

The Match Between Recruiters' Perceptions of Organizational Climate and Personality of the Ideal Applicant for a Management Position

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The relationship between recruiters' perception of the ideal applicant for a managerial position and their perception of organizational climate was examined in real selection procedures. Recruiters ($n = 124$) from 83 organizations in three sectors of industry participated in this study. They assessed the ideal applicant for the vacant managerial position with personality attributes derived from the Abridged Big Five Circumplex (Hofstee *et al.* 1992). Furthermore, they described the existing organizational climate with 14 climate scales based on the Competing Values framework of Quinn (1988). Results indicate that recruiters' perceptions of goal oriented climate dimensions are related to the sector of industry. These perceptions influence the way in which recruiters perceive the ideal manager regarding conscientiousness and compliance. Recruiters' perceptions concerning other dimensions of organizational climate are not related to the sector of industry and the personality profile of the ideal manager. Homogeneity of personality in organizations will exist for only some personality attributes.

Personnel selection aims to identify those characteristics of people which are relevant for job success. Smith (1994) distinguished three domains of human characteristics that are relevant to performance: characteristics that are relevant to all work (universals), characteristics that are relevant to particular jobs or occupations (occupational) and characteristics which are relevant to the way a person relates to a particular work setting (relationals). The present study focuses mainly on the third domain, the 'relationals'. Relationals refer to characteristics which enable effective performance in particular settings. Similar jobs or occupations can vary widely according to their work setting because of differences in environmental characteristics. In order to predict future job performance it is important then to examine the match between characteristics of people and characteristics of the work setting. From studies on person-environment fit it is already known that people who fit the work setting are more satisfied and more committed compared to people who do not fit well (O'Reilly *et al.* 1991). However, within personnel selection much attention is paid to the correspondence between individual qualifications and job requirements and to the assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities of applicants. In real life selection procedures, assessment of these selection criteria is also

important. However, these qualifications are not always of overriding importance in the final selection decision. Rynes and Gerhart (1990) found that recruiters distinguished between suitable characteristics for the job and suitable characteristics for the organization. They assessed firm-specific employability of candidates which differed from evaluations of general job-related employability. The researchers concluded that selection practitioners are aware of the compatibility of applicant characteristics with organizational norms and values. Recruiters apparently compare applicant characteristics with organizational climate factors.

In the final phase of a selection procedure, candidates' personality is often the decisive factor for the choice between eligible candidates (Van Vianen and Willemsen, 1992). The personality factor then becomes the principal criterion for determining who, from among a pool of similarly-qualified applicants, actually receives a job offer. It can be assumed then that the assessment of firm-specific employability is mainly based on personality impressions. Previous studies have shown, however, that recruiters compare perceived personality of candidates with their own perception of the ideal applicant. Those candidates who were most similar to the ideal applicant were offered the job

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(Dalessio and Imada, 1984; Van Vianen and Willemsen, 1992). How do recruiters develop these ideal stereotypes? Given the research results about firm-specific selection, as we have discussed above, we assumed that recruiters' perceptions of the ideal applicant are related to their perceptions of organizational climate. We therefore examined relationships between recruiters' perception of the ideal applicant and their perceptions of organizational climate. Relationships were tested in selection procedures in which the vacant positions were comparable, i.e. all concerning vacancies for middle management jobs. The vacancies, however, differed with respect to sector of industry. Additionally, we tested whether recruiters' perceptions of organizational climate and ideal applicant were different for three sectors of industry. In the next paragraphs, we will explore the linkages between organizational climate and personality.

Organizational Climate

The concept of organizational climate is often confused with the concept of organizational culture. There is, however, a conceptual as well as a methodological difference between culture and climate. Culture refers to the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization (Schein, 1990). Schein (1990) advocates qualitative research methods for measuring organizational culture, such as ethnographic methods in combination with personal interviews and direct observation. Organizational climate refers to the values and artefacts which are the manifestations of organizational culture. Subjective data (perceptions of people), measured with survey instruments, are often used as the indicators for organizational climate. In order to measure climate above the individual level (i.e. at the group or organizational level), it is necessary to assess the inter-rater reliability of all of the individual perceptions. When inter-rater reliability is demonstrated, mean scores can be used as indicators of organizational climate at the organizational or group level.

