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The Impact Of The External Environment On Person-Environment Fit In The Selection Of New Housing Professionals

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THE IMPACT OF THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ON PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT IN THE SELECTION OF NEW HOUSING PROFESSIONALS

by

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This dissertation, submitted by Melissa R. Burgess in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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Melissa R. Burgess
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the concept of "fit" with housing/residence life professionals at colleges and universities using Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework/ model of describing person-environment fit and then determine how/if this fit may be impacted by individual or institutional demographics. This purpose aligned well with the emerging interest in student affairs competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) as well as the literature around person-environment fit as a factor for satisfaction and retention of new professionals. The work of Werbel and colleagues (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999; Werbel & DeMarie, 2005) provided a useful model to use in consideration of questions surrounding the selection practices in student affairs. This model identified person-environment fit as a multi-dimensional construct, including person-job, person-organization, and person-group fits. Despite documentation of unique environments at different types of institutions, in particular those in rural locations, the person-environment fit of new student affairs professionals has gone relatively unstudied. This study helped to examine this area.

The sample for this study was full-time residence life professionals in the employer role who had been employed at their institutions for at least one year and participated in some facet of the selection process of new student affairs professionals. A 55-item electronic survey was completed by 213 individuals representing 85 unique institutions. The questions addressed individual and institutional demographics of

participants, as well as measures of person-job, person-organization, and person-group fits.

The analysis of the results of this study revealed that participants identified three unique dimensions of person-environment fit in the selection of new residence life professionals, and a slightly modified version of Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model did apply to new residence life professionals. The age and hiring authority of the participants influenced how they rated the importance of each dimension of fit. In addition, the geographic location of the institution influenced the relationship between person-job and person-organization fits and their projected outcomes.

These results have implications for student affairs research, graduate education and professional development, and selection and human resource practices. They can help employers and candidates identify the best fit for future new professionals.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Standing in the elevator at a placement exchange for student affairs professionals, it is not uncommon to hear hiring professionals discussing their search strategies for new employees. Staff members from institutions located in more populated areas may discuss staffing needs related to the professional initiatives in their department or at their institution. Or, they may talk about educational qualifications for the position, such as Master's (degree) required, or discuss the large number of candidates in their selection pool. Meanwhile, hiring professionals from rural or more isolated institutions inevitably discuss the challenges of recruiting new professionals to their institution, bringing up the idea of finding someone who is willing to move to their area, or finding someone with the right "fit." This study began as a way to identify what traits or characteristics those at rural institutions may be looking for in new professionals that are different than those in more well-known locations. Are they looking for something different than other institutions? Do they feel forced to "settle" for lesser-qualified candidates because institutional location holds them back? Can urban institutions hire without the consideration of location?

Having worked as a housing/residence life professional at institutions on both sides of the location spectrum, I wanted to understand the "why" behind some of these anecdotal conversations. My hope was that answers to these questions could help hiring

officials at rural institutions focus their energies on those qualities or traits most beneficial to them and help faculty in student affairs graduate programs prepare students to work at different types of institutions.

Given this focus, the initial inquiry into the literature for this study was concentrated on rural institutions. What was it about these institutions that made them different? Had this issue been previously studied? The literature search on rural institutions revealed that staff recruitment and retention are a particular concern for these institutions (Cejda, 2010; Gibson-Harmon, Rodriguez, & Haworth, 2002, Murray, 2007). Baer (2006) reported that one out of three institutions of higher education within the United States is located outside of metropolitan areas, so there are a significant number of institutions in this category. However, because traditional institutional classifications have not necessarily included rurality/urbanization for baccalaureate and graduate institutions, not much research has focused on this factor. Community colleges are classified by their location in the current Carnegie system, though, and several researchers have shown that these rural institutions face a unique set of challenges when compared to their nonrural peers (Cavan, 1995; Cejda & Leist, 2006; Miller & Kissinger, 2007). Some have posited that rural institutions require a specific "fit" for faculty and administrators, but not many of them defined the concept of "fit," discussed it relative to four-year institutions, or discussed how it may or may not apply to student affairs professionals. In the student affairs literature, in particular, there was not only a lack of literature related to the impact of the geographic setting of an institution, but there was also a lack of information about working at different types of institutions in general (Hirt, 2006).

From this examination of the literature, it became apparent that I would not be able to focus this study on hiring practices in student affairs at rural colleges and universities. Instead, I would have to begin with a larger question and then examine how that question played out for different types of institutions. Thus, I began to investigate human resource practices in student affairs, focusing on the selection process for new professionals. This question aligned well with the emerging interest in student affairs competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) as well as the literature around person-environment (P-E) fit as a factor for satisfaction and retention of new professionals. In choosing to frame the study in a human resource framework, the work of Werbel and colleagues (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999; Werbel & DeMarie, 2005) provided a useful model to use in consideration of questions surrounding the selection practices in student affairs. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the concept of "fit" with student affairs professionals at colleges and universities using Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework/model of describing P-E fit, and then determine how/if this fit may be impacted by individual or institutional demographics. In order to have a geographically diverse sample of sufficient size, I chose to focus specifically on residence life staff as the sample, recognizing that the results of this study would have direct generalization for only this group, but also anticipating implications for the broader field of student affairs.

Human Resource Staffing Practices

There are countless references and studies in the field of human resources. Winston and Creamer (1997) specifically focused on student affairs staffing practices in higher education and defined *staffing practices* in this way:

> The way an organization structures itself and the nature of its interactions among the people who compose it may be described as *staffing practices*. They form a system of policies, procedures, structures, activities, and rewards that govern the way people are hired and managed within higher education. The staffing system includes staff recruitment and selection, position orientation, supervision, continuing education and development, and performance appraisal. (p. 3)

Werbel and DeMarie (2005), in their examination of human resource practices in business, discussed the idea of strategic human resource management, or the linking together of all human resource practices and then connecting those with the organization's goals and priorities. They defined P-E fit as a multi-dimensional concept and stated that different types of employee fit led to different types of organizational competency. They discussed that an organization should identify its organizational competency and then build its human resource practices around this. See Figure 1 for Werbel and DeMarie's model.

They reported that the staffing practices of many organizations fail to consider the impact of the external environment and political context of the organization. These authors reiterated the importance, though, of placing time and energy into staffing practices. Winston and Creamer (1997) also emphasized this idea when they stated:

> *Staffing practices* also emphasizes the systemic dimension; selecting people to work in an organization is not independent of the kinds of work to be done, how an organization's people relate to each other, the kinds of supervision and support offered them, and what behaviors are rewarded and punished. (p. 3)

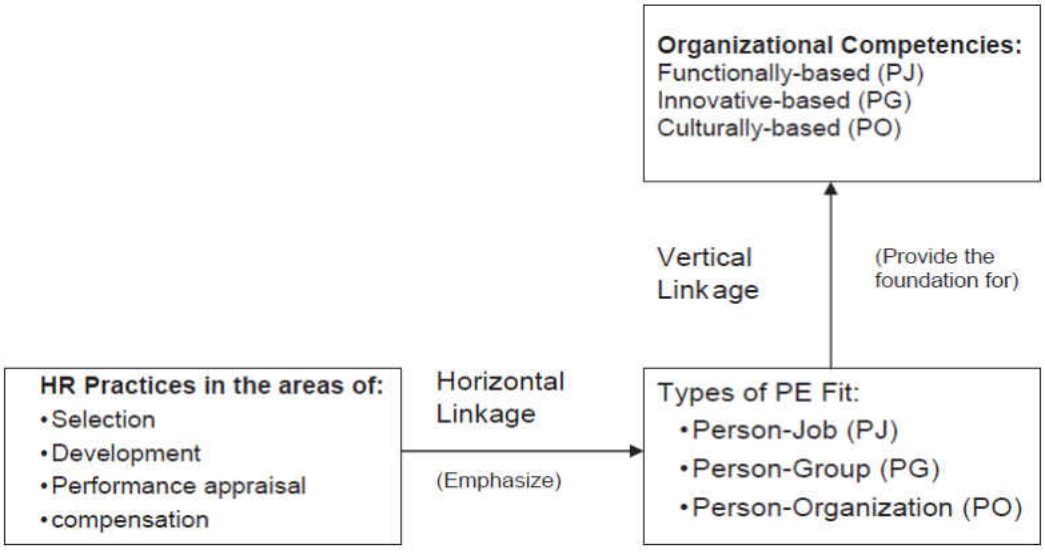


Figure 1. A model relating person-environment fit to human resource management practices. From "Aligning Strategic Human Resource Management and Person-Environment Fit," by J. D. Werbel & S. M. DeMarie, 2005, *Human Resource Management, 15*, p. 250. Copyright 2005 by Elsevier Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Together, these authors helped build the argument that human resource staffing practices are critical to an institution's success, staff fit with an organization increases the productivity of the individual and organization, and the outside environment and political context are key pieces to this fit.

Student Affairs Staffing Practices

Most research in the student affairs field is focused on the broader profession as a whole and not just specifically on residence life, the sample used for this study. One of the most prominent areas of study in student affairs staffing practices has been at the level of the new student affairs professional (someone in the first 5-6 years of his/her career). Studies have examined the experience of new professionals in their first year (Renn & Hodges, 2007; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008), socialization of new professionals to their first position or institution (Collins, 2009; Rosser & Javinar, 2009), and what it means to work at different types of institutions (Hirt, 2006; Hirt, Esteban, &

McGuire, 2003). More recently, many studies have been conducted to consider the entry of new professionals into the student affairs field and what competencies various groups perceived that these professionals have or need (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2004; Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Herdlein, 2004; Waple, 2006). These studies all have implications in how student affairs graduate preparation programs are preparing new master's level professionals.

Hirt (2006) identified that graduate students in student affairs and higher education are most likely trained at one or two types of institutions (research or comprehensive) but as a new professional they are employed at a variety of different types of institutions (liberal arts, religiously affiliated, community college, historically black college or university, Hispanic serving institution, or a tribal college). There may be a disconnect, therefore, between professional preparation and actual experiences or expectations for the first professional position.

Given the importance of staffing practices for all organizations, how do institutions select individuals with the right fit? Are the competencies needed for new student affairs professionals the same for all types of institutions? This is an emerging area of research within the student affairs field.

Student affairs competencies. In 2009, the two comprehensive professional associations for student affairs, ACPA- College Student Educators International and NASPA- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, collaborated and formed the Joint Task Force on Competencies and Professional Standards. This group was charged with developing a comprehensive, standardized set of competencies for student affairs professionals. Using past studies and existing documents from both associations

and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), in 2010 the group published 10 desired competencies for all student affairs professionals- Advising and Helping; Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Ethical Professional Practice; History, Philosophy, and Values; Human and Organizational Resources; Law, Policy, and Governance; Leadership; Personal Foundations; and Student Learning and Development (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). The Task Force determined that these competencies were universal for all student affairs practitioners, regardless of whether they enter the field with a Master's degree in student affairs or a different educational background. They went further to define a basic, intermediate, and advanced level for each of the competencies.

Because this publication is relatively new, no published studies were found that have used these competencies as a framework. The task force also did not explore the idea of how the competencies may apply at different types of institutions or if there are other extenuating factors that play a role. This led to the questions, do some institutions need professionals with stronger competency in some areas than others? Are there factors other than competencies that impact the success of new professionals at different institutions, based on institutional demographics? Based on the elevator conversation between the professionals at the placement exchange, one might guess that this answer would be yes.

The student affairs research, therefore, offered some insight into hiring practices and concerns within the field and identified a focus on developing a universal set of competencies for the profession. However, the researchers did not discuss P-E fit or how

this may vary based on institutional or individual demographics, so the human resources literature in business and organizational psychology was examined.

Person-Environment Fit

While much of the recent research in student affairs has been focused on what competencies student affairs professionals need to do their job, a significant amount of research in the human resource and organizational psychology literature has been focused on the broader concept of P-E fit. Several authors have examined the idea of P-E fit between employees and companies in various aspects of the selection and employment processes (Edwards & Billsberry, 2010; Garcia, Posthuma, & Colella, 2008; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Rynes & Gerhart, 1990; Schneider, 2001). Some of these have studied the idea of fit from the perspective of the employee, while others have examined it from the perspective of the employer, or still others from an objective outside assessment. Carless (2005) also found that the stage/time of the selection process can influence the importance of fit. These inconsistencies and differences make existing results difficult to generalize or compare.

Some authors have posited that P-E fit is multi-dimensional, and they have broken down their studies to look at these different dimensions (Kristof-Brown, 2000; Kristof-Brown, Jansen, & Colbert, 2002; Werbel & Gilliland, 1999). Some of these dimensions include *person-job (P-J) fit*, or the relationship between a person and the requirements of a specific job; *person-organization (P-O) fit*, or the relationship between a person and a company or institution; and *person-workgroup (P-G) fit*, or the relationship between a person and their smaller working group or team within the organization (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999). While the student affairs competency studies

would likely fall within the P-J fit category by definition, this multi-dimensional examination of P-E fit expands the notion of fit to include more than just what knowledge, skills, or abilities the person needs to do the job. This is a relatively new notion being explored (Dickerson et al., 2011).

In a test of the proposition that P-E fit is multi-dimensional, Kristof-Brown (2000) found that recruiters identified P-J and P-O fit as two distinct concepts. She also associated knowledge, skills, and abilities more with P-J fit and values and personality traits more with P-O fit. Werbel and Johnson (2001) argued that P-G fit should be considered in addition to P-J and P-O fit in order to create more cohesive and productive teams in the work environment. Building on these ideas, Kristof-Brown, Jansen, and Colbert (2002) studied these three dimensions of P-E fit simultaneously and found that P-J, P-O, and P-G fit have independent effects on work satisfaction when considered simultaneously. They posited that P-E fit is multi-dimensional, and future research should examine it from this perspective.

Person-Environment Fit in the Selection Process

Having a specific interest in the selection part of the staffing process for this study, further review of the literature revealed that Werbel and Gilliland (1999) focused specifically on selection. They stated that most studies at that time focused on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to do specific jobs, similar to the current state of the research in student affairs literature, but there may be more to an individual's fit than just those factors. They proposed that selection processes may benefit from expanded fit assessments for candidates for employment. See Figure 2 for an illustration of Werbel and Gilliland's model.

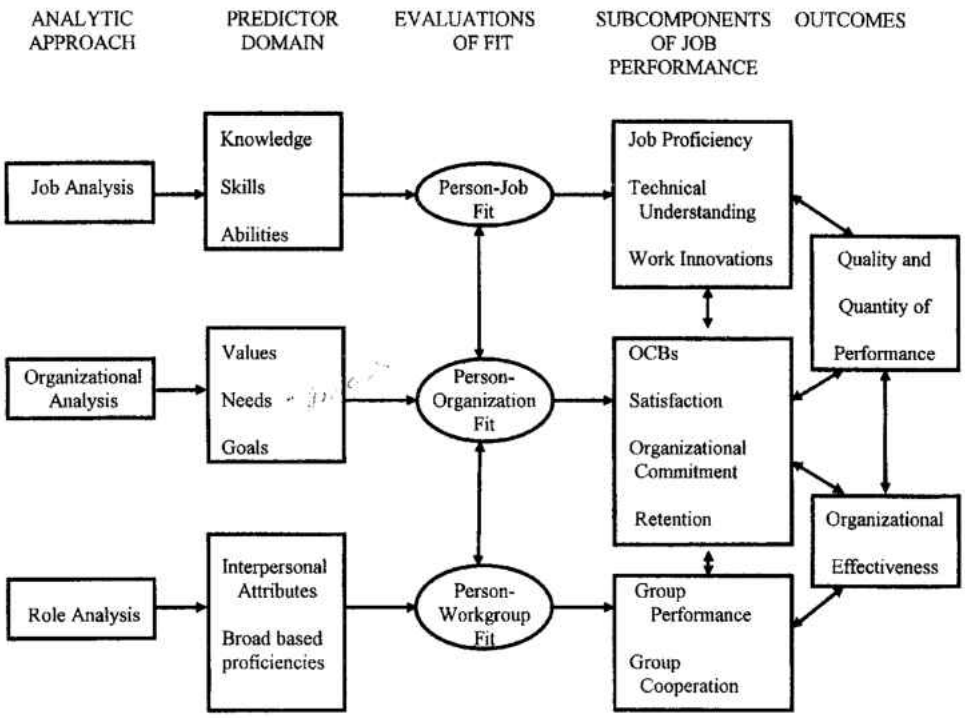


Figure 2. Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) proposed model of fit in the selection process. From "Person-Environment Fit in the Selection Process," by J. D. Werbel & S. W. Gilliland, 1999, *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management, 17*, p. 218. Copyright 1999 by JAI Press Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Werbel and Gilliland's model has not been empirically tested in its entirety in the literature to this point (J. Werbel, personal communication, September 6, 2011). Hedge, Borman, and Ispas (2012) supported Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model, though, positing that given the faster pace of change of many jobs today, employers should be assessing more than just whether or not the candidate can do the job he/she is applying for, but also his/her ability to fit with the organization and other people he/she may be working with. They suggested that while different organizations may weight one type of fit more heavily than others, it is important to give some consideration to all three.

Could it be that different types of institutions seek different types of fit in their new staff? Do their selection processes match what they are looking for? Is fit defined

broader than P-J fit (competencies)? Does Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model apply to student affairs staff selection? Their model aligns with the expanded research purpose for this study, considering other factors that may influence the fit that employers are seeking, with a comparison of institutions based on geographic setting providing one interesting area of analysis.

Research Questions

Bolman and Deal's (2003) human resource frame indicates that employees are most productive and satisfied if they fit with the environment in which they are working; if an employee and employer have a good fit, employee satisfaction and productivity increase, and this contributes to the excellence an institution or organization is striving for. Staffing with individuals who fit with the organization is an important consideration. This study examined the concept of P-E fit in the selection of new staff members for an organization. Specifically, the author focused on whether this area in human resources literature for business and organizational psychology applied to student affairs staff in higher education, and how this was impacted by institutional and individual demographics, with the following questions:

1. Does Werbel and Gilliland's model (1999) apply to the selection processes for new student affairs professionals, specifically those in residence life?
2. Does the type of P-E fit that professionals believe is the most important, match with the criteria for the type of fit they are looking for with their hiring decisions?
3. Are there individual or institutional demographic factors that influence P-E fit in the selection process?

4. Do professionals at rural institutions desire to hire individuals with different types of P-E fit than those at nonrural institutions?

This study was operationalized through the execution of a web-based survey to residence life professionals at a sample of four-year institutions and assessed how they prioritize the types of P-E fit in the housing selection process for new, entry-level professionals. The data were examined to see how desired fit differed based on individual and institutional demographics, including between rural and nonrural institutions. (Note that the terms housing, residence life, and housing/residence life professionals are used interchangeably throughout this document.)

Entry level residence life professionals were selected as a representative sample of new student affairs professionals for this study. Previous studies of new student affairs professionals have identified that the largest percentage of new student affairs professionals report working in residence life (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Tull, 2006). In addition, many institutions share common selection practices for new residence life staff via placement exchanges. Therefore, residence life staff generated a sample that was large enough to investigate the research questions with those who have sufficient similarity in responsibility and selection practices. The goal was that results from this sample would be generalizable to all functional areas of new student affairs professionals, but conclusions must be considered with the sample in mind.

Significance

Despite documentation of unique environments at different types of institutions, in particular those in rural locations, the P-E fit of new student affairs (specifically residence life) professionals has gone relatively unstudied. More focus has been placed

on the selection, training, and development of new professionals for the field of student affairs than at the level of the individual institution.

If responses for the types of fit desired varied based on an institution's demographics in this study, these data may offer implications for graduate preparation programs, recruitment strategies for different types of institutions, and expand the current competency research. Graduate programs could help to articulate to students the different types of fit needed to work at different institutions to help prepare graduates with more realistic expectations; this has been a documented challenge in current preparation programs (Hirt, 2006). These differences could also have an impact on how institutions recruit and select new professionals and then retain them. In the case of rural institutions, past studies have recommended "ruralizing" job descriptions (Leist, 2007b; Murray, 2005; Murray & Cunningham, 2004), or explaining how the rural environment of the institution may lead to different expectations of performance, in order to more accurately socialize candidates as part of the selection process. These results may offer insight into how the job descriptions might be articulated in a variety of unique environments.

Finally, the current competency research focuses on developing a universal list of competencies for all student affairs professionals. This study may challenge and expand that line of research to examine the competencies based on institutional demographics or functional area and/or expand this research to criteria outside of competencies themselves. Attrition of new professionals within their first three to six years in the student affairs field has also been noted (Lorden, 1998; Tull, 2006). This measurable documentation of fit could help create a better match of new residence life professionals

with employment opportunities, benefitting the institution, and help with satisfaction and retention to the institution and the profession, thereby benefitting the field of student affairs.

If no significant difference exists, the results may speak to difficulties some institutions have with recruitment and retention. These results would help to identify that fit may be defined in ways other than Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model. The research will be beneficial to both administrators recruiting and hiring residence life staff at rural institutions as well as those working in graduate preparation programs or creating professional development programs.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided to help the reader understand terms used throughout this study.

Staffing Practices: The way an organization structures itself and the nature of its interactions among the people who compose it… a system of policies, procedures, structures, activities, and rewards that govern the way people are hired and managed within higher education… includes staff recruitment and selection, position orientation, supervision, continuing education and development, and performance appraisal (Winston & Creamer, 1997, p. 3).

Competency: *"*…a cluster of related knowledge, attitudes, and skills that affects a major part of one's job (i.e., one or more key roles or responsibilities); that correlates with performance on the job; that can be measured against well-accepted standards; and that can be improved via training and development" (Parry, 1998, p. 60).

New Professional: a full-time staff member in the first five years of post-Bachelor's/Master's employment

Person-Environment Fit: "the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well-matched" (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005, p. 281)

- *Person-Job Fit*: "congruence of applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) with the task requirements of the job" (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999, p. 217)
- *Person-Organization Fit*: "the congruence of applicants' needs, goals, and values with organizational norms, values, and rewards systems" (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999, p. 217)
- *Person-Group Fit*: "the match between the new hire and the immediate workgroup (i.e., coworkers and supervisor)" (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999, p. 217)
- *Supplementary Fit*: "the possession of characteristics similar to others in the environment" (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999, p. 217)
- *Complementary Fit*: "deficiencies in the environment that are compensated by individual strengths" (Werbel & Gilliland, 1999, p. 217)
- *Perceived Fit*: "when an individual makes a direct assessment of the compatibility between P and E" (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005, p. 291)

- *Subjective Fit*: "when fit is assessed indirectly through the comparison of P and E variables reported by the same person" (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005, p. 291)
- *Objective Fit*: "when fit is calculated indirectly through the comparison of P and E variables reported by different sources" (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005, p. 291)

Rural: Given the reliability, validity, and expanse of data that a national database (IPEDS) or classification system (Carnegie) provides, the definition of rural chosen for this study will be based on the US Census definitions in use by those who work with IPEDS and Carnegie.

US Census Definitions:

- *Urban Area*: "…contiguous, densely settled block groups (BGs) and census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent densely settled census blocks that encompass a population of at least 50,000 people" (Urban Area Criteria, 2002, p. 11667).
- *Urban Cluster*: "…contiguous, densely settled census BGs and census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent densely settled census blocks that together encompass a population of at least 2,500 people, but fewer than 50,000 people" (Urban Area Criteria, 2002, p. 11667).

IPEDS Urbanization Definitions (IPEDS Data Center, n.d.):

- *City: Large*: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.

- *City: Midsize*: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
- *City: Small*: Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population less than 100,000.
- *Suburb: Large*: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more.
- *Suburb: Midsize*: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
- *Suburb: Small*: Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population less than 100,000.
- *Town: Fringe*: Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area.
- *Town: Distant*: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.
- *Town: Remote*: Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles of an urbanized area.
- *Rural: Fringe*: Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.
- *Rural: Distant*: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.

- *Rural: Remote*: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.

Delimitations

The sample for this study was limited to employers who were full-time housing/ residence life staff at their current institution since September 15, 2011. The study was limited to full-time staff, because graduate students may not have had the time or experience to understand organizational culture and may not have the same investment with regards to hiring staff for the organization if their tenure is in most cases, approximately two years.

The initial sample was also limited to those professionals working at institutions represented at the 2012 Oshkosh Placement Exchange (OPE), a hiring conference for housing professionals. Because each institution takes a limited delegation to the conference, but many staff participate in different aspects of the selection process that do not occur at the conference, all individuals who participated in the selection process at or apart from the conference were eligible to participate in the survey.

Limitations

One significant limitation of this study was that it was a cross-sectional view of professionals' perceptions of their candidates' fit in the hiring process; the study was not longitudinal. It was bound by time, location, and participant pool size. In addition, it relied on the perception of survey participants and not an objective measurement; this introduces an element of bias or subjectivity into the study. There was the risk that participants may not have included forthright answers in order to protect their institution. By relying solely on the perceptions of hiring professionals, this study also did not take

into consideration other factors that may influence a new professional's choice to work at a particular institution, such as family, education, or other extenuating circumstances. Finally, as previously mentioned, this study relied on one specific functional area of student affairs (residence life) as a representative sample, which may impact generalizations for the broader population.

Assumptions

This author used assumptions common to many survey research studies conducted in an online format. First, the design of the study assumed that the person responding to the survey met the stated qualifications to do so. Second, it was assumed that participants were answering the survey truthfully and spoke from their own experiences and opinions. Third, it was assumed that participants understood the questions being asked.

Summary

Why do some institutions struggle with recruitment of staff more than others? Are all jobs not created equal? Staff recruitment and selection is a never-ending process for colleges and universities across the country. This study was designed to understand the perceived fit for residence life staff at institutions based on their institutional demographics in order to better inform recruitment, training, and development processes and research in the future.

Chapter I outlined the need, purpose, research questions, theoretical context, significance, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions for the study. An overview of the literature on staffing practices, student affairs staffing, rural institutions, competency studies, and P-E fit is provided in Chapter II. Chapter III is an explanation and context for the methodology, population, and data collection procedures; this chapter also

outlines how the constructs of P-E fit were operationalized. Chapter IV provides the empirical analysis of the results as they applied to the specified research questions. Chapter V provides a discussion of the results and how they could be used to improve recruitment and selection processes new student affairs professionals at rural institutions across the country.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine the concept of "fit" with residence life professionals at colleges and universities using Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework/ model of describing person-environment (P-E) fit and then determine how/if this fit may be impacted by individual or institutional demographics. Because the initial inquiry was based on the student affairs field as a whole, this purpose was derived from an investigation of human resource practices in student affairs, focusing on the selection process for new professionals, which led to an examination of the emerging studies in student affairs competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) as well as the literature around P-E fit as a factor for satisfaction and retention of new professionals, and then the sample of residence life professionals was chosen as a representation of the student affairs professionals outlined in the literature. In choosing to frame the study in a human resource framework, the work of Werbel and colleagues (Werbel & DeMarie, 2005; Werbel & Gilliland, 1999) provided a useful model to use in consideration of questions surrounding the selection practices in student affairs. All of this would hopefully help to answer the question that administrators consistently ask, "How do we get the right people in the right positions, at the right time, at the right institution?"

