

Matching People and Organizations: Selection and Socialization in Public Accounting Firms

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To investigate how the fit of an employee with his or her organization as a whole is established and maintained and what the consequences are in organizations, this study tracked the early careers of 171 entry-level auditors in eight of the largest U.S. public accounting firms and assessed the congruence of their values with those of the organization. Person-organization fit is shown to be created, in part, by selection (assessments of who the person is when he or she enters the organization) and socialization (how the organization influences the person's values, attitudes, and behaviors during membership). Results show some support for three general hypotheses: First, recruits whose values, when they enter, match those of the firm adjust to it more quickly; second, those who experience the most vigorous socialization fit the firm's values better than those who do not; and third, recruits whose values most closely match the firm's feel most satisfied and intend to and actually remain with it longer. •

Organizations devote substantial resources to establishing and maintaining a "good fit" between people and their jobs because they assume that certain people are better suited to perform some jobs than others (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990). Numerous fit theories have been advanced, focusing on careers (Holland, 1985), job choice (Hackman and Oldham, 1980), and organizational climate (Joyce and Slocum, 1984). These theories draw on interactional psychology in that they consider how individual and situational characteristics combine to influence a focal individual's response in a given situation. Pervasive influences on individual behaviors and attitudes may also arise from the organization's social environment, specifically from its central values. Conceptualizing the situation as the organization's values and considering person-organization fit is thus a meaningful, yet less-researched level of analysis.

Person-organization fit is defined as the congruence between patterns of organizational values and patterns of individual values, defined here as what an individual values in an organization, such as being team-oriented or innovative (Chatman, 1989). Although multiple aspects of organizations and people influence behavior and attitudes, person-organization fit is a meaningful way of assessing person-situation interaction because values are fundamental and relatively enduring and because individual and organizational values can be directly compared. Person-organization fit focuses on how the patterning and content of a person's values, when juxtaposed with the value system in a particular organizational context, affect that individual's behaviors and attitudes.

Values are a fundamental element in most definitions of organizational culture (e.g., Barley, Meyer, and Gash, 1988). Although culture researchers disagree about many aspects of its definition and measurement, they agree that culture plays an important role in determining how well an individual fits into an organizational context (Rousseau, 1990). Past research and even simple intuition suggest that when our values and priorities match the values and priorities of a

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0001-8392/91/3603-0459/\$1.00.

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I thank Charles O'Reilly, Benjamin Schneider, Barry Staw, Robert Sutton, and three anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper, Gerald Salancik for his insight and guidance, and Linda Pike and Seymour Chatman for their editorial improvements. A shorter version of this paper won the Best Paper Based on a Dissertation Award for the Academy of Management's Organization Behavior Division and was printed in the *Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings* in 1989.

particular organization we are happier and more likely to maintain an association with that organization (Meir and Hasson, 1982).

Value systems provide elaborate and generalized justifications both for appropriate member behavior and for the activities and functions of the system (Enz, 1988). Organizational values are often considered a group product (e.g., Schein, 1985: 7), and although all members of the group may not hold the same values, typically a majority of active members are aware of the support for a given value. A central value system is said to exist when a number of key values concerning behaviors and the way things are in an organization are shared across units and levels (Weiner, 1988: 535). Strong organizational values are those that are both intensely held and widely shared (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984).

One issue that culture researchers disagree on is the level at which values are meaningful to individuals. Enz (1988) and Hofstede et al. (1990) conceptualized and measured values at the subunit level, while O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) and Weiner (1988) did so at the organization level. In this paper, the central value system, at the organization level, is considered a relevant and important unit of analysis; however, this is not to deny the existence and importance of subunit values.

Individual values within an organization are relatively enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct or end-state is preferable to its opposite. Although people's values in an organization better enable them to make sense of organizational situations, values transcend any particular situation. Thus, values guide actions, attitudes, and judgments beyond immediate goals to more ultimate goals (Rokeach, 1973: 18).

Person-organization fit is influenced by the organizational values existing at the time of membership and by changes in individual values following membership and tenure. This study focuses on how person-organization fit is established and maintained and its consequences in organizational settings. It examines the selection process, or the initial match between individual and organizational values; the socialization process, or how the organizational context influences an individual's values over time, and the consequent attitudes and behaviors. By recruiting employees who will be responsive to organizational practices, by transmitting the significance of prevailing values, and by dismissing those who do not fit, organizations hope to establish a robust and stable attachment among members.

Recruitment, Selection, and Organizational Choice

People choose to join organizations and organizations choose to hire individuals on the basis of already-formed characteristics (Schwab, Rynes, and Aldag, 1987). According to traditional views, selection processes assess job-related characteristics, such as past experience, intelligence, knowledge, skills and abilities, and greater selectivity leads to such desirable outcomes as high performance (for organizations) and satisfaction (for organization members).

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Selection processes may also serve the subtle function of selecting individuals whose values are compatible with organizational values and screening out those whose values are incompatible. Although little direct evidence exists, we do know that selection in organizations is based on such non-job-related criteria as attractiveness (Dipboye, Arvey, and Terpstra, 1977) and goal orientation and interpersonal skills (Rynes and Gerhart, 1990), that the use of face-to-face interviews persists despite their low predictive validity (Arvey and Campion, 1982), that a top criterion for choosing recruiters is their enthusiasm for the company rather than their ability to make good hiring decisions, and that few organizations train recruiters to select candidates systematically on the basis of ability or predicted performance (Rynes and Boudreau, 1986). Rather than focusing on job-related criteria, selection appears to be based on such socially based criteria as "personal chemistry," values, and personality traits and, possibly, on how closely recruits' preferences match organizational values.

Without denying the role of traditional criteria in selection decisions, this study focuses on selection activities that are likely to contribute to higher person-organization fit among entrants. Some researchers have found that spending time in a variety of situations with people is a way to discern values (Festinger, Schachter, and Back, 1950) and that people are particularly good at discriminating between in-groups and out-groups and are attracted to those seen as similar (Moreland, 1985). More specifically, recruiters look for and select candidates who demonstrate characteristics that are similar to successful members (Rothstein and Jackson, 1981). From this I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1a (H1a): Spending more time with firm members before being hired will be positively associated with person-organization fit at entry.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): Perceptions that a candidate demonstrates traits similar to "successful members" will be positively associated with person-organization fit at entry.

Selection decisions are most likely to be made on the basis of non-job-specific characteristics such as person-organization fit when qualified candidates outnumber available positions and when organizations have some flexibility in whom they can hire. Further, person-organization fit at entry may be enhanced when a large proportion of candidates who are most desired by the organization actually decide to join. A firm's acceptance ratio (the proportion of offers accepted relative to offers made) represents success in hiring its most preferred candidates. These people may also exhibit high person-organization fit. Thus I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1c (H1c): Being selected by a firm with a higher acceptance ratio will be positively associated with person-organization fit at entry.

