

APPLICANT PERSONALITY, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, AND ORGANIZATION ATTRACTION

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This study examined the dispositional basis of job seekers' organizational culture preferences and how these preferences interact with recruiting organizations' cultures in their relation to organization attraction. Data were collected from 182 business, engineering, and industrial relations students who were seeking positions at the time of the study. Results obtained from multiple sources suggested that the Big Five personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) generally were related to hypothesized dimensions of culture preferences. Results also suggested that both objective person-organization fit (congruence between applicant culture preferences and recruiting organization's reputed culture) and subjective fit (applicant's direct perception of fit) were related to organization attraction. Further, subjective fit mediated the relationship between objective fit and organization attraction.

The expanding literature on job and organizational choice indicates that applicants are attracted to work environments that are compatible with their personal characteristics (Kristof, 1996). Although falling under the rubric of person-organization fit, however, research has considered fit as congruence between a diverse collection of applicant and organizational attributes. Job seekers' goals, values, needs, interests, and personalities have been compared with organizations' cultures, pay systems, sizes, structures, and values. In light of the myriad applicant and organizational characteristics that could be compared, two advances have been (a) to focus the definition of person-organization fit on similarity in terms of values (Chatman, 1989, 1991; Dawis, 1990) and (b) to develop value typologies that are commensurate with both individuals and organizations (Dawis, 1990; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991).

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Although past investigations have made important contributions, research is needed to explicate the system of relationships surrounding person-organization fit during the job choice process. Specifically, it is important to establish the antecedents and consequences of job seekers' work values and person-organization fit perceptions. In addition to the basic theoretical importance of understanding the factors that relate to work values and how these work values interact with organizational cultures, the implications of how job seekers obtain work values, and how they use person-organization fit impressions in their decisions, are direct for recruiting organizations. Namely, if preferred applicants consistently self-select out of an organization's recruitment process based on a perceived lack of fit, it is critical to know the source and the outcomes of those perceptions. For example, organizations may make investment decisions regarding selection and socialization processes based on the perceived malleability of job seekers' work values (Chatman, 1991).

Regarding the antecedents of person-organization fit, it is important to establish why job seekers possess certain work values which, as discussed later, emerge as organizational culture preferences. Research has indicated that individuals' work values are shaped by a number of factors, including their country of origin (Hofstede, 1980), education and career choices (Kohn & Schooler, 1978), and organizational socialization experiences (Chatman, 1991). One likely antecedent of job seekers' work values is personality. Personality traits are individuals' stable, even innate mental structures which provide general direction for their choices and behavior (Cattell, 1943; Hogan, 1991), and therefore should affect individuals' work values. However, little research has investigated the relationship between personality traits and work values.

Regarding the outcomes of person-organization fit, it is important to establish how fit is interpreted by job seekers, and whether they actually use fit perceptions when making job choice decisions. Little research has investigated job seekers' subjective interpretations of fit, or whether fit perceptions emerge from the interaction between job seekers' culture preferences and organizational cultures. Furthermore, although policy-capturing research has shown that fit influences attraction to hypothetical organizations (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1994; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Turban & Keon, 1993), linking person-organization fit with pursuit of *actual* recruiting organizations remains a significant area for development in the literature (e.g., Rynes, 1992; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995).

Based on the lack of research on these important questions, the purpose of this study is to examine applicant personality and person-organization fit during the job choice process. Specifically, we investigate the relationship between individuals' personality traits and organizational culture preferences. We then compare job seekers' culture

preferences to the cultures of the organizations with which they interviewed, and examine the relationships between person-organization fit, organizational attractiveness, and actual job choice decisions.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Personality, Values, and Organizational Culture Preferences

Cattell (1943) suggested that personality can be measured by the observation of traits, where he defined personality as that which tells a person what to do in a given situation. Consistent with this trait definition, personality is stable across individuals' lives and has a strong genetic component (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Perhaps because personality traits are so generalized and enduring, however, it may be difficult to predict individuals' choices between specific stimuli (such as job choices) based on personality traits. This necessitates consideration of values, which are defined and described below.

One of the most accepted definitions of values was forwarded by Locke (1976), who suggested that a value "is that which one acts to gain and/or keep" (p. 1304). From this perspective, values are what an individual regards as conducive to his or her welfare, and therefore what an individual wants or seeks to obtain. Another influential interpretation of values was provided by Rokeach (1973), who defined values as intrinsic, enduring perspectives of what is fundamentally right or wrong. These conceptualizations of values imply that unlike personality, which is stable and to some degree innate, values are subjective judgments and are learned, and therefore are less static than personality. This explication has been substantiated by empirical research indicating that although values are relatively enduring, they may be modified and transformed by such activities as socialization experiences in new work environments (e.g., Chatman, 1991; Kohn & Schooler, 1978).

There are few differences between values and preferences, except that preferences are situation-specific, and thus are even more immediate to choices among stimuli than values (Dawis, 1990). Accordingly, England (1967) suggested that values are manifested in preferences but are somewhat broader and more ingrained, and Dawis (1990) noted that values represent the mediating belief system between more basic dispositions (traits) and the choice of preferred environments. Thus, preferences represent the transition from the person to the situation; as Allport (1937) argued, values are translated into behaviors by preference.

The above discussion indicates that broad, enduring traits (e.g., personality) affect individuals' specific reactions to particular environments through their effects on individuals' values and preferences. Thus, in the

context of job choice, applicants' work values and preferences for specific organizational environments should be a function of their broader and more stable personality traits. Although empirical support exists for the relationship between work values and organization attraction (Judge & Bretz, 1992), little research has investigated personality as a source of work values or organizational culture preferences.

Dimensionality and Composition of Personality and Values

Thus far we have argued that (a) personality and values are related but distinct concepts, (b) personality traits influence individuals' work values, and (c) in a job choice context, work values can be expressed in preferences for certain organizational cultures. To show specifically how these constructs are linked in the process of organizational entry, we must first describe the composition or dimensionality of personality and values. Having already defined these concepts, in the ensuing two sections we discuss the dimensionality of personality and values according to accepted descriptive frameworks.

Dimensionality of personality. The Five Factor Model of personality, often termed the Big Five (Goldberg, 1990), has provided a unifying framework for the study of personality. The 5-factor structure has generalized across cultures and rating formats (self, peer, observer, and stranger ratings), and there is evidence that the Big Five are heritable and stable over time (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Although the Big Five has increasing support among personality researchers, it should be noted that this acceptance is not universal and some researchers have extracted more or less than five factors (see Block, 1995, for a critique of the 5-factor model). The factors comprising the Big Five are: (a) *Extraversion*, which represents the tendency to be sociable, assertive, active, and directive, (b) *Agreeableness*, representing the tendency to be likable, cheerful, adaptable, and cooperative, (c) *Conscientiousness*, comprised of two major subfactors, achievement and dependability, (d) *Neuroticism*, which is the tendency to exhibit poor emotional adjustment and experience negative affects such as fear, anxiety, and impulsivity, and (e) *Openness to experience*, which is the disposition to be curious, creative, nonconforming, and autonomous.

Although the origins of the 5-factor model are empirical, recent conceptual developments have provided support for the model in several domains (Saucier & Goldberg, 1996). The most important of these is the lexical approach, which is based on the assumption that "... all aspects of human personality which are or have been of importance, interest, or utility have already become recorded in the substance of language"

(Cattell, 1943, p. 483). The lexical approach further assumes that the degree of representation of an attribute in language roughly corresponds to its importance (Saucier & Goldberg, 1996). Thus, the lexical approach argues that the structure of personality can best be determined through study of the languages that are used to describe the person. As a result, the lexical approach defines the dimensionality of personality by considering the phenotypic (observable) attributes of individuals which are described in language. The lexical approach strongly supports the 5-factor model in that the thousands of trait adjectives found in many languages can be collapsed into five replicable categories representing the Big Five traits (Goldberg, 1990).

