

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: An Examination of the Relationships Between Job Congruency and Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Perceived Stress, and Coping Strategies in College Student Workers

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One area of industrial/organizational psychology that has been overlooked is job congruency (also referred to as occupational-educational fit) and the relationship it may have among employees' job performance. During the past several years, research has been conducted on the relationship between job congruency and job satisfaction (Kane, Healy, & Henson, 1992; Kressel, 1990; Richards, 1984). Researchers, however, need to address the relationship between job congruency and organizational commitment, job congruency and perceived stress, and job congruency and coping strategies.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed among the following factors: job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies in college students in part-time employment positions. These factors affect how a college student perceives a part-time job and behavior on the job.

Seventy participants completed an informed consent

statement, a demographic profile, and five questionnaires. A Pearson coefficient correlation was computed to determine the relationship between job congruency and each of four factors: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies. A low positive correlation was found to exist between job congruency and job satisfaction, and job congruency and organizational commitment. An analysis of variance indicated a statistically significant difference between student college placement classification and job congruency. An analysis of variance between varied educational majors and the five job factors, revealed only one statistically significant difference, perceived stress. Statistically significant differences in job congruency and job satisfaction were found when examining the types of jobs students hold.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
JOB CONGRUENCY AND JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT, PERCEIVED STRESS, AND COPING
STRATEGIES IN COLLEGE STUDENT WORKERS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the past, an area of industrial/organizational psychology that has been overlooked is job congruency (also referred to as occupational-educational fit) and the relationship it may have among employees and factors that affect his/her performance on the job. During the past several years, research has been conducted on the relationship between job congruency and job satisfaction (Kane, Healy, & Henson, 1992; Kressel, 1990; Richards, 1984). Researchers, however, need to address the relationship between job congruency and organizational commitment, job congruency and perceived stress, and job congruency and coping strategies.

Even though job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies have been studied in the work force, there has been minimal research examining these factors in relation to college student workers (Feldman & Doeringhaus, 1992; Kane et al., 1992; Obermesik & Jones, 1992). Because of the rising costs of obtaining a college education and the reduction in financial aid, more students must work at least part-time while going to school. According to Kane et al. (1992), "81% of the college seniors [surveyed] reported having at least one part-time job while a college student" (p. 141). The factors of job congruency, job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies are just as important to college student workers as they are to the workers who are not in college. Part-time employees have different attitudes and values than full-time employees whether the part-time employees are in school or not (Eberhardt & Shani, 1984; Feldman & Doeringhaus, 1992; Lee & Johnson, 1991; Miller & Terborg, 1979; Nardone, 1986; Steffy & Jones, 1990; Wakefield, Curry, Mueller, & Price, 1987). Organizations who hire college students should be interested in the relationships between these factors because of the insight they may give for both hiring and retaining employees.

Job congruency can be defined as how closely related the education of an employee is to the position held (Kane et al., 1992; Kressel, 1990; Richards, 1984). Education refers to any formal educational training, such as college, a vocational technical school program, or an organization's formal training program. Relationships between job congruency and a number of factors may exist which could affect an employee's performance on the job which in turn would impact the organization. An employee's job attitude and perceptions of the job have a great deal of influence over what occurs in the work place. Some job attitudes affect absenteeism, turnover rate, and output levels. Other attitudes affect accident occurrence rates and illness in the work place.

The lack of research on the relationship between job congruency and the four job factors to be studied should be of interest to the academic field because of a concept known as "reality shock; . . . [this] occurs when individuals find that many of the work standards and procedures learned in school directly conflict with those required on the job" (Taylor, 1989, p. 393). If educators are aware of inconsistencies existing in the work place, students can be informed that these conflicts exist while still in a classroom setting instead of after obtaining employment. Requiring an internship experience may be another means of illuminating incongruence.

The issue of job congruency is significant to the field of industrial/organizational psychology because of the direct relationship job attitudes and behaviors have in the work place. Research has shown that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies all influence the level of absenteeism and the rate of turnover (Battis, 1980; Ramaswami, Agarwal, & Bhargava, 1993; Revicki & May, 1989). The relationship between perceived stress and coping strategies has a direct affect on the number of accidents that occur in the work place (S. Hoch, personal communication, October 20, 1995). All of these problems have a direct impact on an organization's financial status. The problems, if not corrected, can cost an organization millions of dollars.

Job Congruency

As stated earlier, job congruency is defined as how closely related employees' positions are to their education (Kane et al., 1992; Kressel, 1990; Richards, 1984). Again, education is defined in terms of educational training, such as, college, a vocational technical school program, or an organization's formal training program. Work experience is not included in this definition because it is task-specific and usually demonstrated through technical and operational skills directly involved in the job. Richard (1984) defines job congruency as the "discrepancy between educational preparation and occupational attainment" (p. 306).

