THE PROCESS AND IMPACT OF ANTICIPATING MEANINGFULNESS IN FUTURE WORK DURING EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Despite research attesting that during recruiting, job seekers search for and draw inferences about future work and their place in it, the explanation for the effects of these inferences on recruiting outcomes remains enclosed in a "black box," that has yet to be unpacked. Given the substantial impact of experiencing meaningful work on current employees, I explore the influence of anticipated meaningful work on job seekers in the recruitment process. I present a conditional indirect effects model whereby job seekers anticipate meaningfulness about future organizational employment from inferences of anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact and anticipated belongingness. I contend these inferences are the result of sensemaking, and are shaped by natural human desires for agency and communion and work values of achievement and altruism. I further argue anticipated meaningfulness positively influences acceptance intentions, with a person's work centrality moderating this relationship. I empirically test this theory in a sample of 197 job seekers, and seek to provide evidence that these inferences do in fact influence anticipated meaningfulness, thus explaining their impact on an important recruiting outcome. Implications for theory, research, and practice are discussed.

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NOMENCLATURE

CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
AOBI	Anticipated Opportunity for Beneficiary Impact
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An organization's ability to attract, develop, and retain qualified employees at all levels is a critical source of competitive advantage that can make or break its success (Barney, 1991; Wright & McMahan, 1992), creating a "war for talent" (Michaels, Handfeld-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). Although this phenomenon was identified almost 20 years ago, economic upturns and downturns, evolution of new technology, and increased globalization over the last decade have made clear that hard-to-find talent is a constant in the current world of work, making the challenges of finding highly-qualified workers a way of life for organizations (Jackson, 2017).

These challenges highlight the criticality of effective recruitment to organizations' success. Evidence shows that recruiting effectiveness is heavily influenced by recruits' evaluation of the job and organization as they consider potential work opportunities (Turban, 2001). Job seekers formulate these perceptions through exposure to and evaluation of cues from sources both within and outside the organization (Breaugh, 1992; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). To gain a better understanding of how job seekers use these cues to decipher what performing a job in an organization would be like and how organizational membership would personally affect them (Dineen & Soltis, 2011), researchers have suggested the importance of focusing on the inferences recruits draw from these cues (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005; Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001; Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007);

yet, little scholarly work provides this (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). My dissertation thus seeks to uncover a number of key inferences that influence an organization's appeal to the talent it seeks to attract, and discover how these inferences provide influence. Such insight would help shed light on why the inferences are made, why they are important, and capture proximal predictors of acceptance intentions.

In my dissertation, I contend that the effects of job seeker inferences about working for a prospective organization can be explained by the meaningfulness they anticipate regarding the organization's work. I argue that recruits' perceptions of anticipated meaningfulness are drawn from inferences made about the organization's ability to satisfy critical, fundamental human needs or motives. Realizing meaningful work in an organizational setting is personally significant for individuals, and thus the urge to do so is strong (Wrzesniewski, 2003). Authors and philosophers emphasize the search for meaning as one of the most important human struggles (Frankl, 1963) and because of the proportion of time and energy spent working, people have a strong desire for meaningfulness at work (Dik, Steger, Fitch-Martin, & Onder, 2013). Indeed, in a recent survey, over half of the 100,000 North American respondents answered yes to the following question: "Would you take a lesser role or lower wage if you felt your work contributed to something more important or meaningful to you or your organization?" (Kelly Services, 2012). Scholarship reveals individuals strive for meaningful work for good reason. Individuals performing meaningful work experience less stress, more personal fulfillment, greater well-being, and perceptions of work as more than just pay (Elangovan, Pinder, & McLean, 2010; Kahn, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Duffy & Dik,

2013). These results emphasize that individuals place a premium on finding meaningful work, and justifiably so. Because of its importance, I argue inferences form that allow job seekers to assess meaningfulness as they consider job opportunities, and this anticipated meaningfulness ultimately impacts their acceptance intentions.

While work meaningfulness matters to a job seeker, it is also of consequence to recruiting organizations. Strong assertions that "top talent is worth fighting for" (Chambers et al., 1998) leads practitioners and researches to contemplate what attributes constitute top talent (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). While a pervasive approach defines talent as the best and brightest in terms of abilities (Michaels et al., 2001), a more holistic view defines talent worth fighting for as prospects with not only "the right" competencies, but also "the commitment needed for their jobs, who can find meaning and purpose in their work;" in short, an individual with potential to be "all in" with their "head, hands and heart" (Ulrich, 2006). Here the focus is on attracting and selecting workers not only capable of doing the work, but also fully engaged in it (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). With meaningful work a firmly established prerequisite to engagement (Kahn, 1900, 1992; Rich et al., 2010), it seems advantageous, if not imperative, for recruitment to consider the meaningfulness of work.

Practitioners forward in the popular press that organizations can improve recruitment results by incorporating elements of meaningfulness into its recruiting message: "Improve your recruiting by crafting and telling a more meaningful story…Don't assume job seekers understand why what you do matters" (Bradt et al., 2011). Yet, questions arise regarding what inferences drawn about the organization truly

matter as job seekers anticipate future work's meaningfulness, and to what extent anticipated meaningfulness impacts recruiting outcomes. In other words, how does future work in a prospective organization come to be seen as meaningful during recruitment? Moreover, to what extent does anticipated work meaningfulness predict a person's acceptance intentions toward employment options? Considering the ongoing "war for talent," as well as the positive implications for employees who experience meaningful work, these questions are crucial because they would help identity aspects of organizations that have potential to provide meaningful work. Organizations able to convey how their work is meaningful to job prospects may be more successful in recruiting more desirable talent (Bradt, Check, Pedraza, 2011). Furthermore, for recruits, waiting until employment begins to consider the meaningfulness of work may be suboptimal for retention, since once the employee relationship has been formalized, opportunities to manipulate contributing factors may be limited, and not always easy. Thus, discovering how people anticipate meaningful work *before* hire may be crucial to realizing meaningful work *following* hire.

With that in mind, the purpose of this dissertation is to address these critical questions by examining work meaningfulness as individuals consider and evaluate future employment options. In the pages to follow, I first describe my theoretical model, and afterwards highlight the theoretical and practical contributions of this study.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL MODEL

To set up my model's context, I first distinguish the recruitment cycle's three stages by identifying the objectives and behaviors of both organizations and job seekers

in each stage. During recruiting's middle or maintenance stage—the period between when the job seeker applies for a job and formally receives an offer (Breaugh, 2013)—job seekers aim to learn as much as possible about the job and organization and make subsequent inferences about the experience of working there through a process of sensemaking; i.e., by decoding environmental cues to understand their environs and who they are within them" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 411). These inferences about the nature of work and work environment, are then related to recruitment outcomes (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005; Highhouse et al., 2007; Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001) including—acceptance intentions—the likelihood of a job seeker accepting a job offer if it were extended (Chapman et al., 2005).

This discussion of the recruitment literature sets the stage for a review of the meaningfulness literature, which allows me to introduce the focal construct of interest in this dissertation—anticipated work meaningfulness. To adequately recognize, consider, and appreciate this construct, I first provide clarity of related terminology. Meaningfulness is defined as the amount of significance and worth work and/or its context holds to a person (Feldt, Kinnunen & Mauno, 2000; Rosso et al., 2010). Scholarship attests that meaningfulness originates from two main external sources: (1) the type of work, and (2) interactions and relationships with people at work (Kahn & Fellows, 2013; Pratt & Ashforth 2013). Working day to day, experienced meaningfulness is an individual's sense that putting forth energy and effort has high value, is useful and not taken for granted, and makes an impactful difference (Kahn, 1990, 1992). While experienced meaningfulness is a present-oriented psychological

work state (Kahn, 1992), anticipated meaningfulness is a future-oriented expectation of that work state. Anticipated meaningfulness then, is the sense that putting forth one's energy and effort will have value and significance.

After clarifying anticipated meaningfulness and distinguishing it from related constructs, I contend that certain inferences about the work and its environment matter for perceptions of anticipated meaningfulness, which in turn, influences acceptance intentions. Specifically, I rely on a framework of meaningful work practices to discuss three distinct elements of work and its environment from which individuals infer meaningfulness: doing work well; doing good, impactful work; and doing work with others." (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Pratt, Pradies, & Lepisto, 2013). The inference drawn from the work element of how well people expect to do their job is anticipated job self-efficacy—a confidence in one's ability to successfully perform the job's tasks (Rigotti, Schyns, Mohr, 2008). The inference drawn from the work element of doing good work beneficial to others or a worthy cause, is anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact—a perception that one's actions at work positively affects others (Grant, 2007). Finally, the inference drawn from the work element concerning performing work in the company and with the support of others is anticipated belongingness—the expectation of feeling close to and accepted by others, and feeling known and liked as a member of a group (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). I contend that these three inferences about the work role and work context are responsible for job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness.

Although my model asserts anticipated meaningfulness derives from three key inferences about the work and the work environment, my theoretical model would be incomplete without consideration of aspects of the self. Scholars note that, “the self provides each person with a unique life philosophy that imbues life activities and pursuits with meaning and purpose” (Schlegel & Hicks, 2011; Schlegel, Smith & Hirsch, 2013, p. 178). Thus, considering each person as the ultimate authority in determining meaningfulness, my model asserts the criticality of achievement and altruism work values—that each correspond to a broad fundamental human motive outlined by Rosso et al.’s (2010) framework—which help influence the impact of the inferences noted above on anticipated meaningfulness.

Work values are evaluative, ingrained and enduring beliefs that specific work end-states are desirable and important (Nord, Brief, Atieh, & Doherty, 1990; Locke & Taylor, 1990; Rokeach, 1973;). I argue that the influence of anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact, and anticipated belongingness will interact with either the achievement or altruism work value to influence anticipated meaningfulness. Achievement captures the importance of using one’s abilities and having a sense of accomplishment (Weiss, Dawis, & Lofquist, 1981). Altruism captures the importance of harmony with, and being of service to others. My model forwards three hypotheses concerning the inference-value interactions. First, the higher an individual’s achievement value, the more sensitive they will be to cues that relate to anticipated job self-efficacy and thus the more significance they will place on that inference. Second, the higher individuals’ altruism value, the more attentive they will be

to perceived opportunities for beneficiary impact, and thus the more meaningfulness they will anticipate from those perceived opportunities. Third, the higher an individual's altruism value, the more sensitive they will be to cues of future belongingness and the more significance they will place on the resulting inference from those cues, factors that will enhance the potential for anticipated meaningfulness if that inference is strong.

Additionally, after considering the process by which anticipated meaningfulness originates, my model forwards the notion that the meaningfulness job seekers anticipate about future work ultimately influences their acceptance intentions. Meta-analytic results led Chapman et al., (2005) to conclude "job seekers place a lot of weight on what they imagine the future job environment will be like when forming their acceptance intentions." (Chapman et al., 2005, p. 940), while other empirical evidence shows links between job self-efficacy, opportunity for beneficiary impact, and belongingness (e.g. Cable & Turban, 2003; Cable & Judge, 1994; Grant, 2008a) and job decision cognitions. Connecting this work to the multitude of theory and results that highlight the high priority people place on realizing their innate desire for meaningfulness, I posit that anticipating future work as meaningful from the three aforementioned inferences will influence job seekers' regarding joining a particular organization by way of their offer acceptance intentions.

Finally, following this discussion, my model considers the proposition that while all individuals desire meaningfulness in life (Frankl, 1963), not all expect and derive it from their work, at least to the same degree (Bellah et al., 1985; Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000). This in due in part to the differential view of work's importance in relation to

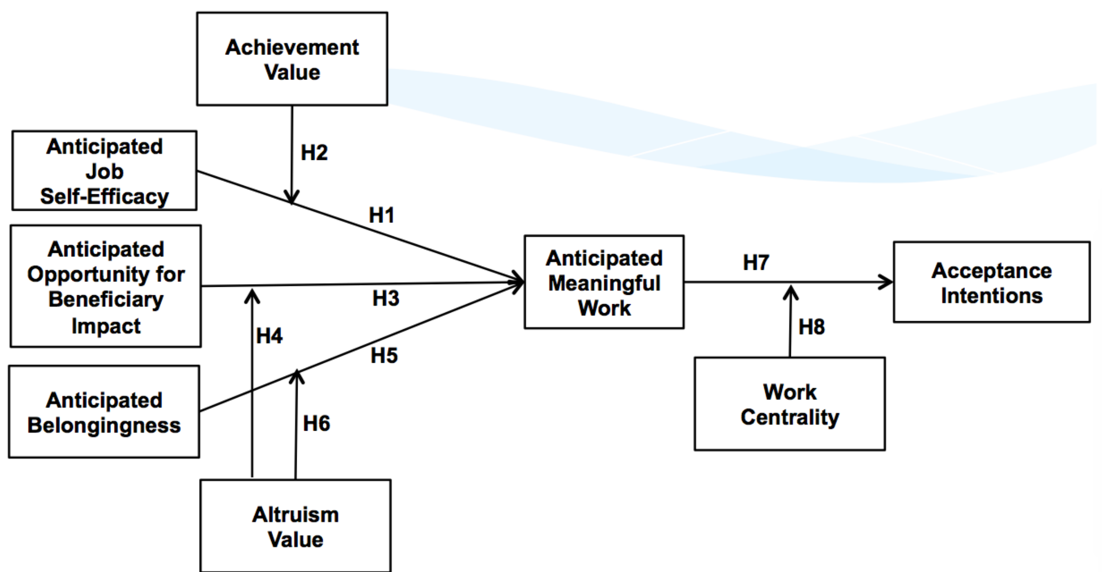
other aspects of life, such as family and friend relationships, spirituality, hobbies and leisure activities, and non-work organizations affiliation and involvement (Kanungo, 1982b, Stephens & Feldman, 1997). Individuals who see work as less central to their lives are likely to experience more meaningfulness from these other sources (Emmons, 1997). This difference among individuals concerning their view of work is captured in the construct of work centrality, defined as a belief in the extent to which a person views work as central and important to one's life (Paullay, Alliger, & Stone-Romero, 1994, Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988). In my model, I posit that for job seekers with higher work centrality, the level of meaningfulness anticipated about a future workplace will matter more as they consider employment options, and thus high work centrality will bolster the positive influence of anticipated meaningfulness on acceptance intentions. Alternatively, for those with lower work centrality, who are more likely to search for and find greater meaningfulness in life domains other than work, the influence of anticipated meaningfulness on their acceptance intentions will be attenuated.

In summary, my model, as shown in Figure 1 and argued in Chapter 2, is as follows: individuals' inferences of anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact, and anticipated belongingness in a future workplace are positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness (H1, H3, H5). However, a person's values serve as the perceptual, evaluative framework influencing the importance placed on attaining these motive-related outcomes. Seen through the filter of one's values, I hypothesize that anticipated job self-efficacy will generate more (less) anticipated meaningfulness for those who more (less) highly value achievement (H2). I

further hypothesize that anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact and anticipated belongingness will generate more (less) anticipated meaningfulness for those who more (less) highly value altruism (H4 and H6, respectively).

Next, I hypothesize the positive relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions to complete this link (H7). Finally, I contend that the effects of anticipated meaningfulness on acceptance intentions will be strengthened or weakened depending upon how central and important work is to a person's life, relative to other life domains. Thus, I hypothesize a job seeker's work centrality moderates the positive relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions (H8).

FIGURE 1: Theoretical Model



To test my model, I will conduct a field study involving at least 150 students who are currently active on the job market. Participants will select one organization of focus for all of the three surveys, distributed one week apart. The goal will be for all data to be

collected following application to the organization but before an offer is received. This is the time period of the maintenance stage of recruiting (Barber, 1998). Each survey will ask participants if a job offer was received prior to filling out that survey. Only data obtained prior to a job offer will be used in the analysis. Survey 1 will ask participants to record their choice of organization for the study, a procedure used by Jones, Willness, and Madey (2014). Anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact, anticipated belongingness, the work values of achievement and altruism, work centrality, demographic information, and a number of control variables will be assessed in Survey 1. Survey 2 will assess anticipated meaningfulness, and the control variables of PO fit and PJ fit. Survey 3 assesses the job seeker's acceptance intentions.

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

This study has the potential to make several theoretical and practical contributions. To begin, answering these research questions has important implications for recruitment research. While evidence shows pronounced effects of a multitude of factors that serve as cues to the job seeker—such as an organization's image, recruiter behaviors, as well as applicants' perceptions of the work environment, type of work, and fit with the job and organization—researchers attest to an insufficient understanding of why various predictors affect an organization's appeal (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016; Yu, 2016). Job seekers interpret cues during recruitment to draw inferences about the nature of working in an organization and its personal implications for them (Braugh, 1992; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). While scholarship forwards that prospective employees use these cues to infer, for example, how they will personally define themselves and be

seen by others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994; Highhouse et al., 2007; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003); how justly they will be treated (Gilliand, 1993: Ryan & Ployhart, 2000); and what opportunities will exist to express their values (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007), recruitment scholarship has largely ignored a powerful and influential human motivator—the desire to fulfill one's basic needs or motives (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus, my study explores a set of job seeker inferences regarding the ability to realize fundamental personal motives with a particular organization. As a consequence of these need fulfillment inferences, I forward job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness as an influential force as they engage in the recruiting process and consider employment options. In so doing, I introduce a new set of antecedents that have the potential to add insight into how and why recruitment cues influence outcomes, and more proximally predict job seekers' acceptance intentions.

This study has the potential to contribute to the meaningful work literature as well. I attempt to extend discourse in the meaningful work literature that widens the lens of temporal focus away from the present and work currently performed, to encompass the future, which considers work not yet performed. In other words, this study shifts focus away from the causes and processes of experiencing meaningful work and towards anticipating meaningful work. To date, anticipated meaningfulness of specific employment opportunities has not been thoroughly considered[1], since the construct has

[1] Literature review discovered one extended abstract by Peasley & Woodruff (2016) that refers to anticipated meaningfulness as part of opportunities/nature of work. The authors refer to it as a common theme of four studies (Stolle, 1977; Kochanek & Norgaard, 1985; Chan & Ho, 2000; Montgomery & Ramus, 2011). These studies did not refer to anticipated meaningfulness per say,

not been completely defined, nor have major aspects of the nomological net, including antecedents, been given theoretical or empirical consideration. As noted previously, research is expansive concerning the role meaningfulness plays in predicting key individual and organizational outcomes for those employed, and the vocational counseling and callings literatures have begun to address the role of anticipated meaningfulness of vocations deemed to have significance and purpose (e.g. Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Dik, Sargent, & Steger, 2008). However, the role of meaningfulness for individuals as they pursue future employment options with specific organizations is not understood. Findings from this scholarship will thus provide important insight in that regard.

Next, this knowledge is crucial not only to a more complete understanding of the meaningfulness concept, but also for its potential to be a missing key time-linked motivational construct that connects future-oriented thinking to present day motivation during recruitment. In articulating recent trends and future research directions for work-related motivation, Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson (2017) highlight a growing concern for understanding the temporal dimension of motivation and the role of time-linked motivation constructs (Kanfer, 2012). In particular, the authors point out a need to understand how a future time perspective connects people to the work they do, either now or in the future. Recent scholarship on the future work self (Strauss, Griffin, &

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and measured a wide variety of job characteristics, the closest being job challenge in two of the studies. Peasley & Woodruff (2016) measured anticipated meaningfulness using a 3-item measure from Thacki & Joshi (2005), which was actually an intrinsic cognition scale by Williams (1988).

Parker, 2012) and the vocational perspective of future time (Zacher & Frese, 2009) advance the notion that, motivation depends not only on current conditions and motives, but on anticipatory forethought about one's future work situation and career. Kanfer et al., (2017) thus suggest that research on "the way individuals construe goals through the lens of time, and the pathways by which they affect motivation and work behavior" will provide interesting and critical avenues for future study (Kanfer et al., 2017, p. 10). Because of the temporal nature and potential influence of anticipated meaningfulness, my research questions offer a significant step in learning more about the role of anticipatory forethought as a time-linked motivational construct in the recruiting context.

In addition to theoretical contributions, this scholarship has the potential to offer a number of practical contributions to various organizational stakeholders. First, knowledge gleaned from this scholarship may empower job seekers to search more strategically by asking pertinent questions of prospective employers that enable them to better anticipate the meaningfulness of possible work opportunities. Second, understanding how individuals anticipate meaningfulness may also be important to professionals who advise job seekers in the search for new employment opportunities and desire to help them assess options based on an organization's capacity to provide them meaningful work. Third, would-be job crafters, who are not necessarily looking for new employment, but who yearn to modify current work arrangements to enhance work meaningfulness, may also benefit from insight into how to anticipate meaningful work and its motivating potential. Fourth, managers and other organizational leaders who contemplate manipulating job characteristics, redesigning socialization practices, or

facilitating change in workplace cultures to enrich meaningfulness for its employees may be beneficiaries. In these cases, knowledge of antecedents and processes for anticipating meaningfulness might allow those considering and selecting new work arrangements or modifying current ones to ask the right questions, imagine possible alternatives, better analyze various options, and foresee effects on meaningfulness before actually allocating costly resources to alter the work environment.

Not to be overlooked are the practical implications for recruiting organizations on recruitment practice, based on results from this study. Greater awareness of the influence of anticipated meaningfulness of work as a decision-making factor for job seekers may provide impetus for organizations to tailor recruitment strategies and objectives to help applicants gauge the potential for meaningful work of job opportunities the firm offers (Breaugh, 2008). For those applicants perceived as quality hires, organizations may also be motivated to portray their work environment as one where meaningful work can be realized. Further, results can guide recruiting organizations in what to communicate to provide specific and relevant meaningfulness-related information to job seekers, as they strive to find, attract, and select employees who would find the organization's work and work setting particularly meaningful. Tailoring this message based on the values important to recruiting targets may also be fruitful.

The remainder of this dissertation is structured in the following way. In Chapter 2, I will review relevant literatures and develop and argue my hypotheses. Chapter 3 will follow with a discussion of research methodology, including a description of the sample,

measures, and analytic strategies to be used, as well as testing and reporting of the results.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature applicable to the aforementioned research questions, and to develop hypotheses specified in the theoretical model (Figure 1) described in Chapter 1. To begin, I will highlight scholarship that speaks to the process by which job seekers utilize environmental cues they receive regarding objective and subjective job and organizational attributes to make certain inferences regarding the work and work environment, inferences that influence recruiting outcomes. To address why these inferences are important, I explain how the meaningful work literature too attests to the influential role of inferences about the work and its context, in this case, consequential to person impressions of meaningful work. Integrating the two literatures, I forward that job seekers' inferences of the work role and work context matter to individual recruitment outcomes because meaningfulness is anticipated from these inferences that motivate job seekers toward certain organizations' job opportunities more than others.

To help justify this claim, I will clarify the construct of anticipated work meaningfulness by reviewing the meaningful work literature to compare and contrast anticipated meaningfulness with experienced meaningfulness. I will differentiate the two constructs by pointing out similarities and differences in their definitions, sources from which they originate, and environmental requirements for their manifestation in a person's cognitions. Finally, I will distinguish anticipated meaningfulness from

anticipated person-environment fit, a related construct strongly supported in the recruitment literature as influencing recruiting outcomes.

Next, I will address what specific work/context-related inferences are particularly key to job seekers' acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness and explain their effects. Relying on meaningful work frameworks (e.g. Pratt et al., 2013), I delineate work elements of "doing well", "doing good", and "doing with (others)" at work as critical to associated inferences. I then argue that individuals' evaluation of potential progress toward fulfilling two fundamental motives is a driving mechanism through which meaningful work is anticipated about future employment via these inferences. I subsequently identify two work values that align with these motives that help explain how these inferences influence anticipated meaningfulness. Lastly, I will detail how the extent to which work is viewed as central to one's life moderates the relationship between job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions. In the end, I articulate my hypothesized relationships of my theoretical model using the previously explained theory and constructs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cues, Sensemaking, and Inferences During Recruitment

Recruiting comprises three stages: generation of applicants, maintenance of applicants, and influence on job choice (Barber, 1998). For organizations, the key issue in the first stage, which begins with a job seeker starting the search and ends with a decision to apply, is bringing a job opening to job seekers' attention to enable a possible affirmative decision to be made, and involves individuals actively processing job and

organizational information (Breaugh, 2013). For job seekers, the tasks of the first stage are to acquire and sift through the deluge of information on potential openings and ultimately choose which jobs they intend to pursue by submitting application (Dineen and Soltis, 2013). Although recruiting research gives more scrutiny to the first stage (Dinnen & Soltis, 2013), recruitment does not end once a job seeker submits an application. The often overlooked second of two stages of the recruiting cycle, the maintenance stage, begins with applicants' decision to apply and ends with formal job offers (Dineen and Soltis, 2013). Organizations' main recruiting objective in this stage is to maintain the status of the most qualified applicants so job offers can be extended to those candidates, and is marked by interactions between applicants and organizational agents such as recruiters, and often includes site visits (Rynes & Cable, 2003). For applicants, this middle stage involves learning as much as possible about the job and organization in efforts to determine if organizations to which they applied continue to be viable and attractive opportunities (Dineen & Soltis, 2013). As they do, they engage in behaviors to leave and/or remain active in applicant pools, and aim to accept jobs if the right opportunities present themselves (Barber, 1998). Finally, the final stage of recruiting begins with a formal job offer, includes negotiating by both parties and deliberation by the job seeker, and ends with a decision to accept or reject an organization's formal offer (Barber, 1998).

While a great deal of research has investigated strategies for increasing job seekers' initial attraction to organizations, far less is known about how job seekers respond to recruitment activities after application submission (Dineen & Soltis, 2013).

Factors within and outside organizations' control influence the number, type, and quality of applicants available to select from and who ultimately accept their offers (Breaugh, 1992). With fierce competition for top talent in today's economic climate (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001), maintaining interest of the most qualified applicants following application—so job offers can be extended to those candidates—is critical to a firm's success and thus a main objective of the organization during the middle stage of recruitment, also called the maintenance stage (Breaugh, 2013). For that reason, my model focuses on the middle stage of recruitment.

As job seekers evaluate employment options during this time, research shows they are concerned about finding the right job as well as the right organization (Darnold & Rynes, 2013). My model proposes that as prospective employees try to learn about how a job and organizational membership would personally impact them, particularly during the middle stage of recruiting, they draw certain inferences that ultimately influence recruiting outcomes. Unfortunately, job seekers lack the benefit of complete information during recruiting, resulting in much speculation about what both the job and organization are truly like (Cable & Turban, 2003). To make "sense" of these unknowns and ambiguities, job seekers extract and interpret cues from sources such as recruiter behaviors, word-of-mouth endorsements of others, and a company's image (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Sensemaking, then, is efforts to understand novel, ambiguous or confusing situations by deciphering cues (Weick, 1979). This sensemaking process leads the job seeker to inferences regarding the personal implications of a job and organizational membership, and is key to consider, as part of continuous recruitment

during the middle stage—the period when organizations aim to maintain applicant status by keeping or enhancing applicants' interest as they learn more about them (Dineen and Soltis, 2013).

The process of sensemaking describes how people decode environmental cues to understand aspects of their environments and who they are—or will be—within them (Weick et al., 2005). When individuals have a relatively shallow understanding of a context and their place within it, or when they are confronted with surprising or ambiguous stimuli that conflicts with what they currently understand about that context, they are inclined to search for cues about how things work, and what is expected (Kramer, 2010, Morrison, 1993). Cues can be explicit or implicit, intended or unintended, and direct or indirect (Ashforth, 2001, Smith L., Amoit, Smith J., Callan, & Terry, 2013) and often come from interactions with others (Maitlis, 2005). A central tenant of sensemaking is individuals make sense of equivocal inputs they receive for the purpose of trying to make their environment more orderly (Weick et al., 2005). Thus, sensemaking is especially critical in dynamic contexts, where creating and maintaining coherent and understandings to inform action is vital, yet often difficult to do (Maitlis, 2005; Weick, 1993). Sensemaking is not about "getting it right." Rather, it consists of continually redrafting an emerging story so it becomes more complete and accurate, by incorporating new, observed information derived from cues. Over time, a person's understanding of their environment and their place in it may get better, but will never be the whole truth (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Subsequent inferences drawn from cues

include those related to, “I like and value this,” “I can do this,” and “this is me.” (Ashforth, 2001; Van Maanen, 2010).

