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Organizational Individualism and Collectivism: Theoretical Development and an Empirical Test of a Measure

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An empirical test of the organizational individualism and collectivism constructs and measures was conducted using survey responses from 916 employees from 46 Turkish organizations. Analyses indicated that fit between individuals' values and perceptions of the organizational culture predicted job attitudes, and that organizational individualism was related to the use of individualistic human resources practices at the organizational level. The utility of this approach for understanding the relationships between individuals, organizations, and societies is discussed.

The development of a large body of popular management and academic literature relating to organizational culture has deeply affected the way we understand organizations (e.g., Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1992; Schneider, 1990). The idea that organizations can have distinct organizational cultures is based on the assumption that particular sets of values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions become internalized by an organization's members. Though abstract, the construct has become central to many micro- and macro-level theories. At the organizational level, unique organizational cultures are believed to be an important source of competitive advantage (Kotter & Heskett, 1992), and it is often believed that successful organizations should attempt to perpetuate their culture. At the individual level, the construct of organizational culture gives legitimacy and substance to individuals' perceptions of and

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reactions to organizations, and has been critical to the development of the research on person–organization fit (Kristof, 1996).

Research on person–organization fit stresses the notion that congruence between an employee's characteristics and his or her organization's characteristics is desirable for both the individual and the organization. The emergence of the global organization, with a diverse multi-cultural workforce and units embedded in multiple societies, has substantially increased the salience of person–organization fit issues. In the environments of global organizations, failure to achieve person–organization fit is often conceptualized as "cultural clash," and is described at a macro level as incongruity between the culture of the society in which a unit is embedded and the societal culture of the organization's base of operations (Schneider, 1988). In this paper, we argue that the dimensions on which cultures clash reflect more general patterns of values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions that operate in multiple contexts and at multiple levels, including the level of organizational cultures. We propose that a richer understanding of person–organization fit can be achieved by applying concepts found in the literature on societal culture and individual cultural orientations to the description of organizational culture, and linking individual, organizational, and societal levels within a common theoretical system. To do this, we describe the rationale for measuring organizational culture along the dimensions of individualism and collectivism, and evaluate the construct validity of a scale based on factor analysis as well as observed relationships at the individual level (in terms of person–organization fit), and at the organizational level of analysis. We discuss how a conceptualization of organizational culture that utilizes more general cultural theory might prove to be a useful tool for understanding the relationships between individuals, organizations, and societies.

Individualism and Collectivism at Multiple Levels

A considerable amount of research on societal culture has been guided by the notion of "cultural syndromes." Cultural syndromes are cognitive structures that help one organize and interpret the world by focusing attention on certain patterns or themes in the subjective elements of the environment, such as values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions (Triandis, 1994a). Of numerous cultural syndromes that have been identified, individualism and collectivism have received considerable attention since the seminal work by Hofstede (1980), and have been the focus of particularly rich theoretical description (e.g., Triandis, 1995). Individualism is the tendency to treat the self as the most meaningful social unit. Individualistic societies stress the development and differentiation of a unique personality and identity, autonomy, and the primacy of personal goals and needs. In contrast, the most meaningful social units in collectivist societies are the groups to which people belong, such as the family, neighborhood, or workplace, and one's identity is defined by membership in these groups. In collectivistic societies, the impact of group membership on self-definition results in a desire to maintain ingroup harmony, and a tendency to subordinate personal preferences and priorities to those of the group (Triandis, 1995).

Cultural syndromes are also present at the individual level of analysis (Schwartz, 1994), and there is considerable support for the contention that individualism and collectivism can be measured and conceptualized as individual differences (Triandis, 1995; Wagner,

1995). As individual differences variables, they are called idiocentrism and allocentrism, respectively (Triandis, Leung, Villareal & Clack, 1985). Idiocentrism is characterized by adherence to notions such as independence, uniqueness, and self-reliance; while allocentrism is suggestive of interdependence, belongingness to ingroups, and subservience to the wishes of the ingroup.

Traditionally, individualism and collectivism have been conceptualized as opposite ends of a unidimensional continuum (e.g., Hofstede, 1980). However, more recent research has suggested that the syndromes of individualism and collectivism are independent or discrete dimensions, because both co-exist in all individuals (e.g., Triandis, 1995) as well as in all societies (e.g., Chinese Cultural Connection, 1987; Schwartz, 1994; Triandis et al., 1986). It is argued that individuals and groups activate one or the other syndrome depending on the situation, and the classification of a society as individualistic or collectivistic is based on the degree to which individualistic or collectivistic values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions apply in a majority of contexts and to a majority of members of that society. Similarly, although individuals can vary broadly within a given society, the identification of an individual as idiocentric or allocentric reflects the individual's relative probability of behaving in a way that is consistent with individualism or collectivism in a majority of contexts. Thus, the abstract values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions comprise independent, discrete dimensions, but in any specific context an individual tends to view the values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions associated with *either* individualism *or* collectivism as more relevant to that situation.

Organizational Individualism and Collectivism

The main argument of this paper is that individualism and collectivism also might be meaningful dimensions in the context of *organizations*. There are a number of reasons to believe that this might be true. A survey of prominent definitions or conceptualizations of societal culture (e.g., Geertz, 1973; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952) and organizational culture (e.g., Adler & Jelinek, 1986; Schein, 1992) suggests that there is considerable theoretical overlap in how the term "culture" is treated. Specifically, culture at both levels: (a) is defined by those who share it and transmit it, (b) includes cognitive representations of values, norms, beliefs, and assumptions, (c) is conditioned or learned, and (d) shapes behavior.

Moreover, the fact that individualism and collectivism are represented at both the individual level and at the societal level suggests that they are extremely salient themes or patterns that people use to understand, categorize, and interpret their environment and to structure their sense of self and identity. Because most people spend a considerable portion of their lives in the workplace, it would seem unlikely that individualism and collectivism are important at the individual and societal levels, but not in organizational contexts. In addition, individualism and collectivism might be meaningful dimensions of organizational culture as a consequence of the fact that all organizations are embedded within societal cultures, which are likely to have an ambient influence on organizations embedded within them (Hofstede, 1985).

The relevance of the individualism and collectivism constructs to organizations is also manifest in a growing part of the organizational literature. For example, theoretical work

highlights the utility of the individualism and collectivism constructs in understanding employees reactions to managerial practices (e.g., Erez, 1994; Mendonca & Kanungo, 1994). In addition, they have been used to understand the effectiveness of human resource practices and managerial policies (Ramamoorthy & Carroll, 1998), job attitudes (Hui, Yee & Eastman, 1995), and firm financial performance (Newman & Nollen, 1996).

