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### Searching for a match: the formation of person-organization fit perceptions

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# CHAPTER 6

## General Discussion



In addition to instrumental motives such as pay, career opportunities, and location, job-seekers' attraction to an organization seems to be based on their impression of fit with their prospective environment. Especially, perceptions of Person-Organization (PO) fit are strong predictors of affective responses toward organizations (Kristof-Brown, et al., 2005). To estimate how well they will fit with an organization, people assess an organization's values and compare these to their own values. However, as people vary in their own cultural values preferences and organizations vary in their cultural values, different people are attracted to different organizations.

In Chapter 2, for example, it became evident that the culture of a for-profit organization is quite different from that of a governmental organization which in turn is quite different from that of a hospital. Moreover, the participants in Chapter 2 varied in their responses to the four organizations that were involved in this study (a consulting firm, a parcel post company, a municipality, and a hospital); some participants considered a particular organization as highly attractive whereas others considered the same organization to be highly unattractive. To illustrate, when asked which organization they would apply for, 24% of the respondents chose the hospital as their first choice, but another 25% of the participants indicated the hospital to be the least favorite option.

PO fit perceptions are of major relevance for employee recruitment, selection, and retention (Kristof-Brown, et al., 2005). Therefore, PO fit perceptions are conceived of as an important basis for responses toward organizations. It thus seems vital to know how perceptions of PO fit arise. Surprisingly, the sources for and development of PO fit perceptions are hardly studied to date. This dissertation aimed to provide a more complete understanding of how people, and especially job-seekers, develop perceptions of PO fit as based on impressions of value congruence. How do they perceive organizations, how do they process organizational information, and how is this information compared with their own preferences?

The general idea of fit seems quite plain. Basically, a person needs to be aware of his or her own values and the values of an organization and then needs to combine these into an assessment of PO fit. Following this reasoning, people's PO fit perceptions are generally assumed to encompass an overall comparison of personal and organizational values. However, in contrast to this general assumption, the chapters in this dissertation have shown that PO fit is not an exogenous and static construct that is the result of an objective

comparison of personal and organizational characteristics. Rather, the findings of this dissertation indicate that perceptions of PO fit evolve from unbalanced and flawed information processing. Moreover, both individual and situational characteristics could affect the way in which personal and organizational values converge into a general PO fit perception.

The studies in this dissertation examined the signals that job-seekers use to make inferences about an organization. In addition, they investigated job-seekers' attention to and weighing of organizational cues. Finally, personal characteristics that affect the processing of organizational information were taken into account. Findings of this dissertation lead to the conclusion that extant PO fit theory is based on assumptions about calculative P and O comparisons that do not exist in reality. First, the content of the P and O components as operationalized by researchers and (recruiting) organizations does not reflect the content that people themselves have in mind when assessing their PO fit (Chapter 2). Second, people weigh the P and O components in a different way than PO fit researchers tend to assume: some types of information are weighed more heavily than other ones. As a result, job-seekers tend to focus on a limited set of organizational features when assessing their future PO fit instead of making an overall comparison (Chapter 3). In addition, PO fit perceptions are less stable than previously expected: the sources of PO fit perceptions can change depending on someone's regulatory orientation or time perspective (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5).

The section below summarizes the main findings from the studies that have led to these conclusions. The theoretical relevance of these findings will be explicated afterwards as will pathways for future research. This discussion will continue with practical implications and will be closed with some concluding remarks.

## **Overview of main findings**

### **Chapter 2 - Attracting applicants on the web**

The first conclusion of this dissertation is that the content of the P and O components as theorized does not reflect the content that job-seekers themselves have in mind when

assessing their PO fit. This may not be surprising, because when looking for a new job, people often do not receive obvious and explicit information about an organization's values. Instead, they often face rather ambiguous indicators of an organization's culture and thus have to draw inferences from the incomplete information available to them. To evaluate the available information about an organization's culture, job-seekers probably make use of their schematic or stereotypical ideas and expectations about different types of organizations and their alleged cultures (Cable, et al., 2000; Cober, et al., 2004). In Chapter 2, I theorized that job-seekers' ideas and expectations about different organizations may be based on the branch of industry in which these organizations operate. These general industry perceptions influence job-seekers' culture perceptions of a specific organization. In addition, the fit between a person's values and these industry culture stereotypes (Person-Industry fit) gives a first indication of how well job-seekers may fit with an organization (PO fit). However, an organization's website may also be able to influence job-seekers' initial fit impressions. Especially when people's initial fit impressions are low as due to their industry culture stereotypes, an attractive website may help drawing their attention to relevant culture information.

