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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by David Paul Osborn entitled "A Noncompensatory Model of Organizational Choice." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Industrial/Organizational Psychology.

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A NONCOMPENSATORY MODEL OF
ORGANIZATIONAL CHOICE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to two individuals who have had a profound influence on my life. First, to my wife, Phyllis Osborn; without your constant love, support, patience, and understanding I would never have completed this work. Thank you for sharing life with me.

This endeavor is also dedicated to my father, Paul A. Osborn. The example of excellence and hard work which he set for me early in my life is directly responsible for whatever academic success I have achieved.

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ABSTRACT

Organizational choice refers to the choice by an individual of a particular organization in which to work. While various studies have examined the decision-making strategies used by individuals to arrive at an organizational choice, most have assumed that individuals use a maximizing, compensatory strategy. The present study proposes and empirically assesses aspects of an alternative model of organizational choice which is noncompensatory in nature.

The model proposes that individuals utilize minimum/special requirements on various attributes which must be met for an alternative to be considered acceptable. It also proposes that the use of minimum/special requirements on certain attributes restricts the variability of the acceptable jobs on those attributes, thus decreasing the importance of those attributes relative to other attributes for the final organizational choice.

The model was tested in a field setting using graduating university students who were actively engaged in a job search. Participants provided information concerning the organizations with which they were interviewing, as well as measures of acceptability and choice for their various alternatives.

In general, the results of the study provided qualified support for the major hypotheses. A significant number of participants both reported and appeared to use minimum/special requirements on various attributes to screen alternatives for acceptability. Also, those attributes which appeared to be important to participants in predicting acceptance of an alternative seemed to lessen in importance relative to other attributes in determining the ultimate choice made from the alternatives. Hypotheses concerning the impact of individual difference

variables on the likelihood to use minimum/special requirements on non-work variables were not supported.

The theoretical and practical implications of the study were discussed. The limitations of the study were also discussed, as well as future directions for research on organizational choice.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each year thousands of university students graduate and enter or re-enter the full-time workforce. The process through which these individuals enter particular organizations is known as organizational entry (Wanous, 1977). The process of organizational entry for a particular individual involves two decisions: (1) the decision of the organization to extend an offer of employment to the individual, and (2) the individual's decision to accept the offer. While many researchers have examined various facets of the organizational entry process, most have studied organizational entry from only the organization's perspective. Hundreds of studies have focused on the development and evaluation of various methods for selecting individuals for a job (Wanous, 1980). Many other studies have examined the recruitment practices and strategies used by organizations to attract and recruit qualified individuals.

Much less literature exists, however, which examines the process of organizational entry from the individual's perspective, i.e., how individuals choose a particular organization in which to work (Wanous, 1977; DeMeuse, 1982). Vroom (1966) has labelled this process "organizational choice behavior". Two basic reasons exist why a study of the organizational choice process is important (Sheard, 1970). First, organizations trying to attract and recruit productive employees should be interested in the organizational choice processes used by individuals so they can achieve optimal results from recruiting activities. Second, individuals making organizational choice decisions need to be aware of the various strategies and processes available so they can maximize their job-hunting success.

Of the literature which has examined the organizational choice process, most has focused on either what factors are important to individuals engaged in choosing an organization, or on the processes and strategies used by individuals to integrate information concerning different alternatives and to make a decision. Concerning the former, researchers have surveyed thousands of job seekers concerning the importance of various factors for organizational choice decisions. The results of these surveys have not led to a clear pattern concerning the importance of different factors to individuals making organizational choice decisions.

Most researchers who have focused on the process through which individuals make organizational choice decisions have assumed that compensatory strategies are utilized, in which unfavorable levels on a factor for a particular job may be offset by very favorable levels on other factors. Vroom's expectancy theory (a compensatory model) has been extensively used to describe the organizational choice behavior of individuals. However, research exists which suggests that Vroom's model and compensatory models in general may not accurately reflect the actual organizational choice process used by many individuals. Some research suggests that individuals may use decision-making strategies which are simpler than the instrumentality-valence theory proposed by Vroom (Simon, 1955; 1957; Einhorn, 1971), in that individuals may use strategies to reduce the number of alternatives they face. Evidence suggests that individuals may hold minimum/special requirements for particular attributes that must be met for a job to be considered acceptable by the individual (Rynes, Schwab & Heneman, 1983). If minimum/special requirements are utilized by individuals, their decision-making behavior must be characterized as non-compensatory, and the majority of research which has investigated the organizational choice process must be re-evaluated.

Research has also suggested that the variability of the alternatives faced by the individual plays a part in the organizational choice process. Rynes, Schwab, and Heneman (1983) found that the importance of a particular factor in the organizational choice process was related to the perceived variability on that factor across the alternatives. Specifically, the greater the variability of the alternatives on a particular factor, the more important that factor was for the organizational choice that was made by the individual.

Based on the literature which has investigated the organizational choice process, including the suggestion that individuals use noncompensatory strategies and the idea that the importance of a particular factor in the organizational choice process may be partly a function of the variability of the alternatives for that factor, a model of organizational choice was developed and tested. The model is presented as a two-stage model. The first stage focuses on the use of minimum/special requirements by job-seekers to screen jobs for acceptability, while the second stage examines the decision-making processes used by individuals to choose from the jobs they consider acceptable.

The study to be reported represents an initial attempt to examine propositions derived from the model using individuals who were actually making organizational choices. Data for the study were collected from graduating university students who provided information concerning the organizations with which they were interviewing. The data were used to test the propositions derived from the proposed model to see if the model accurately reflected the actual choice behavior of participants.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational choice refers to the choice by an individual of an organization in which to work (Wanous, 1977). It differs from job choice, which refers to the choice of a particular job within an occupation, independent of the organization in which the job is located. It also differs from occupational choice, which involves the selection of a particular vocation. However, many of the processes involved in organizational choice were investigated first under the more general area of occupational choice.

The study of occupational choice behavior has been studied by psychologists for over 35 years (Holland, 1959; Crites, 1969). This field of study, known as vocational psychology, has aided greatly in our understanding of the psychological processes by which individuals choose to enter particular occupational fields. While some the theories of occupational choice are relevant to the study of organizational choice, it is important to clearly distinguish between the two areas of study. Occupational choice usually precedes organizational choice, with occupational choice decisions usually being made over an extended period of time and involving a number of influencing events (including choice of a college major, graduation, and job market factors). Crites (1969) refers to this as an exclusion process, during which the range of possible occupations is narrowed over time as the occupational choice becomes more clearly defined for the individual. This exclusion process culminates in the choice of a particular type of job (job choice) and an organization in which to work (organizational choice). Viewed in this way, organizational choice almost always follows occupational choice for those entering the full-time work force for the first time (Wanous, 1977).

There are several reasons why the study of organizational choice per se is warranted. First, the study of how individuals choose organizations is of interest to the organizations trying to recruit and hire individuals who are in demand. It would seem that the more an organization knows about the processes through which individuals choose organizations, the more likely the organization's recruiting activities will be successful (Sheard, 1970).

Second, the study of organizational choice is important when considered from the job hunter's perspective. Understanding about the organizational choice process, particularly about those strategies which may maximize success by job seekers, if communicated to individuals facing such choices should help them recognize the choice processes they may be utilizing and thus more effectively choose from the alternatives available.

Third, studies which have attempted to investigate organizational choice have often yielded conflicting results (Feldman & Arnold, 1978). One of the purposes for the research presented in this paper is to suggest and affirm a possible reason why conflicting findings have been reported by different investigators.

As stated earlier, research on occupational choice has been conducted for many years. Hundreds of studies have been published which examined the personal characteristics of individuals who choose jobs in various occupations, and many theories of occupational choice processes have been developed and tested. While a great deal of information is known about occupational choice behavior, much less is known about the psychological processes through which individuals choose the particular organizations in which they will work. The research which has examined organizational choice generally falls into one of two categories. The first category consists of research which has attempted to identify those organizational and job attributes which are important to job seekers and affect the

organizational choice they make. Rankings of the importance of various job and organizational characteristics to various individuals has seemingly been the purpose of such research. The second category of research examining organizational choice consists of studies which have attempted to identify and investigate the processes used by individuals to combine information about the characteristics of various organizations and to choose from among the alternatives. Studies falling under this category have focused on the choice process itself rather than the importance of various attributes.

Studies Examining the Importance of Job and Organizational Factors

If any conclusion can be drawn from the literature examining the relative importance of various factors to individuals facing organizational choice decisions, it is that no conclusion can be made. No clear pattern of the importance of various factors to individuals emerges from the literature. Much of the research has involved asking college seniors or recent graduates to rank the importance of various job and organization characteristics to them as they look for jobs. Many of these studies were carried out by college and university placement offices. Other studies involved asking newly hired employees to indicate in order of importance the factors which influenced their decision to accept a particular job.

As mentioned above, an examination of the studies which have been carried out over the last 30 years yields no conclusive set of results. Jurgenson (1978), in a review of the literature and a presentation of his own research over a 30-year period, states that job security and opportunity for advancement appear to be rated as the most important factors. However, as pointed out by DeMeuse (1982), Jurgenson included only two factors in his study which are intrinsic in nature. Posner (1981) presented a wide range of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors

to subjects and concluded that job security and opportunity for advancement were less important to job applicants than suggested by Jurgenson. In a study by Schreier (1981) which was carried out at the same time as Posner's study, subjects were presented with a list of factors very similar to that of Posner. The results of this study supported the conclusions of Jurgenson, with job security and opportunity for advancement being ranked by subjects as the two most important factors.

In a study by Zedeck (1977), college students were asked to rank the importance of six factors as they related to organizational attractiveness. The students also read descriptions of fictitious positions in various work organization in which the level of each of the six factors had been manipulated and were asked to rate their willingness to join each organization. Using multiple regression analysis with the six job factors as independent variables and willingness to join the organization as the dependent variable, the results indicated that opportunity for advancement was the factor most predictive of willingness to join the organization. However, opportunity for advancement had the lowest mean ranking of all six factors, indicating that there was a discrepancy between the inferred objective weights assigned to the factors and the explicit subjective weights as stated by the participants. Job security was not included as a factor in the study.

Feldman and Arnold (1978) used a similar multiple regression approach utilizing descriptions of positions in various organizations to study the importance of six factors. The list of factors used by Feldman and Arnold did not include opportunity for advancement or job security. Analysis of the beta weights derived for each of the six factors indicated that salary/fringe benefits and the ability to use skills and abilities were the factors most predictive of organizational choice.

These were also the two factors which yielded the highest mean rankings by participants.

A 1982 study by Giles and Feild presented a list of 13 job factors to students interviewing for jobs through a university placement office. "Interesting work" was the factor rated the most important by male participants, with "opportunity for advancement" rated second most important and "chance to use one's abilities" third. Female participants also rated "interesting work" as the most important factor. "Opportunity for advancement" was rated as the fourth most important factor by females, after "the chance to use one's abilities" and "good pay". However, tests for significance between the rankings given each factor by males and females indicated that only one factor ("opportunity to supervise other people") yielded a difference between males and females which was statistically significant.

These studies along with others (Brief, Rose, & Aldag, 1977; Beak, 1966) suggest that no consistent ordering of various factors in terms of their importance in organizational choice has emerged from the literature. Also, comparison of the results of the different studies is made difficult by the differences in the number and types of factors presented to respondents. Some researchers included as few as 5 or 6 factors in their studies (Brief et al., 1977; Zedeck, 1977; Feldman & Arnold, 1978). Jurgenson included 10 factors, and others included between 13 and 20 factors (Posner, 1981; Schreier, 1981; Giles & Feild, 1982). As already noted, differences also exist between the studies in the number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors presented to respondents.

Also, as pointed out by DeMeuse (1982), conclusions concerning the importance of various factors to applicants are made difficult by differences across studies in the scale of measurement used, the definitions used for the factors

studied, the occupations of the participants, and the stage in the employment process at which the data was collected. This last point will be specifically addressed later in this paper.

For the reasons mentioned above, it appears that research examining attribute importance has not added a great deal to our knowledge of organizational choice decisions. In addition, if we are to understand how job seekers integrate and utilize information concerning different organizations, we must go beyond searching for conclusions concerning the relative importance of different factors and focus on the processes which they use. The next section of this paper reviews the process-oriented literature on organizational choice.

Studies Examining the Process of Organizational Choice

Studies focusing on the processes involved in organizational choice begin with the assumption that individuals faced with a choice among positions in various organizations engage in conscious, rational, thoughtful decisions concerning which position to accept. In this regard, organizational choice has been studied in a manner similar to that used in research examining other decision-making behavior. Most of the research assumes that various factors are important to individuals as they evaluate position alternatives, and the manner in which information about the levels of salient factors provided by each of the alternatives is integrated and processed has historically been the central concern of such research.

Most of the researchers who have examined organizational choice processes have assumed that individuals utilize compensatory strategies of decision-making. In compensatory or "trade-off" models, unfavorable levels of a particular factor can be offset or compensated for by very favorable levels of other factors. Compensatory models of organizational choice have their roots in the work of

classical economic theorists. As summarized by Rottenberg (1956), economists such as Adam Smith (1937) and John Stuart Mill (1895) theorized that wages paid for various jobs varied so as to compensate for other aspects of the job, such that jobs considered less desirable with respect to certain attributes carried a higher wage differential than others. The classical theorists proposed that individuals are indifferent to whether a job is desirable or undesirable; if the wage differential is just sufficient to compensate for undesirable aspects of the job, the job will be accepted.

In more recent times, compensatory models of organizational choice have been refined and enlarged. The compensatory model of organizational choice used most often by researchers has been an expectancy model (Wanous, 1977). Based on work by Vroom (1964), the basic expectancy model as applied to organizational choice proposes that individuals faced with a choice situation will choose that organization with the highest "motivational force". Motivational force is defined as a function of three components: 1 - the perceived likelihood of a job offer from the organization (expectancy), 2 - the individual's perception that the organization will be instrumental in providing certain outcomes (instrumentality), and 3 - the valence or attractiveness of each of the outcomes to the individual. Vroom defined motivational force as a multiplicative function of expectancy and the sum of the products of instrumentalities and the valences of the outcomes [$MF = E\{ (I*V) \}$], and suggested that individuals would choose the organization with the highest motivational force value. The model is clearly compensatory in nature, since even if any particular choice alternative has an $I*V$ value of zero for one or more attributes (at a given level of expectancy) that alternative may still have the highest motivational force if the sum of the remaining $I*V$ values for other attributes is greater than that of all other alternatives.

