

# Person–Organization Fit, Organizational Citizenship and Social-Cognitive Motivational Mechanisms

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Person–organization (PO) fit provides an integrative mechanism for examining the linkages between people and the organizations for which they work (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996). Previous research has demonstrated that PO fit is associated with a wide range of positive outcomes for both employees and employers (see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005). Citizenship performance (e.g., Cable and DeRue, 2002; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001) and motivation are two important outcomes (Bretz and Judge, 1994; Mitchell, 1997). More specifically, people who perceive a strong sense of fit with their employing organization tend to be good organizational citizens (see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005) by regularly engaging in discretionary behaviors that benefit both co-workers and the firm as a whole (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). Moreover, because of the discretionary

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nature of citizenship performance, Kristof-Brown and Guay (2011) posited that PO fit brings about a motivation to support the overall success of an organization, not just to perform a job well. As such, motivational forces are likely to serve as an important mediating mechanism linking PO fit to citizenship performance. To date, however, there has been little consideration of the psychological mechanisms that provide the underlying motivation that links PO fit and organizational citizenship.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a theoretical model examining the social-cognitive psychological processes that are triggered by a person's conscious perception of fit with an organization, and which then motivate that person to be a good organizational citizen. We begin by discussing the link between PO fit and citizenship performance. Next, we draw upon Mischel and Shoda's (1995) cognitive-affective personality system (CAPS) theory to identify the psychological mechanisms linking PO fit perceptions to organizational citizenship. We discuss the formation of fit-related schema and examine how an encoding process of matching organizational features to the content of fit-related schema results in the conscious determination of the degree of fit with an organization. This determination, in turn, activates a series of cognitive and affective reactions (or mediating units), which together provide the motivational drive to engage in citizenship performance behaviors. Finally, recognizing that the model of processes unfolds in a dynamic manner, we discuss the role of self-regulation processes in the on-going activation of the cognitive and affective mediating units, and refinement of fit perceptions and fit-related schema. We present 10 propositions to guide future research, and conclude with a discussion of the theoretical implications of the proposed model. As a point of clarification, in this chapter we limit our discussion to perceptions of strong versus weak PO fit, as opposed to perceptions of PO fit versus misfit.

## Organizational Fit and Citizenship

### PO fit and performance

Findings from several comprehensive meta-analyses indicate that people who perceive themselves to be a good fit with the organization they work for tend to have more positive attitudes and form stronger intentions to remain with the organization than people who perceive that they fit the organization less well (see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005; Hoffman and Woehr, 2006; Verquer, Beehr, and Wagner, 2003). Interestingly, the link between PO fit and task or overall job performance is "quite small to nonexistent" (Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011, p. 33) as the estimated effect size across studies is near zero ( $\rho = 0.07$ ; see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005). However, when the focus shifts to citizenship performance or behaviors, the estimated effects are substantially larger ( $\rho = 0.27$ ; see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005).

Prior studies indicate that PO fit tends to be more strongly related to organization-focused outcomes than job-focused outcomes (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Greguras

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and Diefendorff, 2009). As citizenship is targeted at the benefit of an organization and its members, it is an important performance-related outcome of PO fit. In addition, citizenship is a discretionary form of performance; employees must decide whether or not to engage in acts of citizenship (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). Motivation is therefore a key driver of citizenship-oriented behaviors, and PO fit is a trigger of those motivational forces (Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011).

### Citizenship performance

In an effort to integrate various perspectives on citizenship behaviors and contextual performance, Coleman and Borman (2000) identified 27 behaviors encompassing the domain of prosocial work behaviors. Using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis techniques, they grouped these behaviors into three dimensions: interpersonal-focused citizenship, organizational-focused citizenship, and job/task conscientiousness. Following the suggestions of Organ (1997), Coleman and Borman (2000) referred to the overall set of dimensions as citizenship performance, representing discretionary behaviors that shape “the organizational, social, and psychological context that serves as the critical catalyst for task activities and processes” (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993, p. 71). Throughout this chapter, we use the term *citizenship performance* to refer to the domain of discretionary, prosocial work performance.

Interpersonal-focused citizenship involves behaviors that directly benefit other organization members such as helping, cooperation, and courtesy. Organization-focused citizenship involves behaviors that benefit the overall organization, including supporting organizational initiatives, following procedures, and loyalty. Job/task conscientiousness citizenship involves behaviors that benefit the job or task, including initiative, extra effort, or dedication (Coleman and Borman, 2000).

As noted previously, perceptions of PO fit have been found to be positively related to citizenship across studies (Hoffman and Woehr, 2006; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005). However, to date, there has been little attention devoted to understanding how and why PO fit is linked to organizational citizenship. We draw on Mischel and Shoda’s (1995) CAPS theory to examine how PO fit perceptions trigger a series of cognitive-affective motivational mechanisms within the context of a particular organization, which then generate citizenship performance.

