

The Future of Work: A Fit Perspective

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Abstract

What do antecedents of person-job and person-organization fit theories tell us when examining the future of work, and what are the respective theoretical and practical implications? Although the future of work literature is expansive, it has been subject to several questions, some of which involve the theories under which the future of work is studied. However, empirical evidence on fit antecedents for the future of work remains limited, leading researchers to search for an ever-growing but still unsettled list of factors, and theoretical progress in understanding the contingencies has begun to stall. In this article, we seek to address these gaps and help reinvigorate future of work research by focusing attention on a specific form of fit in future organizations—that manifested in employees' competencies and skills. In the context of the future of work, the skills a person has represent knowledge crucial to task execution more than ever before. Guided by these insights and by recent work that outlines future workforce challenges, we introduce and develop a novel construct to future of work research—*skills-fit* (S-F), that is, skills level and relevancy associated with jobs in future organizations. We illustrate how these changes affect the nature of person-job and person-organization fit theories and thus yield new theoretical and practical implications for the future of work. We test these ideas by outlining eight research hypotheses related to the future of work and fit antecedents and by comparing and contrasting traditional and future organizations. We discuss theoretical and practical implications of this novel construct for promoting and measuring fit in the context of the future of work.

Keywords: Future of work, person-job fit, person-organization fit, skills-fit.

I. Introduction

The future of work has long drawn scholarly and managerial attention (Balliester and Elsheikhi, 2018; Aronowitz and DiFazio, 1994; Nolan and Wood, 2003; Chalutz, Ben-Gal and Ben-Gal, 2017; Valentine, Retelny, Rahmati, Doshi, and Bernstein, 2017). Some characteristics of the future of work involve an ongoing process in which automation, machines and artificial intelligence replace labor in tasks that work used to perform (Autor, Levy, and Murnane, 2003; Autor, 2014). These changes influence traditional work arrangements (Valentine et. al., 2017), reducing the demand for labor and wages (Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2018).

The characteristics of the future of work have great influence on the nature of organizations, for several reasons. First, technology continues to dominate how people and organizations communicate and socialize (Valentine et. al., 2017). Second, the internet and social media play a central role in communication, leading to the fourth industrial revolution (Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2018; Neufeind, O'Reilly and Ranft, 2018; Chalutz Ben-Gal and Ben-Gal, 2017). These rapid changes have great implications for the future of work posing new challenges for people and organizations alike. How does the future of work challenge the assumptions of traditional organizational and management theories? Are there new theories for the future of work? More specifically, what does the future of work tell us regarding person-job (P-J) and person-organization (P-O) fit theories, and what are the respective theoretical and practical implications?

Traditionally, research on fit has focused on the influence of a variety of individual and organizational factors influencing fit levels and outcomes. For example, fit helps facilitate higher employee performance (Michele Kacmar, Andrews, Van Rooy, Chris Steilberg, and Cerrone, 2006; Ton and Huckman, 2008; Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, and Ketchen 2011), higher employee satisfaction (Brown and Lam, 2008; de Oliveira, Cavazotte, and Alan Dunzer, 2017), improved employee motivation and commitment (Kim, 2012; Jin, McDonald, and Park, 2016), and lower employee turnover (Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner, 2000). The basic questions guiding this line of research are how a variety of individual and organizational antecedents affect fit levels under a variety of conditions and circumstances (e.g., Edwards, 1991; Edwards and Shipp, 2007; Kristof, 1996) and what these influences are at the individual and organizational levels (e.g., Boon and Biron, 2016).

This focus makes sense given the boundaries of traditional organizational forms in which tasks and jobs are clearly defined (Cable and DeRue, 2002) and given the psychological contract between employees and their organization. However, P-J and P-O fits change and evolve over time, with various implications for future organizations and their employees (Sekiguchi, 2004). Nonetheless, many of those changes remain blurred because theoretical frameworks were sparse until recently. Moreover, theoretical and empirical evidence on fit in future organizations remains limited, leading researchers to search for an ever-growing but still unsettled list of factors (Valentine and Edmondson, 2015).

