DISSERTATION

TOO LEGIT TO QUIT?

HOW REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS AFFECT EARLY TURNOVER DECISIONS

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

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Using an organizational sample of call center employees, the current study improved upon conceptual and methodological limitations of prior realistic job preview (RJP) and turnover research to conduct a more rigorous test of RJP effectiveness. Specifically, using both quantitative organizational human resources archival records and qualitative third-party exit interview data, it was expected that an RJP intervention would be related to (1) a decreased voluntary turnover rate, (2) an organizationally unavoidable voluntary exit reason or involuntary exit reason (versus an organizationally avoidable voluntary exit reason), and (3) an increase in organizational tenure among exited employees. Results failed to support a hypothesized relationship between the RJP intervention, lower voluntary turnover rate, and increased organizational tenure among former employees, as effects were in the hypothesized direction but not large enough to establish statistical significance. Results also did not support the hypothesized relationship between the RJP intervention and exit reason. Findings and literature synthesis are pertinent for the design of future RJP research and the implementation of realistic recruitment interventions. Further implications of the results, contributions of the study, limitations, and recommendations for future research are also addressed.

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The initial contact between a job applicant and his or her prospective new employer is complex and paradoxical. Organizational entry can be optimized when the job applicant and organization both possess the need to acquire and receive accurate information about one another to ascertain whether a mutually-beneficial situation will result from creating a partnership as employee and employer. However, both parties are also motivated to appear desirable in order to attract the other. Consequently, during the process of recruitment and organizational entry, organizations often provide biased and overly optimistic information to job seekers in order to build the best possible applicant pools (Buckley, Fedor, Carraher, Frink, & Marvin, 1997; Wanous, 1980). As a result, new hires commonly possess unrealistically positive expectations regarding the organization's ability to satisfy their needs and desires for employment (Wanous, 1973, 1976).

Once newcomers begin work, the mismatch between positively inflated pre-employment expectations and day-to-day life on the job can create a harsh reality shock (Breaugh, 1983; Morse & Popovich, 2009). In accordance with the present study's title, the experiences of newly hired employees should legitimately align with the job and organizational information provided to them as job applicants. For individuals who have just transitioned from organizational outsider to insider, the absence of alignment can cause a stark discrepancy that introduces a host of negative outcomes. In contrast, when pre-hire expectations match initial job experiences, organizational newcomers begin their tenure with a job that is "too legit to quit" (Hammer, 1991).

Realistic Job Previews

To prevent a mismatch between job applicants' exaggerated expectations and job

incumbents' daily reality on the job, a realistic job preview (RJP) is a technique designed to present job applicants with an authentic view of organizational life by including negative as well as positive information (Wanous, 1973). Hakel (1982) defined RJPs as "…presenting all pertinent information without distortion" (p. 153). More recently, Earnest, Allen, and Landis (2011) defined RJPs as "programs, materials, and/or presentations that provide applicants with realistic and balanced (positive and negative) information about a job." RJPs have received considerable research attention evaluating the effects of providing job applicants with an honest glimpse of what will actually be encountered on the job, and ascertaining factors that augment the effectiveness of this technique (Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Klein & Polin, 2012).

Although inflating newcomers' expectations may be a seemingly successful organizational strategy for recruiting job applicants in the short-term, a number of longer-term consequences may result once applicants are on board including job dissatisfaction and voluntary turnover (Breaugh, 2008). To prevent these detrimental consequences, the primary purpose of an RJP is to appropriately recalibrate unrealistically high job expectations held by recruits to set them up for a smoother transition into the job. Before defining research needs, it is useful to review prior RJP research.

Historical background. Historically, a practical need for realistic recruitment can be related back to the American human relations movement in the 1930's (Morse & Popovich, 2009). As work organizations started to view employees less as mere extensions of machinery and more as a competitive business advantage, research on topics like work motivation and job attitudes emerged (Katzell & Austin, 1992). Specifically, applied research on the topic of realistic recruitment began to address reactively the problem of turnover, particularly early turnover (i.e., less than one year of tenure). Even in the early days of studying realistic

recruitment, researchers understood the importance of interventions that had the effect of limiting turnover (Morse & Popovich, 2009). In attempts to remedy this potentially costly and damaging problem, RJPs grew in both research and practice (Breaugh, 2008).

Weitz and Nuckols (1955) were credited with conducting the first study pertaining to the consequences of unrealistic job expectations held from recruitment. In their study of job satisfaction and job survival of insurance salesmen, they found that the salesmen were more likely to leave their jobs when their managers had positively skewed recruitment messages prior to their employment. Their findings provided preliminary evidence that having been "sold" on a job with an overly positive spin during recruitment was related to job dissatisfaction and turnover.

The following year, Weitz (1956) was the first to propose that providing job applicants with a realistic picture of the job would reduce turnover. This study of insurance agents showed that the group who received a realistic preview booklet (compared to those who received a regular recruiting booklet) prior to job acceptance experienced significantly less turnover for the first six months of employment. Specifically, Weitz found that insurance agents in the realistic preview group experienced 30% less turnover than the control group.

Nearly two decades later, Wanous (1973) coined the term "*realistic job preview"* and advocated that this technique warranted substantial future research. In his seminal study, Wanous argued that the use of realistic information during recruitment reduced early turnover and examined several psychological phenomena contributing to the relationship between realistic recruitment information and job survival. Wanous (1978) later expanded on the processes by which RJPs reduced turnover, as discussed below.

Further establishing RJP research, Porter and Steers (1973) published a review of

absenteeism and turnover literature that, most notably, focused on realistic recruitment as a useful mechanism for reducing turnover. They introduced the met-expectations hypothesis as an underlying principle of realistic recruitment information; this hypothesis posits that the extent to which job applicants' pre-employment expectations are met on the job will have a direct effect on later job satisfaction. Based on the large body of empirical evidence showing a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover, Porter and Steers deduced that unmet expectations should negatively impact job survival.

Conceptual basis of RJPs. To better understand the proposed effects of RJPs, it is important to first understand their conceptual origin. Throughout over 60 years of RJP literature, researchers have primarily focused on answering practical questions centered on how RJPs "work" to ultimately increase employee longevity (Breaugh, 2008). Thus, existing RJP studies have been largely atheoretical and inductive in nature, as they have grown out of a practical need to address the naturally occurring tension between organizational attraction and retention (Breaugh & Billings, 1988; Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

Wanous (1973, 1978) established the foundation for exploring the psychological phenomena underlying RJPs. In his first of many RJP studies, Wanous (1973) posited that either self-selection or applicant expectations were influencing the relationship between realistic recruitment information and turnover. Wanous (1978) further explored whether RJPs either caused attrition in mismatched applicants during the pre-employment phase (self-selection), or caused expectations of new hires to be appropriately calibrated during the post-employment phase (applicant expectations). Wanous' findings indicated that providing realistic job information did not affect job acceptance, but did affect job survival, with the realistic job information group experiencing less turnover and higher job satisfaction than the control group.

Thus, Wanous concluded that met expectations were the foundational psychological mechanism behind the efficacy of realistic recruitment information, as opposed to applicant self-selection.

Beyond his study's specific findings, Wanous (1978) proposed a comprehensive conceptual model in which he described the ways in which providing realistic information to job applicants may affect various organizational outcomes (see Figure 1). Wanous explained that giving applicants accurate information about a job prevents later disillusionment, which is related to both job attitudes and job survival. Wanous' model proposes that there are four primary underlying psychological mechanisms by which RJPs should reduce turnover: a) Self-selection, b) met expectations, c) ability to cope, and d) air of honesty. These four distinct but not completely independent factors have been hypothesized to mediate the effectiveness of RJPs (Breaugh, 1983; Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981; Hom, Griffith, Palich, & Bracker, 1998; Reilly, Brown, Blood, & Malatesta, 1981; Suszko & Breaugh, 1986; Wanous, 1980). Next I describe each of these four components of the model.

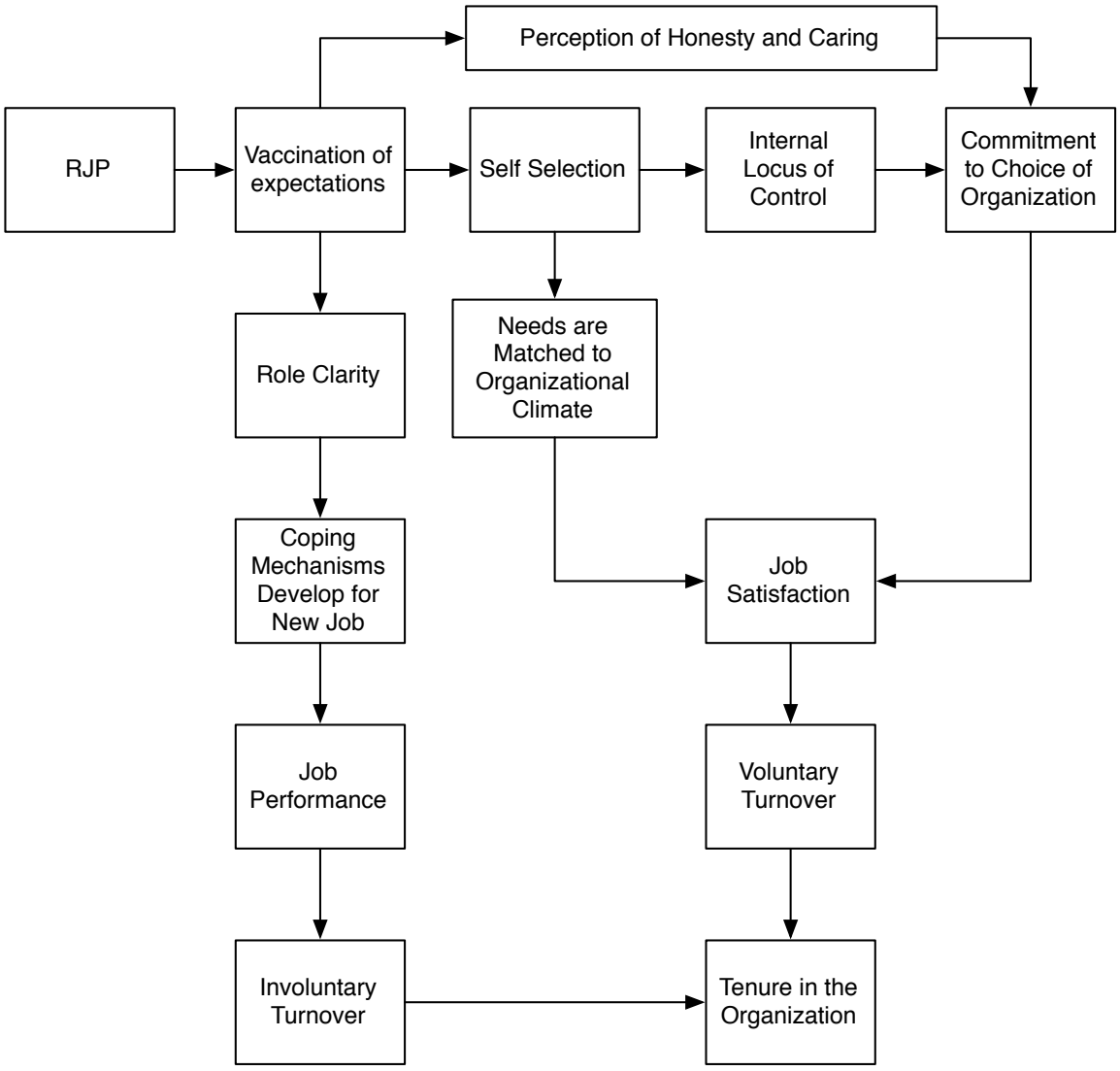

Figure 1: Psychological processes underlying the effectiveness of the RJP (Wanous, 1978)

Self-Selection. First, during the recruitment process, RJPs are proposed to increase applicants' propensity for self-selection. Applicants who receive RJPs and discover that the job will not fit their needs are more likely to choose to decline a job offer. Conversely, applicants who do not receive RJPs are not given the information necessary for self-selection, and therefore, may leave an organization soon after joining because their expectations differed significantly from the reality. Lastly, applicants who receive RJPs and do accept the job are expected to perceive more control over their decision to join the organization since they were able to assess

whether or not the job would be a mutually beneficial match. This greater perceived control in job choice, prior to organizational entry, is posited to lead to increased tenure, satisfaction, and commitment (Wanous, 1978).

Met expectations. Second, assuming that lower expectations will be more easily met by the actual job circumstances, "met expectations" occur when a person's experiences on the job match what he or she expected to encounter (Hom et al., 1998; Porter & Steers, 1973). In other words, when realistic job information is communicated to applicants, they receive a small dose of organizational reality that tempers potentially inflated initial job expectations. Thus, RJPs are proposed to cause a "vaccination" of initial job expectations, preventing possible disappointment once the new employee has begun performing fully on the job. Furthermore, it is assumed that individuals whose initial expectations are met or exceeded are more likely to be satisfied with the job, and consequently, less likely to leave the job voluntarily due to disillusionment or reality shock (Wanous, 1978).

Coping. Third, RJPs are also proposed to increase employees' ability to cope once on the job by bringing common job stressors to their attention early on. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as behavioral and cognitive efforts used to manage a stressor. Some general functions of coping are to gather information about the demands of the stressor, reduce tension, and restore a state of equilibrium (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In other words, coping refers to what a person actually thinks or does to manage a stressor and minimize strain (Lazarus, 1991), allowing employees to reframe on-the-job events as healthy challenges instead of dreaded threats. It is believed that applicants who receive RJPs will have been forewarned about potential problems that may arise on the job, and therefore, will possess a heightened ability to employ coping strategies in order to reduce avoidable stress (Wanous, 1978). Having the opportunity to

anticipate stressors and even pre-rehearse how to handle stressful situations improves an employee's ability to cope with the difficulties of job demands they will inevitably encounter (Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981).

