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The Personal Orientation-Organizational Climate *Fit* and Managerial Success¹

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Traditional research on factors predicting to managerial success has typically employed correlational methods designed to assess how individual characteristics of one kind or another or in combination influence success. This study is based on a social psychological contingency perspective and was designed to test the hypothesis that the interaction or fit between personal work orientations and organizational climate makes a significant contribution to the variance in career success among managers. Questionnaire survey data collected from a population of 310 middle managers and 101 top managers in 28 different company environments in British and American firms were used for the study. Four paired orientation-climate variables were investigated: achievement, risk-taking, relationships, and conventionality-structure. Success was measured by a salary progression-age ratio. The findings support the fit hypothesis in the particular case of the achievement pair for middle managers with meaningful support in the risk-taking area. However, such was not the case for the cross-validation study with the population of top managers where a different dynamic appears to be at work. Certain main effects of

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orientation and climate, different in pattern for the two groups of managers, were also observed. Modifications in the basic hypothesis guiding the study are proposed.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of understanding the determinants of managerial "success" has been a topic of keen interest for many years. Despite the decades of theoretical and empirical inquiries, the problem still persists for the professional specialist. The present study was designed to enhance our understanding of factors associated with managerial success, a study stimulated by a social psychological perspective concerning the *interaction* between personal and organizational factors.

Managerial success may be looked upon as a behavioral construct—that is, as a summative concept comprising various factors and elements connoting career success. Such a managerial variable has often been treated as an independent variable, for example, in studies where the investigation seeks to determine leadership variables (behaviors) crucial to organizational success. However, there are other research paradigms which view successful behavior as a dependent variable.

Ghiselli and his associates, in a chain of studies, have explored the relationship between the need system and managerial success. Ghiselli (1968) measured desire for job security and self-actualization of 271 managers and found that in half of the instances the relationship between traditional trait measures and managerial success was significantly moderated by the measures of motivation. He (1968) further reported that those middle managers who were successful were likely to have less desire for security and high financial reward than those who were unsuccessful. The successful ones were more likely to value self-actualization, while the desire for power over others appeared to be unrelated to success. Ghiselli and Johnson (1970) observed that, for managers in tall organizations, there was little relationship between the degree of need satisfaction and success, while in flat organizations a positive relationship existed between higher-order needs and success. Siegel and Ghiselli (1971) also found a positive relationship between pay and measures of managerial talent for younger managers. But the relationship had been lower and finally inverse for older managers. Thus, work motivations are seen to affect managerial success.

Other studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between values and managerial success. For example, England and Weber (1972) found that successful managers favored pragmatic, dynamic, and

achievement-oriented values, while the unsuccessful ones preferred more static and passive values. Furthermore, value patterns were found to be significantly predictive of managerial success and could be used for selection and placement decisions (England & Lee, 1974; Watson & Williams, 1977).

A number of studies have also been conducted on both intelligence and general personality variables as predictors, though mixed findings have been observed particularly with respect to personality measures. In a review of hundreds of studies (1919-1964), Ghiselli (1966) found that proficiency in executive roles was most effectively predicted by tests of intellectual ability, perceptual accuracy, and to some extent personality. Korman (1968) has argued that objective personality inventories and leadership ability tests have generally not shown predictive validity with the possible exception of a projective test of management motivation developed by Miner (1968) and the well-documented leaderless group discussion technique. Dubno (1968), using the MMPI, observed that successful leaders (managers) engaged in a experimental problem-solving task possess personality characteristics that are relatively free from encroachment and neurotic reactions to stress situations; however, actual job success was not used as the criterion. In one of the pioneer projective studies, Henry (1949) in an ex post facto study reported that the TAT themes of successful business managers contain a crystallization of high drive and achievement desire, strong mobility drive, willing acceptance of authority relationships, and ability to organize unstructured situations and to see the implications for their organizations. The thematic analysis also revealed that successful executives possessed the traits of decisiveness, sense of self-hood, aggressiveness, fear of failure, reality-orientation, identification with superiors, and a detachment from parents. Kinslinger (1966), in a review of eleven studies with projective tests, observed that in nine of the reported studies certain indications or signs distinguished between the more successful and less successful managers. Out of eleven studies, only one (Kurtz, 1948) employed a cross-validation design. But in the Kurtz study, the RT themes were completely unrelated to success or failure among the 41 managers on the cross-validation group. Kinslinger (1966), as have others, concluded that projective tests have essentially no practical use in industry. While there is occasional correlational evidence of personality factors associated with managerial success, such traditional test measures have been poor predictors in before-after designs.