Sensemaking is particularly relevant to recruiting; although complete information is sometimes assumed during this dynamic and sometimes confusing process, job seekers often must rely on cues and sensemaking to make inferences about what that they can expect from the job and organization and what will be expected of them (Cable and Turban, 2003). Although sensemaking is usually conceived as a retrospective process (Weick 1995), recent work suggests that it might also be prospective, and thus useful to explain how applicants use cues to make sense of future work (Maitlis & Christianson 2014). The notions of a desired possible self—who a person would like to become (Markus & Nurius 1986, Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005)—is important in this prospective process (Strauss, Griffin, & Parker 2012). First, a salient, desired possible self shapes how cues are interpreted, and provides standards by which drawn inferences are evaluated (Ibarra 1999). Second, a salient possible self brings the future into the present, representing an outcome for which a person can strive, shaping the desirability of jobs and organizations that may facilitate this (Zhang & Soergel, 2014). Through sensemaking then, cues about attributes of the job and organization are sought after and processed, and inferences are drawn that impact recruiting outcomes.

Regarding outcomes in recruiting research, they typically include job seekers’ overall attraction to the organization (organizational attraction), intention to pursue an work with an organization by applying and staying active in the applicant pool (job pursuit intentions), intention to accept employment if it were offered (acceptance

intentions), and the final decision whether or not to accept or reject employment (job choice). My model focuses on job seekers' acceptance intentions for two main reasons. First, meta-analysis shows that concerning the influence of job and organizational attributes, acceptance intentions is the attitudinal outcome variable that most accurately and proximally predicts job choice (Chapman et al., 2005). Second, while job choice is of paramount concern for organizations, job choice is a dichotomous variable dependent on the focal organization tendering a job offer, whereas acceptance intentions reflect solely the preferences of the job seeker. Since my model's focus is on the job seekers' motivation to select an employer, I do not want organizations' selection decisions to confound the effects.

A number of scholars propose that research should focus on the inferences made by job seekers to better understand how job seekers make sense and make use of cues during recruiting (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005; Highhouse et al., 2007; Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001). Examples of inferences in the literature include: the company is and will be fair, trustworthy, empathetic, treat me well, and I will be able to be true to myself or impress others if I join it (Dutton et al., 1994; Highhouse et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2014; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). I suggest of particular importance are inferences regarding how the job and organization will personally affect job seekers with respect to their fundamental needs. Consequently, my model focuses on three key inferences related to their fundamental, higher-order needs that I will argue should impact acceptance intentions. I further contend that these inferences matter to acceptance intentions because they influence the anticipated meaningfulness of an organization's

work. Next, I address the impact of perceptions about the work itself and the work environment on meaningful work.

Meaningful Work and Recruitment

To this point, I have pinpointed the maintenance stage of recruitment as pertinent to my study. I have also highlighted that during recruiting, job seekers engage in sensemaking to interpret cues, resulting in inferences about how the work and work environment personally matters. These inferences, I argue, impact recruiting outcomes, such as acceptance intentions. Answering the call to focus on these inferences to better understand why these inferences impact outcomes (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016), I turn to the meaningfulness literature to offer potential insight. The meaningfulness literature strongly asserts inferences drawn about the nature of the work and work environment matter too, in the case, to decipher and experience work as meaningful. Integrating the two literatures, due to the positive psychological and motivational effects of meaningful work, one might postulate that inferences drawn about the job and work setting matter to acceptance intentions and other recruiting outcomes, because they impact anticipated work meaningfulness. In this section, I define experienced and anticipated meaningfulness, discuss how they both originate, and compare and contrast the two constructs. I then introduce how anticipated meaningfulness might play out during recruiting's middle stage. Finally, I introduce anticipated fit, a construct suggested in recruiting literature as an influential predictor, and compare and contrast it with anticipated meaningfulness.

Experienced Meaningful Work

As noted in Chapter 1, this dissertation's focal construct is anticipated work meaningfulness. With that focus in mind, to help develop the model, I will first review where meaningful work originates and the construct of experienced meaningfulness in order to clearly distinguish the two constructs. As previously stated, meaningful work is work that has personal purpose and significance (Feldt, Kinnunen, & Manno, 2000). Experienced meaningfulness is thus a person's perception that current work has purpose, because the physical, cognitive, and/or emotional efforts being exerted have a return on investment—evaluated as adding worth, utility value, and an impactful difference (Kahn, 1992). Scholars concur that meaningfulness originates from the person's job tasks, as well as the work environment's culture, people, and other characteristics (Kahn & Fellows, 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Experienced meaningfulness is a cognitive state oriented towards current work and a eudemonic reaction to work—that is, a feeling of contentment, a consequence of work worth doing (Robinson, 1999). Earlier research noted in Chapter 1 suggests experienced meaningfulness may be the strongest, most influential mediator between the task and social characteristics that people encounter while working and work outcomes (Johns, Xie, & Fang, 1992; 2007; Oldham, 1996; Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). An integral part of many motivational theories including those incorporating job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), purposeful work behavior (Barrick et al., 2013) and psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995), experienced meaningfulness is a central motivational construct.

Anticipated Meaningful Work

Because of the positive implications of experienced meaningfulness for individual motivation and well-being, it is no wonder people desire meaningfulness in their work, with many willing to sacrifice extrinsic rewards to realize it (Kelly Services, 2009). As noted, individuals search for and derive meaningfulness from the work tasks and work environment (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). For that reason, questions of how future work in a prospective organization comes to be viewed as meaningful, and how anticipated meaningfulness impacts job choice intentions are pertinent and critical questions to consider for recruiting organizations, job seekers, and scholars interested in both. I define anticipated meaningfulness as a future expectation of experiencing meaningfulness from work, a perception that *future* work *will have* purpose, because the physical, cognitive, and/or emotional efforts *expected to be* exerted *will* have a return on investment. Comparing and contrasting anticipated and experienced meaningfulness, both originate from work tasks and the work environment (Steeger & Dik, 2013). Both are cognitive assessments of the value of work. That being said, the two differ in terms of temporality. Experienced meaningfulness is a *current* psychological state. It is derived from the worth placed on presently done, day-to-day work in the current work environment. Therefore, it requires currently performing the work in that setting to experience the psychological state in the current moment. In contrast, anticipated meaningfulness is a current expectation about a *future* psychological state. It neither requires performing the work in the work setting currently, nor ever having done so. To anticipate meaningfulness of future work, people need only be able to infer aspects of

the work and work environment that give work its significance and purpose, and determine their worth. I presume this occurs during the recruitment process.

Anticipated Meaningfulness During Recruiting

Building on this notion, my model proposes that prospective employees draw inferences about the personal implications of an organization's work and work environment that lead to perceptions of anticipated meaningfulness. To decipher and make sense of relative unknowns, research supports that job seekers extract and work to interpret related cues during recruiting (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), and theorists detail that this process includes deciphering purpose or meaning (Maitlis, 2005). Accordingly, Weick (1995) defines sensemaking as a "meaning construction" process." Through inferences drawn from interpreting cues about attributes of the job and organization, job seekers construe what and how much working there will personally mean to them. During recruiting, job seekers engage in forward-looking sensemaking, whereby they consider desired or expected outcomes and ascribe meaning as if the outcomes had been realized, enabling them to evaluate work situations they have not yet experienced, only imagined (Gioia, Corley, & Fabbri, 2002). To the extent the meaning ascribed is positive and personally significant, they anticipate meaningful work (Brief & Nord, 1990). This research thus highlights the potential role of anticipated meaningfulness in positively influencing applicants' job acceptance intentions, and the role of work-related inferences, drawn from recruitment cues, in forming anticipated meaningfulness perceptions that are influential to these intentions.

With that in mind, my model's specific focus within the recruiting period is middle stage employee recruitment, the time after a job seeker applies for a job and before they accept an offer. During this stage of recruiting, I will argue anticipated meaningfulness has positive motivational implications on recruiting outcomes, just as experienced meaningfulness has positive motivational implications on work outcomes. Specifically, I expect anticipated meaningfulness to impact a person's intentions to accept an offer from a particular organization. My theoretical model seeks to explain the motivating effect of these intentions by exploring the formation of anticipated meaningfulness of working for a specific organization. Exploring the origination and impact of anticipated meaningfulness answers the call in the motivation literature for an increased understanding of the temporal dimension of motivation (Kanfer et al., 2017).

Anticipated Meaningfulness vs. Anticipated Fit

Having distinguished anticipated meaningfulness from experienced meaningfulness based on temporality and context, it is important to distinguish anticipated meaningfulness from related perceptions of future work. For example, anticipated fit is also pertinent to job seekers during recruitment. Anticipated fit is defined as an applicant's perception of the degree to which they will fit with the environment (PE fit) at a future time (Ostroff & Zhan, 2012). Given that meaningfulness perceptions stem from the work and the context in which the work is done, two types of PE fit that relate to anticipated meaningfulness are anticipated person-job (PJ) fit—the match between person characteristics and those of a specific job or role (Edwards, 1991;

Kristof, 1996), and anticipated person-organization (PO) fit—the match between a person and an organization's characteristics.

Connecting anticipated meaningfulness and anticipated fit by relying on various conceptualizations of the two constructs, I contend that anticipated fit is more likely an antecedent to anticipated meaningfulness rather than analogous to it. First, in Steger and Dik's (2010) conceptualization of meaningfulness, the authors connect person-environment (PE) fit to meaningfulness by noting in their definition of meaningful work that an awareness of fit with one's organization is necessary for comprehension—that is, having an understanding of one's work experiences. However, according to these scholars, both *comprehension* of work tasks and the work environment, *and* a positive assessment of the two is what results in *purpose,* and thus are the two requisites for meaningful work. Based on this conceptualization, a person's assessment of fit with their job (PJ fit) and fit with their organization (PO fit) are not synonymous with anticipated meaningfulness, instead fit may be necessary, yet an insufficient precursor to it. Specifically, while individuals may perceive a close match between themselves, work tasks, and the organizational context, only if this match is deemed to provide purpose will people anticipate meaningfulness. Second, another distinguishing feature between anticipated fit and anticipated meaningfulness is that anticipated fit depends upon conscious awareness of one's own attributes, such as personality, goals, values and preferences, in addition to perceptions of the environment (Ostroff & Zhan, 2012). In contrast, meaningfulness does not require such self-awareness, but rather is a much more implicit process that partially relies upon emotions (King et al., 2006; Barrick et al.,

2013). For both of these two reasons: (1) because fit contributes to meaningfulness rather than being synonymous with it, and (2) because meaningfulness stems from implicit and explicit processes, rather than explicit thought processes alone—I contend anticipated meaningfulness is distinguishable from anticipated fit.

I now turn to my theoretical model, which argues that anticipated meaningfulness is a motivating force that influences job choice intentions. I first discuss environmental factors, followed by person factors, influential to the formation and impact of three key inferences about an organization's future work. I contend that it is these inferences that affect a job seeker's acceptance intentions through anticipated work meaningfulness.

Determinants of Anticipated Meaningfulness and Recruiting Outcomes

Above, I noted meaningfulness originates from both inferences related to the work role and context (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). In this section, I rely on prior work to detail three distinct elements of the work and its context responsible for work meaningfulness, and highlight key environmental factors—aspects of a job's design and organizational culture—that shape these distinct elements. In so doing, I introduce three corresponding anticipatory inferences, drawn from pre-hire cues, that my model contends are responsible for inducing anticipated meaningfulness. Finally, I forward that key person factors—two fundamental motives and associated work values—help explain why these inferences are integral to the construal of job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness.

Elements and Inferences of Meaningful Work

In delineating ways in which people intuitively view work and find purpose in it, scholarship attests that to the degree people work for the fulfillment that working brings, rather than for instrumental reasons, individuals draw purpose and meaningfulness from three common and distinct elements of work. These elements can be succinctly summarized as: “doing well, doing good, and doing with” (e.g. Bellah et al., 1985; Pratt et al., 2013, p. 177).

One element of work people draw meaningfulness from deals with doing, or expecting to do their work well (Pratt et al., 2013). Successfully achieving to high standards using one’s skill and expertise, allows a person to experience pride and gratification from their work, gain a sense of mastery and competence, and subsequently find work meaningful (Masten & Reed, 2002; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Scherer, 1982; Mills, 1956; Gecas, 1991). Job design and organizational culture can contribute to individuals’ perceptions of being capable of doing their work well, and just as important, recognize a job well done (Pratt et al., 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). For example, jobs designed so workers can see a project to completion better enables employees to recognize accomplishments (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), feedback provides valuable criteria to gauge personal performance and facilitates learning and mastery (Pratt et al., 2013; Humphrey et al., 2007), and job autonomy allows one to take responsibility for outcomes, given personal control over how work is done (Hackman & Oldman, 1976). Cultures that maintain high standards and appreciate and recognize quality place high value on superior work, devote resources to ensure such outcomes, and thereby facilitate

and reward doing well. Moreover, cultures that emphasize continuous improvement of products, services, and corresponding processes enable workers to excel over time (Pratt et al., 2013). During recruiting, environmental cues that convey aspects of an organization's job and culture that promote achievement, create job seeker perceptions that they will do well, influencing anticipated meaningfulness and organizational appeal. I thus contend that *anticipated job self-efficacy*—confidence in one's ability to successfully accomplish job tasks (Rigotti et al., 2008)—influences acceptance intentions through anticipation of meaningful work.

A second element of work people draw meaningfulness from is doing or expecting to do good work, as in work for the betterment of others or advancement of a cause (Pratt et al., 2013, Bellah et al., 1985). Scholarship shows that workers are often motivated to make a positive difference in people's lives and hence draw meaningfulness from efforts that benefit others (Grant, Dutton, & Rosso, 2008; Penner, Dovidio, Piliavan, & Schroeder, 2005). Thus, foreseen opportunities to impact beneficiaries should affect anticipated meaningfulness. Again, job design and organizational culture can contribute to perceptions that the work is good and impactful on others. On the one hand, jobs with task significance appreciably impact other people, while jobs designed to expose workers to its customers as well as employees of other organizations that are part of the supply chain allow workers to realize their work's impact (Grant, 2007; Hackman & Oldman, 1980). On the other hand, cultures that communicate and celebrate the organization's connection to and impact on its beneficiaries, promote community service, and emphasize corporate responsibility help

employees see themselves and their organization as difference makers, and create expectations for "doing good." For these reasons, cues about the job and culture that indicate opportunities for significant beneficiary impact, helps a job seeker believe they can "do good" at work, leading to anticipated meaningfulness (Pratt et al., 2013). Thus, I will argue *anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact (AOBI)*—the inference that one's actions at work positively affects other entities (Grant, 2007)— influences acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningful work.

A third element of work people draw commonly meaningfulness from is with whom work is done, and the relationships created and maintained as a result (Bellah, et al., 1985; Pratt et al., 2013). A work environment that facilitates forming and maintaining close bonds with others and feeling a member of the collective organization, results in the person experiencing belonging, or a sense of oneness with others and the organization (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Such interpersonal connection through relationships is a primary means whereby people find purpose and meaningfulness in work (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Gersick, Bartunek & Dutton, 2000). Jobs designed such that an individual's job both depends on and influences the jobs of others, provides opportunities to obtain assistance and advice from coworkers or supervisors, and allows or demands teamwork, can give workers opportunities to interact and support others as they work, and experience a sense of communion and camaraderie (Humphrey et al., 2007; Hackman, 1987; Pratt et al., 2013). Cultures that foster community in ways such as making work more like a family—via caring leadership, celebrations of significant achievements, and sympathetic gestures—and supporting employees lives outside of

work—via family friendly policies as flex time and family leave—also foster connection to others and the collective en route to meaningfulness (Pratt & Rosa, 2003). As such, environmental cues job seekers receive that convey these job attributes and a caring, supportive culture helps them imagine the people with whom they might work and experience a sense of belongingness, which is critical to meaningfulness at work (Gersick, Dutton, & Bartunek, 2000). Thus, my model posits that *anticipated belongingness*—the expectation of feeling close to and accepted by others, and feeling known and liked as a member of a group (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) affects acceptance intentions through its effects on anticipated meaningful work.

Although these three distinct elements of work provide avenues for meaningful work, Pratt & Ashforth (2003) point out that jobs or organizations are not intrinsically meaningful in and of themselves. Rather perceptions of meaningfulness must "travel through the self," making individuals the "ultimate arbiters" in determining the extent to which work is meaningful (Rosso, et al., 2010, p. 115), as they internally and intuitively evaluate what makes work worthwhile (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003, Steger & Dik, 2010; Dane & Pratt, 2007). Drawing from Rosso et al., (2010's) framework, I contend that job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness stemming from the aforementioned anticipated job self-efficacy, beneficiary impact, and belongingness inferences is the consequence of expected fulfillment of two fundamental motives that all humans share—agency and communion (Bakan, 1966). I further argue that the importance and salience of these anticipatory inferences and corresponding agency and communion motives are determined by a person's associated work values. The following explanation serves to

justify why these fundamental motives and work values are critical to the anticipation of meaningfulness.

Fundamental Motives of Agency and Communion

In their extensive review of the meaningful work literature, Rosso et al., (2010) concluded that the within-person mechanisms, or processes, that explain how meaningfulness is created have one of two underlying, explanatory motives—either agency or communion. Bakan (1966) introduced the terms agency and communion as "two distinct fundamental modalities of human existence." (p. 14). Scholarship views agency and communion as underlying motives or needs for all individuals (e.g. Barrick et al., 2002; DeShon & Gillespie, 2005; Hogan, 1983; Hogan & Holland, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Using this framework as a theoretical basis, I assert that agency and communion motives are key person factors to explaining why anticipated work meaningfulness results from the three aforementioned job seeker inferences. Below I expound on these two motives.

Agency, the first fundamental motive, captures a fundamental need to individuate and expand the self to achieve a sense of personal control and influence over the environment, such that one's actions can positively influence outcomes (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Bandura, 2001). Agency motivates a person to become competent and master the work they do, distinguish themselves from others, as well as exert and expand their influence (Rosso et al., 2010). Bandura (2001) asserted that agency is the most fundamental need of human existence. DeCharms (1968) further asserted that people's effectiveness in being in control and initiating change to their environment is their

foremost motivational tendency, while intrinsic motivation research also stresses the criticality of agency (Deci & Ryan, 1985; White, 1959). Agency efforts can be for the purpose of benefiting self and/or people or a cause outside the self. Accordingly, Rosso et al.,'s (2010) framework delineates desires to both individuate (self-focused agency) and contribute (other-focused agency) as two main pathways by which work is deemed meaningful. First, as individuals strive to individuate, i.e. distinguish themselves as important, competence—achievement in the work role—is a critical part. Logically, achieving mastery is essential to earning personal control and distinguishing oneself at work, since knowing what to do and how to do it well appears requisite to initiating change and extending work's limits. In short, competence allows people to define and distinguish themselves from others by excelling at what they do. Second, in addition to striving to set themselves apart, individuals also strive to contribute to something greater than oneself (Rosso et al., 2010). This agency for others' sake refers to meaningfulness created or maintained through efforts done in service to others or to benefit causes outside the self (Rosso et al., 2010). An awareness of making a positive difference on individuals, groups, or entities has been shown to go a long way toward evaluating work as making a significant and valuable contribution (Grant, 2008b). As such, Rosso et al., (2010) positions both competence and perceived impact as a means of deriving meaningfulness within the agency motive, by asserting that out of the fundamental drive to assert oneself and influence one's environment arises fundamental desires to achieve mastery and a sense of accomplishment in one's work as well as make an impactful difference to something greater than oneself. My model incorporates this, given evidence

that suggests competence and perceived impact are capable of inducing anticipated meaningfulness (Gecas, 1991; Grant, 2007; Grant, Campbell, Chen, Cottone, Lapedis, & Lee, 2007).

The second of two fundamental motives delineated by Rosso et al., (2010) as being key to meaningfulness processes is communion. Communion captures a fundamental need to attach to, connect with, and unite others (Rosso et al., 2010). Communion is associated with one's social connectedness, and is defined as the desire to get along with and be accepted by others (Barrick et al., 2002). Communion motivates a person to develop and maintain personal relationships within social entities like organizations and groups. Models of human behavior almost unanimously assert the importance of communion for physical and mental health and for motivation (e.g. Maslow, 1968; McClleland, 1951; Murray, 1939; Bolby, 1969). Furthermore, Baumeister & Leary (1995) provided strong support indicating that individuals are motivated to form social bonds in normal situations and try to maintain and prevent the disintegration of current bonds, thus demonstrating that communion has strong effects on thoughts, emotions, and behavior. This as well as other scholarly work (e.g. Barden, Garber, Leiman, Ford, & Masters, 1985) further shows support for a number of detrimental effects on personal health, adjustment and well-being when communion needs are not met. The fundamental drive for communion helps explain why meaningfulness frameworks attest that work relationships represent the second category from which work meaningfulness originates (Kahn & Fellows, 2013; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). As represented by these examples, a multitude of theoretical and empirical work

concurs that communion as a fundamental human motive has strong and widespread influence, including assessments of meaningful work.

Taken together, scholarship suggests motives of agency and communion matter because they influence motivation and selective attention (Dijksterhuis & Aarts, 2010), as well as how job seekers make sense of novel information in uncertain environments (Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Indeed, these two underlying human motives serve to explain why job seekers' attention and careful scrutiny is directed towards cues that shape inferences of their ability to satisfy these motives—as well as why associated inferences personally matter when it comes to evaluating job opportunities. Consequently, my model posits that job seeker inferences of the capability to get things accomplished (anticipated job self-efficacy), serve beneficiaries through their work (anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact), and get along with others in the future work setting (anticipated belongingness) drive perceptions of anticipated meaningfulness.

Personal Work Values of Achievement and Altruism

As individuals internally and intuitively assess what makes work worthwhile (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003, Steger & Dik, 2010;), scholarship asserts that what is meaningful to one person, might not necessarily be as meaningful to another, as internalized evaluations of what makes work worth doing vary between individuals (Pratt et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). Thus, although my model forwards the influence of agency and communion on anticipated meaningfulness and eventually acceptance intentions of future work, it also

posits the moderating influence of a person's work values associated with these motives, given research attests that motives are value-laden (Judge & Bretz, 1994). As noted before, a work value is an ingrained and enduring belief that a specific work end state is personally desirable and important, something a person ought to be able to attain through work (Locke, 1976; Nord et al., 1990). Scholarship attests that attending to and evaluating a stimulus is determined not only by comparison to persons' fundamental goals or desires, but also what they care about and their values (Lazarus, 1991a).

Work values may account for established differences among individuals in need strength and salience (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). Therefore, values may affect how much job seekers notice, actively attend to, and evaluate a perceived work characteristic, outcome, and job opportunity (Schwartz, 2012; Allen, Van Scotter, & Otondo, 2004). For example, an implicit evaluation of more (or less) personal relevance, and positive (or negative) significance depends upon how much the stimulus is perceived to promote or protect attainment of a highly-valued motive (Schwartz, 2012). Because successful recruiting depends upon both applicants' awareness of and attraction to job opportunities (Breaugh, 2013), and given that values influence both a person's attention and evaluation, it is not surprising that individuals self-select into jobs and organizations consistent with their values (Gandal, Roccas, Sagiv, & Wrzesniewski, 2005; Judge & Bretz, 1992; O'Reilly, Chatman, Caldwell, 1991); Drawing from this scholarship, I posit that how much anticipatory inferences of job self-efficacy, opportunity for beneficiary impact, and belongingness matter to the person, and hence how much they influence anticipated meaningfulness and ultimately acceptance intentions, depend upon a

person's work value closely aligned with each antecedent factor (Schwartz, 1996). In this section, I further specify the two work values my model posits will moderate their influence.

The achievement work value is defined as the overall importance a person places on using one's abilities and having a sense of accomplishment (Weiss et al., 1981). This work value aligns with the fundamental need for competence. The higher a person's achievement value, the stronger the belief that one should achieve at work, and thus, the greater importance a person places, both consciously and unconsciously, on demonstrating and realizing mastery in the workplace (Schwartz, 1996). Additionally, recruiting's environmental cues as well as a person's own cognitions, emotions, and behavior related to achieving competence will be more salient, when a person's achievement value is high (Schwartz, 2012). Thus, such individuals may notice and more actively attend to competence-related cues, leading job openings emphasizing opportunities to attain competence to come to their greater attention and be more appealing, whereas the same jobs may be less noticed and attractive to those who do not highly value achievement (Allen, Van Scotter, & Otondo, 2004).

The altruism work value is defined as the importance a person places on having harmony with, and being of service to others in one's work (Weiss et al., 1981). By definition, this work value aligns with both the contribution aspect of fundamental need for agency and the fundamental need for communion. As such, the stronger this work value is, the more motivated a person will be to pursue other-focused agency and communion goals. On the one hand, the higher a person's altruism value, the stronger

one's belief that one's work should preserve or enhance others' welfare, and thus, the greater importance a person places, both consciously and unconsciously, on performing work that makes a positive difference (Schwartz, 1996). On the other hand, the higher a person's altruism value, the stronger one's belief that one's work environment should consist of harmonious interactions, and close, rewarding relationships with others, and as a result, the greater importance one places on a work environment where such interactions and bonds can be formed. In such cases, employment options will be evaluated as more or less worthwhile, and thus given higher priority for individuals high on altruism value, depending on perceived these contribution and communion related end states. Additionally, those who value altruism will be keenly aware of environmental cues that provide evidence that organizations can provide a work environment where beneficiary impact and high-quality relationships can be realized (Schwartz, 2012).

Moderating Influence of Work Centrality

As noted previously, the search for meaningfulness is fundamental to human existence and thus essential for healthy functioning (Frankl, 1959; Baumeister, 1991; Ryff, 1989), making meaningful work individually appealing, due to its contribution to broader meaningfulness in life (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012) . That being said, people realize meaningfulness in their lives through avenues other than work (Porter, Iwasaki, & Shank, 2010; Spreitzer & Snyder, 1974). Depending on their belief in the role of work in their lives, and their desire and ability to draw meaning from work versus non-work sources, anticipated meaningfulness of an organization's work might have more or less of an effect on job seekers' acceptance intentions. Consequently, my model includes a

second stage moderator—work centrality—that is predicted to enhance or diminish the effects of anticipated meaningfulness on this important recruiting outcome.

Work centrality is defined as individuals' belief of the degree of importance that work plays in their lives (Paullay et al., 1994). It is work's relative importance compared to that of other aspects of life including one's family, friends, community, religion, and leisure (England & Misumi, 1986). An individual with higher (lower) work centrality believes work is a more (less) central component in their life, with higher (lower) importance placed upon it relative to these other life aspects. Work centrality is a fairly stable belief that is socialized over time by an individual's family, friends, religion, or culture (Kanungo, 1982a). Studies show that it varies across cultures and generations (England & Misumi, 1986; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Work centrality does not refer to the value placed on any one job, and thus differs from the related construct of job involvement, which refers to the extent a person is immersed in and preoccupied with their present job (Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, and Lord, 2002). Instead, work centrality is broader and scope and deals with a belief in the importance of work in general, irrespective of any current job (Diefendorff et al., 2002). Since my model concerns future work, not present work, and seeks to determine the value placed upon future work's meaningfulness (not that associated with a current job) in determining a job seeker's acceptance intentions with a potential employer, work centrality represents a more appropriate construct in my model.

As such, I argue that the higher (lower) job seekers' work centrality, the larger (smaller) impact anticipated meaningfulness should have on their acceptance intentions.

