

## Chronicling the Transient Nature of Fitness Employees: An Organizational Culture Perspective

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This study adopted an organizational culture perspective to examine the values and beliefs within fitness club operations and determine their influence on employees' job satisfaction and intention to leave an organization. Consideration was also given to subcultures based on geographical location, organizational type, and job function to examine the ways in which organizations and employees may differ. Data were collected at three urban cities in Canada during a major fitness conference and tradeshow. The results from 438 employees confirmed the multidimensionality of the seven-factor instrument, in addition to illustrating the influence on job satisfaction and intention to leave. Further, the results revealed several dimensions were perceived differently with respect to subculture. Findings connote the transient nature of jobs in the fitness industry which remains an immediate concern for managers in this field.

Culture is embedded in the relationships among individuals and is important to understanding the philosophy, values, and beliefs that guide human social activity. Born out of anthropology and psychology, organizational culture (OC) theory has strong roots within these respective literatures (Pettigrew, 1979) among others (e.g., social psychology, cultural anthropology, etc.). While social anthropologists have presented culture as an integral feature of how individuals function in a society, equally observable is the role of culture in an organizational context. This perspective tells us that culture is an important determining factor in how well an individual fits into an organization, and (moreover) how they fit into the larger setting in which the organization resides. Such a contention holds considerable merit for managers seeking to explain (and also predict) employee attitudes and behaviors.

OC is shaped through the principles and actions of company leaders, institutional pressures from the external regulatory environment, and the ongoing interactions and negotiations of member's (over time) as they adapt to their work environment (Alvesson, 2002; Schein, 1985). The combination of surface level artifacts and underlying organizational values and beliefs has led to multiple definitions and debate regarding the methods of studying OC (e.g., etic or emic research), and concerns

surrounding the outcomes of cultural studies (Denison, 1996; Martin, 2002). For example, quantitative cultural studies have been scrutinized due to the similarities with organizational climate research; thereby blurring the line between these areas (e.g., Denison, 1996; Glisson, 2007; Verbeke, Volgering & Hessels, 1998). Glisson (2007) noted that both concepts (i.e., culture and climate) are key constructs in understanding the social context of an organization. He also noted that culture "... is a property of the organization" whereas "... climate is a property of the individual"... and that culture is captured in "... the way things are done in the organization" while climate is "... the individual employees' perceptions of the psychological impact of their work environment on their own well-being" (Glisson, 2007, p.739). This conceptual juxtaposition illustrates that while similarities and differences among concepts exist, they nonetheless "... address a common phenomenon: the creation and influence of social contexts" (Denison, 1996, p. 646). Further and according to Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhard and Holcombe (2000), climate is "... based on perceived patterns in the specific experiences and behaviors of people" (p.22), while culture is considered to be a pattern of basic (and valid) assumptions taught to new members as the correct way to perceive and feel in relation to organizational problems. In contrast to climate, culture sets the boundaries of behavior within the organization and is the foundation from which members' behaviors, values, and actions arise. Despite the conceptual debate surrounding culture and climate, the preceding commentary underpins the utility of culture research to provide solutions for managers searching for new ways to control

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the internal business environment (Ashkanasy, Broadfoot & Falkus, 2000).

OC theory asserts that a shared meaning system contributes to higher levels of organizational effectiveness due (in part) to a greater understanding of what is valued within organizational life (Deal & Kennedy, 1999). These shared meanings are thought to produce (and contribute to) social order within an organization (Kusluvan & Karamustafa, 2003; Schein, 1985), influence job-related attitudes and behaviors (McShane & Steen, 2009), and are seen as key factors in determining employee satisfaction, job fit, and organizational image (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Silverthorne, 2004; Woodbury, 2006). Research has also shown that culture accounts for increased economic performance (Denison & Mishra, 1995) and provides a basis for understanding differences that may exist between successful organizations operating in the same industry sector (Gordon, 1991). While research outside of sport has illuminated the idea that OC does matter in terms of employee recruitment and retention, research in sport has only tautologically advanced our understanding of the topic. As a result, sport scholars have called for more sport specific research intended to inform both theory and practice (e.g., Chalip, 2006). Notably, Slack (1997) maintained that OC provides an alternative to many traditional sociopsychological approaches and challenged researchers to bring mainstream work on OC to sport organizations because they are "... viable sites for testing and extending this theory" (Slack, 1996, p. 102).

## Study Framework and Purpose

The study of OC is complex, with a number of levels of analysis to consider including the macro-organizational level, subcultures within an organization, and the individual as part of the organizations culture (Martin, 2002). Schein's research (1985, 1991) illustrated that OC can be analyzed via three progressively deeper levels of understanding (i.e., artifacts, values and beliefs, basic underlying assumptions). The most accessible level (i.e., values and beliefs) is often considered in deductive OC research, similar to climate studies which have been particularly focused on informal practices and behavioral norms (Denison, 1996; Martin, 2002; Verbeke et al., 1998). However, any quantitative assessment of culture should not deny the existence of deeper level assumptions or the relevance of surface-level artifacts that may have symbolic meaning (Denison, 1996). Instead, such assessments reveal (at best) only part of the meanings people ascribe to their work and "how things are" in their organization; yet for the social scientist, this nonetheless remains an important aspect in explaining organizations and societies (Ashkanasy et al., 2000).

Convolving matters more, institutional pressures are also understood to shape organizational values (e.g., Danisman, Hinings, Slack, 2006; Lee & Yu, 2004). Although empirical data are limited, we can intuitively assume that institutional theory plays an important intermediary role in understanding how organizational values evolve.

Adding further complexity, Martin (1992) argued that a true understanding of OC requires the consideration of three contrasting perspectives: (1) integration (i.e., homogenous values within the organization), (2) differentiation (i.e., competing and contrasting values within the organization), and (3) fragmentation (i.e., no consensus on existing values). Martin believed that multiple work meanings exist within the organization and referred to such distinctive meanings as "subcultures". Subcultures manifest from on-the-job functions, geographical separation of organizational units, and other characteristics such as age and gender of those who work for the organization (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2005; Martin, 1992). Thus, numerous levels of analysis ought to be considered when examining the organizational context, and in particular the values and beliefs that (in part) comprise any study of OC.

