Do Organizational Supplies Fit Individual Needs?
A Longitudinal Study in China

Chun-Sheng Yu, University of Houston-Victoria
June Lu, University of Houston-Victoria

Values are "conscious, as well as subconscious goals, ideals and preferences of worth, expressing intentionality and shaping directions of action" (Aadland, 2010:471). A main purpose of research on values has been to investigate the ways in which how values relate to attitudes, behavior, and social experiences and roles (Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999).

One major branch of value research has focused primarily on work (e.g. Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Elizur, 1984; Elizur, Borg, Hunt, & Beck, 1991; Hofstede, 2001), which is called as work values, also work goals, work needs, work outcomes, job satisfaction, incentive preference, and reward preference (Harpaz, 1990). Work values are specific expressions of general values in the work setting. There are several approaches to classifying work values. The most widely adopted approach classifies work values into intrinsic or extrinsic (Elizur, 1984). Subsequent research has added status-related values (e.g. influence, recognition, advancement) (Ros et al., 1999), freedom-related values (e.g. work-life balance, working hours) and social values (e.g. good relationships with supervisors or peers) (Lyons, Higgins, & Duxbury, 2010), and altruistic values (e.g. making a contribution to society) (Borg, Groenen, Jehn, Bilsky, & Schwartz, 2011).

Research on work values is important part of person-organization (P-O) fit (Kristof, 1996; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003). Most studies of P-O fit address the compatibility of individual values and organizational values. The match between individual needs and organizational supplies is an area that has not received adequate attention. Based on the needs-supplies perspective, P-O fit occurs when an organization satisfies individuals' needs, desires, or preferences.

A longitudinal study has been conducted in 1988, 2001, and 2013 in China separately. During the 25 years, significant changes, especially the economic and organizational transformations, have taken places in China. This paper will report the changes by comparing the results from the three surveys, explain the changes using multiple perspectives, and try to get a dynamic picture of the subjects studied during the 25 years. This study will also adopt a P-O fit framework to examine whether the fitness (or discrepancy) of employees' needs and organizations supplies influences employees' job satisfaction and work effectiveness. Such a longitudinal study is expected to make important contributions to P-O Fit theory building and yield some useful implications to management practices as well.

The entire research project is an empirical and staged longitudinal study in design. An instrument called Job Reactions Inventory (JRI) and developed by Huseman and Hatfield (Huseman, Hatfield, &Yu, 1988) was used to collect empirical data. The instrument contains the following three major sections:

(1) Work Outcomes. The JRI assesses twenty work outcomes that fall into four outcome categories: *System Outcomes* (Pay Fringe Benefits, Job Security, and Promotion and Advancement), *Job Outcomes* (Ability Utilization, Problem Solving, Challenge, Decision Making, Responsibility, and Meaningful Work), *Performance Outcomes* (Accomplishment, Personal Worth, Confidence, Achievement, and Competence), and *Interpersonal Outcomes* (Recognition, Belonging, Status, Appreciation, and Job Friendships).

(2) Job Reactions. The JRI assesses three job reactions: Perceptions of Equity, Job Satisfaction, and Job effectiveness.

(3) Managerial Strategies: The JRI assesses eleven managerial strategies that can provide employee

outcomes: Positive Expectations, Goal Setting, Positive Feedback, Availability, Interest, Negative Feedback, Information, Participation, Criticism, Rewarding Behaviors, and Two-Way Communication.

Generally, the JRI assesses outcomes that employees desire (needs) and experience (supplies) in their jobs, employees' reactions to their jobs, and strategies that managers might use to provide important outcomes. It is proposed that employees whose managers make use of the managerial strategies will experience greater levels of important supplies on the job, thus have better fit (or less discrepancy) between their needs and supplies experienced. In turn, it will lead to more favorable perceptions of equity, increased job satisfaction, and lower untapped levels of job effectiveness.

The sample of the study comprises employees in real enterprises. In 1988, the first stage empirical study was carried out in four factories in China and 340 useable surveys were collected.   Data sets from China and the States respectively were compared and yielded some interesting findings (Huseman, Hatfield, &Yu, 1988, 1991; Yu, Huseman, & Hatfield, 1989). In 2001, the second survey was conducted, using the same instrument and at the same companies that were studied 13 years ago, and yielded 526 data entries. The third survey was carried out this year in the same companies and had 497 usable surveys collected.

To achieve the study objectives, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) will be used for data analysis. Data analysis procedures will include computation of frequencies, means, standard deviations, *t*-tests, and regression tests. The Analysis of Moment Structures (Amos) also will be considered to test whether the Managerial Strategy-Outcome model explain for the empirical data. Findings of the third-stage of study will then be compared with those from previous stages.

References

Aadland, E. (2010). Values in professional practice: Towards a critical reflective methodology. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 97(3), 461-472.

Borg, I., Groenen, P. F., Jehn, K. A., Bilsky, W., & Schwartz, S. H. (2011). Embedding the organizational culture profile into Schwartz's theory of universals in values. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, *10*(1), 1-12.

Cennamo, L., & Gardner, D. (2008). Generational differences in work values, outcomes and person-organisation values fit. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 23(8), 891-906.

Elizur, D. (1984). Facets of work values: A structural analysis of work outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *69*(3), 379–389.

Elizur, D., Borg, I., Hunt, R., & Beck, I. (1991). The structure of work values: A cross cultural comparison. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 12*(1), 21-38.

Harpaz, I. (1990). The importance of work goals: An international perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *21*(1), 75-93.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Huseman, R. C., Hatfield, J. D., & Yu, C. S. (1988). The job reaction inventory: Assessing the management of equity in the United States and the People's Republic of China. *Proceeding of the 14th Annual Conference of the European International Business Association*, Berlin, 1988

Huseman, R. C., Hatfield, J. D., & Yu, C. S. (1991). A Comparative Study of the Employees' Needs and

Managerial Techniques in America and China, *Management World, 2*, 189-195(in Chinese).

Kristof, A. L. (1996). Person-organization fit: An integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement, and implications. *Personnel Psychology, 49*(1), 1-49.

Lyons, S. T., Higgins, C. A., & Duxbury, L. (2010). Work values: Development of a new three-dimensional structure based on confirmatory smallest space analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *31*(7), 969-1002.

Nord, W. R., Brief, A. P., Atich, J. M. & Doherty, E. M. (1988). Work values and the conduct of organizational behavior. *Research in Organizational Behavior,10*, 1-42.

Rokeach, Milton. (1973). *The nature of human values.* New York: The Free Press.

Ros, M., Schwartz, S. H., & Surkiss, S. (1999). Basic individual values, work values, and the meaning of work. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 48*(1), 49-71.

Verquer, M. L., Beehr, T. A., & Wagner, S. H. (2003). A meta-analysis of relations between person–organization fit and work attitudes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 63*, 473–489.

Yu, C. S., Huseman, R. C., & Hatfield, J. D. (1989). The Managerial Strategy-Outcomes Model: A Cross-Cultural Comparison, *Administrative World*, *2*, 154-163 (in Chinese).