In the first test of his expectancy theory as applied to organizational choice, Vroom (1966) utilized graduate students who were nearing graduation and had identified which organizations were potential places of employment as participants in his study. Participants rated three of the organizations they were most interested in on how likely entry into that organization would lead to attainment of 15 job goals which were identified. These ratings provided a measure of the instrumentality of each organization for the job goals. The participants also rated each of the 15 goals in terms of their importance. Participants also rated each of the three organizations on overall attractiveness. Vroom found a strong relationship between the ratings of overall attractiveness of the organization and the degree of congruency between goal importance and perceived attainability of the goals in the organization, and concluded that the results supported his general expectancy model.

Sheard (1970) rightly noted that Vroom's formulation of the expectancy model, since it proposes that overall attractiveness is a function of the sum of the products of the valences of various outcomes and the perceived instrumentalities for the attainment of those outcomes, suggests that the valence and instrumentality ratings should be multiplied and summed across all outcomes (goals). Vroom used the correlation between the valence and instrumentality ratings for the goals as his measure of goal congruence. Since Vroom's measures of instrumentality and valence involved forced distributions, the multiplicative approach suggested by Sheard and Vroom's correlational procedure provide identical results.

Sheard (1970) suggested that the valence of job goals or outcomes added little to the predictive power of instrumentality ratings alone. He found that the sum of the instrumentality-valence products did not predict organizational choice

significantly better than the sum of the instrumentalities alone. The results of several other studies have supported the notion that weighting the instrumentality measures by outcome valence measures adds little to predictive accuracy (Mitchell & Knudson, 1973; Sheridan, Slocum & Richards, 1974; Teas, 1981). However, other studies have found support for the multiplicative model. Huber, Daneshgar, and Ford (1971), in a study specifically examining the utility of multiplying the instrumentality ratings by the valence ratings as compared to using instrumentality ratings alone, found support for the weighted model in predicting job choice. Lawler and Porter (1967), Connolly and Vines (1977) and Oldham (1976) also found support for the multiplicative model.

Thus, while there are differences in the particular mathematical models used by different researchers, most research has found support for expectancy theory predictions of organizational attractiveness (Vroom, 1966; Lawler et al., 1975), organizational choice (Pieters et al., 1968; Huber et al., 1971; Oldham, 1976; Connolly & Vines, 1977) and effort to join the organization (Greenhaus et al., 1978). While such support exists, there are a number of considerations concerning the usefulness of expectancy theory models of organizational choice.

First, while most studies have found a correlation between instrumentality-valence products and organizational choice variables, the correlations have not been overwhelmingly large (Mitchell, 1974; Connolly & Vines, 1977; Herriott & Ecob, 1979). The Lawler et al. study yielded a correlation between the sum of the instrumentality-valence products and the ratings of organizational attractiveness of .34. Oldham (1976) found a correlation of .41 between the instrumentality-valence products and actual organizational choice. Connolly and Vines (1977) reported the results of their study in terms of the "predictive accuracy" of the multiplicative model, that is, the percent of actual organizational choices correctly

predicted by instrumentality-valence scores. They reported that the multiplicative model had a 68% accuracy rate, against a chance baseline of 50.7%. While the improvement of the instrumentality-valence model predictions over the chance baseline was statistically significant at the .01 level, the authors note that the increase is not particularly overwhelming.

A second issue concerns the measures of the components of the expectancy model which are used in most of the studies. As noted by Mitchell and Beach (1976), there is some confusion in the literature over the ways in which expectancies, instrumentalities, and valences are measured. What is called expectancy is often measured as if it were instrumentality, and vice versa. Also, there are differences between the studies in the exact form of expectancy model used. Some of the studies included the Vroom's expectancy component (Greenhaus et al., 1978) while most included only the instrumentality and valence components (Pieters et al., 1968; Sheard, 1970; Huber et al., 1971; Connolly & Vines, 1977; Teas, 1981).

A third issue concerns the methodology used in the testing of expectancy theory. Most of the research has utilized the same method of measuring all the theoretical components proposed by the theory (Wanous, 1977). Questionnaires have been used almost exclusively to gather information on subjects' perceptions of expectancies, instrumentalities, valences, and job choices. Actual job choices have rarely been used as the criterion variable against which to judge the appropriateness of the model.

Also, one of the basic assumptions of the expectancy model has been questioned. Herriot and Ecob (1979) along with Mitchell (1974) have suggested that the assumption that each instrumentality-valence product carries the same weight with individuals in choice situations may be inaccurate. Studies by Lawler and

Porter (1967) and Mitchell and Pollard (1973) examining expectancy theory as a predictor of work performance found that calculating regression weights separately for each instrumentality-valence product improved the predictive accuracy of the model. Herriot and Ecob suggest that the reason for this finding may be that individuals compare the factor products for each alternative before summation of the products occurs; that is, the various attributes may be examined separately for variability in the instrumentality-valence products across the alternatives. If this is the case, it seems plausible that those factor products showing greater variability across the alternatives would carry greater weight in the choice made by the individual. Work by Rynes, Schwab, and Heneman (1983) supports this possibility. They found that the importance of pay to individuals' job choice decisions was a function of the perceived variability of pay across the job alternatives. Their research and its implications for the research presented here will be elaborated later in this paper.

A final issue concerning expectancy theory models of organizational choice is that while support has been found for the model in the form of correlations between measures of instrumentality-valence and organizational preference and choice in tightly controlled questionnaire studies using a simulated choice situation, the model may not accurately describe the decision-making process actually used by individuals faced with a real organizational choice. The assumption underlying expectancy theory that individuals utilize a conscious, rational, maximization decision-making strategy has been questioned by many researchers (Mitchell, 1974).

In particular, there are several who have questioned the assumption of compensatory model usage by individuals (Simon, 1955; March & Simon, 1958; Soelberg, 1967; Einhorn, 1971; Tversky, 1972). These researchers argue that

while there appears to be support for the utilization of linear, compensatory models such as that noted above, individuals faced with actual organizational choice situations may utilize other noncompensatory strategies in order to simplify the choice process. The next section will address such considerations.

Research Examining Noncompensatory Strategies of Decision-Making

Before noncompensatory strategies of organizational choice are discussed, it is of considerable use to examine the more general theories of noncompensatory decision-making, since organizational choice may be considered a particular decision-making situation faced by individuals. Concerning general decision-making strategies, Herbert Simon (1955; 1957), in his well known discussion of the "bounded rationality" with which individuals must make decisions, has suggested that because of their limited information and ability, individuals are unlikely to engage in optimal, maximizing decision-making behavior such as that suggested by compensatory models of choice. March and Simon (1958) and Cyert and March (1963) argue that because of this limited ability to seek the optimal choice, decision makers typically use strategies involving satisficing to simplify the choice process they are facing. Individuals using a satisficing strategy examine each alternative as it becomes available and choose the first one which satisfies the minimally acceptable standards (cut-offs) which they have set on various attributes. Such a model of choice is noncompensatory because of the use of cut-offs which must be met before a choice alternative is considered acceptable.

Einhorn (1971), in his discussion of various decision-making strategies which individuals may utilize, suggested that while support has been found for linear, compensatory models of decision-making, there is evidence of the use of nonlinear, noncompensatory models. Einhorn describes two noncompensatory models of decision-making, and presents the findings of two studies he performed

which investigated the conditions under which individuals would utilize the different strategies.

These models were the conjunctive and disjunctive models of decision-making. The conjunctive model is similar to that proposed by Simon (1955), in that it proposes that individuals utilize minimum standards on various attributes, and only those choice alternatives which meet or exceed the minimum standards on all attributes are considered acceptable alternatives by the decision maker. The elimination of alternatives proceeds, if possible, until only one alternative remains. The disjunctive model also utilizes minimum standards for various attributes. However, using the disjunctive model, an alternative must have at least one attribute greater than the minimum standard, and all the attributes of the other alternatives must be below or equal to the minimum standards. Using this model, an alternative with a particularly high value on any particular attribute is considered the acceptable choice.

As noted, Einhorn carried out two studies examining whether linear, compensatory strategies or nonlinear, noncompensatory strategies such as the two he described were used by individuals facing certain choice situations. In both studies Einhorn found considerable use of noncompensatory models of decision-making, as well as the linear model. In a study examining the strategies used by individuals faced with a simulated job preference decision, Einhorn found that most individuals used a conjunctive strategy, with little usage of the linear model and practically no use of the disjunctive model. In the study examining the decision-making strategies of faculty members as they evaluated hypothetical candidates to graduate school, Einhorn found the linear model and the conjunctive model fitted the data equally well, with few subjects using the disjunctive model.

Tversky (1972) has also questioned the assumption of the use of compensatory models of decision-making. He suggested that individuals may utilize a strategy he called elimination-by-aspects. The elimination-by-aspects strategy is a special case of the conjunctive model in which various attributes have been ranked in order of importance to the individual. Using this strategy, an individual considers the various choice alternatives in relation to a minimum standard on the most important attribute. Those alternatives which do not meet the minimum standard on that attribute are eliminated. The procedure is then repeated using the next most important attribute until only one alternative remains. Tversky presents empirical evidence supporting the use of such a strategy.

Several researchers have investigated the conditions under which noncompensatory decision-making strategies are likely to be utilized by individuals. Payne (1982) discusses the impact of three variables on the types of strategies used by decision-makers. These are the number of alternatives being evaluated, the number of attributes examined, and the time pressure on the decision-maker.

With respect to the effects of the number of alternatives on the type of strategy used, there is considerable evidence that while compensatory strategies are likely to be used when only two alternatives are present, as the number of alternatives being evaluated increases beyond two individuals are more likely to use simplifying choice strategies such as the conjunctive or elimination-by-aspects models (Olshavsky, 1979; Payne, 1976; Payne & Braunstein, 1978). Since job seekers in high demand occupational fields may have more than two alternatives to choose from, it may be likely that simplifying strategies such as these may be utilized in those situations, particularly as the complexity of the situation increases with more alternatives.

Regarding the number of attributes examined by decision-makers, no evidence has been found for its impact on the decision-making strategies utilized by individuals (Payne, 1976). However, research investigating the effects of time pressure on the underlying decision-making strategies used by individuals suggests that time pressure has some impact. Wright (1974), in a lab study examining the strategies used by subjects in a consumer preference task, found that as time pressure on the decision-maker increased, s/he was more likely to place greater emphasis on negative information about the alternatives and to use fewer attributes in arriving at a choice. Such strategies may be likely to be used by individuals faced with a short deadline for responding to employment offers from various organizations.

Turning to decision-making involving organizational choice, there are several researchers who have investigated the possibility that individuals use non-compensatory strategies when faced with such choices. A particular noncompensatory model of organizational choice which has received much attention in the literature is Soelberg's General Decision Process model (Soelberg, 1967). Soelberg, based on observations of the organizational choices of 52 graduate students at MIT, proposed that job seekers utilize a two-stage process in making organizational choice decisions. The first stage involves search for a job which is close to the "ideal job" as perceived by the job seeker. During this phase, various job alternatives are screened using only a few important factors. Soelberg suggested that the job alternatives must satisfy the job seeker's criteria on these factors for the job to be considered acceptable. According to Soelberg, once a job is found which meets the minimum criteria established on the relevant factors it becomes the implicit choice of the individual, even though the individual will continue the job search so that comparisons with the implicit choice can be made. Thus, Soel-

berg proposed that he could predict very early in the job search which job would be the ultimate choice of the individual. The second stage of Soelberg's model involves confirmation of the implicit choice. In this stage, the individual will seek to confirm that his implicit choice was the best choice. The individual will consider many more factors than the ones used to make the implicit choice, and will engage in distortion of information about the alternatives if necessary to confirm that the implicit choice provides maximum utility.

Soelberg's model is noncompensatory in that the minimum criteria on the few factors utilized by the job seeker must be met for the job to be the chosen alternative, regardless of the perceived instrumentality of the job in providing other valued outcomes. The two-stage process involving an implicit choice followed by a period of dissonance and distortion also differs from the model of organizational choice provided by expectancy theory.

Most of the research concerning the General Decision Process model has focused on whether individuals engage in distortion of information concerning job alternatives so as to confirm the initial choice which is made, while little work has focused on the model's proposed first stage of job search and implicit choice. However, a study by Sheridan, Richards, and Slocum (1975) found that implicit job choices were made early in the job search, and that only a few factors were utilized by individuals to make the choice. Also, Hill (1974) found the General Decision Process model to be slightly superior to the expectancy model in predicting actual job preference. Several studies (Lawler et al., 1975; Vroom, 1966; Misra & Kalro, 1972; Glueck, 1974) provide convincing evidence of a cognitive dissonance effect following the choice which is made. All the studies mentioned found individuals engaging in post-choice distortion of information about alternatives so that the initial choice could be confirmed as the best choice.

Other researchers have also investigated the use of noncompensatory strategies by individuals making organizational choices. Some of the early economic theorists, writing in response to the classical theorists' assumption of compensatory models of job choice, stated that their studies indicated differentials in wage rates had very little impact on movement between jobs, and that other aspects of the job were found to be of such importance to workers that they could not be compensated for if absent from a particular job (Myers & Maclaurin, 1943; Kerr, 1950). Reynolds (1951) suggested that workers often held "minimum standards" with respect to certain attributes which had to be met for the job to be accepted. Concerning his observation of workers in the New Haven, CT area, he states "The decision to take or to keep a job usually depends on a comparison between the characteristics of the job and the worker's minimum standards, rather than on a comparison of the job with other known alternatives" (p. 212).

Reynolds proposed that individuals seeking jobs usually establish minimum standards on one or two factors including pay, and then accept the first job which meets the minimum standards. With regard to pay, Reynolds called the minimum amount of pay necessary for an individual to consider a job acceptable the "reservation wage" of the individual. Other economists have found evidence that individuals utilize decision-making strategies involving reservation wages (Stigler, 1962; Sobel & Folk, 1965).

A recent study of particular importance is that of Rynes, Schwab, and Heneman (1983). Based on the work by Reynolds and other labor economists concerning reservation wage strategies, Rynes et al. investigated the possible use of noncompensatory, reservation wage strategies by individuals faced with organizational choice decisions in a laboratory experiment setting. Their research involved presenting subjects with descriptions of jobs in which different levels of

four attributes (starting salary, geographical location, promotional opportunities, and type of work) were manipulated. Two different sets of hypothetical job descriptions were created. In one, five starting salary levels were used which represented a wide pay range. These were combined with the various levels of the other attributes, resulting in 120 jobs in the wide pay range condition. A narrow pay range condition was also utilized, with five starting salary levels representing a much narrower pay range combined with the different levels of the other attributes to create another set of 120 jobs. Subjects were presented with the 240 job descriptions and asked to indicate whether they would attempt to obtain an interview for each job. To provide evidence of reservation wage strategies, the number of individuals who rejected all jobs at certain pay levels regardless of other attribute levels was examined. The results indicated that of the 10 subjects, 7 subjects in the wide pay range rejected all jobs at certain pay levels across all combinations of the other attributes. In the narrow pay condition, 3 of the 10 rejected all the jobs at certain pay levels. Rynes et al. presented this as evidence of the utilization of noncompensatory reservation wage strategies by individuals, and suggested that the results indicated the use of such strategies may increase as the variability of the pay range facing individuals increases.

