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## Measuring attraction to organizations

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## MEASURING ATTRACTION TO ORGANIZATIONS

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Organizational attraction measures are commonly used as surrogate assessments of organizational pursuit. Despite the range in content often encompassed by such instruments, no research has systematically examined the assumptions underlying their use. The authors address this issue by empirically distinguishing items assessing attractiveness, prestige, and behavioral intentions and by modeling their effects on organization pursuit. Undergraduates ( $N = 305$ ) were randomly assigned to recruitment literature from one of five well-known companies and were asked to respond to a series of items commonly used in past research. Analyses of the item responses suggested that three components of organizational attraction can be reliably distinguished and that their relation to organization-pursuit behavior corresponds to Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action.

**Keywords:** *organizational attractiveness; organizational attraction measures; recruitment*

Employee recruitment and organization choice have received considerable research attention in recent years (see Barber, 1998, for a recent review). This increased attention is likely the result of population trends suggesting that growth in the labor force will be at its lowest level since World War II (Dutka, 1994; Johnston & Packer, 1987; Judy & D'Amico, 1997) and of calls

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for the resuscitation of research on how people choose where to work (e.g., Rynes, 1991). Along with this increased interest has come a widened range of dependent variables aimed at assessing attraction to organizations. Although the most direct measures of attraction would be actual applications for employment and ultimate choice of one place to work, restricting recruitment research to only field studies limits the range of research questions that can be addressed. For example, attempting to study in the field the effects of manipulating variables such as recruiter friendliness or advertising deception would be met with both practical and ethical difficulties. Most experimental research on recruitment, therefore, has used measures of attraction to hypothetical organizations (e.g., Highhouse, Stierwalt, Bachiochi, Elder, & Fisher, 1999; Honeycutt & Rosen, 1997; Turban & Keon, 1993). Indeed, even correlational research has commonly included indirect measures of attraction to organizations (e.g., Macan, Avedon, Paese, & Smith, 1994; Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998; Turban & Greening, 1996).

The purpose of this article is not to consider the appropriateness of using indirect measures of organizational attraction but to consider the assumptions underlying these measures. First, whereas some studies have treated attraction to organizations as multidimensional, others have treated it as a global (i.e., unidimensional) construct. From a measurement perspective, if the components are distinct, they should be treated as such and assessed using separate scales. If, however, they cannot reliably be distinguished, a single scale to assess organizational attraction may be sufficient. One purpose of this investigation, therefore, was to examine the dimensionality of organizational attraction. Another purpose of this investigation was to model the relation of organizational attraction measures to the prediction of organizational pursuit behavior.

#### *Using Attitudes to Predict Behavior*

Assessing affective responses to organizational recruitment messages is predicated on the assumption that these responses can be generalized to actual organization choice. The ability of attitudes to predict actual behavior has been a concern of social psychologists since the 1920s. Early research suggested that the relationship between attitudes and behavior is much weaker than was generally assumed (e.g., Blumer, 1955; LaPiere, 1934; Wicker, 1969). This stimulated a lively program of research aimed at understanding when attitudes predict behavior (see McGuire, 1985). The dominant theoretical framework that has emerged from and guided this research is Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. This theory assumes that human behavior is the culmination of a rational sequence of cognitions. In general, the theory of reasoned action suggests that the most proximal determinant of behavior is a person's intention to engage in it and that inten-

tion is a function of attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms. Thus, attitudes influence behavior to the extent that they influence intentions to engage in that behavior. Intentions also derive from perceptions of the social appropriateness of the behavior.

One prescription from the theory of reasoned action is the principle of correspondence (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). According to this principle, attitude-behavior relations are stronger to the degree the attitude and the behavior are measured at the same level of specificity. For example, if one is interested in predicting absenteeism in organizations, it is better to assess attitude toward absenteeism than to assess attitude toward the organization. Another implication of the theory is that assessment of intentions will predict behavior better than will assessment of attitudes. If a researcher is interested in predicting turnover, for example, it is better to assess intention to quit than to assess commitment to the organization. The notion that intentions predict behavior better than do general attitudes has been well supported by empirical research (see Kim & Hunter, 1993). In the following section, we discuss research on recruitment and organization choice that has employed alternative measures of organization attraction. We use the theory of reasoned action as a framework for understanding the assumptions underlying these measures.

