

GRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION AND  
PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES

by

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## DEDICATION

*To Jim Kern who left us too soon but had no unfinished business here.*

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This dissertation represents an achievement that would not have been possible without the dedication and unwavering support of Dr. Ken Wheeler, my committee chairman. The contributions of Dr. David Gray, Dr. Gary McMahan, Dr. George Benson, and Dr. Edmund Prater have made this project much stronger in every way, and my appreciation is immense.

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ABSTRACT

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The value of master's level business education has been previously studied primarily through cost/benefit analysis, generally confirming that MBAs make more money. This study addresses the large question of the value of business master's education by carving out a small area of interest. It looks at the relationship of individual differences to perceptions of organizational mobility, which is a precursor to voluntary turnover. Three research questions are investigated.

The first question is the relationship of cognitive ability to perceived organizational mobility. Cognitive ability was not seen by itself to be significantly related to perceived organizational mobility. In conjunction with high self-efficacy,

high cognitive ability was shown to be related to perceived organizational mobility. This indicates that the highest functioning workers may be the greatest risk of voluntary turnover.

The second research question addressed differences between generalist MBA students and specialized master's students in their perceptions of organizational mobility. Human capital theory would predict that generalists have more potential organizations to work for and would therefore be attractive to a greater number of other firms. This hypothesis was not supported. It was also hypothesized that the presence of an expected outcome of a pay raise or promotion would be influential in perceptions of organizational mobility and this hypothesis was supported.

The third research question involves goals and intentions of workers who return to school for an advanced business degree. It was found that a desire for professional advancement was more influential toward perceived organizational mobility than a desire to seek knowledge. A careerist orientation, which is characterized by opportunism, was also significantly related to perceived organizational mobility. This indicates that ambition is influential to perceived organizational mobility.

A field study was conducted through the use of a web-based survey of working master's students. Usable data was captured from 165 survey respondents. Archival data was furnished through records available. Eight hypotheses were tested through hierarchical moderated regression analyses. Support was found for four of the eight hypotheses.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 General Description of the Area of Concern

The Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) has been described as the ultimate academic achievement in preparation for business careers (Mintzberg, 2004). The importance of the MBA can be observed by the growth in annual graduates from 3,200 in 1956 (Zimmerman, 2001) to more than 100,000 in the late 1990s (Leonhardt, 2000), and sustained at that level into the new century (Mintzberg, 2004). On average, students that participate in MBA programs are 26 to 28 years old (Joiner, 2004) and they have received at least sixteen years of formal education by the time they complete their undergraduate degree. Having spent such a substantial portion of their lives in school, MBA seekers then make the decision to continue with more years of education. This pursuit often requires considerable personal sacrifice because it is typically at a time when the student has full time employment, as well as frequently having a spouse and children (Simpson, 2000). The value that schools offer to students in exchange for their efforts is potential career enhancement and increased income (Pfeffer & Fong, 2004). The desirability of MBA education is bolstered by the popular press through frequent commentary on pay expectations and various rankings of schools (Mintzberg, 2004). Higher pay for MBAs has been confirmed through research

(Connolly, 2003). Beyond income however, information on the career development value of business master's degrees is mostly anecdotal.

In justifying the MBA through cost/benefit analyses, its return on investment is usually shown to be from acceptable to spectacular (Connolly, 2003). Studies have examined the financial attractiveness of pursuing the MBA in terms of time spent, opportunity costs, return on investment, and salary increases (Connolly, 2003; Gottesman & Morey, 2005; Merritt & Hazlewood, 2003; Simpson, 2000; Slack, 1999). Other than the dollar value of the MBA, little research has been done that investigates the relationship of master's level education to career outcomes of business students. This dissertation examines the ways in which MBA education is associated with perceived organizational mobility for graduates.

## 1.2 Importance of Research

A considerable amount of study and commentary has focused on the economic value of an MBA without offering additional insight into other aspects of the value proposition of master's level business education (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). While cost/benefit analysis is important to understanding the meaning of an advanced degree to students, it is only one dimension.

This research will examine the relationship of business master's education to careers in a broader sense. Perceived organizational mobility (Griffeth, Steel, Allen, & Bryan, 2005) is used as an outcome of this study, recognizing the value of external marketability of workers (Parker & Arthur, 2000). Successful careers are considered to

be boundaryless careers (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1993; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003), as workers must increasingly cope with job loss, or moves both within and across organizational boundaries (Eby & DeMatteo, 2000; Sullivan, 1999; Sullivan, Carden, & Martin, 1998). A worker's perception that one has opportunities in the external labor market does not necessarily mean that an individual plans to leave the current organization (Blau, 1993), but these perceptions can be considered precursors to turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Mobley, 1977; Price & Mueller, 1986).

Employers tend to rely on anecdotal evidence to support their efforts to forestall the loss of workers through voluntary, or regrettable turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), leading them to create bonus incentives and innovative benefits as inducements to remain with the firm. Better information based on empirical research could lead to enhanced retention of good employees. The goal of this study is to more clearly identify some characteristics of workers who perceive themselves to have high inter-organizational mobility. Practitioners could also benefit from the identification of any effective measures they might take to lessen the attrition of workers to other firms. For example, Benson, Finegold, and Mohrman (2004) found that turnover of master's graduates is lower if they receive a promotion. This indicates that there may be a relationship of expected outcomes to turnover (Farrell & Rusbult, 1981; House & Dessler, 1974; Rusbult & Farrell, 1983).

### 1.3 Rationale of Research

This dissertation approaches individual differences of working graduate students in business from three perspectives. First, cognitive ability is predicted to be related to organizational mobility perceptions. This would be due to opportunities that may be more evident or more available to individuals who are higher functioning by virtue of high cognitive ability. Next is to examine the degree orientation of master's students in terms of their selection of either a generalist or a specialized program of study. Many universities offer a general MBA degree as well as an array of specialized business master's programs. The differing focus between generalized and specialized programs is identified in this dissertation as degree orientation. Although the two orientations differ somewhat by curriculum, there may also be differences in intentions for the use of the degree in the student's career. For example, a student may be using the degree primarily for the purpose of maximizing one's value in the overall job market. Human capital theory predicts that more generalized training is of use to a broader number of potential employers than specialized training (Becker, 1964). The third perspective is the educational readiness of master's students in which their motivation to seek education is related to their perceptions of organizational mobility.

Social cognitive theory is useful in understanding perceptions of organizational mobility. Self-efficacy is the primary mechanism of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy, which is a belief in the ability to perform (Bandura, 1986), is highly influential to the individual in shaping attitudes and behaviors (Bandura, 1997, 1986; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986). Individual beliefs of self-efficacy are influential



to the relationship between the student's cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility. Another element of social cognitive theory is expected outcomes. Expected outcomes can be manipulated by the organization in terms of offering specific rewards for worker performance. If these reward expectations can be shown to be related to lower perceived organizational mobility, there is justification to consider expected outcomes to be useful in employee retention.

#### 1.4 Research Objectives

The findings of this study will aid researchers in understanding how graduate education is related to perceived organizational mobility of workers depending upon their ability, career orientation, and motivation. A model will also help researchers understand the role of self-efficacy and expected outcomes in the career perceptions of master's program participants. Results will show the impact that the individual self-efficacy of employees has in relationship to workers' evaluation of alternative jobs, which could result in voluntary turnover. The findings of this research will also contribute to literatures of turnover and social cognitive theory by examining relationships that apply to a topic of current concern; the value of graduate education.

The major research questions of this dissertation are:

1. What is the relationship of graduate business education to organizational mobility?
2. Do MBAs perceive more opportunities to change employers than master's students earning specialized business degrees?
3. Do graduate students with high cognitive ability perceive greater opportunities to work for other employers?

4. Does self-efficacy relate to perceptions of organizational mobility?
5. What is the impact of expected outcomes on perceptions of organizational mobility?
6. What is the relationship between motives to pursue a graduate degree and the recognition of alternative job opportunities?

### 1.5 Overview of Dissertation

The literature pertaining to graduate education and the goals and intentions of additional education will be examined first. The predictors of perceived organizational mobility are then introduced in some detail. Social cognitive theory and its primary constructs of self-efficacy and expected outcomes are used to explain variation in the degree of organizational mobility that workers perceive for themselves. Eight hypotheses are developed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four discusses the research design and the methods used. Results and findings will be presented in the Fifth Chapter. Chapter Six presents a discussion of the findings, contributions to academic researchers and practitioners, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This review examines literature relevant to perceptions of organizational mobility for students earning master's degrees. The chapter consists of five sections. The first will be a perspective on graduate education and the ways in which its value is perceived by MBA students. The second is a discussion of motivations for pursuing master's level business education. The third section is a discussion of social cognitive theory pertaining to careers. The last two sections pertain to turnover theory and a brief discussion of the outcome variables that measure perceptions of career mobility.

#### 2.1 Graduate Education

Adults have many possible reasons to pursue advanced degrees but there is general consensus that graduate degrees enhance skills and increase wages for recipients (Grubb, 1993; Heywood, 1994; Hungerford & Solon, 1987). Arkes (1999) found that holders of advanced degrees performed better on standardized tests and received higher pay than those with bachelor's degrees. Independent of the knowledge acquired by workers or the applicability of that knowledge to a given job, a graduate degree increases the individual's value by furnishing a signaling of abilities (Spence, 1974) in which employers assume workers to be more competent when they have more education (Chiswick, 1973). This is known as the "sheepskin effect" that places a

special value on the motivation and personal character that is required for completion of a degree, even when the worker's ability represented by the degree is either already known by the employer or not particularly needed (Belman & Heywood, 1991; Frazis, 1993; Heywood, 1994; Hungerford & Solon, 1987) .

As career management responsibilities have shifted from employer to employee, workers must take the initiative to acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities that will maximize their careers (Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). Employability (Baruch, 2003; Fugate & Ashworth, 2003) refers to self-management of boundaryless careers that are likely to span multiple organizations (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1993, Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). Workers are required to make continual efforts to meet demands of the external environment in order to sustain a career (Mackenzie, 2003). One of the elements of employability is the worker's human capital in terms of perceived potential for productivity (Becker, 1975) that is increased through education and training (Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey, 1996). In this context, an MBA for some workers may be more of a credential for career advancement than it is for the acquisition of skills to help organizations solve management problems (Pfeffer, 2005).

The MBA has been widely considered an excellent way for workers to develop themselves in the acquisition of management skills that will enhance their career opportunities (Sturges, Simpson, & Altman, 2003). In one study that tracked MBAs for two years after their graduation, more than half reported changing functions and two-thirds reported an increase in their salary and benefits packages (Simpson, 2000). In addition to advanced studies for business graduates, the MBA is also popular with

recipients of non-business bachelor's degrees such as engineering and nursing. These students expand their skills base by receiving exposure to aspects of business such as management, finance, and marketing. Many of these MBAs have been able to create career opportunities for themselves in ways that would not have been possible in their more narrowly focused occupational track, based upon a technical degree or one otherwise unrelated to business (Slack, 1999).

The history of the MBA has been traced back to Dartmouth College in 1900 (Schlossman, Gleeson, Sedlak, & Allen, 1994). Only a very few degrees were awarded in those early years. Rapid growth did not take place until the mid 1950s at which time American business schools were awarding around 3,000 MBAs per year (Zimmerman, 2001). A tremendous increase was seen in British universities during the 1960s when the MBA was identified as an answer to the traditional rigid 'command and control' management style that was being partially blamed for low economic performance in the UK (Slack, 1999). By 1976 annual worldwide MBA graduations had grown to 42,000. The pace increased to reach annual worldwide graduation levels of more than 100,000 in 1998 (Leonhardt, 2000) and that level was sustained into the 2000's (Mintzberg, 2004).

Obviously MBA programs have become big business, fueled by popular perceptions of the MBA as a passport to success. In the late 1990s, MBA holders were described in the press with such superlatives as "the supermodels of the business world" (Mintzberg, 2004). The attraction of the MBA has been boosted by anecdotal legends of high earnings and six-figure signing bonuses for new graduates (Branch, 1997).

Gottesman and Morey (2005) investigated the relationship of CEO education to performance and discovered that compensation was higher for executives from the more prestigious graduate schools.

The value of pursuing an advanced degree in business is frequently cited in terms of cost/benefit analyses (Alsop, 2002; Bruce & Edgington, 2003; Connolly, 2003; McCabe & Trevino, 1995; Merritt & Hazlewood, 2003; Pope, 2002). By most accounts, the return on investment for earning an MBA is declining but still attractive (Connolly, 2003). Historically, there is a large difference in return on investment by college. Degrees from the top five-to-ten business schools have been shown to facilitate earnings that are enormously higher than the rest of MBA granting institutions (Merritt & Hazlewood, 2003) while other programs get high ROI ratings because their costs are low. For example, the University of Pittsburgh won top honors in a 1998 *Business Week* survey which calculated a 38% ROI because their program lasts only one year (Dunkin & Enbar, 1998).

Setting aside the cost/benefit analyses that predominate research and commentary on MBA education, a number of other questions remain unanswered concerning the career impact of graduate school. This dissertation looks at the perceptions of those earning graduate degrees as they are proceeding through their programs. In what particular ways do they see their advanced degree as increasing their job opportunities and career development? It has been shown that MBA students expect the degree to improve their career opportunities in very generalized terms (Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership, 2002). There is also research

comparing MBAs to specialized business Master's programs, finding that the MBAs achieve significantly better career success measured in promotions (Baruch, Bell, & Gray, 2005).

## 2.2 Cognitive Ability

Cognitive ability pertains to mental ability or intelligence (Ridgell & Lounsbury, 2004). Cognitive dimensions are frequently divided into verbal and quantitative skills. They can be recognized and measured through solving puzzles or problems, as well as skills in reasoning and the ability to address questions for which there are no verifiably correct answers (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Higher levels of cognitive ability enable one to comprehend strengths and weaknesses in opposing sides of a difficult issue, and also the capability to cognitively organize and manipulate concepts of high complexity. These cognitive abilities have been shown to increase during college. Capoor & Gelfman (1988) found an increase in general intellectual and analytical skill between freshmen and sophomores in such areas as communication, reasoning, and problem solving. Generalized intelligence is associated with success in academic endeavors (Rothstein, Paunonen, Rush, & King, 1994).

Cognitive ability goes beyond the retention of facts and information, a great deal of which is found to be forgotten soon after it has been presented in educational settings (Blunt & Blizzard, 1975; Brethower, 1977; Gustav, 1969; McLeish, 1968). Thus the enduring influence of education is the acquisition of general intellectual skills and

cognitive ability. These enhance the individual's capability to process and use new information, communicate effectively, and make reasonable decisions (Michael, 1975).

Questions arise as to how cognitive ability can be measured. This is particularly important in the prediction of academic performance of students desiring to enter graduate programs. Ideally, cognitive ability evaluation would include communication skills (Steele, 1986), operational reasoning (King, 1986), critical thinking (McMillan, 1987), and postformal reasoning (Kitchener & King, 1981). The cognitive ability variables are typically measured through verbal ability, quantitative aptitude, and undergraduate grades. In predicting the performance of graduate students in business schools, the common practice is to examine undergraduate grade point average (GPA) along with the results of a standardized test such as the GMAT or GRE. These methods are controversial due to their notoriously low predictive capability. Undergraduate GPA has been shown to explain 27% of graduate GPA (Ahmadi, Raiszadeh, & Helms, 1997) and the GMAT only explains 14% of Graduate GPA (Koys, 2004).

### 2.3 Degree Orientation

Graduate school students in many colleges of business can select a specialist master's program (MA, MSHR, Finance, etc.) or study for a generalist MBA. Specialist master's programs are targeted for specific career tracks and may therefore be useful for students who want to hone their skills in certain disciplines such as finance or human resources. In the generalist program, the "A" in MBA is for administration, signifying the intent to educate practicing managers in a management context (Mintzberg, 2004).



Motivations of MBA versus specialized master's students have mostly been written about anecdotally (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000; Simpson, 2000). A qualitative study by Sturges, Simpson, and Altman (2003) indicated that MBA students seek career competencies for their future career development, as well as career capital of self-confidence and credibility that will further their careers.

In an empirical comparison of outcomes of the two degree paths, Baruch, Bell, and Gray (2005) found that the relative organizational position just before and just after graduate school (i.e. promotions) increased more for the MBAs than the specialty business master's students. They identified this as an element of higher career success for the MBAs. These findings are consistent with the results of previous research showing improved career progress and increased managerial positions for MBA graduates (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000; Dreher & Chargois, 1998; Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Schofield, 1996). In a study of motivation to pursue an MBA, 88 percent of respondents reported that their primary goal was to improve job opportunities (Hawksley, 1996). The selection of an MBA program over a specialized master's is conceptually consistent with recognition of the potential productivity of greater human capital (Becker, 1964) that is reflected in the acquisition of training that is more generalized. Education that is more generalized leads to greater mobility of workers, partially due to poaching by other firms (Katz & Ziderman, 1990). An individual who selects the MBA instead of a specialized master's program may recognize the higher human capital represented by education that is more general in nature and transferable

to a greater number of organizations than the education provided in specific curriculums (Bishop, 1998).

