

The Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Subjective Fit Perceptions

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This study examined whether employees develop perceptions about 3 different types of fit: person–organization fit, needs–supplies fit, and demands–abilities fit. Confirmatory factor analyses of data from 2 different samples strongly suggested that employees differentiate between these 3 types of fit. Furthermore, results from a longitudinal design of 187 managers supported both the convergent and discriminant validity of the different types of fit perceptions. Specifically, person–organization fit perceptions were related to organization-focused outcomes (e.g., organizational identification, citizenship behaviors, turnover decisions), whereas needs–supplies fit perceptions were related to job- and career-focused outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, career satisfaction, occupational commitment). Although demands–abilities fit perceptions emerged as a distinct construct, they were not related to hypothesized outcomes (e.g., job performance, raises).

The concept of “fit” is a familiar one for most people in organizations. Job applicants choose between organizations on the basis of their perceived fit with jobs and organizations (Judge & Cable, 1997; Saks & Ashforth, 1997), recruiters make hiring decisions on the basis of their perceptions of applicants’ fit (Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof-Brown, 2000), and employees’ fit perceptions affect their turnover decisions (Cable & Judge, 1996). Thus, people develop and use perceptions of fit as they maneuver through organizational life. In fact, because they are more proximal determinants of behavior, perceptions of fit are better predictors of people’s choices than the actual congruence between people and environments (Cable & Judge, 1997; Endler & Magnusson, 1976; Kristof, 1996).

Past fit research has distinguished between person–organization fit perceptions and person–job fit perceptions. *Person–organization fit* perceptions have most often referred to judgments of congruence between an employee’s personal values and an organization’s culture, whereas *person–job fit* perceptions have referred primarily to judgments of congruence between an employee’s skills and the demands of a job (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Kristof-Brown, 2000). From an organizational perspective, this two-factor conceptualization of fit perceptions is useful because it highlights the fact that successful employees must fit both the job and the organization as a whole (Bowen, Ledford, & Nathan, 1991; Kristof-Brown, 2000).

Despite the intuitive appeal of the prevalent two-factor conceptualization of fit perceptions, it appears to be incomplete because it does not include needs–supplies fit. *Needs–supplies fit* perceptions are judgments of congruence between employees’ needs and the rewards they receive in return for their service and contributions on a job (e.g., pay, benefits, training). Because part of the basic motivation for people to enter the labor market and accept jobs is to gain access to the rewards that organizations offer as inducements (Simon, 1951), needs–supplies fit may be the most important type of fit from an employee perspective.

It appears that we need to further refine our conceptualizations and measurement of fit perceptions, not only to improve the linkage between theory and measurement but also to make better predictions of people’s attitudes and behaviors. To the extent that perceptions about different types of fit are truly distinct, they should result in different consequences, but almost no research has examined the differential outcomes of fit perceptions. Finally, much of the existing evidence on fit perceptions is difficult to interpret because of measurement issues, including ad hoc scales that confound different types of fit and that overlook needs–supplies fit. To redress these limitations, the goal of this article is to examine the composition and meaning of employees’ fit perceptions by developing more complete measurement scales of perceived fit and by conducting two studies to examine the structure and the consequences of employees’ fit perceptions.

Review of Past Research and Current Hypothesis Development

Below, we review past research on the relationships between different types of fit perceptions and their relative effects on people’s attitudes, decisions, and behaviors. In general, our review reveals that past research has not examined needs–supplies fit relative to other types of fit perceptions, and therefore we know little about its role in employees’ conceptualizations of fit or how it affects important work outcomes.

Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) examined the person–organization fit and person–job fit perceptions of truck drivers and

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office staff in a large trucking company. Person–organization fit was operationalized as values congruence, and person–job fit was measured as demands–abilities fit. Results showed that the two types of fit were weakly related to each other ($r = .18$), that both types of fit perceptions explained unique variance of job satisfaction, and that person–organization fit was a better predictor of intentions to quit than person–job fit.

Cable and Judge (1996) used one-item scales to measure person–organization fit and demands–abilities fit for job seekers and newcomers. Their study revealed that the correlations between person–organization fit and demands–abilities fit were relatively low for job seekers ($r = .35$) and were even lower for new entrants ($r = .16$). Results also showed that compared with demands–abilities fit, person–organization fit perceptions were better predictors of several outcomes (e.g., job choice intentions, organizational commitment, job satisfaction).

Saks and Ashforth (1997) also examined job seekers' perceived fit with the organization and the job, revealing a somewhat more substantial correlation of $.56$ ($p < .01$). However, their study measured person–organization fit and person–job fit with single-item scales that did not specifically ask respondents about fit and that might have measured simple attraction (i.e., “To what extent does your new job measure up to the kind of job you were seeking?”). Although results revealed that both person–organization and person–job fit perceptions were related to outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, intentions to quit), this research reported only the change in R^2 when both types of fit were entered into the regression at once. Thus, it was not possible to examine the differential prediction of the two types of fit perceptions.

Finally, Kristof-Brown (2000) examined whether interviewers form distinguishable perceptions of applicants' person–job and person–organization fit. As with the other studies, person–job fit was measured as demands–abilities fit. Although results revealed that the two types of fit were highly correlated ($r = .72$, $p < .01$), a confirmatory factor analysis showed that a two-factor solution provided a significantly better fit with the data than did a one-factor solution. Kristof-Brown also demonstrated that demands–abilities fit was a better predictor of hiring recommendations than person–organization fit.