#### *Components of Organization Attraction*

The earliest research on organization choice was conducted by Vroom (1966), who examined it as a function of instrumentality perceptions. The criterion in Vroom's study was a single-item measure of how attractive each hypothetical organization was to the prospective job seeker. Thus, this initial study assessed organizational attraction as a general company-specific attitude. Several years later, Singh (1973) applied information integration theory to organization choice using a single item assessing likelihood of accepting a job with the company (i.e., "How much would you like to accept this job?"). In keeping with the principle of compatibility, Singh's item assessed attitude at the level of the specific behavior in question (i.e., organization choice).

In the first study to assess organization attraction using more than a single item, Fisher, Ilgen, and Hoyer (1979) presented participants with the following four items: (a) "I am very interested in pursuing my application with this company if offered one," (b) "I would be very willing to accept a job with this company if offered one," (c) "I would really like to work for this company," and (d) "I feel I know enough about this company to no longer be interested in it." The organizational attraction measure used in the Fisher et al. study is interesting for two reasons. First, variations of it served as the basis for measures used in many subsequent studies of organization choice (e.g., Highhouse et al., 1999; Honeycutt & Rosen, 1997; Turban et al., 1998; Tur-

ban & Keon, 1993; Yüce & Highhouse, 1998). Second, it combined items assessing general company attractiveness (i.e., Items 3 and 4) with items assessing intentions (i.e., Items 1 and 2). Other organization attraction measures have also included items assessing both general attitudes and specific intentions (e.g., Rynes & Connerley, 1993; Schwoerer & Rosen, 1989; Williams & Bauer, 1994). High estimates of internal consistency have been used as support for this practice.

In addition to items assessing company attitudes and intentions, a handful of studies have used items assessing perceptions of a company's prestige (e.g., Highhouse, Beadle, Gallo, & Miller, 1998; Turban et al., 1998; Turban & Greening, 1996). These items have been designed to assess the degree to which organizations are perceived as being well regarded (e.g., "This company has a reputation as being an excellent employer") and reputable (e.g., "I would find this company a prestigious place to work"). Prestige measures are typically employed in addition to (i.e., separate from) organization attraction measures, and the scales are generally only moderately correlated.

An interesting feature of the various items used to assess organization attraction is that they seem to map onto the components of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. The company attractiveness items seem to map onto the attitude component. Company attractiveness is reflected in individuals' affective and attitudinal thoughts about particular companies as potential places for employment. It is passive in nature because it does not necessarily imply that any actual behaviors will be taken toward the company. This passivity allows individuals to be attracted to many companies simultaneously; more active pursuit of the company would require resource conservation and a more limited set of feasible possibilities (Barber, 1998).

Intentions items, in contrast, refer to thoughts about a company that specifically imply further action. As such, intentions move beyond the passivity of company attractiveness to involve active pursuit of a job. Because they are more active than the attitudes reflected in company attractiveness, intentions will likely be limited to a smaller subset of potential employers. Like company attraction, however, intentions toward a company require no external social referent.

Prestige items seem to map onto the perceptions of social norms component of the theory of reasoned action. Social reference is the basis for the construct of company prestige. A company is prestigious if it inspires thoughts of fame and renown in the minds of those who hear of it. This prestige reflects a social consensus on the degree to which the company's characteristics are regarded as either positive or negative. The normative quality of a company's prestige is what distinguishes this variable from company attractiveness or intentions toward a company, both of which are centered more closely on an individual.

### *Present Investigation*

This investigation was motivated by the lack of consistency in use of dependent measures in research on recruitment and organization choice. This lack of consistency makes it difficult to compare findings from different studies and to draw conclusions from research that uses surrogate measures of organization choice. We examined the three components of organizational attraction (i.e., attractiveness, intentions, and prestige) that have received the most attention in research on organization choice. First, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses to confirm the hypothesis that the three elements of organizational attraction can be reliably distinguished. Second, we examined the relative impact of the three components on one organizational-pursuit behavior (i.e., request for additional information from the company). Finally, we examined the extent to which the relations between the variables were consistent with the propositions of the theory of reasoned action.

## Method

### *Participants*

A total of 305 participants were recruited from undergraduate psychology courses at a medium-sized university in the midwestern United States. Of the participants, 75% were female, and the average participant was 19 years old.

