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Using a Realistic Job Preview to Communicate Organizational Culture

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THESIS APPROVAL

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Abstract

An abstract of the thesis of Johanna Glode for the Master of Science in Psychology presented July 13, 1998.

Title: Using a Realistic Job Preview to Communicate
            Organizational Culture

The present study sought to determine how organizational culture information could best be presented to job applicants for the purpose of attracting employees who will fit into an organization's culture. Attraction to the organization's culture was hypothesized to influence applicant self-selection into the company. Two different types of Realistic Job Previews (RJPs), semantic and episodic, were compared in their ability to convey information accurately about a hypothetical organizational culture. Participant knowledge of the culture was hypothesized to align objective, or actual, fit with subjective perceptions of fit.

Knowledge of the organization's culture, objective fit, subjective fit, attractiveness of the culture, and time commitment were examined as influences on the self-selection process. Results showed that attractiveness was positively related to self-selection into the organization. In addition, episodic information was shown to convey culture information more accurately than

semantic information. However, more accurate knowledge of the organization's culture did not appear to align participant objective fit with subjective perceptions of fit. Time commitment was not found to be related to participant self-selection ratings. The artificiality of the self-selection process as operationalized in this study is the primary limitation in the interpretation of these results. However, this research highlights the potential value of using contextual examples in conveying organizational culture to applicants. Future research should re-eaxamine the measurement of variables as well as the conceptualization of objective fit.

USING A REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW TO COMMUNICATE

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

by

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Organizational Culture

For every eight businesses that open their doors each year in this country, one business fails. From the years 1990 to 1993 alone over 300,000 organizations failed to make ends meet (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). The secrets behind a successful organization are as varied as the companies themselves, yet many organizations have attributed much of their success to aspects of their organizational culture (Burlingham, 1990; Case, 1996). Building a strong corporate culture in which organization members share basic preferences and engage in characteristic behaviors has been recognized as a means to achieve higher organizational performance and staying power in today's market (Petty, Beadles, Lowery, Chapman, & Connell, 1995).

In order to build a strong corporate culture an organization can focus on two things: 1) Recruiting and hiring individuals who match organizational culture characteristics, and/or 2) training or socializing new hires to adopt the characteristics preferred by the organization. Bowen, Ledford, and Nathan (1991) suggest that the current trend is in recruiting and hiring individuals who not only can perform specific job tasks but can also fit into the "whole" organization culture. The idea of recruiting and hiring individuals rather than

training or socialization is further strengthened by the
notion that individuals bring relatively stable
characteristics with them to the organization that have
been established through life experiences. Only strong and
intense socialization processes are likely to change these
basic characteristics in certain individuals (Chatman,
1989).

The recruitment process is an important issue to
consider when building an organizational culture. Gatewood
and Feild (1994) identified three purposes of recruitment
in personnel selection: 1) to increase the number of job
applicants with minimum cost to the organization, 2) to
meet legal and social demographic obligations, and 3) to
increase the success rate of the selection process by
reducing the number of poorly qualified applicants. The
third purpose of recruitment implies that individuals
assess their own preferences compared to those presented
in the recruitment message before accepting a job with an
organization. In other words, the recruitment process can
be viewed as self-selection process in which individual
job applicants establish the degree of fit between
themselves and the job or organization based on
recruitment information.

The central purpose of this research is to determine
how information can best be presented for the purpose of
attracting employees who will fit into an organization's

culture. Traditionally, the recruitment process has focused on attracting individuals whose knowledge, skills, and abilities match those needed to perform a particular job. Realistic Job Previews (RJPs) were developed to communicate specific job requirements, such as job duties and the working environment, constructed in a manner that conveys both positive and negative aspects that realistically describe a specific job (Wanous, 1980). RJPs are intended to, among other things, reduce turnover, facilitate self-selection, and increase job satisfaction by providing information to job applicants that allows them to determine their fit with the job before accepting the job offer. In contrast, the present study attempts to establish a means by which RJPs can be used to convey the most accurate and useful information that will facilitate self-selection into an entire organizational culture rather than a particular job within the organization.

Research on Organizational Culture and Values

Organizational culture has been defined as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions" that influence the espoused values and organizational structures and processes (Schein, 1992: 12). These shared basic assumptions are at the deepest level of an organization's culture and guide member perceptions and behavior, defining for organization members what to pay attention to, what things may mean, and how to act or react in certain situations. These basic

assumptions are manifested in the formal, espoused values of the organization, for example company goals and vision statements. They are also manifested in the day-to-day language, physical environment, rituals, relations between employees, and in the manner that work is done (Schein, 1992).

In order to communicate information concerning organizational culture to job applicants, an organization must first determine how to describe its culture. Wiener (1988) suggests that shared values (organizational values) are a key element in the definition of culture. The concept of values is important in this definition because values are thought to be fundamental, enduring, and have a direct effect on individual or collective perceptions and behaviors (Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989). Ajzen (1988) reasons that behaviors can be predicted from values through the influence that values have towards attitudes concerning a particular behavior. Attitudes are believed to influence behavioral intentions, which can often predict behavior. Values are thought to act as internalized normative beliefs about what modes of conduct and end-states of existence are preferable, which act as internalized normative guides to actual behavior (Wiener, 1988). In organizations, value systems provide justification for modes of conduct and system functions. For individuals, values guide judgments and actions toward

goals (Chatman, 1991). Thus, the match between organizational and individual values will ensure that individual actions to attain goals within the organization are in accordance with accepted organization behaviors.

The importance of the match between organizational and individual values has been demonstrated by its relationship with job outcomes. Specific findings by Chatman (1991) showed that the congruence between organizational and individual values was positively related to job satisfaction and intent to remain with the company for new hires in eight different accounting firms. She also found that those individuals whose values more closely matched those of the organization when first hired adjusted to the organization more quickly. Posner (1992) found that managers and professional employees in a manufacturing company with the greatest level of value congruence with the organization's values had the most positive work attitudes. Meglino, Ravlin, and Adkins (1989) examined the outcomes of value congruity between production workers, their supervisors, and managers. The researchers found that workers were more satisfied and committed to the organization when their values were congruent with those of their immediate supervisor.

Value congruence has been shown not only to affect job outcomes, such as turnover and satisfaction, but has also been shown to affect job choice decisions. Judge and

Bretz (1996) studied the influence of individual values on job choice in professional degree students using a policy-capturing study. The researchers found that individuals were more likely to choose jobs whose values were similar to their own value orientation.

In a subsequent study, Judge and Cable (1997) distinguished between the effects of an individual's perceptions of subjective fit and objective measures of fit in determining organization choice. Subjective fit is described as an applicant's direct perception of how well he or she will fit into the organization. Objective fit is described as the actual congruence between an applicant's culture preferences and the organization's culture as measured through an organizational value survey. Judge and Cable examined the relationship between an individual's objective fit, subjective fit, and perceptions of organizational attractiveness, or the extent to which an individual would prefer to work for a particular organization. The researchers found that both subjective fit and objective fit were positively related to organization attractiveness, yet further analyses revealed that the effects of objective fit were mediated by subjective perceptions of fit in determinations of organization attractiveness. In addition, Judge and Cable found that attraction to the organization was positively related to reported acceptance of a job offer (self-

selection), yet neither objective or subjective fit was related to reported job offer acceptance. Therefore, a primary objective of the present study is to examine the self-selection process by attempting to replicate the findings of Judge and Cable. Specifically, to replicate findings that job choice decisions are made on the basis of the perceived attractiveness of the organization, and these perceptions of attraction are made primarily on the basis of subjective perceptions of applicant fit with the organizational culture.

> H1a: Organizational attractiveness will be positively related to reported self-selection into the organization.

> H1b: Objective fit will be positively related to organization attractiveness, yet this relationship will be mediated by the subjective perceptions of fit.

Although the notion of matching individual and organizational values seems to be accepted as a means of establishing person-organization fit, the conceptualization of values is less agreed upon. A distinction should be made between overall organizational values and individual work values. Work values, such as those tapped by Hofstede's Value Survey Module (VSM) (as cited in Jensen, White, & Singh, 1990) and Manhardt's Work Values Scale (1972, as cited in Buetell & Brenner, 1986),

describe a person's preference for characteristics or outcomes of a specific job. For example, work values describe preferences for working with congenial associates, opportunities for advancement, and location of work. This is in contrast to organizational values which tap beliefs about what business actions are preferable in reaching organizational objectives (Enz, 1988). Organizational values determine an overall manner of doing things in an organization and the structures put in place to facilitate these actions.

Meglino, Ravlin, and Adkins (1989) conceptualized organizational values as falling into four basic dimensions which describe organizational behaviors. The dimensions are: 1) honesty, which is described as an accurate transmittal of information through admitting errors, acting on one's true feelings, or refusing to take credit for the ideas of others, 2) fairness describes a state of impartiality in judging people, points of view, or actions, 3) achievement, which is descriptive of the advancement of one's career through working hard, taking on responsibilities, and seeking opportunities to learn new skills, and 4) concern for others refers to a caring demeanor displayed in actions such as helping others, encouraging others, or sharing information. These values were identified from an examination of 966 critical incident responses to an open-ended questionnaire in over

40 organizations. The researchers created a measure of values called the Comparative Emphasis Scale (CES). The CES is a measure in which 24 pairs of behavioral value statements are matched according to social desirability, sex bias, and the extent to which the statement represents its specific value. Behavioral statements are used to describe each underlying value as it is manifested in the organization. Respondents are asked to indicate which of the behaviors should receive the greatest emphasis when choosing between a pair and the resulting measure is an ipsative rank-ordering of individual value preferences. A subsequent study by Judge and Bretz (1996) using the CES found that an individual's primary value orientation of achievement, concern for others, or fairness could predict job choice decisions such that organizations manifesting the same primary value were selected. The fact that honesty did not predict job choices led the researchers to question the manipulation of this variable using the CES.

