THE INFLUENCE OF PERSON-ORGANIZATION VALUE CONGRUENCE ON
APPLICANTS' LEVEL OF ATTRACTION TOWARDS AN ORGANIZATION

by

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that when applicants describe their ideal organization, they prefer one that is most similar to them (Tom, 1971). The findings of this study further support previous research, in that a higher level of similarity between the values of the applicant and the perceived values of the organization will result in applicants being are attracted to the specific organization. Additionally, this higher level of similarity leads applicants to believe they would better fit in with the given organization. This study also found that the participants' perceptions of fit and value of congruence were accurate, indicating that applicants can accurately determine whether or not they would fit in well with the company and its employees.

By matching the values profile of an applicant with the profile of an organization, one can predict the employee's satisfaction and perhaps even determine the applicant's intent to stay with the. Employees will be more likely to be satisfied and remain with the organization, which will in turn save the organization the financial burden of hiring and training their replacement.

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CHAPTER I

Literature Review

Overview

In 1987, Benjamin Schneider developed a model in an attempt to explain the actions and behaviors of employees within different organizations. This model, based off of his Attrition-Selection-Attraction (ASA) Theory, stated that individuals would be more attracted to organizations that share their personality attributes, attitudes, and values. According to the ASA Model, applicants are first attracted to organizations that are similar to them. These individuals are then selected by the organization because the organization desires employees who possess their desired attributes. Finally, the model theorizes that these employees will stay with an organization as long as the similarities in attributes remain. Eventually, organizations would only consist of the employees that share the same attributes, attitudes, and values as each other and as the organization itself, which is a phenomenon known as the *homogeneity hypothesis* (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995).

Since the development of Schneider's theory, countless studies have been conducted to define and assess the different types of fit between an employee and various aspects of the organization (Billsberry, 2007; Cable & DeRue, 2002; Cable & Judge, 1996; Carless, 2005; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Overarching all types of fit is the idea of *person-environment fit*, which is the level of similarity and compatibility between the employee and the work environment when the different characteristics, such as the previously mentioned personality attributes, attitudes, and values, are similar. This idea is then broken down into several different types of fit between the employee and the

vocation, job, organization, group/team, and supervisor (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). This particular study will be focused strictly on the level of fit between the person and the organization.

Person-organization fit. Person-organization (PO) fit is defined as the level of similarity and congruence between employees/applicants and the organization as a whole (Billsberry, 2007; Carless, 2005; Chatman, 1991; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). In 1989, Jennifer Chatman began to define and assess person-organization fit in a manner that focused more on the congruence of values between an applicant and an organization. Chatman specifically defined PO fit as "the congruence between the norms and values of organizations and the values of persons" (p.459). Amy Kristoff (1996) more explicitly defined PO fit as the "compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both" (p.3).

Preceding and following the development of Schneider's ASA Theory, researchers began to conduct studies to learn more about why the fit between an employee and an organization is important and what the potential results of this fit, or lack of fit, would be. Victor R. Tom conducted one of the first studies that focused on PO fit in 1971. Consistent with Schneider's ASA Theory, Tom found that when applicants describe their ideal organization, they prefer one that is most similar to them. Although this study helped pave the way for research regarding levels of fit, it was lacking one major piece of the puzzle. Tom had his participants describe their ideal organization, but he did not assess whether or not the applicants actually sought out these

organizations for employment. This leaves a major gap between what applicants prefer and what they value enough to let influence their actions when seeking out a job.

In the research area of PO fit, two of the most influential researchers, Daniel M. Cable and Timothy A. Judge, have conducted several spotlight studies that have made great strides of progress throughout the years. In 1996, Cable and Judge wanted to examine the previously mentioned gap, in order to understand what determines the applicants' perception of PO fit and how influential these perceptions were on job choice decisions and work attitudes towards the job and the organization. As a result, the researchers found that the applicants' perceptions of PO fit have a strong influence on both the decisions made and attitudes held by the employee. Cable and Judge also determined that a potential employee's decisions and attitudes could be predicted by using the applicants' perceived levels of value congruence with a particular organization.

Objective v. subjective fit. A key part of working with the different types of fit between an applicant and an organization is distinguishing whether you are assessing the level of fit using objective or subjective methods and perspectives. Subjective fit measures the congruence between an employee's reported personal values and that same employee's perceptions of the values of the given organization. Objective fit, however, measures the congruence of values between the employee and the organization, as seen by outside perspectives, perhaps from managers or coworkers (Edwards & Cable, 2009). Previous research states that subjective fit is what primarily influences whether a participant would like to work for a particular organization or not and is a better predictor of an applicant's attitudes towards an organization (Carless, 2005).

Although subjective fit has been found to be a better predictor of applicant attitudes in some research studies, both objective fit and subjective fit have been found to have their benefits and weaknesses. In 1997, Cable and Judge conducted a follow-up study to their previous research, incorporating the variable of personality. Using the Big Five personality traits, the study concluded that different fields of employment (e.g. business, engineering, and industry) have differences in the type of culture they prefer to work in. The researchers found that both objective and subjective levels of PO fit were positively related to attraction, but were not correlated with actual job offer acceptance. Dineen, Ash, and Noe replicated this study in 2002, confirming the positive relationship between organization attraction and both objective and subjective PO fit.

The measurements used in this research study will be assessing attraction using objective PO fit methods. Although the applicants will complete the measurements regarding their values and their perceived values of the organization themselves, the correlations of fit will be assessed using analyses of their results. In addition to an objective correlation, participants will be asked to provide their perceived level of fit with the organization, as a way of assessing how accurately participants are able to assess subjective person-organization fit.

