



# Unique Approaches to Fit: Expanding the Nomological Network of Person-Environment Fit

Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology  
Annual Conference

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Presenters: Alexis Hanna, Jodi Detjen, Nicole Morales,  
and Stephen Reid

Discussant: Rong Su

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# Person-Environment Fit



- **Person-environment (PE) fit:** the compatibility between employees and their work environments
- Multiple conceptualizations of “environment”
  - Person-vocation (PV)
  - Person-organization (PO)
  - Person-job (PJ)
  - Person-group (PG)
  - Person-supervisor (PS)



# Why Study P-E Fit?



- Multiple conceptualizations = multiple opportunities to pursue nuanced investigations of how PE dynamic presents across diverse contexts and situations
  - Despite PE research prevalence in the literature, some areas remain relatively under-explored (e.g., PG, PS)
- PE fit and its dimensions are predictive of a wide range of outcomes, including job satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005)



# Purpose of this Symposium



- Share unique approaches to known conceptualizations of fit
  - Understand how this research contributes to the PE fit nomological network
- Investigate how the PE dynamic manifests and influences outcomes across different contexts and situations
- Facilitate discussion about PE fit research—questions and discussion with presenters encouraged at the end



# Current Symposium



- **Lexi Hanna**
  - Examine the influence of gender, ethnicity, and educational levels on one's interest in their current work roles
- **Jodi Detjen**
  - Conceptualize person-organization fit as the fit between an individual's gender and the gendered norms of the workplace culture
- **Nicole Morales**
  - Synthesize interview data from a sample of U.S. Army Soldiers to inform the concept of Soldier-unit fit
- **Stephen Reid**
  - Apply polynomial regression to investigate the effect of supervisor-supervisor fit on team coordination and team cohesion



# U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI)

## Must Be Fit to Fit in the U.S. Army: Military-Specific Themes in Soldier-Unit Fit

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*Consortium Research Fellows Program*



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# Person-Team/Group Fit



**Person-Group (P-G) Fit** = individual's perceived compatibility between themselves and their workgroup

- **Fit *how*?** Supplementary or complementary
- **Fit *on/to what*?** Social + Task-related elements of group work
  - Werbel & Gilliland (1999): Value congruence, goal similarity, skills
  - Li et al. (2018) added: Shared interests, perceived demographic similarity, needs-supplies match, personality compatibility, common workstyle, demands-abilities
- **Predicts what outcomes?**
  - Individual-level: Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, intent to quit, job performance (Oh et al., 2014)
  - Cross-level to group performance (Seong et al., 2015)



# Scientific/Military Problem



## The Problem:

- The U.S. Army consists of teams of teams—understanding how individual Soldier attributes align within a team can help optimize unit staffing decisions
- Limited implications from literature
  - P-G Fit research is limited
  - P-G Fit research in military context is even more limited

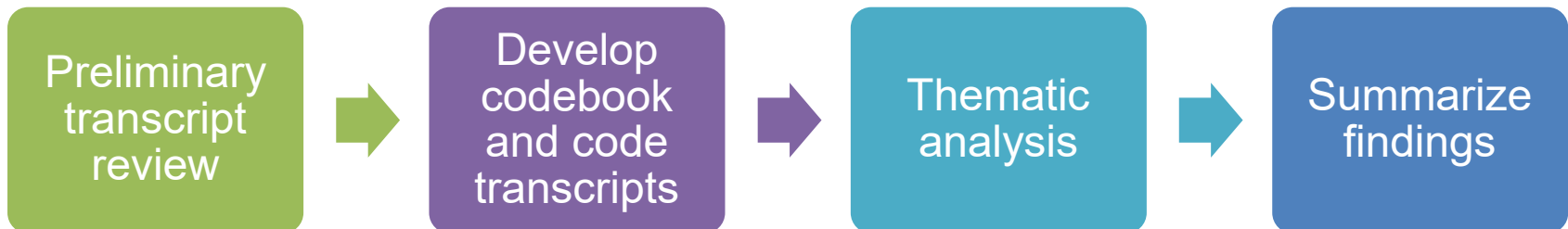
## Research Question:

What dimensions define P-G Fit in the U.S. Army context? What defines Soldier-Unit Fit?



# Study Design & Methods

- Archival dataset of interviews
- Convenience sample of 504 Soldiers from 9 U.S. Army Brigades
- Partially-structured interviewers questions about perceived fit with Army units
  - Question about fit: *“Can you think of someone who really ‘fits in’ with this unit? Can you describe why you think that Soldier fits in so well with this unit?”*
  - Question about lack of fit: *“Now, what about someone who doesn’t exactly fit in, the reverse of what we just talked about?”*
- $N = 106$  transcripts





# Results

## *Social Elements*

### Personality Compatibility

Awkward (-), Bully (-), Confident/Self-esteem, Demeanor, Extroverted, Laid back/Even-tempered, Mature, Negativity (-), Openness/willingness, Poised, Positive attitude, Selfish (-), Straight-forward/direct

### Values Congruence

Esprit de corps  
Fair, Honest, Morality,  
Pride, Respect for others,  
Respect for hierarchy

### Needs-Supplies Match

Integrated into/ supportive of  
Soldiers and/or Unit

### Shared Interests

Similar interests/hobbies

## *Task-related Elements*

### Common Workstyle

Accountable, Difficult to work with (-), Driven/motivated, Eager to learn, Engaged, Focused, Initiative, Job-oriented, Lacking effort (-), Listens to unit, Over-enforcement of standards (-), Team player, Work ethic

### Demands-Abilities

Adaptability, Competence,  
Comprehension, Contextual  
understanding, Discipline, In-  
shape/Stature, Interpersonal skills,  
Physical fitness, Professionalism

### Goal Similarity

Assimilation, Buy-in



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# Conclusions



## What is Soldier-unit (S-U) Fit?

- Consistencies with PG fit literature:
  - Both social and task-related elements, but task-related are more salient than purely social
  - Dimensions:
    - Common work style
    - Task-related ability that meets unit demands
    - Personality compatibility
- Specific to Army context
  - Demands-abilities
    - Contextual understanding (strong situations)
    - In-shape/Stature (looking like a Soldier)
    - Physical fitness (as a lifestyle and as a work competency)
  - Value congruence
    - Army ethic/values



# Implications for Theory and Practice

- Perceptions of SU (PG) fit indicators corroborate existing frameworks (e.g., Li et al., 2018)
- Army-specific findings may generalize to similarly structured industries
  - E.g., RIASEC—Realistic interests: Practical, hands-on problem-solving (O\*NET)
    - Firefighters
    - Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
    - Construction Laborers
- Enhanced understanding of how PG fit manifests in nontraditional work settings can optimize the application of scientific findings to practice (e.g., assignment decisions based on likelihood of fit within a team)



**Thank you!**



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