I contend those who value work more relative to other life domains are likely to demand more from it—to provide satisfaction and fulfillment in life; thus, the effects of anticipated work meaningfulness on a job seekers' acceptance intentions should be exacerbated. Alternatively, I suggest the less work is central to individuals' lives, the motivating power of anticipated work meaningfulness on acceptance intentions should be attenuated. Those with lower work centrality will tend to draw meaningfulness more from other sources, making finding it in work less important when deciding upon jobs.

Summary

In the preceding sections, I introduced and described the relationships in my theoretical model, which seeks to explain how several key job seeker inferences about an organization's work tasks and environment influence acceptance intentions during recruiting's middle stage. I argue these inferences' motivating power can be attributed to the anticipated meaningfulness resulting from these inferences, and describe how a person's fundamental motives for agency and communion, and their work values of achievement and altruism drive anticipated meaningfulness perceptions. Lastly, I suggest a person's work centrality serves as a boundary condition that either constrains or enhances the effects of anticipated meaningfulness on acceptance intentions. Having laid the conceptual and theoretical groundwork, I now turn to the hypothesized relationships.

HYPOTHESIZED RELATIONSHIPS

As previously indicated, people are driven to fulfill fundamental needs of agency and communion (Rosso et al., 2010; Bakan, 1966). Along with their corresponding work values—achievement and altruism—suspected fulfillment of these needs, based on key

inferences related to "doing well, doing good, and doing with" at work, serve as a lens through which people make sense of environmental cues to anticipate meaningfulness of future work. In my model, work centrality is posited to moderate the impact of anticipated meaningfulness on job acceptance intentions for the job seeker. In the paragraphs to follow, these specific relationships are explicated, leading to testable hypotheses.

Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy and Anticipated Meaningfulness

My model first proposes a positive conditional direct effect of a job seeker's organization-specific job self-efficacy on anticipated meaningfulness. Specifically, I contend that job self-efficacy relates to a person's basic desire for competence—a part of their fundamental agency goal—as well as the value they place on achievement, since self-efficacy is defined as confidence in one's power and ability to cope with, and successfully fulfill, a task or set of tasks (Bandura, 1977). Accordingly, I posit that increased potential for fulfilling one's competence desire due to high job self-efficacy impacts anticipated meaningfulness (H1), and this influence is greater (lesser) so for those high (low) in the achievement work value (H2).

Before providing justification for the proposed relationships, two points of construct clarification and justification are necessary. First, given the established importance of specifying the domain being addressed when discussing and measuring self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), I specify *job self-efficacy*—defined as confidence regarding the ability to successfully accomplish the tasks involved in one's job (Rigotti et al., 2008)—as pertinent to my model. Job self-efficacy encompasses more work tasks

than task-specific self-efficacy (Gist & Mitchell, 1992), but is not as inclusive as general self-efficacy—defined as belief in one's overall competence to successfully perform across a variety of different situations—which is not exclusive to one's work role (Judge, Erez, Bono, 1998). Instead, job self-efficacy is individuals' confidence in being able to adequately perform the tasks associated with their work role in their specific organization (Schaubroeck, Merritt, 1997). Second, job self-efficacy does not refer to confidence in work that has been done, but work that the person is doing and has yet to accomplish. Thus, the temporal focus is both on current and future work. That being said, my model's focus is limited to future work with a prospective organization, not current work, and thus *anticipated job self-efficacy*, with its temporal focus solely on future work, is the appropriate referent.

I now turn to detailing the process to provide justification for the proposed relationship. Inferences of anticipated job self-efficacy form from cues derived from recruiting information and interactions. Based on cues related to "doing well" at work (Pratt et al., 2013), Steger and Dik (2010) suggests job seekers then comprehend and evaluate this information for its personal significance and meaningfulness. The resulting inference of job self-efficacy should influence anticipated meaningfulness for a number of reasons, including: it helps a person expect to feel more competent in the work that they will do, more engaged in efforts to achieve, more in control of how they do it, and more impactful regarding their work's positive contributions. Theoretical support is strong for self-efficacy's influence on perceptions of meaningful work through these means. First, scholarship confirms individuals high in job self-efficacy are likely to feel

more competent in their job, confident in their ability to overcome work's challenges, and thus capable of making progress toward fulfilling their fundamental desire for competence (Bandura, 1997; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Kahn, 1990, 1992; Masten & Reed, 2002; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005). Second, theory suggests that high self-efficacy predicts employees will be more engaged in their work (Bakker et al., 2008). With more motivation to exert effort to realize their goals, they are more likely to see value in efforts needed to achieve them. Third, theory forwards that high self-efficacy leads to taking proactive risks to modify the work environment to one's preferences and strengths (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), as well as persist in the face of obstacles that stand in their way, (Bandura, 1997), resulting in feelings of personal freedom, control, and autonomy (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Consequently, workers foresee progress toward fulfilling the broader agency fundamental motive (White, 1959), and thus anticipate meaningfulness from such efforts. Fourth, job self-efficacy contributes to individuals' perception that they are making a positive impactful difference through their work, making work's purpose and significance clearer (Gillet, Fouquereau, Forest, Brunault & Colombut, 2012; Grant, 2008).

Specific empirical work also lends support for self-efficacy's influence on perceptions of meaningfulness. A study by DeWitz, Woolsey & Walsh (2009) discovered that both individuals' general self-efficacy ($r = .64$, $p < .01$) and efficacy specific to their current life role ($r = .59$, $p < .01$) were significantly and strongly related to a greater sense of purpose. Moreover, the study found that people who scored highest

on self-efficacy reported stronger purpose than those scoring lower on self-efficacy. Related to the aforementioned theory which attests that self-efficacy influences meaningfulness, a cross-cultural study by Church, Katigbak, Locke, Zhang, Shen,…Ching (2012) found that individuals who realize competence report greater meaningfulness. This effect was significant for people from countries including the United States (r = .26), Mexico (r = .28), China (r = .20), and Japan (r = .27). These effects provided incremental prediction beyond the Big 5 personality traits, which tend to influence meaningfulness (Lucas & Diener, 2008). This same study also found significant correlations between individuals realizing autonomy and greater meaningfulness for a number of the contexts studied.

Additionally, other empirical studies done within diverse organizational contexts affirm that individual perceptions of competence and autonomy are related to aspects psychological well-being, although these studies did not specifically investigate experiencing meaningfulness (e.g. Barr, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Deci, et al., 2001; Gillet, Fouquereau, Forest, Brunault & Colombat, 2012; Kasser, Davey, & Ryan, 1992). Ward and King (2017) points out that meaningfulness is highly correlated with other features of well-being that these studies did incorporate (Steger et al., 2006; Zika & Chamberkin, 1992). Ryff (1989) found that experiencing meaningfulness is a central criterion of psychological well-being. Thus, Ward and King (2017) forward that these results also suggest meaningfulness manifests from perceived fulfillment of competence and autonomy. These empirical results show self-efficacy's impact on meaningfulness

perceptions, as well as its influence on the means through self-efficacy matters to meaningfulness.

Through mentally simulating working in a prospective organization, job seekers' job self-efficacy should contribute to anticipated work meaningfulness, as they imagine being able to successfully master their work role, engage while they earn autonomy and responsibility, and make a significant impact at their place of work (Gioia et al., 2002). In so doing, they evaluate such future outcomes as personally meaningful.

Turning now to the conditional effects, I predict that the positive relationship between anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated meaningfulness is moderated by the strength of one's achievement value—the importance placed upon utilizing one's abilities and experiencing accomplishment at work (Weiss et al., 1981). A person's achievement value should moderate the positive effect of anticipated job self-efficacy on anticipated meaningfulness because of its influence on attending to and processing "doing well" cues and subsequent job self-efficacy, as well as on determining their relevance and personal significance. First, a stronger achievement value helps job seekers notice and more actively process "doing well" recruiting cues and the anticipated job self-efficacy inference (Schwartz, 2012; Allen et al., 2004; Dijksterhuis & Aarts, 2010). More attention and active processing lead to greater knowledge acquisition and a deeper understanding about the work's opportunities for realizing competence. This understanding serves as the foundation for job self-efficacy, the significance of which determines meaningfulness (Steger & Dik, 2010). Second, a strong achievement value influences the implicit evaluation of job self-efficacy with respect to meaningfulness

(Nord et al., 1990; Brief & Nord, 1990). On the one hand, individuals confident in their ability to successfully produce results and make a difference should feel that future work has more purpose, the more value they place on achievement. On the other hand, confidence in one's ability to perform successfully should matter less—in terms of anticipating meaningfulness at work—to those who are less adamant in their belief that achieving at work is important and highly valued.

Although individuals share a fundamental desire to achieve to some degree (Barrick et al., 2002), such desires are value-laden (Judge & Bretz, 1992), and thus fulfilling this desire is especially salient and critical to those who highly value work-related achievement (Smith, 1969). As such, anticipated job self-efficacy has a stronger impact on the estimation of work meaningfulness for job seekers higher (vs. lower) on achievement values. Therefore, my model posits:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Job seekers' anticipated job self-efficacy is positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness.
>
> *Hypothesis 2:* The positive relationship between anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated meaningfulness is stronger for job seekers with a higher achievement value.

AOBI and Anticipated Meaningfulness

My model secondarily proposes a positive conditional direct effect of a job seeker's organization-specific anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact (AOBI) on anticipated meaningfulness. Specifically, I contend that AOBI relates to a person's basic desire for perceived impact—as aspect of other-oriented agency that is part of their

fundamental agency motive (Rosso et al., 2010)—as well as the value they place on altruism. Accordingly, I posit that increased potential for fulfilling one's perceived impact desire due to high anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact affects anticipated meaningfulness (H3), and this influence is greater (lesser) so for those high (low) in the altruism work value (H4).

I now focus on the process that serves to justify the proposed relationships. Inferences of AOBI form from cues derived from recruiting information and interactions. Drawing from "doing good" cues (Pratt et al., 2013), scholarship suggests job seekers then comprehend and evaluate the resulting information for its personal purpose and meaningfulness (Steger & Dik, 2013). The resulting inference of AOBI should influence anticipated meaningfulness for a number of reasons, including: it helps a person expect to feel more interconnected, motivated, and capable of affecting positive change, as well as view their work as more important. First, scholarship confirms people are likely to feel more interconnected with other people, the community, or society—a part of a system greater than self that cannot survive without collective contributions (Lips-Wiersma, 2002). Second, empirical research confirms that AOBI results in employees being more motivated (Penner et al., 2005), and thus persist in the face of obstacles, given a stronger commitment to beneficiaries (Grant, 2007). Third, research suggests that AOBI leads people to feel more capable of affecting positive change given its promotion of others' welfare (Grant, 2008b, Grant et al., 2008). Fourth, AOBI allows a person to see their work's importance and clear purpose (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Whether work's importance derives from community, societal, or spiritual contributions,

more important work is more meaningful work (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Grant, 2008b; Wrzesnieski, 2003). These results suggest AOBI will positively influence anticipated meaningfulness.

To the points above, Grant (2008a) empirically showed that opportunities for beneficiary impact present in the job are moderately correlated with workers' greater commitment toward beneficiaries ($r = .29$), and, importantly, strongly correlated with their perceptions of greater impact (i.e. making a difference in beneficiaries' lives) through their work ($\beta = .67$). Speaking of this outcome strongly associated with AOBI, Castanheira (2016) found evidence of greater engagement with one's work ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$) as well as stronger felt commitment to beneficiaries ($\beta = .50$, $p < .001$). Results regarding opportunities for beneficiary impact build on prior research on work task significance (Hackman & Oldman, 1980), also shown to lead to increased perceptions of social impact through experimental methodology (Grant, 2008b). Significant work tasks have consistently been shown to strongly influence individuals' meaningfulness perceptions (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Renn & Vandenberg, 1995), including through comprehensive meta-analysis ($p = .68$) (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007).

Rosso's (2010) framework asserts this path to meaningfulness is a consequence of foreseeing progress toward fulfilling the other-focused dimension of one's agency motive, due to the perceived contribution expected to derive from one's efforts (Rosso et al., 2010). Through mental simulation, job seekers' anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact should contribute to anticipated meaningfulness of its work, as they imagine being more interconnected, motivated, and capable of influencing positive

change as they do important work that has purpose. In so doing, they evaluate this inference as personally meaningful.

Regarding the conditional effects, I predict that the positive relationship between anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact and anticipated meaningfulness is moderated by the strength of one's altruism value—a part of which is the importance placed upon being of service to others in one's work (Weiss et al., 1981). A person's altruism value should moderate the positive effect of AOBI on anticipated meaningfulness because of its influence on attending to and processing of "doing good" cues and subsequent AOBI, as well as on determining their relevance and personal significance. First, a stronger altruism value helps job seekers notice and more actively process "doing good" recruiting cues and the AOBI inference (Allen et al., 2004; Dijksterhuis & Aarts, 2010; Schwartz, 2012). More attention and active processing lead to acquiring more knowledge and a gaining a deeper understanding about the work's opportunities for making contributions. This understanding serves as the foundation for AOBI, the significance of which determines meaningfulness (Steger & Dik, 2010). Second, a strong altruism value influences the implicit evaluation of AOBI with respect to meaningfulness (Brief & Nord, 1990; Nord et al., 1990). On the one hand, individuals' perception that one's actions at work positively affects others should feel that future work has more purpose, the more value they place on achievement. On the other hand, opportunity to contribute in these ways should matter less—in terms of anticipating meaningfulness at work—to those who are less adamant in their belief that serving others through work is important and highly valued. This is because fulfilling

this other-oriented aspect of agency desire is more salient and critical to those who highly value work-related altruism (Smith, 1969). As such, AOBI has a stronger effect on anticipated work meaningfulness for job seekers higher (vs. lower) on their altruism value. Therefore, my model proposes:

> *Hypothesis 3:* Job seekers' anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact is positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness.
>
> *Hypothesis 4:* The positive relationship between anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact and anticipated meaningfulness is stronger for job seekers with a higher altruism value.

Anticipated Belongingness and Anticipated Meaningfulness

Additionally, my model proposes a positive conditional direct effect of anticipated belongingness on anticipated work meaningfulness. I contend that anticipated belongingness relates to a person's fundamental communion goal, as well as the value they place on altruism. As such, I posit that increased potential for fulfilling one's communion desire due to high anticipated belongingness impacts anticipated meaningfulness (H5), and this influence is greater (lesser) so for those higher (lower) on altruism work values (H6).

Pratt and Ashforth (2003) forward that workers perceive meaningfulness at work if it helps them affirmatively answer the question, "Where do I belong?" Job seekers who anticipate belongingness will anticipate meaningfulness when they (1) envision relating to and identifying with one or more personally desirable groups, (2) anticipate feelings of comfort and support, and (3) foresee a boost to their self-worth. First,

scholarship shows that belongingness helps a person identify with groups of others, including their beliefs and characteristics, allowing them to feel a part of something unique and special, making work meaningful (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Second, belongingness helps a person feel mutually supported by and connected with others, given the close interpersonal relationships that accompany these feelings (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Notably, both being included in a group and receiving support from its members helps satisfy the personal desire for communion. Thus, such supportive connections infuse work with significance and purpose (Blatt & Camden, 2007). Third, being a part of shared community that enables individuals to feel interpersonal closeness and distinguish themselves from those not a part of the organization, strengthens individuals' personal views of themselves (Gecas, 1991). Opportunities like this that maintain or enhance one's self-worth provide purpose and are thus meaningful (White, 1959; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

A series of studies using correlational, experimental, and longitudinal designs by Lambert, Stillman, Hicks, Baumeister, & Fincham, 2013 provide compelling empirical evidence that perceptions of belongingness predict meaningfulness. Using a correlational design, in one study these authors found a sizeable correlation ($r = .31$, $p < .001$) between a sense of belonging and meaningfulness. Using a longitudinal design, a second study used self-ratings and independent, impartial ratings of short essays to assess meaningfulness to conclude that initial levels of belongingness predicted perceived meaningfulness three weeks later. More specifically, belongingness at Time 1 correlated with higher self-reported meaningfulness ($r = .41$, $p < .001$) and higher articulated

meaningfulness ($r = .30$, $p < .001$) at Time 2. Using an experimental design, a third study found that manipulating belongingness enhances subjective perceptions of belongingness and in turn, enhances meaningfulness.

While belongingness has been empirically shown to enhance meaningfulness, a lack of belongingness can motivate desperate attempts to create or preserve relationships with others to resolve the purposelessness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Unsuccessful attempts to find belonging have been empirically shown to have damaging effects on self-worth—a positive correlate to meaningfulness (Crescioni & Baumeister, 2013; Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006), while Stillman, Baumeister, Lambert, Crescioni, DeWall, & Fincham (2009) showed that chronic loneliness and social rejection were related to lower perceptions of meaningfulness. These findings were consistent across different manipulations and three different measures of meaningfulness. For example, one of these experimental studies showed that loneliness predicted meaningfulness, ($r = -.35$, $p < .001$), such that more loneliness was associated with less meaningfulness.

As can be seen, a plethora of research links experienced belongingness to experienced meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010). Therefore, from an anticipatory standpoint, to the extent individuals mentally simulate a focal organization's workplace and expect to belong, I suggest they will anticipate meaningful work, since anticipated belongingness helps them realize their fundamental communion need.

That being said, I posit that the positive relationship between expected belongingness and anticipated meaningfulness will be moderated by a person's altruism work value—a part of which is the importance a person places on being in harmony with

others (Weiss et al., 1981). A person's altruism value should moderate the positive effect of anticipated belongingness on anticipated meaningfulness because of its influence on attending to and processing "doing with" cues and the resulting anticipated belongingness inference, as well as on evaluating their relevance and significance. First, a stronger altruism value helps potential hires notice and actively process "doing with" recruiting cues and anticipated belongingness (Allen et al., 2004; Schwartz, 2012). More attention and active processing lead to deeper understanding of the work's opportunities for experiencing communion with others, and provides the basis for anticipating belongingness. Second, a strong altruism value will influence the significance of anticipated belongingness. Expectations of being liked and accepted as an organizational member, experiencing meaningful interactions and rewarding relationships, and feeling closely connected to others will matter more to those who place more value on an altruistic workplace. This is because those who highly value harmony with others work will foresee strongly identifying with such conditions, and thus view work as particularly purposeful (Damon et al., 2003; Reker, 2000), since to them, fulfilling this communion desire is especially salient and critical (Smith, 1969). Conversely, low expected belongingness will be more salient and important to those who more (less) strongly value close and supportive work relationships, and thus have a greater (lesser) detrimental influence on as an assessment of the meaningfulness of work at a focal organization. As such, anticipated opportunity for anticipated belongingness has a stronger effect on anticipated work meaningfulness for job seekers higher (vs. lower) on their altruism value. Therefore, my model proposes:

Hypothesis 5: Job seekers' anticipated belongingness is positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness.

Hypothesis 6: The positive relationship between anticipated belongingness and anticipated meaningfulness is stronger for job seekers with a higher altruism value.

Anticipated Meaningfulness and Acceptance Intentions

As noted previously, this dissertation strives to examine and explain two critical questions: (1) During recruitment, how does future work in an organization in which a person is not yet employed come to be perceived as meaningful during recruitment? and (2) Does anticipated work meaningfulness help predict job seekers' acceptance intentions? Having considered the first question in the previous hypotheses, I now turn to the second. Various theories of motivation (e.g. Ajzen, 1985; Atkinson, 1957; Bandura, 1997; Locke & Latham, 1990, Gollwitzer & Bayer, 1999; Vroom, 1964) assert that job seekers are attracted to organizations perceived as able to help them achieve their desires, needs, and/or goals. The notion is that persons choose to pursue organizations based on what they desire from work and if they expect that the organization can satisfy it (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). As mentioned before, the search for meaning is one of the most critical of human struggles, and the desire for meaningfulness is one of man's deepest longings (Frankl, 1963). I thus posit that to the extent that job seekers anticipate meaningfulness from working in a focal organization, job acceptance intentions should be positively affected (H7).

Research indicates meaningfulness experienced while working is an integral workplace influence (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Roberson, 1990). Meaningful work has widespread implications for individuals who experience it, including job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997), an employee's work identity (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kauffmann, 2006), as well as personal fulfillment (Kahn, 2007). Accordingly, extant literature shows meaningful work as a key antecedent to people flourishing and being content at work (Rosso et al., 2010). Furthermore, its effects extend far beyond a person's psychological outcomes to a being positive influence on work behavior (Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), work motivation and engagement (Rich, LePine, & Crawford, 2010), and job performance (Wrzesniewski, 2003).

However, even outside the timeframe of a specific employee relationship, scholarship reveals that work meaningfulness has consequences, with one area of study related to the search for and selection of a vocation or occupation—the line of work, trade, or profession an individual undertakes, separate from any employing organization. Wanous (1977) noted that entering an occupation precedes organizational entry into formal employment by months or years, as individuals must often select and then prepare for a vocation through education and training to qualify for specific jobs in that occupation. Even prior to entering their chosen career, individuals who perceive their future career as meaningful, experience positive motivational outcomes (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007) as well as increased life meaning and life satisfaction (Dik, Sargent & Steger, 2008; Hirschi, 2012). These findings suggest that meaningful work is important

to a person's attitudes and motivations even before actually doing the work in an employment context.

Moreover, the meaningfulness that people experience at work has been shown to contribute to their decisions to maintain or terminate employment (Dik, Byrne & Steger, 2013). Therefore, job seekers strive for meaningful work and/or know people who enjoy its benefits, and thus are keenly aware of the beneficial results. As such, individuals will be particularly cognizant of the perceived expectation of meaningfulness in future work, as they learn about and consider employment options in the recruiting process, in hopes of reaping these benefits again.

While previous hypothesis development provides justification that three key inferences drawn from cues about the nature of the job and the work environment — anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact, and anticipated belongingness—matter to anticipated meaningfulness, as do individuals' corresponding work values, empirical justification also exists that these inferences and work values matter to job seeker intentions.

First, concerning anticipated job self-efficacy, theory suggests that individuals choose work activities they believe they are capable of accomplishing, i.e. according to their perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Empirical work confirms that work-related self-efficacy strongly influences the range of jobs people consider and ultimately choose (Betz & Hackett; 1981; Branch & Lichtenberg, 1987; Layton, 1984; Rooney & Osipow, 1992), even more so than objective measures of their achievement in those work areas (Betz & Hackett, 1981). In particular, Betz and Hackett (1981) revealed that greater self-

efficacy toward jobs traditionally filled by same gender respondents was moderately correlated with both stronger interest in those traditional jobs ($r = .38, p < .001$) as well as the type and number of traditional jobs they considered for employment ($r = .29, p < .001$). Moreover, higher self-efficacy towards jobs not traditionally filled by the respondents' gender had even stronger correlations, with higher self-efficacy towards those nontraditional jobs positively related to increased interest in nontraditional work ($r = .42, p < .001$) and a wider range of nontraditional job options considered ($r = .46, p < .001$) (Betz & Hackett, 1981). Scholarship also shows that individuals are attracted to employment options based on the possibility of being recognized and rewarded for mastering new skills that self-efficacy influences people's confidence in achieving (e.g. Cable & Judge, 1994). This empirical work by Cable & Judge (1994) showed that organizations with compensation systems rewarding acquisition of new skills—as opposed to pay based on job title—were significantly more appealing to those higher in self-efficacy ($\beta = .20, p < .01$). This theoretical and empirical support lead researchers to conclude that job self-efficacy plays a key role in recruitment outcomes (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005).

Additionally, evidence also reveals that individuals steer toward types of work based on a match between achievement values (e.g. Gandal et al., 2005). Results show that individuals who value achievement are more likely to desire and select an employer exhibiting cues that indicate it values achievement. For example, Judge & Bretz (1992) showed that the high value hiring organizations place on achievement value had a moderate effect ($\beta = .32, p < .001$) on job choice intentions for job seekers whose

achievement value was most important, compared to smaller effects for a greater emphasis on aspects including honesty ($\beta = .04$, $p < .01$) fairness ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$), concern for others ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), and even pay ($\beta = .01$, $p < .001$). Referring back to the findings of Cable & Judge (1994), the authors suggest that compensation systems which reward acquisition of new skills—as opposed to pay based on job title—are more appealing to those higher in self-efficacy, not only because of expected rewards, but also because of the signals they send about the importance such organizations places on achievement.

Second, concerning anticipated opportunity for beneficial impact, empirical findings show that people are drawn to jobs that allow them to "do good" and help others, and this is truer for those with altruistic values (e.g. Grant, 2008a). This particular study showed moderate correlations between the magnitude—degree & duration ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$), frequency ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$), and scope—number or range of people affected ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$) of opportunities for beneficiary impact and increased motivation towards this type of work. Moreover, results reveal that people who place high importance upon and exhibit a concern for others—a central component of the altruism work value—are more likely to desire and select an employer exhibiting cues that indicate that it too values this aspect of altruism. On the one hand, Judge & Bretz (1992) showed that perceptions of hiring organizations' emphasis on concern for others had a strong statistical relationship ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$) with job choice intentions for job seekers who valued altruism over other values, compared to smaller relationships ranging from $\beta = .14$, .12, and .08 for cues that organizations emphasize achievement,

honesty, and promotion opportunities respectively. Interestingly, no significant relationship existed between emphasis on pay and job acceptance intentions for individuals who most strongly value this central aspect of altruism. On the other hand, Gully, Phillips, Castellano, Han, and Kim (2013) showed that impressions of more beneficial social and environmental stewardship, in this case through organizations' advertising messages, influenced organizational attraction ($b = .292$, $\Delta R^2 = .026$, $p < .01$) as well as job pursuit intentions ($b = .256$, $\Delta R^2 = .017$, $p < .01$) for job seekers who place greater importance on making a significant impact through their work. In both cases, these effects were mediated by individuals' perceived fit with the organization's values.

Third, regarding anticipated belongingness, results show that the appeal of job opportunities is associated with individuals' perceptions of oneness or belongingness to the organization and its work (Cable & Turban, 2003; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009). Two experimental studies by Gaucher, Friesen, and Kay (2011) serve to demonstrate that less anticipated belongingness diminishes the appeal of a prospective job. In the first, mixed gender sample study, less anticipated belongingness predicted less job appeal ($\beta = .72$, $p < .001$) for women viewing job advertisements. The effect of belongingness on a job's appeal for men in the sample could not be determined, as the wording in the job advertisements did not affect men's anticipated belongingness. In the second, all-female-sample study, reduced anticipated belongingness again predicted less job appeal ($\beta = .67$, $p < .001$) (Gaucher, Friesen, & Kay, 2011). While the influence of anticipated belongingness on the appeal of job prospects is limited to men in these two studies, the effect sizes are strong. Such a perception also has been shown to lead to

satisfaction with work and commitment to the organization once employed, increasing organizational appeal (Lee, Park, Koo, 2015). In addition, with respect to altruism, empirical results show that job seekers who place high importance upon being in harmony with others in meaningful work relationships— the second of two central components of the altruism work value—are drawn to organizations which they anticipate will supply rewarding relationships and consequently fulfill that desire. Yu (2014) found that the value job seekers' place on work relationships was a strong indicator of their psychological need for relationships. This need, in turn, interacted with job seekers' anticipated supply of harmonious relationships in a prospective organization to positively influence organizational attraction ($r = .22$, $p < .01$). Interestingly, standard person-organization fit relationships were not detected in these effects (Yu, 2014), leading authors to conclude that similarity of the relationship component of the altruism value may not be what engenders organizational appeal for job seekers. Rather, since "job seekers can only anticipate the benefits of similar values with respect to future work relationships, cognitive evaluations are drawn from what "personal needs such future relationships can fulfill" given what the organization is expected to provide (Yu, 2014, p. 90). Discussion on previous pages asserts the fundamental need for communion drives this evaluation in the case of altruism.