#### 2.4 Careerist Orientation

Another possible motive for seeking a graduate degree in business is a careerist strategy that maximizes advancement. The opportunistic use of an advanced degree is consistent with a careerist approach (Mano-Negrin & Kirschenbaum, 1999) in which the worker's goal of attaining learning and personal development (Pfeffer & Fong, 2004) also includes a desire to maximize personal advancement (Feldman & Weitz, 1991). Careerists seek professional relationships that will open doors for them rather than meet affiliation and relatedness needs (Kram, 1985). Feldman and Weitz (1991) developed and tested a careerism scale, finding a careerist orientation toward work to be positively related to a desire for mobility. This indicates a disposition to change jobs. Careerist attitudes have been shown to affect turnover of physicians, but not paramedical employees or nurses, suggesting that turnover behavior is occupation specific (Mano-Negrin & Kirschenbaum, 1999). Careerism has not been previously studied with business master's students.

Employment associations are increasingly driven by a transactional approach in which parties have limited involvement in each others' lives and activities, and the focus is short-term and monetizable relationships (MacNeil, 1985; Rousseau & Parks, 1993). This type of transactional psychological contract that places the responsibility for career development upon the employee and no longer upon the employer (Peiperl &

Baruch, 1997) is conducive to is the careerist orientation. Implicit with careerism is the belief that self-interest is dominant and that the “organization-man” commitment does not exist (Aryee & Chen, 2004).

### 2.5 Motivations for Pursuing Master’s Level Education

Students elect to take part in graduate business studies for different reasons than the pursuit of their undergraduate degrees (Mackenzie, 2003). Although the undergraduate degree is career-focused, it is a broad exposure that has included substantial general education requirements for the purpose of providing a well-rounded educational experience. Upon entering a business master’s program, the interests of the student have become focused upon a more narrow path of studies that lead them to a higher professional level (Mackenzie, 2003) with skills that facilitate leadership and the ability to manage organizations (Mintzberg, 2004). In addition to the diverse motivations of any adult student (Michie, Glachan, & Bray, 2001) are concerns of workers that they may be easily dispensable to their current organizations (Aryee & Chen, 2004). The traditional psychological contract (Rousseau, 1989) that was characterized by reciprocal obligations between employer and employee has been changing to an emergent transactional contract (Peiperl & Baruch, 1997) in which employees must take responsibility for their career development in anticipation of likely job turnover.

## 2.6 Goals and Intentions of Additional Education

Motivation to participate in educational activities is influenced by workers' beliefs that these activities will result in favorable outcomes (Noe & Wilk, 1993). In addition to the knowledge and skills gained through the educational process are improvements in work outcomes (Naquin & Holton, 2003) that make up the transfer of learning. These outcomes include increased income, recognition by managers or peers, and increased chances for promotion (Dubin, 1990; Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990). Transfer of learning is generally defined in terms of applying new knowledge to the workplace (Mathieu & Martineau, 1997). The motivation to apply transfer of learning has seldom been examined in research (Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000). The present study examines workers who are currently involved in a learning process and tries to connect their motives for pursuing education to their perceptions of potential outcomes.

### *2.6.1 Motives for Educational Participation*

Houle (1961) proposed that adult education participants had three primary orientations: to pursue goals, activities, or learning. The goal oriented learner seeks advancement and competency by comparing his/her performance to others. This is distinct from a learning orientation that seeks knowledge to satisfy an inquiring mind and a desire of learning for its own sake. An activities orientation for learning seeks the satisfaction of needs for social contact, community service, and a relief of mundane routines. Recognition of the complexity of learning motivation has increased

dramatically since 1961 but most classifications can be collapsed back into Houle's original typology (Fujita-Starck, 1996).

Drawing upon Houle's typology, six factors were identified by Boshier (1991) in developing the educational participation scale (EPS) that offers a heuristic framework identifying motivations to participate in educational activities. These factors are social contact, social stimulation, professional advancement, community service, external expectations, and cognitive interest. The EPS is a multidimensional measure of learning motivation. The six subscales are usually examined individually by researchers (Boshier, 1971, 1977; Boshier & Collins, 1983; Fujita-Starck, 1996; O'Connor, 1979, 1982), indicating that there is not an overall construct of learning motivational orientation (Dia, Smith, Cohen-Callow, & Bliss, 2005). Two of the EPS dimensions are selected for this research. Professional advancement describes learning to keep up with competition and provide higher job status. In cluster analysis, it matches the Houle dimension of goal orientation (Boshier & Collins, 1985). The other dimension is professional knowledge, which is associated with the Houle dimension of learning orientation. It emphasized the desire for learning that satisfies the worker's curiosity for knowledge and the desire to be more competent. The professional knowledge scale and professional advancement scale have been shown to be highly correlated (O'Connor, 1982).

### *2.6.2 Perceived Need for Skill Improvement*

Workers may use a process of self-assessment (Noe & Schmitt, 1986) to identify deficiencies in skills. Career insight (London, 1983) is the degree to which a worker understands career related strengths and weaknesses. This leads to career motivation (London & Mone, 1987; Noe, Noe, & Bachhuber, 1990) in establishing specific career goals and making decisions in favor of pursuing developmental activity. Motivation to take part in these activities has been shown to be related to workers' level of belief that valuable benefits and outcomes will result from their efforts (Birdi, Allan, & Warr, 1997; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Maurer & Palmer, 1999; Noe & Wilk, 1993).

Maurer and Tarulli (1994) developed a perceived need for skill improvement scale that indicates the degree to which respondents believe that their career related skills or knowledge need to be improved. This perceived need has been shown to be influential to actual involvement in training and development, particularly in conjunction with self-efficacy and perceived benefits of training (Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003). This study proposes to build on the linkage of perceived need for skill improvement and actual participation in development, to see if it is related to perceptions of organizational mobility.

## 2.7 Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory is a framework describing behavior and social learning, which recognizes that individuals process and act upon information according to their own characteristics (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). People believe that they have the

power to make things happen. Since these beliefs are personal, intentional cognition brings willpower to bear upon the external environment (Rottschaefer, 1985). Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) envisions behavior as arising from anticipatory thought that results from interactions between environment, behavior, and cognition. This interaction is continuous and bi-directional.

Similar to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), social cognitive theory indicates that individuals who participate in development activities hold beliefs relating to the expected outcomes of their behavior (Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990). Social cognitive theory is being proposed as influential in describing the relationship between master's level degree programs and perceived organizational mobility. A characteristic of individual differences in social cognitive theory is self-efficacy, which is a key element in Bandura's (1986) view of causation between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

### *2.7.1 Self-efficacy*

The most pivotal construct in social cognitive theory is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1991; Bandura & Locke, 2003). It is defined as the way individuals judge their capability to initiate actions that will result in desired performance. It is not concerned with the person's skill level, but with the evaluation of how those skills can be used (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy is an individual difference characteristic that falls in the category of perceived behavioral control (Murray & Gerhart, 2000). It arises from the

individual's judgment to initiate a behavior as well as pursue a task through persistence, thoughts, or feelings (Sadri & Robertson, 1993).

Self-efficacy is relevant for this study based on its suggested use as an individual, situational based construct (Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003) that is related to learning motivation and behavior (Baldwin & Magjuka, 1997; Bandura, 1997; Maurer, 2001; Noe & Wilk, 1993; Noe, Wilk, Mullen, & Wanek, 1997). Self-efficacy can be measured in a situational context (Mathieu, Martineau, & Tannenbaum, 1993), making it useful for isolating its effects to specified experiences and attitudes in a work environment. These efficacy measurements are also isolated in the way that they do not address other aspects, such as how important the experience is (Mathieu & Martineau, 1997).

Beliefs of personal efficacy shape performance and career choices to a much greater extent than the actual experience or skills (Bandura, 1997). For example, Lent, Lopez, & Beischke (1993) found that the levels of a person's self-efficacy and expected outcomes were more influential in successfully acquiring mathematical skills than the actual math skills of individuals. Perceived levels of mathematical efficacy are more influential to the use of quantitative skills than are the amount of math education received in school, level of actual mathematical ability, or past achievement in math (Hackett & Betz, 1989). Self-efficacy to achieve educational requirements and perform job functions has been found to be positively related to wider career options and higher interest in the goals (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986; Matsui, Ikeda, & Ohnishi, 1989).



Self-efficacy is one of the variables that has been linked to training motivation and training effectiveness (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000) in existing research on training motivation. It has also shown positive relationships to learning and motivation to learn (Gist, Stevens, & Bavetta, 1991; Martocchio & Webster, 1992; Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 1992; Quinones, 1995). Self-efficacy is influential in determining an individual's participation in development such as courses, seminars, and activities that influence personal and professional growth (Gist, 1987; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Noe & Wilk, 1993).

Studies in which self-efficacy has been significantly related to organizational performance include managerial performance, attendance (Frayne & Latham, 1987, Latham & Frayne, 1989), faculty research productivity (Taylor et al., 1984), career choice (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Jones, 1986; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986), and adaptability to new technology (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Hill, Smith, & Mann, 1987).

A number of different types of self-efficacy have been examined in research, such as self-efficacy for development relative to other people, absolute self-efficacy for development (Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003), career decision-making self-efficacy (Taylor & Bretz, 1983), training self-efficacy (Guerrero & Sire, 2001), task self-efficacy (Pond & Hay, 1989), absolute self-efficacy (Maurer, Mitchell, & Barbeite, 2002), technological self-efficacy (McDonald & Siegall, 1996), mathematics self-efficacy (Hackett & Betz, 1989; Lent, Lopez, & Bieschke, 1993), computer self-efficacy (Compeau & Higgins, 1995), change-specific self-efficacy (organizational

restructuring) (Ashford, 1988; Wanberg & Banas, 2000), remote work self-efficacy (Staples, Hurland, & Higgins, 1999), and occupational self-efficacy (Schyns & Von Collani, 2002). Job-change self-efficacy (Cunningham et al., 2002) refers to confidence that skills can be transferred and job change can be coped with. A domain specific measure of self-efficacy will be utilized in this research that matches the constructs being studied.

### *2.7.2 Expected Outcomes*

Outcome expectancies are another key construct in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991; 1986). These expectancies create a causal linkage between behavior and the outcome that is expected (Latham, 2001). Expected outcomes are specific to a task or situation, representing beliefs about the long or short term outcomes of behavior (Frayne & Geringer, 2000). While self-efficacy is a better predictor of performance than expected outcomes (Barling & Abel, 1983; Lee, 1984; Manning & Wright, 1983; Williams & Watson, 1985), outcome expectancy has a role in regulating behavior. According to Bandura (1986), the likelihood of achieving outcomes that are expected to provide either favorable or unfavorable consequences create a social linkage. This expectation influences the way self-judged efficacy would lead to a decision of which action to pursue.

The measurements of expected outcomes are a good compliment to self-efficacy by adding an element to the cognitive process that can be manipulated externally. Outcome expectancies can be generated internally by the individual, or by an outside

influence. Self-efficacy shapes expectations internally and influences the controllability of external contingencies. The kind of outcome the individual anticipates is dependent upon how well he or she believes in one's ability to perform in a given situation. Efficacy beliefs account for a smaller portion of variability in outcome expectations if the outcomes are not entirely determined by the quality of performance. External influences can restrict or expand outcome expectancies according to categorical or arbitrary standards. For example, if ethnicity, age, or gender create limitations on entire groups, expected outcomes are uniformly lower, irrespective of self-efficacy. If these barriers are removed, self-efficacy becomes a prime determinant of performance (Bandura, 1997). Expansion of expected outcomes occurs from external influences when inducements such as rewards are provided for a specified behavior.

In this dissertation research, externally generated expected outcomes will be identified as the conveyed expectation that workers who complete their master's degrees will receive a significant reward from their current employer. This reward expectation, in the form of a pay raise or promotion, has a basis in existing research. Expected outcomes have been shown to be influential in performance after training (Frayne & Geringer, 2000) when positive expectations have been established. This is consistent with theories of reasoned action and planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) in which expected outcomes are a known element and that value is placed upon those outcomes. In addition to rewards, negative outcome expectations have been shown to influence changes in worker behavior (Latham, 2001), based on social norms, censure, and self-sanction that arise from violations. Social cognitive

theory combines the influence of external rewards with the stabilizing effect of how people judge their abilities to perform (Bandura, 1997).

## 2.8 Outcome Variables

The dependent variables for this study are perceptions of organizational mobility. This is part of the turnover process. It is common to find withdrawal behavior begin to develop when workers become disappointed about some aspect of their job experience, to the extent that they do not feel at ease (Taris & Feij, 2001). As withdrawal behavior progresses, it is termed intention to turnover, intention to leave, or intention to quit. Intention to turnover is a self-reported variable that has been shown to be predictive of actual turnover (Carsten & Spector, 1987; Steel & Orvalle, 1984).

Intention to turnover has been supported a great deal as an outcome variable that is negatively related to the predictive constructs of job satisfaction and affective commitment (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell, 1957; Locke, 1975; Porter & Steers, 1973; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001; Vroom, 1964). In examining the progression of the turnover process, research has generally shown that causal relationships of various elements of the job lead to job dissatisfaction, creating low organizational commitment, followed by intention to turnover (Bluedorn, 1979; Price & Bluedorn, 1979, Price & Mueller, 1979) and ultimately leading to actual turnover. This is known as the dissatisfaction-quit sequence (Mobley, 1977; Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999).

Predictors of turnover, also known as proximal precursors in the withdrawal process (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000) are job satisfaction, job search, comparison of alternatives, organizational commitment, withdrawal intentions, and quit intentions. Earlier research found that the interaction between job satisfaction and job opportunities is an immediate antecedent to voluntary turnover (Price, 1977; Steers & Mowday, 1981). The process was described by Mobley (1977) as dissatisfaction followed by thoughts of leaving, evaluation of expected utility of a search and cost of leaving, intention to search for job alternatives, actual search for alternatives, comparison of alternatives with the present job, and intention to leave.

An employment opportunity index (EOI) was developed by Griffeth, Steel, Allen, and Bryan (2005) as a measure of the portion of the turnover process that involves workers' consideration of perceived ability to maintain employment by moving to a different organization.

### *2.8.1 The Employment Opportunity Index*

The EOI (Griffeth, Steel, Allen, & Bryan, 2005) is a measurement scale intended to capture job mobility perceptions through a group of microprocesses. Ease of movement and desirability of movement were described by March and Simon (1958) as being instrumental to the motivation to either stay with an organization or leave. A central consideration in ease of movement was identified as the number of interorganizational alternatives perceived (Steel & Griffeth, 1989). Workers are

unlikely to quit without taking into consideration the alternatives that might be available.

Turnover literature has used perceived alternatives extensively (Jackofsky, 1984; Mobley, 1977; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Price & Mueller, 1981). March and Simon (1958) described job alternatives as being a multidimensional construct that includes number of organizations recognized, business activity levels, and individual differences. Researchers have selected certain aspects of perceived alternatives and measured them with short or single-item scales (Steel & Griffeth, 1989). Measures have appeared as “employment opportunity” (Price & Mueller, 1981), “ease of movement”, (Jackofsky & Peters, 1983), or “availability of alternatives” (Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1978). These do not capture the full dimensionality of perceived alternatives and only account for a small portion of turnover variability (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Hom, Caranikas-Walker, Prussia, and Griffeth, 1992).

Griffeth et al. (2005) do not feel that employment market perceptions can be summarized with one-dimensional constructs and have designed the employment opportunity index (EOI) to recapture the richness originally conceived by March and Simon (1958). The index is composed of five factors that bear a relationship to constructs used in previous research to measure alternative job search behaviors. Three of the factors relate to mobility in terms of the degree of difficulty in changing organizational affiliation. They are ease of movement, desirability of movement, and mobility. There is a refinement of job alternatives called crystallization of alternatives.

The last factor is a measure of networking. Items that comprise the EOI scales are known to be proximal precursors in the process of voluntary withdrawal that have been shown to be predictive of turnover (Hom & Griffeth, 1995).

#### *2.8.1.1 Ease of movement*

Three constructs of the EOI sound quite similar and their distinctiveness needs to be highlighted. These are ease of movement, mobility, and desirability of movement. Ease of movement (Jackofsky & Peters, 1983; Michaels & Spector, 1982) is a construct that identifies the general impression of accessibility to alternative jobs (Price & Mueller, 1981; Steel, Lounsberry, & Horst, 1981). It asks the ease with which the respondent feels they could find alternate employment, based on awareness of the number and availabilities of jobs. This does not take into account any implications of uprooting the family or making other sacrifices (Steel & Griffeth, 1989), which is identified in a different scale dimension of mobility. Ease of movement is directly related to characteristics, marketable skills, and competencies of the worker that cause them to be attractive to other organizations. For example, in the original conception of ease of movement it was predicted that females, older workers, and lower social status workers would have greater difficulty in finding replacement jobs (March & Simon, 1958).