## An Integrative Social-Cognitive Model

### CAPS

According to Mischel and Shoda’s (1995) CAPS theory – a social-cognitive theory of personality – individuals have stable overall behavioral dispositions and tendencies, as well as “stable patterns of behavioral variability across situations” (p. 246). In general, CAPS theory is based on “if . . . then” logic; *if* a person recognizes environmental features that have personal relevance, *then* a set of cognitive and affective

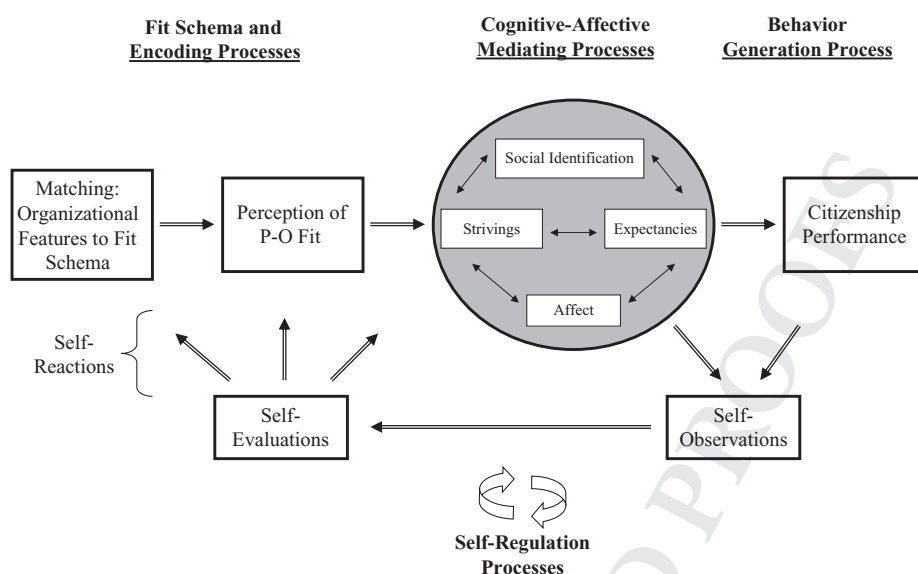
reactions are activated which then generate patterns of behavior. The environmental features that are important, and ways in which they are relevant, differ from person to person, based on factors such as preferences, experiences, etc.

According to Mischel and Shoda (1995), the first stage of the CAPS model is an encoding process. Here, individuals recognize situational features, and match these features to existing cognitive categories about situations, events, people, and the self. Once situational features are encoded, a series of cognitive and affective reactions (or mediating units) occur, including *expectancies and beliefs*, *affect*, *goals and values*, and *competencies and self-regulatory plans*. *Expectancies and beliefs* refer to beliefs about the situation and outcomes of behavior in that particular situation. *Affect* refers to the emotions and moods that occur as a reaction to the situation. *Goals and values* represent the desired outcomes that people pursue. *Competencies and self-regulatory plans* involve strategies, potential behaviors, and scripts that people form to organize their behavior. The activation of the set of cognitive and affective reactions, and the interrelationships among these reactions, form a processing disposition, which is the second stage of the CAPS model. The processing disposition is a mediating mechanism that links the encoding of situational features to patterns of behavior in that situation. Thus, the activation of the cognitive and affective mediating units explains why a person engages in similar patterns of behavior in environments that have similar psychosocial features and acts differently in environments that have different psychological features. Again, the personal relevance of those psychosocial features differs from person to person.

Mischel and Shoda's (1995) CAPS theory provides an integrative framework for understanding the motivational mechanisms linking PO fit to citizenship performance. The process begins with an encoding process that involves an individual matching psychosocial features of the organization to fit-related schema and making a conscious determination of the degree of fit with that organization. This determination then activates four cognitive-affective processes, including the incorporation of organizational membership into one's social identity, the experience of positive affective states, the formation of goal strivings aimed at organizational success, and the shaping of expectations of how personal effort will contribute to organizational success. These processes provide the underlying motivation to engage in citizenship performance. We then use self-regulation processes, which are a core element of both cognitive motivation (Bandura, 1991; Kanfer, 1990) and CAPS theory (Mischel and Shoda, 1995), to examine how these processes unfold over time. We argue that self-regulation processes create a series of feedback loops; self-reactions to the feedback alter the intensity of cognitive and affective reactions, the strength of fit perceptions, and the content of fit-related schema over time. The process is summarized graphically in Figure 5.1.

### **Fit-related schema and encoding processes**

CAPS theory argues that people match features of the environment to existing categories that they have stored cognitively (Mischel and Shoda, 1995). These cognitive



**Figure 5.1** Proposed model of the cognitive and affective motivational processes linking PO fit to citizenship performance

categories equate to schemas, which are cognitive knowledge structures (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Rumelhart and Ortony, 1977). Schemas contain a set of attributes that people use to recognize objects, events, and ideas (Kraiger and Wenzel, 1997), make predictions about unknown attributes, and process new information that relates to the central aspects of the schema (Norman, Gentner, and Stevens, 1976). These knowledge structures are stored in long-term memory, and people use them to make sense of and interact with the world around them (Rumelhart, 1984). Two assumptions about schemas are particularly important for understanding the formation of fit perceptions. First, schemas contain general knowledge rather than time-bound episodes. Second, schemas are activated when a person comes in contact with relevant information (see Smith, 1998). We propose that people develop a schema containing attributes of organizational environments that are a good fit, and use this schema to determine their degree of fit with an organization.

