

## ABSTRACT

**KROUSTALIS, CHRISTINA MARIE.** Investigating the Portrayal of Organizational Culture in Internet Recruitment: Can Applicants Gain a Sense of Person-Organization Fit through a Recruitment Website? (Under the direction of Dr. Adam W. Meade).

This study found that culture-specific pictures on a recruitment website allowed individuals to more accurately assess an organization's culture, while employee testimonials had no such effect. Additionally, results indicated that when individuals expressed higher preferences for a specific culture dimension, they had a higher dimension-level P-O fit after viewing websites designed to portray the specific culture dimension. Lastly, this study confirmed results of previous studies (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997), that when individuals report higher levels of P-O fit with an organization, they are more attracted to the organization. Suggestions for practitioners are included on how to best design recruitment websites to allow viewers to accurately assess an organization's culture.

Investigating the Portrayal of Organizational Culture in Internet Recruitment:  
Can Applicants Gain a Sense of Person-Organization Fit Through a Recruitment Website?

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

PSYCHOLOGY

Raleigh

February 2006

APPROVED BY

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Adam W. Meade, for providing me with the guidance to complete my Master's Degree. Without his tremendous help and patience, the process would have been a much longer and more stressful experience. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Lori Foster Thompson and Dr. Bart Craig for all of their helpful suggestions and comments during my proposal, defense, and all points in between.

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## Section I: Literature Review

Organizational recruitment can broadly be defined as the process of seeking out and attracting potential employees to apply for a job (Heneman, Schwab, Fossum, & Dyner, 1983; Muchinsky, 2000). Recruiting high quality applicants is of monumental importance to organizations in order to attract qualified applicants for vacant positions. Successful recruiting procedures can lead to applicant attraction to an organization, which impacts job choices and attitudes, and ultimately increased performance and decreased turnover (Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980; Wanous, 1980). All organizations go through periods of recruitment in order to add employees, reorganize the workforce, and accommodate for the changing nature of work. As such, organizations utilize the recruitment process in order to maintain an ever-changing balance for growth and survival in the global economy (Cascio, 1998).

It is of great importance for organizations to recruit qualified applicants to vacant positions. One main goal of recruitment is the attraction of potential applicants to an organization (Barber, 1998; Boudreau & Rynes, 1985). Organizations seek to attract as many qualified applicants as possible in order to achieve an adequate applicant pool from which employees are selected for hire (Anderson, Born, & Cunningham-Snell, 2001; Boudreau & Rynes, 1985; Carlson, Connerley, & Mecham, 2002). If organizations do a poor job in the recruitment process, few people may apply for the job, leaving the organization with poor candidates from which to choose.

The recruitment process, however, should be viewed from two perspectives: that of the organization and that of the potential applicant. The “mating” theory of recruitment suggests that success from the viewpoint of both the organization and the job searching

applicant relates to timing issues (Cascio, 1998). If applicants and organizations are searching at the same time, then the odds of success for both parties' goals are enhanced. Most of the emphasis from the recruiting literature has focused solely on organizations attracting potential employees (Rynes, 1993). However, it is also important to understand how applicants view the hiring organization from first impressions during the recruitment process. Research has shown that decisions to apply for a job are related to potential applicants' attraction to the organization (Barber, 1998; Highhouse, Zickar, Thorsteinson, Stierwalt, & Slaughter, 1999; Rynes, 1991). Consistent with this research, person-organization (P-O) fit has been one of the primary mechanisms used to examine the antecedents that contribute to organizational attraction. P-O fit is defined as the extent to which an individual is compatible with an organization (Kristof, 1996). The literature pertaining to P-O fit reveals that ultimately higher levels of fit result in higher levels of attraction to an organization (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002; Judge & Cable, 1997; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991).

#### *Achieving P-O Fit Through the Recruiting Process*

It is important to obtain a good fit between an employee and an organization in order to increase the likelihood of maximum work efficiency (e.g., Tziner, 1987). Organizations and their employees who can achieve a good P-O fit may enjoy many benefits including decreased turnover (e.g., Bretz & Judge, 1993; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Schneider, 1987), increased performance (e.g., Schneider, 1987; Tziner, 1987), pro-social behaviors (e.g., O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), and enhanced attitudes (e.g., Chatman, 1991; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989). The P-O fit literature highlights Schneider's (1987) attraction aspect of his attraction-selection-attrition model and Byrne's (1971) similarity-

attraction paradigm, suggesting that people are attracted to organizations holding values that are congruent with their own. If organizations utilize this P-O fit theory during recruitment, then the aforementioned benefits are likely to result. As such, one way that P-O fit can be enhanced is through recruiting.

Research has shown that the more an applicant perceives a good P-O fit with an organization, the more attracted that applicant is to the organization (e.g., Dineen et al., 2002; Judge & Cable, 1997; Tom, 1971). In order to enhance recruitment then, it is important to examine how applicants perceive P-O fit with an organization. However, the majority of research on P-O fit has focused on selection outcomes, the consequences of P-O fit, and objective P-O fit (note: a description of objective P-O fit will be provided later in the manuscript; Cable & Judge, 1996; Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991). Additional research in the area of perceived P-O fit and recruitment would be fruitful. If organizations thoroughly understood the antecedents of applicants' perceived P-O fit and how they affect job choices, then they would be better able to descriptively portray the antecedents that influence P-O fit perceptions during the recruitment process.

One specific way applicants may form perceptions of P-O fit with a hiring organization is through their perceptions of that organization's culture. Several prior studies have shown a connection between culture and P-O fit during the recruitment process (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997; Kilmann, Saxton, & Serpa, 1986; Schein, 1985; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983). Specifically, the accurate portrayal of culture through recruitment material allows individuals to assess whether their personal characteristics and values match with those of the organization. Judge and Cable (1997) determined that Big Five personality types are compatible with specific cultures. For example, the authors found that individuals

high on neuroticism were not compatible with innovative and decisive cultures, individuals high on agreeableness were most compatible with supportive and team-oriented cultures, individuals high on openness were most compatible with innovative and detail-oriented cultures, individuals high on extraversion were positively associated with aggressive and team-oriented cultures, and conscientious individuals were positively associated with detail-oriented and outcome-oriented cultures. However, individuals high on extraversion were least compatible with supportive cultures, individuals high on openness were least compatible with team-oriented cultures, individuals high on agreeableness were least compatible with outcome-oriented and decisive cultures, and individuals high on conscientiousness were least compatible with innovative and rewards-oriented cultures (Judge & Cable, 1997). Similarly, O'Reilly et al. (1991) investigated the link between individual values and organizational value preferences, concluding that individuals' personal values clearly associate with specific organizational values. For example, individuals that value risk taking and experimentation are positively associated with innovative cultures, and individuals that value precision are attracted to organizations that value attention to detail (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Therefore, if organizations can effectively communicate their culture through various recruitment media, it will benefit the organization in the short-term as well as the long-term. Potential applicants who do not perceive a fit with the organizational culture will not continue to pursue employment with the organization, saving the organization time and money (Cober, Brown, Blumental, Doverspike, & Levy, 2000). On the other hand, applicants who fit well with the organization are likely to be efficient, and more flexible in the workforce in the long-run (Kristof, 1996). Effective communication of

organizational culture could be one way to enhance the P-O fit of applicants, and ultimately, employees.

The question that follows is ‘How do organizations best portray their culture in the recruitment process?’ Traditionally, recruitment media has included such things as brochures, word-of-mouth, newspaper advertisements, and career fairs. Evidence has shown that recruitment media, specifically organizational brochures (Herriot & Rothwell, 1981) and exposure to organizational advertisements (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993), as well as exposure to information about benefits, job characteristics, career advancement, and salaries all increase intentions to apply among job seekers (Rynes & Miller, 1983). With the technological boom in the past few years, however, the use of the Internet in recruitment has grown exponentially (Cober et al., 2000), yet little is currently known about this recruitment medium.

### *The New Era of Recruiting*

Organizations are moving away from focusing solely on “paper-based” recruitment media and are now overwhelmingly using the Internet as a functional recruitment tool. A recent survey found that Internet recruitment is being used by over 90% of large U.S. companies (Cober, et al., 2000). In addition, use of the Internet for recruitment purposes is one of the most cost-reducing and time-reducing ways of attracting and hiring employees (Cappelli, 2001; Cober, et al., 2000; Kay, 2000; Marcus, 2001; Millman, 1998). In fact, recent statistics indicate that U.S. companies average between \$1,000 and \$8,000 per applicant in recruiting costs; however, the average cost of attracting applicants with Internet recruiting has been shown to be as low as \$900 per applicant (Greenburg, 1998).

At present, there are two ways that the Internet is being used in the recruitment process. The first is the use of job boards (e.g., Monster.com) that post job advertisements for organizations that pay to have their job description listed. Job boards are perhaps most similar to newspaper or magazine advertisements, except in many cases they provide a link to apply for the vacant position or to access the organization's website (Zusman & Landis, 2002). Job boards are beneficial to job seekers who are looking for a specific job, but not in a specific organization. Additionally, job boards have the potential to increase the number of job seekers who view job advertisements online, which, in turn, increases the possibility of reaching a more diverse group of individuals who are searching for vacant positions (Crispin & Mehler, 1997). However, job boards typically have limited information about the vacant position, with usually no indication of what it is like to work for the organization. As such, job seekers have few clues about the organization's culture, its employees, and other relevant information that would lead them to make thoroughly informed choices about applying.