### 2.8.1.2 *Desirability of movement*

While ease of movement refers to the quantity of jobs available, desirability of movement pertains to job quality of those alternatives (Billings & Wemmerus, 1983; Farrell & Rusbult, 1981; Peters, Jackofsky, & Salter, 1981). It is possible to generate a number of alternative jobs without having any real improvement in the work situation. March & Simon (1958) described length of service, specialization, and skill level as reducing the value of extraorganizational alternatives perceived. As workers progress in their careers, the number of organizations with desire or ability to offer an improved work situation may become fewer. Research for many years has shown a negative relationship between skill levels and voluntary turnover (Morse, 1953; Reynolds, 1951). Thus, the key element to desirability of movement is the expectation that a job change would be for the purpose of obtaining a *better* job (Griffeth et al., 2005).

### 2.8.1.3 *Mobility*

It might be relatively easy to locate a suitable replacement job, but the suitability of the offer is impacted by the extent to which the worker is uprooted physically, emotionally, or financially. The psychosocial aspects of changing jobs are addressed in the mobility construct. This includes impact upon the family, loss of perks or benefits acquired through organizational tenure, and psychological impact of the new job (Steel & Griffeth, 1989). Lack of mobility can render an opportunity unsuitable when dual careers or reluctance to uproot children cause the worker to be substantially locked into an organization or location (Griffeth et al., 2005).



#### *2.8.1.4 Crystallization of Job Alternatives*

Crystallization of job alternatives (Griffeth & Hom, 1988) is used to identify the worker's perceived concreteness of alternative employment opportunities. That is to say that definite job offers are more useful than just a general impression that there are jobs available (Steel & Griffeth, 1989). Crystallized job alternatives would be more of an inducement to leave the organization than a vague impression that there are replacement jobs to which the worker could go.

#### *2.8.1.5 Networking*

Another element in the perception of interorganizational alternatives is networking. Steel and Griffeth (1989) referred to this as *access to job-availability information* and envisioned it as sources to information through advertising outlets as well as through personal networks of family, friends, and co-workers. Information is vitally important in the search for job opportunities, and it can be assumed that higher quality of information is more advantageous to this process (Griffeth et al., 2005). The measure of networking makes mention of *helpful contacts* in each of its items.

#### *2.8.2 Overall Comments on the EOI*

The multifaceted approach of the EOI is useful for the complex evaluation of perceived job alternatives. Unidimensional measures have a history of poor predictive

capability (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000) because they are inadequate to measure a multifaceted construct such as employment opportunity. The EOI recognizes individual differences that are nuanced in ways that unidimensional measures cannot hope to distinguish (Griffeth et al., 2005). An example of enhanced predictive fidelity is to compare the conceptual difference between “How easy would it be to find acceptable alternative employment?” (Michaels & Spector, 1982) and “If you were to leave your current job, how difficult do you think it would be to find another job that was just as good?” (Gerhart, 1990). The EOI dimensions reveal more detail in perceptions of job alternatives.

Any of the five EOI factors could be rated high by a respondent, along with weak ratings on other factors, creating important nuanced differences. For example, family obligations might afford a worker low mobility, even if ease of movement is high due to many alternative jobs available. Additionally, mobility and ease of movement are unrelated to the question of whether or not the jobs are any better than the current job (desirability of movement). These elements considered individually and collectively present a much richer measure of a complex perceptual target. The EOI is the first measure to bring together these many elements of perceived interorganizational alternatives (Griffeth et al., 2005).

## 2.9 Summary

It is likely that workers engage in a predictable cognitive and behavioral sequence as they proceed through the voluntary turnover process (Griffeth, Hom, &

Gaertner, 2000). Dissatisfaction activates the intention to turnover, followed by discovery and evaluation of available employment options (Blau, 1993). Thus, the EOI is potentially predictive of an early part of the turnover cycle.

The review of literature covers the major constructs that will be used in this study. Social cognitive theory, human capital theory, and turnover theory are discussed in their relationships to the research questions. Self-efficacy and expected outcomes are influential to behavior and may be related to individual perceptions of graduate school outcomes. In summary, master's level business education has been frequently examined for its contributions to income, but very little in relationship to perceptions of organizational mobility. Chapter three puts the constructs of the study into a structural model and formulates hypotheses of worker perceptions.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROPOSED MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

This chapter details the relationships to be studied between individual differences of students and their perceptions of organizational mobility. The model in figure 1 describes the relationships studied. Individual differences of master's students appear on the left side of the model. They are cognitive ability, degree orientation, careerism, and educational goals. The outcome variables of perceived organizational mobility are on the right side of the model. Social cognitive theory constructs of self-efficacy and expected outcomes appear as both main effects and interaction terms. The model can be conceptualized as having four parts. The relationship of cognitive ability and self-efficacy to perceptions of organizational mobility represents perceived opportunities for higher functioning individuals. The next relationship in the model addresses degree orientation and pertains to the value of a generalist MBA credential when compared to a specialized master's degree and in context to expected outcomes. The third part of the model looks at the relationship of a careerist orientation to perceived mobility. The last part of the model investigates goals and intentions of the student and their relationship to perceived future organizational mobility.

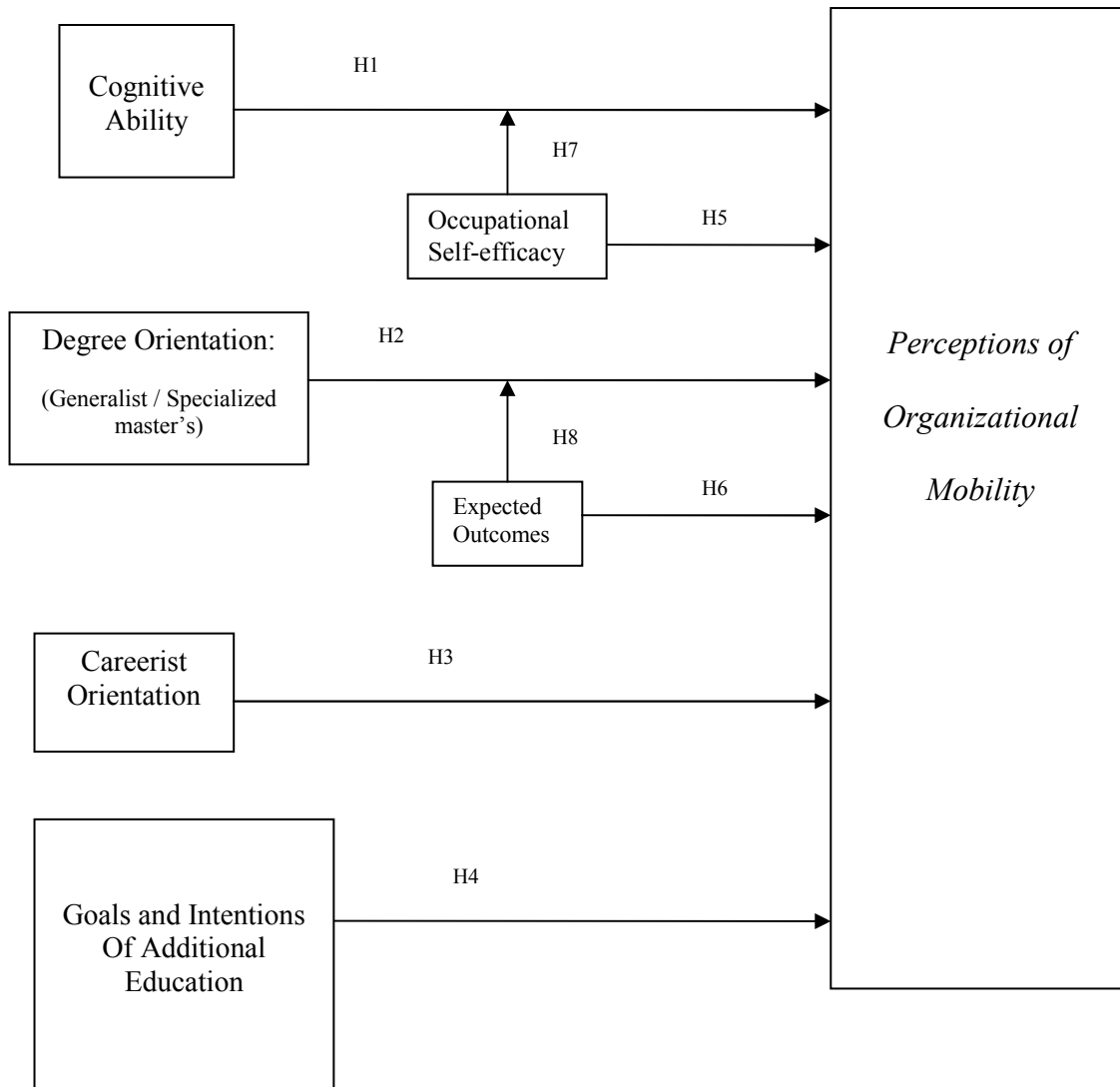


Figure 1 Research Model

### 3.1 Hypotheses Development

While cognitive ability is positively linked to job performance (Hunter & Hunter, 1984), it has also been found to be related to higher voluntary job turnover. High cognitive ability is an individual difference that improves workers' marketability and makes them more likely to turnover (Dickter, Roznowski, & Harrison, 1996). High performers are more likely to leave the organization than low performers (Schwab, 1991). Murnane, Singer, & Willett (1988) observed higher turnover among teachers who earned a high test score on the National Teacher Examination. Gerhart (1990) found cognitive ability to be related positively to perceived ease of movement. Schwab (1991) found among tenured faculty that higher performers were more likely to leave than lower performers.

Students with higher cognitive ability will perceive greater opportunities to move to different organizations. High cognitive ability will be associated with more potential alternative jobs (ease of movement) and better quality of alternative jobs (desirability of movement). Cognitive ability is a type of human capital that facilitates ease of movement (Trevor, 2001) through its association with observable and quantifiable attributes such as performance on pre-employment tests and structured interviews (Campion, Campion, & Hudson, 1994). The potential for organizational mobility can be inferred by the positive relationship of cognitive ability to job promotions (Colarelli, Dean, & Konstans, 1987), general job knowledge (Hunter, 1986), and performance of work samples (Schmidt, Hunter, & Outerbridge, 1986). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility.

An MBA is a generalist degree that offers understanding of a number of aspects of business such as marketing, finance, and operations management. It also takes students into soft skills domains such as communication and management of human resources. The MBA is particularly well suited for undergraduate degree holders from other disciplines such as engineering (Slack, 1999). For non-business degreed workers who feel that their previous qualifications limit them to the practice of their specialty field of training, the MBA is considered an excellent qualification for advancement in an organization. The coursework provides exposure that was not previously part of the curriculum for these adult students. There is an abundance of anecdotal evidence that technical degree holders have progressed in their careers greatly by seeking an MBA rather than an advanced degree in their primary skill area (Sturges, Simpson, & Altman, 2003).

On the other hand, business students in specialized master's programs are seeking depth of knowledge in their selected fields. Often having earned an undergraduate degree in business, their careers have led them to a professional interest in becoming specialized in their primary domain of interest. Although the following distinctions between specialized and generalized business master's programs have not been studied, I am proposing that specialized master's students are to a lesser extent than MBAs interested in making themselves more attractive to other organizations. Rather, the specialists are motivated to become more professional in functioning in their

current organization or a similar organization, thereby limiting their access to a broader spectrum of potential employers.

Workers progressing toward their MBA will have comparatively higher overall perceptions of organizational mobility than the specialty master's candidates, presenting them better opportunities to move to different organizations. Ease of movement will be greater for the MBA as the jobs available to the generalist will be more numerous than for the more focused qualifications of the specialized master's degree, resulting in a smaller potential job pool for the specialist. In examining the immediate outcomes of graduate school, MBAs have been found to experience a larger increase of positions in the organizational hierarchy in comparison to graduates from specialized master's programs (Baruch, Bell, & Gray, 2005). This is influential to the factor of desirability of movement in which the job alternatives available to MBAs are an improvement over the job that is currently held. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: Seekers of generalized degrees will have greater perceptions of organizational mobility than students seeking specialized degrees.

A careerist is one who puts self-interest ahead of trust or loyalty toward one's organization (Aryee & Chen, 2004). They would tend to pursue advancement by networking, building friendships, and working the political grapevine. The non-careerist, on the other hand would tend to seek security in the organization by working extra hours and pursuing goals that are congruent with the long-term interests of the organization (Thompson, Kirkham, & Dixon, 1985). Feldman and Weitz (1991) found the careerist orientation to be negatively related to job involvement, job satisfaction, and



organizational commitment, but positively related to a disposition to change jobs. Careerists believe that tactics are required in order to secure career advancement and that it is sometimes necessary to pursue personal advancement rather than the organization's best interests (Feldman, 1985). Since careerists are much more likely to leave the organization (Blau & Boal, 1989), they will have high perceptions of opportunities with other organizations. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a positive relationship between a careerist orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility.

Expectancy theory can be applied to professional development behavior (Dubin, 1990) that would lead a worker to return to college for an advanced degree. Motivation to pursue development activities is affected by the perceived instrumentality of the learned skills or knowledge (Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990). Research has shown that participation in development is related to the positive outcomes that the individual expects (Noe & Wilk, 1993). These outcomes include increased income, more interesting work, and becoming a better person (Maurer & Tarulli, 1994). Workers who invest in their own skills hope that the results will include higher pay and continued employment (McKenzie & Lee, 1998). However, in an era of the boundaryless career (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003; Sullivan, 1999), mobility to other organizations can often be expected. Relationships with a current employer can be interrupted by downsizing, restructuring, and other threats to job security (Miles & Snow, 1996; Hall, 1996) that lead to movement to different jobs, firms, and careers (Arthur & Rousseau,

1996). Motivations to pursue master's level education in relationship to future organizational mobility have not been previously studied. This is a distinct contribution to extensive existing research evaluating the economic cost/benefits of graduate education. Thus the following hypothesis is presented:

H4: There is a positive relationship between the goals and intentions of additional education and perceptions of organizational mobility.

Self-efficacy has been associated with readiness for occupational and organizational change (Cunningham et al., 2002; Schyns & Von Collani, 2002). Readiness for change is defined in this context as a desire for higher task demands and complexity in a situation where the worker has considered making a change but has not started the change process (Schyns, 2004). Change is stressful and can diminish the individual's sense of well-being unless one has high levels of self-esteem, optimism, and perceived control (Taylor & Brown, 1988). These resilience attributes include self-efficacy as well as locus of control (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998) and have been positively associated with acceptance of change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000).

Self-efficacy plays an important role in this process by furnishing the conviction that the individual can behave in a way that will lead to expected outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Not only is this effective for changes that take place within the organization (McDonald & Siegall, 1996), but self-efficacy also enhances the learning of new jobs (Morrison & Brantner, 1992). Workers with high self-efficacy will voluntarily accept more demanding tasks (Schyns, 2004), believing that they can persist and achieve their performance goals (Bandura, 1997).

The relationship of self-efficacy to perceptions of organizational mobility will be positive. The high readiness for change that is included with the attributes of the high self-efficacy individual will be influential toward the factors of organizational mobility. These workers who generally apply greater effort and persistence, as well as presenting themselves as favorably as possible, will observe high ease of movement as their numbers of alternative employment alternatives are maximized. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H5: There is a positive relationship between occupational self-efficacy and perceptions of organizational mobility.

Expected outcomes are related to the dimensions of perceived organizational mobility. When workers are led to anticipate a significant reward such as a pay raise or promotion as the result of achieving the master's degree, these outcome expectations reduce ease of movement and desirability of movement. Although the worker is more attractive in the external market after achieving the master's degree, the reward that one anticipates receiving from the current organization as an expected outcome of graduating reduces the number of comparable jobs available. This is the result of eliminating the possible jobs that fall between one's old and new status. Desirability of movement is also reduced with high expected outcomes, as other potential jobs in the market would need to offer status and compensation above that which has been awarded to the new graduate. The following hypothesis states:

H6: There is a negative relationship between expected outcomes and perceptions of organizational mobility.

General self-efficacy is likely to be strong in students who pursue advanced degrees, since they would not be applying the time and effort toward graduate studies if they had low self-efficacy. A more focused construct of occupational self-efficacy has been selected for this research. It measures a narrower and more specific range of self-efficacy that is directly related to the workplace experience.

Wright, Kacmar, McMahan, and Deleeuw (1995) found support for the Maier (1958) model of job performance (i.e.,  $P = f(A \times M)$ ) in which ability was the interaction term in the relationship between motivation and performance. However, Lent, Lopez, & Beischke (1993) found that motivation (self-efficacy) moderated the relationship between ability and performance. Self-efficacy was more influential in the acquisition of math skills than the mathematical ability of students. This supports Bandura's (1997) contention that beliefs of personal efficacy shape performance to a greater extent than experience or skills. Similarly, Saks and Ashforth (1999) found self-efficacy to be a stronger predictor of job search success than grade point average.

