

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Layoffs have become recurrent in many organizations today. Most of the research that has been conducted on this subject has focused on the victims and survivors of the layoff process, but very little is known about the impact of layoffs on third parties; people who are indirectly affected by layoffs. These include: potential employees, family members and friends. The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of locus of control and work values on vocational choice among students on the verge of completing their studies, especially vocational choice among organizations that have conducted layoffs.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 90 students from a Midwestern university. The results from the factorial ANOVAs and chi-square provided some support to previous studies. Participants who valued fairness more than any other work value considered an organization's fairness to its employees as an important factor in vocational choice ($F(2, 73) = 3.75, p = 0.03$; fairness $M = 2.64, SD = 0.99$, need for achievement $M = 2.88, SD = 0.88$, and concern for others $M = 3.36, SD = 0.90$). It was also found that individuals with an internal locus of control considered opportunities for advancement important. They took on more financial responsibilities in comparison to people with an external locus of control ($\chi^2(6, N = 90) = 13.09, p < .03$). More research would need to be done, especially a longitudinal study to determine how locus of control

and work values influence vocational choice in today's work environment.

THE EFFECT OF LOCUS OF CONTROL AND WORK VALUES AMONG
POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Work values, layoffs, and locus of control have been shown to influence decision making (Brockner, Grover, & Blonder, 1993; Janssen & Carton, 1999; Judge & Bretz, 1992). More specifically, layoffs and work values have been found to influence work related decisions. This study sought to examine the influence of work values, locus of control, and layoffs on vocational choice. There has been a lot of research that has examined layoffs from the perspective of victims and survivors of layoffs, but few studies have focused on the impact the layoffs had on third parties not directly affected by layoffs (Skarlicki, Ellard, & Kelln, 1998). Third parties include customers, family members, prospective employees, and members of the public. This study sought to examine the influence of layoffs from the perspective of individuals who will be making a vocational choice upon completion of their degree. As mentioned earlier, work values have been found to influence work related decisions. Ravlin and Meglino (1987) found perceptions and work values guide decision making tasks among undergraduate students.

Ravlin and Meglino (1987), as well as Judge and Bretz (1992), further noted there was a need for more research to be done on the influence of work values on decision making. Choosing a job is one of the work related decisions people make while at a university or upon graduation. Therefore, this study is a response to the need for more research in the area of work values.

Background Information on Layoffs

Economic forces and competition force organizations to change (Budros, 1997). For instance, in the early 1980s, competition in the car manufacturing industry was deregulated. As a result, car manufacturers from other countries competed with American companies and were targeting the same group of consumers. The car manufacturing industry had to adopt strategies that would enable them to compete with international companies. One strategy involved cutting back on labor costs by removing unnecessary hierarchies. This entailed laying off employees in the interest of business needs, not necessarily due to performance issues. Apart from the competition, organizations shifted from individually owned companies to share-holder owned companies. Management juggled between making profits and keeping shareholders happy (Fligstein, 1996). Huge organizations like General Motors began to cut back on labor costs to increase its competitiveness through downsizing (Lee, 1997). Other organizations seeking success emulated this strategy as a way of reducing labor costs. This strategy was implemented in blue-collar and white-collar industries.

Downsizing still continues. In 2004, the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics showed that in the previous three years over one million people had been laid off from their jobs. Statistics from the U.S. Labor department indicated this number was higher than the number of individuals laid off between 1990 and 1999. Statistics further indicated the layoffs on the west coast were the highest in the food industry (U.S. Department of Labor, 2004). This shows that layoffs transcended into the service industry, further illustrating the ubiquitous nature of layoffs, thus, making it a strategy worth examining.

Layoffs have become more frequent in the last 20 years where several organizations have sought to reduce costs by cutting back their labor force (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994; Brockner et al., 1986; De Meuse & Marks, 2003; Feldman, 2003; Martin & Freeman, 1998). These organizations have responded to some of these changes by outsourcing, merging, and restructuring (Freeman & Cameron, 1993; Shah, 2000). These changes have altered how organizations function.

In order to examine this trend, definitions and findings on layoffs are paramount. The terms downsizing and layoffs have erroneously been used interchangeably, although they refer to different processes (Budros, 1997; Cameron, Freeman, & Mishra, 1991). *Downsizing* is defined as the reduction of employees through early retirement, and also refers to a reduction of job responsibilities and removal of redundant units within the organization (Cameron et al., 1991; Freeman & Cameron, 1993; Noer, 1993). Downsizing can be implemented when an organization is growing or declining (Freeman & Cameron, 1993). Conversely, *layoffs* entail “the reduction of employees in response to financial strain, globalization, and advances in technology, due to reasons other than performance” (Noer, p. 12). In addition, layoffs have been done in response to outmoded technologies and competition (Brockner et al., 1986; Brockner et al., 1993; Cameron et al., 1991).

There are two categories of individuals directly affected by layoffs. These individuals are victims and survivors of the layoff process. A victim refers to “the person who involuntarily leaves the organization and who is laid off” (Noer, 1993, p. 13). A

survivor on the other hand is “the person who remains in the organization’s systems after involuntary employee reductions” (Noer, p. 13).

Reasons for Downsizing

External forces such as the economy, politics and socio-cultural trends affect organizations. The external environment forces organizations to change in order to survive amidst new consumer demands, and economic and socio-cultural changes (Daft, 2000). Other changes that have affected the nature and structure of organizations in the U.S. include: globalization, advances in technology, new stakeholder demands, and diversity in the workforce (Daft, 2000; Feldman, 2003; Martin & Freeman, 1998).

Cascio, Young, and Mario (1997) suggested organizations reduce their labor force to improve their performance and competitiveness. The reduction of labor costs increases the organization’s ability to control prices in their niche. The assumption of these organizations is that a smaller work force can be efficient and still meet organization goals (Cameron et al., 1991; Cascio et al., 1997; Palmer, Kabanoff & Dunford, 1997; Shah, 2000).

Organizations are increasing their presence globally, thus, the employee pool is larger and consumers are more diverse. The differences in labor costs also vary from one geographical location to another (De Meuse & Marks, 2003). Consequently, organizations seeking to maximize profits do so by eliminating jobs in geographical areas where labor costs are high, and moving some of their units to locations where labor costs are relatively low. These changes enable the organization to increase their profit margins and reduce their labor costs (De Meuse & Marks, 2003; Tang & Fuller, 1995).

Apart from globalization, organizations strive to function with state-of-the-art technology; this implies that they need to keep in step with the latest technology, which changes exponentially (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). As a result, some jobs formerly done by employees are now being taken up by computerized systems. However, changes due to technology vary from one industry to another (De Meuse & Marks, 2003; Tang & Fuller, 1995).

Effects of Downsizing through the Layoff Process

As a result of these changes due to access to cheaper labor, diverse consumers, and technology, many organizations no longer view employees as “long-term assets,” instead they are considered replaceable “short-term assets” (see Noer, 1993, p. 16). Layoffs affect the processes within the organization such as training, hiring, and succession planning (Noer, 1998), since only employees who can adapt to changes remain in the organization and have opportunities for promotion. Those who cannot are compelled to leave. Thus, the organization reduces in size and outsources some of its functions to other organizations (Burke & Nelson, 1998).

Unfortunately, layoffs seldom achieve their intended purpose. Layoffs have dire repercussions on organizations and employees, especially when done haphazardly (Cameron et al., 1991; Mitchell, 2003). It affects those employees who are laid off (victims), as well, as the employees who remain within the organization (survivors). Victims and survivors have been shown to have negative feelings such as anger, resentment, and betrayal. Other feelings include loss of attachment, depression,

disappointment, stress, low self-esteem, and anxiety (Brokner, et al., 1993; Buono, 2003; Cameron et al., 1991; Noer, 1998; Shah, 2000).

Layoffs have also caused family relationships of the victims' to deteriorate due to loss of income resulting in financial strain (Feildman, 2003; Winefeild, Winefeild, Tiggemann, & Golney, 1991), which can be devastating to the individual (Cameron et al., 1991). Furthermore, victims feel the psychological contract between themselves and the organization has been violated, leading to feelings of frustration and dejection (Buono, 2003). Due to layoffs, victims feel demoralized (Muchinsky, 2003). Other research has indicated victims suffered psychosomatic symptoms as a result of the layoff. Symptoms include headaches, vomiting and stomach aches. Other victims responded by returning to school to increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994; Muchinsky, 2003; Schlenker & Gutek, 1987). Even though victims become re-employed, they are often not committed to the organization and are cynical of initiatives by the management in the new organization (Douglas, Skarlicki, & Brian, 2003; Mir, Mir, & Joseph, 2002; Waneber, Bunce, & Gavin, 1999).

Similarly, survivors also have a problem with low morale and guilt, and feel insecure about their jobs, especially if they had the same qualifications as the victims (Brockner et al., 1986; Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt, & O'Malley, 1987). Survivors respond by distancing themselves from the organization, which affects their loyalty as well as organizational citizenship behaviors (Brockner et al., 1987; Noer, 1998; Palmer et al., 1997). The threat of a future layoff and the self-esteem of survivors influence their response to the layoff process. If survivors perceive that a layoff is eminent, they are

likely to be anxious, insecure about their jobs, and go through the motions at work with low morale. For some survivors, the layoff can affect their locus of control; where they no longer believe they can control their circumstances. *Locus of control* refers to the belief that an individual's outcomes are based on internal or external factors. In a layoff situation, the locus of control of some survivors shift from internal to external; thus, they attribute their loss to the management (Brockner et al., 1993; Noer, 1998; Rotter, 1966; Shah, 2000). A study by Brockner, Grover, O'Malley, Redd and Glynn (1993) found that survivors with low self-esteem were committed to their jobs, but were less committed to the organization when the layoff threat was high. Survivors with low self-esteem were more concerned with keeping their jobs than attaining organizational objectives.

Layoffs have been found to sever the social networks within the organization. These social networks provide support to survivors within the organization (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994). When these networks are destroyed, survivors feel they were treated unjustly and become insecure about their jobs (Shah, 2000). Since the old networks are destroyed, survivors need to create new social networks, which takes time, and survivors feel alienated from the organization, and any opportunities for growth within the organization.

