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PERCEIVED PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT: MOVING BEYOND
CORRESPONDENCE-BASED EXPLANATIONS

by

Todd Christian Darnold

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Business Administration
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December 2008

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Amy L. Kristof-Brown

ABSTRACT

Over the next 20 years the labor shortage in the U.S. is expected to grow to 25 million with skilled labor being in especially high demand (Employment Policy Foundation, *Future Labor Skill Shortages Jeopardize American Prosperity*, October, 2001). As such, the firm's ability to recruit human capital will increase in importance. Research suggests that person-organization fit is an important predictor of early stage recruiting outcomes such as organizational attraction (e.g., Kristof-Brown, A.L., Zimmerman, R.D., & Johnson, E.C. 2005. Consequences of individuals' fit at work: A meta-analysis of person-job, person-organization, person-group, and person-supervisor fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 281-342). As such, this dissertation seeks to increase our understanding of the causes of overall PO fit perceptions in the context of realistic early recruiting outcomes. Organizational brand image, individual affectivity, and measures of PO fit on specific work attributes are hypothesized to be related to job seekers perceptions of overall fit perceptions.

Abstract Approved: _____
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Graduate College
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

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To my family, broadly defined, past, present, and future.

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ABSTRACT

Over the next 20 years the labor shortage in the U.S. is expected to grow to 25 million with skilled labor being in especially high demand (Employment Policy Foundation, *Future Labor Skill Shortages Jeopardize American Prosperity*, October, 2001). As such, the firm's ability to recruit human capital will increase in importance. Research suggests that person-organization fit is an important predictor of early stage recruiting outcomes such as organizational attraction (e.g., Kristof-Brown, A.L., Zimmerman, R.D., & Johnson, E.C. 2005. Consequences of individuals' fit at work: A meta-analysis of person-job, person-organization, person-group, and person-supervisor fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 281-342). As such, this dissertation seeks to increase our understanding of the causes of overall PO fit perceptions in the context of realistic early recruiting outcomes. Organizational brand image, individual affectivity, and measures of PO fit on specific work attributes are hypothesized to be related to job seekers perceptions of overall fit perceptions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics by 2010 the U.S. will have 8 million more jobs than workers (O'Connell, 2004). Over the next 20 years the shortage is expected to grow to 25 million and this problem is expected to hit the skilled labor market especially hard (Employment Policy Foundation, 2001). Further, recent estimates suggest that the unemployment rate for college graduates is already nearing record low levels (Isidore, 2007). Interestingly, within the college graduate subgroup there is also increasing demand for new and recent college graduates due to corporate cost cutting strategies (Isidore, 2007). As a large portion of the U.S. workforce is either into or beyond their peak earning years, organizations now seek to fill open positions with younger, cheaper workers. Both the growing demand for labor in general and the specific focus on younger, cheaper workers have led to great demand for new and recent college graduates. For years human resource scholars and practitioners have argued that recruiting is important to organizational effectiveness (e.g., Barber, 1998; Breaugh, 1992; Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001; Rynes, 1991); these market conditions suggest that its importance will only grow with time, especially in terms of recruiting university students. Accordingly, it is imperative that researchers help practitioners understand how to best gain competitive advantage through the acquisition of human capital.

Barber (1998, p. 5), in expanding on definitions from Rynes (1991) and Breaugh (1992), defined recruiting as "those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees." Barber divides recruiting into three phases; generating applicants, maintaining applicant status, and job choice. The generating applicants or early recruiting stage involves reaching out to the potential applicant population in an attempt to persuade some portion of that population to apply for a position. In the maintaining applicant status stage organizations

focus on persuading applicants to remain interested in the firm and continue through the selection process. Finally, organizations attempt to persuade desirable applicants to accept job offers in the job choice stage.

While each stage is important in attaining human capital for the firm, the early recruiting stage sets the maximum for recruiting and selection effectiveness, as the applicant pool can only deteriorate following this stage (Carlson, Connerley, & Meacham, 2002). Given tight labor market conditions, organizations that are able to generate the most quality applicants and be more selective in their hiring decisions should increase the effectiveness of their overall staffing systems (Boudreau & Rynes, 1985), and consequently gain competitive advantage in the marketplace (e.g., Michaels et al., 2001). As such, understanding the factors that lead individuals to decide to initially apply for positions in organizations is essential in maximizing a firm's stock of human capital.

Although there have been few studies examining Person-Organization fit as a predictor of generating applicant stage outcomes such as job pursuit intention and organization attraction, the meta analytic estimates of the concept's influence are high (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Generally speaking, PO fit addresses the compatibility between people and organizational cultures (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). However, we as a field know little about how individuals develop perceptions of potential employers to evaluate their level of compatibility, or fit with the organization. Understanding the phenomena of fit, its link to organizational attraction, and ultimately the application decision, is essential for maximizing staffing effectiveness.

The literature on PO fit in the organizational attractiveness and application decision context is sparse. In their comprehensive quantitative review of the concept, Kristof-Brown and colleagues (2005) report results from only five published studies in their analysis of the relationship between PO fit and organizational attraction. Similarly Chapman and colleagues (2005) include only four studies relating PO fit to job pursuit

intentions and four to job-organizational attraction in their quantitative review of the recruiting literature.

In addition to a general lack of research, understanding in this area has also been slowed by the disparate nature of PO fit research. PO fit has been conceptualized in numerous ways and meta-analyses indicate that conceptualization and measurement strategy moderates the impact of PO fit on outcomes (e.g., Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Kristof-Brown and colleagues (2005) report that when PO fit is measured as an overall perception (i.e., collapsing across attributes of the organization), it has a stronger impact on organizational attraction, such that the more “objective” the conceptualization the weaker the relationship with organizational attraction. For example, Kristof-Brown and colleagues reported a large relationship between organizational attraction and directly measured perceptions of PO fit ($\rho = .62$), but only a moderate relationship ($\rho = .22$) when fit was calculated as the correspondence between specific, separately measured person and organization characteristics.

To date only one study has investigated the processes by which individuals combine information about themselves and organizations to determine their perceptions of PO fit. Edwards and colleagues (2006) employed three primary measurement approaches (atomistic, molecular; and molar) to test the relationships between the PO fit measurement approaches. The molar measures were direct assessments of PO fit, which asked respondents to rate the degree to which they fit with the organization on a specific work attribute. Molecular measures asked respondents about the degree to which over-supply, under-supply, or exact correspondence existed between specific person and organization characteristics. Atomistic measures simply asked about the respondents views of the person and the organization separately, and fit was inferred by the relationship between the two. They found weak relationships between the approaches suggesting that each approach may be tapping a different construct.

While revealing, this study left open several opportunities to contribute to the nascent literature on how people combine perceptions of themselves and an organization to arrive at perceptions of PO fit. Their study investigated only one form of PO fit, complementary fit (needs-supplies), did not include an overall (non-attribute specific) measure of perceived fit, and did not predict outcomes of the fit perceptions. Accordingly, research that investigates relationships between the primary measurement approaches using supplementary as well as complementary fit, an overall measure of perceived fit, and is based in a decision making context with attitudinal and behavioral outcomes would make an important contribution to the PO fit literature.

A primary need in the PO fit literature is an understanding of other causes of PO fit perceptions beyond calculating the correspondence between perceptions the person and the organization. In this study I propose two additional concepts that may contribute to perceived PO fit perceptions -- organizational brand image and individual personality. PO fit has yet to be linked to these two literatures, despite their seeming relevance to early recruitment outcomes. This oversight is unfortunate for several reasons. First, as Barber's (1998) review points out, organizational image has been the centerpiece of the generating applicant stage literature. Further, Chapman and colleagues (2005) meta-analysis suggests that organizational image is one of the best predictors of generating applicant stage outcomes. Also, PO fit and organizational image share social identity theory as a common theoretical explanation. Social identity theory's basic supposition is that individuals seek to join and retain membership in groups that reinforce their self image (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Membership in a group or organization that reflects either individuals' true or intended self image allows individuals to feel as though they fit within a culture that reflects themselves thus allowing them to answer the question, "Who am I?" (Stryker & Serpe, 1982).

Second, despite the emergence of personality in predicting workplace outcomes (e.g., job performance and workplace attitudes), no research to date has explicitly linked

personality to PO fit perceptions. While fit on personality has been a topic of interest in the fit literature, the affect infusion model (Forgas, 1995) suggests that individual personality directly “colors” our perceptions and decisions. As such, it seems that personality, specifically positive and negative affectivity, could influence affective responses to the organization that are tied to directly measured perceptions of PO fit.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to develop and test a model that increases our understanding of the role of perceived PO fit in the earliest stages of applicant recruitment. As part of this model I explore multiple, new predictors of overall PO fit perceptions and subsequent early recruiting stage decisions by job seekers (see Figure D1). Specifically, this study seeks to move the PO fit, organizational brand image, and organizational attraction literatures forward by: (1) evaluating the role of both attribute-specific and overall perceptions of complementary fit (need-fulfillment) and supplementary fit (value congruence) in the organizational attraction context, (2) simultaneously testing the role of three potential influences of overall PO fit perceptions (the organizational brand, PO fit on specific attributes, and individual affectivity), and (3) testing the impact of the organizational brand, need fulfillment, value congruence, and individual affectivity in predicting organizational attraction outcomes.

In addition to building on the extant fit literature I aim to contribute to the organizational brand image literature by introducing a multi-faceted measure of the organizational brand based on work by Fombrum and colleagues (1990; 2000) and Walsh and Beatty (2007). I believe that by including this measure as a predictor of the overall organizational brand, this study can add to our understanding of what types of organizational impressions are related to job seekers’ overall perceptions of the organizational brand. To date, organizational branding research in the organizational attraction context has focused almost exclusively on the brand as a high level concept. Although I believe that understanding the brand as a high level concept is important, and include this important concept in this study, this paper will increase the field’s knowledge

of the organizational branding concept by developing a multi-faceted measure of the organizational brand based on customer service orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility.

Thus, an additional contribution of the paper is to introduce a multi-faceted measure of the organizational brand to the recruiting context and investigate its relationship to the overall organizational brand. A final contribution is the examination of both an attitudinal and behavioral dependent variable representing organizational attraction.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The PO Fit Concept

PO fit is embedded in the broader concept of Person-Environment (PE) fit. While PE fit is defined generically as the compatibility between attributes of the person and the environment (e.g., Pervin, 1989; Schneider, 1987), in PO fit the environmental referent is simply defined as the organization. As such, PO fit addresses the compatibility between people and organizations (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Like PE fit, PO fit has been linked to job choice, selection decisions, job satisfaction, performance, organization commitment, turnover, and psychological well-being (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Although the idea that people should be compatible with their organization may seem simplistic, the academic literature on the topic is anything but straightforward. Specific studies on PO fit can be differentiated based on three primary criteria: (a) complementary versus supplementary traditions, (b) content dimensions and their level of specificity and (c) measurement approach.

Complementary versus Supplementary Traditions

The field of PO fit has two longstanding traditions of research within the broad research context. One tradition is built around the notion of complementary fit. Complementary fit occurs when a person's or an organization's characteristics provide what the other wants or needs (Cable & Edwards, 2004). Complementary fit can focus on numerous organizational or personal attributes. For example, fit would occur when an organization supplies rewards—psychological or tangible—that an employee or potential employee needs or wants, or when an organization demands certain skills or abilities that an applicant or employee possesses. As such, this tradition is also commonly referred to as needs-supplies or demands-abilities fit, respectively. The needs-supplies fit literature

has traditionally emphasized individuals' needs and preferences, but little, if any, work exists in the organizational attraction context that uses this approach.

The second tradition is generally labeled supplementary fit. Supplementary fit exists when a person and an organization possess similar or matching characteristics (Cable & Edwards, 2004). Supplementary fit could occur when an organization hires an employee with a personality in-line with those already possessed by the individuals in the organization, but more often supplementary fit is represented by research exploring value congruence between employees and organizations. Value congruence occurs when both the individual and the organization find *importance* in the same values. For example, value congruence would occur when both a person and an organization find benevolence to be important and power to be unimportant.

A study by Cable and Edwards (2004) supports the unique influence of each tradition. Their work shows that complementary fit (operationalized as psychological need fulfillment) and supplementary fit (operationalized as value congruence) are conceptually distinct and simultaneously predict outcomes. They measured both complementary and supplementary fit using the Work Values Survey which measures work values based on Schwarz's circumplex model (Edwards & Cable, 2002). The WVS was completed by 958 incumbents at four large water treatment facilities along with measures of intent to stay, job satisfaction, and organizational identity. Using polynomial regression they found that supplementary and complementary fit equally, but uniquely, predicted outcome measures. As such, they concluded that "there appear to be two different processes underlying the complementary and supplementary traditions of P-E fit research, each with equal footing (Cable & Edwards, 2004; p. 830)." However, as both traditions address compatibility, they are not unrelated. As such, Cable and Edwards note that these two traditions "should be integrated into a larger theoretical framework that explains their interrelationships as well as their relationships with outcomes that are

important to individuals and organizations (Cable & Edwards, 2004; p. 830).” This paper follows this recommendation.

Content Dimension

Within each of these traditions several content dimensions have been examined in the extant literature. Complementary PO fit has generally emphasized individuals’ needs and preferences or skills and abilities. To examine complementary fit needs are compared with environmental supplies, which refer to extrinsic and intrinsic resources and rewards (e.g., pay, security, interesting work). While historically some researchers have attempted to measure and analyze actual levels of needs and organizational resources, the field has generally moved away from this practice and focused on individuals’ subjective perceptions of their needs and their organization’s resources. While from a practitioner’s perspective it may seem more practically useful to measure actual needs and resources, individuals can only act on stimuli they perceive. Accordingly, it is the perception of fit that leads individuals to act (e.g., Endler & Magnusson, 1976; French, Caplan, & Harrison, 1982). Thus, the process underlying need fulfillment is a person’s cognitive comparison of the desired amount of a resource or reward, relative to the amount that is perceived to be supplied by the organization (French et al., 1982; Cable & Edwards, 2004).

Theories of need fulfillment indicate that people become dissatisfied with an organization when supplies fall short of personal needs or desires. Conversely, theory generally predicts that satisfaction and attraction will increase as supplies increase toward needs or desires. Accordingly, when needs or desires are fulfilled individuals should be maximally attached to the focal organization. This thinking, while clearly evident in the fit literature, stems from early work on discrepancy theories of job satisfaction (e.g., Katzell, 1964; Locke, 1976) which emphasized that satisfaction was dependent, in part, on the comparison between the perceived job attributes and their desired amounts. However, research suggests that for some content dimensions—such as pay and

autonomy—perceived over-supply is the most desirable state (e.g., Cable & Edwards, 2004; Edwards et al., 2006).

The literature on supplementary PO fit has examined fit primarily on values, but goals, personality traits, and attitudes could also serve as content dimensions. Because the literature has placed so much emphasis on values, supplementary fit is often operationalized as value congruence (Cable & Edwards, 2004). When defined as value congruence, supplementary PO fit refers to the similarity between an individual's values and the cultural values system of an organization or its people (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996).

Theory suggests that value congruence should affect individuals' attitudes and behaviors because people are more attracted to others who are similar to themselves. This thinking is at the crux of both Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction theory and Tajfel & Turner's (1985) social identity theory. Both theories essentially state that individuals will be attracted by, seek to join, and retain membership in organizations where they will be in the company of individuals similar to themselves. Social identity theory suggests that individuals seek to join organizations in an attempt to reinforce their self-concepts. Because an organization's values are reflected onto those who work there (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), individuals potentially use the organization as a source of social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Accordingly, individuals should find organizations similar to themselves to be attractive and satisfying (e.g. Cable & Judge, 1996; 1997; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Tom, 1971). Each theory allows for similarity to be based on values, but Byrne's theory assumes interaction between the individual and the organization. As such, social identity theory may be more relevant to PO fit in the attraction context as it posits that individuals can identify with an organization without ever interacting with organizational members.

Once the relevant content dimensions are selected, the level of specificity of these dimensions must also be determined. Edwards and Shipp (2008) introduced a continuum

ranging from global to facet levels of person and environment dimensions. The broadest, global level represents a multi-attribute perspective, in which fit is assessed across multiple content dimensions, such as overall similarity or compatibility. At the mid-range of specificity is the domain level, which refers to a category of content dimensions, such as values, or personality or goals. Most narrowly is the facet level which specifies, within a particular content dimension, specific attributes, such as each of the Big Five personality traits. Thus, the attributes on which PO fit is determined can vary in terms of content as well as specificity. The current study examines how the facet level and domain level approaches are related, by examining how attribute-specific assessments of fit are related to overall perceptions of value congruence and need fulfillment.

