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JOB SEARCH AND VOLUNTARY TURNOVER IN A BOUNDARYLESS WORLD: A CONTROL THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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We propose a cybernetic model of job search and voluntary turnover that is based on the need to remain employable in a volatile economy. The model depicts the process by which individuals engage in ongoing cycles of job search activities that can increase the likelihood of voluntary turnover, which, in turn, provides opportunities to develop additional career competencies. We then examine the implications of the model for future research on the turnover process.

It has been more than fifty years since March and Simon (1958) offered their seminal work on voluntary turnover. Asserting that turnover is a function of both the desirability and ease of movement, March and Simon's work (1958) has spawned countless efforts to identify the psychological processes that lead to voluntary departure from organizations. Low job satisfaction, a prominent indicator of the desirability of movement, has been viewed as a driver of individuals' inclination to leave an employer in much of the turnover literature (Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Mobley, 1977; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007; Porter & Steers, 1973; Price & Mueller, 1981). Perceived job alternatives and a strong economy, indicators of the ease of movement, have also been viewed as promoting organizational departure (Gerhart, 1990; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008; Steel & Griffeth, 1989; Trevor, 2001). In fact, most of the prominent theoretical models incorporate both the desirability and ease of movement as antecedents to turnover (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009).

Although these efforts have provided many insights into the turnover process, the predictive power of the models has remained relatively weak (Griffeth et al., 2000; Hom & Griffeth, 1991; Hom, Griffeth, & Selaro, 1984; Lee et al., 2008),

prompting several criticisms of the turnover literature. First, researchers have expressed concern about the overwhelming emphasis on the desirability portion of the equation (Lee et al., 2008; Steel, 2002), with Griffeth et al.'s (2000) meta-analysis revealing a nearly seven-to-one ratio in the number of studies incorporating job satisfaction as a predictor of voluntary turnover relative to those incorporating alternative job opportunities. Second, most models appear to be based on an "analytic paradigm" (Steinbruner, 1974) that views search and turnover as a highly static process and does not consider the learning that transpires throughout job search over time. Therefore, scholars question whether these models accurately reflect the way in which job search processes and, ultimately, turnover decisions evolve (Lee et al., 2008; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Steel, 2002).

The turnover literature has begun to address both of these criticisms. Recent conceptualizations of the turnover process have at least partially decoupled individuals' job satisfaction from their decision to leave their employer. For example, Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model has identified several paths to voluntary turnover that are not driven by low levels of job satisfaction but, rather, by the presence of shocks or jarring events, including unsolicited job offers and family-related pressures and responsibilities (Lee et al., 2008; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999). Moreover, the prominent role of the ease of

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movement in turnover decisions has attracted increasing attention in the literature (Griffeth, Steel, Allen, & Bryan, 2005; Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 2002; Lee et al., 2008; Steel, 2002; Swider, Boswell, & Zimmerman, in press; Trevor, 2001).

In addition, following calls to address how turnover processes develop over time (Dickter, Roznowski, & Harrison, 1996; Sturman & Trevor, 2001), Steel (2002) has developed a cybernetic model that views job search as a cyclical, self-regulatory process in which information derived from job search activities provides opportunities for "dynamic learning" (Lord & Maher, 1990). These learning opportunities enable individuals to adapt to and influence their environment as they progress through job search by sharpening their understanding of the labor market and by continually refining perceptions regarding their employability over time.

Despite these recent theoretical advances, we believe that it is an opportune time to reexamine the job search and voluntary turnover process in light of an increasingly turbulent economy (Boisjoly, Duncan, & Smeeding, 1998; Comin & Mulani, 2006; Comin & Philippon, 2005; Farber, Haltiwanger, & Abraham, 1997; Jaeger & Stevens, 1999; Marcotte, 1996; Marcotte & Hartman, 1995; Stewart, 2002) that has produced a substantial loss of jobs over the past twenty years (Bansak & Raphael, 2006; Farber, 1995, 2005; Kalleberg, 2009; Marcotte, 1996; Marcotte & Hartman, 1995; Monks & Pizer, 1998; Neumark, Polsky, & Hansen, 1999; Polsky, 1999; Rose, 1995; Valletta, 1998). In subsequent sections of this article, we argue that economic turbulence places a premium on employees' ongoing efforts to assess and enhance their employability, which, we believe, has significant implications for the processes that underlie job search and voluntary turnover.

Therefore, we propose a model of job search and voluntary turnover that both builds on and extends the prior literature in three respects. First, like Steel (2002), we adopt a control theory perspective that depicts individuals' adaptation to—and influence over—their environment during job search. However, to better understand the changes that individuals experience during job search (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008), we incorporate contemporary career concepts, such as protean career orientation (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth, 2006), career

strategy behaviors (Noe, 1996), career competencies (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999), and psychological mobility (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), that collectively capture the behavioral and cognitive processes of adaptation and influence over the environment. We argue that these concepts may be particularly applicable to search and turnover decisions in a volatile economy that requires individuals to remain vigilant and employable.

Second, although we incorporate both job satisfaction and ease of movement as influences on turnover (Lee et al., 2008; Trevor, 2001), we believe that the turbulence of the economy and the consequent emphasis on individual employability suggest a different role for job satisfaction. We view the desirability of movement in general, and job satisfaction in particular, not as a direct trigger of job search and turnover but, rather, as a contingency factor that determines the extent to which job search progresses over time and affects ultimate turnover decisions.

Third, although traditional models tend to view voluntary turnover as the dependent variable at the end of a decision-making process (Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Trevor, 2001), we examine the consequences of turnover for the continued development of career competencies that can promote enhanced employability and further job search. As we argue later in the article, leaving one organization for a job in a different organization provides opportunities for considerable learning about oneself, about job requirements, and about organizations (Mirvis & Hall, 1994) that can help individuals enhance their career competencies.

In the following sections we review the roles of the desirability and ease of movement in the turnover literature, discuss structural changes in the economy that have produced a boundaryless world, and present a model of job search and voluntary turnover that may be particularly relevant to the contemporary economy. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of the model for future research.

DESIRABILITY AND EASE OF MOVEMENT IN THE VOLUNTARY TURNOVER LITERATURE

Because job satisfaction is thought to capture the desirability of movement, it has played an integral role in nearly all turnover theories (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009). Many reviews have

observed a negative association between job satisfaction and voluntary turnover (e.g., Griffeth et al., 2000; Hom, Caranikas-Walker, Prussia, & Griffeth, 1992; Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Steel & Ovalle, 1984; Tett & Meyer, 1993), with the most recent meta-analytic findings reporting an average correlation of $-.19$ between the two variables (Griffeth et al., 2000). Ease of movement has been incorporated into turnover models in a number of ways, including examinations of employment rates, perceived alternatives, general job availability, and movement capital (Gerhart, 1990; Griffeth et al., 2000; Hom et al., 1992; Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Lee et al., 2008; Steel & Griffeth, 1989; Swider et al., in press; Trevor, 2001), with Griffeth et al.'s (2000) meta-analysis reporting an average correlation of $.12$ between ease of movement variables and voluntary turnover.

