

Realistic Job Previews: A Test of the Adverse Self-Selection Hypothesis

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The realistic job preview (RJP) literature has focused more on posthire outcomes such as employee retention than on prehire outcomes such as applicant attraction and job choice behavior. This study extends the RJP literature by focusing on 2 important issues related to applicant attraction: (a) the weight applicants place on negative information in relation to other variables such as pay level and promotional opportunity and (b) whether the "best" applicants react differently to negative information than do other applicants (adverse self-selection). Results indicate that applicants place a fairly high negative weight on negative job information, relative to other vacancy characteristics. The results regarding adverse self-selection are less clear but suggest that the highest quality applicants may be less willing to pursue jobs for which negative information has been presented, especially when doing so imposes opportunity costs.

Realistic job previews (RJPs) have received more attention over the past two decades than practically any other recruiting issue (Rynes, 1991). This attention, however, has primarily focused on the relation between realism and employee retention rather than attraction. For example, recent meta-analyses have reported small but significant negative relations between realistic recruiting practices and turnover (McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Reilly, Brown, Blood, & Malatesta, 1981). These results indicate that, especially for complex jobs, realistic prehire information may help establish the foundation for longer term employment relationships. The relative utility of these relationships, however, is unknown because very little research has examined how realism affects attraction, and virtually no research has examined the differential effects realism might have on various types of applicants. If the best applicants react to the realism by withdrawing at a disproportionately higher rate, then retention measures may overestimate the benefits of realistic recruiting. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relation between realistic information and applicant attraction.

Applicant self-selection is a primary mechanism

through which realistic information presumably affects recruitment outcomes. Under the self-selection hypothesis, applicants will be better able to make informed decisions about which job opportunities to pursue, and those applicants who find the context described by the realistic preview to be unacceptable will self-select out of the process. In an early review of the RJP literature, however, Wanous (1980) suggested that our ability to assess the effects of realism on organizational entry was limited because very few studies provided the realistic information early enough in the process for applicants to use as a basis for self-selection. More recently, Wanous (1992) stated that realistic recruitment does not restrict an organization's ability to recruit, and Colarelli (1984) suggested that self-selection is not a reasonable explanation for the observed relation between realism and turnover. However, the self-selection issue remains unclear because previous research has relied on job acceptance rates as a proxy for self-selection, and because no attempt has been made to understand if realism has differential effects on the better (vs. lesser) qualified applicants (Rynes, 1991).

At the attraction stage, the effects of applicant self-selection can be observed in two ways. First, applicants can decide not to pursue some jobs while remaining in the pool for other jobs. Second, applicants can turn down job offers that are tendered and either accept a competing offer or continue to search for an acceptable alternative. Thus, self-selection implies a matching, or fit, between the applicant's characteristics and the environmental conditions of the job. Job acceptance rates are a deficient proxy because they are not informative about applicants' preferences, or the process of attempting to find a position that allows a better fit with the applicant's needs (Breaugh, 1992).

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We thank Jack Howard and Diane Johnson for their assistance with this study.

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Additionally, studies using job acceptance rates to assess the effects of self-selection implicitly assume that all applicants possess identical qualifications and are therefore interchangeable or that applicant withdrawal is random. If these assumptions hold, then the effects of self-selection should be minimal, although neither assumption appears tenable. There often is significant variation in applicant qualifications (Guion, 1991), and recent evidence suggests that better qualified applicants in fact react differently to negative information than do their less qualified counterparts, primarily because they can exercise options that the others don't have (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991). The adverse self-selection hypothesis suggests that when presented with negative information about a job, the best qualified applicants will be more likely to withdraw from the applicant pool and pursue other opportunities. If this is true, job acceptance measures of self-selection likely have underestimated the impact of RJPs by failing to account for the organization's inability to attract the most qualified applicants.

