Individual and Organizational Fit: It's Impact on Turkish Academic Staff

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Abstract: Achieving congruence between the values of the employee and the organization which often is called person-organization (P-O) fit that has gaining a growing interest in the organizational behavior field in recent years is the main theme of this article. Researches about P-O fit (O'Reilly & Chatman 1986; Lauver & Kristof-Brown 2001; Cable & DeRue 2002; Sekiguchi 2004; Hoffman & Woehr 2006; Nelson & Billsberry 2007) revealed that a high level of congruence has a positive impact on job attitudes of individuals and creates a number of positive outcomes for organizations.

P-O fit that affects the degree to which an individual is liked by co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates (Judge & Ferris 1992) improves individual and organizational effectiveness. Because P-O fit has been positively related to job attitudes (organizational commitment, motivation, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors) and negatively related to turnover intentions of employees, the congruence between individual and organizational values could be critical for the organizations. In this context, this study attempts to explore the relationships between the P-O fit and job satisfaction, work alienation and individual performance level of academicians. In order to test hypothesis empirically; data was collected from academicians of a State University that is being in the list of Top 500 World Universities located in Turkey. After the reliability, correlation and regression analyses, we conclude by discussing implications, limitations, and future researches concerning the P–O fit.

Keywords: Person-Organization Fit, Job Satisfaction, Work Alienation, Individual Performance, Academic Staff, Turkey.

The Concept of Person-Organization (P-O) Fit

The fit between a person and the work environment received attention from both scholars and practitioners in recent years (Schneider 2001; Ballout 2007; Kristof 1996; Chatman 1989; O'Reilly & Chatman 1986). Practitioners who study in organizational psychology field initially focused on person and environment (P-E) subject to explain the relationship between person and organization. P-E is defined as the compatibility that occurs when personal and situational characteristics of employees are well-suited (Schneider 2001). P-E fit studies have discerned between person-job fit, person-team fit and person-organization fit (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005; Vianen Van et al. 2007). The majority of P-E fit papers have evaluated individual features "needs and values" and situational/organizational characteristics "job demands and occupational type" for forecasting and clearing up the valuable results related with increased fit (Ballout 2007).

The most investigated subject within P-E fit is P-O fit (Kristof 1996) that is one of the most popular areas of research in the general management and organizational behavior fields. This domain of research captures the congruence between the characteristics of individuals (i.e., goals, skills, and values) and the characteristics of organizations (i.e., goals, values, resources, and culture) (Bright 2007). P-O fit relates a person's personality, goals and values with those of the organization (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Thus many P-O fit studies (Edwards 1996; Kristof 1996; Chatman 1989; O'Reilly & Chatman 1986) have examined the match between people's values and those of the organization, because values that are conceived of as fundamental and

relatively enduring represent conscious desires held by the person and encompass preferences, interests, motives and goals (Vianen Van et al. 2007).

P–O fit is defined as "the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs or they share similar fundamental characteristics or both" (Kristof 1996). In other words, P-O fit is the "congruency between patterns of organizational values and patterns of individual values" (Chatman 1989) emphasizing the extent to which a person and the organization share similar characteristics and meet each other's needs (Sekiguchi 2004). There are certain values that the individual carries over into his or her role, certain values that the organization imposes, and certain values that the two share. The extent to which the role-related values of the organization and those of the individual are shared indicates the degree of the individual's "fit" with the organization (Lopez 1999).

P-O fit emphasizes the importance of fit between employees and work processes and the importance of creating an organizational identity through the institutionalization of consistent values that permeate an organization's culture (Morley 2007). Thus researchers and practitioners contend that P-O fit is the key to maintaining the flexible and committed workforce that is necessary in a competitive business environment and a tight labor market (Sekiguchi 2004). In other words, P-O fit is a positive attribute that is to be promoted (Nelson & Billsberry 2007). Some scholars (e.g. Kristof, Chapman etc.) categorized P-O fit according to their empirical studies. Kristof (1996) identified four different operationalizations of P-O fit:

- The first one is the congruence between individual and organizational values.
- The second one is goal congruence with organizational leaders.
- The third one is the match between individual preferences or needs and organizational systems and structures.
- The fourth one is the match between the characteristics of individual personality and organizational climate.