### *Procedure and Measures*

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the following five companies: Pella Corporation, International Paper, Sears-Roebuck and Co., Sports Authority, or Enterprise Rent-a-Car. Descriptions of the companies were photocopied from a booklet of company recruitment materials available from the university's career resource center. Multiple target companies were used to ensure that the relationship between the measures would not be idiosyncratically associated with one specific company (see Wells & Windschitl, 1999). We selected these recruitment materials because of their applicability to a wide variety of undergraduate majors (i.e., all majors were encouraged to apply). Although the descriptions varied in content, all clearly assumed a recruitment focus and presented approximately the same amount of information. It should be noted, however, that our focus in this study was the measurement of corporate attraction itself rather than the relative attractiveness of these specific companies. After reviewing the company description, participants responded to a series of questions about the company (described as follows). These items are presented in the first column of Table 1.

Table 1  
*Organizational Attraction Items by Component Assessed, Means, Standard Deviations, Variances, and Covariances*

Item	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>General attractiveness</b>																
1. For me, this company would be a good place to work.	3.35	.84														
2. I would not be interested in this company except as a last resort. <sup>a</sup>	3.33	.46	.95													
3. This company is attractive to me as a place for employment.	3.35	.53	.43	.71												
4. I am interested in learning more about this company.	3.21	.53	.48	.54	.97											
5. A job at this company is very appealing to me.	3.19	.55	.42	.56	.63	.79										
<b>Intentions to pursue</b>																
6. I would accept a job offer from this company.	3.54	.37	.32	.36	.40	.43	.63									
7. I would make this company one of my first choices as an employer.	2.98	.43	.37	.43	.50	.46	.37	.76								
8. If this company invited me for a job interview, I would go.	3.88	.34	.34	.34	.40	.36	.38	.36	.65							
9. I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this company.	3.39	.33	.34	.38	.42	.45	.40	.43	.39	.78						
10. I would recommend this company to a friend looking for a job.	3.69	.26	.24	.27	.29	.29	.24	.22	.22	.32	.65					
<b>Prestige</b>																
11. Employees are probably proud to say they work at this company.	3.78	.19	.14	.22	.12	.18	.15	.13	.13	.17	.23	.61				
12. This is a reputable company to work for.	3.86	.20	.19	.20	.20	.15	.17	.17	.18	.21	.21	.34	.55			
13. This company probably has a reputation as being an excellent employer.	3.77	.15	.15	.17	.14	.14	.16	.12	.15	.17	.21	.37	.35	.58		
14. I would find this company a prestigious place to work.	3.38	.31	.24	.34	.31	.33	.29	.33	.26	.33	.29	.34	.29	.36	.71	
15. There are probably many who would like to work at this company.	3.71	.15	.14	.16	.18	.16	.16	.11	.15	.15	.19	.21	.17	.24	.25	.57

Note: N = 302.

a. Reverse scored. All items were presented using a 5-point response scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*).

*Company attractiveness.* We assessed company attractiveness with five items designed to encompass content used in previous studies of organization choice (e.g., Fisher et al., 1979; Turban & Keon, 1993), while retaining a focus on attractiveness rather than explicit intentions toward the company. As such, we selected items that addressed preliminary attitudes about the company as a potential place for employment.

*Intentions toward the company.* We assessed intentions toward the company with five items designed to focus explicitly on the behavioral intentions of respondents regarding the company. As with the previous scale, these items were selected and adapted from previous research (e.g., Ployhart & Ryan, 1998; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Schwoerer & Rosen, 1989) with the consideration that they should reflect a forward-looking approach to dealing with the company in the future.

*Company prestige.* We assessed company prestige with five items adapted from various sources (e.g., Highhouse et al., 1998; Turban et al., 1998) designed to focus on aspects of a company subject to social influence, such as reputation, popularity, and status.

*Organizational pursuit behavior.* A final section of the survey allowed participants to respond with their name, e-mail address, and year in school if they wanted the company to contact them about internships, co-op programs, and full-time job opportunities. We included year in school information and internship or co-op program availability to give even nonseniors (the majority of our participants) a reason to pursue the company as an immediate place of employment (e.g., for either the summer or the upcoming year). We designed this measure to serve as a behavioral indicator of participants' job pursuit intentions as we viewed their willingness to provide direct contact information such as an e-mail address as a reflection of their interest in the company. Finally, it should be noted that although names were separated from the remainder of the survey to retain anonymity of responses, lists of interested students were actually passed along to the companies as indicated by the item instructions.

