

## Personality and Organizations: A Test of the Homogeneity of Personality Hypothesis

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A central proposition of attraction–selection–attrition theory (B. Schneider, 1987) and of the literature on organizational socialization was tested. Support for the hypothesis that organizations are relatively homogeneous with respect to the personality attributes of their managers was found. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) conducted on a sample of approximately 13,000 managers from 142 organizations representing a broad cross-sample of U.S. industries revealed a significant effect for organizational membership on the personality characteristics of managers. Results of a 2nd MANOVA, nesting organizations within industries, revealed a significant effect for both organization and industry on the personality characteristics of managers. Some implications of these findings are discussed.

During the early part of this century, a group of American anthropologists, who were admittedly influenced by the psychodynamic psychology of Freud, began to concern themselves with the study of intercultural variation in personality (cf. DuBois, 1944; Kardiner, 1945). These anthropologists were not so much interested in the development of individual personality, as was true of their counterparts in psychology; rather, they were intrigued by the societal distribution of various personality characteristics. Fromm (1942) summarized their interest when he wrote, “We are interested . . . not in the peculiarities by which . . . persons differ from each other, but in that part of their character structure [personality] that is common to most members of the group” (p. 277). These anthropologists believed that an understanding of shared personality

characteristics (often referred to as *modal personality*) at the level of societal culture could provide a unique opportunity to describe, differentiate, and understand the behavior of these collectives.

Organizational scientists are also interested in describing, differentiating, and understanding the behavior of a collective (i.e., an organization) and believe that the anthropological notion of shared personality characteristics may offer a unique opportunity to contribute to the understanding of organizations and their strategy, structure, and culture. The research described in this article was designed to test a fundamental assumption of the notion of shared organizational personality characteristics or of a modal organizational personality—an assumption we refer to as the *homogeneity hypothesis*. More specifically, the purpose of the present effort was to test the degree to which organizational membership was associated with the personality profiles of their managers for a sample of organizations.

In what follows, we provide a brief rationale for the hypothesis that organizations are relatively homogeneous with respect to the personality characteristics of the people in them. This rationale is based on Schneider’s (1987) attraction–selection–attrition (ASA) model and on the literature on organizational socialization. We do not believe that the ASA model and socialization are mutually exclusive; in fact, they may be mutually reinforcing. We then present the results of an initial study of the managers of 142 organizations that provides support for the homogeneity hypothesis. Finally, we discuss the implications of personality homogeneity, or modal personality, in contributing to the understanding of organizational behavior and suggest future research directions.

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The research reported here was partially supported by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences and by the Center for Creative Leadership. The views expressed here are the views of the individual authors and should be attributed to them only. This project was also facilitated by a University of Maryland Research Fellowship.

We thank Paul Hanges, John Holland, Robert Hogan, Larry James, and Katherine Klein for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.

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### The People Make the Place

Schneider (1987) proposed a model of organizational behavior, the ASA model, that rests on the fundamental assumption that people in any organization are unique in that they are the ones attracted to, chosen by, and who choose to remain with an organization. Further, the ASA model posits that the key factor influencing the relationship between the person and the organization is the fit of the individual's personality with that of the modal personality of the organization. Thus, Schneider, like the early 20th-century American anthropologists, hypothesized that organizations are relatively homogeneous with regard to personality and can be reliably differentiated on the basis of the modal personality of the people in them. Implicitly, Schneider suggested a reconceptualization of organizations in terms of aggregate individual personality characteristics.

The ASA model begins with the personality of the founder of the organization. Like Schein (1992), Schneider (1987) considered the founder as the central determinant of an organization in all of its respects, and it is through the founder's actions that an organization takes on the strategy, structure, and culture observed at later points in time. ASA proposes that these so-called structural attributes are reflections of the founder's personality and, further, that people are attracted to the strategy, structure, and culture the founder creates.

