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# Job Offer Expectancies: An Analysis of Antecedents, Outcomes and Moderated Effects

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JOB OFFER EXPECTANCIES: AN ANALYSIS OF ANTECEDENTS, OUTCOMES  
AND MODERATED EFFECTS

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Industrial-Organizational Psychology

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by  
Matthew Richard Millard  
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## ABSTRACT

Restricted by limited time and resources, job applicants are often required to make decisions based on their own estimations of an organization's likelihood to extend a job offer. These estimations, or offer expectancies, may be linked to several applicant attitudes and behaviors that have yet to be examined fully in the literature (e.g., job pursuit or information seeking behaviors, search expansion, etc.). We know relatively little about how these perceptions are formed. In this study, actual job applicants were asked to report their perceptions of and behavioral intentions towards organizations that they are currently applying to but have not yet been offered jobs with. In a follow-up survey, applicants were asked to report whether they engaged in certain of these behaviors. The research found that both social comparisons to other applicants and application self-efficacy operated as antecedents of offer expectancies. Furthermore, offer expectancies were found to predict job pursuit intentions and behaviors, as well as information-seeking intentions. Finally, selection-stage was found to moderate the relationship between offer expectancies and job-pursuit intentions such that in later stages applicants were more likely to report intentions to pursue the organization if they had very positive expectations of receiving the offer. This relationship was weak for less positive expectations. Organizations may benefit by understanding what drives applicant decisions to withdraw early from a process, and manage expectations where appropriate.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving and supporting wife, Megan. Her faith, confidence and trust in me inspired me to persist in my goals – even when the outcome was unclear.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

From an applicant perspective, the job search and selection process can be characterized by a high degree of ambiguity and uncertainty. Even when applicants feel qualified for a position, perceive a good fit, and ascertain that the organization recognizes this, they still may have only limited information about the number of or qualifications of others applying for the same job. Indeed, even the most highly qualified applicants likely recognize that it takes only one “better” applicant to take away an opportunity. Yet, despite uncertainty, and in the face of limited time and resources, decisions must be made. Applicants must determine where their actions will be of most value. For example, at what point do applicants cease searching for new organizations and focus on only those in their current pool? Alternatively, when do applicants decide to reopen searches and apply to new organizations? How strongly should applicants pursue organizations with which they have already made contact? And in extreme cases, how do applicants react to situations where a job offer exists with one organization, but holding out may result in a more desirable offer from another organization? The above questions are a sampling of the types of issues applicants may face in the job application process.

Victor Vroom (1964) suggested that the behaviors of individuals faced with uncertain outcomes are influenced by the degree to which they view those outcomes to be probable. Such probability estimates, or expectancies, may be especially relevant in a job recruitment and selection context. In this context, applicants are forced to deal with a number of ambiguities and are often required to make decisions based on incomplete

information. Thus, offer expectancies, or the degree to which applicants expect to receive an offer from certain organizations, may be relevant in understanding applicant decisions.

Surprisingly, very little research has been devoted to understanding how offer expectancies may be formed or may affect applicant perceptions and behaviors. In terms of offer expectancies, research has primarily focused on linking expectancies to variables such as organizational attraction and job acceptance intentions--a useful, but certainly not comprehensive set of outcomes (e.g., Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Chapman & Webster, 2006; Harris & Fink, 1987). As for antecedents, research has typically focused on attributes of the recruiter, selection system, or organization, neglecting the possible impact of perceptions of other applicants, which, considering the competitive nature of the job environment may be very relevant. Several researchers have recently issued calls for more work in this area.

As a response to recent calls in the literature (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005; Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), the primary focus of this dissertation is the development of a more clear understanding of how offer expectations affect the decisions applicants make in the hiring process. By examining a broader range of possible outcomes and predictors of offer expectancies, I hope to provide insight and subsequently promote interest in this construct as a way to better understand how applicants interpret information and react during the hiring process. In addition, this research examines individual differences and contextual variables that might moderate the development or effectiveness of offer expectancies.

I begin with a brief discussion of decisions applicants are required to make and the resources with which they have to work. I follow with a more detailed examination of offer expectancies, which may be an essential predictor of how applicants allocate these resources, including a discussion of measurement issues and various operationalizations of this construct. Following this, I discuss findings regarding both the outcomes and antecedents of offer expectations. I then propose several hypotheses and research questions aimed at uncovering new outcomes and antecedents of these expectations as well as variables that might moderate these relationships. Following this, I describe a field study designed to examine how offer expectations impact the perceptions and decisions of actual applicants.

### Applicant Decisions and Resources

As suggested earlier, job applicants are often required to act in the face of a large degree of ambiguity. These actions may include deciding to more heavily pursue or research certain organizations, to expand a job search and begin looking for other opportunities, or even to risk some opportunities in anticipation of other more attractive options. Furthermore, as resources are often limited, applicants must make decisions about which actions to take. For example, starting a new search for possible jobs may take time that could be better spent researching or pursuing current opportunities.

Time is only one of the many resources with which applicants must be concerned. Others may include financial resources (e.g., costs associated with traveling, interview coaching, etc., or even the length of time an applicant can afford to be without a job) and emotional resources. Applicants may hesitate to emotionally invest in every job

opportunity they come across. Doing so may hinder their ability to manage the process effectively. Furthermore, applicants may desire to protect their own self-perceptions during this process. Much research has focused on actions individuals may take to maintain positive evaluations, including realigning goals to ensure success (Carver & Scheier, 1998) and creating self-serving attributions for behavior (for a meta-analytic review, see Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, & Hankin, 2004). Expectations may become a critical antecedent of these self-serving actions. Later, I incorporate *protection motivation theory*, a popular theory from the health psychology literature, as a way to investigate how perceived threats (in this case, not being offered a job) might interact with perceptions of self to predict behaviors. I now move on to a detailed discussion of offer expectancies.

### Offer Expectancies

Vroom (1964), in his seminal work outlining expectancy (VIE) theory, suggested that “whenever an individual chooses between alternatives that involve uncertain outcomes, it seems clear that his behavior is affected not only by his preferences among these outcomes but also by the degree to which he believes these outcomes to be probable” (p. 20). Thus, individuals who believe a certain outcome to be probable are more likely to engage in behaviors they believe will bring about that outcome. Subsequent research has indeed confirmed that expectancies, or “belief[s] concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome” (p. 20) can affect attitudes, intentions and behaviors (for reviews, see Arnold, 1981; Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996).

An offer expectancy can be defined as an applicant's evaluation of the likelihood of being offered a position at an organization (Chapman et al., 2005). In line with suggestions by Vroom (1964), these expectations have been measured in a few different ways. First, and most common, is measurement via self-report (e.g., Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Chapman & Webster, 2006; Gilliland, 1994; Harris & Fink, 1987; Powell, 1991; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Schmitt & Coyle, 1976; Stevens, 1997; Turban & Dougherty, 1992). Vroom (1964) originally suggested that expectancies should be measured as probabilities (between 0.0 and 1.0). Several researchers have adopted this format while others have used Likert scale response formats (e.g., very unlikely to very likely). Vroom warns the reader that due to faking, or even lack of insight into one's own thoughts or behaviors, self-report measures in general may not elicit accurate responses.

Rather than direct measurement, Vroom points out that researchers may decide to manipulate expectancies. In this approach, the participant is told about the organization's hiring ratio or given feedback about the probability of success. The researchers can then examine reactions to this information. Several offer expectancy researchers have adopted this strategy (e.g., Rynes & Lawler, 1983; Stahl & Harrell, 1981; Thorsteinson & Ryan, 1997). While this method may solve several of the issues inherent in self-report techniques, the trade-off may be realism and practicality. In an applied setting, it seems unlikely that many organizations will explicitly provide applicants with hiring probabilities. Organizations may provide selection ratios (or applicants may be able to fairly accurately estimate these), but these may not necessarily equate with actual offer expectancies. Individuals, knowing that all applicants are not equal, may vary in their

perceptions of their own standing within a pool. Therefore, a researcher manipulating expectancies by providing selection ratio information may also do well to include self-report measures as a way to gauge how applicants see themselves in comparison to other applicants. Another limitation of the above method is that it may be unethical to mislead applicants by manipulating offer expectancies in an applied setting, relegating much of this research to the lab where one cannot observe job seekers making actual job choice decisions.

In addition to methodological differences, several researchers have operationalized offer expectancies in slightly different ways. For example, Gilliland (1994) included perceptions of performing successfully on selection tests (enough to be selected). This perception should be identical to an offer expectancy to the degree that individuals feel that employers fairly incorporate test performance in decision making. However, if applicants anticipate that the organization is not basing offer decisions solely on test scores, one would expect offer expectancies to be different from these perceptions. Rynes and Miller (1983), in addition to offer expectancy, asked participants whether they expected to be invited for a second interview. Again, this is similar to an offer expectancy, but, as applicants realize that organizations will interview more people than they intend to hire, participants may be more likely to endorse this item than they would one specifically examining offer expectancy. Macan and Dipboye (1990) did not actually measure expectancies, but asked applicants to evaluate their own qualifications for the job as well as their perceptions of how the interviewer would evaluate their qualifications. While this will also correlate with offer expectancies, applicants may

realize that, while an interviewer may rate them as very qualified, other applicants may also be just as qualified, leaving the offer expectation to be created based on other information.

An interesting tie-in to the existent offer expectancy literature is the theoretical similarity of offer expectancies to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, a core component of Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory, can be described as an individual's beliefs about his or her capabilities to successfully perform behaviors that will lead to the achievement of a certain goal (Bandura & Jourdan, 1991). Or, in a job application setting, a person's perceived capability to secure a desirable position among the organizations within his or her job search pool or, more narrowly, with a certain organization.

Latham (2007, p. 65) pointed out that expectancies can be equated with self-efficacy if one takes into account all of the factors, both specific to the individual (e.g., knowledge skills or abilities, etc.) and specific to the situation (e.g., selection ratio, type of job tests, etc.), that might affect the outcome. While this may more closely approximate offer expectancies, it seems that self-efficacy may differ in some respects. For one, because of its solid rooting in self-evaluation, self-efficacy necessitates an emotional impact on an individual. However, it is fairly easy to conceive of a situation where an individual is not emotionally affected by a low expectancy for an offer at a certain organization – especially if his or her expectancy is due to uncontrollable factors such as the organization's selection ratio, opportunities to showcase qualifications, or others.



It may be useful to distinguish between self-efficacy for getting a job at a specific organization and self-efficacy about performance in the job application process in general. In general terms, an applicant may have beliefs about his or her ability to perform well in hiring situations. One may have positive perceptions of one's interviewing or interpersonal skills, test-taking skills, or the impressiveness of one's background. However, depending on circumstances, an individual may have lower levels of self-efficacy when applying to certain organizations. For example, some organizations may use selection procedures that applicants are less comfortable with. Or organizations may weigh factors such as background or experience less or more heavily than others. Thus, defining self-efficacy at the job-specific level is likely to be more accurate in terms of its effect on offer expectations and job search outcomes. For this study, we examine job-specific self-efficacy (i.e., an applicant's perceptions of his or her ability to be successful within a certain hiring process).

### Outcomes of Offer Expectancies

A question of critical interest is: in what ways might offer expectancies influence the perceptions, intentions, and behaviors of job seekers? While many studies include offer expectancies as a dependent variable, several have examined different ways expectancies might influence applicants. I'll first review attitudes, perceptions, and intentions as outcomes. Following this, I'll review specific behaviors that have been linked to offer expectancies.

## Attitudes, Perceptions, and Intentions

One of the first and most common variables studied in relation to offer expectancies is intent to accept a job offer. Alderfer and McCord (1970) originally found correlations ranging from .23 to .57 depending on whether participants were rating their worst, average, or best interviews (the best interviews elicited the highest correlations). Subsequent research has established support for this relationship although estimates vary greatly in their strength across studies, ranging from .12 in Stevens (1997) to .37 and .45 in Powell (1991) (pre- and post-interview, respectively). In a meta-analysis, Chapman et al. (2005) found that offer expectancies tend to affect intentions to accept job offers (and, subsequently, actual job choice) through the mediating effect of organizational attraction. However, Chapman and Webster (2006) later tested this hypothesis in a structural equation model including both a direct expectancy to intentions causal path and one mediated through organizational attractiveness. They found weak support for the direct link only ( $\beta = .07$ ).

Researchers that have examined the relationship between offer expectancies and job offer acceptance intentions have given several possible explanations for why this relationship might exist. For one, a positive offer expectancy may communicate to an applicant that the organization values him or her. Thus, it is likely that applicants express a greater desire to work for organizations that they perceive will value them. Applicants may enjoy feeling as though they are highly sought after and may expect to be similarly esteemed while on the job. Another explanation offered by Chapman et al. (2005) uses Janis and Mann's (1977) bolstering theory. The theory suggests that individuals routinely

inflate the positive aspects of outcomes they view as highly probable, while simultaneously downplaying the negative aspects. Thus, applicants may be more likely to express intentions to accept offers with companies where they perceive they are likely to receive an offer (Chapman et al., 2005; Chapman & Webster, 2006).

Ultimately, the mixed results supporting a relationship between expectancies and organizational attraction and intentions to accept an offer are not too surprising. In fact, one could easily make an argument for an inverse relationship. For example, Cialdini (1993) observed that the scarcer something is the more attractive it becomes. Thus, if an applicant perceives a job offer to be highly unlikely, an offer may be more readily accepted because it is seen as a “rare opportunity”. While this research does not examine this hypothesis more closely, it should be noted that intentions to accept an offer may only be moderately useful to researchers and organizations as a dependent variable, primarily as these perceptions are usually collected before an actual offer has been made. As applicants are likely to alter perspectives following an actual offer, it may be more beneficial to attend to other more immediate outcomes of offer expectancies (these will be examined shortly).

Apart from intentions to accept a job offer, a few other behavioral intentions have been examined in relation to offer expectancies. These include intentions to put forth further effort in the application process (LaHuis, 2005; Stahl & Harrell, 1981), intentions to recommend the organization to others after a rejection (Gilliland, 1994), and intentions to apply (after being told the likelihood of receiving an offer) (Kuncel & Klieger, 2007; Rynes & Lawler, 1983).

One other attitudinal outcome of offer expectancies that researchers have examined is perceptions of fairness. Specifically, researchers have examined how expectancies interact with hiring outcomes to predict whether the procedures and tests used by the organizations fairly assessed applicant abilities. Gilliland (1994) found a crossed interaction of expectancy and outcome of the selection process on perceptions of fairness. Among those randomly selected to be rejected by a fictional organization, a priori expectations and outcome ratings were inversely related; the more positive a priori expectations were, the less fair the outcome was rated. For those who were hired by the fictional organization, a priori expectations positively correlated with fairness perceptions. Thorsteinson and Ryan (1997) conducted a similar study but, rather than measuring expectations, manipulated the hiring ratio communicated to participants. They failed to find significance for this manipulation.

#### Behavioral Outcomes of Offer Expectancies

While attitudes and intentions provide some insight into how applicants may act, they can only approximate the usefulness of actual behavioral information. Unfortunately, these data can be very difficult to collect (Chan & Schmitt, 2004). For one, the multitude of factors present in organizational choice decisions means that effect sizes are fairly small. As many behaviors of interest (e.g., withdrawal from a selection process) are relatively infrequent in their occurrence, researchers are required to invest a lot of time and resources in order to establish sufficient power to detect these effects. Second, organizations are often hesitant to allow researchers to survey applicants about some reactions (e.g., fairness of the process, perception of treatment, etc.) for fear of

inciting applicants to spread negative information about the organization or even to pursue legal action. Thus, applicant reaction studies of this nature are relatively infrequent.

Cynthia Stevens (1997) conducted an interesting study in which she collected information on applicant job beliefs, expectancies, perceptions of recruiters, and intentions both before and after a job interview. She also audio-recorded interviews in order to measure impression management tactics interviewees' engaged in during interviews. She found that pre-interview offer expectations positively correlated with impression management tactics (particularly self-promotion, other-enhancement, and opinion-conformity) and use of confirmatory questioning strategies (asking questions that confirm applicants' expectations). Interestingly however, she noted that these behaviors did not significantly affect recruiter perceptions of applicants (which would have indicated the existence of a self-fulfilling prophecy). While her study highlighted specific effects that may relate to offer expectations, a causal inference was not established. It could be that applicants who regularly engage in impression management or self-promotion strategies tend to have greater offer expectancies (perhaps based on previous experience).

Chapman and Webster (2006), in a carefully designed study examining several mechanisms thought to affect applicant job attraction, behavioral intentions, and subsequently job choice, found that offer expectations played a significant, yet fairly small role in the formation of attraction and job offer acceptance intentions. Furthermore, these intentions were shown to later influence job choice as Chapman and Webster were

able to compare applicants' decisions to indicate a preference for a certain organization at a later point in time. A potential limitation of this study relates to the sample used.

Applicants were college students who were applying for four-month education contracts with organizations. This is somewhat removed from more common recruiting situations where both applicants and organizations have more invested in an employer/employee relationship.

Kuncel and Klieger (2007) conducted an analysis of law school applicant behavior. Law schools are distinct from other graduate schools and places of employment in that applicants have easy access to and make frequent use of detailed acceptance statistics provided by their prospective universities. Applicants can calculate their own acceptance probabilities based on their grade point average and LSAT scores. Kuncel and Klieger obtained applicant data for 115 law schools varying in tier and ranking status. Under the assumption that most applicants knew their relative standing in an applicant pool, Kuncel and Klieger found that standard deviations of applicant pools were more narrow than would be expected based on the population of test takers. This would offer evidence that applicants were focusing effort where they expected to receive results. Kuncel and Klieger also noticed a tendency for some applicants to apply to top-ranked schools despite near-zero acceptance rates. They reasoned that these applicants either believed they had a chance despite low scores, or so strongly wanted to be admitted they were willing to risk rejection and incur the costs associated with applying. Finally, they suggest that informing applicants of odds in organizations might allow applicants to self-select and thus reduce workload on personnel associated with processing applications.

One issue restricting our ability to draw meaningful inferences from the behavioral studies just discussed is that each of these used graduating students who were primarily looking for the first career-related position (or admittance into graduate school). Even though these are actual job applicants, there are several reasons why they might differ from others who have more experience. For one, more experienced job seekers may react differently to information from recruiters and other organizational representatives than college graduates. Experienced job seekers may be able to better interpret information from recruiters and organizational sources in forming their offer expectancies. These expectancies may be more realistic as a result. Additionally, more experienced applicants may use more targeted searches, only applying for jobs where they have high expectations of being successful (similar to the law school applicants in Kuncel and Klieger (2007)). Additionally, applicants may differ in the reasons they are searching for a job. While recent graduates may need employment to secure funds for living, some applicants may currently hold jobs and simply be searching for jobs that meet other needs (e.g., growth needs, ideal job characteristics, etc.). These applicants may exhibit different behaviors in the face of low or high expectancies than other applicants.

As shown above, offer expectancies have been linked to several meaningful outcomes, both attitudinal and behavioral. Nevertheless, as this is a fairly new area of research, we still lack a clear picture of the multitude of effects of offer expectancies. The most commonly researched outcome, intentions to accept a job offer (or actual job choice behavior), appears to be only moderately positively related to expectancies. Even more,

this relationship may only be somewhat useful to researchers and organizations as these perceptions are usually collected before an actual offer has been made. Applicant perspectives may change after an offer is presented (e.g., the positive experience of being offered a job may impact feelings towards an organization). Finally, intentions have typically been assessed within the context of one specific job. However, when applicants have multiple job offers, positive expectations to receive offers from other more attractive organizations may reduce intentions to accept an offer at the organization in question. In summary, the extant literature is insufficient to give us an accurate view of the effects of offer expectancies. I propose a more rigorous examination of the outcomes of this construct by the inclusion of several additional outcomes that are more proximally located to the construct of offer expectancies. Additionally, I propose several variables that may moderate the relationship between offer expectancies and certain outcomes. These relationships are displayed in Figure 1.

#### Job Pursuit and Information-Seeking Behaviors

*Job pursuit behaviors.* One of the primary decisions applicants face is how to manage the selection process at various organizations within their pool. Specifically, they must determine which jobs to proactively pursue above and beyond the required application steps. For example, is a follow-up phone call or email in order for a certain organization? Or should an applicant take the time to send thank you letters to those who interviewed him or her? Job pursuit behaviors may take several forms but are driven by a similar motive: to attempt to establish a stronger or more memorable presence with decision makers or to communicate additional information about one's skills or



qualifications. An applicant engages in these behaviors because he or she feels that doing so will incrementally increase the chances of securing a position at an organization. This research specifically inquires about several actions that may be labeled pursuit behaviors including: proactively contacting decision makers through follow-up phone calls or email, sending thank you letters following interviews, and contacting others who may or may not work for the organization but are likely to have contact with decision makers.

While many applicants may recognize these types of behaviors as beneficial to attaining the end goal of being offered a job, it is unlikely that applicants engage in these behaviors for every job. Rather, due to time and resource constraints, applicants may only engage in these behaviors for some organizations. The degree to which they intend to and actually do so may depend in part on their expectations of receiving a job offer from that organization – only expending resources where positive outcomes are most expected. Thus, offer expectancies are expected to have a main effect on job pursuit behaviors.

*H1: The more positive an applicant's offer expectation, the more likely he or she will H1a) express intent to perform, and H1b) perform job pursuit behaviors (i.e., initiating additional contact with organizational agents through emails, phone messages, thank-you letters, or other employees).*

*Information-seeking behaviors.* Similar to job pursuit behaviors, applicants may engage in seeking out additional information about the job or organization from various sources. The key purpose of this behavior, however, is not to initiate further contact with or make an impression with decision makers but rather simply to learn more about the job or organization. This is most likely done for the purpose of aiding a decision about

accepting an offer should one be extended (although in some instances applicants may seek out information in order to aid their performance in subsequent interviews or job tests).

Information seeking behaviors may include researching the organization online or through print media, reading additional material supplied by the organization, or discussing the organization with friends, family, or even current employees who may have additional knowledge about the company, but are not able to impact decisions. Again, applicants, with limited time and resources, will focus information gathering efforts on organizations where they perceive a job offer to be likely. This behavior is likely for two reasons: First, as mentioned earlier, applicants with high expectations are likely more attracted to an organization - thus driving applicants to find out more about the organization to confirm positive expectations (see the discussion earlier about Janis & Mann's bolstering theory); second, an impending job offer means an impending decision to be made on the part of the applicant. Anticipating this decision, applicants may be more motivated to seek out information that will aid them in making the right decision.

*H2: The more positive an applicant's offer expectation, the more likely he or she will be to H2a) express intent to seek out information and H2b) to actually seek additional information about a job (i.e., talking with others about the job / organization, reading about the organization in the media or organizational brochures and website).*

*Organizational attraction as a moderator.* Having stated the above hypotheses, it is not expected that all applicants will react uniformly to offer expectancy information.

Several contextual and individual difference variables may moderate these relationships. First, an individual's level of attraction to an organization is likely to play a significant role in whether he or she is motivated to act on offer expectancy information. Previous research suggests that individuals who are attracted to organizations report greater intentions to pursue those organizations (e.g., Lemmink, Schuijf, & Streukens, 2003). Furthermore, this hypothesis closely resembles predictions from Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory stating that valence of an outcome and expectations predict behavior. As it appears that organizational attraction and offer expectancies are only moderately related to each other, it may be interesting to examine how they may interact with one other to predict applicant intentions and behaviors.

The moderating effect of organizational attraction is expected for both job pursuit and information seeking behaviors. For job pursuit behaviors, applicants who are highly attracted to an organization may choose to pursue an organization regardless of low offer expectancies, simply because the positive aspects of the organization justify the costs associated with devoting resources to pursuance. Justification for this assertion is found in prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), which states that people overreact to small probability risks (i.e., spending a modest amount of resources is justified when the probable outcome is extremely valuable, even if chances of success are very low). For applicants who are not very attracted to an organization, pursuit behaviors will be very minimal even if an offer seems forthcoming. This may simply be because applicants may not intend to accept an offer from said organization unless all else fails. Finally, for

applicants who indicate moderate levels of attraction, a general positive relationship with offer expectancies will be observed on job pursuit behaviors.

