

A Field Study of the Role of Big Five Personality in Applicant Perceptions of Selection Fairness, Self, and the Hiring Organization

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Although there is a growing applicant reactions literature, relatively little work has addressed the role of personality in applicant perceptions. Using a sample of actual law enforcement applicants ($N = 120$), we studied the relationship between Big Five personality measured before a written test and applicants' post-test fairness perceptions, perceptions of themselves, and perceptions of the hiring organization. Personality was related to applicant perceptions after controlling for gender and test score. Personality also accounted for significant variance in self-perceptions and perceptions of the hiring organization beyond that accounted for by fairness perceptions. Neuroticism and agreeableness were the most consistent predictors of applicant perceptions. Our discussion focuses on the consideration of individual differences in applicant reactions research.

Extensive research has documented the relationship between Big Five personality and job performance (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991) and attitudes (e.g., Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). In contrast, the relationship between Big Five personality and applicant perceptions has been examined in only one published study (Viswesveran & Ones, 2004), and the role of Big Five in an actual hiring situation remains unexamined. However, there are important reasons to study the role of personality in applicant perceptions. First, because Big Five personality explains variance in work attitudes (e.g., Judge *et al.*, 2002), personality should also explain substantial variance in similar perceptions among applicants. Second, although perceptions of selection fairness (e.g., Gilliland, 1993) have been found to affect applicant self-perceptions and perceptions of the

organization (e.g., Bauer, Maertz, Dolen, & Campion, 1998; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Truxillo, Bauer, Campion, & Paronto, 2002), there is still substantial variance in applicant perceptions that remains unexplained. Past work suggests a role for individual differences (e.g., Bretz & Judge, 1994) and Big Five personality (e.g., Viswesveran & Ones, 2004) in applicant perceptions. Third, if applicants with desirable personality traits (e.g., conscientiousness) view certain selection methods negatively, these selection methods could be avoided by organizations.

Our goal was to examine the role of personality in applicant fairness perceptions, self-perceptions, and perceptions of the hiring organization. Using a sample of police applicants, we examined the relationship between the Big Five measured before testing and applicants' post-test fairness perceptions, self-perceptions, and perceptions of the organization. We also examined the incremental variance explained in applicant perceptions by personality after controlling for fairness perceptions. Note that the purpose of our study was not to assess the impact of a particular

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selection process on applicant perceptions. Rather, our goal was to assess the degree to which applicant perceptions are a function of stable individual differences (i.e., personality).

Normal Personality and Applicant Perceptions

Recent research on normal adult personality has focused on the Five-Factor ("Big Five") model (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992), which includes the dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Costa and McCrae (1992) maintain that a person's profile on the five factors provides insight into his or her emotional, interpersonal, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational styles. Research suggests that the Big Five predict job performance (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991) and employee attitudes (Judge *et al.*, 2002).

The role of personality in employee attitudes (e.g., Judge *et al.*, 2002) also suggests that personality should be similarly related to the affect and perceptions of job applicants. Moreover, Chan and Schmitt (2004) make a case for examining the role of personality and applicant reactions. Accordingly, Viswesveran and Ones (2004) demonstrated a relationship between personality and the importance ratings of applicant perceptions. Based on this literature, we made hypotheses regarding the most salient potential relationships between each of the Big Five dimensions and three key categories of applicant perceptions: Social fairness perceptions (focused on fair treatment; Bauer, Truxillo, Sanchez, Craig, Ferrara, & Campion, 2001), self-perceptions of selection performance, and perceptions of the organization. This study focuses on social fairness as opposed to structure fairness (focused on the fairness of the test itself; Bauer *et al.*, 2001) because personality is more likely to relate to social perceptions than to structure perceptions, with the latter being a function primarily of the test itself. However, to eliminate variance associated with the test itself, we controlled for test performance and structure fairness in the relevant analyses.

Neuroticism

Persons high in neuroticism tend to experience negative affect such as fear and embarrassment and greater reactivity and poorer coping to encountered stressors (Costa & McCrae, 1992). These individuals also tend to experience more negative life events than others do (Magnus, Diener, Fujita, & Pavot, 1993). Judge *et al.* (2002) found in their meta-analysis that of the Big Five neuroticism had one of the strongest relationships with job satisfaction. Similarly, we predicted that the negative affect associated with neuroticism should be related to negative perceptions of the social context of the test. This negative affect should also carry over to self-

perceptions of selection performance and perceptions of the organization itself.

