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Person-organization fit: bibliometric study and research agenda

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Person-
organization
fit

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to propose a research agenda on person-organization fit (P-O fit).

Design/methodology/approach – A systematic review of the literature from a bibliometric perspective is performed. All documents indexed in the Scopus database with the term “person-organization fit” in the title were mapped.

Findings – An increasing interest in P-O fit since the 1990s is observed. Amy L. Kristof-Brown, affiliated to the University of Iowa, is the most productive author. All empirical studies from our sample used quantitative methodology and non-probabilistic sample, and 85.9 per cent of them were cross-sectional. The similarity conceptualization of P-O fit and the perceived fit perspective have been adopted more often. Job satisfaction, intention to leave and organizational commitment are the most studied outcomes of P-O fit.

Research limitations/implications – By offering a general view of the production on P-O fit, the paper may be valuable not only for those who aim to start researching on the field, but also for practitioners who may benefit from an overview of the field to evaluate interventions to increase the fit between employees and organizations. Noticing the absence of publications from Latin America, and taking into account the positive outcomes of P-O fit to individuals and organizations, this paper aims to stimulate researchers from this region to develop research on P-O fit.

Originality/value – Original insights for future research are presented: The need for qualitative studies to understand the individual perception of fit; the study of complementary P-O fit from a needs–supplies perspective; and the need to consider the multi-dimensionality of constructs that are taken as content of fit, which may offer a possible answer to Van Vianen’s (2001) claim about the “value of fit”.

Keywords Bibliometrics, Research agenda, Person-organization fit

Paper type General review

Person-organization fit (P-O fit) can be broadly defined as the compatibility between employees and their organizations. There is an assumption that the higher the level of P-O fit, the more favorable the outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance (Edwards and Shipp, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013; Ng and Burke, 2005; Ostroff and Judge, 2012; Ostroff and Schulte, 2012).



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Although studies on P-O fit have increased since the 1990s (Edwards and Billsberry, 2010; Edwards *et al.*, 2006; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013), scholars report the presence of many points of disagreement in P-O fit literature (Harrison, 2012; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013; Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012). There are different conceptualizations (i.e. similarity or complementarity), dimensions (person-job, person-group, person-supervisor, person-organization fit), contents (i.e. values, personality, culture, etc.), ways of assessing (i.e. direct or indirect), methods of calculating it (i.e. difference scores, profile similarity or polynomial regression), etc. Some scholars defend that direct and indirect ways of assessing organizational fit would constitute different paradigms (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013).

Taking into account all those differences in the literature, Kristof-Brown and Billsberry (2013, p. 1) affirm that despite the wide use of the concept of organizational fit in industrial/organizational psychology, “it remains questionably defined and often misunderstood”.

The current study aims to contribute to the studies of P-O fit not only by offering a systematic view of its development, covering those points of disagreement, but also by offering recommendations for future studies.

P-O fit

P-O fit is grounded in interactional psychology, according to which behavior is a function of person and environment (Cable and Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989; Schneider, 1987, 2001; Verquer *et al.*, 2003), instead of a result of characteristics of the individual or organization in isolation (Pervin, 1968)[1].

Until the late 1980s, scholars focused on the compatibility between the person and his/her vocation (person-vocation fit) and the and his/her job (person-job fit) (Ostroff and Schulte, 2012; Van Vianen *et al.*, 2013).

Chatman (1989, p. 339), the first researcher to use the term P-O fit (Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012), defined it as “the congruence between the norms and values of organizations and the values of persons”, emphasizing the fit between the person and social attributes of the organization. Beyond values, research on P-O fit may focus on other contents (e.g. characteristics of personality, stages of moral development, etc.) as well.

P-O fit is conceptualized as supplementary fit and complementary fit. In supplementary fit, “a person fits into some environmental context because he or she [...] possesses characteristics which are similar to other individuals in this environment” (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987, p. 269).

In complementarity fit, “the weakness or need of the environment is offset by the strength of the individual, and vice versa” (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987, p. 271). There are two types of complementary fit, namely, demands–abilities and needs–supplies fit. Demands–abilities fit exists when the individual, with his/her knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics, as well as with his/her resources (e.g. time and energy) supplies an organization’s needs–task demands or broader social context demands (Edwards and Shipp, 2012). In needs–supplies fit, the organization supplies employee’s needs – biological needs, psychological desires, motives and goals (Edwards and Shipp, 2012; Kristof, 1996).

