CONTENT, VALUES, AND ENVIRONMENT: APPLICANT

REACTIONS TO JOB DESCRIPTIONS

by

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Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

DECEMBER 2010

To my Gummy – Dorothy Toliver – whose presence I miss every day of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I must thank God for affording me the opportunities I have been presented with in life. Without Him, none of this would be possible.

Next, I thank my family for their love and support during this unfamiliar process. I thank my mother, Linda, and father, Richard, for housing and feeding me while I bum a room in their home. I thank my father for the many breakfasts he cooked to jumpstart my day. I especially thank my mother for sitting in the bed with me while I did draft after draft. You will never know what your presence meant to me. I thank my sister, Tonya, for always being my biggest fan. I thank my nephews, Blake and Bryce, for reminding me of the importance of work-life balance. I thank my oldest brother, Joseph, for being a role model for pursuing my dreams. I thank my middle brother, Daniel, for his random calls to just see what I was doing. And I thank my youngest brother, Sam, for being an example of resilience. I have a special group of friends that I consider my "fam." Without you (Angela, Kristen, Stanton, and Undrea) I may have cried myself to death. Your laughs kept me going when I no longer wanted to.

To my best friends, Jennifer and Karnell, although we are in different parts of the country, your friendship will always mean the world to me.

For my colleagues turned friends (Ajal, Chloe, Erika, and Priya) I truly, truly appreciate your support throughout this process. Ajal, I owe you 30% of my life! Chloe, you are the most encouraging person I have ever met. Erika and Priya, I apologize for the countless hours I spent whining about how I would never get this done – had it not been for you in my corner, I probably wouldn't have.

I also wish to thank Alysia, Doni, and Cara for running participants for me in my absence.

I thank my committee, especially my Chair, Dr. Lopez, for her patience with me. I thank you all for making my project better.

I thank my co-workers at Leadership Worth Following for supporting my academics efforts and for pushing me to 1. Graduate! 2. Graduate!! 3. Graduate!!!

Last, but certainly not least, I thank my wonderful partner, Darrell, for supporting my dreams. You have been more patient with me than I ever imagined. Thanks for supporting me and believing in me when I didn't believe in myself.

November 15, 2010

ABSTRACT

CONTENT, VALUES, AND ENVIRONMENT: APPLICANT REACTIONS TO JOB

DESCRIPTIONS

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The University of Texas at Arlington, 2010

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The research on job descriptions is limited and information regarding applicant reactions to job descriptions is even scarcer. The current research hypothesized that after reading job content information, an applicant's decision to apply or not apply for a job rests on the organizational values and work environment information included in the job description. Participants were presented with four job descriptions with varying levels of job content, organizational values, and work environment information and were asked to indicate which description would make them most and least likely to apply for the job and why. The results showed that the job description containing information on job content, organizational values, and the work environment (job description #4) was most favored among participants, receiving the highest ratings compared to job descriptions #1 and #2, while the job description containing only job content information (job description #1) was least favored among participants, receiving the lowest ratings compared to the remaining three job descriptions. Other findings are discussed as well as the limitations of the study and future directions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the current paper is to identify the factors that potential job applicants deem as important when making the decision to apply for a job. The paper sets forth hypotheses that state that potential job applicants make the decision to apply for a job while or soon after reading a job description. During this time, the potential applicant reviews the points of the job description to see where there is alignment and where there is disconnect with what he or she is capable of and looking for in a job. This paper argues that information about (a) organizational values and (b) the work environment are important components of the job description. Those two particular pieces of information on the job description are the vehicles that convince an applicant to apply or not apply for a job.

While the job description is critical to an applicant's decision, its existence is minimal and secondary in nature in the literature. The current paper will begin by reviewing the job description literature. Next, the fit and value congruence literature will be used to theorize about how potential applicants make decisions on alignment and disconnect. The paper will connect the limited literature on job descriptions and then provide four hypotheses.

1.1 Job Descriptions (Ads, Postings, etc.)

The current research seeks to empirically evaluate the impact that job descriptions have on an individual's decision to apply for a job. This section of the paper will define what a job description is, review the limited literature on job descriptions, and provide information on how potential applicants evaluate job descriptions.

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A job description represents the analysis of job demands, and results in a document that can be used to evaluate job performance (Cascio & Aguinis, 2005). Variations of job descriptions are also used to advertise open job positions within a company. As such, job descriptions provide potential applicants with information about the job. That is, job descriptions specify the work to be performed by the individual, *how* the work should be done, and *why* the work is being done. Cascio and Aguinis (2005) state that traditional job descriptions should include a job title, job activities and procedures, working conditions and physical environment, information about the social environment, and conditions of employment. One purpose of the job description is to provide information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the job. Cascio and Aguinis briefly differentiate the traditional job description mentioned above from the more contemporary behavioral job descriptions. According to Cascio and Aguinis, behavioral job descriptions are becoming more and more useful for outlining broader job abilities to keep up with technology as well as changes in customers' needs. Fondas (1992) described the need for job descriptions to be more behavioral in nature, especially for managers. According to Fondas, having behavioral job descriptions will help delineate one job from one another across functions (e.g., finance, customer support, information technology) and across levels (e.g., line worker, manager, and supervisor). Behavioral job descriptions can help provide additional details about the duties and responsibilities of the job and can have practical implications for people at all levels within an organization. Due to the changing workforce, behavioral job descriptions are likely to be increasingly utilized, especially because of their usefulness in differentiating between duties and responsibilities across job functions and job levels. Because the focus of the current research is on the information contained in job descriptions as opposed to delineating across job functions or level, this study will center on traditional job descriptions and not on behavioral job descriptions.

In "How to Write Winning Job Descriptions," Kennedy (1987) describes the need for job descriptions to be written in such a way that they give participants additional or "behind-the-

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scenes" information regarding how work is carried out within an organization. For example, a job description indicating that the company values a team player attitude might convey to the potential applicant the likelihood of working in teams. The more information the job description provides, the more confident the applicant can be in his or her decision to apply or not to apply for the job. Kennedy goes on to describe the benefits that both individuals and organizations gain from developing high-quality job descriptions. The individual benefits from having an agreement with management outlining the job requirements and performance metrics. Having this agreement can prove useful for eliminating discrepancies when the individual and his or her supervisor begin to engage in job performance evaluations and/or salary negotiations. The organization benefits from having a document that defines job roles and responsibilities, which helps the organization accurately distribute job assignments and determine pay. Another important note, one also made by Fondas (1992), is that high-quality job descriptions differentiate job roles such that a job incumbent knows how his or her role is different from supervisors, peers, and subordinates. This information also helps potential job applicants better understand the job role, how they might be able to help subordinates, which peers they can look to for help, and also how they might provide help to a supervisor.

Job descriptions can be categorized as generic or specific. Both are useful when it comes to developing and writing a job description. Generic job descriptions decrease the likelihood that a writer will introduce superfluous information and increase the likelihood that the writer's content will be consistent. When writers are left to their creative imaginations, the result is job descriptions that vary in quality and level of detail. When such unwanted creativity is decreased and the job description writing process is standardized, the result is thorough job descriptions that give the potential applicant a full understanding of what the job entails and how he or she is expected to perform job duties. In addition, writing specific job descriptions leaves little room for writers to insert their creative imaginations. Specific job descriptions are narrower in focus and force the writer to put more effort into crafting the job description, ensuring that

everything from its specific language to its actual content is correctly aligned with the vision of the company. Kennedy (1987) describes the following parts of a high-quality job description, with the last five items allowing room for elaboration and providing the applicant with an opportunity to set him or herself apart from others in the candidate pool: (1) header (e.g., job title, information regarding names and location of incumbent and immediate supervisor), (2) principle purpose or summary (provides information regarding the job's contribution to the organization), (3) principal responsibilities (e.g., opening the store daily, cleaning glass countertops), (4) job skills (e.g., time management, judgment and decision making), (5) dimensions or scope (provides information on how "large" the role is, e.g., manage $10K budget, manage 352 direct reports), (6) organization chart (diagram representing the relationship between supervisor, incumbent, peers, and subordinates), (7) problems or problem solving (e.g., how to reset timepieces, how to void credit card transactions that have been posted to customer's account) , (8) environment (e.g., climate-controlled warehouse), (9) key contacts (e.g., District Manager, Master Designer), (10) references (e.g., Dean of Students at Agnes Scott College, Customer Service Supervisor at Best Buy), and (11) supervision given or received (e.g., use of positive body language in team meetings). These 11 components of a job description are each a specific and important source of information for the potential applicant. If written thoroughly, after reading the job description the individual should have little or no question about the job and be ready to apply (or not apply) based on his or her qualifications and interests. The current research will vary the amount of information (organizational values, job content, and environmental factors) provided in three (principal responsibilities, job skills, and environment) of the 11 aforementioned sections, and will also include organizational values information.

Similar to the current research, Mason and Belt (1986) wanted to know what leads an individual to prefer one job over another. To find answers to their question, Mason and Belt adapted Dawis, Lofquist, and Weiss' (1968) theory of work adjustment. Dawis et al. proposed

that the theory of work adjustment can help in understanding the following: choice of career, continuing in and progressing in a career, performing satisfactorily in jobs, and deriving satisfaction from work. The theory of work adjustment rests on the notion that there should be correspondence between an individual and his or her environment. The authors assert that individuals make career choices, continue and progress in careers, perform satisfactorily in jobs, and derive satisfaction from their work when maximum individual-environment correspondence is achieved. Both the individual and the environment rely on one another and maximum correspondence is achieved when the individual and the environment are mutually beneficial to one another. Similarly, correspondence in the work environment occurs when an employee provides what the organization requires and vice versa. For example, if an employee successfully negotiates a contract with an organization's major client and the organization, in turn, promotes that employee, work environment correspondence has occurred.

In their adaptation of the theory of work adjustment, Mason and Belt (1986) asserted that individuals make career choices by evaluating the match between the requirements of the job and their personal skill set. Relating this to Dawis et al.'s (1968) theory of work adjustment, this evaluation process can be thought of in terms of correspondence. The individual seeks to make career choices where there is correspondence between his or her knowledge, skills, and abilities, and what he or she reads in the job description. Although Mason and Belt were interested in answering the same question as the current study, (i.e., what leads a potential applicant to prefer one job description over another), their approach differed in that they hypothesized that *specificity* of both the job description and job specifications led a potential applicant to prefer one job over another. Job specifications are pieces of information about the abilities necessary to perform the job. The current research, on the other hand, hypothesizes that it is the *type* of information contained in the job description that leads a potential applicant to choose one job over another. While Mason and Belt chose to examine job descriptions and job specifications, the current study will examine the type of information included in job

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descriptions such as job content, values, and environmental factors in an effort to gain information on which factors lead a potential job applicant to apply (or not apply) for a job. Mason and Belt found that qualified applicants were more likely respond to the job ad compared to unqualified applicants. The authors also found that qualified applicants preferred job description specificity and job specification specificity while unqualified applicants did not show a preference. To account for this in the present study, participants will be asked to provide their current employment status and number of years in the workforce.

