

An Investigation of
Fatal Attractions in Careers

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1. Abstract

Fatal attraction is defined as those qualities which initially attract, but are later deemed unattractive and repellent. Fatal attraction has been predominantly examined and supported to exist in the area of romantic relationships. The current study extended a theory of love and applied this idea to work, and represents the first application of this concept in relation to careers. In Study 1, the fatal matches between attractive and unattractive qualities of jobs (e.g. 'challenging' fatally matched with 'stressful') were obtained. Study 2 asked 110 participants who had either left a job or were contemplating leaving it to complete a questionnaire in which they nominated attractive and unattractive qualities of the job. Study 1's matches were used to examine whether fatal attraction to careers occurred. The results supported the existence of fatal attraction to jobs. Fatal attraction was found to vary significantly with occupation and the nature of the attractive quality sought in a job. These findings add to both the understanding of career and job decision processes; and the knowledge of fatal attraction as a construct. Further exploration is encouraged due to the relevance for both organisations and individuals.

2. Introduction

Careers and jobs are a much researched area, which reflects their importance in people's lives. The majority of adults' waking hours are spent working and there is a real need to understand more about how and why career decisions are made. Career decisions cover: what people study; which job they apply for; when, if and why they leave their job; which job is applied for next; when to retire; and the thought processes surrounding these. It is important to remember that career decisions are essentially about change. Researchers have examined career change in the context of psychosocial development (e.g. Brown, 2002; Young & Rodgers, 1997); alongside life stages (Super, 1980); and its corresponding satisfaction (e.g. Smart & Peterson, 1997); and analysed career decision-making processes (e.g. Betz, 1996; Soelberg, 1967; Vroom, 1966). Historically and today, extensive research examines career-related constructs such as job satisfaction, job expectations, realistic job preview (e.g. Wanous, 1973); and their related outcomes and correlations - illustrating the interest that people have both individually and as organisations (e.g see: Cranny, Smith & Stone, 1992; George & Jones, 1997; Howard & Frink, 1996; Ostroff, 1992; Porter & Steers, 1973; Rynes & Lawler, 1983).

Regardless of the particular economic climate, it is always important to understand more about what attracts people to jobs, what repels them, and how and why they make the decisions that they do. Organisations naturally want to attract and retain talent, and as individuals, it is ideal to be happy, or at least not too unhappy (!), in an enjoyable job. The more understanding that is gained about how people choose careers and what is deemed attractive and unattractive in jobs, the better. This kind of

knowledge informs the areas of selection and recruitment as well as career counselling and educating the general public.

Job Choice Decision Processes

How jobs are chosen is a vital piece in this puzzle of understanding. Many theories exist to explain the processes of job choice and job evaluation, for example, Soelberg's generalized decision process model (1967). In this theory, job seekers compare their job options to an ideal job in order to screen out options. Vroom's (1966) expectancy theory offers an explanation for how people choose jobs. In brief, this theory predicts that job choice involves weighing up the desirability (or valence) of job features with the ability to provide these features (instrumentality) and selecting the most attractive one based on this comparison. Image theory basically posits that someone seeks a job when the 'status quo' no longer exists; jobs then pass compatibility tests and, while people vary in how strict these tests are, a job most often passes an 'attractiveness' test to be selected (Beach, 1996).

While some have argued over these complex processes, others insist that it is not so much the sum of desirable characteristics, but a lack of violations against a personal list of job requirements which determines a job being chosen (Beach, Smith, Lundell & Mitchell, 1988; Beach & Strom, 1989; Potter & Beach, 1994, & Rediker, Mitchell, Beach & Beard, 1993). Further explanation is offered by research which shows that people select jobs based on how well they think they will fit them. This makes sense, and is supported by Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin and Jones's (2005) meta-analysis of 71 studies - where person-job fit was the largest predictor of job acceptance.

John Krumboltz, (winner of the Leona Tyler Award of the American Psychological Association in 1991) however, argues that most people just happen upon a career, that there is no choice about it - it often happens 'by default'.

Here is a decision that affects everything in our future -- not just how we spend eight hours a day, 50 weeks a year -- but probably who we're going to marry, the neighborhood in which we live, who our friends are going to be, and how much money we have to spend. (Krumboltz, 1991; 05/28/91, Stanford University News Service Archives).

Krumboltz (1991) believes that little time is spent considering a career path – more time, he suggests, is usually invested in choosing a pair of shoes.

It is clear that research on how people make career decisions is wide and varied. This illustrates the point that people differ in how they make these decisions and that there is a desire to understand this better. While it has been shown that the actual processes which take place (or not - as the case may be) vary, perhaps a greater understanding can be gained by examining exactly what it is that people find attractive and unattractive about jobs.

Job Qualities

A large body of research examines the attractiveness of jobs, looking mainly from the point of view of organisations (e.g. attracting/recruiting/retaining/ top talent; informing selection systems; psychological tests etc.). There is less specific research on which actual qualities are deemed attractive. This is likely because, as suggested by Chapman et al.'s meta-analysis (2005), it is much more resource-consuming to target individual needs over broader organisational ones.

Research which looks at both what people view as important in a job and at job satisfaction, can reveal what some of these attractive and unattractive qualities are. Facets of job satisfaction shown to relate to quitting are: job security, pay, promotion, initiative, relations, the work itself, hours, job security, and promotion (Clark, 2001). Meaning that being satisfied with these, (e.g. having flexible hours & opportunities for promotion) or dissatisfied, (e.g. having too few hours or a lack of promotion opportunities) impacts significantly on an employee's likelihood of staying in a job (or indeed, leaving).

Some argue that job satisfaction is not the same as job desirability and therefore should not be used to create a list of job characteristics on which to judge jobs (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Jencks, Perman & Rainwater, 1988). Hackman and Oldham (1980) created the job characteristics model, which predicts that a well designed job has: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and job feedback. The Job Diagnostic Survey or JDS (Hackman & Oldham, 1974) essentially stems from this model. Later modifications of the JDS include additions such as 'dealing with others' items by Idazak and Drasgow (1987). Still relevant, the JDS is the most commonly used measure of job characteristics today (Fields, 2002). The Multimethod Job Design Questionnaire or MJDQ by Campion (1988) has motivational items which continue to help build up a picture of what is attractive in jobs. Apart from those qualities mentioned already, they cover: social interaction; task/goal clarity; ability/skill requirement; growth/learning; achievement; participation; communication; recognition; and job security.

Recognition's importance is echoed by Anthony Warren, executive mentor, who cites recognition from others as a timeless and powerful motivator. Warren (2005) explains that Napoleon was often surprised that people would literally die for pieces of ribbon! Mark Twain said he could live for two months on a good compliment.

Jencks, Perman and Rainwater (1988) created a job desirability index, omitting explicit items like 'interesting', which then contained the following areas: pay; fringe benefits; training and promotion opportunities; hazards (including risk of job loss); technical characteristics; autonomy (including hours & supervision); and organisational setting. Together, the non-monetary items were found to have more than twice the impact of earnings on a job's desirability rating (Jencks, Perman & Rainwater, 1988).

Overall, research illustrates that there are a broad range of things which people consider appealing or repellent in jobs and careers and that their degree of importance varies too. Taken together, the following seem to encompass what is attractive in a job: recognition for a job well done; a nice work environment; meaningful work; accountability; responsibility; rewards (either monetary or non-monetary); learning opportunities; achievement; balance; quality work; and quality people. The unattractive qualities can be seen as when these things are not positive - for example: lack of recognition, lack of opportunities, stress and so on.

The Career and the Individual

It is interesting to consider the relationship between an individual and the career that they choose, or the things they find attractive in a job. Keon, Latack & Wanous (1982) found the tendency for people to match their self-image and organisational image to be more pronounced among people with high self esteem, compared to those with low self esteem. These findings further highlight that there is more going on in career decisions than what is on the surface. If an understanding of the constructs which operate in career attraction, and indeed, career *unattractiveness* could be understood more fully, this could help to explain why people can end up disenchanted with their careers.

The idea of looking at 'fatal attraction' as a possible construct operating under the surface in career choices comes from the research of Diane H. Felmlee. 'Fatal attraction' is Felmlee's term, and put simply, it means an attraction to a quality initially seen as positive which is later seen as negative. Felmlee's research (1995; 1998; 2001) and the research of Felmlee, Flynn and Bahr (2004) support the existence of this phenomenon in romantic relationships. To give an example, a woman might be attracted to a man because he makes her laugh, and later be repelled because he never seems

serious. Fatal attraction looks at a quality on a continuum, from the positive to the negative - the negative can be seen as representing 'too much' of the quality (Felmlee, 1995). Felmlee examined fatal attraction in romantic relationships by using data from terminated romantic relationships. For each attracting quality there was a risk of it becoming 'fatal'. Felmlee commonly found fatal attraction rates of around 30% (1998). She suggested that this was a conservative level due to the methodology and use of open-ended questions, which were later coded. The magnitude of a quality moderated the likelihood of fatal attraction occurring. For example a partner being rated as *extremely* laid-back made fatal attraction on this quality more likely (1998; 2001). Perhaps if a similar method to Felmlee's (1998) were followed, the existence of fatal attraction in career changes could be tested.

Love and Work

In order to explain why the similarities between romantic decisions and career decisions exist, the following research is illustrative. Judge and Watanabe (1993) found that life satisfaction had a far greater influence on job satisfaction than job satisfaction had on life satisfaction. Because people's lives are made up of their relationships, work, and leisure; this provides a suggestion of a link between life, love and work decision-making.

While the areas of love and work are usually treated separately in research, there is an argument that parallels do exist between them and that they can be seen to overlap (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Hazan and Shaver (1990) argue that in using attachment theory, love and work are both accommodated. By measuring Ainsworth's attachment styles (anxious/ambivalent; secure; avoidant) adapted to conceptualise adult relationships, Hazan and Shaver (1987) showed that each attachment style is associated with particular patterns in romantic relationships. Hazan and Shaver's 1990 work

extends this to show this to be true of work orientation also. They liken work and love as adults to Bowlby's exploration of childhood – "work (like early childhood play and exploration) is a major source of actual and perceived competence" (Hazan & Shaver, 1990, p. 271). Other researchers have also examined the relationship between attachment styles and romantic relationships (see Belsky & Cassidy, 1994; Feeny & Noller, 1990; Latty-Mann, 1996).

It is expected that fatal attraction is worthwhile to investigate in job choice as it is for romantic attachments, as, like partners, careers are also something which people (usually) change infrequently over their lifetime. Moreover, the nature of a job can change as well as our perceptions of it. The extension of this theory into the domain of work is further justified by the existence of the fatal attraction phenomenon in other areas of behaviour. Fatal attraction has been found by other researchers to be a factor in the breakdown of workplace friendships (Sias, Heath, Perry, Silva & Fix, 2004). It is also seen in the behaviour of money managers, who behave illogically, and, according to Wood (1989) do not learn, or desire to learn from their experiences.

2.1. The Current Study

The current study is motivated by the idea that constructs which operate in romantic relationships and decisions - as well as in work relationships (Sias et al., 2004) and work decisions (Wood, 1989), may also operate in career decisions. This study aims to examine the particular construct of fatal attraction by extending it into the domain of career choice. Thus, in a similar manner to that of Hazan and Shaver (1987; 1990), a theory of romantic relationships is taken and applied to work orientation. In doing so, a greater understanding of what is seen as attractive in a job initially, and its association with what is later deemed unattractive, job might be gained. As Sigmund Freud famously said, "Love and work are the cornerstones of our humanness", so may be

similarly affected. Fatal attraction as a factor in the area of career decision-making has not to date been researched.

In the current study, 'fatal attraction' is conceptualised to mean that the qualities which one finds most attractive at the beginning of a job are later deemed the most unattractive at the conclusion of the job. Investigating this involves first generating a long list of attractive and unattractive qualities from which potential fatal matches can be ascertained, using data collected from participants. This forms Study 1. Completing this first enables a list of qualities to be produced from which fatal attraction can be measured in Study 2. This method improves on Felmlee's method of asking open questions and then later attempting to code and match up 1,027 qualities.

