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Goal orientation and its relationship to organizational commitment

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GOAL ORIENTATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Amy Elizabeth Klein

May 2004

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ABSTRACT

GOAL ORIENTATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

by Amy Elizabeth Klein

Goal orientation refers to the process by which individuals prefer certain goals to others as a result of personality disposition. The purpose of this study was to examine whether the relationship between person-organization fit (P-O fit) and affective organizational commitment (OC) was moderated by individual goal orientation (hypothesis 1) and whether individual goal orientation moderated the relationship between two role stressors, role ambiguity and role conflict, and affective OC (hypotheses 2 and 3). Results showed partial support for hypothesis 1, however, the particular form of the interaction found in this study was not hypothesized. Individual goal orientation did not moderate the relationship between the two role stressors and affective OC. Implications, limitations, and future research are discussed.

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Introduction

Personality and situation theorists have debated for over three decades the strength to which individual differences versus situational characteristics affect behavior (Chatman, 1989; Mischel, 1968; Schneider, 1987). Some researchers argued the need to evaluate behavior as a joint function of the person and the situation (Bowers, 1973; Chatman, 1989; Lewin, 1951; Murray, 1981; Telborg, 1981). Telborg, for example, described interactional psychology as arising from an interaction between personal and situational factors that result in actual behavior. Personal characteristics, such as ability, as well as cognitive, affective, and motivational factors, are seen as one set of personal factors influencing behavior. The other set of factors are situational-based, in which behaviors can be seen as deriving from the interpretive meaning individuals place on the situation, as well as the behavioral opportunities a situation holds. Interactional psychology is in accordance with Lewin's argument that in order to predict behavior, one must examine the total situation, hence, the psychological dynamics (needs, beliefs, abilities) within a person, and how these characteristics operate on any given environmental context to produce behavior. Lewin also described joint factors of the person and environment that predict behavior that include cognition and motivation (as cited in Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Lewin stressed individuals' subjective interpretations and highlighted the need to look at social situations as perceived by the eye of the beholder.

Similarly, Murray (1938) proposed a person-environment approach in his needs-press theory (as cited in Bretz & Judge, 1994). In this theory, Murray suggested that an individual's needs shape behavior and that these "needs" can best be understood from the

way in which the person feels, behaves, and reacts. In addition, the theory outlined that environmental factors also contribute to shaping an individual's behavior. The environment is viewed as either providing for or hindering one's fulfillment of needs and attainment of goals.

Definitions of P-E Fit

Kristof (1996) expanded on Murray's (1938) person-environment approach by highlighting the concept of person-environment fit. Person-environment fit (P-E fit), according to Kristof, is the compatibility between the attributes of a person and the situational factors of an environment on some given plane of interest. In her paper, Kristof reviewed four types of P-E fit, that is, the alignment between individuals and vocations (Person-Vocation fit or P-V fit), individuals and jobs (Person-Job fit or P-J fit), individuals and work groups (Person-Group fit or P-G fit), and individuals and organizations (Person-Organization fit or P-O fit), which will be the focus of this study.

Proposed Study

Consistent with the theory that human behavior arises from the interaction between the person and the environment, the proposed study will utilize a P-O fit approach to study the concept of goal orientation. Goal orientation will be measured at the individual level to assess employees' goal orientations, as well as employees' perceptions regarding their organizations' climate for goal orientation. This study will focus on perceptions because, as stated by Ferris and Judge (1991), "people react on the bases of perceptions of reality, not reality 'per se'" (p. 464). Therefore, in the present study, perceptions related to organizational climate for goal orientation will represent

the environment.

Goal orientation refers to the approach an individual takes in pursuing goals (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). According to Dweck, there are two main types of goal orientation: learning and performance. Individuals with a learning goal orientation are interested in increasing their competence over time, and subsequently select goals that allow them to expand their skills and abilities. The individuals' needs are on developing competence and not on demonstrating their competence to others. In contrast, individuals with a performance goal orientation are interested in the type of goals that allow them to demonstrate and authenticate their own competence. This is achieved by obtaining positive evaluations from others regarding their skills and abilities, while at the same time, avoiding harsh criticism in reference to their competence.

Although no study has been found examining goal orientation at the organizational level, it is here argued that organizations, similar to individuals, have different goal orientations from each other. Some organizations might project a learning goal orientation climate that encourages employees to learn new skills or to develop their existing skills and abilities. These organizations might focus on the effort, improvement, and risk-taking employees engage in. In contrast, performance goal organizations might project a climate that is concerned with proving ability. More specifically, employees, for example, might demonstrate and substantiate competence by maintaining positive levels of feedback from others and avoiding unconstructive evaluations.

Dweck and associates (1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) clearly demonstrated how children have certain tendencies (based on how they cognitively view their implicit

theories of intelligence) toward pursuing either learning or performance goals, especially under challenging situations. For the purpose of this paper, it is argued that just as children undergo obstacles in the achievement arena that result usually in one dominant goal orientation pattern, organizations too face numerous daily challenges, for instance, to be profitable, that can result in an organization displaying a dominant goal orientation disposition. Consequently, an organization may be oriented toward improving its competence through effort, continuous improvement, and risk-taking (learning goal oriented organization) or by proving its competence by demonstrating and validating the competencies that currently exist (performance goal oriented organization).

The proposed study will examine whether the relationship between P-O fit and affective organizational commitment is moderated by individual goal orientation and whether individual goal orientation also moderates the relationship between two role stressors, role ambiguity and role conflict, and affective organizational commitment. Organizational commitment refers to the notion that a psychological link exists between employees and their organizations and that this link characterizes the nature of one's involvement with his or her organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Role ambiguity refers to the extent to which employees understand what is being asked of them in terms of their job responsibilities and authority (Rizzo et al., 1970), whereas role conflict is the extent to which one perceives incongruence in one's work expectations (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Research has shown a relationship between P-O fit and organizational commitment (Boxx, Odom, & Dunn, 1991; Cable & Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989;

Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991; Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Tziner, 1987; Vancouver, Millsap, & Peters, 1994; Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991; Witt & Nye, 1992), and between role ambiguity and role conflict and organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Singh, 1998). This study will attempt to expand upon this research by examining these variables within the context of goal orientation.

The following sections will (i) define P-O fit with a specific focus on fit between personal characteristics and organizational climate, (ii) define goal orientation and the two dimensions that comprise the construct - learning and performance goal orientation, (iii) define and present predictors of affective organizational commitment, (iv) present the main predictors of the study, and (v) propose a rationale for this study's hypotheses, as well as state the specific hypotheses pertaining to this study.

Research on Person-Organization Fit

Kristof (1996) defined P-O fit as the "compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both" (p. 4-5). According to Kristof, various operationalizations of P-O fit exist within the literature, with the most popular being value congruence; the similarity or fit of values between individuals and their organizations (Boxx et al., 1991; Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Chatman, 1989, 1991). Other operationalizations of P-O fit include goal congruence, namely the similarity or fit between individuals' goals and those of the company leaders or clients

(Vancouver et al., 1994; Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991) and needs-structure fit, which is the alignment of personal preferences with organizational structures (Bretz, Ash, & Dresher, 1989; Cable & Judge, 1994). The last operationalization of P-O fit, which is the focus of this study, is person-climate fit: the congruence between individuals' personal characteristics and the characteristics of their organizational climate (Bowen, Ledford, & Nathan, 1991; Christiansen, Villavova, & Mikulay, 1997; Tom, 1971).

Person-Climate Fit. Several studies have investigated personal characteristics in relation to organizational climate (Bowen et al., 1991; Burke & Deszca, 1982; Christiansen et al., 1997; Downey, Hellriegel, & Slocum, 1975; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1984; Tom, 1971; Tziner, 1987). For example, Ivancevich and Matteson proposed a person-environment conceptual model of stress suggesting that congruence between the individual and the work environment would result in positive benefits for the individual (e.g., job satisfaction). Conversely, a lack of fit or incongruence could lead to negative effects, such as occupational stress. A number of studies have supported Ivancevich and Matteson's person-environment model and these studies will be discussed in terms person-climate fit and grouped by main effects (Tom; Burke & Deszca), as well as interaction effects (Downey et al.; Tziner).

Downey et al. (1975) examined interaction effects between individual personality needs (self-confidence and sociability) and perceived organizational climate (decision making, warmth, risk, openness, rewards, and structure) in relation to five job satisfaction facets (satisfaction with work itself, immediate supervisors, pay, co-workers, and opportunity for promotion) and two performance dimensions (number of total upward,

downward, and lateral moves in past four years and salary increases over two year time period). Support was found for the congruency model. For example, individuals possessing high-confidence and who perceived the organizational climate as assigning responsibility and providing specific policies (structure) were satisfied to a greater degree with their co-workers than their high-confidence counterparts who assessed the organization to be unstructured. Additionally, highly sociable individuals were more likely than their less sociable counterparts, to have higher performance when they viewed the organization as offering rewards (e.g., encouragements, compassion, and an environment absent of intimidation).

Tziner (1987) examined an organization's achievement climate - that is, the extent to which an organization places pressure or recognition toward employee achievement. Specifically, Tziner focused on the interaction between an individual's "preferred" organizational achievement orientation (what an individual would like to see in his or her organizational climate) and the organization's "actual" achievement climate (an individual's perception of the organization's actual climate). Tziner found that a fit or congruency with these two orientations was positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance.

Tom (1971) utilized the Adjective Check List and the Study of Values to assess individuals' self-concepts and perceptions of organizational images (perceptions regarding the knowledge, belief, and feelings pertaining to a hypothetical organization that can differ among people, organizations, and through time) to examine individuals' penchants to work for certain types of organizations. It was found that there was a more

direct relationship between individuals' self-concept profiles and their descriptions of their most preferred organizational profiles than there was between individuals' self-concept profiles and their least preferred organizations.

Burke and Deszca (1982) examined the relationship between Type A personality and organizational climate. Type A individuals are generally characterized as achievement-oriented, hurried and impatient, having uncontrolled ambition, competitive, multi-tasked, and exhibiting bouts of hostility (Chesney & Rosenman, 1980; Friedman & Rosenman, 1974). Burke and Deszca found that individuals displaying the Type A personality characteristic (in comparison to individuals who rated low on Type A personality) preferred organizational characteristics consistent with their personality. For example, there was a direct, positive relationship between Type A personality and individuals' preference for organizations that had high performance standards.

