

Effects of supplementary and complementary personality-situation fit on personality processes

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ABSTRACT¹

A conceptual process model of personality-situation (PS) fit (i.e., matching between personality characteristics and situational characteristics) and its impact on different personality processes (i.e., fit perceptions, situation construals, affective responses, behavioral displays) is presented. This model was tested with the domains of the Big Five traits (emotional stability, extraversion, openness/intellect, agreeableness, conscientiousness) and intrapersonal adjustment indicators (authenticity, self-esteem, positive affect). Six groups of participants (total- $N = 125$) were asked to recall different instances of PS fit in a 2×3 factorial design, crossing quality of fit (fit vs. misfit) and type of fit (supplementary vs. complementary demands-ability vs. complementary needs-supply). Findings yielded a consistent main effect of quality of fit, but not type of fit on various personality processes. Additionally, the relation between type of fit and behavioral displays was mediated by fit perceptions, situation construals, and affective responses for all Big Five traits and intrapersonal adjustment indicators. PS fit is discussed as a novel and useful concept in personality psychology.

Keywords

person-environment fit – personality-situation fit – personality processes – situation perception – Big Five – intrapersonal adjustment – authenticity

Schneider (2001, p. 141) proclaimed that “of all the issues in psychology that have fascinated scholars and practitioners alike none has been more pervasive than the one concerning the fit of person and environment.” Accordingly, Roberts and Robins (2006, p. 90) refer to person-environment fit as a “fulcrum concept,” and hundreds of I/O psychological studies are evidence of this (Brown & Guay, 2011; Edwards, 2008). Nonetheless, it remains poorly understood which consequences a “fit” between a person (e.g., someone’s personality traits) and environment (e.g., a momentary situation) may have for outcomes relevant in personality psychology (e.g., Fleeson, 2001, 2007), such as the perception of situations (Rauthmann, 2012), trait-related states (e.g., in the Big Five domains), or intrapersonal adjustment variables (e.g., authenticity, self-esteem, affect). Indeed, concepts of person-environment fit or personality-situation fit have barely been studied in personality psychology so far. This is surprising giv-

en that more recent strings of research in personality psychology focus on if-then patterns of contextualized traits (Mischel & Shoda, 1995), complex and dynamic person-environment transactions (Cramer et al., 2012; Read et al., 2010; Schmitt et al., 2013), and the interplay between persons, situations, and behaviors (Funder, 2006, 2008, 2009). Indeed, many contemporary studies cite Lewin’s (1936, 1951) infamous formula of $B = f(P, E)$, where behavior B is a joint function of a person P and his/her environment E in which he/she is embedded (Bond, 2015). Moreover, Allport (1957) conceived traits as “the dynamic organization within the person, of those psychophysical systems that determine his (or her) unique adjustment to the environment” (p. 48). These early notions of “persons *in situ*” already reflect the concept of person(ality)-environment/situation fit. In a first attempt to bring (back) this fulcrum concept, the current work embarks to elucidate how different types of fit between a person’s personality and a momentary situational episode impact situation percep-

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tion, personality states, and intrapersonal adjustment by means of a design varying recalled instances of (mis)fit.

The Concept of Personality-Situation Fit

The notion of a fit between the person and his/her environment can be traced back to Plato (Dumont & Carson, 1995), but the scientific treatment of the concept reaches back to Parson's (1909) matching model of career decision-making, Lewin's (1936, 1951) field theory, and Murray's (1938, 1951) need-press model (see Edwards, 2008 for details). Since then, various theoretical perspectives on person-environment (PE) fit have emerged (e.g., Caplan, 1987; Edwards, 2008; Edwards, Caplan & Harrison, 1998; Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). In all of these perspectives, PE fit is broadly defined as the match, similarity, proximity, correspondence, compatibility, or congruence between characteristics of persons and environments (Caplan, 1987; Edwards, 2008; Edwards, Caplan & Harrison, 1998; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). Different kinds of these characteristics on the person side (e.g., traits, goals/needs/motives, knowledge/skills/abilities, values, habits) and on the environment side (e.g., individuals, groups, jobs, vocations, organizations) have been distinguished in the literature (see Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011 for a review). Most literature on PE fit define the "person"-part as traits or skills and the "environment"-part in terms of a habitual life-space or socio-ecological niche with relatively enduring affordances (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). In contrast to this predominant notion, the current work defines the "person"-part only as someone's enduring personality traits and the "environment"-part as circumscribed episodes of fleeting situations with momentary affordances. Specifically, these situational episodes may promote/afford or hinder the expression of personality traits (Saucier, Bel-Bahar, & Fernandez, 2007). To the extent that a person scoring highly on Trait *X* encounters a situation that affords Trait *X*, he/she should attain personality-situation (PS) fit for Trait *X*. This conceptualization of PS fit can position PE fit more into personality psychology.

Types of fit

Different types of fit have been distinguished, with the most prominent distinction being made between supplementary and complementary fit (Cable & Edwards, 2004; Kristof, 1996; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). In *supplementary fit*, a person "supplements, embellishes, or possesses characteristics" which are similar to the environment (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987, p.

269). For example, an extraverted person fits to a frivolous party. In *complementary fit*, a person possesses characteristics that add something to the environment (demands-ability fit) or the environment possesses characteristics that help the person (needs-supply fit) (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). For example, an extraverted person has the ability to liven up a party (demands-ability fit), and a party setting can satisfy the need of an extraverted person to socialize and be outgoing (needs-supply fit). As illustrated with the example of extraversion, PS fit may occur for both supplementary and complementary fit. As such, the current work investigates whether and to what extent there are differences in supplementary versus complementary fit regarding their effects on different outcome variables (e.g., personality trait-behaviors).

Outcomes of fit

A wide range of important and consequential outcomes of PE fit in the domains of attitudes, mental and physical health, adjustment, and performance have been established (Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011; Ostroff & Schulte, 2007; Schneider, 1987). This work will consider "personality processes" as outcomes of fit. These processes circumscribe (a) situation perception, (b) personality states, and (c) intrapersonal adjustment indicators. Specifically, the manifestation of Big Five behaviors and intrapersonal adjustment (i.e., authenticity, self-esteem, and affect) will be targeted. Additionally, people's perceptions of fit and their evaluations of the (fitting or misfitting) situation will be examined.

Figure 1 displays a (simplified) conceptual process model of how PS fit may impact different personality-relevant outcomes. A person with his/her personality and self-concept (Box 1A) is constantly embedded into a given ecological, social, and cultural "life space" or surrounding (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989, 2005) which makes up the myriad of situational episodes one experiences (Box 1B). As such, a person always navigates *in situ* (Block & Block, 1981). The different situations encountered pose different affordances on what should, could, or needs to be done. To the extent that characteristics of the person (i.e., his/her personality) and characteristics of the situation (i.e., affordances) "match," there is PS fit (Box 1). As outlined previously, this fit can be supplementary or complementary (in the sense of a demands-ability or needs-supply fit). The current work thus differentiates between *quality of fit* (i.e., fit vs. misfit) and *type of fit* (i.e., supplementary vs. complementary demands-ability vs. complementary needs-supply).

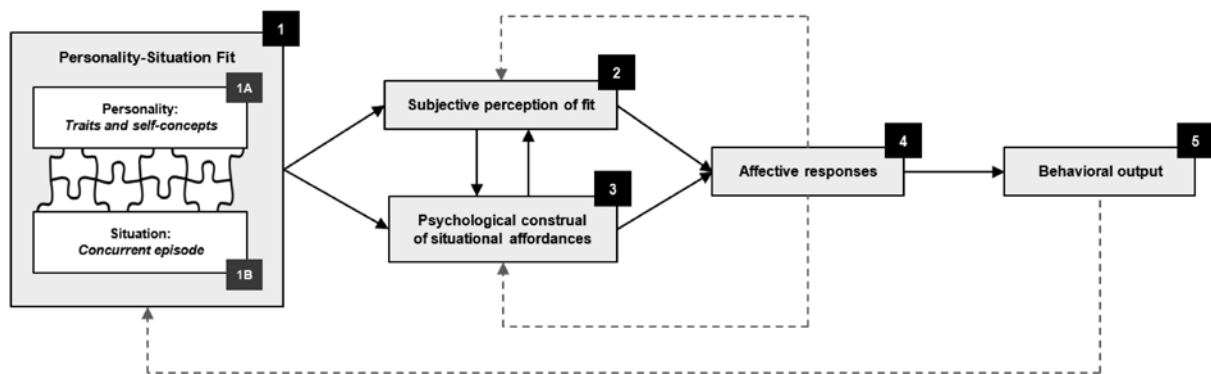


Figure 1: A simplified process model of how personality-situation fit impacts personality processes.

A person's objective PS fit will likely drive this person's perception of his/her fit to some degree (Edwards et al., 2006): People hold explicit and implicit representations of their fit to their enduring environments and specific situations (Box 2). The current work thus samples people's subjective perceptions of their fit to a situation. These subjective fit representations and the objective PS fit, in turn, drive momentary situation perception (Box 3), that is, how people psychologically construe a situation and perceive its characteristics or affordances (Mischel & Shoda, 1995; Rauthmann, 2012; Sherman et al., 2010, 2012, 2013). This work considers several different types of situation perceptions, such as general qualities of situations (see Block & Block, 1981), strong versus weak situations (see Cooper & Withey, 2009; Mischel, 1977), and affordances of traits (see Saucier et al., 2007). Perceived affordances and perceptions of PS fit may guide people which situational demands are salient and important at the moment so as to successfully navigate a situation with appropriate behavior. As such, situation perceptions may elicit affective responses and evaluations (Box 4). Within a person's dynamic cognitive-affective processing system (Mischel & Shoda, 1995), these affective responses may feedback into the fit and situation perceptions from which they originated (see gray-shaded dotted feedback lines in Figure 1). These feelings eventually feed into different verbal, paraverbal, nonverbal, and extraverbal behavioral displays (Box 5).

