yes, no].

1. Was there a single particular event that caused you to think about leaving?
2. Please describe that event. [open-ended response format]
3. If you accepted a job offer, did it originate as an unsolicited inquiry (please answer only if you had a job offer in hand)?
4. Was there a particular event or series of particular events that influenced your decision to leave? If yes, please describe briefly.
5. Would you say that the event or series of events that influenced your decision to leave was positive, negative or neutral?

Script: At least 1 of the following must indicate an engaged script [item 1 answered yes, no; 2 on a 5 point Likert scale, anchored from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree].

1. I have left a job before for essentially the same reasons (i.e., very similar circumstances).
2. At the time I left my job, I had already determined that I would leave the organization **IF or WHEN** a certain event were to occur (e.g., being accepted to graduate school, spouse accepting a job in another location).

Image Violation: At least 1 of the following must indicate violation, which was operationalized as a 1 or 2 response [items 1-4 answered on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-not compatible to 5-compatible; 5-8 on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree].

1. How compatible were your personal values/ethics with those of your former organization? (value)
2. How compatible were your professional values/ethics with those of your former organization? (value)
3. How compatible were your personal goals with those of your former organization? (value)
4. How compatible were your professional goals with those of your former organization? (value)
5. If I had stayed working for my former organization, I would have been able to achieve most

of my career goals. (trajectory)

6. If I had stayed working for my former organization, I would have been able to achieve most of my personal goals. (trajectory)

7. At my former organization, my career was progressing as I expected. (strategic)

8. At my former organization, my personal goals were progressing as I expected. (strategic).

Job Satisfaction: At least 1 of the following must indicate dissatisfaction, which was operationalized as a 1 or 2 response [both answered on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-very dissatisfied to 5-very satisfied].

1. At your former organization, how satisfied were you overall with your job?

2. At your former organization, how satisfied were you overall with the organization and work environment?

Search: At least 1 of the following must indicate search [Items 1 & 2 answered yes, no; question 3 on a Likert scale, anchored from 1-no search to 5-very comprehensive search].

1. Did you have at least one job offer that resulted from a job search when you decided to leave?

2. If you didn't have a job offer when you actually left, did your job search lead you to believe that getting an offer was likely?

3. Before you left the organization, how comprehensive was your search for another job or other non-work alternatives (e.g., did you gather lots of information on other job opportunities or search on a daily basis)?

Evaluation: At least 1 of the following must indicate evaluation of job alternatives [answered yes, no].

1. After your first thoughts about leaving, did you evaluate any specific job alternatives before deciding to leave?

2. In making your final decision to leave, did you seriously consider non-work options (e.g., staying at home, returning to school, taking a sabbatical)? If you responded yes, please indicate the type of non-work option you actually pursued.

Job Offers: At least 1 of the following must indicate offers [items 1-5 answered yes, no & 6 fill-in].

1. Was an unsolicited job inquiry the event that first led you to think seriously about leaving?

2. Did you have at least one job offer in hand when you decided to leave?
3. Did you ultimately accept a job offer that you had in hand? (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.)
4. If you accepted a job offer, was it originally an unsolicited offer or inquiry? (Please answer only if you had a job offer in hand.)
5. How many acceptable alternatives to your job did your search produce before you left your former organization?
6. How many total offers did you have before you left your former organization?

Possible Interventions: [answered yes, no & fill-in].

1. Did your former job meet your initial expectations?
2. Did your former organization meet your initial expectations?
3. Could your former organization have done anything to prevent you from leaving? If yes, please explain.

Appendix D

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study about employee retention and turnover conducted by Lynn Kalnbach, a graduate student in the Psychology Department at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. You have been asked to participate in the research because you have reported voluntarily quitting a job within the last two years.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

The purpose of the study is to determine how various factors influence the manner in which decisions are made to quit specific jobs. There are no risks to participating in the study, while the benefit is that we can learn more about how people make decisions to quit their jobs. If you agree to participate in the study, I would ask you to do the following things: 1) complete the attached questionnaire, which should take approximately 5-10 minutes, and 2) complete a follow-up questionnaire in the next week or two, which will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

The only people who will know that you are a research subject are members of the research team. When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All completed questionnaires will be stored by the investigator in a locked file cabinet. After the study is completed, any identifying information associated with your questionnaire data (name, address, phone number) will be destroyed.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in the study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. In order to give your consent to be a participant in the study, please complete and return the questionnaire. Again, remember that your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University.

