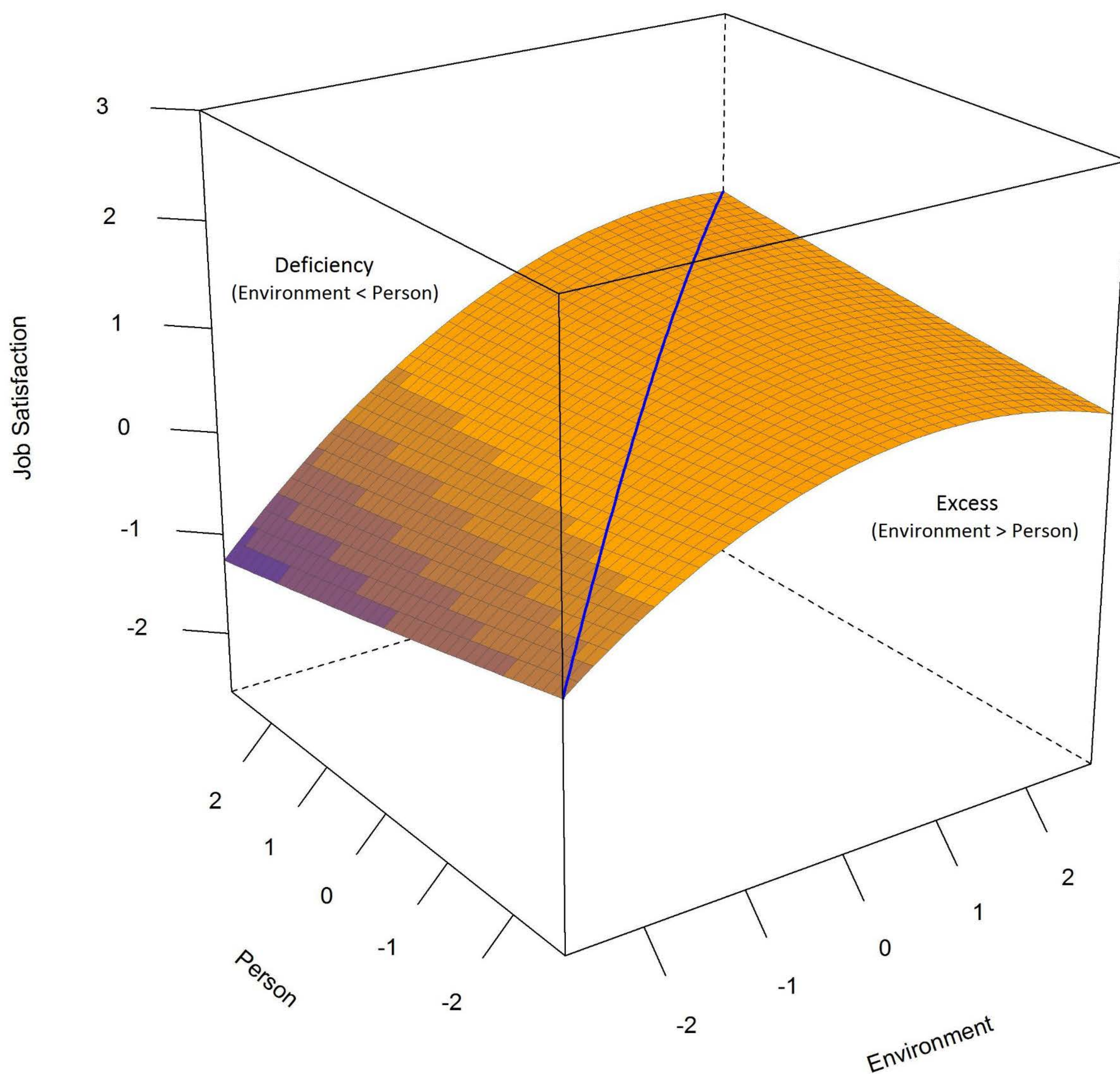


Misfit Asymmetry of Investigative Interest (Excess > Deficiency)



Person-Environment Misfit is not equal: Jobs Exceeding Individuals' Interest Preferences are more satisfying than Jobs Failing to Meet Them

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Spanning more than a century of study, vocational interest researchers have held that individuals will experience greater job satisfaction when their interests match the characteristics of their work environment than when they do not. Yet, meta-analyses have consistently failed to support that notion. Importantly, the individual studies underlying past meta-analyses measured fit by collapsing person and job scores together. Mathematically, this required job satisfaction to be the same whether jobs exceeded or failed to meet an individual's interest preferences. My image, in orange and blue, demonstrates why a century's worth of study failed to capture the fit – job satisfaction relationship. I used polynomial regression and response surface methodology to separate person and environment components (on the two horizontal axes) and then predict job satisfaction (plotted on the third, vertical, axis). The displayed interest is "Investigative," or research-oriented interest, and the image depicts misfit asymmetry, something past, two-dimensional studies were unable to find. As shown, job satisfaction is higher when jobs exceed individuals' preference for Investigative work (the right side of the plot) than when jobs fail to meet their interest preference (the left side). Such asymmetry illuminates a need for three-dimensional analyses when studying interest fit.