The interplay between the desirability of movement and the ease of movement generally takes two forms. Beginning with Mobley (1977), researchers have elaborated on the decision process through which job affect leads to voluntary turnover. Mobley's model suggests a largely linear path, in which dissatisfaction causes individuals to think about quitting, evaluate the utility of searching for a new position, develop intentions to search, engage in job search, evaluate job alternatives, compare alternatives to the current job, and formulate intentions to quit or stay before finally enacting a turnover decision. This attitude-based tradition views job search as a bridge between the perceived desirability of movement (job dissatisfaction) and the perceived ease of movement (job alternatives) and seems to be based on the realistic assumption that perceptions regarding the relative ease of movement are generally derived from job search activities (Steel & Lounsbury, 2009).

In addition, job dissatisfaction and ease of movement have been found to interact in the prediction of turnover. Trevor (2001) found that the relationship between satisfaction and voluntary turnover was stronger when the unemployment rate was low, suggesting that ease of movement enables dissatisfied employees to leave their jobs. Further conceptualizing ease of movement at the individual level, Trevor (2001) also demonstrated that a high level of movement capital (operationalized as an individual's education, cognitive ability, and occupation-specific training) not only strengthened the ef-

fect of job satisfaction on turnover but also attenuated the effect of unemployment rate on turnover. Taken together, these findings illustrate that human capital and employability affect the extent to which job dissatisfaction and general market conditions can influence turnover decisions.

In sum, ease of movement variables not only have main effects on voluntary turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000) but also interact with job satisfaction to predict turnover (Trevor, 2001). Less clear is the mechanism by which job search activities affect actual and perceived ease of movement and the process by which ease of movement intensifies subsequent job search and affects ultimate turnover. The model presented below suggests how job search enables individuals to enhance their employability, which can promote continued job search and increase the likelihood of subsequent turnover.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYABILITY IN A BOUNDARYLESS WORLD

Globalization, technological advancement, and market pressures have forced organizations to change the nature of human capital management. Beginning in the early 1980s, recession and shareholder pressure cultivated an economic environment typified by downsizing and outsourcing in an effort to increase profitability through greater organizational focus and flexibility (Cappelli, 1999). Numerous studies support the trend toward an increasingly turbulent economy (Boisjoly et al., 1998; Comin & Mulani, 2006; Comin & Philippon, 2005; Farber et al., 1997; Jaeger & Stevens, 1999; Marcotte, 1996; Marcotte & Hartman, 1995; Stewart, 2002), indicating that the presence of large-scale job reallocation has become the norm in the U.S. economy (Brown, Haltiwanger, & Lane, 2006; Davis, Haltiwanger, & Schuh, 1997; Ho, 2009; Uchitelle, 2006).

The pressure to stay lean has made organizations hesitant to develop long-term relationships with employees whose skill sets might become outdated (Greenhaus, Callanan, & DiRenzo, 2008), thus producing rising job loss and declines in job tenure and job stability over the past few decades (Bansak & Raphael, 2006; Boisjoly et al., 1998; Farber, 1995, 2005; Kalleberg, 2009; Marcotte, 1996; Marcotte & Hartman, 1995; Monks & Pizer, 1998; Neumark et al., 1999; Polsky, 1999; Rose, 1995; Valletta, 1998). Organizations

have increasingly turned to the external labor market to acquire new capabilities, providing timely skills consistent with organizational objectives while freeing the firms from long-term relationships with potentially less valuable employees (Greenhaus et al., 2008). Moreover, organizations have reduced the number of managerial layers in the hierarchy, have shed unprofitable business units, have outsourced noncore functions, and have relied extensively on temporary and contract employees, all of which have created an environment with fewer opportunities for continuous vertical career advancement within a single employment setting (Callanan & Greenhaus, 1999; Cappelli, 1999; Conger & Pearce, 2003; Klein, Ziegert, Knight, & Xiao, 2006).

These economic pressures precipitated the rise of what General Electric's Jack Welch called the "boundaryless organization." A boundaryless organization seeks to blur or minimize the barriers that inhibit communication and productivity across vertical, horizontal, external, and geographical organizational boundaries (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick, & Kerr, 1995). Scholars have proposed that the advent of boundaryless organizations has caused individual careers to grow increasingly boundaryless as well (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996).

Boundaryless careers are perceived as different from organizational careers in that they represent "independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organizational career arrangements" (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996: 6). Such independence is generally represented by careers that regularly cross interorganizational boundaries, draw validation and social capital from outside one's current employer, and depart from linear progression within a single employment setting (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Whether the boundaryless career represents a dominant career pattern in contemporary society is a matter of substantial disagreement (Arthur et al., 1999; Dany, 2003; Ituma & Simpson, 2006; Pringle & Mallon, 2003). Less debatable is the widespread reliance of employers on the external labor market to remain competitive in a turbulent economy through the churning of jobs in which new employees with needed skills are hired and current employees who do not possess these skills are let go (Cappelli, 1999, 2006). Therefore, although there is likely to be considerable variation in the extent to which individ-

ual careers display boundaryless characteristics, we believe that the dynamic labor market in which many organizations and careers currently intersect can reasonably be captured by the notion of a *boundaryless world*.

The volatile economic and organizational conditions that characterize a boundaryless world have produced diminishing feelings of job security (Davis et al., 1997; Kalleberg, 2009; Smith, 2010). Using twenty-five years of data from the U.S. General Social Survey from 1977 to 2002, Fullerton and Wallace (2007) documented growing pessimism in worker perceptions of job security, a conclusion reached by a number of other researchers (Bansak & Raphael, 2006; Boisjoly et al., 1998; Farber, 1995, 2005; Kalleberg, 2009; Marcotte, 1996; Marcotte & Hartman, 1995; Monks & Pizer, 1998; Rose 1995; Schmidt, 1999), lending credence to the claim that the U.S. economy has entered "a post-job-security era" (Tulgan, 2000). Additionally, research in the United Kingdom offers evidence that workers believe psychological contracts are increasingly short term, transactional, and characterized by diminished trust in employers (Herriot, Manning, & Kidd, 1997; Smithson & Lewis, 2000).

Because of the decline in job security, it is reasonable to expect that individuals increasingly recognize the importance of remaining employable in a dynamic, often hostile economy. Scholars have often advocated that the decline of job security has caused individuals to shift their focus away from the organization toward personal career development, causing employability to replace job security as a primary value and driver behind career management decisions (Baruch, 2001; Benson, 2006; Berntson, Naswall, & Sverke, 2010; Galunic & Anderson, 2000; Grote & Raeder, 2009; Iles, Forster, & Tinline, 1996; King, 2000; Waterman, Waterman, & Collard, 1994). As a result, workers today are highly focused on increasing their employability by developing transferable career competencies (Arthur et al., 1999; Kelan, 2008; Smith, 2010; Wittekind, Raeder, & Grote, 2010) and by staying continuously aware of their value in the workforce and potential avenues for career development (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003; Smith, 2010).