Hypothesis 1: Neuroticism will negatively relate to applicant (a) perceptions of social fairness, (b) self-perceptions of selection performance, and (c) perceptions of the organization.

Agreeableness

Agreeable individuals tend to be cheerful, adaptable, and cooperative. They also tend to believe that others will feel sympathy toward them and be helpful to them (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Thus, agreeable persons should indicate that they were treated fairly by others in the selection process. Because agreeableness is associated with positive beliefs about others, agreeable applicants should make positive attributions about the organization.

Hypothesis 2: Agreeableness will be positively related to applicant (a) perceptions of social fairness and (b) perceptions of the organization.

Conscientiousness

Conscientious individuals tend to be goal-directed and motivated (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and conscientiousness has been shown to relate to job performance (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991). Because of their tendency to perform well, we believed conscientious applicants should have positive self-perceptions regarding their performance.

Hypothesis 3: Conscientiousness will be positively related to applicant self-perceptions of selection performance.

Extraversion

Because extraverted people tend to be gregarious and to like others (Costa & McCrae, 1992), we believed extraverts would perceive that they were treated fairly by others during selection. Moreover, because extraverts are more likely to be optimistic (Costa & McCrae, 1992), we believed that extraversion should be related to positive self-perceptions.

Hypothesis 4: Extraversion will be positively related to applicant (a) perceptions of social fairness and (b) self-perceptions of selection performance.

Openness to Experience

People high in openness to experience tend to have active imaginations, be aware of their own feelings, and have high intellectual curiosity (Costa & McCrae, 1992). While there

appears to be little relationship between openness to experience and job satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 2002), openness to experience may affect the way individuals approach novel testing situations, and in turn, how they perceive themselves and the testing organization. For example, Van Vienen, Taris, Scholten, and Schinkel (2004) found that openness to experience was related to test beliefs and job attractiveness.

Hypothesis 5: Openness to experience will be positively related to applicant (a) perceptions of social fairness, (b) self-perceptions of selection performance, and (c) perceptions of the organization.

Because most applicant reactions research has been based in organizational justice theory, the relationship between process fairness and self-perceptions and perceptions of the organization is well established (e.g., Bauer *et al.*, 2001), as is the effect of outcome fairness and outcome favorability on applicant perceptions (e.g., Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). However, the incremental variance explained by individual differences such as personality beyond that explained by fairness perceptions remains an important gap in the literature. Thus, we also explored the relationship between Big Five personality and applicant perceptions after controlling for process fairness (social fairness and structure fairness) and outcome fairness.

Research Question

What is the incremental variance explained by personality in self-perceptions of selection performance and perceptions of the organization beyond that explained by fairness perceptions (social fairness, structure fairness, and outcome fairness)?

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were drawn from two cohorts of police recruit applicants ($N = 240$) in a U.S. city ($n = 166$ for cohort 1, and $n = 74$ for cohort 2, after removing applicants who were also part of the first wave). The dataset used in this study has not been published elsewhere. During each cohort, data were collected from applicants before (Time 1) and after (Time 2) a multiple-choice, written test, which was the first step of a multiple-hurdle process. To reduce common method variance, personality measures were collected before the test at Time 1 (T1), and applicant perceptions variables were collected after the test at Time 2 (T2). Data were collected at the test site. Participants were provided with informed consent, and participation was voluntary and anonymous. Survey data and applicants' written test scores were matched by the last six digits of the applicants' social security numbers. Matched data for the 120 applicants (of a possible 240; 50% response rate) at both T1 and T2 included 98 men

(82%), 21 women, one non-response; 96 Whites (80%), 21 African Americans, two other. A power analysis showed enough power to test our hypotheses; concerned readers may contact the first author for details.

