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THE EFFECT OF CAREER PREPARATION AND PERCEIVED PROACTIVITY ON ANTICIPATED PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT

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THE EFFECT OF CAREER PREPARATION AND PERCEIVED PROACTIVITY ON
ANTICIPATED PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT

by

Amy Schembari

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Business

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Spring 2018

All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
Business have been completed.

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**THE EFFECT OF CAREER PREPARATION AND PERCEIVED PROACTIVITY ON
ANTICIPATED PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT**

By Amy K. Schembari

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation
with Honors in the Tippie College of Business

Spring 2018

Thesis supervisor: Dr. Amy Kristof-Brown

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between anticipations of person-environment (PE) fit and self-perceptions of proactivity in undergraduate students about to enter the workforce for the first time. The study had the intention of discovering whether students who perceive themselves as being more proactive will also report higher anticipations of PE fit components, specifically person-organization (PO) fit, and person-job (PJ) fit, with their first full-time employment positions. Participants' self-reports of fit anticipations and perceived proactivity were collected through an online survey. Those willing to complete the study were also asked to report the various career preparation activities they participated in during their undergraduate careers, including: internships, job shadows, and memberships in professional organizations. Results indicated that there are strong and positive correlations between a student's perceived proactivity and their anticipations of all three types of fit, but little to no relationship between anticipated fit and the number of career preparation activities a student participated in during college. The study also found that students in specialized colleges are more likely to participate in career preparation activities, and are also more likely to report longer amounts of time when asked how long they expect to remain at their first full-time employment position.

Introduction

Every year, a wave of recent college graduates from higher education institutions across the United States make the transition from student to employee. This lifestyle shift is a tumultuous and stressful one, requiring newly independent graduates to navigate a number of social changes such as moving to a new location, becoming financially independent, and building new friendships (Polach, 2004). Simultaneously, they must also adjust from a student-oriented mindset to a working one, swapping study habits for work ethics as a means to establish themselves as valuable employees in their organization.

This transition has existed since the establishment of formal education; however, retaining these new employees appears to be more challenging for organizations in recent years. A study conducted by IBM found that 16% of employees are actively searching for new jobs, and almost half of the current workforce would consider better job opportunities if presented them (Zhang & Feinzig, 2017). Furthermore, overall employee satisfaction with their current jobs is declining each year. These trends are most notably seen in the millennial generation, and are becoming more prominent in each subsequent year.

The millennial generation is commonly defined as individuals born between 1981 and 1996. This generation epitomizes the most notable change in social convention and ideology since the Baby Boomer generation—those born between 1945 and 1964 (Huyler et al., 2015). Due, in part, to growing up when technology was rapidly advancing, Millennials share more similarities with other Millennials across the world than with other generations in their own country and culture (Stein, 2013). The millennial generation embraces a global mindset, thrive in environments of change, and are more understanding of individuals from differing cultures and backgrounds (Martin, 2005). Millennials have surpassed the Baby Boomers as the largest living

generation, and the tail end of this generation will begin their first job in the workforce within the next three years. In 2016 they became the largest generation in the U.S. labor force (Fry, 2018).

However, academic literature often depicts Millennials as self-centered, unmotivated, and disloyal to their organizations (Myers & Sadaghiani 2010). Perhaps the most widely recognized stereotype of Millennials is their tendency to change jobs or career paths frequently. A 2017 study found that Millennials are twice as likely to leave their job for a better one compared to Baby Boomers, (Zhang & Feinzig, 2017), and over half would consider taking a new job opportunity even if they were not initially looking for one. (Zhang & Feinzig, 2017).

Employee turnover is costly for organizations because they are not only losing human capital, but also must undergo expensive recruiting and training processes to find individuals to replace them (Ongori, 2007). Therefore, it is in the organization's best interest to reduce the turnover rate. In order to do this, however, there needs to be a better understanding of the reasons for the increasing exodus of Millennials from their first jobs.

Research of recent college graduates suggests that their lack of job commitment may be due to inadequate proactivity in career preparation before entering the workforce. One survey of 800 recent college graduates in their first full-time employment positions found a wide range of responses regarding the number of potential problems in the career transition process (Holton, 73). The study suggests recent college graduates are failing to use deliberate strategies to adapt to and prepare for their new organizations and jobs (Holton, 75).

Other studies suggest that the lack of job commitment is due to generational differences in values. Unlike Baby Boomers, who value hard work, or members of Generation X, who prefer financial stability and job security, Millennials value impact and meaning in their workplace environments (Huyler et al., 2015). Millennials are expecting more from organizations than

previous generations (Huyler et al., 2015). Current literature hints that the ideological differences between generations may make it more difficult for Millennials to adjust to their jobs and organizations and be accepted by their supervisors and work groups (Myers, 2010).

Although there are many theories and studies regarding what circumstances prompt recent college graduates to leave their first jobs, there is no definitive cause. However, it is clear that many recent college graduates in their first full-time positions quickly decide that the job or organization is not a good fit for them and that it is time to move on to something new.

Purpose of Study

Finding a job that is a good ‘fit’ is a crucial component of the job search process. Generally speaking, when employees perceive themselves as fitting with the many components of their work environment, they are more likely to report higher feelings of job satisfaction, and are less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors. Therefore, it is in the best interest of both individuals and organizations to maximize fit in order to achieve the best performance results. While much research has been conducted on the various types of fit and their respective implications to the organization, few studies have specifically observed anticipations of fit in future employees who have yet to enter the workforce.

The purpose of this study is to apply previous concepts of fit to university undergraduates who are currently going through the job search process. Specifically, we will observe subjective measures of PE fit by asking respondents questions regarding their *anticipated perceptions* of fit with aspects of their future work environment. The present study will break down person-environment fit into more manageable measurements. Specifically, we will observe participants’ perceptions of person-organization fit and person-job fit anticipations.

Young, millennial employees who are entering the workforce for the first time are relatively unaware of what a full-time position entails. University life and the working world are so drastically different, that it may be difficult to know what to expect from the transition. Because university students typically have no previous full-time employment experience, their anticipations of the job force are largely formed from their classes, lectures, and career preparation activities, such as internships, job shadowing, and company tours.

Students who are more proactive in career preparation will arguably have a better understanding of what to expect from their first full-time employment position. This study predicts that students who are more proactive regarding the job search process during their undergraduate career will be more likely to anticipate better levels of fit from their first employment positions.

This study is important because it provides insight into what students expect and feel from their first time employment positions. If undergraduate students widely report anticipations of misfit with their organizations or specific jobs, they may be entering the workforce with preconceived negative attitudes. If the study is successful in analyzing fit anticipations, it may be able to predict an individual's likelihood of engaging in turnover in the future.

Literature Review

Person-Environment Fit and Misfit

Person-environment fit (PE fit) occurs when an individual is well matched with the many aspects of their work environment (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Individual characteristics may include values, demographics, abilities, and goals, while environmental characteristics may include cultural values, job role, and social environments. Person-environment fit is a multi-faceted concept comprised of other specific types of fit present in the work environment (Kristof-

Brown et al, 2005). The varieties of fit that fall under the umbrella of PE fit include, in part: person-organization (PO), person-supervisor (PS), person-group (PG), and person-job (PJ).