Given the broad conceptualization of OC, the divergent methodologies, and the varying nuances that underpin its study in sport (e.g., professional vs. amateur), the primary purpose of this research was to confirm the dimensions that characterize a shared system of experiences within the Canadian fitness industry, to determine the influence on job attitudes and behaviors. Secondly, we considered the idea of whether subcultures are evident based on geographical location, job function, and organizational type as these levels of analysis could highlight trace distinctions between employees, and organizational and industry mandates. To construct the cultural perspective taken in this study, the literature on OC was reviewed, notably highlighting the levels of analysis previously considered in a cross-section of cultural studies. In addition, we considered the concept of organizational climate because of its close ties to culture and the utility of the concept in this research.

## Literature Review

### Operationalizing the Organizational Culture Perspective

Over the years, OC has been defined in a variety of ways leading to an assortment of methods used to operationalize the construct (Martin, 2002). Early OC work by Smircich (1983) discussed culture as both a metaphor and a variable. The author noted that when treated as a variable, culture research aligns with a functionalist approach since it helps predict organizational outcomes. In contrast, the symbolic approach views culture as a lens for studying organizational life by examining such elements as rituals and the physical arrangement of space within the organization to infer meaning (Smircich, 1983). Martin (2002) noted that both approaches provide valuable information to describe organizational life and indicated that together, material and ideational aspects of culture are indeed quite salient.

Denison (1996) noted that OC is (in part) rooted in history, collectively held, and sufficiently complex to resist manipulation. Schein (1991) remarked that OC is

a system of collective knowledge whereby leadership is focused on instilling particular values to help guide member behavior. Verbeke et al. (1998) commented that "... organizational culture is a system of shared norms and behaviours that are learned by the members of the organization" (p. 313). Although many interpretations and definitions exist to describe OC (some are also quite similar to climate research; Denison, 1996) the most sweeping commonalities of OC are shared beliefs and values that provide meaning for people working in an organization (Martin, 2002).

Research on OC has been undertaken on many analysis levels. For example at the company artifact level (e.g., physical space, tangible items, organizational stories, etc.), some have shown that such elements work to reinforce and indicate certain organizational values (Rafaelli & Pratt, 2006). Take for instance Strati (2006), who remarked that "... physical and tangible objects are not static, immutable, and determinable once and for all" (p. 23). As well, Bitner (1992) noted that the built (or constructed) physical environment of an organization may affect employees and consumers, particularly in service-type organizations. Wilson (2000) argued that visual aspects of the organization represent espoused values but not necessarily the underlying values and assumptions of employees. And Ravasi and Schultz (2006) maintained that understanding OC is central to understanding identities and noted that collective history, organizational symbols, and consolidated practices provide people with a sense of what their organization is really about.

Although artifacts can be symbolic of how things are within an organization, the study of shared values and beliefs that guide employee action and define appropriate behavior, often lie deeper within the organization (Schein, 1991). Such assumptions are expressed and manifested in a variety of formal and informal organizational practices which are verbal and nonverbal, visible, and tangible (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2008). While artifacts can often (and quite easily) be changed within an organization, mental assumptions and values the employees hold are more stable and therefore more difficult to alter (McShane & Steen, 2009). The assessment of values often requires the use of questionnaires to determine their influence on organizational outcomes. This method provides a particular advantage because findings are easy to replicate and provide the organization with the ability to compare data across time and assess the impact of values on the organization (Ashkanasy et al., 2000).

Irrespective of the various ways of studying OC (e.g., observation or survey), the underpinning idea is that OC is a phenomenon that affects employees and accordingly—organizational operations. Chuang and Sackett (2005) argued that knowledge of what is valued within an organization assists management in hiring employees with a stronger person-organization fit (see also O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991). Cable and colleagues (2000) suggested that new applicants' organizational beliefs were related to several preinterview information sources

that recruiters can manage. Later, Hassan (2007) found that several human resource practices (e.g., training and performance evaluation) were positively associated with how employees perceived core values of the organization, and Taormina (2009) noted that socialization (within the organization) links employee needs to OC. In addition, Shirley (2009) remarked that by emphasizing the importance of the definitive core values, organizations can improve the working atmosphere. For example, Ravasi and Schultz (2006) findings' "... provide evidence of a dynamic relationship between organizational culture, identity, and image that, so far, has been suggested only at a theoretical level, but never systematically ground in empirical data" (p. 433). As well, Silverthorne (2004) demonstrated that OC and person-organization fit impact job satisfaction, while others have noted the important role shared values play in employee behavioral intentions such as obtaining higher retention figures (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Sheridan, 1992) and increasing employee productivity (Denison, 1990).

### Organizational Culture and Permeable Boundaries

When studying an organization's culture, the researcher must be aware of boundaries that could "... create an inside and an outside" (Martin, 2002, p. 316), and whether such boundaries are defined by an etic researcher or by participants in the culture within an emic study. Defining organizational boundaries is intended to create simplicity to study cultures within organizational life, although such boundaries might actually oversimplify the organizational reality. Many agree that organizations do not act in isolation to their environment (Danisman et al., 2006; Zakus & Skinner, 2008) and the formation of boundaries serves as a way to address any trace distinctions between groups and explain organizational phenomenon (Martin, 2002). For example, the idea that organizations within a given industry face similar external pressures may explain why organizations operate as they do (e.g., the North American collegiate sport model). The external environment has also been shown to influence the formation and adoption of organizational values and beliefs due to institutional pressures (e.g., Lee & Yu, 2004; Leiter, 2005; Zakus & Skinner, 2008), highlighting the permeable boundaries of organizational life and illustrating one reason why the culture and climate paradigm war persists.

Some organizational theorists have also argued that a shared or homogenous organizational culture is idealistic and rare (e.g., Martin, 2002). This assertion suggests that it is more common to find shared values and beliefs within the boundaries of organizational subcultures than within the entire organization (Martin, 2002). This perspective means that group members' values and beliefs help to develop close ties due to several different potential factors (e.g., job function, demographics, etc.) that may differ from the dominant cultural values espoused at the organizational level (Martin, 2002). Danisman et al. (2006) bolstered this assertion noting that prior research on

organizational subcultures underlines that occupational (or functional) groups share common assumptions and values about their work. As a result, "... occupationally or functionally based subcultures that cut across organizations in a field emerge and develop" (p. 314). Interestingly, Martin (2002) noted that "... cultural members may believe that their organization's culture is unique, but often what is believed to be unique to a particular context is found elsewhere as well" (p. 63). Further, Lee and Yu (2004) contended that organizations can possess distinct cultural profiles (e.g., artifacts, mission and vision statements, etc.) and there is likely a greater variation across industry sectors than within. These contentions are similar to DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) postulation that organizations operating in the same environment will develop similar tendencies since they face comparable pressures to legitimize and survive.