In sum, these findings suggest that job seeker anticipatory inferences of job self-efficacy, opportunity for beneficiary impact, and belongingness, as well their corresponding work values of achievement and altruism, not only influence individuals' anticipated meaningfulness, but their acceptance intentions as well. This proposition

highlights anticipated meaningfulness as an explanatory mechanism as to why perceptions of work tasks and environment are so influential to recruiting outcomes, such as acceptance intentions. For the above reasons, I predict that greater anticipated meaningfulness in the mind of a prospective employee will enhance the organization's appeal as a future employer, and positively influence job seekers' intentions to accept an employment offer from that organization.

Hypothesis 7: Job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness is positively associated with acceptance intentions toward that organization.

Moderating Influence of Work Centrality

Finally, my model acknowledges the effects of anticipated meaningfulness on acceptance intentions will vary across persons. I contend that one determinant that may strengthen or lessen the impact of anticipated meaningfulness on one's intentions to accept a job is belief in the relative importance work plays in life compared to other life domains, i.e. one's work centrality. More specifically, I posit that higher (lower) work centrality, the greater (lesser) impact anticipated meaningfulness should have on a job seeker's acceptance intentions (H8).

As discussed, work centrality is the belief in the extent to which a person's work is central and important to one's life (Brooke et al., 1988; Paullay et al., 1994). People who consider work central to their lives, strongly identify with work—in the sense that they believe it to be an important part of who they are—and rely upon it to affirm their self-concept (Kanungo, 1982a). Work centrality correlates positively with the protestant work ethic construct (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000)—the belief that work is desirable and

worthwhile in its own right, and is not just a means to material ends (Buchholz, 1978; Mirels & Garrett, 1971)—and negatively with a leisure work ethic (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000)—the belief that more fulfillment is found in leisure activities and work is considered a necessity that lacks intrinsic meaning and value (Buchholz, 1978). Thus, those in high work centrality likely see work as more desirable, worthwhile, and potentially meaningful, as it represents an influential part of how they define themselves, whereas those low in work centrality view work more as a necessity enabling them to enjoy and derive meaningfulness through their leisure (Hirschfeld & Feild, 2000).

Not surprisingly, scholarship attests that one's level of work centrality is associated with how much one derives personal meaning from both work and non-work roles (Stephens & Feldman, 1997; Kanungo, 1982b). People's lives usually draw meaning from a number of sources, including family and friends, work, religion, leisure and hobbies (Emmons, 1997). Individuals high in work centrality expect to derive a significant amount of meaningfulness from work, since to them work has intrinsic and self-concept defining value (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), whereas those low in work centrality expect to draw life's meaningfulness more from non-work sources, with work being a less source (Kanungo, 1982a). Given that high work centrality individuals rely upon work as a primary source of meaningfulness in their lives, I expect anticipated meaningfulness of an organization's work to matter more to job seekers with this belief. Since these individuals seek and expect to derive more of life's meaningfulness from their work, they will be more sensitive to perceptions of how much, if at all, a prospective organization can provide it. Thus, anticipated meaningfulness of an

organization's work should more heavily influence a job seeker's acceptance intentions to join an organization for those high in work centrality. In contrast, those low in work centrality typically demand less of their work in terms of fulfilling their life's fundamental desire for meaning (Puallay et al., 1994). Therefore, they should be less sensitive to perceptions of work meaningfulness when they consider employment options. Instead of being attracted to work that holds more intrinsic value and purpose, such individuals may be more attracted to organizations that offer more extrinsic rewards or leisure friendly benefits that might enable them to realize meaningfulness in other life domains.

Several empirical studies speak to this assertion. A study by Lajom, Amarnani, Restubog, Borida, & Tang (2018) found moderate to strong support for future job seekers' harmonious passion for a particular field of work positively influencing their career persistence intentions ($r = .41$, $p < .01$) and commitment to that career path ($r = .73$, $p < .01$). They define *harmonious passion for work* as a compelling affinity for certain work due to its personal endorsement into one's identity (Vallerand, Blanchard, Mageau, Koestner…Marsolais et al., 2003), and note its similarity to work involvement/centrality, in that neither focuses on involvement in a particular role or job (as job involvement does) and both pertain to the central role of work to a person's self-concept; yet, harmonious work passion is distinct because the internalization process of work's importance is more autonomous than socialized, as is the case with work centrality (Vallerand et al., 2003). Interestingly, this internalization process is facilitated by perceived fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and belonging needs (Niemeic,

Ryan, & Deci, 2010), which have been shown to also induce meaningfulness (Lambert et al., 2013; Ward & King, 2017). This conceptualization of harmonious work passion seems to indicate it shares elements of both meaningfulness and work centrality. Thus, findings that show its influence on career persistence intentions—measured in this study as intentions of future job seekers to remain in their current major and on their current future career path—as well as career commitment—defined as employee attitudes and identification with their chosen future profession (Blau, 1988), lend support to my model's Hypothesis 8.

Additionally, Highhouse, Nye, and Matthews (2017), found in an SEM analysis that work centrality explained incremental variance beyond a general work importance factor (incorporating job involvement, work centrality, and protestant work ethic) for nonfinancial employment commitment ($\theta = .23$)—defined as how much a person is motivated to work for nonfinancial reasons (Meriac, Woehr, Gorman, & Thomas, 2013). This indicates that individuals high in work centrality value and are committed to doing work for reasons other than monetary gain. Such a result speaks favorably to the hypothesized impact of work centrality on the relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions.

Finally, in a study examining the moderating effects of a person's work centrality on the relationship between experienced meaningfulness and affective commitment toward a current employer, Jiang and Johnson (2017) found that the positive relationship between meaningful work and affective commitment became weaker ($\beta = -.08$, $p < .05$) under high work centrality (slope = .32, $t = 3.04$, $p = .003$) versus low (slope = .56, $t =$

7.35, $p < .001$). While workers with both high meaningful work and high work centrality had the greatest affective commitment, results indicated that experiencing meaningful is more critical to workers' commitment to their current organization for those who view work as less central to their lives. Meanwhile, those with high work centrality will be organizationally committed whether or not they find a particular job meaningful at any given time, because they are more invested in any work they do.

This study was worthy of mention because of limited scholarship with meaningfulness as an antecedent and work centrality as a moderator. That being said, in contrast to the aforementioned study, my model concerns the appeal of an organization considered as an employer, rather than affective attitudes about a current one [2]. I suspect the moderating influence of work centrality on the anticipated meaningfulness-acceptance intentions relationship will starkly differ from the experienced meaningfulness-affective commitment relationship. Importantly, Hirschfeld and Field (2000) points out the "non-affective essence of work centrality," notes its more cognitive and normative nature (Kanungo, 1982a) and indicates it represents a decision orientation (Wallace, 1999). Thus, work centrality should have a stronger influence on the interaction of meaningfulness with acceptance intentions than with affective

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[2] It should also be noted that this study used a 3-item measure for work centrality, rather than more robust measures such as the 12-item Paullay et al., (1994) measure. The used measure is less comprehensive than even the 6-item Work Involvement Questionnaire (Kanungo, 1982), which has been shown to be so highly correlated with the Job Involvement Questionnaire, that it is suggested people are unable to make the psychological distinction between the importance of one's job and one's work in the questions (Kostek, 2012),. Thus, it may be the case that this study measured job involvement as much as work centrality/involvement.

commitment, as job seekers evaluate organizations' job opportunities. Furthermore, while current workers with low work centrality may be more committed to a current organization as a consequence of experiencing meaningful work, I suspect job seekers who place greater importance on work and thus derive more meaning from it, will more strongly desire to commit to a prospective organization that is anticipated to provide greater meaningfulness. Thus, my model posits:

Hypothesis 8: The positive relationship between anticipated job meaningfulness and acceptance intentions is stronger for job seekers with higher work centrality.

CHAPTER III

SAMPLE, RESEARCH DESIGN, AND METHODS

SAMPLE

Study participants were senior undergraduate students from a large southeastern university who were currently on the job market and thus active participants in the recruiting process. Participating students were enrolled in one of two upper-level business courses, comprised of business and non-business majors alike. Participants were offered course bonus credit and/or a chance to win a restaurant gift card for their full participation. Referring back to earlier discussion which pinpointed this dissertation's objective of measuring job seekers' cognitions during Stage 2—the maintenance stage of the recruiting cycle—only students who were currently actively on the job market seeking employment opportunities during the time of data collection were eligible to take part. The particular time frame of data collection was chosen because discussion with the university's career services office revealed that a portion of senior students engage in the recruiting process during this time period during the fall and spring semesters. Although the ideal sample size would be 250 or more applicants, exclusion criteria, which will be mentioned later, constrained the pool to less than that number as a significant number of participants became ineligible while participating in the study. Collecting data in both the fall and spring semesters, the final sample was 197 participants.

A strength of this sample is that all participating students were on the actual job market and thus face realistic, not simulated decisions about actual employers, not fictitious organizations. Most often, graduating seniors are seeking full-time employment, which is desirable for this study. Another strength is that the sample subsumes a heterogeneous set of jobs, since students enrolled in these business courses were from seven different business majors including: marketing, management, accounting, finance, supply chain, management information systems, and business honors, as well as non-business majors. Students with such a wide range of majors apply to a wide variety of jobs across these disciplines. This increases confidence that the effects are not job or industry specific and also allow for generalization of results. With the exception of possible second-career job seekers among the senior-level undergraduate students, this sample predominantly represented one of the three types of job seekers—new entrants—to the exclusion of unemployed job seekers as a result of job loss, and employed job seekers as the result of possible voluntary turnover (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001). By definition, new entrants are seeking their first full-time positions (Kanfer et al., 2001). Limiting the sample to primarily new entrants minimizes concerns about confounding effects from prior and current job experiences and circumstances surrounding organizational exit in the case of the recent or pending turnover (Boswell, Zimmerman, & Swider, 2012);

RESEARCH DESIGN

To identify and gather individuals to include in my sample, I worked with instructors of the two upper level business courses. To determine eligibility of

prospective participants in these two upper-level business classes, I asked students before they began the series of surveys if they met the following criteria: 1) they were seeking full time employment, 2) they had yet to accept a job offer, and 3) they had at least one organization to which they applied and still considered an employment possibility, but had yet to receive an offer from that organization. Students not currently active on the job market were filtered out to another set of surveys for an unrelated study. If students met the criteria, but had multiple of organizations from which to choose, I suggested they report on an organization from which they do not expect an offer in the next three weeks that followed, particularly one in which they had not yet had a site visit. This presumably reduced the risk that the applicant would not receive an offer before data was collected, since a formal job offer soon follows or is even made in conjunction with a site visit (Dineen & Soltis, 2011). Students who did receive an offer from this organization before completing the surveys were no longer eligible to be included in the sample. An additional requirement was that the focal organization has to be one at which individuals did not previously work as an intern. This is due to the plethora of information known by former interns regarding the work and work environment derived from their work experiences. The breadth and depth of this information is unique to organizational insiders, such as recruited former interns and employees, and thus would not be representative of the organizational information known by more typical job seekers who have not worked in that organization (Breaugh, 2013).

Because my research questions sought to determine the effects of various job seeker perceptions on job seeker acceptance intentions, the use of same source data, all from the individual job seeker, was necessary and justified. To minimize measurement context effects that tend to result in artificial covariation due to same source measurement (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012), data was collected at three different time points via electronic surveys. Adding temporal separation in data collection, and in particular separating measurement via a time lag of the predictor and criterion variables, is a remedy for minimizing this bias (Podsakoff et al., 2013; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Participants were given four days to complete Survey 1, and two days to complete the shorter Surveys 2 and 3, with a one-week separation between the time they completed the previous survey and receive the subsequent survey.

Aligned with the theoretical context of my model, the series of surveys were distributed with the goal of collecting data during the maintenance stage—following application but before a job offer from that organization. While the intent was for all surveys to be completed before a formal offer is extended to the applicant, the possibility existed of an offer being extended by the focal firm before the end of survey completion. Given that possibility, at the conclusion of each survey, I assessed if the focal organization had extended a formal offer up to this point. If the participant confirmed receipt of such an offer, the results from that and all remaining surveys were longer be included in the analysis. This is because the job seeker's perceptions and intentions will not have been collected during the maintenance stage of recruiting, the focus of the

research questions, given a formal offer had been extended. Moreover, theory (e.g. Vroom, 1964) suggests obtaining a formal offer is suspected to heavily influence outcome variables such as intentions to accept an offer from that organization, and a goal of this dissertation is to predict outcome variables related to a focal organization not influenced by receipt of a job offer from that organization. Despite the negatives of eliminating partial data through listwise deletion (Treiman, 2009), I chose not to include participant data collected prior to receipt of an offer in the analysis, since the mediator of interest was not measured until the second time point, and dependent variable was not measured until the final time point. Overall then, I tried to collect data for each participant only during the maintenance stage of the recruiting cycle with the focal firm, and thus only utilized survey data collected during that stage in my analysis. This design aspect was essential to the study, but made data collection challenging due to this exclusion criterion.

Survey 1 first asked participants to indicate the organization they would report on in the surveys. In the instructions I reminded participants, as I did when I introduced the study, to select an organization that they did not expect to receive an offer in the next weeks, such as one they had not yet had a site visit. Additionally, similar to the approach of Jones, Willness, & Madey (2014) to minimize range restriction in variables such as acceptance intentions, I asked participants to either select an organization that is their top choice of employment, or a realistic choice of interest, yet not their top choice. Survey 1 measured model predictor variables specific to the focal organization: *anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact,* and *anticipated*

belongingness. It also measured demographic information, including: age, gender, ethnicity, parent education levels, employment status, and employment history, and non-organizational specific control variables of *perceived economic pressure*, *calling*—each of which are defined below—and personality traits of *extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness*. Survey 1 also included questions about the total *number of job offers* they had currently. Considering variables in my model not specific to the focal organization, I assessed *work centrality* and six work values (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969), including *achievement* and *altruism* that are both part of my model. I collected all six work values to capture the relative importance, not just absolute importance of the values of interest to my dissertation, to counter the social desirability effects which can be problematic (Ganster, Hennessey, & Luthans, 1983). A control specific to the focal organization measured here are time *since application submission*. Receipt of a job offer from this organization also was asked to determine if inclusion criteria was met.

Participants were sent Survey 2 one week after Survey 1 was made available to create temporal separation between variables. I assessed *anticipated meaningfulness* of work related to the focal organization, as well as the control variables of *anticipated PO fit* and *PJ fit*. As in Survey 1, I again asked participants to indicate if they received a job offer from this organization, and the likelihood of receiving such as offer. Survey 3 was distributed one week after each participant completed Survey 2. Survey 3 assessed job seeker's *acceptance intentions* regarding the focal organization. This survey again included questions regarding receipt of a job offer.

Participants numbering 551 began at least one survey. Based on questions in early in Survey 1, 319 of those students were currently on the job market at the time of data collection and so were included in the study moving forward. All three surveys were completed by 252 of the 319 applicants sampled (79% response rate). Of the 252 job seekers who completed all surveys, 197 completed all the surveys before they received a formal job offer from the focal organization and thus their data were included in the analysis. 55 completed only a portion of the surveys prior to obtaining a job offer, and thus, by definition, had progressed beyond the recruitment's maintenance stage and into Stage 3, the post-offer closure stage (Dineen & Soltis, 2013). Therefore, as stated previously, in these cases these portions of the data were excluded and not considered part of the analyses.

Measures

Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy. I used the 10-item Personal Efficacy Beliefs Scale developed by Riggs, Warka, Barbasa, Betancourt, and Hooker (1994) to assess job self-efficacy, with slight modifications. This reliability and validity of this scale has been demonstrated in several populations (e.g. Lubbers, Loughlin, & Zweig, 2005; Bozeman, Perrewe, Hochwarter, & Brymer, 2001; Riggs & Knight, 1994), and measures a person's perceptions of the ability and skill to perform work associated with job requirements. Because the job seeker had not secured and performed in the actual role yet, the measure's instructions asked participants to "imagine themselves working for the particular company in the advertised work role," and individual items were written in the future, rather than present tense. The items include: "I *will* have confidence in my ability

to do this job," "There are some tasks required by my job that I cannot do well (R)," and "I *will* have all the skills needed to perform my job very well." Items were assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Coefficient alpha was .79.

Anticipated Opportunity for Beneficiary Impact. I slightly adapted the 9-item measure of job opportunities for beneficiary impact by Grant (2008). The items on the original scale are written in the present tense and sought to measure job opportunities for impact at the present time. Items include: "My job gives me the chance to make a significant positive difference in others' lives," "My job provides opportunities to substantially improve the welfare on others," "My job has the potential to make others' lives better." The modified measurement asked participants to respond to the questions by imagining themselves working for the particular company, and were written in the future tense. Altered items read: "My job *will* give me the chance to make a significant positive difference in others' lives," "My job *will* provide opportunities to substantially improve the welfare on others," "My job *will have* the potential to make others' lives better." Items were assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Coefficient alpha for this measure was .92

Anticipated Belongingness. I slightly modified the 12-item General Belongingness Scale (Malone, Pillow, & Osman, 2012) to assess anticipated belongingness. The items on the original scale are written in the present tense and seek to measure belongingness at the present time. Items include: "When I am with other people, I feel included," "I feel like an outsider (R)," "I feel accepted by others," and "I feel connected with others." The modified measurement asked participants to respond to

the questions by imagining themselves working for the particular company, and were written in the future tense. Altered items read: "When I am with other people, I *will* feel included," "I *will* feel like an outsider (R)," "I *will* feel accepted by others," and "I *will* feel connected with others." Also, the word "family" in two items will be changed to "co-workers," given the object of belongingness is the workplace not life in general. These items will read: "I will have close bonds with friends and coworkers," and "Coworkers and friends will not involve me in their plans (R)." Items will be assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Coefficient alpha was .87 for anticipated belongingness.

Achievement and Altruism Work Values. Consistent with prior research on work values, I utilized the commonly used Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ) (Rounds, Henly, Dawis, Lofquist, & Weiss, 1981) to assess the six work values, including achievement and altruism. Using one of two equivalent forms of the MIQ, I modified the portion of the paired-comparison form where each statement that details a need-reinforcing aspect of the job and work environment is rated on its importance. While the original MIQ asks users to evaluate whether the aspect of work is important in their ideal job by asking for a "yes" or "no" response, I modified it to a 5-point scale, anchored by "not at all" = 1, "some" = 3, and "very much" = 5. This adjustment allowed for the determination of both absolute importance of achievement and altruism values, and relative importance compared to the other values. The full paired form of the MIQ uses an ipsative measure that presents each of the statements in a pair with each of the other statements. This ipsative measure of the MIQ was not chosen for use due to

general concerns about using ipsative measures, such as low internal consistency reliability estimates, and difficulties interpreting measures using ipsative scoring with traditional statistical analyses (McCloy, Waugh, Medsker, Wall, Rivkin, & Lewis, 1999). The items for the achievement work value were: "On my ideal job it is important that…I could do something that makes use of my abilities," and "the job could give me a feeling of accomplishment." The items for the altruism work value were: "On my ideal job it is important that…my co-workers would be easy to make friends with," "I could do things for other people" and "I could do the work without feeling that it is morally wrong." Coefficient alphas were .59 for achievement and .42 for altruism.

Work Centrality. Work centrality is defined as the extent to which people view work as a main component in their life, and reflects the belief of work's importance compared to other domains (family, leisure, community involvement, etc.), irrespective of a current job (Brown, 1996; Paullay, Alliger,, Stone-Romero, 1994). Researchers believe work centrality will influence perceptions of the meaningfulness of work (Rosso et al., 2010). Along these lines, I believe anticipated work meaningfulness will matter more to individuals with greater work centrality. Thus, I included this variable as a second-stage moderator and assessed it using the 12-item measure by Paullay et al., (1994) assessed on a 6-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Items include: "Work should only be a small part of one's life (reversed)," "In my view, an individual's personal life goals should be work-oriented," and "The most important things that happen to me involve my work." Coefficient alpha was .72.

Anticipated Meaningfulness. I used the 5-item measure developed by Bunderson & Thompson (2009) to assess anticipated meaningfulness, altered to reflect future work by adding the present tense. Participants were asked to respond to the questions by imagining themselves working for the focal company. The items include: "The work that I *will* do is important," "I *will* have a meaningful job," "The work that I *will* do makes the world a better place," "What I *will* do at work *will* make a difference in the world," and "The work that I *will* do is meaningful." Items were assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. Coefficient alpha was .89.

***Acceptance Intentions*.** I used a three-item measure to assess acceptance intentions, two items are the oft used Harris and Fink (1987) measure to measure intentions of the job seeker to accept an offer for employment should it be offered. These items are, 'If you were offered the job, would you accept it?' and, 'If you were offered the job would you accept it immediately?' I will also use one item from the Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar (2003) measure that assesses many job seeker intentions, and specifically acceptance intentions in this one item: "I would make this company one of my first choices as an employer." The response format was a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = extremely unlikely to 7 = extremely likely. Coefficient alpha was .91.

Anticipated Fit. I collected person-organization *(PO) fit* and person-job *(PJ) fit* anticipated by job seekers during recruiting for use in supplementary analyses, given meta-analytic results that attest to their effects on recruiting outcomes (Chapman et al., 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Both PO fit and PJ fit will be obtained with 3-item measures (Cable & DeRue, 2002) measured with a five-point Likert scale of 1 = strongly

disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Sample items include: "The things that I value in life are very similar to the things this organization values" (PO fit), and "There will be a good fit between what this job offers me and what I am looking for in a job" (PJ fit). Coefficient alphas were .90 for anticipated PO fit and .88 for PJ fit.

Control variables. A number of control variables were included to ensure that the observed effects were not the consequence of alternative explanations.

Gender. While I collected data for age, gender, ethnicity, parent education levels, employment status, as well as employment tenure and history in the current company, industry, and overall, given constraints on the number of control variables I could feasibly use, I only controlled for participant gender, particularly since an uneven percentage of females to males were included in the final sample of the study. Age, gender, ethnicity, and parents' education level were self-reported. To assess employment status, participants were asked if they were currently employed full or part time. To measure employment history and tenure, participants were asked to indicate the duration of their current tenure with any current organization, part time or full time, the amount of time of full and part time employment overall, and the time spent working in the specific industry for which they are now seeking work during the recruitment period. Demographic information collected about participants is listed in Appendix A.

Perceived Economic Pressure. Perceived economic pressure refers to a person's psychological distress resulting from financial difficulties (Conger & Elder, 1994), including both unmet basic needs (rent, utilities, food) and modest "extras" or wants (e.g. money to eat out, go to the movies) (Mistry, Lowe, Benner, & Chien, 2008).

Related to socio-economic status (SES), but a more relative and subjective measure of perceptions of what being underprivileged personally means (Iceland, 2003; Deng, Nair, & Lockhart-Burrell, 2005), its effects are thus more proximal to my model. According to Maslow (1943), individuals with unmet basic needs of food, shelter, etc. are less likely to be concerned about meeting psychological needs of belongingness and goal fulfillment needs, and so job self-efficacy, belongingness, and meaningfulness may play less of a role in acceptance intentions for those with unmet needs. Perceived economic pressure were assessed with a two-item scale developed by Mistry et al., (2008) with 5-point Likert scales of 1 = not at all true to 5 = very true. Difficulty meeting financial needs was measured with the item: "These days I can generally afford to buy the things I need." (R). Difficulty meeting financial wants was measured with the item: "I never seem to have enough money to buy something I'd like to have or go somewhere just for fun." Coefficient alpha for economic pressure was .67.

Calling. Calling refers to a people's belief that they are called upon by a Higher Power, by God, by the societal needs, or by their inward potential to do a particular kind of work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007). The degree to which people feel called to a particular kind of work may lead to anticipated meaningfulness, and thus might serve as an alternative explanation as to why these mediating variables influence acceptance intentions during middle stage recruitment rather than my predictor variables. I used the 4-item measure Brief Calling Scale (Dik, Eldridge, Steger, & Duffy, 2012) to assess calling on a 5-point scale from 1 = not at all true of me to 5 = very true of me, in which participants were presented with the definition of calling, and asked to

indicate the extent to which each of the following statements currently describes them. Two items measure the extent to which a person has a calling (calling-presence), and two measures the extent to which a person is searching for a calling (calling-search). Ultimately, I chose to control for only calling-search, as I suspected this dimension of calling would likely have a greater impact on model variables than calling-presence. A sample item from each of the two dimensions include: "I have a calling for a particular kind of work," (calling-presence) and "I am searching for my calling as is applies to my career" (calling-search). Coefficient alphas were .87 for calling-presence, .86 for calling-search, An alpha of .15 for the 4-items combined calling measure led to the decision to consider use of the dimensions rather than the composite measure.

Personality Traits. Big 5 personality traits have been shown to influence perceptions of experienced meaningfulness (Lucas & Diener, 2008), so it stands to reason they would also influence anticipated meaningfulness, particularly from inferences related to doing well and doing work with and others. The Big Five traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion seem particularly relevant to my study variables, and thus were chosen as controls, measured using the Mini IPIP (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006), with items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = very inaccurate to 5 = very accurate. Sample items included: "I keep in the background", "I often forget to put things back in their proper place"," I get easily upset. Coefficient alphas were the following: conscientiousness ($\alpha = .70$), agreeableness ($\alpha = .69$), extraversion ($\alpha = .81$).

Number of Other Job Offers. I controlled for number of outstanding offers participants had at the time of data collection. I controlled for this because outstanding offers may influence model variables regarding a focal firm, such as intentions to accept an offer from an organization that has yet to extend a formal offer, given that meta-analytic results in the recruiting literature show that perceived alternatives influence recruiting outcome variables (Chapman et al., 2005).

Time Since Application. With regard to time, I controlled for the time elapsed between the time of application and when Survey 1 data was collected. The more elapsed time between application submission and Survey 1 completion allows for further inquiry and learning related to organizational characteristics and its people, via interactions with recruiters (Chapman et al., 2005), employer-provided websites and publications (Breaugh, 2013; Dineen & Soltis, 2011), and non-employer provided word of mouth sources (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009). All of these impact job seeker intentions (Chapman et al., 2005) and presumably my model's predicted antecedents to those intentions.

ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

I conducted a number of CFA analyses to satisfy two important objectives. The objective of the first CFA was to test the overall fit to the data of the measurement model that I hypothesized. The objective of the second CFA was to analyze the factor structure of similar constructs to anticipated meaningfulness in an effort to assess discriminant validity.

As is recommended, I used a number of different fit indices with different measurement properties (Hu & Bentler, 1998) The commonly reported chi-square test is a 'badness of fit' statistic that examines the discrepancy between sample and estimated covariances. If the chi square statistic is greater than the critical value at the desired significance level ($\alpha = .05$), convention says to conclude the model does not fit. Because the chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size, researchers commonly consider a chi-square value to degrees of freedom of less than 2 to 1 indicative of 'good fit' (Arbuckle, 1997). I report both RMSEA and SRMR, two commonly reported absolute fit indices, which by definition do not use an alternative model as a base for comparison. RMSEA indicates the average size of misfit at the population level. RMSEA less than or equal to .05 indicates 'good fit,' while a value between .05 and .08 indicates 'fair or mediocre fit'(citation). SRMR indicates the average size of discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariance matrix, with values less than .05 indicating good fit. Finally, I report two commonly reported incremental fit indices that compare a given model to the null model—CFI and TLI. CFI and TLI range from 0 to 1, with CFI values .95 and above indicative of a good fitting model and .90 indicative of fair fit, and TLI values of .90 or above indicating good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

I conducted the first CFA for the purpose of testing the overall fit of the measurement model that I hypothesized, using the criteria outlined above. To assess the validity of hypothesized measurement model, I compared the overall fit of the hypothesized model to alternative measurement models, using the fit indices above. Chi-square difference testing allowed for further comparison of each alternative model fit to

that of the hypothesized model. A significant, positive chi-square difference compared to the hypothesized model (i.e. a larger $\Delta\chi^2$ value for an alternative model) indicates the hypothesized model's superior fit. Alternatively, A significant, negative chi-square difference compared to the hypothesized model (i.e. a smaller $\Delta\chi^2$ value for an alternative model) indicates the hypothesized model's inferior fit.