Honesty. Fourth and finally, RJPs are proposed to increase applicants' sense of the organization's supportiveness, trustworthiness, and honesty because they cause applicants to recognize the time, resources, and good intentions invested in providing an accurate recruitment message. When applicants perceive that the organization cares enough to provide balanced and pertinent recruitment information without coercion, they should experience greater clarity regarding the tasks required for their role, more satisfaction with their choice to join the organization and greater commitment to begin the job itself. Ultimately, it is proposed that this greater clarity, satisfaction, and commitment will translate into positive job attitudes and a lower probability of turnover once the individual has joined the organization as an employee (Wanous, 1978).

Empirical support for RJP psychological processes. Existing RJP literature has provided empirical support for these four underlying psychological processes introduced in Wanous' (1978) model. For example, Premack and Wanous' (1985) meta-analytic findings showed that RJPs decreased initial expectations and increased self-selection. Contrary to Wanous' (1978) model, they found that RJPs decreased job applicants' perceptions of the organization's supportiveness, trustworthiness, and honesty, although this finding was based on only four studies and should be interpreted with caution. Presumably, these perceptions could have stemmed from job applicants perceiving the RJP information as overly honest to the point of appearing harsh, causing backlash instead of positive perceptions. In the most recent RJP meta-analysis, Earnest et al. (2011) also found that RJPs decreased initial expectations and

increased self-selection and perceptions of organizational honesty.

Neither Premack and Wanous (1985) nor Earnest et al. (2011) examined the effects of RJPs on employees' coping, as this is a lesser-studied topic in the RJP literature. However, Suszko and Breaugh (1986) supported coping as a psychological mechanism by demonstrating that new hires who were given RJPs managed stress better than those who were not given RJPs. From a broader perspective, RJP studies have established the met expectations hypothesis as the most widely accepted psychological process underlying the RJP (Hom et al., 1998; Morse & Popovich, 2009).

Empirical support for the effectiveness of RJPs. Thus far I have discussed what RJPs are and how they are proposed to operate. According to Wanous' (1978) model (see Figure 1), RJPs are proposed to affect job satisfaction and turnover. I will now detail past and present foundational studies that offer evidence pertaining to the efficacy of RJPs in order to address the fundamental question, "Do they work?"

RJPs, turnover, and other outcomes.

Aside from turnover, job satisfaction has been the most frequently studied outcome examined in RJP research (Phillips, 1998). For example, Suszko and Breaugh (1986) demonstrated that inventory takers who received RJPs reported higher levels of job satisfaction compared to those who did not receive RJPs. However, because each experimental condition had a sample size of 10, it is prudent to interpret these results with caution. Similarly, Buckley, Fedor, Veres, Wiese, and Carraher (1998) found that manufacturing workers who received RJPs had greater job satisfaction after six months on the job, compared to those who did not receive RJPs. In contrast, Dugoni and Ilgen (1981) did not observe significant differences in job satisfaction between grocery employees who did and did not receive RJPs. Overall, evidence

linking RJPs and job satisfaction has been mixed.

Porter and Steers (1973) discussed the integral connection between lower job satisfaction, withdrawal cognitions, and withdrawal behaviors, which ultimately lead to turnover. Similarly, Hom et al. (1998) demonstrated that elevated job satisfaction diminishes withdrawal cognitions as loyalty is fostered between the employee and employer, thereby reducing employees' likelihood for voluntary turnover. Suszko and Breaugh (1986) found that inventory taker employees who received RJPs were less likely to voluntarily leave the organization. Again, conclusions from this study must be interpreted tentatively due to the small sample size. Dugoni and Ilgen also found that grocery workers who received RJPs had less voluntary turnover compared to the control group, although results were only marginally significant. Last, Reilly et al. (1981) did not find significant differences in voluntary turnover or overall turnover for customer service representatives who did and did not receive RJPs, despite their relatively large sample size (n = 842). Similar to research regarding RJPs and job satisfaction, existing studies connecting RJPs and turnover has been tenuous.

Although a comprehensive review of prior studies is beyond the scope of this paper, results of studies examining whether RJPs actually work have been mixed. Accordingly, four meta-analyses have been conducted to date to aggregate and distill findings across all existing studies (Earnest et al., 2011; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985).

Meta-analytic evidence. McEvoy and Cascio (1985) reported a corrected correlation of -.09 between the use of RJPs and turnover. This somewhat limited meta-analysis only considered the effects of RJPs on job survival. In light of this small effect size, McEvoy and Cascio suggested that turnover reduction efforts might be better spent elsewhere. Concurrently,

Premack and Wanous (1985) reported a similarly small corrected correlation -.06 between RJPs and turnover. However, contrary to McEvoy and Cascio, Premack and Wanous concluded that RJPs are a worthwhile turnover management technique considering the relatively insignificant investment required to create and implement them. Over a decade later, Phillips (1998), mirroring the previous meta-analysis, reported a mean corrected *r* of -.05 between RJPs and all turnover and a corrected correlation coefficient of -.06 between RJPs and voluntary turnover. Finally, according to the latest meta-analysis, Earnest et al. (2011) reported a mean corrected correlation of -.07 for RJPs and voluntary turnover, and a corrected *r* of -.04 for RJPs and all turnover. Earnest et al. concluded that RJPs remain a viable strategy for modestly affecting turnover, especially considering the minimal investment of time and resources required for implementation. The researchers noted that this endorsement of RJPs stands in spite of the continuously changing nature of recruitment systems and proliferation of increasingly available information online.

Meta-analytic evidence has also demonstrated modest support for the relationship between RJPs and other key outcomes: Lower initial job expectations, greater job satisfaction, greater organizational commitment, and greater performance (Earnest et al., 2011; Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985). For example, mean r_c's reported for initial job expectations were -.17 (Premack & Wanous, 1985), -.18 (Phillips, 1998), and -.12 (Earnest et al., 2011). Aligned with Porter and Steers' (1973) aforementioned met expectations hypothesis and Wanous' (1978) conceptual model for understanding the psychological processes underlying RJP effectiveness, empirical evidence supports the notion that lowering initial job expectations will translate to more positive job attitudes, better performance, and ultimately, reduced turnover. Meta-analytic evidence for the main effects of RJPs on job attitudes and performance are much smaller in

magnitude than the main effects for lowering expectations. Regarding job satisfaction, mean reported r_c's were .06 (Premack & Wanous, 1985) and -.01 (Phillips, 1998). Mean reported r_c's for commitment were .09 (Premack & Wanous, 1985) and .01 (Phillips, 1998). Last, mean reported r_c's for performance were .03 (Premack & Wanous, 1985) and .05 (Phillips, 1998). In summary, existing RJP meta-analyses have demonstrated consistent small negative effect sizes for turnover, consistent and slightly larger negative effect sizes for initial job expectations, and more equivocal modest effect sizes for job attitudes and performance.

Moderators of the relationship between RJPs and outcomes. To summarize, meta-analytic evidence has shown that RJPs produce weak effects overall. One possible explanation for the observed weak effects could be that RJPs work under some conditions but not others, therefore weakening overall effect sizes. Consequently, I will also review key moderators and their contribution to establishing a deeper understanding of the ways in which RJPs are more or less likely to work. In the first RJP meta-analysis, McEvoy and Cascio (1985) found that job complexity (defined in their study as entry-level non-management positions versus advanced management positions) did moderate the relationship between RJPs and turnover, resulting in larger turnover reduction for more complex jobs (i.e. insurance sales and military personnel) and smaller turnover reduction for less complex jobs (i.e. store clerks, factory workers, service telephone operators). Premack and Wanous (1985) examined the medium by which RJPs were presented, specifically whether they were written or audio-visual. They found that job candidates who received an audio-visual RJP had higher job performance than those who received a written RJP, with no significant effects for other outcome variables, self-selection and job survival.

Phillips' (1998) meta-analysis made a significant contribution to the literature by

focusing on the following moderators: Research setting (laboratory or field), timing of the RJP manipulation (before hiring or after hiring), and presentation medium (written, verbal, or videotaped). Phillips found that the set of all three moderators accounted for 41% of the variance in voluntary turnover and 33% of the variance in all turnover. Specifically, the effect of RJPs was stronger for field rather than lab studies (research setting), when implementation occurs just before hiring rather than after hiring (timing), and when the delivery is verbal rather than written or videotaped (presentation medium).

Earnest et al. (2011) also examined research setting, RJP timing, and presentation medium, as well as industry type (i.e. white collar, blue collar, military, education, or healthcare), experience requirements (entry level or managerial), education level (high school, college, or beyond), Internet accessibility (whether the study was published before or after the existence of the Internet, with publication dates of 1994 and prior coded as "pre-Internet" and publication dates of 1995 or later coded as "post-Internet"), and timing of measures (pre-hire, post-hire, or on the job). Findings regarding research setting and presentation medium were consistent with prior research. Effects on voluntary and overall turnover were stronger in field settings versus lab settings, and for oral RJPs compared to other presentation media. Contrary to prior research, Earnest et al. (2011) found that post-hire RJPs were more effective than pre-hire at influencing voluntary and overall turnover. They also found that RJPs were most effective at impacting turnover in the healthcare industry, in managerial jobs (as compared to entry level), and for those with college education levels. Finally, they did not find support for the hypothesis that Internet accessibility would cause more recent RJPs (1995 and later) to be less effective at influencing turnover. Even with the abundant information available to job applicants on the Internet, it appears that RJPs have a unique effect above and beyond what can be accessed through

independent online searching.

Reviewing the highly turbulent and criticized empirical history of RJPs, one can find mixed results: there is ample evidence suggesting that RJPs both do and do not work. Whether or not RJPs have significant effects on organizational outcomes, there are other germane reasons to use them. Buckley et al. (1997) argued that the provision of realistic pre-employment and post-employment job information by hiring organizations is ethically mandated no matter how underwhelming the empirical support may be. Ethical stance aside, I will review in the following section my proposition that prior empirical evidence has routinely underestimated the effects of RJPs due to a number of conceptual and methodological flaws.

Weaknesses in Existing Literature (Why Don't RJPs Work Better?)

Although it is possible that RJPs are indeed marginally effective at best, abandoning the use of RJPs altogether without first attempting to review and improve the implementation and empirical inquiry may be akin to throwing the baby out with the bath water. While respectfully acknowledging the large body of existing RJP literature spanning over sixty years, I will review a number of conceptual and methodological gaps that are prevalent in both early and recent research. Breaugh and Billings (1988) stated that considerable inconsistencies exist in the literature regarding fundamental questions including: "What is an RJP?" "How should an RJP be provided?" and "How can we maximize the effects of RJPs?" Although it is possible that RJPs are an outright ineffective technique, I propose that flawed RJP research has led us to underestimate effect sizes and thus undervalue RJPs as a whole. Previous RJP commentaries have offered support for this proposition. For example, Breaugh and Billings (1988) stated, "…previous RJP studies have only been weak tests of the potential benefits to be gained by using RJPs." Therefore, to shed new light on interpreting the overall modest and conflicting RJP

evidence, I will detail critical conceptual and methodological issues in prior research.

Several conceptual and methodological weaknesses prevail in prior RJP and turnover research, ultimately limiting the ability to draw confident conclusions from these bodies of literature. First, I would argue that prior studies have used vague, inconsistent, and unsound operationalizations of RJPs. To address this weakness, the present study featured an RJP that incorporated all attributes of a thorough, research-based conceptualization (Breaugh & Billings, 1988). Second, prior RJP studies have also suffered from criterion conceptualization issues involving turnover. The present study overcame this weakness by creating a unique, more precise operationalization of turnover. Third, the majority of existing RJP studies have failed to adhere to established methodological best practices involving study setting, presentation medium, and timing. The present study's design abided by these methodological best practices. Fourth and finally, Breaugh (1983) offered three boundary conditions to serve as guidelines for ideal RJP research, which have been largely ignored in subsequent studies. The present study incorporated all three boundary condition guidelines to create a more optimal RJP test. Next, I review in detail the various conceptual and methodological weaknesses that predominate in the RJP and turnover literature domains and discuss precisely how I addressed these issues in the present study.

RJP conceptual issues. Arguably the sternest criticism of existing RJP research involves the lack of clear, consistent conceptual and operational definitions of this construct across studies (Breaugh & Billings, 1988; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Reilly et al., 1981). Conceptually, RJPs have been defined as accurate representations of a job, balanced presentations of positive and negative information, and oftentimes, no conceptual definition has been offered at all (Breaugh & Billings, 1988). Further, Breaugh and Billings asserted that a number of RJP studies have

completely neglected to operationally define what they mean by the term "realistic job preview." Similarly, Reilly et al. (1981) argued that no consistent guidelines have been followed regarding operational implementation of RJPs. For example, many existing studies include minimal to no descriptive detail about the actual content of RJPs. If content details are provided, they are typically vague and grossly inconsistent across studies. For instance, RJP subject matter in existing studies may or may not include information regarding supervision, compensation, job duties, coworkers, physical/emotional demands, departmental politics, customer interactions, or various other aspects of the work experience (Breaugh & Billings, 1988; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Additionally, Wanous (1978) suggested that the term "realistic job preview" might actually be a misnomer. He noted that most RJPs address *organizational* expectations (i.e. compensation, processes and procedures, rules and regulations) rather than specific *job* expectations (i.e. job duties, immediate supervisor, coworkers, specific role/job unit information). Although it is useful for employees to be aware of organizational factors, factors pertaining directly to employees' jobs and day-to-day experiences have a more direct impact on employees' job attitudes and behaviors. To address this prior shortcoming, the RJP used in the present study included a balance of both broad organizational expectations and detailed job-specific expectations.

