Research Paper

Study on the Relationship between Employees' Choice of Influence Tactic during an Interview and His Personality

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ABSTRACT

Several academics have explored the efficacy of personality measurements for personnel selection applications over the years. The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of personality traits - - Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness on employees' usage of influence tactics. Interviewees frequently employ persuasion techniques to impress the interviewer. These techniques might be honest, slightly exaggerated or entirely deceptive. A relationship between personality traits and the implementation of persuasion tactics may provide a better understanding of the person-job fit or person-organization fit. The current study aims to investigate the key five personality characteristics (Extraversion, Openness, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, and Agreeableness) and two Influence methods (Self-Promotion, Ingratiation) that candidates often apply during an interview. The findings revealed a considerable relationship between the two, allowing one to be determined about the other. Further investigation into other aspects may provide a more in-depth understanding of the interviewee and employee selection application.

Keywords: *Influence tactics, Personality traits, Employees, Interview*

"I'd rather interview 50 people than hire the wrong fit for the job" - Jeff Bezos

Human behavior in the workplace is studied by an I-O Psychologist. A part of I-O psychology focuses on selecting and evaluating people for any particular job. According to research, a job interview is by far the most extensively utilized instrument for selection in organizations (Huffcutt & Culbertson, 2011). Several elements are assessed by the recruiter during the interview. These elements include anything from knowledge, skills, and abilities to personality traits, values, and applied social skills (Huffcutt et. al. 2001). Although objective criteria such as employment experience or GPA are frequently used to determine who is invited to interview, they are significantly less essential for hiring decisions than performance during the interview (Dipboye, 1992). Given the importance of the interview, it is expected that candidates seek to be successful interviewees (Kristof-Brown et. al. 2002).

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Goffman (1955) brought the idea that people consciously manipulate the perceptions they send to others in interpersonal encounters to the behavioral sciences almost 40 years ago. Research has shown that applicants use strategies known as Influence Tactics to create positive impressions during interviews (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Kacmar, Deleary, & Ferris, 1992; Stevens & Kristof, 1995).

Influence Tactics
Influence tactics, also known as political behaviors or impression management methods are used to regulate shared perceptions (Ferris, Fedor, St King, 1994a). In other words, influence methods are employed in an attempt to persuade people to perceive a situation in the way it is desired. The endeavor to portray a particular (generally good) image of oneself to a target individual has been termed as Impression Management (Schlenker, 1980). Research has consistently supported that applicant employ a range of IM techniques spontaneously during interviews as these tactics predict positive interviewer evaluations. (McFarland, Ryan, & Kriska, 1997; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Several findings have observed a positive link between applicant IM tactics and recruiter evaluations: the candidates are more likable, their skills are more easily perceived, and their fit with the job or organization is more easily perceived (Chen et al., 2010; Chen & Lin, 2014).

Influence is frequently researched as part of the larger field of Organizational Politics. The term influence has a more negative than positive interpretation. Drory and Beaty (1991) associate it with phrases like manipulation, subversion, and achieving goals in inefficient methods. On the contrary, Bacharach (2005) claims that organizational politics has beneficial impacts. When used appropriately, influence tactics may consistently generate favorable attributions in others. As a result, the Influence tactic is a crucial technique through which candidates try to influence interviewers' opinions of them. To this end, research has identified the types of IM behaviors that applicants engage in, such as emphasizing one's qualifications and describing one's skills and abilities attractively (Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Franke, 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995), flattering the interviewer (Higgins & Judge, 2004), and exaggerating or even making up one's qualifications (Kristof-Brown, Levashina & Campion, 2007).

Individuals in organizations tend to utilize impression-management methods in ways that may be categorized as supervisor-focused, self-focused, or job-focused. (Wayne and Ferris 1990). Supervisor-focused strategies use ingratiating actions to make employees look thoughtful and helpful. Exemplification actions are employed in self-focused methods to make people appear good, courteous, and committed workers. Finally, self-motivated actions are utilized in job-focused methods to make people look more competent in their jobs. To measure the influence tactics in an organizational setting, Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) proposed a categorization scheme that identified eight tactics such as assertiveness, ingratiation, rationality, sanctions, exchange, upward appeals, blocking, and coalition. In addition to this, Jones and Pittman (1982) proposed another set of influence methods that they considered were important to interpersonal conduct in organizational contexts, in addition to the tactics proposed by Kipnis et al. (1980). Jones and Pittman's classification of self-presentation methods was the first to distinguish self-promotion from ingratiation. Even though Jones and Pittman classified five different self-presentation strategies, only self-promotion and ingratiation have gotten significant attention in the research.

