

JUDGMENTS OF FIT IN THE SELECTION PROCESS: THE ROLE OF WORK VALUE CONGRUENCE

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Work values were examined as an antecedent of recruiters' judgments of applicant fit with the organization. Data were collected on the work values of recruiters, their organizations, and job applicants in actual job interviews conducted through the placement center of a large university. Following the interviews, recruiters evaluated applicants' general employability and organization-specific fit. Approximately 4 months following the interviews, data on whether the applicants were invited for a second interview were also obtained. Work value congruence between the applicant and the *recruiter* was found to be related to judgments of general employability and organization-specific fit. Congruence between the applicant and the *organization* (as perceived by the recruiter) was not related to judgments of employability and organization-specific fit. Recruiter ratings of employability were related to the decision to invite the applicant for a second interview. Work value congruence was not related to second interview decisions. It is concluded that if work values and judgments of applicant fit influence the personnel selection process, they are more likely to do so at later stages when job offer decisions are made. Work values and judgments of applicant fit seem to have minimal impact on decisions to retain the applicant for additional consideration in early stages of the selection process.

The personnel selection literature has traditionally focused on person-job fit (P-J fit), defined as the individual having the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to perform the job (e.g., Hedge & Teachout, 1992; O'Reilly, Caldwell, & Mirable, 1992). Person-organization fit (P-O fit) extends both the predictor and criterion domains to broadly define fit as congruence of the personality traits,

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beliefs, and values of the employee with the culture, strategic needs, norms, and values of the organization (Bowen, Ledford, & Nathan, 1991; Bretz, Ash, & Dreher, 1989; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990).

Despite the increasing focus on P-O fit in the selection literature, Rynes and Gerhart (1990) noted that components of fit have not been precisely delineated or empirically tested. There is no agreed upon conceptual definition of P-O fit or evidence that it contributes to personnel selection decisions. Rynes and Gerhart found definitions referring to congruence in "personal values, political orientation, hobbies, personality traits, attire, physical characteristics, use of leisure time, and even eating habits" that go beyond "assessments of 'general employability' for any organization or... idiosyncratic reactions of individual evaluators" (p. 15). Regardless of the lack of a conceptual definition of P-O fit, evidence suggests recruiters do make judgments of P-O fit that are distinct from judgments of how "employable" an applicant is (Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). Recruiters' initial judgments constitute the first gate applicants must pass through in the selection process. Recruiter judgments of P-O fit and employability may affect the utility of subsequent selection procedures (see Boudreau & Rynes, 1985, for a description of how recruiting impacts SD_y in the Brogden-Cronbach-Gleser model of utility).

Rynes and Gerhart (1990) called for future research to "pursue additional construct definition and validation" (p. 29) of factors that enter into assessments of P-O fit. Work values may be one important aspect of P-O fit that impacts recruiter judgments. Schein (1985) argued that functions necessary to the survival of the organization are enhanced by employees sharing core organizational values. P-O fit defined as congruent work values has been found to be related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reporting to work on time, and intention to remain with the organization (e.g., Chatman, 1991; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989).

The primary purpose of the current study was to determine whether congruence between applicants' work values and those of the organization contribute to recruiters' judgments of P-O fit. We briefly review findings related to P-O fit in selection and work value congruence before presenting the specific hypotheses addressed.

P-O Fit in Selection

The most promising study of P-O fit in the selection process to date is that of Rynes and Gerhart (1990). They argued that judgments of fit were most salient to the firm after candidates had been minimally prescreened on requisite KSAs and were most commonly assessed in employment interviews.

Unfortunately, as noted by Rynes and Gerhart (1990), prior interview research tended to use measures which confound recruiter impressions of general employability (e.g., "common stereotypes applied widely across interviewers and firms"; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990, p. 16), P-O fit, and interviewer-specific idiosyncratic variance (e.g., similar-to-me bias, etc.). Rynes and Gerhart carried out the only empirical attempt to partition variance in recruiter impressions into these three components. They reported evidence bearing on whether (a) recruiter ratings of person-organization fit contain anything more than idiosyncratic recruiter preferences and (b) a distinction existed between ratings of person-organization fit and general employability. To explore these issues they obtained single-item measures of general employability and P-O fit from initial interviews conducted by recruiters visiting a large business school.