## Analyses

Our analysis plan involved two stages, the first of which focused on the measurement model linking the measured variables to their underlying constructs, and the second evaluated our proposed structural model linking these latent constructs to organization pursuit. The first stage followed previous investigations of discriminant validity among closely related constructs (e.g., Mathieu & Farr, 1991) by using confirmatory factor analysis procedures, in this case as operationalized by the EQS statistical program (Bentler, 1995).



These procedures allowed us to compare the relative fit of three competing models proposing one-, two-, or three-factor solutions. The one-factor solution placed all observed variables on a single latent factor. The two-factor solution placed all attractiveness and intentions items on a single factor and prestige items on the second factor. The three-factor solution placed attractiveness, intentions, and prestige items on separate factors.

Several indices were used to evaluate the goodness of fit of the models, namely, the comparative fit index (CFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The CFI was chosen because it has been found to be unbiased and to be relatively independent of sample size (Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988; McDonald & Marsh, 1990). The RMSEA is a measure of fit per degree of freedom of the model (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Steiger, 1990). The criteria for evaluating these fit indices included CFI values equal to or greater than .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and RMSEA values less than or equal to .050. In particular, for the RMSEA, Browne and Cudeck (1992) proposed RMSEA standards of .05 for close fit, .08 for reasonable fit, and .10 or greater for unacceptable fit.

## Results

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 1 presents the means, variances, and covariances of the 15 variables of the measurement model. Mardia's multivariate kurtosis was 57.01 ( $p < .001$ ). Three cases were removed because they contributed most to Mardia's multivariate kurtosis. Hence, Table 2 is based on 302 cases.

Because the assumption of multivariate normality was violated, we used maximum likelihood and maximum likelihood robust as estimation techniques so that the  $\chi^2$  statistic and the Satorra-Bentler scaled  $\chi^2$  statistic were computed in all structural equation models tested. Results were almost identical. Therefore, the remainder reports only the original  $\chi^2$  statistic per model.

### *Measurement Model*

Our first EQS model placed all 15 observed variables (i.e., all items on the five multi-item scales) on a single latent factor. The results indicated a poor fit with the data:  $\chi^2 (90, N = 302) = 598.92, p < .001$ ; CFI = .779; RMSEA = .137.

The second model hypothesized two distinct yet intercorrelated latent factors, placing attractiveness and intentions variables on the first factor and prestige items on the second factor. This second model provided improved but still inadequate fit:  $\chi^2 (89, N = 302) = 273.86, p < .001$ ; CFI = .920; RMSEA = .083. This second model was a restrictive two-factor model

Table 2  
*Factor Pattern and Structure Coefficients for the Model With Three Correlated Factors*

Item	Factors					
	Attractiveness		Intentions		Prestige	
	Pattern	Structure	Pattern	Structure	Pattern	Structure
ATTRACT1	.71	.71	.00	.61	.00	.28
ATTRACT2	.60	.60	.00	.52	.00	.24
ATTRACT3	.72	.72	.00	.62	.00	.29
ATTRACT4	.78	.78	.00	.67	.00	.31
ATTRACT5	.79	.79	.00	.68	.00	.31
INTENT1	.00	.53	.61	.61	.00	.27
INTENT2	.00	.56	.65	.65	.00	.29
INTENT3	.00	.50	.58	.58	.00	.25
INTENT4	.00	.57	.66	.66	.00	.29
INTENT5	.00	.36	.30	.41	.25	.38
PREST1	.00	.24	.00	.27	.61	.61
PREST2	.00	.22	.00	.24	.55	.55
PREST3	.00	.25	.00	.27	.62	.62
PREST4	.00	.43	.30	.49	.44	.57
PREST5	.00	.15	.00	.16	.37	.37

because—as noted previously—the attractiveness and intentions items were presumed to have zero pattern coefficients on the second factor, whereas the prestige items were presumed to have zero pattern coefficients on the first factor. Therefore, we also tested an unrestrictive two-factor model. To this end, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis through SPSS using maximum likelihood as the extraction method. We used the  $\chi^2$  statistic of this model to compute the CFI and RMSEA indices. The fit of this model was also not acceptable,  $\chi^2(76, N = 302) = 173.94, p < .001$ ; CFI = .957; RMSEA = .065. In other words, even the least restrictive two-factor model (in which items are allowed to have nonzero pattern coefficients on each of the two factors) did not provide adequate fit.

