

PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT AND PERSON-JOB FIT IN EMPLOYEE SELECTION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Abstract

This manuscript reviews the recent advancement of the research on person-organization (P-O) fit and person-job (P-J) fit, the two most extensively studied fit constructs in the employee selection context. First, various conceptualizations of person-environment (P-E) fit, which is an overarching concept of P-O fit and P-J fit, are reviewed. Then, research on P-O fit and P-J fit is reviewed with greater emphasis on the employee selection context. Finally, some unexplored topics in this field are discussed and suggestions for future research are offered.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of person-environment (P-E) fit, which is defined as the degree of congruence or match between a person and environment, has long been prevalent in the management literature (e.g., Holland, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Pervin, 1968; Schneider, 1987). Among the various types of P-E fit, researchers have most extensively studied person-organization (P-O) fit and person-job (P-J) fit. P-O fit refers to the compatibility between a person and the organization, emphasizing the extent to which a person and the organization share similar characteristics and/or meet each other's needs (Kristof, 1996). P-J fit refers to the match between the abilities of a person and the demands of a job or the desires of a person and the attributes of a job (Edwards, 1991). This manuscript reviews the recent advancement of the research on P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection because these two types of fit are considered to be the most influential in the employee selection process.

The organization of this manuscript is as follows. First, the literature on P-E fit, which is an overarching concept of various types of fit, is reviewed to understand the complex and multidimensional nature of P-E fit concept. Second, conceptualizations and empirical findings on P-O fit and P-J fit are reviewed. Third, research on P-O fit and P-J fit that is specific to the employee selection context is reviewed in detail. Finally, some underdeveloped research areas are discussed and suggestions for future research are offered.

THE CONCEPT OF P-E FIT

There has been a long debate about the relative importance of the person versus the

situation in determining human behavior. One group of researchers have argued that it is the situation which is primarily responsible for individual behaviors (Mischel, 1968; Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989), while another group of researchers believe that the personal characteristics are primarily responsible for behavior (Epstein, 1979; House, Shane, & Herold, 1996).

The concept of person-environment (P-E) fit is grounded in the interactionist theory of behavior (Chatman, 1989, Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). The interactionist perspective has a fairly long theoretical tradition, beginning with Lewin's (1951) proposition that behavior is a function of the person and the environment. This view asserts that neither personal characteristics nor the situation alone adequately explain the variance in behavioral and attitudinal variables. Instead, the interaction of personal and situational variables accounts for the greatest variance. P-E fit is defined as the degree of congruence or match between personal and situational variables in producing significant selected outcomes (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987).

Conceptualizations of P-E fit

Researchers traditionally have conceptualized P-E fit as a complex and multidimensional concept. As a result, several different dimensions to conceptualize P-E fit have evolved. The first dimension is the supplementary versus complementary distinction. Supplementary fit occurs when a person supplements, embellishes, or possesses characteristics which are similar to other individuals in an environment. People perceive themselves as fitting in because they are alike or similar to other people possessing these characteristics. Therefore, it is essentially a model of person-person fit (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). Complementary fit occurs when a person's characteristics make whole the environment or add to it what is missing. With complementary P-E fit, the basis for a good fit is the mutually offsetting pattern of relevant characteristics between the person and the environment (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). An essential difference between the supplementary and complementary model is in the definition of environment. The environment in the supplementary model is described according to the people who inhabit it. In the complementary model, the environment is defined apart from its inhabitants. Instead, it is described according to its demands and requirements.

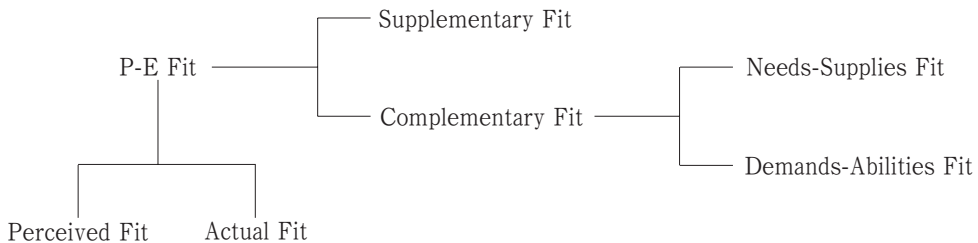
The second dimension is the needs-supplies versus demands-abilities distinction. An environment supplies financial, physical, and psychological resources as well as task-related, interpersonal, and growth opportunities that are demanded by individuals. When such resources from the environment meet an individual's needs, needs-supplies fit is achieved. On the other hand, an environment may demand contributions from individuals in terms of time, effort, commitment, knowledge, skills, and abilities. Demands-abilities fit is achieved when the individuals' contribution (supply) meets environmental demands. In short, needs-supplies fit occurs when an environment satisfies individuals' needs, desires, or preferences. Demands-abilities fit occurs when an individual has the abilities required