This is an important issue because when a person decides to continue education after high school, a very specific occupational choice will be made in the near future (McDonough & Wagstaff, 1983). When this choice is made, the individual will have to make sacrifices and work hard. Therefore, any employment position the person accepts after formal education or training should be of interest, challenging, and relevant to personal goals if the position directly relates to the training just completed (Kressel, 1990). For example, an individual goes through training to become a corrections officer. If a job is obtained in this field, the individual will find it more interesting and fulfilling than a bank teller position. When employees are asked their perceptions of job congruency, two questions

emerge: Is the job related to the employee's area of study and is the position within the career choice area (Kressel, 1990)? Perception of job congruency is important because it affects the employee's job attitudes.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as the "emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Keaveney & Nelson, 1993, p. 118). Satisfaction needs to be studied as an overall measurement because the level of satisfaction for a specific task of a job is continuously changing. Therefore, if a specific task was measured, the only information collected would be the satisfaction level of the employee for a particular time and a particular task instead of a general level of satisfaction (Kalleberg, 1977).

The level of employee satisfaction varies greatly. Many studies use three general approaches to understand satisfaction variation. One approach concentrates totally on the employee's personality. This approach is inadequate because it did not take into account job characteristics. A second approach goes to the other extreme and studies only the characteristics of the job and ignores the employee's personality. This approach is also inadequate. Therefore, researchers decided satisfaction is created as a function of the characteristics of the job and the motives and personality of the employee in that position (Kalleberg, 1977).

Research has been conducted to examine if full-time and part-time workers differ in their level of satisfaction. Logan, O'Reilly, and Roberts (1973) found similar overall levels of satisfaction between full-time and part-time workers with differences occurring in specific components of satisfaction. However, researchers have also shown that part-time workers have higher overall satisfaction than full-time workers (Eberhardt & Shani, 1984; Wakefield et al., 1987). Miller and Terborg (1979) found that part-time workers were less satisfied with the job in general.

Many theories have been developed to attempt to explain the cause of job satisfaction. Phillips, Barrett, and Rush (1978) delineated the common theme of the theories: "satisfaction is a function of the extent [employees] can attain the things they most desire from their jobs" (p. 110). Many different aspects of a job can cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction. A few of the causes that can directly influence an employee's satisfaction level include the level of stress, supervisor behavior, the amount of peer support received, and the organization's environment (Revicki & May, 1989). Job satisfaction can also be influenced by the level of support supervisors give employee efforts and also by how much influence an employee is allowed in decision making. These two factors can increase or decrease the employee's level of satisfaction. Besides changing the levels of job satisfaction, the level of

support from supervisors and the degree to which an employee can be involved in the decision-making process can have a positive or negative impact on an employee's organizational commitment (Niehoff, Enz, & Grover, 1990).

Organizational Commitment

According to Witt (1991), organizational commitment has three components. First, there must be a strong belief and acceptance of an organization's values and goals. Second, an employee must be willing to work for the benefit of the organization. Third, there must be a desire to maintain the relationship. These three components have one thing in common; they all require a person to be actively involved. Commitment is an active relationship that means employees will give of themselves for the benefit and well being of the organization (Ramaswami et al., 1993).

Few studies have been done with regard to organizational commitment and the part-time worker. Hall and Gordon (1973) suggest part-time workers are less committed than full-time workers to the organization.

The amount of discrepancy between an employee's values, goals, and beliefs and the organization's values and goals reduces organizational commitment (Lee & Johnson, 1991). As mentioned earlier, support and an employee's influence in decision-making can also increase organizational commitment. When visible commitment to the organization is shown by supervisors and upper management, employee commitment is

increased (Niehoff et al., 1990). Perceived stress also affects organizational commitment. If the level of stress is high, it may cloud employees' perceptions of how their roles help achieve the organization's goals or it may interfere with the employees' identification with the organization.

Perceived Stress

"Stress is a state of mental tension, pressure, or strain. [It] is said to occur when there is a 'discrepancy between an employee's perceived state and desired state... [if] this discrepancy is considered important by the employee'" (Keaveney & Nelson, 1993, p. 114). Therefore, organizational stress results from a discrepancy between work-related and organizational roles (Keaveney & Nelson, 1993). Studying stress is important in terms of an employee's perception of a stressful event. This perception is what affects the employee's organizational stress level. Looking at an employee's perception provides insight into the actual event, personality characteristics, and coping strategies (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). Personality characteristics and coping strategies cause employees to perceive a specific event as increasing or decreasing the stress level in their individual lives.

