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EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND POST-DECISION
ACCOMMODATION PROCESSES

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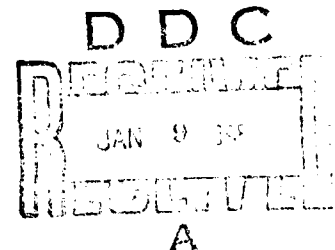| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE | | READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM |
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20. ABSTRACT *(Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)* Based on a review of existing research on employee turnover, this paper suggests a comprehensive model of the processes leading up to voluntary employee termination. The model includes several factors found in research but not heretofore included in previous turnover models. Following this, the paper focuses on the psychological and behavioral mechanisms used by employees to accommodate the decision to stay or leave once this decision has been made. Drawing heavily on attribution theory, a variety of post-decision accommodation processes are suggested. Finally, suggestions for future research are identified to guide additional work in the area.

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ABSTRACT

Based on a review of existing research on employee turnover, this
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theory, a variety of post-decision accommodation processes are suggested.
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work in the area.

Studies of employee turnover from work organizations abound in the literature on organizational behavior and industrial psychology.[1] Beginning with the early studies of Bernays (1910) and Crabb (1912) and continuing to the present, well over 1,000 separate studies on the subject can be identified. Moreover, over the last twenty-five years, at least thirteen review articles on turnover have appeared (Brayfield and Crockett, 1955; Forrest, Cummings, and Johnson, 1977; Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson and Capwell, 1957; Lefkowitz, 1971; March and Simon, 1958; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand and Meglino, 1979; Muchinsky and Tuttle, 1979; Pettman, 1973; Porter and Steers, 1973; Price, 1977; Schuh, 1967; Stoikov and Raimon, 1968; Vroom, 1964). Clearly, the subject has not been neglected by researchers.

What does appear to have been neglected, however, are serious, comprehensive attempts to develop useful models of the turnover process. Although several models exist (e.g., March and Simon, 1958; Price, 1977; Mobley, 1977), their eloquence does not seem to match our current level of knowledge on the subject, probably because of the sheer amount of information available. In our efforts at parsimony, we have a natural tendency to simplify, often resulting in propositions for which contradictory data exist.

Due to the abundance of turnover studies and reviews of turnover studies, it hardly seems appropriate to offer another review. It is our opinion that a far more fruitful area of endeavor is to venture further into the morass of turnover modeling and to attempt to extend our theoretical knowledge of the processes by which individuals decide

whether to stay or leave. Such an attempt is made here. That is, instead
of a review, we shall attempt to piece together the available data and
summarize earlier modeling attempts into a (hopefully) fairly comprehensive
process model of employee turnover.

In addition, we wish to consider the consequences of the participation
or withdrawal decision. Very little is known about how individuals
accommodate or learn to deal with this decision once it has been made.
As such, we shall draw considerably on the social psychological literature
and offer a model of the accommodation process vis-a-vis the participation
decision. By doing so, we hope the materials presented here will be
interpreted as a series of propositions suitable for subsequent testing.
In this way, more will be learned concerning why people choose to remain
with or leave an organization as well as how they adjust to such decisions
once made.

This paper consists of five parts. First, we shall provide a short
synopsis of our current level of knowledge. Second, based on available
information, we shall present a process model of employee turnover. Third,
we shall extend consideration of the turnover model to consider how
individuals accommodate the decision to stay or leave. Fourth, the manner
in which individuals interpret the causes of turnover is reviewed.
Finally, the implications for future research will be considered.

## BACKGROUND AND PROBLEMS OF TURNOVER RESEARCH

Our progress toward a better understanding of employee turnover in
organizations can be traced by examining the various reviews that have
appeared over time. A careful reading of these reviews reveals that,

while some progress has been made, much remains to be learned concerning turnover and its outcomes in work organizations.

We have attempted in Exhibit 1 to summarize several of the more

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Insert Exhibit 1 About Here
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important findings of the various reviews of the turnover literature. Several of these reviews have pointed to the importance of job attitudes as a factor in turnover (Brayfield and Crockett, 1955; Herzberg et al., 1957; Porter and Steers, 1973). In addition, some evidence exists that personality and biodemographic data can predict turnover to some extent (Schuh, 1967). The importance of economic factors has also been shown (Stoikov and Raimon, 1968). Finally, several of the more recent reviews have pointed to the wide diversity of factors (e.g., personal factors, job characteristics, reward systems, supervisory and group relations) that combine to influence the decision to stay or leave (Lefkowitz, 1971; Porter and Steers, 1973; Price, 1977; Mobley et al., 1979; Muchinksy and Tuttle, 1979).

Beyond simple reviews, however, several investigators have attempted to propose conceptual models of the turnover process based on existing literature (March and Simon, 1958; Vroom, 1964; Price, 1977; Mobley, 1977). Although the details of the models differ, turnover is generally thought to be a function of negative job attitudes combined with an ability to secure employment elsewhere. Mobley (1977) goes further here in suggesting several intermediate linkages that intercede between attitudes and actual turnover, noting in particular the importance of behavioral intentions (after Fishbein, 1967).

Despite this long history of research on employee turnover, several issues remain unanswered. At least nine shortcomings of many of the existing models can be identified that need to be taken into account in any comprehensive model of voluntary employee turnover:

1. Many current models ignore the role of available information about one's job or prospective job in an individual's participation decision. Recent research on realistic job previews clearly demonstrates how prior knowledge concerning the actual job environment can ultimately affect turnover (Wanous, 1977).

2. The extent to which an individual's expectations and values surrounding a job are met by one's organizational experiences have also been shown to be an important factor in turnover (Porter and Steers, 1973; Muchinksy and Tuttle, 1979). These factors have likewise received scant attention in comprehensive models of employee turnover.

3. The role of job performance level as a factor influencing desire or intent to leave has also been overlooked. High job performance may heighten one's expectations concerning organizational rewards, while poor performance may cause lower attitudes concerning the intrinsic worth of the job. In both cases, performance must be recognized in the turnover process (Marsh and Manari, 1977).

4. Most models of turnover focus exclusively on one job attitude (namely, job satisfaction) and ignore other attitudes (like organizational commitment) that may also be relevant. In view of recent studies indicating that commitment (rather than satisfaction) represents a better predictor of turnover, (Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian,

1974; Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979), this omission appears serious.

5. Current models ignore a host of non-work influences on staying or leaving. When one's spouse is transferred--or when one's spouse cannot transfer--the employee's mobility is affected.

6. Current models assume that once an employee has become dissatisfied, the wheels are set in motion for eventual termination. This assumption ignores the fact that the employee may be able to change his or her current work situation (perhaps through bargaining with the supervisor, threats to quit, etc.) Ironically, March and Simon (1958) did point to this factor over two decades ago, but most subsequent efforts have dropped it from consideration.

7. It would be useful if models of employee turnover would clarify the role of available alternative job opportunities, both in terms of which factors influence such availability and in terms of the consequences for employees of having no alternatives.

8. Current models of turnover assume a one-way flow process and ignore important feedback loops that serve to enhance or ameliorate one's desire to leave.

9. Very little thought has been given to how people accommodate the participation decision. What happens to those who want to leave but cannot or to those who choose to stay when their friends and associates are leaving? Alternatively, how do people adjust psychologically to the act of leaving one organization and joining

a second? This accommodation process is perhaps the most fruitful area for future research on the turnover process since it has significant implications for the attitudes and behavior of both stayers and leavers.

Clearly, there is a need for more comprehensive process models of employee turnover that take such factors as these into account. Such a model is presented here in the hopes that it will stimulate more comprehensive, multivariate efforts to study employee turnover and its outcomes. The model is largely inductive in nature and has been developed from the existing literature on the topic. The model is presented in two parts: 1) the procedures by which employees decide to stay or leave (turnover); and 2) the procedures by which employees learn to cope with their participation decision once it has been made (accommodation). While a good deal of research (albeit of a limited nature) has been carried out on the first of these two areas, the second area has received virtually no consideration.

## A MODEL OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

In this section, we shall build upon earlier theoretical and empirical work and propose a largely cognitive model of employee turnover that focuses on the processes leading up to the decision to participate or withdraw. This model is meant to summarize and integrate earlier work and to extend such efforts by incorporating the points mentioned above. The model is schematically represented in Exhibit 2. It will provide a

basis for the subsequent discussion on accommodation of the participation
decision. In order to clarify the dynamics of the model, it will be
described in three sequential parts: (1) job expectations and job attitudes;
(2) job attitudes and intent to leave; and (3) intent to leave, available
alternatives, and actual turnover. Relevant research will be cited as
we proceed.

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## Job Expectations and Job Attitudes

Job expectations and values. A model of employee turnover could
start in many places. We could begin with the nature of the job or work
environment, the job market and economic factors, and so forth. We chose
to begin with the individual and his or her expectations and values since
it is the individual who must ultimately decide whether to stay or leave.
All individuals have expectations upon entering a new organization. These
expectations may involve beliefs about the nature of the job, the rewards
for satisfactory performance, the availablility of interpersonal contacts
and interactions, and so forth. It would be expected that each employee
would have a somewhat different set of expectations depending upon his or
her own values and needs at the time.

These expectations (shown in box 2 of Exhibit 2) are believed to be in-
fluenced by three categories of variables: (1) individual characteristics;
(2) available information about job and organization; and (3) alternative
job opportunities. Several individual characteristics (see box 1) can
influence job expectations and ultimately turnover. These include one's

occupation, education, age, tenure, family responsibilities, family income level, personal work ethic, previous work experiences, and personality (Federico et al., 1976; Mangione, 1973; Mobley et al., 1978; Waters et al., 1976; Porter and Steers, 1973; Hines, 1973; Mowday et al., 1978). As a result of such factors, people determine consciously or unconsciously what they expect from a job: what they feel they must have, what they would like to have, and what they can do without.

A second influence on the determination of job expectations is the available information about the job and organization both at the time of organizational choice and during reappraisal periods throughout one's career (box 3). The basic argument here follows from the literature on "realistic job previews" (Wanous, 1977). It has been fairly consistently found that when people are provided with more complete or more accurate information about prospective jobs, they are able to make more informed choices and, as a result, are more likely to develop realistic job expectations that are more easily met by the organization. Modest support for the ultimate impact of unmet expectations on turnover can be found in studies reviewed by Porter and Steers (1973), Wanous (1977), Muchinsky and Tuttle (1979), and Mobley et al. (1979).

Such information about one's job or organization can also be important later in one's career. That is, if an accountant, for example, joins one of the major CPA firms in the hopes of eventually becoming a partner but later learns that the probability of attaining such status is minimal, the accountant may change his or her expectations and may decide to set off on a different course (e.g., corporate accounting).