to meet environmental demands (Kristof, 1996). The distinction between needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit extends the conceptualization of complementary fit (Kristof, 1996). That is, the definition of complementary fit includes the needs-supplies relationship and the demands-abilities relationship.

The third dimension is the perceived (subjective) versus actual (objective) distinction. Perceived or subjective fit is conceptualized as the judgment that a person fits well in the environment. On the other hand, actual or objective fit is the comparison between separately rated individual and environmental characteristics (Cable & Judge, 1996; Kristof, 1996). Perceived fit is typically measured by explicitly asking people to what degree they believe a fit exists. Using this conceptualization, good fit is said to exist as long as it is perceived to exist, regardless of whether or not the person has similar characteristics to, complements, or is complemented by the environment. Actual fit is measured by comparing characteristics at two levels, namely the individual and environment. Edwards (1991) described several ways that actual fit can be measured. Two of them have been used frequently. The first is the calculation of a product term that reflects the moderating effects of one of the entities (person or environment) on the relationship between the other entity and an outcome variable. The second is the reduction of person and environmental measures into a single index reflecting the degree of similarity between them. Polynomial regression is also recommended as the alternative procedure to assess actual fit (Edwards, 1993, 1994).

In summary, P-E fit is a complex and multidimensional concept. First, P-E fit can be conceptualized as complementary and supplementary. Second, complementary P-E fit subsumes needs-supplies and demands-abilities perspectives. Third, P-E fit can be conceptualized as perceived fit and actual fit. Figure 1 summarizes the relationship among these different conceptualizations of P-E fit.

Figure 1: Relationship among different conceptualizations of P-E fit



Different types of P-E fit

The concept of P-E fit has been conceptualized as an overarching construct that subsumes several other types of fit. Although P-O fit and P-J fit are the focus of this literature

review, other types of fit have also been conceptualized. These fit concepts include person-person (P-P) fit (Van Vianen, 2000), person-group (P-G) fit (Werbel & Johnson, 2001) and person-occupation or person-vocation (P-V) fit (Holland, 1997). In the following sections, research on P-O fit and P-J fit is reviewed in detail.

PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT

Person-organization fit is broadly defined as the compatibility between people and organizations (Kristof, 1996). In employee selection research, P-O fit can be conceptualized as the match between an applicant and broader organizational attributes (Judge & Ferris, 1992; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). Researchers and practitioners contend that P-O fit is the key to maintaining the flexible and committed workforce that is necessary in a competitive business environment and a tight labor market (Bowen, Ledford & Nathan, 1991; Kristof, 1996).

The roots of P-O fit research can be traced back to Schneider's (1987) Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework. Schneider argues that individuals are not randomly assigned to situations, but rather seek out situations that are attractive to them. Ultimately, individuals will be selected to be a part of that situation, and by remaining in that situation, help to determine the situation. Schneider applies this ASA framework to the functioning of organizations. He argues that organizations are one situation that people are attracted to, selected to be a part of, and remain with if they are a good fit with the organization, or leave if they are not a good fit with the organization.

Operationalizations of P-O fit

While researchers agree on the importance of P-O fit, there is an ongoing debate in the literature regarding the operationalizations of this construct. Kristof's (1996) extensive review of P-O fit literature identified four different operationalizations of P-O fit. The first operationalization of P-O fit centers upon measuring similarity between fundamental characteristics of people and organizations. The most frequently used measure in this conceptualization is the congruence between individual and organizational values (Boxx, Odom, & Dunn, 1991; Chatman, 1989, 1991; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Posner, 1992). The second operationalization of P-O fit is goal congruence with organizational leaders or peers (Vancouver, Millsap, & Peters, 1994; Vancouver & Schmit, 1991). The third operationalization of P-O fit is the match between individual preferences or needs and organizational systems and structures (Bretz, Ash, & Dreher, 1989; Cable & Judge, 1994; Turban & Keon, 1993). This operationalization reflects the needs-supplies fit perspective, while the first two operationalizations primarily concern with the supplementary fit perspective. The fourth operationalization of P-O fit is the match between the characteristics of individual personality and organizational climate—sometimes labeled organizational personality (Bowen et al., 1991; Burke & Deszca, 1982; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1984; Tom, 1971). Because organizational climate is frequently operationalized in terms of organizational sup-

plies (such as reward systems or communication patterns), this operationalization is thought to include both supplementary and needs-supplies fit perspectives.