Study 2 aimed to examine fatal attraction in career choice, by recruiting participants who have either recently changed jobs, or who have strong intentions to do so. This second group was included because, due to the present economic climate, people may be holding out and less likely to voluntarily leave their job. Participants completed a questionnaire which was designed to measure the existence of fatal attraction. Because fatal attraction has been demonstrated in other areas of life and the rationale for its application to studying career choice argued, the following main hypothesis was predicted.

Hypothesis 1: That fatal attraction occurs in career choice.

In Felmlee's research, the magnitude of a quality moderated the likelihood of fatal attraction occurring (1998; 2001). For example, a partner being rated as *extremely* laid-back made fatal attraction more likely. This aspect will be included in the current study by asking participants to choose three qualities which will be in ranked order. The following is predicted.

Hypothesis 2: That fatal attraction more likely if the quality is rated highly as an attractor.

Because examining fatal attraction in career choice is a new idea, it is useful to measure additional variables in an exploratory manner, to determine any possible influences on fatal attraction. The following hypothesis was predicted.

Hypothesis 3: That length of time in job is related to fatal attraction.

Beer (1964) summarised research which supports a link between organisational size and job satisfaction. To examine the potential that this also relates to fatal attraction, the following is suggested.

Hypothesis 4: That organisation size is related to fatal attraction.

Research has examined the impact of organisational size on job satisfaction (e.g. Beer, 1964); due to the current study measuring incumbents who have left a job or are likely to, this is potentially related to job satisfaction and to the likelihood of fatal attraction.

Hypothesis 5: That job satisfaction will be lower in those showing fatal attraction

Because fatal attraction means that those qualities which were at first seen as attractive are later seen as unattractive, it is likely that this phenomenon means that the expectations of the quality were not met, (it did not 'perform' as expected). Therefore, lower satisfaction might be more likely, as predicted above, and job expectations may be less likely to have been met.

Hypothesis 6: That job meeting expectations ratings will be lower in those showing fatal attraction.

The following moderator variables were also proposed and measured in an exploratory manner to determine whether they have an effect on fatal attraction.

Hypothesis 7: That fatal attraction is related to: time spent considering occupation choice, organisational/job specific variables, magnitude of change in job.

The aim of the current study was to take the construct of fatal attraction: that those qualities which initially attract are those which are deemed unattractive at the end of a job, using Felmler's idea and applying it to career changes.

3. Study 1

In order to improve on Felmlee's method of asking open questions and then coding 1,027 qualities, it was decided that participants would select their answers from a set of options. The aim of Study 1 was to generate both a set of qualities which would form the options and to discern which (if any) fatal pairs existed, for use in Study 2.

3.1 Part 1

Part 1 involved deriving a long list of attractive and unattractive qualities from which the pairs could be chosen for Part 2.

3.1.1. Method

Lists of attractive job qualities and unattractive job qualities were generated using 15 student participants who provided lists of what could be attractive or unattractive in a job.

3.1.2. Results

Participants' answers were combined and the following lists produced.

Attractive qualities

Social interaction, Challenging, Fast paced, Promotion opportunities, Advantageous to my career, Continuous learning, Independence, Working alone, No hierarchy in organization, Flexible job parameters, Variety, Stimulating, Personal development, Status/glamour, In line with my interests, Autonomy/self directed, It fits my skills, Opportunities to travel/work outside the office, Fulfilling, Good incentives/bonuses, Working closely with others, Making a difference, A prescribed workload, Being part of a team, Interaction with clients/customers, Relaxed culture, Secure/stable, Nice surroundings/conditions, Staff social events, Doing something to help others, Flexibility with hours, Healthcare/superannuation plan, Benefits: car/phone etc., Access to resources & information, Pay.

Unattractive qualities

Unclear expectations, Stressful, Deadline pressures, Lack of training/upskilling, Intrusion into personal life/difficult to maintain 'work-life balance', Lack of control, Bullying, Uncomfortable conditions, Unrewarding, Co-workers who don't 'pull their weight', Lack of recognition, Conflict with values, Outside of expertise, Workplace politics, Unpleasant co-workers, Unpleasant clients/customers, Lack of growth opportunities, Being judged by your age, Emotionally overextending, Conflicting demands, Lack of praise/thanks, Too much to do, Unchallenging, Lack of creativity, Too little to do, Work often criticised, Overtime, Pressure to look a certain way, A lack of information, Lack of resources, Lack of communication, Lack of support, A lot of time spent away from home/travelling, Not able to help everyone/get everything done.

3.1.3. Discussion

The attractive qualities list and the unattractive qualities lists contained 34 items each. When compared with: items on the MMJQ (Campion, 1988); the findings of Jencks, Perman and Rainwater (1988), Clark (2001) and the opinion of Warren (2005), the lists seemed to contain similar items to those expected and were deemed appropriate for Part 2.

It was decided that 'Pay' be eliminated at this point because while it has been found to be a non-compensatory factor, meaning that a minimum level of pay is required in order for a job to be considered (Osborn, 1990), in a meta analysis of 71 studies, it has also been shown to be far less of a predictor of job choice than other job and organisation variables (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin & Jones, 2005). This can be explained by looking at Rynes, Schwab, and Heneman's (1983) - finding, that variables which do not vary as much for an individual, will have less impact on decisions. Presumably, when one applies for a range of jobs, they have similar rates of pay – and after all, the obvious reason most people work is to earn a living...

3.2 Part 2

3.2.1. Method

Participants

Thirty people completed the questionnaire. They were recruited using an invitation via the University of Canterbury Psychology Department email facility and through an advertisement on the Department notice board. There were 18 females and 12 males. Participants had an average age of 33.

Questionnaire and Procedure

A questionnaire was devised using the lists generated in Part 1. A copy of this can be found in Appendix A. The questionnaire was printed on A4 paper and completed with

pen. It was also emailed to participants as an attached word document. Participants were given the questionnaires and asked to fill them in as soon as possible. On pages two and three, the questionnaire contained the lists of attractive and unattractive qualities derived in Part 1, then the following instructions:

The following two pages contain the attractive characteristics listed again in a table. For each attractive characteristic, consider which of the unattractive characteristics (listed above) could be caused by it. Please think of jobs in general, not just your job personally.

You can write up to three for each, please list them in order with 1 as most likely to occur. You may leave some blank or only fill in one or two as you deem appropriate. There are no right or wrong answers. For example, if this were in relation to romantic partners instead of jobs, an answer might be:

Sense of humour

1. Can't ever be serious
2. Jokes sometimes inappropriate

The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participants were rewarded with a chocolate bar. After 28 days, 30 questionnaires were received, 14 on paper and 16 as word documents.

3.2.2. Results

The results were collated and the 'fatal' matches chosen from them. This was achieved by producing tables in which all responses were recorded. Each attractive characteristic had its own table. Every unattractive quality that was chosen was written down the first column and the number of times it was selected and in which ranking was tallied. In order to keep the scores comparable each ranking mark represented one point. A lack of answer for each attractive quality was noted, however, it was not known whether or not participants had not answered on purpose, or just skipped certain sections. The answers from all 30 questionnaires were collated into tables. The purpose of this was to determine if there was consensus regarding which unattractive qualities could be elicited or resembled each attractive quality. Each attractive quality with a match usually had one to three unattractive attributes which scored much higher compared to the others.

The following rules were used to select which unattractive qualities were matched with each attractive:

1. The top scoring unattractive quality was chosen, if it had a score of 10 or greater.
2. Any further unattractive qualities scoring directly below the top quality with a score of 10 or greater were also chosen and matched with the attractive quality.

The full set of 33 tables (tables A1 – A34) can be found in Appendix B. Table 1 shows an example of one of these: for ‘Challenging’. ‘Stressful’ was the fatal match because it passed the rules: it was the top scoring quality; and it scored over 10.

Table 1
Matches for Challenging

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful*	17	4		21
Too much to do	3	6	2	11
Outside of expertise	3	1	3	7
Lack of resources	1		2	3
Unclear expectations		2		2
Co-workers who don't pull their weight		1	1	2
Deadline Pressures	2	4	6	12
Conflicting demands			3	3
A lack of information	1		1	2
Lack of support		2	1	3
Emotionally overextending		3		3
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1	1	1	3
Lack of training/upskilling		1	2	3
Not able to do everything		1	3	4
Unpleasant clients	1	1		2
Workplace politics			3	3
Unpleasant co-workers		1		1
Work often criticised			1	1
Nothing selected	2	4	4	10

* denotes fatal match

At this point, attractive qualities without an unattractive quality meeting the rules were deemed not to have fatal counterparts. Matches involved an attractive quality

being associated with between one and three unattractive qualities, with one as the most common number.

Table 2 shows an example for ‘Advantageous to my career’. This quality did not have a fatal match. This was decided by applying the rules: no unattractive qualities scored over 10.

Table 2
Matches for Advantageous to my Career

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1	1	4	6
Too much to do	3		1	4
Outside of expertise	1		1	2
Co-workers who don't pull their weight		1		1
Conflicting demands	1	1		2
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	6	1		7
Lack of training/upskilling	1			1
Emotionally overextending	1	2		3
Overtime	2	1	3	6
Unpleasant co-workers	1			1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1	2		3
Workplace politics	1	3	1	5
Conflict with values	1	3	1	5
Pressure to look a certain way	3	1	1	5
Uncomfortable conditions			1	1
Unchallenging		1		1
Nothing Selected	8	13	17	38

* no fatal match

Because the aim was to investigate fatal attraction, qualities not involved in a fatal match were excluded at this point and not used in Study 2. This meant a final list of 24 attractive qualities and 19 unattractive. The attractive qualities which made the cut were used as the answer options for what was attractive in a job in Study 2's questionnaire. The unattractive qualities were used as answer options for what was unattractive in a job for the same questionnaire. Table 3 shows the final fatal matches which resulted from Study 1. The attractive quality is shown in the first column and its unattractive fatal counterpart(s) are adjacent in the second column.

Table 3
Final Fatal Matches

Attractive Quality	Unattractive Qualities
A prescribed workload	Too little to do
Autonomy/Self directed	Lack of support
Being part of a team	Co-workers who don't pull their weight
Challenging	Stressful
Doing something to help others	Not able to help everyone/get everything done
Fast paced	Deadline pressures, Too much to do
Promotion opportunities	Workplace politics
Working Alone	Lack of support
No hierarchy	Workplace politics, Lack of growth opportunities, Unclear expectations
Flexibility with hours	Unclear expectations
Flexible job parameters	Unclear expectations
Good incentives/bonuses	Deadline pressures
Independence	Lack of support
Interaction with clients/customers	Unpleasant clients/customers
It fits my skills	Lack of training , Lack of growth opportunities , Unchallenging
Making a difference	Emotionally overextending
Opportunities to travel/work outside the office.	Too much time spent away from home.
Relaxed culture	Unclear expectations
Secure/stable	Lack of growth opportunities
Staff social events	Unpleasant co-workers
Status/glamour	Pressure to look a certain way
Stimulating	Stressful, Emotionally overextending
Variety	Conflicting demands, Outside of expertise
Working closely with others	Unpleasant co workers

3.2.3. Conclusions

The matches contained in Table 3 were used as a means of comparing the results of the next section, (Study 2) with, to measure if fatal attraction occurred or not. The data were in a pattern to suggest there was consensus regarding which unattractive qualities can be elicited by the attractive. The aim of Study 1 was achieved; this meant that Study 2 could proceed.

4. Study 2

Study 2, the main part of this research, aimed to investigate the main hypothesis: that fatal attraction occurs in career choice; and the aforementioned hypotheses surrounding this. This study followed on from Study 1 by using its revealed fatal matches.