There are many different areas within an organization that contribute to employee stress. The two most studied organizational stressors are role conflict and role

ambiguity. Role conflict occurs when an employee has conflicting demands or when completing one role expectation would make the completion of another more difficult. Role ambiguity occurs when clear, consistent information is not available (Batlis, 1980; Martin & Berthiaume, 1993). The level of either role conflict or role ambiguity is a function of the characteristics of the employee, the particular job, and the organization (Madhu, Ananda Rao, & Rao, 1990). Steffy and Jones (1990) found that part-time workers may perceive being under more stress than full-time workers.

A concern can be raised when measuring specific stressors, such as role conflict or role ambiguity. The concern is whether the individual is truly evaluating the stress level from the specific source or whether the stress is coming from a different source, such as a fight with a spouse or preparation for a child's marriage. All living beings have a way of coping with stress; it is a dynamic process. The relationship between stress and coping with stress is "reciprocal, such that each part might be either a cause or an effect" (Keaveney & Nelson, 1993, p. 114).

Coping Strategies

Coping has been "described as the cognitive and behavioral efforts that master, minimize, tolerate or reduce internal and environmental demands" (Latack & Havlovic, 1992, p. 482). Just as with stress, there is more than one

area of coping to be examined. Two areas that need to be differentiated are "coping behavior" and "coping styles." Coping behavior looks at the method used to deal with a specific event. Coping style is a pattern that can be seen in an individual over time. There is a need to distinguish between the two types because one is looking at the short-term and the other at the long-term. When asked general questions concerning how employees perceive personal coping style, the information obtained will be how they think they cope instead of how they really cope. Because the report may be slanted by the employees' self-image, the report may in reality resemble more closely a personality trait rather than the coping behavior (Newton, 1989). This issue is important to remember when studying coping. Are employees' perceptions of their personality or how they behave in a stressful situation what need to be studied? The type of information that is desired from the research (actual coping behaviors or an employee's personality profile) needs to be decided upon before an instrument can be selected.

Another factor that needs to be examined is what type of general coping strategy employees use when dealing with stress. There are three main coping strategies: avoidance, problem-reappraisal, and active problem solving (Long, 1990). In the avoidance approach, the individual attempts to reduce stress by not dealing with the problem. When

individuals put their "efforts [into managing] the appraisal of the stressfulness of the event" (Long, 1990, p. 185), they use the problem-reappraisal approach. The most effective approach is active problem solving. In this approach, the individual's efforts are "oriented toward confronting the problem" (Long, 1990, p. 185). The strategy, which the employee uses most frequently, can have a direct link to the employee's perceived stress level. No research was found as to which strategies were used more frequently by either full-time or part-time workers.

Summary

Many factors affect how an employee perceives a job and an employee's behavior on the job. Five of those factors (job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies) have been discussed in this chapter. Studies on all of these factors and a combination of these factors have previously been conducted. Minimal research has been conducted examining the relationship these five factors may have on college student workers. The primary purpose of this study was to examine if a relationship existed between job congruency and four job factors (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies) which affect an employee's job performance. In addition, the influence of student educational classification, educational major, and job type on each of

the five job factors was studied. The following research questions were investigated:

1. Is there a relationship between job congruency and job satisfaction?
2. Is there a relationship between job congruency and organizational commitment?
3. Is there a relationship between job congruency and perceived stress?
4. Is there a relationship between job congruency and coping strategies?
5. Does the educational classification of a student (i.e., junior, senior, graduate student) have an effect on job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies?
6. Does the educational major of a student have an effect on job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies?
7. Does the type of job a student holds have an effect on job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies?

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

The target population for this study included 70 upper-classification students (29 juniors, 26 seniors, and 15 graduate students seeking a master's degree) at a small midwestern university who work while attending school. Each individual included in the study was enrolled in at least one class and worked a minimum of 10 hours a week. Participants were solicited from the following educational majors: communication ($n=5$), the sciences ($n=5$), teacher education ($n=22$), sociology ($n=9$), recreation ($n=2$), therapy (physical, occupational, etc) ($n=4$), psychology ($n=17$), business ($n=5$), and English ($n=1$). The participants' job type was placed in one of the following general categories: retail ($n=10$), technical ($n=6$), graduate teaching assistant ($n=12$), community service ($n=2$), clerical ($n=10$), food service ($n=9$), athletics ($n=8$), professional ($n=7$), and manual labor ($n=6$).

