

# Stability and Change in Person–Team and Person–Role Fit Over Time: The Effects of Growth Satisfaction, Performance, and General Self-Efficacy

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Although considerable research has focused on various forms of person–environment fit, little research has examined how person–team and person–role fit operate over time in team contexts. To address this gap, the authors examined the dynamic nature of values-based person–team fit and person–role fit. They identified several factors that influence these fit perceptions over time. Individuals were composed into teams that worked intensively over an extended time period. Results suggest that person–team fit, when conceptualized as values congruence, is generally stable over time, but perceptions of person–role fit in teams are dynamic. Individuals' growth satisfaction and performance were positively related to increases in person–role fit over time. Furthermore, the effect of performance on person–role fit was moderated by individuals' general self-efficacy. Implications for managerial practice and future research are discussed.

*Keywords:* fit, teams, self-efficacy

Lewin (1935) proposed that human behavior is a function of both the person and the environment. The notion that behavior can be explained via a person–environment interaction has become one of the more widely accepted theoretical perspectives of human behavior. Using this interactionist perspective, researchers have developed numerous conceptions of person–environment fit, including an individual's fit with a particular vocation, job, organization, or team (e.g., Holland, 1985; Kristof-Brown, Jansen, & Colbert, 2002; Schneider, 2001). Person–environment fit is defined as “the compatibility between an individual and a particular work environment that occurs when their characteristics are well matched” (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005, p. 281). People develop perceptions of fit over time, and these perceptions drive individual behavior and choices (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003).

As organizations increasingly structure work around teams (Ilgen, 1999), the concept of perceived fit has become especially important in team contexts. Teams are composed of two or more individuals who share common goals, interact socially, and exhibit task interdependencies (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). Given these characteristics of teams, two forms of person–environment fit are particularly noteworthy. First, *person–team fit* focuses on the compatibility between individual team members and their team (Kristof, 1996). This form of compatibility has been conceptualized along several dimensions, including goals (Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001), values (Adkins, Ravlin, & Meglino, 1996), workplace rhythms (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2005), and dispositional traits such as personality (Barsade, Ward, Turner, & Sonnenfeld,

2000; Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Stevens, 2005). Person–team fit has been linked to individual-level outcomes such as satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to quit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). The second form of person–environment fit that is particularly relevant in teams is *person–role fit*. Person–role fit reflects the compatibility between an individual's personal characteristics and the features of his or her role within the team. This is very similar to traditional conceptualizations of person–job fit (Edwards, 1991), but the term *role* is more descriptive of individuals' responsibilities in team contexts (Ilgen, 1994). Whereas the term *job* focuses on the established or formal task elements of work, roles encompass both established task elements and the emergent task elements that are specified by social sources such as teams (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Given that team member roles include both formalized functional task elements and informal socially defined task elements (Belbin, 1993), we focus here on the fit between the team member and his or her role within the team.

Despite the recognition that fit in teams is important, there are several important limitations of existing research that have to be addressed. First, few studies have considered fit as a dependent variable, and thus relatively little is known about the mechanisms that stimulate or produce perceptions of fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Most research on person–environment fit relies on Schneider's (1987) attraction–selection–attrition (ASA) model to explain how high levels of fit are generated. Other research has considered how certain socialization practices produce higher levels of perceived fit (Cable & Parsons, 2001). Most of this research is cross-sectional and thus fails to address how different conceptualizations of fit operate over time. Second, the literature on fit has often been criticized for not considering multiple conceptualizations of fit in the same study (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; see Cable & DeRue, 2002, for an exception). This criticism is especially appropriate for research on fit in teams (e.g., Adkins et al., 1996), where existing studies only examine outcomes associated with percep-

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tions of person–team fit. Yet, other conceptions of fit such as person–role fit are important in team contexts. Individual team members have specific roles that they must perform, and perceptions of person–role fit are likely to influence how team members fulfill these roles over time. Finally, current research on person–environment fit focuses primarily on between-persons perceptions of fit and generally ignores how and why these perceptions of fit might change over time within people. Given the importance of fit perceptions in organizational settings (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), understanding the dynamic nature of fit perceptions is critical for both theoretical and practical purposes.

To address these limitations, we examined two forms of perceived fit in teams: values-based person–team fit and person–role fit. Specifically, we used the team development literature to inform how perceptions of values-based person–team fit and person–role fit operate over time. We then examined how an individual's (a) growth satisfaction and (b) performance influence changes in these fit perceptions over time. Finally, we examined how individuals' general self-efficacy influences the relationship between individual performance and changes in fit perceptions over time. Because general self-efficacy impacts how individuals interpret the meaning of and attributions about their performance (Bandura, 1997), we expected individual differences in general self-efficacy to moderate the relationship between performance and fit perceptions.

### Understanding the Dynamic Nature of Fit in Teams

As noted at the outset, people in teams are differentially compatible with both the team itself and their particular role within the team. Individual team members' perceptions of this compatibility are the basis for person–team and person–role fit, respectively. In team contexts, however, individuals are nested within an interdependent social system that functions in a complex and dynamic environment over time (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). Because individuals are nested within teams, individuals' perceptions of fit are in part a function of the evolution and development of the team. As detailed later in this article, we used existing theory on team development to construct a set of hypotheses regarding stability and change over time in individual-level perceptions of values-based person–team fit and person–role fit.