To study the role of industry culture stereotypes and website design for the formation of PO fit perceptions, I confronted study participants with four actual organizational web sites. The four selected organizations were alike in location and size, but they differed in branch of industry. Eighty student participants completed a two-wave questionnaire. First, they indicated their organizational value preferences. Then, participants visited the four organizational web sites and indicated their organizational culture perceptions of these organizations and assessed the design of each website. Finally, participants rated their attraction to each of the four organizations. To assess industry culture stereotypes, a second group of comparable participants indicated their organizational culture perceptions as based on very short descriptions of the types of organizations included in the study and without visiting their websites.

Findings show that job-seekers already have expectations about an organization's culture before they learn more about that specific organization, for example, through the organization's website. Based on industry culture stereotypes, people make inferences about specific organizations. Most interesting, they use these stereotypes especially if they find the design of an organization's website not very attractive and their initial fit with the

industry culture (PI fit) is low. Hence, organizations with cultures different from the common stereotypical culture in their branch of industry may have problems attracting people who would fit their organization. Organizations should thus carefully design their website to stimulate active processing of culture relevant information in order to attract those applicants who may fit the organization.

### **Chapter 3 - Ascendancy of attractive over aversive fit**

While chapter 2 showed that job-seekers pay particular attention to the content of an organization's website if they generally fit well with at least the stereotypical organization in the respective industry, chapters 3 to 5 show that people subsequently also weigh the P and O components in a different way than PO fit researchers tend to assume: some types of information are weighed more than other ones. Traditionally, people are expected to make an overall comparison between their personal values and those of the organization when evaluating their PO fit (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2010). According to this assumption, it does not matter on what specific values job-seekers and organizations fit or fail to fit each other as long as the overall level of PO fit is sufficient. Consequently, overall PO fit perceptions are assumed to be equally based on the presence of values in the organization that support a person's own values, i.e., attractive values, and on the absence of values in the organization that contradict a person's own values, i.e., aversive values. Hence fits on values that are personally attractive, aversive, or relatively neutral should be weighed equally.

Chapter 3 questioned this assumption and proposed that PO fit perceptions do not stem from an overall similarity or fit between a person's own values and the values of an organization. Instead, job-seekers are argued to weigh personally attractive values more heavily than personally aversive values in establishing their PO fit perceptions. To test this proposition, I developed four studies that investigated the weighing of attractive, aversive, and neutral values on PO fit perceptions. In each of these studies, I used an experimental policy-capturing method that allowed me to estimate the separate effects of attractive fit, aversive fit, and neutral fit. In these studies, participants considered their PO fit with multiple organizational profiles. Unique to the design used in these studies is that the organizational profiles were personally relevant for each participant. Unbeknownst to participants, their own evaluations of attractive, neutral, and aversive values were used to

tailor these profiles which contained three values: one personally attractive, one personally neutral, and one personally aversive value. For each new profile, values were randomly selected from the participant's own unique choice of attractive, neutral, and aversive values. Hence, although all profiles comprised of one attractive, one neutral, and one aversive value, they differed with regard to the specific content of the values that were shown to participants. Furthermore, the three values in the profile varied in level (low, medium, or high), and the level of each value was systematically varied across profiles.

The findings showed that there was a wide variation in value preferences among participants, so values that were attractive to some participants were neutral or aversive to others and vice versa, which supports the use of tailored idiosyncratic cues. Furthermore, as proposed, all four studies showed that job-seekers do not weigh all value-fits equally; rather, they weigh fit on personally attractive values more heavily than fit on personally aversive and neutral values when indicating their perceived fit with the organization. Thus, job-seekers perceive high PO fit particularly when information about a prospective organization supports values that are personally attractive to them. This was true both for university students (Study 1) and for job-seekers without (Study 2) and with (Study 4) direct need for a new job. Moreover, findings were stable when participants ranked each value by means of a Likert scale (Study 3) or were forced to rate their most attractive and most aversive values by means of a Q-sort technique (Study 1, 2, and 4).