The strength of the moderator effect of self-efficacy proposed in this hypothesis varies by cognitive ability of the worker. While high cognitive ability students will have greater perceptions of organizational mobility than low cognitive ability students, high self-efficacy will increase the magnitude of this positive relationship. This is due to the readiness for organizational change that is associated with self-efficacy (Cunningham et al., 2002; Schyns & Von Collani, 2002). Thus, the student with higher

cognitive ability will perceive higher organizational mobility than the low cognitive ability student, but the addition of self-efficacy will increase the worker's awareness of ease of movement and desirability of movement. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H7: Occupational self-efficacy will moderate the relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that high self-efficacy increases the level of perceived organizational mobility.

Expected outcomes are proposed as a moderator in the relationship between graduate studies degree orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility. These expectancies are a measure of the positive or negative outcome that is anticipated as the result of a behavior (Latham, 2001). Organizations that establish an outcome expectancy are creating an external influence that functions favorably when combined with the individual's self-efficacy, thus combining two critical elements in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986; Frayne & Geringer, 2000; Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003).

The expected outcome in this study is the anticipation of receiving a pay raise or promotion in the worker's current organization. It arises primarily from explicit statements that the employer has made but could also be arrived at implicitly through observing the outcomes experienced by co-workers who have graduated previously. This type of expectation is related to compensation strategies of the firm with regard to labor (Milkovich, 1988; Milkovich & Boudreau, 1994; Milkovich & Newman, 1993).

Strategies that use expected outcomes are designed to attract workers, motivate high individual performance, reduce turnover, increase job satisfaction, or improve organizational commitment. The offer of a significant reward for the achievement of a graduate degree is a certain type of pay for performance system (Lawler, 1989). It can be described as future oriented rather than current oriented (Noe, Wilk, Mullen, & Wanek, 1997), making it a strategy that is comparatively difficult to operationalize because the desired activities are not immediately rewarded.

Perceived organizational mobility will be the highest when low expected outcomes are combined with the generalist degree orientation. These workers with broader utility and higher human capital than the specialized degree students will be the most aware of opportunities in the external employment markets if they are unencumbered by the expectation of a pay raise or promotion after graduating. High expectations of organizational rewards for these workers would significantly reduce the likelihood that the replacement job would be better a better job, as well as reducing the overall numbers of potential replacement jobs.

Perceived organizational mobility will be the lowest for specialized master's students when their expected outcomes are high. In receiving a valuable reward for achieving their degrees, alternative jobs for the specialized master's students are less available than for generalist MBA students who have higher human capital. Specialized master's students with high expected outcomes will have less perception of organizational mobility than generalist master's degree earners due to the specialist's

lower human capital as well as their orientation more toward professional service than financial reward.

The aforementioned leads to the following hypothesis:

H8: Expected outcomes will moderate the relationship between degree orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that low expected outcomes increase the level of perceived organizational mobility.

Table 1 contains a summarized list of the eight hypotheses tested in this study.

Chapter Four will discuss the methodology used for the study.

Table 1 List of Hypotheses

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- HYPOTHESIS 1: There is a positive relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility.
- HYPOTHESIS 2: Seekers of generalized degrees will have greater perceptions of organizational mobility than students seeking specialized degrees.
- HYPOTHESIS 3: There is a positive relationship between a careerist orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility.
- HYPOTHESIS 4: There is a positive relationship between the goals and intentions of additional education and perceptions of organizational mobility.
- HYPOTHESIS 5: There is a positive relationship between occupational self-efficacy and perceptions of organizational mobility.
- HYPOTHESIS 6: There is a negative relationship between expected outcomes and perceptions of organizational mobility.
- HYPOTHESIS 7: Occupational self-efficacy will moderate the relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that high self-efficacy increases the level of perceived organizational mobility.
- HYPOTHESIS 8: Expected outcomes will moderate the relationship between degree orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that low expected outcomes increase the level of perceived organizational mobility.
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## CHAPTER 4

### METHODS

The first three chapters have established the theoretical basis for this study. This chapter outlines the research methods used to test the hypotheses that were presented. The chapter is divided into five sections. First, the design of the study is described, as well as the sampling procedure. The second section discusses the measures to be used. It is followed by a description and justification of the control variables. The fourth section discusses the pilot study and its contribution to the research project, and the fifth section describes statistical techniques used to test the hypothesized relationships.

#### 4.1 Study Design and Data Collection

Although the internal validity of laboratory experiments is potentially high (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991), a field study was selected for collection of data to enhance both external validity and generalizability (Dipboye & Flanagan, 1979). The lack of realism that comes from a highly controlled laboratory experiment was not deemed to be necessary because no manipulation was called for in the research design. Instead, subjects were allowed to select a natural setting in which to respond to a web-based survey. A certain amount of consistency is inherent in this type of survey, as all respondents are in front of a monitor and keyboard while being subject to the survey instrument, and the questions are presented to them in a standardized appearance and

sequence. Since the internet is widely available, a greater level of convenience and access is available to potential respondents that do not have to interrupt their schedule or physically travel to any specified location in order to take part in the survey.

It must be understood that survey respondents could have been in any location at any hour at the time they took part in the survey, but the advantage to this is that they were voluntarily taking part in the activity at a time and place that was convenient to them and favorable for receiving positive attention while taking part in the survey. Thus any lack of control in the field study can be offset by the convenience and minimal artificiality of the data collection experience. As taking part in the survey was purely voluntary, the response rate may be enhanced by allowing respondents to take part in the survey at their own convenience and in a format that is fast, easy, and readily accessible. The instrument was designed to be easy to navigate and similar to surveys and multiple-choice testing formats that are familiar to students. The instrument elicits responses that are opinions and feelings of the individual. Supervision by the researcher is not required, as concerns about cheating or assistance from others is not applicable to this type of survey. Timekeeping is also not necessary in order to maintain fairness between subjects.

Survey respondents were master's level graduate students in a College of Business Administration. They were contacted via Email in a letter from the dean of the business college using Email addresses on file with the graduate school. The letter asked that students voluntarily take part in a study to assist in development and evaluation of programs, and offered respondents an inducement of one of four \$100

awards to be randomly drawn. Included in the Email was a hyperlink that took them into the web-based survey. Upon selecting the survey link, respondents were first presented an informed consent that met the university's research compliance specifications. Subjects were asked to click on an approval icon which confirmed their consent to take part in the study. This initiated the survey process.

At the conclusion of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to enter their last name and the last four digits of their student identification number which was used to match their responses to archival data, as well as prevent any multiple submissions.

#### 4.2 Measures

The primary source of data was the web-based questionnaire. Table 2 summarizes the various indicators used as well as citations of previous studies that used a similar operationalization of the variables. The full survey appears in Appendix A.

Table 2 Summary of Indicators

<b>Independent Variables</b>	
<b>Careerist Orientation Scale</b>	
CREATED BY: Feldman & Weitz, 1991	USED BY: Aryee & Chen, 2002
<b>Educational Participation Scale</b>	
CREATED BY: Boshier, 1991	USED BY: Michie, Glachan, & Bray, 2001 Dia, Smith, Cohen-Callow, & Bliss, 2005 O'Connor, 1982 Fujita-Starck, 1996
<b>Perceived Need For Skill Improvement</b>	
CREATED BY: Maurer & Tarulli, 1994	USED BY: Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003
<b>Occupational Self-Efficacy</b>	
CREATED BY: Schyns & von Collani, 2002	USED BY: Schyns, 2004 Schyns, Paul, Mohr, & Blank, 2005
<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	
CREATED BY: Eisenberger, Fasoslo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990	USED BY: Buchanan & Gray, 2005 Pattie, Benson, & Baruch, 2005
<b>Dependent Variables</b>	
<b>Employment Opportunity Index</b>	
CREATED BY: Griffeth, Steel, Allen, & Bryan, 2005	USED BY: Griffeth, Steel, Allen, & Bryan, 2005

#### *4.2.1 Cognitive Ability*

Cognitive ability is measured by student scores on the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT). This test is a commonly used measure of potential success in graduate business programs (Koys, 2005). Admissions decisions are made on the basis of the GMAT, sometimes combined with other predictors such as undergraduate GPA (Carver & King, 1994). The GMAT is intended to measure cognitive and academic skills that are influential to success in graduate school (Sternberg, 2004). It is considered to have sound psychometric properties (Schrader, 1979) and good construct validity (Swinton & Powers, 1981).

The GMAT score is compiled from two testing dimensions: verbal and quantitative. Verbal modules evaluate verbal reasoning, grammar, and syntax. The quantitative dimensions cover arithmetic and abstract reasoning (Rothstein, Paunone, Rush, & King, 1994). The GMAT score is an objective variable that is obtained for this study through student records compiled by the College of Business Administration. The maximum attainable score is 800. Ranges of scores for respondents in this sample were 340 to 770.

#### *4.2.2 Degree Orientation*

Degree orientation uses a nominal measure of MBA and specialized master's degree categories. All master's students are divided into either the generalist MBA or the specialized orientation of the other business master's programs for health care, human resources, economics, information systems, marketing research, or accounting.

These data were taken from college of business administration records. Respondents were nearly split, with 108 generalist MBA respondents and 115 specialized degree seekers.

#### *4.2.3 Careerist Orientation*

An individual with a careerist orientation is an opportunist who puts self-interest ahead of the interests of the organization (Aryee & Chen, 2002). This construct was measured using a 19-item careerism scale developed by Feldman and Weitz (1991). Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree on each item on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to strongly agree.” A sample statement is “I cannot count on organizations to look out for my own best interests.” In using this scale, a careerist orientation has been shown to be negatively related to organizational commitment and job involvement, but positively related to intention to turnover (Chay & Aryee, 1999).

The full scale consists of 23 items with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.86. A 19-item measure was selected for this study, based on four distinct factors that appeared in a rotated component matrix with a reliability of .85. The items corresponded to topics of ethics, opportunism, loyalty, and politics. For example, ethics were indicated in items such as “Being completely honest doesn’t pay when dealing with your employer.” Politics is being referred to in such items as “The key to success is who you know, not what you know.”

#### 4.2.4 Educational Readiness

Ordinal scales for the measurement of educational readiness were taken from two instruments designed to survey motivations for pursuing adult education. The education participation scale (EPS) (Boshier, 1991) is a multi-dimensional measure that captures motivational orientations of adults participating in educational activities. The EPS assumes that learners vary in their reasons for taking part in adult education. Its six factors have been validated and used extensively in research studies (Garst & Reid, 1999; Michie, Glachan, & Bray, 2001; O'Connor, 1979, 1982; Thomas, 1986) and more than 200 dissertations (Boshier, 2005). The factors have been refined into the current 'A-form', which consists of social contact, social stimulation, professional advancement, community service, external expectations, and cognitive interest. Fujita-Starck (1996) confirmed the factor stability and construct validity of the EPS, finding the overall reliability of the scale to be 0.92. The 24 items in the scale ask respondents to indicate the extent to which each item influenced them to seek additional education. It uses a 5-point Likert-type scale with ranges of 1 (*no influence*) to 5 (*very much influence*). Social contact ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) contains statements that indicate motives to improve social relations and is represented by items such as, "To fulfill a need for personal associations and friendships." Social stimulation ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ) is relief from the routines of life. A sample item is, "To get relief from boredom." A sample of professional advancement ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ) is, "To give me higher status in my job." Community service ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ) deals with motives to improve social welfare skills with

items such as, “To improve my ability to participate in community work.” External expectations ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ) represent compliance with authority. A sample of this factor is, “To comply with the suggestions of someone else.” Knowledge ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) captures the enjoyment of learning with items such as “To learn just for the sake of learning.” The original purpose of the scale was to identify needs of adults returning to school in assisting program administrators to make informed decisions pertaining to content and policies (Fujita-Starck, 1996).

The six factors of the EPS can be collapsed into Houle’s three-factor learning typologies (Houle, 1961; Boshier & Collins, 1985) from which they were originally derived (Fujita-Starck, 1996). The Houle factors are goal orientation, learning orientation, and activity orientation. Four of the EPS dimensions fit within Houle’s activity dimension. These are social contact, social stimulation, external expectation, and community service. These four dimensions are not being selected for use in this study because their occupation-related focus is weak. For example, a sample item for social contact is, “To escape an unhappy relationship.” Social stimulation is represented by “To escape television” and community service is the focus of “To improve my ability to participate in community work.”

Two of the EPS dimensions are distinctly related to two orientations in Houle’s typologies (Boshier & Collins, 1985). The dimension of ‘knowledge’ equates with Houle’s (1961) ‘learning orientation’ (O’Connor, 1979). ‘Professional advancement’ is directly related to Houle’s ‘goal orientation’. These two EPS dimensions of professional advancement and knowledge were selected for this study. In addition to



their direct link to original dimensions of the Houle typologies, they make sense from an occupational standpoint as a connection of working graduate school students to their perceived organizational mobility.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each of a list of reasons were influential to their decisions to seek their current college degree on a five-point scale ranging from “no influence” to “very much influence.” To determine whether the dimensions represented distinct constructs, they were subjected along with perceived need for skill improvement and the outcome variables of ease of movement and desirability of movement in a principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The results indicate that all items loaded on the appropriate factor with no cross loadings. The measures had high internal consistency with Cronbach’s alphas of  $\alpha = 0.85$  for knowledge and  $\alpha = 0.73$  for advancement.

A second measure of educational readiness is the perceived need for self-improvement scale (Maurer & Tarulli, 1994). This scale measures individuals’ perceptions of their need to improve work-related skills and uses a 5-point Likert-style scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). This construct is made up of three items, an example of which is “One or more of my career related skills or knowledge has been in need of improvement.” Cronbach’s alpha for this scale has been found to be  $\alpha = 0.76$  (Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003). In this study, the alpha was  $\alpha = 0.66$ .

## 4.3 Moderating Variables

### *4.3.1 Occupational Self-efficacy*

Colquitt, LePine, and Noe (2000) found that self-efficacy contributes to the understanding of training success. While self-efficacy is influential to work-related performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), it has also been shown to be related to job search (Ellis & Taylor, 1983). Bandura (1982) suggested using a micro-analytic measurement of self-efficacy when a narrow range of respondent behavior is being studied. Global self-efficacy has frequently been partitioned into a number of domain specific scales, as described in Chapter Two. These more specific scales facilitate the measurement of individual differences in self-efficacy. For example, a person could have high technical self-efficacy while also having low social self-efficacy.

The occupational self-efficacy scale is domain-specific (Schyns & Von Collani, 2002) to values particularly important to western cultures, yet can be expected to be highly correlated with generalized self-efficacy scales (Shelton, 1990). Occupational self-efficacy is selected for this research due to the homogeneous nature of the master's level students in which a reasonably high level of global self-efficacy could be expected throughout the sample because of the relatively low percentage of the population that endeavors to earn an advanced degree. It is intended to capture a more narrow range of occupational perceptions with items such as "My past experiences in my job have prepared me well for my occupational future."

In developing the measure, Schyns and Von Collani (2002) tested 20 items that were adapted from four scales that addressed the occupational domain. They were

intended to represent aspects of mastery, optimism, and self-efficacy. Starting with a traditional 10-item self-efficacy scale (Sherer et al., 1982) and another 7 item generalized self-efficacy scale (Schwarzer, 1994), a 2-item hope scale by Snyder et al., (1991) and heuristic competence scale (Staudel, 1988) (1 item) were added. Cronbach's alpha for the original Schyns and Von Collani (2002) scale was  $\alpha = 0.92$  but a more parsimonious measure was desired. Factor analyses revealed a 9 item scale with a reliability of  $\alpha = 0.88$  that captures occupational self-efficacy, namely one's belief that ability and competence create performance success across a variety of tasks and work-related situations. The measure is scored on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*completely true*) to 6 (*not at all true*). This has been reversed and adapted to a 5-point scale with levels from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Schyns and Von Collani (2002) initially validated their occupational self-efficacy scale with three separate studies. The scale was subsequently used in two more studies (Schyns, 2004; Schyns, Paul, Mohr, & Blank, 2005). Cronbach's alpha for the scale was reported by Schyns to be  $\alpha = 0.88$  and was confirmed the same in this study.

#### 4.3.2 *Expected Outcomes*

The expectation of tangible outcomes is a key construct in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991; 1986) as well as expectancy theory (Porter & Lawler, 1968) in which expectancy is defined as the combination of performance and reward (House, Shapiro, & Wabba, 1974). Expected outcomes measure the degree to which the individual links causality to their behavior and the outcomes that are expected (Latham,

2001). Scale items were adapted from ones used by Eisenberger, Fasoslo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990). They were tested in a web-based survey (Buchanan & Gray, 2005; Pattie, Benson, & Baruch, 2005) of 473 business school master's level students, similar to the design of this current study. Four items such as "It is more likely that I will be promoted in my current organization with a graduate degree" are presented on a 5-point Likert-style scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was  $\alpha = 0.78$  in the previous study (Buchanan & Gray, 2005; Pattie, Benson, & Baruch, 2005) and  $\alpha = 0.79$  in this sample. An important intention of this scale was to structure items so that they capture outcome expectancies in the respondent's current organization.