What are the origins or antecedents of these shared climate perceptions? Joyce and Slocum (1990) considered the impact of the organization's strategic position and environment as a determinant of climate perceptions. They described how strategic context and environmental determinism impose constraints on structure, processes and control systems within organizations. The resulting structural differences across organizations yield different characteristics of organizational climate. Other researchers, however, noticed that companies with similar external environments can have

different climates (Schneider, 1987; Schein, 1985). They argued that organizational climate is mainly shaped by its founder, leaders and members. The attributes of people are considered as the fundamental determinants of organizational climate. This approach to organizational climate is well illustrated in the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model proposed by Schneider (1987). Three interrelated dynamic processes, attraction-selection-attrition, determine the type of people in an organization, which consequently defines the nature of the organization. People who have similar personalities will be attracted to a particular type of organization. Through the selection procedure, organizations choose people who share many common personal attributes. Further restriction of the types of persons in an organization takes place by turnover of people who do not fit the organization. According to Schneider *et al.* (1995), there is considerable empirical evidence that organizations will tend towards personality homogeneity of their employees.

Both explanations for existing organizational climate are tenable and do not exclude each other. Because of environmental determinism, it is likely that organizations with similar external environments share at least some aspects of organizational climate. However, in spite of these environmental constraints, organizations still have enough room for creating their own organizational climate. Which part of organizational climate originally is determined by the external environment and which part is mainly shaped by founders, leaders and members is not clear yet. It still can be argued, however, that the attraction-selection-attrition cycle operates in organizations. Given the existing organizational climate, specific personalities are attracted and selected by the organization. In order to examine how personality prototypes develop in the context of existing organizational climate, we have to relate dimensions of personality to dimensions of organizational climate.

Dimensions of Organizational Climate

Different researchers have described organizational climate by distinguishing several dimensions. Some of them used questionnaires consisting of a pool of different questions which were found to refer to aspects of organizational climate, based on previous qualitative research. After factor analysing the data, some dimensions of organizational climate emerged (Hofstede *et al.* 1989). Other researchers made a selection of climate dimensions for which items were constructed (Litwin and Stringer, 1968; Wallach, 1983; Pritchard and Karasick, 1973). Although there is considerable agreement about the basic

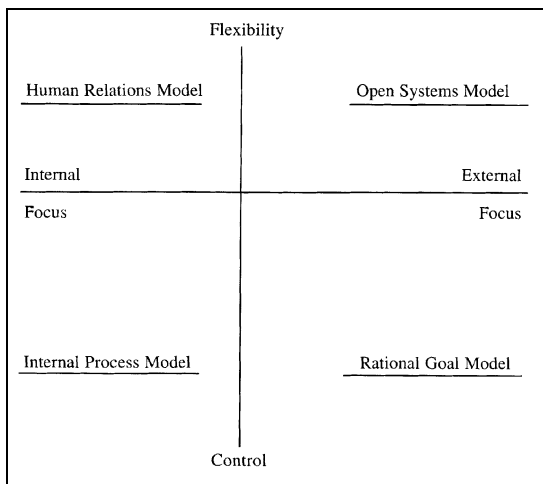


Figure 1: Competing values framework, derived from Quinn, 1988

dimensions of organizational climate, Furnham and Gunter (1993) emphasized that more conceptual clearness and theoretical foundation in the area of organizational climate is needed. The Competing Values framework proposed by Quinn (1988) is an illustration of how organizational climate can be linked to organization theory. In this framework, organizational climate is related to four models in organization theory: the human relations model, the open systems model, the rational goal model and the internal process model.

The two axes in Figure 1 create four quadrants, each representing one of the four models. The vertical axis ranges from flexibility to control, the horizontal axis ranges from an internal to an external focus. Cohesion and morale (internal focus), along with human resource development (flexibility) are stressed in the human relations model. The open systems model emphasises flexibility as well as growth and external support. In the rational goal model, organizations are especially concerned with planning, goal setting, productivity and efficiency. Information management and communication in addition to stability and control are the main elements of the internal process model in organization theory. This framework was adapted to be used as a diagnostic tool for assessing organizational climate. The model does not suggest that (elements of) the four quadrants in the framework cannot mutually exist in real organizations. Rather, it illustrates four basic orientations and thereby offers a framework for diagnosing organizations. The framework is primarily based on an implicit cognitive map of how people view organizational climate. The basic assumptions underlying this framework are quite similar to the basic assumptions underlying the Big Five in personality theory.

Dimensions of Personality

Recently, considerable agreement has been reached among personality psychologists about the five major dimensions of personality (Costa *et al.* 1991). These dimensions are primarily based on people's perception of how personality attributes are organized and therefore, can serve as a meaningful taxonomy for classifying personality attributes. The five factors of personality concern extroversion/introversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience. The extroversion factor includes traits such as being assertive, active and sociable. The agreeableness dimension, also labelled as friendliness or likeable, includes traits such as being tolerant, co-operative, flexible and soft-hearted. There was some disagreement regarding the essence of the third factor, conscientiousness (Barrick and Mount, 1991). Some researchers found that conscientiousness reflects dependability, while others suggested that it includes volitional attributes. Both types of attributes are now combined within one factor and this factor includes traits such as being thorough, responsible, planful, hardworking and achievement-oriented. The fourth dimension, emotional stability, is associated with attributes such as being depressed, anxious, emotional and insecure. The openness to experience dimension refers to attributes such as being curious, original and broad-minded.