To summarize past research in this area, it is currently unclear how employees conceptualize fit with their organizations. Although the stream of research generally suggests that employees hold person–organization fit and demands–abilities fit as two separate cognitions, no studies have examined needs–supplies fit perceptions and how they relate to other forms of perceived fit. Moreover, past research has not examined the explanatory power of needs–supplies fit perceptions relative to other types of fit perceptions. Finally, most past research has focused on organizational entry (i.e., job seekers, newcomers, interviewers), but no research except that of Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) has examined existing employees' fit perceptions.

A Three-Factor Conceptualization of Fit Perceptions

Contrary to the fit perceptions literature, the basic logic of employment relationships is that people accept and keep certain jobs largely on the basis of the rewards provided in return for their investments of time and talent (Simon, 1951; Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997). Theoretically, the fit between an employee's

needs and the rewards that emanate from a job is quite distinct from the types of perceived fit investigated in past research (i.e., values congruence and ability to meet the demands of a job). Therefore, we expect needs–supplies fit to be an important and discrete element of employees' fit perceptions. Although person–organization fit, needs–supplies fit, and demands–abilities fit appear to be three qualitatively different ways of conceptualizing fit, these three perspectives have not been integrated (Kristof, 1996). Thus, although below we hypothesize a three-factor model of fit perceptions, in the Results section we also test several plausible alternative models that offer additional information about the structure of employees' fit perceptions.

Hypothesis 1: Employees distinguish between person–organization fit, needs–supplies fit, and demands–abilities fit.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Employees' Fit Perceptions

To the extent that employees develop and process different types of fit perceptions, then, “one way to build evidence for the distinctiveness of these [fit] constructs is to determine if each type leads to different outcomes” (Kristof, 1996, p. 33). Accordingly, by examining the outcomes of different types of fit perceptions, we can learn more about the nomological network of fit perceptions and whether they are distinct constructs with different meaning to employees (Schwab, 1999).

Person–organization fit perceptions. When employees believe that their values match an organization's values and the values of other employees in the organization, they should feel involved with the broader mission of the organization. As suggested by Saks and Ashforth (1997), people who perceive a good fit with their organization are likely to at least partly define themselves in terms of their organization. In essence, a person who fits his or her organization's values joins a “psychological group,” which Turner (1984) defined as “a collection of people who share the same social identification or define themselves in terms of the same social category membership” (p. 530). Thus, we predicted that positive person–organization fit perceptions should result in increased identification with the organization.

Next, we expected that person–organization fit perceptions should be related to perceived organizational support, referring to global beliefs about how much an organization values employees' contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986). We propose that when employees perceive their values to match their organization's values, they will be more likely to attribute positive motives to the organization's behaviors and actions toward them. Moreover, Eisenberger et al. (1986) argued that perceived organizational support exists because employees tend to anthropomorphize, or personify, organizations. If employees ascribe dispositional traits and values to their organizations that match their personal values, person–organization fit perceptions and perceived organizational support are theoretically linked.

Third, person–organization fit perceptions should be related to citizenship behaviors, or prosocial acts that are not directly specified by an individual's job description and that primarily benefit the organization as opposed to the individual (e.g., volunteering to help peers). We predicted that an individual would be more likely

to help the larger causes of an organization when he or she shares the organization's values. Similarly, Chatman (1989) noted that people who share an organization's values should be more likely to contribute to the firm in constructive ways, and Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) found that perceived person-organization fit predicted employee's extra-role behaviors.

Finally, we expected employees' person-organization fit perceptions to affect their decisions to stay at their organizations. To the extent that individuals perceive that the values of their organization reflect their own identity, they should feel a strong bond to the organization that makes leaving more difficult even if better tangible rewards are available elsewhere. Moreover, individuals who share the values of employees in their organization should find it easier to work and communicate with others, which strengthens their bonds to the people at the organization and makes it more difficult to leave (Jackson et al., 1991). Conversely, Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model suggests that employees can be expected to leave organizations in which they perceive a values mismatch, and some empirical research has confirmed that person-organization fit perceptions are related to turnover intentions (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). In the present article, we extend past research by examining actual, rather than intended, turnover decisions.

Hypothesis 2: Controlling for needs-supplies fit perceptions and demands-abilities fit perceptions, employees' person-organization fit perceptions are related to (a) organizational identification, (b) perceived organizational support, (c) citizenship behaviors, and (d) turnover decisions.

Needs-supplies fit perceptions. Theoretically, people form separate cognitions about their fit with an organization's cultural values (person-organization fit) and their fit with the rewards that a particular job supplies in return for their service (needs-supplies fit). For example, younger workers without children may perceive a better fit with jobs that offer minimal benefits but above-market pay levels, whereas older employees may need more comprehensive benefits (Milkovich & Newman, 1999). Other types of returns that a job can supply include interesting and challenging work, promotion opportunities, recognition, and positive working conditions (e.g., Jurgensen, 1978; Powell, 1984).

To the extent that employees perceive a high degree of match between their needs and the supplies of a job, their job satisfaction should be positive. As Locke (1976) noted, "It is the degree to which the job fulfills or allows the fulfillment of the individual's needs that determines his degree of job satisfaction" (p. 1303). Likewise, the theory of work adjustment suggests that job satisfaction represents an individual worker's subjective evaluation of the degree to which his or her requirements are met by the job (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

Next, we expected needs-supplies fit perceptions would be related to employees' satisfaction with their careers. Presumably, people invest time and energy into their careers, in large part, to generate returns that they need. Although the needs may be financial (e.g., pay level), social (e.g., good peers), or psychological (e.g., power over others), we suggest that individuals judge the success of their career primarily on whether their job has enabled them to fulfill their needs. Because career satisfaction results from personal evaluations about goal attainment (Judge, Cable, Bou-

dreau, & Bretz, 1995), we expect that needs-supplies fit perceptions should be most effective in predicting career satisfaction.

