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EMPLOYEE PREFERENCES FOR WORKPLACE CHARACTERISTICS

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
the California School of Professional Psychology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology at  
Alliant International University, Los Angeles, California

by

Elizabeth A. Rosemond, M.S.

April 23, 2002

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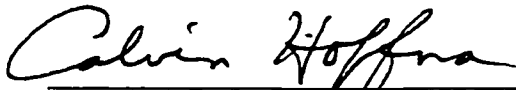
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

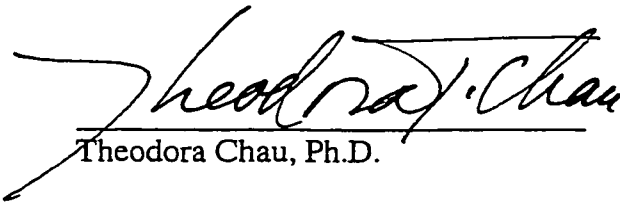
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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, friends and to all the teachers in the world.

My parents, Bruce and Lisa, who have given me unconditional support and love.

Christine, Cheryl, Cindy, Kelly, Anna, Sue, Carla, Kat, Kevin, Jon and Brian for their faithful encouragement and motivation on the project.

All the teachers in the world for they are unsung heroes since education is a gift.

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Employee Preferences for Workplace Characteristics

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

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2002

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Organizations exist today in a complex arena. Due to significant changes in workforce demographics combined with the rise in the global marketplace and increased competitiveness, organizations must prosper within a different environment than ever before. It has become clear to many organizations that to survive and thrive in the current business marketplace, leaders must manage their human resources differently if they are to compete successfully.

The current ongoing struggle recruiting and retaining employees has become an important priority for most companies and isn't likely to subside in the near future. For business leaders and decision-makers to improve their organization's attractiveness to

employees, a greater understanding of the general workforce preferences, both professional and personal, can provide extraordinary insight.

The purpose of this study is to assess employee workplace preferences to determine if different types of employee groups prefer different workplace characteristics. It is hoped that from this information, business leaders and decision-makers can introduce and implement new policies and programs within their organizations to decrease the current gaps between employee preferences and current company policies in an effort to recruit and retain employees.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

After decades of organizational restructuring and work reengineering, American companies are regaining their competitiveness in the global marketplace (Lau & May, 1998). Organizations today face many conflicting problems that must be balanced in order to compete successfully in the world economy. Organizations must continually improve performance and reduce costs, innovate new processes and products and also improve quality (Becker and Gerhart, 1996). Many companies continue to redesign and automate a number of work procedures in search of greater efficiency and higher productivity and this regularly leads to a reduction in workforce.

Nonetheless, management is paying more attention than ever before on recruiting and retaining qualified people, even in downsizing cycles (Brannick, 2001; Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2002; Osterman, 1995; Vallario, 1997). A vast amount of academic research, business literature and a majority of business leaders recognize that a productive workforce will provide a global, sustainable competitive advantage for businesses regardless of economic conditions (Bohl, Slocum, Luthans and Hodgetts, 1996; Lau, 1993). Warbington (2002, p. 19) writes “in today’s world, talent is the primary source of competitive advantage” for any organization.

As new markets, competitors and technologies emerge, there will be an increased need for skilled employees at every level and functional area of the organization (Neilson, et al., 2000). In today’s marketplace, knowledge is in high demand but short supply (Papmehl, 2002). This is true since most employees are often recruited and hired into an organization because of their particular expertise and “people with certain skill



sets are in great demand” (Rappaport, 2001, p. 30). Additionally, Pekala (2001) writes 68% of global business leaders believe that retaining talent is far more important than ever and Brannick (2001) stresses that keeping top employees must remain a very high priority.

Often people can pick and choose where they want to work and as a result, more companies are striving to become employers of choice. Although most companies recognize the worth of their employees to the organization, there is a perceived gap between what employees prefer in a workplace and what companies offer (Papmehl, 2002). What approaches and practices can employers implement to reduce voluntary employee turnover and increase employee satisfaction and commitment among their workforce? This is the focus of the following research project.

#### Current Workforce Changes

Organizations today confront the turmoil of an ever-changing business environment combined with changes in the workforce. Historically, a mutual informal understanding existed between employees and employers that provided a stable and predictable work relationship. The traditional understanding between employee and employer was such that the employee would work hard and the employer would provide a decent job with good pay. It was a predictable stable relationship revolving around the employee remaining loyal to the employer in exchange for job security (DeMeuse, Bergmann & Lester, 2001). The Organization Man by Whyte (1956) portrays this reciprocal work relationship within American business. In summary, this unwritten agreement between employee and employer became known as a psychological contract and is generally the set of beliefs held by an individual employee about the terms of the

work agreement with the particular organization such as perceived promised opportunities, wages, training and meaningful work (Rousseau, 1989). Psychological contract components can represent intrinsic outcomes like meaningful work or the freedom to be creative as well as extrinsic outcomes like a competitive salary or other financial rewards.

However, the traditional employee/employer psychological contract has changed and both parties now have different expectations. Current researchers and business practitioners have commented that the corporate restructuring and downsizing strategies of the 1980's and 1990's have altered the traditional employer/employee relationship (DeMeuse, Bergmann & Lester, 2001). Academics and popular press claim that the changing work environment sends confusing messages that may lead to employee uncertainty, cynicism, fear and anger (DeMeuse & Tornow, 1990). Company initiatives like employee empowerment and self-managed work teams relay to the employee that the employer values them yet employees have weathered reengineering and downsizing practices for decades. Additionally, many researchers claim that the American workplace is one of increased workload and stress, combined with decreased job security (Cascio, 1998 ; DeMeuse et al., 1997; Jaffe and Scott, 1998).

A few researchers have recently published studies on the traditional psychological work contract and most have focused on perceptions of the contract violations and the effects on employee attitudes and behaviors (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson et al., 1996; Rousseau, 1995). For example, Robinson and Rousseau (1994) conducted a study on MBA graduates and found an inverse relationship between psychological contract violations and employee satisfaction, trust and employee intentions to remain

with their current employer. This study and more, combined with current literature, point to a shift within the employee workforce and their perceptions of the current employment relationship. It appears as though the traditional reciprocal stable work relationship is dissolving and new emotions and understandings exist between employers and employees.

Companies currently tend to focus on corporate goals, quarterly profits and daily stock market prices while employees may concentrate on job needs and possible networking opportunities for career advancement. The current employee/employer relationship appears to be more of a short-term attachment with greater self-gratification on behalf of both sides (DeMeuse et al, 1997; Noer 1997). Rousseau (1995) believes that organizations are moving away from a bureaucratic employee/employer relationship to a more temporary partnership. Lastly, a study by DeMeuse, Bergmann & Lester (2001) reveals that employee perceptions of the psychological work contract have indeed changed and employees characterize the new relationship with lower levels of trust, job satisfaction, support, respect, loyalty and commitment with their employer.

Likewise, current research shows that employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment has decreased; which in turn can increase employee turnover intentions (Testa, 2001). Yet research and popular press has shown continually that high employee turnover rates cost an organization a great deal both in financial and emotional terms. Organizations have faced, and will continue to face, an ever-changing business environment in combination with changes relating to their employees. In addition to the informal psychological work contract evolving and an increasing rate of employee dissatisfaction, several more changes over the past few decades have occurred within the

modern workforce that have impacted how organizations can relate to their workforce (Lee & Kanugo, 1984). A few of these changes within the workforce demographics include gender, lifestyle changes and employee preferences.

### *Workforce Demographics*

More women and minorities entered the workforce in the 1960's and their employment took on increased significance (Piotrkowski, Rapoport & Rapoport, 1987). Economic and social pressures compelled women into the American workforce, thereby limiting the time they have available for family roles, therefore men's family roles expanded as they began to share home responsibilities (Pleck, 1985). Considering this shift within the workforce demographics, there have also been changes in the workplace preferences of many employees.

Bernstein (1997) comments that an increased focus on career has led many people to seek for a balance between work and life and unfortunately, people are subject to continued stress while striving for this balance. As Wohl (1997) noted, many employees have begun reevaluating their priorities, and work was often pushed down the list in favor of personal lives and family. This shifting of priorities has been documented as increased expectations of self-fulfillment (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), family welfare becoming more important than work (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; Wohl, 1997) and a greater interest in quality of life and worklife (Zedeck, 1992).

Some employees are willing to give up greater income for more time off (Laabs, 1996). In fact, workers today are willing to sacrifice 21% of their work hours and salary to achieve more work/life balance and this is nearly twice the amount reported just seven years ago (Izzo & Withers, 2001). Since many employees may not have the option to

reduce their hours, some employees are willing to leave organizations that do not recognize and respect their personal needs (Faught, 1995; Miller, Katz, & Gans, 1998). Lastly, Thompson (1997) noted that this shift in employee priorities is not only occurring in downsized employees or aging baby boomers, but also includes the new entrants into the workforce such as college students.

#### Statement of the Problem

With significant changes in worker attitudes and demographics, combined with a demanding and competitive global marketplace, organizations exist and must prosper within a different environment than ever before. It has become clear to many organizations that to survive and thrive in the current business marketplace, leaders must manage their human resources differently if they are to compete successfully. Companies are dependent on a strong productive workforce yet employee dissatisfaction is rising and employee turnover has become a popular and serious topic. Today's workforce is more independent, more in demand and less likely to stand for poor working conditions (Stambaugh, 2001).