Kozlowski, Gully, Nason, and Smith (1999) constructed a theory of team development that incorporates the basic elements and principles of prior team development research (e.g., Bion, 1961; Tuckman, 1965). According to this theory, teams develop through four distinct phases: (a) team formation, (b) task compilation, (c) role compilation, and (d) team compilation. In the initial formation phase, team members engage in information seeking and self-disclosure processes that facilitate the development of interpersonal knowledge among team members. This interpersonal knowledge reflects a mutual understanding among team members regarding team members' personalities, attitudes, and values. According to Katz (1980), this interpersonal knowledge must be established before individuals will devote attention to work tasks. Thus, learning about other team members is the primary focus of individuals during early phases of team development and is essential for team functioning (Gabarro, 1990). In the task compilation phase, team members focus on learning and mastering their individual task without much concern for the interdependence and coordination requirements within the team. By the role compila-

tion phase, team members have expanded their perspective to consider how they must interact and coordinate with other team members in order for the team to be effective. Finally, in the team compilation phase, team members are focused on understanding how their specific role fits within the broader team context. These phases of team development shape how individual-level perceptions of person–team and person–role fit operate over time.<sup>1</sup>

Consistent with prior research (e.g., Adkins et al., 1996; Becker, 1992; Good & Nelson, 1971), we conceptualized person–team fit as perceived values congruence between individuals and their teams. Although person–team fit can be conceptualized along other dimensions (e.g., goals, dispositions), we are particularly interested in how values influence the dynamic nature of person–team fit. Values are intrinsic, enduring perspectives of what is fundamentally right or wrong (Rokeach, 1973). Research suggests that individuals possess a basic value structure that is relatively stable over time (Lusk & Oliver, 1974; Ravlin & Meglino, 1989). According to team development theory, as team members interact socially in the initial formation phase of team development, they come to understand the values of their team members, reflect on their own values, and upon comparison develop perceptions of values-based person–team fit. Individuals seek and develop interpersonal knowledge about other team members to reduce social ambiguity and create a mutual understanding among team members regarding their individual value structures. This is evident in Gersick's (1988) research on team development, where interpersonal knowledge is shared and developed very early in a team's life cycle. Once teams evolve beyond the formation phase, team members have the interpersonal knowledge they need in order to focus on task and role considerations. Because team members' values remain stable over time and perceptions of values congruence are established early in a team's life cycle, perceptions of values-based person–team fit should remain stable after the initial team formation phase.

*Hypothesis 1:* Individuals' perceptions of values-based person–team fit will remain generally stable after the team formation phase.

In contrast, perceptions of person–role fit are based on an interaction between characteristics of the person and features of his or her role within the team. Extending theory on person–job fit (Edwards, 1991) to individuals' roles within teams, person–role fit can be conceptualized along two dimensions: demands–abilities fit and needs–supplies fit. In team contexts, *demands–abilities fit* reflects the degree to which an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities are commensurate with the demands of his or her role within the team. For instance, a team member's perception of person–role fit would be high when his or her role requires skills or abilities that he or she possesses. If this individual did not have

<sup>1</sup> An important boundary condition of this study is that we chose to focus on the stability and change of fit perceptions after the initial formation phase of team development. Although not specifically studied in team contexts, prior research has already examined fit perceptions in early stage contexts such as organizational and group entry processes (e.g., Anderson & Thomas, 1996; Chatman, 1991; Moreland & Levine, 1989). We chose to examine the dynamic nature of fit perceptions in the later stages of team development.

the necessary skills to fulfill this role, his or her perception of person–role fit would be low. *Needs–supplies fit*, on the other hand, reflects the degree to which individuals' needs, desires, or preferences are met by their role within the team. For example, if an individual team member has a strong desire to develop his or her skills, perceptions of person–role fit will be high to the degree that the team and role offer opportunities for individual growth and skill development.

Perceptions of person–role fit are likely to change over time for several reasons. First, team members' roles dynamically adapt in response to changes in the team's environment (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Fundamental changes in team member roles can alter the degree to which individuals perceive that their abilities can meet the new set of role demands. Second, team development theory holds that team members learn about their individual task and role demands and evaluate their ability to meet these demands over time (Kozlowski et al., 1999). In the task and role compilation phases of team development, team members evaluate their ability to meet individual task demands and coordinate with other team members. Team members learn about their own role requirements, who they interact with to perform tasks, and when these tasks must be performed to ensure coordination in the team. In the team compilation phase, team members learn about their role within the broader team context—both in terms of what the role offers the individual and the individual's ability to perform the role. This learning process leads individual team members to develop more accurate perceptions of person–role fit, thus leading to variation in person–role fit over time. Third, a team's ability to meet the needs or preferences of individual team members changes over time because of a variety of factors, including variant task demands and social constraints.

*Hypothesis 2:* Individuals' perceptions of person–role fit will change over time.

#### Predicting Changes in Fit Perceptions Over Time

Most research on person–environment fit uses Schneider's (1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995) ASA model as a backdrop for explaining how perceptions of fit are generated. The ASA model suggests that individuals are attracted to organizations based on an implicit estimate of the congruence between their personal characteristics and the organization's attributes. Organizations then select people into the organization that have desirable attributes. Individuals who enter the organization who do not have these attributes eventually leave the organization. This model is helpful for explaining homogeneity within organizations (e.g., Jordan, Herriot, & Chalmers, 1991), but the model was not designed to nor does it identify the factors that prompt changes in individual-level perceptions of fit over time. Thus, recent research has called for longitudinal examinations of fit as a dependent variable and stressed that identifying the antecedents of perceived fit is fundamental to an understanding of the construct (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Herein, we construct a model of person–role fit as a dynamic construct and identify the antecedents to changes in person–role fit over time. In terms of antecedents, we focus first on growth satisfaction because it is one of the key needs that gets satisfied in team contexts and then individual performance because it is a key indicator of the match between a person's capabilities and his or her role in the team.