*H3: Offer expectancies will interact with organizational attraction such that the slope of offer expectancies on job pursuit intentions (H3a) and behaviors (H3b) will be more pronounced for individuals reporting moderate levels of organizational attraction than for those reporting extreme levels of attraction (either very high or very low).*

Organizational attraction should also moderate the relationship between offer expectancies and information seeking behavior. Similar to job pursuit behaviors, individuals who are highly attracted to an organization may seek out more information about that organization regardless of their offer expectancies (as long as these expectancies do not approach zero). Alternatively, those who are not very attracted to an organization may be less likely to seek out information about the organization even when very high offer expectations exist. Finally, those who are moderately attracted to an organization will be more likely to report intentions to seek information about a job as their offer expectancies increase (especially as information seeking behaviors may be especially time consuming).

*H4: Offer expectancies will interact with organizational attraction such that the slope of offer expectancies on information seeking intentions (H4a) and behaviors (H4b) will be more pronounced for individuals reporting moderate levels of organizational attraction than for those reporting extreme levels of organizational attraction (either very high or very low).*

*Locus of control as a moderator.* Another variable that may moderate the impact of offer expectancies on applicant behaviors is locus of control, or, the degree to which a person expects that outcomes of his or her behavior are within his or her control (Rotter, 1966, 1990). Individuals with an external locus of control credit situational and contextual attributes as the primary source of outcome success or failure, whereas those with an internal locus of control perceive themselves to have more control over outcomes. The moderating effect of locus of control is primarily expected for job pursuit behaviors (and not thought to affect information seeking behaviors). In this context, those with an external orientation may have very little belief in their own ability to affect hiring outcomes and as a result may be reluctant to engage in job pursuit behaviors. These individuals may prefer instead to let the application process take its course without further involvement on their own part. On the other hand, those with internal orientations may very much believe in their abilities to influence organizational decisions and may be much more likely to engage in these behaviors.

*H5: Offer expectancies will interact with locus of control such that the slope of offer expectancies on job pursuit intentions (H5a) and behaviors (H5b) will be more positive for those reporting an internal locus of control than for those reporting an external locus of control.*

*Self-efficacy as a moderator.* Earlier the relationship between offer expectancies and self-efficacy was described. It was stated that self-efficacy would be examined at the job-specific level as well as at the general application level (i.e., an applicant's perception of his or her ability to effectively perform in a hiring situation). Both should affect offer

expectancies in similar ways, however, the focus will depend on the level of analysis of the dependent variable (i.e., outcomes related to specific jobs such as job pursuance or information seeking behaviors, or outcomes related to the search in general such as intentions to broaden or narrow the job search). In this section, outcomes are primarily at the job specific level, thus self-efficacy will be defined at that level.

To introduce the usefulness of self-efficacy in understanding offer expectancies, I draw on a theory borrowed from the health psychology literature. Protection motivation theory (PMT) (Rippetoe & Rogers, 1987; Rogers, 1983) is used to describe how individuals appraise severe threats such as the potential for a major illness or disease (e.g., AIDS, lung cancer, etc.) and act accordingly. While at onset, the application of this theory to the job-search process may not be clear, it becomes relevant when one considers the large impact that job-choice has on individuals. The theory, while commonly applied to major health decisions, actually operates more as a motivational theory for critical life choices.

PMT incorporates four critical pieces of information to predict intentions and behavioral outcomes: the perceived severity of the threat (e.g., lung cancer may be a death sentence), the individual's perceived vulnerability to the threat (e.g., one's estimation of the likelihood of developing lung cancer), outcome (or response)-efficacy (the perceived likelihood that preventative behaviors will meaningfully influence the outcome), and self-efficacy (an individual's appraisal of his or her own ability to successfully perform such preventative behaviors). Ultimately, these four factors should work together to predict whether an individual actually engages in preventative or

maladaptive behaviors. The theory suggests that individuals with low perceived outcome efficacy or self-efficacy are most likely to engage in maladaptive behaviors. For example, they may rationalize away a certain threat or create excuses for not engaging in preventative measures.

Several direct parallels from PMT can be made with the job application/hiring process. Reflecting perceived threat, individuals may vary in the degree to which they view being rejected by a job to have severe consequences. For some (e.g., recently graduated college students, or laid-off employees), consequences of not being offered a job may be viewed as highly severe, whereas, for others (e.g., applicants with current jobs who are looking for a better opportunity but do not feel rushed), a rejection may be of little consequence. Thus, it is important to determine the degree to which an applicant reports needing a certain job. The second aspect of PMT, outcome vulnerability could be viewed as similar to offer expectancy. The degree to which an applicant perceives himself or herself to be vulnerable to being rejected by the organization may affect the decisions he or she ultimately makes. Outcome-efficacy could refer specifically to an applicant's belief that certain actions (e.g., job pursuit behaviors) if completed will improve the likelihood of a positive outcome (i.e., being offered a job). Finally, self-efficacy, the fourth aspect of the model, can be viewed as an applicant's perceptions of his or her ability to be successful in the job application/hiring process.

An advantage of thinking about offer expectancies through the framework of this model is the ability to examine how applicant vulnerability (i.e., job-specific offer expectancy) and self-efficacy interact to predict behaviors. To begin with, the theory

predicts that applicants with low self-efficacy may be less likely to engage in behaviors that might improve their situation (e.g., job pursuit behaviors that may strengthen an application). Rather, they tend to adopt maladaptive coping behaviors (e.g., convincing themselves that a position is not worth their effort in pursuing). Bandura and Jourden (1991) suggest that individuals, consumed by self-doubt, often tend to become pre-occupied with their own current or past failures rather than putting in effort to improve their current situation. Alternatively, those with higher self-efficacy may see the value in such behaviors and be more likely to take action.

Furthermore, these perceptions may interact with offer expectancies in interesting ways. First of all, an individual with high self-efficacy for his or her ability to perform well in an organization's hiring process may pursue a job regardless of perceptions of high or low offer expectancy (which may persist because the applicant realizes that others may also perform well in the process). Individuals with moderate levels of self-efficacy might be influenced more heavily by offer expectancies—pursuing when expectations are high, backing off when expectations are low. Finally, those with low self-efficacy may put forth very little effort into pursuing a job regardless of offer expectations. To this last point, applicants with low self-efficacy may be less likely to engage in pursuit behaviors beyond those required through the application process out of fear of “messing things up” and compromising any possibilities that they may be offered a job.

*H6: Offer expectancies will interact with self-efficacy such that the slope of offer expectancies on job pursuit intentions (H6a) and behaviors (H6b) will be more*



*pronounced for individuals reporting moderate levels of self-efficacy than for those reporting extreme levels of self-efficacy (either very high or very low).*

A similar relationship is expected for information seeking behaviors. Individuals may invest significant emotional resources when seeking information about an organization. Thus, applicants may be motivated by the same protection behaviors that exist in relation to job pursuit behaviors.

*H7: Offer expectancies will interact with self-efficacy such that the slope of offer expectancies on information-seeking intentions (H7a) and behaviors (H7b) will be more pronounced for individuals reporting moderate levels of self-efficacy than for those reporting extreme levels of self-efficacy (either very high or very low).*

*Selection stage as a moderator.* The stage of the selection process that applicants are currently at with an organization may also interact with offer expectations to predict applicant behaviors. The hiring process is typically composed of multiple stages including job search and initial application, interviewing and testing, and job offer / acceptance. The amount of time an applicant spends at any one stage may vary from organization to organization. Research on selection stage, although still in infancy, has found that stage may impact several different applicant attitudes and intentions. For example, Taylor and Bergmann (1987) followed applicants through five recruitment stages (campus interview, post campus, site visit, job offer, job offer decision) and found that recruitment activities predicted applicant perceptions of the organization at the initial stage, but failed to predict later on. Job attributes, however, continued to be effective

throughout the whole process. Horvath and Millard (2009) found that the relationship between organizational attraction and job offer acceptance intentions and recommendation intentions differed depending on the stage of the applicant. Specifically, organizational attraction was most influential during the middle stages but not as effective in the earlier or later stages.

Selection stage is likely to interact with offer expectations to predict information seeking behaviors for a couple of reasons. For one, applicants in later stages may feel the weight of an impending decision. While some degree of range restriction likely exists (most applicants at later stages likely have at least moderate expectations of receiving an offer) the degree to which an applicant expects an offer may affect the pressure of a looming decision, causing them to seek out more information as a way to aid a future decision. At earlier stages this relationship is expected to be weaker. For applicants who may have more temporal distance from a job choice decision information seeking might relate less strongly to offer expectancy and more strongly to variables such as organizational attraction.

*H8: Offer expectancies will interact with recruitment stage such that the slope of offer expectancies on job pursuit intentions (H8a) and behaviors (H8b) will increase in strength as individuals report being in later stages with a certain organization.*

Finally, it is important to note that the effects of recruitment stage may persist beyond the organization in question. If an applicant is at a later stage in one organization and is motivated to seek information based on an offer expectation, it is likely that he or

she will simultaneously engage in more information seeking behaviors at other organizations where they may be at an earlier stage, simply to further aid their job choice decisions. Thus, it is hypothesized that an applicant's farthest stage at any organization will predict information seeking intentions at an applicant's next most probable choice.

*H9: Offer expectancies will interact with recruitment stage such that the slope of offer expectancies on information-seeking intentions (H9a) and behaviors (H9b) will increase in strength as individuals report being in later stages with any one organization in their pool.*

#### Job Search Expansion

Having discussed job pursuit and information seeking as outcomes of offer expectations, another outcome is now examined—intentions to expand a job search. Applicants must consider whether the pool of their viable job possibilities will ultimately result in meeting their employment goals. This determination may lead to decisions to expand their pool by looking for or applying to new organizations or by making the decision to continue in the process at other organizations that they may be less interested in. While at onset this prediction may seem fairly straightforward, there are several factors that may complicate this prediction. To this point, outcomes have been examined at the job-specific level, whereas with job search expansion it becomes necessary to examine how applicants will react to perceptions from multiple organizations. Thus, a low expectancy of an offer from one organization will not necessarily be correlated with intentions to expand a job search, but a low expectancy from two or three of an applicant's top organizations may have this effect.

Furthermore several of the previously discussed moderating variables become relevant at this point. Organizational attraction is likely to play a significant role in this prediction. Applicants may have positive offer expectancies at several organizations but may not be attracted to any of them at a high level. Another factor that should also predict job search behaviors is self-efficacy to perform in a hiring process. In their meta-analysis, Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) found that job-search self-efficacy positively predicted the number of offers received, the status of the job obtained, and the duration of the job-search (reverse-scored).

Ultimately, it is uncertain how these various moderators might combine to predict job search expansion behaviors. This is proposed as a research question.

*Research Question 1: How do applicants' perceptions of offer expectancies, organizational attraction, self-efficacy, and stage in the selection process, interact to predict intentions to search out and apply to more organizations?*

### Job Choice

Schwab, Rynes, and Aldag (1987) suggested that applicants may be influenced by the amount of time employers allow applicants to ponder a job offer. They specifically mention situations where applicants must decide whether to accept or reject a minimally acceptable alternative before receiving a possible offer from a preferred alternative. Clearly, several factors are critical to this decision. For one, researchers must understand the level of attraction to the job/organization that has extended an offer relative to a possible alternative. Additionally, the applicant's offer expectancy for the preferred alternative is also likely important. When offer expectancy for the preferred alternative is

high, and the discrepancy in attraction between the two organizations is fairly large, applicants may be more likely to turn down the already extended offer.

*H10: For applicants who already have a job offer with one organization and may receive an offer from another organization: An applicant's offer expectancy moderated by the difference in the attraction of the possible alternative over the current job offer will predict intentions to self-select (turn down the current offer) such that, for applicants who greatly desire the alternative over the current offer, expectancies will positively predict intentions to self-select and actual withdrawal behavior. As the preference for the alternative decreases the relationship between offer expectancies and intentions to self-select will become less positive (and eventually disappear).*

A possible criticism of the above logic is that it only applies to situations where applicants have two possible jobs to consider: the current offer and the preferred alternative. However, findings from decision making literature make this limitation less problematic. Soelberg (1967), in research examining decision-making tendencies of job applicants, found that job applicants consistently engage in what he termed *choice reduction*. In other words, he noticed a tendency for decision makers to reduce decision alternatives down to just one choice made between two alternatives. Furthermore, his research suggests that individuals will assign one of the alternatives as the “choice candidate” (or implicit favorite) and the other as the “confirmation candidate” (used to confirm that the choice candidate is the correct alternative). In the above hypothesis, individuals who are waiting on decisions from choice candidates may be more likely to

delay or withdraw from a selection process than those who are waiting for confirmation candidates.

### Antecedents of Offer Expectancies

Several authors have focused on identifying the factors that form offer expectancies and have identified many useful variables as antecedents. Nonetheless, room for improvement exists. In this study, I examine information from comparison others—a generally unexplored variable in recruitment literature—as a potential antecedent of offer expectancies. The failure to study social comparison information in recruitment literature is surprising in that employee selection from the organizational perspective is primarily a process of comparing applicants. Applicants, who likely realize this, may find exposure to other applicants, whether through direct contact or simply by learning more about the characteristics of the applicant pool, to be a rich source of information. Thus, comparisons with others should be considered in understanding the attitudes, intentions, and actions of job applicants. In this section, I begin with a review of the literature on antecedents of offer expectancies. I then focus on social comparisons as antecedents and discuss several potential moderators of their effect on offer expectancies.

Within the hiring literature, the most consistently supported finding with relation to the antecedents of offer expectancies is that attributes and behaviors of recruiters or interviewers seem to have the largest effect on applicant offer expectancies. For example, Alderfer and McCord (1970), studying a sample of graduate level business students interviewing for summer jobs, found that applicant perceptions of interviewer interest, willingness to answer questions, trustworthiness and likeability all correlated with

expectations of receiving an offer. In a similar study, Schmidt and Coyle (1976) found that applicant offer expectancies positively correlated with perceptions of interviewers as warm, dependable and likeable. Additionally, attributes such as the recruiter being viewed as correct, precise, and well-informed about the organization and job added to prediction. Harris and Fink (1987) found similar results but strengthened this research by using a pre-post design whereas previous work was primarily cross-sectional. Furthermore, they tested several moderators of this relationship including job attractiveness and experience, but failed to find support for these. In another study, Rynes and Miller (1983) had participants watch several videotaped interviews of actors portraying recruiters varying on level of affect displayed and level of information provided about a job. They found both of these to positively predict offer expectancies and suggested that these behaviors may act as signals to participants of their chances of receiving an offer.

In addition to perceptions of attributes of the recruiter, Turban and Dougherty (1992) examined the effect of several other recruiter perceptions on offer expectancies including: demographic characteristics of recruiters, similarity of recruiters to the applicant, focus of the interview (did the interview focus on marketing the organization or on applicant qualifications; see Rynes, 1989, for a detailed treatment of this distinction), and structure of the interview (use of a rating scale, formal questions, etc.). Only recruiter behaviors significantly influenced offer expectations. Powell (1991), in addition to perceptions of recruiters, found that attributes of the job (e.g., the work itself,

compensation, opportunities to advance, environment, etc.) also predicted offer expectations.

As summarized above, a preponderance of evidence supports that perceptions of recruiters play a very significant part in the formation of applicant offer expectancies. Chapman and Webster (2006) explain that this effect is likely due to a tendency for applicants to assume that recruiters who are less friendly to applicants are simply not interested in them for a position. Thus, while applicants cannot be sure of the recruiters' perceptions, a recruiter's affect and interest towards the candidate likely serve as a signal of the candidate's chances of receiving an offer (which may in fact be the case in many situations).

While recruiter perceptions contribute significantly to applicant expectancies, room exists for other factors that might incrementally increase predictive power. In particular, applicant comparisons to others, a major focus of the present study, may add substantially to the prediction of offer expectancies. Consider a typical hiring process, ideally, a candidate would know exactly how recruiters (or decision makers) rank candidates relative to others along selection criteria (whether it be performing better than others on a formal job test or simply leaving the best impression on an interviewer). As this information is usually not available, two alternatives may provide approximate information: (1) an estimation of whether a decision maker values the individual, and (2) an estimation how an individual compares to others relative to selection criteria. Obviously, both of these are imperfect sources of information in that, for the first, decision makers may value and show affection for certain individuals but still prefer



others more, or they may simply be managing their impressions to applicants. For the second, applicants must understand the selection criteria being used and how decision makers will weigh and interpret these criteria. They must also extrapolate performance information from limited information about others. Nonetheless, applicants may use both of these strategies to form offer expectancies. Below, social comparison theory is discussed in more detail and related to offer expectancies. Potential moderators of this relationship are suggested.

### Social Comparison Theory

In 1954, Leon Festinger proposed a theory that suggests that individuals compare themselves to others to gain information about themselves. Festinger's original paper generated a vast amount of research. In fact, as of October 2009 the PsycInfo database reported 2127 citations of his 1954 paper. His theory contains three basic hypotheses. First, people have an innate desire to know and evaluate their own capabilities. Second, in the absence of the opportunity to directly test abilities, comparing oneself to others becomes a reasonable alternative. Third, the most precise comparisons will be to individuals whom one deems as similar to oneself. While the degree of similarity required by this premise is not clear in Festinger's original work, subsequent research has established that similarity along the traits or attributes related to the performance of the specific task in question are more important than similarity in other areas such as gender, race, age, etc. (Gotheals & Darley, 1977; Martin & Suls, 1997).

As social comparison theory matured, researchers began to identify tendencies for individuals to make upward comparisons (compare oneself to those who are better off) or

downward comparisons (compare oneself to those who are less well off) depending on a variety of factors (e.g., level of stress, self-efficacy, perceived threat, etc.) (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007). For example, individuals may choose to make downward comparisons to make their plight, whatever it may be (research usually examines medical issues), seem less severe (e.g., DeVellis et al., 1991; Gibbons & Boney McCoy, 1991; Tennen, McKee, & Affleck, 2000).

An interesting divergence occurs here between social comparisons within the hiring context and those in much of the research in this area. Specifically, individuals in the hiring process may not have the luxury of choosing to make upward or downward comparisons. Rather, the only comparison that seems worthwhile is to those who are competing for the same position. This study does not examine whether individuals choose to make downward or upward comparisons, but rather how the discrepancies between applicants and others (either above or below their level of qualification) affect their offer expectancies.

Finally, information about others may come in many different forms. For example, some organizations may bring applicants in together, giving applicants opportunities to interact with one another. In other cases, applicants may only be able to guess about their competition based on their perceptions of others applying for the job or even the listed requirements in a job description. Nonetheless, applicants may still make comparisons based on minimal data (the literature on thin-slice judgments suggests that individuals often require very minimal amounts of information to draw conclusions. For a

meta-analytic review, see Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992). Thus, the first hypothesis is fairly straightforward:

*H11: Individuals who perceive themselves as better suited for a position than other applicants (i.e., make downward comparisons) will report more positive offer expectations, whereas, those who see themselves as less suited for position than other applicants (i.e., make upward comparisons) will report less positive offer expectations.*

*Social comparison orientation as a moderator.* Several variables are expected to moderate the relationship between social comparisons and offer expectancies. The first of these is social comparison orientation (SCO; Gibbons & Buunk, 1999), or the extent to which individuals differ in relying on social comparison information. In the presence of a growing literature of individual difference variables all predicting reliance on social comparisons, Gibbons and Buunk developed this scale as a means to summarize and simplify these effects. For example, *low self-confidence*, *intolerance of ambiguity*, being *other-focused*, and *neuroticism* are only a few of the variables they cite as having been studied in relation to the likelihood of making social comparisons. They argue that all of these, while different constructs, have a similar attribute of including a desire to search out information about oneself. Several researchers have confirmed the effects of SCO in predicting how social comparisons might relate to several outcomes. For example, SCO has been found to moderate the effectiveness of information from comparison others in promoting exercising behavior (Oullette, Hessling, Gibbons, Reis-Bergan, & Gerrard, 2005), assigning risk to drunk driving (Gibbons, Lane, Gerrard, Pomery, & Lautrup,

2002), and being emotionally affected by negative information about others similar to individuals (Buunk, Oldersma, & De Dreu, 2001). Thus, individuals high in SCO should be more likely to use this comparative data. It is proposed that SCO will moderate the effect of social comparisons on offer expectations such that those with high levels of SCO will be more likely to adjust their offer expectancies based on this information, whereas for those with low SCO, the comparisons individuals make will have less bearing on expectancies.

*H12: Social comparisons will interact with social comparison orientation (SCO) in that for those high in SCO, social comparisons will predict offer expectancies (as in H11), whereas for individuals low in SCO, social comparisons will be unrelated to offer expectancies.*

*Amount of knowledge of and contact with other applicants as moderators.*

Depending upon several factors (e.g., stage of the process, organizational preferences, etc.) applicants may vary in their opportunities to collect relevant information about other applicants for certain positions. While earlier it was stated that individuals only require thin slices of information to make judgments, applicants may still draw stronger conclusions based on more information, exacting a greater influence on offer expectancies.

*H13a: Social comparisons will interact with amount of knowledge of other applicants such that for those reporting more knowledge about other applicants, social comparisons will predict offer expectancies to a greater degree than for those who report less knowledge about other applicants.*

Similar to this, contact with other might also moderate this relationship in the same way. As applicants have more contact with others, they gain a better feel for their qualifications as compared to others and their opportunity for success.

*H13b: Social comparisons will interact with amount of contact with other applicants such that for those reporting more contact with other applicants, social comparisons will predict offer expectancies to a greater degree than for those who report less contact with other applicants.*

#### Covariates and Controls

In addition to the variables listed in the preceding hypotheses, several other types of information were collected, although specific hypotheses will not be developed. These included, age, gender, race, experience in the job market, reasons for entering the job market, personality (five factor model), and perceptions of job market opportunities (applicants' perceptions of whether many opportunities exist or whether options are limited).

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHOD

#### Participants

*Power Analysis.* Before acquiring the sample, a power analysis was conducted to determine the sample size desired to observe the expected effects. The primary method for data analysis to be used for this study is structural equation modeling (SEM). Using power analysis to estimate the appropriate sample size for a structural equation model is not as straightforward as it is for more common methods of statistical analysis such as multiple regression or analysis of variance. Kaplan (1995) explained that, while most models have very few parameters, structural equation models have many more parameters and, in principle, power should be identified for each in order to estimate adequate power. Rather, several have suggested minimum sample size or derived estimations as functions of the number of various aspects of the model (e.g., number of variables, parameter estimates, etc.). Garson (n.d.) summarizes several common rules of thumb. For example, the sample size should be at least 50 cases over 8 times the number of variables. Mitchell (1993) suggests 10 to 20 times as many cases as variables. The model in this paper includes 16 latent variables, however each of these has several indicators attached - greatly increasing the number of parameters to be estimated. By both of the above rules of thumb, a minimum sample size should be between 200 to 300 for this study.

*Sample Demographics.* All participants were recruited through an email invite from the Director of a Job Placement Center at a large Southwestern private University.

All of those contacted were students or recent graduates (both undergraduate and graduate degrees) who had recently used the Center's services to search for jobs or to place resumes and interview requests with potential employers. The email was distributed once in May of 2008 and again in December of 2008 garnering 104 and 117 respondents, respectively (Appendix A).

