



The Value of Achievement and Responses to the Work Environment

Cheryl L. Adkins
Longwood College

Stefanie E. Naumann
University of the Pacific

ABSTRACT

The value of achievement has long been thought to relate to job performance; however, we still do not fully understand the process through which this occurs. The present study examined the relationship between achievement and responses to the work environment. Five-hundred-twenty-four sales and service agents at a major firm in the transportation industry participated in the study. Achievement was positively related to perceptions of the work environment, satisfaction with intrinsic aspects of the job, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and performance. The findings suggest that achievement may serve as a “lens” through which the work environment is viewed.

Introduction

Work values, defined as “individuals’ beliefs about how they ought to behave at work” (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987b), have long been viewed as a determinant of individuals’ attitudes and behaviors in organizations (e.g., Rokeach, 1973). Image theory suggests that values set the underlying direction for decision making and behavior (Beach, 1990). Locke (1991) proposes a model of motivation in which values serve as a link through which needs are translated into goals and behaviors. Values have generally been thought to be more deeply-rooted than attitudes and behaviors (Locke, 1982; Rokeach, 1973), and thus may help to shape attitudes and behaviors. In particular, individuals’ work values are thought to affect the value they place on certain objects or outcomes (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Further, values may affect perceptions of the work environment so that aspects of the work environment that are consistent with an individual’s values may be more salient. Ravlin and Meglino (1987a), in a laboratory experiment, found that participants categorized ambiguous stimuli in a manner consistent with their own hierarchy of work values. The work environment may be viewed as an ambiguous stimulus (Staw, Bell, and Claussen, 1986). Thus, individuals may be likely to perceive ambiguities in the work environment in a manner that is consistent with their values. For example, if an individual holds the value of achievement as a dominant value, he/she may be more likely to perceive opportunities to enhance achievement at work.

In the present study we examine the extent to which the value of achievement is related to perceptions of and reactions to the work environment. In a recent review of the work values literature, Meglino and Ravlin (1998) noted that despite continued interest in work values, very little research examining work values as independent variables has been conducted in organizations. Further, the authors suggested that future research should examine the intra-



individual aspects of work values, such as cognitions concerning the self. The present study seeks to begin to address this call. Specifically, the purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between the value of achievement and employees' cognitions concerning the work environment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

The value of achievement may be defined as the belief that one should work hard to succeed in attaining difficult and challenging goals (Ravlin & Meglino, 1987a, b). Achievement and related values such as the Protestant work ethic have long been thought to be related to job performance (e.g., Greenberg, 1977; Kanzas, 1978; Merrens & Garrett, 1975; Orpen, 1978; Ryan, Watson, & Williams, 1981). In the present study we examine one process through which this may occur by examining the relationship between achievement and perceptions of, and reactions to, the work environment. We propose that to the extent to which an individual holds the value of achievement as important, dimensions of the work environment that might present opportunities for achievement may be more salient. Thus, the value of achievement may act as a "lens" through which the workplace is viewed.

There is some preliminary evidence suggesting that work values influence how individuals perceive their environment. For instance, Ravlin and Meglino (1987a) conducted an experiment in which subjects categorized ambiguous stimuli according to the value they represented. Their results indicated that the number of times subjects perceived they saw each value was highly correlated with their ranking of values using the Comparative Emphasis Scale (CES; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987a). The CES is a forced-choice instrument which yields an ipsative (e.g., Hicks, 1970) rank ordering of the four work values of achievement, honesty, fairness, and helping and concern for others. Results suggested that individuals with achievement as their dominant value tended to perceive ambiguous stimuli as being related to achievement. Individuals' work values are therefore thought to affect their perceptual processes in that external stimuli tend to be perceived as consistent with individuals' work values (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Outcomes and behavior may be expected to reinforce individuals' value structures (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Thus, we hypothesize that the value of achievement will be associated with perceptions of achievement-related opportunities in the work environment:

H1: The value of achievement will be positively associated with perceptions of achievement-related dimensions of the work environment.