This chapter outlines the literature related to the development of this study. It includes a review of human resources and student affairs staffing literature, specifically

regarding the experience and socialization of new professionals in the student affairs field. The emerging interest in student affairs competency literature is considered to understand what competencies are desired for new professionals and the focus on a universal set of competencies for all professionals. The P-E fit literature offers a broader context for the examination of competencies, culture, and teamwork within human resources. The impact of individual and institutional demographics is then described, with a focus on the definitions and contexts of rural institutions, outlining staffing challenges, identifying staff members that fit at rural institutions as opposed to nonrural institutions, and current strategies to develop professionals and leaders in these institutions.

Human Resource Staffing in Student Affairs

The field of student affairs and professional positions within it has evolved greatly over time. With the expansion of positions and diversification of responsibilities over time (Hirt, 2006), staffing within the student affairs division at colleges and universities has become a pressing issue for institutions. This expansion has led to a proliferation of scholarly research within student affairs as well, much of which has been related to various aspects of staffing.

Winston and Creamer (1997) examined best practices in student affairs staffing processes including recruitment, orientation, supervision, staff development, and evaluation in order to better inform the profession about the human resource function in student affairs. Lorden (1998) took a different perspective and studied attrition within the student affairs field. She found that the literature contained various statistics about the attrition rate within the student affairs field; the percentages varied from 32%-61% of

professionals leaving the field within their first six years as a professional. Her article did not address the external environment (i.e.- geographic location) to the institution as a factor in the attrition rate, though.

Because of changes and diversification of positions within student affairs and documented challenges with attrition of professionals within their first 5-6 years in the field, significant research has been conducted on new professionals. These studies focused on the general experience, socialization, competencies, and what it means to work at different types of institutions for new professionals. While these studies have had various foci and methods, the common purpose has been to understand and improve conditions for new professionals to retain them in the field and/or to improve graduate preparation programs.

New Professional Experience

Studies about the experience of new professionals in their first year of full-time employment have identified the importance of relationships, institutional and personal fit, competence and confidence (Renn & Hodges, 2007), development of a professional identity, navigation of cultural adjustments with support of mentors and more seasoned professionals, and maintaining a learning orientation (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Recommendations from these studies included a focus on individual responsibility for professional development, increased discussion on organizational culture and change in graduate programs, an understanding of relationship-building, a focus on balance for new professionals, goal setting, help with finding a mentor for supervisors of new professionals (Renn & Hodges), a focus on theory to practice in graduate programs, help creating opportunities for self-assessment and reflection when the hands-on development

of graduate school supervisors is no longer present, and assistance identifying how to use data and assessment in practice (Renn & Jessup-Anger). While not speaking specifically to what it means to work at different types of institutions, from the results of these studies the authors recognized that the organizational culture is different amongst institutional types, and new professionals were not necessarily prepared for this in their graduate programs.

In his article, Fried (2011) took an opposite approach to many of the other studies in this area. He wanted to identify what realities characterized the experience of a new professional (those with one to five years of professional experience and less than 35 years of age) in order to better appreciate and utilize their skills. He posited that rather than identify the skills or competencies a new professional may be lacking or need to develop, it may be refreshing to identify their strengths or advantages and cater to those. He applied the economic theory of comparative and absolute advantages to new professionals in student affairs. He determined that new professionals may have advantages in generational proximity to the students they are working with having had recent student experience, having greater energy and enthusiasm, increased engagement with theory, and more experience with the use of technology as compared to their more veteran colleagues. He further identified that fully involving new professionals in working groups in student affairs and using their comparative advantages may benefit both the team and the new professional. Collectively, these authors demonstrated that studies on new professionals and their experiences can vary greatly, depending on the perspective taken.

New Professional Socialization

Studies in socialization helped to identify that there are factors beyond competencies that impact the success and satisfaction of new professionals. While not using the term specifically, these studies were often related to those regarding "fit." Rosser and Javinar (2009) identified six quality of work-life factors that student affairs professionals indicated impacted their morale and satisfaction. These were career support, recognition for competence, intradepartmental relations, building external relationships, work environment or conditions, and perceptions of discrimination. The authors posited that if supervisors of new professionals helped to address these factors, this may positively influence new professionals to stay in their positions or in the field.

From a theoretical standpoint, Collins (2009) outlined how Thornton and Nardi's (1975) four stages of socialization applied to the student affairs profession. The author discussed how a new professional goes through the anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal stages. The author stated that by using and understanding the model, new professionals could better prepare themselves with realistic expectations for their first professional position, and those around them who are mentors, supervisors, or faculty, could use it as a guide to help new professionals better acclimate to their new positions; satisfaction and socialization are likely connected.

Other authors have posited that socialization of new professionals begins in graduate programs (for those who enter the field through a Master's program) (Hirt, 2006; Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). Several elements of a graduate preparation program in student affairs that contribute to the socialization of a new professional include: the curriculum, the quality and diversity of students in a program, interactions with faculty

and practitioners, the availability of experiential opportunities, and the design and assessment of the learning process (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). Hirt (2006) reported that one of the challenges with this idea is that 69% of graduate preparation programs in student affairs and higher education are housed at research universities, and the remainder are located at comprehensive institutions. However, when compared to the percentages of institutions where student affairs professionals are employed, only 6.6% are research institutions, and 15.5% are comprehensive. As Hirt said,

> If new professionals are socialized at research and comprehensive campuses but employed at liberal arts institutions, community colleges, religiously affiliated schools, HBCUs, or HSIs, they might expect to encounter a disconnect between the expectations they bring to the work setting and the realities they confront in that setting. This represents…the gap in our understanding of professional practice in student affairs administration. There is a need for more information about the nature of professional life for those who work at different types of college and university campuses. (p. 10)

This illustrated the need to identify the differences in experiences of new professionals at different types of institutions in order to make sure they are most prepared coming out of graduate programs. Despite institutional differences, much of the most recent research in the student affairs field has focused on identifying the similarities across positions and institutions in student affairs in the form of professional competencies.

Competency Studies

One of the areas that has become increasingly studied in the last few years is the competencies needed to be a student affairs professional. Many studies have been

conducted to determine what competencies various groups perceive new professionals have or need and how they have been or should be obtained. These lead to the next step of how graduate preparation programs are preparing new professionals. The results have also led to the question if competencies can be generalized across all of student affairs or if competencies differ for different types of institutions? When examining these studies, it is important to first understand what competencies are and why they are important to study.

Similar to the definition of rural, competency has often been defined within the context of a discipline or use. Parry (1998) defined a competency as,

> …a cluster of related knowledge, attitudes, and skills that affects a major part of one's job (i.e., one or more key roles or responsibilities); that correlates with performance on the job; that can be measured against well-accepted standards; and that can be improved via training and development. (p. 60)

Parry contrasted this definition with that of traits and characteristics which he said were formed early in life or inherited and not likely to respond to training and development. He also contrasted competencies with skills, which he felt were situational or specific, while competencies are more general and universal. Despite this delineation, one of the struggles with competency studies is that many times the terms and definitions of competencies, skills, and traits are used interchangeably or combined into one.

White (1959) defined competence as, "an organism's capacity to interact effectively with its environment" (p. 297). This would seem to imply that competence in one environment might not mean that the same person would be competent in a different environment, even if performing the same job. The federal government, via the Office of

Personnel Management defined a competency as, "a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, and abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully" (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). Parry (1996) also identified that globalization can have an impact on the definition of the term. In the United Kingdom, competencies are defined in terms of outputs or degree to which work meets or exceeds expectations. In the United States, competencies are seen as inputs, or the knowledge, skills, and abilities a person needs to be able to do the job. France and Germany have adopted a more holistic interpretation, or a combination of the two approaches (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). As with key term definitions in any study, understanding the definition of competence or competency used in the study is important in being able to draw comparisons from one study to another.

Some common uses for competency studies include targeting areas for training and development (Parry, 1998); recruitment, selection, and retention of staff; creation of an environment that focuses on achievement; organizational strategic planning; identification of high performers; succession planning; promotion of organizational culture (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory, & Gowing, 2002); and focusing academic preparation for a field (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Within student affairs, these competency studies or reviews have most often had the purpose of helping to align graduate preparation programs with the needs of the profession (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2004; Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Herdlein, 2004; Kretovics, 2002; Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007; Lovell & Kosten, 2000; Waple, 2006).

Student Affairs Competency Studies

Given the current emphasis on a universal set of competencies for student affairs professionals (ACPA & NASPA, 2010), it was important to examine the literature in this area that led to this development. Most student affairs competency studies have been designed to identify the needed competencies for new professionals from various perspectives including new professionals themselves (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Waple, 2006), supervisors/employers (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Kretovics, 2002), chief/senior student affairs officers (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2004; Herdlein, 2004; Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007), midlevel managers/professionals (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stotlet, 2004; Dickerson, et al., 2011; Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007), and graduate preparation program faculty (Dickerson, et al., 2011; Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007). Because most of the competency studies conducted have desired to help graduate programs better align with the needs of the profession, they have focused on new or entry-level professionals defined as those within three (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009), or five (Fried, 2011; Waple, 2006) years since graduation from a student affairs master's program. This left out a large group of professionals who may hold entry-level positions without having a master's degree or while pursuing one concurrently.

Kuk, Cobb, and Forrest (2007) recognized this gap but defended it by stating that, "…the master's degree from a student affairs graduate preparation program is recognized within the profession as one of the most critical sources of professional preparation for entry into the field" (p. 665). In their meta-analysis of the literature on skills, knowledge, and personal traits necessary for success in student affairs, Lovell and Kosten (2000)

determined that this same variation in definition and subject has occurred throughout time with these studies; in the end, they found that it was difficult to draw conclusions about the overall data because of the variety of ways that the studies had been conducted and reported.

Some common themes in desired competencies have developed over time and audiences surveyed, though. Lovell and Kosten (2000) reviewed literature from over a 30 year period and identified well-developed administration, management, and human facilitation skills as key competencies. (It is important to note that this meta-analysis covered student affairs administrators in general and not just new professionals.) Further studies also added technology, research (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2004), a personal commitment to diversity/multiculturalism (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice & Molina, 2009; Kretovics, 2002; Pope & Reynolds, 2007; Waple, 2006), knowledge of college student development, ethics and standards of practice (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice & Molina, 2009; Waple, 2006), oral and written communication skills, problem solving, effective program planning and implementation (Waple, 2006), and goal setting and the ability to deal with change (Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007) as competencies to add to the list of those desired for new professionals.

There has been some disagreement, though, in the recommendations of how these competencies should be implemented in graduate programs or where student affairs professionals gain competence in these areas. Burkard, Cole, Ott, and Stoflet (2004) found that the skills, competencies, and theoretical knowledge that were expected of entry-level professionals went far beyond what is taught in most student affairs graduate programs. They argued that the results implied that graduate programs should examine

their curricula, particularly in the area of personal attributes and professionals skills to help better prepare graduates for a diverse range of positions. Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, and Molina (2009) found that new professionals felt they were more prepared in some areas after coming out of their graduate programs than their supervisors in their professional positions felt they were. They identified that this could be because of an overconfidence in their abilities or the supervisors' lack of understanding of current competencies, but that their results could be useful to program faculty and to supervisors of new professionals to identify areas of success in preparation and competence and areas for growth.

Herdlein (2004) found that chief student affairs officers were in general satisfied with the learning outcomes of graduate programs in student affairs, but two areas that they felt could be addressed in the curriculum were critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. Based on the need to add more topics to the curriculum, the author identified that additional credit hours may need to be added to the requirements, some topics and skills may need to be addressed in a variety of courses, or programs may need to offer fewer electives. Kretovics (2002) studied competencies from the perspective of the hiring employer. He found that employers ranked practicum and assistantship experiences as very important in the hiring decisions, but other factors varied in importance by size of institution or type of position. He recommended that this information might be useful to faculty as they consider program review; how are programs preparing professionals for different types of positions or institutions?

With all of the other studies identifying gaps in graduate preparation programs and a desire to enhance or make changes in these areas, Kuk, Cobb, and Forrest (2007)

identified that mid- and senior-level student affairs administrators disagreed with graduate preparation faculty in what areas of competence are important for entry-level student affairs professionals. They reported that administrators found competence in individual practice and administration, competence in goal setting and the ability to deal with change, and competence in managing organizations and groups to be significantly more important for new professionals than the responding faculty members. On the one area of competence that both groups agreed was important, they found that the faculty members perceived that students gained their competency in professional knowledge and context from their graduate program, while the administrators felt they gained that competence more in their job roles. These results suggested there might be a disconnect between what practitioners think students need in their graduate programs and what faculty members view as important and may actually be teaching. However, in their later study, Dickerson, et al. (2011) found that their results did not confirm these findings, and there were not significant differences in expectations between faculty members and SSAOs in 49 of 51 competency areas they studied; they recommended that further research be done in this area. Instead, they found greater differences in the expected and perceived competencies for new student affairs professionals from the perspective of SSAOs and graduate program faculty; while both agreed that the levels of competency were important, there was some disagreement on which ones new professionals were lacking. They acknowledged, though, that they did not connect their study of competencies with job-related outcomes, so they are not sure which of these differences should be addressed first.

These competency studies help to identify that there are high and varied expectations for new professionals in the student affairs field on what they should be able to do and how they should or could learn how to do it. With this challenge in mind, in 2009 ACPA- College Student Educators International (ACPA) and the NASPA- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA), the two largest and most prominent comprehensive student affairs professional associations, set out to work together to establish one common set of broad competencies for all student affairs professionals within the United States.

ACPA and NASPA professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners. In order to accomplish this task, the associations established the Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards, made up of 13 members representing both associations. The group was charged with creating a set of competencies that would be applicable to all student affairs positions, regardless of functional area and one that would not only reflect past studies but would also articulate what student affairs professionals will need to be successful in the future. In addition to a literature review, the members of the task force also examined relevant documents from past work from each association as well as the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), which is made up of members from a variety of student affairs professional associations. The members of the task force developed a list of 10 competency areas (ACPA & NASPA, 2010).

The 10 competency areas adopted by the associations include: Advising and Helping; Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Ethical Professional Practice; History, Philosophy, and Values; Human and Organizational

Resources; Law, Policy, and Governance; Leadership; Personal Foundations; and Student Learning and Development. Within each area, the task force identified a list of knowledge, skills, or attitudes that helped to define each area at a basic, intermediate, and advanced level. They were careful to point out that these do not necessarily equate to a position level within an organization, but rather how practitioners in any position can grow and develop. For example, achievement of competence at the intermediate level in all areas does not necessarily mean that a professional should move to a mid-level from an entry-level position. They did posit, though, that all professionals at any level and regardless of whether or not they have attained a master's degree should be able to hold a basic level of competence in each area (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). Compared to previous studies, there are a few competencies that some may perceive as missing from this list. The members of the task force identified that there are three "threads" that weave through all of the competency areas, rather than being identified as competency areas themselves. These are technology, sustainability, and globalism (ACPA & NASPA, 2010).

Similar to previous studies, the members of the task force also developed a list of potential ways that these competencies could be used. Some of these include: to develop a professional development plan, to draft position descriptions, to assist in educating other campus constituencies about the work of student affairs, and to demonstrate a need for resources. They suggested that these competencies could be used to help guide new professionals and their supervisors in the transition to their first professional position and in developing a professional development plan (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). Use of this document could help to address some of the challenges identified by Renn and Hodges (2007) and Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008). The task force members also recognized that

the competencies could be used to inform graduate programs as they revise their curricula. However, unlike the other studies, they identified that it is not possible for graduate programs to address all of the knowledge, skills, and abilities in the list (ACPA & NASPA, 2010).

The ACPA and NASPA Professional Competency Areas established a generalizable set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes for all student affairs professionals, but they also allowed for different levels of competence within each area. Based on previous research, some of this variance might be expected by functional area of the position and institutional type, although because of the newness of the ACPA and NASPA report and a lack of consistency amongst previous research results, a significant amount of data is not available to help identify what these variations might be. There is also a lack of information of the differences that exist for new professionals who enter the field at a bachelor's degree level, without the experience and knowledge gained from a graduate degree program.

Another of the gaps in the literature with these studies is how competence and socialization might be related. The student affairs staffing literature implies that there may be factors other than just knowledge, skills, and abilities in measuring the success of new professionals, but Dickerson et al. (2011) were one of the first to propose and study what they referred to as "dispositional competencies" for new professionals, or those related to values, leadership, ability to work with others, and a commitment to social justice. While there may be some overlap with the ACPA and NASPA competencies, they acknowledged that this is an area, when framed in this way, which has gone relatively unstudied. Based on the student affairs staffing literature and Dickerson et al.

study, there seems to be some disagreement as to whether competency findings with new professionals must consider other factors when making generalizations; competence with knowledge, skills, and abilities does not necessarily seem to always equal satisfaction and success as perceived by the employer or the employee.

Person-Environment Fit

When examining what these other factors for consideration might be, outside of the collection of higher education research, much focus has been placed on P-E fit, particularly in the human resource and organizational psychology literature. This literature has included the use of competencies but also expanded upon it. These studies have focused on the relationship between an individual and their work environment, throughout all aspects of the employment process from recruitment through to separation. Many of these studies have identified the use of fit as a predictor for job-performance outcomes (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Vogel & Feldman, 2009; Werbel & Gilliland, 1999) or even turnover and attrition (Chatman, 1991; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Tak, 2011)- two areas of concern with new professionals in student affairs. In these studies, researchers have examined fit in general, how to break down P-E fit into its dimensions, and specifically how P-E fit impacts the selection process for new staff.

Defining "Fit"

Several studies have examined P-E fit in general and have attempted to define what "fit" is and how it might be identified in candidates in the recruitment and selection process. While often desired, fit can be difficult to describe. As Judge and Ferris (1992) explained, some hiring professionals when asked to define "fit" said, "'I can't articulate

it, but I'll know it when I see it"' (p. 47). In addition to making research more difficult, the vagueness of this definition has also impacted the study of fit from a practical sense.

This inconsistency in definitions came into play in several studies. In one study regarding person-organization (P-O) fit, based on a meta-analysis of quantitative studies, Hoffman and Woehr (2006) wanted to provide a summary of the relationship between P-O fit and behavioral outcomes. They noted that there were a variety of methods used in the studies to determine P-O fit. They broke these down into three categories of subjective fit, directly asking an individual how they fit; perceived fit, asking individuals to describe themselves and describe the organization and then comparing the two descriptions; and objective fit, asking individuals to describe their own characteristics and then asking others to describe the characteristics of the organization and making comparisons of these two. The authors noted that the type of definition chosen for each study was a significant moderator in the results of the study.

Similarly, Edwards, Cable, Williamson, Lambert, and Shipp (2006) based their definition on the measurement of fit. They identified three approaches to the study of P-E fit: atomistic, molecular, and molar. The atomistic approach studies the person and the environment separately and combines them in some way to understand P-E fit. The molecular approach is to study directly any discrepancies between the person and the environment. The molar approach directly studies the perceived fit between a person and the organization.

In another article, Werbel and Gilliland (1999) noted that fit could also be broken down into the type of interaction being sought between a new employee and the existing staff. Complementary fit exists when a new employee fills a missing gap or deficiency in

the team or environment in knowledge or experience, while supplementary fit exists when the new employee adds to the similar knowledge that other team members may already have. Schneider (2001) did a different literature review of studies regarding P-E fit and identified still a different breakdown; he said studies about fit generally fall into one of two categories- based on individual traditions and based on organizational psychology. He also pointed out that in personnel selection, very little study has been made on the impact of the outside environment as a potential contributor to job performance. In contrast, the studies in organizational psychology focus more exclusively on the environment, rather than the person.

The research of these authors highlighted that the interpretation of fit studies should carefully consider the definitions, methods of study, and focus on the person or environment as generalizations are made. While these studies have examined fit in general or only one type of fit individually, many authors have defined P-E fit as a multi-dimensional concept.

Multiple Dimensions of Person-Environment Fit

Several authors have suggested that P-E fit may not be as simple as defining the characteristics of the person and the characteristics of the environment as a whole. They have suggested that there may be different parts of the environment that should be considered separately. Werbel and Gililland (1999) identified that much of the literature on P-E fit focused exclusively on person-job (P-J) fit, or the match between the person and their specific job responsibilities. They proposed that when considering P-E fit, employers and researchers should consider person-organization (P-O) and person-group (P-G) fit as well. The authors proposed a model that identified predictor domains for

each dimension of fit (P-J, P-O, and P-G) in the recruitment process and the outcomes they predict (as seen in Figure 2, repeated below for ease of viewing).

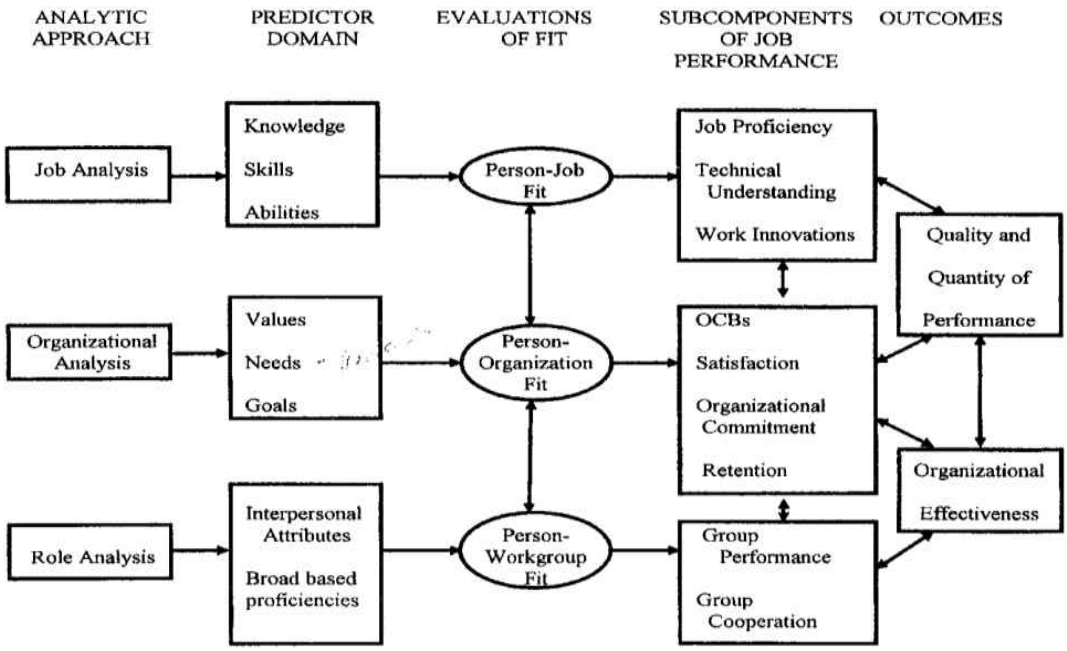


Figure 2. (Repeated) Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) proposed model of fit in the selection process. From "Person-Environment Fit in the Selection Process," by J. D. Werbel & S. W. Gilliland, 1999, *Research in Personnel and Human Resource Management, 17*, p. 218. Copyright 1999 by JAI Press Inc. Reprinted with permission.

They noted that one dimension/type of fit can influence multiple types of performance. They also noted that the type of fit that an employer focuses on may depend on the context of the job or the organization. Hedge, Borman, and Ipsas (2012) supported this idea, and they posited that it will be even more important in a world that is changing at a faster rate than before.

Kristof-Brown (2000) initially confirmed part of what Werbel and Gilliland (1999) proposed when she found that recruiters identified P-J and P-O fit as two distinct concepts and associated knowledge, skills, and abilities more with P-J fit and values and personality traits more with P-O fit. She felt that this had implications for recruiters and

applicants in how they prepare for the interview setting and what training is needed. Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) built on this and found that P-J fit and P-O fit emerged as distinct concepts and had unique impacts when measured from the employee perspective as well. Both concepts had a unique impact on job satisfaction and potential attrition. The authors posited that the results of this study could help a dissatisfied employee know whether they should seek a new job in a different organization or the same one, depending on where the misfit lies.

Morley (2007) concurred with this thought and identified the importance of P-O fit in the P-E fit area of job recruitment and selection. Morley felt that the priority in employee selection had shifted from P-J fit (based on competencies) to P-O fit (based on congruence of work values), so it was important to consider both. Tak (2011) built on these findings, adding person-supervisor fit to the mix and found that P-J fit had the highest correlation with turnover intention of new employees within their first year on the job, but P-O fit had the highest correlation with actual turnover.

Given the justification for considering P-J and P-O fits, Werbel and Johnson (2001) argued that P-G fit should be considered in addition to P-J and P-O fits in order to create more cohesive and productive teams in the work environment. The authors cited a definition of P-G fit by Werbel and Gilliland (1999) as the match between the new hire and the immediate workgroup. This article was not an empirical study, but it provided a useful background and definition for why P-G fit should be included.

In further study, Kristof-Brown, Jansen, and Colbert (2002) continued to build on this idea and found that P-J, P-O, and P-G fits had independent effects on work satisfaction when considered simultaneously. The authors wanted to determine if the

effects of the three types of fit were independent of one another and how individuals combined these types of fit in their views of work satisfaction. The authors felt this study was important because few studies have examined more than one type of fit simultaneously. Their results also suggested that individuals may compensate for low fit in some areas with high fit in others.

Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson (2005) added the construct of person-supervisor fit, or the relationship between a person and their supervisor, as an additional dimension of P-E fit. They found that these four constructs were only moderately related to each other. In 2006, Jansen and Kristof-Brown proposed a model including, P-J, P-O, P-G, person-person (P-P), and person-vocation (P-V) fits as part of P-E fit. They defined P-P fit as the relations between a person and other persons in their work environment and P-V fit as the relationship between a person and their chosen career field. They felt that all of these aspects impacted a person's overall fit with their environment. Edwards and Billsberry (2010) wanted to test empirically Jansen and Kristof-Brown's (2006) model by studying multiple types of fit simultaneously and determine if employees saw their fit with employment as one overall P-E fit or broken down into distinct concepts of fit. They found that employees who haD been employed by their organization for more than one year did not define fit in an overarching manner, but instead they defined fit based on various aspects of their environment. They found that P-G fit was nearly negligible, though, when they deconstructed their model. They suggested that this could be because people might fall into several groups in their employment situation after being employed in the organization for multiple years. This idea was supported by Carless's (2005)

previous finding that P-E fit may be contingent upon timing of the relationship between the person and their environment.

Through careful analysis of these results, researchers have implied that P-E fit is multi-faceted and should be deconstructed when studied. As Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson (2005) stated, "These results underscore the uniqueness of each type of fit and the ability of individuals to discern among aspects of their work environment when assessing fit" (p. 316). They did note, however, that there was a noticeable gap in the literature of studying or testing multidimensional models of P-E fit.