While exact responses frequencies cannot be gathered, the Placement Center estimated that approximately 500 students were contacted at each interval resulting in a response rate of around 23%. Not all participants reported demographic results, such that, the description below applies to the approximately 140-160 participants who reported the information below (of the final sample of 178). The majority (89.4%) of participants were White. Slightly over half of participants were male (54.6%). The average age of the sample was 24.9 ( $SD = 4.5$ ). Participants reported applying to an average of 8.6 jobs ( $SD = 10.1$ ), and also reported having worked for an average of 2.0 ( $SD = 1.7$ ) organizations in their professional career. Participants reported being on average in the early to middle stages of their job search ( $M = 1.8$ ;  $SD = 0.8$ ; on a 3-point scale: 1 = "near the beginning of my search", 2 = "about the middle of my search", and 3 = "near the end of my search"). All participants were actively applying or planning on applying to at least one organization, and each participant was asked to have a specific organization in mind when completing the survey. Approximately 70% of participants indicated choosing their current top job choice as the organization that they would be responding about. Participants were asked to report their status in the application process with this organization; 35% reported that they were interested in applying but had not applied,

27% reported having applied but had not heard anything at that point, 9% reported that the organization had contacted them with an offer to continue in the process but had not yet done this step, and 28% reported having completed at least one stage, but had not yet reached the final stage of the application process. Participants reported having a fairly limited amount of contact with other applicants for the specific job (45% reporting absolutely no contact, 26% reporting a little contact, 22% reporting some contact, and 7% reporting a lot of contact). Finally, 23% of applicants reported that they were currently considering an offer from at least one other organization.

After a three month period following the administration of the initial survey, a follow-up survey was sent to all participants who agreed to be contacted by providing their email address in the first survey (131 in total). Of those, 73 completed the follow-up for a response rate of 56% (Appendix B). Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine whether those that completed the follow-up survey differed on demographic or personal characteristics. The only significant difference was that those who completed the follow-up survey scored slightly higher on the conscientiousness scale (follow-up  $M = 4.01$ ,  $n$  follow-up  $M = 3.87$ ,  $t = -1.62$ ,  $p = .02$ ).

### Design and Procedures

The email invitation asked job applicants to participate in a research study of how individuals perceive organizations that they are applying to and how they make decisions in the workplace (Appendix A). Job applicants could then click on a web link to an online survey hosted by a third-party survey vendor and maintained by the researcher. After reading the online consent form, and agreeing to the terms of the research, the job



applicants were enlisted as participants. In the survey, participants were asked to select an organization that they were currently pursuing and respond to a number of questions related to that organization (discussed below). The participants also completed several individual difference measures (also discussed below). Following the survey, participants were given the option to consent to a short follow-up survey to be administered three months later. They were asked to provide their email address as a signal of consent. Also, as an incentive to participate, participants were given the opportunity to participate in a \$150 random drawing (\$15 each for 10 participants) for each phase of the study (initial survey and follow-up). In compliance with standards of ethical treatment, participants were allowed to end their participation at any time without forfeiting their chances in the random drawing.

In the email invite for the follow-up survey (Appendix B), participants were reminded of their initial consent and were reminded of the organization that they referred to in the initial survey. They were then asked a series of brief follow-up questions concerning the outcome of their initial application, and the pursuit behaviors that they engaged in during the application process for that organization.

### Materials

Survey items fell within two categories, questions about the applicant in general (e.g., job application self-efficacy, social comparison orientation, demographic variables) and questions regarding a specific organization of the participant's choice (e.g., attraction, behavioral intentions). The two categories of questions were counterbalanced

to ensure response biases did not affect the data. The results of the counterbalance are discussed in the first part of the results section.

#### Survey Phase I: Questions About the Applicant

*Self-efficacy.* As self-efficacy is typically thought of as a domain specific construct, items are often very specific to the tasks in question. As I was unable to locate a scale that specifically asked about job-application behaviors (e.g., creating resumes, interviewing skills, etc.), six items were created for this survey. These items centered around an applicant's perception of his or her to ability to be successful in the hiring process of a specific organization. The format of these questions was modeled after those on other job search self-efficacy scales (Ellis & Taylor, 1983; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985). Applicants respond to items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all confident; 7 = completely confident). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .84. A representative question is "Make a positive impression on interviews / recruiters" (Appendix C). These items were averaged for data analysis when not included in a structural equation model.

*Self-comparison orientation (SCO).* This refers to an applicant's tendency to make social comparisons. This study uses Gibbons and Buunk's (1999) 11-item, two factor measure of SCO. The two factors represent "ability", or comparisons of oneself to others along performance dimensions, and "opinions", or sharing and learning opinions of others. Higher numbers indicate that applicants were more likely to compare themselves to others on the given dimension. Participants are asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale. Cronbach's alpha for the two factors was .73 and .84 respectively. The items of

these factors were averaged to create two variables. An example item is, “I always pay a lot of attention to how I do things compared with how others do things” (Appendix D).

*Locus of control.* Locus of control was measured using a scale developed by Rotter (1966). The scale consists of 29 items that pair two opposing statements together asking the participant to choose the statement that best reflects how they view a situation. Each statement reflects either an internal or external locus of control. Participants’ choices are summed to indicate their standing on this dimension (Appendix E). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .69.

*Job search expansion.* Job search expansion behaviors are targeted at widening a search to include additional organizations. Three items were adopted from Horvath and Millard (2009) to examine these behaviors (rated on a 7-point Likert scale). An example item is “I am still looking for other companies that I can apply to” (Appendix F). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .75. These items were averaged for data analysis when not included in a structural equation model.

#### Survey Phase I: Organization Specific Questions

Following the general questions about their job search, personality, and self-efficacy, applicants answered questions about a specific organization to which they were applying but had not yet been offered a position at. For this organization, they responded to the following items.

*Offer expectancies.* Several questions were designed to measure offer expectancies. First, replicating previous research (e.g., Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Horvath & Millard, 2009; Powell, 1991; Thorsteinson & Ryan, 1997), one item asked

participants to indicate the probability that they will be offered a job by the organization (participants chose a probability between 0-100% at intervals of 5 percentage points). In addition, five Likert-type items measure expectancies (rated on a 7-point scale). One of these five was adopted from Gilliland (1994); the others were created for this study (Appendix G). An example item is, "I feel positive about my chances of being offered a job at this organization." To determine the reliability of these items, the probability item was transformed to the same the scale as the 7-point Likert-type items. Following the transformation, Cronbach's alpha was applied to determine the reliability of the items ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

These items were then averaged for data analysis when not included in a structural equation model. To do this, the probability item was transformed to the same scale as the Likert-type items. These data which ranged from 0-20 (0 = 0% and 20 = 100%) were multiplied by .3. This resulted in a 0-6 point scale. I then added 1 to each data-point to match the scale of the other items.

*Job offer acceptance intentions.* Four items examine job offer acceptance intentions. The first was adopted from Powell and Goulet (1996) and asked participants to rate their likelihood of accepting an offer on a scale from 0 to 100 percent. Two other items were borrowed from Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003) and one other was written for this study. An example of one of these items is, "I would accept a job offer from this company" (rated on a 7-point scale) (Appendix H). Again, the first item was transformed to match the scale of the next two items. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was

.84. These items were averaged for data analysis when not included in a structural equation model.

*Organization attraction.* Four items taken from the General Attraction portion of Highhouse et al.'s scale (2003) measure organizational attraction. One other item was written for this study. A representative item is, "A job at this company is very appealing to me" (rated on a 7-point scale) (Appendix I). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .85. These items were averaged for data analysis when not included in the structural equation model.

*Job pursuit intentions.* The job pursuit intentions scale measures applicant intentions to actively pursue an organization above the minimal behaviors required in an application process. These are additional behaviors aimed at increasing an applicant's standing in the application process. To capture this construct, two types of items were developed. The first five items reflect intentions to perform specific behavioral actions, such as sending thank-you cards or notes after interviews, or placing follow-up emails or phone calls. While these behavioral items focus on specific actions, a few limitations are that (1) they may not cover all possible job pursuit behaviors, (2) in some situations these behaviors may not be possible, and (3) applicants may have varying beliefs about the effectiveness of these behaviors. As these items ask about intentions to perform certain behaviors in the future, the time frame of execution was built into the scale as well. Participants were asked about the likelihood of performing these behaviors in the next day, week, and month. Furthermore, to account for applicants who may have completed

these results already (thus reducing the need to re-perform some of the actions), applicants were asked whether they have performed these behaviors recently for this job.

Additionally, five additional items were written to reflect general intentions to pursue the organization (Appendix J). An example is “I will do everything I can to make sure that I am offered this job.” While all five items were used in the study, only four were retained for data analysis. The third item (*I plan on doing only what is required during the application process for this company*) exhibited several problems throughout the analysis. To begin with, during reliability analysis the item-total correlation for this item was .37 and deleting the item would increase the scale reliability by .02. While this in itself is not evidence to remove the item, it continued to be an issue when conducting the structural equation model analyses, and its removal significantly improved model fit in several instances. Looking at the question itself, it becomes apparent why this item may not have operated as intended. As the question is reverse scored, applicants who agreed completely with the question would be admitting that they only intend to do what is required in the process and nothing more or *less*. To be in line with the other items, the opposite of this extreme would require indicating that the applicant required to do *much more* than the application process requires. However, an applicant who answers 1 (*strongly disagree*) could be indicating that they plan to do much more or *much less* than the process requires. Given that job pursuit intent is a pivotal variable in this research, the item was excluded from all future analysis. Cronbach’s alpha for the four items was .80. These four items were averaged for analysis when not included in a structural equation model.

*Information-seeking intentions.* Information-seeking intentions refer to specific behaviors primarily designed to gather information about the organization for the purpose of decision making at a later point. Similar to job pursuit intentions, two types of items were developed—five asking about specific behaviors, such as talking to friends and family about the company or looking up articles online or in magazines, and three additional items written to reflect general intentions to seek out information about the organization (Appendix K). An example is “I do not plan on spending any more time researching this company than I will for others I am applying to. These three items were averaged for analysis when not included in a structural equation model.

*Social comparisons.* Goodman and Haisley (2007) suggested that items intended to capture social comparisons with others should be specific to the tasks in question. Seven items were created that specifically assess an individual’s perceptions of his or her qualifications for and fit with certain jobs. Applicants were asked to describe their position on each item relative to other applicants. An example is “my technical skills in relation to this job” (rated on a 1 to 7 scale, 1 = far below other applicants; 7 = far above other applicants). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .91. These items were averaged for analysis when not included in a structural equation model (Appendix L).

*Contact with other applicants.* A scale was designed to determine the overall level of contact or exposure that applicants had to other applicants in the same job pool. Four items were developed for this purpose. The first item simply states, “How much contact have you had with other applicants?” This was rated on a 4-point scale (“absolutely no contact” to “a lot of contact”). The next three items ask applicants about their interactions

with other applicants and were rated on a 7-point scale (“strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). An example item is “I have interacted at length with others who are currently applying for the same job that I am applying for.” The first item was transformed to match the 7-point scale of the other three. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .81. These four items were averaged for analysis when not included in a structural equation model (Appendix L).

*Knowledge of other applicants.* Additionally, applicants were asked about their level of knowledge about applicant qualifications and characteristics. Applicants were asked to rate their level of knowledge of other applicants across several dimensions (e.g., level of job experience, technical skills, level of expertise, etc.). (Appendix L). These items were averaged for analysis when not included in a structural equation model. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .93.

*Selection stage.* Applicants reported the stage they were at with the organization they mentioned (Horvath & Millard, 2009). Five different applicant stages were identified: Pre-application, immediate post-application, invitation to continue in the process, completed at least one step after initial application but haven’t reached final stage, completed the final step but haven’t yet received a job offer. To explain each stage more fully, applicants were provided with a brief description of what is included at each stage. For example, for the Pre-application stage: You are interested in applying to this organization but haven’t yet put in an application) (Appendix M).

*Perceptions of other job offers.* Hypothesis 10 asked about perceptions of organizations that applicants may be entertaining offers from. These perceptions fall into



two categories: attraction of the “other” organization (four items adapted from Highhouse et al.; 2003), and intentions to accept the offer (three items created for this study). For organizational attraction, Cronbach’s alpha was .84. For acceptance intentions, two of the items were rated on a 7-point scale. An example of one of these items is, “I am strongly considering turning down this offer to pursue other opportunities” (reverse scored).” The other item asked the respondent to indicate the probability of accepting this other offer. (Appendix N). Following data transformations to standardize the scales, Cronbach’s alpha for these items was low ( $\alpha = .63$ ). Despite this, the data were averaged for data analysis.

*Demographic and individual difference information.* Applicants were asked to report demographic information including gender, race, age, and the number of years of job experience they have. In addition, applicants were given a self-esteem scale and a personality scale based on the Big Five dimensions of personality (rated on a 1 to 7 scale, 1 = far below other applicants; 7 = far above other applicants). The self-esteem scale, developed by Rosenberg (1965), asks individuals to rate the degree to which 10 statements describe themselves on a 4-point scale. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree). An example item is, “I feel that I have a number of good qualities” (Appendix O). The Big Five personality scale, developed by John, Donahue, and Kettle (1990) consists of 44 adjectives that participants rate according to descriptiveness of themselves on a 5-point scale of (“Disagree Strongly” to “Agree strongly”) (Appendix P). The reliability coefficients for the five dimensions on this scale were  $\alpha = .89$ (Extraversion),  $\alpha = .81$  (Conscientiousness),  $\alpha = .79$  (Openness to

experience),  $\alpha = .78$  (Agreeableness). Finally, applicants were asked one question regarding their progress in their own job search (e.g., near the beginning vs. near the end) as well as three questions regarding their perception of the opportunities currently available in the job market ( $\alpha = .78$ ) (Appendix Q). All personality items were averaged on their respective scales.

#### Survey Phase II: Follow-up to Organization Specific Questions

The primary purpose of the second phase was to provide behavioral evidence of the outcomes from Phase I. Participants were given the name of the organization that they responded about in the first survey. They were then asked about the outcome of that application (offered and accepted, offered and turned down, not offered). Lastly, they were asked about the job pursuit and information-seeking behaviors that they performed in relation to the job in question (Appendix S).

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESULTS

#### Data Cleaning and Preparation

The initial sample included 221 participants. From this sample, 42 were immediately eliminated for submitting partial results (e.g., only answering a page or two of the survey), or for answering questions in a way that showed that they were clearly not following directions or may have misunderstood the intent of the survey. For example, when asked to type the name of an organization that they were applying to, the participant left the space blank. Following this, the data were examined to eliminate any univariate or multivariate outliers. One case was removed for violating conditions of multivariate normality. This case had a Mahalanobis distance score of 49.75 (critical  $X^2 = 43.920$ ,  $p = .001$ ) Based on this criteria, the decision was made to eliminate this case from the final sample. Following the elimination of this case, multivariate statistics were reviewed again, resulting in no new outliers identified. This process resulted in a final total sample size of 178.

Next, I analyzed the skew and kurtosis of the data, and found that for four of the organizational attraction items (1-4) the data were extremely negatively skewed with high levels of kurtosis. I conducted a logarithmic transformation ( $\log_{10}$ ) after subtracting each data point from eight (one point above the largest scale point). This transformation was critical, especially given the high correlation of organizational attraction with the key outcomes of the study (job pursuit intentions,  $r = .66$ ; and information-seeking intentions,

$r = .67$ ). The transformation resulted in within range skewness and kurtosis values for all transformed variables.

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 contains means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities (where appropriate) for all variables included in the study. An initial look at these data provides a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the sample. Of particular interest are the general trends of the participants in relation to the key variables of the study. Job offer expectancies in general were somewhat above the midpoint ( $M = 4.9$  out of 7;  $SD = 1.13$ ). These expectancies were positively correlated with participants' reports of receiving job-offers from the same organization in the follow-up survey ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). Organizational attraction and job offer acceptance intentions were also positive (organizational attraction,  $M = 5.9$  out of 7,  $SD = .95$ ; acceptance intentions,  $M = 5.9, SD = 1.0$ ).

Concerning job pursuit and information seeking intentions, the reader will recall that two kinds of scales were used to collect these data. The first was a general scale of intentions which yielded fairly positive results for both job pursuit intentions ( $M = 4.8$  out of 7,  $SD = 1.2$ ; and information seeking,  $M = 5.2, SD = 1.1$ ). The second set of scales asked about specific behaviors that the applicant may engage in. Furthermore, participants were asked to indicate the time-frame that they intended to complete each behavior (i.e., next day, week, and month) and whether they had performed this behavior recently. Upon analysis of the data, several concerns were uncovered relating to the reliability of these items. Because of this, these data were not included in any subsequent

analysis. The rationale behind the decision to drop these data is found in the discussion section.

In the follow-up survey, participants provided self-report data pertaining to their completion of pursuit and information-seeking behaviors for the same organization that they responded to in the initial survey. For the 72 participants that completed the follow-up survey, the overall mean score on the pursuit behaviors on a 1-3 scale was 1.55 ( $SD = .50$ ); indicating that in general, individuals were unlikely to report completing these specific job pursuit behaviors. The highest rated of the four was talking to someone who worked at the company and asking them to put in a good word ( $M = 1.74$ ). Similarly, for information-seeking behaviors the overall mean was 1.86 ( $SD = .52$ ). Two of the five information-seeking behaviors had averages over the mid-point: reading the organization's website ( $M = 2.36$ ) and talking to friends and family for more information about the organization ( $M = 2.07$ ). Participants had generally positive intentions to expand their job search ( $M = 5.53$  on a 7-point scale,  $SD = 1.23$ ). Job search expansion intentions also showed a slight negatively correlated with overall perceptions of opportunities in the job market ( $M = 3.75$  on a 7-point scale,  $SD = 1.49$ ). Finally, participants displayed overall high levels of self esteem ( $M = 3.26$  on a 4-point scale,  $SD = 0.47$ ) and self-efficacy to perform well in the selection process ( $M = 5.60$  on a 7-point scale,  $SD = 0.77$ ).

### Analytical Methodology

Two primary methods of data analysis were utilized for this study. First, structural equation modeling was employed where sample sizes were large enough. This method

was selected because of several advantages present when modeling interactions with latent variables. As Marsh, Wen, and Hau (2004) point out, when a variable is represented by multiple indicators, researchers often fail to find support for interactions because of the effects of measurement error. Structural equation modeling is able to account for measurement error to allow for a cleaner modeling of interactions. They also point out that applications of this technique in applied research are relatively rare—most likely due to difficulties in model specification and the manipulation of non-linear constraints that deter many researchers. They provide a methodology (they named the ‘unconstrained approach’) that simplifies the testing of interactions in structural equation models and reduces the need for most non-linear constraints. Their approach includes two key elements. A ‘non-overlapping’ approach to matching indicators for creating interaction terms (this will be discussed in more detail when describing the results for the interactions) and the inclusion of a mean structure. Furthermore their approach tends to perform better under conditions of non-normality than other approaches and is more easily specified. More recently, Coenders, Batista-Foguet, and Saris (2008) simplified the approach even more. In a Monte-Carlo analysis comparing several interaction specification approaches, they show that an unconstrained approach that matches items in an identical way to Marsh et al.’s (2004) approach, but that excludes a mean structure and even a single non-linear constraint that Marsh et al. include, is sufficient to test moderation. Furthermore, they show that this approach can be applied in ‘complex’ structural equation models that include both direct and indirect effects on the outcome.

This approach was adopted for this study. All SEM analyses were conducted using the EQS statistical software package (Bentler, 2002).

Where structural equation modeling was not appropriate, analyses were conducted using multiple regression techniques (i.e., analyses related to the follow-up survey).

### Outcomes of Offer Expectancies

The outcomes of job offer expectancies hypothesized in this study (job pursuit & information seeking) were examined at two levels: intentions (all “a” hypotheses) and behaviors (all “b” hypotheses). The analyses below are organized such that first all “a” hypotheses—those relating to the general intentions measure—are discussed, followed by all “b” hypotheses—those relating to the self-report data of actual behaviors. This was done because the analytical approach for “a” and “b” hypotheses differed (structural equation modeling for all “a” hypotheses and multiple regression for all “b” hypotheses).

*Job pursuit and information-seeking intentions (H1a & H2a).* Before creating a structural model to examine these hypotheses, I first created a measurement model (Table 2: Model 1). The measurement model consisted of latent factors that represent all data elements including interaction terms (see Table 3 for all list of all factors). For locus of control, rather than using all 29 items, I created six item parcels. This was done so that it would be possible to model the interaction of offer expectancies (which contains six items) and locus of control in a subsequent analysis. The parcels were created following the instructions of Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman (2002). Specifically, an exploratory analysis using promax rotation was conducted to determine the factor loadings of each item. After sorting the items from greatest to least according to their

loadings, the items were added to six parcels in a *serpentine* pattern, meaning that the highest loading items were added first, followed by the next highest in reverse order, and the next highest in forward order again, and continue in this way until each parcel had 4 items. I then transformed the reverse scored items and created parcels by calculating the mean of each set of item for each participant. A benefit of this approach was that it created normally distributed items appropriate for the Maximum Likelihood estimation approach used in the structural equation model in this analysis.

The measurement model created a baseline by which to compare the other models to. The model, which converged in 10 iterations, had poor overall fit. The Chi Square value of the model was  $X^2 = 1419.62$ ,  $p < .001$  ( $df = 667$ ). As suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), comparative and residual-based fit indices were also examined. The CFI, which examines the compares the fit of the model to the independence model (a model that assumes all variables are unrelated), was .754. This was substantially lower than the suggested minimum of .95. The RMSEA, which estimates the fit of the model-implied against projections for the population was .087 (90% confidence interval = .080 and .093). Browne and Cudeck (1993) indicate that an acceptable value for this index should be below .08, with the lower and upper limits of the confidence interval falling between .05 and .10 respectively. The model showed unacceptable fit according to this index. Finally, another residual fit index, the SRMR compares the parameter estimates of the model-implied to the sample. Typical Guidelines for this index are that SRMR should be below .05 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007)). This model yielded a large



coefficient of .084—outside of acceptable bounds. Overall Model 1 did not appear to fit the data very well.

A structural equation model was then created to examine the hypotheses associated with outcomes derived from the general intentions measure. In this model, latent factors representing job-pursuit behaviors and information-seeking behaviors were regressed on job offer expectancies, organizational attraction, locus of control, and self-efficacy.

After the creation of latent variables, the disturbances for the endogenous variables were correlated, forming a partially recursive model. Before beginning model comparisons, it made sense to look at those items that were negatively scored in the measure to determine if a response bias might account for some of the error. The first test was conducted by comparing a model with the covariance between the error terms for offer expectancy item #3 and organizational attraction #2 constrained to zero with a model that allowed the covariance to be freely estimated. The difference between the constrained and the unconstrained model ( $X^2 = 51.18$ ,  $df = 1$ ) was significant at the  $p < .001$  level, statistically justifying inclusion. Following this, a second constraint was examined. The same justification was provided for the two negatively scored items on the job pursuit intentions scale (#4 and #5) and one negatively scored item on the information seeking item. Again, the difference was highly significant ( $X^2 = 86.66$ ,  $df = 3$ ) at the  $p < .001$  level.

Investigating the model further revealed some areas for possible improvement. While organizational attraction and job offer expectancies were strong predictors of the

dependent variables, locus of control and self-efficacy showed weak direct relationships. Thinking more deeply about these variables provided a possible suggestion about reorganizing the model. Specifically, self-efficacy measures the extent to which applicants feel they can perform successfully on the application hurdles to be offered a position with the company. So it would make sense that self-efficacy would more likely have a direct influence on hiring expectancies than on job pursuance or information seeking intentions and behaviors. I conducted a Lagrange Multiplier test, which looks for parameters that could be added to the model to enhance fit, and found that a direct path between self-efficacy and offer expectancies would reduce the Chi-Square by 28.75, a highly significant difference. Additionally, the Wald test, which determines if any paths should be constrained to equal zero, suggested that all paths between the factors representing locus of control and self-efficacy to the dependent variables be removed. Given that the parameter estimates were very low for each of these items and neither variable was expected to have a direct effect on job pursuit and information seeking intentions, this was justified. Furthermore, because locus of control was no longer predicting any other variables in the model, it was removed completely.