T1 Measures

Demographic variables including gender, ethnicity, and past test-taking experience for this job were collected at T1. The Big Five personality variables of *Extraversion* (eight items; $\alpha = .66$), *Conscientiousness* (eight items, $\alpha = .76$), *Agreeableness* (eight items; $\alpha = .69$), *Neuroticism* (eight items; $\alpha = .66$), and *Openness to Experience* (seven items; $\alpha = .64$) were measured using the Mini-Markers scale (Saucier, 1994). The 39 unipolar adjective items used in this study were derived from Goldberg's (1992) 100-item scale to maximize brevity and minimize the loss of reliability. Participants made ratings about themselves on a seven-point scale (1 = "Extremely Inaccurate," 7 = "Extremely Accurate"). Note that while these internal consistencies are not all above .70, similar internal consistencies have been found in other Big Five research (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992) perhaps because the constructs are multifaceted. In addition, although some of these Big Five dimensions are highly intercorrelated, this may largely be a function of the particular measure used, and an orthogonal version of the Mini-Markers has now been developed (Saucier, 2002).

T2 Measures

Fairness. *Social fairness* (20 items; $\alpha = .85$, based on the five facets that comprise it) was measured by Bauer *et al.*'s (2001) selection procedural justice scales (SPJS). The SPJS was developed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to tap the selection process fairness dimensions of Gilliland's (1993) model. The SPJS encompasses 11 facets and two higher-order factors (structure and social fairness) which echo the fairness framework proposed by Greenberg (1993). The social fairness subscale, which is focused on the fairness of interpersonal treatment, includes the facets of consistency of administration, openness of the testing staff, treatment by the testing staff, two-way communication during the testing process, and propriety of questions. To measure the *structure fairness* of the written test, which is focused on the fairness of the selection process itself (to be used as a control variable for testing the Research Question), we used the structure fairness subscale (17 items; $\alpha = .72$, based on the five facets that comprise it) of Bauer *et al.*'s (2001) SPJS. The structure fairness subscale taps the five fairness facets of job-relatedness, information known about the test itself, opportunity to perform, reconsideration opportunity, and feedback timeliness. Bauer *et al.* (2001) present evidence over several samples of the discriminant validity of these social and structure fairness subscales. *Outcome fairness* ($\alpha = .90$; to be used as a control variable in the Research Question) was measured by two items

(e.g., "I think that I will get a fair outcome as a result of the Civil Service hiring process"). All measures used five-point scales (1 = "Strongly Disagree," 5 = "Strongly Agree").

Self-Perceptions of Selection Performance. *Test-taking self-efficacy* ($\alpha = .81$) was measured by three items (e.g., "I am confident in my ability to do well on written tests") based on Bauer *et al.*'s (1998) scale. Responses were on a five-point scale (1 = "Strongly Disagree," 5 = "Strongly Agree"). *Likelihood of getting a job offer* was measured by a single item where applicants estimated the probability that they would get a job offer on a scale of 0–100.

Organizational Perceptions. *Perceived employee relations* ($\alpha = .87$) was measured by three items (e.g., "There would probably be good relations between workers and management at the ___ Police Department"). *Turnover perceptions* ($\alpha = .81$) was measured by three items (e.g., "I would be likely to quit my job with the ___ Police Department"). This variable was reverse coded so that a positive score corresponded to positive perceptions to be consistent with the other variables. All measures used five-point scales (1 = "Strongly Disagree," 5 = "Strongly Agree").

Given the importance of outcome favorability in determining applicant perceptions (e.g., Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), we also matched applicants' *written test score* (a skills test focused on police work) with their survey responses to control for variance associated with test performance in all regression analyses.

Results

Correlational Analyses

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations are presented in Table 1. In general, the personality dimensions measured at T1 correlated as hypothesized with the applicant perceptions measured at T2. Neuroticism was negatively correlated with all of the applicant perceptions variables except for likelihood of getting the job (r 's = $-.22$ to $-.36$, p 's $< .05$), providing support for Hypotheses 1a and 1c, and partial support for 1b. Agreeableness was correlated with social fairness ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), in support of Hypothesis 2a, and was correlated with turnover perceptions and employee relations (r 's = $.18$ and $.40$, respectively, p 's $< .05$, one-tailed), supporting Hypothesis 2b. Conscientiousness was correlated with the self-perceptions variables of test-taking self-efficacy and likelihood of getting the job, (r 's = $.21$ and $.29$, respectively, p 's $< .05$), supporting Hypothesis 3. Although Hypothesis 4a was not supported, in that extraversion was not related to social fairness, ($r = .10$, NS), Hypothesis 4b was supported, in that extraversion was related to the self-perceptions variables of test-taking self-efficacy and likelihood of getting the job (r 's = $.29$ and $.21$, respectively, p 's $< .05$). With regard to Hypothesis 5, openness to experience was related only to social fairness (Hypothesis 5a; $r = .25$, $p < .01$). Finally, there were some unhypothesized relationships found between personality and applicant

perceptions. Specifically, conscientiousness was related to social fairness ($r = .21$, $p < .05$) and perceived employee relations ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), and agreeableness was related to perceived likelihood of getting the job ($r = .28$, $p < .01$).

