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Hunting While Working: An Expanded Model of Employed Job Search

***Abstract.** Major theoretical models of job search fail to consider the changing nature of careers, the influence of the internet as a job search tool, and the diverse objectives for employed job search. Consequently, the study of employed job search has been largely confined to turnover research. We add to existing theory by providing a typology of employed search objectives based on modifying employment conditions (separation-seeking, change-seeking, leverage-seeking), contagion (mimetic-seeking) and employability (knowledge-seeking, network-seeking) and offer propositions related to the antecedents and implications for each objective. This classification offers an alternative explanation for previous research findings, provides a framework for future study, and has practical implications for employee retention and recruitment.*

Key Words: employed job search, turnover, job search objectives

Hunting while Working: An Expanded Model of Employed Job Search

Performing job search while employed has been considered a key predictor in turnover models, and thus assumed to reflect an effort to leave a current employer due to either dissatisfaction or a lack of commitment. However, a 2016 online survey of 2,305 adults (including 1,386 American respondents) revealed that 74 percent of workers claimed they were “always hunting” even though the majority (51 percent) reported they were satisfied with their job (Jobvite, 2016). With qualitative changes in the nature of the workplace—accompanied by radically easier and less expensive options for job exploration—employees clearly perform job search for a variety of reasons which have very different implications for organizational functioning than captured in the prominent turnover literature.

Specifically, labor market trends such as outsourcing, escalated use of temporary and contingent workers, reduced management layers, and volatile economic conditions have forced employees to be more proactive about maintaining their employability (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011). Thus, employed job search, has increasingly become a career management tool taking place frequently (Stevenson, 2007), and sometimes incessantly (Steel, 2002), as individuals vacillate between passive and active search.

Focusing on the impact of employed job search only considering consequent turnover, therefore, may not only overstate the threat that employees are planning to leave, but may also overlook the potential benefits of such search that can accrue to employers. Specifically, employed job search can highlight the relative superiority of an existing workplace, expand networks that reap improved industry and market intelligence, or motivate the updating of skills or training. Indeed, without building a more comprehensive and dynamic model that elaborates these varied objectives, research

could misinform organizations to adopt policies that exacerbate the negative impacts or dampen the positive benefits of the inevitable job search behaviors of their employees.

Turnover models have established that people conduct job search to identify alternatives prior to leaving (e.g. Black, 1981; Bretz, et al., 1994; Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Mobley, 1977; Steel, 2002). Employees often leave because of some precipitating event or “shock” rather than dissatisfaction, and may even leave without conducting a job search prior to their exit. (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Furthermore, employees may participate in job search with no intention to leave. Organizations must contend with interpreting the implications of increasingly prevalent job search, specifically when it does not immediately lead to turnover. Certainly, employees may find that their reasons change over time due to context, or in fact, they may hold multiple objectives for conducting employed job search (Boswell, Boudreau, & Dunford, 2001). Yet, without an elaboration of what these varied objectives for job search may encompass, the ability of organizations to respond to one or more of these objectives with any particular employee is highly obscured.

To address this need, we present a typology of employed search objectives based on prior research and theory related to job search motivations and objectives. In developing the typology we first considered the various motivations employees have for conducting a search and identified seven prominent motivation categories from the literature: 1) to escape an unpleasant job situation (Mobley, 1977; Hom et al., 1984); 2) to obtain different job duties that better fit one’s skills and abilities (Feldman et al., 2002; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011); 3) to obtain higher pay or greater benefits (Black, 1981; Blau, 1994); 4) to seek career advancement or to change careers (Longhi & Taylor, 2011; Veiga, 1989); 5) to explore the job market in order to assess or enhance employability (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009); 6) to meet non-work or family-related needs (Keith & McWilliams, 1999); and 7) to follow-up on recommendations of friends, family, coworkers, or recruiters (Cappelli & Hamori, 2013). We then used these motivations to elaborate a set of

objectives—noting that some motivations can be satisfied without leaving the current employer, and ensuring that all of the identified motivations could be included within the typology of objectives.

The present study incorporates objectives identified in previous studies and extends that work by outlining the distinctive features of the categories of employed job search objectives and postulating possible antecedents, likely individual and organizational outcomes, and organizational prescriptions for addressing the various objectives. As observed by Boswell, Zimmerman and Swider (2012) in their literature review of job search behavior across different contexts, employed job search is not well understood and more research “focused explicitly on varying search objectives” is needed (p. 153).

Our employed job search model, therefore, provides a comprehensive foundation of employed job search objectives linked to different theoretical perspectives. We first consider models in which employees seek to modify their employment, and differentiate among *separation-seeking* objectives, which focuses on leaving the organization; *change-seeking*, which centers on change related to a particular position and internal job search; and *leverage-seeking*, which uses job offers to negotiate more favorable employment conditions with the current employer. Next, we integrate recent research currents with *mimetic-seeking*, which focuses on collective turnover theory as context-emergent (Nyberg & Ployhart, 2013), reflecting job search less as an individual-level phenomenon, but rather as an outcome of larger contagion trends within the organization or society. Finally, acknowledging that job search as an antecedent is only modestly related to turnover (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000), we include two other objectives drawing from employability theory which are less likely to be associated with immediate turnover and can sometimes offer organizational benefits: *network-seeking* and *knowledge-seeking*.

Our elaboration of employed job search objectives broadens the conceptualization of job search to include not just searching *for another job*, but includes searching *for information about other jobs*.

We, therefore, define employed job search as the act of investigating information on alternative external and internal employment opportunities while already employed. The search or investigation may be proactively initiated by the employee and include searches on job boards and employer websites, or it may be a reactive response, such as following a link for an unsolicited job advertisement that appears while visiting another website. Consequently, job search success is not necessarily the attainment of another job but is defined by the search objective and may include an expanded network, knowledge of new skill requirements, or improved conditions with the current employer.

Providing a model for employed job search offers several contributions to the job search and career development literature. First, by concentrating on employed job search, we highlight how it is uniquely consequential to contemporary organizations, but not straightforward in its consequences to turnover, morale and performance. Specifically, a more comprehensive understanding of job search objectives is required to identify the appropriate recommendations for organizational responses for retention as well as recruitment. Second, we integrate a set of relevant theories and provide theoretical underpinnings to drive further theorizing and organize existing and future empirical findings. Finally, we expand on the literature by providing a broader range of objectives drawn from research, and theorize propositions that link the objectives to both antecedents and individual and organizational implications. Most importantly, providing this framework should help organizations derive the optimal policies for responding to employed job search, potentially both lowering dysfunctional turnover—i.e. the departure of individuals who the organization would like to keep (Dalton, Todor, & Krackhardt, 1982)—and encouraging self-directed employee investments in their performance.