Model 2 converged in seven iterations with no special problems encountered during optimization (Figure 2). The fit of the model improved substantially over Model 1, but still failed to meet several of the minimum thresholds ( $X^2 = 458.14$ ,  $df = 242$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .907$ ,  $SRMR = .102$ , and  $RMSEA = .077$  (.066-.088)). This model, while not fitting the data extremely well, highlighted some interesting findings with regards to the hypotheses. To begin with, Hypothesis 1a and 2a were supported as I observed a

significant direct effect of job offer expectancies on both job pursuit intentions (standardized coefficient for direct effect = .348,  $p < .05$ ) and information-seeking intentions (standardized coefficient for direct effect = .226,  $p < .05$ ). In both cases, the greater the expectancy of an offer, the more likely the applicant was to indicate intentions to pursue or seek more information about the organization. Furthermore, this effect persisted even with the very strong direct effect of organizational attraction on both dependent variables (standardized coefficient for direct effect on job pursuit intentions = .596,  $p < .05$ ; and standardized coefficient for direct effect on information-seeking intentions = .749,  $p < .05$ ).

The next interesting finding was the indirect effect of self-efficacy on both job pursuit and information-seeking intentions. While this was not hypothesized, a plausible post-hoc explanation coupled with compelling information from both the Lagrange Multiplier and Wald tests, justifies this alternative model. The standardized coefficient for self-efficacy on offer expectancies was .491,  $p < .05$ . The indirect effect of self-efficacy on job pursuit and information seeking intentions is determined by multiplying this coefficient by the direct effect of expectancies on each dependent variable resulting in a standardized indirect effect of .171 ( $p < .05$ ) on job pursuit intentions and .111 ( $p < .05$ ) on information-seeking intentions. As self-efficacy had a positive zero-order correlation with both outcomes variables, and the direct paths to the outcome variables were not significant in the structural equation model, the effect of self-efficacy on each variable appears to be fully mediated by offer expectancies.

Having developed a satisfactorily parsimonious model for the direct effects of offer expectancy, the next step was to begin analysis of the moderators of this relationship. Conducting these analyses requires the creation of a new latent factor that represents the product of the two interacting variables with multiple indicators. Marsh et al. (2004) suggested a ‘matched pairs’ approach when choosing indicators to represent this new factor. Specifically, each indicator on the first-order factor is matched with one indicator from the second order factor, using each item only once. The decision on which items to match was made by pairing the highest loading factors from each item, and continuing with the next highest until all items were utilized. While traditionally one might expect a proper interaction to include a calculation of all items on the first factor with all items on the second factor, Marsh et al. showed that using each item only once in a matched pairs manner would greatly simplify the specification of the model and improve the likelihood of convergence without risking the opportunity to observe effects, especially if each scale had at least three items to pair, and the items loaded adequately on the factor.

For some hypotheses, the number of indicators on the first-order factor was greater than the number on the second order factor. In these situations, Marsh et al. suggest two techniques: (1) matching the best indicators from each factor (based on factor loadings) and trimming the remaining indicators or (2) parceling indicators (by computing means) into single indicators, thus retaining more information about a variable (Hau & Marsh, 2004). In most of the hypotheses in this study, indicator counts are relatively similar for factors, thus the first strategy was used - trimming the least related

indicators where necessary. For locus of control, which has 29 indicators, the parceling strategy was used according to the guidelines outlined in Hau and Marsh (2004).

*Moderating effect of organizational attraction on intentions (H3a & H4a).* The first moderator to be examined is organizational attraction (H3a and H4a). To test this hypothesis I include an additional latent factor in the model that represented the interaction (Model 3). Three indicators were loaded onto the factor—representing the products of the highest loading organizational attraction items and offer expectancy items. The model converged in 10 iterations (with no special problems being observed), and did not fit the data very well ( $X^2 = 719.55$ ,  $df = 363$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .867$ ,  $SRMR = .102$ , and  $RMSEA = .081$  (.072-.089) (Figure 3).

Neither of the direct paths between the interaction term and the dependent variables were significant (standardized coefficient for job pursuit intentions = .006,  $p > .05$ ; standardized coefficient for information-seeking intentions = .057,  $p > .05$ ). Thus, Hypotheses 3a and 4a were not supported.

*Moderating effect of locus of control on intentions (H5a).* Hypothesis 5a suggested that locus of control would interact with hiring expectancies in predicting job pursuit intentions (an interaction on information-seeking intentions was not hypothesized). Recall that locus of control exhibited no direct effect on job pursuit intentions. Furthermore, it was not related to job offer expectancies. Nonetheless, as a crossed-interaction pattern could negate a direct effect it was necessary to test for this effect. As mentioned earlier, to test locus of control, three of the parcels were matched with the highest loading offer expectancy variables scale for product term creation. These

were then represented as a latent factor in the model (in which the direct effect path for locus of control was re-instated) (Model 4). The model converged in seven iterations with no special problems occurring during optimization (Figure 4). Overall fit for the model was poor ( $X^2 = 928.97$ ,  $df = 580$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .867$ ,  $SRMR = .092$ , and  $RMSEA = .064$  (.056-.071). The direct path between the interaction term and the dependent variables was not significant (standardized coefficient for job pursuit intentions = 0.051,  $p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 5a was not supported.

*Moderating effect of Self-efficacy on intentions (H6a and H7a).* Hypotheses 6a and 7a suggested an interaction of job application self-efficacy with offer expectancies. Above, I described how self-efficacy was reconceptualized as an antecedent of offer expectancies in the structural equation model. However, even with this adjustment the opportunity for self-efficacy to act as a moderator still exists. Model 5 included a latent variable that represented self-efficacy. Upon initially running the model, the error variance of the first interaction item was constrained at the lower bound. In order to allow the model to converge without this issue, the loading for the constraint was set to .95, solving the issue. This model, which converged in fifteen iterations, also showed poor overall fit with the data ( $X^2 = 863.82$ ,  $df = 392$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .822$ ,  $SRMR = .104$ , and  $RMSEA = .090$  (.081-.097) (Figure 5). Neither of the direct paths between the interaction term and the dependent variables were significant (standardized coefficient for job pursuit intentions = -.022,  $p > .05$ ; standardized coefficient for information-seeking intentions = .018,  $p > .05$ ). Thus, Hypotheses 6a and 7a were not supported.

*Moderating effect of selection stage on intentions (H8a and H9a).* Hypotheses 8a and 9a suggested that selection stage will act as a moderator of hiring expectancies and job pursuit and information seeking behaviors. Unlike the other moderator analyses, these tests were conducted using standard regression techniques rather than SEM. While, SEM can be a simple and effective technique to analyze models with categorical variables, the low sample sizes that would occur by breaking the analysis into groups was cause for concern (for stage 1,  $N = 62$ , for stage 2,  $N = 48$ , for stage 3,  $N = 16$  and subsequently was be dropped from analysis, and for stage 4,  $N = 50$ ).

To test this hypothesis, I created dummy variables to represent selection stages 2 (immediately post application) and 4 (completed at least one step) - as mentioned above, stage 3 was skipped. There was no need to create a dummy variable for selection stage 1 because, by design, both stages 2 and 3 are equal to zero when stage 1 is indicated. Thus, in the model, the intercept becomes the true mean of stage 1 on the dependent variable. Using a two-step regression approach, I entered the dummy variables representing stages 2 and 4, and offer expectancies (centered) into step 1 of the model. This allowed me to test the main effect of each stage on the dependent variable against the intercept (stage 1). The overall model at step 1 was significant ( $R^2 = .074$ ,  $F = 4.18$ ,  $p = .007$ ). However, neither stage 2 nor stage 4 had significantly different main effects on the dependent variable than that of stage 1 (Table 5). Only offer expectancy was a predictor ( $B = .298$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In Step 2 of the regression analysis, two interaction terms were entered: the interaction of stage 2 and 4 with offer expectancies. The addition of stage 2 improved the multiple  $R^2$  of the model significantly ( $F\Delta = 3.503$ ,  $p = .033$ ). In this step, the interaction

of Stage 4 and offer expectancies was significant (Figure 6). This interaction was in the general direction of the hypothesis in that for those in the stage 1 (pre-application), offer expectancies showed essentially no relationship with job pursuit intentions ( $B = -.006$ ). Rather, the relatively high baseline of  $M = 5.2$  was sustained at different levels of offer expectancy. For stage 2 (post-application), the slope did not significantly differ from that of stage 1 across levels of offer expectancy ( $B = .315$ ). However, for stage 4 (completed at least one step in the process), the slope of change for selection stage at varying levels of offer expectancies was significantly different from stage 1 ( $B = .556$ ). Specifically, as offer expectancies increased, so did job pursuit intentions.

The same analysis was conducted for information-seeking behaviors. However, Step 2 of this analysis was not significant, suggesting that a similar interaction as that found above does not exist. Hypothesis 9a is not supported.

*Job pursuit and information-seeking behaviors (H1b & H2b).* Having reported the analyses for the intentions measure, I now turn to the analysis of the job pursuit and information-seeking *behaviors*. Due to the number of participants that completed the follow-up survey ( $N = 72$ ), multiple regression techniques were used rather than structural equation modeling.

The first question to address is whether each behavioral item should be treated as a unique dependent variable or whether the items should be pooled according to the hypothesized constructs (items *a* through *d* averaged to indicate pursuit behaviors, items *e* through *i* were averaged to indicate information seeking behaviors)(Appendix Q). To explore this question, I first examined the reliability of the two factors. For job pursuit



behaviors, Cronbach's alpha was very low (.61), whereas for information-seeking behaviors Cronbach's alpha was acceptable (.81). I then submitted the data to an exploratory principal axis factor analysis with promax rotation to determine if the data would replicate the hypothesized structure. This analysis resulted in three components with Eigenvalues over 1 (component 1 = 3.61; component 2 = 1.50; component 3 = 1.10; and component 4 = .76), however an analysis of the Scree Plot, seemed to indicate that two factors might be more appropriate, as the value of the difference between the second and third factor was very similar to that of the third and fourth. An examination of the pattern matrix indicated that all five information-seeking behaviors loaded on the first component (item  $g$  = .85; item  $h$  = .71, item  $i$  = .67, item  $f$  = .66, and item  $e$  = .48), three of the job-pursuit behaviors loaded on the second component (item  $b$  = .85, item  $c$  = .68, item  $a$  = .43), and the final job pursuit item loaded on the third factor (item  $d$  = .85). I then reran the analysis; this time limited the number of factors to be extracted to two. After this attempt, component 1 again contained all five information-seeking items and the fourth job-pursuit item. However, the loading for this last item was very low (component 1: item  $g$  = .81, item  $f$  = .74, item  $i$  = .68, item  $h$  = .66, and item  $d$  = .32; component 2: item  $b$  = .84, item  $c$  = .80, item  $a$  = .30). It was clear that forcing the items to load on two components did not justify the analysis. Based on these two attempts, I decided to drop item  $d$  from the analysis and rerun the model without limiting the number of factors that could be extracted. This time, two components emerged with Eigenvalues greater than 1 (Component 1 = 3.38 and Component 2 = 1.50). Furthermore, the Scree Plot justified a two-model approach. The pattern matrix revealed that the five

information-seeking items loaded on the first component (item  $g = .82$ ; item  $f = .70$ , item  $i = .67$ , item  $h = .67$ , and item  $e = .53$ ), and the three remaining job pursuit behaviors loaded on the second component (item  $b = .91$ , item  $c = .69$ , item  $a = .33$ ). This model provided some justification for combining the job pursuit items after excluding the fourth item. A closer look at the item may provide a clue as to why it did not seem to operate in the hypothesized manner. The item reads, “Talked to others who work at the company or know someone who does, and asked them to put in a good word for you.” First, the other pursuit items (sending thank-you cards, phoning or emailing decision makers) imply direct contact with the decision makers, whereas this item may imply a less direct route to the decision maker. Second, the item seems to be double-loaded in that it may be interpreted to contain elements of both information-seeking and job pursuit behaviors.

Given all of this information, the decision was made to treat the first three job-pursuit items as a single construct (this change resulted in a somewhat improved, but still low Cronbach’s alpha of  $.65$ ), and the five information-seeking items as a separate construct. Furthermore, as I believe that each of the behaviors may have merit as individual indicators, I will conduct separate analyses for each item independently.

H1b and H2b suggested that job offer expectancies will predict the likelihood for job applicants to engage in job pursuit behaviors and information-seeking behaviors. First, I examined the zero-order correlations between offer expectancy and all 11 dependent variables (the two aggregate variables representing each construct and the nine individual items). Of the 11, only the second job pursuit item (“Made follow-up phone calls with decision-makers to offer more information about yourself”) was significantly

correlated with job offer expectancies ( $r = .33$ ). I conducted a standard multiple regression analysis to determine the effect of job offer expectancies on this item. In the first step of the model, I entered self-efficacy and top choice (an item asking whether or not the company they are referring is currently their top choice) as covariates, as both had a significant positive correlation with the dependent variable. Step 1 resulted significant multiple  $R^2$  value ( $R^2 = .359$ ,  $F = 5.186$ ,  $p = .008$ ). In step 2, job offer expectancy was introduced to the model. The inclusion of job offer expectancy increased the overall  $R^2$  by .057 to  $R^2 = .186$ , a significant increase in the overall prediction value of the model ( $F\Delta = 4.802$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The unstandardized regression coefficient for offer expectancy of  $B = .147$  indicates that an increase of 1 on the 7-point job offer expectancy will result in an increased likelihood of an applicant phoning the company to provide more information about themselves by .147 on the measure's 3-point scale, a modest, but significant impact. Given this finding, H1b was partially supported, however H2b was not supported. Further all other hypotheses dealing with information-seeking behaviors and the remaining job pursuit behaviors will not be tested (i.e., H4b, H7b, and H8b).

Having established a main effect for only 1 of the 9 behaviors items and 2 composite variables, I then proceeded to test the proposed interactions with this dependent variable.

*Moderating effect of organizational attraction on behaviors (H3b & H4b).* To complete the interaction test for organizational attraction and job offer expectancies, I built on the two-step model used in the analysis for H1b by adding a main effect for organizational attraction in step 2, and the interaction of offer expectancies and

organization attraction in step 3 (both items were mean centered before the product of the two was calculated) (Table 4). Unfortunately, step 3 of the model was not significant and the hypothesized interaction was not observed. Thus, H3b and H4b were not supported.

*Moderating effect of locus of control as behaviors (H5b).* H5 suggested that locus of control would moderate the relationship between job offer expectancies and job pursuit behaviors (but not information seeking behaviors). To examine this, I completed the same steps in the above paragraph, except this time using the composite variable representing locus of control in step 2 (Table 4). At this step, there was no main effect for locus of control or offer expectancies on the dependent variable. The interaction term, added in step 3 was not significant either. Therefore, H5b is not supported.

*Moderating effect of self-efficacy on behaviors (H6b and H7b).* For H6, in step 2, only the main effect for offer expectancy was added, as self-efficacy was included in step 1 as a covariate. Step 3, which included the interaction term, was non-significant. H6b was not supported. Furthermore, as with earlier analyses, because of the insignificant relationship between hiring expectancies and information seeking behaviors, H7b was not supported.

*Moderating effect of selection-stage on behaviors (H8b and H9b).* Earlier, when discussing Hypotheses 8a and 9a, I described a two-step regression analysis that included dummy coding to analyze the categorical by continuous interaction suggested by this hypothesis. The same analysis was conducted for the follow-up data set using the self-report measure of job pursuit and information-seeking behaviors. However, none of the

analyses that were conducted resulted in a significant *step 2* (the step containing the interaction terms). Hypotheses 8b and 9b were not supported.

*Job offer expansion (H10).* H10 applied to those that indicated that they currently had a job offer from another organization. Of interest was determining the effect of the presence of an offer on an applicant's acceptance intentions. Specifically, I predicted an interaction between offer expectancies and the difference in attraction of the offered position over the possible offer, such that if the preference for the possible job over the offered job was large, applicants' offer expectancies would have a stronger effect on intentions to turn down the other offer. Whereas, if the difference is small or if the offered job is preferred to the possible job offer, offer expectancies of the possible organization may have a small effect on likelihood of turning down the offer. To test this hypothesis, I first limited the sample to those who had then indicated that they had already received an offer from another organization ( $N = 42$ ). I then ran a two-step multiple regression (Table 6). As the dependent variable I entered "self-selection", which was calculated by taking the inverse of the participants' indicated likelihood to accept the offer that was on the table. In step 1, self-selection was regressed on offer expectancies and the average difference in attraction between the two offers (attraction of the possible offer – attraction of the proposed offer). The multiple  $R^2$  in this step was significant ( $R^2 = .356$ ,  $F = 10.21$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The difference measure for organizational attraction was the primary driver for this effect at this step ( $B = 2.647$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that those that regarding the possible offer much higher than the proposed offer were much more likely to indicate intentions to turn down the proposed offer. Offer expectancy had little effect

on the dependent variable at this step. In the next, step the interaction between the two IVs was included. This interaction added virtually no predictive value to the model ( $B = .005$ ). Thus, hypothesis 10 was not supported.

### Antecedents of Offer Expectancies

I now turn to the analysis of the hypothesized antecedents of job offer expectancies. All of these analyses were completed using structural equation modeling. The primary relationship in this set of hypotheses is the direct relationship between social comparisons and job offer expectancies (H11). As before, I first built a measurement model to examine the baseline tendencies of the data (Table 2: Model 7). This model had poor overall fit ( $X^2 = 2054.64$ ,  $df = 1270$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .794$ ,  $SRMR = .078$ , and  $RMSEA = .066$  (.060-.071)).

Next, I built a model that included all of the direct effects to be examined during the antecedent analysis (social comparison orientation, perceived knowledge of other applicants, and amount of contact with other applicants). In addition, I included self-efficacy in this analysis as, during the outcome analysis, it was discovered that self-efficacy worked much better as an antecedent to offer expectancies than as a covariate. This model, which converged in nine iterations, had an overall Chi-square of 1060.51 ( $df = 694$ ). In this model, Social Comparison orientation was represented by two first-order latent factors. A second-order factor representing the overall construct was regressed on the first order factors. Additionally, two latent factors representing perceived knowledge of other applicants and contact with other applicants were included, all with direct paths to job offer expectancies.

Before accepting the model, which had poor overall fit, I conducted the Lagrange multiplier test to determine if the releasing of any constraints could optimize the fit of the model. These parameters could be then be released, given the reader accepts a post-hoc explanation for their release. The only justifiable constraint to be released was a path between the latent factor representing self-efficacy and that of social comparisons. This makes fairly obvious theoretical sense, as it one could assume that perceptions of ability to perform well in the application process are very similar to perceptions of how you compare to others in the process. I chose to display this as a correlation rather than as a causal path, as I did not have strong theoretical justification for a path in either direction. Following the inclusion of this path in the model, the overall Chi-Square was reduced by 31.438 with the loss of 1 degree of freedom, an improvement significant at the .001 level (threshold value was 10.83). As for the direct effects in the model, the second-order latent factor representing social comparison orientation had almost no effect on job offer expectancies (standardize coefficient = .034,  $p > .05$ ). As such I eliminated this parameter from the model. Being that social comparison orientation was not connected with any other parameters in the model, I removed all of these items, thus freeing up 350 degrees of freedom.

The redefined model converged in seven iterations ( $X^2 = 563.90$ ,  $df = 344$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .907$ ,  $SRMR = .086$ , and  $RMSEA = .067$  (.057-.076)) (Model 7; Figure 7). In support of hypothesis 11, social comparisons had a positive, significant effect on the dependent variable (standardized coefficient for direct effect = .301,  $p < .05$ ). as expected

efficacy also had a significant effect (standardized coefficient for direct effect = .343,  $p < .05$ ). No other variables had a significant effect on offer expectancies.

*Moderating effect of social comparison orientation (H12).* As explained earlier, social comparison orientation had almost no direct effect on offer expectancies. Nonetheless, I ran the analysis because in the instance of true crossed-interactions, variables with insignificant direct effects can still function as moderators, (Model 8; Figure 8). In this model, I created two latent variables representing the interaction of each component of social comparison orientation with social comparisons. This model fit the data rather poorly ( $X^2 = 948.63$ ,  $df = 585$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .838$ ,  $SRMR = .079$ , and  $RMSEA = .066$  (.058-.078)). Furthermore, the effects of the interactions were not significant (standardized coefficient for SCO factor 1 = .050, .040).

*Moderating effect of knowledge of other applicants (H13a).* H13a examines the effect of perceived knowledge of other applicants on social comparisons and offer expectancies. Similar to the moderation analyses earlier, this analysis was completed by using a latent variable to represent the interaction term, with items that were created by mean centering and multiple indicators from each variable. This model (Model 9; Figure 9) converged in six iterations, and did not fit the data very well ( $X^2 = 639.35$ ,  $df = 370$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .886$ ,  $SRMR = .080$ , and  $RMSEA = .071$  (.057-.076)). Furthermore, the direct path of the interaction term on offer expectancies was not significant (standardized coefficient of the direct effect = .100,  $P > .05$ ). Thus, hypothesis 13a was not supported.

*Moderating effect of contact with other applicants (H13b).* H13b is similar to the hypothesis above as it is expected that the amount of contact an applicant had with other



applicants would moderate the relationship between social comparisons and expectancies. Model 10, which included the latent variable representing this interaction, converged in seven iterations with fairly poor fit (Figure 10). ( $X^2 = 639.35$ ,  $df = 370$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $CFI = .886$ ,  $SRMR = .080$ , and  $RMSEA = .071$  (.057-.076)). Again, the interaction was not significant (standardized coefficient of the direct effect =  $-.032$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

### Job Search Expansion Intentions

Following the formal analysis of hypotheses, I proposed *Research Question 1* to examine the role of job search expansion intentions among the rest of the data. To begin with, an examination of the correlation table reveals several interesting relationships. For example, job search expansion intentions exhibited significant zero-order correlations with stage of search ( $-.38$ ), offer expectancies ( $-.29$ ), whether or not a job was actually offered ( $-.32$ ), and both contact with and knowledge of other applicants ( $-.35$  and  $-.31$  respectively). No clear argument for post-hoc analysis is evident from the above pattern of relationships.

### Other Findings

Besides the hypotheses, there were a few other interesting findings worth noting. As part of the study, several other individual difference data were collected including a five factor personality scale and a self-esteem measure. An examination of the correlation table revealed some interesting findings. First, extraversion was positively related to most of the variables of interest in the study (offer expectancies:  $r = .21$ , job pursuit intentions,  $r = .25$ , information-seeking intentions  $r = .24$ , social comparisons:  $r = .23$ , and self-

efficacy:  $r = .37$ ). Second, conscientiousness was also correlated with several items including job pursuit intentions:  $r = .27$ , information-seeking intentions,  $r = .35$ ; self-efficacy,  $r = .19$ . Finally, self-esteem showed a similar pattern of results (offer expectancies,  $r = .16$ ; job pursuit intentions,  $r = .16$ ; information-seeking intentions,  $r = .19$ , social comparisons,  $r = .25$ ). While in-depth post-hoc analysis will not be performed with these variables, it is apparent that personality factors might play a part in determining expectations and intentions during the application process.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION

This study was designed to provide new thinking and findings related to the construct of job offer expectancies. Specifically, I attempted to establish a relationship between offer expectancies and specific behavioral intentions and actions, and moderations of these relationships. This was accomplished with some success, although only a small of portion of the moderation analyses were supported. Furthermore, I attempted to identify social comparisons as a critical antecedent of offer expectancies and to identify potential moderators of this relationship as well. Again, I was successful in showing this direct relationship, but was not able to find support for many of the moderators hypothesized to affect this relationship.