Looking over the above body of research one must conclude that the "prediction of success" has been a complex topic and thus prone to conflicting conclusions. No single study could be noticed as explaining or predicting more than a small amount of variance in managerial success. Progress in the solution to this problem may better be sought in contingency

or interaction models than in such univariate designs. One of the main objectives of contingency theorists has been to study the *interaction* between an individual and a given situation. Dunn (1977), for example, and others have studied how the *congruence* of personal needs with organizational climate affects commitment to the organization. Similarly, Fiedler and Mahar (1979) on the basis of 12 studies postulate that the effectiveness of a leader depends (or is contingent) upon the appropriate *match* between two major factors—motivational structure and situational control. The *fit* theory has its origin in the description of motivational processes by Lewin (1951). According to Harrison (1978), two kinds of *fit* between the individual and the environment are considered. One of *fit* is the extent to which the person's skills and abilities *match* the demands and requirements of the job. Another kind of *fit* is the extent to which the job environment provides "supplies" to meet the individual's needs. More precisely, the performance of an individual is proposed to be contingent upon the *fit* between his or her personal characteristics and the particular situational demands. Human behavior at work is seen as so complex that it cannot be understood in terms of items of either the work environment or the person alone but only in terms of the interaction (or interrelationship) between the two.

Specifically, the entire focus of this investigation was on the degree of compatibility of *fit* between the characteristics of the environment and those of the individual. It has been empirically observed that an individual with a given task may behave differently depending on the environment wherein he or she works (Forehand, 1968). "... the organization employs the individual because his services are essential for the achievement of its goals; similarly, the individual contributes his services only when it leads to the fulfillment of his personal needs" (Thomas, 1976, p. 466). From this perspective then, what produces effective management behavior and consequent success depends on the specifics in each situation (Lorsch, 1979). In the relative paucity of theory applying a contingency model to this problem area, it is difficult to generate any specific conjectures beyond the general proposition itself. However, on the basis of aforesaid discussion, it may be expected that *how successful a manager is in the performance of organizational roles is a function of the extent to which the climate or work environment is congenial with his or her motivational predispositions in four important areas—achievement, risk, human relationships, and structure.*

METHOD

Overview and Respondents

For this study, the survey research method was employed using data from the Cross-National Management Education Study (Baumgartel &

Sullivan, 1974). The Cross-National survey was mainly designed to carry forward and cross-validate the work of the Indian Management Education Study (Hill, Haynes, & Baumgartel, 1973) with a population of Western managers, executives, and business firms. This series of studies examined how (i) training program characteristics, (ii) personality orientations, (iii) organizational climate, and (iv) their interaction influenced the extent to which managers applied in their back-home job settings new knowledge learned in development programs (Baumgartel & Sullivan, 1974, 1975; Baumgartel, Dunn, & Sullivan, 1976/1977; Baumgartel, Sullivan, & Dunn, 1978).

Thirty-one U.S. corporations, two British firms, three U.S. management education centers, and three British management education centers participated in the study. During the summer and fall of 1973, altogether 1,487 questionnaires were mailed to prospective respondents who had participated in management development programs of at least a week or longer in duration during the six-year period, 1968-1973. Out of 837 returned questionnaires, only 26 could not be used in the basic statistical analysis. Therefore, the adjusted research sample consisted of 811 respondents, representing about 62 different management training centers and 118 different firms.

Of the 811 respondents 587 were employed by these 28 firms which were represented by 8 or more respondents (see appendix A). Only these 28 firms were included in analyses employing measures of organizational climate since such measures are assessed throughout this research program by the *collective* judgements of all company respondents thus making the organization and not the individual the unit of analysis. The study at hand made use of those 411 managers out of the 587 mentioned above who were in either top or middle level positions. Those 176 respondents excluded were in staff, first-level, and specialist positions. The basic investigation was conducted in such a manner as to cross-validate the analysis by repeating the study with the two different populations of managers—middle level and top level, treating the latter as the cross-validation sample.