Industrial psychologists have looked at personnel selection almost exclusively from the perspective of organizations selecting individuals for particular jobs. However, job seekers take an active role in the recruitment and selection process (Granovetter, 1974). Differences in person-organization fit emerge from value differences among candidates and

potential candidates at each stage: among those who are attracted to a firm, those who apply, those who apply but do not receive an offer, those who apply and do receive an offer, those who reject an offer, and those who ultimately join the organization. Longitudinal research shows that people are differentially attracted to particular careers based on their interests, values, and personality (Holland, 1985) and that candidates typically consider characteristics of the job such as pay, the job description, location, and fringe benefits when making choices (Schneider and Schmitt, 1986). Candidates may also search for, prefer, and perform better when organizational values match their values (Schneider, 1987). Indirect support for this comes from studies showing that teachers are differentially attracted to and join unions that espouse values most similar to their own (Betz and Judkins, 1975), reporters apply for jobs at newspapers with either liberal or conservative values, depending on their own orientations (Sigelman, 1975), and job candidates rate their most preferred organization more like themselves than their least preferred organization (Tom, 1971). In addition, when candidates have more organizations to choose from they are likely to be more committed to the chosen organization's values and to stay longer than those who have fewer options from which to choose (O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1981). Greater volition causes people to cognitively re-evaluate their values as being more similar to the values of the organization once they join (Salancik, 1977). The above leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1d (H1d): Having more offers at the time the person chooses to join the organization will be positively associated with person-organization fit at entry.

Socialization

Organizational socialization is the process by which an individual comes to understand the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge that are essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organization member (Louis, 1980). Research shows that occupational socialization affects individual values (Mortimer and Lorence, 1979) and that job incumbency affects individual characteristics (Kohn and Schooler, 1978). Organizational socialization may similarly influence individual values.

The more rigorously an organization attempts to influence its members, the more similar members' values become to the organizations', since effective socialization inspires individuals to think and act in accordance with organizational interests (Reichers, 1987). Past research provides clues about specific activities that may influence person-organization fit. Louis (1980, 1990) proposed that interaction with members facilitates sense making, situational identification, and acculturation among recruits. This interaction may occur during firm-sponsored social activities or in mentor programs, where recruits are encouraged to establish relationships with senior organization members who do not directly supervise their work (Louis, Posner, and Powell, 1983). To the extent that participation in social activities leads to greater social

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integration, new members will begin to rely on the values of incumbents as reference points for their own actions (Terborg, Castore, and DeNinno, 1976). Mentor relationships contribute to person-organization fit because senior members can provide cultural information about the broader organization and its historical contexts. Formal training programs are also considered significant socialization experiences (Van Maanen, 1977); although socialization is conceptualized as an ongoing process in organizations, members are particularly susceptible to the organization's influence in the early stages of membership (Berlew and Hall, 1966). From the above, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): Experiencing more social interaction with firm members in the first year of membership will be positively associated with person-organization fit one year after entering the firm.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): Spending more time with a mentor in the first year of membership will be positively associated with person-organization fit one year after entering the firm.

Hypothesis 2c (H2c): Receiving more formal training in the first year of membership will be positively associated with person-organization fit one year after entering the firm.

In addition to the specific experiences recruits have, their perceptions about socialization practices may influence person-organization fit. Research shows that when members perceive that their organization has intensive socialization practices, they are more committed to organizational values (Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly, 1990). Organizations that are most effective at socializing their employees use a common set of techniques that fall into three categories: (1) rigorous recruitment and selection processes, (2) clear rewards and career paths, and (3) a strong, clear, visible organizational value system manifested through role models and management actions (Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly, 1990). This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2d (H2d): Newcomers' perceptions that organizational socialization emphasizes recruitment and selection processes, career paths, and clear values will be positively associated with person-organization fit one year after entering the firm.

Researchers have argued that organizations can concentrate either on selecting those recruits who best match their requirements or on training new hires once they become members (e.g., Etzioni, 1975). If an organization is highly selective (assuming that clear and valid criteria for selection have been established), then socialization costs such as orientation, training, and other methods of teaching new employees how things are done are presumably lowered. Conversely, as selection ratios become less favorable for the organization (due to fewer qualified applicants), socialization mechanisms will need to be enhanced so that those entering the organization will become appropriately assimilated. But, rather than being substitute processes, selection and socialization may actually be complementary or additive determinants of person-organization fit (Mortimer and Lorence, 1979). Organizations may seek out and select individuals who have preferences that are similar to incumbents in the organization, and organizations may simultaneously attempt to mold individuals to fit in. Exploring

this relationship requires assessing how stable a person's values are and whether pre-existing values are different than values that have been influenced in a particular setting. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Selection and socialization experiences will provide additive explanations of person-organization fit and of changes in person-organization fit over time.

In addition to seeking out and selecting individuals whose values are already similar to prevailing organizational values, organizations may intentionally select individuals on the basis of such characteristics as how open they are to being socialized (Chatman, 1989). This openness may make it easier to influence new members to adopt the organization's value system so that they could be expected to exhibit change in person-organization fit:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): People who are open to the influence of socialization and who experience socialization processes will exhibit more change in person-organization fit during their first year of membership than those who are less open to the organization's influence.

When people do not fit their environment they experience feelings of incompetence and anxiety. When they do fit they experience more positive and less negative affect, and they are likely to choose to stay in that environment (Pervin and Rubin, 1967; Emmons, Diener, and Larsen, 1986). Therefore, higher person-organization fit is likely to lead to greater satisfaction, intentions to remain longer, and a longer stay with the organization:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): High person-organization fit at entry will be positively associated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): High person-organization fit will be negatively associated with intent to leave the organization and positively associated with length of membership.

In addition to the effects of person-organization fit at a single point in time, changes in person-organization fit over time may influence attitudes and behaviors. A person who initially prefers working independently could learn to appreciate the value of working in teams. As this value shift occurs, satisfaction may increase and the person may stay with the organization longer. Furthermore, increases in person-organization fit based on changes in individuals' values may lead to a stronger relationship between fit and these outcomes than for those whose values do not change. Those who face the adversity of not fitting, and who change rather than leave, may end up being the most zealous supporters of the organization's values. These people justify the greater psychological investment they have made to stay in a place where they did not fit initially (Salancik, 1977; Galanter, 1980). From this I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Increases in person-organization fit after one year of membership will be positively associated with satisfaction and negatively associated with intent to leave and departures.