CAPS theory also argues that people attend to the elements in their psychosocial environment that are personally relevant (Mischel and Shoda, 1995). Regarding the elements of fit-related schemas, prior research has identified a number of environmental features that people take into account when assessing fit with an organization, including cultural values, climates, structural characteristics, goals, ethics, demands, and the personality and values of other organizational members (e.g., Ambrose, Arnaud, and Schminke, 2007; Brigham, De Castro, and Shepherd, 2007; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Cable and Judge, 1996; Coldwell, Billsberry, van Meurs, and Marsh, 2008; Edwards and Cable, 2009; Gregarus and Diefendorff, 2009; Herrback and Mignonac, 2007; Judge and Cable, 1997; O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991; Ostroff and Rothausen, 1997; Resick, Baltes, and Shantz, 2007; Van Vianen, 2000; Vancouver and Schmitt, 1991).

Organizational environments are frequently characterized in terms of their culture and climates (see Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson, 2000; Reichers and Schneider, 1990). Congruence with an organization's culture, particularly its shared values, has been a common focus in PO fit research (see Kristof-Brown and Guay, 2011). Organizational culture represents the shared meaning behind organizational events (Rentsch, 1990) that manifests itself in artifacts (e.g., structures, work processes, physical features), shared values, and fundamental assumptions that guide collective behavior (Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 2003). Organizational climate is a similar construct that refers to shared perceptions of the practices, expectations, and policies that characterize a work environment and provide a frame of reference for determining appropriate behavior (James and James, 1989; Schneider, 1975; Schneider and Reichers, 1983). In addition to shared values, cultural artifacts and organizational climates provide evidence of the psychological features of an organization that supply the psychological needs for some employees. At the same time, distinct organizational environments and modal personality characteristics emerge from the personality and values of people who are attracted to, selected by, and remain with an organization (Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Smith, Taylor, and Fleener, 1998). A person's sense of organizational compatibility is enhanced when "the things that are most important to that employee are also important to other employees" (Cable and Edwards, 2004, p. 823). Finally, organizational goals (e.g., Vancouver and Schmitt, 1991), demands (e.g., Brigham, De Castro, and Shepherd, 2007), and ethical expectations (e.g., Ambrose, Arnaud, and Schminke, 2007) are also important organizational features used in the evaluation of organizational fit.

Some individuals may have a strong preference to work in organizations with structural characteristics or work arrangements that supply psychological needs such as performance-based reward programs. Others may seek out organizations with one or more specific cultural values such as competitive excellence, teamwork, or innovation. Still others may take a holistic approach that takes into consideration their interactions with other members, their perceptions of the firm's culture and climate, and the extent to which structural or work characteristics supply psychological needs. As such, we expect that the types of information people take into account when determining their compatibility with a firm vary considerably from person to person, and thus we present the following proposition.

**Proposition 1:** People develop fit schemas containing unique psychosocial features of organizational environments for which they are compatible.

Mischel and Shoda's (1995) CAPS theory proposes that the recognition of important situational features begins an encoding process in which environmental features are matched to existing categories. People find relevant cues about an organization's environment through the characteristics of other members (micro level), the values, perceptions, and norms shared among members (meso level), and the organization's goals, structures, systems, and practices (macro level). These cues provide information about the prevalence of desired and disliked organizational features.

When a person recognizes the personally relevant organizational features, an encoding process is initiated in which the more and less desired organizational features are matched to the contents of fit-related schema. As a result, a person makes a conscious determination of the extent to which he or she fits the organization. This assessment represents a “molar” perception of PO fit, which is based on an individual’s overall assessment of compatibility with the organization (Edwards *et al.*, 2006). Molar perceptions of fit are thought to be a cognitively accessible filter through which the objective fit between a person’s characteristics and an organization’s characteristics are translated into personal attitudes, decisions, and actions (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Edwards *et al.*, 2006; Judge and Cable, 1997; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005).

In addition, this determination of fit may happen actively or passively. Some individuals may actively seek out information about the features that are most critical for determining fit with that organization, particularly when considering applying for a position, when accepting an offer, or having just entered the firm. Other individuals in these same situations may take a more passive, reflective approach that involves reflecting upon events that occur or experiences with people they encounter and making a determination about the issues that are most important to them. Therefore, we propose that molar PO fit perceptions are formed by actively or reflectively matching features of the organization’s psychosocial environment to fit-related schema and present the following proposition.

Proposition 2: Recognition of relevant organizational features activates a fit-related schema that results in the conscious determination of the degree of PO fit.

Schemas are reflective of a learning process and develop as a result of life experiences (Poole, Gray, and Gioia, 1990). By experiencing different degrees of fit over time, we expect that the contents of fit-related schema are continuously refined. New graduates enter the workforce with little understanding of organizational life, which subsequently limits their ability to make informed employment decisions based on organizational environments (Billsberry, 2007). When people first begin their working career, they are joining organizations based upon a more rudimentary understanding of the type of firm they want to work for. This may be based on an organization being listed among Fortune’s *100 Best Companies to Work For* (e.g., Colvin, 2006) or opinions that people tend to form about the qualities of well-known companies (e.g., Brooks, Highhouse, Russell, and Mohr, 2003). These generally superficial forms of company information may contribute to the formation of unrealistic expectations for less experienced workers. For example, new graduates also have a tendency to enter into their first jobs with unrealistic expectations about the firms for which they work (e.g., Arnold, 1985; Mabey, 1986; Nicholson and Arnold, 1991). Then, as people gain experience working for one or more organizations, they begin to develop a more nuanced understanding of the types of organizational features that are personally important. As a result, people are able to refine the contents of fit-related schemas. In turn, experienced individuals should

be able to recognize features of an organization's psychosocial environment that are personally relevant more quickly than less experienced individuals, and they should also make more accurate judgments of the degree of fit with a particular organization. Therefore, we present the following proposition.