As well to labeling demand-abilities and needs-supplies fit within P-O fit construct, P-O fit also includes supplementary fit and complementary fit, both of which are important in P-O fit studies (Morley 2007; Piasentin & Chapman 2006; Nikolaou 2003). Piasentin & Chapman (2006) identify four common definitions of P-O fit, namely:

Supplementary fit where an individual possesses characteristics that are similar to existing organizational characteristics.

Complementary fit where an individual fills a void or adds something that is missing in the organization.

Needs-supplies fit where an individual's needs are fulfilled by the organization.

Demand-abilities fit where an individual's abilities meet the demands of the organization.

Supplementary fit has to do with matching similar levels of characteristics between employees and organizations, whereas complementary fit is concerned with bridging the gap between the patterns of these assessed characteristics, however, needs-supplies and abilities-demands fit have attracted more P-O fit researchers as they apply to congruence and vocational choice theories (Piasentin & Chapman 2006; Morley 2007; Nikolaou 2003; Ballout 2007).

Most P-O fit studies have used needs and values as attributes of comparison between persons and organizations (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Because organizational needs and individual needs are important factors in P-O fit investigations, a sample list of organizational and individual needs for each organization included in Table 1. The degree of similarity between these lists is an indicator of the degree of the P-O fit (Silverthorne 2004).

Table 1: Sample Organizational and Individual Needs List

Organizational Needs	Individual Needs
Loyalty to the organization	Good salary
Hard work	Job security
Employee cooperation	Being with other people
Creativity	Good supervision
Following directions	Opportunity for promotion
Good quality of work outcomes	Challenging work
Commitment to the organization's objectives	Feeling of achievement
Comradeship with colleagues	Good working conditions
Respect for authority	Being involved in the organizational climate
Employee satisfaction	Ability to take responsibility

Source: Silverthorne, C. (2004). The impact of organizational culture and person-organization fit on organizational commitment and job satisfaction in Taiwan. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 25 (7), 592–599.

The Relationships between P-O Fit and Job Attitudes

P-O fit is a key factor with great influence on employee outcomes. Thus it is assumed that both individuals and organizations will be more effective when the values of the person and organization are congruent (Shin & Holland 2004). In the aggregate, empirical studies provide convincing evidence that P-O values fit is an important determinant of long-term consequences for employees (e.g. work attitude, intention to quit and turnover, prosocial behavior, self-reported teamwork, contextual performance and self-report work performance), organizational entry (e.g. individual job search), and socialization (Huang 2005; O'Reilly & Chatman 1986; Sekiguchi 2004). A high level of P-O fit is likely to increase commitment and motivation of employees toward task performance and their engagement in good and lasting relationships (mentoring relationships, organizational citizenship behaviors) with their employers, which in turn will result in positive organizational outcomes (Ballout 2007). P-O fit has influence on many job attitudes of employees, but in this study specifically we focus on the influence of P-O fit on job satisfaction, work alienation and individual performance.

P-O fit has been studied as a potential inductor of job choice decisions and job attitudes (e.g. trust, commitment and satisfaction) (Cable & Judge 1996; Zoghbi & Manrique De 2008). In this context, P-O fit has been shown to play a significant role in how job applicants choose organizations (Saks & Ashforth 1997) and how recruiters select applicants (Kristof-Brown 2000). In addition to this, interactionist research suggests that an employee's job attitudes such as satisfaction and organizational commitment result from the relationship between the attributes of the job and the values required in that situation. In other words, jobs that the employee perceives as providing him or her with important values are satisfying, whereas jobs that the employee perceives as being incongruent with his or her values are dissatisfying (Judge et al. 1997; Lopez 1999). Following this approach, if employees don't have values that are consistent with those of their organization, and therefore lacks proper fit, they experience feelings of incompetence and anxiety (Chatman 1989). P-O misfit would also lead to disconnected personal values for the organization, bringing out emotion of low self-esteem and lack of trust (Kristof 1996; Kuczmarski & Kuczmarski 1995; Saks & Ashforth 1997; Vianen Van 2000; Zoghbi & Manrique De 2008), minimize motivation in work environment and decrease in organizational commitment (Cable & Judge 1996; Chatman 1989; McConnell 2003; O'Reilly & Chatman 1986; Silverthorne 2004; Vianen Van 2000; Westerman & Cyr 2004; Papavero 2007).

