
Organisational culture preference for gen Y's prospective job aspirants: a personality-culture fit perspective

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Abstract: Organisational culture is an important factor in determining how well an individual fits in an organisation. An individual possesses distinct personality traits, which are dimensions of individual differences which are seen in patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions. Two important concepts are studied together in this study to bring out the interconnectedness in both which may be very useful for studying organisational behaviour. Personality traits of the respondents in this study are obtained through the use of the BIG FIVE personality scale and organisational culture preference through the corporate culture preference scale suggested by McShane. This paper explores the intersection between the personality traits of gen Y's prospective job aspirants and their culture preferences. The results show that prospective applicants with high scores on all the five dimensions of personality are more attracted to responsive and relationship-based culture. This evidence attests the importance of understanding the fit between individuals' personality traits and organisational culture preference which can be of major importance to the Human resource functions of recruitment, selection career planning and potential appraisal.

Keywords: generation Y; gen Y; organisational culture; personality traits; control; performance; relationship; responsive; agreeableness; conscientiousness; extraversion; neuroticism; openness; person-organisation fit; P-O fit.

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1 Introduction

Every organisation develops its own entity over time. In this process, certain basic attitudes and beliefs about the people and their work conditions get gradually but firmly accepted in the organisation, which becomes its 'organisational culture'. For a commendable explanation of this notion refer to Elliot Jaques, (*The Changing Culture of a Factory*, Tavistock, London, 1961). This culture covers a wide range of behaviour: methods of organising production; job skills and knowledge; attitude about discipline and punishment; managerial behaviour towards democratic working and joint consultation, etc. In short, organisational culture represents "how things are done around here" (Cameron et al., 2003), which indicates that different organisations have different cultures and it impacts organisational performance (O'Regan and Lehmann, 2008). Organisational culture which is a part of the internal environment describes a combination of a set of commitments, beliefs and values shared by the members of the organisation, and guide them to complete their tasks effectively and efficiently (Lacatus, 2013).

The concept of organisational culture has been essential in the study of organisational behaviour for the past decade (e.g., Barley et al., 1988; O'Reilly et al., 1989; Smircich, 1983). In spite of disagreements over some elements of definition and measurement, researchers seem to approve that culture may be an important feature in determining how fine an individual fits an organisational environment (e.g., Kilmann et al., 1986; Schein, 1985). Workplace environment plays a vital role in ensuring employee's job performance (Naharuddin and Sadegi, 2013) as it may affect employee motivation and productivity (Chandrasekar, 2011). Leblebici (2012) also discusses about the impact of workplace quality and environment on employee's performance and productivity. Shahzad et al. (2012) support that organisational culture has a positive influence on organisational performance.

Organisational culture is a matter of substantial importance to organisational researchers, management experts, and business managers alike. For example, organisational culture has been considered as a management tool (Trice and Beyer, 1993), attributed with generating a competitive advantage as the reason behind merger and acquisition failure, and for providing the foundation for success (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Denison, 1990).

Black defines four dimensions to identify perceptions of organisational culture and has published a self-assessment survey with a scoring model (Black, 2003). The four dimensions are:

- 1 Control culture: this culture gives importance to the role of senior management to lead the organisation. Its goal is to keep everyone aligned and under control.
- 2 Performance culture: this culture values employee and organisational performance and strives for effectiveness and efficacy.
- 3 Relationship culture: nurturing and well-being holds importance in this culture. It considers open communication, equality, cooperation, and sharing a vibrant part of organisational life.
- 4 Responsive culture: this culture values its ability to stay tuned with the external environment, including being competitive and realising new opportunities.

All of us in handling the vicissitudes of life have explicit styles, “ways of thinking and perceiving, ways of experiencing emotion, modes of subjective experience in general, and modes of activity that are associated with various pathologies” [Shapiro and Wilk, (1965), p.1; Cox et al., 1991]. We all have certain pattern of characteristic thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that distinguishes us from others and that persists over time and situations, which is called personality.

Personality has been defined in a number of ways but commonly speaking it can be recapitulated as the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts and interacts with others (Francis and Robbins, 2005; Fiske, 1994). This definition reflects the thought that an individual possesses personality traits, which are dimensions of character differences in consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions (Korzaan and Boswell, 2008). Korzaan and Boswell further put forth that the more an individual has a certain trait, the more he/she displays particular types of behaviour that are associated with that trait. As the sheer diversity of personality traits has rendered methodical investigation, scholars have reduced them to a convenient number that reflects dominant personality traits in individuals. All the way through the past ten years scientists have tried to categorise personalities by researching both subordinate traits and super ordinate factors. Some researchers have developed measures which assume that there are merely three constructs (Eysenck, 1991) or four constructs (Myers et al., 1985). Further researchers have endeavoured to detain measures of personality beneath the umbrella of 16 or more constructs (Megargee, 2008; Cattell et al., 1970). The commonality is that they recommend that a common taxonomy or factor approach subsists to classify personality types. Each and every model endeavours to reduce within-group variances and maximise between-group variances.