Third, needs-supplies fit perceptions should be related to employees' occupational commitment, referring to an attachment to and a desire to stay in a current occupation or profession (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Because needs-supplies fit perceptions relate to the total set of returns that people receive from their jobs, it is likely that needs-supplies fit is more related to people's attachment to their profession rather than to any particular organization where they can pursue that profession. As noted by Thompson, Avery, and Carlson (1968), "A job is a localized version of an occupation which fixes the practice of that occupation in time and space" (p. 6). For example, a lawyer, a professor, or a car salesperson who perceives a good fit between the job and her own needs could expect to receive many of the same types of rewards in the same profession at another firm. Conversely, individuals who perceive low needs-supplies fit are less likely to be satisfied with their occupational choices and accordingly should be less likely to be committed to their professions or occupations.

We also expected needs-supplies fit perceptions to predict employees' turnover decisions. Although we suggest that person-organization fit perceptions are conceptually closer to turnover decisions than needs-supplies fit (because quitting is necessarily an organization-based decision), prior models of turnover decisions have included evaluation of a job's rewards as a primary determinant (e.g., Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Lee & Mowday, 1987).

Finally, in terms of discriminant validity, note that a job can deliver needed rewards even if the job incumbent does not fit the organization's values. Because needs-supplies fit should be based primarily on job outcomes and less on the organization as a whole, we do not expect employees' needs-supplies fit perceptions to be related to organization-based attitudes or behaviors (e.g., organizational identification, perceived organizational support, citizenship behaviors). Thus, we make the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Controlling for person-organization fit perceptions and demands-abilities fit perceptions, employees' needs-supplies fit perceptions are related to (a) turnover decisions, (b) job satisfaction, (c) career satisfaction, and (d) occupational commitment.

Demands-abilities fit perceptions. A fundamental tenet of industrial psychology is that high congruence between the demands of a job and a person's abilities lead to higher job performance. If a person's ability level is too low, work processes will be less efficient and work outcomes will be lower quality; if a person's ability level is too high, she or he may become complacent and uninterested. Although a person's perceptions of his or her own abilities can be imperfect and skewed upward, research indicates that individuals can provide largely accurate reports of their ability levels (Atwater, Ostroff, Yammarino, & Fleenor, 1998). Thus, even though Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) recently found no relationship between demands-abilities fit and job performance, theoretically the most direct and likely outcome of high demands-abilities fit perceptions is high future job performance. Furthermore, on the basis of the logic that organizations generally seek to reward high performers rather than low performers (Milkovich & Newman, 1999), we also predicted that employees' demands-abilities fit perceptions are related to future pay raises. Finally, we

expected that when individuals do not perceive a fit between their skills and their jobs' demands, they should be less attracted to their occupations. On the one hand, people seek to raise or maintain their self-esteem (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and competence is an important component of self-esteem. Thus, to the extent that individuals do not have the abilities to perform their jobs competently, we predict that they should be motivated to either seek other types of work or make their vocation a less important part of their identity. On the other hand, if a person feels that his or her education and abilities are well above the demands of a job, he or she may feel underutilized and detached from the occupation and others who are pursuing the occupation in earnest. Therefore, we expected individuals with low demands-abilities fit perceptions to be less committed to their occupation.

With regard to discriminant validity, we did not expect demands-abilities fit perceptions to be related to organization-based attitudes and behaviors, because abilities generally are in reference to specific tasks or jobs. We also did not expect demands-abilities fit to predict turnover decisions (once person-organization and needs-supplies fit are controlled), because rather than leave a positive work environment, employees could obtain training or transfer to another type of job within the organization (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). Likewise, we did not expect demands-abilities fit perceptions to be related to job or career satisfaction because a person's satisfaction with a job and career should be based primarily on whether the job and career is fulfilling her or his needs and desires (Judge et al., 1995).

Hypothesis 4: Controlling for person-organization fit perceptions and needs-supplies fit perceptions, employees' demands-abilities fit perceptions are related to (a) occupational commitment, (b) future in-role job performance, and (c) future pay raises.

Method

There were numerous problems with existing scales of perceived fit, including ad hoc development of items between studies, single-item measurement, and items that confounded different types of fit and excluded needs-supplies fit. Given the importance of measuring fit adequately in our study, we started our investigation by developing and pilot testing scales to assess the three specific types of fit. Therefore, we developed three distinct scales to assess perceived person-organization fit, needs-supplies fit, and demands-abilities fit. We initially wrote four items for each fit dimension, and we ensured that the wording of our fit items did not confound values, needs, and abilities within a question (i.e., there were no double-barrel questions). Before starting our main investigation, we conducted a pilot study of our items with a sample of 185 MBA graduates from a Southeastern university. Using the results from a factor analysis of this pilot study data, we eliminated one item with the lowest loading from each fit scale, leaving 3 three-item fit scales for the main study. The final items used to test our hypotheses are described below in the *Measures* section.