There is some initial evidence from which to make predictions concerning the relationship of the value of achievement to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. Locke (1982) proposed that job satisfaction is dependent, in part, on the extent to which the work environment allows one to attain one's values. In addition, Meglino, Ravlin, and Adkins (1989) found that congruence between workers' values and those of their supervisors was positively related to worker job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, Chatman (1991) found that congruence between new employees' value profiles and those of the organization was positively associated with employees' intent to remain with the organization. It follows that, particularly in sales organizations, individuals' own values of achievement should be congruent with their own affective reactions to their work environments. Further, Bluen,



Barling, and Burns (1990) found that a dimension of the personality trait Type A behavior called “achievement strivings” was positively associated with job satisfaction and performance. The authors noted that future research should address whether achievement differentially predicts intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. Extrinsic job satisfaction concerns aspects of the job that are contingent on the job occupancy but not an essential part of the work process (e.g., pay satisfaction; supervisor satisfaction). In contrast, intrinsic job satisfaction involves the work process itself (e.g., the extent to which individuals derive growth or security from the job). It may be that achievement is more likely to be associated with intrinsic job satisfaction since satisfaction with extrinsic job features is more dependent on environmental factors (Arvey, Bouchard, Segal, & Abraham, 1989).

Although Bluen et al. (1990) have examined a related construct, values are distinct from personality traits. Rokeach (1973) noted that while personality traits are generally fixed, values are learned and are thus influenced by cultural factors. He suggested that values might be an intervening variable between personality and behavior. This suggests that values, which are highly socially desirable, may affect the relationship between personality traits and behavior (for example, inhibiting behaviors that are less socially desirable). Further, the value of achievement may be held independent of the personality trait Type A behavior. That is, individuals who are low in the Type A personality may be high in the value of achievement, and vice-versa. Thus, it is important that we specifically examine the value of achievement, to build upon Bluen et al.’s (1990) study of the trait achievement strivings and upon the growing literature on work values.

H2: The value of achievement will be positively associated with satisfaction with intrinsic aspects of the job (growth and security) and not related to satisfaction with extrinsic aspects of the job (pay and supervision).

H3: The value of achievement will be positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Last, based on the literature suggesting a relationship between achievement and performance (e.g. Kanzenas, 1978; Merrens & Garrett, 1975; Orpen, 1978; Ryan, Watson, & Williams, 1981) and on the field studies of Ravlin, Adkins, and Meglino (1994) and Adkins and Naumann (2001) which found a relationship between achievement and performance, we predicted that there would be a positive relationship between achievement and self-rated performance.

H4: The value of achievement will be positively associated with self-rated performance.

Meglino and Ravlin (1998) have argued that it is important to specify the relevance of the value(s) selected for study in work values research. It has been suggested that achievement is especially suited to studies of sales organizations (e.g., Lee & Gillen, 1989). The rationale is that individuals high in achievement tend to be ambitious, hard-working, and involved in their job; these qualities are thought to be critical to high performance in sales organizations. The present study was conducted in the sales offices of a large firm in the transportation industry. Participants were telephone sales and service agents. Sales agents were responsible for booking travel arrangements and selling tickets. It is important to note that sales agents responded to



calls initiated by the customer, thus their performance was dependent in part on the volume of customer calls which fluctuated with the season, sales promotions (that is, reduced ticket prices), etc. Given such situational constraints on their opportunities to achieve, agents had to seek subtle opportunities to enhance their performance. Further, it is important to note that agents were paid on an hourly basis; hence their compensation was not tied directly to their level of sales. Service agents were responsible for booking travel arrangements for customers who had accrued “frequent traveler” awards. Performance expectations for service agents differed from those for sales agents. In the following sections, the methodology and results of the present study will be described.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Participants were 524 telephone sales and service agents in a large firm in the transportation industry. The sample was 81% female. Median tenure with the organization was in the 9-11 year range, and median age was in the 36-45 year range (note: demographic variables were measured as categorical variables). As part of a larger study, employees signed-up in advance to participate in a survey during work time. Participation was voluntary and all participants were assured that their responses were confidential.