Instruments

Participants completed the following instruments: a demographic questionnaire, four published instruments (the Job Satisfaction Index, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, the Perceiving Stress Scale, and the Ways of Coping Checklist) and an instrument designed by the researcher (the Job Congruency Questionnaire). The

participants' demographic information was obtained through a demographic profile sheet designed by the researcher.

Participants provided the following information: gender, age, level of education (graduate or undergraduate), major, degree or non-degree seeking, average number of hours worked per week, name of employer, title of position, relationship of current job to area of study, and relationship of current position to career choice area.

Job Satisfaction

The Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) to assess the level of job satisfaction uses very general and content free items (Robinson, Atanasiou, & Head, 1969). The JSI is an 18 item questionnaire using a 5-point response scale that ranges from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5). The split half reliability coefficient for the instrument was .77. No validity information could be found but a number of researchers have used JSI (Jackofsky & Peters, 1987; Kressel, 1990; Logan et al., 1973; Niehoff et al., 1990; Shockey & Mueller, 1994).

Organizational Commitment

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) was used to assess the level of organizational commitment. This questionnaire has 15 items measured on a 7-point response Likert scale. Responses range from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree*

(7). With regard to internal consistency, "Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .82 to .93 with a median of .90" (Price & Mueller, 1986, p. 80). Test-retest reliability was computed for two samples. For one group, reliability went up every month retested, the other group went down over the retest periods. The first group's reliabilities were .53, .63, and .75 over 2, 3, and 4 month periods, respectively. The second group's reliability was .72 over 2 months and .62 for 3 months (Mowday et al., 1979). Through conducting many studies, Mowday et al. found this questionnaire to be valid.

Perceived Stress

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Cohen et al. (1983) was used to assess the participant's current level of stress. The PSS is a 14 item scale that asks questions regarding how often the participant has experienced specific stressors within the last month. The response scale ranges from *never* (0) to *very often* (4). The questions deal with the degree to which the participant feels life is unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloading. The questions are general and relatively free of content specific information toward one population.

The PSS has been found to have adequate internal and concurrent reliability. It has also been correlated with a range of self-reports and behavioral criteria. The scale has a coefficient alpha reliability ranging from .84 to .86 with time spans of test-retest from two-days to six-weeks.

Cohen et al. (1983) concluded this scale had predictive validity for a period of one or two months.

Coping Strategies

A revised Ways of Coping Checklist (WCC; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) was used to gather types of strategies used to cope with stress. WCC was developed to be used in a wide context, not specifically for the work place. Long (1990) revised the scale to include the work environment. After the addition of questions and an analysis of the questions on three factors, a 42 item checklist was constructed. The three overall factors included were avoidance (17 items), problem-reappraisal (14 items), and active problem-solving (11 items). The internal consistency coefficients, found by using Cronbach's alpha, were .83, .81, and .73, respectively. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) original 4-point response scale ranging from *not at all* (0) to *used a great deal* (3) was retained. This scale measures the frequency of use of a particular strategy.

Job Congruency

During the literature review for this study, no published job congruency instrument was found. Hence, one was constructed for this study, the Job Congruency Questionnaire (JCQ). The scale consisted of 20 items describing the relationship between education and current position. Responses ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). To check the validity of these items,

the statements were reviewed by a panel of 3 experts in industrial/organizational psychology. After the review by the panel, the instrument was given to 35 undergraduates in an introduction to psychology class and 5 of the researcher's associates. The coefficient alpha for the instrument was .76.

Procedures

After obtaining approval from the Human Subject's Committee (Appendix A), the researcher obtained permission from graduate and undergraduate instructors to solicit their classes for volunteers by circulating participation sign-up sheets which had alternate dates and times to meet for the administration of the packet and the location of the administration. If students wanted to participate but the times did not fit their schedule, individual and small group times were set up. The classes were told about the research project and were also told that the packet would take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Each participant completed a packet containing: an informed consent statement, a demographic profile sheet, the JSI, the OCQ, the PSS, the WCC, and the JCQ (Appendix B).

Before the administration of the packet, the researcher gave a brief description of the study, told the participants that participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and explained that withdrawal from the study could occur at anytime without consequences. Participants were told that

all names and completed responses would be kept confidential and that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questionnaires. The experimenter stressed that participants should answer each question truthfully, and the results of an individual's questionnaire would not be put in the final summary document, only overall group measurements would be included. Participants were asked to read the instructions for each instrument before responding. The instruments were similar but not identical so following the instructions for each instrument was important to maintain the validity of the study. Participants were asked if there were any questions.

Participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent statement on the front of the packet. After they signed it, they were asked to tear the informed consent statement off and place it aside. The researcher collected the informed consent statement while the participants completed the packet.