We believe that progress in understanding the future of work—from individual and management perspectives—has begun to stall out because of two core limitations in extant research. First, previous research focused on the macroeconomic level and the effects of technological and societal changes on the future of work (Autor, 2014; Rubery et al., 2018). While the importance of the contribution of these studies is clear, it is typically not possible to observe the organizational and individual responses to these aspects and their specific impact on the future of work directly.

In addition, studies of the future of work have tended to assume no changes in fit between the employees and the organizations. However, in the context of the future organization, these ties clearly transform, yielding the need to further explore the nature of the relationship between the employee and the organization. Whereas the theorized benefits of the P-J and P-O fit theories in achieving organizational goals are clear in traditional organizations, the understanding of employee fit in future organizations remains unclear (Johns, 2006; Johns, 2018; Valentine et. al., 2017). Without being able to observe the temporal fluctuations between traditional and future organizations, it is impossible to know what the future of work tells us regarding fit or what are the respective theoretical and practical implications.

In this article, we seek to address these gaps and help reinvigorate future of work research by focusing attention on a specific form of fit in future organizations—that manifested in employees' competencies and skills. In the context of the future of work, the skills a person has represent knowledge crucial to task execution more than ever before (Autor, 2014; Alberti, Bessa, Hardy, Trappmann, and Umney, 2018). Guided by these insights, and by recent work that outlines future workforce challenges, we introduce a novel construct to the future of work research: *skills-fit* (S-F), that is, skills level and

relevancy associated with jobs in future organizations. We illustrate how these changes affect the nature of P-J and P-O fit and thus yield new theoretical and practical implications for the future of work (Autor, 2014; Johns, 2006; Johns, 2018; Chalutz Ben-Gal, 2019).

We test these ideas by outlining eight research propositions related to the future of work and fit antecedents and by comparing and contrasting traditional and future organizations. We discuss implications of this novel construct for measuring the fit in the context of the future of work.

II. The future of work

The future of work has long drawn scholarly and managerial attention (Balliester and Elsheikhi, 2018; Aronowitz and DiFazio, 1994; Nolan and Wood, 2003; Chalutz, Ben-Gal and Ben-Gal, 2017; Valentine, Retelny, Rahmati, Doshi, and Bernstein, 2017). Some characteristics of the future of work involve an ongoing process in which automation, machines and artificial intelligence replace labor in tasks that work used to perform (Autor, Levy, and Murnane, 2003; Autor, 2014). These changes influence traditional work arrangements (Valentine et. al., 2017), reducing the demand for labor and wages (Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2018).

The characteristics of the future of work have great influence on the nature of organizations, for several reasons. First, technology continues to dominate how people and organizations communicate and socialize (Valentine et. al., 2017). Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, robotics, digital platforms, social media, blockchain and others are increasingly reshaping human interaction and organizational action in various domains, for example, credit-risk assessment, product design, platform work, healthcare diagnosis, hiring, and consumer services. Second, the internet and social media play a central role in communication, leading to the fourth industrial revolution. Recent figures indicate that the number of smartphone users worldwide surpassed two billion in 2018, enabling digital devices to be integrated into our wearables and the human brain. Moreover, by the year 2030, socially consistent professional interactions will shift to be more digitally based (Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2018; Neufeind, O'Reilly and Ranft, 2018).

These technological changes are increasingly deployed in many organizations; therefore, their adoption is thereby calling into question fundamental organizational theories. For example, extant research confirms that these changes influence the

organizational boundaries, employment relationships, individuals' identification with organizations resulting in a new psychological contract and other implications for the future of work and organizations alike (Chalutz Ben-Gal et al., 2017; Sousa and Wilks, 2018). Within this scope, we examine the person-job (P-J) and person-organization (P-O) fit theories in the context of the future of work.

III. P-J fit and P-O fit: what has changed for the future of work?

The organizational literature has usually studied the theoretical concepts of P-J fit and P-O fit by exploring the influence of a variety of individual and organizational variables on fit levels and outcomes. The basic questions guiding P-J fit and P-O fit research are how a variety of individual and organizational antecedents affect fit levels under a variety of conditions and circumstances (e.g., Edwards and Cable, 2009; Kristof, 1996; Muchinsky and Monahan, 1987; Shipp and Jansen, 2011) and what these influences are at the individual and organizational levels (e.g., Boon and Biron, 2016; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1991).