Data were collected in seven of the organization's offices. The first author collected data in three locations and organizational representatives collected data in the remaining four. In offices where organizational representatives collected data, participants sealed their survey forms in an envelope for confidentiality.

Measures

Value of Achievement

The value of achievement was measured using the Comparative Emphasis Scale (CES: Ravlin & Meglino, 1987a, 1987b). The CES is a forced-choice instrument which yields an ipsative (e.g., Hicks, 1970) rank ordering of the four work values of achievement, honesty, fairness, and helping and concern for others. Participants responded to pairs of statements representing behavioral manifestations of the four values. Each of the four values was paired with each of the other three values four times for a total of 24 items. Measuring values in this manner is consistent with the hierarchical arrangement of values into value systems (Locke, 1976, 1982; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Ravlin & Meglino, 1989; Rokeach, 1973). Values, by nature, are socially desirable constructs. By forcing individuals to choose among equally desirable alternatives, the CES assesses the individual's value hierarchy, and thus controls for the social desirability of work values (Fallding, 1965; Ravlin & Meglino, 1987a, 1987b).

The score for the value of achievement was the sum of the number of times statements representing "achievement" were selected over statements representing the other three values (possible range 0-12). A sample item measuring achievement is “Working to meet job requirements even when your personal schedule must be rearranged.” Because of the ipsative



nature of the CES (i.e., scores on the four values are not independent of one another; see Hicks, 1970, for a discussion of ipsative measures), it is not appropriate to examine predictive relationships for more than one individual value (as opposed to comparing individuals' full value hierarchies); therefore, the value of achievement was selected as the value of interest in the present study. The ipsative format adds considerable value to the research in that it controls for social desirability bias in participants' ratings of work values. Detailed descriptions of CES item development and substantial evidence of construct validity are presented by Ravlin and her associates (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Ravlin & Meglino 1987a, 1987b, 1989; Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins 1989, 1992) and by Judge and Bretz (1992).

Perceptions of the Work Environment

It was necessary to develop many of the items measuring perceptions of work environment for the present study. A preliminary set of items was developed based on interviews with corporate staff. The items were further refined based on interviews with supervisors and a focus group of agents not included in the present sample.

Perceptions that exerting effort will lead to high performance were assessed using scales developed for the present study. A three item scale measured perceptions that effort leads to high quality performance ($\alpha = .75$). A second three item scale measured perceptions that effort leads to a high quantity performance ($\alpha = .85$). A sample item is "Doing things as well as I am capable leads to a high quantity of work [high quality work]." Responses were on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

Perceptions of environmental factors as motivators were measured using items developed for the present study. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which various aspects of the work environment motivated them to do their best. A five point scale (1=to no extent; 5 = to a very great extent) was used. Two items measured letters of commendation from management and customers ($\alpha = .79$). Four items measured verbal praise from co-workers, supervisors, managers, and executives ($\alpha = .88$). Three items measured contributing to company profitability ($\alpha = .77$). Two items measured challenging, complex work ($\alpha = .80$). Two items measured being able to express creativity and independent thought on the job ($\alpha = .93$). Single items measured working in a dynamic, exciting industry, the opportunity to help others, "not taking your work home with you," opportunities for promotion, and meeting performance goals.

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Job satisfaction and facets were measured using the short version of the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Three items measured overall satisfaction ($\alpha = .65$). Two items measured satisfaction with security ($\alpha = .74$). Two items measured satisfaction with pay ($\alpha = .76$). Four items measured satisfaction with growth opportunities ($\alpha = .79$), and three items measured satisfaction with supervision ($\alpha = .81$). The scale measuring satisfaction with the social aspects of the work environment did not exhibit an acceptable level of reliability; therefore it was not included in the study. All items were scored on a five-point response format (1 = Very Dissatisfied; 5 = Very Satisfied). Porter and Smith's (1970) scale was used as an indicator of



organizational commitment ($\alpha = .86$). A five-point response format was also used for this scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

Performance

Self-rated performance was measured using three items ($\alpha = .70$). Employees were asked to rate their performance on the dimensions of providing high quality service to customers, producing a high dollar volume of sales, and overall performance. Responses were on a 5-point response scale (1=Poor; 5 = Outstanding).