To ameliorate the lacking operational conceptualization of RJPs, Breaugh and Billings (1988) reviewed the existing literature and consequently proposed that sound RJPs must contain five key attributes: 1) Accuracy, 2) specificity, 3) breadth in scope, 4) credibility, and 5) importance. Each of the five attributes is discussed below, although no single RJP study could be found that incorporated all five of these attributes.

Accuracy. At its core, the RJP is intended to accurately portray a job to potential

employees by honestly presenting both positive and negative information regarding what to expect. According to Breaugh and Billings (1988), this attribute has been most commonly satisfied in existing RJP research.

Specificity. Beyond accuracy, Breaugh and Billings (1988) proposed that the content conveyed in an RJP must be specific. The purpose of an RJP is to enable a job applicant to make an informed decision about the position that he or she will potentially hold. However, many studies have included RJPs containing generic organizational information that may not be applicable at the individual job incumbent level. For example, Dugoni and Ilgen (1981), Reilly et al. (1981) and Wanous (1973) presented RJP information about supervision generalities even though the job applicants would all be working for different supervisors at different locations. Although it is likely that variability exists across important work characteristics like supervisors and work groups, these differences cannot possibly be conveyed with such general content. Overly broad content that ignores components specific to one's role compromises the integrity of RJPs, and also impedes the accuracy component.

Breadth in scope. Breadth of content is the third component of Breaugh and Billings' (1988) key attributes. Applicants require information about a broad range of topics to properly evaluate from the outside whether or not the job will satisfy their needs, including job duties, compensation, benefits, coworkers, policies, leadership, and more. However, in their literature review, Breaugh and Billings found that most studies included narrowly focused content that contained detail about only a small portion of the aforementioned topics (i.e. Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981; Dean & Wanous, 1984). Beyond these topics that are applicable to virtually any job, stressful job characteristics such as physical or emotional demands, interpersonal challenges, insufficient time, or lacking resources should be addressed during the RJP as they impact

employees' health, job attitudes, performance, and job survival (Ganster, Fox, & Dwyer, 2001). If RJP content is limited in breadth and certain critical topics fail to be included, a new hire is likely to evaluate these aspects of the job to be below expectations and experience lower satisfaction as a result. Thus, RJPs must contain a broad range of topics that a job incumbent would likely experience so that recruits are able to recalibrate any unrealistic expectations about what life would be like on the job.

Credibility. Fourth, Breaugh and Billings (1988) claimed that credibility is a key component of effective RJPs. RJPs are a form of persuasive communication (Breaugh, 1983), and thus, the source of the RJP information is important (e.g. job incumbent, human resources representative, or recruiter). Wanous (1989, 1992) advocated that job incumbents should be involved in delivering RJP content, as job applicants are likely to see current job incumbents in a similar role as having more expertise and less ulterior motives compared to recruiters or human resources employees. Additionally, Wanous (1980, 1992) explained that including work samples or assessment center exercises are useful methods for heightening the realism of job information conveyed. However, historically, credibility has been assumed to exist without being formally assessed, no matter who the delivery source is (Breaugh & Billings, 1988).

Importance. Importance is the fifth key attribute of RJPs according to Breaugh and Billings (1988). Because it is not realistic or feasible to convey all the detail about a job and organization to applicants, the RJP content must be prioritized to cover only the most important work aspects that would affect life on the job and would likely not otherwise be obvious or available to applicants (e.g. work group political climate, customer relationships, common job demands). A focus on importance is especially relevant in the Internet age with almost endless amounts of easily accessible information available to job candidates (Earnest et al., 2011). In

contrast, stating information that is commonly known to the public (e.g. being a restaurant server or bank teller requires standing on one's feet many hours a day) would be considered less important than explaining the less obvious effects of such a job requirement. Importance of content has also not been assessed in the majority of existing RJP research (Breaugh & Billings, 1988). This final key attribute does overlap with the other four, as important information is also assumed to be accurate, specific to the actual job the recruit would hold, broad in scope, and credible. The present study featured an RJP that fits all five attributes of Breaugh and Billings' (1988) conceptualization. These attributes have been generally absent from the literature, as the author was not able to identify any RJP studies that have used all five of them. Unlike the majority of existing RJP research, the present study ensured that the RJP used was congruent with the five components of Breaugh and Billings' established conceptualization.

Turnover conceptual issues. Since its inception, RJP research has focused foremost on predicting the criterion of turnover (Earnest et al., 2011; Morse & Popovich, 2009; Wanous, 1980). As demonstrated in the previous review of empirical literature, past studies have consistently found modest negative relationships between RJPs and both voluntary turnover and overall turnover (Earnest et al., 2011; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985). In order to fully understand the relationship between RJPs and turnover, it is necessary to shift focus beyond RJP conceptualization issues to also consider the conceptualization of turnover as the dependent variable of interest. Wallace (1965) asserted that industrial and organizational psychologists tend to focus a great deal of intentional effort on designing and optimizing independent variables, and most often choose the criterion variable out of convenience or complacency. Although Wallace's assertion was made five decades ago, I would argue that neglectful treatment of criterion variables is still a relevant issue and threat to

internal validity today.

In existing literature, RJP studies have used either overall turnover or voluntary turnover as outcome variables (Earnest et al., 2011). Overall turnover has been conceptualized as the number (or percentage) of individuals who left an organization for any reason. Possible reasons for leaving include quitting (employee chooses to leave the organization), getting terminated (employee is dismissed by the organization), or even passing away.

Voluntary turnover (incumbents who quit) is a conceptually superior criterion variable compared to overall turnover for evaluating RJP effectiveness, as it includes only those who chose to leave the organization, as opposed to employees who were terminated (or downsized) or passed away. In other words, it is important to focus on turnover over which employees have control. In existing RJP studies, voluntary turnover has been determined either by the authors of the studies or exit interviews (Earnest et al., 2011). Although overall turnover is a suboptimal criterion conceptualization compared to voluntary turnover, it has been significantly more common in existing RJP studies, presumably because it is more easily accessible (Wallace, 1965). Overall turnover was used as the criterion in 48 studies included in the latest RJP meta-analysis, compared to only 15 studies that used voluntary turnover (Earnest et al., 2011). The mean corrected *r* for voluntary turnover was -.07, a slightly greater magnitude than the mean corrected *r* for overall turnover, which was -.04.

I propose that although voluntary turnover is a better conceptualization than overall turnover and the best turnover conceptualization used in RJP research to date, voluntary turnover still does not qualify as an adequate criterion because it fails to provide a conceptual framework that distinguishes the result (quitting a job) from intentional action (motivation behind the decision to quit). For example, if an employee was moving across the country to follow a spouse

who was forced to relocate for his/her job, this person would be coded as a voluntary exit as it is defined in existing research. However, the decision to quit would have no connection to the job itself. In contrast, if an employee decided to leave a job because of an abusive supervisor, lack of advancement opportunities, or dissatisfaction with compensation, this person would also be coded as a voluntary exit. Unlike the previous example, this person's reason for leaving would be entirely motivated by the job instead of personal reasons. I would argue that to optimally test the effect of RJPs on turnover, it is necessary to create a further refined conceptualization of voluntary turnover to capture the true intentional action behind leaving the organization. In the present study, I proposed a conceptualization of voluntary turnover based on leavers' motivation that differentiates between those who voluntarily leave for personal reasons and those who voluntarily leave out of dissatisfaction with their work experience.

Additionally, most prior studies have not examined turnover in terms of initial expectations of organizational entry. RJPs have been most commonly used to prevent new hires from experiencing "reality shock" due to unmet, unrealistically high pre-employment expectations (Wanous, 1980). Early turnover is defined as leaving an organization within one year of tenure (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008). Although early turnover is particularly costly to organizations in terms of upfront recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and training costs, the time-sensitive examination of early turnover requires researchers to capture early quitters very soon after organizational entry. Therefore, because of this stringent methodological requirement, there is currently a dearth of research focusing on the ways in which RJPs affect the damaging issue of early turnover (Holtom et al., 2008; Hom et al., 2008). I examined early turnover in the present study, responding to Holtom et al.'s (2008) call for integration of recruitment and turnover research to address the need to better understand the turnover decision process of early

quitters. In the section to follow, I will detail the proposed examination of turnover.

Methodological weaknesses. Beyond the aforementioned prevalent challenges in conceptualizing RJPs and turnover (Breaugh & Billings, 1988; Premack & Wanous, 1985; Reilly et al., 1981), the majority of previous RJP studies have also utilized problematic study designs and have failed to conform to important boundary conditions (Breaugh, 1983; Breaugh, 2008). I will detail weaknesses in study design and boundary condition adherence below.

Breaugh (1983) offered a critical appraisal of seminal RJP research, which highlighted a number of inconsistencies and flaws in the aforementioned early RJP studies. For example, he noted that although Wanous' (1973) study is widely regarded as seminal and commonly cited as exhibiting a significant turnover main effect, this study has two noteworthy shortcomings. First, Wanous did not find a statistically significant difference ($p > .10$) in turnover rate between the RJP group and control group. Second, the study lacked statistical power due to the small sample size ($N = 78$). Similarly, Farr, O'Leary, and Bartlett (1973) and Dugoni and Ilgen (1981) failed to find significant differences in turnover between RJP groups and control groups. Reilly et al. (1981) also argued that inadequately small sample sizes and inconsistent operationalization of RJPs have introduced significant doubt in interpreting evidence for the majority of RJP studies. In sum, Breaugh (1983) and Reilly et al. (1981) concluded that RJP literature is riddled with inconsistencies, suggesting that both researchers and practitioners should be wary about drawing conclusions from the mixed evidence supporting the effectiveness of RJPs.

The three most common methodological factors that have been investigated over the history of RJP research are: 1) Study setting (i.e. field or lab), 2) RJP presentation medium (i.e. written, verbal, or videotaped), and 3) timing at which the RJP is administered (i.e. pre or post hire) (Earnest et al., 2011; Morse & Popovich, 2009; Phillips, 1998). Each of these three

methodological moderators has been shown to differentially affect key outcomes including satisfaction, performance, and turnover, causing researchers to question the quality of RJP studies that differ on these three moderating variables (Breaugh, 2008; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). I will explain below the differential impacts of these three methodological moderators based on prior research.

For example, considering study setting, 10 of the 17 studies that examined voluntary turnover in Phillips's (1998) meta-analysis were laboratory studies conducted in university settings. More recently, three of the 15 studies that examined voluntary turnover in Earnest et al.'s (1998) meta-analysis were laboratory studies conducted in university rather than field settings. Although undergraduate students are commonly used as convenience samples in industrial and organizational psychology research, Edwards (2008) argued that this is a methodological crutch that we must overcome to elevate the validity and generalizability of our research. Considering the fundamentally applied nature of RJPs as an organizational recruitment mechanism, it is reasonable to question whether lab studies conducted with undergraduate students create sufficient experimental and mundane realism to test hypotheses related to the complex effects of RJPs in a work setting (i.e. job attitudes, performance, turnover). Earnest et al. (2011) found that, compared to lab studies, field studies found larger effect sizes between RJPs and turnover (both voluntary and overall). Accordingly, my study used a true field sample.

Presentation medium, the second moderator, is also an important methodological factor to consider. It is more difficult to assess the fidelity of RJP studies that have used passive communication media like pamphlets or videos, as such studies have rarely included manipulation checks to verify whether the material was actually read or viewed. In contrast, it is

easier to verify that applicants are receiving and absorbing information during a face-to-face live facilitation (Schmidt & Hunter, 2014). Thus, not surprisingly, oral RJP presentations have been found to be considerably more effective than other presentation media for influencing turnover (Earnest et al., 2011; Phillips, 1998). Wanous (1989) further emphasized the importance of presentation medium by proposing that the RJP message which was "received and comprehended" should be taken into account, rather than simply the message that was "sent" by the organization. However, in Earnest et al.'s most recent RJP meta-analysis, only five RJPs used to predict overall turnover were delivered orally, compared to 22 written, 12 video, six "other," and three "combined" (meaning some combination of written, oral, video, online, or audio). Focusing on the prediction of voluntary turnover, six of the studies had written RJPs, three were delivered by video, two "other," and two "combined." To summarize, although evidence consistently shows oral RJPs to be the most effective communication medium, this has been the least frequent mode of delivery in prior studies. Accordingly, the present study featured a live, interactive, orally-delivered RJP.

Last, timing of the RJP is an important methodological factor and somewhat controversial moderator to consider. Breaugh (2008) argued that RJPs provided to individuals who have already accepted a job and begun work should not qualify as a recruitment mechanism, as the RJP occurs during the onboarding/orientation process. Providing RJPs post-hire violates several of the psychological mechanisms on which they are based (Wanous, 1973), as newly hired employees (compared to job applicants) have scant ability to self-select out of job consideration and do not have the opportunity to form opinions about the trustworthiness of the organization prior to joining (Breaugh, 2008; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Additionally, the "preview" aspect of realistic job previews does not apply if this technique is implemented post-

hire, as RJPs are thought to be most effective when applicants' expectations and recruitment decision-making process are impacted by the RJP information conveyed. However, RJPs were provided post-hire in 56% of the studies included in the voluntary turnover portion of Phillips's (1998) meta-analysis and 33% of the studies included in the voluntary turnover portion of Earnest et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis. The large proportion of post-hire RJPs in existing literature further contributes to the difficulty in drawing conclusions about the small effect sizes observed in past studies. Accordingly, the present study featured a pre-hire RJP, delivered before the organization extended job offers to job applicants.