Dimensionality of organizational culture preferences. Research has indicated the importance of job seekers' and employees' organizational culture preferences in predicting their job choice decisions and work attitudes (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Bretz, 1992; O'Reilly et al., 1991). However, little research has investigated the dimensionality of individuals' culture preferences. Although it is unlikely that any typology of culture preferences perfectly captures a large number of diverse job seekers, O'Reilly et al. (1991) found that eight factors approximate many of the dimensions to which the qualitative literature on culture has often referred (e.g., Deal & Kennedy, 1982). The eight factors representing organizational culture preferences identified by O'Reilly et al. are: (a) *innovation* (degree to which individuals prefer organizations that promote risk taking, experimentation and that fail to emphasize being careful, stable, or secure); (b) *attention to detail* (degree to which individuals prefer cultures that are analytical, attend to details, and are precise); (c) *outcome orientation* (degree to which individuals prefer cultures that are achievement-oriented, are demanding and results-oriented, and promote high expectations); (d) *aggressiveness* (degree to which individuals prefer organizations that emphasize aggressiveness, competition, and opportunities); (e) *supportiveness* (degree to which individuals prefer organizations that are supportive, promote sharing information, and praise good performance); (f) *emphasis on rewards* (degree to which individuals prefer organizations that value high pay for performance and professional growth); (g) *team orientation* (degree to which individuals prefer cultures that are team-oriented and promote collaboration); (h) *decisiveness* (degree to which individuals prefer organizations that value decisiveness, predictability, and low conflict). This last factor was the weakest extracted, perhaps because the values comprising this factor are quite diverse.

Hypothesized Relations Between Personality and Organizational Culture Preferences

The interactionist perspective and the corresponding literature on situation selection provide justification for the general proposition that work environment preferences are, in part, dispositionally based. Personality researchers since Allport (1937) have argued that individuals seek out situations that are congruent with their personalities, and empirical research supports this basic tenet of interactional psychology (e.g., Diener, Larsen, & Emmons, 1984; Emmons, Diener, & Larsen, 1986). Because employment represents such an important aspect of individuals' lives (Schein, 1982), job seekers are expected to be concerned with organizational values and culture. As noted by Popovich and Wanous (1982), joining a particular organization is a concrete, public expression of values. Accordingly, we propose that job seekers prefer organizational cultures that are consonant with their personality. In fact, some exploratory research has provided initial support for the relationship between personality traits and values preferences (O'Reilly et al., 1991). To develop past research, we next propose a system of hypothesized relations between personality and culture preferences, grouped according to the factors comprising the 5-factor model.

Neuroticism. Individuals who score high on measures of neuroticism are likely to be rigid, unadaptable, and timid (Wiggins, 1996). Neurotic individuals also are prone to anxiety, manifesting itself in tendencies to be fearful of novel situations and susceptibility to feelings of dependence and helplessness (Wiggins, 1996). The lexical approach indicates that the adjectives insecure, submissive, indecisive, and lethargic are associated with the neuroticism factor (Goldberg, 1990). Research also shows that neuroticism is associated with psychological distress in dealing with short- and long-term life changes (Ormel & Wohlfarth, 1991) and difficulty in decision-making tasks (Forgas, 1989).

These descriptions of neuroticism appear relevant to two aspects of organizational cultures and culture preferences: innovation and decisiveness. Past research has conceptualized firms' innovation by the degree to which they continuously develop new methods and procedures for doing business rather than following established approaches (e.g., Covin & Slevin, 1990). Not surprisingly, innovative firms encourage experimentation and risk-taking by employees, and generally are not environments characterized by high stability and security (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Judging from the above description of neuroticism, then, it appears unlikely that individuals scoring high on neuroticism would be attracted to innovative firms. The description of neuroticism provided by past research also indicates that these individuals will dislike environments demanding interpersonal conflict or decisiveness (Goldberg, 1990). Because these attributes are components of decisive organizational culture preferences (e.g., O'Reilly et al., 1991), we expect that

individuals scoring high on neuroticism will be less attracted to decisive organizational cultures. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Job seekers who score high on neuroticism will be less attracted to (a) innovative and (b) decisive organizational cultures.

Extraversion. The most obvious aspect of extraversion is sociability. As Costa and McCrae (1992) noted, extroverts "... like people and prefer large groups and gatherings" (p. 15). However, sociability and affiliation are not the only characteristics of extroverts. Extroverts also are assertive, bold, forceful, and surgent (Goldberg, 1990), suggesting a link between extraversion and aggressiveness. In fact, biological research shows that extroverts have higher levels of arousal, which is linked to aggressive behavior (Eysenck, 1990).

Due to their affiliative tendencies, extroverts should be attracted to team-oriented organizational cultures. In fact, Emmons et al. (1986) found that extroverts, when choosing how to spend their spare time, selected social activities (as opposed to being alone) and were attracted to team sports. Furthermore, O'Reilly et al. (1991) found that affiliative individuals preferred team-oriented cultures. On the other hand, the aggressiveness of extroverts suggests that they may not value the sensitivity and tact required in supportive cultures but they may be attracted to aggressive cultures. In fact, O'Reilly et al. found that two aspects of extraversion, dominance and aggressiveness, were associated with preferences for aggressive cultures and lack of preferences for supportive cultures. Thus,

Hypothesis 2: Job seekers who score high on extraversion will be attracted to (a) aggressive and (b) team-oriented organizational cultures and less attracted to (c) supportive cultures.

Openness to experience. Individuals who score high on openness to experience are described as imaginative, original, unconventional, and independent (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Evidence consistently demonstrates that openness to experience is positively related to creativity and divergent thinking (McCrae, 1987). A recent review of the literature on organizational creativity indicated that the profile of a creative individual is someone who places value on esthetic qualities in experience, has broad interests, is attracted to complexity, and displays independence of judgment and autonomy (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). As each of these terms has been used to describe individuals high in openness to experience (Costa & McCrae, 1992), the link between openness and creativity seems clear.

Organizations striving to be innovative depend on the creativity of

individuals (Woodman et al., 1993), as well as several other individual characteristics. Two of these attributes are willingness to change and autonomy. A meta-analysis of the literature on organizational innovation revealed that management willingness to change was one of the best correlates of organizational innovation (Damanpour, 1991). A survey of scientists found that autonomy was the most cited factor leading to innovation (Galbraith, 1982). Thus, innovative cultures must promote creativity and the central means through which they do this is through openness, willingness to change, and autonomy (O'Reilly, 1989). Furthermore, because open individuals are nonconforming and autonomous (Goldberg, 1990), they should be less attracted to detailed-oriented cultures that demand adherence to precise rules and procedures. They also should be less attracted to team-oriented cultures that may limit individual autonomy. In fact, O'Reilly et al. (1991) found that autonomy was positively related to preferences for innovative cultures while negatively associated with preferences for team-oriented cultures. Thus,

Hypothesis 3: Job seekers who score high on openness to experience will be more attracted to (a) innovative organizational cultures and less attracted to (b) detail- and (c) team-oriented cultures.

Agreeableness. Like extraversion, agreeableness is a dimension of interpersonal behavior. In fact, agreeableness forms a central aspect of Wiggins' interpersonal circumplex that describes preferred social interactions. Agreeable individuals are altruistic, warm, generous, trusting, and cooperative (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Research indicates that agreeableness is negatively related to aggression and hostility and positively related to cooperation (Zuckerman, Kuhlman, Joireman, & Teta, 1993).

The composition of agreeableness suggests several cultural preferences. Supportive cultures value tolerance and respect for people while aggressive cultures appear to place little weight on these values (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Because agreeable individuals value support and cooperation and avoid conflict (Costa & McCrae, 1992), they should be attracted to supportive organizational cultures and repelled by aggressive cultures (O'Reilly et al.). Similarly, because team-oriented cultures emphasize cooperation (Kabanoff, Waldersee, & Cohen, 1995), this culture fits well with the cooperative tendencies of agreeable personalities. In fact, research indicates that nurturing individuals prefer team cultures (O'Reilly et al.). Although agreeableness is socially desirable, high levels of agreeableness have been associated with the dependent personality disorder (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Thus, high agreeableness is associated with passivity, dependence, and conformance while low agreeableness is associated with narcissism, cynicism, and greed (Costa & McCrae,

1992; Goldberg, 1992). Because decisive cultures are likely to emphasize self-reliance and outcome-oriented cultures value action and results (Sheridan, 1992), the tendencies of highly agreeable individuals to be passive and generous should make them less attracted to decisive and outcome-oriented cultures. Thus,

Hypothesis 4: Job seekers scoring high on agreeableness will be more attracted to (a) supportive and (b) team-oriented organizational cultures and less attracted to (c) aggressive, (d) outcome-oriented, and (e) decisive organizational cultures.