Kristof (1996, pp. 4-5) integrates both conceptualizations into a comprehensive definition. According to her definition, P-O fit is “the compatibility between people and

organizations that occurs when: a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or c) both”.

To reduce the confusion between supplementary and complementarity fit, this paper recommends the use of the term *'similarity fit'* rather than *supplementary fit* because, when studying supplementary fit, researchers look at the similarity between person and organization. However, the word “supplement” refers to add something to complement something else (e.g. we say that someone who goes to the gym may take a supplement to complement his/her diet).

There are direct and indirect ways of assessing P-O fit when surveys are applied. Perceived fit is a direct way, because participants directly report their perception about their fit with the organization (Edwards *et al.*, 2006; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012).

Conversely, indirect ways of assessing P-O fit “involve an explicit comparison between separately related individual and organizational characteristics” (Kristof, 1996, p. 11), and the researcher calculates the fit. The main methods used in calculating P-O fit are difference scores, profile comparisons based on correlations (Q-methodology) and polynomial regression. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explain the methods, but those interested may read the papers of Edwards and Parry (1993), Edwards (1994), Kristof (1996), Ximénez and San Martín (2000) and Caldwell *et al.* (2012).

The indirect ways are divided in subjective and objective. Subjective measures ask participants to separately report on him/herself and about the characteristics of the organization (e.g. the participant answers two questionnaires, one about personal values and the other about organizational values) (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013; Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012).

In objective measures, the individual answers about his/her characteristics (P-component) and data on the organizational characteristics (O-component) comes from other sources (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013). For instance, the O-component can be assessed by objective characteristics of the organization (e.g., its pay system), by aggregating the answers of organizational members or even from the perspective of a single other (e.g. the interviewer or the leader) (Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012).

Bibliometric approach

Bibliometric research represents a way of evidencing how knowledge has been developed in a particular field (Araújo, 2006; Vanti, 2002) by quantifying scientific production, such as articles and citations (Braga, 1973; Santos and Kobashi, 2009; Vanti, 2002).

The relevance of this type of research may be understood when Santos and Kobashi (2009, p. 156) state, “those who need to gather information on the development of science face sometimes enormous challenges to find the most relevant items to subsidize certain task”.

Vanti (2002) observes that ranking and frequency are the two main methods used in bibliometric studies. Chen and Leimkuhler (1986) note that bibliometric studies show the number of articles per journal, the number of papers per author and the number of citations per person. Further exploration of the historical development of the bibliometric studies is beyond the scope of this paper and has already been performed by Araújo (2006), Chen and Leimkuhler (1986), Fonseca (1973) and Santos and Kobashi (2009).

Methods

We searched the Scopus[2] database on February 17, 2015 for documents with *person-organization fit* in the title, limiting the results to the field of Social Sciences and Humanities[3].

The search provided 128 documents. Eight were excluded either because they were not about P-O fit ($n = 3$) or because they were not written in English[4] ($n = 5$). Our final sample consisted of 120 documents: 17 theoretical papers, 4 meta-analyses and 99 empirical studies.

The following information were identified in the documents: year of publication, affiliation of the authors, country of institution, publication name, research methodology (quantitative or qualitative), sample, conceptualization of P-O fit (similarity or complementarity), ways of assessment (subjective, objective or perceived), questionnaires, calculation and outcomes. Finally, we analyzed information about citations.

These data were organized using MS-Excel 2013. As suggested by Vanti (2002), data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, such as ranking, relative frequency, cumulative relative frequency and percentage.

Results

Articles per year

The oldest retrieved document was from 1994. Analyzing the production by decades, we observe an increasing interest in P-O fit (Figure 1). From 1994 to 1999, the average publications per year was by 1.3, increased to 5.4 from 2000 to 2009 and to 11.6 from 2010 until the present.

