

## Hopeful employees: Societal development aims as a source of employee-organization fit

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the concurrent validity of an employee-organization fit measure based on societal development aims to forecast employee hope in successful work outcomes via enhancing perceived task significance. White-collar employees from various roles and sectors of professional organizations in Turkey participated in this survey study. A subjective fit index was computed based on ratings of the extent participants preferred 26 development aims and the extent they perceived their organizations incorporated those goals into their agenda. Validity was confirmed in binary correlations of fit with hope and task significance and polynomial regressions on hope. The mediating role of task significance was confirmed in the relationship between employee-organization fit and hope. Direct involvement as a moderator was not significant. The research expands fit dimensions with a validated measure of societal development that aims to measure and incorporate hope, positive psychology, and employee-level corporate social responsibility outcomes.

**Keywords:** societal development aims, employee-organization fit, employee hope, task significance

## Zaposleni, polni upanja: cilji družbenega razvoja kot izvor ujemanja med zaposlenim in organizacijo

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**Izveček:** V študiji smo preverjali sočasno veljavnost pripomočka za ocenjevanje ujemanja med zaposlenimi in organizacijo, ki je utemeljen na ciljnih družbenega razvoja. Cilj uporabe pripomočka je napovedovati upanje zaposlenega o uspešnih delovnih izidih, ki so posledica izboljšane zaznave pomembnosti naloge. V študiji so sodelovali delavci, zaposleni na različnih strokovnih delovnih mestih v podjetjih v Turčiji, ki delujejo v različnih sektorjih gospodarstva. Na podlagi preferenc udeležencev o 26 razvojnih ciljnih in zaznavah o tem, v kolikšni meri so ti cilji del strategije podjetja, smo izračunali indeks subjektivnega ujemanja. Veljavnost smo podprli s parnimi korelacijami med ujemanjem ter upanjem in pomembnostjo naloge, ter s polinomialno regresijo, s katero smo napovedovali upanje. Mediatorska vloga pomembnosti naloge je bila podprta v odnosu med ujemanjem zaposlenega z organizacijo in upanjem. Neposredna vpletenost ni bila pomemben moderator. Raziskava razširja razsežnosti ujemanja z validiranim pripomočkom socialnega razvoja, ki ocenjuje in vključuje upanje, pozitivno psihologijo ter izide korporativne družbene odgovornosti na ravni zaposlenega.

**Ključne besede:** cilji družbenega razvoja, ujemanje zaposlenega in organizacije, upanje zaposlenih, pomembnost naloge

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Conceptualizations of societal development have emerged as a research area in cross-cultural psychology, focusing on culturally sensitive and universal societal development aims (Biggeri et al., 2019; Kryś et al., 2022; Sachs et al., 2020; Sciarra et al., 2021; United Nations [UN], 2015). These goals range from conventional aims, including upholding traditions and religious practices, to modernization objectives, such as ensuring happiness, providing access to education, eradicating poverty, cherishing family life, improving health, enhancing justice and democracy, and establishing peace. In the industrial and organizational psychology literature, societal development is a focal component of external corporate social responsibility (CSR). As part of CSR, organizations have contributed to achieving specific development goals, including combating climate change, facilitating peace processes, enhancing human rights, reducing gender inequality, eliminating poverty, and increasing access to education and health services (Allen & Craig, 2016; Grosser & Moon, 2005; López-Concepción et al., 2021; Merino & Valor, 2011; Wettstein, 2012).

Organizations engage in CSR for a variety of reasons, including enhancing trust in the organization (Park et al., 2017), constructing an eco-friendly green identity (Luke, 2013), and earning a good reputation (Weber et al., 2012). Besides improving the economy and protecting the environment, societal development attracts stakeholders, including consumers and employees. Although CSR provides a competitive advantage to organizations (e.g., stakeholder theory; Freeman, 1984; resource-based view of the firm theory; Hart, 1995; institutional theory; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), researchers are interested in the employee-level effects. CSR has constructive effects on employee-related outcomes as it enhances employee-organization (E-O) fit and positively relates to employee performance, organizational commitment, and creativity, and it is negatively related to cynicism (Brammer et al., 2007; Korschun et al., 2014; Malik & Kanwal, 2016; Sheel & Vohra, 2015). More recent research indicates that societal development involvement positively affects job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Chatzopolou et al., 2021). Employees' sense of participating in CSR initiatives positively affects their satisfaction and engagement by enhancing their justice perception (Dávila & Finkelstein, 2010; Rupp et al., 2006; Zhu et al., 2013).

