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# Mediating roles of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in the relationships between perceived person-job fit and work outcomes

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**Most fit scholars primarily focused on the direct relationship between perceived person-job fit and work-related outcomes. However, they offered little understanding of the mediating process linking these relationships. Hence, the present study specifically considered intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy as the mediating variables. After analyzing 256 sets of employee and supervisor questionnaires collected from 12 frozen seafood processing factories in Taiwan, this study found that perceived person-job fit was directly related to job involvement and job performance. In addition, it was also found that both intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy served as important mediating and motivational mechanisms in the relationship between perceived person-job fit and job involvement, as well as those between perceived person-job fit and job performance. Implications for practice were discussed and directions for future research were also provided.**

**Key words:** Person-job fit, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, job involvement, job performance.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to sustain competitive edge in dynamic environments, it is imperative that organization retain the right employees and assign them to the right jobs. Here, the right employees for the right jobs refer to those who hold person-job fit (P-J fit). The effects of P-J fit on work-related outcomes are well documented in fit literature. For example, P-J fit significantly influences job satisfaction (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001), job performance (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1992), affective organizational commitment (Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009), organizational identification, stress symptoms, and intentions to quit (Saks and Ashforth, 1997). Despite the comprehensive study on the relationship between P-J fit and employee work outcomes, it appears that job involvement as a possible outcome of P-J fit, remains untested. As mentioned earlier, P-J fit results in favorable attitudes such as increased job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment. Likewise, when employees perceive high P-J fit, they are more likely to be involved in their jobs than those who perceive low P-J fit. Thus, the present study seeks to fill the gap in fit literature by proposing job

involvement as a potential work outcome. Moreover, although there are inconsistent results with regard to the linkage between P-J fit and job performance, it is suggested that "individuals can provide largely accurate reports of their ability levels" (Cable and DeRue, 2002). Thus, this study considers job performance as another work outcome of P-J fit.

Studies on P-J fit undertaken by most scholars primarily focus on its direct relationship with employee attitudes and behaviors. However, they provide little understanding of the mediating process linking these relationships. Greguras and Diefendorff (2009) present what could be the first identified competence need satisfaction as a significant mediating variable in the P-J fit-job performance relationship. This neglect of the mediating process reveals a gap in fit literature. To fill this void, the current study uses Herzberg's (1959) motivation factors, the job characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980), as well as social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) as a theoretical framework to test whether or not intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy serve as mediating and motivational mechanisms in the relationship between P-J

fit and work outcomes (in terms of job involvement and job performance).

## PERSON-JOB FIT

Edwards (1991) conceptualize P-J fit in terms of two distinct forms, namely, needs-supplies (N-S) fit and demands-abilities (D-A) fit. These two forms are also explored extensively in Cable and DeRue's (2002) study. N-S fit indicates the degree to which employees' desires are met by job supplies (Edwards, 1991). Employees' desires consist of psychological needs, values, goals, interests and preferences, whereas job supplies include pay, benefits, training, interesting and challenging work, promotion opportunities, recognition, good working conditions, and decision-making latitude (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Edwards, 1991). D-A fit denotes the degree to which job demands are met by employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) (Edwards, 1991). Job demands consist of work load, performance requirements and instrumental activities. KSAs refer to employees' aptitudes, experience, and education (Edwards, 1991).

Other researchers like Chang et al. (2010), Kristof-Brown (2000), and O'Reilly et al. (1992) use D-A fit and P-J fit interchangeably. Following these researchers, the present study also regards D-A fit as P-J fit and defines it as the degree to which employees perceive the match between their knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), and job demands

P-J fit is widely explored by fit scholars. For example, through hierarchical regression analyses, Chang et al. (2010) investigate the moderating effects of perceived P-J fit and P-O fit on the relationship between training investment and turnover intentions among 303 research and development engineers from 30 high-technology firms in Taiwan. Controlling for perceived needs-supplies fit and demographic variables, Chang et al. (2010) find that perceived P-J fit, P-O fit, and perceived training investment jointly affect turnover intentions. In two empirical studies, Kristof-Brown (2000) tests whether or not applicants' P-J fit and P-O fit are conceptually distinct from recruiters' perspectives. Having performed the confirmation factor analysis, she states that a two-factor model (perceived P-J fit and P-O fit) suits the data better than a one-factor model, lending support to her hypothesis that recruiters discriminate between applicants' P-J fit and P-O fit during interviews.