These studies demonstrate how personal characteristics can have a main or interaction effect with other antecedent variables to predict various level outcomes variables. The proposed study will expand on this previous research using a P-O fit approach (person-climate fit) to study how individual goal orientation moderates the relationship between P-O fit and organizational commitment, and between two role stressors, role ambiguity and role conflict, and organizational commitment.

Research on Goal Orientation

Overview. The notion of goal orientation utilized for this study stems from research generated by Carol Dweck and her associates in the 1970's and late 1980's (Diener & Dweck, 1978; 1980; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck,

1988). These researchers devised a social-cognitive model of motivation based on previous research focused in the areas of child/educational psychology. Dweck and her colleagues proposed that goal orientation is a function of personality involving differences in one's set of beliefs and values regarding one's ability and effort. Encompassed in this model is the belief that individuals have preferences or adopt goals, based on what the achievement situation at hand offers. Dweck (1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988) also further suggested that determinants of goal orientation branch from theories regarding intelligence. For example, if an individual considers ability to be a permanent attribute, they are seen as using an entity theory of intelligence. However, if an individual considers ability to be a more pliable attribute, they are said to use an incremental theory of intelligence. More specifically, it was suggested that it is one's self-perceptions regarding intelligence that enables individuals to pursue goals that are indicative of one of two types of goal orientations, (a) a learning goal orientation or (b) a performance goal orientation.

Definition of Learning and Performance Goal Orientation. According to Dweck (1986), learning goal orientation can be defined as the way "in which individuals seek to increase their competence, to understand or master something new," whereas performance goal orientation can be defined as the way "in which individuals seek to gain favorable judgments of their competence or avoid negative judgments of their competence" (p. 1040). As specified by Dweck and colleagues (1986; Elliott & Dweck, 1988), these orientations can be perceived as cognitive structures upon which individuals interpret information related to the achievement setting. As a result of these cognitive

structures, certain adaptive or maladaptive behavioral response patterns become visible when individuals are confronted with a challenging obstacle in an environment endorsing achievement. Thus, individuals with both learning and performance goal orientations can have the same innate intellectual capacity, but produce very different behavioral responses patterns based on the way in which they interpret data related to the achievement environment.

Learning Goal Orientation Pattern. Learning goal orientated individuals see ability as a pliable characteristic (Dweck, 1986; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). In this case, the focus is on effort, rather than on ability. When people of this disposition are confronted with a challenging obstacle regardless of their perceptions about their ability to overcome a challenge, they will be observed asking the question, "How can I develop my skill set in this situation or become an expert at this task?" As a result, the demanding goals individuals with this orientation choose are those that can increase competence over a period of time. An adaptive behavioral response pattern (mastery-oriented) emerges that is similar to a person displaying a performance goal orientation who has confidence in his or her ability when faced with a challenge. Again, these individuals apply the needed effort to accomplish a task, as well as enjoy and persist through the particular challenge(s).

Performance Goal Orientation Patterns. According to Dweck (1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988), the performance goal oriented individual focuses on ability as a permanent trait. Individuals who pursue goals indicative of this disposition are seen as asking, "Do I have the necessary intelligence or ability that is

required of this situation?" When ability is perceived as high, and the situation allows for the possibility of failure, the task choice that individuals with this orientation choose include moderate to moderately demanding tasks. The sole purpose for the performance goal oriented individual is to demonstrate his or her competence to others. In essence, people emphasizing this orientation try to avoid criticism from others, while hoping to obtain positive evaluations from others regarding their competence. In this case, an adaptive behavioral response pattern (mastery-oriented response) emerges that stimulates a desire in individuals to become involved in a challenge, as well as to apply effort and determination toward meeting that challenge.

However, for those with low confidence in their abilities, the goals chosen are either reasonably easy or exceptionally hard in order to induce either success (attributed to luck) or failure (cannot be attributed to ability). In this case, the behavioral response pattern that emerges is considered maladaptive (helpless response), because appropriately challenging goals have not been established, attempted, or achieved. For example, Diener and Dweck (1978) found that children displaying the helpless pattern ascribed their failures to factors outside their control (ability - you either have it or you don't) and, as a result did not frequently engage in actions that would allow them to overcome their failures. Furthermore, Dweck and her associates also noted that the maladaptive behavioral response pattern is further distinguished by resistance to, or withdrawal from a challenge, along with other negative responses, such as, unconstructive self-talk in reference to one's competence (Diener & Dweck, 1978; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

Elliott and Dweck (1988) noted two major distinctions between learning and performance goal oriented individuals. Performance goal oriented individuals may select simple to moderately demanding tasks based on their confidence level, but they can forfeit learning prospects if mistakes are likely. This is for two reasons, either because they want to reveal they are competent or because they want to avoid appearing rather incompetent in a particular task. It is also suggested that it is not easy for those with performance goal orientations to maintain a level of confidence needed to see a challenge through because they tend to focus on failures (Elliott & Dweck), as opposed to their learning goal orientation counterparts, who focus on finding solutions to their challenges to learn and grow (Diener & Dweck, 1978; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck).

Diener and Dweck (1978) found that in the face of failure, the learning goal oriented group showed noticeable improvements in the complexity of the test-related strategies used to solve problems and sought ways to increase the likelihood that they would succeed by employing two methods: the use of self-instruction and self-monitoring. Conversely, performance oriented individuals showed an overall lessening of constructive strategies, an increase in ineffectual strategies, attributed their failures to internal ability and engaged in solution-irrelevant statements. In addition, the learning oriented group showed signs of positive affect and preserved a positive prognosis with regards to the task at hand, whereas performance goal individuals verbalized statements of negative affect.

VandeWalle Studies. As described earlier, Dweck and her colleagues focused their research efforts on children in the educational setting (Diener & Dweck, 1978; 1980; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). To expand research on goal orientation, VandeWalle and his associates (Brett & VandeWalle, 1999; VandeWalle, Brown, Cron & Slocum, 1999; VandeWalle, Cron & Slocum, 2001) applied the notion of goal orientation to study adult students in the educational environment, as well as employees in their work venue.

VandeWalle et al. (1999) utilized sales personnel in a medical distributor company during a company product promotion to study goal orientation in relation to self-regulation tactics (goal setting, intended effort, and region and account planning) and sales performance. VandeWalle et al. showed that having a learning goal orientation positively related to the goals salespersons set, as well as the time, intensity, overall effort, and intended planning put into a work promotion (territory and account planning), whereas performance goal orientation was not related to two of the three self-regulation tactics; goal level and intended effort. Although both orientations were related to intending planning, not surprisingly, the relationship was much weaker for the performance versus learning goal orientation. Results showed that increased sales performance was related to having a learning goal disposition, but not to displaying a performance goal orientation, highlighting the benefit of having a learning as opposed to a performance goal orientation.

Brett and VandeWalle (1999) studied MBA students to investigate the use of content goals (skill development, comparison, avoidance) in relation to goal orientation

and task performance. In this study, Brett and VandeWalle defined goal orientation as a three-factor construct in which the performance goal orientation dimension was divided into two additional constructs - a performance-prove goal orientation and a performance-avoid goal orientation. Those with a performance-prove goal orientation are interested in attaining positive evaluations/comparisons to others, whereas those with the performance-avoid goal orientation are concerned with the avoidance of critical judgments. Results showed that the relationship between goal orientation and task performance was mediated by the subjects' choice of content goals. Individuals chose content goals aligned with their orientation. Participants with a learning goal orientation chose content goals related to skill improvement (development and refinement), whereas participants with a performance-prove goal orientation chose comparison goals (presenting better than fellow students), and participants with a performance-avoid goal orientation chose goals in harmony with avoidance goals (not being viewed as an incompetent presenter).

VandeWalle et al. (2001) utilized a longitudinal design with two data collection times to study goal orientation in relation to self-regulation tactics (effort, self-efficacy, and goal level) and exam scores over time. Performance feedback on prior task performance was included in the model after subjects completed the first exam. Results found that subjects displaying a learning goal orientation maintained high exam scores during both data collection times, whereas those with performance-prove orientations displayed high exam scores only during Time 1. Additionally, those with performance-avoid orientations displayed negative relationships at Time 1 and Time 2, however, only

the relationship between orientation and exam performance was found to be statistically significant for Time 2. This study supported self-regulation tactic as mediating the relationship between goal orientation and performance.

The results of the aforementioned studies supports research conducted by Dweck and her colleagues (Diener & Dweck, 1978; 1980; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988) and also highlights the importance of studying goal orientation among adult subjects, particularly in their work venue (Brett & VandeWalle, 1999; VandeWalle et al., 1999; VandeWalle et al., 2001). Thus, the present research attempts to expand upon these findings by adopting a P-O fit (person-climate fit) approach to examine goal orientation in reference to adult employees in the workplace.

Research on Organizational Commitment

Overview. For decades, organizational commitment has been observed as an important construct to study, but within the last 20 years, organizational commitment research has increasingly become a hot topic for researchers and practitioners (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and has been the focus of a number of reviews (Mathieu, & Zajac; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Morrow, 1983; Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Reichers, 1985). Although companies have become leaner and have learned to adapt with fewer “redundant” employees, due to technology, as well as corporate downsizing from the 1990’s, companies still need qualified people in order to be successful (Herman, 1999). Not only are they in need of good people, but corporations need individuals who are skill diversified and who can perform a number of core duties for the organization, while still being adaptable to remain in the organization (Bridges, 1994). Therefore, the need to

trust and keep highly trained employees has become essential and organizational commitment is invariably one means to reach this end (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Definition of Organizational Commitment. Organizational commitment has been defined in numerous ways (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990, Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1982). The underlying commonality within research in this domain, as indicated by Meyer and Allen, is that organizational commitment (OC) “is a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization” (p. 67). According to Meyer and Allen this psychological state brings together individuals with their organizations, and thereby, increases the likelihood that employees will stay with their particular organizations.

