

Typology of Ideal Personality: Applicant Perspective In Job Selection Setting

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Abstract—Previously studies suggest that job applicant fake response on a personality test based on their stereotype of ideal employee. This study explored typology of personality that relied on applicants' stereotype. Experimental participant (N=200) completed three factors of BFI-44 (extroversion, conscientiousness, openness) under two different instruction. An honest fashion (honest condition) and under instructions to a response as if applying for a job (applicant condition). In both conditions, latent class analysis yields three classes for each personality factors with different type of personality. Typologies of personalities that rest on a stereotype of an applicant were different from existing typology.

Keywords: *Faking Response, Type of Personality, Stereotype, Job Applicant*

I. INTRODUCTION

Personality is widely defined as stable, inner, personal dispositions that determine consistent patterns of behavior across different situations. Personality is what makes a person's behavior similar in different situations, as well as different from the behavior of other people [1]. Research showed that there is a high relationship between personality and job performance. Therefore, many companies in industrial-organizational setting use personality tests as an instrument to select new employee. They attempt to determine whether an applicant has a personality who matched for offered job. For example, an assessment might show that the individual has certain characteristics needed to be a successful salesperson. The central issue in personality research is not rely on what personality traits are or whether personality traits exist or are useful, but, rather, which personality traits should be assessed [2].

The using of personality testing in employee selection remains problems related to resistance of this technique to faking response. Formerly, researchers focus on exploring how applicants elevate their test score in applicant setting faking response either in simulation or in real setting. Meta analytic study was conducted by and Ones [3] which explore whether individuals can be fake on a personality test found that faking responses obtain a higher score (almost 0.5 SD) than honest responses. Birkeland et al. [4] use similar method in job applicant setting. Use 33 studies that compared job applicant and non-applicant they found that across all job types, applicants scored significantly higher than non-applicants did. Among five personality factors that

were used, the larger score difference between those groups was on conscientiousness and emotional stability factors.

Since job provider use test score as consideration in hire decision, they use a rank ordering of job applicants based on this score. A study that examined faking response in applicants with taking rank ordering into account found that many applicants (30-50 percent) fake personality measure by elevating their score on personality measure [5]. Applicant faking behavior affects significant rank ordering changes that impact hiring decisions. When selection criteria are too strict, fakers tend to comprise the majority of individuals hired. Personality tests typically use self-report techniques; therefore, applicants know instrument key, thus that they easily can fake a response to achieve a higher score.

II. BACKGROUND

A. *Mitigating Faking Response*

To mitigate faking response problem, several researchers suggest using ipsative format to limit the susceptibility of test to faking response. A study by Martin et al. [6] explored whether respondents were able to fake their response on personality scale. They compared resistance of normative and ipsative type scales (i.e. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator). They found there was no difference amount of faking on the ipsative form between both faking and honest group. Conversely, on the normative form, they found that faking group was significantly fake their response rather than an honest group. Reporting individual profile rather than a total score is one of the advantages ipsative forms. All individuals will have an equal score, but it may comprise different profiles of personality. Thus, this form is more resistant to faking response than normative form.

Researchers also suggested employers to use various personality tests for selection purposes in order to mitigate faking response. This method has two purposes, cross check consistency of response and measure various personality attributes. Researchers have developed numerous personality instrument measures based on factor analysis or clustering method (i.e. big five personality). These instruments covered various factors or personality attributes that mapped personality attributes as a typology. Multidimensional measure of attributes will generate more information than a single attribute or undimensional measure. While employers utilize a multidimensional

measure, their focus to personality profiles in hiring decision rather than to rank ordering of total score.

Rather than hire applicant who achieved a higher score, they will prefer to applicants who possess certain personality profiles that suit to the job requirements. Formerly, testing a measure that produced several types of personality was conducted with an ipsative test. Ipsative test generates ipsative scores that reflect only relative strengths of traits within the individual [7]. Typically are administrated with forced choice, applicants are asked to state what is 'most like' and what is 'least like' from a range of alternatives or options. Thus, this test will report that applicant tend to possess a certain type than another type personality.

Hiring an employee based on typology should face the challenges how to make sure that type of personality as reported by such a test is free from faking response. Research based on this area is required to develop measurement that resistance to faking response. Using simulation study, Research found that applicant's faking response related to personality types and their stereotype of ideal personality types were identical [8]. Being instructed role as applicant, respondent attempt to distort their response on a personality test to create the profile they saw as an ideal employee. For example, faking in order to get psychologist job and stereotype about psychologist job suggest a similar type of psychology. In MBTI term, both responses lead to ESTJ (extrovert, sensing, thinking, judging) type. This finding is consistent in accountant job as well since both fake job and stereotype response produced ISTJ (introvert, sensing, thinking, judging) type.