Theoretical Development: A Model of Employed Job Search

Past research on employed job search, which tends to focus on search behaviors related to turnover rather than the implications of search, have identified various search objectives of employees. In a study based on a survey of high-level executives, for example, Boswell, Boudreau and Dunford (2001) found that active search behaviors (e.g. sending out resumes) and preparatory search behaviors (e.g. asking family and friends about job leads) varied according to nine search objectives they listed. Drawing from prior research and theory, their objectives included: obtain a new position in the same line of work, change careers, expand professional relationships, obtain leverage with the current employer, begin a new vocation (e.g. charity), start a new company, stay aware of alternatives, prepare for job loss, and prepare for company falter. None of their 1,600 respondents offered additional objectives when given the opportunity. Similarly, Van Hoye and Saks (2008) found individuals used different search methods depending on their employment objectives: find another job, keep abreast of alternative opportunities, develop a network of professional relationships, and gain leverage with their employer. Despite the range of objectives identified in these studies, these objectives lack strong conceptual categories and theory as well as elaboration on the antecedents, outcomes and implications of employed job search for reasons other than separation with the current organization. A notable exception is a study by Boswell, Boudreau and Dunford (2004) which differentiated separation-seeking from leverage-seeking objectives, and provided evidence that these objectives differ in their antecedents. Still, the literature is missing a comprehensive treatment that illustrates why antecedents should differ across objectives, and the implications for individuals and organizations of these differing objectives.

Our conceptual model of employed job search is presented in Figure 1 and is anchored in the six objectives motivating the search behaviors. Researchers have long identified a variety of individual

characteristics (e.g. personality) and situational variables capturing environmental and organizational features (e.g. job characteristics) as well as individual reactions to such features (e.g. job satisfaction) that serve as predictors of employed job search behavior. These variables can be associated with a variety of motivations and objectives that reflect insights from turnover theories, the theory of planned behavior, contagion, and employability perspectives. These objectives then influence job search processes and behaviors, and result in a range of individual and organizational outcomes. For example, depending on search objectives, individuals may become enthusiastic leavers who depart the organization, but could also become enthusiastic stayers if their search results in labor market information showing their present circumstances in a positive light or enabling them to leverage a counter-offer. Similarly, organizations may be in a position to tailor responses to external offers based on data and experience with employee job search objectives. Accordingly, the model demarcates considerably different implications for organizational policy than previous treatments that tended to characterize search objectives predominantly based on turnover theory assumptions.

Importantly, while our model is based on the driving motivation for each of the objectives; it should never be interpreted to mean that more motivations cannot arise dynamically or sequentially. If organizations overlook, or are oblivious to, the dominant motivations for the documented large number of employed job searches that are not associated with intended turnover, then organizations will likely respond reflexively and miss important benefits to these behaviors.

Place Figure 1 Here

The sections below review the six objectives by theorizing on antecedents and important individual and organizational implications for each. In addition to our review of prominent articles and theory, we further validated our identification of the pool of potential antecedents by running a first-pass meta-analytic query using metaBUS, a cloud-based Internet platform that allows researchers to

identify empirical research findings (Bosco, Uggerslev, & Steel, 2017). The metaBUS platform shows that “job search behaviors” have been associated with 1,749 different variable effects as of July 2017. After condensing the findings to variables found in at least six studies and with significance at the 80% confidence interval, we assured that we incorporated references to all of the associated specific antecedent variables, or their conceptual antecedent category, within our framework below. Through this process, we expand our coverage to explicitly integrate community embeddedness as a referenced antecedent. We summarize the propositional implications for specific antecedents and outcomes with a typology of the objectives offered in Table 1 below. We conclude by discussing the importance of a more comprehensive employed job search model, practical implications, and further suggested research.

Place Table 1 Here

Objectives Based on Modifying Employment Conditions

Job search activity by employees is often motivated by the desire to modify their employment situation in some way. This may be an aspiration for different/higher levels of responsibility, pay or benefits; a desire to change employers; or a need for different working conditions. Currently, however, the literature does not discriminate among important differences in these objectives. For instance, an employee who enjoys their position responsibilities may still want to leave an organization because of discomfort with the identity or culture of the company. Alternatively, an employee in a highly-rated workplace, – e.g., Fortune’s top “Best companies to work for” (such as Google) may want to change their job responsibilities due to their interests or skill sets, but be strongly committed to staying in their workplace. This difference affects how organizations should respond to such job search most effectively; and therefore, the model first delineates the differences among the three categories of separation-seeking, change-seeking, and leverage-seeking objectives.

These three objectives are grounded in turnover theories and the theory of planned behavior. The most heavily studied models of employed job search behaviors assume that job search is, in fact, intended to lead to employment in a new position; thus, not surprisingly, employed search is often an important antecedent to turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). Specifically, as job search and the comparison of alternatives are prominent in most turnover models (Hom & Kinicki, 2001), the antecedents in such turnover models are similarly shared by search objectives associated with an interest in modifying their employment situation. For instance, research indicates the importance of embeddedness in dampening turnover (Mitchell et al., 2001) as well as job search behaviors (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010; Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010).

In applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to voluntary turnover, Van Breukelen, Van der Vlist and Steensma (2004) clarified the treatment of antecedents to differentiate the “external” predictors based on attitudes towards the job situation (i.e., job satisfaction and organizational commitment) and demographics (i.e., tenure) from the more “basic” predictors of the theory of planned behavior (attitudes toward leaving, subjective norms about leaving and perceived behavioral control). Similarly, our framework focuses theorizing around the attitudes that lead to different search objectives—that is, the why of performed job search. Thus, we concentrate on the attitudes that discriminate the objectives, specifically organizational commitment and job satisfaction for separation-seeking and change-seeking. Concerning leverage-seeking, we return to the predictor of perceived behavioral control, as we believe the significant antecedents are those that relate to employees’ confidence in successfully gaining leverage-seeking benefits, such as human capital and proactivity. Importantly, research suggests that these objectives can overlap and interact over time. For instance, research showing the effectiveness of the global core work evaluation (Webster, Adams & Beehr, 2014) implies that evaluative assessments that arise from one attitude (e.g., job satisfaction)

may influence other attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment); suggesting there is a need to test the boundary conditions for parsing job search objectives more finely.

Employees with objectives based on intentions to modify their employment are salient targets for proximal withdrawal theory, which elaborates the individual implications of job search outcomes (Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012). “Proximal withdrawal states” are based on the interaction between an employee's preference for leaving or staying with their level of control over that decision (Hom et al., 2012; Li, Lee, Mitchell, Hom, & Griffeth, 2016). “Enthusiastic leavers and stayers” have a high level of control; whereas, “reluctant leavers or stayers” feel they have little control over whether they can stay in their position or leave. This control difference can also predict variables such as engaging in job search and actual turnover. For example, an employee might deplore their current job situation, but reluctantly stay to avoid sacrificing benefits or to avoid inferior compensation. Alternatively, an employee who enjoys their job may have a separation-seeking objective, but only as a reluctant leaver, due to a relocating spouse. In the first case, the organization may suffer from sub-productivity from the reluctant stayer; while in the latter case, the organization could misinterpret the turnover as a signal of an internal concern.