Measurement Approach

A final way to differentiate research in the PO fit domain is by measurement approach. The field employs four basic measurement approaches for the study of PO fit. *Objective* PO fit bases fit on comparison of the objectively measured person and the objectively measured organization. As such, objective PO fit is not concerned with what individuals perceive. It is only concerned with what can be measured apart from individuals' perceptions. For example, one could employ this approach by measuring the values that an organization claims to hold using a survey of top management, then measuring the values individuals claim to hold, then comparing the two sets of values. When the two sets of values are congruent, fit is said to exist. While this method has been shown to predict workplace outcomes (e.g., Dineen, Ling, Ash, & DeIVecchio, 2007), it is considered a distal predictor and is generally much more weakly related to outcomes than the *subjective* approaches (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Further, in order for a stimulus to be acted upon it must be perceived; thus, it is the perception of fit that leads individuals to act (e.g., Endler & Magnusson, 1976; French et al., 1982). As such, the field has generally moved away from objective measures of fit (Dineen's work and Chatman's early work are the notable exceptions).

Edwards and colleagues (2006) focus only on the three subjective measurement approaches. These approaches are widely used in PO fit research and have been assumed to tap into different aspects of the psychological process linking the perceived person and organization to perceived PO fit. The indirect, or atomistic, approach is characterized by studies that measure an individual's perceptions of the person and environment separately and combine them using various statistical methods to represent the construct of PO fit. This could be done by measuring individuals' desire for interesting work, then measuring those individuals' perceptions that the organization provides interesting work, then comparing the measurements to see if the desire for interesting work is fulfilled by the organization. The discrepancy, or molecular, approach is rarely employed, but refers to studies that measure the perceived degree of discrepancy between the person and environment. For example, one might ask whether work rewards exceed or fall short of the person's need for those rewards. To answer this question one could ask individuals to rate the degree to which they believe an organization would pay them less than, more than, or an amount equal to their desired pay level. The direct, or molar, approach involves studies that directly measure the perceived fit, match, or similarity between the person and environment. For example, this category includes studies that ask respondents to rate the degree to which their values fit with those of a focal organization. While these measurement approaches are procedurally dissimilar, they have been assumed to be conceptually equivalent as each aims to estimate the perceived relationship between the person and the organization.

When individuals are able to accurately rate the characteristics of the organization and of themselves, the four measurement approaches described above should have similar relationships with criteria and have high intercorrelations. In reality, however, this has rarely been found to be the case (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1997; Edwards, et al., 2006; Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001). Cable and Judge found indirect and direct subjective measures to be correlated .33, while being related to job choice intention at .23 and .54

(bivariate correlations) respectively. Kristof-Brown and Stevens, using polynomial regression, found that indirectly measured subjective congruence on mastery goals explained twenty-four percent of the variance in work satisfaction while indirectly measured objective congruence explained only ten percent of the variance. Finally, Edwards and colleagues, in the most comprehensive study on the issue, found only moderate support for the proposed relationships between the indirect and direct approaches for measuring subjective fit (R^2 ranged from .15-.58, the average was .39). Further, their data suggest that it is often the perceived environment that drives perceptions of fit, rather than an actual correspondence between the person and the environment.

Direct measures of subjective fit likely allow a great degree of cognitive manipulation because they don't distinguish between under-supply and over-supply. In addition, they are generally employed at an overall (non-attribute specific) level. Thus, they allow individuals to give unequal weighting to those organizational attributes that are salient and particularly important when assessing fit. Specifically, responding to direct measures of overall fit, the individual is allowed to weight the attributes on which fit is considered without any guidance, as such, their judgment of fit may be based exclusively on one value or equally on all possible values. Similarly, when making a direct judgment of fit, individuals can only make judgments based on attributes that are salient in their own minds. For example, when an individual is simply asked "To what degree do you believe you fit with organization X?" they may respond based on the degree to which they perceive they fit with certain organizational values and neglect to consider whether they fit well with the organization's compensation system. Accordingly, fit on any one attribute may not even register with the decision maker.

To address some of these concerns and add to our theoretical understand of how job seekers develop their overall perceptions of PO fit I will measure fit on specific attributes (such as fit on need for pay and importance of the value power) as well as

overall (non-attribute specific) perceptions of need fulfillment and value congruence. This will allow me to provide an initial test of the manner in which fit on specific work attributes and values is related to overall measures of need fulfillment on work attributes and value congruence when each measure employs the direct measurement approach.

The disconnect in measurement approaches also provokes the question, “if perceived P-E fit does not represent the match between the person and the environment, then what *does* it represent (Edwards et al., 2006, p. 823)?” Edwards and colleagues suggest that it “may signify affect more than the judged match between the perceived person and environment (p. 822).” Edwards and colleagues further note that based on the pattern of relationships between objective measures of person and environment and perceived fit, that directly measured perceived fit may really be “anticipated satisfaction” (p. 822). However, as the analysis was post-hoc, they offer no theoretical explanation for this notion. But, this idea is consistent with the finding that it is generally the perceived environment that most strongly determines perceived fit. Their reasoning was based on the fact that environmental oversupply is more traditionally thought of as a scenario for predicting job satisfaction and not PE fit. As such, research is needed that investigates “other causes” (Edwards and colleagues terminology, p. 830), and consequently, the meaning of directly measured perceived PO fit. By investigating the role of the organizational brand and individual affectivity I hope to identify and evaluate two of these potential other causes of PO fit perceptions.

Overarching Model

I propose a model of PO fit in the early recruitment context (Figure D1) that incorporates two conceptualizations of perceived PO fit (overall need fulfillment and overall value congruence) as the primary predictors of organizational attraction. To understand what comprises these two fit perceptions I include three primary predictors; direct measures of fit (both for value congruence and need fulfillment) on specific

attributes of the organization, the organizational brand, and individual affectivity (positive and negative affect). Further, to better understand what comprises our perceptions of the organizational brand I include a multi-faceted measure of the organization brand and organizational familiarity. Finally, I include measures of industry image and of the participant's expectation for person-job fit (the perceived match between an expected job and a person's desired job) as control variables that may also influence organizational attraction and application decisions.

The Role of PO Fit in Predicting Organizational Attraction and Application Decisions

As previously mentioned, PO fit has been linked to job choice, selection decisions, job satisfaction, performance, organization commitment, turnover, and psychological well-being (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). However, relatively few published studies have linked PO fit to organizational attraction outcomes. Organizational attraction, the individual's overall evaluation of attractiveness of the organization, is one of the most popular outcome measures in the recruiting literature (Chapman et al., 2005). As such, the paucity of research relating the two constructs is curious. Chapman and colleagues (2005) and Kristof-Brown and colleagues (2005) included data from only four and five published studies respectively for the relationship between PO fit and organizational attraction in their meta-analyses.

A few studies typify this nascent literature on fit in the recruiting context and have become widely cited for showing that fit predicts recruiting outcomes and more specifically organizational attraction. In two studies, Cable and Judge provide the initial links between PO fit and organizational attraction outcomes for actual organizations. First, using a sample of 96 active student job seekers, Cable and Judge (1996) linked indirect, subjective measures of values congruence (supplementary fit) using the

Organizational Culture Profile (OCP; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) and a direct one-item measure of overall supplementary PO fit on values ("To what degree do you feel your values match or fit this organization and the current employees in this organization?", p. 299) to organizational attractiveness in the form of job choice intentions. They report a correlation between their direct measure of PO fit and job choice intention of .54 and a correlation between their indirect measure and job choice intention of .23. Further, the importance of these two variables remained even after controlling for person-job fit and several demographic variables.

A second study was published one year later (Judge & Cable, 1997). In this study the authors again collected indirect measures of supplementary fit on values (OCP), direct measures values-based fit (a three-item measure they developed), and organizational attraction data from 182 student job seekers. Again they found that both the more general direct measure of values-based fit and the attribute-specific indirectly measures of fit predicted organizational attraction ($r = .40$ and $r = .26$ respectively). Although these studies provide an important link between PO fit and organizational attraction, the studies provide three areas for future research. First, in each case, organizational values assessments and fit perceptions were collected after an initial job interview. As such, these are not really studies of early recruiting outcomes as defined by Barber (1998). Second, the direct measures of fit were collected at the same time as the attractiveness measures. Given that these two measures are both direct assessments of reaction to the organization, it seems likely that their relationship could be inflated by common method bias. And finally, the studies focused only on the supplementary view of PO fit, leaving out the important conceptualization of complementary (needs-supplies) fit.

A more recent study by Dineen and colleagues (2002) investigated the role of both objective and perceived supplementary fit in predicting organizational attraction in a web-based recruiting experiment. They created a fictitious organization and an

accompanying website, then used the information on the website to rate organizational values using the OCP. 312 business students then completed a personal values measure (the OCP). An email then invited the students to the company website which they were allowed to visit on their own time. Once they finished viewing the website they were sent to an on-line questionnaire containing an overall perceived PO fit measure, and an organizational attraction measure. The investigators then used the student's personal values measures and their ratings of organizational values to calculate objective PO fit. They found, as expected, that the overall measure of fit mediated the relationship between objective PO fit and organizational attraction. The direct measure of overall PO fit perceptions was strongly related to attraction ($r = .67$) while objective fit had a weaker, but still statistically significant relationship ($r = .21$).

Again, although this study provides important information regarding the link between two conceptualizations of PO fit and organizational attraction, the study leaves questions for future research. First, students rated a fictitious company, and thus were not in the same decision making mode as if they were evaluating an actual organization. Second, they analyzed their objective PO fit data using profile similarity. Accordingly, the researchers collapsed across multiple distinct values to generate a difference score that compares individuals' overall profile with the overall profile of the organization. This limits our understanding of which specific values were related to the fit and attraction outcomes. Third, the overall fit measures were collected at the same time as the attractiveness measures. As these two measures are both direct, it seems likely that their relationship could be inflated by common method bias. Finally, the study again focused only on the supplementary conceptualization of fit. Taken together, both the shared and unique limitations in Cable and Judge and Dineen and colleagues typify the literature's inability to answer questions regarding the relationship between the complementary and supplementary views of PO fit as well as the different approaches to measuring fit and early recruiting outcomes. As such, it is unclear how the different fit traditions and

measurement strategies relate to organizational attraction outcomes when simultaneously considered. Further, we know very little about the underlying causes of fit perceptions (e.g., more objective fit conceptualizations versus other causes) in the early recruiting context.

There is good theoretical reason to expect PO fit conceptualized using values and needs to be linked to early recruiting outcomes. Cable and Edwards (2004) provide and support theoretical explanations for both the complementary (need fulfillment) and supplementary (value congruence) traditions. Complementary fit works through what they call the employment relationship model. The basic logic stems from Simon (1951), who argued that people accept and keep jobs based primarily on the rewards—psychological or physical—provided in return for their investments of time and talent. From this perspective, individuals enter the labor market to obtain rewards that fulfill their needs and desires. Accordingly, individuals should be attracted to, and seek employment with, organizations they believe will fulfill their needs and desires. When perceived needs and desires are met by perceived organizational rewards, need fulfillment will occur. As such, the employment relationship model suggests that it is the degree to which individual's needs and desires are fulfilled by organizational rewards that produce outcomes. Thus, when individuals perceive a likelihood of need fulfillment from a potential employer they should be attracted to, and consequently apply for employment with that firm.

Alternatively, according to Cable and Edwards, supplementary fit or value congruence works through the social identity model (social identity theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). This model suggests that people classify themselves into social categories based on organizational membership in order to define or locate themselves within society (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Social classification allows individuals to understand their place in the world, thus allowing themselves to answer the fundamental existential question, "Who am I?" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Cable & Edwards, 2004).

Organizational membership serves as a concrete, public expression of a person's values (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Popovich & Wanous, 1982). Accordingly, the organization to which a person belongs sends a signal to society regarding the person's self and therefore has implications for self definition (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). When individual and organizational values are incongruent, individuals question whether they can be a part of an organization that does not share their values. When an individual is considering employment with a firm that they perceive is not congruent with their values, cognitive dissonance should occur reducing attraction to the firm and ultimately the likelihood of application. Conversely, an individual should be attracted to a firm that shares their values because they should be excited about what membership in the firm would say about them as a person.

As previously mentioned, Cable and Edwards (2004) found both complementary and supplementary fit to have unique effects on organizational attachment variables (job satisfaction, intent to stay, and organizational identification). Specifically, using path analysis, they showed that in nearly all cases, complementary and supplementary fit have an equivalent, but distinct effect on the outcomes included in their study. The need for or importance of prestige was the notable exception. Supplementary fit on prestige was a notably weaker predictor of all outcomes variables; however, the study only looked at organizational attachment in incumbent employees. Accordingly, further research is needed to expand these findings to other contexts. Based on both theory and this preliminary evidence, I believe each tradition should play an important role in predicting early recruitment outcomes.

H1: Perceptions of overall value congruence will be related to organizational attraction.

H2: Perceptions of overall need fulfillment will be related to organizational attraction.

When perceived PO fit is operationalized as an overall judgment of need fulfillment or value congruence, an individual is allowed to simultaneously consider fit on any attribute or attributes he or she chooses. Accordingly, individuals can choose to consider fit on attributes that maximize their perception of attraction to the organization. When PO fit is measured on specific work attributes of need fulfillment or specific attributes of value congruence, the fit measure should be influenced less by extraneous other causes than an overall measure of need fulfillment or value congruence not anchored to any specific attribute. For example, when job seekers are asked to consider their degree of fit with an organization on the value of prestige or their need for pay, they should be less likely to include unrelated information and perceptions in their consideration of whether they fit than would be the case when considering fit in an overall sense. When asked to respond to an overall item like “Will Organization A meet your needs at work?”, the job seeker is left to consider fit on any attribute they choose. When fit is operationalized using specific attributes, individuals are allowed less opportunity to manipulate their perceptions of fit. As such, fit on a specific value or work attribute should be less strongly related to organizational attraction than an overall perception of fit.

Meta-analyses have revealed a moderate to strong relationship between PO fit and organizational attraction. Chapman and colleagues (k=4; n=448) and Kristof-Brown and colleagues (k=11; n=9,001) each reported true-score correlations of .46 for the relationship between PO fit and organizational attraction. However, the strength of the relationship depends on the measures used. Kristof-Brown and colleagues, in their moderator analysis, further reported a true-score correlation for indirect attribute-specific measures (k=4, n=7,525) and direct overall measures (k=10, n=8,797) of .22 and .62 respectively. To my knowledge only Edwards and colleagues’ (2006) study has used direct measures of perceived fit on specific attributes. As such, we have little evidence for

the relationships between directly measured attribute-specific perceptions of fit, directly measured overall fit, and organizational attraction.

There are two ways to conceive of how impressions of fit on specific attributes add to an overall impression of fit. The rationalist approach suggests that potential job seekers simply add up specific impressions to make an overall impression. However, this assumes that job seekers will gather a complete set of impressions then calculate a sum. This seems unlikely as, especially in the early recruiting stage, individuals have limited access to information. The concepts in Gestalt psychology (Sternberg, 2006) of reification and reproductive thinking offer another potential way in which specifics are related to more general perceptions. Reification is a constructive or generative process that suggests that individuals perceive more than what is actually presented by constructing a whole picture based on parts actually present. Reproductive thinking suggests that when a person is given segments of information they will consider the relationship among its parts until an overall impression comes forth. Regardless of whether you take the rationalist view or the gestalt view it stands to reason that perceptions of fit on specific organizational attributes should be related to perceptions of overall fit for both need fulfillment and value congruence. Based on the preceding theory and evidence I posit the following hypotheses.

H3: Direct measures of perceived value congruence on specific organizational values will be related to the direct measure of overall value congruence.

H4: Direct measures of perceived need fulfillment on specific organizational work attributes will be related to the direct measure of overall need fulfillment.

The Role of Organizational Brand Image in Predicting Perceived PO Fit and Organizational Attraction

As Figure D1 suggests, I believe organizational brand image serves as an influence of organizational attraction both directly and through its relationship with perceived PO fit. The following two sections develop these linkages.

Organizational Brand Image and Organizational Attraction

Tom (1971), in his seminal work on organizational image, defined organizational image as the way people perceive an organization and in more general terms, as a loose structure of knowledge, beliefs, and feelings about an organization. More recently, organizational attraction scholars have defined organizational image in terms of brand equity (e.g. Allen et al., 2007; Cable & Turban, 2003) and values (Cable and Yu, 2006). The organizational brand image literature suggests that organizational brands influence consumers, in this case job seekers, by increasing familiarity, organizational appeal, and points of differentiation (Keller, 1993), and by signaling more specific information such as values (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001). This led Cable and Yu (2006) to define image as an audience's beliefs about the central, distinctive, and relatively enduring traits that are ascribed to an organization by job seekers. Organizational brand image is thought to be related to organizational attraction for three primary reasons (Barber, 1998).