To answer our research questions, we gathered data from two different samples of employees. In our first study, we investigated fit perceptions across all levels of employees in a single organization because our primary goals of this study were to (a) examine the factor structure of our fit scales and (b) maximize the generalizability of our results across job levels and types. The primary goals of our second study were to (a) maximize the generalizability of our factor structure findings across many organizations and (b) study the convergent and discriminant validity of fit perceptions across a range of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Accordingly, we

complemented our cross-sectional data collection with a second, longitudinal investigation that included 187 managers in 143 different organizations as well as 135 of their supervisors or peers. Each sample and data collection methodology is described below in detail.

Samples

Single-firm sample. Two hundred fifteen employees (which was 72% of the entire workforce) of a small telecommunications company responded to a survey that assessed their background and demographics and their perceived person-organization fit, needs-supplies fit, and demands-abilities fit. Sixty-five percent of respondents were women, 73% were Caucasian, and 21% were African American. Respondents represented a wide dispersion of job types, including finance and tax (14%), administrative services (13%), field service (11%), legal (10%), human resources (6%), manufacturing (6%), and marketing (4%). Job level also was well dispersed among respondents, including 48% nonmanagement and 52% management. The average respondent earned about \$50,000 per year.

Multiple-firm sample. We distributed 1,501 surveys and prepaid postage envelopes to a randomly selected sample of the individuals who had received their MBAs over the last 10 years at a business school in the Southeast (none of whom were contacted for the pilot survey). This survey assessed individuals' background and demographics, the organization that they worked for, and their perceived person-organization fit, needs-supplies fit, and demands-abilities fit. Five hundred ninety-nine people (40%) responded, although we had to eliminate 20 respondents because of missing data.

We then waited 1 year and sent two surveys—a self-survey and a supervisor survey—to each of the respondents from the first wave of surveys. Although the longitudinal design of the survey meant that responses could not be completely anonymous, we did maximize confidentiality by assigning and using code numbers to track individual respondents (the code numbers were printed on both the self-surveys and supervisor surveys). Of the 579 people that completed Survey 1, we could locate accurate addresses for 553 individuals (26 moved with no forwarding address). We included a \$1 bill on the cover letter and prepaid postage envelopes for both the self- and the supervisor surveys. Recipients were asked to give the supervisor survey to their manager; if they did not have a manager, they were asked to give the survey to a business partner or peer who they interacted with frequently. For individuals who did not respond after 1 month of the Wave 2 mailing, we sent reminder letters to improve our response rate. The self-survey assessed respondents' organizational identification, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, career satisfaction, occupational commitment, and pay raise over the past year. The supervisor survey assessed supervisor's perceptions of the focal employee's in-role performance and citizenship behaviors.

Of the 553 individuals who received the second survey, 258 (47%) responded. Unfortunately, because of errors with our code numbers, we were unable to match 33 of the respondents and were forced to eliminate these data. Seventy percent of the respondents were male, 88% were Caucasian, 4.5% were Hispanic, 3% were African American, and 3% were Asian. The average respondent was 36 years old, had worked at his or her organization 2.5 years, and earned \$99,721 in annual base pay. In terms of job types, respondents rated the degree to which their position entailed responsibilities in different functional areas (each respondent could report responsibilities in multiple functional areas). We received a wide representation of functional areas. Specifically, on a 7-point scale (ranging from 1 = none to 7 = all) the average responses were as follows: finance, 4.2; human resources, 3.2; accounting, 3.2; operations, 4.0; marketing, 4.6; strategy, 5.0; sales, 4.2; research and development, 2.4; and general management, 4.8. In terms of the industries in which respondents worked, 40% were service, 25% were high technology, 6% were health care, 6% were education or nonprofit, 5% were food and beverage, 2% were consumer durable goods, and 2% were entertainment. Fifty-eight percent of the organizations where respondents worked were publicly held, and the av-

average revenues were about \$11,000,000,000. To examine whether respondents were representative of our target sample, we compared all relevant data from Wave 1 (e.g., sex, age, tenure, person–organization fit, needs–supplies fit, demands–abilities fit, organizational revenues, public versus private firm) between individuals not responding to Wave 2 with those individuals who did respond to Wave 2. No significant differences were found on any variable between the two groups (all $ps > .20$), suggesting that respondents were representative of our target sample.

We also received 162 completed supervisor surveys. Assuming that only the 258 focal employees who responded to Survey 2 would have given the supervisor survey to their managers, this represents a 63% response rate for the supervisor survey. The average supervisor respondent had worked with the focal employee for 3.5 years, was male (78%), and was 41 years old. Ninety-two percent of supervisor respondents were Caucasian, 2% were African American, 2% were Hispanic, and 1.5% were Asian. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were the focal employee's supervisor, and 33% were peers or business partners. Although supervisors were on average 5 years older than peers ($p < .01$), supervisors and peers did not differ significantly in terms of their in-role or extra-role evaluations of employees, sex, or education (all $ps > .20$).

Measures

Perceived fit. The items from the three perceived fit scales were presented in the surveys in random order. In the multiple-firm sample, the perceived fit items also were interspersed with decoy items about goals and personality. Following past research that has defined person–organization fit as values congruence (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Chatman, 1989; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001), we measured person–organization fit with three items: “The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values,” “My personal values match my organization's values and culture,” and “My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.” The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .91$ in the single-firm sample and $.92$ in the multiple-firm sample.

Whereas past empirical research on perceived fit has not measured needs–supplies fit, we created our items based on the conceptualizations offered by Kristof (1996) and Edwards (1991). Our items included “There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job,” “The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job,” and “The job that I currently hold gives me just about everything that I want from a job.” The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .89$ in the single-firm sample and $.93$ in the multiple-firm sample.