Control Variables

As noted above, data were collected in seven different offices. Preliminary analyses suggested that there were significant differences in several outcome variables, particularly satisfaction and commitment, across offices. To control for differences in the work environment between offices, we controlled for the office location in our analyses. It has been recommended that achievement research utilizing samples of salespeople should control for the location where sales are conducted because local factors might affect sales (Barling, Kelloway, & Cheung, 1996).

Further, as noted earlier, the sample included both sales and service agents. To control for different expectations in performance across the two job categories, we controlled for job type in analyses examining perceptions that effort would lead to performance, and self-rated performance.

Results

Means and standard deviations of all study variables are reported in Table 1. Correlations among study variables are reported in Table 2.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
Achievement	5.16	2.37
Effort leading to a high quality performance	12.61	2.55
Effort leading to a high quantity performance	11.02	3.23
Letters of commendation	6.22	2.23
Praise	12.58	4.20



Contributing to company profitability	10.20 2.96
Challenging work	7.34 2.03
Being able to express creative and independent thought	6.19 2.79
Working in a dynamic, exciting industry	3.16 1.25
The opportunity to help others	3.64 1.05
"Not taking your work home with you"	3.93 1.25
Opportunities for promotion	2.51 1.49
Meeting performance goals	2.81 1.26
Job satisfaction	2.90 1.03
Satisfaction with growth	9.87 3.71
Satisfaction with security	2.66 1.10
Satisfaction with supervision	3.24 1.02
Satisfaction with pay	2.71 1.15
Organizational commitment	2.98 0.73
Self-rated performance	11.78 1.67



Table 2
Correlations Among Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Achievement	-																		
2. Effort leading to a high quality performance	.24**	-																	
3. Effort leading to a high quantity performance	.12**	.24**	-																
4. Letters of commendation	.12**	.19**	.06	-															
5. Praise from others	.05**	.14**	.04	.76**	-														
6. Contributing to company profitability	.18**	.25**	.09*	.50**	.50**	-													
7. Challenging work	.17**	.16**	.02	.49**	.45**	.45**	-												
8. Being able to express creative thought	.08	.18**	.03	.40**	.44**	.54**	.37**	-											
9. Working in a dynamic,	.19**	.16**	.10*	.42**	.36**	.46**	.37**	.36**	-										



exciting
industry

10. The
opportunit
y to help
others

.09	.20	.08	.43	.42	.35	.43	.34	.48	-
*	**		**	**	**	**	**	**	

11. "Not
taking
your work
home with
you"

.03	.10	.04	.18	.21	.33	.16	.22	.20	0.0	-
	**		**	**	**	**	**	**	8	

12.
Opportunit
ies for
promotion

.13	.11	.12	.32	.40	.43	.17	.52	.41	.27	.18	-
**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	

13.
Meeting
performan
ce goals

.18	.20	.24	.40	.38	.50	.34	.34	.32	.20	.18	.35	-
**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	

14. Job
satisfactio
n

.17	.17	.07	.30	.25	.37	.25	.20	.25	.19	.14	.12	.33	-
**	**		**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	

15.
Satisfactio
n with
growth

.16	.22	.11	.35	.30	.40	.29	.23	.27	.25	.10	.11	.37	.73	-
**	**	*	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	*	*	**	**	

16.
Satisfactio
n with
security

.11	.09	.08	.11	.10	.05	.07	.00	.14	.10	.03	.04	.12	.24	.2	-
*	*		*	*				**	*			**	**	5*	

17.
Satisfactio
n with
supervisio
n

.03	.02	.05	.22	.20	.19	.09	.07	.11	.12	.08	.01	.20	.21	.2	.16	-
			**	**	**	*		**	**			**		8*	*	