There are several reasons why direct examination of the adverse self-selection hypothesis is important. First, if the best applicants are withdrawing at a disproportionately higher rate, the base rate in the applicant pool will decline, thus requiring either more valid selection processes or lower selection ratios in order to maintain a given level of postselection job performance (Cascio, 1991; Taylor & Russell, 1939). Likewise, assuming top-down selection models, if tendered offers are rejected, the organization must move down the list and make offers to less qualified applicants, thus reducing the utility of the selection process (Boudreau, 1991). Additionally, recent literature suggests that many organizations are becoming increasingly selective and are tailoring their recruitment practices to attract only the "best" applicants (Rynes, 1991). To the extent that this is true, understanding how the best applicants react to realistic information appears to have real utility for organizations competing for scarce human resources. Because RJPs emerged as an alternative to traditional recruiting processes in which organizations would emphasize positive job attributes while failing to disclose the less desirable ones (Wanous, 1980), they usually include some information that the organization perceives as potentially negative (Rynes, 1991). Thus, on the basis of these arguments, we made the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1. Applicants, in general, will place a negative weight on the negative information typically conveyed in realistic job previews and will be less attracted to organizations providing this type of information.

Hypothesis 2. The better qualified applicants will place more weight on the negative information and be less attracted to organizations providing this information than will the lesser qualified applicants.

Because previous research has shown that other vari-

ables also affect applicant reactions to recruiting information, we attempted to control for the source of the information and the manner in which it was conveyed. The source of job information can affect job applicants' reactions (Breugh, 1992). Information from informal sources such as friends currently working for the organization often is deemed more reliable by applicants than information from formal sources such as recruiters. Additionally, hires resulting from informal sources such as employee referrals often yield better performance and higher survival rates than those generated through formal sources (Rynes, 1991; Wanous & Colella, 1989). One explanation for this longevity effect is that referrals provide RJPs. Because the source of the information can potentially influence the applicant's perception of the job, we included this variable as a control in both of the research designs discussed below.

Additionally, research has shown that organizational commitment may be affected by judgments of procedural justice. That is, people may accept less than desirable outcomes when they perceive that the process generating those outcomes was fair (Tyler, 1991). In addition, people may be more likely to accept undesirable outcomes when the reasons for them are conveyed in a concerned and compassionate way (Greenberg, 1990, 1993). Thus, because it seems that the process of conveying the RJP might influence applicant behavior, we attempted to control for this effect as well.

Method

Participants and Procedure

We administered surveys to graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in a professional degree program at a large university located in the Northeast and to graduate students enrolled in a business program at a university in the Southwest. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was assured in advance. In order to induce participation, we paid participants completing surveys a small honorarium. We gave surveys to 112 participants, and 83 surveys were returned (74%). Response rates did not vary across universities.

Average age of respondents was approximately 23 years (range 19–39 years). Average level of full-time work experience was 1.4 years. Of the participants who returned surveys, 36% were graduate students at the Northeast university, 47% were undergraduate students at the same university, and 17% were business graduate students at the Southwest university. Average grade point average was 3.15. Eighty-one percent of the participants were White, and 72% were women. Eighty percent of the participants were actively interviewing for full-time jobs at the time of the study. Seventy-six percent of the respondents perceived some or many employment opportunities, and 24% perceived few or no employment opportunities.

Research Design

We used a mixed experimental design (Keppel, 1982), incorporating both within- and between-subjects components. We

incorporated two within-subjects methods into the study. In one method, participants responded to a policy-capturing survey containing hypothetical scenarios that manipulated job characteristics and recruiting processes. In the other method, participants evaluated the recruiting practices of organizations they were considering at the time of the study.

In the policy-capturing section, five within-subjects factors representing characteristics of job offers or descriptions of the recruiting process were manipulated. The factors were pay, promotion opportunities, amount of negative information communicated during the recruitment process, source of job information, and manner in which negative information was delivered. Each factor contained two levels. Each factor was coded dichotomously, where 0 indicated a low level of the factor and 1 indicated a high level of the factor.