The second way the Internet is commonly used in recruiting is with organizations' official websites, including pages dedicated solely to recruiting. These 'careers' sections of organizations' official websites include information about the organization's policies, what it is like to work for the organization, employee testimonials, and additional content such as information about career development opportunities. In having a 'careers' portion of the official organizational website, organizations can elaborate on information about vacant positions, and provide additional information about the organization, such as organizational policies, value statements, and benefits information. Recently, Braddy, Meade, and Kroustalis (in press) found that information such as value statements and organizational policies can provide information about the organization's culture on the recruitment website.

For example, statements such as “We value innovation” and “Our strong customer-service policy guides our organization” allow the organization to display aspects of its culture to job seekers. By doing so, the job seekers who are viewing the organization’s recruitment website can gather more information about the company, ultimately leading them to make more informed choices about applying for vacant positions. Therefore, it is essential for recruiting organizations to take advantage of the ability to post more information about the company by way of official recruitment websites.

Since viewing an organization’s recruitment website may be an individual’s first impression of that organization, it is of utmost importance for it to be well-designed, easily navigable, and aesthetically pleasing, while including all the necessary information for the viewer to make an informed decision about applying. Thus, signaling theory (Spence, 1973; 1974) provides a possible explanation for how applicants decide to apply for a job with an organization after viewing recruitment materials. According to signaling theory, when an individual does not have complete data, or is uncertain of the position they should take on a matter, he or she will typically draw inferences based on cues from available information. Rynes and Miller (1983) stated in regards to recruitment that job seekers are often limited to perceived characteristics of the recruitment material in order to gain information about the hiring company. In accordance with this theory which suggests that any information that a job seeker views will guide their impressions of the hiring company, variables that do not seem to have a direct connection to a job or organization can become cues for what it would be like to work for that organization, including individuals’ attraction to the organization (Rynes et al., 1991; Turban, 2001; Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998).

The majority of the preliminary research on Internet recruiting has focused on the aesthetic and navigational aspects of recruitment websites related to organizational attraction (e.g., Braddy, Thompson, Wuensch, & Grossnickle, 2003; Cober et al., 2000; Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, & Keeping, 2003; Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Scheu, Ryan, & Nona, 1999; Williamson, Lepak, & King, 2003; Zusman & Landis, 2002). In order to capture the attention of the job seeker, recruitment websites need to have appealing features to engage the individual's interest in further exploration. This attention-grabbing aspect of the website is usually driven by the aesthetic properties (Coyle & Thorson, 2001). Grabbing the attention of the job seeker enhances the likelihood of attraction and interest in the recruiting organization. These aesthetic characteristics generally include visual elements such as, attractive colors, pleasing text images and fonts, and multimedia presentations (e.g., Braddy et al., 2003; Cober, et al., 2000; Williamson et al., 2003).

The usability of the website is also essential in attracting potential applicants. Website usability can be defined as individuals' subjective perceptions of how effective and efficient a computer-based tool is in helping them reach their goals (Karat, 1997). Aspects of usability, such as the orientation of the website and the ease of use of navigating the website through various hyperlinks, toolbars, and menus also relate to organizational attractiveness (Cober et al., 2003; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 1996; Williamson et al., 2003; Zusman & Landis, 2002). To illustrate the importance of a highly usable website, a recent study indicated that 26% of participants chose not to apply for positions in certain organizations due to the ineffective design of their recruitment websites alone (Karr, 2000).

Potential applicants may also view the aesthetics, usability, and content of recruitment websites as signals for what it would be like to work for a particular organization. In this manner, website aesthetics and usability seem to provide indirect cues about an organization that can impact job seekers' perceptions regarding the attractiveness of an organization. Perhaps one of the main ways potential applicants can gather further information from a recruitment website, however, is through the portrayal of the organizational culture on the website itself. Braddy et al. (in press) found that aspects of a recruitment website can provide cues about an organization's culture. Therefore, this information could ultimately lead a job seeker to determine if P-O fit exists with the hiring organization.

#### *Culture and Recruitment Websites*

Potential applicants are typically searching for information from organizations that enables them to determine what it would be like to work for the organization, which, in turn, affects how attracted they are to the organization as a potential employer (e.g., Dineen et al., 2002). Many of these cues give insight into the organizational culture and allow viewers to determine if a match is made between the organization's values and their own (i.e., there is P-O fit). Research has indicated that individuals utilize recruitment media to determine information about culture, compensation, benefits, and career development which affects their level of attraction to an organization (Barber & Roehling, 1993; Cable, Aiman-Smith, Mulvey, & Edwards, 2000; Cober et al., 2003; Dineen et al., 2002). Like other recruitment media, the Internet should also provide cues regarding organizational culture. If so, organizations should focus their attention on descriptively displaying their culture on recruitment websites.

O'Reilly et al. (1991) have proposed eight dimensions of organizational culture in their Organizational Culture Profile (OCP). The dimensions were derived from a Q-sort methodology where respondents sorted organizational culture characteristics into categories that were either characteristic or uncharacteristic of them. The resulting eight dimensions of culture included *innovation*, *attention to detail*, *outcome orientation*, *aggressiveness*, *supportiveness*, *emphasis on rewards*, *team-orientation*, and *decisiveness*. Judge and Cable (1997) adapted the culture taxonomy from O'Reilly et al. (1991) to include the congruence between organizational culture and applicant personality. In addition, Braddy et al. (in press) have proposed that a ninth dimension of culture be included: support for diversity. Descriptions of the nine dimensions of culture are: (a) *innovation* (organizations that promote risk-taking, and experimenting, with a lack of emphasis on stability, security, and being careful); (b) *attention to detail* (organizations that place heavy emphasis on precision, paying attention to detail, and being analytical); (c) *outcome orientation* (organizations that have high expectations of their employees, and are oriented towards achievement and results); (d) *aggressiveness* (organizations that put emphasis on competition, and getting ahead); (e) *supportiveness* (organizations that focus on support, praise, and information sharing); (f) *emphasis on rewards* (organizations that pay for performance and emphasize professional growth); (g) *team-orientation* (organizations that value teamwork and collaboration); and (h) *decisiveness* (organizations that focus on low conflict and are highly predictable). Additionally, Braddy et al. (in press) describe *diversity* (organizations that value diversity among employees and diversity throughout the organization). While it is virtually impossible to have a taxonomy that thoroughly captures each individual's culture preferences, these

dimensions provide insight into the most prominent cultures in today's organizations (Judge & Cable, 1997).

*The Relationship between Website Design Features and Organizational Culture Perceptions*

At present, little is known about how the design features of a recruitment website affect viewers' perceptions of the cultural dimensions mentioned above. However, Braddy et al. (in press) made headway in the area by conducting an exploratory study in order to assess which features of a recruitment website portray an organization's culture to prospective applicants. The authors found that such things as website design features, organizational policies, specific comments related to the dimensions of culture, and other miscellaneous/general descriptions affected individuals' perceptions of culture after viewing an organization's recruitment website. Website design features pertained to such things as including portions of a recruitment webpage devoted entirely to the specific culture (e.g., an entire page devoted to valuing diversity), pictures, employee testimonials, and value statements. Organizational policies included items discussing career development opportunities, continuing education programs, benefits, training opportunities, forums, and reward systems. Specific mentions of culture included explicit statements about the organization's culture (i.e., "We are an innovative company who prides itself on risk-taking."). In addition, there were numerous miscellaneous categories that were specific to each culture that did not fit into the other features of recruitment websites. These included items such as organizational awards won, the size of the organization, the organization's involvement with the community, and geographic dispersion of the organization. However, the study was exploratory in nature and used a forced-choice design which may have led

participants to cite irrelevant information regarding which website aspects portrayed evidence of the organization's culture.

The purpose of the present study is to thoroughly examine two website design features in relation to three organizational culture dimensions in order to assess what specific qualities of the website design features lead to perceived culture ratings. Previous studies have shown that pictures strongly enhance and reinforce information about an organization's values (Cober et al., 2000) and can impact memories more effectively than text (Childers & Houston, 1984; Miniard, Bhatla, Lord, Dickson, & Unnava, 1991). The use of pictures in addition to text increases the viewer's cognitive awareness, leading to an increase in attention to the information provided (Edell & Stalein, 1983). Therefore, pictures should enhance text and display characteristics of the organization when used in creating recruitment websites (Metz & Junion-Metz, 1996; Zusman & Landis, 2002). Given the role pictures have been shown to play in providing information about an organization, I propose:

*Hypothesis 1:* The inclusion of culture-specific cues in an organization's website pictures will strengthen viewers' perceptions of corresponding culture dimensions.