In addition to the aforementioned weaknesses in study design, Breaugh (1983) outlined three boundary conditions for optimal RJP research, outside of which RJP studies are unlikely to be effective. Breaugh's boundary conditions were derived from the four underlying psychological mechanisms in Wanous' (1973) aforementioned conceptual model. The first boundary condition for maximizing effectiveness is providing an RJP when job applicants possess an abundance of alternative employment opportunities, meaning they can be selective about accepting a job offer. The second is providing an RJP when job applicants possess minimal familiarity with a considerably complex job, indicating that they are likely to have unrealistic job expectations. The third condition is providing an RJP when job applicants would likely struggle to cope with job demands in the absence of an RJP, such as heavy physical and/or emotional job demands that require advanced warning.

The vast majority of prior RJP studies have failed to meet these boundary conditions, with a small number of notable exceptions (Suszko & Breaugh, 1986; Taylor, 1994). Taylor posited that one potential explanation for past studies' inability to find significant differences among employees who did and did not receive RJPs (Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981; Farr et al., 1973;

Reilly et al., 1981; Wanous, 1973) could be researchers' failure to adhere to Breaugh's boundary conditions. In the present study, I used a call center industry sample because it aligns well with these boundary conditions, serving as an ideal RJP laboratory and contributing to a more optimal test of RJP effectiveness. Specifically, the call center sample used in the present study addresses these boundary conditions by featuring: a) A notoriously high turnover industry with many available job openings, b) a job with which the general public is likely unfamiliar, and c) a job with significant emotional demands. I will detail the present study's methodology and alignment with Breaugh's boundary conditions in the following section.

Contributions of Present Study

The existing body of research suggests that RJPs do have a modest positive relationship to job applicants' job attitudes and turnover, which practically translates into real dollars for organizations (Earnest et al., 2011; Wanous, 1989). However, despite their intuitive appeal (Taylor, 1994), an overall lack of confidence in the efficacy of RJPs is prevalent in the literature (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985). I would argue that these doubts are fueled in part by the widespread conceptual inconsistencies and methodological issues in existing research that have contributed to deflated and variable effect sizes (Breaugh, 2008; Breaugh & Starke, 2000). Acknowledging flaws in prior tests, I conducted an experimental investigation that created a fairer evaluation of the effectiveness of RJPs by overcoming a number of critical weaknesses of prior RJP studies.

Specifically, the present study differed from prior research in that: 1) The RJP conformed to Wanous' (1973) operational definition, 2) the impact of RJPs on turnover was evaluated utilizing a more nuanced and theoretically sound conceptualization of the criterion, 3) the methodology was designed based on best practices established in the literature (i.e. Phillips,

1998), and 4) the sample was aligned with Breaugh's (1983) boundary conditions for the optimization of RJP research. These four improvements on the weaknesses found in prior RJP research are detailed in the section to follow.

RJP operational definition. A recurring issue in RJP literature has been an inadequate operational conceptualization of this technique (Breaugh & Billings, 1988; Reilly et al., 1981). To address the fact that the majority of prior studies have failed to disclose precisely how RJPs have been conceptualized, Breaugh and Billings (1988) proposed five key attributes for conceptualizing RJPs based on a thorough literature review. As no subsequent studies were found incorporating these five attributes, the present study elevated the operationalization of RJPs by conforming to Breaugh and Billings' five attributes.

First, regarding accuracy, the RJP implemented in the present study was designed to realistically portray both positive and negative information representing what applicants should expect on the job. The present study utilized a sample of call center employees in the Western United States, whose sole function is collecting outstanding bills from customers. The RJP provided applicants with accurate detail regarding both positive and negative aspects of the job. Specifically, to portray to applicants what the experience of a difficult customer interaction would be like, the RJP included audio from a real example of a particularly complex, combative, frustrating call with a customer. By featuring an actual negative example of what applicants could be exposed to on the job, the RJP was designed to provide applicants with an accurate and well-rounded view of what to expect.

Second, the RJP implemented in the present study also aimed to fulfill the attribute of specificity. In addition to generalities about the organization and its policies and procedures, the content primarily focused on specific details relating to characteristics of the job itself. Some

examples of this job-specific content included supervisors, work groups, and day-to-day job tasks.

Breaugh and Billings' third key RJP attribute, breadth in scope of content, was also addressed by the RJP utilized in the present study. In contrast to prior studies that featured RJPs with narrowly-focused content (Dean & Wanous, 1984; Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981) that could be applicable to virtually any job (i.e. compensation, benefits, policies), the present study's RJP contained broader information relating to a wide range of topics that would likely impact new employees' job attitudes and turnover intentions. Specifically, some components of the present study's RJP included the sample customer call, policies, procedures, team dynamics, communication, leadership, and work processes.

Fourth, the RJP featured in the present study sought to demonstrate credibility by delivering the information from several sources. Because RJPs are considered to be a form of persuasive communication that heavily impacts an applicant's job choice (Breaugh, 1983), the credibility of the source of information must be considered. Wanous (1989, 1992) argued that job incumbents should have involvement in delivering RJP content because they are viewed by job applicants as being more trustworthy and knowledgeable than a human resources representative or recruiter, for example. The present study's RJP was delivered primarily by department managers, and also contained audio of a real work sample featuring an actual job incumbent. The inclusion of a work sample also aligns with Wanous' (1980, 1992) recommendations for enhancing the realism and credibility of RJP content.

Lastly, the present study's RJP fulfilled the attribute of importance by highlighting information that would deeply affect job incumbents' day-to-day experiences (e.g. customer interactions, details of job demands, work group interactions, supervisory relationships) and

could not be easily attained elsewhere or known to the public. In sum, because the RJP utilized in the present study fulfills Breaugh and Billings' (1988) largely ignored operationalization of an effective RJP, the present study provided a fairer test of RJP effectiveness.

Turnover conceptualization. Understanding how and why employees leave their jobs has gripped practitioners and researchers for over a century (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Holtom et al., 2008; Hom & Griffeth, 1995; Hom et al., 2012; and Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979), as turnover is associated with work performance disturbances (Huselid, 1995; Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005), loss of organizational memory (Linde, 2009), decreases in organizational competitiveness for attracting and retaining top talent (Allen et al, 2010), and financial costs ranging from 90% to 200% of an employee's annual salary when considering recruiting, selecting and training dollars (Mitchell, Holtom, & Lee, 2001).

Although RJPs are generally regarded as a strategy for reducing turnover, prior studies have historically yielded modest effect sizes (Earnest et al., 2011; McEvoy & Cascio, 1985; Phillips, 1998; Premack & Wanous, 1985). In their review of various recent turnover meta-analyses, Allen et al. (2010) compared various on-boarding techniques, job characteristics, leadership styles, work environment factors, job attitudes, withdrawal process attitudes and behaviors, and demographic characteristics to establish research-based estimates of the relative important of various turnover predictors. Out of all the variables examined, Allen et al. demonstrated that RJPs have the least predictive power, aside from a few demographic characteristics (marital status, sex, cognitive ability, and race) that would not be expected to relate to turnover.

In light of this comparison, I would argue that inadequate conceptualization of turnover, the criterion variable, is heavily contributing to the attenuated effect sizes historically seen in

existing RJP literature (Wallace, 1965). The present study conducted a better test of the effects of RJPs on turnover by utilizing a more nuanced and theoretically sound conceptualization of the criterion variable.

Hom et al. (2012) explained that everyone eventually leaves an organization in some fashion, through quitting, termination, retirement, death, or the company going out of business. Employees decide to leave organizations for a wide variety of reasons, including, "…quitting their job without having found alternate employment (though intending to search for and take alternate employment), quitting their job after having accepted another job, retiring from their current job, staying home to raise children, resigning to follow a spouse who has accepted a job in another location, returning to school, or recovering or rehabilitating from some health issue (or helping a family member recover or rehabilitate)" (Russell, 2013, p. 164). Distilling the large number of possible turnover reasons cited by Russell, turnover is commonly categorized in the literature across three dimensions (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). I will discuss each of the three turnover categorizations, and how the present study addressed weaknesses of prior research.

The first important distinction regarding turnover is whether it is *voluntary* versus *involuntary*. Voluntary turnover is initiated by the employee, and is defined as "voluntary cessation of membership in an organization by an individual who receives monetary compensation for participation in that organization" (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Involuntary turnover occurs when the organization severs the employment relationship, most often because of organizational restructuring or poor employee performance. Retention management typically focuses on voluntary turnover, as this type of turnover is more feasible to impact and usually includes employees whom the organization would like to retain.

Hom et al. (2012) highlighted several issues with current operationalization of the

voluntariness of turnover. First, they suggested that the common research practice of collapsing all of the complex and varied reasons why an employee chooses to leave an organization into two broad categories (voluntary and involuntary) is crude, inappropriate, and severely dilutes turnover variance. Second, criterion contamination can occur in archival records when involuntary quits are falsified as voluntary to protect the reputation of the leaver, allowing the leaver to collect unemployment benefits and possibly avoiding lawsuits or other retaliation to the organization (Campion, 1991). Thus, Hom et al. suggested that, instead of examining possibly tainted archival organizational records of terminations, researchers should gather data from the leavers themselves through independent structured exit interviews conducted by a third party immediately after term date. The present study precisely followed this suggestion to understand the true circumstances behind the reason for leaving by utilizing data gathered through high-touch quantitative and qualitative structured exit interviews administered by a third-party organization shortly after resignation. Hom et al. indicated that this type of study design to achieve criteria refinement and improve turnover prediction is extremely rare in the entire superset of turnover literature, and the author is unaware of any prior studies that have examined RJPs and turnover with this superior methodology.

The second category, within voluntary turnover only, is *organizationally avoidable* versus *organizationally unavoidable* turnover (Abelson, 1987). Organizationally avoidable turnover refers to turnover that reflects the individual's choice to leave based on a reason perceived as within the organization's control (e.g., lacking adequate compensation or developmental opportunities, unsatisfactory training, conflict with supervisor, etc.). Conversely, organizationally unavoidable turnover is characterized by voluntarily leaving an organization based on a personal reason outside of the organization's control (e.g., moving across the country

with a relocating spouse, leaving the workforce after having a child, inability to work due to health issues).

Few studies have separated organizationally avoidable versus unavoidable turnover in the examination of voluntary turnover, despite these leavers failing to withdraw because of dissatisfaction with the job or organization itself (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005). Abelson (1987) found that employees who left an organization for organizationally unavoidable reasons were more similar attitudinally to people who stayed than to those who left for organizationally avoidable reasons (e.g., better pay, conflict with supervisor). In fact, Hom and Griffeth (1995) concluded that organizationally avoidable (versus unavoidable) turnover is "a superior criterion for testing prevailing turnover models."

When providing a reason for leaving to supervisors or human resources representatives, leavers may be motivated to falsely cite unavoidable reasons resulting from fear of retribution or "burning bridges" (Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Kulik, Treuren, & Bordia, 2012). For example, an employee's primary reason for quitting may be due to an abusive relationship with his supervisor, but this employee would likely cite a personal (organizationally unavoidable) reason for leaving when asked by his supervisor in order to avoid confrontation and leave on good terms. Similarly, supervisors may be motivated to downplay organizationally avoidable exit reasons in company records because these may reflect poorly on their own leadership or managerial performance (Hom, Leong, & Golubovich, 2010). For example, if an employee did cite his supervisor as the main reason for quitting, the supervisor may be motivated to miscode the exit reason as organizationally unavoidable (i.e. health problem or family issue) or involuntary (i.e. poor performance or tardiness) in order to avoid blame. Thus, improving on the prevailing method of using organizationally-collected exit reasons (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Inderrieden, 2005; Hom

et al., 2010; Morrell & Arnold, 2007), the present study achieved criterion refinement by further conceptualizing voluntary turnover as organizationally avoidable or unavoidable based on leavers' responses collected in third-party exit interviews.

The third turnover categorization is *functional* and *dysfunctional* (Dalton, Todor, & Krackhardt, 1982), and incorporates leavers' performance. This type of "healthy" turnover usually includes poor performing voluntary quits or those considered easily replaceable, and is not typically the focus of retention management efforts (Allen et al., 2010). In contrast, dysfunctional turnover includes the quitting of high performers and employees who have difficult-to-replace skill sets. Functional turnover is viewed as in the best interest of the organization, although it still may be disruptive. Dysfunctional turnover is more harmful and costly for organizations (Hom et al., 2010). Because the present study focused on organizational newcomers and did not incorporate performance management data, this categorization was not examined.

Beyond these three conceptualizations of turnover, early turnover (i.e. leaving an organization within one year of tenure) is a conceptually important and largely neglected aspect of turnover research due to the methodological requirement of capturing leavers in a tight timeframe shortly following organizational entry. Holtom et al. (2008) claimed that gaining a better understanding of the temporal nature of turnover is an especially promising area for future turnover research, as voluntary turnover early on in an employee's tenure is the most detrimental to organizations. Because it takes months or even years for newly hired employees to be fully contributing to the organization at a level of performance commensurate with the costs of their own recruitment, hiring, socialization, and training, prevention of early turnover is an especially important area requiring more attention in the turnover literature (Morse & Popovich, 2009).

The present study answered this call for further research by featuring a sample that included employees who left their organization within the first year of tenure.

In sum, by improving the conceptualization and measurement of turnover, the present study advanced existing research and was expected to demonstrate a more robust relationship between RJPs and voluntary turnover within an organization's realm of control.

Methodological best practices. Another way in which the present study addressed weaknesses of prior research was by using established best practices in study design. Specifically, a large proportion of existing RJP literature varies on three methodological moderators that account for significant variation in effect sizes: 1) Study setting (i.e. field or lab), 2) presentation medium (i.e. written, verbal, or videotaped), and 3) timing in which the RJP is administered (i.e. pre- or post-hire) (Earnest et al., 2011; Phillips, 1998). A large body of research has shown that RJPs have a stronger effect in field rather than lab studies (study setting), when the delivery is verbal rather than written or videotaped (presentation medium), and when implementation occurs just before hiring rather than after hiring (timing) (Earnest et al., 2011; Morse & Popovich, 2009; Phillips, 1998).