The two populations of managers were compared on their demographic characteristics by employing a multivariate ANOVA. The top managers ($MX = 45.54$) were found to be significantly ($F = 4.79$, $df = 1/409$, $p < .02$) older than the middle ($MX = 43.91$) level of managers, although the difference in mean age is not great. The top managers ($MX = 2.07$) had attended significantly ($F = 6.02$, $df = 1/409$, $p < .01$) more management development training programs than their middle-level counterparts ($MX = 1.71$) but the difference is not great. No significant difference was observed between the two levels of managers on other characteristics such as tenure in company, years in present position, education, and studies and employment abroad. The top level of mana-

gers ($MX = 3.37$) were as would be expected significantly ($t = 1.89$, $df = 409$, $p < .05$) higher on the salary scale than the middle managers ($MX = 3.13$). As regards organizational integration characteristics, the top managers (i.e., cross-validation group) appeared to be more in agreement than middle managers with the *goals* and *purpose* of their organizations ($F = 10.64$, $df = 1/409$, $p < .001$), had more agreement with the *means*, methods, and procedures used by their organizations ($F = 16.91$, $df = 1/409$, $p < .001$), and they were more *active* in changing their organizations to achieve their goals than the middle managers ($F = 23.93$, $df = 1/409$, $p < .001$). Considering the nominal although significant difference in ages of the two groups, one may conclude that the top managers generally are persons who have achieved their positions in early midcareer and that the two populations of managers, hence, must differ in significant ways.

Criterion—Dependent Variable

The availability of a good criterion has been one of the key problems in industrial and organizational psychology (e.g., see such reviews as those of Bray & Moses, 1972; Smith, 1976, among others). It is also true with regard to the measurement of managerial success. However, there is a clear-cut indication that salary progression (e.g., Bray & Grant, 1966; Jaques, 1968; Grant & Bray, 1969; England & Weber, 1972; Watson & William, 1977; Ansari, 1979) and the hierarchical levels promoted to or attained by managers have frequently been used as measures of success and/or effectiveness (e.g., Doktor & Bass, 1974; Ansari, 1979). In the present study, job level (middle vs. top) was held constant for cross-validation purposes. Hence, a single criterion, salary relative to age, was used to measure managerial success on the assumption that compensation is related to general performance. The respondents were asked to report their earned income from salary, bonuses, and/or commission on a dollar or pound scale with six intervals. The success index was calculated by the following equation: Success Index = (Salary/Age) X 100.

Measures—Independent Variables

In order to test the *fit* hypothesis, four personality scales were constructed to match with the four climate measures deemed important in determining a productive match. Within the limitations for this purpose of the pre-existing questionnaire data, every possible attempt was made to

include items of similar contents in each pair. The paired scales along with their definitions are as follows:

Personality Dimensions

Achievement-Oriented: the degree to which a manager is energetic, hard-working, sees self as “origin” not “pawn,” likes to set set goals and make long-range plans.

Risk-Taking Orientation: the degree to which a manager is imaginative and wants to take chances with new ideas, jobs and peoples.

Relations-Oriented: the degree to which a manager is interaction-oriented, likes people, and likes to work with them.

Conventional-Oriented: the degree to which a manager has need for steady job and a strong dependence on superiors.

Climate Dimensions

Achievement-Oriented: the extent innovation and experimentation, provides freedom to set goals, and is performance-oriented.

Risk-Taking-Oriented: the extent to which a company provides general support for risk-taking.

Relations-Oriented: the extent to which a company provides general openness and helpfulness, i.e., inter-personal trust and consideration.

Structure-Oriented: the extent to which a company is well-organized and has rules, regulations and procedures.

Development of Climate Measures

It is evidenced through literature search (Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Taguiri & Litwin, 1968; Schneider, 1975, among others) that industrial-organizational psychologists have shown more concern with measurement techniques than with understanding and explicating the concept of climate. The main confusion lies in the unit of analysis, that is whether one is measuring *psychological* climate (the perceived world of the individual member) or studying the *organizational* climate (attributes of the organization as a whole). If we regard climate as an *organizational attribute*, the term “organizational climate” seems appropriate; when regarded as an individual attribute, a new designation such as “psychological climate” may be employed (James & Jones, 1974). The present research deals with organizational climate and *not* with psychological climate, that is the perceived worlds of the individual member. With this end in view, organizational climate may be defined as “the sum total of particular attributes of the organization as a whole as well as those values and norms which symbolize the on-going pattern of the organization and its sub-units” (Ansari, 1980, p. 94).