Although this growing body of literature has led a number of researchers to suggest that the exploration of individualism and collectivism at the level of organizational culture might be fruitful (e.g., Earley & Gibson, 1998; Triandis, 1994b), we are aware of only two studies in which this has been explored explicitly. Chatman and Barsade (1995) conducted an experiment in which participants were randomly assigned to simulated organizations that emphasized either collectivist or individualist values. They found that participants' cooperative or individualistic orientation interacted with the simulated organizational culture to predict cooperative behaviors and preferences for certain types of organizational practices, suggesting that person–organization fit along the dimensions of individualism and collectivism might be an important predictor of behaviors and attitudes. In another study, Hofstede and Spangenberg (1987) performed exploratory factor analysis on data representing 14 "work goals." Although none of the extracted dimensions were interpreted as organizational individualism and collectivism, Hofstede and Spangenberg (1987) note that their results do not preclude the possibility that individualism and collectivism dimensions can be obtained at the organizational culture level. Indeed, they suggest that robust organizational individualism and collectivism factors might be obtained using careful operationalization of the constructs and a confirmatory validation approach.

Adopting this approach, measures of organizational individualism and collectivism were developed for this research in order to test the assumption that the constructs exist as dimensions of organizational culture, and then to investigate other theoretical propositions related to those constructs. This leads to our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Organizational individualism and collectivism are discernable dimensions of organizational culture across a wide range of organizations.

Person–Organization Fit

The last two decades have witnessed a surge in interest in the notion of "fit" or congruence between employees and their organizations (see Kristof, 1996, for a review), and has focused primarily on the domain of values (see Meglino & Ravlin, 1998, for a review). The literature suggests that an analysis of person–organization fit requires: (1) the identification of a common theoretical system that defines commensurate dimensions along which the values of the "person" and the "organization" can be assessed reliably, (2) that the dimensions are important to peoples' self-concept, and (3) that the dimensions represent qualities that are important or meaningful in an organizational context (Kristof, 1996). In this research, we focus on the values associated with the constructs of individualism and collectivism as the common theoretical system. These constructs also fulfill the second requirement as they appear to be essential patterns of ways in which people construct their sense of self and identity (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Regarding the final requirement, with the

exception of the Chatman and Barsade study (described above), there has been little empirical work specifically examining the individualism and collectivism constructs in the context of person–organization fit. However, a number of authors such as Earley and Gibson (1998) argue for their importance, and maintain that a match between an employee and an organization along these dimensions should result in positive outcomes. This research examines this assertion, and in so doing, tests both the construct validity of measures of organizational individualism and collectivism and the practical importance of the dimensions with regard to their ability to predict organizational outcomes.

Fit and Misfit

Theoretically, fit is the subjective experience of congruence between the values that shape a person's general expectations and their perceptions of whether or not those values are represented in a specific context. However, the analysis of "fit" for individualism and collectivism is somewhat complex. Recent theoretical and empirical research, outlined earlier, suggests that because individuals and societies have access to both individualistic and collectivistic values, individualism and collectivism should be measured independently, as two separate or discrete constructs. Indeed, as stated by Triandis, Chan, Bhawuk, Iwao and Sinha, "if we are to predict behavior, we need to know both the individual's allocentrism and idiocentrism and the individual's definition of the situation" (1995: 463).

In this study, consistent with this research, a measurement approach was employed that assessed individualism and collectivism as discrete dimensions at both the individual and organizational levels. This allowed for a standard examination of "fit," through the assessment of congruence on dimensions that are *parallel* at the individual and organizational levels. However, as suggested by Chatman and Barsade (1995), while research on "fit" has generally focused on congruence between an individual and an organization along some dimension, it has ignored the implications of potential "mismatches" or misfit between an individual and the situation. They suggest that misfit might represent a qualitatively different experience for the individual than simply "low fit." The independent measurement of individualism and collectivism enabled us to represent this distinction empirically. Specifically, *low fit* is experienced by an individual who strongly endorses a set of values and believes that their organizational culture does not support those same values. In contrast, misfit is experienced when an individual strongly endorses a set of values (e.g., individualism), but believes that their organizational culture strongly supports a contrasting set of values (e.g., collectivism). The current research afforded the opportunity to explore whether or not misfit can predict organizational outcomes beyond fit alone.

In this study, fit and misfit interactions are hypothesized to have implications for job attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational respect. This is consistent with Locke's (1976) suggestion that job attitudes result from met expectations about what the workplace should be like, and with the traditions in the person–organization fit literature (e.g., Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). This discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Idiocentrism and allocentrism, the individual-level manifestations of individualistic and collectivistic values, will interact with organizational individualism and collectivism to predict the work related attitudes of organizational respect, and

satisfaction with promotion, the work itself, coworkers, and supervisors. Specifically, attitudes will be relatively positive when an individual is high on allocentrism or idiocentrism, and high on the *parallel* dimension of organizational individualism or collectivism (fit), and will be relatively negative when an individual is high on allocentrism or idiocentrism, and high on the *contrasting* dimension of organizational individualism or collectivism (misfit).

Organizational Culture as a Shared Construct

In the last two decades, disciplinary tendencies or preferences for macro- or micro-level approaches to the study of organizations have begun to give way to an approach that focuses increased attention on choosing the level(s) of analysis that is *appropriate* for a particular area of inquiry (e.g., Rousseau, 1985). Although much of this literature has focused on important technical issues (e.g., James, 1982; Klein, Dansereau & Hall, 1994), attention seems to have begun to focus on the benefits and integrative power of multi-level research. One of the more well-articulated frameworks for addressing these issues has been described by House, Rousseau, and Thomas-Hunt (1995), who advocate what they call a "meso paradigm" for integrating variables obtained at different levels of analysis. The key to this approach, they suggest, is bridging multiple levels by developing linking hypotheses.

Research on organizational culture has historically contained notions of multi-level effects. For example, Denison (1996) notes that a fundamental dilemma that is often faced in the literature on organizational culture is that theories tend to posit that individuals *influence* an organizational culture, and are also influenced *by* the organizational culture. Similarly, while micro-level theories might equate organizational culture with an employee's perceptions of an organization, as suggested by Hypothesis 2, in order for those perceptions to be truly "organizational," they must be based on a common environmental stimulus present in the organization. So, to formulate a linking proposition between the individual level and organizational level, we extend Schneider and Reichers' (1983) argument that organizational cultures develop in response to stimuli that are experienced in common by organizational members. We suggest that sources of such concrete or common environmental elements include the human resources (HR) practices that are utilized throughout the organization, and become manifest in institutionalized structures, rules, or standard operating procedures. Thus, HR practices at the organizational level carry with them an underlying set of values and assumptions that may provide the basis for *shared* perceptions of the organizational culture at the individual level.