Organizations can support and implement initiatives that will directly contribute to their employee's increased satisfaction and commitment, while positively influencing the organizational and financial results of the company. In fact, Ostroff (1992) investigated the links between employee satisfaction and organizational performance and concluded that increased employee satisfaction heightens effectiveness. Many business leaders are focusing their organizations on attracting, motivating and retaining top talent to remain competitive and innovative. In fact, Marriott Jr. (2001) believes that finding and keeping talent has never been easy but recruitment and retention are the most

pressing challenges facing America business today and will be for the next 10 to 15 years.

Companies should evaluate and understand what employees are looking for in an employer. It is important for organizations to understand the changes within the modern workforce and respond quickly with creative and applicable policies and programs in order to attract and retain top talent. The purpose of this study is to explore current workforce preferences on various workplace characteristics in order to gain a better insight into today's employee workplace priorities.

More specifically, this body of research will examine three workplace characteristics with four types of employees to analyze if different departments of employees prefer different workplace characteristics. The three workplace components are job tasks, company culture/structure and compensation and the four employee groupings include engineers, creatives, project managers/strategists and administrative. The findings of this project can introduce a new niche in research and can have interesting implications for other business leaders regarding the current workforce and their workplace preferences. With this type of knowledge becoming available, more organizations can improve their particular reward structures, employee development programs, communication policies and overall company cultures to better attract, retain and develop their employees.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature revolving around the topic of employee preferences at the workplace comes from many different sources and incorporating all the pieces can be a daunting and difficult responsibility. Employee workplace preferences as a topic stems from and draws upon varying other topics such as employee & job satisfaction, turnover, job design, employee & organizational commitment, and other relating subjects. This section will attempt to briefly review these topics and more to integrate and relate them together towards current research on employee workplace preferences. Additionally, information regarding employee groupings as well as a summary of information on the three workplace characteristics of job tasks, company culture/structure and compensation are presented.

As discussed in the previous section, it is important for current business leaders, managers and hiring professionals to be aware of the current and ever-changing workforce trends in order to hire and retain a productive workforce. Although the relative importance of various job and employee preferences has been investigated, this topic continues to intrigue researchers and practitioners since employee preferences have changed over time (Karl & Sutton, 1998). Current research has concluded that employee preferences can change over time, and this can influence employee's overall satisfaction.

#### Job Satisfaction

In essence, job satisfaction is the extent to which people like their jobs (Spector, 1997). In 1976, Locke claimed that job satisfaction is the degree to which what is valued about a job is provided. Since individuals prefer different characteristics within a job,

satisfaction can be measured or interpreted numerous ways. Employee job satisfaction is essential to implementing high-performance work systems (Osterman, 1995; Taylor, 1991), which often contribute to a firm's financial performance (Lau & May, 1998). Job satisfaction is often considered an important influence on employee behavior and, ultimately on organizational effectiveness (Spector, 1997). However, employee job satisfaction is at its lowest level in years (Vinocur, 1995).

Historically, employee satisfaction has been evaluated on only one dimension—perceptions. The way employees perceive the employment relationship is rooted in Adam's Equity Theory (1965). Employees enter into a relationship based on the concept of a reciprocal agreement and a psychological comparison where the employee compares their contributions with what the organizational presumably promised. According to Porter and Lawler (1968) satisfaction is defined as a unidimensional construct of which rewards actually received meet or exceed the perceived equitable levels of rewards.

In contrast, Smith, Kendall & Hulin (1969) argue that job satisfaction is multidimensional and thus, created the popular and widely used Job Descriptive Index as a job satisfaction survey instrument. Additionally, Comm and Mathaisel (2000) conducted research that focused on two dimensions—perceptions and expectations to better recognize and handle the “gaps” in between. They found that employee satisfaction perceptions fell short of expectations and therefore, employee satisfaction may decline. Job satisfaction has probably been the most widely researched work attitude in the organizational behavior literature, but despite the extensive research, many causal relationships concerning antecedents to and consequences of job satisfaction are still open to question (Cranny, Smith & Stone, 1992).



Job design researchers, (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980; Herzberg, 1968; Maslow, 1943) have stated that the more complex and enriched a job, the more likely the job will be to meet an individual's needs and the greater will be the individual's satisfaction with the job. From the psychological point of view, much of job satisfaction can be linked to Attribution Theory, which generally states that certain motives are attributed to actions after the fact (Kelley, 1973).

Job Characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, 1976) specified the relationship between five core job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and individual job outcomes. The first three are said to prompt the psychological state such as an experienced meaningfulness of the work while the autonomy influences the psychological state of experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work. Lastly, the feedback dimension prompts the psychological state as knowledge of the actual results of the work activities. Hackman and Oldham claim that these five dimensions can be combined to determine the job's motivating potential score and the greater the score, the more satisfied individuals are likely to be with the job. Hackman and Oldham also point out that with higher satisfaction from a job, there are other beneficial outcomes such as higher motivation, higher quality performance, and lower absenteeism and turnover.

Pollock, Whitbred & Contractor (2000) mention that early research and theoretical development of job characteristics theory has its' roots in needs satisfaction models (Argyris, 1957, Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Herzberg, 1968; Maslow, 1943; Vroom, 1964). The basic assumptions of this theory is that individuals have different sets of needs that have to be satisfied and that jobs possess certain objective characteristics

that can meet these needs and increase individuals' levels of satisfaction.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the informal work psychological contract has evolved. Studies show that organizations struggle to fulfill components of the psychological contract, as well as components of their formal work agreement, that their employees prefer and these discrepancies significantly negatively impact employee satisfaction and intention to stay at the organization (Lester & Kickul, 2001). In fact, employers with proactive company initiatives and programs are likely to experience reduced intentions to leave the organizations by employees because most of their needs are being met (Lester & Kickul, 2001).

Shore and Barksdale (1998) found that employees reported higher levels of satisfaction, organizational support, commitment and lower levels of turnover intentions when their employment relationships with their organizations were fulfilled. However, when employees perceive that their employer has failed to fulfill promised inducements, they may withhold their own designated contributions (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). Lester & Kickul (2001, p. 6) write "supervisors and other organizational representatives need to be more cognizant of and responsive to employees' desires for things such as meaningful work, recognition, creative freedom and opportunities for personal growth". Perhaps organizations are unaware of the perceived discrepancies or unaware of current employee preferences, but regardless, organizations can improve employee job satisfaction by providing more workplace components that are meaningful to today's workforce.

### *Work and Nonwork Life*

The relationship between work and nonwork life interaction has also been the subject of many articles, books and research studies crossing various academic disciplines. There are three prevailing models of work and nonwork interaction that have been well documented (Griffin, 2000). Stemming from Maslow's needs theory, Dubin (et al., 1958) argues that once individuals have their basic needs met through work for food and clothing, people have the energy and choice to focus on other areas of their life, which may or may not include work. Dubin claims individuals have "central life interests" where a portion of one's total life energies are invested, both mentally and physically, into various activities. Furthermore, Dubin believes individuals can have numerous focuses, or roles, without role conflict because people can act in some roles with little emotional energy. Lastly, Dubin and Champoux (1974, 1975, 1977) found that employees with a central life interest in work have a higher level of job satisfaction and commitment to their organization whereas workers with a nonwork central life interest have a lower level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The spillover model is the most popular and widely researched model of work and nonwork interaction and the model indicates that work can have psychological effects on the individual, which can spill over onto the worker's family life and vice versa (Lambert, 1990, Zedeck, 1992). The compensation model affirms that work is inherently lacking and workers can chose alternative means to satisfy those unmet needs by seeking out other nonwork activities (Rice et al., 1980). Both the spillover and compensation models argue that one's work life influences their nonwork life either positively or negatively, and these models are more descriptive of behavior. More specifically, role conflict between work and nonwork life for individuals is an example of negative

spillover since people play multiple roles each day and as demands increase, it is likely the role conflict will increase as well (Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985).

However, Dubin suggests a separation paradigm where there is no relationship between one's work and nonwork life and this model presents more of a value position. All in all, the academic research on the models has generally taken a universalistic approach and has thus been unable to come to any definitive conclusions, which is exactly the same conclusion reached when the models were researched in the field of work and leisure relationships (Mankin, 1978).

Additionally, Levering (1988) suggested that the importance of work is central to people's lives for it defines roles within society. It determines the level of income, hence one's standard of living. Moreover, Drucker (1974) wrote that to make a living is no longer enough, work also has to make a life and Reeves (2001) explained that work is becoming more central to all of our lives. Lawler (1994) has taken an employee's job satisfaction level and related it to society as a whole for he wrote that what happens to people during the workday has profound effects both on the individual employee's life and on society, in general.

### *Satisfaction and Turnover*

Employee satisfaction has been shown to be one of the best predictors of turnover (Lee, 1988) and over 1,000 studies on employee turnover have been conducted (Steers & Moday, 1981). Additionally, job satisfaction has been shown to be negatively correlated with turnover (Kerr, 1948). However, employee satisfaction with the company, as a characteristic of job satisfaction, is an infrequently studied turnover variable and few empirical studies have been conducted (Kraut, 1975).

Many companies underestimate the cost of turnover (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). In fact, high employee turnover rates can result in dramatic financial costs to organizations. It is estimated that the annual per-person costs of turnover range from \$1,200 to \$20,000 depending on the position, and can easily reach \$40,000 or more for senior executive positions (Mercer, 1988; Taylor, 1998). Furthermore, Reimers (2001) claims the cost of turnover is twice the salary of an employee and even more for a computer professional. Every year, U.S. companies are paying more than \$140 billion in recruiting, training and administrative costs to replace employees who decide to leave (Pekala, 2001).