Person-Environment Fit in the Selection Process

Studies of P-E fit in the selection process have explored several different foci. A few studies have examined fit from the employees' perspective (Carless, 2005; McCulloch & Turban, 2007), while most have been examined with the employers' perspective in mind. Some have focused on the resume review (Tsai, Chi, Huang, & Hsu, 2011) and some on the interview process (Adkins, Russell, & Werbel, 1994; Garcia, Posthuma, & Colella, 2008; Higgins & Judge, 2004), while others have considered the selection process more holistically (Chatman, 1991; Rynes & Gerhart 1990; Sekiguchi, 2004; Sekiguchi, 2007; Werbel & Gilliland, 1999). Werbel and DeMarie (2005) suggested that the area of P-E fit that an organization focuses on in its employee selection process should support the organizational competency, mission, and goals it is striving for.

While Werbel and DeMarie (2005) argued that human resource practices as a whole should be focused on the same type of fit, many of the studies on the selection process have examined the selection process as several smaller components. Rynes and

Gerhart (1990) found that when employers are conducting job interviews, their assessment of general employability is different than their assessment of firm-specific employability. This supports the idea that P-O fit is unique to different organizations and not just based on overall vocations. Tsa, Chi, Huang, & Hsu (2011) found that recruiters' perceptions of P-J and P-O fit were influenced by certain aspects of a candidate's resume, which mediated a recruiter's hiring recommendation for the candidate. They also found that while a recruiters' perception of a candidate's P-P fit was influenced by resume characteristics, this did not ultimately correlate with the recruiter's future hiring recommendations. Chatman (1991) also looked at P-O fit and identified that recruits to new accounting firms who had greater P-O fit when selected for their positions adjusted to it more quickly, felt more satisfied, and intended to remain with the firm longer. She also found that changes in fit over the first year had little impact on retention, bringing out the importance of getting an accurate measure of P-O fit in the selection process.

Sekiguchi (2004) wanted a broader understanding of the studies that exist on P-O and P-J fits in the selection process. He found that many researchers suggest that P-O fit plays a larger role in the later parts of the selection process than the earlier ones, but there is a lack of data to support this belief. He identified that most of the literature could be placed into two categories, the prescriptive approach, or what managers should do in order to select the right candidate, or the descriptive approach, what managers are actually doing in the selection process. His suggestions for future research included studying the effects of multiple types of fit simultaneously, studying the cross-cultural effects of fit, and studying more types of fit, beyond P-O and P-J fit. He then built on this research in a later article and proposed a contingency model for P-J and P-O fit. He

proposed that P-J fit is more important when employee tasks are more defined and transactional, when firms hire for general human capital, and when organizations hire people that are more focused on their profession than their firm; P-O fit is more important in the opposite scenarios. He suggested that this perspective could have implications in employee selection with helping employers prioritize the type of fit they desire (Sekiguchi, 2007). This seems to coincide with Werbel and DeMarie's (2005) proposition that organizations should focus on the type of fit that supports their overall mission and goals.

Collectively, these studies identified that P-E fit is a multi-dimensional concept that impacts human resource selection and hiring processes. However, it was also clear that there are still existing gaps in the literature, particularly in the area of studying the dimensions of fit within the same study and including more than just P-J or P-O fit within these dimensions. While several people, such as Werbel and Gilliland (1999) and Hedge, Borman, and Ipsas (2012), have proposed models or ideas of how fit may play into the human resource processes, there is a lack of empirical testing of these models. Combined with the other facets of this study, there was also little to no research measuring P-E fit in the student affairs field or examining the impacts of individual interviewer or institutional demographics in four-year higher education.

Individual Interviewer Demographics

Much of the study related to how individual interviewer demographics may impact desired fit in the selection process fell in the human resources and organizational psychology literature. In the study of P-E fit in the interview process, researchers have tried to determine the impact of perceived fit of the interviewee, the opinion of the

interviewer, and then on subsequent hiring decisions. Adkins, Russell, and Werbel (1994) found that work value congruence between the applicant and the organization, as perceived by recruiters, was not related to whether or not an applicant received a second interview, but it was related to perceived general employability and organizational fit. Overall, they posited that if work-value congruence and fit do play a part in the selection process, it may be later in the process when final selection decisions are made. Garcia, Posthuma, and Colella (2008) wanted to know if interviewers' perceptions of fit were impacted by how similar candidates were to recruiters demographically or whether or not the recruiter liked the applicant. They found that performance expectations had a direct effect on perceived fit with the organization in the interview process, but perceived fit was not impacted by whether or not the interviewer liked the candidate or had any perceived demographic similarities.

Although other studies have also found that recruiters' hiring recommendations are not impacted by whether or not they like a candidate, Higgins and Judge (2004) wanted to know if applicants could influence recruiters' perceptions of fit in the interview process. They found that ingratiation by a candidate had a significant effect on recruiters' perceived fit, which positively impacted hiring recommendations for candidates. The authors identified that ingratiation by a candidate, or trying to win favor with the interviewers, had a strong positive effect on recruiters' perceptions of fit. These studies highlighted the challenges in getting an accurate measure of P-E fit from an interview in the selection process and the possible extraneous influences on this measurement.

Institutional Demographics

As noted, there was a lack of research on the influence of institutional demographics (classification, geographic setting, size, etc.) on human resources staffing practices in student affairs and higher education. In order to examine this area, it was important to understand how institutions are traditionally broken down demographically and what limited research has been conducted.

Institutional Classification

Colleges and universities are broken down in many different classifications or categories. Private and public, athletic (NCAA) divisions, secular and religious, non-profit and for-profit, degree level, differences in mission, and institutional size are all common ways in which institutions are grouped. In a study of institutions of higher education, it is important that a consistent classification system is used and understood in order for the results to be generalized and compared to current or future research.

Carnegie classification. One of the most widely-accepted classification systems is the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, developed and published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Since its initial release in 1973, institutional administrators as well as scholars and researchers have used this system to compare institutions on consistent terms. Over the years, the Carnegie Classification system has undergone many changes or revisions based on the changing types of institutions and feedback of administrators and scholars. One of most significant revisions occurred in 2005 (The Carnegie Classifications, n.d.).

In the case of associate's degree institutions (community colleges), the 2005 revision classified these institutions for the first time based on the urbanization/rurality of

their locations. Prior to 2005, several scholars and research teams had studied and identified different systems of classification for two-year institutions in order to identify a method that more accurately reflected the diversity of two-year institutions. The previous Carnegie Classification guidelines relied heavily on classifying institutions with a breakdown by degree offerings. Since community colleges have one dominant degree offering, some scholars felt that the classification system needed more diversification (McCormick & Cox, 2003). New breakdowns were proposed based on institutional control, geography, governance, and size (Katsinas, 2003); curricular characteristics (Schuyler, 2003); institutional size (Cohen, 2003); data including enrollment, student demographics, and institutional characteristics from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) (Merisotis & Shedd, 2003); and price and degree delivery (Shaman & Zemsky, 2003). Ultimately, the classification system based on institutional control, geography, and governance developed by Katsinas, Hardy, and Lacey was the basis for the 2005 revision to the Carnegie Classification system for primarily associate's institutions (Classification Description, n.d.). This resulted in several research studies including rurality as a demographic factor and consideration in the study when examining two-year institutions.

For their definition of rural, the Carnegie system identifies an institution as rural if it is not located in a Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA) or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) according to the 2000 United States Census with a population exceeding 500,000 or not located in a PMSA or MSA at all (Classification Description, n.d.). In a later study Hardy and Katsinas (2007) identified that roughly 33% of all

United States public community college students are at rural institutions, which make up 59% of all community college campuses.

Despite the fact that baccalaureate and graduate institutions also exist in rural environments, the Carnegie Classification system does not currently break down these institutions in the same manner. In this area, types of degrees offered drive the system (McCormick & Cox, 2003). Institutions are subdivided by doctoral, master's, and baccalaureate degrees, and then further subdivided by level of research activity (doctoral), size (master's), and curricular areas of degrees (bachelor's) (Classification Description, n.d.). Other sources of data must be identified about these institutions in order to be able to classify them by their geographic location.

The Carnegie Classification still carries importance for four-year institutions, though, because institutional characteristics help to dictate how a college or university responds to the environment of its geographical location. For example, doctoral granting institutions with high research activity may carry a national presence in the market that would defer some of the staff recruitment challenges of being lesser known or isolated that other rural institutions encounter. In addition, these types of institutions may require different community support for their research activity and personal needs of student, faculty, and staff, such that despite being in a rural location, their access to resources may not be as limited.

IPEDS data. The IPEDS data system is a collection of data from all United States institutions of higher education that participate in the federal financial aid program. Some of the data reported include institutional demographics, degrees offered, degrees earned, staff employed, number of students enrolled, and money spent (About IPEDS,

n.d.). Unlike the Carnegie system, it does not have its own prescribed classifications, but rather, it allows the user to sort institutions or identify trends based on specific data of his/her interest. However, the IPEDS system does include Carnegie Classifications as one of its data points, so users can use this as one of their sortable attributes. One of challenges with IPEDS data is that they are self-reported. IPEDS offers specific definitions for each category of data being reported, but there is always a danger of different interpretations of the definitions or measuring characteristics that may not be comparable (Gater, 2003).

One of the data points that IPEDS collects for every institution is its degree of urbanization, or urban-centric locale. According to IPEDS,

> Locale codes identify the geographic status of a school on an urban continuum ranging from "large city" to "rural." They are based on a school's physical address. The urban-centric locale codes introduced in this file are assigned through a methodology developed by the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division in 2005. (IPEDS Data Center, n.d.)

IPEDS includes these data for all institutions, not just those that are two-year, so it provides a consistent framework for identifying rural institutions at the baccalaureate level and beyond.

Data definitions and uniformity make the results of a study easier to understand and to generalize. While there are many definitions and classification systems that exist and scholars may argue which one is preferable, those chosen by nationally reported systems and databases help provide validity to a study. Beyond numerical definitions and

classifications, it is also important to understand how these reported characteristics influence the experience of students and staff at these institutions.

Influence of Institutional Demographics

Working at Different Types of Institutions

Recognizing some of the gaps in the data, Hirt (2006) conducted several studies related to what it means to be a student affairs professional at different types of institutions. She identified that significant amounts of research had been conducted in the student affairs field related to specific functional areas, and another pocket of research identified specific characteristics of those in the profession and their career paths, but there was a gap in the literature of what it meant to work at different types of institutions. She used the Carnegie Classification system to provide a framework for types of institutions. From her studies, she identified the nature of the campus, the nature of student affairs work, the nature of relationships, and the nature of rewards at liberal arts, religiously affiliated, comprehensive, research, historically black, community college, and Hispanic-serving institutions. Hirt's research came out of a desire to help those entering the field to understand that work environments were different at these institutional types and a realization that most graduate programs were not orienting students in that way. Hirt concluded that, "Although there are elements of student affairs administration that are similar across institutional types, the work that professionals conduct does, in fact, differ based on where they work" (p. 185). Hirt's research did not identify specific competencies needed at these different types of institutions, though, but rather it left much to the reader to infer based on the work described at each institution; it was more closely related to studies of fit, rather than competence.

Because Hirt's (2006) study used the Carnegie Classification as its framework, it did not examine any differences related to the urbanization/rurality of institutions. However, one article, published prior to her 2006 book, did identify the environment specifically at rural community colleges and found that student affairs administrators at these institutions expected to produce a large quantity of work at high quality, had little training or orientation for their positions, had little authority, were able to meet personal and family obligations, earned good salaries, and exhibited positive relationships with others on campus. Based on a study of two rural community colleges that included observations and interviews, the authors concluded that their results may have an impact on determining who will be most successful at this type of position. They also recommended a greater focus on training and orientation to smooth out the transition period for new employees, as many of the current staff in this are likely to be retiring soon (Hirt, Esteban, & McGuire, 2003).

The Hirt (2006) and Hirt, Esteban , and McGuire (2003) studies have implications for recruitment, selection, and training of student affairs staff. If institutions can accurately portray their environment and the fit that best match this environment, and if students and graduate programs could acknowledge and understand that different institutions have different environments, they could identify training or create experiences that help prepare practitioners to work in these different environments. This would generate a greater match between employee and institution.

One specific area of analysis for this study, as noted, is the difference in identifying a fit to best match the environment at rural versus nonrural institutions. While the scope of the study became much broader, a review of the literature related to

rural institutions provides an example of one area where institutional demographics do seem to influence fit.

Defining Rural

Similar to the definition of "fit," the term "rural" also has many definitions. Contextually, the word "rural" often brings about common mental images or ideas for many people. These may include:

> …fewer people, low or declining populations, relatively low average incomes (linked primarily with agricultural and extractive industry sector jobs), a shortage of alternative jobs, little or no public transportation, stores closing on Main Street, and poorer provisions of services and facilities… (Richardson, 2000, p. 1)

Beyond the shared images of the common person, researchers have studied the concept of rural in the context of many different disciplines. They have examined the impact of a rural location in disciplines including, but not limited to, sociology, psychology, geography, and education. In many cases, each study has used its own definition or concept of the term rural. This definition may also vary based on location or context within the United States as well.

In the case of IPEDS in education, the definition of rural is based on numbers and relies on the United States Census data, defining rural based on the distance from an Urbanized Area or Urbanized Cluster. In this case, the Census 2000 defined an Urban Area as, "contiguous, densely settled block groups and census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent densely settled census blocks that encompass a population of at least 50,000 people" (Urban Area Criteria, 2002, p.11667). An Urbanized Cluster was defined as, "contiguous, densely settled census block groups

and census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent densely settled census blocks that together encompass a population of at least 2,500 people, but fewer than 50,000 people" (Urban Area Criteria, 2002, p. 11667). As seen in Chapter I, these definitions present a spectrum of population from most populated, or urban, to least populated, or rural. The United States Census has defined rural as those areas which do not fall into either of the above definitions.

In sociology, Bell (2007) examined how most sociologists defined rural in their studies and identified that they frequently used a material or numerically defined definition, or one based on qualitative ideals and characteristics. He stated that many times the definition of rural was given, as in the Census definition, by defining urban and then defining rural as that which was not urban. He said others defined rural based on images of things like farms, cowboy hats, and open spaces. His recommendation was that researchers should use a pluralism of both definitions in their studies.

Bosak and Perlman (1982) did an earlier and similar review of sociology and mental health studies and identified four categories of definitions of rural, explicitly stated definitions, verbal definitions, homemade quantitative definitions, and external quantitative definitions. Based on a review of 178 references including articles, books, and other sources published between 1971 and 1980, the authors found that 43% of articles used a definition of rural that they did not clearly define, 19% used a verbal definition that relied on qualitative criteria such as characteristics of an area, 15% used their own quantitative definition, and 23% used an externally established definition. The two most widely used external definitions were based on the United States Census data, and the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). (These are also the definitions

used by the Carnegie Classification system and IPEDS.) The authors identified that this diversity of definitions makes comparative analysis difficult. While they did not advocate for a specific definition, they recommended that future researchers carefully consider their definition of rural in the context of how they want to ultimately use the results of their study.

In the United States, the federal government also does not have a consistent definition of rural. There are more than 24 schemas to define the term rural in use by federal agencies alone, and they can be broken into three different types of definitions: the administrative concept, the land-use concept, and the economic concept. Based on an examination of federal agency policies and guidelines, some agencies, such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) rural development programs, base their definition of rural on municipal or jurisdictional boundaries, or the administrative concept. Other agencies, such as the United States Census Bureau, base theirs on how densely settled an area is, or the land-use concept. Finally, primarily research agencies look at the influence of an urban area on the labor, trade, and media markets, or the economic concept. This is another example of the point that the definition chosen needs to best fit the circumstances at hand (Cromartie & Buchholtz, 2008).

These authors helped to illustrate that in order for this research to be comparable in the future, the definition of rural that is chosen is critical. They also illustrated that the definition of rural goes beyond the idea of numbers or "not urban" and includes the qualitative impact of images and characteristics of this environment. It was also important to examine this perspective of rural in the context of higher education.

Rural Higher Education

It is well known that institutions of higher education exist in rural environments throughout the United States (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007); however, limited research has been conducted in this area regarding baccalaureate and graduate institutions. Those articles which have been written are most often regarding rural community colleges and are often not based on empirical research. Rural community college research will be used to establish a baseline for characteristics of rural institutions because it is where scholars have conducted the wealth of the research. Some of these characteristics include the comprehensive mission of these institutions, the role they serve in their communities, and unique challenges they face when compared to urban or suburban institutions.

Because rural institutions, and particularly rural community colleges, are often the primary source of higher education for a large geographical area, they have a very comprehensive mission. They are required to meet the needs at all educational levels within their service area, often requiring faculty to teach students with varying levels of ability (Cavan, 1995). The institutions are often open access with a mission to provide higher education to anyone who may desire it, again requiring them to meet the needs of students with a diversity of abilities (Cejda & Leist, 2006). Because of the limited opportunities for higher education in an area, they are also challenged to provide a comprehensive curriculum, sometimes eliminating specializations or delivery methods that other institutions can offer when they are not required to meet such a diversity of needs (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). This comprehensive mission often impacts staffing because these institutions need to hire faculty and staff who can work with a diverse

student body and who understand the need for a comprehensive curriculum, sometimes sacrificing specificity.

One of the other primary characteristics of rural institutions is the unique role they play in their communities. As Miller and Tuttle (2007) described, from the perspective of one rural community college administrator, "Folks come to town for other reasons, although there are not really that many,…but, by and large, we are known as the hometown of the college" (p. 125). Because the institution is often a significant source of employment and a reason that many people are drawn to live in or visit a rural community, several studies have been conducted on how these institutions contribute to the economic development of their community and how this can be measured (Garza & Eller, 1998; Manning, Campbell, & Triplett, 2004; Miller & Kissinger, 2007). It is not known, though, if this economic development is a result of the college being located in the community or a result of these colleges being located in communities that were already more economically developed. In their examination of the 58 counties in North Carolina that contain community colleges, Pennington, Pittman, and Hurley (2001) found that counties with a community college did not show a significant difference than those without a community college in the areas of percent of population graduated from high school, family income, percent of the population employed, percent employed in agricultural occupations, or the percent employed in manufacturing occupations. However, they did find that when controlled for population, counties with community colleges did have significantly higher retail sales. They concluded that the presence of a community college was associated with as much as 8% to 11% of the economic

development within a county. This study, though, did not differentiate as specifically within the context of rural institutions.

Another author identified that rural community colleges should play a key role in the strategic planning for their community (Cavan, 1995). Miller and Kissinger (2007) also stated that one of the key differences between rural community colleges and their suburban and urban peers was the potential for impact they have in the community where they are located and identified four roles that rural community colleges fill including: leisure education, cultural enrichment, economic development, and continuing education. They posited that these four roles have the potential for an even greater impact if the institution collaborates with other public service agencies in the community. Often, these colleges are also a primary source of employment within a community. In terms of staffing, it is important to identify faculty, staff, and administrators who understand and value the roles the institution plays in the community and also who can advocate for the roles of the institution to community members (Cavan, 1995).

Because of the current state of the economy, most institutions of higher education are facing some measure of financial challenge. For both rural and nonrural community colleges, it is difficult to balance the mission of open access with that of affordability in times of significantly rising costs (Cejda & Leist, 2006). Rural institutions also face additional measures of financial challenge. Their economic tax base is smaller than their nonrural peers, so there is often a measure of instability in funding (Baer, 2006). Other challenges include fewer students, a funding formula that is based on credit hours (Fluharty & Scaggs, 2007), higher operating costs per student, high dependency on state funding, high-cost technical curricula, and a struggle to gain the same federal workforce

incentives when compared to their suburban and urban counterparts (Katsinas, Alexander, & Opp, 2003). Another concern for rural institutions is fundraising. While rural institutions may have more reported revenue than their urban and suburban counterparts, often due to the active lobbying of rural legislators, they often struggle in the area of fundraising because of a lack of donors with the ability to make large endowments within their service area. With less revenue coming from government sources and more from fundraising in the current economic crisis, this could cause significant problems for these institutions in the future (Dowd, 2005). These challenges with finances can cause issues with staffing in the areas of offering competitive salaries and enough positions to be able to manage the workload.

In relation to staffing and salaries specifically, Glover, Simpson, and Waller (2009) studied community colleges in Texas and identified that college faculty at rural institutions had salaries that were significantly lower than their metropolitan community college peers. Other challenges unique to rural institutions include out-migration of population from rural communities (Baer, 2006) impacting both enrollment as well as the pool of eligible staffing hires, recruiting students, and faculty and staff turnover (Cejda & Leist, 2006). All of these challenges have a direct impact on the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff at rural institutions through the challenging working conditions they create.

Staffing at rural institutions. Because rural institutions face unique challenges and circumstances that can make recruitment of qualified faculty and staff more challenging (Isaac & Boyer, 2007), and there is a high projected turnover for rural community college faculty and administrative leadership within the next few years

(Berry, Hammons, & Denny, 2001; Murray, 2010), several articles have been written examining this issue and proposing solutions to the problem.

A small pocket of research was focused on rural community college faculty and administrative leadership. These articles identified the paths faculty and administrative leaders took to get to their roles in these institutions, some of the barriers to recruitment, and suggestions for ways to overcome these challenges. Allen and Cejda (2007) examined Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) at rural community colleges to try to understand how they reached their current positions. The authors found that the administrative labor market for CAOs at rural community colleges is relatively closed; few individuals gain the CAO position without prior rural community college experience. They also found a high likelihood of internal promotion within the same institution. The authors felt that this implied that those who wish to seek a rural community college administrator position should start working in that environment early in their career, and from the institutional standpoint, this lends itself to the idea of grow-your-own leadership programs.

Given that many CAOs are drawn from the ranks of those faculty currently working at rural community colleges, it is also important to examine how these faculty are initially entering into the system. While most studies have examined the challenges of the rural environment, one particular study articulated that benefits of the rural environment may come in non-monetary forms.

> The more natural, rural surroundings escape the problems associated with more populated areas. Emphasis on community often culminates in a more integrated and personal instructional environment. Faculty members can experience the

> advantages of shorter commutes to and from work sites and more comprehensive involvement in the operations of the institutions. (Glover, Simpson, & Waller, 2009, p. 48)

This information could be used to help sell faculty on these positions.

In looking at some of the challenges of the selection process, Murray (2010) identified that faculty members were often selected because they possess the minimum qualifications and not because the interviewers believed they would fit in the community college culture. This fit includes a heavy teaching load and serving a diverse student population; he posited that many hiring committees are not trained to look for these qualities, despite research which shows that faculty members who buy into this culture are more positive and successful. So, in order to resolve the issue of having successful administrative leaders to grow within the system for future roles, it may be important to focus on the issues at the point of entry.

Several other studies have identified additional challenges to recruiting qualified faculty to rural community colleges. These challenges included: fewer qualified individuals in the rural environment, fit with the rural environment, salary and benefits that are not competitive with urban institutions, socialization, anticipated versus actual job expectations (Cejda, 2010), a shift to a learning paradigm in community colleges, the influence of technology, organizational hierarchy, morale, mobility opportunities (Gibson-Harmon, Rodriguez, & Haworth, 2002), a lack of cultural, social, shopping, and recreational activities in the immediate area, a lack of interested minority or intellectually diverse candidates, challenges in working with students with diverse academic abilities, a lack of dual career opportunities for the trailing spouse, faculty workload, and geographic

location (Murray, 2007). While some of these challenges are similar or related, the large quantity of different challenges and the lack of consistency in identifying the primary challenge in faculty recruitment mean that there is likely not one common resolution that will solve the overall problem. This has not stopped authors from making suggestions as to how the issues might be resolved, though.

Different authors have proposed different solutions; however, these solutions for the most part have not been tested to determine their success rate. Allen and Cejda (2007) suggested that institutions might benefit from developing programs to train leaders from within a system and establish a coordinated effort with succession planning. In a different study, Cejda (2010) recommended that faculty be socialized into the rural environment during the recruitment process through the creation of realistic job previews, even before they are hired. He also suggested that developing joint advertisements with K-12 schools or four-year institutions in the area could increase the pool of candidates or the development of a state-wide teaching fellows program with a four-year institution.

Murray and Cunningham (2004) identified that many community college faculty were drawn to their institutions by the recommendation of someone who was currently working in the institution or through the current adjunct pool at the institution. They recommended that community college leaders might benefit from involving current faculty in the recruitment process or examining the adjunct pool for interest in becoming full-time faculty members. In a later article, Murray (2007) also recommended that administrators assist in identifying dual career opportunities for the trailing spouse, consider recruiting from alumni of the institution who have gone on for further education, and examine compensation and work-life balance packages to entice retention. Finally,

Gibson-Harmon, Rodriguez, and Haworth (2002) suggested that faculty hiring challenges could be addressed by examining how faculty and staff are prepared for community college roles, providing care and attention to the career paths of faculty and staff, and understanding the community college culture.

While these studies did not directly address student affairs staff members or staffing practices at baccalaureate and graduate institutions, many of these challenges were related to the dynamics of the rural environment and the personal challenges it presents, so they are likely transferable across institutional type. One common theme across these challenges and recommendations is what it means to have a good person-environment "fit" with the institution.

"Fit" with rural institutions. Another collection of studies identified that fit and institutional culture are important for faculty and leader satisfaction at rural community colleges (Eddy, 2007a; Eddy, 2007b; Lesit, 2007a; Leist, 2007b; Murray, 2005; Murray, 2010; Murray & Cunningham, 2004; Pennington, Williams, & Karvonen, 2006; Twombly, 2005) . In most cases, the articles on staffing at rural institutions defined "fit" as the qualities or traits that make a candidate successful and satisfied with a position and institution, as opposed to academic or professional qualifications required in the job description. The authors then made recommendations of how to address this issue in the recruitment process.

Several studies have examined fit for presidents at rural community colleges. Eddy (2007b) concluded that community college presidents faced a lack of anonymity and required a fit with the rural environment in their leadership position. Based on a larger study regarding the role of rural community college presidents and community

change, she found that a new president was often surprised by the lack of anonymity in a rural community. No matter where they went or what they did, they were always identified in their role as president. Relationship building with community members and all levels of faculty and staff members was also critical and expected; they seemed to desire being included in the decision making process, and they desired more personable, informal interactions with the president. In a separate study, Eddy (2007a) identified that presidents at rural institutions faced different challenges than their nonrural peers in that they were less likely to deal with multicultural issues, but they were more likely to face leadership development challenges in growing their leaders from within.

Similarly, Leist (2007a) found that, in order to be most successful, a rural community college president may need traits that are specific to this position and not just those of a successful organizational leader; these included situational awareness, the ability to tell the story of the institution, and rural roots. He found that presidents at rural community colleges must embrace the local culture of the community where their college was located and understand how their institution fits into that culture. He also found, like Eddy (2007b), that there was a high expectation of community involvement, and presidents must use these opportunities to tell the story of the institution. Finally, Leist (2007a) found that community college presidents with rural roots tended to understand and fit in better with the rural culture. These rural roots not only helped presidents to know better what to expect, it "tells external constituents that a president understands their struggles and their way of life" (p. 319).

Additional studies have been conducted on fit of faculty members at rural community colleges. For faculty, this fit involved being comfortable living and working

in a rural community, a willingness to celebrate in students' accomplishments (Murray, 2005), a heavy teaching load, a desire to serve a diverse student population (Murray, 2010), rural roots or connections to the geographic area (Twombly, 2005), and a desire to place a greater emphasis on teaching than research (Wolfe & Strange, 2003). Some of these are likely attributable to the institutional type (community colleges) and some to the rural environment, but these studies did not distinguish between the two.