Many of the identifiable HR practices that are utilized in modern organizations are products of Western societies (e.g., the US), and emphasize individualistic rather than collectivistic values (Erez, 1994). Such practices are arguably constructed on a "rational" basis (Lawler, Jain, Ratnam & Atmiyanandana, 1995) and as such, may be particularly formalized. Conversely, practices that emphasize more collectivistic values such as strong interpersonal relationships, loyalty to the group, ingroup memberships, and seniority are less formalized and more difficult to observe or measure. Following this logic, we suggest that although organizational cultures are multiply determined, an organization's use of formalized individualistic HR practices provides a common objective environment for the development of

shared perceptions of individualism in the organizational culture. On this basis, we offer the following hypothesis at the organizational level of analysis:

Hypothesis 3: Employees' perceptions of the organizational culture will be associated with the nature of their organization's HR practices; specifically, extensive use of individualistic human resources practices will be related to perceptions of organizational individualism.

Method

Scale Development

Item content specifications were developed based on a review of the literature on individualism and collectivism, particularly with regard to possible links between individualism and collectivism and organizational culture (e.g., Chatman & Barsade, 1995; Earley & Gibson, 1998; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995), as well as numerous discussions with a cross-cultural research group consisting of faculty and graduate students. The literature review and group discussions suggested a number of categories for item development including: (1) maintenance of individual uniqueness and personal growth, (2) the role and appropriateness of competition, (3) meritocracy in process and procedures, (4) a focus on group work vs. individual work, (5) paternalism or protection of workers by management, and (6) collective vs. individual responsibility or a sense of collective fate. A large initial pool of items was written to these specifications and items were discarded if there was not substantial agreement (90%) in content classifications by members of the research group. Seventeen items were chosen for a pilot study on the basis of these ratings, as well as comments from group members regarding the appropriateness of the items selected.

Pilot Study

As the primary study involved data collection in Turkey, a pilot study was conducted in which responses to the 17 organizational culture items were solicited from 351 employees from six Turkish organizations. Data were collected in Turkish. One English–Turkish bilingual translated the original English instrument into Turkish and two bilinguals back-translated it. Discrepancies between language versions were corrected and back-translated once again. The final versions, which were reviewed by all translators, were in substantial agreement.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on ratings of item agreement using maximum likelihood estimation and varimax rotation. Results suggested that two factors were interpretable as organizational individualism and collectivism. Two scales were formed on the basis of strong factor loadings (i.e., >.40). Three additional items with moderate loadings were also included on conceptual grounds, with the wording of one item changed slightly for future administration. The result of this analysis was an organizational collectivism (OC) scale with seven items ($\alpha = .82$), and an organizational individualism (OI) scale with five items ($\alpha = .71$). One additional item was added to the OI scale in an attempt to increase

construct breadth and reliability. The resulting seven OC items and six OI items represented the scales analyzed in the present study.

Sample Characteristics and Procedure

Organizational contacts in Turkey were initiated by a Turkish researcher associated with the business community. The sample included respondents from 46 private sector organizations, which varied broadly in terms of industry, size, and location (metropolitan vs. smaller cities). Although the sample of organizations was not technically random, an effort was made to solicit the cooperation of a diverse sample of organizations. Samples obtained from each organization ranged from 4 to 94. Twenty-five samples included between 4 and 15 respondents; 11 included between 16 and 30 respondents; and 10 included more than 30 respondents.

A total of 916 employees responded to a survey that included measures of work-related attitudes, allocentrism and idiocentrism (the individual-level manifestations of individualistic and collectivistic values), perceptions of organizational culture (the OI and OC scales), and demographic variables. The modal age category was 25–29 years (32%), the modal tenure category was 1–5 years (44%), and 45% of the sample were female. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents held at least a Bachelor's degree, 11% vocational college or 2 years of college, 26% high school, and 6% had education below the high school level. Respondents included office workers (32%), blue-collar workers (9%), technicians (11%), supervisors (19%), professionals (15%), and managers (14%). Although the current sample is fairly representative of the Turkish urban labor force in terms of age, managers and professionals were overrepresented and blue-collar workers were underrepresented (State Institute of Statistics, 1999).

Measurement

All measures, described in detail below, were translated into Turkish using the same procedure used for the pilot study.

Ratings of HR practices. In each organization, a key informant such as the owner/manager or manager of HR rated their organization's reliance on a number of HR practices (Khandwalla, 1983; Lawler et al., 1995), using a 5-point scale ranging from "1" (did not use the practice or used it very little) to "5" (used the practice extensively). An index of seven HR practices was created as an indicator of the extent to which an organization's HR function utilized practices that were more individualistic in nature (i.e., the individualistic HR practices index; IHRP). These included the use of participatory decision making, merit-based pay and promotion, an MBO system, formal job evaluation, and the use of educational background information and interviews in employment. These practices were chosen based on a review of the literature on the influence of cultural values on HR practices (Adler & Jelinek, 1986; Erez, 1994; Mendonca & Kanungo, 1994; Storey & Bacon, 1993), which suggested that individualistic HR practices are those that emphasize individual merit, equity norms, objective personal job qualifications for selection, the importance of personal initiative, and a focus on individuals rather than groups.

Employee survey. The survey completed by the employees included seven items measuring organizational culture collectivism (the "OC" subscale), and six items measuring organizational culture individualism (the "OI" subscale). These items are presented in Appendix A. Allocentric and idiocentric values were measured using the INDCOL instrument (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk & Gelfand, 1995). Responses to both organizational culture subscales and values items were made on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Facets of job satisfaction were measured using the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) as revised by Roznowski (1989). In the JDI, participants choose Yes, ?, or No to a series of nine adjectives describing the characteristics of promotion opportunities, the work itself, coworkers, and supervisors. Organizational respect was assessed by the Supervisor subscale of the Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment scale developed by Donovan, Drasgow and Munson (1998). The scale items refer to employees' perceptions of how they are treated in their organization (e.g., "Employees' suggestions are ignored") and uses a response scale similar to the JDI's response options (Yes, ?, No). For all scales, higher scores represent more endorsement of the construct.

