
**Researcher Notes**

**Categories addressed:** Recruitment, selection, and hiring.

**Participants:**

Study 1: Thirty-one recruiters from the mid-Atlantic divisions of four consulting organizations participated in the study. All participants were fulltime consultants who recruited an average of 3.3 days a year, and received very limited recruitment training.

Study 2: Forty-six recruiters from Company C and Company A, who had not participated in Study 1. Their time spent each year recruiting and in recruitment training was similar to that of the participants in Study 1.

**Method:**

Study 1: This study used a qualitative technique called the repertory grid (Kelly, 1955) to solicit recruiters’ schemas of the applicant characteristics associated with perceptions of good person-job fit (P-J) and person-organization fit (P-O). For this study the process involved asking recruiters to compare a standard set of applicants, and describe the characteristics that distinguished those with good P-J and P-O fit from the others.

Study 2: After conducting 30-minute screening interviews, the participants were asked to evaluate at least one “successful” and one “unsuccessful” applicant.

**Independent Variables:**

Study 1: Recruiters use of knowledge, skills, and abilities (SKA) of applicant characteristics.

Study 2: Recruiters use of applicant values.

**Dependent Variable:**

Study 1: Recruiter perceptions of applicants P-J and P-O fit.

Study 2: Recruiter perceptions of applicants P-J and P-O fit.

**Purpose of the study:** The two studies were conducted to assess whether recruiters form distinguishable perceptions of applicant person-job (P-J) and person-organization (P-O) fit.

**Findings:**

Study 1:

- Results indicate that 100% of recruiters mentioned KSA (employees’ knowledge, skills, and abilities) as indicators of both P-J and P-O fit. However, the mean number of KSAs reported as indicators of P-J fit was significantly higher than the mean reported for P-O fit. As hypothesized, the mean number of values reported for P-O fit was significantly higher than the mean number of values mentioned for P-J fit. A similar result was
found for the mean of personality traits with 100% of recruiters using them to assess P-O fit versus 81% for P-J fit.

- Exploratory analyses revealed that within these broad categories of applicant characteristics, recruiters seldom agreed on the specific indicators of a good fit of either type. Their perceptions were dominated by idiosyncratic ideas of what made an applicant a good P-J or P-O fit. One explanation for this is the limited training that participants in this study had received on interviewing.

Study 2:

- Results of this study indicate that both perceived P-O and P-J fit explained unique variance in recruiters’ hiring recommendations.
- These results provide evidence that perceived P-J and P-O fit are distinct constructs. However, there is no question that the two variables are highly related in the minds of recruiters. Their bivariate correlation is high and recruiters make some of KSAs, values and personality traits when assessing both types of fit.

Practice Implications:

- Recruiters would benefit from greater guidance in terms of what makes an applicant a good fit. Although many companies have trained their recruiters to assess specific job-related qualifications, they may benefit from expanding this training to include what makes an applicant a good cultural fit. This might have the additional benefit of reducing the reliance on idiosyncratic preferences for judging fit.

Suggestions for future research:

- Because recruiters vary widely in their ability to accurately interpret “nonobservable” characteristics such as values, research is needed on what can be done by recruiters and applicants to make more reliable assessments of these characteristics. By building on the findings presented in these studies, future research may improve on, as well as better understand recruiters’ perceptions of fit.