Separation-Seeking

Organizations are uniquely powerful contexts in an employee's decision to find a new job, and organizational commitment has long been understood as an important antecedent to turnover (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). While organizational commitment alone is an uneven predictor for turnover (Cohen, 1993), a more recent meta-analysis found it to be a stronger predictor of turnover than job satisfaction (Griffeth et al., 2000). Furthermore, dissatisfaction with aspects of the current organization has outperformed perceived job alternatives in motivating job search behaviors (Bretz, Boudreau & Judge, 1994).

The separation-seeking objective is conceptualized as driven by attitudes toward the organization, specifically, organizational commitment and person-organization fit. Job searchers seeking separation are motivated by the perception of intolerable aspects of organizational life that appear impervious to change. Consequently, perceptions of unfairness, inequity in pay and organizational justice, as well as negative feelings toward the supervisor, have prominently predicted increased job search (Felman, Leana & Bolino, 2002). Poor perceived organizational success (Bretz, et al., 1994) also discourages organizational loyalty. Moreover, discomfort may not necessarily arise due to the individual or the workplace, but instead to person-organization fit and a lack of work adjustment (Judge, 1994).

Consequently, antecedents that would be expected for separation-seeking job search span factors that drive subjective negative appraisals of the organization: i.e., individual variables that drive some employees to be more likely to dislike their organization, and situational variables that generally make organizations dislikable. For instance, at the individual level, personality variables such as agreeableness or emotional stability independently contribute to turnover beyond job satisfaction and performance (Zimmerman, 2008). More recent research affirms the importance of agreeableness to organizational commitment, especially in collectivist cultures (Choi, Oh & Colbert, 2015). On the other hand, proactive individuals may search simply to advance or change their career, absent of negative emotions about the organization (Woo & Allen, 2014).

The second set of antecedents draws from situational variables known to drive organizational commitment; for example, organizational justice issues (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001), abusive supervision (Burton, Taylor, & Barber, 2014), and untrustworthy leadership (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002) appear to be significant antecedents to job search predicting turnover. A fairly recent research stream has emphasized the pernicious role of workplace bullying behavior (Leymann, 1996)

in motivating turnover from an organization (Houshmand, O'Reilly, Robinson, & Wolff, 2012).

Summarizing the above, we propose:

Proposition 1: a) *Employees performing job search with separation-seeking objectives will significantly differ from other employed job searchers on situational and individual characteristics that relate to organizational commitment and person-organization fit.* b) *Employees with separation-seeking objectives will have the highest likelihood for turnover.*

Individuals seeking to leave their organization are likely to perform an intense external search and should naturally fall into the categories of either an enthusiastic leaver or a reluctant stayer. Thus, an unsuccessful separation seeker is likely to be a reluctant stayer, with lower levels of engagement, persistently low organizational commitment, perceptions of low control over their job situation, and lower performance (Li et al., 2016).

The above implies that organizations would be wise to recognize that not all turnover is dysfunctional; search by employees truly mismatched to the organization may, in fact, be a good turn of events. Organizations should, though, take advantage of the honeymoon effect (Allen, 2006; Wright & Bonett, 2002) to instill a high sense of commitment in the early periods of employment when attitudes are still pliable to avoid such separation seeking. Certainly, if an organization experiences higher turnover rates than their peers, and/or observes a high rate of job search behaviors, it is incumbent on management to diagnose whether it is the organization itself that suffers from objectionable situational features.

Change-Seeking

While separation seeking concerns an employee's intent to leave the organization, change seeking focuses specifically on internal job search options driven by a desire to change some aspect of their current employment such as hours, responsibilities, title, pay or supervision. Accordingly, a variety of remedies that do not involve turnover may satisfy the needs of change seekers. Employees may change duties or job conditions within their current department, perform a similar job within

another internal department, or perform a different job within another internal department. (Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 2002). Importantly, internal options are often preferable to employees, as they usually involve less effort, stress and risk – notwithstanding the additional influences of organizational and community embeddedness (Lee, Burch & Mitchell, 2014). In the absence of suitable internal options, though, employees with a change-seeking objective may change to a separation-seeking objective and look for external alternatives. Some employees may, in fact, be indifferent about leaving the organization and look internally and externally simultaneously, reflecting both objectives.

The change-seeking objective is conceptualized as driven by the attitudes to the job, specifically, job satisfaction and person-job fit. Dissatisfaction with some aspect of the current job is a prominent motivation spanning such issues as work-family conflict (Batt & Valcour, 2003), career plateaus (Slocum, Cron, Hansen & Rawlings, 1985), burnout, high career demands (Martins, Eddleston, & Veiga, 2002), and underemployment (McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011).

Secondly, like person-organization fit, person-job fit (Edwards, 1991), which recognizes the need to fit the job demands with the abilities and needs of the employee, may contribute to change or separation intentions (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005). However, change seekers prefer to stay with their current organization and are likely to have higher levels of organizational commitment than separation seekers who want to leave the organization.

Individual differences can also be central to motivating an employee's change-seeking objectives. In a comprehensive integration, Zimmerman and colleagues (2016) identify a wide-range of individual differences—i.e., personality, affectivity, mental ability, and related traits—that predict withdrawal outcomes such as turnover (Zimmerman, Swider, Woo & Allen, 2016). Of especial interest to change-seeking, they note the role of variables that predict expectancies, goals, and competencies that may lead individuals to pursue different opportunities. For example, Zimmerman et al. (2012) found that

extraversion had positive and negative effects on job search behaviors depending on the mediating variable. Extraversion is positively related to ambition and self-efficacy which tends to increase job search behavior; but extraversion, as well as conscientiousness, is positively related to job satisfaction and performance, which tends to decrease search behaviors and turnover (Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002; Zimmerman, 2008; Zimmerman et al., 2012). Extraversion is also associated with embeddedness since the links or social connections that extroverts form within the organization or community make it harder for them to leave (Allen, 2006; Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001; Zimmerman, 2012). Consequently, extraversion may predispose some employees to internal options, such as change-seeking or leverage-seeking objectives, for career advancement and growth.

Change-seeking objectives may develop into separation-seeking objectives depending on the organization's potential to accommodate the employee's needs. Of note for organizations responding to such search, though, internal accommodation may not be the preferred or optimal choice.

Kirschenbaum and Weisberg (2002) found, for instance, that lower education levels predicted intentions to move internally and use career ladders to advance, versus more educated employees who preferred moving to another organization for career progression.

Proposition 2: a) *Employees performing job search with change-seeking objectives will significantly differ from other employed job searchers on situational and individual characteristics that relate to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and/or person-job fit.*
 b) *Employees with change-seeking objectives without satisfactory internal alternatives are likely to become separation seekers with the high likelihood of ensuing turnover.*

Because of these conflicting dynamics for internal/external preferences, proximal withdrawal states are likely to vary widely (Li et al., 2016). If the employed job searcher can achieve the desired change internally, they may become enthusiastic stayers. Unsuccessful internal searches, though, may lead to reluctant stayers with lower levels of engagement than before their job search; alternatively, an employee could change their expectations and become an enthusiastic stayer. Finally, those who

become separation seekers and accept an external offer may be reluctant leavers if they preferred to stay with the organization but were not provided an acceptable alternative.