Results

Hypothesis 1 predicted that organizational individualism and collectivism would be robust dimensions of organizational culture in a sample obtained from a wide range of organizations and job types. Operationally, this suggests that a two-factor model contrasting the six OI items with the seven OC items would provide a satisfactory fit to the data, and a superior fit to a model in which all items loaded on a single factor. To test this hypothesis, we conducted two confirmatory factor analyses in LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) based on the complete data of 855 individuals. Comparing the single factor to the two-factor model, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), which provides an estimate of "badness" of fit while correcting for model complexity, decreased from .058 to .050, the non-normed fit index (NNFI) increased from .93 to .95, the comparative fit index (CFI) increased from .95 to .96, and the χ^2/df ratio decreased from 3.83 to 3.13. The $\Delta\chi^2$ for comparing the two models was 48.43, relative to a change of one degree of freedom, and was highly significant ($p < .0001$). Thus, although the correlation between the two scales was high ($r = .70$), the two-factor model fit the data well, and significantly better than the single-factor model, providing support for Hypothesis 1.

Fit and Misfit Hypothesis

Hypothesis 2 suggested that fit and misfit between individuals' values and their perceptions of the organizational culture would predict job attitudes. Operationally, fit and misfit were defined as interactions in a regression analysis. Fit was represented by the interaction between individual values and the organizational culture measures along *parallel* dimensions, whereas misfit was represented by the interaction between individual values and organizational culture along *contrasting* dimensions.

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, correlations, and coefficient alphas for the analysis of interactions between individual values and organizational culture[a]

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Allocentrism	29.3	7.06	(68)[b]								
2. Idiocentrism	40.0	6.37	−10	(67)[b]							
3. Organizational collectivism (OC)	28.3	8.96	10	−06	(82)[b]						
4. Organizational individualism (OI)	27.0	6.57	07	04	70	(71)[b]					
5. Organizational respect	24.3	11.15	−08	−11	67	55	(90)[b]				
6. Satisfaction with promotion	8.3	7.79	−04	−03	44	42	48	(90)[b]			
7. Satisfaction with the work itself	15.7	7.70	01	−07	41	35	44	42	(85)[b]		
8. Satisfaction with coworkers	20.0	6.79	02	−08	34	24	37	22	30	(85)[b]	
9. Satisfaction with supervisors	18.6	7.57	−08	−01	41	34	56	32	35	43	(86)[b]

[a] Decimals have been omitted. Correlations are based on maximum sample size for each variable pair. Correlations greater than .09 are significant ($p < .01$).

[b] Values in parentheses are reliabilities (coefficient alpha).

The means, standard deviations, and coefficient alphas for all variables measured at the individual level and included in the regression analyses are listed in Table 1. Reliabilities for the allocentric and idiocentric values scales and the OI scale were somewhat low (i.e., α ranges from .67 to .71) but acceptable and perhaps reasonable for scales measuring broad constructs such as cultural values (Singelis et al., 1995). The reliabilities for the OC scale as well as the outcome variables used in the analyses were all satisfactory (i.e., above .80). After standardizing all variables, a four-step multiple regression procedure was employed for each of the five dependent variables, including organizational respect, and satisfaction with promotion, the work itself, coworkers, and supervisors. In the first step, the main effects of OI, OC, allocentrism, and idiocentrism were entered into the equation. In the second step, the quadratic terms for these four variables were entered in order to control for possible non-linear effects that might confound the interaction effects (Cortina, 1993). In the third and fourth steps, the two fit interactions (i.e., OC $\times$ allocentrism and OI $\times$ idiocentrism) and the two misfit interactions (OC $\times$ idiocentrism and OI $\times$ allocentrism) were entered sequentially.

Results of the regression analyses are presented in Table 2 . The results for the organizational respect, satisfaction with promotion, and satisfaction with the work itself outcome variables provided support for the hypothesis that fit has positive effects (positive regression coefficients) and misfit has negative effects (negative regression coefficients). Plots of the significant and marginally significant interactions are displayed in Figure 1, Panels A through F, to illustrate the form of the interaction. These interactions were plotted using the standardized regression weights, and based on point estimations using S.D. $= -1.00$ and S.D. $= +1.00$ to define low and high OI and OC, and low and high idiocentrism and allocentrism. Other variables were set to a value of 0.

Specifically, for organizational respect, the OI by idiocentrism fit interaction term was significant and in the predicted direction ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$), as was the OC by idiocentrism misfit interaction ($\beta = -.10$, $p < .01$). The plot in Panel A suggests that low and high

Table 2
Hierarchical regression analyses: Predicting organizational respect and satisfaction with promotion, the work itself, coworkers, and supervisors from perceptions of organizational individualism and collectivism (OI/OC), allocentrism and idiocentrism, and the interaction between the two[a]

Independent variables[b]	Dependent variables				
	Org. respect	Sat. w/ promot.	Sat. w/ work	Sat. w/ cowrkrs	Sat. w/ supervion
Step 1: Main effects					
Org. collectivism (OC)	.54**	.32**	.34**	.32**	.33**
Org. individualism (OI)	.17**	.23**	.14**	.04	.13**
Allocentrism	.16**	−.10**	−.04	−.02	−.12**
Idiocentrism	−.11**	−.01	−.08*	−.09*	−.03
(R^2)	(.463**)	(.225**)	(.180**)	(.115**)	(.190**)
Step 2: Quadratic terms					
Org. collectivism^2	.06+	.10*	.01	−.04	.01
Org. individualism^2	−.04	.03	.05	.10*	−.01
Allocentrism^2	−.01	.00	.01	.00	.03
Idiocentrism^2	−.07*	−.03	−.10**	−.04	−.06+
(ΔR^2)	(.007+)	(.013*)	(.010+)	(.007)	(.003)
Step 3: Person × organization (fit interactions)					
OC × allocentrism	.00	.00	.05	.01	.01
OI × idiocentrism	.09*	.07+	.10*	−.03	.04
(ΔR^2)	(.001)	(.003)	(.004)	(.004)	(.000)
Step 4: Person × organization (misfit interactions)					
OC × idiocentrism	−.10**	−.08+	−.05	−.04	−.06
OI × allocentrism	−.03	−.08+	−.07+	.03	−.01
(ΔR^2)	(.005*)	(.005+)	(.004)	(.001)	(.002)
Adjusted R^2	.470**	.233**	.185**	.112**	.182**
F	55.95	19.41	14.95	8.87	14.94
df	12/733	12/714	12/728	12/733	12/740

[a] Regression weights are standardized beta weights from Step 4. Main and quadratic effects are two-tailed, interactions are one-tailed.

[b] Organizational culture and values variables were standardized prior to analysis.

+ $p < .10$.