In 1940s, through the statistical tool of factor analysis, researchers examined investigation about adequate personality models. Fiske (1949) acknowledged a five-factor model (FFM) for categorising individual conduct. Fiske tagged the early five factors as emotional stability, extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and culture. Consecutive research has normally supported the employment of the FFM in personality testing (Barrick and Mount, 1991; Salgado, 1998; McCrae, 1987). In the FFM, the hierarchical factors contain a lot of distinguishing subordinate traits and behavioural tendencies (McCrae and Costa, 1989). McCrae and Costa (1985) also selected five factors of personality. These five-factors are often referred to as the ‘big five’ and

comprise of agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Numerous present studies correlating personality and leadership effectiveness have recommended the submission of the FFM (Hogan et al., 1994; Judge et al., 2002a, 2002b; Burke, 1982).

The first factor in the model is agreeableness. Agreeableness refers to the superiority of interpersonal relations (DeNeve, 1999). Hogan et al. (1994) defined agreeableness as a measure of an individual's sympathy, support, and kindness. According to Piedmont and Weinstein (1994), agreeableness includes the features of confidence, straightforwardness, unselfishness, obedience, humbleness and tender-mindedness. In a nutshell, agreeableness is the degree to which an individual is amiable, tolerant, sensitive, trustworthy, kind-hearted and warm (Kumar and Bakhshi, 2010).

The second factor is conscientiousness. Conscientiousness refers to work behaviour and impulse control. Conscientious individuals work hard, persevere, and are organised (Hogan et al., 1994). Furthermore, conscientiousness comprises of the feature of capability, order, dutifulness, achievement, self-discipline, and contemplation (Piedmont and Weinstein, 1994).

Extraversion, the third factor, focuses on the significance and the intensity of relations. Extraversion is intermittently referred to as surgency. Extraversion includes the aspects of kindness, unreservedness, boldness, activity, venturesome, and positive emotions (Piedmont and Weinstein, 1994).

The fourth factor, Neuroticism comprises of the facets of lack of adjustment and is inversely related to emotional stability. Neurotic persons are impetuous, negligent and not reliable (Hogan et al., 1994). Neuroticism includes the features of apprehension, antagonism, dejection, self-consciousness, impetuosity, and susceptibility (Rodgers and Piedmont, 1998).

The fifth and final factor in the big five is openness or openness to experience. Openness refers to an individual's potential to be inventive, broad minded and inquiring (Hogan et al., 1994). Openness contains the facets of fantasy, mind-set, aesthetics, actions, judgment, and principles (Piedmont and Weinstein, 1994).

The big five model of personality has attained support as a 'grand unified theory' for personality (Digman, 1990; Lounsbury and Ventresca, 2003). The characterisation of personality in terms of five factors is mainly established upon normal personality framework (Costa and McCrae, 1992; Lounsbury and Ventresca, 2003; Viswesvaran and Ones, 2004; Zweig and Webster, 2004).

In a most recent meta-analysis of 163 studies, Judge et al. (2002b) remarked that over the last 20 odd years, the field has developed consensus around the Big Five factors as being a measurement of the 'most momentous facets of personality'. Saucier and Goldberg (2003) referred to the big five factor structure as the most expansively influential personality model of the past twenty years. Different researchers credit the big five factor structure to fuelling the renaissance of personality trait research (Hough and White, 2003; Weiss and Kurek, 2003). Buss (1991) wrote that the "five factors of personality, characterize important dimensions of the social environment that human beings were selected to attend to and operate upon". John and Srivastava (1999) completed their book chapter on the five-factor theory by stating that in their view the big five structure is a crucial step to looking forward, a long-due addition and enhancement over previous factor systems that tended to compete with each other, rather than simply establish commonalities and convergences. The big five structure captures an open

level of thought, the commonalities among most of the accessible systems of personality depiction, and offers an integrative model for personality study.