Importance of Attribute Variability

An additional area of study concerning organizational choice which has received recent attention concerns the effects of the perceived variability of an attribute on its importance to the individual. Reynolds (1951) in his book presenting his views on labor market theory, suggested that the variability of a particular job attribute as perceived by an individual faced with job alternatives has a direct impact on the importance of that attribute for the individual's job choice. Specifically, he hypothesized that the greater the range in pay among the job alternatives

facing the individual, the greater the importance of pay for the decision. Thus, factors in the labor market outside the individual's control have a direct impact on the weights given various attributes by the individual.

Rynes et al. (1983) specifically tested this hypothesis in the laboratory study mentioned above. In their study, which involved presenting subjects with hypothetical job descriptions and asking them whether they would accept an interview for the job, they found the importance of pay in predicting interview acceptance to be significantly higher in the wide pay range condition than in the narrow pay range condition. Also, by examining the importance of pay in the wide and narrow pay range conditions at only those midrange pay levels common to both conditions, they found that subjects made greater distinctions between two pay levels in the narrow pay range condition than between the same two levels in the wide pay range condition. This finding indicates that those seeking jobs may evaluate particular pay levels differently depending on the variability of pay they perceive in the relevant job market.

This finding is important for several reasons. First, it provides insight into the processes individuals may utilize to evaluate information concerning the levels of various attributes provided by job alternatives. Second, it suggests that the importance of pay (and possibly other attributes) to individuals in certain occupations may differ from its importance to individuals in other occupations with a job market differing in the amount of variability on pay. Individuals in occupations where there is great variability in pay rates may place greater emphasis on pay in choosing a job than those in occupations where there is little variability in pay. This suggestion may help in explaining the conflicting results from surveys designed to discover the importance of various factors to individuals, since such research differs widely in the occupations of those surveyed.

The suggestion that the importance of an attribute is a function of its perceived variability also has implications at the level of the individual. It would seem that those individuals within an occupational field who are considered the "best applicants" among those available would possibly face greater variability on pay than other applicants, as some organizations may offer them higher pay levels than other applicants as an inducement to accept the offer from the organization. Higher pay offers from some organizations would seem to increase the range in pay rates confronting such individuals, and would thus increase the importance of pay to those individuals. Also, the importance of pay and other attributes to an individual may not remain stable across the individual's career, but may fluctuate as a function of the variability on the attributes facing the individual at different points in his/her career.

If the importance of a particular attribute to an individual is related to the variability of the attribute s/he perceives across the job alternatives s/he faces, any screening activity carried out by the individual concerning the attribute would seem to decrease the variability of that attribute across the alternatives s/he deems acceptable, and thus decrease its importance in organizational choice relative to other attributes. Thus, if an individual utilizes some minimum standard on a particular attribute, any information the individual receives concerning the level of the attribute provided by a potential job which would cause the individual to consider that job unacceptable (i.e., it does not meet the minimum standard) would seem to restrict the variability on that attribute to some degree across the alternatives that meet the standard. This restriction should decrease the importance of that attribute relative to other attributes for the ultimate choice made from the acceptable alternatives.

Summary

Overall, researchers investigating organizational choice have been unable to identify any consistent order of relative importance of various factors for individuals choosing among job alternatives. Attention has been placed more recently on describing the processes utilized by individuals to make organizational choice decisions. While compensatory models of organizational choice such as that provided by expectancy theory have received considerable support, they may not accurately reflect the decision-making strategies actually used by many individuals faced with organizational choice decisions. Research concerning general decision-making processes suggests that individuals may use simpler, less complex, noncompensatory strategies in choosing among various alternatives than those proposed by expectancy theory models of organizational choice. It appears that the use of noncompensatory strategies may increase as the number of job alternatives facing individuals increases and the amount of time in which to make the choice decreases.

Also, research involving organizational choice suggests that individuals may hold certain minimum standards regarding pay that must be provided by a job for it to be considered acceptable. This finding is in direct conflict with expectancy theory assumptions concerning the ability of other factors to compensate for low levels of a particular attribute. There is no reason to suggest that individuals do not also hold minimum/special requirements for other attributes besides pay. In addition, research concerning the effects of the perceived variability of an attribute on its importance in the choice decision suggests that attribute variability should be incorporated into our models of organizational choice.

Purpose of the Present Study

The present research is designed to examine a proposed model of organizational choice which was developed by the author. The model attempts to integrate research findings from three different areas of study in organizational choice. These are: 1-research concerning the use of noncompensatory organizational choice strategies utilizing minimum standards; 2-research on expectancy theory models of organizational choice, and 3-studies examining the effects of attribute variability on the relative importance of various attributes in organizational choice decisions.

The model presented here was developed based on the research reviewed above and unstructured interviews with individuals involved in the organizational choice process (college seniors and graduate students about to enter the full-time work force) and college recruiters who interact with such individuals.

Proposed Model of Organizational Choice

The model of organizational choice presented here was developed to represent the decision-making processes of individuals who are faced with an actual organizational choice. Therefore, the model would seem most appropriate for those individuals who receive more than one job offer at approximately the same time and must choose from the offers. Such is often the case for individuals graduating from school and entering the full-time work force. Other persons faced with a choice among job alternatives would be those individuals in the work force who decide to change jobs, engage in a search for various job alternatives, and then choose from among those alternatives. However, Reynolds (1951) and others have suggested that such is often not the case for individuals already in the work force who decide to change jobs. Often, these individuals may be so anxious

to leave their present job that they will search for a new job only until one acceptable alternative is found. Other individuals who may be satisfied with their present job may be recruited away by another organization, in which case a choice among alternatives (other than the present job and the new alternative) does not occur. While some of the decision-making processes utilized by individuals in these circumstances may be similar to those utilized by individuals choosing from among various alternatives, the focus of the model presented here is clearly on describing the organizational choice strategies of those individuals faced with several simultaneous offers. The proposed theoretical model of organizational choice appears in Figure 1. It is presented as a 2-Stage model, in which the first stage represents the decision-making processes utilized by individuals to evaluate the acceptability of various position alternatives. The second stage of the model represents the actual choice made by individuals from among the position alternatives perceived as acceptable in Stage I.

The model consists of a series of seven proposed steps that job applicants undergo in arriving at a choice among various organizational positions. The first five steps of the model are in Stage I, and the last two steps describe Stage II of the model. In Step 1, the individual enters the job market. In this step, the individual decides to look for a job, and begins an active search for various job alternatives. For those individuals in college/university settings, this step might entail becoming involved in the school's job placement program. For those already in the work force, this step would involve taking the necessary steps to identify potential job alternatives.

In Step 2 of the model, it is proposed that applicants at some point in the beginning of the job search will set minimum/special requirements on certain attributes. This hypothesis is based directly on the work by Myers and Maclaurin

ORGANIZATIONAL CHOICE MODEL

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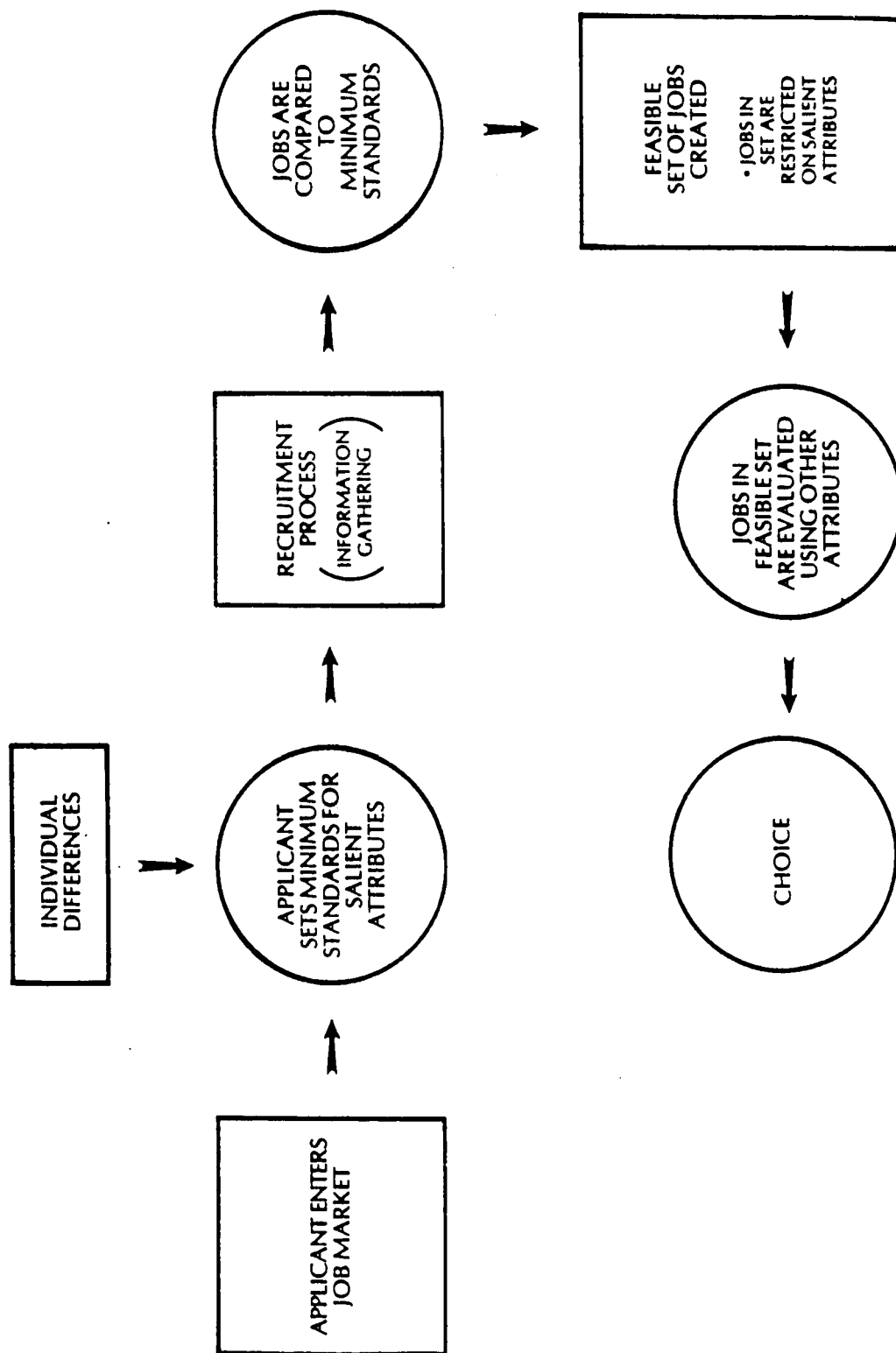


Figure 1. Proposed model of organizational choice.

(1943), Reynolds (1951), Stigler (1962), and Rynes et al. (1983) noted above. While most of this research examined the use of minimum standards on pay, there is no theoretical reason to suggest that individuals do not utilize minimum/special requirements on other attributes as well. It is proposed here that various individuals will utilize minimum/special requirements on different attributes. Included in the model is the hypothesis that various individual differences have an impact on the types of attributes for which minimum/special requirements are utilized. While no research is known to have directly examined what types of individual differences might have an impact on the use of minimum/special requirements for various attributes by different individuals, the literature on the importance of non-work variables on work-related decisions would seem to offer guidance. Work by Kanter (1977), Rapoport and Rapoport (1980), and Matthews and Matthews (1980) suggests that married individuals engaged in the job search often try to locate jobs which will maximize the job finding potential of their spouse. Thus, married job applicants may be more likely to place greater emphasis and use minimum/special requirements on non-work attributes such as geographic location and the size of the city/town in which the job is located, since both of these factors would seem to have an impact on spouse job-hunting success. Also, while not based on any empirical research, the model specifies that job applicants with children will also be more likely to utilize minimum/special requirements on non-work attributes such as geographic location and size of the city/town in which the job is located, since these attributes are related to several factors which would appear to be of greater concern to parents (ie., schools in the area, cost of living, crime rate, medical facilities in the area, etc.).

The third step in the proposed model is the recruitment process. This step involves the participation of the individual in job search activities with various organizations which s/he has identified as potential employers. For individuals in college/university settings, this step would most likely involve interviews with recruiters who come to the campus, and may also involve visits to the organization's location. For those already in the work force, this step would consist of sending resumes to potential employers, participating in interviews with representatives of the organizations, and participation in any other activities required by the organization (job simulations, assessment centers, etc.). While a major function of this step is to provide information to the organization concerning the suitability of the individual for the job, of interest in the organizational choice process of the individual is the information gained by the individual concerning job alternatives. In this sense, this step is viewed as one of information gathering in which the individual seeks to gather information concerning the levels of various attributes provided by the alternative organizations.

Step 4 of the organizational choice model proposes that the applicant will compare the levels of salient attributes provided by the various alternatives to the minimum/special requirements established in Step 2. Those alternatives which do not meet or exceed the minimum/special requirements on the attributes for which requirements exist are eliminated from further consideration by the individual. It seems probable that the individual will be more likely to use minimum/special requirements for those attributes most important to him/her. Although this step appears in the model after the recruitment/information gathering step, this does not imply that comparison to the minimum/special requirements takes place only after information gathering for all alternatives is complete. It is probable that comparison to the minimum/special requirements for each al-

ternative occurs soon or immediately after the individual has sufficient information to make the comparison.

The result of Step 4 is the creation of a feasible set of job alternatives, Step 5 in the model. The feasible set refers to the set of position alternatives that meet or exceed the minimum/special requirements established by the individual for various attributes. These alternatives are the ones considered acceptable by the individual, since they meet the criteria set for the salient attributes.

The feasible set of jobs which remains, consisting only of those alternatives which meet the minimum criteria established for certain attributes, is different from the set of jobs originally evaluated by the individual. Specifically, the feasible set which remains is restricted on the attributes most important to the individual, i.e., those for which minimum/special requirements were utilized, as compared to the entire set of jobs originally evaluated by the individual. The degree of restriction on the salient attributes for the feasible set as compared to the entire set of alternatives depends on the extent to which the use of the minimum/special requirements caused certain alternatives to be eliminated.