If you have any questions about this study or the procedures, you may contact me by telephone at (262) 376-9835. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Lynn Kalnbach

Appendix E1

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Please read each statement and circle the answer (1-5) that best describes how you are now, rather than how you would like to be in the future.

1. I avoid mistakes.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

2. I choose my words with care.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

3. I stick to my chosen path.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

4. I jump into things without thinking.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

5. I make rash decisions.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

6. I like to act on a whim.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

7. I rush into things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

8. I act without thinking.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

9. I do unexpected things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

10. I often make last-minute plans.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

11. I act wild and crazy.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

12. I do dangerous things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

13. I am willing to try anything once.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

14. I take risks.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

15. I love excitement.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

16. I avoid dangerous situations.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

17. I prefer variety to routine.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

18. I dislike changes.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

19. I like to visit new places.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

20. I prefer to stick with things that I know.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

21. I am interested in many things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

22. I do not like the idea of change.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

23. I like to begin new things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

24. I am a creature of habit.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

25. I am attached to conventional ways.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

26. I believe that this job will utilize my skills and talents well.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

27. I feel like I am a good match for this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

28. I believe that my coworkers will be similar to me.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

29. I believe that my values are compatible with the organization's values.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

30. I can reach my professional goals working for this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

31. I will have a lot of freedom on this job to decide how to pursue my goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

32. I fit with the organization's culture.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

33. The perks on this job will be very good.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

34. My promotional opportunities will be excellent here.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

35. The benefits are good on this job.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Circle or fill in the appropriate answer to each of the following questions.

36. How many years of experience do you have in this type of job? _____

37. How many jobs have you voluntarily left in the last five years? _____

38. Do you tend to save or spend your money? Save Spend

39. Do you own the home you live in? Yes No

40. Are you currently married? Yes No

41. If you are married, does your spouse work outside the home? Yes No

42. How many dependents do you have?

- a) none
- b) 1
- c) 2
- d) 3-5
- e) more than 5

43. What is your age?
- a) 18-25 years
 - b) 26-35 years
 - c) 36-45 years
 - d) 46-55 years
 - e) over 55 years
44. How much work experience did you obtain before you were 18 years old?
- a) none
 - b) less than 1 year
 - c) 1-2 years
 - d) more than 2 years
45. What is your highest level of education?
- a) no high school diploma
 - b) high school diploma
 - c) some college or technical school
 - d) Associate's degree
 - e) Bachelor's degree
 - f) Graduate degree
46. List all of your work-related skills (e.g., computer-related skills, interpersonal skills, time management skills, etc.). _____

47. Give your best estimate of your present alternative job opportunities.
- a) no alternatives
 - b) few alternatives
 - c) many alternatives

Appendix E2

Conscientiousness (cautiousness)

1. I avoid mistakes.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

2. I choose my words with care.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

3. I stick to my chosen path.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

4. I jump into things without thinking.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

5. I make rash decisions.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

6. I like to act on a whim.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

7. I rush into things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

8. I act without thinking.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

9. I do unexpected things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

10. I often make last-minute plans.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Willingness to Take Risks (thrill-seeking)

11. I act wild and crazy.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

12. I do dangerous things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

13. I am willing to try anything once.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

14. I take risks.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

15. I love excitement.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

16. I avoid dangerous situations.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Openness to Experience (adventurousness)

17. I prefer variety to routine.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

18. I dislike changes.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

19. I like to visit new places.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

20. I prefer to stick with things that I know.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

21. I am interested in many things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

22. I do not like the idea of change.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

23. I like to begin new things.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

24. I am a creature of habit.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

25. I am attached to conventional ways.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Expectation of Skill Utilization

26. I believe that this job will utilize my skills and talents well.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Organizational Fit

27. I feel like I am a good match for this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

28. I believe that my coworkers will be similar to me.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

29. I believe that my values are compatible with the organization's values.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

30. I can reach my professional goals working for this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

31. I will have a lot of freedom on this job to decide how to pursue my goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

32. I fit with the organization's culture.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Expectations about Benefits

33. The perks on this job will be very good.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

34. My promotional opportunities will be excellent here.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

35. The benefits are good on this job.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neutral	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

Circle or fill in the appropriate answer to each of the following questions.

