





# A Cross-Cultural Examination of Person-Organization Fit: Is P-O Fit Congruent with or Contingent on Societal Values?

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## Abstract

Many single-country studies have examined compatibility between the individual values of the employee and organizational cultural values, typically referred to as person-organization (P-O) fit. However, little progress has been made in understanding whether P-O fit relationships generalize across countries and, if so, whether and how societal values impact this relationship. Because of this void, it is important to extend the P-O fit literature cross-culturally to explain not only how individual values relate to organizational values but also how societal values influence P-O fit relationships. Our study of 1,307 business professionals across six diverse countries focused on individualism/collectivism values at societal, organizational, and individual levels. We found that individual values are consistently congruent with organizational cultural values in individualistic societies, but found mixed results for P-O values fit in collectivistic societies. Our results provide more support for the contingency perspective (rather than the nested theory of culture) on how societal values influence P-O values fit relationships. Implications for the cross-cultural generalizability of extant P-O fit theory as well as for organizations are discussed.

Keywords Person-organization fit  $\cdot$  Societal values  $\cdot$  Multi-country  $\cdot$  Cross-cultural  $\cdot$  Contingency  $\cdot$  Congruence  $\cdot$  China  $\cdot$  Mexico  $\cdot$  Netherlands  $\cdot$  Russia  $\cdot$  Spain  $\cdot$  USA

## **1** Introduction

The compatibility between the individual values of the employee and the cultural values of the organization, often referred to as person-organization (P-O) fit (Dawis 1992; Edwards et al. 1998), has maintained a focal position in the organizational behavior literature for decades (Brown 1966; Cable and Judge

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1996; Downey et al. 1975; Drazen and Van de Ven 1985; Edwards 2008; Gardner et al. 2009; Hoffman et al. 2011; Kristof-Brown and Guay 2011). Organizational culture has been studied in a cross-cultural context, including societal culture and job attitudes (Kanungo and Wright 1983), societal culture and management practices (Newman and Nollen 1996), organizational culture and organizational effectiveness (Deshpandé and Farley 2004; Fey and Denison 2003), as well as the moderating effect between job characteristics and job satisfaction (Huang and Van de Vliert 2003). However, very few studies have undertaken a cross-cultural examination of P-O fit relationships (Lee and Ramaswami 2013; Oh et al. 2014).

Of those studies that have examined P-O fit cross-culturally, most have been limited due to the small number of organizations and countries studied (e.g., Astakhova 2016; Astakhova et al. 2014; Jung and Takeuchi 2014; Parkes et al. 2001) and because they compared groups of countries (Lee and Antonakis 2014) or societally diverse geographic regions (Oh et al. 2014) but not individual countries. This literature void is unfortunate, because in order to have an accurate understanding of P-O fit in today's global business environment, one must understand not only cross-cultural variations in P-O fit relationships but also how societal values influence P-O fit dynamics (Lee and Ramaswami 2013). Thus, in order to develop a culturally embedded understanding of P-O fit relationships, we take a multi-level approach, where individual values are nested in organizations (P-O fit) and this relationship is embedded in societal values (Erez and Gati 2004).

Regarding the role and consequences of societal values, for several decades scholars have reported significant differences among countries for a wide array of cultural dimensions (Hofstede 1980; House et al. 2004; Schwartz 2006; Smith et al. 1996). Although most cross-cultural research has emphasized the core cultural values that differentiate one country from another and the way that these values interact with organizational behavior, the relationship between societal values and organizational behavior may be more complicated than previously thought (Tung and Stahl 2018). With respect to P-O fit dynamics, the nested theory of culture (Erez and Gati 2004) suggests that the strength of P-O values fit relationships will be a function of values *congruence* across societal, organizational, and individual levels. That is, the reinforcing dynamic of cross-level consistency in cultural values results in stronger P-O values fit relationships. Specifically, individualistic societies would have more individualistic persons who would prefer to work for organizations with individualistic culture orientations; whereas collectivistic societies would have more collectivistic persons who would prefer to work for organizations with collectivistic culture orientations.

More recently, an emerging scholarly camp suggests that P-O fit phenomena may be *contingent* on societal culture (cf., Lee and Ramaswami 2013), specifically on whether the country is an individualistic or a collectivistic society (e.g., Oh et al. 2014). In support of this reasoning, based on their qualitative study of how Chinese individuals interpret person-environment (P-E) fit, Chuang et al. (2015) contend that P-E fit theories are "culture bound" to individualistic cultural assumptions about persons being independent entities who pursue congruence with personal values and needs in organizational relationships. In this paper, we contribute to this congruence—contingency debate by theorizing and empirically examining the influence that societal values have on P-O fit at the individual level of analysis. Specifically, our objective is to answer two research questions: (1) Is P-O fit theory generalizable across societal contexts? and (2) Is the nature of P-O fit relationships congruent with or contingent on societal values? Although the first question is important for advancing the P-O fit literature crossculturally, the second research question may be even more critical, as it has been argued that individualism and collectivism values constructs must be examined at the individual level due to intra-societal variation (e.g., Au 1999; Caprar et al. 2015; Oyserman et al. 2002; Triandis and Suh 2002). Given the limitations associated with previous geographic regional approaches (e.g., Oh et al. 2014), the field lacks an empirical test of the theorized relationships between individualism and collectivism societal values and individual-level P-O values fit.

In order to assess the cross-cultural generalizability of P-O fit theory, we undertake a six-country (China, Mexico, Netherlands, Russia, Spain, US) study in which we examine individual values, organizational values, and societal values, with an eye toward understanding how individual values are related to organizational values and how P-O fit is nested in societal values.

Our research is organized into five sections. First, we review the relevant P-O fit literature. Second, based on this theoretical grounding, we propose hypothesized relationships. Third, we explicate the methodology used to test these hypotheses. Fourth, we present our results. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

#### 2 An Overview of the Person-Organization Fit Literature

The 'P' component of the P-O fit equation has been assessed based on the theory of basic human values, which defines values as desirable, trans-situational goals that vary in importance and that act as guiding principles in individuals' lives (Rokeach 1973). In the form of conscious goals, values represent individual responses to three universal requirements with which all individuals and societies must cope, namely the needs of individuals as biological organisms, the requisites of coordinated social interactions, and the requirements for the functioning and survival of groups and organizations (Ros et al. 1999). It has been proposed that values are concepts or beliefs that pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, that transcend specific situations, that guide the selection or evaluation of behavior or events, and that are ordered by relative importance (Meglino and Ravlin 1998; Schwartz and Bilsky 1990).

