

The Role of Human Resource Systems in Job Choice Decisions

Robert D. Bretz, Jr. and Timothy A. Judge

**Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies
School of Industrial and Labor Relations
Cornell University**

Working Paper # 92-30

This paper has not undergone formal review or approval of the faculty of the ILR School. It is intended to make the results of Center research, conferences, and projects available to others interested in human resource management in preliminary form to encourage discussion and suggestions.

RUNNING HEAD: Human Resource Systems

The Role of Human Resource Systems in Job Choice Decisions

Robert D. Bretz, Jr. and Timothy A. Judge
Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies
School of Industrial and Labor Relations
Cornell University

RUNNING HEAD: Human Resource Systems

Abstract

Given that organizations make choices about how to manage their human resources, underlying information about the organization is often expressed or implied in the human resource systems that organizations implement. This study proposes that information conveyed through human resource systems affects applicant job choices, that particular systems will be more important to some people than others, and that job acceptance will be influenced by the degree to which individual characteristics match the content of the system information presented. A policy-capturing design was used to assess the effects of human resource systems within the context of other variables that past research has shown to significantly influence job choices. Results suggested support for the importance of human resource systems in job choice decisions, and further suggested that the fit between individual characteristics and organizational settings described by the systems in place may be particularly important determinants of job acceptance.

The Role of Human Resource Systems in Job Choice Decisions

For several years staffing experts have been suggesting that an organization's human resource systems might be instrumental in the staffing decisions made by organizations and the job choice decisions made by applicants (e.g., Olian & Rynes, 1984; Rynes, 1992). Although this thesis is endemic to staffing research in general, it is particularly salient and explicit in discussions of strategic staffing and person-organization fit. Strategic staffing may be described as recruiting and selection activities that are derived from a systematic assessment of the organization's strategic objectives and needs (Butler, Ferris, & Napier, 1991). That is, strategic staffing activities are purportedly undertaken to procure long-term human assets; not merely to fulfill immediate operational objectives (Lorange & Murphy, 1984; Miller, 1984). Similarly, person-organization fit addresses the suitability or propriety of certain types of people in particular types of organizational environments, with the assumption that this match has long-term implications for organizational effectiveness (Schneider, 1987). Differences in human resource systems supposedly reflect the underlying nature of organizations, and therefore, in the staffing context, provide the environmental context for determinations of fit. This necessitates exploring the meaning of human resource systems and applicant perceptions of person-organization fit.

Human Resource Systems

The term human resource systems can be used to refer to the collection of policies, practices, and procedures that affect particular human resource functions (Bretz, 1988). For example, reward (or compensation) systems include those activities that determine how pay and other rewards are distributed to organizational members (Gerhart & Milkovich, in press). Reward systems can be based on employee merit, longevity, or output (Milkovich & Newman, 1987), or may be described by their focus on either the individual, the group, or the organization (Staw, 1986). An individually-oriented reward system attempts to create strong instrumentality linkages between performance and rewards by relying on the

archetypical "merit system." A group-oriented reward system designs work and distributes rewards on the basis of group performance. An organizationally-oriented system ties the individual's rewards to the performance of the organization by relying heavily on profit and/or gain sharing, bonuses, and stock options. Reward system characteristics reflect fundamental differences in what the organization deems valuable, and how it chooses to distribute resources among its members (Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1992).

Additionally, while mobility in organizations is often accompanied by increases in compensation (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1989), the staffing system itself can have independent motivating characteristics (Markham, Harlan, & Hackett, 1987). Mobility or career systems describe mechanisms by which individuals move into, through, and out of organizations (Rosenbaum, 1984). Sonnenfeld & Peiperl (1988) define career systems as "collections of policies, priorities, and actions that organizations use to manage the flow of their members into, through, and out of the organization over time" (p. 588). Turner (1960) described mobility systems as either contest-oriented or sponsored-oriented. Under a contest norm, upward mobility is the result of victory in a fair and open contest. Promotions are made on the basis of recent performance. Therefore, those who excelled in the past must continue to compete for further promotion and those who lost in prior rounds are not disadvantaged in the current competition (Bretz & Dreher, 1988). In contrast, mobility under a sponsorship norm relies on early identification of those possessing certain characteristics. This select group is afforded different career opportunities than the non-sponsored cohort (Bretz & Dreher, 1988). The most obvious example of sponsored mobility systems are organizational "fast tracks" and internal promotion policies (Rosenbaum, 1984).