Antecedents and outcomes of P-O fit

Schneider's ASA framework proposes that people and organizations are attracted to one another based on their similarity. This influences the applicant job choice behavior and organizations hiring decisions. Thus, both applicant job choice behavior and organizations' hiring practices are the major antecedents of P-O fit. Empirical evidence supports this argument (e.g., Adkins, Russell, & Werbel, 1994; Cable & Judge, 1994, 1996, 1997; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990; Tom, 1971). Following organization entry, individual and organizational socialization practices contribute to P-O fit. Empirical studies demonstrated that socialization helps establish P-O fit between newcomers and organizations (Chatman, 1991; Cable & Parsons, 2001).

Empirical evidence has shown that a high level of P-O fit is related to a number of positive outcomes. P-O fit was found to be correlated with work attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Boxx et al., 1991; Bretz & Judge, 1994; Chatman, 1991; Downey, Hellriegel, & Slocum, 1975; O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991; Postner, Kouzes & Schmidt, 1985; Tziner, 1987; Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991). P-O fit also was found to predict intention of quit and turnover (Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Vancouver et al., 1994), and was related to prosocial behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), self-reported teamwork (Posner, 1992), and contextual performance (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999). P-O fit was correlated to self-report work performance (Tziner, 1987) and objective measures of work performance (Downey et al., 1975; Bretz & Judge, 1994). Although a high level of P-O fit also may have positive organizational level outcomes, some researchers have pointed out that there may be negative organizational outcomes of the high level of P-O fit (Argyris, 1957; Powell, 1998; Schneider, 1987; Walsh, 1987)

PERSON-JOB FIT

The concept of person-job fit is the traditional foundation for employee selection (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999). The primary concern in employee selection has been with finding those applicants who have the skills and abilities necessary to do the job. Traditionally, P-J fit is assessed by determining the demand of the job through a job analysis, which identifies the essential job tasks that an incumbent performs, and the requisite skills, knowledge, and abilities to perform the job tasks. From its simple inception evolving out of scientific management (Taylor, 1911), the process of determining P-J fit increasingly gained sophistication with identification of both statistically reliable and valid processes that can be used to determine P-J fit. Assessment of P-J fit also achieved legal support with the development of Uniform Guidelines (1978) on employee selection procedure (Werbel & Gulliland, 1999).

Operationalizations of P-J fit

The common operationalizations of P-J fit include needs-supplies perspective and demands-abilities perspective (Edwards, 1991). Thus, P-J fit can be defined as the fit between the abilities of a person and the demands of a job or the desires of a person and the attributes of a job. As discussed earlier, needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit are the extended conceptualization of complementary fit. Supplementary fit perspective may not apply to P-J fit because the environment in the supplementary model is described according to the people, not the job. The components of needs-supplies perspective include the desires of the individuals and the characteristics and attributes of the job that may satisfy those desires. Individuals' desires include goals (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981), psychological needs (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), interests (Campbell & Hansen, 1981), and values (Locke, 1976). Job supplies have been described as general characteristics of occupation (Holland, 1985), pay (Lawler, 1981), and other job attributes. The demands-abilities perspective consists of the job demands that are required in order to carry out the tasks of the job and the abilities that the individual has that can be used to meet the job requirement. Job demands typically consist of the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required to perform at the acceptable level in the job (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990; Wilk & Sackett, 1996). Abilities include education, experience, and employee aptitudes or knowledge, skills, and abilities (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; French, Caplan, & Harrison, 1982). In employee selection practices, the strategies to assess P-J fit include resumes, tests, interviews, reference checks, and a variety of other selection tools (Werbel & Gulliland, 1999).

Antecedents and outcomes of P-J fit

Similar to the discussion of P-O fit, applicant self-selection and employee selection practices are the major antecedents of P-J fit. Especially, employee selection processes of most organizations have traditionally focused on achieving P-J fit (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999). Following organization entry, job design strategy (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) may be another contributor to establish P-J fit (Brousseau, 1984).