Organizations can actively respond to many of the interests of change-seeking employees, and thus possibly avoid both the reluctant stayers whose lower engagement impacts individual, team and organizational productivity, and reluctant leavers who can be accommodated at a lower cost than turnover exacts. Organizations may address issues such as work-family conflict by adopting work-family support policies for dependent care (Butts, Casper & Yang, 2013) or designing individual jobs with greater flexibility (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz & Shockley, 2013).

Organizations can also proactively respond to underemployment and career ambitions by formally instituting opportunities in the workplace such as job rotation (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994). Sometimes, just offering challenging assignments can reduce job search behaviors as well as turnover (Preenan, DePater, VanVianen, & Keijzer, 2011), especially if employees believe their skills are being appropriately utilized (Nelissen, Forrier, & Verbruggen, 2017). Finally, organizations may actively invest in career ladders and options to accommodate valued employees seeking career advancement (Spell & Blum, 2000). Such investments should reflect research finding that promotions tend to offer lower salaries than outside hires (Bidwell & Keller, 2014); thus, employees may still opt for separation to obtain higher salaries, or use external offers as leverage to negotiate pay with the current employer.

In their review of job search across different contexts, Boswell et al, (2012) noted that “little, if any, research has been conducted focusing on how EJSs [employed job seekers] may successfully search for new jobs with their current employers” (p. 153). Indeed, employees and employers alike can benefit from a greater emphasis on internal options for satisfying the needs of employees with change seeking objectives.

Leverage-Seeking

Boswell and colleagues (2004) introduced the concept of leverage-seeking as a key distinction from separation-seeking in understanding employed job search. Leverage-seeking covers the tendencies of employees to obtain a job offer as a signal of their worth on the external job market and as leverage to negotiate an increase in pay or position (Bretz et al., 1994). These employees have a general desire to stay with the current employer, but are also driven by the desire for career advancement or prestige, consistent with career trajectories research that values self-promotion for career success (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001), greater pay, and promotions (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995).

Boswell et al. (2004) found that perceived alternatives, hierarchical level, career satisfaction, and importance of rewards all predicted leverage-seeking objectives in job search. Intriguingly, perceiving more job alternatives led to higher leverage-seeking objectives, but lower separation-seeking objectives (Boswell et al., 2004). This finding suggests that variables related to an employee's perceived behavioral control in succeeding at leverage-seeking are compelling variables. Because human capital variables such as education, cognitive ability and occupation-specific skill determines the availability of alternatives and ease of movement for job seekers (Bretz et al., 1994; March & Simon, 1958; Trevor, 2001), such individuals are usually valuable to their current employer as well. Accordingly, employers are often interested in negotiating to retain leverage seekers (Becker, 1993).

Other individual variables can contribute to raising perceived behavioral control in their job search outcome—that is, whether an employee is inclined toward confidence in leverage-seeking behaviors. Women, for instance, are consistently less likely to engage in behaviors that would increase their compensation in their position than men (Bowles & Babcock, 2013), and their reluctance may be well-founded due to a greater disinclination by evaluators to work with such

negotiators when they are women (Bowles, Babcock & Lai, 2007). Personality characteristics also predict such behaviors: higher proactivity has been found to be related to higher script-driven (having a pre-determined course of action) versus dissatisfaction-driven search behaviors; the former exhibiting higher job search behaviors but a lower intention to leave than their dissatisfied counterparts (Woo & Allen, 2014). In a sample of 208 employed job searchers from Belgium and Romania, Van Hove and Saks (2008) found indeed that leverage-seeking employees made more frequent contact with other employers.

Since individuals with leverage-seeking objectives prefer to stay with their current employer, they may have higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment than separation seekers with turnover intentions. However, they still pose a significant turnover risk. With an offer in hand, leverage-seeking employees must face the relative desirability of turnover should their negotiations fail. Consequently, leverage seekers may be enthusiastic stayers or reluctant leavers, depending on the outcome of their negotiation. Furthermore, leverage seekers may pose a greater turnover risk in the future. Indeed, reports estimate that up to 80 percent of employees that receive counter offers still leave the organization within two years (Green, 2012). This may be because these proactive, script-driven seekers have plans for continued career growth and their previous contact with other employers may have bolstered their confidence in their ability to find alternative opportunities or predisposed them to unsolicited offers from employers or recruiters.

Proposition 3: a) *Employees performing job search with leverage-seeking objectives will significantly differ on situational and individual variables associated with higher perceived behavioral control. b) Employees with leverage-seeking objectives pose a significant turnover risk that increases over time.*

Based on the above, organizations should explicitly consider their stance toward leverage-seeking initiatives. Tolerance for employees seeking to use leverage varies widely across organizations. A 2001 Small Business Administration (SBA) survey found that 41 percent of the firms would be willing to consider a counter offer for their workers hired within the last two years, while 52 percent

of the firms would not (Barron, Berger, & Black, 2006). While most firms are likely to have a “selective” counteroffer policy in which decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, employers should realize that successful leverage seekers still pose a substantial turnover risk. Employers must weigh seriously their response to leverage seekers in light of turnover risk; indeed, a greater use of counter offers may encourage other employees to engage in job search (Barron et al., 2006). Furthermore, the relevant antecedents of perceived behavioral control in pursuing leverage may lead high-performing women to seek out a new position rather than even attempt to negotiate with leverage-seeking, suggesting employers need greater proactivity to keep these employees.

Objective Based on a Contagion

This theoretical perspective identifies the sort of cascading job search behaviors that will arise in response to organizational crises and encompasses search behaviors driven by larger environmental features rather than individually-spawned needs or interests. For instance, search behaviors are sensitive to business cycles. In recessions, the rise of layoffs in other firms and higher unemployment dampens search activity (Osberg, 1993). Alternatively, constricted labor markets encourage employers to advertise more and hire already-employed job seekers (Russo, Gorter, & Schettkat, 2001), which, in turn, raises the value of employed search and its activity.

As argued by Lee and Mitchell (1994), turnover research (and associated job search) must acknowledge the substantial role of the macro-labor market. Notably, a path highlighted in their model includes turnover responses that arise from “past actions or rules that a person has generated from observing others or from knowledge he or she has acquired in other ways” (Lee & Mitchell, 1994, p. 61). A full elaboration of this meso-level of analysis can be found in recent interest in “turnover contagion” which states that “a coworker’s search for job alternatives or actual quitting can spread through a process of social contagion” (Felps et al., 2009, p. 546). To capture these behaviors,

we draw on institutional assumptions to represent job search behaviors as a copying response to the behaviors around the employee, especially during periods of uncertainty.