Hypotheses 1–5: Relationship of Personality to Applicant Perceptions

Control Variables. We used applicant test score as a control variable in our regression analyses to control for variance associated with test performance. We also used gender as a control variable because of the relatively small number of women in police jobs (U.S. Department of Labor, 2003). We also controlled for applicant test-taking experience for this job.

It is commonplace in studies of applicant perceptions to control for pre-existing perceptions to determine the degree to which perceptions *changed* in response to a selection procedure (typically a test; e.g., Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Truxillo *et al.*, 2002). However, the purpose of the present study was not to assess the impact of a selection process but instead to assess the degree to which applicant perceptions are a function of stable individual differences (i.e., personality). Therefore, we purposely did not control for pre-test applicant perceptions. However, the correlation between the T1 applicant perceptions and the other study variables are shown above the diagonal in Table 1.

Personality and Social Fairness. We used hierarchical regression to further test the effects of Big Five personality on social fairness. With T2 social fairness as the dependent variable, we entered test score, gender, and test experience in Step 1 as control variables, and the T1 personality variables in Step 2. These analyses are presented in Table 2. There was a significant change in R^2 for social fairness, $\Delta R^2 = .19$, $F(5, 89) = 4.31$, $p < .01$. Specifically, neuroticism was negatively related to social fairness, $\beta = -.26$, $t = -2.24$, $p < .05$.

Personality and Self-Perceptions of Selection Performance. We used hierarchical regression to further test the effects of Big Five personality on applicant self-perceptions of selection performance. We created two regression equations with T2 test-taking self-efficacy and T2 likelihood of getting the job as the dependent variables. We entered test score, gender, and test experience in Step 1 as control variables, and the T1 personality variables in Step 2. These analyses are presented in Table 2. There was a significant change in R^2 for self-efficacy, $\Delta R^2 = .23$, $F(5, 90) = 5.53$, $p < .01$. Specifically, extraversion was positively related to self-efficacy, $\beta = .30$, $t = 2.86$, $p < .01$, and neuroticism was negatively related to self-efficacy, $\beta = -.21$, $t = -1.79$, $p < .05$, one-tailed. There was also a significant change in R^2 for likelihood of getting the job, $\Delta R^2 = .16$, $F(5, 90) = 3.64$, $p < .01$. Specifically, agreeableness was positively related to likelihood of getting the job, $\beta = .40$, $t = 2.92$, $p < .01$.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations (SD), intercorrelations, and α -reliabilities for study variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Test score	66.12	12.05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.14	-.02	.09	-.12	.13	-
2. Gender	.18	.38	-.16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.01	-.12	.07	-.15	-.05	-
3. Ethnicity	.20	.40	-.16	.11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.08	.04	-.04	.07	.07	-
4. T1 extraversion	5.06	.79	.07	.09	-.21*	(.66)	-	-	-	-	-	-	.09	.21*	.21*	-.18	-.02	-
5. T1 agreeableness	5.89	.69	.22*	.11	-.13	.20*	(.69)	-	-	-	-	-	.08	.17	.27**	-.08	.18	-
6. T1 conscientiousness	6.01	.72	.21*	.17	-.24*	.36**	.67**	(.76)	-	-	-	-	.14	.23*	.33**	-.06	.05	-
7. T1 neuroticism	2.67	.79	-.19	.07	.07	-.20*	-.57**	-.51**	(.66)	-	-	-	-.16	-.31**	-.10	.23*	-.16	-
8. T1 openness to experience	5.54	.72	.09	.10	.08	.27*	.42**	.40**	-.22*	(.64)	-	-	.13	.20*	.15	-.03	-.03	-
9. T2 structure fairness	3.36	.51	-.12	.05	-.08	.16	.09	.06	-.14	.19	(.72)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. T2 social fairness	4.26	.51	-.18	.08	.03	.10	.30**	.21*	-.32**	.25**	.48**	(.85)	-	-	-	-	-	-
11. T2 outcome fairness	3.85	.83	-.15	-.04	.05	.10	.08	.04	-.19*	.16	.40**	.51**	(.90)	.28**	.34**	-.09	-.08	-.34**
Self-perceptions																		
12. T2 test-taking self-efficacy	3.65	.67	-.05	-.12	-.07	.29**	-.02	.21*	-.23*	.17	.31**	.18	.31**	(.81)	.35**	-.02	.18	-.14
13. T2 likelihood of getting job	.72	.24	.03	.02	.03	.21*	.28**	.29**	-.15	.16	.22*	.12	.22*	.38**	-	-.09	.12	-.28**
Organizational perceptions																		
14. T2 turnover perceptions	2.19	.82	.20*	-.02	.01	.06	.18	.07	-.36**	-.07	.03	.10	.05	-.13	-.04	(.81)	-.22*	-.17
15. T2 perceived employee relations	3.66	.65	.16	.02	-.05	.07	.40**	.28**	-.22*	.09	.20*	.25**	.22*	.06	.08	.22*	(.87)	-.02
16. Test experience	.44	.50	-.05	.07	-.07	-.01	.14	-.02	.02	.02	.01	.06	-.17	-.13	-.23*	-.10	.10	-