Research of over 100 years has determined that an individual's perceived fit in their workplace environment is associated with work-related outcomes and successes (Follmer, Talbot, Kristof-Brown, Astrove, & Billsberry (2018). Studies on PE fit consistently support the idea that a strong fit between person and environment correlates with more favorable work-related outcomes, such as satisfaction and commitment. A meta-analysis conducted by Kristof-Brown et al found that perceptions of various types of fit within a given work environment strongly influence employee attitudes and decisions (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Looking at each type of fit as a separate entity, PO fit is a strong predictor of organizational commitment, PJ fit is a strong predictor of job satisfaction, PG fit is a strong predictor of satisfaction with co-workers, and PS fit is a strong predictor of satisfaction with supervisor (Kristof-Brown et al, 2005). These findings are consistent on a cross-culture level (Oh et al, 2014).

Conversely, 'misfit' is regarded as the opposite end of the fit spectrum, occurring when an individual feels incompatibility and discomfort with their work environment (Shipp & Jansen, 2011). Studies agree that a lack of fit with some area of a work environment can lead to counterproductive work behaviors, including deviance, withdrawal, boredom, and turnover. Any of the counterproductive work behaviors that occur as a result of misfit can be costly to organizations (Follmer et al. 2018). When a lack of fit in one or more areas of a work environment are experienced, an individual is more likely to feel dissatisfaction or engage in counterproductive work behaviors. Therefore, it is in the best interest of a company to ensure that employees are matched as closely as possible to each type of fit in their work environments.

Almost all previous research on person-environment fit agree that 'fit' is a condition that both individuals and organizations strive to achieve. However, developing a method to accurately measure PE fit at a given point in time remains a point of contention in the field, as the individual's 'environment' is difficult to define, and there are wide ranging views on what actually constitutes 'fit' (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

Person-Organization Fit

Person-organization fit (PO fit) measures the compatibility between an individual employee and the characteristics of the organization they work for. (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Person-organization fit can be conceptualized from two perspectives: complementary and supplementary (Kristoff-Brown, 1996). Complementary fit occurs when an individual brings unique perspectives and characteristics to the organization, while supplementary fit occurs when an individual shares similar fundamental characteristics and values with the organization (Sharkawi et al., 2013). Based on these relationships, PO fit is said to occur when 1) one entity provides what the other needs, 2) both entities share fundamental characteristics, or 3) a combination of the two occur (Kristof-Brown, 1996).

A meta-analytic study found that direct, perceived measures of PO fit are strongly and positively correlated with organizational commitment (.77), job satisfaction (.56), and organizational attraction (.62); and negatively correlated with intent to quit (-.52) (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). These findings suggest that individuals are more likely to remain at, and have more positive attitudes towards, organization that possess values that are congruent to the values of the individual.

PO fit is often traced to the attraction-selection-attrition framework (ASA), which suggests that applicants and organizations are attracted to each other because they share similar

values and goals (Schneider, 1987). Perceptions of person-organization fit are strongly correlated with an applicant's job choice decisions during organizational entry (Cable & Judge, 1996). Additionally, there is evidence that recruiters assess applicants' perceived PO fit when interviewing and hiring applicants (Cable & Judge, 1996; Kristof-Brown, 2002). Given this knowledge, it is important for organizations to seek and hire applicants who share similar values as the organization.

As with PE misfit, a lack of person-organization fit can lead to counterproductive work behaviors and reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover rates. A study conducted by Sharkawi et al. found a strong, negative correlation between PO fit and counterproductive work behaviors (Sharkawi et al., 2013).

Person-Job Fit

Person-job fit (PJ fit) is defined as a compatibility between an individual and the characteristics of the specific job or role the individual holds (Kristof-Brown & Guay 2011). PJ fit maintains that individuals will fit better in work roles that match their needs, desires, skills, knowledge, and abilities. As a whole, direct, perceived PJ fit is moderately and positively correlated with organizational attraction (.62), job satisfaction (.58), and organizational commitment (.47); and is negatively correlated with intent to quit (-.49) (Kristof Brown & Guay, 2011).

Person-job fit can be further broken down into two separate types; demands-abilities (DA fit) and needs-supplies (NS fit). DA fit emphasizes the importance of matching an employee's knowledge, skills and abilities to the demands of the job, while NS fit focuses on matching an employee's needs and wants to the supplies and characteristics provided by the job. Both DA and NS fit are addressed in the current study.

Demands-Abilities Fit. The first aspect of person-job fit addressed in this paper is demands-abilities fit (DA fit). DA fit measures the congruence between an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAOs) with the requirements necessary to perform the job well (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). When an employee perceives DA fit in their workplace, they feel that their knowledge, skills, and abilities match the demands necessary for the job (Basit & Arshad, 2015).

When differences between the demands of the jobs and the abilities of the individual exist, the individual will experience misfit. Misfit in the context of demands-abilities fit can be observed in individuals who perceive themselves as being over- or under- qualified for their job.

Overqualification occurs when an employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities exceed the demands required to perform the job successfully (Kahn & Morrow, 1991). Studies agree that perceived overqualification leads to decreased levels of job attitudes and satisfaction (Maynard et al. 2006). Overqualification literature is often linked to the *relative deprivation theory*, which suggests that individuals will experience frustration when there is a discrepancy between what they have and what they feel entitled to (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009). As employees move their way through the education system, expand their KSAOs, and advance in their careers, they develop higher expectations about the type of job they deserve to have (Vaisey, 2006). Thus, when an individual feels they deserve more from their current job based on their repertoire of KSAOs, they are more likely to report decreased job satisfaction and fulfillment.

Another example of overqualification occurs in workers who perceive themselves as being underemployed—a phenomenon that transpires when a job is inferior in some way to an employee. Underemployment can occur, in part, when the individual possess skills that are not utilized in the context of the job, or they accept a job in an area outside of their formal training

(McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2016). In both instances, the individual will likely feel that their abilities exceed the demands of the job, or that the KSAOs they have acquired over the years are not being utilized at all. Either circumstance can lead to feelings of job dissatisfaction.

Contrary to overqualification and underemployment, underqualification occurs when an employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities do not meet the demands of the job. Often, individuals working in positions that require more KSAOs than the employee possesses are thought to be less productive because of a lack of formal qualifications (Hamersma et al, 2015). Similar to overqualification, underqualification is also often linked to job dissatisfaction (Hamersma et al, 2015). This dissatisfaction may be due to the increased levels of stress that arise when an individual is operating in an environment they do not have the qualifications to handle successfully.

There is some research that suggests that perceptions of over- and under- qualification depend on the job itself. A 1990 study conducted by Kahn found that high demand jobs can lead to increased stress and anxiety, while low demand jobs can lead to boredom and withdrawal behaviors (Kahn, 1990). In either instance of DA misfit, an employee is likely to be dissatisfied with their job, which can lead to negative repercussions for both the individual and the organization.

Needs-Supplies Fit. The second types of person-job fit is needs-supplies fit. NS fit focuses on whether or not the job satisfies the desires or preferences of the individual (Caplan, 1983; Cable and DeRue, 2002). In the context of NS fit, *needs* refers to aspects of the job, including autonomy, skill variety, security, and feedback that the individual needs or desires from their work. (Basit & Arshad, 2015). One study examining the effects of needs-supplies fit found that NS fit is positively and strongly correlated with employee workplace engagement

(Basit & Arshad, 2015). Based on this logic, it is reasonable to infer that NS fit is beneficial to both employees and organizations.