Production by author

The 120 documents were written by 249 authors. Because 108 articles were written by more than 1 author, we compared the production of each researcher with the production

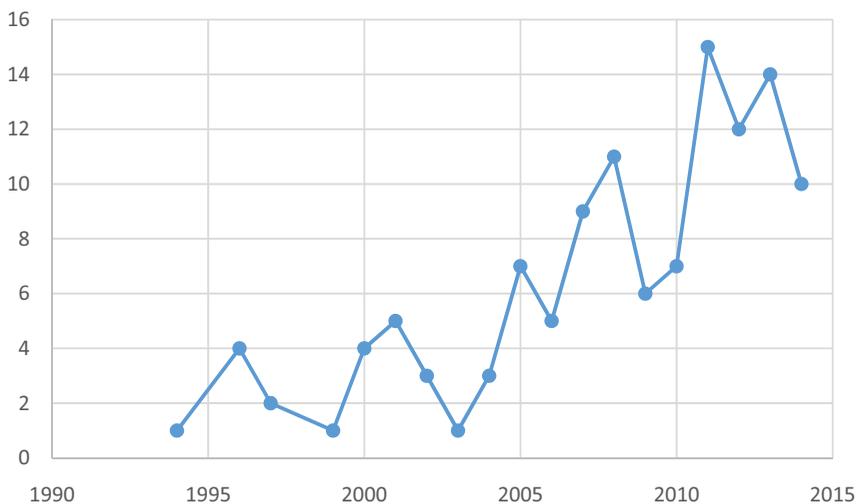


Figure 1.
Quantity of
documents published
per year

of others[5][6]. Consequently, the total ($n = 292$) exceeds the number of articles in our sample (Table I).

From Table I, we can see that 6 authors represent 8.2 per cent of the production and 31 authors, 25.3 per cent of it (Table I). The most productive author is Amy L. Kristof-Brown, followed by Timothy A. Judge, Daniel M. Cable, Aichia Chuang, Tae-Yeol Kim and Annelies E. M. Van Vianen. The names of all authors who published two articles are presented in Table I and those who published one ($n = 222$) were omitted.

Affiliation of the authors

Authors affiliated to 140 universities/institutions wrote the 120 articles. When authors affiliated to the same institution wrote one paper, the institution was counted once. For instance, the Ohio State University was counted once in Dineen *et al.* (2002), because Dineen and Noe were both affiliated to it. Table II shows the most productive institutions.

As 52.5 per cent of the documents ($n = 63$) were written by authors affiliated to two or more institutions, we calculated the number of articles produced in each institution in comparison to those produced in all the institutions. Because of that the total ($n = 198$) exceeds the number of articles in our sample. As we can see in Table II, 11 institutions are responsible for 22.7 per cent of the production and 30 institutions for 47.0 per cent. The University of Iowa is connected to 4.0 per cent of the total.

Looking at Table III, we see that the partnership between researchers from different institutions is common practice in the field of P-O fit. 52.5 per cent of the documents ($n = 63$) were written by authors affiliated to two or more universities.

Production by country

The same level of association is not observed among authors from different countries. Authors in 24 countries wrote the 120 documents, but 83.3 per cent of the papers were from the same country (Table IV).

When more than one author from the same country contributed to a paper, it was counted once. For instance, Spain was counted once in Vilela *et al.*'s (2008) article, as all authors were located in Spanish universities.

No. of papers	No. of authors	Total (papers × authors)	(%)	Cumulative %	Authors
6	1	6	2.1	2.1	Kristof-Brown
5	1	5	1.7	3.8	Judge
4	1	4	1.4	5.1	Cable
3	3	9	3.1	8.2	Chuang, Kim, Van Vianen
2	25	50	17.1	25.3	Andysz, Cennamo, Chapman, Chi, Cyr, Gardner, Hu, Jung, Liu, Martínez-Cañas, Merez, Pandey, Piasentin, Resick, Ruiz-Palomino, Singhal, Westerman, Wheeler, Wright, Wu, Ximénez, Yoon, Zimmerman
1	218	218	74.7	100.0	Others
Total	249	292	100.0	100.0	

Table I.
Most productive authors

Table II.
Most productive
institutions

Institutions	No. of institutions	No. of articles/ institution	Total (institutions × no. of articles)	% of the total documents	Cumulative %
University of Iowa	1	8	8	4.0	4.0
University of North Carolina	1	6	6	3.0	7.1
National Taiwan University	1	5	5	2.5	9.6
Georgia Institute of Technology, University of Amsterdam	2	4	8	4.0	13.6
Ghent University, National Chengchi University, University of Akron, University of Calgary, University of Florida, University of Nevada	6	3	18	9.1	22.7
Bradley University, California State University, China Europe International Business School, Concordia University Montreal, Drexel University, Florida State University, Harvard University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Jijun National University, Kyung Hee University, Massey University, Monash University, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, University of Kansas, University of Limerick, University of Missouri, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Wayne State University	24	2	48	24.2	47.0
Others	105	1	105	53.0	100.0
Total	140		198		