Notes: *N* ranges from 105 to 120. The correlations for the Time 1 (pre-test) overall fairness, self-perceptions, and organizational perceptions variables are given above the diagonal, whereas correlations for Time 2 applicant perceptions are below the diagonal; α -reliabilities are for the Time 2 variables, which are the focus of this study. Gender was coded 0 = White, 1 = non-White. Ethnicity is coded 0 = White, 1 = females. Turnover perceptions was reverse coded so that a positive score corresponds to positive perceptions to be consistent with the other outcome variables. Test experience was coded 0 = No, 1 = Yes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed.

Table 2. Hierarchical regressions with T1 Big Five personality predicting T2 social fairness, T2 self-perceptions, and T2 perceptions of the hiring organization

Variable	T2 self-perceptions									T2 perceptions of the hiring organization					
	T2 social fairness			T2 test-taking self-efficacy			T2 likelihood of getting the job			T2 perceived turnover			T2 perceived employee relations		
	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.04			.04			.06			.05			.03		
Gender			.05			-.19*			-.08			.12			-.05
Test score			-.29**			-.09			.03			.07			.07
Test experience			-.05			-.09			-.24*			-.18 ⁺			-.02
Step 2	.23** .19**			.26** .23**			.22** .16**			.21** .16**			.19* .16**		
Extraversion			.07			.30**			.16			.01			.10
Agreeableness			.19			-.17			.40**			.11			.43**
Conscientiousness			-.10			.18			.06			-.10			.11
Neuroticism			-.26*			-.21 ⁺			.09			-.39**			.13
Openness			.15			.08			-.08			-.16			-.13

Notes: N 's range from 97 to 99. β 's are for the final equation. R^2 and ΔR^2 values may appear inconsistent due to rounding.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, ⁺ $p < .10$.

Personality and Perceptions of the Hiring Organization. We used hierarchical regression to test the relationship between the Big Five personality and applicant perceptions of the hiring organization. We created two regression equations with T2 turnover perceptions and T2 perceived employee relations as the dependent variables. We entered test score, gender, and test experience in Step 1 as control variables, and the T1 personality variables in Step 2. These analyses are presented in Table 2. There was a significant change in R^2 for turnover perceptions, $\Delta R^2 = .16$, $F(5, 90) = 3.52$, $p < .01$. Specifically, neuroticism was negatively related to turnover perceptions, $\beta = -.39$, $t = -3.28$, $p < .01$. There was also a significant change in R^2 for perceived employee relations, $\Delta R^2 = .16$, $F(5, 88) = 3.54$, $p < .01$. Specifically, agreeableness was positively related to perceived employee relations, $\beta = .43$, $t = 3.02$, $p < .01$.

In summary, although the relationship between individual personality dimensions and the outcome variables were not as consistent in the regressions as in the correlational analyses, (perhaps due to multicollinearity among the personality measures), T1 personality accounted for substantial variance in the T2 outcome variables even after controlling for test score, gender, and test experience.