O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) advocate the use of an eight-dimension conceptualization of values in which the salience and configuration of both organizational and individual characteristics can be described along the same dimensions. The researchers developed the Organization Culture Profile (OCP) from an analysis of academic and practitioner writings on organizational values and culture. The OCP is a set of 54

value statements which are Q-sorted by the individual to
obtain the individual's value profile. These statements
are also sorted by organization members and aggregated to
obtain the organization's value profile. Congruence is
determined by correlating the individual and
organizational value profiles. A factor analysis of the
OCP showed that the measure taps eight dimensions
describing an organization's culture: 1) innovation (the
degree to which the organization promotes risk taking,
experimentation, and that fail to emphasize being careful,
stable, or secure), 2) attention to detail (the degree to
which organizations are analytical, attend to details, and
are precise), 3) orientation towards outcomes (the degree
to which organizations are achievement-oriented, are
demanding and results-oriented, and promote high
expectations), 4) aggressiveness (the degree to which
organizations emphasize aggressiveness, competitiveness,
and opportunities), 5) supportiveness (the degree to which
the organization is supportive, promotes the sharing of
information, and praises good performance), 6) emphasis on
growth and rewards (the degree to which the organizations
emphasizes high pay for performance and professional
growth), 7) team orientation (the degree to which the
organization is team-oriented and promotes collaboration),
and 8) decisiveness (the degree to which organizations
value decisiveness, predictability, and low conflict). The

conceptualization of organizational values in terms of these eight dimensions will be utilized in the present study due to the replication of the eight dimensions by Chatman (1991) and Judge and Cable (1997), as well as due to the notion that the dimensions are descriptive of organizational structures and processes, key elements in the definition of organizational culture.

Research on Realistic Job Previews and Self-Selection

Information about organizations is available from a wide variety of sources including printed advertisements, media, and from interactions with organization members. The recruitment process is a formal means by which an organization can provide job applicants with information so that they can decide whether or not they will fit into that organization's culture. Wanous (1980) illustrates how job applicants make choices about organizations as outsiders, and often make judgments and build up expectations about organizations without knowing the realities of the organization. This can lead to a mismatch between the individual and organization which eventually may lead to voluntary or involuntary turnover. Realistic Job Previews (RJPs) have been developed in order to combat this possible mismatch by providing information describing working conditions, job characteristics, and rewards to the applicant before hiring so that he or she can form more realistic job expectations.

Realistic Job Previews are often presented in either written, audio-visual, or face-to-face interview forms (Colarelli, 1984). In an experiment testing the effects of different media used to present the RJP on job turnover, Colarelli (1984) found that face-to-face interviews were most effective in reducing employee turnover, yet this method is more time consuming, more expensive, and will reach fewer individuals than written or audio-visual methods. Due to the expense and time required to prepare and provide face-to-face and audio-visual RJPs, the written RJP has become the most popular form in which to present RJP information (Saks & Cronshaw, 1990). The written RJP has been shown to be an inexpensive medium for transmitting information to many job candidates in order to aid applicants in determining whether to continue in the selection process, influence job pursuit intentions (Bauer & Aiman-Smith, 1996), influence preferences for organizational policies (Strand, Levine, & Montgomery, 1981), and to influence actual job choices (Saks, Wiesner, & Summers, 1994).

Results of reviews of RJP research concerning the outcomes associated with the use of RJPs in the recruitment and selection process have been mixed. Reilly, Brown, Blood, and Malatesta (1981) studied the effects of receiving a RJP versus not receiving this information on job acceptance, met expectations, job commitment and job

turnover for 842 telephone service representatives. These researchers found no significant differences between those applicants who received and those who did not on the outcome variables. Because these findings contrasted with proposed purposes of RJPs, Reilly et al. pooled data from eleven previous studies to look more closely at the outcomes associated with RJPs. The researchers found that self-selection, met expectations, and coping ability were unaffected by RJPs while RJPs only slightly reduced turnover and increased positive job-related attitudes.

Premack and Wanous (1985) used meta-analytic methods to examine 21 RJP experiments to determine the job-related outcomes of providing RJPs to job applicants. In contrast to the prior RJP review by Reilly et al., the researchers found that RJPs appear to lower initial expectations about a job and organization, increase the number of applicants who decide not to pursue a particular job, increase initial levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and job survival. Although the effect sizes were weak to moderate (the highest were r = .34 and r = .12) it appears that providing realistic job information to job applicants has positive outcomes compared to not providing the RJP.

Saks and Cronshaw (1990) suggest that the effects of RJPs on entry-level outcomes such as role clarity, job commitment, and perceptions of organizational honesty are

due to the effects that RJPs have on participant knowledge structure of a job. The knowledge structure provided by RJPs was expected to enable job applicants to make more informed decisions about the job or organization and create more accurate job expectations. Saks and Cronshaw studied this knowledge-increasing function of RJPs by hypothesizing that increased knowledge about a job results in more accurate job expectations, greater role clarity, greater job commitment, and greater perceptions of organizational honesty. The researchers also hypothesized that RJPs influence behavioral intentions such that those who receive a RJP will be less likely to intend to accept a given job offer. The researchers studied 60 undergraduate co-op students simulating applicants to a hotel desk clerk position. Saks and Cronshaw found that attitudes toward the job were significantly positively correlated with behavioral intentions and job acceptance decisions, yet receiving a RJP did not actually influence behavioral intentions or attitudes. The researchers did find that those individuals who received a RJP performed significantly better on a true/false knowledge test of the job. Further, regression analyses showed that knowledge also significantly predicted expectations, role clarity, and perceived interviewer honesty. Thus, the researchers concluded that RJPs have their effects on the knowledge structure of a job and appear to function as information

providers rather than having direct effects on attitudes and behavioral intentions.

Type of Information Presented in RJPs

As noted earlier, RJPs appear to have their effects on job-related outcomes by increasing applicant knowledge about a particular job or organization (Saks & Cronshaw, 1990). A central premise in the present study is that individuals will determine their fit with an organization by comparing their individual values to those of the organization (Judge and Cable, 1997). Hall (1989) states that an important part of designing a value system is conveying the message accurately to others so that the message is understood by others as the sender intends. Misunderstandings may emerge when vague or ambiguous words or phrases are interpreted to mean different things to different people. A recent article in the Harvard Business Review states that an unfortunate consequence of many corporate value statements is that they are a confusing stream of fuzzy words (Collins & Porras, 1996). If the statements of organizational values given to individuals in the recruitment process are vague and confusing, it is likely that applicant perceptions of fit with the organization will be inaccurate, thus nullifying the positive effects of RJPs in attracting only those individuals who will fit into the organization's culture. Thus, the similarity of applicant subjective perceptions

of fit and actual (objective) fit is dependent on the accurate portrail of organizational value information. Hall suggests making the context of the value statement, or how a particular value is manifested in an organization by its members, clear in order to avoid confusion and increase accuracy in interpretations.

Rosman, Lubatkin, and O'Neil (1994) distinguish between the use of semantic and episodic information used by individuals in decision-making situations. The researchers used the term semantic information to refer to information given to decision makers that is represented by facts, without reference to the context in which the facts are to be interpreted. The other type of information was termed episodic. Episodic information is that in which the qualitative context in which information should be interpreted is presented. For the purposes of the present study, episodic information provides the organizational context in which applicants may interpret values and determine their fit with the company. This is in contrast to semantic information which provides only the value stated as a fact through the use of one word or word phrase.

Judge and Bretz (1996) used explicit behavioral statements when presenting organizational value information to study participants. For example, the value of achievement was presented by the statement "continuing

to work on a problem until it is solved" rather that simply stating "the organization values achievement". The authors noted the use of such explicit statements as a possible limitation to their study of organization choice based on work values because these statements leave little room for subjective interpretation of values by participants. This may be a concern for generalizability of study findings to real-world situations, for example people usually need to interpret and give meaning to organizational practices they witness. But in terms of using RJPs for the purpose of attracting only job applicants that will fit into the overall culture, the more explicit the value statement is, the less room for misunderstandings.

Most formal statements of corporate values contain semantic information. For example the organization may state "Our company values collaboration", yet the word "collaboration" may take on different meanings in different contexts and lead to confusion when interpreted by others. For example, does this statement refer to collaborative decision making with top management, people working in teams and collaborating on projects, or employees collaborating with customers to create products? An episodic, or behavioral, example of this value statement, such as "Company employees work in teams where each individual is a specialist in his or her area",

conveys the organizational value of collaboration in a manner that clearly highlights organizational structures and processes that define the organization's culture. Thus, the form in which organizational culture information is presented to participants is expected to affect the accuracy of their knowledge structure concerning the organization's culture. Furthermore, the accuracy of knowledge about the organization will affect an individual's subjective perceptions of fit with the organization's culture. If an individual has accurate knowledge of the organization's culture, he or she will be more likely to make subjective interpretations of fit that are close to the actual objective measure of fit. Low knowledge accuracy could lead to inacurate perceptions of subjective fit and a discrepancy between an individual's objective fit and subjective fit with the organization's culture.

> H2: Individuals who receive episodic organizational culture information will have more accurate knowledge of the organization than those who receive semantic information.

> H3: Knowledge accuracy and objective fit will interact to affect subjective perceptions of fit. Specifically, when knowledge accuracy is high, objective and subjective fit will be positively

related. When knowledge accuracy is low, objective

and subjective fit will not be related.

Time Commitment and the Self-Selection Process

Saks, Wiesner, and Summers (1994) suggest that job-

related outcomes of providing RJPs to job applicants, such

as reduced turnover and increased job and organizational

commitment, are mediated by the self-selection process.

These researchers state that self-selection is a matching

process whereby individuals match their needs and

preferences to their expectations of the realization of

these needs in the job or organization. RJPs affect job

outcomes by providing realistic information to applicants

so that they can make an informed decision concerning the

match between preferences and organizational realities.

Therefore, those that do accept a job offer with an

organization are more satisfied, committed, and stay with

the organization due to the initial determination of fit.