The current work considers two broad content domains of situational affordances, associated feelings, and contingent behavior (collectively referred to as "personality processes" because they are driven by and constitute mechanisms of individual differences): The Big Five personality traits (emotional stability, extraversion, openness/intellect, agreeableness, conscientiousness) and intrapersonal adjustment (authenticity, self-esteem, positive affect). The current work uses the Big Five taxonomy because of its wide application in personality psychology (John & Srivastava, 1999), usefulness for describing situational properties (Rauth-

mann, 2012), and important consequences for a plethora of life outcomes (Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006). Intrapersonal adjustment indicators are tied together by the beneficial effects or outcomes for the individual on a psychological/intrapersonal level. As such, they have been the focus of numerous PE fit investigations that posit them as outcomes of (successful or beneficial) PE fit (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). The current study considers three variables that may be particularly central to the self and important for intrapersonal functioning: authenticity (feeling congruent with one's true self; Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Lenton, Bruder, Slabu, & Sedikides, 2015), self-esteem (positive evaluations of the self and self-worth; Leary, 1999), and affect (positive affect as a contrast to negative affect, stress, strain, and trauma; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). To the extent that a person's personality fits well into a given environment or situation, the person should be able to express who he/she truly is (authenticity), thus feel content about him-/herself (self-esteem), and ultimately be generally satisfied and happy (positive affect) (Ickes, Snyder, & Garcia, 1997).

More generally, personality and intrapersonal adjustment variables may manifest momentarily as "personality states" which represent *in situ* expressions of trait-relevant feelings and behaviors (Fleeson, 2001, 2007). Within the model depicted in Figure 1, the quality and type of PS fit drives these personality states: PS fit may foster, and PS misfit may hinder the manifestation of traits. The enactment and consistency of behavior may then, in turn, impact the momentary situation in the short-term and the enduring environment in the long-term, respectively (gray-shaded dotted feedback lines in Figure 1). This feedback is commonly referred to as "person-environment transactions" (Buss, 1987), where people select, evoke, modify, or generate their environments and situations.

To summarize, the PS fit process model in Figure 1 conceptualizes various personality processes (i.e., fit and situation, feelings, and behavioral enactments in the domains of the Big Five and intrapersonal ad-

justment) as proximal and distal outcomes of PS fit. In other words, the model postulates that PS fit may lead to behavioral output via (a) subjective perceptions of fit, (b) subjective perceptions of situational affordances, and (c) feelings associated with the behaviors to be enacted. The current work seeks to provide initial evidence (a) whether, to what extent, and how quality and/or type of PS fit may differentially impact different domains of personality processes and (b) whether the PS fit process model holds true.

The Current Study

Aims and scope

With the broader aim of reinvigorating the concept of a “person *in situ*” and introducing the novel concept of PS fit to fill a lacuna in personality psychology, the current study seeks to examine whether effects of PS fit on personality process outcomes (fit and situation perceptions, personality states) vary as a function of the factors “quality of fit” (fit vs. misfit) and “type of fit” (supplementary vs. complementary demands-ability vs. complementary needs-supply). This investigation will allow drawing conclusions on whether different types of fit vs. misfit differentially impact the Big Five and intrapersonal adjustment domains or whether effects are homogeneous/universal across domains. Answers to such basic questions as “Does PS fit impact all traits in the same way?” serve as an important and first underpinning upon which to base future research.

Additionally, this work serves to provide initial evidence for the process model of PS fit outlined above and depicted in Figure 1. Specifically, the question is whether fit perceptions, situation perceptions, and feelings mediate relations between PS fit and behaviors. This question goes beyond the issue of whether there are effects of quality and/or type of fit to the more profound issue of whether and how PS fit drives personality processes. Addressing this question is hence particularly paramount to a personality psychological approach to PE fit in general and PS fit in particular.

Questions and hypotheses

First, and as a minimum, significant differences in subjective perceptions of fit as a function of the fit vs. misfit instruction should be found. Significant differences serve as a sort of validity check whether the instruction of recalling a fit versus misfit occurrence actually worked. Once global differences between fit versus

misfit have been established, differences among the three types of fit may be examined.

Second, it was treated as an exploratory question whether, to what extent, and in which domains differences between the three types of PS fit would emerge. This question is concerned with the generalizability of PS fit effects across types of fit and domains of outcome variables. As such, it can be addressed whether (a) the type of fit is important at all and (b) certain types of fit are particularly relevant to certain kinds of personality process outcomes.

Third, it was expected that fit perceptions, situational affordance perceptions, and feelings would mediate the relationship(s) between quality and/or type of fit and behavioral displays. This hypothesis is in accordance with the conceptual process model outlined in Figure 1. Statistically, a significant total effect of quality and/or type of situation on behavioral displays should be reduced to a non-significant direct effect once taking the indirect effects of the three sets of mediators (fit perceptions, situational affordances, feelings) into account.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Participants (total- $N = 125$; 97 women, 28 men; mean age = 35.02 years, $SD = 13.05$, range: 14-58 years) were randomly assigned to six different groups in an online-study (using *soscisurvey*: Leiner, 2015). A between-subjects design was used by prompting different groups of participants to recall as vividly as possible different types of PS (mis)fit that they had recently experienced themselves and would report (and judge) in the study (see Appendix A). Six groups of participants resulted from the crossing of “quality of fit” (fit vs. misfit) \times “type of fit” (supplementary vs. complementary demands-ability vs. complementary needs-supply). For each group (supplementary: $n = 19$ fit, $n = 25$ misfit; complementary demands-ability: $n = 20$ fit, $n = 20$ misfit; complementary needs-supply: $n = 23$ fit, $n = 20$ misfit)², fit perceptions, situation perceptions, and judgments of personality states as well as intrapersonal adjustment indicators were elicited. Specifically, after describing what happened when, where, and with whom present in the recalled occurrence of PS (mis)fit, people were to rate (a) their subjective experience of fit to the situation, (b) situation perceptions (i.e., situational qualities and strength), (c) Big Five related variables (affordances, feelings, and behaviors),

² Fit conditions: $n = 62$, misfit conditions: $n = 63$; supplementary conditions: $n = 42$, complementary demands-ability conditions: $n = 40$, complementary needs-supply conditions: $n = 43$.

and (d) intrapersonal adjustment related variables (affordances, feelings, and behaviors). Moreover, several personality traits were assessed for all participants at the beginning of the online-study.

Such a research design is advantageous for several reasons. First, participants were not confronted with a hypothetical instance of PS (mis)fit, but had to recall an instance they had *actually experienced* themselves firsthand. Such recalled responses based on real occurrences in people's everyday lives should hold more ecological validity than responses to hypothetical situations (e.g., encapsulated in vignettes). Second, quality *and* type of fit were varied and crossed as factors in a 2×5 design. It can thus be estimated whether and to what extent personality processes are a function of (a) fit vs. misfit regardless of type (i.e., omnibus main effect of quality), (b) the type of fit regardless of (mis)fit (i.e., omnibus main effect of type) and (c) an interaction between quality \times type of fit. Third, concerning different personality and intrapersonal adjustment domains, these questions can be addressed on a general level (i.e., regardless of domains) or a specific level (i.e., attending to differences between domains). This can inform us whether effects generalize across domains or are domain-specific.

Instruments

Three different sets of dependent variables (with three subsets each) were considered: general situation perceptions (Set 1), Big Five trait processes (Set 2), and intrapersonal adjustment processes (Set 3). These three sets, their respective subsets, and specific variables are listed in Table 1. All dependent variables were rated on a seven-point Likert-type response scale (from 0 to 6).

For *general situation perceptions*, participants responded to three sets of variables: perceptions of fit, situational qualities, and situational strength. First, participants indicated their fit to the situation (I experienced no fit at all between the situation and me vs. I experienced an excellent fit between the situation and me) and self-perceived similarity to the situation (I experienced no similarity at all between the situation and me vs. I experienced an outstanding similarity between the situation and me) which they had previously recalled and described. These items were inspired by Edwards et al. (2006). As previously noted, these items served as a validity check and were to sample people's subjective fit experiences (see Figure 1, Box 2). Second, participants rated six basic situational qualities: familiarity (The situation was novel, unknown, unfamiliar to me vs. was familiar), selection (I did not select the situation myself vs. I selected the situation myself), degrees of freedom (The situation constrained me vs.

did not constrain me), effective navigation (I could not navigate the situation at all vs. could navigate the situation very well), no modification wish (I would have liked to change the situation vs. not change the situation), and satisfaction (I was not satisfied with the situation vs. I was satisfied with the situation). These items were based on some of the situation qualities outlined by Block and Block (1981) and can be used to describe almost any situation. Third, participants rated the situational strength of the situation they recalled: universal interpretation (Every person would have perceived and interpreted that situation in the same manner), universal behavioral appropriateness (Every person would agree on how to behave in that situation), universal rewards (A "reward" or positive consequence can be expected for acting "appropriately" in the situation), and universal abilities (Every person would have had the ability to act "appropriately" in that situation). These items were formulated from suggestions of Cooper and Withey (2009), who based their conceptualization of strong versus weak situations on the guidelines proposed by Mischel (1977). Ratings of situational qualities and strength were included to further exploratively assess in what respects the recalled occurrences may differ as a function of quality and type of PS fit. As such, they may grant a deeper understanding of the recalled instances of PS (mis)fit and how they are described by people.

For *Big Five trait processes*, participants responded to three sets of variables: perceptions of situational affordances, trait-related feelings, and trait-related behavioral displays. First, participants rated the affordance of each Big Five trait in their recalled situation (The situation was ... threatening, destabilizing vs. calming, stabilizing; reserved, unsociable vs. welcoming, sociable; not intellectual vs. intellectual; cold, quarrelsome vs. warm, harmonious; untidy, unclear vs. tidy, clear). These items were partly inspired by Rauthmann (2012). Second, participants indicated to what extent they "felt" each Big Five trait (I felt ... anxious, nervous vs. calm, emotionally stable; reserved, unsociable vs. welcoming, sociable; not interested in intellectual matters vs. interested in intellectual matters; cold, quarrelsome vs. warm, harmonious; untidy, careless vs. tidy, conscientious), alluding to feelings as important underpinnings of traits (Rauthmann & Denissen, 2011). Third, participants indicated to what extent they had "enacted" behaviors of each Big Five trait (I behaved ... anxiously, nervously vs. calmly, emotionally stable; reservedly, unsociably vs. welcomingly, sociably; not interested in intellectual matters vs. interested in intellectual matters; coldly, quarrelsomely vs. warmly, harmoniously; untidily, carelessly vs. tidily, conscientiously). Big Five item content was based on (German versions of the) BFI (Gerlitz & Schupp, 2005,

Table 1: Overview of (sets of) dependent variables.