Rynes and Gerhart (1990) reported that when multiple recruiters from the same firm evaluated P-O fit, interrater reliability was greater (.49) than for recruiters from different firms (.20), while the difference was much smaller (.33 vs. .24) for interrater reliability of general employability. They inferred from this "that interviewers from the same organization share *at least some* [italics added] common notions about firm-specific employability or applicant fit" (p. 23). Thus, recruiters do make conceptually distinct judgments of P-O fit.

Ryan and Schmit (1993) examined the relationship of fit between individual and organizational characteristics to selection, performance, and turnover. Using a small sample of applicants for the position of insurance claims adjuster, they found that there was no significant difference in fit between those who were hired and those who were not hired. In follow-up analyses, however, they found that the P-O fit of individuals who remained with the organization was higher than for individuals who left the organization. Using other samples, they found that P-O fit was significantly correlated with supervisory ratings of performance. Thus, P-O fit was not found to be related to selection decisions, but was related to performance and to the individual remaining with the organization.

Work Value Congruence

Work values have been examined as a component of P-O fit in contexts other than personnel selection. Chatman (1991) examined the role of P-O fit, operationalized as congruence between the work values of the employee and the dominant work values of the organization, in newcomer's adjustment to the organization, job satisfaction, and intent to remain with the organization. Congruence was assessed using a 54-item Q-sort instrument developed by O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991).

Individuals with high person-organization work value congruence adjusted to the organization more quickly, were more satisfied, and intended to remain with the organization longer than those with low work value congruence. Although Chatman (1991) reported that the amount of time the newcomer spent with representatives of the organization before being hired was associated with P-O fit, she did not examine relations between the Q-sort measure of work value congruence and existing recruiting and selection procedures.

Meglino et al. (1989) examined fit on the dimension of work value congruence between supervisors and subordinates. Congruence between employees' work values and those of their supervisors was associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and reporting to work on time. Value congruence was assessed using the Comparative Emphasis Scale (CES; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987a, 1987b; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989, 1992). The CES is a 24-item forced-choice instrument yielding ipsative rankings of the four work values of achievement, fairness, honesty, and helping and concern. The CES is substantially less cumbersome to administer and evaluate than the Q-sort procedure.

Similarly, Adkins, Ravlin, and Meglino (1992) examined fit on the dimension of work value congruence between co-workers. Value congruence was again assessed using the CES. They found that the extent to which the job required the individual to work closely with others moderated the relationship between work value congruence and performance. The relationship between work value congruence and facet satisfactions and attendance was moderated by the individual's tenure with the organization.

Finally, Judge and Bretz (1992) used the CES values instrument to examine relationships between work value congruence and job choice. They asked college graduates to complete the CES and then provided job scenarios incorporating the values of the CES. Individuals tended to prefer jobs with dominant work values consistent with their own.

Thus, one proposed facet of the construct domain underlying P-O fit, work value congruence, has been shown to be related to important organizational and individual outcomes including individuals' preference for jobs. Given these promising findings in the broader context of management and organizational behavior, it would be interesting to determine whether this nomological network of relations extends to include aspects of personnel selection processes. Specifically, the present study examined whether one hypothesized aspect of the P-O fit construct (work value congruence) is related to recruiter judgments of P-O fit, recruiter judgments of employability, and firms' subsequent invitations for second interviews. Evidence of such relationships would simultaneously

confirm (a) the importance of work value congruence as a facet of the P-O fit construct and (b) the theoretical and practical contribution of P-O fit for personnel selection systems.

Recruiters from multiple organizations assessed the general employability and P-O fit of applicants during actual campus interviews. The Ravlin and Meglino (1987a, 1987b, 1989) CES instrument has already been shown by Judge and Bretz (1992) to predict one side of the personnel selection process—applicant job choice decisions. Hence, we used the CES in conjunction with a multi-item measure of recruiters' perceptions of P-O fit and general employability. We also obtained a CES-based measure of value congruence between the candidate and the recruiter, and a "selection process" criterion measure of whether the candidate was asked to come back for a second interview.

Our first hypothesis, replicating Rynes and Gerhart (1990), tested whether recruiter perceptions of P-O fit are distinct from perceptions of general employability. Our second hypothesis tested whether recruiter perceptions of P-O fit are best explained by congruence between the work values of the applicant and organization (as perceived by the recruiter) or are best explained by congruence between the work values of the applicant and the recruiter (what Rynes and Gerhart called an idiosyncratic effect). In an exploratory analysis, we also examined whether one of the 24 possible orders of four work values might constitute a "universal," cross-organizational hierarchy of work values against which applicant values are compared.¹ Our third hypothesis tested how well the measures of work value congruence (applicant-organization and applicant-recruiter), general employability, and recruiter judgments of P-O fit were related to a subsequent selection system outcome (decisions to invite the candidate back for a second interview).