Carrying out a 2 X 2 experimental design, Singh (1975) varied job context factors (e.g., salary) and job content factors (e.g., job tasks) in an effort to understand what would make engineering students choose one job over another. Singh hypothesized that job content and job context factors influenced a job's attractiveness and whether an applicant reported that he or she would experience job satisfaction after accepting the job offer. In line with the current research, Singh reported that applicants are influenced by certain job factors before they even make the decision to apply for a job. Factors such as pay and opportunity for advancement are pieces of information that carry different weights when a potential applicant is making decisions about which jobs to apply for. Participants in the current study will be asked which description appeals to them and why, in hopes of gathering information about the different weights they place on particular pieces of information (e.g., job content, values, and work environment). Singh presented each participant with one job description that varied four content-related factors and four context-related factors. Participants were asked how likely they were to accept the job and how satisfied they would be if they accepted the job offer. The author found that context factors were more important when participants were evaluating whether they would likely accept the job whereas content factors were more important when participants were evaluating their anticipated job satisfaction. The authors also found that content factors were more important to more advanced participants who were close to exiting college and entering the working world. Singh's findings are important for the current study in that the author

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provides information about which job factors influence an applicant's decision making. The current research will expand Singh's findings by giving each participant four different job descriptions that vary the *type* (i.e., organizational values, work environment preferences) of information presented.

Over two decades ago Smith, Benson, and Hornsby (1990) noted the limited amount of research examining the judgments of job descriptions. Today, there is still a need for research in this area and the current research seeks to fill this void. One thing the limited literature does say, however, is that there are several factors that impact an applicant's evaluation of job descriptions. For example, Smith, Hornsby, Benson, and Wesolowski (1989) found that the job title alone can impact job description evaluation. The current study focuses on how potential applicants evaluate job content, organizational values, and work environment to arrive at a decision to apply or not apply for a job. Each of these factors (job content, values, and environment) is discussed in turn.

<u>1.2 Job Content</u>

The limited literature on job descriptions is centered on what information should be included in the job description. For example, both Fondas (1992) and Kennedy (1987) agree that the job description should tell applicants how their job differs from subordinates, peers, and supervisors. There is also agreement that job descriptions should include information on the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required to perform the job (Fondas, 1992; Kennedy, 1987). While this information is important, likely it is not what causes a potential applicant to vacillate about whether or not he or she should apply for the job. Once an individual learns what KSAs are required for the job, typically it is fairly clear to ascertain whether or not one has the required skills. If one does possess the required skills, he or she may then look to information about organizational values and work environment to determine whether or not this is the right job for them.

1.3 Work Environment and Organizational Values

After an individual decides whether or not his or her skill set matches the requirements of the job, it is theorized that potential applicants seek information about their work environment. For example, potential applicants want to know if they will have to work in a team or how long they have to stay in their current position to become eligible to move to the next rung on the career ladder. Thus, the following research question is presented:

R1: Is work environment information an important aspect of job descriptions?

In addition to evaluating the work environment, it is hypothesized that potential applicants look at the organization's values to determine whether or not there is alignment or disconnect. Organizational values can include loyalty, trustworthiness, and innovation. Thus, the following research question is presented:

R2: Is organizational values information an important aspect of job descriptions?

Taken together, the last research question is:

R3: Of job content, work environment, and organizational values, which is the most important aspect of the job description?

To support these theories and to help answer these questions, the fit and value congruence literature are presented. The fit literature is examined for its relevance to the role the work environment plays in shaping a potential applicant's reaction to a job description. The three types of fit important for the current study (person-environment fit, person-organization fit, and person-job fit) will be discussed in turn. In addition, the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model will be examined for its value in providing background information regarding how individuals become attracted to an organization, make decisions about which organizations they select to join, and when they decide to leave an organization. The value congruence literature is examined for its relevance to how individuals make decisions about whether their values match an organization's values.

1.3.1. Person-Environment Fit

Research on person-environment fit dates back to the early 1900s when Parsons (1909) examined vocational congruence. Person-environment fit, or *fit* as it is sometimes called, is the match, or congruence, between the skills and qualities of an individual and his or her work environment (Greguras & Diefendorff, 2009). Person-environment fit impacts many of the elements of an individual's experience during her or his interaction prior to and after joining an organization including perceptions of the organization, interest in the organization, actions and attitudes after joining, and turnover intentions. The current paper is focused on how person-environment fit impacts an individual's perception of the job description and if that individual applies for a job within the organization as a result of that perception.

Realizing that while previous researchers were able to link person-environment fit to outcomes such as recruitment and selection decisions, job satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment, and turnover, Edwards, Cable, Williams, Lambert, and Shipp (2006) noticed the literature lacked information about how individuals come to make decisions about person-environment fit. That is, Edwards et al. sought to understand how people take information about themselves (e.g., their knowledge, skills, abilities, and characteristics) and information about the environment to arrive at perceptions about how they will fit with an organization. The authors found that when individuals are evaluating fit, the end perception differs based on whether the individual is making concrete or subjective judgments. A concrete judgment occurs when an individual is weighing the current environment against a standard such as industry averages for pay or travel time.

Subjective judgment, on the other hand, occurs when an individual is weighing the current environment against past, present, or future environments. Armed with this knowledge, an organization can structure its recruitment and interview environment such that it gains information from applicants about their perceptions of the organization in terms of fit, and what

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they are looking for or hoping to gain from the organization. For instance, it may be beneficial to ask individuals their thoughts about the organization. It may even be beneficial to ask individuals how they compare this organization against similar organizations or against organizations they have worked for in the past or those they would like to work for in the future. This would allow organizations to understand what perceptions the individual has of the organization. Organizations can then take this information and adapt it, in the job description, for instance, to play to its strengths. One of the benefits of the current research is the information gained by asking participants why they chose to apply, or not apply, for the job after reading the job description. The current study will give organizations a model for piloting their job descriptions before they are introduced to potential applicants. Using the current methodology, organizations can distribute sample job descriptions to thousands of participants and get feedback on what they should change in order to attract the high potential candidates they seek. The information contained in job descriptions provides the basis on which applicants will determine their fit with the job and the organization.

1.3.2. Person-Organization Fit

A review of the literature yields several different types of fit and while the aforementioned person-environment fit is at the top of the fit hierarchy, there are several more types of fit that are important to the current study. Person-organization (PO) fit is discussed for the value gained by understanding the relationship between a person and a specific organization. For example, increasingly organizations are making an effort to understand the impact that person-organization fit has on outcomes such as turnover (Suszko & Breaugh, 1986), counterproductive work behaviors (Carless, 2005), job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational satisfaction (Amos & Weathington, 2008). It is important for potential applicants to assess PO fit prior to joining an organization in an effort to decrease negative outcomes such as turnover and increase positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In an effort to achieve the end goal of understanding the

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relationship between fit and applicant reactions to job descriptions, an in-depth discussion of person-organization fit is presented.

Kristof (1996) asserts that person-organization fit occurs either when an individual or an organization provides something the other party needs, when an individual and an organization share core characteristics, or both. In short, Kristof defines person-organization fit as the benefits that one party can gain from another. Mello (2006) defines person-organization fit as the fit between the job and the individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and also between the characteristics of the applicant and the characteristics of the organization. For Mello, person-organization fit includes fit between the person and his or her job (also known as person-job fit) as well as the person and the organization. Latham and Pinder (2005) state that goodness-of-fit models assess person-organization fit by examining the relationships between individual variables (e.g., individual needs, personality variables) and contextual variables (e.g., the organization and its culture). The authors further argue that person-organization fit can be influenced by internal environmental factors. For example, the culture of an organization (an internal environmental factor) is likely to influence an individual's perception of how the organization is meeting his or her needs. Internal environmental factors may also influence an individual's perception of how well his or her values are aligned with the organization's values. Latham and Pinder's research directs future researchers to examine the internal and external factors that influence person-organization fit. The current research will, in part, build on Latham and Pinder's foundation by examining organizational environmental factors that are important to potential applicants in order to determine which of those factors would most likely influence the individual's decision to actually apply for a job.

There are multiple ways to study the relationship between how individuals and organizations fit together. Authors commonly research person-organization fit as noted above. However, other types of person-environment fit have been subject to investigation and thus merit discussion. For instance, Kristof (1996) distinguishes needs-supplies person-organization

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fit from demands-abilities person-organization fit. Needs-supplies person-organization fit is related to how the organization meets an individual's needs, desires, or preferences (i.e., Does the organization supply what the employee needs?). According to Kristof, organizations supply the following employee needs: financial, physical, and psychological resources and task-related, interpersonal, and growth opportunities. Applying this information to the current study, task-related opportunities would be related to job content, and interpersonal and growth opportunities would be related to the work environment. Therefore, needs-supplies person-organization fit would occur, for example, when an organization offers developmental coaching (a growth opportunity) to meet the needs of an employee who seeks to become a better leader. This is an example of the environmental factors that might be important to a potential applicant.

Demands-abilities person-organization fit, on the other hand, addresses the congruence between an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities, and the demands of the organization (i.e., Are the abilities of the person meeting the organization's demands?). In exchange for pay, organizations demand the following employee contributions: time, effort, commitment, knowledge, skills, and abilities. Therefore, demands-abilities person-organization fit occurs, for instance, when a growing organization hires an experienced engineer skilled in cutting edge technology to head product innovation (an organizational demand).

Needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit are important to the person-organization fit literature in that they provide additional information on how both individuals and organizations evaluate PO fit. On the one hand, individuals are assessing PO fit by determining if the organization can supply what he or she needs (needs-supplies fit). That is, if while reading a job description an individual believes the organization will not supply an acceptable level of financial resources for the time, effort, and commitment required to perform the job, he or she may assume that the organization does not fit his or her needs and, therefore be less likely to apply for the job. It is important for organizations to know and understand what potential applicants are looking for as they read job descriptions. The aim of the current research is to provide that

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information for organizations to use in the future to help them write job descriptions that will attract the high potential, good-fit candidates they seek.

Carless (2005) proposed another way to examine fit by dividing person-environment fit into the subcomponents of person-job fit and person-organization fit. Carless proposes that the optimal situation occurs when there is both person-job fit and person-organization fit, which yields an overall person-environment fit. Carless further divided person-organization fit into supplementary and complementary fit where the former (supplementary fit) is characterized by similarities (e.g., skills or work styles) across individuals within the organization and the latter (complementary fit) is characterized by a mutually benefitting relationship between the employee and the organization. Kristof (1996) identified both a person aspect of supplementary fit as well as an organizational aspect. The person aspect of supplementary fit addresses values, goals, personality, and attitudes of the person while the organizational aspect of supplementary fit addresses culture, climate, values, goals, and norms of the organization. Congruence between the person aspect and the organizational aspect constitutes sound supplementary fit. An example of supplementary fit might be an individual who values environmental protection and applies for and is hired by an organization where recycling is part of the company culture. It is likely that when making decisions about applying for a job, some individuals may look for specific types of supplementary fit. Organizations that do not incorporate or express their values, or explain their cultural norms as part of their job descriptions run the risk of losing high potential applicants.

1.3.3. Person-Organization Fit and the ASA Model

To better understand what influences applicants while job hunting, an examination of the relationship between person-organization fit and the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model is helpful. The ASA model examines individual and organizational characteristics to develop an understanding of person-organization fit (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995). The model is comprised of three related elements (attraction, selection, and attrition) and describes

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the process an individual goes through as he or she interacts with, joins, and eventually leaves the organization. Schneider's (1987) ASA model is used as a tool to understand organizational behavior. Specifically, the model proposes that the types of individuals in an organization are a result of the attraction, selection, and attrition process.

The attraction component of Schneider's (1987) ASA model proposes that applicants bring certain preferences to the application, recruitment and selection processes (Schneider et al., 1995). For example, applicants display a preference for, or are attracted to, organizations whose characteristics appear congruent with their needs, values, and personality.