The design of the present study exactly followed the methodological characteristics known to maximize effect sizes. Unlike numerous prior RJP studies (Phillips, 1998), the present study was conducted using a field sample of call center job applicants in a real organization. Using a field sample, as opposed to an undergraduate college student lab sample, heightens the external validity (i.e., generalizability) of the present study (Edwards, 2008). Regarding presentation medium, the present study also followed best practices defined in the literature by including an RJP that was delivered as a live facilitation with a small portion of recorded audio. Using the RJP delivery method that has been found to be most effective will further strengthen

the evaluation of the RJP intervention and differentiate it from the overwhelming majority of prior studies that have used RJPs with less effective, passive delivery methods like written brochures or video recordings (Earnest et al., 2011). Finally, unlike many existing RJP studies, the present study created a stronger RJP evaluation by following the best practice of providing a pre-hire RJP. More specifically, the present study's RJP was implemented after the battery of selection assessments and interviews were completed and before a formal job offer was extended to applicants, providing a true "preview" to job applicants of what the job would entail. Considering the large number of existing studies that deviate from these methodological best practices and the significant threat to validity that this poses (Breaugh, 2008; Breaugh & Starke, 2000), the present study overcame yet another prevalent issue in existing research.

Boundary conditions. The final way in which the present study provided a fair evaluation of RJPs was by aligning with Breaugh's (1983) boundary conditions for the optimization of RJP research. Based on Wanous' (1973) seminal conceptual model of the four underlying psychological mechanisms by which RJPs are presumed to affect turnover, the three boundary conditions offered by Breaugh provide a beacon for shedding new light on RJP research. With only a few exceptions (Suszko & Breaugh, 1986; Taylor, 1994), the bulk of RJP research has not taken these boundary conditions into account, which may have handicapped their ability to find significant differences among employees who did and did not receive RJPs (Taylor, 1994). In order to avoid this mistake, the present study incorporated Breaugh's three boundary conditions.

Breaugh's first boundary condition for leveraging RJP effectiveness involves choosing a sample in which job applicants can be selective about accepting a job offer. Although the author did not have access to actual acceptance rates (job offers: job acceptances) and was not able to

systematically assess the amount of job choice available to the job applicants in the present study's sample, a few current statistics about the unemployment rate and call center job prevalence suggest that job applicants could be selective about their job choice. The United States unemployment rate totaled 5.8 percent in both October and November of 2014 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a), the lowest level of unemployment since July 2008 (several months prior to the worst global economic recession in almost one hundred years that began in late 2008) (Borbely, 2008). The steady downward trend in the U.S. unemployment rate since 2010 suggests that current job seekers possess increasing freedom of choice when deciding whether or not to accept job offers. Additionally, although identifying the precise number of available jobs in the call center industry is difficult because many are nested within larger organizations, the call center industry is rapidly growing in the United States, as well as India and the Philippines (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Das, Nandialath, & Mohan, 2013). Despite the increasing trend of offshoring call centers outside of the U.S., an estimated 2,362,800 U.S. workers were employed as customer service representatives in 2012, with a 13% increase in jobs expected by the year 2022 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). Additionally, the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) labeled this occupation as having a "bright outlook," meaning rapid growth is projected to occur in the foreseeable future (O*NET, 2013). O*NET is an online database containing hundreds of detailed occupation-specific descriptions. Thus, this booming industry presumably provides job applicants seeking call center jobs with a variety of job choices.

Further, call centers have notoriously high base rates of turnover, or "churn." To illustrate the amount of hiring that occurs to maintain staffing levels in this revolving door industry, Russell (2013) offered an example to illustrate a call center with 1,500 employees based on his 12 years of experience designing personnel selection system solutions for call

centers:

> Average job tenure stands at *M* = 42 days (*SD* = 24 and highly positively skewed) and 98% of all turnover is voluntary. An average of over 52 employees quit every day of the work week, requiring >13,000 new hires annually if steady state employment is to be kept at 1,500 (or an 869% annual turnover rate). If three candidates are considered for every opening, expenses associated with >39,000 applicants going through the recruiting/selection system are incurred annually, as are training expenses incurred by the final 13,000+ actually hired (a new training class of N = 52 starts every weekday). Given two or three weeks of training and orientation, new employees actually spend an average of only ~25 days as fully operational employees. Most will never migrate beyond ‘‘newcomer’’ status to become ‘‘seasoned employees’’ with six or more months of job tenure (p. 161).

The current state of the workforce and dynamic call center industry suggests that job applicants in this sample were able to be selective and did not view this job as their only feasible option, increasing the likelihood of the RJP having an impact on their expectations and job attitudes.

The second boundary condition offered by Breaugh (1983) requires a sample of job applicants who are likely to possess unrealistic job expectations due to the unfamiliar and complex nature of the job. Breaugh explained that individuals applying for highly visible, entry-level positions (e.g. supermarket clerks, janitors, restaurant servers) likely have a fair understanding of what the job entails in the absence of an RJP, lessening the impact of the technique. Conversely, jobs that are not as obvious to organizational outsiders and are more complex in nature are the ideal focus for RJP research, as such jobs increase the impact of the

technique. Thus, the billing and collections call center associate role in the present study's sample aligns with the requirements of this boundary condition, as the typical organizational outsider likely has little to no contact with this job on a regular basis. Moreover, although the average person has likely had experience periodically speaking with call center representatives as a customer, it is reasonable to assume that the average person has had little to no exposure to the specific context in which billing and collections call center customer service representatives work.

Breaugh's third and final boundary condition entails the provision of an RJP when job applicants necessitate advanced warning of physical and/or emotional job demands in order to facilitate coping in the organizational newcomer (Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981). Although call center employees do not have physically demanding roles, they are prone to experiencing psychological distress (DeTienne, Agle, Phillips, & Ingerson, 2012; Grégoire & Lachance, 2014; Niven, 2014). In their meta-analysis, Hershcovis and Barling (2010) reported sizeable effects of customer aggression on customer service employees' emotional exhaustion (r = .36), psychological distress (r = .22), and physical health (r = -.19). In a study of over 2,000 French call center workers, a significant number of these employees experienced mild (39.4%) or severe (8.3%) symptoms of psychological distress over a 12-month period (Charbotel et al., 2009). The call center industry is known for its "Tayloristic" job design, a theory of Scientific Management created by Frederick Taylor in the late 1800s that emphasized economic efficiency, standardization, mass production, and automation at the cost of worker satisfaction (Barling and Griffiths, 2003). Although Taylor's Scientific Management theory has generally declined in favor of more worker-centric philosophies, many call centers still utilize scientific management principles, including redundant tasks, heavy workloads over long shifts, highly structured work

causing a lack of control over worker's tasks, lack of professional growth opportunities, and emotional labor (Das et al., 2013). Emotional labor is the incongruence between emotions and actions when servicing customers, or "a set of regulatory cognitions and behaviors enacted by employees at work in response to actual or anticipated discrepancies between felt emotions and perceptions of expected emotional displays" (Goodwin, Groth, & Frenkel, 2011). Emotional labor is a common issue for various customer-facing service jobs, and has been linked to employee well-being, customer satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately, organizational performance (Grandey, 2000). Call center employees in this particular research sample were responsible for handling customers' billing and collections issues, often after service had been forcibly discontinued due to lack of payment. Thus, the call center employees in the present study's sample likely encountered a large number of irate, aggressive, and abusive customer interactions that presumably would not be expected by job applicants in the absence of a balanced RJP. In sum, the intense emotional job demands of the present study's sample satisfy Breaugh's third boundary condition for an enhanced examination of RJP effectiveness.

To summarize, the present study improved upon prior RJP research by sharpening the operationalization of both the independent and dependent variables and utilizing largely ignored best practices for sampling and study design to maximize generalizability. Specifically, the present study had two primary foci: 1) to evaluate the impact of RJPs on turnover utilizing more theoretically and methodologically sound conceptualizations of RJPs and turnover, and 2) to examine the relationship between RJPs and *early* turnover in particular. By creating a stronger test of RJP effectiveness, the present study aimed to breathe new life into this equivocal area of research and stand as a valuable contribution for both academic researchers and practitioners.

Hypotheses

The aim of the present study was to conduct an experimental investigation that created a fairer evaluation of the effectiveness of RJPs by overcoming a number of critical weaknesses of prior RJP studies. Given prior research on why RJPs work and why existing research may be consistently underestimating the technique's effectiveness (Breaugh, 2008; Breaugh & Billings, 1988), I hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1. Supporting the existing body of RJP literature, the departmental voluntary turnover rate will be lower after the RJP intervention was implemented compared to before the RJP intervention was implemented.

Hypothesis 2. By further categorizing voluntary turnover into "organizationally avoidable" vs. "organizationally unavoidable" turnover, exited call center employees who did not receive RJPs will be more likely to have left the organization for "organizationally avoidable" voluntary turnover reasons compared to "organizationally unavoidable" voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons (e.g. termination).

Hypothesis 3. Exited call center employees who did receive RJPs will be more likely to have left the organization for "organizationally unavoidable" voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons compared to "organizationally avoidable" reasons.

Further prioritizing voluntary exits beyond organizationally avoidable leavers, early leavers (commonly defined as employees who leave within the first year of tenure) represent a particularly important segment of leavers. Depending on the industry, organization, and role, it can take many months for an organization to reach a "break even" point with new hires after factoring in the costs of attracting, hiring, socialization, and training.

Hypothesis 4. Customer service representatives who did not receive RJPs will have had

shorter tenure at time of turnover as compared to those who did receive RJPs.

Given the conceptual and methodological improvements of the current study over most prior investigations, I also expected that obtained effect sizes would be substantially greater than those typically found in the literature.

Method

Participants

The present study used a quasi-experimental design with two groups (employees who received an RJP and those who did not) among billing and collections department call center employees in the Western United States. Study participants were not randomly assigned to the experimental conditions; rather the RJP and non-RJP groups, respectively, were determined by dividing exited employees who were hired before versus after the organization implemented an RJP. Details about the RJP intervention are described in the *Procedure* section.

Data used in this study were obtained from an archival dataset consisting of administrative human resources records for 911 employees and confidential quantitative and qualitative structured exit survey data from 309 of those employees. Sample demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Data were collected between May 2012 and November 2014 by an unbiased third-party consulting research organization with 26 years of experience designing and administering exit interviews in a wide variety of industries. The exit survey contained 48 quantitative items rated on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and five open-ended qualitative questions. The quantitative questions measured attitudes regarding the following characteristics of the call center employees' work experience: Climate and morale, job satisfaction, immediate supervisor, management, senior leadership, staffing and workload, customer service and quality, training and career development, compensation, benefits, and likelihood to return to the organization. The qualitative questions focused on the most important reasons for leaving, the best things about working at the organization, and what could have been done to prevent the employee from leaving. Employee participation in the exit interviews was completely voluntary;

participants were told that their anonymous feedback would be aggregated and reported back to organizational leaders to improve the work experience for current and future employees.

Out of 911 exited employees included in this study, 309 (33.9%) completed the exit survey, 185 (20.3%) were unreachable (i.e., they had invalid contact information), 358 (39.3%) were not captured after multiple email and phone contact attempts, and 59 (6.5%) refused to participate. Among the 309 who completed the exit survey, the vast majority of 298 (96.4%) completed feedback via live phone interviews that averaged from 10-12 minutes in duration; 10 completed an Internet survey, and one completed it via paper and pencil. 685 (75.2%) exited employees did not receive RJPs (their hire date was prior to RJP implementation) and 226 (24.8%) exited employees did receive RJPs (their hire date was post RJP implementation).

Table 1: Sample demographic characteristics

	Total Sample	Completed Exit Survey Sample	Non-RJP Group Sample	RJP Group Sample
N	911	309	685	226
Age				
M	30.9	30.9	30.9	30.2
SD	10.5	10.4	10.5	10.1
Gender				
% Women	39.8%	44.7%	36.2%	50.9%
% Men	35.6%	45.3%	32.4%	45.6%
% Missing	35.6%	10.0%	31.5%	3.5%
Tenure in Days				
M	285.0	286.6	285.9	311.5
SD	351.7	353.1	352.2	424.2

Procedure

Beginning in May 2012, the consulting research organization began receiving a monthly data feed of demographic and contact information for all call center employees who left the organization for any reason (voluntary or involuntary). Within two days of receiving the data

feed, the consulting organization sent an email inviting all exited employees to complete the survey online and placed a call inviting all exited employees to complete the survey via phone as well. In an approximately eight-week timeframe, former employees received up to three emails and eight phone calls in attempts to capture their feedback. To increase awareness about the study and promote participation, the participant organization included an information flyer explaining the third-party exit interview surveys in each employee's human resources "exit packet" distributed prior to their last day at the organization.

RJP Intervention

Historically, the billing and collections department of the participant organization experienced especially severe challenges with employee retention compared to other call center departments within this organization. Thus, in July 2013, the management and human resources team for the billing and collections department designed and implemented an RJP for all subsequent job applicants during the final phase of the recruitment process (once recruits had successfully completed all selection assessments and formal interviews but prior to extending a job offer) in an effort to reduce turnover.