A packet was then distributed by the researcher to those who wished to participate in the study. While the packets were being distributed, the participants were asked to complete the packet. If any questions occurred while completing the packet, they were told to feel free to ask the researcher. Upon completion, participants brought the packet to the researcher and departed. As participants left, the researcher thanked each individual for participating in the study.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between job congruency and four different job factors. Four Pearson correlation computations were calculated: job congruency with job satisfaction; job congruency with organizational commitment; job congruency with perceived stress; and job congruency with coping strategies. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the effect of educational classification, educational major, and job type in regard to job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies. The seven research questions were:

1. Is there a relationship between job congruency and job satisfaction?
2. Is there a relationship between job congruency and organizational commitment?
3. Is there a relationship between job congruency and perceived stress?
4. Is there a relationship between job congruency and coping strategies?
5. Does the educational classification of a student (i.e., junior, senior, graduate students) have an effect on job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies?

6. Does the educational major of a student have an effect on job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies?
7. Does the type of job a student holds have an effect on job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies?

All computations were completed by the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) computer program.

The results of the Pearson coefficient correlations between job congruency and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies can be found in Table 1. Low positive correlations between job congruency and job satisfaction and job congruency and organizational commitment existed. No correlations between job congruency and perceived stress or job congruency and coping strategies were found. The coefficient of determination for job congruency and job satisfaction was .21 which leaves 79% of the variance unaccounted. Job congruency and organizational commitment was found to have a coefficient of determination of .13 which leaves 87% of the variance unaccounted.

Separate analyse of variance (ANOVA) were computed using three of the demographic areas (educational classification, educational major, and job type) and each of

Table 1

Correlation Coefficients Between Job Congruency and Four
Job Factors of Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment,
Perceived Stress, and Coping Strategies

	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Perceived Stress	Coping Strategies
Job Congruency	.46*	.36*	-.07	-.11

* $p < .05$

five job factors (job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies). All post hoc Tukey tests were performed at the $p < .05$ level.

When computing the ANOVAs for participant's educational classification (junior, senior, graduate student), only job congruency showed a statistically significant difference, $F(2,67) = 8.12$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2). The Tukey test revealed that graduate students had greater job congruency than juniors and seniors which did not differ (see Table 3).

When computing ANOVAs for participant's educational major (communication, the sciences, teacher education, sociology, recreation, therapy, psychology, business, and English), the only job factor which showed any statistically significant difference was perceived stress, $F(8,69) = 2.64$, $p < .02$ (see Table 4). The Tukey test revealed that business majors had significantly less stress than communication, teacher education, psychology, and English majors (see Table 5).

When ANOVAs were computed for participant's job type (retail, technical, graduate teaching assistant, community service, clerical, food service, athletics, professional, and manual labor), a statistically significant difference was found for both job congruency, $F(8,61) = 4.96$, $p < .0001$, and job satisfaction, $F(8,61) = 2.39$, $p < .03$ (see Tables 6 and 7). The Tukey test on job congruency found

Table 2

Analysis of Variance on Job Congruency by Educational
Classification

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	<u>η^2</u>
Educational Classification	2	9137.73	4568.88	8.12*	.80
Error	67	37708.61	562.82		

* $p < .001$

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Job Congruency by
Educational Classification

	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Junior	29	80.93 _a	25.34
Senior	26	74.42 _a	20.61
Graduate	15	104.80 _b	25.51

* Subscripts denote means that are significantly different.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance on Perceived Stress by Educational Major

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	<u>η^2</u>
Educational Major	8	1082.88	135.36	2.64*	.74
Error	61	3121.99	51.18		

* $p < .02$

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Perceived Stress by Educational Major

	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Communication	5	28.60 _{bc}	6.31
Sciences	5	26.80 _c	5.63
Teacher Education	22	25.82 _{bc}	7.04
Sociology	9	23.11 _c	8.58
Recreation	2	31.00 _c	1.41
Therapy	4	22.25 _c	7.18
Psychology	17	25.65 _{bc}	7.95
Business	5	13.60 _{ac}	3.05
English	1	39.00 _{bc}	0.00

* Subscripts denote means that are significantly different.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance on Job Congruency by Job Type

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	<u>η^2</u>
Type of Job	8	18466.12	2308.27	4.96*	.61
Error	61	28380.22	465.25		

* $p < .0001$

Table 7

Analysis of Variance on Job Satisfaction by Job Type

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<u>F</u>	<u>η^2</u>
Type of Job	8	1980.21	247.53	2.39*	.76
Error	61	6309.63	103.14		

* $p < .03$

that graduate teaching assistants had greater job congruency than those working in retail, food service, and manual labor (see Table 8). The Tukey test computed for job satisfaction showed that manual laborers had less job satisfaction than those involved in athletics and professional positions which did not differ (see Table 9).