#### 4.4 Outcome Variables

##### *4.4.1 Employment Opportunity Index*

Five facets of perceived job market opportunities comprise the Employment Opportunity Index (EOI) (Griffeth et al., 2005). It is a multidimensional measure of employment market cognitions that is intended to capture more variance than one-item or short multi-item scales that have been used in the past such as availability of alternatives (Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, 1978), job alternatives (Mowday, Koberg, & McArthur, 1984), and employment opportunity (Price & Mueller, 1981). The dimensions of the EOI are ease of movement, desirability of movement, networking, crystallization of alternatives, and mobility. Together, they have been shown to explain 20% to 33% of the variance in withdrawal process variables such as

intention to search, intention to quit, and preparatory search, which is a great improvement over traditionally used measures that explain 5% to 7% of variance in the withdrawal process (Griffeth et al., 2005).

Both quality and quantity of employment opportunities are represented by the constructs of the EOI which is reminiscent of March and Simon's (1958) conceptualization of ease of movement combined with desirability of movement.

Responses to the dimensions of the EOI are made on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Griffeth et al. (2005) found reliabilities to be consistently strong in their initial work to validate the scale. Ease of movement ( $\alpha = 0.70$ ) is structured to reveal the quantity of available jobs with items such as "I can think of a number of organizations that would probably offer me a job if I was looking." Desirability of movement ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ) differs in its concern with the acquisition of a *better* job with items such as, "By and large, the jobs I could get if I left here are superior to the job I have now". Networking ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ) is captured with three items, characterized by, "I have contact in other companies who might help me line up a new job", the purpose of which is to inquire about access to job information. Crystallization of alternatives ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ) is a direct derivative of job alternatives, noting the difference between a vague impression of "jobs out there" and actual concrete offers in hand (Griffeth & Hom, 1988). An example of this dimension is, "Right now I have a job offer 'on the table' from another employer, if I choose to take it." Mobility ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ) deals with the psychosocial aspects of being uprooted physically, emotionally, or

financially with items such as, “There are factors in my personal life (e.g., school age children, relatives, etc.) which make it very difficult for me to leave in the near future.”

By capturing a greater amount of variance in the withdrawal process, it is possible that the EOI contributes both explanatory and predictive power to the process of turnover (Griffeth et al., 2005). Although the dimensions of the EOI have been shown to be relatively independent of each other (Steel & Griffeth, 1989), some of the dimensions may be causally antecedent to other dimensions. Prior to evaluating ease of movement or desirability of movement, the individual may evaluate personal mobility and activate his/her network of friends, relatives, and work contacts (Griffeth et al., 2005).

Ease of movement and desirability of movement have been selected for outcome variables in this study. They are a direct perception of the quantity and quality of perceived job alternatives as originally envisioned by March & Simon (1958). The two variables have very low correlation at  $r = .013$  and they load on different factors in a principal components analysis with varimax rotation. In validation studies by Griffeth et al. (2005), ease of movement and desirability of movement were found to be positively related to actual turnover, whereas neither mobility or networking were. The two-item crystallized alternatives measure was not an acceptable for this study, as the reliability was low ( $\alpha = 0.56$ ) and it failed to load cleanly in factor analysis.

#### 4.5 Control Variables

A number of characteristics of respondents may create variance that needs to be controlled in the measurement of job market perceptions. In order to preserve power, covariates were selected for this study that have low intercorrelations but would be expected to have significant correlations with the dependent variables of ease of movement and desirability of movement. These control variables are gender, age, marital status, tenure with organization, number of months until anticipated graduation, and current earnings.

##### *4.5.1 Gender*

Perceptions of organizational mobility may differ between men and women because of continued gender bias. Brett and Stroh (1997) confirmed the unequal benefits between men and women who pursued an external labor market strategy. While male managers who changed jobs received higher pay than those who stayed with one employer, the same did not hold true for women.

Female career progress is slower due to differences that include acceptance in the workplace (Melamed, 1996), perceived qualification (Burke & McKeen, 1994), and assertiveness (Still, 1992). Women are socialized from childhood in stereotyped roles that are passive and lower in achievement expectations than men (Courtney & Whipple, 1974; Jacklin & Mischel, 1973; McArthur & Eisen, 1976; Signorielli, 1990). These perceptions are perpetuated by the media, educational systems, families, and culture

(Hackett & Betz, 1981). Research findings on the value of master's degrees for women are mixed, attributing much to the culture of the employing organization (Ong, 1993).

A study of full-time employed MBA students found that women were more likely to have an external locus of control, indicating they attribute their career rewards to luck, fate, or the power of others. Men in the study tended to have an internal locus of control, attributing success to their own choices and behavior (Bishop & Solomon, 1989).

Based upon these culturally inspired and perpetuated limitations, female students may have lower perceptions of organizational mobility than men. Their ease of movement and desirability of movement would be lower than their male counterparts due to opportunities that are fewer and less likely to be an improvement on their current situation. While the glass ceiling that they experience may drive them into a job search for better opportunities, the patriarchy of the 'men's club network' (Simpson, 2000) limits their ability to find a job with greater opportunity. Financially, a marital bonus has been repeatedly found for men but not women (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Hill, 1979; Korenman & Neumark, 1991; Landau & Arthur, 1992). The same is true of a parental bonus for men (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Hill, 1979; Landau & Arthur, 1992). In fact, several studies found a marriage and children penalty for women (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Hill, 1979).

Gender was coded in this dissertation as a dichotomous variable. 52.6% of respondents were female.



#### *4.5.2 Age*

Age is a control variable due to its possible relationship to organizational mobility. A recent random workforce survey found younger workers to have a much greater desire to conduct a job search (Johnson, 2003). Forty-eight percent of respondents in the 19 to 34 age category were interested in making a job change, compared with just 17 percent of professionals aged 55 and above. This is consistent with a meta-analysis that concluded age to be negatively related to turnover (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986), although other research has failed to find this relationship to be significant (Healy, Lehman, & McDaniel, 1995).

Generational differences between workers have been studied, revealing that young workers place a higher value on work/life balance (Lewis, Smithson, & Kugelberg, 2002; Smola & Sutton, 2002), creating conflict when workload expectations are heavy. Older workers who change jobs have been found to experience lower pay as well as a reduction in the socio-economic status of their occupational position (Bartel & Borjas, 1981; Parnes & Nestel, 1981; Shapiro & Sandell, 1985). These are elements that could influence perceptions of organizational mobility for different age groups.

Ages reported by survey respondents were in the range of 20 to 63 with a mean of 31.9.

#### *4.5.3 Marital Status*

Training and development literature has used various demographic elements as control variables in order to avoid ‘third’ variables that may be influential to the

relationships being studied (Mathieu & Martineau, 1997; Noe et al., 1997). Marital status is a demographic variable that is related to rewards and responsibilities (Landau & Arthur, 1992). For example, career rewards have been shown to be related to family structure (Pfeffer & Ross, 1982). Spousal support theory (Kanter, 1977) indicates that workers receive additional resources for their job performance through spouses. These resources take the form of counsel and work assistance as well as taking care of household responsibilities. Spousal support theory has been supported in research (Schneer & Reitman, 1993; Stroh & Brett, 1996). Family needs and employee needs have changed over the past few decades, but salary progression continues to favor married persons, with a bias toward males (Schneer & Reitman, 2002). Men have been shown to be recipients of a marital bonus (Hill, 1979; Korenman & Neumark, 1991; Landau & Arthur, 1992, Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000) in which marriage and children are associated with higher managerial level and career satisfaction.

Marital status is controlled in this study because it could have an influence upon motivations that relate to both turnover and desire to seek additional education (Tharenou, 2001). Marital status was measured as a dichotomous variable coded 0 for unmarried and 1 for married. The distribution in this sample was 51.1% unmarried.

#### *4.5.4 Organizational tenure*

Tenure has been shown to have a negative correlation with intentions to turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gartner, 2000). Thus, workers more recently hired may be more open to job opportunities. They may also be less invested in the organization through

pension funding and specialized job training, making them more mobile through lack of “side bets” that encourage workers to stay (Meyer & Allen, 1984). These side bets accumulate through a combination of sacrifices and investments that workers make at work. For example, decisions to pursue specialized training or live close to the office bind the employee to the organization (Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). Workers with short tenure have also been shown to have less effective social and political networks with their peers and superiors (Chao et al., 1994) which relates to their ability to secure pay raises and avoid adverse consequences. This could have an impact on perceptions of organizational mobility. The study controlled for organizational tenure that ranged from 1 to 27 years with a mean of 4.3 years, in order to smooth the potential effects of early organizational departure.

#### *4.5.5 Time to Graduation*

The point that the worker is in their academic program is influential to educational readiness, expected outcomes, and the EOI. As they progress further in their studies, their educational readiness becomes more past-oriented. The expected outcomes of the worker’s new degree are influential to perceptions of mobility as graduation becomes more imminent (Benson, Finegold, & Mohrman, 2004). Likewise, EOI dimensions change as the approaching degree changes aspects of ease of movement and desirability of movement. The number of semesters until anticipated graduation is used as a control variable in this study, due to its possible creation of variance in the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. It is

likely that students will perceive greater organizational mobility as they get closer to graduation. Months until graduation ranged from 1 to 48 in the sample.

#### *4.5.6 Current Earnings*

Earnings level is a control variable that may be associated with the main effects and interactions of this study. Lower paid employees have been shown to receive larger pay raises than those near the top of their pay grade (Gibbs & Hendricks, 2004). This is due to salary compression as workers “top out” in their salary range. Baker, Gibbs, and Holstrom (1994) also found that pay raises and promotions fall as job tenure increases.

In context to perceptions of organizational mobility, pay growth has been shown to be negatively related to turnover (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1989). As a more general commentary on compensation, pay satisfaction has been shown to be correlated positively with life satisfaction (George & Brief, 1990). Thus, workers may be more mobile while they are in the lower range of their pay grade. Ranges of annual earnings reported in the data set are \$5,000 to \$150,000 with a mean of \$59,990.00.

### 4.6 Pilot Study

Prior to administering the web-based survey, a written questionnaire was completed by 164 undergraduate business students in a classroom setting as a pilot test. Its purpose was to establish factor loadings and reliabilities of the study constructs, ensuring that the measures of the proposed study would be appropriate for adult students. The survey consisted of 77 items plus 5 demographic questions. The first 43

items comprised the educational participation scale (EPS) with items for the six factors scrambled. The next section of the survey consisted of randomly mixed items representing the constructs of the employment opportunity index (EOI), self-efficacy, expected outcomes, and perceived need for self-improvement.

The mean age for this group was 24, with an even gender distribution. Eighty percent of these students were employed, 22% were married, and 8% were international students. Suitable factor loadings were observed with varimax component rotation. Reliabilities of the constructs were measured by Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). The dimensions of the EPS were all  $\alpha = 0.70$  or higher. The EOI was less favorable, with an overall model of  $\alpha = 0.64$ . The factors for desirability of movement and networking were both  $\alpha = 0.73$ , but ease of movement, crystallized opportunities, and mobility were low with alphas of  $\alpha = 0.42, 0.36,$  and  $0.60$  respectively. It was hoped that any weakness in these reliabilities would be improved in the main sample of master's level students that would be older, more experienced, and more involved in their careers. The interaction measures hypothesized for the final study were expected outcomes ( $\alpha = 0.65$ ) and occupational self-efficacy ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ).

Based on these reliabilities, the pilot study confirmed that the measures selected were appropriate for adult students. The questionnaire was structured similarly to the web-based survey used later. The EPS items appeared in front, followed by the other measures that were based on questions for currently employed workers. Demographics were at the end. There was only a page break between the two sections of the pilot

study. This page break was used to instruct respondents that if they were not employed they should skip to the demographic questions at the end.

#### 4.7 Web-based Survey

The web-based survey for primary data collection used a format similar to the pilot study, but collected some demographic data between sections as well as at the end. The 43 EPS questions that began the pilot survey were shortened to 15 by the decision to measure two of the five EPS dimension (knowledge and professional advancement). This prevented the length of the survey from increasing a great deal for the main data collection, as other questions were added. These included 20 additional demographic questions, plus tuition reimbursement questions. The additional demographic items collected information such as months to graduation, years in workforce, pay increases, and part time/fulltime.

#### 4.8 Data Analysis

Hypotheses testing were conducted through hierarchical moderating regression. The results of all hypotheses testing appear in Chapter Five. Data for “months until graduation” of 56 and 60 months were outliers and were replaced with missing values to avoid a misleading skewness of the distribution. The same is true of current income in which values of \$150,000 and \$187,000 were removed, leaving the high annual income reported at \$140,000. GMAT scores were a mean of 538.33.

#### 4.9 Power Analysis

Statistical power analysis involves the assessment of the probability of detecting effect sizes in the research study. If it is determined that power needs to be enhanced in a study, the easiest remedial measure is to increase the sample size. Beyond this, it may be recommended to raise the alpha level, improve reliability and precision of the survey instrument, and to look for large effect sizes. The specification of power at .80 is a convention for general use (Cohen, 1988). Effect sizes of small, medium, and large were calculated by Cohen (1992) for regression/correlation analyses. The presence of eight independent variables in this study indicate that a sample size of 151 or greater is sufficient to observe a medium effect size at power = .80 with  $\alpha = .01$ . Power analysis for the current sample size of  $N = 165$  confirms that provision for the avoidance of a Type II error is more than adequate.

#### 4.10 Reliabilities

“Reliability is the extent to which a variable or set of variables is consistent in what it is intended to measure” (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998: 3). Average inter-item reliabilities of all constructs were measured using Cronbach’s alpha (Cronbach, 1951). The details of the reliability analysis are as follows.

Cronbach’s alpha for the two movement dimensions of the EOI index included  $\alpha = .86$  for desirability of movement and  $\alpha = .75$  for ease of movement. Professional knowledge had a coefficient alpha of .85 and advancement was  $\alpha = .73$ . The three item perceived need for skill improvement had a reliability of .66. The careerist orientation

is a 19 item measure with a coefficient alpha of .85. Occupational self-efficacy was  $\alpha = .88$  and expected outcomes was  $\alpha = .79$ . In conclusion, most of the scales had reliabilities of .70 or greater, indicating an acceptable standard for the measure of internal consistency (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). A summary of the self-reported measures, their means, standard deviation, coefficient alpha, and number of scale items is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of Self-Report Measures

Measure	Mean	S.D.	$\alpha$	# of items
Ease of Movement	3.702	.8094	.75	2
Desirability of Movement	3.293	.9443	.86	3
Knowledge	3.244	.9808	.85	3
Professional Advancement	3.019	.8525	.73	4
Perceived Need for Skill Improvement	3.420	.7273	.66	3
Careerist Orientation	2.794	.4996	.85	19
Occupational Self-Efficacy	4.153	.4115	.88	8
Expected Outcomes	3.363	.8899	.79	4
<b>Control Variables</b>				
Age	33	8.832		1
Gender	.457	.4963		1
Marital Status	.570	.50		1
Current Earnings	56,734	29,755		1
Organizational Tenure	4.543	4.741		1
Months to Graduation	14.591	10.299		1

#### 4.11 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was conducted on latent variables to demonstrate discriminant validity between constructs and scale dimensions. These were subjected to principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The purpose was to confirm that the items



from the survey loaded on the factor that was specified. Constructs for each main and interaction effect were entered and cross-loading items removed, while seeking to maintain reliability at or above  $\alpha = 0.70$ . This confirms that the models are correctly specified.

#### 4.12 Descriptive Statistics

Histograms and scatterplots were examined for all individual items as well as their combined scale measures. Although there was evidence of skewness and non-normality of distribution for some of the individual scale items, when combined into the measures for the study the distributions were acceptable for all items except months until graduation and organizational tenure, which were control variables. Scatterplots between each independent variable and dependent variable indicated that heteroscedasticity only existed in the variable of age. Means and standard deviations are shown in Table 3.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

This chapter provides a detailed statistical analysis of the data collected for the study. It contains two sections. The first section describes the data as a whole and the characteristics of the respondents. In the second section the results of hierarchical regression analyses are presented.

#### 5.1 Sample Characteristics

Out of a population of approximately 4,300 business school students, 923 were master's level and 86 were Ph.D. students. There were 328 valid survey responses from 909 master's students contacted by Email, for a response rate of 36 percent. A similar web-based survey one year earlier of graduate students in this college achieved a response rate of 48 percent. Eighty-seven current students did not have Email addresses on file but 73 of those had an Email address listed in a university directory. The initial total of 374 respondents was reduced by 34 students who did not identify themselves, 5 that did not appear in college records, 2 that took the survey twice, and 5 surveys that exhibited invalid response patterns in which nearly all of the scaled responses were the same, indicating that the responses were not meaningful.