The above hypotheses were tested in a longitudinal study that traced the selection and socialization experiences of new accountants. The sample and research design are described below.

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METHODS

Sample and Research Design

West Coast offices of eight of the largest U.S. public accounting firms participated in this study. The firms' similar structures, jobs, and career paths and candidates' similar occupational and job orientations allow for a focus on person-organization fit. Entry and early socialization experiences of 171 junior audit staff members (x per firm = 21; $s.d.$ = 3) were traced. Fifty-three percent of the respondents were female, they were an average of 24 years old, all had bachelor's degrees, and 25 percent had master's degrees. All recruits entered their firm with the job title of staff accountant, and their salaries were nearly identical across the eight firms (x = \$21,500, $s.d.$ = \$1000).

Data were collected over a two and one-half year period. The first data collection (Time 1) was done early in the recruits' membership in the firm. In five of the eight firms, Time 1 was incorporated into the formal firm orientation process. Participants were assured that their survey responses were completely confidential and would not be identified to their employers. Respondents had two hours to complete the survey materials, which were subsequently collected by the researcher. One-hundred percent of the recruits are represented in these five firms. In two of the remaining firms the first data collection occurred after the recruits had been working for a short time. The recruits were brought together and given the same introduction to the study but were asked to complete the materials within one week and mail them to the researcher. Seventy-one percent in Firm 1 and 75 percent in Firm 7 returned packets. Finally, in Firm 8 the data collection was postponed until the winter, when 87 percent of their fall and winter hires participated in the study. Because of these variations, tenure (in days) was controlled in all analyses.

The second data collection (Time 2) occurred 10–12 months later. This lapse was chosen because it was long enough to allow respondents to go through a variety of organizational experiences, most importantly a "busy season," however, it was short enough to allow them to report these experiences accurately. Although Firm 8 was not able to participate in the Time 2 data collection (response rate for Time 2 = 71 percent, N = 122), performance and departure data were collected from human resource directors in all eight firms for 92 percent of the original sample.

Measures

Person-organization fit. The Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991), which is based on the Q-sort profile comparison process (Bem and Funder, 1978; Block, 1978), was used to measure person-organization fit. The OCP contains 54 value statements (e.g., quality, respect for individuals, flexibility, risk-taking) that emerged from a review of academic and practitioner-oriented writings on organizational values and culture (cf. Ouchi, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Davis, 1984; Schein, 1985). Thirty-eight business administration majors and four business-school faculty members screened

the initial 110-item deck for items that were redundant, irrelevant, difficult to understand, or omitted. A similar check was made with an independent set of respondents from accounting firms. After several iterations, a final set of 54 values was retained (see O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991).

Recruits sorted the 54 items into nine categories, placing fewer items in the extreme and more items in the middle categories (2-4-6-9-12-9-6-4-2 was the requested distribution). Respondents were asked: "[Please] sort the 54 values into a row of nine categories, placing at one end of the row those cards that you consider to be the *most desirable organizational values* and at the other end those cards that you believe to be the *most undesirable organizational values*." The question respondents were asked to keep in mind while sorting the cards was, "How desirable is it for this attribute to be a part of my ideal organization's values system?" The results of the sorting formed preference profiles for the individual recruits, which were collected at Time 1 and Time 2.

To assess each organization's values, 128 managers and partners (x per firm = 16, s.d. = 2, average tenure = 8 years) sorted the same 54-item set into the same 9-category distribution. These "member profiles" differed from the "recruit profiles" in that the sorting question was phrased, "How much does this attribute characterize the organization you work in?" and the category anchors ranged from "most characteristic" to "most uncharacteristic." Members' profiles were averaged, within each firm, to form eight firm profiles. The OCP was administered to half the firm informants within each firm at Time 1 and the other half at Time 2 to check for possible changes in each firm's values over the 12-month period. During the time of the study no major changes or mergers occurred among these firms. In addition to the questions described above, all firm respondents were asked, "Is the culture of your firm changing?" Eighty-six percent answered that their firm's values were not changing. The firm profiles collected at each time period were very similar: The median interrater correlation between Time 1 and Time 2 firm respondents was .78, and within each firm, the maximum difference in item rankings between Time 1 and Time 2 was 1.96, out of a possible 8.00, across firms. Therefore, a single profile based on responses from all firm informants was used in the person-organization fit calculation.

The person-organization fit score was calculated by correlating each recruit's preference profile with his or her firm's profile. Person-organization fit is considered a dependent variable with respect to selection and socialization and an independent variable with respect to satisfaction, intent to leave, and departure.

A number of tests were conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the OCP. To assess test-retest reliability of individual preferences, 16 M.B.A. students from a large West Coast university Q-sorted the 54 items twice, once in February of the first year of their program and again 12 months later. Correlations over the year were quite high

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(average $r = .73$; range = .65–.87), suggesting stable preferences. Another concern is that the OCP has an inherent predetermined ordering that biases responses. In particular, respondents may place items in categories according to how culturally approved each item is rather than how much they prefer it or judge it to be characteristic of their organization. To avoid this social-desirability bias (Arnold and Feldman, 1982), items in the OCP were cast in neutral terms, and eight organizational behavior doctoral students were asked to Q-sort the 54 items into the nine categories, using as their anchors "most socially desirable" to "most socially undesirable." This social-desirability profile was compared to the eight firm profiles, and since they were not significantly correlated (median correlation = .18, n.s.), organizational members did not appear to sort the OCP in a way to make their firm look good. To assess convergent validity, person-organization fit was correlated with normative commitment, defined as attachment to an organization based on value congruence (Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly, 1990). Person-organization fit at Time 1 and Time 2 were significantly correlated with perceptions of value congruence ($r = .28$ and $r = .25$, respectively; $p < .05$), indicating that perceptions that one's values are similar to one's firm's are positively related to similarity in the content and patterning of the individual's and organization's values.

Independent Variables

Selection. Before Time 1, structured interviews were conducted with human resource (HR) directors. Respondents were assigned their firm's acceptance ratio (number of acceptances/number of offers, averaged over the past five years). HR directors listed the criteria that their recruiters looked for in job candidates. A content analysis of these criteria yielded four personality characteristics that were considered important by all eight HR directors: confidence, endurance, achievement orientation, and analytical orientation. To assess the extent to which these traits were used as selection criteria, recruits were asked to complete the Adjective Check List (ACL) (Gough and Heilbrun, 1980) at Time 1. The ACL is a self-report personality inventory consisting of 300 items that fall into 37 scales. Four ACL scales matched the HR directors' criteria: self-confidence, achievement, endurance, and "low origence/high intellectence" (analytical orientation). Achievement and confidence, on the one hand, and endurance and analytical orientation, on the other, were highly correlated with one another ($r > .75$), making multicollinearity a potential problem in regression analyses. A factor analysis with varimax rotation revealed that the items in the four scales loaded into two, rather than four distinct factors—achievement/confidence, and endurance/low origence, high intellectence. Factor scores were used in all subsequent analyses.