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations of Job Congruency by Job Type

	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Retail	10	71.00 _{bc}	24.17
Technical	6	89.33 _c	33.81
Graduate Teaching Assistant	12	111.67 _{ac}	16.47
Community Service	2	99.00 _c	9.90
Clerical	10	85.00 _c	19.92
Food Service	9	65.89 _{bc}	4.98
Athletics	8	83.50 _c	25.41
Professional	7	87.00 _c	18.48
Manual Labor	6	58.33 _{bc}	21.92

* Subscripts denote means that are significantly different.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of Job Satisfaction by Job Type

	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Retail	10	63.40 _c	11.59
Technical	6	67.33 _c	11.98
Graduate Teaching Assistant	12	68.00 _c	8.16
Community Service	2	77.00 _c	5.66
Clerical	10	68.40 _c	5.54
Food Service	9	66.33 _c	13.88
Athletics	8	72.40 _{bc}	8.69
Professional	7	71.00 _{bc}	10.65
Manual Labor	6	52.50 _{ac}	10.90

* Subscripts denote means that are significantly different.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between job congruency and four factors that can affect an employee's performance on the job. These factors were job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies. The Pearson coefficient correlation between job congruency and each of the four factors indicated a low positive correlation between job congruency and job satisfaction, and job congruency and organizational commitment.

Researchers have just begun to study the concept of job congruency both in regard to college student workers and other members of the work force. This study supported the findings of previous research conducted on college student workers (Kane et al., 1992; Obermesik & Jones, 1992) by finding a correlation between job congruency and job satisfaction. Organizational commitment has been studied extensively in the full-time work force. The association of job congruency with organizational commitment has not been previously studied.

What implications do the associations between job congruency and job satisfaction and job congruency and organizational commitment have to an organization that employs college students? Because correlational studies are not designed to show or prove cause and effect, it cannot be

stated that higher job congruency will bring higher job satisfaction or organizational commitment. Employers need to be made aware that low associations exist between these factors. Employers might be able to detect patterns in employees and use this information in the organization's hiring policies and possible training. This information would also be important when evaluating job performance either as a performance appraisal or a recommendation for another position.

A definite need for more research in these areas exists. The establishment of possible causality between job congruency and job satisfaction and/or job congruency and organizational commitment would be of great benefit for organizations. The main implication is if the organization wants the benefits that come from having satisfied and committed employees (less turnover, less absenteeism, etc.), the organization needs to see what the student applicant is studying and how closely related the major is to the position being filled.

In the current study, 79% of the variance between job congruency and job satisfaction was unaccounted for and 87% of the variance between job congruency and organizational commitment was unaccounted for. For future research to be able to be used by organizations this percentage must be decreased. What can future research do to decrease this percentage? One possibility would be to create a different

instrument for gathering information about job congruency. Because this study focused on college student workers, more factors related to the college students' life (e.g., number of hours of class work in which the student is enrolled, extracurricular activities, etc.) should be included. A larger sample size would also be preferable.

A second purpose for this study was to investigate the interaction between three demographic variables (educational classification, educational major, and job type) and five job factors. The three demographic responses were statistically analyzed to determine whether differences existed between groups for each of the five job factors (job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies). Graduate students had greater job congruency than juniors and seniors. This difference may exist because graduate students already have a baccalaureate degree and are viewed by their employer as having more knowledge. Therefore, graduate students may be seen as more employable within their chosen field.

The analysis between educational majors and the five job factors revealed one statistically significant difference for perceived stress. Business majors had less stress than communication, teacher education, psychology, and English majors. Several factors may have influenced this outcome, some of which may be individual tolerance for stress, ability to recognize and deal with stress, and personal life.

Statistically significant differences in job congruency and job satisfaction were found when examining the type of jobs participants held. Graduate teaching assistants had higher job congruency than participants working in retail, food services, and manual labor. This difference may have occurred because graduate teaching assistants have received a baccalaureate degree in a major related to the classes that they are teaching; therefore, they feel their education has been worthwhile and helpful in obtaining personal goals (Kressel, 1990). This would probably not be the case for the participants in the other job types (retail, food service, and manual labor).

When examining job satisfaction, participants who did manual labor had less job satisfaction than those who were professionals or involved with athletics in some way. A possible reason for this could be that within the professional field (manager, teacher, etc.), the participant has invested time, effort and possibly schooling to obtain the position; therefore, the individual may view personal goals as more closely fulfilled. For the athlete, a possible reason for higher job satisfaction may be the personal devotion to the sport and in some cases, the relationship of the sport to the athlete's life.