The second aspect of the ASA model defines selection as the process by which the organization selects and extends job offers to applicants it feels are a good match with what the organization requires. In essence, the selection aspect of the ASA model can be described as the level of fit between the person and the organization as determined by the organization. An organization with an effective selection system would only extend job offers to applicants that fit well with the organization. One way to determine how well an applicant fits with the organization would be to examine the value congruence between the applicant and the organization. An effective organization would ensure that the factors that are important for congruence and good fit are explicitly outlined in the job description so that resources are not used interviewing applicants who do not fit with the organization or applicants whose values do not match with those of the organization.

The last aspect of the ASA model, attrition, yields the hypothesis that employees leave organizations where there is low congruence. Well-written, or thorough, job descriptions have the potential to play a large role in reducing attrition. If organizations ensure that their job descriptions are written in a manner that attract good-fit job applicants, the likelihood of an employee being selected and later leaving the organization because congruence is low can be reduced. The key here is including the right mix of job content, values, and work environment information that attracts applicants who are a good fit for the job and deters those who are not

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congruent with or a good fit for the organization. Several problems can arise when an organization hires an individual whose values are not congruent with the organization. For example, if an organization hires a manager who does not value diversity in the way the organization does, that manager may hire employees who also do not value diversity. Over time, this can negatively impact the climate and culture of the organization. To reduce the negative effects of attrition, organizations and employees alike would benefit from prior knowledge of a match in values, job content, and environmental factors before hiring, which can be outlined in the job description.

Using Schneider's (1987) model, Slaughter, Stanton, Mohr, and Schoel (2005) sought to understand the direct effects and interactions of attraction and selection on individual differences. The authors wanted to add to the fit literature by examining how applicant attraction and performance on a selection measure influences the organization's composition. Slaughter et al. measured individual difference variables prior to participants choosing to seek employment at the organization. One of the authors' goals was to compare the differences between those who were attracted to the organization and those who were not. The authors' second goal was to give organizations a tool to use to compare their applicant pool to the larger population of applicants. This tool would allow organizations to market themselves and could also be used to help organizations tailor their job descriptions to attract the specific applicants they are seeking for their organization (Slaughter et al., 2005). The authors found that individuals who passed the selection test scored higher on characteristics deemed desirable by the organization such as need for achievement and openness to experience than individuals who did not pass the selection test. In addition, individuals who were attracted to the organization differed from those who were not attracted to the organization on desirable characteristics such as extraversion and emotional stability.

Slaughter et al.'s (2005) research is important not only because it provides information about the individual differences that attract individuals to an organization, but also because

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information on individual differences can be used to help tailor job descriptions to attract desired individuals. For instance, if an organization knows that certain individuals (e.g., extraverts) are more likely to be successful within their organization, the organization can tailor its job descriptions to attract those individuals. This can also work the other way. For example, if currently extraverts are more likely to be attracted to the organization and the organization would like to attract more introverts, the organization can adjust its job description in such a way that it attracts more introverts. In this manner, organizations can be proactive in matching their needs with candidate characteristics. The current study will examine information contained in job descriptions and propose hypotheses that state that applicants are less likely to apply for jobs with organizations where perceived person-organization fit is low and more likely to apply for jobs where perceived person-organization fit is high. Results from this study can be utilized pre-hire (i.e., attracting applicants through job description) to lower the mismatch between organizations and employees thus reducing errors in selection and alleviating post-hire attrition.

1.3.4. Person-Job Fit

A third part of the fit hierarchy is person-job (PJ) fit. Brkich, Jeffs, and Carless (2002) define person-job fit as a match between the requirements of the job and what an individual contributes to that job in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and values. Person-job fit is studied because while individuals may fit the job (PJ fit), their values may not fit well with the organization (PO fit) or the environment (PE fit) and vice versa. The latest statistics from The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reveal that Americans rank third in annual hours worked per employed person (The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Of the 8,760 hours in a year, Americans spend approximately 20% of their time working. If we consider that the average full-time worker spends eight hours per day (or more) at work that averages out to approximately one-third one an individual's day spent at work. This is a considerable amount of time, especially given that for most, one's job is a central part of his or her identity. Unfortunately, as of January 2010, approximately 55% of Americans reported not liking their

jobs (Long Island Press, 2010). Given that individuals spend so much time at work, it would be beneficial for them to be in jobs that they actually enjoy. An analysis of person-job fit may yield answers as to why so many individuals report not liking their jobs. Using the information gained from a person-job fit analysis may positively change the way job descriptions are written.

Ehrhart (2006) notes that the fit literature primarily focuses on person-organization fit, giving less attention to person-job fit. When studying job choice, researchers (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Cable & Judge, 1994) are often more concerned with the impact of perceived person-organization fit and neglect or choose not to give attention to the impact that person-job fit can have on an applicant's decision to apply for a job. Not assessing this impact, results in incomplete or inadequate information about organizational outcomes such as performance or turnover. One exception is the person-job fit research conducted by Kristof (1996). To better understand person-job fit, researchers (Ehrhart, 2006; Kristof, 1996) have divided it into subjective and objective person-job fit. Subjective fit involves an individual making judgments about how well they fit the job. For example, when reading a job description, a potential applicant makes judgments about how well the work environment fits his or her work style preferences or how well the organizational values match with his or her own values. Objective fit involves an individual matching his or her characteristics with those required of the job. For instance, a potential applicant must evaluate whether he or she is creative, innovative, organized, or charismatic enough to fulfill job duties.

Kristof-Brown, Jansen, and Colbert (2002) posit that person-job fit exists when an individual can successfully perform the job requirements or when the individual has one or more of his or her needs met by the job. Brkich et al. (2002) assert that achieving and maintaining person-job fit is becoming an increasingly complex task as employees and organizations continue to change. Once an employee has joined an organization, person-job fit has been linked to the following outcomes: job performance (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990), job satisfaction,

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and career success (Bretz & Judge, 1994), turnover (Steers & Mowday, 1981), and commitment (Meyer, 1997).

Extending the person-job fit literature, Scroggins (2003) began researching self-concept–job (SC–J) fit. Scroggins deemed the traditional person-job fit construct to be a mix of self-concept–job fit and the demands-abilities and needs-supply constructs mentioned earlier in the paper. Scroggins (2008) empirically tested whether self-concept–job fit is different from traditional person-job fit. The author argues that whether or not an individual finds his or her work meaningful is a key factor in determining person-job fit. Further extending this argument, Scroggins posits that human resource professionals are in the position to create meaningful work for employees. This responsibility lies in the hands of human resource professionals due to the influence they have in determining how work is distributed. In many organizations, it is largely the responsibility of human resource professionals to design jobs and determine the work required for that job. Furthermore, those who are involved in recruitment and selection certainly have the opportunity to evaluate how well an individual will fit with a job. Prior to the recruitment and selection processes, human resource professionals are tasked with writing the job descriptions for the positions they are looking to fill. In this vein, how the job description is outlined by the human resource professional will impact a potential applicant's perception of his or her fit with the job.

1.3.5 Work Value Congruence

Related to person-organization fit, but not part of the fit hierarchy, is the concept of work value congruence. A review of the work value congruence literature will help to better understand the impact that values have on a potential applicant's decision to apply or not apply for a job. Edwards and Cable (2009) define value congruence as a match in values between an employee and the organization. According to Edwards and Cable, value congruence consists of subjective fit and objective fit. Subjective fit occurs when an employee's values and his or her perception of the organization's values are similar. Objective fit occurs when someone other

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than the employee (e.g., a peer or supervisor) perceives the alignment between the employee's values and the organization's values. For example, if an employee has a sense of subjective fit with the organization, he or she may be likely to produce higher quality work. If an employee's supervisor sees an alignment between the employee's values and those of the organization (i.e., objective fit), the supervisor may be more likely to reward the employee's performance.

Amos and Weathington (2008) analyzed value congruence across seven dimensions and looked at its relationship to five outcome measures: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational satisfaction, and turnover intentions. According to the researchers, organizations should examine person-organization fit because higher levels of person-organization fit increase the likelihood that employees will display positive attitudes and behaviors. The authors defined value congruence as a match between an employee's values and those of the organization and his or her coworkers. The authors investigated the following values: superior quality and service, innovation, importance of people as individuals, importance of details of execution, communication, profit orientation, and goal accomplishment. The results showed total value congruence to be significantly related to job satisfaction, organizational satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment, and turnover intent. Overall, the results indicated superior quality and service and importance of people were most predictive of employee attitudes. The authors found support for higher value congruence being positively related to job satisfaction and satisfaction with the organization as a whole. The authors also found value congruence to be positively related to two of the three commitment dimensions (i.e., affective and normative). Last, value congruence was significantly negatively related to turnover intentions. The authors' findings suggest that work value congruence and person-organization fit should be studied in conjunction with one another for a full understanding the individual's perspective. The current research will, in part, address Amos and Weathington's findings by asking participants about their perceived work value congruence as well as perceived person-organization fit. To gain this information, participants will be asked, among other things, to rate

the level of importance of 10 values (five associated with the organization and five not associated with the organization).

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

2.1 Pre-Study Methods

       The current study sought to identify the values and environmental factors that make potential job applicants more or less likely to apply for a job. The study consisted of a pre-study survey as well as a laboratory experiment. In order to distribute the pre-study survey to participants, the Institutional Research Board (IRB) affiliated with the researcher was contacted. The IRB committee approved pre-study participation for university students as well as the general population as long as the participant voluntarily consented to participation and was informed that he or she may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

       To help inform the details to be included in the four job descriptions, a pre-study survey was conducted. The purpose of the pre-study survey was to assess directly from participants the details about the job and the organization that would influence their decision to apply for a job. Gathering this information was necessary in order to increase the benefits of the laboratory experiment for organizational use. The purpose of the laboratory study was to provide organizations with a model they can use to write job descriptions that will increase the likelihood of attracting the high-potential, good-fit applicants for which that particular organization seeks. In a sense, each organization utilizing the model will represent its own unique population, complete with its own unique work environment and set of values. As such, it was necessary to determine the preferences of the population that would be used for the laboratory study in order to determine the "organization" population (e.g., organizational values and work environment). The information provided by the participants from the pre-study was used to determine whether

the decision to apply or not apply for the job was based on the particular information contained in the job description (i.e., the job content, the values, and the work environment) or if that participant was significantly different than the population as a whole.

2.1.1. Sample

Participants were recruited using the online survey system, Sona, at a large southern university. In exchange for their participation, participants received one hour of research credit towards the 2.5 (for MayMester students) or 6 (Summer Term) hours they were required to complete. Alternatively, rather than participating in research studies, participants had the option of writing article summary papers to fulfill their research requirements.

Of the 43 participants, 72.1% were female, 27.9% male. Nearly half (44.2%) of the participants were White, 25.6% were Black, 14% were Hispanic, 11.6% were Asian, and 4.7% of the respondents reported that they were either of a mixed racial background or placed themselves in the "Other" category. The ages of respondents ranged from 16 to 39 ($M = 21.23$, $SD = 5.01$). For education level, 23.3% were freshmen, 32.6% sophomores, 30.2% were juniors, 11.6% were seniors, and 2.3% were graduate students. When asked about their employment status, 62.8% were employed part-time, 9.3% were employed full-time, 11.6% were not employed, but actively seeking work, while 16.3% were not employed and not seeking employment.

2.1.2. Survey

The pre-study survey was divided into four sections: demographics, job, organization, and values. The demographic section asked standard background questions used to help analyze participants and better understand their responses. The job and organization sections asked participants to identify five factors from each category that would make them more likely to apply for a job. Participants' values were assessed by asking them to rank order 18 value statements from most important (1) to least important (18). The information gained from the

responses to these sections was used to develop the job descriptions that will be used in the laboratory experiment.