The basic questions underlying P-J fit and P-O fit research are the identification of the factors that promote or delay fit (e.g., Cable and DeRue, 2002; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Cable and Judge, 1996; Cable and Parsons, 2001) and the consequences of fit for an individual (Caldwell and O'Reilly, 1990; DeRue and Morgeson, 2007), a group, or a broader unit (Cooper-Thomas et. al., 2004; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007). Studies tend to adopt traditional methodological approaches (Vogel and Feldman, 2009; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009), meta-analysis (e.g., Griffeth et. al., 2000; Kristof-Brown et. al., 2005; Verquer et. al., 2003) and reviews, mostly within traditional organizations (Edwards, 1991; Hoffman and Woehr, 2006; Jansen and Shipp, 2013; Kristof, 1996).

The interplay of P-J fit and P-O fit with employee satisfaction and performance has also been analyzed and discussed (e.g., DeRue and Morgeson, 2007; Elfenbein and O'Reilly, 2007; Greguras and Diefendorff, 2009; Rounds et. al., 1987), yielding various outcomes. Some results indicate that fit leads to positive employee attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, e.g., commitment, trust and organizational citizenship behavior.

In terms of the theoretical analysis of fit in various organizational settings, researchers have typically examined temporal outcomes of fit patterns with the underlying assumption that time has an

impact on a variety of fit scenarios. Cable and Edwards (2004), for example, distinguished between complementary and supplementary fit. The researchers found that the two types of fit progressed in parallel but separate streams, and they attempted to articulate the theoretical underpinnings. They tested three alternative conceptual models that examined the complementary fit, and they proposed an integrative model. Similarly, Shipp and Jansen (2011) explored how individuals craft and recraft stories in relation to fit. The authors proposed a model that both extends and reinterprets the understanding of fit over time. Their temporal perception of fit is composed of examining past fit, current fit, and anticipated future fit, helping individuals make sense of their fit experiences and relate them to outcomes through temporal issues. Along these lines, Boon and Biron (2016) explored the conditions under which fit with one aspect of the environment influences another aspect.

An understanding of the general forms of P-J fit and P-O fit, their antecedents, and their consequences provides important insights into the theoretical phenomenon of fit and its possible outcomes (Maden and Kabasakal, 2014). Traditionally, research on fit has focused on the influence of a variety of individual and organizational factors influencing fit levels and outcomes. For example, fit helps facilitate higher employee performance (Michele Kacmar, Andrews, Van Rooy, Chris Steilberg, and Cerrone, 2006; Ton and Huckman, 2008; Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, and Ketchen 2011), higher employee satisfaction (Brown and Lam, 2008; de Oliveira, Cavazotte, and Alan Dunzer, 2017), improved employee motivation and commitment (Kim, 2012; Jin, McDonald, and Park, 2016), and lower employee turnover (Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner, 2000). The basic questions guiding this line of research are how a variety of individual and organizational antecedents affect fit levels under a variety of conditions and circumstances (e.g., Edwards, 1991; Edwards and Shipp, 2007; Kristof, 1996) and what these influences are at the individual and organizational levels (e.g., Boon and Biron, 2016).

This focus makes sense given the boundaries of traditional organizational forms in which tasks and jobs are clearly defined (Cable and DeRue, 2002) and given the psychological contract between employees and their organization. However, P-J and P-O fits change and evolve over time, with various implications for future organizations and their employees (Sekiguchi, 2004). Nonetheless, many of those changes remain blurred because theoretical frameworks were sparse until recently. Moreover, theoretical and empirical evidence on fit in future

organizations remains limited, leading researchers to search for an ever-growing but still unsettled list of factors (Valentine and Edmondson, 2015).

We believe that progress in understanding the future of work—from individual and management perspectives—has begun to stall out because of two core limitations in extant research. First, previous research focused on the macroeconomic level and the effect of technological and societal changes on the future of work (Autor, 2014; Rubery et al., 2018). While the importance of the contribution of these studies is clear, it is typically not possible to observe the organizational and individual responses to these aspects or their specific impact on the future of work directly.