Self-Promotion & Ingratiation

In organizational settings, self-promotion and ingratiation have been extensively studied because they appear to be particularly relevant to the job interview. Ingratiation is the practice of using specific activities such as opinion conformity, other enhancement, and favor-giving to boost the target person's liking of the individual (Jones, 1964). Self-promotion, on the other hand, is the effort at promoting one's good attributes to enhance proficiency and skills (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). In previous research, it was discovered that applicants are inclined to use ingratiation and self-promotion in job interviews and that both have beneficial effects on interview outcomes (Stevens & Kristof, 1995).

Despite the expanding number of studies of Influence Tactics in interview situations in recent years, some questions remain. Applicant personality factors that impact the strategy use of influence tactic is one of the concerns that have gotten little research. Although there is a growing interest in the impact of personality on behavior, there has been little research on the relationship between influence tactic use and personality factors. Amy Kristof-Brown, Murray R. Barrick, and Melinda Franke (2002) were the first to analyze how personality affects certain influence strategies. Their study looked at the connections between two well-known personality qualities linked with social interaction (extraversion and agreeableness), and three different types of IM (self-oriented, other-oriented, and non-verbal tactics). The results provide evidence that certain personality traits are related to applicant influence tactic use.

The Big Five Personality Traits

The main concern explored in this study is that there is a relationship between the applicant's choice of influence tactic and his personality. Self-promotion and Ingratiation as influence tactics will be studied. To analyze personality, the big five personality traits, namely, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness are taken into consideration. The fundamental benefit of the Big Five Personality Traits to organizational behavior is that it reinstates the relevance of predisposition traits, which have been convincingly proved to correspond to job success (Luthans, 2001). Being disciplined, industrious, organized, and goal-oriented are all examples of conscientiousness. Employees who score high on this feature are likely to be identified by their peers as having a strong work ethic and dedication. The degree of emotional stability, impulse control, and anxiety is referred to as neuroticism. They have a relatively low ability to deal with unpleasant events and become enraged at how others treat them (Van Heck, 1997). As a result, their presence and involvement in group projects will be restricted (Mandal & Saha, 2017). Extraversion manifests itself as increased friendliness, assertiveness, and talkativeness. They range from "Extravert" to "Introvert" characteristics. Extravert characteristics are advantageous in sales, politics, and the arts. Introvert characteristics are beneficial in production management as well as in the physical and scientific sciences (Sev, 2019). They are lined up for recognition, social validation, power, and obedience (Costa and McCrae 1992). According to Varca (2004), when a person is very extraverted, he or she frequently delivers services ahead of time. They also use their talents more effectively than personnel with low extraversion. This boosts their self-efficacy and confidence, which contributes to enhanced work efficacy (Berg and Feij, 2003; Griffin, 1997). Great intellectual curiosity and a taste for novelty and variety characterize openness. According to Jost (2016), those who have a high level of openness in their personality are likely to be liberal-minded and accepting of diversity. As a result, they are more open to diverse cultures and lifestyles. They have lower levels of ethnocentrism and right-wing authoritarianism. Finally, agreeableness is defined as

the ability to be helpful, cooperative, and sensitive to others. Individuals high on this trait have great interpersonal skills and find mundane connections to be inherently engaging. They also carry out all responsibilities allocated to them conscientiously and strive hard to achieve their objectives. There is some evidence that personality and motivation are intricately tied with individual differences and these qualities influence business intention, creation, and success, according to meta-analyses (Brandstätter, 2011).

There has been little research into what motivates applicants to utilize instant messaging, and much of what has been done has focused on the interview context. Some research indicates that an average of 37.25 tactics is used in every interview and that 97.5 percent of applicants use at least one tactic to sell themselves (Ellis et al., 2002). Meta-analyses have also shown that IM behaviors can influence interview outcomes (Barrick et al., 2009). In a nutshell, interview IM is common, vital, and crucial to comprehending applicant behavior throughout the interview.

