

A match made in
heaven:
The importance of
person-environment
fit in selection

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Presentation summary

- Summary of existing literature
- Specific research questions
- Methodology used
- Results
- Discussion of results
- Implications for organisations

What is Person-Environment Fit?

“Person-environment fit theory indicates that people are likely to be more satisfied when what a job supplies is what a person wants or desires, or where a person’s abilities meet the demands of the job.” Daniels & deJonge (2010)

What is person-environment fit?

“...person and environment work as joint determinants of employees’ well-being, with the misfit between person and environment as the cause of strain.” Yang et al (2008)

Summary of existing literature

- Research history dates back to 1970s
- Holland's (1973) theory of career choice
 - Congruence = satisfaction
- Furnham & Walsh (2001)
 - Congruent environments often contain like-minded people

Summary of existing literature

- Relationships between person-environment fit and positive organisational outcomes:
- Searle & Bright (2003) – occupational stress in urban bus drivers
- Swyny & Albrecht (2003) person-organisation fit in contact centre workers.

Summary of existing literature

- However, research in support of person-environment fit is not unequivocal:
- Furnham & Walsh (2001) – found an inverse relationship

Summary of existing literature

- Irving & Montes (2009) – importance of using Realistic Job Previews in selection
- Chan (2005) - criticisms of selection research
“...matching persons to work must often take into account more than just the job itself; it may have to consider the group and organizational contexts in which the person needs to function.”

Goals of research

- To build upon previous research demonstrating a relationship between person-environment fit and positive organisational outcomes.
- To consider the interaction between:
 - Person-organisation fit
 - Person-manager fit
 - An individual's personality traits
- Is there are logical congruence between these three factors?

Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1 – Participants working in cultures that are congruent with their preferences will report being significantly higher on positive organisational outcomes
- Hypothesis 2 – There will be a logical congruence between participants' culture and leadership preferences (i.e. the style of leader an individual prefers to be managed by)
- Hypothesis 3 – There will be clear differences in participants' personality profiles according to these preferences

Methodology

- Nationally representative sample (n = 1,212) of UK & Irish working age participants
- 16PF online validation survey
- Participants completed 16PF5 questionnaire, plus questions on:
 - Job satisfaction
 - Work enjoyment
 - Turnover intentions
 - Perceived stress at work

Methodology

- Participants asked to rate how comfortable they would be working in a range of different work environments/cultures

AND

- To what extent their current organisation was reflective of that environment/culture
- Based on these ratings, participants were divided into 3 groups:

Methodology



Congruence



Moderate
congruence



Incongruence

Methodology

- Leadership preferences (i.e. the style of leader an individual likes to be managed by) were also explored

Results

- Chi-Square analyses revealed that participants working in cultures congruent with their preferences reported being significantly higher on:
 - Job Satisfaction ($p < .001$)
 - Job Enjoyment ($p < .001$)
- They also reported being significantly less likely to:
 - Think about quitting their job ($p < .001$)
 - Change job ($p < .001$)
- Finally, they reported experiencing significantly less stress at work ($p < .001$)

Results

- Chi Square and Independent ANOVAs showed a strong association between:
 - Reported leadership preferences (i.e. the style of leader an individual likes to be managed by) and reported culture preferences
 - Clear differences in participants' personality profiles according to these preferences

Results

Leader preference	Organisational culture preference	Individual characteristics /traits
A leader who sets clear direction	An organisation with clear structures, rules and guidelines Where jobs are made as simple as possible	Higher rule consciousness A more grounded and practical thinking/decision making style Higher levels of perfectionism and self control Lower openness to change

Results

Leader preference	Organisational culture preference	Individual characteristics/ traits
A leader who allows me to decide most things for myself	An organisation emphasising employee independence	A more dominant, socially confident, and independent personality Lower levels of anxiety Higher abstract reasoning abilities Greater openness to change

Results

Leader preference	Organisational culture preference	Individual characteristics/traits
A leader who supervises me closely	Less comfortable working in: An organisation emphasising employee independence Individuals may have wide-ranging responsibilities	Lower abstract reasoning abilities Lower levels of emotional stability and independence A lower capacity for self control A greater tolerance for disorder

Results

Leader preference	Organisational culture preference	Individual characteristics/ traits
<p>A leader who mostly makes decisions in consensus with me and others</p>	<p>A structured environment, emphasising independence and rewarding employee loyalty</p> <p>With individuals from many different backgrounds</p> <p>Where individuals have responsibility for many different areas</p>	<p>A higher level of sensitivity</p> <p>A more grounded and practical thinking style</p> <p>Greater openness to change</p> <p>Higher abstract reasoning abilities</p> <p>Higher levels of apprehension</p>

Results

Leader preference	Organisational culture preference	Individual characteristics/ traits
<p>A leader who makes decisions independently and tells me the outcome</p>	<p>Less comfortable working in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A highly structured organisationWhere employee independence is emphasisedWhere employees are viewed as individuals with particular skillsWith individuals from many different backgrounds	<p>Lower levels of sensitivity</p> <p>Less bound by rules and regulations, preferring a more expedient and unconventional approach</p> <p>Lower abstract reasoning abilities and lower levels of self control</p>

Discussion

- Results demonstrated support for all three hypotheses
- Person-environment fit has a significant impact on organisational outcomes, including:
 - Job satisfaction and enjoyment
 - Workplace stress
 - Turnover intentions

Discussion

- Significant relationship between leader and organisational culture preferences, and individual differences in personality profiles
- Leader preferences, organisational culture preferences, and personality characteristics showed a logical congruence with each other
- Importance of looking at the complete picture to determine person-environment fit

Implications for design of selection procedures

- Use trait based tools to understand complexities of personality and its influence on an individual's behaviour and preferences
- Align leaders with organisational culture to create congruence for employees
- Build congruence models for individual recruitment campaigns
- Use of Realistic Job and Culture Previews as a sifting tool

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