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Does Collective Supplementary Fit Constrain Workplace Deviance?*

Jee Young Seong | Jeonbuk National University

This study examines whether a collective person-group supplementary fit (hereafter, collective supplementary fit) constrains deviant behaviors likely to occur in the workplace. The study observed a two-way interaction between the mean and the dispersion (diversity) of collective supplementary fit in predicting interpersonal deviance in the workplace. The results showed that the two-way interaction between the collective fit mean and its dispersion was negatively associated with interpersonal deviance. The relationship between perceptions of collective supplementary fit and interpersonal deviance was stronger when dispersion was high than low. Implications and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: *Collective supplementary fit, interpersonal deviance, two-way interaction*

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Introduction

The issue of person-environment (PE) fit has received significant attention from scholars and practitioners (Schneider 2001). Social-psychological theories state that similarity or fit between people leads to attraction and explains why fit is related to favorable attitudes (Byrne 1971). People tend to prefer interacting with others with similar characteristics to reinforce their beliefs, behaviors, and affect (e.g., Swan, Stein-Seroussi, and Giesler 1992). Most research on PE fit has examined its effects on various work outcomes.

Person-group (PG) fit is a sub-dimension of person-environment fit (Edwards and Shipp 2007). PG fit, or person-team fit, describes the interpersonal compatibility between individuals and members of their immediate workgroups (Kristof-Brown and Stevens 2001; Werbel and Gilliland 1999). Because the emphasis is placed on an individual's experience of fit, PG fit has been associated with a variety of individual-level outcomes, including members' attitudes toward the team, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, contextual and task performance, and political behavior (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005).

Most studies have examined fit at the individual level. Given the characteristics of PG fit, however, this study will approach PG fit at the group level. This is the collective fit, which is "a shared perception that the members of a team fit well together and with their task, that emerges from their shared experiences of working together" (Kristof-Brown et al. 2014, p. 971). In PE fit literature, a key distinction has been made between *supplementary* and *complementary* fits (Kristof 1996; Muchinsky and Monahan 1987). Supplementary fit emphasizes the matching or similarity of commensurate individual and organizational characteristics (Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987). In contrast, complementary fit refers to how organizational structures or pay systems meet employees' needs or complement personality traits to predict individual-level outcomes (Kristof-Brown and Jansen 2007; Muchinsky and Monahan 1987). In this paper, we focus on the supplementary PG fit at the group level (collective fit, Seong and Hong 2020), in which the group members' interaction styles develop a set of values in groups in the team context.

As distinct from the *degree* (mean) *o*f PG fit, we intend to examine the moderating role of PG fit *dispersion* (standard deviation) of team members' perceptions of the group's collective fit in the relationship between the collective fit and interpersonal deviance (Seong and Hong 2020). The self-

categorization process is fundamental to forming in-groups since individuals prefer homogeneous groups of similar others (Turner, 1987). In that sense, a higher level of collective fit in personality, goals, and values may raise or lower interpersonal deviance. However, little empirical research has been conducted on this relationship. This study has two purposes. First, we build on the fit literature by investigating collective fit and its dispersion which has not been examined before, even though fit dispersion is more critical from the perspective of team diversity. Second, we advance our understanding of the effects of perceived PG fit on interpersonal deviance in the team by investigating the role of collective fit dispersion.

Literature Review

Collective Fit

Kristof-Brown et al. (2014, p. 971) defined team-level collective fit as "team members' shared assessment of compatibility with each other and the task environment." This definition emphasizes that because shared experiences result in the emergent understanding of fit, the collective fit is conceptualized and should be operationalized as a shared perception rather than a combination of actual member characteristics or personal PG fit perceptions. This is also the case for the distinction between internal and external fit made by DeRue and Hollenbeck (2007); collective fit should be assessed across multiple characteristics, such as values, goals, personality, and abilities, and involves looking both within the team and at its task context.