The organizational climate measure consisted of 12 out of a total of 23 climate items rated on a 4-point "extent" scale. The climate items themselves were based on both field interviews and a thorough review of the published literature. In view of the above perspective, the particular climate scores on the 4 dimensions for each of the 28 companies in the study were determined by the *mean* of the *mean* item scores of the respondents representing the particular company—a summated index. The company's *mean* scores on each item were correlated with each other across the 28 companies to produce a company climate correlation matrix. Table I shows the patterns of intercorrelation among these items. An inspection of these data suggests some evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for the four organization climate dimensions. The three items included in the measure of the "Achievement" scale show an average interitem correlation of .57. A single item was used in "Risk-Taking" scale. Five items were included in the measure of "Relations" scale, with an average interitem correlation of .70 which is quite impressive. And the "Structure" scale consisted of three inter-related items, averaging an inter-correlation coefficient of .44.

Patchen (1967) has discussed extensively the reliability and validity of questionnaire measures such as these. In an earlier study using similar climate items, the average correlation between superior and subordinate climate ratings on 8 comparable items across about 40 companies was .50 (Baumgartel, 1971). In sum, the measures of organizational climate were based on reasonably reliable and valid collective judgments of the objective work environment in the companies. Individual managers were, hence, assigned their company scores on the four climate dimensions.

It is of interest to examine the interrelationships among the four climate measures (Table II). It can be readily recognized that the four dimensions are themselves interrelated. The *Achievement* climate and *Relations* climate measures are most closely related. As one would expect, there is little correlation between *Risk* climate and *Structure* climate. The average intercorrelation is, however, only <.36. While the four climate measures are not entirely independent of each other, particularly *Achievement* and *Relations*, they may be construed as assessing four

Table I. Mean Intercorrelations Among Clusters in the 12 Climate Items^a

| Dimension | Items in index | Among index items | Index items vs. all others |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Achievement | 3 | .57 | .43 |
| Risk | 1 | — | .34 |
| Relations | 5 | .70 | .48 |
| Structure | 3 | .44 | .35 |

^a*N* = 28 companies with eight or more respondents.

Table II. Interrelationship Among Climate Dimensions ($N = 28$) and Their Zero-Order Correlations with Success Criterion ($N = 411$).

| | Achievement | Risk | Relations | Structure | Success |
|-------------|------------------|------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Achievement | X | | | | .13 ^b |
| Risk | .39 ^a | X | | | .19 ^b |
| Relations | .60 ^b | .32 | X | | .10 ^a |
| Structure | .34 | .10 | .43 ^a | X | -.04 |

^a $p < .05$.

^b $p < .01$.

different dimensions of climate. As we shall also see below, three of the climate measures bear a significant but low relationship with the *success* criterion itself.

Development of Personal Orientation Measures

Four personality scales were constructed which were relevant to career success and which would suitably match with the four important organizational climate measures. The scales were constructed by selecting sets of self-report questionnaire items relevant to the particular personality orientation as defined above. Five items were used to measure “Achievement” orientation, 3 for “Risk-taking,” 2 for “Relations,” and 2 for the “Conventional” orientation. The individual’s mean score on the particular items in the index constituted the measure. Such self-report personality measures are known to be reasonably reliable and valid—see, for example, Graham (1971).

It is worthwhile to examine the inter-relationships among the four personality dimensions shown in Table III. The average inter-correlations among the four personality measures is only $<.19$, although the *Achievement* and *Risk* scales are fairly closely associated. The four scales with this exception, are fairly independent of each other. As with the climate measure, three of the four scales show low but statistically

Table III. Interrelationship Among Personal Orientation Dimensions and their Zero-Order Correlations with Success Criterion^a

| | Achievement | Risk | Relations | Conventional | Success |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|
| Achievement | X | | | | .16 ^b |
| Risk | .44 ^b | X | | | .24 ^b |
| Relations | .29 ^b | .32 ^b | X | | .12 ^b |
| Conventional | .00 | .03 | .03 | X | -.09 |

^a $N = 411$.