Offer expectancies, the central construct of this study, were related to variables in a manner consistent with that suggested by previous research, providing evidence that the measure developed for this study captured offer expectancies as designed. For example, previous research has suggested an existing, but weak, positive relationship between offer expectancies and organizational attraction (e.g., Alderfer & McCord, 1970; Chapman et al., 2005; Stevens, 1997). These relationships were typically small to moderate. In our research, the zero-order correlation for this relationship was small (.19) but significant at the  $p = .05$  level. Additionally, I suggested earlier that job-specific self-efficacy would relate closely to offer expectancies, although these two constructs should be as distinct as antecedents that impact offer expectancies may not demonstrate the same pattern with self-efficacy (i.e., competency of gate-keepers at the organization, the existence of

another equally viable candidate, fairness of the process, etc.). In this research, the correlation between the two was .42, although as will be discussed shortly, this correlation was re-conceptualized as a path from self-efficacy to offer expectancies.

### Outcomes of Offer Expectancies

In this research, the outcomes of job pursuit and information-seeking behaviors were measured in three different formats: as general intentions, as intentions for job specific behaviors, and finally as self-report of behaviors taken relative to the job in question as part of a follow-up survey. As noted, the general intentions measure and self-report measure were used with some success, whereas the behavior-specific intentions measure was met with structural and analytical difficulties that challenge its reliability and validity as an indicator. Following is an in-depth account of these issues.

The behavior-specific items asked participants to indicate on a scale 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*) their intentions to complete certain behaviors (e.g., how likely are you to send thank cards or notes after an interview). Furthermore, participants indicated their intentions to complete these behaviors for three time frames: within the next day, week, and month. They also indicated whether or not they had done this recently. This methodology was proposed to allow for a more precise understanding of not only if the applicant intended to perform a behavior but also when it should occur, thus taking into account the applicant's perceptions of urgency, and immediacy.

The first challenge came in attempting to determine whether items should be aggregated, and, if so, how best to accomplish this. Initial analyses seemed to indicate poor agreement between items, suggesting that a pooled approach was not recommended.

Furthermore, from a theoretical standpoint, it is probable that applicants have different perceptions about the usefulness of each behavior for either pursuing or seeking more information about a job. For example, applicants may universally agree that sending thank-you cards after interviews is a worthwhile activity to take when pursuing a job, but not all may agree that scheduling an unsolicited visit to the company would bode well for their chances at receiving an offer (it may be seen as too overbearing or out of the ordinary).

A second, and more challenging issue is related to whether this methodology is appropriate for the sample used for this research. As highlighted earlier, respondents were currently in various stages of the application process. Some had just recently applied to an organization, whereas others had already gone through much of the process and were awaiting notification of a job offer. In this light, several behaviors that may have been seen as appropriate at one stage may not be seen as appropriate at another. For example, regarding the question that asked about sending thank-you cards, an applicant who has already been through the process and perhaps has already sent thank-you cards would answer this as very unlikely (and would instead indicate that they recently completed this step). A strategy to counteract this may be to filter out those cases where an individual indicated that he or she recently completed a behavior, but doing so results in sample sizes that in some cases are greatly diminished. Conversely, an applicant that has not yet had any interviews may indicate that they intend to send thank-you cards, but their estimation of timing (next day, week, or month) may have depended on when they expected to be interviewed.

A third, and perhaps the most troubling issue with this data, is the potential for inconsistency in how applicants interpreted and answered these items. For example, imagine that an applicant intends to send an email with more information about herself to a company recruiter. She indicates her intent to do this as *very likely*, and estimates the timing as in the next day. The next question will then ask her to indicate the likelihood of completing that same action within the next week, and following that, the next month. What is unknown is whether she interprets the *next week* to include the *next day* in her evaluation. For example, she might reason that if she is very likely to complete an action in the next day, it is virtually a given that it will be completed within the next week, and even more so in the next month; she will then answer *very likely* for each question. Alternatively, she could reason that because she is likely to complete the behavior in the next day, it is less likely that it will occur in a week, and even less likely that as long as a month may transpire before the behavior is completed. In both cases, she greatly intends to complete the behavior, but her answers are very different. An investigation of the data found evidence for both strategies. For example, several cases displayed evidence of the first strategy (consistent/unchanging scores in the next day, week and month). Alternatively, several cases displayed the second strategy (high score in next day, followed by decreasing scores in the next week and month). While looking at this evidence, I also noticed a few cases with random patterns (high in the next day, low in the next week, but high in the next month), as well as several cases with missing data (applicants appeared to indicate likelihood only in the timeframe that they intended to complete the behavior, and left the other timings blank). Given all of these issues, the

decision was made to disregard this portion of the data for analysis, especially as both the general intentions measure and the self-report behavioral measure were also available.

Support was found for the relationship between offer expectancies and job pursuit and information seeking intentions, even after factoring in organizational attraction, which had a much stronger relationship with the dependent variable. For job pursuit and information seeking behaviors, however, the relationships were much weaker. In fact, only one of the job pursuit variables (phoning the organization to provide more information about oneself), and none of the information seeking variables were significantly related to offer expectancies.

It was interesting that offer expectancies predicted intent to pursue the organization, but not actual behavior. A closer look at the relationship between intentions and behaviors may suggest reasons as to why this hypothesis failed. First, general job pursuit intentions correlated weakly with each of the job pursuit behaviors (.06 to .27). Similarly the relationship between information seeking intentions and behaviors was also low to moderate (.16 to .39). One conclusion that could be drawn from this is that the behaviors chosen poorly reflected the intended constructs. Indeed, one could think of many other behaviors that might also represent these constructs (e.g., impression management, competitive behaviors with other applicants, etc.), and there is no reason to believe the behaviors that were chosen for this study were consistently viewed as effective by all participants, and or for all jobs. To explore this even more, I examined correlations between the specific behavioral intentions (even though earlier I presented reason to distrust these numbers) and the actual report of these behaviors. Again,

correlations were weak to moderate (pursuit behaviors ranging from .27 to .37; information seeking ranging from .04 to .33).

Icek Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior may provide further insight into this weak correlation. According to Ajzen, the relationship between intentions and behaviors may be moderated by perceived behavioral control, or the degree to which individuals feel that they are able to actually perform the behavior. Several factors might have limited the ability to perform the behaviors indicated. For example, the behaviors involving friends, family or others that may work at or know someone who works at the organization are obviously limited by whether the applicant knows anyone in that situation. Also, the behaviors referring to phone calls or visits to the organization imply that the applicant has access to these methods. Additionally, the lack of perceived behavioral control could stem from the organization. If the applicant has learned that the organization no longer is interested in continuing with the applicant in the process, they may conclude (and accurately so) that any additional behaviors will be fruitless.

This last point identifies a potential methodological issue that may have accounted for the failed relationship. We did not ask about, and thus cannot control for, whether the applicant was given the opportunity to perform the behavior in question. It may be that their courtship with the organization ended too soon for them to have the opportunity to complete the behavior in question.

Other occurrences that could have attenuated this relationship could have been finding out information about the job or company (following the initial survey) that changed their initial level of attraction, finding out more information about others



applying, or finding another organization to pursue that they preferred more. In short, several reasons exist as to why the follow-up survey did not work as intended.

The next step in the research was the analysis of moderators between offer expectancies and outcomes. With the exception of selection stage, the data failed to support these hypotheses. There are several reasons why this may have failed. First, a selection bias might have been in operation. Applicants were given the opportunity to choose the organization to respond about. Because of this, they may have been more likely to choose organizations in which they had positive expectations about being offered a job. In fact, the mean offer expectancy was almost a full point above the midpoint on a 7-point scale (suggesting that they felt they were more likely than not to be offered a job at the organization). This reduced the opportunity to collect data when offer expectancies were low.

Similarly, organizational attraction (H3 & H4) was also very high ( $M = 5.9$  on a 7 point scale). Again, a self-selection bias might have occurred with this variable as well as individuals are probably less likely to apply to organization that they are not attracted to. The hypothesis stated that, at low levels of organizational attraction, applicants would be less likely to pursue the organization or seek out more information, regardless of the offer expectancy. Given that there was a limited opportunity to observe those with low organizational attraction, it is not surprising that these hypotheses failed.

For locus of control (H5), part of the lack of a significant finding may have been due to the overall lack of a strong correlation with either of the dependent variables (.16

for both pursuit and information-seeking intentions in the direction of external locus of control resulting in a reduced likelihood to engage in the behaviors).

During the analysis of the interaction of offer expectancies and self-efficacy (H6 & H7), it was observed that self-efficacy, while not showing a significant direct effect on either of the latent factors representing intentions, was found to instead relate indirectly to intentions through offer expectancies. While this finding should not negate the possibility of a moderation effect, the linear dependency of offer expectancies on self-efficacy may inhibit the opportunity to observe individuals at levels of the two variables. In other words, because self-efficacy is an antecedent of offer expectancies, one can expect that when self-efficacy is relatively low, offer expectancies are more likely to be low as well. However, the observation of an interaction depends on having individuals who are low in one of the variables and high in the other. Theoretically, it seems possible that an applicant can have high self-efficacy but a low expectancy (e.g., they believe that despite their best efforts, it could only take one other good applicant to take away an opportunity) or low-efficacy but a high expectancy (e.g., they have a unique “in” to the organization). Given the selection bias issue and possible range issues that I have already discussed, power may have been too lower to observe the proposed interaction.

The interaction of offer expectancies and selection stage was supported for job pursuit intentions (H8a) but not for information-seeking intentions (H9a). The interaction was also not supported for any of the hypotheses for the behaviors (H8b & H9b). For H8a, those that had completed at least one stage were more likely to indicate intentions to pursue the organization than those who had not yet applied. It may be that applicants who

are later in the process (completed at least one step) have the desire to increase the probability of receiving a highly expected offer by increasing their pursuit behaviors. For information-seeking behaviors, it was thought that the looming possibility of an upcoming decision (to accept or turn-down an offer) would cause applicants to seek more information about the organization. However, for applicants that had completed at least one stage, it may be that they had already invested the time to seek-out more information about this organization, thus reducing the likelihood of an interaction for this variable.

H10 was introduced to examine how a job offer from another organization would impact an individual's perceptions and intentions concerning a current job offer. To examine this we asked applicants to report if they had another offer and to rate their level of attraction to this organization and intentions to accept the offer. It was thought that those that preferred the "possible offer" to the current offer would be more likely to turn down the current offer if expectations of being hired by the other company were high. The rejection of this hypothesis indicates that applicants were not factoring in expectancy levels when deciding whether to accept or reject the current offer. Again, this hypothesis could have been limited by the overly positive offer expectations observed in the sample (5.1 on a 7-point scale for the limited sample  $N = 42$ ).

#### Antecedents of Offer Expectancies

In this research, social comparisons were found to be a significant predictor of offer expectancies (H11). Individuals who indicated beliefs that they were more suited or capable than other applicants believed that they also had a better chance of being offered

the position. Furthermore, it is not surprising, that self-efficacy, which correlated strongly with social comparisons ( $r = .48$ ), was also a significant antecedent.

The results for the hypothesized interactions were less positive. First, I examined whether social comparison orientation, an individual's tendency to make comparisons to others, would interact with social comparisons to predict offer expectancies (H12). The lack of support for this hypothesis suggests that applicants use information gleaned from comparisons to others to form their offer expectancies – and that their social comparison orientation does not impact this process.

H13a & b suggested that knowledge of and contact with other applicants would increase the likelihood that social comparisons would relate with hiring expectancies. Again neither of these hypotheses was supported. Rather, it appears that applicants use the information at hand to make social comparisons which, in turn, impacts offer expectancies. Increased contact with or knowledge of other applicants may change social comparisons, however, a longitudinal design would be most appropriate for answering that question.

#### Job Search Expansion Intentions

This question dealt with the role of job expansion intentions and other data in the model. As indicated earlier, several expected correlations were observed; however, none provided a compelling case for further examination. Nonetheless, job expansion intentions may be an interesting avenue for future research as expanded job searches may lead to new opportunities, benefiting job seekers, and potentially depriving organizations of good candidates. Understanding cues that drive applicants to investigate new

opportunities might lead to practices that encourage top candidates to stay involved in the process, or conversely encourage job seekers who are overly optimistic about a certain position to seek out others and avoid eventual disappointment.

### Other Findings

In addition to the proposed analyses, several correlations among the personality variables and some of the core variables of the study were reported. While these data were not investigated at a deeper level, several possible avenues for future research may emerge. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and self-esteem all correlated positively with job pursuit and information-seeking intentions and self-efficacy. Extraversion and self-efficacy also correlated positively with social comparisons. In all, these data seem to suggest that certain personality predictors might influence an individual's perceived likelihood of receiving an offer (either through social comparisons, or offer expectancies) and also impact their likelihood of pursuing the organization or seeking for more information. Additionally, these variables may work in different ways to reach that outcome. For example, conscientiousness may lead to carefulness in research or planning for job applications/interviews, thus leading to greater expectancies. Or, extraverts may be more comfortable talking to interviews and have more confidence in their ability to communicate their fit for a position.

### Future Research

One of the more intriguing portions of this research had to do with the identification of job pursuit and information-seeking behaviors. Without a pre-developed

taxonomy to work from, several obvious or traditional follow-up behaviors were selected. As was shown earlier, these failed to show significant results for many of the analyses, and, while some of this may be due to methodological issues (e.g., timing of the follow-up survey, lack of control for company attributes), it does provide for an interesting discussion about whether additional behaviors may be more relevant. For example, impression management behaviors, examined by Stevens (1997), might be a more fruitful avenue of research in the context of offer expectancies. As another example, a researcher that determines a way to measure *effort* in the application process may also provide a more interesting dependent variable. Effort might express itself as more thorough research, more thought out questions or answers, and more persistence in tracking down the job.

Another interesting area of research could be the observation of *competitive behaviors*. These would include behaviors that applicants engage in to beat out other applicants either by sabotage, trickery, bullying, falsification, or other means. While these behaviors may not occur in all situations, they could occur in situations where applicants are familiar with each other (e.g., campus recruiting or small towns) or end up spending significant time with each other in job situations.

Another area for future research could be the application of a longitudinal methodology to examine these relationships. In this study, the follow-up survey only asked about what had transpired over the period of time. Much of the limitations of the study could be improved by implementing a true longitudinal approach that accounts for changes in expectancies, attraction, and social comparisons over time. This would allow

researchers to explore additional questions of interest as well. For example, how does increased exposure to other applicants or information change a job seeker's perceptions about their opportunities or interest in the organization?

From a social comparisons standpoint, most of the applicants in this study were making downward comparisons to other individuals. While there was variance within this variable, it would be interesting to see a true comparison between those making upward and downward comparisons.

### Benefits and Practical Applications

As discussed earlier, the literature regarding applicants offer expectancies is regrettably limited. Furthermore, while we know quite a lot about organizational outcomes such as self-selection from a hiring process or intentions to accept a job offer, we know little about specific behaviors applicants may engage in during the hiring process. This study provides a foundation for future investigation of these behaviors. Organizations may benefit by gaining a clear understanding of how applicants may react based on their perceptions of the organization. Specifically, organizations may find that managing perceptions has more value than previously realized (e.g., they may be able to prevent applicants who are underestimating their chances of being offered a job from searching elsewhere or perhaps may help weed-out less desirable applicants by providing more information about their chances).

Understanding these perceptions may also benefit applicants by helping to determine the factors that impact expectancies. If these expectancies are too optimistic, the applicant may over-invest in the organization both mentally and with their time.

Similarly, underinvestment may lead to missed opportunities to improve the chance of being hired.

Finally, future research may look to determine whether job pursuit behaviors actually have the desired effect of improving their chances. Researchers could aspects or similarities of these behaviors that are truly effective.

### Limitations

As with any applied research venture, several limitations exist. First, range restriction was evidently present, making it difficult to collect data for all levels of variables. This may have been a reason why several of the proposed interactions did not work. Future research could attempt to solve this limitation by asking individuals first about the organizations they applied to and then assigning an organization to discuss or by some other method designed to provide more variance. However, due to the nature of the question, it may be that selection bias is a natural part of the process in that applicants tend not to apply to organizations that they aren't attracted to. Thus, it may not be worthwhile to study some of the interactions in question, at least in the context of this study.

Another limitation is inherent in the method of data collection – an online survey. Participants may have been more or less likely to respond in this manner for a number of reasons. Responses may have reflected the attitudes of more conscientious or agreeable applicants who may have been more willing to respond to survey data. Or responses may have reflected the attitudes of applicants with more time on their hands to respond to emailed surveys. While this may threaten the external validity of the results, we feel that



the convenience of the sample coupled with the need to gather data from actual applicants outweighed this concern.

### Conclusion

This study, while suffering some methodological limitations, was overall effective in establish links among offer expectancies and some critical antecedents and outcomes. Furthermore, ample attention was given to a fairly new research topic—that of job pursuit and information-seeking intentions and behaviors. While only moderate effects were observed for these variables, a more precise specification and methodological might contribute interesting findings to the field. Furthermore, the social comparative process of the hiring stage has been given little attention, and may provide additional benefits moving forward.

## APPENDICES

Appendix A

Email Invite to Job Applicants

Dear Job Seeker,

We understand that you recently used <Name of University>'s Career Placement Services in your current job search, and would like to offer you the opportunity to participate in a brief research study.

Researchers at Clemson University are studying how individuals perceive organizations that they are applying to and make decisions during the job search process. Clemson University has agreed to share their analysis of the data with us so we can better understand the experiences of our applicants when searching for a job. Therefore, your input will help not only these researchers but also our Career Placement Services.

The survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Furthermore, your participation will qualify you to be entered into a random drawing to win one of ten \$15.00 dollar prizes.

To participate in the survey please click the following link:  
<email Link>

We thank you for your time and input in completing this important research.

Sincerely,

< Name/contact information of Career Services Director>

## Appendix B

### Follow-Up Email to Participants

Dear BYU Alumnus/Student,

A few months ago you completed a survey online sent by <Name of Participating University>'s Career Services center in conjunction with research being conducted at Clemson University about your job search process. As part of that survey, you provided your email address so that we could contact you later to ask a few follow-up questions. We now ask you to complete a brief (2 to 4 minute) survey to complete the process.

In the survey you will be asked about a specific organization that you were applying to at the time of the initial survey. The organization that you identified was: <**Name of Company Identified**>. Please respond to the questions with this organization in mind.

As with the initial survey, you can choose to again be entered into a drawing to win one of ten \$15 prizes as an incentive to participate in the research. Your responses for this survey will be held in complete confidentiality. Therefore, feel free to be completely honest when responding to the questionnaire.

Click the link below or paste into your browser to access the survey:

<Link to Survey>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

<Name/contact information of researcher>

## Appendix C

### Measure of Job-Application Self-efficacy

Instructions given to participant:

The following questions ask about your level of confidence to perform well in the hiring process for the specific job that you indicated earlier. Indicate your level of confidence in your ability to perform each of the following behaviors by choosing the appropriate response (1 = not at all confident; 2 = very unconfident; 3 = slightly unconfident, 4 = neither unconfident nor confident; 5 = slightly confident; 6 = very confident; 7 = totally confident).

1. Communicate your qualifications to interviewers / recruiters.
2. Prepare a resume that will catch the attention of recruiters.
3. Communicate the value you would bring to the organization.
4. Perform well enough on selection tests to be offered a job.
5. Make a positive impression on interviewers / recruiters.
6. Perform well enough in the hiring process to be offered a job.

## Appendix D

### Measure of Social Comparison Orientation

(Gibbons & Buunk, 1999)

Instructions given to participants:

Most people compare themselves with others from time to time. For example, they may compare their feelings, opinions, abilities, and situations with those of other people. There is nothing particularly ‘good’ or ‘bad’ about this type of comparison, and some people do it more than others. We would like to find out how often you compare yourself with other people. To do that we would like to ask you to indicate how much you agree with *each* statement below, by using the following scale.” (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

1. I often compare how my loved ones (boy or girlfriend, family members, etc.) are doing with how others are doing <Factor 1>
2. I always pay a lot of attention to how I do things compared with how others do things <Factor 1>
3. If I want to find out how well I have done something, I compare what I have done with how others have done <Factor 1>
4. I often compare how I am doing socially (e.g., social skills, popularity) with other people <Factor 1>
5. I am not the type of person who compares often with others (reversed) <Factor 1>

6. I often compare myself with others with respect to what I have accomplished in life <Factor 1>
7. I often like to talk with others about mutual opinions and experiences <Factor 2>
8. I often try to find out what others think who face similar problems as I face <Factor 2>
9. I always like to know what others in a similar situation would do <Factor 2>
10. If I want to learn more about something, I try to find out what others think about it <Factor 2>
11. I *never* consider my situation in life relative to that of other people (reversed) <Factor 2>

Appendix E

Measure of Locus of Control

(Rotter, 1966)

Instructions given to participants:

For each of the following items, circle either “a” or “b” depending on which statement best selects the way that you view the situation described.

1.     a.     Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.(Ex)  
       b.     The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy on them.
  
2.     a.     Many of the unhappy things in people’s lives are partly due to bad luck.(Ex)  
       b.     People’s misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
  
3.     a.     One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don’t take enough interest in politics.  
       b.     There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.(Ex)
  
4.     a.     In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.  
       b.     Unfortunately, an individual’s worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.(Ex)
  
5.     a.     The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.  
       b.     Most students don’t realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.(Ex)



6.
  - a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.(Ex)
  - b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
  
7.
  - a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.(Ex)
  - b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
  
8.
  - a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.(Ex)
  - b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what one is like.
  
9.
  - a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.(Ex)
  - b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
  
10.
  - a. In the case of the well-prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
  - b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.(Ex)
  
11.
  - a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
  - b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.(Ex)
  
12.
  - a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
  - b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.(Ex)

13.
  - a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
  - b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.(Ex)
14.
  - a. There are certain people who are just no good.(Ex)
  - b. There is some good in everybody.
15.
  - a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
  - b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.(Ex)
16.
  - a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.(Ex)
  - b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
17.
  - a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand nor control.(Ex)
  - b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs, the people can control world events.
18.
  - a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.(Ex)
  - b. There really is no such thing as "luck."
19.
  - a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
  - b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.(Ex)

20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.(Ex)  
b. How many friends you have depends on how nice a person you are.
21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.(Ex)  
b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.  
b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.(Ex)
23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.(Ex)  
b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.  
b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.(Ex)
25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.(Ex)  
b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.  
b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.(Ex)

27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.(Ex)
- b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.
28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.
- b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.(Ex)
29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.(Ex)
- b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

## Appendix F

### Measure of Job Search Expansion Intentions

(Horvath & Millard, 2009)

Instructions given to participants:

For the statements please select the number that best describes your answer [(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree)].

1. I am still looking for other companies that I can apply to.
2. I have applied to all of the companies that I want to apply to.
3. If I found out about a new job opening (for which I was qualified) at another company, I would apply for that job.

## Appendix G

### Measure of Offer Expectancies

Instructions given to participants:

1. How likely is it that you will be offered a job at this organization? (e.g., 0 = no chance, 50 = 50% chance, and 100 = 100% chance). If you aren't sure, give it your best guess.

For the statements please select the number that best describes your answer [(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree)].

1. I expect that I will do well enough through the employment process at this organization to be offered a position.
2. I feel positive about my chances of being offered a job at this organization.
3. My chances of being offered a job at this organization are not very good.
4. The decision makers at this organization are very interested in me as a candidate.
5. I would be surprised if I am not offered a job at this organization.

## Appendix H

### Measure of Job Offer Acceptance Intentions

Instructions to Participants:

On a scale of 0-100%, How likely is it that you would accept a job offer from this organization? (0 = no chance, 50 = 50% chance, and 100 = 100% chance)?

For the statements please select the number that best describes your answer [(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

1. I would accept an offer from this organization.
2. I would make this company one of my first choices as an employer.
3. If offered a job by this organization, I would probably decline.

## Appendix I

### Measure of Organizational Attraction

(Highhouse et al., 2003)

Instructions given to participants:

For the statements please select the number that best describes your answer [(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).]

1. For me, this company would be a good place to work.
2. I would not be interested in this company except as a last resort.
3. This company is attractive to me as a place for employment.
4. A job at this company is very appealing to me.
5. I would feel disappointed if I was not offered a job at this company.