Proposition 3: Work experience is positively related to the complexity of the content of fit schemas; experienced workers are more able to quickly and accurately determine their degree of fit with an organization than are less experienced workers.

### Cognitive-affective mediating processes

According to CAPS theory, the encoding process activates a set of interrelated cognitive-affective mediating mechanisms that ultimately generate behavior (Mischel and Shoda, 1995). Drawing upon CAPS theory and findings from prior PO fit research (see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson's 2005 meta-analysis), we point to four cognitive and affective mechanisms that provide the motivational force mediating the relationship between PO fit perceptions and citizenship performance. These mechanisms are: (a) social identification, (b) positive affective states, (c) goal strivings, and (d) expectancies. We now examine each mechanism further.

*Social identification.* Through social identification, people integrate their membership of various social groups (e.g., ethnic groups, religious organizations, work organizations, etc.) into their self-concept and define themselves in terms of membership in these groups (Banaji and Prentice, 1994; Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Turner and Haslam, 2001). This identification increases group commitment (O'Reilly, 1989), engenders a sense of belonging, and elicits motivation to work toward the group's interests (van Knippenberg, 2000).

Organizational identification is a form of social identification in which people define themselves in terms of their membership in a particular organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Mael and Tetrick, 1992; Pratt, 1998). Ashforth and Mael (1989) have argued that two factors facilitate the formation of organizational identification. First, people more easily identify with organizations that have distinct values and normative practices. Second, people are more likely to identify with organizations when they like their co-workers and work with similar types of people. Organizational identification, in turn, influences the ways in which a person interacts with other members of the organization (Turner and Haslam, 2001).

Social identification emerges from the cognitive links that people form between personal and group identities; these links are thought to form through social comparison and self-categorization processes (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). In terms of social comparison processes, people accentuate the positive characteristics of the social groups they belong to and use these characteristics to amplify between-group differences (e.g., Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Wood, 1989). People then engage in self-categorization processes through which they come to emphasize membership in social groups, particularly those that are distinctive and prestigious (Hogg and



Abrams, 1988). Recently, researchers have begun to examine the dynamic nature of social identification processes. For example, Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley (2008) argued that organizational identification evolves through a dynamic “interplay between individuals and organizations” (p. 340); individuals engage in sense-making activities while organizations engage in sense-giving activities. These activities engender the social comparisons and self-categorizations that promote and encourage organizational identification.

Perceptions of organizational fit have been found to be strongly related to organizational identification (e.g., Cable and DeRue, 2002). People who perceive high levels of compatibility with an organization for which they work define themselves in terms of their membership in those organizations (Saks and Ashforth, 1997). As such, organizational membership becomes a salient aspect of the working self-concept. Identity salience is important in the context of the proposed model as more salient identities within the self-concept have a greater motivational impact than less salient identities (Shamir, 1990; van Knippenberg, 2000). When organizational identification is high and organizational membership is salient, people perceive that their fate is intertwined with the group’s fate (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), and they personally experience the successes and failures of the group (Foote, 1951; Tolman, 1943). Acts of organizational citizenship help the organization to operate successfully, and by doing so, are self-enhancing for individuals who have a high level of organizational identification. As such, we propose that organizational identification is one cognitive mechanism through which perceived PO fit is linked to citizenship performance, and we present the following proposition.

Proposition 4: The degree of perceived fit with an organization is positively related to social identification with the organization and the integration of organizational membership into the working self-concept, such that being an employee of the organization is a salient and important aspect of a one’s self identity.

*Affect.* Positive affect refers to “pleasant feelings induced by commonplace events or circumstances” (Isen and Baron, 1991, p. 1). In adults, affective states are brought about by perceptions of environmental characteristics and events (Lazarus, 1982). The workplace provides one set of environmental factors that has a powerful impact on employee affective states (George, 1991; Spector and Fox, 2002). Moods and emotions are two forms of affective reactions. Emotions are short-lived, intense, and stem from a specific incident (e.g., Frijda, 1993; Simon, 1982; Zajonc, 1998). Moods, on the other hand, are longer-lasting affective experiences that influence thought processes and behaviors, but are not associated with any particular event (Brief and Weiss, 2002; Clark and Isen, 1982; George and Brief, 1992). In turn, moods and emotions induced by the workplace are key drivers of work-related beliefs, attitudes, discretionary behaviors, and performance (e.g., Beal, Weiss, Barros, and MacDermid, 2005; Forgas and George, 2001; Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996).