We included pay level and promotional opportunities because previous research has demonstrated that the effects of nonpecuniary job characteristics cannot be reliably estimated in their absence (Rynes, Schwab, & Heneman, 1983). The manipulations for the pay and promotion opportunities were derived from data from the schools' career placement offices. Because average salary offers differed significantly between graduates and undergraduates and across the two universities, we provided separate salary figures in the three surveys. The high salary level was represented by an amount equal to the 75th percentile of the offers accepted during the previous round of campus recruiting. The low salary level was represented by an amount equal to the 25th percentile of the offers accepted during the previous round of campus recruiting. Few promotion opportunities were indicated by having one promotion in 4 years on the job. High promotion opportunities were indicated by two promotions in 4 years. We determined these levels through discussions with the schools' placement directors.

The amount of negative information about the job was manipulated by informing participants of various aspects of the hypothetical job. This information concerned four job characteristics that previous RJP literature has used to convey realism (Dean & Wanous, 1984; Saks, Wiesner, & Summers, 1994; Suszko & Breaghaug, 1986). These characteristics, and the statements we used to operationalize them, are described in Table 1. High negative information was manipulated by making two of these four factors unfavorable, and low negative information was manipulated by making all four of these factors favorable.

Source of job information was manipulated by informing

participants that the primary source of job information was either (a) the person who interviewed them or (b) a friend of theirs who worked for the organization. Manner in which the negative information was delivered reflected different levels of sensitivity to applicant concerns, and we manipulated this reflection by informing the participants either (a) that even though the job isn't perfect, individuals will just have to adjust, or (b) that even though the job isn't perfect, the organization regrets that negative factors cannot be removed, and it had tried to make the job as pleasant as possible. Although we did not conduct a formal manipulation check for these variables, we did ask several students who were interviewing for jobs at the time of the study to read the scenarios and comment on their realism and clarity. On the basis of their suggestions, we made minor modifications to the scenarios, but no major concerns were voiced by the students reviewing the survey.

The five within-subjects independent variables were completely crossed, which permits assessment of the independent effects of each factor on job choice decisions. Crossing the factors resulted in 32 scenarios (2^5) that contained all possible combinations of the independent variables. We asked each participant to assume that they were offered a job possessing the characteristics included in the description. To minimize order effects, we presented the scenarios in the survey in random order.

The other within-subjects aspect of the study asked participants to evaluate companies that were recruiting them at the time of the study. Because there was no formal placement center at the Southwestern university, only students at the Northeastern university participated in this part of the study. However, because the graduate and undergraduate students interviewed with different companies, these surveys also were different. For the undergraduate surveys, 10 companies were rated. For the graduate surveys, 14 companies were rated. In this portion of the study, participants rated the degree to which negative information about the organization or job was communicated during the early phases of the recruitment process, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*). We controlled for the source of job information by asking participants two questions: "How much of the information came from formal organizational channels such as the recruiter?" and "How much of the information came from informal sources such as friends?" Both questions were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*). We did not

Table 1
Job Characteristics Manipulated to Create the Realistic Job Preview (RJP) for the Policy-Capturing Analysis

Job characteristic	Positive level	Negative level
Time pressures	There is ample time to complete tasks before they are due.	Many tasks you will be asked to perform have time deadlines that are difficult but necessary to meet.
Closeness of supervision	Your supervisor stays out of your way and lets you do your job.	Your supervisor frequently looks over your shoulder to make sure you are on top of things.
Supportiveness of the culture	Expectations are high but will be recognized when these expectations are met.	Expectations are high, and you can expect to be criticized for poor performance but seldom praised for good performance.
Interactions with others	The job requires frequent interaction with friendly and courteous people.	The job requires frequent interaction with employees and customers who have not had their earlier concerns handled to their satisfaction.

include questions concerning pay and promotion opportunities in this survey because debriefing conducted with students from previous campus recruiting cycles suggested that this information would not be reliably known by most job seekers until much later in the process.