Conscientiousness. The two major facets of conscientiousness are achievement and dependability (Mount & Barrick, 1995). Thus, conscientious individuals are ambitious, practical, and persistent, as well as scrupulous, careful, and neat (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Although conscientiousness may appear to be a universally desirable trait, conscientious individuals also tend to be controlled, rule-bound, cautious, and risk averse (Goldberg, 1990).

The characteristics of conscientiousness suggest individual preferences for certain organizational cultures. First, conscientious individuals, being orderly and meticulous (Goldberg, 1992), should be attracted to detail-oriented cultures because such cultures have norms for precision and accuracy (Sheridan, 1992). Second, conscientious individuals are ambitious and achievement-oriented, as evidenced by research showing that conscientiousness is the best personality predictor of academic achievement and job performance (Mount & Barrick, 1995). Because outcome-oriented cultures have high performance expectations and norms of personal achievement (Sheridan, 1992) and reward-oriented cultures emphasize high pay for good performance and career opportunities (O'Reilly et al., 1991), conscientious individuals should be attracted to these cultures. Finally, the cautious, risk averse nature of conscientious individuals (Goldberg, 1990) does not appear compatible with innovative cultures that value risk-taking and inventiveness (O'Reilly et al., 1991). In fact, Diener et al. (1984) found that need for order was negatively related to choice of novel situations. Because innovative cultures may force people into new, unfamiliar situations (O'Reilly, 1989), it is expected that conscientious individuals' need for order will repel them from innovative cultures. Thus,

Hypothesis 5: Job seekers scoring high on conscientiousness will be attracted to (a) detail-oriented, (b) outcome-oriented, and (c) rewards-oriented organizational cultures and less attracted to (d) innovative cultures.

Hypothesized Relations Between Person-Organization Fit and Organization Attraction

Having hypothesized a series of relations between personality traits and culture preferences, the next step is to conceptualize the linkages between how these culture preferences interact with organizational culture in their relation to fit perceptions and organization attraction. Before describing the justification for these hypothesized linkages, we first define and describe the constructs.

Consistent with conceptions of person-environment fit (Dawis, 1990), Kristof (1996) has made a distinction between "objective" and "subjective" person-organization fit. According to Kristof (1996), objective fit refers to actual fit, or fit that is defined as an empirical relationship between separate assessments of individual and organizational values. In the present study objective fit is the similarity between a job seeker's culture preferences and an organization's reputed culture. On the other hand, subjective or perceived fit represents individuals' direct judgments of how well they fit (or would fit in a job choice context) in the organization. Thus, subjective fit represents job seekers' holistic interpretations of how well their personal characteristics match organizational characteristics (Kristof, 1996). It is important to investigate the relationship between objective and subjective fit because although both concepts are meant to assess the same basic construct ("true" person-organization fit), there are many motivational and cognitive biases that may divorce fit perceptions from an objective assessment of fit. Despite the fact that objective and subjective fit often may diverge, we expect them to be related. There is theoretical and empirical justification for this expectation. Conceptually, the prediction that subjective fit should lead to objective fit is derived from the attraction component of Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model, which suggests that job seekers base their fit perceptions on the correspondence between their values and those of organizations. Furthermore, Chatman's (1989) interactionist framework suggests that job seekers' objective fit with organizations should predict their subjective fit perceptions. Supporting these arguments, Cable and Judge (1996) found that objective person-organization fit significantly predicted subjective fit ($\beta = +.26, p < .01$). Thus,

Hypothesis 6: Objective person-organization fit will be positively related to subjective (perceived) person-organization fit.

It would seem fairly obvious that individuals would be attracted to organizations that they feel share their values. Although the conceptual relationship between subjective fit and organization attraction appears

direct, little empirical research has confirmed that perceptions of fit are related to attraction toward actual (as opposed to hypothetical) organizations. In fact, only one study has been published that examines the relationship between fit and applicant attraction to actual organizations (Tom, 1971). However, Tom's (1971) respondents only described their most- versus least-preferred organizations, and they were not seeking jobs with the organizations they rated. Thus, although there is ample reason to believe that fit is related to organization attraction, nonexperimental demonstrations of this relationship are lacking.

Despite the paucity of empirical research on this issue, we expect job seekers' subjective fit perceptions to be related to their attraction to organizations. In its broadest sense, this prediction is derived from past situation selection research indicating that people select environments that fulfill their needs (Diener et al., 1984). This prediction also is rooted in the similarity-attraction paradigm, which suggests that individuals are attracted to other individuals and groups that are similar to them (Byrne, 1969). In the context of organization attraction, Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model posits that applicants will be attracted to organizations where they perceive similarity between their attributes and those of the organization.

Hypothesis 7: Objective and subjective person-organization fit will be positively related to organization attraction.

Most person-organization fit research has overlooked individuals' subjective impressions of fit, instead focusing on objective fit (Kristof, 1996). This appears to be an important omission because people's subjective perceptions generally are more predictive of their behaviors than some "objective" reality (e.g., Locke, 1976). Furthermore, Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition framework suggests that job seekers develop perceptions about their fit with organizations based on objective fit, and then select into organizations based on those perceptions. Subjective perceptions of person-organization fit appear particularly relevant in the context of organizational entry, where there is little time for job seekers to develop interpersonal relationships with organizational members, diminishing the effects of "objective" values congruence on job choice decisions unless it is perceived explicitly by job seekers (e.g., Rynes, 1992). Thus, we expect job seekers' subjective fit perceptions to mediate the effect of objective fit on organization attraction.

Hypothesis 8: Subjective person-organization fit will mediate the relationship between objective fit and organization attraction.

Control Variables

Because past research has suggested that demographic and human capital variables are relevant in job choice contexts (Judge & Bretz, 1992), age, race, gender, and education (degree level and type) were instituted as control variables predicting culture preferences and organization attraction. In addition, because demographics (race, sex), human capital (education level, experience), and labor market success (number of interviews) are relevant to organization attraction (Cable & Judge, 1994), these variables were instituted as controls. Finally, due to attempts to achieve cognitive consistency, it seems likely that being offered a job by a recruiting organization may affect an applicant's attraction to it. Thus, whether the individual received a job offer from the recruiting organization was controlled in the analysis.

Method

Setting and Subjects

Data were collected during the 1995 recruiting cycle at a large university in the Northeast. To ensure that the design of the study was realistic of college recruiting, the three largest professional degree programs in the university (engineering, business administration, and industrial relations) were targeted for participation in the study. All three placement directors sanctioned the study and provided the authors with a list of students who had registered with the placement offices.

Subjects were students in the engineering (70%), business (15%), and industrial relations (15%) programs who were interviewing for jobs at the time of the study. These participation percentages roughly reflect the size of the respective programs (700, 190, and 90 job seekers, respectively). Seventy-four percent of the students were undergraduates with the remainder enrolled in master's programs (78% of engineering majors were undergraduates, compared to 64% of business and 67% of industrial relations majors). Average age of subjects was approximately 22 years. The average subject had 1.2 years of full-time work experience, and their average GPA was 3.20. Sixty-three percent of subjects were male. Racial composition of the subjects was as follows: White = 70%; Asian = 22%; Hispanic = 4%; Black = 1%; Other = 3%. The demographic characteristics of this sample appeared to be relatively similar to the population across all three schools, where 72% of the job seekers were men, and 66% were White. The average subject had had 2.2 campus interviews at the time of the study; the average job seeker expected 2.5 offers by the end of the semester's recruiting cycle.