The recent research on conceptualizations of specific development aims to bridge the CSR literature with the E-O fit measurement perspective. The CSR literature only embraces a narrow range of specific societal development aims, which can be expanded based on recent studies (e.g., Kryś et al. 2022). These include twenty-seven development aims inclusive of traditional and modernization objectives. Simultaneously, societal development contributes to the E-O fit literature, which primarily focuses on organizational and professional aspects of fit, including organizational culture, values, and brand-based correspondence between the employee and the employer (Arthur et al., 2006; Chatman, 1989; Christiansen et al., 1997; Downes et al., 2017; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Ryan & Schmit, 1996). Accordingly, we introduce specific development goals to estimate the extent to which the employee's preferred

aims correspond with perceived aims in the organization, indicating employee-organization agreement regarding how society should develop.

Moreover, in the present research, we focus on the psychological impact as a critical outcome of incorporating development aims into the organizational agenda. Outcomes of CSR have been limited to work-related variables such as job satisfaction, task performance, and creativity; in contrast, the psychological effects, including those outcomes defined by positive psychology, have been relatively unexplored (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). Considering global pessimism in response to the recent adverse political, societal, and economic turmoil, we are interested in hope as a positive psychology construct and outcome of E-O fit based on shared views of societal development aims.

To investigate the psychological impact on the employees of E-O fit, we test a model that accommodates work and non-work-related variables. To test mediation in the relationship between fit and employee hope, we examined the role of perceived task significance, referring to how employees believe that their work impacts others' lives. We argue that shared views of societal development between the employee and employer will enhance employees' perceptions that their work is essential concerning other people's lives. We further test the moderating role of direct involvement in achieving development goals in the relationship between E-O fit and task significance. In the current literature, the implications of employees' direct CSR involvement on psychological outcomes have been under-researched (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). We investigate how shared objectives between employees and their organization to develop society and employees' self-perceived contribution to those goals would enhance employee hope via perceptions of impacting others' lives.

## Employee-organization fit

In the organizational psychology literature, CSR practices are transferred from the traditional stakeholder theory perspective to considering employees' values, aims, and expectations regarding societal development (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). Employees maximize their satisfaction and well-being when they have self-identified intrinsic goals, such as a genuine motivation to eradicate poverty, compared to more controlled or extrinsic motives, such as monetary rewards (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998). Pursuing goals for self-concordant reasons is more likely to be satisfying, which may turn into higher performance. Intrinsic effects are embedded in E-O fit as it indicates a sense of oneness, pointing to correspondence between employee-preferred and perceived organizational values (Chatman, 1989).

Increasing the fit between the workforce and the workplace is the mandate of the industrial psychology perspective (Arthur et al., 2006; Edwards et al., 1998; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Oh et al., 2013; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Verquer et al., 2003). E-O fit is in the best interest of the employee and the organization as it contributes to increased performance, reduced job stress, and enhanced job satisfaction and

organizational commitment. Lack of fit in needs, demands, goals, and objectives can lead to negative consequences such as reduced organizational identification, increased turnover, and counterproductive behavior (Holland, 1997; Koh & Boo, 2001; Liao & Chuang, 2004; Sacco & Schmitt, 2005; van Vianen, 2018). Ideological misfits endorse a hostile organizational culture in which employees may experience alienation and feel unwelcomed, resulting in tokenism, characterized by psychological constraints, stereotyping, and detachment (Duarte et al., 2015; Kanter, 1977; Tilcsik, 2011). For example, millennials are argued to signal misfits as their primary concern is social and environmental responsibility, while they perceive their organizations as primarily interested in making profits (Deloitte, 2016).

Value and goal congruence has become essential for operationalizing E-O fit (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996). Schneider's (1987) premise of "people make the culture" (p. 437) indicates that the *environment* is a function of individual behavior and personality,  $E = f(P, B)$ ; Lewin et al., 1936, p. 12), proposing to shift the focus from organizational climate to the employee. Although researchers acknowledge that E-O fit benefits organizational efficacy, they disagree on integrating societal development aims into the symbiotic relationship between the employee and the organization (e.g., Lee & Ramaswami, 2013). As employees' perceptions of increased societal and environmental concerns become salient in organizational settings, the research agenda should prioritize goal and demand misfits. Thus, we believe incorporating development goals into fit measurements will enrich this research field.