Turnover not only has an economic impact but also affects employee morale and organizational development. There are many indirect costs and consequences associated to low job satisfaction and high turnover such as low morale, training, recruiting, learning curve inefficiencies and a decrease in customer satisfaction. All in all, turnover represents a significant drain on the corporate bottom-line (Callochchia & Ramsey, 2001). To decrease employee turnover and increase retention, employers need to know what employees prefer at the workplace in order to design jobs, reward systems and human resource policies that will result in maximum job satisfaction and productivity (Karl & Sutton, 1998).

March & Simon (1958) presented one of the first integrated models of employee turnover which now serves as the foundation for many other theoretical models. This model is original for it considers both individual behavior and the economic-labor market. This model was developed from combining turnover research of the current period with Barnard's research and theory (1938). Barnard reasoned that increases in the

balance of benefit utilities over contribution utilities decreases the propensity of the individual participant to leave the organization, whereas decreases in that balance have the opposite effect. In essence, Barnard stated that employees will leave an organization when inducements (the organization's ability to reward its employees) are perceived to be less than the contributions (worker participation and productivity).

March & Simon (1958) stated that this inducement-contribution balance is influenced by desirability of leaving the organization and perceived ease of movement from the organization such as favorable market conditions. March & Simon suggested that the primary factor influencing this motivation to leave is employee satisfaction with the job as defined by the employee.

Other researchers have attempted to validate specific hypotheses in the March and Simon model. For example, Pettman (1973) reviewed the literature on employee turnover and found consistent support for many of the hypotheses concerning visibility of the individual, number of extra-organizational alternatives perceived, and level of business activity as reflected in unemployment rates. In 1983, Jackofsky and Peters found that job satisfaction and a measure of ease of movement that reflects both intra- and inter-organizational movement produced a better prediction of turnover than previous studies.

Price's (1997) conceptual model of employee turnover includes structural, economic, and psychological variables that the literature showed to be related to turnover. Five antecedents of satisfaction, which are argued to have an indirect relationship to turnover were identified. These include: (a) pay, (b) integration (the extent of participation in primary and/or quasi-primary relationships), (c) instrumental

communication (communication directly relating to role performance), (d) formal communication (officially transmitted information), (e) centralization (the degree to which power is concentrated in a social system).

All of these antecedents except for centralization are hypothesized to be positively related to satisfaction and centralization is expected to be negatively correlated to satisfaction. Satisfaction is hypothesized to be related to turnover but is moderated by opportunity. Price defines satisfaction as the degree to which employees have a positive attitudinal orientation toward membership in an organization. Opportunity is defined as the availability of jobs in the environment. The model states that employee dissatisfaction will lead to turnover only when opportunities for alternative jobs are high. According to the model, no matter how dissatisfied an employee is, turnover will only occur when economic conditions are favorable for an external transfer.

Mobley (1982) criticizes the Price model since it fails to specify how individuals perceive and evaluate the determinants and opportunities. Therefore, Mobley argues the model minimizes individual differences in values, perceptual and evaluative processes by assuming that determinants are equally valued outcomes and individuals have knowledge of alternative jobs and are unconstrained in pursuing them.

Mobley conducted further research and suggested there are four primary determinants of intention to quit and the primary determinant of turnover is job satisfaction. Mobley's model defines job satisfaction as a present-oriented evaluation of the job involving a comparison of an employee's multiple values and what the employee perceives the job as providing. Logically, a positive evaluation enhances job satisfaction while a negative evaluation diminishes it. Mobley argues this definition has important

implications for the satisfaction-turnover relationship. For example, an evaluation of job satisfaction will differ from person to person because each individual has a different set of values. Thus, the dimensions of satisfaction with pay, work environment, and career opportunities are important to consider and evaluate if one is to better understand the complexity of job satisfaction. Since there are numerous personal and professional preferences that influence one's job satisfaction, it is highly unlikely that one variable alone will solely determine someone's job satisfaction. Thus, this study attempts to further the existing research linking employee preferences with various workplace characteristics.

### Organizational Commitment

Bragg (2002, p. 14) writes "companies with committed employees do better financially than companies with uncommitted workers". Organizational commitment has generally been defined as an attachment to or an identification with an organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Meyer & Allen (1990) developed a three-dimensional model with affective, continuance and normative dimensions within the subject of organizational commitment. Affective represents the emotional attachment to the organization, continuance represents a bond because of the cost of leaving and normative represents a sense of obligation to continue with the organization. An employee may feel commitment to the organization, the department, the supervisor or to peers, so employees may have differing types of commitment combined.

The relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction is controversial and contradictory (Koslowsky, Caspy, & Lazar, 1991) because some researchers have found causal, correlational and nonexistent relations between the



variables. Most research suggests that job satisfaction is an antecedent to organizational commitment but regardless of the causal sequence, it appears that organizational commitment and job satisfaction are associated variables that affect organizational outcomes such as turnover intentions, turnover, absenteeism and work performance (Testa, 2001). Most often, an increased retention rate is the primary benefit of higher commitment, regardless of the type of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1990).

An empirical study by Tansky & Cohen (2001) in a hospital setting showed that organizational commitment and perceived organizational developmental support (training) correlated with employee satisfaction. In general, the more employee development opportunities an organization provides, the more an employee may reciprocate and become more committed to the organization. Employee development opportunities are usually viewed as a positive action from the organization to the employee that sends a message that the organization cares about them and values their contributions (Nadler and Nadler, 1989). The Tansky & Cohen 2001 study supports similar findings of Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) that perceptions of organizational support positively influences organizational commitment. Lastly, Testa (2001) found that increases in job satisfaction will stimulate increased organizational commitment and, in turn, improve business outcomes within the service sector.

Meyer & Allen (1990) suggest that organizations can include numerous practices to foster or improve employee organizational commitment. They recommend increased corporate communications (especially on organizational goals and values), increased training, treat employees fairly & with value, more employee participation, job enrichment, sharing financial gains, promotion from within policies and a perceived

fairness in personnel decision making. While most organizations may not be able to implement all of their suggestions, business leaders should at least be aware of the suggestions and the positive influences upon employees and business outcomes. As mentioned, this project will attempt to reveal what workplace characteristics various types of employees prefer so that research in this area is expanded and may result in increased employee satisfaction and organizational commitment within the modern workplace. Thus, employees and organizations together may prosper.

### Research on Employee Groupings

There is scarce research within the topic of employee workplace preferences, job satisfaction or organizational commitment that is specifically focused on different types or sectors of employees. It has only been within the last decade that documented studies have focused on separate groups of employees outside of traditional line workers. For instance, a 1998 study between public and private sector employees found that private sector employees placed the highest priority on good wages and job security whereas the public sector employees preferred interesting work the most.

A 1999 employee job satisfaction study within the U.S. Steel industry found that job satisfaction depended primarily on how work roles and job duties are defined, on good employee-management relations and on practices that help balance work and family responsibilities. This study showed that those who are able to use their skills and knowledge on the job, those who report positive employee-management relations, and those who believe the company helps them balance work and family responsibilities have relatively high probabilities of being very satisfied with their jobs (Berg, 1999).

Another example is a study profiled in *Communication World* (April, 2000)

magazine focused on communication and public relations professionals. The survey found that this industry group relates job satisfaction to access to technology, compensation and creative opportunities on the job. Lastly, Spinelli (1998) looked at employee job satisfaction within different departments of a major hotel chain. Spinelli's article pointed out the importance of noneconomic job factors, noting that employee satisfaction may vary among departments and this may assist managers to target job enrichment initiatives more effectively to their employees' needs.

This study will expand on the aforementioned concept of investigating more closely certain groups or types of employees and evaluating their workplace preferences. As mentioned earlier, this project will analyze four groups of employees and survey them on three workplace characteristics. Currently, there is some research available as to what employees prefer within organizations but more specific research is warranted. For instance, there is some information available focusing on engineers/computer professionals but there is very scarce information available regarding creative, project managers/strategists, and administrative categories of employees. Therefore, this study will be introducing a new area of research while expanding on the current knowledge.

#### *Summary of Current Research on Computer Professionals*

Fast Company (July 2000) magazine highlighted the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics on the 10 fastest-growing occupations and it was shown that over 1 million people were employed within the engineer/computer occupation in 1998 but that the demand would grow over 100% by the year 2008. Grover & Huray (1998, p.9) write "the U.S. has faced a major shortage of engineers/information technologists (IT) for the past 30 years" and that the scarcity and demand for IT professionals reached epidemic

proportions, especially during the late 1990's. Even with the recent technology industry meltdown in 2001, there are still as many as 850,000 tech jobs in North America and one million positions in Europe to fill (French, 2001).

Since it is evident there is a shortage of qualified skilled computer professional currently in the U.S., it is even more imperative for organizations to hire, retain and develop such skilled employees. French (2001, p. 54) writes "a global bidding war for IT talent now rages 24 hours a day and human capital is the most precious asset in the new economy". As mentioned, this study will attempt to unveil more information as to what this particular category of employee prefers within a workplace so organizations can evaluate and redefine their policies and programs accordingly.

Most recently, Computerworld's (June, 2001) annual survey of the Top 100 Employers for IT professionals summarized that IT professionals "remain fussy" about who they want to work for and organizations need to offer certain elements in order to attract and retain employees. According to the survey, key organizational components include: (a) provide training, education and resources, (b) offer flexible and generous benefits packages, (c) give workers challenging projects, and (d) foster an atmosphere of fun, creativity and respect.