While the idea that organizational (or industry) members think and act alike and share common understandings of values and beliefs may be idealistic, it is likely however that individuals, groups, and organizations differ with respect to the intensity of certain values that describe "how things are" within organizational life (or even the nature of those values themselves). Sport management research has shown that subcultures occur as a result of a number of different factors including functional work groups (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2005) and other similar characteristics (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). Indeed, sport organizations (e.g., equipment manufacturers, suppliers, private clubs, etc.); multi- and single-sport event organizers (e.g., Pan American Games, FIFA World Cup, etc.); are potential hotbeds for exposing subcultures within the vertical and horizontal management structure.

In sport management, OC theory has been explored in collegiate sport departments (e.g., Southall, 2001), amateur sport organizations (e.g., Smith & Shilbury, 2004), and fitness organizations (e.g., Weese, 2005). In the aggregate, this work has shown that culture is an important theory and management principle to comprehend yet further work is needed to formally advance our understanding of the topic. Given the possible subculture permutations (and based on the previously outlined work), we argue that a macro-industry perspective is of interest in examining variations according to horizontal and vertical lines and specific mandates (e.g., nonprofit, profit sector).

### The Canadian Fitness Industry

Despite tumultuous economic times, the fitness industry has shown positive growth. Approximately 16% of Canadians are fitness club members with similar numbers affirmed in the United States (see McNeil, 2006; Mintel International Group, 2006). In addition to strong membership numbers, many fitness organizations offer employment related to physical activity (e.g., fitness instructing, personal training, yoga, etc.) and other ancillary services (e.g., nutrition counseling, proshop, tanning, massage, etc.) that signal the need for both skilled and unskilled labor to support organizational operations.

Further, many fitness organizations are now open 24-hr which require staff availability and flexibility to meet increasing member demands. Since the fitness industry is by nature a "service-type" industry, there is a heavy focus on service quality and the factors deemed important to the client-member relationship. Concomitantly, staff retention issues continue to plague many organizations and remain an ever-present concern for senior management (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2007). Chelladurai (2005) commented on the important connection of the fitness industry to sport-management research and remarked that coordinating human and material resources to produce and exchange services is a noteworthy contribution to the body of knowledge. More importantly, we know that sport-management research is both a novel and distinct field of research. And since sport possesses some distinct characteristics from those found in mainstream business, the field requires a unique set of work related to theory. Much the way that marketing teaches us that sport is intangible, perishable, fleeting, and inculcates loyalty, OC research in sport is a bit different than other bodies of work. For example (and according to Chelladurai's typology), fitness organizations are sport-participant services that offer space where people meet their fitness needs through activities designed for healing, restoration, and skill advancement. Plausibly, research on the fitness industry can provide insight into the broader sport-management arena and in particular areas where "service" is a priority.

## Method

The aims of this research were threefold. First, we sought to confirm the factor structure of the Cultural Index for Fitness Organizations (CIFO) instrument. The CIFO represents a cultural perspective which was developed through qualitative research to derive the key values according to fitness leaders and senior staff members (see MacIntosh & Doherty, 2008), and later was tested using exploratory factor analysis with a cross section of fitness industry staff (see MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010). Second, we examined a model which predicted that this cultural perspective will influence job satisfaction and intention to leave a fitness organization. Third, was to explore the concept of subcultures within the fitness industry based on job function, geographic location, and organizational type. To achieve these connected purposes, a survey methodology was employed and fitness organization employees were sampled from three different urban cities in Canada during a fitness conference and tradeshow.

### Study Population and Participant Recruitment

Since the fitness industry in Canada is both large and diverse, and the interest of the study was to examine the possibility of subcultures based on geographic location, job function and organizational type, three of Canada's largest urban centers were chosen as data collection sites

(i.e., Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal). In Canada, the largest concentrations of fitness staff gather in these cities annually for a national fitness conference organized by the Canadian Fitness Professionals. Based on conference records, it was estimated that approximately 300 delegates would attend the Vancouver conference, 700 in Montreal, and 4000 in Toronto. At each site, the researchers were present at a booth adjacent to the conference registration desk where recruitment took place and the questionnaires were administered. Participants were made aware of the research through a sign which read: "Research Study on the Canadian Fitness Industry". When approaching the booth, the potential respondents were informed of the research through a neutrally worded script. If they agreed to participate (and met the criterion of working in the Canadian fitness industry) the individual was then provided with a "research information" letter, a consent form, and a questionnaire to complete.

### Instrumentation

The questionnaire consisted of 39 items contained in 8 dimensions. The member-checked dimensions included: (1) staff competency (e.g., credentials, knowledge, positive attitude; 9 items), (2) atmosphere (e.g., club is welcoming, upbeat, fun; 7 items), (3) connectedness (e.g., sense of affiliation, belonging; 5 items), (4) formalization (e.g., policies, procedures, standards; 5 items), (5) sales (e.g., sales emphasized and rewarded; 4 items), (6) service-equipment (e.g., variety, quality, availability; 3 items), (7) service-programs (e.g., current, innovative, varied; 3 items), and (8) organizational presence (e.g., history, positive image; 3 items). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the multiple items describing "how things are" within their fitness organization on a 7 point Likert-type scale anchored from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree".

In addition to the posited dimensions, the questionnaire contained three items that measured intention to leave (e.g., "how often have you felt like quitting your job", anchored from 1 = "never" to 7 = "often"; MacIntosh & Doherty, 2005) and three items that measured job satisfaction (e.g., "in general, I don't like my job" anchored from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree"; Cammann, et al., 1979). Participants were also asked to indicate what type of fitness organization they worked for (i.e., profit, nonprofit, fitness chain, or independent), their position (e.g., manager, fitness instructor, personal trainer, etc.), and to provide their demographic information (i.e., gender, age range, education, etc.).

### Analytic Technique

To confirm the factor structure of the CIFO, the items and factors were prespecified based on previous research (see MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010) and then entered into the AMOS graphics. To assess the fit of the measurement model, we followed the commonly established two-step procedure (Hoyle & Panter, 1995). In the first step, a

CFA was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the model and the discriminant validity of individual constructs. In the second step, a structural equation model (SEM) was examined to estimate path coefficients between the instrument and the outcomes of satisfaction and intention to leave. SEM was particularly suitable because it allowed simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships between latent constructs while accounting for measurement error and maximizing the variance explained in the latent and endogenous variables. To test the overall fit,  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), Nonnormed fit index (NNFI), comparative fit index (CFI) were used. Last, a multifactor 3-way analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to explore subcultures according to geographical location, organizational type, and job function. Pillai-Bartlett trace was used because this omnibus test is the most robust to violations of assumptions when the sample sizes are relatively equal (Field, 2009).