Previous literature about person-organization fit suggests that similarity in the values of the employee and the organization bring out positive outcomes for both of them. While past researches have examined various aspects and impacts of fit, we specifically focus on the relationships among P-O fit and three key employee attitudes—job satisfaction, work alienation and individual performance. In this direction, it is proposed that the degree of congruence between the values of the employee and the organization will be positively related to employee job satisfaction and performance level and negatively related to three dimensions of work alienation.

Studies of the impact of P-O fit on individuals find powerful correlations between P-O fit and greater levels of job satisfaction (Nelson & Billsberry 2007; O'Reilly & Chatman 1986; Sekiguchi 2004; Lopez 1999). Thus P-O fit researchers theorize that the degree to which an individual's and organization's values overlap, termed value-goal congruence (Chatman 1991), the more satisfied the employee will be in his or her job. On the reverse side, lack of value-goal congruence reduces employee job satisfaction, most likely through violation of employee expectations, which in turn causes employee turnover (Bright 2007; Wheeler et al. 2007; Ostroff et al. 2005). In this direction the following hypothesis are proposed:

P_1: *P-O fit will be positively related to job satisfaction of academicians.*

Work alienation that refers to subjective feeling states which are the result of objective work conditions is defined as a discrepancy between the workers' perception of objective task conditions along specific dimensions (control, purpose and self-expression) and their expectations regarding these dimensions, which is further intensified by the importance or salience of these dimensions. The outcomes of work alienation are a feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness and hence a sense of self-estrangement in work (Mottaz 1981). According to this, *powerlessness* exists when workers are unable to control their job activities; *meaninglessness* exists when workers contribute only minutely to the total product; and *self-estrangement* exists when workers view work as a means to some other end such as making money, rather than as a means of personal self-fulfillment (Shepard 1977; Mottaz 1981).

Work alienation is the degree to which an individual identifies psychologically with a specific type of work; it reflects a situation in which an individual cares little about work, approaches work with little energy and works primarily for extrinsic rewards. In this context, business managers consider awareness of the work alienation and organizational commitment of their employees to be a key concern. Ostensibly, highly committed, less alienated employees are more productive and less likely to leave the organization (Michaels et al. 1996).

Work alienation represents a generalized, unenthusiastic outlook toward the world of work that indicates a low level of engagement in the work role and portrays a low level of positive affect for the world of work (Hirschfeld & Field 2000). This unenthusiastic outlook toward work is typically regarded as stemming from people perceiving that, in general, work endeavors do not contribute to the attainment of their personal goals or salient needs. Because work alienation represents a generalized tendency to respond to work endeavors and contexts in a detached manner (Hirschfeld 2002), it is proposed that, the closer the congruence between employees' values and their organizations' values, the lower the employees' work alienation. In this direction the following hypothesis are proposed:

P₂: P-O fit will be negatively related to the powerlessness dimension of work alienation.
P₃: P-O fit will be negatively related to the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation.
P₄: P-O fit will be negatively related to the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation.
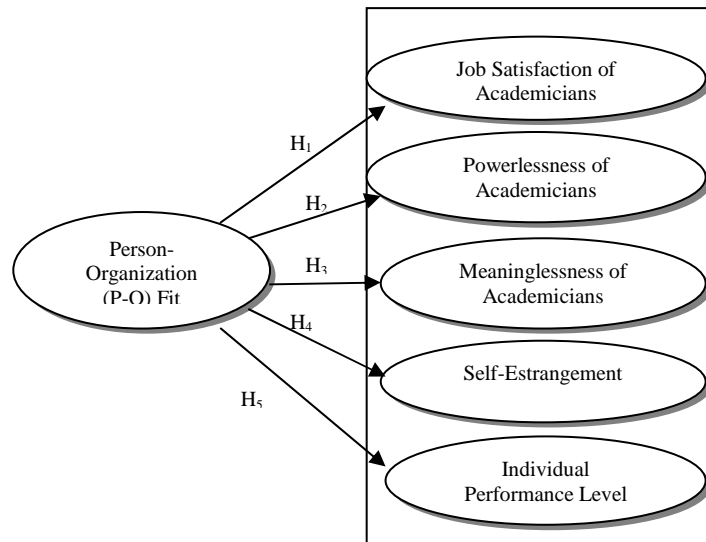