Procedure

Rynes (1992) noted that reliance on cross-sectional studies with data obtained from self-reports are limitations with past fit and job choice research. To maximize the accuracy of data collection and to minimize problems due to priming and response sets, data were collected in three waves over a 4-month period. Prior to the fall recruiting session, job seekers in the engineering, business, and labor relations programs were contacted via e-mail messages and asked to participate in a longitudinal study of their job search and choice process. Due to the time-sensitive nature of the data collection, recipients had one week to contact us if they were interested in participating. Every student in the three degree programs ($N = 980$) was eligible to participate in the study, and most of these individuals were sent e-mail messages. However, because many students do not read their e-mail regularly, and many may not have read our message before the deadline, it is unclear what percentage of the population had the opportunity to respond to our initial communication. Two hundred and fifty job seekers initially agreed to participate in the study. The procedures involved in each phase of the study are described below.

Time 1. Surveys were distributed to subjects after they gave their initial agreement to participate in the study. Of the 250 subjects who had given initial approval, 182 returned completed surveys. At Time 1, subjects were given two surveys. First, job seekers completed a survey where they self-reported their personality and organizational culture preferences. Second, job seekers were asked to give a short survey to a peer who would independently rate the job seeker's personality. Subjects were specifically instructed not to complete the peer survey themselves and both peers and focal subjects were required to sign their names on top of their respective surveys. Of the 182 subjects who returned the self-report surveys, 174 peer surveys were returned. The relationship of the peer to the subject was as follows: Friend = 60%; spouse or significant other = 25%; relative or other = 15%. Peers had known the subjects an average of 3.6 years.

Time 2. Three weeks after completing the self-report surveys, subjects were asked to complete a survey on the culture of, and their attraction to, the next organization with which they interviewed. Respondents interviewed with and rated a total of 60 different companies. One hundred forty-four subjects returned organizational surveys. Respondents did not differ from nonrespondents with respect to demographic (e.g., age, race, gender) or personality (the Big Five traits) variables.

Time 3. Three months after self-report, peer, and organization surveys were completed, subjects were sent an e-mail message asking them

to report their attraction toward the company with which they had interviewed 3 months ago, whether they had received a job offer from that company and, if so, whether they had accepted the offer. In this survey, attraction was measured with a single-item scale to keep the message as brief as possible (to ensure high participation), and because, during the earlier data collection, this item correlated highly with the other two items used to measure attraction at Time 2 ($r = +.73$). One hundred ten replies were received. Respondents did not differ from nonrespondents with respect to the demographic or personality characteristics.

Measures

Big Five personality traits. The Big Five personality traits were measured with the NEO personality inventory, the most extensively validated measure of the 5-factor model (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The short form of the NEO (NEO-FFI) consists of 60 items, where there are 12 statements for each of the five traits. Example statements are: "When I'm under a great deal of stress," "Sometimes I feel like I'm going to pieces," "I really enjoy talking to people," "I often try new and foreign foods," "I tend to be cynical and skeptical of others' intentions," and "I'm pretty good about pacing myself so as to get things done on time." Although the NEO typically uses a 5-point response scale, in order to keep the scale consistent with other parts of the survey, responses were anchored on a 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree* scale. As indicated earlier, both self- and peer versions of the NEO were completed. Reliabilities of the NEO scales were acceptable for both self-reported (average $\alpha = .80$) and peer reported (average $\alpha = .82$) versions.

Organizational culture preferences. Values were assessed with a modified version of O'Reilly et al.'s (1991) Organizational Culture Profile (OCP). The OCP is an ipsative measure utilizing a Q-sort methodology. Respondents sort attributes of organizational culture (e.g., tolerance, working long hours, etc.) into nine categories ranging from 1 = *very uncharacteristic of me* to 9 = *very characteristic of me*. The conceptual requirements for interactional research (Chatman, 1989) indicate that the assessment of individual and organizational values should be idiographic, so that the uniqueness of value patterns across people and organizations are represented (also see Pelham, 1993). An idiographic approach was also deemed necessary because it allows for holistic comparisons across multiple value dimensions (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Such comparison strategies are critical because, consistent with past theory and research, values congruence implies similarity across two entities' entire profiles of values, not sequentially considering one value dimension in

isolation from the others. Finally, most work values are socially desirable (e.g., few individuals would care to characterize themselves as lacking fairness or tolerance until they are forced to make a choice). Thus, research has indicated that ipsative measurement is the best method of values assessment (e.g., Chatman, 1989; Meglino et al., 1989).

Past research has modified the OCP by reducing the number of items. Specifically, Cable and Judge (1996) had 10 experienced doctoral students reduce the OCP by grouping similar values together but retaining those that were unique. Only the values that respondents unanimously agreed were very similar were removed. This adapted version of the measure was used in the present study. Evidence of the reliability of the OCP, in terms of stability, has been provided by Chatman (1991), who found a correlation of .73 between scores on the OCP over a 12-month period. Based on the 8-factor structure found by Chatman (1991) and O'Reilly et al. (1991), we formed the eight dimensions of culture preferences by summing the specific attributes that loaded on the relevant dimension of culture. Unfortunately, ipsative measures are not amenable to internal consistency estimates of reliability. Therefore, these figures cannot be provided for the culture preferences subscales. However, in the results section we present evidence pertaining to the dimensionality of the revised OCP.

Assessment of organizational culture. Applicants were asked to respond to the OCP such that they reported the values of the organizations with which they had just interviewed. This assessment was made 3 weeks after applicants reported their own values. Multiple job seekers (range = 1–14; $M = 6$) rated each organization's culture. Because perceptions about organizational contexts are more convincing when examined across a set of respondents (Cable & Judge, 1994), organizational culture was characterized as the mean perception of an organization's culture across multiple job seekers. Thus, companies rated by only one applicant were excluded. In cases where companies were rated by two applicants, the other person's rating served as the culture measure for that applicant. This left ratings available for 31 companies. In the results section we present evidence regarding the appropriateness of aggregation.

Objective person-organization fit. Conceptually, person-organization fit signifies a level of congruence between a job seeker's culture preferences and an organization's culture. Consistent with O'Reilly et al. (1991), we estimated person-organization fit with the correlations between job seekers' culture preferences and organizations' cultures. Although this profile comparison process has been used extensively in fit research (Chatman, 1989) and has been specifically advocated to measure fit (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1991), such measures

are not without limitations. As Edwards (1993) noted, profile similarity indices discard information on direction of misfit and rely on the assumption that each dimension of fit contributes equally to the overall construct. On the other hand, profile similarity indices have the advantage of reducing social desirability biases and allowing holistic comparisons across multiple value dimensions (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990).

In the present study, job seekers reported both their culture preferences and the culture of an organization with which they interviewed. Although these reports were separated by at least 3 weeks, it is possible that self-report biases could affect the relationship between culture preferences and organizational culture (Ostroff, 1993). To eliminate this possibility and to make the organizational culture measure more objective, we removed the focal person's report of an organization's culture when computing objective person-organization fit for that person. In other words, objective person-organization fit estimates were computed with job seekers' self-reports of their own culture preferences and *other* job seekers' reports of the culture of the organizations with which they interviewed.

Subjective person-organization fit. Consistent with Cable and Judge (1996), applicants provided their subjective fit perceptions by responding to the following questions (response scale: 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*): "To what degree do your values, goals, and personality 'match' or fit this organization and the current employees in this organization?" "To what degree do your values and personality prevent you from 'fitting in' this organization because they are different from most of the other employees' values and personality in this organization?" (reverse scored), and "Do you think the values and 'personality' of this organization reflect your own values and personality?" ($\alpha = .80$).

Organization attraction. Organization attraction immediately following the campus interview (Time 2) was measured with a 3-item scale. "Rate your overall attraction to this organization" (1 = *not attracted* to 7 = *very attracted*), "Rate the likelihood that you would interview again with this organization, if they offered you a second interview" (1 = *very unlikely* to 7 = *very likely*), and "Rate the likelihood that you would accept a job offer from this organization, if it were offered" (1 = *very unlikely* to 7 = *very likely*). The internal consistency of this scale was .85. Organization attraction 3 months after the initial campus interview (Time 3) was measured by asking the respondent to rate their overall attraction to the organization using a 1 = *very unattracted* to 5 = *very attracted* scale. Attraction at Time 2 correlated $r = +.52$ ($p < .01$) with attraction at Time 3. We decided to use attraction at Time 3 in the analysis because this was the time during which job choices were made. Similar results were obtained using either measure. Applicant decisions to accept a job offer

were measured by asking them, via e-mail, if they had received job offers and, if so, whether they had accepted these offers. For 28% of the organizations applicants rated, applicants were subsequently offered jobs; 63% of these offers were accepted. In order to determine whether applicants were truthful in their responses, we verified offers to applicants in the industrial relations school. Because the accuracy rate was 100% in this subsample, we did not deem it important to verify all offers received.