First, dating back to Tom's (1971) initial work, self image, or what has become social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1985), has been of fundamental importance. Tom argued based on Super's (1953) theory of vocational choice that employment is a means of implementing one's self image. As such, individuals can implement or shape their self image by belonging to an organization, thus they will be attracted to organizations that they believe will reinforce or bolster their self image.

Second, organizational branding is thought to play a critical role in job seekers' decisions by (a) increasing the chances that the branded organization will be familiar to the job seeker and thus among those considered, (b) generating organizational appeal

toward the branded organization, and (c) creating points of differentiation and reasons to choose the branded organization over its competitors (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). In the marketing context, customer-based brand equity refers to beliefs held by individual consumers about a product's or a service's brand that affects their preferences and purchasing decisions relative to other unbranded products or services with similar attributes (Keller, 1993). As such, brands are used as information above and beyond the actual attributes of the product or service (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Accordingly, even after more objective information is taken into account, organizational brand image should have an incremental impact on early recruiting outcomes via increased perceptions of familiarity, organizational appeal, and perceived points of differentiation.

Finally, signaling theory suggests that in the face of incomplete information, individuals call on whatever information is available to make inferences about unknown job and organizational attributes (Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). As early stage job seekers often have little knowledge of the organization other than its image, they may use these general impressions as signals of more specific information such as organizational values or work attributes.

Substantial empirical evidence supports the link between organizational brand image and organizational attraction. At the meta-analytic level, Chapman and colleagues (2005) report a moderate true-score relationship between the two constructs ($\rho=.48$; $k=27$; $n=3,121$). The aforementioned theoretical and empirical evidence suggests the following hypothesis:

H5: Overall organizational brand image will be related to organizational attraction.

Organizational Brand Image and PO Fit

To date no research has linked organizational brand image and PO fit explicitly. This oversight is important for two reasons. First, Barber (1998) called for research into the why and how of the relationship between image and early recruiting outcomes. PO fit

could serve to partially explain this relationship as it has been shown to be a proximal predictor of early recruiting outcomes. Second, Edwards and colleagues specifically call for research on other causes of PO fit perceptions. Because of organizational brand image's role in shaping self-identity, attribute beliefs, and perceptions of appeal, it has implications for both complementary and supplementary fit perceptions at both the specific attribute and overall levels. Accordingly, I develop the link between these concepts below.

The why and how of organizational image. Although the question of whether organizational brand image and organizational attraction are related has been addressed, the questions of why and how they are related remain open for debate. Barber (1998) noted that of the prominent studies included in her review, only Tom's (1971) dealt directly with the question of why, and to date few, if any, studies have investigated the mechanisms through which image cognitively influences organizational attraction outcomes. Conceptually the notion of fit was present in Tom's (1971) initial work on image. Tom measured organizational image by asking students to rate their most and least preferred employer using a 15-item personality assessment and a six-item values instrument. Then later had the students rate themselves on these instruments and found that students tended to prefer employers with images that corresponded to their own self images. It could be argued that he investigated indirect supplementary fit on personality and values. Accordingly, his study provides initial evidence for the notion that perceived PO fit is the mechanism through which organizational image influences early recruiting outcomes.

Image as an "other cause" of PO fit perceptions. Although the theoretical link between image and supplementary fit is clear in Tom's research, more recent work suggests a link between image and PO fit operationalized as both need fulfillment (complementary fit) and value congruence (supplementary fit). Branding theory, as previously discussed, suggests that the organizational brand acts to create points of

differentiation and reasons to choose a branded organization over its competitors (Keller, 1993). The brand does this, at least in part, by signaling points of differentiation on product attributes (e.g., quality, Shapiro, 1983). Further, signaling theory suggests that in the face of incomplete information, individuals call on whatever information is available to make inferences about unknown job and organizational attributes (Rynes, 1991; Spence, 1973). Based on these theories, in a study of 368 students, Cable and Turban (2003) found that ratings of organizational reputation were related to beliefs regarding organizational attributes such as prospects for future earnings, employee morale, and opportunity for learning experiences. Organizational reputation held a statistically significant relationship ($\beta=.36$) with a combined measure of the work attributes in a path model with job pursuit intentions as the ultimate dependent variable. Accordingly, if the organizational brand acts to signal specific work attributes and specific values to job seekers, it should influence their assessment of fit on specific organizational attributes and values.

H6: The organizational brand will be related to perceived congruence on specific organizational values.

H7: The organizational brand will be related to perceived need fulfillment on specific organizational attributes.

If attribute-specific fit and overall fit are based on the same signaled information and only that information, then the measurement approaches should be strongly related. Yet, given the weak relationships in the extant literature (e.g., Dineen et al., 2002; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), overall fit perceptions must be influenced by additional variables. Social identity theory and brand equity theory suggest a potential source of this disconnect between attribute-specific fit and overall fit.

Social identity theory suggests that individuals seek out and sustain organizational membership to define or locate themselves within society (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). To

the degree that individuals seek to define themselves positively for society rather than accurately locate themselves in society, organizational brand image should differentially impact the attribute-specific and overall approaches to measuring PO fit. If individuals simply seek to find fit with an organization that is a true representation of their needs and values, then attribute-specific measures of fit should be very closely tied to overall fit as each should be a comparison of individual attributes with organizational attributes. However, if individuals seek to define for themselves and others an idealized self image, they will likely perceive fit with a highly visible organization that they believe will be viewed positively by society regardless of their perceptions of attribute-specific fit with that organization. In this case, organizational brand image should relate to overall PO fit above and beyond the influence of attribute-specific PO fit.

Brand equity theory reinforces this view. As previously discussed brand equity theory suggests that a brand will work through appeal generation to impact beliefs above and beyond actual attribute information. As such, after controlling for attribute-specific fit perceptions, organizational brand image should influence overall PO fit perceptions based on the level of general appeal generated by job seekers' perceptions of the firm's image. The more appealing the organizational brand image, the more an individual will want to be viewed by themselves and others as similar to the organization and as having attained a job with an organization seen as meeting employees' needs and desires. As such, individuals will align their perceptions of overall fit with their perception of organizational image in order to maintain cognitive consistency.

This idea seems to be supported by Edwards and colleagues' (2006) finding that it is perceptions of the organization, rather than the exact correspondence of personal needs and organizational supplies, that most strongly lead to fit assessments. Further support comes from their finding that direct measures of fit on pay, span of control, travel, vacation, autonomy, supervision, prestige, and variety were all moderately to highly correlated. The relationship between fit measures on these very different attributes should

be fairly unrelated apart from the influence of a third variable such as a brand image that generates general organizational appeal. As such, it seems that it is the general nature of individuals' perceptions of an organization, rather than exact correspondence with the organization's attributes that has a strong impact on overall fit perceptions and to a lesser degree, attribute-specific measures of PO fit.

An overall measure of fit that allows job seekers to consider all environmental cues simultaneously should allow for more influence from the appeal generation function of organizational brand image than a measure of attribute-specific of fit. While attribute-specific measures of fit are anchored to specific values or work attributes, overall measures allow the job seeker to be maximally influenced by self-image considerations and organizational appeal above and beyond specific attribute information. As such, organizational brand image should be more strongly related to overall measures of fit than attribute-specific measures of fit. This should be true for overall need fulfillment and value congruence as each is a general measure not tied to specific organizational attributes. Based on the preceding theory and evidence I posit the following hypotheses.

H8: The organizational brand will be related to overall perceptions of value congruence in addition to attribute-specific measures of value congruence.

H9: The organizational brand will be related to overall perceptions of need fulfillment in addition to attribute-specific measures of need fulfillment.

The Role of Affectivity in Predicting Overall Fit and Application Decisions

Another potential cause of PO fit perceptions is individual affectivity. The last 25 years have marked the age of the "affective revolution" in organizational psychology (e.g., Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Chermont & Warren, 2003). This "revolution" is based on research linking affect, both as stable personality disposition and transient mood state, to a variety of job-related outcomes. In particular, a

great deal of emphasis has been placed on the links between positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA; Watson & Clark, 1984; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) and attitudinal variables, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to quit, and job-related burnout (e.g., Brief & Weiss, 2002; Thoresen et al., 2003). However, to date there has been little research linking affect to pre-hire outcomes, organizational image, or PO fit.

Affect in a general sense is the phenomenological state of feeling (Watson, 2000). It can be operationalized as a state or as a trait. When operationalized as a trait it is referred to as affectivity and indicates the dispositional tendency to experience certain affective states over time. Longitudinal research has shown trait affect to be highly stable in both mean level and rank-order terms (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000) and predictively valid over long time intervals (Watson & Walker, 1996). Furthermore, dispositional affect can have a causal influence on mood states at any given point in time (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991; Watson, 2000).

The field of organizational psychology has generally accepted a model of trait affect consisting of two uni-polar dimensions, positive affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA; e.g., Thoresen et al., 2003). Individuals high in trait based PA will have a dispositional tendency toward experiencing feelings of enthusiasm, alertness, activation, and energy. While those high in NA will experience feelings of anger, guilt, fear, nervousness, and subjective stress. Individuals high in PA actively seek out the companionship of others, experience pleasurable engagement with the environment, and espouse positive views of themselves and the world in general. Those high in NA tend to have unfavorable opinions of themselves and view their environments as hostile and threatening. Researchers generally argue that PA and NA are separate orthogonal personality and affective dimensions (Bradburn, 1969; Watson & Clark, 1984) with distinctly different patterns of correlates (Watson & Clark, 1992; Watson et al., 1988). Thus, low PA does not necessarily indicate high NA, nor vice versa. It is commonly

accepted that PA and NA are operationally equivalent to extraversion and neuroticism, respectively, from the Big Five model of personality (Watson & Clark, 1992, Watson et al., 1988). Theoretically however, I believe it is more appropriate to label the dimensions PA and NA when investigating organizational attachment outcomes (e.g. organizational attraction, job satisfaction, turnover) as the affect literature developed largely as a way of explaining the psychological mechanisms underlying approach-avoidance decisions.

Thoresen and colleagues (2003) meta-analysis reports moderate correlations between affectivity and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions. As such, there is a clear link between affectivity and prominent organizational attachment outcomes. However, the literatures on PO fit and organizational attraction, both attachment concepts, have not been notably linked to affect based explanations. As such, a possible means of explanation for the occurrence of fit and organization attraction has been neglected. Accordingly, I believe there is a need for investigation into the linkages between these constructs and affectivity.

Forgas' (1995) affect infusion model (AIM) provides theoretical explanation for why affectivity would affect fit perceptions. The AIM suggests that affect has a direct impact on individuals' cognitive and behavioral processes. As such, people's attitudes toward potential jobs or employers are partially a function of the affect that "infuses" or colors the cognitive processes underlying attitude formation and decision making.

Affect infusion refers to the process whereby affectively loaded information exerts an influence on, and becomes incorporated into, a person's cognitive and behavioral processes, entering into their constructive deliberations and eventually coloring the outcome in a mood-congruent direction (Forgas, 1995). Affect infusion occurs because planning and executing complex social behaviors usually requires constructive cognitive processes, as actors search their preexisting knowledge base, memories, and associations to construct an interpretation and a response. Forgas and George (2001) argue that affect influences this process by influencing the content of

thoughts. More specifically, affect impacts the way in which individuals recall, attend to, select, interpret, and learn information.

The AIM model suggests that affect will have differential effects depending on the amount of constructive processing required. When little constructive processing is needed, affect will have little effect, however when much constructive processing is required affect will likely play an important role in the decision making process. In these high cognitive construction decisions affect may enter the process either directly (Clore, Schwarz, & Conway, 1994), or indirectly through primed associations in memory (Forgas & Bower, 1987) such as brand associations. Overall PO fit perceptions should require a great deal of constructive processing as they require individuals to compile and assess information about a variety of fit dimensions in an undefined manner. This is opposed to the attribute-specific measurement approach which only requires the individual to consider fit on one attribute at a time. Accordingly, as overall PO fit is the more cognitively complex and abstract conceptualization of fit, affectivity should most strongly impact this conceptualization of fit.

Cognitive complexity also helps to explain why I believe affectivity is likely to be more strongly related to overall PO fit perceptions than to perceptions of the organizational brand. When an individual evaluates their overall fit with an organization they must determine not only what they know, believe, and feel about a firm, they must also then compare those perceptions with their own needs and values to decide whether they believe needs will be met and values will be congruent. It seems that affectivity will more strongly influence the process of determining value congruence and need fulfillment as this is where feelings of enthusiasm, excitement, fear, or nervousness are likely to color our perceptions of the firm's ability to meet our needs or match our values.

Positive Affectivity

As previously discussed, individuals high in PA will have a dispositional tendency toward experiencing feelings of enthusiasm, excitement, activation, and energy.

Further, individuals high in PA actively seek out the companionship of others, experience pleasurable engagement with the environment, and espouse positive views of themselves and the world in general. Accordingly, PA related feelings should infuse or color the decision making process leading to overall perceived PO fit as individuals high on PA should recall, attend to, select, interpret, and learn information regarding the organization in a more positive manner than those low on the trait.

Negative Affectivity

Those high in NA will experience feelings of anger, guilt, fear, nervousness, and subjective stress. Further, those high in NA tend to have unfavorable opinions of themselves and view their environments as hostile and threatening. Accordingly, NA related feelings should infuse or color the decision making process leading to overall perceived PO fit as individuals high on NA should recall, attend to, select, interpret, and learn information regarding the organization in a more negative manner than those low on the trait.

This should be true of both need fulfillment and value congruence. Each appears to require the same level of constructive processing, and as such, should each be impacted in the same manner by affectivity. The aforementioned theoretical and empirical evidence suggests the following hypotheses:

H10: Positive affectivity will be positively related to overall value congruence.

H11: Negative affectivity will be negatively related to overall value congruence.

H12: Positive affectivity will be positively related to overall need fulfillment.

H13: Negative affectivity will be negatively related to overall need fulfillment.

The Multi-faceted Organizational Brand as an Indicator of
What Constitutes the Overall Organizational Brand

Although the overall organizational brand is an important concept for predicting and understanding organizational attraction outcomes, the concept is generally discussed only at the broadest level. This leaves unanswered the question of what specific images constitute the more general image or brand in the minds of job seekers.

To date there is little research on this topic in the organizational attraction literature. Cable and Yu (2006) broach the subject indirectly. In their study of “organizational image beliefs” they, using a modified version Schwarz’s circumplex model, identify specific image beliefs in terms of human values. They surveyed 53 MBA job seekers regarding their impressions of 18 “well known” Fortune 500 companies from a wide range of industries at two points in time. First, they interviewed students before the school’s career fair regarding their impressions of six firms using their organizational values measure. They then asked participants to engage in five minutes worth of exposure to one randomly assigned recruiting medium per organization, then were sent the values measure again along with measures of the richness and credibility of the experiences with the media in question (conversations with a recruiter, the organizational website, or a visit to the firm’s online job board). Finally, they surveyed organizational representatives as to their intended images. They found that when media were rich and credible they brought participants’ original beliefs in-line with the value images the recruiting organization intended to convey.

Although this study speaks to the value of specific recruiting tactics in communicating values based images, it does not link these values to an overall organizational image or to an organizational attractiveness outcome. Further, past research on organizational personality (Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, & Mohr, 2004) in the attractiveness literature suggests that describing an organization using a model developed to describe humans can be problematic. Accordingly, I suggest that the

literature on corporate reputation and branding offers a model of organizational images that represents multiple business practices and pertains to multiple stakeholders.

Adopting a model of specific organizational brand image based on business practices the organization values is important for at least two reasons; first, it moves the literatures away from the anthropomorphization of the firm. It allows businesses to be described in language more akin to the language of business. Second, by understanding which business practices are linked to overall brand image recruiters can stress those practices with strong links to the overall brand image and organizations can potentially shape organizational goals and strategies in-line with valued business practices.

Recent work by Walsh and Beatty (2007) in the corporate reputation/branding literature presents a model of organizational image in-line with this view. They validate a multi-faceted organization brand (customer-based reputation in their terminology) comprised of the following facets: customer service orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility. They show, using an online survey that included 698 diverse respondents, that these specific organizational images were predictive of impressions of overall image ($R^2=.63$ in their validation study).

This measure should be related to overall brand impressions in the organizational attraction context as well. This multi-faceted conceptualization of the organizational brand recognizes that not all stakeholders view or judge a firm from the same perspective. Some come to know a firm through recruiting efforts while others may come to know a firm through product focused commercials, others still may be introduced to the firm through a news story about a firm's efforts to be socially responsible. Taking only the overall view of the organizational brand does not allow for investigation of the origins of the overall brand perception. Yet, these more specific, and potentially formative, impressions should be linked to the overall impression. Again, there are two ways to conceive of how impressions of specific images add to the holistic impression.