Mimetic-Seeking

Increasingly, cognitive science illuminates how people tend to learn their behaviors by observation and interpretation of the activities, interactions and social norms that surround them, especially in the work setting (Marsick & Watkins, 2015). In fact, a considerable literature in economics continues to link social interactions with job search processes (Ioannides & Loury, 2004), stressing how social networks determine such outcomes as the type and productivity of the job search people undertake. Thus, employed job search can be expected to be driven, in part, by employees copying the behaviors around them. This decision to similarly engage in employed job search—although the individual is not particularly motivated to get a new job—reflects motivations to conform, or to resolve uncertainty about future employment prospects.

Consequently, employee search behaviors in this perspective arise from a variety of antecedents. Generalized job search behaviors, for example, can arise from the situational variables of career expectations and organizational identity of peers in the same industry, organization or position. Podolny and Baron (1997) catalog job search as a part of the regular work life in high technology firms. Felps et al. (2009) provided compelling evidence that the job embeddedness and job search behaviors of coworkers independently exerted an effect on employees in predicting turnover. Other research suggests that situational variables such as significant coworker exit will affect employees tied to those who have quit the organization, increasing their intent to leave: “proximity to and role similarity with them increase the social pressure on focal individuals and trump their sense of connection with the organization” (Halgin, Gopalakrishnan, & Borgatti, 2013, p. 9).

Other conditions that may induce contagion-like job search behaviors on a collective basis were outlined in Nyberg and Ployhart’s (2013) elaboration of collective turnover theory, and included

contagion (Felps et al., 2009), job shock (Lee & Mitchell, 1994), and contextual features such as the organizational climate (Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeShon, 2003). Also, poor organizational performance signals possible bankruptcy, layoffs, or closure, and can motivate job search (Trevor & Nyberg, 2008). While an array of situational variables may trigger mimetic job search, job embeddedness may explain not only why some employees stay in their position despite such pressures, but even improve their performance under such conditions (cf., Burton et al, 2010).

Proposition 4: *a) Employees performing job search with mimetic-seeking objectives will significantly differ from other employed job searchers on situational variables that relate to coworker job search activity and exit. b) Employees with mimetic-seeking objectives will exhibit turnover from their job search in relation to their levels of embeddedness.*

Individuals succumbing to this sort of job search behavior are likely reluctant leavers, as this is not a self-motivated endeavor. While there is no reason to believe that individuals should avoid responding to their immediate environments when being prompted to engage in greater search, they may want to be more aware of these subconscious pressures. By making such mimetic processes more explicit, employees might respond with greater “mindfulness” (Dane & Brummell, 2013) and clarify their own unique search goals.

For organizations, greater awareness of how the organizational environment promulgates job search behaviors may help to reduce mimetic search. In the face of job shocks, for instance, HR practices that promote procedural justice and job embeddedness may reduce the amount of voluntary turnover (Trevor & Nyberg, 2008). Certainly, instituting metrics to monitor pockets of turnover—which recognizes distributed ties that span geographical locales (Halgin et al., 2013)—is recommended. Disconcertingly, there is mounting evidence these contagion phenomena enact a vicious circle: while poor organizational performance may trigger mimetic search, the rising turnover that mimetic search enables can also lower organizational performance (cf., Hausknecht, Trevor & Howard, 2009). Given the increasing evidence that search behaviors may be induced by coworkers

and environmental signals, organizations need to proactively respond to emergent signals of job search behaviors that spur turnover.

Objectives Based on Employability Concerns

Researchers have long recognized that much of employed job search does not lead to turnover (Bretz et al., 1994; Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Mobile technology and the increased availability of job information over the internet allow employees to search for jobs with just a few clicks—anytime and anywhere. Consequently, an increasing number of employees participate in search activity motivated by curiosity and reasons other than dissatisfaction with their job or employer.

Concerns about future employability motivate employees to stay abreast of job openings and continually assess their qualifications based on market trends. In the last few decades, managers, older workers, and the highly educated—those who have traditionally been immune to corporate downsizing—have experienced some of the highest job loss rates from restructuring (Sullivan, 1999). Additionally, the psychological contract of job security in exchange for employee loyalty has been altered, resulting in doubt about future job stability (Murrell, Frieze, & Olson, 1996). No wonder Nye, Zelikow and King (1997) reported that trust in corporations has declined from 55 percent in the mid-1960s to 21 percent by the mid-1990s; it continues to vacillate in the teens in 2016 (Gallup, 2016). Recent human resource strategies necessitate employees be proactive and take individual responsibility for their job, skills, and career (Seibert et al., 2001).

The cybernetic job search model (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011) highlights psychological mobility, or the perception of one's ability to obtain and successfully transition to another job (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). It suggests that “individuals adapt to new information (comparisons during job search) with adaptive actions (career strategy behaviors) that can change how they are perceived by the environment (employability) and by themselves (psychological mobility), which produces subsequent goal-directed behavior (additional job search)” (Direnzo & Greenhaus, 2011, p.

572). Increased search behavior is thus a consequence of maintaining employability by sharpening the understanding of the labor market, refining perceptions of available alternatives, and assessing discrepancies between current and desired employability (Direenzo & Greenhaus, 2011; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Wittekind et al., 2010).

Employees with either network-seeking or knowledge-seeking objectives have no current intention of turnover and may passively peruse online job boards and social networking sites on a periodic or ongoing basis, but rarely advance to more active search behaviors such as sending out resumes or completing applications. With network seeking in particular, employees conduct search as a career-management strategy to build their professional networks. Knowledge seeking, on the other hand, reflects search out of curiosity or to assess current skills relative to market needs. Thus, both network-seeking and knowledge-seeking can increase psychological mobility—i.e. mental assessments of a greater ability to transition to another job if needed. Meanwhile, employees attain information that motivates raising their human capital, and thus their value to the organization.

Network-Seeking

Career-minded professionals, no longer relying on hierarchical career ladders for advancement, can take a relational approach to career management and conduct job search to build networks with other professionals to aid in learning and development (Boswell et al., 2012; De Janasz & Sullivan, 2002). Unsurprisingly, career management experts advise building a social network in advance, to be ready for unexpected entry in the job market. This readiness involves conducting passive job search, maintaining professional profiles on social media sites such as LinkedIn, joining relevant groups, and creating and maintaining a network of professional contacts (Dole, 2016). Van Hoye and Saks (2008) documented how individuals seeking to expand their professional network contacted employers and participated in networking with family, friends, and acquaintances as their primary method of job search.

Antecedents to network-seeking include variables associated with job characteristics and personality variables. Michael and Yukl (1993) found that higher-level managers participated in network-building behaviors more frequently than their lower-level coworkers. Their boundary-spanning roles both increase the need for such behaviors as well as the opportunities to network. Not surprisingly, network-building behaviors are related to the personality traits of extraversion, self-esteem, and proactivity (Forret & Dougherty, 2001). Forret and Dougherty (2001) also found that socioeconomic background and attitudes toward workplace politics predicted networking.