O'Reilly et al. (1992), using a profile comparison process (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990) to assess P-J fit among 65 marketing representatives of a computer company, describe P-J fit as "...the competencies or knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) necessary to perform the job". Their correlation analysis shows that P-J fit is positively associated with job performance ( $r = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), the measure of actual sales ( $r = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

It is widely accepted among scholars that perceived fit closely predicts employee attitudes and behaviors (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Chang et al., 2010; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; Saks and Ashforth, 1997). As such, the term "perceived P-J fit" is used in the remaining text of this study.

## PERCEIVED P-J FIT AND WORK OUTCOMES

Job involvement can be defined as one's "psychological identification with a job" (Kanungo, 1982b). It also refers to "the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one's present job" (Paullay et al., 1994). In other words, employees who demonstrate high involvement in their jobs truly care for their jobs (Kanungo, 1982b; Lodahl and Kejner, 1965).

To date, no known research has directly linked perceived P-J fit to job involvement. The study conducted by Hall and Lawler (1970) provides an indirect link. They indicate that when employees' needs for acquiring competence are satisfied by their job, this fulfillment can encourage them to make greater efforts, thereby, further increasing job involvement. In addition, the job characteristics model (JCM) also helps postulate the perceived P-J fit-job involvement linkage. When employees perceive that their jobs involve core characteristics (that is, skill variety, task identity, etc.), it may inspire their intrinsic motivation, and subsequently increase their job involvement. This is evidenced in the study conducted by Chen and Chiu (2009) who find that two of the job characteristics (that is, task significant and autonomy) are positively related to employees' job involvement. Taken together, these studies imply that when employees are competent in doing their jobs with requisite KSAs while regarding their jobs as important and meaningful, they are likely to display greater job involvement. Accordingly, this study predicts a positive relationship between perceived P-J fit and job involvement.

Past results vary with regards to the perceived P-J fit-job performance relationship. Only two studies (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990; O'Reilly et al., 1992) find significant links between P-J fit and subjective and objective performance. However, the links between perceived P-J fit and job performance are not evidenced in other studies. For example, contrary to expectations, Cable and DeRue (2002), Greguras and Diefendorff (2009), and Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) find no direct effect of perceived demands-abilities fit/or perceived P-J fit on job performance. Nevertheless, it is suggested that "individuals can provide largely accurate reports of their ability levels" (Cable and DeRue, 2002). In addition, theoretically speaking, employees who perceive a good match between their own KSAs and the job requirements are likely to perform their jobs effectively (Kristof-Brown et al., 2002; Lepak and Gowan, 2010).

In view of the aforementioned, the present study

expects perceived P-J fit to be positively linked with job involvement and job performance. The hypothesis is developed as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Perceived P-J fit is positively related to (a) job involvement and (b) job performance, respectively.

### **MEDIATING ROLES OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND SELF-EFFICACY**

Although the perceived P-J fit-job performance relationship yields inconsistent results, Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) provide a plausible explanation for this. They point out that the relationship may change depending on how P-J fit and job performance are operationalized and measured. With no direct relationship between perceived P-J fit and job performance, Greguras and Diefendorff (2009) suggest that demands-abilities fit (operationalized as P-J fit) is a distal antecedent of job performance, and that "this effect may not be detected in bivariate tests." Thus, in their study, they use psychological need satisfaction (a form of intrinsic motivation) as a mediating variable to explain the mediating process, and their results show that perceived demands-abilities fit is indirectly linked to job performance through competence need satisfaction. Based on Greguras and Diefendorff's (2009) research, the present study also considers intrinsic motivation as a possible mediating mechanism in the perceived P-J fit-job performance relationship.

Intrinsic motivation refers to a psychological state, in which an employee finds the task itself interesting and derives enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction from completing or working on that specific task (Deci et al., 1989). Herzberg's motivation factors (for example, achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement and growth) are often viewed as predictors of satisfaction. If present in a job, these are likely to increase employees' intrinsic motivation and satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Moreover, according to the job characteristics model, when jobs are high on the dimensions of skill variety, task identity and task significance, employees experience the meaningfulness of their work; in turn, this leads to the formation of high intrinsic motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1980).