DV sets	DV domain	DV variables
<i>Set 1: General situation perceptions</i>		
a	Fit	Subjective fit Similarity to the situation
b	Situational qualities	Familiarity Selection Degrees of freedom Effective navigation No modification wish Satisfaction
c	Situational strength	Universal interpretation Universal appropriateness of behavior Universal rewards Universal abilities
<i>Set 2: Big Five processes</i>		
a	Situational affordances of the Big Five	Affordance of emotional stability Affordance extraversion Affordance of openness/intellect Affordance of agreeableness Affordance of conscientiousness
b	Feelings of the Big Five	Feelings of emotional stability Feelings of extraversion Feelings of openness/intellect Feelings of agreeableness Feelings of conscientiousness
c	Behavioral displays of the Big Five	Behaviors of emotional stability Behaviors of extraversion Behaviors of openness/intellect Behaviors of agreeableness Behaviors of conscientiousness
<i>Set 3: Intrapersonal adjustment processes</i>		
a	Situational affordances of intrapersonal adjustment	Affordance of authenticity Affordance of self-esteem Affordance of positive affect
b	Feelings of intrapersonal adjustment	Feelings of authenticity Feelings of self-esteem Feelings of positive affect
c	Behavioral displays of intrapersonal adjustment	Behaviors of authenticity Behaviors of self-esteem Behaviors of positive affect

Note. DV = dependent variable.

Lang, 2005; Rammstedt & John, 2005, 2007) and TIPI items (Denissen, Geenen, Selfhout, & van Aken, 2008; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2008).

For *intrapersonal adjustment processes*, participants responded to three sets of variables: perceptions of situational affordances, adjustment-related feelings, and adjustment-related behavioral displays. First, participants rated the affordance of each intrapersonal adjustment indicator in their recalled situation (The situation was ... fostering distortedness and inauthenticity vs. fostering genuineness and authenticity; decreasing self-esteem vs. increasing self-esteem; raising bad mood vs. raising good mood). Second, par-

ticipants indicated to what extent they “felt” each intrapersonal adjustment indicator (I felt ... inauthentic, distorted vs. authentic, genuine; low self-esteem vs. high self-esteem; bad mood vs. good mood), alluding to the fact that the indicators sampled genuinely circumscribe intrapersonal and affect-laden processes. Third, participants indicated to what extent they had “enacted” behaviors of each intrapersonal adjustment indicator (I behaved inauthentically, distortedly vs. authentically, genuinely; I displayed low self-esteem vs. displayed high self-esteem; I displayed a bad mood vs. a good mood). Authenticity items were partly based on the works of Fleeson and Wilt (2010) and Lenton et

al. (2015), self-esteem items on the single-item self-esteem scale by Robins, Hendin, and Trzesniewski (2001), and positive affect on Mayer and Gaschke (1988).

Personality traits (to be used as covariates) were assessed with the BFI-S16 (for the Big Five; Lang, 2005) as well as one-item markers for authenticity (I generally feel inauthentic, distorted vs. authentic, genuine; Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Lenton et al., 2013), self-esteem (I have low self-esteem vs. I have high self-esteem; Robins et al., 2001), and positive affect (I am generally in a bad mood vs. in a good mood; Mayer & Gaschke, 1988).

Data-analytical strategy

Six experimental groups were sampled by a 2×5 factorial design by crossing the factors “quality of fit” (two levels: fit vs. misfit) with “type of fit” (three levels: supplementary vs. complementary demands-ability vs. complementary needs-supply). Different sets of dependent variables were considered (see Table 1), all of which were studied as a function of the two-way factorial design: general situation perceptions, Big Five trait processes, and intrapersonal adjustment processes. The data can thus be analyzed by means of a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Estimates of effect sizes and (*a posteriori* computed) power are reported and means of variables visualized in bar graphs (see Figures 2-10).

Results

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), broken down for quality and type of fit, can be found in the Appendix B. First, MANOVA findings are presented, structured around the three different sets of dependent variables (i.e., general situation perceptions, person-

ality processes, intrapersonal adjustment processes). Second, process model findings are presented (which are informed by the MANOVA findings).

General situation perceptions

Perceptions of fit. Predicting *subjective fit variables* (Set 1a: fit, similarity) from quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(2, 118) = 170.95, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .74$, power = 1.00) but not for type of fit ($F(4, 238) = 1.47, p = .211$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$, power = .45). The interaction between quality and type of fit was only marginally significant ($F(4, 238) = 2.06, p = .086$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$, power = .61). As can be seen in Table 2 under “Subjective fit (Set 1a),” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all both fit perception variables (p s $< .001$), with participants reporting higher levels of fit (mean difference = 3.82, $p < .001$) and similarity of the self with the situation (mean difference = 2.97, $p < .001$) in the fit relative to the misfit conditions.

Not regarding the different experimental groups, perceptions of fit and similarity to the situation were strongly correlated in the entire data, $r = .82$ ($p < .001$). This was taken as evidence that both variables captured a virtually similar concept of “global subjective fit,” and thus both variables were aggregated to one variable. Predicting global subjective fit from quality and type of fit in a two-way ANOVA yielded a significant main effect for quality of fit ($F = 284.09, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .71$, power = 1.00), but not for type of fit ($F = 2.31, p = .103$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$, power = .46). The interaction between quality and type of fit turned significant ($F = 3.24, p = .045$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$, power = .61). As expected, participants reported more overall fit in the fit conditions relative to the misfit conditions (mean difference = 3.40, $p < .001$). These findings are graphically displayed in Figure 2.

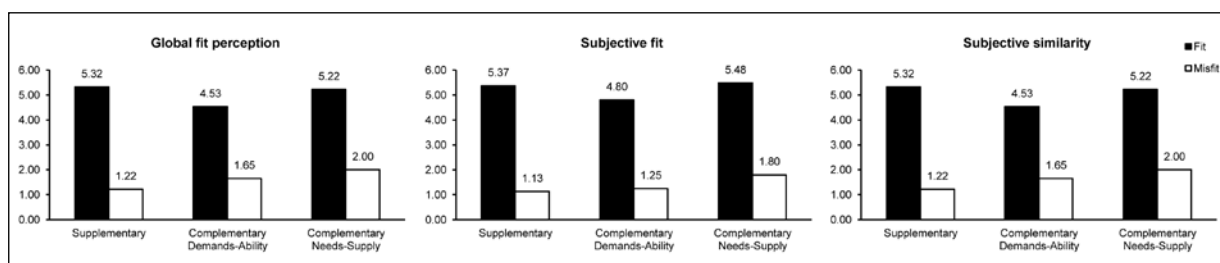


Figure 2: Perceptions of fit (Set 1a), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

Table 2: Main and interaction effects of quality and type of fit on different dependent variables.

Dependent variables	Quality of fit (main effect)			Type of fit (main effect)			Quality x Type of fit (interaction effect)		
	F-value	Partial η^2	Power ^a	F-value	Partial η^2	Power ^a	F-value	Partial η^2	Power ^a
<i>Subjective fit (Set 1a)</i>									
Fit	359.96***	.74	1.00	5.01†	.05	.57	1.05	.02	.25
Similarity	159.95***	.54	1.00	1.02	.02	.25	4.25*	.07	.75
<i>Situational quality variables (Set 1b)</i>									
Familiarity	20.24***	.15	.99	1.75	.05	.56	2.64†	.04	.52
Selection	20.56***	.15	.99	2.47†	.04	.49	1.59	.02	.29
Degree of freedom	92.52***	.44	1.00	0.54	.01	.10	0.83	.01	.19
Effective navigation	98.97***	.45	1.00	5.47**	.08	.84	0.91	.02	.20
No modification wish	91.16***	.45	1.00	5.05**	.08	.81	4.79*	.07	.79
Satisfaction	151.77***	.56	1.00	2.25	.04	.45	3.95*	.06	.70
<i>Situational strength variables (Set 1c)</i>									
Interpretation	0.57	.00	.09	0.00	.00	.05	0.48	.01	.13
Behavioral appropriateness	0.27	.00	.08	0.17	.00	.08	0.19	.00	.08
Rewards	4.20*	.05	.53	0.46	.01	.12	1.49	.02	.51
Abilities	2.81†	.02	.38	0.55	.01	.14	0.71	.01	.17
<i>Situational affordances of the Big Five (Set 2a)</i>									
Emotional stability	109.68***	.48	1.00	1.08	.02	.24	2.20	.04	.44
Extraversion	28.11***	.19	1.00	2.93†	.05	.56	0.82	.01	.19
Openness	18.12***	.15	.99	0.42	.01	.12	0.18	.00	.08
Agreeableness	52.77***	.22	1.00	2.49†	.04	.49	0.92	.02	.21
Conscientiousness	56.91***	.24	1.00	2.94†	.05	.56	4.18*	.07	.75
<i>Feelings associated with the Big Five (Set 2b)</i>									
Emotional stability	82.88***	.41	1.00	1.62	.05	.54	0.54	.01	.14
Extraversion	58.78***	.35	1.00	5.22*	.05	.60	1.61	.05	.34
Openness	10.08**	.08	.88	5.28*	.05	.61	0.15	.00	.07
Agreeableness	52.98***	.22	1.00	0.82	.01	.19	0.14	.00	.07
Conscientiousness	51.47***	.21	1.00	1.67	.05	.55	2.62†	.04	.51
<i>Behaviors of the Big Five (Set 2c)</i>									
Emotional stability	54.56***	.25	1.00	4.59*	.07	.77	.72	.01	.17
Extraversion	24.54***	.17	1.00	2.99†	.05	.57	.50	.01	.10
Openness	8.49**	.07	.82	2.07	.05	.42	.42	.01	.12
Agreeableness	26.14***	.18	1.00	0.49	.01	.15	.55	.01	.14
Conscientiousness	10.99**	.08	.91	2.99†	.05	.57	5.26*	.05	.61
<i>Situational affordances of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3a)</i>									
Authenticity	115.81***	.49	1.00	0.42	.01	.12	1.55	.02	.52
Self-esteem	85.62***	.41	1.00	4.29*	.07	.74	1.69	.05	.35
Positive affect	89.54***	.43	1.00	6.81**	.10	.91	4.59*	.07	.77
<i>Feelings associated with intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3b)</i>									
Authenticity	84.75***	.42	1.00	0.04	.00	.06	1.17	.02	.25
Self-esteem	42.66***	.26	1.00	1.27	.02	.27	0.55	.01	.14
Positive affect	96.94***	.45	1.00	0.80	.01	.18	4.94**	.08	.80
<i>Behaviors of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3c)</i>									
Authenticity	59.29***	.35	1.00	1.58	.05	.55	0.44	.01	.12
Self-esteem	28.59***	.19	1.00	0.92	.02	.21	0.05	.00	.05
Positive affect	54.55***	.22	1.00	6.07**	.09	.88	1.08	.02	.24

Note. ^a Power-estimate based on $\alpha = .05$. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p < .10$.