Twenty-two percent of the respondents were unemployed, 7.6% worked part-time, and the rest (70.1%) were full-time workers while attending graduate school. For

the final sample, 73 unemployed respondents were removed because many of the scaled items are workplace questions that cannot be answered by an unemployed student. These scaled items were measures for occupational self-efficacy and expected outcomes, as well as perceived organizational mobility. A skip-pattern was activated just prior to these items in the survey, leaving them as missing data. The 25 part-time workers who answered the survey were removed from the sample, as only 5 of them intended to stay with their organization after graduation, indicating that their current jobs were not career-oriented. The 7 international students were removed because their eligibility to work in the United States is unknown and career perceptions of workers in other countries is not part of this current research. 55 respondents that were missing GMAT scores were removed from the sample due to this measure of cognitive ability being an important variable in the study<sup>1</sup>. 168 subjects remained in the sample for final data analysis.

The gender distribution was even and the average age was 32 with 9.3 years work experience. Seventy percent of the respondents were Caucasian/White and the next largest proportion was Black/African American (11%). Asian students comprised 10% of the sample, along with 5% Hispanic/Latino, zero Native Americans, and 4% “Other”. The degree orientation of the students was fairly evenly divided with 53.2% seeking specialized master’s degree credentials and 46.8% in the generalist MBA programs.

A summary of the sample characteristics appears in table 4.

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<sup>1</sup> An additional 20 respondents had GRE scores. These were converted along with GMAT scores to percentiles and analyzed at n=188 with no significant changes to outcomes.

Table 4 Summary of Sample Characteristics

VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	NUMBER	VALID PERCENT
Gender	Female	84	50%
	Male	84	50%
	TOTAL	168	100%
Ethnicity	White	119	70%
	Asian	16	10%
	Black	18	11%
	Hispanic	8	5%
	Native American	0	0%
	Other	7	4%
	TOTAL	168	100%
Marital Status	Married	95	57%
	Single	73	43%
	TOTAL	168	100%
Age	20-25	41	32%
	26-30	46	21%
	31-40	58	34%
	41-50	19	11%
	51 and above	4	2%
	TOTAL	168	100%
Current Earnings (\$1,000)	0-20	13	8%
	21-40	45	27%
	41-60	51	30%
	61-80	33	20%
	81-100	13	8%
	101-150	13	8%
	TOTAL	168	100%

Table 4 - continued

VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	NUMBER	VALID PERCENT
Organizational Tenure (years)	0-2	80	48%
	3-5	46	27%
	6-10	26	16%
	11-20	15	8%
	21 and above	1	1%
	TOTAL	168	100%
GMAT Score	340-400	6	4%
	401-500	59	34%
	501-600	64	39%
	601-700	36	21%
	701-770	3	1%
	TOTAL	168	100%

### 5.2 Correlation Analysis

Prior to testing main effects, the Pearson Product moment correlations for all the variables were examined. Correlations are presented in Table 5. Variables that correlate at a level of 0.70 or greater should not be used in the same analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Except for the interaction terms, the highest correlation in the data was 0.486 between control variables of age and organizational tenure. Other control variables were found to have significant correlations in ways that might be expected, such as age and current earnings ( $r = 0.425$ ), age and marital status ( $r = 0.323$ ), marital status and current earnings ( $r = 0.291$ ), and organizational tenure with current earnings ( $r = 0.378$ ).

Control variables correlated with outcome variables were months to graduation and ease of movement ( $r = -0.248$ ) and current earnings with desirability of movement ( $r = -0.382$ ). Independent variables that were correlated significantly with dependent variables were ease of movement with expected outcomes and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.257$  and  $r = 0.228$ ). Desirability of movement was correlated with careerism ( $r = 0.258$ ), desire for advancement ( $r = 0.205$ ), perceived need for skill improvement ( $r = 0.198$ ), and GMAT score ( $r = -0.183$ ).

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Ease of Movement	3.70	.81	-																
2. Desirability of Movement	3.29	.94	-.022	-															
3. Age	33.33	8.83	-.038	-.100	-														
4. Months to Graduation	14.59	10.30	-.248**	-.128	.016	-													
5. Marital Status	.57	.50	-.052	-.143*	.323**	.010	-												
6. Gender	1.54	.50	-.001	.081	.000	-.032	.180**	-											
7. Current Earnings	56,734	29,754	.193**	-.382**	.425**	.012	.291**	.071	-										
8. Organizational Tenure	4.54	4.74	.122	-.069	.486**	.000	.148*	-.008	.378**	-									
9. Total GMAT Score	538	83.91	-.025	-.183*	.137	.174*	.076	.212*	.152*	.020	-								
10. MBA or specialized	.48	.50	.069	-.009	-.180**	.141*	.136*	.137*	.002	.016	-.008	-							
11. Careerist Orientation	2.79	.50	-.146*	.251**	.002	-.033	-.115	.083	-.149*	-.065	-.173*	.095	-						
12. Knowledge	3.24	.98	.030	-.040	.068	-.027	-.012	-.097	-.003	.091	-.009	-.024	-.212**	-					
13. Professional Advancement	3.02	.85	-.015	.159*	-.017	-.045	.083	.014	-.058	-.115	-.071	-.043	.053	.023	-				
14. Perc. Need f/skill Improvement	3.42	.73	-.152*	.197**	.059	.032	-.025	-.048	-.218**	-.196**	-.064	-.132*	.192**	.042	.258**	-			
15. Expected Outcomes	3.36	.89	.257**	-.103	-.087	-.013	.009	.025	-.039	-.044	.074	-.012	-.146*	.071	.297*	.128	-		
16. Self-efficacy	4.15	.41	.228**	.063	.133*	-.074	.047	.056	.029	.223**	-.008	-.043	-.134*	.254**	.081	-.014	.076	-	
17. GMAT*self-efficacy	2211	401	.154*	-.157*	.174*	.068	.092	.236**	.178*	.164*	.840**	-.009	-.191*	.135	.032	-.085	.127	.515**	-
18. Degree * expect outcomes	1.62	1.77	.106	-.037	-.137*	.122	.143*	.154*	.020	.014	.027	.949**	.108	-.017	.013	-.084	.185**	-.025	.041

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 5.3 Regression Testing

To test the hypotheses, two hierarchical moderated regression analyses were conducted. Control variables were entered in the first step. These were comprised of marital status, gender, age, current earnings (dollars per year), organizational tenure, and estimated months to graduation. The main effects were entered in Step 2. These were degree orientation, careerist orientation, desire to seek knowledge, professional advancement, perceived need for skill improvement, occupational self-efficacy, and expected outcomes. In the final step, the interactions of self-efficacy and expected outcomes were entered into the equation.

Prior to examination of the regression results, statistics indicating the presence of multicollinearity (VIF and Tolerance) were examined. In the presence of serious multicollinearity, the VIF for the affected variable would be 10 or greater (Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim, & Wasserman, 1996) and the Tolerance would be near zero (Pallant, 2001). The results indicated that GMAT score exhibited multicollinearity when interaction terms were added<sup>2</sup>. This may be unavoidable, as the GMAT score is highly correlated to the interaction term of GMAT score and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.84$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

The results of the full model for the outcome variable of ease of movement are presented in Table 6 and the results for desirability of movement is in Table 7. Step one shows the results with just the control variables in the model. Current earnings was the only control variable significantly related to both dependent variables ( $p < .01$ ), although



in opposite directions. This indicates that high current earners feel that they can easily find another job, but the number of alternative jobs that are better jobs goes down as earnings go up. Months to graduation ( $p < .001$ ) is negatively related to ease of movement, indicating that those near completion of their degree feel that finding another job would be easiest. Male gender is positively related to desirability of movement ( $p < .05$ ), consistent with workplace bias previously discussed.

The second step in Table 6 for the dependent variable of ease of movement shows the entry of the GMAT score, degree orientation, careerist orientation, knowledge, professional advancement, perceived need for self improvement, occupational self-efficacy, and expected outcomes. The statistics for this step are the following:  $R^2 = .313$ , change in  $R^2 = .126$ ,  $F = 4.871$ ,  $p < .001$ .

In the final step, the interaction terms were entered into the equation. The results of this step show  $R^2 = .370$ , change in  $R^2 = .058$ ,  $F = 4.807$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Following the same procedure in Table 7 for the dependent variable of desirability of movement, Step 2 results are:  $R^2 = .340$ , change in  $R^2 = .111$ ,  $F = 5.511$ ,  $p < .001$ . With entry of the interaction terms in step 3,  $R^2 = .341$ , change in  $R^2 = .001$ ,  $F = 4.777$ ,  $p < .001$ .

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<sup>2</sup> Conversion of GMAT scores to z scores did not reduce multicollinearity.

Table 6 Hierarchical Regression Analyses: Ease of Movement Dimension of Employment Opportunity Index (EOI)

Variable		Standardized Betas <sup>a</sup>			
		<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	
<b>DV: Ease of movement</b>					
Control	Months to graduation	-.303*** (.005)	-.282*** (.005)	-.255*** (.000)	
	Marital status	-.013 (.131)	-.068 (.127)	-.059 (.433)	
	Age	-.218* (.009)	-.163 (.009)	-.163 (.053)	
	Gender	-.025 (.121)	-.034 (.120)	.033 (.643)	
	Current earnings	.245** (.000)	.253** (.000)	.193* (.022)	
	Org. tenure	.134 (.017)	.067 (.017)	.112 (.180)	
	Independent	GMAT score		-.028 (.001)	-1.507** (.000)
MBA / specialized			.088 (.118)	.213 (.437)	
Careerist orientation			-.047 (.124)	-.044 (.533)	
Knowledge			-.068 (.060)	.044 (.533)	
Prof. Advancement			-.015 (.073)	-.018 (.811)	
Skill-improv. need percep.			-.122 (.085)	-.066 (.388)	
Expected outcomes			.298*** (.070)	.299** (.096)	
Occupational self-efficacy			.162* (.153)	-.763** (.519)	
Interaction		GMAT * self-efficacy			1.757*** (.001)
		Deg. orient. * exp. outcomes			-.152 (.129)
Intercept		(.253)	(.873)	(2.163)	
	R <sup>2</sup>	.186	.313	.370	
	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.155	.248	.302	
	F	6.023***	4.871**	5.440**	

<sup>a</sup> Standardized coefficients are reported; the figures in parentheses are standard errors.

N=165

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

Table 7 Hierarchical Regression Analyses: Desirability of Movement Dimension of Employment Opportunity Index (EOI)

Variable		Standardized Betas <sup>a</sup>		
		<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>
<b>DV: Desirability of movement</b>				
<b>Control</b>	Months to graduation	-.127 (.006)	-.105 (.006)	-.108 (.006)
	Marital status	-.033 (.154)	-.021 (.151)	-.024 (.152)
	Age	.061 (.010)	-.006 (.010)	.010 (.011)
	Gender	.148* (.143)	.140* (.142)	.142* (.144)
	Current earnings	-.501*** (.000)	-.437*** (.000)	-.428*** (.000)
	Org. tenure	.129 (.020)	.135 (.020)	.129 (.021)
<b>Independent</b>	GMAT score		-.079 (.001)	.083 (.005)
	MBA / specialized		.041 (.140)	.104 (.562)
	Careerist orientation		.176* (.148)	.178* (.151)
	Knowledge		-.045 (.071)	-.048 (.072)
	Prof. Advancement		.157* (.087)	.154* (.088)
	Skill-improv. need percep.		.094 (.100)	.089 (.103)
	Expected outcomes		-.174* (.083)	-.153 (.119)
	Occupational self-efficacy		-.008 (.181)	.110 (.643)
<b>Interaction</b>	GMAT * self-efficacy			-.192 (.001)
	Deg. orient. * exp. outcomes			-.064 (.160)
<b>Intercept</b>		(.299)***	(1.036)**	(2.679)
	R <sup>2</sup>	.229	.340	.341
	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.199	.278	.269
	F	7.801***	5.511**	4.777

<sup>a</sup> Standardized coefficients are reported; the figures in parentheses are standard errors.

N=165

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.01 \*\*\*p<.001

#### 5.4 Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility.

The first hypothesis proposed that individuals with higher cognitive ability would perceive higher potential mobility to other organizations. Examining the correlation between the variables indicated that there was a negative relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility but it was only significant with the dependent variable of desirability of movement. Regression results did not indicate a significant relationship. Cognitive ability did not have an impact on perceptions of organizational mobility for ease of movement ( $t = -.378, p = .706$ ) or for desirability of movement ( $t = -1.098, p = .274$ ). Thus none of the variation in ease of movement or desirability of movement could be explained by GMAT score. This hypothesis was not supported.

**Hypothesis 2:** Seekers of generalized degrees will have greater perceptions of organizational mobility than students seeking specialized degrees.

The second hypothesis predicts that generalized degree seekers perceive more job opportunities in the external environment. In other words, the more general focus of their degree will be related to a greater number of potential organizations that recognize the need and value of their credential. However, it was found that the correlation between degree orientation and both ease of movement and desirability of movement was low. Regressions of the variables were not significant ( $t = 1.234, p = .219$  for ease

of movement,  $t = .591$ ,  $p = .555$  for desirability of movement), leading one to believe that the generalized MBA does not necessarily relate to any difference in perceptions of organizational mobility.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a positive relationship between a careerist orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility.

The third hypothesis predicts that higher levels of careerist orientation are related to higher perceived organizational mobility. This hypothesis was supported for desirability of movement but not for ease of movement. Regression analysis showed a significant t-value of 2.401 ( $p = .018$ ), indicating support for this hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a positive relationship between the goals and intentions of additional education and perceptions of organizational mobility.

The fourth hypothesis states that goals and intentions for returning to school are positively related to perceived organizational mobility. These goals and intentions are identified by three constructs. Knowledge and professional advancement are dimensions of the educational participation scale. Perceived need for self-improvement is a separate scale. Knowledge and professional advancement are not significantly correlated and perceived need for skill improvement is only correlated significantly to professional advancement. Regression analysis showed professional advancement to be significantly related to desirability of movement ( $t = 2.07$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Thus there is partial

support for this hypothesis in the finding that a goal of professional advancement is positively related to individual perceptions of organizational mobility.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a positive relationship between occupational self-efficacy and perceptions of organizational mobility.

The fifth hypothesis states that persons high in occupational self-efficacy can be expected to indicate high levels of perceived organizational mobility. This hypothesis was supported for ease of movement ( $t = 2.083, p < .05$ ) but not for desirability of movement ( $t = .102, p = .919$ ).

**Hypothesis 6:** There is a negative relationship between expected outcomes and perceptions of organizational mobility.

The sixth hypothesis states that expected outcomes will be negatively related to perceived organizational mobility. Regression results showed support for the hypothesis regarding a negative relationship of expected outcomes with desirability of movement ( $t = -2.34, p < .05$ ) but also indicated a positive significant linear relationship between expected outcomes and ease of movement ( $t = 3.938, p < .01$ ).

**Hypothesis 7:** Occupational self-efficacy will moderate the relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that high self-efficacy increases the level of perceived organizational mobility.

The seventh hypothesis predicts that there will be an attenuation effect of occupational self efficacy in the positive relationship between cognitive ability and perceived organizational mobility. This was examined through hierarchical moderated regression according to procedures outlined by Cohen and Cohen (1983). The results of this analysis appears in Table 6. Control variables were entered as Model 1, with main effects in Model 2 and interactions entered in Model 3. Both main effects are significant in this step, with the GMAT score at ( $t = -3.668, p < .001$ ) and self-efficacy at ( $t = -2.890, p < .01$ ). Results indicate that each model was significant ( $F = 6.023, 4.871, \text{ and } 5.440, p < .01$ ), predicting 30% of the variance in ease of movement. As illustrated in Model 3 of Table 6, the interaction term between GMAT score and occupational self-efficacy has a significantly positive relationship to ease of movement ( $t = 3.658, p < .001$ ).

Further examination of the interaction was conducted through simple slope analysis procedures outlined by Aiken & West (1991), as illustrated in Figure 2. The illustration of this interaction suggests that the relationship between GMAT score and ease of movement is positive for individuals with high self-efficacy, but the relationship is negative for individuals with low self-efficacy.