Though layoffs are done to increase productivity and efficiency, they are stressful for those remaining after the layoff. Survivors in the organization have to deal with a heavier work load. They respond by being tardy, less involved in their jobs, and resort to increased absenteeism (Brockner et al., 1993; Golnaz, 1996). These reactions negatively affect employee attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Allen,

Freeman, Russell, Reizenstein, & Rentz, 2001). As a result of layoffs, survivors seek ways to adapt to their new environment. They adapt by seeking information through formal and informal channels. The formal channels include memos and meetings, while informal avenues can include rumor mongering and articles in newspapers (Noer, 1998; Shah, 2000).

Due to the negative impact of layoffs on victims and survivors, the U.S. Government has implemented some initiatives to buffer these harmful effects. Federal revenue provides assistance to communities where large-scale layoffs have been implemented. Other government interventions in the U.S. are provided through Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), or the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which are geared toward victims. The goal of JTPA is to provide victims with the training and finances needed for new employment (Bennet, Martin, Bies, & Brockner, 1995; Brockner et al., 1994; Fledman, 2003).

Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) is an act that was passed in Congress in 1988. The purpose was to provide potential victims of layoffs ample time to prepare for the transition between their current job and their future job. The WARN act requires the employer to notify the employees who will be laid off 60 days before their termination date. The employers are also required to inform them that employment assistance will be provided. After the employer notifies the affected employees, the state-rapid-response-dislocated workers unit coordinates efforts with the employer. This unit provides information on new jobs, as well as job search and placement assistance. However, the WARN act is only applicable to private and quasi-

public organizations with more than 100 full-time employees who may layoff at least 50 employees at a single employment site (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007).

As indicated, layoffs disrupt employment among victims and survivors (Barling, Dupre, & Hepburn, 1998). Employment is essential in providing structure, income, identity, shared goals, social, and psychological status for the employee (Schlenker & Gutek, 1987; Winefeild et al., 1991). Thus, the loss of employment affects the individual and alters their social and economic standing. This change induces stress and negative attitudes toward organizations (Parkes, 1990).

Stress usually occurs when an individual is faced with a new threatening situation and his/her coping resources are insufficient (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Based on this premise, layoffs are stressful to the individuals who find the layoff threatening and perceive they have inadequate coping resources. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), individuals differ in the manner in which they respond to stressful situations. They have different perceptions and interpretations. The level of stress is determined by the individual's assessment of the situation. Based on his/her assessment, the individual copes with the situation by seeking to solve the problem or remain in denial (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Thus, individuals face the same situation (layoffs), yet have different levels of stress (Houston, 1972).

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model was tested in Gowan, Riordon and Gatewood's (1999) study, which focused on the coping strategies of victims in a layoff setting. The study was conducted among 202 participants who had lost their jobs at an eastern airline company. The data was collected at two points; the first was four months

after the airline closed down, and the other was six months after the first survey. The results of the study showed that if victims had more coping resources during the layoff, it enabled victims to deal with the lay off positively. Victims in the study used three types of coping strategies. The first strategy was to focus on the problem of unemployment and look for employment. Victims who had financial obligations with no alternative income implemented the first strategy; these victims actively looked for another job. The second approach was emotion focused; individuals who took this approach responded by denial and distanced themselves from the layoff situation. Individuals who thought their job was in high demand in other organizations took the second approach. The third strategy was focused on non-work activities that made the victim feel better; drinking excessively, reading, going to church, or engaging in community service (Gowan et al., 1999), thus providing support to Lazarus and Folkman's model of coping with stress. Other factors that may contribute to different responses were cultural differences, an individual's history, social status, and locus of control (Houston, 1972; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

However, negative reactions do not always accompany layoffs or downsizing. Survivors may have the opportunity to pursue new career paths that will enrich their lives. Clear communication of these possibilities increases survivor perceptions of fairness and is unlikely to affect their organizational commitment (Brockner et al., 1987; Shah, 2000). In addition, layoffs may benefit organizations where they renew themselves and develop flatter structures, thereby increasing their ability to compete (Buono, 2003).

Managing Layoffs Effectively

The process of downsizing is a double-edged sword, and like a scalpel in the hand of a surgeon, the executives behind the process should possess the skills and knowledge required to perform the operation competently (Cameron et al., 1991). An early study by Brockner et al. (1987) indicated that open communication with victims prior to the layoff, increased survivors' perceptions of fairness. Senior management needs to communicate with employees clearly and adequately prior to the layoff, as well as after the layoff (Brockner et al., 1994; Noer, 1998).

The process of downsizing affects the daily functioning of the organization; therefore, management should clearly communicate the direction of the organization in the short-term and long-term. The communication should be formal as well as informal (Noer, 1998). Formal communications include memos and letters from the CEO of the organization, and informal communications include the company grapevine (Mansuor-Cole & Scott, 1998). Communications should also be continuous during each phase (Brockner et al., 1994; Cameron et al., 1991; Noer, 1998; Shah, 2000).

Managerial communication is essential and has been proposed to be a predictor of employee trust and commitment to the organization (Gopinath & Becker, 2000). In addition, open and honest communication by management increased employees' perceptions of procedural justice, trust, and commitment (Noer, 1993; Noer, 1998). Procedural justice is concerned with fairness in decision making and it has three attributes (Greenberg, 1990). The first attribute of procedural justice is that decisions should have formal procedures. Secondly, the decision should clearly be explained to

those affected. Thirdly, interpersonal treatment should be outlined in the decision making process.

The importance of open, honest communication among victims and survivors was also supported in a field study by Brockner et al. (1994). The first study was conducted among victims of a layoff. The 218 respondents were drawn from a group of registrants who were applying for unemployment benefits from the South Central United States. The victims of the layoff had been out of work for 4.5 months on average. The second study was conducted on 150 survivors, who worked as full-time employees at a financial service organization. The organization had laid off employees seven months prior to the study. The findings indicated that when procedural justice was low the victims and survivors had negative reactions; however, when the procedural justice was high the survivors and victims had less negative responses.

Further evidence from research indicates victims of a layoff should be treated humanely during the layoff (Brockner et al., 1987; Brockner et al., 1994; Cameron et al., 1991; Tang & Fuller, 1995). Management should also consider the timing of the layoff information and give employees advance notice and counseling when possible, in order to enable them to make necessary arrangements (Brockner et al., 1987; Brockner et al., 1994; Cameron et al., 1991). The organization should also provide placement services to the employees.

Contrary to the findings of fairness in layoffs, Bennet et al. (1995) in a longitudinal study, found treating the victims fairly negatively influenced the victim's tendency to search for new employment. The sample size in this study of 49 participants

included a majority of women, a different dynamic than earlier studies. It should be noted the sample was from one unit of an organization and the findings may not reflect the impact of fairness of victims in other industries.

Differences in responses to layoffs are not only evident in victims, but also among survivors. According to Armstrong-Stassen (1994), survivors with higher perceived supervisor support were more committed to the organization; they were also high performers and were less likely to leave the organization. The findings by Armstrong-Stassen (1994) were based on a study of blue-collar employees, which provided evidence of individual differences in response to layoffs.

Management should also be aware that contrary to the premise of downsizing as an improvement mechanism, there is little evidence of significant improvement after the process, and results vary from one industry to another (Cascio et al., 1997). Thus, layoffs in the downsizing process should be tailored to the organization's needs in order to be effective (Cameron et al., 1991; Tang & Fuller, 1995).

Cameron et al. (1991) suggested some "best practices" in downsizing derived from an analysis of 30 organizations. The first suggestion was senior management and subordinates should implement downsizing; such that downsizing is planned and carried out by management and subordinates within the organization. The rationale behind this approach was that both perspectives are essential in increasing efficiency and reducing redundancy in the organization. This approach enabled employees to understand the need for downsizing, and created an ideal environment for innovation because all members of the organization were involved in implementing the downsizing.

The second suggestion was that downsizing should be done across the board to enable the organizations to adopt new strategies in order to survive. In this approach, the organization strives to maintain valuable jobs and tasks. Like a surgeon who is aware of the potential risks of certain surgical procedures, senior management should be aware of the risks of the layoff process such as decreased innovation, low morale, and low commitment (Cameron et al., 1991; Palmer et al., 1997; Tang & Fuller, 1995). Management within the organization should plan and “count the cost” before implementing a layoff, because it can be expensive if not managed strategically (Palmer et al., 1997). Research suggests management should communicate with employees about layoffs through each phase (Mansuor-Cole & Scott, 1998; Wanberg et al., 1999). The effects of layoffs on employees may take time and the uncertainty among employees may linger after the layoff. Therefore, management should clearly define roles, direction and the changes affecting those who remain (Allen et al., 2001).

Mansuor-Cole and Scott (1998) conducted a 133 participant longitudinal study in a research and development facility of an industrial corporation. This facility had never conducted any form of reorganization. It had been a profitable organization but was undergoing changes due to foreign competition. As a result, the organization had to upgrade their technology and make structural changes that would be implemented over a number of years. In this case, some of the employees heard about the layoff through their supervisors, some heard about it as a rumor from employees and others found out through the formal announcement in the mail from the CEO. During the first survey, 10

employees opted for early retirement, 21 were involuntarily relocated to other divisions, and 45 were laid off.

Employee perceptions of fairness were found to be higher when the management communicated to the employees rather than when the layoff information was communicated through their colleagues or media (Mansuor-Cole & Scott, 1998). In addition, when employees were given the opportunity to voice their concerns, their perceptions of fairness increased (Wanberg et al., 1999).

Management should also be aware of the impact of layoffs on non-employees or potential employees. Communication is not only important for those directly affected by the layoff, but also non-employees (Skarlicki et al., 1998). Skarlicki et al. found perceptions of non-employees were determined by the manner in which the layoff information was communicated, and the degree to which they empathized with the victims. In addition, the effects of layoffs not only affect victims and survivors, but also other members of the public who are indirectly affected by the process. For example, victim family members lose income, which affects their financial decisions. Thus, management should plan to regain the trust of some customers and other non-employees after the layoff (Barling et al., 1998; Skarlicki et al., 1998).

Furthermore, interventions such as placement services and benefits may help in alleviating the stress associated with layoffs. Other interventions like stress management training and relaxation methods may be preventative or remedial (Van der Klink, Blonk, & Schene, 2001). The effectiveness of interventions will be mediated by individual interpretations of the situation and the factors causing the stress. Individuals respond

differently to stressful circumstances (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); the interventions will be relevant if they are appealing to the individual employee.