Work values and value congruence. Assessing the level of fit between an applicant and an organization is essentially useless if the values are not properly defined. Following the perspectives of previous psychologists, Judge and Cable (1997) pointed out that values are what an individual seeks in order to either attain or maintain their desires and needs. Although these values are often quite stable, they may be modified depending on the different environments and experiences. The major difference between

values and preferences is that preferences are more situation-specific, fluctuating greatly due to more immediate decisions. Values, however, are broad and dependent on the overall environment, rather than a particular situation.

Dose (1997) defined work values as standards that employees use to evaluate the work they are doing or the environment in which they are working. Employees use these standards to determine what they believe to be right or what is important to them. Dose then further broke down the definition of work values into moral values and preferences categories. Moral values are based off of an individual's ethical views of right and wrong, while preferences are based on whether they are important or preferred by an individual. This distinction further supports the previously mentioned conclusions made by Judge and Cable (1997).

Using these distinctions and definitions of values, Edwards and Cable (2009) conducted a study that focused on what they termed *value congruence*. According to their study, value congruence is the level of similarity that exists between the values that are held by an applicant and the values that are emphasized by an organization. Studies have found that when the values of the organization match the values of a current employee, the employees are more satisfied with their position, work to keep a positive relationship with the employer, and are better able to identify with their organization (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

In 1992, McDonald and Gandz conducted interviews with senior executives and management consultants who specialize in the area of executive selection. These interviews consisted of three open-ended questions related to how significant shared values are, what values in particular are important, and how can they apply these shared

values to the interviewees workplace. Through this process, all but one interviewee

strongly emphasized how important and significant shared values were in their

workplace, stating that they spend a great deal of time discussing them. Some employees

discussed how common values with the organization help them find their purpose in their

occupation and their niche in the organization.

     When seeking what particular values were important to the senior executives and

management consultants they interviewed, McDonald and Gantz (1992) were able to

group their results into four distinct categories: task-oriented values, relationship-oriented

values, change-related values, and status quo values. While the researchers fully believe

that their compiled list of twenty-four shared values that make up these categories fully

encompass the values that are important in organizations, they do encourage further

research to look more extensively into these values. Determining whether these values

have different levels of importance based on the industry or at what expense to the other

values could be greatly beneficial to future actions taken in these respective industries

and organizations.

     Present study variables. This study will attempt to expand upon the current

literature in the assessment of the relationship between value congruence, perceived PO

fit, and organizational attraction. Hypothetical organizations and job positions will be

used to control for extraneous variables, such as job location, company size, etc. Value

congruence will be measured by the Revised Organizational Culture Profile (OCP)

(Sarros, 2005) and Work Values Survey (Cable & Edwards, 2004). Organization

attraction will be measured by the Applicant Attraction Assessment (Turban & Keon,

1993) and perceived PO fit will be measured by the Perceived Person-Organization Fit

Survey (Cable & Judge, 1996).

Value congruence. In the past, one of the biggest barriers to creating a more

structured definition of PO fit was the ways in which it was assessed. In response to this

issue, researchers developed what is now known as the Organizational Culture Profile

(O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, & Doerr, 2014). By comparing the reported results of

individuals within the organization with the results of applicants, the assessment focused

on the comparison of reported values, such as autonomy, stability, and fairness.

Following successful validation and reliability studies of the OCP, the values-

based instrument became a widely used tool for assessing PO fit. The original OCP uses

a Q-Sort Technique, basing the items off of seven major factors. In addition to being

used in the previously mentioned studies conducted by Judge and Cable (1996, 1997) and

Dineen et al. (2002), a modified Likert-scaled version of the OCP was created by Sarros

and colleagues in 2005. This shortened version uses 28 of the original items, grouping

the items into seven factors: (a) supportiveness; (b) innovation; (c) competitiveness; (d)

performance orientation; (e) stability; and (f) emphasis on rewards and social

responsibility. This particular study uses the shortened list of 28 items with the original

Q-Sort Technique in order to maintain reliability and keep the assessment at a reasonable

length of time for participants to complete.

Cable and Edwards (2004) also wanted to assess the relationship between the

fulfillments of one's needs and value congruence. In order to successfully do so, they

utilized the Work Values Survey (WVS;, Edwards & Cable, 2004). The WVS is based

off of the Schwartz (1992) model of values. This model took data from over 20 different

countries and was developed to reflect what needs people have in order to survive, regardless of where they are from or their personality type. The WVS uses Schwartz's model to create dimensions that distinguish values into two major groups. The first group separates the values based on whether they week to provide satisfaction for intellect and emotion or for maintaining your status in the chain-of-command. The second group distinguishes values in terms of "enhancing personal interests versus promoting the welfare of models" (p.825).

Based off these two major groups, Edwards and Cable (2002) were able to create eight major values that assess subjective value congruence: altruism, relationships, pay, security, authority, prestige, variety, and autonomy. The 24 items are measured on a Likert-scale, based the amount of importance to the individual, with options ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 7 (*extremely important*).

Organizational attraction. Using a scale of applicant attraction, Turban and Keon (1993) found that applicants' personality often aligns with the types of organizations they are attracted to. Applicants with low self-esteem, for example, tend to be more attracted to decentralized organizations, in comparison with those who have high levels of self-esteem. Additionally, applicants with a high need for achievement typically prefer to work for organization that have a merit-based rewards structure, compared with those who have a low need for achievement. The five-item Likert-scale, developed by Turban and Keon (1993), will be used to measure the level of interest an applicant has for the hypothetical organization they are presented with.