18.
Satisfactio
n with pay

.02	.01	.04	.12	.08	.12	.14	.00	.10	.07	.06	.0	.09	.24	.2	.41	.19	-
			**		**	**		*			6	*	**	7*	**	**	

19.
Organizati
onal
commitme
nt

.24	.19	.13	.42	.35	.53	.31	.23	.34	.20	.20	.19	.48	.60	.5	.33	.31	.37	-
**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	4*	**	**	**	



20. Self-rated performance

	.19	.20	.12	.13	.11	.19	.20	.18	.24	.24	.06	.10	.14	.09	.10	.00	.06	.01	.12
	**	**	**	**		**	**	**	**	**		*	**	*	0				**

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

Regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between achievement and outcome variables. As noted above, survey data were gathered in seven different offices and preliminary analyses suggested that office location was related to several dependent variables; therefore, we controlled for office location. The sample included both sales and service agents. Given that there were different expectations for these two groups of employees with respect to quality and quantity of performance, we also controlled for job title when examining perceptions that effort would lead to performance and self-rated performance.

Results of regressions examining the hypothesized relationships between achievement and outcomes are reported in Table 3. As Table 3 shows, the value of achievement was positively associated with perceptions that effort would lead to performance with respect to both quality and quantity of work. We next examined the relationship between the value of achievement and features of the work environment that individuals perceived as motivators. In general, achievement was positively associated with features of the work environment that reflect hard work and accomplishment. Achievement was positively associated with perceptions of letters of commendation, contributing to the company's profitability, challenging work, working in a dynamic, exciting industry, the opportunity to help others, opportunities for promotion, and meeting performance goals as motivators. Achievement was not associated with perceptions of praise, being able to express creative and independent thought, or of "not taking your work home with you" as motivators. Thus hypothesis one was largely supported.

Table 3
Regression Analyses Examining the Relationship Between Achievement and Perceptions, Satisfaction, and Performance

	Parameter Estimate ^a	Equation F	R ²
Effort leading to a high quality performance			
Office	0 - 1.12		
Job	-0.71 - 0		
Achievement	0.15**	2.22**	0.34
Effort leading to a high quantity performance			
Office	0 - 0.63		
Job	-.65 - 0		
Achievement	0.25**	5.16**	0.76



Environmental Factors as Motivators

Letters of commendation from management and customers				
Office	-0.99 - 0.48**			.05
Achievement	0.13**	4.32**		7
Praise from others within the organization				
Office	-0.96 - 1.11			.02
Achievement	0.09	1.91		7
Contributing to company profitability				
Office	-1.32 - 0.04			.05
Achievement	0.23**	4.17**		6
Challenging work				
Office	-1.09 - B970.28			.05
Achievement	0.14**	4.87**		0
Being able to express creative and independent thought				
Office	-0.79 - 0.59			0.7
Achievement	0.15	5.34**		6
Working in a dynamic, exciting industry				
Office	-0.25 - 0.04			0.2
Achievement	0.10	1.87		6
The opportunity to help others				
Office	-0.01 - 0.37			0.3
Achievement	0.04*	2.21*		0
"Not taking your work home with you"				
Office	-0.39 - 0.03			.01
Achievement	0.01	0.86		2



Opportunities for promotion				
Office	-0.26 - 0.94**			.06
Achievement	0.07*	4.84 **		5
Meeting performance goals				
Office	-0.03 - 0.32**			0.7
Achievement	0.09**	5.33**		0
<u>Satisfaction, Commitment, and Performance</u>				
Job satisfaction				
Office	-0.26 - 0.39**			0.7
Achievement	0.08**	5.48**		0
Satisfaction with growth				
Office	-2.14 - 1.74 **			.12
Achievement	0.27**	8.81**		0
Satisfaction with security				
Office	-0.00 - 0.79**			0.6
Achievement	0.05*	5.07**		6
Satisfaction with supervision				
Office	-0.44 - 0.00			0.1
Achievement	0.01	1.10		5
Satisfaction with pay				
Office	-0.70 - 0.46			.10
Achievement	0.01	8.27**		3
Organizational commitment				
Office	-0.34 - 0.37**			.15
Achievement	0.07**	12.77**		3
Self-rated performance				
Office	-0.23 - 0.37			