## Results

Of the 635 questionnaires distributed in the three urban centers in Canada, 425 were distributed in Toronto ( $n = 278$ ; 65.4%), 110 were distributed in Montreal ( $n = 85$ ; 77.3%) and 100 in Vancouver ( $n = 75$ ; 75.0%), which yielded 438 complete and usable questionnaires (i.e., 69% overall response rate).

The descriptive analysis showed that 22.8% ( $n = 100$ ) were male, 76.7% ( $n = 336$ ) were female, and the age of the participants ranged from 18 to 70 years ( $M = 37.6$ ;  $SD = 10.70$ ). In terms of organization type, 50 (11.4%) indicated working within a women's only club, 308 (70.3%) within a coed club, 76 (17.4%) within a hybrid club (e.g., facility housed a separate women's only area as well as a coed area). Further, 144 (32.9%) indicated working within a nonprofit organization, 268 (61.2%) within a for-profit organization, 201 (45.9%) worked for a fitness chain, and 158 (36.1%) worked for an independent fitness outfit. In terms of job function, 93 (21.2%) worked in management, 119 (27.2%) were personal trainers, 173 (39.5%) were fitness instructors, 18 (4.1%) worked in customer service, 8 (1.8%) were in sales, and 27 (6.1%) classified themselves as "other".

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The first step of the analyses consisted of constructing a multifactor measurement model by treating all variables as latent constructs. Using maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) to define the model, the goodness-of-fit indices revealed that the eight-factor 39-item measurement model fit the data reasonably well and the chi-square for the preliminary model was significant ( $\chi^2/df = 3.28$ ). According to Hu and Bentler (1999), the RMSEA indicated a reasonable fit and the SRMR was also within the range of acceptable fit ( $\leq .10$ ; Kline, 2005). However, the CFI and NNFI were lower than the suggested cut point

(> .90; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). The results are provided in Table 1. The reliability measures of the prelude model including average variance extracted (AVE), construct reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha were above the suggested values but the model fit indices signified an overall lack of fit to the data, and a need for model respecification.

During the respecification phase, it was apparent that lack of model fit was attributed to items from the original scale. The most notable of which, was the poor performance of the *organizational presence* dimension. While the factor loadings of this dimension were below the suggested cutoff, the conceptual construction of these items was questionable. In a previous study (see MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010), this was the only factor in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) that failed to meet the appropriate internal consistency level ( $\alpha = .68$ ). Based on this information and the resultant low factor loadings, organizational presence was not subjected to further analyses. Additional scale refinement followed the suggestions of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), who maintained that factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ) should be equal to or greater than .70 to share a high proportion of common variance. Of the remaining 36 items, two with a lambda ( $\lambda$ ) value of lower than .70 were removed from the model.

Upon examination of the modification indices for the respecified model, we noted some inflated residual values (delta,  $\delta$ ) and correlations with other items as well. To evaluate and further modify the model, all of the modification indices greater than five were reviewed. The item, "the club is a fun place to work out", under *atmosphere* had the highest residual value ( $\delta$ ) and a poor modification index with the other items. In addition to this item, four other items were removed after careful consideration of both statistical and theoretical justifications. Consequently, a 7-factor model with 29 items resulted in a better fit to the data ( $\chi^2/df = 2.38$ ). The RMSEA (CI = .061  $\rightarrow$  .071), SRMR, and the additional fit indices were all in the acceptable range for a good fitting model (see Table 1).

Next, we successively tested the refined measurement model for evidence of convergent and discriminant validity. First, convergent validity is derived from (a) the significant size of the factor loadings (average  $\lambda = .76$ ), (b) composite reliabilities for each of the constructs exceeding .80, and (c) AVE for each construct exceeding .50 (all of which were confirmed). While the reliability measures of the preliminary model already showed high internal consistency, the final confirmed model had higher Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ), CR, and AVE. Alpha reliability coefficients and CR coefficients were above the acceptable

criterion (see Lance, Butts, & Michels, 2006). The  $t$  values for all variables ranged from 13.75 to 19.69 at the .001 significance level. The results suggested that each item significantly contributed to its underlying construct (see Tables 2 and 3) and the phi coefficients ( $\Phi$ ), measuring interfactor correlations among the latent variables, revealed a high correlation between factors.

One challenge with developing a multidimensional scale is establishing discriminant validity. This is a direct result of having strong relationships between the dimensions contained in the scale. Therefore, we conducted one additional test to ensure that our constructs were acting independently. Following Fornell and Larcker (1981), we first calculated the AVE by the items in the model. According to Fornell and Larcker, should the value of a scale's average variance exceed its correlation with other variables, evidence of discriminant validity is present. Our data suggest this condition was met indicating that the scale dimensions were distinct from one another. These values are presented along the diagonal of Table 4, which provides correlations and descriptive statistics for the variables in the model.

## Structural Equation Modeling

To evaluate the refined model, *SEM* was used because it allowed us to focus on conceptual connections among the latent factors. The covariance matrix was analyzed via maximum likelihood with AMOS graphics. This approach enabled the examination of relationships among the nine study variables simultaneously, extracting the relative impact of each on the proposed model. It also allowed us to account for the error associated with the variables. Scale intercorrelations reported in Table 4 confirmed the significant relationships between the dimensions and job satisfaction and intention to leave. Confirmation of these relationships was necessary to proceed with testing of the model. The initial model adequately fit the data ( $\chi^2/df = 2.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = .063, SRMR = .081, CFI = .90, NNFI = .90). The results however, indicated some nonsignificant path coefficients which were the basis for model trimming.