Despite employability's increasing salience to both theory and practice, there is little consensus regarding the definition of the construct. Although derived from varying conceptions

stemming from dispositional (Fugate, 2006; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Nauta, Van Vianen, Van der Heijden, Van Dam, & Willemsen, 2009; Van Dam, 2004), competency-based (Benson, 2006; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden, de Lange, Demerouti, & Van der Heijde, 2009), and psychosocial approaches (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007), all conceptualizations of employability carry some notion of individually based employment security (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Kanter, 1993; Wittekind et al., 2010) and control over one's employment options (Baruch, 2001; Bertson et al., 2010; Kanter, 1993).

The employment security and control inherent in employability are based on the capacity to leverage personal resources (Chan, 2000; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Rothwell, Herbert, & Rothwell, 2008; Smith, 2010) in order to gain and maintain employment (Finn, 2000); realize potential through sustained employment (Hillage & Pollard, 1998); continuously fulfill, acquire, or create work (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006); or identify and realize career opportunities (Fugate, 2006; Fugate et al., 2004). Integrating the central features of these perspectives, we define employability as the capacity to control one's employment options through the creation, identification, and realization of career opportunities. This conceptualization is rooted in the notion of individuals as "agents of their career destinies" (Inkson & Baruch, 2008: 217) and suggests that employability is contingent on proactive responses to the environment.

We further suggest that the need to remain employable is as relevant to a recent high school graduate as it is to an established MBA, to a construction worker as it is to a marketing manager, and to a family-focused employee as it is to an advancement-oriented careerist because economic uncertainty and job losses have cut across organizational levels and employee age groups (Boisjoly et al., 1998; Brown et al., 2006; Feldman & Leana, 2000; Polsky, 1999; Smith, 2010; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009; U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). This is not to say that the incidence and determinants of turnover are equivalent across diverse employee groups but, rather, that the need to become (or remain) employable is salient in a sizable segment of the workforce.

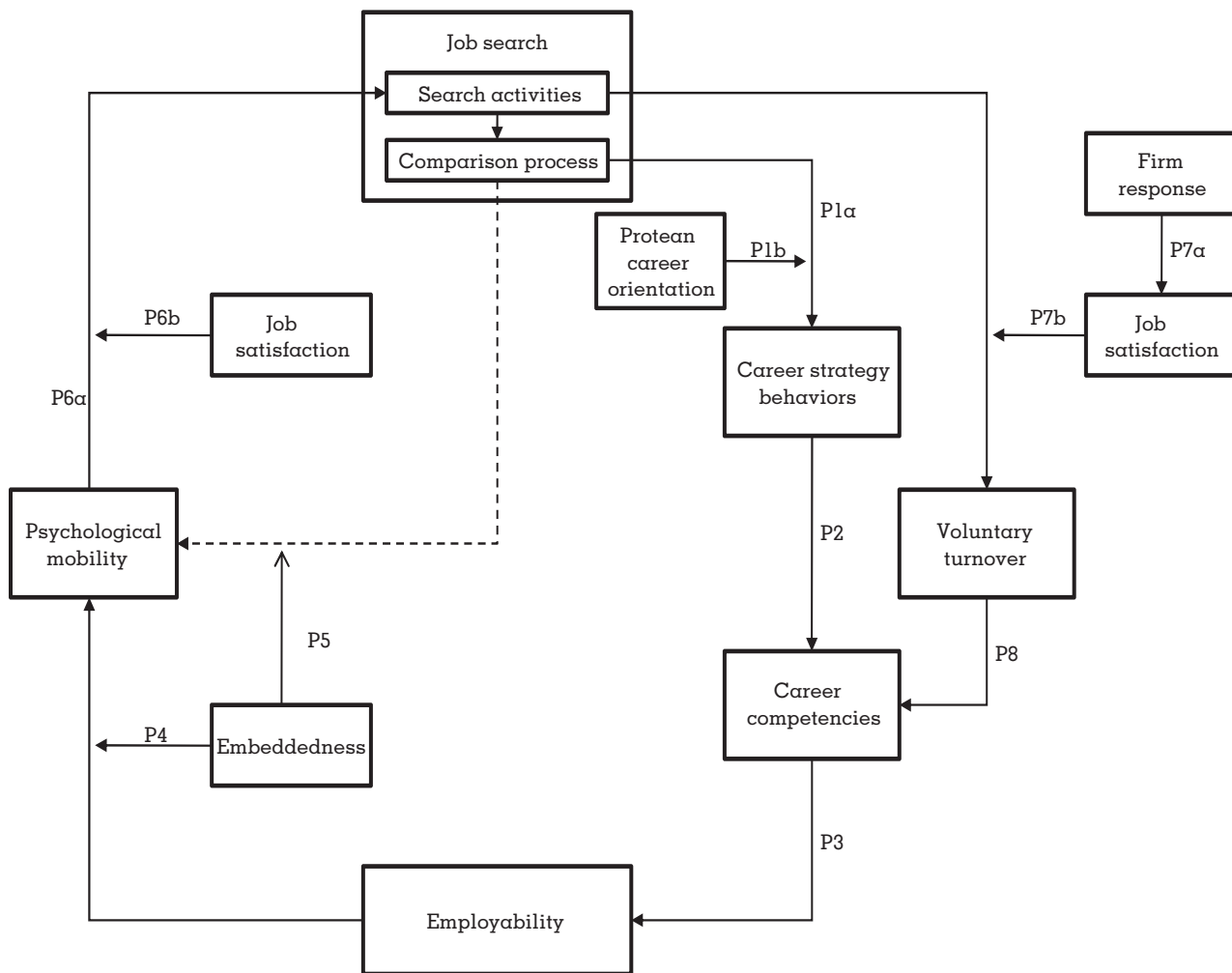
MODEL OF JOB SEARCH AND VOLUNTARY TURNOVER

Figure 1 presents a model that adopts a control theory perspective to illustrate how job search and turnover decisions develop over time. Although individuals who quit a job have a variety of destinations (Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 2002), this model focuses on individuals who enact voluntary turnover to transition immediately to a job in a different organization. Before presenting the propositions that represent the relationships among the variables in Figure 1, we provide an overview of the model and its relationship to cybernetic theory.

We suggest that job search and turnover processes represent goal-oriented, self-regulating, cybernetic systems in which feedback from the environment is compared with a reference standard or goal and adaptive or corrective behaviors are enacted to reduce discrepancies that are detected by the individual (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). Therefore, the job search variable in our model contains two elements: search activities and a comparison process. Given the economic volatility of today's labor market, we agree with Steel's (2002) notion that individuals are in a perpetual search mode, although to varying degrees and often at a somewhat passive level. As such, search activities range from easily attainable attempts to acquire general information about the labor market (e.g., health of the economy or segments of the economy) through the media, the Internet, and casual conversations with friends to more effortful and focused activities designed to acquire increasingly particularistic (Steel, 2002) or personally relevant information (e.g., job requirements for a particular career field of interest). All job search activities, whether enacted specifically to seek alternative employment or to explore available job alternatives, potentially enable individuals to gauge their employability in the labor market (Boswell, Boudreau, & Dunford, 2004; Bretz, Boudreau, & Judge, 1994).