Each of the responses to the job, organization, and values section of the survey was coded and percentages were calculated. Results of the pre-study survey showed that when it comes to the organizational characteristics that sway the decision to apply for a job, participants indicated that co-workers (40%) and atmosphere or environment (37%) are important factors. Additionally, 30% indicated that their schedule (e.g., flexibility), and the reputation (9%) and stability of the organization (21%) were important factors.

When it comes to what job characteristics are important to participants when deciding to apply for a job, leaders and their leadership styles, as well as co-workers, were rated as equally important (both 23%). Participants also indicated that job related factors such as tasks (28%), required skills (7%), schedule (26%), opportunity for advancement (21%), level of autonomy (26%), and the amount of teamwork required (9%) are important factors when deciding to apply for a job. Other factors that are important to participants were workspace (e.g., cleanliness, lighting, air conditions, amount of space) (65%), atmosphere or environment (35%), and the job's amenities (e.g., food and beverage options, break room availability) (12%).

2.1.3. Job Description Development

Information from O*NET was used to guide the writing of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and job tasks sections of the job descriptions. O*NET is a database that provides information (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, tasks, average salary, average travel required) for thousands of jobs. Information from the pre-study survey was used to guide the values and environmental factors included on the job descriptions. For example, frequently reoccurring responses from the pre-study survey, such as co-workers, flexible schedule, and relaxed atmosphere, were integrated into the work environment section of the applicable job descriptions. The top five responses from the values section of the pre-study survey were also used to gain a sense of the values most important to participants. For each participant, the values ranked one through five

were tallied and percentages were calculated to determine which values would be integrated in the job descriptions. The highest ranked values were: (1) having a career, (2) health, (3) being religious, (4) love and being loved, and (5) having a wealth of knowledge. The first value is addressed through the very nature of the experiment such that the context for the experiment is applying for a job. The second value, health, is addressed through the salary (e.g., benefits) section (standard for a typical job description) as well as by stating the organization is environmentally-friendly. The third value, being religious, indicates that participants appreciate strong values, integrity and ethics and, as a result, information regarding Sosik's (the fictitious organization used for the experiment) values of loyalty, integrity and trustworthiness is mentioned in the job descriptions. The fourth value, love, points to a desire to have meaningful relationships and is addressed through the value the company places on collaboration, teamwork. The last value, having a wealth of knowledge, is addressed within the knowledge, skills, abilities, and task portions of the job description (e.g., critical thinking, written comprehension and expression). These, along with providing opportunity for growth, indicate that Sosik values education, knowledge, and learning. For the complete pilot survey, see Appendix A.

Based on the results of the pilot data, the values and work environment sections of the job description were developed that represented the values and work environment of the Sosik organization. The values that will be assessed for match between the individual and the organization are: (1) loyalty, (2) creativity, (3) integrity, (4) going green, and (5) quality service. The environment factors that will be assessed for match between the individual and the organization are: (1) comfortable and relaxed work atmosphere, (2) teamwork, (3) schedule flexibility, (4) positive, accessible leaders, and (5) opportunity for growth.

2.2 Laboratory Experiment Methods

Based on theory and information obtained through the pre-study survey, a laboratory study was conducted. The laboratory study used the pre-study results to integrate the factors most frequently reported to influence an individual's decision to apply for a job. Each participant was given four job descriptions.

2.2.1. Sample

Participants were recruited for the laboratory study via the university's online survey system, Sona, and flyers placed around campus. Students who responded to the flyers were asked to e-mail their time slot choice to a Google e-mail account used only for this study. In order to maximize the researcher's time and resources (research assistants), up to six participants were allowed to sign up for each timeslot. The timeslots were divided into one hour increments. Based on a power analysis using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007), it was determined that a sample of 122 participants was needed for a predicted effect size of $r = .30$, $\alpha = .05$, two-tailed, and a power of .80 (Cohen, 1998) for the chi-square goodness-of-fit test. A smaller sample (80 participants) was needed for a predicted effect size of $r = .15$, $\alpha = .05$, two-tailed, and a power of .80 (Cohen, 1998) for the linear multiple regression. This sample of participants came from the larger pool of participants used for the chi-square goodness-of-fit test. A total of 176 participants participated in the study and there were 142 complete surveys. Of the 176 participants who participated in the survey, 79.5% were female, 31.3% Hispanic, 25% Caucasian, 19.9% African-American/Black, and 18.2% Asian. The ages of participants ranged from 17-58 with a mean age of 20.36.

2.2.2. Measures

2.2.2.1. Job Descriptions

Each participant was given four different job descriptions, each of which was based on a Customer Service Team Lead position for the fictitious company, Sosik, which reported selling high-end, hand-crafted watches. For the full job descriptions, see Appendix B.

The difference between the four job descriptions was the information contained therein. One job description (job description # 1) contained information concerning only the job content (i.e., what tasks the participant will perform and what KSAs are necessary to perform those tasks). A second job description (job description # 2) contained information about job content as well as the organizational values Sosik holds in high esteem (loyalty, creativity, etc.). A third job description (job description # 3) contained information about job content and the work environment (schedule flexibility, teamwork, etc.). The fourth job description (job description # 4) contained information regarding job content, organizational values, and the work environment. As stated above, along with O*NET, the information from the pre-study was used to inform the job description writing process. Thus, the most frequently reported values and work environment characteristics from the pilot study were included in the value and work environment job descriptions. For example, the pre-study survey indicated that the atmosphere or work environment would influence an individual's decision to apply for the job. As a result, job description #3 contained work environment information by stating that Sosik offers a relaxed work environment and a comfortable atmosphere. The information on job content, organizational values, and work environment remained consistent from one job description to the next.

2.2.2.2. Values

To assess the participants' values, they were asked to rate the level of importance (1 = Not At All Important to 7 = Very Important) each value has for them. This information was used to determine if there was a values match between the participant and the organization, and was helpful in determining the reason behind why participants decided to apply or not apply for the job. Participants were asked to rate level of importance because previous research (Singh, 1975) indicates that potential job applicants place different weights on different pieces of information they receive. In order to better differentiate between individuals whose values matched with the organization from those that did not, additional values were included on the

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rating form that were neither clearly associated with the organization nor included in the job descriptions (i.e., independence, spontaneity, status, courage, and diversity).

2.2.2.3. Environment

Similarly, to assess work environment preferences, participants were asked to indicate the level of importance (1 = Not At All Important to 7 = Very Important) of each of Sosik's work environment characteristics. As with the values information, these ratings were used to determine if there was a match between the work environment preferences of the participant and the work environment of the organization. In order to better differentiate between individuals whose work environment preferences matched with the organization from those that did not, additional work environmental factors were included in the rating form that were neither clearly associated with the organization nor included in the job descriptions (i.e., fast-paced work environment, autonomy, fixed schedule, focus on productivity, and travel opportunities).

<u>2.3 Procedure</u>

Once participants entered the laboratory, they were greeted and given a packet containing (a) a demographic questionnaire, (b) a values survey, (c) a work environment survey (d) four job descriptions, and (e) five job description questionnaires, one for each of the job descriptions and one for the job descriptions as a whole (see Appendix B). The demographic information was used to help categorize and analyze participants' responses.

As part of their packet, participants were provided with a brief description of a Customer Service Team Lead to help prime them for the experiment, and were asked to imagine they were applying for a job as a Customer Service Team Lead with Sosik. Participants were asked to read each of the job descriptions one by one and were then asked to indicate (a) if they would apply for the job, and (b) if so, how likely they would be to apply for the job based on the job description. For the beginning of the experiment, participants were only allowed to look at one job description at a time and, after answering the questions for the current job description, they were not allowed to go back to the previous description. In an effort to ensure that

participants did not look ahead or at previous descriptions, a red sheet of paper was placed between each of the four descriptions and a proctor monitored the participants as they completed the study.

After reading all four job descriptions and completing the corresponding questions, participants were asked to compare the job descriptions to one another and were asked to complete the fifth job description questionnaire asking them (a) to rank order the job descriptions from the one that would make them most likely to apply for the job to the one that would make them least likely to apply for the job, (b) to indicate which job offer they would most likely accept, if the job was offered to them by Sosik, and (c) to indicate which job offer they would least likely accept, if the job was offered to them by Sosik. The order in which the participants viewed the four job descriptions was counterbalanced across participants. The reason for giving each participant all four job descriptions was to better differentiate what makes an individual choose one job description over another.

2.4 Manipulation Check

To assess whether participants carefully read and could differentiate between the four job descriptions, questions on the questionnaires asked about information that may or may not have been included in the job descriptions. For example, one questionnaire asked if participants noticed information about their workspace (which was not included) while reading the job description.

2.5 Hypotheses

H1: Participants will report that the job description containing only job content information would make them least likely to apply for the job.

H2: Participants will report that the job description containing job content, organizational values, and work environment information will make them most likely to apply for the job.

H3: The extent to which the participant's values match with those of the organization will predict participants' rating of job description #2.

H4: The extent to which the participant's work environment preferences match those of the organization will predict participants' rating of job description #3.

H5: Work environment variables will predict job description ratings over and above organizational values variables.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1 Manipulation Check

To test whether the manipulation check was effective, chi-square tests were performed to determine whether participants correctly identified variables that were included in the job descriptions as being present at a rate greater than chance. Overall, participants correctly identified the items that were present. For job description #1, participants correctly identified that time management, X^2 (1, N = 167) = 102.76, p < .01, and listening, X^2 (1, N = 166) = 86.75, p < .01, were present. For job description #2, participants correctly identified that time management, X^2 (1, N = 169) = 107.84, p < .01, and listening, X^2 (1, N = 169) = 83.79, p < .01, were present. For job description #3, participants correctly identified time management, X^2 (1, N = 168) = 113.36, p < .01, advancement, X^2 (1, N = 168) = 36.21, p < .01, and listening, X^2 (1, N = 168) = 103.71, p < .01, were present. For job description #4, participants correctly identified that time management, X^2 (1, N = 168) = 100.6, p < .01, environmental protection, X^2 (1, N = 168) = 20.02, p < .01, advancement, X^2 (1, N = 168) = 48.21, p < .01, and listening, X^2 (1, N = 168) = 97.52, p < .01, were present. Across the four job descriptions, the only variable that participants did not correctly identify as being present at a rate greater than chance was environmental protection, X^2 (1, N = 169) = 3.13, *ns,* in job description #2. Overall, the results suggest that participants were able to correctly identify which variables were present across the four job descriptions.

Another way to determine if the manipulation check was effective was to average the percentages of participants who correctly identified the variables as both present and not present for each job description. For job description #1, the average was 60.26%; for job

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description #2, the average was 64.02%; for job descriptions #3, the average was 65.44%; and for job description #4, the average was 63.52%. This gave a holistic look at the manipulation check and suggested that most of the participants were able to ascertain which variables *were* included in the job descriptions and which ones were *not* included.

<u>3.2 Hypothesis Testing</u>

For hypothesis one, it was expected that job description #1 (containing only information regarding job content) would be least favored among participants such that it would be the one least likely to make them apply for the job. Further, for hypothesis two, it was expected that job description #4 (containing information regarding job content, values, and work environment) would be most favored among participants such that it would be the one to make them most likely to apply for the job. Initial chi-square tests were performed to examine whether participants ranked the four job descriptions differently. Significant chi-square results indicated that participants differed significantly in their rankings of the job descriptions with respect to which was their least favorite, X^2 (3, $N = 166$) = 164.75, $p < .05$, and which was their most favorite, X^2 (3, $N = 166$) = 98.43, $p < .05$.