A 1999 study by Jiang focused on entry-level IT professionals and found that these professionals find more satisfaction with their career when supervisor support is prominent and an adequate range of opportunities within their organization exists. Additionally, a 1998 article in Computerworld magazine highlighted a study of 40 companies by the Concours Group. This study claimed that IT staffers usually do not leave over pay but are more likely to leave for greater career growth. Also noted is the

trigger to leave if there was turmoil on the employee's project team or in the company. 71% of the respondents said enjoyment of work was a key factor in their move and 57% said they placed a lot of attention on a clearly developed career plan.

The Concours Group found that companies with the lowest turnover tended to have programs that focused on individual career development. Some studies report a nonsignificant relationship between promotional satisfaction and employee turnover whereas other demonstrate that those who left a firm were more negative about promotional opportunities. Porter and Steers (1973) report that poor promotional opportunities are a major factor leading to employee withdrawal. Furthermore, the accounting and consulting firm, KPMG Peat Marwick witnessed its retention rate improve almost 20% in one year after implementing a career development program.

A study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers and Computer World Canada (Spring, 2000) asked Computerworld magazine subscribers to rate workplace variables in terms of importance and satisfaction. The number one desire by respondents was to be treated with respect by their employer and number two was for management to value their people and be supportive and effective in their managerial roles. Most interesting was that a high salary ranked 18<sup>th</sup> out of 45 workplace variables. Some respondents felt managers had poor communications skills and didn't consult their employees in decision-making.

An article in Computerworld magazine concluded that trust, training and technology top the list of what keeps IT workers at their jobs (Watson, 2000). Mill (2001, p.27) writes in Computing Canada "the chance to work with leading technologies consistently ranks as one of the primary factors in job satisfaction". Training appears

attractive to IT professionals for it keeps their skills current and when the company and/or managers trust their professionals and treat them with respect and allow the IT staffers to be creative, then their job satisfaction is also increased. Moreover, this Computerworld article and others highlight that IT employees are attracted to a good benefits package, perks such as flex time or telecommuting, casual dress policies, staff outings and other “soft” benefits.

Another article within Computerworld (June, 2000) by Melymuka highlighted that organizations need to mentor or coach every new hire and the organizations need to make their employee’s family lives a company priority. Lastly, IT professionals desire job challenges but it’s the lack of corporate bureaucracy that they find pleasing too. A recent study found that a majority of IT professionals who leave their job do so for promotions but more than half also said a major factor in their decision to leave was the work environment (James, 2000).

An article profiled in Computing Canada (March, 1998) discussed a study conducted by Computer Action and found that 75% of Canadian IT workers would move South to the U.S. for a better opportunity. Many Canadian IT professionals believe that U.S. organizations pay better, but more interesting is the insight that Canadian IT workers feel that U.S. employers treat their employees better. The respondents of this study also desired newer technology as well as more interesting work. The conclusion of this study pointed out that well-planned non-monetary incentives can keep skilled IT staff loyal. Whitaker (1999) profiled a survey that found IT workers under age 30 are mostly concerned with career development and enjoyment of work.

However, there is some conflicting research. For example, a national salary

survey published in May 1998 in InformationWeek found that IT professionals valued (a) challenge, (b) atmosphere and (c) compensation. However, InformationWeek published data from another study in April 2000 that found IT professionals changed positions for (a) compensation, (b) bad management or culture, and (c) interesting work. Clearly, more information regarding compensation is essential for a better understanding of its important impact on overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment and turnover.

### Workplace Characteristic Groupings

This study focuses on how four types of employees prefer three workplace characteristic groupings. The workplace components are categorized into operational groupings as defined below, however, other researchers may group these characteristics differently and there may be slight overlap. Each grouping will represent a dependent variable within the study and are separated as:

#### Job Tasks

This first topic area relates directly to the perceived job tasks and responsibilities. Scientific, technical and other employees have reported that work content is the most important component for retention purposes (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). Professionals want to do interesting work that challenges them and uses their skills and talents.

An article in Human Relations by Blau (1999) concluded that task responsibilities and employee performance appraisal satisfaction (discussed in a different section) significantly affected overall job satisfaction. Moreover, Blau's research supported Roberts & Glick's (1981) findings that overall job task satisfaction can dissipate over time and that the supervisor's role in affecting employee satisfaction is important.

Managers should be aware of their employee's reactions to task delegation in order to be sensitive to their job satisfaction level. Kochanski & Ledford (2001, p. 36) write "in most cases, staff doesn't quit a company, they quit a job and improving job design is one of the least used yet most effective ways to reduce turnover in the long run".

### Company Culture & Structure

Organizations, like people, have distinct personalities. This grouping encompasses many job characteristics such as company culture, structure, leadership and softer benefits. According to Schein (1985) culture is a shared phenomenon within a group and community and because of its embedded nature, it is difficult to measure. Additionally, Schein (1986) defined culture as the pattern of basic assumptions that the group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration.

Schein stated that culture has three levels: (a) artifacts, (b) values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions. Culture influences how the members of the group understand and respond to their environment. Alternatively, Schein considered climate to be a surface level indicator of culture and climate can best be characterized as a manifestation of culture (Shadur, Kienzle & Rodwell, 1999). Organizational climate helps to set the tone of the organization and can work to facilitate or impair employee involvement and "applicants being interviewed today for positions inquire as frequently about a firm's corporate culture as they do about its other benefits" (Mill, 2001, p. 26).

Lawler has been an active researcher in the field of employee involvement but there is little research examining the link between employee involvement and organizational climate. However, work by Marchington, Ackers and Goodman (1994)



suggests that employee involvement may be affected by the prevailing organizational culture. Kotter and Heskett (1992) offer insight into how the culture of an organization powerfully influences its economic performance, for better or for worse, and conclude that effective leadership is fundamental in reversing unhealthy cultures.

In the book, The Healthy Company, author Robert Rosen (1991) describes a healthy organization as one where people and practices combine and coordinate to produce exceptional performance. Within the same book, Rosen also mentions several studies to support the notion that “healthy” companies enhance the development of people and add value to the bottom line. Levering (1988) suggests that a great place to work is relevant to identifying satisfying work environments and stated that what is important about a healthy organization is that profits are not something to be achieved at the expense of people. Levering argues that in a great workplace, it is possible to achieve business success while enriching the lives of the people who work there.

A 1999 study conducted by Shadur, Kienzle & Rodwell focused on 269 information technology employees and their perceptions of involvement and organizational climate. They found that only a supportive climate was a significant predictor of participation in decision making, teamwork and communication and that a supportive environment was generally desirable. Lastly, this study concluded that organizational climate can be used as a diagnostic tool to identify those areas that require alteration or fine-tuning to improve the fit between work organization and employee attitudes.

Additionally, Computerworld’s 1996 annual review of the top five best places to work indicated that Cisco was ranked since it had a flat, friendly and entrepreneurial

culture, while Informix software was listed for participation in technology development which has boosted morale. Moreover, Computer Associates International, Inc. believes their intense dedication to getting the job done is a big part of their culture, as is a genuine excitement about working on leading-edge technology. All in all, a culture that encourages motivation, energy, innovation and acceptance to change has a much better chance of retaining their number one assets: their employees.

### *Management Influences*

In a 1997 article, Hewlett-Packard's Bob Witte discussed his beliefs that technical employees appreciate management styles and an overall environment that is not driven by short-term corporate goals. He said retention-minded organizations should offer training programs that groom employees for long-term contributions. Walsh (2001) claims that people aren't just looking for a job but they're looking for an experience where they can grow and learn. In today's knowledge-based economy, talented people want intellectual challenges so organizations and leaders must create a culture that values learning (Reich 1998). For example, Marriott Jr. (2001) states that Marriott International invests \$100 million a year in training because it permeates every aspect of their business and acts as a retention tool too. Many articles and studies show employees crave training opportunities but it will be the wise companies that will not let a short-term economic downturn alter their training programs (Withers, 2001).

Studies by Niehoff, Enz and Grover (1990) found that leadership actions were positively correlated with commitment and job satisfaction. These findings are parallel with research by Yukl (1994), who concluded there was a positive relationship between supportive leadership behaviors and employees attitudes. Peters and Waterman (1982)

found that productivity was improved as a result of strong leadership behaviors. Bernstein (1997) argues that today's generation of managers need to enable their employees, rather than be autocrats and need to offer a vision and be willing to share authority. Additionally, McCafferty (2000) states that managers need to be proactive and "should be trained to spot the early warning signs of dissatisfaction and be proactive in the retention of valued staff" (Callochia & Ramsey, 2001, p. 7).

Xerox's John Seely Brown believes that leadership today needs to create meaning at work for the employees. He believes money alone will not satisfy and retain talented people but that talented people want to be part of something that they believe in, something that confers meaning in their work and in their lives – something that involves a mission. Brown also comments that leaders today should provide that mission and meaning at work for employees. Furthermore, Withers (2001, p. 37) writes "leaders today need to promote a sense of a deeper cause and that workers yearn to be motivated by more than a company's bottom line".

In recent estimates, some 85 percent of Fortune 1000 firms are said to be using some type of team, circle, or other employee-involvement approach with management (Lawler, Mohrman and Ledford, 1992). This contemporary trend to build self-managing teams and flatter work organizations stem from the studies that found benefits in productivity and morale occurred when workers had greater participation (Rothschild 2000). Additionally, with the huge improvements in information technology, workers at all levels of the organization are depending less on the hierarchy for the information vital to their jobs. There are many new ways for organizations to share data and knowledge with employees. Thus, the more workers have the necessary information, the more they

can make good work-related decisions and the less they need to rely on the managers who have had exclusive access to this information.