A third influence on job expectations is the extent to which an individual has alternative job opportunities (box 4). Simply put, the greater the number of attractive job alternatives, the more demanding an individual may be when evaluating his or her current job or job offer. Pfeffer and Lawler (1979) found availability of alternative jobs was negatively related to job attitudes among a large sample of university faculty. However, Mowday and McDade (1979) found that the mere availability of alternative jobs was a less important influence on job attitudes than the relative attractiveness of the alternatives. In addition, they found that the influence of attractive alternative jobs on attitudes changed over time. In a longitudinal analysis, attractiveness of alternative jobs was negatively related to organizational commitment on the first morning a new employee reported for work. After one month on the job, however, attractiveness of alternative job offers the individual did not take advantage of was positively related to organizational commitment. Hence, on the first day at work, information about alternative jobs may be very salient since information about the chosen job is limited. After a period of time at work, however, the individual must justify his or her choice of the job and this may result in more positive attitudes for those who have given up an opportunity to take a relatively attractive alternative job.

Given the salience of alternative jobs during the early employment period, it is not surprising to discover that expectation levels of employees are quite high at the point of organizational entry (Porter and Steers, 1973). Once in a given job for a period of time, however, expectations

tend to become more realistic as one develops greater behavioral commitments that make it less attractive to go elsewhere (Salancik, 1977). (We shall say more about the role of alternative job opportunities shortly).

Affective responses to job. The next link in our proposed model relates job expectations and values to subsequent job attitudes (box 8). Following the literature on job attitudes, it is proposed that affective responses (including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and anxiety and frustration) result from the interaction of three factors: (1) job expectations; (2) organizational characteristics and experiences; and (3) job performance level. (A discussion of the relative impact of the various affective responses on turnover goes beyond the scope of this paper - see Hom et al., 1979; Cooper and Payne, 1978; Porter et al., 1974).

The major thrust of the argument here deals with the interaction between job expectations (box 2) and organizational characteristics and experiences (box 6). Again, following from the literature on realistic job previews (Wanous, 1977), the more one's experiences in the organization are congruent with what one expects, the greater the propensity that an individual would be satisfied and would wish to remain with the organization (Muchinsky and Tuttle, 1979; Porter and Steers, 1973; Vroom, 1964). Such experiences have also been shown to be related to organizational commitment (Buchanan, 1974; Steers, 1977).

It should be noted here that the impact of expectations on subsequent job attitudes is a point open to dispute. Locke (1976) has argued that when expectations are not met, the reaction by individuals is surprise,

not dissatisfaction. Instead, he argues that it is the extent to which valued attributes (instead of expected attributes) are present in a job that influences satisfaction. Although values and expectations are conceptually distinct. available evidence suggests that they are highly related in practice (Bray, Campbell, and Grant (1974) found the two to be correlated at r = .8?). Perhaps employees develop higher expectations about those aspects of the job that are most highly valued and, hence, both concepts may be related to subsequent attitudes (see also: Ilgen and Dugoni, 1977).

Other aspects of organizational life that could influence the extent to which one's expectations are met include the organization's pay and promotion policies, one's actual job duties, co-worker relations, work group size, supervisory style, organization structure and opportunities for participation in decision-making, geographic location, and organizational goals and values. (Marsh and Mannari, 1977; Ilgen and Dugoni, 1977; Dansereau et al., 1974; Koch and Steers, 1978, Waters et al., 1976; Krackhardt, McKenna, Porter and Steers, 1978). Variables such as these, when taken together, constitute a form of experienced organizational reality that signal the individual as to whether his or her expectations are being (or are likely to be) met.

In addition, recent research suggests that job performance level (box 7) may also influence job attitudes and ultimate turnover. Poor performance has been shown to lead to poor attitudes about the job, possibly in an attempt to rationalize the poor performance ("This is a crummy job anyway.") Poor performance has also been shown to lead to increased anxiety and

frustration (Cooper and Payne, 1978). Finally, two recent studies have shown that poor job performance represented an important influence on voluntary turnover (Marsh and Mannari, 1977; Wanous, Stumpf, and Bedrosian, 1978).

The resulting job attitudes, in turn, influence several other aspects of behavior. First, attitudes can feed back and influence both organizational experiences (box 6) and job performance (box 7), as shown in Exhibit 2 (see, for example, Forrest et al., 1977). Poor job attitudes often color an employee's perceptions of organizational actions (e.g., promotion decisions, pay raises, supervisory behavior). Support for this position can be found in the recent attribution theory literature (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978) and in studies of selective exposure to information (Janis and Mann, 1977).

Poor attitudes may in fact lead supervisors to take certain (punitive) actions which, in turn, lead to further reduced job attitudes. Likewise, negative affective responses to one's level of job performance can lead to further reductions in performance levels (a "who cares?" attitude). This degenerative, self-reinforcing cycle can significantly enhance an employee's desire and interest to leave.

In addition, poor job attitudes may cause individuals to engage in efforts to change the situation (box 9). It is logical to assume that before actually deciding to leave, an individual would in many cases attempt to change or eliminate those aspects of the work situation that are compelling the individual to leave. Such efforts may take the form of attempted intraorganizational transfer (March and Simon, 1958) or,

alternatively, attempts to act on the work environment. Efforts to change the situation by acting on the environment can include attempts to restructure one's job or job responsibilities, changing the payoffs for continued participation, unionization efforts, threatening to leave, or forcing someone else to leave. Through mechanisms such as these, the work environment hopefully becomes more tolerable, thereby improving one's job attitudes and desire to stay. On the other hand, where an employee finds it impossible to alter the situation, poor job attitudes would be expected to remain the same (or possibly decrease), thereby strengthening one's resolve to leave. The potential effects of efforts to change the situation (whether successful or unsuccessful) on intent to leave and actual turnover represents a major area in need of serious study.

## Job Attitudes and Intent to Leave

The second phase of the model focuses on the linkage between one's job attitudes and one's desire and intent to stay or leave. In brief, it is suggested that desire/intent to leave is influenced by: (1) affective responses to job; and (2) non-work influences on staying or leaving.

Following from the work of Fishbein (1967) and others on attitude theory, it is assumed that one's affective responses to the job lead to behavioral intentions. In the case of employee turnover, we would expect reduced levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (box 8) to result in an increased desire or intent to leave (box 11; Mobley, 1977; Price, 1977; Steers, 1977; Koch and Steers, 1978). Such an assertion is common throughout the literature on turnover.

What is often overlooked in determining desire/intent to leave, however, is a constellation of non-work influences on staying or leaving (box 10).

There are many instances in which one may not like a particular job but still does not desire or seek termination. Such instances include situations where (1) an individual tolerates an unpleasant job (e.g., an apprenticeship) because of its instrumentality for future career consider-ations (e.g., a master craftsman); (2) a spouse is limited geographically to a certain region and alternative employment is scarce; (3) an individual's central life interests lie outside of work; and (4) family considerations (Dubin, Champoux and Porter, 1975; Porter and Steers, 1973; Schneider and Dachler, 1978).

In fact, following a review of relevant work, Sussman and Cogswell (1971, p. 485) suggested that "there is a direct relationship between the supply and demand of workers in any occupational system and the consideration of non-economic factors in job movement; the greater the demand for workers in any occupational system the greater is the consider-ation given to familial concerns such as work aspirations of spouses, special needs of children, community activities, linkages with kin, friends, and voluntary associations; physical and social environments." Included here too would be Fishbein's (1967) notation of subjective normative beliefs, or how those around an individual would feel about his or her leaving. These non-work factors are often overlooked in turnover research but may, in fact, explain a greater proportion of the turnover variance than job attitudes.

Parenthetically, it should be noted here that in our proposed model, we have combined desire and intent to leave. This has been done for the

sake of parsimony and because we wished to focus our attention on the processes leading up to one's behavioral intentions. It was felt that these early influences were perhaps the least understood segment of the participation decision. It should be noted that more elaborate distinctions between desire to leave and intent to leave are presented by Mobley (1977; Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth, 1978) and Fishbein (1967). Fishbein introduces the term "attitude toward the act," which is similar to our use of "desire to leave." Fishbein and others (e.g., Hom et al., 1979) argue that an individual's feelings toward the act of quitting (desire) represent a more immediate determinant of intent to leave than feelings about the job.

## Intent to Leave, Available Alternatives, and Turnover

Finally, the third segment of the proposed model focuses on the link between behavioral intent to leave and actual turnover. Following from the earlier work of March and Simon (1958), it is argued that employee turnover is ultimately determined by a combination of behavioral intent to leave (box 11) and the availability of alternative job opportunities (box 4). Although research support for this contention is mixed, much of the discrepancy appears to result more from inadequate methodology than from any repudiation of the basic hypothesis (Pettman, 1973; Schwab and Dyer, 1974; Schneider, 1976; Dansereau, Cashman and Graen, 1974).

Intent to leave apparently influences actual turnover in at least two ways. First, it may lead fairly directly to turnover (Muchinsky and Tuttle, 1979). Some people decide to leave their jobs even when alternative

jobs are not available. Recent changes in the social welfare system aimed at providing unemployed people with minimal support levels may serve to enhance this direct relationship by providing an economic cushion to leavers.

Intent to leave may further influence actual turnover in an indirect fashion by causing the individual to initiate search behavior for more preferable alternative jobs (box 12). Research suggests that less satisfied people are more likely to be sensitive to job market changes (March and Simon, 1958). Such search behavior serves to open up to an individual a greater number of job possibilities, thereby increasing the likelihood of leaving.

In addition, however, alternative job opportunities (box 4) are also influenced by individual characteristics (box 1) and economic and market conditions (box 5). Individual characteristics such as age, sex, and occupation often constrain one's opportunities for jobs (Porter and Steers, 1973). Moreover, economic and market conditions also influence the availability of jobs (Forrest, Cummings and Johnson, 1977).

If an individual has no (or few) alternative job opportunities, he or she would be less likely to leave the organization. Instead, however, the individual may engage in alternative forms of withdrawal or accommodation in order to reduce the anxiety or frustration that results from not being able to leave (box 13). These alternatives may include absenteeism, drug abuse or alcoholism, sabotage, slow-downs, and so forth. Or, alternatively, they may take the form of rationalizing why it is in

one's best interest to remain after all, as we shall see in the next

section. In any case, where an individual wishes to leave but is unable

to do so, some form of accommodation process can be expected. Where the

individual wishes to leave and is able to do so, the probability of actual

turnover (box 14) is markedly increased. (Dansereau et al., 1974;

Mobley et al., 1978; Woodward, 1976).

With regard to the availability of alternative job opportunities, we

can see a further feedback loop in operation. Specifically, when an

employee is presented with a new and attractive alternative position,

perhaps because of changes in market conditions, his or her expectations

on the current job are likely to be increased, making it more difficult for

the organization to meet these expectations. As a result, job attitudes

may suffer which cause heightened desire and intent to leave. This, in

turn, sensitizes the individual to the possibility of changing jobs.

Again, this self-reinforcing cycle can ultimately hasten the decision

to leave.

Relationship to Earlier Models

As noted above, the model suggested here attempts to summarize and

integrate much of the earlier theorizing on the topic of employee turnover.

Even so, while many aspects of the model have appeared earlier, other

aspects are somewhat unique.