Three Dimensions of OC. Meyer and Allen (1984) suggested that OC was a multidimensional construct. Allen and Meyer (1990) investigated a three-component model of OC which they devised based on the categorization of various definitions of commitment by researchers since the 1960’s (Becker, 1960; Mowday et al., 1982; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Wiener, 1982). Allen and Meyer (Meyer & Allen, 1991) labeled these three commitment components affective, continuance, and normative. Meyer and Allen indicated that affective commitment (AC) is the extent to which one is attached to, identifies with, and is involved in his or her organization. Employees rating high on AC, stay with their particular organizations out of a desire to do so. Continuance commitment (CC) is the extent to which one stays with the organization because of the costs incurred to leave his or her particular organization (e.g., loss of benefits or

seniority). Employees rating high on CC, stay involved with their organization because they feel they have to. Normative commitment (NC) is the extent to which one feels an obligation or responsibility to maintain employment with his or her organization. Employees rating high on NC stay with their organization because they feel they should (p. 67).

For the purpose of this paper, only AC will be assessed. Studies have been conducted utilizing the CC component (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Dunham, Grube, & Castaneda, 1994; Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997), however, because goal orientation does not revolve around the costs incurred on behalf of the employee for leaving their organization, it will not be studied. Additionally, there is evidence that the AC and the NC components are highly correlated in North American populations, signifying that although the two components are measuring two distinct constructs, there may be an important link, or possible inclination between feelings of desire and feelings of obligation (Allen & Meyer). However, the focus of this study will remain solely on AC for two main reasons. First, there is no literature suggesting a link between goal orientation and NC. Second, evidence suggests that NC derives from (a) investments granted to an individual by an organization which are so large in scale that a sense of "indebtedness" develops in the mind of the receiving individual (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Scholl, 1981), and (b) internalized pressures resulting from childhood familial and cultural socialization processes, as well as organizational socialization processes (Wiener, 1982), and both of these factors are not pertinent themes in relationship to the hypotheses of this study.

Additionally, most OC researchers feel that affective commitment is the key dimension of OC, as evidenced by the amount of studies conducted on the AC component (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Allen, 2002).

Predictors of OC. For more than a decade, researchers (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Dunham et al., 1994; Hackett et al., 1994; Ko et al., 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993) have investigated the antecedents of OC, as well as hypothesized numerous relationships between OC and an assortment of outcome variables. Therefore, for a better understanding of OC, this study will outline the following; (i) the general predictors of OC, (ii) the specific predictors of AC, (iii) the main predictors utilized for this study and, (v) a rationale for all the hypotheses generated for this paper.

General Predictors of OC. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) preformed an extensive meta-analytic review of OC which included attitudinal and calculative commitment. Attitudinal commitment is most related to Allen and Meyer's (1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991) AC component, whereas calculative commitment corresponds most to their CC component. Until Mathieu and Zajac's meta-analytic review, NC had generally been considered an extension of attitudinal or calculative commitment or as a correlate to OC. Allen and Meyer even found AC and NC to be highly correlated. Taking this into consideration, the purpose of this section is to state general predictors of OC as represented by Mathieu and Zajac.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) classified antecedents of OC into five categories; personal characteristics (age, sex, education, marital status, position and organizational

tenure, perceived personal competence, ability, salary, protestant work ethic, and job level), role states (role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload), job characteristics (skill variety, task autonomy, challenge, and job scope), group/leader relations (group cohesiveness, task interdependence, leader initiating structure, leader consideration and communication, and participative leadership), and organizational characteristics (size and centralization).

Among these categories, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that the relationship between personal characteristics and OC yielded generally small correlations with some exceptions. More specifically, two variables, notably, age and protestant work ethic, were found to have medium-sized positive correlations with OC. Perceived personal competence was the only personal variable to yield a large positive correlation with OC.

Among the role states category, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found moderate, negative correlations between all three role states and OC, however noted that it was not understood whether the relationship between the role states and OC was direct or mediated by other variables.

With regards to the job characteristics category, an interesting finding was found from Mathieu and Zajac (1990). For example, they revealed that job scope, which is the average representation of the other variables in the job characteristic category, was found to have the most impact on OC, thus more complex jobs, as perceived by the eye of the beholder, may be more beneficial for employees' OC.

Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) study examining the group/leader relations category found moderate, positive correlations between two variables, namely leader initiating

structure and leader consideration and OC, however, a large amount of variance was not accounted for. Although the sample sizes were small, leader communication and participatory leadership were also correlated positively with OC. Examining these studies in more detail, these researchers suggested that other variables related to the work setting may be important when evaluating and understanding the relationship between leader behaviors and OC, thus allowing for more variance to be accounted for.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) also evaluated organizational characteristics and roles states in relation to OC. Little support was found for the use of organizational size and centralization as immediate antecedents of OC.

AC Predictors. Positively related antecedents of AC include seven characteristics (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Cohen, 1993; Dunham et al., 1994; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Ko et al., 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 1993). First, are organizational characteristics, including management receptiveness, organizational dependability, transformational leadership organizational support, and participatory management. Second are social rewards, including supervisory support and coworker support. Third are job characteristics, including, task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety, and supervisory feedback. Fourth are rewards/punishments, including, distributive and procedural justice, legitimacy, promotional chances, job security, pay, and job autonomy. Fifth are personal variables, including, age, tenure, job level, met expectations, job expectations and values, work involvement and motivation, positive affectivity, and job satisfaction. Sixth are personal competence variables, including, feedback, goal difficulty, job challenge, challenge, and skill transferability. Seventh are

environmental variables, including, spouse and parent support outside of work. Negatively related antecedents of AC, include role-related variables (role ambiguity, role conflict, routinization, resource inadequacy), organizational characteristics and/or employment alternatives (job hazards, perceived alternatives), and personal variables, such as negative affectivity, as well as, education (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Ko et al., 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Main Predictors of the Study

In this section, the main predictors of this study will be outlined. For example, this section will (i) examine the role of implicit theories, (ii) assess perceived personal competence in relation to affective OC, (iii) detail research related to P-O fit and OC and lastly, (iv) outline research pertaining to role states and affective OC. The research in this section will then be utilized to formulate specific hypotheses outlined in the “Rationale for Hypotheses” section.

Implicit Theories. Dweck and her associates’ (Diener & Dweck, 1978; 1980; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988) work on implicit theories of intelligence (entity vs. incremental) has been broadened to encompass implicit theories in reference to personal relationships (Knee, 1998), and more recently to implicit theories regarding academic interests (Zuckerman, Gagne, & Nafshi, 2001). For example, Knee found that subjects prescribing to an entity theory (fixed view of relationships), in which relationships were perceived by the beholder as either being destined to succeed or to fail, were more likely to end a personal relationship when the relationship underwent difficulties as opposed to those prescribing to an incremental theory. Expanding upon

this, Zuckerman et al. showed that implicit theories about academic interests impact students' decisions to pursue their academic majors. More specifically, it was predicted that low perceived competence would indicate a lack of congruence between students' academic interests and their chosen majors for those students holding an entity theory, but would have little impact for those holding an incremental theory. Accordingly, these students would be more inclined to choose another major. The present study will attempt to expand upon the above research by examining P-O fit (person-climate fit) to determine how employees' implicit theories in reference to goal orientation will relate to employees' OC.

Personal Characteristics and OC. In their meta-analytic review, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found that perceived personal competence had a very strong, positive correlation with attitudinal commitment (comparable to the AC component). One might conjecture from this that individuals will be more likely to "identify" or be affectively committed with their organization when they are self-assured in their own personal abilities and achievements. This research is still open to debate. Meyer and Allen (1997) stated "it is difficult to know whether AC to the organization derives directly from true 'dispositional self-confidence' or if competent people were able to choose higher-quality organizations, which in turn inspired stronger affective commitment" (p. 44).

P-O fit and Commitment. A range of research has highlighted a P-O approach to studying the construct of OC (Boxx et al., 1991; Cable & Judge, 1996; Chatman, 1989; Meglino et al., 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Tziner, 1987; Vancouver & Schmitt, 1991; Vancouver et al., 1994; Witt & Nye, 1992). According to

Kristof (1996), these studies can be operationalized in terms of value similarity (Boxx et al.; Chatman, 1989; O'Reilley et al.; Meglino et al.), goal similarity (Vancouver & Schmidt; Vancouver, et al.; Witt & Nye), and a match between an individual's personality disposition and the climate of an organization (Tziner). The prevailing research outlined here documents a positive relationship between P-O fit and commitment to an organization. More specifically, when individuals' values, goals, and personality match that of their organization, they are more likely to be committed. Although research has been conducted on P-O fit, little attention has been given to operationalizing P-O fit in terms of person-climate fit. Thus, this study will attempt to expand upon the above research introducing a variable called goal orientation, to examine how individual goal orientation moderates the relationship between P-O fit and affective OC.

Role States and OC (affective commitment). Mowday et al. (1982) asserted that role states are likely key determinants of OC. However, over time, there has been some debate about the function of role states, such as role ambiguity and role conflict, in relation to outcome variables, such as OC, due to inconsistent results (for a review see Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981).

Fisher and Gitelson (1983) put some of this debate to rest with their meta-analysis on role conflict and role ambiguity. Results of their meta-analysis produced negative and consistent results with regards to the relationship between role ambiguity and role conflict with affective OC; role ambiguity was significantly more related to affective OC than role conflict. Contrary to Fisher and Gitelson's results, Jackson and Schuler's

(1985) meta-analysis found that although both role ambiguity and role conflict moderately correlated with affective OC, the amount of variance unaccounted for suggested the need to introduce more predictor and moderator variables. Future studies only added to the confusion. For example, Good, Sisler, and Gentry (1988) found both role ambiguity and role conflict to be correlated with affective OC, however, only role conflict was found to have a main, negative relationship with affective OC after additional model testing. Schaubroeck, Cotton, and Jennings (1989) found no direct relationship between these two role states and affective OC when OC was hypothesized to be a mediator between job satisfaction and turnover intentions. More recently, results by Brown and Peterson (1993) and Singh (1998) have supported the original findings by Fisher and Gitelson that role ambiguity and/or role conflict have direct, negative linear relationships with affective OC. Thus, consensus would seem to suggest that there is a relationship between these two role states and affective OC and that including a moderator variable, such as goal orientation, could be an important step in understanding the deeper dynamics of this relationship.