B. Typology of Ideal Personality as Stereotype

Job shapes the employee's behavior and people categorize them according to an oversimplified idea by their job behavior as well. They developed stereotype based upon the concept ideal employees who match with a job requirement. People often believe that certain jobs require a certain personality type [9]. For example, an accountant has certain characters such as conservative, meticulous, and quiet, while a used-car sales representative was aggressive, flashy, and smooth talking. They believe that some types of people occupy a certain job; therefore, people must have a specific personality type to be successful at a particular type of job. This study explores applicants' stereotype about ideal personality types of an employee. Since an applicant attempt impressing the company that they possess certain attributes to support successful job, they managed a stereotype. Result from this study is useful to test whether their instrument resistance to faking response and explore how an applicant perceived an ideal employee. There are differences between this study and Mahar et al. [8] methodology, such as (a) using a normative format as an instrument to measure, (b) exploring typology rather than confirm existing typology of personality, and (c) focusing on an item level rather than total scale level exploration.

Newer statistically technique has introduced (e.g. latent class analysis/LCA) which can help researchers to identify a type of personality of individual without using ipsative test. Based on response pattern of each item in normative test, latent class analysis produces several classes equal to type of personality. Given the diversity of personality types, LCA seem particularly appropriate for analyzing data from personality tests.

III. METHOD

A. Participant

Participants of this study were last year semester students at Faculty of Psychology Gadjah Mada University (N=200). Each participant were administered a paper and pencil version of instrument measure in two different instruction. Participant were assured of confidentiality their score results as this process only be used for research purposes. All participants first completed the BFI-44 following the standard administration instructions. In this condition, instructor asked participant to response all items in instrument honestly (honest condition). After first condition finished, instructor asked participant to completed instrument measure, as they are job applicant who participate in job selection offer. Therefore, they should maximize their chances of getting an offered job (applicant condition). There no certain kind of job that was determined in this instruction

B. Measure

Conscientiousness, extroversion, openness to experience and agreeableness were measured by the Big Five Inventory (BFI-44) [10] which based on the five-factor model of personality. Domain scores for Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience were calculated, each from 48 items measured on a five-point Likert scale. In Indonesian version, BFI has tested and produced high degree of internal consistency reliability: extraversion (0.839), agreeableness (0.789), conscientiousness (0.924), emotional stability (0.848) and openness (0.807). These results are similar to the original version that was reported by John and Srivastava [11] that also have high consistency internal reliability between 0.75 to 0.80 and test-retest reliability between 0.80 to 0.90.

C. Data Analysis

This study used latent class analysis (LCA) to indentify typology from each personality factors. LCA can be used to validate diagnostic measures and also determine base rates of types within condition [12]. The procedure seeks to identify latent categorical variables that explain for the covariance among set of items within instrument measures. Rather than conceptualizing certain personality factors as a continuous variable, LCA will assist to conceptualize it as forming distinct categories or typologies.

IV. RESULTS

A. Comparing Statistics Each Condition

This study assumed that in the applicant condition (participants' role as an applicant) would provide more motivation for participants to give faking response than honest condition. To verify whether they give faking response mean score differences between both conditions were compared. Results from paired samples t-test indicated that all means score in faking condition significantly higher than honest condition. Differences mean score of conscientiousness measure between both condition was highest than other personality factors. Mean conscientiousness score in applicant condition ($M=4.04$) was significantly higher than in the honest condition ($M = 3.40$; $t=-12.92$, $p<0.01$). Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. This findings regarding the ability to fake are consistent with previous findings that suggest that when instructed, participants have the capability to fake non-cognitive measures [3].

B. Goodness-Of-Fit Testing

Table 2 shows the results of goodness-of-fit testing of the latent-trait latent-class model for each personality factors. The overall chi-squared statistics and their degrees of freedom (df) are given, as well as the corresponding AIC and BIC statistics. Three classes solution was fitted with data as all goodness-of-fit indices support the result. All chi-squared statistics are non-significant and difference between AIC-BIC between three and four classes solution is low.