Positive employee attitudes have been shown to influence organizational performance (Fulmer, Gerhart, & Scott, 2003). Fulmer et al. found that positive employee organizational relationships were a characteristic of 100 of the best performing companies based on a list from *Fortune* magazine. They conducted an employee attitude survey on randomly selected employees from 161 organizations to measure whether employee satisfaction led to better financial performance in terms of return on assets (ROA) and equity value. The findings suggested organizations whose employees had positive work attitudes performed better than their counterparts. Thus, one may infer that positive attitudes are essential for organization performance. Another study by McElroy, Morrow, and Rude (2001) found layoffs, not only affect the individual, but also organization performance. Therefore, management should strive to maintain positive work attitudes during the layoff to increase their performance.

Non-employees and Layoffs

As mentioned earlier, layoffs have a ripple effect and can be stressful to survivors as well as some non-employees. Apart from the children of victims or survivors, non-employees include customers, potential employees, and members of the public who hear about the layoff from friends, family, and media (Armstrong-Stassen, 1994; Barling, et al., 1998; Brockner et al., 1988; Muchinsky, 2003; Schlenker & Gutek, 1987).

Downsizing affects victims, survivors, their families, and the community. In cases where a victim is the sole breadwinner, the family loses income, thus altering their standards of

living. If children are old enough to understand the implications of the layoffs, they develop negative attitudes toward work and have a negative work ethic (Skarlicki et al., 1998). In addition, when mass layoffs take place in a community, the level of unemployment increases and the community tax revenues are reduced. Friends of victims are not able to share recreational activities due to the loss of income. However, the responses of the family and friends may vary due to individual differences. Thus, some of the spouses and older children respond by actively seeking employment (Fledman, 2003).

One rationale behind the effect of downsizing can be illustrated by the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Bandura suggested individuals repeat behavior that has favorable consequences. However, consequences are not limited to those experienced by the individual alone, but also those experienced by others. This method of learning by observing others outcomes is referred to as vicarious reinforcement. If the consequences were appealing to the individual, he/she would model the behavior. If the consequences do not appeal to the individual, he/she would refrain from the behavior.

Based on social learning theory, one could assert that survivors and potential employees get vicariously reinforced through observing the consequences of layoffs. Potential employees may react negatively or positively toward the organizations that conducted layoffs depending on their perception of the layoff situation. However, human behavior is complex and potential employee responses to layoffs cannot be wholly attributed to vicarious reinforcement (Houston, 1972). Other factors such as the nature of the relationship with the victims, the benefits for the individual (victims or survivors), individual loss, career advancement opportunities, learned helplessness, employee

involvement in decision making, and dire economic conditions could influence the perceptions of potential employees (Barling et al., 1998; Brockner et al., 1988; Mansuor-Cole & Scott, 1998; Skarlicki et al., 1998).

The results of one study showed the level of satisfaction among employed parents (survivors or victims) affected their children's (non-employees) attitudes toward work (Barling et al., 1998). Barling et al. (1998) conducted a study on students and their parents. There were more fathers who experienced layoffs compared to mothers $t(133) = 2.27 < .05$, but there were no significant difference in the self-reported levels of job insecurity $t(133) = -1.01 p > .05$. The results showed the manner in which the layoffs were carried out and job insecurity affected their children's work beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, the researchers also found female students had stronger work beliefs than male students, and male students identified more with their fathers than female students. When the student highly identified with the father, humanistic beliefs had a negative relationship with perceptions of the father's job insecurity. However, it was not statistically significant when the identification was low. Thus, students who identified more with their fathers were more likely to have negative work beliefs. After late adolescence, children's attitudes are fairly stable. Youth, in such situations, may develop negative work beliefs which may be difficult to change.

Another study by Skarlicki et al. (1998) examined the perceptions of fairness among third parties; customers, potential employees, and members of the public. Participants consisted of 123 psychology students from a Canadian university; 68% of the participants were women and 43% of the participants had experienced a layoff. The

participants were given an article on layoff procedures, they were then randomly assigned to two conditions: voice condition (voice, no voice) and communication condition (explanation, no explanation). The ANOVA results showed that voice and communication manipulations predicted fairness, $F(1,117) = 26.54, p < .01$ and $F(1,117) = 4.00, p < .05$. More ANOVA results showed that neither the voice nor the communication manipulations predicted victim derogation $F(1,117) = .60$ and $F(.1,117) = .02, p > .05$ respectively. The results indicated there was a significant relationship between giving the victims a voice and procedural justice in situations of high and low victim derogation. They also found that high derogation of the victim was evident in participants who viewed themselves as customers more so than those who viewed themselves as potential employees. Thus, fairness of the process and identification with the victims influenced the observer's perceptions of justice. Both studies indicated that non-employees respond differently to the layoff process. The responses of the non-employees were based on the information they had on the layoff as well as their perception of the layoff situation.

Vocational Choice

The previous section has examined the current organization environment in which layoffs are eminent. It has also indicated that individual differences impact how individuals respond to layoffs. This section examines locus of control, work values, and vocational choice.

Sauermann (2005) stated that vocational choice is a complex process; it occurs over a long period of time, and involves choosing a job and career. This process begins at

an early age when children announce their aspirations of becoming a doctor or a nurse. It is further refined over the years as individuals examine their skills, interests and preferences (Holland, 1959). Although vocational choice is based on personal preferences, it has some constraints such as demographic and economic factors that may influence how people make their choices (Muchinsky, 1999; Sauermann, 2005). Demographic factors may include height and age, which may influence one's suitability for a career. For example, some careers like sumo wrestling may require the wrestlers to be a certain height and weight to qualify for the career. Factors like the economic state of the region and its history may also influence the types of jobs that are available in that area (Muchinsky, 1999). In addition, if the employment rate is low, job seekers have limited options and choose any available job. Job seekers with more financial obligations are also likely to take any available job (Judge & Bretz, 1992).

The assumption of the *attraction-selection-attrition* (ASA) framework is that people in the organization, not its structures, determine the organizational behavior. Schneider's (1987) ASA framework proposes that people are first attracted to organizations, they are selected to join the organization, if they find that they do not fit in the environment, they may leave the organization (attrition). The selection is not only limited to the individual seeking the job, but organizations also uses selection procedures to select people with particular competencies that are consistent with their organization. For instance, if YMCA hires an accountant and a social worker, both candidates should have similar competencies even though their job descriptions are different (Schneider, 1987).

Schneider (1987) also asserts people are not separate from the environment; in fact, they create it, select it, and remain in it. Thus, people who are similar will be attracted, not only to similar jobs, but also similar organizations. On the basis of this assumption, one can infer that individual differences impact how people are drawn to different organizations or careers. Kristof (1996) agreed with this line of thought and proposed attractiveness of the organization as a prerequisite to choosing a job or organization.

One theory that has made substantial contributions to this area is Holland's theory of vocational choice (Muchinsky, 1999). Holland's theory is drawn from ecology, and it stipulates that individuals are drawn to different organization or career environments. Individuals base their choice on their hierarchy of preferences, interests, and beliefs (Holland, 1959). According to Holland there are six major occupational environments: (a) motoristic environment, (b) intellectual environment, (c) supportive environment, (d) conformist environment, (e) persuasive environment, and (f) aesthetic environment. The motoristic environment is for individuals who enjoy activities requiring physical strength or motor coordination. Occupations classified under this environment are farming, truck driving, machine operators, and carpenters. The intellectual environment has occupations such as: anthropologists, mathematicians, and biologists. A supportive environment is for individuals who enjoy teaching and therapy, and those who possess interpersonal skills. The occupations under this environment are teaching, vocational workers, and social workers. On the other hand, conformist environment was proposed for individuals who prefer structure. Occupations included are bank tellers, secretaries,

book-keepers, and clerks. Alternatively, the persuasive environment was for salesmen, politicians, business executives, and promoters. The last environment was the aesthetics environment, which consists of musicians, artists, and poets (Holland, 1959).

Values and Vocational Choice

Before delving any further into organization attraction and its impact on vocational choice, it would be essential to first state the factors that make an organization attractive. Schneider (1987) found organizations chose individuals whose values are congruent with the entity's values, and individuals choose organizations whose values are similar to their personal values. Judge and Bretz (1992) conducted a pilot study among 67 students from two different universities to find out the most important factors students used in choosing a job. They found the most influential factors were salary level, opportunity for advancement, geographical location, type of work, and type of organization. Among those five factors the most important factors for the students were salary level, opportunity for advancement, and type of work. They also found individuals were drawn to organizations that shared their values. For instance, job seekers who were extroverts were drawn to organizations that were team oriented, since extroverts prefer environments with high levels of social interaction. Ravlin and Meglino (1987) also found that personal beliefs and preferences might influence the job seeker's perception of organizational attractiveness.

Furthermore, in a study by Saks and Ashforth (1997), authors found that applicants considered fit, in terms of similarity of values, as a major factor in choosing to work for an organization. Similarly, Ravlin and Meglino (1987) found that values of an

organization impact the attractiveness of the organization, specifically, organizations practicing work values like need for achievement, concern for others, honesty, and fairness. Dose (1997) also found work values influence the decisions people make about their careers. Other factors like pay and opportunities for advancement also made an organization attractive to job seekers. Organizational attraction has been found to significantly correlate with decisions to accept job offers (Judge & Cable, 1997).

Holland (1959) suggested job seekers were more attracted to organizations based on job seeker preferences. As people acquire more information about an organization, they become aware of organization values and are able to determine whether or not they fit into the organization. Some of the ways people get to know the values of an organization are through family members who work for the organizations (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Loughlin & Barling, 2001), the recruiting process, the media, and friends (Skarlicki et al., 1998).

Values have been found to be essential in determining the job seeker's assessment of *fit* and the organization traits they find attractive, even though decision making in the selection process is based on perceived fit rather than actual fit. Fit is important because there is evidence of a positive relationship between all types of person-organization fit and individual preferences for an organization (Kristof, 1996).

According to Ravlin and Meglino (1987) there is need for more research to be done in this area, to find out more about the role of values in the decision making process among individuals. Job seekers choose jobs based on a variety of criteria, and it would be essential to determine the impact of values in their decision making. In Judge and Bretz's

study (1992), they found individuals sought jobs in work environments that shared their personal values. Results showed value congruence as a key factor predicting job choice. However, the authors noted there was need for more research in this area among different samples to determine the influence of work values.