To begin with, the role of available information about the prospective

job and organization is explicitly recognized (box 3). Second, job

performance level as a factor in affective responses to the job is also

noted (box 7). Third, like Mobley et al.'s (1979) model, but unlike others,
several attitudes (not simply job satisfaction) are considered as they
related to turnover (box 8). Fourth, major emphasis is placed on a
series of non-work factors that have been shown to influence desire to
leave and/or actual termination (box 10). Fifth, recognition is also
given to the fact that when an employee is dissatisfied he or she may
engage in attempts to change the situation or work environment prior to
deciding upon termination (box 9). Finally, special emphasis is given to
the accommodation processes used by individuals who leave a positive
situation or remain in a negative one (box 13), as well as those used by
individuals left behind when someone else leaves.

In all, then, it is our belief that the model presented here does
suggest several new avenues for future research on the turnover decision
that should aid in our understanding of the process. Based on this model,
we now turn to a consideration of the processes by which individuals
accommodate the decision to participate or withdraw.

## ACCOMMODATING THE DECISION TO PARTICIPATE OR WITHDRAW: ATTITUDINAL AND BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES OF TURNOVER

The primary analytical focus in previous research on turnover in
organizations has been concerned almost exclusively with understanding
the psychological processes leading up to the decision to stay or leave and
identifying factors which may influence these processes. Numerous
investigations have attempted to determine the extent to which characteristics
of the individual employee, task, work environment, and larger organization

predict subsequent turnover behavior (Mobley et al., 1979; Porter and Steers, 1973). In the previous section a number of such antecedent factors were identified and integrated into a comprehensive model of the processes leading up to the decision to stay or leave. Important questions still remain, however, concerning the consequences of turnover behavior for both individuals and organizations. In this section we will consider the turnover decision of an individual in terms of its consequences. Relatively little empirical or theoretical attention has been given to the consequences of turnover for either individuals or organizations. As a result, much of the discussion that follows remains somewhat speculative. Our intent in this section is not to provide definitive answers concerning the consequences of turnover, but rather to stimulate research interest in this area and to suggest several tentative conceptual models that can be used to guide future inquiry.

The consequences of turnover can be viewed from at least four perspectives. The first three perspectives concern the consequences for several types of organizational participants at an individual level of analysis, while the fourth represents the consequences of turnover for organizations.

First, the decision to stay with or leave an organization is clearly likely to have consequences for the person making the decision. Although previous research in organizational behavior has concentrated on the implications of job attitudes for subsequent behavior (e.g., job satisfaction as a predictor of turnover), there is considerable evidence that behavior also has important implications for subsequent attitudes (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Research on job choice, for example, has shown that

individuals who select among alternative jobs often systematically re-evaluate both the chosen and unchosen jobs following the choice (Lawler, Kulick, Rhode and Sorenson, 1975; Vroom and Deci, 1971). From the perspective of the individual leaving the organization, the act of turnover may therefore have important implications for attitudes toward the job the individual is leaving, as well as the new job he or she is taking.

A second perspective from which to view the consequences of turnover concerns the co-workers of the individual who leaves the organization. Turnover by an individual can be interpreted by his or her former co-workers as a rejection of the job and/or as an implicit, if not explicit, recognition that better job opportunities exist elsewhere. Those who remain in the organization may have to reconcile their decision to stay in light of evidence from the behavior of another individual that the job may not be all that desirable. Turnover may therefore cause former co-workers to re-evaluate their present position in the organization and possibly lead to the development of more negative job attitudes. Furthermore, it may cause former co-workers to initiate a search for a more attractive job.

A third perspective from which to view the consequences of turnover is from the perspective of the supervisor of the individual who has left the organization. This may be the most important perspective from an organizational standpoint since it is the supervisor who must take steps to prevent turnover in the future. Since turnover is most often viewed as a problem in organizations, a high rate of turnover by subordinates may

adversely reflect on the effectiveness of the supervisor, particularly when it is the best employees who leave. Turnover by subordinates may be perceived as threatening by the supervisor. Moreover, supervisors in organizations experiencing high rates of turnover must diagnose the reasons why employees leave and make decisions about appropriate courses of action to reduce turnover. The ability of supervisors to accurately determine the reasons why employees leave has important implications for the effectiveness of subsequent efforts designed to remove the causes of turnover. Despite the importance of understanding how supervisors interpret the reasons for subordinate turnover, very little is known about this process or the factors which may influence it.

The fourth and final perspective from which to view the consequences of turnover concerns the impact of turnover on overall organizational effectiveness. A number of writers have developed methods for identifying and measuring the costs associated with replacing employees who leave the organization (e.g., Jeswald, 1974; Macy and Mirvis, 1976). In addition, Price (1977) has suggested that turnover has implications for such organization-wide variables as size of administrative staff, formalization, integration, innovation, and centralization. Since the consequences of turnover for organizations have already received some attention in the literature, this section will focus only on the consequences of turnover from the perspective of individuals.

In the discussion that follows, the consequences of turnover behavior will be considered from the perspective of both the person leaving the

organization and observers of the behavior (i.e., co-workers and supervisors).
The discussion in this section will focus on the attitudinal and behavioral
consequences of turnover. Particular attention in this discussion will
focus on the consequences of turnover for the individual making the decision
to leave the organization, although the attitudinal and behavioral
consequences of turnover for observers of the action will also be briefly
considered. In the next section, a theoretical model of the processes
through which the causes of turnover are identified will be presented and
the factors which influence this process will be discussed. This discussion
will draw heavily upon the work of social psychologists in the area of
attribution theory.

General research interest in the consequences of choice behavior for
subsequent attitudes has increased in recent years among those interested
in investigating behavior in organizations (cf. Salancik and Pfeffer,
1978). Research on the implications of behavior for attitude change has a
long history in social psychology. The important work of Festinger (1957)
and Brehm and Cohen (1962) on cognitive dissonance and Bem (1967) on
self-perception theory provide theoretical frameworks within which attitude
change on the part of the person behaving can be predicted from a knowledge
of the circumstances under which behavior took place. Although primary
interest has been focused on attitude change on the part of the person
behaving, research evidence also suggests that an individual's behavior
may have implications for the attitudes of those who observe it (Nisbett
and Valins, 1972).

## Consequences for the Person Staying or Leaving

From an analytical standpoint, the decision to remain on a job that is satisfying or leave one that is dissatisfying is less interesting with respect to its consequences than cases in which satisfied employees leave or dissatisfied employees stay (i.e., "off-quadrant" behavior). When behavior is consistent with prior attitudes (e.g., a dissatisfied employee leaves) there would appear to be little need to change subsequent attitudes as a consequence of the decision. Although in cases where behavior is consistent with prior attitudes the individual may strengthen their pre-existing positive or negative feelings in the process of justifying his or her decision, it is doubtful whether attitudes would dramatically change (e.g., shift from positive to negative). When behavior is inconsistent with prior attitudes (e.g., a dissatisfied employee remains in the organization), however, there is reason to believe that a dramatic shift in attitudes may take place under certain circumstances.

Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance is relevant to understanding the consequences of behavior (staying or leaving) which is inconsistent with prior attitudes.[2] Briefly stated, the theory suggests that dissonance is aroused whenever two cognitions psychologically stand in obverse relation to each other. The existence of dissonance is viewed as creating tension within the individual and motivating actions designed to reduce the dissonance (cf., Zanna and Cooper, 1976). The motivation to reduce dissonance is a function of the magnitude of the dissonance created; the greater the dissonance, the greater the motivation to reduce it.

Applied to the turnover decision, the theory clearly suggests that the decision to leave a job which is satisfying or remain on a job which is dissatisfying will, under certain conditions, create dissonant cognitions in the mind of the employee. In the former case, the "satisfied-leaver" may hold the two dissonant cognitions "I am satisfied with my job" and "I am leaving my job." The "dissatisfied-stayer," on the other hand, holds the two dissonant cognitions "I am dissatisfied with my job" and "I am remaining on the job." When such dissonant cognitions exist, the theory predicts individuals will be motivated to reduce dissonance through either behavioral or cognitive means (Brehm and Cohen, 1962; Festinger, 1957; Wicklund and Brehm, 1976). Since it is usually difficult to change or deny a decision once it has been made, this generally suggests that the individual will change his or her attitudes or perceptions to be more consistent with the choice.

Recent research on dissonance theory has been directed toward the problem of explicating the conditions under which predictions of the theory will hold (Kiesler and Munson, 1975; Wicklund and Brehm, 1976). Several situational factors surrounding choice processes are thought to be necessary to produce dissonance. First, the decision must involve a behavioral commitment on the part of the individual and/or the action taken must be difficult to change or revoke (Brehm and Cohen, 1962; Staw, 1974). In other words, a definite choice must be made between two or more alternatives and the decision may not be easily changed. Second, the decision must have important consequences for the individual in order to

produce dissonance (Festinger, 1957; Staw, 1974). Third, the individual must feel personal responsibility for the decision (Collins and Hoyt, 1972; Staw, 1974). In other words, the decision situation must be perceived as one in which the individual had freedom of choice among the alternatives. Finally, there must be an element of inadequate justification associated with the choice between alternatives (Brehm and Cohen, 1962; Freedman, 1963). This requirement suggests that there must be some characteristic of the unchosen alternative which, when considered alone, would have led the individual to select that alternative. In general, we would expect dissonance to be greatest when the alternatives are similar in terms of their overall attractiveness but differ with respect to the attractiveness of specific characteristics associated with each alternative.

Since the turnover decision involves a definite choice, is a decision that is most often difficult to revoke or change, and is of considerable importance to most individuals, the first two conditions necessary to produce dissonance can be assumed to exist in most, if not all, turnover decisions. Consequently, the third and fourth conditions (perceived choice and inadequate justification) appear to be most crucial in determining the attitudinal consequences of the decision to stay or leave. More specifically, for purposes of the discussion below the presence or absence of perceived choice and inadequate justification will be viewed as determining whether or not an individual reacts to the decision in a manner predicted by dissonance theory.

When a turnover decision is characterized by both perceived choice and inadequate justification, dissonance theory predicts several possible

behavioral or attitudinal consequences. In any given situation, a number of alternative methods of reducing dissonance may be available to the individual. It is difficult, however, to make precise predictions about how individuals will reduce dissonance (Wicklund and Brehm, 1976). Festinger (1957) originally proposed that the method of dissonance reduction chosen would be sensitive to the "reality" of the situation. In a test of this proposition, Walster, Berscheid, and Barclay (1967) found that subjects chose a method of dissonance reduction that was unlikely to be challenged by future events. Considerable ambiguity still remains, however, about what method of dissonance reduction will be chosen in a particular situation. As a consequence, the discussion in this section remains somewhat speculative.

In considering the consequences of turnover for the individual making the decision, a distinction will be drawn between: 1) whether a person is a "satisfied-leaver" or a "dissatisfied-stayer;" and 2) whether or not the conditions necessary to produce dissonance are present. To simplify the discussion, only decision situations in which both perceived choice and inadequate justification are present or where at least one or both of the conditions are absent will be considered. When both conditions are present, it is assumed that dissonance may result from the turnover decision. If one or both of the conditions are absent, no dissonance is predicted since external justification for the behavior will exist in the situation. This distinction results in the four-fold classification of cases presented in Exhibit 3.