4.1 Method

4.1.1. Participants

Participants were recruited from October to November 2009, using: advertisements emailed out by the Psychology department at the University of Canterbury; advertisements on notice boards and flyers; and face to face recruitment in Christchurch city's streets and parks. It was a requirement that every participant answer 'yes' to either: 'I have left a job in the last 12 months' or 'I am seriously considering leaving my current job'. Students were not eligible as participants. 110 participants completed the questionnaire 63.6% of the sample were female and 36.4% were male. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 59 years, with a mean age of 31 ($SD = 9.2$ years). The most common age, or the mode, was 25.

4.1.2. Materials

The questionnaire was printed on seven pages of A4 paper. The first was an information page. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix C. It was also set up as an online survey, using LimeSurvey, an internet-based open source software available at limesurvey.com. The online questionnaire was worded identically to the paper one, and participants typed or clicked to select their answers. The attractive and unattractive qualities which made up the fatal attraction matches of Study 1 were used for the answer options in parts of this questionnaire, as will be explained.

4.1.3. Questionnaire Description and Procedure

Participants filled in the pen and paper questionnaire or completed the online version. Participants first read an instruction page assuring the anonymity of their answers and outlining the nature of the questions to follow. Section one first asked: ‘Which group do you fit into?’: ‘I have left a job in the last 12 months’; or ‘I am seriously considering leaving my current job’. Question two asked participants to:

‘Cast your mind back to when you started this job. Please choose from the following list, the qualities which *most* attracted you to the job in the first place. Please select *THREE* exactly, and rank them in order from one to three in the spaces provided.’

The list contained the attractive qualities in Questions regarding the nature of the job followed: ‘How long have you held/did you hold the job for?’; number of people interacted with; and job title. Section Two asked questions about some characteristics of the next job – ‘the job you are planning to have next, or if you have already made this change, the job which you are in now’. Next, questions asked: if the new job was in the same department, same organisation; how similar it was to the preceding job; and whether or not it required retraining or further study. Section Three asked respondents to:

‘Please think again about a) the most recent job you have had which has ended OR b) your present job which you are considering leaving. (That is, the *SAME* job you answered questions about earlier in this questionnaire.)’ If you are still in the job, think about how you feel now, if you have already left the job, think about how you felt when you left’.

‘What are the qualities you find/found most *unattractive* about the job?’

Answers were selected from the list of 19 unattractive qualities created by Study 1’s results. Respondents were then required to rate this job on how satisfying it was on a one item 7-point Likert scale; and how the job met their expectations, also on a 7-point Likert scale. The scales’ respective anchors were very unsatisfying (1) to very satisfying (7), and expectations completely unmet (1) to expectations completely met (7). The final page asked for basic demographic information.

Note that the order of questions was designed to circumvent the methodological issues arising from asking about both the qualities which initially attracted, and then those which were later viewed as unattractive. The last part of Section One and all of Section Two contained questions which were less emotional and more factual, for example: how long did you hold the job for; work group size; and number of people spoken to. These questions were placed in between those asking for most attractive and most unattractive qualities, to provide a break and to diffuse emotions. The qualities were all listed in alphabetical order, to minimise any inferred order bias.

A total of 121 questionnaires were attempted. Participants took approximately ten minutes to complete the questionnaire. Of the 43 completed on paper, 38 were valid and five invalid or incomplete. Of the 78 completed online, 72 were valid and six incomplete. The total of completed valid questionnaires was thus 110. Participants were rewarded for their time where possible, with an instant scratch and win card and a chocolate bar.

4.2. Results

4.2.1. Data Preparation

The data collected via the online questionnaire were exported to a database in the statistics programme SPSS 17.0. The on-paper questionnaire data were added to this SPSS spreadsheet. SPSS was used for all of the following analyses, unless otherwise specified. Only those questionnaires which were totally complete and correctly filled in were included in the analyses. It is not expected that the omission of these data is problematic, in all 11 cases, unusable questionnaires involved either participants stopping after a couple of pages (not skipping certain sections), or providing answers for the qualities questions which were not from the list provided (this happened for the paper questionnaires).

4.2.2. Preliminary Analyses

The main requirement for taking part in this study was that participants had either left or were considering leaving a job. The group: 'I have left a job in the last 12 months' comprised 61.8% of the sample: 'I am seriously considering leaving my current job' made up 38.2% of it.

Because this study examined the potential effect of how long a job had been held for and how much time was spent considering the job, it was necessary to analyse the descriptive statistics for this variable. The questions 'How long have you held / did you hold this job for?' and 'How much time did you spend considering this as a job for you?' were answered with separate fields for years, months, weeks and days. It was necessary to change these into comparable forms. The values were converted into months, for the first question, to create a new variable: Time held in months. For the second question, the values were converted into days, to create a new variable: *Decision in days*.

Length of time jobs were held for ranged from one month to 228 months (or 19 years), with a mean of 29.35 months and a standard deviation of 34.13 months. The range for time spent considering job was from 1 to 3650 days (10 years). The mean amount of time was 157.74 days; this number is a reflection of the huge range, caused mainly by outlying data of a few respondents answering: four, eight and 10 years.

Dealing with Others

The question 'On a normal work day, how many people would you talk to?' was asked. The number of people spoken to per day varied greatly, ranging from four to 500. The mean number of people spoken to was 31 with a standard deviation of 51. The most common response, or the mode, was 10 people per day. Table 4 depicts

participants' answers to the question: 'How would you characterise the group of people you worked with in terms of size?

Table 4
Size of Participants' Work Groups

Work group size	Frequency	Percent
10 or more people	70	63.6
Less than 10 people	19	17.3
Less than 5 people	17	15.5
Self employed	3	2.7
I work alone	1	.9
Total	110	100.0

The Next Job

The next part of the analysis involved looking at the characteristics of participants' new job, meaning: 'the job you are planning to have next, or of you have already made this change, the job which you are in now'. To the question: 'Is this job in the same department?', 10.9% answered 'yes' and 89.1%, 'no'. To the question: "Is this job in the same organisation?", 18.2% answered 'yes' and 81.8%, 'no'. The question regarding how similar the new job was to the preceding job elicited these answers: 'A totally different job': 50.9%.; 'A similar job': 36.4%; 'The same basic job': 12.7%.

To the question: 'Does/did the change to this job require retraining or further study?', 36.4% answered 'yes' and 63.6% 'no'. Therefore, these are mostly major changes, even if they do not require retraining.

Satisfaction and Expectations

The last part of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate their job in terms of how satisfying they found it on a one item 7-point Likert scale. Ratings were distributed along the full continuum of the scale, from 1 (very unsatisfying) to 7 (very satisfying). The mean was 4.85 ($SD=1.81$). The mode, or most common rating, was 6, satisfying. This is rather high, considering that people have either left or are planning to leave their job. The least common rating was 1, very unsatisfying.

Ratings on a similar 7-point Likert scale were obtained for the question ‘Was the job as you expected it would be?’ Ratings followed a similar pattern to those for satisfaction, ranging along the full continuum from 1 (expectations completely unmet) to 7 (expectations completely met). The mean rating was 4.62 ($SD=1.81$). The mode, or most common answer, was 6, expectations met. The least common answer was 1, expectations completely unmet. Ratings for ‘satisfaction’ and ‘expectations met’ appear very similar to each other. There was a Pearson correlation of .715 ($p < .01$).

4.2.3. Attractive Qualities

The next part of the analysis was to examine the frequency that each attractive quality was chosen. Table 5 shows the distributions for the question: ‘Please choose from the following list, the qualities which *most* attracted you to the job in the first place. Please select *THREE* exactly, and rank them in order from one to three.’ Participants listed three qualities; the data from all answers were combined. A separate table for each of the ranked positions was generated. Qualities are ordered from highest to lowest frequency.

Table 5
Attractive Quality Listed in Position One.

Qualities	Frequency	Percent
Challenging	18	16.4
In line with my skills	18	16.4
Flexibility with hours	13	11.8
Good incentives/ bonuses	10	9.1
Promotion opportunities	8	7.3
Relaxed culture	7	6.4
Secure/Stable	7	6.4
Autonomy/Self directed	4	3.6
Being part of a team	3	2.7
Doing something to help others	3	2.7
Making a difference	3	2.7
Stimulating	3	2.7
Flexible job parameters	2	1.8
Independence	2	1.8
Interaction with clients/customers	2	1.8
Opportunities to travel/work outside the office	2	1.8
Variety	2	1.8
A prescribed workload	1	.9
Fast paced	1	.9
Working closely with others	1	.9
No hierarchy	0	0
Staff social events	0	0
Status/glamour	0	0
Working alone	0	0
Total	110	100.0

Table 5 shows that for the attractive quality listed in position one, 20 of a possible 24 qualities were chosen as answers. ‘Challenging’ and ‘In line with my skills’ were chosen most frequently. ‘No hierarchy’, ‘Staff social events’, ‘Status/glamour’ and ‘Working alone’ were not selected as the leading attractive quality by any respondent.

Table 6
Attractive Quality Listed in Position Two

Quality	Frequency	Percent
In line with my skills	17	15.5
Challenging	13	11.8
Interaction with clients/customers	8	7.3
Promotion opportunities	8	7.3
Variety	8	7.3
Making a difference	6	5.5
Being part of a team	5	4.5
Doing something to help others	5	4.5
Flexible job parameters	5	4.5
Good incentives/ bonuses	5	4.5
Relaxed culture	5	4.5
Stimulating	5	4.5
Flexibility with hours	3	2.7
Secure/Stable	3	2.7
Working Alone	3	2.7
Working closely with others	3	2.7
A prescribed workload	2	1.8
Opportunities to travel/work outside the office	2	1.8
Staff social events	2	1.8
Autonomy/Self directed	1	.9
Independence	1	.9
Fast paced	0	0
No hierarchy	0	0
Status/glamour	0	0
Total	110	100.0

Table 6 shows that for the attractive quality listed in position two, 21 of a possible 24 qualities were chosen as answers by participants. The most common answer was 'In line with my skills'. 'Fast paced', 'No hierarchy' and 'Status/glamour' were not selected as answers.

Table 7
Attractive Quality Listed in Position Three

Quality	Frequency	Percent
In line with my skills	13	11.8
Relaxed culture	11	10.0
Variety	10	9.1
Being part of a team	9	8.2
Challenging	8	7.3
Good incentives/ bonuses	8	7.3
Autonomy/Self directed	7	6.4
Promotion opportunities	6	5.5
Doing something to help others	5	4.5
Fast paced	4	3.6
Opportunities to travel/work outside the office	4	3.6
Secure/Stable	4	3.6
Working closely with others	4	3.6
Flexibility with hours	3	2.7
Making a difference	3	2.7
Independence	2	1.8
No hierarchy	2	1.8
Status/Glamour	2	1.8
A prescribed workload	1	.9
Flexible job parameters	1	.9
Interaction with clients/customers	1	.9
Staff social events	1	.9
Stimulating	1	.9
Working alone	0	0
Total	110	100.0

Table 7 shows that for the attractive quality listed in position three, 23 of a possible 24 qualities were chosen as answers by participants. Of these, 'In line with my skills' was the most common again. 'Working alone' was not selected as an answer in position three.

It is also interesting to examine the answers for all three attractive qualities combined. Table 8 contains the distribution of all participants' three selected qualities.

Table 8
Summary of Qualities Found Most Attractive in the Job

Quality	Frequency	Percent
In line with my skills	48	14.5
Challenging	39	11.8
Good incentives/ bonuses	23	7.0
Relaxed culture	23	7.0
Promotion Opportunities	22	6.7
Variety	20	6.1
Flexibility with hours	19	5.8
Being part of a team	17	5.2
Secure/Stable	14	4.2
Doing something to help others	13	3.9
Autonomy/Self directed	12	3.6
Making a difference	12	3.6
Interaction with clients/customers	11	3.3
Stimulating	9	2.7
Flexible job parameters	8	2.4
Opportunities to travel/work outside the office	8	2.4
Working closely with others	8	2.4
Fast paced	5	1.5
Independence	5	1.5
A prescribed workload	4	1.2
Staff social events	3	.9
Working Alone	3	.9
No hierarchy	2	.6
Status/Glamour	2	.6
Total	330	100.0

Table 8 shows that all 24 qualities were selected at least twice. ‘In line with my skills’ was the most common response (14.5% of answers). The least common answers were ‘No hierarchy’ and ‘Status/Glamour’ (both 0.6%). Overall, what people find most attractive in a job is rather varied, illustrated by the range of qualities chosen as those most attractive.