Mainstream researchers concur that the five factors signify distinct traits while sharing modest correlation. Costa and McCrae (1992) showed inter-correlations between the traits ranging .20–.29. Costa and McCrae (1992) put forth their support for the big five factor model as the traits' stability in being measured by self-reports; constancy with diverse psychological theories; validity amid assorted cultures; and links to a biological constituent.

2 Conceptual framework

It is broadly recognised that organisation culture affects organisational members' views, opinions, conduct and effectiveness (Mintu-Wimsatt, 2002; Reigle, 2001). In particular, Mintu-Wimsatt (2002) and Chatman and Barsade (1995) have shown that cultural framework moderates the association between personality and behaviour in management, for example, influencing on behaviours such as teamwork and problem resolving. Some researchers (Organ et al., 2006; Judge et al., 2002b; Kappagoda, 2012) put forth that the personality of a person is directly correlated with numerous work outcomes and attitudes. Personality traits are the vital performance drivers in raising the performance benchmarks for a business organisation (Rajagopal and Rajagopal, 2011). Furthermore, as Stewart and Barrick (2004) proposed traits do not envisage behaviour in all circumstances. Certain traits are only pertinent in situations where behaviours associated with those traits are vital for better work performance (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). If expression of the trait is not related to task accomplishment, then the trait becomes unsuitable to the work situation (Stewart and Barrick, 2004). However, there has been research bearing organisational culture as a moderating variable of the relationship between personality and behavioural outcomes like performance (Miron et al., 2004; Navarrese, 2008), organisational citizenship behaviour (Schnake and Dumler, 2003), career consequences (Erdogan and Bauer, 2005), and work behaviour (Tett and Burnett, 2003). These findings back the notion that people prefer to work in cultures similar to their own personality (Judge and Cable, 1997), with this fit persuading them to perform well.

Research study on P-O fit has revealed imperative inferences for individual well-being and organisational outcomes. Han (2015) investigated the relationships between person-job fit, person-organisation (P-O) fit and psychological ownership. P-O fit is positively related to a person's dedication which results in improved job performance and work satisfaction (Tugal and Kilic, 2015). For instance, fit between an individual's values and organisational values are related to behavioural and affective outcomes, such as longer term, more organisational commitment and improved work performance (O'Reilly et al., 1991). A review of P-O fit work indicated that these studies used different conceptualisations and operationalisation of P-O fit, ensuing in different affect sizes (Kristof, 1996). Most of the operationalisation of fit, however, can be merged in to the definition of P-O fit, as recommended by Kristof (1996): "the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when: at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both". André (2015) developed the P-O fit approach, using which, business organisations could select individual millennial that are apt for their existing company cultures rather than modifying their company cultures to accommodate the varied millennial force.

Much of the current interest in the concept of P-O fit (see Kristof, 1996) can be drawn from Schneider's attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework (Schneider, 1987), which proposes that people and organisations appeal to one another based on their similarity.

On the basis of prior experiences, interests, necessities, likings and personality people make a selection among different types of various organisations. Quite a few studies made use of interactionist approach to P-O fit (Edwards et al., 1990) to check these assumptions and examine whether individuals are attracted to organisations that suit their own personality. Schein and Diamante (1988) reported that people were enticed to an organisation whose culture reflected their own personality traits.

3 Measurement

The study was conducted with two tools to measure the two major constructs in the study, i.e., personality and corporate culture preference.

3.1 Description of measure

- 1 The tool (corporate culture preference scale) consists of 12 pair of statements which represent the four types of organisational culture.
- 2 Forty four-item inventory that measures an individual on the big five factors (dimensions) of personality (Goldberg, 1993). Each of the factors is then further divided into personality facets.

The respondents were administered the test and they selected the statements on the behaviour that closely described them or closer to their personal preferences.

3.2 Sample

The questionnaire was administered to 515 prospective gen Y job applicants across Pan India through a web survey. 120 filled out the online questionnaire indicating a response rate of approximately 23.3%. The sample was drawn from the population of students; the inclusion criteria were:

- 1 the students should have no prior work experience
- 2 they should be in the final trimester of an MBA post graduate program
- 3 they should be looking for a suitable job post degree completion.

3.3 Scaling technique

For purposes of analysis, it was decided that an eight-point rating scale be used to ensure no selection of a neutral stand. This ensures that the respondents make a distinct selection. Reverse coding wherever required, was employed to calculate the scores and to reveal each respondent's personality score. For the corporate culture tool the respondents were requested to select one of the two options which displayed a clear preference to a certain culture.