Finally, we based our demands–abilities fit items on past research by Cable and Judge (1996). The items included “The match is very good between the demands of my job and my personal skills,” “My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job,” and “My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that my job places on me.” The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .89$ in the single-firm sample and $.84$ in the multiple-firm sample.

Organizational identification. We measured organizational identification with the six items used by Saks and Ashforth (1997; e.g., “When someone criticizes my firm, it feels like a personal insult”). The reliability of the scale in our study was $\alpha = .84$.

Perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support was measured using Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) 16-item scale (e.g., “The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me”; reverse scored). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .94$.

Citizenship behaviors. We measured supervisors' perceptions of employees' citizenship behaviors by using Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) 12-item scale (e.g., “This employee volunteers to do things for this organization”). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .88$.

Turnover decisions. We coded a variable 1 if individuals were at the same organization for the Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys and coded the

variable 0 if they had left for another organization over the course of the year.

Job satisfaction. We measured job satisfaction by using the three items used by Edwards and Rothbard (1999; e.g., “All in all, the job I have is great”). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .94$.

Career satisfaction. Career satisfaction was measured with the five-item scale used in Judge et al. (1995; e.g., “I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career”). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .89$.

Occupational commitment. We measured occupational commitment by using Meyer et al.'s (1993) six-item Affective Commitment Scale (e.g., “I regret having entered the profession that I did”; reverse scored). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .82$.

Job performance. We measured supervisors' perceptions of employees' in-role job performance by using Van Dyne and LePine's (1998) four-item scale (e.g., “This employee performs the tasks that are expected as part of the job”). The reliability of the scale was $\alpha = .92$.

Pay raise. As part of the Time 2 survey, respondents reported the percentage raise that they received over the last year (i.e., since the Time 1 survey).

Results

Our first hypothesis (H1) was that employees distinguish between perceptions of person–organization fit, needs–supplies fit, and demands–abilities fit. To test this hypothesis, we used LISREL 8 to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis of the three-factor, nine-item measurement model associated with the fit scales (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). The results of this analysis, conducted for both the single-company and the multiple-company sample, appear under the “hypothesized model” row of Table 1. Results indicate that the hypothesized three-factor model fit the data quite well for both studies, as indicated by an average goodness-of-fit index of $.940$, an average normed fit index of $.955$, and an average comparative fit index of $.965$ (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994).

In the hypothesis development section, we noted that because the three types of fit perceptions have not been integrated in past research (Kristof, 1996), it is useful to explore the structure of employees' fit perceptions by examining several alternative conceptualizations. Thus, as recommended by Medsker et al. (1994) and Hayduk (1987), we evaluated our hypothesized model relative to four plausible alternative models. First, in a more restrictive test of the three-factor model, we specified a model with no relationships between the three fit constructs, leaving all other aspects of the original hypothesized model unchanged. A second possibility is that rather than forming three separate judgments of fit, employees form just one overall or gestalt fit judgment that combines all the different elements of fit (values, needs, and abilities). We tested this second alternative model by loading all of the fit items onto a single factor.

Third, it is possible that employees simply distinguish between supplementary and complementary fit (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). In this study, person–organization fit is supplementary because an employee's values supplement, or are similar to, an organization's cultural values (Kristof, 1996; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). Conversely, both needs–supplies fit and demands–abilities fit are complementary, such that the combination of person and situation “make whole” or add to it what the other is missing (Kristof, 1996; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). Thus, we tested our third alternative model by loading the supplementary person–organization fit items on one factor and loading the com-

Table 1
Fit Statistics for Alternative Models

Model	χ^2			GFI		NFI		CFI	
	SFS	MFS	df	SFS	MFS	SFS	MFS	SFS	MFS
Hypothesized model ^a	87	106.3	24	.92	.96	.94	.97	.96	.97
Alternative Model 1 ^b	318	658.4	27	.79	.81	.79	.82	.80	.83
Alternative Model 2 ^c	494	1128	27	.64	.65	.67	.70	.68	.70
Alternative Model 3 ^d	161	550	26	.85	.80	.89	.85	.91	.86
Alternative Model 4 ^e	400	645.5	26	.69	.75	.73	.83	.74	.83

Note. SFS = single-firm sample; MFS = multiple-firm sample; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index.

^a Items load onto three separate fit factors: person–organization fit, needs–supplies fit, and demands–abilities fit. ^b No relationships between fit factors. ^c All items load onto one fit factor. ^d Items load onto two factors: complementary and supplementary fit. ^e Items load onto two factors: needs–supplies fit and demands–abilities fit.

plementary demands–abilities fit and the needs–supplies fit on a second factor.

Finally, it appears plausible that employees view value congruence with organizations as one specific form of needs–supplies fit. In other words, it is possible that employees perceive values congruence as one of many rewards of their job. We tested this fourth alternative model by loading the person–organization fit and the needs–supplies fit items on one factor and loading the demands–abilities fit items on a second factor.

Table 1 presents fit statistics from each of the alternative models. As shown in the table, the hypothesized model provided a better fit than any of the alternative models across all of the fit indices. In fact, the only alternative model with any fit indexes that approached .90 was the third alternative model (complementary and supplementary fit). Thus, results from our tests of the hypothesized and competing alternative models strongly supported Hypothesis 1 for a three-factor conceptualization of employees’ fit perceptions.