4.2.4. Unattractive Qualities

The next part of the analysis was to examine the frequency that each unattractive quality was chosen. Below shows the distributions for the question: ‘What are the qualities you find/found most *unattractive* about the job?’ Participants listed three qualities, for which the frequency tables are displayed.

Table 9
Unattractive Quality Listed in Position One

Quality	Frequency	Percent
Lack of growth opportunities	19	17.3
Workplace politics	16	14.5
Stressful	9	8.2
Conflicting demands	8	7.3
Lack of support	8	7.3
Too little to do	7	6.4
Unchallenging	7	6.4
Unclear expectations	7	6.4
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	5	4.5
Lack of training	4	3.6
Unpleasant clients/customers	4	3.6
Deadline pressures	3	2.7
Emotionally overextending	3	2.7
Not able to help everyone/get everything done	3	2.7
Unpleasant co-workers	3	2.7
Too much time spent away from home/travelling	2	1.8
Pressure to look a certain way	1	.9
Too much to do	1	.9
Outside of expertise	0	0
Total	110	100.0

Table 9 shows that for position one of what was found most unattractive about a job, 18 of a possible 19 qualities were selected by respondents. ‘Lack of growth opportunities’ was the most common answer. ‘Outside of expertise’ was not selected as an answer.

Table 10
Unattractive Quality Listed in Position Two

Quality	Frequency	Percent
Lack of support	13	11.8
Unchallenging	12	10.9
Workplace politics	12	10.9
Unclear expectations	9	8.2
Conflicting demands	8	7.3
Too much to do	8	7.3
Too little to do	7	6.4
Unpleasant co-workers	6	5.5
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	5	4.5
Lack of growth opportunities	5	4.5
Stressful	5	4.5
Deadline pressures	4	3.6
Pressure to look a certain way	4	3.6
Too much time spent away from home/travelling	4	3.6
Emotionally overextending	3	2.7
Unpleasant clients/customers	3	2.7
Lack of training	2	1.8
Not able to help everyone/get everything done	0	0
Outside of expertise	0	0
Total	110	100.0

Table 10 shows that for position two of what was found most unattractive about a job, 17 of a possible 19 qualities were selected by respondents. The most common answer was 'Lack of support'. 'Not able to help everyone/get everything done' and 'Outside of expertise' were not selected as answers.

Table 11
Unattractive Quality Listed in Position Three

Quality	Frequency	Percent
Workplace politics	16	14.5
Lack of support	13	11.8
Unchallenging	11	10.0
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	9	8.2
Emotionally overextending	8	7.3
Lack of growth opportunities	8	7.3
Unpleasant co-workers	7	6.4
Stressful	6	5.5
Unclear expectations	6	5.5
Too little to do	5	4.5
Too much to do	5	4.5
Conflicting demands	4	3.6
Not able to help everyone/get everything done	4	3.6
Deadline pressures	2	1.8
Pressure to look a certain way	2	1.8
Unpleasant clients/customers	2	1.8
Lack of training	1	.9
Too much time spent away from home/travelling	1	.9
Outside of expertise	0	0
Total	110	100.0

Table 11 shows that for the unattractive quality listed in position three, 18 of a possible 19 qualities were chosen as answers by participants. Of these, 'Workplace politics' was the most common. For the third time 'Outside of expertise', was not selected as an answer.

The next part of the analysis was to combine all the answers into one table as was done for the attractive qualities. Again, the data from all three positions were combined to form one new variable, with 330 data points.

Table 12
Summary of Qualities Found Most Unattractive in the Job

Qualities	Frequency	Percent
Workplace politics	44	13.3
Lack of support	34	10.3
Lack of growth opportunities	32	9.7
Unchallenging	30	9.1
Unclear expectations	22	6.7
Conflicting demands	20	6.1
Stressful	20	6.1
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	19	5.8
Too little to do	19	5.8
Unpleasant co-workers	16	4.8
Emotionally overextending	14	4.2
Too much to do	14	4.2
Deadline pressures	9	2.7
Unpleasant clients/customers	9	2.7
Lack of training	7	2.1
Not able to help everyone/get everything done	7	2.1
Pressure to look a certain way	7	2.1
Too much time spent away from home/travelling	7	2.1
Outside of expertise	0	0
Total	330	100.0

The overall summary of the answer to the question: ‘What are the qualities you find/found most *unattractive* about the job?’ are shown in Table 12. Eighteen of the 19 possible answers were selected. Apart from ‘Outside of expertise’, every quality was selected at least seven times. The most common response was ‘Workplace politics’. This summary, as was apparent for the attractive qualities, shows that there is a broad variety of qualities which put people off a job.

4.2.5 Analysis of Hypotheses

Investigation of the main hypothesis, that fatal attraction occurs in career choice is really the crux of this research. 'Fatal attraction' means that an answered attractive quality is accompanied by a corresponding unattractive fatal match (from those produced by Study 1), for a given participant.

The first part of analysing the data to investigate Hypothesis 1 was to compare each set of responses and check whether any fatal matches occurred. This was achieved by looking at each participant's data separately and checking if attractive quality one had a fatal match with any of the chosen three unattractive qualities; then attractive quality two; followed by attractive quality three. This was done by hand and checked by a second person. These data were then entered into the SPSS database alongside the existing data, under new variables. The percentage table for these variables are shown below.

Table 13
Any Fatal Matches for First, Second and Third Attractive Qualities

Any Fatal Match	First	Second	Third
Yes	27.3	23.6	28.2
No	72.7	76.4	71.8
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

An obvious and important question to ask at this point is whether or not the number of matches is greater than would be expected by chance, indicating instead that there is a tendency for unattractive and attractive qualities to match up. This is not a routine statistical test and the following method was used: There are 24 positive qualities and they could be associated with a total of 31 unattractive qualities. Therefore, each attractive quality has on average 31/24 unattractive counterparts. Hence, the odds of picking a matched unattractive counterpart by chance for a randomly chosen attractive quality is 1/19 (there are 19 unattractive qualities) multiplied by 31/24 (this multiplier corrects for the fact that some of the unattractive qualities may be chosen in response to

more than one of the attractive qualities), which equals .0679. Binomial theorem is then used to estimate the probabilities for getting three, two, one or no matches.

The chances of getting three matches out of three for any one respondent are:

$$(.0679)^3 = .0003 \text{ (.03\%)}$$

The odds of getting exactly two matches (and no more) are:

$$3 \times (.0679)^2 \times (1 - .0679) = .0129 \text{ (1.29\%)}$$

The odds of getting exactly one match and no more are:

$$3 \times (.0679) \times (1 - .0679)^2 = .1769 \text{ (17.69\%)}$$

The odds of getting no matches at all are:

$$(1 - .0679)^3 = .8098 \text{ (80.98 \%)}$$

The three variables (match first, match second and match third) were added together to form another variable called *number of matches*, containing each participant's total number of matches. Table 14 shows the distribution of total fatal matches.

The predicted probabilities, actual observed qualities and cumulative probabilities are also shown in the table.

The next step is to compare the predicted probabilities with the actual observed rates. This was simply conducted using indicative tests of proportion, on each row separately (taking $n = 110$) using the statistics software, Statistica. The results of these tests of proportion are shown in Table 14 also.

Table 14
Predicted Matches vs. Observed Matches

Number of Matches	Predicted %	Frequency	Observed %	Cumulative %
3	.03	2	1.8	1.8
2	1.29	18	16.4***	18.2
1	17.69	46	41.8***	60.0
0	80.98	44	40.0***	100.0
Total		110	100.0	

Note. For two-tailed tests of proportion * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 14 shows that the observed percentage of fatal attraction was significantly greater than that expected by chance for two, one and zero matches. This provides support for Hypothesis 1, that fatal attraction occurs in career choice.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that fatal attraction is more likely if the quality is rated highly as an attractor. This hypothesis was examined hypothesis by simply looking at Table 13, which shows that fatal attraction occurs 27.3% for the first attractive quality, 23.6% for the second and 28.2% for the third. Clearly, this pattern of results does not provide support for the hypothesis and no further testing was carried out.

To test the following hypotheses, a simple measure of whether a person had apparently experienced fatal attraction, or not, was used. This was either zero matches (44 people) or one, two or three matches (66 people) – this can be seen in Table 14.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that fatal attraction is related to length of time in job. As a test of this hypothesis, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted, comparing length of time in job with fatal attraction. This test showed no significant relationship, $t(108) = -.400, ns$.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that fatal attraction is related to size of organisation. As a test of this hypothesis, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted, comparing size of work group with fatal attraction. Prior to this analysis, 'I work alone' and 'self employed' were combined, because, based on the occupations (private singing teacher for example), they both really meant 'I work alone'. The variable was converted to a four category scale, with 1 = I work alone; 2 = fewer than five people; 3 = fewer than 10 people; and 4 = more than ten people. This test did not show a significant relationship between the variables, $t(108) = 0, ns$.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that ratings of job satisfaction would be lower in those showing fatal attraction. As a test of this hypothesis, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted, with job satisfaction as the dependent variable and fatal attraction as the independent variable. Ratings of job satisfaction were not affected by whether or not fatal attraction occurred, $t(108) = 1.359$, *ns*.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that job meeting expectations ratings would be lower in those showing fatal attraction. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted with the job expectation ratings as the dependent variable and fatal attraction or not as the independent variable. Job meeting expectations was not significantly related to fatal attraction, $t(108) = 0.988$, *ns*.

Because the notion of fatal attraction in career choice is a new one, Hypothesis 7 was exploratory. It predicted that fatal attraction is related to other variables. As an initial test of whether other variables might moderate fatal attraction, *t*-tests were conducted. Age, time spent considering the job and number of people spoken to each day were compared for those with and without fatal attraction. All of these tests were not significant; hence, there seems little likelihood of moderating effects here.

Gender was examined using a chi-square test. The number of participants with fatal matches did not differ significantly by gender, $\chi^2(1, N = 110) = 0.164$, *ns*.

4.2.6. Further Analyses – Examining Areas of Interest.

Given that support for the main hypothesis has been demonstrated - that fatal attraction occurs in career choice, although no variables have been found to significantly moderate this - it is interesting to delve further into the finer details of the fatal matches which occurred.

Occupation

Participants were asked for their occupation and the answers were rather varied. However, it was possible to divide them into seven, albeit crude, groups. A list of the groups follows with specific examples of each in parentheses.

Management/Coordination (company director, CEO, sector manager, HR director, travel coordinator); *Administration/Support* (receptionist, technical writer, PA, technical support); *Customer Service* (café staff, shop assistant, flight attendant, sales rep.); *Teaching/Childcare* (nanny, early childhood teacher, ESOL teacher); *Law/Finance* (solicitor, accountant, finance broker, loans officer, judge's clerk); *Technology/Design* (software developer, graphic designer, roading engineer); *Specialist* (paediatrician, environmental specialist, planning consultant). Occupations were placed in the group deemed closest. Due to the broad range of occupations (and the lack of specific detail about them) it is acknowledged that these groupings lack precision – ‘Specialists’ in particular encompasses rather differing occupations.

A cross-tabulation was produced and a chi-square conducted, to test whether or not occupational grouping was related to fatal attraction. This showed a significant relationship, $\chi^2(6, N = 110) = 14.6, p < .024$.

Table 15 shows that Specialists have the highest rate of fatal attraction, followed closely by Administration/Support roles, then Law/Finance. Least prone to fatal attraction are those in the groups Customer Service and Teaching/childcare occupations. Occupational group had a significant effect on fatal attraction.