Meyer and Allen (1997) noted studies that have found concrete and consistent correlations between employees' work experiences and AC, with a predominance of these studies measuring individuals' perceptions of their work experiences. For example, in their meta-analytic review, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) examined over 50 studies taking into account employees' work experiences with regards to role states, such as role ambiguity and role conflict. In particular, Mathieu and Zajac found negative, moderate level correlations between both role ambiguity and role conflict with AC.

For a deeper understanding of how work experiences, emphasizing role states, are associated with OC, Allen and Meyer (1996) conducted a test of studies using their three-component model of OC to assess individuals' work experiences for their contributing influence on OC. Results revealed that role ambiguity had the strongest, negative correlation with AC, followed by NC, but CC was not correlated with role ambiguity. Ko et al. (1997) also tested Meyer and Allen's three-component model of OC, however, they examined role ambiguity and role conflict as correlates of AC. Both role ambiguity and role conflict were found to be negatively associated with AC.

In this section, it has been demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between P-O fit and OC and a negative relationship between two role stressors, role ambiguity and role conflict, and affective OC. The present study will try to expand upon this research by introducing a moderator variable, goal orientation, to determine if individual goal orientation moderates the relationship between three antecedents, including P-O fit (goal orientation), role ambiguity, and role conflict, and the outcome variable, affective OC.

Rationale for Hypotheses

Based on the research presented throughout this paper, it has been shown that individuals hold implicit theories about their intelligence, their personal relationships, and their academic interests (Diener & Dweck, 1978; 1980; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Knee, 1998; Zuckerman et al., 2001). For example, individuals who prescribe to an entity theory (view attributes as fixed) are considered to have a performance goal orientation and are more likely to avoid or withdraw from a

task, an interpersonal relationship, or academic major than those with an incremental theory (learning goal orientation) when confronted with a challenging situation.

Additionally, in the work domain, Brett and VandeWalle (1999) showed how implicit theories relate to content goals. For example, employees displaying a performance-avoid orientation chose avoidance goals (goals that would not make them look incompetent), whereas those with a learning goal orientation picked goals related to skill improvement (development and refinement). Along these same lines, VandeWalle et al. showed that having a learning goal orientation positively related to the goals salespersons set, as well as the time, intensity, overall effort, and intended planning put into a work promotion (territory and account planning), whereas performance goal orientation was not related to two of the three self-regulation tactics (e.g., goal level and intended effort). Although both orientations were related to intending planning, the relationship was much weaker for the performance versus learning goal orientation. Results ultimately showed that increased sales performance was related to having a learning goal disposition, but not to displaying a performance goal orientation, highlighting the benefit of having a learning as opposed to a performance goal orientation.

The proposed study postulates that employees' may be aware of their personal goal orientations and that they evaluate whether their organizational climate provides for the actualization of their goal orientation. That is, employees with a learning goal orientation will want to work in an organization that has a climate that encourages development of new skills and competencies, and that focuses on progress through effort

improvement, and risk taking. In contrast, employees with a performance goal orientation will want to work in an environment focused on proving one's performance through demonstration and substantiation of one's competence with the main goal to obtain positive evaluations from others while avoiding unwanted criticism. Additionally, it can be suggested that employees who prescribe to an entity theory (performance goal orientation) may evaluate their goal orientation as either fitting or not fitting with their organizations' goal orientation climate, whereas those who prescribe to an incremental theory (learning goal orientation) would be less influenced by whether their organizations' goal orientation climates match that of their personal goal orientation because these individuals are willing to grow and adapt to an organization's climate.

As presented earlier, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) indicated that attitudinal (affective) OC was greater for those individuals who were self-assured in their abilities and achievements. Accordingly, it is argued that employees displaying a learning goal orientation are more likely to be self-assured in their competence to handle a situation in which their goal orientation does not match that of their organization, because this group is more inclined to persist, take delight in, and put forth more effort toward facing their challenges (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Thus, any incongruence in goal orientations between an employee and that of the organizational climate would signal to those holding a performance goal orientation to avoid or withdraw from the organization, becoming less committed to the organization.

H₁: The relationship between P-O fit (goal orientation) and affective OC will be stronger for performance goal oriented individuals

than for learning goal orientated individuals. Specifically, when there is a perceived misfit, affective OC will be lower for the performance goal orientated individuals than for the learning goal oriented individuals. However, when there is a perceived fit, affective OC will be similar for both the performance and the learning goal oriented individuals.

Meyer and Allen (1997) suggested that when employees' needs and expectations are met, employees are likely to be affectively committed to their organizations. Evidence supporting this view has been found. For example, Iverson and Buttigieg (1999) found that when employees' expectations were met in reference to their jobs, they were more likely to "identify" with their particular organization. Allen and Meyer (1990) found that when role clarity was high, that is, when employees were clear in their roles, they were more likely to feel a "desire" to maintain membership with their organization. Conversely, research has demonstrated that role ambiguity (not understanding what is expected in one's role) is negatively correlated with affective OC (Brown & Peterson, 1993; Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Ko et al., 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Therefore, it can be argued that the relationship between role ambiguity and affective OC will be moderated by an individual's goal orientation. That is, role ambiguity may lower affective OC for a performance goal oriented employee, because experiencing role ambiguity is often frustrating and challenging, and performance goal oriented individuals have been shown to have a difficult time in maintaining confidence, persisting with and putting forth effort toward a challenge (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

H₂: The relationship between role ambiguity and affective OC will be stronger for those with a performance goal orientation than a learning goal orientation. Specifically, when there is high role ambiguity, affective OC will be lower for performance goal oriented individuals than for the learning goal oriented individuals. However, when there is low role ambiguity, affective OC will be similar for both the learning and the performance goal oriented individuals.

The following argument can also be made with regards to role conflict. For example, when employees were expected to act in a manner incongruent with how they felt they should act (role conflict), they experienced lower levels of affective OC (Ko et al., 1997). Therefore, it is argued that the relationship between role conflict and affective OC is moderated by an individual's goal orientation. That is, the relationship between role conflict and affective OC may be more negative because it might pose more difficulties and/or threat to a performance oriented individual for whom role conflict is taxing and frustrating. Research has demonstrated that those displaying this orientation are less likely to maintain confidence when challenged and are also less likely to apply the needed effort and cultivate the needed persistence to follow through on a challenge (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

H₃: The relationship between role conflict and affective OC will be stronger for those with a performance goal orientation than a learning goal orientation. Specifically, when there is high role conflict, affective OC will be lower for performance goal oriented individuals than for the

learning goal oriented individuals. However, when there is low role conflict, affective OC will be similar for both the learning and the performance goal oriented individuals.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 214 part-time and full-time fall graduate Masters in Business Administration (MBA) students from San Jose State University. Since this paper involved analysis at the individual level and focused on comparing a person's fit orientation with personal perceptions of his or her company's fit orientation, regardless of company and industry, MBA students were utilized for this study. MBA students, as opposed to graduate students in other departments, were chosen because this population was likely to be currently employed, working in professional level jobs, and working for different organizations. Moreover, the MBA program is one of the largest graduate programs on campus and it was more readily accessible for data collection.

All students asked to participate in this research study received a brief 5-minute introduction by the researcher (during class time) outlining the major constructs and purpose of the study, along with instructions for filling out their paper-format survey. All subjects received two "Agreement to Participate in Research" consent forms (one for their records and one for the researcher), along with a paper-format survey and a T&E 200 scantron for responses. Students were instructed when they completed their survey to return the signed and dated researchers consent form, their survey, and scantron to the researcher. Responses to the administered survey were completed by participants with

the understanding that their answers would remain confidential and anonymous. A sample of the survey instrument is presented in Appendix A.

Out of the 214 students who completed the survey, 170 participants indicated they were currently employed, with 44 responding they had been unemployed for up to 6 months or longer. All participants who designated themselves as unemployed were dropped from the analyses. An additional six subjects were deleted from future analyses due to conflicting information regarding their employment status, resulting in a workable sample of 164 subjects.

Participants were predominately male (65%) and Caucasian/EuroAmerican (47%) or Asian/Pacific Islander (37%). Mostly participants were between the ages of 25-31 (49%) and 32-38 (23%). Subjects generally worked over 40 hours a week (56%) or between 31-40 hours (34%). Participants' responses indicated that 42% had worked for their particular organization for three or more years, followed directly by 1-2 years (22%) and 2-3 years (20%). Job tenure resembled results found for organizational tenure, with the typical job tenure being over three years (29%), 1-2 years (26%) or 2-3 years (21%). When instructed to fill out the department they worked for, a number of subjects chose the "Other" category (36%), while others selected R&D/Production department (23%) or the Sales/Marketing department (15%). Lastly, the majority of participants worked for companies employing over 1000 employees (50%) or 50 or less (22%).

Measures

Demographic Characteristics. Participants were asked to report job specific demographics, such as, employment status, how long ago their last part-time/full-time job

was, hours worked, tenure (company/job), department, and number of employees employed at their organization. Personal demographics questions included gender, age, and ethnicity. An example of a demographic item was, "How long have you been working/were you working for your current position?"

Individual Goal Orientation. Employees' individual goal orientations were assessed by a 13-item measure developed by VandeWalle (1997). VandeWalle's measure included three subscales: learning goal orientation (5 items), performance-prove goal orientation (4 items), and performance-avoid goal orientation (4 items). Responses to the 13-item measure were made using a 5-point Likert-type response scale, with anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item measuring learning goal orientation was, "I am willing to select a challenging work assignment that I can learn a lot from," an example of an item measuring performance-prove goal orientation was, "I like to show that I can perform better than my coworkers," and a sample item measuring performance-avoid goal orientation was, "I prefer to avoid situations at work where I might perform poorly." However, for the present study, only the learning and performance-avoid dimensions were used for additional analyses as they most related to the hypotheses of this study. Internal consistency was estimated by Cronbach alpha, with the following results: learning goal orientation $\alpha = .83$ and performance-avoid goal orientation $\alpha = .78$.