The RJP lasted for two hours and was delivered in-person by a combination of four first-line and two second-line managers in the billing and collections department, depending on schedule availability. During the two hour presentation, the following topics were discussed: overview of the organization and its culture, pay processes, performance management processes, policies and procedures (e.g. dress code, attendance, scheduling), communication, teamwork, and general behavioral expectations. Additionally, to provide applicants with a balanced and authentic picture of what the job would entail, an actual example of a particularly complicated and difficult call with a customer was played for the group of applicants. After listening to the

customer call example, the managers delivering the RJP debriefed the applicant group by answering questions and facilitating discussion to critique the job incumbent's performance on the call. Job offers were made immediately following completion of the RJP session, unbeknownst to the applicants in attendance.

Measures

Different measures and sample subgroups (see Table 1) were used to properly test each hypothesis, as described in the sections to follow. For all hypotheses, exited employees were assigned to the non-RJP condition versus the RJP condition based on whether their hire dates were before versus after RJP implementation began.

Data from all 911 exited employees were used to test Hypothesis 1; managers' exit reason coding from the organization's archival personnel dataset were used to determine the portion of exits who were dismissed from the organization. These were labeled involuntary exits (detailed in the *Involuntary exit reason* section below). To test the voluntary turnover rate for Hypothesis 1 (detailed in the *Voluntary turnover rate* section), these involuntary exits were excluded from the total sample of all 911 exited employees.

In order to examine voluntary exit reason for Hypotheses 2 and 3, former employees' exit interview responses were used rather than the organization's archival personnel dataset. That is, only the smaller subsample of exited employees who chose to participate in the third-party exit interview (n = 309) were included in these analyses. Within this group, any exits who were dismissed by the organization (according to the organization's coding in archival personnel records described above) were classified as leaving for an involuntarily exit reason (detailed in the *Involuntary exit reason* section). The remainder of the group of 309 exit interview participants were considered having left for voluntary exit reasons. The qualitative exit

interview responses of those former employees who completed exit interviews and left for voluntary reasons were coded for organizational avoidability through a content analysis process (detailed in the *Voluntary exit reason* section).

Data from a subsample of all 911 exits were used to test Hypothesis 4, comparing tenure of those who did and did not receive RJPs (detailed in the *Organization tenure* and *Hypothesis 4* sections).

Involuntary exit reason. In the organization's monthly data feed based on their archival personnel records, "exit reason" was coded for all 911 exited employees (not just the 309 exited employees who completed the survey). Specifically, in the archival dataset, a total of 28 voluntary and involuntary exit reason categories were cited based on managers' perceptions of their subordinates' reason for leaving, including: "unsatisfactory performance," "career development/promotion opportunity," "leaving for a competitor," "dissatisfied with work environment," and "moving." All involuntary exits (i.e., those who were dismissed by the organization as indicated by managers' coding) were categorized as such based on this archival coding. Some examples of involuntary exit reason coding categories include: "unsatisfactory performance," "policy violation," "attendance/tardiness," "violation of customer interaction," and "code of ethics violation."

Managers' coding of involuntary exit reason is considered viable due to the concrete and objective nature of dismissing employees from an organization. In other words, there is little ambiguity in the interpretation of the involuntary exit reason. In contrast to managers' coding of involuntary exit reason, potential for biases exists in involuntarily dismissed employees' responses about why they left the organization since these former employees did not leave by their own volition. Involuntary exits were eliminated from data analyses to test Hypothesis 1 in

order to calculate voluntary turnover rate.

Voluntary turnover rate. For Hypothesis 1, voluntary turnover rate was assessed based on the organization's human resources records regarding the average total number of employees and number of employees who exited voluntarily in the billing and collections department during the study duration before and after the RJP was implemented. The number of employees who exited voluntarily was determined by subtracting those who left for an involuntary exit reason (as previously described) from the total number of exits (911). The ratio of the total number of employees to the number who left the organization voluntarily during May 2012 to June 2013 (pre-RJP) was compared to the ratio of total employees to the number who left the organization voluntarily between July 2013 and November 2014 (post-RJP).

Voluntary exit reason. For all 220 organizational exits categorized as "voluntary" by archival manager coding, the voluntary exit reason variable was based on the qualitative exit survey question, "What was your main reason for leaving [the organization]?" This single-item qualitative question for voluntary exit reason categorization is consistent with prior studies (Holtom et al., 2005; Morrell & Arnold, 2007). Again, this variable, including only individuals who completed the third-party exit interview, was used to test Hypotheses 2 and 3.

Specifically, the author read through all 220 responses and constructed a coding scheme consisting of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories based on the aforementioned conceptual framework of organizational avoidability within voluntary exit reasons (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Of the 220 voluntary exits who completed the third-party exit interview, six did not answer the question, "What was your main reason for leaving [the organization]?", and were eliminated from analyses. The remaining 214 open-ended verbatim responses to this question were coded into "organizationally avoidable" and "organizationally unavoidable" voluntary

turnover through an iterative content analysis process. Using this coding scheme, three Industrial and Organizational Psychologists (one doctoral student and two with Ph.D.s) were trained by the author to independently and blindly code each of the 214 open-ended responses. Specifically, before beginning, the coders received a general explanation of the task and reviewed the coding category definitions with four corresponding examples per category. Any clarification questions were answered at this time, before coding commenced. The coders were asked to choose one category per comment, with the option to also choose multiple or none as appropriate. Also, the coders identified nine responses that were too vague or irrelevant to code, which were eliminated from all subsequent qualitative analyses. Thus, the final total of voluntary exits included in analyses was 205. Krippendorff's (2004) alpha was calculated to assess the inter-rater reliability to determine the level of agreement across the three independent coders. Krippendorff's alpha yielded an agreement coefficient of $\alpha = .83$. Coding discrepancies were resolved through group discussion until consensus was reached.

Although virtually all existing turnover studies examine the criterion of "voluntary turnover" based on internally-collected archival organizational records, these internally-collected voluntary exit reasons were not utilized to categorize voluntary turnover in the present study (Hom et al., 2010). The inherent tendency towards biases and inaccuracies in internally collected archival voluntary exit reasons (stemming from both exiting employees and managers) inspired the present study's unique methodology rooted in confidential responses collected by a neutral third party directly from exited employees instead of their managers (Griffeth & Hom, 2001; Hom et al., 2010).

Organization tenure. Organization tenure for each employee was calculated from the difference between hire date and termination date, provided by the organization in their monthly

data feed obtained from human resources records. Tenure was compared for exited employees in the RJP group versus a subsample of exited employees in the non-RJP group. The non-RJP group subsample allowed for equivalent comparisons between the RJP and non-RJP groups, which was determined by a hire date pre or post RJP implementation.

Immediate supervisor relationship quality. Beyond the four formal study hypotheses, exploratory analyses were conducted to test a model featuring leadership as a mediating mechanism between RJPs and tenure (proposed exploratory analyses fully detailed in the *Hypotheses Testing* section). Leadership (as defined by immediate supervisor relationship quality) was measured with an eight-item scale contained in the third-party research organization's exit survey questionnaire. A sample item is, "My supervisor gave me helpful feedback on my performance." Responses were obtained on a five-point Likert scale anchored from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). All eight items are included in the "Immediate Supervisor" section of *Appendix C*. Although no pre-existing validity evidence was available for this scale, the internal consistency of this scale in the present study was $\alpha = .97$.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 proposed that the departmental voluntary turnover rate (ratio of the number of employees who left voluntarily compared to the total number of employees) would be lower after RJP implementation compared to before RJP implementation. Voluntary turnover rate was calculated by averaging monthly voluntary turnover rate before and after the RJP intervention. A one-tailed independent samples t-test ($p < .05$) was used to evaluate this by comparing the voluntary departmental turnover rate before and after the RJP intervention occurred.

Hypotheses 2 & 3. Hypothesis 2 proposed that exited employees who did not receive

RJPs would be more likely to have left for "organizationally avoidable" voluntary turnover reasons compared to "organizationally unavoidable" voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons (e.g. termination). Hypothesis 3 proposed that exited employees who did not receive RJPs would be more likely to have left for "organizationally unavoidable" voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons. A chi-square test was used to evaluate whether or not receiving an RJP was related to organizationally avoidable voluntary turnover, organizationally unavoidable turnover, or involuntary turnover.

Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 proposed that exited employees who did not receive RJPs would have had shorter overall tenure as compared to exited employees who did receive RJPs. This was examined by comparing the tenure of exits before and after the RJP intervention occurred. A one-tailed independent samples *t*-test ($p < .05$) was used to evaluate whether or not there was a difference in tenure for former employees who did and did not receive RJPs.

Exploratory analyses. Beyond the four primary study hypotheses, an exploratory approach for testing a model of leadership mediating the relationship between RJPs and tenure was used. Specifically, the exploratory analyses focused on the relationship with one's immediate supervisor in relation to RJPs and tenure. As the author is unaware of any existing work on this particular topic, minimal a priori guidance was available regarding expected outcomes. However, congruent with the large body of evidence demonstrating positive relationships between effective leadership and a plethora of positive outcomes (Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2009; Avolio, Sosik, Jung, & Berson, 2003), it was expected that the quality of exited employees' relationship with their immediate supervisor would mediate the relationship between RJPs and the amount of tenure prior to their departure. Before examining the mediation model, psychometric analyses (i.e. exploratory and

confirmatory factor analyses) were conducted to examine the data quality and psychometric properties of the available immediate supervisor measure.

Results

Statistical Analysis

Data handling. Before testing the present study's hypotheses, the data were screened according to the procedures recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). First, I examined variables for missing data and patterns of missing values using Missing Values Analysis (MVA) in SPSS Version 22.0. The MVA for the present study did not reveal any missing data.

Second, I examined the variable of tenure for outliers, as tenure is the only numeric study variable. *Z* scores were calculated to identify outlier values, with any standardized *Z* scores greater than 3.29 ($p < .001$) marked as potential outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Eight *Z* score values for tenure exceeded the cutoff and became flagged as possible outliers. However, all identified outliers were ultimately eliminated from the tenure variable in hypothesis testing due to truncation necessary for the creation of equivalent comparison groups (procedure explained fully in *Hypothesis 4* section), rather than on the basis of their outlier status.

Third, histograms with super-imposed normal distributions allowed for the examination of normality of the frequency distribution, specifically skewness and kurtosis. Visual inspection of histograms for the tenure variable indicated a positively skewed and leptokurtic distribution. In addition, *Z* statistics for skewness and kurtosis were created by subtracting each skewness or kurtosis value by zero and then dividing by the standard error of the statistic. The tenure variable was then tested for significant skewness and kurtosis using the alpha level of .001 ($Z = 3.29$). Based on this cutoff of .001, the tenure variable was identified as having significant skewness ($Z = 62.46$) and kurtosis ($Z = 326.45$). After further examination, all responses occurred within an expected range. Additionally, the standard errors for skewness and kurtosis decrease with large sample sizes, a phenomenon which causes minor deviations in skewness and kurtosis to become

statistically significant. In an effort to improve normality of the tenure variable, several transformations (logarithmic and power) were attempted. However, because transformations did not improve normality, all analyses used untransformed tenure values.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. To test whether there was a significant difference in departmental voluntary turnover rate before versus after RJP implementation occurred, I conducted a one-tailed independent samples t-test ($p < .05$). I calculated departmental voluntary turnover rate as the ratio of the number of employees who left the department voluntarily compared to the total number of employees on a monthly basis, averaging the months before RJP implementation and months following RJP implementation. The voluntary turnover rate was lower after RJP implementation ($M = .04$, $SD = .02$) as compared to before RJP implementation ($M = .05$, $SD = .02$). However, this effect of lower voluntary turnover rate following the RJP intervention was not statistically significant $t\ (29) = .850$, $p = .201$, $d = .31$

Hypotheses 2 & 3. Focusing on qualitative exit reason, Hypothesis 2 proposed that exited call center employees who did not receive an RJP were more likely to have left for organizationally avoidable voluntary reasons than organizationally unavoidable voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons. Conversely, Hypothesis 3 proposed that exited call center employees who did receive an RJP were more likely to have left for organizationally unavoidable voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons compared to organizationally avoidable voluntary reasons. Qualitative analyses included a total of 298 responses from those who completed the third-party exit interview survey, consisting of 205 content analysis-coded voluntary turnover respondents and 93 involuntary turnover respondents (coded as such from the organization's archival human resources records). The most frequently occurring category was

organizationally avoidable voluntary turnover (46.6%), which represents an individual's choice to leave an organization based on a reason perceived to be within the organization's realm of control. The second most frequent category was involuntary turnover (31.2%), which represents an individual being dismissed from the organization without choice (e.g. termination). The third most frequent category was organizationally unavoidable voluntary turnover (22.1%), which represents an individual's choice to leave based on a personal reason perceived to be outside of the organization's realm of control. Table 2 presents the two voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover categories, along with a definition for each, example verbatim statements, and frequency of category emergence.