It is certainly possible that little restriction may occur, if for instance the minimum/special requirements for various attributes are set very low and few if any of the jobs in the entire set are eliminated. However, it is also possible that severe restriction might occur if the minimum standards are set very high and many of the original alternatives are eliminated from further consideration. The use of a minimum/special requirement for a particular attribute which is very high could result in a feasible set of jobs which is homogeneous with respect to that attribute. For instance, the individual could use the criteria for the attribute of geographic location that the job be located in a particular city. After the entire set of job alternatives is evaluated with respect to geographic location, those jobs

not located in the desired city would be eliminated from further consideration, resulting in a feasible set of jobs in which there is no variability on geographic location.

Entering Stage II of the model, Step 6 proposes that after the feasible set of acceptable jobs has been created, the jobs in the feasible set will be evaluated by the individual and a choice will be made from among the alternatives. Since the jobs in the set have been restricted with respect to the important attributes for which minimum/special requirements were utilized, it would seem that they would have less variability on these attributes than before the screening activity occurred. Therefore, the restricted variability on the attributes considered most important by the individual should decrease their importance relative to other attributes for the actual choice made by the individual. Other attributes besides those for which minimum standards were used should become more important to the individual in comparing the overall attractiveness of the various job alternatives. This assumption receives support from the research by Rynes et al. (1983) which found the importance of an attribute to be related to its perceived variability. Thus, the model proposes that the relative importance of various attributes in predicting choice from the alternatives (Stage 2) will be different from their importance in the prediction of acceptability (Stage 1).

This evaluation of jobs in the feasible set of alternatives leads to the actual choice of a position, represented in Step 7 of the model. It is recognized that the actual alternatives available to the individual will consist of only those jobs for which employment offers have been extended by the organization. Therefore, the model includes the extension of employment offers to the individual and recognizes its impact on the final position acceptance. The model proposes that of the position alternatives in the feasible set which are offered to the individual,

the position considered the most desirable by the individual will be chosen and accepted for employment.

Design of Study

The model of events concerning organizational choice proposed here is based on the noted relevant literature and reasoning concerning the sequence of events that would seem to describe the steps in the decision-making process. The present study was conducted to examine the appropriateness of the proposed model for describing the decision-making strategies of individuals who were actually involved in organizational choice decisions. Participants' survey evaluations of organizational alternatives were used in order to examine the possible use of non-compensatory decision-making strategies and to examine the attributes that predicted the acceptability of various position alternatives that were being evaluated by participants. This activity corresponds to Stage 1 of the proposed model. Actual choice from among those position alternatives considered acceptable by participants was then used to examine the appropriateness of Stage II of the proposed model.

It was necessary to identify particular attributes on which to focus in the study so that inferences concerning the appropriateness of the proposed model could be made. Four attributes were chosen for inclusion in the study. These were starting salary, type of job, geographic region in which the job was located, and size of the city/town in which the job was located. These four attributes were included in the study for two reasons. First, unstructured interviews with graduating students and with college recruiters suggested that these were the attributes most salient to students searching for jobs. Second, there was a desire to utilize both work-related and non-work related attributes in order to examine hypotheses 2 and 3 below. Thus, two work-related attributes (starting salary and

type of work) and two non-work related attributes (geographic region and size of city/town) were investigated in the study.

Hypotheses

The particular hypotheses pertaining to the sequence of events in the model are as follows:

H₁: Individuals facing organizational choice decisions utilize minimum/special requirements on various attributes which must be met or exceeded by a position alternative for that position to be considered acceptable.

H₂: Those individuals who are married will be more likely to utilize minimum/special requirements on non-work attributes than single individuals.

H₃: Those individuals with children will be more likely to utilize minimum/special requirements on non-work attributes than those without children.

H₄: The use of minimum standards on a particular attribute will decrease the variability of that attribute on the position alternatives considered acceptable by the individual compared to the set of alternatives originally evaluated by the individual.

H₅: The use of minimum/special requirements will cause attribute importance to change from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Specifically, those attributes which are most important in predicting acceptability of alternatives in Stage 1 will be less important in predicting choice from among the acceptable position alternatives in Stage 2.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in the present study were 96 individuals who were actively involved in searching for jobs during the period from February of 1985 to December of 1986. Most of the participants (94%) were searching for jobs through the Career Planning and Placement Services Office of the University of Tennessee. The remaining participants were searching for jobs through other channels such as graduate student conventions and placement services offered by various professional associations. All of the participants were interviewing with various organizations at the time of the study.

Potential participants were identified through the Career Planning and Placement Services Office and through classes in the College of Business Administration at the University of Tennessee. Students who were currently searching for jobs and participating in interviews with various organizations were asked to serve as participants in the study. Biographical information concerning the participants is summarized below.

1. Age: Mean = 24.6, Standard deviation = 2.7, with ages ranging from 20 to 39.
2. Gender: 57.3% female, 42.7% male.
3. Marital Status: 69.8% single, 18.8% married, 11.5% divorced.
4. Previous Job Experience: 63.5% had some work experience, 36.5% had no previous work experience.
5. Degree: 72.9% undergraduate, 10.4% Masters, 16.7% PhD.

Questionnaires

Three different questionnaires were completed by participants in the study. The first questionnaire (Form A, see Appendix A) was given to participants when they agreed to participate in the study. This questionnaire contained three sections. The first section contained items related to personal background (e.g., age, gender, marital status, number of children/dependents, field of study, etc.). The second section of the questionnaire contained items relating to the use of minimum/special requirements. First, an open-ended item asked participants if they had minimum/special requirements that had to be met by a position alternative for it to be considered acceptable. Participants were also asked whether they held minimum standards/special requirements for the four specific attributes included in the study. For each of these attributes participants were asked to indicate whether they held minimum/special requirements, and if so were asked to specify what the requirements were (e.g., "Is there a minimum starting salary necessary before you would consider a job? If yes, what is the minimum salary necessary?"). The third section of the first questionnaire also asked participants to rank the four attributes (along with any other they wanted to include) in order of importance for their job choice decision. The responses to the 4 attributes were scored using the ranks assigned by participants (1 = most important, 2 = second most important, etc.). These rankings served as the measures of perceived valence for the attributes.

The second questionnaire utilized in the study (Form B, see Appendix B) was completed for each of several position alternatives evaluated by participants. The questionnaire contained four sections. The first section contained items of general information about the position alternative for which the questionnaire was completed (e.g., organization, position, location of job, date of interview,

etc.). The second section of the questionnaire contained items related to satisfaction of the minimum/special requirements held by the participant. For each of the four attributes, an item asked the participants whether the position satisfied his/her minimum/special requirements for that attribute. Participants responded either "Yes" or "No" to each of the items, and the responses were scored as 1 for "Yes" and 0 for "No." The third section of the questionnaire contained items asking the participants to rate on 7-point Likert scales the extent to which the position provided levels corresponding to what they desired on 25 various attributes, including the four attributes of major concern in the study. The item scales ranged from (0) no extent to (6) to an extraordinary extent. The items concerning the 4 attributes of major concern were used as the measures of perceived instrumentality of each position for providing various attributes.

The final section of this questionnaire contained items relating to the participant's perception of the acceptability of the position being evaluated. The first item asked participants to indicate whether they considered the position acceptable for employment (Yes/No). This item was used to determine whether the alternative was included in the participant's feasible set of acceptable positions. The second item asked participants to rate the acceptability of the position on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) very unacceptable to (7) very acceptable.

The third questionnaire (Form C, Appendix C) was completed by participants approximately one month after the other questionnaires were completed. It consisted of two sections. The first section contained items concerning when the questionnaire was completed and whether the participant had accepted an employment offer. Participants were asked to record the date on which the questionnaire was completed and were also asked "Have you accepted an employment offer? If yes, what job have you accepted?" The second section presented

the participant with his/her feasible set of positions. This list was compiled for each participant by examining the questionnaires the participant had completed for each position (Form B) and listing all the positions rated as acceptable on the dichotomous acceptability item (Yes/No). Participants were asked to indicate which of the positions s/he would accept if offered each of the positions by circling the position which s/he would accept. This served as the measure of organizational choice for the study. Participants were also asked to rank the positions in order of preference (1 = job accepted first, 2 = job accepted next, etc.).

Procedure

After individuals who were involved in searching for a job were identified in the manner described above, they were asked to participate in the study. Those who agreed to participate were told the nature of the study and were given an envelope of materials. This packet included a copy of Form A, six copies of Form B, and a letter of general information and instructions. The letter explicitly stated that although the Career Planning and Placement Services Office was cooperating with the study, participation in the study would have no impact on the participant's success in the interviewing process. Participants were asked to complete Form A at that time. The participants were asked to complete copies of Form B for each of six positions that they interviewed for in the following two-month time period. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire for a particular position as soon as possible after the interview. The participants were asked to put the completed copies of Form B back in the envelope and leave it at the Career Planning and Placement Services Office. That office was a convenient drop-off location for most of the participants since they were frequently there for job interviews. Those participants who did not return their completed question-

naires were contacted by telephone by the researcher or an assistant and urged to return the questionnaires as soon as possible.

Approximately one month after each participant's completed set of questionnaires was received, a copy of Form C was mailed to the participant with a stamped, pre-addressed envelope. As noted above, this form asked the participant to indicate which of the position alternatives in his/her feasible set s/he would accept if offered each of them. A letter which was included asked the participants to complete Form C and mail it back as soon as possible. Again, participants who did not return Form C were contacted by telephone and asked to mail them as soon as possible.

Data Analysis

Correlation analyses were used to analyze the data for testing the major hypotheses of the study (Cohen & Cohen, 1975). Chi-square analyses were used to test the hypotheses concerning the effect of individual differences on the use of minimum/special requirements for non-work attributes (Hayes, 1986). An alpha level of .05 was chosen before the analyses were performed in order to test for statistical significance.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The present chapter presents an assessment of a proposed model of organizational choice (Figure 1, pg. 26). The model is presented as a 2-Stage model, with four hypotheses pertaining to Stage 1 and one hypothesis pertaining to Stage 2 of the model. The proposed model focuses on the decision-making processes used by individuals to choose an organizational position from the particular alternatives they face. The model is cast as a within-person decision-making model, in that it emphasizes the individual choice behavior of job seekers as they evaluate a set of organizational alternatives and attempt to choose from those alternatives. It was desired in this study to examine the proposed model in a setting in which organizational choices were actually being made in hopes of capturing actual decision-making strategies used by job seekers. Therefore, participants provided information concerning the particular set of jobs they were evaluating at the time of the study. Data was collected which allowed analysis of each participant's decision-making behavior with respect to their particular set of organizational alternatives.

While such data are consistent with the within-person focus of the proposed model, it precludes the use of traditional between-person hypothesis-testing techniques, since the sets of alternatives evaluated by individual participants were different in content and number. For this reason, the method of analysis used primarily in the present study consisted of analyzing individual responses of participants, and then estimating the percentage of participants whose responses were consistent with the proposed organizational choice model. The following sections report data relevant to the hypotheses for each stage.

Hypothesis Testing for Stage 1

The first stage of the model concerns how individuals determine the acceptability of various position alternatives which they are considering. Following are the 4 hypotheses derived for Stage 1 and data from the study relevant to each:

Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 proposed that individuals facing organizational choice decisions utilize minimum/special requirements on various attributes which must be met or exceeded by a position alternative for it to be considered acceptable. To assess whether individuals utilize minimum requirements in such a manner, responses were examined in several different ways. First, the number of positive responses to the item "Are there any special requirements that must be met by a job before you would consider it acceptable?" was examined. Of the 96 participants, 85 (88.5%) responded "yes" to the item, and 11 (11.5%) responded "no." A 95% confidence interval for the percentage of participants who responded "yes" ranged from 82.1% to 94.9%. Next, responses to the items asking whether participants held minimum/special requirements for each of the 4 factors focused on in the study (salary, type of work, geographic region, and city population) were examined. Table 1 lists the number of individuals who responded positively and negatively to these 4 items. As indicated in Table 1, a number of the participants indicated that they held minimum/special requirements for each of the 4 factors as hypothesized, with more having a minimum requirement for salary (83.3%) than for the other 3 factors (50%-57.3%).

It should be noted that the data reported above only indicate whether participants stated that they held minimum/special requirements for various job alternatives. Several analyses were performed to assess whether participants actually utilized the minimum requirements to screen jobs for acceptability. First, the

Table 1. Responses to Items Concerning the Use of Minimum/Special Requirements for the Four Primary Attributes

Do You Have Minimum/Special Requirements For:		
	Yes	No
Salary	80 (83.3%)	16 (16.7%)
Geographic Region	55 (57.3%)	41 (42.7%)
Population Size	48 (50.0%)	48 (50.0%)
Type of Work	54 (56.3%)	42 (43.7%)

responses of the participants to items asking whether a particular job satisfied their minimum/special requirements for the 4 major factors were examined to see if jobs which failed to meet one or more requirements were rated as unacceptable as predicted by Hypothesis 1. Considering all the various jobs evaluated by the 96 participants, a total of 544 jobs were evaluated. Of the 544 jobs, 344 were rated as acceptable by participants on the dichotomous acceptability item. Of these 344 acceptable jobs, 302 (87.7%) satisfied the minimum/special requirements of participants on all four factors as indicated by the participants' responses. Only 42 of the 344 jobs rated acceptable (12.2%) were rated as such even though they did not meet one or more of the minimum requirements. Further, of the 200 jobs rated unacceptable, all of them failed to satisfy the minimum/special requirements of the participants on one or more attributes. "Type of work" was the attribute used most often to eliminate jobs, in that more participants rated jobs as not meeting their minimum/special requirement for "type of work" than for any other attribute. Table 2 reports the number of jobs rated unacceptable which failed to meet the minimum/special requirements on one attribute, two attributes, etc. Thus, of 544 total jobs evaluated, 502 (92.3%) demonstrated the use of minimum/special requirements to screen jobs for acceptability, in that jobs which failed to meet the requirement for any one of the four attributes were rated as unacceptable and jobs which satisfied the minimum/special requirement on all four attributes were rated as acceptable.

With respect to individual decision-making, 67 of the 96 participants (69.8%) were consistent in their use of minimum/special requirements to screen jobs for acceptability across all the jobs they evaluated, in that they rated any job which failed to meet one or more of their minimum requirements as unacceptable. The 95% confidence interval for this percentage ranges from 59.9% to

Table 2. Of Jobs Rated Unacceptable, Number Which Failed to Meet The Minimum/Special Requirements on 1, 2, 3, or 4 of the Primary Attributes.