An employee's perception of NS fit correlates with their perceptions of job meaningfulness (Basit & Arshad, 2015). When employees perceive NS fit in their workplace environments, they are more likely to perceive their jobs as meaningful because they recognize that their efforts are being reciprocated (Kahn, 1990). Therefore, it is to be expected that positive NS fit provides employees a sense of meaningfulness in their work environments.

Temporal Fit

Studies of person-environment fit have primarily observed fit at a given point in time, asking subjects to reflect on their perceptions of fit aspects in the present moment. However, a majority of current PE fit literature overlooks time as a variable for fit perceptions (Shipp and Jansen, 2011). Recently, new conceptions of fit observe it as a phenomenon that develops and changes over time (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). A *temporal* view of person-environment fit argues that an individual's perception of their fit at any given time is influenced by past experiences and future expectations of fit (Shipp & Jansen, 2011).

A model proposed by Shipp and Jansen argues that employees' current fit experiences are impacted by their "temporal baggage", or past and future fit perceptions (Shipp, 2006). This model separates temporal fit into two entities; retrospective and anticipated. Retrospective temporal fit suggests that current fit perceptions are formed by past experiences, whereas anticipated temporal fit refers to forecasts of future fit anticipations (Shipp & Jansen, 2011). Both types of temporal fit are combined to form current feelings of fit.

Over time, employees develop "fit narratives" that bridge the gap between past, current, and future perceptions of fit (Shipp & Jansen, 2011). Anticipations of fit may impact outcomes

in the present, such as when individuals accept new jobs they believe will match their abilities or values. Shipp and Jansen suggest that employees who expect to remain at their jobs for the foreseeable future will be more likely to report favorable perceptions of current PE fit than employees who think of their job as a temporary step in their career path (Shipp & Jansen, 2011).

Future fit anticipations can be influenced by previous experiences (Shipp & Jansen, 2011). Recalling a previous job position where an individual's abilities did not meet the demands of the job may cause them to perceive a weak fit with future employment positions. Likewise, an employee who held a job in the past that did not pay enough to meet their needs may anticipate a higher needs-supplies fit with an organization that is paying more than the previous company.

Prior to organizational entry, measurements of person-environment fit are actually assessments of anticipations, and not current perceptions (Kristof-Brown & Billsbury, 2012). Individuals accept positions based on their *anticipated* level of fit with the job or organization (Shipp & Jansen, 2011). These anticipations include, in part: room for growth (NS fit), salary (NS fit), characteristics of the organization (PO fit), and demands of the job (DA fit). These anticipations are formed from a myriad of places, including retrospective and current perceptions of fit in workplace environments.

The current study investigates fit anticipations in undergraduate Millennials in their final years at university. The sample population is about to enter the workforce for the first time, and has never held a full-time employment position. Although previous experiences with full-time employment person-environment fit are not applicable in shaping students' anticipations of fit, they nonetheless appear to have an idea of the level of fit they anticipate in their future full-time employment positions.

We explore the idea that anticipations of fit in undergraduates derive from the career preparation activities they partook in during university. These career preparation activities include, in part: internships, job shadows, company tours, guest lectures, career fairs, and professional development organizations.

Proactivity Personality and Career Preparation

Bateman and Crant (1993) defined the proactive personality as an individual who has a stable disposition to influence change in their environment and is not constrained by situational forces (Seibert et al, 1999; Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive personalities are exceptional at identifying opportunities and taking advantage of them, and are willing to persevere until they bring about the changes they desire (Crant, 1995). In contrast, less proactive individuals tend to react to environmental changes as they occur (Seibert et al, 1999).

In studies on workplace environments, proactivity is found to be predictive of job performance and overall career success (Crant, 1995; Seibert et al, 1995). This phenomenon is attributed to the fact these individuals are more likely to proactively create situations that position them for workplace success (Crant, 1995). A correlation between proactivity and career adaptation exists as well. When facing challenges or a need for adaptation in the workplace, proactive personalities are more likely to identify opportunities to shape their environment and improve their careers (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Tolentino et al, 2014).

Although proactivity is often assessed in individuals at their current jobs, there is some literature that observes perceived proactivity prior to organizational entry. Findings agree that proactive individuals are more likely to seek information on particular jobs and organizations prior to entry (Morrison, 1993; Ashford & Black, 1996; Seibert et al, 1999).

Proactive individuals are more likely to position themselves for greater career success

prior to organizational entry by acquiring new skills or higher education needed to perform the job well (Seibert et al, 1999). They are constantly searching for opportunities to improve themselves, and their goals are not defeated by the obstacles they encounter. There is also a positive correlation between proactivity and career planning (Tolentino et al, 2014).

The current study will observe proactivity in terms of career planning; specifically whether undergraduate students take initiative to prepare themselves for their future careers, and whether they are taking initiative to act on their career plans and goals. One tangible way students prepare for their future employment is through *career preparation*.

In a 2000 study on career preparation, Sagen et al found that career preparation activities; including internships, courses within one's major, work experiences, mentorships, and student organizations, are all independently correlated with initial employment successes, self-awareness, and understanding of organizations (Sagen et al. 2000). Another study suggested that employers use career preparation as a means of analyzing an applicant's person-organization and person-job fit during the interview process (Bretz et al, 1993).

Despite the importance of career preparation and proactivity on positive work outcomes, few studies have examined how career preparation variables, aside from basic factors like grade point average and university major, contribute to actual future work success (Sagen et al, 2000). No previous studies have analyzed how undergraduate proactivity and career preparedness is related to the anticipated level of person-environment fit in their first full-time position. The current study will investigate this relationship.

Hypothesis Development

Studies have suggested that proactivity in the workplace is strongly and positively correlated with fit. For example, socialization tactics before and during organizational entry are

found to be strongly correlated with perceptions of person-organization fit (Chatman, 1991; Cable & Parsons, 2006). When employees enter new organizations, they experience shock for a number of reasons (Kim et al. 2005). New employees immediately observe the differences between their expectations and the reality of the job, and they face a certain amount of ambiguity about what is expected of them (Kim et al. 2005). The purpose of an organization's socialization process is to diminish the amount of ambiguity that employees experience during organizational entry (Kim et al. 2005).

Literature agrees that proactivity in the form of anticipatory socialization, demonstrated either from the new employee or the organization itself, increases the likelihood of P-O fit perceptions. It might, therefore, be possible that other forms of proactivity are also correlated to certain types of fit. Thus, we develop our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Respondents who perceive themselves as being more proactive will be more likely to report more positive anticipations of a) person-organization fit, b) demands-abilities fit, and c) needs-supplies fit with their first full-time employment position.

Individual career satisfaction and success is partially dependent on finding a job that is compatible with one's personal characteristics, values, KSAOs, and expectations. When this 'fit' between organizational experiences and one's needs, values, and skills is achieved, the individual is more likely to report feeling satisfied with their career (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). However, in order for one to achieve fit, the individual must have an awareness and understanding of various work environments in order to understand what type of job and organization would best match their personal values and needs (Callanan & Benzing, 2004).