Furthermore, as in some cases, authors from more than one country gathered for doing the research; the total number ($n = 143$) exceeds the number of articles in our sample. As it is evident in Table V, the USA is the most productive country, with participation in 37.1 per cent of the documents, followed by China (9.1 per cent), Canada, Korea and Taiwan (5.6 per cent each). The production of other countries (representing less than five per cent of the total) is presented in Table V.

Publications with more articles

In all, 107 documents were published in 62 peer-reviewed journals, 8 in conference proceedings and 5 in book chapters. Table VI demonstrates that the *Journal of Business Ethics* and the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* are the most productive publications, with eight documents each (15.0 per cent of the total), followed by the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (6.5 per cent of total published papers). Other journals with less than 5 per cent of publications are presented in Table VI, but journals with only one paper were omitted.

No. of universities per document	No. of documents	% of the total documents	Cumulative %
1 University/institution	57	47.5	47.5
2 Universities/institutions	46	38.3	85.8
3 Universities/institutions	14	11.7	97.5
4 Universities/institutions	3	2.5	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

Table III.
Association among
universities

No. of countries in the same document	No. of documents	% of the total documents	Cumulative %
Authors from one country	100	83.3	83.3
Authors from two countries	17	14.2	97.5
Authors from three countries	3	2.5	100.0

Table IV.
Association among
authors from
different countries

Countries	No. of countries	No. of articles/ country	Total (countries \times no. of articles)	% of the total documents	Cumulative %
USA	1	53	53	37.1	37.1
China	1	13	13	9.1	46.2
Canada, Korea, Taiwan	3	8	24	16.8	62.9
The Netherlands, Spain, Turkey	3	6	18	12.6	75.5
UK	1	5	5	3.5	79.0
Australia, Belgium, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand	5	3	15	10.5	89.5
Ireland, Israel, Japan, Poland, Singapore	5	2	10	7	96.5
Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Norway, South Africa	5	1	5	3.5	100.0
Total	24		143	100.0	

Table V.
Most productive
countries

Table VI.
Most productive
publications

Name of publication	No. of publications	No. of documents per publication	Total (publications × documents)	% of total publications	Cumulative %
Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Vocational Behavior	2	8	16	15.0	15.0
Journal of Applied Psychology	1	7	7	6.5	21.5
International Journal of Selection & Assessment, Personnel Psychology	2	5	10	9.3	30.8
Journal of Managerial Psychology	1	4	4	3.7	34.6
Applied Psychology: An International Review, International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes	3	3	9	8.4	43.0
International Journal of Hospitality Management, International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health, Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of Human Values, Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology, Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary & Applied, Social Behavior & Personality, The International Journal of Human Resource Management	8	2	16	15.0	57.9
Management	45	1	45	42.1	100.0
Other publications	62		107	100.0	
T total					

Research methodology and design

All empirical studies from our sample used quantitative methodology, indicating that this is the dominant approach to P-O fit research.

In total, 85.9 per cent ($n = 85$) of the empirical studies were cross-sectional and 14.1 per cent ($n = 14$) of them were longitudinal. From those 14 documents, 7 assessed P-O fit during the stages of the selection process and 2 collected data of turnover in different points of time, but the participants answered the questionnaires only once. Brigham *et al.* (2007) evaluated P-O fit during the first two years of new employees in a company, and Meyer *et al.* (2012) assessed P-O fit before and after an organizational change.

Sample

All empirical studies used non-probabilistic samples. Attempting to minimize this problem, some researchers randomly selected participants within the organizations (Autry and Wheeler, 2005; Merez and Andysz, 2012, 2014) or applied cluster sampling (Seong *et al.*, 2012).

While 22.2 per cent ($n = 22$) of the studies were conducted in one or two organizations (Table VII), 61.6 per cent ($n = 61$) involved employees from various organizations, as the participants were recruited in other environments (such as universities). Other researchers presented characteristics of fictional organizations to the participants (13.1 per cent of the total).