According to CAPS theory (Mischel and Shoda, 1995), people experience positive moods and emotions when they view a particular situation favorably, and these

positive affective states contribute to the motivation to engage in certain patterns of behavior. According to person–environment (PE) fit theory, the optimal congruence between people and their environment leads to positive experiences (Dawis, 1992; Dawis and Lofquist, 1984). Based on the consistent finding that PO fit is related to positive work-related attitudes such as satisfaction and commitment (see Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005; Verquer, Beehr, and Wagner, 2003), we expect that PO fit perceptions induce positive affective experiences. As moods are more general affective reactions than emotions, we expect that the encoding process and determination of the degree of PO fit induces generally positive moods. In turn, specific events that reinforce perceptions of the environment or provide new cues regarding the organization’s environment should induce emotional reactions. For example, a person who has a performance orientation, who values the spirit of competition, and who works for an organization that rewards people for their performance is likely to perceive a sense of compatibility with the organization. We expect that person to experience generally positive moods during the workday. Later, if that same person comes to learn that the organization is a true meritocracy that uses a detailed performance management system to link rewards with performance, he or she receives reinforcing information. As a result, the employee should experience a happy or positive emotional reaction to the information. In contrast, if that same person comes to learn that the organization actually encourages little differentiation in performance ratings or pay, he or she receives incongruent information. As a result, the employee is likely to react with disappointment or irritation emotional reactions.

A substantial amount of literature indicates that positive affect is associated with prosocial behaviors such as cooperation, helping, and negotiation (see Isen and Baron, 1991). In organizational settings, positive affective states may lead to favorable opinions about the firm, co-workers, supervisors, or customers, which then results in increased levels of citizenship performance (Dalal, 2005; George, 1991; Spector and Fox, 2002). Engaging in helping behavior is also self-reinforcing, such that it enables a person to maintain a positive affective condition (Clark and Isen, 1982; Isen, Shalker, Clark, and Karp, 1978). When people form a strong sense of fit with their organization and subsequently experience positive feelings, they are likely to engage in behaviors that help to maintain the positive state and that serve to protect or benefit the organization (George and Brief, 1992). We therefore propose that positive mood and emotions brought on by PO fit perceptions contribute to the motivation to engage in citizenship performance behaviors and present the following proposition.

Proposition 5: The degree of perceived fit with an organization is positively related to the frequency and duration of positive affective states concerning the organization and employment with the company.

*Goal strivings.* Intentions are a proximal indicator of behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Klein, 1991) and encompass “both the *objective* (or goal) one is striving for and the *action*

plan one intends to use to reach that objective” (Tubbs and Ekeberg, 1991, p. 181). Intentions are reflected in the things that people strive for, and these goal strivings represent the cognitive motivation to act (Barrick, Stewart, and Piotrowski, 2002). Hogan and Shelton (1998) noted that people have two basic goals they strive to attain, “getting along” and “getting ahead” (p. 130). Barrick, Stewart, and Piotrowski (2002) built on this distinction and defined three types of motivational striving important in work settings: *communion striving*, *status striving*, and *accomplishment striving*. Each form of striving is believed to motivate behavior congruent with that striving.

Both communion striving and status striving are broad intentions focusing on social interactions (Bakan, 1966; Hogan, 1996; Hogan and Shelton, 1998; Wiggins and Trapnell, 1996). Communion striving involves intentions to affiliate and get along well with others at work, such as striving to include co-workers in key decisions. Status striving involves intentions to obtain positions of prominence in the organization’s status hierarchy, as well as seeking to gain recognition within the organization. Accomplishment striving focuses on work-related goals, such as completing projects and devoting effort to assignments.

Mischel and Shoda’s (1995) CAPS theory argues that the recognition of psychosocial organizational features also triggers behavioral intentions, scripts, and strategies for organizing actions and internal states. When people experience a strong sense of fit with their employing organization, they are likely to place a high value on both their personal success within the firm and the overall success of the firm. As a result, we expect that they will strive to: (a) achieve success in their respective roles, (b) actively contribute toward the achievement of the organization’s strategic goals, (c) gain visibility and positions of higher prominence, and (d) get along well with co-workers. For example, people who fit their organizations are likely to cooperate with others and volunteer to help co-workers, as these actions help to build cohesion and enhance the work environment. Likewise, people who have a strong sense of organizational fit will want to maintain employment and strive to gain positions of higher status and visibility. In addition, the overall success of the organization is also likely to be important and self-enhancing, and people will strive to contribute to the organization’s success, either by performing acts that benefit the organization or by striving to do a good job. Therefore, we propose the following proposition.

Proposition 6: The degree of perceived fit with an organization is positively related to the formation of: (a) communion strivings, (b) status strivings, and (c) achievement strivings.

*Expectancies.* Expectancies are a central component of Mischel and Shoda’s (1995) CAPS theory and Vroom’s (1964) expectancy motivation theory. According to expectancy theory, people are motivated to put forth effort if they believe that: (a) their efforts will lead to higher performance (expectancies), (b) higher performance will be instrumental in gaining important outcomes (instrumental), and (c) those outcomes are highly valued (valence). CAPS theory focuses specifically on the expectancy component, which addresses the perceived probability that personal efforts

will lead to a performance outcome. Across studies, expectancy has been found to be related to motivational effort and intentions, along with supervisor ratings of performance (see Van Eerde and Thierry, 1996).