Perceived person-organization fit. As mentioned previously, there can be significant a difference in the level of fit based on whether it was measured using

objective versus subjective methods. Because the methods of this study uses the objective measures to determine PO fit, the researcher wanted to gain more insight and information about the participants by incorporating questions that assess the level of subjective fit. By using Cable and Judge's assessment of perceived PO fit (1996), participants will be asked questions regarding how well they believe their values align with the values of the organization.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

> **Hypothesis 1.** Using the Revised Organizational Culture Profile (Sarros et al., 2005), a lower difference score, between the ratings for an applicant and ratings for a hypothetical organization, will be positively correlated with applicant attraction towards said organization.
>
> **Hypothesis 2***:* A lower difference score between the ratings for an applicant and the ratings for a hypothetical organization, using the Work Values Survey (Edwards & Cable, 2014), will be positively correlated with reported applicant attraction towards said organization.
>
> **Research Question 1***:* Does it matter to applicants whether or not they have similar values to an organization?
>
> **Research Question 2:** Do applicants feel more attracted to organizations that are similar to them?

CHAPTER II

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study consisted of 175 graduate and upper-level undergraduate students from a large, southeastern university, in addition to individuals outside of the university who have recently began or will soon begin the job search process. Student were recruited heavily from graduate and capstone or senior-level restricted courses. Additionally, an email was sent to all graduate students at Middle Tennessee State University. Participation in the study was completely voluntary and some participants were compensated for their time with extra credit, as determined by the professor of their class. Students in the class who did not wish to participate in the study were given an alternative option for extra credit. All participants were over the age of 18.

A total of 175 participants completed the survey and met the requirements of being a current graduate or upper-level undergraduate student. Responses of five individuals were removed for incorrectly answering the manipulation checks, resulting in a remaining 170 participants for analysis. Demographic information was collected at the end of the survey for purposes of sample description. Of the 170 remaining participants, 71% were female, 78% indicated they were Caucasian/White, 51% were between 21 and 24 years of age, 48% were currently enrolled in the College of Behavioral and Health Science, and 65% had not yet begun applying for a full-time job. See Appendix A for full descriptive statistics.

Measures

      Organization culture profile. The Organization Culture Profile (OCP) was administered to assess the amount of fit between an applicant and an organization using a Q-Sort Technique.   This technique required participants to sort the 28 items they are given into five different categories based on how well the participants believed the items described either the organization or themselves. This technique was conducted online, by having the participants drag and drop the items into the different categories. These five categories ranged from ranging from one (*Describes [the organization/me] the best*) to 5 (*Does NOT describe [the organization/me]*). Participants were only allowed to have a specific number of items in each category (required distribution = 3-6-10-6-3), which prevents participants from rating all of the items similar in importance. Each category was given a number value and states how many items are allowed in that particular category.

      The most recent, full version of the OCP measure has a total of 54 value statements and a reported reliability of r = .88 (O'Reilly et al., 2014) and factor analysis found that all items loaded significantly, supporting the statement that the OCP does an adequate job of representing the dimensions of culture preferences found by other research studies (Chatman, 1991). Sample items to sort include: (a) having high expectations for performance; (b) being results oriented; (c) having high ethical standards; and (d) respecting individuals. The shortened and revised version of the OCP created by Sarros and colleagues in 2005 uses a Likert-scale format, but this study used the shortened version in the Q-sort format. The subscales of this shortened/revised measure show an average reliability of r = .75.

The revised OCP (Sarros et al., 2005) is broken down into seven factors: (a) stability (being calm; security for job employment); (b) supportiveness (team oriented, being people oriented); (c) social responsibility (being reflective); (d) innovation (quick to take advantage of new opportunities); (e) emphasis on rewards (fairness; opportunity for professional growth); (f) performance orientation (results oriented); and (g) competitiveness (emphasis on quality; achievement oriented). The list of all 28 items used in the current study can be found in Appendix B.

Work values survey. In addition to the OCP, the Work value Survey (WVS) was used as an additional measure of value congruence between the applicant and the organization. Cable and Edwards developed the WVS in 2002, based off of Schneider's ASA Model. The WVS compares the congruence in values between an applicant and an organization, while taking into account the applicant's needs for psychological fulfillment. Consistent with other measures of value congruence, the WVS has a reliability estimate of $r = .85$. The values were measured based on their importance to the person and to the organization, incorporating individual values, perceived organizational values, and the psychological needs of the individual. Edwards and Cable were able to create eight major values that assess subjective value congruence: (a) altruism; (b) relationships; (c) pay; (d) security; (e) authority; (f) prestige; (g) variety; and (h) autonomy. The 24 items were measured on a Likert-scale, based on how important they are to the individual, with options ranging from one (*not important at all*) to 7 (*extremely important*). The list of 24 items, broken down by values, is shown in Appendix C.

Assessment of applicant attraction. Turban and Keon (1993) developed a five-item scale of applicant attraction ($\alpha = .95$), asking applicants to rate their level of interest

towards a company on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7

(*completely agree*). Items included in the measure were related to the amount of effort

the participant would put forth to actually work for the company and asked participants

whether they would accept if they were offered a job for the company. One of the items,

"I am no longer interested in the company, except as a last resort", was reverse scored.

The exact items used are shown in Appendix D.