Control variables. Questions concerning education level, major, number of years of full-time work experience, number of interviews, race, and gender were contained in the survey completed by applicants at Time 2. Whether applicants had received a job offer from the recruiting organization was assessed with an e-mail message approximately 3 months after their interview.

Results

Prior to testing the hypotheses, it is important to establish the validity of the measures of organizational culture preferences, applicant ratings of the culture of recruiting organizations, and the validity of the Big Five traits. Results pertaining to each of these three measures are reported below.

Organizational Culture Preferences

In investigating the validity of applicants' organizational culture preferences, it is important to confirm the OCP factor structure found by Chatman (1991) and O'Reilly et al. (1991) with the revised version of the OCP used in this study. Accordingly, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of the revised OCP using an oblique rotation (all elements in the ϕ matrix were freed). In order to achieve an adequate sample size, data on the OCP used in the present study were supplemented with data from a survey of graduate job seekers at a university in the Northeast and a survey of undergraduate job seekers at a university in the Southeast. Using listwise deletion, the resulting sample size was 519. Because ipsative measures produce expected correlations equal to $-1/(k-1)$ where k is the number of categories (Dunlap & Cornwell, 1994), we used this formula to correct the interitem correlations prior to the analysis. The OCP has nine categories; therefore the expected correlations essentially were .125 higher than the uncorrected correlations. Standardized fit statistics calculated from the results were as follows: Goodness of fit index = .86; Incremental fit index = .74; Tucker-Lewis Index = .84; Critical $N = 211.45$. The average item loading was .59 and only 6/40 (15%) items failed to exhibit loadings greater than .40. All items loaded at least .30 on their

hypothesized factor and all loadings were significant ($p < .01$). These results suggest that the revised OCP does an adequate job of representing the dimensions of culture preferences found by Chatman (1991) and O'Reilly et al. (1991).

Applicant Assessment of Organizational Culture

When evaluating the merit of using applicant ratings to assess organizational culture, there are two important questions. First, do applicants have enough information to make accurate judgments about recruiting organizations' cultures? Second, do applicants sufficiently agree in their assessment of recruiting organizations' culture to justify aggregation? Each of these questions is to be answered in turn.

Because this study was concerned with applicant attraction to organizations, it appears most appropriate to use job seekers' perceptions of organizations' cultures since presumably these are the perceptions they use to make decisions. At first blush, though, it appears unlikely that applicants would have enough experience with recruiting organizations to provide meaningful ratings of their culture. However, applicants' responses to a number of questions we asked about their experience with recruiting organizations suggest that they had attempted to acquire some degree of knowledge about these organizations. First, 90% of applicants read information about the organization in the career placement office prior to their interviews. This information almost always includes annual reports, which contain significant information on organizational values (Kabanoff et al., 1995). Second, most (56%) applicants attended information sessions about the company prior to their interviews. Finally, when asked to describe how much they knew about the values of the organization, 48% of applicants indicated they knew something of the organization's values, and 41% indicated they knew a great deal. Although these results are suggestive of applicant knowledge about recruiting organizations, it is also true that relatively inexperienced applicants who collected basic information about organizations still may not know a great deal about that organization's values. Furthermore, given the organization's interest in recruiting the applicants, they may have been given the wrong view of the organization's culture. Thus, this measure of objective culture probably has a measure of subjectivity and error built into it.

It is also possible that because applicants are rating organizational cultures in which they do not work, their ratings of different organizational cultures display little variance across the dimensions of culture. For example, applicants may not differentiate between organizations based on their degree of innovation or supportiveness, instead giving

all organizations relatively similar rankings based on these (or other) dimensions. If this were the case, one would expect that the distributions of some of the culture attributes to be leptokurtic, with scores clustered toward the middle of the distribution, or skewed, with scores falling away from the middle of the distribution. However, examination of the kurtosis and skew statistics for the eight culture dimensions revealed that none of the statistics were significant (for the kurtosis statistics, the average t value was .92 [*ns*]; for the skewness statistics, the average t value was .84 [*ns*]). These results show that applicants did vary in their perceptions of recruiting organizations' cultures and these perceptions were normally distributed. This analysis does not, of course, answer the question of whether the variance is due to true differences in culture across the organizations or to disagreement (variance) among applicants in their ratings. To answer this question, one must examine the degree of agreement in applicants' ratings of organizational culture.

James (1982) has argued that in order to aggregate individual ratings of culture to represent an organizational-level construct, interrater agreement is necessary. Three indices of agreement have been suggested. The first two are intraclass correlations (ICCs) which represent homogeneity among raters evaluating the same object. ICC(1) measures agreement at the individual level. A review of the climate literature by James (1982) suggested that ICC(1) values ranged from .00 to .50 with a mean of .12. The second measure of agreement, ICC(2), reflects agreement at the aggregate level. As noted by Ostroff and Schmitt (1993), rules of thumb for gauging the adequacy of ICCs have not been forthcoming. Past researchers, however, have used levels for ICC(1) above .20 (Ostroff, 1993; Ostroff & Schmitt, 1993; Sheridan, 1992) and levels for ICC(2) above .70 (George & Bettenhausen, 1990) to justify aggregation. Because ICC(1) is dependent on total variance and variance between groups as much as it is dependent on within-group consistency, it also is important to report r_{wg} (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1993) adjusted for socially desirable responding (C. Ostroff, personal communication, April 11, 1996). In the case of the present study, the null distribution for the OCP was triangular, with the following probabilities of responses: 1 = .05, 2 = .075; 3 = .10, 4 = .175, 5 = .20; 6 = .175, 7 = .10, 8 = .075, 9 = .05. Results in the present study indicated that ICC(1) = .27, ICC(2) = .85, and r_{wg} = .44. Thus, based on the rules of thumb, these levels of agreement appear sufficient to justify aggregation. Because some of these statistics are not overly high, though, it should be noted that results were equivalent whether aggregated or individual-level assessments of organizational culture were used.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Personality Traits and Culture Preferences

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Neuroticism (self)	3.32	1.00	.86																	
2. Extraversion (self)	5.00	0.78	-.37	.79																
3. Openness (self)	4.77	0.79	-.06	.15	.73															
4. Agreeableness (self)	5.02	0.76	-.04	.31	.14	.78														
5. Conscientious (self)	5.25	0.84	-.16	.27	-.06	.18	.84													
6. Neuroticism (peer)	3.04	1.04	.46	-.19	.04	-.06	.10	.88												
7. Extraversion (peer)	4.90	0.95	-.31	.62	.09	.25	.18	-.30	.86											
8. Openness (peer)	4.35	0.76	.02	.06	.53	.08	-.23	-.06	.10	.70										
9. Agreeableness (peer)	5.16	0.83	-.01	.12	.06	.44	.05	-.28	.32	.23	.79									
10. Conscientious (peer)	5.42	0.95	.00	.08	-.15	.11	.44	-.25	.18	-.05	.40	.89								
11. Innovative culture	5.35	1.09	-.21	.08	.31	-.12	-.29	-.22	.16	.25	-.03	-.20	-.							
12. Detail-oriented culture	5.10	0.77	.11	-.05	.16	.08	.27	.13	-.08	.03	-.04	.06	-.15	-.						
13. Aggressive culture	4.84	1.10	-.09	.05	-.25	-.46	.10	-.16	.09	-.14	-.18	.15	.14	-.07	-.					
14. Outcome culture	5.34	1.36	.01	.09	-.16	-.21	.24	-.06	.07	-.01	-.12	.24	.07	.02	.36	-.				
15. Supportive culture	5.32	1.01	.09	-.14	-.01	.20	-.11	.06	-.09	.06	.15	-.03	-.07	-.07	-.35	-.37	-.			
16. Rewards culture	5.33	1.51	-.20	.07	-.04	-.26	-.06	-.06	.03	.03	-.10	-.01	.07	-.23	.28	.18	-.05	-.		
17. Decisive culture	4.57	1.39	-.21	-.03	-.01	-.36	.09	-.12	-.06	-.10	-.09	.15	.09	-.06	.31	-.08	.00	.01	-.	
18. Team-oriented culture	5.58	1.27	-.03	.35	-.04	.34	-.02	-.11	.27	-.01	.25	.04	-.21	-.25	-.12	-.16	.13	-.04	-.17	-.