To further test the specific nature of hypotheses one and two, a one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine if there were significant differences between participants' ratings of the four job descriptions, and which was rated most and least favorably. Mauchley's test indicated the assumption of sphericity had been violated, X^2 (5) = .79, $p < .001$; therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using the Huynh-Feldt (1976) estimates of sphericity (ε = .872). The Huynh-Feldt correction was applied opposed to the Greenhouse-Geisser as a result of the sphericity value being greater than .75 (Field, 2008). Results of the ANOVA revealed an overall significant difference in participants' ratings of the four job descriptions, F (2.617, 416.137) = 50.457, $p < .001$, and post-hoc tests were conducted to pinpoint the differences. The results showed significant differences in participants' ratings of the job descriptions except for the difference between job description #3 and job description #4.

Overall, these results provide support to hypothesis one in that job description #1 was rated significantly lower than the other three job descriptions. In addition, partial support was found for hypothesis two in that job description #4 was rated significantly higher than job descriptions #1 and #2 but not higher than job description #3. The results of the post-hoc comparisons are presented in Table C1.

For hypothesis three, it was expected that the degree to which participant's values matched with the organization's values could be used to predict participants' ratings of job description #2 (containing information regarding job content and values). To examine a values match, a new variable, Values Match, was created. The variable "Values Match" was computed as the mean of participants' ratings on the five Sosik values that were included in the job description. Those five variables were (1) creativity, (2) integrity, (3) loyalty, (4) going green, and (5) quality service. In order to determine if the "Values Match" variable would significantly predict participant's ratings, regression analysis was used. Hypothesis three was not supported, $B = -25.634$, $F (1, 174) = .638$, ns. In a separate analysis, the five Sosik values that were included in the job description were placed into the model as individual variables (as opposed to them being combined into one "Values Match" variable), but the hypothesis was still not supported, $F (5, 170) = .391$, ns. The results of these individual analyses can be found in Table C2.

For hypothesis four, it was expected the degree to which participant's work environment preferences matched with the organization's characteristic could be used to predict participants' ratings of job description #3 (containing information regarding job content and work environment) would vary based on how the participant's work environment preferences matched Sosik's environment. To examine a work environment preferences match, a new variable, Pref Match, was created. The variable "Pref Match" was computed as the mean of participants' ratings on Sosik's work environment characteristics. Those five variables were (1) a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere, (2) schedule flexibility, (3) opportunity for growth, (4)

teamwork, and (5) positive, accessible leaders. In order to determine if the "Pref Match" variable would significantly predict participant's ratings, regression analysis was used. Hypothesis four was not supported, $B = -.054$, $F (1, 174) = .058$, *ns.* In a separate analysis, the five Sosik environment characteristic that were included in the job description were placed into the model as individual variables (as opposed to them being combined into one "Pref Match" variable), the hypothesis was still not supported, $F (5, 170) = 1.994$, *ns.* The results of these individual analyses can be found in Table C2.

Finally, it was expected that work environment preferences would be a better predictor of participant's likelihood to apply for the job than organizational values. This result was expected based on the pre-study survey information wherein 65% of participants indicated that some aspect of the work environment would influence their decision to apply for a job. In order to determine if work environment variables would significantly predict participant's ratings over and above values variables, regression analysis was used. Job descriptions #2, #3, and #4 were examined with the expectation that the work environment variables would be better predictors than the values variables for each of the job descriptions. Using a hierarchical regression analysis, the work environment variables were entered on step one and the values variables were entered on step two. Results showed that hypothesis five was not supported for job description #2, $\Delta F (8, 147) = .617$, $p = .763$, $\Delta R^2 = .030$; job description #3, $\Delta F (8, 148) = .322$, $p = .957$, $\Delta R^2 = .016$; or job description #4, $\Delta F (8, 145) = .980$, $p = .454$, $\Delta R^2 = .046$. Overall the results indicate that the addition of work environment preferences to the model did not significantly predict whether an individual would apply for the job over and above organizational values.

In order to further explore reactions to the job descriptions, participants were asked to indicate which job description would make them most likely to accept a job offer if extended and to indicate why. Participants were also asked to indicate which job description would make them least likely to accept a job offer if extended and to indicate why. Results showed that job

description #4 was the most favored among participants revealing that it was the one to make them most likely to accept a job offer if extended, X^2 (3, N = 173) = 114.10, p < .05. Of the 100 participants who indicated that this job description made them most likely accept a job offer if extended, 50% indicated that the job's tasks matched their interests; 57% indicated that their knowledge, skills, and abilities met the job's requirements; 61% indicated their values matched the organization's values; 47% indicated that their work environment preferences matched Sosik's work environment; 82% indicated that the amount of information provided was adequate enough for them to make an informed decision; and 12% cited there were other reasons for their decisions (e.g., "had the most perks," " precise," "they made it sound appealing"). The "other" responses were then coded into one of five categories: comments about (1) the amount of information, (2) values, (3) work environment, (4) job content, and (5) miscellaneous (e.g., "I liked the layout," "the language used was appropriate," "it had the most perks."). Of the "other" responses, 30.8% were about the amount of information, 42.3% were about the work environment, 3.8% were about the job content, and 23.1% were miscellaneous comments.

Results also revealed that job description #1 was the least favored among participants showing that it was the one to make them least likely to accept a job offer if extended, X^2 (3, N = 170) = 160.49, p < .05. Of the 114 participants who indicated that this job description made them least likely accept a job offer if extended, 25.4% indicated that the job's tasks did not match their interests; 8.8% indicated that their knowledge, skills, and abilities did not meet the job's requirements; 18.4% indicated their values did not match the organization's values; 23.7% indicated that their work environment preferences did not match Sosik's work environment; 81.6% indicated that the amount of information provided was not adequate enough for them to make an informed decision; and 18.4% cited there were other reasons for their decisions (e.g., "does not talk about the actual company at all," "too generic," "lacking a company description on values and work environment, founder and company goals"). The "other" responses were then coded into one of five categories: comments about (1) the amount of information, (2) values, (3)

work environment, (4) job content, and (5) miscellaneous (e.g., "too strict," "organization of the job description," "the way it was worded."). Of the "other" responses, 27.8% were about the amount of information, 2.8% were about the values, 13.9% were about the work environment, 8.3% were about the job content, and 47.2% were miscellaneous comments.

Additional regression analyses were run to determine which, if any, of the values and work environment preferences would significantly predict participants' ratings of each of the four job descriptions. For job description #1, a fast-paced work environment, $B = .191$, $F (1, 162) = 4.33$, p < .05; teamwork, $B = .20$, $F (1, 162) = 5.08$, p < .05; and productivity, $B = .24$, $F (1, 162) = 6.95$, p < .05, (all work environment preferences) were significant predictors, and travel, $B = .14$, $F (1, 162) = 3.64$, p = .058, was marginally significant. Creativity (a value) was a significant predictor of job description #2, $B = .264$, $F (1, 164) = 9.71$, p < .01; job description #3, $B = .209$, $F (1, 165) = 5.08$, p < .05; and job description #4, $B = .315$, $F (1, 162) = 13.94$, p < .01. Leadership (a work environment preference) was marginally significant for job description #2, $B = .251$, $F (1, 163) = 3.52$, p = .06, and autonomy (a work environment preference) was a significant predictor of job description #4, $B = .225$, $F (1, 161) = 6.47$, p < .05. This last set of analyses was not part of the original hypotheses so it is important to note that these may be spurious relationships in that of all the relationships examined, it was likely at least a few of them would be significant. For a full list of results, see Tables C1-C9.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current research was to identify the factors that impact an individual's decision to apply or not apply for a job. The basis for the research was that after reading job content information, individuals seek additional information to help them make the decision to apply or not. The overall hypothesis for this research was that potential applicants seek information about the organization's values and work environment to help them make their decision (Singh, 1975).

Hypothesis one stated that the job description containing only job content information (#1) would be the least favored such that participants would rank it the lowest out of four at a rate greater than chance. This hypothesis was supported, leading to the conclusion that participants were looking for more than job content information to help them make the decision to apply or not apply for this job. To support this conclusion, participants were asked which job description would make them least likely to accept a job offer if an offer was extended to them. The results showed that 81.6% of participants indicated that the amount of information provided was not adequate enough for them to make an informed decision. Qualitative data showed that participants felt they could not trust a company that did not include its values in its job description, that they wanted the work environment explained to them, that they want information about the company as well as its founder and the company's values, and they felt job description #1 was too generic. This information is important because it directly supports the notion that potential applicants want to know more about the job they are applying for than the tasks or duties they will be performing (Singh, 1975). This finding is important to organizations in that they may place themselves at a major disadvantage against their competitors and risk

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Hypothesis two stated that the job description containing job content information, organizational values, and work environment information (#4) would be the most favored such that participants would rank it highest out of four at a rate greater than chance. This hypothesis was partially supported, leading to the conclusion that participants are not only interested in more than job content information, but they prefer having values and work environment information. To support this conclusion, participants were asked which job description would make them least likely to accept a job offer if one was extended to them. The results showed that 61% of participants indicated their values matched the organization's values; 47% indicated that their work environment preferences matched Sosik's work environment; 82% indicated that the amount of information provided was adequate enough for them to make an informed decision. Specifically, qualitative data suggested that participants liked the inclusion of information about the company, opportunities for advancement, and the ability to access upper management. This information is valuable because research indicates that individuals are seeking information about how well they fit with an organization (Slaughter et al., 2005). The results of the current research suggest that by not including values and work environment information on job descriptions, organizations are potentially missing out on some of the good-fit applicants they seek. While an individual might be a perfect fit for the job, this research suggests that if the individual lacks the information to evaluate his or her fit with the organization, he or she might not apply for the job or accept a job offer if extended.

The attraction component of Schneider's (1987) ASA model proposes that applicants bring certain preferences to the application, recruitment and selection processes (Schneider et al., 1995). As a result, hypothesis three stated that a match between the individual's values and those of the organization could be used to predict his or her rank ordering of the job descriptions. This hypothesis was not supported and there may be one key factor explaining these findings. When analyses were performed on the individual values to assess which variables were significant predictors of participants' rank ordering, only one out of the five Sosik

predictors yielded significant results. Logically, therefore, when the individual variables were used to create the "Values Match" variable, the regression analysis was not expected to produce significant results. Knowing that participants indicated that they preferred the job description with the values information and that 61% of participants indicated they preferred this job description because their values matched the organization's values, it can be deduced that the tool used to measure participants' values was flawed. The current study was designed so that the participants were asked to rate their values before reading the job descriptions. This information was then used to assess the match between the participant's values and those of the organization. In the future, researchers might provide participants with the values of the organization and then ask participants to rate the values as a better way to assess directly from participants how well their values match with the organization's values. This would be a way to explicitly identify the match between applicant and organization instead of assuming that a match in values can be ascertained from a scale that participants do not explicitly know is related to their ratings and overall ranking of the job descriptions. That being said, however, overtly asking participants, "Do you match the organization's values?" would likely bias an applicant's views of whether or not there is a match with the organization. In this context, participants might be more likely to falsely report a match with the organization because they are interested in presenting themselves favorably to get the job. Because participants were first asked to assess their values prior to being presented with the organization's values, this study attempted to obtain an objective measure of participants' values. This objective assessment was then used to test the participant's subjective assessment of a values match with the organization. Future research might include a pre- *and* post measure of participants' values to assess whether participants' values change after being presented with the values of the organization.

Alternatively, participants could independently provide a list of values to be used to assess a match with the organization's values. A third option would be for researchers to have

participants rank the values from most to least important. This would force participants to more carefully think about where they stand on each of the values and which ones are more important to them than others. In any case, the results of the study seem to contradict themselves in that participants indicated their values matched with the organization's values, yet those same values were not found to significantly predict participants' rank ordering of the job descriptions. Future research should explore better ways to assess how well participants' perceptions of their values match with the organization's values. One way to do this would be to ask participants the reasons for their decisions without giving them responses to choose from. Researchers could then code participants' responses into appropriate categories.