The recommendation of this study is that more research in the areas of job congruency, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment needs to be conducted. The sample

from which this study was conducted came from a small university in the Midwest region of the United States. Research needs to be conducted in other geographic regions and at larger universities. If future research can establish a cause and effect relationship between job congruency and job satisfaction, and job congruency and organizational commitment, the implications could be interesting for the organizations that hire college students, the students, and the students' academic advisors. Implications for the organizations that hire the students might be lower turnover, more dedicated workers, less absenteeism, and the possibility workers will continue employment with the organization after graduation.

Implications for the student are numerous. Greater job congruency will result in on-the-job experience in the field of interest. The student can determine whether or not a career should be pursued in the area of work. Networks can be formed. If students enjoyed work and viewed it as relevant to personal career goals, increased motivation would be evident. One implication for the advisor would be to help the student locate a job related to personal career goals. The possibility of including work related experiences as internship hours to be included in the educational degree the student was seeking could be explored. The advisor would also be able to obtain a sense of accomplishment in helping students reach their goals.

The group differences reported in this study may be a starting point in trying to determine if overall differences do exist.

Associations exist between job congruency and job satisfaction and job congruency and organizational commitment in college student workers. Educational classification of the student and the type of job the student holds may have some effect on job congruency and job satisfaction. Even though cause and effect cannot be established, this information is important to organizations which hire college students. Research has established that higher levels of job satisfaction and/or organizational commitment produce a lower rate of turnover and absenteeism and other benefits to the organization. Since job congruency has been shown to correlate with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, an organization should look at the relationship between an applicant's educational goals and the position opening. The lower the turnover rate and absenteeism rate, the less the organization has to spend, which leads to the organization having a higher profit margin at the end of the year.

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APPENDIX A

Human Subject Committee's Approval



September 28, 1995

Karen Hicks
1533 Merchant, Apt. #S-7
Emporia, KS 66801

Dear Ms. Hicks:

The Institutional Review Board for Treatment of Human Subjects has evaluated your application for approval of human subject research entitled, "An Examination of the Relationship Between Job Congruency and Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Perceived Stress and Coping Strategies." The review board approved your application which will allow you to begin your research with subjects as outlined in your application materials.

Best of luck in your proposed research project. If the review board can help you in any other way, don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Schwenn".

John Schwenn, Dean
Graduate Studies and Research

pf

cc: Tes Mehring

APPENDIX B

Packet

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Emporia State University supports the practice of protection for human participants in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdraw from the study, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach.

A research project on job congruency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies is being conducted by Karen Hicks in partial fulfillment of a Master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between job congruency and four job attitudes, specifically job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies. If you wish to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a demographic profile sheet and four short questionnaires relating to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived stress, and coping strategies. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the materials. If you have any questions at all concerning the research, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Your participation is solicited, but strictly voluntary. Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study. If you do have any questions about the study, I can be reached at 343-8507. Be assured that your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. I appreciate your cooperation very much.

Sincerely,

Karen Hicks

"I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures and possible risks involved. I understand the potential risks involved and I assume them voluntarily. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach. Furthermore, my signature on this consent form does not obligate me to complete the study or release the researcher from possible legal responsibility."

Please sign and return the consent form.

Signature of participant

Date

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Please provide the following information about yourself.

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 23 or Under [] 24 or Over []
3. Level of Education: Freshman [] Sophomore []
 Junior [] Senior []
 Graduate []
4. Major Working Towards: _____
5. Degree Seeking Student: Yes [] No []
6. Average number of hours worked per week: _____
7. Name of Employer: _____
8. Title of Position or short description: _____
9. Is your current job related to your area of study? Yes [] No []
10. Is your current position within your career choice area? Yes [] No []

JOB CONGRUENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

Listed below are a series of statements relating your educational background to your current job position. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Moderately disagree 3 = Slightly disagree 4 = Neither disagree nor agree

5 = Slightly agree 6 = Moderately agree 7 = Strongly agree

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The group projects which I participated in during my college classes has prepared me to work on teams in the workplace. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. My degree goal is directly related to my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. My college classes have helped me to complete the tasks in my current position more effectively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. My degree goal has helped me obtain my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. My education has not been of use during my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. Presentations assigned during my education have prepared me to research and present special assignments within my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. I can apply what I have learned in school to the position I currently hold. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8. Skills I learned by participating in university organizations are transferable to my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9. Without my education I could not complete the tasks required of me in my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10. Concepts I learned in classes have directly applied to my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11. My education has helped me in my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12. The position I currently hold could be done by anyone, with or without post-high school education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13. Papers written for class have helped prepare me for writing reports in my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14. The skills I learned in school have helped me obtain my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15. Because of my education, I feel I am better able to perform the duties of my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. The information I have received in class has not been applicable in my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17. Positions I have held in university organizations sponsored by my degree field have not helped in obtaining leadership positions in my current place of employment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18. Skills used to complete projects in college classes have been irrelevant in my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 19. I could not do my job well without the information I received from my college classes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 20. The articles and textbook assigned for college classes has prepared me for the reading I do in my current position. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