Note: Where appropriate, coefficient α reliability estimates are on the diagonal; decimals have been omitted from correlations and reliability coefficients; correlations greater than .15 are significant at the .05 level (two-tailed); $N = 158$.

TABLE 2
Relations Between Big Five Traits and Organizational Culture Preferences

	Innovative	Detail-oriented	Aggressive	Outcome-oriented	Supportive	Rewards-oriented	Decisive	Team-oriented
Neuroticism								
Self-report	[-.17*]	.12	-.03	.13	-.02	-.15	[-.16*]	.03
Peer-report	[-.25**]	.16	-.17*	-.01	.05	-.07	[-.15]	-.04
Extraversion								
Self-report	.13	-.10	[.22**]	.17*	[-.20**]	.08	.04	[.36**]
Peer-report	.13	-.01	[.10]	.09	[-.14]	.05	-.07	[.21**]
Openness								
Self-report	[.26**]	[.21**]	-.22**	-.07	-.02	-.03	-.01	[-.14]
Peer-report	[.20**]	[.08]	-.09	.04	.05	.05	-.14	[-.03]
Agreeableness								
Self-report	-.09	.00	[-.49**]	[-.23**]	[.24**]	-.23*	[-.40**]	[.24**]
Peer-report	-.05	-.08	[-.33**]	[-.27**]	[.21*]	-.14	[-.17*]	[.18*]
Conscientious								
Self-report	[-.38**]	[.35**]	.09	[.30**]	-.11	[-.07]	.08	-.18*
Peer-report	[-.27**]	[.15]	.20*	[.32**]	-.05	[.00]	.15	-.07

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed); boxed estimates represent hypothesized relations; estimates are standardized regression coefficients adjusted for age, race, work experience, degree level and type and, for peer reports, length of time peer has known applicant; for the self-report equations, $N = 174$; for the peer report equations, $N = 158$.

Measurement of Big Five Personality Traits

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of the Big Five traits and organizational culture preferences. For both the traits and preferences, the means and standard deviations are calculated based on average responses to the scales (i.e., the total score was divided by the number of items comprising the scale). As can be seen in the table, the average correlation between the same trait measured by different sources is .50. (This figure is identical to the median value reported by Costa & McCrae, 1992.) The average correlation between different traits measured by the same source is .19 and the average correlation between different traits measured by different sources is .11. Although these correlational results are useful, it is perhaps more appropriate to measure interrater agreement. Accordingly, the same ICCs were computed as with the applicant assessments of organization culture. Comparing self- versus peer ratings of the Big Five traits revealed $ICC(1) = .54$ and $ICC(2) = .85$. These figures are similar to those found in past research (McCrae & Costa, 1992).

In testing the hypotheses, the results will be presented in two stages. First, the relationships among the Big Five and organizational culture preferences will be presented. Second, the relationship between person-organization fit and organization attraction will be presented.

Test of Hypothesized Links Between Big Five Traits and Culture Preferences

Table 2 provides multiple regression results predicting organizational culture preferences with the self- and peer-reported Big Five traits. The average variance explained in culture preferences was 23% in the self-reported and 16% in the peer-reported equations. The coefficients reported in the table are standardized regression coefficients controlling for the Big Five traits and the control variables (education level and major, age, race, and sex). Due to space limitations, the controls are not reported in Table 2. Significant coefficients for the controls were the following: men preferred innovative and decisive cultures, women preferred detail-oriented cultures, business majors preferred innovative and aggressive cultures, engineering majors preferred supportive but disliked outcome-oriented cultures, and White job seekers preferred decisive cultures.

Results in Table 2 indicate support for the hypothesized relationships between the Big Five traits and culture preferences in that the majority of the hypothesized links were significant. Also, the results are fairly robust in the sense that in most of the cases where the hypothesized self-reported link was significant, the hypothesized peer-reported link also

TABLE 3
Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Intercorrelations of Fit and Attraction Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Business degree candidate	0.15	0.36	-										
2. Engineering degree candidate	0.67	0.47	-51	-									
3. Graduate student	0.31	0.85	07	02	-								
4. Job offer received from company	0.28	0.45	06	04	14	-							
5. Number of interviews	2.23	2.69	19	-15	-15	-10	-						
6. Race (White = 1)	0.70	0.46	16	-32	-11	09	12	-					
7. Sex (male = 1)	0.63	0.48	03	10	15	11	-03	18	-				
8. Work experience	1.19	1.98	27	-45	-10	10	25	27	-11	-			
9. Objective fit	0.13	0.22	07	-03	08	02	-01	-15	-06	-03	-		
10. Subjective fit	13.35	2.76	05	23	05	13	-09	-06	00	-11	37	-	
11. Organization attraction (Time 3)	3.35	1.13	04	01	22	43	-25	-16	09	-07	26	40	-

Note: Decimals are omitted from correlations; correlations greater than .21 are significant at the .05 level (two-tailed); N = 109.

achieved significance. Although several nonhypothesized linkages were significant in the self- and peer-reported estimations, none of these relationships were significant for both the self- and peer-reported models. In general, these estimates indicate support for the system of hypothesized relationships.

Test of Relationship Between Person-Organization Fit and Organization Attraction

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables testing the job choice hypotheses (Hypotheses 6–8). (A correlation table containing all study variables is provided in the Appendix.) As shown in Table 3, the average objective fit, or correlation between applicant and organization values, is $r = +.13$. Objective fit was normally distributed and values ranged from $r = -.55$ ($p < .01$) to $r = +.65$ ($p < .01$). These fit correlations are similar to those reported by O'Reilly et al. (1991).

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between person-organization fit and organization attraction. In predicting organization attraction, the control variables (education level and major, experience, race, sex, and job market success) were entered on the first step of the regression equation. Objective fit was entered on the second step. Perceived or subjective fit was entered on the third and final step. Because hierarchical regression can produce biased estimates of variables entered on the lower steps of the equation (Kennedy, 1985), and in order to test whether objective fit was related to attraction controlling for subjective fit, a simultaneous regression, where all variables were entered on the same step, also was estimated. For both the hierarchical and simultaneous regressions, incremental R^2 values were computed as the decrease in R^2 caused by removal of the variable or variable sets. Again, this protects against biased estimates of R^2 in favor of variable sets entered in the early stages of the regression.

The results of the regression analyses are provided in Table 4. As the table illustrates, whether the variables were entered hierarchically or simultaneously influenced the significance of a number of control variables. In fact, of the control variables, whether the individual had received a job offer from the organization they were rating was the only variable to achieve significance in both estimations. Cumulatively, the eight control variables accounted for 33% of the variance in organization attraction when entered on the first step and 24% of the unique variance in organization attraction when controlling for the influence of the fit variables. Results from the second and third steps of the hierarchical regression revealed that both objective and subjective fit were

TABLE 4
*Relationship Between Person-Organization Fit and
 Organization Attraction (Time 3)*

	Hierarchical entry	Simultaneous entry
<u>Step 1: Control variables</u>		
Business degree candidate	-.04	-.06
Engineering degree candidate	-.14	-.22*
Graduate student	.15*	.08
Job offer received from company	.44**	.38**
Number of interviews	-.13	-.15*
Race (White = 1)	-.11	-.20*
Sex (male = 1)	.05	.09
Work experience	-.08	-.04
ΔR^2	.33**	.24**
<u>Step 2: Objective fit</u>		
Objective fit	.22**	.09
ΔR^2	.05*	.01
<u>Step 3: Subjective fit</u>		
Subjective fit	.34**	.34**
ΔR^2	.09**	.09**
Overall R^2	.42**	.42**

Notes: Hierarchical entry refers to entry of variables in the three steps specified in the table; simultaneous entry refers to entry of all variables at once; ΔR^2 was calculated as the decrease in R^2 when the variable or variable set on each step was removed from the equation; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; $N = 109$.

significantly related to attraction. Together, the two dimensions of fit accounted for 14% of the variance in attraction.