Schonberger's (1990) focus on internal customer relationships provides support for the idea that the employee may be viewed, in some senses, as the "customer" of the manager, and it is the manager's responsibility to remove the barriers which prevent employees from performing at their highest ability. Also, providing employees the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process increases their understanding of how decisions are made and reduces the number of alternative interpretations employees can have of a situation (Shalit, 1977).

Ferris and his colleagues (1989, 1993, 1994, 1996) have shown that employees will be less affected by politics when they have an understanding of events at work and feelings of control. It has been suggested that supervisors are well positioned to address the negative impact of organization-wide politics. This is such for supervisors can increase the understanding and feelings of control by engaging in cooperative decision-making with their subordinates.

### *Work/Life Balance*

Lau & May (1998) found companies with a high quality of work/life balance also enjoy exceptional growth and profitability—a win-win situation. According to the 1998 America@Work study conducted by Aon Consulting Worldwide Inc., employee satisfaction and commitment are strongly correlated with management's recognition of personal and family life, and the effects of work on workers' personal lives (Laabs, 1998). Additionally, employee commitment studies find that as workplace supportiveness increases, so does employee loyalty. The Aon workforce commitment

study found that the biggest driver of employee loyalty is having managers recognize employee's need to balance work with home life. The Aon study also found that the amount of time workers are losing from their jobs due to personal matters appears to be increasing, with 13.6 days a year missed in 1995, and 15.1 days in 1998.

Withers (2001) writes that the number one retention strategy that responds to worker preferences is for organizations and managers to be proactive in offering employees a better work/life balance. Sullivan (2001) found that although less time may be spent on work at "family-friendly" firms, job performance is just as high and organizational commitment is higher than in firms with less supportive environments. Thus, Sullivan argues firms that focus on long hours for making performance evaluation decisions are not gaining more productivity and may experience higher turnover.

A survey conducted by Hoechst Celanese (1997) also found that programs that help balance work and family responsibilities have a positive effect on employees' decisions to stay with the company. More specifically, employees preferred the ability to work flexible hours on a day-to-day basis, while family care was ranked second. The 1995 Aon Consulting study also found that the percentage of workers reporting regular 50-hour workweeks nearly doubled from 1995 to 1998. Coincidentally, when the America@Work study ranked the 23 common benefits by importance, paid vacation and holiday time moved six spots from 10<sup>th</sup> to fourth place (Stum, 1998).

Personal benefits were originally only childcare benefits designed to alleviate absenteeism (Friedman & Galinsky, 1992). Nowadays, "lifecycle benefits" are geared toward the many demands and challenges typically found in the various life stages of employees such as child care, elder care, parental or health-related leave policies or

employee assistance programs. Moreover, flexible work policies and programs were introduced during the 1970's as a way to ease congestion and energy concerns (Winett & Neale, 1980). Through the years, flextime has become more flexible and common, including benefits like part-time work programs or job-sharing, liberal arrival & departure times and telecommuting. The use of flexible policies can have a tremendous influence on reducing absenteeism rates and can likewise, increase morale (Dalton & Mesch, 1990; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992). Lastly, O'Connell (2001) found that flextime enhances both employee commitment and performance.

Richard Federico, VP and National Practice Leader in the Work/Life Practice at the Segal Company claims the best way to foster commitment is to link work/life initiatives to performance as much as one can. Also, Federico suggests companies use their work/life benefits as strategic advantages to attract and recruit high-performers as well as a reward for high performance employees. In fact, Reimers (2001) reports that current Human Resources executives say job satisfaction is more about quality of life issues these days than salary and stock options. Ann Vicola, a Senior Partner with Corporate Work/Life Consulting explains that quality of life is predicted to be the controlling workforce issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Laabs, 1998).

Likewise, the 1997 Families and Work Institute's National Study of Changing Workforce concluded that the quality of workers' jobs and the supportiveness of their workplaces are the most important predictors of productivity, as reflected in job satisfaction, commitment to an employer, and retention. Ellen Galinsky, President of the Families and Work Institute expresses her view that traditionally pay and benefits were the motivators that really affected the decision about whether employees will stay or

whether they'll give their all. But this viewpoint doesn't prove to be true, according to Laabs (1998), because what really differs is the quality of jobs and how supportive the workplace is to the individual, both in terms of getting the work done and having a life outside the job. Laabs continues that work/life balance and an understanding company culture is a fundamental part of having a workplace that's supportive; this support matters to today's workforce.

Little attention has been paid to the potential impact of coworker relations in mitigating against job dissatisfaction and other undesirable outcomes. However, Hodson (1997) pointed out that social relations in the workplace may make a key contribution to employees' job satisfaction, productivity and well being. Several other recent studies have reported a positive association between supervisor or coworker support and satisfaction with work (Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Cummins, 1989; Ganster, Fusilier & Mayes, 1986; LaRocco & Jones, 1978).

Many companies and business leaders have realized the need to integrate fun into the workplaces and have company game rooms, company gyms, scheduled social time and allow employees to bring pets to work. Additionally, a host of softer benefits that go beyond childcare and eldercare are entering the market like concierge services, and onsite flu shots to make employees' lives less stressful (Dutton, 1998). Also, companies like Sun Microsystems, Oracle and Netscape have dry cleaning services, massage/physical therapists and various dining choices ranging from Indian to Italian food on site.

All in all, it has been shown that organizations which choose to take a long term investment approach to their employees have the highest returns in terms of employee attitudes and performance (Tsui, Pearce, Porter & Tripoli, 1997). Koys (2001) found that

human resource policies and outcomes influence business outcomes, rather than the other way around. Lau & May (1998) stress that as the composition of the workforce continues to change over the years, companies that offer better benefits and supportive working environments are expected to gain leverage in hiring and retaining valuable people. Furthermore, in terms of financial implications, Work/Family Directions found that for every one dollar spent on work-life initiatives, more than two dollars was added to the bottom line through savings and/or increased productivity (Solomon, 1994; Swiss, 1998).

### Compensation

According to Tang (2000), people have different needs and different attitudes toward money at any given point in time and these attitudes may evolve over time. Thus, money will have different meanings and impacts on employee motivation and satisfaction in organizations. Money can be perceived as either a motivator (Lawler, 1981) or a hygiene factor (Herzberg, 1959). People's attitude toward money can be perceived as their frame of reference in which they examine their everyday life (Tang, 1992) and may have a significant impact on their motivation and work-related behavior, especially turnover.

Adams (1965) theorized that individuals evaluate their workplace inputs (e.g., knowledge, skills, abilities, effort, etc.) to their workplace outputs (e.g. money, benefits, promotions and praise, etc.) and then compare with that of other people in order to evaluate their own satisfaction. As mentioned earlier, this has become known as Adam's Equity Theory and remains a fundamental theory within research for workplace and compensation satisfaction studies today.

There are inconsistent findings in the research on the relationship between pay



satisfaction and turnover. In fact, there is clearly conflicting research on the relationship between job satisfaction and compensation. Some studies have reported a non-significant relationship between salary satisfaction and turnover, such as Kock & Steers 1978. Additionally, Motowidlo (1983) found there is not a significant correlation between pay satisfaction and turnover, and Work in America (1973) found that high pay alone will not lead to job satisfaction. However, Campion (1991) found that the most important reason for voluntary turnover is higher wages/career opportunity and Mangione (1973) found both pay and promotional opportunities significantly related to turnover. In summary, there is a relationship between pay and job satisfaction but this correlation varies for each person and may change over time.

Mankin (1978) found that theorists may have underestimated the enduring significance of the extrinsic characteristic of pay. Campion (1991) found that the most important reason for voluntary turnover is higher wages/career opportunity and that employees are more satisfied with the turnover outcome when leaving for higher wages/career opportunity. Likewise, a study that focused on accounting professionals found that departing employees tend to have lower pay satisfaction than stayers and receive about a 20 percent increase in pay on their new job (Hellriegel & White, 1973). Thus in order to increase wages, many employees are motivated to change their jobs.

People who place a high priority on money may want to improve their income by changing jobs regardless of their intrinsic job satisfaction. Intrinsic job satisfaction may have very little impact for those who want to improve their income (Tang, Kim & Tang, 2000). As Milkovich and Newman (1999) pointed out, pay level was extremely important to materialists and less important to those who preferred continuous personal

improvement or to those who were risk averse.

Lawler (1981) found that despite competitive wages, commissions, cost of living increases, bonuses and stock options, many studies have shown that in the majority of organizations, 50 percent or more of employees are dissatisfied with pay. Compensation dissatisfaction may lead to turnover, low commitment, employee theft, sabotage and other negative consequences in organizations (Tang, Kim & Tang, 2000). Furthermore, studies on pay satisfaction clearly show that positive attitudes toward pay are associated with better attendance, less turnover, and a lower probability of employees voting for a union (Heneman, Fox & Eskew, 1998).

In addition to pay, many companies offer hefty stock option packages in order to attract and retain employees. Employee equity programs have become increasingly popular, if not commonplace, by the late 1990's. More often than not, talented people can negotiate a competitive base salary as well as a fair stock option package. Reich (1998) stressed that in order to keep talented employees, organizations need to pay them well and if companies want employees to have the enthusiasm that comes with ownership, then the organizations must trade equity for it. Reich summarized that these days, money does more than talk.