The 'O' element of the P-O fit equation is organizational culture, and it has been an important facet of organizational behavior research for nearly four decades (see O'Reilly et al. 1991; Pettigrew 1979; Ravasi and Schultz 2006; Schneider and Barbera 2014; Smircich 1983). Organizational culture refers to a set of values, norms, and beliefs shared by members of an organization that provides them with meaning and rules of behavior (Schein 1996). Deal and Kennedy (1982) proposed that organizational culture is a set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols that define the way a firm conducts its business. These definitions indicate that organizational culture has pervasive effects on how an organization interacts with its employees and with its stakeholders. An organization's culture ultimately impacts its ability to engender employee satisfaction and commitment (Edwards and Cable 2009; Kirkman and Shapiro 2001) and to achieve a competitive advantage (Barney 1986).

The concept of fit is related to theories of the individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis (Venkatraman 1989). Nadler and Tushman (1980, p. 40) defined fit as "the degree to which the needs, demands, goals, objectives and/or structure of another component." Accordingly, P-O fit theory argues that people tend to find organizations satisfying when organizational cultures are consistent with their own individual values, leading to their behavior being selectively reinforced (Edwards 2008). Conversely, the greater the discrepancy between the values of the person and those of the organization with which the person is affiliated, the more dissatisfying and uncomfortable the interactions become within the personorganization setting (Holland 1997; van Vianen 2018). Although some P-O fit literature operationalized this symbiotic relationship as personality-climate congruence (Christiansen et al. 1997; Ryan and Schmit 1996), values congruence has become widely accepted as the defining operationalization of P-O fit (Chatman 1989; Kristof 1996).

### **3** Hypotheses Development

#### 3.1 The Role of Collectivistic and Individualistic Personal Values in P-O Fit

The perception that an employee has of an organization's culture has been found to be related to P-O fit and retention (Judge and Cable 1997; O'Reilly et al. 1991; Verquer et al. 2003). In support of this reasoning, Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model suggests that prospective employees are attracted to and remain in work environments that are consistent with their personal values (e.g., Cable and Judge 1996; Schneider et al. 1995, 2000; Yu 2014).

Unfortunately, most of the P-O fit literature has used measures of the fit between an individual's profile on a large number of values and an organization's specific values profile (e.g., Edwards and Cable 2009; O'Reilly et al. 1991), or unspecified organizational values in general (Astakhova et al. 2014; Cable and DeRue 2002). Because these approaches ignore the fact that some value dimensions may be more important for overall fit than others (Harris and Mossholder 1996), Edwards (1993) recommended that specific values dimensions should be used to examine P-O fit, rather than general profiles. Accordingly, we selected individualism/collectivism values to examine P-O fit relationships because it has been argued that they represent the most sophisticated conceptualization and operationalization of basic cultural values at individual and organizational levels (Gardner et al. 2009; Marcus and Le 2013). At the societal level, it has been proposed that individualistic societies promote individuals seeking their own well-being, while collectivistic societies promote individual conformity to the collective interests of the group (Oishi et al. 1998; Oyserman and Lee 2008).

Individualism-collectivism (I-C) refers to separate and distinct cultural worldviews. Triandis (1995) identified four attributes that define I-C: (1) the conception of the self; (2) goal relationships; (3) the relative importance of attitudes and norms; and (4) an emphasis on relationships. Individualism is characterized by an emphasis on the self over collective interests, by loose ties with others, and by the tendency to attempt to control or master one's environment. In sum, individualists are assertive and independent, and they rank individual goals ahead of group goals. Conversely, collectivism emphasizes collective interests over those of the individual, wherein people congregate in cohesive in-groups manifested by strong interpersonal contact and openness (Hofstede 1980; Markus and Kitayama 1991; Triandis 1995). In general, collectivists are relationship oriented and they emphasize the degree to which they are connected to in-groups, and place collective goals above personal goals. Although individualism and collectivism are presented as conceptually distinct, we acknowledge that in reality there is intra- and inter-individual variation in the extent to which each worldview is held and exhibited in different situations or contexts (Devinney and Hohberger 2017). Thus, individualism and collectivism values are positioned in terms of degrees, rather than absolutes, and when/how values are manifested is dependent on situational salience (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Triandis 1995), that we examine in terms of societal and organizational values contexts in the present study. Although several approaches have been proposed to analyze organizational culture, we adopted the widely used Competing Values Framework (CVF) typology (Hartnell et al. 2011). The CVF identifies four types of organizational cultures that are delineated by two dimensions: external focus and differentiation vs. internal focus and integration; stability and control vs. flexibility and discretion (Cameron and Quinn 2011; Quinn and Rohrbaugh 1983). In the present study, we focus on the external focus/differentiation vs. internal focus/integration dimension which Gardner et al. (2009) used to contrast, respectively, individualistic (adhocracy and market) and collectivistic (clan and hierarchy) organizational culture orientations. Given the fundamental differences in the adhocracy/market and the clan/hierarchy organizational culture orientations, we posit that individuals will have strong preferences to align with one organizational culture type over the other, and that these preferences will be reflected in P-O fit.

The adhocracy organizational culture tends to be flexible, creative and innovative, with an emphasis on individuality and risk-taking (Cameron and Quinn 2011). This type of organizational culture emphasizes a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative workforce and its organizational structure tends to be ephemeral, with a duration only as long as the focal project. A market-oriented organizational culture refers to a type of organization that functions as a competitive market (Cameron and Quinn 2011). This type of organization tends to focus on attaining economic success in external environments at the expense of internal controls and collaboration. Because the unit of analysis in a market-oriented culture is the transaction, the market organization functions primarily through market mechanisms, including hard-driving competition and market exchange. The core values that dominate adhocracy- and market-oriented organizations are independence, competition and productivity, which

are consistent with individualism (Oishi et al. 1998; Oyserman and Lee 2008). Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 1: Business professionals with higher individualistic values are more likely to be employed in organizations that have higher adhocracy or market organizational culture orientations.

Individuals who are collectivistic emphasize interdependent relationships to achieve collective goals (Oyserman and Lee 2008). We posit that these traits are consistent with the group cohesion, loyalty and collaborative participation emphasis of the clan culture (Cameron and Quinn 2011). Similarly, a hierarchy culture emphasizes conformity and interdependent action to achieve organizational objectives which is consistent with collectivistic values. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: Business professionals with lower individualistic values (i.e., more collectivistic) are more likely to be employed in organizations that have higher clan or hierarchy organizational culture orientations.

#### 3.2 The Moderating Role of Societal Values on P-O Fit

Scholars generally agree that societal-level values develop largely in response to specific challenges that all societies face, both human-made and otherwise. Societies differ in how they respond to these challenges, and their unique response set constitutes the manner in which societies interpret and resolve challenges (Inkeles and Levinson 1963; Schwartz 1999). Since Hofstede's (1980) seminal work on the comparison of values across nations, interest in the impact that national cultures have on individual behaviors, organizational phenomena, and the interrelationship between the two has increased exponentially (Tung and Stahl 2018; Tung and Verbeke 2010). This belief that values can be measured and categorized based on societal differences resulted in the development of various metrics to measure national cultural differences, including Hofstede (1980) and the more recent GLOBE project (House et al. 2004).