Our next set of tests deals with the convergent and discriminant validity of the three types of fit perceptions. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations for each of the variables in the multiple-firm sample. As shown in Table 2, most of the fit perceptions are significantly related to the outcomes, and in

general the relative sizes of the correlations are consistent with our hypotheses. For example, .41 is the average correlation for the hypothesized relationships between person–organization fit perceptions and the outcomes that were linked only to person–organization fit (organizational identification, perceived organizational support, citizenship behaviors), whereas the average relationship between these same outcomes and needs–supplies fit perceptions and demands–abilities fit perceptions was .25. To provide multivariate tests of our hypotheses, we entered the three types of perceived fit as simultaneous predictors in a series of regressions with the different outcomes. We used ordinary least squares (OLS) regression for all of the outcomes except decisions to stay, which is dichotomous and was therefore analyzed using logistic regression (Greene, 1993). The results from these analyses appear in Table 3. Also, because it is possible that people fit better into certain industries of organizational sizes, we re-estimated each of these regressions controlling for both industry type and organizational revenues. These analyses yielded nearly identical results, with an average beta weight change of .008 and no changes in the patterns of the three fit beta coefficients for each dependent variable.

Our second hypothesis (H2) was that employees’ person–organization fit perceptions are related to organizational identifi-

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Multiple-Firm Sample

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Perceived person–organization fit	4.82	1.20	—											
2. Perceived needs–supplies fit	4.71	1.33	.53	—										
3. Perceived demands–abilities fit	5.71	0.85	.28	.53	—									
4. Organizational identification	5.13	1.07	.48	.34	.23	—								
5. Perceived organizational support	4.96	1.01	.53	.40	.34	.47	—							
6. Peer-rated citizenship behaviors	5.42	0.63	.22	.16	.01	.13	.19	—						
7. Turnover decision (1 = <i>stayed</i>)	0.93	0.25	.17	.10	.11				—					
8. Job satisfaction	4.99	1.44	.53	.61	.33	.44	.69	.27		—				
9. Career satisfaction	5.04	1.15	.17	.38	.27	.12	.34	.03	.45		—			
10. Occupational commitment	5.53	0.93	.33	.43	.24	.24	.39	.11	.51	.37		—		
11. Peer-rated job performance	6.36	0.58	.11	-.02	.00	-.04	.02	.29	-.02	.10	-.01		—	
12. Pay raise	13.71	16.73	.13	.20	.13	.23	.28	.07	.21	.12	.12	.09		—

Note. N = 187; for peer-rated variables, N = 136. For N = 187, correlations greater than .16 are significant at $p < .05$; correlations greater than .20 are significant at $p < .01$.

Table 3
Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Subjective Fit Perceptions

Outcome variable	Predictors						Model R^2
	P-O		N-S		D-A		
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	
Organizational identification	<u>.42</u>	.08**	.08	.09	.07	.08	.24
Perceived organizational support	<u>.44</u>	.07**	.08	.08	.17	.07*	.32
Peer-rated citizenship behaviors	<u>.20</u>	.10*	.09	.11	-.09	.10	.06
Turnover decision (1 = <i>stayed</i>) ^a	<u>.48</u>	.24*	<u>-.12</u>	.27	.36	.35	.08 ^b
Job satisfaction	.28	.06**	<u>.45</u>	.08**	.01	.06	.41
Career satisfaction	-.04	.08	<u>.34</u>	.09**	.10	.08	.15
Occupational commitment	.14	.08	<u>.35</u>	.09**	<u>.01</u>	.08	.20
Peer-rated job performance	.18	.10	-.13	.11	<u>.01</u>	.10	.02
Pay raise	.03	.10	.16	.11	<u>.03</u>	.10	.04

Note. $N = 187$. Underlined cells represent hypothesized relationships. P-O = perceived person-organization fit; N-S = perceived needs-supplies fit; D-A = perceived demands-abilities fit.

^a Unstandardized logistic regression results. ^b Nagelkerke estimated R^2 .

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

cation, perceived organizational support, citizenship behaviors, and decisions to stay at an organization. Note that we tested this hypothesis after controlling for needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit. As shown in the first column of Table 3, each of these relationships was positive and significant. Thus, H2a-H2d (which suggested that person-organization-fit perceptions are related to organizational identification, perceived organizational support, citizenship behaviors, and turnover decisions) received strong support, offering positive evidence about the convergent validity of employees' person-organization fit perceptions. Table 3 also reveals that person-organization fit perceptions were unrelated to most of the other nonhypothesized outcomes, offering discriminant validity evidence (Schwab, 1999).

Hypothesis 3 (H3) predicted that employees' needs-supplies fit perceptions are related to job satisfaction, career satisfaction, occupational commitment, and decisions to stay at an organization (after controlling for person-organization fit and demands-abilities fit). As shown in the second column of Table 3, each of these relationships was positive and significant except turnover decisions. Thus, results provided support for H3b-H3d (i.e., that needs-supplies fit perceptions are related to job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and occupational commitment) and generally confirmed the convergent validity of needs-supplies fit perceptions. These results also revealed that needs-supplies fit perceptions were unrelated to the nonhypothesized outcomes, offering evidence of discriminant validity.

Hypothesis 4 (H4) predicted that, controlling for person-organization fit perceptions and needs-supplies fit perceptions, employees' demands-abilities fit perceptions are related to occupational commitment, future job performance, and future raises. As shown in the third column of Table 3, none of these relationships was significant. Thus, H4a-H4c (i.e., that demands-abilities fit perceptions are related to occupational commitment, in-role job performance, and pay raises) received no support, signifying low convergent validity of employees' demands-abilities fit perceptions.

