

Managerial Recruitment: The Influence of Personality and Ideal Candidate Characteristics

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In summary, personality as measured by the FIRO Element B (i.e., control, openness, inclusion) significantly predicted one's attraction to a business management position, after controlling for possible confounding variables as identified by the literature. Individuals scored as control on the FIRO Element B, for example, are attracted to a management position most when the simulated position advertisement depicts the ideal candidate for the position as a control-oriented manager. Identical effects occurred for inclusion applicant-inclusion ideal job candidate pairings and openness applicant-openness job candidate pairings.

This study achieved a number of research advancements. The first advancement concerns the support for job attraction theory. Job attraction theory and the similarity-attraction hypothesis predict that job applicant characteristics influence applicant ratings of jobs in recruitment media. In our simulation study, age statistically significantly influenced the control and openness variables, but not the inclusion (I include people), job ratings independently of the other research variables.

This was the first application of the FIRO Element B in a recruitment study. Job applicant personality, as predicted by job attraction theory, influenced the attraction of business professionals to private-sector managerial jobs depicted in simulated position advertisements.

These study findings suggest that the FIRO Element B may be useful for guiding HR business recruiters in developing a recruitment profile for a job applicant who is likely to be attracted to a specific job advertisement with attributes of inclusion, control, or openness. The study findings are also a tentative step towards allowing HR recruiters to produce recruitment media (e.g., position advertisements, Internet job postings, job description mailings, and recruitment interviews) that are optimally efficient in attracting applicants with a certain personality that is a good person-job fit. This type of creative HR activity might be one way to better support an organization's quest for sustainable competitive advantage through what McLagan calls "people strategies."

What might be especially appealing to HR recruiters is that producing recruitment media to incorporate this study's findings should incur minimal cost and the benefits (better person-job fit) might be significant. Person-job fit aligns characteristics of individuals and jobs in ways that result in desired outcomes and is defined as the compatibility between the ability of a person and the demands of a job. For example, managers with a control-oriented personality may well be best suited for positions in business where high levels of control are needed (e.g., Vice President of Finance, Controller, and Director of Quality Control).

A recommendation that derives from this study is to investigate other frameworks of interest using the FIRO Element B, such as the P-O (People-Organization) fit framework. The P-O framework addresses the antecedents and consequences of compatibility between people and the organizations in which they work. The variables that may prove valuable to investigate within the P-O fit framework might be organizational characteristics (i.e., quick decision making, hierarchy, accountability), personality (i.e., inclusion, control, openness), and other personal characteristics (i.e., age, work experience, gender), job performance, and job tenure. The FIRO Element B could be used to identify the personality of the job applicant (inclusion, control, openness) and classify the characteristics of the organization with a position vacancy into three dimensions: inclusion, control, or openness. Investigating the above variables within P-O fit framework could expand recruitment theory and provide new directions for both the recruitment and retention of managers.

The FIRO Element B might also have utility for aiding HR business recruiters in producing recruitment media (e.g., position advertisements, Internet job postings, job description mailings, recruitment interviews) to attract job applicants who are best suited to work in specific environments (i.e., telecommuting, traveling salesperson, office worker). For example, an HR recruiter might use low inclusion and high control job attributes to create a position advertisement to attract an employee preferring to work alone in a telecommuting environment.

This study involved the investigation of printed job advertisements for use as recruitment media. To expand the efficacy of the FIRO Element B, the same approach used in this study should be used to examine other recruitment media such as Internet job postings, recruitment videos, and recruitment interviews.

For more information about this research, contact Alonzo Johnson, Ph.D., Alonzo.Johnson@beamglobal.com.