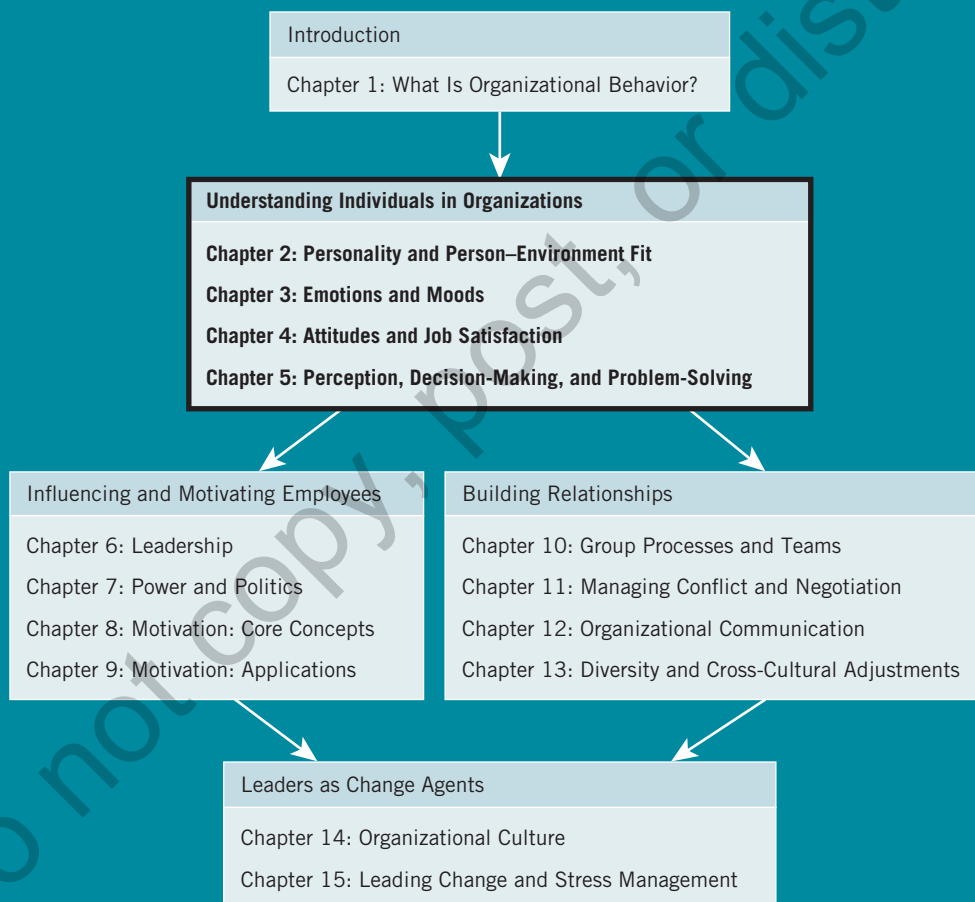


UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUALS IN ORGANIZATIONS



PERSONALITY AND PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- 2.1: Define *personality* and discuss the role of heredity.
- 2.2: Discuss the benefits and limitations of using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in organizations.
- 2.3: List and explain the five factors in the Big Five theory of personality.
- 2.4: Compare and contrast the Type A and Type B behavior patterns.
- 2.5: Develop an example of a job that would benefit from risk-taking.
- 2.6: Summarize the elements of psychological capital.
- 2.7: Compare and contrast person-organization fit and person-job fit.

THE PERSONALITY EFFECT IN UNICORNS

A *unicorn* is a term used in the venture capital industry to describe a privately held startup company with a value of over \$1 billion. A unicorn you have likely heard about is WeWork. The company leases private offices for teams of all sizes. The office space has a distinct type of décor that includes glass walls and natural lighting that is aimed at inspiring team creativity.

WeWork was a rising star in part due to the charismatic personality of one of the cofounders, Adam Neumann. Under Neumann's leadership, WeWork grew rapidly and provided coworking office space in commercial buildings in more than 120 cities in nearly 40 countries. The story is an example of the powerful impact of personality on the emergence of unicorns and their ability to attract investors.

Neumann does not fit the expectations of what the founder of a multibillion-dollar company would look like or be like. He is 6 feet 3 inches tall and has long, dark hair. Neumann told his employees that the new company had a single, grand mission: "To elevate the world's consciousness." His charisma and inspiring speeches were a big motivator for WeWork's employees. They put in long hours at work with relatively low pay because they believed they were part of the next great tech start-up company. As the company valuation rose, they dreamed of becoming millionaires.

The company had a party atmosphere, which appealed to the young workers. They had parties after work that lasted for hours. The company became famous for having a

“Summer Camp” with events such as yoga, axe throwing, and drum circles. Musical artists including the Chainsmokers and the Weeknd were flown in.

In June 2019, the company was valued at \$47 billion. However, when the company filed its initial public offering (IPO) paperwork in mid-August, large losses were revealed. WeWork lost the confidence of investors and stopped their plan to go public. Much of the public criticism centered on Neumann’s unconventional management style and lavish spending on perks for himself and the employees. Did Neumann go too far?

The company ran out of cash. Neumann had practically run it into the ground. In September 2019, Neumann announced that he was stepping down as CEO, saying he was becoming “a significant distraction” to WeWork’s IPO plans. In October, he left the board of directors, with a \$1.7 billion buyout deal. By November 2019, the company reported that it had lost \$1.25 billion on revenue of \$934 million. That month, they announced layoffs of 4,000 employees.