Method

Participants

Participants for the present study were corporate recruiters interviewing through the placement center of a large state university and the job applicants they interviewed. Corporate recruiters were contacted in advance of their campus visits to solicit participation in the study. Fifty-two (95%) of the companies contacted agreed to participate. Of those, 44 recruiters (31 male, 13 female) from 37 companies returned usable pre- and post-interview surveys. Seventeen of the recruiters (42.8% of

¹We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting the possibility of a "universal" order of work values.

the interviews) were human resource managers, while the remaining 26 were functional managers (the job title of one was missing). As in the Rynes and Gerhart (1990) study, the unit of analysis in this study was the interview; therefore, recruiters interviewed multiple candidates and some applicants had multiple interviews. Recruiters conducted an average of 8 interviews each (range 2 to 21).

Of the 534 interviews conducted, applicant surveys were completed for 353 (66%). The 353 interviews were conducted on 171 applicants, hence the range of independent candidate "stimuli" was restricted, causing any observed effects to conservatively estimate what would have been observed if 353 independent candidate "stimuli" had been available. Of these, 56 (30%) were female, and 32 (15%) were nonwhite. Complete information (questionnaires and archival data) was obtained on 310 of the 353 interviews (88%).

Procedure

Recruiters completed two separate CES questionnaires assessing their personal work values and their perceptions of their corporations' work values anywhere from 2 months in advance of the campus interviews to the day of the campus interviews. Immediately after the interviews, they rated each candidate on general employability and P-O fit. Recruiters were contacted approximately 4 months after their campus recruiting dates and asked to indicate which candidates had been invited for a second interview. A total of 243 of the 353 interviews (69%) provided information on all questionnaire measures and on whether candidates were invited back for second interviews (the rest did not have the positions open that they had originally anticipated). Recruiters were informed that all information gathered was confidential and were promised a report of the results of the study.

Applicant participation was solicited by approaching applicants as they signed up for an interview time or as they arrived for the interview. Job applicants completed a survey and were informed that all responses were confidential and that participation in the study would not affect their job interview in any way. Applicant demographic, work history, and academic data were gathered from placement records.

Measures

Recruiter and organization values. The instrument was designed to assess (a) the recruiters' personal work values and (b) recruiters' perceptions of the organization's work values using the Comparative Emphasis Scale (CES; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987a, 1987b). The CES

measures the four work values of achievement, fairness, honesty, and helping and concern for others. These values were selected based on surveys of 966 employees at different levels in a variety of organizations (see Cornelius, Ullman, Meglino, Czajka, & McNeely, 1985). The CES is a forced-choice measure which yields a purely ipsative rank-ordering of the work values (see Hicks, 1970). Respondents are asked to choose between behaviors representing each of the four work values. Each value is paired with every other value four times for a total of 24 items. Because values are arranged hierarchically in value systems (Locke, 1976, 1982; Ravlin & Meglino, 1989; Rokeach, 1973), use of an ipsative measure is appropriate. Further, this measurement approach controls for the social desirability of values (Falding, 1965; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987a, 1987b). More detailed descriptions of CES item development and construct validity are presented by Judge and Bretz (1992), Meglino et al. (1989, 1992) and Ravlin and Meglino (1987a, 1987b, 1989).

Recruiters were asked to complete the first CES instrument in a way that reflected the behaviors that they personally felt were important on the job. They were then asked to complete the second CES instrument in a way that reflected the behaviors they believed their organization as a whole viewed as important. Because we were examining whether recruiters based judgments of P-O fit on similarity with the organization versus similarity with their own personal work values, the recruiters' *perception* of the organization's work values is the appropriate operationalization.

Assessment of applicant. Recruiters assessed applicants' (a) general employability and (b) P-O fit using a 6-item instrument. Conceptually, these were expected to be highly correlated, but independent, constructs. Specifically, while conceptually every possible combination of high/low employability and high/low P-O fit is possible, we expected that most individuals who were rated as high P-O fit would also be rated high on employability, and most individuals rated as low P-O fit would be likely to be rated low on employability. If true, this would yield a positive correlation between P-O fit and employability ratings.