The rationalist approach suggests that potential job seekers simply add up specific impressions to make some whole. However, this assumes that job seekers will gather a complete set of impressions then calculate a sum. This seems unlikely as job seekers are unlikely to possess complete information. The concepts in Gestalt psychology (Sternberg, 2006) of reification and reproductive thinking offer another potential way in which specifics are related to a whole. Reification is a constructive or generative process that suggests that individuals perceive more than what is actually presented by constructing a whole picture based on parts actually present. Reproductive thinking suggests that when a person is given segments of information they will consider the relationship among its parts until an overall impression comes forth. Regardless of whether you take the rationalist view or the gestalt view it stands to reason that specific firm brand images should be related to the overall organizational brand. Based on the preceding theory and evidence I posit the following hypothesis.

H14: Specific facets of organizational brand image will be related to overall organizational brand image.

The Role of Familiarity in Understanding Organizational Brand Image

One must be aware of an object before one can have an impression of that object. According to Keller's (1993) seminal work on brand equity, brand awareness (familiarity) affects decision making by influencing the formation and strength of brand associations in the brand image. A necessary condition for the creation of a brand image is that a brand has been established in memory, and the nature of that brand node should affect how easily different kinds of information can become attached to the brand in memory. Further, brand image is defined by Keller as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. As such, to have an image of the firm the job seeker must first be aware or familiar with some aspect of the firm.

To date, the brand image literature in the organizational attraction context has operationalized familiarity and image as part of the same thing, brand image, rather as familiarity being necessary for image (e.g., Allen et al., 2007; Cable & Turban, 2001). However after finding that after controlling for image and specific job information, familiarity was no longer associated with organizational attraction outcomes Allen and colleagues (2007) suggested that future research should investigate whether image is partly a function of familiarity rather than an independent predictor of attraction outcomes.

There is also evidence to suggest that familiarity with the organization is related to organizational brand image in the attraction context. Collins (2007), in a study including 456 student job seekers, showed that both awareness of a company's products ($r=.28$) and the company as an employer ($r=.47$) were significantly related to organizational employment reputation (as rated by the job seeker), the two types of awareness were significantly correlated as well ($r=.54$). Unfortunately Collins treated both employment familiarity and employment image as dependent variables in separate regression equations so one cannot estimate any sort of causal ordering even in the very weak sense suggested by a structural equation model.

Furthermore, while not explicitly tested by Allen and colleagues, one can infer that since familiarity is significantly related to image ($r=.44$) and attitude toward the organization ($r=.14$; and no other predictors in the equation), that it loses its significance in predicting attitude toward the organization in their structural model because of the shared variance with organizational image. This scenario is exactly what would be expected in a mediation scenario, where familiarity is antecedent to image in predicting attitude toward the organization.

Finally, I believe that familiarity will be related to overall image only through specific brand images because the job seeker would have become familiar with the firm after perceiving some specific message or messages about the firm, which, in turn grew

into an overall impression of the firm through further knowledge acquisition or a gestalt process. Accordingly, based on the preceding theory and evidence I propose the following hypothesis.

H15: Organizational familiarity will be related to specific organizational brand images.

The Role of Organizational Attraction in Application

Decisions

Theories of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) and planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggest that attitudes relating to a given behavior lead to behavioral intentions and subsequently to actual behavior. Chapman and colleagues (2005) provided evidence for this notion by showing that attitudes and intentions indeed do mediate the relationship between predictors of recruiting outcomes and job choice. Accordingly, I propose and test the following hypothesis:

H16: Organizational attraction will be related to the application decision.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Research Design

Participants

Primary study participants were undergraduate and MBA students from a large Midwestern university 89.7% of whom said they would search for either an internship or full-time position within the year and 61% of whom were currently searching for an internship or full-time position. Students were recruited from management classes and participated outside of class to receive course credit. 205 students completed each survey. Demographic composition of the sample was 68% male, 85% Caucasian, 89% Midwestern (63% Iowan), 70% second semester sophomores or beyond (23% were MBA students), and 79% had a current resume. The average participant was 22 (sd=3.32) had 13.62 months of internship or full-time work experience (sd=23.16) and had a GPA of 3.28 (sd=.43).

Procedure

Across three points in time student participants were asked about their perceived PO fit, organizational brand image, interest in pursuing employment, and application decisions for Principal Financial Group (PFG). PFG was selected for two primary reasons. First, by using a company that, despite its size, is not widely known, I should insure variability on measures of familiarity and organizational image. This variability differentiates this study from prior studies on organizational brand image and attraction as they have traditionally used only very well known companies. Using only well known companies reduces variability in participant familiarity with the organization thus reducing the study's power to detect a relationship between familiarity and organizational attraction (e.g., Allen et al., 2007). Further, as reputation and image studies that have used real organizations have almost universally looked at very well known firms,

focusing on PFG in this study should add to our understanding of the organizational brand concept by providing an estimate of the importance of organizational brand image for a lesser known firm. This is beneficial as it is important to understand the extent to which the concepts and relationships in the recruiting literature generalize beyond the well known firms that we tend to study.

PFG, while well known within the state of Iowa, does not frequently appear on “Most Admired” lists or as an example in text books. PFG, founded in 1879 offers businesses, individuals, and institutional clients a wide range of financial products and services, including insurance, investment, and banking products. As of Spring 2007 PFG ranked 250th in the Fortune 500 based on revenues of 2.83 billion and employed 16,400 people worldwide. While PFG’s director of college recruiting considers PFG a prominent employer in the state of Iowa, she says they struggle with applicant flow for positions of all types. Human resources leadership at PFG fears that this may be due to a lack of familiarity and organizational brand image among students and other job seekers. This concern, along with student survey data suggests good variability across participants on familiarity and organizational brand image.

A second benefit to using one company is that I can investigate how perceived fit and organizational attraction stem from differences in each individual’s perceptions of one firm’s organizational attributes. When multiple firms are used one cannot determine if differences in actual organizational attributes are responsible for changes in ratings or if it is only differences in perceptions of organizational attributes.

Pilot study. A pilot study was conducted to test potential items for inclusion in the primary study. The pilot study tested organizational familiarity, specific brand image, overall corporate brand image, location preferences, and industry attractiveness items. Familiarity and brand image were assessed for four organizations: Citigroup, PFG, Securian Financial, and a fictional firm, Schwierig Financial Services. Citigroup questions were asked first so as to prompt some comparison effect with this well known

and historically higher prestige firm. All students in introduction to management were invited to participate and participants received extra credit points for their participation. The pilot survey can be viewed at the following website (<http://survey.uiowa.edu/wsb.dll/522/orgattpilot.htm>). 130 students provided complete data for the pilot survey.

Primary study. At Time 1, students were contacted through postings to the course web site and in-class announcements. Students were invited to a computer lab to learn more about the study, view the human subjects information document, and to fill out online measures of organizational familiarity and corporate brand image for Citigroup, PFG, and Securian Financial, as well as individual affectivity (NA and PA), location preference, industry attractiveness, and traditional demographic variables. Three to five days later (Time 2), participants returned to the behavioral lab to respond to measures of need fulfillment on specific organizational attributes, congruence on specific values, overall need fulfillment, overall value congruence, and an overall measure of anticipated person-job fit. Finally, after another three to five days (Time 3), participants were sent a link with a measure of interest in pursuing employment (organizational attraction) with PFG and a question asking whether they would pursue employment with PFG if given the opportunity. After they completed this survey, participants were told to email a resume to an email account set-up for this study at PFG if they wished to pursue employment with PFG. Participants were told, with permission and confirmation from PFG, that I was helping PFG build an applicant bank that would be used to help fill future internship and full-time positions. Two students acknowledged having participated in the pilot study. These students' data were not included in the final data analyses.

Study Measures

Measures

Please see Appendix A for measure prompts and items.

Overall Corporate Brand Image (T-1). The pilot study included 5-items measuring the overall corporate brand image. Two of these items were based on Cable and Turban's (2003) measure of personal beliefs about an organization's reputation. These items are: "I have a good image of this organization.", "I think highly of this organization". Three additional items based on Fombrun and colleagues' (2000) work were also included. These items included: "I have a good feeling about this company", "I admire and respect this company", and "I have a good impression of this company." All items were initially rated "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Neutral", "Agree", "Strongly Agree", or "I Have No Impression". The "I Have No Impression" option was added in this study.

Pilot data for the 5-item overall corporate brand image scale suggested good internal consistency ($\alpha=.94$) and a single factor structure (82% of variance explained by a single factor). Accordingly, I included the 5-item scale in subsequent analyses. The scale was found to be reliable in the primary data as well, $\alpha=.96$.

Specific Corporate Brand Images (T-1). To better understand what influences perceptions of overall organizational brand image I adapted specific measures of brand image from Walsh and Beatty (2007). These factors are customer orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility. Walsh and Beatty used Likert type scales to measure customer orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility with six, seven, eight, five, and five items respectively (see Appendix B, bold italicized items were retained for use in the primary study). I asked students to rate all items from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree", or "I Have No Impression". The "I Have No Impression" option was added in this study. In order to streamline the scales I decided to shorten the measure of each facet to three items (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, and Warr, 1981 as well as Carmines and Zeller, 1979 suggest that three items is adequate for internal consistency).

Accordingly, I asked three raters, two professors and one PhD student, to “rate the items from 1, most representative of the facet of the organizational brand, to 8 (in the case of reliable and financially strong company) for the least representative.” Four items were retained at this point so that I could take advantage of the qualitative item ratings while still employing the quantitative method of exploratory factor analysis to eliminate one further item based on either a weak factor loading, strong cross loadings, or both. Because the facets were expected to be correlated I executed the factor analysis using principal axis factoring with promax rotation (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). I then confirmed the five factors using confirmatory factor analysis (LISREL 8.71, Joreskog & Sorebom, 2004). The five factor model fit the data well (see Table C1). The fit indices were as follows: non-normed fit index (NNFI) .96, comparative fit index (CFI) .97, incremental fit index (IFI) .97, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) .062, with a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) confidence interval of .08 to .12. Coefficients alpha were .94, .89, .90, .88, .83 for customer orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility respectively. Further, each facet was significantly related ($p < .01$) to both overall corporate brand image and organizational attraction.

The same five facets fit the primary data as well (see Table C1). The CFA revealed results similar to those in the pilot data, NNFI .97, CFI .97, IFI .97, SRMR .054, and RMSEA confidence interval .08 to .12. Coefficients alpha were .94, .93, .90, .89, .90 for customer orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility respectively.

Familiarity with the Organization (T-1). I included 8-items in the pilot study. Three of the items were based on a scale employed in past studies of organizational attractiveness (e.g., Lievens, Van Hove, & Schreurs, 2005; Turban, 2001). An example item is “I am familiar with this company as an employer”. Lievens and colleagues (2005) reported a satisfactory estimate of reliability ($\alpha = .81$). However, this scale is narrowly

focused on familiarity with employment versus familiarity with the overall firm. This runs contrary to both the multi-stakeholder perspective and the traditional approach of looking at the brand as an overarching concept. As such, I developed five additional items in the pilot study for evaluation. The items were “I believe I have a good understanding of this organization's business”, “I feel as though I am familiar with this organization”, “This is a company I think of when I think of financial services”, “I would be comfortable saying that I know something about this organization”, and “I am familiar with this company”. All items were rated “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, with “Neutral” being the mid-point.

Pilot study data provided support for the new, more general, 5-item measure of familiarity. Coefficient alpha was .93 and exploratory factor analysis revealed one factor explaining 78% of the variance in the items. Further, the pattern of correlations between the overall familiarity measure and the specific employment familiarity measure with overall image and organizational attraction was similar (.47 vs. .46 and .21 vs. .20). The two familiarity measures were correlated .77. Accordingly, to keep the familiarity measure at the more general level, as opposed to one focusing largely on familiarity with employment, I included the more global measure in subsequent analyses. The 5-items measure of overall familiarity was reliable in the primary study as well, $\alpha=.95$.

Positive and Negative Affectivity (T-1). To capture trait affect I employed the trait based version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson and Clark, 1992; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they generally experience each of the affects on a 5-point scale. The points of the scale were labeled "very slightly or not at all," "a little," "moderately," "quite a bit," and "very much," respectively. The PA scale consists of *active, alert, attentive, determined, enthusiastic, excited, inspired, interested, proud, and strong*. The terms comprising the Negative Affect scale are *afraid, ashamed, distressed, guilty, hostile, irritable, jittery, nervous, scared, and upset*. Across their four samples, reliabilities ranged from .81 to .89

for Positive Affect, and from .83 to .88 for Negative Affect. In my sample the coefficients alpha were .83 and .82 for PA and NA respectively.

Overall Value Congruence (T-2). To measure values-based fit I included a 3-item measure adapted from Cable and Derue (2002). These items were adapted to capture anticipated PO fit on values as, unlike in Cable and Derue's context, participants were potential applicants, not incumbents in an organization. This measure investigated job seekers' overall perception of anticipated supplementary fit on values. An example item is: "I expect this organization's values and culture to provide a good fit with the things that I value in life."; "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree", or "I Have No Impression". The "I Have No Impression" option was added in this study. Cable and Derue's (2002) measure was supported by confirmatory factor analysis and had a reliability of .92 in their study. The primary data in this study yielded an internal consistency estimate of .97.

Overall Needs-Supplies Fit (T-2). To measure needs based fit I included a 3-item measure adapted from Cable and Derue (2002). These items were also adapted to capture anticipated PO fit on needs. The measure investigated job seekers' overall perception of anticipated complementary fit on needs. An example item is: "Working at this organization will give me just about everything that I want from work"; "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree", or "I Have No Impression". The "I Have No impression" option was added in this study. Cable and Derue's (2002) measure was supported by confirmatory factor analysis and had a reliability of .93 in their study. The primary data in this study yielded an internal consistency estimate of .96.

Supplementary person-organization fit on specific values (T-2). The specific values measures were drawn from work by Cable & Yu (2006) and Parks (2007), much of which was based on work by Schwartz (1992). Eight values were measured; power ($\alpha=.93$) and benevolence ($\alpha=.97$) were measured using nine-items, achievement ($\alpha=.96$), stimulation ($\alpha=.93$), self-direction ($\alpha=.96$), universalism ($\alpha=.93$), tradition ($\alpha=.92$), and

conformity ($\alpha=.95$) were measured using six-items. Participants were told “These questions concern the cultural characteristics of Principal Financial Group. We want to know the degree to which you believe what Principal finds important fits with what you find important.” Then were asked to rate items such as “Being dominant over others”; “No Fit, Weak Fit, Neither Good or Bad Fit, Good Fit, Complete Fit” or “I Have No Impression”. The “I Have No Impression” option was added in this study.

Complementary person-organization fit on specific needs (T-2). The specific needs-supplies fit measures were based on work attributes used in work by Powell (1984) and Lievens and Highhouse (2003). Each of the attributes was measured using three items. The needs were pay ($\alpha=.95$), security ($\alpha=.99$), benefits ($\alpha=.95$), development ($\alpha=.92$), travel ($\alpha=.99$), time off ($\alpha=.97$), autonomy ($\alpha=.97$), interesting work ($\alpha=.97$), important work ($\alpha=.96$), variety ($\alpha=.95$), and quality coworkers ($\alpha=.97$). Participants were told “These questions concern the characteristics of Principal Financial Group. We want to know how well the amount of each characteristic of work at Principal fits with what you want from an employer. Then were asked to rate items such as “Salary”, “No Fit, Weak Fit, Neither Good or Bad Fit, Good Fit, Complete Fit” or “I Have No Impression”. The “I Have No Impression” option was added in this study.

Recoding No Impression Responses. In order to reduce demand effects I allowed respondents to respond “I Have No Impression” to the evaluative judgment measures industry image, specific and overall organizational brand image, as well as the specific and overall fit measures. This allowed for cases in which respondents were not familiar enough with the company to respond to an evaluative statement accurately. Even in the case of very strong image firms it is possible that a respondent has not formed an opinion about the firm. Simply the act of asking about the firm may stimulate the opinion. I sought to minimize this concern. Supporting the inclusion of the “I Have No Impression” in the evaluative scales, many students did not have evaluative judgments regarding

many attributes of the firm. The average organizational brand item and average fit item were rated “I Have No Impression” by 75 participants and 33 participants respectively.

Allowing people to use the “I Have No Impression” option was important to help reduce demand effects. However, it raises a question of what to do with those data. There is some support in the field for recoding these “I Have No Impression” responses as comparable to the “Neither good nor Bad” or “Neutral” midpoints option on the five-point scales. Keller’s (1993) original work on brand image supports this approach to recoding. Familiarity, sometimes referred to as awareness, recognition, or salience, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the existence of an image or impression. Brand image (in the context of attitudes) is evaluative and one must be aware of the thing that is to be evaluated. Accordingly, an evaluator can be aware of a brand without having an evaluative position or valence loaded impression regarding the brand. Both “Neutral” and “I Have No Impression” lack valence, thus each would serve as the middle point on an evaluative or valence loaded scale of brand image. Although, this argument stems from the branding literature, I believe the logic holds for assessments of PO fit as well. Judgments regarding ones fit with the firm or a firm attribute are also evaluative judgments based on perceptions. One cannot judge his or her fit with an organization or an attribute of an organization if he or she is unfamiliar with the organization or attribute. As such, I recoded “I Have No Impression” responses to be equal to “Neutral” or “Neither good nor Bad” responses on the scale for evaluative judgments regarding all measures of image and fit.