The mixed results obtained from previous reviews

concerning the effects of RJP information on individual

self-selection highlight several factors that may affect

the degree of self-selection RJPs influence. Unemployment

rates, perceptions of recruiter characteristics (Rynes,

Heneman, & Schwab, 1980), statistical artifacts (Reilly et

al., 1981), and timing of the RJP (Wanous, 1989) may all

moderate the degree of self-selection obtained through

using a realistic job preview. With regard to the timing

of the RJP, or when in the selection process RJPs are
given to job candidates, Wanous (1989) suggests that
providing RJPs early on in the selection process affects
self-selection by affecting an individual's expenditure of
effort in attaining the job. Wanous states that increasing
the effort involved in gaining employment with an
organization tends to increase the liklihood that the
individual will accept a job offer because the expenditure
of effort leads to increased commitment to obtaining the
position. In building a strong corporate culture through
the selection process, the earlier in the selection
process that organizational culture information is given,
the less committed a job candidate will be to attaining a
position within the organization, and the more likely he
or she will be to reject a job offer on the basis of mis-
matched values.

> H4: Individuals who have committed more time towards
> gaining a position with the organization before
> reading cultural information will have higher
> reported self-selection ratings than those who commit
> less time.

<div align="center">Method</div>

<u>Participants</u>

When using statistical analyses in research the issue
of power, or the probability of accurately detecting a
significant difference between groups based on an

experimental manipulation, should be addressed (Kraemer & Thiemann, 1987). The issue of power revolves around the question: "How many subjects are needed in order to detect a certain effect size?" To determine the effect size sought in the present study, the effect sizes found in previous studies examining organization choice in student samples were examined. Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996) found a correlation of r = .74 (R^2 = .54) between company attractiveness and job choice. These researchers also found that 13% of the variance in company attractiveness could be explained by the predictors of age, gender, grade point average, work experience, ecological ratings, and the provision of ecological information, and 14% of the variance in job choice could be explained by the previously stated predictors. Saks, Wiesner, and Summers (1994) found a correlation of r = .56 (R^2 = .31) between organizational attractiveness and job acceptance. Judge and Cable (1997) found a correlation of r = .26 (R^2 = .06) between objective fit and organization attractiveness, and r = .40 (R^2 = .16) between subjective fit and organization attractiveness. The effect size sought in the current study will be .22, which is based on the average effect size found in the above studies. The conventional significance level of .05 and a power set at 80% using two-tailed tests will be used to determine the number of participants needed to detect an effect size of .22.

Because regression, correlation, and ANOVA will be utilized to examine certain hypotheses in this study, the Master Table created by Kraemer and Thiemann (1987) was used to determine the number of subjects needed for the present study. This Master Table approximates the number of participants needed to find significance with a variety of statistical tests. According to the Master Table, in order to detect a .22 effect size, with a power level set at 80%, using a significance level of .05, 158 subjects are needed.

Participants in the study were undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at Portland State University. Participants were approached in their classes and asked to participate in a short survey studying organizational culture. Participants were informed that data would be collected at two time points, the first during class, and the second at a specified time about one week later. In all cases, participants received extra-credit points in their classes for participation in the study.

At the first data collection point, 209 participants completed baseline measures. At the second time point, 168 individuals (80%) returned to complete the study measures. T-tests were performed to determine if there were any significant differences on subjective fit, attractiveness, and self-selection ratings at Time 1 between those who did or did not return to complete the study at Time 2. These

tests revealed no significant differences on self-selection ratings, $t(208) = -1.49$, $p > .05$, attractiveness ratings, $t(208) = -1.08$, $p > .05$, or subjective fit ratings, $t(208) = .59$, $p > .05$, between those who did and did not return to complete the study. Because complete data were available only for the 168 individuals who returned to complete the study, sample characteristics are reported for these individuals only. The mean age for the sample was 25.83 ($SD = 7.5$), 50% were female, and 46% were psychology majors. The average number of months of work experience was 74.55 ($SD = 84.43$). The racial composition of the sample was such that 80% classified themselves and Caucasian, 10% classified themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 10% classified themselves as belonging to other racial groups.

Materials

Realistic previews. The Realistic Job Preview were developed using the eight-dimension classification of organizational values developed by O'Reilly et al., (1991) . The RJP was presented in written form as a value statement of a hypothetical organization. The statement described a hypothetical organizational culture in one of two forms. The first form presented the eight organizational values in semantic form. RJP information presented in semantic form consisted of a listing of organizational values by word or phrase only (Appendix A).

The second form of the statement presented the eight organizational values in episodic form. Episodic RJP information consisted of a contextual example of how each value is manifested in the daily organizational activities. For example, the value of "supportiveness" was described with the statement "Our organization supports the development of teams and individuals by sponsoring educational seminars throughout the year". The other seven dimensions are described in a similar manner (Appendix B).

A pilot test was conducted in order to determine whether the episodic statements written to describe the organization's culture corresponded to the definitions of the value statements provided by O'Reilly et al., (1991). A panel of raters, 9 undergraduate and 2 graduate psychology students, were asked to read the definitions of the values and rate, on a 1 to 5 Likert scale (1 = Not at all, 5 = Completely), the extent to which the episodic statement conveyed the particular value for which it was intended. Ratings for each value statement were averaged across raters to arrive at an overall rating. Only two statements had overall mean ratings of 3 or less, those describing supportiveness and decisiveness. These statements were modified according to comments made by the raters to better reflect those values.

Commitment to Job Attainment. The present study seeks to determine whether or not the expenditure of effort in gaining employment with an organization affects the self-selection process through increased time commitment to the attainment of a position with the organization. For the purposes of this study, time commitment is built through the expenditure of effort, which is operationalized as the completion of certain requirements necessary for obtaining a position with the organization. This manipulation was achieved by having study participants complete an application form, asking general information such as name, sex, age, prior education, and work experience, as well as having them take a short math and logic ability test (i.e. filler test). This manipulation was further strengthened by having study participants answer the following question: "If you were to be called in for an interview with this organization, what day and time will best fit your schedule?". This manipulation was presumed to increase commitment to obtaining a position because by answering this question, participants have chosen to continue in the process of gaining a position with the organization.

Objective and subjective fit. Individual objective fit was measured by rank-orderings of the eight value dimensions tapped by the OCP. The use of value measures to

distinguish between individuals has been plagued by the
social desirability of values, meaning that individuals
tend to endorse all values rather than determining which
are more important. Ravlin and Meglino (1987) examined
four methods of measuring values: 1) rank order in which
values are simply ranked from most to least important or
preferable, 2) point assignment in which a total of 100
points is divided among the factors giving the most points
to the most important factor, 3) forced-choice in which
the participant is asked to choose the most important
factor from a pair of variables, and 4) Likert-scale
ratings where participants rate the importance of a factor
on a 5-point scale. They found that Likert-scale responses
were somewhat affected by social desirability and the
others were not. Rank-ordered measures were found to be
the best performers in controlling social desirability and
predicting hierarchical orderings and decision behavior.
Therefore, in the present study the eight value dimensions
of the OCP were ranked in terms of individual preferences
for a particular value in an organization by placing a
number from 1 (most important) to 8 (least important) by
each value statement (Appendix C). Similar to Judge and
Cable (1997), an individual's rank-order correlation
(calculated by using Kendall's Tau) was used as his or her
score on objective fit for all analyses.

Subjective fit was measured with responses to the following three, Likert-scale items adapted from Judge and Cable (1997): "What is the probability that you will fit in well in this organization" (1 = extremely unlikely, to 5 = extremely likely), "To what degree do your values match those of this organization" (1 = not at all, to 5 = completely), and "To what extent do your own values prevent you from fitting in with this organization" (1 = not at all, to 5 = completely; reverse scored). An individual's overall subjective fit score was calculated as the mean rating on all three items. Chronbach's Alpha for the three items at Time 1 was .61 and .73 at Time 2.

Organization attractiveness. Attractiveness of the organization was measured by the following three, 5-point Likert scale items adapted from Saks et al., (1994) and Judge and Cable (1997): "How attractive is the organization to you" (1 = extremely unattractive, to 5 = extremely attractive), "Rate your overall attraction to the organization" (1 = extremely unattractive, to 5 = extremely attractive), and "How attractive do you find the values of this organization" (1 = extremely unattractive, to 5 = extremely attractive). Individual scores on each item were averaged to obtain an overall indication of attractiveness. Chronbach's Alpha for the three items at Time 1 was .83 and .92 at Time 2.

Self-selection. Self-selection was measured by ratings of the following items: "Rate the extent to which you would like to work for this organization" (1 = not at all to 5 = very much), "Rate the likelihood that you would accept a position with this organization" (1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely), and "Rate the likelihood that you would turn down a job offer with this organization" (1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely, reverse scored). Individual responses to each item were averaged to obtain an overall indication of reported self-selection. Chronbach's Alpha for the three items was .83 at Time 1 and .87 at Time 2. The Organization Survey found in Appendix D combines the items measuring organizational attractiveness, self-selection, and subjective organization fit.

Organization knowledge. Organization knowledge was assessed with a short test written to measure the accuracy of information conveyed by each type of RJP. Questions tap understanding of each value dimension by asking if a certain situation or event is likely to occur in that particular organization. For example, if the RJP states that the organization values risk taking, the test item was "I would expect to have the ability to experiment with new and different ideas in this organization" (Appendix E). An indication of overall organization knowledge was

obtained by summing the number of correct responses to the True/False test. Test-retest reliability for the measure was .68 ($\underline{N}$ = 18).

A pilot test was conducted to determine the extent to which a particular test item reflected the values defined by O'Reilly et al., (1991). A panel of raters, 9 undergraduate and 2 graduate psychology students, were asked to read the definitions of the values and rate, on a 1 to 5 Likert scale (1 = Not at all, 5 = Completely), the extent to which the test item reflected the particular value for which it was intended. Ratings for each test item were averaged across raters to arrive at an overall rating for the item. Only four items had overall ratings of 3 or lower and, thus, were modified according to comments made by the raters in order to better reflect a particular value.