Individuals with network-seeking objectives may be motivated by career advancement and take proactive measures to improve their prospects for professional growth. Additionally, network seeking can cultivate internal relationships, and these along with external relationships help employees develop social capital— “actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit” (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). Social capital can provide valuable intangible resources such as connections, information and opportunities. Researchers confirm that both internal and external networking is a valuable career competency for employees, and is positively related to salary progression (Gould & Penley, 1984), as well as the rate of advancement (Michael & Yukl, 1993) and re-employment (Cingano & Rosolia, 2012). Consequently, employees with network-seeking objectives can be enthusiastic stayers (Hom et al., 2012). On the other hand, research has shown that networking can increase voluntary turnover, and even more so for external networking (Porter, Woo & Campion, 2016).

Proposition 5: a) Employees performing job search with network-seeking objectives will likely have situational variables and individual characteristics that relate to overall career expectations and advancement. b) Although employees with network-seeking objectives do not have immediate turnover intentions, their exposure and increasing human capital value increases their risk for future turnover.

Network-seeking can add significant value to organizations given the industry and market knowledge gained from social and professional ties forged by boundary spanners across organizations (Spekman, 1979). Such market intelligence can prove to be a competitive advantage in generating innovation for their employer (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003), and training management to properly nurture the value of employees' external relationships will reap rewards in greater innovative behavior (Wang, Fang, Qureshi & Janssen, 2015). Since embeddedness has been found to reduce the risk of turnover from networking (Porter, Woo & Campion, 2016), employers are also challenged to keep these employees motivated to stay and engaged over time. Although individuals with network-seeking objectives do not have immediate turnover intentions, their increased psychological mobility from their professional network can facilitate their exit (Podolny & Baron, 1997) if they later experience antecedents related to the objectives spurring modification of employment (separation, change or leverage). By promoting HR practices that enhance development and retention, or that facilitate internal networks, employers may help these employees manage their careers while minimizing turnover risk.

Knowledge-Seeking

Employees with knowledge-seeking objectives are motivated to evaluate their career preparedness by continually assessing their qualifications based on market needs in the quickly-evolving job market, especially given the constant advent of new technologies. Indeed, evidence of “boundaryless careers” (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) highlights this increased interest in remaining employable—even absent a desire to change employers.

Because such individuals are only seeking to understand their job skills relative to market demand and not necessarily to leave the organization, employees with knowledge-seeking objectives may have a high level of commitment and embeddedness in their current organizations (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). For example, an employee with high tenure may want to stay

with the organization until retirement; but because of uncertainty within the internal and/or external labor market, may feel the need to prepare for other opportunities. Some governments, in fact, are actively promoting programs that encourage employees to become aware of “best practices” in their industry and recognizing that raising employee job control via interventions like better knowledge can lead to both economic and health advantages (Landsbergis, Grzywacz, & LaMontagne, 2014).

Knowledge-seeking may lead to enthusiastic or reluctant stayers (Hom et al., 2012). Employees with low skills may want to leave but feel they cannot obtain a position with the same level of pay and benefits. On the other hand, employees with long tenure, who tend to search less than their shorter-term colleagues (Black, 1981; Boudreau, Boswell, Judge, & Bretz, 2001), may be enthusiastic stayers and search just to keep abreast of market trends and to stay current in their field. As these employees passively search and compare their qualifications with the needs of the market, their psychological mobility may increase with a favorable assessment or decrease with an unfavorable assessment; and as they address these needs, they bolster their confidence to later compete in the job market if necessary. To the extent that they are motivated to update their skills, such job search is a positive development for human resource goals.

Proposition 6: a). *Employees performing job search with knowledge-seeking objectives will likely have significantly different situational variables and individual characteristics associated with a need to keep up career skills with evolving market demands.* b) *Employees with knowledge-seeking objectives have the lowest risk of turnover among those who pursue employed job search.*

Although knowledge seeking is associated with the lowest threat of turnover, employers are still at risk of losing top performers with this objective because these passive seekers are increasingly becoming the focus of recruiters. In a 2015 survey, 82 percent of employers using social media for recruitment reported that their main reason for using this recruitment tool was to target passive job seekers (Mulvey, 2016). On the other hand, this group may also be comprised of employees who have plateaued in their career, or marginal employees who the organization would benefit from

losing. Concerns with legal constraints and the reluctance of some supervisors to use disciplinary measures often allows these marginal employees to remain within the organization (O'Reilly & Weitz, 1980). In such situations, along with initiating disciplinary action to pressure these employees to pursue more active search objectives such as change-seeking or separation-seeking, the organization may want to actively counsel the employee, or make information on job alternatives available.

Table 1 summarized the propositional implications of this typology and illustrates that the six objectives outlined above imply substantially differing organizational consequences. While the typology identifies the salient motivations for each objective, job seekers may have multiple motivations and objectives (Boswell et al., 2001). For example, an individual may have a network-seeking objective and a change-seeking objective simultaneously. Similarly, the same motivation may be associated with different objectives—an individual with a motivation for career advancement may have a separation-seeking objective preferring to advance in another organization, or a change-seeking objective focused on movement within the current organization.

Discussion

The expanded access to job information and the changing nature of careers has prompted a flurry of search activity even among satisfied employees (Jobvite, 2016). Yet, the recognition that employees have a variety of objectives when participating in job search has not been fully integrated into job search research, nor expanded to consider the organizational implications of such differences. In this research, we used different theoretical umbrellas to organize objectives: turnover/theory of planned behavior (separation-seeking, change-seeking, leverage-seeking); contagion search (mimetic-seeking); and employability-related search (network-building, knowledge-seeking). By focusing on the search objectives and their various antecedents, outcomes and implications, researchers and

practitioners are better able to discriminate the reasons for the search; and, therefore, target the needs of specific employee groups represented by these objectives.

The typology presented here advances our understanding of employed job search in several critical ways. In addition to highlighting reasons for job search other than turnover, it helps to answer the question of why so many “satisfied” employees are "constantly hunting" (Jobvite, 2016). Importantly, it presents researchers with a more comprehensive framework of employed search objectives which offers additional theoretical perspectives, alternative explanations for the modest correlation between job search and turnover, and guidance for future research. For example, in a recent study of employees who searched but did not leave by Boswell, Gardner, and Wang (2017), search objectives were investigated and, contrary to their expectations, did not have a moderating effect. Incorporating a framework of more clearly delineated search objectives as presented here, however, may yield different results in similar tests of moderation.