Organizational Attraction (T-3). In order to employ a measure of attraction that suggests interest toward application and allows both the possibility of an internship or full-time employment I developed the following 3-item for this study. The three items are: “I am interested in pursuing employment with this company.”, “I would like to apply for a position with this company if given the opportunity.”, and “I would be excited to pursue an internship or full-time employment with this company.” All items were rated

“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. The primary data suggested that the scale was reliable ($\alpha=.97$).

Application Intention (T-3). I included a 1-item measure in order to gauge application intentions. The item was “Will you apply for employment with Principal Financial Group?” The item was rated “Yes” or “No”. 34% (69 students) of respondents reported that they would apply for employment with PFG.

Application Decisions (T-3). I measured actual application decisions by asking participants to email a resume to PFG via an email address set up specifically for this study. Surprisingly, many students, despite being attracted to PFG and reporting intentions to apply, did not follow through. Only 16% (32 students) of the study participants submitted their resume to PFG, well below the 30% needed to avoid known problems caused by skew when employing a dichotomous dependent variable in a linear regression based analysis (Huselid & Day, 1991). Huselid and Day showed that when the probability for a dichotomous dependent variable was .30 to .70, (employee turnover in their case) the function was essentially linear, thus allowing the use of standard linear regression techniques. When probabilities were lower than 30%, however, the underlying assumptions for regression are not supported, and a linear regression approach is not viable. Thus, application decision could not be used as a dependent variable in the structural equation models. Accordingly, a separate logistic regression was used to investigate the influence of the primary independent variables (e.g., overall need fulfillment, overall value congruence, and brand image) on the application decision.

Anticipated Demands-Abilities Perceived Person-Job Fit (T-2). To account for the fact that some students may not have believed that PFG offered jobs that were a good match for their skill set, I measured perceived anticipated PJ fit using a modified version of Cable and Derue’s (2002) measure (items again changed to reflect the expectation rather than experience of fit). The items were: “The match is very good between the demands of the jobs Principal could offer me and my personal skills.”, “My abilities and

training are a good fit with the requirements of jobs this company could offer me.”, and “My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that Principal’s jobs would place on me.” The scale ranged from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, and “I Have No Impression”. The “I Have No Impression” option was added in this study. The primary data in this study yielded an internal consistency estimate of .96.

Financial Services Industry Image (T-1). Because participants were from multiple majors I measured respondent’s feelings regarding the financial services industry. I adapted Fombrum’s (2000) three affective organizational image items by changing the word company to industry: “I have a good feeling about this industry”, “I admire and respect this industry”, and “I have a good impression of this industry.” In addition, I altered two items of Cable and Turban’s (2003) overall brand image measure in the same manner: “I have a good image of this industry”, and “I think highly of this industry”. All items were initially rated “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”, or “I Have No Impression. It should be noted that the data collection was concluded prior to the downturn of the primary financial markets in 2008.

Pilot data for the 5-item measure of industry image suggested good internal consistency ($\alpha=.89$) and a single factor structure (70% of variance explained by a single factor). Accordingly, I included the 5-item measure in subsequent analyses. The scale was found to be reliable in the primary data as well, $\alpha=.89$.

Location (T-1). While not included in the hypothesized model, I collected three different measures for location preference in order to insure that the organizational attraction outcomes were not strongly influenced by PFG’s location, each was explored separately. First, I collected the following three-items using a scale that ranged from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. Items included: “I would move nearly anywhere to work for a great organization.”, “It is the quality of the organization and not the location that I value.”, and “Location is unimportant compared to working for an

organization that is a good fit for me.” This scale was intended to gauge the level of importance participants place on location. The primary data yielded an internal consistency estimate of .80 for the location importance scale.

Second, I collected two items intended to determine participants’ desire to stay in Iowa. I collected the following two-items using a scale that ranged from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. Items included: “I see myself staying in Iowa.” and “Getting out of Iowa is a top priority for me after graduation” (reverse coded).

Finally, I collected two items intended to measure participants’ desire to live in a large city. Items included: “I would like to live in a large cosmopolitan area.” and “Living in a small town or small city would be ideal for me” (reverse coded). Again, the scale ranged from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Primary Analyses

Descriptive Statistics

Relationships between variables of primary interest. Correlations and descriptive statistics for the study variables are provided in Table C2. The data generally supported proposed relationships in this study with the exception of positive and negative affect which were not related to the other focal variables. Overall measures of need fulfillment ($r=.21$), value congruence ($r=.18$), and the organizational brand ($r=.30$) each held a statistically significant relationship (all tests $p<.05$, one-tailed) with the application decision. The pay ($r=.15$), security ($r=.19$), interesting work ($r=.19$), important work ($r=.19$), variety of work ($r=.15$), and quality coworker ($r=.14$) measures of specific need fulfillment held statistically significant relationships with the application decision (average $r=.12$, range .01 to .19). Perceived PO congruence on the values of power ($r=.14$), achievement ($r=.15$), stimulation ($r=.16$), and self direction ($r=.16$) held statistically significant relationships with the application decision (average $r=.12$, range .04 to .16). In addition, each facet of the organizational brand held a statistically significant relationship with the application decision (average $r=.26$, range .15 to .34).

Overall measures of need fulfillment ($r=.69$), value congruence ($r=.63$), and the organizational brand ($r=.50$) each held a statistically significant relationship with organizational attraction. Specific measures of need fulfillment (average $r=.40$, range .27 to .61), value congruence (average $r=.39$, range .35 to .43), and the organizational brand (average $r=.40$, range .21 to .48) also held statistically significant relationships with organizational attraction. Overall need fulfillment and value congruence were strongly related to each other ($r=.80$). The overall organizational brand held a statistically significant relationship with both overall need fulfillment ($r=.45$) and overall value

congruence ($r=.40$). Measures of specific need fulfillment were related to overall need fulfillment (average $r=.58$, range .42 to .78), as were specific facets of the organizational brand (average $r=.41$, .27 to .48). Measures of specific value congruence were related to overall value congruence (average $r=.64$, range .59 to .70), as were specific facets of the organizational brand (average $r=.38$, range .28 to .43). Overall brand image held statistically significant relationships with specific measures of need fulfillment (average $r=.28$, range .15 to .40), value congruence (average $r=.29$, range .22 to .36), and specific facets of the organizational brand (average $r=.68$, range .41 to .81). Interestingly, environmental and social responsibility held a weaker relationship with the overall brand ($r=.41$) than did the other specific brand measures. The overall brand was also related to organizational familiarity ($r=.57$). Finally, familiarity was related to each specific measure of brand image (average $r=.49$, range .27 to .59), again environmental and social responsibility held the weakest relationship ($r=.27$).

Control variables. Anticipated person-job fit and industry image each held statistically significant relationships with study variables of primary interest. Anticipated person-job fit was related to the application decision, organizational attractiveness, overall need fulfillment, overall value congruence, and overall organizational brand image ($r=.21, .58, .75, .64, .41$). Industry image was related to the application decision, organizational attractiveness, overall need fulfillment, overall value congruence, and overall organizational brand image ($r=.18, .32, .37, .36, .47$). Location importance was related to attraction in terms of simple correlation ($r=.17$). However it was not a statistically significant predictor of organizational attraction when organizational attraction was regressed on overall need fulfillment, overall value congruence, organizational brand image, and location importance ($\beta=.079, p=.30$). Further, it did not hold a statistically significant correlation with the application decision, organizational brand image or the overall fit perceptions. Accordingly, the measure of location importance was not included in the test of the hypothesized structural model. Desire to

stay in Iowa also was not related to organizational attraction or the other focal variables included in the structural model, thus it was not included in the structural model.

However, it did hold a statistically significant correlation with the application decision ($r=.13$). Participants' desire to live in a large, cosmopolitan city was unrelated to the study variables.

Modeling Technique

In estimating the hypothesized model, I used covariance structure modeling (LISREL 8.71, Joreskog & Sorebom, 2004). Covariance structure models have several advantages relevant to this study, including the fact that they correct latent variables for measurement error and allow estimation of indirect effects. A variance-covariance matrix was entered as input into the program. In the model, I treated the variables as manifest variables estimated with measurement error. I corrected for measurement error by constraining the error term as:

$$\theta_{\epsilon} = \sigma_y^2 \times (1 - \alpha_y)$$

Where θ_{ϵ} is the error variance (theta epsilon) for endogenous variables (theta delta [θ_{δ}] is the error term for exogenous [x] variables), σ_y^2 is the variance of variable y, and α_y is the reliability of variable y.

With covariance structure models, it is essential to first examine the overall fit of the model. If the model does not fit the data acceptably, the overall hypothesis that the model is an accurate representation of the data is rejected. In such cases, the coefficients estimated in the model can be biased due to relevant omitted causes, and thus are meaningless (James, Muliak, & Brett, 1982). Several statistics provide information on the fit of the model. The most widely used measure is the chi-square (χ^2) statistic. Hu and Bentler (1999) further suggest that multiple indices be used for judging model fit, particularly a combination of Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual (SRMR) less than .08 with Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990) greater than .95. Additionally, I will report two other recommended fit statistics (Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994;

Mulaik, James, Alstine, Bennett, Lind, & Stilwell, 1989). These are Bollen's (1989) incremental fit index (IFI) and the Non-normed fit index (NNFI). Finally, I will report the Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), with its confidence intervals (90% CI; Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Alternative nested models will be compared using change in the chi-square (χ^2) and change in CFI.

Tests of Hypotheses

The overall hypothesized model (Figure D2) fit the data well. Although the chi-square statistic $\chi^2_{342} = 928.79$ ($p < .01$) was significant, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom was less than five, indicating good model fit (Hughes, Price, & Marrs, 1986). The other indicators of fit indicated moderate to good fit to the data with the exception of SRMR (CFI=.98, IFI=.98, NNFI=.96, RMSEA CI .074 - .088, SRMR .24.). SRMR punishes parsimony in the sense that when you do not allow variables that covary to do so in the structural model your SRMR will be increase such that it will signal poor model fit. In the hypothesized model I set the overall brand image as a full mediator of several variable's relationship with more proximal variables (most notably the specific facets of the brand) or simply did not allow for covariance where covariance exists (e.g., the relationship between industry image and all variables except for attraction) for the sake of parsimony. SRMR simply sees this as misspecification of the model.

The data provided support for Hypothesis 1 which stated that perceptions of overall value congruence (Time 2) would be related to subsequent measures of organizational attraction (Time 3). The path coefficient between value congruence and organizational attraction ($\beta=.12$, $p < .05$) was statistically significant.

Hypothesis 2, which stated that perceptions of overall need fulfillment (Time 2) would be related to organizational attraction (Time 3), was supported as well. The path coefficient between need fulfillment and organizational attraction ($\beta=.43$, $p < .05$) was statistically significant.

The data provided partial support for Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 stated that value congruence on specific organizational values would be related to the overall measure of perceived value congruence. Only congruence on benevolence ($\beta=.33$) and self direction ($\beta=.17$) were related to overall value congruence with the model controlling for overall brand image and the other values. This, despite the fact that fit on each value was strongly correlated with overall value congruence (average $r=.64$, all statistically significant at $p < .05$). The average path coefficient for these relationships was $\beta=.08$.

Hypothesis 4, which stated that need fulfillment on specific organizational work attributes would be related to the overall measure of perceived need fulfillment, was partially supported. Only fit on pay ($\beta=.24$), development ($\beta=.25$) and interesting work ($\beta=.41$) were related to overall need fulfillment with the model controlling for overall image and each other work attribute. This, despite the fact that fulfillment of each work attribute was strongly correlated with overall need fulfillment (average $r=.58$, all statistically significant at $p < .05$). The average path coefficient for these relationships was $\beta=.05$.

Hypothesis 5, which stated that overall organizational brand image would be related to organizational attraction (controlling for overall fit measures and industry image) was supported as image was found to be statistically significantly related to organizational attraction ($\beta=.25$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 6, which suggested that the organizational brand would be related to perceived congruence on specific organizational values was supported. Each path coefficient relating the overall brand to specific measures of value congruence was statistically significant (average $\beta=.34$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis 7, which suggested that the organizational brand would be related to perceived need fulfillment on specific organizational attributes was supported. Each path coefficient relating the overall brand to each specific measure of need fulfillment was statistically significant ($\beta=.32$, $p < .05$).

The data provided support for Hypothesis 8 which stated that the organizational brand would be related to overall perceptions of value congruence in addition to attribute specific measures of value congruence. The path coefficient relating the organizational brand to overall value congruence was statistically significant ($\beta=.27$, $p < .05$). I calculated the indirect effect of the organizational brand on organizational attraction through value congruence by multiplying the path coefficient between the organizational brand and overall value congruence with the path coefficient between overall value congruence and organizational attraction. The indirect effect was .03.

Hypothesis 9, which stated that the organizational brand would be related to overall perceptions of need fulfillment in addition to attribute specific measures of need fulfillment was supported. The path coefficient relating the brand to overall need fulfillment was statistically significant ($\beta=.36$, $p < .05$). I calculated the indirect effect of the organizational brand on organizational attraction through overall need fulfillment by multiplying the path coefficient between the organizational brand and overall need fulfillment with the path coefficient between overall need fulfillment and organizational attraction. The indirect effect was .09.

Hypotheses 10-13 were not supported. These hypotheses proposed relationships between positive and negative affectivity and the overall fit measures. These relationships were not found using correlation, regression, or structural equation data analysis techniques. Based on these findings and a desire for parsimony, I did not include PA or NA in the analyses featured in the manuscript including the test of the overall structural model.

Partial support was also found for Hypothesis 14. Hypothesis 14 suggested that the specific facets of organizational brand image would be related to overall organizational brand image. The data supported this notion for quality employer ($\beta=.49$) and product and service quality ($\beta=.29$), as each were related to the overall brand. However, despite having a statistically significant correlation with the overall brand

image, customer service orientation ($r=.65$), operational strength ($r=.81$), and social responsibility ($r=.41$) had weak or near zero relationships with overall image when all facets were included in the structural model. Given this study's design, the ultimate causal direction of this relationship cannot be determined. Given these data, I can only say that quality employer and product and service quality are related to the overall organizational brand image and that the overall organizational brand image is more proximally related to fit and attraction outcomes.

Hypothesis 15, which suggested that organizational familiarity would be related to specific organizational brand images was supported. The standardized path coefficients between familiarity and customer service orientation ($\beta=.56$), quality employer ($\beta=.67$), operational strength ($\beta=.63$), product and service quality ($\beta=.66$), and social and environmental responsibility ($\beta=.31$) were each statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Finally, Hypothesis 16 stated that organizational attraction would be related to the application decision. This hypothesis was not tested in this model given the problems with using strongly skewed dichotomous dependent variables. However, the relationship between organizational attraction and application intentions was strong ($\beta=.73$). The application decision held a statistically significant correlation with both organizational attraction ($r=.32$) and application intention ($r=.45$).

Two control variables were included in the model of organizational attraction as well. The standardized path coefficient between industry image and organizational attraction was essentially zero ($\beta=-.02$) when all other predictors were included in the model. The data also suggested a non-significant relationship with organizational attraction for anticipated person-job fit ($\beta=.05$) when all other predictors were included in the model.

Supplementary Analyses

Alternative Models

More Parsimonious Model. Alternative Model 1 (Figure D3) explores a more parsimonious nested model for comparison with the hypothesized model depicted in Figure 1. Alternative Model 1 removes the direct path between overall organizational brand image and organizational attraction in order to test for full mediation. Full mediation is rejected as the alternative model has a significantly larger chi-square value than the hypothesized model ($\Delta\chi^2_{1}=13.53$, $p<.05$), deletes a significant path, and has a worse CFI (CFI=.97 versus CFI=.98; Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; See Table C3).

Adding a link between familiarity and attribute specific fit. Figure D4 depicts a model with direct paths from organizational familiarity to PO fit on specific attributes. Although this model is not nested within the hypothesized model, I included it for general comparison as it allows for a test of whether it is the familiarity function of the brand that communicates organizational attributes or the overall organizational brand after controlling for familiarity. These data suggest that perceptions of the overall organizational brand, not mere familiarity, signal information about specific organizational attributes. This conclusion was reached by comparing standardized path coefficients. The path coefficients between the organizational brand and specific measures of value congruence were each statistically significant (average $\beta=.35$), the path coefficients between familiarity and specific measures of value congruence were not (average $\beta=.00$). The path coefficients between the organizational brand and specific measures of need fulfillment were also largely statistically significant (average $\beta=.31$; the brand's relationship with travel and vacation were not statistically significant), the path coefficients between familiarity and specific measures of need fulfillment were not (average $\beta=.03$).