Blau (1999) wrote that performance appraisal satisfaction has been neglected within research and would most likely positively impact overall job satisfaction. Performance appraisal satisfaction deals with such topics as evaluation timeliness, perceived accuracy, goal setting procedures and feedback mechanisms. One's immediate supervisor most often conducts/oversees an employee's performance appraisal although other parties may be involved as well (e.g., coworkers, subordinates, customers).

Performance appraisals can greatly influence other variables such as pay and/or a change in work responsibilities, which in turn, can influence an employee's satisfaction level with their job.

According to Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) a substantial amount of research conducted over the last two decades has indicated that people, when reacting to organizational decisions that affect them, are influenced by the procedures used to establish the decision outcomes. More specifically, people are concerned with the fairness of the decision-making procedures, or procedural justice. This focus on procedural justice is in contrast to the earlier emphasis on distributive justice, or the fairness of the decision outcomes received. Procedural justice effects are independent of, and often greater than, the effects of distributive justice, which indicates that people are concerned with procedures for reasons beyond the immediate outcome they receive from those procedures.

Thus, research has shown that employee satisfaction with a performance appraisal process positively affects employee satisfaction with outcomes based on that process. Employee satisfaction with the performance appraisal process is logically related to the perceived fairness of this process (Organ, 1988). In essence, if the employee feels fair and accurate information was gathered and feels satisfied with the procedures of the process such as timeliness and proper feedback, then this positively affects an employee's overall job satisfaction. Kochanski & Ledford (2001) claim people want to understand how the pay system works and they want clear communication about pay. Folger (1993) claims that while an employee may be disappointed with the outcomes received based on an appraisal, the key to an adverse employee reaction to such outcome negativity is

understanding the process.

It is not surprising that employees will experience reduced job satisfaction when promotions, awards, and pay raises are based on political considerations, rather than merit, or when there are cliques closely tied to organization leaders that typically get their way even at the cost of productivity. Empirical evidence has indicated that perceptions of politics are related to expressions of job satisfaction (Witt, Andrews & Kacmar, 2000). Lastly, a 1998 study by Green, Forrest & Kopf found that for companies to gain the maximum performance from employees, organizations should ensure that compensation systems are administered in conjunction with management practices that promote growth, development and skill acquisition.

In summary, this literature review reveals that people derive satisfaction from a sense of accomplishment, from participating in organizational & group processes/decisions, from fulfilling lifestyle needs, from growing and developing their skills, and being recognized and acknowledged. When these needs are met, employees perceive work more positively, therefore, both the individual and the organization are healthier, more productive and better able to withstand new work demands and challenges.

Once again, the goal of this research paper is to assess employee preferences at the workplace and gather information on their attitudes on three categories of workplace characteristics. From this, it is believed that insightful information regarding various types of employees and which company characteristics within an organization are preferred over others. From this data gathering and analysis, it is hoped that helpful information will be revealed and can be shared with employers as well as furthering

research within this area.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

Since the 1930's, employee attitude surveys have been frequently used in business to assess and document employee morale (Schneider, Ashworth, Higgs & Carr, 1996). Employee attitude surveys are important for organizations looking to improve their employee satisfaction levels and are a relatively easy and cost-effective tool to diagnose organizational levels of satisfaction. Outcomes of surveys can help business leaders target improvements in work environments that can be mutually rewarding to both employees and the organization's bottom line.

A survey of employees at a multimedia media company on which workplace characteristics they prefer at their current employer represented the participant pool. For the purpose of this study, the company name has been changed and is referred to as ABC Internet. ABC Internet is a privately held, six-year-old multimedia company with four offices in the United States. ABC Internet competes with both public and privately held companies and hires talent from the corporate environment as well as entrepreneurs. ABC Internet offers their 100+ employees a progressive environment, a team-based structure, high profile clients, challenging projects as well as the opportunity to expand one's skills and career.

This study considered ABC Internet's employees by the four main groupings of engineers, project managers/strategists, creatives and administrative staff. This study surveyed the employees on the three main workplace categories of job tasks, company culture & structure, and compensation. By distinguishing the employees into four main departments and analyzing their attitudes on the three workplace characteristics topic

areas, it is anticipated that discerning information will arise on which types of employees may prefer certain workplace characteristics over others within an employer. Thus, business leaders and decision-makers may be able to apply this knowledge to improve their organization's policies and programs that will in turn, attract, develop and retain prized employees.

### Participants

Given the above information, this inductive research study surveyed ABC Internet's employees in all four national offices with a quantitatively based instrument with a few open-ended questions in early Spring 2001. There were approximately 100 employees nationwide located in the Los Angeles, Denver, Hollywood and Atlanta offices. More specifically, ABC Internet was comprised of roughly 65% males and the average age of employees was under 35. There were women in prestigious positions such as the Chief Financial Officer, Human Resource Director, Recruiting Director, and Production Director. This study focuses on numerous employee departments and which workplace characteristics are preferred. Therefore, typical demographic information such as age, gender, socio-economic status and geographic information was not collected in order to ensure anonymity of the small participant pool within this particular company.

### *Types of Employees*

This study surveyed ABC Internet's employees (independent variables) described below as well as analyzed their responses in regards to personal preferences with the three main topic areas (dependent variables).

#### *1. Project Management/Strategy*

Project Managers interact with the external clients as well as organize the internal team of engineers and creatives to create and launch a web site within a given timeline and budget. Strategists analyze the client's business needs as well as industry trends to formulate design recommendations and present the findings directly to the external clients before the beginning of a project and work closely with project management too.

## *2. Creatives*

Creatives envision and create the visual look of the websites using technologies such as Photoshop and Flash.

## *3. Engineering*

These employees are programmers or developers that use technologies such as HTML, JavaScript, Active Server Pages, Visual Basic and MS SQL to create intranet/internet websites and databases. This group also includes the network engineers who handle the computer hardware and network connections.

## *4. Administrative*

This group includes everyone else in the company such as the Finance, Sales and Human Resource departments and other office staff such as the office manager and receptionist. Table 1 displays this information.



Table 1

*Employee Groups and Responsibilities*

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Employee group	Job responsibilities
Project Management/Strategy	Project managers interact with the external clients, maintain the projects budget and timeline, and coordinate with the internal team to create and launch the website. Strategists analyze the client's business needs and present findings to the client working with the Project managers.
Creatives	Utilize technologies such as PhotoShop and Flash to create the visual design of a website.
Engineering	Programmers/developers using HTML, JavaScript, Active Server Pages, Visual Basic, MS SQL to design and create the front and backend of a website.
Administrative	Other functions within the company such as Sales, Marketing, Finance, HR, receptionist etc.

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## Design and Procedures

An email introducing and explaining the study was written and sent by ABC's Founder/CEO to every employee. The survey was passed out in person to every employee in Los Angeles & Hollywood by the researcher, passed out in person by the local Human Resources team member in Atlanta, and emailed to the Denver employees. The surveys were collected in a marked collection box within five business days at all offices and the researcher picked up the boxes in person at Los Angeles and Hollywood while the Atlanta and Denver offices mailed the responses to the researcher directly.

## Instrument

The survey was created by the researcher especially for this study and is included as Appendix A. Section One focuses on job tasks and has eight questions, Section Two centers upon company culture & structure and has 15 questions, while Section Three has three questions on compensation. All questions were designed to be straightforward and distinct from each other and were acceptable to the Founder/CEO of ABC Internet. As discussed earlier, the focus of this project is to gain more insight into worker's preferences within the different groupings of employees and which characteristics they prefer within a company. For simplicity, the three categories of job tasks, company culture & structure and compensation represent ABC Internet's company characteristics evaluated within this study.

The inventory utilized a 5 point Likert scale and also included three open-ended questions as well as an additional comments line. It is believed this survey structure yields the most discerning data as well as a greater degree of reliability and validity within the survey design and responses. Two student peers who have their Masters in

Organizational Psychology and are Ph.D candidates as well and three employees at ABC Internet participated in pilot testing. All volunteers assessed the instrument and gave feedback to the researcher directly regarding face validity, usability, and checked for grammatical and typographical errors. For both reliability and validity within the survey, a factor analysis and a calculation of Cronbach's alpha were conducted.

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1 – Do employees in the four departments (project management/strategy, creative, engineering and administrative) at ABC Internet prefer the three workplace characteristic groupings (job tasks, company culture & structure and compensation) differently?

Hypothesis 1A- The employees in the project management/strategy, creative, engineering, and administrative departments (IV's) do prefer job tasks (DV) differently. This hypothesis is represented in the survey as Section 1 questions 1-8.

Hypothesis 1B - The employees in the project management/strategy, creative, engineering, and administrative departments (IV's) prefer the company's culture/structure (DV) differently. This hypothesis is represented in the survey as Section 2 with questions 9-24.

Hypothesis 1C – The employees in the project management/strategy, creative, engineering, and administrative departments (IV's) prefer compensation (DV) differently. This hypothesis is represented in the survey as Section 3 with questions 25-27 and Table 2 depicts this 4x3 factorial design.

Table 2

*Research Question 1 and the 4x3 Factorial Design*

Employee Department		Research Question 1		
Project Mgmt/Strategy	1A-Job Tasks	1B-Culture & Structure	1C-Compensation	
Creatives	1A-Job Tasks	1B-Culture & Structure	1C-Compensation	
Engineering	1A-Job Tasks	1B-Culture & Structure	1C-Compensation	
Administration	1A-Job Tasks	1B-Culture & Structure	1C-Compensation	

Research Question 2 - Which workplace characteristic is the least preferred by the four particular employee departments?

Hypothesis 2 - The company characteristic of compensation (DV) will be the least preferred workplace category out of the three within the study by all employee groups (IV's).