1. <u>Satisfied-leaver/dissonance present</u>.  In this situation the
employee has voluntarily resigned from a job (i.e., high personal
responsibility and choice) which he or she found satisfying.  Inadequate
justification exists in that a trade-off was made between attractive
elements of the old and new job.  When this situation exists, it is
predicted that post-decision dissonance will result and that the employee
will be motivated to reduce this dissonance.

Several alternative modes of dissonance reduction would be available
in this situation, as shown in Exhibit 3.  First, dissonance may be
reduced by denying personal responsibility for the decision (Cooper, 1971).
The employee may, for example, cognitively distort the circumstances
surrounding the decision in a manner which suggests the organization was
subtly urging him or her to leave.  Such a strategy is equivalent to
cognitively manipulating the attribution of the reason for leaving.
(Attribution processes surrounding the turnover decisions are discussed
in the next section.)  The fact that people are more likely to attribute
the causes of their own behavior to characteristics of the environment
(Jones, 1976) suggests that this may be a common strategy.  This strategy
may be difficult to reconcile with reality, however, when the organization
has made attempts to retain the employee (e.g., promised a raise or
promotion).

A second plausible method of reducing dissonance is to cognitively
distort the characteristics of the old and new job.  This strategy can be
seen in research on job choice which has found that people systematically

re-evaluate the alternatives after a choice has been made (Lawler et al., 1975; Vroom and Deci, 1971). It has been found, for example, that people reduce dissonance by increasing their positive evaluation of the chosen (new) job while at the same time magnifying the negative aspects of the unchosen (old) job. In the turnover decision, this is likely to result in a third consequence which is a rapid shifting of loyalties and commitment from the old to new job. The generally high levels of commitment found among newly hired employees on the first day at work may be evidence of this phenomenon (Porter, Crampon and Smith, 1976; Van Maanen, 1975).

Fourth, and consistent with the process of systematically re-evaluating the old and new job, it is probable that individuals will avoid information that is inconsistent with their choice and selectively seek information which confirms the choice (Festinger, 1957; Janis and Mann, 1977). This may result in selective perception as the employee experiences the new job environment. Finally, employees may reduce social contacts with co-workers on the previous job and develop new social relationships based on the chosen job, since association with previous co-workers may make salient information inconsistent with the choice. Caplow (1964) has cited the termination of social relationships based on past organizational memberships as an important part of socialization into a new organization. This socialization requirement may in part serve to reconfirm the job choice of the individual.

2. Dissatisfied-stayer/dissonance present. This situation describes an employee who perceives that alternative jobs are available but who voluntarily turns down a job to remain in a relatively dissatisfying position.

Inadequate justification for the decision to remain may be created when the alternative job was at least in some respect more attractive than the current job. The decision to remain would be predicted to create dissonance.

One method of reducing dissonance in this situation is to deny responsibility for the decision. In other words, the circumstances surrounding the choice can be cognitively distorted to eliminate the perceived voluntary nature of the decision (i.e., low perceived choice or personal responsibility). For example, the employee may attribute the causes for his or her behavior to environmental factors beyond their control (e.g., "I can't leave while my children are still in school"). As noted earlier, the attribution of causes of behavior to environmental factors may be a common strategy since there is a natural tendency for this to occur (Jones, 1976) and it may be successful since a multiplicity of such factors are likely to exist in any decision situation. When this occurs, the individual may remain dissatisfied with the job and react in a manner described in Case #4 below.

When it is impossible to deny personal responsibility for the choice, the employee may distort perceptions of the existing job to magnify its positive features. For example, the individual may re-evaluate the inducements associated with the job and place a higher valence on those inducements previously considered unattractive (an employee may come to value aspects of the current job such as seniority, pension benefits, and job security more highly than before to reduce dissonance.) In addition, the individual may "discover" features of the job which cast it in a more

favorable light. For example, the individual may perceive greater opportunities for promotion in the future than were previously thought to exist. Alternatively, the employee may cognitively redefine the nature of the job itself to make it more attractive and satisfying (Porter, Lawler and Hackman, 1975).

In general, it can be predicted that many "dissatisfied-stayers" will not be likely to remain dissatisfied for long. This condition can be viewed as unstable when perceived choice and inadequate justification are present. The process of reducing dissonance through a cognitive re-evaluation of the job is thus likely to result in movement from a "dissatisfied-stayer" to a "satisfied-stayer."

When dissatisfaction with the job is very high there is one additional method through which dissonance can be reduced. This would involve a temporary increase in the level of dissonance associated with the decision to remain to a point greater than the resistance to changing jobs (Festinger, 1957). Once the level of dissonance met or exceeded the resistance to change, the individual would be predicted to leave the organization (i.e., become a "dissatisfied-leaver"). This may be a less common form of dissonance reduction. However, some employees never seem to find anything right on the job and continually express a high degree of dissatisfaction with relatively minor irritations at work. Such employees may be following a more or less deliberate, albeit unconscious, strategy designed to increase dissonance associated with remaining on a job to a point where they have little choice but to leave (or be asked to leave).

The negative consequences of this strategy for the organization in terms of potential work disruptions, discipline incidents, and low morale are apparent.

3. <u>Satisfied-leaver/dissonance absent</u>. When an employee has little control over the decision to leave a job or when the decision is voluntary but clearly the "right" choice (i.e., adequate justification), there is little reason to believe the individual will experience dissonance. Based on theory, there is little reason to believe the individual will engage in the systematic cognitive distortion described in Case #1 since there is no need to psychologically justify the decision. The employee may, depending on the circumstances under which he or she left, retain pleasant memories about the old job and positively evaluate the time spent in the organization. In addition, the individual may wish to maintain active social contacts with former co-workers and take an active interest in their work-related affairs. From the perspective of the leaver's former co-workers, however, these social contacts may become increasingly less attractive for reasons discussed below.

When a person voluntarily leaves the job for what is clearly a more attractive alternative, however, it is possible to question whether the concept of a "satisfied-leaver" is really viable. Although an employee may be satisfied with his or her current job, receipt of information about an attractive alternative should cause the person to re-evaluate his or her current position. Comparing the current job to the attractive alternative may result in dissatisfaction and thus the person would become a "dissatisfied-leaver." Although there may be little dissonance associated

with this situation, the dissatisfaction which results from comparing the current job with the alternative may appear to be the consequence of dissonance reduction processes. In other words, the employee may express increasing dissatisfaction with the job he or she is leaving both when conditions producing dissonance are present or absent. When the conditions producing dissonance are absent, however, dissatisfaction should increase prior to the decision to leave the organization since it is at this time that comparisons are made between the present and alternative job. In contrast, dissatisfaction should theoretically follow the decision to leave when the conditions producing dissonance are present. Although this distinction follows from theory, it may be difficult in actual practice to distinguish between these two conditions since it is often impossible to determine when the actual decision to leave has been made.

4. Dissatisfied-stayer/dissonance absent. In this situation the employee is dissatisfied with the job but, for a number of possible reasons, finds it impossible to leave (i.e., low perceived choice). Such reasons may include economic constraints (e.g., investments in the pension system), family constraints (e.g., dual career families), or no available alternatives. In contrast to the situation where the conditions producing dissonance are present, employees in this situation may pose serious problems of an unexpected nature to the organization. In considering the possible actions of employees in this situation, it should be remembered that these actions are motivated by a desire to deal with the dissatisfying job situation and not by an attempt to reduce dissonance associated with the decision to remain in the organization.

First, as suggested previously, employees may engage in attempts to change the job situation (see Exhibit 2, box 9). Dissatisfied employees who are forced to remain in the organization may be motivated to remove the source of dissatisfaction through such means as restructuring the job, efforts to obtain a transfer within the organization, unionization, and so forth. Although little is currently known about how employees accommodate dissatisfying jobs by attempting to restructure the work environment, it is likely that such attempts are made.

Second, when attempts at changing the job are unsuccessful or when the reason for remaining in the organization is the lack of alternative jobs, employees may be likely to continue to engage in search behavior designed to find another position (March and Simon, 1958; Mobley, 1977). In other words, dissatisfaction may remain high and the individual will continue to look for any reasonable way to leave the organization. From the perspective of reactance theory (Brehm, 1966), heightened and continued search behavior would be predicted as a way for employees to reassert their freedom of action.

When continued search activity remains unsuccessful, several potentially negative consequences may result (cf., Wortman and Brehm, 1976). For instance, the employee may experience decreased self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of his or her failure to find another job. This decreased self-esteem may ultimately influence performance on the job (Korman, 1977). Furthermore, the employee may engage in alternative forms of withdrawal behavior such as absenteeism and tardiness (Porter and

Steers, 1973). Alternatively, the employee may turn to more severe forms of withdrawal such as alcoholism or drugs when other means of withdrawal are unavailable (cf., Staw and Oldham, 1978). Several authors (e.g., Kornhauser, 1965) have suggested that job-related frustrations may be related to mental and physical illness as well as other problems off-the-job. These individuals are likely to present severe problems for the organization and it may be useful for organizations to consider making available periodic forms of withdrawal (e.g., "mental health" days) as a method of countering these problems.

Finally, a somewhat less severe reaction under these circumstances has been suggested by the work of Dubin (1956). His research on the "central life interests" of employees suggests that many employees cope with dissatisfying jobs by shifting their central life interests from work to non-work areas of their life. For example, the employee may become highly involved in family activities, church or civic groups, and so forth. Employees with non-work central life interests have little psychological investment in the work place. Their orientation toward the job is likely to be of an instrumental nature in which work is seen as a means to the attainment of more highly valued outcomes off-the-job. From the organization's perspective, these employees may remain productive and contributing members of the work force, although their commitment to the organization and involvement in the job are likely to remain low (Dubin, Champoux, and Porter, 1975).

Consequences for Observers of Turnover by Another Person

From an objective standpoint, the consequences of turnover by another individual appear fairly straightforward. The fact that another individual has resigned from his or her job in the organization provides potentially valuable information and may serve as a stimulus for future action. Former co-workers of the person who resigned, for example, may analyze the reasons why the individual left for purposes of re-evaluating their own position in the organization. Turnover by another individual may also provide new information about attractive alternative job opportunities. Similarly, the supervisor of the person leaving may analyze the reasons for turnover and use this information to solve any problems in the work place that may be causing employees to resign.

Although the consequences for observers of turnover by another individual can be approached from a rational information processing perspective, it is likely that a number of motivational factors may influence the interpretation of why another person leaves the organization. Dissonance theory can also be used to understand why observers may be motivated to distort the reasons why other people leave. In the case of a supervisor, for example, his or her self-image as a good manager may be threatened by the belief that an employee left the organization because of poor supervision. Rather than change his or her self-image, the supervisor may find it easier to reduce dissonance in this situation by distorting the reasons why the individual left the organization. This may involve cognitively distorting the individual's prior job behavior (e.g., the

person frequently complained about the pay in the organization) or the nature of the new job to which the individual is moving (e.g., the new job provides much better opportunities for promotion and career advancement). Reassessing the person's prior job behavior or the characteristics of the new job to which the person is moving would shift the blame for turnover from poor supervision to other factors in the work environment or characteristics of the person leaving (e.g., he or she was not very reliable or loyal). As a result, the supervisor may come to believe that changes in supervisory practices are unnecessary while changes in selection practices or other aspects of the work environment are desirable. Distorting the reasons why the person left the organization may result in both more negative attitudes toward the person and actions designed to reduce future turnover that do not address the real reason why the employee left.