In terms of overall model fit, the model with paths from familiarity to PO fit on specific attributes fit the data well. Although the chi-square statistic $\chi^2_{323} = 914.06$

($p < .01$) was significant, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom was less than five, indicating good model fit (Hughes, Price, & Marrs, 1986). The other indicators of fit indicated moderate to good fit to the data with the exception of SRMR (CFI=.97, IFI=.98, NNFI=.96, RMSEA CI .076 - .091, SRMR .28,). However, this model did not fit the data as well as the hypothesized model as CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR suggested slightly worse fit. Further, the model is much less parsimonious than the hypothesized model.

Supplemental Analysis

Estimating the influence of focal study variables on the application decision. In order to estimate the influence of the focal study variables on the application decision I employed logistic regression (Hair et al., 1998). Logistic regression is designed for the analysis of regression equations that employ a dichotomous variable as the dependent variable. Accordingly, it is uniquely suited for analyzing data where the dependent variable is the decision of whether or not to apply.

I regressed the application decision on overall need fulfillment, overall value congruence, the organizational brand, person job fit, and desire to stay in Iowa. Hair et al. recommended reporting the chi-square test of log-likelihood reduction from the null and a measure of pseudo- R^2 as tests of overall model fit. The chi-square statistic suggested that the hypothesized model was statistically significantly different from a null model ($\chi^2_5=23.51$, $p=.000$) and the pseudo- R^2 was .11 (Cox & Snell). Only the odds ratio for the overall organizational brand was statistically significant in predicting the application decision ($B=2.92$, $p=.003$). The odds ratios for measures of fit and location were 1.41 ($p=.34$), .91 ($p=.82$), 1.13 ($p=.77$), and 1.39 ($p=.14$) for PJ fit, need fulfillment, value congruence, and desire to stay in Iowa respectively. Accordingly, only the overall organizational brand predicted the application decision in these data.

Accounting for multicollinearity using block regression. When investigating the role of highly correlated variables such as need fulfillment, value congruence, and the organizational brand in predicting organizational attraction it is important to take

multicollinearity into account. As such, as a supplement to the primary structural analyses I employed regression models where need fulfillment and value congruence were treated as a block. This allowed me to investigate the degree to which these two highly intercorrelated variables influenced organizational attraction over and above the organizational brand once multicollinearity was taken into account. First, I regressed organizational attraction on the organizational brand. The organizational brand explained 25 percent of the variance in organizational attraction. Next, I regressed organizational attraction on the organizational brand, value congruence, and need fulfillment. The organizational brand and the fit block explained 54 percent of the variance in organizational attraction, a statistically significant ($p < .05$) change of 29 percent. In order to ensure that these results were not caused by the order in which I entered the independent variables, I ran a second set of analyses. First, I regressed organizational attraction on the PO fit block and then entered the organizational brand variable in a second regression equation. The regression equation including only the PO fit block explained 49 percent of the variance in organizational attraction. Adding the organizational brand increased the variance explained in organizational attraction by only four percent (statistically significant at $p < .05$). This second set of analyses confirmed the importance of the PO fit block in predicting organizational attraction. As such, both perceived PO fit and the organizational brand are important predictors of organizational attraction.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study sought to elucidate the predictors and role of job seekers' PO fit perceptions in the earliest stages of recruitment. It contributes to the PO fit and organizational attraction literatures in three primary ways. First, this study provides an initial estimate of the importance of two predictors of organizational attractiveness outcomes -- PO fit and organizational brand image -- when simultaneously considered. This study suggests that job seekers' perceptions of anticipated need fulfillment, anticipated value congruence, and the organizational brand are each important influences of organizational attraction when each is included in the same structural model. Supplemental block regression analyses suggest that when treated as a block variable perceived PO fit (value congruence and need fulfillment) is at least as important as the organizational brand in predicting organizational attraction once multicollinearity is taken into account. Results from logistic regression suggest that only organizational brand image is a significant predictor of the application decision after controlling for the influence the fit variables and desire to stay in Iowa.

Second, to better understand the influences of perceived PO fit, this study investigated three potential antecedents to perceived overall need fulfillment and value congruence. Results suggest that attribute-specific fit and the organizational brand are related to overall PO fit in the organizational attraction context, while individual affectivity is not. These data suggest that need fulfillment with regard to pay, employee development, and interesting work and congruence on the values of benevolence and self direction are particularly important predictors of the corresponding overall measures of PO fit. After controlling for these attribute-specific measures of PO fit this study reveals that the overall organizational brand serves as an important "other cause" of PO fit

perceptions in the early recruitment context. However, results do not support either positive or negative affectively as predictors of PO fit perceptions.

Finally, in order to better understand the organizational brand concept in early recruitment, this study investigated five potential facets of the organizational brand. Results support the findings of previous research in the marketing and corporate reputation literatures which demonstrate five key facets of the organizational brand: customer orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility. However, results from the current study support only good employer and product and service quality as important predictors of the overall brand, after controlling for the other facets.

Theoretical Implications

Cable and Edwards (2004) suggest that perceived need fulfillment (complementary fit) and value congruence (supplementary fit) are unique and important conceptualizations of PO fit and should thus be considered simultaneously in models of PO fit. This study extends their work by demonstrating the unique impact of both complementary and supplementary fit in the early recruitment context. Further, this study expands on their results by examining attribute-specific as well as overall measures of each type of fit. In addition to generally confirming Cable and Edward's findings, these results suggest that in the early recruitment context anticipated value congruence may have a weaker relationship with attitudinal and behavioral outcomes than does anticipated need fulfillment. This is important because value congruence is the PO fit conceptualization most frequently studied in the organizational attraction literature (e.g., Cable and Judge, 1996; 1997; Dineen and colleagues).

These results suggest that while perceived value congruence may be important, other types of fit perceptions may have a stronger influence on early recruitment outcomes. This may be due to perceived line-of-sight differences, in that job seekers may

feel more confident that they have an accurate view of organizational attributes such as pay and job attributes when compared to organizational values. Incumbent employees, like those in Cable and Edwards' study, are likely to have more confidence in their perceptions of organizational values, and their fit with those values, because they interact with those values on a daily basis at work. Early stage job seekers have little to no tangible exposure to organizational values other than those espoused on the company website. Conversely information about pay, benefits, and jobs may be more accessible as individuals likely are comfortable assuming that a large branded firm fulfills basic work needs such as competitive pay, benefits, and interesting work.

These results also extend prior research by expanding our understanding of attribute-specific and overall perceptions of both complementary and supplementary fit. This is a departure from Cable and Edwards who investigated supplementary and complementary approaches, but only on one attribute at a time. For example, they would measure prestige using the complementary approach (desired amount of prestige versus what would be provided) and the supplementary approach (the importance of prestige to the person versus the organization) and then simultaneously estimate the impact of complementary and supplementary fit on prestige on an employee attitude (job satisfaction, intent to stay, organizational identification). This approach allowed them to isolate the independent effects of complementary and supplementary fit without confounding the effects of the measurement approach with those of the value measured. This approach, while useful for addressing their research questions, does not appear to accurately represent the thought process of a job seeker. Thus, the approach taken in this study, while not as precise, allows for an understanding of the importance of fit on wide range of work attributes and organizational values. Accordingly, not only does this study confirm the merit of both the complementary and supplementary approaches in the early recruitment context, it does so while simultaneously considering multiple organizational attributes developed in the attraction context (Cable & Yu, 2006; Powell, 1984; and

Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). In terms of simple correlations, fit on each specific organizational attribute is related to organizational attraction. However, when simultaneously entered into a structural model only supplementary fit on the value of benevolence and complementary fit on need for pay, employee development, and interesting work hold statistically significant indirect relationship with organizational attraction. These results add to our understanding of the specific influences of overall fit perceptions as well as the importance of fit on specific organizational attributes for attracting job seekers.

Taken together this study builds on Cable and Edward's work by: a) clarifying the importance of fit on specific work attributes, b) showing that these specific attributes work through more proximal overall measures of complementary and supplementary PO fit, and c) showing that complementary and supplementary fit each uniquely contribute to predicting an organizational outcome when measured as overall concepts.

Chapman and colleagues (2005) report that PO fit and organizational image are two of the most important predictors of organizational attraction outcomes. Yet, until this study, these two concepts had not been simultaneously investigated. This study reveals that two conceptualizations of perceived PO fit (need fulfillment and value congruence), and the overall organizational brand image are each important predictors of organizational attraction. This is important to theory as results suggests that these are unique concepts that each hold importance in understanding why individuals become attracted to an organization and intend to apply. If each of these concepts were simply measures of the general appeal of the organization as Edwards et al. (2006) suggest, each would not have unique importance in predicting attraction in the structural model. As such, it appears that individuals can and do differentiate between these evaluative measures of the organization. However, in terms of predicting the application decision, these data suggest that it is the organizational brand, as opposed to fit perceptions, that most influences the behavior of submitting an actual application.

This study also adds to our understanding of the “other causes” of perceived PO fit. Edwards and colleagues (2006) suggested that there must be other causes of PO fit perceptions other than simply the perceived correspondence of P and O characteristics. Data from the current study show that the organizational brand influences both attribute-specific and overall measures of need fulfillment and value congruence. Further, the brand influences the overall measures of PO fit even after controlling for the influence of the specific measures and the brand’s influence on those measures. This suggests that individuals evaluate the organizational brand and use the information gathered as signals of fit with the firm on specific attributes while also allowing the brand to color their overall evaluation of the firm above and beyond perceptions of fit on specific attributes. This finding informs our understanding of the genesis of PO fit perceptions.

Finally, this study contributes to our understanding of organizational brand image in three ways. First, it responds to Barber’s (1998) call for exploration of the processes through which image works to influence recruiting outcomes. To date, little, if any, research has addressed this issue. The data presented here suggests that organizational brand image works both by influencing perceptions of PO fit, particularly need fulfillment, as well as by directly influencing attraction. The brand appears to signal information regarding fit on specific work attributes as well as to generate broad appeal through overall fit perceptions.

Second, this study tests a five-faceted model of organizational brand image in the organizational attraction context. Data suggest that perceptions of the overall brand may be comprised by one or more of the following specific facets of the brand: customer orientation, good employer, reliable and financially strong company, product and service quality, and social and environmental responsibility. Factor analysis supports the existence of this five facet model of the organizational brand. However, subsequent structural analyses suggest that it is primarily good employer and product and service quality that work to influence a separate measure of the overall organizational brand in

the organization attraction context. In the organizational attraction context the organizational brand has general been measured as a high level overarching concept and when it has been looked at the attribute specific level (Cable & Yu, 2006) it has been evaluated based on a model of human attributes. The approach taken here adds to our understanding of the concept by showing the business attributes related to evaluations of the overarching brand image.

Third, this study positions organizational familiarity as an antecedent of organization brand image. Past work has viewed familiarity as part of brand image, thus testing it in the same position as the evaluative portion of the brand in structural models (e.g., Allen et al., 2007). The data presented here suggest that familiarity may be antecedent to the evaluative portion of brand image. Branding theory supports this notion as one must be cognizant of organizational brand attributes before one can evaluate them. As such, this study suggests that organizational familiarity should be thought of as an antecedent of image perceptions as opposed to as a part of image.

Managerial Implications

This study further solidifies the finding that brand building is an important tool in attracting talent. These results demonstrate that the brand directly attracts job seekers and also works indirectly by influencing perceptions of PO fit with the firm. As such, investing in the organizational brand could be an investment in two of the best predictors of organizational attraction. Thus, investments in brand building are vital for attracting student job seekers.

This study also suggests which specific organizational attributes organizational recruiters should stress when building the brand. At the brand facet level when an organization is perceived to be a good employer and to offer quality products and services the organization is likely to be seen as having a strong overall brand image. This by itself is not surprising; however, recently both the academic and practitioner

management literatures have begun to stress the importance of being seen as socially responsible (e.g. Greening & Turban, 2000; Mattioli, 2007). This study suggests that in the minds of student job seekers perceptions of social responsibility do not drive perceptions of the overall brand or organizational attraction once the other brand attributes are considered. As such, in terms of effective and efficient recruiting, a focus on social responsibility should be secondary to a focus on being perceived as a quality employer and as offering high quality products and services.

Results of this study suggest that need fulfillment should be stressed during the early recruiting of student job seekers. Pay, development, and interesting work were related to organizational attraction through the overall perception of need fulfillment. This suggests that in terms of efficiency and effectiveness need fulfillment in terms of pay, development, and interesting work should be the focus of organizational branding communications regarding why the organization is a good employer. Edwards and colleagues (2006) show that perceived over-supply of work attributes such as pay actually increase PO fit on those attributes. Accordingly, recruiting organizations should relentlessly stress those organizational attributes found to be important here without fear of signaling over-supply through the use of brand building activities such as advertising and recruiting events.

Further, these data suggest that by building the good employer facet of the organizational brand an organization not only builds its overall brand, it also indirectly increases the likelihood that students will perceive fit on attribute specific measures of fit. In this study the only exceptions were travel and vacation. This suggests that a good way to signal organizational attributes early in the recruiting process is to invest in marketing materials or activities that build the good employer portion of the organizational brand.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any research, this study has limitations that offer opportunities for future research. First, this study investigates perceptions of only one organization. Although it was important to focus on only one organization here so that the perceptions of individuals could be isolated, this may limit the generalizability of the findings reported here. In the future, studies using more organizations and more complex analytical techniques that can investigate both within person and between organization effects simultaneously are recommended.

Second, this study focused on student job seekers. Accordingly, the results presented here may not generalize to other segments of the employment population. I expect this is especially true of the finding that need fulfillment is a stronger predictor of attraction than value congruence. Also, I suspect that more experienced job seekers may rely less on their feeling of general appeal toward the organization than do less experienced job seekers. Experienced job seekers should have a better grasp of what is really important to them in their work lives, and thus, may be less concerned with the general appeal of the organization and more focused on the degree of perceived need fulfillment and value congruence on specific work attributes. Kristof-Brown, Jansen, and Colbert (2002) provide evidence for the notion that career stage may moderate the degree to which individuals rely on different perceptions in forming evaluative judgments about organizations. They found that individuals who had worked in a greater number of companies were more influenced by PO fit than those who had worked in fewer organizations, while those who had more months of work experience were more influenced by PJ fit. They concluded that individuals will be most influenced by the attributes with which they have the most experience. Future research should investigate other segments of the employment population in order to understand key differences between various job seeker populations.

Third, the student sample was drawn from only one university. As such, results may not represent the broader student population. This may have led to idiosyncrasies in which facets of the brand or organizational attributes were found to be important. Of particular interest is the finding that social and environmental responsibility was of little predictive importance despite much discussion to the contrary in both the popular media and the academic literature. Accordingly, more diverse samples should be employed to better understand the organizational attributes and brand facets that student job seekers believe to be important.

Fourth, in order to maintain some degree of parsimony in the hypothesized model it is likely that other variables holding some meaningful relationship with organizational attraction were omitted. This may lead to an overestimate of the effect sizes between variables presented here. Future studies should seek to understand the relationship between the focal variables in this study and other important variables. Two areas that I think would be especially interesting for future research would be trust and recruiter perceptions. The concept of trust would further respond to Barber's call for investigation into the means by which image impacts recruiting outcomes. One of the beneficial outcomes of having a strong brand is that consumers are more likely to trust that a product will deliver what it promises. I believe that the brand serves a similar function in the organizational attraction context. Past research has shown that the recruiter plays an important role in attracting potential employees (Chapman et al., 2005). I suspect that one of the ways recruiters increase attraction is by serving as a tangible representation of the brand. Accordingly, the recruiter would serve as an antecedent to the organizational brand and PO fit perceptions. Further, it would be interesting to understanding the degree to which recruiter attributes signal different qualities about an organizational brand and subsequently perceptions of PO fit on specific attributes.

Finally, although theory was used to generate the hypothesized model, causality cannot be determined using this design. Accordingly, one cannot be certain of the

ordering of the variables in the model. It is possible that overall perceptions of fit form based on perceived fit with one or a few specific work attributes and then it is this overall perception of fit that leads to perceptions of fit on other specific attributes. This type of phenomena cannot be investigated using a non-experimental design. The same is true of the causal relationship between organizational attraction and PO fit. It is possible job seekers are attracted based solely on brand image and then perceive “fit” with the organization in order to avoid cognitive dissonance. Future research should employ experimental designs in order to better estimate causal linkages.