Figure 1: The Relationship between Research Variables

The P-O fit literature strongly suggests that individuals who are compatible with the characteristics of their organization will have higher performance than individuals who are less compatible (Bright 2007). In a foundational work, Pervin (1968) theorized that when a match exists between individual and organizational characteristics, performance tends to be high and stress tends to be low (O'Reilly et al. 1991). But only a few studies examined the P-O fit – job performance relation and their results remained unclear. Unlike earlier studies which showed P-O fit to relate negatively to indices of job performance (i.e., Becker et al. 1996; Meglino et al. 1989), the study of Shin and Holland (2004) indicated that as indices of P-O fit increased, so did job performance (Shin & Holland 2004). In this context, as the congruence between individuals and organizations increases, employees become more committed and productive (Bright 2007). In this direction the following hypothesis is proposed:

P₅: P-O fit will be positively related to individual performance level of academicians.

Method

In order to test hypothesizes empirically; data was collected from academicians of a State University that is located in Turkey. All scales used in this study were translated into Turkish and then translated independently back into English (Brislin 1980). The questionnaire measured P-O fit, job satisfaction, work alienation and job performance along with demographic variables of academicians. The questionnaire which contained these measures was distributed to 256 randomly selected academicians of 9 faculties, 3 high schools and 9 vocational schools of a State University. At the end of the survey 187 questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 73 percent. In study 41.7 percent of respondents were women (78) and 58.3 percent were men (109).

In table 3 we see the age range of academic staff. 26.7 percent of them are between 25-31 age. 38.5 percent of them are 32-38 age. 17.1 percent of respondents are between 39-45 and 12.3 percent of them are between 53-59 age. So we can say that most of the staff is in the middle age.

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Table 3: Age And Tenure of Academicians

Age			Tenure		
Age	Frequency	Percent	Years	Frequency	Percent
18-24	1	.5	1-5	48	25.7
25-31	50	26.7	6-10	62	33.2
32-38	72	38.5	11-15	37	19.8
39-45	32	17.1	16-20	18	9.6
46-52	23	12.3	21-25	14	7.5
53-59	6	3.2	26 and +	8	4.3
60 and +	3	1.6			

Academic staff's tenure is shown in table 3. According to table, 25.7 percent of the staffs are between 1-5 years job tenure. 33.2 percent are between 6-10 years, 19.8 percent are 11-15 years, 9.6 percent are 16-20 years and 7.5 percent are 21-25 years.

Measures and Analyses

In this study person-organization fit was measured by three items adapted from Cable&Judge (1996). Work alienation was measured a scale (powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement) proposed by Mottaz (1981), job satisfaction was measured five items adapted by Brown&Peterson (1994), and individual performance was measured by four items adapted from Kirkman and Rosen (1999). All constructs were measured with scales adapted from existing scales. All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale where "1 strongly agree" and "5 strongly disagree".

This study assessed perceived P-O fit. In perceived or direct P-O fit, academic personnel estimated the extent to which their values are similar to those of their University. We used the three-item five-point Likert scale developed by Cable and Judge (1996). Items include "My values match those currently in the organization", "The values and 'personality' of this organization reflect my own values and personality", and "I feel my values 'match' or fit this organization and the current employees in this organization". Job satisfaction was measured a scale developed by Brown and Peterson (1994). The demographic variables in the study are age, gender and job tenure. In addition to these, the questionnaire includes the department and academic rank of respondents.

In study the coefficient alpha was used to estimate the reliability for scales. Three items for P-O fit measure had alpha reliabilities 0.82. Alpha reliability for job satisfaction was 0.74, for powerlessness was 0.79, for meaninglessness was 0.64 and for self-estrangement of academicians was 0.79. These results indicate that the internal consistency reliabilities for all of the scales were reasonable.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient Alpha	N
P-O Fit	2.7362	.89765	.8228	187
Job Satisfaction	2.2130	.74350	.8637	187
Work Alienation				
• Powerlessness	2.3066	.80981	.7948	187
• Meaninglessness	2.3155	.60078	.6452	187
• Self-Estrangement	3.0419	.31233	.7941	187
Job Performance	2.0936	.66645	.8096	187

After the reliability analyses, means and standard deviations for each variable were calculated and a correlation matrix of all variables used in hypothesis testing was created. Means, standard deviations, coefficient alpha and correlations among all scales used in the analyses are shown in Table 4 and 5. The means and standard deviations are within the expected ranges.