I conducted the second CFA, considering that *anticipated meaningfulness*, *anticipated PO fit* and *anticipated PJ fit*, and *calling* are similar constructs. Thus, I analyzed the factor structure of each of the variables using a CFA with the aim of establishing discriminant validity of anticipated meaningfulness from the other constructs. Measures for each of the four constructs are relatively short—5 items or less—so there is no need to group the items in parcels (Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999) for the purpose of raising statistical power. Given the two dimensions of calling established in the calling literature, and the low reliability for the composite measure (α = .15), I began with a model with five latent factors, whereby each multi-scale item loads on one first-order latent factor, will be assessed for adequately of fit with the data using the fit indices mentioned previously. To further assess discriminant validity, I computed three four-factor CFAs, including one that collapses the two dimensions of calling into a single factor, as well as ones that collapse each dimension with anticipated meaningfulness. Chi-square difference tests revealed if any of the four-factor models provide a better fit than the five-factor model. Three three-factor models I computed were those that collapsed anticipated meaningfulness with calling, anticipated PO fit, and anticipated PJ fit. A test two-factor model combined anticipated meaningfulness

with both forms of anticipated fit. Lastly, I will compute a single factor CFA. These analyses will provide evidence whether or not anticipated meaningfulness, anticipated PO and PJ fit, and calling are four distinct latent factors. Results of this CFA testing are reported and described in Chapter 4.

Path Analysis

I theorize a conditional indirect effects model, with conditional effects being at both the first stage and second stage of the mediation. To analyze the results, all hypotheses were tested using OLS regression analysis using an SPSS macro called PROCESS (Hayes, 2017) with bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals for the indirect and conditional indirect effects, based on 10,000 bootstrap samples, unless otherwise noted. While the use of OLS regression when estimating mediation is commonplace, Hayes (2013) notes that as models increase in complexity, widespread belief exists that maximum likelihood-based structural equation modeling (SEM) is superior or even necessary (e.g. Iacobucci, Saldanha, & Deng, 2007), and thus I considered SEM as an alternative approach.

I opted to use OLS regression for the following reasons. First, even if I would align with the notion that a complex mediation model necessitates the use of SEM, my model is not overly complex with just 3 antecedents, 2 moderators, and 1 mediator. Second, Hayes (2017, 2013) demonstrated that when comparing path coefficients and standard errors of models analyzed using both SEM and PROCESS, both are the same to three decimal places, and thus asserts that any differences should be of no concern. Notably, for smaller samples such as this one, path coefficient inferential tests may have

a stronger probability of slight error, as p-values from an SEM program usually rely on the normal distribution rather than the t-distribution, as is the case with OLS regression (Hayes, 2013). Hayes (2017) notes that in larger samples, this difference is of no consequence, however, in smaller samples the t-distribution utilized by OLS regression is more appropriate from which to derive p-values for regression coefficients. Third, the added advantage of computing bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals to determine significance seems to warrant the choice of using OLS regression using PROCESS over SEM. In addition to using OLS regression, I will also test the omnibus model using MPlus software.

Using PROCESS to test this model required running a regression for each single pathway in the same SPSS session, ensuring the generated bootstraps would begin at the same place each time (Hayes, 2017), then interpreting the results together. More specifically, I first ran a regression with the one antecedent (anticipated job self-efficacy), its 1st stage moderator, (achievement value), the mediator (anticipated meaningfulness), its 2nd stage moderator (work centrality) and the outcome variable (acceptance intentions), while including the model variables not part of the first pathway—the other antecedents (anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact and anticipated belongingness) and other moderator (altruism value) as control variables. Next, in the same SPSS session, I ran a regression with the second of the antecedents (anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact), its moderator, (altruism value), the mediator (anticipated meaningfulness), the second-stage moderator (work centrality), and the outcome variable (acceptance intentions), with the variables not part of the

second pathway—the other antecedents (anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated belongingness) and other moderator (achievement value) as control variables. Finally, in the same SPSS session, I ran a regression with the last of the antecedents (anticipated belongingness), its first-stage moderator, (altruism value), the mediator (anticipated meaningfulness), the second-stage moderator (work centrality), and the outcome variable (acceptance intentions), with the variables not part of the second pathway—the other antecedents (anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact) and other moderator (achievement value) as control variables.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Following descriptions in Chapter 3 of the sample, research design, measures, and analytical strategy I utilized to test my model, in this chapter I report the results of my study. First, I give a short overview of some noteworthy descriptive statistics and correlations. Second, I report the results of the confirmatory factor analyses in which I tested the proposed model for validity. Third, I report the results of my analysis of the model I used to test my hypotheses. Lastly, I test a number of alternative models and detail the results of some exploratory post-hoc analyses.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATIONS

Table 1 indicates the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the study variables. In this section, I will succinctly remark on a few findings in Table 2 that are noteworthy. First, I will note the base rates for the model variables. Anticipated job self-efficacy (M = 3.795, SD = .56), ABOI (M = 3.92, SD = .69), and anticipated belongingness (M = 3.65, SD = .77) were all measured on a five-point scale; anticipated meaningfulness (M = 4.72, SD = .72) on a six-point scale; and acceptance intentions (M = 5.77, SD = 1.3) on a seven-point scale. Several low reliabilities are also worthy of mention. The reliabilities for the achievement work value (α = .59) and altruism work value (α = .42) fell below commonly acceptable standards. While the venerable Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ) (Rounds et al., 1981) was used for measurement, the scale was modified to eliminate the use of ipsative measures after

careful consideration. This modification resulted in less items and perhaps contributed to lower reliabilities than this measure typically provides.

Second, please note some noteworthy correlations between model variables in the study. The intercorrelations between my model's three determinants of anticipated meaningfulness are all significant but weak, with the correlation between AOBI and anticipated belongingness being the strongest (r = .22). Among correlations between the two first stage moderators and the three predictors, only the relationships between AOBI and altruism (r = .20) and AOBI and achievement (r = .21) are significant. The two first-stage moderators are weakly correlated with each other (r = .19). Significant correlations between anticipated meaningfulness and some model variables exist, particularly between it and anticipated job self-efficacy (r = .15), achievement value (r = .19), and ABOI (r = .50), with the relationship with AOBI notably being moderate to strong. Looking at correlations between the three main predictors and moderators with the acceptance intentions outcome, anticipated job self-efficacy is significantly and positively correlated (r = .21), as is anticipated meaningfulness (r = .29). No other correlations in the model are significant. To test assumptions of discriminant validity of my model's constructs, I will analyze the fit my hypothesized model with various alternatives that collapse constructs in the section to follow.

Third, I want to highlight correlations between anticipated meaningfulness and similar constructs mentioned previously. A fairly strong correlation exists between anticipated meaningfulness and person organization (PO) fit (r = .51). Weaker correlations exist with person job (PJ) fit (r = .15), calling (r = .23), and one of its two

aspects—calling-presence (r = .28). Searching for one's calling (calling-search) was not significantly related to anticipated meaningfulness Given construct similarity, I analyzed the factor structure of each of these variables, also using a CFA analysis.

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSES

Fit of Hypothesized Model and Comparison to Alternatives

I conducted a CFA to test the overall fit of my hypothesized measurement model to the data. Some measures of constructs were longer than five items, so grouping the items into parcels was necessary to raise statistical power (Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999). Parcels were formed based on theory and convention when possible, while others were broken into three random parcels (Landis, Beal, & Telsuk, 2000). Following the order of the variables in the model, anticipated job self-efficacy was broken into 3 random parcels. AOBI was broken into three parcels following the 3 dimensions of AOBI outlined by Grant (2008a)— magnitude, frequency, and scope. Anticipated belongingness was broken into three random parcels. Achievement, altruism, and anticipated meaningfulness were all five items or less, so grouping items for these variables was unnecessary (Hall et al., 1999). Finally, work centrality was broken into three random parcels.

The hypothesized model contains eight latent factors: anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated job opportunity for beneficiary impact (AOBI), anticipated belongingness, achievement work value, altruism work value, anticipated meaningfulness, work centrality, and acceptance intentions. The results of the CFA are

shown in Table 2. Results indicate acceptance fit for the hypothesized model—χ^2 (243) = 435.22, $p < .05$, RMSEA = .064; SRMR = .075; CFI = .913; TLI = .893.

I then compared the hypothesized model with several alternative models, in which the correlation between each pair or group of factors is fixed to one, by conducting chi-square difference tests (Bagozzi, Yi, Phillips, 1991). These results are also shown in Table 2. In the first alternative model, I combined the two work values. A chi-square difference test revealed that this model was not statistically different from the hypothesized model. In the second alternative model, I combined AOBI and anticipated meaningfulness, due to the moderately high correlation between the two factors. In the third alternative model, I combined achievement with anticipated job self-efficacy as well as altruism with AOBI. Results indicate that my hypothesized model is superior to each alternative model with fixed correlations, indicated by significant chi-square difference tests as well as other indicators including higher RMSEA and SRMR values. That being said, the hypothesized model was not a good fitting model according to fit indices. I suspected this might be due to the poor reliabilities of the achievement and altruism. Thus, I tested a model where I eliminated achievement and altruism. This model was indicative of adequate fit to the data (χ^2 (148) = 262.02, $p < .05$; RMSEA .063; SRMR = .071; CFI .945; TLI = .930) and far superior to even the hypothesized model. Other models that eliminated achievement and altruism, while combining other latent factors displayed inferior fit indices to the model that just eliminated the achievement and altruism. Interestingly, the model that eliminated achievement and altruism while combining work centrality and anticipated meaningfulness displayed

slightly superior fit to the hypothesized model. Yet, in the model when just work centrality and anticipated meaningfulness were combined and achievement and altruism remained, the hypothesized model fit the data better.

In sum, these CFA results seem to provide evidence that the presence of achievement and altruism as latent factors strongly contributed to less than desirable fit to the data. Despite these results, I proceeded to use the hypothesized eight-factor measurement model for the causal model analysis, given both work values were proposed moderators with effects that can easily be isolated and thus not contaminate the relationships of other variables in the model.

Discriminant Validity Assessment of Anticipated Meaningfulness

As described in Chapter 3, I conducted another CFA to analyze the factor structure of each of these similar constructs: anticipated meaningfulness, anticipated PO fit, anticipated PJ fit, and calling to establish discriminant validity of anticipated meaningfulness from the others. As indicated previously in Chapter 3, measures of each construct are short—5 items or less—so grouping the items into parcels was unnecessary to raise statistical power (Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999).

Table 3 shows the results of the CFA with the varying number of latent factors. First shown is the five latent factor measurement model with anticipated meaningfulness, anticipated PO fit, anticipated PJ fit, and calling-search and calling-presence as the five factors. Calling scholars theoretically distinguish among these two aspects of calling (e.g. Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012) and validity measures confirm this distinction. The five-factor measurement model fit the data reasonably well

(χ^2 (80) = 232.18, p < .01; RMSEA = .099; SRMR = .050; CFI = .923; TLI = .899), with fit indices with the exception of RMSEA indicating fair fit. Next, is a four-factor model that collapsed calling-search and calling-presence into a single latent factor. Results (χ^2 (84) = 379.82, p < .01; RMSEA = .104; SRMR = .054; CFI = .917; TLI = .894) indicate inferior fit to the five-factor model comparing all indices, including a significant chi-square difference test ($\Delta\chi^2$ (4) = 147.64, p < .01).

In search of better fit, two subsequent four-factor measurement models combining anticipated meaningfulness to calling-presence and then to calling-search were then considered, with both having inferior fit indices to the five-factor model. The same was true for three three-factor models, whereby anticipated meaningfulness was combined with either PO fit, PJ fit, or the calling measure that combined calling-search and calling-presence. Fit indices from each three-factor model show that the five-factor model where anticipated meaningfulness is not combined with any of these similar constructs is superior. A two-factor model combining both forms of fit with anticipated meaningfulness had inferior fit indices to any of the previous three or four-factor models. Finally, a one-factor model that combining all five constructs displayed the poorest fit of any model. In total, these results provide evidence that anticipated meaningfulness is distinct from anticipated PO fit, anticipated PJ fit, calling, and both of its two dimensions, calling-presence and calling-search.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

As outlined in Chapter 3, I tested my hypotheses by analyzing three regression models for each of the three moderated mediation pathways. As is recommended, I made

sure to control for the other model variables that were not part of each pathway I was testing at the time (Hayes, 2017). Additionally, the control variables I used for all parts of the analysis were: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since the job seeker applied to the focal organization, calling-search, number of job offers, and gender. Variables were mean-centered prior to the analysis and regressions were run to obtain standardized coefficients.

Pathway 1: Anticipated Job-Self Efficacy to Acceptance Intentions

The first moderated mediation path I examined was anticipated job self-efficacy → anticipated meaningfulness → acceptance intentions, moderated by the first-stage moderator —achievement work value—and second stage moderator—work centrality. The mediation portion of the pathway was examined first, with results shown in Table 4. This model allows for consideration of Hypothesis 1, which predicts a positive relationship between anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated meaningfulness and Hypothesis 7, which predicts a positive relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions. Results do not support Hypothesis 1, as anticipated job self-efficacy did not contribute to greater anticipated meaningfulness (β = .062, 95% CI = -.079 to .202). Support is demonstrated for Hypothesis 7, as anticipated meaningfulness was significantly and positively related to a job seeker's acceptance intentions (β = .267, 95% CI = .118 to .415). Although not directly hypothesized in my model, the indirect and direct of anticipated job self-efficacy on acceptance intentions were explored are worthy of mention. While there are no significant indirect (mediation) effects between anticipated job self-efficacy and acceptance intentions (ab = .016 95% CI = (-.018 to

.063), anticipated job self-efficacy does a have positive direct effect on acceptance intentions (β = .161, 95% CI = .018 to .302), i.e. with anticipated meaningfulness included in the regression equation.

After examining the mediation only portion of the anticipated job self-efficacy pathway to acceptance intentions, I re-examined this pathway for both moderation and moderated mediation. Table 5 shows regression results for achievement's first-stage moderation of anticipated job self-efficacy posited by Hypothesis 2, while Table 6 shows regression results for work centrality's second-stage moderation of anticipated meaningfulness posited by Hypothesis 8. Table 5 shows the achievement value and anticipated job self-efficacy interaction term is not significant (β = .075, 95% CI = -.074 to .224), providing a lack of support for Hypothesis 2. Table 6 shows the anticipated meaningfulness and work centrality interaction term is not significant (β = -.033, 95% CI = -.157 to .091) providing a lack of support for Hypothesis 8. Considering the entire pathway, Table 7 provides evidence for a lack of moderated mediation by both achievement and work centrality by showing the mediation at two levels of the moderators (+1 SD and -1 SD), as suggested by Cohen et al., (2013). The indirect effect of job seekers' anticipated job self-efficacy on acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness was not significant for achievement at low levels (*ab* = .002, 95% CI = -.047, .046) or high levels (*ab* = .027, 95% CI = -.019, .101). Neither, was this indirect effect was significant for work centrality at low levels (*ab* = .016, 95% CI = -.020, .073), or high levels (*ab* = .012, 95% CI = -.018, .067). Because of this insignificance at low and high levels of both moderating variables, the change in the indirect effects from low

to high levels were also not significant, indicating no moderated mediation by either achievement or work centrality.

Pathway 2: AOBI to Acceptance Intentions

The second moderated mediation path I examined was anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact (AOBI) → anticipated meaningfulness → acceptance intentions, moderated by the first-stage moderator —altruism work value—and second stage moderator—work centrality. The mediation portion of the pathway was examined first, with results shown in Table 8. This model allows for consideration of Hypothesis 3, which predicts a positive relationship between AOBI and anticipated meaningfulness. Support was already demonstrated for Hypothesis 7 during examination of the first pathway, which predicts a positive relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions. Results do support Hypothesis 3, as AOBI positively contributed to greater anticipated meaningfulness with a moderate to strong effect size (β = .492, 95% CI = .343 to .640). The indirect and direct of anticipated job self-efficacy on acceptance intentions are again worthy of mention. Significant indirect (mediation) effects exist between AOBI and acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness (ab = .143, 95% CI = (.069 to .229). Moreover, AOBI has no significant direct effect on acceptance intentions (β = -.128, 95% CI = -.287 to .031). These results show that the moderate positive effect a job seeker's AOBI on their acceptance intentions works entirely through the indirect effect of the mediator anticipated meaningfulness.

After examining the mediation only portion of the anticipated job self-efficacy pathway to acceptance intentions, I re-examined this pathway for hypothesized mediation effects, as well as moderated mediation. Table 9 shows regression results for altruism's first-stage moderation of AOBI posited by Hypothesis 4, while Table 10 shows regression results for work centrality's 2nd stage moderation of anticipated meaningfulness posited by Hypothesis 8. Table 9 shows the altruism value and AOBI interaction term is not significant (β = .159, 95% CI = -.016 to .334), providing a lack of support for Hypothesis 4. Although not shown, the effect size at +1 SD of altruism (β = .636, 95% CI = .418 to .855) is greater than at -1 SD of altruism (β = .348, 95% CI = .133 to .563), but the ΔR^2 was not significant (ΔR^2 = .013, p = .075) to indicate a significant moderating influence. Table 10 shows the anticipated meaningfulness and work centrality interaction term is not significant (β = -.038, 95% CI = -.161 to .085), providing a lack of support for Hypothesis 8 as well. Considering the entire pathway, Table 11 provides evidence for a lack of moderated mediation by both altruism and work centrality by showing the mediation at two levels of the moderators (+1 SD and -1 SD). The indirect effect of job seekers' AOBI on acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness was significant for altruism at low levels (*ab* = .101 95% CI = .027, .203) and high levels (*ab* = .185, 95% CI = .064, .286, but the difference is minimal (Δab = .007, moderated mediation index = -.046, 95% CI = -.021, .016). For the 2nd stage moderation, the indirect effect is significant for work centrality at low levels (*ab* = .152, 95% CI = .074, .241) but not at high levels (*ab* = .112, 95% CI = -.007, .237). That being said, the index for conditional moderated mediation (.039) contains zero (95% CI = -

.021, .015) leading to the conclusion that work centrality does not significantly moderate the mediation pathway from AOBI to acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness.

Pathway 3: Anticipated Belongingness to Acceptance Intentions

The third moderated mediation path I explored was anticipated belongingness → anticipated meaningfulness → acceptance intentions, moderated by the first-stage moderator —altruism work value—and second stage moderator—work centrality. The mediation only portion of the pathway was examined first, with results shown in Table 12. This model allows for consideration of Hypothesis 5, which predicts a positive relationship between anticipated belongingness and anticipated meaningfulness. The second stage of the model, again associated with Hypothesis 7, which predicts a positive relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions, was tested and supported in conjunction with previous models. Results do not support Hypothesis 5, as anticipated belongingness did not contribute to greater anticipated meaningfulness (β = -.032, 95% CI = -.175 to .110). Although not directly hypothesized in my model, the indirect and direct anticipated belongingness on acceptance intentions will be mentioned. No significant indirect (mediation) effects exist between anticipated belongingness and acceptance intentions (ab = -.002, 95% CI = (-.052 to .041). Furthermore, anticipated belongingness does not a have significant direct effect on acceptance intentions (β = .122, 95% CI = -.015 to .259).

Following examination of the mediation only portion of the anticipated job self-efficacy pathway to acceptance intentions, I re-examined this pathway for moderation as

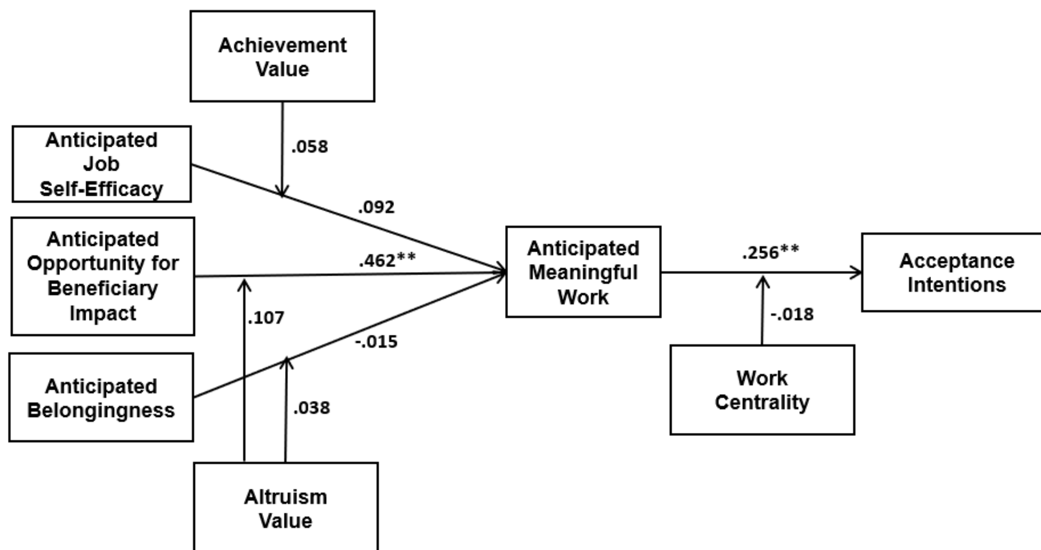
well as moderated mediation. Table 13 shows regression results for altruism's first-stage moderation of anticipated belongingness posited by Hypothesis 6, while Table 14 shows regression results for work centrality's second-stage moderation of anticipated meaningfulness posited by Hypothesis 8. Table 5 shows the altruism value and anticipated belongingness interaction term is not significant (β = .066, 95% CI = -.090 to .221), providing a lack of support for Hypothesis 6. Furthermore, Table 14 shows the anticipated meaningfulness and work centrality interaction term is not significant providing a lack of support for Hypothesis 8. Considering the entire pathway, Table 15 provides evidence for a lack of moderated mediation by both altruism and work centrality by showing the mediation at two levels of the moderators (+1 SD and -1 SD), as suggested by Cohen et al. (2013). The indirect effect of job seekers' anticipated belongingness on acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness was not significant for altruism at low levels (*ab* = .019, 95% CI = -.086, .028) or high levels (*ab* = .015, 95% CI = -.043, .080). This indirect effect was not significant for work centrality at low levels (*ab* = -.003, 95% CI = -.057, .046), or high levels (*ab* = -.0.02, 95% CI = -.048, .036).

Omnibus Model

In addition to testing each mediation pathway using the methods above, I also tested the model in its entirety with an omnibus test. Results indicate poor fit by commonly used standards (χ^2 (15) = 28.99, p < .01; RMSEA = .70; SRMR = .056; CFI = .853; TLI = .695). Figure 2 shows the results that are consistent with the previous moderated mediation analysis. Job seekers' anticipated opportunity for beneficiary

impact is positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness (β = .462, 95% CI = .331 to .593). This provides support for Hypothesis 3. Also, job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness is positively associated with acceptance intentions toward that organization (β = .256, 95% CI = .109 to .402). These results provide support for Hypothesis 7. All other effects were not significant, confirming a lack of support for the other hypotheses in the model.

FIGURE 2: Omnibus Test Results of Full Model



ALTERNATIVE CAUSAL MODELS

I tested an alternative model for the purpose of examining whether cross paths may exist. First, I tested a model in which the achievement work value moderated the relationship between AOBI and anticipated meaningfulness. A significant correlation between achievement and ABOI provided impetus for the model. Results of testing this model did not support this relationship. The interaction term of AOBI and achievement

value was not significant (β = -.059, 95% CI = -.201 to .092). Considering the entire pathway, Table 16 provides additional evidence for a lack of moderated mediation by both achievement and work centrality by showing the mediation at two levels of the moderators (+1 SD and -1 SD). The indirect effect of job seekers' AOBI on acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness was significant and higher for achievement at low levels (*ab* = .146, 95% CI = .056, .257) than at high levels (*ab* = .119, 95% CI = .041, .214), but the difference is minimal (Δab = .007, moderated mediation index = -.006, 95% CI = -.009, .027). For the 2nd stage moderation, the indirect effect is significant for work centrality at low levels (*ab* = .148, 95% CI = .069, .241) but not at high levels (*ab* = .115, 95% CI = -.004, .245). That being said, the index for conditional moderated mediation (-.016) contains zero (95% CI = -.062, .022) leading to the conclusion that work centrality does not significantly moderate the mediation pathway from AOBI to acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness with achievement as the first-stage moderator. The conclusion reached is that achievement does moderate the effects of AOBI on its pathway to influence acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness.

A second alternative moderation I wanted to test involved switching the stages in which the moderators entered the mediation. Although work centrality failed to moderate the relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions, I wanted to investigate whether it might moderate the relationship between the initial predictor and anticipated meaningfulness (i.e. the first stage moderation). Secondarily, I sought to determine if a person's work value might influence the relationship between

anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions. Given the fact results show only one significant mediation path, I chose to test this alternative model using the significant AOBI → anticipated meaningfulness → acceptance intentions pathway. The interaction term of AOBI and work centrality is not significant (β = -.025, 95% CI = -.151 to .100), thus providing no evidence of a first-stage moderation effect by work centrality. Furthermore, the interaction term of anticipated meaningfulness and altruism is also not significant (β = -.069, 95% CI = -.233 to .095), providing no evidence for a stage moderation effect by a person's altruism value. This evidence shows a lack of support for reversing the order of the stages of moderation from the hypothesized model, as neither the hypothesized model nor this alternative model show moderated mediation effects.

POST-HOC ANALYSES

Because my theoretical discussion forwarded that anticipated PO fit and anticipated PJ fit may likely be antecedents of anticipated meaningfulness, I chose not to control for their effects in my model analyses. That being the case, I sought to determine the influence on anticipated meaningfulness of both types of anticipated fit inside and outside my model's context, including whether anticipated meaningfulness was a proximal outcome and if it had predictive power over these two related constructs.

Initially, I conducted supplementary tests to consider the fit as antecedent question. With no other variables in the regression equations, results revealed that both PO fit and PJ fit, which were measured at Time 1 in my study, are positively related to perceptions of anticipated meaningfulness at Time 2, 1 week later. PO fit had a much

larger influence on anticipated meaningfulness (β = .536, 95% CI = .406 to .667) than PJ fit (β = .149, 95% CI = .008 to .291).

Next, I tested how anticipated fit influenced the relationships in my model's context, and explored the possibility discussed earlier of anticipated meaningfulness being a more proximal predictor of recruiting outcomes than anticipated fit. To do so, I first explored how both anticipated PO fit and PJ impacted the AOBI → acceptance intentions pathway. Finally, I explored how they both affected the JSE to acceptance intentions pathway. I did not test the anticipated belongingness to acceptance intentions pathway, given the non-significant direct and indirect effects reported earlier.