Hypothesis four stated that a match between the individual's work environment preferences and the work environment provided by the organization could be used to predict his or her rank ordering of the job descriptions. This hypothesis was not supported, and the reasons provided to explain the findings of hypothesis three may also explain the findings of hypothesis four. As with the value predictors, analyses were performed on the individual work environment preferences to assess which variables were significant predictors of participants' rank ordering. In this instance, none of the predictors yielded significant results. Again, it is logical that when the individual variables were used to create the "Work Preferences Match" variable, the results of the regression analysis would not be significant. Also, as mentioned before, participants indicated a preference for the job description with work environment information, and nearly half indicated that their work environment preferences matched Sosik's work environment; yet this contradicts the nonsignificant findings for hypothesis four. On one hand, we can deduce that the tool used to measure participants' work environment preferences was flawed. Alternatively, we can look at participants' qualitative data. When asked which job description would make them least likely to accept a job offer if extended, 23.7% of participants chose job description #1 and indicated that Sosik's environment did not match their preferences. This information, however, was not presented in job description #1 (as measured by the researcher). Therefore, it would be

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difficult for participants to correctly identify a match between their preferences and Sosik's environment. As with the values information, future researchers might provide participants with information about the organization's environment and then ask participants to rate the organization's characteristics as a better way to assess directly from participants how well their work environment preferences match the organization's characteristics.

Hypothesis five stated that work environment preferences would be better predictors of whether an individual would apply for the job than organizational values. This result was expected based on the pre-study survey information wherein 65% of participants indicated that some aspect of the work environment would influence their decision to apply for a job. This hypothesis, however, was not supported. As with the previous two hypotheses, it is likely that the results are, in part, a product of the measurement tool. After the previous two hypotheses were not supported, it would have been statistically impossible for this hypothesis to be significant. Even before running the analyses, the data revealed that more participants indicated their values matched with the Sosik's values (61%) than indicated their work environment preferences were met by Sosik (47%). Future research can go several routes with these nonsignificant findings. First, researchers should carefully consider how they measure values and environment preferences matches. It should not be assumed participants will connect a scale at the beginning of the study with their ratings or overall rankings of the job descriptions. It is possible that participants did not carefully rate the values at the beginning of the study because they did not realize they would be connected to their ratings and overall rankings of the job descriptions. Also, researchers should take steps to ensure that their definition of match is aligned with participants' assessment of match. For example, participants could be asked to explain why they feel they match with the organization. Second, researchers should further explore which of the variables (values vs. environment preferences) is more important to participants. Organizations that have these values could then highlight them in their job descriptions, thereby increasing their attractiveness to potential applicants who fit well with the

organization. Alternatively, researchers can test a combination that combines values and work environment preferences to find the combination that is most appealing to potential applicants.

Although the results of the research were somewhat mixed (the values and preferences did not yield significant results, but participants reported a match with the organization on both values and preferences), some important information did result. First, participants appear to prefer more information as indicated by the content-only job description being ranked the least favorite. Second, participants appear to prefer having values and environment preferences information as indicated by the job description with all three pieces of information receiving significantly higher ratings than job descriptions containing only content (JD #1) and content and values information (JD#2). Additionally, it was important to learn that the way the values match and preference match were measured in this study did not accurately capture participants' perceptions of how well they matched with the organization.

When additional analyses were run to determine which predictors would provide significant information about participants' ratings of each of the four job descriptions, the results were not impressive, but did provide important information that is beneficial for future researchers. For job description #1, only three work environment preferences were significant and a fourth was marginally significant. The preferences that did emerge as predictors can be explained quite simply – overall, participants had little information on which to base their ratings. As a result, basic information such as teamwork and productivity emerged as important given the few pieces of information participants had to base their rating upon.

Creativity (a value) was found to be a significant predictor of the remaining three job descriptions. One possible explanation for this finding is that participants' creativity or desire for creativity in the workplace allowed them to see the possibilities with a dynamic organization like Sosik. For example, job description #2 stated that "Sosik's mission is to provide high-quality, modern, original, hand-crafted timepieces." Keywords such as modern, original, and hand-crafted may have resonated with participants who have creative minds. Additionally, job

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description #3 stated that Sosik's CEO has been recognized as a progressive leader by *Forbes Magazine*, that the management team employs a Master Designer, and that the Design Team has been awarded the "Shawn Lee Conerly Award for Creativity" for five out of the last seven years. Another explanation was that the word "creative" or "creativity" was presented in the job description on three different occasions, which quite simply could have produced a priming effect. These are all things that are likely to positively impact creative participants' ratings of the job descriptions, while perhaps decreasing the appeal of the job descriptions for participants who consider themselves less creative. Without directly measuring participants' creativity, however, it is not possible to conclude exactly why participants who gave creativity a higher rating also rated each of the job descriptions higher than participants who gave creativity a lower rating.

Leadership (a work environment preference) was marginally significant in predicting participants' ratings of the job description containing job content and values information. This information is somewhat surprising given the paradox of the work environment preference predicting the job description characterized primarily in terms of values. A possible explanation for this finding is the wording of the values and mission statement for this job description. In hindsight, these two components of the job description are written from a management perspective, which may have influenced participants' ratings.

In addition to creativity, autonomy was found to significantly predict participants' ratings of the job description containing all three pieces of information (content, values and environment). This finding is interesting given its role as a "non-match" variable. Recall that the measures for gauging a participant's match (or lack thereof) with the organization in terms of values and work environment contained five "match" variables that were included in the job descriptions and five "non-match" variables that were not included in the job description. Autonomy falls in the latter category. One possible explanation for this finding is the error in the measurement tool. As previously mentioned, majority of the values and work environment

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preferences did not significantly predict participants' rank ordering of the job descriptions, nor their individual ratings of the four job descriptions. Therefore, it is most likely that this finding is simply due to error with the measurement tool.

4.1 Limitations

Arguably, the main limitation of the current study is its subjective measurement of participants' values and work environment preferences. As discussed, there was no true way to tell if participants' values and work environment preferences actually matched Sosik's or if participants reported a match to make themselves appear as better, or more qualified candidates for the job. Also, without concretely measuring participants' values it is difficult to determine if they actually possessed the values (e.g., they act with integrity) or if they simply valued them (e.g., they believe that having integrity is important, but they do not act with integrity). The current study is a step towards gaining information from potential applicants regarding what information they would like to see included in job descriptions, but future research should strive to assess values more reliably as well as to more clearly assess why certain information (e.g., organizational values, work environment characteristics) may be viewed as more important than other information (e.g., specific job tasks).

A second limitation of the study is that the study was hypothetical. Specifically, participants were asked to make decisions based on a fictitious company. After reading an advertisement for a fictitious Customer Service Team Lead, participants were asked to evaluate job descriptions for a job to which they were not actually applying It is possible that in a real-world setting, the results may have been different as actual job candidates likely view job descriptions under a different lens than participants in a lab setting who may have a lower sense of job-seeking urgency.

4.2 Implications for Research

The current study adds to the research literature by providing information about the job description writing process. The information gained from this study can be used to help

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academics develop guidelines for writing job descriptions. Currently, the literature contains information about how to write job descriptions primarily in technical terms (Fondas, 1992; Kennedy, 1987). Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model suggests applicants evaluate their match with an organization during the application process (Schneider et al., 1995). The job description is the step preceding the actual application process. Thus, the information gained from this study adds to the literature by providing information regarding the content that should be included in job descriptions. One major advantage of the current research is its generalizability and timeliness. The sample consists primarily of college students who are currently or will soon be looking for jobs. Based on the information gained from this sample of participants, the literature will benefit from having information that will help shape the process that yields job descriptions that target this population. Specifically, this study allows researchers insight into how to measure "match" as it is likely critical to the outcome of the research. This study provides evidence regarding how researchers evaluate match and how that evaluation may be quite different from how potential applicants perceive their match with the organization. The results suggest that participants should be asked how they feel they match with the organization in more explicit terms. Before researchers assume they know how to best measure match, or fit, they should explore the differences between how fit is measured in the lab versus how participants arrive at conclusions about their match with an organization.

<u>4.3 Implications for Practice</u>

Organizations will benefit from the current study by having empirical research to guide their job description writing process. Based on the results of this study, organizations can begin to better understand the importance of including values and work environment information on job descriptions as well as the detriment of not doing so. Armed with this information, organizations can make informed decisions about what information they write into their job descriptions. As gleaned from the creativity examples, organizations can see just how important one word can be to potential applicants.

APPENDIX A

PRE-STUDY SURVEY MATERIALS

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time. I am 18 years or older or I am under 18 but have received parental consent to participate. Please select yes if you voluntarily consent to participate in this study. Please select no if you do not consent to participate in this study.   □ Yes   □ No

Name:

Major Area of Study:

Race/Ethnicity:

A) Asian

B) African American/Black

C) Caucasian/White

D) Hispanic/Latino

E) American Indian/Alaska Native

F) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

G) Multi-racial or other

Age:

Gender:

Education Level: ___ Freshman   ___ Sophomore ___ Junior

                   ___ Senior   ___Graduate Student

Employment Status: ___ Part-Time   ___Full-Time

___ Not currently employed But actively seeking employment

___ Not currently employed and Not actively seeking employment

Instructions: Suppose you want to obtain a job as a Call Center Representative. You have spent the last month searching for the perfect job using the internet, your friends and family, and recruiting agencies. You have narrowed your list to your top three choices across three different organizations.

Category: Recruitment

Name five (5) aspects about the recruitment process that would compel you to apply for a job.

In other words, how would the recruitment process influence you to apply for a job? (e.g., the recruiter, recruitment style (e.g. formal vs. informal), length):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Name five (5) things about the recruitment process that would dissuade you from applying for the job at a particular organization (e.g., recruiter, recruitment style (e.g. formal vs. information), length):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Category: Organization

Name five (5) things about the organization that would compel you to apply for a job. What would attract you to a particular organization? (e.g., location, values, work benefits (e.g. telecommuting option):

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

Name five (5) things about the organization that would dissuade you from applying for the job (e.g., location, values, work benefits (e.g. telecommuting option):

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

Category: Job

Name five (5) things about the job that would compel you to apply at an organization. What would attract you to a particular job? (e.g., level of autonomy, workspace (e.g. cubicle vs. office):

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

Name five (5) things about the job that would dissuade you from applying at an organization (e.g., level of autonomy, workspace (e.g. cubicle vs. office):

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

Category: Overall

From the responses you provided above, name the top five (5) reasons you **would apply** to the

job.

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

From the responses you provided above, name the top five (5) reasons you would **not apply** to

the job.

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

How I am in general?