^b $p < .01$.

significant correlations with the criterion measure—a fact also shown in subsequent analysis.

In the original study, data about the respondent's demographic as well as organizational integration characteristics were also obtained as indicated above.

Data Analyses

As stated earlier, the main objective of the present report was to investigate how the *fit* of personal orientation with organizational climate influences or predicts managerial success. The *fit* was measured by the statistical *interaction* between personal orientation and organizational climate in predicting to success. Thus, for example, in the case of the Achievement-Achievement pair, whatever the main effects of each variable, high achievers should succeed most in a high-achievement climate while the degree of achievement climate should have little influence for low achievers. Conversely speaking, high achievers should not do well in a nonachievement environment. The hypotheses were, hence, statistically tested in two-way ANOVA's by categorizing the managers into three levels of both climate (high, moderate and low) and personality (high, moderate and low) yielding 3 X 3 data arrays. In addition to testing the four main propositions, 12 supplementary ANOVA's were calculated to study the other possible climate-personality pairs as an exploratory investigation. Significant statistical interactions other than main effects in the predicted direction would, then, provide evidence supporting the hypotheses. In view of the directional predictions, one-tailed significance tests were employed in the main analyses.

RESULTS

As explained earlier, the main focus of the present study was to test the hypothesis that the climate-orientation *fit* predicts to managerial success. Two separate investigations were conducted, one with the main population of middle managers and one, for cross-validation purposes, with a subsidiary sample of top managers. The findings for the main sample will be presented first, then the data for the cross-validation study and finally the results for the analysis of nonmatched pairs will be shown.

Testing Fit Hypotheses—Main Sample

The summary results for the main sample (i.e., middle management) are portrayed on Fig 1. The findings clearly support the hypotheses in the

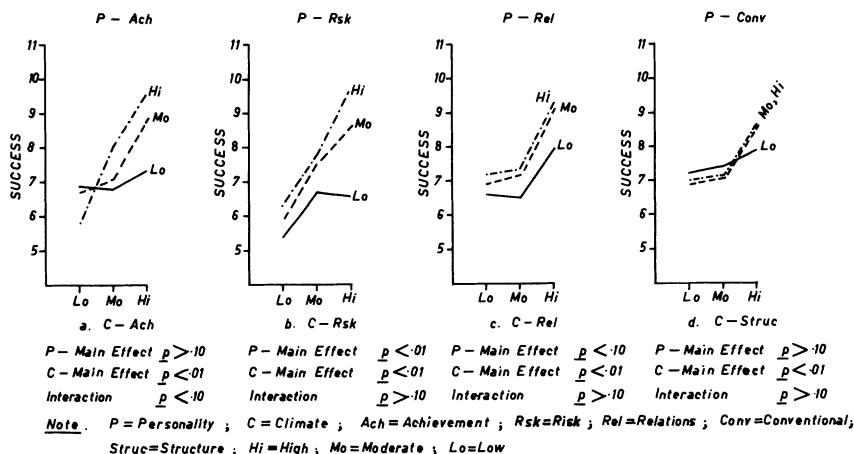


Fig. 1. Summary of *fit* hypothesis on mean salary progression scores (middle management).

case of the achievement-achievement data pair; there is a strong positive relationship between climate and success for high achievers and essentially no relationship for low achievers. This statistical interaction is significant at the .10 level of confidence. Thus, the findings support to this degree the *fit* hypothesis that a manager who is achievement-oriented—that is, energetic, hardworking, and liking to set goals and long-range plans—is most likely to succeed in an environment which is also achievement-oriented as indicated by performance orientation, stimulation of innovation and experimentation, and freedom to set personal performance goals (Fig. 1a). Although not statistically significant, the interaction patterns show a similar configuration on the other three pairs particularly in the case of risk. Managers who are highly imaginative and like to take chances with new ideas and plans (i.e., risk-taking-oriented) earn higher scores on success in high risk-taking-oriented organizations (Fig. 1b). As expected, managers who are interaction-oriented and like people (i.e., relations-oriented) succeed most in the environment where they find the climate of consideration, free communication, participation and interpersonal trust (Fig. 1c). A slight trend (Fig. 1d) also supports the hypothesis of *fit* that managers who have higher needs for a steady job and have strong dependence on superiors (i.e., conventional-oriented) do better than those with low orientations in highly organized and well-structured situations. While not a strong effect, the climate-orientation *fit* does appear to influence career success in the case of middle managers, particularly in the achievement area.