For college students, this awareness could be achieved through career preparation and anticipatory socialization (Callanan & Benzing, 2004). These activities include internships,

company visits, career center visits, mock interviews, and memberships in professional organizations. These preparations help students establish a concrete sense of self, obtain a realistic understanding of the working world and different organizational environments, and realize which jobs demand skills that match the abilities the student already has (Callanan & Benzing, 2004). Although research on the correlations between career preparation and future P-E fit is minimal, almost all studies have found agreed that career preparation activities are beneficial to both the individual and the organization. For example, Richards (1984) found that individuals who successfully complete an internship during college are more likely to accept positions that are similar to their prevocational activities, and are more likely to report improved perceptions of job fit during their early career (Richards, 1984). Because individuals who partake in career preparation activities throughout college will likely have a better understanding of the working world and the careers that will best suit their values and needs, they may be more likely to anticipate a better fit with their future work environment. Thus, we predict the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Respondents who indicate they have participated in more career-preparation activities will be more likely to report positive anticipations of a) person-organization fit, b) demands-abilities fit, and c) needs-supplies fit in their first full-time employment position.

Previous fit literature has agreed that improved fit leads to favorable work-related outcomes, such as career satisfaction, organizational commitment, and decreased turnover intentions (Kristof-Brown, et al. 2005). However, the opposite is also true. When employees perceive a misfit between themselves and their work environment, they are more likely to be less

satisfied with their career, and more likely to report turnover intentions (Follmer, et al., 2018). This logic should hold true when measuring future fit anticipations.

Hypothesis 3: Respondents who anticipate lower levels of a) person-organization fit, b) demands-abilities fit, and c) needs-supplies fit, will record a lower number of months when asked how long they anticipate remaining at their first full-time employment position.

A college student's major is a determinant of many of the experiences they will have during their time in school. College majors establish what classes a student will take, the professors and other students they will interact with, and the specific resources available to them. It is apparent that the implications of this choice remains far beyond the student's experiences in college. Salaries and opportunities vary significantly by bachelor degree, and many studies have found that undergraduate majors are strongly correlated with job satisfaction and stability (Porter & Umbach, 2006).

The University of Iowa offers 88 majors to undergraduate students, not including minors, certificates, or tracks within majors. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences offers 68 of these majors, while the specialized schools, including Tippie College of Business (6 majors offered), The College of Education (6 majors offered), The College of Nursing (1 major offered), and The College of Engineering (7 majors offered), provide the rest.

Each specialized school at the University of Iowa has a selective admission process. In order to enroll in specialized colleges, students must complete an application, maintain a high grade point average, and complete certain prerequisite coursework. Students may also opt to enroll directly into these programs following high school. These individuals must have achieved a high grade point average in high school, scored strongly on the ACT examination, and completed a strong application for admission. Due to these additional requirements and

standards, students wishing to enroll in specialized schools at the University of Iowa must build a strong application, and be willing to put in extra work to ensure admission. Proactivity should facilitate this type of behavior. Thus, we form our fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Students in specialized colleges (Tippie College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Education, College of Nursing) will be more likely to report higher self-perceptions of proactivity than students in non-specialized colleges (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).

Although individuals must initially take on more work to obtain admission to the College of Engineering, College of Education, College of Nursing, and Tippie College of Business, there are many benefits of admission to a specialized college. The programs are smaller and are filled with like-minded individuals who are working toward similar goals and share similar interests. These programs also have smaller enrollments and fewer offered majors than the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which makes it easier for the program to focus on career development and preparation activities such as: private career fairs, guest lecturers, and specialized resume workshops. Although all students at the University of Iowa have access to the Pomerantz Career Center, students in specialized colleges have additional opportunities for career prep through their programs. With this logic, we form our fifth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: Students in specialized colleges (Tippie College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Education, College of Nursing) will be more likely to report partaking in more career preparation activities during their collegiate years than students in non-specialized colleges (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).

Hypotheses 1 and 2 propose that individuals who perceive themselves as more proactive, and who partook in more career preparation activities during their undergraduate years, will

likely report more positive anticipations of fit. Hypotheses 4 and 5 propose that students in specialized colleges are more likely to indicate higher levels of perceived proactivity and are also more likely to engage in career preparation activities as undergraduates. If these hypotheses are correct, it is also reasonable to assume that, if students in specialized colleges are more subjectively and objectively proactive, they will likely report more positive anticipations of fit with their future full-time careers. Drawing from the logic of previous hypotheses, we develop our final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: Students in specialized colleges (Tippie College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Education, College of Nursing) will be more likely to anticipate higher levels of a) person-organization fit, b) demands-abilities fit, and c) needs-supplies fit in their first full-time employment positions than students in non-specialized colleges (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of current undergraduate students at the University of Iowa who report graduation dates between May 2018 and May 2020. The survey was distributed via the University of Iowa Listserv to 21,586 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa. Of the students that were sent the email, 235 took the survey, and 185 qualified for the current study ($N=185$).

Of the students that qualified for the study, 34 were male (28.6 %), 84 were female (70.6%), and 1 participated reported 'other' (0.8%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to over 25. 34.2% of respondents expect to graduate in May 2018, 9.8% in December 2018, 22.8% in May 2019, 6.0% in December 2019, and 27.5% in May 2020. Their areas of study ranged across

all undergraduate majors at the University of Iowa. 101 participants were currently enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (64.3%), and 56 participants were currently enrolled in specialized colleges; including Tippie College of Business, College of Nursing, College of Education, and College of Engineering (35.7%).

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete a five minute survey regarding their anticipations of full-time employment, the career preparation tactics they have accomplished, and their perceived levels of proactivity (Appendix 1). No identifiable information was collected in the study, and students were provided the option to exit the survey at any point if they did not wish to continue. Of the total number of respondents, 78.72% qualified for and successfully completed the survey. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no extra credit was given to the students for filling out the surveys.

The survey was distributed via mass email through the University of Iowa's Listserv portal and posted on the primary investigator's Facebook page. Additionally, the survey was distributed via word of mouth. Respondents were encouraged to pass the survey link along to other eligible undergraduates. No compensation was offered for distributing the survey link, so doing so was completely voluntary. A brief set of instructions were provided with the link to the survey, as well as information on the importance of the results of the study.

Students were allowed two weeks to complete the survey following the initial distribution of the mass email. Responses were collected electronically by the primary investigator via Qualtrics. Since no identifiable information was collected in the survey, maintaining confidentiality was not an issue. Once all results had been collected, the data was analyzed using SPSS, a statistical software.

Measures

Proactivity

The questionnaire contained several measures that were analyzed in the study. The first was the proactive personality scale (PPS), which was adapted from Seibert et al (1999). A seven-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”), with lower scores indicating lower perceptions of proactivity. Responses from these items were then summed to generate a final proactive personality score. Nine items of the original Seibert PPS were adapted for this study, including: “I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life”, “If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen”, and “I excel at identifying opportunities”. Reliability of the nine-item scale was $\alpha=0.885$.