Co-workers may also find that the knowledge that an individual has left the organization for a better position is a source of dissonance and psychological discomfort. The fact that another individual found the job dissatisfying may be dissonant with the co-workers' implicit decision to stay in the organization. It may be easier for the co-worker to cognitively distort the reasons why an individual resigned from the job rather than raise serious questions about their own decision to remain in the organization. As with the case of supervisors, this process may involve distorting information about the former co-worker's job behavior before resignation or the nature of the co-worker's new job. Changing perceptions about the reasons why the individual has left the job may make the act of turnover less threatening to employees who remain.

Although motivational factors are likely to have an impact on beliefs about why other people leave and subsequent attitudes toward the individual, the extent of this influence may be greater under certain conditions and for some individuals than for others. From the perspective of former co-workers, the knowledge that another person has left because they found the job to be dissatisfying it likely to be most threatening when the person remaining has the same freedom to leave but chooses not do do so. It follows that the co-worker could also reduce dissonance associated with another person leaving by denying that they have the same freedom of action. It might also be hypothesized that the motivation to distort the reasons why others leave would be greatest for individuals with a poor self-concept or a lack of confidence in their own judgment (Bradley, 1978). More will be said about this in the next section on attribution processes.

Beliefs about the reasons why an individual has left the organization have been found to play an important role in determining the attitudinal and behavioral consequences of turnover. Little is currently known, however, about how such beliefs concerning the reasons for turnover are formed. In the next section the processes through which people develop beliefs about the causes of turnover will be discussed and a conceptual model of this process will be presented.

## INTERPRETING THE CAUSES OF TURNOVER BEHAVIOR

The manner in which individuals react to turnover behavior, whether their own or that of other employees, may largely depend upon the

reasons why they believe turnover took place. As suggested earlier, the
consequences of turnover may be quite different if co-workers believe that
a dull and uninteresting job was the cause of turnover rather than the fact
that the leaver was a malcontent or was unreliable. A knowledge of the
processes through which individuals determine the causes of turnover
behavior therefore appears to be an important element in understanding
the larger consequences of turnover behavior.

The processes through which individuals attempt to understand the
causes of events they observe have been the province of social psychologists
interested in attribution theory. Attribution theorists view individuals
as "intuitive scientists" who observe events in their environment and
attempt to provide explanations for these events by identifying their
causes (Ross, 1977).

Current research on attribution processes has been greatly influenced
by two important theories. Jones and Davis (1965) developed a theory of
correspondent inferences to describe how personal characteristics of an
actor could be inferred from the consequences of their action. Their
primary interest was in explaining how attributions to the traits and
dispositions of the person could be made by ruling out environmental
explanations (Jones, 1976). A complimentary theory of attribution processes
developed by Kelley (1967, 1972, 1973) focuses on how multiple occurrences
of a behavior are attributed to characteristics of the person, environment,
or the circumstances under which the behavior took place. Unlike the
approach of Jones and Davis (1965), which examines consequences of the
behavior, Kelley's theory focuses attention on factors which covary with

behavior for purposes of making attributions. A fundamental assumption of Kelley's theory is that the processes used by observers to determine the cause of behavior are similar to those used by the actor to determine the cause of his or her own behavior (cf. Bem, 1967).

The attribution theories of Jones and Davis (1965) and Kelley (1973) focus attention on different types of information that can be used to form beliefs about the causes of turnover behavior (i.e., information about the consequences of turnover vs. information about job-related behavior prior to the point of turnover). Although the two theories have generally been viewed as distinct, it is possible to integrate both approaches in developing a more comprehensive model of the processes through which individuals attribute the causes of turnover behavior (cf. Jones and McGillis, 1976). Such an effort is presented here in a model of the processes associated with forming beliefs about the reasons why people leave an organization. Before presenting the model, however, it is first necessary to briefly consider the nature of turnover as a category of behavior.

## Nature of Turnover as a Behavior

Unlike attribution processes associated with behaviors such as job performance (Green and Mitchell, 1979), it should be recognized that turnover is a behavior that occurs at one point in time and seldom, if ever, more than once for the same individual in a particular organization. Turnover behavior therefore differs from job performance in that it is most often characterized by a single rather than multiple occurrence.

This has important theoretical implications since previous theory suggests

that the attribution processes involved in analyzing the single occurrence

of a behavior may differ from those used to analyze a behavior which is

repeated over time (Kelley, 1973). Attribution processes associated

with assessing the causes of turnover behavior are complicated, however, by

the fact that individuals may analyze it as a single occurrence of behavior,

a multiple occurrence of behavior, or both.

The view that turnover behavior can be analyzed as a single occurrence

of behavior is obvious from the nature of the act itself. Although a person

may change jobs many times in his or her career, the attribution processes

of interest here are those associated with the resignation of an individual

from a particular organization. Jones and Davis' (1965) theory suggests

that the causes of an action can be determined from an analysis of its

consequences. When behavior and its associated consequences are observed,

it is possible to make inferences about its causes with no prior knowledge

about the behavior. Turnover behavior can therefore be treated as a

single occurrence of a behavior for purposes of making attributions.

The reasons for assuming that turnover can also be analyzed as if it

were multiple occurrences of behavior may be less obvious. Several

considerations are relevant in this regard. First, individuals frequently

possess historical information about a number of turnover incidents and

this information can be used in identifying why, in a particular instance,

an individual left the organization. The turnover of a particular

individual is a single occurrence of behavior. The knowledge that the

previous three people performing the same job also quit, however, may be

viewed as multiple occurrences of the same behavior for analytical purposes of identifying the cause why a particular individual left the job.

Second, job behavior prior to the point of termination may be considered in identifying the reasons why an individual has left the organization. For purposes of analyzing the causes of turnover behavior, for example, expressions of dissatisfaction with a particular facet of the job prior to the point of termination may be viewed as consistent with the subsequent turnover and thus multiple occurrences of the same underlying behavior. It should be recognized that linking prior expressions of dissatisfaction with subsequent turnover involves a second causal inference that dissatisfaction causes turnover. Although there is little evidence available on this point, it is probable that most employees believe a strong relationship exists between job dissatisfaction and turnover.

Recognizing that turnover behavior, although it occurs at one point in time, can be analyzed as either a single or multiple occurrence of behavior suggests that people may use different processes in making attributions about the causes of turnover. The nature of these processes are discussed in the model suggested below.

## A Model of Attribution Processes Associated with Turnover Behavior

The proposed model of the processes through which people may infer the causes of turnover behavior is presented in Exhibit 4. The model is an integration of earlier work on attribution processes by Jones and Davis (1965) and Kelley (1967, 1973). It suggests that people perceive different categories of causal agents (i.e., characteristics of the

person, job and external environment, or circumstances) as causing an individual to leave the organization and that turnover, in turn, results in certain unique effects or consequences to the individual. Although the model suggests a causal process proceeding from cause to turnover behavior to consequences of turnover behavior, it is important to recognize that people are assumed to reason backwards from the observation of turnover and its effects to an inference about the cause of turnover. In other words, the logical flow of an individual's cognitive processes is from turnover behavior to the causes of turnover.

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Insert Exhibit 4 About Here

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Three broad categories of possible causes of turnover behavior are identified in Exhibit 4 (box 1): characteristics of the individual employee, environmental factors (including both the job and external environment), and the circumstances under which the behavior took place. The important issue dealt with in the model concerns identifying the types of information people use in making inferences about which of these three categories of causes actually led to turnover (box 6). Two types of information are considered relevant to making inferences about the reasons for turnover.[3] First, following Jones and Davis (1965), beliefs about the causes of turnover can be derived from an analysis of the effects or consequences of turnover (box 7). These effects may include increased pay or a more challenging job. Second, the causes of turnover may, as suggested earlier, be inferred from analysis of the individual's behavior

on the job prior to the point of termination. This latter analysis is more
closely associated with the work of Kelley (1973) and involves consideration
of the behavioral cues of consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus
(box 5). The extent to which either approach leads to the identification
of a specific cause of turnover, however, is thought to be mediated by
several additional factors: whether an individual is analyzing his or her
own behavior or that of another employee (box 2), the psychological relevance
of the observed behavior for the person making the attribution (box 3), and
beliefs about the ability, knowledge, and intention of the person leaving
to achieve the observed effects of turnover (box 4).

For purposes of discussion it is convenient to consider the two
sources of information about the causes of turnover (i.e., prior job
behavior vs. consequences of turnover) separately. It should be apparent,
however, that the two sources of information are not entirely independent.
In the discussion below, the two approaches to making causal attributions
about the reasons for turnover will be presented separately and then
consideration will be given to the relationship between the two approaches.

Analysis of effects. The major premise underlying the approach of
Jones and Davis (1965) to attribution theory is that people who have
freedom of choice will attempt to achieve positive outcomes by their
behavior. It follows that a great deal can be learned about the reasons
for an action by examining its effects or consequences.

Jones and Davis (1965) suggest that the first step in such an
analysis is to compare the characteristics of the job an individual has

left with characteristics of the new job he or she has taken. The
characteristics that the two jobs share in common are separated from
the characteristics that are unique to each job. Two hypothetical examples
of such comparisons are presented in Exhibit 5 for purposes of illustrating
the discussion.

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Insert Exhibit 5 About Here

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In example A in Exhibit 5, it can be seen that the old and new jobs
are similar in pay, job security, and desirability of geographic location.
The old and new jobs differ, however, in terms of the nature of the task
(routine vs. challenging). Few clues about the reasons why an individual
left the job are contained in the characteristics the old and new jobs
share in common. Information about the causes of turnover is therefore
more likely to be found among characteristics of the jobs that differ.[4]
When there are a large number of unique effects, the task of determining
which may have caused turnover is more difficult, if not impossible.
When a large number of unique effects are present we would have little
confidence in asserting which particular effect was the actual reason for
turnover since any one of them may have been a sufficient cause. This
situation appears similar to Kelley's (1973) discussion of multiple
sufficient causes and the discounting principle (i.e., the role of any
particular cause of behavior will be discounted when other plausible causes
for the behavior also exist in the situation).