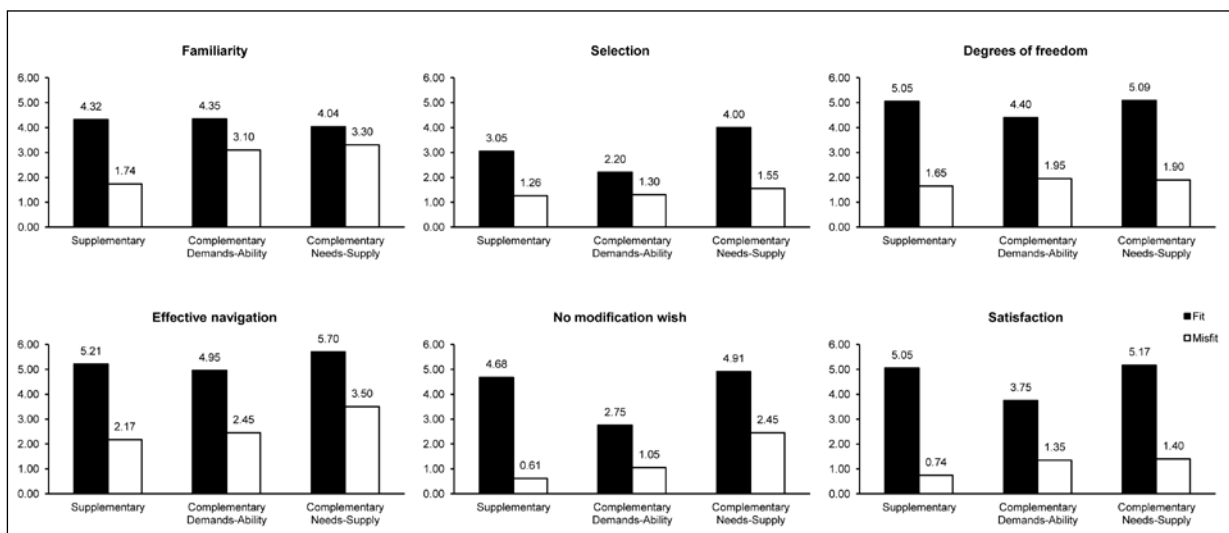


Figure 3: Perceptions of situational qualities (Set 1b), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

Perceptions of situational qualities. Predicting *situational quality variables* (Set 1b: familiarity, selection, degrees of freedom, effective navigation, no modification wish, satisfaction) from quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(6, 114) = 29.78, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .61$, power = 1.00) and type of fit ($F(12, 250) = 2.21, p = .012$; partial $\eta^2 = .10$, power = .95). The interaction between quality and type of fit was only marginally significant ($F(12, 250) = 1.66, p = .074$; partial $\eta^2 = .08$, power = .85). As can be seen in Table 2 under “Situational quality variables (Set 1b),” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all situational quality variables ($ps < .001$), with participants reporting significantly more familiarity with, self-induced selection of, more degrees of freedom in, better effective navigation in, less modification wishes of, and more satisfaction with their situation in the fit relative to the misfit conditions (mean differences = 1.52 – 3.10, $ps < .001$). Type of fit only showed a significant main effect on effective navigation and no modification wish ($ps < .01$). Participants reported significantly better effective navigation in the situation for complementary needs-supply fit relative to both complementary demands-ability fit (mean difference = 0.90, $p = .017$) and supplementary fit (mean difference = 0.91, $p = .014$). They also reported significantly less modification wishes for complementary needs-supply fit relative to complementary demands-ability fit (mean difference = 1.26, $p = .006$). Additionally, there was a significant quality x type of fit interaction effect on no modification wish and satisfaction ($ps < .05$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 5.

Perceptions of situational strengths. Predicting *situational strength variables* (Set 1c: interpretation, behavioral appropriateness, rewards, abilities) from

quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a non-significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(4, 116) = 1.70, p = .156$; partial $\eta^2 = .06$, power = .51) and type of fit ($F(8, 254) = 0.51, p = .962$; partial $\eta^2 = .01$, power = .15). The interaction between quality and type of fit was also non-significant ($F(8, 254) = 0.72, p = .676$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$, power = .33). Nonetheless, by inspection of pairwise comparisons, participants reported significantly more universal rewards in fit conditions relative to misfit conditions ($F = 4.21, p = .043$; mean difference = 0.67, $p = .043$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 4.

Big Five processes

Perceptions of situational affordances. Predicting *situational affordances of Big Five traits* (Set 2a: emotional stability, extraversion, openness/intellect, agreeableness, conscientiousness) from quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(5, 115) = 22.00, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .49$, power = 1.00) but not for type of fit ($F(10, 252) = 1.41, p = .175$; partial $\eta^2 = .06$, power = .71). The interaction between quality and type of fit was also non-significant ($F(10, 252) = 1.17, p = .513$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$, power = .60). As can be seen in Table 2 under “Situational affordances of the Big Five (Set 2a),” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all five affordance variables ($ps < .001$), with participants reporting significantly higher levels of affordances of all Big Five traits in the fit relative to the misfit conditions (mean differences = 1.50 – 2.77, $ps < .001$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 5.

Feelings. Predicting *Big Five related feelings* (Set 4a: emotional stability, extraversion, openness/intellect, agreeableness, conscientiousness) from quality and

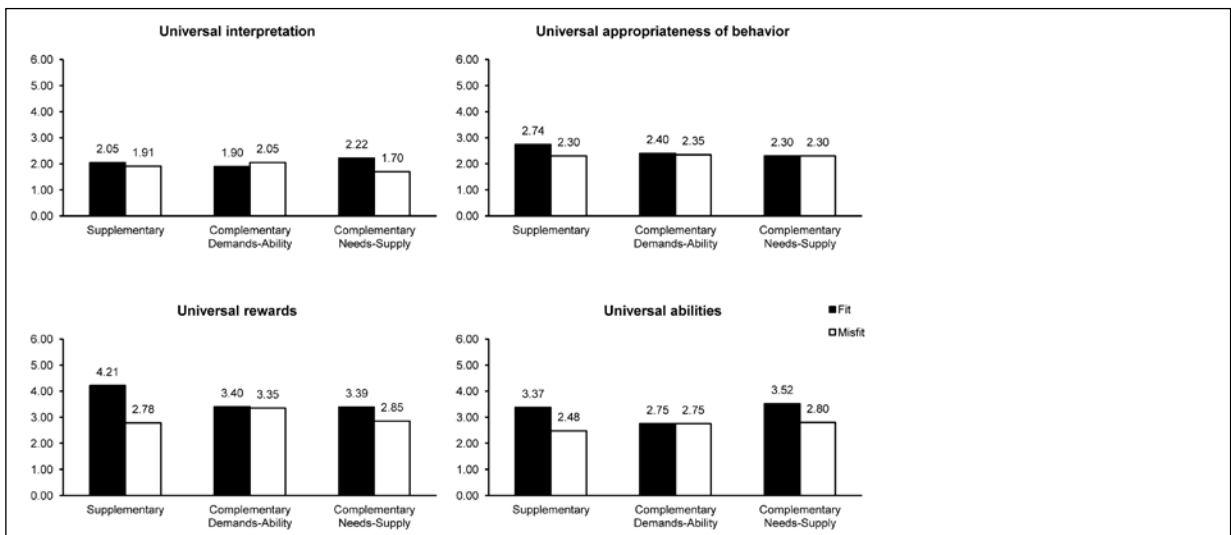


Figure 4: Perceptions of situational strength (Set 1c), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

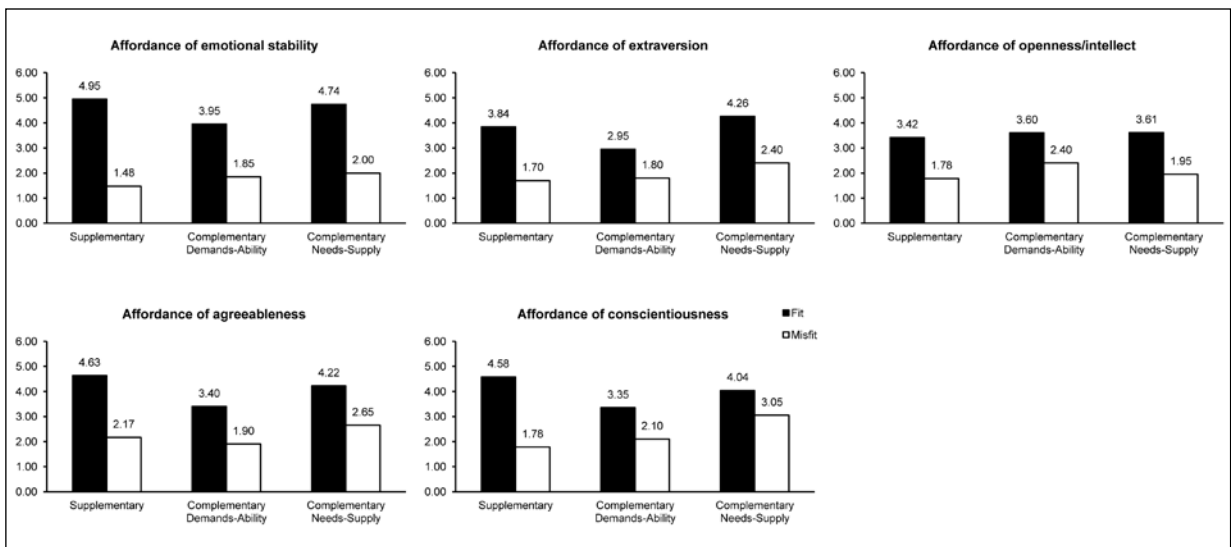


Figure 5: Perceptions of situational affordances of Big Five traits (Set 2a), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(65, 115) = 22.80, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .50$, power = 1.00) but not for type of fit ($F(10, 252) = 1.60, p = .107$; partial $\eta^2 = .07$, power = .77). The interaction between quality and type of fit was also non-significant ($F(10, 252) = 1.07, p = .583$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$, power = .56). As can be seen in Table 2 under “Feelings associated with the Big Five (Set 2b),” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all trait-related feelings variables ($ps < .01$), with participants reporting significantly more feelings of all Big Five traits in the fit relative to the misfit conditions (mean differences = 1.06 – 2.73, $ps \leq .002$). Type of fit only showed a significant main effect on feelings of extraversion and openness/intellect ($ps < .05$), with participants reporting significantly more feelings of extraversion in complementary needs-supply fit

relative to supplementary fit (mean difference = 0.82, $p = .049$) and marginally significantly more feelings of openness/intellect in complementary needs-supply fit relative to complementary needs-demands fit (mean difference = 0.95, $p = .065$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 6.