To reduce the possibility of priming, where participants' responses to earlier questions influence their responses to subsequent questions, we alternated the three major sections of the survey in their order of presentation. Thus, in some surveys, the policy-capturing section was first, followed by the organization pursuit questions, and concluding with the section assessing applicant quality and demographics. In other surveys, this order was reversed.

Measures

Organizational attraction. For the policy-capturing part of the study, we measured applicant attraction to hypothetical recruiting organizations using a two-item scale completed in response to each scenario. The two items were "How interested would you be in obtaining an interview with this organization?" (1 = *very uninterested*, 5 = *very interested*), and "How likely would you be to accept a job offer with the above characteristics?" (1 = *very unlikely*, 5 = *very likely*). The coefficient alpha estimate of this two-item scale was .91.

Although the reliability evidence reported above suggests that responses to the two individual questions contained in the attraction measure are consistent, it does not reveal whether participants responded consistently to the scenarios themselves. In order to assess how reliably participants responded to these questions as a result of the manipulations, we duplicated four scenarios at random and placed them in different parts of the survey. The average reliability of the responses to duplicated pairs of scenarios was .76, indicating that participants were consistent in reporting their organization attraction in response to identical scenarios.

For the company evaluation part of the study, we measured applicants' attraction to recruiting organizations using the number of points they "bid" to obtain a spot on the organizations' interview schedules. The organizations considered in this study all had "open" interview schedules (i.e., they had not pre-screened resumes, and all students were eligible to compete for interview slots). In the degree program we studied, job seekers are given a number of nonreplaceable points (500 per semester) that are used to bid on organizations. Job seekers must spend points to obtain campus interviews from organizations. Failure to outbid other job seekers for a given organization excludes that company as an interviewing possibility. We obtained this bidding information from placement office records after we collected the survey data. Thus, the procedure for this aspect of the study consisted of point bidding and interviewing (which occurred independent of the study), followed by survey completion. This measure of organization attraction (number of points bid) correlated, $r = .51$, with participants' overall regard for the organization at the time they completed the survey.

Applicant quality. We measured applicant quality by collecting participants' resumes and having three senior doctoral students with business experience rate the quality of the resume. Each rater completed an evaluation sheet on each participant

by responding to four questions about the resume: (a) quality and quantity of applicant's work experience, (b) academic achievement, (c) relevant extracurricular activities, and (4) overall applicant quality. We rated each of these dimensions on a scale ranging from 1 (*very low*) to 5 (*very high*). We measured overall applicant quality using the average response to these four questions, averaged across the three raters. For the three raters, the reliability of the four-item scale was .71, .75, and .72. To further investigate the reliability and validity of this evaluation process, the school's placement director evaluated the quality of the students she knew ($N = 58$).

Although each rater responded reliably to the four-item measure of applicant quality, we still needed to deal with the issue of whether their overall ratings were in agreement. In order to determine the degree of interrater agreement in evaluating participants' resumes, we calculated r_{wg} (James, 1982). When estimating the agreement among the three judges who rated every available resume, $r_{wg} = .83$. When estimating the agreement between the school's placement director and the average of the three ratings for the 58 participants who were rated by the placement director, $r_{wg} = .82$. Following the procedures outlined by Cramer (1994, pp. 272–275), we also computed intraclass correlations (ICCs). Among the three judges who rated every resume, ICC = .76. When the school's placement director was also included as a rater, ICC = .78. Although there are no clear rules of thumb for gauging the adequacy of interrater agreement statistics, these figures appear to indicate reasonably strong interrater agreement in the evaluations of applicant quality.

Control variables. We measured applicant race and gender with specific questions on the survey. Because so few (less than 19%) of applicants were non-White, we coded race as 1 = White, 0 = other. We coded gender as 1 = male, 0 = female. We measured work experience with the question "How many total years of full-time work experience do you have?" We measured expectancy of a site visit with the question "How likely is it that you will be invited for a site visit with this company?" Applicants responded to this question for each company using a scale ranging from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*).