In this sense, job search activities can be vehicles by which individuals engage in career exploration (Zikic & Klehe, 2006), which enables them to gain a better understanding of opportunities in the environment, as well as their personal strengths and values (Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983; Zikic & Saks, 2009). As reflected by the path in Figure 1 from search activities to

FIGURE 1
Model of Job Search and Voluntary Turnover in a Boundaryless World



the comparison process, the information derived from job search activities serves as the basis for the comparison process that is central to a cybernetic perspective. Because a paramount goal in a volatile economy is to maintain employability (Benson, 2006; Grote & Raeder, 2009; Smith, 2010; Wittekind et al., 2010), we propose that individuals make comparisons between their desired level of employability (reference standard) and the feedback they receive from the environment during job search regarding their current employability.

As we discuss more fully in subsequent sections of the article, individuals who perceive a negative discrepancy between desired and current employability (i.e., who perceive a lower level of employability than desired) attempt to

reduce the discrepancy through adaptive action in the form of career strategy behaviors. Furthermore, the enactment of career strategies has the potential to trigger a cycle of enhanced career competencies, higher employability, and stronger perceptions of psychological mobility that can lead to an escalation in job search activities and, potentially, to turnover. The cycle represents the self-regulating process of a cybernetic system as 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).

Effect of Job Search on Career Strategies and Career Competencies

As noted above, cybernetic models capture the dynamic learning that takes place as individuals regularly adapt to and influence their environment over time. Because of the importance of employability to contemporary employees, a significant feature of the learning that takes place during job search pertains to their employability. We suggest that information derived from job search enables individuals to gauge their current employability or control over their career options. The information may be somewhat general (mounting job losses in their industry) or may be moderately or highly particularistic (skills sought by other employers; the work experiences of colleagues who have been unsuccessful or successful in securing a new position).

Consistent with the tenets of cybernetic theory (Steel, 2002), individuals compare the level of employability they desire with the perception of their current employability. Because, as we suggested above, the volatility of the economy focuses employees' attention on the importance of control over their career options, we expect that most employees desire to be highly employable. Nevertheless, there are likely to be variations in the level of employability that individuals find acceptable, resulting from differences in such attributes as their career stage or their breadwinner status in the family.

We suggest that individuals who detect a negative discrepancy between their desired and current employability (they are less employable than desired) engage in adaptive behaviors (Carver & Scheier, 1982; Lord & Maher, 1990) designed to increase their career competencies in order to close the gap by increasing their value and protecting themselves against employment insecurity (Fugate, 2006; Fugate et al., 2004; Greenhaus et al., 2008; Wittekind et al., 2010). The adaptive feature of a cybernetic system that is incorporated in our model is the enactment of career strategy behaviors in response to the negative discrepancy.

Career strategies are purposeful activities that increase the likelihood of achieving important career objectives (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2010; Noe, 1996) in a timely manner (Gould & Penley, 1984). In the present instance the objective is to enhance one's employability

to a more desirable level. The literature has identified a variety of specific career-related strategies, including networking, seeking advice and support, self-nominating, building one's reputation, creating opportunities, and developing expertise, which are generally enacted to acquire greater experience, training, contacts, skills, or knowledge (Gould, 1979; Gould & Penley, 1984; Greenhaus et al., 2010; King, 2004; Kossek, Roberts, Fisher, & DeMarr, 1998; Noe, 1996). There is substantial evidence that career strategies can facilitate career growth and enhancement (e.g., Abele & Wiese, 2008; Crant, 2000; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Gould & Penley, 1984; Greenhaus et al., 2010; King, 2004; Kossek et al., 1998; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Mackenzie Davey, 2002).

Therefore, consistent with self-regulation theories (Bandura, 1991), we suggest that the detection of a negative discrepancy between desired and current employability during the comparison process is likely to spark the enactment of specific career strategies in order to reduce the discrepancy by enhancing individuals' competencies and, ultimately, their employability.

Proposition 1a: The detection of a negative discrepancy between desired and current employability is positively related to the enactment of career strategy behaviors.

We also propose that a protean career orientation (PCO) moderates the relationship between the detection of a negative discrepancy and the enactment of career strategy behaviors. A strong PCO is characterized by (1) a self-directed orientation, in which individuals attempt to assert control over their career by taking responsibility for making career decisions, and (2) a values-driven orientation, whereby individuals pursue values and goals that are personally meaningful in order to experience psychological success (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). In other words, individuals characterized by a strong PCO develop their own conception of what constitutes a successful career (values driven) and take the initiative to make decisions (self-directed) that will enable them to achieve success according to their criteria.

We believe, for several reasons, that individuals high in PCO are more likely to respond to market feedback by engaging in adaptive behaviors. First, because of their self-directed ori-

entation, individuals with a strong PCO are likely to believe that they are responsible for assuming control over their career with autonomous career actions when they discover a discrepancy regarding their employability. This notion is consistent with Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant's (2001) finding of a positive relationship between proactive personality and the initiation of behaviors designed to promote one's career.

Second, because individuals high in PCO are driven to achieve career outcomes that satisfy their personally meaningful values, they should be particularly attentive and responsive to information derived from job search so that they can increase the likelihood of achieving a close fit between career opportunities and valued goals. In addition, the importance that they place on achieving a sense of authenticity in their career (Briscoe et al., 2006) may encourage high-PCO individuals to reflect deeply on the information they gather from job search to formulate more potential career strategies.

Third, the adaptability associated with a strong PCO (Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 2002) may enable individuals to respond in a more flexible manner to market information that permits them to break out of career routines (Hall & Mirvis, 1995) and to engage in strategies that may differ from previous approaches they have used. For these reasons we expect high-PCO individuals to be more responsive to the discrepancy they perceive regarding their employability.

Proposition 1b: The positive relationship between the detection of a negative discrepancy between desired and current employability and the enactment of career strategy behaviors is stronger for individuals high in PCO than for those low in PCO.

As noted in the previous discussion, individuals adopt career strategy behaviors to expand their career competencies. DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) identified the competencies included in the present model as being critical for contemporary careers. Drawing from theory related to core competencies of the firm, the authors suggested three "ways of knowing" that are essential for career growth—knowing-how, knowing-whom, and knowing-why—which have served as useful frameworks for empirical research on careers (Eby et al., 2003; McArdle et al., 2007; Singh, Ragins, & Tharenou, 2009).

Knowing-how competencies embody the transferable skills, capabilities, and knowledge that individuals can develop and use in various employment settings, akin to the human capital frequently discussed in the literature (Eby et al., 2003). Knowing-whom competencies refer to the breadth and diversity of an individual's social network that can be drawn on to foster career growth, and they are related to resources that flow from the accumulation of social capital (Eby et al., 2003). As the name implies, knowing-why competencies "answer the question 'Why?' as it relates to career motivation, personal meaning, and identification" (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994: 308). Acquired through reflection and retrospective sensemaking, knowing-why competencies promote an enhanced self-awareness that helps define personal and career identity and serves as the basis for sustained "motivational energy" (Arthur et al., 1999: 122) over the course of a career. In their capacity to provide energy, knowing-why competencies are related to psychological capital, which provides motivation and resilience in the face of challenge (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010; Gooty, Gavin, Johnson, Frazier, & Snow, 2009; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans & Youssef, 2004, 2007; Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007).