Research studies have conflicting findings on how this connection and fit influence hiring practices. Murray (2010) identified that many institutional hiring practices do not focus on finding a faculty member who fits with the institution, but rather on those meeting the minimal qualifications, while Twombly (2005) found that search committees at smaller, regional community colleges placed a strong emphasis on fit. Pennington, Williams, and Karvonen (2006) found that institutions have struggled over time to find qualified individuals at all levels of positions, including administrative leaders, faculty, and staff and stated that individuals are more likely to self-select out of these institutions when there is not a fit than they are to be fired. Despite some disagreement, it is clear that P-E fit has an impact at these institutions. Since this has not been defined or examined in terms of job qualifications or competencies at this point, it is often not clearly defined in a job announcement or position description. The authors of these studies have made recommendations of how the concept of fit can be incorporated into the recruitment and selection process.

Eddy (2010) posited that may faculty are not socialized to work at community colleges, and particularly rural community colleges. By identifying the unique challenges they faced, she felt that a focus should be placed on these challenges in faculty

development or possibly different emphases in graduate programs. Others have recommended that rurality should be implemented into job descriptions and marketing tools (Leist, 2007b; Murray, 2005; Murray & Cunningham, 2004), rural community colleges should consider growing their own leaders from within, and graduate programs who are preparing these leaders should examine how they are preparing students to work in these environments (Leist, 2007a). "Ruralizing" job descriptions may include information on the mission, location, culture, and constituencies of the institution as well as specific traits and characteristics that identified with the rural nature of the institution (Leist, 2007b). Both of these ideas indirectly refer to the idea of identifying staff and faculty with P-O and P-G fit. Another suggestion involved training search committees to look for those traits or characteristics which have been found in successful faculty or leaders in their positions (Murray, 2010).

From these studies, it was clear that fit at rural institutions is something to consider in the selection process for new faculty and administrators, and this may be unique at rural institutions as compared to those that are not rural. Several gaps in the literature included that this topic had not been examined for student affairs staff, it had not been examined at rural institutions beyond community colleges, and it had not been studied in a way that incorporates research on P-E fit.

"Grow-your-own" programs. Because studies have shown that rural community college leaders are more satisfied and often more successful if they have a rural background or experience at a rural institution (likely that they have P-O fit), several authors have recommended that administrators should consider creating leadership or faculty development programs that allow institutions to create a succession

plan by growing potential leaders from within the institution (Allen & Cejda, 2007; Leist, 2007a;. Mitchell & Eddy, 2008). These studies have been in the areas of professional leadership development and collaboration with graduate programs for academic preparation.

After finding that most rural community college CAOs got to their position with prior rural community college experience and many had experience at the same institution, Allen and Cejda (2007) posited that institutions should consider a grow-your-own leadership program to prepare faculty members for this role. Leist (2007a) drew similar conclusions with his findings regarding rural community college presidents. Mitchell and Eddy (2008) found that many midlevel community college administrators at both rural and nonrural institutions did not begin their careers intending to work in a community college or to seek out leadership positions within their colleges. They also found that there was no formal structure in place to mentor midlevel leaders and develop them in the areas of administration and leadership. If faculty and staff do not begin their career considering working at rural community colleges or think about being leaders at these institutions, a leadership development program might be critical in identifying those with potential that may not identify it in themselves.

Most of the studies related to academic preparation of rural community college leaders focused on doctoral program access and emphases and specific relationships or initiatives as case studies. One example where faculty and administrators benefitted from a fellowship program, leadership symposium, connections with a community college leadership graduate program, funding for research, and links to other state and national organizations was the MidSouth Partnership for Rural Community Colleges (Clark &

Davis, 2007). Another case study focused on a partnership between a community college district and a local university to offer a doctoral program for community college leaders. Students were allowed to focus their areas of study and internships around their personal and career-based needs (Luna, 2010). Another program at Mississippi State University was unique in that it was based on the needs of the states it serves; it offers a focus beyond higher education to rural economics and rural America (Lovell, Crittenden, Stumpf, & Davis, 2003).

Keim and Murray (2008) took an opposite approach to their study. Rather than examining the issue from the perspective of a doctoral program, they examined the highest degree of community college CAOs, both rural and nonrural. They found there was a decline in CAOs with earned doctorates since a previous study in 1985 and a lack of community college research being conducted for dissertations. The authors posited that in order to address the impending crisis for the shortage of CAOs, more doctorates needed to be offered/earned in community college leadership, and more national research in community college leadership needed to be completed. They decided that more work was needed to recruit younger scholars in community college leadership. One way to do this would be through a grow-your-own relationship or model.

Based on a need to recruit qualified leaders willing and able to work in a rural environment, these studies have recommended that growing these leaders from within an institution, with both professional leadership development and academic program access and focus. This seems to ring true across disciplines where staffing shortages occur. The recent timing of these articles showed that this is a current hot topic for administrators and researchers to resolve the current staffing issues. However, the gap exists in that

researchers had not studied whether new professionals are being hired with the intentionality that they could be developed into future administrative leaders or if they are willing to hire staff that might not meet their desired competencies or standards with the intent that those could be developed. In other words, should institutions place more emphasis on P-O fit than P-J fit? Can P-J fit be trained? Could/should rural institutions focus on hiring staff with the right P-O fit and then train them on the P-J fit aspects? There was also a gap in looking at how all of these things apply to student affairs staff and baccalaureate and graduate institutions in the same rural settings.

Theoretical Context

Werbel and Gilliland (1999) provided a model for considering the concept of fit and human resource practices on a broader level. While most studies in the literature have focused on person-job (P-J) fit, they posited that more must be considered. These three considerations were P-J fit, or the matching of employee competencies to job-related tasks, P-G fit, or matching a person's competencies to supplement the existing staff's competencies, and P-O fit, or matching the person's interests and values to the organization's culture. They defined a model of how all three parts were identified in the selection process with new employees. The predictors of P-J fit include the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the candidate. The predictors of P-O fit are the values, needs, and goals of the candidate. For P-G fit, the predictors include interpersonal attributes and broad-based proficiencies. Their model can be seen in Figure 2. Werbel and Gilland also pointed out that finding a good fit for job performance in these three areas requires an understanding at the individual, group, and organizational level.

Werbel and DeMarie (2005) built on the earlier model. They acknowledged that all three types of fit can be important within an organization, but they posited that most firms should strategically identify one as the primary driver of their human resource management (HRM) practices and consider the other two their secondary drivers. They posited that organizations would be most successful if all of their HRM practices were geared towards the same type of fit. They went beyond selection in the previous model and defined how the three types of fit could impact recruitment, training and development, compensation, and performance evaluation. Applied to higher education and student affairs specifically, this may mean that certain types of institutions may place different levels of importance in the hiring process on the specific types of fit. As Hirt (2006) identified, the nature of the work and nature of the rewards (P-J fit), the nature of the campus (P-O fit), and the nature of the relationships (P-G fit) were unique at different types of institutions. A comparison of institutions by type would be the way to identify if institutions recognize these differences and look for different fits of candidates based on them.

Summary

The literature on student affairs staffing helps to identify the challenge of the high attrition rate of entry level student affairs professionals and the importance of understanding their experience in order to best prepare them for their transition into the professional world. Some of this preparation comes in identifying and training on the importance of P-E fit, including competencies for student affairs professionals, modified by the realization that the socialization and competencies for professionals may be impacted by institutional and workgroup climate and culture. The P-E fit literature offers

a model that may help to provide greater definition and framework to these differences across institutions. In examining the influence of individual interviewer and institutional demographics, the difference between rural and nonrural institutions is one interesting area of analysis. Authors have articulated that rural environments are unique and have different characteristics and challenges than urban and suburban institutions. The institutions of higher education in rural areas serve an important and comprehensive role in these environments. Staffing of faculty and high-level administrators at rural institutions is often difficult and the right employee-environment fit is important, and institutions have sought out solutions to develop professionals and leaders to work in these settings.

This is where the gap in the literature is situated- what are these differences and how do we select new staff members based on the best fit to these differences? Are different types of institutions focused on searching for different types of fit, or should they be? Studies of fit may help to prepare graduate students for the differences in the work environments in these areas in order to help them best identify their own fit in the job selection process. Combined with the literature on rural institutions, studies of fit may help to identify factors important in "ruralizing" job descriptions and developing a training agenda for "grow-your-own" development programs.

The next chapter presents a review of the methodology of this study designed to address this gap. This includes the design of the study, the population studied, the instrument used, how the data was collected, and how the data was analyzed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This purpose of this dissertation study was to examine the concept of "fit" with student affairs (specifically residence life) professionals at colleges and universities using Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework/model of describing person-environment (P-E) fit, as described in Chapter I. After confirming the model, comparisons were examined among institutions to see how desired fit of new professional candidates varied based on institutional characteristics. Do institutions place an emphasis on a different type of fit unique to their setting? Or, do they desire and recruit and hire the professionals with the same fit as all other institutions?

This purpose was operationalized through the execution of a web-based survey to professionals in the student affairs field in higher education. This chapter will outline how this dissertation study was carried out. It should be noted that a pilot study for this survey was conducted in fall 2011 as part of an independent study project for EFR 592, Independent Research in Education. A summary of the results and changes from the pilot study are noted later in this chapter.

Research Questions

1. Does Werbel and Gilliland's model (1999) apply to the selection processes for new student affairs professionals, specifically those in residence life?

2. Does the type of P-E fit that professionals believe is the most important, match with the criteria for the type of fit they are looking for with their hiring decisions?
3. Are there individual or institutional demographic factors that influence P-E fit in the selection process?
4. Do professionals at rural institutions desire to hire individuals with different types of P-E fit than those at nonrural institutions?

Survey Methodology

Survey methodology is a common method of quantitative research. One of the advantages of using this method for this study was the ease of getting a large geographic sample when compared to other methods (Krathwohl, 1998). Because rurality/urbanization was an independent variable in this study, this was a very important consideration. A survey was also valuable because there are a limited number of student affairs or housing professionals at each institution; a multi-institution study was needed to test the model and gain a comparison sample based on institutional differences. Finally, it allowed for anonymity of the participant, which may enhance the accuracy of responses.

Response rate is also a consideration with online survey methodology. As access to participants has become easier with the ability to transmit surveys online, it also means that participants are being asked to fill out more surveys, possibly experiencing survey fatigue. One way that this was combatted for this dissertation study was through the use of incentives. A research grant was secured through the Upper Midwest Region of the Association of College and University Housing Officers (UMR-ACUHO) to offer five,

$20 Amazon.com gift cards to randomly chosen participants as incentives for completing the survey.

The research design in this case was cross-sectional, meaning that data were collected from a broad array of participants at one point in time. This particular design is appropriate because the purpose of this study was not to measure change in fit over time. In addition, it also allowed for questions to be asked in a "retrospective or prospective manner" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 213). In order to get a greater sample size, the survey questions regarding fit were asked in a hypothetical scenario format for all participants. This allowed the sample to be expanded to all who participate in the selection process rather than just those who have hiring responsibility. Martin and Polivka (1995) examined the impact of hypothetical vignettes in survey construction and posited that this method would be useful in a variety of situations including measuring contextual meaning of key constructs, and in situations when a "survey requires participants to make implicit or explicit judgments about the scope of complex phenomena" (p. 565).

The survey was administered electronically using the Survey Monkey web service. See Appendix A for a full version of the survey. To ensure confidentiality, responses to the online survey were protected with encryption. Survey Monkey provides SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) protocol for transmitting private documents or information via the Internet. It works through a 128-bit cryptographic system that secures a connection between a client and a server, allowing downloading collected data over a secured channel. This is commonly used for online banking sites or sites that transmit secured information (R. Stupnisky, personal communication, September 19, 2011).

Approval to conduct the survey was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota (UND). Because the Oshkosh Placement Exchange did not have its own IRB, they deferred to the permission granted by UND. See Appendix B for the approved IRB request.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in fall 2011 to determine if an instrument could be developed to examine Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) three dimensions of P-E fit, person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), and person-group (P-G) fits. Given that the specific model had not been empirically tested before, the pilot study was important to measure the reliability and validity of the created instrument. This pilot study tested the predictor domains, fit constructs, and subcomponents of job performance from the model.

For the pilot study, the sample was full-time residence life professionals who had been employed at their respective institution for at least one year from six public, graduate institutions in the Midwest. A total of 44 usable responses were collected from a sample of 100 participants.

The data analysis indicated that the pilot study confirmed what Kristof-Brown, Jansen, and Colbert (2002) found; there are multiple distinct constructs within P-E fit. A few questions did not hold with the model and were eliminated. After the elimination of troublesome questions, the final reliability data indicated an acceptable to strong Cronbach's alpha for each of the three fit constructs (P-J fit=.64, P-O fit=.79, P-G fit=.76), indicating that the data should be replicable. When factor analysis was completed, the three dimensions of fit were each able to be fit into their own single constructs. By forcing the items into a single factor for each dimension of fit, the three

single factors accounted for 40.8% (P-J fit), 39.1% (P-O fit), and 30.9% (P-G fit) of the variance with Eigenvalues of 2.04, 3.52, and 3.40, respectively. In addition, the correlation data amongst the three factors indicated that there was not such a strong correlation among the constructs that they were measuring the same concept. (Correlation values ranged from .04 to .27). These three pieces of evidence together indicated that the questions were likely measuring three different types of fit, as Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework suggested.

One interesting finding from the pilot study, though, was that each of the fit constructs had an improved Cronbach's alpha when the questions regarding the predictor domains were added into the fit construct (P-J fit=.43 to .56, P-O fit=.59 to .79, and P-G fit=.74 to.76). (These values were calculated before any questions were eliminated. Final values are shown above.) This led to the possibility that Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework might be slightly different than proposed. The predictor domains seemed to be indicators of the type of fit, while also a part of the fit construct, as indicated in the new proposed framework in Figure 3.

In other words, the predictor variables were themselves included in the broader definition of each type of fit. It is difficult to define each type of fit without using the predictor variables in the definition, and the pilot study data seemed to confirm that they are in fact one construct.

Like the predictor domains, most of the subcomponents of job performance had significant correlations, $p<.05$, with the fit constructs (with the predictor domains included), as proposed in Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework. The questions for those subcomponents that did not correlate with the (revised) fit constructs (job

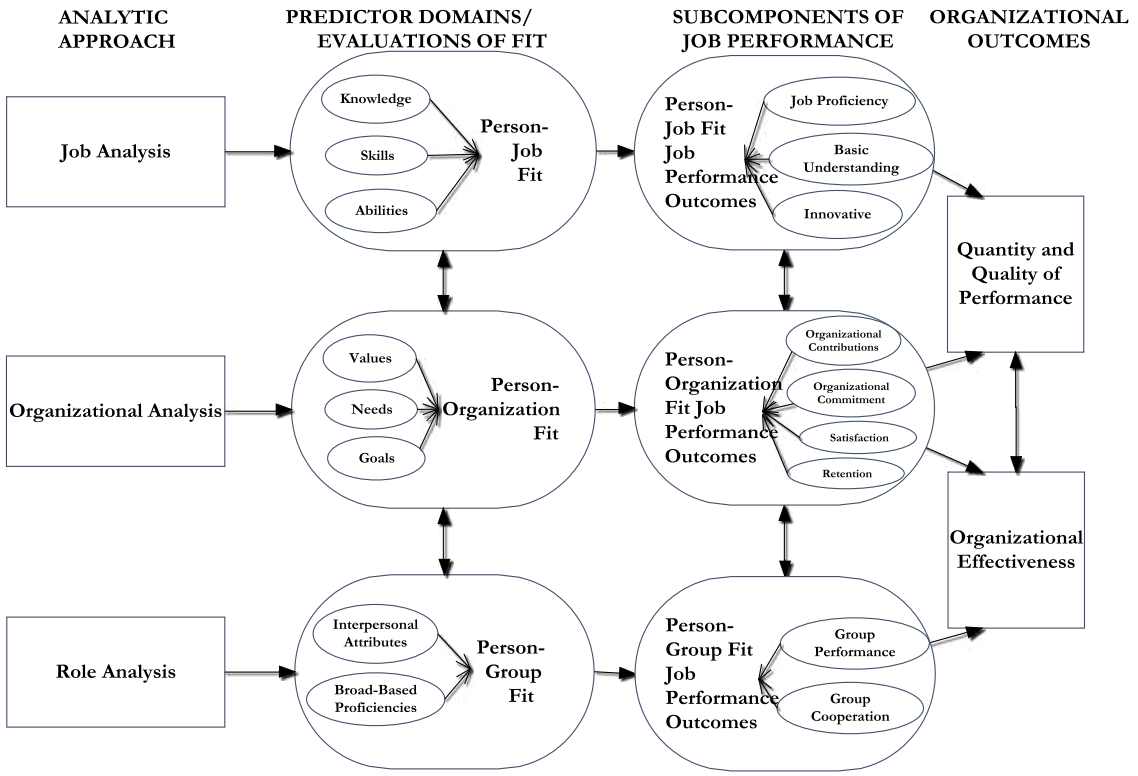


Figure 3. Proposed application of Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework of person-environment fit in the selection process of new housing/residence life professionals, derived from pilot study.

proficiency, technical understanding, work innovations, and organizational citizenship behaviors) were re-examined and rewritten for the dissertation study. For example, in the job performance outcomes section, "Technical Understanding" was relabeled "Basic Understanding", as the term "technical" is often associated with technology skills in student affairs, rather than basic job skills as implied by the model. Werbel and Gilliland's framework was proposed as a general human resource or business model, so the decision was made that the phrasing of the outcomes needed to be altered to make them more in line with student affairs language and concepts before they were completely eliminated from the model.

From the analysis of the pilot study results, there was confidence that a slightly modified version of Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model did apply to student affairs, and

the instrument created was a realistic measure of the model. Modifications were made to correct some of the problematic areas from the pilot, and then the research project proceeded with the full dissertation study.

Dissertation Study

Research Procedures

Participants and setting. The population for this dissertation study was full-time student affairs professionals who had been employed at their institutions since at least September 15, 2011 and participated in some facet of the selection process of new residence life professionals in the spring 2012 recruitment process. Length of time at an institution was included as a criterion to ensure that the participant had experience with the culture and expectations of their current institution. The study was limited to full-time staff, because graduate students may not have had the time or experience to understand organizational culture and may not have the same investment with regards to hiring staff for the organization if their tenure is approximately two years in most cases.

The sample for this dissertation study was chosen from a subset of student affairs professionals, namely those employed in residence life/housing at institutions participating in the Oshkosh Placement Exchange (OPE). OPE has taken place at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh for the last 32 years, and it is a job selection conference that brings together employers from colleges and universities seeking new staff for student affairs positions, primarily in residence life, with candidates who are seeking these types of positions. In 2012, 154 colleges and universities from 35 states were represented; 268 unique position openings were posted at the conference (Oshkosh Placement Exchange, 2012). Permission was obtained from the Oshkosh Placement

Exchange co-chairs to obtain access to this sample (See Appendix B). Employers were informed of the survey and how to opt-in or out when they registered for the conference, which took place from March 1-4, 2012 (L. Develice Collins, personal communication, October 3, 2011).

Framework. The initial pilot study was based on Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) proposed model. As previously described, based on the pilot study, this model was amended slightly to create a new proposed model for student affairs (see Figure 3).

Instrument. The survey consisted of 55 items. When placed into Survey Monkey, there were 24 questions, as some questions contained multiple items. See Appendix A for the entire survey. The pilot survey consisted of 62 items, but through the initial/pilot data analysis, several items were recommended to be changed and/or removed. All of the person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), and person-group (P-G) fit questions are based on the scenario:

> You have just interviewed an applicant for the most educationally qualified hall director position (as indicated in the initial demographic questions) in your current organization (as indicated in the initial demographic questions). Please rate the importance of each of the following criteria on your decision to recommend the applicant be hired for the position **based on their fit to the (job, organization, staff team)**.

Measures. Sample questions for each of the fit constructs and predictor domains can be seen in Table 1. See Appendix A for the entire survey.

Table 1. Sample Fit and Predictor Domain Questions.

Construct/Predictor Domain	Example Question
Person-Job Fit	The applicant's fit to the requirements of this job
- Knowledge	The applicant has the knowledge necessary to understand the components of the job
- Skills	The fit between the requirements of the job and the applicant's personal skills
- Abilities	The fit of the applicant's abilities to the requirements of the job
Person-Organization Fit	The applicant's fit with the organization
- Values	The organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things the applicant values in life
- Needs	The terms and conditions of employment fit with those the applicant thinks he/she should have
- Goals	The opportunities for growth and development fit with those the applicant thinks he/she should have
Person-Group Fit	The applicant's fit with the current employees that would be part of their work team
- Interpersonal Abilities	The applicant's ability to develop and support quality interpersonal interactions with the existing staff team.
- Broad-based Proficiencies	The applicant's ability to develop collegial relationships with the existing staff team

Individual demographics. Eight items were related to demographics of the individual participants and were placed at the end of the survey. These included age, educational attainment, whether the participant earned any of their degrees from his/her current institution, professional status/level, years of experience in his/her current position, and at his/her current institution, hiring responsibility, and gender identification.

Institutional demographics. Seven items were related to institutional demographics. These questions asked about the full name of the institution, institutional control (public, private, for-profit etc.), type of institution, the employment status, educational qualifications, and number of hall directors at the institution. The final question asked how the participant defined 'organization' relative to their considerations in hiring hall directors. The question regarding the name of the institution was used to

associate respective IPEDS data regarding urbanization/rurality with the institution as well as their Carnegie Classification.

Fit measures. For each of the three dimensions of fit, two types of questions were asked. First, questions were asked about the type of fit in a holistic sense. Then, questions were asked about each predictor variable related to that particular definition of fit. For example, for P-J fit, the first three questions were related to fit overall, the fourth question had to do with skills, the fifth question with abilities, and the sixth and seventh questions with knowledge. See Table 1 for examples and Appendix A for the entire list of questions.

Person-job fit. Three items related to P-J fit overall were based on measures from Kristof-Brown (2000) and Higgins and Judge (2004). These were designed to measure how likely employers are to look for candidates that fit the best with the qualifications or knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the job. All responses were based on a 5-point scale with (1=not at all important) to (5=very important) as anchors. The final four questions related to the predictor domain items for P-J fit from Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model- knowledge, skills, and abilities. Two of these were based on measures by Cable and DeRue (2002) and two were measures developed by the author of this study. They were designed to highlight these domains specifically to identify if the domains in fact were related to P-J fit. All responses were based on a 5-point scale with (1=not at all important) to (5=very important) as anchors.

Person-organization fit. Three items related to P-O fit overall were based on measures from Kristof-Brown (2000). These were designed to measure how likely employers are to look for candidates that fit the best with the organizational culture,

values, and goals. The final six questions in this section related to the predictor domain items for P-O fit from the framework. Five of these were based on measures by Cable and DeRue (2002) and Edwards and Billsberry (2010) and were designed to highlight the predictor domains of needs, values, and goals specifically to identify if the domains in fact are related to P-O fit. One item was developed by the author to capture a remaining area of professional goals. All responses were based on a 5-point scale with (1=not at all important) to (5=very important) as anchors.

Person-group fit. Because this area is the least-studied of the three types of P-E fit in Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework, there were no previous measures on which to base the questions; therefore, all questions were created by the author. Eight items related to P-G fit overall. These were designed to measure how likely employers are to look for candidates that fit the best with the existing staff team. The final three questions related to the predictor domain items for P-G fit from the framework: interpersonal attributes and broad-based proficiencies. All responses were based on a 5-point scale with (1=not at all important) to (5=very important) as anchors.

Job-performance outcomes. Participants were asked to assess which subcomponents of job performance from the Werbel and Gilliland (1999) framework were most desired in hall-director candidates. These outcomes included job proficiency, basic understanding, innovative, organizational contributions, satisfaction, organizational commitment, retention, group performance, and group cooperation. Complete definitions can be seen in the full survey in Appendix A. These outcomes were addressed in two ways. For the first assessment, they were asked nine questions with the prompt: 'Please indicate how important you think each of the following job-performance outcomes would

be for hall director staff hired for your department at your institution.' Each outcome was defined based on research by Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001), Cable and DeRue (2002), Edwards and Shipp (2007), and the author's personal knowledge based on the literature in this area and experience as a housing professional. Each response was based on a 5-point scale with (1=not at all important) to (5=very important) as anchors. In other words, in this section participants were asked to rate each of the job performance outcomes (Job Proficiency, Basic Understanding, Innovative, organizational Contributions, Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Retention, Group Performance, and Group Cooperation). For the second part, participants were asked to rank the outcomes in order of importance from a hall-director candidate from 9=most important to 1=least important. In other words, this time the outcomes were considered as a group, and participants were asked to rank each of the outcomes in comparison with the others. This question was asked in order to be able to eliminate the positive bias of the previous question if a participant deemed all the outcomes as very important.

Person-environment fit. Participants were asked to rank the three types of fit based on which they put the most emphasis on when hiring from most important (1) to least important (3). This helped to offer a comparison of whether participants ranked each of the types of fit in the same way they did their associated variables.

Data collection. The survey for this study was distributed online, as mentioned, and all results were collected via the Internet. The dissertation study was introduced to participants initially via the online registration for OPE. A statement in the registration process read:

> Research Study- OPE Employers will be invited to participate in a higher education research study related to hiring processes for professional staff. At the time of the invitation, you can choose whether to be in the study or not. Participation or non-participation will not affect your service or status as an employer. (L. Develice Collins, personal communication, October 3, 2011)

At the conference in March, representatives from the author's home institution attending OPE passed out postcards to participants, notifying them that they would be receiving an email inviting them to participate in the survey, and the survey link was also included, should participants choose to access it directly outside of the email. After the conference was held, an email was sent to an OPE staff member. This email was forwarded by the OPE staff member to all primary OPE contacts for each participating institution, and it introduced them to the author and the dissertation study, explained the purpose of the dissertation study, and it asked them to forward the directions for completing the dissertation study on to any full-time staff member at his/her institution who participates in the hall director selection process. The forwarded directions included an introduction to the survey, an estimate as to the amount of time to complete the survey, the date requested for completion, an assurance of confidentiality, and details on the incentive drawing. The survey took approximately ten minutes per participant to complete. Participants were given approximately three weeks to complete the survey. Two additional reminders were sent to participants in the three week time span. Because of the way that the survey was distributed, the reminders went to all participants, regardless of whether or not that person had already completed the survey. A sample of the post card and text from all three emails are included in Appendix C.

The introductory email informed participants that in exchange for participating in the dissertation study, they could also be entered into a drawing for one of five, $20 Amazon.com gift cards. After completing the dissertation study survey, participants were invited to link to a separate survey to enter into the drawing for one of the prizes.

Explanation of data analysis. Data analysis was completed by the author, with the use of the SPSS and AMOS software packages. Two stages of data analysis were conducted. First, a psychometric analysis of the instrument relative to Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model was conducted. This closely followed the data analysis procedures of the pilot study. Then, tests were run to determine if there were significant differences in the findings based on elements of the environment, such as rurality/urbanization. These methods of analysis are outlined here.