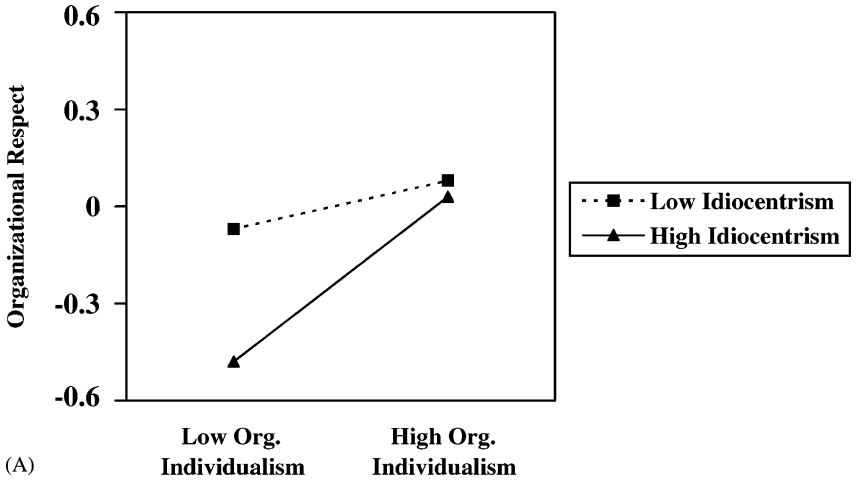
* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

idiocentrics perceived a similar amount of organizational respect when the organizational culture was highly individualistic. However, high idiocentrics perceived considerably less organizational respect when the organizational culture was low on individualism, indicating that low fit had negative consequences relative to high fit. Conversely, Panel B shows that although more organizational respect was perceived when the organizational culture was high in collectivism, low idiocentrics perceived higher levels of organizational respect than high idiocentrics, suggesting a possible effect of misfit for high idiocentrics in a highly collectivistic organizational culture.

For satisfaction with promotion, the OI by idiocentrism fit interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = .07$, $p < .10$) as was the OC by idiocentrism misfit interaction ($\beta = -.08$, $p < .10$), and the OI by allocentrism misfit interaction ($\beta = -.08$, $p < .10$), all in support

of the hypothesis. The plot in Panel C suggests a tendency for high idiocentrics to be more satisfied with promotion opportunities than low idiocentrics when the organizational culture was high in individualism (i.e., high fit), and less satisfied when the organizational culture was low in individualism. Panel D shows a similar cross-over pattern, but in the opposite direction because organizational collectivism is on the *X*-axis. That is, high idiocentrics had a greater degree of misfit than did low idiocentrics when the organizational culture was high on collectivism, and were also relatively more satisfied than low idiocentrics when the organizational culture was low on collectivism. Panel E suggests that low and high allocentrics were at about the same level of satisfaction when the organizational culture was



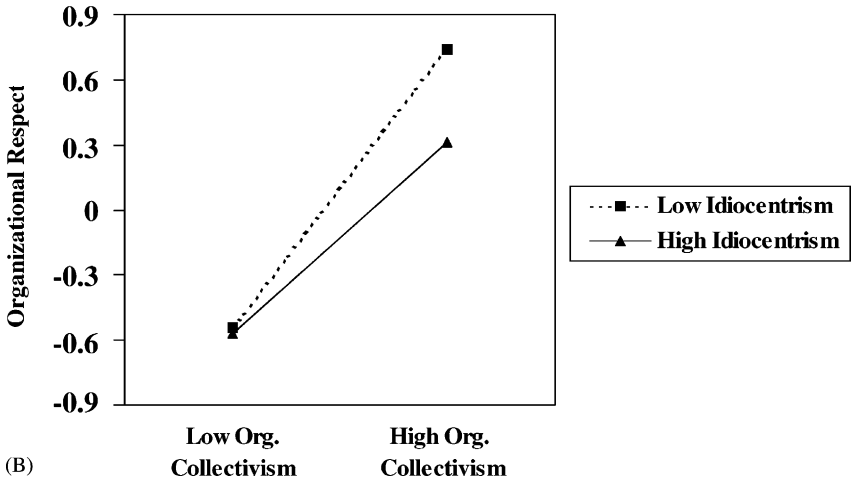
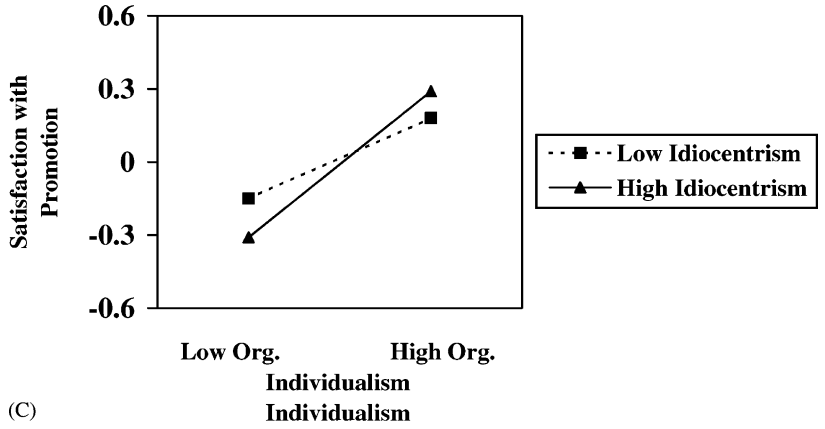
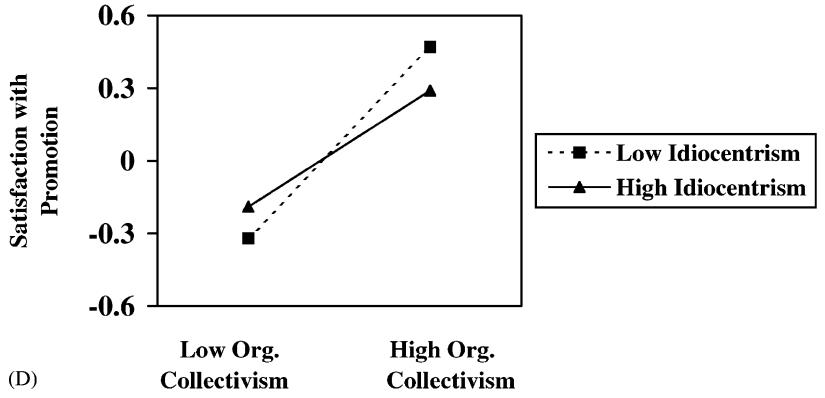


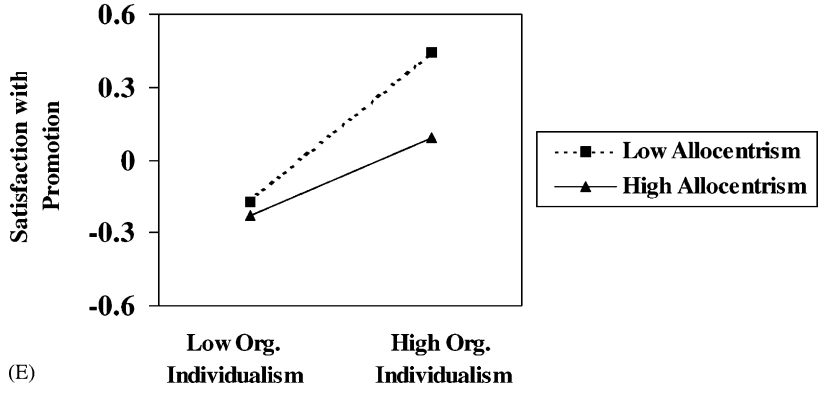
Figure 1. Interactions between organizational culture and individual values predicting organizational respect, satisfaction with promotion, and satisfaction with the work itself.