#### *Growth Satisfaction*

A long history of research acknowledges the importance of needs as internal mechanisms that influence individuals' cognitive and motivational processes (Kanfer, 1990). A variety of individual needs have been discussed in the literature, including the need for achievement, affiliation, social interaction and personal growth. Individuals experience a tension when these needs are not met and, in turn, direct their attention and effort toward fulfilling the unmet need (Mitchell & Daniels, 2003). According to Hackman (1990), one of the most important individual needs in team contexts is the need for personal growth and development. Thus, we focused on this particular need in the present study. Whereas some teams function in ways that prevent the development of individual team members, the most effective teams supply their team members with opportunities for learning and growth need satisfaction. This is consistent with other needs-based theories of motivation, wherein individual growth and skill development are often considered to be among the most important needs that individuals seek to fulfill (Aldefer, 1972; Herzberg, 1966; Kanfer, Ackerman, & Heggstad, 1996).

Given the importance of growth as an individual need, the fulfillment of growth needs will lead to increased perceived person–role fit over time. Person–role fit is in part a function of how well one's role in the team satisfies specific needs (needs–supplies fit). Personal growth is one of the most important needs that team members seek to fulfill. Thus, when an individual is highly satisfied with the opportunities for growth in his or her role, that person's need for growth and development is being fulfilled by the team. As this person's need for growth is increasingly met by the team, this person's perception of person–role fit should also increase over time. On the other hand, if a person is dissatisfied with the opportunities for growth in his or her role, this individual's need for growth is not being met by the team and his or her perception of person–role fit should decrease.

*Hypothesis 3:* Growth satisfaction will be positively related to changes in person–role fit over time.

#### *Performance*

Person–role fit is also a function of the perceived match between an individual's skills and abilities and the demands of his or her role within the team (demands–abilities fit). As individuals increasingly feel they are able to meet the demands of a particular role, the degree of perceived fit between the person and his or her role also increases. In team contexts, however, the process of forming these person–role fit perceptions is complicated by the fact that role demands are dynamic and consist of both functional and social elements (Belbin, 1993). As role demands change and present individual team members with new challenges, individuals are forced to reevaluate their person–role fit according to a revised set of role demands. To facilitate this reevaluation process, individual team members must obtain and interpret any available information that might serve as an indicator of their fit with the newly specified role. Using self-regulation theory, we suggest that performance information is one such indicator and individuals use this information to revise their perceptions of person–role fit over time.

Self-regulation theories of motivation posit that individuals use past performance information to shape their belief regarding their

own capacity to effectively meet specific task or role demands. For example, Bandura (1997) suggested that enactive attainments of performance are the most influential informational cue when it comes to forming beliefs or perceptions about one's ability to perform a specific task or role. In essence, people reflect on their past history of success or failure in order to reach conclusions about their level of competence. Similarly, control theorists (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Lord & Levy, 1994) have suggested that individuals use past performance information as cues to direct their attention and behavior. In cases of poor performance, individuals recognize that current levels of effort and ability are inadequate for the given task or role and, in turn, allocate their attention toward enhancing their effort or ability. In sum, one's performance in a particular role serves as information that then guides the individual's subsequent judgments and behaviors.

The principles of self-regulation theory can be extended to the domain of person–role fit. Positive performance experiences should lead individuals to conclude their current level of ability is a good fit with their role in the team. Thus, we would expect high individual performance to promote increases in person–role fit over time. In contrast, negative performance experiences should foster the belief that one's current ability level is inadequate for the given role and thus should promote decreases in perceived person–role fit over time.

*Hypothesis 4:* Individuals' performance in the team will be positively related to changes in person–role fit over time.

### General Self-Efficacy

The positive relationship between individual performance and changes in perceived person–role fit assumes that individuals attribute their performance to their own ability. Yet, individuals differ in the attributions they make about positive and negative performance experiences (Weiner, 1974). *General self-efficacy* has been forwarded as an explanation for these different attributions and has been defined as "individuals' perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations" (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998, p. 170). General self-efficacy can be distinguished from task-specific self-efficacy, which is a relatively malleable, task-specific belief, whereas general self-efficacy is a stable, trait-like belief in one's own competence (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001; Chen, Gully, Whiteman, & Kilcullen, 2000). General self-efficacy beliefs bias individuals' interpretations and causal attributions of their own performance (Bandura, 1997). For instance, individuals with high general self-efficacy tend to ascribe their failures to insufficient effort or unfavorable conditions related to a task or job. These same high-efficacy individuals, however, attribute success to their own level of ability. In contrast, individuals with low general self-efficacy attribute failures to a lack of ability and success to external factors such as luck. We expected the attributional tendencies associated with general self-efficacy to influence the nature of the relationship between individual performance and person–role fit.

Individuals with high general self-efficacy are more likely to attribute good performance to their own ability, thereby concluding that their personal characteristics are compatible with their role in the team. Superior performance serves as a signal that one's own ability level meets the demands of the role. If these high-efficacy

individuals experience poor performance, however, they will attribute this performance to causes outside of their control. Because of these attributional tendencies, individuals with high general self-efficacy will experience a strong positive relationship between performance and person–role fit. On the other hand, individuals with low general self-efficacy are less likely to attribute success to their own ability to meet role demands. In fact, these individuals are more likely to attribute high performance to something beyond their control. As such, individuals with low general self-efficacy are less likely to exhibit the same strong, positive relationship between performance and person–role fit.