Statistical software. The data were initially downloaded from Survey Monkey into a Microsoft Excel file. After numerically coding the non-numerical responses, the data were copied into SPSS 19. Frequencies, descriptive statistics, reliability calculations, factor analysis, ANOVAs, and correlations were all computed with this program. Finally, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) were conducted using AMOS.

Missing data. Minimal amounts of missing data were anticipated and realized. Missing data resulted from participants missing a solitary question or not completing the survey entirely, so the greatest amount of missing data were on the personal demographics of the participant, the last page of the survey. Missing data were accounted for using the processes in the statistical software packages. SPSS calculations

accounted for missing data using the pairwise procedure, and AMOS used the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) process.

Scale composition. Each of the fit constructs were measured with fit items and predictor items for each type of fit. The score for the subscale was calculated by adding the items scores and dividing by the number of items to calculate the scale mean. In some instances, the predictor questions were included in the fit scales, and in other cases they were not; these areas of difference are noted throughout. These scores on each scale ranged from 1 to 5; the higher the score, the greater the desire for that type of fit.

Normality. The first analysis examined the skewness for each of the fit questions and the predictor domains. Skewness is a measure of how far the curve of the frequency distribution is from the normal curve. If a variable has a skewness outside the range of +1.0 to -1.0, the distribution is considered skewed, and different types of analysis may need to be computed (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). Skewness is a particular concern because the study focuses on what types of characteristics a professional views as important in the selection process. This helps to see if participants defined any of these as unimportant.

Reliability. Reliability is a measure of internal consistency of a scale. If you were to repeat the test or choose any measure in the scale, how likely are you to get the same answer? Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used type of internal consistency assessment. Cronbach's alpha is typically used when there are several scaled items summated to measure one central construct. It essentially measures the average correlation of every item in the scale with every other item. A desired Cronbach's alpha is above .70; however, it is common to see results of .60 to .69 if the scale only has a few

items (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). The advantage of this particular measure is that it can be used in the case of one administration of a survey, such as in this study. Reliability measures were calculated for each of the fit constructs, both with and without the predictor domains.

Validity. Validity is the extent to which a test or scale measures what it is intended to measure. Validity of a measure allows for proper interpretation of the results (Brown, 1976). The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* suggests that there are five types of evidence that can be used to demonstrate validity- evidence from test construct, internal structure, relationship to other variables, response processes, and consequences of testing. The most applicable evidence in this case can be determined from the internal structure of the survey. This is the evidence which shows that the participants will respond to the multiple items that represent the same construct in the same way. For example, if there are five items representing a specific type of fit, participants should respond in the same way to those five items. This is most often determined through factor analysis (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005).

Factor analysis is a multivariate correlational statistic that allows a researcher to determine if a group of variables represent a smaller number of constructs (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). Factor analysis measures the correlation of the variables to the overall construct and the amount of variance that can be accounted for by the construct; the higher the variance that is accounted for, the higher the construct validity (Brown, 1976). In this case, the survey was designed to measure three factors, P-J fit, P-O fit, and P-G fits; therefore, a factor analysis was completed for each construct. This calculation was

done when considering each individual factor and its related items, as well as through confirmatory factor analysis in the structural equation modeling process.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005) also explained the other types of evidence of validity from the *Standards of Educational and Psychological Testing*. Evidence from test content is often used in achievement testing or tests of skill and proficiency and is a demonstration that the items on a test represent the theory or background that they intend to represent. Evidence from relationship to other variables is most often used when a test is designed to predict behavior. If the tests were designed to predict how well a student would do in a math class, this evidence would be provided by showing the test results in comparison to the actual math class grades. It is not as applicable in this case, because it was beyond the scope of the current study to measure if the types of fit actually predict the outcomes. The correlation between these variables will be measured, but no outside evidence of actual fit was determined. Evidence from response processes measures if the thought process used by the test taker is consistent with the construct being measured. Again, this was beyond the scope of the current study. Finally, evidence from the consequences of testing has to do with how the outcome of a particular test may impact the future of the participant. Because of the anonymity and hypothetical nature of the instrument, this type of evidence was not really possible. Understanding each of these types of evidence helps to show that evidence from the internal structure through factor analysis is the most applicable procedure for this particular case.

Correlation. Correlations are used to describe the relationships between two variables. This typically occurs through the calculation of a Pearson correlation coefficient, *r*. The range of the correlation coefficient is -1.00 to 1.00; the relationship

between the two variables is stronger at the extremes. The advantages of this calculation are that it allows the reader to interpret the extent of the relationship that exists or does not exist, and it allows for comparisons of variable relationships. However, it is important to remember that this is just a demonstration of a relationship between the variables and not causal inference (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). In this case, correlations were used to demonstrate the strength of the relationships between the predictor domains and the fit constructs and the fit constructs and the subcomponents of job performance. Correlations were also used in the demonstration of the three independent fit constructs.

Analysis of variance. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) calculations test the significance of differences between two or more means of variables. ANOVA is used when an independent variable has more than two categories and the dependent variable is quantitative; a t-test is used when the independent variable has two categories and the dependent variable is quantitative (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). After the psychometric analysis of the instrument, t-test and ANOVA calculations were used to determine if there was a significant difference in the means for each fit construct based on the demographic questions, specifically the rurality/urbanization category from the IPEDS definitions.

Structural equation modeling. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a technique used to specify causal relationships among variables. It is similar to path analysis, except that it allows modeling with two-way causation (Agretsi & Finlay, 1997). As Byrne (2010) stated, it is different from the an exploratory factor analysis calculations in that it is a confirmatory procedure; it is used to confirm if data fit or do not fit a predicted model, in this case the Werbel and Gilliland model (1999). In addition, it

is advantageous because it provides estimates for error variance in ways that traditional multivariate techniques cannot. Finally, while traditional multivariate techniques are based only on observed variables, SEM can account for both unobserved and observed variables. All of these made it advantageous for this dissertation study.

One of the procedures used in the SEM process was confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement model. CFA allowed the determination of how the observed (measured) variables could be predicted by the unobserved (latent) construct. CFA was used to confirm that the items on the survey were related to the type of fit they were designed to measure (Byrne, 2010). In this case, CFA also accounted for the correlation between the unobserved constructs.

Finally, an additional technique that was used within SEM and CFA for this dissertation study was parceling. Parceling is the summing or averaging of two or more items in order to enhance the reliability and communality of the items. Advocates for parceling have argued that it is particularly useful with small sample sizes because of the psychometric and estimation advantages that parceling presents. Two of the advantages for parceling are that it allows for a more parsimonious model, and it leads to reduction of the various source of sampling error. Those who argue against parceling feel that if a construct is multidimensional, the parcel may also be multidimensional and these parcels may introduce biased loading estimates into the model. Also, if the parcels share systemic error, this error becomes incorporated into the definition of the unobserved construct (Little, Cunningham, Shahar & Widaman, 2002). In this case, the large number of items representing each fit construct meant that a large amount of item error was introduced when considering the items individually, so the advantages outweighed the

disadvantages in using parceling. Items were parceled based on the predictor variable or fit type they were designed to represent.

There are several calculations that are used with CFA and SEM to identify how well the data fit with the predicted model, referred to as "goodness of fit" indices. Byrne (2010) offers a summary of several of these models. While Chi Square was once thought to be the best measure of goodness of fit, it has been found to be sensitive to sample size and degrees of freedom and results in the rejection of true models, so other indices are more often used with complex models in CFA and SEM. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is a measure of the comparison of the hypothesized model with the independence, or null, model. Values range from 0.00-1.00, with values of .95 or above considered representative of a strong-fitting model. The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) is another comparative index of goodness of fit, with similar desired values to that of the CFI. The root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) takes into account the error of approximating in the population. A value of .05 or less is considered to be a strong goodness of fit, while values up to .08 are considered a reasonable goodness of fit for the model. The advantage of this measure is that it accounts for the number of degrees of freedom, so it is sensitive to the complexity of a model.

One of the challenges with SEM is that it typically requires a large sample size (greater than 100). For this reason, it was not used with the pilot study data. In addition, it also meant that in order to run comparisons between some of the data based on demographics, some of the categories had to be consolidated, for example urban and not urban, instead of the 10 IPEDS categories of geographic location.

Summary

This chapter outlined the population and sample of the pilot and dissertation studies, the framework and measure creation of the instrument used, and the methods of survey administration, data collection, and statistical data analysis. The data were analyzed using the statistical analysis software package of SPSS 19, and the results are outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

This purpose of this study was to examine the concept of "fit" with student affairs (specifically residence life) professionals at colleges and universities using Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework/model of describing fit, as described in Chapter I. This purpose was operationalized through the execution of a web-based survey to professionals in residence life. The data were analyzed in two phases. First, a psychometric analysis was conducted to determine if the instrument fit Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model and if this model held up in the student affairs field. Then, a comparative analysis was run to see how the results varied based on institutional and participant demographics. These two separate analyses were conducted to determine the answer to the research questions.

Research Questions

1. Does Werbel and Gilliland's model (1999) apply to the selection processes for new student affairs professionals, specifically those in residence life?
2. Does the type of person-environment (P-E) fit that professionals believe is the most important, match with the criteria for the type of fit they are looking for with their hiring decisions?
3. Are there individual or institutional demographic factors that influence P-E fit in the selection process?

4. Do professionals at rural institutions desire to hire individuals with different types of P-E fit than those at nonrural institutions?

Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model is based on three dimensions of P-E fit: person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), and person-group (P-G) fits. The study was based on a subjective view of fit, from the perspective of the hiring employer. In this chapter, the descriptive characteristics of the sample and results are presented, along with a psychometric analysis of the instrument and a comparison of results based on institutional and individual demographics.

Characteristics of the Sample

There were a total of 239 participants who initially attempted the survey. Of those participants, 13 did not meet one of the two qualifications for the survey; specifically, they were not employed full-time in housing/residence life at their institution, or they had not been employed in their current position since at least September 15, 2011. The responses of these participants were eliminated before any analysis was completed.

In addition, 13 participants did not proceed past the first page of survey questions. Since this page only included questions regarding institutional demographics and did not include any of the questions regarding the fit constructs, these responses were not useful to the study. They were also eliminated before any further analysis was completed. This left 213 responses in the analysis. Any additional missing responses by these 213 participants through the survey were statistically accounted for via SPSS and/or AMOS.

Participant Characteristics

The remaining 213 participants identified that they were from 85 unique institutions. This accounts for a response rate of 55.2% (85/154) of the institutions registered for the conference. Of the participants, 175 (82.2%) were from public institutions, while 38 (17.8%) were from private institutions. One of the private institution participants indicated that their institution was for-profit. Based on the name of institution indicated, the institution is not a for-profit institution, but the housing at the institution may be privatized. The percentages of participants based on IPEDS degree of urbanization are in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants Based on IPEDS Degree of Urbanization.

IPEDS Degree of Urbanization Code	IPEDS Degree of Urbanization Description	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
11	City: Large	20	9.4
12	City: Midsize	23	10.8
13	City: Small	60	28.2
21	Suburb: Large	21	9.9
22	Suburb: Midsize	4	1.9
23	Suburb: Small	5	2.3
31	Town: Fringe	2	0.9
32	Town: Distant	29	13.6
33	Town: Remote	37	17.4
41	Rural: Fringe	12	5.6

The analysis of the results indicated that the participants were from a wide geographic range of institutional locations. Those in small and midsize suburbs as well as fringe towns had the smallest sample size and may be too small to generalize conclusions for those categories.

Participant data were also broken down by the Carnegie classification of the institution (see Table 3). As previously mentioned, the Carnegie Classification may have a moderating impact on the degree of urbanization- as the size of the institution may warrant services not typically found in rural location.

Table 3. Participants Based on Carnegie Classification: Basic (2005).

IPEDS Carnegie Classification Code	Carnegie Classification	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
15	Research Universities (very high research activity)	47	22.1
16	Research Universities (high research activity)	52	24.4
17	Doctoral/Research Universities	19	8.9
18	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	41	19.2
19	Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	24	11.3
20	Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	7	3.3
21	Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences	18	8.5
22	Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields	5	2.3

Again, the participants represented institutions from a wide range of Carnegie Classifications, with small master's colleges and universities as well as baccalaureate colleges in diverse fields having a sample size too small to reach conclusions about.

There was also a question if responses would vary based on geographic location in the country. As a result, participants were also sorted by geographic region of the country based on the NASPA regional designations (see Table 4). While NASPA is an

Table 4. Participants Based on NASPA Region.

NASPA Region	States	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
I	CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT	4	1.9
II	NY, PA, WV, DE, NJ, MD, Washington D.C.	0	0
III	AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA	27	12.7
IV-E	IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, OH, WI	123	57.7
IV-W	NM, CO, WY, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, MO, AR	47	22.1
V	UT, AK, ID, OR, NV, MT, WA	7	3.3
VI	CA, AZ, HI	5	2.3

international organization, all institutions represented were from the United States, so international information was excluded from the Table.

Responses to individual interviewer demographic questions are located in Table 5. The sample was made up of predominantly educated as the Master's degree level or higher, entry or mid-level professionals, more females than males, limited racial diversity, and professionals who identified themselves as having hiring authority.

One surprise was related to the last item in the table. One might expect only one or two people per institution to indicate that they had hiring responsibility. The results of this question may indicate that participants may define hiring responsibility different. If someone serves on a search committee or interview team, they may believe that they have hiring responsibility. This question would need to be more clearly defined in future research.

Table 5. Individual Respondent Demographics.

Demographic	Response Category	# of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Degree Attainment	High School Diploma	1	0.5
	Associate's Degree	2	0.9
	Bachelor's Degree	15	7.0
	Master's Degree in College Student Personnel, Higher Education, or Related Field	140	65.7
	Master's Degree in Other Field	24	11.3
	PhD or EdD in College Student Personnel, Higher Education, or Related Field	8	3.8
	PhD or EdD in Other Field	1	0.5
	Other (please specify)	0	0.0
	No Response	22	10.3
Position Status	Entry-level professional	87	40.8
	Mid-level professional	76	35.7
	Senior-level professional	27	12.7
	Administrative support staff person	2	0.9
	Other (please specify)	0	0.0
	No Response	21	9.9
Gender	Male	71	33.3
	Female	119	55.9
	Other	0	0.0
	No Response	23	10.2
Race	American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0.5
	Asian	3	1.4
	Black or African American	18	8.5
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0
	White	153	71.8
	Other	7	3.3
	More Than One Race Indicated	8	3.8
	No Response	23	10.8
Hiring Authority	Yes	63	29.6
	No	128	60.1
	No Response	22	10.3

Participant Institution Characteristics

Multiple individuals per institution were encouraged to fill out the survey. The percentages above reflect the sample of the survey, but it was also important to examine the characteristics of the institutions represented. For this reason, some descriptive statistics were also calculated based on institution. Of the 85 institutions represented in the sample, 63 (74.1%) were public, while 22 (25.9%) were private. See Tables 6 and 7 for the respective numbers and percentages of institutions based on IPEDS Degree of Urbanization and Carnegie Classification.

Table 6. Institutions Represented Based on IPEDS Degree of Urbanization.

IPEDS Degree of Urbanization Code	IPEDS Degree of Urbanization Description	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
11	City: Large	10	11.8
12	City: Midsize	11	12.9
13	City: Small	20	23.5
21	Suburb: Large	8	9.4
22	Suburb: Midsize	2	2.4
23	Suburb: Small	4	4.7
31	Town: Fringe	2	2.4
32	Town: Distant	12	14.1
33	Town: Remote	13	15.3
41	Rural: Fringe	3	3.5

The percentages of institutions are similar to the percentages of individuals, but are not exactly the same, so it is important to consider which way the data are being run when drawing conclusions.

Table 7. Institutions Represented Based on Carnegie Classification: Basic (2005).

IPEDS Carnegie Classification Code	Carnegie Classification	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
15	Research Universities (very high research activity)	14	16.5
16	Research Universities (high research activity)	20	23.5
17	Doctoral/Research Universities	7	8.2
18	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	20	23.5
19	Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	8	9.4
20	Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	3	3.5
21	Baccalaureate Colleges--Arts & Sciences	11	12.9
22	Baccalaureate Colleges--Diverse Fields	2	2.4

Psychometric Analysis of Instrument

Skewness. The first analysis examined the skewness for each of the fit questions and the predictor domains. Skewness is a measure of how far the curve of the frequency distribution is from the normal curve. If a variable has skewness outside the range of +1.0 to -1.0, the distribution is considered skewed or with a non-normal distribution curve, and different types of analysis may need to be computed (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). Skewness was a particular concern because of the potential for positive bias. Would participants indicate that all characteristics were desirable in order to select the best candidate?

The skewness data for the fit constructs provided the first indication if any of the questions may have been out of place from the rest of the data (see Table 8). Based on the parameters above related to skewness, questions 1 and 8 are skewed (but very close to -1.0 or 1.0). These questions were marked to keep an eye on through the rest of the analysis.

When examining the means for each of the items in Table 8, there were three that stood out as being different from the others, those for items 9, 20, and 21. Each of these related to hiring candidates that are similar to the existing staff members in various ways. In higher education, and particularly in residence life, one of the strong values is that of diversity, and institutions often seek to hire a diverse staff that is representative of the student population they serve. Based on a comment from at least one participant, he/she felt like answering this question in the affirmative would go against that value. Because of the potential implications of these questions and responses being different than the others, these three items were eliminated from the analysis from this point forward.

Reliability. Reliability is a measure of internal consistency of a scale. If you were to repeat the test or choose any measure in the scale, how likely are you to get the same answer? Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used measure of internal consistency and was used as the measure of reliability for the three fit constructs. The first calculation was completed using only the overall fit questions as the construct and not including any of the questions regarding the predictor variables (see Table 9).

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the P-G fit construct showed a high reliability coefficient between the measured items in that subscale, but the reliability coefficients for the other two constructs were not as strong. Because Cronbach's alpha is

Table 8. Mean and Skewness for Questions Regarding Fit and Fit Predictors.

Questions	Mean	Skewness
Person-Job Fit		
1. The applicant's fit to the requirements of this job	4.53	-1.10
2. Your confidence that this applicant is qualified for this job	4.52	-.77
3. Your belief that this applicant can achieve a high level of performance in this particular job	4.42	-.41
4. The fit between the requirements of the job and the applicant's personal skills	4.29	-.45
5. The fit of the applicant's abilities to the requirements of the job	4.43	-.43
6. The applicant has the knowledge necessary to understand the components of the job	4.13	-.27
7. The applicant has knowledge through education or work background that would apply to the position	4.18	-.79
Person-Organization Fit		
8. The applicant's fit with the organization	4.41	-1.05
9. The applicant's similarity to other employees within the organization	2.66	.18
10. Other employees' perceptions that this candidate fits well in your organization	3.45	-.21
11. The things the applicant values in life are-similar to those that the organization values	3.50	-.10
12. The organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things the applicant values in life	3.84	-.37
13. The terms and conditions of employment fit with those the applicant thinks he/she should have	3.65	-.58
14. The working environment fits with how the applicant thinks it should be	3.63	-.24
15. The opportunities for growth and development fit with those the applicant thinks he/she should have	3.86	-.65
16. The applicant's professional goals/plans are a good fit with the organization	3.95	-.36
Person-Group Fit		
17. The applicant's fit with the current employees that would be part of their work team	3.93	-.46
18. The applicant will get along with current staff members whom they will work closely with	3.74	-.45
19. The applicant's skills and abilities meet a need of the existing staff team	4.07	-.41
20. The applicant's skills and abilities are similar to the existing staff	2.83	-.15
21. The applicant's personality is similar to the existing staff	2.59	.07
22. The applicant's skills and abilities complement the existing team	4.12	-.81
23. The applicant adds new or different skills and/or abilities to the team	4.36	-.71
24. The applicant's ability to improve existing team functionality	4.12	-.92
25. The applicant's ability to develop and support quality interpersonal interactions with the existing staff team	4.04	-.62
26. The applicant's ability to develop collegial relationships with the existing staff team	3.98	-.39
27. The applicant's ability to promote group cooperation and synergy amongst the existing staff team	4.03	-.42

Table 9. Correlation of Subscale Constructs and Measures of Internal Consistency.

Sub Scale	P-J Fit	P-O Fit	P-G Fit	Cronbach's Alpha
Person-Job Fit (Questions 1-3)				.59
Person-Organization Fit (Questions 8, 10)	.23			.56
Person-Group Fit (Questions 17-19, 22-24)	.21	.34		.75

Note: All correlations were significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

impacted by the number of items in a scale/subscale, the values for P-J and P-O fit may have been lower than that for P-G fit because of the smaller number of items in those subscales. When SPSS was used to calculate the Cronbach's alpha if an item were eliminated, it suggested the Cronbach's alpha would not be improved if any questions were removed.

Because the questions regarding the predictor domains also contained specifics that were in the definition of each type of fit, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were also calculated including the questions regarding these predictors (questions 4-7, 11-16, 28-30) as part of each fit construct. The comparison of these two calculations, seen in Tables 9 and 10, shows that the data were much more internally consistent with the inclusion of the predictor questions as a part of the fit constructs.

The data in Table 10 showed that there was increased correlation between the constructs with the predictor variables included. However, the Cronbach's alphas also increased, so more reliability was found by including the predictors as part of the construct, with all three types of fit falling above the desired .70 level. Some of the

improvement in this value could also likely be attributed to more items being included in each subscale.

Table 10. Correlation of Subscale Constructs and Measures of Internal Consistency With Predictor Domain Questions.

Sub Scale	P-J Fit	P-O Fit	P-G Fit	Cronbach's Alpha
Person-Job Fit (Questions 1-7)				.77
Person-Organization Fit (Questions 8, 10-16)	.32			.79
Person-Group Fit (Questions 17-19, 22-27)	.33	.50		.82

Note. All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level.

This was the first indication that Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework may look slightly different than expected for the student affairs field. This result was consistent with the findings of the pilot study. These correlation values also indicated that a single predictor variable may predict more than one type of fit. The data indicated, though, that there were likely three distinct concepts amongst the fit constructs, but there was likely some relationship between P-O and P-G fits.

Validity. Validity is the extent to which a test or scale measures what it is intended to measure. Validity of an item or factor allows for proper interpretation of the results (Brown, 1976). To measure the validity of each of the three fit constructs in this study, principal component analysis was conducted to assess the underlying structure for each construct. One factor was specified for each construct, based on the idea that each of the constructs was believed to represent one concept. In a similar manner to the

reliability calculations, the factor analysis was done both with and without the predictor questions (see Tables 11 and 12).

Table 11. Factor Loadings for Each Construct, Without Predictor Domain Questions.

Person-Job Fit		Person-Organization Fit		Person-Group Fit	
Question	Factor Loading	Question	Factor Loading	Question	Factor Loading
1	.68	8	.83	17	.61
2	.80	10	.83	18	.66
3	.75			19	.68
				22	.79
				23	.63
				24	.65

By forcing the items into a single factor, the factors accounted for 55.4% (P-J fit), 69.5% (P-O fit), and 45.0% (P-G fit) of the variance when the analysis was completed without the predictor questions (Table 10) with Eigenvalues of 1.66, 1.39, 2.70, respectively. The analysis of these data suggested that all of the questions represented the same construct as the rest of their subscale, as they all loaded with a coefficient above .40 when measured with the other questions in their individual constructs.

A similar procedure was run with all of the questions (fit and predictor) included. Table 12 displays the component matrix for each of the factors.

By forcing the items into a single factor for each type of fit, once again, the three single factors accounted for 42.2% (P-J fit), 40.4% (P-O fit), and 41.4% (P-G fit) of the variance with Eigenvalues of 2.95, 3.23, and 3.73, respectively. The analysis of these data in Table 12 showed that with the inclusion the predictor items, all questions again held to their designated construct.

Table 12. Factor Loadings for Each Construct With Predictor Domain Questions Included.

Person-Job Fit		Person-Organization Fit		Person-Group Fit	
Question	Factor Loading	Question	Factor Loading	Question	Factor Loading
1	.57	8	.49	17	.61
2	.59	10	.56	18	.66
3	.65	11	.67	19	.58
4	.63	12	.73	22	.67
5	.67	13	.58	23	.52
6	.73	14	.73	24	.61
7	.69	15	.67	25	.74
		16	.61	26	.67
				27	.71

Based on all of this information, the analysis of the reliability data indicated that the constructs were much more reliable with the predictor questions included as part of the constructs. The factor analysis data indicated that there were in fact three distinct P-E fit constructs, but P-G and P-O fit may have some overlap.

Correlation. Correlations are used to describe the relationships between two variables. This typically occurs through the calculation of a correlation coefficient, *r*; the larger the value of the correlation coefficient, the stronger the relationship between the two variables. However, it is important to remember that this is just a demonstration of a relationship between the variables and not causal inference (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005).

For this study, correlation tests were run to determine if the predictor domains related to their designated fit construct in Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework. The correlations between an average of the overall fit construct questions and the mean of the predictor variable questions for each variable were calculated. For example, questions 1-

3 were averaged for P-J fit, and that was correlated with the average of questions 6 and 7 related to knowledge to determine the first value in the Table. The analysis of the predicted relationships verified that the predictor domains at least moderately correlated with the fit constructs predicted. Because the values P-O fit were slightly lower than the others, the correlations of all of the predictors were examined with the three types of fit. Were the P-O fit correlations lower because these predictors were more closely correlated with a different type of fit (see Table 13)? The bolded correlations indicate those that would be predicted to be the highest based on the model.

Table 13. Predictor Domain Correlation Values With Three Types of Fit.

	P-J Fit	P-O Fit	P-G Fit
Knowledge	**.41****	.13	.14*
Skills	**.39****	.22**	.31**
Abilities	**.41****	.13	.16*
Values	.11	**.34****	.38**
Needs	.28**	**.35****	.35**
Goals	.22**	**.27****	.32**
Interpersonal Attributes	.29**	.26**	**.48****
Broad-Based Proficiencies	.24**	.22**	**.47****

Note: *Correlation was significant at the .05 level. **Correlation was significant at the .01 level.

The predictor variables for P-O fit were similarly correlated or slightly more correlated with P-G fit. Further tests needed to be conducted to determine if this was reflective of a change to Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model.

Similarly, correlation tests were run to determine if the fit constructs were correlated with their respective subcomponents of job performance, as predicted by Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework. (Based on the pilot study, some of the titles of

the outcomes were slightly adjusted from the original model to reflect more common language in the student affairs/residence life field. No significant definition changes were made from the original model.) The fit constructs included the predictor variables in this case, as dictated in Table 12. In other words, the predictor domains were considered a part of the fit constructs that predict the subcomponents of job performance. In this case, all of the nine subcomponents of job performance were significantly correlated with their respective fit constructs. However, because those for P-O fit were again lower values than for P-G or P-J fit, a similar analysis to Table 13 was completed, and the correlation values for each outcome were calculated for all three types of fit in Table 14.

Table 14. Job-Performance Outcome Correlation Values with Three Types of Fit.