## Societal development aims

Grand challenges bedevil the World (e.g., climate change, poverty, pandemic, war, and inequality). Intergovernmental institutions such as the UN, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank have focused on societal well-being. Sustainable development has become a key term following its introduction in the Brundtland Report (United Nations, 1987); however, its operationalization across different societies was challenged by vagueness. Following the acceptance of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 corresponding targets in the UN General Assembly in 2015 built upon Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), development goals became clarified, gaining focus both in application and academic research. As the latest development in this field of research, Krys and colleagues (2022) expanded the identified sustainable development goals and empirically tested universal and country-specific societal development aims, in which they identified twenty-seven conventional and modernization aims of societal development.

Compared with MDGs targeting only developed countries, societal development aims have an open call for cultures irrespective of their countries' economic development. However, incorporating these goals into the organizational agenda is challenging due to (1) inhibition of actions resulting from the broad scope of goals and indicators and (2) ambiguity of operationalization of development aims

as they are designed to facilitate country-level interventions (Easterly, 2015; Nilsson et al., 2018). Thus, embracing well-defined societal development aims in business settings beyond the boundaries of corporate strategy by integrating employees' values and demands into the organizational agenda is crucial for tackling grand challenges in enhancing employee well-being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A line of E-O fit studies investigates cross-cultural variations of fit, considering different countries or geographical regions (Lee & Antonakis, 2014; Oh et al., 2013). For example, employees from individualistic countries prefer to work with individualistic-oriented organizations. However, the literature needs an approach inclusive of (a) the mutual relationship between societal, individual, and organizational values and (b) perceiving employees as independent entities pursuing different societal aims with varying salience in a country-specific framework. The congruence between individual and organizational preferences for societal development is embedded in the interplay between societal and individual values. Thus, integrating societal development aims into the E-O fit measurement perspective provides a sophisticated operationalization of fit, integrating individualistic and societal perspectives.

## Hope and task significance

Global pessimism is rising in response to wars in the Middle East and currently in Ukraine, pandemics, refugee crises, racism, gender inequality, unemployment, global warming, environmental disasters, and global economic downturns (Teymoori et al., 2016). In this multi-faced crisis, socially responsible organizations may be a source of hope for their employees to believe that there is a bright future concerning their workplaces. As people face rapid transformation of societal goals, we consider that positive psychological constructs, including hope, are a timely contribution to person-organizational fit literature. Considering motivation and strategies associated with hopefulness, employees are likely to have higher organizational performance, job satisfaction, profitability, and higher problem-solving skills in the workplace (Luthans et al., 2005; Peterson & Byron, 2008; Peterson & Luthans, 2003; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Theoretically, goal-relevant agency and pathways are two components reciprocally interacting, giving rise to hope (Snyder et al., 1991). Specifically, the agency represents the motivational component, which generates goal-directed energy to initiate and continue to attain goals; in contrast, pathways are defined as generating adaptive routes and dealing with barriers to success.

Incorporating societal development aims into the organizational agenda allows employees to impact other people's lives, potentially enhancing perceptions of task significance. Task significance is a job characteristic referring to employees' influence on how other people work or live their lives (Grant, 2007; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Hackman 1980; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). Task significance is associated with meaningfulness, a desirable psychological state that enhances job satisfaction and performance (Barrick et al., 2013; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; 1976). Job design

interventions often target task significance to increase meaningfulness, providing a sense of worth from impacting others. Apart from the benefits to others and society, task significance positively impacts the employees' impression management (Hogan, 1982).

Task significance has become critical as employees are increasingly concerned about what their organization can do about economic, social, and environmental challenges associated with wars, conflicts, inequalities, and climate change (Colby et al., 2001). By virtue, contributing to achieving development goals entails improving other people's lives. Hence, perceived meaningfulness should increase when individuals work for organizations dedicated to improving the World.

We test a moderated mediation model displayed in Figure 1. We predict that employee hope will increase in response to E-O fit based on congruence between employee-preferred aims and perceived organizational endorsement of those goals. We further predict that fit would increase employees' sense of impact on other people's lives; accordingly, we test the mediating role of task significance in the relationship between E-O fit and hope. Finally, we predict that employees' direct involvement in achieving development goals will moderate the extent to which E-O fit would enhance perceived task significance.