Herzberg's motivation factors and the job characteristics model provide a link between perceived P-J fit and intrinsic motivation. When employees feel that their KSAs enable them to meet their job's demands, they begin to perceive their jobs as important and meaningful; such positive feelings are likely to promote their intrinsic motivation. Past studies indicate that P-J fit is positively related to motivation (Edwards, 1991). In this kind of situation, a positive relationship between perceived P-J fit and job performance can be expected.

Moreover, Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory helps draw a connection between perceived P-J fit and

self-efficacy. The social cognitive theory is rooted in the view of individuals as being proactively engaged in their own development such that they are more actively involved in taking control of their actions. The key to this is that individuals believe that "...what they think, believe, and feel affect how they behave" (Bandura, 1986). In a work setting, self-efficacy refers to an employee's belief in his or her capability to perform certain tasks successfully. In this respect, self-efficacy is relevant to the definition of perceived P-J fit. Employees, who possess appropriate KSAs and have experienced success on specific tasks in the past, are likely to enhance their self-efficacy; such enhanced self-efficacy can make them feel competent in effectively completing future tasks (Bandura, 1997). Hence, self-efficacy arises from the acquisition of required KSAs through past experience or performance. The previous discussion facilitates the creation of the following hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: Perceived P-J fit is positively related to (a) intrinsic motivation and (b) self-efficacy, respectively.

As for the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job involvement, past studies show that when employees find the job itself interesting and are intrinsically motivated to perform the tasks, they are more likely to be involved in their respective jobs (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2008). There is also evidence that job involvement is more strongly correlated with motivation than with job satisfaction, indicating that job involvement, is conceptually more similar to motivation than job satisfaction (Huszczko, 1981).

Moreover, previous studies reveal a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Joo et al., 2010; Kuvaas, 2006a, b). Similar links can also be located in the fields of education (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004) and sports (Callahan et al., 2003). These studies consistently demonstrate that intrinsically motivated individuals tend to engage in higher levels of performance.

As far as the relationship between self-efficacy and job involvement is concerned, in a research investigating the effect of job self-efficacy on job involvement among 419 clinical nursing teachers, Yang et al. (2006) show that clinical nursing teachers' self-efficacy significantly increases their job involvement. The similar finding is proposed by Shih et al. (2009), who indicate that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and job involvement of internal auditors.

Consistent with the study conducted by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998), Jawahar et al. (2008) also find that self-efficacy is an important predictor of task performance. Similarly, in applying the social cognitive theory to test their hypothesized model, Wang and Netemeyer (2002) find that a salesperson's self-efficacy is positively related to sales performance in the real estate sample and advertising sample. All of these studies suggest a

positive linkage between self-efficacy and job performance.

Given that “good performance is self-reinforcing” (George and Jones, 2002), high P-J fit individuals are more likely to generate a positive feeling about their jobs, which in turn, will inspire their intrinsic motivation and a sense of self-efficacy, and subsequently, increase their job involvement and job performance (Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Lent et al., 1994) than those low P-J fit individuals. Accordingly, this study anticipates that intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy serve as mediating mechanisms in the following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub>: Intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy simultaneously mediate the relationships between: (a) Perceived P-J fit and job involvement; (b) Perceived P-J fit and job performance.

Based on the relevant literature discussed, a research model is developed and presented as Figure 1.

## METHODS

### Sample and procedures

In this study, Taiwan's frozen seafood industry was selected for investigation. With the assistance of the general secretary of the association, the top management of 12 factories agreed to participate in the research. The human resource (HR) managers were requested to distribute the questionnaires. Given that the number of employees in each department in each factory differed, 3 to 6 questionnaires were distributed to each department. Employees in each department were randomly chosen by the HR manager to participate in the survey. The HR manager of each factory was requested to return the completed questionnaires with a stamped envelope addressed to the researcher.

To avoid problems related to social desirability, all respondents received an accompanying cover letter assuring complete confidentiality (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Two sets of questionnaires were used in the study. The employee questionnaire included P-J fit, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, job involvement, and demographic questions (organizational tenure, education, and department). The supervisor questionnaires included employee job performance and demographic questions. Although the present study used different sources (for example, employees and their direct supervisors) to measure the independent-dependent relationship to avoid common methods bias, causal relationship variables (for example, P-J fit, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, job involvement) answered by the same respondent still existed. Hence, the items in the employee questionnaire were randomized to “reduce any potential ordering effects” (Neubert et al., 2008).