With the elimination of the nonsignificant observed indicator (i.e., sales), the second model yielded an improved fit ( $\chi^2/df = 2.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = .060, SRMR = .051, CFI = .92, NNFI = .92). A series of mediation tests (Hair et al., 2005) provided support for the effects shown in Figure 1. Based on the literature, we hypothesized that OC would be mediated (at least partially) by satisfaction. The *SEM* results provide support

**Table 1** Confirmatory Factor Analysis Comparisons

Models	$\chi^2(df)$	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNFI
1: Eight Factor Model <sup>a</sup>	2212.0 (674)*	.072	.081	.881	.874
2: Seven Factor Model <sup>a</sup>	1041.9 (436)**	.056	.041	.935	.926

Note. <sup>a</sup> Satisfaction and Intent to Leave included, Sales excluded

\* $p < .01$ ; \*\* $p < .001$

**Table 2 Measurement Model Results & Reliability Statistics (standardized estimates)**

Factors and Items	Factor Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Staff Competencies<sup>a</sup></b>		.59	.89
Staff have proper credentials to deliver health/fitness information	.71		
Staff take responsibility for their actions	.78		
Staff are hard working and conscientious about their job	.84		
Staff do what they say they will do	.73		
Staff go above and beyond what is expected of them	.80		
Staff are good fitness role models for members	.74		
<b>Atmosphere<sup>a</sup></b>		.62	.88
The club is welcoming	.70		
Member success (i.e., reaching goals) is very important to the club	.75		
Staff display positive and upbeat energy	.86		
The club is a fun place to work	.75		
The club staff are friendly	.79		
<b>Connectedness<sup>a</sup></b>		.71	.84
The club recognizes members who have been there a long time	.86		
Staff have a strong sense of belonging with the club	.80		
Staff have a strong affiliation with the club	.70		
Members have a strong sense of belonging with the club	.88		
<b>Formalization<sup>a</sup></b>		.70	.89
The club has many policies and procedures for staff to follow	.80		
The club has strict grooming standards for staff	.77		
The club has many staff training procedures to follow	.71		
The club has strict dress standards for staff	.75		
The club has many rules and regulations for staff to follow	.85		
<b>Sales<sup>a</sup></b>		.69	.84
Sales are a major focus of the club	.88		
Sales staff are rewarded for their performance	.70		
The club emphasizes sales	.97		
<b>Service-Equipment<sup>a</sup></b>		.79	.90
The club has a good variety of equipment	.90		
The club has good availability of equipment	.86		
The club has good quality equipment	.83		
<b>Service-Programs<sup>a</sup></b>		.73	.88
The club has up to date fitness programs	.89		
The club keeps things fresh and innovative for members	.88		
The club has a good variety of fitness programs	.77		
<b>Satisfaction<sup>a</sup></b>		.70	.83
All in all, I am satisfied with my job	.88		
In general, I don't like my job	.92		
In general, I like working here	.60		
<b>Intention to Leave</b>			
How often have you felt like quitting your job <sup>b</sup>	.79	.64	.81
How often have you felt like leaving your club/organization <sup>b</sup>	.81		
How long do you think you will stay with your club/organization <sup>c</sup>	.70		

Note.  $\chi^2/df=2.390$ , RMSEA=.056, SRMR=.041, NNFI=.93, CFI=.94

<sup>a</sup> 1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree; <sup>b</sup> 1 = Never; 7 = Often; <sup>c</sup> 1 = Will Leave Very Soon; 7 = Will Stay Forever

**Table 3 Means, Standards Deviations, & Internal Consistency Measures**

<b>Factors and Items</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range of inter-item correlation</b>	<b>Item-to- total score</b>
<i><b>Staff Competencies</b></i>				
Staff have proper credentials to deliver health/fitness information	5.69	1.33	.472–.548	.617
Staff take responsibility for their actions	5.30	1.31	.560–.652	.737
Staff are hard working and conscientious about their job	5.45	1.23	.553–.688	.780
Staff do what they say they will do	5.29	1.28	.472–.616	.691
Staff go above and beyond what is expected of them	5.19	1.38	.477–.688	.738
Staff are good fitness role models for members	5.51	1.36	.518–.590	.685
<i><b>Atmosphere</b></i>				
The club is welcoming	5.68	1.26	.518–.637	.693
Member success (i.e., reaching goals) is very important to the club	5.47	1.48	.498–.678	.662
Staff display positive and upbeat energy	5.66	1.29	.617–.693	.790
The club is a fun place to work	5.56	1.31	.498–.637	.679
The club staff are friendly	5.85	1.26	.545–.639	.723
<i><b>Connectedness</b></i>				
The club recognizes members who have been there a long time	4.73	1.75	.447–.601	.640
Staff have a strong sense of belonging with the club	5.10	1.49	.550–.711	.751
Staff have a strong affiliation with the club	4.96	1.49	.447–.711	.647
Members have a strong sense of belonging with the club	4.85	1.59	.509–.586	.648
<i><b>Formalization</b></i>				
The club has many policies and procedures for staff to follow	5.32	1.47	.545–.729	.730
The club has strict grooming standards for staff	4.84	1.56	.532–.715	.729
The club has many staff training procedures to follow	5.01	1.51	.532–.656	.681
The club has strict dress standards for staff	4.97	1.58	.545–.715	.709
The club has many rules and regulations for staff to follow	5.12	1.41	.591–.729	.775
<i><b>Sales</b></i>				
Sales are a major focus of the club	4.80	1.92	.496–.850	.771
Sales staff are rewarded for their performance	4.38	1.78	.496–.564	.552
The club emphasizes sales	4.66	1.98	.564–.850	.824
<i><b>Service-Equipment</b></i>				
The club has a good variety of equipment	5.61	1.41	.747–.781	.831
The club has good availability of equipment	5.41	1.43	.691–.781	.788
The club has good quality equipment	5.66	1.39	.691–.747	.762
<i><b>Service-Programs</b></i>				
The club has up to date fitness programs	5.56	1.48	.689–.791	.817
The club keeps things fresh and innovative for members	5.35	1.49	.652–.791	.788
The club has a good variety of fitness programs	5.58	1.36	.652–.689	.708
<i><b>Satisfaction</b></i>				
All in all, I am satisfied with my job	5.29	1.74	.482–.819	.747
In general, I don't like my job	5.16	1.71	.558–.819	.808
In general, I like working here	4.85	1.54	.482–.558	.545
<i><b>Intention to Leave</b></i>				
How often have you felt like quitting your job	5.46	1.40	.591–.635	.701
How often have you felt like leaving your club/organization	5.89	1.46	.527–.591	.618
How long do you think you will stay with your club/organization	5.55	1.46	.527–.635	.650

**Table 4 Means, Standard Deviations, & Correlations Among Study Measures**

Construct	Mean	SD	Correlation Matrix									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1. Staff Competency	5.40	1.06	<i>.77</i>									
2. Atmosphere	5.64	1.08	.605**	<i>.78</i>								
3. Connectedness	4.91	1.30	.673**	.648**	<i>.84</i>							
4. Formalization	5.05	1.25	.571**	.549**	.585**	<i>.84</i>						
5. Sales	4.61	1.65	-.072**	.059**	.048**	.263**	<i>.83</i>					
6. Service-Equipment	5.55	1.28	.564**	.594**	.525**	.465**	.096**	<i>.88</i>				
7. Service-Programs	5.40	1.06	.626**	.655**	.696**	.529**	.166**	.755**	<i>.85</i>			
8. Intention to Leave	5.63	1.43	.435**	.406**	.444**	.171**	-.093**	.260**	.397**	<i>1.00</i>		
9. Satisfaction	5.62	1.23	.537**	.558**	.508**	.269**	-.057**	.299**	.441**	.646**	<i>1.00</i>	

*Note.* The values on the diagonal in italic are square roots of the average variance explained. This value must be larger than a focal variable's zero-order correlations in the same row and column to pass Fornell and Larcker's (1981) discriminate validity test.