In addition to human resource systems demarcated by functional specialty, these systems might also include sets of policies and practices that are endemic to the organization and cut across functional boundaries. For example, work values represent a subset of social values that suggest general patterns of behavior individuals ought to exhibit at work

(Fallding, 1965; Rokeach, 1973). Recent research has revealed that achievement, concern for others, honesty, and fairness are the most salient work values to most individuals (Cornelius, Ullman, Meglino, Czajka, & McNeely, 1985; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). Although these values seem to be universally important, individuals express differences regarding their relative importance, and appear to choose jobs based on the degree to which organizational values match personal values (Judge & Bretz, 1992). Some past research has indicated that fairness is the most important work value to individuals (Judge & Bretz, 1992). This suggests that the justice systems of the organization, or the degree to which fairness is emphasized in organizational procedures and in the distribution of outcomes, is a critical component of how an organization treats its workers (Folger & Greenberg, 1985; Greenberg, 1990).

Similarly, individuals presumably differ in the degree to which work and family obligations create conflicts. For example, the strength of a person's work ethic (Weber, 1958) may influence the level of work/family conflict a person experiences. The confluence of demographic, legislative, and attitudinal changes suggest that work/family issues will be of central importance in the future (Zedeck, 1992). The collection of policies regarding how an organization deals with work/family issues might reasonably be thought of as a human resource system. Differences in how organizations accommodate work/family issues are likely to differentially affect job seekers (Friedman & Galinsky, 1992).

The above discussion suggests that human resource systems play a critical role in the relationship between an employee and his or her organization. Thus, past research suggests that some of the more critical dimensions along which a human resource system can be classified relate to its compensation policies, its mobility system, the degree to which a justice system is in place, and work/family policies. The degree to which these systems are seen as important by individuals likely will influence the choices and decisions they make about their work role membership.

Strategic Staffing and Pre-Hire Perceptions of Fit

To the extent that organizational strategic objectives drive the firm's human resource systems, organizations reveal important contextual information in the systems they choose to implement. Therefore, knowledge of the organization's human resource systems should impact job seekers' decision-making process. However, although many have theorized about both the variability and propriety of human resource systems, little is known about how job applicants interpret human resource system differences between organizations.

Using the Miles and Snow (1978) typologies, Olian and Rynes (1984) proposed that "... different recruitment and selection practices attract different types of individuals into organizations" (p. 170-171). They suggested that in recruiting, Defender-type organizations would emphasize tight organizational control, a concern for efficiency of process, well-defined internal promotion ladders, and a commitment to employee training and development. These organizational characteristics were hypothesized to attract individuals with high needs for security and structure and low tolerance for ambiguity. Likewise, Prospector-type organizations were expected to emphasize dynamic work processes, more concern over output than process, and a commitment to innovation. Reward distribution and staffing decisions would reflect a focus on recent individual accomplishments. These organizational characteristics were expected to attract individuals with a propensity for risk-taking.

Similarly, Sonnenfeld & Peiperl (1988) suggested that organizations that hire at entry levels and use mobility systems based on group accomplishment ("Clubs") would be more attractive to individuals who favor job security over rapid advancement. Those that hire at all levels and base mobility on individual achievement ("Baseball Teams") should attract highly motivated, confident, risk-taking individuals. Finally, those that hire only at entry level and base mobility on individual accomplishment ("Academies") should appeal most to those with long-term focus and strong organizational commitment. The taxonomies

described above are conceptually appealing, yet we are unaware of any studies that have empirically examined whether these issues actually are emphasized by organizations best characterized by the respective typologies, how potential applicants react to this information, or what applicants infer about the organization on the basis of this information.