Values and Organizational Fit

Some of the literature on vocational choice has mentioned person-organization fit, values, and work values; before going any further, it would be necessary to first define these terms. Kristof (1996) defined *fit* as the “compatibility between individuals and organization” (p. 3). *Supplementary fit* occurs when a person possesses characteristics which are similar to other individuals in the environment. *Complementary fit* is concerned with characteristics an individual adds to the environment. The person joining the organization has values, goals, and attitudes that add value to the organization. The organizational characteristics included values, goals, and norms. Person-organization fit is said to occur when there is compatibility between the person and the organization. It also occurs when an organization and its employees share similar fundamental characteristics (Kristof, 1996).

Furnham (2001) asserted that fit is not fixed because individuals and organizations change. Organizations and jobs continue to evolve due to market forces, technology, and customer demands. However, fit is still important because it is key in retaining a work force with flexibility and organizational commitment, which are essential to meet competitive challenges. Saks and Ashforth (2002) suggested fit was essential in markets where the unemployment rate is relatively low.

Values and Work Values

Values are one of the core components of fit (Kristof, 1996) and have been shown to impact individual choices. Rokeach (1968) defined values as long-term beliefs on whether particular behaviors or states of existence are preferable. They are also standards determining attitudes, evaluations, and a comparison of one's self and others. Values are specific preferences for certain behavior and end states of existence. O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) considered values to be internal normative beliefs determining behavior. They also enable one to diagnose his/her self-worth, worldview, and are key elements in our interaction with others (Dose, 1997).

According to Rokeach (1968) there are two kinds of values: (a) terminal values and (b) instrumental values. Instrumental values include aspects like courage, responsibility, independence, honesty, and ambition. Terminal values have a more philosophical component that includes inner harmony, world peace, and equality. Rokeach further stated values were organized in a hierarchy on the basis of importance, and there is a terminal hierarchy and an instrumental hierarchy. These hierarchies enable individuals to make a choice when faced with a decision to choose between two values. When an individual is faced with this decision, incongruence can occur where there is a conflict between the individual's values. The personal value system enables one to resolve conflict between two modes of behavior.

Another attribute of values is that they can change, and in the organizational setting this change occurs when the organization has learned new ways of resolving problems. This new way may require the organization to adopt new values in order to

survive (Schien, 1983). In individuals, values formed through experience tend to be stronger and more resistant to change. According to Dose and Kilomski (1999), most values develop through multiple long-term experiences, or influences stemming from culture, society, or personality. They found that the individual values based on society norms were easier to change.

Ravlin and Meglino's (1987) study was conducted to determine the impact of values on decision making. Surveys were administered to 103 undergraduate students who completed them during three different work sessions. The surveys were used to determine how values impacted the choices of the students. The results of the study indicated values were part of the criteria used by individuals to make decisions.

As mentioned earlier, values have an impact on selection, and they also influence interpretation of external stimuli. They have been found to influence behavioral choices in organizations (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987) and are key aspects of the work experience (George & Jones, 1997). According to Ravlin and Meglino, the impact of values is moderated by situational factors, such as the prevalent norms and situational uncertainty within an organization, which have an impact on the decisions made within the organization. Also, leaders play a major role in determining and classifying values. They establish policies to ensure new employees uphold the values of the organization (Dose, 1997; Schein, 1983). Ravlin and Meglino stated that individuals learn these values through socialization efforts such as employee orientation as well as their interactions with other employees in the organization.

According to Meglino, Ravlin, and Adkins (1989) one of the main advantages of having similar values among members of an organization is that similarity in values enhances the cognitive process. Similarities are assumed to positively affect coordination, satisfaction, and commitment. Since values are fairly stable, then the congruence between members of the organization should remain the same over a long period of time (Meglino et al., 1989). Though similar values may foster internal integration, they may not necessarily enhance the organizations ability to adapt externally.

Work values on the other hand, consist of a narrower domain of values (Dose, 1999), and the most prominent work values are need for achievement, concern for others, honesty, and fairness (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). Judge and Bretz (1992) defined need for achievement as the willingness to work hard or learn new skills, take additional responsibilities, and sacrifice personal gratification. Concern for others was depicted as caring for others; a compassionate demeanor, and helping and encouraging others. Judge and Bretz stated honesty was characterized by refusal to mislead others, while fairness was concerned with impartiality and considering different view points before acting.

According to Dose (1997), work values were based on personal morals or social consensus. The moral component has to do with right or wrong, while the social component has to do with importance or desirability of a value. Dose continued to state that conflict could occur between moral values and socially desirable values. This conflict takes place in instances such as whistle blowing, where personal values override social values. Based on this, one can assume that personal values in some individuals are unlikely to be affected by socialization efforts. Judge and Bretz (1992) found that need

for achievement, concern for others, and fairness predicted offer acceptance. This was the case when the organization's values matched the primary value orientation of the individual. Work values are also very important to the organization because they determine the kind of work environments preferred and the job seeker decision making (Dose, 1997; Judge & Bretz, 1992).

Locus of Control

As suggested by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), individuals interpret the same situation differently, therefore, individual differences in perceptions play a role in decision making amidst stressful situations such as layoffs. One way of understanding individual differences is through the identification of one's locus of control. Rotter (1966) developed the concept of locus of control, which is a construct designed to assess a person's perceived control over his or her fate. This construct is based on the social learning theory and work by James Phares on internal and external attitudes (Leftcourt, 1981).

Locus of control consists of two components: internal and external. Internal locus of control is the belief that an individual's own actions determine their outcomes. External locus of control refers to the belief that one's actions are independent of their outcomes and that other external factors such as other people or chance are more significant determinants (Rotter, 1966). Individuals who have a higher internal locus of control perceive situations differently from those have higher external locus of control. People with an internal locus of control are more likely to believe they can control their environments and outcomes. Therefore, in settings where an internal locus improves their

performance they are likely to become more internal (Anderson, 1977). In addition, if an internal perceives that another organization has more attractive career opportunities they are more likely to act on their turnover intentions (Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005). Organ and Greene (1974) found that people with an internal locus of control are also more likely to respond to the slightest reinforcement and maximize the opportunity. In addition, people with an internal locus of control tend to be more focused and are less likely to be persuaded to change their minds (Avtigis, 1998; Organ, 1975). They would also seek more information and engage in career planning, since they believe their fate lies in their hands.

On the other hand, individuals with higher external locus of control have been found to be indecisive and easily persuaded (Avtigis, 1998; Trice, Haire, & Elliott, 1989). They are also less likely to take personal responsibility and are more prone to allow external forces to determine their decisions (Trevino, 1986). Individuals with higher external locus of control have been found to be passive and are less likely to act on their turnover intentions. They may also have lower expectations of their ability to control events (Allen et al., 2005).

A study by Janssen and Carton (1999) indicated that students with an internal locus of control were less likely to procrastinate than students with an external locus of control. However, the findings were based on a cross-sectional design, which is not sufficient to determine causality. A more recent study by Lease (2004) focused on the effect of locus of control in career decisions. The sample consisted of 433 students from eight different colleges and universities; four were community colleges, three private

universities, and a state university. The students completed two instruments: the Career Decision Making Difficulties Questionnaire and the Career Locus of Control Scale. The findings suggested external locus of control was a predictor of career choices among minority students.

Though people with an internal locus of control have been found to take personal responsibility for their actions, when they fail, they blame themselves, and this lowers their self-esteem. People with an internal locus of control find it difficult to deal with unexpected events, while people with an external locus of control would respond better to failure and unexpected events (Furnham & Steele, 1993). People with an external locus of control have been found to be more altruistic because they may see others as victims of their circumstances, while people with an internal locus of control may not be willing to help since the problem was a result of the individuals' actions. Furnham and Steele (1993) said people with an internal locus of control were likely to be more selfish and individualistic, while people with an external locus of control may have more collectivist attributes.

It should be noted that individuals vary in their degree of external or internal locus of control (Allen et al., 2005). This can be attributed to the fact the individuals' expectation regarding their ability or their environment is not fixed and may be influenced by situational factors. Moreover, Furnham and Steele (1993) suggested that an individual might be an internal in one area and an external in a different area. Some of the aspects that may influence one's locus of control include novelty, past experience, and ambiguity. For example, layoffs have been shown to shift locus of control of some

survivors from internal to external (Brockner et al., 1993), where after the layoff, the survivor may attribute his/her work outcomes to the management of the organization. Similarly, Rotter (1966) suggested situational factors and the value of the outcome influence locus of control. If a situation is novel or ambiguous, the individual has no frame of reference to base his/her belief (Rotter, 1975). On the other hand, if the individual does not value an outcome then one cannot predict his/her behavior.

Based on findings of locus of control, (see Avtigis, 1998; Organ, 1975; Organ & Greene, 1974; Trevino, 1986; Trice et al., 1989; Spector, 1988) there has been an erroneous assumption that internal locus of control is positive while external locus of control is negative (Furnham & Steele, 1993; Rotter, 1975). Rotter (1975) stated the locus of control construct was developed as a result of observations of behavior and was not focused on classifying behavior as good or bad. On the contrary, it was focused on situational factors and individual differences. Rotter observed that individuals varied in their perceptions of the impact of outcomes on their behavior. As a result of these observations, Rotter (1966) concluded people with an external locus of control would perceive their behavior did not influence the outcomes, while people with an internal locus of control believed they could determine outcomes.

Although locus of control has contributed to a better understanding of individual differences, Rotter's scale has been criticized for over-simplifying behavior, which is a complex variable (Duffy, Shiflett, & Downy, 1977; Houston, 1972; Leftcourt, 1981; Levenson, 1981), but Rotter (1966) indicated in the study that locus of control was not a variable that could be generalized to all situations. In a later article, Rotter (1975)

suggested the general locus of control scale was designed to explore a wide range of behaviors and not to predict specific behavior. Rotter suggested that to predict specific behavior, one would need to develop narrower measures.

Many of the latter scales of locus of control were developed to predict specific behavior, such as health, career choices (Lease, 2004; Trice et al., 1989) and work (Leftcourt, 1981; Spector, 1988). Levenson (1981) suggested additional components to measure locus of control such as (P) powerful others and (C) chance, would determine internal or external locus of control. Following Rotter's (1975) suggestion of developing narrow measures to determine specific behavior, Trice et al. (1989) developed a career locus of control scale that could be used to predict career planning. Trice et al. stated locus of control was found to be an appropriate variable in career development.