Table 5: Pearson Correlations Among All Research Variables

Research Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.P-O Fit	1					
2.Job Satisfaction	.556**	1				
3.Powerlessness	.314**	.485**	1			
4.Meaninglessness	.401**	.543**	.420**	1		
5. Self-Estrangement	-.057	.109	.041	.084	1	
6.Job Performance	.296**	.447**	.227**	.288**	.111	1
Means	2.7362	2.2130	2.3066	2.3155	3.0419	2.0936
Std.Deviation	.89765	.74350	.80981	.60078	.31233	.66645
N	187	187	187	187	187	187

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The pattern of correlations is supportive of our four hypothesizes. That is, correlation coefficients between P-O fit and job satisfaction, job performance are significant and in the predicted direction (positively related). For example, P-O fit correlate with job satisfaction .556 (strongly correlate) and with job performance .296 (weakly correlate). Correlation coefficients between P-O fit and powerlessness, meaninglessness are significant and in the not predicted direction (positively related). For example, P-O fit correlate with powerlessness .314, with meaninglessness .401. But correlation coefficient between P-O fit and self-estrangement is non-significant, and not supportive of our fourth hypothesis.

Results

The findings show that P-O fit is related to job satisfaction and job performance of academicians. In addition to this, P-O fit is positively related to meaninglessness and powerlessness, and non-significant relation with self-estrangement.

Results support P_1, P_5 indicating that P-O fit positively related to academicians' job satisfaction behaviors. It was proposed that as the compatibility between academicians and their organization increases, job performance will also increase. This hypothesis was weakly supported by the findings of the current study. As the congruence between the respondents and their organization increased, their job performance also increased. Therefore, P_1 and P_5 were supported. P-O fit positively related to academicians' powerlessness and meaninglessness behaviors directed at their university. Therefore, P_2 and P_3 were not supported. P-O fit and self-estrangement is non-significant. So there is no relation between them. Therefore, P_2, P_3 and P_4 were not supported.

Limitations and Implications

This study makes an important contribution to the literature, but is limited by two key issues. First, the results are based on a single sample. An important consideration is whether the findings of this study will generalize across jobs and organizations. In this context more research is needed to untangle the varying relationships between P-O fit indices and employee job attitudes.

In this study we examined perceived congruence between organizational and employees' values. Recent studies have confirmed that both perceived and actual fit with the organization have independent and interactive relationships with job attitudes (Ravlin & Ritchie 2006).

Even though the vast amount of research on P-O fit that has been already done, there still are a lot of research opportunities to investigate the role of P-O fit in organizations. Future research is expected to include new topics such as the simultaneous effects of P-O fit on many other work attitudes e.g. organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational commitment, tenure, career success and turnover intention in a cross-cultural perspective.

Conclusion

Empirical facts have shown that a high level of P-O fit is related to academicians work behaviors and performance. Fit has been positively related to individuals' job satisfaction and job performance and positively

related to work alienation. While past researches have examined various aspects of fit we specifically focus on the relationship between perceived P-O fit and job performance and job satisfaction, work alienation of academicians.

The research results show that P–O was positively related to individuals' satisfaction and performance consistent with previous research. According to this, the closer the congruence between academicians' values and their universities' values, the higher the academicians' job satisfaction and performance. The results also provide that P-O was positively related to powerlessness and meaninglessness at work. The other result shows that there is a non-significant relation between P-O fit and self-estrangement. These results were inconsistent with the literature. Therefore, the consequences partially reinforce the findings from earlier research (Chatman 1991) that the concept of P-O fit plays an important role for academicians in a variety of organizational settings. Finally, this research provides support for the importance of P-O fit in organizations (Silverthorne 2004) and also indicates the incongruity between P-O fit and work alienation in Turkish State University.

This empirical research shows that P-O fit results were estimated direction in Turkish State University, as compared with literature for job satisfaction and performance. On the other hand P-O fit and results about work alienation were inconsistent with the literature. It means that P-O fit level increase work alienation (powerlessness and meaninglessness) increase at the same directions. As academicians and organization fit seems high we can say that our research result is indicating some important problems such as weak organizational culture and leadership style. Therefore, the future studies should search the reasons of work alienation and P-O fit results. And also further cross-cultural studies should be done at the state and private universities' academic staffs in different countries.

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