There is considerable evidence that a high level of P-J fit has a number of positive outcomes. The review of the P-J fit literature by Edwards (1991) identified job satisfaction, low job stress, motivation, performance, attendance, and retention as outcomes that are positively affected by P-J fit. When P-J fit is assessed as the match between what an employee wants and receives from performing job, it is correlated with improved job satisfaction, adjustment, and organizational commitment, as well as reduced intentions to quit. Additional benefits for task performance have been demonstrated when the definition of P-J fit is expanded to include the match between abilities and their job demands (Edwards, 1991). Researchers demonstrated that validated and structured procedures for determining P-J fit have led to more effective selection of employees in comparison to unstructured techniques (Buckley & Russell, 1997; McDaniel, 1994).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN P-O FIT AND P-J FIT

Conceptually, P-O fit and P-J fit are distinct constructs. There also is empirical evidence that supports the discriminant validity of these two types of fit. For example, researchers have reported low correlations between actual P-O fit and P-J fit (O'Reilly et al., 1991; Higgins, 2000) and perceived P-O fit and P-J fit (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). Research using confirmatory factor analysis has also shown that job applicants and recruiters are able to distinguish between P-O fit and P-J fit (Kristof-Brown, 2000; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Furthermore, Kristof-Brown (2000) found that recruiters' perceived P-O fit and P-J fit differed in terms of their antecedents, and both offered unique prediction of recruiters' hiring recommendations.

Some researchers have examined the simultaneous impact of different types of fit including P-O fit and P-J fit on various outcomes. O'Reilly et al. (1991) found that P-O fit and P-J fit had independent effects on job satisfaction, commitment, and intentions to quit for accountants. Lauver & Kristof-Brown (2001) found that employees' perceived P-O fit was a better predictor of intention to quit and contextual performance than perceived P-J fit. Saks and Ashforth (1997) found that P-O fit and P-J fit differently affected new hires' outcomes including job satisfaction, stress, and turnover. Kristof-Brown, Jansen, and Golbert (2001) investigated how individuals integrate their perceptions of fit with organizations (P-O fit), groups (P-G fit), and jobs (P-J fit) when forming work attitudes. They found that each type of fit had a unique impact on job satisfaction and intention to quit. P-J fit had the greatest impact on work attitudes, followed by P-O fit and P-G fit. They also found that two-way and three-way interactions of P-O fit, P-J fit, and P-G fit explained additional variance in work attitudes, suggesting that individuals combined their perceptions of various types of fit using more complicated processes than simple linear integration. Cable and DeRue (2002) included perceptions of supplementary P-O fit, needs-supplies fit, and demands-abilities fit to examine the effect of each type of fit, and found that P-O fit perceptions were related to organizational-focused outcomes, whereas needs-supplies fit perceptions were related to job- and career-focused outcomes.

P-O FIT AND P-J FIT IN EMPLOYEE SELECTION

Research on employee selection can be divided into two different approaches: a prescriptive approach and a descriptive approach. The prescriptive approach is aimed at establishing arguments about what managers should do in order to select the right job candidate. Therefore, the prescriptive approach focuses primarily on criterion-related validity of the focal concept (e.g., applicant fit) as the predictor domain. On the other hand, the descriptive approach is used when researchers are interested in what managers actually do in employee selection practices. Therefore, the descriptive approach focuses on how the focal concept (e.g., applicant fit) plays out in actual selection processes. Both the prescriptive and descriptive approaches are important for employee selection research. If

the findings from the prescriptive approach and the descriptive approach diverge, it can be interpreted in many ways. One interpretation is that researchers who empirically established criterion-related validity of the predictors have not communicated their research findings successfully to practitioners. Another interpretation is that there are still unexplored research topics or boundary conditions that affect the relationship between the predictors and outcomes such as individual and organizational effectiveness. In the following, both prescriptive and descriptive approaches for P-O fit and P-J fit in selection are reviewed.