#### **Chapter 4 - Regulating PO fit perceptions**

Though job-seekers should search for organizations that signal the presence of attractive organizational features and the absence of unattractive ones, they seem to base their fit perceptions mainly on the amount of fit with organizational features they find attractive and to neglect available fit information about organizational features that they perceive as unattractive. Why do they use this strategy? To what extent is it, for example, caused by the specific nature of the job-search task? Answering this question was the main purpose of Chapter 4, which aimed to identify factors that affect people's attention to and perception of particular organizational cues. I applied regulatory focus theory that argues that the attention given to positive versus negative information depends on the degree to which a person is promotion or prevention focused. A promotion focus is aimed at potential success

and therefore people will display a greater sensitivity to the presence or absence of positive outcomes. Prevention, by contrast, centers on security needs or preventing loss and thus people will display greater sensitivity to the presence or absence of negative outcomes. Regulatory focus is a state and can differ both across situations (momentary regulatory focus) and across individuals (chronic regulatory orientation; Förster & Werth, 2009).

In Chapter 4, I hypothesize that success is more related to security needs. This in turn implies a greater promotion than prevention and that the job-search task draws more attention to positive focus among job-seekers. Due to this focus they will pay more attention to information regarding the absence or presence of their personally attractive values. However, also job-seekers' chronic regulatory focus will affect information processing. Chronically prevention-oriented job-seekers, who usually are more attentive to the presence or absence of negative outcomes (Higgins, 1997), will also focus on information regarding the absence or presence of their personally aversive values. Consequently, they may arrive at more balanced and thus more accurate perceptions of their overall fit with a potential organization.

I used an experimental policy-capturing design to examine the separate effects of attractive fit, aversive fit, and neutral fit as due to participants' regulatory focus. In this study, the main findings of Chapter 3 were replicated: when searching for a job, people perceive particularly high PO fit when information about a prospective employer supports values that are attractive to them. In addition, the results of this study showed that perceptions of PO fit are – at least partly - contingent on people's chronic regulatory orientation. People with a high prevention orientation also take the information on their personally aversive values into account. This latter finding seems to result in a more balanced and possibly more realistic perception of how well a person may fit with a potential prospective organization.

### **Chapter 5 - Future and present PO fit perception**

Chapter 3 showed that personally attractive values seem more salient to job-seekers than personally aversive values. Additionally, Chapter 4 showed that a person's regulatory focus affects the weighing of values. The aim of Chapter 5 was to investigate whether this process could be affected by temporal context. I used Construal Level Theory (Trope & Liberman, 2000, 2003) that argues that people's time perspective affects their evaluations: the longer the time perspective, the more weight people tend to put on possible positive outcomes. I,

therefore, proposed that PO fit perceptions are primarily based on attractive fit when people hold a distant time perspective. In a similar vein, aversive fit will also play a role when people hold a near time perspective.

I examined the effect of temporal distance on the weights assigned to attractive and aversive values in an experimental study. Participants evaluated four different organizations that were each described with two indicators of attractive and/or aversive fits and misfits. As in Chapters 3 and 4, organizational information was based on participants' own value preferences. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two temporal conditions (near vs. distant) and – as in Chapter 4 – their regulatory orientation was assessed. Participants reported their PO fit with each of the four organizations.

As proposed, PO fit perceptions were more strongly related to people's attractive values and less to their aversive values. However, this effect was partially attenuated in the 'near time' condition as compared to the 'distant time' condition. That is, both in the near and more distant time perspective, attractive fit resulted in more positive PO fit evaluations than aversive fit, but time perspective affected the weighing of misfits (rather than fits). In a distant time perspective, attractive misfit resulted in more negative PO fit perceptions than aversive misfit, whereas in a near time perspective both had a similar impact. Finally this study showed that the effect of temporal distance on the weighing of attractive and aversive (mis)fit was affected by a person's regulatory orientation.

## **Theoretical Implications and Future Directions**

As described in the introduction of this dissertation, very little was known about how an organization's culture is represented in the minds of people when they assess their PO fit, let alone how they assess their PO fit directly. Thus, despite the many PO fit studies conducted in the past, the question what is actually being measured when measuring PO fit was still left open (Edwards, et al., 2006). The findings of this dissertation have provided a better understanding of the content of people's PO fit perceptions and how these perceptions are shaped. Moreover, they have implications for PO fit theories and are a prelude to future research.