Two items measured P-O fit ($\alpha = .96$). These items were: "Given your overall impression of this candidate, how good a 'fit' do you think there is between the candidate and your organization?" and "Do you think other people in your organization will think this candidate fits well in the organization?" Both items were scored on a 7-point response scale (1 = "Poor fit"; 7 = "Good fit").

Four items measured general employability ($\alpha = .91$). These items were: "Given your overall impression of this candidate, how 'employable' do you think this candidate is (i.e., how likely do you think this candidate is to receive other job offers)?" "Do you think other people

in your organization will feel this candidate is very employable (will receive many job offers)?” “Regardless of the candidate’s qualifications, how likeable was this candidate?” and “Do you think other people in your organization will find this candidate likeable?” These items were also scored on a 7-point response scale (1 = “Low employability”; 7 = “High employability”).

Applicant values and characteristics. Job applicants were asked to complete the CES in a way that reflected their personal work values. It was also felt that differences in applicants’ interpersonal skills might affect the extent to which they communicate their work values to the recruiter, influencing recruiters’ judgments of general employability and P-O fit. Consequently, applicants were asked to complete the behavioral friendship subscale of the effective interpersonal behavior scale developed by Ford and his colleagues (Ford, Burt, & Bergin, 1984; Ford & Tisak, 1983). Five items asked candidates to describe how well they do in different interpersonal situations at work. Russell (1987) demonstrated that effective interpersonal behavior scale scores were related to ratings of oral communication skills in an assessment center setting (he reported items from all subscales in an appendix). The coefficient alpha for this scale was .81.

Archival information. Demographic data, work history, GPA, and self-report information on student’s involvement in campus activities were gathered from placement records. These data included gender (coded 0 = female; 1 = male), whether the applicant was a member of a minority group (coded 0 = minority group member Asian, black, or Hispanic; 1 = Caucasian), the applicant’s grade point average, the number of jobs the applicant had held, and the number of campus activities the applicant was involved in. Dougherty, Turban, and Forret (1993) found that GPA and participation in extracurricular activities were related to recruiter judgments of applicant employability.

Approximately 4 months after the campus visits, recruiters were contacted and asked to indicate which applicants were invited for a second interview. Twenty-five firms provided information on inviting recruits for second interviews. Eight of the organizations were not hiring due to economic conditions and were not included in analyses using presence or absence of a second interview as a dependent variable.

Assessment of Value Congruence

As noted above, the CES yields a fully ipsative ranking of the four work values of achievement, honesty, fairness, and helping and concern for others. Because of the ipsative nature of this measure, the use of traditional parametric statistical procedures is inappropriate (Hicks,

1970). Therefore, congruence between the recruiter's personal work values and the applicant's work values was operationalized by computing a rank order correlation between the applicant's ranking of the four work values and the recruiter's personal work value rankings. This index is subsequently referred to as "applicant-recruiter work value congruence." Similar profiles have exhibited substantial construct and criterion-related validity in non-selection settings (e.g., Meglino et al., 1989, 1992).

A second rank-order correlation was also estimated between recruiter's ranking of the organization's work values and applicant's value ranking. This index will subsequently be referred to as "applicant-organization value congruence." Finally, in an exploratory analysis, a third set of rank-order correlations was derived between the applicants' ranking of work values and each of the 24 possible rank orders of work values. If one of these sequences of values is "universal" or cross-organizational, "applicant-universal" value congruence should predict ratings of employability and P-O fit. All resulting correlations were then converted to z -scores using the Fisher z transformation. This procedure corrects for the skewness in the distribution of the rank-order correlations resulting from correlating the two profiles of four values each. This distribution of correlations may be highly skewed due to ceiling and floor effects (e.g., the correlations can only range from -1 to 1). For examples of the use of this procedure see Meglino et al. (1989, 1992), Adkins, Ravlin, and Meglino, (1992), and Adkins (1992).

Analyses

Following Rynes and Gerhart (1990), t -tests were computed comparing mean ratings on the two scales to examine whether recruiter perceptions of P-O fit were distinct from perceptions of general employability. As per Rynes and Gerhart, average ratings of employability were expected to be greater than average ratings of P-O fit. Additionally, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to determine whether a two-factor solution was most consistent with correlations among the four employability and two P-O fit items. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship of value congruence to recruiter's assessments of general employability and P-O fit. Independent variables included indices of (a) the congruence between applicants' work values and recruiters' perceptions of the organization's work values, (b) the congruence between applicants' and recruiters' personal work values, and (c) the congruence between applicant work values and a "universal" set of work values. Dependent variables included recruiter's ratings of (a) candidate employability and (b) P-O fit. Traditional predictors of

employability (GPA, employment history, involvement in campus activities), sex, minority group membership, and behavioral social skills served as control variables. Because there were three distinctly different categories of employers, we also controlled for type of industry (business, engineering, or civil service— coded 1,0 for business; 0,1 for engineering; and 0,0 for civil service). In each sequence of multiple regression analyses, the dependent variable of interest was regressed on the control variables and the appropriate value congruence index. The significance of the standardized regression coefficient for the work value congruence index reflects its contribution to recruiter assessments of employability and fit in the presence of other predictors.