We propose that the enactment of career strategy behaviors is associated with the development of knowing-how, knowing-whom, and knowing-why competencies. A number of the career strategies in the literature are intended specifically to develop experience, skills, and expertise that enhance an individual's human capital. Strategies related to the acquisition of human capital have been shown to provide career-related benefits (e.g., Crant, 2000; Gould, 1979; Gould & Penley, 1984; King, 2004; Kossek et al., 1998; Noe, 1996) and should enhance one's knowing-how competencies. For example, an individual may enact a career strategy that includes stretch assignments, online training, and completion of graduate studies to develop new and transferable skills.

We also suggest that networking-oriented career strategies lead to the development of social capital (Gould & Penley, 1984; Noe, 1996; Wolff & Moser, 2009) that should enhance one's knowing-whom competencies. For instance, individuals may generate new contacts or strengthen ties with existing contacts to provide career-related

information, guidance, and assistance. We expect individuals to use social networks because they are valuable to career development (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Kram, 1985; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Wolff & Moser, 2009) and can lead to the development of future job opportunities (Eby et al., 2003; Forret & Sullivan, 2002; Gould & Penley, 1984).

Finally, we expect that individuals can increase their knowing-why competencies through enacting career strategy behaviors. Virtually all career strategies provide an opportunity to enhance self-awareness, an essential component of knowing-why competencies (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). For example, taking on a new assignment, entering a training program, or enrolling in an evening class can help clarify career strengths, weaknesses, and values that provide direction in, meaning to, and motivation for one's career. Moreover, enacting focused career strategies may foster knowing-why competencies because the implementation of plans to achieve a clear goal (in this instance, to enhance competencies) can increase one's confidence (Locke & Latham, 1990) and hope (Snyder et al., 1996) and thereby provide greater motivation and meaning in one's career.

Proposition 2: The enactment of career strategy behaviors is positively related to the development of career competencies.

Effect of Career Competencies on Employability

As described above, employability is the capacity to control one's employment options through the creation, identification, and realization of career opportunities. Research within the careers literature regularly depicts employability as a function of work-related skills and abilities (Baruch, 2001; Benson, 2006; Berntson et al., 2010; Smith, 2010)—important components of knowing-how competencies. Numerous scholars in the job search and turnover literature have concluded that individual attributes, such as one's talents and expertise, determine the availability of jobs and ease of movement (e.g., Bretz et al., 1994; Jackofsky & Peters, 1983; March & Simon, 1958; Trevor, 2001). Aspects of human capital signal employee value to the labor market and can entice competition for individuals'

services from outside employers (Trevor, 2001), particularly the accumulation of externally visible accomplishments (Allen & Griffeth, 2001), such as advanced degrees and promotions. Employees can then leverage the demand for their skills as a source of power and influence over prospective employers (Boswell et al., 2004; Bretz et al., 1994). Therefore, the enhancement of transferable knowledge, skills, and abilities (i.e., knowing-how competency) will signal the market of increases in an employee's value (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Eby et al., 2003), raise demand for that individual's services, and elevate his or her employability through increased access to employment options.

Additionally, knowing-whom competencies provide avenues to new contacts and organizations that can lead to possible job opportunities (Arthur, 1994). The strength and breadth of social networks enhance one's ability to discover career growth options (Dess & Shaw, 2001). Moreover, the accumulation of social capital can improve performance in one's current job (Sparrowe, Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001), which is thought to serve as a labor market signal, carrying information of one's worth and value (Schwab, 1991; Waldman, 1990) and enhancing labor market visibility (Milgrom & Oster, 1987) and, presumably, employability. Further, the expansion of knowing-whom competencies can create career communities that foster personal development and provide career support (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Parker & Arthur, 2000) that can potentially help individuals identify and attain career opportunities. Accordingly, we anticipate that the development of knowing-whom competencies will facilitate the creation, identification, and realization of job and career opportunities.

Finally, knowing-why competencies that provide career motivation, meaning, and resilience enable individuals to adapt to changing work situations and to remain open to new career experiences (Eby et al., 2003; Mirvis & Hall, 1994). Scholars suggest that knowing-why competencies act as a "cognitive compass," enabling individuals to effectively navigate career opportunities (McArdle et al., 2007). Individuals who understand their values and talents should not only be capable of identifying appropriate career opportunities (Singh, 2006) but also should be appealing to prospective employers who appreciate employees' understanding of who they

are and what they can contribute to an organization. Moreover, the psychological capital associated with knowing-why competencies has been empirically tied to improvements in job performance (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010), which, as we noted above, can serve as a signal regarding an individual's value in the labor market (Schwab, 1991; Waldman, 1990).

Proposition 3: Career competencies are positively related to employability.

Effect of Employability on Psychological Mobility

As noted by Cappelli and Sherer (1991), the effect of the environment on turnover decisions is filtered through individual perceptions. Figure 1 represents this filter by suggesting a linkage between employability and psychological mobility. Whereas employability is the capacity to create, identify, and realize career opportunities in an objective sense, psychological mobility is the subjective appraisal of one's capacity to make career transitions (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). In the present context of voluntary turnover, we focus specifically on the perceived capacity to make interorganizational transitions. As such, our model builds on Steel and Griffeth's (1989) conception that ease of movement entails notions of both physical and psychological mobility. Moreover, psychological mobility in our view refers not only to the perceived capacity to receive a job offer but also to the perceived capacity to actually make a successful transition to a new position. Whereas the first component of psychological mobility is akin to job search self-efficacy (Saks & Cote, 2006), the second component reflects a broader capacity for change (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) that enables an individual to transition effectively and comfortably to a new environment.

We suggest that as employability increases and as individuals gain market leverage and control, they are likely to increase their perceived capacity to find and attain viable career alternatives. Consistent with this contention, Griffeth et al. (2005) reasoned that job alternatives should appear more accessible to individuals whose skills are in high demand in the market. Moreover, Maertz and Campion observed that extensive employment options may "psychologically pull employees away from

their current organizations, even ones that are well-liked" (2004: 570), suggesting that this psychological detachment is due to the perceived ability to acquire other rewarding positions. As such, market leverage positively influences cognitions of job market opportunity (Griffeth et al., 2005) and perceived control (Saks & Cote, 2006), enabling individuals to derive a sense of "employability security" (Kanter, 1993).

However, because psychological mobility includes the perceived capacity to execute an interorganizational transition successfully, high levels of employability may not be sufficient to generate strong perceptions of psychological mobility. We suggest that an employee's degree of embeddedness in the current job determines the impact of employability on perceptions of psychological mobility. Embeddedness is composed of (1) the fit between a person's job and other important facets of life, (2) the links or ties an individual has with coworkers and work activities, and (3) the personal sacrifices that would need to be made if an individual were to leave his or her position (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). Therefore, the greater the fit, links, and sacrifices, the more embedded an individual is in his or her position.