Behavior. Predicting Big Five related behavioral displays (Set 3c: emotional stability, extraversion, openness/intellect, agreeableness, conscientiousness) from quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(5, 115) = 10.49, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .31$, power = 1.00) and for type of fit ($F(10, 252) = 2.03, p = .032$; partial $\eta^2 = .08$, power = .88). The interaction between quality and type of fit was non-significant ($F(10, 252) = 0.96, p = .477$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$, power = .50). As can be seen in Table 2

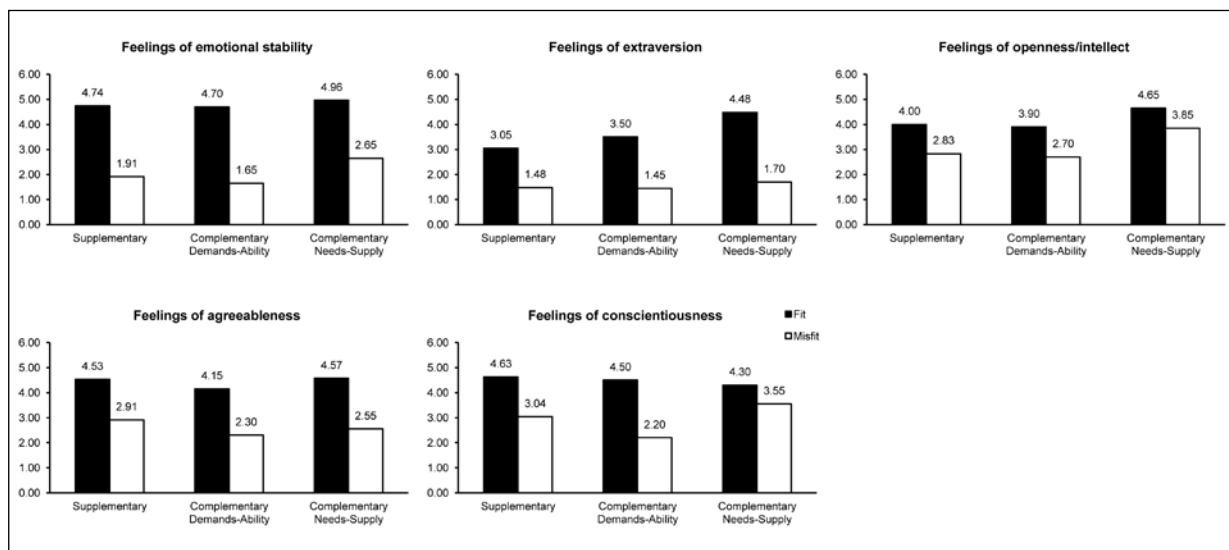


Figure 6: Feelings associated with the Big Five traits (Set 2b), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

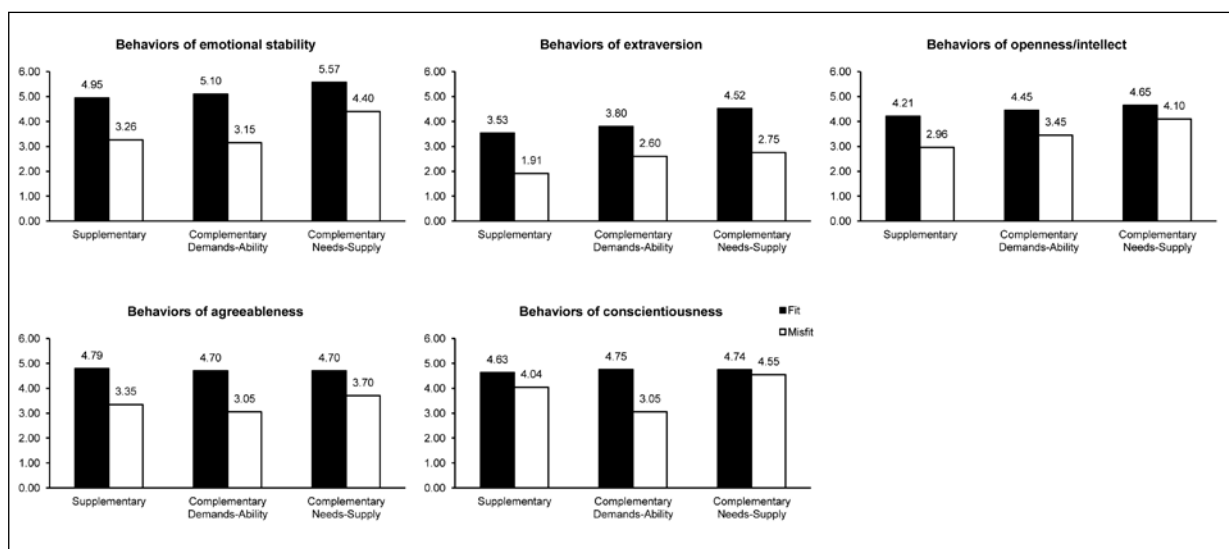


Figure 7: Behavioral displays of Big Five traits (Set 2c), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

under “Behaviors of the Big Five (Set 2c),” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all trait-related behavior variables ($ps < .01$), with participants reporting significantly higher behavioral displays of all Big Five traits in the fit relative to the misfit conditions (mean differences = 0.85 – 1.60, $ps \leq .004$). Type of fit only showed a significant main effect on the behavioral display of emotional stability ($p < .05$), with participants reporting a significantly higher behavioral display of emotional stability in complementary needs-supply fit relative to both supplementary fit (mean difference = 0.88, $p = .027$) and complementary demands-ability fit (mean difference = 0.86, $p = .034$). Moreover, participants reported a significantly higher behavioral display of extraversion in complementary needs-supply fit relative to supplementary fit (mean difference =

0.92, $p = .048$). Lastly, participants also reported a significantly higher behavioral display of conscientiousness in complementary needs-supply fit relative to complementary demands-ability fit (mean difference = 0.75, $p = .049$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 7.

Intrapersonal adjustment processes

Perceptions of situational affordances. Predicting situational affordances of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3a: authenticity, self-esteem, positive affect) from quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(3, 117) = 48.28, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .55$, power = 1.00) and for type of fit ($F(6, 236) = 5.97, p = .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .09$,

power = .97). The interaction between quality and type of fit was non-significant ($F(6, 236) = 1.73, p = .115$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$, power = .65). As can be seen in Table 2 under “Situational affordances of intrapersonal adjustment,” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all three affordance indicators ($ps < .001$), with all participants reporting significantly higher levels of affordances of intrapersonal adjustment indicators in the fit relative to the misfit conditions (mean differences = 2.76 – 5.15, $ps < .001$). Moreover, type of fit showed a significant main effect on affordances of self-esteem and positive affect ($ps < .05$). Specifically, participants reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem affordances in complementary needs-supply fit relative to supplementary fit (mean difference = 1.00, $p = .021$). They also reported significantly less positive affect affordances in complementary demand-ability fit relative to both supplementary fit (mean difference = -1.03, $p = .021$) and complementary needs-ability fit (mean difference = -1.52, $p = .002$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 8.

Feelings. Predicting feelings of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3b: authenticity, self-esteem, positive affect) from quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(3, 117) = 40.75, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .51$, power = 1.00) but not for type of fit ($F(10, 232) = 0.59, p = .758$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$, power = .25). The interaction between quality and type of fit was non-significant ($F(6, 236) = 1.66, p = .152$; partial $\eta^2 = .04$, power = .65). As can be seen in Table 2 under “Feelings associated with intra-

personal adjustment (Set 3b),” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all three variables of feelings related to intrapersonal adjustment ($ps < .001$), with participants reporting significantly more feelings of authenticity, self-esteem, and positive affect in the fit relative to misfit conditions (mean differences = 2.21 – 2.84, $ps < .001$). Additionally, there was a significant quality x type of fit interaction effect on feelings of positive affect ($p < .01$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 9.