C. Typology of Personality

Three classes solution fit with data in extroversion factors with similar profiles. However, on the conscientiousness and openness to experience factors, three classes with different profiles were fit. Every profile in applicant condition consist one class with high level probability in all indicators. It is a proof that every indicator on each personality factors was job-related.

Extroversion. The three similar classes were detected in extrovert factors among honest and applicant conditions. Both classes yield same type of personality since profiles of probability level of each item within class are similar (see Appendix).

1. *Class 1 (high level of extroversion).* This class appeared high level of probability in all extroversion characteristics.
2. *Class 2 (active-unfriendly).* This class generated individual with most favorable in active characteristics (full of energy, enthusiasm, assertive) but tend to reluctant to initiate social interaction as attributes related to reserved, cheerful, openness are low.
3. *Class 3 (low-level of extroversion).* This class appeared low probabilities in all extroversion indicators.

Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness also yield the three classes but with distinct typology of

personality. Three class generated in honest condition are:

1. *Class 1 (reliable-inattentive).* Member of this class tends to perform a thorough job and reliable but easily distracted.
2. *Class 2 (organized-unreliable).* This class comprise individuals with high level of carefulness and organized when they are working but unreliable, not efficient and easily distracted.
3. *Class 3 (low level of conscientiousness).* Individuals of this class have low level probability in almost all indicators.

Three class of conscientiousness generated in faking condition are:

1. *Class 1 (high level of conscientiousness).* This class appeared high level of probability in all conscientiousness characteristics.
2. *Class 2 (thoroughly-unorganized).* Individuals of this class work thoroughly, reliable, and persevere but they are unorganized and easily distracted.
3. *Class 3 (low level of conscientiousness).* Individuals of this class have low level probability in almost all indicators.

Openness. This factor yield three classes with distinct typology of personality. Three class generated in honest condition are:

1. *Class 1 (high level of openness).* Member of this class exhibit high level of probability in almost all indicators.
2. *Class 2 (intellect).* Member of this class exhibit high probability of curiosity, deep thinking, imagination and ideas but low interest and experience with artistic and literature.
3. *Class 3 (artistic).* Individuals of this class exhibit high probability of interested in aesthetic, artistic and curiosity as well.

Three class generated in honest condition are:

1. *Class 1 (high level of openness).* Similar with class 1 in honest condition, member of this class exhibit high level of probability in almost all indicators.
2. *Class 2 (intellect).* Member of this class exhibit high probability of all intellect aspect but moderate aesthetic and low artistic and literature interest.
3. *Class 3 (moderate level of openness).* Member of this class exhibit moderate probability of all openness indicators.

Table 3 show how many individual for each class. For honest condition, size of class is not too much different comparing with applicant condition. For applicant condition, class that represent 'ideal' type of personality biggest. For example, class size either conscientiousness or openness to experiences that represent high level of conscientiousness (59%) or openness to experiences (71%) are the biggest class.

Table 1. Statistics factors personality for each condition

Factors	Condition	Min	Max	Mean	SD	t-value	Corr.
Extroversion	Honest	1.38	5.00	3.49	0.63	-11.28**	0.51**
	Applicant	2.38	5.00	3.96	0.57		
Conscientiousness	Honest	1.78	5.00	3.40	0.56	-12.92**	0.32**
	Applicant	2.22	5.00	4.04	0.64		
Openness	Honest	1.70	4.90	3.67	0.48	-8.62**	0.60**
	Applicant	2.80	4.90	3.92	0.43		

Table 2. Goodness-of-fit test each model

Factors	Condition	3 Classes			4 Classes		
		Chi	AIC	BIC	Chi	AIC	BIC
Extroversion	Honest	186.79	1756.91	1842.67	229.61	1762.29	1890.92
	Applicant	158.13	1333.23	1418.99	135.35	1339.39	1454.83
Conscientiousness	Honest	321.02	1986.30	2081.95	332.49	1979.35	2107.99
	Applicant	346.02	1346.55	1442.20	309.01	1336.69	1465.33
Openness	Honest	656.84	2099.67	2205.22	744.54	1521.47	1415.93
	Applicant	744.55	1415.93	1521.47	656.85	2099.67	2205.22

All chi-squared value are $p > 0.05$.

Table 3. Total of individuals member in each class.