Consistent with findings that embeddedness minimizes the influence of environmental forces (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006), job search effort (Swider et al., in press), and unsolicited-job-offer shocks (Mitchell & Lee, 2001) on turnover, we suggest that embeddedness minimizes the impact of employability on psychological mobility. As people become more embedded in their current position, it becomes increasingly difficult for an interorganizational transition to provide an equivalent level of fit. Moreover, transitions to a different organization require embedded individuals to make great personal sacrifices and to break strong ties with coworkers and their community. As a result, embeddedness buffers the effects of employability by creating greater psychological barriers to interorganizational transitions, causing successful transitions to seem less accessible or desirable and thereby dampening perceptions of psychological mobility. As noted by Griffeth et al., "When physical (e.g., geographic distances) and psychological (e.g., loss of perks, dual careers) barriers impede movement, the field of potential alternatives shrinks accordingly" (2005: 336). Therefore, individuals who are highly embed-

ded are less likely to derive psychological mobility from their employability.

Proposition 4: The positive relationship between employability and psychological mobility is stronger for individuals who are weakly embedded than for those who are highly embedded in their current position.

Propositions 1 through 4 collectively describe employees' reactions to a negative discrepancy between desired and current levels of employability. Consistent with a cybernetic perspective, individuals respond to the negative discrepancy by enacting adaptive career strategy behaviors, especially if they hold a strong PCO. These career strategy behaviors are expected to enhance career competencies, which, in turn, promote high employability, which strengthens psychological mobility for employees who are not highly embedded in their current job.

Although positive discrepancies (where individuals perceive a greater level of employability than they desire) seem unlikely, it is possible that individuals detect no discrepancy between desired and current employability as a result of the comparison process derived from their job search activities. Because their current level of employability is aligned with their desired level of employability, there is no need to engage in adaptive career strategy behaviors. Rather, as represented by the dotted line stemming from the comparison process in Figure 1, we propose that this situation leads directly to an escalation in psychological mobility, because individuals perceive themselves to have achieved a desired level of control over their employment options and are sufficiently capable of finding, creating, and realizing career opportunities.

However, just as a strong embeddedness in the current job reduces the impact of employability on psychological mobility, embeddedness might also reduce the impact of the alignment of desired and current employability on psychological mobility. For the same reasons as discussed previously, individuals who are highly embedded in their current position find it difficult to perceive that an interorganizational transition can provide an equivalent level of fit and would further require them to make personal sacrifices and sever the strong ties they have developed with their coworkers. Therefore, the alignment of desired and current employ-

ability is expected to have a greater impact on the psychological mobility of employees who are less strongly embedded in their current job.

Proposition 5: The alignment of desired and current levels of employability is more strongly related to psychological mobility for individuals who are weakly embedded than for those who are highly embedded in their current position.

Effect of Psychological Mobility on Subsequent Job Search

Individuals with a strong perception of psychological mobility are motivated to engage in additional higher-level job search so as to replace general market information with particularistic information that is necessary to develop more refined and accurate comparisons between desired and current employability. Refining employability comparisons over time represents a *crystallization* process (Griffeth et al., 2005; Griffeth & Hom, 1988; Mitchell et al., 2001; Steel & Griffeth, 1989), by which vague impressions of employment opportunity give way to more concrete understandings of employment alternatives. Because refining employability perceptions is an "informationally intensive process" (Griffeth et al., 2005: 337), individuals need to increase job search activities in order to gather more particularistic information (Steel, 2002).

However, individuals are likely to increase job search activities only if they believe that this effort will lead to rewarding outcomes in the future (Vroom, 1964). Because individuals with a strong perception of psychological mobility believe that viable transition opportunities are attainable, they hold a strong expectancy that job search activities will enable them to find and attain desirable alternatives. Indirect evidence in support of this relationship can be found in previous research indicating that the perceived quantity and the quality of job alternatives predict both intent to search and actual job search (Griffeth et al., 2005). Additionally, psychological mobility entails a sense of control over job transitions, which not only increases job search activity (Saks & Cote, 2006) but also strengthens the relationship between turnover intentions and quit decisions, presumably because feel-

ings of control lead to more job search behaviors (Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005).

Proposition 6a: Psychological mobility is positively related to job search activity.

To this point we have not incorporated job satisfaction in the model despite substantial evidence that dissatisfied employees are more likely to engage in job search and to quit jobs than are satisfied employees (Bretz et al., 1994; Griffeth et al., 2000). We believe that strong perceptions of psychological mobility stimulate job search activities, regardless of individuals' level of job satisfaction, because the insecurity rooted in a volatile economy requires even currently satisfied employees to understand the labor market, explore their options, and assess and increase their employability (Benson, 2006; Grote & Raeder, 2009; Smith, 2010; Wittekind et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, we expect low levels of job satisfaction to strengthen the effect of psychological mobility on subsequent job search. As noted earlier, when psychological mobility is weak, individuals are not likely to engage in subsequent job search because of their low expectancy of locating and securing alternative employment opportunities. However, when psychological mobility is strong, highly dissatisfied employees should be strongly motivated to acquire increasingly particularistic information through job search that might reveal employment opportunities providing a better fit with their values than does their current job. Therefore, high psychological mobility should incite dissatisfied employees to engage in greater search activities. The relationship between psychological mobility and job search is not expected to be as strong for satisfied employees whose job situation currently meets their values (Locke, 1976).

The predicted interaction between psychological mobility and job satisfaction is consistent with Trevor's (2001) finding of heightened voluntary turnover for dissatisfied employees who also possess extensive movement capital. As discussed earlier, movement capital presumably increases employability and should therefore produce feelings of psychological mobility, which, in conjunction with job dissatisfaction, spurs extensive job search and subsequent turnover.

Proposition 6b: The positive relationship between psychological mobility and job search is stronger for individuals with low job satisfaction than for those with high job satisfaction.

Effect of Job Search on Turnover

The learning that occurs through increased job search sharpens labor market knowledge and aligns individual perceptions with reality (Steel, 1996, 2002). Therefore, job search should continue until individuals either (1) uncover employability deficiencies via comparisons among more particularistic information, causing them to engage in additional career strategy behaviors as previously discussed, or (2) develop fully crystallized (Griffeth & Hom, 1988; Steel & Griffeth, 1989) concrete job alternatives that enable voluntary turnover. Ample research has indicated a positive relationship between job search activity and turnover (Blau, 1993, 1994; Saks & Ashforth, 1999, 2002; Saks & Cote, 2006; Wanberg, Hough, & Song, 2002).

However, job search can also lead to improved employment conditions with one's current organization (Bretz et al., 1994; Lazear, 1986; Pinkley, Neale, & Bennett, 1994). In the same manner that performance, promotions, and human capital can signal individuals' value to prospective employers (Milgrom & Oster, 1987; Schwab, 1991; Trevor, 2001; Waldman, 1990), employees can "engage in job search to convince others that the market values their contributions at a level that justifies better employment arrangements" (Bretz et al., 1994: 276). Therefore, because employers do not want to lose valuable employees to competitors, they may respond to extensive job search activity by enhancing current employment conditions with such rewards as promotions or salary increases (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000), in an effort to increase employees' satisfaction and induce their retention at the firm. Because improved conditions of employment provide valued rewards that promote feelings of job satisfaction (Locke, 1976), we predict the following.

Proposition 7a: The extent to which firms respond to individuals' job search activities with enhanced employment conditions is positively related to individuals' job satisfaction.