In addition, studies of the future of work have tended to assume no changes in fit between the employees and the organizations. However, in the context of the future organization, these ties clearly transform, generating a need to further explore the nature of the relationship between the employee and the organization. Whereas the theorized benefits of the P-J and P-O fit theories in achieving organizational goals are clear in traditional organizations, the understanding of employee fit in future organizations remains unclear (Daft, 2015; Johns, 2006; Johns, 2018; Valentine et al., 2017). Without being able to observe the temporal fluctuations between traditional and future organizations, it is impossible to know what the future of work tells us regarding fit or what are the respective theoretical and practical implications.

IV. P-J fit: the role of competencies

P-J fit has been examined from a variety of perspectives. It is defined as the relationship between employee characteristics and job characteristics (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Edwards (1991) outlined a two-dimensional conceptualization of P-J fit consisting of needs-supplies (N-S) fit and demands-abilities (D-A) fit. N-S fit indicates the congruence of employee needs, desires, and preferences with the rewards received for the job; D-A fit is the congruence between job demands and employee knowledge, skills and abilities, for example, competencies (Cable and DeRue, 2002). Prior studies have supported the effects of both types of P-J fit on employee and organizational attitudes and behaviors (Edwards and Shipp, 2007; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Moreover, it has been claimed that P-J fit increases job satisfaction and organizational commitment (OC) and reduces turnover (Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001); hence, it

plays a critical role in organizational effectiveness. In particular, we explore the following hypotheses:

Proposition 1a: Competencies play an important role in P-J fit in traditional organizations.

Proposition 1b: Competencies and skills play an important role in P-J fit in future organizations.

V. P-O fit: the role of commitment, trust and values

P-O fit theory suggests that some characteristics of organizations coincide with characteristics of individuals and that the degree of value congruence or “fit” between individuals and organizations influences individuals’ attitudes, behaviors (Kim, 2012), and performance. Advocates of this theory argue that as the similarity between individuals and organizations increases, employees become more committed to and thus more productive and successful in their jobs. P-O fit theory (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) provides two criteria to describe compatibility between people and organizations. First, P-O fit occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs, resulting in complementary fit. Second, P-O fit occurs when the two parties share similar fundamental characteristics, resulting in supplementary fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, P-O fit is the compatibility of characteristics between individuals and the organization (Kristof-Brown, Zimmermann, and Johnson 2005). In other words, complementary fit compensates for what others lack by meeting the needs of other parties, while supplementary fit emphasizes the match between individual and organizational values (Cable and Edwards 2004). Some results of P-O fit include positive employee attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, e.g., commitment, trust and organizational citizenship behavior.

This focus makes sense given the boundaries of traditional organizational forms in which tasks and jobs are clearly defined (Cable and DeRue, 2002) and given the psychological contract between employees and their organization. However, P-O fit may change and evolve over time, with various implications for future organizations, especially agile organizations and fluid teams that are driven by online labor markets (Sekiguchi, 2004; Valentine and Edmondson, 2015; Valentine et al., 2018).

Proposition 2a: Commitment plays an important role in P-O fit in traditional organizations.

Proposition 2b: Commitment plays a remote role in P-O fit in future organizations.

Proposition 3a: Trust plays an important role in P-O fit in traditional organizations.

Proposition 3b: Trust plays a remote role in P-O fit in future organizations.

Proposition 4a: Values play an important role in P-O fit in traditional organizations.

Proposition 4b: Values play a remote role in P-O fit in future organizations.

VI. Overview and comparative analysis

Table 1 serves as the basis for comparison of fit levels between traditional organizations and future organizations. Future organizations are defined as new organizational forms designed for adaptability and agility, which shift from hierarchical structures towards models of virtual teamwork and online labor markets (Hardy, 2016; Valentine et al., 2017; Trends, D.G.H.C., 2017). Table 1 summarizes our main assertions for the future of work related to changes in P-J and P-O fit antecedents—competencies, commitment, trust and values—as a function of their respective contribution to fit in traditional organizations compared to future organizations.