Founders also tend to reproduce the way they think and behave by hiring those with anticipated similarities in thoughts and behavior. By inference, this hiring strategy yields relative homogeneity in the personalities of organizational members and relative homogeneity with regard to the form of the decisions they make. Schein (1992) noted the influence of the founder this way:

Founders not only choose the basic mission and the environmental context in which the new group will operate, but they choose the group members and bias the original responses that the group makes in its effort to succeed in its environment and to integrate itself. Organizations do not form accidentally or spontaneously. (pp. 211–212)

The ASA cycle suggests that, first, people are differentially attracted to organizations on the basis of an organization's character and the character's manifestations in organizational structure, strategy, and culture. Levinson (1987) suggested that "there is indeed such a phenomenon as organizational personality" (p. 52) and that this personality affects a person's decision to join an organization. This proposition is consistent with research in vocational psychology and with the literature on organizational choice (see Schneider, 1983; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995, for reviews). Thus, the attraction principle suggests that the propensity for organizations to develop a modal personality begins before the organization has

the opportunity to formally act in choosing members but is inherent in the preferences held by applicants for particular types of organizations.

Second, through formal and informal selection strategies, organizations choose those individuals who are compatible with the working environment or who fit the character of the organization. Selection further increases homogeneity and the propensity for a modal personality by restricting the type of applicants who enter an organization to those with the competencies, interests, and personality consistent with the goals of the organization. A. P. Brief (personal communication, December 22, 1997) commented that the hypothesized basis of the selection stage in the ASA model is not a new conceptualization. He noted that Barnard (1938) prescribed selecting and promoting people to executive positions who match those already in place.

Perhaps often and certainly occasionally men cannot be promoted or selected, or even must be relieved, because they cannot function, because they "do not fit" where there is no question of formal competence. This question of "fitness" involves such matters as education, experience, age, sex, personal distinctions, prestige, race. (Barnard, 1938, p. 224)

People who do not fit a working environment tend to leave or "must be relieved." The literature on turnover has consistently supported this hypothesis (Mobley, 1982; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). Homogeneity is increased by ridding the organization of those people who do not fit and, by implication, leaving those individuals who do.

Schneider (1987), Schneider et al. (1995), and Schneider, Kristof, Goldstein, and Smith (1997) have reviewed the literature that is relevant to the ASA framework, so we do not review that literature here. Suffice it to say that various studies tend to yield evidence supportive of the model. For example, there is research that reveals that people are attracted to organizations that fit their own personality (Judge & Cable, 1997). There is also research that reveals that people are likely to leave organizations they do not fit (O'Reilly et al., 1991) and that people choose organizations that fit their need structures (e.g., high-need-for-achievement people choose to work in organizations with individual incentive systems; Turban & Keon, 1993). There is also evidence that organizations consciously make selection and promotion decisions that serve to clone the personality attributes of the dominant coalition (Pinfield, 1995).

To summarize, Argyris (1958) proposed that organizations attract and select what he called *right types*. Similarly, ASA theory proposes that an outcome of the ASA cycle is relative homogeneity of the kinds of persons in an organization, especially homogeneity at the upper management level of the organization (Schein, 1992). Basi-

cally, Schneider proposed that attraction and selection produce some homogeneity; that those who do not fit leave the organization, yielding yet more homogeneity in those who remain; and that in different organizations the result would be different modal personality types.

### The Place Makes the People

For psychological anthropologists, the source of homogeneity of personality was quite clear: A person was the product of his or her cultural inheritance. Personality was considered a function of the particular cultural milieu in which a person was imbedded and the unique course of developmental experiences to which a person was exposed (referred to as *acculturation* or *socialization*). In many ways, this perspective has been adopted by organizational scientists to describe the process by which the vision, values, strategy, goals, and culture of an organization are communicated to, and subsequently internalized by, organizational newcomers (cf. Louis, 1990). It is not our intent here to review the mass of theory and research on organizational socialization that has been adequately addressed elsewhere (cf. Fisher, 1986; Louis, 1990; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Rather, we note that a function of socialization is to teach newcomers "the ropes" and to instill in newcomers the perspectives and values of an organization's culture (Louis, 1990; Trice & Beyer, 1993). We hypothesize that an outcome of the socialization process in organizations would be a homogeneity of personality because (a) newcomers come to take on the values and mores of the setting and (b) newcomers who are not socialized "are not likely to stay" (Trice & Beyer, 1993, p. 137).