   Perceived person-organization fit. A three-item Likert-scale assessed the

participant's perceived level of fit between them and the organization. This measure was

developed and first used by Cable and Judge in 1996. Although the main intention was

to simply ask participants how much they agree their values match those of the

organization, the researchers added additional questions to improve the reliability for the

scale. The overall scale has an alpha of .87, and post-hoc analysis indicated that the main

question, "To what degree do you feel your values 'match' or fit this organization and the

current employees in this organization" (p.299) can just as accurately predict work

outcomes as the three-item scale. The scale items are shown in Appendix E.

Procedure

   A survey was developed through Qualtrics, an online survey platform, and the

survey link was distributed to participants through email from their faculty members.

Preceding the survey, participants were informed of the purpose and background

information regarding the overall thesis project. Participants were then asked to provide

an electronic signature for informed consent, agreeing that they met the requirements to

participate in the study and give the researcher permission to use the demographics and

responses for research. The informed consent is shown in Appendix F and the survey

introduction in Appendix G.

After providing informed consent, participants were randomly shown one of two

possible profiles that described the structure, values, mission, and other additional details

of a particular fabricated organization. The purpose of using two hypothetical

organization profiles was to emphasize different values while maintaining other

characteristics about the organization, such as size, pay, or location.   The first

hypothetical organization, *Innovation Unlimited,* emphasized a highly collaborative and

team oriented environment that focuses on innovation and adaptability. The second

hypothetical organization, *Service First*, emphasized a customer-focused environment

that was highly structured and hierarchical. See Appendix H for the profiles of the

hypothetical organizations.

After reading the profile of the hypothetical organization, participants were asked

two quality assurance questions to ensure that their answers to the assessment were valid

and that the participants were partaking responsibly. These questions can be found in

Appendix I. Participants who failed to answer both manipulation questions correctly

were removed from data analysis.

Following the quality assurance questions, participants were asked to rate their

level of attraction towards the organization by completing Turban and Keon's Applicant

Attraction Assessment (1993). Next, they were then given the revised Organizational

Culture Profile (Sarros et al., 2005) and Work Values Survey (Cable & Edwards, 2004)

regarding their perceived values of the hypothetical organization they were given.

Participants were then instructed to complete the same two assessments (OCP and WVS) about themselves.

Participants were asked questions regarding how well they believed they would fit in with the organization, which was termed as person-organization fit. Lastly, the participants were given questions related to their demographics, including their age, gender, race, academic standing, job search process status, and their field of study at Middle Tennessee State University (See Appendix J). Once the survey was complete, participants were thanked for their participation and given the researcher's contact information in case they have further questions.

Prior to the assessment of participants, a pilot study was conducted to ensure that the values emphasized in the hypothetical organization descriptions were being accurately perceived by a majority of participants. Based on the perceived values of the organizations expressed by the pilot study participants, adjustments were made related to the layout and order of the survey in order to improve the accuracy of the hypothetical organization descriptions to be used in the actual survey.

CHAPTER III

Results

Difference Scores

Descriptive statistics and frequency counts were obtained on all qualitative

questions related to the participants' demographic information. Descriptive statistics for

all demographic questions can be found in Appendix A. Difference scores were

calculated for each item using the measures of perceived person-organization fit and

value congruence. The difference score for the perceived fit measure was calculated by

comparing how they sorted the item for describing the hypothetical organization and how

they sorted the item when describing themselves. These absolute value scores were

totaled for each hypothetical organization scenario. The participants with a higher score

indicated a greater difference between that individual and the hypothetical organization

they were presented, meaning they were less of a fit with the organization. The same

overall process was conducted for the level of value congruence measure, with a higher

absolute value indicating a greater difference in value alignment between the participant

and the organizational scenario they reviewed. These summed difference scores ranged

from 16 to 46, with a standard deviation of 6.60 for the organizational scenario one

(*Innovation Unlimited*) and from five to 102 with a standard deviation of 17.69 for

scenario two (*Service First*).

Perceived Fit and Organizational Attraction

Pearson's correlations were conducted between all the three items within the

perceived person-organization fit for both of the organizational scenarios. The

Cronbach's alpha of this scale showed a reliability of 0.86 for scenario one (*Innovation*

Unlimited) and 0.87 for scenario two (*Service First).* The results of these analyses

indicated the three items used in the scale were adequately measuring the desired variable

of perceived person-organization fit. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to

compare the participants' level of fit in scenario one (*Innovation Unlimited)*

($M = 9.80$, $SD = 2.88$) and scenario two (*Service First)* ($M = 9.02$, $SD = 3.01$), but no

significant difference was found; t (168) = 1.71, $p = .089$. The descriptive statistics

summary can be found below in Tables 1.

Table 1
Perceived Person-Organization Fit Item Descriptives

Variable	N	M	SD
Values Match the Organization			
Innovation Unlimited	79	3.37	1.00
Service First	91	3.18	1.15
Values & Personality Reflect Your Own			
Innovation Unlimited	79	3.24	1.12
Service First	91	2.99	1.10
Values Match Current Employees			
Innovation Unlimited	79	3.19	1.10
Service First	91	2.86	1.05

Reliability was determined for the five-item scale used to assess applicant

attraction to the organization. The final question used in the assessment of applicant

attraction (shown above in Table 6) was a negatively worded question, while all other

questions in the scale were phrased in a positive attitude towards the organization. Due to

the poor quality of this final question, only four of the items in the scale were combined

to create an overall attraction variable. The significant correlations between these four

within the scale show the items to be strongly related to one another. The Cronbach's

alpha of 0.93 for scenario one (*Innovation Unlimited*) and 0.91 for scenario two (*Service*

First) indicate all scale items were adequately measuring the intended variable of

attraction to the hypothetical organization scenarios. An independent-samples t-test was

conducted to compare the participants' level of attraction in scenario one (*Innovation*

Unlimited) ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.52$) and scenario two (*Service First)* ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.36$),

but no significant difference was found; $t (168) = 1.61$,

$p = .276$. The descriptive statistics are in Table 2.