At Time 1, respondents listed the activities (e.g., first interview, on-site interview, etc.) and amount of time (in hours) they spent with firm incumbents before entering the firm. Recruits also reported the number of applications they sent out, the number of offers they received, and the name of each organization they applied to and that offered them a

job. Organization choice was calculated as the ratio of applications to offers to include the breadth of the job search. This measure captures the difference between, for example, two people who received two offers each but one applied to ten organizations (20 percent offer rate), while the other applied to two organizations (100 percent offer rate).

Socialization. Interaction with firm members was assessed at Time 2 with each recruit's report of the firm-sponsored social and recreational events he or she attended. HR directors provided a list of the firm's events for the year. Respondents reported the number of hours they spent with a mentor, the number of hours they spent over the past year in formal training classes, and the name of each class attended.

Perceptions of socialization were measured with Pascale's (1985) socialization scale at Time 2. Respondents indicated the extent to which each item was true of their employing firm on a 5-point scale. Consistent with previous research (Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly, 1990), three clear factors emerged from a factor analysis with varimax rotation. The first factor, defined by four items (e.g., "There are very few instances when actions of management appear to violate the firm's espoused values.") is labeled "consistent values and behaviors." The second factor, defined by three items (e.g., "The career path for professional employees is relatively consistent over the first six to ten years with the company.") is labeled "rewards." The third factor, defined by four items (e.g., "The company actively facilitates deselection during the recruiting process by revealing minuses as well as pluses."), is labeled "recruiting perceptions."

The 25-item self-monitoring scale (Snyder, 1987) was administered at Time 1 to assess openness to socialization. Those scoring high on the self-monitoring scale were considered to be more sensitive to their external context and were expected to exhibit greater value change as a result of their socialization experiences.

Dependent Variables

Satisfaction. Overall satisfaction was measured at Time 2 with the Faces Scale (Kunin, 1955). Respondents chose the drawing of a face that best expressed how he or she felt about the organization in general.

Intent to leave and departure. Intent to leave was assessed at Time 2 with four Likert-scaled questions: (1) To what extent would you prefer another more ideal job than the one you now work in? (2) To what extent have you thought seriously about changing organizations since beginning to work here? (3) How long do you intend to remain with this organization? and (4) If you have your own way, will you be working for this organization three years from now? Since a principal components analysis of the questions yielded a single factor, one factor score was calculated and used to represent intent to leave.

HR directors provided information about those who had left the firm (e.g., date and reason for departure) at Time 2 and, periodically, up to two and one-half years after the initial data

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collection. Of the original 171 respondents, 47 (28 percent) left during the two and one-half year period.

Control Variables

Grade-point average (G.P.A.s) and tenure were used as proxies for ability, which could explain satisfaction and departure. This information was collected from HR directors. Person-job fit, another measure of ability, assessed how congruent respondents' knowledge, skills, and abilities are to the requirements of the entry-level audit job. Like the OCP, the Knowledge Skills and Abilities Profile (KSAP) is a Q-sort deck (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990). The differences are that the KSAP has 60 items that describe specific job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g., written communication skills, computer knowledge) and requires respondents to sort the deck according to how characteristic each item is of him- or herself. To generate a profile for the entry-level staff position, 48 senior accountants (six per firm) who had held the staff position, had been with the firm for at least two years ($x = 37$ months), and who were not participating in any other capacity in this study Q-sorted the KSAP according to how important each attribute was for success in the staff position. Since reliabilities for the eight job KSAPs from firm raters were high (median alpha = .94), each individual's KSAP was correlated with the combined KSAP for his or her firm.

RESULTS

Assessing Person-Organization Fit

Before reporting tests of the hypotheses, the results of the organizational profiles and person-organization fit are presented. An implicit assumption in the use of the OCP is that a firm's value system can be represented in a single profile. Averaging firm informants' Q-sorts only makes sense if there is high consensus among members about organizational values. To assess the level of consensus within firms, firm informants' Q-sorts were averaged, item by item, and compiled into eight single profiles representing each firm. Two statistical tests were used to estimate consensus in firm values. Table 1 presents coefficient alphas, which, when using the Q-sort method, represent how similar each firm member's rating of the firm is to the total firm profile. The coefficient alpha is an estimate of how likely it is that the same profile would emerge if everyone in

Table 1

Correlations among Firm Profiles*								
Firm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	(.90)							
2	.72	(.84)						
3	.52	.57	(.88)					
4	.61	.56	.80	(.90)				
5	.44	.65	.75	.82	(.89)			
6	.29	.29	.74	.71	.75	(.88)		
7	.62	.58	.85	.78	.64	.71	(.89)	
8	.73	.79	.71	.76	.76	.61	.74	(.89)

* Numbers on the diagonal represent the Chronbach's alpha for each firm profile.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables

	X	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Selection										
1. Pre-hire time	11.80	12.31	–							
2. Achievement/confidence	.00	1.00	–.05	–						
3. Endurance/analytical	.00	1.00	.13	.00	–					
4. Other offers/applications	2.55	1.64	.17*	.15*	.08	–				
5. Firm acceptance	.45	.09	.09	–.03	.11	.05	–			
Socialization										
6. Social activities	.82	1.88	–.04	.12	.07	.04	.09	–		
7. Mentor program	.33	.47	–.01	.11	.03	.08	–.10	–.04	–	
8. Time in training	103.78	44.39	.06	–.02	.14	.06	.41**	.05	.06	–
9. Recruiting perceptions	.00	1.00	.02	–.08	.10	.05	.12	.05	–.01	.25**
10. Reward system	.00	1.00	.13	–.05	–.01	–.01	.23**	–.13	.03	.09
11. Consistent values/ behaviors	.00	1.00	.03	.03	.13	–.05	.06	.14	–.06	.06
12. Self-monitoring	12.77	3.64	–.04	.12	–.28**	–.03	–.07	.10	–.02	.04
Outcomes										
13. Job satisfaction	5.09	1.31	.11	.15	.19*	.02	.01	.15	.17	.02
14. Intent to leave	.00	1.00	–.06	–.26**	–.21*	–.06	.07	–.21*	.01	.04
15. Turnover (dichotomous)	1.27	.45	–.04	–.03	.03	–.11	–.01	–.08	–.13	–.01
Controls										
16. Tenure (days)	.75	.16	–.05	–.04	.12	.01	.29**	.00	–.08	.36**
17. Age	24.32	3.45	.01	–.01	.21**	.05	.04	–.16	–.07	–.04
18. G.P.A.	3.46	.29	.15	.05	.23**	.09	.01	–.02	.14	–.01
19. Gender (M = 1, F = 2)	1.52	.50	.03	.01	.21*	.01	.16*	–.19*	.07	.02
20. Person-job fit	.26	.14	.05	.11	.29**	.01	.02	.15	.01	–.05
Person-organization fit										
21. POF1	.23	.18	.24**	.19*	.16*	.07	–.05	.06	.07	–.08
22. POF2	.19	.20	.17	.16	.27**	.18*	–.03	.22*	.18*	–.04