Moreover, Harman's one-factor test (Anderson and Bateman, 1997) was another approach adopted in the study. A principal components factor analysis on the question items yielded 5 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, which accounted for 69.48% of the total variance. A substantial amount of common method bias seemed to be absent (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Podsakoff et al., 2003) as the first factor did not account for the majority of the variance (21.39%). The problem of common method bias was reduced greatly, indicating that there was no negative or positive affectivity behind the participants' response.

To match the dyadic responses, the researcher assigned a

matching number to the supervisor and the employee questionnaires; afterwards, the HR manager of each factory double-checked and ensured that the supervisor and the employee questionnaires were properly matched. Of the 450 sets of employee and supervisor questionnaires distributed, 310 sets of completed questionnaires were returned. With 54 invalid questionnaires (incomplete data), 256 sets of employee and supervisor questionnaires were kept for analysis, representing a response rate of 56.99%. In terms of demographics, 19.6% had tenures of less than 5 years, 41.3% had tenures from 6 to 10 years, and 39.1% had tenures of more than 11 years. As for education, 50.8% of the respondents graduated from high school/vocational high school, whereas 49.2% had college degrees or above. Moreover, 59.6% of the respondents worked in administrative departments (for example, accounting, client service, sales, HR, etc.), whereas, 40.4% worked in production departments.

### Measures

Except for the demographic variables, all measures used response options ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Items in the scales were averaged to create an overall mean for each variable. Higher values indicated greater variable strengths.

Person-job fit was measured with a three-item scale ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) adapted from Cable and DeRue (2002). Sample items included the following: “The match between the demands of my job and my personal skills is very good” and “My abilities and training are a good fit with the requirements of my job.”

Intrinsic motivation was measured using a six-item scale developed by Kuvaas and Dysvik (2009). Sample items included the following: “The tasks that I do at work are enjoyable” and “My job is so interesting that it is a motivation in itself.” The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.86.

Self-efficacy was measured with an eight-item scale developed by Chen et al. (2001). Sample items included the following: “I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself” and “When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.” The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.92.

Job involvement was measured with a 10-item scale developed by Kanungo (1982a). Sample items included the following: “Most of my interests are centered around my job” and “The most important things that happen to me involve my present job.” Two items were reverse coded. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.87.

Job performance was measured with a four-item scale developed by Van Dyne and LePine (1998). Direct supervisors were asked to evaluate their subordinates' job performance. Sample items included the following: “This particular subordinate fulfills the responsibilities specified in his/her job description” and “This particular subordinate meets performance expectations.” The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.94.

Control variables organizational tenure, education, and department were controlled in this study because these factors may influence job involvement and job performance. Organizational tenure was measured in number of continuous years. As for education, high school/ vocational high school degree was coded as 0, whereas college/ university degree was coded as 1. In addition, administrative department was coded as 0, and production department was coded as 1.

Given that this study focused on the effect of perceived P-J fit on work outcomes, perceived needs-supplies fit was controlled in each step of the mediation regression analyses. The scale was adapted from Cable and DeRue (2002) and consisted of three items ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ), including “The attributes that I look for in a job are fulfilled very well by my present job” and “There is a good fit between what my job offers me and what I am looking for in a job.”

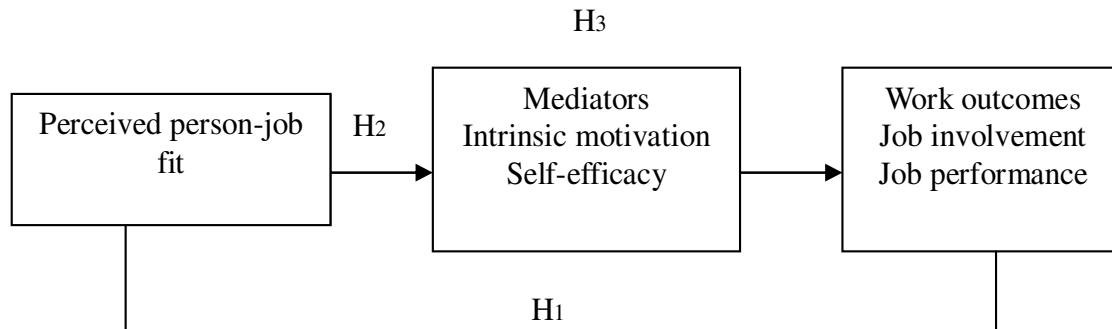


Figure 1. A research model.