As noted above, it is also possible that applicant social skills determine the accuracy, quantity, and nature of information exchanged in the interview, hence moderating the relationship between measures of work value congruence (obtained before the interview) and recruiters' ratings of P-O fit and employability (obtained from the interview). Consequently, interactions between the social skills scale and work value congruence measures were examined using moderated regression analysis.

Results

Our first hypothesis asked whether recruiter perceptions of general employability and P-O fit differ. Assessment of P-O fit was significantly lower than assessment of general employability (means 4.72 and 5.26, respectively, $t = -12.66$, $p < .01$), replicating the efforts of Rynes and Gerhart (1990). When the coefficients of variation were compared (i.e., the standard deviation/mean $\times 100$) the ratings of firm-specific fit were significantly more variable than those of general employability ($s^2 = 1.39$ and 1.05, C.V.s = 29.40 and 20.02, respectively, $F_{352,352} = 1.73$, $p < .001$). Confirmatory factor analysis forcing the four employability items and two P-O fit items onto separate factors using LISREL VIII resulted in the "best" fit of all models (including a single-factor model) when the employability and P-O fit factors were permitted to correlate (Goodness of Fit Index = .939, Normed Fit Index = .901, with the employability-P-O fit correlation = .848). Thus, it appears that the current recruiters make a distinction between P-O fit and general employability, consistent with findings reported by Rynes and Gerhart (1990).

Results reported in Table 1 contain the means, standard deviations, and simple correlations among all variables. Applicant-recruiter work value congruence was significantly correlated with P-O fit ratings, but not with employability ratings. Applicant-organization work value congruence was uncorrelated with any dependent variable. Only one rank ordering of the four CES values (1-achievement, 2-honesty, 3-concern,

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Between All Study Variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. GPA	3.13	0.56	—												
2. Number of jobs	3.32	0.86	-.14**	—											
3. Campus activities	3.30	1.95	.16**	.10*	—										
4. Sex	0.70	0.46	-.18**	.14**	-.05	—									
5. Race	0.84	0.36	-.13*	.19**	-.04	.10*	—								
6. Social skills	22.57	3.98	.06	.03	.20**	-.12*	.07	—							
7. Engineering	0.44	0.50	-.26**	.06	-.02	.40**	-.07	-.09	—						
8. Business	0.53	0.50	.28**	-.07	.04	-.42**	.05	.11+	-.96**	—					
9. Value congruence recruiter	0.12	1.07	.02	-.03	-.09*	-.09*	-.04	.00	-.08	.09	—				
10. Value congruence firm	0.18	1.02	-.03	-.13*	-.09	-.14*	-.09	-.05	-.15**	.16**	.43**	—			
11. Value congruence "universal"	-.05	1.12	.05	-.06	-.18**	.02	.15*	.10*	-.16**	.14**	.14*	.00	—		
12. General employability	5.26	1.05	.22**	.14**	.09	-.14*	.12*	.12*	-.17**	.14*	.10*	.04	.13*	—	
13. Person-organization fit	4.72	1.39	.07	.16**	.09	.05	.14**	.13*	-.04	-.01	.11*	-.01	.13*	.81**	—
14. Invitation for second interview ^a	0.29	0.45	.16**	.12*	.17**	.02	.06	.08	-.05	.05	-.07	-.09	.06	.44**	.42**

^aFor correlations with Invitation for second interview, n = 222.
*p < .05; **p < .01

TABLE 2
*Regression Coefficients and Multiple Correlations Relating
 Recruiter Ratings of General Employability and Person-Organization
 Fit to Applicant Value Congruence and Personal Characteristics*