This hypothesis is represented in the survey after question 27 where the participants rank the three workplace categories from the most important to the least.

#### Data Analysis and Statistical Testing

Research question one and hypotheses 1A-1C were statistically tested using a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and descriptive statistics were reported. After the initial MANOVA, a factor analysis was computed and two new scales were created and another MANOVA was calculated. Cronbach's alpha values were computed for all the dependent variables and are listed also. Research question two and hypothesis 2 were figured using a non-parametric statistical test, followed by frequency calculations.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of Participant Characteristics

As discussed earlier, all of the participants for this study were ABC Internet employees from the four national offices: Los Angeles, Hollywood, Denver and Atlanta. A total of 79 surveys were collected out of 91 distributed for a return/participation rate of 87%. The Los Angeles office had 52 surveys collected out of 61 passed out for a return/participation rate of 85%, Hollywood had 8 surveys collected out of 10 passed out for a return/participation rate of 80%, Atlanta had 16 surveys collected out of 14 passed out for a return/participation rate of 115% and Denver had 3 collected out of 3 passed out for a return/participation rate of 100%. It is possible for the Atlanta office to have more than a 100% return rate because of employees that were travelling from another office and turned it in at Atlanta instead of their base location. The researcher does not have any concerns regarding the 115% return rate in Atlanta.

Additionally, ABC Internet has three employees who work from home yet travel throughout all the offices. The survey was emailed to them yet the return/participation rate is unknown for they may have participated and returned the survey at either the Los Angeles or Atlanta location. Table 3 provides a summary of the surveys collected.

From the 79 collected surveys, 15 were from the Creative department (19%), 25 were from Engineering (32%), 21 were from Project Management/Strategy (27%) and 17 were from the Administration group (22%). There was one survey where the group identification question was left blank and another survey that had a blank second side and was invalid. Table 4 depicts this information

Table 3

*Distribution of Surveys Collected by Location*

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Location	Surveys Distributed	Surveys Returned	Percent Returned
Los Angeles	61	52	85%
Hollywood	10	8	80%
Atlanta	14	16	115%
Denver	3	3	110%
Work from home	3	?	?
Entire Company	91	79	87%

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Table 4

*Distribution of Surveys Collected by Department*

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Department Collected	Surveys Returned	Percent of Total Surveys
Creative	15	19%
Engineering	25	32%
Project Mgmt/Strategy	21	27%
Administration	17	22%

---



It is also interesting to note each department's survey response rate from the total number possible. Table 5 outlines this information.

Prior to statistical data analysis, all the applicable survey information was inputted into SPSS and questions 7 and 26 were reverse coded to reflect appropriate answers within the 5-point Likert scale used. Table 6 displays each survey question and the descriptive statistics for each one and Table 7 lists the means and standard deviations for the dependent variables.

#### Data Analysis

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was calculated to determine the effect, or different preferences, of the four employee department groups on the three dependent variables: job tasks, company culture & structure and compensation. The results did not show significant differences among the employee groupings toward the dependent variables of company workplace characteristics, Wilks' Lambda=.86,  $F(9,175)=1.22$ ,  $p=.29$ . The multivariate Eta squared based on Wilks' Lambda was .05. Follow-up ANOVA calculations were not calculated since the MANOVA did not yield significant results.

Table 5

*Distribution of Surveys Collected within each Department*

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Department Collected	Surveys Collected	Total Employees in Department	Percent Collected
Creative	15	17	88%
Engineering	25	30	83%
Proj. Mgmt/Srategy	21	23	91%
Administration	17	21	81%

---

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Each Survey Item*

	M	SD
Section 1: Job tasks		
1. My job duties/responsibilities are what I value most about my job	3.72	.92
2. I know what is expected of me at work	4.00	.96
3. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work properly	3.56	1.07
4. I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	3.34	1.00
5. I feel that I am progressing with my job skills and responsibilities at a comfortable and fair pace	3.50	1.00
6. I feel that there is a good degree of potential growth for me here	3.32	1.09
7. I think about leaving this company for increased job responsibilities or greater growth potential	3.15	1.14
8. I am currently satisfied with my job tasks	3.40	.93
Section 2: Company culture & structure		
9. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	3.42	1.26
10. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	4.09	.88
11. There is someone at work who encourages my development	3.56	1.02
12. I stay at this company because of the co-workers I currently have	4.00	.91
13. I value an "open communication/open door" policy such that I can ask the appropriate person a question or make a comment, regardless of job title	4.52	.66
14. At work, my opinions seems to count	3.90	.85
15. The mission/purpose of this company makes me feel my job is important	3.53	.99
16. It is important to me that the company/leaders keep me informed	4.75	.50
17. I value the relaxed work environment in this company	4.63	.68

(table continues)

Table 6 (continued)

	M	SD
18. It is important to me that I receive feedback, positive or negative	4.72	.53
19. My co-workers are committed to doing quality work	4.11	.83
20. I have a best friend at work	3.21	1.06
21. It is important to me that we have a "learning environment" with company paid-for books and/or classes	4.50	.70
22. In the last six months, someone at work talked to me about my progress	3.40	1.20
23. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow	3.91	.91
24. I stay at this organization because of the overall dynamic company culture	3.82	1.02
Section 3: Compensation		
25. The most important aspect to me about my job is the salary combined with all the benefits—the total comp package	3.20	1.00
26. I would consider leaving this company for a higher total comp package even for a less interesting company culture	2.91	1.05
27. I stay at this company because of the comp package regardless of my job tasks, job satisfaction and the company culture	1.90	.87

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent Variables*

	Group	M	SD
Job tasks	Creative	26.87	4.78
	Engineering	29.64	3.41
	Proj/Strategy	26.57	4.57
	Administrative	28.41	3.16
	Total	28.01	4.12
Company Culture & Structure	Creative	61.67	5.49
	Engineering	64.92	5.60
	Proj/Strategy	63.43	8.18
	Administrative	65.18	5.81
	Total	63.95	6.43
Compensation	Creative	8.07	1.44
	Engineering	8.28	1.65
	Proj/Strategy	7.95	1.80
	Administrative	7.59	2.67
	Total	8.00	1.90

To determine if the survey structure was consistent with the three factors expected, a factor analysis with a varimax rotation was performed on the entire survey. This analysis produced eight factors or components, but the variables loaded onto too many factors and was difficult to comprehend. The factor analysis was repeated specifying four factors and even though there was a relatively clean loading pattern on the factors, the results were basically uninterpretable. In essence, it was too abstract to label each potential scale with a clear meaning that corresponded accurately to the survey questions. Thus, the factor analysis was repeated specifying two potential scales.

The two “cleaner-structured” scales were named Career development with survey items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23, and 24, and Career feedback with items 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16 and 27. A MANOVA was re-computed using these two new variables, and once again, the results did not demonstrate significant differences among the employee groups, Wilks’ Lambda=.88,  $F(6,146)=1.66$ ,  $p=.14$ . The multivariate Eta squared based on Wilks’ Lambda was .06. Table 8 provides the means and standard deviations for the dependent variables of Career development and Career feedback. Follow-up ANOVA calculations were not performed since the MANOVA did not yield significant results.

Cronbach’s alpha values were computed to determine the reliability for each scale. The Career development scale had an alpha of .81 and the Career feedback scale had an alpha of .80 which are both acceptable values.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for the New Dependent Variables*

	Group	M	SD
Career development	Creative	55.00	9.13
	Engineering	61.32	6.31
	Proj/Strategy	56.86	9.50
	Administrative	60.06	6.40
	Total	58.63	8.11
Career feedback	Creative	27.73	4.56
	Engineering	29.40	4.26
	Proj/Strategy	27.57	5.24
	Administrative	29.12	4.49
	Total	28.53	4.63

Research question 2 asks which workplace characteristic is the least preferred of the three and it was predicted that the category of compensation would be the least preferred. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis statistical test was computed with the employee groups and the participant rankings on job tasks, company culture & structure and compensation. The Kruskal-Wallis statistic was 3.019 and the significance = .389. Therefore, there were not statistical differences among the employee departments on the three job categories.

Alternatively, a review of the frequency information on the entire participant pool showed that the company culture & structure category is the least preferred with 30 responses, then the compensation category with 27 responses and the job tasks category had 20 responses and 2 surveys had invalid responses.

As mentioned earlier, the survey created for this particular study incorporated three open-ended questions as well as an additional comments line. From analyzing the 79 survey responses, a master list of themes was created for each question, then the list was continually collapsed to create the following master list. A comment had to be noted by two participants in order to be considered noteworthy. In order to increase this section's reliability and validity, reliability of the coding scheme was reviewed by two graduate school peers who independently reviewed the themes and offered suggestions. Only three changes were needed to clarify the groupings and meanings. These two colleagues each have a M.S. in Organizational Psychology and have been trained in qualitative analysis. Table 9, 10, 11 and 12 summarize the findings by themes.