## Appendix J

### Measure of Job Pursuit Intentions

Instructions given to participants:

We now ask you about several behaviors that you might engage in during the job application process. Please indicate how likely you are to engage in these behaviors for the company you mentioned earlier for each time period listed below by entering the number that corresponds with the following scale in each empty box. (1 = very unlikely; 2 = unlikely; 3 = slightly unlikely; 4 = neither likely nor unlikely; 5 = slightly likely; 6 = likely; 7 = very likely). Furthermore, in the final column indicate by answering either Yes or No, whether you have performed this behavior with regard to this company recently

	Within the next day	With the next week	Within the next month	I have done this recently
1. Send thank-you cards or notes after interviews.				
2. Make follow-up phone calls with decision makers to offer more information about your self.				
3. Send follow-up emails to decision makers to offer more information about yourself.				
4. Schedule a visit to the company to meet decision makers in person.				
5. Talk to others who may work at this company or may know someone who does and ask them to put in a good word for you.				

For the statements please select the number that best describes your answer (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

1. I intend to strongly pursue this position.
2. I will do everything I can to make sure that I am offered this job.
3. I plan on doing only what is required during the application process for this company.
4. I do not intend to go out of my way to increase the chance that I am offered a job at this company.
5. I do not plan on pursuing this job any more intensely than I will others.

Appendix K

Measure of Information-seeking Intentions

Instructions given to participants:

We now ask you about several behaviors that you might engage in during the job application process. Please indicate how likely you are to engage in these behaviors for the company you mentioned earlier for each time period listed below by entering the number that corresponds with the following scale in each empty box. (1 = very unlikely; 2 = unlikely; 3 = slightly unlikely; 4 = neither likely nor unlikely; 5 = slightly likely; 6 = likely; 7 = very likely). Furthermore, in the final column indicate by answering either Yes or No, whether you have performed this behavior with regard to this company recently.

	Within the next day	With the next week	Within the next month	I have done this recently
1. Read as much as you can about the company on its website.				
2. Talk to friends and family about this company.				
3. Look up articles in magazines or online about this company.				
4. Inquire about additional reading materials from the company (pamphlets, etc.).				
5. Find and talk to employees of this company as a way to find out more about it.				

For the statements please select the number that best describes your answer (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

1. I intend to find out as much as I can about this company.

2. It is worth my time to learn as much as I can about this company.
3. I do not plan on spending any more time researching this company than I will for others I am applying to.

## Appendix L

### Measure of Social Comparisons

Instructions given to participants:

Now we would like your views of where you stand in relation to the others in the applicant pool for this job. We know that you may or may not have had any interactions with other applicants, but we are still interested in your perceptions of your competition. Please answer the following questions as best you can. For each statement, please select the number that best describes your relative position to those in the applicant pool (1 = far below other applicants; 2 = somewhat below other applicants; 3 = slightly below other applicants; 4 = equal to other applicants; 5 = slightly above other applicants; 6 = somewhat above other applicants; 7 = far above other applicants).

1. My ability to be successful in this job
2. My qualifications for this job
3. My background and experience
4. My knowledge about this job
5. My level of expertise
6. My fit with this position
7. My technical skills in relation to this job

Contact with other applicants:

1. How much contact have you had with other applicants? [(1 = absolutely no contact; 2 = very little contact; 3 = some contact, 4 = a lot of contact)]

2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements regarding the source of your information about the applicant pool. (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree)
- a. I have interacted at length with others who are currently applying for the same job that I am applying for.
  - b. I have seen others that are applying for the same job that I am applying for at interviews, job fairs, etc.
  - c. I have a good understanding of the type of applicants that may have applied for this position (e.g., the skills, qualifications, experience, etc., they may possess).

Knowledge of other applications

We are interested in how much you know about the applicant pool for this position. Please indicate how much you know about the qualifications / characteristics of the applicant pool according to the following scale [(1 = I know very little; 2 = I know a little; 3 = I know some, 4 = I know very much)].

- d. Level of expertise
- e. Technical skills
- f. Level of job experience
- g. Fit for this position
- h. Education

## Appendix M

### Selection Stage Item

(Horvath & Millard, 2009)

Instructions given to participants:

Please indicate how far along you are in the hiring process for this organization, by choosing the option that represents your situation.

- a) Pre-application: You're interested in applying to this organization but haven't yet put in an application.
- b) Immediate post-application: You've applied to this organization, but you haven't yet heard anything back from them (aside from possible communication saying that they've received your application).
- c) Invitation to continue in the process: This organization has contacted you about continuing to the next step in the process (such as an interview, test, etc.), but you haven't yet done this step.
- d) Completed at least one step after initial application, but haven't reached the final stage: You've completed at least one step (test, interview, etc.), but you know that you haven't yet reached the final stage of their process.

## Appendix N

### Measure of Perceptions of Other Job Offers

Instructions given to participants:

To this point we have asked about your perceptions of an organization to which you are applying but have not yet received a job offer from. We are now interested in your perceptions of any organizations that you may have recently received an offer from. If you have not recently received a job offer from any organizations, please skip the following 9 questions.

Have you received an offer from any other another organizations? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of this organization? (If you have received an offer from more than one, please indicate the one you are most interested in) \_\_\_\_\_.

Please rate your attraction to this other organization on the following scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

1. For me, this company would be a good place to work.
2. I am not interested in this company except as a last resort.
3. This company is attractive to me as a place for employment.
4. A job at this company is very appealing to me.
5. I am strongly considering turning down this offer to pursue other opportunities.



6. I am considering asking for more time to consider this offer in order to pursue other opportunities.

On a scale of 0-100%, how likely is it that you will accept the offer from this organization? (0 = no chance, 50 = 50% chance, and 100 = 100% chance)?

Appendix O

Self-Esteem Scale

(Rosenberg, 1965)

Instructions given to participants:

For each of the following questions, place the number that corresponds to your response in the blank preceding each statement. Select a response based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement as it describes you using the scale provided.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. (reversed)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. (reversed)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. (reversed)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I certainly feel useless at times.(reversed)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. At times I think I am no good at all.(reversed)

Appendix P:

Big 5 Personality Scale

Instructions given to participants:

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

Disagree Strongly 1	Disagree a little 2	Neither Agree nor disagree 3	Agree a little 4	Agree strongly 5
---------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------	------------------------

*I see myself as someone who....*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| _____ 1. Is talkative                            | _____ 23. Tends to be lazy                              |
| _____ 2. Tends to find fault with others         | _____ 24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset       |
| _____ 3. Does a thorough job                     | _____ 25. Is inventive                                  |
| _____ 4. Is depressed, blue                      | _____ 26. Has an assertive personality                  |
| _____ 5. Is original, comes up with ideas        | _____ 27. Can be cold and aloof                         |
| _____ 6. Is reserved                             | _____ 28. Perseveres until the task is finished         |
| _____ 7. Is helpful and unselfish with others    | _____ 29. Can be moody                                  |
| _____ 8. Can be somewhat careless                | _____ 30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences        |
| _____ 9. Is relaxed, handles stress well         | _____ 31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited                   |
| _____ 10. Is curious about many different things | _____ 32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone    |
| _____ 11. Is full of energy                      | _____ 33. Does things efficiently                       |
| _____ 12. Starts quarrels with others            | _____ 34. Remains calm in tense situations              |
| _____ 13. Is a reliable worker                   | _____ 35. Prefers work that is routine                  |
| _____ 14. Can be tense                           | _____ 36. Is outgoing, sociable                         |
| _____ 15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker           | _____ 37. Is sometimes rude to others                   |
| _____ 16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm          | _____ 38. Makes plans and follows through with them     |
| _____ 17. Has a forgiving nature                 | _____ 39. Gets nervous easily                           |
| _____ 18. Tends to be disorganized               | _____ 40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas             |
| _____ 19. Worries a lot                          | _____ 41. Has few artistic interests                    |
| _____ 20. Has an active imagination              | _____ 42. Likes to cooperate with others                |
| _____ 21. Tends to be quiet                      | _____ 43. Is easily distracted                          |
| _____ 22. Is generally trusting                  | _____ 44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature |

## Appendix Q

### Job Search Progress and Market Opportunities

#### Job Search Progress

Instructions given to participants: We are interested in where you are in your current job search process. Please do your best to estimate this on the following scale (1 = near the beginning of my search, 2 = about in the middle of my search, and 3 = near the end of my search).

#### Perceptions of Current Market Opportunities.

Instructions given to participants: We are interested in your perceptions of the current state of the job market in your area of work. Please indicate your agreement with the statements below using the following scale. (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree).

1. More opportunities in my field exist than there are candidates to fill these opportunities.
2. It is difficult to land a job in my field right now.
3. Most applicants in my field are able to find a good job fairly easy.

Appendix R

Demographic Information Questionnaire

Instructions to participants:

Please choose the appropriate response:

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: Asian \_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_

White \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_

How many companies have you worked for in your professional career?: \_\_\_\_\_

The primary purpose of this survey is to explore how job applicants perceive organizations to which they are applying.

Please think of one job that you are currently applying to, but have not yet received a job offer from, or one that you are planning on applying to in the near future. What is the name of the organization/company that this job is with? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this job currently your top choice? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

If you have already applied to this job, is this the most recent job you have applied to?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

Please estimate how many other jobs you are currently applying to or plan on applying to in the immediate future? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix S

### Follow-up Survey

#### Instructions to applicants:

- 1) When you completed the previous survey, you were asked to think of one organization/company to which you had recently applied. You were asked several questions about your interest in and intentions to pursue this organization. The name of the organization you referred to was included in the email that linked to this survey. Please type the name of that organization below. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What was the outcome of this application?
  - a. I was offered a job with this organization and accepted it.
  - b. I was offered a job with this organization and didn't accept it.
  - c. I was not offered a job with this organization.
- 3) In the previous survey, we asked about your intentions to pursue a position with the organization you indicated. For this organization please indicate the extent to which you engaged in each of the following behaviors for this job.
  - a. Sent thank-you cards or notes after interviews.
  - b. Made follow-up phone calls with decision makers to offer more information about yourself.
  - c. Sent follow-up emails to decision makers to offer more information about yourself.
  - d. Talked to others who work at the company or know someone who does,

and asked them to put in a good word for you.

- e. Read as much as you could about the company on its website.
- f. Talked to friends and family about the company.
- g. Looked up articles in magazines or online about the company.
- h. Inquired about additional reading materials from the company (magazines, etc.)
- i. Talked to employees of the company as a way to find out more about it.

APPENDIX T

RESULTS TABLES

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics: means, standard deviations, scale reliabilities and correlations.*

Measure	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender <sup>A</sup>	152	0.45	0.50	-									
2. Age	155	24.94	4.50	-.07	-								
3. Ethnicity <sup>B</sup>	151	0.89	0.31	-.01	.03	-							
4. Companies worked for	155	1.98	1.67	.01	.08	.02	-						
5. Stage of search <sup>C</sup>	178	1.78	0.80	-.28**	.15	.06	.13	-					
6. Company = top choice <sup>D</sup>	178	0.70	0.46	.05	-.07	.05	-.02	.03	-				
7. Company = most recent application <sup>D</sup>	159	0.46	0.50	.02	-.06	-.14	.11	.16*	-.05	-			
8. # of Jobs applying to	177	8.60	10.11	.05	-.02	.03	-.13	-.03	-.01	.06	-		
9. Offer expectancy <sup>E</sup>	178	4.92	1.13	.12	.03	.06	.18*	.04	.11	.12	-.11	.90	
10. Org attraction <sup>E</sup>	178	5.88	0.95	-.06	-.04	.09	.11	.08	.46**	-.03	.01	.19*	.85
11. Offer acceptance intentions <sup>E</sup>	178	4.94	0.61	.00	.02	.13	.09	.08	.43**	-.10	.04	.06	.74**
12. Job pursuit intentions <sup>E</sup>	178	4.96	1.23	-.02	.12	.12	.12	.12	.38**	-.11	-.04	.27**	.66**
13. Information seeking intentions <sup>E</sup>	178	5.24	1.10	.03	-.04	.06	.02	.08	.41**	-.10	.01	.18*	.67**
14. Job pursuit behaviors <sup>C</sup>	73	1.50	0.56	-.12	.12	.18	.01	.32**	.23	-.15	.03	.16	.25*
15. Information seeking behaviors <sup>C</sup>	73	1.86	0.52	-.18	.06	.09	.08	.28*	.27*	-.14	.21	.06	.27*
16. Pursuit 1: Thank you cards <sup>C</sup>	71	1.48	0.77	-.11	.07	.16	-.10	.34**	.12	-.14	.00	-.03	.20
17. Pursuit 2: Follow-up phone-calls <sup>C</sup>	73	1.41	0.68	-.09	.07	.16	.13	.23	.25*	-.03	-.04	.33**	.14
18. Pursuit 3: Follow-up emails <sup>C</sup>	73	1.60	0.74	-.09	.12	.08	.00	.16	.14	-.19	.12	.06	.22
19. Pursuit 4: Others – good word <sup>C</sup>	72	1.74	0.77	-.09	.05	-.01	.12	.23*	.04	-.15	.01	.12	.07
20. Info-seek 1: Read org. website <sup>C</sup>	73	2.36	0.71	-.19	.18	.06	.12	.33**	.19	-.03	.18	.03	.21
21. Info-seek 2: Friends and family <sup>C</sup>	72	2.07	0.70	.00	.04	-.06	-.05	.12	.07	-.17	.22	-.06	.10
22. Info-seek 3: Find articles about org <sup>C</sup>	73	1.74	0.67	-.25*	.01	.14	.08	.24*	.30*	.02	.25*	.07	.37**
23. Info-seek 4: Ask for more info <sup>C</sup>	73	1.33	0.58	-.11	-.10	.07	.13	.16	.30*	-.13	.11	.06	.22
24. Info-seek 5: Talked to employees <sup>C</sup>	73	1.81	0.78	-.14	.05	.07	.06	.20	.17	-.18	.04	.11	.15

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ . <sup>A</sup> coded 0=Male, 1=Female; <sup>B</sup> coded 0=Non-white, 1=White; <sup>C</sup> rated on a 3-point scale; <sup>D</sup> coded 0=no, 1=yes; <sup>E</sup> rated on a 7-point scale; <sup>F</sup> Rated on a 4-point scale; <sup>G</sup> coded 0=Internal LOC, 1=External LOC; <sup>H</sup> rated on a 5-point scale. Reliabilities for scales found in diagonal where appropriate.



Table 1 Continued...

Measure	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
11. Offer acceptance intentions <sup>E</sup>	.84													
12. Job pursuit intentions <sup>E</sup>	.49**	.80												
13. Information seeking intentions <sup>E</sup>	.55**	.72**	.75											
14. Job pursuit behaviors <sup>C</sup>	.26*	.33**	.20	.65										
15. Information seeking behaviors <sup>C</sup>	.33**	.25*	.29*	.39**	.81									
16. Pursuit 1: Thank you cards <sup>C</sup>	.15	.23	.16	.70**	.27*	-								
17. Pursuit 2: Follow-up phone-calls <sup>C</sup>	.18	.26*	.08	.81**	.17	.32**	-							
18. Pursuit 3: Follow-up emails <sup>C</sup>	.24*	.27*	.21	.78**	.42**	.25*	.55**	-						
19. Pursuit 4: Others – good word <sup>C</sup>	.08	.06	.13	.25*	.40**	-.07	.21	.44**	-					
20. Info-seek 1: Read org. website <sup>C</sup>	.21	.30*	.20	.43**	.72**	.26*	.27*	.46**	.35**	-				
21. Info-seek 2: Friends and family <sup>C</sup>	.27*	.04	.17	.05	.71**	.11	-.12	.13	.32**	.43**	-			
22. Info-seek 3: Find articles about org <sup>C</sup>	.40**	.25*	.39**	.23	.81**	.14	.06	.32**	.23	.46**	.46**	-		
23. Info-seek 4: Ask for more info <sup>C</sup>	.16	.18	.20	.31**	.74**	.19	.22	.28*	.23	.39**	.36**	.62**	-	
24. Info-seek 5: Talked to employees <sup>C</sup>	.19	.17	.16	.41**	.79**	.31**	.23	.37**	.34**	.43**	.42**	.55**	.51**	-

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ . <sup>A</sup> coded 0=Male, 1=Female; <sup>B</sup> coded 0=Non-white, 1=White; <sup>C</sup> rated on a 3-point scale; <sup>D</sup> coded 0=no, 1=yes; <sup>E</sup> rated on a 7-point scale; <sup>F</sup> Rated on a 4-point scale; <sup>G</sup> coded 0=Internal LOC, 1=External LOC; <sup>H</sup> rated on a 5-point scale. Reliabilities for scales found in diagonal where appropriate.

Table 1 Continued...

Measure	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
25. Job offered <sup>D</sup>	72	0.24	0.43	.01	-.08	.16	.24*	.26*	.12	.14	-.11	.37**	.21
26. Considering other offers <sup>D</sup>	138	0.30	0.46	-.18*	.03	.09	.10	.44**	.10	.00	-.07	.08	.05
27. Other org: attraction <sup>E</sup>	63	5.20	1.43	-.04	.15	-.05	.14	.25*	.04	.08	-.13	.31*	.10
28. Other org: acceptance intentions <sup>E</sup>	64	4.11	1.54	.01	.01	.02	.04	.10	.04	-.18	-.03	.16	.12
29. Perception of market opportunities <sup>E</sup>	178	3.75	1.49	.19*	.04	-.04	.13	-.13	.08	.19*	-.10	.32**	-.03
30. Search expansion intentions <sup>E</sup>	178	5.53	1.23	.03	.00	-.03	-.06	-.38**	-.19*	-.27**	.03	-.29**	-.11
31. Contact with other applicants <sup>E</sup>	158	3.79	1.52	-.08	.05	-.01	.17*	.31**	.08	.14	.05	.28**	.02
32. Knowledge of other applicants <sup>E</sup>	158	2.47	0.89	-.04	.00	.01	.15	.13	.12	.15	.02	.29**	.03
33. Comparison to other applicants <sup>E</sup>	158	5.11	0.91	-.05	-.18*	.01	.19*	-.03	.10	.15	-.08	.45**	.15
34. Social comp. orientation- ability <sup>E</sup>	164	4.67	1.14	.03	-.01	.05	-.11	-.01	-.07	.07	-.04	-.03	-.02
35. Social comp. orientation- opinions <sup>E</sup>	164	5.41	0.84	.06	.07	.09	-.05	-.05	.03	-.10	.02	.00	.10
36. Self Esteem <sup>F</sup>	164	3.26	0.47	-.08	-.02	.11	.01	.05	.10	-.01	-.01	.16*	.20**
37. Self Efficacy <sup>E</sup>	161	5.60	0.77	-.13	-.11	.05	.19*	.14	.17*	.06	-.08	.42**	.20*
38. External locus of control <sup>G</sup>	163	0.38	0.15	.07	.01	.03	-.17*	-.11	-.03	-.05	-.06	-.15	-.14
39. Extraversion <sup>H</sup>	159	3.33	0.80	.07	.01	.04	.08	.04	.11	-.04	-.02	.21**	.07
40. Conscientiousness <sup>H</sup>	159	3.93	0.55	.12	-.05	.05	.02	-.11	.11	-.14	.08	.02	.21**
41. Openness to experience <sup>H</sup>	159	3.80	0.56	-.05	-.13	-.03	.03	-.12	-.05	-.01	-.03	.01	-.04
42. Agreeableness <sup>H</sup>	159	3.85	0.56	.09	-.11	.23**	.03	.03	.04	-.01	.01	.17*	.22**
43. Neuroticism <sup>H</sup>	159	2.59	0.74	.27**	-.01	-.03	-.10	-.21**	.00	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.17*

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ . <sup>A</sup> coded 0=Male, 1=Female; <sup>B</sup> coded 0=Non-white, 1=White; <sup>C</sup> rated on a 3-point scale; <sup>D</sup> coded 0=no, 1=yes; <sup>E</sup> rated on a 7-point scale; <sup>F</sup> Rated on a 4-point scale; <sup>G</sup> coded 0=Internal LOC, 1=External LOC; <sup>H</sup> rated on a 5-point scale. Reliabilities for scales found in diagonal where appropriate.

Table 1 Continued...

Measure	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25. Job offered <sup>D</sup>	.14	.31**	.13	.12	.24*	.19	.10	-.04	-.02	.05	.13	.24*	.29*	.22
26. Considering other offers <sup>D</sup>	.14	.09	.15	.05	.32*	.08	.01	.02	-.04	.29*	.19	.23	.22	.21
27. Other org: attraction <sup>E</sup>	.19	.01	.19	.08	.50**	-.12	.17	.16	.40*	.11	.42*	.51**	.25	.56**
28. Other org: acceptance intentions <sup>E</sup>	.22	.06	.31*	-.17	-.19	-.06	-.18	-.18	.27	-.16	.18	.15	.09	.42*
29. Perception of market opportunities <sup>E</sup>	-.08	-.11	-.06	-.14	.00	-.18	-.12	-.03	.10	-.04	.00	-.02	.11	-.04
30. Search expansion intentions <sup>E</sup>	-.09	-.08	-.09	-.02	-.19	-.05	-.05	.06	-.17	-.16	-.13	-.20	-.16	-.08
31. Contact with other applicants <sup>E</sup>	.06	.12	.11	.06	.36**	.03	-.02	.11	.32**	.15	.30*	.23*	.17	.45**
32. Knowledge of other applicants <sup>E</sup>	.09	.03	.08	.19	.32**	-.01	.16	.27*	.26*	.21	.31**	.23	.11	.29*
33. Comparison to other applicants <sup>E</sup>	.05	.16*	.08	.11	.08	-.04	.26*	.04	.15	.06	-.02	.14	-.01	.12
34. Social comp. orientation- ability <sup>E</sup>	.00	-.04	.05	-.03	-.13	.34**	-.20	-.19	-.26*	-.25*	-.02	.00	-.12	-.11
35. Social comp. orientation- opinions <sup>E</sup>	.13	.05	.16*	.05	.19	.22	-.07	-.02	-.02	.15	.27*	.10	.02	.17
36. Self esteem <sup>F</sup>	.20**	.16*	.19*	.14	.13	-.02	.15	.18	.05	.09	.05	.12	.13	.10
37. Self efficacy <sup>E</sup>	.17*	.27**	.24**	.07	.03	-.06	.29*	-.07	.03	-.08	-.08	.13	.11	.07
38. External locus of control <sup>G</sup>	-.12	-.16*	-.16*	-.20	-.32**	-.10	-.17	-.21	-.03	-.27*	-.21	-.31**	-.27*	-.19
39. Extraversion <sup>H</sup>	.07	.25**	.24**	.05	.21	-.05	.08	.06	.10	.16	.20	.06	.16	.21
40. Conscientiousness <sup>H</sup>	.33**	.27**	.35**	.11	.13	-.01	.11	.15	.07	.09	.24*	.12	.00	.04
41. Openness to experience <sup>H</sup>	.03	.10	.04	-.02	.04	.01	.01	-.05	-.15	-.06	.03	-.02	-.02	.22
42. Agreeableness <sup>H</sup>	.26**	.18*	.20*	.16	.22	.02	.08	.26*	.08	.08	.14	.26*	.22	.12
43. Neuroticism <sup>H</sup>	-.19*	-.11	-.18*	-.27*	-.23	-.03	-.21	-.36**	-.22	-.18	-.04	-.22	-.20	-.23

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ . <sup>A</sup> coded 0=Male, 1=Female; <sup>B</sup> coded 0=Non-white, 1=White; <sup>C</sup> rated on a 3-point scale; <sup>D</sup> coded 0=no, 1=yes; <sup>E</sup> rated on a 7-point scale; <sup>F</sup> Rated on a 4-point scale; <sup>G</sup> coded 0=Internal LOC, 1=External LOC; <sup>H</sup> rated on a 5-point scale. Reliabilities for scales found in diagonal where appropriate.

Table 1 Continued...