Independent variables	Dependent variables					
	General employability			Person-organization fit		
	Standardized β			Standardized β		
1. GPA	.22**	.23**	.10	.11*	.12*	.22**
2. Number of jobs	.16**	.17**	.14*	.13*	.14*	.17**
3. Campus activities	.05	.03	.08	.07	.06	.05
4. Sex	-.10	-.10*	.03	.05	.04	-.11*
5. Race	.12*	.12*	.09	.12*	.11*	.10
6. Social skills	.08	.09	-.11	.12*	.12*	.06
7. Engineering	-.42*	-.42*	-.55**	-.60**	-.60**	-.42*
8. Business	-.45*	-.45*	-.59**	-.58**	-.58**	-.40*
9. Value congruence recruiter	.10*	—	—	.14*	—	—
10. Value congruence firm	—	.08	—	—	.06	—
11. Value congruence "universal"	—	—	.12*	—	—	.11*
<i>R</i>	.379**	.373**	.332**	.339**	.316**	.379**
ΔR	.105*	.077	.115*	.134*	.055	.104*

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

and 4-fairness) was correlated with both P-O fit and employability (row 11 in Table 1, labeled Value congruence "universal"). Table 2 shows that applicant-recruiter work value congruence and candidate congruence with the "universal" work value sequence were significant predictors of recruiters' ratings of P-O fit and employability ratings after controlling for demographic and academic predictors, increasing the multiple correlation by approximately 33% in each case. Consistent with the non-significant simple correlations in Table 1, applicant-organization work value congruence did not significantly predict ratings of employability or P-O fit after controlling for demographic and academic predictors. This suggests that recruiters' judgments of P-O fit are best explained by either applicant-recruiter work value congruence or applicant-"universal" work value congruence.

Finally, moderated regression analyses failed to yield significant interaction effects between the behavioral social skills scale and value congruence measures in predicting ratings of employability or P-O fit. This suggests that social skills (sensitivity to interpersonal cues, responding appropriately to social cues, etc.) are not acting as a barrier in the communication and perception of work values in initial campus job interviews. Interestingly, the social skills scale did yield significant simple correlations of recruiter ratings of P-O fit and employability, suggesting social skills are important in the initial interview, though not moderating

TABLE 3

Regression Coefficients and Multiple Correlations Relating Invitation for Second Interviews to Applicant Personal Characteristics, Value Congruence, and Recruiter Ratings of General Employability and Person–Organization Fit

Independent variables	Dependent variable (Invitation for a second interview)
	Standardized β
1. GPA	.08
2. Number of jobs	.06
3. Campus activities	.06
4. Sex	.02
5. Race	-.01
6. Social skills	.02
7. Industry ^a	-.03
8. Value congruence recruiter	-.07
9. Value congruence universal	-.02
10. Employability rating	.24*
11. PO-fit rating	.19
<i>R</i>	.48** ($F_{10, 299} = 6.25$)
ΔR (due to indep. vars. nos. 10 & 11)	.21*

^aNo public sector organizations made invitations for second interviews, hence this variable became a simple dummy code for industry (business vs. engineering).

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

how applicant work values are conveyed. It should be noted that given the relatively small statistical effect size associated with value congruence, our sample size may have been too small to detect an interaction effect (Russell & Bobko, 1992).

Multiple regressions were also used to test the third hypothesis that assessments of fit, employability, and work value congruence were related to the selection system outcome of inviting the candidate for a second interview. First, invitation for a second interview (coded 0 = “no;” 1 = “yes”) was regressed onto the demographic and academic control variables (i.e., industry, GPA, sex, race, number of previous jobs, number of campus activities, and the social skills scale), applicant–recruiter value congruence, and applicant–“universal” value congruence. The latter two variables were included due to their significant relationships with P-O fit and employability. General employability and P-O fit were added to the set of independent variables in a second step. Findings reported in Table 3 show that ratings of employability and P-O fit were significant predictors of invitation for a second interview after controlling for predictors of employability ($\Delta R = .201$, $F_{2, 210} = 21.20$, $p < .001$). In separate analyses it was found that applicant–organization work value congruence was not related to invitations for a second interview.

Similar results with respect to significance of standardized betas and of the multiple correlation coefficient were obtained using logistic

regression. However, because it was desirable to examine sequential contributions to prediction, the results of ordinary least squares regression analysis are presented here.