Analyses

We used multiple regression to estimate the effect of the combination of job attributes and recruiting processes on organization attraction. Because each reaction to a scenario or recruiting organization is an independent event, and each event becomes a dependent variable (Hays, 1981), the sample size was the number of participants multiplied by the number of scenarios or organizations they evaluated. Thus, for the policy-capturing analysis, the potential sample size is 2,988, because each of the 83 participants reacted to 36 scenarios (less cases deleted because of listwise deletion of missing values). For the organization pursuit data, bidding points were available for only 53 participants. Thus, the potential sample size is 612 (less cases deleted because of missing values). Unlike some policy-capturing analyses, this analysis does not suffer from potential nonindependence problems because no individual difference variable was duplicated. We controlled for whether the applicant ex-

Table 2
Regression Estimates Predicting Organization Attraction: Policy-Capturing Data Set

Independent variable	β	SE (β)	t
Salary level	.27	.01	17.98***
Promotion opportunities	.08	.01	5.05***
Procedural fairness of information	.11	.01	7.41***
Friend source of information	.07	.01	4.65***
Amount of negative information	-.48	.01	-32.09***
<i>R</i>			.59
<i>R</i> ²			.35
Number of observations			2,981
Number of participants			83

Note. β coefficients are standardized regression coefficients.

*** $p < .001$.

pected to receive an invitation for a site visit, because when evaluating actual organizations, applicants' attraction may be reciprocal and thus influenced by whether the organization is interested in the applicant.

To investigate the degree to which the relationship between the amount of negative information presented and organization attraction varied by applicant quality following previous research (Cable & Judge, 1994), we calculated the β weight each applicant placed on negative information by regressing organization attraction on the amount of negative information presented. For the policy-capturing analysis, this was the β weight representing the effect of negative information on organization attraction for the 36 scenarios to which participants responded. For the organization pursuit data set, the β weight represented the effect of the negative information acquired during the recruitment process on organization attraction for the 10 (undergraduate students) to 14 (graduate students) companies they evaluated. Once these two β weights (one for the policy-capturing data, one of the organization pursuit data) were calculated for each participant, we used the measure of applicant quality to predict these β weights. In these analyses, race, gender, and work experience were instituted as control variables.

Results

Table 2 contains the regression results predicting organization attraction for the policy-capturing data set. As the table reveals, the manipulated variables generally had significant effects on organization attraction. Salary and promotion opportunities were positively related to attraction, although the effect size for promotion opportunities was small. In terms of the manipulated RJP variables, students were slightly more attracted to organizations when negative information was communicated in a procedurally just manner (i.e., when the organization expressed concern and noted that it had tried to make the job as pleasant as possible) and when a friend was the source of job information. The degree of negative information presented in the recruiting message had a strong, negative effect on organization attraction. Cumulatively, the within-

subjects (manipulated) variables explained 34% of the variance in organization attraction.

Table 3 contains the regression results predicting organization attraction for the organization pursuit data set. As expected, participants were more attracted to organizations that they felt were interested in them (i.e., those companies from which they expected a site visit invitation). Consistent with the policy-capturing results, participants were more attracted to organizations when a friend provided them with information about the job and less attracted to organizations when negative information was conveyed during the recruiting process. To examine whether source effects were due to general information or negative information, we created two dummy variables. The first dummy represents whether a friend was the primary source of negative information, and the second dummy represents whether the recruiter was the primary source of negative information. We added these two variables to the equation predicting attraction (Table 3), while keeping the two variables representing the degree to which the recruiter and the friend were sources of information in general. The results suggest that what matters is the degree to which the friend was a source of information in general, not whether the friend was the primary source of negative information per se. In total, 21% of the variance in organization attraction (bidding points) was explained by the variables. Thus, the results from both studies support Hypothesis 1, which states that applicants will be less attracted to organizations that present negative information in the recruitment process.