Mischel and Shoda (1995) argued that the recognition of situational features triggers expectations and beliefs about the situation and outcomes of behavior. Extending their theory to the organizational fit arena, for people who have a strong sense of organizational fit, the success of the organization is personally important as it enables the company to sustain a competitive market position, provides resources that enhance the work environment, and lessens the potential for downsizing initiatives. In addition, PO fit is negatively related to turnover intentions (see Hoffman and Woehr, 2006; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson, 2005), which indicates a desire to maintain employment with that organization. As a result, people may form expectations that their efforts will contribute to being viewed as a valued member of the firm, and help to protect their employment. As such, we expect that people who have a strong sense of fit with an organization engage in citizenship performance, in part, because they expect their efforts to contribute to the overall success of the organization and their ability to maintain their employment with that firm. For example, people who have a strong sense of PO fit are more likely to stay late to meet a project deadline, assist a colleague in meeting a deadline, or volunteer to serve on an orientation committee than someone who perceives a weaker level of fit with the organization because they expect their efforts to help the organization to be successful. Therefore, expectancies provide another cognitive mechanism linking PO fit perceptions to citizenship, and we offer the following proposition.

Proposition 7: The degree of perceived fit with an organization is positively related to expectations that personal efforts will: (a) help the organization to be successful and (b) enhance the work environment.

### **Behavior generation process**

Mischel and Shoda (1995) also argued that each of the four cognitive and affective units are connected through a stable network of relationships. As such, the units work together and influence one another. For example, positive moods and emotions tend to influence the behaviors people choose to adopt (George and Brief, 1996), expectancy motivation (Erez and Isen, 2002), and how people make judgments and think about their settings (Forgas and George, 2001; Isen and Baron, 1991). Likewise, because the success of the organization is self-enhancing to people who identify with the organization (Turner and Haslam, 2001), they are likely to form strivings and behaviors aimed at helping the organization succeed and expectations that personal efforts are an important contributor to organizational success.

CAPS theory goes on to propose that the four cognitive and affective mechanisms, and the network of interrelationships among them, create a processing disposition

(Mischel and Shoda, 1995). This processing disposition generates patterns of behavior in that situation. More specifically, the activation of one or more cognitive or affective units in response to features of a situation activates the remaining units through the network of interrelations that forms. This network of activated mechanisms is a processing disposition that provides an arousal for behavior generation and direction for that behavior.

Turning to the proposed model, we expect that the four cognitive and affective mechanisms combine through a network of interrelationships to form a processing disposition that channels effort toward citizenship performance. More specifically, the conscious determination of PO fit triggers positive reactions in each of the cognitive and affective mechanisms, and each activated mechanism contributes to the desire to be a good organizational citizen. However, organizational identification, positive affective reactions, expecting efforts to enhance the firm, and developing organization-enhancing goal strivings also form a network of interrelationships that activate and intensify the reactions among the units. This network of interrelationships, or processing disposition, creates an upward spiraling effect that provides a motivational basis for engaging in citizenship performance behaviors. Once activated, the processing disposition creates an arousal and directs efforts toward interpersonal-, organizational-, and job-focused citizenship, and increases the intensity and persistence of those efforts. Individuals who fit an organization well have little to lose and much to gain by helping the organization and co-workers to succeed because of the set of cognitive and affective reactions. In contrast, people who form a weak sense of fit with an organization experience more neutral, or perhaps even negative, cognitions and affective states. These experiences probably deter people from engaging in work outside of their specific role or area of responsibility and may cause people to view acts of citizenship as detracting from personal success. Therefore, we propose the following proposition.

Proposition 8: People who perceive that they fit an organization well form a processing disposition that involves the activation of each of the four cognitive-affective units and a series of interrelationships among them, which in turn, lead to the engagement in citizenship performance.

We also expect that the degree of perceived organizational fit directly influences the magnitude of the relationships with each of the cognitive and affective mechanisms. People with a strong sense of organizational fit are likely to incorporate organizational membership as a salient aspect of their self-concept and consistently experience positive moods in the workplace. At the same time, they are also likely to form clear motivational strivings that focus on organizational achievement, and hold steadfast expectations that their efforts contribute to organizational success. The strength of fit perceptions and the strength of the relationships with each of the cognitive and affective units should then spill over and influence the magnitude of the pattern of interrelationships among the cognitive and affective mediating units. Strong relationships between PO fit and any one of the four cognitive-affective

reactions is likely to enhance the remaining reactions and thus intensify the processing disposition. That is, we propose that the degree of perceived fit is related to the magnitude of: (a) the relationships between fit perceptions and each cognitive or affective reaction, and (b) the interrelationships among the cognitive and affective reactions. The magnitude of these relationships and interrelationships represents the strength of the processing disposition; stronger processing dispositions lead to higher levels of citizenship performance.

Proposition 9: The degree of perceived fit with an organization is positively related to the magnitude of the interrelations: (a) between perceived PO fit and each of the cognitive-affective units, and (b) among the cognitive-affective units. The magnitude of the interrelations is positively related to citizenship performance.