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

the firm, rather than this sample, had Q-sorted the OCP. The alphas in Table 1 range from .84 to .90 across firms, well above the typical guidelines for scale reliability (e.g., Nunnally, 1967). Another estimate of shared values is the average interrater correlation, representing how similarly any two raters view their firm. All pairs of interrater profiles were correlated, and the average interrater correlation was significant in each firm. Taken together, these statistics suggest consensus about the patterning of values within each of the eight firms in this sample.

To assess variations in firm values, Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated for each pair of firm profiles. Table 1 shows that the correlations among the firms are generally high ($x = .66$), and only three of the 28 are less than $r = .50$, however, some firms are relatively different from others (s.d. = .14). For example, Firm 3 and Firm 7 have relatively similar profiles ($r = .85$), but Firms 2 and 6 have relatively dissimilar profiles ($r = .29$). This observation extends to the placement of specific items: The two most similar firms share nine of their top 12 items and eight of their bottom twelve items, while the two least similar firms share only two of the top twelve and two of the bottom twelve. Further, the two most different firms rank the item "informality" as the top value ($\neq 1$) and the bottom value ($\neq 54$), respectively, suggesting that they operate differently.

Average person-organization fit scores calculated for the sample ($x_{T1} = .22$; $x_{T2} = .19$) and each firm indicated that

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Table 2 (continued)

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
–												
.00	–											
.00	.00	–										
.13	–.10	–.14	–									
.08	.09	.42**	–.11	–								
–.06	–.01	–.33**	.05	–.75**	–							
–.10	.01	–.10	–.04	–.30**	.24**	–						
–.03	.17*	–.02	–.04	.09	–.01	.05	–					
.14	.14	–.09	–.17*	.03	–.11	.13	.04	–				
.03	–.01	–.02	–.14	.02	.13	–.07	–.07	.18*	–			
.09	–.05	.11	–.22**	–.01	.12	–.06	–.01	–.10	.18*	–		
.01	–.02	.06	–.23**	.21*	–.25**	–.03	–.09	.06	.05	.21**	–	
.13	.13	.05	–.12	.35**	–.37**	–.16*	–.12	.14	.05	–.08	.16*	–
.18*	.09	.04	–.05	.39**	–.31**	–.35**	.09	.01	.05	.06	.12	.62**

person-organization fit varies among individuals. Firms 1, 2, and 8 have particularly large ranges between the lowest and highest person-organization fit scores (Firm 1: –.36 and .61; Firm 2: –.29 and .44; Firm 8: –.29 and .61).

Antecedents and Outcomes of Person-Organization Fit

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all the variables appear in Table 2. The low correlation between person-job fit and person-organization fit indicates that these are distinct constructs. Other correlations, such as those between satisfaction and intent to leave are consistent with earlier findings (Colarelli, Dean, and Konstans, 1987).

The determinants of person-organization fit were tested using ordinary-least-squares regression analyses. Table 3 shows results of the selection hypotheses (1a–1d). Hypothesis 1a, that spending more time with members before entering is positively associated with person-organization fit at entry, is supported. Hypothesis 1b, that demonstrating traits of successful members is positively associated with person-organization fit at entry, is supported for the achievement/confidence dimension but not for the endurance/analytical dimension. Hypothesis 1c, that being selected by a firm with a higher acceptance rate is positively associated with person-organization fit at entry, is not supported. Finally, hypothesis 1d, that having more offers at the time individuals choose to join an organization is positively associated with person-organization fit at entry, is not supported.

Table 3

Regression Analyses Predicting Person-Organization Fit at Time 1 and Time 2 Using Selection and Socialization Variables*

Variables	H1a-1d	H2a-2d	H3
Selection			
1. Pre-entry time with members	.22**		.12
2. Achievement/confidence	.21**		.02
3. Endurance/analytical	.12		.14
4. Firm acceptance rate	-.02		-.06
5. Competing job offers	.02		.08
Socialization			
6. Social activities		.31**	.30**
7. Mentor relationship		.25**	.22*
8. Formal training		-.01	-.03
9. Recruiting perceptions		-.16	.19*
10. Reward system perceptions		.10	.11
11. Consistent values/behaviors		.01	-.02
Control variables			
12. Tenure	-.09	.08	.10
13. Age	.12	.22*	.18
14. G.P.A.	-.04	-.09	-.12
15. Gender	.14	.08	.05
16. Person-job fit	.14	.06	.01
R^2	.17	.22	.27
F-ratio	3.23**	2.44*	2.04*

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

* Entries represent standardized coefficients. The N s for person-organization fit at Time 1 and Time 2 are 171 and 122, respectively.

Table 3 also shows the effects of socialization on person-organization fit one year after joining the firm (H2a-H2d). Person-organization fit after a year of membership is significantly related to the number of firm-related social events attended and to the time spent with a mentor, supporting hypotheses 2a and 2b. Person-organization fit at Time 2 is not related to training or socialization perceptions, and therefore hypotheses 2c and 2d are not supported. Finally, older respondents fit better at Time 2 than younger respondents.

The last equation in Table 3 offers one test of hypothesis 3, that selection and socialization provide independent explanations of person-organization fit. First, since the overall selection equation in Table 3 significantly explains 17 percent of the variance in person-organization fit at entry, personal characteristics and organizational selection processes directed at uncovering these characteristics appear to affect fit, at least initially. To gauge the separate influence of selection and socialization experiences on person-organization fit a year after entry, the incremental contribution of the selection variables, over and above the socialization variables, and the incremental contribution of the socialization variables, over and above the selection variables, were compared. The change in R^2 resulting from including the selection variables in the socialization regression equation was insignificant; however, the socialization variables added significant explanatory power ($F = 1.93, p < .05$).