Research Question: Testing the Effects of Personality Beyond Fairness Perceptions

Control Variables. Because fairness perceptions are theorized to play a central role in applicant perceptions

(Gilliland, 1993), and because of the extensive work demonstrating that applicants' fairness perceptions (process and outcome fairness) are related to self-perceptions and perceptions of the organization (e.g., Bauer *et al.*, 2001; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000), it is important to establish the incremental variance explained by personality beyond that explained by fairness perceptions. With the four T2 self-perceptions of performance and perceptions of the organization measures as the dependent variables, we entered test score, gender, test experience, T2 process fairness perceptions (T2 social fairness and T2 structure fairness), and T2 outcome fairness as controls in Step 1. We then entered the T1 personality variables on Step 2.

Incremental Variance Explained in Self-Perceptions of Selection Performance. We created two regression equations with T2 test-taking self-efficacy and T2 likelihood of getting the job as the dependent variables. These analyses are shown in Table 3. There was a significant change in R^2 for self-efficacy, $\Delta R^2 = .16$, $F(5, 82) = 4.01$, $p < .01$. Specifically, extraversion was positively related to self-efficacy, $\beta = .26$, $t = 2.48$, $p < .05$. There was also a significant change in R^2 for likelihood of getting the job, $\Delta R^2 = .16$, $F(5, 82) = 3.60$, $p < .01$. Specifically, both agreeableness ($\beta = .33$, $t = 2.54$, $p < .05$) and conscientiousness ($\beta = .23$, $t = 1.74$, $p < .05$, one-tailed) were positively related to perceived likelihood of getting the job.

Incremental Variance Explained in Perceptions of the Hiring Organization. We created two regression equations with T2 turnover perceptions and T2 perceived

Table 3. Hierarchical regressions with T1 Big Five personality predicting T2 self-perceptions and T2 perceptions of the hiring organization after controlling for test score, T2 social fairness, structure fairness, and outcome fairness

Variable	T2 self-perceptions						T2 perceptions of the hiring organization					
	T2 test-taking self-efficacy			T2 likelihood of getting the job			T2 perceived turnover			T2 perceived employee relations		
	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β	R^2	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.19**			.14*			.09			.10		
Gender			-.20*			-.10			.11			-.05
Test score			-.02			.10			.09			.16
Test experience			-.01			-.13			.19 ⁺			.00
T2 social fairness			-.14			-.19			-.02			.07
T2 structure fairness			.25*			.19 ⁺			.15			.10
T2 outcome fairness			.22 ⁺			.21			-.03			.18
Step 2	.35**			.30**			.22*			.22*		
Extraversion		.16**	.26*		.16**	.07		.13*	-.00		.11 ⁺	.08
Agreeableness			-.21			.33*			.11			.35*
Conscientiousness			.20			.23 ⁺			-.05			.07
Neuroticism			-.18			.15			-.35**			.18
Openness			-.01			-.09			-.14			-.27*

Notes: N 's range from 92 to 94. β 's are for the final equation. R^2 and ΔR^2 values may appear inconsistent due to rounding.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, + $p < .10$.

employee relations as the dependent variables. These analyses are shown in Table 3. There was a significant change in R^2 for turnover perceptions, $\Delta R^2 = .13$, $F(5, 82) = 2.76$, $p < .05$. Specifically, neuroticism was negatively related to turnover perceptions, $\beta = -.35$, $t = -2.80$, $p < .01$. The change in R^2 for perceived employee relations was also significant, $\Delta R^2 = .11$, $F(5, 80) = 2.33$, $p < .10$. Both agreeableness ($\beta = .35$, $t = 2.47$, $p < .05$) and openness to experience ($\beta = -.27$, $t = -2.36$, $p < .05$) were related to perceived employee relations in the final equation.

In summary, the Research Question analyses indicated that personality accounted for significant incremental variance in applicants' performance perceptions and perceptions of the organization beyond that explained by fairness perceptions.

Discussion

This research makes three contributions to the applicant perceptions literature. First, it provides additional evidence that Big Five personality variables (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992) relate to applicant perceptions such as fairness perceptions, self-perceptions, and perceptions of the organization. Second, this study demonstrates that personality accounts for variance in self and organizational perceptions beyond that accounted for by fairness percep-

tions. These results are particularly compelling given that the T1 Big Five variables accounted for variance in the T2 self-perception and organizational perception variables even after controlling for T2 perceptions of fairness. Third, this study demonstrated these personality-percept relationships in a field setting using actual job applicants.