\*\* $p < .001$

for this prediction. The results indicated that both the fully and partially mediated models fit the data well. A chi-square difference test indicated no difference between models ( $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 1.63, p > .05$ ). However, evidence of full mediation exists because an alternative model representing the partial influence of the dimensions on intention to leave slightly decreased the fit. As well, since the fully mediated model was the more parsimonious, we interpreted that model. In addition and notwithstanding the strong and positive direct effects on satisfaction, there was also a significant and positive indirect effect on intention to leave ( $\beta = .409, p < .001$ ).

It was also of interest to explore whether there were differences among the scale dimensions based on possible subcultural categories identified a priori, based on geographical location, organizational type, and job function. Means and standard deviations of these dimensions are reported in Table 5.

### Subculture Analysis

Each of the subcultures (i.e., independent variables) pertaining to geographic location (i.e., Vancouver, Montreal, or Toronto), organizational type (i.e., nonprofit and profit organizations), and job function (e.g., management, personal trainer, sales staff, etc.) were analyzed using a 3-way MANOVA to evaluate their influence on the dimensions. This analysis provided univariate follow-up tests for the significant multivariate findings and post hoc tests were also performed to determine whether the means significantly differed. The number of subjects in each of the subgroups varied somewhat because of the patterns of missing data and the differences that existed among location, organizational type, and job function. In addition, since there were differences in the original group sizes for geographic location greater than a ratio of 1:1.5, the Toronto group was randomly reduced to 100 respondents to help achieve multivariate normality

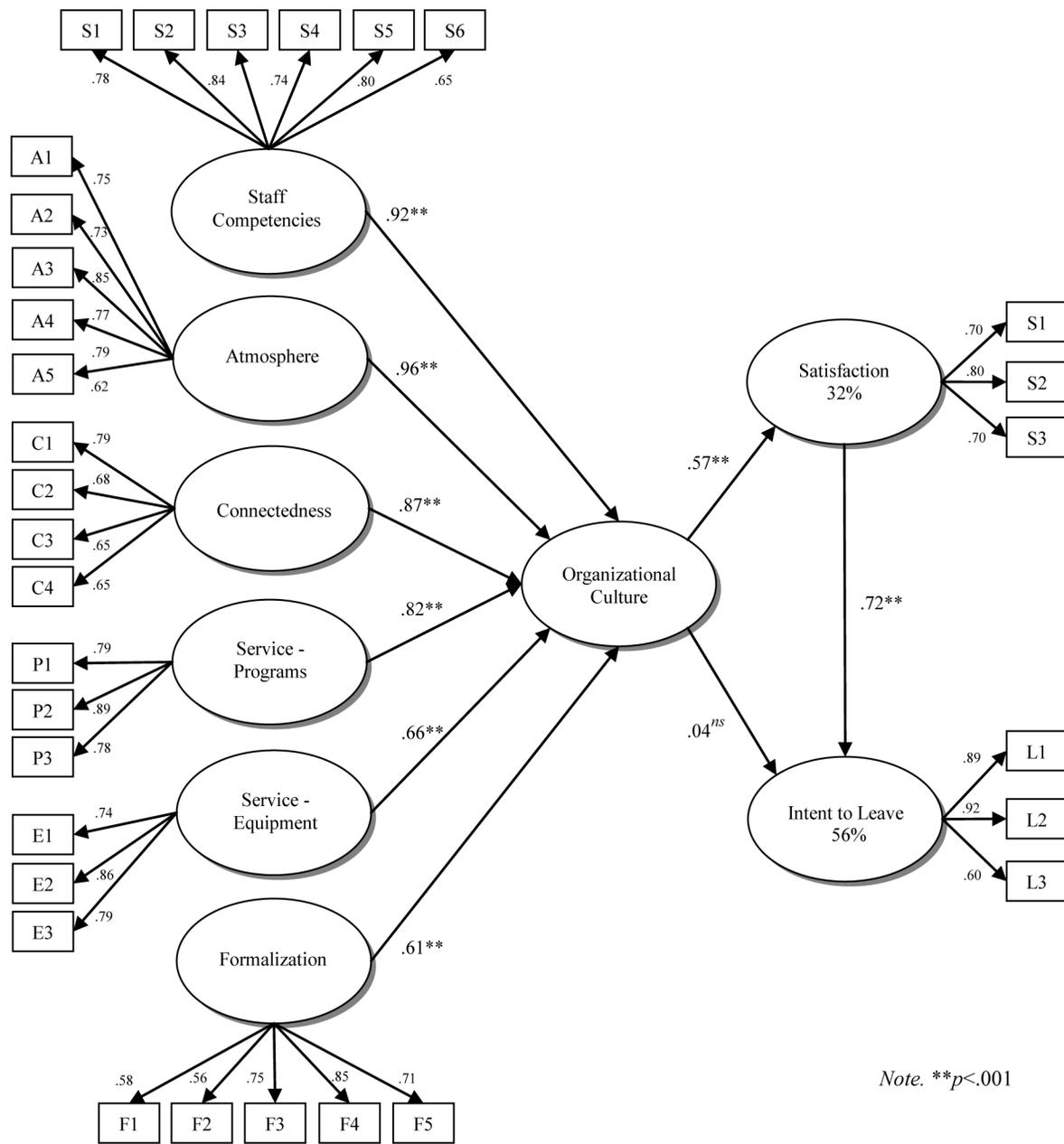
(Field, 2009). Further, the degrees of freedom in the error terms for each of the univariate effects was greater than 20 ( $df_{error} = 265$ ) thereby helping to achieve multivariate normality.