### Self-regulation processes

People exercise control over their actions by making self-relevant evaluations and regulating the allocation of effort and attention to various goals and intentions (Kanfer and Ackerman, 1989; Lord and Hanges, 1987). Self-regulation operates through three psychological sub-functions, comprising self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-reaction (Bandura, 1982; 1991; Kanfer, 1970). In the self-observation sub-function, individuals gather information about their own behaviors that are relevant for attaining specific goals of interest (Bandura, 1982; 1986). These observations provide the diagnostic information that is used in the self-evaluation sub-function to judge progress by comparing behaviors or results to various standards (Bandura, 1991; Kanfer, 1990). Self-evaluation also involves an evaluation of the importance of these actions, as people are not likely to devote attention to activities they care little about (Bandura, 1991; Kanfer, 1990). Then, during the self-reaction sub-function, people respond to their evaluations by adjusting: (a) their goal-directed behavior, (b) the goals they are striving for, and (c) their beliefs about goals and their ability to achieve them (Bandura, 1991; Kanfer, 1990). These reactions typically lead to some level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with performance or with the self (Kanfer and Ackerman, 1989). As such, self-regulation is a dynamic process through which people adjust their actions and beliefs in pursuit of desired goals (Bandura, 1991; Kanfer, 1990).

Mischel and Shoda's (1995) CAPS theory indicates that self-regulation is important for organizing the competencies, plans, and strategies that generate patterns of social behavior, and thus it includes self-regulation processes as another cognitive-affective mediating unit. However, because of its dynamic nature, we use self-regulation to explain how these processes evolve over time. In what follows we examine how self-regulation processes create a series of feedback loops through which people adjust the intensity of their cognitive and affective reactions, and through which they refine their perceptions of organizational fit and the contents of their fit-related schemas.

Through self-regulation processes, people who perceive a strong sense of fit with an organization control the allocation of their attention and efforts toward the goal of building a successful organization and work environment. The process begins with people making self-observations of their citizenship, including how they support co-workers and the activities of the organization in general. People also make observations of the overall importance of their employing organization and role within the organization, the goals they strive for, the moods and emotions they experience at work, and whether they expect their efforts to generate success. These observations may be the result of self-awareness and internal interpretations of behavior. The observations may also stem from reflecting upon feedback from external sources such as supervisors and colleagues. Ultimately, self-observations provide important diagnostic information used to make self-evaluations of the extent to which behaviors, beliefs, and affective states exceed, match, or fall short of standards. People then react to these judgments by adjusting: (a) the intensity of cognitive and affective reactions, (b) perceptions of fit with the organization, and (c) the content of fit-related schema.

People are thought to experience some degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction in reaction to evaluations of their progress, and, in turn, they adjust the intensity of their efforts (Bandura, 1991; Kanfer and Ackerman, 1989). Favorable evaluations of citizenship performance or progress toward important goals should lead to positive emotional reactions, such as happiness and a sense of satisfaction, while unfavorable judgments should produce less positive emotional reactions, such as disappointment or frustration. When judgments indicate that standards have not been met, mild affective reactions lead to more intense efforts whereas stronger affective reactions lead to the adjustment of standards and beliefs (Bandura, 1991), in this case about citizenship and the organization. Self-evaluations should also influence goal strivings and expectancies. Favorable judgments should result in maintaining current goal striving levels – or even intensifying strivings – and therefore reinforce expectations that personal efforts are an important contributor to organizational success. Less favorable judgments may result in adjusting expectations or goal strivings downwards to be congruent with beliefs about the organization and its capabilities. Judgments should also impact the distinctiveness of the organization and the salience of membership in the working self-concept.

The next set of self-reactions focus on clarifying perceptions of organizational fit and refining personal fit-related schemas. People develop and refine their assessments of fit with an organization over multiple pre- and post-hire experiences (Dickson, Resick, and Goldstein, 2008). These experiences are an important guide to organizing self-relevant information, and the importance people attach to a particular situation is influenced by how they feel in that situation (Greenwald and Pratkanis, 1984). For example, people who see themselves in a good mood at work and make a favorable judgment about the organization are likely to determine that the organization is a good match for their personal preferences or values. In contrast, people who form a more negative or neutral judgment about the organization are less likely to determine that they are a good fit with the organization. Thus, self-regulation processes

help people to refine their perceptions of compatibility with the organization. In addition, once feedback is internalized, it is interpreted in the context of current schemas (DeNisi, Cafferty, and Meglino, 1984) and enables people to refine personally relevant schemas (London, 1995). Through reflections upon cognitive and affective reactions, acts of citizenship, and the outcomes of citizenship performance, people refine schemas containing the general and specific characteristics of compatible organizations. Therefore, we propose that self-regulation processes provide insights into the dynamic nature of the motivational processes linking PO fit and citizenship performance.

Proposition 10: Through self-regulatory processes, individuals engage in self-observations and self-evaluations of their citizenship performance and cognitive and affective reactions. These evaluations lead to self-reactions that include adjustments to: (a) fit-related schema content, (b) the strength of PO fit perceptions, (c) social identification assessments, (d) affective states, (e) goal strivings, and (f) expectancies.

## Discussion

At the conclusion of their comprehensive meta-analysis of the PE fit literature, Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson (2005) concluded that consistent patterns of relationships between fit and job-related attitudes, decisions, and behaviors provide “conclusive evidence that fit matters” (p. 325). In this chapter we have focused on one behavior-related outcome with the goal of explaining *how* and *why* PO fit matters relative to organizational citizenship. Good theory in the organizational sciences needs to provide explanation (Campbell, 1990), as well as meaning and direction for future research (Klein and Zedeck, 2004). To this aim, we formulated a theoretical model of the psychological mechanisms that link PO fit to citizenship, and we presented a series of propositions to guide future research. Aside from the formal propositions, the model also raises a number of broad issues for consideration in the organizational fit literature.