<u>Procedure</u>

Data for the study were collected at two different time points. At the first time point, participants were approached in class and asked to participate in a short study concerning organizational culture and job choice. Baseline measures of organizational attractiveness were obtained by having those that agreed to participate in the study read a paragraph describing a hypothetical clothing manufacturing firm. After reading the paragraph,

participants were asked to complete the organization survey, which measured self-selection into the organization, attractiveness of the organization, and subjective perceptions of fit with the organization. These individuals were then asked to sign up for a time when they could return to provide additional information.

Time 2 occured about one week later. At that time, a 2 (information type) X 2 (investment in organization) between-subjects design was used such that participants were assigned to one of four groups: 1) Episodic RJP with time commitment, 2) Semantic RJP with time commitment, 3) Episodic RJP with no time commitment, and 4) Semantic RJP with no time commitment. The number of individuals in each group were as follows: 47 individuals in Group 1, 41 in Group 2, 40 in Group 3, and 40 in Group 4.

Participant placement into conditions was as follows. RJP before or after application information was determined by the packet of study materials that a participant received. An equal number of study materials containing episodic information and semantic information were handed out to participants by the researcher in random order. Responses between Time 1 and Time 2 were matched by the last six digits of an individual's social security number.

The procedure for data collection for those individuals in the RJP with no time commitment in gaining employment with the organization was as follows.

Participants were first asked to read the value statement given to them. After reading the statement, participants were instructed to answer the survey questions and complete the job knowledge test. Participants were then asked to rank-order the value statements according to their own individual preferences. After completing the measures, participants turned in all materials to the researcher before leaving. After turning in the materials, participants were debriefed about the purpose of the study and any questions were answered by the researcher.

Participants in the RJP with time commitment in gaining employment with the organization groups were given the application information and asked to complete the application form and the written test (this information was immediately destroyed by the researcher to preserve participant anonymity). Participants were then handed the RJP information in the same random fashion described above for the RJP with no investment condition. After reading the RJPs, research participants were then asked to complete the dependent measures as described above. Finally, they were asked to turn in forms and were debriefed in the same manner described above for the RJP with no commitment condition. Figure 2 shows the procedure for data collection.

A pilot test of the materials and procedures utilized in this study was conducted on a small sample before

running the actual experiment. This pilot test was utilized in order to identify any potential problems in the procedure or materials, such as unclear instructions or having adequate time to complete all measures, before actually collecting data. Data were collected from 8 graduate students during class time. These individuals were first asked to read the description of the clothing manufacturing firm. Then, they were asked to read the organization's value statement and complete the organization survey as well as the organization knowledge test. These individuals were then asked to rank order the eight value statements according to their preferences. After materials were turned in to the researcher, comments were solicited from the pilot volunteers. Volunteers agreed that all instructions were clear and they were aware of what they were being asked to do, and had no suggestions for improvements. Therefore, the materials and procedure for data collection were not modified any further for subsequent data collection.

Results

Table 1 provides means and standard deviations for all variables. Table 2 provides intercorrelations between all variables. Of particular interest for the purposes of the present study are the non-significant correlations between objective fit and subjective fit, attractiveness, and self-selection. It appears that the objective

measurement of an individual's fit with the organization has no relationship with subjective perceptions of fit, attractiveness, and reported selection into the organization. Also of interest are the significant negative correlations between information type, age, work experience, and organization knowledge with subjective fit, attractiveness, and self-selection. It appears that as age, work experience, and organization knowledge increase, ratings of attractiveness, self-selection, and subjective fit decrease. In addition, those individuals who received episodic information had lower subjective fit, attractiveness, and self-selection ratings. A final point of interest is that participant field of study (major) was not related to any of the variables included in the present study.

Before testing specific hypotheses, it was first necessary to determine whether there were any differences in ratings of attractiveness, subjective fit, and self-selection at Time 1, when individuals were given a description of a hypothetical manufacturing firm, and at Time 2, when individuals were given the RJP containing organizational value information. Paired-sample t-tests revealed no significant differences at Time 1 and Time 2 for attractiveness ratings, $t(140) = 1.53$, $p > .05$, subjective fit ratings, $t(140) = 1.06$, $p > .05$, and self-selection ratings, $t(140) = 1.73$, $p > .05$. These findings

suggest that the provision of organization culture information had no effect on individual ratings of self-selection, subjective fit, and attractiveness.

Hypothesis 1a (organization attractiveness will be positively related to reported self-selection into the organization) was tested with hierarchical regression in which organization attractiveness was the outcome variable. Because information type, age, work experience, and organization knowledge were all significantly correlated with self-selection, these variables were used as control variables in the analysis. The control variables were entered in the first step of the analysis. Organization attractiveness was entered on the second step. Table 3 shows the results of this analysis. The table reveals that attractiveness does predict a significant amount of variance in self-selection above that accounted for by the control variables (ΔR^2 = .14, $\underline{p}$ < .001). In addition, examination of the Beta coefficients reveals that attractiveness is the most important predictor in accounting for variance in self-selection. Therefore, hypothesis 1a was supported.

Because self-selection, attractiveness, and subjective fit were so highly correlated, it was necessary to determine whether these variables are actually three distinct concepts or if they are actually tapping the same underlying construct. To answer this question, a post hoc

exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The nine items measuring attractiveness, self-selection, and subjective fit were entered into a principal components factor analysis. This analysis extracted only one factor with an eigenvalue over 1.0. This factor accounted for 69.4% of the variance in the data. The range of factor loadings was .61 to .92. These results suggest that attractiveness, self-selection, and subjective fit, which had been treated as distinct concepts, may actually be tapping one construct relating to the general desire to work for a particular organization.

Hypothesis 1b (objective fit will be positively related to organization attractiveness, yet this relationship will be mediated by the subjective perceptions of fit) was tested with a series of regression analyses outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), three regression equations must be computed in order to test a mediational hypothesis. In the first equation, the mediator (subjective fit) was regressed onto the predictor (objective fit). In the second equation, the outcome variable (organization attractiveness) was regressed on to the predictor (objective fit). In the third equation, the outcome variable (organization attractiveness) was regressed on to both the predictor (objective fit) and the mediator (subjective fit). For mediation to exist, the predictor

must affect the mediator in the first equation, the predictor must affect the outcome variable in the second equation, and the mediator must affect the outcome variable in the third equation.

The first equation, where subjective fit was regressed onto objective fit, was not significant, $F(1, 158) = 1.42$, $p > .05$. Because the relationship between subjective and objective fit was not significant, the mediational hypothesis could not be supported. The second equation, where attractiveness was regressed onto objective fit, was also not significant, $F(1, 158) = 1.07$, $p > .05$. The third equation, where attractiveness was regressed onto both subjective fit and objective fit, was significant, $F(2, 157) = 206.60$, $p < .001$, yet only subjective fit was found to significantly predict attractiveness ($\beta = .85$, $p < .001$). The results of these analyses reveal that although subjective perceptions of fit did predict organization attractiveness, objective fit had no effect on organization attractiveness. Therefore, hypothesis 1b was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 (individuals who receive episodic organizational culture information will have more accurate knowledge of the organization than those who receive semantic information) was tested using a 2 (information type) by 2 (time commitment) ANOVA in which organization knowledge was the dependent variable. This analysis

revealed a significant main effect for information type, $F(1, 156) = 39.9$, $p < .01$, as well as a significant main effect for time commitment, $F(1, 156) = 9.17$, $p < .01$. Examination of the means for each group revealed that those who received episodic information ($M = 11.16$) scored significantly higher on the job knowledge test than those who received semantic information ($M = 9.54$). These results provide support for Hypothesis 2. In addition, those who completed the application and math test ($M = 10.74$) scored significantly higher on the job knowledge test than those who did not complete these measures ($M = 9.96$). The interaction between information type and time commitment was not significant, $F(1, 156) = .33$, ns.

The third hypothesis stated that knowledge accuracy and objective fit will interact to affect subjective perceptions of fit. Specifically, when knowledge accuracy is high, objective and subjective fit will be positively related; when knowledge accuracy is low, objective and subjective fit will not be related. This hypothesis was tested using hierarchical regression. For this analysis, objective fit and total knowledge were converted to z - scores to center the measures. Low scores were considered to be 1 standard deviation below the mean score and high scores were considered to be 1 standard deviation above the mean score. Because age and workexperience were significantly correlated with subjective fit, these two

variables were entered in the first step of the regression analysis as control variables. In the second step of the analysis, subjective fit was regressed onto objective fit and organization knowledge. The interaction term (objective fit X organization knowledge) was entered on the third step. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4. Because the interaction term was significant in the final step of the analysis, t = -2.18, p < .05, and because the interaction predicted an additional 3% of the variance in subjective fit, the interaction was further explored by graphing the relationship between objective fit and organization knowledge in predicting subjective perceptions of fit (Figure 3). Figure 3 reveals that subjective fit and objective fit are more closely related when individuals have low knowledge accuracy, which is opposite effect than what was hypothesized.

Because these results were counter to the hypothesis, the interaction was explored further by taking into consideration the type of information that individuals were given. Information type was of interest because this was the only variable related to objective fit. Therefore the nature of the interaction between objective fit and organization knowledge in predicting subjective fit may be different depending on the information type. (This investigation was for exploratory purposes only, it was not intended to test a three-way interaction.)

This posibility was explored by performing separate regression analyses for those who received semantic and those who received episodic information. Again, work experience and age were added as the first step in the hierarchical regression analysis as control variables. Subjective fit was regressed on to objective fit and total knowledge in the second step, and the interaction between objective fit and total knowledge was added in the final step of the analysis to determine if the nature of the interaction was different for those receiving semantic versus episodic information. For those that received semantic information, the change in the variance accounted for by the interaction term was not significant, $F(1,71) = 0.01$, $p > .05$. For those individuals who received episodic information, the addition of the interaction in the third step of the analysis revealed that the interaction accounted for an additional 8% of the variance in subjective fit beyond that accounted for by organization knowledge and objective fit, $\Delta R^2 = .084$, $F(1, 69) = 7.37$, $p < .01$. Table 5 provides the regression coefficients for the final model. The nature of the interaction was explored by graphing the relationship between knowledge accuracy and objective fit in predicting subjective fit (Figure 4). The graph, again, reveals that subjective fit and objective fit are more closely related when individuals have low knowledge accuracy.