This hypothesis will be tested for three culture dimensions:

*Hypothesis 1a:* Innovation

*Hypothesis 1b:* Team Orientation

*Hypothesis 1c:* Diversity

Employee testimonials are another way organizations can use website design features to portray culture on recruitment websites. Anecdotal evidence indicates that testimonials are highly persuasive in recruitment contexts to achieve favorable impressions of a hiring organization (Highhouse, Hoffman, Greve, & Collins, 2002). Likewise, Fazio and Zanna

(1981) found that individuals like testimonial evidence about work life because it is a personal form of information complete from first-hand employee accounts of the organizational atmosphere. Cober et al. (2000) suggest the reason for this may be that employee testimonials provide a human touch to the recruitment material, enhancing feelings of identification with members of the hiring organization, as well as with the organization itself. Therefore, the more culture-specific employee testimonials are, the more likely it will be that a potential applicant will perceive the organization to be high on its relevant culture. Given these findings, I propose:

*Hypothesis 2:* The inclusion of culture-specific cues in an organization's website employee testimonials will strengthen viewers' perceptions of corresponding culture dimensions. This hypothesis will be tested for three culture dimensions:

*Hypothesis 2a:* Innovation

*Hypothesis 2b:* Team Orientation

*Hypothesis 2c:* Diversity

Cable et al. (2000) indicate that today's top organizations are moving away from bureaucratic, conservative cultures, and moving towards innovative and collaborative cultures. In addition, workforce diversity has become an important trend in the industry in order to create a more diverse workforce because the overall population is increasingly becoming more diverse. Thus, diversity can provide more perspectives to workplace development and ideas, and allows for equal employment opportunities. Therefore, these three dimensions of culture (innovation, team-orientation, and diversity) seem to be prominent in the workforce today, and for that reason, they are the three culture dimensions chosen for this study.

Two types of P-O fit can be assessed when studying the congruence between an individual's and organization's values: perceived (subjective) fit and objective fit. Kristof (1996) defines perceived P-O fit as individuals' judgments on how well their values and goals match with those of the organization. Perceived P-O fit then, relates to an individual's overall or holistic perception of congruence with an organization's values, goals, and culture (Judge & Cable, 1997). Therefore, perceived P-O fit is not dimension-level. Objective P-O fit, on the other hand, is dimension-level. Kristof (1996) defines objective P-O fit as "actual fit." This is fit that is obtained by studying the observed relationship between measures of an individual's values and an organization's values. Objective P-O fit is usually measured with self-reports of a participant's own culture preferences correlated with other participants' ratings of organizational culture. However, for the purposes of the present study, objective fit will be examined as a self-report measure of congruence between individuals' culture dimension specific preferences and their perception of the organization's culture (Judge & Cable, 1997). To avoid confusion, a lexical shift in terminology in this paper seems appropriate when discussing perceived P-O fit and objective P-O fit. Because objective P-O fit is measured in this study in terms of the difference between perceived culture and culture preferences, it does not seem appropriate to refer to the P-O fit variables as subjective and objective, as objective fit is measured through subjective perceptions. Thus, for the remainder of the paper, perceived P-O fit will be referenced by the term *global* P-O fit and objective P-O fit will be referenced by the term *dimension-level* P-O fit.

If culture-specific pictures and employee testimonials relating to the three culture dimensions are present, then individuals that value these aspects of culture should more easily achieve a perception of global P-O fit from the recruiting organization's website. As

previously mentioned, if individuals can gain an accurate sense of an organization's culture from viewing cultural cues embedded in pictures and employee testimonials on a recruitment website, then they can more easily self-select in or out of an organization based on the perceived fit they obtain from the information on the website. Therefore, it is beneficial for organizations to specifically portray their culture through the use of pictures and employee testimonials on recruitment websites so P-O fit can be achieved, ultimately increasing job satisfaction (e.g., Chatman, 1991), performance (Tziner, 1987) and decreasing turnover (e.g., O'Reilly et al., 1991). Global and dimension-level P-O fit can be examined by observing the relationship between an individual's values and culture preferences with the culture of an organization. Therefore, I propose:

*Hypothesis 3:* There will be an interaction between cultural cues and cultural preferences, with cues producing the greatest effect on dimension-level P-O fit when individuals have strong preferences for the cultural dimension represented by the cues. This hypothesis will be tested for three culture dimensions:

*Hypothesis 3a:* Innovation

*Hypothesis 3b:* Team Orientation

*Hypothesis 3c:* Diversity

*Hypothesis 4:* There will be an interaction between cultural cues and cultural preferences, with cues producing the greatest effect on global P-O fit when individuals have strong preferences for the cultural dimension represented by the cues. This hypothesis will be tested for three culture dimensions:

*Hypothesis 4a:* Innovation

*Hypothesis 4b:* Team Orientation

*Hypothesis 4c: Diversity*

Global and dimension-level P-O fit have also been shown to be antecedents to organizational attraction (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Dineen et al., 2002; Judge & Cable, 1997). Job seekers who establish that a global fit is made between their values and the organization's (i.e., global P-O fit) are more likely to apply for vacant positions with the hiring organization. Likewise, attraction will result from the congruence of individuals' specific culture preferences and particular aspects of organizational culture (i.e., dimension-level P-O fit). Therefore, job seekers who have higher global P-O fit and dimension-level P-O fit with a hiring organization after viewing the organization's recruitment website should be more attracted to the organization. I propose:

*Hypothesis 5:* As individuals' global P-O fit with an organization increases, their attraction to the organization will increase. This hypothesis will be tested for three culture dimensions:

*Hypothesis 6:* As individuals' self-reported dimension-level P-O fit with an organization increases, their attraction to the organization will increase. This hypothesis will be tested for three culture dimensions:

*Hypothesis 6a:* Innovation

*Hypothesis 6b:* Team Orientation

*Hypothesis 6c:* Diversity

## Section II: Method

### *Participants*

Participants were 278 undergraduate students at a large southeastern university. The sample was 51% female, with a mean age of 19.2. Seventy-two percent of participants were

Caucasian, 16% were African-American, 5% were Asian, and 1% were Hispanic. Five percent of participants did not indicate their race. The breakdown of class standing was as follows: 64.9% freshman, 20.8% sophomores, 6.8% juniors, and 6.8% seniors. Thirty-three percent of respondents indicated that they had previously applied for a job online; and participants indicated that they spent an average of 16.5 hours on the Internet per week.

### *Design and Procedure*

Data collection took place in a computer laboratory in the university's psychology building. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes, and consisted of about 20 participants per session. As participants arrived to the study, they were given instructions for the experiment and were asked to complete an informed consent form. Participants were then asked to assume that they were job seekers who had just graduated from college, while reviewing the "careers" sections of three randomly chosen organizational websites that were created by the author of the study and a research assistant. Each participant viewed a website related to each culture dimension (i.e., each participant viewed a total of 3 websites); however, the order of viewing of the three websites was randomly determined. Within each culture dimension, the conditions of website cultural cue strength were randomly determined as well (see following paragraph for complete description). The participants were asked to assume that all of the jobs being offered by the organizations were equally attractive in location and pay, were openings in their occupations of interest, and that they were qualified for the jobs. Essentially, participants were asked to base all responses on what was seen on the organizations' websites only.

The websites were designed to emulate the "careers" portion of Fortune 500 company websites. Each website was three pages in length, and included links in a navigational bar

pertaining to a main “careers” page containing a mission statement, frequently asked questions, and what it is like to work for the particular company. Each website was designed to be aesthetically pleasing with colorful banners including the fictitious company’s name, and each website included text on the main page welcoming the viewer to the careers portion of the website. Each website that the participant viewed consisted of a manipulation of the pictures and employee testimonials on the website that portrayed the specific organization’s culture. Specifically, the manipulated pictures and testimonials fell into four conditions: (1) a null condition, in which pictures and employee testimonials gave no indication of the organization’s culture; (2) a condition that consisted of the pictures on the website strongly depicting the organization’s culture, while employee testimonials gave no indication of the culture; (3) a condition that consisted of testimonials on the website strongly depicting the organization’s culture, with pictures giving no indication of the culture; and (4) a condition in which both the pictures and the employee testimonials strongly depicted the organization’s culture (i.e., a 2 x 2 design). Each of these conditions was developed into a website that was designed for each of the three culture dimensions: innovation, team-orientation, and diversity. These conditions for each culture dimension were not tested simultaneously, but instead they were examined separately for each culture dimension (i.e., three separate 2 x 2 studies).

Pilot testing occurred before actual data collection took place in order to determine which pictures and employee testimonials would be used on the organizational websites. The pilot test participants consisted of 15 graduate students viewing websites that contained pictures and testimonials thought to either relate to each of the culture dimensions, or to be neutral. After viewing pictures and employee testimonials thought to portray each culture

dimension, participants were asked to rate how much each picture or testimonial exhibited the culture dimension in question. In addition, participants saw a series of pictures and employee testimonials that were not thought to be expressive of the three culture dimensions used in this study. A greater number of neutral pictures and testimonials were pilot tested than culture-specific pictures and testimonials because neutral website features needed to be included on all three represented cultures' websites. Thus, it was necessary to pilot test a greater number of neutral pictures and testimonials to ensure there would not be duplicate testimonials and pictures among the three cultures. Participants were asked to rate each neutral picture and employee testimonial for the eight dimensions of culture taken from Judge and Cable's (1997) adapted taxonomy of culture dimensions, as well as a ninth culture dimension (valuing diversity) that was included by the author of this study. Because these pictures and testimonials were not believed to exhibit the culture dimensions examined in the current study, I expected the ratings of the neutral pictures and employee testimonials for the culture dimensions of innovation, team-orientation, and diversity to have low ratings. A rating scale from 1 = *low* to 10 = *high* was used to assess the pictures and testimonials. The highest and lowest rated of ten pictures and testimonials were kept for use in designing the fictitious organizational websites with the additional constraint that only those pictures and testimonials that were rated less than "3" for the "low" condition and greater than "8" for the "high" condition were kept and inserted into the fictitious organizational websites. See Tables 1-8 for descriptive statistics regarding which pictures and employee testimonials were chosen for placement in the generated websites. Appendices A-E illustrate the pictures that were used for development of the websites in addition to a screenshot of one of the fictitious organizational recruitment websites that was constructed for the current study.