Early attempts to describe pre-hire perceptions of fit mainly relied on theories of vocational choice (e.g., Holland, 1966; Super, 1953). For example, Tom (1971) extended Super's (1953) perspective of vocational choice to the organizational context by asking students to describe themselves and two organizations: one they would most prefer to work for and one they would least prefer to work for. He found more similarity between the individual's description of himself and the most preferred organization than there was between the self description and that of the least preferred organization. Similarly, Burke & Deszca (1982) investigated the relationship between Type A behavior and preferences for particular organizational climates. Type A behavior scores were related to preferences for working environments characterized by high performance standards, spontaneity, ambiguity, and toughness. Since the personality attributes describing Type A individuals include ambition, competitiveness, need for achievement, and impatience, it appears that the drive for congruence in occupational contexts extends to organizational preference as well.

The extension of the vocational choice literature to the organizational choice context suggests that accepted theories of person-environment fit are relevant in the organizational choice context and appear to explain some of the variance in organizational choice decisions. Recent examination of person-organization fit has focused on fit at the post-hire stage (e.g., Blau, 1987; Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990; French, Caplan & Harrison, 1982; Kulik, Oldham & Hackman, 1987; Meglino, Ravlin & Adkins, 1989; Moos, 1987; O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991; Rounds, Dawis & Lofquist, 1987). However, a few studies have attempted to assess the degree to which perceived person-organization fit affects job choice behavior. For example, Bretz, Ash, & Dreher (1989) found some support for the hypothesis that the

valence of an organization's reward system to an individual depended on the personality of the individual. Similarly, Judge and Bretz (1992) found that organizational values were an important determinant of job choice and that individuals preferred jobs in organizations which displayed value preferences similar to their own. Finally, Rynes, Bretz, and Gerhart (1991) content analyzed in-depth interviews with job seekers and concluded that applicants assess fit on the basis of job characteristics, organizational practices, recruiter attributes, and recruiting process activities.

Thus, it seems that applicants do form judgments about the desirability of particular organizations on the basis of at least some of its human resource systems. Despite this research, however, the assessment of organizational fit by job applicants remains largely a mystery. Although we have an indication that applicants consider reward systems, mobility systems, and value systems when forming opinions about the relative attractiveness of organizations, we do not know the weight that is placed on these types of variables, or the degree to which individual differences interact with these variables to influence job choice behavior. The current study is an attempt to directly assess these issues in the context of other variables that are known to affect job choices.

Hypotheses

Within-Subjects

A significant body of prior research has suggested that pay level and promotional opportunities affect job choices (Rynes, 1992; Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Rynes, Schwab, & Heneman, 1983; Schwab, Rynes, & Aldag, 1987). In fact, Rynes et al. (1983) concluded that pecuniary attributes were so important in the job choice process that the effects of nonpecuniary attributes could not be interpreted in their absence. Moreover, Locke (1976) suggested that for most people, the desire for certain job attributes, like pay and promotions, was linear because most people cannot get "too much" of these things. One reason for this

may be that they can be applied to fulfill a wide range of needs. Consistent with this prior research we hypothesized that:

- H1: Individuals will be more likely to accept jobs with higher than average salaries than they will be to accept jobs with lower than average salaries.
- H2: Individuals will be more likely to accept jobs where the promotional opportunities are relatively high than they will be to accept jobs where the promotional opportunities are relatively low.

Rynes (1992) lamented the fact that while a great deal has been learned about recruiters, recruitment sources, and realistic job previews, recruitment research has neglected other fundamental aspects of jobs and organizations that might affect job choice decisions. One of the neglected areas are vacancy characteristics, which represent distinguishing environmental or contextual characteristics that describe the job or organization. Two primary objections to the inclusion of vacancy characteristics in recruiting research have been offered. First, these types of characteristics may have their greatest impact on retention and job satisfaction and should therefore be studied in those contexts. Second, it may be of limited usefulness to understand the effect of these attributes in the recruiting context since employers would be generally unwilling to make broad-based changes in the organizational systems they represent (McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Miceli, 1986; Rynes, 1992). These objections, however, may be less cogent today than in the past. Because current and projected labor market trends are necessitating a shift from a "screening" to an "attracting" mode for many organizations (Rynes & Barber, 1990), information that differentiates an organization from others is likely to affect job choices. Moreover, information that creates a positive impression of the organization and distinguishes it from other organizations is likely to significantly improve its ability to attract applicants. It is also not clear that all vacancy characteristics are expensive or difficult to modify in order to attract applicants. One vacancy characteristic that has become more

salient of late are policies to accommodate family needs and reduce their interference with work activities. Rynes (1992) argues that work/family policies may influence job choices, and contrary to the assertions regarding problems in studying vacancy characteristics, holds that:

For example, provision of flextime or on-site day care -- even at the employee's expense -- might yield high returns in terms of attraction and retention, because such nonstandard benefits more clearly distinguish an employer from its competitors. Similarly, there are several benefits that might be used only by a subset of the employee populations (and hence be relatively inexpensive), but that might have substantial effects on an organization's image as a "good place to work" (e.g., educational benefits or sick child day care). (p. 433)

It is also true that career expectations are becoming less significant indicators of success in many individual's lives, and that many family-based influences are providing an increasing sense of fulfillment for many people (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kanter, 1977). Moreover, over 40% of the labor force consists of members of dual-income households (Zedeck, 1992). Therefore, since the work/family issue is becoming increasingly important and potentially offers recruiting advantages to organizations that exploit it properly, we hypothesized that:

H3: Individuals will be more likely to accept jobs in organizations with expressed concern for balancing work and family issues than they will be to accept jobs in organizations in which the importance placed on these issues is unknown.

Expectancy theory considers the attractiveness of alternative jobs as a function of the perceived instrumentalities and valences associated with each of the alternatives (Vroom, 1964). Job opportunities that are considered most attractive will be those in which the applicant believes that his/her performance will lead to positively valent outcomes. Human resource system information that creates stronger instrumentality linkages should lead to

higher levels of attractiveness. Individually-oriented reward systems should create stronger instrumentalities than group-oriented reward systems because individual contribution and accountability are clear. Because individually-oriented reward systems create explicit instrumentalities between what are assumed to be positively valent rewards and individual performance, these type of reward systems should be more attractive to job applicants. Furthermore, American society has often been described as individualistic (as opposed to collectivistic) in its orientation. This is evidenced by the fact that when compared to workers in other countries, workers in the United States place a high value on individual work goals such as high pay and a lower value on group outcomes such as good interpersonal relations with co-workers (MOW International Research Team, 1987). Thus, while for some individuals group- or team-based reward systems may be attractive, for most individuals they will be less attractive due to their perceived lower probability of leading to work role rewards, and because of the individualism extant in American culture. For the reasons above we hypothesized that:

H4: Individuals will be more likely to accept jobs in organizations where rewards are distributed on the basis of individual merit than they will be to accept jobs in organizations where rewards are distributed on the basis of group output.

Moreover, contest mobility systems also make valent outcomes (promotions) contingent on individual performance. Therefore, instrumentalities also should be stronger in contest, as opposed to sponsored, mobility systems. Furthermore, the social values of Americans may again be relevant here, where societal norms dictate that equal opportunities for advancement be available to all (Rosenbaum, 1984). Therefore, we hypothesized that:

H5: Individuals will be more likely to accept jobs in organizations which rely on contest mobility norms than they will be to accept jobs in organizations with sponsored mobility norms.

Locke (1976) defined needs as "objective requirements of an organism's survival and well-being" (p. 1303). Needs exist whether or not a person actively desires their fulfillment, and irrespective of what the person wants. Values, on the other hand, are enduring perspectives of right and wrong, based upon what the person wants (Locke, 1976; Rand, 1966). Work values have been shown to be related to the job choices people make (Judge & Bretz, 1992), the way people feel about their work (Spence, 1985), the way they behave on the job (England, 1967, 1975), and their overall job satisfaction (Locke, 1976; Meglino et al., 1989). Because work values are generally considered to be universally desirable, organizational systems that encourage or insure commonly held values should be preferable to organizational environments that are contrary to or ignore such values. In fact, it has been shown that job satisfaction and intention to turnover are significantly related to perceptions of justice (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987), and that individual's impressions of organizations are strongly affected by perceptions of justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Researchers have made a distinction between distributive justice (the fairness of ends or outcomes achieved) and procedural justice (the fairness of means used to achieve those ends)(Greenberg, 1987). The importance of distributive justice to individuals can be explained by the "self-interest model," which suggests that distributive justice is desired because it allows individuals to exert control over their own outcomes (Lind & Tyler, 1988). On the other hand, procedural justice may be important to individuals because individuals desire "process control," or the ability to influence the process of outcome attainment (Greenberg, 1990; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1987). Thus, explicit policies reaffirming that procedural and distributive justice are key elements of the organization's culture, and are likely to be perceived favorably by most individuals (Greenberg, 1990). Therefore we hypothesize that:

H6a: Individuals will be more likely to accept jobs in organizations with expressed policies to insure procedural justice than they will be to accept jobs in organizations in which these policies are unknown.