(C)

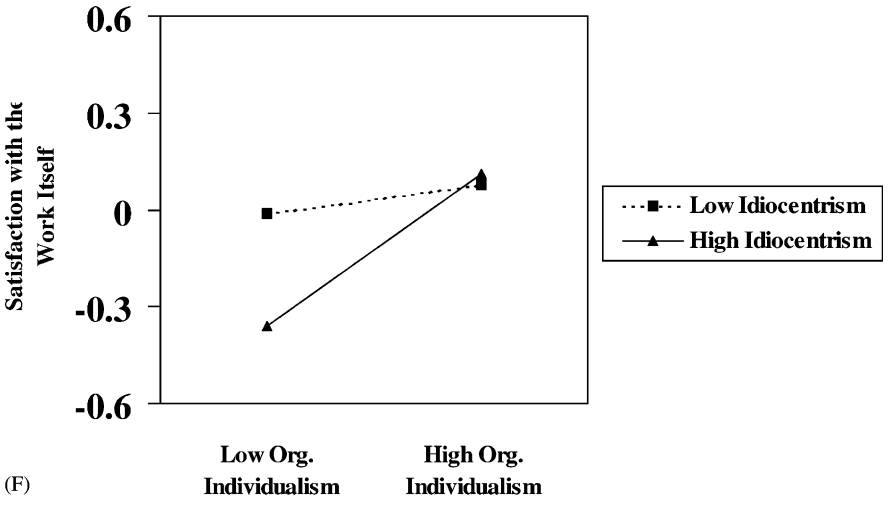


(D)

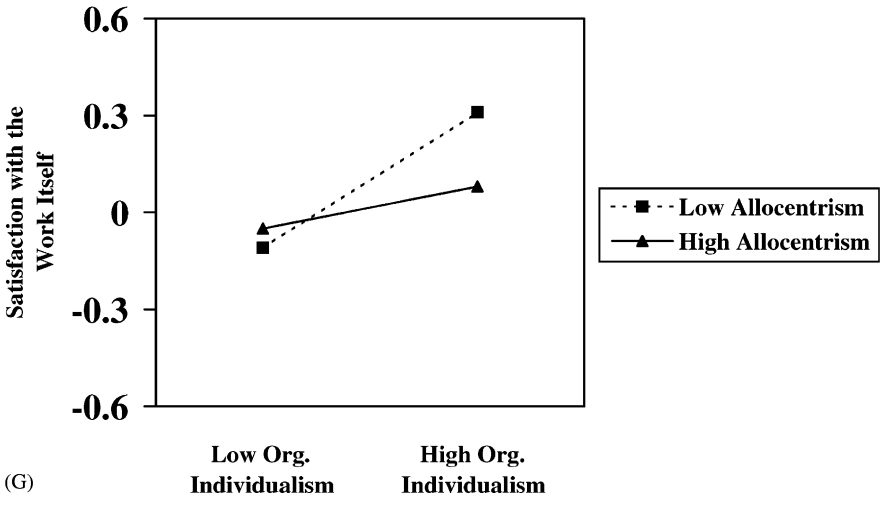


(E)

Figure 1. (*Continued*).



(F)



(G)

Figure 1. (*Continued*).

low in individualism, but high allocentrics had lower levels of satisfaction with promotion when the organizational culture was high in individualism, which is again indicative of a misfit effect.

For satisfaction with the work itself, the OI by idiocentrism fit interaction was significant ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$) and the OI by allocentrism misfit interaction was marginally significant ($\beta = -.07$, $p < .10$). Panel F suggests a pattern that is similar to the pattern in Panel A. That is, high and low idiocentrics were similarly satisfied with the work itself when the organizational culture was high in individualism, but when the organizational culture was low in individualism, high idiocentrics were less satisfied. In contrast, Panel G suggests

that although low and high allocentrics were similarly satisfied with the work itself when the organizational culture was low in individualism, high allocentrics showed misfit in a highly individualistic organizational culture, as they were considerably less satisfied than low allocentrics under those conditions.

None of the interactions were significant for the satisfaction with coworkers or supervisors variables. However, only 2 out of 20 interaction coefficients (both associated with the satisfaction with coworkers outcome variable) were not in the predicted direction. That is, with two exceptions, fit interactions were positive and misfit interactions were negative.

We also reanalyzed the data by including an additional step in the regression analysis to account for between organization variability. We dummy-coded for organization and included those dummy codes as a first step in a regression analysis before including the main, quadratic, and interaction effects. The results of this analysis suggested that the unique characteristics of each organization did impact the attitudinal dependent variables, as manifest in a significant amount of variance explained in this first step for all dependent variables. The effect of this initial step on results obtained in subsequent steps of the analysis, however, was relatively minor. The statistical significance of the main and quadratic effects was diminished slightly, although not the direction of the effects. In addition, although three of the four interaction effects that had been marginally significant in the initial analysis (i.e., $p < .10$) became non-significant (i.e., $p > .10$), the significant interactions remained so in the reanalysis. However, we note that the reanalysis includes a significant loss of power due to a decrease of 45 degrees of freedom to account for the dummy coding.

Results for the Organization-Level Hypothesis

To justify aggregation of individual responses to the level of organizations (Klein et al., 1994), we conducted a one-way MANOVA with organizational membership as the independent variable, and the OI and OC scales as the dependent variables, following Schneider, Smith, Taylor and Fleenor (1998). Results of the MANOVA were significant ($\Lambda = .708$, $p < .001$), and suggested that 31% of the variance in the organizational culture variables could be accounted for by organizational membership. This provided sufficient justification for aggregation, as it exceeded both James' (1982) reported median value of 12% for measures of perceptual agreement, and also the 24% that Schneider et al. (1998) used to justify aggregation.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that mean organizational perceptions of OI would be associated with the use of HR practices that are consistent with individualism. To test this hypothesis, we created the index of individualistic HR practices described earlier (i.e., the IHRP). Across organizations, the coefficient alpha for the IHRP was .67. Although this is somewhat low given conventions for this statistic, we believe it is reasonable given the breadth of the construct, and it is consistent with other coefficient alphas for indices of HR practices (e.g., Huselid, 1995). We regressed values for the IHRP index onto aggregated measures of both OC and OI from 42 of the 46 organizations for which we had complete organization-level data. The results suggested that the overall regression equation was significant (adjusted $R^2 = .25$, $N = 42$, $p < .05$). Specifically, the standardized beta weight for OI was .41 ($p < .05$, one-tailed), while the standardized beta weight for OC was .14 (n.s.). Thus, it appears that even though OI and OC were highly correlated at the organizational level

($r = .64$, $p < .001$), the unique variance in the OI measure was associated with the IHRP, suggesting that the employees of organizations that utilize individualistic HR practices tend to perceive their organizational culture as more individualistic.