After participants viewed each of the organizational websites, they answered a series of questions regarding the perceived ratings of the organizational cultures, their global P-O fit with the organizations' cultures, their culture preferences, and how attracted they were to the organizations. In addition, participants completed a survey with questions asking about demographic variables and general questions about their Internet usage.

### *Measures*

*Perceived Culture Ratings.* In order to assess participants' perceived culture ratings of the organizational websites that they viewed, an adaptation of O'Reilly et al.'s (1991) Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) was used. The OCP assesses the degree to which respondents think various items describe an organization's culture. OCP *Innovation* and *Team Orientation* factors were included, in addition to a *Diversity* measure developed by the author of the present study (see Appendix G). Participants responded to the question: "To what extent do each of the following describe the organization's culture" on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *great extent* for each of the culture items.

*Culture Preferences.* Participants' culture preferences were also assessed with a modified version of the OCP. The three culture dimensions of *Innovation*, *Team Orientation*, and *Diversity* that were used to measure perceived culture ratings were also used to assess culture preferences (see Appendix F). Each participant responded to descriptions of the three culture factors (e.g., risk-taking, team-oriented) ranging from 1 = *not at all like me* to 7 = *very much like me*, in order to assess each individual's culture preferences. Culture preferences were measured for each culture dimension separately, where scale scores were computed by averaging item responses obtained for each culture dimension.

*Global P-O Fit.* Global P-O fit was examined as the participants' overall self-reported perception of fit with the organization's culture. Participants' global P-O fit was measured with a three item questionnaire taken from Cable and Judge (1996) (see Appendix H). The response scale ranged from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*. The coefficient alpha estimate of internal consistency of the scale in this sample was .87.

*Dimension-level P-O Fit.* The measure of dimension-level P-O fit corresponds to the fit between participants' culture preferences and an organization's culture rating. In order to assess dimension-level P-O fit estimates, the differences between the perceived culture dimension of an organization and culture preferences for the dimension (Perceived minus Preferences) were examined. This measure was computed for each of the three culture dimensions separately.

*Organization Attraction.* In order to assess participants' attraction to the organization, a five item measure with a 5-point response scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*) was taken from Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003). The coefficient alpha estimate of internal consistency of the scale in this sample for the culture dimensions of diversity, team-orientation, and innovation were .83, .94, and .95, respectively. See Appendix I for items assessing organization attraction.

### *Data Analysis*

A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA was employed to test Hypotheses 1 and 2 for each of the three culture dimensions. Hypothesis 1, which states that the inclusion of culture-specific cues in an organization's website pictures will strengthen viewers' perceptions of corresponding culture dimensions, was tested for three culture dimensions of innovation (H1a), team-orientation (H1b), and diversity (H1c). In addition, Hypothesis 2, which states

that the inclusion of culture-specific cues in an organization's website employee testimonials will strengthen viewers' perceptions of corresponding culture dimensions, was also tested for three culture dimensions of innovation (H2a), team-orientation (H2b), and diversity (H2c). These hypotheses were tested simultaneously by conducting a 2 x 2 ANOVA and examining both main effects and the interaction between employee testimonials and pictures. A series of three 2 x 2 ANOVAs were conducted, one for each culture dimension.

A regression analysis was conducted in order to test Hypothesis 3, which examined the effects of the predictors, organizational culture preferences and study condition, on the criterion measure of an individual's dimension-level P-O fit. Study condition was dummy-coded for both pictures and employee testimonials, and the interaction between culture preferences and study condition was assessed to determine if persons high on culture preferences have increased dimension-level P-O fit when in the condition of high culture salience. The model was tested for each of the three culture dimensions separately.

An additional regression analysis was conducted to test Hypothesis 4, which looked at the effects of the predictors, organizational culture preferences and study condition, on the dependent measure of individuals' global P-O fit. Study condition was again dummy-coded for both picture and employee testimonial conditions. The interaction between culture preferences and study condition was assessed to determine if persons high on culture preferences have increased global P-O fit when in a study condition of high culture salience.

Lastly, to assess the relationship between P-O fit and organizational attraction, two separate regression analyses were employed to test Hypotheses 5 and 6, respectively. Dimension-level P-O fit and global P-O fit were entered into the separate regression equations as predictors to assess the criterion measure of organizational attraction. A separate

regression analysis was conducted for each of the three culture dimensions within each hypothesis. Specific results are presented below.

### Section III: Results

For the first culture dimension of innovation, Hypothesis 1a was supported. A significant (though small) main effect was found when innovative-specific pictures were included in the design of the recruitment website for an innovative organization  $F[1, 272] = 4.91, p = .03, \eta^2 = .02$ , with culture-specific pictures increasing viewers' perceptions of the website portraying an innovative culture. That is, participants who viewed the innovative website that contained either innovative pictures and innovative testimonials ( $M = 5.11, SD = .71$ ) or innovative-specific pictures and null testimonials ( $M = 5.03, SD = .78$ ) perceived that the recruiting organization's culture was innovative more than participants who viewed websites with either null pictures and null testimonials ( $M = 4.77, SD = .90$ ) or null pictures and innovative-specific testimonials ( $M = 4.95, SD = .83$ ). However, within the same culture dimension of innovation, Hypothesis 2a examining culture-specific testimonials, was not supported  $F[1, 272] = 1.81, p = .18$ . A significant interaction between innovation-specific pictures and testimonials also was not found  $F[1, 272] = .25, p = .62$ .

For the second culture dimension of team-orientation, Hypothesis 1b was not supported  $F[1, 272] = 1.94, p = .16$ . In addition, no significant main effect was found for Hypothesis 2b, which looked at the effect of culture-specific employee testimonials for team-oriented cultures,  $F[1, 272] = 3.04, p = .08$ . A significant interaction between team-oriented pictures and testimonials was not found for this culture dimension as well  $F[1, 272] = .51, p = .48$ .

For the third culture dimension of diversity, Hypothesis 1c, a small but significant main effect was found when diversity-specific pictures were included in the design of the recruitment website for an organization that valued diversity  $F[1, 272] = 4.05, p = .05, \eta^2 = .02$ , with culture-specific pictures increasing viewers' perceptions of the website portraying a diverse culture. That is, those participants who viewed the diversity website with either diversity-specific pictures and diversity-specific testimonials ( $M = 5.24, SD = .78$ ) or diversity-specific pictures and null testimonials ( $M = 5.02, SD = .64$ ) perceived that the recruiting organization's culture valued diversity more than participants who viewed websites that portrayed either null pictures and null testimonials ( $M = 4.90, SD = .88$ ) or null pictures and diversity-specific testimonials ( $M = 4.96, SD = .87$ ). As with the innovation culture dimension, this effect was statistically significant, but had a small effect size. When testing culture-specific employee testimonials in Hypothesis 2c, however, no significant effect was found,  $F[1, 272] = 2.08, p = .15$ . A significant interaction between diversity-specific pictures and testimonials also was not found  $F[1, 272] = .57, p = .45$ .

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be an interaction between cultural preferences and cultural cues, such that cultural cues (represented by strong pictures and employee testimonials) would lead to greater dimension-level P-O fit for individuals that have strong preferences for the cultural dimension. Significant two-way interactions between culture preferences and both culture-specific pictures and testimonials were found for the three culture dimensions of innovation, team-orientation, and diversity; however, significant three-way interactions between culture preferences, culture-specific pictures, and culture-specific employee testimonials were not found for all three culture dimensions (see Table 9). Thus,

Hypothesis 3 was partially supported. More specific results for each culture dimension follow.

When testing Hypothesis 3a, which dealt with the culture dimension of innovation, the overall omnibus test was found to be significant  $F[5, 270] = 56.80, p = .00, R^2 = .72$ . When testing the two-way interaction between preferences for an innovative culture and innovative-specific pictures on a recruitment website, a significant interaction was found  $t(270) = -8.58, p = .00, b = -.62, \beta = -1.33$ , with the highest level of dimension-level P-O fit occurring when individuals had strong preferences for innovative cultures when null pictures ( $M = -1.54, SD = .96$ ) and strong pictures ( $M = -1.75, SD = .87$ ) were presented (see Figure 1). Additionally, when testing the two-way interaction between preferences for an innovative culture and innovative-specific employee testimonials, a significant interaction was found  $t(270) = -7.94, p = .00, b = -.52, \beta = -1.10$ , with the highest level of dimension-level P-O fit occurring when individuals had strong preferences for innovative cultures when null testimonials ( $M = -1.80, SD = .85$ ) and strong testimonials ( $M = -1.48, SD = .96$ ) were presented (see Figure 2). A significant three-way interaction between culture preferences for an innovative culture, innovative-specific pictures, and innovative-specific testimonials was not found  $t(270) = -.26, p = .80$ .