Measure	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
25. Job offered <sup>D</sup>	-													
26. Considering other offers <sup>D</sup>	.06	-												
27. Other org: attraction <sup>E</sup>	.18	.46**	.84											
28. Other org: acceptance intentions <sup>E</sup>	.04	.25	.49*	.63										
29. Perception of market opportunities <sup>E</sup>	.09	.00	.06	.13	.78									
30. Search expansion intentions <sup>E</sup>	-.32**	-.05	-.16	-.02	-.15*	.75								
31. Contact with other applicants <sup>E</sup>	.26*	.24**	.29*	.21	.11	-.35**	.81							
32. Knowledge of other applicants <sup>E</sup>	-.02	.21*	.34**	.30*	.16*	-.31**	.53**	.93						
33. Comparison to other applicants <sup>E</sup>	.29*	.11	.14	.13	.12	.01	.03	.03	.88					
34. Social comp. orientation- ability <sup>E</sup>	-.10	.01	.10	-.02	-.02	.11	-.02	-.07	-.06	.84				
35. Social comp. orientation- opinions <sup>E</sup>	-.06	.15	.35**	.13	.07	.14	-.02	-.03	-.02	.45**	.73			
36. Self esteem <sup>F</sup>	-.04	.14	.22	.12	.10	.01	.06	-.01	.25**	-.16*	.19*	.87		
37. Self efficacy <sup>E</sup>	.10	.19*	.26*	.18	.04	-.15	.12	.15	.48**	-.05	.00	.40**	.84	
38. External locus of control <sup>G</sup>	-.03	-.19*	-.21	.08	-.04	.01	.00	-.05	-.11	.03	-.20*	-.34**	-.16*	.71
39. Extraversion <sup>H</sup>	-.09	.05	.15	.04	.04	.03	.09	-.07	.23**	-.03	.26**	.41**	.37**	-.26**
40. Conscientiousness <sup>H</sup>	-.04	.00	.17	.27*	-.16*	.12	.02	.09	.09	.07	.17*	.35**	.19*	-.17*
41. Openness to experience <sup>H</sup>	-.09	.04	-.01	.01	-.17*	.04	.04	-.01	.01	.11	.15	.02	.24**	-.03
42. Agreeableness <sup>H</sup>	.10	.06	.24	.18	.05	-.10	.01	.12	.10	-.12	.19*	.40**	.22**	-.30**
43. Neuroticism <sup>H</sup>	-.02	-.11	-.21	-.06	.04	.07	-.13	-.10	-.14	.16*	-.01	-.56**	-.29**	.31**

Measure	39	40	41	42	43
39. Extraversion <sup>H</sup>	.89				
40. Conscientiousness <sup>H</sup>	.19*	.81			
41. Openness to experience <sup>H</sup>	.27**	.06	.79		
42. Agreeableness <sup>H</sup>	.24**	.35**	.11	.78	
43. Neuroticism <sup>H</sup>	-.27**	-.22**	-.18*	-.48**	.86

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ . <sup>A</sup> coded 0=Male, 1=Female; <sup>B</sup> coded 0=Non-white, 1=White; <sup>C</sup> rated on a 3-point scale; <sup>D</sup> coded 0=no, 1=yes; <sup>E</sup> rated on a 7-point scale; <sup>F</sup> Rated on a 4-point scale; <sup>G</sup> coded 0=Internal LOC, 1=External LOC; <sup>H</sup> rated on a 5-point scale. Reliabilities for scales found in diagonal where appropriate

Table 2

*Model fit statistics for all structural equation models.*

<i>Models: Outcomes of Expectancies</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>SRMR</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	<i>RMSEA 90% CI</i>
1. Measurement Model (correlated factors)	1419.62	667	.000	.754	.084	.087	.080 - .093
2. Efficacy predicting expectancies	458.14	242	.000	.907	.102	.077	.066 - .088
3. Expectancies x org attraction	633.89	311	.000	.873	.101	.083	.074 - .092
4. Expectancies x locus of control	759.56	481	.000	.891	.096	.062	.053 - .070
5. Expectancies x self-efficacy	660.40	310	.000	.861	.099	.087	.077 - .096
<i>Models: Antecedents of Expectancies</i>							
6. Measurement model (correlated factors)	2054.64	1270	.000	.794	.078	.066	.060 - .071
7. All direct effects	563.90	344	.000	.907	.086	.067	.057 - .076
8. Social comparison x SC orientation	948.63	585	.000	.838	.079	.066	.058 - .078
9. Social comparison x applicant knowledge	639.35	370	.000	.886	.080	.071	.057 - .076
10. Social comparison x applicant contact	478.89	292	.000	.897	.082	.067	.056 - .077

Note: Recommended thresholds for fit indices are as follows: CFI > .95; SRMR < .05 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007); RMSEA < .08 with confidence interval falling between .05 and .10 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Table 3

*Measurement model for outcomes and moderators of offer expectancies.*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	$\gamma$	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	$\gamma$	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	$\gamma$
1	Offer exp 1	.862	3	LoC parcel 3	.627	5	Pursue int 5	.566
1	Offer exp 2	.922	3	LoC parcel 4	.503	6	In-Seek int 1	.812
1	Offer exp 3	.729	3	LoC parcel 5	.567	6	In-see int 2	.920
1	Offer exp 4	.659	3	LoC parcel 6	.451	6	In-see int 3	.493
1	Offer exp 5	.661	4	Efficacy 1	.807	7	Att 3 x exp 2	.799
1	Offer exp scale	.743	4	Efficacy 2	.540	7	Att 4 x exp 1	.909
2	Org. att 1	.883	4	Efficacy 3	.824	7	Att 1 x exp scale	.265
2	Org. att 2	.634	4	Efficacy 4	.483	8	LOC 3 x exp 2	.859
2	Org. att 3	.923	4	Efficacy 5	.651	8	LOC 2 x exp 1	.525
2	Org. att 4	.903	4	Efficacy 6	.767	8	LOC 5 x exp scale	.260
2	Org. att 5	.492	5	Pursue int 1	.924	9	Eff 3 x exp 2	.416
3	LoC parcel 1	.535	5	Pursue int 2	.911	9	Eff 1 x exp 1	.440
3	LoC parcel 2	.579	5	Pursue int 4	.477	9	Eff 6 x exp scale	.781
Corr Factors		$\Phi$	Corr Factors		$\Phi$	Corr Factors		$\Phi$
1 x 2		.171	2 x 7		.167	4 x 8		-.137
1 x 3		-.116	2 x 8		-.135	4 x 9		.038
1 x 4		.503	2 x 9		.154	5 x 6		.774
1 x 5		.412	3 x 4		-.198	5 x 7		.024
1 x 6		.332	3 x 5		-.095	5 x 8		-.106
1 x 7		-.085	3 x 6		-.198	5 x 9		.007
1 x 8		-.168	3 x 7		-.062	6 x 7		.044
1 x 9		-.138	3 x 8		-.127	6 x 8		-.121
2 x 3		-.145	3 x 9		-.052	6 x 9		.062
2 x 4		.177	4 x 5		.328	7 x 8		-.209
2 x 5		.635	4 x 6		.241	7 x 9		-.056
2 x 6		.770	4 x 7		-.371	8 x 9		.130

Note:  $\gamma$  = loading of the item on the latent factor;  $\Phi$  = the covariance between the two factors.

Table 4

*Measurement model for antecedents and moderators of offer expectancies.*

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	$\gamma$	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	$\gamma$	<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	$\gamma$
1	Social comp 1	.713	4	Know others 1	.895	7	Offer exp 4	.701
1	Social comp 2	.831	4	Know others 2	.902	7	Offer exp 5	.691
1	Social comp 3	.741	4	Know others 3	.847	7	Offer exp scale	.765
1	Social comp 4	.543	4	Know others 4	.848	8	SC 5 x SCO 1.2	.567
1	Social comp 5	.860	4	Know others 5	.746	8	SC 2 x SCO 1.3	.779
1	Social comp 6	.665	5	Interaction 1	.890	8	SC 3 x SCO 1.5	.465
1	Social comp 7	.710	5	Interaction 2	.735	9	SC 5 x SCO 2.8	.537
2	SC orient 1.1	.501	5	Interaction 3	.466	9	SC 2 x SCO 2.9	.890
2	SC orient 1.2	.801	5	Interaction 4	.801	9	SC 3 x SCO 2.10	.360
2	SC orient 1.3	.803	6	Self-efficacy 1	.798	10	SC 5 x know 2	.769
2	SC orient 1.4	.584	6	Self-efficacy 2	.551	10	SC 2 x know 1	.811
2	SC orient. 1.5	.695	6	Self-efficacy 3	.810	10	SC 3 x know 4	.630
2	SC orient. 1.6	.660	6	Self-efficacy 4	.487	10	SC 1 x know 3	.611
3	SC orient 2.7	.610	6	Self-efficacy 5	.665	10	SC 7 x know 5	.534
3	SC orient 2.8	.760	6	Self-efficacy 6	.769	11	SC 5 x inter 1	.811
3	SC orient 2.9	.713	7	Offer exp 1	.843	11	SC 2 x inter 4	.637
3	SC orient 2.10	.668	7	Offer exp 2	.912	11	SC 3 x inter 2	.558
3	SC orient 2.11	.239	7	Offer exp 3	.717			
Corr Factors		$\Phi$	Corr Factors		$\Phi$	Corr Factors		$\Phi$
1 x 2		.003	3 x 4		-.022	5 x 10		-.020
1 x 3		.067	3 x 5		.005	5 x 11		-.070
1 x 4		.055	3 x 6		.070	6 x 7		.527
1 x 5		-.002	3 x 7		.090	6 x 8		-.133
1 x 6		.503	3 x 8		.091	6 x 9		.052
1 x 7		.474	3 x 9		.098	6 x 10		-.017
1 x 8		.162	3 x 10		.035	6 x 11		-.098
1 x 9		.067	3 x 11		-.070	7 x 8		-.026
1 x 10		-.062	4 x 5		.544	7 x 9		-.053
1 x 11		-.118	4 x 6		.186	7 x 10		.099
2 x 3		.351	4 x 7		.331	7 x 11		-.115
2 x 4		-.116	4 x 8		.004	8 x 9		.446
2 x 5		.049	4 x 9		.069	8 x 10		.070
2 x 6		.002	4 x 10		.105	8 x 11		.201
2 x 7		-.044	4 x 11		-.038	9 x 10		.014
2 x 8		.221	5 x 6		.058	9 x 11		-.042
2 x 9		.007	5 x 7		.286	10 x 11		.594
2 x 10		.129	5 x 8		-.032			
2 x 11		-.009	5 x 9		-.099			

Note:  $\gamma$  = loading of the item on the latent factor;  $\Phi$  = the covariance between the two factors.

Table 5

*Structural equation model essential parameters.*

From	To	Model	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient	t-value
Offer expectancy	Job pursuit intentions	2	.357	.348	5.04*
Offer expectancy	Info-seeking intentions	2	.197	.226	3.53*
Org attraction	Job pursuit intentions	2	.746	.596	8.24*
Org attraction	Info-seeking intentions	2	.796	.749	10.53*
Self-efficacy	Offer expectancy	2	.785	.491	5.49*
Exp x Org attraction	Job pursuit intentions	3	.263	.044	0.61
Exp x Org attraction	Info-seeking intentions	3	.093	.018	0.27
Exp x LOC	Job pursuit intentions	4	-.137	-.026	-0.36
Exp x Self-efficacy	Job pursuit intentions	5	-.062	-.076	-0.97
Exp x Self-efficacy	Info-seeking intentions	5	-.015	-.021	-0.29
Social comparisons	Offer expectancy	6	.380	.300	3.29*
Social comp. orient.	Offer expectancy	9	.353	.276	2.93*
Soc comp. SCO1	Offer expectancy	9	.050	.021	0.20
Soc comp. SCO2	Offer expectancy	9	.044	.028	0.32
Knowledge of others	Offer expectancy	10	.333	.256	3.40*
Know x Social comp	Offer expectancy	10	.132	.100	1.26
Contact with others	Offer expectancy	11	.419	.267	3.40*
Contact x Social comp	Offer expectancy	11	-.022	-.037	-0.38

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ ; Refer to Table 2 for model fit indices



Table 6: H1b, H3b, H5b, H6b

*Standard multiple regressions for direct and moderation effects on the job pursuit behavior: “follow-up phone-calls”*

		DV: Follow-up phone calls									
Hypothesis	IV	B(SE)	$\beta$	$sr^2$	R	R <sup>2</sup>	df	SE	F	FΔ	p
All	Step 1				.359	.129	2,70	.647	5.186**	5.186**	.008
		Self-efficacy	.232* (.101)	.260*	.066*						
		Top choice	.304 (.163)	.210	.043						
H1b	Step 2				.431	.186	3,69	.630	5.246**	4.802*	.003
		Job offer expectancy	.147* (.067)	.260*	.058*						
H3b	Step 2				.433	.187	4,68	.634	3.913**	2.429	.006
		Job offer expectancy	.149* (.068)	.263*	.067*						
		Organizational attraction	-.033 (.096)	-.045	.002						
	Step 3				.436	.191	5,67	.637	3.154*	.281	.013
		Offer exp. x Org. attract.	.043 (.081)	.062	.003						
H5	Step 2				.455	.207	4,68	.627	4.431**	3.331*	.003
		Job offer expectancy	.139* (.067)	.245	.050						
		Locus of control	-.661 (.492)	-.146	.021						
	Step 3				.459	.211	5,67	.630	3.577**	0.333	.006
		Offer exp. x Loc. of control	-.214 (.371)	-.069	.004						
H6	Step 2				.431	.186	3,69	.630	5.246**	4.802*	.003
		Job offer expectancy	.147* (.067)	.260*	.058*						
	Step 3				.460	.211	4,68	.625	4.555**	2.207	.003
		Offer exp. X Self efficacy	.123 (.083)	.183	.026						

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ .  $sr^2$  is the squared semi-partial estimating the unique explained variance.

Table 7: H8a

*Standard multiple regression to test the interaction of selection stage and offer expectancies on job pursuit intentions.*

DV: Job Pursuit Intentions											
	IV	<i>B(SE)</i>	$\beta$	<i>sr</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>df</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>FΔ</i>	<i>p</i>
Step 1					.273	.074	3,156	1.184	4.184**	4.184**	.007
	Intercept	5.098 (.150)									
	Selection stage 2 (dummy)	-.071 (.234)	-.027	.001							
	Selection stage 4 (dummy)	-.187 (.228)	-.071	.004							
	Offer expectancy	.298 (.089)	.276**	.067**							
Step 2					.339	.115	5,154	1.166	3.992**	3.503*	.002
	Intercept	5.117 (.148)									
	Selection stage 2 (dummy)	-.082 (.239)	-.031	.001							
	Selection stage 4 (dummy)	-.326 (.232)	-.124	.011							
	Offer expectancy	-.006 (.155)	-.005	.000							
	Stage 2 x offer expectancy	.321 (.215)	.176	.015							
	Stage 4 x offer expectancy	.572 (.216)	.304**	.040*							

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ . Selection stages 2 and 4 were dummy coded such that 1 = membership in stage, and 0 = else. Selection stage 3 is omitted due to low sample size. The intercept value represents the mean of selection stage 1 on the dependent variable.

Table 8: H10

*Standard multiple regression to test the interaction of offer expectancies and the difference in attraction of a possible offer over a proposed offer on intentions to self-select from the hiring process.*

DV: Self-selection intentions										
IV	<i>B(SE)</i>	$\beta$	$sr^2$	<i>R</i>	$R^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i> $\Delta$	<i>p</i>
Step 1				.596	.356	2,37	5.246	10.210**	10.210**	.000
Org attraction - difference	2.647 (.595)	.593**	.345**							
Offer expectancy	-.134 (.776)	-.023	.001							
Step 2				.596	.356	3,36	5.319	6.623**	.000*	.001
Diff-Org Att x expectancy	.006 (.400)	.002	.000							

Note: \* $p \leq .05$ , \*\* $p \leq .01$ .

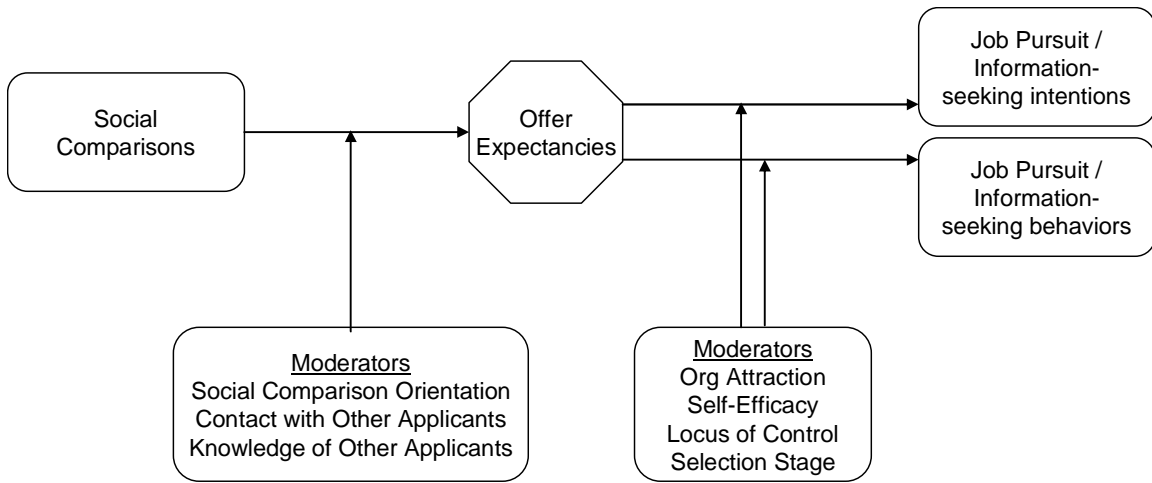


Figure 1. Overall model of antecedents and outcomes of offer expectancies.

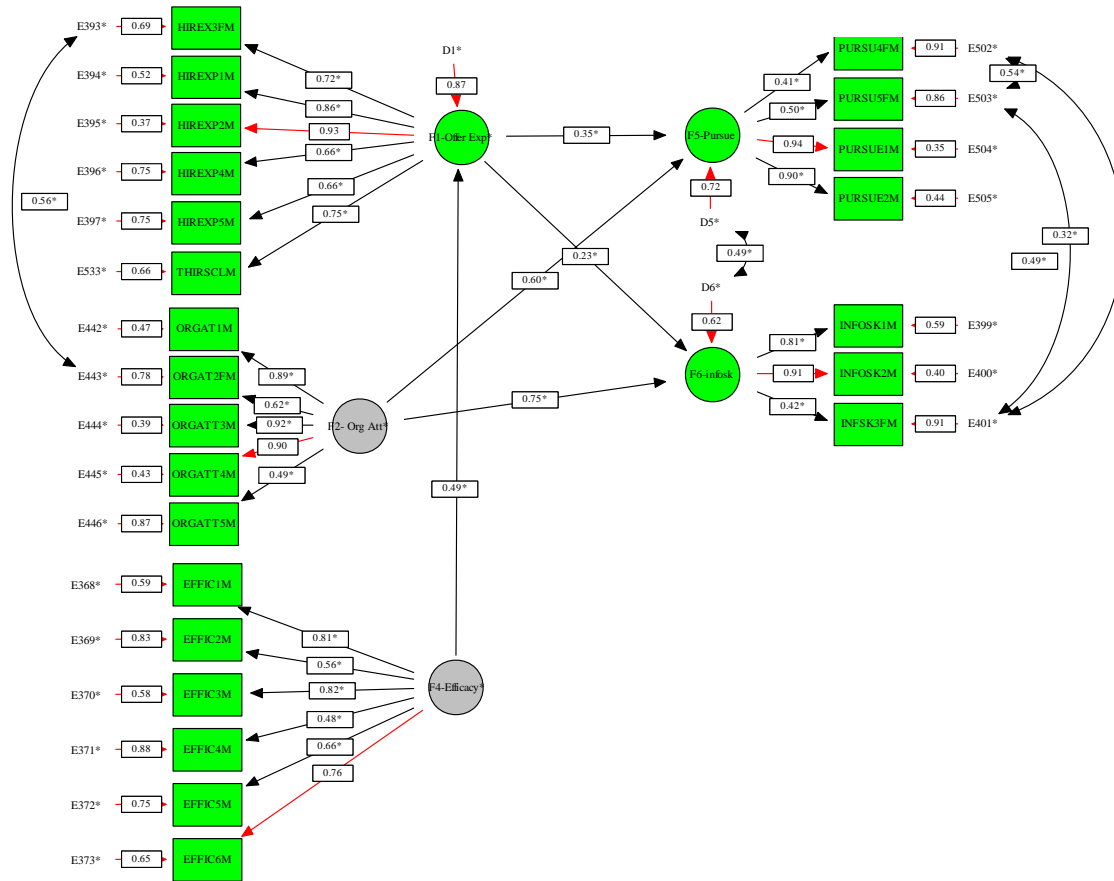


Figure 2. Model 2: The direct effects of offer expectancies on intentions.

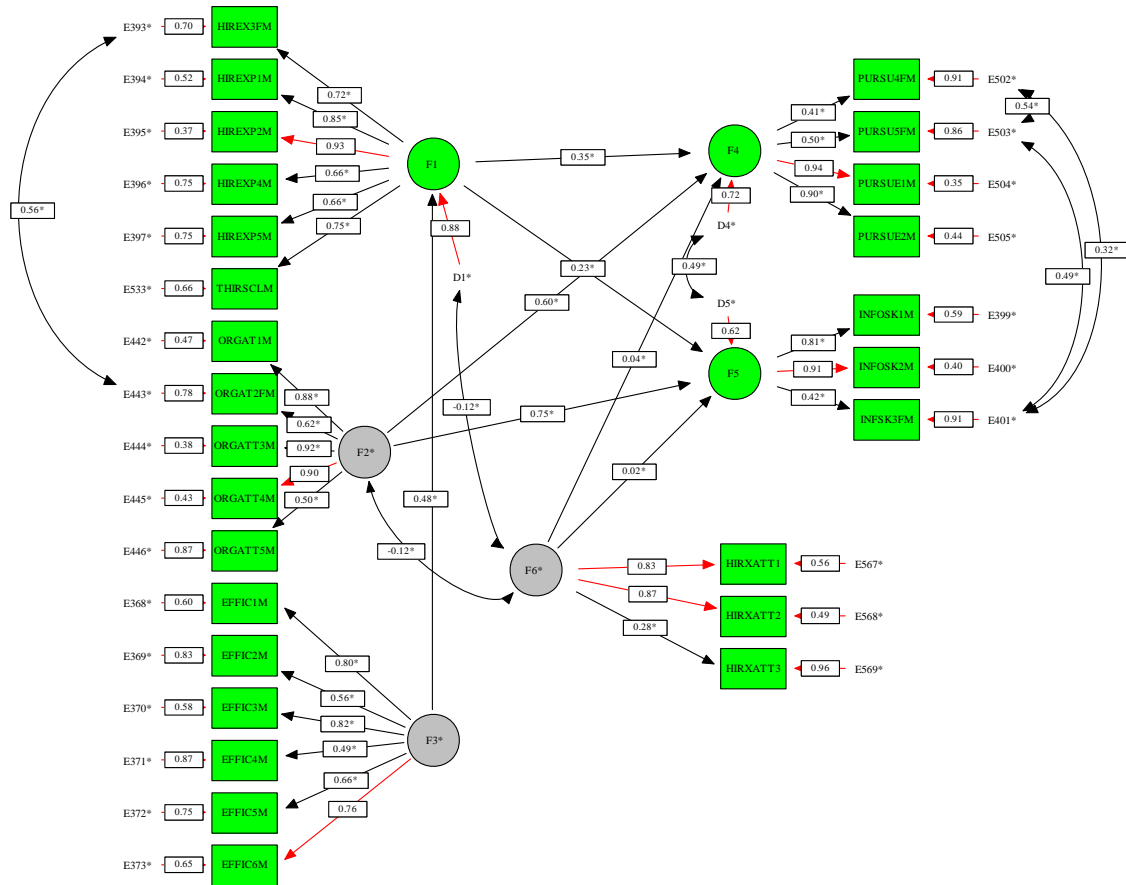


Figure 3. Model 3: The interaction of organizational attraction and expectancies on intentions.