Most studies on fit have yet to address fit as an emergent, collective construct, except for some works by Kristof-Brown et al. (2014), Seong and Choi (2014), and Seong et al. (2015). The most closely related research is on perceived similarity within teams (e.g., Hobman, Bordia, and Gallois 2003). These studies demonstrate that the perception of similarity/diversity significantly influences team-level outcomes more than objective similarity/diversity. Shin and colleagues (Shin 2008; Shin and Choi 2010) examined team-level person-organization (PO) fit and team-level person-job (PJ) fit, which correspond to DeRue and Hollenbeck's (2007) notion of external fit rather than internal fit. We examine the collective fit perception from inside and outside the team context. We use Kristof-Brown et al.'s (2014) definition of collective fit in the present study.

PG Fit and Its Dispersion

PG fit refers to the compatibility between individuals and their work groups (Kristof 1996). Although PG fit occurs when individuals feel a sense of compatibility with other workgroup members, the average PG fit and its dispersion pose different issues. High dispersion indicates a lack of congruence in perceived PG fit among team members. On the other hand, low dispersion implies unity but may appear at the low, middle, or high level of PG fit in work groups.

In the fit literature, more research needs to be carried out on the diversity of perceived fit in work groups and its correlates or outcomes. It has only recently been pointed out that the dispersion of specific variables is as crucial as their mean values in explaining group outcomes (Bell 2007). In this paper, we are concerned with how team members perceive PG fit as distinct from the PG fit at the group level. The average level of PG fit perceived by individual members differs from the dispersion of PG fit in work groups. But it is unclear whether the trait dispersion under consideration has positive or negative effects on group outcomes (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, and Mount 1998; Bell 2007).

Composition and Compilation Models

To explain how lower-level characteristics or elements emerge into higher-level constructs or collective phenomena, two qualitatively distinct models have been proposed; composition and compilation models (Kozlowski and Klein 2000). The composition model refers to "situations whereby lower-level elements or characteristics converge and coalesce to result in a higher property that is essentially the same as the elements that comprise it" (Kozlowski and Klein, 2000, p. 20). A compositional perspective of fit is based mainly on the notion that the person's characteristic is compared to a higher-level feature functionally similar to the lower-level construct, e.g., individual vs. organizational values.

In contrast, the compilation model focuses on the notion that "a particular configuration or profile of lower-level elements or characteristics yields higher-level constructs" (Kozlowski and Klein, 2000, p. 21). A compilation perspective of fit is based on the notion that, although elements or characteristics vary, they complement and fit with one another, e.g., different personality types across individuals combine to form a team's

features. The composition model is associated with the mean value of a specific trait, while the compilation model is formed by its variance. Thus, we examine how different composition and compilation processes predict team workplace deviance.

Hypothesis Development

Collective Fit and Workplace Deviance

Workplace deviance is defined as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (Robinson and Bennett 1995, p. 556). Deviance at work may occur either in interpersonal relations or in the organization at large. Over the years, workplace deviance has become a challenging topic in organizational research (Bordia, Restubog, and Tang, 2008; Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt and Barrick, 2004), but we know little about the relationship between person-environment fit and counterproductive behaviors at work (Lee and Allen 2002; Sackett and DeVore 2001).

Kristof-Brown et al. (2014) defined team-level collective fit as "team members' shared assessment of compatibility with each other and with the task environment" (p. 971). Since shared experiences result in the emergent fit experience, the collective fit is conceptualized as a shared perception rather than a combination of individual members' characteristics or PG fit perceptions. Our concern in this study is whether collective PG fit can constrain deviant behaviors likely to occur in the workplace.

We hypothesize that positive perceptions of collective fit are negatively related to deviant behavior. When employees perceive that they fit with their team, they may exert more effort to produce higher performance. On the other hand, when employees have unfavorable perceptions of the team and its members, they are less likely to succeed. Employees with negative perceptions of their team environment perceive that they need to receive support and encouragement (Colbert et al. 2004). They experience frustration, which leads to deviant behavior (Spector 1997). Specifically, employees with unfavorable perceptions of the collective fit and the team environment may be less motivated than their colleagues and may respond by withholding effort.