When testing Hypothesis 3b, which examined team-oriented cultures, a significant omnibus test  $F[5, 270] = 24.36, p = .00, R^2 = .56$  was found. A significant two-way interaction between preferences for team-oriented cultures and team-oriented specific pictures on a recruitment website  $t(270) = -3.46, p = .00, b = -.38, \beta = -.93$  was found, with the highest level of dimension-level P-O fit occurring when individuals had strong preferences for team-oriented cultures when null pictures ( $M = -.86, SD = .95$ ) and strong

pictures ( $M = -.44$ ,  $SD = .77$ ) were presented (see Figure 3). In addition, when examining the significant two-way interaction between preferences for team-oriented cultures and team-oriented specific employee testimonials  $t(270) = -7.21$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $b = -.74$ ,  $\beta = -1.83$ , the highest level of dimension-level P-O fit was found when individuals had strong preferences for team-oriented cultures when null testimonials ( $M = -.66$ ,  $SD = .74$ ) and strong testimonials ( $M = -.75$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) were presented (see Figure 4). A significant three-way interaction between culture preferences for a team-oriented culture, team-orientation-specific pictures, and team-orientation-specific testimonials was not found  $t(270) = -.10$ ,  $p = .92$ .

Lastly, when testing Hypothesis 3c, which looked at the culture dimension of diversity, the overall omnibus test was found to be significant  $F[5, 270] = 29.22$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $R^2 = .59$ . When further examining the significant two-way interaction between preferences for a diverse culture and diversity-specific pictures on a recruitment website  $t(270) = -5.43$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $b = -.78$ ,  $\beta = -1.28$ , the highest level of dimension-level P-O fit was found when individuals had strong preferences for cultures that celebrated diversity when null pictures ( $M = .09$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) and strong pictures ( $M = .27$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) were presented (see Figure 5). When examining the significant two-way interaction between preferences for a diverse culture and diversity-specific employee testimonials  $t(270) = -6.61$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $b = -.91$ ,  $\beta = -1.47$ , the highest level of dimension-level P-O fit was found when individuals had strong preferences for diverse cultures when null testimonials ( $M = .10$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) and strong testimonials ( $M = .23$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) were presented (see Figure 6). A significant three-way interaction between culture preferences for a culture that values diversity, diversity-specific pictures, and diversity-specific testimonials was not found  $t(270) = 1.53$ ,  $p = .13$ .

Hypothesis 4 stated that there would be an interaction between cultural cues and cultural preferences, with cues (represented by pictures and testimonials) producing the greatest effect on global P-O fit when individuals have strong preferences for the cultural dimension represented by the cues. No support was found for Hypothesis 4 for all three culture dimensions. No significant two-way interaction between culture preferences and culture-specific pictures and no significant two-way interaction between culture preferences and culture-specific employee testimonials was found for any of the three culture dimensions. For innovative cultures, the overall omnibus test was not found to be significant  $F[6, 269] = .89, p = .50, R^2 = .14$ . The overall omnibus test for team-oriented cultures was also not significant  $F[6, 269] = 1.42, p = .21, R^2 = .16$ . The overall omnibus test for diverse cultures was significant  $F[6, 269] = 2.52, p = .02, R^2 = .23$ ; however, no significant interactions for diversity-specific pictures  $t(269) = -.73, p = .47$  and diversity-specific employee testimonials  $t(269) = .91, p = .36$ , was found. In addition, a significant three-way interaction between culture preferences, culture-specific pictures, and culture-specific employee testimonials was not found for any of the culture dimensions.

Hypothesis 5 stated that individuals who perceived a global fit with an innovative, team-oriented, or diverse organization after viewing that organization's recruitment website would be more attracted to the organization. This effect was found to be significant for all three culture dimensions. Because global P-O fit is an overall perception of fit with an organization (i.e., not dimension-specific), this hypothesis was not explicitly broken into a separate test for each culture dimension. However, because of the nature of the study, it was necessary to analyze Hypothesis 5 through each culture dimension separately. Specifics of these analyses are reported below.

For Hypothesis 5 (innovation), the overall omnibus test for innovation was significant  $F[1, 275] = 171.68, p = .00, R^2 = .38$ , with individuals who perceived a global P-O fit with innovative cultures reporting more attraction to the innovative organization than individuals who did not perceive a global fit with innovative cultures,  $b = 1.29, \beta = .62$ . For Hypothesis 5 (team-orientation), the overall omnibus test for team-oriented cultures was significant  $F[1, 275] = 142.87, p = .00, R^2 = .34$ , with individuals who perceived a global P-O fit with team-oriented cultures reporting more attraction to the team-oriented organization than individuals who did not perceive a global fit with a culture that values team orientation,  $b = 1.08, \beta = .59$ . Lastly, when examining Hypothesis 5 (diversity), the overall omnibus test for diverse cultures was significant  $F[1, 275] = 87.63, p = .00, R^2 = .24$ , with individuals who perceived a global P-O fit with diverse cultures reporting more attraction to the organization that values diversity than individuals who did not perceive a global fit with an organizational culture that values diversity,  $b = .92, \beta = .49$ .

Hypothesis 6 stated that individuals who had a self-reported dimension-level P-O fit with an innovative, team-oriented, or diverse organization would also report an attraction to the organization. A significant effect was found for all three culture dimensions of innovation, team-orientation, and diversity; thus Hypothesis 6 received full support. Specifics of the analyses for Hypothesis 6 are presented below.

For Hypothesis 6a, the overall omnibus test for innovation was significant  $F[1, 274] = 6.33, p = .01, R^2 = .02$ , with individuals who self-reported a dimension-level fit with innovative cultures being more attracted to the innovative organization,  $b = .16, \beta = .15$ . In addition, for Hypothesis 6b, the overall omnibus test for team-orientation was significant  $F[1, 274] = 15.51, p = .00, R^2 = .05$ , with individuals who self-reported a dimension-level fit

with team-oriented cultures being more attracted to the team-oriented organization,  $b = .33$ ,  $\beta = .23$ . Lastly, for Hypothesis 6c, the overall omnibus test for diversity was significant  $F[1, 274] = 63.14$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $R^2 = .19$ , with individuals who self-reported a dimension-level fit with diverse cultures being more attracted to the organization that celebrates diversity,  $b = .53$ ,  $\beta = .43$ .

#### Section IV: Discussion

The use of the Internet for employee recruitment has increasingly become the norm for most large-scale organizations. While an abundance of research has examined the aesthetic and navigational qualities of these sites (e.g., Braddy et al., 2003; Cober et al., 2000; Cober et al., 2003; Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Scheu et al., 1999; Williamson et al., 2003; Zusman & Landis, 2002), there has been a lack of research on how applicants determine an organization's culture from a recruitment website. Moreover, the link from culture perceptions to perceptions of fit with the organization and ultimate attraction to the organization is also poorly established. This study sought to extend Braddy et al.'s (in press) exploratory study, which examined which features of a recruitment website lead viewers to obtain culture perceptions. Specifically, the use of culture-specific pictures and employee testimonials were examined to determine if including these features on a recruitment website would allow viewers to more accurately assess an organization's culture. Additionally, this study examined whether individuals perceived a global fit and self-reported a dimension-level fit with an organization when they preferred a specific culture and when the cultural cues on a recruitment website favored the culture dimension. Lastly, this study sought to confirm the results of previous studies, which have found that perceived and objective P-O fit

with an organization leads individuals to be more attracted to the hiring organization (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Dineen et al., 2002; Judge & Cable, 1997).

As the results of Hypothesis 1 indicate, when the pictures on a recruitment website strongly depict that organization's culture, generally, viewers perceive the culture of that organization as more salient than recruitment websites that do not include culture-specific pictures. This effect was found for organizations displaying an innovative (H1a) and diverse (H3a) culture, but not for team-oriented cultures (H3b). These results suggest that the use of pictures on a recruitment website is likely to give job seekers an indication of that organization's culture, but only for some culture dimensions. Team-oriented cultures may benefit more from other website features that can display culture perceptions such as mission statements and direct statements of what the organization values. Note however, that the effects found in this study were not particularly strong. Thus, the choice of pictures should be rigorously pilot-tested prior to constructing a recruitment website to ensure that pictures that are designed to portray an organizational culture do so effectively.

Much to the author's surprise, the employee testimonials on a recruitment website did not result in viewers accurately assessing the organization's culture. However, this finding may be due to the viewers failing to cognitively process this feature on the website because they were not actively seeking employment with the fictitious organization. If viewers were not actively seeking employment with the organization, they may not have concentrated on written material on the organizations' websites. As Miniard et al. (1991) and Childers and Houston (1984) point out, pictures tend to impact memory more effectively than text. Therefore, if viewers failed to read the information presented on the website and only focused their attention on the visual aspects of the website, it is likely that the employee

testimonials would not result in an accurate assessment of culture. Additionally, if individuals' memories are impacted by pictures more so than attention to written information on the website (i.e., employee testimonials), then written content may have less of an effect on culture perceptions than the pictorial features of the website.

In addition, employee testimonials in this study may not have been as strong of a manipulation as the culture-specific pictures. Because pictures are thought to impact memory more effectively than written information, the employee testimonials on a recruitment website may need to more strongly provide cues to the organizational culture than the pictures on a website. Based on findings from the pilot test, the employee testimonials and pictures were rated similarly through all three culture dimensions; however, more strongly worded testimonials may have been more effective in portraying culture. Future research should consider this interpretation when designing recruitment websites that use manipulated website features.

It is also likely that the participants in this study had little trust in what the company employees were saying in their testimonials. Viewers are obviously aware that an organization would carefully select (or perhaps even fabricate) testimonials to be included on the organization's homepage. As such, viewers may put less trust in such statements than in a picture. An additional possibility is that participants were not cognitively engaged in this study because the organizations were known to be fictitious, and the participants were not active job seekers looking for employment. The participants in this study may also have been less likely to have ever searched organizational websites before for the purpose of seeking employment, leading them to be unfamiliar with employee testimonial statements.