Job	0 - 0.02		
Achievement	0.13**	3.44**	.05 3

^a The control variables are categorical variables; therefore, a regression weight was generated for each of the seven office locations and each of the two job categories. Because office and job were control variables, we presented only the ranges of the regression coefficients. The associated significance level is for office and job as a single entity.

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

The value of achievement was positively associated with job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. In general, achievement was positively associated with satisfaction with intrinsic aspects of the work environment, specifically growth opportunities and security, but not associated with extrinsic aspects of the work environment such as supervision and pay. These findings are supportive of hypotheses two and three. Last, in support of hypothesis four, the value of achievement was positively associated with self-rated performance.

Discussion

The present study examined the relationship between the value of achievement and perceptions of the work environment. Achievement was positively associated with perceptions that effort would lead to performance on the dimensions of quality and quantity. This suggests that individuals who are higher in the value of achievement are more likely to be motivated to perform in the workplace. This finding is consistent with Locke's (1991) model of motivation which suggests that values are a link through which needs are translated into goals and performance. The value of achievement was also positively associated with perceptions of the general work environment. When asked to indicate what elements in the work environment "motivate you to do your best" participants with higher scores on the value of achievement were more likely to endorse work dimensions that reflect hard work, accomplishment, and success. This suggests that individuals who are high in the value are more focused on opportunities to perform and succeed in the work environment. As noted earlier, Tang and Baumeister (1984) found that individuals high in achievement performed differently depending on whether tasks were labeled as work or leisure. The present finding suggests that aspects of the work environment that present opportunities for achievement may be more salient to individuals who hold the value of achievement more highly. This finding is consistent with image theory that suggests that values guide decisions and behavior (Beach, 1990) and with the research of Ravlin and Meglino (1987a) who found that work values affected perception.

As noted earlier, Bluen, Barling, and Burns (1990) suggested that future research examine whether achievement differentially predicts intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. We found that the value of achievement was positively associated with satisfaction with intrinsic dimensions of the work environment (growth and security) but not with extrinsic dimensions (pay and supervision). This finding is consistent with the observation of Arvey et al. (1989) that satisfaction with extrinsic job features may be more dependent on environmental factors.



Achievement was also positively associated with overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment, consistent with Locke's suggestion that individuals will be satisfied to the extent that work allows them to attain their values (Locke, 1976, 1982) and with the research that suggests that value congruence with an organization is related to satisfaction and commitment (Chatman, 1991; Meglino et al., 1989). These findings are especially notable in light of the significant differences in job satisfaction and organizational commitment across offices. Finally, achievement was positively associated with self-rated performance. This finding suggests that individuals who are higher in the value of achievement may have higher self-efficacy with respect to work accomplishments. Future research should further explore this possible relationship.

When viewed as a whole, the present findings suggest that the value of achievement may serve as a perceptual lens through which individuals view their work environment. It appears that individuals are more likely to perceive a positive relationship between effort and performance, and to be motivated by dimensions of the work environment that reflect a striving for success (both individual and organizational success; e.g., contributing to the company's profitability, challenging work, working in a dynamic, exciting industry, and meeting performance goals). Individuals higher in achievement were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organization, and evaluate their own performance as high. It should be noted that although more objective measures of performance are highly desirable, in the present setting sales agents received frequent performance feedback in the form of sales statistics. Thus, participants' evaluation of their own behavior should have been "grounded" in the reality of concrete feedback.