Discussion

The issues involved in understanding the values, norms, and beliefs manifest at the individual, organizational, and societal levels have become particularly relevant in the increasingly global business environment. This study was designed to investigate the degree to which two dimensions of culture that are well-established at the individual and societal levels, individualism and collectivism, also function as meaningful perceptual dimensions at the intermediate level of *organizational* culture. This was done by examining the construct validity of a scale designed to measure organizational individualism and collectivism, and exploring the potential utility of such dimensions for understanding how culture might be linked to individual-level job outcomes, and for establishing a link between features of the organizational environment and individuals' perceptions of that environment.

The study was initiated by the development of scales to measure the theoretical constructs of organizational individualism and collectivism. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis suggested that the items designed to measure the two dimensions coalesced around two constructs that had independent variance components. In addition, consistent with the urgings of a number of authors (e.g., Glick, 1985), these results were obtained using data from a wide variety of organizations. This feature of our sample is important in supporting our contention that organizational individualism and collectivism are *general* organizational culture dimensions, and not just specific to a particular organization, profession, or industry. The significant results for the person–organization fit analysis also added to the evidence for the construct validity of the OI and OC measures, as those hypotheses relied on the assumption that the individual values and organizational culture measures represented theoretically parallel constructs.

Of more practical importance, the significant fit and misfit interactions also provided support for the utility of measuring organizational culture along the dimensions of individualism and collectivism. We predicted that job attitudes would be more positive when there was congruence (i.e., fit) between an individual's values and their perception of the organization's values, and less positive when an individual's values contrasted with those of the organization (i.e., misfit). Support for the phenomena of both fit and misfit was obtained in the form of statistical interactions in regression analyses. The significance of misfit interactions suggests that misfit may indeed represent a qualitatively unique phenomenon (Chatman & Barsade, 1995) that is worthy of future study. The results also suggest that there may be some differences in the relative salience of fit vs. misfit for individuals varying in allocentrism and idiocentrism. Specifically, five of the seven interactions depicted were for low vs. high idiocentrics. Looking at the general pattern, it appears that although a highly individualistic organizational culture does not necessarily contribute to more positive job attitudes for high idiocentrics, when the expectation of a highly individualistic organizational culture is violated, high idiocentrics may develop more negative job attitudes. The greater tendency for high idiocentrics in comparison to high allocentrics to have more negative

job attitudes in high misfit or low fit situations is reminiscent of Chatman and Barsade's (1995) observation that people with an individualistic orientation were less willing to adapt to different organizational cultures.

Although these results are supportive of our hypotheses and suggest some intriguing directions for future research, we wish to note some of the limitations of the person–organization fit approach, and specifically, the potential implication that organizations should select individuals who will "fit" in their organizational culture. Results from this study and others tend to indicate that person–organization fit is associated with beneficial outcomes for individuals (e.g., job satisfaction), and possibly good short-term outcomes for the organization (e.g., lower turnover costs). However, Schneider et al. (1998) propose that fit is the driving force behind attraction, selection, and attrition processes that result in homogeneous organizational memberships. Such homogeneity, they suggest, may be related to failures to innovate, to be creative, and to adapt to change, all of which have negative long-term consequences at the organization-level. The inherent tension between the individual-level phenomena of fit and the organization-level need for diversity highlights the relevance of multi-level approaches in general, and suggests that the development of theory and empirical research exploring ways in which both fit and diversity might be achieved could have significant value.

Another assumption that underlies the notion that selecting for fit will improve effectiveness is that an organization's culture will be stable over time. We acknowledge the fact that the values, beliefs, and assumptions that characterize an organization's culture are likely to undergo significant changes in response to an increasing emphasis on rewarding change and adaptability to markets and technology, and as a result of the high incidence of mergers, acquisitions, and political changes in governance. Such forces may change the culture itself, and are also likely to shift the emphasis of fit from one set of dimensions to another, giving the construct of fit a potentially dynamic nature.

These issues notwithstanding, we believe that it is still important to identify and explore dimensions of organizational culture. Bowen, Ledford and Nathan (1996) argue that given the increasingly transitory demands of specific jobs, organizational culture is likely to be a relatively stabilizing force. In fact, they argue that hiring based on organizational values will become the only effective selection model for the typical business environment in the future. In addition, as organizations take new strategic directions, it may become increasingly important to identify those dimensions of an organization's culture that are fundamental representations of an organization's core values and assumptions. Individualism and collectivism may serve as dimensions of such core values, as they appear to be represented at a deeper psychological level within individuals and within societies.

Support for this notion may be found in the results of other empirical approaches to dimensionalizing organizational culture quantitatively. Although the correspondence is not perfect, an examination of dimensions extracted from two well-developed organizational culture inventories, the OCI (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988) and the OCP (O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991), reveals considerable conceptual overlap with the constructs of individualism and collectivism. For example, the OCP's "team orientation" and the OCI's "affiliative" factors overlap with collectivism. Similarly, the OCP's "outcome orientation" and "aggressiveness" factors, and the OCI's "self-actualization" overlap conceptually with individualism. Similar parallels can be drawn between dimensions of organizational culture

identified in a content analysis of the extant literature conducted by Detert, Schroeder and Mauriel (2000). Although this does not imply that more specific dimensions of organizational culture are not useful or important, such conceptual overlap suggests that some of the more essential differences between organizational cultures may be subsumed within the broader constructs of individualism and collectivism.