An attribution to characteristics of the person is most likely to
occur when the unique effect associated with the new job is one that

is not widely valued by most people or has some undesirable aspect
that would not have been expected to be valued by the person leaving
(cf. Jones and McGillis, 1976).[5] When an action such as turnover dis-
confirms our expectations about what the person was likely to do in that
situation (i.e., leads to consequences we would not have expected the
person to value), unique information is gained about the person. For
instance, in example A in Exhibit 5 it is suggested the person left an
interesting and challenging job for one that is routine and uninteresting.
Since we would assume that most people would want an interesting and
challenging job, Jones and Davis (1965) suggest this situation is more
likely to lead to an attribution to the unique characteristics of the
person as a cause for turnover. Although not explicitly considered in the
theory, it also seems possible that the existence of undesirable unique
effects associated with the new job would lead observers to continue to
search for additional information until a more plausible explanation
for turnover is found. In the absence of additional plausible explanations,
however, undesirable effects associated with the new job are likely to be
viewed as providing unique information about the individual and thus
lead to an attribution to personal characteristics as the cause for
turnover.

In contrast, an attribution to environmental characteristics as the
cause for turnover would appear most likely when the effects achieved by
turnover are ones that most people would be expected to value. In example B
in Exhibit 5 an individual has left a routine and uninteresting job for

one that is challenging and interesting. Moreover, the individual has

left a job in a desirable geographic location for a job that is in a

less desirable geographic location. Since most people would be assumed

to want an interesting job, the challenging nature of the new job provides

a sufficient explanation for turnover. The attribution in this case may

be complicated, however, by the fact that the new job also has an undesirable

unique effect (i.e., geographic location). In this case the challenging

nature of the new job provides a sufficient explanation for turnover and

the role of geographic location may be discounted as a reason for leaving.

The undesirable geographic location may be viewed as a cost associated with

turnover and therefore strengthen the attribution to the challenging

nature of the new job [cf. see Kelley's (1973) discussion of facilitory

and inhibitory causes].

Some ambiguity may remain in this situation as to whether it was

really the characteristics of the old job which "pushed" the individual

out of the organization or the characteristics of the new job that

exerted an attraction or "pull." How this ambiguity is resolved may

depend upon the knowledge possessed about the person's behavior on the

old job (e.g., did he or she frequently express dissatisfaction with the

job?). In addition, Newtson (1974) found that attributions are more

highly influenced by characteristics of the chosen alternative (new job)

than characteristics of the alternative foregone (old job).

Jones and Davis (1965) suggest that several additional aspects of

the situation must be considered in making attributions about the causes

of turnover from an analysis of its effects. First, the individual leaving

must be assumed to have had freedom of choice in leaving the job. Second, the individual must be assumed to have had a knowledge of the effects of their action and the intention and ability to achieve these effects. When the effects of turnover are unknown to the individual at the time he or she left or the effects are unintended (e.g., lucky coincidence), it would be difficult to make attributions to characteristics of either the person or environment as a cause of turnover.

Analysis of prior job behavior. The attribution theory suggested by Kelley (1973) provides a framework within which to understand how the causes of turnover can be inferred from knowledge about the leaver's prior job behavior. Since Kelley's theory is better known among organizational researchers than the work of Jones and Davis (1965) and is reviewed elsewhere in this volume (see Mitchell's paper), it will only be briefly discussed here.

The principle of covariance states that a behavior will be attributed to a cause with which it covaries over time. Kelley (1973) identified three sources of information that are used to analyze covariation and make causal inferences about behavior: information from observations of people, entities, and across time. These three sources of information provide specific types of information relevant to considering the cause of a behavior: the consistency, consensus, and distinctiveness of a response. Information from observations of people leads to knowledge of consensus or the extent to which the individual behaves in a manner similar to that of other people in the same situation. Information from observations of

entities provides clues about the distinctiveness of a response. Does the individual behave this way toward all entities or stimuli (e.g., supervisor, task, co-worker) or just one particular entity? Finally, information from observations across time provides clues about the consistency of a behavior or response. Does the individual respond this way to a particular entity each time it is encountered or was the response unique to just one occasion? Consistency information can also be over modality (i.e., does the person respond to the entity in the same way regardless of the situation in which it is presented?).

Consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness information are combined to make attributions about the cause of turnover. Kelley (1973) suggests this is done as if the different types of information are combined in the form of a 2 X 2 X 2 analysis of variance framework. To simplify the analysis, each type of information is thought to take on either a high or low value (e.g., high or low consistency). This framework leads to eight cells or unique combinations of consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness information. Each unique combination or cell leads to a specific attribution about the cause of a behavior.

Based on earlier work (Kelley, 1973; McArthur, 1972; Orvis, Cunningham and Kelley, 1975), it is possible to predict attributions for various combinations of information. An attribution to characteristics of the person as the cause of behavior is most likely when consistency information is high and consensus and distinctiveness information are low. Attributions to an entity or stimulus are most likely when consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness information are high. Finally, an attribution to the

circumstances within which behavior took place is likely to occur when
distinctiveness information is high and consensus and consistency information
are low. The attributions resulting from other information combinations
are more complex and less easily predicted on an intuitive basis. However,
Orvis et al. (1975) found that people tend to limit their attributions
to the three information combinations mentioned above (i.e., make
attributions to characteristics of the person, entity or environment,
or circumstances as the cause for an observed behavior). In fact, their
research suggests that people look for information that is consistent
with one of these three attributions and will "fill-in" missing information
to be consistent with one of the combinations.

Applying Kelley's (1973) theory to the analysis of the causes of
turnover behavior requires a less rigid interpretation of the covariance
principle than originally implied by the theory. That is, attributions
about the causes of turnover do not require that the behavioral cues of
consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness occur at the same point in
time as turnover. Rather, what is likely to be examined is the individual's
past job behavior that is consistent with the act of turnover. For
example, an entity attribution would result if in the past the individual
leaving consistently expressed dissatisfaction with a particular aspect
of the job (e.g., supervisor) and other employees also expressed dissatis-
faction with this aspect. Analyses of prior job behavior can also be
utilized to assess the credibility of public statements about why a person
is leaving.

Mediating influences on attributions. Although the attribution

theories presented suggest rational procedures for processing information

to make attributions about the causes of turnover, research suggests that

people may deviate from the model under several circumstances. First,

Jones and Nisbett (1972) have suggested that actors and observers may

process the same information differently. The fundamental attribution

error has been described by Jones (1976; p. 300) "whereas the actor sees his

behavior primarily as a response to the situation in which he finds

hims.lf, the observer attributes the same behavior to the actor's dispos-

itional characteristics." Second, individuals may be motivated to deviate

from attributions prescribed by the model when the attribution made has

negative consequences for the individual's self-image. Jones and Davis (1965)

introduced the concept of "hedonic relevance" to refer to the motivational

significance of an action for the observer with respect to promoting or

undermining the observer's values, beliefs, or purposes. A commonly

studied manifestation of hedonic relevance is the ego-defensive bias in

attributions (Bradley, 1978; Miller and Ross, 1975; Ross, 1977; Stevens

and Jones, 1976). For example, a supervisor may be more likely to take

credit for the good performance of a subordinate while blaming poor

performance on the employee's personal characteristics. The ego-defensive

bias often influences attributions in a manner opposite from what might be

predicted from the fundamental attribution error.

Integrating the two approaches to attributions. The two attribution

theories incorporated in the model presented in Exhibit 4 suggest that

different types of information may be employed in causal inferences about

turnover. Attributions about the causes of turnover can be made from either an analysis of its effects or an analysis of prior job behavior. The existence of two distinct sources of information that can be used in making inferences raise questions about which of the two is most likely to be used and under what circumstances.

The particular approach adopted by an individual is likely to depend upon the type of information he or she has available. For the former supervisor or co-worker of an employee, for example, job-related behavior prior to turnover is likely to be most salient. Non-work friends of the individual leaving, however, may only have information about the consequences of the action (e.g., information about the pay, security, and location of the old and new job). As a result, former supervisors and co-workers may be more likely to utilize the approach described by Kelley (1973) while non-work friends may process information in the manner described by Jones and Davis (1965).

The type of information which becomes salient in making attributions about the causes of turnover may also be sensitive to environmental considerations. For example, when economic conditions are good it may be more reasonable to assume that turnover was caused by a "pull" from attractive alternative jobs. This would be likely to lead to an analysis of the consequences of turnover for purposes of determining the specific cause. In contrast, when economic conditions are poor and few alternative jobs are available, it may be more reasonable to assume that turnover was caused by a "push" from the job (e.g., by dissatisfaction). In this situation, prior job-related behaviors may become more salient in making inferences about the causes of turnover.

In addition, the concept of hedonic relevance or ego-defensive bias suggests that individuals may be motivated to selectively process information in a way that reinforces existing beliefs and attitudes. Although evidence on this is limited, Mowday (1979) found that employees who were themselves dissatisfied with the job and uncommitted to the organization were more likely to believe that others left the organization because of job dissatisfaction than were employees with positive job attitudes. The influence of job attitudes on causal inferences about the reasons why employees leave the organization would be consistent with the ego-defensive bias, although it is also consistent with the ego-centric or false consensus bias (see Ross, 1977).

The existence of at least two sources of information upon which to base attributions about the causes of turnover suggests that the attributions resulting from different information sources may differ or be in conflict. The possibility that the two approaches discussed above will lead to conflicting attributions appears less likely, however, when it is considered that the theories of Kelley (1973) and Jones and Davis (1965) overlap in terms of the information used to make attributions.[6] The expectation that an individual intended to achieve a particular effect through turnover, for example, may be influenced by observations of the behavioral cues associated with on-the-job behavior. The possibility still remains, however, that analyses of effects vs. job behavior may result in conflicting conclusions about the causes of turnover. It is difficult at this point to do little more than speculate about how such conflicts will be resolved.

There is little doubt that employees develop beliefs about the reasons
why their co-workers leave the organization and that these beliefs may
have important attitudinal and behavioral consequences. At present the
attribution theories developed by social psychologists provide one of the
clearest indications of the processes employees may use in developing
such beliefs. To place the discussion in this section in perspective,
however, it should be recognized that these theories have been developed
in well-controlled environments in which relatively simple, well-structured
problems have been studied. In contrast, organizations are complex
environments that present employees with a wide variety of information and
stimuli. The cognitive limitations of individuals suggest that employees
may be ill-equipped to adequately cope with the complex environment they
face. The model presented in this section provides a starting point for
research in organizations designed to understand how employees cognitively
process information about turnover and the implications of resulting beliefs
for attitudes and behavior. As research in this area is undertaken,
however, it is likely to be found that employees use additional sources
of information in making causal judgments and employ heuristics to assist
them in the judgment process. What is crucial at this point in time is to
recognize the importance of causal inferences made by employees so that
research will be undertaken to further refine and extend our understanding
of the consequences of turnover.

## CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Even though it is possible to identify over 1,000 studies of turnover which have been conducted since the turn of the century, our understanding of how employees decide whether to stay with or leave organizations and the consequences of such decisions remains limited. It should be apparent that the problem is not that turnover in organizations has suffered from a lack of research attention. Rather, the problem appears to be attributable to the rather narrow range of issues associated with turnover that researchers have chosen to study and to the methods which have been used in studying these issues.