Factor	Honest				Applicant			
	Type	Class	N	%	Type	Class	N	%
Extroversion	High level	1	113	57	High level	1	23	12
	Active-unfriendly	2	80	40	Active-unfriendly	2	41	21
	Low level	3	7	4	Low level	3	135	68
Conscientiousness	Reliable-inattentive	1	43	22	High level	1	117	59
	Organized-unreliable	2	76	38	Thoroughly-unorganized	2	19	9
	Low level	3	81	40	Low level	3	64	32
Openness to experience	High level	1	93	47	High level	1	142	71
	Intellectualistic	2	34	17	Intellectualistic	2	18	9
	Artistic	3	73	36	Moderate level	3	40	20

V. DISCUSSION

This study yielded several key findings: (1) honest and applicant condition did not differ in the number of class or type of personality. Varieties of responses of both conditions are equal. (2) Even generated similar number of class, an honest and applicant condition differed in the typology. Since faking response present in applicant condition, a class that consists of all attributes that had high-level probability were apparent (3) Faking response strategy among individuals as an applicant were different. Not all attributes are perceived related to job, thus individual as applicants only attempt to elevate a score in certain attributes based on their stereotype. This study supported previous research findings, which suggest that applicant has a different strategy to fake the response.

Participant's response reveals three latent classes with an equal number of class in both conditions. Latent class analysis on extroversion responses generated three classes with similar profiles but different in size of class membership. Conscientiousness and openness to experience exhibit class with a same number of class and class profiles. These results indicate that typology of personality according to both conditions are different. These results also support previously research that suggests individual have a different amount to fake [13]. LCA exhibit multiple classes rather than single since applicants attempt to achieve attempt getting hired in different ways. Presences of various types of personality in applicant condition indicate that individual have different strategies faked the responses. Some of the individuals believe that ideal worker should have high the level of capacity in all attributes, thus they faked all item in such factors. However, some others believe only relevant

attributes that related to job, thus they faked only those items.

This study suggests that there are differences between real and stereotype typology of personality. In normal setting, people in population can be divided into several types of personality, which each type consist equal members. In other side, researchers have developed typology that could be simultaneously applied to people and jobs. For example, Holland classifies interests and careers with an hexagon describing realistic, investigative, artistic, social, entrepreneurial and conventional interests [14]. However, these types of personality in normal setting disappear in applicant setting. Applicant by their self developed certain typology of personality based on their stereotypes.

Based on extroversion factors, we can identify applicant's stereotypes about ideal workers. People who possess some leadership capacity, such as active, energetic and proactive are more favorable on the job. It was widely known in many leadership theories that employee that possess effective leadership characteristics, such as confidence and communicative are required on the general job [15] [16]. Despite of the lack specificity of the job that was conditioned in this study, participants perceived similar field of work. There are more prefer a job related to industrial-organizational field rather than social services. Some applicant only focusing to enhance extroversion score associated to industrial rather than services. Friendships, relationships and warmth were considered less relevant to job.

Most of the participant perceived that individuals who possess a high level of conscientiousness and openness to experiences are the ideal employees. Other respondents perceived that not all attributes would support success on the job. Some individual has a stereotype that only orderliness attribute was ideal for an employee. They consider that employee with high orderliness and well-organized will be succeeded on the job. However, there are small participants stereotyping attribute related conscientiousness is not so important in their job. Therefore, they did not try to elevate a score in all conscientiousness items. As exhibit in class 3 in applicant condition, all attributes are stuck on a low-moderate level.

Based on class profile, this study suggests that there are variation stereotype exist among applicants. Some applicants believe that individuals should display high level of all attributes in extroversion, conscientiousness or openness to get bigger chance to get a job. Some other believes that applicant should display high level only for certain attributes that related to job.