The third model, which hypothesized three distinct yet intercorrelated latent factors corresponding to attractiveness, intentions, and prestige, also did not provide an acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2(87, N = 302) = 205.17, p < .001$ ; CFI = .949; RMSEA = .067. This third model was a restrictive three-factor model because items were presumed to have only nonzero pattern coefficients on the factor they were measuring and to have zero pattern coefficients on the other factors. Therefore, we also tested an unrestrictive three-factor model on the basis of an exploratory factor analysis through SPSS (with maximum likelihood as extraction method). This unrestrictive three-factor model produced a good fit to the data,  $\chi^2(63, N = 302) = 93.01, p < .01$ ; CFI = .987; RMSEA = .040. The result that the unrestricted three-factor

model produced a good fit to the data but the restricted three-factor model did not indicate that three factors are the best representation of the items but that probably some items are also having nonzero pattern coefficients on other factors than they are presumed to measure. Inspection of the modification indices (i.e., the univariate test statistics of the Lagrange-Multiplier test in EQS) confirmed this. We freed only two nonzero factor pattern coefficients (the ones that had the largest significant decrease in  $\chi^2$ ) because they could be supported by substantive interpretations.

In particular, we allowed the fourth prestige item (“I would find this company a prestigious place to work”) to have a nonzero pattern coefficient on the intentions factor. As stated previously, intentions refer to thoughts that imply further action. This fourth prestige item is the only prestige item that was also phrased as an intention (“I would”). Hence, it is not that unexpected that this item had a nonzero loading on the intentions factor. Similarly, the fifth intention item (“I would recommend this company to a friend looking for a job”) was allowed to have a nonzero pattern coefficient on the prestige factor. Indeed, this fifth intention item is the only intention item in which a social referent (i.e., a friend) is mentioned. As noted previously, prestige typically instills fame in the minds of relevant others such as friends. The latter provides an explanation for the nonzero factor pattern coefficient on the fifth intention item. This restrictive three-factor model (with the two factor pattern coefficients freed) yielded an acceptable fit to the data,  $\chi^2(85, N = 302) = 139.04, p < .001$ ; CFI = .976; RMSEA = .046. We also examined the internal consistency of the three scales using Cronbach’s alpha. The company attractiveness scores had an alpha equal to .88, the intentions scores had an alpha of .82, and the prestige scores had an alpha of .83. The three-factor model, including standardized path estimates, is presented in Figure 1.

As can be seen in Figure 1, all items had statistically significant pattern coefficients on their designated factors. In terms of factor correlations, the high correlation (.85) between the attractiveness factor and the intentions factor is noteworthy. Given this high correlation, it is important to inspect the factor structure coefficients because—unlike factor pattern coefficients—the factor correlations are honored in these structure coefficients (Graham, Guthrie, & Thompson, 2003; Thompson, 1997). To this end, Table 2 presents both factor pattern and structure coefficients for the three-factor model. This table shows that the structure coefficients for intentions items on the attractiveness factor ranged from .36 to .57, although the pattern coefficients of these items were all constrained to zero. For “fixed” attractiveness items on the intentions factor, the structure coefficients were even higher, ranging from .52 to .68. Clearly, the high correlation between the attractiveness factor and the intentions factor is reflected in these structure coefficients.

According to Thompson (1997), inspection of these structure coefficients has two important advantages. First, structure coefficients assist researchers