H6b: Individuals will be more likely to accept jobs in organizations with expressed policies to insure distributive justice than they will be to accept jobs in organizations in which these policies are unknown.

Fit-Based Interactions

In addition to the main effects hypothesized for the human resource system attributes, we also expected that individual differences between applicants would interact with the system characteristics to affect job choices. Organizations tend to differentiate themselves on the bases of what is rewarded (both formally and informally) and how rewards are distributed (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1990). Individually-oriented merit systems should be most attractive to individuals who prefer to work independently of others while group-based reward distribution systems should be preferred by individuals who are predisposed to work in cooperative settings (Bretz, 1988). Bretz et al. (1989) originally proposed that individually-oriented reward systems would be preferred by applicants with high need for achievement (nAch), and group-oriented reward systems would be preferred by applicants with high need for affiliation (nAff). However, instruments for measuring these needs were not specifically designed for work setting applications, and therefore may have limited applicability. Rather, questions that directly assess the applicant's preference for individual versus group-based work may be better indicators of reward system preference (Bretz, 1988; Bretz et al., 1989). Therefore we hypothesized that:

H7: Individuals characterized by a preference for individual work and contribution will be more likely than applicants characterized by a preference for team-based work and contribution to accept jobs in organizations with individually-oriented reward systems.

Sponsored mobility systems describe a situation in which the future elite are chosen by the established elite, on the basis of predetermined criteria. Those who do not possess the distinguishing characteristics cannot earn them through any amount of skill or effort (Turner, 1960). Because the future elite are identified early in their careers and "sponsored" into elite status, in many ways their career success is beyond their control. Conversely, contest mobility systems never really bestow elite status and require repeated competitions for promotions and reaffirmations of one's ability. In this sense, one's career progression is completely determined by one's own ability and effort vis-a-vis others in the cohort. Internal locus of control describes individuals who tend to believe that they have significant control over what happens to them, and external locus of control describes individuals who tend to believe that the things that happen to them are caused by events beyond their control (Rotter, 1966). Because contest mobility systems place one's career progression squarely on one's own shoulders, and sponsored mobility systems effectively remove direct control over career progression, we hypothesized that:

H8: Individuals with high internal locus of control will be more likely than those with low internal locus of control to accept jobs in organizations with contest mobility systems.

Although expressed policies for balancing work and family issues may indicate that an organization is a good place to work (Rynes, 1992), it seems reasonable that these policies would be more important to applicants with higher levels of perceived work/family conflict, because they are more likely to have an immediate need for these accommodations and therefore should prefer organizations which offer them. Furthermore, those who do not presently experience work/family conflict but believe it will be an important issue for them in the future also should value work-family policies. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

H9: Individuals experiencing higher levels of work/family conflict will be more likely than other applicants to accept jobs in organizations that have expressed policies for accommodating work/family issues.

It has been demonstrated that individuals make job choices that are consistent with value-laden goals (Vroom, 1966). Because organizational concern for procedural and distributive justice is conceptually similar to "fairness," and value intensity affects the amount or degree of something an individual wants (Locke, 1976; Rand, 1966), it is reasonable to expect that individuals who value fairness will be motivated to accept a job in an organization which emphasizes fairness. Thus, consistent with person-environment interactionism, it is quite possible that attributes of the organization (in this case justice systems) interact with attributes of the individual (in this case fairness value orientation) in explaining attitudes and behaviors (in this case job choice decisions). In fact, Judge and Bretz (1992) demonstrated that individuals were more likely to choose jobs whose value content was similar to their own value orientation. Procedural and distributive aspects of justice should be valent to individuals who value fairness because these individuals should be concerned with the equity of outcomes and the means through which the outcomes are achieved. Based on the above reasoning, we hypothesized that:

H10: Individuals who are fairness value dominant will be more likely than other applicants to accept jobs in organizations that express concern for (a) procedural justice and (b) distributive justice.