To test the hypothesis that high-quality applicants will place more weight on negative information than will lower quality applicants, we used the β weight representing the relationship between presence of negative information and organization attraction for each applicant as the dependent variable. Most applicants placed negative weight on negative information, as the average weight was $\beta = -.56$ for

Table 3
Regression Estimates Predicting Organization Attraction: Organization Pursuit Data Set

Independent variable	β	SE (β)	<i>t</i>
Expectancy of site visit	.34	.04	8.38***
Degree to which recruiter is source of information	.04	.04	0.97
Degree to which friend is source of information	.17	.04	4.13***
Amount of negative information	-.19	.04	-4.89***
Recruiter primary source of negative information	.05	.04	1.42
Friend primary source of negative information	.03	.04	0.83
<i>R</i>		.46	
<i>R</i> ²		.21	
Number of observations		608	
Number of participants		53	

Note. β coefficients are standardized regression coefficients.
*** $p < .001$.

the policy-capturing data and $\beta = -.17$ for the organization pursuit data set. However, there was substantial variation in these weights in the policy-capturing and organization pursuit data sets ($SD_{\beta} = .23$ and $SD_{\beta} = .31$, respectively). This variation suggests the possibility of individual differences in the weight placed on more negative information. Thus, applicant quality, along with several control variables, served as the independent variables predicting the weight placed on negative information. As is shown in Table 4, applicant quality was not related to the weight placed on negative information in the policy-capturing data set. In fact, none of the variables in the policy-capturing data set were predictive. However, applicant quality did negatively predict ($p = .06$) organization attraction in the organization pursuit data set. Although the coefficient is not significant at the $p < .05$ level, we chose to interpret it because the sample size is small ($N = 53$). The coefficient estimate indicates that high quality

applicants were more likely to place negative weight on the type of information typically conveyed through RJPs. Also, work experience positively predicted the β weight, indicating that the experienced applicants were less likely to react negatively to this information. Thus, high quality and less experienced applicants placed more weight on negative information than lower quality or more experienced applicants (the correlation between applicant quality and experience was $-.05$, *n.s.*, in the policy-capturing data, and $-.01$, *n.s.*, in the organization pursuit data). Unlike the policy-capturing data set, where the variables accounted for only a small amount ($R^2 = 2\%$) of the variance in weight placed on negative information, substantially more variance ($R^2 = 20\%$) was accounted for in the organization pursuit data set.

Finally, in order to determine whether type of negative information mattered to applicants, we coded the positive versus negative nature of the four attributes for each sce-

Table 4
Relationship Between Applicant Quality and Weight Placed on Negative Information

Independent variable	Policy-capturing data set			Organization pursuit data set		
	β	SE (β)	<i>t</i>	β	SE (β)	<i>t</i>
Work experience	.01	.11	.08	.37	.15	2.54**
Gender (1 = male, 0 = female)	.12	.12	.99	-.04	.15	-0.30
Race (1 = White, 0 = other)	.03	.11	.27	.18	.14	1.30
Applicant quality	-.06	.12	-.52	-.22	.14	-1.53*
<i>R</i>			.15			.45
<i>R</i> ²			.02			.20
Number of participants			83			53

Note. β coefficients are standardized regression coefficients.
* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$.

nario where negative information was presented. The presence of time pressures ($r = .13, p < .001$) and difficult interactions with coworkers ($r = .07, p < .01$) were positively correlated with attraction, whereas the presence of an unsupportive organizational culture was negatively correlated with attraction ($r = -.16, p < .001$). Closeness of supervision was not significantly correlated with attraction ($r = -.03, ns$). These results indicate that when negative information was presented, applicants preferred to have it concern time pressures on the job or interactions with coworkers rather than supportiveness of the organizational culture. However, judging from the correlation of the amount of negative information with attraction ($r = -.50, p < .001$), it appears that the *type* of negative information is less important than the *presence* of negative information.