Hypothesis 4 (individuals who have committed more time towards gaining a position with the organization will have higher reported self-selection ratings than those who commit less time) was tested using a 2 (information type) X 2 (time commitment) ANOVA in which self-selection was the dependent variable. The main effect for time commitment was not significant, $F(1, 164) = .03$, $p > .05$. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. A significant main effect, however, was found for information type ($F(1, 164) = 13.16$, $p < .01$). An examination of means indicated that those individuals who received semantic information ($M = 3.65$) had significantly higher self-selection ratings (tended to self-select into the organization) than those who received episodic information ($M = 3.11$).

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to determine how organizational culture information could be best presented to job applicants for the purpose of attracting employees who will fit into an organization's culture. In order to do this, the process by which individuals establish fit with an organization and subsequently choose to join the organization must be understood. Past research has attempted to identify the relative importance of job and organization factors in an applicant's decision to accept a job with an organization. Various studies have found different results regarding the importance of factors such

as autonomy, opportunities to use skills, flexibility in scheduling (Feldman & Arnold, 1978), organization image (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993), pay, environmental responsibility, and fair employment (Strand, Levine, & Montgomery, 1981) in making job choice decisions. Judge and Bretz (1992) found that the effects of organizational value factors on job choices was stronger than the effect of pay and promotion. In the present study, perceptions of fit, attractiveness, and reported self-selection into the organization did not change significantly as a result of the provision of the RJP containing organizational value information. One possible explanation for these findings is that participants in this study did not consider organizational value information in determining whether or not they would like to work for the organization. Instead, these individuals may have made decisions regarding their fit with the organization on the basis of information regarding the type of firm described, the location of job openings, or the type of job openings available. Because these results are in contrast to Judge and Bretz (1992), future research should attempt to determine just what influence organizational values have on individual self-selection into a particular organization.

Another possible explanation for the findings that ratings of self-selection, attractiveness, and subjective

fit did not change as a result the provision of organization value information is that the 8-dimension classification of values may not have fit the value profiles of the participants in this study. In other words, participants may not have considered these particular values to be important in determining whether or not they would like to work for the organization, but may have taken other values into consideration in their determinations of fit. For example, Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996) found that an organization's ecological stance, which can be interpreted as the value the organization places on environmentally-friendly practices, influenced the degree to which study participants would have liked to work for the organization. Future research should examine the possibility that the selection of particular values provided to job applicants may influence the degree to which values are utilized in determinations of fit with the organization.

Findings by Judge and Cable (1997) suggest that self-selection into an organization is based on applicant perceptions of attraction to the organization. Furthermore, attraction to the organization is influenced by actual (objective) fit with the organization as well as subjective perceptions of fit. In the present study, (hypothesis 1a) organization attractiveness was found to account for a significant amount of variance in self-

selection ratings after controlling for other factors found to be related to self-selection, such as, work experience, information type, subjective fit, and age. In addition, the beta coefficients of the regression equation revealed that attractiveness was the most important predictor of self-selection ratings. These findings support those of Judge and Cable in identifying individual attractiveness to the organization as the basis for reported selection into an organization.

The hypothesis that subjective perceptions of fit would mediate the effects of objective fit on organization attractiveness (hypothesis 1b) was not supported. These findings are in contrast to those of Judge and Cable (1997) who found that the relationship between an individual's objective fit with the organization and organization attractiveness was mediated by subjective perceptions of fit. In the present study, there was no relationship between objective fit and organization attractiveness. Subjective fit and organization attractiveness were strongly related such that increases in fit led to increases in perceptions of attractiveness. These findings suggest that individual perceptions of fit with the organization are more important than actual fit with the organization in determinations of attractiveness. This suggestion is supported by Kristof (1996) who found

that perceived fit, rather than actual fit, was more influential in the job selection process.

Past research has identified different factors, other than the degree of person-organization fit, that may affect individual self-selection into an organization (Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980; Reilly et al., 1981). Of particular interest in the present study was the influence of commitment to obtaining a particular job built though the expenditure of effort in obtaining the job (Hypothesis 4). Wanous (1989) suggests that individuals who expend more effort towards obtaining a job will tend to self-select into the organization regardless of person-organization fit. The results of the present study do not support that assertion, in other words, those individuals who expended more effort in the present study by filling out an application and completing a test of math and logic skills did not have higher self-selection ratings than those who expended less effort. The likely explanation for these findings is that the manipulation of effort expenditure in the research study was too weak and artificial. In the present study, effort expenditure was manipulated by having participants spend 15 to 20 minutes filling out an application and taking a math and logic exam. In real job-seeking situations, the expenditure of effort is often much greater. For example, people may spend hours driving to and from work locations,

interviewing, testing, and creating resumes in hopes of obtaining a job with an organization. Therefore, the generalization of these findings to actual job choice situations may be limited by the manipulation of the time commitment variable. Future research in a field setting would be appropriate for testing the effects of effort expenditure on self-selection.

In the present study, time commitment in the self-selection process was found to be positively related to knowledge of the organization's values. In other words, those who committed more time towards the selection process scored higher on the organization knowledge test. This unhypothesized finding may indicate that although increased expenditure of effort may not affect self-selection ratings, it may affect the degree of effort put in to other aspects of the organization evaluation process. Future research should examine this possibility.

One unhypothesized factor that was found to influence self-selection ratings was the type of information received. Specifically, those individuals who received semantic information tended to have higher self-selection ratings than those receiving episodic information. These findings may give insight into applicant preferences for certain types of value information. Results of this study may suggest that applicants prefer shorter, concise descriptions of organization values to longer

descriptions. In addition, these information preferences may be linked to organization preferences. Rynes et al., (1980) identified many factors in the recruiting process that influenced applicant reactions towards a particular organization (i.e. recruiter characteristics). Future research should examine the type of information (semantic versus episodic) provided to applicants as another possible factor influencing applicant reactions towards a particular organization.

Realistic Job Previews (RJPs) have been developed in order to provide information to job applicants for the purpose of aligning individual perceptions with organization realities (Wanous, 1980). With regard to organizational values, the manner in which the information is presented can affect the degree of accuracy in which the values are perceived by job applicants. In the present study, the hypothesis that individuals who receive episodic information will score higher on a job knowledge test than individuals who receive semantic information was supported (Hypothesis 2). It appears that the provision of a contextual example of how organzational values are manifested in a particular organization, rather than a word or word phrase advocating a given value, aids in aligning individual expectations with organization realities. These findings strengthen Hall's (1989) assertion that making the context of the value statement

clear, or how a particular value operates in an organization, aids in avoiding misunderstandings and increasing the accuracy in which the message is perceived as the sender intends. These findings also support those of Saks et al., (1994) in concluding that RJPs function as information providers and affect individual knowledge structure about an organization.

Although individuals who received episodic information scored higher on a test of organization knowledge than those who received semantic information, this knowledge accuracy did not translate to more accurate perceptions of fit with the organization. In other words, subjective perceptions of fit with the organization were not related to an objective measure of fit when individuals had more knowledge of the organization. In fact, the opposite effect was found. Individuals who had less accurate knowledge of the organization's values tended to have subjective perceptions of fit that more closely aligned with the objective measure of individual values than those with more accurate organization knowledge.

In an attempt to explain these findings, zero-order correlations between objective fit, subjective fit, and organization knowledge were examined (Table 2). The zero-order correlation between subjective fit and knowledge accuracy revealed that as knowledge accuracy increased,

subjective fit decreased. In addition, objective fit was not related to either subjective fit or knowledge accuracy. These findings may be a result of what information individuals used in order to determine fit with the organization. As noted earlier, subjective fit ratings (as well as attractiveness and self-selection ratings) did not change as a result of receiving the organizational value RJP. It is possible that at the second measurement point, individuals were making judgements of fit on the basis of the type of organization, the location of work, or types of positions available instead of on the match between individual and organizational values. If perceptions of fit were based on factors other than organizational values, one would not expect these perceptions to be related to an individual's actual value orientation.

This does not, however, help to explain why people who had less accurate knowledge of the organization had perceptions of fit that more closely aligned with objective fit. This finding suggests that individuals who knew less about the organization's values were better able to discern their actual fit with the organization's values. Interestingly, these findings were only found for individuals who received episodic information - the interaction between objective fit and knowledge accuracy in predicting subjective fit was not significant for those

who read semantic information. In general, those who received episodic information scored higher on the organization knowledge test than those who received semantic information. In fact, only six individuals who received episodic information scored low on the organization knowledge test. Perhaps those individuals did not perform well on the organization knowledge test, but were basing perceptions of fit on the match between values, whereas others are basing perceptions of fit on other job and organization characteristics. Future research should attempt investigate the possibility that certain individuals do consider the match between organizational and individual values when making job choice decisions, whereas other individuals do not.

Implications

There are a number of implications of this study for organizations attempting to build a strong organizational culture through recruitment and selection. The most obvious implication is that in order to convey organizational value information to job applicants, organizations should avoid the use of single word or word phrase value statements. As noted by Collins and Porras (1996), corporate value statements are often perceived to be a confusing stream of words. To avoid this confusion, organizations can provide applicants with contextual

examples of how values affect the structures and processes utilized in organizations to meet company goals.

A second implication of this study is that perceptions of fit with an organization may be more important than actual fit in determining whether or not individuals are attracted to an organization, specifically subjective fit was found to be positively related to attractiveness but objective fit was not. The issue remains as to what information individuals are using to assess their fit with the organization. If applicants use information such as type of work, type of firm, or location of work on which to determine fit with the organization, the provision of a RJP presenting organizational values may not be useful in aligning individual perceptions of an organization's culture with actual organization structures and processes. If this is the case, those organizations that strive to build a strong corporate culture may want to consider methods other than recruitment and selection in perpetuating organization values, such as employee training programs or socialization practices (Chatman, 1991).

There are several implications of the support of the the hypothesis that subjective fit would mediate the effects of objective fit on organization attractiveness. Had this hypothesis been supported, Judge and Cable's (1997) findings would have been replicated in another

setting, establishing that although actual fit with the organization does influence perceptions of attractiveness, this influence is primarily due to subjective perceptions of fit. In addition, support of this hypothesis would have provided insight into how people form perceptions of both organization attractiveness and subjective fit.