### Translation of measures

The original English versions of the measures were translated into Chinese by the researcher and then back-translated into English by a bilingual foreign language expert. In order to ensure the content validity of the measures, the translation was reviewed for appropriateness by two scholars specializing in organizational behavior (Brislin, 1986).

### Analyses

Multicollinearity was assessed in this study by examining the tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) values. Multicollinearity refers to the relationship, in which an independent variable (IV) is nearly a linear combination of two or more other IVs. Tolerance is the degree of variability of a specific IV, which is not explained by other IVs. The recommended cut-off value is 0.10. Small tolerance values (that is, those close to 0.10) imply that multicollinearity exists (Hair et al., 1998). Table 1 illustrates that all the tolerance values were more than 0.10. Regarding VIF diagnosis, the VIF indicates the impact of other IVs on the regression coefficient. High VIF values (that is, >5) indicate that there exists multicollinearity (Hair et al., 1998). The results in Table 1 demonstrate that all the VIF values were less than 5.

The present study tested the mediation hypotheses, following Baron and Kenny's (1986) three-step regression procedure. In the first step, the IV should be significantly related to the dependent variable (DV). In the second step, the IV should be significantly related to the mediator. In the third step, the mediator should be related to the DV after the IV was entered. Partial mediation exists if the IV-DV relationship remains significant even if the beta value decreases. However, there is full mediation if the IV-DV relationship becomes insignificant and the beta value diminishes.

## RESULTS

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, alpha coefficients, and inter-correlations of the study variables. As far as demographics is concerned, the longer employees remained in an organization, the higher their job involvement ( $r = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and job performance ( $r = 0.23$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were (Table 2). In addition, employees who graduated from colleges or universities tended to have higher levels of job involvement ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

Regarding the relationships between perceived P-J fit

and work outcomes, perceived P-J fit was positively correlated with job involvement ( $r = 0.44$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and job performance ( $r = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). As for the relationship between perceived P-J fit and mediators, results indicated that perceived P-J fit was positively correlated with intrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.51$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In addition, intrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was positively associated with job involvement ( $r = 0.53$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and job performance ( $r = 0.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), whereas self-efficacy was also positively associated with job involvement ( $r = 0.56$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and job performance ( $r = 0.60$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The previous results provide preliminary support for H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>.

Table 3 exhibits the results of mediation analyses. As can be seen from the results, Step 1 shows that perceived P-J fit was significantly related to job involvement ( $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and job performance ( $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), respectively, when demographics and perceived N-S fit were controlled, supporting H<sub>1</sub>. In Step 2, perceived P-J fit was also significantly related to intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H<sub>2</sub>. In Step 3, the results reveal that intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.30$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were significantly related to job involvement after perceived P-J fit was included. In this step, the perceived P-J fit-job involvement relationship became insignificant ( $\beta = 0.02$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), and the beta value decreased noticeably from 0.20 to 0.02, indicating a full mediation.

Step 3 was repeated for the perceived P-J fit-job performance relationship. Intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and self-efficacy ( $\beta = 0.50$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were significantly related to job performance after perceived P-J fit was entered (Table 3). In addition, the relationship between perceived P-J fit and job performance became insignificant ( $\beta = 0.07$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), and the beta value diminished considerably from 0.32 to 0.07, demonstrating a full mediation. Hence, the results provide support for H<sub>3</sub>, indicating that intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy fully mediated the relationship between perceived P-J fit and job involvement, and between perceived P-J fit and

**Table 1.** Multicollinearity diagnostics.

Parameter	Tolerance	VIF
Perceived person-job fit	0.57	1.76
Intrinsic motivation	0.61	1.64
Self-efficacy	0.68	1.48

**Table 2.** Correlations, means, and standard deviations.

S/N	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Organizational tenure	2.76	0.95	—								
2	Education	1.49	0.50	0.09	—							
3	Department	0.45	0.50	-0.00	0.04	—						
4	Perceived N-S fit	3.75	0.74	0.01	0.02	0.10	(0.91)					
5	Perceived P-J fit	3.91	0.80	0.20**	0.03	0.03	0.63**	(0.84)				
6	Intrinsic motivation	3.95	0.68	0.21**	0.08	0.06	0.50**	0.59**	(0.86)			
7	Self-efficacy	3.91	0.67	0.20**	0.02	0.09	0.48**	0.51**	0.60**	(0.92)		
8	Job involvement	3.72	0.67	0.20**	0.18**	0.01	0.46**	0.44**	0.53**	0.56**	(0.87)	
9	Job performance	3.87	0.79	0.23**	0.06	0.03	0.36**	0.47**	0.59**	0.60**	0.40	(0.94)

Notes: N = 256. Perceived N-S fit = perceived needs-supplies fit; Perceived P-J fit = perceived person-job fit; Reliability estimates appear in parentheses along the diagonal. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01.

job performance.