Person-Organization Fit

Person-organization was one of three items measured using an adapted scale from Cable and DeRue (2002). The original PO fit measure was adjusted to measure organizational fit anticipations instead of organizational fit perceptions. A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure PO fit. Sample items include “I anticipate that the things I value most in life will be similar to the things that my first organization values”, and “I anticipate that my personal values will match my first organization's values and culture”. Reliability PO fit was $\alpha=0.914$.

Person-Job Fit

PJ fit was further broken down into two separate items: demands-abilities fit and needs-supplies fit. The three-item demands-abilities fit measure was adapted from Cable and DeRue (2002). The original DA fit scale was adapted to measure fit anticipations, instead of perceptions, and was measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Sample items for DA fit include “I anticipate

that the match will be very good between the demands of my first job and my personal skills” and “I anticipate that my abilities and training will be a good fit with the requirements of my first job”. Reliability for DA fit was $\alpha=0.901$.

Needs-supplies fit was also adapted from Cable and DeRue (2002). Similar to PO and DA, the original NS fit measure was adjusted to measure fit anticipations instead of perceptions. As with the other fit measures, NS fit was measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Sample items include “I anticipate there will be a good fit between what my first job offers me and what I am looking for in a job” and “I anticipate that the attributes I look for in a job will be fulfilled very well by my first full-time position”. Reliability for NS fit was $\alpha=0.880$.

Career Preparation

Participants of the survey were asked 10 questions regarding steps they have taken during college to prepare for their future careers. Samples of these questions regarding career preparation include, “Have you held a summer internship position” and “Are you a member of a *professional* organization”. Other items, such as “Which of the following career preparation activities have you done” allow participants to select all applicable options from a list including items such as, “Attended a career fair”, “Attended a professional trip”, and “Participated in a mock-interview or interview-stream”. These results were analyzed to get a general understanding of how proactive the respondent was in preparing for a career.

Dichotomous items were coded 0 for yes and 1 for no. Items that asked respondents to “select all that apply” were coded with the number of options the participant selected. Responses were coded 0 for no selections, 1 for one selection, 2 for two selections, and so on.

Anticipated Time Staying.

Anticipated time staying was measured by asking participants to report the number of months they expect to remain at their first full-time employment position. The question was open-ended, and allowed respondents to enter in a numerical value. Responses ranged from 6-60 months, with the average number of months reported as 27.03. Data for this measure was coded as the number of months reported by the student.

Demographics

The survey included items inquiring about the subjects' age, year in school, gender, race, and work experience. Gender was coded 0 for female subjects, 1 for male subjects, and 2 for subjects reporting "other". Race was coded 0 for Caucasian, 1 for African American, 2 for Hispanic, 3 for Asian, 4 for Native American, 5 for Pacific Islander, and 6 for subjects reporting "other". Year in school was coded 0 for May 2018 to 6 for respondents with anticipated graduation dates after May 2020.

Results

Utilizing SPSS, a statistical software program, means, standard deviations, and correlations were calculated between the three fit items, objective and subjective proactivity, college of enrollment, and the number of months the respondent anticipates staying at their first full-time employment position. Prior to calculating these figures, it was first necessary to create scales using the average items in the following areas: anticipated P-O fit, anticipated D-A fit, anticipated N-S fit, and perceived proactivity. Using scale averages allows for more reliable and valid data. Strong reliabilities, or reliabilities close to 1, indicate that the scale in question was an effective measure. The current study found reliabilities for P-O fit, D-A fit, N-S fit, and perceived proactivity, which were especially important because the measured items were

adjusted to measure anticipations instead of perceptions. Reliabilities for all measures in the current study were acceptable, and are indicated in bold in the correlations table (Appendix 2).

Additionally, all reported career preparation activities were counted and totaled to create a new item: combined career preparation activity. This number represented how many total career preparation activities the individual reported partaking in during their time as undergraduate students.

A descriptive table and a correlation table are presented in Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 2. Correlations can range from -1 to +1. Correlations of 0 signify that there is no visible relationship between the two variables. Correlations of +1 signify that there is a very strong and positive relationship between the two variables, which means that as one variable increases, the other variable will increase as well and vice versa. Conversely, correlations of -1 signify that there is a very strong and negative relationship between the two variables, which indicates that as one variable increases, the other will decrease.

After correlations were assessed, linear regressions were run. Regressions indicate whether one variable can explain significant variance in another. Results of the correlation and regression analysis are reported below for each of the hypotheses. A further breakdown of regressions can be found in Appendix 3.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that students who perceive themselves as being more proactive will be more likely to report positive anticipations of P-O, D-A, and N-S fit in their first full-time employment positions. As seen in Table 2, correlations between perceived proactivity and all three fit variables were positive and strongly significant (Appendix 2). Anticipations of P-O, D-A, and N-S fit respectively were regressed on perceived proactivity to test Hypothesis 1. All three types of fit were found to be significantly related to perceived proactivity ($p < .05$; and $\beta =$

.307, .440, and .328 respectively). These findings indicate that the respondents who report higher levels of perceived proactivity will also likely report more positive anticipations of P-O, D-A, and N-S fit with their first full-time employment positions, which supports Hypothesis 1.

Regression results for these measures can be found in Table 1, Appendix 3.

Similar to the first hypothesis, Hypothesis 2 predicted that students who are more proactive, as measured by the number of career preparation activities they have taken advantage of, will be more likely to report positive anticipations of P-O, D-A, and N-S fit. Correlations between career preparation activities and the three fit measures were noticeably weaker than the correlations between fit and self-reported proactivity. The correlation between P-O fit and career preparation were small but statistically significant ($r = 0.189, p < .05$), while the correlations between the other two fit measures and career preparation were not statistically significant (D-A $r = .107, ns$; N-S $r = .137, ns$). (Table 2, Appendix 2).

P-O, D-A, and N-S fit anticipations were regressed on career preparation to test Hypothesis 2. The results of this analysis indicate that career preparation does not predict any of the three types of anticipated fit ($p > .05$ for all measures; $\beta = .107$ for P-O, $\beta = .016$ for D-A, and $\beta = .069$ for N-S). These findings indicate that there is little relationship between the number of career preparation activities a student participates in and their anticipated levels of P-O, D-A, and N-S fit. Taken together these results do not support Hypothesis 2. Regression results for these measures can be found in Table 1, Appendix 3.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that individuals who anticipate more positive levels of fit with their first full-time employment positions will also report a higher number of months when asked how long they expect to stay at their first position. The correlations between reported amount of time and anticipated fit were weak and not statistically significant for the three types of fit (P-O r

= .034, ns; D-A $r = -.038$, ns; N-S $r = .096$, ns). These results suggest that there is little relationship between any of the types of fit and anticipated “staying time” (Table 2, Appendix 2).

As with the first two hypotheses, Hypothesis 3 measured by regressing the three types of fit on the reported amount of time. Similar to Hypothesis 2, the results of the analysis indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between any of the anticipated fit items and the reported amount of time the individual expects to remain at their first full-time employment position ($p > .05$ for all measures; $\beta = .238$ for P-O, $\beta = -.117$ for D-A, and $\beta = .143$ for N-S). These findings indicate that there is little to no relationship between anticipated fit and the expected amount of time the individual reports. Again, it is important to note that the beta value between D-A fit and reported number of months was also negative, which suggests a possible inverse relationship between the two measures. These results do not support our prediction for Hypothesis 3. Regression results for these measures can be found in Table 2, Appendix 3.