Study Goals and Design

Previous studies have examined victims, survivors, and third parties of the layoff process. Most of the research emphasized survivors and victims. Very little is known about the impact of layoffs on the career choices of third parties (Skarlicki et al., 1998). In this study, the group of third party individuals studied were potential employees, more specifically, potential employees who were on the verge of completing their undergraduate or graduate degree. The study sought to explore the impact of work values and locus of control on vocational choice in today's layoff environment.

One of the goals of this study was to replicate previous research on the impact of values on decision making and to examine the impact of layoffs on this decision making process. In fact, Meglino et al., (1989) called for more research on the impact of values

on decision making. Judge and Cable (1997) stated that there was need for more research on the job seeker's perspective or preferences for organizational culture. This study focused on one core aspect of culture: values, and how these impact vocational choice.

Downsizing was included because it is part of today's work landscape.

Muchinsky (1999) considered downsizing to be the greatest change in today's work environment. These changes have influenced the relationship between organizations and employees, thus, there is an increased need for workers to be flexible, apt to learn, and skilled. According to Friedman (1999), these are the kind of workers who would be very marketable in this age of globalization.

Conducting research on the impact of values and locus of control in vocational choice may provide more insight from the job seeker perspective. This information will be useful to organizations to provide them with more information on how to make their organization more attractive in this era of downsizing. Since hiring new graduates from a university is an expensive venture due to training costs (Rynes, Orlicy, & Bretz, 1997), it would be in the best interest of organizations to recruit employees who are a good fit for their organization. The employees who fit are likely to be more committed to the organization (Kristof, 1996).

This study sought to investigate whether work values and locus of control influence vocational choice, and to see whether there are any similarities to previous studies done in the area of values and vocational choice (see Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). The perceptions of non-employees have not been the focus of most literature on layoffs, little is known about the impact of locus of control and work values

on vocational choice. This study sought to provide more information as well as trigger more research in this area (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987).

Key Terms In the Study

Participants were grouped into the following categories:

Achievement (I): Individuals who have an internal locus of control and prioritize need for achievement higher than fairness or concern for others.

Achievement (E): Individuals who have an external locus of control and prioritize need for achievement higher than fairness or concern for others.

Fairness (I): Individuals who have an internal locus of control and prioritize fairness higher than need for achievement or concern for others.

Fairness (E): Individuals who have an external locus of control and prioritize fairness higher than need for achievement or concern for others.

Concern (I): Individuals who have an internal locus of control and prioritize concern for others higher than need for achievement or fairness.

Concern (E): Individuals who have an external locus of control and prioritize concern for others more than need for achievement or fairness.

Financial obligations (S): The subjective perspective of financial obligations. This is based on the participants' perception of their financial need.

Financial obligations (O): The objective perspective of financial obligations. This is based on the financial responsibilities that can be documented by participants. (e.g., rent, school loans, or car payments).

Hypotheses

Collins and Stevens (2002) found job seekers' beliefs about an organization were formed through four recruiting activities: (a) publicity, (b) sponsorship, (c) word of mouth endorsements, and (d) advertising. Since people with an internal locus of control were more likely to search for information about an organization, they would be aware of these recruiting activities and take action (Allen et al., 2005; Rotter, 1966). According to Allen et al. and Rotter, individuals who scored higher in external locus of control were less likely to find out information about an organization, and may only know about it by chance. In fact, Trice et al. (1989) found that by the time most people with an external locus of control were graduating, they had not applied for jobs, and they believed they would succeed by chance.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference between people with an internal locus of control and people with an external locus of control in the effort to seek information on an organization's values.

According to Judge and Bretz (1992) of the four work values, only three were found to be predictors of job offer acceptance. Therefore, this study focused on the three values, which were: (a) fairness, (b) concern for others, and (c) need for achievement. They also found when an individual was more aware of the values held by an organization, this factor influenced his/her vocational choice. Since individuals who scored higher on internal locus of control were more likely to plan their careers (Allen et al., 2005), they were also more likely to learn about the values of an organization. This information has been shown to influence their vocational choice (Judge & Bretz, 1992).

Hypothesis 2: Individuals in the *fairness (I)* and *fairness (E)* group are significantly more likely to seek to know whether an organization conducted layoffs fairly, as compared to all other individuals in all the other groups (*achievement (I)*, *achievement (E)*, *concern (I)*, and *concern (E)*).

As mentioned earlier, one of the work values is fairness. Fairness in this study referred to how the organization handled its employees in a layoff situation. Fairness also referred to how much the organization considered the impact of the layoff decision before acting (Judge & Bretz, 1992). Research has indicated that layoffs were considered to be fair when the layoff was openly and honestly communicated (Brockner et al., 1987; Brockner et al., 1994). Mansour-Cole and Scott (1998) also discovered that procedural justice was found to be higher when communication came through a manager rather than through other employees. Layoffs were also considered fair when employees are given the choice to voice their concerns. Therefore, layoffs would be considered fair if one or more of these factors are present.

Concern for others was demonstrated by caring for others, providing essential information, and resources to employees (Judge & Bretz, 1992). This would be demonstrated by the initiatives of the organization during the layoff process. If the organization followed the WARN procedures, they would have provided job placement and information on training. They would have given the layoff notice 60 days before the layoff (UDOL, 2007). In addition, an organization that values concern for others would treat victims humanely during the layoff process. Concern for others would be demonstrated by any or both of these factors.

The last value that was examined in this study is need for achievement. This is demonstrated by people exerting themselves to work harder, or learn new skills, or sacrifice to attain work objectives (Judge & Bretz, 1992).

Hypothesis 3: Individuals who were in the *concern (I)* and *concern (E)* groups will be significantly more likely than all the other groups (*fairness (E)*, *achievement (I)*, *achievement (E)*) to take a job offer at a company where layoffs have been conducted in a manner showing concern for the victims and survivors.

Hypothesis 4: The individuals in the *achievement (I)* and *achievement (E)*, groups will be significantly more likely to work for an organization that does not conduct layoffs fairly, if opportunities for advancement have been outlined by the company, compared to all other groups (*fairness (E)*, *achievement (I)*, *concern (I)*, and *concern (E)*).

One factor that has been found to influence how individuals may respond to a layoff situation is financial obligations. In fact, individuals who were laid off and have financial obligations have been found to seek employment after they learn about the layoff (Gowan et al., 1999). Even among job seekers, financial obligations have been found to influence vocational choice. If an individual had pressing financial obligations they were likely to seek any available job (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987).

Hypothesis 5a: There will be no significant difference between people with an internal locus of control and people with an external locus of control in vocational choice on the objective measures of financial obligations.

Hypothesis 5b: There will be no significant difference between people with an internal locus of control and people with an external locus of control in vocational choice on the subjective measures of financial obligations.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Introduction

This study was a cross-sectional study designed to explore the impact of work values, locus of control, and layoffs on vocational choice among graduate and undergraduates who intended to seek employment. An online and class survey was administered to participants.

Participants

One hundred and thirteen students participated; however, 33 surveys were excluded from the study because the students did not state whether they were in their final year. The goal was to recruit at least 200 participants; however, I was only able to get 90; 49 of the participants were undergraduate students and 41 were graduate students. All participants were in their last year of classes at a Midwestern regional university. The sample consisted of 42 male and 48 female participants from various departments. Only 66% of the participants said they intended to seek employment after graduation, 16.7 % were already employed, 11.1% planned to pursue further studies, while 2.2% said they planned to be self-employed, and the last 3.3% were undecided. Most of the participants had work experience; 28.9% had more than 8 years, 25.6% had 5 to 7 years, 26.7% had 2 to 4 years, and 18.9% less than one year of work experience.

These participants were recruited from the convenient sample and the random sample. The first 71 participants were recruited through the convenient sample and the remaining 19 participant were randomly selected. The participants from the convenient

sample filled in the paper surveys in class, while the random sample filled out online surveys. Both groups got an invitation to the study, which included a letter of consent and a consent form (see Appendix A).

Measures

The participants completed four instruments: a demographic survey, a values inventory, a career locus of control instrument, and a vocational choice survey.

Demographic data. The demographic survey (see Appendix B) collected information such as the gender of the participants, ethnicity, marital status, and work experience. The participants were asked whether they have worked for an organization that has laid off employees. They were asked if they would seek to be employed with a company after graduation. All the items in the demographic data were measured using a single question item.

Comparative emphasis scale. The Comparative Emphasis Scale was created by Ravlin and Meglino (1987) to measure work values. Twelve items from the comparative scale instrument (see Appendix C) were used to measure the three work values (see Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987): need for achievement, concern for others, and fairness. The comparative scale instrument has been found to have a reliability of 0.70 (Mcneeley & Meglino, 1994; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). The test-retest method was used to determine reliability, where the second test was administered four weeks after the first test (Mcneeley & Meglino, 1994). In this study, reliability was calculated using the Kuder Richardson method and was found to be 0.78 accurate. The instrument items contained statements where participants were asked to choose between two values. Forced choice

was used because it was found to control for social desirability (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). This two-point scale was used to determine the most prominent values among participants. The instructions required participants to indicate which statement should receive more emphasis, for example, “taking care of all loose ends on a job or project” versus “being impartial when dealing with others.”

The participants’ scores were put through the comparative emphasis scale rubric formulated by Ravlin and Meglino (1987). Each statement on the comparative emphasis scale represented a work value, for example, “being impartial when dealing with others” depicted fairness, and “taking care of all loose ends on a job or project” depicted need for achievement. If a participant chose statements depicting fairness more than any work value, then fairness was their prominent value. In some cases, participants chose two work values; where they picked fairness 5 times and need for achievement 5 times and concern for others three times. In such a case, the participant had two work values.

Career locus of control. The third instrument was the Career Locus of Control Scale (Lease, 2004; Trice et al., 1989), which was used to determine the degree to which the participants attributed their career outcomes to their own efforts or chance (see Appendix D). The Locus of Control instrument was created by Trice et al. to determine locus of control in career development. This instrument had a true and false format. Trice et al. used the test-retest method and found the Career Locus of Control had a reliability of 0.93. The tests were administered at a three week interval. However, when the reliability was determined by the Kuder Richardson method, the reliability was between 0.81 and 0.84 (Trice et al., 1989). The Career Locus of control Scale was also found to be valid

since Trice et al. reported it had a positive correlation with career exploration. In this study, the reliability was found to be 0.72, using the Kuder Richardson method. This instrument included statements, such as “I believe the right career will just come my way.” The participants were asked to indicate whether they believed the statement true or false. Trice et al. had a rating score showing the statements that would be picked by a person with an internal locus of control and external locus of control. The answers of participants were compared to Trice et al.’s rubric, The participants were divided into four groups depending on how they scored on the locus of control scale. The groups were high internal locus of control, low internal locus of control, high external locus of control, and low external locus of control.