Organizational Climate for Goal Orientation. In order to assess participants' organizational goal orientation climates, this study utilized Newton, Duda and Yin's (2000) 33-item Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire-2 scale

(PMCSQ-2). This scale involved assessing task-involving and ego-involving climates with regards to sports, which is similar to Dweck's (1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) conceptualization of learning and performance goal orientations, as well as, Vandewalle's (1997) 3-factor model of goal orientation, specifically his learning and performance-avoid dimensions. All 33 PMCSQ-2 items were adapted to measure individuals' perceptions of organizational climates for goal orientation as opposed to a sports climate. An example of an original item from the PMCSQ-2 was, "On this team, the coach gets mad when a player makes a mistake." This item was changed to read, "At my company, managers get mad when employees make mistakes."

Responses to the 33-item measure utilized to assess participants' organizational goal orientation climates were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with the anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an adapted scale item that was used to assess a learning climate (mastery climate) was, "At my company, managers want employees to try new skills" and for performance-avoid climate, "At my company, employees are afraid to make mistakes." However, only 5 items measuring learning goal orientation (represented by effort/improvement) and 6 items measuring performance-avoid goal orientation (punishment for mistakes) were retained for subsequent analyses because they most related to the specific hypotheses of this paper. Internal consistency for the items measuring learning goal orientation and performance-avoid goal orientation were estimated by Cronbach alpha with the following results ($\alpha = .83$ and $.87$, respectively).

P-O fit (person-climate fit). The present study adopted a subjective indirect measure of fit similar to what is commonly found in the P-E literature. P-E fit is usually measured indirectly; in which the person and environment characteristics are measured separately (Caplan, 1987; Kristof, 1996). Specifically, an indirect subjective measure of fit is measured by asking the individual to report on him or herself, as well as the organization on a particular dimension (French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974). For example, an individual would respond to items such as, "Fairness is an important consideration to me" and "Fairness is an important consideration in organizational activities" (Bretz & Judge, 1994). The main difference for this paper is that the dimension of interest is goal orientation.

Based on methodology developed by Caplan (1987) and Kristof (1996), a new variable assessing fit had to be created. Therefore, in order to calculate whether a fit actually existed between a participant's individual goal orientation and his or her organization's goal orientation climate, two new variables were created. The first variable, dominant *individual* goal orientation, was formed so that a person scoring higher on the individual learning dimension would obtain a score of 2, whereas those scoring higher on the individual performance-avoid dimension would get a 1. The next variable, dominant *organizational* goal orientation was created in the same fashion as the above variable. Those perceiving their organizational climate as learning oriented (represented by effort and improvement) were given a score of 2 and those perceiving their organizational climate as performance-avoid oriented (characterized by punishment for mistakes) were given a score of 1. In order to determine if there is a fit between each

individual's goal orientation and his or her organization's goal orientation climate, a variable called P-O fit was created. When a participant's scores for the individual's goal orientation and the perceived organizational goal orientation were the same (e.g., both received a 1 or both received a 2), then it was said there was a fit. When the goal orientation for the individual and for the organization were different (e.g., individual had a learning orientation and the organization had a performance-avoid orientation or vice versa), then it was said there was a misfit. If there was a fit between individual and organizational goal orientation, then P-O fit was coded as 1 and if there was a misfit between the individual's goal orientation and that of his or her organization, P-O fit was coded as 0.

Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict. Role ambiguity and role conflict were assessed through a measure developed by Rizzo et al., (1970). The use of this subjective scale to measure both role stressors, based on employee perceptions, was supported by Schuler, Aldag, and Brief (1977). Rizzo et al.'s measure included 6 items to assess role ambiguity and 8 items to assess role conflict. Responses to the 14-item measure were made on a 5-point Likert type scale with the anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of an item that was used to measure role ambiguity was, "I feel certain about how much authority I have" (reverse scored) and a sample item used to measure role conflict was, "I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it." Reliability was measured by using Cronbach alpha with the following results for role ambiguity and role conflict (Cronbach $\alpha = .74$ and $.79$, respectively).

Organizational Commitment. In order to assess organizational commitment, this study utilized Meyer et al.'s, (1993) revised 18-item OC Scale. The revised 18-item measure comprised of six items each dimension for the Affective Commitment (AC), Continuance Commitment (CC) and Normative Commitment (NC) scales. The revised version used by Meyer et al. was based upon modifications of Allen and Meyer's (1990) original measure of OC consisting of 24 total scale items. Responses to the 18-item measure to assess participants' AC, CC and NC were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example of a scale item that was used to assess AC was, "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization," for CC "It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to," and lastly, for NC "I owe a great deal to my organization." For this study, affective commitment was the only scale to be included in all hypotheses, and as a result, the AC was only used in subsequent analyses. Internal consistency for the AC scale was estimated by Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = .82$).

Results

Dimensionality of the Measures

To determine the dimensionality of each measure used in this study, principal component analysis with oblimin rotation was performed for the following measures of individual goal orientation, organizational climate, role ambiguity/role conflict, and organizational commitment. All factor loadings above .35 are reported in this study. Results for the individual goal orientation items are presented in Table 1.

All individual goal orientation items were entered into the factor analysis with the researcher forcing a 3-factor solution to replicate VandeWalle's findings that goal orientation is a three-factor construct (VandeWalle, 1997; VandeWalle et al., 2001). Results were consistent with his findings and three factors were extracted. Learning goal orientation represented the first factor, which accounted for 30.51% of the variance in the overall individual goal orientation measure. Performance-prove represented the second factor, which accounted for an additional 22.20% of the variance, and the third factor, performance-avoid, accounted for an additional 8.04% of the total variance in this measure. Results did replicate VandeWalle's findings, but as mentioned earlier, only the learning dimension and the performance-avoid dimension were used in subsequent analyses.

Table 1

Principal Components Analysis with Oblimin Rotation for the Measure of Individual Goal Orientation (N = 161)

Item	Factor 1 Learn Orientation	Factor 2 Perf.- Prove Orientation	Factor 3 Perf.- Avoid Orientation
Enjoy challenging/difficult tasks	.91		
Opportunities to develop skills	.82		
Select challenging assignments	.79		
Work in situations w/high ability	.67		
Development of work ability	.59		
Perform better than coworkers		.79	
Prefer projects that prove ability		.77	

Table 1 Continued

Item	Factor 1 Learn Orientation	Factor 2 Perf.- Prove Orientation	Factor 3 Perf.- Avoid Orientation
Others aware of how I am doing		.73	
What it takes to prove ability		.65	
Avoid situations if perform poorly			.84
Concerned about taking on task			.82
Avoid task if appear incompetent			.75
Avoiding a show of low ability			.54
Eigenvalue	3.97	2.89	1.05
% Variance accounted for	30.51	22.20	8.04
Cumulative % variance	30.51	52.70	60.75

Principal components analysis with oblimin rotation forced to a two-factor solution was conducted for the measure of organizational goal orientation climate. Results for the organizational climate items are presented in Table 2. Two factors were extracted. Items representing a learning (mastery) climate, based on effort and improvement, loaded correctly on factor 1, accounting for 39.36% of the total variance. Items representing a performance-avoid climate, based on punishment for mistakes, loaded correctly on factor 2, accounting for an additional 13.98% of the overall variance in the measure.

Table 2

Principal Components Analysis with Oblimin Rotation for the Measure of Organizational Goal Orientation Climate (N =156)

Item	Factor 1 Learning Climate	Factor 2 Perf.- Avoid Climate
Improvement on skills not good at	.80	
Focus is to improve each project	.79	
Employees encouraged to work on weaknesses	.75	
Managers want employees to try new skills	.65	
Trying hard is rewarded	.62	
Managers emphasize trying your best	.62	
Employees feel successful when improve	.52	
Employees feel good when try their best	.50	
Employees punished when make mistakes		.86
Employees taken off projects for mistakes		.84
Managers get mad with employee mistakes		.82
Mangers yell at employees for messing up		.75
Employees afraid to make mistakes		.70
"Stars" contribute to success of organization		.55
Eigenvalue	5.51	1.96
% Variance accounted for	39.36	13.98
Cumulative % variance	39.36	53.34

Principal components analysis with oblimin rotation forced to a two-factor solution was conducted for the measure of role ambiguity and role conflict, however, results did not replicate previous research findings indicating a two-factor structure (Rizzo et al., 1970). As a result, a second principal components analysis with varimax rotation forced to two factors was performed and a resulting two-factor structure was replicated as expected (see Table 3), with one role conflict item loading on the role ambiguity factor ("I work on unnecessary things"). This item was removed from all analyses. Two factors were extracted, with the first factor representing role conflict, with 28.65% of the overall variance. The second factor, role ambiguity, accounted for an additional 15.57% of the total variance in this measure.

Table 3

Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation for the Measure of Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict (N = 156)

Item	Factor 1 Role Conflict	Factor 2 Role Ambiguity
Assignment without manpower to complete	.71	
Incompatible requests from two or more people	.71	
Do things that should be done differently	.68	
Work with groups that operate differently	.67	
Buck a rule/policy to complete assignment	.64	
Assignments without resources/materials	.57	
Accepted by one person but not others	.53	
Work on unnecessary things		.60*

Table 3 Continued

Item	Factor 1 Role Conflict	Factor 2 Role Ambiguity
Know exactly what is expected of me		.78
Get clear explanations for what is to be done		.65
Certain of how much authority I have		.65
Know what responsibilities are		.64
Clear, planned goals exist for job		.57
Know divided time properly		.50
Eigenvalue	4.01	2.18
% Variance accounted for	28.65	15.57
Cumulative % variance	28.65	44.23

*Item should have loaded on factor 1. It was dropped from subsequent analyses.