3.4 Scoring method

The total for each personality type will be symptomatic of their personality trait. If they have scored high on one trait, it is their predominant trait. While selecting a corporate culture preference we see that some respondents have clearly selected one while some fall in the category of preferring more than one or a mix of two cultures. The score of all the respondents with the calculation of the median point were taken forward for analysis.

3.5 Analysis

The analysis was done with the respondents with regards to the median point in the two major constructs. Personality wise the respondents with higher scores on extraversion, openness, conscientiousness and agreeableness were taken. As for neuroticism, since it denotes a negative connotation, the scores lower than the median were taken into account. For the corporate culture preference, the median of the total score on each preference type was taken for analysis. Table 1 illustrates the respondents that fell in each category.

Table 1 Personality dimension and culture type preference matrix

	<i>Extraversion</i>	<i>Agreeableness</i>	<i>Conscientiousness</i>	<i>Neuroticism</i>	<i>Openness</i>
Control	0	0	0	0	0
Performance	29	25	31	35	27
Relationship	57	57	57	54	54
Responsive	58	56	60	51	60

4 Findings and discussion

BFI, 44-item inventory that assess an individual on the big five factors (dimensions) of personality (Goldberg, 1993) was used. Based on the scores the respondents were slotted into five personality factors as described in the scale, i.e., extrovert, agreeable, conscientious, neurotic and open. Corporate culture preference scale (McShane, 1992) to identify a corporate culture that fits most closely with one's personal values and assumptions was also used. The respondents with high scores on each personality dimension were selected to find out their inclination towards the four types of culture.

The study shows that generation Y candidates, who scores high on extraversion dimension of personality do not prefer to work in controlled environment. Out of all extrovert respondents, no one showed an inclination towards controlled workplace culture. Extraversion is related to the experience of positive emotions, and extraverts are more probable to go for leadership roles (Watson and Clark, 1997). This implies that extrovert gen Y cannot work well under control. Out of the total generation Y candidates with high scores on extraversion dimension of personality only 46% prefer to work in performance-based culture. Barrick et al. (1993) found that extraversion was not associated with goal commitment, but it was associated with goal level. It is evident from the table that extrovert generation Y candidates are more (90% and 92%) inclined to work in relationship-based and responsive culture respectively. This implies that extroverts have more friends and spend more time in social situations because of their

social facility, are likely to find interpersonal interactions (such as those that occur at work) more rewarding (Watson and Clark, 1997). Gen Y tends to value teamwork and fairness and is likely to be more positive on a range of workplace issues including work-life balance, performance assessments, and accessibility of supervisors. Making a lot of money tends to be less important to gen Y than contributing to community for welfare, parenting well, and leading a full and sensible life (Allen, 2004).

Gen Y candidates with high scores on agreeableness dimension of personality do not prefer to work in controlled environment. None of them showed a disposition towards control workplace culture. 42% prefers to work in performance oriented culture as they desire instant and speedy feedback about performance (Francis-Smith, 2004). Organ and Lingl (1995) apparently agreed, commenting that agreeableness “involves getting together with others in pleasant, satisfying relationships”. Gen Y candidates, who scores high on agreeableness dimension of personality are more (95% and 93%) inclined to work in relationship-based and responsive culture respectively. Gen Y is a truly global generation, socially conscious and volunteer minded and found to be the most challenging generation. Strength, cooperation, vigour, conformity, virtue and responsibility tend to be among gen Y's morals (Pekala et al., 2001).

Gen Y candidates with high scores on conscientiousness dimension of personality do not prefer to work under strict control. None of them has a leaning towards control workplace culture. 49% prefers to work in performance oriented culture. Conscientious persons are dependable, reliable and achievement-oriented, whereas low scorers are uncaring, apathetic and unreliable (Digman, 1990). Generation Y candidates, who scores high on conscientiousness are more (90% and 95%) motivated to work in relationship-based and responsive culture respectively. Gen Y tends to have a strong sense of morality, to be patriotic, willing to fight for unconventionality, is affectionate, and gives importance to home and family.

Gen Y candidates with low scores on neuroticism dimension of personality do not favour controlled environment at workplace. They show no preference towards control workplace culture. 58% prefers to work in performance oriented culture. They tend to be goal-oriented (Southard and Lewis, 2004) and interested in their development and betterment. In the workplace, gen Y has a tendency to approve an inclusive style of management, do not appreciate slowness, and desire immediate feedback about performance (Francis-Smith, 2004). Generation Y candidates, who scores low on neuroticism (90% and 85%) desire to work in relationship-based and responsive culture respectively.