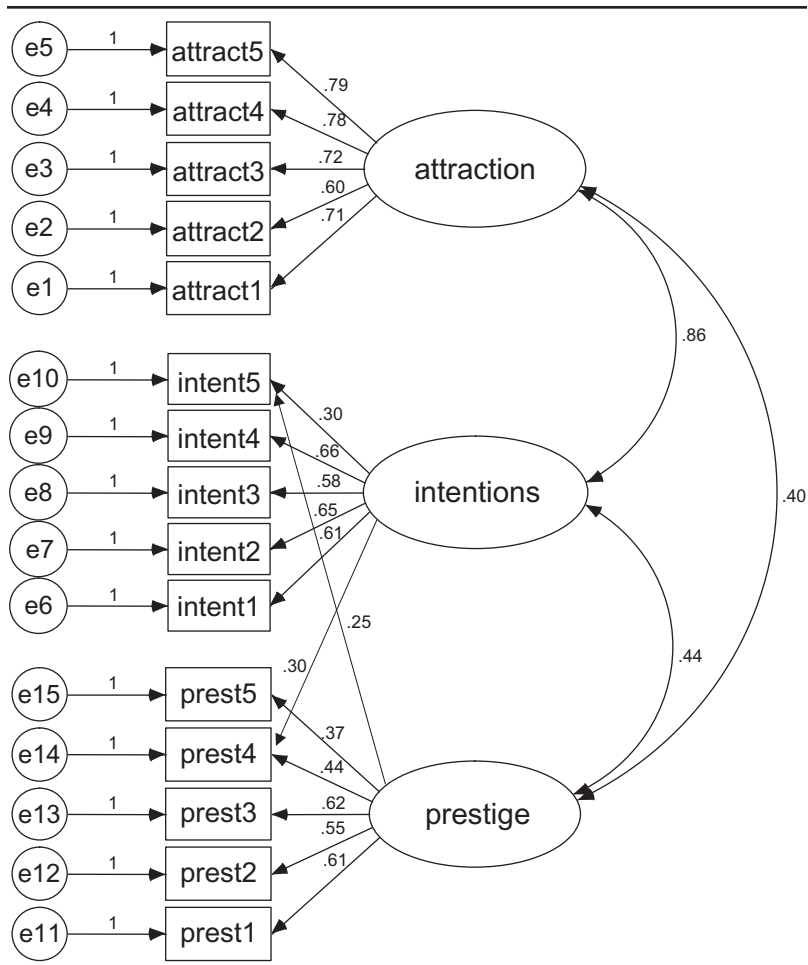


Figure 1. Standardized parameter estimates resulting from a three-factor model of company attractiveness, company prestige, and intentions toward a company.

in identifying model misspecification. For example, this study’s high structure coefficients for “fixed” items on the attractiveness and intentions factors might indicate that either these items’ factor pattern coefficients should be freed or a two-factor model might be a better representation of the data. As argued previously, even an unrestricted two-factor did not provide an acceptable fit to the data, ruling out the latter possibility. To examine whether freeing the “fixed” items on the attractiveness and intentions factors would improve fit, we specified three other confirmatory factor analysis models in

which all attractiveness items had nonzero pattern coefficients on the intentions factor, all intentions items had nonzero pattern coefficients on the attractiveness factor, or a combination of both. Besides the fact that these confirmatory factor analysis models were less parsimonious, they also provided an unacceptable fit to the data (CFIs < .95 and RMSEAs > .05).

As a second advantage, Thompson (1997) showed that the use of structure coefficients enables researchers to make more informed interpretations of the factors. Indeed, in this study, inspection of the structure coefficients shows that the intentions factor is the most important factor in measuring organizational attraction. This is because all items have either moderate (e.g., the prestige items) or high (e.g., the attractiveness items) structure coefficients on this factor. This interpretation of the intentions factor is consistent with the structural relationships that we hypothesized among the factors, as noted in the following section.

### *Structural Relationships*

In the second stage, we built upon our measurement model by evaluating the relative effects of the three relatively distinct constructs on organizational pursuit behavior. In this model, organization pursuit behavior was specified as a manifest variable. Our model, proposing a structure similar to that incorporated by the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), provided an acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2(99, N = 302) = 164.34, p < .001$ ; CFI = .972; RMSEA = .047. This model, with standardized path estimates included, is presented in Figure 2. In this figure as in Figure 1, “attraction” represents the company attractiveness latent construct, “intentions” the intentions toward the company latent construct, and “prestige” the company prestige latent construct. In addition, “organizational pursuit” represents participants’ choice to provide their names and contact information in a request for additional information.

In support of the theory of reasoned action, statistically significant path coefficients led from company prestige to intentions and from company attractiveness to intentions. Prestige and attractiveness were significantly correlated. Finally, intentions were a statistically significant predictor of organization pursuit as reflected in participants’ willingness to request further company information. It is worth noting, however, that a model in which attraction, intentions, and prestige led directly to information request produced a fit nearly identical to the fit of the model based on Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1980) theory of reasoned action:  $\chi^2(97, N = 302) = 159.319, p < .001$ ; CFI = .974; RMSEA = .046. Thus, although this competing model is not based on any existing attitude theory, it cannot be empirically distinguished from the model based on the theory of reasoned action.