Although workplace deviance has become the focus of an increasing number of studies (Bordia et al. 2008; Colbert et al. 2004; Robinson and

Bennett, 1995), little research has been conducted on the relationship between the perceived fit and workplace deviance. However, considering previous research on situational perceptions and workplace deviance (e.g., Lee and Allen, 2002; Sackett and DeVore, 2001), we can deduce the relationship between PE fit and deviant behavior.

According to Robinson and Bennett (1995), workplace deviance is either interpersonal or organizational. The relationship between PE fit and workplace deviance can be explained by social exchange theory (Levinson 1965). This theory offers insight into situations where similarity effects may occur even without individuals engaging in interpersonal interactions. The self-categorization theory specifies the operation of the social categorization process as the cognitive basis of group behavior. For example, similar team members identify with their team and strive to maintain their positive social identities by acting "prosocially" toward other team members (Van Dyne, Cummings, and Parks 1995). Individuals prefer to work with and help others like themselves (Graf and Riddell 1972; Karylowski 1976).

Consistent with social exchange theory (Levinson 1965) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960), we hypothesize that positive perceptions of collective fit are negatively related to the deviant behavior of withholding effort. When employees perceive that they fit with their team, they may exert more effort to produce higher performance. On the other hand, when employees have unfavorable perceptions of the team and its members, they are less likely to make an effort. Employees with negative perceptions of the team environment perceive that they are not receiving support and encouragement (Colbert et al. 2004), as a result of which they experience frustration, which leads to deviant behavior (Spector 1997). Specifically, employees with unfavorable perceptions of the collective fit and the team environment may be less motivated than their colleagues and may respond by withholding effort. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

> ***Hypothesis 1.*** Perceptions of collective supplementary fit and its dispersion interact to influence interpersonal deviance such that the relationship between perceptions of collective supplementary fit and interpersonal deviance is stronger when dispersion is high.

Methods

Data and Sample

Data were collected from 840 employees and their team leaders of 131 teams in a South Korean bank. The target respondents were 1,575 individual employees and 168 teams (head office department and branch) leaders, excluding agency workers who work for the bank but institutionally belong to other companies. In cooperation with the bank's human resources team, each employee was asked to log in to the bank's website and respond to a questionnaire there. In addition, team leaders were asked to evaluate individual team members and the team as a whole and to answer questions about themselves. Of 1,575 total employees, 1,080 (68.6%) participated in the survey, and 162 (96.4%) out of 168 team leaders responded to the questionnaire asking about their team members' performance and the evaluation of their team. This resulted in a final sample of 840 individuals in 131 teams (M = 6.68; SD = 3.08).

Measures

Collective Supplementary Fit
Adapting the items used in Piasentin and Chapman (2007), we constructed a five-item measure of group-level collective (KSA) fit on a seven-point scale. For collective supplementary fit, we measured it with a five-item scale adapted from Piasentin & Chapman (2007) and Shin (2008) that similarly reflected the team context and referent shift to the group level. We included the following sample items: "The underlying philosophy of our team reflects what members value in the team" and "Our team members share a lot in common with other team members."

Collective Fit Dispersion
According to Chan's (1998) composition model, we operationalized congruence fit dispersion using the within-team standard deviation of the individual KSA congruence fit scores.

Interpersonal Deviance
We measured interpersonal deviance using the seven-item Bennett and

Robinson (2000) interpersonal deviance scale. Sample items include: "I often made fun of someone at work," "I often embarrassed someone at work," and "I often acted rudely toward someone at work." Individual team members' responses were aggregated to reflect the interpersonal deviance scores at the team level.

Control Variables

We included team size and members' mean tenure as control variables (Seong and Hong, 2020).