Principal components analysis with oblimin rotation forced to a three-factor solution was conducted for the measure of organizational commitment. Items addressing affective, continuance, and normative commitment were entered into the factor analysis to replicate findings that organizational commitment is a three-factor construct (Dunham et al., 1994; Hackett et al., 1994; Meyer et al., 1993). Three factors were extracted, however, for the purpose of this study and its hypotheses, only the affective items were retained for analyses. Results are presented in Table 4. All affective commitment items loaded on the first factor, with the addition of two normative items ("I owe a great deal to my organization" and "This organization deserves my loyalty"). However, when the scale mean was computed for affective commitment, the two normative items were excluded.

The first factor (that includes the two NC items) accounted for 32.92% of the overall variance in this measure.

Table 4

Principal Components Analysis with Oblimin Rotation for the Measure of Organizational Commitment (N = 159)

Item	Factor 1 Affective	Factor 2 Continuance	Factor 3 Normative
Personal meaning	.78		
Owe great deal to organization	.74*		
Happy to stay entire career	.65		
Sense of belonging	.65		
Part of family	.63		
Organization deserves loyalty	.63*		
Company problems are my own	.60		
Emotional attachment	.59		
Too few options to leave		.73	
Life would be too disrupted if left		.71	
Hard to leave organization		.71	
Staying is necessity and desire		.63	
Scarcity of alternatives		.61	.41
Guilty leaving			-.84
Obligation to people			-.79
Leaving not right			-.54

Table 4 Continued

Item	Factor 1 Affective	Factor 2 Continuance	Factor 3 Normative
Obligation to company	.36		-.52
Putting so much of self into org.			-.37
Eigenvalue	5.93	2.71	1.20
% Variance accounted for	32.92	15.06	6.68
Cumulative % variance	32.92	47.98	54.66

*Normative items should have loaded on factor 3 and were dropped from future analyses.

Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations

Descriptives statistics, reliabilities, and bivariate correlations for the variables of interest are presented in Table 5.

Correlations of Control Variables. Two demographic variables, namely organizational tenure and job tenure were used as control variables in the first step of the hierarchical moderated regressions that were run to determine if hypotheses 2 and 3 were supported. Bivariate correlations revealed a significant relationship between organizational tenure and job tenure ($r = .69, p < .01$).

Interestingly, both control variables were negatively correlated with organizational learning (mastery) goal orientation climate ($r = -.20, p < .05$, $r = -.21, p < .01$, respectively), however, only job tenure was found to be positively related to the other organizational goal orientation variable, performance-avoid climate ($r = .18, p < .05$). These correlations imply that the less organizational and job tenure one has, the more likely one is to view their organizational climate as learning goal oriented (characterized

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations (N=155)

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Org. Tenure	3.79	1.30										
2 Job Tenure	3.46	1.29	.69**									
3 Ind. Learning GO	4.31	0.54	-.04	-.01	.83							
4 Ind. Perf. - Avoid GO	2.73	0.80	-.05	-.04	-.38**	.78						
5 Learning GO Climate	3.44	0.63	-.20*	-.21**	.16	-.06	.83					
6 Perf. - Avoid GO Climate	2.76	0.87	.15	.18*	-.12	.11	-.51**	.87				
7 P-O fit	0.70	0.46	-.18*	-.23**	.04	-.13	.49**	-.59**	-			
8 Role Ambiguity	2.50	0.67	-.01	-.04	-.10	.00	-.44**	.18*	-.14	.74		
9 Role Conflict	3.07	0.69	.05	.10	-.02	.07	-.31**	.40**	-.20*	.30**	.79	
10 Affective OC	2.95	0.85	-.02	-.06	.07	.02	.51**	-.48**	.38**	-.36**	-.25**	.82

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Note: Reliability Coefficients are in bold

by effort and improvement), however, as job tenure increases, so does the likelihood that an individual will view his or her organizational climate as more performance-avoid goal oriented, that is, punishing individuals for making mistakes. Lastly, both control variables were negatively correlated with P-O fit ($r = -.18, p < .05$, $r = -.23, p < .01$, respectively), suggesting the shorter one works for an organization and a job, the more likely one is to feel he or she can actualize his or her individual goal orientation within his or her company.

Correlations of Control Variables with Affective OC. Bivariate correlations revealed that there was not a significant relationship between organizational and job tenure with the criterion, affective OC ($r = -.02$, and $r = -.06$, ns, respectively).

Intercorrelation Among the Predictors. In line with previous research (VandeWalle et al., 1999), the two individual goal orientations dimensions, learning and performance, were negatively correlated with each other ($r = -.38, p < .01$). However, the two goal orientation dimensions were not significantly correlated with any other variables in this study.

With regards to the two organizational goal orientation climate variables, there was a significant negative correlation between learning climate and performance-avoid climate ($r = -.51, p < .01$). Furthermore, these two organizational goal orientation climate variables were correlated with a number of other predictor variables. For example, learning climate was significantly correlated with P-O fit ($r = .49, p < .01$), as was performance-avoid climate ($r = -.59, p < .01$), suggesting that those perceiving an organizational learning climate based on effort and improvement are more likely to feel a

sense of fit with their organization than those viewing their organizational climate as performance-avoid (characterized by punishment for mistakes). Additionally, learning climate was negatively related with both role ambiguity ($r = -.44, p < .01$) and role conflict ($r = -.31, p < .01$), while performance-avoid climate was positively correlated with these two variables ($r = .18, p < .05, r = .40, p < .01$, respectively). These correlations suggest that individuals experiencing low role ambiguity and low role conflict perceive their organizational climate as more learning goal orientated, whereas those experiencing high role ambiguity and high role conflict perceive their organizational climate as more performance-avoid goal oriented.

In line with existing literature reviews, role conflict was positively correlated with role ambiguity (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Additionally, role conflict was negatively correlated with P-O fit ($r = -.20, p < .05$), suggesting that the more fit there is between an individual's goal orientation and that of their company's climate for goal orientation, the less role conflict an individual is likely to feel.

Correlations of Predictors with Affective OC. Bivariate correlations showed no significant relationship between the two individual goal orientation dimensions, learning and performance-avoid, and affective OC ($r = .07$, and $r = .02$, ns, respectively). However, a number of predictor variables were correlated with affective OC. For instance, learning goal orientation climate was positively associated with affective OC ($r = .51, p < .01$), whereas performance-avoid goal orientation was negatively correlated with affective OC ($r = -.48, p < .01$). These results suggest that those perceiving their organizational climate as learning goal oriented were more likely to have higher affective

OC than those indicating their organizational climate as more performance-avoid goal oriented. Additionally, bivariate results revealed that P-O fit was positively correlated with affective OC ($r = .38, p < .01$), indicating that when there is a fit between an individual's goal orientation and that of their company, they are more likely to be affectively committed to their organization. Lastly, both role ambiguity and role conflict were negatively associated with affective OC ($r = -.36, p < .01$ and $r = -.25, p < .01$, respectively), supporting previous research on OC (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analyses

Three separate hierarchical moderated regressions were performed to test the hypotheses. The first analysis was conducted to determine if the relationship between P-O fit (goal orientation) and affective OC would be stronger for performance goal oriented individuals than for learning goal orientated individuals. More specifically, with a perceived misfit, affective OC would be lower for performance goal orientated individuals than for learning goal oriented individuals. However, with a perceived fit, affective OC would be similar for both performance and learning goal oriented individuals (hypothesis 1). In the first step, the two individual goal orientation variables, learning and performance-avoid, were entered into the equation along with the P-O fit (person-climate fit) variable. In the second step, the cross products were entered, that is, P-O fit x individual learning goal orientation and P-O fit x individual performance-avoid goal orientation. Results of this analysis showed that the main effects explained a significant amount of variance in affective OC ($R^2 = .15, p < .01$, see Table 6) with P-O fit being the only significant predictor ($\beta = .39, p < .01$). In addition, the cross products

entered in step 2 explained a significant amount of variance in the criterion above and beyond the main effects ($\Delta R^2 = .06, p < .01$) with the cross product of P-O fit x learning goal orientation being a significant predictor ($\beta = 1.57, p < .05$), but not P-O fit x performance-avoid goal orientation ($\beta = -.34, ns$).

Table 6

Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis Predicting Affective OC (N = 156)

Predicting Affective Organizational Commitment			
	Predictors	β	ΔR^2
Step 1	Individual Goal Orientation - Learning Dimension	-.21	.15**
	Individual Goal Orientation - Perf.-Avoid Dimension	.20	
	P-O Fit	-.82	
Step 2	P-O fit x Learning Dimension	1.57*	.06**
	P-O fit x Perf.-Avoid Dimension	-.34	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. β s are reported after all main effects have been entered.

To interpret the significant interaction in hypothesis 1, correlations between individual learning goal orientation, performance-avoid goal orientation, and affective OC were computed separately by fits and misfits.

One hundred and eight individuals had a P-O fit of 1, indicating a fit between their goal orientation and their perception of their company's goal orientation climate.

For these “fit” individuals, the correlation between individual learning goal orientation and affective OC was a significant positive correlation ($r = .23, p < .05$, see Table 7).

Conversely, 48 individuals had a P-O fit of 0, indicating a misfit between their individual goal orientation and that of their company. For these “misfit” individuals, the correlation between individual learning goal orientation and affective OC was a significant negative correlation ($r = -.31, p < .05$). Although hypothesis 1 predicted an interaction effect, this particular form of the interaction was not hypothesized, therefore only partial support for hypothesis 1 was found.