A similar argument could have been made for the failure to support Hypothesis 3 (objective fit and organization knowledge would interact to affect subjective fit). Had this hypothesis been supported, a method for aligning objective and subjective perceptions of fit would have been discovered, namely to increase the accuracy of knowledge that an applicant has about a particular organization. This could be accomplished by providing contextual examples of the organization's culture.

Limitations

The major limitation of the present study in terms of external validity was the use of a laboratory research setting to study the self-selection process. Although participants were asked to place themselves in the position of someone looking for a job, the fact that people were not actually considering the organization for employment may have limited the findings. In other words, participants in the study may not have given the organization's value information a high degree of consideration because they were not actually using this

information to make a life decision. Saks et al., (1994) advocate the use of controlled laboratory research designs in investigating underlying psychological processes of RJP effects. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the use of a controlled research setting to examine the type of information that most accurately conveys an organization's values was appropriate in this instance due to the fact that the cognitive process of deriving expectations about the organization given organizational value information is most likely the same in a "real-world" setting. However, the manipulation of value statements in order to examine the self-selection process in the present study was most likely too weak in this setting to obtain accurate information about how individuals determine fit with the organization.

A second limitation of the present study was the reliability of the organization knowledge test. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the organization knowledge test was .68 in the present study, indicating a moderate amount of measurement error in the test. When using test-retest estimates of reliability, the correlation between test scores at one time point and another time point can be affected by participant learning about test content or practice (Gatewood & Feild, 1994). In the present study, participants scored higher on the organization knowledge test on the second administration

than the first, suggesting a practice effect. Therefore, the reliability coefficient obtained may actually underestimate of the true reliability of the organization knowledge test.

Another limitation to the present study concerns the finding that attractiveness, self-selection, and subjective fit, treated as three distinct concepts, loaded on to a single factor. This finding limits the validity of the results obtained regarding the effects of subjective fit and attractiveness on self-selection. One possible explanation is that the three dependent variables are related due to common method variance. That is, self-selection, subjective fit, and attractiveness were all measured at the same time with self-report ratings. Judge and Cable (1997) examined the relationships between these three variables in 182 students who were actually looking for jobs at the time of the study. They operationalized self-selection into the organization as actual decision to work for an organization and found that organization attractiveness was correlated with self-selection. Therefore, the notion that attractiveness predicts self-selection into an organization may be valid when measured as actual self-selection versus reported self-selection intentions. Future research should consider whether participants are currently looking for positions.

The collection of data in the present study may present limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn from the research. For example, participant responses were not coded according to the day and time that individuals participated in the study. Because this information is not available, it is unclear whether study condition was confounded with the time of day people participated in the study. In other words, individuals who completed the study in the morning may have differed significantly on important characteristics (such as current employment) than those who completed the study in the afternoon. Because people could choose what time to participate depending on their schedules, the assignment to conditions was not purely random.

Another issue with the collection of data in the present study is that demographic characteristics were not collected on individuals at the first measurement time. Although it is known that individuals who returned to complete the study at Time 2 did not have significantly different ratings on the baseline measures, it is not known whether these two groups differed on other important characteristics.

Future Research

One avenue for future research, other than those already suggested, concerns the terms and measures used to examine constructs in this field of research. Of

particular concern is the concept of objective fit. Judge and Cable (1997) define objective fit as actual fit, or an empirical relationship between separate assessments of individual and organizational values. However, the measurement of objective fit in terms of value profiles is not entirely objective in that individuals are still subjectively reporting their value preferences. Future research should attempt to explore measures that would objectively tap an individual's actual fit with the organization without relying on subjective self-reports.

In the present study, the eight-dimension classification of values developed by O'Reilly et al., (1991) was utilized to conceptualize, and develop measures and manipulations for individual and orgnanizational values. O'Reilly et al. developed the OCP, which is a set of 54 value statements that are Q-sorted to obtain individual and organizational value profiles. These statements have been shown to fall into 8 broad classifications (Chatman, 1991; Judge & Cable, 1997). In the present study, participants were asked to rank order the eight broad classifications of values. It is possible that having study participants Q-sort 54 value statements would produce different rank order correlations than having these individuals rank order eight value dimensions. Future research should attempt to determine whether the two methods measuring values yield equal

results in terms of the rank order correlations obtained among individual and organizational value preferences.

In hindsight, there are several suggestions for future research that can be made with regard to the measures and manipulations utilized in the present study. As noted, the manipulation of the time commitment variable in the present study was weak and artificial. Although the hypothesis that time commitment positively affects self-selection ratings was not supported in this study, it may still be important to examine Wanous' theory (1989) that increased effort expenditure leads to higher self-selection. This theory is important to examine because it provides insight into the best timing for providing Realistic Job Previews to applicants so that they can make informed decisions about their fit with the organization. One suggestion for strengthening this manipulation would be to provide study participants with a scenario describing where they are in the selection process. For example, one condition could describe an applicant that has had several interviews with various people in the organization and is now going to complete the last stage of the selection process. Another scenario could describe an applicant who has only been looking for a job for one week and is making his or her first contact with the organization. Manipulation checks could be used in future

research to determine the strength of individual time commitment provided with different scenarios.

A final avenue for future research concerns the relative amount of information given to job applicants in different types of RJPs. In the present study, those who were given episodic information describing the organization's culture were given *more* information than those who received semantic information. It is possible that the reason individuals who received episodic information scored differently on the organization knowledge test than those who received semantic information is because the *amount* of information received was different, rather than the *type* of information being different. One consideration would be to use the same titles on both semantic and episodic statements so that the materials would be identical except for the amount of information given. Future research should examine the possibility that the amount of information concerning the organization's culture affects knowledge of the culture regardless of information type.

Conclusion

The results of the present study have added insight into the use of Realistic Job Previews for the purpose of attracting individuals who will fit into an organization's culture. Findings from the study have raised questions regarding the influence of certain factors, such as

objective fit with the organization's values or time commitment, in determinations of whether individuals whoudl like to work for a particular organization. However, findings have also added clarity into the use of RJPs as information providers in affecting the accuracy in which organization values are interpreted.

Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations for All Variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Objective Fit	.14	.30
Age	25.80	7.5
Work Exp.	74.55	84.43
Org. Knowledge	10.40	1.85
Subjective Fit	3.40	.88
Attractiveness	3.25	.99
Self-Selection	3.37	.98

*Note: $\underline{N}$ = 161.

Work Experience refers to the number of months of both full and part-time work experience.

Table 2.

Intercorrelations among variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1) Objective Fit	--									
2) Info. Type	-.23**	--								
3) Time Commitment	.03	.03	--							
4) Gender	-.03	-.08	.14	--						
5) Age	-.02	-.02	-.18*	-.10	--					
6) Work Exp.	-.12	.04	-.13	-.16*	.69**	--				
7) Org. Knowledge	-.03	.44**	.21**	-.06	-.05	.06	.68			
8) Subjective Fit	.09	-.38**	-.06	.08	-.20**	-.19*	-.40**	.73		
9) Attractiveness	.08	-.34**	-.07	.02	-.24**	-.17*	-.37**	.84**	.92	
10) Self-Selection	.00	-.27**	-.02	.05	-.22**	-.17*	-.35**	.76**	.85**	.87
11) Major	.02	.00	-.04	.10	.03	.09	.00	.04	.01	-.02

*Note.

*p < .05, ** p < .01, N = 161

Info. Type: 1 = episodic, 0 = semantic. Time Commitment: 1 = yes, 0 = no. Gender: 1 = female, 0 = male. Numbers on the diagonal are reliability estimates. Work experience refers to months of full or part-time experience. Major: 1 = psychology, 0 = other.

Table 3.

Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting

Self-Selection

Variable	b	Beta	R^2	ΔR^2
1. Step 1				
Work Experience	.001	.03		
Info. Type	.01	.01		
Subjective Fit	.84	.76**		
Age	-.01	-.08		
			.59**	
2. Step 2				
Work Experience	.001	-.02		
Info. Type	.06	.03		
Subjective Fit	.20	.18*		
Age	.001	-.02		
Attractiveness	.69	.70**		
			.73**	.14**

Note. * indicates p < .05, ** indicates p < .001, N = 160.

Table 4.

<u>Interaction between Objective Fit and Organization</u>

<u>Knowledge in Predicting Subjective Fit</u>.

Variable	b	Beta	R^2	ΔR^2
1. Step 1				
Age	-.01	-.1		
Work Experience	-.0006	-.05		
			.02	.02
2. Step 2				
Age	-.02	-.19		
Work Experience	.0003	.02		
Objective Fit	.10	.11		
Total Knowledge	-.37**	-.42**		
		.	.21**	.19**
3. Step 3				
Age	-.03*	-.22*		
Work Experience	.0005	.05		
Objective Fit	.86*	.99*		
Total Knowledge	-.29**	-.33**		
Interaction	-.77*	-.90*		
			.23**	.025*

<u>Note</u>. * indicates $p < .05$, ** indicates $p < .01$, N = 153.

Table 5.

Interaction between Objective Fit and Organization

Knowledge in Predicting Subjective Fit for Those Receiving

Episodic Information.

Variable	b	Beta	ΔR^2
Work Experience	.001	.09	
Age	-.03	-.20	
Objective Fit	1.8**	2.05**	
Total Knowledge	-.32**	-.33**	
Interaction	-1.74**	-2.05**	.08**

Note. ** indicates $p < .01$, $R^2 = .22$, $N = 74$.