	P-J Fit	P-O Fit	P-G Fit
Job Proficiency	**.41**	.27	.28
Basic Understanding	**.40**	.23	.28
Innovative	**.44**	.29	.34
Organizational Contributions	.34	**.29**	.33
Satisfaction	.29	**.39**	.39
Organizational Commitment	.26	**.39**	.31
Retention	.34	**.28**	.22
Group Performance	.28	.28	**.43**
Group Cooperation	.30	.38	**.44**

Note. All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level.

In this case, all of the outcomes were correlated significantly with all three types of fit being examined. However, the highest correlation values for the outcomes for P-J fit and P-G fit matched the prediction of Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model. This was not the case for P-O fit. Organizational Contributions and Retention were outcomes more

highly correlated with P-J fit than P-O fit, but still not as highly as some of the other constructs. The values for the outcomes Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment did correlate most closely with P-O fit. Again, this analysis suggested that P-O fit may look a little different for this situation than Werbel and Gilliland might have predicted.

Does the model for residence life reflect different outcomes for the three types of fit, or does it reflect that not all of the outcomes predicted by Werbel and Gilliland are represented in this case? This is where CFA and SEM became advantageous. After the initial steps of the psychometric analysis, in general these data reflects that there is support for Werbel and Gilliland's model, but there are likely some slight modifications.

Measurement model. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with all of the fit and predictor variables to determine how these items predicted their respective fit response. The original CFA with all items included as indicators inadequately fit the data $\chi^2(249)=640.92$, $p<.001$, CFI=.73, TLI=.67, RMSEA=.086 (90% CI=.078, .094), remembering that desired values are optimally, CFI>.95, TLI>.95, and RMSEA<.05, with 90 percent confidence intervals for the RMSEA providing a better indication of the strength of that value. Because of the large number of items for each type of fit and the number of degrees of freedom introduced into the model, the data were parceled (Little, Cunningham, Shahar & Widaman, 2002). This was supported by the fact that the three fit constructs were previously shown to each be unidimensional through factor analysis. The items were averaged for each type of fit and each predictor variable (if the predictor variable was represented by more than a single item). For example, P-J fit was parceled into P-J fit, knowledge, skills, and abilities. This CFA (see Figure 4) was a much better fit, $\chi^2(41)=60.21$, $p=.027$, CFI=.96, TLI=.94, RMSEA=0.047

(90% CI=.017, .071), indicating a relatively well-fitting model with all measured variables able to be predicted significantly by the latent fit constructs.

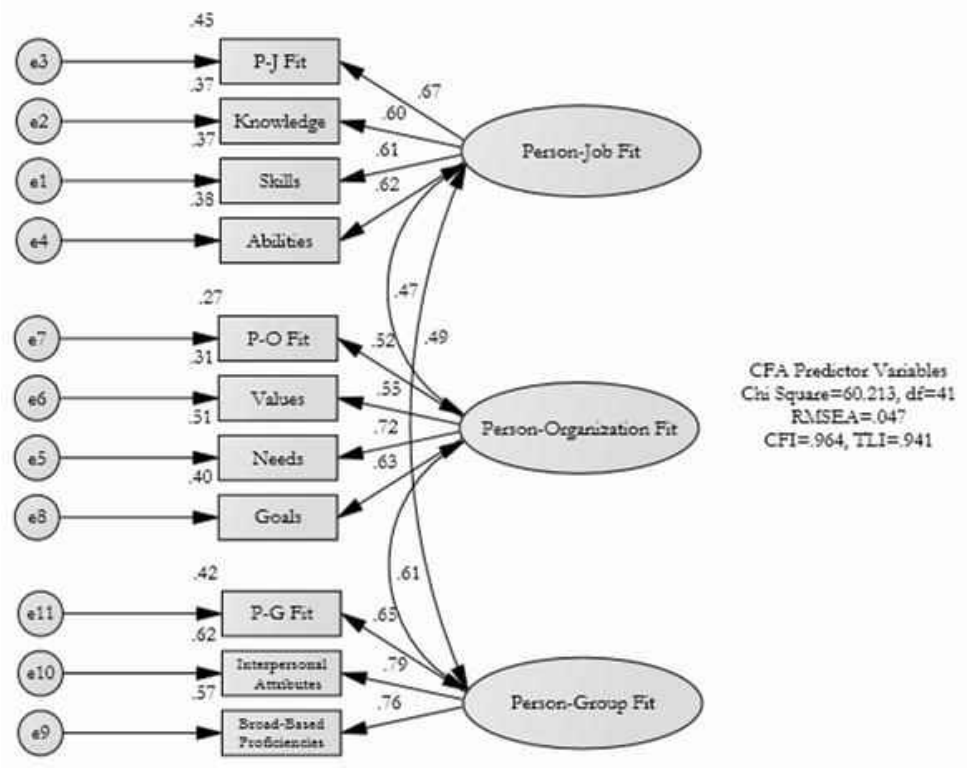


Figure 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of predictor variables. *Note:* All paths were significant at $p \leq .001$

This indicated that the results of items on the survey, with the exception of those items already removed (9, 21, 22), for fit and each of the predictor variables held well with Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model, so they were retained for further analysis.

Structural equation modeling. SEM analysis was run to determine the fit of the data in this study to Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) overall model. Initially, the structural model was run based on the theoretical model from fit to the specific job performance outcomes from the theoretical model. This resulted in a poorly fitting model, $\chi^2(167)=410.23$, $p<.001$, CFI=.80, TLI=.75, RMSEA=0.083 (90% CI=.073, .093) Because of this poor fit, a CFA was run to map the job performance variables into a

larger outcome latent variable for each type of fit. (For example, Group Performance and Group Cooperation were associated with a latent variable for P-G fit job-performance outcomes.) In other words, were job performance outcomes able to be predicted by a latent construct for the outcomes for that type of fit? This also resulted in a poor fit, $\chi^2(24, n=213)=73.00$, $p<.001$, CFI=.90, TLI=.82, RMSEA=.098 (90% CI=.073, .12). Because of the differing correlation patterns for Organizational Contributions and Retention in the SPSS analysis, two of the P-O job performance outcomes these two outcomes were removed to examine if the model was better without considering these two outcomes. The result was a much stronger fitting model, $\chi^2(11)=18.06$, $p=.08$, CFI=.98, TLI=.95, RMSEA=0.055 (90% CI=.00, .095). This is represented in Figure 5.

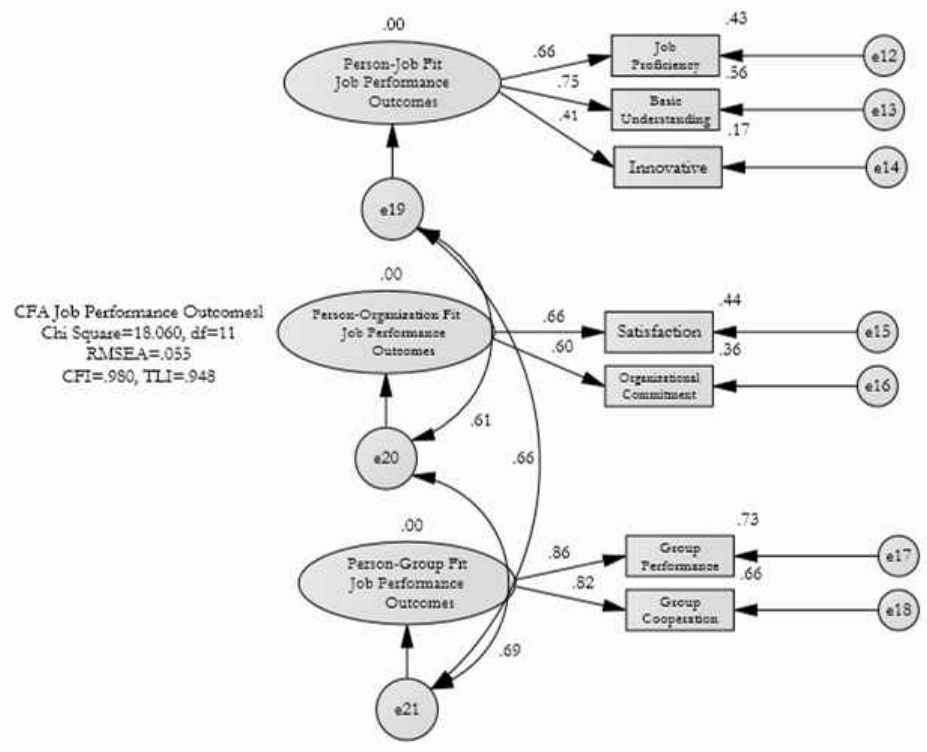


Figure 5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of job performance outcomes. *Note:* All paths were significant at $p \leq .001$

Given that the previous analyses showed that Organizational Contributions and Retention were more correlated with other fit dimensions than P-O fit, this seemed to confirm that these two outcomes may not be the aligned in the same way in this model, and Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model would likely need to be modified. These two outcomes were removed for future analyses.

A second SEM was run with the three types of fit each predicting their respective fit outcome latent constructs, which predicted the individual job performance outcomes. The three types of fit correlated with each of the other two, respectively, to account for the interrelationships between these constructs. Additionally, the residuals for each of the three fit job performance outcomes were correlated to account for the interrelationships among these constructs. This model showed a suitable fit with the data, χ^2 (126)=200.08, p<.001, CFI=.93, TLI=.90, RMSEA=0.053 (90% CI=.038, .063). See Figure 6.

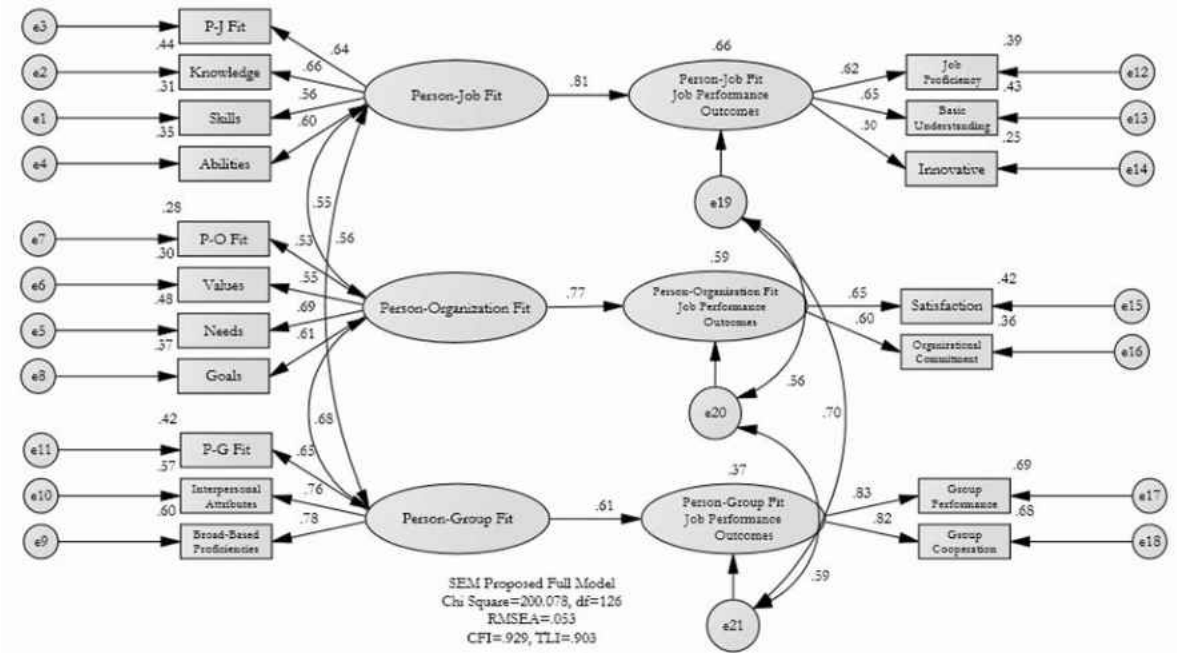


Figure 6. Structural model with standardized coefficients and r^2 correlation values.
Note: All paths were significant at $p \leq .001$

This model was compared to a competing model (see Figure 7) with each of the types of fit predicting all three types of outcomes, $\chi^2(120)=183.42$, $p<.001$, CFI=.94, TLI=.91, RMSEA=.050 (90% CI=.035, .064). The difference between the two models

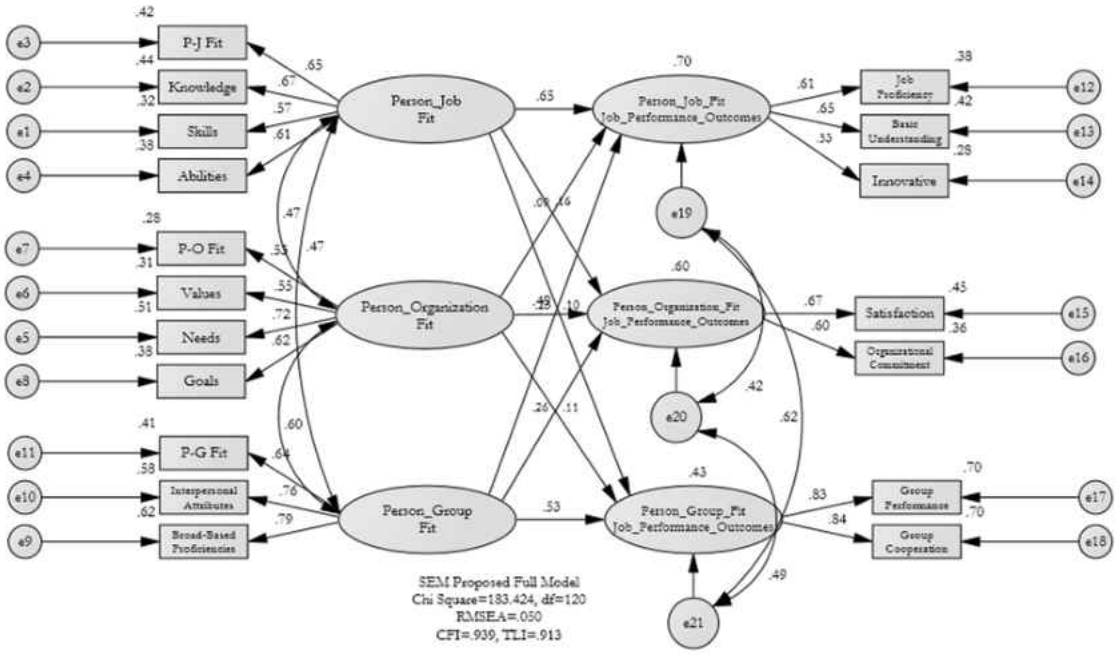


Figure 7. Competing structural model with standardized coefficients and r^2 correlation values.

($\chi^2(6)=16.66$, $p=0.011$) was statistically significant, but the new relationships did not result in significant pathways, so the original model was chosen to move forward.

Because the Innovative job performance outcome, associated with P-J fit, had the lowest loading of any of the specific job performance outcomes in this model, further investigation was done to see if this item was more able to be predicted by another outcome, and it was found that this outcome was slightly more strongly connected with P-O fit outcomes in this model. This alternate model (seen in Figure 8) had a slightly better goodness-of-fit, $\chi^2(126)=192.02$, $p<.001$, CFI=.94, TLI=.91, RMSEA=0.050 (90% CI=.035, .063). Although the goodness-of-fit indices were slightly better, the squared

multiple correlation values were much lower, meaning the predictor variables were less likely to predict the latent constructs. For this reason, the model in Figure 6 was retained.

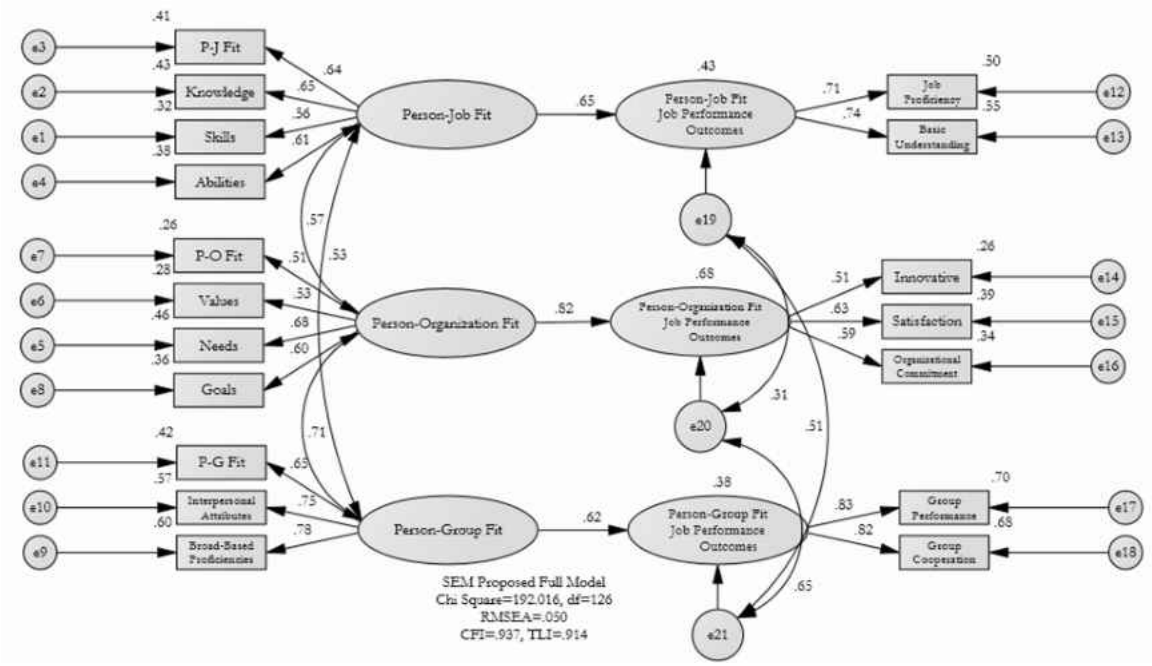


Figure 8. Alternate structural equation model with standardized coefficients and r^2 correlation values. *Note:* All paths were significant at $p \leq .001$

The data in Figure 6 supported the idea that the answer to the first research question is that Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model is applicable to residence life with the exception of the Organizational Contributions and Retention, but further research may need to be explored related to the Innovation outcome, particularly in the residence life sample.

Ranking comparison. Two questions on the survey asked participants to rank the subcomponents of job performance of Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework in different ways. The first of the two asked participants to rate each of the subcomponents of job performance that they find important in hall director candidates for their institution on a 5-point scale with (1=not at all important) to (5=very important) as anchors. The

second question mirrored the first, only this time participants were asked to rank the outcomes in order of importance with (1=least important) to (9=most important) as anchors. These questions were designed to eliminate a possible positive skew with the 5-point scale question. Would participants actually respond that some subcomponents of job performance were less desired?

One issue that was noted with the ranking question was that the survey tool allowed participants to select the same value (1-9) for more than one question. So, while the directions in the question indicated that each response should only be used once, some responses had this issue. Responses were removed for the entire ranking question if a participant used a value more than once, as these responses could result in skewed averages. This resulted in 41 responses to the ranking question being removed.

Table 15 contains a comparison of the order that participants rated and ranked the outcomes. The two value order columns are very similar. The biggest difference was on Job Satisfaction, with participants rating it higher with the 5-point scale response than when they ranked their responses. Given that the mean responses from the 5-point scale questions were all higher than 3.50, there was a skew to all of the answers, so the ranking data may in fact be more useful in identifying what outcomes participants think are important. It was also noteworthy that in both scales, Retention was noted as the least preferred outcome, which may help to explain why it did not fit well in the model for this sample.

A second ranking comparison was also completed on which of the three types of P-E fit participants placed the most importance on in their selection decision. Similar to the previous ranking question, an issue that was noted was that the survey tool allowed

Table 15. Comparison of Importance of Job Performance Rankings.

Relationship	5-Point Scale		Ranking	
	Mean (5=Very Important, 1=Not Important)	Value Order (1=High, 9=Low)	Mean (9=Most Important, 1=Least Important)	Value Order (1=High, 9=Low)
Job Proficiency: The applicant performs the duties as described in the job description	4.52	1	6.40	1
Basic Understanding: The knowledge necessary to complete the daily job tasks	4.30	3	5.89	2
Innovative: The ability to implement ideas to improve processes	4.09	7	4.79	7
Organizational Contributions: Acts that seek to benefit the organization as opposed to the individual	4.18	6	5.09	5
Satisfaction: A positive attitude about one's job or job situation	4.42	2	5.13	4
Organizational Commitment: A person's identification with and involvement in an organization	4.02	8	4.25	8
Retention: Continued employment with the organization that is beneficial to both the organization and the employee	3.81	9	3.43	9
Group Performance: Contributions to the overall work efforts of the staff team	4.25	4	5.17	3
Group Cooperation: How members of a team work together or get along to advance the efforts of the whole	4.23	5	4.84	6

participants to select the same value (1-3) for more than one question. So, while the directions in the question indicated that each response should only be used once, some responses had this issue. The same procedure was done to address this issue; responses were removed for the entire ranking question if a participant used a value more than once. This resulted in 22 responses to this P-E ranking question being removed. See Table 16 for the comparison data for this question.

Table 16. Comparison of Importance of Fit Rankings.

	5-Point Scale		Ranking	
	Mean (5=Very Important, 1=Not Important)	Value Order (1=High, 3=Low)	Mean (1=Most Important, 3=Least Important)	Value Order (1=High, 3=Low)
Person-Job Fit	4.36	1	1.62	1
Person-Organization Fit	3.79	3	2.18	2
Person-Group Fit	4.04	2	2.20	3

With the values based on the means calculated with the previous survey responses, P-J fit came out as the most important, followed by P-G fit and then P-O fit for the sample as a whole. When participants were asked to rank the three, the order came out to be P-J fit, then P-O fit, and then P-G fit, with P-O fit and P-G fit being very close in value. These differences may be reflective of some of the P-O fit differences reflected throughout the analysis.

For the second research question, these data supported the idea that the type of P-E fit participants desire may not always match the type of fit they are prioritizing in their selection process. However, with the values being as close as seen in Table 16 above, more research would help confirm this idea.

Comparison of Data Based on Demographics

As noted previously, demographic data were collected from each participant based on both the institution where they currently work as well as the individual participant's demographics. Participants were also asked to provide the name of their institution. This was used to code the data with information from IPEDS regarding the institution's sector, degree of urbanization, and basic Carnegie Classification. The

location of the institution was also used to code the data by NASPA region to test for differences based on region of the country. In addition, data were compared based on how participants viewed "the organization" when making their selection decision.

For individual characteristics, comparisons were made based on age, length of time in position, length of time in the organization, highest degree attained, institution from which degrees were attained, status of professional position, gender, and hiring responsibility. Comparisons among and between groups were made for the means for each type of fit with the predictor variables included; however, the items removed earlier in the analysis (9, 21, and 22) remained excluded. These comparisons were completed using t-tests, ANOVAs and SEM analyses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Lack of Significance

No statistically significant differences were revealed for the means of each fit dimension based on the NASPA region of the institution, sector of the institution (public vs. private), how participants viewed "the organization" when making their selection decision, highest degree attained, institution from which degrees were attained, how long they had worked at the institution or in their position, status of professional position, and gender (see Appendix D). Because of small sample numbers for each category, the data were not analyzed based on the race of the participant.

Geographic Setting

The first demographic comparison where a significant difference was noted was based on the focus of this study, the geographic setting. Because of small sample sizes in some of the 10 represented categories of the IPEDS Degree of Urbanization, items were consolidated into the broader categories of city, suburb, town, and rural (see Table 17). It

is important to note that even with this consolidation, the rural sample size was still very small (12 participants representing three unique institutions), so consideration of that data should be made accordingly.

Table 17. Comparison Based on Geographic Location.

Construct Category	1.City M(SD)	2.Suburb M(SD)	3.Town M(SD)	4.Rural M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.43(.41)	4.29(.51)	4.26(.37)	4.42(.38)	.042*	2.77
P-O Fit	3.82(.56)	3.69(.46)	3.77(.49)	3.85(.42)	.667	.52
P-G Fit	4.10(.53)	4.09(.43)	3.95(.47)	3.97(.41)	.287	1.27
			t-tests			
	1-2	1-3	1-4	2-3	2-4	3-4
P-J Fit	1.59	2.80**	.13	.33	.44	-1.34

Note: *p<.05, **p<.0083

The analysis of the data in Table 17 revealed that there was evidence to show that the samples are different based on the geographic setting of the institution for P-J fit, but not P-O or P-G fits. In addition, individual t-tests were completed between each pair of geographic settings to find that the significant difference specifically fell between participants who work at city institutions versus those who work at town institutions. The Bonferroni Correction was used by dividing the desired *p* value (.05) by the number of analyses being run (6) to account for multiple comparisons being run. The difference was still significant at this level.

Because the SEM analysis, reported later, required sample sizes of close to 100 (Byrne, 2010), the participants were grouped into two different groups based on geographic location, urban and town/rural (combining the town/rural participants into one

group and excluding all responses from suburban institution). A comparative ANOVA analysis was done specifically for these two groups (see Table 18).

Table 18. Comparisons Based on Condensed Geographic Location.

Construct Category	City M(SD)	Town/Rural M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *T*
P-J Fit	4.43(.41)	4.28(.38)	.012*	2.54
P-O Fit	3.82(.56)	3.79(.48)	.714	.367
P-G Fit	4.10(.53)	3.96(.46)	.066	1.85

Note: *$p<.05$

The analysis of the data in Tables 17 and 18 revealed that the differences between the means based on geographic location were not significant based on the P-O fit or P-G fit constructs. However, the mean for P-J fit at city institutions was significantly higher than that at town/rural institutions.

A comparison of the way that the participants from these two categories of institutions ranked the type of fit they prefer was also generated (see Table 19).

Table 19. Comparison of Importance of Fit Rankings at Urban vs. Town/Rural Institutions.

	Urban				Town/Rural			
	5-Point Scale		Ranking		5-Point Scale		Ranking	
	Mean (5=Very Important, 1=Not Important)	Value Order (3=Low, 1=High)	Mean (1=Most Important, 3=Least Important)	Value Order (3=Low, 1=High)	Mean (5=Very Important, 1=Not Important)	Value Order (3=Low, 1=High)	Mean (1=Most Important, 3=Least Important)	Value Order (3=Low, 1=High)
P-J Fit	4.43*	1	1.55	1	4.28*	1	1.61	1
P-O Fit	3.82	3	2.18	2	3.79	3	2.20	3
P-G Fit	4.10	2	2.28	3	3.96	2	2.18	2

Note: *Denotes statistically significant difference between values, $p<.05$. Additional details in Table 18.

These data supported the proposition that there may be differences in institutions based on geographic setting in what they say they desire for P-E fit, as town/rural institution participants ranked P-G fit higher than P-O, while those at urban institutions did the opposite. It is interesting to note, though, that those from urban institutions did not rank their fit preferences in the same way they prioritized them in the other items on the survey.