**DISCUSSION**

The relationship between perceived P-J fit and job performance is explored in existing fit literature (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; O’Reilly et al., 1992). However, job involvement as a possible consequence of perceived P-J fit remains untested. Moreover, little is known about the motivational process that links perceived P-J fit to work-related outcomes, thereby leaving a gap in fit literature. To fill this

void, the present study applied Herzberg’s motivation factors, the job characteristics model, and social cognitive theory to test the direct and indirect relationships between perceived P-J fit and job involvement as well as those between perceived P-J fit and job performance in the hypothesized model.

Having performed the mediation regression analyses, the current study found perceived P-J fit to be positively related to job involvement, supporting the standpoints of Hall and Lawler (1970) and Chen and Chiu (2009). Concerning the link of perceived P-J fit and job performance, many previous studies (Cable and DeRue, 2002; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Lauver and

Kristof-Brown, 2001) find no direct and significant relationship between these two. Contrary to those studies, the present research found perceived P-J fit to be significantly linked to job performance when demographic variables were controlled. The results of this study are consistent with those of earlier research conducted by Caldwell and O’Reilly (1990) and O’Reilly et al. (1992). Considering that perceived P-J fit is competence-related (Cable and DeRue, 2002), employees who possess the appropriate KSAs are expected to meet their job demands, become involved in their work, and continue to perform at a high level.

According to bivariate correlations, organizational tenure was significantly associated with

**Table 3.** Regression analysis results for mediation.

Variable	Step 1: IV→DV	Step 2: IV→Med	Step 2: IV→Med	Step 3: IV and
	$\beta$	Intrinsic motivation $\beta$	Self-efficacy $\beta$	Med→DV $\beta$
<b>DV: Job involvement</b>				
Controls				
Organizational tenure	0.13*	0.11*	0.12*	0.07
Education	0.18***	0.07	0.01	0.17***
Department	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.07
Perceived needs-supplies fit	0.33***	0.23***	0.27***	0.20**
<b>IV</b>				
Perceived person-job fit	0.20**			0.02
<b>Med</b>				
Intrinsic motivation		0.42***		0.22***
Self-efficacy			0.32***	0.30***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.30	0.39	0.32	0.43
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.28	0.38	0.31	0.41
$\Delta R^2$	0.30	0.39	0.32	0.13
F	20.87***	31.80***	23.36***	26.11***
<b>DV: Job performance</b>				
Controls				
Organizational tenure	0.16**	0.11*	0.12*	0.08
Education	0.10	0.07	0.01	0.12**
Department	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.07
Perceived needs-supplies fit	0.15*	0.23***	0.27***	0.05
<b>IV</b>				
Perceived person-job fit	0.32***			0.07
<b>Med</b>				
Intrinsic motivation		0.42***		0.26***
Self-efficacy			0.32***	0.50***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.25	0.39	0.32	0.53
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.23	0.38	0.31	0.52
$\Delta R^2$	0.25	0.39	0.32	0.28
F	16.45***	31.80***	23.36***	40.02***

N = 256. Standardized betas are reported from each of the three steps. IV = independent variables; Med = mediator variable; DV = dependent variable; \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

perceived P-J fit ( $r = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and job performance ( $r = 0.23$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 2). The demographic results show that 41.3% of the participants had tenures ranging from 6 to 10 years and 39.1% had tenures of more than 11 years. Such findings seem to suggest that employees with longer organizational tenures are accustomed to their daily tasks; thus, they can be expected to possess the necessary KSAs to carry out their tasks. This result

may provide a plausible explanation for the significant linkage between perceived P-J fit and job performance.