Table 7

Correlation Table on Fits and Misfits

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2
P-O Fit = 1 (FIT)				
N=108				
1 Individual Learning GO***	4.32	0.54		
2 Individual. Perf.-Avoid GO	2.67	0.76	-.33 **	
3 Affective OC	3.16	0.76	.23 *	-.07
P-O Fit = 0 (MISFIT)				
N=48				
1 Individual Learning GO	4.28	0.54		
2 Individual Perf.-Avoid GO	2.91	0.90	-.46 **	
3 Affective OC	2.47	0.83	-.31 *	.32 *

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

***GO stands for goal orientation

A second multiple hierarchical regression was performed to determine if the relationship between role ambiguity and affective OC would be stronger for those displaying a performance goal orientation than a learning goal orientation. Specifically, with high role ambiguity, affective OC would be lower for performance goal oriented individuals than for learning goal oriented individuals, however, with low role ambiguity, affective OC would be similar for both learning and the performance goal oriented individuals (hypothesis 2). The following order was adopted for each step of the analysis in line with this hypothesis. In the first step, two control variables were entered, organizational tenure and job tenure. In step two, the following variables were entered into the equation, individual learning goal orientation, individual performance-avoid goal orientation, and role ambiguity. In the final step, the cross products of role ambiguity x individual learning goal orientation and role ambiguity x individual performance-avoid goal orientation were entered. Given that control variables were not significantly correlated with affective OC in the bivariate correlation analysis, the first step was not statistically significant ($R^2 = .00$, ns, see Table 8). However, the main effects (represented by step 2) accounted for a significant amount of additional variance beyond the two control variables ($\Delta R^2 = .12$, $p < .01$) with role ambiguity being the significant predictor ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .01$). However, the third step did not explain a significant amount of variance in the criterion, affective OC ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, ns). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Table 8

Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis Predicting Affective OC (N =160)

Predicting Affective Organizational Commitment			
	Predictors	β	ΔR^2
Step 1	Organizational Tenure	.03	.00
	Job Tenure	-.09	
Step 2	Individual Goal Orientation - Learning Dimension	.06	.12**
	Individual Goal Orientation - Perf.-Avoid Dimension	.06	
	Role Ambiguity	-.33**	
Step 3	Role Ambiguity x Learning Dimension		.00
	Role Ambiguity x Perf.-Avoid Dimension		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. β s are reported after all main effects have been entered.

A final hierarchical moderated regression was conducted to determine if the relationship between and role conflict and affective OC would be stronger for those displaying a performance goal orientation than a learning goal orientation. More specifically, with high role conflict, affective OC would be lower for performance goal oriented individuals than for learning goal oriented individuals, however, with low role conflict, affective OC would be similar for both learning and the performance goal oriented individuals (hypothesis 3). In the first step, organizational and job tenure were

entered again as control variables to be consistent with hypothesis 2. The main effects were then entered in step two to determine if the following variables accounted for additional variance in the criterion, individual learning goal orientation, individual performance-avoid goal orientation, and role conflict. The final step included entering the cross products between role conflict and the two individual goal orientations, learning and performance-avoid. Results revealed that the control variables in the first step did not explain a significant amount of variance in affective OC ($R^2 = .00$, ns, see Table 9). Regarding step two, the results showed that the main effects explained a significant amount of variance in affective OC above and beyond the control variables ($\Delta R^2 = .06$, $p < .05$) with role conflict being a significant predictor ($\beta = -.24$, $p < .01$). However, as with hypothesis 2, the cross products of role conflict and learning and performance goal orientation did not explain a significant amount of variance above either the control variables or the main effects ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, ns). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Table 9

Hierarchical Moderated Regression Analysis Predicting Affective OC (N =160)

Predicting Affective Organizational Commitment			
	Predictors	β	ΔR^2
Step 1	Organizational Tenure	.02	.00
	Job Tenure	-.05	
Step 2	Individual Goal Orientation - Learning Dimension	.10	.06*

Table 9 Continued

Predicting Affective Organizational Commitment

	Predictors	β	ΔR^2
	Individual Goal Orientation - Perf.-Avoid Dimension	.08	
	Role Conflict	-.24**	
Step 3	Role Conflict x Learning Dimension		.01
	Role Conflict x Perf.-Avoid Dimension		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. β s are reported after all main effects have been entered.

Discussion

Previous research regarding goal orientations has focused on measuring goal orientation at the individual level only. This study took research one-step further to measure individual's perceptions regarding their organizational climate for goal orientation. This study suggested that employees are aware of their personal goal orientations and that they will evaluate whether their organizational climate provides for the actualization of their goal orientation in the workplace. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine whether the relationship between P-O fit (person-climate fit) and affective OC was moderated by individual goal orientation (hypothesis 1) and whether individual goal orientation also moderated the relationship between two role stressors, role ambiguity and role conflict, and affective OC (hypotheses 2 and 3).

Findings of this study provide some empirical support for the moderating effect of individual goal orientation on affective OC, as well as evidence supporting previous research indicating a relationship between role ambiguity/role conflict and affective OC.

That 93% of the sample considered themselves to be more learning oriented than performance-avoid oriented (individual goal orientation) might have been revealing about the characteristics of the sample, as assessment was conducted on people who were motivated to continue learning, that is, students. Nonetheless, these individuals also reported similar results for their dominant organizational goal orientation, with 70% of the population reporting their organization as more learning oriented than performance-avoid oriented. It is possible that many of the working students in this study, are taking MBA classes as a result of a tuition reimbursement program offered by their company. However, not all companies offer such a program, and therefore, fewer individuals in those types of companies may be enrolled in MBA programs. Future researchers choosing to study this topic on working graduate students might want to consider asking about tuition reimbursement plans. Companies that have these type of plans might be seen as learning organizations. Companies that do not offer the plan might be seen as performance-oriented. After computing P-O fit (person-climate fit), results revealed 108 individuals or 69% were classified as “fits” while, 48 individuals or 31% were classified as “misfits.” Caution is warranted when interpreting this finding because 69% fit does not mean that the fit was between a learning oriented person and a learning oriented organization only, it could include performance orientation individual and organization as well.

That perceived P-O fit (person-climate fit), in terms of goal orientation, yielded a tendency for there to be a positive relationship between individual learning goal orientation and affective OC, suggests that commitment results when a learning individual works in an organization that emphasizes effort and improvement, but probably not through punishment. P-O fit and performance-avoid goal orientation did not interact to explain affective OC, possibly in part because most of the individual and organization goal orientations were toward learning. It is also suggested that the wording of Vandewalle's (1997) 3-factor measure of goal orientation, specifically, the performance-avoid questions, is ambiguous. Participants responses to a few items under this dimension grouped around the neither agree nor disagree response, which could have lowered participants dominant individual performance-goal orientation scores, subsequently, increasing the likelihood that more participants would be categorized as learning oriented, as results showed.

Although hypotheses two and three were not supported, both role stressors were positively related to performance-avoid climate, suggesting that organizations with a performance goal orientation may not provide their employees with clear role expectations, which might feed people's perceptions of the organization as endorsing a performance goal orientation. Lastly, results supported previous research that role ambiguity and role conflict negatively related to affective OC (Brown & Peterson, 1993; Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Ko et al., 1997; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Singh, 1998).

Practical Implications

For part-time and full-time employees working in Silicon Valley, results indicated that people who endorse a learning orientation working in a company that provides learning opportunities feel emotionally attached to their organization. In light of this particular finding, recommendations for practical implications can be made. For instance, these results suggest that it would be worthwhile for organizations to determine if they have a learning goal orientation climate and/or for departments within an organization to do the same.

Once a company establishes through management that a learning climate exists within the company, it is recommended that management ensure that the company's structure (policies, procedures, responsibilities) supports a learning environment. For example, specific competencies that are geared toward learning (technical, leadership/influence, focus on effort) should be developed by the company's senior management team and HR and included in each job description. Otherwise, individuals who endorse a learning orientation may become less committed over time. Additionally, it is recommended that all management receive training on (1) what constitutes a learning environment, (2) what specific competencies exist for their job, as well as their employees' jobs, and (3) how to provide guidance and learning opportunities to ensure specific competencies are developed over time from their staff. The above recommendations may help to provide clear role expectations for individuals within companies. As this study showed, clear expectations lead to perceptions that an organization is learning oriented. Therefore, individuals with learning orientations who

can actualize their orientation in the workplace may feel emotionally attached to their organizations.

Once the above has taken place, it is recommended that hiring managers, during the interview process, use these job descriptions to collect and evaluate job seekers and existing employees fit with the company/department. If a fit exists, appropriate decisions on hiring, promoting, or transferring of an individual can rest upon additional information such as the applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The above paragraphs discussed implications for organizations in determining fit, yet, this paper centered around perceptions of goal orientation from one person's viewpoint (the part-time, full-time employee). So what if an applicant is hired by an organization because a fit in learning orientations appeared to exist, but over time, the new employee begins to perceive a different organizational climate than the company's management team, that is, one that is performance-avoid oriented? Findings from this paper suggest that as role stressors arise, perceptions of learning climate versus performance-avoid climate may be tainted toward performance-avoid climate, because individuals reporting stressors are more likely to see their organizational climate as punishing individuals for making mistakes.

Findings revealed that when there is a fit between an individual's goal orientation and that of their company, they are more likely to be affectively committed to their organization, so for employees who feel they cannot actualize their goal orientation in the workplace, there are far reaching consequences. For instance, research has shown that there is a negative relationship between OC and intention to search for job alternatives,

intention to leave one's job, as well as turnover (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). That's why it is so important for companies to have an organizational structure that is supported by specific learning competencies and appropriate training to develop these competencies.

Limitations

Although the results of this study provided some evidence that individual goal orientation moderates the relationship between P-O fit and affective OC, and supports previous research regarding the relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict, and affective OC, this study is not without its limitations. Several findings from this study need to be taken with caution because of the way data was collected. More specifically, this study's survey was subjectively based, that is, meaning individuals reported their perceptions on the different constructs utilized for this study. For example, participants were asked about their perceptions regarding their organizations' climates for goal orientation and not asked to compare their perceptions with agreed upon organizational climates based on aggregated perceptions from multiple employees within an organization. Although Ferris and Judge (1991) stated that, "people react on the bases of perceptions of reality, not reality 'per se'" (p. 464), it would have be interesting to obtain an aggregated score pertaining to organizational goal orientation in an attempt to know whether this information would have altered individuals sense of P-O fit and thus the results of this study.

Another limitation of this study was that the questionnaire itself was 94 items. This could have created fatigue and/or a lack of motivation on the part of some subjects to continue to answer the questions. Too many questions can infringe on people's time,

effort and, as a result, reliability can suffer. However, Dillman (1978) found that questionnaires utilizing 125 questions or less did not reduce response rate.