While employee testimonials may be helpful on some organizational websites, the results of this study suggest that the manipulation of culture-specific pictures provide a stronger impact on viewers' perceptions of culture than testimonials. Therefore, future research will need to examine additional employee testimonials portraying different culture dimensions to determine how much of an added effect these website features provide over culture-specific pictures.

As the results for Hypothesis 3 illustrate, when recruitment websites strongly depict the culture of the organization through culture-specific pictures and testimonials, and when individuals prefer the type of culture the website is portraying, individuals self-report a dimension-level P-O fit with the organization. This effect, however, was only found for dimension-level fit with the organization. Surprisingly, when strong cultural cues were present on a recruitment website and when individuals showed preferences for the type of culture the website was portraying, the individuals did not perceive a global P-O fit with the organization. This finding may be attributed to the fact that only two website features were manipulated on the fictitious websites used in this study. If more cultural cues had been used, viewers may have been better able to accurately assess the culture, possibly leading to stronger perceived global fit with the organization. Another potential reason that a significant effect was found for dimension-level, but not global, fit could be that participants may have perceived other culture dimensions than the one the website was designed to portray. If other culture dimensions were inadvertently depicted, participants' global fit may have been affected, particularly if those culture dimensions were more important to participants than those investigated in this study. Because dimension-level fit is an objective measure of P-O fit, significant effects are more likely to occur when examining the interaction between

culture preferences and culture-specific pictures and testimonials over subjective perceptions of global fit with an organizational culture. This is because objective measures of fit comparing perceived culture and cultural preferences may give more accurate assessments of fit than individuals' subjective reports of global fit because objective measures of fit take into account both actual fit (i.e., objective fit) and individual perceptions of fit (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997; Kristof, 1996).

Previous research has shown that when job seekers fit well with an organization, they are more likely to be attracted to the organization (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). The findings from the current study generally supported the P-O fit-attraction linkage found in other studies. When individuals perceived a global fit with the organization whose recruitment website they were viewing, they were, in fact, more attracted to the organization. The same effect was found when assessing the relationship between individuals' dimension-level fit with the organization and their attraction to the organization. Thus, the results support previous research in the area of P-O fit leading to greater attraction to an organization (e.g., Dineen et al., 2002; Judge & Cable, 1997; Tom, 1971). However, while pictures and, to a lesser degree, employee testimonials, allow viewers to more accurately assess an organization's culture, these website features may only be beneficial for certain cultures. Some organizational cultures may more likely benefit from recruitment websites that portray other website features to give job seekers an idea of what that organization values. Because only three culture dimensions were assessed in this study, future research should examine other culture dimensions, as well as other website features to further measure the P-O fit-attraction linkage.

Overall, there were a number of general trends when examining cultural cues of pictures and employee testimonials. Culture-specific pictures significantly affected viewers' perceptions of organizational culture more than culture-specific employee testimonials; however, this effect was only found for innovative and diverse cultures. While culture-specific employee testimonials did not produce significant effects when examining viewers' perceptions of organizational culture in innovative and diverse cultures, both culture-specific pictures and culture-specific testimonials had no effect on viewers' perceptions of culture in team-oriented organizations. Thus, while it seems that culture-specific pictures effectively allow viewers to judge the culture of an organization, these pictorial cultural cues may only impact culture perceptions for certain organizational cultures. Future research should examine other culture dimensions and other cultural cues to thoroughly understand what features of a recruitment website allow for accurate assessments of culture. The lack of significant findings in this study, however, may be due to limitations of the sample. Participants may have been inexperienced with information presented on corporate websites and unmotivated because the websites were fictitious or because they were not actively seeking employment with the organization.

Another general trend found in all three culture dimensions is that individuals self-report dimension-level fit with an organization when they show high preferences for the culture and when cultural cues (either pictures or testimonials) are portrayed on a recruitment website. Surprisingly, when examining the three-way interaction between cultural preferences, culture-specific pictures, and culture-specific testimonials, no significant interaction effects were found.

While significant interactions between cultural preferences and cultural cues on dimension-level fit did occur within all three culture dimensions, these same interactions were not found to be significant when examining individuals' perceived global fit with the organization. Thus, it appears that the effect of cultural preferences on P-O fit, depending on whether cultural cues are null or strong, is only found for objective dimension-level fit, and not when individuals report their perceived global fit with an organization. This finding is surprising considering both types of P-O fit measured in this study are self-reported and based on perceptions. However, these findings may have been due to a characteristic of the analysis used to measure dimension-level and global P-O fit, as dimension-level fit was measured as a difference score, while global fit was based on a seven-point Likert-type scale. To compute dimension-level fit, a difference score between perceived culture and cultural preferences was used; therefore, one of the predictors (culture preferences) was included in the difference score itself. If the pattern of findings uncovered in this study is not an artifact of the analysis, this means that the perception of P-O fit an individual has with an organization is based on culture dimensions rather than an overall assessment of how well individuals believe they will fit with the organization. Therefore, it is even more important for organizations to accurately portray specific dimensions their organizational cultures on their recruitment websites so individuals can make accurate assessments of their fit with the organization based on a dimension-level assessment.

Lastly, this study illustrates that a general trend among all three culture dimensions exists when examining the effect of dimension-level fit and global fit on attraction to an organization. Consistent with previous research, the results of this study indicate that as individuals report an increase in dimension-level or global fit with an organization, their

attraction to that organization increases as well. That is, the findings from this study match the relationship between P-O fit and organizational attraction measured in other studies of similar nature (e.g., Cable & Judge, 1996; Dineen et al., 2002; Judge & Cable, 1997).

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

While the results of this study provide promising avenues for organizations to better their recruitment websites, some limitations should be noted. First, the sample of this study was undergraduates enrolled in an introductory Psychology course, the majority of which were freshmen and sophomores. Thus, the participants may not have taken the task as seriously as an actual job seeker exploring the recruitment websites of various organizations might. This limitation may have affected various parts of the study, including how well individuals believed their values matched with the organization's values, and how attracted they were to the organization. If a sample of actual job seekers had been used, these job seekers may have taken participation more seriously. However, it is worth noting that organizations do not always try to target active job seekers, as some recruitment websites are just as focused on grabbing the attention of non-active job seekers as they are active job seekers. A manipulation check should have been included in the current study to determine how much trust participants put into what was being said on the organizational websites because they were fictitious. Another manipulation check could have assessed how well participants remembered the content of the pictures and testimonials of the website.

Lack of experience of the participants in this study could also lead to individuals having less knowledge about what they might actually prefer in the workplace, as many of the participants in the study may have had too little experience to know their cultural preferences. Because a majority of the participants in this study most likely have not worked

with enough organizations to understand what types of cultures they are most attracted to, an organization's culture may not have meant much to them. Having the experience of working with different organizations, and exposure to different organizational cultures, allows individuals to assess what they value most and value least out of an organization. It should be noted, however, that although the participants in the study may have lacked experience in the workplace, they were very familiar with the Internet, as the participants indicated they spent an average of 16.5 hours on the Internet per week. In addition, approximately one-third of the participants had previously applied for jobs online.

While the fictitious websites used in this study had the advantage that they could be manipulated under carefully controlled conditions, only two features on the websites were manipulated. As such, the sites left out other types of website features that could lead individuals to perceive an organization's culture. These features include policy statements, information about organizational awards won, community involvement, and size of the organization (Braddy et al., in press). Therefore, the fictitious recruitment websites may have been more effective in portraying an organization's culture had more features been incorporated. More features may also have made the recruitment websites more similar to real recruitment sites. The external validity of the websites may have been compromised in this study due to the websites only portraying a subset of the information normally provided on real recruitment websites. While the websites used in the current study were modeled after Fortune 500 company recruitment websites, additional studies examining specific recruitment website features may benefit by including more information on the manipulated websites to mirror actual recruitment websites of hiring organizations. Thus, using clearly

bogus websites may have influenced participants' lack of motivation to take the study as seriously as an actual job seeker.

Another limitation that should be noted is that only three culture dimensions were measured. While the three culture dimensions of innovation, team orientation, and diversity were manipulated, participants may have had much stronger preferences for some of the many other culture dimensions, and as a result, may have been reacting to cues related to those dimensions. Even though I tried to carefully control for this, because most organizations can be categorized by a combination of cultural dimensions, cultural cues may be perceived as relating to more than one culture.

Future research should use actual job seekers as participants to ensure respondents are highly motivated. In addition, the effect of additional website features (e.g., information about the size of the organization, community involvement, policy statements) should be empirically tested, as should additional culture dimensions. Follow-up research may be particularly important for the team-oriented organizational websites due to the lack of findings for this dimension in the current study. Combinations of website features should also be tested in order to be able to include as much information about organizational culture as possible on a recruitment website. Simultaneously testing more cultural dimensions will also benefit organizations that value more than one type of culture (e.g., organizations that value innovation and diversity), which may be common among organizations. By testing these additional culture dimensions, future research may find significant results in areas where non-significant results were found in this study (i.e., the interaction between cultural preferences and cultural cues on global P-O fit).

Follow-up studies could examine the impact of cultural cues on variables other than P-O fit and attraction levels. These studies could examine outcomes such as website search behavior, affective reactions to the design of recruitment websites, and the impact of familiarity, prior attitude toward the hiring organization, and organizational image, on attraction. In addition, follow-up studies could go further by first measuring job seekers' perceptions of an organization's culture after viewing recruitment websites designed to portray a particular culture, and the job seekers' fit and attraction to the organization. Then, this can be followed by measures of whether individuals decided to apply and/or accept a job offer with the organization of interest.