For this study of P-O values fit, we focus on institutional collectivism societal values from the GLOBE project (House et al. 2004). Institutional collectivism is defined as "the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action" (House et al. 2004, p. 30). We selected GLOBE institutional collectivism societal values because institutional collectivism represents a theoretically and empirically useful construct for cross-cultural research, especially for research questions related to organizational behavior issues (Rode et al. 2016), such as P-O fit. In addition, GLOBE's institutional collectivism societal values are more relevant to organization contexts than GLOBE in-group (family) collectivism values, which relate to relationships between parents and children (Brewer and Venaik 2011; Rode et al. 2016).

In societies with low institutional collectivism values, its members assume that they are largely independent of the organization and that individuals tend to make critical decisions. In such settings, the pursuit of individual goals is encouraged, even at the expense of group loyalty, the society's economic system tends to

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maximize the interests of individuals, and rewards are driven primarily by an individual's contribution to task success. In societies with high institutional collectivism values, its members assume that they are highly interdependent, with organizational and critical decisions being made by groups. In addition, group loyalty is encouraged, even if it undermines the pursuit of individual goals. Thus, the society's economic system tends to maximize the interests of the collective, and rewards are driven primarily by seniority, personal needs, and/or within-group equity. According to the GLOBE project (Gelfand et al. 2004, p. 470), Russia and the US are low on institutional collectivism values, and therefore may be described as individualistic societies. Conversely, China, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Spain are high to very high on institutional collectivism values, and therefore may be described as collectivistic societies.

Building on the premise that societies influence individual-level values and that the P-O fit relationship is likely to be influenced by societal values, we propose two sets of hypotheses, the evaluation of which allows us to answer our second research question. The first set of hypotheses are premised on the values congruence argument of the nested theory of culture (Erez and Gati 2004), whereas the second set of hypotheses are premised on the societal values contingency argument presented by Oh et al. (2014).

Following the nested theory of culture (Erez and Gati 2004), we posit that individualistic societies, operating via isomorphic pressures (Kwantes and Dickson 2011), will tend to produce organizations that emphasize individualistic values (e.g., adhocracy and market organizational cultures) and that this dynamic will be stronger in individualistic societies. Our congruence argument suggests that individualistic societies should beget organizations with individualistic values embedded in them. That is, through socialization, individualistic organizations. This may be seen as a reinforcing cycle, wherein people are more likely to be attracted to and stay with organizations whose values and management practices are more consistent with predominant cultural expectations in a society (Nadeem et al. 2018; Newman and Nollen 1996; Prince and Kabst 2019). Hence, the more congruence with respect to individualistic values orientations across levels (e.g., societal, organizational, and personal), the stronger the P-O fit relationship will be. As such, we propose:

Hypothesis 3a: The positive relationships between business professionals' individualistic values and adhocracy organizational culture orientation is stronger in individualistic values societies than in collectivistic values societies.

Hypothesis 3b: *The positive relationships between business professionals' individualistic values and market organizational culture orientation is stronger in individualistic values societies than in collectivistic values societies.* 

Following this logic, the negative P-O fit relationship, which was theorized for personal individualism values and collectivistic organizational cultures (clan and hierarchy), should be stronger in collectivistic values societies than in individualistic societies. The congruence argument is that collectivistic societies will engender organizations with collectivistic values embedded in them (Brodbeck et al. 2004). Through socialization, collectivist societies would have more collectivistic people who prefer to work in more collectivistic organizations. Lee and Ramaswami (2013) also proposed that there is greater importance accorded to P-O values fit in collectivistic cultures that emphasize group harmony and the attainment of group goals. The congruence argument suggests that this societal dynamic would further strengthen the impetus for individual-organizational collectivism values congruence. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 3c: The negative relationships between business professionals' individualistic values and clan organizational culture orientation is stronger in collectivistic values societies than in individualistic values societies.

Hypothesis 3d: The negative relationships between business professionals' individualistic values and hierarchy organizational culture orientation is stronger in collectivistic values societies than in individualistic values societies.

In contrast, the more recent contingency argument posits that there will be a greater prevalence of P-O fit in individualistic societies than in collectivistic societies, irrespective of the type of individual values exhibited (Oh et al. 2014). This is because in individualistic societies, where the reference point is the individual, people will be more proactive in aligning themselves with organizations whose values are consistent with their own personal values. Conversely, because people in collectivistic societies are socialized to conform to group and organizational norms, their personal values will be less relevant and influential in determining their preference for a P-O fit.

For organizations in individualistic and collectivistic contexts there are also different societal expectations regarding employer-employee relationships that would affect the strength of P-O fit relationships (Lee and Ramaswami 2013; Ramamoorthy and Carroll 1998). In individualistic societies, there is a stronger focus on individual abilities and performance, and acceptance of these criteria for managerial decisions regarding employee recruitment, reward, and retention (Rabl et al. 2014). However, in collectivistic societies, the stronger emphasis on employee loyalty and interdependent long-term relationships creates an expectation of organizational reciprocity, with managers being more tolerant of employees who do not meet performance expectations or exhibit P-O misfit (Lee and Ramaswami 2013).

Thus, the congruence and contingency P-O fit logics would result in similar hypotheses regarding stronger positive relationships between personal individualistic values and adhocracy and market organizational culture orientations. However, the contingency P-O logic would differ for relationships concerned with the other two organizational culture orientations. Specifically, the negative relationships between personal individualistic values and clan as well as hierarchy organizational culture orientations would also be expected to be stronger in individualistic values societies than in collectivistic societies. Thus, we propose the following alternative P-O fit hypotheses for clan and hierarchy organizational culture orientations: Hypothesis 4: The relationships between business professionals' individualistic values and organizational culture orientations are stronger in individualistic values societies than in collectivistic values societies.

## 4 Methods

In conceptualizing this study, one of our objectives was to develop a more complete understanding of the P-O fit relationship. As such, we began by examining the history of the advancement of knowledge in this literature domain. As reported earlier, the first phase of the development of this research stream occurred over several decades but mainly in 'Western' settings. As such, Schneider (2001) concluded that the relationship between the more general person-environment (P-E) fit and culture has hardly been examined. In agreement, Lee and Ramaswami (2013) and Lee and Antonakis (2014) urged researchers to add a cross-cultural perspective to the 'fit' literature. As is common in the theory development phase of a literature domain, Chuang et al. (2015) took a qualitative approach when they interviewed 30 working individuals in China (a collectivistic culture) in an effort to extend the 'fit' literature cross-culturally. In an attempt to generalize Chuang et al.'s single country study's findings, we argue that a multi-country quantitative approach is appropriate.