*Hypothesis 5:* General self-efficacy moderates the relationship between individual performance and person–role fit, such that the relationship will be stronger for individuals with high general self-efficacy.

## Method

### Participants and Setting

This study was conducted in an experiential class setting at a large midwestern university in which teams of students work together over the course of a semester in a senior-level management course. Participants were 205 undergraduate business students and 43 master of business administration (MBA) students. The undergraduates served as the team members on 4- to 6- person teams, where each of the 43 teams was led by a single MBA student. Sixty percent of the undergraduates were male, and 65% of the MBA students were male. The average age of the undergraduate and MBA students was 21.9 and 28.5 years, respectively.

The class was designed to model an organizational context in that the teams experienced all aspects of team formation, development, and performance across a 15-week semester. Specifically, team members were involved in numerous selection and recruitment activities, including ability and personality testing, structured and unstructured interviews, and targeted recruiting activities. The team leaders were responsible for interviewing, selecting, recruiting, and then leading their teams over the course of the semester. Once formed, teams underwent training and development on the computer simulation used in the course as well as various team building exercises. Finally, teams competed with other teams in 12 highly interactive team-based command-and-control computer simulations. Team performance on the simulations had a large impact on the participants' grades (20% of total grade), thus ensuring adequate motivation.

During this study, team members received considerable individual-level feedback. This feedback was delivered in three forms. First, individuals received formal ongoing feedback from their team leaders. For example, leaders would routinely review and comment on individual performance in e-mail communication, one-on-one feedback sessions, and team discussions. At the end of the semester, team members also received formal performance appraisals from their leaders. This feedback did not include the actual performance ratings used in the current study but did touch on both task and contextual elements of performance. Second, individuals received informal feedback from their team members. For example, teams often talked informally about individual-level performances—both in general and specific to particular simula-

tion tasks. Finally, individuals received feedback from the task itself. For instance, individuals monitored their individual scores in real time during and after the task. The task also indicated to each individual (in real time) when he or she made performance errors. In other words, the task provided individuals with considerable performance feedback (both during and after the task) that they could use to interpret their own performance on the task. These feedback mechanisms generally resulted in involved and motivated participants who had extensive interaction with their teams inside and outside the class setting.

### Nature of the Team Task

The team task in this study was a modified version of the Distributed Dynamic Decision-Making (DDD) Simulation developed for the Department of Defense for research and training purposes (for a complete description, see Hollenbeck et al., 2002; Miller, Young, Kleinman, & Serfaty, 1998). The DDD simulation used here is a realistic command-and-control simulation in which participants monitor friendly and enemy targets and work interdependently to protect restricted territory from the enemies. In this study, individual performance required both task and contextual role behaviors. In terms of task performance, individuals were responsible for working interdependently as a team to detect, identify, and disable enemy targets while avoiding disabling friendly targets. To accomplish this task, each team member had under his or her control a single base and four vehicles. The bases and vehicles were geographically distributed. Thus, participants working on this task had to make decisions and take independent actions while coordinating their plans and actions with others to manage the physical space that they controlled. In terms of contextual performance, team members were responsible both within and outside the context of the simulation to help other team members when needed, treat team members fairly, work with the team to solve both task and interpersonal problems, and encourage other team members. Team leaders were responsible for coordinating and directing the team's efforts.

Each simulation varied in the number and types of targets, the direction of those targets, and the configuration of vehicles. However, the schedule for which simulations were used each week was held constant across teams. All variants of the simulation were designed for individuals with little to no military experience and were 30 min in length. Participants had a networked personal computer at their workstation and used a computer mouse to control the base and vehicles. Each team worked in a common room, and the room was designed so that team members could not see their teammates' computer screens. The team leader was free to move around the room and see the different computer screens. Both team members and leaders were free to communicate with each other, and most teams engaged in high levels of communication across all 12 computer simulations.

### Measures

Table 1 summarizes the data collection schedule. During the course of the semester, we collected data on general self-efficacy, values-based person-team fit, person-role fit, growth satisfaction, and team member performance. In the 1st week of the semester, we collected data on general self-efficacy; this time period is

Table 1  
*Timeline of Data Collection*

Measure	Source	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 5
General self-efficacy	Member	X				
Person-team fit	Member		X			X
Person-role fit	Member		X			X
Job performance	Leader			X		
Growth satisfaction	Member				X	

labeled Time 1. After the teams were formed (approximately 5 weeks into the course) and trained, they participated in two computer simulations per week for 6 weeks. We collected data from the team members on values-based person-team fit and person-role fit in the 2nd week of computer simulations; this time period is labeled Time 2. During the 5th week of simulations, we collected data on team members' performance as rated by their team leaders; this time period is labeled Time 3. We then collected data on team members' growth satisfaction during the final week of computer simulations; this time period is labeled as Time 4. Finally, we collected another round of data on team members' perceptions of values-based person-team fit and person-role fit 1 week after the final set of computer simulations; this time period is labeled as Time 5.

*General self-efficacy.* General self-efficacy was measured using Chen et al.'s (2001) eight-item scale (e.g., "I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks"). Internal consistency reliability was .92.

*Person-team fit.* We used a modified version of Cable and DeRue's (2002) three-item scale for person-organization fit to measure values-based person-team fit (e.g., "My personal values match my team's values."). This scale was used because it is a validated measure of values congruence between an individual and a particular unit—in this case, the unit is the team. We modified the scale by changing the word *organization* to *team* in each of the three items. Internal consistency reliability was .88 at Time 2 and .93 at Time 5.