Table 1. Evidence-based Fit examination: Traditional vs. Future Organization

	Fit	Traditional Organization	Future Organization	Evidence-Based Examples	Sample References
Competencies (H1a; H1b)	Person-Job	High	High → Skills	Flash teams; Flash organizations; Temporary and fluid teams; Complementarity of humans and AI	Valentine et. al., 2017; Valentine et. al., 2018; Valentine and Edmondson, 2015; Jarrahi 2018
Commitment (H2a; H2b)	Person-Organization	High	Low	The future of workplace commitment	van Rossenberg et. al., 2018
Trust (H3a; H3b)	Person-Organization	High	Low	Integrated model of trust in virtual teams	Hacker et. al., 2019
Values (H4a; H4b)	Person-Organization	High	Low	Worker-ecosystem relationship (WER) construct	Subramony et. al., 2018

NOTE: High / Low = Contribution to fit

Table 1 presents traditional organizations and future organizations separately in the columns; an additional fit column is presented to highlight the nature of fit, i.e., P-J vs. P-O fit. The antecedents of P-J and P-O fit—competencies, commitment, trust and values—are presented in separate rows. Table 1 also presents evidence-based examples and key references to support our analysis.

Table 1 suggests that competencies play an important role in P-J fit in traditional organizations and that they are expected to continue to serve an important role in P-J fit in future organizations, with a growing dominance of skills. As a result, competencies and skills continue to play a vital role in individual and organizational tasks, even more so in future organizations (Daft, 2015; Trends, D.G.H.C., 2017; Sousa and Wilks, 2018). This suggestion is consistent with several studies that indicate the centrality of individuals and their competencies in the future of work. For example, in flash teams—which comprise crowds structured like organizations to achieve complex goals (Valentine et al., 2017) and are said to be central to the future of work—individual competencies, skills and behaviors are crucial in achieving complex tasks. Other studies provide a practical perspective, highlighting the complementarity of humans and human capabilities and the future of work, e.g., artificial intelligence (Jarrahi, 2018). Additionally, in the case of temporary and fluid teams, competencies and roles situated in specific organizational structures contribute (and are expected to continue to do so) to the performance of teams and organizations as a whole (Valentine and Edmondson, 2015; Valentine et al., 2018).

From a macro-organizational perspective, human capital theory (HCT) continues to play a central role in both traditional and future organizations, supporting our findings. According to HCT (Schultz, 1961), competencies are imbedded in both people's traits and their behaviors. Consistent with HCT, skills, traits and behaviors (i.e., competencies) are an essential part of any task, even within teams that are temporary in nature (Valentine and Edmondson, 2015; Valentine et al., 2018). Table 1 provides insights into the multifaceted nature of P-J fit, as displayed by the relationship between employee characteristics and job characteristics (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), consistent with demand and supply perspectives (Edwards, 1991). We suggest that competencies and skills will be central in future organizations, leaving them to play a vital role in P-J fit in the future of work.

A closer look at Table 1 reveals that in contrast to traditional organizations—in which

commitment, trust and values play a central role in P-O fit—we expect their contribution to P-O fit in future organizations to be remote. The question arises regarding why this expectation is true. We provide two explanations. First, it seems that the weight of tasks and roles is greater in future organizational forms (Valentine et al., 2017; Jarrahi, 2018), which leads to a greater emphasis on the importance of competencies and skills. Second, we build upon a new psychological contract in future work formats (van Rossenberg et al., 2018; Subramony et al., 2018; Hacker et al., 2019), which changes the contribution of traditional fit antecedents (for example, commitment, trust and values).

We propose a new approach to fit for the future of work based on an individual's competencies and skills. Whereas in traditional organizations, trust, commitment and values have important implications (Blau, 1964; Chalutz Ben-Gal & Tzafrir, 2011; Tzafrir, Chalutz Ben-Gal and Dolan, 2012), in the context of the future of work, traditional ties clearly transform, resulting in temporal fluctuations that shift the focus of fit (Johns, 2006; Valentine et al., 2017; Johns, 2018; van Rossenberg et al., 2018; Subramony et al., 2018; Hacker et al., 2019).