Chatman (1991) provided one recent organizational research example that supports the homogenizing quality of socialization processes. Chatman examined socialization in accounting firms and found that various socialization processes contributed to the emerging congruence of newcomer values and incumbent values. Changes from newcomer to incumbent values were especially acute during a recruit's 1st year. Interestingly, Chatman also investigated the impact of applicant selection on organizational values congruence. Her results suggest that both selection and socialization contribute uniquely to individual-organizational values congruence. Similarly, Ostroff and Rothausen (1997) examined the role that tenure plays in person-organization fit and found that over time an individual's values, attitudes, and interests converge on the dominant values, attitudes, and interests of the modal organizational member. This phenomenon suggests that organizational processes, like socialization, affect individual dispositions (see Bell & Staw, 1989, and Kohn & Schooler, 1983, for additional perspectives on environmental and personal influences on individuals and environments).

Schneider (1983, 1987) has noted, however, that although organizations may have socializing influences on people, people arrive in the setting with some of the dispositions required to be socialized to that setting. Similar to the findings in psychology (cf. Bowers, 1973) in general and in vocational psychology (cf. Holland, 1985) in particular, Schneider noted that people are not randomly assigned to settings; they actively choose themselves into them. We speculate that ASA, especially through the processes of attraction and selection, yields a rough fit between the person and the organization and that socialization polishes the fit (Anderson & Ostroff, 1997; Semmer & Schallberger, 1996).

We were unable to tease apart the relative contribution of these different effects on homogeneity in the present study. Both ASA and the socialization literature, however, yield the common hypothesis of homogeneity of personality. Regardless of the source of homogeneity, to our knowledge, there is only one published field study that directly tests the homogeneity hypothesis. This study, conducted in England by Jordan, Herriot, and Chalmers (1991), used a sample of four organizations containing 344 managers and demonstrated that the factors of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (Cattell, Eber, & Tatsuoka, 1970) significantly discriminated among those organizations. This finding suggests that there may be meaningful organizational differences in individual personality, lending some credence to the relative homogeneity hypothesis.

The present study is reminiscent of the research of Jordan et al. (1991) but on a much larger sample. We hypothesized that organizations could be reliably differentiated on the basis of the personality characteristics of their members.

## Method

### Sample

To test the homogeneity hypothesis, we required personality data from multiple members of multiple organizations. From the archives at the Center for Creative Leadership, we culled a sample of 12,739 managers from 142 organizations. This sample of 142 organizations was selected to ensure a credible index of the modal personality profiles of managers by limiting organizational participation to those organizations for which at least 25 managers had completed the personality measure. Each respondent completed, as part of a leadership development program, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI; Myers & McCaulley, 1985). The average age of the respondents was 41 years. The respondents were predominantly White (88%) and male (69%). Organizations were classified by industry by using *Fortune* magazine's industry classifications. Table 1 depicts the sample of organizations by industry.