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

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

I am someone who…

1. _____ Is talkative
2. _____ Tends to find fault with others
3. _____ Does a thorough job
4. _____ Is depressed, blue
5. _____ Is original, comes up with new ideas
6. _____ Is reserved
7. _____ Is helpful and unselfish with others
8. _____ Can be somewhat careless
9. _____ Is relaxed, handles stress well.
10. _____ Is curious about many different things
11. _____ Is full of energy
12. _____ Starts quarrels with others
13. _____ Is a reliable worker
14. _____ Can be tense
15. _____ Is ingenious, a deep thinker
16. _____ Generates a lot of enthusiasm
17. _____ Has a forgiving nature
18. _____ Tends to be disorganized
19. _____ Worries a lot
20. _____ Has an active imagination
21. _____ Tends to be quiet
22. _____ Is generally trusting

23. _____ Tends to be lazy
24. _____ Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
25. _____ Is inventive
26. _____ Has an assertive personality
27. _____ Can be cold and aloof
28. _____ Perseveres until the task is finished
29. _____ Can be moody
30. _____ Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
31. _____ Is sometimes shy, inhibited
32. _____ Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
33. _____ Does things efficiently
34. _____ Remains calm in tense situations
35. _____ Prefers work that is routine
36. _____ Is outgoing, sociable
37. _____ Is sometimes rude to others
38. _____ Makes plans and follows through with them
39. _____ Gets nervous easily
40. _____ Likes to reflect, play with ideas
41. _____ Has few artistic interests
42. _____ Likes to cooperate with others
43. _____ Is easily distracted
44. _____ Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

Clarifying Your Values

Directions: Rank from 1 to 17 the importance of the following values to you as a person. The most important value on the list receives a rank of 1; the least important a rank of 17. Use the space next to other if the list has left out an important value in your life.

_____ Having my own place to live

_____ Having one or more children

_____ Having an interesting job or career

_____ Owning a car

_____ Having a good relationship with coworkers

_____ Having good health

_____ Sending and receiving e-mail messages and using the Web

_____ Being able to stay in contact with friends by cell phone and text messaging

_____ Watching my favorite television shows

_____ Participating in sports or other pastimes

_____ Following a sports team, athlete, music group, or other entertainer

_____ Being a religious person

_____ Helping people less fortunate than myself

_____ Loving and being loved by another person

_____ Making an above-average income

_____ Being in good physical condition

_____ Being a knowledgeable, informed person

_____ Completing my formal education

APPENDIX B

EXPERIMENTAL STUDY MATERIALS

Demographic Information

1. Name: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Gender: _____Male   _____Female

4. Major Area of Study: _____

5. Education Level:

_____ Freshman

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior

_____ Senior

_____Graduate Student

6. Race/Ethnicity:

_____ Asian

_____ African-American/Black

_____ Caucasian/White

_____ Hispanic/Latino

_____ American Indian/Alaskan Native

_____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

_____ Multi-racial (Please specify): _____

_____ Other (Please specify): _____

7. Employment Status:

_____ Part-time

_____ Full-time

_____ Not currently employed, But actively seeking employment

_____ Not currently employed, and Not actively seeking employment

8. Number of Years in the Workforce: _____

Clarifying Your Values

Directions: We would like to know the level of importance you would place on each of the following values. For example, is teamwork *Not at all* or *Very* important to you? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate your importance rating for each value.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all Important			Neutral			Very Important

_____ Independence

_____ Creativity

_____ Integrity

_____ Spontaneity

_____ Status

_____ Loyalty

_____ Going Green

_____ Quality Service

_____ Courage

_____ Diversity

Work Environment Preferences

Directions: We would like to know the level of importance you would place on the following aspects of the work environment. For example, is a relaxed atmosphere *Not at all* or *Very* important to you? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate your importance rating for each aspect of the work environment.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all Important			Neutral			Very Important

_____ Fixed Schedule

_____ Comfortable and relaxed atmosphere

_____ Schedule Flexibility

_____Opportunity for growth

_____ Fast-paced work environment

_____ Teamwork

_____ Autonomy

_____ Positive, Accessible Leaders

_____ Travel Opportunities

_____ Focus on Productivity

Customer Service Team Lead

A customer service team lead is responsible for overseeing a team of customer service providers. He or she is expected to hire and train new employees and provide them with development feedback as they strive to reach their personal goals and progress through their careers. A team lead is expected to have a higher level of industry knowledge than his or her subordinates. A team lead should have superior communication skills, both written and verbal, and possess the ability to effectively resolve escalated customer concerns in a manner that leaves the customer with a positive view of the organization. A customer service team lead is responsible for implementing organizational initiatives, sharing information with subordinates, enforcing company policies, and executing the vision, mission and objectives of the organization.

Now, as you read the following four job descriptions, imagine that in your job search, you have come across a Customer Service Team Lead position with Sosik, a high-end, hand-crafted watch retailer.

Please read each description very carefully as they may be some differences.

Customer Service Team Lead – Sosik, Timepiece Retail (1)

Knowledge

- **Sales & Marketing** — Knowledge of principles & methods for showing, promoting, & selling products.
- **Customer & Personal Service** — Knowledge of principles & processes for providing customer & personal services.
- **Administration & Management** — Knowledge of business & management principles involved in strategic planning, leadership technique, & coordination of people & resources.

Skills

- **Time Management** — Manage one's own time & the time of others.
- **Active Listening** — Give full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, & not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Critical Thinking** — Understand the implications of information for current & future problem-solving & decision-making. Use logic & reasoning to identify the strengths & weaknesses of alternative solutions.

Abilities

- **Oral Expression & Comprehension** — The ability to orally communicate information & ideas so others will understand. The ability to listen to & understand information & ideas presented through spoken words & sentences.
- **Problem Sensitivity & Conflict Resolution** — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong & an understanding of how to get others to work cooperatively after problems arise.
- **Written Comprehension & Expression** — The ability to read & understand information & ideas presented in writing. The ability to communicate information & ideas in writing so others understand.

Job Tasks

- Monitor sales staff performance to ensure that goals are met.
- Direct & supervise employees engaged in specific activities such as sales or inventory-taking.
- Listen to & resolve customer complaints regarding services, products, or personnel.
- Plan & prepare work schedules, and assign employees to specific duties.

Qualifications

High school diploma or GED/equivalent, bachelor's coursework or degree is a plus.

Locations

Atlanta, GA; Miami, FL; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Chicago, IL

Schedule & Salary

You will have the opportunity to negotiate a flexible schedule and a competitive salary accompanied by an attractive benefits package and bonus opportunities.

Job Description #1 Questionnaire

Please rate how likely you would be to apply for this job.

1 Not at all Likely	2	3	4 Neither Likely or Unlikely	5	6	7 Very Likely

While reading this job description (#1), did you notice any of the following?

□ Time Management

□ Conflict Resolution

□ Environmental Protection

□Relationship Building

□Cubicle Workspace

□Opportunities for Advancement

□Active Listening

□Relationship Building

□ Timepiece Conferences

Customer Service Team Lead – Sosik, Timepiece Retail (2)

Knowledge

- **Sales & Marketing** — Knowledge of principles & methods for showing, promoting, & selling products.

- **Customer & Personal Service** — Knowledge of principles & processes for providing customer & personal services.

- **Administration & Management** — Knowledge of business & management principles involved in strategic planning, leadership technique, & coordination of people & resources.

Skills

- **Time Management** — Manage one's own time & the time of others.

- **Active Listening** — Give full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, & not interrupting at inappropriate times.

- **Critical Thinking** — Understand the implications of information for current & future problem-solving & decision-making. Use logic & reasoning to identify the strengths & weaknesses of alternative solutions.

Abilities

- **Oral Expression & Comprehension** — The ability to orally communicate information & ideas so others will understand. The ability to listen to & understand information & ideas presented through spoken words & sentences.

- **Problem Sensitivity & Conflict Resolution** — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong & an understanding of how to get others to work cooperatively after problems arise.

- **Written Comprehension & Expression** — The ability to read & understand information & ideas presented in writing. The ability to communicate information & ideas in writing so others understand.

Job Tasks

- Monitor sales staff performance to ensure that goals are met.

- Direct & supervise employees engaged in specific activities such as sales or inventory-taking.

- Listen to & resolve customer complaints regarding services, products, or personnel.

- Plan & prepare work schedules, and assign employees to specific duties.

Vision

Sosik is a forward-thinking timepiece company in the global economy & workforce. We pride ourselves on creating the most unique timepieces available in the global market.

Mission

Sosik's mission is to provide high-quality, modern, original, hand-crafted timepieces. Our workforce is comprised of innovative and creative individuals who are not afraid to challenge the status quo. We welcome original thinkers, and seek energetic problem solvers and team players to expand our customer service team.

Sosik values:

- Problem Solving
- Teamwork
- Loyalty
- Trustworthiness/Integrity

- Innovation
- Environmental Protection
- Organizational Sustainability
- Exceptional Customer Service

Qualifications

High school diploma or GED/equivalent, bachelor's coursework or degree is a plus.

Locations

Atlanta, GA; Miami, FL; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Chicago, IL

Schedule & Salary

You will have the opportunity to negotiate a flexible schedule and a competitive salary accompanied by an attractive benefits package and bonus opportunities.

Job Description #2 Questionnaire

Please rate how likely you would be to apply for this job.

1 Not at all Likely	2	3	4 Neither Likely or Unlikely	5	6	7 Very Likely

While reading this job description (#2), did you notice any of the following?

□ Time Management

□ Conflict Resolution

□ Environmental Protection

□Relationship Building

□Cubicle Workspace

□Opportunities for Advancement

□Active Listening

□Relationship Building

□ Timepiece Conferences

Customer Service Team Lead – Sosik, Timepiece Retail (3)

Knowledge

- **Sales & Marketing** — Knowledge of principles & methods for showing, promoting, & selling products.
- **Customer & Personal Service** — Knowledge of principles & processes for providing customer & personal services.
- **Administration & Management** — Knowledge of business & management principles involved in strategic planning, leadership technique, & coordination of people & resources.

Skills

- **Time Management** — Manage one's own time & the time of others.
- **Active Listening** — Give full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, & not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Critical Thinking** — Understand the implications of information for current & future problem-solving & decision-making. Use logic & reasoning to identify the strengths & weaknesses of alternative solutions.

Abilities

- **Oral Expression & Comprehension** — The ability to orally communicate information & ideas so others will understand. The ability to listen to & understand information & ideas presented through spoken words & sentences.
- **Problem Sensitivity & Conflict Resolution** — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong & an understanding of how to get others to work cooperatively after problems arise.
- **Written Comprehension & Expression** — The ability to read & understand information & ideas presented in writing. The ability to communicate information & ideas in writing so others understand.

Job Tasks

- Monitor sales staff performance to ensure that goals are met.
- Direct & supervise employees engaged in specific activities such as sales or inventory-taking.
- Listen to & resolve customer complaints regarding services, products, or personnel.
- Plan & prepare work schedules, and assign employees to specific duties.

General Company Information

Sosik is committed to quality, excellence, innovation, and serving customers' changing needs. Sosik was created in the mind of President & CEO Darrell White in 2000. Mr. White has recently been recognized as a progressive up-and-coming leader by *Forbes Magazine*.

Sosik Offers:

- A relaxed work environment
- A comfortable atmosphere
- Genuine team camaraderie
- Flexible schedules
- One-on-one time with upper management
- Opportunities for advancement

Sosik has been recognized for its innovation by local and national magazines and the Design Team has been awarded the "Shawn Lee Conerly Award for Creativity" for five out of the last seven years. Sosik has also been named one of the most environmentally aware companies by Time Magazine. Employing some of the most creative minds across the country, Sosik has also earned awards for being among the best small businesses to work for.

If you are a leader who thinks you have what it takes to help Sosik maintain its reputation of quality, innovation and service, we are excited to meet you.

Qualifications

High school diploma or GED/equivalent, bachelor's coursework or degree is a plus.

Locations

Atlanta, GA; Miami, FL; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Chicago, IL

Schedule & Salary

You will have the opportunity to negotiate a flexible schedule and a competitive salary accompanied by an attractive benefits package and bonus opportunities.

Job Description #3 Questionnaire

Please rate how likely you would be to apply for this job.

1 Not at all Likely	2	3	4 Neither Likely or Unlikely	5	6	7 Very Likely

While reading this job description (#3), did you notice any of the following?