A first implication regards the validity of extant PO fit measures. Many PO fit measures in extant research may not reflect the construct as described in seminal PO fit theories. This dissertation has shown that most of the indirect PO fit operationalizations (subjective and objective fit indices, see Chapter 1) will hardly present job-seekers' direct PO fit impressions. In other words, the content of individual and organizational values as employed in prior empirical research cannot be equated with the content that individuals themselves have in mind when searching for a job. In addition, person and organizational values are weighed in a different way than most PO fit theories seem to assume: the P and O components are weighed in a lopsided rather than balanced way. Finally, both individual differences, such as individuals' regulatory focus, and contextual factors, such as psychological distance to the organization, affect the relevance and thus the weighing of attractive versus aversive PO fit information.

One way to improve validity and to solve current inconsistencies in PO fit concepts and measures is to create a stronger link between the aim of a PO fit study and the choice of a specific PO fit operationalization. For example, if researchers aim to predict job-seekers' actual fit with the prospective organization, they should use an 'objective' fit index (that combines job-seekers' values with the culture perceptions of organizational members) rather than using a subjective PO fit index (both P and O ratings are derived from individuals themselves) or job-seekers' direct fit perceptions. This latter operationalization is more adequate, for example, when researchers aim to estimate the relative contribution of job-seekers' PO fit (e.g., in comparison to other factors such as salary, travel distance, etcetera) to their job choices; job-seekers' own PO fit perceptions are probably most predictive then.

When using indirect PO fit measures, most researchers tend to include only a restricted set of individual and organizational values, particularly if they employ polynomial regression as recommended by Edwards (1994). The polynomial regression technique allows only a small number of variables because each variable is represented with five terms in the polynomial regression equation ( $P$ ,  $O$ ,  $P \times O$ ,  $P^2$ , and  $O^2$ ). The studies in this dissertation have shown that people largely differ in their cultural preferences: values that are highly attractive for one person may be aversive or neutral for another person. Consequently, employing only a limited number of values in the assessment of cultural preferences may fail to sufficiently cover the breadth of differing preferences between people – with the result that the PO fit effects that were found in prior research may not reflect true PO fit effects;

the first will be weaker than the second ones. Unfortunately, methodological and statistical issues have dominated the PO fit literature and researchers may have obeyed to popular analytical approaches at the cost of theoretical and conceptual considerations. Future studies that employ indirect PO fit measures should include a broad array of cultural values so that individual differences in preferences are no longer masked.

In addition, the findings of this dissertation suggest that a distinction between attractive, neutral, and aversive values could be useful for future studies as well. When choosing a job, people tend to rely on impressions of attractive fit (the extent to which an organization adheres to their preferred cultural values) rather than neutral or aversive fit. When employed, people may also (unconsciously) distinguish between their attractive, neutral, and aversive fits. Hence, future research could examine whether this distinction is also relevant for measuring people's fit perceptions in other stages of the attraction-selection-attrition cycle. That is, rather than asking individuals to indicate their overall perceived fit with the organization, it may be useful to assess their attractive and aversive fits separately. In this way, researchers could investigate the dimensionality of fit measures: PO fit perceptions might not be one-dimensional after all. Moreover, various PO fit dimensions may affect specific outcomes differently. For example, attractive fit might most strongly relate to approach-type outcomes, such as organizational attraction, whereas aversive fit might most strongly relate to avoidance-type outcomes, such as turnover.

The findings of this dissertation are particularly interesting for further research into the development of PO fit experiences over time. Apparently, in the context of job-search where individuals make prospective PO fit assessments, the power of attractive values to attract is greater than the power of aversive values to repel. Hence, the presence of aversive values in organizations is not felt as a serious threat to one's future fit with an organization during job search. Indeed, a number of biases enable individuals to believe that, through their own actions, they can avoid negative factors in the future. That is, people have an overly optimistic conception of the self and an exaggerated perception of personal control (Okhuysen, Galinsky, & Uptigrove, 2003; Taylor, 1991; Taylor & Brown, 1994). These positive biases lead them to hold overly optimistic perceptions about the future and to neglect or misjudge the presence of aversive features. Job-seekers may view the presence of aversive values as a factor they can easily deal with in their future job. For example, if they notice the presence of an aversive organizational value, they may assume that they will not suffer that

much and will furthermore believe that even if they would suffer, this misery can be solved. Altogether, job-seekers may reappraise the future situation in a way that aversive values can be managed. Furthermore, job-seekers may assume that it will be easier to exert control over present organizational features they find aversive (aversive misfit) than to exert control over absent organizational features they find attractive (attractive misfit). This may explain why only misfits on aversive features are discounted and not misfits on attractive features. The role that expectations of control play in the appraisal of organizational information and the extent to which these perceptions are adaptive for adjustment to the organization could be further explored in future research.