It is our contention that the level of understanding of turnover processes can best be increased in at least two general ways. First, greater attention needs to be given in research to testing comprehensive models of the turnover process. Although recent research has moved in this direction, there is still a need to move beyond studies focusing on a limited number of variables and/or a limited perspective with respect to the turnover process. Toward this end a comprehensive model of the turnover process has been proposed here. Although the model is generally consistent with existing albeit piecemeal research, it should be considered a series of propositions requiring further study.

Second, it has been argued that future research needs to move beyond consideration of the processes leading up to turnover and consider its consequences. Although it is often recognized that turnover has important consequences for both individuals and organizations, these consequences remain virtually unstudied. A model of the consequences of turnover for

individuals was proposed here to compliment the earlier work of Price
(1977), who considered the problem at the organizational level of analysis.
Our model focuses particular attention on how individuals form beliefs about
the causes of turnover and the implications of these beliefs for subsequent
attitudes and behavior. In this regard the model is not all-encompassing
in that it does not consider several possible consequences for individuals
of the decision to leave organizations (e.g., stress associated with changing
jobs). However, it does suggest a variety of areas for future research
that should increase our understanding of the consequences of turnover.

In addition to these two general directions for future research, a
number of specific research needs can also be identified. These are
briefly presented below.

1. We are still in need of research focusing on the role of job
performance in the turnover process. The turnover model proposed here
incorporates performance as a factor in turnover decisions, but research
is clearly needed in this area. Specifically, do high performers leave
for different reasons than poor performers? What is the effect of poor
performance on subsequent job attitudes and desire to stay? Do high
performers raise their level of job expectations thereby making it more
difficult for the organization to satisfy (and perhaps retain) them?

2. March and Simon (1958) noted long ago that dissatisfied employees
may make efforts to change the work situation and reduce or eliminate the
more distasteful aspects of it. There is no research to date, however, to
suggest whether this hypothesis is in fact correct. If employees do
undertake systematic efforts to change the work situation, it is necessary

to identify the more common change mechanisms used by individuals and groups in this regard. It is also necessary to examine the conditions under which such efforts are likely to be successful. When efforts to change the work environment are unsuccessful, are negative job attitudes strengthened or do they remain unchanged?

3. We are just beginning to acknowledge the existence of a host of non-work factors than can influence staying or leaving. Most of these factors are related to matters of personal goals and values and family considerations. Yet few studies have examined these factors in a systematic way as they relate to the decision to participate. In view of the considerable amount of turnover variance probably explained by such factors, it represents a rich area for future research.

4. Most models of employee turnover include the notion of search behavior for more preferable job alternatives. This notion is typically coupled with economic considerations or actual alternative job opportunities. What appears lacking here, however, is a systematic examination of how people initiate search processes, the quality of information they receive, and how they process such information in arriving at a participation decision. This topic lends itself particularly well to laboratory experimentation, a method of research typically not used in the study of turnover. Information gained in the laboratory could then be used to guide field investigations.

5. The literature on withdrawal behavior in general suggests that some forms of withdrawal may at times act as a substitute for other forms. When an individual is unable to quit an undesirable job, for example, he

or she may use absenteeism as a temporary form of escape (Porter and Steers, 1973). Alcoholism and drug abuse also represent possible substitutes, as do sabotage and work slow downs. Although psychiatrists have studied alcoholism and drug abuse and labor economists have looked at sabotage and slow downs, few systematic attempts have been made by organizational psychologists to examine the substitutability of these forms of behavior for turnover. That is, when an employee cannot leave an undesirable job, how likely is he or she to find alternative modes of accommodation that may be dysfunctional both to the employee and the organization? Moreover, are certain types of employees more likely to engage in these behaviors than others? Finally, is there a generalizable sequencing of substitute behaviors, perhaps beginning with increased absenteeism and then proceeding to alcoholism and drug abuse, or do different employees simply select different modes of accommodation?

6. Researchers have generally been quite skilled at developing elaborate statistical models designed to identify the reasons why employees leave an organization. What we have neglected to consider, however, is that people also develop cognitive models to explain turnover behavior. The inferences people make about the causes of turnover represent a relatively unexplored area for future research. Although some work has been done asking employees who leave an organization the reasons for their action (e.g., exit interviews), few studies have attempted to explore the beliefs of former co-workers or supervisors about the causes of turnover. Virtually no research has examined how such beliefs are formed

and the factors that may influence this process. Even so, it is highly

likely that people in organizations do form beliefs about why others leave

and that these beliefs influence subsequent attitudes and behavior. This

is particularly true for supervisors who may have the responsibility for

taking steps to reduce turnover. The effectiveness of organizational

attempts to reduce turnover are likely to be vastly improved if a greater

understanding can be achieved of how supervisors intuitively develop

causal models to explain turnover and the extent to which these models are

linked to subsequent changes.

7. It is important to recognize that the attribution model presented

earlier is a rational model of how certain types of information should be

processed to determine the causes of turnover. Comprehensive empirical

tests of the model suggest that people actually infer the causes of

behavior as the model predicts (McArthur, 1972; Orvis et al., 1975),

although the model remains largely untested among managers. Research is

therefore needed to determine whether managers actually use the systematic

information processing strategies described in the model or whether the

demands inherent in managerial positions force managers to follow a less

systematic approach designed to identify a sufficient if incomplete

explanation for turnover. Managers may limit their search for explanations

to highly salient sources of information while ignoring more subtle and

less readily accessible information relevant to determining why employees

leave the organization (Taylor and Fiske, 1978).

In addition, it was suggested that motivational factors may cause

individuals to deviate from attributions predicted by the model. Several

such factors were discussed, but it is likely that future research in
organizations will identify additional motivational influences on
attributions. Such motivational factors are likely to be particularly
salient in organizational settings where the manager's performance
and career advancement may in part depend upon how the causes of employee
behavior such as turnover are assessed. Finally, the attribution model
presented suggests that managers will rely on certain types of information
in making causal inferences (e.g., behavioral cues and consequences of the
action). It is important to determine the extent to which managers actually
rely on these sources of information and if additional types of information
are utilized. In addition, how do managers make attributions and thus take
action when imperfect or limited information is available?

These areas for future research represent only a few of the ones that
might have been mentioned. It is customary to end a paper of this type by
expressing the need for additional research in this area. Such a state-
ment would appear to be particularly appropriate with respect to turnover
and its consequences. Our understanding of turnover processes is less
likely to depend on the quantity of future research, however, than its
quality. We simply do not need more studies of turnover (or reviews of
studies, for that matter). Rather, what is needed are rigorous investiga-
tions of a comprehensive nature designed to test existing theories and
which offer the promise of improving our current level of understanding of
the processes proceeding and following an employee's decision to leave.

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Footnotes

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theory as it applies to the consequences of turnover and to

Larry Cummings, Daniel Ilgen, Terence R. Mitchell, Charles O'Reilly,

and Barry Staw for their insightful and useful comments on an earlier

draft.

2    Bem's (1967, 1972) self-perception theory is also relevant to

understanding the implications of behavior for subsequent attitudes.

However, a central postulate of Bem's (1972, p. 5) theory suggests that

the self-perception processes he has described are most likely to

occur in situations where internal cues (i.e., attitudes) associated

with a behavior are weak or ambiguous.  This is unlikely to be the

case in most turnover decisions.  As indicated in the model presented

in Exhibit 2, affective reactions to the job are an important

antecedent of turnover behavior.  As a result, self-perception

theory appears less useful for understanding the attitudinal consequences

of most decisions to remain or leave an organization than Festinger's

(1957) theory of cognitive dissonance.  In the case of impulsive

decisions to leave the organization, however, the attitude change

processes associated with turnover may be similar to the self-

perception processes described by Bem (1972).

3    A third source of information about the causes of turnover is
available from the individual's publicly stated reasons for leaving.
Although the stated reasons for leaving may provide the most
straightforward information about the causes of turnover, this
information may not always be regarded as credible. It is commonly
recognized that employees leaving an organization may feel con-
strained in candidly discussing their reason for leaving in conversa-
tion with others. It has been found, for example, that the exit
interview is not a valid source of information about the reasons why
employees leave (Lefkowitz and Katz, 1969). As a result, those who
remain in the organization may discount stated reasons for leaving
and still use the processes described in the model for inferring the
causes of turnover and as a method for verifying whether the stated
reasons for leaving are consistent with information available
from other sources (e.g., prior behavior or the job).

4    While Jones and Davis (1965) are primarily concerned with existence
of unique effects or differences between the old and new job,
it is also apparent that the magnitude of such differences are also
important. The degree of difference between the old and new job
can be interpreted in two ways. First, the greater the difference
between the old and new job with respect to one particular effect,
the more confidence that can be placed in the attribution to this
as a cause for turnover. Second, the greater the number of
unique effects associated with the old and new job, the larger the

overall difference between the jobs. In this latter case, the
existence of a large number of unique effects will make it more
difficult to confidently assess which particular unique effect
caused turnover.

5    Jones and Davis (1965) and Jones and McGillis (1976) discuss factors
     which are likely to influence the development of expectations about
     the values and behavior of others. In addition, attribution theorists
     have discussed the ego-centric or false-consensus bias which suggests
     there is a tendency to assume that others hold the same values as
     we do and thus would possess behavioral intentions similar to our
     own.

6    Jones and McGillis (1976) provide an excellent integration of current
     attribution theories.

Exhibit 1. Summary of Empirical Reviews of Turnover Literature

| Investigator(s) | Focus | Major Findings | Formal Model Presented |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brayfield & Crockett (1955) | Effects of job satisfaction on turnover | Significant if modest relation between dissatisfaction and turnover | No |
| Herzberg et al. (1957) | Comprehensive review | Significant if modest relation between dissatisfaction and turnover | No |
| March & Simon (1958) | Comprehensive review | Turnover largely influenced by desirability of leaving plus ease of movement | Yes |
| Vroom (1964) | Limited review | Turnover influenced by force to remain vs. force to leave | Yes |
| Schuh (1967) | Personality and biodemographic predictors of turnover | Modest evidence that vocational interest inventories and scaled biographical information blanks predicted some turnover | No |
| Stoikov & Raimon (1968) | Economic factors in | Money and labor market factors have sizable influence on industry-wide turnover rates | No |
| Kefkowitz (1971) | Comprehensive review | Turnover influenced by job expectations, satisfaction, work environment, compensation, job itself, and supervisory style | No |
| Porter & Steers (1973) | Comprehensive review | Satisfaction modesty related to turnover, major influences on turnover can be found in person, job, work environment, and organization-wide factors, importance of met expectations | Partial |