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations between all study variables, and scale reliabilities. We performed confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to evaluate the distinctiveness of the scales. The expected two-factor model (separate scales for group-level supplementary fit and interpersonal deviance) provides the better fit ($x^2(df = 53) = 177.23$, $p < 0.001$; CFI= 0.92, TLI= 0.90, SRMR= 0.050).

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

	Variables	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Team size	6.32	3.08	-				
2.	Team tenure	2.44	1.96	-.07	-			
3.	Collective supplementary fit	5.41	.59	.10	-.11	(.86)		
4.	Collective supplementary fit dispersion	.76	.27	.02	-.16	.14		
5.	Interpersonal deviance	5.90	.72	-.03	-.05	-.32**	.03	(.93)

[a] n= 131. The alpha internal-consistency reliability coefficients appear in parentheses along the main diagonal.
** $p < .01$.

For measures initially taken at the individual level, it is necessary to demonstrate consensus within teams before aggregating them to the group level (Harrison et al. 2002). To this end, we examined the within-group

agreement index (r_{wg}), ICC(1), and ICC(2) and checked the levels of within-group homogeneity and between-group variation (Chen and Bliese 2002; James et al. 1993). These values were, for collective supplementary fit, 0.92 (r_{wg}), .04 (ICC1), 0.22 (ICC2), and 0.86(α); for interpersonal deviance, 0.92(r_{wg}), 0.40 (ICC1), 0.22 (ICC2), and 0.93(α). The test statistics (F ratios) associated with all three variables' ICC(1) values were statistically significant at the 5% level. Overall, these results justify aggregating responses at the team level (Bliese 2000).

Hypothesis 1, the only hypothesis proposed, predicted a two-way interaction between collective supplementary fit and its dispersion in predicting interpersonal deviance in the team. To test our hypothesis, we examined the effects produced by the interaction of collective supplementary fit and its dispersion on interpersonal deviance using hierarchical regression analyses. We tested the hypotheses using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.

The results provide initial support for Hypothesis 1 (see Table 2). Specifically, we found that the two-way interaction between collective supplementary fit and its dispersion is significantly and negatively associated with interpersonal deviance (β = -.27, p < .05).

Table 2
Regression Analysis of Interpersonal Deviance

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Independent Variables	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Step	Team size	-.09	-.06	-.08
	Team tenure	-.03	-.05	-.03
Step 2:	Collective supplementary fit		-.35***	-.47***
	Collective supplementary fit dispersion		.07	.06
Step3:	Collective supplementary fit × Collective supplementary fit dispersion			-.27**
	R^2	.01	.13	.18
	ΔR^2	.01	.12***	.05**

F	.50	4.63**	5.57***
Δ F	.50	8.70***	8.26**

[a]*n*= 131. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

To determine if the two-way interaction of collective supplementary fit and its dispersion is more vital when dispersion is high, as we predicted, we generated a graph of the two-way interaction. We used one standard deviation above and below the mean on the independent variables while we held the control variables at their means. We plotted the two-way interaction from the models with significant effects to interpret these relationships (see Figure 1).

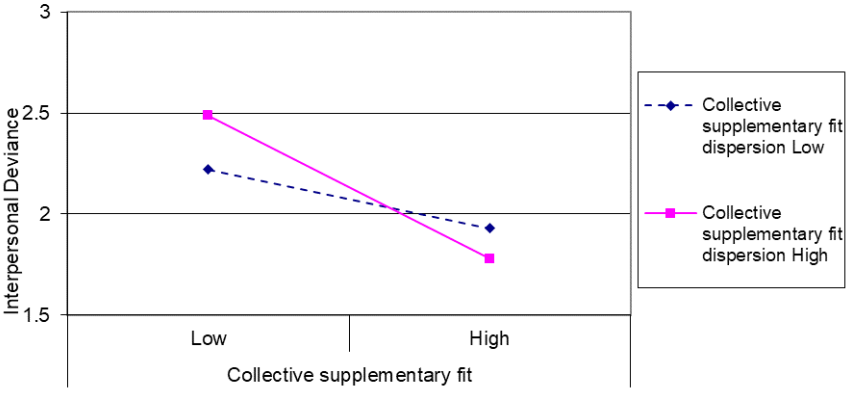

Fig. 1.—Two-Way Interaction of Collective Supplementary Fit and Its Dispersion on Interpersonal Deviance