Table 1 reveals that commitment plays an important role in P-O fit in traditional organizations. However, it is expected to play a remote role in P-O fit in future organizations. One question that arises is whether OC disappears completely or changes form with regard to its influence on fit. Will organizations of the future—influenced by technology and digitization—become blind to individuals' merits and involvement? As implied by our analysis, and given the nature of future organizations, the factors associated with P-J fit (competencies and skills) will continue to have a central role in future organizations, whereas the factors associated with P-O fit (commitment, trust and values) are expected to have a remote role in fit.

Likewise, Table 1 reveals that values play an important role in P-O fit in traditional organizations. However, they are expected to play a remote role in P-O fit in future organizations. Organizational working processes are embedded in a set of individual and organizational values derived from beliefs and perceptions that are inherent in culture and guide interactions between actors. In traditional organizations, the better fit is between organizational hierarchies (Valentine, 2017), the higher the probability of organizational success (Kristof, 1996; O'Reilly et al., 1991). In traditional organizations, values play a central role, and employees hold individual values and grounded notions of what

“ought” and what “ought not” to be (Tzafirir, Chalutz Ben-Gal and Dolan, 2012). Thus, in traditional organizations, the social interactions that originate from values lay the foundation for an understanding of desired behaviors and attitudes. Therefore, in traditional organizations, values help us to “predict, interpret, and act accordingly to achieve better performance” (Ibid, p. 402). P-O fit, or lack thereof, is influenced by this relationship. Moreover, in traditional organizations, an MBV perspective is important (Dolan and Garcia, 2002). In these organizations, in which multiple stakeholders exist, the challenge of aligning values is complex. Key stakeholders—clients, service providers, employees, and others—must attain a clear understanding of which values and beliefs are to be aligned consistent with how to adapt successfully. This alignment is crucial in attaining P-O fit.

However, for the future of work and organizations, which are more task and role centric and are occasionally temporary (Valentine et. al., 2017; Valentine et. al., 2018; van Rossenberg et. al., 2018; Subramony et. al., 2018; Hacker et. al., 2019), some of these factors can be seen as second-order causes of the achievement of P-O fit. Accordingly, what more specifically determine the level of fit are factors embedded in specific tasks and roles (Valentine and Edmonson, 2015) rather than organizational and individual values.

Overall, our analysis implies that for the future of work, there is an ongoing shift in the fit phenomenon as traditional organizations transform and adapt to future work, thereby changing the nature of work (Jarrahi, 2018; Valentine et. al., 2017; Subramony et. al., 2018). Our analysis implies that, moving forward, organizations must adjust to a new psychological contract with individuals performing complicated tasks. Consequently, in the following section, we present a novel construct, *skills-fit*, and discuss its theoretical and practical contribution to the future of work.

VII. Skills-fit (S-F) and the future of work

In the context of the future of work, the skills a person has represent knowledge crucial to task execution more than ever before (Astor, 2014; Alberti, Bessa, Hardy, Trappmann, and Umney, 2018; Sousa and Wilks, 2018). This work illustrates how major changes in the future of work affect the nature of fit, thus yielding new theoretical and practical implications (Astor, 2014; Johns, 2006; Johns, 2018; Chalutz Ben-Gal, 2019).

Past research analyzed skills in the context of individual and organizational characteristics (Prochno, 2001; Chatenier et al., 2010; Gerstein and Friedman, 2016). The concept of skills development is prevalent as a research issue in higher education because such development is an important goal for the universities and students alike. Skills development is perceived as a strategic management tool to cope with the changing business environment (Nyhan, 1998; Porter and Heppelman, 2014) specifically in the context of the future of work (Routley et al., 2013; Gerstein and Friedman, 2016; Sousa and Wilks, 2018). In this flexible job market, there is a growing need for the complex and technical, which requires flexibility and agility (Sousa and Wilks, 2018). In this context, the complexity and the uncertainty, partly due to the globalization and accelerated rhythm of technological change, results in a growing demand for human talent equipped with skills associated with overcoming these challenges (Gerstein and Friedman, 2016; Sousa and Wilks, 2018). Guided by these insights and by recent work that outlines future workforce challenges, we introduce a novel construct to the future of work research: *skills-fit* (S-F), that is, skills level and relevancy associated with jobs in future organizations. We argue that S-F captures the fit challenges for the future of work more precisely compared to P-J and P-O fit alike. Consequently, in the following section, we discuss recommendations for improving fit in the context of the future of work.