Purpose
The study aims to find out the impact of applicant personal attributes on strategy utilization of influencing methods.

Hypothesis
- There will be a significant positive correlation between Personality Traits and Self-Promotion.
- There will be a significant positive correlation between Ingratiation and the Five Personality Traits.
- There will be a significant negative correlation between Self-Promotion and Neuroticism.
- There will be a significant negative correlation between Honest Ingratiation and Neuroticism.

METHODOLOGY
Sample
A total of 100 young adults from across the states, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi, and Rajasthan of India participated in the study. The age range of participants was 18 - 30 years.

Measures
- **Big Five Inventory -** The Big Five Inventory (BFI) was created in 1991 by John, Donahue, and Kentle. The 44-item English BFI was designed to enable for fast and flexible assessment of the five personality dimensions. Items were chosen from Big Five prototype definitions created by expert assessment and subsequent factor analytic validation in observer personality evaluations. Despite its short length, the BFI does not compromise subject delivery or psychometric qualities. The respondents were asked to rate each item by choosing one of the five options (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree).
- **Honest Impression Management Scale -** The scale was developed by Bourdage et. al. in 2018. It includes 2 influence tactics - Self-Promotion and Ingratiation (Honest & Deceptive). The participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (to no extent) to 5 (to a very great extent).

Procedure

The goal of the study was explained to the participants, and the surveys were completed using Google Forms. The participants were requested to fill out the questionnaires honestly and were assured that their answers would be treated confidentially. Standardized psychological tests were used for collecting responses and assessing various concepts.

RESULTS

To determine the relationship between the variables, mean, standard deviation, and correlations were calculated. Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations for each variable. Table 2 and 3 shows the correlations between all the variables and the replies of the participants were analyzed using the T-test which is presented in table 4.

Table 1: Showing N, Mean and Standard Deviation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Extraversion	100	25.76	6.125
Agreeableness	100	33.52	6.375
Neuroticism	100	23.64	6.016
Openness	100	35.88	6.646
Conscientiousness	100	31.60	5.827
Honest Ingratiation	100	29.93	5.605
Deceptive Ingratiation	100	12.08	3.821
Self-Promotion	100	54.56	9.865

Table 2: Showing N, Mean and Standard Deviation with Influence tactic as grouping variable

	Influence Tactic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Extraversion	Self-promotion	56	26.589	6.0205
	Ingratiation	44	24.705	6.1628
Agreeableness	Self-promotion	56	35.768	5.8309
	Ingratiation	44	30.659	5.9257
Neuroticism	Self-promotion	56	22.411	5.8520
	Ingratiation	44	25.205	5.9203
Openness	Self-promotion	56	37.071	5.3762
	Ingratiation	44	33.750	6.8849
Conscientiousness	Self-promotion	56	32.750	5.5963
	Ingratiation	44	30.136	5.8492

As we can see in Table 1, Self-promotion (54.56) was used most by the participants while they preferred to engage in honest ingratiation (29.93) rather than deceptive (12.08). According to the results from the Influence tactic scale, 56% of the participants used Self-promotion while 44% used Ingratiation as an Influence Tactic. Furthermore, persons with high scores in all personality traits except Neuroticism are more predisposed to Self-promotion. Ingratiation was more common among those who scored high on Neuroticism. Anger, anxiety, self-consciousness, irritability, emotional instability, and depression are all symptoms of neuroticism, which is a personality feature. Despite the fact that the difference is statistically small, one can be used to predict the other.

Table 3: Showing correlations of the five personality traits and self-promotion influence tactic

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism	Openness	Conscientiousness	Self-Promotion
Extraversion	1					
Agreeableness	.243*	1				
Neuroticism	-.646**	-.192	1			
Openness	.331**	.359**	-.149	1		
Conscientiousness	.361**	.344**	-.335**	.202*	1	
Self-Promotion	.281**	.339**	-.294**	.317**	.279**	1

Note. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.

Table 4: Showing correlations of the five personality traits and ingratiation influence tactic

	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism	Openness	Conscientiousness	Honest Ingratiation	Deceptive Ingratiation
Extraversion	1						
Agreeableness	.243*	1					
Neuroticism	-.646**	-.192	1				
Openness	.331**	.359**	-.149	1			
Conscientiousness	.361**	.344**	-.335**	.202*	1		
Honest Ingratiation	.326**	.232*	-.257**	.272**	.263**	1	
Deceptive Ingratiation	.050	-.095	.018	-.044	-.014	.425**	1

Note. * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001.