Table 2: Qualitative exit reason coding

Category	Definition	Example responses to "What was your main reason for leaving?"	% of Responses
Organizationally Avoidable Voluntary Turnover	Organizationally avoidable turnover refers to turnover that reflects an individual's choice to leave based on a reason perceived as within the organization's control. The decision to leave directly reflects dissatisfaction with the job or organization. The individual perceives that the organization could have done something to prevent his/her voluntary departure by making changes to resolve the source(s) of dissatisfaction.	"Better job somewhere else with better pay and schedule." "The supervisors didn't care about you. It was a hard job to deal with angry customers, and supervisors didn't show appreciation for that." "Some [Company Name] customers were very verbally abusive on the phone. [Company Name] did not clearly define this during orientation. There is high turnover because employees don't know what they are getting into."	46.6%
Organizationally Unavoidable Voluntary Turnover	Organizationally unavoidable turnover refers to voluntarily leaving an organization based on a personal reason outside of the organization's control. In essence, the reason for leaving is separate from the job or organization, and nothing could have been done by the organization to prevent it.	"My health, I had to move to a new geographic location." "I had family obligations to take care of." "I had an opportunity to go into the mortgage company again and I wanted to use my skills for closing mortgages."	22.1%

Involuntary Turnover	Involuntary turnover refers to being dismissed by the organization against one's will. This category was coded based on the organization's archival human resources records and not based on responses to the question, "What was your main reason for leaving?" The examples included are for illustrative purposes only.	"I got fired." "I was laid off for attendance issues." "I was let go for not meeting the minimal expectations in Collections."	31.2%

I computed a chi-square test to evaluate whether receiving an RJP is related to exit reason (i.e. organizationally avoidable voluntary turnover, organizationally unavoidable voluntary turnover, or involuntary turnover). Contrary to my hypotheses, exited employees who did not receive RJPs were not significantly more likely to have left for organizationally avoidable voluntary reasons compared to organizationally unavoidable voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons. Additionally, exited employees who did receive RJPs were not significantly more likely to have left for organizationally unavoidable voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons compared to organizationally avoidable voluntary reasons, $\chi^2 = (2, N = 298) = 3.27$, $p = .20$. Table 3 presents the frequency distribution and relative frequencies of exit reason in relation to RJP group membership.

Table 3: Frequency distribution and relative frequencies of exit reason in relation to RJP group

	Organizationally Avoidable Voluntary Turnover		Organizationally Unavoidable Voluntary Turnover		Involuntary Turnover		Total	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	% of Total
Pre-RJP	98	43.8%	51	22.8%	75	33.5%	224	75.2%
Post-RJP	41	55.4%	15	20.3%	18	24.3%	74	24.8%
Total N, % of Total	139	46.6%	66	22.1%	93	31.2%	298	100.0%

Hypothesis 4. In addition to the aforementioned preliminary data handling, the tenure variable was modified in order to create equivalent comparison groups necessary for testing Hypothesis 4. Specifically, the RJP group (n = 226) included employees who were hired and left the organization in a 17-month period between July 2013 and November 2014. In contrast, the pre-RJP group (n = 685) included employees who were hired and left the organization in a 15-year period between November 1999 and November 2014. In order to create equivalent comparison groups and adhere to the equality of variance assumption for t-tests, the pre-RJP group was truncated to include only employees who were hired and left the organization in a 17-month period before the RJP was implemented between February 2012 and June 2013 (n = 281). In sum, this adjustment to the tenure variable enabled comparison of equivalent groups before and after the RJP intervention occurred, as both included former employees who were hired and left the organization within a 17-month period of time.

To test whether there was a significant difference in tenure between exited employees who did and did not receive RJPs, I conducted a one-tailed independent samples t-test ($p < .05$). Exited employees who did not receive RJPs had shorter organizational tenure in days (M = 101.3, SD = 91.1) as compared to exited employees who did receive RJPs (M = 113.6, SD = 93.2). However, this effect of increased tenure for RJP recipients was not statistically significant t (505) = 1.501, p = .067, d = .13.

Exploratory analyses. Before testing the proposed mediation model, I first investigated the factor structure of the immediate supervisor relationship quality scale (i.e. leadership scale) in order to establish preliminary validity evidence for this measure. This eight-item scale was included in the third-party research organization's exit interview survey without prior existing validation evidence, so factor analysis served as a necessary step before pursuing any further empirical inquiry to establish preliminary validity evidence for the measure. Additionally, factor analysis was needed to confirm the expectation that the eight items tapped a single factor of immediate supervisor leadership quality.

An exploratory factor analysis of the leadership scale was conducted to investigate the basic structure of the eight-item measure and a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to examine the model fit of the measure. The exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood extraction supported a single factor accounting for 81.8% of the variance. The eight items and corresponding factor loadings are included in Table 4. In sum, the exploratory factor analysis demonstrated excellent fit for a one-factor structure for the leadership scale with high internal consistency reliability. Conversely, a confirmatory factor analysis indicated poor overall fit for a one-factor model (χ^2 = 179.90, df = 20, $p < .01$, χ^2-df-ratio = 8.99, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .13). To improve upon the poor model fit, modification

indices were examined. Based on the largest modification index values, the model was re-specified by covarying two pairs of error terms. First, residual covariances were added for: “My supervisor clearly communicated expectations for my performance” and “My supervisor gave me helpful feedback on my performance." Second, residual covariances were added for: “My supervisor cared about me as a person” and “My supervisor treated me with respect." These residual covariances did improve fit between the initial and modified confirmatory factor analysis model (a decrease from χ^2 = 179.90 to χ^2 = 84.16, a decrease from χ^2-df-ratio = 8.99 to χ^2-df-ratio = 4.68, and a decrease from RMSEA = .13 to RMSEA = .09). Although improved, model fit still did not reach an “acceptable” level. Upon examination of the remaining modification indices, none of the other suggested modifications were theoretically justifiable or warranted given the small possible further improvements in model fit. Item deletion also was not warranted, as the lowest factor loading was .76. Dividing the model into two factors also was not justified theoretically or based on factor loadings.

After considering every justifiable confirmatory factor analysis model re-specification strategy, an acceptable fit for the model was not found. Because the scale had not been previously validated, the positive exploratory factor analysis results were taken into consideration alongside the poor confirmatory factor analysis results. In light of the tenuous psychometric scale properties as indicated by the confirmatory factor analysis, moving forward with further testing of the proposed exploratory analyses was deemed inappropriate.

Table 4: Exploratory factor analysis factor loadings for leadership scale

Item Number	Item	Factor Loadings
1	My supervisor clearly communicated expectations for my performance	0.88
2	My supervisor gave me helpful feedback on my performance	0.89
3	My supervisor provided recognition and appreciation for good work	0.91
4	My supervisor held people accountable for their performance	0.76
5	My supervisor cared about me as a person	0.93
6	My supervisor treated me with respect	0.93
7	My supervisor encouraged my professional development	0.91
8	I trusted my supervisor	0.91

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to conduct a more rigorous evaluation of RJP effectiveness by implementing research-based conceptual and methodological best practices that improve upon prevalent weaknesses of prior RJP studies. Specifically, I hypothesized that an RJP intervention would be related to a decreased voluntary turnover rate within a billing and collections department that underwent an RJP intervention (H1). Additionally, employing a novel conceptualization of voluntary turnover, I further hypothesized that exited call center employees who did not receive RJPs would be more likely to have left the organization for organizationally avoidable voluntary reasons (H2) and exited call center employees who did receive RJPs would be more likely to have left the organization for organizationally unavoidable voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons (H3). Lastly, I hypothesized that receiving an RJP would be related to greater organizational tenure among exited employees (H4).

Results were in the expected direction for H1 and H4, but did not provide statistical evidence to establish empirical support for these study hypotheses. Contrary to my hypotheses, results were not in the expected direction for H2 and H3. Consistent with prior research (e.g. Allen et al., 2010; Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981; Earnest et al., 2011; Phillips, 1998; Suszko & Breaugh, 1986), results demonstrated a very small effect for the RJP intervention on lower voluntary turnover and increased tenure. Additionally, results did not lend support for a relationship between the RJP intervention and the novel voluntary exit reason categorization based on qualitative content analysis of exit interview responses for H2 and H3.

The results of this study are consistent with prior empirical findings examining the relationship between RJPs and turnover. However, the present study improved upon existing similar studies investigating the impact of RJPs on turnover in two ways. First, the present

study built on prior RJP research by answering calls for improved RJP conceptualization (Breaugh & Billings, 1988), adherence to methodological best practices (Breaugh, 2008), and alignment with boundary condition guidelines (Breaugh, 1983). Although a small number of studies have addressed some of these issues either through commentary or actual study design, the present study was the first to incorporate all three components in a single RJP study. Specifically, the present study directly answered Breaugh and Billings' (1988) call for conceptually robust and methodologically stringent RJP research that overcomes critical weaknesses of previous studies and bolsters our confidence in satisfactorily testing the true distinctive impact of RJPs on turnover and the magnitude of that impact. In light of the present study's numerous improvements on prior research, the lack of significant findings offers increased confidence when drawing conclusions about the true effect of RJPs on turnover. Second, although findings did not support a significant relationship between RJPs and organizationally avoidable versus unavoidable turnover, the present study expanded upon existing turnover research and directly addressed Hom et al.'s (2012) call to adopt a more targeted turnover criterion conceptualization. Instead of using overall turnover or voluntary turnover as criterion variables, the present RJP study was the first to incorporate a refined conceptualization of voluntary turnover based on leavers' psychologically-based motivation (organizationally avoidable versus organizationally unavoidable voluntary turnover) using a unique data source (self-reported qualitative exit interview data) rather than heavily biased voluntary turnover categorization from simplistic archival human resources records. Acknowledging the possibility that coder categorization errors or non-optimal voluntary turnover conceptualization may have affected study results, future research should build upon the present study's qualitative methodology to further refine the distinction between types of voluntary

turnover. For example, a future study could directly ask participants to self-identify as having left for an organizationally avoidable versus organizationally unavoidable voluntary turnover reason instead of using coders to infer this categorization based on general exit reason qualitative comments. Recognizing the potential limitations of the present study's qualitative portion, continued turnover research employing nontraditional approaches and methodologies that capture the complexities of employees' perspectives will strengthen our ability to understand, manage, and predict turnover (Rothausen, Henderson, Arnold, & Malshe, 2015). Moreover, the present study's examination of tenure contributes to the current dearth of research on the especially costly problem of early turnover (Holtom et al., 2008; Morse & Popovich, 2009).

In spite of the conceptual and methodological improvements described above, I still did not find statistically significant results to support the hypothesized relationships between RJPs and turnover. The present study's results align with prior research which also did not find that RJPs had much effect on turnover (e.g. Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981; Farr et al., 1973; Reilly et al., 1981; Wanous, 1973). In this study, I sought to re-examine this issue by refining the operationalization of both RJPs and turnover, employing best practices for study design, and incorporating unique sampling techniques to maximize generalizability. It is not possible to determine conclusively whether the lack of significant findings may have been due to limitations in the present study or the true limited utility of RJPs as a turnover prevention technique. Although it is possible that the present study's findings corroborate past criticisms of the notoriously weak effectiveness of RJPs as a turnover reduction technique (McEvoy & Cascio, 1985), several other possible explanations for the lack of significant findings exist, detailed fully below.

Despite the lack of support for study hypotheses, the present study's aforementioned conceptual and methodological advancements offer empirical contributions to guide future RJP and turnover research. Specifically, future RJP research must adopt increased methodological rigor and consistency as demonstrated in the present study, or future research on RJPs is not likely to achieve much success. For example, meta-analytic research on the three primary methodological moderators (study setting, RJP presentation medium, and timing of RJP administration) should be incorporated into future studies in order to optimally test RJP effectiveness (Earnest et al., 2011; Phillips, 1998). Specifically, field samples should be chosen over laboratory samples, RJP delivery should be oral instead of written or video, and RJP timing should be pre-hire instead of post-hire. Additionally, future turnover research would benefit from the unique conceptual, methodological, and sampling contributions of the present study in order to increase generalizability and improve our understanding of voluntary turnover.

Beyond its empirical contributions, the present study's findings may possess practical importance as well. From an applied standpoint, the findings offer new insight for practitioners evaluating the worth of implementing RJPs in today's organizations. Some researchers have asserted that providing RJPs ought to be mandated on an ethical basis regardless of evidence for empirical support (or lack thereof) because job applicants and incumbents have a right to know and understand exactly what they are "signing up for" (Buckley et al., 1997). For example, in order to avoid wasting time and resources on a hiring mistake, organizations typically use a battery of assessments and interviews to learn about job applicants and evaluate whether they are a good fit for a given role. However, from a job applicant's perspective, job descriptions and company websites typically include basic information regarding essential job duties and responsibilities, but likely fail to paint a full picture of the job experience on a day-to-day basis.

Thus, analogous to organizations' selection processes, RJPs allow job applicants to gain critical information in order to honestly assess a potential job opportunity and proactively decide whether or not it is a good fit.

Also, due to my formal training in industrial/organizational psychology as well as my organizational development consulting background (which involved occasional recommendations to diverse organizations regarding RJP implementation), it is possible that I possess a bias for advocating the use of the RJPs. Beyond my RJP consulting experience and Buckley et al.'s ethical stance, organizations must weigh the relative costs and benefits of developing and implementing such a technique, even if the turnover reduction effects are indeed small. Although the present study yielded weak evidence regarding the effects of RJPs on voluntary turnover, practitioners are urged to consider the many ways in which RJPs can benefit employees across every stage in the employee lifecycle, from before hiring actually takes place through turnover.

Limitations

The present study possessed several limitations. First, a quasi-experimental design was used because the archival nature of the data did not allow for a true experimental design with random assignment to RJP conditions. Because pre-existing groups were measured at different points in time, it is possible that the study groups may have differed in meaningful ways that account for some of the differences in outcomes observed (outside of the RJP intervention). For example, major organizational or labor market changes unknown to the author could have taken place during the study duration (e.g. leadership, policies, compensation, local job availability), which could have possibly influenced the present study's dependent variables beyond the effects of the RJP intervention. Change in voluntary turnover rate was calculated by averaging the

monthly voluntary turnover rates before versus after RJP implementation. Thus the present study capitalized on the available archival turnover data spanning these timeframes. However, use of a longer timeframe for calculating turnover may have yielded more meaningful estimates of true changes in turnover rate.

The use of an interview protocol developed by the consulting research organization and not the author introduced another potential limitation of the present study. Without control over the survey items, the author could not inform the study variables based on a priori reasoning or incorporate measures with established validity evidence. Moreover, the use of a single-item measure (i.e., exit reason) may lack reliability and content validity (Fisher, Matthews, & Gibbons, in press). However, the author accepted these limitations because they allowed for the ability to access a uniquely objective turnover data source that enabled a number of methodological advantages.