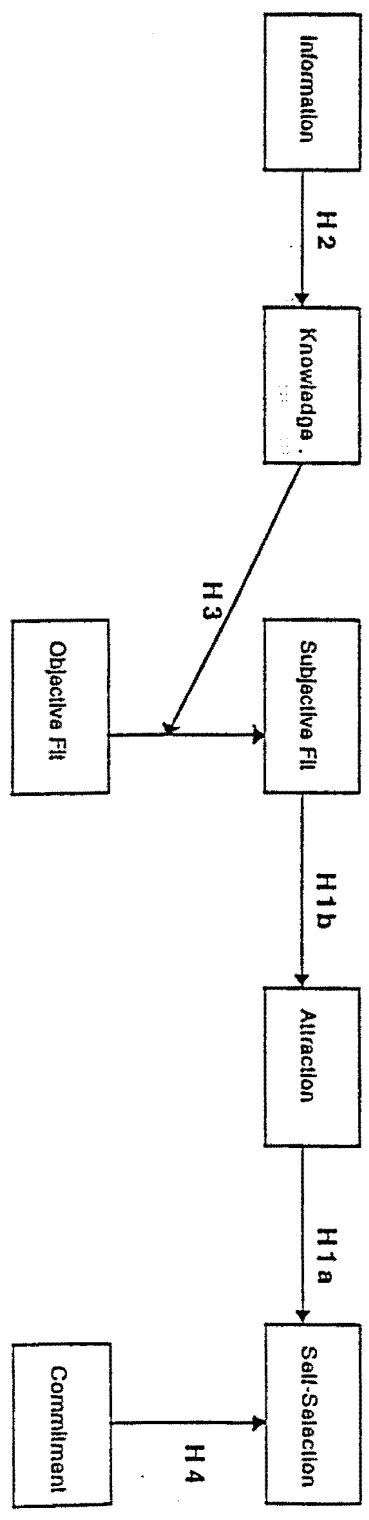Figure 1. Hypothesized relationships between variables.

Figure 2. Procedure for data collection.

PROCEDURE

STEP 1: RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS;
OBTAIN BASELINE MEASURES

STEP 2: ASSIGNMENT TO GROUPS
2 X 2 BETWEEN-SUBJECTS DESIGN

GROUP 1

No commitment

Semantic

GROUP 2

Commitment

Semantic

GROUP 3

No Commitment

Episodic

GROUP 4

Commitment

Episodic

STEP 3: (FOR GROUPS 2 AND 4 ONLY)

COMPLETE APPLICATION AND TEST

STEP 4: (ALL GROUPS)

READ CULTURE INFORMATION

STEP 5: (ALL GROUPS)

COMPLETE ORGANIZATION SURVEY

STEP 6: (ALL GROUPS)

COMPLETE JOB KNOWLEDGE SURVEY

STEP 7: (ALL GROUPS)

RANK ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

STEP 8: (ALL GROUPS)
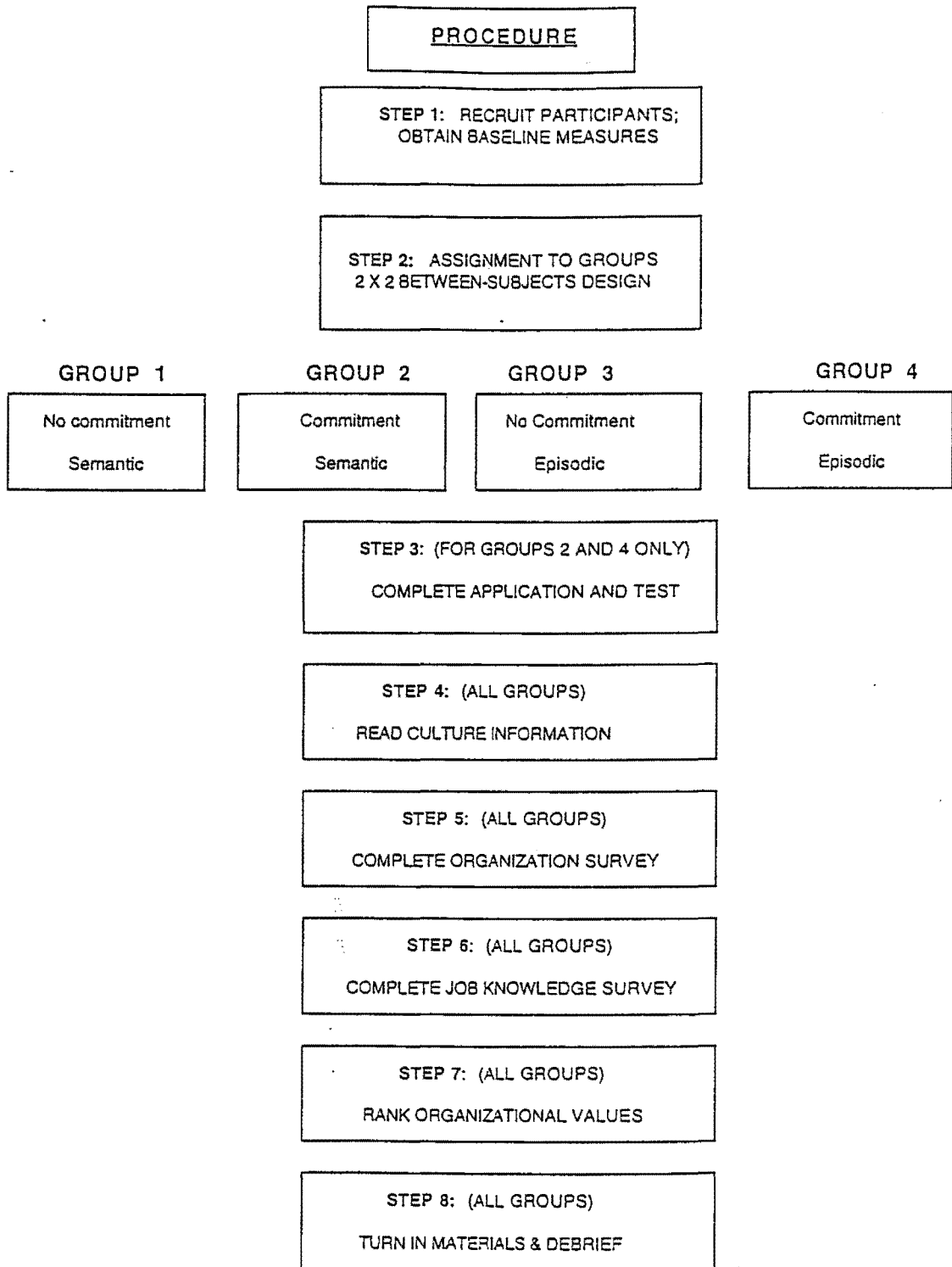
TURN IN MATERIALS & DEBRIEF

Figure 3. Interaction between organization knowledge and objective fit on subjective fit.