Table 1  
Sample Characteristics by Industry

Industry <sup>a</sup>	No. of organizations	No. of respondents	% total sample
Airlines	1	43	0.3
Railroads	3	182	1.4
Trucking	1	26	0.2
Motor vehicles & parts	1	152	1.2
Chemicals	5	650	5.1
Health care	2	250	2.0
Pharmaceuticals	13	1,465	11.5
Rubber & plastic	1	649	5.1
Soaps & cosmetics	2	67	0.5
Tobacco	1	77	0.6
Computer & data services	6	364	2.9
Computers & office equipment	1	41	0.3
Electronics & electrical equipment	8	389	3.1
Scientific, photographic, & control equipment	3	261	2.0
Telecommunications	3	202	1.6
Building materials & glass	2	154	1.2
Engineering & construction	2	69	0.5
Metals	2	86	0.7
Electric & gas utilities	4	243	1.9
Petroleum & refining	4	242	1.9
Forest & paper products	5	318	2.5
Diversified financial	6	276	2.2
Life insurance	3	385	3.0
Commercial banks	4	197	1.5
Publishing & printing	2	411	3.2
Apparel	1	33	0.3
Beverages	1	34	0.3
Food	9	1,344	10.6
General merchandise	5	1,695	13.3
General consulting <sup>b</sup>	4	280	2.2
Government <sup>b</sup>	18	1,262	9.9
Education <sup>b</sup>	8	347	2.7
Specialist retailers	1	118	0.9
Missing	10	427	3.4
Total	142	12,739	

<sup>a</sup> Eleven industries were not represented in the database. These included aerospace, industrial and farm equipment, metal products, mining, pipelines, savings institutions, entertainment, furniture, textiles, food and drug stores, and wholesalers. <sup>b</sup> Three industry classifications were added to incorporate organizations that were not included in *Fortune* magazine's classifications. These are general consulting, government, and education.

### Instrument

The MBTI served as the measure of personality for this study. The MBTI is based on Jungian type theory, which postulates that individual personality can be defined by 1 of 16 types, which represent different permutations of four bipolar dimensions. The four dimensions of the MBTI are Extraversion-Introversion (EI), Thinking-Feeling (TF), Judging-Perceiving (JP), and Sensing-Intuition (SN). Table 2 depicts the frequency with which each MBTI type occurred in the database studied here. Table 2 reveals extensive overlap with the normative database on the MBTI for American managers in business and industry (McCaulley, 1990, Table 1, p. 386), where the permutations of types involving TJ predominate.

The use of the MBTI in this study is somewhat of a happen-

stance in that it is the measure for which a large sample of managers from a large sample of organizations was available. A more appropriate measure might have been one based on the five-factor model (FFM; Costa & McCrae, 1992) used recently by Judge and Cable (1997) to study, for example, the attraction of people to particular organizations. Given the question of interest here and the hypothesis that the modal personality of managers is reflected in organizational culture, an alternative might have been the Organizational Culture Profile (O'Reilly et al., 1991). However, by using the MBTI, we had access to a unique database, one that permits a test of the homogeneity hypothesis on many managers from many organizations. Regardless of prior criticisms of the MBTI, there is evidence that it recovers four of the five dimensions from the FFM (McCrae & Costa, 1989). Also, in a recent review of research with the measure, Gardner and Martinko (1996) were quite supportive of continued research with the MBTI.

Although the MBTI is based on type theory, which suggests categorical or nonparametric measurement, research conducted with the MBTI frequently uses continuous scores derived from the four dimensions (a variation suggested in the MBTI manual itself; Myers & McCaulley, 1985). We conducted both kinds of analyses, but because the results were very similar, we present only the parametric analyses here.

### Analyses

By homogeneity hypothesis we mean to imply that there is a sufficient lack of within-organization variability (with respect to between-organization variability) to permit the reliable differentiation of organizations on the basis of the personality characteristics of the people in them. Statistically, this proposition can be tested by conducting a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using organization membership as the categorical independent variable and the four continuous MBTI dimensions as dependent variables. A significant multivariate effect for orga-

Table 2  
Frequency of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Types in the Center for Creative Leadership Database

Type	n	% sample
ENFJ	418	3.3
ENFP	593	4.7
ENTJ	1,595	12.5
ENTP	990	7.8
ESFJ	526	4.1
ESFP	205	1.6
ESTJ	2,021	15.9
ESTP	435	3.4
INFJ	221	1.7
INFP	305	2.4
INTJ	1,240	9.7
INTP	794	6.2
ISFJ	490	3.8
ISFP	193	1.5
ISTJ	2,279	17.9
ISTP	434	3.4

Note. E = Extroversion; N = Intuition; F = Feeling; J = Judging; P = Perceiving; T = Thinking; S = Sensing; I = Introversion.

nization membership suggests that the assumption of homogeneity is tenable; however, it provides us with no indication of the size of the effect.