Hypothesis 4 anticipated that students who are currently enrolled in specialized colleges will be more likely to report higher self-perceptions of proactivity. The correlation between the two variables was .100, which is relatively weak and not statistically significant. This correlation indicates that there is a weak, but positive relationship between individuals who are currently enrolled in specialized colleges and self-reported proactivity (Table 2, Appendix 2).

Hypothesis 4 was analyzed by regressing college of enrollment on perceived proactivity. The results of the regression indicate that there is not a significant relationship between college enrollment and perceived proactivity ($p > .05$; $\beta = .100$). This finding indicates that there is not a significant relationship between the college a student is enrolled in and their self-reported proactivity, which goes against our prediction in Hypothesis 4. Regression results for these measures can be found in Table 3, Appendix 3.

The fifth hypothesis in this study predicted that students enrolled in specialized colleges will be more likely to report higher numbers of career preparation activities. In support of Hypothesis 5, the correlation between college of enrollment and number of reported career preparation activities was positive, and statistically significant. The correlation between career preparation and college enrollment was .296. These results indicate that there is a moderate and positive relationship between being enrolled in specialized colleges and the number of reported career preparation activities in which the individual participates (Table 2, Appendix 2).

Hypothesis 5 was also analyzed by regressing the combined number of career preparation activities on college of enrollment. The relationship between the number of reported career preparation activities and college of enrollment was positive and statistically significant ($p < .05$, $\beta = .296$). This result indicates that the students in specialized colleges (i.e., Business, Education, Engineering, Nursing) report engaging in more career preparation activities than students in the more generalized College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, thereby supporting hypothesis 5. Regression results for these measures can be found in Table 4, Appendix 3.

Our final hypothesis predicted that students in specialized colleges will be more likely to anticipate positive anticipations of person-organization, demands-abilities, and needs-supplies fit. The correlations between college of enrollment and all three types of fit were extremely weak ($P-O = .000$; $D-A = .011$; $N-S = .009$). These results indicate that there is virtually no relationship between college enrollment and any type of anticipated fit (Table 2, Appendix 2).

We also analyzed Hypothesis 6 by regressing the P-O, D-A, and N-S fit on college of enrollment. The results of this regression show that there is no relationship between college of enrollment and any of the three types of anticipated fit ($p > .05$ for all measures, $\beta = .000$ for P-O fit, $\beta = .011$ for D-A fit, $\beta = .009$ for N-S fit). This indicates that students in specialized colleges,

such as the College of Nursing, College of Engineering, College of Education, and Tippie College of Business, do not necessarily report more positive anticipations of fit with their first full-time employment position than do students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This does not support Hypothesis 6. Regression results for these measures can be found in Table 5, Appendix 3.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study is to apply previous concepts of fit to undergraduates who are undergoing the job search process by asking students to report proactivity, their anticipations of P-E fit with their first jobs, and their intentions to remain with the organization. After determining the correlations and regressions between measures, some general conclusions can be drawn about these relationships.

Hypothesis 1, which predicted students who score higher on the perceived proactivity scale will also report more positive anticipations of fit, was supported by the current study. This finding is consistent with previous fit literature. Seibert (1999) found that individuals who report high levels of perceived proactivity are more likely to research organizations prior to entry, establish career related goals, and acquire new skills and education in order to perform their jobs better (Seibert et al, 1999). This logic can be used to explain why proactive individuals also tend to anticipate better levels of fit.

Students who perceived themselves as being more proactive indicated that they are more likely to identify opportunities, work toward their goals, and change their path if they are not satisfied. It is possible that these individuals are more likely to actively and thoroughly search for organizations that match their values and job roles that fulfill their needs, which would explain the strongly significant correlations between proactivity and P-O and N-S fit. Among the three

types of fit, demands-abilities had the strongest correlation with perceived proactivity. It is possible that proactive students have heightened perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and abilities, which is consistent with findings by Myers and Sadaghiani (2010).

The lack of support for Hypothesis 2, which predicted that students who report partaking in more career preparation activities will also report more positive anticipations of fit, could have stemmed from a myriad of reasons. Most of the literature used for this study discuss career preparation's effect on person-organization and person-job fit through the lens of the recruiter, and not the applicant. The study conducted by Bretz found that employers and interviewers use career preparation as a way to predict the applicant's P-O or P-J fit (Bretz et al. 1993). While this study was informative, it does not suggest that simply engaging in career preparation can change the applicant's perceptions or anticipations of person-environment fit.

Another possible reason for the lack of support for Hypothesis 2 is the fact that career preparation may be a factor of perceived proactivity. That is, students who perceive themselves as being more proactive in a number of ways, do not necessarily target that proactivity at career preparation activities. The correlation between perceived proactivity and actual career preparation activities was small and not statistically significant ($r = .169$, ns). Proactive students may be taking advantage of other opportunities at the university, rather than career preparation. It is also possible that students have an inflated view of their own proactivity, which could impact the results of the proactive personalities measured item.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that respondents who anticipate higher levels of person-organization fit, demands-abilities fit, and needs-supplies fit will report a higher number of months when asked how long they expect to stay at their first full-time employment position. Surprisingly, this hypothesis was also not supported by the current hypothesis. There appeared to

be little to no relationship between fit anticipations and the number of months an individual reported. There are several potential causes for this result.

First, many Millennials perceive their first jobs as ‘stepping-stones’ on their career path. Although individuals may anticipate a good fit with their company, it is possible that they still perceive that job as a temporary one. A majority of respondents reported expectations to stay at their first job for a timespan between 12 and 24 months. Out of the three types of fit, needs-supplies appeared to have the strongest correlation with the amount of time an individual reported. This finding supports the idea that people who believe their first job will not bring them what they ultimately desire from a career will be more likely to look for alternative positions or opportunities shortly after organizational entry. The opposite is true as well. Individuals who report high anticipations of needs-supplies fit with their first full-time position tended to report a higher number of months they expected to remain at their job.

As mentioned earlier, there is a slight negative correlation between anticipated demands-abilities fit and reported amount of time expected to be spent in the first job. This inverse relationship could be explained by previous research on recent millennial college graduates, which suggests that recent college graduates are more likely to experience perceptions of overqualification and DA misfit (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). This inflated perception of their abilities may make them more likely to feel overqualified for their job, and more likely to desire leaving. One study reports that overqualification is increasing linearly, and as the workforce becomes more educated, the probability of experiencing underemployment is more likely (Vaisey, 2006). Increased competition for jobs could force a large percentage of recent college graduates to accept jobs that require less knowledge, skills, or abilities than the individual possesses, which could potentially lead to dissatisfaction and turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 4, predicted that students who are enrolled in specialized colleges, such as Tippie College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Education, and College of Nursing, would be more likely to report higher perceptions of proactivity. This hypothesis was not supported by the current study, as there appeared to be a lack of relationship between the two variables. Although students who are enrolled in specialized colleges must have met certain requirements in order to be admitted, they do not necessarily perceive themselves as being more proactive than respondents enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

This result may have occurred due to the referent groups of the students surveyed. It is possible that students in specialized colleges are more proactive than the student body as a whole, but feel less proactive in comparison to other students within their college of enrollment. If students in specialized colleges are more proactive to begin with, it could affect an individual's self-perceptions of proactivity because they are only comparing themselves to others in their school.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that students in specialized colleges would be more likely to report partaking in career preparation activities during their time in college. Contrary to Hypothesis 4, Hypothesis 5 was supported by the current study. There was a statistically significant relationship between the college enrollment type and the number of career preparation activities in which a student participated.