Additionally, it is conceivable that the exit interview subsample was not representative of the entire exited employee population, posing a threat to external validity. Exit interview participation was voluntary and anonymous, introducing the possibility that the former employees who completed the exit interview held extreme views and may have differed from the general population of former employees in important and meaningful ways. Although all 911 former employees received equal opportunity to participate, 309 actively chose to take the time and energy to provide feedback in an exit interview. Plausibly, the 34% who chose to participate (versus those who chose not to participate) could have differed substantively, potentially introducing a bias due to exit survey non-response. For example, those who chose not to partake in the exit interview could have harbored especially hostile attitudes towards the organization (suggesting organizationally avoidable voluntary exit reasons or possibly terminations) or could

have felt especially positive or indifferent towards the organization (suggesting organizationally unavoidable voluntary exit reasons). Conversely, one could also reasonably speculate that those who did choose to participate could have been eager to share their perceptions with a third party because they felt especially disgruntled, pleased, or even ambivalent towards the organization. While these differences in motivation were possible between participants and non-participants, I was able to neither measure them nor control for them. Although utilizing self-reported exit reason data from a third-party exit interview did strengthen the present study's methodology beyond relying on internally collected exit responses, it is important to consider the potential for non-response bias when interpreting qualitative study findings as those who chose not to participate in the exit interview could have differed from those who did participate in meaningful ways.

Finally, the several week time lag between an employee's last day on the job and survey completion may have introduced the potential for recall bias, inherent in a retrospective study design. The accuracy or completeness of participants' recollections could have changed during the time lag, potentially resulting in less accurate recalled accounts of their experiences prior to exiting the company. For example, dissatisfaction with compensation might hypothetically fade over time, but memories of an abusive supervisor may become more vivid. Although this potential exists, the time lag ranging from days to weeks was considerably less than other similar existing turnover studies, which required subjects to recall exit reasons up to two years after they left their jobs (Holtom et al., 2005; Morrell & Arnold, 2007). Additionally, research suggests that retrospective designs are viable and may not necessarily introduce bias (Miller, Cardinal, & Glick, 1997; Morrell & Arnold, 2007).

Future Research

Although the present study's findings did yield minimal support for the relationships between RJPs and voluntary turnover and tenure, these relationships may ultimately be more complex than hypothesized, warranting further research. In particular, RJP research would benefit from expanding in four areas: 1) further improvement of methodological issues; 2) stress and coping, 3) applications to non-work domains, and 4) optimistic cognitive bias. I explain each of these below.

First, beyond the methodological improvements of the present study, future research should incorporate further improvements in order to study RJPs under optimal conditions. For example, an ideal RJP study should feature a true experimental design with random assignment to RJP conditions within an organization, as opposed to the present study's quasi-experimental design. Additionally, in contrast to the present study, an ideal RJP study should contain only empirically validated measures and incorporate more proximal outcome variables, including coping, stress, and job satisfaction. Lastly, to fully understand the ways in which RJPs affect turnover, future RJP studies should ideally assess pre-hire turnover in addition to traditional turnover measured in the present study. By understanding how RJPs impact desirable turnover of job applicants who self-select out after the RJP is administered and before they join the organization due to concerns about fit, we can better understand the benefits of this technique.

Second, although Wanous (1978) identified coping as one of the primary psychological mechanisms by which RJPs affect turnover, a notable gap in the RJP coping literature exists with very few exceptions (e.g. Dugoni & Ilgen, 1981; Suszko & Breaugh, 1986). Examining RJPs in terms of stress and coping would foster a deeper understanding of the psychological processes underlying RJPs. Moreover, understanding the relationship between coping processes and RJPs

would facilitate superior design of realistic recruitment interventions focused on the provision of advanced job information, which would ultimately allow for better coping and the prevention of job stress. Richardson and Rothstein (2008) explicated three types of stress management interventions: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary interventions attempt to alter the sources of stress altogether before they impact employees. Examples of preventive strategies include job redesign, such as increasing the amount of autonomy or control a worker has to make decisions and choose how they perform the work on their job. Secondary interventions attempt to reduce the severity of stress symptoms before they lead to negative outcomes. Examples of secondary interventions include stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, time management, or goal setting. Tertiary interventions are designed to treat employees' strains (e.g., poor job attitudes, health conditions). An example of a tertiary intervention is an employee assistance program, in which employers offer resources intended to help employees overcome strain that may adversely affect their well-being, health, or job performance. Investigating and implementing RJPs as a type of primary stress management intervention would be enriching from both an empirical and applied perspective. For example, RJPs offering cognitive reframing content to transform hindrance job stressors into challenge job stressors could improve the coping strategy use of new employees and prevent later job strain. Using RJPs as a tool for preventing the experience of emotional labor and other types of strain could reduce the need for secondary or tertiary stress management interventions once job applicants join the organization, positively affecting both employee and organizational outcomes (Goodwin et al., 2011).

Third, the concept of a realistic preview could be extended to many areas outside of the work domain. Although RJPs were initially created to reduce employee turnover (Weitz, 1956), significant potential exists for broader applications of this technique outside of the workplace.

For example, a realistic preview strategy could benefit various health promotion interventions. If individuals could receive a realistic preview of a smoking cessation or weight loss program prior to enrolling, they could gain an enhanced ability to anticipate the degree and likelihood of anticipated success as well as common roadblocks and ultimately heighten their chance of success. Similarly, further research is needed to explore the possible benefits of applying RJP principles to help individuals successfully adjust to other non-work milestone life decisions, including becoming a parent, enrolling in graduate school, or retiring.

Fourth, literature on optimistic cognitive bias could further elucidate RJP effectiveness and inform the design of better RJPs in practice. Optimistic bias refers to people's tendency to believe that their risk of experiencing a negative outcome is less than that that of their peers (Klein & Helweg-Larsen, 2002). This cognitive bias has been observed in a number of negative and positive domains, including the risk of becoming an alcoholic, getting cancer, having a divorce, or suffering from an injury in a car accident, as well as the likelihood of marrying a wealthy spouse or living past the age of 80 (Weinstein, 1980). Presumably, optimistic bias could lead job applicants to believe positive job information presented during an RJP but discount negative information. For example, if the present study's participants believed that experiencing job stress from interacting with angry customers would likely affect *other* employees but not themselves, the effectiveness of the RJP would have been diminished. The degree to which RJP recipients absorb and believe the information presented impacts the efficacy of this technique. Therefore, discounting RJP information because of a biased optimistic belief could cause employees to experience increased job stress, lower job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions when they do inevitably encounter the job stressors mentioned during RJP administration. In practice, organizations using RJPs may benefit from acknowledging

optimistic bias and educating job applicants about how this cognitive bias may inflate notions of overcoming certain job challenges compared to fellow job applicants or past job incumbents. From a research perspective, future RJP studies could measure optimistic bias to determine the extent to which this cognitive bias be related to employee attitudes and perceptions as well as overall RJP effectiveness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study aimed to revitalize research on RJPs from both an empirical and practical perspective. Empirically, the present study improved upon some of the longstanding conceptual and methodological weaknesses in both RJP and turnover literature to create a stronger test of RJP effectiveness. From an applied perspective, the present study offered practitioners straightforward techniques for improving retention and proactively addressing systematic or recurring issues contributing to turnover. Although the present study employed refined conceptualizations and methodologies, the findings generally ratified the large body of existing research exhibiting a small negative relationship between RJPs and turnover (Earnest et al., 2011). Despite its failure to support study hypotheses, the present study highlighted the practical value of RJPs and confidential exit interviews for understanding and ameliorating unwanted turnover.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of Study Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Supporting the existing body of RJP literature, the departmental voluntary turnover rate will be lower after the RJP intervention was implemented compared to before the RJP intervention was implemented.

Hypothesis 2: By further categorizing voluntary turnover into "organizationally avoidable" vs. "organizationally unavoidable" turnover, exited call center employees who did not receive RJPs will be more likely to have left the organization for "organizationally avoidable" voluntary turnover reasons compared to "organizationally unavoidable" voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons (e.g. termination).

Hypothesis 3: Exited call center employees who did receive RJPs will be more likely to have left the organization for "organizationally unavoidable" voluntary reasons or involuntary reasons compared to "organizationally avoidable" reasons.

Hypothesis 4: Customer service representatives who did not receive RJPs will have had shorter tenure at time of turnover as compared to those who did receive RJPs.

Appendix B

Measure Explanations and Sample Sizes

Measure	Source	Explanation	Applicable Hypotheses	Sample size
Involuntary exit reason	Study organization's archival human resources dataset	Example manager coding: "unsatisfactory performance," "policy violation," "attendance/tardiness," "violation of customer interaction," and "code of ethics violation"	Hypothesis 1	248
Voluntary turnover rate	Study organization's archival human resources records	Monthly ratio of the total number of departmental employees to the number who left voluntarily between May 2012 to June 2013 (pre-RJP) compared to the monthly ratio of the total number of departmental employees to the number who left voluntarily between July 2013 and November 2014 (post-RJP)	Hypothesis 1	663
Voluntary exit reason	Third-party exit survey qualitative coding of item "What was your main reason for leaving [the organization]?"	Content analysis further categorized this variable into "organizationally avoidable voluntary turnover" and "organizationally unavoidable voluntary turnover" (full detail provided in Tables 2 & 3)	Hypotheses 2 & 3	205
Organization tenure	Study organization's archival human resources records	Difference between hire date and termination date	Hypothesis 4	507

Appendix C

Third-Party Research Organization's Exit Survey

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree/Some what Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Answer
1	2	3	4	5	N

On-Boarding (Answer only if employed with the company for less than 1 year)

1. I was made to feel welcome as a new employee
2. New hire orientation provided me with the information I needed to be successful
3. The reality of my job matched the expectations I had when I was hired
4. The job preview helped to prepare me for what to expect on the job

Climate & Morale

5. I was proud to work for [Organization]
6. I felt valued as an employee
7. I enjoyed working with my coworkers
8. Employees were treated fairly regardless of their race, gender, or age
9. I would recommend [Organization] as a good place to work

Job Satisfaction

10. My job made good use of my skills and abilities
11. I was satisfied with the type of work I did
12. I had access to the resources and equipment I needed to do my job effectively
13. My opinion was listened to

Immediate Supervisor (Refers to the provider of your performance reviews)

14. My supervisor clearly communicated expectations for my performance
15. My supervisor gave me helpful feedback on my performance
16. My supervisor provided recognition and appreciation for good work
17. My supervisor held people accountable for their performance
18. My supervisor cared about me as a person
19. My supervisor treated me with respect
20. My supervisor encouraged my professional development
21. I trusted my supervisor

Management (Refers to managers, senior managers, and senior directors)

22. Management effectively communicated organizational changes
23. I felt comfortable raising questions or concerns to Management
24. Management was effective in understanding and solving key department problems

Senior Leadership (Refers to your CEO, CFO, etc.)

25. Senior Leadership's actions showed they valued their employees
26. I trusted Senior Leadership to make good business decisions
27. Senior Leadership communicated a clear vision and plan for [Organization]'s future

Staffing & Workload

28. There was sufficient staff in my department to handle the workload
29. The amount of work I was expected to do was realistic
30. I was given enough flexibility in scheduling
31. If you answered 3 or lower to the previous question, what aspect of scheduling weekends, getting days off, etc.) didn't you like? (shift, lunches and breaks, weekends, getting days off, etc.)

Customer Service & Quality

32. Customer service excellence was a top priority
33. I was encouraged to share ideas for improving service and quality
34. My coworkers were committed to delivering high quality work
35. My coworkers were held accountable for doing quality work

Training & Career Development

36. I received the training I needed to do my job well
37. I was provided with opportunities to learn new skills
38. I felt I had the opportunity to be promoted
39. I was able to earn more responsibility and autonomy

Compensation

40. I was paid appropriately for my job responsibilities
41. My pay reflected how well I did my job
42. My compensation was competitive with other organizations in the area

Benefits (Answer only if you received benefits from the organization)

43. Overall, the benefit package met my needs
44. My benefits were competitive with other organizations in the area
45. Discounted cable services was a valued benefit
46. My benefits were clearly communicated so that I understood them

Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely/ Somewhat Unlikely	Likely	Highly Likely	No Answer
1	2	3	4	5	N

Future Potential

47. I would consider returning to [Organization]
48. I would consider returning to the same position
49. If you responded with a 3 or above to any of the likelihood to return questions, [Organization] is interested in receiving your contact information. [Organization] will not have access to your specific survey answers if you give permission for your contact information to be shared for future employment consideration. Do you give permission for us to share your name and contact information for future employment consideration? (Yes/No)

Demographics

50. What is your level of education?

Comments (Your responses in the following open-ended comment section will remain confidential, meaning that your name will not be associated with each comment; however, any identifiable information included in your comments will be reported as entered)

51. What were the most important reasons you left [Organization]?

52. What could [Organization] have done to prevent you from leaving?

53. What was the best thing about working at [Organization]?

54. Do you know of any compliance or integrity issues that have not been addressed with [Organization] (i.e., unlawful, unethical, or illegal behaviors) that you would like to bring to the attention of [Organization]? If yes, please explain.

55. (Answer only if you responded to the previous question) [Organization] takes these issues seriously and would like to be made aware of them. We will be forwarding this issue/s to [Organization]. As much information as you can share will be most helpful (i.e., department, location/business area, job titles, etc.). All your other answers to this survey remain confidential. Do you give permission to identify your name with this specific comment? If yes, this will give [Organization] an opportunity to follow up and you may be contacted for more information. (Yes/No)

56. Is there anything else you would like to add?