Exhibit 1. Summary of Empirical Review of Turnover Literature (continued)

| Investigator(s) | Focus | Major Findings | Formal Model Presented |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pettman (1973, 1975) | Test of March & Simon model | Modest support for model based on review of literature | Yes |
| Price (1977) | Comprehensive review | Turnover influenced by dis- satisfaction plus opportunity to leave; also considers organizational outcomes of turnover | Yes |
| Forrest et al. (1977) | Effort to integrate psycho- logical and economic influences on turnover | Based on Vroom model, both psychological and economic factors shown to influence turnover | Yes |
| Mobley (1977; Mobley et al., 1979) | Comprehensive review | Model of intermediate linkages between satisfaction and actual turnover presented (1977); review of literature (1979) supports expanded version of model | Yes |
| Muchinsky & Tuttle (1979) | Comprehensive review | Major influences on turnover can be found in attitudes, person, work, and biographical sheets; support for met expectations proposition | No |
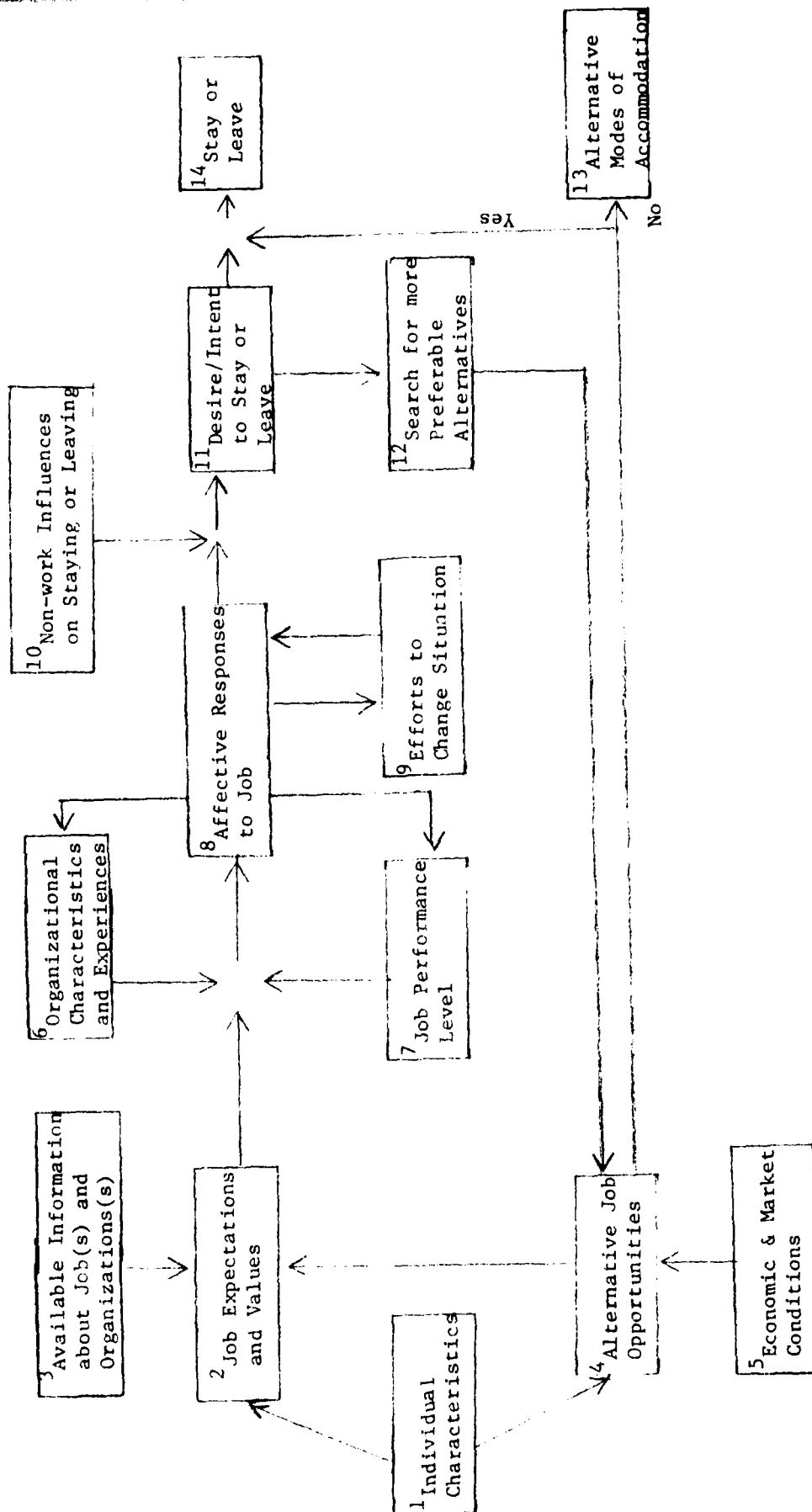
Exhibit 2. A Model of Voluntary Employee Turnover

Exhibit 3

Possible Attitudinal and Behavioral Consequences
for the Decision Maker of the Decision to Participate

| Situational Characteristics | Emergent Condition | Satisfied-Leaver | Dissatisfied-Stayer |
|---|---|---|---|
| High personal responsibility and inadequate justification | High dissonance | 1. Denial of responsibility for decision to change jobs. | 1. Denial of responsibility for decision to remain. |
| | | 2. Systematic distortion of characteristics of old and new job. | 2. Systematic distortion of characteristics of current and alternative jobs. |
| | | 3. High organizational commitment and satisfaction on new job. | 3. Shifting valence of inducements for membership in present organization. |
| | | 4. Selective perception of new job. | 4. Increased satisfaction and commitment on present job. |
| | | 5. Reduced social contacts with former co-workers. | 5. Deliberate increase in dissonance. |
| Low personal responsibility and/or adequate justification | Low dissonance | 1. Pleasant memories of old job. | 1. Change job situation. |
| | | 2. Willingness to maintain social contacts with former co-workers | 2. Continued job search behavior. |
| | | | 3. Lowered self-esteem and self-confidence. |
| | | | 4. Alternative forms of withdrawal. |
| | | | 5. Shifting central life interests. |

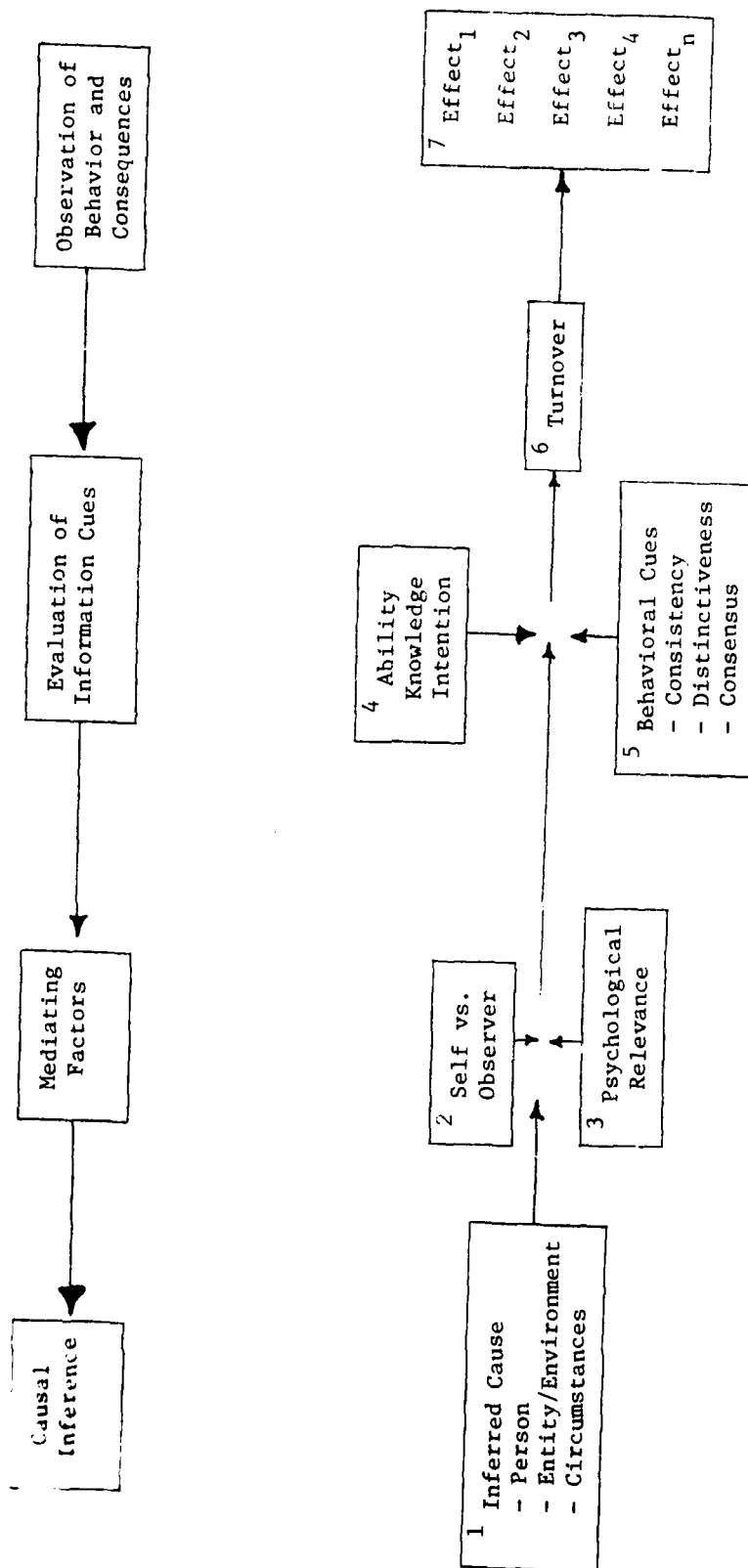Figure. A model of factors influencing attributions of the causes of turnover behavior

Observation of Behavior and Consequences

Evaluation of Information Cues

Mediating Factors

Causal Inference

1 Inferred Cause
 - Person
 - Entity/Environment
 - Circumstances

2 Self vs. Observer

3 Psychological Relevance

4 Ability
 Knowledge
 Intention

5 Behavioral Cues
 - Consistency
 - Distinctiveness
 - Consensus

6 Turnover

7 $Effect_1$
 $Effect_2$
 $Effect_3$
 $Effect_4$
 $Effect_n$

Exhibit 5

Inference Processes of the Causes of Turnover
from an Analysis of its Consequences

## Example A

| Characteristics of Old Job | Characteristics of New Job |
| --- | --- |
| Good pay | Good pay |
| Average job security | Average job security |
| Challenging and interesting job | Routine and uninteresting job |
| Desirable geographic location | Desirable geographic location |

### Non-Common Effects

| | |
| --- | --- |
| Challenging and interesting job | Routine and uninteresting job |

### Inference

Cause of turnover is related to characteristics of the person (e.g., cannot take demands associated with challenging task).

## Example B

| Characteristics of Old Job | Characteristics of New Job |
| --- | --- |
| Good pay | Good pay |
| Average job security | Average job security |
| Routine and uninteresting job | Challenging and interesting job |
| Desirable geographic location | Undesirable geographic location |

### Non-Common Effects

| | |
| --- | --- |
| Routine and uninteresting job | Challenging and interesting job |
| Desirable geographic location | Undesirable geographic location |

### Inference

Cause of turnover is attractiveness of new job. Most people assumed to want an interesting job but not an undesirable geographic location. Undesirable geographic location viewed as inhibitory cause (cost) that strengthens attribution to positive feature of new job.

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