With regard to effect size, recall that a MANOVA orthogonally extracts a series of canonical variates from the set of dependent variables (the MBTI dimensions) that best differentiates between the levels of the independent variable (organization membership). For each variate extracted, a MANOVA produces a squared canonical correlation that represents the amount of variance shared between the variate and the independent variable. Given that these variates are extracted orthogonally, the sum of these squared canonical correlations for all significant variates represents the total amount of variance shared between the variates and the independent variable. Stated differently, the sum of the squared canonical correlations represents the ratio of between-organization variability to total variability in personality, where variability in personality is defined by the extracted canonical variates. Conceptually, this index is a multivariate analog of the univariate effect size, the between-eta correlation ( $\eta_b^2$ ), and the related intraclass correlation (ICC) from an analysis of variance (Cooley & Lohnes, 1971).

Coincidentally, the procedure we have described for assessing homogeneity is conceptually identical to that used in other research where homogeneity (or agreement) is required to justify the aggregation of data (cf. Glick, 1985; James, 1982, for examples from the climate literature). James reviewed the published literature in which homogeneity was assessed by using the between-eta correlation or the ICC and reported a median value of .12 from that literature. On the basis of James's review, we adopted this median value as our cutoff to determine if homogeneity of personality is evident in organizations. In summary, the squared canonical variates that emerge from a MANOVA are directly interpretable as effect sizes, and, because the squared canonical variates are derived orthogonally, a simple sum of these values is the multivariate equivalent of the between-eta correlation and the ICC.

We realized, post hoc, in accordance with both Schneider's (1987) and Schein's (1992) view of the founder's role in creating an organization, that one of the initial decisions that may fundamentally shape the nature of the organization is choice of the industry in which to compete. Thus, organizations in different industries, we believed, might also differ with regard to the modal personality within them, and, within an industry, organizations should also differ. That is, the most conservative test of the organizational homogeneity hypothesis would be to demonstrate that, with industry taken into account, there remains a significant relationship between personality and organization membership (i.e., even within an industry, there are personality differences that characterize organizations).

Thus, to test our hypotheses, we conducted a series of MANOVAs. First, to examine the degree to which organizations differ with respect to the personality characteristics of the managers in them, we conducted a one-way MANOVA with organization membership as the independent variable and the four continuous dimensions of the MBTI as dependent variables. Second, to remove the effect of industry, we conducted a factorial MANOVA with industries, and organizations nested within industries, as the independent variables of interest. A factorial

MANOVA permits the parsing of effects to industries and to organizations in understanding the multilevel relationship of personality to industry and organizational membership.

For the nested MANOVA, the sample size was reduced to 11,139 managers from 123 organizations representing 24 industry segments. This reduction was due to our inability to identify the industry segment for 10 organizations and the fact that there were nine industries in our sample represented by a single company. In such cases, the effects due to industry and organization are completely confounded, so they were dropped from this analysis.

## Results

### *Results for Organizational Membership*

Using Wilks's multivariate criterion, we found that there was a significant main effect in the one-way MANOVA for organization membership on the four MBTI dimensions ( $\lambda = .77$ ;  $p < .001$ ). This finding suggests that organizations do, in fact, differ with respect to the personality characteristics of their members. Table 3 shows the results of the MANOVA in canonical form. The canonical correlations showing the relationship between each of the four canonical variates (best linear combination of the MBTI dimensions) and organizational membership range from .34 to .16. Because each canonical variate is extracted orthogonally, the sum of the squared canonical correlations indicates the total amount of shared variation between organization membership and the four MBTI canonical variates (Bobko, 1990). The summed, squared canonical correlation was .24, substantially exceeding James's (1982) median value of .12.