Two SEM comparisons were also run with the data to determine if the paths looked any different for different groups. Because SEM is suggested for samples of approximately 100 or more (Byrne, 2010), and very few of the demographic items from the survey resulted in multiple subsamples of this size, comparisons were only run for hiring responsibility versus no hiring responsibility and urban versus town/rural participants. The model for urban versus town/rural did result in one significant path difference. This was determined by completing a chi square comparison between the unconstrained model ($\chi^2(252)=351.26$) and a model that constrained the three paths between each dimension of fit and its respective job performance outcomes ($\chi^2(255)=360.02$).

Given that this test showed a significant difference between the two models ($\chi^2(3)=8.76$, $p=0.032$), the next step was to test the relationship between the unconstrained model and a model with one of the three paths between fit and outcomes unconstrained. This was done for all three paths, and the P-O fit in the urban model (standardized regression=.89) was significantly more likely than the town/rural model (standardized regression=.47) to predict the P-O job performance outcomes ($\chi^2(2)=7.18$,

p=0.028). This indicated that those who work in rural institutions may have different anticipated outcomes associated with this P-O fit.

Age of Participant

Another area where significant differences were found was based on the age of the participant (see Table 20).

Table 20. Comparison Based on Employer Age.

Construct Category	1.20-29 Years M(SD)	2.30-39 Years M(SD)	3.40+ Years M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.26(.44)	4.34(.34)	4.58(.41)	.001**	7.24
P-O Fit	3.72(.54)	3.81(.50)	3.93(.47)	.131	2.06
P-G Fit	3.98(.51)	4.11(.43)	4.17(.47)	.096	2.38
		t-tests			
	1-2	1-3	2-3		
P-J Fit	-1.26	-3.56**	-2.92**		

Note: *$p<.05$, **$p<.017$

The analysis of the data in Table 20 showed that there was evidence that sub-groups based on age were different based on age for P-J fit. Specifically, those who were over 40 years of age found P-J fit significantly more important than both those who were 20-29 and those who were 30-39. There was no evidence to show that the results were from different samples based on age for P-O or P-G fit. The Bonferroni Correction was used by dividing the desired *p* value (.05) by the number of analyses being run (3) to account for multiple comparisons being run. The difference was also significant at this level.

Hiring Responsibility

Finally, significant differences were found when comparing the data based on whether or not the individual participant had hiring responsibility for the hall director position in their department. This was run to determine whether or not those who have decision-making responsibility have different opinions than those who do not (see Table 21).

Table 21. Comparison Based on Hiring Responsibility.

Construct Category	Hiring Responsibility M	No Hiring Responsibility M	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *T*
P-J Fit	4.36(.40)	4.36(.42)	.915	.106
P-O Fit	3.76(.49)	3.85(.53)	.283	1.08
P-G Fit	3.99(.46)	4.17(.50)	.020*	2.35

*$p<.05$

The analysis of the data in Table 21 depicted that the differences between the means based on whether or not the participant had hiring responsibility for the hall director position in their respective department were not significant based on the P-J fit or P-O fit constructs. However, they were significant based on P-G fit; those without hiring responsibility rated P-G fit significantly higher than those with hiring responsibility. The SEM analysis based on hiring responsibility resulted in no significant prediction differences.

Carnegie Classification

The fourth area after geographic region, age, and hiring responsibility where significant differences were noted was amongst Carnegie Classification for P-J fit.

However, upon closer examination the areas where significant differences were observed were with the Classifications with the smallest sample sizes (n=5, n=7). For this reason, it was decided that further research would need to be done with larger samples in order to make more appropriate conclusions.

In terms of the final two research questions, these data clearly supported that there are differences in how employers rate the importance of the dimensions of P-E fit based on institutional demographics and geographic location of the institution. The implications of these findings are discussed in the following chapter.

Summary

This chapter contained data for a psychometric analysis of the instrument proposed for Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model as it applies to student affairs professionals. An amended model was identified and tested to determine goodness-of-fit with the data. In addition, several tests were run to determine group differences based on demographic characteristics of the institution and individuals completing the survey. These tests helped to identify results to provide answers for each of the research questions. The next chapter discusses the practicality of these results and implications for the student affairs profession.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The results of this study on the role of person-environment (P-E) fit in the selection process of new residence life professionals provided enough evidence to address the research questions set forth in Chapter I. In this Chapter, each of the research questions is addressed with an explanation of how the results applied to the question and an explanation for what these results may mean. Implications for further research; graduate education and professional development; and recruitment, selection and other human resource practices are then addressed, followed by suggestions for future research with this study, and limitations of the study.

Application of Theoretical Model

The first research question asked, does Werbel and Gilliland's model (1999) apply to the selection processes for new student affairs professionals, specifically those in residence life? Several confirmatory psychometric analyses were run to show that there is evidence that this model has merit in the application for this sample of residence life professionals with potential implications for the desired population, but there were also some differences based on the context of the sample and population.

Multiple Dimensions of Person-Environment Fit

The data analysis indicated that this study confirmed what Kristof-Brown, Jansen, and Colbert (2002) found; there are multiple distinct constructs within P-E fit. In this

case, these three constructs were person-job (P-J), person-organization (P-O), and person-group (P-G) fits. The reliability data had an acceptable to strong Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the three fit constructs, indicating that the data should be replicable. When factor analysis was completed, the three constructs were unidimensional. In addition, the correlation data amongst the three factors in the final proposed constructs indicated that while there was likely some relationship amongst the three constructs, the correlation was not strong enough to suggest that they were measuring the same concept.

These findings were the first to support the idea that there may be considerations other than knowledge, skills, and abilities that contribute to a person's fit with a new job. This is somewhat contradictory to the current movement within the two overarching student affairs professional associations, ACPA- College Student Educators International and NASPA- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, to establish one primary set of competencies for all student affairs professionals; the findings from this study supported Dickerson et al.'s (2011) idea that there may be other types of competencies, such as dispositional competencies, involved in the fit of new professionals.

Difference in Theoretical and Proposed Models

Predictor variables and fit constructs. This was the first instrument and empirical study to fully test Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model (J. Werbel, personal communication, September 6, 2011). A contribution of this study to the research in this area was the psychometric analysis of an instrument that expands the more common notion of "fit" beyond the knowledge skills and abilities to do the job. There were,

however, some areas where the proposed model differed from the theoretical model, as noted in the data analysis. One of the findings from the pilot study that was confirmed in the dissertation study was that the fit constructs had a stronger reliability and the model had a stronger goodness-of-fit when the predictor variables were collapsed into/included in the fit calculations, instead of remaining as separate items, as depicted in the original theoretical model. This resulted in a more parsimonious model, as seen in Figure 9.

The idea that the predictor variables were a part of the overall fit construct makes conceptual sense, given that it is hard to define P-J, P-O, and P-G fits without using the predictor variables. This adjusted model helped to identify that residence life professionals have difficulty with this distinction as well.

Person-organization (P-O) fit job performance outcomes. The P-O fit job performance outcomes, Organizational Contributions and Retention did not fit with this model. There are many possible explanations for why this may have occurred. First, this may have been circumstantial to the sample studied. Entry level residence hall directors are typically hired with an anticipation of staying in the position for 3-5 years. Recruiters and hiring authorities, while not looking for someone to leave immediately, likely do not place as much value on how the person contributes to the greater organization or their retention in their final hiring decisions, because of this anticipated timeline. Conceptually and analytically, these outcomes did not hold up in the case of residence life professionals. This would need to be further tested to see if the finding is generalizable to the entire field of student affairs.

A second explanation was that the institutions surveyed may not have had a strong institutional culture to define a fit with, or participants may not have identified

with the institutional culture themselves. The median number of years that participants had worked at their current institution was three years. This short tenure may also have also impacted whether or not a participant valued how long a new employee would be retained or contribute to the overall organization.

Finally, when participants were asked what they viewed as "the organization" when hiring hall directors for their organization, the overwhelming majority, 168/213 (78.9%) responded that "the organization" was their individual department as opposed to their division or overall institution. This may indicate that participants did not necessarily view how the selection process applied to the larger organizational picture, which would specifically impact the Organizational Contributions outcome. Any or all of these explanations could offer reasons why Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) model was altered in this area.

Person-job fit job performance outcomes. In addition, as mentioned with the alternate model, the P-J fit job performance outcome Innovative had a stronger correlation in the model with P-O fit outcomes than with P-J fit outcomes. This model was not selected as the final model, but it does indicate a further area of explanation, particularly for residence life professionals. In many cases, the process for hearing and accepting new ideas depends on the organizational culture of the department or institution. In some instances, you have to be in an organization for a period of time before others come to seek or accept your ideas. For this specific sample, some institutions also have a significant number of entry level hall director positions for which they may be seeking consistency. Innovation as a job outcome may not be sought when trying to achieve this consistency. Employers may also have associated this outcome

with P-O fit due to its connection with organizational culture. P-O fit job performance outcomes in this model related to a broader organizational vision and longer-term concepts. Innovation and change conceptually fit with this idea.

Innovation as a part of organizational culture may be even more applicable in rural institutions, where Leist (2007a) identified the need for incoming rural community college presidents to have situational awareness as one of their traits. Hiring someone who understands how to navigate organizational culture with regard to innovative ideas has some conceptual merit. However, it should be noted that the difference in the model with the Innovative outcome associated with P-O fit job performance outcomes was only slightly better than with its original placement, and it had a negative impact on the error variance accounted for, so additional research needs to be conducted on this specific outcome area for both the residence life sample and the student affairs population.

Suggested model. The statistical and conceptual pieces of evidence together indicated that the questions in this survey likely measured three different types of fit, as Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework suggests, but there may be differences in outcomes for this specific sample and population. Collectively, this resulted in a new proposed model for P-E Fit in entry-level residence life professionals, with possible implications for the broader population of student affairs, as seen in Figure 9.

Desired vs. Actualized Fit in the Selection Process

After developing an understanding of the model for P-E fit, the second research question was, does the type of P-E fit that professionals believe is the most important, match with the criteria for the type of fit they are looking for with their hiring decisions?

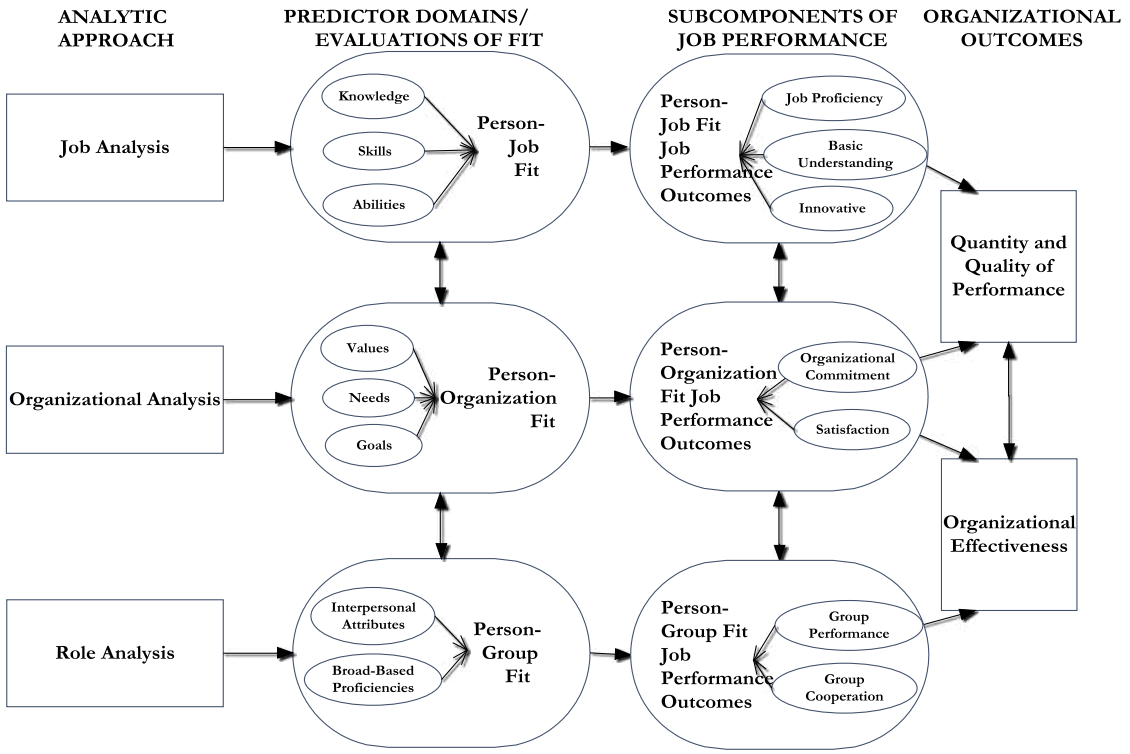


Figure 9. Proposed person-environment fit model for new residence life professionals, modified from Werbel and Gilliland (1999).

In other words, does the desired P-E fit align with the actual selection process? The data revealed that this may not necessarily be the case.

Desired Fit

When participants were asked to rank what type of P-E fit they placed the most emphasis on when making hiring decisions on hall director candidates, P-J fit was the top choice of 94/170 (55.3%) participants and one of the top two choices by 141/170 (82.9%). In other words, the first thing recruiters wanted to know was whether or not the person had the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the job. The ranking of P-O and P-G fits was not as clear. The percentage of participants that had P-O fit as one of their top two choices (58.2%) was nearly equal to the percentage that ranked P-G fit as one of their top two choices (58.8%). The final result, though, was that simply by ranking overall

types of fit, participants placed them in order of P-J, P-O, and P-G fits for where employers place their primary emphasis in hiring decisions for new entry-level residence life professionals.

Criteria for Hiring Decisions

When broken down by predictor variables and job performance outcomes, the data analysis told a slightly different story. Based on the 5-point scale ratings of the fit criteria items and predictor variables, participants rated P-J fit the highest. This was in agreement with the ranking data. However, based on the 5-point scale responses, participants placed P-G fit as their second priority, and P-O fit as their third priority, which did not align with the ranking data. The same order held true with the job performance outcomes. The P-J fit job performance outcomes were considered very important for hall directors hired. P-G and P-O fit job performance outcomes were ranked lower, with P-G outcomes on average slightly more important than P-O fit outcomes. When the sample was broken down based on geographic location, the urban sample had a similar pattern to the overall model; the order for the type of fit desired in the ranking question did not necessarily match the order of importance for the criteria or outcomes. The town/rural participants had a stronger match between the criteria and outcomes they viewed as important with the ranking of types of fit they sought in their selection processes.

This suggested that in fact the criteria and outcomes that interviewers are seeking in selection processes may not align with the type of fit they believe they place their greatest emphasis on in hiring decisions. P-J fit as the most important to employers aligned with current research. Werbel and Gilliland (1999) noted in their research, much

of the literature on P-E fit focused exclusively on P-J fit, or the match between the person and their specific job responsibilities. This is how many employers have been trained and selection processes have been designed. The student affairs field has focused on P-J fit and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for the profession with the ACPA/NASPA competencies. Professionals understand and place priority on candidates who can do the job. However, past P-J fit, participants did not seem to have as clear of a match.

One possible explanation is the relationship between P-O and P-G fits. The data indicated that there was a moderate relationship between the two, so this could be why the criteria and the outcomes did not line up exactly with the desired type of fit. Given that participants indicated that they viewed their department as "the organization" when making hiring decisions, this could mean that they were considering fit to the organization (P-O) and fit to the staff team (P-G) similar constructs and could possibly explain the discrepancy. As Werbel and Gilliland (1999) implied, it may be that more training and education would help those in selection processes to better understand what criteria would match their desired priority in final hiring decisions. A research study that extends beyond a single functional area and position type to a more diverse sample would help to identify if the issue is the similarity of the two constructs, or if it is that the criteria being sought in hiring decisions do not in fact match what interviewers are looking for in future employees.

Institutional and Individual Demographic Differences

After understanding fit from a broad perspective with the entire model and how desired fit compared to the individual criteria interviewers look for, the third research

question was, are there participant or institutional demographic factors that influence P-E fit in the selection process? The answer to this question is that there were several areas identified where the difference between the results was statistically significant for different groups based on demographic factors. These included the age and hiring responsibility of the participant and the geographic location of the institution.

Individual Demographics

Age. Age of the participant/employer was one of the areas where a statistically significant difference in the responses regarding the types of fit was noted. While participants still placed the types of fit in the same relative order of importance, and P-J fit was the most important to all three age-based subgroups, P-J fit was rated significantly more important to those in the oldest age range than to those in the younger age ranges. This may be related to the identity development of the interviewer and his/her place in the organization. As Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) and Renn and Hodges (2007) discussed in their studies of the importance of socialization of new professionals, this could also have been impacted by how younger people and new professionals view their colleagues. This may suggest that younger people may be looking for people with whom they can have both personal and professional relationships with, while older participants are truly looking for someone who can do the job and not necessarily for other traits. Younger staff may also assume that someone else in the hiring process is focusing on whether or not the person can do the job. It could also reflect that older participants have higher expectations for candidates coming in than those who are likely more close in age to the people desired for hall director roles, affirming some of the competency findings

by Burkard, Cole, Ott, and Stoflet (2004) and Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, and Molina (2009).

It is important to note, though, that while there may be a correlation between age and position level in an organization, an increase in age does not always equate to an increase in position level at an institution. No significant differences were noted with fit based on participants' self-reported position status within the organization.

Hiring responsibility. The other individual demographic response where statistically significant differences were noted was based on whether or not the participant had hiring responsibility for the hall director position within their organization. This time the noted difference was in P-G fit, with P-G fit being significantly more important to those without hiring responsibility. Conceptually, this makes sense in that the person with the hiring responsibility is often at a supervisory level in the organization and would be most interested in whether or not the person could do the job, while those without the hiring responsibility are usually at the entry level or administrative assistant level and may assume the person can do the job and would likely be more interested than supervisors with how they would "get along"/work with the person being hired. The data analysis indicated that there may be some difference in the view of fit, depending on position placement or role in the organization.

Institutional Demographics

Geographic setting. The institutional demographic where significant differences were noted was in the area of urbanization/rurality of the institution. Differences were noted in the importance placed on P-J fit, the rankings of P-O and P-G fits, and in the SEM relationships between P-O fit and P-O fit job performance outcomes. Collectively,

these analyses indicated that there are notable differences based on the geographic setting of the institution and supported the research indicating that rural institutions face a unique environment and challenges when compared to their nonrural peers (Cavan, 1995; Cejda & Leist, 2006; Miller & Kissinger, 2007).

Importance of P-J fit. The initial area of difference noted was that urban institution participants rated P-J fit criteria higher than those from institutions located in town/rural locations. One plausible explanation for this is the smaller candidate pool of qualified candidates that are attracted to rural institutions (Cejda, 2010). With alleged larger candidate pools, those hiring at urban institutions could use job qualifications as one way to narrow down their pool to determine who to hire, while rural institutions may be in a situation where they may not have the opportunity to hire extremely well-qualified staff; rather they hope to hire those who meet the minimum qualifications and develop them from within (Allen & Cejda, 2007). The greater role of job qualifications in the hiring process would explain why participants from urban institutions rated P-J fit criteria as more important.

Ranking the dimensions of fit. A second area of difference that was noted was the way that participants from urban and town/rural locations ranked their desired type of fit. While both again had P-J fit as most important, when ranking responses were averaged, those from urban institutions had P-O fit as their second choice, while those from town/rural locations had P-G fit as their second choice. This difference in fit connected to geographic setting supports the idea found in previous studies of rural community college presidents regarding the importance of relationship building (Eddy,

2007b). Employers at town/rural institutions desire someone who is going to fit with the team, which may have a broader scope and level of importance than at urban institutions.

The third noted area of difference related to the SEM analysis is addressed in the next section. Collectively, these results supported the idea that individual and institutional demographics do have an impact on P-E fit. This was also a second piece of evidence that there may be further areas to explore in the current ACPA/NASPA competencies study; are the needed competencies truly universal, or should they be considered in the context of the specific institutional setting? Implications of these differences could relate to Werbel and DeMarie's (2005) later model of P-E fit and organizational human resource practices as a whole. These differences supported the idea that an institutional alignment of human resource practices to desired fit could help ensure that candidates do not receive mixed signals of expectations based on the demographics of the interviewer, and it suggested that human resource practices may not be a one-size fits all process for institutions of higher education.

Differences Between Rural and Urban Institutions

The previous data analyses led right into the final research question, do professionals at rural institutions desire to hire individuals with different types of P-E fit than those at nonrural institutions? Because of the geographic setting of the survey participants, this question was addressed in the form, do professionals at urban institutions desire to hire individuals with different types of P-E fit than those at nonurban institutions? The previous data analysis indicated that there was a difference between what employers from urban and town/rural institution participants deemed as important

in the hiring process and desired from candidates. Further analysis was done to dig a little deeper in this area, resulting in a very interesting finding of this study.

When SEM analyses were completed for the urban and town/rural portions of the sample, both samples had an average to good fit with the proposed model; however, a significant difference was noticed in the relationship between P-O fit and P-O fit job performance outcomes. The analyses revealed that the fit responses from town/rural participants were significantly less likely to predict the desired outcomes in the model. Together with the ranking results above, this indicated that while participants at both institutions desire to find candidates who can "do the job" (i.e., have high P-J fit), their expectations of outcomes of "doing the job" may be very different.

The difference in the relationship between P-O fit and P-O fit job performance outcomes at urban versus town/rural institutions may help to explain why rural institutions sometimes struggle with recruitment and retention of faculty and staff (Cejda, 2010; Cejda & Leist, 2006; Gibson-Harmon, Rodriguez, & Haworth, 2002, Murray, 2007). If they do not identify the connection between the alignment of a candidate's values, needs, and goals with their Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment outcomes, they may be seeking a mismatch without even realizing it. In looking at the regression values for the specific P-O fit job performance outcomes, the Organizational Commitment outcome was more predictable for town/rural institutions. This supported the notion that desired P-O fit may have different definitions for the two types of institutions. The research stated that rural institutions seek someone who is committed to the institution and its commitment to its community, while urban

institutions may be looking more for staff who are on the cutting edge of new ideas. These results seemed to confirm this notion.

There was evidence to support the idea that there are differences in what professionals at urban institutions desire versus their town/rural counterparts. While the most important type of fit at institutions in both settings was P-J fit by all accounts, there were several other noted differences that indicated differences in desired fit. The recognition of these differences could have a significant impact on the student affairs research, graduate education and professional development, and selection processes of the future.

Implications

Research

The results of this study have implications for future research. As noted by Werbel and Gilliland (1999), much of the research in the area of P-E fit has been focused on P-J fit. In student affairs, many studies have been focused on competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2010; Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2004; Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Herdlein, 2004; Waple, 2006), which align with the P-J fit line of research. The results of this study indicated that this line of research may need to be expanded. Employers hiring entry-level residence life professionals identified that there were three different and unique constructs of P-E fit. Just because someone has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the job does not mean that he/she will fit with a specific institution. Further identification of the role that P-O and P-G fits play in the selection process as well as longitudinally in employee productivity and satisfaction is important. Are there any of the ACPA/NASPA competencies that account for P-O and P-G fit

outcomes? A cross-analysis with this survey tool and the desired ACPA/NASPA outcomes may be revealing in that regard. Further, can this line of research be presented in a way that accounts for other types of fit?

Additionally, studying the ACPA/NASPA competencies in terms of how they are desired, expressed, and used at different types of institutions, based on geographic setting or other institutional demographic, or in different functional areas seems to be important. If graduate programs choose to use these competencies as a guiding document for aligning their curriculum, it will still be important to denote what it means to work at different types of institutions. Broader study of the application of the competencies would aid in this effort.

In addition, there is a lack of research on four-year institutions based on their geographic setting. Many of the institutions in town/rural setting serve a primarily regional or local mission and have few graduate programs. All of these dynamics present unique dynamics for the recruitment and retention of staff, but they have gone relatively unstudied in the literature. The results of this study helped to confirm that these institutions are different from larger, graduate, and urban institutions that are more often studied. This study utilized an IPEDS framework for classifying institutions, which could be applied to nearly any large-scale multi-institutional study. The research on rural community colleges identified that the rural location provides a unique environment. When related to fit, the results of this study confirmed these results for four-year institutions. This opens up a new area of research to identify the unique characteristics and challenges rural environments present and how they impact human resource practices for the institution as a whole, for student affairs staff, and for residence life and hall

directors specifically. An expansion of the current study to a larger, more professionally diverse sample would allow a stronger paired analysis to identify the specific institutional demographics that impact P-E fit (size, mission, rural location, etc.) or to draw firmer conclusions about the generalizability of these results to the broader student affairs profession. These findings then would have further impact in the graduate education and professional development of new staff members to an institution.

Graduate Education and Professional Development

The implications for graduate education and professional development can be divided into two areas, those for graduate preparation programs and those for individuals with a role in institutional selection processes. Significant research has been done in the area of competency development in graduate programs from various perspectives (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2004; Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009; Herdlein, 2004; Kretovics, 2002; Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007; Lovell & Kosten, 2000; Waple, 2006). Most of these focus on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to prepare new professionals for the student affairs field, but as identified by Hirt (2006), very little has focused on preparing these new professionals to work at different types of institutions. This study identified one area that faculty and supervisors of graduate students could use to help identify institutional differences.

Training graduate students to examine all three types of fit with a new position as well as the emphasis that different types of institutions place on the different types of fit could help to make them more prepared for the selection process and could aid in the socialization to their new positions. Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) found that one of the areas that new professionals identified as challenging in their first year in a new position

was navigating organizational culture. Advanced preparation for this process would not completely eliminate this challenge, but it may help to ease it. Previous student affairs studies have indicated that not all responsibility should fall to the graduate program faculty; this process is likely to be most effective if addressed by both the faculty and those with whom the student works with in his/her practical experience. If this comprehensive advanced preparation occurred, it could also have implications for retention of new professionals, a significant issue for student affairs as identified by Lorden (1998).

The results of this study also have implications in how new staff members are oriented to the selection process for new residence life professionals. What are the top priorities for a department when hiring new staff? What parts of the selection process are focused on identifying these priorities? Werbel and DeMarie (2005) identified that businesses should identify their top priority and strategically align their selection processes with this priority and focus on that type of P-E fit. A staff member who moves from one type of institution to another may not realize the differences in P-E fit for the new institution and how they are operationalized in the selection process. Orienting all staff members to the right institutional "fit" may aid in preventing some of the individual demographic differences that were identified based on age and hiring responsibility. It would ease frustrations of staff members without hiring responsibility whose top pick for a position may not be the department's final selection, or from a candidate who inferred one type of fit from a particular interviewer that did not match the institutional priorities. Although all individual differences can never be accounted for, especially with a value to hire a diverse staff reflective of the students being served, better orientation to what the

department is looking for has implications for all involved. These results, along with the research of Werbel and DeMarie (2005) imply that a one-size-fits-all selection process may not be the best strategy for institutions of higher education.

Selection and Human Resource Practices

The broadest implications for this study are for residence life selection processes. The results of the study identified that P-E fit goes beyond whether or not the candidate can do the job. Werbel and Gilliland (1999), in their application of P-E fit to selection processes identified that employers could do a job analysis (P-J fit), organizational analysis (P-O fit), or role analysis (P-G fit) to identify specific fit needs. Identifying these needs prior to engaging in the selection process helps to ensure that all staff are on the same page with what the institution desires for candidates coming into positions. Identifying these needs to the candidate also allows them to potentially identify a misfit before it occurs. These implications go broader than just the selection process, though. Werbel and DeMarie (2005) discussed the importance of strategic human resource practices, or aligning all human resource practices with desired fit (e.g. orientation, training, performance management). This study focused on just one of these practices, namely selection; alignment of all processes could help to resolve some of the noted issues with attrition of student affairs professionals and help to propel an organization forward.