Prescriptive approach on fit in selection

Employee selection processes, especially in American organizations, have traditionally focused on achieving P-J fit. However, both practitioners (Montgomery, 1996) and academicians (Behling, 1998, Borman & Motiwidlo, 1993, Kristof, 1996) have suggested that P-J fit is becoming less important than other types of fit. The challenges to the extensive use of P-J fit for hiring decisions are from two perspectives: expanded criterion domain and expanded predictor domain (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999). Borman and Motwidlo (1993) have called for an expanded criterion domain. They suggest that selection practices should be based on factors associated with organizational effectiveness. From this perspective, they argue that performance should embrace the domain of behaviors broadly including more than just task activities. They also argue that task performance and contextual performance should be distinguished. Researchers identified several similar concepts of contextual performance such as organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988), prosocial behavior (Brief & Motwidlo, 1986), and extra-role behavior (Van Dine, Cummings, & Parks, 1995). According to this perspective, hiring decisions need to go beyond the P-J fit approach if the expanded criterion domain is considered.

The arguments for an expanded predictor domain beyond P-J fit are threefold. First, employers need to consider that employees will hold multiple jobs over the course of their employment with a company (e.g., U. S. Department of Labor, 1991, 1992). This leads to the universalist perspective that focuses on key characteristics such as general cognitive ability (*g*) in selecting job applicant rather than specific P-J fit (Behling, 1998; Ree & Earles, 1992; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Second, researchers who advocate the P-O fit perspective argue that managers should select job applicants who share the values and visions of the organization (Bowen et al., 1991). Third, researchers argue that P-J fit based on job analysis is based on the outdated ideas about jobs themselves (Carson & Stewart, 1996). This argument acknowledges the changing nature of work (Bridges, 1994a, 1994b) and suggests that an expanded predictor domain including teamwork and flexibility is needed in employee selection.

In light of the limitation of the exclusive use of P-J fit, the use of P-O fit is one of the alternative selection approaches that many practitioners and researchers recommend. Bowen et al. (1991) suggest that the organization should define organizational culture and

values for the assessment of P-O fit. Using a Q-sort technique was identified as a valuable P-O fit assessment tool (Chatman, 1989). As reviewed in the previous section, high levels of P-O fit and P-J fit lead to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. Therefore, the prescriptive approach in employee selection research suggests that both of P-O fit and P-J fit are critical factors that should be included in employee selection practices.

Descriptive approach on fit in selection

Despite the extensive focus on P-J fit in traditional selection research, researchers argue that elements of P-O fit have been already included in employee selection practices (Chatman, 1989; Ferris & Judge, 1991; Judge & Ferris, 1992). That is, managers make P-O fit evaluations or holistic judgments about applicant's fit with their organizations in actual selection processes (Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). Many researchers who advocate this view refer to employment interviews to show that P-O fit plays a crucial role in selection processes. Other researchers have created controlled research settings (e.g., using hypothetical applicants) to examine the role that fit plays in hiring decision-making.

One selection device that may be critical in assessing applicant fit is the employment interview (Chatman, 1991; Judge & Ferris, 1992). Researchers suggest that managers are reluctant to abandon the interview despite its questionable reliability and validity (e.g., Harris, 1989). This is because the employment interview may be the most effective way of selecting applicants who appear to fit well with the organization (Chatman, 1989; Ferris & Judge, 1991; Judge & Ferris, 1992).

Interviewers may assess both applicant P-O and P-J fit during employment interviews. Researchers found that recruiters' perceptions of P-O fit were distinct from perceptions of general employability (Rynes & Gerhart, 1990; Adkins et al., 1994). Rynes and Gerhart (1990) found that interviewers evaluated P-O fit according to their organization's attributes, not just their personal preferences. Cable and Judge (1997) found that interviewers could assess applicant-organization values congruence with significant accuracy and that interviewers compare their perceptions of applicants' values with their organizations' values to assess P-O fit. Bretz et al. (1993) reported that interviewers most often mentioned job-related courses, experiences, and general applicant characteristics when responding to open-ended questions about their subjective fit evaluations, suggesting that interviewers also assess applicant P-J fit in employment interviews.

Although the majority of descriptive studies on fit in employee selection were conducted as field studies, some researchers have used other approaches. For example, Kristof-Brown (2000) used repertory grid methodology to examine whether recruiters can differentiate P-O and P-J fit in assessing job applicants. Repertory grid methodology (Kelly, 1955) involves asking recruiters to compare standard sets of applicants to describe the characteristics that distinguished those with good P-O fit and P-J fit from others. Results indicate that applicants' KSAs are relied on more frequently to assess P-J fit, and appli-

cants' values and personality traits are relied on more frequently to assess P-O fit.