Limitations

The present study is not without limitations. It was necessary to develop new measures for the study, particularly the measure of dimensions of the work environment that "motivate you to do your best." Whereas the efficacy of such measures clearly needs further examination, it should be noted that 1) the items were based on interviews with a sample of agents, supervisors, and members of corporate staff; thus they should represent critical dimensions of the present work environment and 2) the reliabilities of the multi-item scales were all of acceptable levels. Further, the reliabilities of these scales were higher than the intercorrelations among the scales, suggesting that they are somewhat distinct dimensions of the work environment.

The present data were gathered on a single survey instrument, thus increasing the likelihood of common method variance. Although this cannot be ruled out, the fact that there was a distinct pattern of relationships between achievement and a variety of outcome variables that persisted even after office location was controlled for suggests that common method variance was less of a problem. Clearly, future research should attempt to gather data from multiple sources.

Last, it should be noted that the magnitude of the relationships between achievement and the various outcome variables was modest. This is consistent with the work values literature which suggests that values are linked more closely to behaviors and attitudes over time more



than to individual instances of behavior or attitudes at a given point in time (e.g., Epstein, 1979, 1980).

Implications for Research and Practice

The findings of the present study suggest that achievement relates to perceptions of, and affective reactions to, the work environment. Achievement was also related to self-rated performance. Future research should seek to examine individual differences and situational variables that might moderate these relationships. For example, Ravlin et al. (1994) found that the relationship between achievement and supervisor-rated performance in a manufacturing setting was affected by how performance was defined by the organization at the time the individual was socialized into the work setting.

The present study has positive implications for practice. These findings suggest that individuals who are high in the value of achievement are more likely to seek out achievement-related dimensions of the work environment. As Staw, Bell, and Clausen (1986) suggested, jobs may be viewed as ambiguous stimuli. Thus, to the extent that individuals interpret the stimuli presented by a job as an opportunity for achievement-related behavior, performance may be enhanced. Interviews with a group of agents not included in the present sample indicated that subtle differences in approaches to customers could affect performance. This is consistent with Ravlin et al.'s (1994) finding that individuals higher in the value of achievement often performed better even in manufacturing jobs that were machine-paced. Together with the findings of Ravlin et al. (1994) and Adkins and Naumann (2001), the present findings suggest that employees who have achievement as a dominant value are more likely to be better performers, in addition to being more satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organization. To the extent that achievement does serve as a "perceptual lens" that makes achievement-related dimensions of the work environment more salient, these findings also suggest that managers may need to be proactive in making opportunities for achievement and performance salient to individuals who are lower in the value of achievement. This could possibly take the form of coaching by a high performing co-worker.

In sum, the present study provides further evidence that values, in this case the value of achievement, are related to perceptions of the work environment. These findings provide preliminary evidence that one way in which values are related to individual and organizational outcomes may be through their relationship with perceptions of the work environment. Future research should continue to examine the process through which values are related to attitudes and behaviors.



References

- Adkins, C. L. & Naumann, S. E. (2001). Situational constraints on the achievement – performance relationship: A service sector study. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 22, 453-465.
- Arvey, R. D., Bouchard, T. J., Segal, N. L., & Abraham, L. M. (1989). Job satisfaction: Environmental and genetic components. Journal of Applied Psychology, 74, 187-192.
- Barling, J., Kelloway, E. K., & Cheung, D. (1996). Time management and achievement striving interact to predict car sales performance. Journal of Applied Psychology, 81, 821-826.
- Beach, L. R. (1990). Image theory: Decision making in personal and organizational contexts. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
- Bluen, S. D., Barling, J., & Burns, W. (1990). Predicting sales performance, job satisfaction, and depression by using the achievement strivings and impatience-irritability dimensions of Type A behavior. Journal of Applied Psychology, 75, 212-216.
- Chatman, J. A. (1991). Matching people and organizations: Selection and socialization in public accounting firms. Administrative Science Quarterly, 36, 459-485.
- Epstein, S. (1979). The stability of behavior: I. Implications for psychological research. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37, 1097-1126.
- Epstein, S. (1980). The stability of behavior: II. Implications for psychological research. American Psychologist, 35, 790-806.
- Fallding, H. (1965). A proposal for the empirical study of values. American Sociological Review, 30, 223-233.
- Greenberg, J. (1977). The Protestant work ethic and reactions to negative performance evaluations on a laboratory task. Journal of Applied Psychology, 62, 682-690.
- Hackman, J. R. & Oldham, G.R. (1975). Development of the job diagnostic survey. Journal of Applied Psychology, 60, 159-170.
- Hicks, L. E. (1970). Some properties of ipsative, normative, and forced-choice normative measures. Psychological Bulletin, 74, 167-184.
- Judge, T. A. & Bretz, R. D. (1992). Effects of work values on job choice decisions. Journal of Applied Psychology, 77, 261-271.