People with high levels of openness involve in consistent and continuous learning (London and Smither, 1999), share knowledge (Cabrera et al., 2006), are stimulated to learn, are more conscious of their social environment (Krasman, 2010), and are more enterprising (Fuller and Marler, 2009). Gen Y candidates with high scores on openness dimension of personality do not appreciate controlled environment at work. 45% prefers to work in performance oriented culture. Gen Y candidates, with high scores on openness are more (90% and 100%) likely to work in relationship-based and responsive culture respectively. Gen Y tends to want intellectual challenge needs to succeed, seeks those who will further its professional growth, attempts to mark a difference, and measures its own success. They are inclined to plunge into tasks they find exciting and imperative even when they know little about it (Lewis et al., 2003).

5 Conclusions

It draws on the five-factor theory of personality along with the preference of organisational culture to identify P-O fit and argues that individuals with different personality traits are likely to identify with particular organisational cultures. Thus, the study sheds light on the personality and corporate culture preferences of gen Y respondents. The analysis can help corporate understand what prospective employees prefer in terms of culture with regards to their personality. HR managers can contemplate ways to train millennial to demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes that will enable them to perform optimally at their workplace utilising their predominant personality traits. It can aid in understanding the employee behaviour, what motivates them and what can possibly dissuade them from doing well in an organisation. Culture is a thread that binds the employee and the organisation and unravelling this mystery can help in efficient functioning.

6 Implications of the study

Personality is one of the most studied psychological construct which plays a crucial role in predicting work behaviour. Behaviour is a function of attributes of the individual and the environment (Lewin, 1935). This research is aimed to examine the link between the big five personality traits and preferences for various types of corporate culture. The better the fit, the more happy and content the employees. A proper match between personality and culture can lead to more involvement and commitment. How their combined effect will influence behaviour can be an interesting area of study. The study done above shows that generation Y candidates, who scores high on extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness dimensions of personality do not prefer to work under strictly controlled environment. Therefore, from this analysis we can understand certain important underlying conditions that prevail in an organisation and which if paid attention to, can help the organisation maximise its efficiency.

This study portrays the ideal situation of a match in the organisation culture and the personality of the candidate. Organisations can benefit with regards to understanding the sync between the culture and the personality of the candidate which can help them in their recruitment and selection process. If there is a tandem between the two, the individual will be energised to work in the organisation which will result in higher productivity and may harbour entrepreneurial behaviour in the long run.

While assigning roles to the employee, this analysis can play a very vital role. Assigning the employee roles in which he can perform will only boost his morale and provide a conducive atmosphere for him to work. This satisfaction will result in long term happiness and attachment with the firm. The attachment with the firm can further result in the employee talking favourably about the firm resulting in positive word of mouth or even brand champions for the company. With deployment of job roles as per the personality of the employee, the productivity can be improved as also the employee feels engaged with the firm. He/she may go out of their way to complete their work and even put in added efforts to complete their tasks because the task is in tune with their personality and also their interests.

While this works for the image of the company it also enables the attrition rate of the company to be as low as possible. If the attrition rate is low, the company will not have to keep spending big bucks on fresh recruitment, selection and training procedures.

7 Limitations

In this study, a self-report instrument was used to measure personality, rather than a coding instrument filled out by potentially more objective observers. There was a possibility of subject response bias on the self-report measure as some respondents could have chosen to indicate responses that were generally accepted by the majority, but not necessarily be a true representation of the self. Researchers can gather data through direct observation in different settings, e.g., subordinate-superior dialogue; peer assessment, self-report measures. Moreover, this study is a relatively small one. In this regard, survey research methods covering large number of prospective generation Y job aspirants with diverse educational backgrounds will be relevant.

8 Scope for further research

Sociologists as social scientists must think afresh about the roles of culture and personality of employees in organisations and its overall impact on organisational performance. This research study can be replicated using a bigger random sample size to see whether it would result in similar findings. The use of greater random samples across varied age groups will also allow future researchers to identify more consistent patterns in the personality and corporate culture preference as well as to decrease biases which might impact studies of small sample sizes.

Future research might also investigate other matches and mismatches to understand how different situations influence the relationships between dispositions and behaviour. For example, extroverts become more friendly and social in organisations that value development and welfare. Studying these kinds of matches between personality and culture could reveal aspects of organisation behaviour and events which otherwise remains a mystery.

This study can guide the human resource professionals to design a pre-hiring strategy. Also, the research work can be replicated amongst existing employees to check their pre-dominant personality traits and identify if the same pattern persists.

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