Although there is considerable agreement on this taxonomy of personality traits, several researchers argue that a 'Big Five personality test' is not always useful in daily practice. The factor structure of traits is, for instance, dependent on the context in which these traits are assessed. It very much depends on the semantic meaning of the trait, given the specific situation. Moreover, the Big Five factors are too broad to be cohesive. Circumplex models, in which traits are characterized by their angular positions in a two-dimensional factor space, provide more opportunity for identifying clusters of traits that are semantically cohesive. Hofstee *et al.* (1992) developed the Abridged Big Five Dimensional Circumplex (AB5C), in which each trait is characterized by its factor loadings on a subset of two of the Big Five factors. The AB5C model comprises ten two-dimensional circumplexes; for instance, the combination of factor I with II, I with III, I with IV etc.). Each of these circumplexes are then divided into 12 segments, combining the negative and positive poles of each of the two Big Five dimensions (see Figure 2). A specific trait is assigned to one of these segments, based on their first and secondary factor loadings on each of the dimensions. This procedure was described

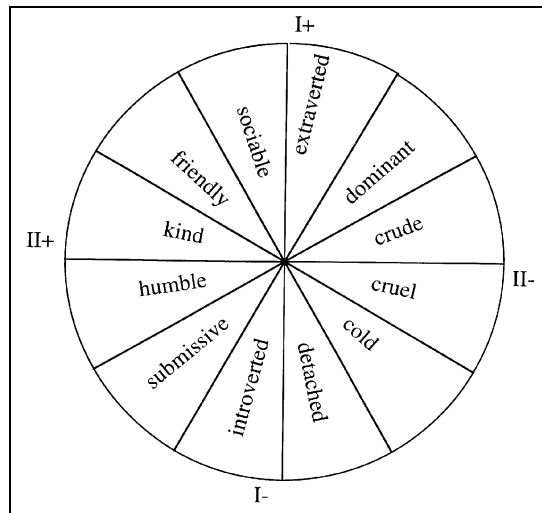


Figure 2: Example of a circumplex formed by big five factor I and II, derived from Hofstee *et al.*, 1992

extensively in a publication of Hofstee *et al.* (1992).

In order to examine the relationship between recruiters' perception of the ideal applicant and organizational climate, a selection of personality attributes from the Big Five dimensions was related to climate dimensions of the Competing Values framework. In a previous study, Jordan *et al.* (1991) tested the hypothesis that members of different organizations differ in personality. They found differences in personality of managers across four organizations. How these differences illustrated differences in organizational climate, remained unclear. There have been few attempts to systematically study and establish linkages between characteristics of people and organizational climate.

Dimensions of Organizational Climate Related to the Big Five Factors of Personality

Quinn (1988) developed the Competing Values framework at the managerial level. He described how roles and power of managers varies across the four quadrants of the model. The roles of a leader in the human relations model are assumed to be those of a facilitator and mentor. The power of a manager is based on relationships and his primary function is facilitating interaction. A capability to open communication and responsiveness to the need for affiliation of subordinates is important to be effective as a manager in such organizations. These qualities specifically refer to three Big Five dimensions: agreeableness, extroversion and openness to experience. Managers high on agreeableness, extroversion and openness to experience will show co-operativeness, tolerance, broad-mindedness and sociable behaviour. Managers

in an 'open system' organization need comparable qualities. These managers are expected to stimulate growth and development of their subordinates and their leadership style ought to be inventive. Especially, openness to experience and extroversion apparently are important personality traits for effective managers in these organizations. The primary function of managers in the rational goal model and the internal process model is somewhat different. 'Rational goal' organizations are highly achievement oriented. In these organizations managers are assumed to give direction and to provide structure and they have to influence subordinates through rational persuasion. Rationality is also an important ingredient of 'internal process' organizations. Here, managers' power is primarily based on expertise and they rule by information control. Managers' qualities such as having control, being organized and achievement oriented, all refer to the third Big Five Factor conscientiousness. Therefore, conscientiousness can be expected to be an important trait for effective managers in rational goal and internal process organizations.