Method

Pilot Study

Students interviewing for jobs were surveyed to identify the non-system factors most important in individuals' job choice decisions. They were asked to rank (1 = most important, 5 = least important) five different characteristics of jobs that had been identified by past research as influential in job choice decisions (Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Rynes et al.,

1983; Schwab, Rynes, & Aldag, 1987). The five factors were salary level, advancement potential, geographic location, type of work, and type of organization. Twenty-eight students completed surveys. To control for social desirability bias (Jurgensen, 1978), individuals were asked to rank the importance of these factors according to how they thought others perceived them. The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the ranks for the 5 factors were: type of work (M = 1.96, SD = 1.29); salary level (M = 2.50, SD = 1.11); advancement potential (M = 2.86, SD = 0.85); type of organization (M = 3.29, SD = 1.54); and geographic location (M = 4.29, SD = 1.01). The mean ranks for geographic location and type of organization were significantly lower than all other factors, except that the difference between advancement potential and type of organization was not significant. Because type of work desired exhibited little variation in our sample, salary level and promotion opportunities were chosen as the non-system factors to include in this study. These factors also offer the advantage of having previously been shown to be among the most important determinants of job choices (Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Rynes et al., 1983; Schwab, Rynes, & Aldag, 1987).

Setting, Subjects, and Procedure

Surveys were administered to students in several upper-level human resources courses at two major U.S. universities in the Midwest and Northeast. Participation was voluntary and anonymity of responses was assured. Seventy-six students were eligible to participate and 65 surveys were returned, yielding a response rate of 86%. Age of the respondents ranged from 20 to 39 years, with the average age equal to 24.5 years (SD = 3.8 years). Eighty-two percent of the respondents were white, and 66% were men. Previous job experience ranged from no prior experience to 21 years experience; the average respondent reported an average experience level of 2.4 years (SD = 3.8 years). Fifteen percent of respondents were married. For those who were married, 78% of their spouses worked outside the home (44% worked in professional positions). The average working spouse

worked 35.5 hours per week ($SD = 17.9$ hours). Thirteen percent of respondents were undergraduates, while 87% were graduate students. Thirty-one percent of the respondents attended the Midwest University while 69% attended the Northeast University. Grade point average (GPA) of respondents ranged from 2.4 to 4.0, with an average of 3.4 ($SD = 0.35$). Fifty-two percent of the respondents were currently interviewing for jobs, with the rest of the students expected to interview within a year. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents perceived many employment opportunities, while 51% perceived some alternatives, and 21% perceived few or no employment alternatives.

Research Design

We used a mixed experimental design which incorporated both within-subjects and between-subjects components (Keppel, 1982). The within-subjects design permits inferences to be drawn about the relative importance of particular factors that individuals use to make decisions. This element of the design is referred to as policy capturing and has been used to study decision making processes in many organizational contexts, including job choice decisions (Arnold, 1981; Feldman & Arnold, 1978; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Rynes et al., 1983; Zedeck, 1977), disciplinary decisions (Klaas & Wheeler, 1990), judgments of task importance (Sanchez & Levine, 1989), managerial pay raise decisions (Sherer, Schwab, & Heneman, 1987), and judgments of sexual harassment (York, 1989).

The within-subject factors used in the present study included those that have been shown by previous research to have an effect on job preferences (salary level and promotional opportunities), and several human resource systems hypothesized to affect job choices (reward systems, mobility systems, justice systems, and work-family systems). Because non-pecuniary aspects of job choice may be interpretable only when pecuniary attributes are accurately represented (Rynes et al., 1983), the manipulated values for pay and promotional opportunities were derived from placement office data and reflected actual market conditions that the subjects would face in a real job choice. Since salaries for

undergraduates and graduate students varied, it was necessary to indicate different salary figures for the undergraduate and graduate surveys. The salary levels also differed between the Midwest and Northeast universities, so separate figures were provided in these surveys. The two levels of salary represented the 75th and the 25th percentile of offers that were currently being made to graduates of these degree programs. The two levels of promotional opportunities were one promotion in four years (low) and two promotions in four years (high), and again were representative of the actual conditions these graduates were likely to experience.