36. How many years of experience do you have in this type of job? _____

37. How many jobs have you voluntarily left in the last five years? _____

38. Do you tend to save or spend your money? Save Spend

39. Do you own the home you live in? Yes No

40. Are you currently married? Yes No

41. If you are married, does your spouse work outside the home? Yes No

42. How many dependents do you have?
- a) none
 - b) 1
 - c) 2
 - d) 3-5
 - e) more than 5
43. What is your age?
- a) 18-25 years
 - b) 26-35 years
 - c) 36-45 years
 - d) 46-55 years
 - e) over 55 years
44. How much work experience did you obtain before you were 18 years old?
- a) none
 - b) less than 1 year
 - c) 1-2 years
 - d) more than 2 years
45. What is your highest level of education?
- a) no high school diploma
 - b) high school diploma
 - c) some college or technical school
 - d) Associate's degree
 - e) Bachelor's degree
 - f) Graduate degree
46. List all of your work-related skills (e.g., computer-related skills, interpersonal skills, time management skills, etc.).
-
-
-
47. Give your best estimate of your present alternative job opportunities.
- a) no alternatives
 - b) few alternatives
 - c) many alternatives

Appendix F

Work-Related Scenarios

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

Read each of the scenarios on the following pages (one scenario per page). Assume that you are dealing with each situation as it is written, and circle or fill in the best answer to each of the questions.

Scenario 1: You have been working at this job for a while. One afternoon, your supervisor yells at you in front of your coworkers for committing a simple mistake. Your supervisor does not apologize to you after the initial confrontation.

- 1) To what extent do you think that this situation represents a jarring event that would prompt you to think about quitting this job? (Circle the number of the best answer.)

To no extent	To some extent	To a large extent
1	2	3

- 2) How would you respond to this work situation? (Circle the letter of only **one** answer)
- a) Quit the job, but only after searching for another alternative.
 - b) Stay in the job even though you are dissatisfied with the situation.
 - c) Quit the job immediately, without searching for another alternative.
 - d) Plan to leave the job if another opportunity comes along.
- 3) Rate each of the answers from above in terms of how likely you would be to do each on a scale of 1-5; 1 being very unlikely, 2 being somewhat unlikely, 3 being neutral, 4 being somewhat likely, and 5 being very likely.)

<u>Response</u>	<u>Rating</u>
a)	_____
b)	_____
c)	_____
d)	_____

- 4) Would you feel obligated to stay with the organization?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- 5) Have you actually ever been in this type of situation before?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 6) If you have been in this situation before, how did you handle it?

Scenario 2: You were hired into this job knowing that there would be some travel and work in the evenings. However, the amount of travel and evening work has become much greater than you had expected. You have already missed your good friend’s wedding and the funeral of a close relative as a result of your work demands.

- 1) To what extent do you think that this situation represents a jarring event that would prompt you to think about quitting this job? (Circle the number of the best answer.)

To no extent	To some extent	To a large extent
1	2	3

- 2) How would you respond to this work situation? (Circle the letter of only **one** answer)
- a) Quit the job, but only after searching for another alternative.
 - b) Stay in the job even though you are dissatisfied with the situation.
 - c) Quit the job immediately, without searching for another alternative.
 - d) Plan to leave the job if another opportunity comes along.
- 3) Rate each of the answers from above in terms of how likely you would be to do each on a scale of 1-5; 1 being very unlikely, 2 being somewhat unlikely, 3 being neutral, 4 being somewhat likely, and 5 being very likely.)

<u>Response</u>	<u>Rating</u>
a)	_____
b)	_____
c)	_____
d)	_____

- 4) Would you feel obligated to stay with the organization?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- 5) Have you actually ever been in this type of situation before?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 6) If you have been in this situation before, how did you handle it?

Scenario 3: You have been working full time in this job and have recently been informed that you were accepted into graduate school. You enjoy the job, but you also realize that the graduate courses will require much more of your time.

- 1) To what extent do you think that this situation represents a jarring event that would prompt you to think about quitting this job? (Circle the number of the best answer.)

To no extent	To some extent	To a large extent
1	2	3

- 2) How would you respond to this work situation? (Circle the letter of only **one** answer)
- a) Quit the job, but only after you begin your graduate courses.
 - b) Stay in the job even though you are concerned that you will not have enough time to commit to both work and school.
 - c) Quit the job immediately in order to prepare for graduate school.
 - d) Inquire about the possibility of working part time while attending graduate school.