Discussion

The results substantially replicate and extend earlier findings regarding the nature of recruiters' ratings of P-O fit and employability. Specifically, results bearing on our first hypothesis suggest recruiters in the current study distinguished between judgments of candidates' employability and P-O fit. Differences in means and standard deviations of these judgments suggest recruiters from different organizations show less variability about general employability than P-O fit. Confirmatory factor analysis also yields a best fitting model depicting two distinct, highly correlated constructs. Rynes and Gerhart (1990) reported similar results using single-item measures, suggesting that recruiters from different organizations (a) have some shared perception of what it takes to get a job in the labor market while (b) not sharing the same perceptions concerning how that employability "fits" with their firms' needs. However, it should be noted that given the high mean ratings of employability (5.26 on a 7-point scale), "ceiling effects" may attenuate the variance of this construct.

Our second hypothesis tested whether work value congruence was related to recruiters' judgments of employability and P-O fit. Applicant-organization work value congruence *was not* related to recruiters' judgments of employability *or* P-O fit. An initial interpretation of this finding suggests that recruiter judgments of P-O fit may be based on something other than complementary work values between the candidate and the organization. For example, work values other than the four reflected in the CES may dictate recruiter judgments of P-O fit and employability (e.g., work values measured by the O'Reilly et al., 1991, Q-sort procedure); however, as noted previously, the four values represented in the CES were selected from an extensive study of the values of 966 workers from over 40 organizations throughout the United States. Further, the values measured by the CES have been shown to be related to work outcomes in other settings (e.g., Adkins et al., 1992; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Meglino et al., 1989).

Applicant-recruiter work value congruence and applicant-"universal" work value congruence significantly contributed to the prediction of recruiters' employability and P-O fit ratings. Hence, while the current results concur with the conclusion that recruiters distinguish between judgments of general employability and "fit," they also suggest that recruiter judgments of employability and P-O fit are driven by either

(a) idiosyncratic fit (or what might be called a “similar-to-me” bias) or (b) “universal” fit (or what might be called a “similar-to-an-ideal” bias). An average rank correlation of $r = .50$ between recruiters’ work values and the “universal” work values suggests that different comparisons result when applicant work values are compared to those of a recruiter versus some ideal hierarchy.

A post hoc analysis examined the relationship between applicant–recruiter value congruence, applicant–“universal” value congruence, and the dependent variables of employability and P-O fit. As with previous analyses, demographic variables were entered in the first step, and applicant–recruiter value congruence and applicant–“universal” value congruence were entered together in the second step. Applicant–recruiter value congruence and applicant–“universal” value congruence together were significant predictors of employability and P-O fit ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $F_{2,308} = 3.16$, $p < .05$; $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $F_{2,308} = 4.93$, $p < .01$, respectively). Further, the regression weights for applicant–recruiter value congruence and applicant–“universal” value congruence were significant in both equations (all at $p < .05$, one-tailed), suggesting that some combination of fit with an individual recruiter and with a “universal” value ranking predicts judgments of fit.² Thus, it appears that judgments of employability and P-O fit have multiple antecedents. It is interesting to note that the “universal” value ranking (1–achievement, 2–honesty, 3–concern, 4–fairness) emphasizes the more performance-oriented value of achievement over the more people-oriented values of concern and fairness. Further, when applicant values are compared with the “universal” value ranking, they are being compared to a fixed value hierarchy as opposed to being compared to the different value rankings of individual recruiters and organizations. Thus, applicant–“universal” value congruence should be viewed as a pure individual difference measure. Applicant–organization and applicant–recruiter value congruence will contain aspects of both applicant individual differences *and* situational circumstances (organization and recruiter values). Therefore, these findings suggest, not surprisingly, that applicants who are higher in the value of achievement are judged to be more employable and to fit better with the organization. It must be noted, however, that analyses examining “universal” values were post hoc and exploratory in nature. Before generalizing to other samples, it is essential to cross-validate these findings.

Interestingly, recruiters’ personal rankings of work values are also significantly related to their perceptions of the organizations’ rankings of work related values ($r = .758$, $p < .005$). However, anything other

²We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this analysis.

than a perfect correlation between organizational or "universal" work values and recruiters' personal work values permits the possibility of recruiters arriving at conclusions based on idiosyncratic fit. For example, if recruiter-candidate value congruence was correlated .758 with organization-candidate value congruence, and organization-candidate value congruence was correlated .758 with recruiter ratings of P-O fit, then P-O fit and recruiter-candidate value congruence can be correlated anywhere from .150 to 1.00 (McNemar, 1962). As noted previously, recruiter perceptions of their organizations' values is the construct of interest here; however, it is likely that recruiter values *are* highly congruent with those of their organization. Employers would not be expected to send out recruiters whose work values are substantially deviant from the rest of the organization. However, prior research in the area of corporate culture suggests that different subgroups (clans) within the organization can differ meaningfully in underlying values, norms, and beliefs (Ouchi, 1980; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983). Clearly, further research is needed to explore the underlying nuances in construct and criterion-related validities associated with applicant-organization and applicant-recruiter value congruence.