The main purpose of the present study was to examine relationships between recruiters' perceptions of organizational climate and their perception of the ideal applicant in real selection procedures for managerial positions. It was hypothesized that:

- (1) Attributes concerning the personality dimensions of extroversion and openness to experience will be perceived as more favourable for a managerial position by recruiters assessing organizational climate as flexible (Human Relations Model and Open Systems Model) than by recruiters assessing organizational climate as control (Internal Process Model and Rational Goal Model).
- (2) Attributes concerning the personality dimension of conscientiousness will be perceived as more favourable for a managerial position by recruiters assessing organizational climate as control (Internal Process Model and Rational Goal Model) than by recruiters assessing organizational climate as flexible (Human Relations Model and Open Systems Model).
- (3) Attributes concerning the personality dimension of agreeableness will be perceived as more favourable for a managerial position by recruiters assessing organizational climate according to the Human Relations Model compared to recruiters assessing organizational climate according to the Internal Process Model, the Rational Goal Model and the Open Systems Model.

No hypothesis was formulated concerning the personality dimension of emotional stability, since

it was assumed that this dimension would be equally preferred in each of the organizational climates.

The vacancies for the management positions in the present study differed with respect to sector of industry. We therefore also explored differences between recruiters from these sectors concerning their ideal applicant and climate perceptions.

Method

Procedure

During a period of two months, advertisements for vacant managerial positions were selected from major Dutch newspapers. Criteria for selection were: educational level (academic), middle management positions with direct supervisory responsibility and sector of industry. Middle management positions within the educational field were excluded. The researchers asked for permission by phone to send the questionnaire to two members of the selection board. In case it was difficult to contact the organization by phone, a letter was sent to the contact person in the advertisement. Of the 156 organizations, 130 organizations agreed upon participation in the study. Questionnaires were returned from 83 organizations (63.8%). However, from 42 organizations only one questionnaire was completed.

Sample

The questionnaire was mailed to 260 persons, of which 124 persons (47.7%) returned their

questionnaire. Respondents were involved with the vacancy as a member of the selection board and/or as an employee of the department or as a personnel officer. Most respondents were members of the selection board for the current vacancy ($n = 103$), the other respondents ($n = 21$) were involved in former selection procedures. Average age of the 96 male and 28 female respondents was 42 years, and average job tenure was 9 years. Most respondents were employed in (local) government institutions ($n = 55$). Twenty-six respondents were employed in profit organizations, such as bank and insurance companies, industry, trade and transport companies, and 43 respondents were employed in service institutions, such as institutes for medical care.

Measures

The questionnaire consisted of questions concerning the vacancy, such as job title, salary, the composition of the selection board and required level of education. Other questions concerning background variables of the respondents were sex, age, tenure, position and sector of industry.

For measuring *organizational climate*, fourteen climate scales were developed based on the Competing Values framework of Quinn (1988). The first quadrant (see Figure 1) consisted of seven scales: *peer cohesion* (such as: support from colleagues); *open communication* (such as: differences of opinion are discussed in the group); *positive feedback* (such as: employees get

Table 1: Internal consistency of the climate scales in the present study, mean internal consistency of the climate scales in previous studies with number of samples and number of respondents

Climate Scales	Alpha present study	Mean Alpha previous studies	With:	
			<i>n</i> samples	<i>n</i> respondents
Regulation (9)	0.82	0.83	7	881
Innovation (7)	0.86	0.85	8	1,020
Reward (5)	0.77	0.82	5	561
Positive feedback (5)	0.90	0.90	7	761
Negative feedback (5)	0.88	0.92	7	1,001
Work pressure (5)	0.75	0.82	7	820
Friendship (7)	0.76	0.80	7	909
Peer cohesion (9)	0.85	0.89	5	511
Morale (5)	0.73	0.76	9	1,203
Open communication (6)	0.81	0.82	6	622
Human development (6)	0.82	0.82	8	1,092
Image (5)	0.84	0.86	6	650
Competition (4)	0.66	0.83	1	111
Participation (7)	0.78	0.82	4	425

Note: The number of items is printed in parentheses.

recognition for their performances); *morale* (such as: employees put more energy into their work than they are paid for); *development of human resources* (such as: employees get the opportunity to develop themselves); *participation* (such as: employees participate in decision making); *friendship* (such as: friendly relationships exist among the team members). The second quadrant consisted of the scales: *innovation* (such as: challenges are taken on) and *image* (such as: employees are proud of working in this department). Internal process orientation, the third quadrant, was operationalized with two scales: *regulation* (such as: fixed procedures are followed) and *negative feedback* (such as: bad performance is punished). The fourth quadrant, goal orientation, consisted of: *work pressure* (such as: there are clear standards of performance); *competition* (such as: employees compete with each other) and *reward* (such as: there is a relationship between performance and reward). The respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point scale the extent to which the statement was applicable in the department with the vacancy (1 = not at all applicable; 7 = fully applicable).