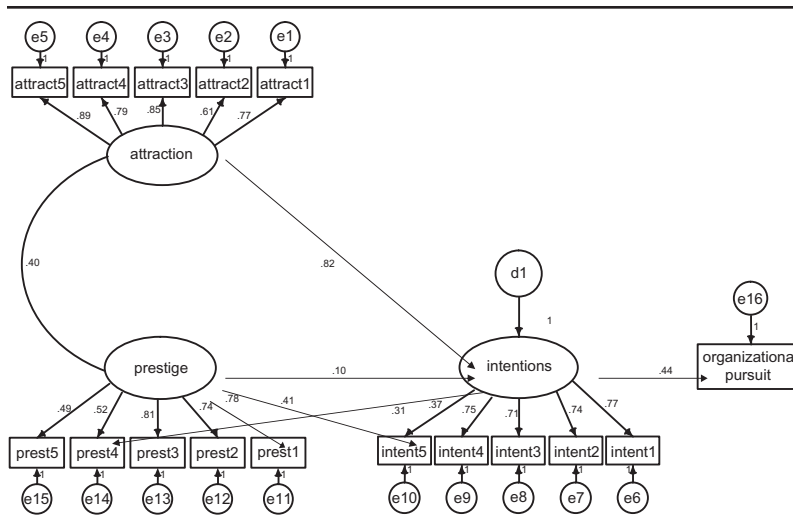


Figure 2. Model and standardized parameter estimates linking company attractiveness, company prestige, intentions toward a company, and job pursuit behavior.

## Discussion

The first stage of our analyses suggested that company attractiveness, intentions toward the company, and company prestige are in fact distinct, albeit interrelated, constructs. The primary implication of this finding is that the generic “organizational attraction” concept in recruitment research may need to be supplanted with a more multivariate conception of dependent variables. By examining the components of organizational attraction independently, a more complete understanding of organization choice may result. For example, certain elements of a recruitment brochure may affect a company’s attractiveness but may have no discernable effect on intentions toward the company (e.g., if a job at the company is seen as unobtainable). Alternatively, reading a magazine article profiling a company may enhance company prestige but have no effect on attractiveness of the company as a place to work.

The distinctions among the three components of organizational attraction provided a foundation for our second set of analyses, designed to examine the structural relations among these variables. Our results suggested that the relations among the three components of attraction and job pursuit were consistent with the propositions of Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) theory of reasoned action. That is, intentions appear to mediate the effects of company attractiveness and prestige on organization choice. It should be noted, however, that the structural model based on the Fishbein and Ajzen model could not be empirically distinguished from a model including no mediator.

Because this second model did not produce a statistically significant improvement in fit and because the original model is superior in terms of theoretical foundation and supportive empirical research, we favor a model based on the theory of reasoned action when interpreting our results.

Clearly, additional research is needed to confirm our findings. For example, experimental research is needed to establish the proposed time ordering of these constructs and to rule out possible confounds. Researchers might examine the effects of manipulating attractiveness and prestige on intentions to pursue employment with an organization (see, e.g., Belt & Paolillo, 1982). Cross-sectional views of organization choice often fail to consider the entire belief-attitude-intention-behavior sequence that seems to be characteristic of organization pursuit.

Our findings have implications for the design of future studies of organizational attraction. Company prestige, in particular, appears to hold much promise as a measured variable affected by the action of a company or its representatives. Few researchers have designed studies to build on Soelberg's (1967) identification of social influence as "the single most promising direction" for research on job choice (cf. Kilduff, 1990). Research could explore circumstances in which a company's prestige would be more or less influential in decisions regarding organization pursuit (e.g., in certain situations or for personal characteristics). Attitudes about a company may be supplemented by beliefs about its social acceptability in influencing job pursuit intentions; individuals may pursue companies only if they are viewed as attractive and if others believe they should pursue them (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

The practical implications of this study are provided by a view of recruitment as a complicated process in which job seekers are subject to influence from multiple sources. Moreover, whereas some of these sources (e.g., advertising) are directly under control of a company, others (e.g., prestige beliefs) may be less so. Although a company description was the sole stimulus used in this study, it is important to recognize that inferences made on the basis of this information may not always be predictable and manageable by the company.

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