The idiosyncratic fit interpretation is consistent with the finding bearing on our third hypothesis, that invitations for a second interview are at best marginally predicted by recruiter judgments of P-O fit ($p < .10$) and not predicted by any measures of work value congruence. However, recruiters' judgments of employability *did* significantly predict invitations for second interviews ($p < .05$). If judgments of general employability are based primarily on KSA-related information, this finding might best be interpreted in terms of a two-stage selection decision process leading to invitations for second interviews.

This highlights a limitation of the current design. The present study is limited in its use of a single measure of value congruence taken very early in the recruiting process and by limited variance in invitations for second interviews (due to economic conditions). First, it is possible that recruiters' exposure to the CES prior to the interview may have made the applicants' work values more salient; however, this is unlikely. The instructions for the CES direct respondents to indicate which *behaviors* they feel should be emphasized on the job; thus, the CES is not presented to respondents as a measure of work values per se. Further, recruiters' questions and comments about the instrument at the end of the recruiting day (following their ratings of applicants), suggested that they were blind to the purpose of the CES instrument. Second, decisions to ask a candidate back for a second interview were made by the recruiter *and* other human resource and line personnel in the organization. These other decision makers had no face-to-face contact with the candidates,

leaving the recruiter as the only member of the group with direct impressions of candidates' work values. However, these other decision makers usually *did* have candidates' resumes and transcripts and hence were able to draw their own conclusions about candidates' "general employability," it is reasonable to expect that these conclusions were similar to the recruiters' conclusions.

Consequently, we might speculate that the influence of candidates' work values on employment selection decisions is weak or does not occur at the initial stage of on-campus recruiting interviews. Instead, primarily KSA-oriented information may be used to screen candidates through to steps in the selection process occurring closer to the ultimate selection decision makers (i.e., second interviews, site visits, etc.). Perceptions of work value congruence of individual line managers and/or teams of human resource personnel and line managers may have the most impact during the later stages of the selection process, when a decision to make a job offer is made (Paunonen, Jackson, & Oberman, 1987). The current study and Rynes and Gerhart's (1990) effort may simply have looked at the wrong source for judgments of P-O fit that actually impact selection.

Regardless, the relatively small portion of explained variance in each of the dependent variables is probably due to the absence of more formal measures of candidate KSA's in the regression equations. The current results suggest perceptions of work value congruence play a role in recruiters' initial perceptions of P-O fit. Future work needs to address two critical and previously unaddressed questions: (a) Do measures of candidate work value congruence and/or P-O fit predict subsequent job performance? and (b) Do measures of candidate value congruence contribute to the prediction of job performance beyond the levels of prediction currently obtained from more traditional KSA-oriented predictors? Future research should address these questions using measures of work values beyond those examined here *and* at later points in the recruiting-selection process. As noted previously, only a portion of the organizations in the present study invited candidates for second interviews. Of those, only 71 campus interviews (the unit of analysis) resulted in invitations for a second interview. Thus, our sample size was insufficient to examine ultimate selection decisions.

Our "idiosyncratic fit" finding implies that systematic variance in recruiters' judgments of P-O fit are unique to each recruiter. Since the recruiters' unique influence will generally not be found in traditional measures of job performance, any criterion-related validities derived from recruiters' idiosyncratic fit ratings are expected to approach zero. Future research also needs to explore the impact of value congruence on judgments of P-O fit at alternate points in the selection sequence.

In sum, findings suggest that recruiters' judgments of person-organization fit contain unique variance that is independent of impressions of general employability. Applicant-recruiter work value congruence is related to recruiter judgments of person-organization fit and employability. Recruiter judgments of employability are, in turn, related to invitations for a second interview. The fact that value congruence measures were not directly related to invitations for a second interview suggests that if there is an effect on selection, it occurs later in the process. The present study and previous studies (e.g., Bretz et al., 1989; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990) have explained relatively small (although statistically significant) amounts of the variance in the selection process; however, given the increasing popularity of the notion of "fit" in the management practitioner literature (e.g., Bowen et al., 1991), it is important that we continue to study what determines recruiters' judgments of fit.

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