Support for Hypothesis 5 may have occurred due to the fact that specialized colleges are smaller and have fewer majors to account for, which makes it easier to target professional development. For example, both Tippie College of Business and the College of Engineering have a private career fair with recruiters for each major within the specialized school. While the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences certainly has large amounts of career development

opportunities for its students, it simply just might be easier for students in specialized colleges to find activities that directly match their career goals.

Finally, Hypothesis 6 proposed that students in specialized colleges will be more likely to anticipate higher levels of person-organization, demands-abilities, and needs-supplies fit. The results of the current study found that there is little to no relationship between the type of college enrollment and anticipations of fit, which did not support this prediction. This realization makes sense based on the findings from the other hypotheses in this study.

When creating Hypothesis 6, several assumptions were made about the other hypotheses in the study. First, that career preparation and perceived proactivity were found to be more prominent in specialized schools, and second, that career preparation and perceived proactivity are correlated with more positive anticipations of fit. Our results indicate that students in specialized colleges are more likely to partake in career preparation activities, but were not necessarily more likely to perceive themselves as being more proactive. We also found that perceived proactivity is highly correlated with the three types of fit, while reported career preparation activities is not. Because college enrollment type is only related to reported number of career preparation activities, and reported number of career preparation activities is not significantly related to anticipations of fit, it makes sense that college enrollment type is not directly related to fit anticipations.

One interesting finding that fell outside the initial study was the fact that college of enrollment appeared to be significantly correlated with the reported amount of time an individual estimates remaining at their first full-time employment position. These measures were not initially intended to be measured together, nor was this included as one of our original

hypotheses. Additional investigation of this correlation is necessary in order to further understand why the relationship occurred.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the current study that we must acknowledge. In this particular study, the survey was distributed via the University of Iowa Listserv to 21,586 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa. This means that the students who have selected to opt out of the mass email list did not receive the survey. Of the students that were sent the survey, only 235 people took the survey, and only 185 qualified for the study. The relatively small sample size may not have been an accurate representation of the University of Iowa undergraduate student body, which may have hurt the outcome of the data.

It should also be noted that the current study may have been impacted by a self-selection bias. While the sample was randomized, students voluntarily chose whether or not to participate in the study. Due to this potential bias, causation was more difficult to determine, as there may have been a significant difference in response between those who chose to participate in the study, and those who did not. This situation is particularly important to note in the current study, which measures perceived proactivity as one of its variables. It is possible that the people who self-selected into the current study, and completed the entire survey, are more proactive than those who did not click the link at all or immediately deleted the email. If this phenomenon were true, our results would be skewed toward proactive personalities and our data would be impacted.

An additional limitation is our lack of ability to generalize the results of the current study to other institutions, colleges, and universities. Our findings are specific to the University of Iowa, a large, state school in the Midwest, and must be interpreted within that context. This study

may have yielded very different results from other types of institutions, such as: liberal arts colleges, ivy leagues, community colleges, state schools in other regions of the United States, and international universities. If we want to apply our conclusions to Millennials in general, we would have to sample from a wider range of university and college types.

A final limitation of the current study was the varied number of responses between the measured items, particularly the question asking participants to report the number of months they anticipate staying at their first full-time employment position. This item was an open ended question, allowing respondents to manually input their answer. Many people left the question blank, or reported answers including “I don’t know”, and “Not sure”, which made it more difficult to accurately analyze the data, and supplied us with a smaller *N*. Forcing response to this question, or using a multiple choice question response instead of an open ended one, may have yielded better results.

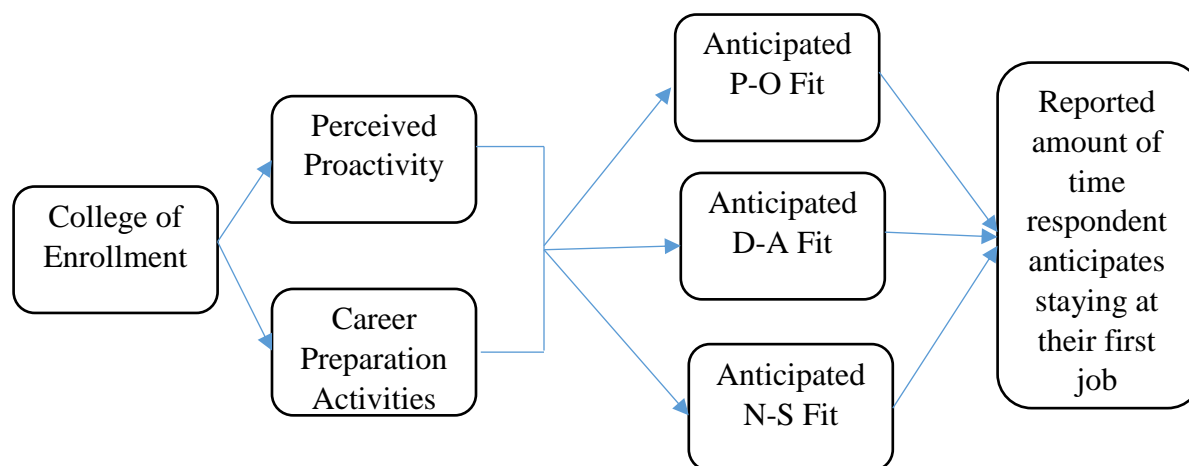
Future Research

There are several new directions for research that may be prompted by the results of this study. First, the current study could be repeated in a longitudinal format to measure whether the fit anticipations of college students are similar to their actual perceptions of fit with their first full-time employment positions. Doing this would require several surveys; one administered during the participant’s senior year of college, another distributed during the first year of their full-time job, and a final survey sent during the participant’s second year of full-time employment. This study would allow researchers to observe whether having positive fit anticipations in college leads to career success, job satisfaction, and lower turnover intentions.

The current study could also be further analyzed to determine the effect of specialized college enrollment on the length of time students anticipate remaining at their first full-time

employment position. Results from the current study demonstrated a very strong correlation between college of enrollment and anticipated length of time. However, this significance could have stemmed from a myriad of variables, and thus college of enrollment cannot be definitively written off as the cause of the reported amount of time without further investigation.

It is possible that college of enrollment leads to increases in career preparation and perceived proactivity, which in turn leads to more positive anticipations of P-O, D-A, and N-S fit, which results in longer amounts of time respondents anticipate remaining at their first jobs. The model below is a visual descriptive of this theory:



Testing this theory would require running an advanced regression model output. This form of regression is only found in expansions of the SPSS software, and was therefore unavailable for use in the current study.

Finally, this study could be repeated with a qualitative design. The current study was quantitative, and was effective in determining trends between the three types of anticipated fit and objective and subjective proactivity. However, it does not offer much insight into why these trends and relationships occur. A qualitative design would allow participants to speak freely

about their anticipations of fit, and would provide deeper insight into how those anticipations formed.