The pooled within-organization correlations between the MBTI dimensions and the canonical variates (see Table 4) indicates that the TF dimension dominated the first function and best distinguished between organizations, followed by the SN, EI, and JP dimensions. Correlations below .50 were not interpreted. Given the very strong relationship between the MBTI continuous dimension scores and the subsequent canonical variates, in later text and tables we refer to the four functions by their respective MBTI labels—always remembering that it is the variates, not the MBTI continuous dimensions, that are involved in the analyses.

Table 3  
*Results of the Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Organization Membership—Canonical Correlations*

Function	Canonical <i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
1	.34	.116
2	.27	.073
3	.18	.032
4	.16	.023

Table 4  
Correlations Between Dependent Variables and  
Canonical Functions for Organization

Variable	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
TF	.98	.21	.02	.02
SN	-.11	.98	-.12	.08
EI	-.12	-.11	.88	.44
JP	.16	.30	-.45	.83

Note. TF = Thinking-Feeling; SN = Sensing-Intuition; EI = Extraversion-Introversion; JP = Judging-Perceiving.

Figure 1 reveals the personality profiles for 4 randomly chosen organizations based on the four canonical functions extracted in the MANOVA. In the figure, the first bar for each organization represents that organization's score on the TF, the second bar the results for the SN, and so forth. Where no bar is apparent, the score is essentially zero. This figure reveals the differences in profiles that can characterize the modal personality of the managers in different organizations. In addition, Figure 1 reveals the predominance of the TF dimension in differentiating organizations on the basis of the MBTI data. This finding would be expected, given the relative strength of the TF dimension in its relationship to organizational membership.

#### Results for Organization Nested Within Industry

Results of the factorial MANOVA with industry, and organization nested within industry, as the independent variable and the four continuous dimensions of the MBTI as the dependent variables are presented in Tables 5 and 6. Table 5 presents the canonical results for the significant

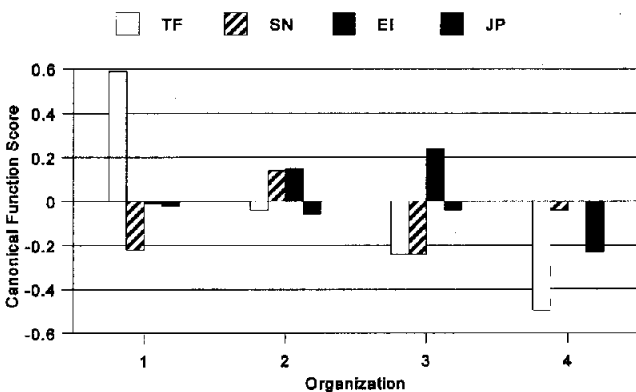


Figure 1. The canonical function scores and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality profiles for four randomly chosen organizations. TF = Thinking-Feeling; SN = Sensing-Intuition; EI = Extraversion-Introversion; JP = Judging-Perceiving.

industry effect (Wilks's  $\lambda = .956$ ;  $p < .001$ ). The sum of the squared canonical correlations for the four variates extracted was .05. This effect, although significant, is small and below the criterion of .12 set by James (1982).

Table 6 presents the canonical results for the organization-nested-within-industry effect. The sum of the squared canonical correlations for the four variates extracted was .16 (Wilks's  $\lambda = .846$ ;  $p < .001$ ). With industry effects removed, the percentage of shared variance between organization membership and the four MBTI canonical variates exceeded James's (1982) median value of .12.

Figure 2 presents the personality profiles for four new organizations, this time for four organizations from the same industry. Again, even controlling for industry, the differences in the modal personality profiles of managers in different organizations were revealed. A missing bar in the figure indicates that the function score is essentially zero.