Table 15
Fatal Attraction in Occupational Groups

Occupation	Fatal Matches	No Fatal Matches	Total in Group	% Fatal Matches
Specialists	10	2	12	83
Admin/Support	14	3	17	82
Law/Finance	15	6	21	71
Technology/Design	5	4	9	56
Mgmt/Coordination	13	13	26	50
Customer Service	7	12	19	37
Teaching/Childcare	2	4	6	33
Total	66	44	110	60

Reasons for leaving

Participants were asked “What is your main reason for leaving this job? Please explain.” The answers varied, but could be placed into six categories; a list of which follows, including answer examples of those placed in them.

Boss/Management Problems: “Boss and his family were unstable”; “Boss gave contradictory support and demands”; “The bosses were controlling and saw staff as expendable. Weren't open to improvement suggestions made by staff for business and working conditions. NEVER consulted staff on changes”; “Poor management styles”; “Can't stand the boss. Passive-aggressive, controlling w***er”

Lack of Opportunities: “No opportunities for promotion”; “Transferred to a better position”; “Better opportunity came along”

Boredom: “Need a change”; “It became boring and unchallenging”
 Stress/demands too great: “Very stressful and long hours with little reward or appreciation” “There must be: More to life than pressure pressure pressure everyday :) !”

End of Contract/Redundancy: “Forced action due to impending redundancy”; “ No security”; “Workplace being forced to close”; “My lovely girlfriend moved back to NZ and I had to follow”.

Conflict/Bullying: “Workplace bullying by manager”; “Conflict with co-workers”; “Pay and workplace politics”.

Where an answer fit more than one category, it was placed in the category which best covered it. A chi-square test was conducted, the amount of participants with any fatal matches did not differ for based on reason for leaving, $\chi^2(5, N = 110) = 1.54, ns$.

While not a significant effect, the reason for leaving is still interesting, because most (60%) of participants showed fatal attraction, so it is informative to know why they left their jobs. Table 16 shows this.

Table 16
Fatal Attraction Related to Reason for Leaving Job

Reason	Fatal Matches	No. Fatal Matches	GroupTotal	% Fatal
Conflict/Bullying	3	1	4	75.0
End of Contract/Redundancy	15	9	24	62.5
Stress/Demands too great	10	6	16	62.5
Lack of Opportunities	18	11	29	62.0
Boredom	8	5	13	61.5
Boss/Management Problems	12	12	24	50.0
Total	66	44	110	60.0

The final analyses investigate whether any particular fatal attraction matches (matches of an attractive and unattractive quality) - are particularly likely to occur. Table 17 summarises the fatal attraction matches ordered by number of matches actually reported by Study 2 participants.

Table 17
All Fatal Matches

Fatal Match	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
In line with my skills - Lack of growth opportunities, Lack of training, Unchallenging	17	19.5	19.5
Promotion opportunities - Workplace politics	11	12.6	32.2
Challenging - Stressful	10	11.5	43.7
Relaxed culture - Unclear expectations	9	10.3	54.0
Autonomy/self directed – Lack of support	5	5.7	59.8
Flexibility with hours - Unclear expectations	5	5.7	65.5
Secure/stable - Lack of growth opportunities	5	5.7	71.3
Being part of a team – Co-workers who don't pull their weight	4	4.6	75.9
A prescribed workload - Too little to do	3	3.4	79.3
Fast paced - Deadline pressures, Too much to do	3	3.4	82.8
Doing something to help others - Not able to help everyone/get everything done	2	2.3	85.1
Independence - Lack of support	2	2.3	87.4
Making a difference - Emotionally overextending	2	2.3	89.7
Variety - Conflicting demands, Outside of expertise	2	2.3	92.0
Flexible job parameters - Unclear expectations	1	1.1	93.1
Good incentives/bonuses - Deadline pressures	1	1.1	94.3
Interaction with clients/customers - Unpleasant clients/customers	1	1.1	95.4
No hierarchy - Lack of growth opportunities, Workplace politics, Unclear expectations.	1	1.1	96.6
Staff social events - Unpleasant co-workers	1	1.1	97.7
Stimulating - Stressful, Emotionally overextending	1	1.1	98.9
Working closely with others - Unpleasant co-workers	1	1.1	100.0
Status/glamour – Pressure to look a certain way	0	0	
Working alone – Lack of support	0	0	
Opportunities to travel/work outside the office – Too much time spent away from home/travelling	0	0	
Total	87	100.0	

Of a possible 24 fatal matches, 21 occurred in this study. The matches: ‘Status/glamour – Pressure to look a certain way’; ‘Working alone – Lack of support’; and

‘Opportunities to travel/work outside the office – Too much time spent away from home/travelling’ did not occur. The top four matches encompass 54% of all fatal match occurrences.

While Table 17 shows the most common fatal matches and the individual frequencies of their attractive and unattractive counterparts, this does not give the full picture. Finding ‘In line with my skills’ one of the most attractive qualities in a job does not always spell fatal attraction. ‘In line with my skills’ was selected by 48 people overall as one of three qualities which most attracted them to their job, but this only led to 17 fatal matches.

Accordingly, Table 18 shows the percentage of fatal matches out of total responses to each attractive quality. This table can be thought of as correcting for the fact that some attractive qualities were more attractive than others.

Table 18 shows the proportion of fatal attraction matches, out of the total number of times the attractive quality in the match was chosen. In the column headed ‘ratio’ the first number refers to the number of match occurrences, the second, to the total number of times the attractive quality in the match was chosen. This gives a ratio that a fatal attraction occurred based on choosing the attractive quality. Looking at the matches in this way presents rather a different picture. Where ‘In line with my skills - Lack of growth opportunities, Lack of training, Unchallenging’ was first, and ‘A prescribed workload – Too little to do’ was ninth in terms of total number of matches (Table 17); when converted into proportions for Table 18, they switch places. ‘A prescribed workload – Too little to do’ is now first; at a fatal attraction rate of 75%.

Table 18
Proportion of Fatal Matches Resulting from Attractive Quality Answers

Fatal Match	Ratio	%
A prescribed workload - Too little to do	3/4	75
Fast paced - Deadline pressures - Too much to do	3/5	60
Promotion opportunities - Workplace politics	11/22	50
No hierarchy - Lack of growth opportunities, Workplace politics, Unclear expectations.	1/2	50
Autonomy/self directed – Lack of support	5/12	41.7
Independence - Lack of support	2/5	40
Relaxed culture - Unclear expectations	9/23	39.1
Secure/stable - Lack of growth opportunities	5/14	35.7
In line with my skills - Lack of growth opportunities, Lack of training, Unchallenging	17/48	35.4
Staff social events - Unpleasant co-workers	1/3	33.3
Flexibility with hours - Unclear expectations	5/19	26.3
Challenging - Stressful	10/39	25.6
Being part of a team – Co-workers who don't pull their weight	4/17	23.5
Making a difference - Emotionally overextending	2/12	16.7
Doing something to help others - Not able to help everyone/get everything done	2/13	15.4
Flexible job parameters - Unclear expectations	1/8	12.5
Working closely with others - Unpleasant co-workers	1/8	12.5
Stimulating - Stressful, Emotionally overextending	1/9	11.1
Variety - Conflicting demands, Outside of expertise	2/20	10
Interaction with clients/customers - Unpleasant clients/customers	1/11	9
Good incentives/bonuses - Deadline pressures	1/28	3.5
Status/glamour – Pressure to look a certain way	0/2	
Working alone – Lack of support	0/3	
Opportunities to travel/work outside the office – Too much time spent away from home/travelling	0/8	

Put simply, when asked to 'Please choose...the qualities which most attracted you to the job in the first place'; four people answered 'A prescribed workload' as one of their responses. Consequently, when asked what was 'most unattractive about the job', of these four people, three answered 'Too little to do' – which is the fatal match,

displaying fatal attraction. This gives 'A prescribed workload' a fatal attraction loading of 75%.

While some of these values are rather low in terms of number of participants (four, in the illustrated example, is not a large sample), they do suggest that some attractive qualities may be more likely to prove fatal than others.

5. Discussion

The current research aimed to explore the construct of fatal attraction by extending it into the domain of career choice. Fatal attraction, Felmlee's (1995) term, means that those qualities which initially attract are the very cause of what is repellent at the end of the relationship. While fatal attraction has been shown to occur in romantic relationships (Felmlee, 1995; 1998; 2001; Felmlee, Flynn & Bahr, 2004); work friendships (Sias et al., 2004); and in the behaviour of money managers (Wood, 1989); this is thought to be the first application of it to career decision-making. In the manner of Hazan and Shaver (1990) a theory of romantic relationships was extended to careers. By first developing fatal matches from lists of attractive and unattractive qualities, fatal attraction was then measured in career choice for a sample of 110. A quality initially seen as attractive, like challenging, being later deemed stressful, was a fatal attraction. The finer details of fatal attraction and potential moderator variables were explored.

The following goes over the research method; outlines the main findings of the results; including the exploration of hypotheses; then the consequent implications, limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

5.1. Summary of Results

The findings of this research provide evidence for the existence of fatal attraction in career choice. Fatal attraction, as defined by the presence of one or more fatal matches in a participant's answers to what was attractive and then unattractive about their job, was operationally defined from Study 1's findings. A sample of 30 students who matched attractive qualities with possible consequent unattractive qualities resulted in a list of fatal matches consisting of 24 attractive and 19 unattractive qualities.

These matches were used to construct Study 2's questionnaire and the respondents' answers were examined for matches to determine whether fatal attraction occurred. Analysis showed overall that 60% of respondents had evidence of being fatally attracted to their present or previous job. An indicative test showed this to be greater than expected by chance, providing support for Hypothesis 1, that fatal attraction occurs in career choice.

The number of matches on the first, second and third qualities did not differ significantly, contradicting Hypothesis 2, that fatal attraction was more likely if a quality was rated highly. Exploration of Hypotheses 3-7 involved conducting exploratory *t*-tests to examine if those with fatal attraction and those without fatal attraction differed on the following variables: length of time spent in the job; size of work group; job satisfaction; job expectations met; age; time spent considering job; and number of people spoken to daily. These differences were not significant. A chi-square was conducted to test if those with fatal attraction and those without differed significantly by gender. This was also not significant. These results suggest little likelihood of moderator effects on fatal attraction for these variables.

Because fatal attraction was shown to exist, it was deemed appropriate to delve further into the details of these matches and to examine other potential moderator variables possible from data gathered. Those with fatal attraction were compared with those without using a chi-square test and a significant relationship was found for occupational group. Those with the highest rate of fatal attraction were: 'Specialists' (83%); followed by 'Administration/Support' (82%); and 'Law/Finance' (71%). In the middle were: 'Technology/Design' (56%); and 'Management/Coordination' (50%). Least fatal attraction occurred for those in 'Customer Service' (37%); and 'Teaching/Childcare' (33%).

Perhaps the most important of the results (apart from those supporting fatal attraction in the first place) were obtained in the last section of Study 2, which investigated what the actual matches were and reported the percentage occurrence of fatal matches out of total answers on that attractive quality. This placed the attractive qualities in order from most to least likely to cause a fatal match. The top fatal match was 'A prescribed workload – Too little to do' (75% fatal matches). This means that people who were initially attracted to a job because it had a prescribed workload (perhaps presuming a straightforward job which left evenings free), later found they had 'too little to do' (and presumably now found a lack of stimulation and felt bored). 'Fast paced – Deadline pressures' had the next highest rate of fatal attraction (60%). This means that those who were initially attracted by a fast pace (perhaps presuming an exciting and enriching job) later found the consequent pressure of deadlines unattractive (presumably detracting from the rush of being in an exciting role).