Discussion

Our research aimed to investigate relationships between collective fit, its dispersion, and interpersonal deviance. The results supported the hypothesis of a two-way interaction between collective fit and its dispersion affecting interpersonal deviance. Figure 1 shows the effect of the interaction between mean collective fit and its dispersion on interpersonal deviance.

Despite extensive support for a positive relationship between perceived fit and employee attitudes, we must pay careful attention to the conditions

under which PG fit is actually experienced. The company where we collected our data had low between-group variability with high within-group variability, which indicates a high level of homogeneity in the company. This result is consistent with findings in earlier studies. High levels of uniformity can be attributed to the company's characteristics (a bank). The bank has branch offices regarded as teams performing the same missions. High homogeneity may induce uniform group thinking, which leads to negative outcomes such as lower levels of creativity and innovation. Thus, we may have to consider both sides of the effects of similarity or fit.

Our study provides empirical evidence for perceived PG fit as a collective construct. The study made several contributions to the literature. First, our results add to the growing evidence for the significance of higher-level collective fit perceptions. Extending the PG fit construct beyond the individual level provides a proper multi-level perspective that has generally needed to be improved in fit research (Ostroff and Schulte 2007; Seong et al. 2015; Shin and Choi 2010). These results support the contention that PG fit may have multi-level ramifications regarding interpersonal dynamics and group functioning (Kristof-Brown and Jansen 2007).

Second, our study found a significant two-way interaction between collective PG fit and its dispersion in predicting interpersonal deviance. The relationship with coworkers is more likely to be an essential factor in determining team performance in Eastern societies, characterized by Confucian values, than in their Western counterparts. As stated in this way, the effect of coworkers and supervisors is highly influential for employees in Korea. Comparative research encompassing other cultures is suggested in the future to test the tentative conclusions drawn in this study.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Our findings have to be interpreted subject to some limitations. The measurement of fit has to be re-examined. Compared to objective fit, both subjective and perceived fit still have the problem of assessment by a single source (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). These measures have been criticized for allowing a single individual to report a holistic evaluation of fit, which may make them prone to consistency effects (Edwards 1991; Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). However, perceived, subjective, and objective fit may differ in how they are measured and the meaning they represent conceptually (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Future research should examine both the effects of subjective and objective fits simultaneously. Because team members have

different inclinations when interpreting their environments, it is valuable to use different fit measurements depending on their purpose. Finally, we acknowledge that our study variables' ICC(2) values were relatively low. Since a slight variation between groups may be attributed to the fact that all groups come from the same organization, Schneider and Bowen (1985) recommend within-group agreement rather than between-group differences to justify aggregation. Thus, group-level reliability and ICC(1) values justify the group-level aggregation of the current variables.

The present study investigated how collective fit can influence interpersonal deviance by examining the moderating role of the two-way interaction between collective fit perception, its dispersion, and team outcomes. Despite its limitations, this study enriches our understanding of collective fit and its dispersion on interpersonal deviance. Although a significant amount of research on collective fit has been conducted, we still need to find the mechanism. Hence, additional research is warranted and critical to advancing our understanding of collective fit perception.

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Jee Young Seong is an Associate Professor in the Department of Business Administration at Jeonbuk National University. Her research interests include person-environment fit and diversity within organizations, work-life balance, and cultural differences in the organization. Her research has appeared in *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Human Resource Management Journal*, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, and *Group and Organization Management*, among others. [*Email:* sjylyk@jbnu.ac.kr]