Number of Attributes For Which The Job Failed to Satisfy the Minimum/Special Requirements	Number of Jobs
1	117
2	78
3	5
4	<u>0</u>
	200 *

* Total number of jobs rated as unacceptable

78.3%. Twenty-nine participants (30.2%) rated at least 1 job as acceptable even though it failed to meet one or more of their minimum/special requirements. Thus, most participants clearly seemed to utilize minimum/special requirements for various attributes to screen job alternatives for acceptability, as proposed in the current model of organizational choice.

An additional analysis contrasting the proposed model of organizational choice with predictions from expectancy theory was performed to assess Hypothesis 1. Conventional expectancy theory predicts that the job alternatives with the higher VI scores (the sum of the products of perceived valences and instrumentalities of various attributes) would be the ones considered acceptable by the individual, while those with the lower VI scores would be considered less acceptable. Hypothesis 1 proposes that even among those jobs with the high VI scores, jobs which fail to meet the individual's minimum/special requirements would be considered unacceptable.

To assess Hypothesis 1 in this alternative fashion, VI scores were calculated for the job alternatives of each individual by multiplying the individual's rating of the job on the 7-point Likert scales which measured the extent to which the job provided desired levels of the 4 attributes (instrumentalities) by the ranking of the importance of the attributes (valences). The rankings were inverted so that the attribute ranked the most important received the heaviest weighting. The products of the valences and instrumentalities were summed across the attributes to yield a VI score for each job.

For each participant, the VI scores for each of his/her job alternatives along with his/her response to the dichotomous acceptability item ("Yes"/"No") were examined to see if any jobs which were rated as unacceptable had a VI score which was higher than the lowest VI score of the jobs rated as acceptable. Of the

96 participants, 32 rated as unacceptable one or more jobs which had a VI score higher than the lowest VI score of the jobs rated as acceptable. Fifty-five of the remaining 64 participants rated any job which failed to meet at least one minimum/special requirement as unacceptable. Of the 32 cases in which an individual rated a high VI score job as unacceptable, 31 (96.9%) were such that the high VI score jobs rated as unacceptable failed to meet the individual's minimum/special requirements on one or more attributes. "Type of work" was the attribute most frequently used to screen out high VI score jobs on acceptability. Thus, even jobs predicted by expectancy theory to be among the most acceptable were rated as unacceptable if they failed to satisfy one or more of the minimum/special requirements held by the individual. In summary, Hypothesis 1 received support in that participants were fairly consistent in the utilization of minimum/special requirements to screen jobs for acceptability, and that jobs predicted by expectancy theory to be considered relatively more acceptable were not rated as such if they failed to meet the minimum requirements on one or more attributes.

Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 proposed that married individuals would be more likely to utilize minimum/special requirements for non-work attributes than single job seekers. Table 3 lists the frequencies of married and single participants who stated whether or not they held minimum/special requirements for the two non-work factors of geographic region and size of the city/town in which the job was located. A 2X2 chi-square analysis performed for each of the 2 non-work factors indicated that marital status had no effect on whether minimum/special requirements were utilized for the 2 non-work factors ($\chi^2_{(1)} = .132, p = .716$ for geographic region; $\chi^2_{(1)} = .274, p = .601$ for city population). Thus, hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 3. Responses of Married and Single Participants to Questions Concerning the Use of Minimum/Special Requirements for Non-Work Attributes.

		<u>Marital Status</u>	
		<u>Married</u>	<u>Single</u>
Do you have minimum/special requirements for the geographic region in which the job is located?			
	YES	11	44
	NO	7	34
		<u>Married</u>	<u>Single</u>
Do you have minimum/special requirements for the size of the city/town in which the job is located?			
	YES	8	40
	NO	10	38

Hypothesis 3. The third hypothesis predicted that individuals with children would be more likely to utilize minimum/special requirements on non-work attributes than individuals without children. Table 4 lists the frequencies of individuals with and without children who stated whether or not they held minimum requirements for the two non-work attributes. A 2X2 chi-square analysis performed for each attribute indicated that individuals with children were not more likely to hold minimum requirements for either of the two non-work factors than were individuals without children ($\chi^2_{(1)} = .053, p = .817$ for geographic region; $\chi^2_{(1)} = .711, p = .399$ for city population). Thus, hypothesis 3 did not receive support.

Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 predicted that the utilization of minimum/special requirements on an attribute would decrease the variability of that attribute among the job alternatives considered acceptable as compared to the entire set of jobs originally evaluated. To assess this hypothesis, variances on each of the 4 attributes focused on in the study were calculated for each participant across all the job alternatives s/he evaluated, using the instrumentality ratings on the 7-point Likert scales which measured the extent to which the job provided desired levels of the attributes. Then, variances were calculated for each of the 4 attributes using the instrumentality ratings on the 7-point scales for each participant across only those jobs rated as acceptable on the dichotomous acceptability item (the feasible set). This resulted in the calculation of 384 variances for participants' entire set of jobs (4 attributes for 96 participants) and 384 variances for the participants' feasible set of jobs. The variances for each individual across his/her entire set of jobs were compared to the variances across only the jobs s/he rated as acceptable to determine whether the feasible set demonstrated less variability than the entire set of jobs. Of the 384 total variances calculated for both the en-

Table 4. Responses of Participants With and Without Children to Questions Concerning the Use of Minimum/Special Requirements for Non-Work Attributes.

	Participants With Children	Participants Without Children
Do you have minimum/special requirements for the geographic region in which the job is located?		
YES	9	46
NO	6	35
	Participants With Children	Participants Without Children
Do you have minimum/special requirements for the size of the city/town in which the job is located?		
YES	6	42
NO	9	39

tire set of jobs and the feasible set only, 281 (73.2%) were less for the feasible set than for the entire set of job alternatives. The ratings of 33 of the 96 participants (34.4%) showed less variability for all 4 attributes across the feasible set as compared to the entire set of jobs. Table 5 reports the average variance across participants' entire set of jobs and across their feasible sets on each of the 4 attributes. Thus, Hypothesis 4 received moderately strong support.

In summary, two hypotheses pertaining to Stage 1 received some support (1, 4), and two hypotheses were not supported (2, 3). The analyses indicate that participants did utilize minimum/special requirement on various attributes that had to be met for the job alternative to be considered acceptable and thus given further consideration. Alternatives which would be predicted by expectancy theory models of organizational choice to be considered acceptable were not rated as such by 32 of the 96 participants if they failed to meet the minimum requirements on one or more attributes. As predicted, the exclusion of some job alternatives from further consideration because of their failure to meet minimum requirements on one or more attributes also restricted the variability of the remaining set of jobs on the various attributes for many of the participants.

In contrast, the hypotheses concerning the inclusion of individual difference variables in the proposed model of organizational choice did not receive support. Marital status and having children were not found to have any impact on the likelihood of participants to utilize minimum requirements on the non-work attributes of geographic region and city population.

Hypothesis Testing for Stage 2

The second stage of the organizational model proposed in Figure 1 (pg. 27) concerns the choice made by an individual from the set of jobs s/he considers acceptable. Stage II of the model proposes that after jobs which fail to meet the

Table 5. Average Variance For 4 Primary Attributes Across Participants' Entire Set of Jobs and Participants' Feasible Sets.

Attribute	Average Variance For Participants' Entire Set of Jobs	Average Variance For Participants' Feasible Set of Jobs
Salary	1.93	.71
Type of Job	1.83	.77
Geographic Location	2.10	1.48
City Population	1.87	1.08

individual's minimum/special requirements are screened from further consideration by the individual, the set of jobs which remain (feasible set) will have less variability on the attributes for which such requirements were used as compared to the original, entire set of jobs. As individuals then choose from the jobs in the feasible set, other attributes become more important for the choice, since the attributes for which minimum/special requirements were utilized show little variability. The following section describes the analyses performed to assess Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 5 predicted that attributes most important in predicting acceptability of position alternatives in Stage 1 would be less important in predicting choice from the feasible set of alternatives in Stage 2. While multiple regression analyses would typically be used to assess the importance of various variables in predicting acceptability or choice, such analyses were not appropriate in this case. Within-person analyses were required since the set of jobs evaluated was different for each participant, and since 4 independent variables were included in the analyses, regression analyses were precluded for those individuals with fewer than 5 observations (jobs). Also, the results of such analyses are difficult to interpret for even those individuals who provided ratings on from 5 to 8 jobs because of the small number of observations. For these reasons, the main method of assessing Hypothesis 5 consisted of computing correlations for each participant and examining the number of these within-person correlations which were consistent with Hypothesis 5.

A number of analyses were performed to examine Hypothesis 5. First, the instrumentality ratings on the 7-point Likert scales for the four attributes were correlated with the ratings of acceptability of the job and the ranking of choice for the job to see if attribute importance changed between Stage 1 and Stage 2 as

hypothesized. In performing this analysis, each individual's rankings of the four attributes were examined to determine which attribute s/he ranked as the most important, the second most important, the third most important, and the fourth most important. Table 6 lists the frequencies with which each of the 4 attributes were ranked as the most important attribute, the second most important, etc. For each individual, the instrumentality rating for the attribute s/he ranked as the most important was used as the rating for the most important attribute in the correlations between the variables of acceptability and ranked choice; the rating for the attribute ranked by the individual as the second most important attribute was used as the rating for the second most important attribute, etc. Thus, the importance of various attributes could be used in the analyses even though the participants differed in their rankings of importance for the attributes.

Table 7 lists the correlations between the instrumentality ratings on the 7-point scale for the 4 attributes and ratings of acceptability and ranked choice across jobs. The formula for the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used in computing the correlation coefficients. It should be noted that one of the assumptions underlying use of this type of correlation is that both variables should be measured at the interval or ratio level. While the correlations using the ranked choice variable involve a variable which is ordinal level (rankings), Cohen and Cohen (1975) note that the Pearson r appears to be robust with respect to violations of this assumption.

In reviewing Table 7, it should be noted that the ratings of acceptability on the 7-point scale and the dichotomous acceptability item were provided for all the job alternatives. For the ranked choice item, however, participants were asked to rank only the jobs in their feasible set in the order in which they would choose if offered all the jobs. While the correlations of the attribute ratings with the 7-

Table 6. Frequencies of Rankings for the Four Primary Attributes.

Attribute	Ranking	Frequency
Salary	1	7 (7.3%)
	2	30 (31.3%)
	3	36 (37.5%)
	4	23 (23.9%)
Geographic Region	1	22 (22.9%)
	2	31 (32.2%)
	3	23 (24.0%)
	4	20 (20.9%)
Type of Work	1	63 (65.6%)
	2	16 (16.7%)
	3	5 (5.2%)
	4	12 (12.5%)
City Population	1	2 (2.1%)
	2	11 (11.5%)
	3	17 (17.7%)
	4	66 (68.7%)

Table 7. Correlations of Attribute Instrumentality Ratings With Job Acceptability Ratings and Choice Rankings.

Attribute	Correlation with Acceptability Rating (7-pt. scale)	Correlation with Dichotomous Acceptability Item (0 = No, 1 = Yes)	Correlation with Ranked Choice *
Most Important	.48*** (533)	.42*** (533)	.06 (336)
Second Most Important	.32*** (503)	.24*** (503)	.09 (311)
Third Most Important	.34*** (456)	.28*** (456)	.20*** (286)
Fourth Most Important	.21*** (539)	.18*** (539)	.34*** (339)

Note: Number of job ratings used in analysis is enclosed in parentheses.

* Rankings were inverted so that the job ranked first received the highest rank, the job ranked second received the next highest rank, etc..

*** $p < .0001$

point scale acceptability ratings reported in Table 7 are all significant, ($p < .0001$), the relative magnitudes of the correlations are clearly what would be predicted, with the correlation highest for the most important variable, the smallest correlation for the least important variable, and the other two correlations in between. The correlations between the dichotomous acceptability item and the attribute ratings, while somewhat smaller, are also highly significant and as predicted by expectancy theory. However, the correlations between the attribute ratings and ranked choice yielded almost exact opposite results, with the fourth most important attribute having the highest correlation with ranked choice ($r = .34, p < .0001$), and the most important attribute rating having the lowest correlation with ranked choice ($r = .06, p = .23$). The correlations for the second and third most important attributes fell in between these two ($r = .09, p = .1$ and $r = .20, p < .001$, respectively). Thus, the attributes most related to acceptability as measured in the study seemed to be least related to the ranking of choice of the jobs from among those in the feasible set, with those attributes the least related to acceptability becoming the most important in predicting choice. These results seem to provide support for Hypothesis 5.

A second method of analysis was also employed to assess Hypothesis 5. This method of analysis contrasted predictions made under Hypothesis 5 with conventional expectancy theory predictions of organizational choice. First, valence-instrumentality scores (VI scores) were calculated for each job alternative by multiplying the instrumentality ratings for each of the four attributes by the ranking of importance for the attributes (valences) and summing across all the products. Again, the rankings were inverted so that those attributes which were ranked first were given the highest number, attributes which were ranked second

were given the next highest number, etc. With the rankings inverted in this manner, the greater the valence and instrumentality the higher the VI score.

A set of correlation analyses was performed for each participant correlating the summed VI score for each of his/her jobs with the 7-point rating of acceptability, the dichotomous acceptance item (accept or not accept the job), the inverted ranking of the choice from the feasible set, and the dichotomous choice item (the chosen job coded 1, all others coded 0) for that job. This yielded 96 sets of correlations for each of the four variables mentioned above. The correlations appear in Table 8. The direction and magnitude of the correlations were first examined to determine whether they supported expectancy theory predictions. Summary statistics across the 96 sets of correlations appear in Table 9.

Expectancy theory predictions of organizational choice suggest that VI scores should be positively correlated with both acceptability and job choice. Of the correlations for the 96 participants between VI scores and acceptability ratings (7-pt. scale), 93 are positive and 3 are negative. The average magnitude of the positive correlations (after transforming the r 's to Z 's using Fisher's Z transformation before calculating the mean) was .845, while the average magnitude of the negative correlations was -.4. Of the 96 correlations between VI scores and the dichotomous acceptability item (1 = Acceptable, 0 = Unacceptable), 89 were positive and 7 were negative. After Fisher's r to Z transformation, the average positive correlation was .77 and the average negative correlation was .42. Thus, as predicted by expectancy theory, VI scores seem to be highly related to overall ratings of acceptability for almost all the participants.

However, the correlations between the VI scores and ranked choice are contrary to expectancy theory predictions. Of the 96 correlations between VI scores and the inverted rankings of choice, only 40 (41.6%) were positive, and 56

Table 8. Correlations of Job Instrumentality-Valence Scores With Job Acceptability and Choice Variables Within Participants.