5.2. Interpretations and Implications

Study 1 resulted in a list of attractive and unattractive qualities being generated. When compared with the body of literature (Campion (1988; Chapman et al., 2005; Clark, 2001; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Jencks, Perman & Rainwater, 1988; Warren, 2005), the qualities generated by Study 1 resembled those expected. Researchers stated that that an attractive job involves: recognition for a job well done; a nice work environment; meaningful work; accountability; responsibility; rewards (either monetary or non-monetary); learning opportunities; achievement; balance; quality work; and quality people. The unattractive qualities were seen as when these things are not positive - for example: lack of recognition, lack of opportunities, stress and so on. Study 1's qualities mirrored and extended upon these, - perhaps reflecting a focus on more individually preferred qualities (for comparison see 3.1.2. Results).

Similarities with examined literature were echoed in Study 2, where the most frequently ranked attractiveness item (taken from Table 8) was 'In line with my skills' which resembles Chapman et al.'s (2005) finding that the most important predictor of job acceptance is person-job fit. 'Challenging' was second-most frequent, and aligns well with 'achievement' and 'learning opportunities', mentioned above. This is important because it provides support for the issue of whether the current sample is typical or not.

Overall, the results of Study 2 have provided support for the existence of fatal attraction in career choice. Moreover, more participants in the sample were fatally attracted to their career than not. The fact that people are fatally attracted at all is in line with the research of Felmlee (1995; 1998; 2001) and colleagues (Felmlee, Flynn & Bahr, 2004) in the area of romantic relationships; as well as Sias et al. (2004) in work friendships; and Wood (1989) in the area of money managers. This adds to the body of research on fatal attraction, while building on career decision-making literature; suggesting a potential pathway to career disenchantment.

Successful application of a construct found to operate in romantic relationships to the area of careers is in line with the work of Hazan and Shaver (1990). This parallel suggests that people may behave in similar ways in different aspects of their lives, and even hints at the possibility that these patterns are pervasive and established early in life.

The fact that fatal attraction occurs at all is important. It is also important to know which attractive qualities are which are most likely to lead to fatal attraction. First of all, the list in Table 18 can be seen as a 'warning list'. In other words: if you go for a job because of these attractive qualities, then here is the predicted likelihood of you becoming disenchanted with the job due to the corresponding fatal match. This may be

of interest to many groups, such as those interested in research on realistic job preview; recruitment; career counselling; and also general people looking to examine and understand more about how and why decisions are made in career choice. While the numbers are small, as acknowledged, they suggest a pattern which may be confirmed by further research.

Similarly, the fact that occupational group was shown to be significantly related to fatal attraction is interesting and important. This has implications for recruitment; it may be of use to 'warn' people about the potential fatal match in a way which educates them to the potential down-sides of a job's initial appealing qualities. This could enhance retention and trust - consequently reducing turnover (Wanous, 1973).

The limitations and future suggestions for this study go hand in hand, and so are discussed together.

5.3. Limitations and Future Suggestions

Participants

Thirty participants completed Study 1's questionnaire. The data from this were used to decide what the fatal matches were. This is not a large number of participants and it would be of value to repeat this using a larger group and compare the results. Similarly, the number of participants in Study 2 was 110. They were recruited using notice boards, by standing outside office buildings in the CBD of Christchurch and in parks.

The size of this sample and the areas participants were recruited from may have biased results somewhat and also limited the ability to generalise these findings to the rest of the population. Having a larger sample would lead to larger numbers in each cell of results and help to further build a convincing picture of the existence of and patterns

in fatal attraction. Future research might like to replicate both Study 1 and 2, to check if these patterns are found again. It would be beneficial to use a larger sample size for both. On the other hand, the sampling method actually used did produce a reasonable number of people who had either had a recent job change, or were contemplating one.

Future research might also ascertain further whether these findings and trends are typical and seen in other populations by doing the following: 1). Look at different economic circumstances to see if these give rise to more or less fatal attraction - to investigate this it would be necessary to either look at different countries or at different times in New Zealand. 2). Look at a broad range of occupations in order to explore in finer detail the variable of occupational group. The way occupations were grouped together in the current study is acknowledged to be somewhat imprecise, and the finding that fatal attraction does differ between occupations suggests something more precise would be useful in the future.

Construct Measurement

Because looking at fatal attraction in the area of careers is a new idea, conceptualising what fatal attraction is and its measurement may lack rigor. This issue may have affected the way that some of the hypotheses were investigated. The main aim of this research was to explore whether fatal attraction occurred in career choice, and data regarding the subsequent hypotheses were not very detailed. For example, job satisfaction and job expectations were measured using one 7-point Likert question each. Using validated scales instead may give better measures and consequent different results. On the other hand, the choice of simple one-item measures in the present study kept the whole questionnaire brief enough make recruiting participants easier.

Ideally, it might be better to examine what attracts people to a job when they actually start it, and then later when they leave ask them what they found unattractive.

This gets around the possible confounds of time and memory distortion. This could be done by HR departments, using entry and exit questionnaires and could be specific for different jobs. The current data suggest that this would be different for different jobs. Future research would address these limitations by extending and building on the research.

It would be valuable, should this finding be replicated, to pair it with other variables which may correlate. For example, Keon, Latack & Wanous (1982) found the tendency for people to match their self-image and organisational image to be more pronounced among people with high self esteem compared to those with low self esteem. Perhaps fatal attraction could be measured along with self esteem or a self awareness scale.

Because the present study has taken a theory of romantic relationships and applied it to a work setting in a similar manner to Hazan and Shaver (1990) with success, this parallel suggests that people may behave in similar ways in different aspects of their lives, and even hints at a need to examine if these patterns are pervasive and established early in life.

Research suggests that people tend to follow similar patterns and indeed make similar mistakes throughout their love lives (see for e.g. Tashiro and Frazier, 2003; Busby, Gardner & Taniguchi, 2005). Perhaps, being the “cornerstones of our humanness” (Freud), love and work are again similar. Future research might follow a longitudinal design and measure if fatal attraction recurs in participants through different job changes.

5.4. Conclusions

The title to Felmlee’s (1998) paper, which formed part of the inspiration for the current study, begins: ‘ “Be careful what you wish for...” – this warning is equally

transferrable to the current findings on fatal attraction. This warning can be inferred too from Oscar Wilde's famous words: "When the gods wish to punish us they answer our prayers".

Fatal attraction seems to occur in job choices. Some attractive qualities and some occupations seem more likely to be fatally attractive than others. There is much left to be explored in this area, and further exploration seems worthwhile because there are obvious important practical implications.

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Appendix A

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, as part of my dissertation toward an MSc in Industrial/Organisational Psychology at the University of Canterbury

This research aims to investigate some of the constructs operating in career attraction.

The lists of qualities below and on the following page contain attractive and unattractive aspects of jobs.

Attractive

Social interaction	Personal development	Being part of a team
Challenging	Status/ glamour	Interaction with
Fast paced	In line with my interests	clients/customers
Promotion opportunities	Autonomy/self directed	Relaxed culture
Advantageous to my career	It fits my skills	Secure/stable
Continuous learning	Opportunities to travel/work	Nice surroundings/conditions
Independence	outside the office	Staff social events
Working alone	Fulfilling	Doing something to help
No hierarchy in organization	Good incentives/bonuses	others
Flexible job parameters	Working closely with others	Flexibility with hours
Variety	Making a difference	Healthcare/ superannuation
Stimulating	A prescribed workload	plan
		Benefits: car/phone etc
		Access to resources &
		information

Unattractive

Unclear expectations	Conflict with values	Too little to do
Stressful	Outside of expertise	Work often criticised
Deadline pressures	Workplace politics	Overtime
Lack of training/ upskilling	Unpleasant coworkers	Pressure to look a certain way
Intrusion into personal life/difficult to maintain 'work-life balance'	Unpleasant clients/customers	A lack of information
Lack of control	Lack of growth opportunities	Lack of resources
Bullying	Being judged by your age	Lack of communication
Uncomfortable conditions	Emotionally overextending	Lack of support
Unrewarding	Conflicting demands	A lot of time spent away from home/travelling
Coworkers who don't 'pull their weight'	Lack of praise/thanks	Not able to help everyone/get everything done
Lack of recognition	Too much to do	
	Unchallenging	
	Lack of creativity	

The following two pages contain the attractive characteristics listed again in a table. For each attractive characteristic, consider which of the unattractive characteristics (listed above) could be caused by it. Please think of jobs in general, not just your job personally.

You can write up to three for each, please list them in order with 1 as most likely to occur. You may leave some blank or only fill in one or two as you deem appropriate. There are no right or wrong answers.

For example, if this were in relation to romantic partners instead of jobs, an answer might be:

Sense of humour

1. Can't ever be serious

2. Jokes sometimes inappropriate

Please complete the following also

Age _____

Gender: Male

Female

Thanks for your time!

Challenging

- 1
- 2
- 3

Fast paced

- 1
- 2
- 3

Promotion opportunities

- 1
- 2
- 3

Advantageous to my career

- 1
- 2
- 3

Continuous learning

- 1
- 2
- 3

Independence

- 1
- 2
- 3

Working alone

- 1
- 2
- 3

No hierarchy in organization

- 1
- 2
- 3

Flexible job parameters

- 1
- 2
- 3

Variety

- 1
- 2
- 3

Stimulating

- 1
- 2
- 3

Personal development

- 1
- 2
- 3

Status/ glamour

- 1
- 2
- 3

In line with my interests

- 1
- 2
- 3

Autonomy/self directed

- 1
- 2
- 3

It fits my skills

- 1
- 2
- 3

Opportunities to travel/work outside the office

- 1
- 2
- 3

Fulfilling

- 1
- 2
- 3

Good incentives/bonuses

- 1
- 2
- 3

Working closely with others

- 1
- 2
- 3

Making a difference

- 1
- 2
- 3

A prescribed workload

- 1
- 2
- 3

Being part of a team

- 1
- 2
- 3

Interaction with clients/customers

- 1
- 2
- 3

Relaxed culture

- 1
- 2
- 3

Secure/stable

- 1
- 2
- 3

Nice surroundings/conditions

- 1
- 2
- 3

Staff social events

- 1
- 2
- 3

Doing something to help others

- 1
- 2
- 3

Flexibility with hours

- 1
- 2
- 3

Healthcare/ superannuation plan

- 1
- 2
- 3

Benefits: car/phone etc

- 1
- 2
- 3

Access to resources & information

- 1
- 2
- 3

Appendix B

Study One: Results Tables.

Note: Each table was formed by collating all participants' three responses to which unattractive qualities could be caused by each attractive quality, in a job setting. Each attractive quality has its own table, shown in the title. In the headings, one two and three refer to the ranking of the items. Any fatal match(es) are marked with *. If there was no match, this is indicated directly below the table.