A significant multivariate effect was found for geographical location (Pillai's Trace = .076;  $F = 1.774, p < .05$ ), explaining 3.8% of the variability. The univariate tests of significance for geographic location showed a significant effect on *service programs* ( $F = 1.865, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$ ). Tukey's post hoc tests demonstrated that respondents in Toronto placed a greater emphasis than the other locations on this value. No significant effects were found for the other dimensions.

A significant multivariate effect was also found for organizational type (Pillai's Trace = .068;  $F = 1.289, p < .05$ ), explaining 1.3% of the variability. Univariate tests of significance demonstrated a significant effect of the dimension of *sales* ( $F = 2.479, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$ ). Tukey's post hoc test showed significant differences with the value of *sales* in profit oriented organizations being far greater than respondents from nonprofit organizations. No other differences were found with respect to organizational type.

A final significant multivariate effect was found for job function (Pillai's Trace = .248;  $F = 1.980, p < .001$ ), explaining 7.7% of the variability. Univariate tests of significance demonstrated a significant effect for *formalization* ( $F = 2.902, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$ ) and *service-programs* ( $F = 2.532, p < .05, \eta^2 = .05$ ). Post hoc results showed significant differences between personal trainers and managers for *formalization* and for *service program*, significant differences existed between fitness instructors and managers. No other differences or significant interaction effects between subcultures were found (see Table 5).

One additional separate MANOVA was also performed to evaluate the differences of organizations that are considered fitness chains and those considered independent fitness organizations. A significant multivariate



Note. \*\* $p < .001$

Figure 1 — Structural Equation Model

effect was found (Pillai's Trace = .203;  $F = 12.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with 22% of the variability accounted for by organizational type in this analysis. Univariate tests of significance demonstrated a significant effect for the dimension of *formalization* ( $\eta^2 = .04$ ). Post hoc testing could not be performed with only two groups.

### Discussion

One of the main thrusts of this study was to confirm the scale dimensions through a CFA with fitness industry personnel to further understand the influence on job

satisfaction and intention to leave. The study confirmed several dimensions and their effect on employee attitudes and behaviors while allowing for the examination of subcultures in the Canadian fitness industry. This analytical technique shed new light on the factors and their subsequent influence on employees. The results strongly supported the seven-factor scale based on a CFA and a SEM. These findings buttress the main contention that “key values” do indeed matter in organizational life—specifically among Canadian fitness employees. The results underscored the relevance that specific dimensions have on job satisfaction (in general) and the influence

**Table 5 Means and Standard Deviations Based on Organizational Types, Job Function, and Location**

	Staff Comp.	Atmosphere	Connect.	Formal.	Sales	Serv-equip.	Serv-pro.
<i>Organizational Type</i>							
For-profit	5.37 (1.10)	5.66 (1.36)	4.94 (1.36)	5.09 (1.28)	5.20 (1.41)	5.58 (1.26)	5.56 (1.28)
Nonprofit	5.49 (.98)	5.61 (1.06)	4.82 (1.22)	5.01 (1.20)	3.46 (1.48)	5.54 (1.33)	5.36 (1.36)
Fitness Chain	5.21 (1.04)	5.56 (1.05)	4.86 (1.27)	5.27 (1.15)	5.38 (1.45)	5.62 (1.19)	5.55 (1.26)
Independent	5.56 (1.10)	5.72 (1.16)	5.02 (1.36)	4.86 (1.31)	4.18 (1.54)	5.55 (1.35)	5.55 (1.31)
<i>Job Function</i>							
Management	5.50 (1.09)	5.91 (.99)	5.03 (1.31)	5.99 (1.27)	4.61 (1.78)	5.64 (1.26)	5.73 (1.20)
Pers. Trainer	5.23 (1.10)	5.43 (1.20)	4.79 (1.33)	4.96 (1.26)	4.74 (1.54)	5.32 (1.42)	5.15 (1.45)
Fit. Instructor	5.51 (1.02)	5.68 (1.00)	4.89 (1.30)	5.08 (1.29)	4.53 (1.67)	5.67 (1.23)	5.64 (1.20)
<i>Geographic Location</i>							
Vancouver	5.35 (.99)	5.58 (1.07)	4.63 (1.45)	4.78 (1.23)	4.67 (1.53)	5.56 (1.29)	5.32 (1.15)
Toronto	5.51 (.99)	5.72 (1.01)	5.04 (1.24)	5.15 (1.20)	4.65 (1.72)	5.57 (1.26)	5.55 (1.29)
Montreal	5.13 (1.31)	5.46 (1.31)	4.75 (1.29)	4.97 (1.39)	4.45 (1.55)	5.51 (1.38)	5.48 (1.46)

job satisfaction has on a person's intention to leave the organization (in particular). Specifically, the scale dimensions significantly influenced job satisfaction by directly explaining 32% of the variance and by indirectly (through job satisfaction) explaining 56% of the variance on intention to leave. Thus, the adopted cultural perspective was in fact important in the fitness industry because of its significance on whether employees will act in a "transient" manner.

Research has shown that job satisfaction is one of the most powerful predictors of why people chose to leave their organization (Chelladurai & Ogasawara, 2003). The results of this study buttress this contention and extend the literature to reveal other factors associated with job satisfaction. It was somewhat interesting to note that while previous research (see Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004; MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010) has shown direct and indirect influences of OC on intention to leave, we found a nonsignificant direct association between these variables. It may be that intention to leave the organization can be more decisively explained by other organizational behavior topics (e.g., job motivation or organizational commitment).

To understand why culture may not be consistently (or directly) predictive of turnover intentions, some have suggested that satisfaction levels might mediate the relationship (Egan et al., 2004). Our results revealed that the cultural dimensions had a significant and positive influence on job satisfaction, supporting the work of Silverthorne (2004). In addition, this study demonstrated that the scale dimensions had an indirect impact on employees' turnover intention mediated by job satisfaction. These findings were somewhat surprising given that intention to leave manifested positively in this relationship. This positive relationship points to a unique proposition of employment in the fitness industry.

That is, that turnover (in this context at least) may be attributed to the transient nature of jobs in this particular industry. For example, although a fitness employee may be satisfied with their position, our results illustrate that the employee may still elect to leave the organization, irrespective of satisfaction level. Purportedly then, other factors may assist in explaining turnover issues for fitness organizations (e.g., job succession, future orientation, compensation, etc.). This finding obviously warrants future research and we feel that our results can aid in the design of such studies. Regardless, this study nonetheless confirmed that the scale dimensions and subsequent cultural perspective is important to Canadian fitness employees in that the associated measures were both reliable and internally valid and significantly influenced job attitudes and behaviors.