In order to determine the degree to which perceptions of fit (subjective fit) mediated the relationship between objective fit and organization attraction, regression-based mediation analysis was performed (Darlington, 1990). In order for subjective fit to mediate the relationship between objective fit and attraction, three conditions must be satisfied: (a) There must be a significant relationship between objective fit and attraction; (b) There must be a significant relationship between subjective fit and attraction; (c) The relationship between objective fit and attraction decreases significantly once subjective fit is controlled. As is shown in Table 4, these conditions were met. Specifically, the hierarchical regression (first column) reveals a significant relationship between objective fit and attraction ($\beta = +.22, p < .05$) and a significant relationship between subjective fit and attraction ($\beta = +.34, p < .01$). The simultaneous regression (second column) reveals that the relationship between objective fit and attraction becomes nonsignificant once subjective fit is controlled ($\beta = +.09, ns$). These results reveal that although both objective fit and

subjective fit are related to organization attraction, most of the relationship between objective fit and attraction is mediated by subjective fit.

It should be noted that a similar pattern of results was observed when using the measure of organization attraction immediately following the interview (Time 2). Specifically, objective fit significantly predicted organization attraction ($\beta = +.28, p < .01$) and accounted for 8% of the unique variance in attraction before subjective fit was added to the equation. When subjective fit was added to the equation, it significantly predicted attraction ($\beta = +.56, p < .01$) and explained 24% of the variance in attraction while the coefficient on objective fit became nonsignificant ($\beta = +.08, ns$).

Only 32 individuals received job offers from the organization to which they reported their attraction. This small sample size prohibited multivariate tests of the relationships among fit, attraction, and job choice decisions. However, it was possible to estimate simple Pearson correlations between whether individuals accepted job offers and these variables. Organization attraction, both rated after the initial interview (Time 2) and at the time of making job choice decisions (Time 3), was significantly correlated with accepting the recruiting organization's job offer ($r = +.41$ and $r = +.40$, respectively, $p < .01$). Conversely, and surprisingly, neither subjective nor objective fit were correlated with offer acceptance.

Discussion

Person-organization fit has become the dominant perspective in the job choice literature. However, relatively little is known about the system of relationships surrounding person-organization fit during the job choice process. For example, no research has addressed the relationship between personality and job seekers' culture preferences. Furthermore, as noted by Kristof (1996), no published research has examined job seekers' subjective impressions of fit or the relationship between fit and attraction to actual recruiting organizations. Thus, we know little about why job seekers prefer certain organizational cultures, or whether matching those preferences with organizational cultures really matters in terms of applicant attraction. These are substantial gaps in establishing the nomological network around the construct of person-organization fit.

The present study sought to fill these voids in the literature. Results indicated that hypothesized relationships among the 5-factor model of personality and organizational culture preferences were supported by the data. Because overlap in item content measures was avoided (Costa, McCrae, & Holland, 1984), the personality-culture preference relations

are substantively meaningful. Furthermore, the use of peer reports of the Big Five showed that the observed relationships were independent of common method variance. As Chatman (1989) noted, a limitation with past person-organization fit research is that conceptualizations of persons and situations have been deficient and incongruous. Thus, in addition to establishing the personological correlates of organizational culture preferences, these results served to further validate the OCP by demonstrating that culture preference dimensions are interpretable in the context of job seekers' personalities.

This cumulative set of results also complements earlier studies showing significant relations between personality traits and vocational interests. Costa et al. (1984), using a 3-factor model of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness), found significant relations between these traits and facets of the Holland vocational interest typology. For example, extroverts expressed interest in social and enterprising vocations and open individuals expressed interest in artistic vocations. McCrae and Costa (1989) found a number of strong relationships between the Big Five and dimensions of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Because the Big Five is meaningful to individuals yet has avoided many theoretical and methodological problems of the Myers-Briggs typology, McCrae and Costa (1989) argued that vocational researchers should give greater consideration to the Big Five. Although vocational reinforcers are clearly distinct from organizational cultures, the compatibility of these results suggests that the job choice literature also would benefit from additional consideration of the 5-factor model.

Because the present paper provided support for hypotheses linking personality traits and culture preferences using two different, previously validated scales measuring two very different aspects of people (personality vs. culture preferences), results from the present paper contribute to our understanding of the antecedents to job seekers' culture preferences. Although the results indicated clear support for the hypothesized relationships between personality and culture preferences, it could reasonably be argued that the personality effect sizes are weak. An accurate portrayal of the magnitude of these relations is important because general support for the hypothesized relations could be falsely interpreted as wholesale support for the proposition that personality underlies organizational culture preferences. In fact, examination of the correlations in Table 1 reveals that the average absolute correlation between personality and culture preferences is $r = .15$ for self-reports of personality and $r = .11$ for peer reports. These effect sizes are small and could be used to argue that the personality influences are relatively trivial. However, rather than use this "broadside" (atheoretical) approach to interpret effect sizes, it is better to examine theoretically relevant linkages

(Schneider & Hough, 1995). In fact, if one examines the results for the hypothesized linkages in Table 2, the average beta coefficient is $\beta = .22$. Although this cannot be considered a large effect size, neither is it trivial. Personality is an important source of work values, but clearly it is not the only source. Future research may indicate that job seekers' goals, past experiences, and history also contribute to their desired organizational culture.

Because the Big Five traits are easily observed, even by strangers (Watson, 1989), one practical implication of the results is that organizational recruiters may be able to judge the likelihood that an applicant will fit their culture by considering the applicants' personality. This is particularly likely since values may be harder to observe than personality (i.e., it would appear more difficult to determine whether an applicant values decisive cultures than whether he or she is extroverted). For example, extraversion is a clearly observable trait (Watson, 1989), and thus an organization with a team-oriented culture may be able to conclude that a particularly introverted applicant may not fit their culture. Whether greater fit can be achieved by assessing more fundamental but also more observable *traits*, as opposed to more proximal but less observable *values*, is an important practical issue for future fit research to consider.

A second general finding of this paper was the relationships between objective and subjective person-organization fit and organization attraction. Support for the antecedents and outcomes of job seekers' subjective fit perceptions replicated the exploratory results from two recent studies (Cable & Judge, 1996; Powell & Goulet, 1995) with a new, less-homogeneous sample, while the multiple-stage attraction measures in the present study extended their findings. Results showed that both dimensions of person-organization fit were related to attraction to actual recruiting organizations. To our knowledge, this is the first time that this has been shown in the literature. Results further suggested that subjective fit mediated most of the relationship between objective fit and organization attraction. Thus, as noted by Kristof (1996), it appears that the perception of congruence is a more proximal influence on actual decision making. This does not mean that objective indices of fit are irrelevant to job choice research. Rather, these results suggest that much of the influence of objectively defined fit on organization attraction is due to the direct perception of fit by job seekers. It also is important to note that objective fit, as defined in this paper, does not imply fit with an organization's "actual" values. Instead, objective fit refers to the similarity between a job seeker's values and an organization's culture reputation, where culture reputation is the average, consistent perception of an organization's culture across multiple job seekers. This conceptualization of values congruence appears to be the most appropriate, because job

seekers must make decisions based on available information rather than some unknown reality (e.g., Rynes, 1992).

Based on the small number of individuals who received job offers from recruiting organizations, results also suggested that organization attraction significantly correlated with decisions to accept actual job offers, even when organization attraction was measured 3 months before job choice decisions were made. Although this evidence is limited due to the small number of offers, it does help to fill one of the most important voids in job choice research. As Rynes (1992) commented, "Stating one's perceptions or intentions is a completely 'costless' exercise. In contrast, real job choices involve serious opportunity costs. . . Unfortunately, we have virtually no information about how preferences and intentions are converted into actual job choices" (p. 436).