Behavior. Predicting behavioral displays of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3c: authenticity, self-esteem, positive affect) from quality and type of fit in a two-way MANOVA yielded a significant omnibus effect for quality of fit ($F(3, 117) = 24.69, p < .001$; partial $\eta^2 = .39$, power = 1.00) and for type of fit ($F(6, 236) = 2.26, p = .039$; partial $\eta^2 = .05$, power = .79). The interaction between quality and type of fit was non-significant ($F(6, 236) = 0.69, p = .661$; partial $\eta^2 = .02$, power = .27). As can be seen in Table 2 under “Behaviors of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3c),” quality of fit showed a significant main effect on all three variables of behavioral displays related to intrapersonal adjustment ($ps < .001$), with participants reporting significantly higher behavioral displays of authenticity, self-esteem, and positive affect in the fit relative to misfit conditions (mean differences = 1.63 – 2.25, $ps < .001$). Type of fit showed a significant main effect only on behavioral displays of positive affect ($F = 6.07, p = .003$; partial $\eta^2 = .09$, power = .88), with participants reporting significantly higher behavioral displays of positive affect

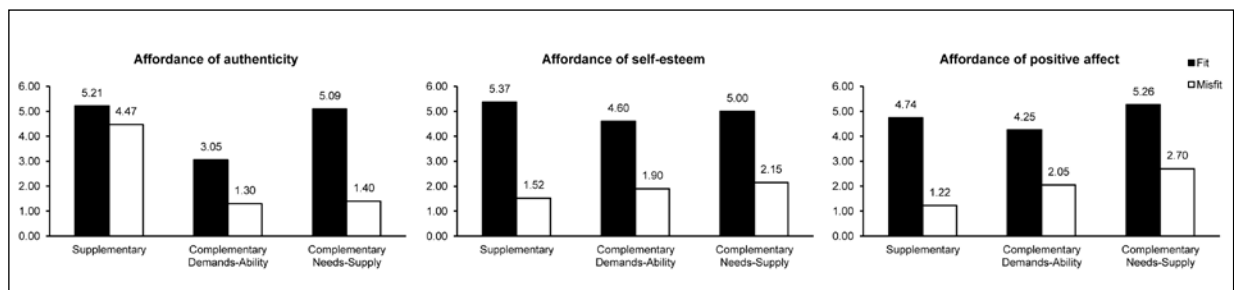


Figure 8: Perceptions of situational affordance of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3a), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

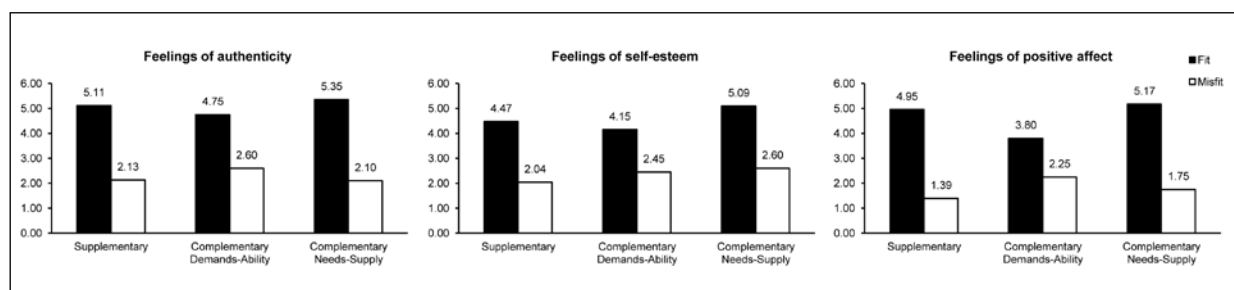


Figure 9: Feelings associated with intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3b), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

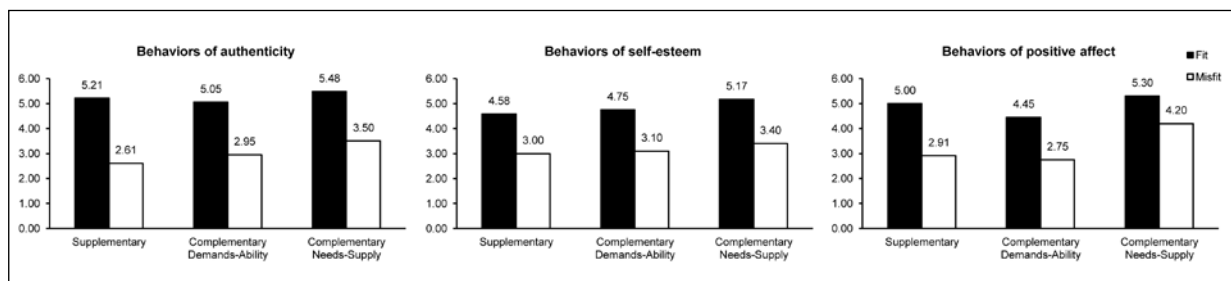


Figure 10: Behavioral displays of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3c), broken down by quality and type of personality-situation fit.

in complementary needs-supply fit relative to complementary demands-ability fit (mean difference = 1.15, $p = .003$). Findings are graphically displayed in Figure 10.

Ancillary covariance analyses

All analyses presented above were repeated with the addition of ten covariates (sex, age, neuroticism, extraversion, openness/intellect, agreeableness, conscientiousness, trait authenticity, global self-esteem, trait positive affect) in multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVAs). For descriptive statistics of personality traits, see Appendix C. While some main effects of these individual differences variables on dependent variables were noted, generally only little differences in the pattern of findings and the conclusions drawn from them emerged when controlling for these individual differences variables. If differences to the MANOVA findings occurred at all, then that some significant effects of type of fit on dependent variables vanished. However, as MANOVA and MANCOVA findings were largely highly similar, models without controlling for covariates were presented in this work.⁵ The overall pattern of findings from these models may be deemed robust.

Process model analyses

The previously reported MANOVA findings point towards the importance of quality of fit as fit versus misfit had strong effects on fit perceptions, situation construals, personality processes, and intrapersonal adjustment. In contrast, type of fit did not consistently show an effect on any of the sets of dependent variables, and if it did show statistically significant effects, then these were relatively negligible in effect sizes (when compared to the effects of quality of fit). As such, the process model of PS fit outlined in the Introduction (see Figure 1) does not need to explicitly distinguish between different types of fit for the Big Five trait and intrapersonal adjustment domains used in this study.

Only quality of fit (fit vs. misfit) is thus considered in the following analyses.

The process model depicted in Figure 1 was modeled with Hayes' (2012, 2015) Model 6 in the PROCESS Macro which allows specifying one independent variable (IV), multiple sequentially linked mediating variables (M_n), and one dependent variable (DV). Specifically, following variable groups were incorporated according to the conceptual model in Figure 1: IV = type of fit (fit = 1 vs. misfit = 0), M_1 = global fit perception, M_2 = situational affordance rating, M_3 = feelings, DV = behavioral display. This process model was computed for each variable in the domains of the Big Five (emotional stability, extraversion, openness/intellect, agreeableness, conscientiousness) and intrapersonal adjustment (authenticity, self-esteem, positive affect) separately, resulting in eight different models. Additionally, bootstrapping procedures (5,000 resamplings) were used to derive bootstrapped confidence intervals used to evaluate whether mediation has occurred or not. In the case of one IV leading to one DV via three sequentially linked M_{1-3} , PROCESS computes seven different process models varying the mediators M_{1-3} . By inspecting indirect effects and confidence intervals for each of these models, conclusions can be drawn on how many and which mediators are necessary to mediate the effect of IV on DV.

Findings are summarized in Table 5 and Figure 11. Table 5 shows a summary of the indirect effects from several different process models and Figure 11 shows standardized regression weights for all domains within one model. As can be gleaned from Table 5, the sequence of the mediators fit perception → situational affordance → feelings fully mediated the effect of fit versus misfit on behavioral displays for all Big Five traits and intrapersonal adjustment indicators. For these models the bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence interval did not contain zero which is taken as evidence that a "significant" mediation has occurred (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Hayes, 2009, 2012, 2015). It is noteworthy that also other models yielded significant mediation results, but the fourth process mediation

⁵ Additional findings may be obtained from the author upon request.

Table 3: Summary of indirect effects from different process models.

Process models computed	Effect	SE	L-CI	U-CI	Mediation?
<i>Emotional stability</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	.00	.15	-.26	.25	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.07	.08	-.07	.24	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.07	.08	-.10	.21	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.21	.07	.11	.40	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	.01	.02	-.02	.09	
Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.05	.04	-.06	.15	
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	.07	.07	-.04	.24	
<i>Extraversion</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	-.16	.11	-.37	.07	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.17	.07	.05	.34	•
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.34	.08	.20	.52	•
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.09	.04	.03	.21	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	-.03	.05	-.14	.04	
Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	-.02	.05	-.08	.02	
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	-.06	.06	-.18	.07	
<i>Openness/Intellect</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	-.10	.10	-.31	.11	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.18	.05	.09	.31	•
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.17	.08	.04	.34	•
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.10	.04	.04	.21	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	-.04	.05	-.15	.04	
Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	-.02	.05	-.09	.02	
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	-.08	.08	-.25	.05	
<i>Agreeableness</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	-.14	.10	-.35	.04	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.10	.07	-.01	.26	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.16	.09	.00	.36	(•)
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.16	.06	.08	.31	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	-.01	.05	-.09	.05	
Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	-.02	.04	-.10	.06	
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	.01	.07	-.13	.15	
<i>Conscientiousness</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	-.08	.10	-.25	.13	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.01	.05	-.06	.07	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.08	.09	-.09	.26	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.10	.05	.04	.25	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	.00	.01	-.01	.04	
Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.02	.04	-.06	.12	
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	.12	.09	-.05	.29	
<i>Authenticity</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	.07	.07	-.06	.21	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.07	.06	-.02	.21	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.22	.08	.08	.40	•
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.17	.06	.07	.33	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	.05	.05	-.01	.12	

Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.06	.04	.00	.17	(•)
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	-.02	.06	-.14	.09	
<i>Self-esteem</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	-.14	.11	-.37	.07	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.12	.10	-.04	.35	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.05	.09	-.14	.25	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.29	.08	.17	.50	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	.00	.02	-.06	.05	
Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.00	.05	-.10	.09	
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	.04	.08	-.09	.21	
<i>Affect</i>					
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Behavior	-.04	.14	-.31	.26	
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation Perception → Behavior	.27	.10	.09	.48	•
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Feelings → Behavior	.10	.06	.01	.25	•
Fit / Misfit → Fit perception → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.09	.06	.01	.24	•
Fit / Misfit → Situation Perception → Behavior	.00	.05	-.10	.10	
Fit / Misfit → Situation perception → Feelings → Behavior	.00	.02	-.03	.04	
Fit / Misfit → Feelings → Behavior	.00	.05	-.05	.08	

Note. $N = 125$. Estimates of effect size and confidence intervals are bootstrapped (with 5,000 resamples).

SE = standard error. L-CI = lower 95 % bootstrapped bias-corrected confidence interval, U-CI = upper 95 % bootstrapped bias-corrected confidence interval.

Presence of a mediation effect was judged when the lower and upper confidence intervals did not include zero. If this was the case, then the corresponding mediational model obtained a “•.”