This study helped to operationalize how institutions might begin to look at "ruralizing" job descriptions and interview processes as suggested by Leist (2007b), Murray (2005), and Murray and Cunningham (2004). Broadening job descriptions to include organizational and role analyses as well as identifying ways to communicate

these in and to candidates in the selection process is critical. In addition, the results of this study gave professionals at rural institutions permission to say that their institutions are in fact different and should be looking for a different fit in candidates. Rather than just believing their location may be hindering their selection processes, the results helped to justify that their environments are different and they may need to alter their processes accordingly. Town/rural institutions need to define what outcomes they are looking for in someone who "can do the job" and "fits with the organization."

Realization of the multiple dimensions of P-E fit and how these may be impacted by institutional differences expands the perspective from which much current research is approached. Training and preparing staff in these areas and applying them to the selection processes could have significant impact on the future of entry level professionals in residence life and potentially the entire student affairs field.

Limitations

In the completion of the study, a few limitations were encountered. The first was that this framework had not been empirically tested before, and this topic had not been discussed extensively in student affairs literature, so there was not a strong foundational grounding on which to base this study. However, the pilot study results indicated that there was some evidence to show an applicability of this model to the sample studied. This offered confidence in moving forward with the dissertation study. This also placed significance on the results of this study, since they are the first of their kind.

Second, it was not possible to calculate an exact response rate for the dissertation study. Because the author relied on the primary contact at each institution to forward the email invitation out to potential participants, it is unknown how many people forwarded

the survey on or to how many people it was forwarded. It was also not possible to determine exactly how many people were eligible to complete the dissertation study. One way that this was resolved was to calculate the response rate by the number of eligible institutions participating.

Third, while the sample size for the study was fairly robust, there were still areas where data analyses could not be completed because of small sample sizes of certain subsamples. A repetition of this study to a larger sample would help to further substantiate the results and identify further differences in how participants viewed P-E fit. A larger sample would allow for more confident conclusions to be drawn about the impact of specific individual or institutional demographics.

Finally, the sample for the study could be considered one of convenience, in that not all institutions in the United States participate in the Oshkosh Placement Exchange, and there was not a global factor to the sample. It was bound by both time and location. In addition, the sample was based on participants who work in residence life; however, given that new professionals in residence life make up the highest percentage of new professionals in student affairs, this would support the potential generalizability of the results. Additional samples from other areas of student affairs staff would help confirm that the results are generalizable across student affairs. However, the sample produced participants from a diverse range of institutions, so generalizations can still be made in this area. Drawing a sample from a larger, broader organization, such as ACPA or NASPA, may eliminate some of these challenges.

Further Research

Beyond those areas addressed in the implications above, further research is warranted regarding human resource practices and the models that Werbel and Gilliland (1999) and Werbel and DeMarie (2005) have provided. This was the first known study to empirically test the model related to selection practices; there are many areas of human resource practices in student affairs that can be examined. There have not only been documented challenges with selection processes at different types of institutions, but as noted, there are challenges with attrition of new student affairs professionals across higher education. However, most of these studies have examined only one area of human resource practices such as orientation or socialization. Expanding from Werbel and Gilliland's model to Werbel and DeMarie's broader model addressing the strategic management of all human resource practices is a potential area for further study. Conducting a longitudinal study to follow employees and employers through several different facets of human resource practices from recruitment to selection through to orientation, professional development, performance management, and turnover from a position or institution would help expand the snapshot view of this study into a more holistic one. How are the different dimensions of P-E fit impacted over time and by different human resource practices?

Duplication of this specific study with a larger sample and across more areas of student affairs would confirm and advance the applicability and relevance of this study to a broader representation of student affairs staff and departments, beyond just the current sample. Can the same conclusions be drawn across a wider range of institutions and a broader range of positions? What conclusions from this study are directly impacted by

the sample being entirely residence life professionals? What role does the Carnegie Classification of the institution play? The results from this study could not be conclusive in these areas.

Qualitative studies, similar to those of Renn and Hodges (2007) and Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008), in the area of human resource practices and the models mentioned here are also suggested. How, if at all, do employers believe that P-E fit plays into their human resource practices? Do these answers differ from the perspective of the employer to that of the employee? What about from faculty and practitioners preparing graduate students to enter the field? Do these answers vary based on institutional type? How are employers and employees choosing to address problems if misfit occurs? These would help to offer a more firm explanation beyond the assertions based on the quantitative results here.

Finally, additional research could be done from the perspective of the employee. What type of fit are they most looking for in a job? How does the employee identify and carry out the fit that the employer is looking for? Based on recruitment and selection practices does the type of fit the employee believes that the employer is looking for match with what the employer believes he/she is espousing? What is it that employers espouse that helps an employee to determine whether or not to even enter into the application process?

As with many studies, the results of this research led to many more questions for the future. It opened up several new areas to be examined in in hopes of having a positive impact on human resource practices.

Summary

This purpose of this study was to examine the concept of "fit" with student affairs (specifically residence life) professionals at colleges and universities using Werbel and Gilliland's (1999) framework/model of describing fit. A new instrument was created and psychometrically analyzed to be able to examine this model within the context of the selection processes for ne residence life professionals. After confirming the model, comparisons were examined among institutions to see how desired fit of new professional candidates varied based on institutional characteristics. It confirmed that Werbel and Gilliland's model opens up a new perspective on residence life selection processes and institutional and individual demographics can and do make a difference in what professionals look for when hiring candidates for entry-level positions in residence life. It provided the data to begin asking how person-organization or person-group fits might fit into the conversations regarding professional competencies. These results have implications for future research, graduate education and professional development students and staff, and human resource practices in residence life and potentially all of student affairs.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Survey

This questionnaire concerns your beliefs and opinions regarding the selection process for hall directors at your current institution. There are no right or wrong answers – we are simply trying to find out how you make decisions regarding hall director applicants during the selection process. We are interested in your opinions with respect to your current institution, so please be candid in your responses. Your answers will be kept strictly CONFIDENTIAL. The information will be used for research purposes ONLY and will NOT be available for any other reasons.

The questionnaire consists of 24 items which are to be answered on the following online survey. Although some of the items are similar, there are differences between them, so you should treat each one as a truly separate question. The best approach is to ANSWER EACH ITEM FAIRLY QUICKLY. Choose the alternative that seems to reflect your view most closely. In total, completion of the survey should take you no more than 10 minutes.

Your participation in this study is vital to its overall success. The time you have given to answer this questionnaire is very much appreciated. Thank you for your support.

Missy Burgess
PhD Student
Department of Educational Leadership
University of North Dakota

Item	
Have you been employed at your current institution for at least one year?	• Yes • No
Are you a full-time staff member?	• Yes • No
Please write out the name of your institution. These data will only be used to match survey results with IPEDS data for institutional demographics. The names of the institution will be removed from final data analysis.	
Is your institution:	• Public • Private, Not-for-profit • For-Profit
Is your institution:	• 2-year • 4-year, baccalaureate • 4-year, baccalaureate and graduate
Please select the employment status that describes the hall directors hired for your department. Please check all that apply.	• Master's required • Master's preferred • Bachelor's required • Graduate assistant • Undergraduate position
How many hall directors total do you employ at your institution?	
If you would like to offer any additional explanation as to your hall director staffing pattern, please do so here:	
When hiring for the most educationally qualified hall director position(s) within your current organization, what are you most likely to view as "the organization"?	• Your specific department • Your division (Student Affairs/Academic Affairs/Business and Finance) • The institution as a whole

You have just interviewed an applicant for the most educationally qualified hall director position (as indicated in the initial demographic questions) in your current organization (as indicated in the initial demographic questions). Please rate the importance of each of the following criteria on your decision to recommend the applicant be hired for the position **based on their fit to the job**.

5= very important

4= somewhat important

3= neutral

2= somewhat unimportant

1= not at all important

Question	Scale
The applicant's fit to the requirements of this job	1 2 3 4 5
Your confidence that this applicant is qualified for this job	
Your belief that this applicant can achieve a high level of performance in this particular job	
The fit between the requirements of the job and the applicant's personal skills	
The fit of the applicant's abilities to the requirements of the job	
The applicant has the knowledge necessary to understand the components of the job	
The applicant has knowledge through education or work background that would apply to the position	

Continuing with the previous hypothetical example… you have just interviewed an applicant the most educationally qualified hall director position (as indicated in the initial demographic questions) for your current organization (as indicated in the initial demographic questions). Please rate the importance of each of the following criteria on your decision to recommend the applicant be hired for the position **based on their fit to the organization**.

5= very important
4= somewhat important
3= neutral
2= somewhat unimportant
1= not at all important

Question	Scale
The applicant's fit with the organization	1 2 3 4 5
The applicant's similarity to other employees within the organization	
Other employees' perceptions that this candidate fits well in your organization	
The things the applicant values in life are-similar to those that the organization values	
The organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things the applicant values in life	
The terms and conditions of employment fit with those the applicant thinks he/she should have	
The working environment fits with how the applicant thinks it should be	
The opportunities for growth and development fit with those the applicant thinks he/she should have	
The applicant's professional goals/plans are a good fit with the organization	

Continuing with the previous hypothetical example…you have just interviewed an applicant the most educationally qualified hall director position (as indicated in the initial demographic questions) for your current organization (as indicated in the initial demographic questions). Please rate the importance of each of the following criteria on your decision to recommend the applicant be hired for the position **based on fit to the staff team**.

5= very important
4= somewhat important
3= neutral
2= somewhat unimportant
1= not at all important

Question	Scale
The applicant's fit with the current employees that would be part of their work team	1 2 3 4 5
The applicant will get along with current staff members whom they will work closely with	
The applicant's skills and abilities meet a need of the existing staff team	
The applicant's skills and abilities are similar to the existing staff	
The applicant's personality is similar to the existing staff	
The applicant's skills and abilities complement the existing team	
The applicant adds new or different skills and/or abilities to the team	
The applicant's ability to improve existing team functionality	
The applicant's ability to develop and support quality interpersonal interactions with the existing staff team	
The applicant's ability to develop collegial relationships with the existing staff team	
The applicant's ability to promote group cooperation and synergy amongst the existing staff team	

You have just interviewed an applicant the most qualified hall director position (as indicated in the initial demographic questions) for your current organization (as indicated in the initial demographic questions). Please **rate** how important you think each of the following **job-performance outcomes** would be for hall director staff hired for your department at your institution.

5= very important

4= somewhat important

3= neutral

2= somewhat unimportant

1= not at all important

Question	Scale
Job Proficiency: The applicant performs the duties as described in the job description	1 2 3 4 5
Basic Understanding: The knowledge necessary to complete the daily job tasks	
Innovative: The ability to implement ideas to improve processes	
Organizational Contributions: Acts that seek to benefit the organization as opposed to the individual	
Satisfaction: A positive attitude about one's job or job situation	
Organizational Commitment: A person's identification with and involvement in an organization	
Retention: Continued employment with the organization that is beneficial to both the organization and the employee	
Group Performance: Contributions to the overall work efforts of the staff team	
Group Cooperation: How members of a team work together or get along to advance the efforts of the whole	

You are hiring an applicant for a an applicant the most educationally qualified hall director position (as indicated in the initial demographic questions) for your current organization (as indicated in the initial demographic questions). You have just indicated how you would rate each individual job performance outcome for hall director applicants, now please **rank** the importance of the following outcomes for staff hired for your organization with **1 being least important and 9 being most important**.

Question	Rank
Job Proficiency: The applicant performs the duties as described in the job description	
Basic Understanding: The knowledge necessary to complete the daily job tasks	
Innovative: The ability to implement ideas to improve processes	
Organizational Contributions: Acts that seek to benefit the organization as opposed to the individual	
Satisfaction: A positive attitude about one's job or job situation	
Organizational Commitment: A person's identification with and involvement in an organization	
Retention: Continued employment with the organization that is beneficial to both the organization and the employee	
Group Performance: Contributions to the overall work efforts of the staff team	
Group Cooperation: How members of a team work together or get along to advance the efforts of the whole	

When you recommend an applicant to be hired for a hall director position for your organization, please **rank** the relative emphasis on the fit of the applicant to the job vs. the fit of the applicant to the organization vs. the fit of the applicant to the staff team with **1 being the most important to 3 being the least important**.

- Fit to the job
- Fit to the organization
- Fit to the staff team

Demographics

Item	
Please indicate your age in years (in whole numbers):	
Please indicate your race. (Please check all that apply.)	• American Indian or Alaskan Native • Asian • Black or African American • Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander • White • Other
Please indicate your highest level of education attained:	• High School Diploma • Associate's Degree • Bachelor's Degree • Master's Degree in College Student Personnel, Higher Education , or Related Field • Master's Degree in Other Field • PhD or EdD in College Student Personnel, Higher Education, or Related Field • PhD or EdD in Other Field • Other (please specify)
Have you received any degrees from the institution at which you are currently employed?	• No. • Yes, all of my degrees have come from my current institution. • Yes, at least one, but not all, of my degrees has come from my current institution, but not my most recent degree. • Yes, at least one, but not all, of my degrees has come from my current institution, including my most recent degree.
Please indicate how you would classify your current professional position:	• Entry-level professional • Mid-level professional • Senior-level professional • Administrative support staff person • Other (please specify)
Please indicate how many years you have worked in your current position (in whole	

numbers, including the current year):	
Please indicate the number of years you have worked at your current institution (in whole numbers, including the current year):	
In your current position, do you have responsibility for the hiring decisions related to new, entry-level professionals?	• Yes • No
Please indicate how you identify:	• Male • Female • Transgender • Other

If you are interested in being entered into a drawing for a $20 Amazon.com gift certificate as a reward for completing the fit survey, please click the link below to enter your email address. You will be contacted on or about April 15, 2012 if your email is selected as the winner. Your email address will not be used for any other purposes and will not be associated with your responses to this survey in any way.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/M5L7C97

Appendix B
IRB Approvals

UNIVERSITY OF UND NORTH DAKOTA

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
c/o RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE
DIVISION OF RESEARCH
TWAMLEY HALL ROOM 106
264 CENTENNIAL DRIVE STOP 7134
GRAND FORKS ND 58202-7134
(701) 777-4279
FAX (701) 777-6708
http://und.edu/research/research-economic-development/institutional-review-board/

February 10, 2012

Melissa Burgess
411 Tulane Court
Grand Forks, ND 58203

Dear Ms. Burgess:

We are pleased to inform you that your project titled, "The Impact of External Environment on Person-Environment Fit in the Selection of New Housing Professionals 2012" (IRB-201202-252) has been reviewed and approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (IRB). The expiration date of this approval is June 1, 2013.

As principal investigator for a study involving human participants, you assume certain responsibilities to the University of North Dakota and the UND IRB. Specifically, any adverse events or departures from the protocol that occur must be reported to the IRB immediately. It is your obligation to inform the IRB in writing if you would like to change aspects of your approved project, prior to implementing such changes.

When your research, including data analysis, is completed, you must submit a Research Project Termination form to the IRB office so your file can be closed. A Termination Form has been enclosed and is also available on the IRB website.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at (701) 777-4279 or e-mail michelle.bowles@research.und.edu.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP
IRB Coordinator

MLB/jle

Enclosures

January 17, 2012

Dear Institutional Review Board:

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Department of Residence Life and Gruenhagen Conference Center have proudly hosted the Oshkosh Placement Exchange (OPE), a national job placement conference, for the past 32 years. We believe hosting the annual event is one way we are able to serve our profession.

On October 1, 2011, Missy Burgess contacted Marc Nylen and I, OPE Co-Chairs, to discuss the possibilities of partnering to support her research project. We applaud her efforts to conduct research, and feel it is yet another way for Missy to serve our profession; a woman who is already well-respected in our field. We have agreed to assist Missy in accessing the survey population, the 2012 OPE employers.

Since Missy had worked with us before the 2012 OPE registration opened, the following statement was able to be included on the employer registration form, "OPE Employers will be invited to participate in a higher education research study related to hiring processes for professional staff. At the time of the invitation, you can choose whether to be in the study or not. Participation or non-participation will not affect your service or status as an employer."

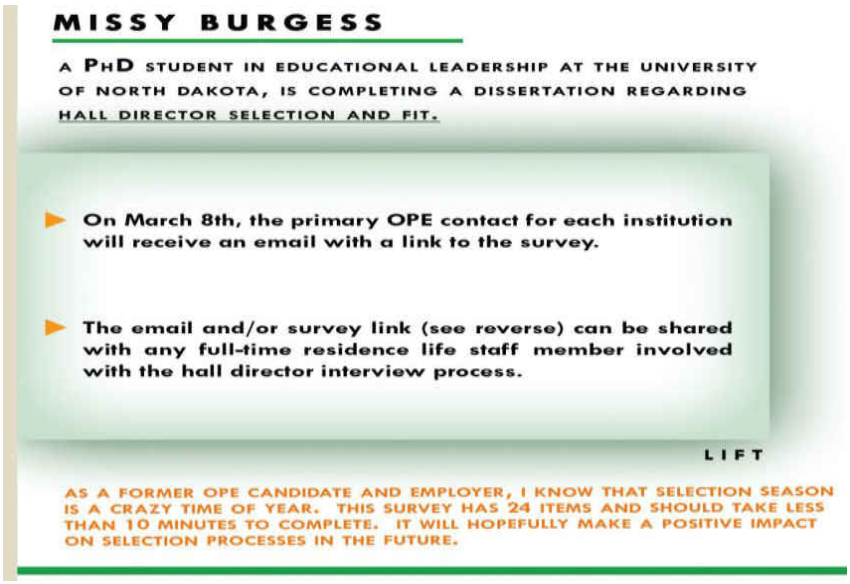
It is our pleasure to support Missy Burgess' research. Please feel free to contact me at (920) 424-3212 or develice@uwosh.edu if any additional information would be useful.

Respectfully,

Lori M. Develice Collins
Assistant Director of Residence Life – Leadership and Community Development
Oshkosh Placement Exchange (OPE) Co-Chair
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Appendix C
Survey Distribution Materials

Front of Post Card Distributed at OPE



Back of Post Card Distributed at OPE

Email # 1: March 8, 2012

Hello Primary OPE Contacts!

My name is Missy Burgess, and I am a PhD student in Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. I am currently working on my dissertation, and I am seeking your help in the completion of my study. Could you please forward the message below to any full-time staff in housing/residence life who participate in the hall director selection process for your institution? They need not have attended OPE. If they participate in the process in any way on your campus, they are eligible!

Thank you in advance for your time!

-Missy

Email to forward to your staff:

Hello!

My name is Missy Burgess, and I am a PhD student in Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. I am currently working on my dissertation, and I am seeking your help in the completion of my study. The survey linked below asks questions regarding your thoughts about the hall director selection process at your current institution. It should take approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. I know this is a very busy time of year, so I GREATLY appreciate your time to assist me in this endeavor.

If you have not already done so- if you could please complete the survey linked below no later than Friday, March 30, 2012, that would be great! Because of the generous assistance of a UMR-ACUHO Research Grant, at the end of the survey, you will be given the opportunity to opt in for a drawing for one of 5, $20 Amazon.com gift cards.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/burgess-survey

Thanks in advance for your assistance!

-Missy Burgess
PhD Student, Educational Leadership
University of North Dakota

E-mail #2: March 21, 2012

Hello Primary OPE Contacts!
(This is a follow-up, reminder e-mail.)

My name is Missy Burgess, and I am a PhD student in Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. I am currently working on my dissertation, and I am seeking your help in the completion of my study. On March 8th, you were emailed a request to forward out an email to your staff asking them to complete the survey below. Could you please forward the reminder below to any full-time staff in housing/residence life who participate in the hall director selection process for your institution? They do not need to have attended OPE. If they participate in the process in any way on your campus, they are eligible!

Thank you in advance for your time!

-Missy

Reminder/follow-up email to forward to your staff:

Hello!

My name is Missy Burgess, and I am a PhD student in Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. This is a reminder, follow-up request for your assistance! I am still seeking additional responses for my dissertation research.

The survey linked below asks questions regarding your thoughts about the hall director selection process at your current institution. It should take approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. I know this is a very busy time of year, so I GREATLY appreciate your time to assist me in this endeavor.

If you have not already done so- if you could please complete the survey linked below no later than Friday, March 30, 2012, that would be great! Because of the generous assistance of a UMR-ACUHO Research Grant, at the end of the survey, you will be given the opportunity to opt in for a drawing for one of 5, $20 Amazon.com gift cards.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/burgess-survey

Thank you to those who have already completed the survey!

-Missy Burgess
PhD Student, Educational Leadership
University of North Dakota

E-Mail #3: March 29, 2012

Hello Primary OPE Contacts!

211 people have filled out this survey- have you?!?

(This is the final reminder e-mail.)

My name is Missy Burgess, and I am a PhD student in Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. I am currently working on my dissertation, and I am seeking your help in the completion of my study. Could you please forward the reminder below to any full-time staff in housing/residence life who participate in the hall director selection process for your institution? They do not need to have attended OPE. If they participate in the process in any way on your campus, they are eligible! Multiple responses per institution are desired!

Thank you in advance for your time!

-Missy

Reminder/follow-up email to forward to your staff:

Hello!

211 people have filled out this survey- have you?!?

(This is the final reminder e-mail.)

My name is Missy Burgess, and I am a PhD student in Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. This is a reminder, follow-up request for your assistance! I am still seeking additional responses for my dissertation research.

The survey linked below asks questions regarding your thoughts about the hall director selection process at your current institution. It should take approximately 10 minutes or less to complete. I know this is a very busy time of year, so I GREATLY appreciate your time to assist me in this endeavor.

If you have not already done so- if you could please complete the survey linked below no later than Friday, March 30, 2012, that would be great! Because of the generous assistance of a UMR-ACUHO Research Grant, at the end of the survey, you will be given the opportunity to opt in for a drawing for one of 5, $20 Amazon.com gift cards.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/burgess-survey

Thank you to those who have already completed the survey!

-Missy Burgess
PhD Student, Educational Leadership
University of North Dakota

Appendix D
Supplemental Comparison Tables

Table 22. Comparison Based on NASPA Region.

Category Construct	1.I M(SD)	2.III M(SD)	3.IV-E M(SD)	4.IV-W M(SD)	5.V M(SD)	6.VI M(SD)	Sig. *P*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.50(.72)	4.26(.41)	4.40(.40)	4.30(.38)	4.18(.46)	4.57(.39)	.263	1.31
P-O Fit	4.03(.16)	3.76(.55)	3.80(.45)	3.80(.55)	3.80(.45)	4.08(.42)	.751	.53
P-G Fit	4.25(.14)	4.13(.59)	4.07(.46)	3.86(.52)	4.00(.41)	3.86(.52)	.079	2.01

Note: There were no participants from NASPA Region II.

Table 23. Comparison Based on Institutional Sector.

Category Construct	1.Public M(SD)	2.Private M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *t*
P-J Fit	4.36(.40)	4.33(.49)	.632	.49
P-O Fit	3.77(.53)	3.85(.46)	.442	-.77
P-G Fit	4.02(.50)	4.14(.46)	.187	-1.32

Table 24. Comparison Based on Definition of "the Organization".

Category Construct	1.Dept. M(SD)	2.Division M(SD)	3.Institution M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.34(.42)	4.40(.40)	4.46(.35)	.400	.92
P-O Fit	3.77(.54)	3.78(.44)	3.95(.47)	.304	1.20
P-G Fit	4.00(.51)	4.18(.41)	4.21(.46)	.071	2.68

Table 25. Comparison Based on Employers' Highest Degree Attained.

Category Construct	1.High School M(SD)	2.Assoc. M(SD)	3.Bach. M(SD)	4.Mast.-CSP M(SD)	5.Mast.-Other M(SD)	6.Doct.-CSP M(SD)	7.Doct.-Other M(SD)	Sig. *P*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.57	4.71(.40)	4.39(.36)	4.35(.42)	4.39(.38)	4.57(.27)	3.86	.485	.92
P-O Fit	4.25	4.56(.62)	3.88(.45)	3.78(.50)	3.84(.63)	3.54(.24)	2.88	.091	1.85
P-G Fit	4.78	4.22(.31)	4.19(.43)	4.04(.48)	4.04(.62)	3.98(.28)	2.89	.152	1.59

Note: There was only one participant in the each of the high school and doctorate-other categories.

Table 26. Comparison Based on Institution from Which Employers' Degrees Were Attained.

Category Construct	1.None from Current Inst. M(SD)	2.All from Current Inst. M(SD)	3.Some from Current Inst., but Not Most Recent M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.36(.42)	4.42(.32)	4.39(.39)	.814	.21
P-O Fit	3.84(.51)	3.72(.57)	3.61(.51)	.121	2.14
P-G Fit	4.06(.49)	4.14(.61)	3.91(.46)	.286	1.26

Table 27. Comparison Based on Employers' Years in Current Position.

Category Construct	1.1 Yr. M(SD)	2.2-4 Yrs. M(SD)	3.5-9 Yrs. M(SD)	4.10+ Yrs. M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.39(.36)	4.36(.41)	4.37(.42)	4.31(.49)	.888	.212
P-O Fit	3.78(.57)	3.80(.49)	3.90(.52)	3.64(.47)	.351	1.10
P-G Fit	4.03(.52)	4.01(.49)	4.22(.55)	3.95(.28)	.169	1.70

Table 28. Comparison Based on Employers' Years at Current Institution.

Category Construct	1.1 Yr. M(SD)	2.2-4 Yrs. M(SD)	3.5-9 Yrs. M(SD)	4.10+ Yrs. M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.41(.35)	4.38(.38)	4.36(.46)	4.32(.44)	.821	.31
P-O Fit	3.76(.54)	3.86(.49)	3.83(.52)	3.68(.52)	.398	.99
P-G Fit	4.02(.42)	4.10(.47)	4.10(.64)	3.96(.42)	.572	.67

Table 29. Comparison Based on Employers' Status of Professional Position.

Category Construct	1.Admin. M(SD)	2.Entry-Level M(SD)	3.Mid-Level M(SD)	4.Senior Level M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *F*
P-J Fit	4.50(.71)	4.38(.36)	4.36(.44)	4.33(.43)	.905	.19
P-O Fit	4.44(.80)	3.80(.52)	3.79(.51)	3.72(.49)	.297	1.24
P-G Fit	3.72(.39)	4.02(.49)	4.09(.50)	4.06(.49)	.686	.50

Table 30. Comparison Based on Employers' Gender.

Category Construct	1.Female M(SD)	2.Male M(SD)	Sig. *p*	Omnibus *t*
P-J Fit	4.34(.43)	4.39(.39)	.379	-.88
P-O Fit	3.83(.51)	3.72(.51)	.165	1.39
P-G Fit	4.01(.50)	4.09(.48)	.273	-1.10

Note: There were no responses in the other category.

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