Participant	Acceptability Rating 7-pt. scale	Dichotomous Acceptability Item (0 = Unacceptable 1 = Acceptable)	Ranked Choice *	Choice (Yes or No) **
1	.71	-.11	.99	-.53
2	.88	-.43	.56	-.28
3	.92	-.11	.94	0
4	.68	.95	-.19	.13
5	.94	.94	.24	.22
6	.58	.80	.72	.07
7	.68	.53	-.79	.51
8	.99	.91	.77	.11
9	.64	.77	.81	.07
10	.83	.94	-.24	.17
11	.92	.86	-.95	.53
12	.96	.87	-.47	.15
13	.99	.92	-1.0	0
14	-.43	.42	1.0	.12
15	.97	.75	-1.0	.52
16	.93	.98	-.93	.42
17	.91	.91	-.91	.51
18	.75	.81	.93	-.17
19	.53	.72	-.17	-.18
20	.68	.35	.64	-.30
21	1.0	0	1.0	.50
22	.93	0	-.04	.14
23	.95	.64	.44	.19
24	.65	.52	-1.0	.86
25	.79	.85	-.99	.74
26	.15	.39	.18	-.53
27	-.40	0	-.41	.50
28	.74	.93	.87	.11
29	.78	.81	.87	.16
30	.85	.79	.48	-.28
31	.61	.28	1.0	.02
32	.31	.22	-.93	.65
33	.69	.57	-.32	.08
34	.96	.88	.17	.49
35	.75	.66	-.84	.64
36	.01	.26	-.74	.07
37	.97	.85	-1.0	.76
38	.82	.92	-.15	.16
39	.35	.80	.59	-.29
40	.69	.77	.87	-.35
41	.42	.50	-.89	.46
42	-.36	0	.21	-.52
43	.13	.06	.96	-.85
44	.24	.34	.93	-.71
45	.79	.93	0	.30
46	.53	-.22	-.53	.70
47	.62	.65	-.87	.79
48	.66	-.54	-.53	.46
49	.63	0	-.74	.75
50	.99	0	-.99	-.90
51	.69	.74	-.97	.85

Table 8 (Continued)

Participant	Acceptability Rating (7-pt. scale)	Dichotomous Acceptability Item (0 = Unacceptable 1 = Acceptable)	Ranked Choice *	Choice (Yes or No) **
52	.97	0	-.97	.96
53	.68	.50	-1.0	.76
54	.78	.74	-.49	.50
55	.82	.89	-.72	.43
56	.97	.89	-.85	.41
57	.96	.88	.44	.26
58	.92	.94	-.42	.55
59	.98	.98	-.93	.57
60	.22	.67	.13	.15
61	.53	.37	-.94	.81
62	.99	-.73	.77	.06
63	.69	.66	.48	.19
64	.89	-.88	-.75	.40
65	.90	.83	-.96	.57
66	.97	1.0	0	0
67	.96	.97	1.0	0
68	.95	.97	-1.0	.71
69	.91	.76	-.90	.51
70	.95	.98	0	.36
71	.68	.58	-.58	.91
72	.97	.88	.57	-.13
73	.91	.69	.27	.37
74	.51	.68	-.87	.61
75	.71	.41	.09	-.06
76	.86	0	-.74	.74
77	.72	.75	.77	-.13
78	.79	.68	-.86	.77
79	.75	.83	-.99	.73
80	.95	.64	.33	-.25
81	.30	-.36	0	.70
82	.91	.98	-.92	.50
83	.72	.59	-.33	-.01
84	.60	.59	.20	-.12
85	.66	.70	1.0	.37
86	.12	.10	-1.0	0
87	.56	.36	-.54	.08
88	.92	.96	-.60	.41
89	.95	.64	-.37	.17
90	.45	.23	-.69	.25
91	.99	.84	-.94	.73
92	.98	.94	-.15	.15
93	.84	.70	.68	-.32
94	.87	.94	-.86	.46
95	.57	.17	-.20	-.12
96	.85	.74	1.0	.24

* Rankings were inverted so that job ranked first received the highest ranking, job ranked second received the next highest ranking, etc..

** The job in the feasible set which was chosen was coded as 1, all others in the set were coded as 0's.

Table 9. Summary Statistics for Correlations between Original Instrumentality/Valence (VI) Scores and Job Acceptability and Choice Items.

	Acceptability Rating (7-pt. scale)	Dichotomous Acceptability Item (0 = Unacceptable, 1 = Acceptable)	Ranked Choice *	Choice (Yes or No) **
Average Overall Correlation	.81 (96)	.68 (96)	.19 (96)	.48 (96)
Average for Positive Correlations	.84 (93)	.77 (89)	.77 (40)	.74 (80)
Average for Negative Correlations	-.40 (3)	-.42 (7)	-.87 (56)	-.82 (16)

Note: Number inside parentheses indicates the number of correlations used in calculating the average.

*Rankings were inverted so that the job ranked first received the highest ranking, the job ranked second received the next highest ranking, etc.

** The job in the feasible set which was chosen was coded as 1, all others in the set were coded as 0's.

(58.4%) were negative. The average magnitude of the positive correlations was .77, while the average magnitude of the negative correlations was -.87.

McNemar's test for the significance of changes was used to compare the proportion of positive and negative correlations between the VI scores and the 7-point acceptability ratings and the proportion of positive and negative correlations between the VI scores and the choice rankings. This test is appropriate for comparing a change in the proportion of individuals who respond a certain way when related samples are used (Siegel, 1956). The test was performed by examining the sign of the correlations (positive or negative) for each participant using the acceptability ratings and the choice rankings. The observed frequencies for those participants whose correlation was positive using acceptability ratings and negative using the choice rankings were compared to the frequencies which would be expected if the proportions were the same to determine if the difference was greater than what could be explained by chance. The test yielded a X^2 value of 22.02 ($p < .001$), indicating that the proportions of positive and negative correlations were different for correlations using the acceptability ratings and those using the choice rankings. Thus, the expectancy model does not appear to be as predictive of actual choice from among acceptable jobs (Stage 2 in the proposed model) as it is of acceptability (Stage 1). The correlations between VI scores and the dichotomous choice item also suggested that the expectancy model is not as efficient in predicting job choice as it is in predicting acceptability. Of the 96 correlations between the dichotomous choice item and the VI scores, 80 were positive (average magnitude = .74) and 16 were negative (average magnitude = -.82.)

Hypothesis 5 suggests that attributes change with respect to their importance to the individual during the organizational choice process, with those attributes which are more important early in the screening process becoming less

important later as the actual choice is made from among the alternatives considered acceptable. In order to examine whether the importance of the attributes to the participants changed between Stage 1 and Stage 2 with attributes less important in predicting acceptability becoming more important in predicting choice, new VI scores were calculated for each position alternative. For these VI scores, the weights assigned to the attributes (valences) were inverted from their original rankings, such that the attribute ranked the most important by the participant was assigned the weight of 1, the attribute ranked the second most important was assigned the weight of 2, the attribute ranked the third most important was assigned the weight of 3, and the attribute ranked the least important was assigned the heaviest weight of 4. Thus, the new VI scores weighted the 4 attributes exactly opposite the way the original VI scores weighted them, with the attribute ranked the most important weighted the least, etc. These new VI scores were then correlated with the acceptability ratings, the dichotomous acceptance responses, the ranked choice responses, and the dichotomous choice responses. The correlations are found in Table 10. Summary statistics for the 96 sets of correlations appear in Table 11.

Of the 96 correlations between the inverted VI scores and the acceptability ratings, 86 were positive (average magnitude = .77) and 10 were negative (average magnitude = -.39), compared to 93 positive correlations and 3 negative correlations using the originally calculated VI scores. For the dichotomous acceptability item (1 = Acceptable, 0 = Unacceptable), 84 of the correlations between the inverted VI scores and the dichotomous acceptability item were positive, with an average magnitude of .77, while the 12 negative correlations averaged -.49. This compares to 89 positive correlations between the originally calculated VI scores and the dichotomous acceptability item. Thus there appears

Table 10. Correlations of Inverted Job Instrumentality-Valence Scores With Job Acceptability and Choice Variables Within Participants.

(Weights for attribute valence were inverted before calculating scores)

Participant	Acceptability Rating (7-pt. scale)	Dichotomous Acceptability Item (0 = Unacceptable, 1 = Acceptable)	Ranked Choice *	Choice (Yes or No)**
1	-.45	.87	-.68	.45
2	-.80	.95	-.90	.43
3	-.08	.93	-.27	0
4	.64	-.92	-.77	.42
5	.89	.90	-.93	.57
6	.74	.93	.72	.23
7	.63	.42	-.50	.23
8	.83	.97	-.96	.50
9	.55	.78	-.64	.49
10	.61	.93	-.92	.46
11	.92	.87	-.62	.27
12	.96	.79	-.29	-.04
13	.93	.96	-1.0	0
14	-.49	.72	-1.0	.55
15	.99	.64	-1.0	.60
16	.80	.83	-.92	.52
17	.75	.44	-.77	.97
18	.74	.81	.83	.08
19	-.32	-.35	-.93	.28
20	.90	.78	-1.0	.19
21	1.0	1.0	0	.50
22	.87	0	-.06	.23
23	.24	-.23	-.59	.71
24	.87	.97	-.95	.53
25	.82	.88	-.97	.72
26	.33	.75	-.15	.04
27	.20	0	-.81	.27
28	.81	.99	.77	.27
29	.94	.94	-.19	.51
30	.44	.57	-.73	.23
31	.90	.64	-1.0	.47
32	.30	.15	-.76	.27
33	.25	.75	-.93	.47
35	.26	.09	-.91	.48
36	.69	.38	-.96	.74
37	-.22	-.57	-.98	.26
38	.50	.33	-.77	.48
39	.78	.62	-.59	.28
40	.92	.89	-.87	.29
41	.79	.64	-.96	.68
42	.87	.93	-.49	.62
43	.65	.73	-.63	.23
44	-.25	-.05	-.37	-.13
45	.37	.22	-.55	.87
46	.58	.69	-.99	.88
47	.72	.67	0	.61
48	.55	0	-.60	.61
49	.73	0	-.81	.65
50	.96	0	-.96	.97
51	.14	.09	-.99	.84
52	.62	0	-.62	.93

Table 10 (Continued)

Participant	Acceptability Rating (7-pt. scale)	Dichotomous Acceptability Item (0 = Unacceptable, 1 = Acceptable)	Ranked Choice *	Choice (Yes or No)**
53	-.43	-.61	-.98	.42
54	.34	-.41	.28	.65
55	.69	-.79	-.63	.38
56	.77	.58	-.96	.81
57	.97	.93	.87	.22
58	.94	.80	-.83	.81
59	.97	.90	-.99	.65
60	.03	.61	.98	.17
61	.26	-.11	-.98	.58
62	.92	.96	0	.47
63	.61	.78	-.64	.49
64	.88	.81	-.72	.54
65	.91	.81	-.72	.70
66	.97	1.0	0	0
67	.62	.87	-1.0	0
68	.93	.98	-1.0	.68
69	.75	.43	-.40	.11
70	.92	.96	0	.33
71	.68	.40	-.87	.99
72	.72	.70	.57	-.12
73	.23	-.11	.30	-.14
74	.41	.76	-.87	.60
75	.73	.52	-.16	.13
76	.91	0	-.65	.66
77	.26	-.17	-.55	.68
78	.87	.85	-.97	.59
79	.66	.83	-.98	.68
80	.73	.68	.79	-.21
81	-.32	0	.11	.30
82	.88	.91	-.90	.62
83	.78	.88	-.80	.47
84	.70	.82	-.15	.16
85	.29	.38	1.0	0
86	.57	.42	-1.0	0
87	.43	.69	-.38	.16
88	.93	.95	-.40	.36
89	.80	.29	-.28	-.05
90	.85	.78	-.62	.39
91	-.30	-.66	-.56	.23
92	.23	.40	-.77	.51
93	.93	.85	-.87	.52
94	.70	.85	-.87	.71
95	.63	.70	-.90	.55
96	.43	.54	.57	-.53

* Rankings were inverted so that job ranked first received the highest ranking, job ranked second received the next highest ranking, etc..

** The job in the feasible set which was chosen was coded as 1, all others in the set were coded as 0's.

Table 11. Summary Statistics for Correlations Between Inverted Instrumentality-Valence (VI) Scores and Job Acceptability and Choice Items.
(Weights for attribute valence were inverted before calculating VI scores)

	Acceptability Rating 7-pt. scale	Dichotomous Acceptability Item (0 = Unacceptable, 1 = Acceptable)	Ranked Choice *	Choice (Yes or No) **
Average Overall Correlation	.65 (96)	.61 (96)	.62 (96)	.64 (96)
Average for Positive Correlations	.77 (86)	.77 (84)	.80 (87)	.75 (89)
Average for Negative Correlations	-.39 (10)	-.49 (12)	-.65 (16)	-.79 (7)

Note: Number inside parentheses indicates the number of correlations used in calculating the average.

* Rankings were inverted so that the job ranked first received the highest ranking, the job ranked second received the next highest ranking, etc.

** The job in the feasible set which was chosen was coded as 1, all others in the set were coded as 0's.

to be some loss in the ability of the inverted VI scores to predict job acceptability as compared to the originally calculated VI scores.

Next, the correlations between the inverted VI scores and the ranked choice variable were examined. Hypothesis 5 suggests that the importance of various attributes changes during the organizational choice process, in that attributes important in predicting job acceptability are not as important as other attributes in predicting choice from among the acceptable alternatives. If true, the inverted VI scores, which weight the attributes opposite the way participants originally ranked them should be positively correlated with ranked choice for a sizeable number of participants.

As indicated in Table 11, of the 96 correlations between the inverted VI scores and ranked choice, 80 were positive (average magnitude = .80) and only 16 were negative (average magnitude = -.65), compared to only 40 positive correlations using the original VI scores. It seems that assigning weights of magnitude opposite the rankings of importance by participants appears to strengthen the relationship between the VI scores and ranked choice for most participants. The correlations between the inverted VI scores and the dichotomous choice item also suggest limited support for Hypothesis 5, with 89 of the correlations being positive (average magnitude = .75) as opposed to only 80 positive correlations using the original VI scores. The 7 negative correlations had an average magnitude of -.79.

These results appear to provide support for Hypothesis 5. Specifically, the importance of various attributes seemed to change during the organizational choice process, with those attributes most important for determining whether a particular job alternative is acceptable not necessarily being the most important in determining ultimate choice.