For this cross-national P-O fit study, our focus was on participants' subjective fit, wherein they reported separately on their personal values (P) and their perceptions of their organizations' cultures (O) (Kristof 1996). This indirect assessment of P-O fit is less prone to consistency biases than directly asking participants to report the degree of perceived fit with their organizations (Kristof-Brown and Guay 2011); and is more predictive of work attitudes and behavioral outcomes than external (objective) assessments of organizational characteristics (Hoffman and Woehr 2006; Kristof-Brown et al. 2005; Verquer et al. 2003).<sup>1</sup> Consistent with previous research on subjective P-O fit (e.g., Cable and DeRue 2002; Cable and Judge 1996), we took a quantitative approach that enabled statistical comparisons of degree of P-O fit across societies.

#### 4.1 Sample

Our sample is composed of 1,307 business professionals in six countries: China N = 240, Mexico N = 201, Netherlands N = 222, Russia N = 160, Spain N = 285, US N = 199. These six countries provide substantial cultural diversity in terms of institutional collectivism societal values (House et al. 2004), as well as being representative of Confucian, Latin America, Nordic, East European, Latin European and Anglo cultural groups, respectively (Ronen and Shenkar 2013). Data collection methods were consistent across countries and involved contacting individuals directly at their places of employment and delivering the surveys either in person

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Note that Kristof's (1996; Kristof-Brown et al. 2005) labels for subjective fit and perceived fit are reversed by Hoffman et al. (2011) and Verquer et al. (2003).

or by mail (with self-addressed and stamped return envelopes). There were no more than five respondents per organization. The survey was initially designed in English and standard translation-back translation procedures (Brislin 1986) were used to develop native-language questionnaires for China, Mexico, Netherlands, Russia, and Spain. This process involved one person first translating the English language version of the survey questionnaire into the native language, and then another person subsequently back-translating this survey questionnaire into English. The two translators then compared the original and the back-translated English versions of the questionnaire items and resolved any differences between the two versions. If necessary, a third person assisted with addressing differences in translated survey items (McGorry 2000).

### 4.2 Measures

#### 4.2.1 Organizational Culture

We used Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) that measures four types of organizational cultures (adhocracy, clan, hierarchy, market). The 24 OCAI items focus on six facets of organizational culture: dominant characteristics, management of employees, leadership style, organizational glue, strategic emphases, and criteria of success. For each organizational culture facet, respondents indicate the extent to which their organization was like each of the four types of organization culture (9-point Likert scale, 1=strongly disagree and 9=strongly agree). Scale reliabilities (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) for the total sample and range for country samples were: adhocracy  $\alpha = 0.88$  (0.84–0.92), clan  $\alpha = 0.87$  (range 0.82–0.89), hierarchy  $\alpha = 0.80$  (0.76–0.90), market  $\alpha = 0.87$  (0.76–0.93).

We conducted multi-group confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to determine the cross-national measurement invariance of these measures (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998). Comparisons of model fits focused on changes in CFI, with a  $\Delta CFI < 0.010$  indicating a nonsignificant difference and a  $\Delta CFI > 0.020$  indicating a significant model fit difference (Cheung and Rensvold 2002). The configural invariance CFA model had an acceptable fit  $[\chi^2_{(1476)} = 4986.99, \text{ CFI} = 0.934,$ NNFI=0.926, RMSEA=0.105]. The metric invariance model (loadings constrained) was not significantly different ( $\Delta CFI = -0.005$ ), whereas there was a significant change in model fit for the scalar invariance model ( $\Delta CFI = -0.015$ ). The partial scalar invariance model with two intercepts unconstrained was not significantly different from the metric invariance model ( $\Delta CFI = -0.010$ ). Although these findings indicate support for the use of raw scores in analyses, examination of individual country scores showed non-normal data distributions for the Mexico sample (skewness and kurtosis statistics>|1.00|). To address cross-cultural differences in response style, we followed Hanges' (2004) within-subject standardization procedure to construct organizational culture adjusted scores that indicate the relative emphasis on an organizational culture orientation.

#### 4.2.2 Individualism Personal Values

For this measure, we used items from the Schwartz Values Survey instrument (Schwartz 1992, 1994) that has been validated extensively for assessing personal values at the individual level, unlike cultural values instruments, such as Hofstede's VSM and the GLOBE project, that are only validated as societal-level constructs (cf., Fischer et al. 2010; House et al. 2004). Specifically, we used 32 items that Schwartz (1992, 1994) determined were cross-culturally valid and are assigned to 8 values that comprise the higher-order values dimensions of: individualism (18 items) consists of openness to change (self-direction, stimulation) and self-enhancement (achievement, hedonism, power) values; collectivism (14 items) consists of benevolence, conformity and tradition values. Participants were asked the extent to which each value is important as a "guiding principle" in their lives (9-point Likert scale; -1 = "opposed to my values" to 7 = "of supreme importance"). The scale reliabilities (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) for the total sample and range for country samples were: individualism  $\alpha = 0.86$  (range 0.66–0.90), collectivism  $\alpha = 0.84$  (0.67–0.89). To address potential cultural differences in scale response (Fischer 2004), withinsubject standardized values scores were calculated for each value. The two values scores were significantly correlated (r = -0.68, p < 0.001), so the individualism values reflected measure was constructed by subtracting the collectivism score from the individualism score (Ralston et al. 2009). Hence, for the individualism reflected dimension, positive scores indicate a high individualistic values orientation, whereas negative scores indicate a low individualistic (collectivistic) values orientation.

#### 4.2.3 Covariates

Respondent demographic and organizational characteristics included as control variables were: age (years); gender (1=female, 0=male); education level (1=8 or fewer years completed, 2=9-12 years completed, 3=13-16 years completed (Bachelors degree), 4=Masters degree, 5=Doctorate degree); position level (1=nonsupervisory, 2=1st level manager, 3=middle manager, 4=top level manager); company size (1=less than 100 employees, 2=100-1000 employees, 3=more than 1000 employees); and industry sector (1=services, 0=manufacturing/resource-based).

### 4.3 Analyses

#### 4.3.1 Common Method Bias

To address the issue of common method bias, we took several preventive measures, including providing anonymity and confidentiality to respondents, using measures validated by previous studies, and providing different question formats (Podsakoff et al. 2012; Richardson et al. 2009). We also assessed the potential biasing effect of common method variance using the CFA marker technique (Richardson et al. 2009; Williams et al. 2010) for the total sample. The conceptually unrelated marker variable was the 5-item "market maven" measure (Chelminski and Coulter 2007)

that assesses consumer practices (9-point scale, 1=strongly disagree to 9=strongly agree; total sample  $\alpha$ =0.88). The baseline CFA model with the six dependent/independent factors (four organizational culture variables, individualism and collectivism values) and the marker factor had an acceptable model fit [ $\chi^2_{(1757)}$ =10,589.73, CFI=0.909, NNFI=0.903, RMSEA=0.076]. Nonsignificant changes in model fits were found for the CFA model that tested for equal (noncongeneric) method effects ( $\Delta$ CFI=0.003) and unequal (congeneric) method effects ( $\Delta$ CFI=0.002). The CFA model testing for the biasing effect of the marker-based method variance on factor correlations was not significantly different from the noncongeneric model ( $\Delta$ CFI=-0.004). Compared to the baseline model, factor correlations remained statistically significant with a small difference in correlations (average  $\Delta$ r=0.014, range of 0.00–0.16). These CFA marker analyses indicate that common method bias was not a significant issue for these data.