Conceptualization of P-O fit

As mentioned earlier, there are two traditional conceptualizations of P-O fit: similarity and complementarity. Out of all, 65.7 per cent ($n = 65$) of the empirical studies adopted exclusively the similarity conceptualization, 4.0 per cent ($n = 4$) the complementarity and 29.3 per cent ($n = 29$) both (Figure 2).

Ways of assessing P-O fit

As mentioned earlier, there are direct (i.e. perceived) and indirect (i.e. subjective and objective) ways of assessing fit. In all, 67.7 per cent ($n = 67$) of the papers assessed it exclusively by using perceived fit questionnaires (Table VIII), followed by subjective measures (16.2 per cent) and objective ones (12.1 per cent).

Other studies use more than one type of measurement. Dineen *et al.* (2002) found the interaction effect (i.e. mediation) of subjective fit in the relationship between objective fit and organizational attraction. Tepeci and Bartlett (2002) found both, perceived and subjective fit, contributing significantly to the explained variance of job satisfaction, intention to leave and willingness to recommend the organization as a good place to work. In their words, "consistent with previous findings, perceived fit explained much

No. of organizations	No. of documents	% of the total documents
Employees from various organizations	61	61.6
One organization	18	18.2
Two organizations	4	4.0
Any real organization (laboratory study)	13	13.1
Not mentioned	3	3.0
Total	99	100.0

Table VII.
Number of
organizations studied

Figure 2.
Conceptualization of fit

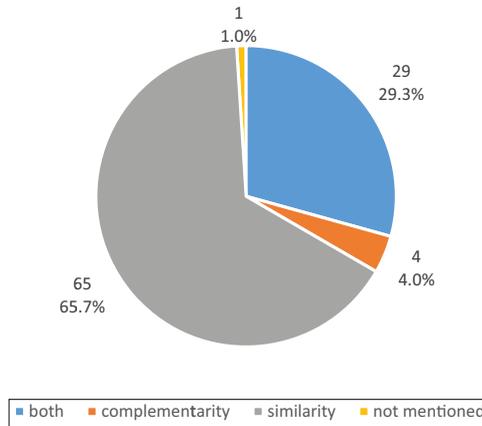


Table VIII.
Ways of assessing P-O fit

Type of measure	No. of documents	(%)	Cumulative %
Perceived	67	67.7	67.7
Subjective	16	16.2	83.8
Objective	12	12.1	96.0
Perceived and subjective	2	2.0	98.0
Perceived and objective	1	1.0	99.0
Not mentioned	1	1.0	100.0
Total	99	100.0	

more variance than did calculated fit for all the outcomes” (Tepeci and Bartlett, 2002, p. 165). Yet, Van Vuuren *et al.* (2007) regressed perceived fit on subjective fit and found that the subjective explains only a small part of the perceived.

Questionnaires

Out of the total, 86.6 per cent ($n = 84$) of the empirical studies used one questionnaire to measure P-O fit, 10.3 per cent ($n = 10$) used two different questionnaires and other 3.1 per cent ($n = 3$) used three. As a result, the total number of occurrences analyzed ($n = 110$) was higher than the number of studies.

In Table IX, we can see that Cable and Judge’s (1996) questionnaire is the most commonly used, followed by Cable and DeRue’s (2002), the Organizational Culture Profile (O’Reilly *et al.*, 1991) and Saks and Ashforth’s (1997). All of those questionnaires, except the OCP, assess perceived organizational fit.

Some studies applied questionnaires that had been developed outside the field of P-O fit to measure specific characteristics of the individual and the organization. For instance, Ambrose *et al.* (2008) applied questionnaires to assess the individual’s level of moral development and the organization’s ethical climate.