Table 2
Assessment of Applicant Attraction Item Descriptives

Variable		N	M	SD
I would exert effort to work here				
	Innovation Unlimited	79	4.44	1.67
	Service First	91	4.07	1.56
I am interested in applying here				
	Innovation Unlimited	79	4.20	1.68
	Service First	91	3.87	1.53
I would like to work here				
	Innovation Unlimited	79	4.33	1.71
	Service First	91	3.91	1.58
I would accept an offer from here				
	Innovation Unlimited	79	4.80	1.62
	Service First	91	4.51	1.43
I would only work here as a last resort				
	Innovation Unlimited	79	3.52	1.56
	Service First	91	3.94	1.69

Relationship Between Perceived Fit and Work Values

The hypotheses for this survey were assessed using bivariate correlations. The relationship between the Organizational Culture Profile (Sarros et al., 2005) difference score and applicant attraction towards the hypothetical organization was assessed. The results indicated a significantly negative correlation between the OCP difference score and overall attraction for scenario one ($N=79$, $r = -.32$, $p = .005$) and scenario two ($N = 91$, $r = -.36$, $p = < .001$). This provides support for Hypothesis 1, which states that the lower the OCP difference score between the applicant and the hypothetical organization, the more attracted the applicant will be towards the organization.

Hypothesis 2 assessed the relationship between the Work Values Survey (Edwards & Cable, 2014) difference score and applicant attraction towards the hypothetical organization. Results showed a significantly negative correlation between the WVS difference score and overall attraction for scenario one ($N=79$, $r = -.41$, $p < .001$) and scenario two ($N = 91$, $r = -.51$, $p = <.001$). This supports Hypothesis 2, stating that a lower WVS difference score between the applicant and the hypothetical organization, the more attracted the applicant will be towards the organization.

In addition to the two major hypotheses, the researcher also wanted to examine two research questions related to the participant's perceived fit with the organization. Analyses showed a significantly negative correlation between the OCP difference scores and the perceived level of fit for both the organizational scenario one (*Innovation Unlimited*) ($N=79$, $r = -.41$, $p < .001$) and scenario two (*Service First*) ($N = 91$, $r = -.45$, $p = <.001$). The correlation between the WVS difference score and the participant's perceived fit with the hypothetical organization was also negatively significant for both

scenario one (*Innovation Unlimited*) ($N = 79$, $r = -.53$, $p < .001$) and scenario two (*Service First*) ($N = 91$, $r = -.43$, $p = <.001$). These results support the idea that applicants have accurate perceptions on their level of fit and congruence of values with the hypothetical organizations they were presented.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

Perceived Fit and Value Congruence

Previous research has shown that when applicants describe their ideal

organization, they prefer one that is most similar to them (Tom, 1971). More

specifically, applicants with a higher levels of PO fit and value congruence are found to

be more attracted to the organization (Cable & Judge, 1997; Dineen et al., 2002; Kristof-

Brown et al., 2005; McDonald & Gandz, 1991). The findings of this study further

support previous research, in that a higher level of similarity between the values of the

applicant and the perceived values of the organization will result in applicants being are

attracted to the specific organization. Additionally, this higher level of similarity leads

applicants to believe they would better fit in with the given organization. This study also

found that the participants' perceptions of fit and value of congruence were accurate,

indicating that applicants can accurately determine whether or not they would fit in well

with the company and its employees.

Implications of Previous Findings

Countless studies have shown that there are several positive outcomes and

benefits to having high levels of PO fit for employees (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Judge &

Cable, 1997). For example, previous research has found that PO fit levels can be used to

predict employee satisfaction with their job, organizational commitment, and reduced

turnover (Edwards & Cable, 2009; O'Reilly et al., 1991). Additionally, PO fit

perceptions have been found to be positively correlated with citizenship behaviors, organizational identification, and reduced turnover (Cable & DeRue, 2002).

McDonald and Gantz (1991) asked interviewees what strategies and tactics were used by the organization in order to achieve high levels of value congruence. The researchers discovered it is vital to tie the values of the organization to the vision of the organization. By linking the goals, vision, and values together, more commitment and positive behaviors are expressed by the employees. This in turn fulfills the needs of the customers and stakeholders, creating an overall more effective and productive organization. In addition, the values are also able to improve the quality of working relationships, reduce the conflict between individuals in the workplace, and improve the strategic decision-making process of the organization.

In 1992, Judge and Bretz were able to successfully link work value alignment with job choice decisions. According to their research, concern for others, achievement, and fairness have a greater impact on job choice decisions than pay or opportunities for getting a promotion, although all of these variables were statistically significant attributes of job choice decisions. For all of the assessed values, except honesty, offer acceptance could be predicted as long as the given value was shown to be important to both the applicant and the organization. This means that organizations should be more forthright in showing what values they have to offer to applicants, including achievement, fairness, and concern for others.