First, I considered a model with anticipated PO fit as both a separate mediator of the AOBI → acceptance intentions relationship, and a serial mediator whereby anticipated PO fit led to anticipated meaningfulness and then acceptance intentions. Table 17 shows the results. With PO fit in the regression equation, AOBI still positively predicted anticipated meaningfulness (β = .416, 95% CI = .297 to .534). AOBI predicted anticipated meaningfulness more than it predicted than anticipated PO fit (β = .245, 95% CI = .104 to .380). Furthermore, anticipated meaningfulness still predicted acceptance intentions (β = .177, 95% CI = .120 to .341), when controlling for AOBI and anticipated PO fit, although effects were reduced ($\Delta\beta$ = .090) compared to when PO fit was not in the regression equation. Anticipated PO also predicted acceptance intentions (β = .267, 95% CI = .123 to .422). When considering separate mediation pathways, both anticipated meaningfulness (a_1b_1 = .067, 95% CI = .020 to .124) and anticipated PO fit (a_2b_2 = .073, 95% CI = .120 to .341) mediated the AOBI to acceptance intentions

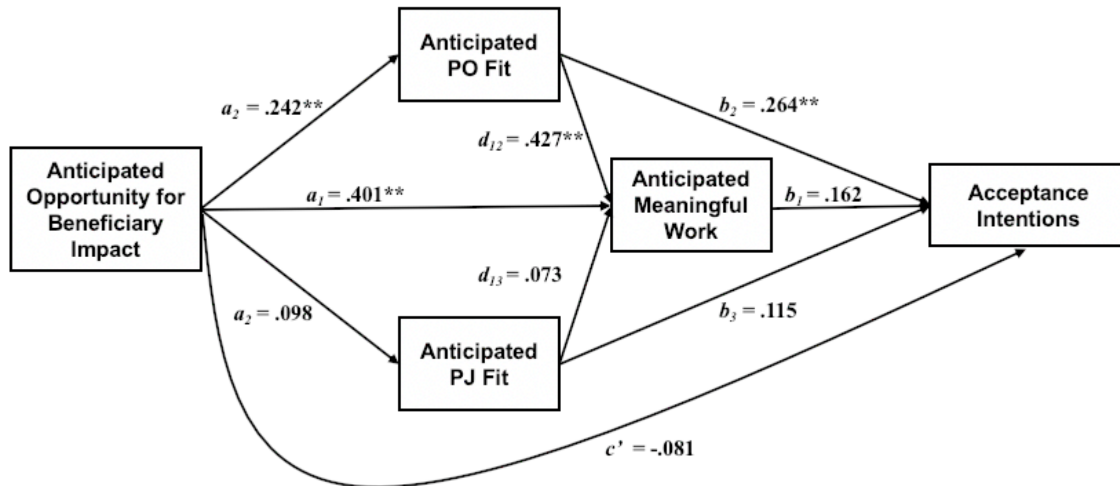
relationship. Moreover, anticipated PO fit predicted anticipated meaningfulness (β = .433, 95% CI = .313 to .553) and I found evidence of a small serial mediation by which AOBI leads to anticipated PO fit, followed by anticipated meaningfulness and ultimately acceptance intentions ($a_1d_{12}b_2$ = .019, 95% CI = .001 to .042). As was the case without PO fit in the model, the direct effect of AOBI on acceptance intentions was not significant. Instead, the effect of AOBI on acceptance intentions operated solely through the positive indirect effects (β = .157, 95% CI = .067 to .259), comprised of indirect effects through anticipated meaningfulness and anticipated PO fit separately, and a serial indirect effect through them both. Together, these indirect effects are slightly more ($\Delta\beta$ = .029) than the mediating effect of anticipated meaningfulness when PO fit is not included in the model. In sum, these results show the influence of anticipated meaningfulness on acceptance intentions is reduced when controlling for the effects of anticipated PO fit, and also suggest anticipated PO fit and anticipated meaningfulness both offer explanatory power for why anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact influence job seekers acceptance intentions. An additional analysis using organizational attraction as the outcome variable produced the same pattern of results among all relationships, with effect sizes roughly .01 higher compared to the model with acceptance intentions as the outcome variable. For the sake of parsimony, these presentation and discussion of these results have been omitted.

Second, I considered a model with anticipated PJ fit as both a separate mediator of the AOBI to acceptance intentions relationship, and a serial mediator whereby anticipated PJ fit led to anticipated meaningfulness and then acceptance intentions. Table

18 shows the results. With PJ fit in the regression equation, AOBI still positively predicted anticipated meaningfulness (β = .510, 95% CI = .381 to .640), while it does not predict PJ fit. Furthermore, anticipated meaningfulness still predicted acceptance intentions (β = .270, 95% CI = .125 to .414), when controlling for AOBI and anticipated PJ fit, although effects were reduced ($\Delta\beta$ = .090) compared to when PJ fit was not in the regression equation in my hypothesized model. Anticipated PJ also predicted acceptance intentions (β = .131, 95% CI = .006 to .257). When considering separate mediation pathways, only anticipated meaningfulness (a_1b_1 = .135, 95% CI = .057 to .221) mediated the AOBI to acceptance intentions relationship. In contrast to the previous model, anticipated PJ fit did not predict anticipated meaningfulness, nor was there evidence of serial mediation ($a_1d_{12}b_2$ = .002, 95% CI = -.003 to .011). As with previous models, the direct effect of AOBI on acceptance intentions was non-significant. Instead, the effect of AOBI on acceptance intentions operated solely through the positive indirect effects (β = .157, 95% CI = .067 to .259), comprised of indirect effects through anticipated meaningfulness. In sum, these results show the influence of anticipated meaningfulness on acceptance intentions is not impacted significantly when controlling for the effects of anticipated PJ fit, and also suggest anticipated PJ fit does not offer explanatory power for why anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact influence job seekers acceptance intentions. Again, this model was replicated substituting organizational attraction as the outcome variable and produced the same pattern of results among all relationships. Again, for the sake of parsimony, specific results are not included.

Third, I considered a model with both anticipated PO and PJ fit as both separate mediators of the AOBI to acceptance intentions relationship, and two serial mediation pathways, whereby AOBI led to anticipated PO fit or PJ, then to anticipated meaningfulness, and finally acceptance intentions. Figure 3 depicts this model and Table 19 shows the results. I will only highlight deviations from the previous two models' results. With both forms of anticipated fit in the regression equation, only the 2nd stage direct effect of anticipated PO fit significantly impacts acceptance intentions (β = .264, 95% CI = .110 to .417). Zero in the confidence interval for the effect of anticipated meaningfulness (β = .162, 95% CI = -.002 to .327) signals its non-significant effect. However, the indirect effect through anticipated meaningfulness remains significant (β = .067, 95% CI = .002 to .142), as does the indirect effect through PO fit (β = .064, 95% CI = .019 to .123). Neither serial mediation from PO fit or PJ fit to anticipated meaningfulness is significant, making the total indirect effects coming through the separate PO fit and anticipated meaningfulness pathways the only significant effects comprising the total effect of this model that included both forms of anticipated fit. Running the same model with organizational attraction yielded slightly different results (see Table 20). The link from anticipated meaningfulness to organizational attraction, controlling for both anticipated PO and PJ fit remains significant in this model (β = .169, 95% CI = .023 to .315), whereas with acceptance intentions it does not. Additionally, there is a very small serial mediation effect through PO fit and then through anticipated meaningfulness ($a_1d_{12}b_2$ = .019, 95% CI = .001 to .043), unlike the case when acceptance intentions is the outcome variable.

FIGURE 3: Serial Mediation Model: AOBI to Acceptance Intentions Through Anticipated PO Fit or PJ Fit and Anticipated Meaningful Work



Overall, these results indicate the both anticipated meaningfulness and anticipated PO fit both serve to explain how job seekers' inference of anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact influences their acceptance intentions, and also their organizational attraction. Furthermore, when the effects of PO fit and PJ fit are controlled for, the impact of anticipated meaningfulness is reduced but it still has explanatory power to predict both outcomes.

TABLE 1 — Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Between Study Variables

	Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Job Self Efficacy	3.80	.56	**.79**	.14	.20	-.03	-.01	.15	-.02	.21	.19	.05	-.16
2	AOBI	3.93	.69	.14	**.92**	.22	.21	.20	.50	-.03	.08	.25	.09	-.16
3	Anticipated Belongingness	3.65	.77	.20	.22	**.87**	.17	.13	.12	.05	.09	.04	-.03	-.13
4	Achievement Value	3.65	.42	-.03	.21	.17	**.59**	.19	.19	.06	-.01	.12	.11	.08
5	Altruism Value	3.43	.50	-.01	.20	.13	.19	**.42**	.10	-.07	.09	.14	.09	-.10
6	Anticipated Meaningfulness	4.72	.71	.15	.50	.12	.19	.10	**.89**	.09	.29	.51	.15	-.10
7	Work Centrality	3.04	.56	-.02	-.03	.05	.06	-.07	.09	**.72**	.01	.14	.04	.11
8	Acceptance Intentions	5.77	1.27	.21	.08	.09	-.01	.09	.29	.01	**.91**	.35	.17	.07
9	Person Organization Fit	4.88	.69	.19	.25	.04	.12	.14	.51	.14	.35	**.90**	.10	-.09
10	Person Job Fit	3.75	.82	.05	.09	-.03	.11	.09	.15	.04	.17	.10	**.88**	-.06
11	Economic Pressure	2.01	.95	-.16	-.16	-.13	.08	-.10	-.10	.11	.07	-.09	-.06	**.67**
12	Calling	2.14	.64	-.01	.22	.12	.18	.16	.22	.06	-.01	.15	.05	-.11
13	Calling - Presence	1.87	1.11	.10	.22	.18	.13	.04	.28	.15	.09	.09	.01	-.04
14	Calling- Search	2.41	1.16	-.10	.03	-.05	.08	.14	-.02	-.07	-.10	.08	.05	-.09
15	Extraversion	3.25	.94	.32	.31	.27	.04	.08	.17	.04	.04	.11	.06	-.18
16	Conscientiousness	3.85	.75	.14	-.03	.16	-.03	.08	.03	-.01	.03	.08	-.07	-.12
17	Agreeableness	4.20	.63	.18	.25	.11	.10	.27	.12	-.18	.23	.26	.08	-.13
18	Number of Job Offers	.38	.69	.12	.07	.02	-.03	-.10	.06	.12	-.03	.14	-.04	.08
19	Time Since Applied to FO	2.09	1.33	-.03	-.11	.11	-.09	.01	-.09	.00	-.16	-.09	.07	.03
20	Gender	1.63	.49	-.13	-.01	-.04	.09	.13	-.08	-.05	-.13	-.01	.01	-.05
21	Organizational Attraction	4.51	.54	.19	.11	.01	.06	.18	.34	-.09	.66	.44	.10	.02

Note: N = 197. Coefficient alphas are on the diagonal in bold. Correlations with an absolute value .15 or above are significant at $p < .05$ and have 95% confidence intervals that exclude zero. Correlations with an absolute value of .19 or above are significant at $p < .01$.

TABLE 1 – Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Between Study Variables (continued)

	Variable	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1	Job Self Efficacy	-.01	.10	-.10	.32	.14	.18	.12	-.03	-.13	.19
2	AOBI	.22	.22	.03	.31	-.03	.25	.07	-.11	-.01	.11
3	Anticipated Belongingness	.12	.18	-.05	.27	.16	.11	.02	.11	-.04	.01
4	Achievement Value	.18	.13	.08	.04	-.03	.10	-.03	-.09	.09	.06
5	Altruism Value	.16	.04	.14	.08	.08	.27	-.10	.01	.13	.18
6	Anticipated Meaningfulness	.22	.28	-.02	.17	.03	.12	.06	-.09	-.08	.34
7	Work Centrality	.06	.15	-.07	.04	-.01	-.18	.12	.00	-.05	-.09
8	Acceptance Intentions	-.01	.09	-.10	.04	.03	.23	-.03	-.16	-.13	.66
9	Person Organization Fit	.15	.09	.08	.11	.08	.26	.14	-.09	-.01	.44
10	Person Job Fit	.05	.01	.05	.06	-.07	.08	-.04	.07	.01	.10
11	Economic Pressure	-.11	-.04	-.09	-.18	-.12	-.13	.08	.03	-.05	.02
12	Calling	**.15**	.54	.59	.10	-.01	.07	-.05	.06	-.06	.01
13	Calling - Presence	.54	**.87**	-.36	.24	.13	.06	.04	-.08	-.08	.08
14	Calling- Search	.59	-.36	**.86**	-.11	-.14	.01	-.09	.15	.00	-.06
15	Extraversion	.10	.24	-.11	**.81**	-.02	.29	.16	-.01	.02	.00
16	Conscientiousness	-.01	.13	-.14	-.02	**.70**	.01	-.05	-.16	.16	.05
17	Agreeableness	.07	.06	.01	.29	.01	**.69**	-.01	.07	.14	.19
18	Number of Job Offers	-.05	.04	-.09	.16	-.05	-.01	-	.03	-.15	.00
19	Time Since Applied to FO	.06	-.08	.15	-.01	-.16	.07	.03	-	-.01	-.11
20	Gender	-.06	-.08	.00	.02	.16	.14	-.15	-.01	-	-.03
21	Organizational Attraction	.01	.08	-.06	.00	.05	.19	.00	-.11	-.03	**.90**

Note: N = 197. Coefficient alphas are on the diagonal in bold. Correlations with an absolute value of .15 or above are significant at $p < .05$ and have 95% confidence intervals that exclude zero. Correlations with an absolute value of .19 or above are significant at $p < .01$.

TABLE 2 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Hypothesized Measurement Model

Factor Structure	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df) (from #1)	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
1. Eight factors (hypothesized model)	435.22 (243)		.064	.075	.913	.893
2. Seven factors (combining achievement and altruism work values)	446.24 (250)	14.02 (7)	.064	.075	.912	.894
3. Seven factors (combining AOBI and anticipated meaningfulness)	607.36 (250)	172.14 (7)*	.086	.091	.839	.807
4. Seven factors (combining WC and anticipated meaningfulness)	560.94 (250)	125.72 (7)*	.080	.084	.860	.832
5. Six factors (collapsing achievement with anticipated JSE and altruism with AOBI)	524.02 (256)	88.8 (13)*	.073	.094	.879	.858
6. Six factors (eliminating achievement and altruism)	262.02 (148)	-173.20 (95)*	.063	.071	.945	.930
7. Five factors (eliminating achievement and altruism and combining WC and AM)	411.52 (156)	-23.7 (87)	.092	.086	.877	.851
8. Five factors (eliminating achievement and altruism and combining anticipated JSE & belongingness	477.11 (156)	-41.89 (87)	.103	.086	.846	.812
9. Four factors (collapsing all IV's)	NONE		NONE	.123	1.000	No value

Note: χ^2 (df) = chi square test of model fit with (degrees of freedom), RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, residual, SRMR = root mean square residual, CFI = comparative fix index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index *p < .05.

TABLE 3 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis to Assess Discriminant Validity of Anticipated Meaningfulness from Similar Constructs: PO Fit, PJ Fit, & Calling

Factor Structure	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df) (from #1)	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
1. Five factors (separating calling-presence and calling-search)	232.18 (80)		.099	.050	.923	.899
2. Four factors (Calling as single factor)	379.82 (84)	147.64 (4)*	.104	.054	.917	.894
3. Four factors (meaningfulness + calling-presence)	431.34 (84)	199.16 (4)*	.146	.092	.824	.780
4. Four factors (meaningfulness + calling-search)	442.93 (84)	210.75 (4)*	.148	.099	.818	.772
5. Three factors (combining anticipated meaningfulness and calling)	600.43 (87)	368.25 (7)*	.174	.115	.739	.686
6. Three factors (combining anticipated meaningfulness and PO fit)	656.64 (87)	424.46 (7)*	.184	.108	.771	.651
7. Three factors (combining anticipated Meaningfulness, PJ fit)	628.27 (87)	396.09 (7)*	.179	.104	.725	.669
8. Two factors (combining anticipated meaningfulness, PO fit, PJ fit)	864.89 (89)	632.71 (9)*	.212	.116	.606	.536
9. One factor (combining all)	1085.3 (90)	852.82 (10)*	.239	.130	.495	.411

Note: χ^2 (df) = chi square test of model fit with (degrees of freedom), RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, residual, SRMR = root mean square residual, CFI = comparative fix index, TLI = Tucker Lewis Index. *p < .05.

TABLE 4 – Mediation Model of Pathway 1: Effects of Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work

Regression Equation	Type of Effect	Value	95% CI (LL, UL)
Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy → Anticipated Meaningfulness	First stage (H1)	β = .062	(-.079 to .202)
Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Second stage (H7)	β = .267**	(.118 to .415)
Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect	*ab* = .016	(-.018 to .063)
Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy → Acceptance Intentions (controlling for anticipated meaningfulness)	Direct	β = .161*	(.018 to .302)
Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy → Acceptance Intentions	Total	β = .172*	(.037 to .292)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; The following variables were controlled for in the analysis: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since application to the focal organization, calling-search, # of job offers, and gender, as well as the variables in other pathways of the model—AOBI, anticipated belongingness, and altruism work value. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 5 – Pathway 1 Regression Results: Achievement Work Value as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy and Anticipated Meaningfulness

Variable	*β*	*t*	95% CI (LL, UL)
Control variables:			
Economic Pressure	-.023	0.333	(-.161 to .114)
Extraversion	-.008	-0.106	(-.158 to .143)
Conscientiousness	.037	0.535	(-.122 to .147)
Agreeableness	-.009	-0.117	(-.156 to .138)
Time since application to focal firm	-.008	-0.119	(-.142 to .126)
Calling-search	-.039	-0.568	(-.158 to .108)
# of job offers (other than focal firm)	-.012	-0.179	(-.156 to .138)
Gender	-.174	-1.235	(-.452 to .104)
Predictors:			
Anticipated job self-efficacy	.062	0.863	(-.079 to .202)
Achievement work value	.111	1.513	(-.034 to .257)
Moderating effect:			
Anticipated job self-efficacy x Achievement value (H2)	.075	0.995	(-.074 to .224)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs on normal approximation are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 6 – Pathway 1 Regression Results: Work Centrality as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Anticipated Meaningfulness and Acceptance Intentions

Variable	*β*	*t*	95% CI (LL, UL)
Control variables:			
Economic Pressure	.126	1.854	(-.008 to .260)
Extraversion	-.101	-1.359	(-.247 to .046)
Conscientiousness	-.047	-0.711	(-.179 to .084)
Agreeableness	.230**	3.133	(.085 to .376)
Time since application to focal firm	-.180**	-2.714	(-.312 to -.049)
Calling-search	-.054	-0.811	(-.184 to .077)
# of job offers (other than focal firm)	-.051	-0.782	(-.179 to .075)
Gender			
Predictors:			
Anticipated meaningfulness	.267**	3.547	(.118 to .415)
Work centrality	.017	0.234	(-.114 to .149)
Moderating effect:			
Anticipated meaningfulness x Work centrality (H8)	-.033	-0.549	(-.157 to .091)

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% Cis on normal approximation are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 7 – Moderated Mediation Model of Pathway 1: Effects of Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work with 1st-Stage Moderator Achievement and 2nd-Stage Moderator Work Centrality

Model	Moderator -1 SD		Moderator +1 SD		Moderated Mediation Indices	
	ab	95% CI (LL, UL)	*ab*	95% CI (LL, UL)	Index	95% CI (LL, UL)
Anticipated Job Self-Efficacy x Achievement → Anticipated Meaningfulness (1st stage moderated mediation)	.002	(-.056, .073).	.032	(-.015, .104)	-.002	(-.022, .010)
Anticipated Meaningfulness x Work Centrality → Acceptance Intentions (2nd stage, conditional moderated mediation)	.018	(-.191, .073)	.014	(-.018, .060)	.020	(-.016, .073)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; The following variables were controlled for in the analysis: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since application to the focal organization, calling-search, # of job offers, and gender, as well as the variables in other pathways of the model—AOBI, anticipated belongingness, and altruism work value. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 8 – Mediation Model of Pathway 2: Effects of Anticipated Opportunity for Beneficiary Impact (AOBI) on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work

Regression Equation	Type of Effect	Value	95% CI (LL, UL)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness	First stage (H1)	β = .492**	(.343 to .640)
Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Second stage (H7)	β = .278**	(.146 to .434)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect	*ab* = .143**	(.069 to .229)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions (controlling for anticipated meaningfulness)	Direct	β = -.128	(-.287 to .031)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions	Total	β = -.014	(-.134 to .163)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; The following variables were controlled for in the analysis: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since application to the focal organization, calling-search, # of job offers, and gender, as well as the variables in other pathways of the model—anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated belongingness, and achievement work value. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 9 – Pathway 2 Regression Results: Altruism Work Value as a Moderator of the Relationship Between AOBI and Anticipated Meaningfulness

Variable	*β*	*t*	95% CI (LL, UL)
Control variables:			
Economic Pressure	-.018	-0.257	(-.154 to .119)
Extraversion	-.116	-0.267	(-.160 to .137)
Conscientiousness	.056	0.810	(-.080 to .192)
Agreeableness	-.014	-0.182	(-.169 to .132)
Time since application to focal firm	-.014	-0.211	(-.148 to .094)
Calling-search	-.034	-0.500	(-.167 to .099)
# of job offers (other than focal firm)	.020	-0.477	(-.112 to .150)
Gender	-.152	-1.085	(-.428 to .124)
Predictors:			
AOBI	.492**	6.576	(.344 to .640)
Altruism work value	.013	-0.167	(-.139 to .165)
Moderating effect:			
AOBI x Altruism value (H4)	.159	1.793	(-.016 to .334)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs on normal approximation are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 10 – Pathway 2 Regression Results: Work Centrality as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Anticipated Meaningfulness and Acceptance Intentions

Variable	β	t	95% CI (LL, UL)
Control variables:			
Economic Pressure	.126	-2.048	(-.008 to .260)
Extraversion	-.870	-1.178	(-.233 to .059)
Conscientiousness	-.045	0.692	(-.174 to .084)
Agreeableness	.267**	3.700	(.124 to .408)
Time since application to focal firm	-.175**	-2.965	(-.305 to -.045)
Calling-search	-.040	-0.624	(-.169 to .088)
# of job offers (other than focal firm)	-.054	-0.851	(-.180 to .072)
Gender	-.216	-1.582	(-.486 to .054)
Predictors:			
Anticipated meaningfulness	.278**	3.566	(.120 to .417)
Work centrality	.023	0.348	(-.108 to .154)
Moderating effect:			
Anticipated meaningfulness x Work centrality (H8)	-.038	-0.615	(-.161 to .085)

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs on normal approximation are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 11 – Moderated Mediation Model of Pathway 2: Effects of Anticipated Opportunity for Beneficiary Impact on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work with 1st-Stage Moderator Altruism and 2nd-Stage Moderator Work Centrality

Model	Moderator -1 SD		Moderator +1 SD		Moderated Mediation Indices	
	ab	95% CI (LL, UL)	*ab*	95% CI (LL, UL)	Index	95% CI (LL, UL)
AOBI x Altruism → Anticipated Meaningfulness (1st stage moderated mediation)	.101*	(.027, .203).	.185*	(.082, .304)	-.046.	(-.021, .016)
Anticipated Meaningfulness x Work Centrality → Acceptance Intentions (2nd stage, conditional moderated mediation)	.152*	(.074, .241)	.112	(-.007, .237)	.039	(-.021, .105)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; The following variables were controlled for in the analysis: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since application to the focal organization, calling-search, # of job offers, and gender, as well as the variables in other pathways of the model—anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated belongingness, and achievement work value. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 12 – Mediation Model of Pathway 3: Effects of Anticipated Belongingness on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work

Model	Moderator -1 SD		Moderator +1 SD		Moderated Mediation Indices	
	ab	95% CI (LL, UL)	*ab*	95% CI (LL, UL)	Index	95% CI (LL, UL)
AOBI x Altruism → Anticipated Meaningfulness (1st stage moderated mediation)	.101*	(.027, .203).	.185*	(.082, .304)	-.046.	(-.021, .016)
Anticipated Meaningfulness x Work Centrality → Acceptance Intentions (2nd stage, conditional moderated mediation)	.152*	(.074, .241)	.112	(-.007, .237)	.039	(-.021, .105)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; The following variables were controlled for in the analysis: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since application to the focal organization, calling-search, # of job offers, and gender, as well as the variables in other pathways of the model—anticipated job self-efficacy, anticipated belongingness, and achievement work value. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 13 – Pathway 3 Regression Results: Altruism Work Value as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Anticipated Belongingness and Anticipated Meaningfulness

Variable	β	t	95% CI (LL, UL)
Control variables:			
Economic Pressure	-.030	-0.069	(-.167 to .108)
Extraversion	-.002	-0.021	(-.151 to .155)
Conscientiousness	.045	0.653	(-.092 to .182)
Agreeableness	-.001	0.151	(-.144 to .146)
Time since application to focal firm	-.044	-0.650	(-.178 to .090)
Calling-search	-.012	-0.180	(-.146 to .121)
# of job offers (other than focal firm)	.012	0.180	(-.117 to .141)
Gender	-.161	2.340	(-.438 to .117)
Predictors:			
Anticipated Belongingness	-.032	-0.114	(-.175 to .110)
Altruism work value	.003	-0.032	(-.149 to .152)
Moderating effect:			
Anticipated Belongingness x Altruism value (H6)	.066	0.950	(-.090 to .221)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs on normal approximation are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 14 – Pathway 3 Regression Results: Work Centrality as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Anticipated Meaningfulness and Acceptance Intentions

Variable	*β*	*t*	95% CI (LL, UL)
Control variables:			
Economic Pressure	.126*	1.852	(-.008 to .260)
Extraversion	-.105	-1.420	(-.250 to .041)
Conscientiousness	-.049	-0.751	(-.179 to .080)
Agreeableness	.266**	3.700	(.124 to .408)
Time since application to focal firm	-.175*	-2.655	(-.305 to -.045)
Calling-search	-.036	-0.558	(-.165 to .092)
# of job offers (other than focal firm)	-.059	-0.921	(-.186 to .068)
Gender	-.216	-1.581	(-.486 to .054)
Predictors:			
Anticipated meaningfulness	.278**	3.689	(.129 to .426)
Work centrality	.023	0.348	(-.108 to .157)
Moderating effect:			
Anticipated meaningfulness x Work centrality (H8)	-.038	-0.680	(-.161 to .085)

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs on normal approximation are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 15 – Moderated Mediation Model of Pathway 3: Effects of Anticipated Belongingness on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work with 1st-Stage Moderator Altruism and 2nd-Stage Moderator Work Centrality

Model	Moderator -1 SD		Moderator +1 SD		Moderated Mediation Indices	
	ab	95% CI (LL, UL)	*ab*	95% CI (LL, UL)	Index	95% CI (LL, UL)
Anticipated Belongingness x Altruism → Anticipated Meaningfulness (1st stage moderated mediation)	.019	(-.086, .028).	.015	(-.043, .080)	-.003	(-.020, .013)
Anticipated Meaningfulness x Work Centrality → Acceptance Intentions (2nd stage, conditional moderated mediation)	-.003	(-.057, .046)	-.002	(-.048, .036)	.019	(-.019, .068)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; The following variables were controlled for in the analysis: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since application to the focal organization, calling-search, # of job offers, and gender, as well as the variables in other pathways of the model—anticipated job self-efficacy, AOBI, and achievement work value. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 16 – Moderated Mediation Model of Alternative Pathway 2: Effects of AOBI on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work with 1st-Stage Moderator Achievement and 2nd-Stage Moderator Work Centrality

Model	Moderator -1 SD		Moderator +1 SD		Moderated Mediation Indices	
	ab	95% CI (LL, UL)	*ab*	95% CI (LL, UL)	Index	95% CI (LL, UL)
Anticipated Belongingness x Altruism → Anticipated Meaningfulness (1st stage moderated mediation)	.019	(-.086, .028).	.015	(-.043, .080)	-.003	(-.020, .013)
Anticipated Meaningfulness x Work Centrality → Acceptance Intentions (2nd stage, conditional moderated mediation)	-.003	(-.057, .046)	-.002	(-.048, .036)	.019	(-.019, .068)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000; The following variables were controlled for in the analysis: economic pressure, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, time since application to the focal organization, calling-search, # of job offers, and gender, as well as the variables in other pathways of the model—anticipated job self-efficacy, AOBI, and achievement work value. CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

TABLE 17 – Post Hoc Analysis: Mediation Model of Pathway 2: Effects of AOBI on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work and Anticipated PO Fit

Regression Equation	Type of Effect	Value	95% CI (LL, UL)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness	1st stage—path 1	a_1 = .416**	(.297 to .534)
AOBI → Anticipated PO Fit	1st stage—path 2,3	a_2 = .245**	(.104 to .380)
Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions (controlling for AOBI and anticipated PO fit)	2nd stage—path 1	b_1 = .177**	(.120 to .341)
Anticipated PO Fit → Acceptance Intentions (controlling for AOBI and anticipated PO fit)	2nd stage—path 2	b_2 = .267**	(.123 to .422)
Anticipated PO Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness (controlling for AOBI)	2nd stage—path 3	d_{12} = .433**	(.313 to .553)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect—path 1	a_1b_1 = .067*	(.020 to .124)
AOBI → Anticipated PO Fit → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect—path 2	a_2b_2 = .073*	(.004 to .152)
AOBI → Anticipated PO Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect—path 3	$a_1d_{12}b_2$ = .019*	(.001 to .042)
	Total indirect	β = .157*	(.067 to .259)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions (controlling for anticipated meaningfulness and anticipated PO fit)	Direct	β = -.078	(-.062 to .219)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions	Total	β = .079	(-.067 to .259)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients (β) and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000.