INDEX OF JOB SATISFACTION

Some jobs are more interesting and satisfying than others. This questionnaire contains eighteen statements about jobs. You are to circle the phrase below each statement which best describes how you feel about your present job. There are no right or wrong answers.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Undecided 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. There are some conditions concerning my job that could be improved. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. It seems that my friends are more interested in their jobs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I consider my job rather unpleasant. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I enjoy my work more than my leisure time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am often bored with my job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I am satisfied with my job for the time being. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I feel that my job is no more interesting than others I could get. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I definitely dislike my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Most days I am enthusiastic about my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Each day of work seems like it will never end. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I like my job better than the average worker does. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. My job is pretty uninteresting. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I find real enjoyment in my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I am disappointed that I ever took this job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Moderately disagree 3 = Slightly disagree 4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Slightly agree 6 = Moderately agree 7 = Strongly agree

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13. I really care about the fate of this organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15. Deciding to work for this organization was definite mistake on my part. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate *how often* you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer each question fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way, but rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate.

For each questions choose form the following alternatives:

0 = never 1 = almost never 2 = sometimes 3 = fairly often 4 = very often

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | In the last month, how often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | In the last month, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. | In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. | In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. | In the last month, how often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. | In the last month, how often have you been able to control the way you spend your time? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. | In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

COPING STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

Please give a general description of the primary work related stressor that you have experienced during the previous two weeks.

Please read each item below and indicate, by circling the appropriate category, to what extent you used it in the situation you have just described.

0 = not used 1 = used somewhat 2 = used quite a bit 3 = used a great deal

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Left work as soon as possible | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. | Criticized or lectured myself | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. | Hoped a miracle would happen | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. | Went along with gate; sometimes I just have bad luck | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. | Slept more than usual | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. | I tried to forget the whole thing | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. | Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication, etc. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. | Took it out on other people | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. | Wished that I could change what happened or how I felt | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. | I daydreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. | Wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. | Had fantasies or wished about how things might turn out | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. | Had a good cry | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. | Expressed my irritation and frustration to myself | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. | Avoided being with people in general | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. | Avoided other staff members | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. | Expressed my irritation and frustration by swearing, slamming things down and crumpling paper and so forth | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. | Just concentrated on what I had to do next; the next step | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. | Forgot work when I finished for the day | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. | Looked for the silver lining, so to speak; tried to look on the bright side of things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. | Didn't let it get to me; refused to think too much about it | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

22.	Made light of the situation; refused to get too serious about it	0	1	2	3
23.	Just accepted that it was another job, and got on with it	0	1	2	3
24.	I tried to keep my feelings from interfering with other things to much	0	1	2	3
25.	Simply took one day at a time	0	1	2	3
26.	Tried to be very organized so that I could keep on top of things	0	1	2	3
27.	Tried to see this as an opportunity to learn new skills	0	1	2	3
28.	Put extra attention on planning and scheduling	0	1	2	3
29.	Thought of myself as a winner--someone who always comes through	0	1	2	3
30.	Thought how much better things are for me compared to the past or to my peers	0	1	2	3
31.	Established some sort of routine	0	1	2	3
32.	Talked the problem over with colleagues	0	1	2	3
33.	Tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind	0	1	2	3
34.	Talked to someone to find out more about the situation	0	1	2	3
35.	Confronted my supervisor with problems	0	1	2	3
36.	Talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem	0	1	2	3
37.	Took a big chance or did something very risky	0	1	2	3
38.	Talked to someone about how I was feeling	0	1	2	3
39.	Stood my ground and fought for what I wanted	0	1	2	3
40.	Came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem	0	1	2	3
41.	I went over in my mind what I would say or do	0	1	2	3
42.	I thought about how a person I admired would handle this situation and used that as a model	0	1	2	3

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Karen Ann Hicks
Signature of Author

December 6, 1995
Date

An Examination of the Relationships
Between Job Congruency and Job
Satisfaction, Organizational
Commitment, Perceived Stress,
and Coping Strategies in
College Student Workers
Title of Thesis

Doug Cooper
Signature of Graduate Office Staff
Member

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