Table 4 presents the results of hierarchical regressions predicting changes in person-organization fit from Time 1 to

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Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Predicting Change in Person-Organization Fit*		
Equations	H4	H3
1. POF (Time 1)	.59**	.55**
Change in R^2	.39	.39
R^2	.39	.39
Change in F -ratio	65.46**	65.46**
2. Control variables		
Tenure (Time 2)	.07	.09
Age	.14	.11
G.P.A.	-.05	-.08
Gender	.17*	.17*
Person-job fit	-.05	-.08
Change in R^2	.03	.03
R^2	.41	.41
Change in F -ratio	.90 n.s.	.90 n.s.
3. Selection		
Pre-entry time with members		.03
Achievement/confidence		-.03
Endurance/analytical		.17*
Firm acceptance rate		-.09
Competing job offers		-.11
Change in R^2		.04
R^2		.45
Change in F -ratio		1.30 n.s.
4. Socialization		
Social activities	.26**	.26**
Mentor relationship	.17*	.17*
Formal training	-.01	-.01
Recruiting perceptions	-.07	-.09
Reward system perceptions	.02	.04
Consistent values/behaviors	-.02	-.03
Self-monitoring	.06	.08
Change in R^2	.09	.09
R^2	.50	.53
Change in F -ratio	2.35*	2.32*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.
 * Variable sets are listed in the order of the step in which they were entered. Entries represent standardized coefficients.

Time 2. Specifically, hypothesis 4, that openness to socialization (coupled with socialization experiences) will be positively related to change in person-organization fit, was tested. Change in person-organization fit was calculated by including person-organization fit at Time 1 as a predictor of person-organization fit at Time 2. In order to address the corresponding multicollinearity issues, person-organization fit at Time 1 was entered first. When subsequent independent variables were entered in the second step, their partial correlations reflected their relationship with person-organization fit at Time 2, from which fit at Time 1 influence had been removed (Cohen and Cohen, 1983: 122). Person-organization fit at Time 1 is clearly a strong predictor, but it does not perfectly predict person-organization fit at Time 2. Although neither the control variables nor self-monitoring predict changes in person-organization fit, some of the socialization variables do, collectively, accounting for 9 percent of the variance in person-organization fit.

The second equation in Table 4 was used to gauge the separate influence of selection and socialization experiences

on changes in person-organization fit. The equation represents a hierarchical regression using fit at Time 1, the control variables, the selection variables, the socialization variables, and self-monitoring. The change in R^2 resulting from including the selection variables in the socialization regression equation is insignificant, again suggesting that selection experiences do not affect the extent to which people's values change over the first year of membership. The amount of variance explained in changes in person-organization fit, however, was significantly enhanced (by 9 percent) by adding the socialization variables.

Table 5 presents regression and hierarchical regression analyses testing hypotheses 5 and 6. Hypothesis 5, that high person-organization fit at entry is positively associated with satisfaction one year later, is supported. Hypothesis 6, that high person-organization fit at entry is negatively associated with intent to leave the organization, is also supported. Even though compelling distinctions between satisfaction and intent to leave have been offered (Mobley, 1977), because satisfaction and intent to leave are highly correlated here, one could question the extent to which these represent separable constructs. To explore this, hierarchical regressions were analyzed, entering intent to leave in the first step and person-organization fit and controls in the second step when predicting satisfaction and entering satisfaction in the first step of the same equation when predicting intent to leave. Person-organization fit at both Time 1 and Time 2 (separate equations) predicted satisfaction and intent to leave even when partialing out the effects of intent to leave and satisfaction, respectively. Thus satisfaction and intent to leave each account for some independent variance.

Since departure is a dichotomous dependent variable, logistical regression and survival analyses were used.

Table 5

Hierarchical Regressions Predicting Satisfaction and Turnover Using Person-Organization Fit*

Equations	H5 (Satisfaction)	H6 (Intent to leave)	H7	
			(Satisfaction)	(Intent to leave)
1. Control variables				
Tenure	.08	.04	.05	.05
Age	-.03	-.07	-.06	-.05
G.P.A.	.02	.16	.02	.15
Gender	-.03	.11	-.07	.13
Person-job fit	.17*	-.23**	.17*	-.23**
Person-organization fit				
2. POF Time 1	.32**	-.33**	.14	-.23**
R^2	.15	.22	.15	.22
F -ratio	3.43**	5.19**	3.43**	5.18**
3. POF Time 2				
R^2			.29**	-.16
F -ratio			4.10**	4.78**
Change in R^2 from including fit at Time 2			.05	.02
Change in F -ratio			7.00**	2.13

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

* Variable sets are listed in the order of the step in which they were entered. Entries represent standardized coefficients.

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Logistical analyses showed that person-organization fit at Time 1 did not predict departure ($\chi^2 = 9.63$), however, the equation predicting departure from person-organization fit at Time 2 (without fit at Time 1 included) was significant ($\chi^2 = 21.67, p < .01$). Survival analysis is a more sensitive technique for assessing departure because it incorporates the information that some individuals did not leave, and thus it allows one to examine both the length of stay as well as whether or not a person leaves (Morita, Lee, and Mowday, 1989). Survival analysis takes explicit account of time by removing duration dependence and avoids the problem of right-censoring (Kalbfleisch and Prentice, 1980). To determine whether person-organization fit at Time 1 has an effect on staying, a survival analysis with a Weibull distribution was conducted. The log-likelihood of the base equation (controls only) was compared to the log-likelihood of the equation including person-organization fit. The difference between these was significant for fit at Time 1 ($\chi^2 = 8.90, p < .01$) and at Time 2 ($\chi^2 = 12.66, p < .01$).

Finally, Table 5 presents multiple regression analyses used to test hypothesis 7, that increases in person-organization fit after one year of membership are positively associated with satisfaction and negatively associated with intent to leave. Change in person-organization fit over the first year is a better predictor of satisfaction (change in $F = 7.00, p < .01$) than is person-organization fit at Time 1 alone. In contrast, fit at Time 1 accounts for significantly more variance in intent to leave than change in fit.

Additional Analyses

In order to assess the comparative importance of person-organization fit, additional analyses were conducted. First, it was argued above that the effects of selection and socialization on satisfaction, intent to leave, and departure are mediated by person-organization fit. Alternatively, one could argue that selection and socialization experiences lead directly to these outcomes. To distinguish between these views, the outcome regression equations, the logistical regressions, and the survival analyses were reanalyzed, with the selection variables and the socialization variables, respectively, serving as independent variables. Neither selection nor socialization experiences explained more variance than person-organization fit in satisfaction, intent to leave, or departure.