By testing more culture dimensions and website features, organizations will be able to most beneficially develop their recruitment websites. Based on the results of the current study, practitioners should attempt to develop recruitment websites such that their organization's culture is effectively portrayed. This includes constructing websites that include culture-specific pictures, especially for organizations that value innovation and diversity. In addition, to increase job seekers' dimension-level P-O fit with an organization, practitioners should ensure that the organization's recruitment website includes culture-specific employee testimonials. If these cultural cues (i.e., pictures and testimonials) are included on recruitment websites, job seekers are more likely to accurately assess the organization's culture, report dimension-level fit with the organization, and ultimately become attracted to organizations in which they report a dimension-level fit. In addition, practitioners should make sure that recruitment websites are aesthetically pleasing and easily navigable to satisfy the job seekers' usability perceptions (e.g., Cober et al., 2000; 2003; Zusman & Landis, 2002). By designing recruitment websites in this manner, many beneficial

outcomes for the organization and the job seeker can result, including decreased turnover (e.g., O'Reilly et al., 1991) and increased performance (e.g., Tziner, 1987) and attitudes (e.g., Chatman, 1991).

### Section V: Conclusions

There is no question that the use of technology in the workplace has impacted all areas of work, and continues to present advantageous additions to the workplace. With exponential growth in the use of technology in the workplace comes the need to understand the best ways to enhance existing procedures through technology. The use of the Internet for recruitment purposes is an area where organizations are combining the “old way of doing things” with new technology. Being able to enhance the recruitment process through the use of recruitment websites provides beneficial outcomes for the organization and the job seeker alike. However, additional research is needed to fully understand how recruitment websites can most effectively benefit the organization. This study has taken an initial step in that process by examining two website features that can potentially impact a job seeker's impression of the culture of an organization. By continuing research of this kind, organizations will be better able to attract and retain employees who fit well with the company. Achieving this goal can cut costs for organizations by reducing turnover and the cost of hiring individuals, and can assist job seekers in their search for a job that is right for them.

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Table 1.

*Innovative-Specific Employee Testimonials*

<i>Employee Testimonials</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I enjoy working for [Company X] because I am encouraged to take risks and look at problems in new ways. The work here is never boring because of that very reason.	5.69	1.14
[Company X] gives me the freedom to experiment with new ideas and solutions. I feel fortunate to be a part of an organization that fosters such innovation.	5.75	1.07
Thinking outside the box is [Company X's] motto. I am always encouraged to devote a certain amount of time at work to pursue new product ideas, which really keeps me on my feet.	5.19	1.56

Table 2.

*Team-Orientation-Specific Employee Testimonials*

<i>Employee Testimonials</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
[Company X] is a place that fosters team-orientation. We are encouraged to work with our peers to collaborate ideas and our project work. It creates a setting where we are able to really get to know our colleagues.	5.88	1.09
I really enjoy the team-based atmosphere we have. The collective ideas and insights of my colleagues really fosters a setting of collaboration and communication—something you don't really engage in with a lot of other organizations.	5.44	1.46
The camaraderie and teamwork radiating through this organization means everything to me. [Company X] really supports our collaboration with peers to ensure that we all are included as 'part of the group.'	5.38	.96

Table 3.

*Diversity-Specific Employee Testimonials*

<i>Employee Testimonials</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I love working for [Company X] because of the diverse nature of our employees. Everyone is made to feel welcome, and interacting with different cultures allows me to see things from other points of view.	5.63	1.20
The employees at [Company X] really mirror the makeup of society. Having a diverse set of colleagues really helps ensure that our products are always on target—wherever in the world our products are sold.	5.38	1.31
We have council meetings at [Company X] that allow us to connect with our diverse group of colleagues. During these meeting, we are able to share ideas and interests that go beyond everyday work activities. The company really values an environment where we can come to work without the fear of being judged.	4.88	1.71

Table 4.

*Null Employee Testimonials*

<i>Employee Testimonials</i>	<i>Innovation</i>		<i>Team-Orientation</i>		<i>Diversity</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
People are friendly and helpful at [Company X]. We're empowered to make a difference and given the tools to learn and grow.	4.00	1.67	5.00	1.41	2.88	1.86
My contributions are well rewarded. But one of the things that keep me here is the flexible benefits that accommodate my individual needs.	2.50	1.83	2.56	1.67	2.69	1.89
The credo (core values) of [Company X]. gives you the courage to do the right thing.	3.69	2.18	3.13	1.86	2.81	1.94
With the national and global presence of the corporation, an employee can choose between numerous career paths.	4.00	1.93	3.31	2.06	4.56	2.10
My contributions are well rewarded. But one of the things that keep me here is the flexible benefits that accommodate my individual needs.	2.94	1.81	4.06	1.84	3.19	2.14
I enjoy coming to work because the facilities and people are so pleasant	2.06	1.34	4.44	1.83	2.81	1.83
Working here is a great experience. The values of the company instill a sense of belongingness, and make me feel that my contributions are worthwhile.	2.56	1.55	5.06	1.84	3.38	2.42

Table 5.

*Innovative-Specific Pictures*

<i>Pictures</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Picture 1	5.19	1.64
Picture 2	5.06	1.61
Picture 3	5.44	1.46

*Note.* See Appendix A for Innovative-specific pictures

Table 6.

*Team-Oriented-Specific Pictures*

<i>Pictures</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Picture 1	6.00	1.10
Picture 2	5.38	1.50
Picture 3	4.19	1.42

*Note.* See Appendix B for Team-Oriented-specific pictures

Table 7.

*Diversity-Specific Pictures*

<i>Pictures</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Picture 1	5.25	1.34
Picture 2	4.63	1.75
Picture 3	3.56	1.86

*Note.* See Appendix C for Diversity-Specific pictures

Table 8.

*Null Pictures*

<i>Pictures</i>	<i>Innovation</i>		<i>Team-Orientation</i>		<i>Diversity</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Picture 1	3.63	2.03	3.31	2.72	2.38	1.59
Picture 2	2.19	1.38	2.56	1.59	2.44	1.46
Picture 3	3.38	1.93	2.56	1.46	1.69	1.14
Picture 4	4.25	2.11	2.50	1.79	2.38	1.96
Picture 5	4.19	2.29	2.75	1.69	2.38	1.59

*Note.* See Appendix D for null pictures

Table 9.

*Interaction Results for Dimension-level P-O Fit*

	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	$\beta$
<i>Innovation</i>			
Preferences x Pictures	-.62	.13	-1.33*
Preferences x Testimonials	-.52	-1.10	-1.10*
Preferences x Pictures x Testimonials	-.01	.04	-.02
<i>Team-Orientation</i>			
Preferences x Pictures	-.38	.11	-.93*
Preferences x Testimonials	-.74	.10	-1.83*
Preferences x Pictures x Testimonials	-.00	.04	-.00
<i>Diversity</i>			
Preferences x Pictures	-.78	.14	-1.28*
Preferences x Testimonials	-.91	.14	-1.47*
Preferences x Pictures x Testimonials	.09	.06	.13

Note. \* p<.05

## Figure Caption

*Figure 1.* Two-way interaction between preferences for an innovative culture and innovative-specific pictures.

*Figure 2.* Two-way interaction between preferences for an innovative culture and innovative-specific employee testimonials.

*Figure 3.* Two-way interaction between preferences for a team-oriented culture and team-oriented-specific pictures.

*Figure 4.* Two-way interaction between preferences for a team-oriented culture and team-oriented-specific employee testimonials.

*Figure 5.* Two-way interaction between preferences for a diverse culture and diversity-specific pictures.

*Figure 6.* Two-way interaction between preferences for a diverse culture and diversity-specific employee testimonials.

Figure 1.

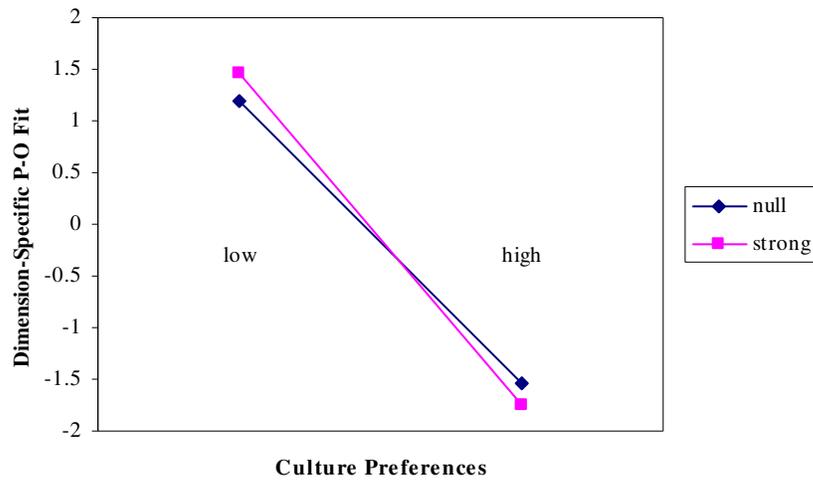


Figure 2.