Vocational choice. The survey consisted of statements regarding vocational choice. The reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.70, using the Kuder Richardson method. A five-point Likert scale was used in this survey. The respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements on vocational choice. This section consisted of eight questions that were formulated for the study. The survey included statements like “If I get a job offer at a company that has recently laid off employees (e.g., six months ago) I would be more concerned about the opportunities for advancement than how the employees were treated during the layoff.” The respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements (see Appendix E). The scoring of the vocational choice survey was done according to Crocker and Aligna (1986). “A respondents total score is the sum of the points associated with the responses given to each item.” (p. 80).

Procedure. The random sample consisted of participants contacted through the registrar's office. The names of students were randomly selected from a list from the office of the registrar. The researcher sent emails to the students. The email explained the purpose of the study, contained the consent form (see Appendix A) and the survey. The random sample consisted of a wider variety of participants thus reflecting the population of university seniors.

For the convenient sample, students who volunteered filled out surveys in class. To avoid having the participants fill in the surveys twice, the researcher conducted the convenient sample first and compared the names of the students who took the class survey to the names from the registrar's office. The researcher did not send the online surveys to students who completed the class surveys. All participants were in their final year and most were seeking employment. Any information collected from the participants was kept confidential in keeping with the APA ethical standards of research.

After the participants agreed to take part in the study, they were required to fill in the consent form. In addition, the participants were requested to complete four instruments. These instruments included: A Demographic Data survey, the Comparative Emphasis Scale, Career Locus of Control Scale, and Vocational Choice survey. Furthermore, participants in the study had a chance to win \$100. The participants who wished to enter the drawing were requested to provide address information in order for the researcher to send the \$100. The researcher randomly picked one of the names of the participants to win.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

This chapter provides the general results derived from this study pertaining to the demographic data used. The results were analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics such as the use of frequency distribution tables and graphs. The later section of the chapter describes how the hypotheses were analyzed and the results derived. The collected data enabled the researcher to analyze the influence of values and locus of control on vocational choice.

The study was conducted on students from a Midwestern university who were in their final year of obtaining their degree. The study was conducted on a sample of both male and female respondents. There was a satisfactory representation of both genders for the results of the study with 46.67% male and 53.33% female participants. There was no significant difference in the frequency distribution of male and female respondents. The study is therefore a representative of the real-life situation in which two genders exist.

Another characteristic of the sample of the study was that the majority of the respondents (68%) were found to be single as shown in Table 1, this table also summarizes a lot of the demographic data from the study. The study was a cross-sectional design conducted on respondents who had work experience. The experience of most of the respondents (29%) was noted to be eight or more years as shown in Figure 1. On average, 82% of the total respondents had a work experience above two years.

Table 1

Demographic Data

	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity		
Asian	8	8.9
Caucasian	72	80.0
Hispanic	5	5.6
African	4	4.4
Other	1	1.1
Marital Status		
Married	24	26.7
Singles	61	67.8
Other	5	5.6
Children		
Yes	15	16.7
No	75	83.3



Figure 1. The Years of Work Experience Among Participants

Twenty-six of the participants had more than eight years of experience, 23 of them had worked for five to seven years and the last 25 participants had worked for two to four years ($N = 90$, $M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.09$).

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis, which stated that there was no significant difference between individuals with strong internal and strong external locus of control in the effort to seek information on organizations values/culture, was tested using an independent sample t -test. Respondents with a greater inclination toward external and internal locus of control were first determined using the Career Locus of Control Scale. The dependent variable considered in this hypothesis was the extent of the effort of the respondents in seeking company information; in this case, values and culture.

The results showed that the mean of seeking company information by respondents with an internal and external locus of control was $M = 1.94$ and $M = 1.70$ respectively. The average departure of the respondents responses from the means is very small $SD = 0.76$ and $M = 0.86$ respectively as calculated from the standard deviations. The mean difference for the extent to which individuals seek information on the company between the respondents with external and internal locus of control is 0.24. This difference is not statistically significant at the 5% alpha level, considering the 95% confidence interval of -0.10 to 0.59.

The t -value of 1.39 (equal variances assumed) was not significant, $p = ns$. This implies the respondents with external and internal locus of control are not different in the way they seek company information before the acceptance of a job. In order to determine the extent in seeking company information by respondents with internal and external locus of control, a histogram was generated (see Figure 2). On average, respondents “agreed” they would seek company information before taking a job offer as shown in the above chart (Figure 2). This implies that respondents in the two groups (people with an external locus of control and people with an internal locus of control) generally were in agreement that before taking a job offer, one needs to seek information on company values. Only 12% of the participants disagreed, implying they would not seek company information or values. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis stated individuals in the *fairness (I) and fairness (E)* group are significantly more likely to seek whether an organization conducted layoffs fairly as compared to other individuals in all the other groups; *achievement (I), achievement (E), concern (I) and concern (E)*. This was tested using factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA). The factorial ANOVA was conducted to test whether the two independent variables (locus of control and work values) affect vocational choice. The work values had three subscales in this study, these were: need for achievement, fairness, and concern for others. Locus of control had four levels: strong internal locus of control, weak internal locus of control, strong external locus of control and weak external locus of control. In

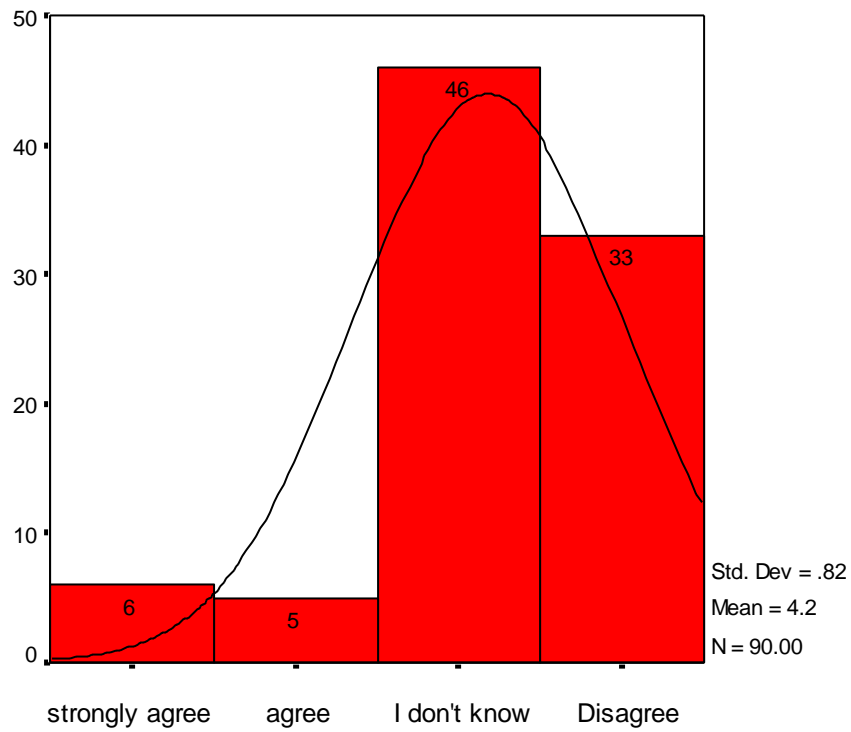


Figure 2. Histogram Showing the Degree to Which Respondents Would Seek Company Values/Information

external locus of control and weak external locus of control. In order to determine whether differences exist among different groups, a 3 x 4 (work values x locus of control) factorial ANOVA was conducted on the data.

The results obtained from the factorial ANOVA showed one of the independent variables (work values) significantly affected vocational choice, while the other independent variable (locus of control) had no effect on vocational choice. Respondents who value fairness in an organization (more than achievement or concern for others) were seen to prefer making vocational choices based on fairness more than the other groups. These respondents are also seen to disregard the concern for others and need for achievement as conditions of taking a job offer at the expense of fair treatment by the management to the employees. This is clearly seen from the one-way ANOVA results. There is a significant difference among the above three groups (on work values) with regard to their vocational choice. This is because work values $F(2, 73) = 3.13, p = 0.03$ was significant at the 5% level, the p value was less than the 5% alpha level (see Table 2). The means of the respondents were as follows: fairness $M = 2.64, SD = 0.99$, need for achievement $M = 2.88, SD = 0.88$, and concern for others $M = 3.36, SD = 0.90$. The group whose work value is fairness, strongly agree/believe (more than all the other groups) that if they get a job offer at a company that has recently laid off employees, they would like to know whether the management of the company conducted the exercise fairly or not. The interaction between locus of control and work values was not significant, $F(9, 73) = 1.284, p = ns$. Respondent's emphasis on work value and locus of

Table 2

Two-way Analysis of Variance of the Effect of Fairness and Locus of Control on Vocational Choice

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Work values (W)	2	3.13	0.03
Locus of control (L)	3	2.40	0.08
W x L	9	1.28	0.26
Error	73		

control in an organization do not significantly interact to change the way members embrace fairness in an organization.

Hypothesis 3

The focus of this hypothesis was concern for others. The hypothesis stated there would be a significant difference between individuals who valued concern for others in comparison to those who valued fairness and need for achievement when it came to vocational choice in an organization that conducted layoffs in a manner that showed concern for others. This hypothesis can be translated as individuals in the *concern (I)* and *concern (E)* groups were significantly more likely than all the other groups (*fairness (I)*, *fairness (E)*, *achievement (I)* and *achievement (E)*) to take a job offer at a company where layoffs have been conducted in a manner that shows concern for the victims and survivors.