Discussion

This study was designed to assess the effects of negative information on applicant attraction. Conclusions from previous research on how RJPs influence an organization's ability to recruit have been limited by interventions that introduce the information too late in the process to affect applicants' choices. Conversely, this study used two methods to assess the effects of negative information in the early stages of recruiting when applicants are making decisions about which opportunities to pursue. In addition, rather than focus on acceptance rates as typically has been the case in RJP research, we assessed the relative weight that applicants place on negative information in the context of variables such as pay level and promotional opportunities that consistently have been shown to affect job preferences.

Results from both studies indicate significant negative relations between the amount of negative information conveyed and applicant attraction. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. The results are less clear in regard to Hypothesis 2. In the policy-capturing study, there was no relation between applicant quality and the weight placed on negative information. In the organization pursuit study, however, the coefficient estimate was not trivial in magnitude ($\beta = -.22$) and nearly reached conventional significance levels ($p = .06$), suggesting that some adverse self-selection may have occurred. One explanation for the divergent results may be that in the policy-capturing study continued interest in all potential jobs imposes no costs on the applicants. However, because the bidding system used by this institution assigns points that are both limited (fewer than the applicants would like to have) and nonrefundable (if the applicant does not bid enough to get on the interview list, the number of points bid is lost and cannot be recovered during that recruiting cycle), the costs are very real. Rynes (1991) and others have suggested that results from

recruiting-job choice studies that do not impose costs on applicant behavior should be interpreted cautiously because most real job choice behavior is not cost free. Thus, the preliminary support for the adverse self-selection hypothesis offered by the organization pursuit analysis might be more credible than the absence of support from the policy-capturing data.

Although the policy-capturing methodology has numerous advantages, such as its robustness and proven accuracy in predicting individual decisions, it also has its limitations. As Hogarth (1980) noted, one limitation of policy-capturing models is potential environmental correlation. Most policy-capturing designs stipulate orthogonal factors, yet few variables are truly independent in reality. Thus, the realism of the design often must be questioned. Because the true relations among the independent variables are unknown in this study, the inability to investigate environmental correlations must be acknowledged as a potential limitation. Fortunately, policy capturing was not the only methodology used in the present study. While the policy-capturing design has the advantage of control but the limitation of realism, the organization pursuit data set has the opposite advantages and disadvantages. For example, although the organization pursuit study examines behavior in a very realistic context, there is less control because the timing of measurement would allow applicants to acquire additional information after bidding but prior to completing the survey. Consistent results across the two studies, as was the case with the presence of negative information, are more robust than they would have been if only one methodology had been used, because the limitations of each approach are offset by the strengths of the other.

In terms of the practical effect of realistic information, applicants bid 19.78 fewer points on organizations that were evaluated to provide *quite a bit* or *very much* negative information. Given that the average number of points bid on a particular company was 43.6, this represents a reduction in points bid of 45.4%. In terms of the relationship between applicant quality and the weight placed on negative information, applicants of moderate or low quality bid only 2.1 fewer points on organizations that provided one standard deviation more than average negative information. Conversely, high quality applicants bid 19.95 (46%) fewer points on these organizations. Thus, the better qualified applicants clearly bid fewer points for the opportunity to be interviewed by organizations for whom negative information had been conveyed. In other words, better qualified applicants appeared less willing to incur costs that would limit their ability to secure interviews with organizations in which less negative information was made available. In sum, realistic information did appear to have tangible effects on an authentic measure of organization attraction, particularly for high quality applicants.

In conclusion, although our data cannot offer an unequal-

ified endorsement in favor of the adverse self-selection hypothesis, as far as we know this is the first attempt to empirically test the hypothesis, and it does provide some insight on how negative information affects applicant behavior. We hope that future research can build on this foundation to further examine the interaction between RJP and applicant quality on attraction and intentions to pursue job opportunities.

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Received March 24, 1997

Revision received November 20, 1997

Accepted November 20, 1997 ■