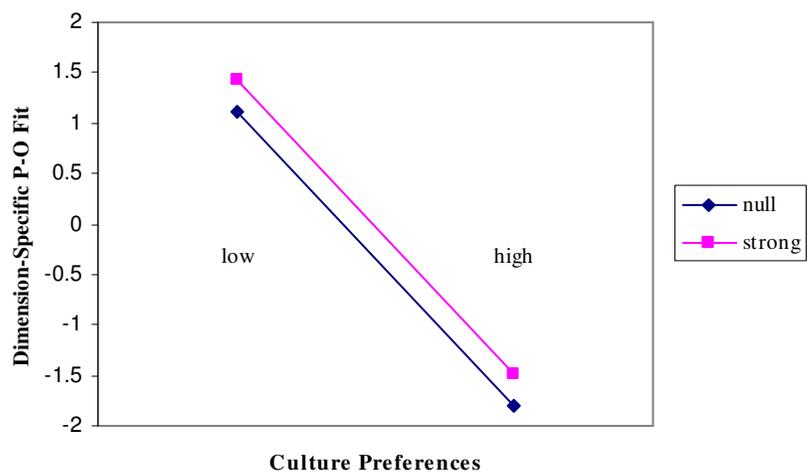


Figure 3.

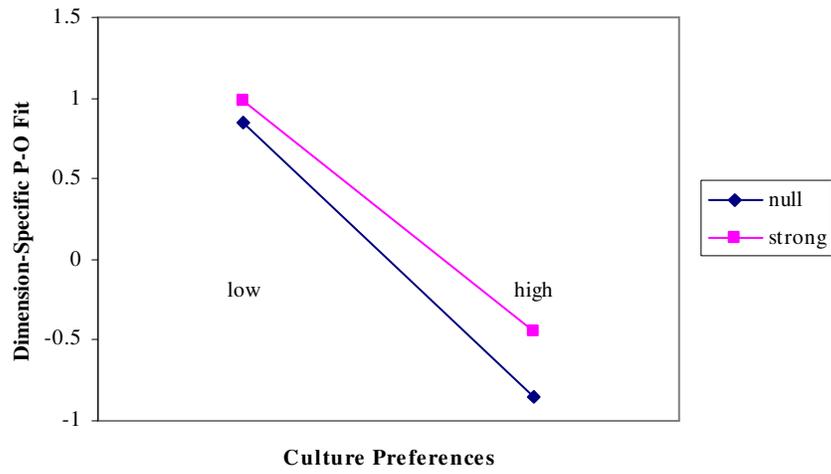


Figure 4.

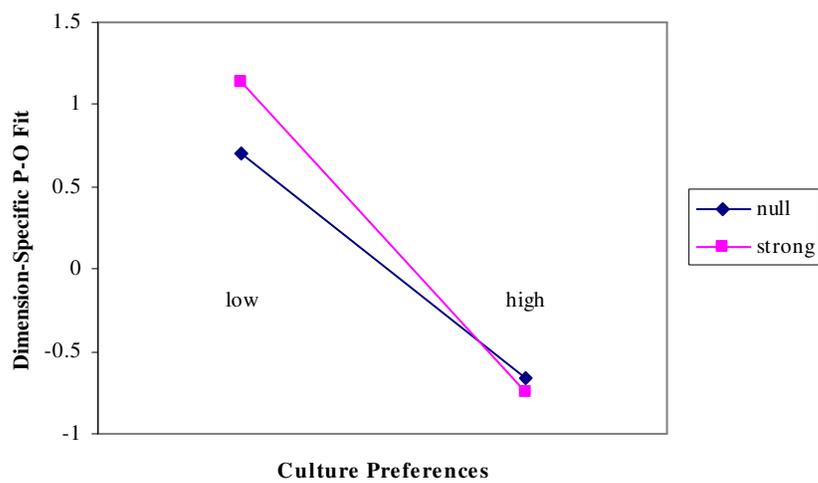


Figure 5.

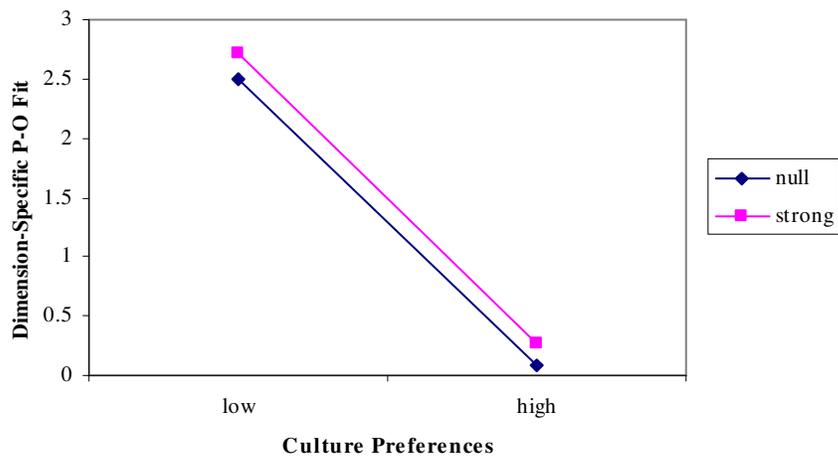
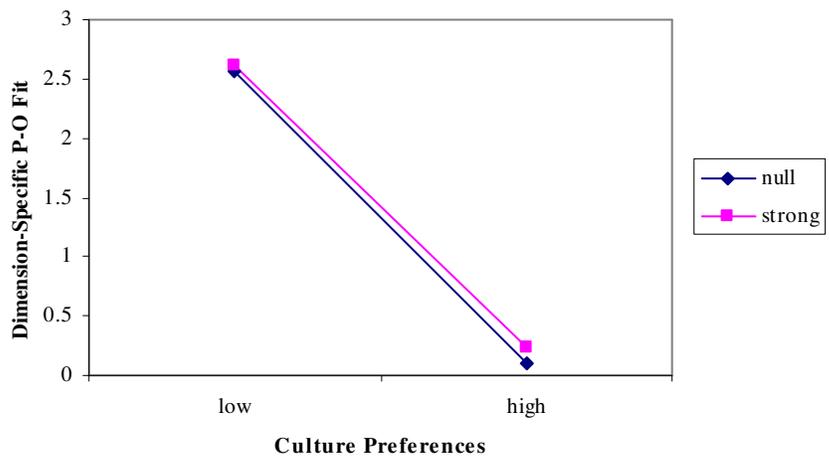


Figure 6.



## APPENDICES

Appendix A  
Innovative-Specific Pictures

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Appendix B  
Team-Orientation-Specific Pictures

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Appendix C  
Diversity-Specific Pictures

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Appendix D  
Null Pictures

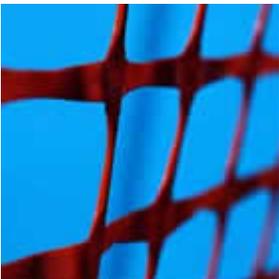
Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5



## Appendix E Sample Website

Untitled Document - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites

Address [http://www.ncsu.edu/project/ckthesis/pilotforms/DC2\\_home.htm](http://www.ncsu.edu/project/ckthesis/pilotforms/DC2_home.htm) Go Links Norton AntiVirus

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FAQs  
Survey



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**Our employees make a difference.**

The dedication of our employees to reach their fullest potential through their work creates a setting where everyone comes out on top.

*We take great pride in our employees.*

Done Internet

Start Untitled Document - ...

12:30 AM

## Appendix F

## Items Assessing Culture Preferences

***Instructions:*** Please rate the following items based on how well they describe the types of organizational cultures (i.e., things that an organization values) that you prefer and value yourself.

Please respond on a 1-7 scale, with 1 = *not at all like me* to 7 = *very much like me*

*To what extent do each of the following describe your own organizational culture preferences?*

1. Stable
2. Innovative
3. Experimental
4. Values Risk-taking
5. Careful
6. Rule-oriented
7. Values Security
8. Highly Organized
9. Values Autonomy
10. Team-oriented
11. Values Collaboration
12. People-oriented
13. Values Diversity
14. Celebrates Differences

## Appendix G

## Items Assessing Culture Perceptions

***Instructions:*** Please rate the following items based on how well they describe the organization's culture (i.e., things that the organization values) of the website you just viewed.

Please respond on a 1-7 scale, with 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *great extent*

*To what extent do each of the following describe the organization's culture?*

1. Stable
2. Innovative
3. Experimental
4. Values Risk-taking
5. Careful
6. Rule-oriented
7. Values Security
8. Highly Organized
9. Values Autonomy
10. Team-oriented
11. Values Collaboration
12. People-oriented
13. Values Diversity
14. Celebrates Differences

## Appendix H

## Items Assessing Global P-O Fit

**Instructions: Please rate the following items based on how much your own values match with the organization's values of the website you just viewed.**

Please respond on a 1-7 scale, with 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *completely*

1. To what degree do your values “match” or fit this organization and the current employees in this organization?
2. To what degree do your values prevent you from ‘fitting in’ this organization because they are different from most of the other employees’ values in this organization?
3. Do you think the values of this organization reflect your own values?

## Appendix I

## Items Assessing Organization Attraction

**Instructions:** Please rate the following items based on how attracted you are to the organization whose website you just viewed.

Please respond on a 1-7 scale, with 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*

1. For me, this company would be a good place to work.
2. I would not be interested in this company except as a last resort.
3. This company is attractive to me as a place for employment.
4. I am interested in learning more about this company.
5. A job at this company is very appealing to me.