The scales were developed for a Dutch population and were validated in several studies¹. Table 1 shows the number of studies, the samples and the mean internal consistencies of the scales in previous studies and the internal consistencies of the scales in the present study.

Personality was measured with 65 attributes derived from the Abridged Big Five Circumplex (Hofstee *et al.*, 1992). Attributes were selected, based on the following criteria: (1) only the attributes with the highest factor loadings on a segment of the ten circumplexes; (2) only those attributes from segments with an opposite segment; (3) only those segments with at least two attributes with high factor loadings; (4) only one attribute was selected from each selected segment. In cases where the authors were unsure whether the two attributes with the highest factor loadings would have the same meaning in a work context, both of the attributes were selected. Using this procedure, a broad spectrum of attributes was chosen. The respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point scale the extent to which the attributes would contribute to a good or a poor chance of a candidate being selected for the job. The instruction was: "If a candidate possesses the following attributes, his/her chance for being selected in this department will be: Not good at all (1) ... Very good (7)."

Factor analysis (varimax) of the attributes revealed 16 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, accounting for 69.3% of the variance. After some of the attributes were removed, based on low factor loadings or with a high but single loading on one factor, a second factor analysis was conducted. After this factor analysis, eight

personality scales could be identified. The first scale was similar to the Big Five scale, '*conscientiousness*'. This scale consisted of 9 attributes, such as being precise, punctual, planful and conscientious. Internal consistency of this scale was 0.90. A second scale was entitled '*social*', and consisted of 6 attributes such as being agreeable, open and having social skills. This scale includes attributes from the Big Five scales '*agreeableness*' and '*extroversion*'. Internal consistency of this scale was 0.73. A third scale containing 8 attributes such as being nonchalant, changeable and light-hearted was named '*nonchalance*'. The internal consistency of this scale was 0.79. A fourth scale '*compliant*' with an internal consistency of 0.75, consisted of 4 attributes, such as being obedient, dependent, submissive and compliant. The fifth scale consisted of three attributes, closed, suspicious and depressed, and was named '*depressed*'. The internal consistency of this scale was 0.66. '*Dominance*' was the sixth scale, containing attributes such as being dominant, authoritarian and bossy, with an internal consistency of 0.80. The seventh scale was comparable with the Big Five scale '*openness to experience*' and consisted of 4 attributes such as being creative, enthusiastic, enterprising and determined. The internal consistency of this scale was 0.68. The eighth scale, '*emotional*', with three attributes, included attributes of the Big Five scale '*emotional stability*', such as being emotional, sensitive and kind-hearted. The internal consistency of this scale was 0.71.

Results

The means, standard deviations and Pearson product-moment correlations for the 14 climate scales and the 8 personality scales are shown in Table 2.

Substantial correlations between some of the climate scales were found. In order to test whether the climate scales fit the Competing Values framework of Quinn (1988), a factor analysis (varimax rotation) was conducted with the scale values. The analysis identified a three-factor solution (eigenvalues > 1, accounting for 66.7% of the variance). The first factor concerned the first and the second quadrant of the Competing Values model (flexibility). This factor consisted of the scales: peer cohesion (0.82), open communication (0.79), image (0.72), positive feedback (0.61), innovation (0.80), human development (0.78), participation (0.82), and friendship (0.72). The second factor concerned the control dimension of the Competing Values model and contained the scales competition (0.72), reward (0.62), work pressure (0.80), regulation (0.67) and negative

Table 2: Mean, standard deviations of the climate and personality scales and correlations between the scales ($n = 124$)