In summary, the major hypotheses related to the proposed model of organizational choice received some support in this study. Participants utilized minimum/special requirements to screen various job alternatives, and appeared to be fairly consistent in screening jobs which failed to meet or exceed the requirements. In many cases expectancy theory predictions of the acceptability of various jobs did not hold up when the job failed to provide the minimum requirement on one or more attributes. The use of such requirements reduced the variability of attributes across the set of jobs considered acceptable as compared to the original set of jobs. Attribute importance appeared to change during the organizational choice process, with attributes which were the most important in predicting acceptability of alternatives becoming less important in predicting choice from among the acceptable alternatives. Hypotheses concerning the impact of the variables of marital status and number of children on the use of minimum/special requirements for non-work variables were not supported by the study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The study presented here focused on examining the processes through which individuals make organizational choice decisions. Based on the literature on organizational choice, general decision-making theory, and recent work concerning the importance of attribute variability for decision-making, a theoretical model of organizational choice was developed and examined in a field setting, using participants who were engaged in the organizational choice process.

The proposed model of organizational choice is an individual decision-making model consisting of two stages. The first stage of the model proposes that individuals use minimum/special requirements for various factors to screen job alternatives for acceptability. The second stage of the model focuses on the choice made from the alternatives considered acceptable. Several hypotheses were derived from the proposed model and tested.

It should be noted that several of the hypotheses were examined using non-traditional hypothesis-testing techniques. Specifically, the percentages of participants who responded in a manner consistent with the various hypotheses provided a major method of analysis. This was due to the nature of the data and the within-person focus of the proposed model. While these analyses allow examination of the validity of the hypotheses, no statements can be made concerning the level of risk assumed in testing these hypotheses.

In general, the results of the study supported the major hypotheses of the study. Analysis of the results indicated that most participants did use various minimum/special requirements that had to be met before a job alternative was considered further. Also, many jobs which would be predicted by expectancy theory

to be chosen as the final job choice, based on a composite valence/instrumentality score, were not considered acceptable and were not chosen if they failed to meet the minimum/special requirements of participants.

The study also supported the hypothesis that attribute variability changes during the course of the organizational choice process as various job alternatives are screened out because of their failure to meet the individual's minimum/special requirements on particular attributes. Those attributes for which minimum/special requirements were used by participants demonstrated less variability across the alternatives after unacceptable alternatives were screened out by the participants (Stage 1 of the model). This decreased variability on certain attributes appeared to be related to a decrease in the importance of those attributes for the final job choice made by participants (Stage 2) as compared to Stage 1 decisions, while other attributes appeared to carry greater weight for the final job choice decision.

The findings of this study call into question a general assumption underlying much of the organizational choice research, i.e., that individuals use compensatory decision-making strategies throughout the process of evaluating alternatives (Vroom, 1966; Lawler & Porter, 1967; Connolly & Vines, 1977; Pieters et al., 1968). Many of the participants in the study did not appear to use a compensatory strategy in the initial phase of choosing an organization, but instead used minimum/special requirements to screen certain jobs from further consideration. Most of the research supporting compensatory models such as expectancy theory models has used a questionnaire approach using descriptions of fictitious jobs. Participants in this study, while responding to questionnaires, evaluated organizational positions for which they were actually interested in interviewing. It could be that when presented with fictitious job descriptions in a tightly control-

led study, individuals are more likely to utilize rational, maximizing, compensatory strategies throughout the choice process than when presented with real organizational choice situations. The use of minimum/special requirements may represent a simplification strategy used by individuals when faced with many alternatives or when they do not have all the information necessary to carry out a maximization strategy (March & Simon, 1958; Cyert & March, 1963). This would seem to often be the case in organizational choice decisions where a certain amount of uncertainty concerning various job alternatives is often present. The use of non-compensatory strategies may serve to simplify the decision-making process in that jobs are screened out through the use of minimum/special requirements, thus reducing the number of alternatives which must be compared when making a final choice.

While researchers have claimed that individuals often use decision-making processes which are less rational than compensatory, maximization strategies such as those based on expectancy theory (Simon, 1955; Einhorn, 1971), non-compensatory organizational choice strategies using minimum/special requirements may in a sense be more rational than compensatory strategies. If individuals approach the organizational choice decision with an understanding of what they must have in a job in order to be satisfied with that job, the use of minimum/special requirements may prohibit the acceptance of a job which would ultimately be unsatisfactory to the individual because of its failure to provide a valued outcome. The use of a compensatory strategy may, in contrast, lead to acceptance of that job due to its high degree of favorableness on other factor(s). For individuals who hold minimum/special requirements and know that a job will not be satisfactory to them unless those requirements are met, a non-compensatory strategy makes perfect, rational sense.

The results of this study also seem to support recent work by Rynes et al. (1983) which suggests that the importance of a particular attribute may be directly related to the perceived variability of that attribute relative to other attributes across the alternatives. While Rynes et al. investigated this hypothesis with regard to only the attribute of pay, the present study suggests that the variability of other attributes besides pay has an influence on the importance of those attributes for organizational choice decisions. Together with the finding that many individuals utilized minimum/special requirements for particular attributes and that these served to minimize the variability on those attributes across the jobs given further attention by the individual, the model received support, in that attribute importance appeared to change for many participants during the organizational choice process. Specifically, those attributes for which minimum/special requirements were utilized, while predictive of rated acceptability of the jobs, did not appear to be as highly predictive of final organizational choice. Factors initially important in the decision-making process, in that minimum/special requirements were used on those factors, appeared to lessen in importance for the ultimate choice made from the jobs which met the minimum/special requirements.

Hypotheses concerning the effect of two individual difference variables on the likelihood of individuals to utilize minimum/special requirements on non-work variables did not receive support. Married individuals were no more likely to state they held minimum/special requirements on the attributes of geographic region and population size of city/town than were unmarried participants. Participants with children were no more likely to state the use of minimum/special requirements on the attributes of geographic region and population size of city/town than were participants without children.

One possible reason why these two hypotheses did not receive support concerns the sample size for the "married" and "with children" groups. Only 18 (18.8%) of the 96 participants were married, while only 15 (15.6%) of the participants had children. The small sample size for the "married" and "with children" groups makes statistical significance difficult to achieve because of low statistical power.

Also, almost all of the participants who were married and had children were relatively young (in their late 20's or early 30's). Most had children who were too young to be enrolled in school. It may be that non-work attributes such as those examined in this study are not as important to younger married individuals with very small children as they are to individuals who are older and have school-age children.

Another possible reason why marital status was found to be unrelated to the use of minimum/special requirements for non-work attributes concerns the employment situation of the spouses of the married participants. It was hypothesized that geographic region and size of the city/town would be more important to married participants because those participants would likely be concerned with the employment opportunities for their spouse in the city or region where their job alternatives were located. It may be that the spouses of the participants were not looking for a job or were primarily concerned only with the participant's job/career opportunities. Future studies on organizational choice should examine the importance of spousal job opportunities to individuals seeking a job and its impact on the importance of non-work attributes in organizational choice decisions.

While not related to any of the hypotheses of the study, the results concerning the importance in general of non-work variables to participants are strik-

ing. Twenty-two of the participants (25.0%) ranked one of the two non-work variables as the most important attribute for their decision (geographic region, 20; city population, 2), while only 7 of the participants (7.3%) ranked salary as the most important attribute. Also, 55 of the participants (57.3%) stated they held minimum/special requirements for geographic region, while 48 (50.0%) stated they held a minimum requirement for the size of the city/town in which the job was located. Clearly, non-work variables appears to be important to individuals facing organizational choice decisions. However, as noted by De Meuse (1982), few researchers have incorporated non-work variables into their models of organizational choice. This study suggests that non-work variables may play a more important role in organizational choice decisions than previously thought. Jobs which fail to meet the minimum/special requirements held by individuals on non-work factors may be excluded from further consideration, regardless of how favorable they are with respect to other factors. Also, for those individuals who use minimum/special requirements on work-related factors to screen jobs, non-work factors may be extremely important for the ultimate organizational choice made if the various alternatives which are considered acceptable are homogeneous with respect to the work-related factors.

Implications of the Present Study

The results of the present study have several theoretical and practical implications. First, as previously noted, the study calls into question the over-riding influence that compensatory models have had in the organizational choice literature. Many participants in this study used non-compensatory strategies in the initial phase of an organizational choice decision. The use of minimum/special requirements on different factors was clearly demonstrated by many of the participants, and organizational positions predicted by expectancy theory to be

chosen were in many cases not chosen because of their failure to meet the minimum/special requirements. This study suggests that the idea that all individuals use compensatory strategies throughout the choice process is inaccurate.

The results of this study may help explain discrepancies in the results of surveys attempting to identify the factors most important to job seekers. As noted earlier, several researchers who have surveyed job seekers concerning the importance of various factors for their decision have found conflicting results. Differences in the survey methodology used, the characteristics of the populations surveyed, and the lists of factors presented to respondents may account for many of the discrepancies. An additional reason for the conflicting findings may be related to the results of this study. This study suggests that attribute importance changes during the course of the organizational choice process as job alternatives are screened out because they fail to meet minimum/special requirements. Early in the choice process, when few if any alternatives have been screened out yet, individuals may report that the most important factors to them are those factors which they will use to screen jobs for acceptability, i.e., factors for which they hold minimum/special requirements. However, later in the choice process, after they have screened out jobs which fail to meet the minimum/special requirements, the variability of the jobs still being considered by the individual may be restricted on the factors used to screen alternatives. When asked to indicate which factors are the most important, the individual at this later point in the choice process may choose other factors which have not undergone any restriction, namely, those factors for which minimum/special requirements were not utilized. Thus, results of surveys asking respondents to rate or rank various factors as to their importance for the job decision may depend on the point in the job search at which they are asked to respond. Since this study suggests that the importance

of various factors changes during the organizational choice process, attempts to identify what general factors are the most important to job seekers seem shortsighted. It would seem more useful to focus on the processes through which the importance of various factors may change during the organizational choice process, rather than on the ranking of job attributes in terms of their importance for the choice of a job.

The study also has practical implications for organizations trying to attract and recruit employees. First, this study strongly suggests that many individuals hold certain requirements on various factors which must be met before a job is considered acceptable, and that these individuals will not choose a job which fails to meet such requirements, regardless of how desirable the job may be relative to other factors. While past literature has acknowledged that individuals use minimum standards for pay, (Reynolds, 1951; Stigler, 1962), this study found that participants used minimum/special requirements on other attributes as well as pay, including non work-related factors. Thus, organizations trying to attract an individual for a job which fails to meet the minimum/special requirements of that individual may find attempts to compensate on other factors unsuccessful. It would seem beneficial for recruiters to try and identify the minimum/special requirements of job applicants early in the job selection process, so that recruitment time and costs are not needlessly spent on applicants whose minimum requirements would preclude them from accepting the job.

As noted above, the results of this study indicate that non-work variables are an important concern to many individuals searching for a job. This finding suggests that organizations may need to focus more attention on non-work factors when attempting to attract candidates for a job. This would seem to be particularly true for those jobs with very favorable non-work attributes. Positive location

factors such as a good climate, cultural and educational opportunities, opportunities for spousal employment, etc., should be emphasized in interviews, company literature, and correspondence with the applicant, since these factors appear to play an important role in the the organizational choice process.

Directions for Future Research

The results of the present study suggest several directions for future research examining the organizational choice process. First, since this study found that many individuals appear to use non-compensatory strategies for organizational choice decisions, future studies should investigate the use of alternative decision-making strategies besides compensatory strategies. The situations in which different types of strategies are likely to be utilized by individuals engaged in organizational choice decisions would appear to be an area for useful research.

Specifically, there are several variables which need to be examined to determine whether they have an impact on the decision-making strategies used by job seekers. The amount of perceived time pressure on the individual to choose a job may affect the strategy s/he uses. The previously noted research by Wright (1974) suggests that the use of minimum/special requirements may increase as perceived time pressure on the individual increases. Also, the number and types of positions perceived by the individual to be available for employment may impact his/her choice strategy, as well as general economic and employment conditions at the time s/he is seeking a job. Individuals who perceive their employment opportunities to be limited may be less likely to utilize minimum/special requirements or may be more likely to use a satisficing strategy than those who feel their opportunities are less limited. The financial status of the individual may also have an impact on whether s/he sets minimum/special requirements on various attributes and uses those requirements to screen out certain alternatives. Each of

these variables needs to be studied further in relation to the particular strategies used by individuals seeking jobs.

Second, more research is needed which focuses on how the importance of various factors to job seekers may change during the organizational choice process. The results of the present study suggest that the relative importance of various factors is not stable throughout the job search. This study examined how the use of minimum/special requirements may serve to restrict the variability of certain factors and thus reduce their importance in later decisions. There may be other mechanisms which impact the importance of factors to individuals at particular points in the organizational choice process. New information about various position alternatives gathered by the individual throughout the job search may have an impact on the relative importance of different factors. It may be that some individuals begin the organizational choice process with unrealistic perceptions of what is available to them as alternative positions. As they gather more information during job interviews and correspondence with the organization concerning how favorable the jobs are with respect to various factors, their minimum/special requirements may change to reflect a more realistic assessment of their alternatives. The reverse may also be true, in that some job seekers may have initial expectations which are low with respect to what is actually available to them as position alternatives. These individuals may raise their requirements or change the importance they place on certain factors as a result of new information suggesting that their initial perceptions were too pessimistic. These and other possible mechanisms need to be examined by future researchers interested in studying how individuals change their perceptions and decision-making strategies during the organizational choice process.

Another area for future research concerns the importance of non-work factors to individuals engaged in organizational choice decisions. The present study found that many individuals are influenced by non-work variables, and that these variables play a part in the decision-making process. However, most research which has examined the organizational choice process has not recognized the importance of non-work factors to job seekers. The findings of the present study are consistent with other research which suggests that non-work variables are important in many different areas of the work lives of many individuals (Parker, 1976; Kabanoff, 1980). Future research should continue to explore the importance of non-work variables to individuals making organizational choices and other work-related decisions. More research is needed which examines the types of individual difference variables which may have an impact on how important various non-work variables are to individuals making organizational choices. For example, while marital status was found in the present study to be unrelated to the use of minimum/special requirements on certain non-work variables, it was noted that this finding may be due to the small number of participants who were married and the resulting lack of statistical power. Since a growing body of literature on dual-career couples (Rapaport & Rapaport, 1980; Stautberg, 1987) suggests that non-work variables are often very important to couples seeking employment for both partners, more research is needed to further examine the importance of non-work variables to couples seeking jobs. Also, future studies should utilize a more diverse group of participants, and should include participants who are older and who have school-age children in order to examine the effects of such variables on the importance of non-work variables.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of the present study which should be addressed. First, since the study attempted to assess the proposed model in a field setting using actual job seekers, some of the analyses used to examine the various hypotheses of the study were not traditional, probabilistic hypothesis-testing procedures. For this reason, statements of support for the hypotheses must be made with caution. While support for the major hypotheses was demonstrated using different methods of analysis, statements concerning the risk of error in acceptance/rejection of some of the hypotheses cannot be made. Since this initial attempt to test the proposed model in a field setting suggested support for the model, future research should focus on testing the model using methods which allow for stronger statements concerning the validity of the model.