- 3) Rate each of the answers from above in terms of how likely you would be to do each on a scale of 1-5; 1 being very unlikely, 2 being somewhat unlikely, 3 being neutral, 4 being somewhat likely, and 5 being very likely.)

<u>Response</u>	<u>Rating</u>
a)	_____
b)	_____
c)	_____
d)	_____

- 4) Would you feel obligated to stay with the organization?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 5) Have you actually ever been in this type of situation before?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 6) If you have been in this situation before, how did you handle it?

Scenario 4: You are employed in a low-paying job with a good company. When you were hired, you were told about the great opportunities for higher wages and advancement within the organization. Although you have been given additional responsibilities, you have not received any additional compensation or changes in title.

- 1) To what extent do you think that this situation represents a jarring event that would prompt you to think about quitting this job? (Circle the number of the best answer.)

To no extent	To some extent	To a large extent
1	2	3

- 2) How would you respond to this work situation? (Circle the letter of only **one** answer)
- a) Quit the job, but only after searching for another alternative.
 - b) Stay in the job even though you are dissatisfied with the situation.
 - c) Quit the job immediately, without searching for another alternative.
 - d) Plan to leave the job if another opportunity comes along.

- 3) Rate each of the answers from above in terms of how likely you would be to do each on a scale of 1-5; 1 being very unlikely, 2 being somewhat unlikely, 3 being neutral, 4 being somewhat likely, and 5 being very likely.)

<u>Response</u>	<u>Rating</u>
a)	_____
b)	_____
c)	_____
d)	_____

- 4) Would you feel obligated to stay with the organization?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 5) Have you actually ever been in this type of situation before?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 6) If you have been in this situation before, how did you handle it?

Scenario 5: You have been working in the same organization for some time. You recently attended a conference where you presented some information about the work you are currently doing. While you were there, you were offered a good job with a competing organization. The new job sounds interesting and offers a higher salary than you are currently earning.

- 1) To what extent do you think that this situation represents a jarring event that would prompt you to think about quitting this job? (Circle the number of the best answer.)

To no extent	To some extent	To a large extent
1	2	3

- 2) How would you respond to this work situation? (Circle the letter of only **one** answer)
- a) Quit your current job, but only after discussing the situation with your current boss.
 - b) Do not seriously consider the new job offer, and stay in your current job.
 - c) Quit your current job immediately, without discussing the situation with your current boss.
 - d) Consider the new job offer, but plan to leave your current job only if you do not receive the appropriate recognition in the future.

- 3) Rate each of the answers from above in terms of how likely you would be to do each on a scale of 1-5; 1 being very unlikely, 2 being somewhat unlikely, 3 being neutral, 4 being somewhat likely, and 5 being very likely.)

<u>Response</u>	<u>Rating</u>
a)	_____
b)	_____
c)	_____
d)	_____

- 4) Would you feel obligated to stay with the organization?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 5) Have you actually ever been in this type of situation before?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 6) If you have been in this situation before, how did you handle it?

Scenario 6: You have been working for this organization for a short time. The work environment is very poor. Managers in the organization are disrespectful toward employees, and your coworkers are unfriendly. In addition, the working hours are undesirable.

- 1) To what extent do you think that this situation represents a jarring event that would prompt you to think about quitting this job? (Circle the number of the best answer.)

To no extent	To some extent	To a large extent
1	2	3

- 2) How would you respond to this work situation? (Circle the letter of only **one** answer)
- a) Quit the job, but only after searching for another alternative.
 - b) Stay in the job even though you are dissatisfied with the situation.
 - c) Quit the job immediately, without searching for another alternative.
 - d) Plan to leave the job if another opportunity comes along.

- 3) Rate each of the answers from above in terms of how likely you would be to do each on a scale of 1-5; 1 being very unlikely, 2 being somewhat unlikely, 3 being neutral, 4 being somewhat likely, and 5 being very likely.)

<u>Response</u>	<u>Rating</u>
a)	_____
b)	_____
c)	_____
d)	_____

- 4) Would you feel obligated to stay with the organization?

- a) Yes
- b) No

- 5) Have you actually ever been in this type of situation before?

- a) Yes
- b) No

- 6) If you have been in this situation before, how did you handle it?

For what reasons have **you** voluntarily left jobs in the past? (Briefly describe each instance.)