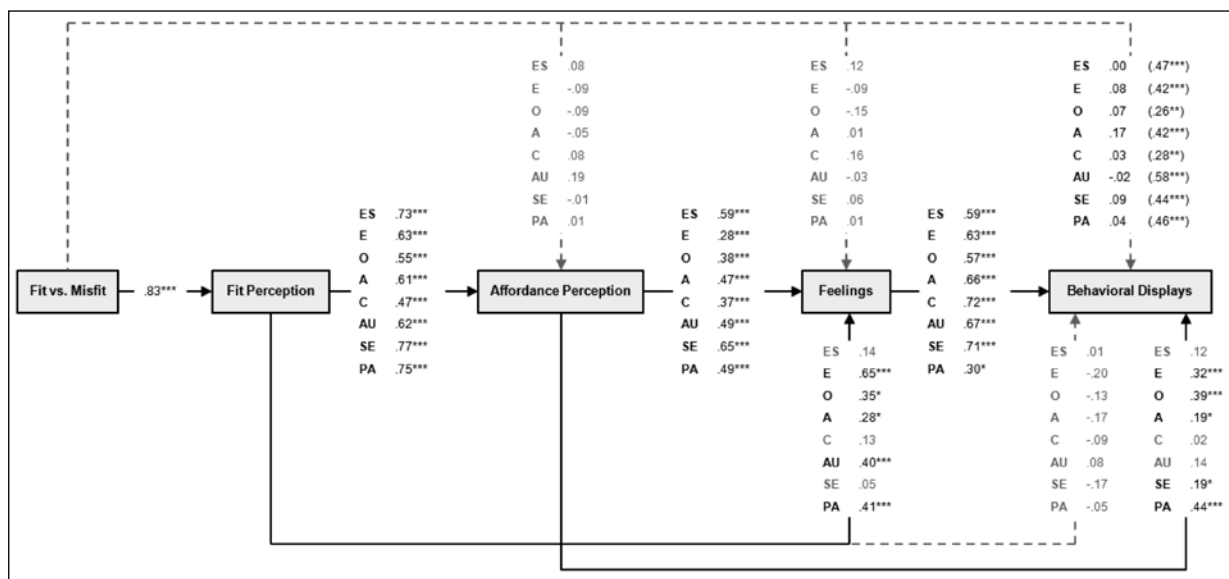


Figure 11: Process model of personality-situation fit predicting perceptions of fit, situational affordances, feelings, and behavioral displays.

Note. $N = 125$.

Standardized regression weights are depicted. Gray and dotted paths represent statistically non-significant effects ($ps > .05$). Regression weights in parentheses from “Fit vs. Misfit” to “Behavioral Displays” represent total effects.

ES = emotional stability, E = extraversion, O = openness/intellect, A = agreeableness, C = conscientiousness, AU = authenticity, SE = self-esteem, PA = positive affect. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

model (see Table 3) incorporating all three mediation variables consistently yielded a strong significant indirect effect.

As can be gleaned from Figure 11, neither objective fit versus misfit nor the subjective global perception of fit had any direct effects on behavioral displays: All effects were rendered non-significant (see gray values in Figure 11) once situational affordance perceptions and feelings were introduced as mediators (which showed direct effects on behavior for some traits). First, objective fit versus misfit did not show any direct effects on any mediating variable (except for global fit perception) or behavioral display. Second, subjective global perceptions of fit showed direct effects on all situational affordance perceptions as well as on feelings for some domains, but there were no direct effects on behavior once controlling for the other mediators in the process sequence. Thus, behavior was a relatively distal outcome of PS fit in these data, with more proximal mechanisms (i.e., situation perceptions and feelings) driving the expression of behavior. In line with expectations formulated from the conceptual process model in Figure 1, effects of quality of fit were completely subsumed by the mediating variables in a full mediation.

Discussion

Summary

This work investigated the effects of (recalled) quality of PS fit (fit vs. misfit) and type of PS fit (supplementary vs. complementary demands-ability vs. complementary needs-supply) on different sets of personality process outcome variables (general situation perceptions, Big Five processes, intrapersonal adjustment processes). Findings can be summarized as follows. First, quality of fit consistently showed strong main effects on all personality processes (except for situational strength where no significant differences between fit and misfit conditions were detected). Specifically, participants experienced more fit, evaluated the situation more positively, perceived stronger affordances of traits, felt more trait-relevant emotions, and enacted trait-behaviors more strongly in conditions of fit versus misfit. This included that participants felt more authenticity, self-esteem, and positive affect in fit conditions. Second, type of fit did not consistently produce significant main effects and was hence deemed a negligible factor in the current data. Third, PS fit predicted trait-relevant behavior via subjective fit perceptions, situational affordance perceptions, and feelings associated with traits. As such, PS fit had indirect and distal effects on behavior, which is in line with the PS fit

process model in Figure 1. To summarize, the expectations and hypotheses formulated at the outset of the study were all met.

Effects of personality-situation fit

What do the empirical findings of this work mean for the conceptual process model of PS fit in Figure 1? Although the domains of the Big Five traits and intrapersonal adjustment indicators were treated as separate sets of dependent variables, empirical findings (see Tables 2 and 3) suggested that both domains produced a similar pattern of findings. Thus, the findings presented in Figure 11 were averaged and rearranged to fit into the conceptual model presented in Figure 1. This new model is displayed in Figure 12. Values represent standardized regression coefficients averaged across all Big Five traits and intrapersonal adjustment indicators (M_{β}). Dotted lines represent direct effects controlled for the contributions of the mediating variables. As can be seen, objective PS fit vs. misfit had no direct effects on the psychological construal of situational affordances ($M_{\beta} = .02$), affective responses ($M_{\beta} = .01$), and behavioral output ($M_{\beta} = .06$). Notably, the total effect of objective PS fit vs. misfit on behavioral output was $M_{\beta} = .42$. This means that the intermediate variables fully mediated the path from objective PS fit vs. misfit to behavioral output. Objective PS fit vs. misfit did, however, have a strong effect ($\beta = .83$) on subjectively perceived fit. The subjective perception of fit had, in turn, a relatively strong direct effect on the psychological construal of situational affordances ($M_{\beta} = .65$), a moderate direct effect on affective responses ($M_{\beta} = .32$) (even after taking into account the mediation of situational affordances), and no direct effect on behavioral output ($M_{\beta} = -.09$). The psychological construal of situational affordances had a strong direct effect on affective responses ($M_{\beta} = .45$), and affective responses a relatively strong direct effect on behavioral output ($M_{\beta} = .62$). Situational affordances had only a moderate direct effect on behavioral output ($M_{\beta} = .23$) (after taking affective responses as a mediator into account).

The aggregated findings of this work thus inform us in several ways about the relations in Figure 1. First, PS fit is best understood in terms of quality of fit, that is, whether fit vs. misfit occurred. The type of fit was negligible in this study. Second, effects of PS fit vs. misfit seem to generalize across trait and intrapersonal adjustment domains. There are some differences between the domains studied, but the larger picture points to a consistent pattern of findings across domains. Third, PS fit vs. misfit is impactful and consequential in that it drives ensuing processes such as perceptions of fit, construals of situational affordances, affective responses, and ultimately behavioral outputs.

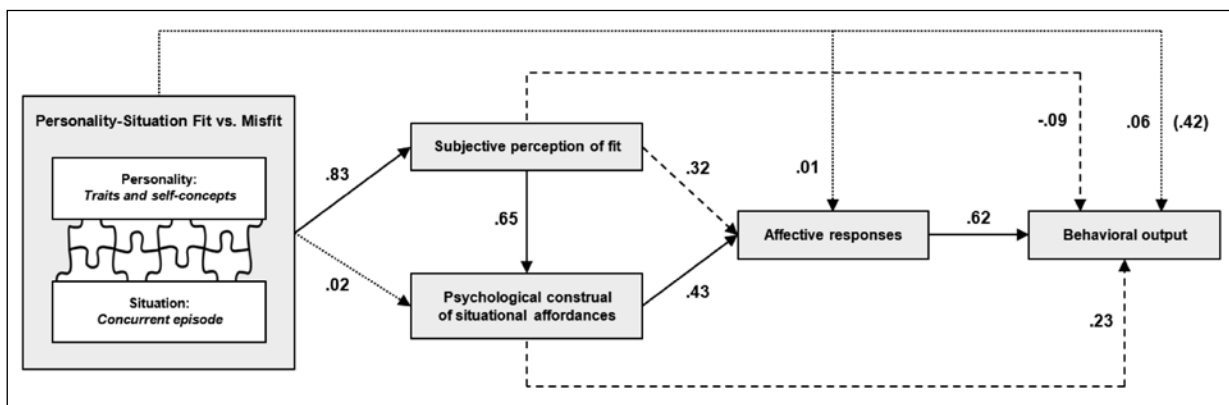


Figure 12: Average effects in the process model of personality-situation fit predicting different personality processes.

Note. Average effect sizes (standardized regression coefficients) are presented. Values reflect the means of the standardized regression coefficients presented in Figure 11. The model in Figure 11 has been rearranged into the model in Figure 1.

All dotted lines represent indirect effects that run over at least one mediating variable.

Densely dotted lines represent indirect effects only of personality-situation fit versus misfit on different outcome variables.

For personality-situation fit versus misfit, .06 represents the average direct effect (once all mediating variables have been taken into account) and (.42) the average total effect.

However, the effects of PS fit vs. misfit are not direct and proximal; rather, there are indirect and distal effects through various mediating variables. Particularly the perception of the situation and subsequent affective responses are of importance. To summarize, the current findings underscored the validity of the conceptual model in Figure 1.