A 3 x 4 (work values x locus of control) factorial ANOVA was conducted. The independent variables were locus of control and work values. The dependent variable was vocational choice. The results of factorial ANOVA shows the effect of work values on individuals' vocational choices in an organization that shows concern for others was not found to be significant $F(2,78) = 0.04, p = ns$. Similarly, the main effect of the locus of control on vocational choices on concern for victims and survivors was found not to be significant $F(3,78) = 0.53, p = ns$ (see Table 3). The interaction between the two factors did not reach significance either, and thus it is concluded that the combination of the two

independent variables (work values and locus of control) do not significantly influence the individuals' vocational choice $F(3,78) = 0.30, p = ns$.

Table 3

Two-way Analysis of Variance of the Effect of Concern for others and Locus of Control on Vocational Choice

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Work values (W)	2	0.441	0.65
Locus of control (L)	3	0.303	0.82
W x L	6	0.537	0.78
Error	78		

Therefore, based on the results, individuals who were in *concerned (I and E)* groups were not significantly more likely than all the other groups (*fairness (E)*, *fairness (I)*, *achievement (E)* and *achievement (I)*) to take a job offer at a company where layoffs have been conducted in a manner that shows concern for the victims and survivors. Consequently, the third hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 4

In this hypothesis, the study sought to find out whether there was a significant difference between individuals in the *achievement (I)* and *achievement (E)* groups and those in *fairness (I)*, *fairness (E)*, *concern (I)* and *concern (E)* in their decision to agree to work for an organization that did not conduct layoffs fairly, but clearly outlined opportunities for advancement. The independent variables were locus for control and work values. After conducting a 4 x 3 (locus of control x work values) factorial ANOVA the following results were obtained.

The results in Table 4 show there was a significant main effect for locus of control on individuals' vocational choices ($F = (3, 78) = 3.26, p = 0.03$). After conducting a Tukey test, the levels of high internal and external locus of control reached significance at 0.05. Consequently, it was concluded that individuals with a high locus of control (either internal or external) are more likely to take vocational choices in an organization with the greatest consideration to opportunities for advancement. The individuals with external locus of control also agree they would consider opportunities for advancement more than anything else when seeking a job in an

Table 4

Two-way Analysis of Variance of the Effect of Need for Achievement and Locus of Control on Vocational Choice

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Work values (W)	2	2.09	0.13
Locus of control (L)	3	3.26	0.03
W x L	6	1.25	0.29
Error	78		

organization that lately conducted layoffs. Based on the results, locus of control does affect vocational choice across work values. This is based on the results that showed no significant interaction on the F test ($F = (6, 78) = 1.25, p = ns$).

Hypothesis 5a

The goal of this hypothesis was to see whether there was a dependence based on locus of control and the extent of subjective or objective financial obligations between individuals. The participants were asked to rate their need for a paycheck. The range was between one and five, where one was a high need and five was a low need. For the objective financial obligations, participants were asked to indicate their current financial responsibilities. There were 15 categories of responsibilities (see Appendix B).

In order to code the data into SPSS, the financial responsibilities were categorized into five groups. Group one was for individuals with a maximum of three financial responsibilities. Group two consisted of individuals with four to six financial obligations. The third group had participants with seven to nine financial responsibilities. Group four had individuals with 10 to 12 financial obligations. The fifth group had individuals with 13 to 15 financial responsibilities. Hypothesis 5a focused on objective measures of financial obligations, and Hypothesis 5b focused on subjective measures of financial obligations. To analyze Hypothesis 5a and find out whether there is an association between individual's objective financial obligation and locus of control, a chi-square test was used.

The $f\chi^2$ contingent table was used in summarizing the research data that was later analyzed: The Pearson's chi-square value (13.09) for the amount of association between

the locus of control and the objective financial obligation of the participants is greater than the critical chi-square value of 12.59 at six degrees of freedom, 5% level. The probability value of 0.042 is also less than 0.05 and thus significant. $\chi^2(6, N = 90) = 13.09, p < .03$ (See table 5). This implies there is a difference in the vocational choices on the objective measures of financial obligations of participants with internal and external locus of control. A majority of the respondents with an external locus of control (30%) had between one to three financial responsibilities (Group 1) as compared to 19% of the respondents with internal locus of control who had similar financial obligations. In the same way, 37% of the respondents with internal locus of control, as compared to 18% of those with external locus of control, have between four to nine financial responsibilities (Groups 2 and 3).

Hypothesis 5b

The chi-square test conducted on the research data determined whether there is any association between individuals' locus of control (external or internal) and whether the participants had subjective financial obligations. The exact significance level for the above is statistically significant $\chi^2(12, N = 90) = 23.56, p < 0.023$ (See table 6). This implies there is a significant dependence between the individuals' locus of control and the subjective need for financial obligation.

Table 5

Contingent Table for Locus of Control and Objective Financial Obligations

Objective Financial Obligations	Locus of Control				Total
	Strong ILOC	Weak ILOC	Strong ELOC	Weak EOLC	
Group 1					
Observed	2.0	15.0	7.0	20.0	44
Expected	3.4	19.6	5.4	15.6	44
Group 2					
Observed	5.0	19.0	1.0	10.0	35
Expected	2.7	15.6	4.3	12.4	35
Group 3					
Observed	0.0	6.0	3.0	2.0	1
Expected	0.9	4.9	1.3	3.9	11
Total	40.0	7.0	32.0	11.0	90

The analysis of the percentage distribution of respondents' vocational choices, when participants were faced with subjective financial obligations, shows that 13% of the total respondents have strong internal locus of control and are willing to wait until very late before getting a paycheck after graduation as compared to 4% of the participants with strong external locus of control who can wait for the equivalent duration before getting a paycheck. In contrast, only 2% of the participants with an internal locus of control seem to require a paycheck soon after graduation as compared to 4% of the respondents with an external locus of control. In Hypotheses 5a and 5b there was a significant difference, thus, the null hypotheses are rejected.

Table 6

Contingent Table for Locus of Control and Subjective Financial Obligations

Objective Financial Obligations	Locus of Control				Total
	Strong ILOC	Weak ILOC	Strong ELOC	Weak EOLC	
Group 1					
Observed	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	5
Expected	4.0	1.8	1.8	6.0	50
Group 2					
Observed	2.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4
Expected	3.0	1.4	1.4	0.5	4
Group 3					
Observed	0.0	10	10	3.0	19
Expected	1.5	6.8	6.8	2.3	19
Group 4					
Observed	1.0	8.0	8.0	1.0	25
Expected	1.9	8.9	8.9	3.1	25
Group 5					
Observed	4.0	12.0	1.02	4.0	37
Expected	2.9	13.2	13.2	4.5	37
Total	40.0	7.0	32.0	11.0	90

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

A majority of the participants said they knew someone who had been laid off, and more than half of the participants had worked for a company that had laid off employees. This shows how pervasive layoffs have become. The goal of this study was to examine the impact locus of control, work values, and layoffs have on vocational choice among final year undergraduate and graduate students. Some of the results of the study partially supported previous literature on work values, financial obligations, and vocational choice (Judge & Betz, 1992). According to Judge and Betz work values were found to be key predictors of offer acceptance.

Hypothesis 1 was based on literature that suggested individuals with internal locus of control made the effort to engage in career planning (Organ & Greene, 1974; Rotter, 1966). According to Lease (2004), locus of control played a role in vocational choice. Most of the respondents (88%) agreed they would seek information on the values/culture of an organization with no significant difference between those with an external or internal locus of control. This implies that seeking information on a company's values was important for people with an internal locus of control and people with an external locus of control. A longitudinal study with more questions to capture an individual's effort in career planning would provide more information on how people with an external locus of control and people with an internal locus of control engage differently in career planning.

Hypothesis 2 predicted individuals who value fairness were less likely to take a job in a company that conducted layoffs unfairly, compared with individuals who value need for achievement or concern for others. In Hypothesis 2, there were no significant main effect for locus of control and no interaction. The results show locus of control does not influence one's decision to work for a company that does not treat its employees fairly. Work values had a significant main effect, which implies work values influence one's vocational choice. The respondents who valued fairness more than need for achievement or concern stated that fairness of an organization to its employees would influence their vocational choice. According to Judge and Betz (1992), work values have an impact on vocational choice, therefore, it was expected there would be a difference between individuals who valued fairness and those who preferred concern for others or need for achievement. The results provided support of the research by Judge and Betz.

Fair treatment of employees has been shown to also influence victims and survivors of the layoff process. It would be in the best interest of companies conducting layoffs to ensure their procedures are fair to their employees, thus ensuring they attract prospective employees who value fairness. One interesting aspect was that some of the respondents had two prominent values, in such cases, the respondents were considered to fall into the both groups.

There were no significant results for Hypothesis 3. These results are contrary to the findings that "concern for others" was one of the predictors of vocational choice (Judge & Betz, 1992). Hypothesis 3 predicted there would be a difference between individuals who valued concern for others, and those who valued fairness and need for

achievement when choosing to work for an organization that did not reflect concern for others. A longitudinal study with more questions to capture data for the “concern for others” aspect would provide more insight on how this viewpoint may influence an individual’s vocational choice.

According to Kristoff (1996) values are one of the factors influencing decisions made by individuals. Values are considered to be part of the criteria used to make decisions (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987). However, in Hypothesis 4, the main effect for work values was not found to be significant. There was also no significant interaction. Locus of control had a significant main effect; this implies that clearly outlined opportunities for advancement were important in vocational choice for people with an internal locus of control and people with an external locus of control. A longitudinal study would provide more insight on the impact of need for achievement on vocational choice. When a Tukey test was conducted it showed that those with a strong internal or external locus of control preferred to work for a company that clearly outlined opportunities for advancement.

Previous literature indicated that financial obligations and salary levels influence vocational choice (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Muchinsky, 1999; Sauermann, 2005). One study by Judge and Bretz indicated that the salary level greatly influenced the students’ vocational choice. Since finances and financial obligations have been shown to have an impact on vocational choice, it was expected there would be no difference between individuals with an internal locus of control or external locus of control in Hypothesis 5. The results showed there is a significant difference between people with an internal locus

of control and people with an external locus of control in vocational choices on the objective measures of financial obligations. The results show that those with an internal locus of control had more objective financial obligations than those with an external locus of control. This could be attributed to the fact individuals with an internal locus of control believe they control their outcomes; they would be more willing to take on more responsibilities in comparison to externals. Externals are more likely to believe that external factors would influence their outcomes, thus they may not take up more financial responsibilities. This is consistent with Furnham and Steele's, (1993) assertion that people with an internal locus of control would take on more responsibilities. In Hypothesis 5b, respondents with an internal locus of control are less likely to allow subjective financial obligation to affect their vocational choices as compared to the respondents with an external locus of control who are most affected by subjective financial obligation in their vocational choices.