The hypothesized relationships between Big Five personality and applicant perceptions were generally supported at the correlational level. Specifically, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion were related to each of these outcomes generally as hypothesized. While the relationships between individual personality dimensions and the outcome variables were less consistent in the regression analyses, T1 personality still accounted for sizeable variance in the T2-dependent variables. More important, personality accounted for variance in self-perceptions and perceptions of the organization even after controlling for selection fairness, a consistent predictor of these outcomes in the applicant reactions literature.

Similar to Judge *et al.*'s (2002) meta-analytic findings regarding personality and job satisfaction, neuroticism appeared to be a consistent predictor of applicant perceptions. Given that neurotic individuals tend to experience events more negatively than others (Magnus *et al.*, 1993) and to cope less effectively with stress (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992), this effect may be heightened during selection, where there is a heavy emphasis on a person's

performance. It is also not surprising that agreeableness was a consistent predictor of applicant perceptions, given that agreeable persons tend to be adaptable and cooperative and to believe that others will react positively to them (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Potential Limitations

This study has some potential limitations. First, we were not able to investigate the effects of personality on actual applicant behavior. However, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between personality and the applicant perceptions most frequently studied in the literature (e.g., Anderson, Born, & Cunningham-Snell, 2001; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Truxillo, Steiner, & Gilliland, 2004). Because we found a relationship between personality measured before the test and perceptions measured after the test, these results are less likely due merely to common method variance. Second, future research should explore personality's relationship to applicant perceptions using other Big Five measures, including those with more orthogonal measures of the Big Five (e.g., Saucier, 2002). Third, these results were found with one particular type of applicant (police applicants) and for this particular selection system. This study should be replicated with other applicant samples and selection systems to examine the generalizability of these findings. Finally, we focused primarily on the incremental variance explained by personality over fairness perceptions. Future research should take into account other key variables that may determine applicant perceptions such as belief in tests, test-taking motivation, and ethnicity (e.g., Chan, Schmitt, DeShon, Clause, & Delbridge, 1997), as well as explicitly measuring self-serving bias (e.g., Chan, Schmitt, Jennings, Clause, & Delbridge, 1998).

Implications

This study has several implications for practice. First, factors outside of the organization's control such as individual differences may also play a role in applicant perceptions. That is, applicant perceptions may not only be a function of the selection process itself, but also a function of dispositional factors, similar to meta-analytic findings for job satisfaction (Judge *et al.*, 2002). If this is the case, there may be only so much bandwidth available to employers to influence applicants' perceptions. That is, if applicant perceptions are a function of dispositions and not of the selection process itself, interventions to improve applicant perceptions are less likely to be effective for all applicants. Also, these results suggest that the nature of the applicant pool should be carefully considered in designing selection systems and interventions: What may seem fair to some applicants (e.g., extraverts) may not seem fair to others (e.g., introverts). In addition, applicants (e.g., those high in neuroticism) who may not succeed in certain jobs

may also react negatively to the organization during the selection process.

This study also has several implications for research. First, because personality explained substantial variance in applicant perceptions, dispositional factors such as personality should be considered in future applicant perceptions research. By considering characteristics of the individual and of the selection context, researchers should obtain a more complete understanding of the factors affecting applicant perceptions. Second, future applicant reactions research should consider other individual difference variables. For example, because neuroticism related to applicant perceptions, similar variables such as negative and positive affectivity may also be important to include in applicant reactions research. Third, the incremental effects of selection interventions such as presenting information to applicants (e.g., Truxillo *et al.*, 2002) should be studied to assess the effects of interventions beyond the effects of personality. Fourth, past research has examined differences in applicant reactions in different countries and cultures (e.g., Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996). As noted by Hausknecht, Day, and Thomas (2004), applicant reactions research should be conducted in a range of countries, cultures, and job types. Finally, the moderating effects of personality in reactions to different selection methods should also be considered. For example, the nature of certain selection methods (e.g., interviews) may make them more attractive to some applicants (e.g., extraverts) than to others (e.g., introverts).

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