## 4.3.2 Tests of Hypotheses

We conducted hierarchical regressions to test our hypotheses. The dependent variables were the four organizational culture variables: adhocracy, clan, hierarchy, market. The first step included the six covariates (age, gender, education level, position level, company size, and industry sector). In the second step, we added the set of five dummy coded country variables for which the US was the reference group. To test hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2, in the third step we added the individualism personal values dimension variable. To test hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4, in the fourth step we added the five country by values interaction variables. The values dimension variable was mean-centered and this was used to construct the country by values interaction variables. Significant variance explained ( $\Delta R^2$ ) between steps 3 and 4 indicates country differences in personal values-organizational culture orientation relationships, the nature of which were confirmed by additional regressions with different country reference groups as well as individual country regressions. To interpret the nature of significant country interactions for these relationships, we plotted country scores at high and low  $(\pm 1 \text{ s.d.})$  levels of personal values (per Aiken and West 1991).

## 5 Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the total sample (means, standard deviations, correlations, scale reliabilities). In Table 2, we present the results for hierarchical regressions to test our hypotheses.

As shown in Table 2, we found significant country differences in organizational culture orientations (Step 2, range of  $\Delta R^2 = 0.017$  to  $\Delta R^2 = 0.073$ , all p < 0.001). The significant country differences (at p < 0.05 level) were as follows. Organizational adhocracy orientation: (Mexico, Netherlands)> (Spain, Russia, China, US); and (Spain, Russia)> US. Organizational clan orientation: Netherlands> (US, Russia, China, Spain)> Mexico. Organizational hierarchy orientation: (China, Spain,

Table	1 Descriptive statistic	s: mean	s, standa	urd deviat.	ions, cor	relations,	and sca	le reliabi	lities									
		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	7	8	6	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.	Adhocracy	5.50	1.02	(0.88)														
4	Clan	6.00	1.03	-0.13	(0.87)													
3.	Hierarchy	6.14	0.68	-0.71	-0.14	(0.80)												
4.	Market	6.11	1.00	0.03	-0.66	-0.31	(0.87)											
5.	Individualism values	0.01	0.57	0.12	-0.07	0.04	-0.08											
7.	China	0.18		-0.07	-0.02	0.04	0.02	0.06										
<u>%</u>	Mexico	0.15		0.21	-0.11	-0.09	0.04	-0.24										
9.	Netherlands	0.17		0.10	0.11	-0.05	-0.16	0.22										
10.	Russia	0.12		-0.05	0.01	0.00	0.04	0.29										
11.	Spain	0.22		-0.06	-0.04	0.08	0.00	-0.20										
12.	Age	35.69	10.00	-0.04	-0.01	0.04	-0.02	-0.15	-0.20	-0.03	-0.04	0.21	0.04					
13.	Gender	0.53	0.50	-0.01	0.06	0.00	- 0.04	-0.15	0.14	-0.01	-0.06	-0.17	0.09	-0.14				
14.	Education level	3.13	0.77	-0.10	0.02	0.07	-0.01	0.26	0.01	-0.19	-0.04	0.43	-0.18	0.01	-0.10			
15.	Position level	1.76	0.94	0.03	0.05	-0.08	0.00	0.08	0.00	-0.10	-0.12	0.20	-0.17	0.27	-0.14	0.28		
16.	Company size	1.91	0.82	-0.13	-0.08	0.10	0.09	0.07	0.00	-0.16	0.19	-0.02	-0.05	- 0.01	-0.05	0.12	-0.07	
17.	Industry: Services	0.86	0.35	0.01	0.06	- 0.05	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.07	-0.01	-0.11	0.09	- 0.04	0.13	0.01	-0.01	0.02
N=1 cal v elors 1 = le	307. Scale reliabilities ariables coded as follow degree), 4=Masters dt ss than 100 employees,	(Cronba ws: gend egree, 5= 2=100	ch $\alpha$ ) on ler $1 = fc$ = Doctoi -1000 c	n the diag male, 0 = rate degre mployees	onal. Co = male; e ee; positi s, 3 = mo	rrelations ducation ion level re than 10	r > 10.07 level 1 = 1 = nonst 000 emp	<ul><li>1 signific</li><li>= 8 or few</li><li>upervisor</li><li>loyees; in</li></ul>	ant at p /er yearsy, 2= 1stidustry co	<ul> <li>&lt;0.01 lev</li> <li>complet</li> <li>complet m</li> <li>t level m</li> <li>oded as 1</li> </ul>	/el. Coun ed, 2=9. anager, 3   = servic	try dumn -12 years i=middle es, 0=m	ny coded complete manager anufacturi	with US ed, $3 = 1$ ; 4 = top ing/resou	as refere 3–16 yea level ma ırce-base	nce grc rs com nager; d	up. Cate pleted (F company	gori- 8 ach-

	Adhocracy		Clan		Hierarchy		Market		Individualis	n values
	β	$\Delta \mathbf{R}^2$	β	$\Delta R^2$	β	$\Delta R^2$	β	$\Delta R^2$	β	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1. Covariates		$0.030^{***}$		0.019***		0.030***		0.010*		0.116***
Age	-0.05		-0.02		0.07*		-0.03		$-0.18^{***}$	
Gender	-0.03		0.04		0.03		-0.03		$-0.14^{***}$	
Education	$-0.11^{***}$		0.03		0.09**		-0.03		$0.24^{***}$	
Position	0.05		0.06*		$-0.11^{***}$		0.00		0.04	
Company size	$-0.11^{***}$		-0.09**		$0.09^{***}$		$0.09^{**}$		0.03	
Industry	0.02		0.06*		-0.06*		-0.01		-0.02	
Step 2. Countries		$0.073^{***}$		$0.033^{**}$		$0.017^{***}$		0.045***		$0.147^{***}$
China	0.06		-0.07		0.03		-0.06		$0.11^{***}$	
Mexico	$0.30^{***}$		$-0.15^{***}$		-0.09*		-0.02		$-0.10^{**}$	
Netherlands	$0.24^{***}$		0.08*		- 0.09*		-0.25 ***		$0.27^{***}$	
Russia	0.07*		-0.01		- 0.03		-0.03		$0.31^{***}$	
Spain	$0.10^{**}$		-0.07		0.03		-0.07		-0.03	
Step 3. Individualism values	$0.09^{**}$	$0.005^{**}$	$-0.17^{***}$	$0.022^{***}$	$-0.11^{**}$	$0.008^{**}$	$0.21^{***}$	$0.033^{***}$		
Step 4. Interactions		$0.028^{***}$		$0.011^{**}$		$0.020^{***}$		$0.015^{***}$		
China × individualism	$-0.10^{**}$		0.00		0.09*		0.01			
Mexico × individualism	$-0.12^{**}$		0.04		$0.13^{***}$		-0.08*			
Netherlands × individualism	-0.08*		-0.03		0.02		0.08*			
Russia×individualism	$0.13^{**}$		$-0.14^{**}$		-0.09*		0.10*			
Spain × individualism	-0.09*		-0.02		0.05		0.04			
Model R <sup>2</sup>	$0.137^{***}$		$0.085^{***}$		0.075***		$0.103^{***}$		$0.264^{***}$	
Standardized beta coefficients s Significance: $*p < 0.05$ , $**p < 0$	hown for varia .01, *** <i>p</i> <0.0	bles added in e 01	each step; refer	ence group fo	r country and e	country intera	ctions was the	SU		