During job search, job-seekers may predominantly take the self, that is, their own core attributes and values, as the main reference to assess whether the organization will fit them. However, once employed they may possibly change their focal point of view, taking also the organization as referent and focusing more on the salient attributes and values of the organization as the main reference for establishing their fit (Van Vianen, et al., in press). In other words, the focal perspective from which individuals assess their PO fit may change, which will influence the content of their PO fit experiences as well. Most likely, the content of PO fit perceptions before organizational entry will be different from the content of PO fit perceptions after organizational entry. Future research could investigate the sources and development of PO fit perceptions after organizational entry. Of particular interest is the question how organizational employees come to weigh attractive and aversive fits once they have worked in the organization for a while, thus passing the organizational socialization process with all its possible honeymoons and hangovers (e.g., Boswell, Shipp, Payne, & Culbertson, 2009). Are employees' fit perceptions influenced by attractive fit, aversive fit, or both?

In addition, it would be worthwhile to investigate the possible validity of PO fit measures that are taken from an organization's point of view. That is, how do employees fit with present and dominant organizational values, how do they fit with values that are of less importance to the organization, and how do they weigh these fits? Ideally, the development of PO fit perceptions (that stem from both the individual and the organization's perspective) should be studied throughout the Attraction-Selection-Attrition stages longitudinally, with a within-person design following individuals and their self-selection decisions during these stages.

A final implication of this dissertation concerns the basic assumptions of PO fit theory: *'people need to fit with their environment'* and *'people make the place'* (Schneider, 1987). These assumptions seem to suggest that people, environments, and their mutual fit can be assessed objectively. However, many psychological theories acknowledge that people's perceptions of reality are more important for their behaviors than reality itself. Furthermore, it is recognized that human perceptions are far from objective. Indeed, this dissertation has evidenced that PO fit is primarily based on subjective and, thus, inaccurate environmental information processing. Therefore, PO fit theories should more explicitly frame the PO fit concept as a subjective phenomenon: PO fit is in people's mind rather than reality.

### **Practical Implications**

The theory and findings in this dissertation also bear considerable practical implications, both for individuals and organizations. People decide on the basis of their perceptions rather than reality, and self-selection decisions such as seeking for and staying in organizations are based on perceptions of PO fit rather than on actual PO fit (Kristof-Brown, et al., 2005). PO fit matters, but the content and focus of people's PO fit assessments apparently differ, depending on the stage of the PO relationship in which they are assessed, that is during attraction, selection, or after organizational entry (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006; Van Vianen, et al., in press). Before organizational entry, thus during attraction and selection, PO fit perceptions concern an organization that is not yet known but is distant, with the resulting fit perceptions depending on vastly different factors (such as industry stereotypes and selectively desirable features) than the factors that may determine candidates' PO fit and PO fit perceptions after organizational entry, i.e., when one is employed and is highly familiar with the organization. As a result, people may experience different types of fit and misfit before and after organizational entry.

During job search people have to assess their PO fit with an unknown organization. Most often job-seekers possess only limited information about these organizations and have to draw inferences from the incomplete and 'managed' information that is available to them through sources such as websites, products, and service interactions. These sources of information may activate mental models that encompass impressions of an organization's

values and culture. As found in Chapter 2, people hold general ideas about the prevalent culture that is stereotypical for specific branches of industry and these stereotypes trigger the respective mental models to shape people's PO fit perceptions.

However, it is easy to imagine that these mental representations will be different from those models that people hold once they are in close contact with or are employed in the organization. Yet, it will be in recruiting organizations' best interest to pay close attention to the messages they communicate for they may propagate cultural values that are different from those that represent their actual cultural value system.

Communicating clearly about the organizational value system may be a good first step to align PO fit perceptions before and after organizational entry and the study presented in Chapter 2 highlights the importance of good website design in order to convey to job-seekers organizational values that differ from the general stereotypes held about this organization's industry. However, additional measures may be needed as well. Some literatures have advocated the use of a Realistic Job Preview (RJP; Phillips, 1998) as a means to adjust job-seekers' expectations to organizational reality. These literatures propose that providing realistic job information to job-seekers will result in better self-selection decisions and, once employed, to a higher level of met job-expectations. However, the findings of this dissertation raise some doubts about the degree to which applicants will actually consider all the information provided to them.