*Person-role fit.* We measured person-role fit with a modified version of the six items validated by Cable and DeRue (2002) for measuring needs-supplies and demands-abilities fit (e.g., "The role that I currently hold on my team gives me just about everything that I want from a role on a team"; "The match is very good between the demands of my role on this team and my personal skills"). Again, we modified these items by changing the referent to one's role within the team. We chose to combine the two scales (needs-supplies, demands-abilities) into an overall person-role fit measure because of meta-analytic evidence suggesting a combined conception of these two fit dimensions is a better predictor of key criteria than each component by itself (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Internal consistency reliability was .91 at Time 2 and .92 at Time 5.

*Growth satisfaction.* We measured growth satisfaction using Wageman, Hackman, and Lehman's (2005) three-item scale (e.g., "Working on this team stretches my personal knowledge and skills."). We excluded the only reverse-coded item in the scale ("My own creativity and initiative are suppressed by this team") because of poor internal consistency, resulting in a two-item measure with an internal consistency reliability of .83.

Table 2  
*Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Between Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Person-team fit (Time 2)	3.95	0.61	—						
2. Person-team fit (Time 5)	3.92	0.64	.55**	—					
3. Person-role fit (Time 2)	4.11	0.55	.68**	.43**	—				
4. Person-role fit (Time 5)	3.96	0.71	.36**	.60**	.46**	—			
5. Growth satisfaction	4.19	0.79	.33**	.35**	.41**	.51**	—		
6. Performance	4.06	0.62	.25**	.22**	.13	.31**	.27**	—	
7. General self-efficacy	4.26	0.48	.20**	.15*	.15*	.18*	.08	.13	—

Note. Sample size ranged from 143 to 205 because of missing data.  
 \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Performance.** Team leaders rated the performance of team members using Liden, Wayne, and Stilwell's (1993) 4-item task performance measure (e.g., "My personal view of this team member is that he or she is very effective") and 13 items from Van Scotter and Motowidlo's (1996) contextual performance measure (e.g., "This team member praises other team members when they are successful"; two items were not included because they were not applicable in the current study context). The Appendix contains all items used in the performance measure. We used this measure of individual-level performance for three reasons. First, performance is often conceptualized as consisting of both task and contextual elements (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994), and in a team setting, both are essential to team success (Morgeson, Reider, & Campion, 2005). Second, the team task used in this study required team members to engage in both task and contextual role behaviors. Third, individual team members received formal and informal feedback on both task and contextual elements of their performance. We combined these measures for an overall individual performance measure. Internal consistency reliability was .95.

## Results

Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for all variables measured in this study. The observed variance on all measured variables was adequate. An examination of the means indicates that perceptions of fit across all individuals actually declined over time. The correlation between values-based person-team fit and person-role fit at Time 2 was .68; at Time 5, this correlation was .60. Consistent with prior meta-analytic evidence (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), these correlations suggest that person-team and person-role fit perceptions are positively related. The correlation among values-based person-team fit perceptions across time was .55, whereas the correlation for person-role fit perception across time was .46. This finding offers preliminary support for the notion that person-role fit perceptions change more over time than do values-based person-team fit perceptions. Finally, the correlation between individuals' performance and their growth satisfaction was .27, indicating that these two antecedents of person-role fit are moderately related.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that values-based person-team fit would be stable over time, and Hypothesis 2 suggested that person-role fit would change over time. Because these hypotheses concern within-person change over time, we conducted a repeated measures analysis where the dependent variable (person-team fit, person-role fit) was regressed on time (Time 2 = 0; Time 5 = 1).

The results of this analysis appear in Table 3. According to Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003), regressing the dependent variable on time indicates the systematic, within-person change in the dependent variable over time. In other words, "the linear term (for the variable time) is the estimate of the systematic increase or decrease of mean scores over the measurement occasions and thus represents the slope over time" (Cohen et al., 2003, p. 576). Results indicate that the variable time did not significantly affect values-based person-team fit ( $\beta = -.03$ , *ns*) but did significantly impact person-role fit ( $\beta = -.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ). These findings suggest that there was significant within-person change over time in person-role fit but not in values-based person-team fit. Although we did not predict the direction of this change over time, it is interesting to note that the overall mean of person-role fit actually decreased over time. In sum, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were both supported.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested using hierarchical regression techniques. Hierarchical regression is the appropriate analytical technique here because it enabled us to examine changes in fit perceptions over time by controlling for prior fit perceptions. By first entering fit perceptions at Time 2, we controlled for between-subjects variance at Time 2 and avoided the problems associated with difference scores (Edwards & Parry, 1993). Hierarchical regression also allowed us to isolate the explanatory power of each predictor variable. Hypothesis 3 predicted that higher levels of growth satisfaction would lead to increases in person-role fit over time. Using hierarchical regression with person-role fit at Time 5 as the dependent variable, we first entered individuals' perceptions of person-role fit at Time 2. This step explained an initial 17% of the variance in perceptions of person-role fit at Time 5. As indicated in Model 1 of Table 4, we then entered growth satisfaction in Step 2. Results suggest that individual team members who experienced greater growth satisfaction ( $\beta = .39$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .13$ ) perceived their person-role fit to be higher over time.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Hypothesis 4 predicted that higher levels of individual performance would lead to increases in person-role fit over time. To test this hypothesis, we again entered person-role fit at Time 2 in

<sup>2</sup> We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with growth satisfaction and the needs-supplies component of person-role fit. This analysis suggested that growth satisfaction and needs-supplies fit are distinct constructs. We also repeated our test of Hypothesis 3 while excluding the needs-supplies component of person-role fit. The results and conclusions of this test were consistent with our original analysis, thus providing evidence that growth satisfaction and person-role fit are not confounded.