Conclusion

This study was a step toward understanding the person-environment fit anticipations of current undergraduate students, and whether various types of preparatory behavior can alter these anticipations in a positive way. The results of this study supports previous literature regarding the effects of perceived proactivity on person-environment fit, although it appears that there is little to no relationship between the number of career preparation activities a student completes and anticipations of fit. That being said, it is interesting to note that the findings of this study suggest that students in specialized colleges are more likely to participate in career preparation activities, and are also more likely to report expecting to stay at their first full-time employment position for longer periods of time. Building on the takeaways of the current study, future research could follow students from the end of their college careers to their first employment positions to understand whether a student's anticipations of fit correlate with their future fit perceptions.

Appendix 1: Survey Measures

Anticipatory P-O Fit Survey Questions (Adapted from Cable and DeRue, 2002):

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding you and your first full-time employment organization? Items measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with responses of 1 indicating ‘Strongly Disagree’, and 7 indicating ‘Strongly Agree’.

1	I anticipate that the things I value most in life will be similar to the things that my first organization values
2	I anticipate that my personal values will match my first organization's values and culture
3	I anticipate that my first organization's values and culture will provide a good fit with the things I value in life

Anticipatory N-S Fit Survey Questions (Adapted from Cable and DeRue, 2002):

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding you and your first full-time employment position? Items measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with responses of 1 indicating ‘Strongly Disagree’, and 7 indicating ‘Strongly Agree’.

1	I anticipate there will be a good fit between what my first job offers me and what I am looking for in a job
2	I anticipate that the attributes I look for in a job will be fulfilled very well by my first full-time position
3	I anticipate that my first full-time position will give me just about everything that I want from a job

Anticipatory D-A Fit Survey Questions (Adapted from Cable and DeRue, 2002):

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding you and your first full-time employment position? Items measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating ‘Strongly Disagree’, and 7 indicating ‘Strongly Agree’.

1	I anticipate that the match will be very good between the demands of my first job and my personal skills
2	I anticipate that my abilities and training will be a good fit with the requirements of my first job
3	I anticipate that my personal abilities and education will provide a good match with the demands that my first full-time employment will place on me

Perceived Proactivity Scale (Adapted from Seibert et al, 2009):

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Items measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating 'Strongly Disagree', and 7 indicating 'Strongly Agree'

1	I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life
2	Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality
3	If I see something I don't like, I fix it
4	No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen
5	I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition
6	I excel at identifying opportunities
7	I am always looking for a better way to do things
8	If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen
9	I can spot a good opportunity long before others can

Combined Career Preparation Activities

Every answer indicating the respondent has participated in the career preparation activity was reported as 1 point. Points were added together for each participant to get a 'combined career preparation activities' figure.

1	How many full-time employment positions have you applied to?
2	How many companies have you interviewed with for full-time employment positions?
3	Which of the following career preparation activities have you done? (Select all that apply).
4	Select all professional development clubs that you are currently or were a member of.
5	Are you a member of any other professional organizations that were not stated above? (Separate responses with a comma if necessary).
6	Have you held a summer internship position?
7	Have you held a semester long internship position?
8	What other steps have you taken to prepare for your first job?

Appendix 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Tables

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Perceived Proactivity	114	2.44	7	5.34	0.9
N-S Fit	119	1.33	7	4.55	1.32
D-A Fit	121	2	7	5.26	1.18
P-O Fit	120	1.67	7	5.19	1.12
Career Prep Activities	157	0	26	6.35	6.2
College of Enrollment	157	—	—	1.36	0.48
Anticipated Time for Staying	104	6	60	27.03	14.84

Table 2: Correlations of Fit Measures, Proactivity, College of Enrollment, and Anticipated Time of Remaining At First Full-Time Enrollment Positions

	Perceived Proactivity	N-S- Fit	D-A Fit	P-O Fit	Career Prep Activities	College of Enrollment	Anticipated Time for Staying
Perceived Proactivity	$\alpha=0.885$						
N-S Fit	0.314**	$\alpha=0.880$					
D-A Fit	0.443**	0.619**	$\alpha=0.901$				
P-O Fit	0.326**	0.597**	0.556**	$\alpha=0.914$			
Career Prep Activities	0.169	0.137	0.107	0.189*	—		
College of Enrollment	0.100	0.009	0.011	0.000	0.296**	—	
Anticipated Time for Staying	0.004	0.096	-0.038	0.034	0.17	0.265**	—

α = Scale Reliability

*Significance at .05

**Significance at .01

Appendix 3: Regression Tables

Table 1

Regression Results for Testing the Effect of Career Preparation Activities and Perceived Proactivity on Anticipations of P-O, D-A, and N-S Fit

Regression	Variables	Dependent Variable	β	R ²	df	Sig.
1	Career Prep Activities	Anticipated P-O Fit	0.107	0.118	2, 112	0.243
	Perceived Proactivity		0.307			0.001
2	Career Prep Activities	Anticipated D-A Fit	0.016	0.196	2, 113	0.854
	Perceived Proactivity		0.440			0.000
3	Career Prep Activities	Anticipated N-S Fit	0.069	0.121	2, 111	0.452
	Perceived Proactivity		0.328			0.000

p<.05

β = standardized regression coefficient

Table 2

Regression Results for Testing the Effect of Fit Anticipations on the Reported Amount of Time the Participant Anticipates Staying at Their First Full-Time Employment Position

Regression	Variables	Dependent Variable	β	R ²	df	Sig.
1	Anticipated P-O Fit	Anticipated Time at First Full Time Position	0.238	0.017	3, 85	0.812
	Anticipated D-A Fit		-0.117			0.406
	Anticipated N-S Fit		0.143			0.332

p<.05

β = standardized regression coefficient

Table 3

Regression Results for Testing the Effect of College of Enrollment on Reported Career Preparation Activities and Perceived Proactivity

Regression	Variables	Dependent Variable	β	R²	df	Sig.
1	College of Enrollment (Specialized vs. Non-Specialized)	Perceived Proactivity	0.100	0.001	1, 113	0.292

p<.05

β = standardized regression coefficient

Table 4

Regression Results for Testing the Effect of College of Enrollment on Reported Career Preparation Activities and Perceived Proactivity

Regression	Variables	Dependent Variable	β	R²	df	Sig.
1	College of Enrollment (Specialized vs. Non-Specialized)	Reported Number of Career Preparation Activities	0.296	0.082	1, 156	0.000

p<.05

β = standardized regression coefficient

Table 5

Regression Results for Testing the Effect of College of Enrollment on P-O, D-A, and N-S Fit Anticipations

Regression n	Variables	Dependent Variable	β	R²	df	Sig.
1	College of Enrollment (Specialized vs. Non-Specialized)	P-O Fit	0.000	0.000	1, 119	0.996
2	College of Enrollment (Specialized vs. Non-Specialized)	D-A Fit	0.011	0.000	1, 120	0.905
3	College of Enrollment (Specialized vs. Non-Specialized)	N-S Fit	0.009	0.000	1, 118	0.919

p<.05

β = standardized regression coefficient

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