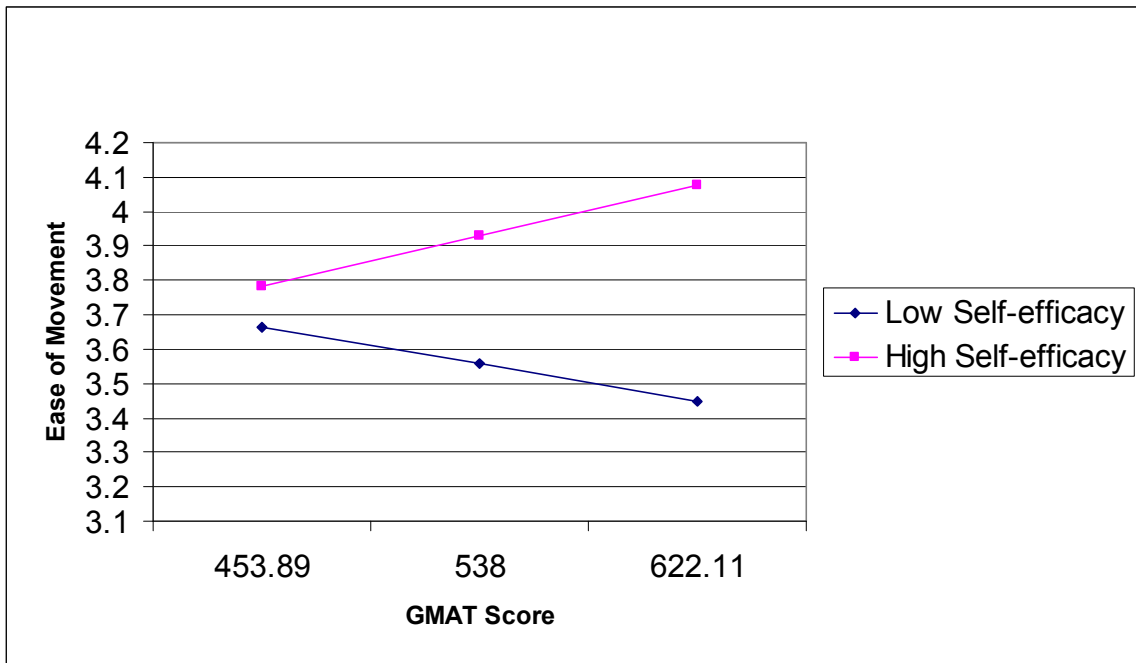


Figure 2 Moderating impact of self-efficacy on the relationship between GMAT score and ease of movement

In examining the moderating effects of occupational self efficacy on the relationship between cognitive ability in relationship to desirability of movement, there were no significant main effects observed in either Step 2 or Step 3 of Table 7. The interaction term was also not significant at  $t = -.390$  ( $p = .697$ ). Hence, hypothesis 7 was supported for ease of movement.

**Hypothesis 8:** Expected outcomes will moderate the relationship between degree orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that low expected outcomes increases the level of perceived organizational mobility.



The eighth hypothesis predicts that there will be an interaction of expected outcomes in the relationship between degree orientation and perceived organizational mobility. The correlations between the four constructs of degree orientation, expected outcomes, ease of movement, and desirability of movement identified a strong association only between expected outcomes and ease of movement ( $r = .257$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Investigating the interaction terms in Model 3 of Tables 6 and 7 reveal that there is no interaction of expected outcomes and degree orientation with either ease of movement or desirability of movement ( $t = -.542$ ,  $p = .589$  and  $t = -.223$ ,  $p = .824$ , respectively). Consequently, Hypothesis 8 is not supported.

### 5.5 Summary

A summary of the findings of this study are presented in Table 8. Chapter 6 will present a detailed discussion of the results and their implications.

Table 8 List of Supported Hypotheses

		Perceptions of organizational mobility:	
		E	D
		D = Desirability of Movement	
HYPOTHESIS 1:	There is a positive relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
HYPOTHESIS 2:	Seekers of generalized degrees will have greater perceptions of organizational mobility than students seeking specialized degrees.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
HYPOTHESIS 3:	There is a positive relationship between a careerist orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility.	<b>X</b>	<b>YES</b>
HYPOTHESIS 4:	There is a positive relationship between the goals and intentions of additional education and perceptions of organizational mobility.	<b>X</b>	<b>YES</b>
HYPOTHESIS 5:	There is a positive relationship between occupational self-efficacy and perceptions of organizational mobility.	<b>YES</b>	<b>X</b>
HYPOTHESIS 6:	There is a negative relationship between expected outcomes and perceptions of organizational mobility.	<b>X</b>	<b>YES</b>
HYPOTHESIS 7:	Occupational self-efficacy will moderate the relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that high self-efficacy increases the level of perceived organizational mobility.	<b>YES</b>	<b>X</b>
HYPOTHESIS 8:	Expected outcomes will moderate the relationship between degree orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that low expected outcomes increase the level of perceived organizational mobility.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

**YES** Hypothesis Supported  
**X** Hypothesis Not Supported

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

This chapter will furnish a detailed discussion of the findings and their implications. It is divided into four sections. I will start by discussing the results of each of the hypotheses. This is followed by theoretical and practical implications of the study. The third section discusses limitations of the study, and the last section suggests future research.

#### 6.1 Review of Findings

The goal of this study was to examine individual differences of working graduate students from three perspectives. The first was to examine the relationship of cognitive ability to perceptions of organizational mobility. The second area of interest was the degree orientation of the student in terms of generalist MBA or specialist master's focus in their programs of study, and the outcomes that they expected to receive from their current employer in the form of a pay raise or promotion. The third area of individual differences pertains to motives and goals for returning to school.

Furthermore, while social cognitive theory and human capital theory have been used in training and development literature, they have not been applied directly to master's level business education. This level of individual development is highly specific in the way that workers voluntarily participate over a long time period for a

credential that is more valuable to the individual than to the organization (Loewenstein & Spletzer, 1999). The implications of the three areas of interest will be discussed separately.

### *6.1.1 Cognitive Ability*

The first set of hypotheses (1, 5, and 7) predicted the relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility, and the influence of occupational self-efficacy. The first hypothesis stating that there would be a positive relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility was not supported. This finding was surprising, based on support in previous research of a link between cognitive ability and turnover (Dickter et al., 1996; Murnane et al., 1988, Schwab, 1991). A study by Gerhart (1990) found cognitive ability to be related to perceived ease of movement, similar to this study. Two possible explanations for failure to support this hypothesis are dissimilarities between intention to turnover and perceived organizational mobility, as well as concerns that the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) may not be a clear measure of cognitive ability.

The use of perceived organizational mobility in this study does not assume that there is a lack of job satisfaction that would lead to actual turnover. Although the presence of job dissatisfaction would fuel the dissatisfaction-quit sequence (Mobley, 1977; Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999), perceived organizational mobility by itself is neutral and related to job market perceptions (Steel & Griffeth,

1989). In this sense, cognitive ability may not be directly related to perceived organizational mobility.

The other question is whether the GMAT measures cognitive ability. The GMAT is used as a predictor of graduate school success in pre-admission screening. Other tests that are sometimes used are the SAT (formerly the Scholastic Aptitude Test), ACT (formerly American College Test), and GRE (Graduate Record Examination). The GMAT is intended to measure ones' ability to think systematically by employing verbal and mathematical skills (Jaffe & Hilbert, 1994). Its potential weakness is evidenced in its inability to explain more than 18% of the variance in graduate school GPA (Ahmadi, Raiszadeh, & Helm, 1997; Graham, 1991; Hancock, 1999; Koys, 2004; Nilsson, 1995; Paolillo, 1982, Wright & Palmer, 1994; Youngblood & Martin, 1982).

Alternatively, a popular measure of cognitive ability often used in research is the Armed Forces Qualifications Test (AFQT) (Dickter et al., 1996; Gerhart, 1990; Trevor, 2001). This instrument is a composite of four verbal and quantitative tests (word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, arithmetic reasoning, and mathematical knowledge). Its reliability has been reported in excess of .90 (Bock & Moore, 1986) and it has been shown to be stable over time (Gottfredson, 1986). The AFQT or similar test was not available for this study.

### *6.1.2 Self-efficacy*

Self-efficacy was predicted to be both a main effect and an interaction in the relationship between cognitive ability and perceived organizational mobility. Hypothesis 5 stated that there is a positive relationship between occupational self-efficacy and perceptions of organizational mobility. This hypothesis was supported for ease of movement but not for desirability of movement. Working students high in occupational self-efficacy believe that it would be easy for them to find another job. That does not necessarily mean, however, that they believe the replacement job would be any better than their current job. This is consistent with the relationship between self-efficacy and readiness for individual and organizational change (Cunningham et al., 2002). High self-efficacy is associated with success in coping with change (Prochaska, Redding, & Evers, 1997) and this could be related to recognition that job alternatives exist. As mobility is a precursor in the voluntary job withdrawal process, it is useful to confirm that self-efficacy is significantly related to mobility perceptions.

### *6.1.3 Interaction Effect*

Hypothesis 7 stated that occupational self-efficacy will moderate the relationship between cognitive ability and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that high self-efficacy increases the level of perceived organizational mobility. This hypothesis was supported. Occupational self-efficacy increases the magnitude of the effect of cognitive ability on ease of movement in a positive direction. Self-efficacy is associated with readiness for change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000) as well

as task accomplishment (Bandura, 1977). The findings suggest that higher performing students (based on their GMAT scores) who are also high in occupational self-efficacy are positively related to perceptions of ease of finding another job. This relationship did not hold true for the outcome variable of desirability of movement, indicating that the high self-efficacy and cognitive ability worker feels they can find another job, though not necessarily a better job.

#### *6.1.4 Degree Orientation*

The second set of hypotheses (2, 6, and 8) predicted that degree orientation would be related to perceived organizational mobility, and influenced by expected outcomes. Hypothesis 2 stated that seekers of generalized degrees will have greater perceptions of organizational mobility than students seeking specialized degrees. This hypothesis was not supported. While the generalist MBA continues to be considered an excellent way for workers to develop themselves in the acquisition of management skills that will enhance their career opportunities (Sturges et al., 2003), it is not clear if there is any way to differentiate them from the seekers of specialist degrees. First of all, it may be incorrect to assume that there was homogeneity among the seven specialist master's program participants. This may partially explain the failure to discern significance between generalist and specialist degree seekers. For example, 38 of the 115 specialist degree seekers were in accounting programs. Human capital theory would predict that these more specialized skills would make workers less likely to be bid away from their current employers in comparison to workers with skills that are

more generalized (Becker, 1964; Bishop, 1996; Stevens, 1994). Based on this theory, hypothesis 2 predicts that these accounting specialists would have lower perceptions of organizational mobility when in fact, accounting professionals are currently in extremely high demand. Other specialists in finance and information systems are in much lower demand. In another example, out of the group of 50 survey respondents majoring in health care administration (a specialized master's program), 34 plan to look for a new employer after graduating. This is quite different from intention to turnover among the generalist MBA's, which is equally distributed between very low and very high. As a result, assumptions about the perceived organizational mobility of generalist vs. specialist master's students is of greater complexity that initially envisioned in this hypothesis.

#### *6.1.5 Expected Outcomes*

Expected outcomes is a construct of social cognitive theory that was proposed as both a main effect and an interaction term in the relationship between degree orientation and perceived organizational mobility. According to Hypothesis 6, there is negative relationship between expected outcomes and perceptions of organizational mobility. This expected outcome would be created by the employer in offering a positive incentive in the form of a pay raise or promotion. As a retention strategy it would assist in diminishing the attractiveness of other organizations. Only when workers had low or no expected outcomes of their graduate degrees would there be an association with high levels of perceived organizational mobility. As expected, regression results



showed support for the hypothesis regarding a negative relationship of expected outcomes with desirability of movement. However, a positive significant relationship between expected outcomes and ease of movement was in the opposite direction of that being hypothesized. The rationale behind this finding could be that while the workers with high expected outcomes did not observe that there were better jobs to be had, they were well aware that there were plenty of alternative jobs. It is possible that the positive expectation of a reward from the employer is related to a degree of pride or satisfaction, and part of the message workers receive is that they are valuable enough to go elsewhere for work should they wish to.

#### *6.1.6 Interaction Effect*

Hypothesis 8 stated that expected outcomes will moderate the relationship between degree orientation and perceptions of organizational mobility in such a way that low expected outcomes increases the level of perceived organizational mobility. This relationship was not supported. Although expected outcomes was seen to be significant as a main effect with perceptions of organizational mobility, it did not contribute to any significance when introduced as a moderator in the relationship between degree orientation and perceived mobility. There is no evidence to believe that expected outcomes should have any differing impact on perceptions of organizational mobility and based on degree orientation and based upon potential weaknesses in the measure of degree orientation discussed previously.

### *6.1.7 Goals and Intentions of Additional Education*

The third set of hypotheses (3 and 4) examine goals and intentions of students who return to school for a graduate degree in business. The hypothesized positive relationship between motivations for pursuing additional education and perceptions of organizational mobility was partially supported. Four measures were used to represent motivations to pursue additional education. These were a desire for professional advancement, desire for knowledge, perceived need for skill improvement, and a careerist orientation. A high desire for professional advancement was positively associated with desirability of movement. The more general desire for knowledge and a perceived need for skill improvement were not significantly related to perceived organizational mobility. These results indicate that master's students who are ambitious to advance their careers tend to believe that better jobs are available for them to choose from, although they do not necessarily believe that these opportunities are numerous. On the other hand, perceived organizational mobility is not a significant outcome variable to the other motives of returning to school for the purpose of increasing knowledge or improving skills.

### *6.1.8 Careerism*

The other factor examined in relationship to goals and intentions of additional education is the level to which a worker has a careerist orientation. Hypothesis 3 stated that there is a positive relationship between a careerist orientation and perceptions of

organizational mobility. This hypothesized relationship was supported in terms of the outcome variable of desirability of movement although not for ease of movement. The results indicate that the careerist feels that it is likely that they could procure a job that is better than their current one although they do not necessarily feel that the overall number of alternative jobs are numerous. The careerist scale indicates the level to which the individual might be characterized as putting their self-interest first in several aspects. The higher level of careerism indicates opportunism in not trusting an organization to look out for ones' best interests, not believing that loyalty or honesty pays off, as well as a belief in the need of using influence to get ahead. The significance of desirability of movement for the careerist would be consistent with an attitude of observing opportunities that appear to be more favorable, in a continual pursuit of seeking a better position in work. Although this relationship is intuitive, it has not been previously identified specifically with perceived organizational mobility in the voluntary withdrawal process. Therefore, the findings of this study indicating that careerists believe they have better jobs available to them supplements previous research that has shown the careerists tendency to be less committed and more likely to turnover (Feldman & Weitz, 1991).

## 6.2 Contributions of the Study

There are seven areas of contribution of this study to literature and practice. The employment opportunity index (EOI) is a recently developed construct. It is

conceptually compelling in its potential for capturing a wider range of total variance in the voluntary withdrawal processes than previously used measures. Although well validated in its initial introduction (Griffeth et al., 2005), it has not yet been used extensively. Its utility can be evaluated only by its application in research projects. The five EOI dimensions are intended to be examined individually, as some are likely to be causally antecedent to others. The two dimensions that were selected as appropriate for this study, ease of movement and desirability of movement, are the structural basis of March and Simon's (1958) turnover theory. Variations of these alternatives have consistently been referred to in turnover literature (Gerhart, 1990; Michaels & Spector, 1982; Peters, Jackofsky, & Salter, 1981; Price & Mueller, 1981). The dimensions of ease of movement and desirability of movement proved to be reasonably strong in reliability and factor analyses. The other three dimensions of the EOI are networking, mobility, and crystallized alternatives. While their theoretical relationship to the main effects of this study were not clear, the constructs of mobility and crystallized alternatives were also somewhat of a disappointment. These two measures exhibited weak reliabilities (alphas below 0.60) and cross-loadings in factor analyses. In general, this study has been a useful application of the new EOI measure in the advancement of turnover theory.

The second area of contribution is the attempt to link cognitive ability to perceptions of organizational mobility. While both performance and cognitive ability have been linked with turnover (Dickter, Roznowski, & Harrison, 1996; Schwab, 1991), cognitive ability has not been previously linked with perceived organizational mobility.

Although the main effect was not supported, in combination with occupational self-efficacy, cognitive ability contributes to increased recognition that better jobs are available from other organizations.

Related to this is the third contribution, in finding that occupational self-efficacy is related to perceptions of organizational mobility. This is an extension of previous findings (Cunningham et al., 2002; Wanberg & Banas, 2000) of self-efficacy being related to readiness for individual and organizational change. Thus, while there is no indication that cognitive ability of graduate level business students is in itself particularly influential toward perceptions of organizational mobility, combining it with occupational self-efficacy creates a positive relationship to perceptions of alternative job opportunities. This is consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory that emphasizes the influence of belief in one's ability to impact the environment. Based on this, an employer might be correct to conclude that smarter employees may be more likely to leave when they are very high in self-efficacy.

A fourth contribution to literature is additional confirmation of the doubt that there are clear differences in general vs. specialized training & development, as originally articulated in Becker's (1964) human capital theory. The type of graduate business degree selected does not seem to be predictive of the workers' perceived organizational mobility. MBAs do not perceive any different level of ease of movement or desirability of movement when compared to seekers of specialized master's degrees. It is possible that comparisons of these working students need to be made using different criteria and that they cannot be adequately compared in only two groupings.