□ Time Management

□ Conflict Resolution

□ Environmental Protection

□Relationship Building

□Cubicle Workspace

□Opportunities for Advancement

□Active Listening

□Relationship Building

□ Timepiece Conferences

Customer Service Team Lead – Sosik, Timepiece Retail (4)

Knowledge

- **Sales & Marketing** — Knowledge of principles & methods for showing, promoting, & selling products.
- **Customer & Personal Service** — Knowledge of principles & processes for providing customer & personal services.
- **Administration & Management** — Knowledge of business & management principles involved in strategic planning, leadership technique, & coordination of people & resources.

Skills

- **Time Management** — Manage one's own time & the time of others.
- **Active Listening** — Give full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, & not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Critical Thinking** — Understand the implications of information for current & future problem-solving & decision-making. Use logic & reasoning to identify the strengths & weaknesses of alternative solutions.

Abilities

- **Oral Expression & Comprehension** — The ability to orally communicate information & ideas so others will understand. The ability to listen to & understand information & ideas presented through spoken words & sentences.
- **Problem Sensitivity & Conflict Resolution** — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong & an understanding of how to get others to work cooperatively after problems arise.
- **Written Comprehension & Expression** — The ability to read & understand information & ideas presented in writing. The ability to communicate information & ideas in writing so others understand.

Job Tasks

- Monitor sales staff performance to ensure that goals are met.
- Direct & supervise employees engaged in specific activities such as sales or inventory-taking.
- Listen to & resolve customer complaints regarding services, products, or personnel.
- Plan & prepare work schedules, and assign employees to specific duties.

Vision

Sosik is a forward-thinking timepiece company in the global economy & workforce. We pride ourselves on creating the most unique timepieces available in the global market.

Mission

Sosik's mission is to provide high-quality, modern, original, hand-crafted timepieces. Our workforce is comprised of innovative and creative individuals who are not afraid to challenge the status quo. We welcome original thinkers, and seek energetic problem solvers and team players to expand our customer service team.

Sosik values:

- Problem Solving
- Teamwork
- Loyalty
- Trustworthiness/Integrity
- Innovation
- Environmental Protection
- Organizational Sustainability
- Exceptional Customer Service

General Company Information

Sosik is committed to quality, excellence, innovation, and serving customers' changing needs. Sosik was created in the mind of President & CEO Darrell White in 2000. Mr. White has recently been recognized as a progressive up-and-coming leader by *Forbes Magazine*.

Sosik Offers:

- A relaxed work environment
- A comfortable atmosphere
- Genuine team camaraderie
- Flexible schedules
- One-on-one time with upper management
- Opportunities for advancement

Sosik has been recognized for its innovation by local and national magazines and the Design Team has been awarded the "Shawn Lee Conerly Award for Creativity" for five out of the last seven years. Sosik has also been named one of the most environmentally aware companies by Time Magazine. Employing some of the most creative minds across the country, Sosik has also earned awards for being among the best small businesses to work for.

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Locations

Atlanta, GA; Miami, FL; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Chicago, IL

Schedule & Salary

You will have the opportunity to negotiate a flexible schedule and a competitive salary accompanied by an attractive benefits package and bonus opportunities.

Job Description #4 Questionnaire

Please rate how likely you would be to apply for this job.

1 Not at all Likely	2	3	4 Neither Likely or Unlikely	5	6	7 Very Likely

While reading this job description (#4), did you notice any of the following?

□ Time Management

□ Conflict Resolution

□ Environmental Protection

□Relationship Building

□Cubicle Workspace

□Opportunities for Advancement

□Active Listening

□Relationship Building

□ Timepiece Conferences

Post-Job Description Questions

Rank order the job descriptions by entering the job description number on the appropriate line below. For the job description that would make you _most_ likely to apply for the job, enter the job description number on line #1. For the job description that would make you _least_ likely to apply for the job, enter the job description number on line #4.

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

    4. _____

Now that you have read each of the job descriptions, imagine Sosik extended a job offer to you. Comparing each of the descriptions to one another, which would make you _most_ likely accept the job offer? (Please circle one.)

1   **2**   **3**   **4**

Think about the job description that you indicated above would make you most likely to accept a job offer, if extended. Check the items below that influenced your decision.

_____ The job's tasks match my interests.
_____ My knowledge, skills, and abilities meet the job's requirements.
_____ My values match the organization's values.
_____ My preferences match Sosik's work environment.
_____ The amount of information provided was adequate enough for me to make an informed decision.
_____ Other (Please specify):_____

Now that you have read each of the job descriptions, imagine Sosik extended a job offer to you. Comparing each of the descriptions to one another, which would make you least likely accept the job offer? (Please circle one.)

1   **2**   **3**   **4**

Think about the job description that you indicated above would make you least likely to accept a job offer, if extended. Check the items below that influenced your decision.
_____ The job's tasks do not match my interests.

_____ My knowledge, skills, and abilities do not meet the job's requirements.
_____ My values do no match the organization's values.
_____ My preferences do not match Sosik's work environment.
_____ The amount of information provided was not adequate enough for me to make an informed decision.
_____ Other (Please specify): _____

APPENDIX C

RESULTS TABLES

Table C.1
Bonferroni Post-Hoc Comparison for Job Description Ratings

Job Descriptions		Mean Rating Difference	Std. Error	95% CI	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-.713*	0.126	-1.050	-0.375
	3	-1.075*	0.133	-1.432	-0.718
	4	-1.331*	0.131	-1.682	-0.980
2	1	.713*	0.126	0.375	1.050
	3	-.363*	0.097	-0.623	-0.102
	4	-.619*	0.092	-0.865	-0.373
3	1	1.075*	0.133	0.718	1.432
	2	.363*	0.097	0.102	0.623
	4	-.256	0.103	-0.532	0.019
4	1	1.331*	0.131	0.980	1.682
	2	.619*	0.092	0.373	0.865
	3	.256	0.103	-0.019	0.532

* $p < .05$.

Table C.2

Regression Results for Values Predicting Job Description #1 Rating

Values	B	SE B	β	R^2	F
Independence	.111	.109	.080	.006	1.039
Creativity	.141	.107	.103	.011	1.739
Integrity	.086	.119	.057	.003	.523
Spontaneity	.148	.098	.118	.014	2.293
Status	-.029	.080	-.029	.001	.133
Loyalty	-.011	.137	-.006	.000	.006
Going Green	.016	.088	.015	.000	.035
Quality Service	-.113	.134	-.066	.004	.703
Courage	-.049	.101	-.038	.001	.232
Diversity	.022	.092	.019	.000	.056

Table C.3

Regression Results for Work Environment Preferences Predicting Job Description #1 Rating

Values	B	SE B	β	R^2	F
Fixed Schedule	.076	.080	.074	.006	.899
Atmosphere	-.005	.124	-.003	.000	.002
Flexible Schedule	.043	.098	.035	.001	.195
Opportunity for Growth	-.047	.151	-.024	.001	.095
Fast Paced*	.191	.092	.161	.026	4.329
Teamwork*	.200	.089	.174	.030	5.075
Autonomy	-.007	.111	-.005	.000	.004
Leadership	.183	.166	.087	.007	1.222
Travel[†]	.140	.073	.148	.022	3.638
Productivity*	.240	.091	.203	.041	6.949

*$p < .05$. [†] $p = .058$

Table C.4
Regression Results for Values Predicting Job Description #2 Rating

Values	B	SE B	β	R^2	F
Independence	.058	.088	.051	.003	.433
Creativity*	.264	.085	.236	.056	9.706
Integrity	-.013	.097	-.010	.000	.018
Spontaneity	.096	.080	.093	.009	1.441
Status	.043	.065	.052	.003	.439
Loyalty	.035	.111	.025	.001	.101
Going Green	.076	.071	.083	.007	1.146
Quality Service	-.101	.107	-.074	.005	.901
Courage	-.063	.082	-.061	.004	.604
Diversity	.022	.074	.023	.001	.087

* $p < .01$.

Table C.5

Regression Results for Work Environment Preferences Predicting Job Description #2 Rating

Preferences	B	$SE\ B$	β	R^2	F
Fixed Schedule	.077	.065	.092	.008	1.394
Atmosphere	.163	.100	.127	.016	2.656
Flexible Schedule	.022	.079	.022	.000	.078
Opportunity for					
Growth	.075	.121	.049	.002	.385
Fast Paced	-.008	.076	-.009	.000	.012
Teamwork	.110	.072	.119	.014	2.327
Autonomy	.000	.091	.000	.000	.000
Leadership [†]	.251	.133	.145	.021	3.524
Travel	.047	.060	.061	.004	.610
Productivity	.037	.075	.038	.001	.238

[†] $p = .06$

Table C.6

Regression Results for Values Predicting Job Description #3 Rating

Values	B	SE B	β	R^2	F
Independence	-.028	.091	-.024	.000	.003
Creativity*	.209	.088	.193	.000	5.08
Integrity	.063	.100	.050	.000	.005
Spontaneity	.049	.083	.046	.000	.005
Status	-.058	.068	-.066	.000	.006
Loyalty	-.029	.114	-.020	.000	.002
Going Green	.064	.073	.068	.000	.006
Quality Service	-.127	.110	-.090	.000	.003
Courage	-.008	.085	-.007	.000	.004
Diversity	.089	.076	.091	.000	.005

*$p < .05$.

Table C.7

Regression Results for Work Environment Preferences Predicting Job Description #3 Rating

Preferences	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*R²*	*F*
Fixed Schedule	.068	.067	.080	.006	1.052
Atmosphere	.141	.103	.107	.011	1.879
Flexible Schedule	.036	.082	.035	.001	.200
Opportunity for					
Growth	.142	.125	.088	.008	1.283
Fast Paced	.007	.077	.008	.000	.009
Teamwork	.091	.074	.096	.009	1.505
Autonomy	.098	.092	.083	.007	1.119
Leadership	-.069	.144	-.038	.001	.232
Travel	.023	.062	.029	.001	.138
Productivity	-.051	.078	-.051	.003	.430

Table C.8
Regression Results for Values Predicting Job Description #4 Rating

Values	B	SE B	β	R^2	F
Independence	.082	.088	.072	.005	.854
Creativity*	.315	.084	.282	.079	13.943
Integrity	-.024	.097	-.019	.000	.061
Spontaneity	.125	.081	.120	.015	2.387
Status	.016	.066	.019	.000	.061
Loyalty	.087	.110	.062	.004	.624
Going Green	.092	.072	.100	.010	1.633
Quality Service	.060	.109	.043	.002	.304
Courage	.106	.081	.102	.010	1.696
Diversity	.076	.074	.080	.010	1.536

*$p < .05$.

Table C.9

Regression Results for Work Environment Preferences Predicting Job Description #4 Rating

Preferences	B	$SE\ B$	β	R^2	F
Fixed Schedule	.081	.065	.098	.010	1.563
Atmosphere	.110	.100	.087	.008	1.228
Flexible Schedule	.131	.078	.131	.017	2.829
Opportunity for					
Growth	.204	.121	.132	.017	2.834
Fast Paced	-.020	.075	-.021	.000	.072
Teamwork	.107	.072	.117	.014	2.250
Autonomy*	.225	.089	.197	.039	6.467
Leadership	.153	.135	.089	.008	1.277
Travel	.025	.060	.033	.001	.173
Productivity	.018	.075	.019	.000	.056

*$p < .05$.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Adria D. Toliver was born in Dallas, Texas in 1986. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia. She discovered her interest in industrial and organizational psychology while studying at the University of Western Australia and developed her skill set in the undergraduate lab of Dr. Jennifer Hughes. Her current research interest focuses on applicant perceptions of organizations.