## Methods

### Participants, design, and procedures

The participants were white-collar employees in various roles from different sectors, including health care (12.7%), manufacturing (9.9%), information technologies (8.9 %), finance (19.5%), and food (4.5), education (4.1%), transportation and logistics (4.1%), media (3.4%), telecommunication (2.7%), NGOs (1.7%) and social services (1.7%). The participants received the survey link by email from assisting undergraduate students who recruited the participants from their social and professional networks in return for course credits. A total of 292 participants took part in a survey design study. The participants completed the study voluntarily. The average age of the participants was 35 years; 47% were male and 49% female, with an average total organizational tenure of 13.24 years. Among the participants, 81% worked full-time, about 5% were part-time employees, 10% were self-employed, and 44% were managers. A sensitivity power

analysis (Faul et al., 2007) indicated that the sample size ( $N = 292$ ) was sufficient to detect small effect sizes of  $f^2 = 0.03$ , at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , and  $power \beta = 0.8$  (Cohen, 1988, p. 25). After reading the informed consent and explanation for the study, the participants entered the survey. The survey contained preferred and perceived ratings of development goals and questions about direct involvement, task significance, and hope. Finally, participants completed demographics concerning age, gender, SES, tenure, role, and sector.

### Measures

**Hope.** Hope dimension of the Psychological Capital Scale (PCQ, Luthans et al., 2007) was used to assess participants' hope concerning their workplace experience. The items were validated in Turkish (Çetin & Basım, 2012). The scale consists of six items; a sample item was "If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it." Participants were asked to rate their agreement on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = *definitely disagree*" to "6 = *definitely agree*". The six items formed a reliable composite measure ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

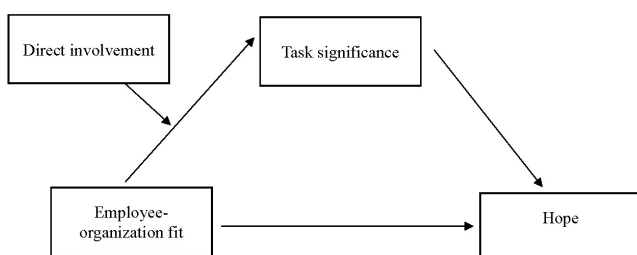
**Task significance.** Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS; Hackman & Oldham, 1975) was used to measure task significance by three items rated on a six-point rating scale between "1 = *very inaccurate*" and "6 = *very accurate*" was used. One item, "The job itself is not very significant or important in the broader scheme of things," indicated a low correlation with the other two items; hence, this item was excluded. The average of two items formed a composite measure ( $r = .72$ ). The first item was about whether their job is generally significant. A significant job was described as "the work results are likely to affect the lives or well-being of other people significantly." The second item was "how well the work gets done affects many people."

**Direct involvement.** Participants indicated the extent to which their work contributed to achieving development aims at a 6-point scale ranging from "1 = *does not contribute at all*" to "6 = *contributes to a great extent*" on one item: "How much does your work contribute to the development of the society you live in when you look at it holistically?"

**Societal development aims.** Twenty-six items were used. The items corresponded to the modernization and conventional aims identified by Krys et al. (2022). Two items, *libertarianism* and *averageness*, were excluded as these items did not fit well with the organizational psychology focus of the study. Additionally, we added *peace*, which was not included originally (Krys et al., 2022), although peace has been identified as an essential development aim by the UN (2015). First, participants indicated the extent to which they *preferred* their organizations to embrace the listed development goals. Second, they rated the extent to which they *perceived* their organization to incorporate these goals into their agenda. Both ratings were completed on a 6-point Likert scale, with high scores indicating higher employee and organizational endorsement of the items.

**Figure 1**

*Proposed model predicting hope*





## Results

*Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis.* Exploratory factor analysis with Promax rotation was performed to allow modernization and conventional latent structures to correlate for the preferred ( $r = .66$ ) and perceived ratings ( $r = .58$ ). The two-factor solution explained 58 % and 57 % of the variance for preferred and perceived development aims, respectively. Table 1 summarizes factor loadings for the two-factor solution. For modernization aims, 16 items (items 1–18, Table 1), and for conventional aims, eight items (items 19–26, Table 1) were shared between preferred and perceived ratings.