Step 1 and then entered individuals' performance in Step 2. As indicated in Model 2 of Table 4, results indicate that individual team members who achieved higher performance perceived their person–role fit to be higher over time ( $\beta = .23, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = .05$ ).

Because individuals' performance and growth satisfaction are positively related ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ), the effects of performance and growth satisfaction on perceptions of person–role fit over time may not reflect independent effects. To test the independence of these effects, we conducted another hierarchical regression analysis where growth satisfaction and performance were entered simultaneously into Step 2 of the regression. As indicated in Model 3 of Table 4, both growth satisfaction ( $\beta = .36, p < .01$ ) and performance ( $\beta = .17, p < .05$ ) had unique effects on increases in person–role fit over time. Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were fully supported.

As a supplemental analysis, we also examined whether growth satisfaction and individual performance mediated the relationship between Time 2 and Time 5 perceptions of values-based person–team fit and person–role fit.<sup>3</sup> We used Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach for testing mediation, which requires that three conditions be met to infer mediation: (a) the independent variables must be significantly related to the dependent variable, (b) the independent variables must be significantly related to the proposed mediators, and (c) the previously significant relationship between independent and dependent variables decreases and becomes nonsignificant when controlling for the mediator.

With respect to the first condition, values-based person–team fit and person–role fit at Time 2 were significantly related to values-based person–team ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ) and person–role ( $r = .46, p < .01$ ) fit at Time 5, respectively (see Table 2). Regarding the second condition for mediation, values-based person–team fit at Time 2 was related to both growth satisfaction ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ) and individual performance ( $r = .25, p < .01$ ). Person–role fit at Time 2 was related to growth satisfaction ( $r = .41, p < .01$ ) but not individual performance ( $r = .13, ns$ ). With respect to the third condition, we first regressed values-based person–team fit at Time 5 on growth satisfaction and individual performance while controlling for person–team fit at Time 2. Values-based person–team fit at Time 2 ( $\beta = .349, p < .01$ ) had a unique effect on values-based person–team fit at Time 5; growth satisfaction ( $\beta = .19, p < .05$ ) but not individual performance ( $\beta = .15, ns$ ) partially mediated this relationship. We then regressed person–role fit at Time 5 on growth satisfaction while controlling for person–role fit at Time 2; individual performance was not examined as a mediator because it failed to meet the second condition for mediation. In this analysis, person–role fit at Time 2 had a unique effect on person–

Table 3  
*Repeated Measures Analysis of Within-Person Change Over Time*

Independent variable	Person–team fit		Person–role fit	
	$\beta$	Total $R^2$	$\beta$	Total $R^2$
Time	-.03	.00	-.11*	.01

Note.  $N = 398$  (two observations per 199 team members). Time 2 was coded as 0, and Time 5 was coded as 1.  
\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed.

Table 4  
*Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Person–Role Fit on Performance and Growth Satisfaction*

Step	Independent variable	Person–role fit (Time 5)		
		$\beta$	Total $R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1				
1	Person–role fit (Time 2)	.42**	.17	
2	Growth satisfaction	.39**	.30	.13**
Model 2				
1	Person–role fit (Time 2)	.42**	.17	
2	Performance	.23**	.22	.05**
Model 3				
1	Person–role fit (Time 2)	.42**	.17	
2	Growth satisfaction	.36**	.33	.16**
	Performance	.17*		

Note.  $n = 138$ .  
\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed. \*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed.

role fit at Time 5, but growth satisfaction ( $\beta = .39, p < .01$ ) also partially mediated this relationship. A Sobel test (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Sobel, 1982) for both values-based person–team fit (2.17,  $p < .05$ ) and person–role fit (3.10,  $p < .01$ ) indicated that the measurements of values-based person–team fit and person–role fit at Time 2 shrunk significantly when we controlled for growth satisfaction, thus providing evidence for partial mediation.

Hypothesis 5 suggested that general self-efficacy would moderate the relationship between performance and increases in person–role fit over time, such that performance would be most strongly related to increases in person–role fit for individuals with high general self-efficacy. We tested this hypothesis using hierarchical regression. Perceptions of person–role fit at Time 2 and ratings of individual performance were entered as Steps 1 and 2, respectively. We then entered team members' ratings of general self-efficacy in Step 3 and the interaction between general self-efficacy and performance in Step 4 of the equation. Moderation is present if the  $R^2$  change associated with the interaction is significant. As Table 5 indicates, general self-efficacy did moderate the relationship between individual performance and person–role fit ( $\beta = 3.00, p < .01$ ), accounting for an incremental 5% of the variance. As an aid in understanding the form of the interaction, the relationship between performance and person–role fit for high and low levels of general self-efficacy (defined as +1 and -1 standard deviations from the mean, respectively; Aiken & West, 1991) is shown in Figure 1. Consistent with the hypothesis, the relationship between performance and person–role fit is strongly positive for individuals with high general self-efficacy and slightly negative for individuals with low general self-efficacy. This interaction further reinforces the importance of general self-efficacy in determining how individuals interpret and attribute their individual performance. In sum, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

<sup>3</sup> We thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting we conduct this supplemental analysis.

Table 5  
Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Person–Role Fit on Performance and General Self-Efficacy

Step	Independent variable	Person–role fit (Time 5)		
		$\beta$	Total $R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Person–role fit (Time 2)	.42**	.17	
2	Performance	.23**	.22	.05**
3	General self-efficacy	.09	.23	.01
4	Performance $\times$ General Self-Efficacy	3.00**	.28	.05**

Note.  $n = 138$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed.