Digging deeper: Explanations of personality-situation fit

Why is PS fit constituted in the first place? This question revolving around the proximate mechanisms and functions of PS fit could not be empirically answered with the data at hand. Nonetheless, it is important to at least speculate about potential answers to this question as such speculations may serve as precursors of hypotheses to be formally explored and tested in future research. The person – with traits, needs, goals, values, habits, knowledge, skills, abilities, and social roles – is constantly embedded into an environment – with a plethora of situations with different affordances. This embedding represents a person's PE fit. There is a chronic PE fit denoting one's relatively stable fit to the habitual life space, but there can also momentary PS fits denoting concurrent fit with fluctuating situations. Indeed, there are many different PE/S fits depending on time frame, nature of the "fit," and domain of person and environment/situation. Regardless of whether PE/S fit operates in the short- or long-term, it creates a kind of equilibrium (i.e., balanced relation, match, or fit) between characteristics of the person and the environment or situation so that relatively stable environmental affordances are met with relatively stable

(re-)actions of the person. For example, Cramer et al. 2012 (p. 416) position their network model of personality around the fact that "human systems tend to settle in relatively fixed areas of the enormous behavioural space at their disposal, where they are in relative 'equilibrium' with themselves and their environments" so that "organism-environment feedback loops [become] important sources of stability because they can serve to sustain behavioural patterns." Thus, to the extent that people seek, shun, evoke, modify, or generate certain situations in accordance with their traits, habits, needs, and motives (Buss, 1987; Ickes et al., 1997), they are likely to attain behavioral equilibria (Cramer et al., 2012) within PE/S fit which, in turn, is related to different personality processes. Thus, different person-environment transactions (see gray dotted feedback lines from behavioral output to PS fit in Figure 1) may be the driving forces behind the establishment, maintenance, and regulatory government of PE/S fit.

Limitations and prospects

The limitations of this work point towards direction of future research that may aim at replicating, corroborating, and extending the conceptual perspectives and empirical findings uncovered in this work. First, all variables used were recalled and may thus be subject to memory distortions. Future studies should thus sample the variables truly *in situ* either within an experimental laboratory setting or via ambulatory assessment / experience sampling methodology in people's everyday lives. Second, a cross-sectional design was used in this study. As such, the arrows in Figures 1, 11, and 12 do not and cannot imply causation. To

examine causal processes between temporally distant variables in the sequential chains of variables presented in Figure 1, experimental and longitudinal studies are needed (see first point). Third, all variables were self-reported in this study, including the concrete instances of PS (mis)fit. Future studies should multi-methodically seek to obtain data from other and several different sources, such as knowledgeable others (e.g., to rate the personality characteristics of the target persons), other people *in situ* (e.g., to rate the situational characteristics of the situations), and coders or experts (e.g., to code behavioral outputs). Such a design would reduce the likely multicollinearity among variables that may spuriously inflate correlation and regression effect sizes due to common method variance. Fourth, the conceptual model in Figure 1 is a simplified model of the complex and dynamic relations between persons and environments or situations. As such, it will probably need to be revised to accommodate micro-processes constituting, underlying, or driving the arrow paths. This may also entail attending to person-environment transactions variables such as systematic situation selection or situation modification. To investigate such processes as well as their short-term and long-term unfolding, longitudinal data are needed (see the first point again).

Conclusion

PS fit can represent a fruitful concept to advance personality science, but it has thus far been largely overlooked. The current study aimed at showing to what extent and how PS fit is consequential in the prediction of personality processes (i.e., perceptions of fit, psychological construals of situational affordances, affective responses, and behavioral output). While the type of PS fit was not of importance, the distinction between fit versus misfit was crucial. PS fit versus misfit showed effects on behavior, mediated by cognitive-affective processing mechanisms. Hopefully, this work can spur multiple lines of psychological research concerning the antecedents, correlates, processes, consequences, and trajectories of PS fit in people's everyday lives.

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Appendix A: Instructions

The **basic instruction** (common to all groups) was:

We experience many different situations every day. Some situations fit well to us, others less. Psychologists call this “person-situation fit”: the extent to which we fit together with a specific situation or not. This is what we are interested here.

< *Specific instructions (see below)* >

Please put yourself again exactly in this situation: Play the situation mentally through. Try to experience this situation with all your senses.

If you have done so, please describe this situation in the following.

The *specific instructions* for the six different groups were:

Fit type	Fit quality	Group instruction
Supplementary	Fit	Here, we are interested in an occasion in which you perceived a fit between yourself and a situation. Specifically, we mean that you and the situation were “similar” or you have perceived a similarity.
	Misfit	Here, we are interested in an occasion in which you did not perceive a fit between yourself and a situation. Specifically, we mean that you and the situation were “dissimilar” or you have not perceived a similarity.
Complementary Demands-Ability	Fit	Here, we are interested in an occasion in which you perceived a fit between yourself and a situation. Specifically, we mean that the situation posed certain “demands” which you could meet.
	Misfit	Here, we are interested in an occasion in which you did not perceive a fit between yourself and a situation. Specifically, we mean that the situation posed certain “demands” which you could not meet.
Complementary Needs-Supply	Fit	Here, we are interested in an occasion in which you perceived a fit between yourself and a situation. Specifically, we mean that the situation could meet certain needs of yours.
	Misfit	Here, we are interested in an occasion in which you did not perceive a fit between yourself and a situation. Specifically, we mean that the situation could not meet certain needs of yours.

Appendix B: Descriptive statistics of dependent variables broken down by research conditions

Dependent variables	Fit						Misfit							
	Supplementary			Complementary			Supplementary			Complementary				
	M	SD		M	SD		M	SD		M	SD			
<i>Fit perceptions (Set 1a)</i>														
Overall fit	5.52	0.71		4.55	1.52		5.22	0.97		1.22	1.26		2.00	1.16
Subjective fit	5.37	0.85		4.80	1.32		5.48	0.85		1.15	1.29		1.80	1.47
Similarity	5.26	0.87		4.25	1.71		4.96	1.22		1.50	1.49		2.20	1.28
<i>Situational quality perceptions (Set 1b)</i>														
Familiarity	4.52	1.92		4.35	1.84		4.04	1.89		1.74	1.91		3.50	1.90
Selection	5.05	2.44		2.20	2.51		4.00	2.50		1.26	1.91		1.55	1.64
Degrees of freedom	5.05	1.58		4.40	1.96		5.09	1.41		1.65	1.82		1.90	1.62
Effective navigation	5.24	1.62		4.95	1.28		5.70	0.56		2.17	1.57		3.50	1.88
No modification wish	4.68	1.86		2.75	2.49		4.91	1.88		0.61	1.47		2.45	2.62
Satisfaction	5.05	1.51		5.75	2.17		5.17	1.40		0.74	1.45		1.40	1.23
<i>Situational strength perceptions (Set 1c)</i>														
Interpretation	2.05	1.90		1.90	1.65		2.22	1.54		1.91	1.56		1.70	1.22
Behavioral appropriateness	2.74	2.02		2.40	1.85		2.30	1.55		2.50	1.96		2.50	1.59
Rewards	4.21	1.81		3.40	1.98		3.59	1.75		2.78	1.85		2.85	1.90
Abilities	5.57	1.71		2.75	1.80		5.52	1.81		2.48	1.85		2.80	1.80
<i>Situational affordances of Big Five traits (Set 2a)</i>														
Emotional stability	4.95	1.55		3.95	1.82		4.74	1.51		1.48	1.08		2.00	1.41
Extraversion	5.84	2.06		2.95	1.93		4.26	1.66		1.70	1.85		2.40	1.79
Openness/Intellect	5.42	1.98		3.60	2.04		3.61	2.06		1.78	1.91		1.95	1.54
Agreeableness	4.65	1.54		5.40	1.85		4.22	2.11		2.17	1.97		2.65	1.69
Conscientiousness	4.58	1.64		3.55	1.59		4.04	1.49		1.78	1.41		3.05	1.76
<i>Feelings associated with the Big Five (Set 2b)</i>														
Emotional stability	4.74	1.88		4.70	1.56		4.96	1.61		1.91	1.93		2.65	1.53
Extraversion	5.05	1.75		3.50	1.76		4.48	1.47		1.48	1.53		1.70	1.53
Openness/Intellect	4.00	2.06		5.90	2.00		4.65	1.61		2.85	1.99		5.85	1.66
Agreeableness	4.55	1.65		4.15	1.84		4.57	2.00		2.91	1.70		2.55	1.85
Conscientiousness	4.65	1.58		4.50	1.56		4.30	1.52		5.04	1.72		5.55	1.79
<i>Behavioral displays of the Big Five (Set 2c)</i>														
Emotional stability	4.95	1.65		5.10	1.29		5.57	0.66		3.26	1.74		4.40	1.90
Extraversion	5.55	1.95		5.80	1.94		4.52	1.44		1.91	1.70		2.75	1.83
Openness/Intellect	4.21	2.07		4.45	1.64		4.65	1.50		2.96	1.99		4.10	1.45
Agreeableness	4.79	1.55		4.70	1.26		4.70	1.64		5.55	1.54		5.70	1.63
Conscientiousness	4.63	1.54		4.75	1.45		4.74	1.21		4.04	1.50		4.55	1.36
<i>Situational affordances of intrapersonal adjustment (Set 3a)</i>														
Authenticity	5.21	1.13		3.05	1.79		5.09	1.54		4.47	1.79		1.40	1.54
Self-esteem	5.37	1.21		4.60	1.64		5.00	1.45		1.52	1.53		2.15	2.06
Positive affect	4.74	1.59		4.25	1.92		5.26	1.29		1.22	1.62		2.70	2.00
<i>Intrapersonal adjustment, feelings (Set 3b)</i>														
Authenticity	5.11	1.55		4.75	1.59		5.55	1.05		2.15	1.98		2.10	1.86
Self-esteem	4.47	1.93		4.15	2.11		5.09	1.16		2.04	2.03		2.60	2.11
Positive affect	4.95	1.39		3.80	1.74		5.17	1.59		1.59	1.62		1.75	1.52
<i>Intrapersonal adjustment behavioral displays (Set 3c)</i>														
Authenticity	5.21	1.32		5.05	1.10		5.48	0.85		2.61	1.92		3.50	2.01
Self-esteem	4.58	1.77		4.75	1.45		5.17	0.89		5.00	2.07		5.40	2.26
Positive affect	5.00	1.57		4.45	1.54		5.30	1.11		2.91	1.73		4.20	1.77

Appendix C:

Descriptive statistics of personality and individual differences variables (covariates)

Trait variables	M	SD	α
Big Five			
Neuroticism	4.15	1.34	.81
Extraversion	4.65	1.33	.80
Openness/Intellect	5.41	1.07	.75
Agreeableness	5.09	1.09	.64
Conscientiousness	4.95	1.12	.73
Intrapersonal adjustment			
Authenticity	5.50	1.37	-
Self-esteem	4.65	1.73	-
Positive affect	5.36	1.12	-

Note. $N = 125$.