Conclusion

Despite the importance of the PO fit and organizational brand image concepts to the early stage recruiting literature empirical research has not yet determined the relationship between these concepts. In this study, I found that organizational brand image is related to PO fit conceptualized as need fulfillment and value congruence in two ways. First, image is related to overall perceptions of fit through attributes specific measures of PO fit. Second, organizational brand image is directly related to overall perceptions of PO fit. Accordingly, this study suggests that organizational brand image is related to PO fit both through its function as a signaling mechanism and through its ability to generate general organizational appeal. Further, this study showed that need fulfillment, value congruence, and organizational brand image uniquely influence organizational attraction, but only the organizational brand influences the actual application decision. Finally, this study deepens our understanding of the organizational brand image concept by showing that it is the good employer and product and service quality facets of the organizational brand that drive perceptions of the overall brand. Future research is needed to more clearly understand these relationships in different samples, to investigate other concepts that may serve as antecedents or mediating

mechanisms, and to increase our understanding of the causal mechanisms linking study variables.

APPENDIX A
STUDY MEASURES

Time 1

Positive and Negative Affectivity

Please rate the extent to which you generally experience each of the following feelings using the following scale (Very little or not at all to Very much).

PA: Active, Alert, Attentive, Determined, Enthusiastic, Excited, Inspired, Interested, Proud, Strong

NA: Afraid, Ashamed, Distressed, Guilty, Hostile, Irritable, Jittery, Nervous, Scared, Upset

Location Importance

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

I would move nearly anywhere to work for a great organization.

It is the quality of the organization and not the location that I value.

Location is unimportant compared to working for an organization that is a good fit for me.

Desire to live in Iowa

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

I see myself living in Iowa?

Getting out of Iowa is a top priority for me after graduation (Reverse Scored).

Desire to Live in a Large City

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

I would like to live in a large cosmopolitan area.

Living in a small town or small city would be ideal for me (Reverse Scored).

Organizational Familiarity

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group

(Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

I believe I have a good understanding of this organization's business.

I feel as though I am familiar with this organization.

This is a company I think of when I think of financial services.

I would be comfortable saying that I know something about this organization.

I am familiar with this company.

Industry Image

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and I Have No Impression).

I have a good feeling about this industry.

I admire and respect this industry.

I have a good impression of this industry.

I have a good image of this industry.

I think highly of this industry.

Organizational Brand Image

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and I Have No Impression).

I have a good feeling about this company.

I admire and respect this company.

I have a good impression of this company.

I have a good image of this company.

I think highly of this organization.

Specific Brand Image

Customer Orientation

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and I Have No Impression).

Has employees who are concerned about customer needs.

Has employees who treat customers courteously.

Is concerned about its customers.

Good Employer

Seems to have excellent leadership.

Has management who seems to pay attention to the needs of its employees.

Seems to maintain high standards in the way that it treats people.

Reliable & Strong Company

Appears to make financially sound decisions.

Has a strong record of profitability.

Is doing well financially.

Product & Service Quality

Offers high quality products and services.

Is a strong, reliable company.

Stands behind the products and services that it offers.

Socially and Environmentally Responsible

Would reduce its profits to ensure a clean environment.

Seems to be environmentally responsible.

Appears to support good causes.

Time 2

PO Fit

Specific Values

These questions concern the cultural characteristics of Principal Financial Group. We want to know the degree to which you believe what Principal finds important *fits* with what you find important (No Fit to Complete Fit and I

Have No Impression).

Power

Having authority over others

Being dominant over others

Having power over others

Having prestige

Obtaining status

Being seen as important

Having material possessions

Having money

Being rich

Achievement

Being successful

Being ambitious

Being competitive

Being competent

Being effective

Being efficient

Stimulation

Being challenged

Doing novel things

Changing

Being excited

Doing daring things

Having an exciting life

Self Direction

Selecting own purposes

Choosing own goals

Making own decisions

Being self-reliant

Being self-sufficient

Being independent

Universalism

Being tolerant of different ideas and beliefs

Being broadminded

Being open to new things

Equal opportunity for all

Contributing to humanity

Being socially responsible

Benevolence

Being genuine

Being sincere

Being honest

Being dependable

Being reliable

Being loyal

Being compassionate

Being forgiving

Being caring

Tradition

Submitting to circumstances

Following rules and traditions

Accepting what is given to me in life

Being modest

Putting others first

Being humble

Conformity

Showing respect for others

Being accommodating of others

Acting obediently

Being courteous

Having good manners

Being polite

Specific Work Attributes

These questions concern the characteristics of Principal Financial Group. We want to know how well the *amount* of each characteristic of work at Principal *fits* with what you want from an employer. (No Fit to Complete Fit and I Have No Impression).

Pay

Salary

Bonus

Total Compensation

Security

Security from layoffs

Security from business closure

Security from job elimination

Benefits

Insurance

Retirement Benefits

Fringe Benefits

Development

Training for my current job

Career Development

Mentoring

Travel

Work related travel

Business trips

Working out of town

Time Off

Time off from work

Vacation Time

Paid days off

Autonomy

Freedom to do work my own way

Determining the way my work is done

Ability to make my own decisions

Interesting Work

Work that is interesting

Stimulating work

Work I can be excited about

Important Work

Work that is important in the eyes of others

Important work

Work that causes me to be looked up to by others

Variety

Variety of work tasks and

The chance to do something new on a regular basis

The opportunity to do many types of work

Quality Coworkers

Coworkers I can have fun with

Supportive coworkers

Competent coworkers

Overall Value Congruence

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and I Have No Impression).

The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that I expect this organization values.

My personal values match what I expect from this organization's values and culture.

I expect this organization's values and culture to provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.

Overall Need Fulfillment

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and I Have No Impression).

There is a good fit between what work at this company will offer me and what I am looking for from my work.

The attributes that I look for in work will be fulfilled very well by this organization.

Working at this company will give me just about everything that I want from work.

Anticipated Person Job Fit

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree and I Have No Impression).

The match is very good between the demands of the jobs this company could offer me and my personal skills.

My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of jobs this company could offer me.

My personal abilities and education provide a good match with the demands that this organization's jobs would place on me.

Time 3

Organizational Attraction

Please rate the degree to which you agree with the following statements regarding Principal Financial Group (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree).

I am interested in pursuing employment with this company.

I would like to apply for a position with this company if given the opportunity.

I would be excited to pursue an internship or full-time employment with this organization.

Application Intention

Will you apply for employment with *Principal Financial Group* if given the opportunity in the next few days?

APPENDIX B
SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONAL BRAND MEASURE DEVELOPMENT

Customer Orientation

Has employees who are concerned about customer needs.

Has employees who treat customers courteously.

Is concerned about its customers.

Treats its customers fairly.

Takes customer rights seriously.

Seems to care about all of its customers regardless of how much money they spend with them.

Good Employer

Looks like a good company to work for.

Seems to treat its people well.

Seems to have excellent leadership.

Has management who seems to pay attention to the needs of its employees.

Seems to have good employees.

Seems to maintain high standards in the way that it treats people.

Seems to be well-managed.

Reliable & Financially Strong Company

Tends to outperform competitors.

Seems to recognize and take advantage of market opportunities.

Looks like it has strong prospects for future growth.

Looks like it would be a good investment.

Appears to make financially sound decisions.

Has a strong record of profitability.

Is doing well financially.

Seems to have a clear vision of its future.

Product & Service Quality

Offers high quality products and services.

Is a strong, reliable company.

Stands behind the products and services that it offers.

Develops innovative products and services.

Offers products and services that are a good value for the money.

Socially and Environmentally Responsible

Appears to be aware of its responsibility to society.

Seems to make an effort to create new jobs.

Would reduce its profits to ensure a clean environment.

Seems to be environmentally responsible.

Appears to support good causes.

APPENDIX C

TABLES

Table C1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for Specific Brand Image Measure

	Pilot Data	Primary Data
NNFI	.96	.97
CFI	.97	.97
IFI	.97	.97
RMSEA Confidence Interval	.08 - .12	.08 - .12
SRMR	.062	.054

Table C2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Application Decision	0.15	0.36	1.00										
2. Application Intention	0.33	0.47	.45	1.00									
3. Organizational Attraction	3.17	1.08	.32	.68	1.00								
4. Need Fulfillment	3.33	1.08	.21	.42	.69	1.00							
5. Value Congruence	3.53	0.92	.18	.40	.63	.80	1.00						
6. Congruence on Power	3.45	0.67	.14	.22	.35	.56	.59	1.00					
7. Congruence on Achievement	3.91	0.74	.15	.29	.40	.57	.62	.69	1.00				
8. Congruence on Stimulation	3.52	0.82	.16	.27	.43	.65	.65	.63	.73	1.00			
9. Congruence on Self Direction	3.48	0.83	.16	.24	.39	.61	.65	.67	.64	.80	1.00		
10. Congruence on Universalism	3.66	0.71	.09	.23	.35	.52	.63	.58	.65	.70	.64	1.00	
11. Congruence on Benevolence	3.83	0.75	.11	.31	.38	.56	.70	.57	.71	.68	.65	.77	1.00
12. Congruence on Tradition	3.48	0.69	.04	.19	.38	.60	.66	.61	.62	.69	.71	.70	.73
13. Congruence on Conformity	3.74	0.71	.09	.27	.40	.53	.60	.55	.66	.62	.61	.72	.77
14. Fulfillment on Pay	3.69	0.83	.15	.21	.34	.57	.58	.58	.57	.58	.52	.46	.51
15. Fulfillment on Security	3.62	0.82	.19	.21	.32	.48	.53	.59	.57	.55	.51	.47	.48
16. Fulfillment on Benefits	3.73	0.75	.11	.21	.32	.46	.54	.57	.56	.55	.51	.50	.50
17. Fulfillment on Development	3.75	0.75	.11	.28	.43	.61	.65	.55	.65	.65	.60	.57	.58
18. Fulfillment on Travel	3.47	0.78	.01	.17	.27	.42	.45	.49	.47	.54	.53	.46	.44
19. Fulfillment on Vacation	3.56	0.72	.02	.21	.29	.51	.53	.56	.56	.59	.54	.48	.52

Note. N=203. Correlations of .13 or greater are statistically significant at $p < .05$, one tailed.

Table C2 - Continued

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
20. Fulfillment on Autonomy	3.39	0.83	.08	.31	.43	.61	.65	.54	.51	.69	.76	.62	.62
21. Fulfillment on Interesting Work	3.37	1.01	.19	.33	.61	.78	.75	.50	.58	.76	.66	.59	.60
22. Fulfillment on Important Work	3.58	0.80	.19	.33	.50	.69	.73	.61	.62	.71	.71	.59	.62
23. Fulfillment on Work Variety	3.45	0.85	.15	.31	.47	.66	.66	.54	.51	.74	.73	.63	.58
24. Fulfillment on Quality Coworkers	3.58	0.69	.14	.30	.39	.60	.61	.52	.54	.63	.62	.60	.60
25. Organizational Brand Image	3.77	0.71	.30	.47	.50	.45	.40	.31	.36	.32	.24	.28	.34
26. Customer Orientation	3.50	0.65	.27	.41	.40	.42	.43	.33	.38	.37	.33	.39	.43
27. Good Employer	3.64	0.70	.28	.42	.47	.46	.41	.32	.35	.34	.28	.32	.40
28. Reliable & Strong Company	3.62	0.65	.27	.39	.44	.45	.37	.33	.32	.32	.28	.27	.33
29. Product & Service Quality	3.63	0.63	.34	.41	.48	.48	.41	.35	.39	.38	.30	.33	.37
30. Social & Environ. Responsibility	3.22	0.55	.15	.18	.21	.27	.28	.31	.22	.24	.23	.28	.25
31. Organizational Familiarity	3.23	1.00	.30	.41	.33	.21	.18	.17	.26	.21	.13	.16	.15
32. Anticipated Person-Job Fit	3.48	0.98	.21	.40	.58	.75	.64	.40	.47	.57	.47	.45	.50
33. Industry Image	3.74	0.88	.18	.38	.32	.37	.36	.20	.25	.23	.18	.23	.21
34. Positive Affectivity	4.12	0.47	.11	.15	.00	.00	-.03	.13	.13	.11	.13	.09	.06
35. Negative Affectivity	1.76	0.50	.12	.06	.07	.08	.08	.20	.11	.14	.07	.14	.13
36. Location Importance	3.36	0.92	.03	.14	.17	.10	.10	.17	.16	.23	.11	.18	.15
37. Desire to Stay in Iowa	3.29	1.02	.13	.06	.09	.17	.05	-.05	.04	.03	.06	.02	-.01
38. Desire to Live in a Large City	3.46	0.95	.08	.04	.01	.06	.07	.07	.03	.01	-.01	.00	.11

Note. N=203. Correlations of .13 or greater are statistically significant at $p < .05$, one tailed.

Table C2 – Continued

Variable	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1. Application Decision													
2. Application Intention													
3. Organizational Attraction													
4. Need Fulfillment													
5. Value Congruence													
6. Congruence on Power													
7. Congruence on Achievement													
8. Congruence on Stimulation													
9. Congruence on Self Direction													
10. Congruence on Universalism													
11. Congruence on Benevolence													
12. Congruence on Tradition	1.00												
13. Congruence on Conformity	.74	1.00											
14. Fulfillment on Pay	.54	.48	1.00										
15. Fulfillment on Security	.55	.44	.81	1.00									
16. Fulfillment on Benefits	.58	.50	.80	.81	1.00								
17. Fulfillment on Development	.61	.56	.63	.63	.62	1.00							
18. Fulfillment on Travel	.57	.49	.49	.54	.52	.62	1.00						
19. Fulfillment on Vacation	.58	.46	.65	.69	.67	.70	.70	1.00					

Note. N=203. Correlations of .13 or greater are statistically significant at $p < .05$, one tailed.

Table C2 - Continued

Variable	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
20. Fulfillment on Autonomy	.68	.60	.54	.54	.53	.57	.52	.56	1.00				
21. Fulfillment on Interesting Work	.66	.60	.57	.53	.51	.60	.50	.56	.71	1.00			
22. Fulfillment on Important Work	.68	.63	.63	.59	.62	.68	.54	.57	.73	.79	1.00		
23. Fulfillment on Work Variety	.65	.54	.56	.53	.52	.60	.52	.54	.78	.78	.77	1.00	
24. Fulfillment on Quality Coworkers	.61	.59	.59	.50	.58	.65	.55	.63	.63	.67	.71	.73	1.00
25. Organizational Brand Image	.22	.30	.29	.24	.23	.20	.15	.17	.29	.40	.37	.36	.37
26. Customer Orientation	.36	.41	.32	.28	.32	.31	.24	.23	.33	.39	.41	.37	.38
27. Good Employer	.26	.38	.34	.30	.30	.30	.18	.22	.32	.43	.41	.37	.40
28. Reliable & Strong Company	.28	.36	.33	.32	.27	.28	.23	.24	.32	.41	.38	.36	.38
29. Product & Service Quality	.33	.39	.39	.33	.30	.32	.26	.27	.34	.44	.41	.40	.42
30. Social & Environ. Responsibility	.32	.21	.19	.25	.17	.21	.23	.16	.25	.26	.25	.26	.19
31. Organizational Familiarity	.07	.17	.20	.19	.21	.16	.13	.16	.13	.21	.22	.20	.23
32. Anticipated Person-Job Fit	.53	.46	.48	.44	.44	.55	.42	.52	.53	.68	.65	.59	.59
33. Industry Image	.18	.23	.24	.19	.18	.24	.09	.14	.24	.33	.30	.31	.24
34. Positive Affectivity	.06	.12	.04	.06	.02	.02	.15	.03	.12	.05	.02	.06	.06
35. Negative Affectivity	.10	.10	.03	.06	.05	.06	.05	.06	.06	.05	.06	.08	.08
36. Location Importance	.08	.04	.22	.20	.12	.19	.19	.17	.16	.13	.11	.18	.13
37. Desire to Stay in Iowa	-.01	-.07	.10	.03	.04	.07	.01	.07	.05	.12	.09	.17	.12
38. Desire to Live in a Large City	.00	.07	.04	.07	-.01	.00	.01	.01	-.02	.04	.03	-.07	-.03

Note. N=203. Correlations of .13 or greater are statistically significant at $p < .05$, one tailed.