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US)>(Mexico, Netherlands). Organizational market orientation: (US, Mexico, Russia, China, Spain)>Netherlands.

Hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2, regarding the relationships between individualism personal values and organizational culture orientations (P-O fit), were fully supported. Consistent with hypothesis 1, the individualism values dimension was positively related to adhocracy and market orientations (respectively,  $\beta$ =0.09, p<0.01;  $\beta$ =0.21, p<0.001). Consistent with hypothesis 2, the individualism values dimension was negatively related to clan and hierarchy orientations (respectively,  $\beta$ =-0.17, p<0.001;  $\beta$ =-0.11, p<0.01).

In hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4 we hypothesized that there would be significant country differences in the relationships between individualism values and organizational culture orientations. As shown in Table 2, for each organizational culture orientation there was a significant country-by-individualism values interaction effect (step 4, range of  $\Delta R^2 = 0.011$ , p < 0.01, to  $\Delta R^2 = 0.028$ , p < 0.001).

In hypothesis 3, we hypothesized that the positive relationships between individualism personal values and adhocracy (hypothesis 3a) as well as market (hypothesis 3b) organizational culture would be stronger in individualistic values societies (Russia, US) than in collectivistic values societies (China, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain). Similarly, in hypothesis 4 we hypothesized that there would be stronger relationships in individualistic societies than in collectivistic societies.

Hypothesis 3a was fully supported. As illustrated in Fig. 1a, the positive relationship between individualism personal values and adhocracy orientation was significant for professionals in individualistic values countries Russia (p < 0.001) and US (p=0.003), but was not significant for professionals in the four collectivistic values countries (p > 0.29). These findings also support hypothesis 4.

With respect to hypothesis 3b (see Fig. 1b), the positive relationship between individualism personal values and market orientation was significant across countries (p < 0.01), except for Mexico (p = 0.54). hypothesis 3b and hypothesis 4 were only supported in that this positive relationship was significantly stronger for Russia professionals (p < 0.001) than for China and Mexico professionals.

In hypothesis 3 we hypothesized that the negative relationships between individualism personal values and clan (hypothesis 3c) as well as hierarchy (hypothesis 3d) organizational culture would be stronger in collectivistic values societies (China, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain) than in individualistic values societies (Russia, US). In contrast, in hypothesis 4 we hypothesized that these relationships would be stronger in individualistic societies than collectivistic societies.

As illustrated in Fig. 1c, the negative relationship between individualism personal values and clan orientation was stronger for Russia professionals (p < 0.001) than for professionals in the four collectivistic values countries of China (p=0.09), Mexico (p=0.21), Netherlands (p=0.04) and Spain (p=0.006). Further, this negative relationship for US professionals (p=0.01) was not significantly different from that for professionals in the four collectivistic values countries. These findings do not support hypothesis 3c, but the Russia findings provide partial support for hypothesis 4.

As illustrated in Fig. 1d, the negative relationship between individualism personal values and hierarchy orientation was stronger for Russia professionals (p=0.006) than for professionals in the four collectivistic values countries (p>0.17). Further,





this negative relationship for US professionals (p=0.004) was significantly different from that for professionals in China and Mexico but similar to professionals in the Netherlands and Spain. These findings do not support hypothesis 3d, but provide moderate support for hypothesis 4 (full support for Russia, partial support for the US).

### 5.1 Subsidiary Analysis

The Table 1 correlations indicated that there are country differences in individualism personal values, so we conducted a subsidiary hierarchical regression with individualism values as the dependent variable. As reported in Table 2, we found significant country differences ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.028$ , p < 0.001) in individualism values such that: Russia (mean = 0.41) > Netherlands (0.28) > China (0.04) > [US (-0.12), Spain (-0.16)] > Mexico (-0.27).<sup>2</sup>

## 6 Discussion

Our research answers the call to extend the P-O fit literature by delineating its boundary conditions (Edwards 2008; Lee and Ramaswami 2013). We respond by being one of the first to empirically delineate the cross-cultural boundary conditions that influence P-O fit relationships. Notably, we found that the well-established P-O values fit relationship does not hold consistently across cultural contexts. In addition, we investigated the manner in which societal values influence the P-O fit relationship, specifically whether P-O fit is congruent with or contingent upon societal values. This is an important issue in the international P-O fit literature, insofar as some scholars have argued for a nested reinforcing cycle of cultural values across societal, organizational and individual levels (Erez and Gati 2004; Kwantes and Dickson 2011), whereas others advancing a contingency perspective contend that societal culture influences the salience of P-O fit (Lee and Ramaswami 2013; Oh et al. 2014). Our findings provide strong evidence in support of the contingency scholarly camp, suggesting that P-O fit theory is more relevant in individualistic than in collectivistic societies (Table 3).

We found limited support for the nested theory of culture's proposal for the reinforcing cycle of values congruence across societal, organizational, and individual levels. In support of the nested theory of culture, Russia is individualistic at both the societal and individual levels, while Mexico and Spain are collectivistic at both societal and individual levels. However, there is values incongruence between societal and individual levels for the US (individualistic society, more collectivistic persons), the Netherlands (collectivistic society, more individualistic persons), and China (collectivistic society, slightly more individualistic persons).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Country means adjusted for demographic and organizational covariates.