By matching the values profile of an applicant with the profile of an organization, one can predict the employee's satisfaction and perhaps even determine the applicant's intent to stay with the organization. Satisfaction levels are higher when there is

alignment throughout the first year of employment, with that satisfaction increasing as time of employment goes on (Chatman, 1991). These findings show that organizations should be more strategic about selecting individuals with values that are similar to those of the organization. This will ensure the employees are more likely to be satisfied and remain with the organization, which will in turn save the organization the financial burden of hiring and training their replacement.

Study Limitations

A common issue that has occurred in previous research is a lack of an adequate sample size. A small sample size can be sensitive to outliers, preventing the confirmation of the role of PO fit in regards to organizational attraction and job choice decisions. Judge and Cable (1997) theorize that their research also failed to produce significant results due to a small sample size and the fact that the sample only included applicants who pursued and received jobs, excluding those that were not offered a company position. A larger sample size could have provided more confidence in the findings of this study.

A second issue that commonly occurs in this line of research is a lack of generalizability due to limited diversity of participant characteristics. Several of the previously related studies only assessed the variables for applicants of a singular company (Carless, 2005), a specific industry (Chatman, 1991), or a specific department (Judge & Bretz, 1992). Utilizing participants that are in a specific course at a university may also lead to limited use of the results (Dineen et al., 2002; Edwards & Cable, 2009). This research study incorporated individuals from a variety of university departments. Almost 50% of participants in this study were part of the College of Behavioral and

Health Science, most of which were psychology majors. An increased variety of participant areas of study could enrich the results and allow for the results to be more confidently applied to individuals in all areas of study.

The final potential limitation of the current study involves the information given to participants about the hypothetical organizations. Although some researchers think that using fabricated organizations may be a limitation, others believe that it can be acceptable if developed properly and thoroughly (Billsberry, 2007; Dineen et al., 2002; Edwards & Cable, 2009; Judge & Bretz, 1992). The use of fake organizations can control for previous attitudes or assumptions of popular organizations. This can also help control for variables that may differ between the utilized organizations, such as size, location, culture, diversity, etc.

Several researchers have stated that the descriptions of the organizations were likely too brief for participants to be able to fully understand the overall representation of the nature of the organization. Given the short descriptions given to participants in this study, there is a possibility that participants were unable to determine where the organization stands on some of the values they were asked. The inclusion of only a few particular values and the lack of information related to the size, location, and job salary could be a limitation to this study. Descriptions may also positively skew the perception of an organization, rather than presenting the information in a neutral tone (Billsberry, 2007; Dineen et al., 2002; Edwards & Cable, 2009), which is also a potential limitation for this particular study.

Future Research

Future research should incorporate the use of actual applicants for a specific, existing organization. By tracking these applicants throughout the process and assessing whether they accepted the position or not, more reliable conclusions can be made as to whether or not value congruence played a role in the overall job process. Additionally, the participants that either decline the job offer or do not stay long with the organization can be asked whether or not value congruence was a factor in either of these events.

The use of actual organizations will decrease the limitation information about the organization, so that applicants can better determine the various values of the organization in its entirety. Researchers can encourage participants to ask the organization for more details regarding its values, if necessary. Additionally, subject matter experts (SMEs) at the organization can rate the values of the organization, making the reported organization values more reliable and realistic. This will reduce the potential issue of large difference between the reported values of the organization and the actual values of the organization.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender			
N=170	Male	46	27.1
	Female	121	71.2
	Transgender Male	1	0.6
	Other	2	1.2
Race			
N=169	Arabic/Middle-Eastern	3	1.8
	Asian	9	5.3
	Black or African American	16	9.5
	Caucasian/White	133	78.7
	Two or more races	6	3.6
	Other	2	1.2
Age			
N=170	20-24	86	50.6
	25-30	62	36.3
	31-40	11	6.6
	40+	11	6.6
Current Academic Standing			
N=170	Junior	25	14.7
	Senior	52	30.6
	5th Year Senior	18	10.6
	Graduate Student	73	42.9
	Other	2	1.2
College of Study			
N=162	Basic & Applied Sciences	32	19.7
	Behavioral & Health Sciences	77	47.5
	Business	5	3.1
	Education	18	11.1
	Liberal Arts	21	13
	Media & Entertainment	4	2.5
	University College	5	3.1

APPENDIX B

Revised Organization Culture Profile

Part A Directions: Please sort the value statements into one of five categories based on how well you think it describes [*Service First/Innovation Unlimited*]. Below you will find a list of 28 value statements. Each of these statements can be used to describe an organization. The top box is for the three items that you believe best [*Service First/Innovation Unlimited*] and the bottom (fifth) box is for the three items that you feel are not descriptive of [*Service First/Innovation Unlimited*] at all. Each box has a statement at the top that tells you how many items you are allowed to put into the box.

Note: It will be easier if you start by sorting the five items that describe Innovation Unlimited the most, putting them into the top box, and the five items that describe Innovation Unlimited the least, putting them in the last box.

Example: If you believe Innovation Unlimited appears to be very honest, you would place "Being honest" in the top box. If you feel that the company is not at all people oriented, you would place "Being people oriented" in the last (fifth) box at the bottom of the page. There are some items that may be unclear of whether they describe Innovation Unlimited or not based on the brief description you were provided. Use your best judgment to place these items in the middle boxes. For example, if you are unsure of how innovative Innovation Unlimited is but it sounds somewhat like them, then you would put "Being innovative" in one of the middle boxes.

Part B Directions: Please sort the value statements into one of five categories based on how well you think it *describes you*.

Below you will find a list of 28 value statements. Each of these statements can be used to

describe you. The top box is for the three items that describe you the best and the bottom (fifth) box is for the three items that describe you the worst/least. Each box has a statement at the top that tells you how many items you are allowed to put into the box.