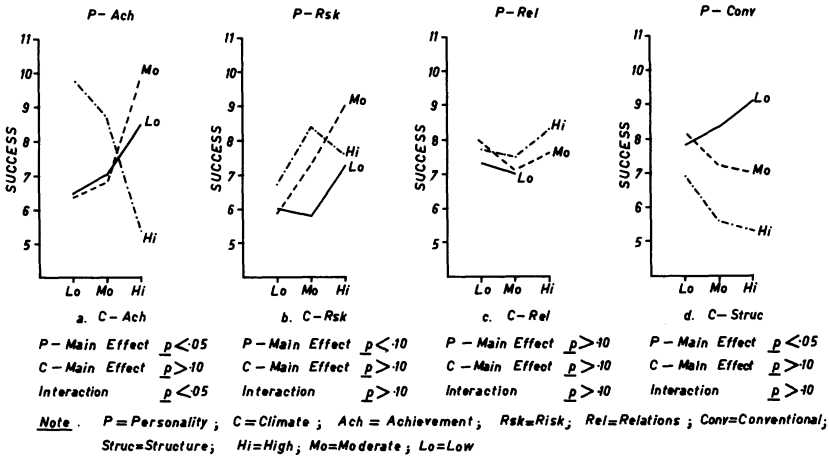


Fig. 2. Summary of fit hypothesis on mean salary progression scores (top management).

Testing Fit Hypotheses—Cross Validation Sample

The statistical details for the cross-validation sample (i.e., top management) are summarized on Fig. 2. The results (Figs. 2a-2d) readily disclose that the fit hypothesis does not apply for this sample. In fact, an entirely different and contradictory pattern appears in some cases. The interaction effect is significant for only the Achievement-Achievement pair; however, this contradictory pattern also emerges for the Conventional-Structure pair. A personality main effect is statistically significant at the .05 level for both Achievement and Structure, although the patterns are different.

No climate main effect reaches statistical significance at even the .10 level in any case. The data do suggest that in the achievement area the higher the fit between personal orientation and organizational climate, the lower the success score (Fig. 2a). The best match for success appears to be high achievement climate and moderate achievement orientation. No other interaction effect approaches statistical significance for this small sample. The trend on the conventional-structure pair (Fig. 2d) is, as noted, quite different from the one found in the case of middle managers (Fig. 1d). As compared with the pattern for middle managers, one can observe that the less conventionally oriented the top manager, the more successful he is. Clearly a different pattern of relationships exist in the top managers' data when compared with that for middle managers.

In sum, the findings indicate that what is true for the middle managers may not be applicable to the top ones and, more precisely, that different sets of climate-orientation combinations are associated with salary progression for the two different hierarchical echelons of management.

Personality vs. Climate Analyses—Non-Matched Pairs

A supplementary statistical analysis, not fully reported here, was carried out to examine the effects on career success of the alternative 12 climate-orientation data pairs, e.g., risk vs. relations. A summary of the statistical significance of these ANOVAs is reported in Table IV. The data presented are for middle managers only. Table III reveals only one significant interaction, that between personality and climate on the Achievement-Relations pair. High achievement-oriented managers thrive in high relations climates as well as in high achievement climates—of course, the achievement climate dimension and the relations dimension are themselves intercorrelated (see Table III). The climate’s positive main effects are significant for every pair as fits the data in Fig. 1. The main effect of achievement orientation attains statistical significance only in the risk analysis while the positive main effect of the risk orientation manifests itself in all three supplementary ANOVAs. In sum, the main effects of climate and personal orientation are as expected and only in the case of the Achievement Orientation-Relations climate is there a significant *fit* effect.