TABLE 18 – Post Hoc Analysis: Mediation Model of Pathway 2: Effects of AOBI on Acceptance Intentions through Anticipated Meaningful Work and Anticipated PJ Fit

Regression Equation	Type of Effect	Value	95% CI (LL, UL)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness	1st stage—path 1	a_1 = .510**	(.381 to .640)
AOBI → Anticipated PJ Fit	1st stage—path 2,3	a_2 = .098	(-.051 to .248)
Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	2nd stage—path 1	b_1 = .270**	(.125 to .414)
Anticipated PJ Fit → Acceptance Intentions	2nd stage—path 2	b_2 = .131**	(.006 to .257)
Anticipated PJ Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness (controlling for AOBI)	2nd stage—path 3	d_{12} = .112	(-.015 to .239)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect—path 1	a_1b_1 = .135*	(.057 to .221)
AOBI → Anticipated PJ Fit → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect—path 2	a_2b_2 = .010	(-.010 to .044)
AOBI → Anticipated PJ Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	Indirect—path 3	$a_1d_{12}b_2$ = .002	(-.003 to .011)
	Total indirect	β = .148*	(.065 to .239)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions (controlling for anticipated meaningfulness and anticipated PJ fit)	Direct	β = -.127	(-.284 to .030)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions	Total	β = .021	(-.125 to .170)

Note: Standardized regression coefficients (β) and bootstrapped 95% CIs are reported in the table. Bootstrap sample = 10,000.

TABLE 19 – Post Hoc Analysis: Mediation Model of Pathway 2: Effects of AOBI on Acceptance Intentions through PO Fit, PJ Fit, and Anticipated Meaningful Work

Regression Equation	Type of Effect	Value	95% CI (LL, UL)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness	1st stage—path 1	a_1 = .401**	(.291 to .527)
AOBI → Anticipated PO Fit	1st stage—path 2,4	a_2 = .242**	(.104 to .380)
AOBI → Anticipated PJ Fit	1st stage—path 3,5	a_3 = .098	(-.051 to .248)
Anticipated Meaningfulness → Acceptance Intentions	2nd stage—path 1 3rd stage—path 4,5	b_1 = .162	(-.002 to .327)
Anticipated PO Fit → Acceptance Intentions	2nd stage—path 2	b_2 = .264**	(.110 to .417)
Anticipated PJ Fit → Acceptance Intentions (with the other two variables in the regression equation)	2nd stage—path 3	b_3 = .115	(-.011 to .242)
Anticipated PO Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness	2nd stage—path 4	d_{12} = .427**	(.307 to .547)
Anticipated PJ Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness	2nd stage—path 5	d_{13} = .073	(-.038 to .184)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Intentions	Indirect—path 1	a_1b_1 = .067*	(.002 to .142)
AOBI → Anticipated PO Fit → Intentions	Indirect—path 2	a_2b_2 = .064*	(.019 to .123)
AOBI → Anticipated PJ Fit → Intentions	Indirect—path 3	a_3b_3 = .011	(-.005 to .040)
AOBI → PO Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Intentions	Indirect—path 4	$a_1d_{12}b_2$ = .017	(.000 to .039)
AOBI → PJ Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Intentions	Indirect—path 5	$a_2d_{13}b_3$ = .001	(-.001 to .007)
AOBI → Mediators → Acceptance Intentions	Total indirect	β = .160*	(.069 to .265)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions	Direct	β = -.081	(-.232 to .070)
AOBI → Acceptance Intentions	Total	β = .079	(-.062 to .219)

TABLE 20 – Post Hoc Analysis: Mediation Model of Pathway 2: Effects of AOBI on Organizational Attraction through PO Fit, PJ Fit, and Anticipated Meaningful Work

Regression Equation	Type of Effect	Value	95% CI (LL, UL)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness	1st stage—path 1	a_1 = .401**	(.291 to .527)
AOBI → Anticipated PO Fit	1st stage—path 2,4	a_2 = .242**	(.104 to .380)
AOBI → Anticipated PJ Fit	1st stage—path 3,5	a_3 = .098	(-.051 to .248)
Anticipated Meaningfulness → Organizational Attraction	2nd stage—path 1 3rd stage—path 4,5	b_1 = .169**	(.023 to .315)
Anticipated PO Fit → Organizational Attraction	2nd stage—path 2	b_2 = .331**	(.195 to .467)
Anticipated PJ Fit → Organizational Attraction (with the other two variables in the regression equation)	2nd stage—path 3	b_3 = .041	(-.072 to .153)
Anticipated PO Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness	2nd stage—path 4	d_{12} = .427**	(307 to .547)
Anticipated PJ Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness	2nd stage—path 5	d_{13} = .073	(-.038 to .184)
AOBI → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Org Attraction	Indirect—path 1	a_1b_1 = .069*	(.003 to .139)
AOBI → Anticipated PO Fit → Org Attraction	Indirect—path 2	a_2b_2 = .080*	(.029 to .140)
AOBI → Anticipated PJ Fit → Org Attraction	Indirect—path 3	a_3b_3 = .004	(-.008 to .021)
AOBI → PO Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Attraction	Indirect—path 4	$a_1d_{12}b_2$ = .019*	(.001 to .043)
AOBI → PJ Fit → Anticipated Meaningfulness → Attraction	Indirect—path 5	$a_2d_{13}b_3$ = .001	(-.001 to .007)
AOBI → Mediators → Organizational Attraction	Total indirect	β = .172*	(.076 to .273)
AOBI → Organizational Attraction	Direct	β = -.075	(-.209 to .058)
AOBI → Organizational Attraction	Total	β = .097	(-.033 to .226)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While organizations try to meet the challenges of the "war for talent" to attract and hire highly-qualified workers, the recruitment literature demonstrates the profound influence of recruits' evaluation of prospective jobs and work environments on firm appeal (Chapman et al., 2005, Uggerslev et al., 2012; Turban, 2001). Although research attests that job seekers search for and interpret cues about prospective jobs and organizations during the recruitment process to draw consequential inferences about future work opportunities (Turban, 2001; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), the explanation for how these inferences influence recruitment outcomes remains enclosed in a yet to be unpacked "black box." While researchers assert that a focus on these inferences is important to understand how recruits use these job and organizational cues to assess and evaluate potential employers (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007; Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005), a dearth of scholarly work offers such a focus (Lievens & Slaugher, 2016).

The present study is meant to address this gap in theory and research to inform recruiting practices in organizations. To remedy the aforementioned limitation, I explored the formation and influence of anticipated meaningful work on job seekers during the recruitment process. I contended that certain inferences about a future work setting and its work matter because they generate perceptions of anticipated meaningfulness for the applicant, which in turn, influence their intentions to accept

forthcoming job offers. Consequently, the essential ideas of the present study were to investigate how future work in a prospective organization comes to be viewed as meaningful, and whether anticipated meaningfulness impacts recruiting outcomes.

To develop a theoretical model to address these issues, I first relied on a framework of meaningful work practices (Pratt et al., 2013; Bellah et al., 1985) to propose that applicants anticipate meaningfulness from cues pertaining to three distinct elements of work and its environment: doing work well, doing impactful work, and doing work with others. By way of these cues that applicants attend to, given fundamental human motives, they anticipate job-self efficacy, opportunity for beneficiary impact, and belongingness—inferences that lead to the anticipated work meaningfulness with a prospective employer.

Second, my model also postulated certain aspects of the self as moderating factors in these relationships. Specifically, I proposed that while all job seekers infer meaningfulness from anticipated job self-efficacy, opportunity for beneficiary impact (AOBI) and belongingness, the strength of certain work values will lead to more or less anticipated meaningfulness from those inferences. Thus, I proposed that the strength of applicants' achievement work value will positively affect the degree to which anticipated job self-efficacy results in anticipated meaningfulness, and the strength of their altruism work value will positively affect the degree to which both AOBI and belongingness lead to anticipated meaningfulness.

Finally, in addition to hypothesizing three inference antecedents and boundary conditions to anticipated meaningfulness, I contended that anticipated meaningfulness

positively influences acceptance intentions with a prospective organization. I further proposed the strength of this effect would vary across individuals based on their work centrality—the extent to which work is central to a person's life. I posited work centrality would positively moderate the relationship between anticipated meaningfulness and acceptance intentions with a focal organization. Specifically, I contended that anticipated meaningfulness will matter more to job seekers with greater work centrality, thus strengthening the effect on acceptance intentions.

Finally, although not directly hypothesized, heavily discussed in the theoretical development of my model were assertions that inferences of anticipated job self-efficacy, opportunity for beneficiary impact and belongingness associated with a future organization, would impact these acceptance intentions, and do so indirectly through their influence on anticipated meaningfulness.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

I tested the hypothesized model using data from 197 job seekers during the maintenance stage of recruitment—i.e., following application but before receipt of an offer or rejection from a focal organization. Only two hypotheses were supported. First, contrary to predictions, job seekers' anticipated job self-efficacy was not associated with anticipated meaningfulness. Furthermore, this relationship was not significant at high, middle, and low levels of the achievement work value. Also contrary to my predictions, job seekers' anticipated belongingness was not associated with anticipated meaningfulness, and this relationship was non-significant at high, middle, and low levels of applicants' altruism work value. However, as predicted, job seekers' anticipated

opportunity for beneficiary impact was strongly and positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness. Contrary to my hypothesis, this effect was not significantly different across applicants' high, middle, and low altruism values, thus indicating no moderating effect.

Moving on from the antecedent inferences of anticipated meaningfulness, results confirmed that job seekers' anticipation of meaningful work at a focal organization has a moderate, positive influence on their intentions to accept an employment offer from that organization. No significant difference in this relationship existed when comparing applicants across high, middle, or low work centrality, and thus results were contrary to my prediction of work centrality's moderating effect.

Lastly, I tested the direct and indirect effects of the three key inferences and mediation effects through anticipated meaningfulness. Only job seekers' anticipated job self-efficacy toward a focal organization directly impacted their acceptance intentions, with the impact being positive. Meanwhile, no indirect effect of applicants' anticipated job self-efficacy through anticipated meaningfulness was supported. While there were no significant direct or total effects of AOBI on acceptance intentions, results confirmed a significant indirect effect of job seekers' AOBI on their acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness. Finally, applicants' anticipated belongingness at a focal organization had no direct or total effect on their acceptance intentions with that firm, nor was there an indirect effect through anticipated meaningfulness.

Overall, these findings suggest job seekers do take into account anticipated work meaningfulness as they assess potential employers during recruiting's critical

maintenance stage. Furthermore, results indicate that anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact appears to be a primary driver of anticipated meaningfulness perceptions during this time frame. These findings seem to generalize across individuals, despite differing levels of their achievement work value, altruism work value, and work centrality. Next, I discuss the potential theoretical implications of these findings.

CONCLUSIONS FROM FINDINGS

A number of factors are suspected to have contributed to the null findings in my study. Empirical reasons include a lack of power due to sample size, job seekers' insufficient exposure to organizational cues from which inferences are drawn, and the nature of the anticipated meaningfulness measure. Theoretical reasons derive from both the sample's first-time job seeker status and age, as well as the suspected effect of one's calling as a first-stage moderator.

From an empirical standpoint, the size of the sample resulted in insufficient power conducive to finding interaction effects. My power analysis led to the conclusion that I had sufficient power, but I failed to consider that the hypothesized interaction effects require a much higher sample size for adequate power. A sample size in the upper 300's, rather than the mid 100's, is necessary for adequate power given the hypothesized interactions.

Another empirical factor supposed to contribute to the null findings is that job seekers may have had insufficient exposure to information-laden cues necessary to anticipate meaningfulness from these inferences. A post-hoc supplementary analysis that parcels out and considers only those study participants who had a company interview by

the time anticipated meaningfulness was assessed in Survey 2 (n=82) seems to indicate this is indeed the case for some relationships.

First, for this subsample, the relationship between anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated meaningfulness is significant (β = .249, CI = .020 to .478, $p < .05$). Furthermore, the direct effect of anticipated job self-efficacy is non-significant, while the indirect effect of anticipated job self-efficacy on acceptance intentions through anticipated meaningfulness is now significant (β = .097, CI = .002 to .258, $p < .05$). These results stand in stark contrast to the full sample, which includes applicants who did and did not have an interview by Survey 2. In the full sample, anticipated job self-efficacy was not related to anticipated meaningfulness and anticipated meaningfulness did not mediate the effects of anticipated job self-efficacy on acceptance intentions; only the direct effect was significant. Further testing still showed no moderating effect of achievement on the anticipated job self-efficacy to anticipated meaningfulness relationship.

Second, concerning the AOBI → acceptance intentions relationship for the parceled sample that had an interview before Survey 2, the relationship was stronger (β = .409, CI = .181 to .638, $p < .05$) compared to that of the full sample, and this effect was indeed shown to be moderated by the altruism work value, given a significant interaction term (β = .361, CI = .022 to .695, $p < .05$) and a significant R^2 change ($\Delta R^2 = .043$, $p < .05$). The effect of AOBI on anticipated meaningfulness ranges from non-significant (CI = -.352 to .486) at -1 SD of altruism to .702 (CI = .387 to 1.00) at +1 SD of altruism. Recall the full sample showed no moderating effect of altruism on the AOBI →

anticipated meaningfulness relationship, which was suspected to be more the result of low reliability of the altruism measure.

These differential effects concerning relationships in both the job self-efficacy and AOBI pathways suggest that some job seekers' lack of exposure to adequate information-giving cues may have contributed to a number of the non-significant effects, and a weakening of effects that were significant. It is worth noting the relationships along the anticipated belongingness → anticipated meaningfulness pathway were still not significant for this subsample.

A final empirical factor suspected to have contributed to null findings, and in particular anticipated job self-efficacy → anticipated meaningfulness and anticipated belongingness → anticipated meaningfulness is the nature of the anticipated meaningfulness measure. More specifically, two of the five the items in the anticipated meaningfulness measure have an outward, others focus. "The work that I will do will make the world a better place," and "What I do at work will make a difference in the world" overlaps conceptually with AOBI. Anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated belongingness have virtually no overlap with these two items. Thus, the three remaining items: "The world that I will do will be important," "I will have a meaningful job," and "That work that I will do is meaningful" are the only three items that have a neutral focus and could potentially align with anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated belongingness. In contrast, all five items have the potential to align with AOBI. Hence, it is not surprising the AOBI → anticipated meaningfulness relationship was the only one of the three, that produced significant results. Despite the overlap between measures, the

modest .50 correlation between the AOBI and anticipated meaningfulness points to their empirical distinctiveness.

Turning to theoretical considerations, one theoretical factor suspected to contribute to null findings, particularly the anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated belongingness → anticipated meaningfulness relationships, is lack of full time work experience of the sample. Because of this inexperience, it is suspected these job seekers may underestimate the impact of experiencing success and feeling connected with others at work. Thus, the effects of anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated belongingness on anticipated meaningful work might be minimized. Although conjecture, I suspect a few reasons for this underestimation. With regard to belongingness, senior college students planning to first enter the full-time workforce come from a frame of reference of being surrounded by same-age peers and friends in their "workplace" of school, and may not fully consider how they will be soon be mixed with many different generations of workers, making establishing friendships more challenging. Also, at this point in their lives they may have freedom and flexibility to choose jobs in locales where current friends are located, and thus plan to rely less on their workplace for friendships. However, they may also fail to fully comprehend that they will spend much of their waking hours a week with coworkers, and despite friendships outside of work, feeling connected to coworkers may indeed contribute to experiencing meaningfulness. With regard to job self-efficacy, research strongly shows that self-efficacy and experiencing success at work contributes to work meaningfulness, and is important to one's personal and professional identity. However, inexperienced workers may not fully appreciate the

difference achieving versus struggling at work makes to a person, and how important doing well contributes positively to their psychological state. In sum, I suspect first-time job seekers underestimate factors related to work success and connections with others. This weakens relationships between anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated belongingness on anticipated meaningfulness for my sample.

A second theoretical factor suspected to contribute to null findings for this predominantly first-time job seeker sample is generational differences between this youngest working generation and others in today's workforce. Twenge et al., (2010) explored generational differences and found that social work values (i.e. making friends) and work centrality was lowest among the youngest generation sampled compared with workers of other generations. It therefore seems that younger people do not view work as central to their lives and do not rely on it as heavily as a source of friendships and comradery. This might explain the non-significant effects of anticipated belongingness on anticipated meaningfulness, and the null moderating effects of work centrality in this study. Finally, scholarship shows that the youngest working generation values the intrinsic value of work (i.e. deriving satisfaction from accomplishing work tasks) less than other generations and values extrinsic rewards and leisure activities more (Dumais, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010). Given this scholarship, it is not surprising that anticipated job self-efficacy impacted acceptance intentions for first-time job seekers in my study, but did not impact anticipated meaningfulness. Rather than future success at work mattering to these job seekers for its intrinsic value and meaningfulness, it appears it affects an organization's appeal because it may offer opportunities for extrinsic rewards.

Overall, generational differences between young workers—that predominate my study's sample—and older workers may account for effects that differ from what theory and prior empirical results may predict.

A third and final theoretical factor, this one suspected to be consequential to the first-stage moderation null effects, is the possibility that the degree to which individuals are in search of their calling, rather than the strength of their work values, interacts with the anticipatory inferences to impact anticipated meaningfulness. Examining the moderating effects of calling-search on the AOBI→ anticipated meaningfulness relationship, results show that calling-search indeed significantly moderates the effect of AOBI on anticipated meaningfulness in the negative direction, given a significant, negative interaction term is (β = -.154, CI = -.274 to -.034 $p < .05$) and a significant R^2 change ($\Delta R^2 = .025$, $p < .05$). The effect of AOBI on anticipated meaningfulness ranges from .677 (CI = -.501 to .853) at -1 SD of calling-search to .280 (CI = .051 to .508) at +1 SD of calling-search. Thus, it appears that the less job seekers are currently searching for their calling, most likely because of increased certainty about what it is, the more AOBI impacts anticipated meaningfulness.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Meaningful Work Research

Taken together, the study's findings have important implications for meaningful work research. At the study's outset, I highlighted that while extensive scholarship speaks to the positive role of experienced work meaningfulness in both individual and organizational outcomes, and additional scholarship in the vocational and callings

literatures attends to the positive role of vocational meaningfulness on outcomes (Dik, Sargent, & Steger 2008; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007), the role meaningfulness plays regarding work yet to be performed, including that for a prospective employer, was unclear. This is due in part to the construct of anticipated meaningfulness not previously being clearly defined, and aspects of its nomological net—including its antecedents and outcomes—not being given significant theoretical or empirical consideration. To that end, my study defined anticipated meaningfulness and distinguished it theoretically and empirically from related constructs of PO fit, PJ fit, and dimensions of calling.

Addressing the criterion end of the nomological net of anticipated meaningfulness, results supported that as people ponder work yet to be undertaken, anticipated work meaningfulness is salient in job seekers' minds and does indeed have a role in positively influencing outcomes related to a particular work setting's appeal. Moreover, inconsistent with my predictions, the effects of anticipated meaningfulness were not significantly affected by work centrality; whether work is central to a persons' lives or not, anticipated meaningfulness of future work still influences its appeal in their eyes. Supplemental analyses yielded non-significant moderating effects for individual and situational differences including personality traits, calling-search, and felt economic pressure, which speaks to the widespread influence of anticipated meaningfulness across individuals and their circumstances. While my study focused on acceptance intentions as the outcome variable during the middle stage of recruitment, further testing of another common recruitment outcome measure supported the notion that the impact of anticipated meaningfulness is not limited to job seekers' intentions to accept a focal

organization's job offer, but also their organizational attraction. Together, these findings indicate that at least in the present context, perceptions of the meaningfulness of future work have impactful ramifications for individuals, as well as organizations concerned about individuals' impressions of their workplaces.

Turning to the front end of the nomological net, my findings offer insight into how individuals come to anticipate future work's meaningfulness. As predicted, I found that inferences of AOBI are quite strongly associated with anticipated meaningfulness of future work for those searching for employment. This result is consistent with related findings that AOBI strongly correlates with perceptions of doing impactful, difference-making work for currently employed workers (Grant, 2008a). Also telling are findings contrary to predictions that anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated belongingness are not related to anticipated meaningfulness. This result stands in contrast to previous work that showed moderate to strong support for the influences of general self-efficacy, realizing competence, and belongingness on greater experienced meaningfulness (DeWitz et al., 2009; Church et al., 2012, Lambert et al., 2013; Stillman et al., 2013). These differential findings seem to indicate important distinctions between how people anticipate meaningfulness compared to how they experience it in the present. While prior scholarship shows that experienced meaningfulness manifests from a capability to achieve at work (Ward & King, 2007), serve beneficiaries through one's work (Wrzesnieski, 2003), and get along with others during work (Blatt & Camden, 2007), expected self-efficacy and belongingness at work are insufficient to induce meaningfulness about future work, whereas expected opportunity for beneficiary impact

appears sufficient. These distinctions suggest that anticipated meaningfulness and experienced meaningfulness may differ, and illuminate opportunities for both theoretical and empirical exploration of antecedents of anticipated meaningful work.

When theoretically distinguishing anticipated meaningfulness from anticipated fit early in the study, I contended that anticipated PO fit and PJ fit are likely antecedents to anticipated meaningfulness rather than equivalent constructs. CFA results supported the distinctness of these two constructs from anticipated meaningfulness, and further testing revealed that both PO fit and PJ fit are indeed predictors, with PO fit exhibiting a strong positive effect and PJ fit exerting a weak positive effect on anticipated meaningfulness. Discussion of contributions to the understanding of the nomological net of anticipated meaningfulness then would not be complete without mention of anticipated PO and PJ fit as antecedents.

Traditional meaningfulness research (e.g. Barrick et al., 2013) attests that individual differences play an integral role in experiencing meaningfulness. My study demonstrated null effects of certain work values on the relationship between applicant inferences and anticipated meaningful work, which is both inconsistent with past scholarship and contrary to my predictions. Achievement did not moderate the non-significant effects of anticipated job self-efficacy on anticipated meaningfulness. Meanwhile, altruism did not moderate the positive effects of AOBI or null effects of anticipated belongingness on anticipated meaningfulness. These non-significant findings may be attributable to low reliabilities for both work value measures. Accordingly, these measures contributed to inferior model fit of the hypothesized model compared to a

model that excluded them. To test whether other individual differences matter—which would lend support to the assumption that poor reliabilities were a main culprit of non-significant moderating effects of work values—I ran supplemental analyses for the moderating effects of other individual differences variables, including Big 5 personality traits—which have been shown to influence meaningfulness perceptions (Lucas & Diener, 2008)—and work centrality—the proposed second-stage moderator in my model. In these analyses, no individual difference variables moderated the hypothesized predictor to anticipated meaningfulness relationships. Overall, these findings suggest individual differences such as work values and personality may play a lesser role in the processes associated with anticipating meaningfulness of future work compared to experiencing it. Perhaps mere speculation (versus realization) of fulfillment of basic motives that individuals' personalities and values differentially deem important is less influential in appraising work as meaningful.

In sum, these findings provide evidence that anticipated work meaningfulness, which appears to be both distinct from and partially an outcome of anticipated fit, is salient to job seekers and influences the appeal of future work and its organizational context across a variety of individual and situational differences. These contributions set the stage for further investigation on antecedents and outcomes of anticipated meaningfulness both within and outside the recruiting context.

Recruitment Research

The present study also has implications for recruiting research. While scholarship demonstrates that recruitment period information and interactions provide cues that

affect job seekers' thoughts, attitudes, and choices (Cable & Turban, 2003; Rynes et al., 1991), models associated with these results have been criticized for their underdevelopment (Breaugh, 2008), particularly because the mechanisms that link cues to outcomes—the inferences drawn from these cues—are rarely tested, or even conceptually specified (Celani & Singh, 2010). Thus, this study answers a call for scholarship that addresses what inferences employees derive from evaluating aspects of the job and organization discerned during recruitment, as well as theoretical and empirical consideration of why they matter to recruitment outcomes (Phillips & Gully, 2015; Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005).

First, fairly high base rates for my model's three inferences suggest that in recruitment's middle stage, job seekers, on average, anticipate fairly high levels of job self-efficacy, AOBI, and belongingness about firms to which they chose to apply. These job seeker inferences join the likes of others in the literature including a prospective organization's perceived trustworthiness, fair treatment of workers, empathy, and fit, as well as its potential to allow a person to be true to themselves, and gain prestige (Dutton et al., 1994; Highhouse et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2014; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). In a review of the recruiting literature, Phillips and Gully (2015) asserts that, "Better understanding the images and perceptions that organizational 'cues' provoke can improve our understanding of applicant attraction and job choice" (p. 1430). Thus, this study potentially contributes to the recruiting literature by identifying three inferences shown to exist a fairly high, positive degree for the average applicant following application submission, as they aim to learn as much as possible about organizations of

interest and recruiting organizations' aim is to maintain applicant status of their most qualified candidates. Whether these inferences contribute to job seekers' initial (Stage 1) organizational attraction, and thus influence their decision to apply, is ripe for speculation and further inquiry.

Second, in investigating whether these three inferences—argued to derive from basic and fundamental human motives—influence job seekers' acceptance intentions during recruiting's maintenance stage, I found that, as theorized in Chapter 2, both applicants' anticipated job self-efficacy (to a lesser degree) and anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact (to a greater degree) with a focal firm impact their intentions to accept a potential job offer during this crucial time of the recruiting cycle. Results do not support the effect of applicants' anticipated belongingness on acceptance intentions during this period. Such results are consistent with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and replicate findings that work self-efficacy influences the job people consider and choose (e.g. Betz & Hackett, 1981; Rooney & Osipow, 1992). Results also correspond with theory on prosocial job characteristics and replicate findings that AOBI leads to increased motivation towards that work (Grant, 2008a), yet run contrary to experimental findings that reduced anticipated belongingness negatively influences job appeal (Gaucher et al., 2011), and a sense of belonging among employed workers enhances their current organization's appeal (Lee et al., 2015). My results add insight to recruitment research regarding a number of fundamental motive-related job seeker inferences by offering evidence as to which do and do not seem to matter during the critical maintenance stage. Supplemental testing revealed the role of the three inferences

on organizational attraction—another key recruiting outcome. Results showed that anticipated job self-efficacy and AOBI positively influenced applicants' organizational attraction, whereas anticipated belongingness again did not influence the recruiting outcome variable.

Third, my study's findings can offer a partial explanation for why these inferences influence applicant outcomes during the middle stage of recruitment. Evidence shows anticipated meaningfulness mediates the relationship between AOBI and acceptance intentions. Yet, anticipated meaningfulness does not mediate the relationship between anticipated job self-efficacy and acceptance intentions. Supplemental inquiry shows the equivalent mediation pattern for both predictors' effects on organizational attraction.