## Discussion

Past theory and research has considered person–environment fit primarily as a predictor of individual-, group-, and organizational-level outcomes, including satisfaction, commitment, turnover intentions, and job performance. The present research addresses recent calls for the study of fit as a dependent variable over time (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Results from this study differentiate values-based person–team and person–role fit based on the degree to which they change over time. Person–team fit, conceptualized here as values congruence, is generally stable over time. Person–role fit, on the other hand, is a dynamic construct. This finding is consistent with research on individual values and team development theory, which suggests team members develop knowledge of other team members' values early in the team's life cycle and that these values remain generally stable over time (Judge & Bretz, 1992; Kozlowski et al., 1999; Lusk & Oliver, 1974; Ravlin & Meglino, 1989). On the other hand, team members' roles are dynamic and evolve over time (Ilgen & Hollenbeck,

1991). As a result, perceptions of person–role fit vary over time. In light of this finding, the next logical concern is understanding what factors shape these changes in person–role fit.

Results from the present study suggest that two factors, individual performance and growth satisfaction, are positively related to changes in person–role fit over time. The positive impact of growth satisfaction supports Hackman's (1990) claim that personal growth and development is one of the most important individual needs in team contexts. Moreover, in light of past research (e.g., Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005), our findings related to individual performance suggest that there may be a reciprocal relationship between individual performance and person–role fit. Past research has focused on person–role fit as an antecedent to individual performance in organizations, but the present study suggests that individual performance also impacts perceptions of person–role fit. It is also important to note that, in the present study, the effects of performance on person–role fit were strongest for those individuals with high general self-efficacy. Future research that examines the causal mechanisms underlying this relationship between person–role fit and individual performance is needed.

The present study has a number of practical and theoretical implications for the role of fit in organizational contexts. Most notably, this study demonstrated that not all conceptualizations of person–environment fit operate in the same way over time. Whereas values-based person–team fit was found to be generally stable over time, perceptions of person–role fit changed over time. Considering that most research in the literature on person–environment fit has used cross-sectional designs to examine the outcomes of fit perceptions, this finding has significant implications for interpreting existing research. For example, much of the research on values congruence has been conducted using cross-sectional designs prior to organizational entry or after early socialization processes (e.g., Adkins, Russell, & Werbel, 1994; Cable &

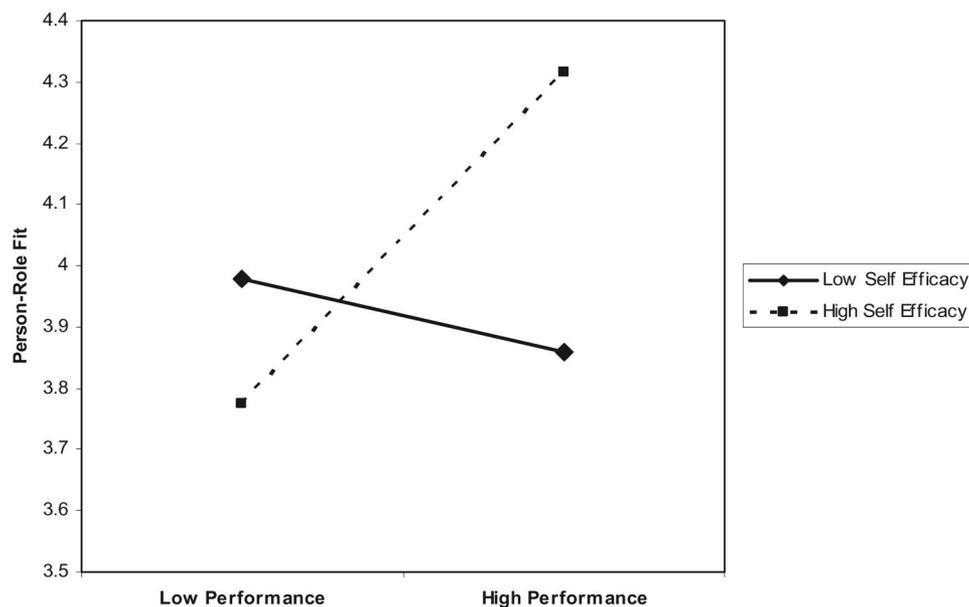


Figure 1. Effects of general self-efficacy on the relationship between performance and person–role fit.

Judge, 1997; Chatman, 1991). Given the stability in values, such a focus on preemployment assessment makes good sense. It enables an organization to determine whether an individual's values are consistent with the organization's, thereby avoiding selection errors. In addition, because values congruence is generally stable, we would expect the relationships found in this research to be replicated at later points in an individual's tenure in the organization. However, this approach may not be appropriate when studying more dynamic conceptualizations of fit (e.g., person–role fit). In this case, longitudinal approaches to research design are needed to understand the processes by which fit perceptions change over time and the implications of these changes.

An essential first step in this process is for future research to identify which conceptualizations of person–environment fit are generally stable or dynamic. For example, in the current study, person–team fit is conceptualized as values congruence. Other research, however, has based person–team fit on goal (Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001) or dispositional (e.g., Barsade et al., 2000; Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Stevens, 2005) congruence. Dispositional characteristics such as personality are generally stable over time. Thus, we would expect person–team fit based on dispositions to also be stable over time. Goals, however, do change over time. Future research should examine the dynamic nature of person–team fit when based on goals congruence. We might expect a different set of results had we conceptualized person–team fit using goal congruence.