Table A1
Matches for Challenging

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful*	17	4		21
Too much to do	3	6	2	11
Outside of expertise	3	1	3	7
Lack of resources	1		2	3
Unclear expectations		2		2
Co-workers who don't pull their weight		1	1	2
Deadline Pressures	2	4	6	12
Conflicting demands			3	3
A lack of information	1		1	2
Lack of support		2	1	3
Emotionally overextending		3		3
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1	1	1	3
Lack of training/upskilling		1	2	3
Not able to do everything		1	3	4
Unpleasant clients	1	1		2
Workplace politics			3	3
Unpleasant co-workers		1		1
Work often criticised			1	1
Nothing selected	2	4	4	10

Table A2
Matches for Fast Paced

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	10	3		13
Too much to do*	6	5	5	16
Lack of resources			1	1
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	2		3	5
Deadline Pressures	7	4	6	17
Conflicting demands	1	3	2	6
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1		1	2
Lack of training/upskilling		1		1
Not able to do everything	1	3	5	9
Unpleasant clients		1		1
Overtime	2	1	1	4
Lack of control	1	1	1	3
Lack of recognition		1		1
Lack of support			1	1
Lack of communication		1		1
Unpleasant co-workers			1	1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling		1		1
Lack of praise/thanks		1		1
Nothing Selected		2	7	9

Table A3
Matches for Promotion Opportunities

Unattractive qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	2	2		4
Too much to do	1		1	2
Outside of expertise		2		2
Co-workers who don't pull their weight		1		1
Lack of control	1			1
Emotionally overextending	1	3		4
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1	2	1	4
Uncomfortable conditions	1			1
Workplace politics*	11	2	6	19
Overtime	4	1	3	8
Pressure to look a certain way		5	3	8
Lack of growth opportunities	1			1
Lack of recognition	1	2		3
Unpleasant co-workers	1		1	2
Being judged by your age	1	1		2
Bullying		2		2
Lack of training/upskilling	1			1
Unclear expectations	1	1		2
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling			2	2
Nothing Selected	2	6	13	21

Table A4
Matches for Advantageous to my Career

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1	1	4	6
Too much to do	3		1	4
Outside of expertise	1		1	2
Co-workers who don't pull their weight		1		1
Conflicting demands	1	1		2
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	6	1		7
Lack of training/upskilling	1			1
Emotionally overextending	1	2		3
Overtime	2	1	3	6
Unpleasant co-workers	1			1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1	2		3
Workplace politics	1	3	1	5
Conflict with values	1	3	1	5
Pressure to look a certain way	3	1	1	5
Uncomfortable conditions			1	1
Unchallenging		1		1
Nothing Selected	8	13	17	38

* no fatal match

Table A5
Matches for Continuous learning

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful		1	1	2
Too much to do	4	1		5
Unclear expectations	2		1	3
Outside of expertise	2	4	3	9
Conflicting demands	1	1	1	3
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	4	2	1	7
Lack of training/upskilling	1	1		2
Emotionally overextending	1	3		4
Unpleasant clients	1			1
Overtime			2	2
Lack of control	1	1	1	3
Lack of recognition	2	1		3
Lack of resources	1	2	1	4
Lack of support	1	2		3
Lack of information	1	1		2
Not able to help everyone/get everything done			1	1
Work often criticised		1	1	2
Workplace politics		1		1
Conflict with values	1			1
Lack of creativity			1	1
Lack of communication	1			1
Nothing Selected	5	9	16	30

* no fatal match

Table A6
Matches for Independence

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1			1
Too much to do		1	3	4
Unclear expectations	5	3	3	11
Outside of expertise			1	1
Deadline Pressures		2		2
Emotionally overextending		1	1	2
Overtime		1		1
Lack of praise/thanks		1	1	2
Lack of recognition		5	1	6
Lack of resources		4		4
Lack of support*	19	1	1	21
Lack of information			1	1
Lack of communication		3	1	4
Not able to help everyone/get everything done		1		1
Unchallenging		1		1
Lack of control			1	1
Pressure to look a certain way		1		1
Lack of training/upskilling	1			1
Lack of growth opportunities		1		1
Unrewarding	1			1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling		1		1
Nothing Selected	2	4	14	20

Table A7
Matches for Working Alone

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful		1	1	2
Too much to do	3			3
Unclear expectations	2	1		3
Outside of expertise			2	2
Deadline Pressures			1	1
Conflicting demands	1			1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance		1		1
Unrewarding		1		1
Emotionally overextending		2		2
Unrewarding		1	1	2
Overtime	1	1	1	3
Lack of praise/thanks	3	1		4
Lack of recognition	4	2	2	8
Lack of resources	1	2		3
Lack of support*	14	7	2	23
Lack of information		3	1	4
Lack of communication	2	6	1	9
Not able to help everyone/get everything done			1	1
Lack of training/upskilling	1			1
Conflict with values			1	1
Nothing Selected	4		11	15

Table A8
Matches for No Hierarchy in Organization

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful		1		1
Too much to do	1			1
Unclear expectations*	8	2	1	11
Outside of expertise			1	1
Coworkers who don't pull their weight	2	1	2	5
Conflicting demands		1	1	2
Unrewarding				1
Unpleasant coworkers	1	1		2
Being judged by your age			1	1
Lack of recognition		2	2	4
Lack of information			1	1
Lack of control	2	2		4
Lack of support			2	2
Lack of communication		2		2
Not able to help everyone/get everything done		1	1	2
Workplace politics*	5	4	2	11
Lack of growth opportunities*	8	3	1	12
Unchallenging		1		1
Lack of training/upskilling	1	1	1	3
Lack of praise/thanks		2		2
Nothing Selected	3	4	15	22

Table A9
Matches for Flexible Job Parameters

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful		1	1	2
Too much to do	2		1	3
Unclear expectations*	9	5	2	16
Outside of expertise	1	2	1	4
Coworkers who don't pull their weight	1		1	2
Conflicting demands	2	1	1	4
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	5	1		6
Unrewarding			1	1
Overtime	1		1	2
Lack of information	1	1		2
Lack of control	1	1		2
Lack of support		1	2	3
Lack of communication		1		1
Not able to help everyone/get everything done			1	1
Workplace politics		1	1	2
Lack of growth opportunities		1		1
Unchallenging	1	2		3
Nothing Selected	6	11	18	35

Table A10
Matches for Variety

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1	2		3
Too much to do	3	4	3	10
Unclear expectations	7	2	1	10
Outside of expertise*	4	6	3	13
Conflicting demands*	6	6	1	13
Lack of resources	1	1		2
Lack of information		1	1	2
Lack of control	2		2	4
Lack of support		2		2
Not able to help everyone/get everything done	1	2	3	6
Work often criticised			1	1
Lack of training/up skilling	1			1
Lack of creativity			1	1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1		1	2
Emotionally overextending			1	3
Nothing Selected	3	4	12	19

Table A11
Matches for Stimulating

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful*	8	3	3	14
Too much to do	2	1	1	4
Unclear expectations	1		1	2
Outside of expertise	1	1		2
Deadline Pressures	1	1		2
Conflicting demands	1	2	1	4
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1			1
Emotionally overextending*	7	5	1	13
Lack of recognition	1			1
Lack of information		1		1
Lack of control	1	1	1	3
Lack of support		1		1
Work often criticised		1		1
Workplace politics			1	1
Pressure to look a certain way		1		1
Not able to get everything done	1			1
Overtime		1		1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling			1	1
Nothing Selected	5	12	18	35

Table A12
Matches for Personal Development

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Too much to do		2		2
Unclear expectations	2	1	1	4
Outside of expertise			2	2
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	5	2		7
Emotionally overextending	4	2	3	9
Unpleasant coworkers	1	1		2
Overtime	3	1	1	5
Unpleasant clients/customers			1	1
Lack of recognition	1	1		2
Lack of support	1	2		3
Lack of communication		1	1	2
Pressure to look a certain way	1		1	2
Workplace politics		1	2	3
Conflict with values	1	2		3
Lack of training/up skilling	2			2
Too little to do			1	1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1		1	2
Conflicting demands	1			1
Nothing Selected	5	11	18	44

* no fatal match

Table A13
Matches for Status/Glamour

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	3	1	3	7
Too much to do		2		1
Deadline Pressures	1			1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	2	2	1	5
Being judged by your age	4	4	1	9
Unpleasant clients/customers			1	1
Lack of control		1		1
Pressure to look a certain way*	13	5	5	23
Bullying		3		3
Workplace politics	2	2	2	6
Conflict with values	3	3		6
Unpleasant coworkers		2	3	5
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling		2		2
Work often criticised			1	1
bullying		2		2
Nothing Selected	1	3	12	16

Table A14
Matches for In Line With my Interests

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful			1	1
Too much to do	1	1		2
Unclear expectations	1			1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	7	1		8
Unrewarding	1			1
Emotionally overextending	2			3
Overtime		1		1
Unpleasant clients/customers		1	1	2
Too little to do	1			1
Lack of support		2		2
Lack of resources			2	2
Unchallenging	3	2	3	8
Work often criticised			1	1
Conflict with values		2		2
Lack of growth opportunities	2	1	1	4
Lack of training/up skilling	2	1	1	4
lack of creativity	2	2		4
Nothing Selected	8	16	20	44

* no fatal match

Table A15
Matches for Autonomy/ Self Directed

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1		3	4
Unclear expectations	7	3	1	11
Coworkers who don't pull their weight	1			1
Deadline Pressures		1	1	2
Unrewarding		2		2
Emotionally overextending			5	5
Overtime		2		2
Lack of recognition	1	2	1	4
Lack of information			1	1
Lack of support*	9	5	1	15
Lack of resources	1	3	1	5
Too little to do	1			1
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done	1	1		2
Lack of training/up skilling		1		1
lack of praise/thanks	1	1	1	3
Lack of communication	1	1		2
Too much to do	2		1	3
Work often criticised	1			1
Difficult to maintain work life balance			1	1
Lack of control			1	1
Conflicting demands		1		1
Outside of expertise		1		1
Nothing Selected	3	6	12	21

Table A16
Matches for It Fits my Skills

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Too much to do			1	1
Outside of expertise			1	1
Deadline Pressures			1	1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1			1
Unrewarding	3	2	3	8
Workplace politics		1		1
Lack of recognition			1	1
Lack of information		1		1
Lack of support	1	2		3
Lack of resources			1	1
Unchallenging*	5	3	2	10
Too little to do	1	1		2
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done			1	1
Lack of growth opportunities*	5	6		11
Lack of training/up skilling*	7	2	2	11
Lack of creativity	1	1		2
Nothing Selected	5	11	17	33

Table A17
Matches for Opportunities to Travel/ Work Outside the Office

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful			1	1
Too much to do		1		1
Unclear expectations		1	1	2
Conflicting demands		1	2	3
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	5	3	3	11
Uncomfortable conditions		4	1	5
Emotionally overextending			1	1
Overtime		3	5	8
Unpleasant clients/customers		1		1
Lack of recognition		1	1	2
Lack of control			1	1
Lack of support	1	1	1	3
Lack of resources		1		1
Too little to do		1		1
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done		3		3
Lack of communication		3		3
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling*	22	2	1	25
Work often criticised			1	1
Nothing Selected	1	4	11	16

Table A18
Matches for Fulfilling

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	2	1	1	4
Too much to do	1		2	3
Deadline Pressures	1	1		2
Conflicting demands			1	1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	4	1	9	5
Uncomfortable conditions			1	1
Emotionally overextending	2	2	1	5
Overtime		2	1	3
Lack of recognition	1			1
Lack of support	1	1		2
Lack of resources		1		1
Workplace politics		1		1
Unchallenging			1	1
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done		1		1
Lack of communication		1		1
Lack of training/up skilling			1	1
Nothing Selected	18	18	21	57

* no fatal match

Table A19
Matches for Good Incentives/ Bonuses

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1	2	1	4
Too much to do		1	7	8
Unclear expectations		2		2
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	1			1
Deadline Pressures*	7	2	1	10
Conflicting demands		1		1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1	1		2
Pressure to look a certain way	1			1
Overtime	4	3		7
Lack of control		1	1	2
Workplace politics	3	3	2	8
Unpleasant co-workers	1			1
Conflict with values	2	1		3
Lack of training/up skilling			1	1
lack of praise/thanks	1			1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling			1	1
Work often criticised	1	2	1	4
Nothing Selected	7	11	15	33

Table A20
Matches for Working Closely with Others

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful			1	1
Too much to do			1	1
Unclear expectations		1		1
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	11	3	2	16
Work often criticised	1			1
Conflicting demands		2		2
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	2			2
Uncomfortable conditions		1		1
Emotionally overextending	1	1	1	3
Pressure to look a certain way			1	1
Overtime		1		1
Unpleasant clients/customers		3	2	5
Lack of control	1	1	1	3
Lack of resources			1	1
Workplace politics	4	4	4	12
Unpleasant co-workers*	8	9	3	20
Conflict with values			1	1
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done		1	2	3
lack of praise/thanks			1	1
Being judged by your age			1	1
bullying			2	2
Nothing Selected	1	3	7	11