Table 9

*Themes Reported for First Open-ended Question*

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Survey question: List the three characteristics you value about the job and/or this company

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Participant Responses	Number of times marked on survey
Special atmosphere	31
Top-notch, dedicated coworkers	26
Opportunity to learn on the job & expand skills	16
Generous benefits & liberal HR policies	15
Independent work environment	13
Quality clients & engaging projects	9
Open communication throughout	9
Horizontal structure & minimized bureaucracy within company	8
Everyone's dedication to quality	4

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Table 10

*Themes Reported for Second Open-ended Question*

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Survey question: List the job and/or company characteristics valued but are not currently available or would like to see improved

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Response	Number of times marked on survey
Improved senior leadership, need more experienced people	11
Increased feedback & mentoring	11
Better communication across other departments	9
Higher compensation	8
Recognition/rewards	6
More varied training opportunities	6
More work/life balance policies	6
Organized career growth path & upward mobility	6
More organizational processes across national offices	5
More defined roles & job descriptions	4
More internal resources	4

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Table 11

*Themes Reported for Third Open-ended Question*

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Survey question: I would consider leaving this company if another employer offered

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Response	Number of times marked on survey
Significantly higher compensation (at least 15-20%)	24
Higher compensation but with same Company environment	20
More challenging work tasks	12
More training/finance further education	9

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Table 12

*Themes Reported for Fourth Open-ended Question*

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Survey question: Additional Comments line

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Response	Number of times marked on survey
ABC Internet is a great place to work	9
Some people do not realize how good we have it here	2

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## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this dissertation research project was to assess employee workplace preferences to determine if employee groups prefer different workplace characteristics. This chapter will briefly review and summarize the data results outlined earlier in Chapter IV and highlight interpretations by the researcher. Assumptions, limitations and implications of this study will also be presented and discussed.

Luckily, the participant rate for this study by ABC Internet's four national offices was high since 79 out of 91 people returned the survey for a participant rate of 87%. There are a few factors that can be attributed to the high survey return rate such as ABC Internet's Founder/CEO lending his support and sending the introductory email to the company. Other factors include the fact that an employee survey had not been given before at ABC Internet and the employees may have been anxious to share feedback and the participant's were made aware that ABC Internet's upper management team would be presented with all the findings.

#### Hypothesis Discussion

Although research question 1 and hypotheses 1A-1C were tested with a MANOVA and factor analysis computing different results than predicted or hoped, there are still some interesting revelations within this research project. The MANOVA statistical analysis did not show that the various groups of employees prefer the workplace characteristics differently but it is believed that the results were due to a small sample size and a lack of power.

Research question 2 asks which workplace characteristic is the least preferred by all ABC Internet employees and this was figured with non-parametric statistical test and a frequency count. It was anticipated that the workplace characteristic of compensation would be the least preferred. Unfortunately the non-parametric test lacked significance but from a frequency count, company culture & structure was the least preferred by a slim margin of three marks over compensation. It is interesting to note the slim margin between the two categories and demonstrates that modern workers may feel strongly about both categories and further investigation could reveal insightful information that about today's worker preferences. Job tasks is the most preferred characteristic and this is a logical finding and correlates with past research studies and findings that employees value interesting and challenging assignments.

While there was not clear statistical significance found within the quantitative analysis, the open-ended questions yielded some thoughtful information. As aforementioned, the responses had to be written by at least two participants in order to be noted.

The first open-ended question asked for the participants to list the three characteristics most preferred about the job and/or company. It is interesting to observe that 31 people commented on the relaxed environment and 26 people commented on their coworkers. This is intriguing since people did not comment on their job tasks or compensation as noted earlier as preferred workplace characteristics so there are conflicting findings. This overlap or conflict could also encourage further research into today's worker preferences. Additionally, the third most marked comment was for a

greater opportunity to learn and this is consistent with current research on modern employees and could also bolster further investigation.

The second question asked which job and/or company characteristics are desired by the participant but not currently available or would like to see improved and there were 10 themes found. Eleven people commented both on improved leadership and greater feedback/mentoring. These are engaging findings because they demonstrate that employees prefer leadership and feedback. This is in accordance with current research that business leaders need to provide leadership and vision to their people and also the organization needs to offer feedback and mentoring so workers can to hone their skills. This relates to the earlier revelation that employees care about their job skills and want to continually grow and improve them.

The third question asked the participants to list which characteristics they would consider leaving ABC Internet for another employer and there were four total themes. Higher compensation was marked by 24 people, 20 noted higher compensation with the same company environment and 12 people wrote in more challenging tasks. This is interesting information because clearly compensation is a strong factor but more challenging tasks also shows that today's worker cares about their job tasks and skills.

Lastly, the final question was an additional comments line which few participants completed but there were two positive themes uncovered. Nine people commented that ABC Internet is a great place and 2 people mentioned that not enough employees realize how good they have it at ABC Internet.

It should be noted that the extracted themes are more useful to ABC Internet in particular and can not be transferred to other organizations or other industries. However,

it should be acknowledged that all of the collected themes cross the three workplace groupings of job tasks, company culture & structure and compensation quite evenly. Unfortunately, and contrary to expectations, no single workplace characteristic seems preferred over the others within this study.

#### Assumptions and Limitations of the Dissertation

This study stems from research demonstrating that employees prefer different characteristics within a job and assumes that these preferences influence employee satisfaction levels. There are numerous study limitations and as mentioned earlier, demographic information such as gender, age, ethnicity etc. was not collected due to the small sample size and concern for participant anonymity. Furthermore, it was assumed that location differences by the participant pool are held constant since location information also was not collected due to the anonymity concerns.

It is important to note that an organization's workforce is not homogeneous. Levels of, and influences on, employee satisfaction will vary across subgroups. Since the participant pool was quite small and this study focused on certain workplace characteristics within one multimedia company, the study lacked an adequate statistical power to detect a real significance or difference that may exist.

Given that this is the first attempt known to the researcher to relate various employee groupings to workplace preferences, it would be interesting if other studies expanded on the premise but incorporated more participants from numerous companies so the results would have greater statistical power and offer more generalizable results. Since this study is a non-experimental company case-study, no causal conclusions can be made.



## Implications of the Research

Even though this project does not offer clear statistical findings, there are a few contributions and implications to mention. This research project offers a new survey instrument that may benefit from alterations, but nonetheless, this survey instrument may be utilized with more significant results in the future. This project contributes and supports current research for it offers some consistent findings, such that employees prefer workplace characteristics like meaningful work, training, work/life policies and compensation. Also, this paper offers ideas for further investigation.

In looking at this study in a broader sense, the premise underlying it is important and valid since employee workplace preferences have changed over the years, as highlighted within the Literature Review section. As discussed earlier, employees prefer different characteristics within a workplace and an investigation into workplace characteristics is important and worthwhile for organizations in today's global marketplace. Many companies recognize the worth of their employees to the organization, but there is a perceived gap between what employees prefer and what companies offer (Papmehl, 2002).

This study offers relevant data that can be shared with ABC Internet specifically, thus if another study was completed with more participants within various companies, then it would be hoped that those results would offer greater statistical significance as well as greater generalizability. It does seem apparent from this particular study that employees do prefer the three workplace characteristics of job tasks, company culture & structure and compensation. This alone is interesting information since many managers and employers still believe that employees only prefer compensation.

This study is unique in that it tried to evaluate workplace preferences among employee departments to reveal new information. Even though the statistical results were non-significant, this area of research is timely and applicable and warrants greater investigation in order to assist organizations today. Companies are dependent on their top performers to innovate and provide services that differentiate them from their fierce competitors (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2002) and employees prefer different aspects within a workplace. Companies may continue to struggle in meeting and fulfilling employee preferences and expectations without additional studies and further research.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Directions:** Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement, using the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree/Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

**Section 1: Job Tasks**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My job duties/responsibilities are what I value most about my job.....                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I know what is expected of me at work.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work properly.....                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I feel that I am progressing with my job skills and responsibilities at a comfortable and fair pace ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I feel that there is a good degree of potential growth for me here .....                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I think about leaving this company for increased job responsibilities or greater growth potential .....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I am currently satisfied with my job tasks .....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Section 2: Company Culture and Structure**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work .....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person .....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. There is someone at work who encourages my development.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I stay at this company because of the co-workers I currently have.....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I value an “open communication/open door” policy such that I can ask the appropriate person a question or make a comment, regardless of job title ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. At work, my opinions seem to count.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. The mission/purpose of this company makes me feel my job is important .....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. It is important to me that the company/leaders keep me informed (ie: quarterly meetings, emails, dept meetings) .....                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I value the relaxed work environment (creative office space, casual dress policy, game room, kitchen, etc) in this company.....                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. It is important to me that I receive feedback, positive or negative .....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. My coworkers are committed to doing quality work.....   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I have a best friend at work .....  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Disagree/Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

21. It is important to me that we have a "learning environment" with  
company paid-for books and/or classes ..... 1 2 3 4 5
22. In the last six months, someone at work talked to me about my progress..... 1 2 3 4 5
23. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow..... 1 2 3 4 5
24. I stay at this organization because of the overall dynamic company culture..... 1 2 3 4 5

**Section Three: Compensation**

25. The most important aspect to me about my job is the salary  
combined with all the benefits—the total compensation package ..... 1 2 3 4 5
26. I would consider leaving this company for a higher total compensation package  
even if for a less interesting job and less interesting company culture..... 1 2 3 4 5
27. I stay at this company because of the compensation package regardless  
of my job tasks, job satisfaction and the company culture ..... 1 2 3 4 5

**Please rank the importance of each area to you with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least.**

\_\_\_\_ Job tasks                      \_\_\_\_ Company culture                      \_\_\_\_ Compensation

**I work in the following group:**

\_\_\_\_ Creative                                      \_\_\_\_ Administrative (Accounting, HR, Sales, PR, Office support)

\_\_\_\_ Engineering                                      \_\_\_\_ Project Management/Strategy

**Comments:**

The three characteristics I value most about my job and/or this company are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

There are certain job and/or company characteristics that I value but are not currently available or I would like to see improved, such as \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I would consider leaving this company if another employer offered me \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your confidential participation and please drop off in the collection box!