Implications for Practice

Understanding objectives can help guide organizational policies such as human resource practices to ameliorate negative effects from employed job search. Organizations commonly create an atmosphere that discourages employees from effective job search as they hide their search activity (Gallo, 2012). Certainly, ubiquitous job search behaviors can drain morale, adversely affect performance, or signal to coworkers that better opportunities exist elsewhere. But more wisely, organizations could benefit by embracing the potential positives to what is a confessed behavior by upwards of three quarters of the workforce. Comparing one’s job to alternatives may help some employees become enthusiastic stayers because of a renewed appreciation for their current employer. Search with employability objectives can gain market knowledge that sparks innovation; and as employees expand their professional networks, they can receive early signals of the skills and competencies necessary to stay competitive. And finally,

the organization benefits in those cases where job search leads to functional turnover—i.e., the departure of those that the organization wants to leave (Dalton et al.,1982).

Differentiating employed job search behaviors by their objectives helps employers target their retention efforts and focus policies and practices (e.g. work-life balance policies, job enrichment, recognition, pay practices) to minimize the incidence of adverse outcomes. Improving communications regarding internal advancement opportunities, or regular development and career planning discussions, can inform career-minded and insecure employees of their value and future progression within the company. Job crafting, which allows individuals to change “the task and relational boundaries of a job to make it a more positive and meaningful experience” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 197) could improve retention by responding to employees with change-seeking objectives. Similarly, adopting effective processes for posting and follow-up of internal openings with change seekers may ameliorate some dysfunctional turnover. However, employers should also embrace beneficial job search that raises employability capital, and accommodate the separation imperatives for employees who are not good fits for their positions or the organization.

As many employees participate in passive job search without a high sense of urgency, employers can take preemptive steps to assuage the possibility of turnover by valued employees. However, the best employees will always be subject to external recruitment despite their job satisfaction. Instead of ruing the practice, employers may want to proactively participate in this reality with their own recruiting efforts. By sponsoring networking groups that build networks or share market information, organizations can themselves move from resigned targets to attractive destinations for other passive job searchers in their industry.

Implications for Future Research

The preceding typology of job search objectives allows researchers to disaggregate the different types of job seekers and to study the predictors and outcomes associated with each. Further

investigation of each objective's antecedents will improve an organization's ability to proactively shape the employment experience and to answer questions such as: "What antecedents lead to functional or dysfunctional outcomes from job search?" or "How do objectives affect employee engagement in regard to proximal withdrawal implications, and how can the organization counteract this response?"

Further research on how personality relates to search objectives may also have implications for both hiring and retention as some individuals may be predisposed to certain objectives. As noted earlier, individuals high in extraversion may prefer objectives tied to internal options such as change-seeking, leverage-seeking or network-seeking. On the other hand, individuals high in neuroticism, which is associated with job dissatisfaction (Zimmerman, 2008), or those manifesting a "hobo syndrome" (Ghiselli, 1974) may be predisposed to separation-seeking.

Demographic variables such as gender, race, and age may also be correlated to whether employees gravitate toward certain objectives and thus are relevant to organizational initiatives addressing turnover. Temporal dynamics should impact the job search objectives that employees pursue, just as it does their turnover (Mitchell, Burch & Lee, 2014). Long-term dynamics, represented by variables such as tenure and age, have been found to be generally positively related to both task attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, lowered role conflict) and organization-based attitudes (e.g., identification and affective commitment) (Ng & Feldman, 2010). Indeed, tenure, age and hierarchical level, have shown a generally negative relationship with search behavior (Black, 1981; Boudreau, Boswell, Judge, & Bretz, 2001; Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001) as the rate of job shifting slows with age and labor force experience (Rosenfeld, 1992). Thus, change and separation-seeking propensities may be lowered by tenure and age.

Similarly, future research can examine the search objectives based on the career life cycle (Gervais, Jaimovich, Siu, Yedid, & Levi, 2016). Younger workers in the early career stage are more

likely to be in jobs with poor occupational fit and have more frequent job transitions (Gervais et al., 2016). Consequently, they are more likely to be separation or change seekers, as separation rates for 20-24 years old can be approximately four times that of 45-54 years old (Gervais et al., 2016). On the other hand, older individuals in the late career stage are generally less adept at using networking sites and job boards (CareerBuilder, 2013), are expected to have lower job search self-efficacy, and may experience greater community embeddedness (Felps et al, 2009); these individuals may prefer internal career paths with change-seeking and knowledge-seeking objectives. Mid-career professionals, who have attained status in the organizational hierarchy and occupy boundary-spanning roles, are more likely to have leverage-seeking or network-seeking objectives (Boswell et al., 2004).

Men may be more prone to leverage seeking and network seeking since they are generally in higher levels of management (Boswell et al., 2014), are more likely to negotiate salary increases (Bowles & Babcock, 2013) and are more astute at networking than women (Ibarra, 1993). Women and minorities, who are less likely to receive career feedback and mentoring than men (Barsh, Devillard & Wang, 2012; De Janasz, Sullivan, & Whiting, 2003; Ibarra, 1993; McDonald & Westphal, 2013), may feel the need to look externally for promotional opportunities. Understanding these types of distinctions among groups could help employers develop more focused recruitment and retention efforts.

Short term dynamics such as represented in affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) may also offer additional insight to the typology over time. With the ease of initiating internet job search, employees can quickly embark in search activity solely in reaction to ephemeral emotional events, such as having a “bad day.” Other research has found that many of the motivating attitudes noted here can vary widely on a daily basis (Zacher, 2015). Finally, given findings that job seekers who were unemployed varied in their search intensity based on their stable motivations (approach or

avoidance) as well as their transient mental states (Wanberg, Zhu, Kanfer and Zhang, 2012), a similar repeated measures approach to employed job search should be of organizational interest in recognizing temporary responses that do not threaten persistent turnover intentions.

Importantly, future research should explore how these objectives can overlap and interact over time to offer insights on when they are most usefully studied apart or together. Given employees can have multiple objectives simultaneously or across time, research identifying patterns in dynamics across these objectives may also be revealing. Job search involvement over time can change individuals through the dynamic learning that takes place during this evolutionary process (Lord & Maher, 1990; Steel, 2002), progressing employees from one objective to another. For example, a passive knowledge seeker, with no intent of leaving his/her employer, may choose to submit a resume after following a link for an unsolicited job advertisement and later accept an interview invitation and a job offer. What started out as curious knowledge seeking has evolved into a separation-seeking objective. Figure 2 illustrates how future research could investigate such hypothetical patterns that might arise across search objectives. Importantly, if one type of seemingly innocuous search persistently leads to later undesirable search, organizations may want to intervene in, or discourage, the antecedent job search objectives.

 Place Figure 2 Here

Employed job search researchers must be attentive to three methodological issues. First, longitudinal designs exposing temporal dynamics are necessary to match the search objectives with the search outcomes. Second, diverse samples are needed to offer better representations of the workforce of interest. Much of the data collected use highly-compensated managers in search firm databases (e.g. Boswell, et al., 2004; Boudreau et al., 2001; Bretz et al., 1994) or recent college graduates (Van Hove et al., 2008), both atypical of the average employed job searcher, and thus more

limited in generalizability. Third, updated measures of job search activity and processes, beyond Blau's (1994) two-dimensional measure of job search based on preparatory and active job search stages (e.g., Griffeth et al., 2005) are needed to reflect changes in the last two decades fitting current search practices. Focusing on search motivations and objectives, as well as updating the assessment of search persistence and intensity, should improve the predictors of job search outcomes.