Table 3 Summary of findings			
	Hypothesized relationship	Findings	
Main effects Hypothesis 1. High Individu- alism (+)/low individual-	+ Adhocracy + Market	Positive: adhocracy, market	Supported
<pre>ism values (-) Hypothesis 2. High individu- alism (+)/low individual- ism values (-)</pre>	– Clan – Hierarchy	Negative: clan, hierarchy	Supported
Country interactions		Country differences in relationships	
Individualism and Adhocracy	Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 4. Stronger positive in individualistic countries	Russia > US > (Spain, China, Netherlands, Mexico)	Hypothesis 3a and Hypothesis 4. Supported
Individualism and market	Hypothesis 3b and Hypothesis 4. Stronger positive in individualistic countries	(Russia, Netherlands, Spain, China, US) > Mexico; Russia > (China, US)	Hypothesis 3b and Hypothesis 4. Minimal support
Individualism and Clan	Hypothesis 3c. Stronger negative in collec- tivistic countries Hypothesis 4. Stronger negative in individu- alistic countries	Russia> (Netherlands, Spain, US, China, Mexico)	Hypothesis 3c. Not supported Hypothesis 4. Partial support
Individualism and Hierarchy	Hypothesis 3d. Stronger negative in collec- tivistic countries Hypothesis 4. Stronger negative in individu- alistic countries	Russia > (US, Netherlands, Spain, China, Mexico); (US, Netherlands, Spain) > Mexico; US > China	Hypothesis 3d. Not supported Hypothesis 4. Moderate support
Country differences in person significant relationship in indiv	al individualism values—organizational cultu vidual country regressions (at p<0.05 level). B	re orientation relationships significant at the	p < 0.05 level. Italic font for country indicates ulues (House et al. 2004), Russia and the US are

significant relationship in individual country regressions (at p < 0.05 level). Based on GLOBE Inst individualistic societies whereas China, Mexico, Netherlands and Spain are collectivistic societies

Further, our findings indicate that the "weak link" in the nested theory of culture appears to be the proposed values congruence between societal and organizational levels (Erez and Gati 2004; Kwantes and Dickson 2011). Specifically, we found similar organizational culture profiles for both individualistic Russia and the US and collectivistic China and Spain. For the Netherlands (collectivistic at societal level), organizational culture profiles were both consistent (higher clan and lower market orientations) and inconsistent (higher adhocracy and lower hierarchy). And the potential for P-O values fit appears to be constrained in collectivistic Mexico (at both societal and individual levels) where the predominant organizational culture profile was individualistic (higher adhocracy and market; lower clan and hierarchy). In sum, we found a diversity of organizational culture orientations across countries, with these being more a function of factors (e.g., organization size and industry sector, see Table 2) other than societal isomorphic pressures (Kwantes and Dickson 2011).

Our findings demonstrate that societal values (e.g., institutional collectivism) have an effect on P-O fit dynamics, but not as theorized by multi-level nested theories of culture (e.g., Erez and Gati 2004). As proposed by the contingency perspective, our findings indicate that extant P-O fit theory may be 'culture bound' to individualistic societies that emphasize the importance of personal values coalescing with the organization. In such societies (e.g., Russia, USA), individuals (both individualistic and collectivistic) may be attracted to organizational cultures that are more consistent with their own values orientations. In collectivistic societies, conversely, where group interests prevail over individual interests (Gelfand et al. 2004) the notion of personal values fit with one's organization may not be as relevant as previously thought. We advance Astakhova et al.'s (2014) 3-country study, which found that P-O values fit is more relevant in individualistic than in collectivistic societies. However, our research was not limited to China but included other collectivistic societies (Mexico, Netherlands, Spain) and, as such, it is more generalizable.

Our cross-cultural findings are important for the P-O fit literature as well as other organizational behavior phenomena. Indeed, we found stronger support for the emerging literature stream which posits that P-O fit relationships at the individual-level are contingent on societal cultural values, specifically whether the country is an individualistic or collectivistic society (e.g., Oh et al. 2014). Building on Chuang et al.'s (2015) qualitative study, we contend that P-O fit theories are culture bound by individualistic assumptions about employees acting as independent individuals motivated to seek P-O fit relationships that are congruent with their personal values. As also concluded by the few cross-cultural P-O empirical studies conducted to date (e.g., Jung and Takeuchi 2014; Lee and Antonakis 2014; Oh et al. 2014; Parkes et al. 2001), our study advances the need for a more contextualized understanding of P-O fit across diverse cultural contexts.

#### 6.1 P-O Fit Relationships in the Multi-Country Context

Although our research stresses the role of the individual in defining what a culture is, we also examine the role of societal culture on the individual. By emphasizing the individual level of analysis, we account for the multi-level nature of culture as well as the endogenous nature of the individual within societies (Caprar et al. 2015). Consistent with P-O fit theory (Edwards 2008; Schneider et al. 2000), we found overall congruence between business professionals' personal values and the values of the organizations in which they were employed. Specifically, our findings indicate that business professionals with higher individualistic values were more likely to work in organizations that emphasized adhocracy and market cultural orientations. In contrast, business professionals with more collectivistic values were more likely to work in organizations that emphasized clan and hierarchy cultural orientations. These findings are consistent with those of Gardner et al.'s (2009) US study that determined similar personal-organizational values alignment is a factor in students' projective attraction to organizations. Our study extends these findings to demonstrate that the self-reinforcing cycle of personal values alignment with organizational culture values is also a significant factor for employee retention.

However, we also found cross-cultural differences in the strengths of these P-O values fit relationships across the six countries under study. Notably, as proposed by the contingency perspective (Oh et al. 2014), these P-O fit relationships were consistently significant for the two individualistic countries (Russia and the US) whereas there were inconsistent findings for the four collectivistic countries (China, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain). For the Netherlands and Spain, individualistic business professionals were more likely to be affiliated with organizations that had a market orientation and less likely to be in organizations with a clan orientation. Further, we found no significant relationships between personal values and adhocracy or hierarchy organizational cultural orientations for these two countries. For business professionals in China, the only significant P-O fit relationship was between individualistic values and market organizational culture. For business professionals in Mexico, there was even less support for P-O fit theory, with no significant relationships between personal values and organizationals.

These findings suggest that individualistic societal norms support P-O values fit as a salient and acceptable criterion in employment relationships. That is, professionals in individualistic countries are more likely to be attracted to and remain in organizations that provide a closer fit with their own personal values orientations. This interpretation is consistent with Astakhova et al.'s (2014) three-country study that found the link between collectivistic values and P-O fit was stronger in the US and Russia than in China. As such, our findings challenge Lee and Ramaswami's (2013) conclusion that people in collectivistic cultures accord higher emphasis on P-O values fit than do people in individualistic cultures. And yet, the generally weaker P-O values fit relationships in collectivistic cultures provide empirical support for Lee and Ramaswami's (2013) proposition that people (and organizations) in collectivistic cultures are more tolerant of values misfit with organizations and instead focus more on relational fit with supervisors and work groups. Whereas Chuang et al.'s (2015) Chinese model of P-E fit offers an explanation of such 'incongruent-yet-fit' phenomena based on Confucian relationism and selfhood concepts, further research is needed to develop indigenous explanations in other collectivistic societies.