Calculating P-O fit

As 66.7 per cent ($n = 66$) of the empirical papers used only direct measures of fit, they do not require its calculation. Regarding the other 33 studies, Table X demonstrates that

Questionnaires	No. of documents	% of total
Cable and Judge (1996) – original and adapted versions	19	17.3
Cable and DeRue (2002)	15	13.6
OCP – original and adapted versions	12	10.9
Saks and Ashforth (1997) – original and adapted versions	6	5.5
Netemeyer <i>et al.</i> (1997)	4	3.6
Edwards (1991)	2	1.8
Minnesota importance and Minnesota job description questionnaires	2	1.8
Piasentin and Chapman (2006)	2	1.8
Work values questionnaire	2	1.8
Questionnaires to measure specific contents of P-O fit	7	6.4
Others developed for the study	17	15.5
Others used in only one document	22	20.0
Total	110	100.0

Table IX.
Most used
questionnaires

Type of measure	No. of documents	(%)
Profile comparison	12	36.4
Polynomial regression	10	30.3
Difference scores	5	15.2
Not mentioned	6	18.2
Total	33	100.0

Table X.
Ways of assessing
P-O fit

profile comparison was used in 36.4 per cent of studies ($n = 12$), polynomial regressions by 30.3 per cent ($n = 10$) and difference scores by 15.2 per cent ($n = 5$).

Outcomes

As many of the empirical studies were concerned with more than one dependent variable, the total number of occurrences was 140. In [Table XI](#), we see that job satisfaction, intention to leave and organizational commitment are the most studied outcomes of P-O fit, representing 64.3 per cent of occurrences. These are followed by variables related to performance, organizational attraction and tenure, among others.

When considering the 99 documents, job satisfaction was investigated in 34.3 per cent of them ($n = 34$), intention to leave in 29.3 per cent ($n = 29$) and organizational commitment in 27.3 per cent ($n = 27$) ([Table XI](#)).

Citation analyses

The total numbers of citations are 4,952 and 80 of the 120 documents were cited at least once. [Table XII](#) shows the 12 documents that were cited more than 100 times, representing 67.7 per cent of all citations.

In [Table XII](#), we can see that Kristof-Brown is the most cited author in the field of P-O fit. Four articles that she authored represent 37.9 per cent of all citations.

[Table XIII](#) presents the journals in which the most-cited articles were published. By comparing [Tables VI](#) and [XIII](#), we see that the journals with more published papers are also the ones whose papers are cited more often but not necessarily in the same order.

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Outcomes	No. of documents	% per outcome, considering the 140 occurrences	% per outcome, considering the 99 documents
<i>Most studied dependent variables</i>			
Job satisfaction	34	24.3	34.3
Intention to quit	29	20.7	29.3
Organizational commitment	27	19.3	27.3
<i>Variables related to performance</i>			
Task performance	9	6.4	9.1
Organizational citizenship behavior	10	7.1	10.1
Contextual performance	1	0.7	1.0
<i>Variables related to organizational attraction</i>			
Organization's attraction	7	5.0	7.1
Intent to accept a job offer	4	2.9	4.0
Job offer acceptance	3	2.1	3.0
<i>Variables related to tenure</i>			
Tenure	2	1.4	2.0
Actual turnover	3	2.1	3.0
Willingness to recommend the organization as a good place to work	4	2.9	4.0
<i>Variables related to hiring recommendations</i>			
Hiring recommendations	3	2.1	3.0
Job offer	1	0.7	1.0
<i>Other variables</i>			
Motivation, stress, work values	2	1.4	2.0
Changes in values, creativity, ethical intent, innovative and entrepreneurial behaviors, pride, satisfaction with CEO, service climate, career success, trust	1	0.7	1.0

Table XI.
P-O fit outcomes

Articles (authors and year of publication)	No. of citations	% of total ($n = 4,952$)	Cumulative %
Kristof, 1996	945	19.1	19.1
Kristof-Brown <i>et al.</i> , 2005	686	13.9	32.9
Cable and Judge, 1996	401	8.1	41.0
Cable and Judge, 1997	196	4.0	45.0
Verquer <i>et al.</i> , 2003	194	3.9	48.9
Bretz and Judge, 1994	194	3.9	52.8
Cable and Parsons, 2001	171	3.5	56.3
Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001	127	2.6	58.8
Kristof-Brown, 2000	117	2.4	61.2
Hoffman and Woehr, 2006	110	2.2	63.4
Goodman and Svyantek, 1999	110	2.2	65.7
Van Vianen, 2000	101	2.0	67.7