Discussion

Perhaps the most important contribution of this study is that it provides insight into the way that employees structure and use fit perceptions. Past empirical research on fit perceptions has focused on the important distinction between person-organization fit and person-job fit but has operationalized person-job fit only as demands-abilities fit. However, the basic logic of employment relationships suggests that more refinement is necessary. Specifically, people enter and maintain employment relationships in large part to obtain returns for their service (e.g., Simon, 1951), suggesting that needs-supplies fit is an important element of employees' fit perceptions. This is a very important issue because it is crucial that our measures reflect our theoretical conceptualizations and because more refined measures allow better predictions of employees' attitudes and behaviors.

In general, our results strongly supported distilling person-job fit into needs-supplies fit and demands-abilities fit. First, results from a confirmatory factor analysis verified that individuals differentiate between fit with their organizations' values, fit with their rewards, and fit with their jobs' demands. The fact that direct tests of plausible alternative models clearly did not fit the data as well as the theorized three-factor model lends confidence to our findings. These results offer greater specificity about what is meant by the elusive word *fit* to employees who actually generate and use fit perceptions in their decisions.

Results from this study also revealed a high level of convergent and discriminant validity for the three-factor model of fit perceptions. Person-organization fit perceptions were the best predictors of four organizational outcome variables, including citizenship behaviors and turnover decisions. Moreover, although results revealed significant simple correlations between organization-level outcomes and the other types of fit perceptions (see Table 2), these nonhypothesized relationships disappeared once person-organization fit perceptions were added in a multiple regression. This pattern of results confirmed our predictions, because theoretically a person can receive all the rewards he or she desires from

a job and have the right skills to do the job but still not relate to the organization's cultural values. When an employee does not share the values of his or her organization, he or she should be less likely to identify with the organization, less trusting of the organization's motives, less willing to help the organization with extra-role contributions, and less likely to stay in the organization.

Conversely, when we examined job-focused attitudes (including job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and occupational commitment), we found that perceived needs-supplies fit was the best predictor. Although both person-organization fit and demands-abilities fit were significantly correlated with these job-based attitudes (see Table 2), these relationships were not sustained once needs-supplies fit was added into the equation. Although a non-hypothesized relationship emerged between person-organization fit and job satisfaction, the beta coefficient was substantially smaller than for needs-supplies fit. In general, these results confirm that employees judge satisfaction with their jobs and careers primarily on the basis of the fit between their personal needs and the rewards that they receive in return for their inputs (Judge et al., 1995) and not on the basis of shared values with their organization or ability to perform the job. Thus, our results reveal a serious omission in past research on perceived fit, because needs-supplies fit perceptions may be the primary driver of many important decisions and work attitudes but have not been measured in past research (e.g., Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Judge & Cable, 1997; Kristof-Brown, 2000). It also is important to note that needs-supplies fit perceptions did not predict employees' turnover decisions when person-organization fit perceptions were controlled. This result may not be surprising given that person-organization fit is organization focused and is therefore conceptually closer to turnover decisions than the rewards of a particular job. Although future research is needed to confirm our finding, conceptual models of turnover (e.g., Cotton & Tuttle, 1986) can be improved by modeling person-organization fit as an antecedent, consistent with Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model.

It is interesting that demands-abilities fit perceptions did not predict any of the outcomes we hypothesized, including occupational commitment, job performance, and pay raises. Thus, our results are consistent with Lauver and Kristof-Brown's (2001) null findings with regard to the relationship between fit perceptions and job performance, and our findings also extend past research by examining other theory-based outcomes of demands-abilities fit. Although it is difficult to interpret null effects, it is possible that demands-abilities fit perceptions are not predictive due to range restriction or ceiling effects. Specifically, because demands-abilities fit perceptions are competence-related, it is possible that they have greater implications for self-esteem than the other types of fit, and as a result people may be motivated to skew demands-abilities fit perceptions upward. Some evidence for this possibility is gleaned from the fact that demands-abilities fit perceptions had a higher mean and a lower standard deviation than the other fit perceptions (see Table 2), a result that mirrors Lauver and Kristof-Brown's (2001) findings. It also is possible that we did not find results for demands-abilities fit perceptions because the hypothesized outcomes are influenced by many other external factors and are therefore difficult to predict. For example, job performance assessments are influenced by a rater's opportunity to evaluate, and raises are affected by the economic conditions of a firm. The

variance of demands-abilities fit also may be constrained because people who truly cannot perform competently on the job generally do not accept the job or soon leave the job. Researchers might need to track demands-abilities fit across time to demonstrate its full effects. Finally, this study followed past research and did not measure the directionality of respondents' misfit. Thus, low demands-abilities fit may imply an overabundance or a deficit of skills, and these different types of misfit may lead to different types of outcomes that we did not measure in the present study (e.g., anxiety versus boredom).

In summary, our study demonstrates that employees distinguish demands-abilities fit perceptions from person-organization fit and needs-supplies fit perceptions, but future research is needed to provide more information about the outcomes of demands-abilities fit perceptions. Future research may demonstrate that demands-abilities fit perceptions are more important to interviewers than employees, as suggested by Kristof-Brown (2000).

Limitations and Strengths

It should be noted that we examined only the differential outcomes of fit perceptions, but important validity information also could be gathered by studying the antecedents of fit perceptions. For example, it would be possible for future research to measure employees' values and their organizations' values and to then examine whether values congruence predicts person-organization fit perceptions but not needs-supplies fit or demands-abilities fit perceptions. Thus, it would be useful to examine the linkages between actual fit, perceived fit, and outcomes. In fact, some research has suggested that perceived fit mediates relationships between actual fit and outcomes (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997), and it would be interesting to extend this finding across the three types of perceived fit.