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate a significant correlation between the personality qualities, Extraversion, Openness, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Self-Promotion along with Honest Ingratiation, but the same cannot be said about the mentioned Personality traits and Deceptive Ingratiation as an influence method.

The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between four personality traits, Extraversion (r=0.281, p<.01), Openness (r=0.317, p<.01), Conscientiousness (r=0.279, p<.01), and Agreeableness (r=0.339, p<.01), and Self-Promotion, while a significantly negative correlation exists between Neuroticism (r=-0.294, p<.01) and Self-promotion, implying that when one variable increases, the other tends to decrease. The four traits aid in being active, open to new opportunities, and enhancing job performance. Because these candidates tend to be higher achievers, they may have more genuinely decent experiences to draw on, resulting in a greater ability to apply self-promotion strategies. However, Neuroticism is characterized by an inclination toward negative feelings. It includes feelings of anxiousness or anger, as well as self-doubt. Such feelings make it difficult to engage in self-promotional activities.

Furthermore, Honest Ingratiation has a statistically significant positive correlation with Extraversion (r = 0.326, p<.01), Openness (r = 0.272, p<.01), Conscientiousness (r = 0.263, p<.01), and Agreeableness (r = 0.232, p<.05) and a negatively correlated with Neuroticism (r = -0.257, p<.01). A research study indicated that, whereas honest and deceptive influence tactics are positively connected, they are associated with quite a distinct variable and subjective character traits. Honest influence tactics appear to be connected with trained, motivated, and interested applicants who score high on qualities like Extraversion and Conscientiousness, and who do well in an interview that they believe to be fair (Bourdage et al. 2018). Deceptive Ingratiation, on the other hand, has no significant association with any

of the personality factors. On the other hand, a study by Bourdage et al., 2018 revealed that applicants may not necessarily view deceptive IM as preferable, but rather engage in it because they perceive the interview to be too complicated and unfair, or because they lack the training, interpersonal comfort (i.e., extraversion), and preparation (i.e., conscientiousness) that would allow them to perform well through more reasonable means.

The findings also indicate that applicants are more likely to use self-promotional strategies than Ingratiation during interviews. In fact, Kristof-Brown et al. (2002) discovered that interview training was positively connected to self-promotion. Subsequently, the hypothesis states that there will be a significant correlation between personality traits and influence tactics, a positive correlation between Extraversion, Openness, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Self-Promotion, and a negative correlation between Neuroticism and Self-Promotion has been accepted. However, because there is no significant relationship between deceptive ingratiation and personality characteristics, the hypothesis that there is a substantial negative relationship between Deceptive Ingratiation and Agreeableness has been rejected. According to Stevens and Kristoff (1995), influence strategies have an impact on interview outcomes mostly through their effect on the perceptions of fit that recruiters generate throughout the interview.

CONCLUSION

Organizational scholars in the last 20 years have connected influence strategies to several parameters that reflect job results, drawing on earlier literature in social psychology. (C.A. Higgins et al., 2003). However, past research has mostly focused on the use of persuasion strategies in employment interviews, their outcomes, and the impact of perceived fit in the hiring process. There has been relatively little clarity in the research on the relationship between human attributes and the use of certain influence tactics. As a result, the current study attempted to investigate if there is an association between human traits and the selection of influence strategies utilized. The interviewee's impression management strategy is influenced by his or her personality type. As a result, the hypothesis has been accepted. Influence methods benefit the interviewee, but understanding the relationship between them and personality provides the interviewer an advantage. As firms face downsizing, quality efforts, and changes in or elimination of job structures, the benefits of employing employees who can move within an organization have become widely acknowledged. Increasing P-0 fit through hiring and socializing is frequently cited as the key to sustaining a staff with the flexibility and organizational commitment required to face these competitive challenges (Kristof, 1996). The current study was an important step in increasing the transparency of the personnel selection process. The field has a wide range of applications. Further study may be conducted, taking into consideration age and gender, as well as various other qualities and influencing strategies. The studies can also focus on how this can be used to determine the course of an interview by employers.

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