Common method variance also may be a factor in this study, because all responses to the measures were given during a certain time frame, with no time elapsing between each measure. For instance, participants may have been prone to answer the individual goal orientation items and the organizational climate for goal orientation items in a similar fashion, thereby, setting up social desirable responses. However, questions regarding individual goal orientation were located at the beginning of the survey, and organizational goal orientation questions were located at the end, thus providing some separation. Additionally, as a result of the sample of MBA graduate students utilized for this study, the researcher was only allowed one chance to administer the survey in full.

Results from this study indicated that 93% of the sample considered themselves to be more learning than performance-avoid goal oriented, with comparable results at the organizational level (70%, 30%, respectively). This is not a surprise given the subjects were graduate students who may be more inclined to be learning goal oriented. However, VandeWalle's (1997) measure of individual goal orientation may not actually be accurately capturing performance-avoid goal oriented individuals. For instance, questions that were learning oriented, seemed more precise and clear ("I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent") and received more agree and strongly agree responses. On the contrary, questions measuring performance-avoid goal orientation ("I try and figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others at work")

appeared more vague with some questions producing responses clustered around the neither agree nor disagree response.

One last limitation surrounds the assistance of MBA graduate students as participants in this study. Although the data that were analyzed pertained only to those participants who were either part-time or full-time employed; nonetheless, this sample may not be representative of the actual workforce population.

Future Research

Assessing goal orientation not only at the individual, but more importantly, at the organizational level is a novel concept not studied prior to this paper. With the results of this research, it is evident there is some validity in continuing to pursue this new direction. Given this innovative idea, there are a multitude of possibilities for expanding research in this area.

First, there is the need to continue to determine the reliability and validity of VandeWalle's (1997) individual goal orientation measure. Given the heavy skewness toward participants being learning oriented in this study, it is important that in the future researchers collect data from representative samples, such as employees in the workplace, to determine if other populations are equally skewed (as in this study) or more evenly distributed. Additionally, a second look at VandeWalle's instrument would be appropriate, with a special emphasis on the wording of the performance-avoid goal oriented items, given that a few items produced a heavier than expected neither agree nor disagree response. In fact, it might be beneficial to utilize another measure of individual goal orientation all together or to develop a new measure if heavy skewness towards

learning oriented individuals continues to result from representative samples in the future. Lastly, this study did not evaluate whether participants in this study were both high and low on both goal orientation dimensions. For example, Button, Mathieu, and Zajac (1996) found evidence to support that individuals can be equally high and low on the learning and performance dimensions; future research needs to capture this dynamic more readily.

As with most research, it is important that future research can replicate similar or more substantial findings. For example, it would be interesting to research whether companies in the Silicon Valley are really as learning oriented as subjects perceived. By conducting focus groups with Human Resource Representatives, Executives, and workers, the goal orientation climates of various companies and/or departments in the Bay Area could be revealed. From there, subjects can then be asked to give their perceptions regarding how they view their organizational or departmental goal orientation in light of these climates. In this way, researchers can then begin to evaluate whether individuals' perceptions of organizational climate are similar to aggregated perceptions of organizational climate and what affect this might have on P-O fit in future studies.

Additionally, research should be carried out in other cities of the United States. Silicon Valley is an innovative and technologically driven valley, more apt to attracting learning oriented individuals who are willing to work for organizations that are the same. By reproducing the notion of this study in other localities, where more performance oriented companies may reside, results may be more substantial as an outcome.

Lastly, future research must also incorporate other predictor variables, such as personality attributes or environmental characteristics (manager feedback or support) to see if learning oriented individuals who are working in an organization that is not congruent with their goal disposition, may experience higher affective OC.

Additionally, it would be useful for future research to study relevant predictor variables (cultural values) in relation to other dimensions of OC, such as NC, and other dependent variables, such as job satisfaction, to determine if individual goal orientation also moderates the relationship between the above independent and dependent variables. For example, people working in learning organizations might feel an obligation to reciprocate the positive and rewarding climate one has in the organization and thus might report a normative OC.

In conclusion, this paper broke new ground by measuring perceptions of goal orientation at the organizational level. This paper utilized an adapted sports climate measure to gather perceptions on organizational goal orientation. However, as a result of this study, it is hopeful that future research will produce a new reliable/valid instrument designed specifically to measure employees' goal orientation perceptions at the organizational level. It is also the hope of this study that investigators continue to utilize additional predictor and criterion variables when studying goal orientation to see if additional variance can be accounted for when using a P-O fit approach.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument

Throughout this survey, you will be asked a number of questions. There are no right or wrong answers, if you do not wish to answer a question(s), feel free to skip it. Remember that your answers will remain completely confidential and anonymous to San Jose State University and to your company.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS

Please answer the below questions by filling in the corresponding circle on your scantron.

1. Are you currently employed?

YES ☐	NO ☐
1	2

2. If you are NOT currently employed, when was your last part-time/full-time job?

(IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED, PLEASE SKIP QUESTION #2 AND PROCEED TO QUESTION #3)

Less than 1 month ☐	1-2 months ☐	3-4 months ☐	5-6 months ☐	Over 6 months ☐
1	2	3	4	5

3. How many hours a week do you/did you work for your ORGANIZATION?

Up to 10 hours ☐	11-20 hours ☐	21-30 hours ☐	31-40 hours ☐	Over 40 hours ☐
1	2	3	4	5

4. How long have you been/were you with your COMPANY?

Under 6 months ☐	6 mos. to 1 year ☐	1-2 years ☐	2-3 years ☐	Over 3 years ☐
1	2	3	4	5

5. How long have you been working/were you working in your CURRENT position?

Under 6 months	6 mos. to 1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	Over 3 years
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

6. What department do you/did you work in?

Sales/ Marketing	R&D/ Production	Finance/ Accounting	General Management/ HR	Other
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

7. Approximately, how many employees are there in your company (including headquarters and subsidiaries/branches)?

Under 50 employees	50-100 employees	100-500 employees	500-1000 employees	Over 1000 employees
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

B. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT YOUR JOB (Individual Goal Orientation Items 8-20)
(Role Ambiguity/Role Conflict, 21-34)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. For each statement below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by filling in the corresponding circle on the scantron.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

8. I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent.
9. I prefer to avoid situations at work where I might perform poorly.
10. I'm concerned about taking on a task at work if my performance would reveal that I had low ability.
11. For me, development of my work ability is important enough to take risks.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

12. I enjoy challenging and difficult tasks at work where I'll learn new skills.
13. I like to show that I can perform better than my coworkers.
14. Avoiding a show of low ability is more important to me than learning a new skill.
15. I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge.
16. I enjoy it when others at work are aware of how well I am doing.
17. I prefer to work on projects where I can prove my ability to others.
18. I am willing to select a challenging work assignment that I can learn a lot from.
19. I would avoid taking on a new task if there was a chance that I would appear rather incompetent to others.
20. I try to figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others at work.
21. I know what my responsibilities are.
22. I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it.
23. I work on unnecessary things.
24. I know exactly what is expected of me.
25. I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.
26. I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.
27. Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job.
28. I do things that are likely to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.
29. I know that I have divided my time properly.
30. I get clear explanations of what has to be done.
31. I feel certain about how much authority I have.
32. I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.
33. I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.
34. I have to do things that should be done different.

C. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION (Organizational Commitment Items 35-52)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. For each statement below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by filling in the corresponding circle on the scantron.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

35. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
36. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
37. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.
38. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.
39. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.
40. I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.
41. This organization deserves my loyalty.
42. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
43. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization right now.
44. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.
45. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.
46. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.
47. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
48. I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.
49. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.
50. I owe a great deal to my organization.
51. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere.

52. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.

(Intent to Quit Items 53-55. Data for these items were not used in this study)

53. It is likely that I will actively look for a new job in the next year.

54. I often think about quitting.

55. I will probably look for a new job in the next year.

D. YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE (Organizational Goal Orientation Items 56-88).

Please think about how it has felt to work at your company this year. What is it usually like at your company? Read the following statements and respond to each in terms of how you view the typical atmosphere of your company by filling in the corresponding circles on your scantron. Perceptions naturally vary from person to person, so be sure to take your time and answer as honestly as possible.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

AT MY COMPANY...

56. Only the top employees "get noticed" by the manager.

57. The focus is to improve on each project.

58. Managers believe that all employees are crucial to the success of the organization.

59. Managers want employees to try new skills.

60. The managers encourage employees to help each other.

61. Employees get "excited" when they do better than their coworkers on a project.

62. If you want to work on a special project or team, you must be one of the top performers.

63. Each employee has an important role.

64. The managers emphasize always trying your best.

65. Managers give most of their attention to "the stars" of the organization.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

AT MY COMPANY...

66. Employees feel good when they try their best.
67. Managers yell at employees for messing up.
68. Employees help each other learn.
69. Employees feel successful when they improve.
70. Managers get mad when employees make mistakes.
71. The employees help each other to get better and excel.
72. Managers think only "the stars" contribute to the success of the organization.
73. Managers praise employees only when they perform better than their coworkers.
74. Each employee contributes in some important way.
75. Managers make it clear who they think are the best performers.
76. Managers favor some employees more than others.
77. The employees really "work together" as a team.
78. Employees are encouraged to outperform other coworkers.
79. Employees are punished when they make a mistake.
80. The managers make sure employees improve on skills they're not good at.
81. Trying hard is rewarded.
82. Managers have their favorite employees.
83. Only the employees with the best work get praise.
84. Each employee feels as if he/she is an important team member.
85. Employees are encouraged to work on their weaknesses.
86. Employees at all skill levels have an important role in the organization.
87. Employees are afraid to make mistakes.
88. Employees are taken off projects for making mistakes.

E. HOW YOU FIT WITH YOUR COMPANY (P-O fit Items 89-91, not used)

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

89. The things that I value in my life are very similar to the things that my organization values.

90. My personal values match my organization's values and culture.

91. My organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.

F. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU (Demographic Items 92-94).

92. What is your gender? (use response options below)

MALE	FEMALE
(1)	(2)

93. What age group do you fall under?

18-24 years	25-31 years	32-38 years	39-45 years	Over 45 years
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

94. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

Asian/ Pacific Islander	Hispanic/ Latino(a)	Black/ African American	Caucasian/ EuroAmerican	Other
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

Appendix B
Human Subjects Approval