The results also suggested that subcultures based on geographic location modestly explained the respondents' perceptions of the scale dimensions. Specifically, *service programs* were higher in Toronto than in Montreal producing a significant difference among respondents from these cities. This may point to differences in perceptions regarding how employees in each city perceive the specific programs offered by their respective organization. It is noteworthy that this was the only difference, suggesting a relatively strong shared perception and a possible indication of imbedded isomorphic tendencies.

Another difference among the scale dimensions was that of *sales* as perceived by employees of profit oriented and nonprofit organizations. Perhaps this is a manifestation of the different mandates that exists between sectors (i.e., profit vs. nonprofit). This may signify a large degree of isomorphism within the fitness industry despite different mandates among the two sectors in accordance to the other dimensions measured in this study. For example, the for-profit structure is intended to benefit the

organizations owners, managers, and executives to bolster the collective “bottom line”, while nonprofit organizations exist to further an intended (societal) purpose (although profits are a necessary outcome). Given these divergent foci, the tangibility of business outcomes may be at play. In this case, nonprofit employees may perceive sales as a value somewhat divergent to the organization’s mandate. Conversely, for-profit employees may perceive sales as providing tangible benchmarks (e.g., market share, stock price, etc.). In line with this conjecture is the issue of profit—more specifically, how profits flow. In a for-profit organization the profits that are not reinvested in the organization are distributed to the owners as cash, which may then be forwarded to the employees to incentivize future work or reward work already performed (e.g., through annual evaluations and merit raises). In the case of a nonprofit organization the profits are used to provide goods or services to the group or groups the nonprofit was formed to help. This commentary suggests fitness business outcomes, coupled with the monetary incentive structure may have an impact on how sales are perceived in the organization. OC researchers would be well-served to investigate this finding in greater detail and differing contexts to see under what circumstances this finding does (or does not) hold.

Another interesting finding was the significant difference between fitness chains and independent fitness organization employees with respect to *formalization*. In particular, respondents from fitness chains indicated a greater emphasis on formalization (e.g., policies, procedures) than did employees working within independent organizations. This may be one way in which these types of organizations are distinguished among the industry, connoting subcultural differences in regards to “how things are”; which may add to an organization’s image. Further evidence of subcultures were found because of job function. Specifically, a significant difference was seen between management and personal trainers on *formalization*. This finding indicates (not surprisingly) that management placed a greater emphasis on policies, procedures, and standardization than did personal trainers. As well, both fitness instructors and managers placed a greater emphasis on *service-programs* than personal trainers. Collectively, these findings mirror those of MacIntosh and Doherty (2005) who suggested that subcultures exist based on job function within the organization hierarchy. In addition, we show that the differentiation perspective, noted by Martin (1992), is likely to develop based on occupational workgroups. Based on this information, personal trainers may also constitute a unique subculture, one which could be studied independently to understand high turnover among this particular job function.

The overall analysis demonstrated some isomorphic tendencies in the fitness industry regardless of organizational type. Perhaps this is not that surprising given that the industry in Canada is becoming more and more standardized and the principal philosophy of employees appear similar (i.e., the pursuit of healthier lifestyles as a basic assumption of working in the industry). Although the fitness industry is young in comparison with other

industry types in Canada (e.g., automotive, agricultural, professional ice-hockey etc.), the fight for legitimization appears to have caused organizations to adopt best practices; a survival tactic common in the general business community. Thus, replication of best practices and “ways of doing things” may indeed be predicated on isomorphic tendencies which were exemplified in this study.

Pragmatically, it may be difficult for job-seekers to differentiate among fitness organizations based on the specific dimensions since they are relatively similar across the industry (i.e., irrespective of the few differences already noted). This may present issues for fitness organizations with respect to employee retention, particularly since the employee may not identify strongly with the organization (at the outset) and instead identify more strongly with the job (e.g., tasks and attributes related to the delivery of health); an aspect arguably similar irrespective of the organization (e.g., personal training in one place is similar to another). Given the similarities among scale dimensions, it is not likely that the dimensions would contribute to sustainable competitive advantage in the fitness industry (although this can only be assessed in a longitudinal manner and was outside the scope of this study). It is most likely that without the shared strength and presence of certain values, that organizations in the fitness industry may have a greater difficulty in competing for skilled labor and retaining quality employees.

In terms of the study limitations, it should be noted that we do not claim to have captured all possible elements of OC, as by the very definition cultures evolve, are not static, and can change. Nor have we considered organizational artifacts and other symbolic aspects of culture and how they may differ between each type of organization or sector. Instead, through a more simplistic approach to the study of OC (quite similar to an organizational climate methodology), we analyzed certain values across sectors and within organizations. Although this cultural perspective has limitations, it nevertheless provides focused evidence of the similarities and differences within an industry that may be transposed to other sectors of sport (e.g., how professional and amateur sport bodies may differ). Thus, research (such as this) that investigates multiple-exposure effects and employee responses to organizational phenomenon would allow for the isolation of additional value-laden cues which may add to our findings. We believe that our results can (at least in part) assist in the design of such studies. Finally, while the dimensionality of the instrument was supported and the internal consistency measures were strong, we failed to establish construct (i.e., external or concurrent) validity for the model. Sound psychometric practice holds that the only way to show construct validity is to show that the measures correlate (as expected) with other separate and validated measures (as expected), and/or show that the measure predicts something in an expected way. In the current study this was not accomplished. Future researchers would be well-served to externally validate the constructs contained herein to provide further evidence of the scale’s external validity.

## Conclusion

The idea that values and beliefs can play a part in shaping organizational performance continues to be strengthened by both culture and climate research in sport. While our knowledge of how employee perceptions of the organization contribute to its overall effectiveness still remains ambiguous, by refining existing models a more concrete understanding could begin to formally crystallize. Although further discussions regarding the differences between climate and culture are necessary, and the philosophical debate regarding the appropriateness of measuring culture ensues (i.e., particularly regarding the discussion between culture and climate), future research should also consider examining sport specific OC from a cross-cultural perspective. As such, the idea that national cultures influence industry and organizational values remains an area in need of further exploration in sport management. As well, this approach would allow further testing of our “transient” assertion in a service sector such as the fitness industry. Further consideration should also be given to how organizational values change over time, particularly when considering environmental influences (e.g., economic, political, social, etc.) and other job related characteristics which impact the management of sport and its omnipresent permeable boundaries.

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