Krys and colleagues (2022), applying multi-dimensional scaling for their nine-country data, identified the aims of *enhancing safety* (item 25) and *facilitating family life* (item 26) as foundational aims and *eradicating poverty* (item 24) as a welfare aim within the modernizing factor. In our analysis, these items, both for perceived and preferred ratings, were loaded as conventional aims. In Krys et al.'s study, foundational aims are represented as creating agentic

and social capital, including economic growth, securing material resources, and strengthening social bonds. The aims are hierarchically related from foundational to welfare aims, followed by modernization. Thus, the conventional loading of enhancing safety and facilitating family life, at least to some extent, corresponds with Krys et al.'s study (2022).

Eradicating poverty was loaded as a conventional aim in our research, and cross-cultural differences can explain the difference. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (1984, 1991), Turkish culture is collectivist, where individuals emphasize collaboration and communalism. Thus, Turkish people are likely to endorse the *other-centered* perspective, which facilitates concern for the welfare of others. Accordingly, participants in our sample may focus more on social inequalities due to interpersonal orientation. According to World Bank data, the Gini coefficient (Ceriani & Verme, 2011; Gini, 1912) indicates that income distribution highly fluctuates in Turkey, constantly increasing after 2015. Long-term exposure to poverty likely induces Turkish people to perceive poverty eradication as a conventional rather than a modernization aim targeted in economically advanced countries.

**Table 1**

*Promax rotated loadings for preferred and perceived ratings for modernization and conventional aims*

Items	Preferred SDGs		Perceived SDGs	
	Modernization	Conventional aims	Modernization	Conventional aims
1. Equality	.94		.82	
2. Openness	.90		.91	
3. Happiness	.88		.95	
4. Gender equality	.85		.74	
5. Trust	.84		.68	
6. Freedom	.83		.76	
7. Justice	.82		.80	
8. Communication	.81		.71	
9. Human rights	.77		.62	
10. Economy	.70		.88	
11. Education	.70		.63	
12. Environment	.69		.84	
13. Balanced life	.62		.53	
14. Reach full potential	.61		.52	
15. Peace	.59		.56	
16. Social bonds	.56		.49	
17. Democracy	.54			.57
18. Health	.43			.51
19. Defense force		.93		.83
20. Demography		.84		.85
21. Traditions		.69		.80
22. Religion/Spirituality		.69		.71
23. Strong nation		.65		.65
24. Poverty		.58		.55
25. Family		.54		.73
26. Safety		.42		.57

Further, *democracy* (item 17) and *health* (item 18) were loaded as a modernization for preferred ratings and as conventional aims for perceived ratings. Excluding democracy and health, twenty-four items appeared appropriate for constructing the perceived scale (16 items, from item 1 to item 16 in Table 1) and the preferred scale (8 items, from item 19 to item 26 in Table 1). Possibly, the internal locus of control aspects of democracy and health-related goals manifest as major struggles for Turkish people; hence, these items represent modernization preferences. However, at the same time, participants seem to perceive that ensuring health and democracy are governmental and organizational responsibilities, so these items are perceived as conventional from the organization's perspective.

**Person-Organization fit measure.** Researchers recommend testing the implications of employee-organization fit in multiple ways (Cable & DeRue, 2002; Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001; Ostroff et al., 2005). First, the fit was indicated by the sum of absolute values of the difference ( $|D|$ ) between preferred and perceived scores for each of the 24 items for each participant (Tisak & Smith, 1994). Values close to zero indicated a strong fit. The average of the obtained fit scores  $|D|$  was 21.19 ( $SD = 14.87$ ), ranging from 0 to 70. The second method constituted a polynomial regression test of fit (Edwards, 1994; Edwards & Perry, 1993). The average of raw preferred ratings ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ,  $\alpha = .96$ ) and the average of perceived ratings ( $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = .97$ ,  $\alpha = .94$ ) for the 24 items was centered on computing their two-way interaction term. A significant interaction term can provide evidence of enhanced hope when the perceived E-O fit is strong compared to when it is poor.

**Data analytic strategy.** First, the binary correlations of employee-organization fit  $|D|$  with the mediator and outcome were examined. Second, we conducted a polynomial regression analysis to probe the interaction between preferred and perceived ratings on hope and task significance. Third, a moderated mediation model was tested, using employee-organization fit  $|D|$  as the focal predictor, task significance

as a mediator, and perceived contribution to achieving development goals as moderators.