Table XII.
Most cited articles

Journals	No. of citations	% of total (<i>n</i> = 4,952)	Cumulative %
Personnel Psychology	2,020	40.8	40.8
Journal of Vocational Behavior	811	16.4	57.2
Journal of Applied Psychology	535	10.8	68.0
Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes	401	8.1	76.1
Journal of Business Ethics	184	3.7	79.8
Journal of Managerial Psychology	148	3.0	82.8
Applied Psychology: An International Review	110	2.2	85.0
Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology	75	1.5	86.5
International Journal of Selection & Assessment	66	1.3	87.8
International Journal of Hospitality Management	63	1.3	89.1
Administration & Society	60	1.2	90.3
Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory	58	1.2	91.5
Journal of Management	48	1.0	92.5
Organization Behavior & Human Decision Processes	48	1.0	93.4

Table XIII.
Most cited journals

For instance, papers published in the *Personnel Psychology* are the ones more frequently cited, but the journal ranked fourth in terms of number of papers published.

Discussion

The results of our study show an increasing interest in P-O fit in the past decades, demonstrated by the increasing number of papers published between the 1990s and now. Scholars had already observed this interest (Autry and Wheeler, 2005; Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; Li, 2006; Ostroff and Judge, 2012; Ostroff and Schulte, 2012; Van Vianen *et al.*, 2007), which is due to the relevance of P-O fit outcomes.

The number of researchers who have consistently published in the field is small (six authors are responsible for 8.2 per cent of the production) considering the prominence of P-O fit in industrial/organizational psychology (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013) and business (Edwards *et al.*, 2006; Edwards and Billsberry, 2010; Li, 2006). Consequently, the production is concentrated in a small number of universities as well. The theoretical and empirical development, with its consequences to organizations and employees, would benefit a wider community of researchers.

Researchers located in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America and Oceania have published on P-O fit. We highlight the absence of researchers from Latin America. Indeed, as we started reviewing the literature, we have found one unpublished Master's thesis (Sousa, 2013) and two book chapters (Porto *et al.*, 2012; Teixeira and Pereira, 2008)[7] about P-O fit written by Brazilian researchers. Of course, it is not to say that scholars in Latin America are not concerned with the relationship between individual and organizational characteristics, but they may be not supporting their studies on person-organization fit theories.

It is unsurprising that the similarity conceptualization was adopted in the majority of documents. Chatman's (1989) definition states that P-O fit is congruence between the individual and organization, and the term *congruence* has often been understood, in the field of P-O fit, as similarity (Billsberry, 2003). However, more research about complementarity is needed, particularly considering the complementarity between

individual needs and organization supplies, because some studies look at the complementarity between organizational demands and individual abilities, what is better understood as person-job fit (Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013; Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012).

We observe that direct measures of perceived fit have been used more often, followed by subjective fit. We can understand the interest of researchers on perceived fit, as scholars argue that objective fit “only has an impact on someone if that person perceives that the fit exists” (Kristof-Brown and Jansen, 2012, p. 133). Furthermore, Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001, p. 455) affirm that “research has consistently demonstrated that the two constructs are distinct, and it is the perception of fit that best predicts individual outcomes”.

Van Vuuren *et al.* (2007) have compared perceived and subjective fit and argued that they may be distinct constructs, what had been pointed out by Edwards *et al.* (2006). Moreover, the authors argue that employees “have another set of values in their minds [and not the set of values that is presented in questionnaires of subjective fit]” (Van Vuuren *et al.*, 2007, p. 1,743) when reporting their perception of fit. Therefore, we suggest future studies to adopt qualitative data and methodology to understand how employees experience fit. In fact, Billsberry *et al.* (2005) have already recommended the use of qualitative data and methodology (i.e. storytelling and causal mapping) to study perceived fit.

Our results show that the mainstream has been studying perceived fit quantitatively. The most used questionnaires (i.e. Cable and Judge, 1996; Cable and DeRue, 2002; Saks and Ashforth, 1997) may be criticized because they either use global assessment or do not focus on clearly different contents of fit. Because of that, they do not allow the researchers to test the relative importance of each aspect of P-O fit in predicting outcomes (Piasentin and Chapman, 2006). For instance, the items “To what extent is the organization a good match for you?” (Saks and Ashforth, 1997, p. 406) and “Do you think the values and ‘personality’ of this organization reflect your own values and personality?” (Cable and Judge, 1996, p. 299) do not allow us to test the relative importance of each content of P-O fit, making the interpretation of the results difficult.