VIII. Contributions

This work contributes to management and organizational research. At the same time, it has potentially important implications for future of work research and strategic human resource initiatives in organizations. We introduce to the future of work research a novel construct, *skills-fit*, which integrates organizational and management perspectives on fit and how to analyze and perhaps adjust it to the context of the future of work. Whereas the literature on the future of work has increasingly recognized the need for deeper analytical understanding of the nature of work, we believe that progress in understanding the future of work—from individual and management perspectives—requires further analysis specifically with regard to the fit context (Astor, 2014; Rubery et al., 2018). Our approach demonstrates the utility of our proposed *skills-fit* construct as a complementary means to understand various facets of the future of work, how they vary within various contexts, and what factors give rise to them.

From a theoretical perspective, we revisit and question traditional boundaries of P-J and P-O fit

theories by exploring an ever-changing psychological contract relevant to the context of the future of work (Subramony et. al., 2018; Hacker et. al., 2019). Moreover, we believe that theoretical and empirical evidence on fit in the context of the future of work is limited; we thus trust that our novel *skills-fit* construct contributes to this important theoretical discussion. By providing specific insights into P-J fit and P-O fit theories, we believe that our *skills-fit* construct addresses the gaps of fit theories, moving forward from traditional organizations towards the future of work.

We believe, consistent with previous analyses, that only research that is driven by sound theoretical considerations based on a well-established construct can be effective in advancing the understanding of complex issues such as P-J and P-O fit and their changing nature in the future of work. When constructed, as we have done, such constructs can serve as scaffolds for developing management policies and practices consistent with organizational interventions geared at improving fit; because of the task and job design focus and hierarchy alignment challenges, fit often fails to occur (Valentine and Edmonson, 2015; Valentine, 2017; Valentine et. al., 2017). Our analysis suggests that fit changes its formation and presence in the future of work; thus, the evolution in certain types of fit (i.e., P-J and P-O fit) is not an entirely unavoidable reality (see also Jarrahi, 2018), making *skills-fit* a more suitable construct to improve fit and make it work to the benefit of all stakeholders involved.

We believe that our *skills-fit* perspective on exploring the future of work—as in other organizationally related challenges—can open up a number of promising pathways for future research. For example, how can organizations adopt the *skills-fit* construct and integrate it with existing managerial and organizational-related processes—for example, by effective workforce management (Chalutz Ben-Gal, 2019). Similarly, in the context of the future of work, can the introduction of *skills-fit* bring about greater effectiveness and help address people-related challenges using a more relevant and fine-grained approach? Beyond fit, we see the potential to develop new *skills-fit*-based measures for the purpose of

improved people management and behavior prediction in the future of work.

Limitations

Although we constrained our analysis to include only a few (four) antecedents of P-J and P-O fit (namely, competencies, commitment, trust and values), we do not deny that fit may be a more complex phenomenon in reality. Indeed, fit often combines more than just these four types of antecedents, given its multifaceted nature. In addition, employee and organizational fit may fluctuate between various causes of fit attributed to more than one antecedent. We believe that even if this possibility is most likely true, how to start understanding the fit phenomenon, especially in the context of the future of work, is by dissecting it into smaller parts—i.e., antecedents—that are manageable, as we did in our analysis.

Certainly, despite this restriction, we managed to compare and contrast fit and its antecedents in traditional organizations vs. future organizations (see Table 1) and provide practical managerial tools for improving fit in the context of the future of work. We also believe that the predictions stemming from this analysis must be empirically tested under controlled conditions in the lab and in real-life field research. Only after this testing is done can we obtain a deeper understanding of the issues in question related to fit and the future of work.

Conclusion

In summary, this study introduces and demonstrates the value of the *skills-fit* construct to the future of work research. Relative to prevailing approaches to studying organizational fit, *skills-fit* offers a different means of understanding the future of work, including a shifting view of fit antecedents, and unlocks the importance of analyzing and adopting novel fit constructs and explaining them to meet the managerial and organizational challenges of the future of work.

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