**Descriptive statistics and binary correlations.** Table 2 summarizes means, standard deviations, and binary correlations. Confirming our predictions, the fit index  $|D|$  was negatively and significantly related to task significance ( $r = -.14$ ) and hope ( $r = -.17$ ), indicating that more substantial levels of fit were associated with higher levels of perceived task significance and hope. Additionally, the fit was negatively associated with work role, age, and gender: Managers, older employees, and males indicated a stronger fit relative to non-managers, younger employees, and females, respectively. Work role was significantly associated with task significance. SES and age were significantly correlated with hope. The mediator, moderator, and outcome variable showed significant interrelations.

**Polynomial regression to test E-O fit.** Additional evidence for the role of E-O fit was tested in polynomial regression analysis concerning the two-way interaction between preferred and perceived ratings, using age, role, and SES as covariates, as these demographic variables were significantly correlated with task significance, hope, or both. Table 3 displays the results of this analysis. The interaction term was significant for hope and non-significant for task significance.

Figure 2 displays the two-way interaction for hope. When perceived ratings for the goals were high (i.e., one standard deviation above the mean), preferred ratings were positively and significantly related to hope,  $B = .19$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t = 2.81$ ,  $p = .005$ , 95%  $CI (.06, .32)$ . Accordingly, hope was significantly higher when the fit was strong (i.e., both preferred and perceived ratings were high) than when the fit was poor (high preferred, low perceived ratings). When perceived ratings for the goals were low (i.e., one standard deviation below the mean), preferred ratings were not significantly associated with hope  $B = .03$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t = .06$ ,  $p = .46$ , 95%  $CI (-.11, .18)$ .

**Model testing for hope.** Figure 3 displays the results of model testing. The hypothesized moderated-mediation model (Hayes, 2012; model #7) was not confirmed statistically.

**Table 2**

*Means, standard deviations and binary correlations (N = 292)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Fit $ D $ <sup>a</sup>	33.84	22.93	-.59**	.06	-.21**	-.05	-.15*	.15**	-.14*	-.17**
2. Pref. <sup>b</sup>	3.69	1.15		.51**	.18**	-.01	.12*	-.04	.42**	.18**
3. Perc. <sup>c</sup>	4.82	0.97			.01	-.03	.11	.07	.35**	.10
4. Role <sup>d</sup>	0.45	0.50				.26**	.43**	-.07	.12*	.26**
5. SES <sup>e</sup>	3.66	0.94					.13*	-.03	.03	.27**
6. Age	34.98	10.67						-.08	.10	.24**
7. Gender <sup>f</sup>	1.56	0.60							.01	-.03
8. Tasks <sup>g</sup>	4.42	1.20								.30**
9. Hope	4.36	1.01								-

*Notes.* <sup>a</sup>Employee-organization fit was computed as absolute value of the sum of difference between employee and organization ratings for each item. <sup>b</sup>Arithmetic mean of preferred ratings for the twenty-four societal development items. <sup>c</sup>Arithmetic mean of perceived ratings for the twenty-four societal development items. <sup>d</sup>0 = non-managerial role, 1 = managerial role. <sup>e</sup>Measured on a 4-point continuous scale, high scores indicate high SES. <sup>f</sup>0 = male, 1 = female. <sup>g</sup>Task s. = Task significance.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

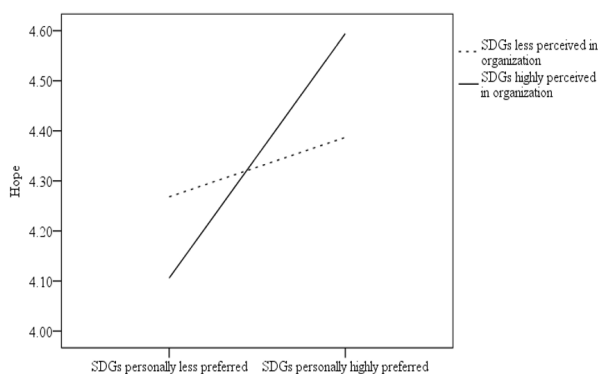
**Table 3***Polynomial regression test of employee-organization fit predicting hope and task significance*