Table IV. Summary Results of Personality vs. Climate ANOVA Analysis—Main Effects and Interaction (for middle managers)^a

| Personal orientation | Effect | Climate | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Achievement | Risk | Relations | Structure |
| Achievement | <i>P</i> | <i>X</i> | .05 | n.s. | n.s. |
| | <i>C</i> | <i>X</i> | .01 | .01 | .05 |
| | <i>PXC</i> | <i>X</i> | n.s. | .05 | n.s. |
| Risk | <i>P</i> | .01 | <i>X</i> | .01 | .01 |
| | <i>C</i> | .01 | <i>X</i> | .01 | .01 |
| | <i>PXC</i> | n.s. | <i>X</i> | n.s. | n.s. |
| Relations | <i>P</i> | n.s. | n.s. | <i>X</i> | n.s. |
| | <i>C</i> | .01 | .01 | <i>X</i> | .01 |
| | <i>PXC</i> | N.S. | N.S. | <i>X</i> | n.s. |
| Conventional | <i>P</i> | n.s. | n.s. | n.s. | <i>X</i> |
| | <i>C</i> | .01 | .01 | .01 | <i>X</i> |
| | <i>PXC</i> | n.s. | n.s. | n.s. | <i>X</i> |

^a*P* = personality; *C* = climate; *p* = significance level.

DISCUSSION

A summary of the findings, then, indicates that in only one of the four primary tests of the guiding hypothesis of the study (the Achievement-Achievement pair for middle managers) is there a statistically significant interaction supporting the main hypothesis. Other statistical trends do, however, support the hypothesis for middle managers particularly in the Risk-Risk match. The significant Achievement Orientation-Relations climate interaction provides some supplementary support for the notion that career success is *ceteris paribus* a function of the fit of the manager's personal orientations with selected dimensions of the climate in the working environment. This empirical support holds true, as noted, only for the middle-manager sample. Entirely different patterns of interaction between orientations and climate as they influence success appear in the data for the much smaller sample of top managers.

In general the main effects of personality orientation on success are as might be expected. Both achievement and risk orientation show consistent positive relationships with success, while relations and conventional orientations do not. In fact, among top managers the conventional orientation is significantly negatively associated with this measure of career success (see Fig. 2), a not unsurprising finding considering the nature of the responsibilities of top managers.

The main effects of organizational climate are more difficult to interpret. The four climate effects are positive and statistically significant for middle managers but not for top managers suggesting again some categorical difference in the patterns of relationship among variables for the two groups of managers. Operationally the positive association between climate and success for middle managers means that in those companies where the collective judgements gave higher scores on the climate dimensions the managers themselves had higher rates of salary progression. This could mean that companies with more favorable climates contained managers who are advancing more rapidly or it could mean that collectively more successful managers gave more favorable ratings to their company environments. Although a study of this design cannot distinguish well between such explanations, the fact that no significant climate main effects appear in the top management data suggests that the answer is not simple. For this latter group climate and career success appear to be independent of each other.

Two general conclusions are suggested by these findings. First, the *fit* hypothesis appears to function in the case of achievement and risk orientations for middle managers. Data from the correlational and main effects analyses and common sense that these two orientations are the most relevant and salient for career success within this group of managers.

Hence, the *fit* hypothesis should itself be modified to refer only to those personal orientations and climate dimensions which are most relevant to the achievement of success in business organizations. Such a modification further suggests that future research should focus on the role of the power orientation as well as on that of achievement and risk.

It should be noted that the data are more sound and the conditions are more appropriate for testing the fit hypothesis among middle managers than among the top managers in this study. The number of managers in the middle manager study is three times that of the top manager replication study resulting in better measures of the variables and larger cell frequencies. Certainly the salary progression measure of success is intuitively more meaningful for these managers; middle managers in midcareer are in the work situation where this fit model should be most appropriate.

The second major conclusion to be derived from this study is that the dynamics of the *fit* hypothesis may be quite different for top managers, presumably chief executive officers and heads of major divisions and departments, as compared with middle managers. With only about 100 top managers and a 3 X 3 ANOVA analysis, many highly idiosyncratic factors may have produced the results. McClelland (1974) has noted that the president of one successful achievement-oriented firm revealed himself to have a very low need-achievement score. It is also plausible that one or more high-achiever managers may have been brought into companies with a low-achievement climate. Furthermore, as noted above, the meaning of the success measure may be different for this group of top managers than for the middle managers. For example, by the nature of the measure an older "successful" top manager could have a lower salary-progression score than a younger "less successful" manager. While it seems generally that less confidence can be placed in the top-manager sample findings than in the findings from the much larger sample of middle managers, further comment of the contradictory findings may be in order.