Two levels of reward system differences were used. Individually-oriented reward systems were described as those in which "yearly salary increases are determined by your individual productivity." Alternatively, group-oriented reward systems were described as those in which "yearly salary increases are determined by your work group's productivity." Two levels of mobility systems were used. Contest mobility systems were described as those in which "all employees compete for promotions on the basis of their recent performance, regardless of their historical accomplishments." Alternatively, sponsored mobility systems were described as those in which "high potential employees are placed on the 'fast-track' and have promotional opportunities that are generally unavailable to other employees." Three levels of justice system differences were used. Justice system differences were expressed as procedurally just ("employees are assured of fair treatment in all human resource procedures"), or distributively just ("employees are assured that outcomes and rewards are distributed fairly"). Alternatively, since it would be unreasonable to expect subjects to express interest in organizations that are overtly unfair, and it is unlikely that such information would be conveyed to job applicants, the third level of justice system was represented by making no reference to the justice component. Finally, two levels of work/family issues were used. The organization was either described as having

"implemented policies that promote a balance between work and family life (e.g., day-care, parental leave, flexitime, etc.)" or no mention was made of work/family issues.

The six within-subjects independent variables were completely crossed so that the independent effects of each factor could be assessed. This resulted in 96 ($2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3$) scenarios which contained all possible combinations of the independent variables. The order in which the factors appeared in the scenarios was randomized. An example of a scenario is provided below.

This organization has implemented policies that promote a balance between work and family life (e.g., day-care, parental leave, flexitime, etc.). The starting salary for this job is \$35,000. Employees are assured that outcomes and rewards are distributed fairly. By the fourth year, the average graduate has received 1 promotion. All employees compete for promotions on the basis of their recent performance, regardless of their historical accomplishments. Yearly salary increases are determined by your individual productivity.

The dependent variable was the probability of accepting a job offer with the above characteristics if such an offer were made. It was operationalized in this manner: "Indicate the extent to which you would likely accept an offer possessing the above characteristics." Subjects responded to a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 = highly unlikely to 7 = highly likely.

Between-Subjects Measures

Inter-individual differences based on individual attributes were assessed using the between-subjects part of the design. In order to control for possible consistency or priming effects (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), the survey order was mixed such that one-half of the subjects completed the between-subjects material first, and one-half of the subjects completed the within-subjects material first. Due to the length of the within-subjects part of the

survey, it was necessary to keep the between-subjects portion as brief as possible.

Therefore, the shortest possible measures were used that would still yield a valid measure of the constructs. Description of the between-subjects measures follows.

Team orientation. Preference for team-based reward contingencies was assessed with a two-item scale which included the items (1) Members of a team should get the same rewards, and (2) If some team members contribute more, they should get more in return. Subjects responded by indicating that they thought the statement was either "true" or "false". The coefficient alpha estimate for this measure was .77.

Locus of control. Locus of control was measured using five items from Rotter's locus of control scale (Rotter, 1966). The items we used included (1) Without the right breaks one cannot perform well on the job, (2) Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck, (3) In my case getting what I want has little to do with luck, (4) Who gets promoted often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first, and (5) Most people don't realize the extent to which what happens on the job is controlled by accidental happenings. Coefficient alpha for the 5-item scale was .69.

Work/family conflict. Work/family conflict was measured using three items derived from existing work/family conflict scales (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). These items included (1) My working life does (or I think my working life will) interfere with my family life, (2) To "get ahead" I will have to neglect or postpone some family duties or obligations, and (3) A person must choose to emphasize either their work or their family life; you can't have it all. Subjects responded using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). Coefficient alpha for the 3-item scale was .60.

Fairness value dominance. Work values were assessed by the Comparative Emphasis Scale (CES), a survey developed and tested by Ravlin and Meglino (1987), Meglino et al. (1989), and Ravlin and Meglino (1989). The values represented in the CES were chosen