Scale	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
<i>Climate perceptions:</i>																										
(1) Regulation	4.66	0.81	(0.82)																							
(2) Innovation	4.58	0.88	0.16	(0.86)																						
(3) Reward	3.34	1.34	0.20*	0.30**	(0.77)																					
(4) Positive feedback	4.72	0.98	0.37**	0.58**	0.46**	(0.90)																				
(5) Negative feedback	5.12	0.96	0.45**	0.41**	0.42**	0.56**	(0.88)																			
(6) Work pressure	4.46	0.92	0.38**	0.42**	0.48**	0.51**	0.56**	(0.75)																		
(7) Friendship	4.45	0.78	0.18*	0.50**	0.16	0.47**	0.18*	0.22*	(0.76)																	
(8) Peer cohesion	4.89	0.75	0.25**	0.71**	0.26**	0.51**	0.34**	0.30**	0.69**	(0.85)																
(9) Morale	3.94	0.92	-0.09	0.26**	0.33**	0.17	0.07	0.26**	0.36**	0.28**	(0.73)															
(10) Open communication	4.22	0.66	0.24**	0.64**	0.21*	0.54**	0.49**	0.33**	0.58**	0.66**	0.12	(0.81)														
(11) Human development	4.79	0.86	0.15	0.64**	0.28**	0.71**	0.44**	0.32**	0.44**	0.53**	0.25**	0.59**	(0.82)													
(12) Image	4.76	1.01	0.35**	0.60**	0.30**	0.56**	0.34**	0.45**	0.67**	0.76**	0.32**	0.57**	0.54**	(0.84)												
(13) Competition	3.84	0.82	0.35**	0.19	0.39**	0.44**	0.32**	0.58**	0.26**	0.13	0.14	0.19*	0.21*	0.33**	(0.66)											
(14) Participation	4.68	0.75	-0.03	0.61**	0.12	0.48**	0.25**	0.11	0.46**	0.54**	0.15	0.54**	0.70**	0.47**	0.07	(0.78)										
<i>Personality:</i>																										
(15) Conscientiousness	5.34	0.69	0.35**	0.15	0.07	0.20*	0.24**	0.17*	0.18*	0.19*	0.00	0.19*	0.07	0.19*	0.19*	-0.02	(0.90)									
(16) Social	5.73	0.54	0.13	0.06	0.03	0.12	0.08	0.08	0.05	0.07	-0.03	0.09	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.47**	(0.73)								
(17) Nonchalance	2.39	0.66	-0.06	-0.09	-0.09	-0.12	-0.16	-0.19*	-0.06	-0.06	-0.18*	-0.05	-0.07	-0.12	-0.16	-0.06	-0.18*	-0.15	(0.79)							
(18) Compliant	3.01	0.78	0.28**	0.16	0.15	0.20*	0.21*	0.23**	0.02	0.13	0.04	0.09	-0.03	0.19*	0.03	-0.15	0.30**	0.03	0.15	(0.75)						
(19) Depressed	2.39	0.66	-0.03	-0.02	0.11	-0.06	0.03	0.06	-0.09	-0.02	-0.01	-0.11	-0.21*	-0.09	-0.11	-0.28**	0.08	-0.20*	0.32**	0.47**	(0.66)					
(20) Dominance	2.70	0.94	0.25**	-0.06	0.08	0.04	0.03	0.04	-0.00	0.04	-0.05	0.01	-0.13	0.03	0.06	-0.18*	0.00	-0.20*	0.33**	0.39**	0.38**	(0.80)				
(21) Openness to experience	6.03	0.50	0.14	0.05	0.03	0.19*	0.06	0.00	0.10	0.01	-0.03	0.10	0.20*	0.12	0.09	0.10	0.30**	0.38**	-0.12	-0.02	-0.24**	-0.16	(0.68)			
(22) Emotional	3.90	0.79	-0.01	0.05	-0.11	0.04	-0.01	-0.09	0.06	-0.01	-0.08	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	-0.07	0.04	0.10	0.18*	0.23*	0.09	-0.01	0.03	0.02	(0.71)		

Note: Internal consistencies of the scales are printed in parentheses.

** $p < 0.01$. * $p < 0.05$.

Table 3: Correlations between the climate factors flexibility and control and the personality scales ($n = 124$)

	Flexibility	Control
Conscientiousness	0.17	0.26**
Social	0.11	0.11
Nonchalance	-0.13	-0.18*
Compliant	0.10	0.24**
Depressed	-0.13	0.03
Dominance	-0.04	0.12
Openness to experience	0.13	0.08
Emotional	0.02	-0.09

** $p < 0.01$. * $p < 0.05$.

feedback (0.70). The third factor only correlated with morale (0.86). Relationships between the first factor, flexibility, and the second factor, control, with the personality dimensions were examined, as is shown in Table 3.

Significant correlations were only found with the control factor of organizational climate. Higher ratings on control correlated with higher ratings on conscientiousness and compliance, and with lower ratings on nonchalance.

The results show that Hypothesis 1 was only partly confirmed. Openness to experience was only related to some of the climate dimensions concerning the Human Relations Model, such as positive feedback and human development. Recruiters who rated their organizational climate high on positive feedback and human development put more emphasis on openness to experience of the ideal candidate for a managerial position compared to recruiters who rated low on these dimensions. However, recruiters' overall climate perceptions of control and flexibility did not have a relationship with the personality dimension openness to experience.