Moreover, considering the importance of values to the research on P-O fit, we observe that those questionnaires refer to values without considering the multi-dimensionality of the concept. Therefore, we recommend that future quantitative studies look at the possible components of perceived fit and adopt questionnaires that take into account the theoretical multi-dimensionality of each of those components. In this regard, Santos and Domenico (2014) consider the construct of realization of personal values in the organizational environment, developed by Maurino and Domenico (2012), which consider the dimensionality of basic values proposed by Schwartz *et al.* (2012). It may be a path to be explored.

When using indirect measures, more research is needed to identify the impact of the way of calculating P-O fit (i.e. difference scores, profile similarity and polynomial regression) on its outcomes. Few studies test different ways of calculating, as is the case of Tepeci and Bartlett (2002), in our sample, who found high correlation ($r = 0.97, p < 0.01$) between different ways of calculating difference scores – namely, absolute difference ($|D|$) and square difference (D^2), moderate correlation ($r = 0.53, p < 0.01$) between profile similarity (Q) and $|D|$ and moderate correlation ($r = 0.48, p < 0.01$) between Q and D^2 .

People and organizations change. The interactional psychology assume the dynamic interaction between people and organization (Endler and Magnusson, 1976; Magnusson and Endler, 1977; Pervin and Lewis, 1978) and Kristof-Brown and Jansen (2012, p. 139) affirm “that fit is temporal in nature is not a new notion”. Considering that 85.9 per cent of the documents in our sample were cross-sectional and those who are longitudinal have mainly followed job applicants in different stages of the recruitment and selection processes, more longitudinal studies with employees within the organizations are needed.

Future research may also look at the impact of different sampling decisions (e.g. studies conducted with employees of one company, various companies or laboratory studies asking participants to consider characteristics of fictitious companies) on the consequences of P-O fit.

Final considerations

This paper contributes to the field of P-O fit by presenting a systematic review of its production, discussing the main points that cause results to be inconclusive (i.e. different conceptualizations of P-O fit, ways of assessing it and methodological issues) and offering a research agenda for future studies.

Although the majority of the studies from our sample look at P-O fit as the similarity between individuals and organizations, Tamayo (1998) questions the possibility of existence of fit between personal and organizational values, arguing that personal and organizational values do not share the same nature. Therefore, studies of P-O fit would benefit from the discussion of that philosophical issue.

Although most studies use scales to measure perceived fit, its theoretical development is relatively new (Billsberry *et al.*, 2005; Kristof-Brown and Billsberry, 2013). The scales have many problems, such as mixing conceptualizations (i.e. similarity and complementarity) and contents (e.g. values, personality, culture). Indirect measures assess personal and organizational characteristics independently, not taking into account the interaction between person and organization, even when using commensurate constructs in the questionnaires.

One of the most productive authors in the field, Van Vianen (2001), has claimed that researchers should look at what is important to the individuals, what she called ‘value of fit’. One of the constructs that may be able to respond to her claim, advancing theory on perceived fit is personal values, which shall be considered in their multi-dimensionality (Santos and Domenico, 2014).

It is important that Latin American researchers contribute to the theoretical and empirical development of P-O fit. Understanding the interactional dynamics of the individual and his environment and its consequences for organizational results may help to improve their competitiveness.

Notes

1. There are alternative views in the literature, such as the situationist perspective (i.e. characteristics of the environment determine behavior) and the personalist one (i.e. behavior is determined by personal characteristics, such as personality traits) (Ostroff and Schulte, 2012). Yet, the social learning theory departs from the perspective of reciprocal determinism of behavior, involving “a continuous reciprocal interaction between behavioral, cognitive, and environmental influences” (Bandura, 1978, p. 345).

2. The largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature.
3. Excluding the fields of health sciences, life sciences and physical sciences.
4. Although all the articles that remained were written in English, it was not mandatory to be considered in the current study. Those five articles were excluded because they were written in languages that the authors of the current paper are not able to read (i.e. German, Polish and Turkish).
5. If we calculated the participation of each author in relation to the total number of documents in our sample ($n = 120$), then the cumulative percentage would exceed 100 per cent.
6. A similar reasoning was applied to calculate the production of institutions and countries.
7. These documents have not been indexed in Scopus database so far.

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