#### Discussion

These results suggest support for the hypothesis that organizations are relatively homogeneous with regard to the personality characteristics of their managers. This hypothesis emerged from a consideration of two streams of thinking and research: ASA theory and the socialization construct. Both traditions imply homogeneity of personality in organizations, but only one prior direct statistical test of the hypothesis using a measure of personality has been reported (Jordan et al., 1991). The present results shed no light on the causes of the homogeneity observed. However, we speculate that homogeneity emerges from a process that includes decisions by individuals regarding the attractiveness of organizational membership to them, decisions by organizations about who is attractive as an employee, socialization tactics by organizations to imbue newcomers with the values and perspectives of the organization, and decisions (by the individual or by the organization) to leave the organization when a fit is not achieved. Research on the ways such a combination of personal and organizational influences on personality homogeneity operates is warranted.

Table 5  
Results of the Multivariate Analysis of Variance Industry  
Effect-Canonical Correlations

Function	Canonical R	R <sup>2</sup>
TF	.16	.02
SN	.09	.01
EI	.07	.01
JP	.07	.01

Note. TF = Thinking-Feeling; SN = Sensing-Intuition; EI = Extraversion-Introversion; JP = Judging-Perceiving.

Table 6  
*Results of the Multivariate Analysis of Variance*  
*Organization-Nested-Within-Industry*  
*Effect-Canonical Correlations*

Function	Canonical R	R <sup>2</sup>
TF	.29	.08
SN	.20	.04
EI	.15	.02
JP	.14	.02

Note. TF = Thinking-Feeling; SN = Sensing-Intuition; EI = Extraversion-Introversion; JP = Judging-Perceiving.

The demonstration of homogeneity of personality in organizations is particularly critical for ASA theory. In its original formulation (Schneider, 1987), ASA theory contained seven propositions, but the most central conceptual and research issue for the ASA framework concerned the predicted relative homogeneity of the personality in organizations. The study we have summarized here continues the line of research stimulated by ASA (Schneider et al., 1995) and provides additional impetus for continued research on the additional propositions in the theory.

As summarized by Schneider et al. (1995), some evidence has begun to accumulate in support of these propositions, especially the propositions regarding the tendencies of people to be attracted to organizations they fit and to leave those they do not fit. Of course, the literature on organizational socialization also makes the prediction that poor fit yields attrition (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

As yet, we have no direct normative statistical evidence regarding the implications of such homogeneity for the ways recruitment, selection, and socialization are actually practiced in organizations and in the strategies, structures, and cultures that evolve in organizations characterized by different modal personalities, much less the implications of homogeneity for eventual organizational effectiveness. On the issue of organizational effectiveness, however, threads from the more qualitative results of extensive case studies presented earlier by Argyris (1958) and later by Schein (1992), combined with the research in the groups literature (Guzzo & Shea, 1992; Herriot & Pemberton, 1995), create a fabric suggestive of the potential importance of the modal personality construct. The implications are not good. In all of the citations, heterogeneity was found to yield increased adaptability and flexibility in dealing with difficult tasks involving demands for creativity and innovation. In other words, as predicted by Schneider (1987), it can be inferred that (a) organizations tend toward homogeneity of personality and (b) homogeneity of personality is not beneficial to long-term organizational effectiveness.

On the basis of the present results, however, these spec-

ulations must be labeled as such—speculations. In addition, the present results contribute to speculations with regard to the potential role of individual differences in understanding organizational phenomena (Hattrup & Jackson, 1996; Holland, 1985; Schneider, 1996). There has been a clear tendency in the organizational sciences to ignore the attributes of individuals when conceptualizing and studying the behavior of organizations: People are interesting, the literature seems to say, but not when it comes time to understand important organizational phenomena.

It has recently been noted by several researchers (Astley & Van de Ven, 1983; Schneider et al., 1995; Staw, 1991; Staw & Sutton, 1992) that the unfortunate consequence of this institutionalized distinction between the micro and the macro is a scholarly bifurcation characterized by parallel, yet largely exclusive, literatures and a provincialism that impedes cross-level and interdisciplinary research. First, there is the call by researchers like Staw (1991; Staw & Sutton, 1992) to examine "how psychological theories can explain organizational action" (p. 805) and effectiveness. Second, several investigators (e.g., Chatman, 1989, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991) have begun to integrate both individual and organizational perspectives in their theory and research focusing neither on the micro- nor the macrolevel but instead on the mesolevel (House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995).