Although conjecture, these results suggest that perceptions of anticipated meaningfulness and subsequent attitudes toward a prospective organization may have less to do with what a person expects to be able to gain (personal success) and more to do with what a person expects to be able to give (to the benefit of others). This aligns with research by Grant, Dutton, and Rosso (2008) that discovered a similar pattern in which employee attitudes about their organization improved from employee programs that allowed workers the opportunity to support their coworkers, as much as receive support themselves. In this instance, the opportunity to give allowed individuals to see themselves as generous, helpful, and caring, and consequently gain a sense of pride and purpose. These findings provide valuable insight to recruitment researchers looking to unpack the black box that explains job seeker inference effects. Whereas evidence

indicates the effects of AOBI on recruitment outcomes matter because of the impact on anticipated work meaningfulness, the effects of anticipated job self-efficacy are best explained by another source.

Given these results, I conducted additional mediation testing to investigate whether anticipated PO fit and PJ fit help explain why anticipated job self-efficacy impacts intentions. Findings that anticipated PO fit mediate the effects of job self-efficacy to acceptance intentions, as well as organizational attraction, shed some light on the explanation for why anticipated job self-efficacy influences recruiting outcomes. That being said, because these mediation effects account for less than half of the total effects on both outcomes, it is evident that the explanation for why anticipated job self-efficacy influences recruiting outcomes during this period of recruitment partially remains in the black box, yet to be unpacked.

Supplemental analyses of anticipated fit's impact on AOBI to recruiting outcomes relationships provides more insight into why ABOI matters to applicants during the middle stage of recruitment. Whereas anticipated PJ fit added no explanatory power, the combination of anticipated PO fit and anticipated meaningfulness yielded slightly more explanatory power than anticipated meaningfulness alone. More specifically, consideration of anticipated PO fit reduced the indirect effect of anticipated meaningfulness on outcomes, while simultaneously operating as a second mediation pathway through which AOBI influences both applicants' acceptance intentions and organizational attraction. A small portion of explanatory power operating through anticipated meaningfulness as a second-stage serial mediator, when PO fit is the first-

stage mediator for both acceptance intentions and organizational attraction suggests that anticipated meaningfulness may serve as a more proximal predictor of recruiting outcomes for PO fit in certain instances. It should be noted, however, that including the effects of PJ fit, although they were non-significant, eliminated the serial mediation effect on acceptance intentions. In sum, this supplementary analysis adds nuance to this study's findings that explain the effects of AOBI on recruitment outcomes. Together, results show that AOBI matters to outcomes because of the impact on anticipated work meaningfulness AND anticipated PO fit.

Summarizing the overall implications for recruiting research, my study reveals that job seekers make sense of job and organizational related cues during recruiting by making fundamental motive-related inferences about future workplaces, inferences that are quite positive for organizations to which individuals have chosen to apply. It also aids in understanding how job seekers respond to these inferences by showing that while some inferences will not impact recruiting outcomes during the maintenance stage, evidence shows that some indeed will. Furthermore, my study provides theoretical explanation as to why certain inferences matter to applicants by identifying anticipated meaningfulness as a mediating mechanism through which job seeker inferences might impact outcomes, the effects of which can operate through and apart from perceptions of a commonly studied and influential variable in the recruiting literature—person-organization fit. Interestingly, with even just two impactful inferences to compare, findings point to a partitioned 'black box' in which the explanation for inference effects is nuanced, with explanatory effects varying depending on the inference. Finally, the

context of my study—the relatively understudied middle stage of recruitment—contributes to a general understanding of how job seekers respond to recruitment activities after application submission.

Motivation Research

Finally, my study has implications for motivation research. Earlier, I articulated the potential for anticipated meaningfulness to be a time-linked motivational construct that connects future-oriented thinking to present day motivation. A multitude of theories tout meaningfulness as a central motivational construct, while empirical results suggest it may be the strongest, most influential mediator between work characteristics and work outcomes (Humphrey et al., 2007). Yet, Zacher and Frese (2009) assert that today's motivation not only depends on a workers' present goals and environment, but on anticipatory forethought about what they want and expect to happen. My study's findings that demonstrate the power of anticipated meaningfulness to enhance future work's attractiveness and motivate a job seeker's desire to accept a position to do that work, signal its role as such a time-linked motivational construct in the recruiting context, and suggest it may have motivating power in other contexts as well. For example, it is possible that anticipated meaningfulness could be an integral motivator during the socialization period—the time period after the employee has accepted a position and through their early tenure—during which certain employee characteristics are shown impact to socialization outcomes of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and even turnover (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011).

While current research acknowledges the role of fit motivating individuals during recruitment, current work also is in search of ways to explain the influence of fit once workers are employed. Barrick and Parks-Leduc (2019) recommend investigating motivational constructs as possible mediators of PO fit in the work context, and note "Whereas fit is expected to positively impact motivation, little research has explicitly examined motivational constructs as mediators of the relationship between fit and performance" (p. 188). My results demonstrate that anticipated meaningfulness can partially explain the relationship between PO fit and pre-hire outcomes. This insight lends credence to the notion that it could help explain PO fit's positive post-hire outcomes, and serves as a springboard to further inquiry into anticipated meaningfulness as a time-linked motivational construct associated with fit in the day-to-day work context.

Overall, my study contributes to the motivation literature by addressing a growing concern for understanding the temporal dimension of motivation (Kanfer, 2012). My findings that anticipated work meaningfulness derived from inferred fulfillment of basic human motives leads to attraction to and motivation toward future work provide confirmatory evidence that anticipatory forethought has motivating power.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this section I address several limitations of the present study, some which could be addressed in future research. These limitations concern the sample used, the use of same source data, the unreliability of certain measures, range restriction, and the omission of hypothesized mediation.

The first limitation concerns the homogeneity of the sample used and the limits it puts on generalizability. While a strength of the sample is that all participants were actual job seekers reporting on real (not fictitious) organizations, most were all classified as first-time job seekers in that they were searching for their first full-time job to begin their professional careers. This sampling decision was made largely out of convenience, and also due to the greater ability to eliminate alternative explanations, given more homogeneous characteristics of individuals who lack full time experience. However, exclusive use of new entrants to the job market, at the exclusion of the two other types of job seekers—formerly unemployed individuals who are now looking for work, and those employed individuals considering changing employers (Boswell et al., 2012)—calls into question the generalizability of the findings, given the effect of these relationships may differ for different types of job seekers. For example, given that financial need may be a more primary motivator for unemployed and yet-to-be employed workers (Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 1999) that may cause a lack the security and stability compared to employed job seekers (Boswell et al., 2012), anticipated meaningfulness may be less of a factor on recruiting outcomes for individuals in these categories. An argument might also be made that younger, inexperienced, millennial job seekers may be more idealistic, as compared to late-career, financially-secure workers who are more focused on leaving a legacy. Thus, it is possible that anticipated meaningfulness might matter more for late-career individuals. Furthermore, the psychological effects of involuntary job loss and an unplanned job search (Price, 1992) might differentially impact my model's relationships. Due to the differences between categories of job seekers and the potential for differential

effects stemming from these differences, future researchers should be encouraged to continue the line of inquiry using samples of job seekers that fall into the other job seeker categories, and perhaps include all three simultaneously.

Another concern about sample homogeneity is that job seekers in the sample are largely pursuing white-collar jobs and permanent positions. Research in recruitment and other disciplines in the organizational sciences have traditionally included samples of white-collar workers and those pursuing white-collar jobs. However, blue-collar workers make up a substantial portion of the global economy and labor market analysts indicate the United States in particular suffers from a blue-collar labor shortage, which will continue at least through 2019 (Levanon & Steemers, 2018). Thus, it is in the best interest of recruiting researchers to not ignore any segment of workers who are and will continue to be in high demand, yet in short supply. Therefore, to account for possible differences related to white-collar work versus blue-collar and service work, scholarship on this topic would benefit from samples of workers pursuing non-white collar jobs. A similar argument can be made for contingent workers, given organizations increasingly turn to contingent workers to accomplish its work (Barrick & Parks-Leduc, 2019). Constructs shown to be important to permanent workers, including meaningful work, may have less importance for temporary workers. Future samples might also consider contingent workers to more fully explore these research questions by accounting for a more diverse workforce and the need to attract them.

A second limitation of this study involves the use of same source data. Because the aim of my research questions was to determine the effects of several job seeker

inferences on recruiting outcomes, the use of same source data, all from the individual job seeker, was necessary. However, same-source measurement does result in measurement context effects that cause artificial covariation (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). To minimize these effects, as suggested by (Podsakoff et al., 2013; Podsakoff et al., 2003), I added temporal separation and collected the predictor, mediator, and criterion variables over a week apart from each other. While this methodology resulted in losing members of my sample due to attrition and no longer meeting inclusion criteria (i.e they were offered a job during over the span of these two weeks), it served as the best conceivable remedy to minimize this bias.

A third limitation concerns unacceptable reliabilities of the work values measured in the study: achievement (α = .59) and altruism (α = .42). As stated in Chapter 4, the oft-used Minnesota Importance Questionnaire (MIQ) (Rounds et al., 1981) was used for measurement, but the scale was modified due to valid concerns about the use of ipsative measures, which the original and validated measurement tool utilized. This modification resulted in less items per measure than is advisable, and likely contributed to lower reliabilities than this measure typically provides. Given these reliabilities, any conclusions made about the null moderation effects of work values in the model are highly suspect. In fact, as stated before, CFA results indicate the best fitting model is one in which these work values are omitted from the model entirely. Despite these results, I tested the hypothesized measurement model knowing I would treat any associated results with caution and the proverbial “grain of salt.” Indeed, to

reach any valid and publishable conclusions about the moderating impact of these two work values, future studies must include more reliable measurement of these two variables.

A fourth limitation is that the relationships in my model may suffer from range restriction. Because the context of the study was the maintenance stage and our research questions dealt with a single organization to which an applicant chose to apply, all participants were responding to questions about an organization of considerable interest to them. Thus, this should lead to a range restriction in the relationships involving my model's criterion variable—acceptance intentions—and the criterion variable used in several supplementary analyses—organizational attraction. Following Jones et al., (2014) I tried to minimize range restriction by instructing participants to choose for their focal organization—by which model constructs were measured—either a top choice or a realistic choice, but not necessarily their top choice. However, a true range restriction correction requires establishing and utilizing the unrestricted standard deviation, something that was not done in this study.

While not tied to specific limitations of the study, several interesting and potentially fruitful avenues of future research are worthy of mention. These include exploration of: (1) antecedents to my model inferences, (2) the influence of anticipated meaningfulness during recruiting's other stages, (3) post-recruiting ramifications of anticipated meaningfulness that occurs during recruiting, (4) anticipated meaningfulness as an outcome variable in the job search literature, and (5) anticipated meaningfulness as a motivational variable in the everyday workplace.

First, while this study focused on several impactful job seeker inferences drawn from cues about an organization and its work, future scholarship is encouraged to focus on the specific cues that lead to these inferences, particularly during the maintenance stage when so much information is being sought out by applicants and conveyed by a multitude of sources such as recruiters, hiring managers, organizational websites, current employees, and even friends and family (Gully et al., 2015). For example, a recruiter's interpersonal skills and warmth—shown meta-analytically to influence applicants' acceptance intentions ($p = .30$)—might be a cue that leads to anticipated belongingness at that organization, whereas recruiter competence—also shown to correlate with acceptance intentions ($p = .24$)—might indicate to the applicant that organizational employees and leaders are qualified and know what they are doing, and thus induce anticipated job self-efficacy. To be most useful and practical to recruiting organizations, it is necessary for research to investigate recruiting period cues about the job and organization that are responsible for inferences consequential to both anticipated meaningfulness and recruiting outcomes.

Second, while this study has focused on anticipated meaningfulness during recruiting's middle stage, future scholarship might explore the effects of anticipated meaningfulness during the other two stages of the recruiting cycle. The first stage consists of applicants gathering preliminary job and organizational information in order to decide whether or not to formally enter the selection process by submitting application; meanwhile, organizations attempt to generate viable candidates during this time (Breaugh, 2008, Rynes & Cable, 2003). Organizational attraction is the most

common construct of interest during this stage, and is shown to influence application decisions (Harold, Uggerslev, & Kraichy, 2014). In my study, job seekers anticipated a high degree of work meaningfulness in organizations to which they applied—the mean anticipated meaningfulness score was 4.71 on a 6-point scale (SD = .715). Thus, future work could investigate the degree to which anticipated meaningfulness influences their Stage 1 organizational attraction and application decisions. Stage 3 is marked by organizations persuading offered candidates to join the organization, and candidates pondering whether or not to accept (Dineen & Soltis, 2011). The outcome variable of most interest to researchers and organizations in this stage is job choice—the candidate's decision to accept or decline a job offer (Barber, 1998). Future work could examine if and how anticipated meaningfulness influences job seekers' acceptance decisions.

Third, future research might consider the post-recruiting ramifications of meaningfulness that was anticipated during recruiting. In addition to more obvious positive motivational ramifications of met expectations, a potential dark side is the fallout from unmet expectations. Porter & Steers (1973) convey that lesser expectations lead to greater job satisfaction, because a large discrepancy between initial expectations and actual job experiences can result in lower employee satisfaction, eventually leading to a greater likelihood of turnover (Breaugh, 2000; Phillips, 1998). Consequently, although high anticipated meaningfulness may lead to improved recruiting outcomes, a discrepancy between anticipated and experienced meaningfulness might be detrimental to work attitudes and performance while on the job.

Fourth, anticipated meaningfulness might be an answer to the call in the job search literature to identity and utilize more job search outcomes than the oft used outcomes of employment status or number of job offers (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). Job search research has come to the conclusion that desirability, not just number of job offers, is a key aspect to consider when trying to determine job search success (Boswell et al., 2012). Thus, Boswell et al., (2012) asserted the need to identify different job search outcomes, and highlighted in particular the need for more subjective outcomes. Some scholarship has begun to take on this challenge by exploring employee attitudes about their job and organization after employment has ensued (e.g. Jokiasaari & Nurmii, 2005; Saks & Ashforth, 2002). Given this need, anticipated meaningfulness could serve the job search literature well as a subjective outcome that reflects the desirability, rather than the quantity of job offers.

Fifth and finally, as has been hinted at in the earlier discussion, anticipating work meaningfulness is not limited to job seekers during the recruitment process. Workers currently employed in an organizational setting also contemplate and infer what their present work and work environment will look like days, weeks, months, and years ahead (Lewin, 1951) and presumably gauge its meaningfulness. Future research can examine the antecedents and processes of currently employed workers' anticipated meaningfulness, and the impact it might have on attitudinal, motivational, and behavioral outcomes associated with performance, socialization, development, and turnover.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study suggests several important actions for organizations can take as they attempt to recruit qualified applicants. Most importantly, organizations can increase their recruitment success by spending time and effort to convey to their applicant pools if and how their work is meaningful. As was described earlier, anticipating meaningfulness requires both applicants' comprehension of the work tasks and work environment *and* a positive assessment of them having personal significance and purpose (Steger & Dike, 2010). Organizations intent on solely helping applicants assess fit will be more concerned with people's match to the job, organizational culture, etc. and so will focus on helping them understand what the work and work environment will be like. However, organizations intent on helping applicants assess meaningfulness will be dually concerned about the personal significance the person attributes to that work and setting, and helping them assess its worth and purpose. Results of this study indicate that job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness is related to both acceptance intentions and organizational attraction, and has predictive power over and above perceived PO fit. Further analyses revealed the effects of anticipated meaningfulness are unwavering, despite differences in personality, how central work is to a person's life, and the economic pressure they feel as they search for work. Because of this influence across individuals and circumstances, organizations are encouraged to communicate how their work could be appraised as meaningful.

To accomplish this, organizations would do well during the maintenance stage of recruitment to provide information and engage in interactions that cue applicants

regarding opportunities for beneficiary impact in their jobs and work settings. Results confirmed the AOBI inference impacts both acceptance intentions and organizational attraction later in the maintenance stage, and is largely attributable to its impact on anticipated work meaningfulness and anticipated PO fit. Several suggestions are included that might be helpful to organizations in that vein.

First, organizations should be more intentional about communicating how vacant jobs provide opportunity for beneficiary impact. Consider community involvement as an example. Organizations high in community involvement—defined as philanthropy and support for employee volunteering in the community (Grant, 2012)—can be viewed as having sizable opportunities for beneficiary impact, but organizational outsiders can often be largely unaware of an organization's community involvement (Sen, Bhattachary, & Korschun, 2006). This lack of awareness has been shown to limit the effects of corporate good citizen behavior on recruiting outcomes (Jones et al., 2014). By being more intentional about communicating the ways in which the organization helps the community and other beneficiaries via recruiting websites and print materials, during interviews and site visits, as part of realistic job previews (Barber, 1998) and through other applicant interactions, organizations will be better able to take advantage of the effects AOBI has on outcomes by way of this influential mediator.

Second, in order for organizations to have "something to talk about" regarding opportunities for beneficiary impact, they should pay attention to job design and work to infuse jobs with opportunities for beneficiary impact. For example, designing a job with more task significance—which has been strongly associated to meaningfulness

(Humphrey et al. 2007)—increases the extent to which a job's tasks are impactful to others (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) and is one way to enhance opportunity for beneficiary impact. Opportunity for beneficiary impact on the job can vary along four dimensions: magnitude—how much beneficiaries are impacted, frequency—how often beneficiaries are impacted, scope—the number or range of beneficiaries impacted, and focus—whether the job prevents beneficiaries harm or provides them benefits (Grant, 2007, 2008a). Evidence shows that when jobs are designed to provide opportunities for beneficiary impact, current employees are able to recognize that their jobs allow them to "do good," which leads to enhanced motivation and job performance (Grant, Campbell, Chen, Cottone, Lapedis & Lee, 2007). As this study shows, cues that signal these opportunities have motivational impact. During the maintenance stage of recruiting, applicants may come in contact with current employees and managers who communicate how the work they perform and supervise impacts clients, customers, etc. Recruiters may espouse this impact as well. Without jobs that offer ample opportunity along the aforementioned dimensions, however, there will be little of positive consequence to share if they do so honestly and accurately. Thus, enhancing jobs' actual opportunity for beneficiary impact is an important step to take advantage of the motivational implications of AOBI.

Third, to enhance AOBI, organizations might consider designing jobs with more employee contact with beneficiaries, as well as promoting this feature of the job to applicants. While results are mixed regarding the effects of beneficiary contact on current workers' perceptions of beneficiary impact, because some interactions are

positive, while others are more negative (e.g. Grant 2008a, Grant et al., 2007), strong theoretical arguments suggest that a job that provide avenues for employees to interact with customers and clients in order to build relationships, better serve them, and obtain feedback on their service allows employees to more fully recognize the opportunities the job provides to impact beneficiaries (Grant, 2007, 2008). Job design research confirms that interaction outside the organization—a job characteristic defined as the extent to which a job requires a person to communicate with people external to the organization—has motivational, attitudinal and performance implications (Humphrey et al., 2007). Thus, organizations having jobs with any or all of these aspects: (1) frequent beneficiary contact, (2) a wide variety of beneficiaries with whom to connect, and (3) ample opportunity for meaningful and deep interactions should enhance perceptions of AOBI and ultimately anticipated meaningfulness, if organizations convey these attributes well to recruits.

Fourth, organizations intent in increasing the likelihood that job seekers anticipate opportunities for beneficiary impact should focus on creating and maintaining an organizational image and reputation that is high on corporate social responsibility (CSR). A strong reputation of CSR—an organization known for social and environmental performance in addition to economic performance—is a key factor that shapes organizational attractiveness in job seekers' eyes, particularly for applicants with more job options (Albinger & Freeman, 2000; Turban & Greening, 1997) as it cues individuals to the values of the organization and its prosocial orientation (Grant, Dutton, & Russo, 2008; Jones et al., 2014). It also cues that the company can afford to invest in

discretionary environmental and social practices that could enhance opportunities for beneficiary impact (Jones & Willness, 2013). Job seekers who learn about an employer's CSR through other sources external to the organization, such as a news outlet's list of top corporate citizens, may be less skeptical and less likely to discount a positive CSR image, compared to when they only learn of the company's CSR exploits through its own media outlets (Jones, Willness, & Heller, 2016). In sum, organizations with a reputation for doing 'more good' are likely to be perceived to provide more opportunities for prospective employees to do good.

In addition to findings that provide direction for recruiting organizations to be concerned about AOBI to enhance anticipated meaningfulness, this study also suggests organizations that aim to facilitate applicants' anticipation of meaningful work can do so by helping them foresee the extent to which their basic, fundamental goals would be fulfilled in that organizational setting. My study considered fundamental motives of agency (self-focused and other-focused) and communion (Bakan, 1966) but other motives have also been shown to contribute to perceptions of meaningfulness (Barrick et al., 2013). Organizations would do well to communicate how their work and work environment can meet their fundamental needs for security, status, communion, achievement and autonomy (the latter two are encompassed by agency) in an effort to help applicants assess work's personal significance and thereby anticipate work's meaningfulness.

Secondarily, in addition to a focus on conveying to their applicant pools if and how their work is meaningful, results highlight the importance of tailoring information

provided during the middle stage of recruitment in ways that applicants can gain a better sense of how successful they might be performing that specific job in that organization. Results confirmed that inferences of anticipated job self-efficacy during the maintenance stage of recruiting directly influence acceptance intentions and organizational attraction weeks later. Part of this influence can be attributed to perceptions of fit with the organization that manifest from inferred job self-efficacy, while the rest appears attributable to the importance a person places on expecting to be capable and successful in doing one's choice of work. This is consistent with recent work that attests that job seekers are not only motivated by the desire to "fit in" at a future workplace, but also "do well" once they are there (Barrick & Parks-Leduc, 2019; Morgan & Barrick, 2017).

Organizations intent on helping facilitate applicants' inference of job self-efficacy should not only provide applicants with complete and accurate information regarding the nature of the job and work environment through realistic job previews (Barber, 1998), but also help them assess to what degree they have the capabilities to excel in the work and thrive in the work setting. This can be accomplished through individualized feedback regarding the alignment of their skills and abilities with what the job demands via recruiting websites (Dineen, Ling, Ash, DelVecchio, 2007) or face-to-face communication. Providing applicants with such feedback may convince poorer-fitting applicants to self-select out of the applicant pool, thereby improving the quality of the remaining pool (Dineen & Noe, 2009). Meanwhile, all candidates tend to view even negative information positively because it allows them to make judgements using accurate information about their potential success in the job and organization (Meglino,

Ravlin, & DeNisi, 2000). Furthermore, presenting realistic job previews of what jobs are like also enhance perceptions of an organization's honesty (Earnest et al., 2011).

Lastly, this study offers organizations who typically recruit for fit an additional tool they might choose to utilize as they seek to generate and maintain a strong applicant pool. Organizations are indeed wise to recruit for fit, as evidence shows a positive relationship between anticipated PO fit and recruiting outcomes (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). That being said, several factors, in addition to this study's findings of parallel mediation, suggest that anticipated meaningfulness is another factor worthy of organizations to attend to during the middle stage of recruitment in addition to fit. First, evidence shows that job seekers, especially first-time job seekers, are often under "the illusion of preference consistency" (Wells & Iyengar, 2005: 66) meaning that while they think personal attributes match job characteristics, they in fact do not "fit." Fit scholars recommend for more objective assessments of fit to be used to reduce this inaccuracy, (e.g. Barrick & Parks-Leduc, 2019). In contrast, scholarship shows that anticipated meaningfulness does not require total self-awareness—which may lack accuracy anyway—but instead is much more of an implicit process (King et al., 2006). Thus, job seekers might form more accurate assessments when anticipating meaningfulness versus anticipating fit, from which both organizations and applicants would benefit. Second, there are instances in which organizations are or would do well by recruiting applicants who do not fit. Practitioners forward that in times of trying to change business strategy or culture, they intentionally seek out individuals who are dissimilar (Barrick & Parks-Leduc, 2019). Furthermore, scholarship has shown that hired employees who are

"misfits" can be engaged and perform well (Vogel et al., 2016; Morgan & Barrick, 2017; Devloo et al., 2011). By contrast, organizations with applicants who anticipate meaningfulness that later translates into experienced meaningfulness in the workplace reap the benefits of many positive motivational implications (Humphrey et al., 2007). For these reasons, organizations might consider addressing meaningfulness during recruitment in addition to recruiting for fit.

CONCLUSION

Recruiting talent is integral to organizational effectiveness (Phillips & Gully, 2015) and can be a source of competitive advantage (Taylor & Collins, 2000), thus making the "war for talent" a battle worth fighting. Organizations intent on gaining a leg up in this struggle should heed the words of Victor Frankl who wrote, "Man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life" (1963, p. 156). Anticipated work meaningfulness appears to be a critical, yet understudied factor that affects job seekers' intentions to accept employment opportunities as the recruiting process moves beyond initial attraction and decisions to apply. Inferences job seekers glean from job and organizational related cues during recruitment about anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact strongly influence anticipated meaningfulness during this crucial time of recruitment. While existing recruiting research advocates attending to the inferences job seekers derive from cues about prospective work, and searches for explanations of why they matter to recruitment outcomes, this study helps unpack this "black box" by highlighting a key explanatory mechanism that links inferences job seekers make with recruiting outcomes. It further

advances the meaningfulness and motivation literatures by demonstrating how anticipating the meaningfulness of future work can have present day motivational implications. Finally, this study enriches our understanding of how anticipating making a difference can make a difference for job seekers, as well as the organizations who recruit them. Organizations should thus take strategic steps to adjust their recruitment strategies to tap into the potential of anticipated meaningfulness in order to gain a competitive advantage in the war for talent.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A-1 – Demographic Composition of Sample

Demographic Characteristic	*N* = 197	
Age	20	2.6%
	21	54.1%
	22	37.1%
	23	3.6%
	24	1.5%
	31	0.5%
	35	0.5%
Gender	Male	37.6%
	Female	62.4%
Race	Asian	9.3%
	Black/AA	1.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	18.0%
	Pacific Highlander	1.0%
	White	69.1%
	Other	1.0%
Full Time Work Experience	No Full Time Work Experience	67.0%
	Less than 6 months	5.1%
	6 months to 1 year	16.5%
	Greater than 1 year up to 2 years	6.7%
	Greater than 2 years up to 3 years	3.1%
	Greater than 3 years	1.5%
Part Time Work Experience	No Part Time Work Experience	6.2%
	Less than 6 months	1.0%
	6 months to 1 year	21.6%
	Greater than 1 year up to 2 years	17.6%
	Greater than 2 years up to 3 years	17.0%
	Greater than 3 years up to 5 years	28.9%
	Over 5 years	7.6%
Number of Current Jobs	0	43.3%
	1	46.9%
	2	8.2%
	3	1.5%
Years in Their Longest Tenured Current Job	0-1 years	47.3%
	2-3 years	41.8%
	4-5 years	11.0%

APPENDIX A-2 – Proposed Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Supported/Not Supported
H1: Job seekers' anticipated job self-efficacy is positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness.	Not Supported
H2: The positive relationship between anticipated job self-efficacy and anticipated meaningfulness is stronger for job seekers with a higher achievement value.	Not Supported
H3: Job seekers' anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact is positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness.	Supported
H4: The positive relationship between anticipated opportunity for beneficiary impact and anticipated meaningfulness is stronger for job seekers with a higher altruism value.	Not Supported
H5: Job seekers' anticipated belongingness is positively associated with anticipated meaningfulness.	Not Supported
H6: The positive relationship between anticipated belongingness and anticipated meaningfulness is stronger for job seekers with a higher altruism value.	Not Supported
H7: Job seekers' anticipated meaningfulness is positively associated with acceptance intentions toward that organization.	Supported
H8: The positive relationship between anticipated job meaningfulness and acceptance intentions is stronger for job seekers with higher work centrality.	Not Supported