No inferences in this regard can be made from this study. Nonetheless, the lack of observable differences between the two groups offers a degree of confirmation to those who believe that all education and training is highly general in its application (Bishop, 1998) and “one is hard pressed to come up with good examples of training that provides skills that are useful at only one employer” (Lowenstein & Spletzer, 1999: 730).

A fifth major contribution of this study is in identifying the outcome expectancy of receiving a pay raise or promotion upon graduation as being negatively related to the desirability of moving to another organization. Benson et al. (2004) identified turnover as an outcome of not receiving a promotion, but this is the first subsequent study that examines whether a reward for graduation is expected by the worker. Expected outcomes are an element that can be manipulated by an organization in creating the anticipation of a reward for performance. The implication to management is a clear recommendation that completion of an advanced degree needs to be accompanied by a reward so that alternative jobs available in the market are less attractive.

The sixth contribution relates to careerism, which has never been examined with business master’s students. Mano-Negrin and Kirschenbaum (1999) showed that the impact of careerism on turnover is occupation specific. My research shows that high careerism in business master’s students is influential toward perceived organizational mobility.

Careerism is also related to the final contribution of this study, which is in identifying some motivations for pursuing a graduate business degree. Using two

constructs from the educational participation scale (EPS) that have been widely applied across a broad variety of educational pursuits (Boshier, 1991), motivations to seek knowledge and professional advancement were examined for their influence toward perceptions of organizational mobility. While the pursuit of knowledge was not found to be significantly related to perceptions of organizational mobility, desire for professional advancement was a different story. It was found that motivations favoring professional advancement were significantly related to the recognition of more desirable jobs being available. Thus, workers who are ambitious toward their professional advancement tend to believe that better jobs are available to them in other organizations. Taken to a more opportunistic level, workers with a high careerist orientation had a positive significant relationship with the belief that they could easily leave their current employer in favor of a better job. This indicates that when graduate business education is used for career advancement, workers have an eye on the external job market for moving their career forward. Although this is a fairly intuitive finding, it has not been measured previously in this context, making it a significant finding of this study.

The overall summary of individual differences in this study that are significantly related to perceptions of organizational mobility indicate that self-efficacy, careerism, a desire for professional advancement, and expected outcomes are influential toward perceptions of organizational mobility for workers seeking graduate level business education. Cognitive ability by itself and the type of degree selected were not found to

be related significantly to perceived organizational mobility. Nor were motives of perceived need for skill improvement or a general quest for knowledge.

### 6.3 Study Limitations

The three primary limitations of this study are the self-report bias, the lack of an objective dependent variable, and the use of cross sectional data. These will need to be dealt with, to the extent possible, in future research.

The self-report bias is directly related to problems of common method variance (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Fiske, 1982) and the use of cross sectional data. Common method variance questions arise from the use of a single data source. Studies of organizational behavior typically rely on reporting from the subjects themselves on the variables of interest. Researchers are skeptical about results that come from questionnaires that ask people to report on themselves and their jobs (Spector, 1994). On the other hand, it has been pointed out that it is often necessary to obtain data from the only people with accurate knowledge, which would be the employees themselves (Maurer & Tarulli, 1994; Noe & Wilk, 1993). This information would be suspect if there was reason to believe undue influence had been exerted from an organization or researcher. That is not the case with this study, as respondents were in a position of neutrality in relationship to their employer, the time and location of the web-based survey was of their own choosing, and confidentiality of their responses relative to the university was assured. Another issue with common method variance is that due to multiple measures coming from the same source, defects that exist in that source will



create contamination in the measures, presumably of the same variety and in the same direction. It would be preferable to utilize objective or archival data for a number of the variables in this study, particularly the outcome variables. Given the design of this study and the non-availability of additional objective sources of data, self reporting was the only available source for much of the data. Two variables came from archival sources. Cognitive ability in the form of the GMAT performance was furnished by the college of business, as well as the degree orientation (generalist MBA and specialized master's programs).

One diagnostic for common method variance is the Harmon's one-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). This diagnostic tool uses factor analysis in which all or large groups of variables are examined in an unrotated solution. A substantial amount of common method variance is indicated if one factor accounts for a majority of the covariance in the independent and criterion variables. Evaluation of the data in this study using the Harmon's test did not reveal a dominant factor in any of the configurations of variables.

In addition to procuring many of the variables from the same subjects, this study used a cross sectional design in which data were collected on the independent and dependent variables at the same time. This prevents any evaluation of causality or even the directionality of the relationships (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982). Interpretation of the relationships hypothesized in this study should be made with the appropriate caution and an understanding of the data collection biases that may be present to some degree.

An additional limitation of the study pertains to generalizability. Although the total number of respondents ( $n = 328$ ) was an excellent response rate, it represents only the students in one large public university in one state. Legitimate questions may be raised as to how generalizable this group is to the entire population. The study does, however, benefit from excellent diversity on several levels. First is the cultural diversity of the population, as well as the diversity of business master's programs offered at this school. Equally important is the wide range of employers represented by the students in this sample. The metropolitan area and the large number of organizations that this university draws from provides a broad range of industries and organizational structures.

The use of currently enrolled university students creates a limitation to this study in two ways. First is the absence of archival data that would be available in the human resources files of a large employer. The use of hard data in place of self-report items would eliminate some of the biases in this study. Data procured from employers would also furnish some performance measures that are not available through the university, such as actual turnover and salary growth. A second limitation in the use of university students is the absence of an important comparison population: workers who are not students. This would furnish an important base line or comparison point in the evaluation of perceived organizational mobility. Data from non-student workers would also be informative in context to three of the independent variables: cognitive ability, occupational self-efficacy, and careerist orientation.

An additional potential limitation in this study is the use of the EOI for perceived organizational mobility. Although this construct is designed to capture perceptions of mobility related to joining another organization, it does not capture internal mobility within the firm which is an important area of career mobility.

#### 6.4 Directions for Future Research

This study is exploratory in nature, although many of its measures and its theoretical base are well established. The contribution that it makes is in the examination of master's level business education in its value beyond the traditional cost/benefit analysis. Future research will require refinement of the measures and broadening of the population studied.

The measure of cognitive ability is clearly inadequate in this study. I propose the use of a comprehensive measure such as the AFQT mentioned earlier or perhaps some other cognitive evaluation instrument used by an organization in pre-employment screening. The degree orientation division between generalist and specialist master's degrees in this study is overly simplistic. Differences between the various degree specialties needs to be more clearly examined and defined if there is any significance to be recognized between the degree programs selected by students.

Future research will necessitate access to an organization that can furnish objective measures. Many of the limitations in this study that arise from self reporting can be alleviated with archival data. For example, in pursuing the large questions of the value of master's level business education to students, objective measures are needed

such as actual turnover, salary growth, actual promotions, and other career growth measures that can probably only be furnished by an employer.

Future research that examines business master's education in relationship to organizational mobility needs to be able to also measure mobility within the organization rather than being limited to recognition of career growth through mobility to other organizations. Workers may not need to leave their current organization if career growth within the firm is satisfactory.

Three dimensions of the EOI (mobility, networking, and crystallized alternatives) were not used in this study. In further validation of this new five-factor measure, additional research needs to focus on each of the dimensions. Further research may be able to identify EOI dimensions that are causally antecedent to others. This would be a contribution to long standing questions about to the turnover cycle.

Also pertaining to causality, longitudinal study will be beneficial in future research. In addition to hypothesizing causality and directionality of relationships, the investigation of outcomes at multiple time points would be informative of actual outcomes vs. expectations.

### 6.5 Conclusion

This study makes a contribution to the understanding of career expectations of workers who return to college for an advanced degree in business. It is an area that has had surprisingly little research. It comes at a time when the value of graduate business education is being questioned, in an era of broad changes in employment relationships

and career opportunities. This research should be seen as a starting point for future study of the implications of development for meeting career goals.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

March 27, 2006

Dear Graduate Student:

If you complete the College of Business Administration survey, you will be entered into a **random drawing for four separate awards of \$100.00**. Your individual answers will be held in confidence and will only be reported as summary information.

The data you and others provide will help us better understand the degree and career choices of graduate students and it will help us continuously improve course and degree offerings.

SURVEY LINK: <http://www.zipsurvey.com/LaunchSurvey.aspx?suid=7891&key=77178DCA>

The College has made great progress over the past several years in developing high-quality programs and attracting the best group of graduate students the College has ever experienced. The test scores of incoming students continue to climb and enrollments are growing. Our established programs have been supplemented with new courses of study including the MS in Health Care Administration, the Chinese EMBA, and the Cohort MBA. In fall 2006 the EMBA program will be available at the UT Arlington Fort Worth Center in downtown Fort Worth.

As part of our ongoing efforts to better understand our students and meet your needs, I am asking that you take a few minutes to complete a survey. The survey asks questions about your work experience and goals for graduate studies. The information will be used to improve COBA programs, improve our marketing for new students, and support our AACSB maintenance of accreditation process. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Click on the link below (or copy & paste into the address field of your web browser).

SURVEY LINK: <http://www.zipsurvey.com/LaunchSurvey.aspx?suid=7891&key=77178DCA>

Sincerely,  
Dan Himarios  
Dean, College of Business Administration



## Masters Student Survey

### INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. George Benson  
TITLE OF PROJECT: Student Career Attitudes

As a participant you will be entered into a random drawing in which four \$100 prizes will be awarded among approximately 600 respondents.

The survey must be completed in order to qualify and you can only participate one time.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study is to learn how masters level education relates to career perceptions.

**PROCEDURES:** You will be asked your opinions and experience in multiple choice questions. You will click on your responses as you proceed through the survey. It should take less than ten minutes of your time. There are no known or expected risks/discomforts. The possible benefit of your participation is advancement of understanding the role of education in career futures.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in room #604 of the Business Building for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Service, the UTA IRB, and personnel particular this research (individual or department) have access to study records. Your student records will be kept



completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

**CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:** If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Dr. George Benson at (817) 272-3856, or contact Bob Buchanan at (817) 272-3851. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at (817) 272-1235 for any question you may have about your rights as a research subject.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or quit at any time by closing your web browser. Responses from incomplete surveys will not be saved. By clicking on the gray box below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you and you freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

Please press keys Ctrl/P at this time if you wish to print a copy of this informed consent document.

I agree to take part in the survey

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## Masters Student Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey about your feelings towards your work and education. You can be assured that the information is confidential and that your identity remains anonymous in the analysis of the data.

1. Please indicate the extent to which each of the reasons below influenced your decision to seek your current college degree program.

		No influence	Little influence	Moderate influence	Much influence	Very much influence
	To seek knowledge for its own sake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To secure professional advancement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To respond to the perception that I am surrounded by people who continue to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To satisfy an inquiring mind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To be accepted by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To give me higher status in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Continued:  
The extent to which each of the reasons below influenced you to seek your current degree program.

		No	Little	Moderate	Much	Very much

		<b>influence</b>	<b>influence</b>	<b>influence</b>	<b>influence</b>	<b>influence</b>
	To supplement a narrow previous education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To acquire knowledge that will help with other courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To keep up with competition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To increase my competence in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To improve my ability to serve mankind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To keep up with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 3. Continued:

The extent to which each of the reasons below influenced you to seek your current degree program.

		<b>No influence</b>	<b>Little influence</b>	<b>Moderate influence</b>	<b>Much influence</b>	<b>Very much influence</b>
	To learn just for the sake of learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To learn something new	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To keep up to date professionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How many credit hours are you currently taking at UT Arlington this semester?

5. Are you currently seeking a degree?

No

Yes

6. How many months until you expect to graduate?

7. How much time did you wait after your undergraduate degree before starting graduate school? (in years)

8. How much time did you wait after high school before starting your undergraduate degree? (in years)

9. I received my undergraduate degree from UT Arlington

No

Yes

10. How many total years have you worked full-time? (to the nearest year)

11. How many full-time jobs have you had in your entire career?

12. Does your employer offer tuition reimbursement?

13.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
	Getting reimbursed by my firm is easy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My company's tuition reimbursement program is a great benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Is there a probation or service requirement in order to qualify for tuition reimbursement?

Yes

No

15. How long is the waiting period? (number of months)

16. How long have you worked for your current organization? (to the nearest year)

17. Are you required to stay with your employer for a specific amount of time after you have graduated?

Yes

No

18. How long are you required to stay? (to the nearest year)

19. Are you currently employed?

Yes

No

20. How long have you worked in your current functional job description? (to the nearest year)

21. How many hours (on average) do you work every week?

22. What is the total number of employees in your entire organization?

23. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	If I looked for a job, I would probably wind up with a better job than the one I have now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	It is hard to get ahead in an organization on sheer merit alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I am unable to move to another place of residence now, even if a better job came along	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I have seriously thought that my job abilities should be increased in certain areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If I do a good job, I'll be rewarded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I can remain calm when facing difficulties in my job because I can rely on my abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Earning my graduate degree increases my prospects in my current organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Who you know is more important in an organization than what you know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I have a far-reaching "network" of contacts which could help me find out about other job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	opportunities					
	No matter what comes my way in my job, I'm usually able to handle it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Continued: The degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	Given my qualifications and experience, getting a new job would not be very hard at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	To get promoted, you need to do your job very well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Earning my degree increases my chances of getting a future pay raise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I have found a better alternative than my present job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Having a job assignment with high contact with supervisors is more important to me than having a challenging job assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	By and large, the jobs I could get if I left here are superior to the job I have now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	There are factors in my personal life (e.g., school age children, relatives, etc.) which make it very difficult for me to leave my current job in the near future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I meet the goals that I set for myself in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



	Sometimes you have to use your social relationships with your coworkers and bosses to get ahead in an organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I have contacts in other companies who might help me line up a new job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. Continued: The degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	When I am confronted with a problem in my job, I can usually find several solutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The key to success is who you know, not what you know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	It is more likely that I will be promoted in my current organization when I have a graduate degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I have been in real need of career related skill or knowledge improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If I am in trouble at my work, I can usually think of something to do to remedy the situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Looking good to your boss is more important in getting ahead than being good at your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I can think of a number of organizations that would probably offer me a job if I was looking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My work and/or social activities tend to bring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	me in contact with a number of people who might help me line up a new job					
	In terms of getting ahead in an organization, looking and acting like a winner can be more instrumental than simply being very competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	One or more of my career related skills or knowledge have been in need of improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

26. Continued: The degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	My past experiences in my job have prepared me well for my occupational future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sometimes you have to act unethically to get the promotions you feel you have coming to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	There simply aren't very many jobs for people like me in today's job market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel prepared to meet most of the demands in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	You can't be completely honest when dealing with your boss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	It is likely that I will get a raise in my current job when I get my degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Right now I have a job offer “on the table” from another employer if I choose to take it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I cannot count on organizations to look out for my own best interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Most of the jobs I could get would be an improvement over my present circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. Continued: The degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	My spouse’s career makes it very difficult for me to leave my current organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Occasionally, you have to distort information you give to your employer in order to promote your own self-interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Knowledge gained from a degree will improve my performance in my current job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In the final analysis, what's best for me in my career is not going to be consistent with what is in the organization's best interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	This organization inspires the very best in the way of job performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Help is available from my organization when I have a problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In terms of managing careers in organizations, it's each man or woman for himself/herself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel worried about my future with my current organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I talk of my organization to my friends as a great place to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. Continued: The degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	Being completely honest doesn't pay when dealing with your employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel secure in my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I plan to look outside my organization for a new job after I graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I don't think of myself as "an organization man/woman"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	All in all, I am satisfied with my current job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	When you go to work for a company, you have to remember to watch out for yourself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The skills gained from my degree will NOT improve my performance in my current job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My organization cares about my well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

29. Continued: The degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	You should be straightforward and honest in dealing with your employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My organization strongly considers my goals and values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The degree I'm earning at UTA is not related to my current job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My goals and my employer's goals probably will not be compatible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel that I am getting ahead in my organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	After I graduate I'm planning to look for a better job in a different organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	For me this is the best of all organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	to work					
	I feel that the company I go to work for will be fair and honest with me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. Continued: The degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	There is a good chance that I will quit my job after graduating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In most companies, you really have to watch out that you won't be taken advantage of	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The degree I'm working on is related to my current job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Loyalty to one's employer is unlikely to be rewarded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I feel good about my future with my current organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I'm extremely glad to have chosen this organization to work for over other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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31. What are the total earnings from your current or most recent job? (per year)

32. If you received a raise at your last performance review, what was the percentage increase?

33. How much do you expect to earn after receiving a graduate degree from UT Arlington? (per year)

34. Are you married?

Yes

No

35. Are you an international student?

Yes

No

36. How old were you on your last birthday?

37. Gender

38. Ethnicity

- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- White Caucasian or Middle East
- Asian or India
- Native American
- Other (please specify)

39. Please enter your last name for the cash prize drawing

40. Last four digits of your student I.D.



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