	Hope			Task significance		
	<i>B</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>
Role	0.24	-.02, .48	.07	0.09	-.23, .41	.59
Age	0.01	.00, .02	.03	0.01	-.00, .02	.23
SES	0.24	.11, .36	.00	0.02	-.13, .17	.79
Preferred	0.11	.00, .22	.05	0.30	.16, .44	.00
Perceived	0.03	-.11, .17	.71	0.23	.05, .40	.01
Pref.*Perc.	0.08	.00, .17	.049	0.04	-.06, .15	.43
$\Delta R^2_{\text{interaction}}$		.012			.001	
$F_{\text{interaction}} (df)$		3.90 (1, 280)			.61 (1, 280)	
$F^2_{\text{interaction}}$		.014			.002	

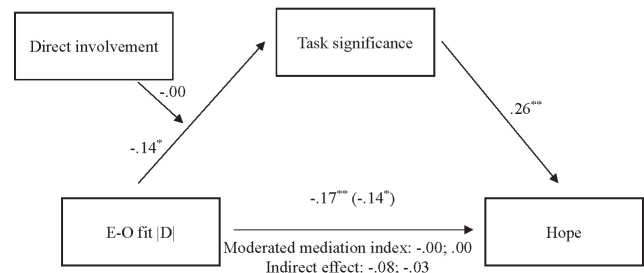
Notes. For role, 0 = non-manager, 1 = manager

**Figure 2**

*Interaction between preferred and perceived ratings of SDGs on hope.*

**Figure 3**

*Standardized regression coefficients for the relationship between E-O fit |D| and hope with task significance as mediator and involvement as moderator.*



Notes. The direct effect is displayed in parentheses.

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

The two-way interaction between E-O fit  $|D|$  and direct involvement was not significant,  $B = -.002$ ,  $t = 1.00$ ,  $p = .15$ , 95%  $CI (-.12, .11)$ ,  $F^2 = .01$ . The index of moderated mediation was not significant  $B = -.001$ , 95%  $CI (-.002; .000)$ . The mediating role of task significance was supported (Hayes, 2012; model #4). The analysis confirmed that fit  $|D|$  was a significant predictor of task significance;  $B = .14$ ,  $t = 2.46$ ,  $p = .014$ , 95%  $CI (-.01, -.001)$ ,  $F^2 = .02$ . Task significance was significantly related to hope,  $B = .21$ ,  $t = 4.64$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95%  $CI (.12, .29)$ ,  $F^2 = .07$ . The total effect of fit  $|D|$  on hope was significant,  $B = .01$ ,  $t = 2.98$ ,  $p = .003$ , 95%  $CI (-.012, -.003)$ ,  $F^2 = .03$ . The magnitude of the direct effect of fit  $|D|$  reduced but remained significant  $B = -.006$ ,  $t = 2.39$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95%  $CI (-.011, -.001)$ ,  $F^2 = .02$ . The indirect effect was significant, providing evidence that task significance was a partial mediator of the effect of fit  $|D|$  on hope.

## Discussion

Societal development aims are a recent area of research in cross-cultural psychology; in the present study, we transferred the scope of research to an industrial and organizational

psychology perspective concerning employee-organization fit. We introduced preferred and perceived development aims to measure E-O fit and tested its concurrent validity against employee hope in successful work outcomes. As predicted, the fit scores were correlated with task significance and hope, supporting the validity of the subjective fit index ( $|D|$ ). Further, the preferred and perceived ratings indicated a significant interaction with hope, providing further evidence for the validity of the E-O fit construct in a polynomial regression analysis.

We proposed perceived task significance as a mediator because attaining societal development goals enhances societal welfare (Fukuda et al., 2016). Only the mediation model was supported: E-O fit increased employees' perceived task significance, enhancing employee hope. We predicted that direct involvement in achieving development goals would qualify the mediated effect; however, we found no support for this prediction concerning moderation.

The study and the findings have theoretical, research, and practical implications. First, because E-O fit to pursue development goals can increase employee hope, goal-framing studies should emphasize shared vision and value creation that strengthen the bonds between employees and the organization.

Second, the E-O fit measure, with two validated dimensions and specific items, expands the development aims identified in CSR studies. Third, societal development aims expand the literature on fit dimensions, which were based mainly on values, culture, and branding. We computed perceived and preferred fit scores corresponding with studies measuring employee-organizational fit, such as the hospitality industry in Turkish organizations (Tepeci, 2019).