Although the opportunity to increase one's employability by changing jobs can be a useful strategy in a volatile economy (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), it is possible that a high level of job satisfaction will deter or delay the interorganizational mobility that characterizes many contemporary careers (Stewart, 2002). People are less likely to quit if the expected utility of their current job exceeds that of perceived alternatives (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979), and increasing rewards and promotions has been shown to reduce the desirability of movement (Trevor, Gerhart, & Boudreau, 1997) and to moderate the relationship between high performance and turnover (Harrison, Virick, & William, 1996; Salamin & Hom, 2005; Trevor et al., 1997).

Researchers have noted that labor market dynamism is shifting turnover theory toward a focus on staying as opposed to leaving the organization (Holtom et al., 2008). In this vein, we suggest that low levels of job satisfaction do not necessarily drive turnover decisions but, rather, that high levels of satisfaction provide an incentive to stay. Just as job satisfaction should attenuate the relationship between psychological mobility and subsequent job search, it may also reduce the likelihood that well-crystallized alternatives result in a turnover decision, an assertion that is consistent with Swider et al.'s (in press) recent finding that high job satisfaction weakens the impact of job search effort on the likelihood of subsequent turnover.

Proposition 7b: The positive relationship between job search and voluntary turnover is stronger for individuals with low job satisfaction than for those with high job satisfaction.

Effect of Voluntary Turnover on the Development of Career Competencies

Our model also attempts to broaden turnover theory by considering the effect that the enactment of voluntary turnover has on the continued development of individual careers. To date, the literature has considered turnover primarily as a dependent variable at the end of a decision-making process. But particularly when considering the extensive job mobility characterized by today's workforce (Stewart, 2002), it seems timely to address how turnover might influence

the evolution of one's career and future turnover decisions.

The relationship between turnover and the development of career competencies has been alluded to in previous research discussing the prevalence and value of experiencing numerous short learning cycles throughout one's career (Mirvis & Hall, 1994). These learning cycles involve stages of exploration, trial, mastery, and exit, as individual careers progress through projects, jobs, organizations, industries, and professions. Therefore, each learning cycle begins as individuals embark on a career transition and produces new knowledge that can help them develop career competencies. Career cycles originating from interorganizational transitions can produce learning opportunities similar to those that occur through the job search process.

External job transitions include moves to either the same job in a different organization or a different job in a different organization (Kirschenbaum & Weisberg, 2002). Interorganizational transitions are likely to introduce individuals to new social contacts. Although the value of these contacts can vary across situations, entering a new organization is likely to extend the breadth of one's social network (Lester, Hillman, Zardkoohi, & Cannella, 2008). Moreover, some new coworkers may take on mentoring roles (Kram, 1985), enabling individuals to develop multiple developmental relationships (de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004; Higgins & Kram, 2001) that have been shown to positively influence career development (Baugh & Scandura, 1999; Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997; Higgins, 2000; Higgins & Thomas, 2001; Van Emmerik, 2004). Finally, moving to a different organization may also require individuals to establish new extra-organizational contacts (e.g., suppliers and customers) in order to perform their job duties, further expanding their network of professional contacts, which, as previously discussed, represents an increase in knowing-whom competencies (Eby et al., 2003; Singh et al., 2009).

Transitions to a different organization also may enhance individuals' knowing-how competencies. A new position that is substantially different from the prior position is likely to require the development of different skills pertaining to the new work role. Many individuals who enter the mastery stage of this transition-based career cycle (Mirvis & Hall, 1994) gain experi-

ence and expertise in their new area of responsibility. Although a new position that is similar to the prior position may not require individuals to develop new technical skills, the degree of success in applying existing skills in a different environment can teach them about the role of interpersonal relationships and politics in an organization—significant challenges for individuals who cross organizational boundaries (Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994). Moreover, it is possible that even poorly conceived or misinformed interorganizational transitions provide valuable learning experiences that enable individuals to negotiate job transitions more successfully in the future, an important knowing-how competency in a volatile economy.

Finally, knowing-why competencies may develop as a result of voluntary turnover, because working in a new environment can provide opportunities for career exploration. The experience of working in a different organization can help individuals clarify career values and develop a greater sense of what jobs and career paths provide the best fit (Saks & Ashforth, 2002; Stumpf et al., 1983). Transitioning to new roles that require different skills, attitudes, and interactions can refine or change one’s self-identity (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010) and provide clearer goals and direction in one’s career (McArdle et al., 2007). Therefore, enacting turnover can help individuals understand themselves and alternative work environments.

Proposition 8: Voluntary turnover is positively related to the development of career competencies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

We intended the model of job search and voluntary turnover presented in this article to extend the prior literature through (1) a delineation of a cycle of adaptation and influence over the environment that is consistent with a cybernetic perspective on job search and turnover in a volatile economy, (2) a repositioning of the role of job satisfaction in the job search and turnover process, and (3) an examination of the consequences of turnover for the continued development of career competencies. We next discuss a number of fertile areas for additional research associated with each of these three elements of

the model and then discuss broader implications of the model for future research.

First, our proposed cycle of adaptation and change, which was intended to integrate the careers literature and the turnover literature in a boundaryless world, provides a number of opportunities for future research. For example, we incorporated PCO in the model to reflect individual differences that can affect the attention given to labor market feedback and the attempt to reduce discrepancies arising from the feedback. However, other career orientations, such as career anchors (Schein, 1985) and career as a calling (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rosin, & Schwartz, 1997), might also determine how closely an individual pays attention to feedback during job search. Moreover, because there are differences in the styles individuals use in making career decisions (Singh & Greenhaus, 2004), it would be useful to determine whether certain career decision-making styles (e.g., systematic) are more or less conducive to adapting to labor market feedback than other styles (e.g., intuitive).

In addition, it is likely that the comparison process involves not only the determination of a discrepancy between desired and current employability but also an attribution regarding the cause of the discrepancy, which, in turn, should be associated with the selection of particular career strategies. For example, individuals who attribute a negative discrepancy to the absence of developmental relationships might join a professional association or seek a mentor, whereas those who attribute a negative discrepancy to a lack of a certain type of experience might seek a skill-building assignment at work. Therefore, research should investigate the causal attributions that individuals make regarding employability discrepancies to determine the accuracy of the attribution and the impact of the attribution on the selection of an adaptive career strategy. Indeed, an inaccurate attribution might lead to the adoption of a career strategy that does not meet the needs of the situation and therefore is ineffective (Greenhaus et al., 2010), just as an inaccurate assessment of the needs of work organizations might lead an individual to develop a competency that fails to send a signal of the individual’s value or worth in the marketplace.

We also believe it is important to gain a greater understanding of the linkage between

employability and psychological mobility, which represent, respectively, the objective and subjective elements of ease of movement (Steel & Griffith, 1989) in our model. We proposed that weak embeddedness in the current job would enable highly employable individuals to experience psychological mobility because they would not need to sever strong ties or make personal sacrifices to transition to a different organization. Research might also explore the possibility that personality affects the impact of employability on psychological mobility. For example, individuals who are high in openness to experience, one of the Big Five personality factors (Barrick & Mount, 1991), might derive a strong sense of psychological mobility from employability because of their inclination to welcome ambiguity and change in unfamiliar situations (Dilchert, Ones, Van Rooy, & Viswesvaran, 2006).