As was hypothesized, the personality dimension conscientiousness was related to the climate dimensions of the Internal Process Model and the Rational Goal Model, (Hypothesis 2). Recruiters who rated their environment as high on control prefer conscientiousness more for their managers than recruiters who rated their environment as low on control.

Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed. No relationships were found between perceptions of organizational climate and the personality dimension agreeableness, operationalized in this study as the personality dimension 'social'.

Our second research question concerned differences in climate perceptions of recruiters from different sectors of industry. In the introduction section of this paper we already suggested that strategic context and environmental determinism impose constraints on structure, processes and control systems

within organizations. It is likely then that recruiters from different organizational environments have different perceptions.

For 41 organizations, data were available from two respondents. After calculating the inter-rater reliability we used the mean scores of these two respondents. Mean inter-rater reliability was 0.55 (ranging from 0.16 to 0.99) for the climate measures and 0.90 (ranging from 0.80 to 0.99) for the personality measures. The high agreement on the personality measures is due to the fact that some of the personality attributes are attractive for most of the respondents and some of the attributes are evidently unattractive. The lower, but still substantial, agreement on the climate measures is due to the fact that in some cases the two respondents fulfilled different positions and/or did not work in the same work unit. In case the respondents were employed in the same work unit (but in different positions), mean inter-rater reliability increased to 0.63. Further examination of the differences between the two raters for each of the climate scale scores revealed that for most of the scales the difference was less than one scale point, except for positive feedback (with a mean difference of 1.00) and for reward (with a mean difference of 1.19).

The organizations in this study were divided into three groups, according to their branch of industry. The first group consisted of recruiters from government institutions, such as local government and civil service ($n = 34$). The second group were business organizations, such as banks and insurance companies, industries, trade companies and commercial services ($n = 18$). The third group contained the service industries, such as medical services ($n = 31$). Group means were compared using three MANOVAs with the climate scales, the climate factors flexibility and control and the personality scales as the dependent variables. The MANOVAs revealed significant differences between the groups (climate scales: $F(28, 83) = 2.56, p = 0.00$; climate factors: $F(4, 83) = 8.29, p = 0.00$; personality scales: $F(16, 83) = 1.63, p < 0.06$). ONEWAY analyses of variance were performed for the variables on which the groups differed significantly. The results of these analyses are shown in Table 4. Main differences were found between the service industry and the other two groups (government and business). Compared to governmental and business organizations, recruiters from service institutions rated their organizational climate significantly lower on competition, reward, morale, work pressure, negative feedback and the climate factor control. Few differences were found between the three branches of industry on the personality scales. Recruiters from service institutions rated their ideal manager higher on emotional and lower on depressed. Recruiters

Table 4: Significant differences between recruiters from three branches of industry on organizational climate perceptions and personality measures of the ideal manager ($n = 83$)

	Government Mean	Industry Mean	Service Mean	F (2,83)
<i>Climate perceptions</i>				
Competition	4.07	3.88	3.57	4.48*
Reward	3.75	4.31	2.45	22.75**
Morale	4.09	4.21	3.57	4.61*
Work pressure	4.55	4.87	4.10	6.46**
Negative feedback	5.24	5.56	4.70	7.86**
Climate Factor: Control	4.46	4.70	3.87	15.70**
<i>Personality scales</i>				
Nonchalance	2.19	2.57	2.51	3.72*
Depressed	2.28	2.65	2.14	3.79*
Emotional	3.66	3.90	4.15	3.71*

** $p < 0.01$. * $p < 0.05$.

from governmental organizations rated their ideal manager lowest (i.e. more negative) on nonchalance and emotional compared to recruiters from the other two branches.

Discussion

This study focused on the match between characteristics of people with characteristics of the work setting. From the ASA model (Schneider, 1987) it was assumed that recruiters would be aware of the compatibility of applicants' characteristics with organizational characteristics. They would prefer those applicants who fit the characteristics of the organization. Schneider *et al.* (1995) argued that organizational climate is mainly shaped by the personality characteristics of its members and that organizations will tend towards homogeneity of personality. It was hypothesized in this study that recruiters' perception of the ideal applicant for a management position would be a reflection of their perception of organizational climate. Managers are the linking pins of organizational climate. It was assumed then that recruiters' perception of the ideal manager would give an opportunity to establish evidence for the link between organizational climate and personality.

Some relationships between perceptions of organizational climate and personality of the ideal manager were found in this study. It was shown that recruiters perceiving a control climate are more concerned with conscientiousness of their managers compared to recruiters perceiving less emphasis on control. Specifically, recruiters assessing their climate high on regulation rated personality attributes such as conscientiousness, compliance and dominance as favourable for their

ideal manager. Significant but weak relationships were found for the climate scales positive feedback and human development with the personality attribute openness to experience. In the research literature, little empirical evidence was found up to now that organizational climate is really a reflection of homogeneity of personality. Schneider *et al.* (1995) mainly offered indirect evidence for the proposition that organizations become homogeneous with regard to the personality of incumbents. The results of the present study, however, do not strongly support the homogeneity hypothesis.