Research to date including Kristof-Brown's repertory grid methodology assumes that the employment interview is the single most important situation in which the concept of fit plays the major role. However, the role of P-O fit and P-J fit in hiring decisions may not be limited to employment interviews. Although there is a dearth of researches, findings from other studies support the idea that managers can assess P-O and P-J fit in other selection practices. For example, Brown and Campion (1994) examined how recruiters perceive and use the biographical information in resume screening. They found that recruiters utilize biodata as presented in resumes to determine both abilities such as language and math, and other attributes such as interpersonal skills, leadership, and motivation. They also found that recruiters rated resumes more attractive to the degree that biodata in the resumes reflected attributes required by the jobs. These findings indicate that recruiters assess P-J fit in resume screening. Recruiters may also assess P-O fit if resumes include the information such as personal goals, values, personality characteristics, and personal interests.

Researchers have found that interviewers' perception of applicant P-O fit predicted invitations to subsequent interviews (Adkins et al., 1994) as well as hiring recommendations (Cable & Judge, 1997). Cable and Judge (1997) also found that interviewers' hiring recommendations directly affected organizations' hiring decisions. Similarly, recruiters' perception of P-J fit was found to be the predictor of hiring recommendations. For example, Kinnicki, Lockwood, Hom, and Griffeth (1990) found that the subjective evaluation of P-J fit was strongly related to hiring recommendations.

The descriptive research that includes both P-O fit and P-J fit in the context of employee selection is sparse. One of the few studies that included both P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection is Kristof-Brown's (2000) research. She found that recruiters' perception of applicant P-O fit and P-J fit were highly correlated with hiring recommendations, with the correlation of P-J fit slightly higher than that of P-O fit. She also found that each of the P-O fit and P-J fit perceptions explained unique variance in recruiters' hiring recommendations. Still, P-J fit explained more variance than P-O fit in their hiring recommendations. In general, employee selection can be characterized as a multi-step process (Huber, Neale, & Northcraft, 1987). Because Kristof-Brown's study used screening interviews as the research setting, it is suggested that P-J fit might play the major role in order to eliminate applicants who do not meet the minimum job requirements. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize Kristof-Brown's (2000) research results across different stages of the selection process.

Research on human decision-making provides some insights regarding the relative importance of fit in multiple stages of the selection process. Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) suggests that people attempt to avoid losses during early stages of decision making and that people attempt to assure a win in later stages of decision-making. Image theory (e.g., Beach, 1990; Beach & Mitchell, 1987) suggests that during early

stages of decision-making, people use the compatibility test, in which applicants are evaluated to determine if they meet minimal job qualifications. Once subsets of applicants pass the screening step, image theory suggests that a profitability test occurs in which the applicant who best meets the organization's demands is determined. These theories suggest that employee selection processes can be separated into two major stages: the screening stage and the choice stage.

Based on the theories above, some researchers suggest that P-O fit plays a larger role at later stages of the selection process (i.e., the choice stage), than earlier stages (i.e., screening stage) (Bretz et al., 1993; Kristof-Brown, 2000; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). While this argument appears to be reasonable, there is a lack of empirical evidence. In fact, researchers have found that minimal job qualifications are the major determinants of initial screening process. However, we know little about the later stage of selection processes. It is possible that, even during the later stages of selection process, managers may still weigh P-J fit more heavily than P-O fit.

One reason that the majority of studies have focused on the relatively early stages of selection processes may be the ease with which such field data (e.g., college recruiting) can be collected. On the other hand, it might be difficult to study the later stages of the selection process through field research. This is because organizations are less likely to provide researchers with access to find decision makers who are typically working managers. Therefore, different research methodologies are needed such as using hypothetical job applicants and scenarios in order to examine the relatively later stages of the selection process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

So far, this manuscript reviewed the literature on P-O fit and P-J fit primarily focusing on the employee selection context. A vast amount of research has been done in this area and our understanding of the role of P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection has become considerably deep. However, there are still unexplored topics in this field that need to be researched in the future. As the final section of this manuscript, I propose some research topics that would contribute to our knowledge of P-O fit and P-J fit in the selection process, and thus would provide additional insights to the theory and practice of human resource management.

Simultaneous effects of P-O fit and P-J fit in selection

While a growing body of research examines the simultaneous impact of P-O fit and P-J fit on various employee outcomes (e.g., satisfaction), little empirical research has explicitly investigated the simultaneous effects of P-O fit and P-J fit in the employee selection context, with the exception of Kristof-Brown's (2000) study. Because both P-O fit and P-J fit may play an important role in selection decisions, it is reasonable to include both types of fit and explore the relationship between these two types of fit and selection decisions.