Given the existence of individualism and collectivism as dimensions of organizational culture and their potential impact on individual job attitudes, it becomes important to determine the organizational basis for individual-level perceptions. From a theoretical standpoint, this can help establish the construct validity of the organizational culture scales by linking perceptions of organizational culture to theoretically relevant concrete elements of an environment that are shared or experienced in common by all individuals. We proposed that the HR practices used in organizations might constitute part of that shared environment, and that they influence employees' common perceptions of organizational culture. The test of this hypothesis in this study was fairly rigorous, as the measures of organizational culture and the measure of individualistic HR practices were obtained from independent sources. Consistent with the hypothesis, OI was significantly and positively related to the index of individualistic HR practices and OC was not. From a practical standpoint, the identification of an association between HR practices and perceptions of organizational individualism and collectivism can help organizations diagnose their culture and identify potential levers for organizational change efforts.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the encouraging support for the construct validity of the organizational culture measures, the study had a number of limitations. For example, the high correlation between the OI and OC scales leads us to speculate that the items may have included a positivity or desirability bias. That is, items might have been interpreted as having a considerable "good vs. bad" component, in addition to their distinction between individualism and collectivism, with item agreement constituting "good." It is also possible that the high correlation between OI and OC reflects some amount of true correlation if "good" organizations can develop organizational cultures that effectively incorporate positive aspects of both individualism and collectivism. This possibility can be explored in future research. However, as noted by Kristof (2000), it is perhaps even more important to demonstrate that highly correlated measures of conceptually unique phenomena have distinctive empirical relationships as predicted by theory. She argued that in her own work on person–job and person–organization fit, as well as Tyler's (1984) work on procedural and distributive justice, that the constructs represented by highly correlated measures (i.e., $r = .70+$) should be viewed as conceptually distinct and important due to their unique relationships with other constructs. Indeed, the results of the person–organization fit analysis and organization-level analysis in this study suggested that the two organizational culture scales had distinct relations with other measures in the study as predicted by the theory, and thus, should be considered sufficiently independent.

Another potential concern with the scales is the number of items (i.e., six and seven) used to define each factor, and more specifically, construct reliability. As noted by Cronbach (1990) in his discussion of the "bandwidth" vs. "fidelity" problem, there is often difficulty in

measuring broad constructs with great reliability. Clearly, culture at the level of organizations or societies is a broad construct, and good measures must tap that breadth with items that represent the entire range of content. We believe that the scales used in this study may provide a good starting point for the measurement of organizational individualism and collectivism. In future development of these scales, perhaps both desirability bias and construct breadth issues can be addressed by making items more face neutral (e.g., "supervisors eat meals with their employees"), and expanding the breadth of the construct by expanding the content specifications of the items. In addition, although individualism and collectivism appear to be the most theoretically well-developed dimensions of culture, other cultural dimensions such as those identified by Hofstede (1980), the Chinese Cultural Connection (1987), and Schwartz (1994), could also prove to be meaningful if developed more thoroughly and at multiple levels of analysis.

A further issue is that the interactions representing fit and misfit were somewhat weak. However, such interactions are generally regarded as difficult to obtain in field studies, and McClelland and Judd (1993) note that the efficiency of detecting moderator effects tends to be very low due to non-optimal joint distributions of the predictors. In fact, they suggest that "a bleak assessment of the relative ability of field studies to detect interactions is really a best-case scenario" (p. 386). They go on to recommend that "the more important question is whether any multiplicative effect exists" (p. 387), rather than the amount of variance accounted for by the interaction. Therefore, we suggest that because the predicted fit and misfit interactions were detected across a number of dependent measures, despite the difficulties involved in detecting such interactions, the statistical weakness of the interactions should not be interpreted as signifying lack of importance or instability.

Other concerns relate to the limitations of the data itself. First, the data were cross-sectional, making it impossible to imply causality. Longitudinal designs in which both predictor and criterion variables are measured over time might be particularly useful extensions of the current study. Also, the data are limited due to the fact that they were collected in a single country. However, we note that the theoretical constructs of individualism and collectivism have been developed by researchers around the world, suggesting that they might be applied appropriately in many different contexts. Moreover, considering that all societies possess the full distribution of individual differences including allocentrism and idiocentrism (Triandis, 1995) and in view of our effort to include a diversity of organizations, we feel that some concerns regarding external validity were addressed. Nevertheless, we believe that future research assessing similar data from multiple societies, and perhaps specifically from multinational enterprises, will provide an extremely informative validation for our results.

We would also like to acknowledge that there is considerable difference of opinion in the literature regarding the use of qualitative vs. quantitative methods in organizational culture research (Denison & Mishra, 1995). Certainly, qualitative methods tend to focus on the unique context and rich description of units under analysis, and are often less constrained by the researchers' notions about what types of values, norms, or beliefs are important. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, tend to stress the precise identification of constructs, and attempt to ensure that the same phenomena are assessed in each different context. In this study, quantitative measurement allowed us to maintain a degree of theoretical consistency from the literature on individual and societal individualism and collectivism to the organizational level, and allowed for a rule-based assessment of its place within a specific

theoretical system. However, in the future, the application of various qualitative methods to the study of dimensions of organizational culture as well as the subjective experience of person–organization fit could benefit from the richness of description such methods tend to provide.

Conclusions

Although the results of this study provide good empirical evidence for the validity of the organizational individualism and collectivism constructs, we believe that the most important aspect of this study was the demonstration of the utility of applying more general cultural theory to the study of organizational cultures. We emphasize that the growing literature pertaining to societal cultures describes a wide web of relationships between culture, behavior, and psychological variables, and that this literature can be utilized to understand how individuals influence organizations and societies, or the reverse. In the present global business environment in which multi-national enterprises operate within numerous cultural contexts, it may be extremely useful to be able to describe societal cultures, individual values, and organizational cultures with a common theoretical language. Such a common language might help predict and explain a wide variety of organizational phenomena that can only be described properly with reference to cross-level relationships. In the context of increasingly common joint ventures, restructurings, mergers, and acquisitions, the ability to discuss potential clashes of individual values, organizational cultures, or societal cultures as separate but related phenomena may help focus efforts to integrate employees in and across different organizational units. We believe that this type of multi-level conceptualization of culture represents a fairly elegant approach to some of the extraordinarily complex issues that face modern organizations, and suggests promising avenues for future research.

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Appendix A. Organizational Culture Scale

Organizational individualism (OI) items:

1. Each worker is encouraged to realize his or her own unique potential.
2. People with good ideas make sure management knows the idea was theirs.
3. Employees' ability to think for themselves is valued.
4. Individuals who stand out in a high performing group are recognized.
5. Employees value independence in their job.
6. Competition between employees is accepted.

Organizational collectivism (OC) items:

1. Management and supervisors are protective of and generous to loyal workers.
2. Decisions about changes in work methods are taken jointly by supervisors and employees.
3. Employees are taken care of like members of a family.
4. Everyone shares responsibility for the organizations' failures as well as success.
5. Regardless of hierarchical level, employees take each other's views into consideration.
6. Once someone is hired, the organization takes care of that person's overall welfare.
7. Everyone is kept informed about major decisions that affect the success of the company.

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