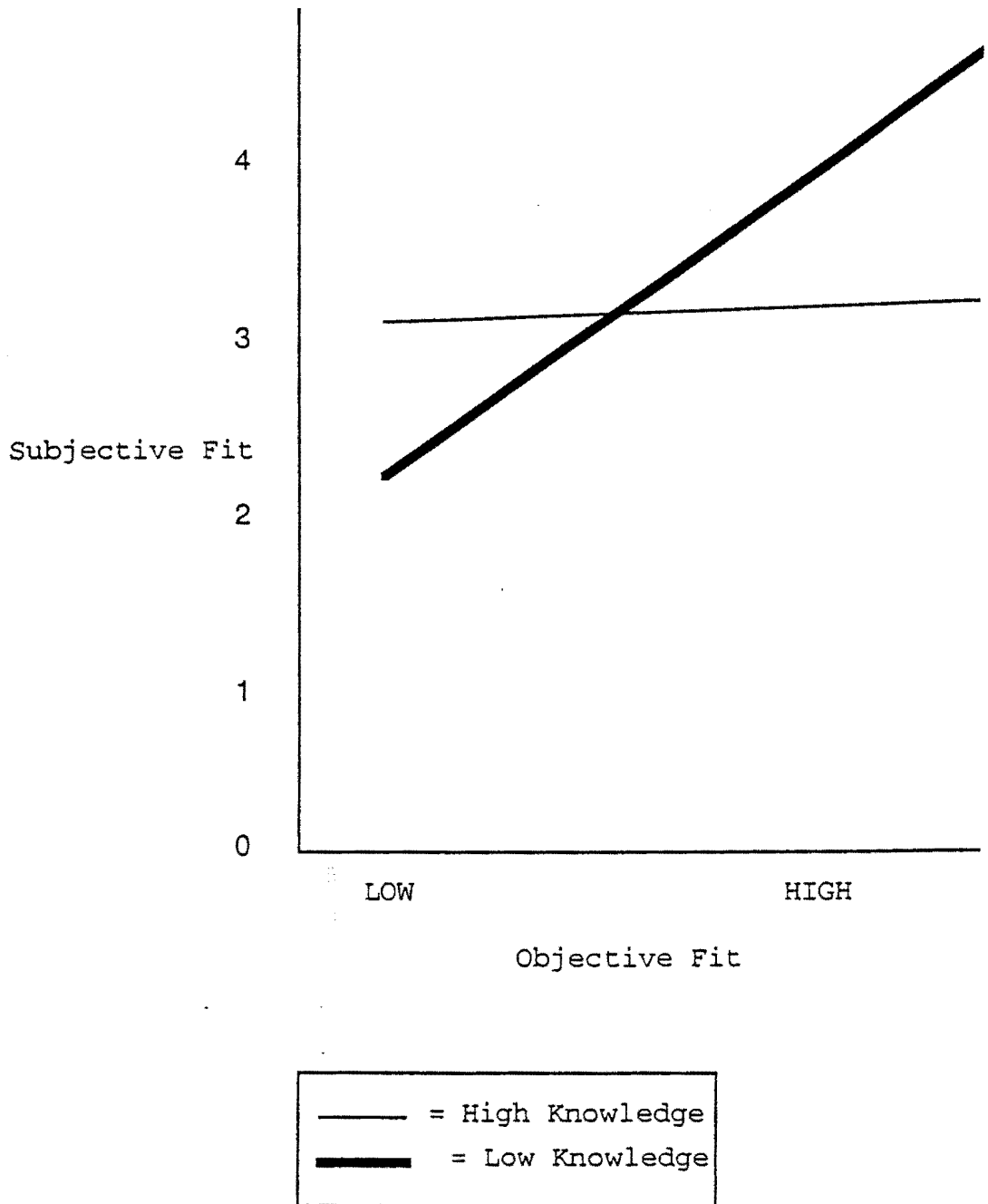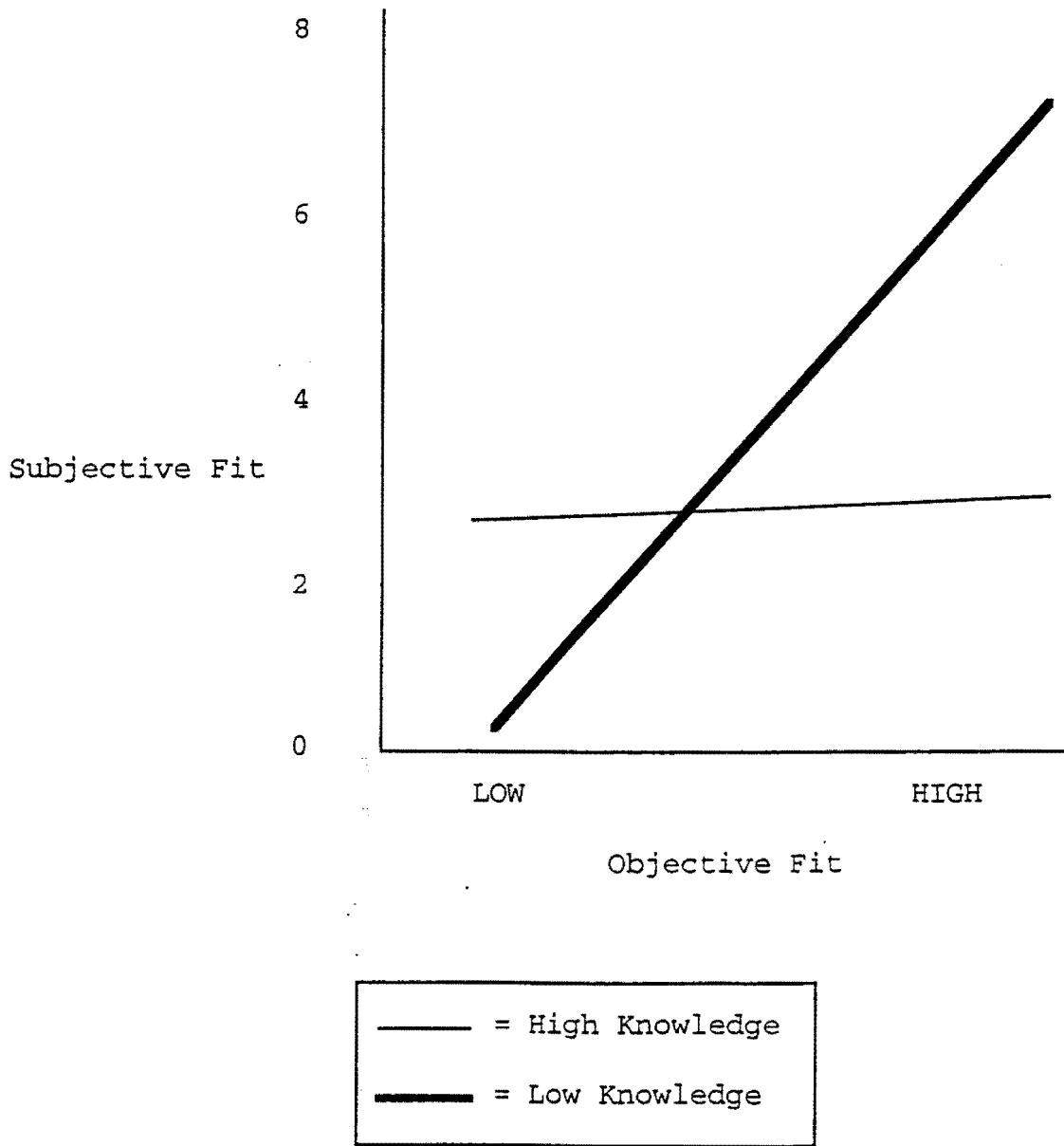Figure 4. Interaction between organization knowledge and objective fit on subjective fit for those reading episodic information.

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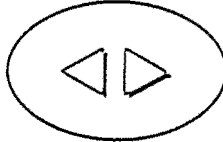
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Appendix A

Organizational Culture RJP: Semantic Form

Pacific ◁ ▷ *Atlantic*

Statement of Values

Our organization strives to be the leader in the industry in terms of production, profit, customer and employee satisfaction, and societal contribution.   To accomplish this mission we adhere to the following values in doing business (in order of importance):

Team Collaboration
Innovation
Supportiveness
Results
Aggressiveness
Rewards
Precision
Decisiveness

Appendix B

Organizational Culture RJP: Episodic Form

Pacific (◁ ▷) *Atlantic*

Statement of Values

Our organization strives to be the leader in the industry in terms of production, profit, customer and employee satisfaction, and societal contribution.   The following statements describe the values we adhere to in accomplishing our mission (in order of importance):

"We view our department as a team.   Any individual problems or issues are addressed as a group during weekly meetings."

"Sometimes risky experiments don't work out well, but they have also led to some of our best-selling products."

"Our organization supports the development of teams and individuals by sponsoring educational seminars throughout the year."

"There is never a chance to rest easy in this company.   When last year's goals are met, next year's goals are set even higher."

"When management announces a new project to go to the best team, teams will do just about anything to prove their merit over the others."

"Expectations are set higher each year, but annual salaries increase accordingly."

"One person on each team is assigned the role of The Perfectionist. Nothing leaves the department without being thoroughly checked."

"In this organization, individual employees rarely question decisions made by top management."

Appendix C

Survey of Individual Values: Objective Fit Measure

Last six digits of your Social Security Number : XXX-_____-_____

Survey of Individual Values

Instructions: Please rank the following value statements according to how important it is for an organization that you work for to possess that characteristic.   Write the numbers 1 (*most   important*) through 8 (*least   important*) by each statement   using   each   number   only   once.

Example: Decisiveness is most important, followed by rewards, and so on ending with Aggressiveness, which is considered the least important characteristic for an organization to possess.

8	Aggressiveness
7	Attention to Detail
3	Collaboration
1	Decisiveness
5	Innovation
6	Results-Oriented
2	Rewards
4	Supportiveness

Your   Ratings:

_____   **Aggressiveness:**   the degree to which my organization emphasizes aggressiveness, competitiveness, and opportunities.

_____   **Attention   to   Detail:**   the degree to which my organization is analytical, attends to details, and is precise.

_____   **Collaboration:**   the degree to which my organization is team-oriented and promotes collaboration.

_____   **Decisiveness:**   the degree to which my organization values decisiveness, predictability, and low conflict.

_____   **Innovation:**   the degree to which my organization promotes risk taking, experimentation, and fails to emphasize being careful, stable, or secure.

_____   **Results-Oriented:**   the degree to which my organization is achievement-oriented, is demanding and results-oriented, and promotes high expectations.

_____   **Rewards:**   the degree to which my organization emphasizes high pay for performance and professional growth.

_____   **Supportiveness:**   the degree to which my organization is supportive, promotes the sharing of information, and praises good   performance.

Appendix D

<u>Organization Survey: Measurements of Self-Selection,</u>

<u>Organization Attractiveness, and Subjective Organization</u>

<u>Fit</u>

Organization Survey

Instructions: Please answer the following questions based on the information you have read about this organization's values. Indicate your response by circling the appropriate number.

1. Rate the extent to which you would like to work for this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at All				Very Much

2. To what extent do your own values *prevent* you from fitting in with this organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at All				Completely

3. How attractive is the organization to you?

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Unattractive				Extremely Attractive

4. Rate the likelihood that you would accept a position with this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Unlikely				Extremely Likely

5. What is the probability that you will fit in well in this organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Unlikely				Extremely Likely

6. How attractive do you find the values of this organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Unattractive				Extremely Attractive

7. To what degree do your values match those of this organization?

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All				Completely

8. Rate the liklihood that you would *turn down* a job offer with this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Unlikely				Extremely Likely

9. Rate your overall attraction to this organization.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Unattractive				Extremely Attractive

Appendix E

<u>Organization Knowledge Survey</u>

Last six digits of your Social Security Number :XXX-_____-_____

Organization Knowledge Survey

Instructions: Please answer the following items based on the information you have read about this organization. If you think the statement describes the organization you have read about, circle TRUE. If you think the statement does not describe that organization, circle FALSE.

1. I would expect to have the ability to experiment with new and   TRUE or FALSE
    different ideas in this organization.

2. I would expect to be rewarded for my individual contributions to   TRUE or FALSE
    this company.

3. The goal in this organization is to maintain the status quo (keep   TRUE or FALSE
    things as they are.

4. People in this organization are encouraged to become the expert in   TRUE or FALSE
    their team on a particular issue rather than teaching their
    knowledge to others.

5. I would expect that employees who do *not* meet annual performance   TRUE or FALSE
    goals will be fired.

6. Employees in this organization are encouraged to seize   TRUE or FALSE
    opportunities rather than wait for something to happen.

7. I would expect this organization to reward employees with a public   TRUE or FALSE
    announcement of a job well done rather than money.

8. I would expect that little mistakes, such as typographical errors in   TRUE or FALSE
    reports, to be excusable in this organization.

9. I would expect top management to change a decision in light of new   TRUE or FALSE
    information.

10. In this organization, I would expect workstations to be laid out in a TRUE or FALSE
    circle.

11. I would expect this organization to support the continuing   TRUE or FALSE
    education of its employees.

12. Employees in this organization don't worry about meeting annual   TRUE or FALSE
    goals.

13. I would expect work teams to get along well with other work teams.   TRUE or FALSE

14. I would expect that minute details are important in this   TRUE or FALSE
    organization.

15. In this organization the highest recognition for a job well done is a TRUE or FALSE
    salary increase.

16. I would expect employees to carry out decisions exactly as detailed   TRUE or FALSE
    by supervisors.