Schneider *et al.* (1995) argued that ASA theory does not deny that there are situational correlates of organizational behaviour. We indeed found relationships between the situational context and perceptions of organizational climate. Recruiters from service institutions especially differed from recruiters from business organizations with respect to climate dimensions such as competition, reward, morale, work pressure, negative feedback and control. Apparently, differences in perceptions of organizational climate stem mainly from the extent to which organizations are concerned with production and have to operate in a competing market. Significant differences were also found between recruiters from service institutions and governmental organizations. Although governmental organizations do not have to operate in a competing market, it is very well known that in the past ten years governmental organizations have moved from a focus on internal processes to a much more external orientation. Nowadays, these organizations are much more focused on efficiency and cost savings.

No differences were found between recruiters from service, governmental and business

industries concerning climate dimensions such as regulation, innovation, positive feedback, friendship, peer cohesion, open communication, human development, image and participation. These climate dimensions apparently are not related to the sector of industry and are thus not influenced by the environmental context. We agree with Schneider *et al.* (1995) that even organizations in the same industry differ in their climates, but the results of this study suggest that they differ with respect to only some and not all aspects of organizational climate. Recruiters from comparable organizations assess their climate quite similar with respect to climate dimensions which are directly related to their goal orientation, such as productivity and efficiency. They differ, however, with respect to aspects concerning human relations, internal processing and innovation. Are these differences due to differences in personalities of people in those organizations (within the same industry), as was suggested by Schneider *et al.* (1995)? The results of this study do not indicate direct relationships between recruiters' perception of those climate dimensions and their personality profile of the ideal manager. Recruiters from similar organizations differed with respect to climate dimensions concerning human relations, internal processing and innovation, and they also differed with respect to most of the personality attributes. Small, but significant differences between the three sectors of industry were found only for the unfavourable personality attributes, such as nonchalance, depressed and emotional. Nonchalance (as opposed to conscientiousness) was perceived as very unfavourable by recruiters from governmental organizations; depressed was perceived as very unfavourable and emotional was perceived as less unfavourable by recruiters from service institutions.

This study was not without limitations. Our conclusions are based only on the comparison between recruiters' perceptions of organizational climate and their perception of the ideal manager. More research is needed in which real selection decisions, for instance based on personality assessment of selected and rejected candidates, are examined in the context of existing organizational climate. One drawback of assessing perceptions of the ideal applicant rather than assessing selection decisions was that the variance within personality attributes was restricted. The standard deviation of the personality attributes was quite small because some attributes were perceived as favourable or unfavourable for all of the management positions. With small standard deviations, few substantial correlations between the scales are to be expected.

Another shortcoming of this study is that in each organization only one or two recruiters were

involved. We therefore have to be cautious with drawing conclusions concerning the complex relationship between sector of industry, organizational climate and personality of people. The results suggest that some aspects concerning the goal orientation of organizational climate (competition, work pressure etc.) are related to sector of industry. These goal-oriented dimensions of organizational climate apparently influence the way in which recruiters perceive the ideal manager regarding conscientiousness and compliance. Other aspects of organizational climate are not related to sector of industry and do not influence recruiters' perception of the ideal manager.

Schneider *et al.* (1995) argued that ASA is a time-based conceptualization of homogeneity, one in which homogeneity is predicted to occur over time as the ASA cycle plays out for each individual. The results of the present study do not strongly indicate homogeneity of personalities. Homogeneity of personality in organizations will exist for only some personality attributes, but not for many other attributes. It is more likely that organizational climate is mainly created by homogeneity of behaviour and not homogeneity of personalities. People with different personalities enter the organization. These people are socialized into the existing organizational climate, which will result in homogeneity of their behaviour. A comfortable fit between the person and the environment (i.e. a successful socialization) is probably more dependent on the fit between the needs of the person and the fulfilment of these needs by the environment and less on the fit between the person's personality and the environment. Karren and Graves (1994) also suggested that it seems unlikely that the use of fit as a criterion of selection will result in overly homogeneous organizations since employees vary on many personality dimensions which were not the basis of selection. Therefore, assessment of person-environment fit in selection should not be primarily focused on personality-climate fit but on the fit between the person's needs and organizational practices.

Note

- 1 These studies appeared as internal research reports at the University of Amsterdam, under supervision of the first author. Data and reports are available on request.

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