It also should be noted, however, that fit was uncorrelated with job choice decisions. This is an unexpected finding given that objective and subjective fit were related to attraction, and attraction was related to job choice decisions. Several explanations are apparent. First, at the point of actual job choice decisions, job seekers may focus on job attributes such as pay level, reputation, and location, and less on organizational factors such as culture. This may be particularly true for the relatively inexperienced job seekers in our sample. It also is possible that this subsample analysis obscured the impact of person-organization fit because it only included applicants who pursued and received jobs. Presumably, applicants are evaluated and offered jobs based on their person-organization fit (Chatman, 1989, 1991), and job seekers self-select themselves out of a company's recruitment based on fit (Rynes, 1992). Thus, it is possible that some threshold level of person-organization fit already was established for this group of job seekers, reducing the statistical impact of fit. Second, as was hypothesized in our model and in previous research (Cable & Judge, 1996), person-organization fit may not influence job choices directly. Rather, its effect is mediated by intervening processes (such as organization attraction) and moderated by external variables (such as labor market alternatives). Unfortunately, the small number of offers received in our sample prohibited testing these relevant factors. Finally, dichotomous variables based on small samples are very sensitive to outliers (Darlington, 1990). In fact, removing two outliers in our sample resulted in a correlation between objective fit and job choice decisions of $r = +.22$ ($p < .05$) and a correlation between subjective fit and job choice decisions of $r = +.27$ ($p < .05$). Thus, our results cannot be used to confirm or disconfirm the role of person-organization fit in actual job choice decisions.

Limitations

This study has several shortcomings. One limitation is the potential of common method variance. Although nearly all of the links tested involved multiple sources of data, the relationship between subjective fit and organization attraction is subject to common method variance interpretations. One factor that may mitigate this concern is that subjective fit and attraction were collected using different methods over a 3-month time interval. Related, it is important to remember that the support for the hypotheses should be interpreted as associational and not causal. Although multiple methods of data collection and the longitudinal design may mitigate concerns over inappropriate casual directions, we have been careful to interpret the supported relationships using noncausal language.

The size and nature of the sample also limits generalizability of the results. The longitudinal nature of the data collection process, sample attrition, and the fact that only a proportion of applicants for a particular position receive job offers, reduced the available sample size for the prediction of organization attraction and job choice decisions. Our sample is also limited by its reliance on college recruiting. Although our sample of job seekers was a diverse group, comprising eight majors, three schools, and two degree levels, our exclusive focus on college graduates may confine generalizability of these results to college-educated job seekers. Similarly, the relatively low amount of previous work experience ($M = 1.2$ years) held by our sample also may have affected the relationships between the fit variables. However, although it is possible that these relationships are inflated because our sample had little experience in weighting factors and selecting jobs, it also is possible that fit may be more important for employees who have considerable work experience: Experienced job seekers may realize that fit is more rewarding than are extrinsic job attributes (e.g., high pay) and thus may have a better idea of what to look for in reaching judgments of person-organization fit. Thus, future research is needed to examine the conditions under which fit is an important component of job choice decisions. Replication using a larger and more diverse sample would be beneficial.

Next, it would have been interesting to have assessed recruiting organizations' cultures apart from recruiters and/or other organizational members. These data, although difficult to obtain across 60 recruiting organizations, would have provided a means to test the accuracy of job seekers' organizational culture perceptions. Such a measure would also have the advantage of being immune to impression management by firms motivated to put their best foot forward with desired applicants. Because the dependent variable of interest was organization attraction, however,

it appears most appropriate to use job seekers' perceptions of organizations' cultures because presumably these are the perceptions that they use to make decisions (Kristof, 1996). Nevertheless, because our measure of organization culture was only from the applicant's perspective, it seems likely that the measure of objective fit is more subjective than would otherwise be the case. Furthermore, in the present study job seekers responded to the OCP according to the question "How characteristic is this attribute of you?" while O'Reilly et al.'s (1991) respondents reported the importance of the values in the organizations they worked for. Because this version of the OCP focused respondents more on themselves, this change in wording may have affected the relationships between personality and values preferences. Although the hypothesized relationships were confirmed by independent sources, future research is needed to better understand the relations between values preferences and personality traits.

Finally, the implications of our measure of fit, and the ensuing method of analysis, merits discussion. Although decades of past research have established the appropriateness of the Q-sort approach in assessing individual differences, like most methods the Q-sort has weaknesses. Despite the fact that the forced ranking inherent in the OCP is the most appropriate method of values assessment (Chatman, 1989; Meglino et al., 1989), this method also may have constrained some of the natural variance in job seekers responses. Furthermore, the presented relationships between personality and culture preferences may have been constrained because we examined relationships between results from an idiographic scale (OCP) and a nomothetic scale (NEO). It may be possible for future research to extend the results of the present study by examining work values with different measurement techniques.

Conclusion

One of the central tenets of Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition framework is that individuals are attracted to work environments that are compatible with their "personal" characteristics. Although the Schneider framework has received general support, many aspects of the model remain untested (Schneider et al., 1995). With respect to the attraction component of the framework, results from the present study indicate that job seekers' preferences for organizational cultures are based on their personality. Although this represents a logical extension of the model, no previous research has linked job seekers' personalities to preferred cultures of recruiting organizations. Furthermore, this

study adds evidence from actual organizations to Diener's and Schneider's homogeneity hypothesis in that job seekers were attracted to organizational cultures that matched their values. As Diener et al. (1984) noted, some researchers have viewed the interactional and dispositional frameworks as competing explanations of individual behavior. The results of this study comport with Schneider's view of interactional psychology and help to unify these approaches: Main effects (dispositional basis of culture preferences) and interactional effects (job seekers are attracted to organizational cultures that match their values) can fruitfully co-exist to explain the process of organization attraction.

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Appendix (continued)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29								
21. Graduate student	-.16	.10	.10	-.24	-.19	-.14	.07	.12	.03	-.15	.18	-.06	.08	-.17	.00	.11	.21	.09	.08	.06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						
22. Job offer from org.	.07	-.20	.00	-.10	-.12	-.01	-.14	.01	-.09	.08	.04	.11	-.05	.03	.00	.04	.03	-.06	.06	.08	.18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
23. Number of interviews	-.31	.22	.05	.01	.13	-.23	.29	.03	.12	.15	.10	.09	.13	.12	-.12	.00	-.02	.04	.18	-.19	-.16	-.11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
24. Race (White = 1)	-.23	.11	.19	-.09	-.04	.00	-.06	.22	-.06	.05	.05	-.04	-.01	-.09	.04	.11	.23	-.09	.16	-.30	-.11	.06	.12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
25. Sex (male = 1)	-.25	-.09	.25	-.32	-.33	-.32	-.01	.12	.04	-.04	.23	-.14	.17	-.05	.01	.19	.37	-.16	.03	.09	.18	.16	-.01	.20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
26. Work experience	-.15	.01	-.01	.02	.18	-.09	.01	.10	.03	.23	-.22	.17	-.05	-.01	-.06	.09	.05	-.13	.29	-.40	-.11	.04	.29	.24	.09	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
27. Objective fit	-.05	.03	.18	-.19	.14	-.07	.05	.14	-.02	.05	-.03	-.18	.35	.61	-.10	.30	.03	.04	.07	.03	.08	-.03	-.01	-.20	-.01	-.10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
28. Subjective fit	-.06	.02	-.19	.01	.05	.00	-.22	-.21	-.08	-.07	-.01	-.06	.10	.21	-.16	.17	.00	.03	.05	.31	.04	.11	-.10	-.18	.01	-.17	.36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
29. Organization attraction	-.01	-.07	-.11	-.20	-.10	-.04	-.19	-.06	-.13	-.08	-.02	.05	.07	.11	-.01	.18	.01	-.04	.05	.05	.32	.43	-.24	-.23	.08	-.13	.30	.44	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Decimals are omitted; correlations greater than .20 are significant at the .05 level (two-tailed)