Table A21
Matches for Making a Difference

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	4	3	1	8
Too much to do	1		2	3
Unclear expectations		2	1	3
Deadline Pressures		1		1
Conflicting demands	1	2		3
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1	2		3
Unrewarding	1			1
Emotionally overextending*	7	2	1	10
Overtime			1	1
Lack of recognition			2	2
Uncomfortable conditions			1	1
Lack of support		1		1
Lack of resources	1		1	2
Workplace politics			1	1
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done	6	3		9
lack of praise/thanks		1		1
Nothing Selected	8	13	19	40

Table A22
Matches for A Prescribed Workload

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1			1
Too much to do	4	4	2	10
Deadline Pressures	4	2	1	7
Conflicting demands		1		1
Unrewarding	4	3	2	9
Overtime			1	1
Lack of recognition			1	1
Lack of control	5	4	1	10
Lack of support		1		1
Unchallenging	3	1	1	5
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done	1	1		2
Lack of creativity	1	3	3	7
Lack of growth opportunities	2	2	3	7
Too little to do*	4	5	3	12
Nothing Selected	1	3	12	15

Table A23
Matches for Being Part of a Team

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Unclear expectations	1			1
Co-workers who don't pull their weight*	7	9	5	21
Overtime			1	1
Lack of recognition	1	1	2	4
Lack of control	2	2		2
Lack of support	1			1
Workplace politics	11	3		14
Unpleasant co-workers	4	8	6	18
Conflict with values	2		1	3
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done			2	2
Lack of communication		1	1	2
lack of praise/thanks	1		1	2
Too little to do		1		1
Work often criticised			2	2
Bullying		1	3	4
Nothing Selected		4	7	11

Table A24
Interaction with Clients/Customers

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful			2	2
Unclear expectations	1			1
Outside of expertise			1	1
Conflicting demands	1	1		2
Unrewarding			1	1
Uncomfortable conditions		1		1
Emotionally overextending		1	1	2
Pressure to look a certain way	2	6	2	10
Unpleasant clients/customers*	24	2		26
Workplace politics			1	1
Conflict with values		4	1	5
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done		1	1	2
Lack of communication			1	1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1	1		2
lack of praise/thanks		1		1
Being judged by your age	1	1	2	4
Work often criticised		1	1	2
Bullying		2		2
Nothing Selected	1	8	18	27

Table A25
Matches for Relaxed Culture

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Unclear expectations*	12	2	1	15
Outside of expertise			1	1
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	1	3	2	6
Deadline Pressures	1			1
Unrewarding	1			1
Uncomfortable conditions	1			1
Pressure to look a certain way			1	1
Lack of recognition		1	4	5
Lack of information	1	3		4
Lack of control	1			1
Lack of support	2	2	1	5
Lack of resources		1		1
Workplace politics	2			2
Unchallenging		4		4
Unpleasant co-workers		2		2
Lack of communication	1		1	2
Lack of growth opportunities	1	1		2
lack of training/upskilling	1	2	1	4
Too little to do	3	2	1	6
bullying			1	1
Nothing Selected	2	7	16	25

Table A26
Matches for Secure/Stable

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Too much to do	1			1
Unclear expectations	1			1
Conflicting demands			1	1
Unrewarding	4	5	1	10
Pressure to look a certain way		1	1	2
Overtime			1	1
Lack of recognition		2	1	3
Lack of control	1	1		2
Lack of resources		1		1
Workplace politics		1		1
Unchallenging	6	2	1	9
Lack of creativity	2	1		3
Lack of training/upskilling		4	5	9
Lack of growth opportunities*	10	3		13
Too little to do	1		1	2
Work often criticised			1	1
Nothing Selected	5	9	17	31

Table A27
Matches for Nice Surroundings/Conditions

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Unclear expectations	1			1
Deadline Pressures		1		1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1			1
Unrewarding		1	1	2
Uncomfortable conditions	1			1
Pressure to look a certain way	6	1	1	8
Being judged by your age			1	1
Workplace politics	1	1		2
Unpleasant co-workers	1			1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling		1		1
Bullying			1	1
Nothing Selected	18	25	26	69

* no fatal match

Table 28
Matches for Staff Social Events

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	2			2
Too much to do			1	1
Outside of expertise			1	1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	5	4	3	12
Uncomfortable conditions	1		1	2
Emotionally overextending	1			1
Pressure to look a certain way	3	3		6
Lack of support		1		1
Workplace politics	6	3	2	11
Unpleasant co-workers*	6	9	3	18
Being judged by your age		1		1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1			1
Bullying	1	2	1	4
Nothing Selected	4	9	18	31

Table A29
Matches for Doing Something to Help Others

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful			1	1
Too much to do	4	2	1	7
Outside of expertise		1		1
Coworkers who don't pull their weight	2	1	1	4
Deadline Pressures			1	1
Conflicting demands	2		1	3
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	1		2	3
Unrewarding		1		1
Emotionally overextending	2	2	1	5
Overtime			1	1
Unpleasant clients/customers	2			2
Lack of recognition	1	3	1	5
Lack of support		2		2
Lack of resources	1		1	2
Workplace politics	1		2	3
Unpleasant coworkers		2		2
Conflict with values		2		2
Lack of praise/thanks	2	2	2	6
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done*	9	4	1	15
Too little to do			1	1
Nothing Selected	4	7	13	24

Table A30
Matches for Flexibility with Hours

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Too much to do		1	2	3
Unclear expectations*	10	1		11
Coworkers who don't pull their weight	1	1		2
Deadline Pressures		1		1
Conflicting demands		1	1	2
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	3	2	1	6
Overtime	2	2	3	7
Lack of communication	1	1	1	3
Lack of support		2		2
Lack of resources		1		1
Workplace politics		1		1
Unpleasant coworkers			1	1
Lack of growth opportunities		1		1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1			1
Too little to do	3	1		4
Nothing Selected	6	15	21	42

Table A31
Matches for Healthcare/superannuation plan

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful	1			1
Deadline Pressures			1	1
Conflicting demands			1	1
Difficult to maintain work/life balance		2	1	3
Unrewarding	1			1
Emotionally overextending		1		1
Lack of information	1	1		2
Lack of control	2			2
Conflict with values		1	1	2
Workplace politics	1	2		3
Being judged by your age	4			4
Lack of praise/thanks	1			1
Lack of growth opportunities		1		1
Nothing Selected	19	21	25	65

*no fatal match

Table A32
Matches for Benefits: car/phone etc

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Deadline Pressures	1		1	2
Difficult to maintain work/life balance	4	1	1	6
Pressure to look a certain way		1		1
Overtime	1		1	2
Lack of recognition		1		1
Lack of control		1		1
Conflict with values	2		1	3
Workplace politics	4	1		5
Lack of praise/thanks	1			1
A lot of time spent away from home/travelling	1	3	2	6
Bullying			1	
Nothing Selected	11	19	22	52

*no fatal match

Table A33
Matches for Access to resources and information

Unattractive Qualities	1	2	3	Total
Stressful		1	2	3
Too much to do	2	3	2	7
Unclear expectations	3		2	5
Outside of expertise	2		1	3
Conflicting demands	1			1
Emotionally overextending	1			1
Pressure to look a certain way		1		1
Lack of communication	1			1
Lack of resources	2	1		3
Lack of information		1		1
Lack of support	2	1		3
Conflict with values	1	2		3
Lack of creativity				
Lack of training/upskilling		2	1	3
Not able to help everyone/ get everything done	1	1		2
Nothing Selected	14	17	22	53

*no fatal match

Appendix C

University of Canterbury

Department of Psychology

QUESTIONNAIRE

Career Attraction

Please read the following before completing the questionnaire.

NOTE: You are invited to take part in this research project by completing the following questionnaire. The aim of this project is to investigate the constructs operating in job attraction and in particular when one changes jobs.

This project is being carried out as a requirement for the dissertation part of a Masters of Applied Psychology at the University of Canterbury by Alice McLean, who can be contacted at amm163@student.canterbury.ac.nz, under the supervision of Simon Kemp, who can be contacted at simon.kemp@canterbury.ac.nz. They will be happy to address any concerns or questions you may have about participation in the project.

This questionnaire is anonymous; you will not be identified as a participant without your consent.

You may withdraw your participation, including any data or information you have provided, up until your questionnaire has been collected and added to the others. Due to the anonymity, after this point it will not be retrievable.

By completing this questionnaire, it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the project and that you consent to the publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

In order to be involved in this research, you must satisfy one of two options

1) You have recently changed jobs (ie. In the last twelve months)

Or 2) You are seriously considering leaving your job at present

Instructions:

The following pages contain the questionnaire, please carefully read the instructions in bold and take care to complete each page in order before you move on to the next one.

Thank you very much – your participation is extremely valued.

One

The following questions (questions 1-7) require you to think about either a) the most recent job you have had which has ended or b) your present job which you are considering leaving.

1. Which group do you fit into? (please tick one)
- I have left a job in the last twelve months
- I am seriously considering leaving my current job

Cast your mind back to when you started this job.

2. Please choose from the following list, the qualities which *most* attracted you to the job in the first place. Please select *THREE* exactly, and rank them in order

A prescribed workload	Making a difference
Autonomy/Self directed	No hierarchy
Being part of a team	Opportunities to travel/work outside the office
Challenging	Promotion Opportunities
Doing something to help others	Relaxed culture
Flexible job parameters	Secure/stable
Fast paced	Status/Glamour
Flexibility with hours	Staff social events
Good incentives/ bonuses	Stimulating
In line with my skills	Variety
Independence	Working Alone
Interaction with clients/customers	Working closely with others

Qualities that most attracted you to the job:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. How long have you held / did you hold this job for?

_____years _____months

4. How much time did you spend considering this as a job for you?

_____years _____months _____weeks _____days

5. What is/was the title of this position?

6. On a normal work day, how many people would you talk to?

7. How would you characterise the group of people you worked with in terms of size? (please tick one)

Self employed

I work alone

Less than 5 people

Less than ten people

10 or more people

Two

The following questions (questions 8-11) require you to think about your new job: that is, the job you are planning to have next, or of you have already made this change, the job which you are in now.

8. Is this job in the same organization? (please tick one)
Yes
No
9. In this job in the same department? (please tick one)
Yes
No
10. Is this: (please tick one)
The same basic job
A similar job
A totally different job
11. Does/did the change to this job require retraining or further study? (please tick one)
Yes
No

Three

For the following questions (questions 12-15), please think again about a) the most recent job you have had which has ended OR b) your present job which you are considering leaving.

(That is, the SAME job you answered questions about earlier in this questionnaire.)

If you are still in the job, think about how you feel now, if you have already left the job, think about how you felt when you left.

What are the qualities you find/found most *unattractive* about the job?

12. Please select THREE from the list. Write each in the spaces provided below, ranked in order of unattractiveness. Please select *THREE* exactly.

Conflicting demands	Stressful
Co-workers who don't pull their weight	Too little to do
Deadline pressures	Too much time spent away from home/travelling
Emotionally overextending	Too much to do
Lack of growth opportunities	Unchallenging
Lack of support	Unclear expectations
Lack of training	Unpleasant clients/customers
Not able to help everyone/get everything done	Unpleasant co-workers
Outside of expertise	Workplace politics
Pressure to look a certain way	

Qualities that you find/found most unattractive about your job:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

13. What is your main reason for leaving this job? Please explain

14. Please rate this job in terms of how satisfying you find/found it:

1	2	3	4	5	6
7					
very unsatisfying satisfying	unsatisfying	slightly unsatisfying	neutral	slightly satisfying	satisfying

15. Was the job as you expected it would be?

1	2	3	4	5	6
7					
expectations expectations completely unmet met	expectations unmet	expectations slightly unmet	neutral	expectations slightly met	expectations met

Four

Please complete the following for statistical purposes only

16. Age: _____ years

17. Male

Female

18. Ethnicity: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your participation is much appreciated! Should you have any questions, or if you have an interest in viewing the final research, please contact Alice McLean, at amm163@student.canterbury.ac.nz or Simon Kemp, at simon.kemp@canterbury.ac.nz.