Using societal development goals as a fit dimension implies that employees would see the world become a better place and believe their organizations can improve society. Accordingly, incorporating valued development goals into the organizational agenda can provide an E-O fit. Finally, in the CSR literature, the psychological benefits of working for socially responsible organizations are a research area to expand. We found that employee hope, a positive psychological construct, and perceived task significance, a job design characteristic, were predicted by employee-organization fit. Task significance reflects that employees gain *meaning* from working in organizations that endorse valued development goals. The hope indicates a positive psychological state associated with working for such organizations. Thus, our findings contribute to the general industrial and organizational psychology literature on organizational attempts to enhance psychological states that have a positive impact on job satisfaction.

We predicted that the E-O fit would forecast task significance specifically for employees who were highly involved in attaining development aims. This prediction was not confirmed, which places some limitations on our conclusions. Our measure included only one item, which may have provided limited insight into employee involvement. Future research should explore the role of involvement with an increased number of items. A further limitation concerns the dimensionality of the fit measure. Societal development aims are culturally sensitive (Krys et al., 2022), which places restrictions on developing a universal index. We applied the measure in a Turkish context and found that five out of twenty-six items were approximate; however, they somewhat deviated from their proposed dimensions (Krys et al., 2022). Development goals need to be understood in a cultural and situational context because cultures may differ in the salience of goals. In poorer countries, people may place more importance on financial objectives, such as a decent standard of life, health-longevity, and eradicating poverty. Thus, some items are likely more valued in some cultures or specific contexts. Hence, researchers must apply rigorous steps to establish internal consistency when using the measure in different contexts or cultures.

Future research may further elaborate on the psychological consequences concerning the different types of fits employees experience. Likely, employees show different reactions when an attribute is preferred and perceived, as compared to when an attribute is neither preferred, nor perceived in the organization. These different types of employee-organizations fits may be explored in a non-loss and gain perspective, drawing from prospect and regulatory-focused theories (Idson et al., 2000). Gain indicates individuals' desired outcomes, whereas non-loss

refers to the negative attributes individuals attempt to avoid. Gain produces cheerful emotions with feelings of success in goal correspondence, whereas non-loss is associated with quiescence-related emotions with the achievement of minimal outcomes (De Goede et al., 2013; Idson et al., 2000). The traditional E-O fit approach assumes that irrespective of low or high attributes, the fit will be associated with positive organizational and employee outcomes. However, our results concerning the polynomial regression test support prospect and regulatory-focused theories. As hope refers to a motivating positive psychology construct that energizes individuals to achieve desired goals, it refers to an approach-based mechanism. Correspondingly, participants whose highly preferred goals were strongly endorsed by their organizations (i.e., gain prospect) were more hopeful than participants with low E-O fit. However, those participants whose least preferred development aims were disregarded by their organizations (i.e., non-loss prospect) did not differ from their low-fit counterparts. Hence, employees seem not to value all fit equally. Corresponding to De Goede et al.'s (2013) conclusions, employees outweigh fit on personally attractive values compared to neutral or aversive values. Further research should explore whether outcomes are more favorable when employees experience gain rather than non-loss prospects based on societal development aims in E-O fit.

Future studies can investigate the relationship between P-O fit in terms of societal development goals and other positive psychology outcomes such as resilience, creativity, or strength of interpersonal relationships by using behavioral measurement methods to increase external validity. Building on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, 2018), P-O fit regarding sustainability perceptions may act as a job resource that allows employees to cope with job demands effectively. Thus, it is also a fruitful research area to examine workplace fatigue of employees to understand whether P-O fit regarding societal development aims attenuate workplace fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and burnout.

## Conclusion

Although the traditional view approaches sustainability based on the three “e”s approach (i.e., economy, ecology, and equity), it also promotes well-being and quality of life and work (Di Fabio, 2017; Harris, 2003). P-O fit based on societal development aims indicates organizations' integration of employee-congruent societal development perspectives as CSR activities can serve as novel interventions toward sustainable goals. Apart from the traditional “avoiding” approach of sustainability (i.e., avoiding exploitation and depletion), our research has taken a promotion-oriented approach, emphasizing how P-O fit endorses further growth and development in the organizations, even without direct involvement in CSR practices. In parallel with positive psychology, focusing on perceiving challenges and difficulties as opportunities, this study also has implications for enhancing hope with task significance in personally sensitive ways of societal development preferences.



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