The proponents of RJPs assume that job-seekers will receive and process all available information (Phillips, 1998). Chapter 2 in this dissertation, however, shows that people do not use all information, particularly when they do not feel an initial fit with their mental model of the organization's industry. Rather, they have to be tempted into processing the information by a nice website design. In addition, even when information is presented in a clear and straightforward manner and cannot be overlooked, some information seems more salient than other: While job-seekers should process both attractive and unattractive organizational features, they tend to base their PO fit perceptions mainly on the amount of fit with attractive organizational features and to neglect unattractive ones (Chapter 3). Hence, despite complete information, they attend to what they want rather than to what they do not want in their future organization. The findings of this dissertation seem to suggest that organizations' ability to influence job-seekers' fit impressions is relatively limited since these impressions mainly depend on job-seekers' own preferences, i.e., the

unique set of values they find attractive. Consequently, RJP's may only be helpful to make job-seekers aware of the presence or lack of attractive values in an organization. Yet, they may not promote the processing and weighing of information regarding job-seekers' aversive values.

For recruitment and selection practices it is important to find and understand additional actions that could promote the processing of information about aversive values. For example, in addition to providing comprehensive organizational information, it might be useful to also guide job-seekers' perspective from which they assess their PO fit. The perspective that people take when making a decision significantly impacts decision processes and outcomes (Kahneman, 2000, 2003). As argued by Van Vianen and colleagues (in press), job-seekers seem mainly focused on their own salient preferences as the main source for appraising organizations, because they often have only sparse organizational information. However, when becoming more familiar with the organization, during selection and particularly after entrance, they may shift their attention to the characteristics of the organization in order to successfully adapt. Thus, the main reference that people use to establish their PO fit may change from the self (P) to the organization (O). Consequently, people may use different self and organizational features when assessing their fit with a *future* organization (during job search) than when assessing their fit with a *present* organization (when working in the organization). In other words, prospective PO fit perceptions may be based on attractive 'apples' whereas current PO fit perceptions may include aversive 'oranges'.

Hence, while job-seekers appear to predominantly take the self, that is, their own core attributes and values, as a reference to assess whether the organization matches the self, they may come to take the organization as the focal referent, thus focusing more on the salient attributes and values of the organization as the main reference for establishing their fit. In other words, job-seekers should be guided through organizational information in a way that they also process an organization's aversive 'oranges'. Therefore, an avenue for future research is to examine the precise impact of perspective taking during job search. Meanwhile, practice could try to find ways for encouraging job-seekers to take the perspective of the organization during the recruitment process. That is, instead of asking themselves: "Is this the organization that will fit *me*?" they could ask themselves: "Am I the person that will fit this *organization*?"

Another method for getting a more accurate and overall impression of an organization's culture and its related values could be to reduce the distance between the job-seeker and the organization so that job-seekers feel more familiar or 'close' with the organization. In keeping with the results of Chapter 5, job-seekers could judge the information in a near rather than distant time perspective, for example, by better visualizing how daily life will look and feel like when working in a specific organization. Another and even better strategy is to offer job-seekers the opportunity for 'test days' or 'short internships'. Bringing an organization closer and thus making it more concrete may likewise help to activate job-seeker's prevention orientation (Chapter 4).

To conclude, job-seekers as well as organizations should be aware that job-seekers' PO fit perceptions should be a valid reflection of future reality. Most importantly, organizational information should be processed in a way that PO fit perceptions during job search are a good predictor of PO fit perceptions after being employed. Both factors in- and outside of an organization's control determine people's experience of PO fit with a specific organization. Thus, for job-seekers it is important to deliberate not only on what they positively expect and want, but also on what they negatively expect and do not want in a future organization. For organizations it is important to not only focus on their positive image to attract applicants but also on providing information that reflect their dominant values which may or may not diverge from the values associated with their industry. Further, organizations could encourage job-seekers to also take the organization's perspective when processing her information.

## **Concluding remarks**

This dissertation started with theorizing about and testing the underlying mechanisms of job-seekers' PO fit perceptions. The studies in this dissertation have shown that PO fit is a matter of idiosyncratic information processing. To date, fit research has mainly built on prevalent fit theories and prior fit research, restraining its scientific sources almost exclusively to the fit domain. Future fit research could gain by relying more heavily on extant basic theories concerning people's information processing, decision-making, and attitude change. Since the ultimate aim of psychological sciences is to predict human behavior and fit

perceptions are strong determinants of behaviors, more research efforts should be directed to predicting fit perceptions in the first place.