Second, attempts to generalize the results of the study to populations beyond that of graduating university students should be viewed with caution. The present study focused on the decision-making processes of individuals facing a choice from among several job opportunities presented at approximately the same time. Most individuals already in the full-time workforce must evaluate different job opportunities as they become available. It is recognized that individuals facing decisions concerning whether to pursue a particular job opening or remain in the present job may utilize strategies different from those used by individuals facing a choice from among several simultaneous openings. Future studies of organizational choice should examine possible differences in the decision-making processes utilized by individuals in these two different situations.

Also, most of the participants in this study were entering the full-time workforce for the first time. It may be that as individuals progress through their career, the decision-making strategies they use to evaluate different alternatives

may change. Individuals may be more or less likely to use minimum/special requirements as they become older and more experienced, or the initial importance of various attributes to job seekers may change with age and experience. There is a need for future research to examine the organizational choice processes of older workers.

Also, it should be noted that while the present study tested several hypotheses concerning organizational choice, real organizational choice behavior was not used to test the hypotheses. Participants in the study were presented with a list of the positions they had rated as acceptable and ranked the positions in order of choice assuming they were offered all of the positions. This method of examining choice was necessary because of the difficulties associated with using actual position acceptance to test the hypotheses. Some participants did not accept a position until after they left the university, which would have made obtaining information from them difficult and in some cases impossible. Other participants were offered few or none of the positions for which they interviewed, thus preventing them from accepting a position. Also, a few of the the participants decided not to accept any of the positions for which they interviewed, but instead to attend graduate school or do something other than accept a full-time employment position. For these reasons, organizational choice was simulated in the present study in the manner previously described.

While there may be no obvious reason to suspect the validity of using "simulated" organizational choice, it would seem desirable for future research to focus on the actual choice behavior of job seekers. One particular reason for this suggestion would be the possibility that an offer or lack of an offer of employment from particular organizations may communicate information to the individual which affects his/her decision-making strategy. If offers which the individual ex-

pects are not received, the individual may lower his/her minimum/special requirements or alter in some way his/her decision-making process. Conversely, an individual who receives an offer s/he did not expect may raise his/her requirements or place greater emphasis on certain factors. This possibility can be addressed only through studies which follow job seekers throughout the organizational choice process until they actually accept an employment position.

This study suggests that attribute importance changes during the organizational choice process, and that this change may be related to the screening activity in which individuals engage. While support was shown for this mechanism, there may be other reasons why attribute importance changes during the organizational choice process. Job seekers undoubtedly begin the organizational choice process with limited information concerning the levels of various attributes offered by the different alternatives. As more information is gathered and analyzed by individuals as they interview with organizations, perceptions of "what's available" may become more realistic. As a more realistic knowledge of what is afforded by the various alternatives is gained, individuals may change their evaluation strategies to reflect this new information. An important area of study in the future would appear to be an examination of whether initial perceptions of job seekers are realistic, and whether perception changes that may occur during the organizational choice process have an effect on the decision-making processes utilized by individuals.

A major limitation of the present study is that no hypothesis was made concerning exactly how individuals make a final choice from the alternatives they consider acceptable. While evidence was found suggesting that many individuals used non-compensatory strategies to determine acceptability of alternatives, and that the importance of various attributes may change during the choice process,

the present study did not directly address how information concerning the acceptable alternatives is utilized and processed by job seekers to make a final choice. The study did not provide data necessary for examining exactly how participants chose from the acceptable alternatives.

Assuming that some individuals screen out unacceptable alternatives before they make a final choice, an assumption which appeared to receive support from the present study, they may use a maximization strategy such as that described by expectancy theory models to make a final choice, involving comparison of valence-instrumentality perceptions. While valence-instrumentality scores were used to test the hypothesis that attribute importance for final choice would be different from attribute importance for acceptability, and support was found for this hypothesis, this does not imply that participants were using compensatory, expectancy theory strategies in making a final choice. The use of the VI scores merely provided a method of examining Hypothesis 5.

Another possibility is that individuals compare the alternatives on only a few very salient attributes and choose the alternative which is the most desirable with respect to those attributes. The research noted earlier concerning general theories of decision-making would appear to indicate that there may be no one strategy which best describes the behavior of decision makers. Studies are needed which directly focus on the particular strategies used by individuals to choose from the organizational positions which they consider acceptable and which are offered to the individual.

It should be noted that the valence-instrumentality scores used to test several of the hypotheses in the present study were derived by summing valence-instrumentality products across the four attributes of the study. This method of integrating information across attributes is referred to as an additive model. Fish-

bein and Ajzen (1975) point out that averaging across the valence-instrumentality products may yield better predictions of attitude or choice behavior than the additive model. Fishbein and Hunter (1964) demonstrated that the additive and averaging models yield different predictions of attitude. However, in studies where the number of attributes used is held constant across subjects, the additive and averaging models yield identical results, since dividing a variable by a constant (the number of attributes) produces a new variable which is perfectly correlated with the original variable. This was true in the present study, since all the participants were asked to provide information on four attributes, and VI scores were calculated by summing across the valence-instrumentality products for those four attributes. Also, if the additive model accurately describes the decision-making behavior of individuals, the term compensatory may not be entirely appropriate in describing their decision-making strategy, since high values on a particular attribute do not actually compensate for low values on other attributes for a particular alternative, but instead only add to the overall VI score for that attribute. In the averaging model, the addition of more attributes in the decision must alter the importance of other attributes, whereas in the additive model additional attributes can be used in the decision without affecting the importance of other attributes. For this reason the averaging model should be considered more compensatory in nature than the additive model.

Since all of the participants in the present study provided information on four attributes, thus causing the additive and averaging models to yield identical results, it was impossible in the present study to determine whether the additive or averaging model best describes the choice behavior of participants. In real organizational choice situations in which job seekers are free to consider any number of salient attributes, the averaging model suggested by Fishbein and Ajzen

may describe their decision-making behavior better than Vroom's additive model. Future studies on organizational choice should compare the additive and averaging models using participants who are free to evaluate alternatives using any number of attributes.

A related point concerns the static nature of the proposed organizational choice model. The model is cast as a 2-stage model, proposing that individuals first evaluate the acceptability of various positions (Stage 1) and then evaluate the acceptable alternatives for desirability and make a final choice (Stage 2). The model only outlines two global, broad stages that appear to occur in the organizational choice strategies used by some individuals. However, the two stages of the model may not accurately reflect the actual thought processes of job seekers who are evaluating different alternatives. While support was found for the hypothesis that individuals use minimum/special requirements to evaluate position acceptability, and that the use of minimum/special requirements may impact the importance of attributes for the subsequent choice decision, these may not be discrete, sequential steps that are carried out only once by the individual. Individuals may continuously evaluate alternatives for acceptability throughout the job search as new information becomes available, with alternatives previously considered acceptable screened out at a later point as a result of new information or a raising of the individual's requirements, or vice versa. Some individuals may not screen out any alternatives at all because of their perceptions of difficulty in obtaining employment. Another possibility is that individuals may evaluate the acceptability and the overall desirability of various alternatives at the same time, rather than initially screening for acceptance and subsequently choosing from the acceptable alternatives. An area for future research would appear to be a further ex-

amination of the particular sequence of decision-making steps in which job seekers engage.

Conclusion

Organizational choices are among the most important decisions made, for both the individual and the organization attempting to recruit qualified individuals. While many researchers have examined various aspects of the organizational choice process, most have assumed that individuals utilize compensatory, maximization strategies to evaluate alternative positions. This study has presented evidence that this may not be the case for many individuals. This finding has several implications for both researchers and organizations. More research is needed to more fully refine our understanding of the organizational choice process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
FORM A

13. Did you return to school after an absence for some reason (for example, military service, full-time work, family reasons, etc.) Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, why did you return to school?

How long were you out of school? _____

14. How many years (approximately) have you been interested in the field in which you are pursuing a job? _____

15. Do you have any immediate plans concerning marriage or a family?
Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, what are they _____

16. If married, what is the employment status of your spouse?

a) not employed b) employed part-time c) employed full-time

17. If married, is your spouse currently seeking a job?

a) yes b) no

18. If both you and your spouse are offered equally desirable jobs in different locations, which job will be accepted?

a) the job offered to you
b) the job offered to your spouse
c) both jobs
d) neither job
e) don't know

B. Many individuals have some minimum or special requirements on various job characteristics which must be met before a job would be considered acceptable. For example, an individual might require that a job meet or exceed a minimum starting salary or be in a particular geographic location before he/she would consider it. Considering yourself in your present situation please answer the following questions concerning any minimum or special requirements that you have for a job.

1. Are there any special requirements that must be met by a job before you would consider it acceptable? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what are they? _____

2. Are there any specific factors concerning a potential job that would cause you to consider it unacceptable? _____

3. Is there a minimum starting salary necessary before you would consider a job? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, what is the minimum annual salary necessary? _____

4. Do you have any special requirements concerning the geographic region in which the job is located? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, what are your requirements concerning geographic region?

5. Do you have any special requirements concerning the type of job (for example, management trainee, account executive, etc.)? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, what are your requirements concerning the type of job you find acceptable? _____

6. Do you have any special requirements concerning the size of the city/town in which the job is located? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, what are your special requirements concerning city/town size? _____

7. Are there any other special requirements that must be met before you would consider accepting a particular job? If so, please describe them below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

C. Please rank the following mentioned above in order of their importance for your job choice decision.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Factor</u>
_____	Type of work
_____	Geographic region in which the job is located
_____	Starting salary
_____	Size of city/town in which the job is located
_____	Other (specify) _____
_____	Other (specify) _____
_____	Other (specify) _____

APPENDIX B

FORM B

Placement Service Questionnaire

(Questionnaire to be Completed After Each Job Interview)

This questionnaire is being used to provide data for a research project examining the factors which are important to students as they interview for jobs through Career Planning and Placement Services. Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated. The following information is very important to the success of the project. You are asked to complete this form (FORM B) for each of at least six jobs which you have interviewed for as outlined in the letter of instructions which is included in your packet of materials. Please answer the questions as thoroughly and honestly as possible. Your responses will be held in confidence, and while the results of this project may in the future be helpful to others, your responses will have no bearing on your success in the interviewing process.

A. Please write your answer in the space provided or circle the letter corresponding to the response which best represents your choice. Please be as honest as possible when answering the questions.

1. Name _____
2. Telephone number where you can usually be reached _____
3. Concerning the job you interviewed for:
 - a. Name of organization _____
 - b. Position _____
 - c. Level of entry (trainee, first level management, etc.) _____
 - d. Location of job _____
4. Date of interview _____ Date form completed _____
5. What is the likelihood that you will receive an offer of employment for this position?

<u>Very Unlikely</u>		<u>50/50</u>		<u>Very Likely</u>		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B. Please answer the following questions concerning the job you interviewed for by filling in the blank or placing an X in the appropriate blank. If you don't know the answer to a question please leave it blank.

1. What is the annual starting salary for this position?

Does this job meet your minimum requirement concerning starting salary? Yes ____ No ____

2. Is the type of work this job offers acceptable to you?
Yes ____ No ____
3. Does the geographic region in which this job is located meet your requirements concerning location? Yes ____ No ____
4. Does the size of the city/town in which this job is located meet your requirements concerning city/town size?
Yes ____ No ____

C. For the following job factors, please rate the extent to which this job corresponds to what you desire in a position by circling the appropriate number. If you don't know the answer to a question or if it is not applicable, please circle the N/A response

to no extent	to a very little extent	to a little extent	to some extent	to a great extent	to a very great extent	to an extra-ordinary extent		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A	
1. Starting salary	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
2. Promotional opportunities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
3. Opportunities for interesting work ..	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
4. Employment opportunities for spouse in the area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
5. Reputation of the organization	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
6. Specific job duties	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
7. Job security	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
8. Cost-of-living in the area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
9. Benefits (insurance, vacation, savings plan, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
10.Challenging work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
11.Opportunities for recognition	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
12.Geographic location	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
13.Outdoor recreation opportunities in the area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
14.Opportunities for feedback concerning performance	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
15.Size of city/town	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A

to no extent	to a very little extent	to a little extent	to some extent	to a great extent	to a very great extent	to an extra- ordinary extent	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	N/A
16. Entertainment opportunities in the area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
17. Opportunity to work independently ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
18. Schools in the area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
19. Opportunities for continuing education (local colleges and universities) ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
20. Level of entry into organization	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
21. Good public transportation system ...	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
22. Type of work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
23. Medical facilities in the area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
24. Close proximity to relatives and/or friends	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A
25. Desirable local culture	0	1	2	3	4	5	6 N/A

D. Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate response.

1. Considering this job alone, do you find the job acceptable for employment?

a. yes b. no

2. Considering this job alone, to what degree do you find the job acceptable for employment?

Very
Unacceptable

Very
Acceptable

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX C
FORM C

FORM C

Placement Service Questionnaire

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This questionnaire is being used to provide data for a research project examining the factors which are important to students as they interview for jobs through Career Planning and Placement Services. Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated. You are asked to complete this questionnaire, answering the questions as honestly as possible. Your responses will be held in confidence and will have no influence on your success in the interviewing process. Please complete the questionnaire as soon as possible and mail it in the pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelope provided.

A. For each of the following questions please write your answer in the space provided.

1. Name _____
2. Date form completed _____
3. Telephone number where you can be reached _____
4. Have you accepted an employment offer? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, what job have you accepted? _____

B. Listed below are the names of organizations and positions which you indicated earlier were acceptable to you for employment. Please circle the number beside the job you would accept if you were offered each of the jobs. Then, please rank the remaining jobs in order of preference by placing the number corresponding to your ranking in the blank to the right of the job.

	Organization/Position	Your Ranking
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____

VITA

David Paul Osborn was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee. He began his education at Harding Academy of Memphis, from which he graduated in 1976. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology in 1980 from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas.

After graduating from Harding University, he enrolled in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at the University of Tennessee. While a student at Tennessee, he worked as an analyst for the Research and Analysis Branch of the Personnel Division at the Tennessee Valley Authority. He was employed for several years as a consultant and trainer with QualiMetrics. He received the Doctor of Philosophy degree in August, 1988.

Dr. Osborn is a member of the Academy of Management, the American Society of Quality Control, and the American Production and Inventory Control Society. He is currently employed as an Assistant Professor of Management Sciences at Abilene Christian University. He resides with his wife, Phyllis, and their son, Blake, in Abilene, Texas.