The most anomalous finding is the negative relationship between the organization-climate achievement score and career-success score for top managers with high scores on the personal-achievement index. Aside from the possibility of idiosyncratic factors in the small samples, it may be that the dynamics of the person-environment interaction are different in the top management situation. Obviously, as Likert (1967) has pointed out, top managers mold the organizational climate. Others have commented on the different perspectives of top as compared with middle management. Many different kinds of unassessed factors may have entered into the achievement of top management position—entrepreneurial skill, inherited wealth, aggressiveness, etc. The task demands on this group are different—

external relations assume greater importance than internal organizational matters; work pressures mount; political skills become more salient. Hence, the fit hypothesis in its simplest form may not apply. More cynically, one may speculate about the relevance of the Peter principle. Certainly evidence exists in our own studies that there exist a significant number of somewhat alienated, disaffected, and regressive top managers (Baumgartel et al., 1976/77). The inherent limitations of a study of this design preclude meaningful exploration of some of these alternative explanations. Certainly, however, future investigations of the *fit* hypothesis in predicting to managerial success will need to probe more carefully differences between the environments of middle and top managers.

On the positive side we can conclude that the study provides significant evidence that middle managers thrive best, in the sense of salary success, in organizational environments congenial with their own motivational orientations toward achievement and risk-taking. Such a circumstance has clear implications for both managers in their own career planning and for firms in their organizational development programs. Managers need to be aware of their own motives and sensitive to the characteristics of the environments they choose for their careers. Conversely, organizations need to be aware of the characteristics of the environments which they provide for their managers. If achievement-oriented managers are needed for organizational effectiveness, then an achievement environment must be provided, that is an environment that stimulates innovation and experimentation, provides freedom for managers to set their own performance goals, expects top performance, and encourages risk-taking. Organizations lacking in these characteristics can self-consciously choose a course of development along these dimensions. Evidence exists furthermore (Litwin & Stringer, 1968, and Baumgartel et al., 1976/77) that organizational climates set by the top leadership can and do influence the motivational orientations of middle managers in specific and organizationally important ways. Obviously the many methodological questions raised by this study can only be properly answered by longitudinal studies designed to explore the circumstances under which the person-environment fit effect has its major implications.

APPENDIX A

List of 28 Firms in Company Analysis

| Source of respondents | Number of respondents | Percent of total sample |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| U.S. firms | | |
| Airco | 31 | 5.3 |
| Battelle, NW | 15 | 2.6 |
| Bendix | 18 | 3.1 |
| B. F. Goodrich | 10 | 1.7 |
| Celanese | 14 | 2.4 |
| Central Telephone | 46 | 7.7 |
| Connecticut General | 14 | 2.4 |
| Continental Oil | 10 | 1.7 |
| Corning Glass | 16 | 2.7 |
| DuPont | 18 | 3.1 |
| GTE Service | 15 | 2.5 |
| Hughes Aircraft | 19 | 3.2 |
| Huntington Alloy | 15 | 2.6 |
| Kodak | 31 | 5.3 |
| National Lead | 22 | 3.7 |
| Parke-Davis | 18 | 3.1 |
| RCA | 53 | 9.0 |
| Rockwell International | 11 | 1.9 |
| Shell Oil | 14 | 2.4 |
| U.S. Steel | 15 | 2.6 |
| United Telecommunications | 49 | 8.3 |
| Westinghouse Electric | 25 | 4.3 |
| Subtotal | 479 | 81.7 |
| British firms | | |
| BBC | 9 | 1.5 |
| British Oxygen | 40 | 6.7 |
| British Steel | 9 | 1.5 |
| Imperial Chemical | 10 | 1.7 |
| National Coal | 10 | 1.7 |
| Shell International | 30 | 5.1 |
| Subtotal | 108 | 18.7 |
| Totals | 507 | 100 |

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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