Especially, investigating the relative importance of P-O fit and P-J fit in the later stages of selection process (e.g., final hiring decisions) is expected. The investigation of how the relative effects of P-O fit and P-J fit changes when the work context varies is also intriguing.

Werbel and Gulliland (1999) suggest that the relative importance of different types of fit is contingent on the work environment. Based on their argument, Sekiguchi (2003) proposes the contingency perspective on the relative importance of P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection. He argues that theory of psychological contracts, human capital, and professional-manager dichotomy would be useful in theorizing which of P-O fit and P-J fit is more important than the other in selecting job applicants for specific job types. This kind of contingency perspective should be refined and empirically validated in the future.

Cross-cultural and comparative research on P-O fit and P-J fit in selection

The cross-cultural and comparative research on P-O fit and P-J fit is sparse. In fact, most of the research on P-O fit and P-J fit is conducted in the Western context. Therefore, research is needed to examine whether the research findings on this topic are also applicable to other cultural contexts such as Japan, and how cultural variables affect the role of P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection.

There might be many ways that cultural or national factors affect the role of P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection. For example, if we look at the U.S. and Japan, staffing practices in the U.S. typically mean, "finding a person who fits the existing or newly created job," while staffing practices in Japan typically mean, "hiring a person who fits the organization, then assigning the appropriate job or tasks based on his/her potential or post-employment skill development." In general, the collectivistic nature of Asian culture suggests that P-O fit, especially as value congruence and similarity among member characteristics, might be more important than P-J fit in selection. Relatively high long-term orientation in Asian culture (Hofstede, 1991) may also associated with the preference of P-O fit over P-J fit in employee selection decisions. For example, compared with U.S. and other Western firms, Japanese firms tend to use trials and errors frequently to promote P-J fit after employees are hired, through such practices as employee transfer and job rotation. In this case, a high level of P-J fit at the time of hiring is not necessary because employees may have a lot of opportunities to increase P-J fit through their long-term career development within the firm. On the other hand, because of their relatively short-term orientation, Western firms may try to create a high level of P-J fit immediately by such ways as defining positions and organizational structure clearly, and matching people and jobs carefully at the time of hiring decisions.

The first step toward constructing cross-cultural perspective on P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection would be to conduct the replication studies in other cultural contexts. The cultural, social, or legal factors may affect the applicability of the research findings to other cultures. Then, these factors may be included as contingency variables in theorizing

the cross-cultural perspective on the role of P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection. In short, research on P-O fit and P-J fit in other cultural contexts needs to be done in order to investigate how cultural, social, or legal factors affect the role of P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection.

Expanding the research domain

As mentioned earlier of this manuscript, P-O fit and P-J fit have been the most studied fit concepts in employee selection research because these two might be the most influential types of fit in selection processes. While this may be true, other types of fit may also play an important role in employee selection. Also, various types of P-E fit may be critical not only in the selection process but also in many other activities during the organizational entry process (e.g., applicant job search behavior, applicant job choice, recruitment, post-hire socialization practices, and subsequent employee training). Therefore, expanding the current research domain to wider one, that includes the examination of more than two types of P-E fit at the same time and the investigation of the role of P-E fit in organizational entry as a whole, would provide us with valuable knowledge and insights for theory and practice in human resource management. For example, other types of fit such as person-group (P-G) fit and person-vocation (P-V) fit, as well as P-O fit and P-J fit, could be included in the research to examine the complex interplay among these different types of fit through the organizational entry process. Another interesting research topic is to investigate how the relative importance of different types of fit changes from early stages of organizational entry (e.g., applicant job search behaviors) to the later stages of organizational entry or post-hire activities (e.g., socialization practices). The accumulation of this type of study would contribute to the comprehensive understanding of the relative importance of fit in employment practice.

In conclusion, despite the a vast amount of research on P-O fit and P-J fit that has been already done, there still are a lot of research opportunities to investigate the role of P-O fit and P-J fit in employee selection. Future research is expected that includes new topics such as the simultaneous effects of P-O fit and P-J fit, a cross-cultural perspective, and the role of multiple types of P-E fit in the organizational entry process as a whole.

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