In addition to specifying the arousal of an adaptive cycle in the face of employability discrepancies, we also suggested that job satisfaction may play a different role in the turnover process than traditionally assumed. Because of the importance of appraising and enhancing employability in a volatile economy and the ease of conducting lower-level job searches to acquire general information about the labor market, our model does not view job dissatisfaction as a trigger for job search. Individuals do not have to be dissatisfied with their job or intent on seeking alternative employment to engage in such search. Instead, job dissatisfaction initially enters our model as an influence on *subsequent* job search for those individuals who are psychologically mobile. In other words, we believe that some form of job search is necessary to produce a sufficiently high level of psychological mobility for job dissatisfaction to kick in as an influence on additional search.

This assumption raises a number of interesting questions for future research. For example, why might some psychologically mobile individuals engage in further job search, regardless of their job satisfaction, whereas others need to be dissatisfied before engaging in subsequent job search? In other words, is there a three-way interaction among psychological mobility, job satisfaction, and a personal (e.g., achievement orientation) or contextual (economic conditions in a geographical area) variable that explains the continuation of job search activities? In a related vein, psychologically mobile individuals

may need more of an incentive to search for increasingly particularistic information, with its attendant high level of effort (Steel, 2002), than to search for more easily acquired general information, suggesting that job dissatisfaction (which can provide such an incentive) may become an increasingly important influence on more "active" phases of job search (Blau, 1994).

We also proposed that a firm might respond to an employee's level of job search or receipt of an alternative employment opportunity with an attempt to induce a higher level of satisfaction so as to prevent the employee's departure. This raises a number of questions worthy of future research. What criteria do organizations use to decide whether to respond to a potential departure: the employee's level of job performance, the employee's possession of skills in short supply, or the centrality of the employee's position to the firm's strategic mission? Additionally, because even moderately satisfied employees may quit if alternative opportunities provide a better fit (Lee & Mitchell, 1994), what push and pull factors determine whether employees who are satisfied because of a firm's recent inducements decide to remain or to leave? Moreover, in light of the importance of time in the turnover process (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005), it is important to determine whether escalating job search produces a momentum that is difficult to reverse and, if so, whether the impact of firm response on turnover decisions is greater at earlier stages of job search than at later stages. Furthermore, Salamin and Hom's (2005) finding that the quit rate of top performers diminished when they received a bonus from their employer suggests the possibility of an inverted U-shaped relationship in which voluntary turnover is lower among highly employable individuals (who are induced to stay) and highly unemployable individuals (who have no options) than among moderately employable individuals.

In addition to specifying an adaptive cycle and repositioning the role of job satisfaction in the turnover process, our model regards voluntary turnover not as an end point in the decision process but as a career transition that can perpetuate the job search cycle through the development of career competencies. The literature on compressed career cycles (Mirvis & Hall, 1994), the literature on leadership development (McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994),

and the literature on organizational socialization (Chao, 2006) suggest that individuals can achieve significant learning outcomes through participation in a variety of new experiences. Nevertheless, the effect of turnover on the development of knowing-how, knowing-whom, and knowing-why competencies is not likely to be automatic. Therefore, future research should explore the conditions under which voluntary turnover decisions are most likely to enhance career competencies.

One interesting lens through which to examine the conditions under which learning takes place involves the nature of the relationships that individuals experience in their new work environment. There is a growing awareness of the importance of positive work relationships (Ragins & Dutton, 2007) or high-quality connections (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003) characterized by vitality, mutuality, and positive regard. These relationships provide a culture of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) in which individuals are encouraged to take risks, open themselves up to new experiences, and experiment with different ways of viewing themselves and the world around them. Recent research has revealed that high-quality work connections can facilitate learning behaviors and outcomes (Carmeli, Brueller, & Dutton, 2009; Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). We recommend that research examine whether and how the quality of relationships in a new organizational setting promotes the development of the career competencies included in our model.

In addition to future research that is relevant to each of the elements of the model discussed above, we believe there are more general implications of our model requiring additional research. It is essential to recognize that our underlying assumption regarding the importance of employability in a turbulent economy drives the entire model. If individuals do not place importance on appraising and increasing their employability on a relatively ongoing basis, they are unlikely to compare desired and current levels of employability during job search, to notice a discrepancy, and to engage in adaptive career strategy behaviors.

Although it is reasonable to assume the importance of employability in an economic landscape marked by high levels of job insecurity (Davis et al., 1997; Kalleberg, 2009; Smith, 2010), research should examine this issue empirically.

Therefore, we recommend the development of a measure that directly assesses the importance individuals place on maintaining and/or enhancing their employability. Individual differences in the importance of employability could then be examined to determine whether employees at different organizational levels or in certain occupations, industries, or stages of family development place a greater or lesser emphasis on employability in their careers. In short, we suggest a direct test of our assumption that the enhancement of employability is salient to a sizable segment of the workforce.

In addition, the boundary conditions of the model should be directly examined by testing the model (or elements of the model) on populations that may value employability to greater or lesser degrees. For example, does the model hold as well for public sector as well as private sector employees, for union as well as nonunion employees, or for secondary as well as primary breadwinners? Boundary conditions could be further scrutinized by examining the model across national cultures, including those that do not adhere to an individualistically oriented career perspective (Pringle & Mallon, 2003).

Along this same vein, research should examine the impact of the economy on job search and voluntary turnover, with a particular focus on the variables in the model. Because general economic variables, such as the unemployment rate, have been some of the more consistent ease-of-movement predictors of turnover (Griffith et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2008), it would be interesting to determine whether economic indicators influence the employability feedback that individuals receive from their job search activities. For example, it is possible that poor economic conditions may simultaneously signal low current employability and the need to pay more attention to the individuals' level of employability in the future. Furthermore, because of the churning of jobs (Cappelli, 1999, 2006), periods of economic instability are dangerous times for some workers but provide extensive opportunities for others, thus having contrasting effects on individuals' psychological mobility. Therefore, investigating the interacting role of economic and individual-difference variables could provide important insights into the voluntary turnover process.

Finally, it is important to recognize the methodological challenges associated with the ex-

amination of the job search and turnover process (Dickter et al., 1996; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005; Steel, 2002; Steel & Griffeth, 1989). Because our model views job search as an ongoing cycle of learning and adaptation and of changes in the environment and the person, the adoption of multiwave longitudinal research designs is particularly important. Sophisticated time-sensitive analytical methods, such as lagged causal models and survival analysis (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2008; Salamin & Hom, 2005; Trevor, 2001), should be especially useful in testing a dynamic model of job search and voluntary turnover.

In conclusion, the cybernetic model of job search and voluntary turnover proposed in this article is based on the need to remain employable in a boundaryless world of economic volatility. We suggest that deficiencies in perceived employability detected during job search trigger a self-regulatory cycle through the enactment of career strategy behaviors that can enhance career competencies, increase employability, heighten perceptions of psychological mobility, promote additional job search activity, and potentially influence voluntary turnover decisions. We believe that the model's incorporation of career concepts into the turnover process has the potential to stimulate and guide research regarding the nature of the self-regulatory process, the role of job satisfaction in job search and turnover, and the consequences of turnover for the continued development of career competencies.

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