Moreover, in line with the viewpoint of Edwards (1991), the present study also found that perceived P-J fit was positively linked to intrinsic motivation. Herzberg et al.'s (1959) motivation factors and the job characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980) implicitly facilitate such linkage. When P-J fit employees perceive their jobs

as important and meaningful, such positive psychological feelings are likely to enhance their intrinsic motivation. In addition, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) provides a connection between perceived P-J fit and self-efficacy. According to the theory, past experience or performance influences an individual's self-efficacy, implying that P-J fit employees who perform better in the past are more likely to build up their confidence and believe that they are capable of completing tasks in the future than those with a P-J misfit. The association between perceived P-J fit and self-efficacy was, therefore, supported by the results of the study.

Consistent with previous research (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2008; Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Huszczo, 1981; Jawahar et al., 2008; Joo et al., 2010; Stajkovic and Lutheans, 1998; Yang et al., 2006), both intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy were found to significantly influence job involvement and job performance. These results suggest that intrinsically motivated employees with a strong sense of self-efficacy are more likely to display high levels of job involvement and job performance than those who lack intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy beliefs.

In addition to the evident direct links, the current study empirically confirmed that intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy played vital motivational roles in mediating the relationships between perceived P-J fit and job involvement as well as those between perceived P-J fit and job performance. By examining motivational processes, this study provided a better understanding of how perceived P-J fit indirectly relates to job involvement and job performance through intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy.

### Practical implications

Top management should be aware that if employees' KSAs are not matched with their job requirements, organizations are likely to make more errors, resulting in higher production costs, lower employee morale (Lepak and Gowan, 2010), and high stress symptoms and intentions to quit (Saks and Ashforth, 1997) that, in turn, can be detrimental to organizational operations.

The results of the current study show that perceived P-J fit could enhance employees' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Such enhancement on intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy could then increase employees' job involvement and job performance. To ensure that employees possessed appropriate KSAs to keep themselves intrinsically motivated and generate more confidence in their abilities in coping with difficult or challenging tasks, the HRM department could design a skills inventory system or develop a competence assessment system to achieve this end. Either of the systems offers a number of beneficial functions, such as identifying prospective employees during the selection process, determining who should get promoted, planning

job rotation effectively, dispatching employees overseas, determining employees for transfer due to job misfit, as well as ascertaining training needs for new and existing employees at all levels.

### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study contains a number of limitations that should be addressed. First, the research conducted concerned Taiwan's frozen seafood industry. Consequently, its findings are not applicable to other industries. However, a comparative research on the effects of perceived P-J fit on work outcomes in different sectors (for example, high-tech, services, etc.) can be conducted in the future.

Secondly, the main purpose of this study is to understand the actual feelings and thoughts of the participants regarding perceived P-J fit, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and job involvement. Therefore, it is more appropriate that the employees answer these questions. To avoid same-source bias, question items were randomized in the questionnaire, and the Harman's one-factor test was employed in the study. However, to maintain precision with the research methods, the present study suggests that subsequent researchers consider questionnaire distribution under different time periods. For example, the HR manager can initially distribute questionnaires on intrinsic motivation and job involvement. After two weeks, he or she can then distribute questionnaires on perceived P-J fit and self-efficacy with randomized question items.

Thirdly, as mentioned earlier, this study mainly focused on the mediating process in the proposed relationships. Recent studies reveal that perceived training opportunities (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2008), job characteristics (Torraco, 2005), and psychological empowerment (Seibert et al., 2004) are positively related to job performance. Moreover, Cable and DeRue (2002) suggest that future research can develop the measurement of perceived P-J misfit for employees who are under matched or overmatched as well as examine its effects on work outcomes. Accordingly, future researchers can explore whether or not perceived training opportunities serve as the moderator of the relationship between perceived P-J misfit for under matched employees and job performance. Job characteristics and psychological empowerment can also be considered as potential moderators of the relationship between perceived P-J misfit for overmatched employees and job performance.

Finally, in the current study, bivariate correlations showed that organizational tenure was correlated with job involvement and job performance, indicating that senior employees tended to demonstrate high levels of job involvement, resulting in better job performance than new employees. Hence, the potential moderating effect of organizational tenure on the relationships between perceived P-J fit and job involvement as well as those



between perceived P-J fit and job performance may be avenues worth exploring in future research.

In conclusion, this study specifically explored the mediating process from perceived P-J fit to work-related outcomes. In addition to the direct links being discovered, the results of the present study indicate that intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy mediated the perceived P-J fit-job involvement relationship and the perceived P-J fit-job performance relationship. These demonstrate that intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy, indeed, serve as important mediating and motivational mechanisms. Such findings significantly contribute to current fit literature.

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