A failure to focus on the people attributes of organizations not only has theoretical ramifications but also several potentially important negative practical and managerial consequences. For example, in discussions of organizational design and change, structural rearrangements are the norm, yet ASA theory predicts that these structural changes may have little consequence if the people who

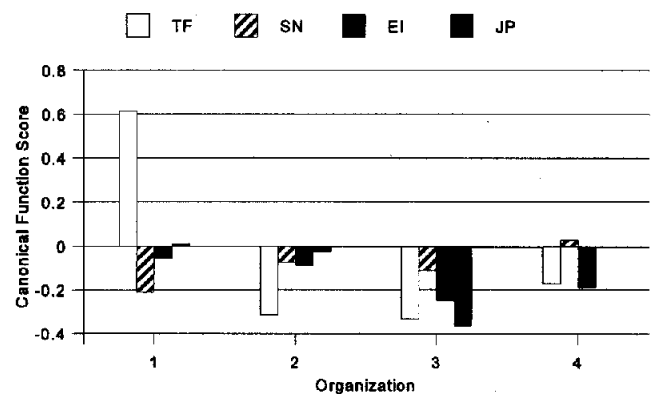


Figure 2. The canonical function scores and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality profiles for four randomly chosen organizations from the same industry. TF = Thinking-Feeling; SN = Sensing-Intuition; EI = Extraversion-Introversion; JP = Judging-Perceiving.

occupy those structures are not replaced, or at least fundamentally changed, through some focused learning or socialization experiences (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988). The failure of many structural rearrangements to yield long-term organizational change can be directly attributed, at least in part, to the modal personalities of the people in the organization and the notion that the existing structural arrangements fit those people (Kristof, 1996).

Or, consider less drastic issues in organization, like the way newcomers are socialized. Is it likely that an organization dominated by introverts will have the same kinds of socialization practices as one dominated by extraverts? More tangibly, why do police departments have different kinds of socialization practices than do retail organizations? Some might argue it is because of the kind of demands placed on these different kinds of organizations, the environments in which they function, and so forth. An alternative explanation, and the one that follows from ASA theory, is that police organizations attract, select, and retain different kinds of personalities than do retailers, and it is an outcome of an attraction, selection, and later socialization cycle that ultimately determines the way an organization goes about socializing newcomers.

It may be time for those interested in the study of individual differences in people in the workplace to reclaim some rights to the understanding of organizational behavior, strategy, structure, culture, and organizational effectiveness (Schneider, 1996). We hope that the kinds of data we have summarized in this article will begin to reveal that the potential for such seemingly radical cross-level conceptualization may be possible. Forty years ago, in a statement we agree with today, Argyris (1958) summarized this position as follows:

The fact that the organization is composed of variables from many different levels of analysis implies changes in research methodology. Behavioral scientists who traditionally abhor conducting research simultaneously on different levels of analysis may have to reconsider their position if their models are to represent reality. (p. 517)

### Conclusion

Although potentially provocative, the results presented here must be interpreted in the light of the earlier history of failure for psychological anthropology. As then, important implications for the modal personality of cultures were presented but ultimately discarded for failure to be supported by the weight of the evidence. In this study, we have shown there exists homogeneity of personality within organizations and that organizations reveal significant differences in their modal personality profiles. The meaning of such results, however, is extremely speculative because no relationships between modal personality and other facets of the organization have been established

to date. Do organizations with different modal personalities have different cultures, strategies, or structures? Hypothetically, yes, but the evidence needs to be gathered prior to concluding that the importance assigned to modal personality is a reality.

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Received April 24, 1997

Revision received January 20, 1998

Accepted January 20, 1998 ■