Note: Read over the list of all items in the left hand column before sorting them into the boxes on the right hand column. It will be easier if you start by sorting the three items that describe you the best, putting them into the top box, and the three items that describe you the least, putting them in the last (fifth) box.

Example: If you are someone who is very honest, you would place "Being honest" in the top box. If you are definitely not an aggressive person, put "Being aggressive" in the last box. If you are sometimes careful, then perhaps you would put "Being careful" in one of the middle boxes, because it is not something that you feel as strongly about.

Achievement orientation	Having a clear guiding philosophy
An emphasis on quality	Having a good reputation
Being calm	Having high expectations for performance
Being competitive	
Being distinctive – being different from others	High pay for good performance
	Low conflict
Being highly organized	Opportunities for professional growth
Being innovative	Praise for good performance
Being people oriented	Quick to take advantage of opportunities
Being reflective	Risk taking
Being results oriented	Security of employment
Being socially responsible	Sharing information freely
Being team oriented	Stability
Collaboration	Taking individual responsibility
Enthusiasm for the job	Predictability
Fairness	

APPENDIX C

Work Values Survey

Directions Part C: Rank each of the items below based on how important you think they are to [*Innovation Unlimited/Service First*]. Rank the items between 1 (*not important to the organization at all*) and 7 (*extremely important to the organization*).

Directions Part D: Rank each of the items below based on how important they are to you between 1 (*not important to you at all*) and 7 (*extremely important to you*).

1. Making the world a better place

2. Being of service to society

3. Contributing to humanity

4. Forming relationships with coworkers

5. Getting to know your fellow workers

6. Developing close ties with coworkers

7. Salary level

8. Total compensation

9. The amount of pay

10. Gaining respect

11. Obtaining status

12. Being looked up to by others

13. Being certain of keeping my job

14. Being sure I will always have a job

15. Being certain my job will last

16. Distinct reporting relationships

17. A clear chain of command

18. Definite lines of authority

19. Doing a variety of things

20. Doing something different every day

21. Doing many different things on the job

22. Doing my work in my way

23. Determining the way my work is done

24. Making my own decisions

Part E Directions: Arrange the following categories based on how important they are to [*Innovation Unlimited/Service First*], so that it goes from *most important* to the organization at the top to *least important* to the organization at the bottom.

Part E Directions: Arrange the following categories based on how important they are to you, so that it goes from *most important* to you at the top to *least important* to you at the bottom.

A. Altruism

B. Relationships with others

C. Pay

D. Prestige

E. Security

F. Authority

G. Variety

H. Autonomy

APPENDIX D

Applicant Attraction Survey

Part F Directions: Please rate the following items according to how interested you

would be in working for [*Innovation Unlimited/Service First]*. Rate the items

between 1 (completely disagree) and 7 (completely agree).

1. I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this company

2. I am interested in pursuing an application with the company

3. I would like to work for the company

4. I would accept a job offer from this company

5. I would only work for the company as a last resort

APPENDIX E

Perceived Person-Organization Fit

Part G Directions: Please rate the following items according to how well you believe you would be a good fit at [*Innovation Unlimited/Service First*]. Rate the items on how much you agree with them between 1 (*not at all*) and 5 (*completely*).

1. To what degree do you feel your values 'match' or fit this organization and the current employees in this organization?

     A. Not at all

     B. Not very much

     C. Neutral

     D. Somewhat

     E. Completely

2. Do you think the values and "personality" of this organization reflect your own values and personality?

     A. Not at all

     B. Not very much

     C. Neutral

     D. Somewhat

     E. Completely

3. My values match those of the current employees in this organization.

     A. Not at all

     B. Not very much

     C. Neutral

D. Somewhat

E. Completely

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent

Middle Tennessee State University

Project Title: The Influence of Person-Organization Fit on Applicant's Level of
Attraction Towards an Organization

Purpose of Project: This study will attempt to learn more about the relationship between
the values of an organization and how they influence whether or not a person is interested
in working for that organization.

Procedures: The purpose of this study is to determine if a similarity in values between a
job applicant and an organization influences whether or not the applicant would be
interested in working for said organization. You will be presented with a description of a
hypothetical organization, followed by questions about your perceived values of the
organization. You will then answer the same questions about your own personal values.

Risk/Benefits: No risk or discomfort is anticipated from this study. The majority of this
study involves the evaluation of hypothetical organizations and the provision of general
opinions or preferences. The information gathered from this study will provide valuable
guidance to organizations related to the information used to recruit and hire future
employees.

Confidentiality: Students participating in the study for extra credit will have the option
to enter their Student ID Number (M#). This number will only be shared with the
professor of your course. No other information will be given to your professor. Once
this number has been given to your professor, it will be deleted from all existing data
files. No other identifying information will be collected.

Principal Investigator/Contact Information: Denielle Meyerink |

dm4y@mtmail.mtsu.edu

Participating in this project is voluntary, and refusal to participate or withdrawing from participation at anytime during the project will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised, for example, your information may be shared with the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board. In the event of questions or difficulties of any kind during or following participation, you may contact the Principal Investigator as indicated above. For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact the MTSU Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

Consent

I have read the above information and my questions have been answered satisfactorily by project staff. I believe I understand the purpose, benefits, and risks of the study and give my informed and free consent to be a participant. By clicking the "*I Agree*" button below, I am agreeing to the statement above.