However, our findings indicate that there may be one exception to both the cultural congruence and contingency perspectives on P-O fit dynamics. Across both individualistic and collectivistic societies (except Mexico), more individualistic professionals were affiliated with more market-oriented organizations. This (near) universal P-O fit relationship is consistent with the free market individualistic component of the emerging 'global culture' posited by Erez and Gati (2004).

#### 6.2 Managerial Implications

It is well established that P-O values fit is crucial for positive work attitudes and job performance (Arthur et al. 2006; Hoffman and Woehr 2006; Verquer et al. 2003). What is less understood is how organizations can ensure P-O fit in different cultural contexts. Given that our findings suggest that the P-O values fit relationship is contingent on but not necessarily congruent with societal values, organizations would be well advised to examine P-O fit through a cultural lens but with an emphasis on employees' values congruence with that of their organizations' culture rather than with societal culture. Within each of the six countries under study, there was values diversity in terms of both individualistic and collectivistic individuals as well as organizational culture orientations. The prevalence of employee-organizational values similarity (although to varying degrees) reveals a self-reinforcing dynamic that contributes to employee values homogeneity within organizations (Vogel et al. 2016). One implication for managers endeavoring to be organizational culture change agents is that such strong P-O values fit can be a source of employee resistance to change—especially when the intended culture change involves transitioning between individualistic (adhocracy or market) and collectivistic (clan or hierarchy) orientations.

Our study's findings indicate that managers should accord high importance to values fit with organizational culture when recruiting new organizational members (Edwards 2008). Because HRM practices are intertwined with organizational culture (Jackson and Schuler 1995), organizations should also ensure that their HRM systems are internally consistent with respect to having an individualistic or collectivistic orientation (Fitzsimmons and Stamper 2014; Ramamoorthy and Carroll 1998). Individualistic employees are more likely to be attracted to, motivated by, and remain in firms with more individualistic HRM practices (e.g., formal recruitment and performance appraisal processes, individual-based reward systems, merit-based promotion systems). Conversely, collectivistic employees are more likely to be attracted to, motivated by, and remain in firms with more collectivistic HRM practices (e.g., informal recruitment processes, equality and team-based reward systems, seniority-based promotions, and job security). Another implication of our study is that this role of HRM systems to engender P-O values fit would be effective for organizations located in individualistic societies more than in collectivistic societies.

In collectivistic societies (except Mexico), market-oriented firms that utilize individualistic HRM practices would also be effective in their relationships with employees with more individualistic values. As such, this finding would be of particular interest to market-oriented multinational companies seeking global standardization of competitive and results-oriented HRM practices (Edwards et al. 2016; Nadeem et al. 2018). To a somewhat lesser extent, the use of collectivistic HRM practices would be effective for clan-oriented firms in collectivistic societies in Western Europe (e.g., Netherlands, Spain). Even so, the lack of significant P-O fit relationships for Mexico in total, and for adhocracy-oriented and hierarchy-oriented firms in the other three collectivistic societies, suggests the existence of P-O values misfit, which could be a contributing factor to decreased motivation and eventual organizational exit (Lee and Ramaswami 2013; Posthuma et al. 2005). For these organizations, managers may need to pay more attention to enhancing other types of person-environment fit (e.g., person-job, person-team, person-supervisor) to counterbalance the negative consequences of P-O values misfit. Indeed, our research suggests that multiple potential cultural variations may be contextually appropriate in both collectivistic and individualistic societies and, in light of the importance of the individual, it is incumbent on organizations to understand which types of fit are more important.

#### 6.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

As with other research, there are limitations that need to be addressed. First, our study had more countries than previous P-O fit studies, although future research with a larger number of countries is needed to confirm our findings. Such large-scale research would also permit the use of multi-level modeling analytic procedures (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002) to delineate variance at individual and societal levels as well as more directly test for the cross-level moderating effects of societal values. Contrary to our findings, some recent research has advanced the notion that IB research should focus more on socio-economic clusters of countries rather than countries per se (e.g., Goertzen et al. 2018; Taras et al. 2016). A larger set of countries would enable investigating whether this proposition is appropriate in terms of variations in P-O fit relationships. In addition to increasing the number of countries under study, it would be interesting to examine P-O fit at the sub-regional (e.g., regions within a country) level to determine how our findings hold up in countries that exhibit distinctive within-country sub-cultures (for example, India; Dheer et al. 2015).

In this study, we took a quantitative approach to examining cross-cultural differences in P-O values fit and our findings for collectivistic societies suggest that P-O dynamics are context specific. As demonstrated by Chuang et al. (2015), qualitative research is helpful in uncovering contextualized models of P-O fit and identifying the boundary conditions of Western-based P-O fit theory. Hence, another direction for future research would be conducting qualitative studies of P-O fit to develop indigenous conceptualizations of this multidimensional construct (Kristof-Brown and Guay 2011; Lee and Ramaswami 2013).

P-O misfit is generally regarded as having negative consequences for both employees and their organizations (Edwards 2008; Kristof-Brown and Guay 2011). However, a recent study found that employees can temper the negative effects of P-O values incongruence by engaging in alternative work (job crafting) and non-work (leisure) activities (Vogel et al. 2016). Cross-cultural research (quantitative

and qualitative) is needed to examine the extent to which and how employees are proactive in mitigating P-O misfit in other societal contexts.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

By utilizing individual-level data to study the P-O fit relationship cross-culturally, we are among the first to study this phenomenon across societal, organizational, and individual levels of analysis. Our cross-cultural study of P-O fit relationships questions the nested theory of culture that posits a reinforcing cycle wherein cultural values are similarly reproduced and represented at societal, organizational and individual levels (Erez and Gati 2004; Kwantes and Dickson 2011). From this perspective, there is an impetus for cross-level values congruence that mirrors either individualism or collectivism values. Instead, we found that societal culture is an important factor in understanding P-O values fit dynamics but that this influence is primarily in terms of signaling the salience and relevance of P-O values congruence in employment relationships (Lee and Ramaswami 2013; Triandis 1995). Our results affirm that culture is more about individuals operating within complex social contexts that have greater variation in individual and organizational values orientations than societal norms would predict (e.g., Au 1999; Devinney and Hohberger 2017). Thus, our study's findings should be interpreted in terms of the relative prevalence of values orientations and P-O values fit within a society rather than summary society categorizations. In sum, we conclude that, for IB researchers to uncover meaningful relationships, the focal unit of analysis in cross-cultural research should be at the individual-level, and not rely exclusively on the country-level (Brannen and Doz 2010). Hence, we support calls to develop contextualized theories and knowledge about P-O values fit phenomena (Chuang et al. 2015; Lee and Ramaswami 2013).

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