It is also plausible that individual values, rather than the match between an individual's and an organization's values, affect satisfaction, intent to leave, and departure. That is, people with certain value profiles may fit better in any organization. Exploring this possibility is complicated by the Q-sort technique: Although the rank of any value can vary across respondents, all profiles have identical means because of the requirement that a certain number of cards must be placed in a certain number of categories. For this reason, a factor analysis, guided by results from a larger study using the OCP, was conducted. O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) found that 33 items loaded at .40 or above on eight distinct factors. Based on a scree test, eight

interpretable factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and defined by at least three items emerged. The eight factors included preferences for values characterized by (1) innovation and risk taking, (2) attention to detail, (3) an orientation toward outcomes or results, (4) aggressiveness and competition, (5) supportiveness, (6) an emphasis on growth and rewards, (7) a team orientation, and (8) decisiveness. These factors were replicated in the present study, and factor scores were used in subsequent analyses. The eight value factors substituted for person-organization fit, but they failed to predict satisfaction, intent to leave, or departure.

A related question is whether firms that emphasize certain values tend to hire and keep people who fit better. This alternative explanation was explored in two ways. First, the equations predicting outcomes were reanalyzed, substituting a firm dummy variable for person-organization fit. Once again, none of these equations was significant, indicating that general differences among the firms did not explain variance in the outcomes. Second, the factor analysis findings from O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) were replicated at the firm level. Consistent with their findings, firm values were described by seven factors: (1) innovation, (2) stability, (3) respect for people, (4) outcome orientation, (5) detail orientation, (6) team orientation, and (7) aggressiveness. When the equations were reanalyzed with these firm factor scores, no significant findings emerged. Considering the alignment between individual values and organizational values thus appears to be more instructive than considering either individual or organizational values alone.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although many theories of person-situation fit have been advanced, few have focused on the congruence between patterns of organizational values and patterns of individual values. The results of this study show that spending time with members before entering the firm and being achievement oriented and confident are positively associated with alignment between individual values and firm values at entry. Attending firm-sponsored social events and spending time with a mentor are positively associated with person-organization fit one year after joining and with changes in fit. Positive changes in fit also occur among recruits who demonstrate endurance and analytical orientations.

Selection and socialization processes are typically viewed as complementary processes, such that the more effort organizations direct to selecting new members, the less socialization the new recruits will need, and vice versa. This study suggests that, to the extent that organizations desire members who share prevailing values, selection and socialization are somewhat complementary. Selection contributes significantly to value congruence at entry, but regardless of selection, socialization experiences contribute significantly to changes in person-organization fit over recruits' first year. Therefore, one contribution of this study is that it identifies some of the ways that

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person-organization fit is created, maintained, and changed during membership.

The study provides some clues about the outcomes of person-organization fit as well. Person-organization fit, assessed very early in members' tenure, predicted satisfaction and intent to stay a year later and departures two and one-half years later. When a recruit prefers the values that are prevalent in his or her organization, he or she is more satisfied and more likely to intend to and actually stay longer with the organization. Interestingly, when a recruit's preferences became more closely aligned with the organization's values over the first year, corresponding increases in satisfaction also occurred. Further, the match between a recruit's values and his or her organization's values is a better predictor of these outcomes than either the recruit's or the organization's values alone. Thus this study provides evidence that individual characteristics and organizational characteristics, here conceptualized in terms of values, are useful for predicting individual attitudes and behaviors. Simply knowing whether a strong culture exists or whether individuals have certain patterns of preferences is less informative than their simultaneous consideration.

Selection

Although a number of results confirmed hypotheses, a number of hypotheses were not supported. Among the selection hypotheses, the endurance/analytical personality criteria did not predict fit at entry. Interestingly, however, those people who scored higher on this scale were more likely to exhibit positive changes in person-organization fit at the end of their first year. Perhaps those whose personality predisposes them to endure and to be (appropriately) analytical through the somewhat tedious first-year staff job, justify their behavior by adopting the firm's value system as their own. The lack of findings at entry may reflect a slippage inherent in selection processes—organizations may identify criteria but be unable to refine procedures to allow them to select people based on these criteria.

This study provides only limited insight into the relationship between personality and person-organization fit. For example, the study cannot rule out the possibility that personality variables explain little variance in preferences or behavior (e.g., Mischel, 1968) or that personality prototypes are not used to select people. These issues remain unresolved, in part, because of the way that the personality criteria were collected from HR directors. A more informative and parsimonious approach would have requested that HR directors complete the same personality inventory as candidates, according to a profile of a successful firm member. As with the OCP, this could have been compared with candidates' self-ratings to see if their personalities were more or less similar to the successful profile. Each firm would then have a customized personality profile, allowing for a finer-grained analysis of personality similarities.

Firms' selection ratios failed to predict person-organization fit. This indicator did not vary substantially among the eight firms, but person-organization fit scores did, suggesting that

the firm-level selection ratios may not affect the extent to which value congruence is emphasized in hiring decisions. Alternatively, the measure used here may have been too global to apply to hiring decisions made about specific recruits. A better way to assess the extent to which firms hire on the basis of person-organization fit would be to assess person-organization fit for the entire applicant pool and then to collect actual hiring decisions.

The complement to the firm's selection ratio for individuals, candidates' ratio of offers to applications, also failed to predict fit at entry. One limitation of this study is that it did not trace recruits' entire search process but, rather, gathered retrospective information after recruits had joined a firm. Therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the relationship between the breadth, goals, and outcomes of a job search and the extent to which people attempt to join organizations that they think they will fit into. Thus this study cannot determine whether candidates lacked the information necessary to do their own mental assessment of how well they might fit, whether they had such information but did not weight it in their decision, or whether fit simply did not matter to them in selecting an organization. Future research that specifically tracks recruits through the job-search process and collects information about the extent to which they try to assess how well they will fit is necessary to understand this relationship. This earlier starting point is also necessary to determine the extent to which individuals' values at entry are affected by anticipatory socialization, for recruits in this study may have already changed their values, attitudes, and behaviors in anticipation of their new membership status (Feldman, 1976).

Socialization

The results also failed to support some of the socialization hypotheses. First, formal training was not related to fit. There may be a sample-specific explanation for this finding: Given the strict sequencing and required standardization of formal training mandated by the accounting profession, recruits may learn less about the norms and values of the firm and more about the technical aspects of auditing in these classes, especially in their first year. In addition, the recruiting factor was the only one that predicted person-organization fit a year after joining. Caldwell, Chatman, and O'Reilly (1990) found that members' perceptions that their firm had strong socialization practices were positively associated with perceptions that one's values were similar to the organization's. The generally weak perceptual findings in this study may reflect a distinction between perceptions of value similarity and more objectively assessed value similarity. In this study respondents were not asked to rate their perceptions of how similar their values were to their organization's; rather, this similarity was assessed by comparing their preferences to aggregated firm informants' value profiles.