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APPENDIX

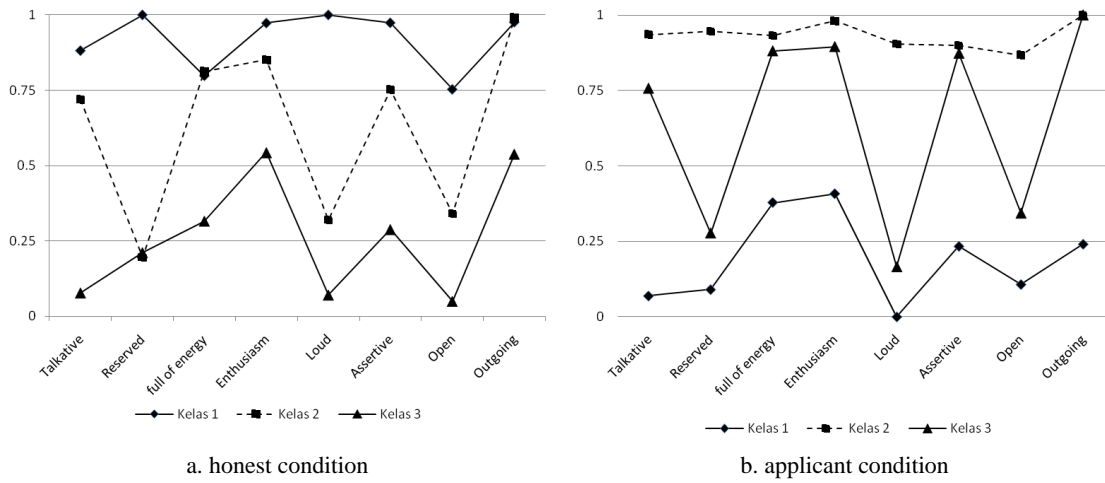


Figure 1. Class profiles in Extroversion Factors

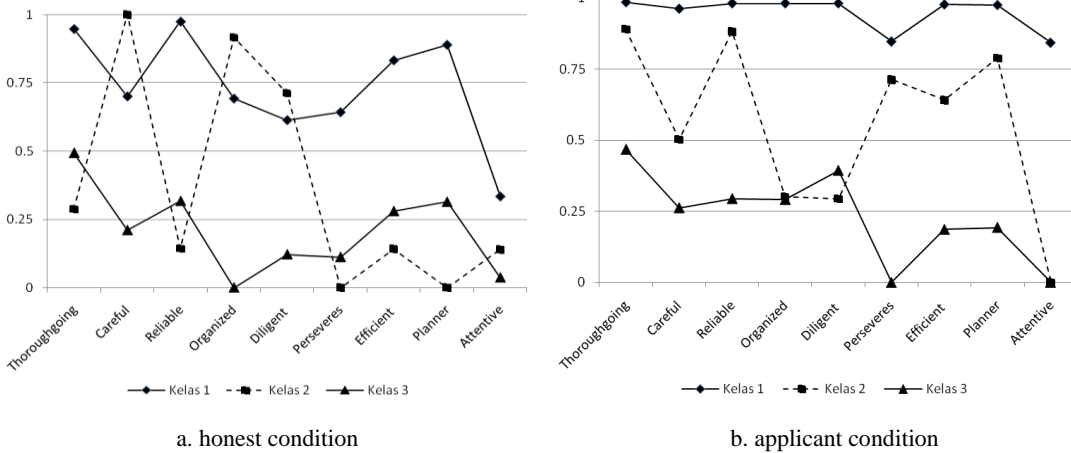


Figure 2. Class profiles in Conscientiousness Factors

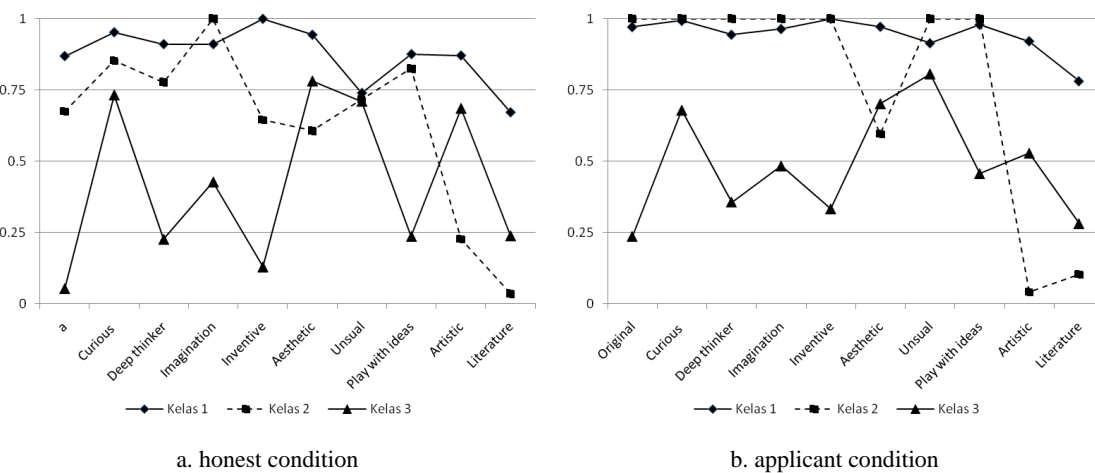


Figure 3. Class profiles in Openness to Experiences Factors