### Theoretical issues for consideration

In this chapter, we view the perception of fit and the activation of the cognitive and affective mediating mechanisms as operating at a conscious level. However, the extent to which the encoding, mediating, and self-regulation processes operate at a conscious level versus an unconscious level is an issue that warrants greater theoretical and empirical examination. Goal-setting research provides some indication that motivational processes unfold on both a conscious and an unconscious level. For example, Stajkovic, Locke, and Blair (2006) found that goals have a stronger relationship with performance when the goal is conscious versus unconscious. However, they also found that subconscious goals interacted with conscious goals to enhance



their effects on performance, suggesting that some mechanisms may unfold at an unconscious level. When people determine that the organization they work for is a good fit, they may consciously form communion, status, and accomplishment strivings that focus on helping the company and colleagues succeed. In contrast, people may experience positive moods and emotions when they have a strong sense of PO fit without being consciously aware of the reasons. Future research should examine which processes are more (or less) likely to unfold consciously as opposed to unconsciously. Similarly, some individuals are attuned to their environments and are generally more self-aware than others. As a result, individual differences may impact the extent to which these processes unfold consciously versus unconsciously. These are questions that present fruitful avenues for future research.

PO fit is a positive psychological experience and this chapter examines the motivational consequences of strong organizational fit. However, there have been few attempts to determine the extent to which organizational fit and organizational misfit are distinct psychological experiences. In relation to the proposed conceptual model, this raises two important questions: (a) what work-related behaviors are people who experience misfit motivated to engage in? and (b) what are the social-cognitive psychological processes that trigger these behaviors? Just because a person does not experience a sense of fit with an organization does not necessarily mean that the person experiences a sense of misfit. Different psychological processes are likely to be activated when a person makes a determination that “my organization cares about things that I don’t care about” (perception of weak fit) and “my organization and I care about the same things, but we have opposing viewpoints” (perception of misfit; J. Billsberry, personal communication, June 28, 2010). Perhaps people react to misfit by disengaging from their job and organization and by focusing more intently on job-seeking behaviors. Alternatively, prior research has found that people who experience some forms of misfit are motivated to over-perform to protect their employment (Shallenberger, 1994). People who experience misfit and also have few alternative employment options may be motivated to engage in exceptional levels of task performance to protect their employment (J. Billsberry, personal communication, June 28, 2010). Others may experience extreme emotional reactions and become motivated to engage in deviant behaviors to ease the tensions they experience. Research is needed to determine if perceptions of organizational misfit activate a different series of cognitive-affective motivational mechanisms leading to a different set of behaviors, or if perceptions of PO misfit activate the same types of motivational mechanisms but with different reactions motivating different behaviors.

In this chapter, we have focused on the role of PO fit and cognitive and affective reactions to fit as motivational drivers of citizenship performance. At the same time, personality traits, particularly conscientiousness and agreeableness, have been found to be important internal indicators of both individual- and organizational-focused citizenship across a range of conditions and after controlling for relevant variables (e.g., Borman, Penner, Allen, and Motowidlo, 2001; Dalal, 2005; Illies, Fulmer, Spitzmuller, and Johnson, 2009; LePine, Erez, and Johnson, 2002; Organ and

Ryan, 1995). As personality traits have been linked with preferences for organizational culture values (Judge and Cable, 1997), agreeableness and conscientiousness traits may also be important indicators of organizational preferences. Agreeableness has been linked with communion striving (Barrick, Stewart, and Piotrowski, 2002) and preferences for supportive and team-oriented cultures (Judge and Cable, 1997). Perhaps agreeable individuals naturally seek out cooperative cultures where citizenship is outwardly encouraged. In these organizations, high agreeableness individuals are likely to experience positive moods and reactions, form communion strivings, naturally identify with their employer, and be highly motivated to engage in citizenship performance. Likewise conscientious individuals are dependable and driven (see Digman, 1989; Roberts, Chernyshenko, Stark, and Goldberg, 2005), tend to form accomplishment strivings (Barrick, Stewart, and Piotrowski, 2002), and prefer cultures that are detail oriented and outcome oriented. As a result, they may seek out organizations with similarly conscientious members who strive to work for a successful organization and expect their efforts to generate success. Highly conscientious individuals tend to place greater emphasis on PO fit perceptions than less conscientious individuals in their employment intentions and decisions (Resick, Baltes, and Shantz, 2007). As a result, the cognitive and affective mediating units may play a stronger mediating role in high versus low conscientious individuals.

## Conclusion

Employees who are good organizational citizens help organizations to operate successfully. For example, unit-level citizenship has been linked with employee retention, cost containment, and enhanced productivity, efficiency, and profitability (see Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, and Blume, 2009). The reasons why people engage in organizational citizenship are numerous (see Ilies, Fulmer, Spitzmuller, and Johnson, 2009; LePine, Erez, and Johnson, 2002; Venkataramani and Dalal, 2007). In this chapter, our intent was not to provide a comprehensive discussion of the origins and antecedents of organizational citizenship. Rather, our intent was to focus specifically on the organizational fit–organizational citizenship linkage and outline the motivation-related processes that explain this relationship. Because PO fit arises from the unique interactions of people and the organizations in which they work, fit perceptions provide important insights into the motivational mechanisms that explain why people behave as they do at work.

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