Limitations

This study was a cross-sectional design and may not offer a conclusive answer on vocational choice, a longitudinal study would provide more information and would capture consistent factors that influence vocational choice. The data was also based on the perceptions of students prior to a job offer. If data was also collected during the job offer and after the offer was accepted it would reveal more on how factors like locus of control, layoffs, and work values influence vocational choice.

Another limitation of the study was that the online survey was only available for a short period of time due to time and financial constraints. Thus, the online respondents

had a small time window of three weeks to respond to the email. In addition to this, the researcher used a personal email address to send out the surveys, if the email sent to students was sent from an administrator's email address instead of the researcher's the response rate probably would have been higher.

As mentioned, very few studies have focused on work values, locus of control and vocational choice. Therefore, there is an opportunity for explorative research on this area. This study was also a quantitative study, thus, the respondents only answered the specific questions in the questionnaire and did not have an opportunity to provide additional information on their work values, locus of control and vocational choice. The study also focused on testing specific hypothesis and could have missed out other phenomenon that influence work values, locus of control and vocational choice. If the study also had some qualitative components, such as focus group discussions, the respondents may have provided more insight on the work values, locus of control, vocational choice as well as other factors not considered by the researcher. This kind of information would be useful for future research.

Since the respondents filled in the questionnaire, the data could not be verified independently. The researcher accepted the responses at face value and had to assume that the responses accurately reflected the respondents' opinion.

Conclusion

According to Judge and Bretz (1992), need for achievement, fairness and concern for others were found to significantly affect vocational choice. In this study, only fairness was found to significantly influence vocational choice. Though this study supported

previous literature, more research should be conducted to find out more about the impact of work values on vocational choice. A future study that is longitudinal with some qualitative components will reveal more about work values, locus of control and vocational choice.

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Appendix A
Letter of Consent

Letter of Consent

This study will be conducted by Ruth Mbugua for her thesis at Emporia State University. The purpose of this study is to assess the relationship between locus of control, values, and vocational choice. The final report will be presented to members of the thesis committee who are faculty at Emporia State University.

The participants will be asked to fill out a survey. The survey will ask for demographic information, such as gender, race, and marital status. Participants will also be asked to complete a survey regarding locus of control, values, and vocational choice. The approximate time needed to complete the survey is twenty minutes. If the participants feel uncomfortable in responding to any question, they are free to withdraw from the study at any point.

The researcher anticipates that two of the questions regarding layoffs may be slightly uncomfortable for participants who have had a bad layoff experience. To relieve this discomfort, the researcher will assure the participants their responses will be kept confidential and will not be linked to the participants or the results of the study. The participants will benefit from the study as an opportunity to examine their process of vocational choice. In addition, they will contribute to a better understanding of vocational choice among university seniors. Furthermore, the participants can choose to participate in a drawing where the lucky winner will receive a \$100 money order.

The participants will be able to contact the researcher during the study, by phone or email after the study. All information and the participants' identity will be kept

confidential and their personal information will not be linked to the results of the study.

After the data are collected all their information such as name, address or email will be destroyed.

The researcher can be reached by:

a) email : ruthmbugua@hotmail.com

b) telephone : 214-317-1535

Appendix B
Informed Consent Document

Informed consent document

The Department of Psychology at Emporia State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdraw from the study, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach. Likewise, if you choose not to participate, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between locus of control, values and vocational choice. The participants will be asked to fill in surveys that will include supplying information on gender, race, locus of control, values and vocational choice. The time involved in taking this survey should not take more than twenty minutes to complete. The only discomfort anticipated during the study is with questions regarding layoffs. Participants who have had a bad layoff experience may experience this discomfort. To alleviate the discomfort the researcher will assure participants that their responses will be kept confidential, and their identity will not be linked to the results of the study. The participants will also be assured they are free to withdraw from the study at any point.

One of the main benefits of this study is that it gives participants an opportunity to examine or re-examine their vocational choice process. The participants will also have a

chance to win \$100, and their input will contribute to a better understanding of vocational choice among university seniors.

The data received on the subjects will be kept confidential by the researcher. The researcher will be the only one with access to information containing the participants' identity. The results of the study will not be linked to the participants' identity and all the filled in surveys will be destroyed after the study is complete. If any of the participants has any questions regarding the surveys, they should feel free to contact the researcher via telephone: 214-317-1535 or email: ruthmbugua@hotmail.com.

I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures and possible risks involved. I understand the potential risks involved, and I assume them voluntarily. I also understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach.

Signature

Date

Appendix C
Demographic Survey

Demographic Survey

Please fill in the demographic information below by checking the appropriate circle:

1. Check your gender:
 - Male
 - Female

2. Please indicate your ethnicity
 - Asian decent
 - Caucasian decent
 - Hispanic decent
 - African decent
 - Other (optional please specify) _____

3. Please indicate your marital status
 - Single
 - Married
 - Other _____

4. Do you have children?
 - Yes
 - No

5. Check the current degree you are pursuing:
 - Undergraduate (e.g., B.A., B.S.)
 - Graduate (e.g., M.S., M.B.A., Ph.D)

- Other
6. Are you in your final year of education for you current degree?
- Yes
 - No
7. How much work experience do you have?
- 0-1 years
 - 2-4 years
 - 5-7 years
 - 8-or more years
8. Have you ever worked for a company that has laid off employees?
- Yes
 - No
9. Do you personally know someone who has been laid off?
- Yes
 - No
 - If yes, who was the person laid off? (e.g., family member, friend, self) _____
10. When did the layoff take place?
- Not applicable
 - Less than a month ago
 - One to six months ago
 - Six months to a year ago

- Other (please specify e.g. two years ago, five years ago)_____

11. Do you intend to seek out employment with a company after you graduate?

- Yes
- No, I plan to be self-employed
- No, I am already employed
- No, I plan to pursue further education, first.
- Not sure

12. How soon after graduation is it imperative that you get a pay check?

- Immediately
- Two weeks
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- A year.
- A year or more.

13. How would you rate your need to get a paycheck after graduation? (Where 5

indicates a high need and 1 being a low need)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

14. Please indicate which of the following responsibilities/dependents you will need to take care of. Please check all that apply:

- Spouse
- Children
- Rent
- Mortgage
- Car payment
- One car
- Two cars
- School debt
- Tuition
- Alimony
- Child support
- Credit cards
- One card
- Two cards
- More than three
- Medical expenses for yourself or a family member

Appendix D

Comparative Emphasis Scale

Comparative Emphasis Scale

Instructions:

Sometimes people must choose between two things they feel they *should* do. In these choice situations they must place more emphasis on one activity over another. Below are pairs of statements describing activities people feel they should do. Read each statement carefully, then place a check next to the statement you feel you *should* emphasize more in your behavior at work.

Always being in control of your emotions while under stress

Looking forward to the future with a positive outlook

Example: Both of the above statements represent activities many people feel are important and should be done. Imagine you're in a situation in which you can only do one of them. Your task is to select the *one* statement of the pair you feel should be emphasized in your behavior. In the above example, this particular person felt the second activity should receive more emphasis than the first. Of course, another person might feel just the opposite.

Please read the following 12 pairs of statements and indicate which *one* in each pair you feel should receive *more emphasis*. Some choices will probably be difficult for you, but please do the best you can. Do not leave any questions blank.

1. Taking care of all loose ends on a job or project
 Being impartial when dealing with others

2. Encouraging someone who is having a difficult day
 Considering different points of view before taking action
3. Continuing to work on a problem until it is resolved
 Trying to help a fellow worker through a difficult time
4. Being impartial in judging disagreements
 Helping others on difficult jobs
5. Offering help to others when they are having a tough time
 Doing whatever work is required to advance in your career
6. Judging people fairly based on their abilities rather than only on their personalities
 Seeking out all opportunities to learn new skills
7. Trying to be helpful to a friend at work
 Being sure that work assignments are fair to everyone
8. Being determined to be the best at your work
 Trying not to hurt a friend's feelings
9. Finishing each job you start even when others do not
 Making sure that rewards are given in the fairest possible way
10. Sharing information and ideas which others need to do their job
 Always setting high performance goals for yourself

11. ___Allowing each employee to have an equal chance to get rewards

___Taking on more responsibility to get ahead in an organization

12. ___Providing fair treatment for each employee

___Lending a helping hand to someone having difficulty

Appendix E

Locus of Control Scale

Locus of Control Scale

In each of following statements please circle the degree to which you find the statement true (T) or false (F).

1. Getting a good job is primarily a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

T F

2. College grades play a very major role in getting a job.

T F

3. I expect that my social/family/college connections will be the primary factor in getting my first job.

T F

4. I expect to get a job primarily on my record of hard work.

T F

5. I am confident that the placement services on campus will be able to find me an excellent job upon graduation.

T F

6. I would take a low paying position upon graduation that would help my career over a higher paying job that is not related to my career objectives.

T F

7. One day I will just happen onto a career option that is right for me.

T F

8. There are too many factors involved in getting a job or entering a career that you have no control over to worry about it.

T F

Appendix F
Vocational Choice Survey

Vocational Choice Survey

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. If I get a job offer at a company that has laid off employees recently (e.g., six months ago) I would be concerned with how the management treated its employees during the layoff.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. If I get a job offer at a company that has recently laid off employees (e.g., six months ago) I would be more concerned about the opportunities for advancement than how the employees were treated during the layoff.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. If I get a job offer, I would pick one related to my field /career over a higher paying job in a different field.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. If I get a higher pay job offer in a different field than my field/career I would take it due to my current financial obligations.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. If I get a job offer at a company that has laid off employees, I would want to know if the company assisted the laid off employees by offering job placement services.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. If I get a job offer, I make the effort to find out information about the companies values/ culture.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. If I get a job offer, at a company that has recently laid off (e.g., six months ago) I would like to know if the management of the company communicated openly and honestly to the employees prior to the layoff.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. If I get a job offer, at a company that has recently laid off (e.g., six months ago), I would like to know more about the opportunities for advancement than if the company treated employees fairly.

Strongly
Disagree

Disagree

Don't
Know

Agree

Strongly
Agree

1

2

3

4

5

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I, _____, hereby submit this thesis to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available for use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.

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Signature of Graduate Office Staff Member

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