Results from this study also have significant implications for team design and how organizations manage role responsibilities in teams. On the one hand, high levels of individual performance promote increases in person–role fit. Thus, teams and team leaders should ensure that team members' roles and abilities are aligned. Future research might examine how teams dynamically align team member roles and abilities and the implications of this process on individual and team performance over time. Likewise, identifying individuals' personal growth and development priorities and then designing roles that are aligned with these developmental priorities is critically important for fostering person–role fit in organizations. Future research might seek to integrate principles from the work design literature (e.g., Morgeson & Campion, 2003; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006), needs theory, and the fit literature to understand precisely how the nature of one's job or role influences fit perceptions over time. The present research suggests that fit perceptions will increase as one's role in a team fulfills individuals' growth needs, but personal growth and development is only one of several important needs that individuals seek to fulfill via work.

The finding that higher levels of individual performance lead to increases in person–role fit also has considerable implications for performance feedback systems in organizations. For example, accurate and informative performance feedback is critically important for ensuring that individuals have accurate perceptions of person–role fit. Misguided interpretations of performance information will result in misguided perceptions of person–role fit. Moreover, organizations must recognize that not all individuals interpret performance feedback in the same way. For instance, results from this study suggest that positive performance feedback facilitates stronger perceptions of person–role fit when the individual is high in general self-efficacy. Future research might examine how the nature of the performance feedback (e.g., type of feedback, frequency of feedback) influences the relationship be-

tween an individual's performance and his or her perceptions of person–role fit.

Finally, the theoretical implications of our findings for the ASA model are particularly noteworthy. This is especially true with respect to understanding attrition processes in organizations. Whereas the ASA model offers a general framework for explaining attrition at the organizational level, the model does not explain the individual-level psychological processes that guide individuals' attrition-related decisions. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that perceptions of fit influence individuals' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover decisions (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). By examining fit as a dependent variable over time, the present research begins to address this limitation of the ASA model and further explains the underlying psychological processes that help shape perceptions of fit, work attitudes, and attrition-related decisions.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned contributions, there are several possible limitations to this study that should be kept in mind when interpreting the research findings. First, because the study participants were students in an experiential business course performing an interactive computer simulation, one potential question is whether our findings will generalize to different organizational contexts where teams are not always temporary and there is greater diversity in team members (in terms of age and experience) and types of tasks performed. It is important to realize, however, that the experiential course that served as the backdrop for this study shared a number of features that one would find in other settings. For example, participants experienced all aspects of team development (e.g., formation of the team, training of the team, and team performance) over a considerable amount of time (15 weeks). In addition, during this time there were extensive amounts of interaction among team members and considerable challenges and motivation to perform at high levels. These features make it more likely that our findings will generalize to other contexts. Nevertheless, clearly future research should examine the nature of person–team and person–role fit in field settings.

Another potential limitation of this study is that we examined fit perceptions only from the team member's perspective. Although focusing on team members' fit perceptions over time fills an important gap in the literature, the team leader's perception of each team member's fit with the team and role is also important. For example, a team leader's ratings of individual member performance are likely influenced by his or her perceptions of the team member's fit with the team and role. In addition, other team members' perceptions of an individual's person–team and person–role fit may be important for team processes such as communication, cohesion, and workload sharing. Thus, future research is needed to understand the implications of others' perceptions of team member fit.

Finally, we cannot be certain that all teams in this study progressed through the phases of team development at the same rate. In addition, we did not directly measure the depth of interpersonal knowledge that team members developed in the team formation phase. Although these are possible limitations of the current study, we do not feel these are critical concerns because all teams in this study were formed at the same time and experienced the same tasks. Furthermore, all teams experienced extensive training and team building exercises and, according to Kozlowski et al. (1999),

these activities facilitate the development of interpersonal knowledge among team members.

In spite of the noted limitations, the design of the current study had several strengths. Perhaps most notably, the study's longitudinal design allowed for the study of perceived fit over time and thus addressed a clear gap in the existing literature. Second, all measures were collected at separate times over a 15-week period, and the ratings of team member performance were collected from a separate source (the team leader). This method of data collection minimized the possibility of common-method variance as an alternative explanation for our findings. Third, the controlled setting in which this research was conducted enabled us to rule out other substantive variables as alternative explanations for our findings.

### Conclusion

In sum, this study is the first investigation of how values-based person-team fit and person-role fit operate over time in team contexts. Moreover, this study provides an explanation of how individuals' growth satisfaction and performance influence changes in fit over time. Because we considered fit as a dependent variable over time, our results provide a first step toward better predicting and explaining fit perceptions in organizations.

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Appendix  
Performance Measure

1. This team member is superior to other team members that I've supervised before.
2. The overall level of performance that I have observed for this team member is outstanding.
3. My personal view of this team member is that he or she is very effective.
4. Overall, I feel that this team member has been effectively fulfilling his or her roles and responsibilities.
5. This team member praises other team members when they are successful.
6. This team member talks to other team members before taking actions that might affect them.
7. This team member says things to make others feel good about themselves or the team.
8. This team member encourages others to overcome their differences and get along.
9. This team member treats others fairly.
10. This team member helps others in the team without being asked.
11. This team member pays close attention to important details.
12. This team member works harder than necessary.
13. This team member asks for challenging assignments within the team.
14. This team member exercises personal discipline and self-control.
15. This team member takes the initiative to solve task-related problems.
16. This team member persists in overcoming obstacles to complete a task.
17. This team member tackles difficult work assignments enthusiastically.

Received February 20, 2006  
Revision received November 2, 2006  
Accepted December 4, 2006 ■