Table C2 - Continued

Variable	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
22. Fulfillment on Important Work														
23. Fulfillment on Work Variety														
24. Fulfillment on Quality Coworkers														
25. Organizational Brand Image	1.00													
26. Customer Orientation	.65	1.00												
27. Good Employer	.81	.73	1.00											
28. Reliable & Strong Company	.76	.57	.79	1.00										
29. Product & Service Quality	.76	.66	.78	.81	1.00									
30. Social & Environ. Responsibility	.41	.49	.40	.47	.48	1.00								
31. Organizational Familiarity	.57	.50	.59	.55	.56	.27	1.00							
32. Anticipated Person-Job Fit	.41	.40	.46	.42	.46	.15	.25	1.00						
33. Industry Image	.47	.32	.41	.41	.45	.15	.33	.32	1.00					
34. Positive Affectivity	.05	.05	.00	.08	.07	.06	.11	-.03	.14	1.00				
35. Negative Affectivity	.10	.12	.13	.08	.12	.21	.09	.04	.03	-.23	1.00			
36. Location Importance	.09	.13	.14	.10	.17	.10	.15	.07	.12	.17	-.03	1.00		
37. Desire to Stay in Iowa	.12	.09	.12	.07	.17	.05	.15	.13	.06	-.14	.08	.01	1.00	
38. Desire to Live in a Large City	.05	.04	.05	.03	-.07	.02	-.02	-.04	.04	.13	-.12	.08	-.58	1.00

Note. N=203. Correlations of .13 or greater are statistically significant at $p < .05$, one tailed.

Table C3. Comparison of Hypothesized Model with Alternative Models

	Hypothesized Model	Nested Model (Alternative 1)	Change in Model Fit	Alternative Model 2
Chi Square	928.79	942.32	13.53	914.06
Degrees of Freedom	342	343	1	323
NNFI	.96	.96	0	.96
CFI	.98	.97	1	.97
IFI	.98	.97	1	.98
RMSEA Confidence Interval	.074 - .088	.075 - .090	.001 - .002	.076 - .091
SRMR	.24	.24	0	.28

APPENDIX D

FIGURES

Figure D1. Hypothesized Model

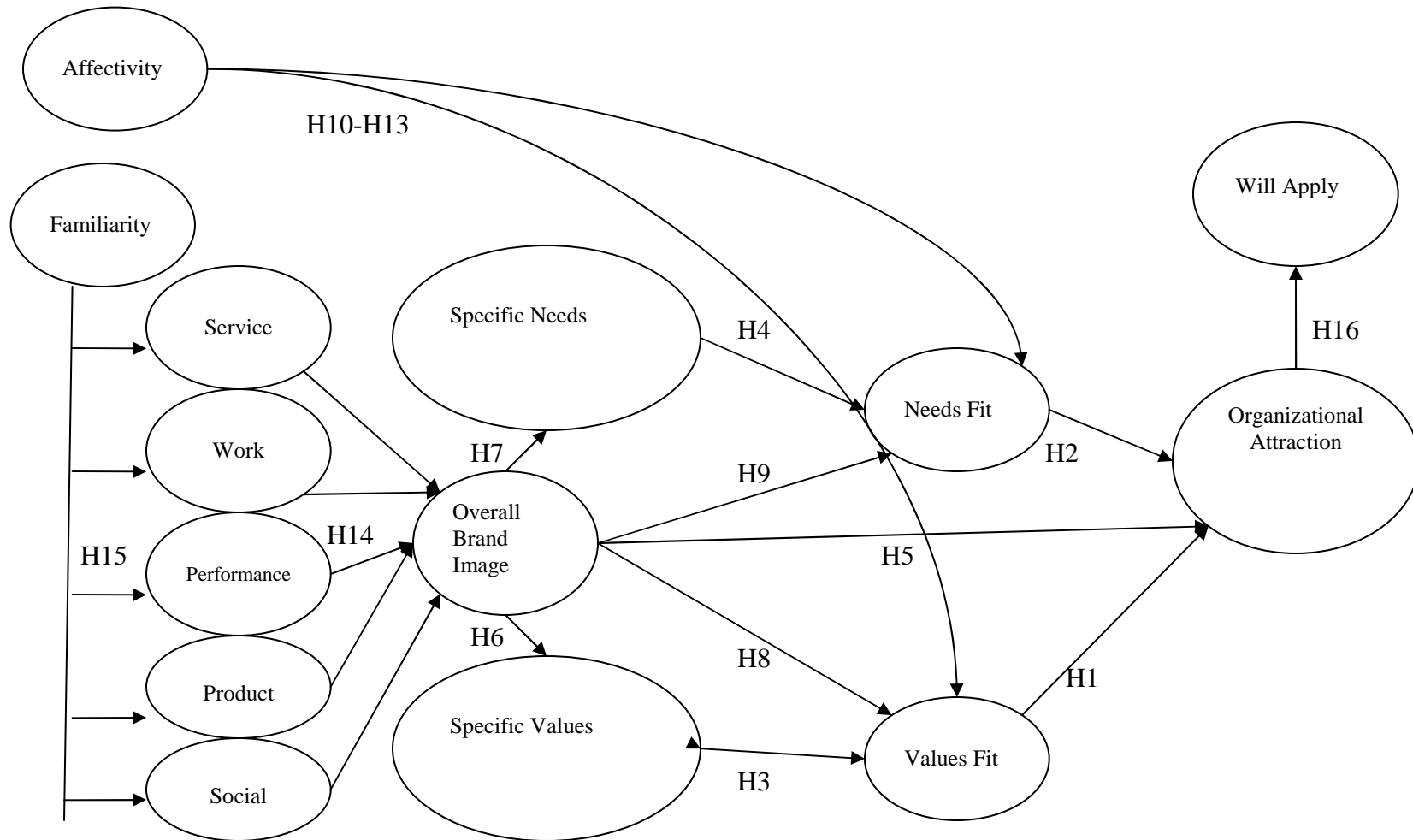


Figure D2. Results for Hypothesized Model

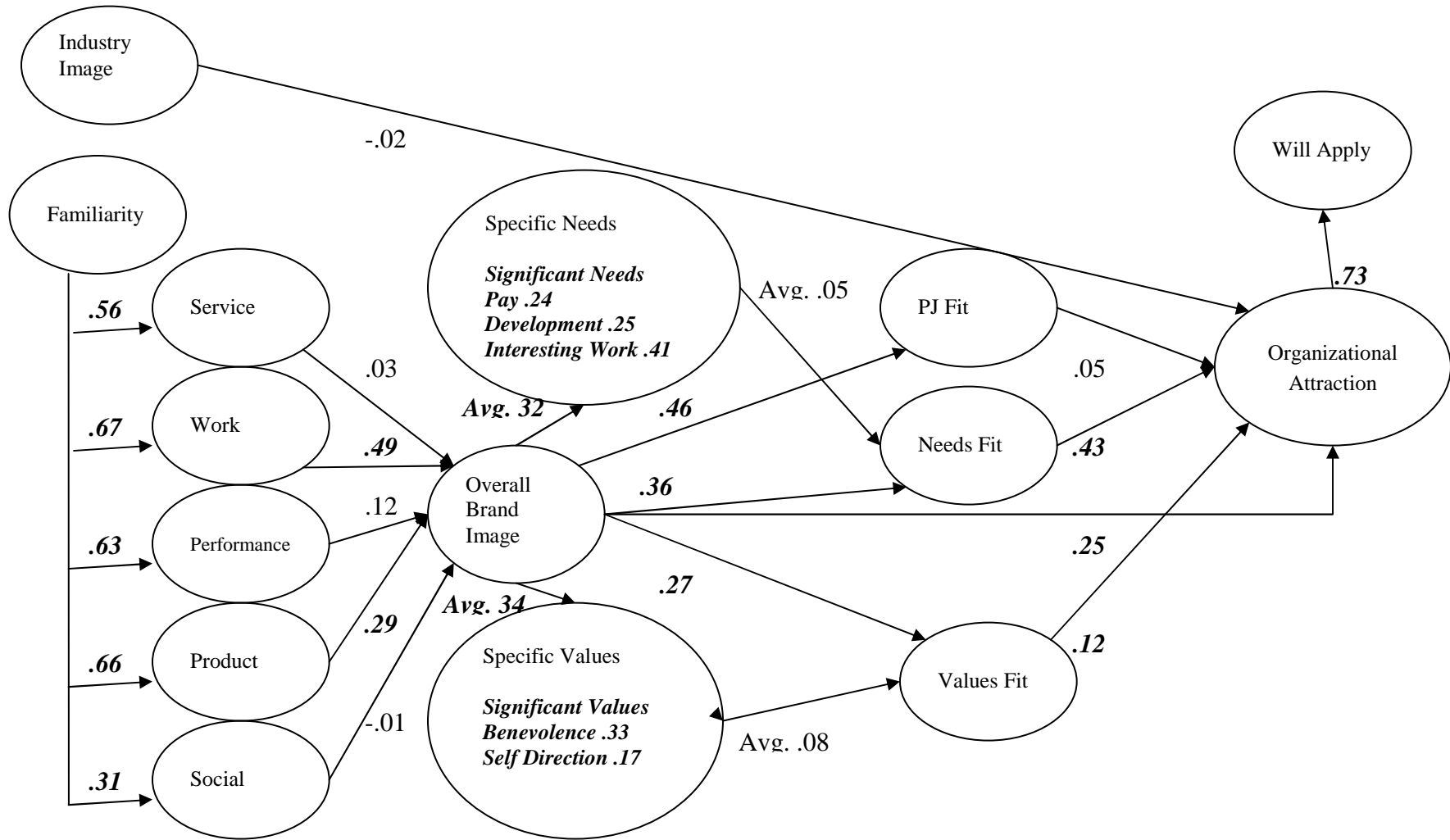


Figure D3. Results for Alternative Model 1

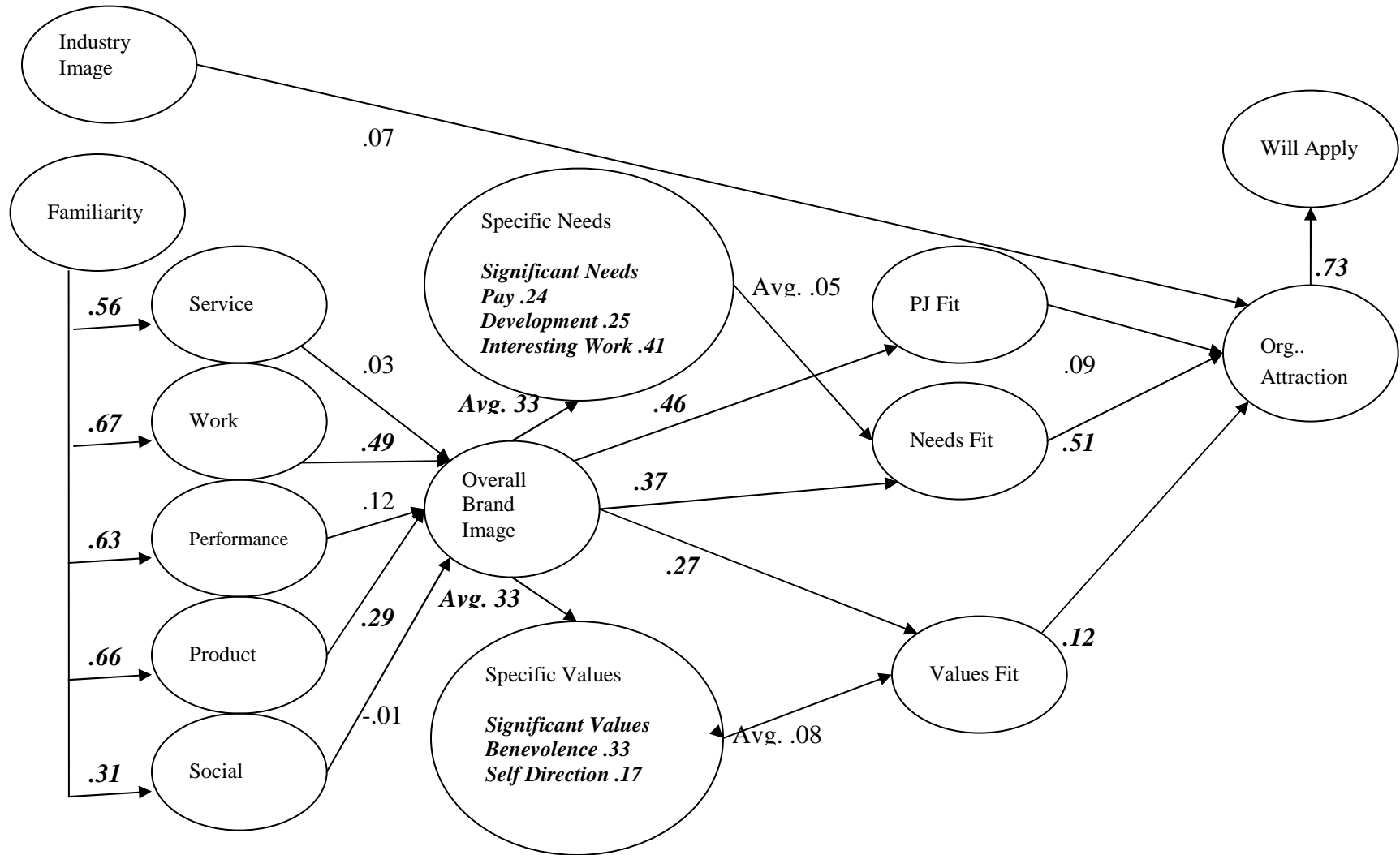
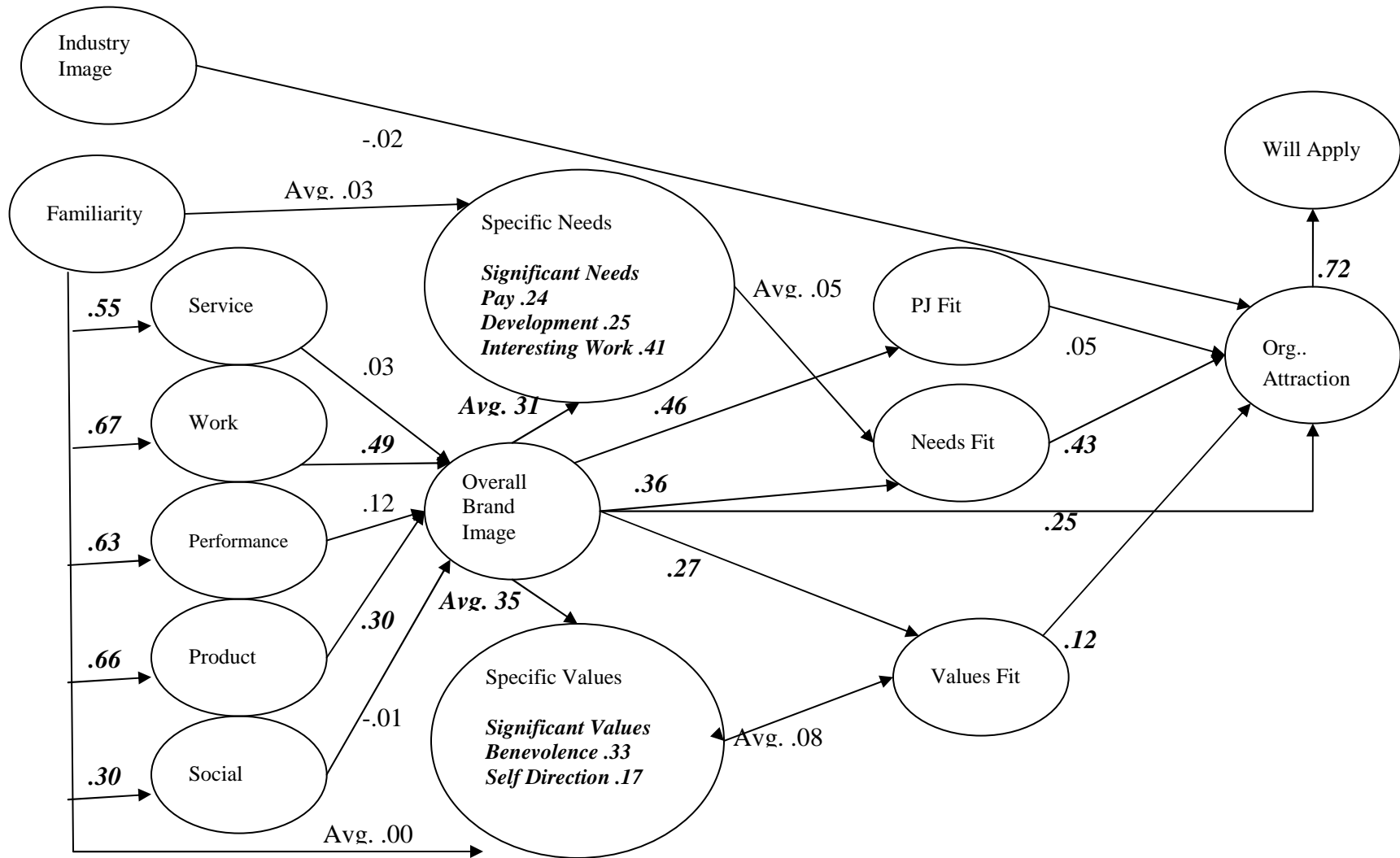


Figure D4. Results for Alternative Model 2



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