In sum, the typology of job search objectives presented here offers a foundation for researchers to expand our knowledge of employee job search. Furthermore, embracing a search objectives approach to recruitment and retention can empower organizations to dynamically manage their workplace appeal.

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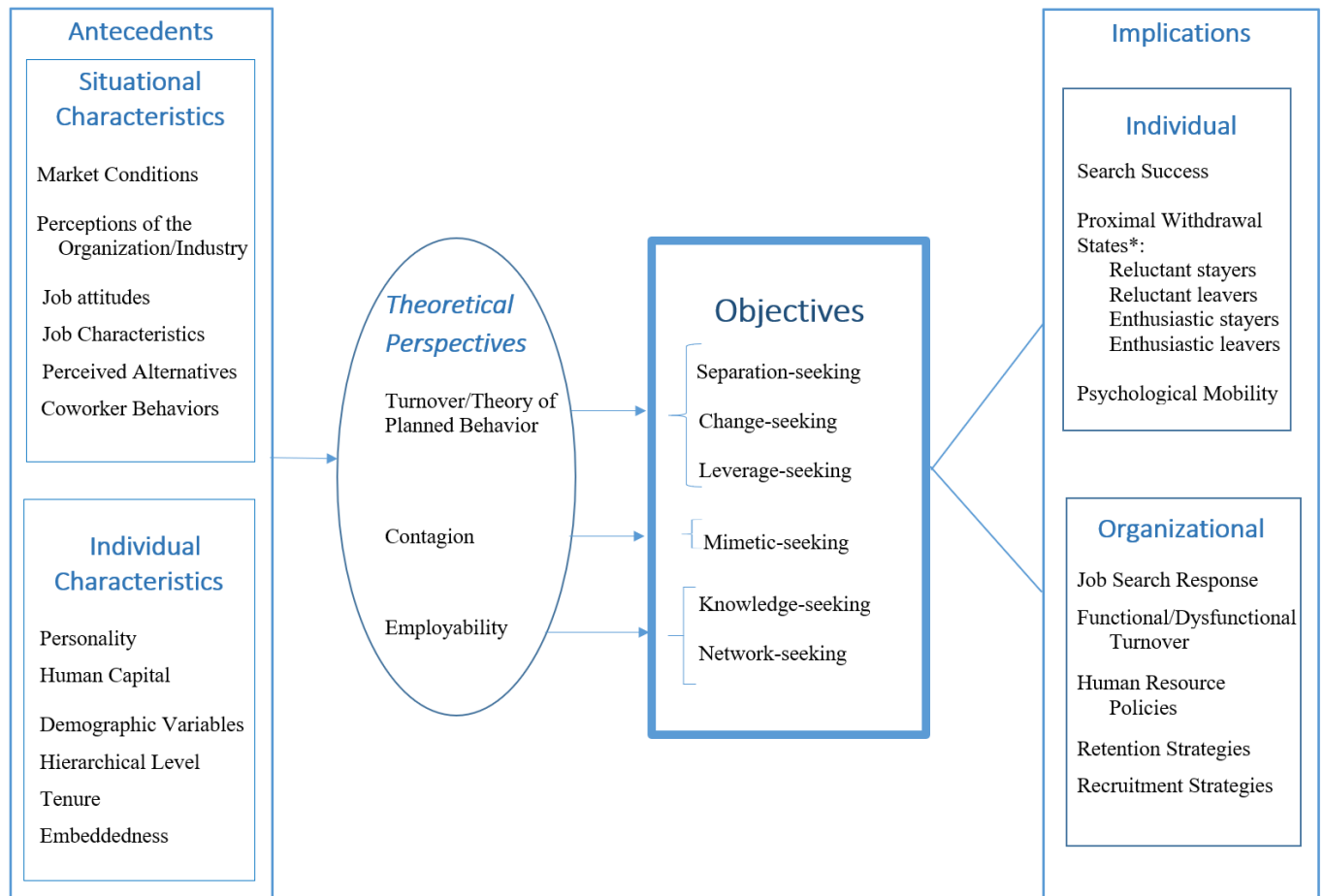
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Figure 1. Employed Job Search



*(Hom, Mitchell, Lee, & Griffeth, 2012)

Table 1
Summary of Objectives, Antecedents, and Implications

Objective/ <i>Prominent Motivation</i>	Example Job Search Antecedent Variables	Likelihood of Turnover	Individual Implications		Organizational Prescriptions and Benefits*
			Successful Search	Unsuccessful Search	
Separation-Seeking <i>Negative perceptions of the organization or external pull (e.g. relocating spouse, career change)</i>	Organizational commitment Person-organization fit Personality	High	Enthusiastic Leaver	Reluctant Stayer	Invest in honeymoon socialization to improve organizational commitment Accept some turnover as functional
Change-Seeking <i>Dissatisfaction with some aspect of working conditions</i>	Job satisfaction Person-job fit Perceived internal alternatives Community embeddedness	Depends on availability of internal alternatives	Enthusiastic Stayer	Reluctant Stayer or become a Separation Seeker	Gain feedback on employee needs that can be remediated Invest in intra-organization career ladders and mobility
Leverage-Seeking <i>Career advancement</i>	Hierarchical Level Human capital Perceived external alternatives Proactivity Gender	Short term: maintain human capital Long-term: high turnover	Enthusiastic Stayer	Reluctant Leaver	Design policy that balances the need for stability and the need to minimize the depletion of human capital *Search may help some to better appreciate their current employer and become enthusiastic stayers
Mimetic-Seeking <i>Resolve uncertainty, conform to peer norms</i>	Market conditions Industry/organization norms Organizational/industry performance Co-worker exit	High	Enthusiastic Leaver	Reluctant Stayer	Consider organizational change management strategies (incentives, retention bonuses) Monitor turnover patterns and counsel those left behind
Network-Seeking <i>Expanded professional network to enhance employability</i>	Extroversion Proactivity Hierarchical level Career focus Job characteristics	Increases over time	Broader network Increasing human capital value, Increased psychological mobility		Facilitate internal networks; tap knowledge of boundary spanners. Align recruitment efforts to attract network seekers *Search may result in market intelligence and spark innovation
Knowledge-Seeking <i>Knowledge of labor market to monitor employability</i>	Tenure/Age Job embeddedness Employability concerns Fast changing markets/industries	Increases with favorable market assessment. Decreases with unfavorable assessment.	Increased market knowledge Recognition of contemporary skill expectations		Gain feedback on career development and Training Plan for a normal turnover rate *Search may highlight the superiority of current employer or provide early signals of needed future skills and competencies

Figure 2. Examples of Changing Objectives