Next, we measured person-organization fit solely as values congruence. Although this conceptualization is consistent with past research on this topic (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989; Judge & Cable, 1997; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001), it also is possible that person-organization fit includes a needs-supplies component. For example, the returns that employees desire may be rooted in firm-level policies (e.g., type of compensation, length of vacation). In the present study we assumed that any firm-level supplies would eventually be perceived most directly by employees as returns on the job, such that supplies depend on an employee's specific job type, job level, and job contributions. However, future research should examine whether person-organization fit has both complementary (i.e., needs-supplies) as well as supplementary (i.e., values congruence) components.

A third limitation of this study is that we examined fit perceptions only from the employee perspective. Although the employee focus taken in this study fills an important gap in the existing fit literature that has focused primarily on organizational entry, it is clear that fit perceptions are relevant to job seekers evaluating their future employers and to recruiters evaluating job applicants (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Kristof-Brown, 2000; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Thus, future research is needed to examine whether job seekers and recruiters also hold three-factor conceptualizations of fit. It is possible that when recruiters evaluate applicants' fit, they are less focused on needs-supplies fit because their primary goal is

to judge applicants' abilities to do the job and to fit the organizational culture.

As discussed above, the conceptualizations of perceived fit that appear in the literature and in this article do not distinguish between the directionality of individuals' misfit. For example, an individual may experience low demands-abilities fit because he does not have the skills to perform the job effectively or because he is overeducated for the job. It would be interesting and useful for future research to focus on this issue by maintaining the direction of the misfit in the measurement and by examining outcomes that are unique to people who are undermatched versus those who are overmatched.

Finally, as is always the case with surveys, it is possible that the wording of our fit questions primed respondents to conceptualize fit differently than they actually hold the constructs in their memories. We attempted to obviate these concerns by randomly mixing the order of the fit items in the survey to avoid response sets, altering the order of the items between the two samples, and interspersing decoy items for the multiple-firm sample. Nevertheless, it should be noted that items pertaining to needs-supplies and demands-abilities fit used the term *job* whereas person-organization fit used the word *organization*. Although this phrasing follows the accepted theoretical conceptualizations of fit and mirrors how the terms have been used in past empirical research, the terms *job* and *organization* may have signaled different meanings to employees. On the other hand, results clearly indicate that respondents differentiated between the needs-supplies fit concept and the demands-abilities fit concept, even though the questions for both these types of fit used *job* terminology. Although it appears that priming based on specific wording or order effects was not a significant problem in this research, future studies could use open response formats and content analysis to examine this issue.

The limitations of this study are countered by some important strengths. Perhaps most notably, this study redressed several significant omissions and problems with existing scales of perceived fit. Past empirical studies of fit generally have used ad hoc scales to make a simple distinction between person-organization fit and person-job fit perceptions (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Saks & Ashforth, 1997). We addressed these shortcomings by creating, piloting, and then validating focused, multiple-item perceived fit scales. In addition to the scientific importance of improving the alignment between theoretical conceptualizations and operational measurements, results revealed that our distinct scale of needs-supplies fit was the best predictor of several hypothesized outcomes (job satisfaction, career satisfaction, and occupational commitment), controlling for the other types of fit perceptions.

Next, to establish the convergent and discriminant validity of fit perceptions, we used prevalidated scales of nine different outcomes that we linked to different types of fit perceptions. Despite their theoretical appeal, several of these outcomes had not been connected with fit perceptions in past research, including perceived organizational support, career satisfaction, and occupational commitment. In addition to helping establish the validity of different forms of fit perceptions, developing and testing these theoretical linkages develops the nomological net between fit and other important variables in organizational behavior research.

Finally, several methodological elements of this study represent strengths because they increase our confidence in the findings.

Thus, the fact that we examined employees' fit perceptions across all the different job types and levels in an organization adds to our confidence about the robustness and generalizability of the three-factor results, which is greatly extended by the fact that we found nearly identical results in a second study of managers in over 140 different organizations. The wide representation of age, race, sex, job type, and income levels across our two samples implies that our scales and findings are applicable to most employees. Next, to examine the convergent and discriminant validity of fit perceptions, we separated our predictors and outcomes by a full year to reduce concerns with self-report biases and survey priming and to allow time for a cycle of raises and turnover decisions to occur. We gathered reports of employees' citizenship behaviors and in-role job performance from supervisors to avoid same-source biases, and we measured employees' actual turnover decisions rather than relying on reports of their intentions. The fact that we found significant, theoretically predicted results between variables separated by a year and reported by different sources lends confidence to our results and conclusions about the convergent and discriminant validity of fit perceptions.

Practical Implications

Given that our measures of fit perceptions predicted many important employee attitudes and behaviors, managers should use this scale to assess and monitor employees' fit perceptions. It would be particularly valuable for managers to track their employees' fit perceptions across time, resulting in organizational "standards" of fit around which to manage. Thus, managers could examine the effects of organizational changes (e.g., pay redesign, downsizing) on different types of workforce fit perceptions and could benchmark their levels of applicant and workforce fit relative to other firms. Organizations also could adapt the proposed fit scales for interviewing purposes, resulting in a standardized, common metric to compare applicants across different dimensions of fit. Thus, results from this study encourage managers to be aware of, to measure, and to manage three types of fit, both during anticipatory socialization (selection and recruitment) and after organizational entry (training and socialization).

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