- Kanzanas, H. C. (1978). Relationship of job satisfaction and productivity to work values of vocational education graduates. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 12, 155-164.
- Lee, C., & Gillen, D. J. (1989). Relationship of Type A behavior pattern, self-efficacy perceptions, and sales performance. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 10, 75-81.
- Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and consequences of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette, (Ed.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology (pp. 1297-1349). Chicago: Rand-McNally.
- Locke, E. A. (1982). A New Look at Work Motivation: Theory V. (Tech. Rep. No. GS-12). College Park: University of Maryland.
- Locke, E. A. (1991). The motivation sequence, the motivation hub, and the motivation core. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50, 288-299.
- Meglino, B. M. & Ravlin, E. C. (1998). Individual values in organizations: concepts, controversies, and research. Journal of Management, 24, 351-389.
- Meglino, B. M., Ravlin, E. C., & Adkins, C. L. (1989). A work values approach to corporate culture: A field test of the value congruence process and its relationship to individual outcomes. Journal of Applied Psychology, 74, 424-432.
- Meglino, B. M., Ravlin, E. C., & Adkins, C. L. (1992). The measurement of work value congruence: A field study comparison. Journal of Management, 18, 33-44.
- Merrens, M. R., & Garrett, J. B. (1975). The Protestant ethic scale as a predictor of repetitive work performance. Journal of Applied Psychology, 60, 125-127.
- Orpen, C. (1978). The work values of western and tribal black employees. Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology, 9, 99-12.
- Porter, L.W. & Smith, F.J. (1970). The etiology of organizational commitment. Unpublished manuscript, University of California at Irvine.
- Prentice, D. A. & Miller, D. T. (1992). When small effects are impressive. Psychological Bulletin, 112, 160-164.
- Ravlin, E. C., Adkins, C. L., & Meglino, B. M. (1994). Organizational definition of performance and individual value orientation: Interactive effects on performance and absence. In T. Welchans (Chair), New Directions in Fit: Interaction and Process. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Academy of Management, Dallas, TX.



- Ravlin, E. C. & Meglino, B. M. (1987a). Effects of values on perception and decision making: A study of alternative work value measures. Journal of Applied Psychology, 72, 666-673.
- Ravlin, E. C. & Meglino, B. M. (1987b). Issues in work values measurement. In W. C. Frederick (Ed.), Research in corporate social performance and policy: Vol. 9, (pp. 153-183). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Ravlin, E. C. & Meglino, B. M. (1989). The transitivity of work values: Hierarchical preference ordering of socially desirable stimuli. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 44, 494-508.
- Rokeach, M. (1973). The nature of human values. New York: Free Press.
- Ryan, E. J. Jr., Watson, J. G., & Williams, J. (1981). The relationship between managerial values and managerial success of female and male managers. Journal of Psychology, 108, 67-72.
- Schneider, B. & Bowen, D. E. (1992). Personnel/human resources management in the service sector. In Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management, Vol. 10, (pp. 1-30). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Staw, B. M., Bell, N. E., & Clausen, J. A. (1986). The dispositional approach to job attitudes: A lifetime longitudinal test. Administrative Science Quarterly, 31, 56-77.
- Tang, T. L., & Baumeister, R. F. (1984). Effects of personal values, perceived surveillance, and task labels on task preference: The ideology of turning play into work. Journal of Applied Psychology, 69, 99-105.