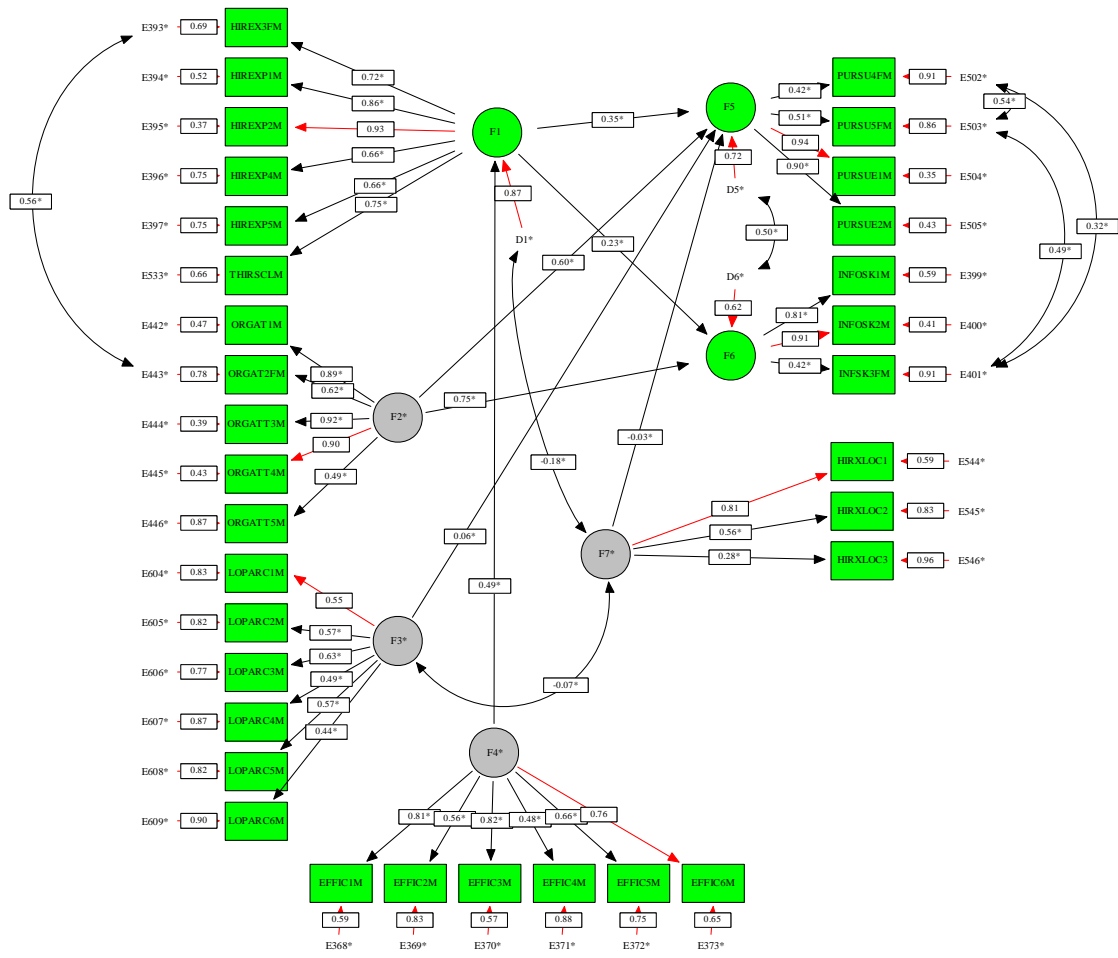


Figure 4. Model 4: The interaction of locus of control and expectancies on intentions.

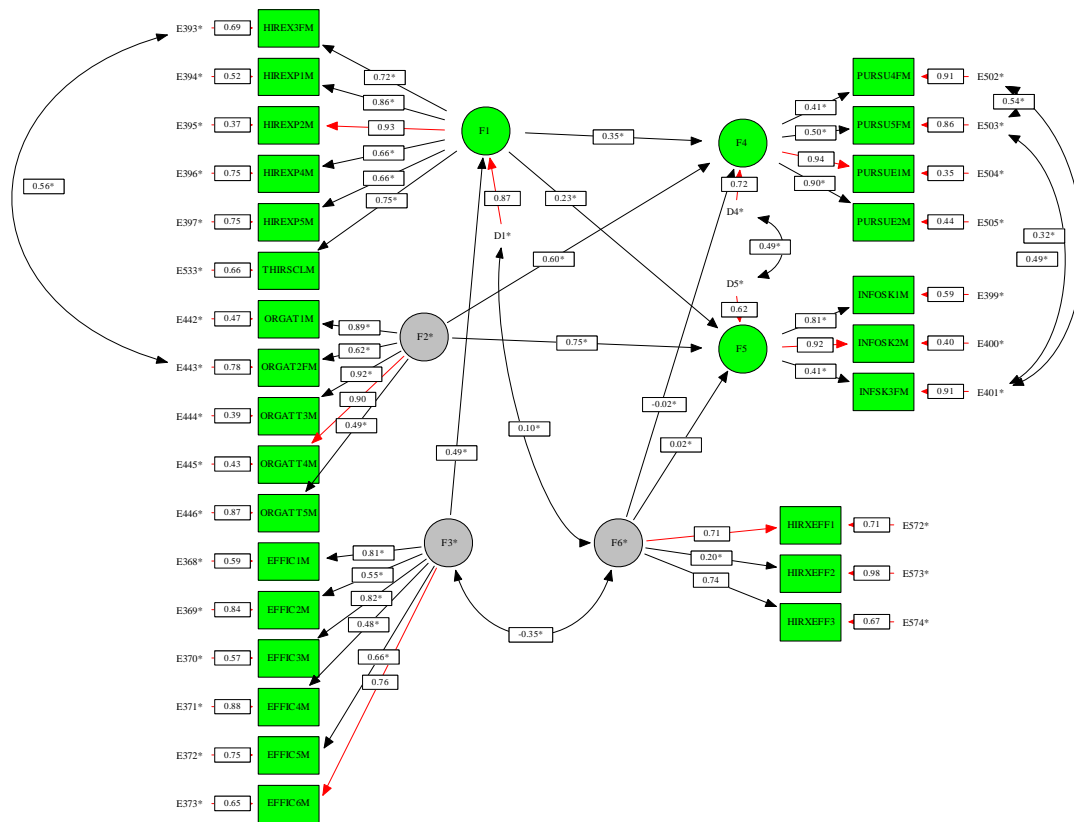


Figure 5. Model 5: The interaction of self-efficacy and expectancies on intentions.



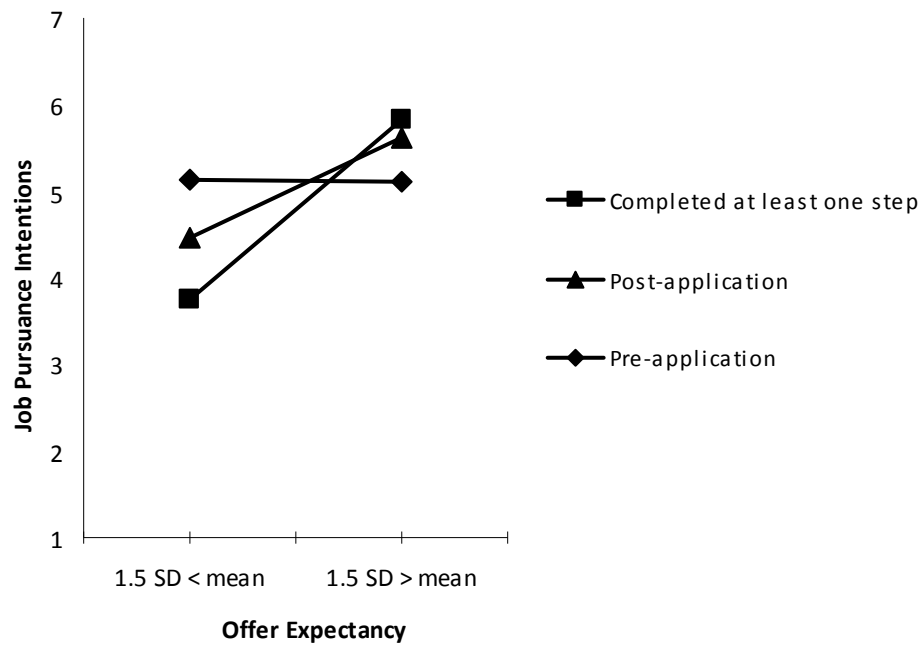


Figure 6. The interaction of selection stage and offer expectancies on intentions.

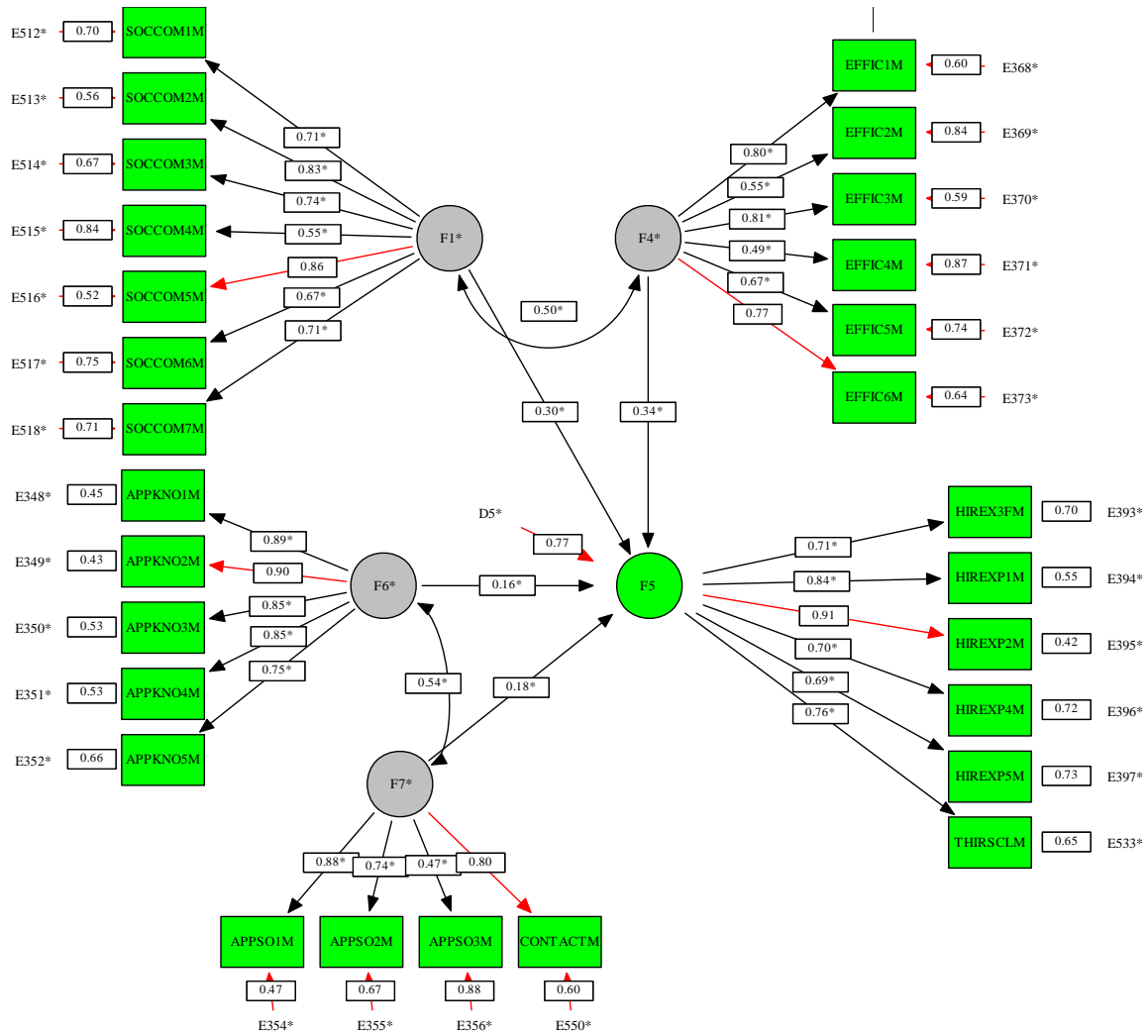


Figure 7. Model 7: The direct effects of social comparisons on expectancies.

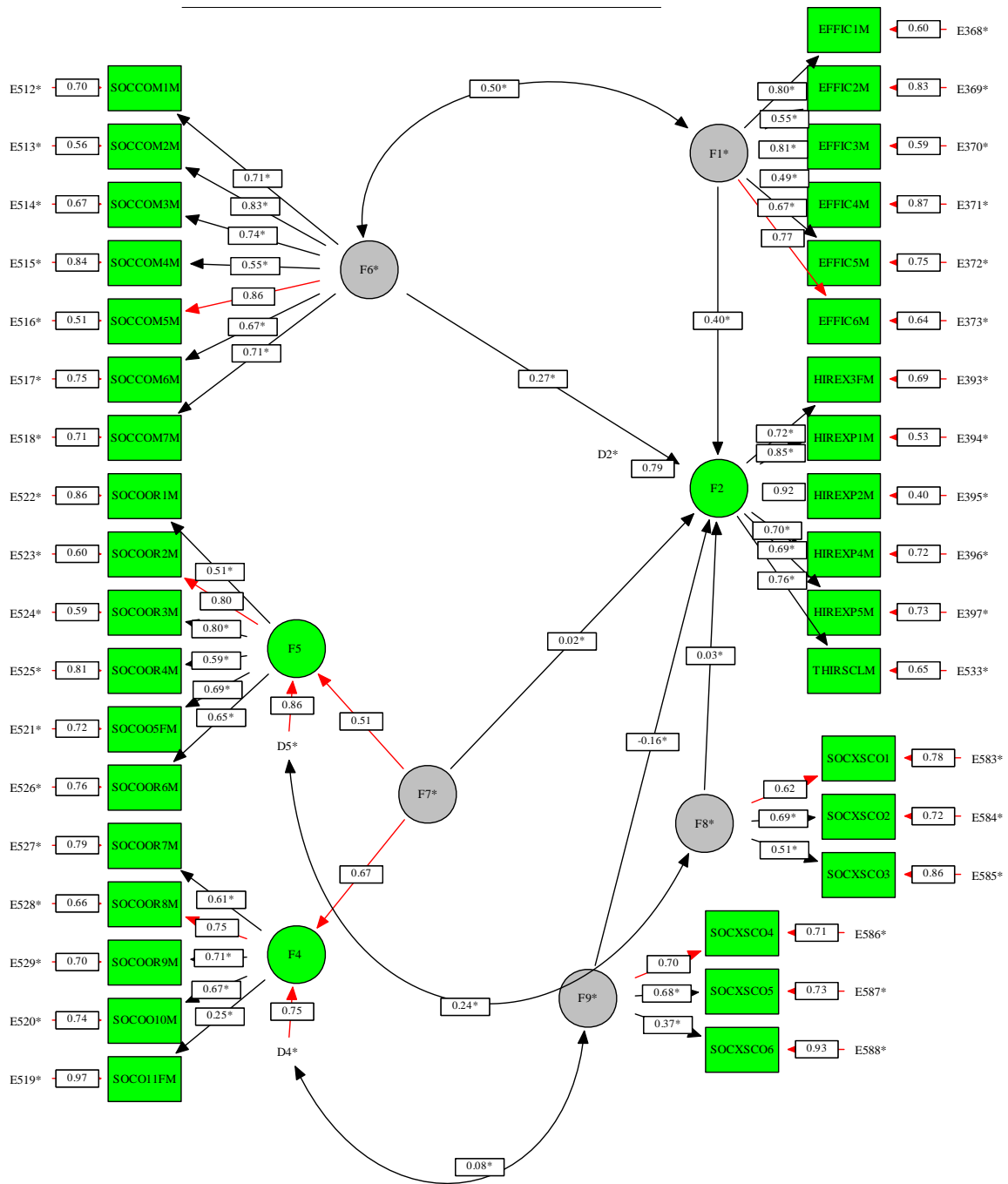


Figure 8. Model 8: The interaction of social comparison orientation and social comparisons on expectancies.

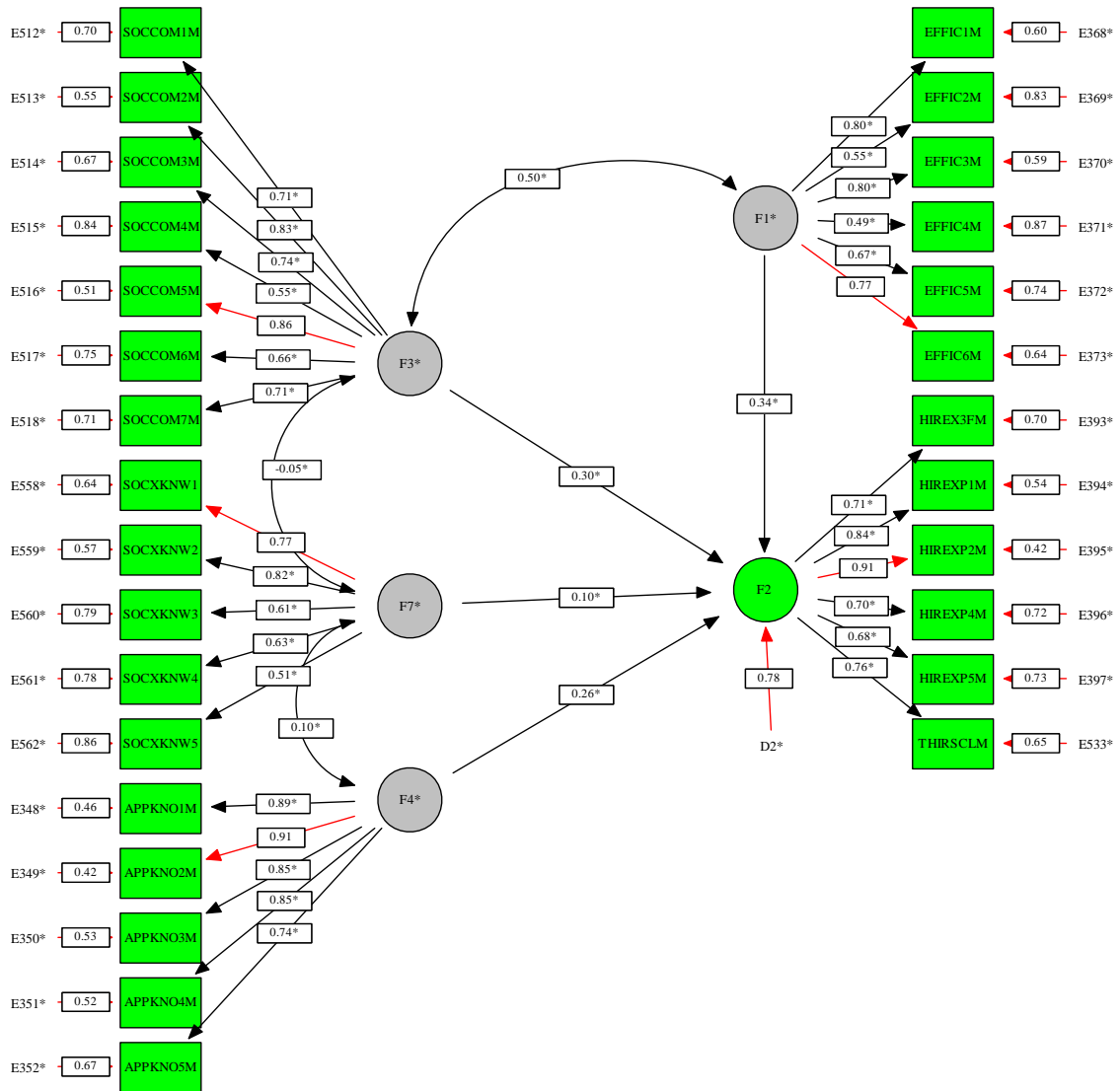


Figure 9. Model 9: The interaction of applicant knowledge and social comparisons on expectancies.

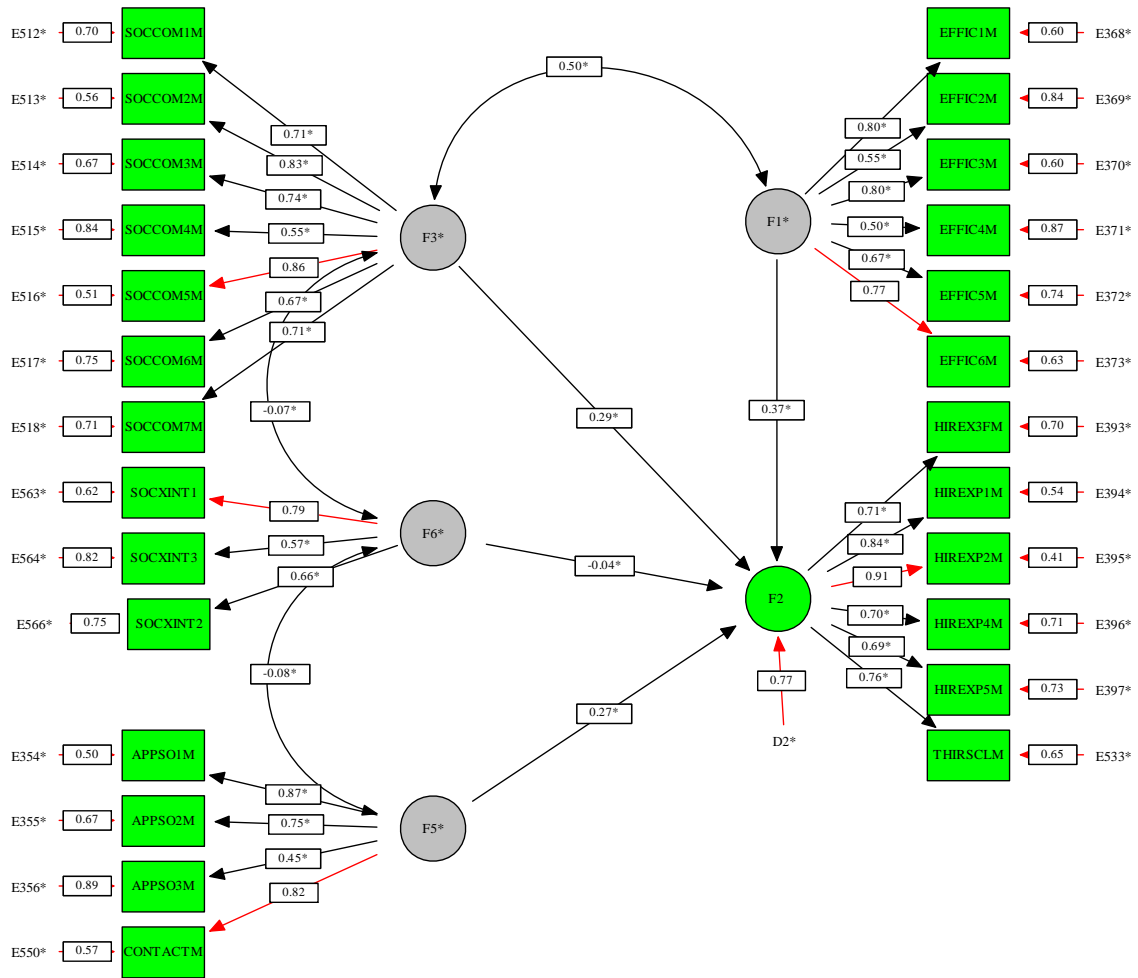


Figure 10. Model 10: The interaction of applicant contact and social comparisons on expectancies.

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