APPENDIX G

Survey Introduction

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The following information is provided to inform you about the research project and your participation in it. This survey should take no longer than 60 minutes and participation is strictly voluntary.
NOTE: This survey will not function properly if it is being taken on a smart phone or tablet. It is highly recommended that you take the survey on a desktop computer or average-sized laptop.

The purpose of this study is to determine if a similarity in values between a job applicant and an organization influences whether or not the applicant would be interested in working for said organization. You will be presented with a description of a hypothetical organization, followed by questions about your perceived values of the organization. You will then answer the same questions about your own personal values.

For this research study, values are defined as what an individual seeks in order to attain their desires and needs. These values are often quite stable and broad. An example of a value would be altruism, which is the practice of showing concern for the welfare of others. Individuals who care deeply about how others are doing, or appreciate that the organization cares about the welfare of others, typically have a high regard for the value of altruism.

Values are very important and can have a major influence on your life. Not only do values influence your preferences, but they also help you make decisions based on what you believe to be ethically right or wrong. In an organization, values can help you evaluate whether your needs and desires are being met, which can in-turn affect your satisfaction with your job or the organization you work for. Please keep this in mind throughout the survey and take your time, putting thought and consideration into your answers.

If you should have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact Denielle Meyerink at dm4y@mtmail.mtsu.edu, Dr. Judith Van Hein at Judith.VanHein@mtsu.edu, or the MTSU Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

APPENDIX H

Hypothetical Organization Descriptions

Organization: *Innovation Unlimited*

"You found the advertisement for a position with *Innovation Unlimited* through an online

job search engine site. This is a medium sized company with 500 employees. You

interviewed with a representative from the Human Resources department who was very

informative. Two weeks after the interview, you received an invitation to visit the

worksite. The site visit allowed you to discover that the organization is a highly

collaborative environment, encouraging employees to work with other team members to

produce high-quality results. Additionally, the organization encourages its team

members to be creative and find ways to adapt quickly to the changes and challenges of

the workplace. Promotion decisions are based on overall group, department, and team

performance."

Organization: *Service First*

"You found the advertisement for a position with *Service First* through an online job

search engine site. This is a medium sized company with 500 employees. You

interviewed with a representative from the Human Resources department who was very

informative. Two weeks after the interview, you received an invitation to visit the

worksite. The site visit allowed you to discover that the organization makes the customer

the main focus of their work. They encourage all employees to do what it takes to make

the customer satisfied, as long as they maintain their integrity and follow the rules of the

organization. Tasks are often very structured and follow the procedures established for

their particular department. Work is often done on an individual basis, and promotional

and pay increase decisions are made based on individual performance. Job hiring

decisions are made by top-level management, followed by the final background check

approval, which is done by the Human Resources Department."

APPENDIX I

Quality Assurance Questions

For Organization A (Innovation Unlimited)

1. What is the name of the organization you just read about?

    a. Quality First

    b. Innovation Unlimited

    c. Collaboration United

2. Approximately how many employees does the organization have?

    a. 50

    b. 500

    c. 1,000

    d. 25,000

For Organization B (Service First)

3. What is the name of the organization you just read about?

    a. Customer Service Plus

    b. Quality Serivce

    c. **Service First**

4. Approximately how many employees does the organization have?

    a. 50

    b. 500

    c. 1,000

    d. 25,000

APPENDIX J

Demographics Questions and Survey Conclusion

1. Please indicate which gender you identify most with:

    a. Male

    b. Female

    c. Transgender

2. Please state your birth year: _____

3. Please indicate the ethnicity you identify most with:

    a. African American

    b. American Indian/Alaskan Native

    c. Arab/Middle Eastern

    d. Asian/Asian American

    e. Caucasian/White

    f. Hispanic

    g. Other: _____

4. What is your current undergraduate academic standing?

    a. Junior

    b. Senior

    c. 5th Year Senior

    d. Graduate student

    e. Other: _____

5. What is/are your current major(s):

6. What is your current job search process for post-graduation:

a. I have not applied yet

b. I have applied but not begun interviewing for a full-time positions

c. I have applied and begun interviewing for a full-time position

d. I have been offered a full-time position but not accepted yet

e. I have accepted a full-time position already

f. I am already working full-time

g. I am already working part-time

h. Other: _____

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your responses have been recorded. If you should have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact Denielle Meyerink at dm4y@mtmail.mtsu.edu, Dr. Judith Van Hein at Judith.VanHein@mtsu.edu, or the MTSU Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

APPENDIX K

IRB Approval Form

IRB
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

MIDDLE TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY

EXEMPT APPROVAL NOTICE

9/15/2015

Investigator(s): Denielle Jo Meyerink
Department: Psychology
Investigator(s) Email: Dm4y@mtmail.mtsu.edu
Protocol Title: "The Influence of Person-Organization Fit on Applicant's Level of Attraction
Towards an Organization "
Protocol ID: 16-1042

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research
proposal identified above and this study has been designated to be EXEMPT.. The exemption is
pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b) **(2) Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations**

The following changes to this protocol must be reported prior to implementation:
- Addition of new subject population or exclusion of currently approved demographics
- Addition/removal of investigators
- Addition of new procedures
- Other changes that may make this study to be no longer be considered exempt

The following changes do not have to be reported:
- Editorial/administrative revisions to the consent of other study documents
- Changes to the number of subjects from the original proposal

All research materials must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for
at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the
data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify,
change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves
the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

NOTE: All necessary forms can be obtained from www.mtsu.edu/irb.

IRBN005   Version 1.0   Revision Date 06.03.2015