Even though this study clarifies the effects of some socialization experiences, the hypotheses and findings are less specific about the psychological processes underlying value change. For example, attending firm-sponsored social

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events is related to the number of occasions available for influencing a person's values, but the sequencing of this relationship may be more complex than alluded to in hypothesis 2a. One who fits is also more likely to attend more of these functions than one who does not fit. And the positive effects of relationships with senior organization members occurs, presumably, because mentors can provide cultural information about the broader organization and its historical contexts (Louis, 1990: 101). However, we need a more explicit description of the content and form of information transmitted in these encounters (Dreher and Ash, 1990). Further, the operationalization of socialization may have been unrealistically narrow in this study. The general finding here that informal, as opposed to formal, socialization practices affect fit indicates that more explicit attempts to assess interactions with supervisors, other newcomers, and veteran peers (Louis, 1990) would be fruitful.

Finally, questions still exist about the relationship between selection and socialization processes. Even though selection experiences explained significant variance in fit early on, one implication from the relatively stronger effects of socialization on fit and changes in fit is that situations have powerful effects on values and value change. Clearly, research that captures individual characteristics, such as personality traits, and that includes a broader range of socialization experiences is necessary before we can draw such conclusions.

Changes in Person-Organization Fit

The openness-to-change hypothesis was not supported. The self-monitoring scale may be inappropriate for measuring openness to change. High self-monitors are more skilled at controlling self-presentation so that their behaviors are appropriate in an immediate situation. But their behaviors may be inconsistent with their private attitudes or values (Snyder, 1987). Thus even though high self-monitors may be more aware of the situational cues, or, in this study, the values present in an organization, and even if they behave in accordance with those values, high self-monitors' private values may remain unaffected by social cues. Other personality scales, such as the openness to experience factor of the five-factor model of personality (McCrae, 1987), may be more appropriate. In addition, other personality characteristics, such as personal control and self-esteem, may affect the extent to which people are likely to change or to exert influence.

Outcomes

Although person-organization fit at entry explains significant variance in satisfaction and departure measured a year and two and one-half years later, respectively, changes in fit over the first year affect satisfaction but not departure. This indicates that departure is affected by the absolute level of fit only, not by relative changes in fit. This inconsistency also points to the ambiguity in interpreting causation, even in a longitudinal study. It also indicates that future studies should include other conditions leading to these departures. For example, making a decision to leave an organization is

affected by macro-economic conditions and internal mobility. Exit interviews may reveal more about people's reasons for leaving. It would also be interesting to track individuals' careers across organizational contexts, to see if their values change or if each subsequent organization they join is more similar to their desired value profile.

This study showed that person-organization fit predicts certain global outcomes; however, other, more specific outcomes need to be investigated. The question revolves around the extent to which high levels of person-organization fit are good for organizations and for people. Organizations may want to distinguish between various types of person-organization fit to determine what "mix" of employees is optimal. This would depend on an organization's goals or stage of growth. For example, organizations that are trying to become more innovative may benefit from having members who do not share the same values and prioritize them according to the current organizational value system (Janis and Mann, 1977; Kanter, 1988).

Other Limitations

Generalizing these findings across organizations and industries may be problematic, given the sample size, the limited time frame, and the idiosyncracies of the public accounting industry. One question is whether the year lag between assessments of person-organization fit was a long enough time for socialization processes to affect values. And, at the macro level, recent research provides some assurance that the dimensions found here generalize across organizations and industries but that actual profiles are systematically different in each industry (Chatman and Jehn, 1991).

Continued investigation of the validity of the OCP is necessary. Using the Q-sort method involves a clear tradeoff: The standardized distribution allows profiles to be compared; however, a truly idiographic approach would allow the distribution to vary according to the object of the Q-sort (e.g., firm or individual values) and provide another dimension of information. It is important to study the true distribution of organizational and individual values. For example, bland organizations might have many items placed in the "neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic" category and few items placed in the "highly characteristic" or "highly uncharacteristic" categories, while certain "vivid" organizations would have a very different pattern in how many items are assigned to each category.

Practical Implications

The study suggests that selection and socialization practices ought to include considerations of value congruence rather than focusing exclusively on how well a candidate fits a particular job. This may encourage longer-range planning for human resource needs, especially in professional firms with long career paths. Similarly, job seekers should explicitly gather information about prospective organizations' values before deciding to join, perhaps asking questions that reveal organizational values. Thus this study reaffirms the

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common-sense notion that individuals and organizations ought to get as much information as possible about each other during the selection process.

The OCP is a semantic tool that can help top executives clarify their firms' values. Having a profile that represents these values may allow managers to sell their firms' products and services to a variety of constituents on the basis of a distinct identity, to isolate discrepancies between their ideal value profile and their current value profile, and, therefore, to instigate planned changes, such as changing culture, more effectively. This type of discrepancy assessment could also be used to identify merger or acquisition targets, since cultural discrepancies between merging organizations delay postmerger integration (Chatman and Peck, 1991).

Future Research

Future research on person-organization fit should be more explicitly interactional. In addition to isolating the relative contributions of individual elements and situational elements to person-organization fit and the subsequent effects of person-organization fit on individual and organizational behavior, a truly interactive model considers the reciprocal effects of people and organizations. While this study emphasizes how the organization affects people, we need to look more closely at how people influence organizations (e.g., Snyder, 1983; Chatman, 1989). Recruits entering a particular firm at a particular time could be tracked on the basis of their preferred values. A composite of the recruits' profiles could be calculated in the same manner as the firm profiles were in the present study. If a meaningful "composite new member profile" emerges, it could be compared to the composite firm profile over time to see if the two composites begin to converge. If the firm composite becomes more like the original new-member profile, new members have changed the organization values. This would refine the identification of reciprocal influence; for some values, recruits may adjust to the firm, whereas for others, the firm may adjust to the recruits. Recruits' abilities to affect the organization may be influenced by the size of the entering group and the demographic makeup of the current organization (e.g., O'Reilly, Caldwell, and Barnett, 1989). Thus, a large number of new members who enter at a time when there are relatively few incumbents at the next level may exert more influence on the organization's values than would a small entering class with many incumbents above them.

Past research has made a general connection between selection and socialization experiences and people's preferences and changes in their preferences. This study provides systematic evidence that this link exists and identifies a few of the specific kinds of selection and socialization experiences that are related to individuals' values. More important, from a theoretical perspective, although many studies relate individual values to behaviors, these have not typically included a consideration of the context. A person's preferences do not exist in a vacuum, they mold and are molded by particular situations.

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