WeWork appears to have been saved from bankruptcy, contingent upon the departure of Neumann. The Japanese investment company Softbank provided \$9.5 billion for the company to stop its impending collapse. Critics have noted that the rapid rise of WeWork, and its even faster demise, raises serious questions about the “cult of personality” that has been gaining traction in venture capital investing. Investors are looking for industry disrupters, but some of these unicorns are gaining investor confidence based more on the charming personalities of the founders than their actual value.

The WeWork case shows that personality can play a huge role in the emergence of startups. We can all think of examples of CEOs with powerful personalities. Personality affects organizational behavior in several ways. It’s important for leaders to understand the variety of facets of personality that have been studied and how they relate to organizational effectiveness.

Sources: Coppola (2019); Leskin (2019); O’Brien (2019); WeWork (n.d.); Rosoff and Shin (2019); Wiedman (2019)

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

Learning Objective 2.1: Define *personality* and discuss the role of heredity.

Understanding your own **personality**—and the personalities of others—is critical. Personality is *relatively stable* over the life course. Personality has been defined as “regularities in feeling, thought and action that are characteristic of an individual.”¹ Also, personality matters because it is linked to organizational behavior (OB). It affects our

RESEARCH IN ACTION

Leaders: Are They Born or Made?

With the research on twins reared apart and evidence from the Big Five personality theory relating personality traits to leader emergence in groups, one question that arises is whether leaders are born to greatness or if leadership can be acquired by anyone. This is one of the most frequently asked questions about leadership and traits. There are arguments on both sides of this issue among scholars of organizational behavior. For example, research suggests genetic factors contribute as much as 40% to the explanation of transformational leadership. This suggests that much of charismatic, visionary leadership is an inborn trait. One leadership study compared genetic samples of approximately 4,000 employees with career information. They took DNA samples and then examined whether employees supervised other people in leadership roles. They learned that there was a significant association between genetics and leadership.

On the other hand, many people believe that transformational leadership can be learned, and experimental research has shown that leaders can be trained to exhibit charismatic behaviors. Also, followers responded positively to leaders

that have been trained, and their performance increased. An integrative perspective suggests that leaders have certain inborn traits that predispose them to self-select into leadership positions. For example, an employee who exhibits extraversion might be more likely to pursue a high-level position in an organization. Once hired into a leadership role, these people may respond to leadership training better than those who are not as interested in becoming leaders. The best thinking on this at present is that leadership is most likely a combination of inborn traits and learned behavior. Leadership expert Ron Riggio believes that leaders are mostly made. He estimates that leadership is about one-third born and two-thirds made. The implications for organizations are to carefully select those hired into leadership and then provide the training needed to enhance leader effectiveness. Those with innate leadership skills have an advantage, but an individual may be able to enhance their leadership capabilities by learning about the behaviors that comprise effective leadership and then practicing the behavioral skills needed.

Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, is leadership innate (hereditary) or learned (through training, for example)? Support your position.
2. If leadership is both innate and learned, as some researchers believe, what do you think is the best way to identify leadership potential?
3. What type of leadership training would you recommend to complement the selection process?

Sources: Arvey, R. D., Rotundo, M., Johnson, W., Zhang, Z., & McGue, M. (2006). The determinants of leadership role occupancy: Genetic and personality factors. *Leadership Quarterly*, 17, 1–20; De Neve, J. E., Mikhaylov, S., Dawes, C. T., Christakis, N. A., & Fowler, J. H. (2013). Born to lead? A twin design and genetic association study of leadership role occupancy. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(1), 45–60; Howell, J., & Frost, P. (1989). A laboratory study of charismatic leadership. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 43, 243–269; Judge, T. A., & Long, D. M. (2012). Individual differences in leadership. In D. V. Day & J. Antonakis (Eds.), *The nature of leadership* (pp. 179–217). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; Riggio, R. (2009). Leaders: Born or made? *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/200903/leaders-born-or-made>

work habits and how we interact with our coworkers. However, personality isn't like many other areas of OB where the manager can influence the outcomes by intervention. It must be *understood*, and leaders must often work with personality differences rather than try to change people. As the example of Adam Neumann at WeWork suggests, a real question is whether the company will be able to name a successor with the right personality traits to lead the organization to success. Next, we discuss research that addresses whether personality can change.

Can a brilliant engineer who is introverted change their personality and become an extraverted visionary leader? In other words, are personality traits inborn or learned? This question has been addressed by the famous **Minnesota twin studies**. To conduct this research, twins born in Minnesota from 1936 through 1955 were asked to join a registry.² Identical twins (monozygotic and dizygotic reared apart; MZAs and DZAs, respectively) were confirmed through birth records, and 80% of the surviving pairs were recruited for participation in psychological studies. Twins were reared apart for various reasons (e.g., adoption). These twins tell us a great deal about the contribution of heredity compared to the environment. A study showed that 50% of the variation in occupational choice (whether a person becomes a dentist or a soldier, for example) is due to heredity.³ Most people are surprised to learn this. Another study of twins showed that 40% of the variance in values related to work motivation could be attributed to heredity.⁴ A review of research on personality change does suggest that it may be possible for some personality traits to change.⁵ This may be due to self-development (e.g., engaging in therapy), organizational events (e.g., a job change), or an event outside of the workplace (e.g., marriage or divorce).

The implications for a leader are that, while personality might change, it is probably fairly stable over time. Instead of trying to change a coworker's personality, it is perhaps better to learn about personality differences, understand how different personalities operate at work, and then learn to work effectively with different types. Psychologists have developed inventories (personality tests) to assess personality differences. These tests are useful in training programs on conflict resolution and team building. One such test is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

Learning Objective 2.2: Discuss the benefits and limitations of using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in organizations.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the personality test most often administered to nonpsychiatric populations (i.e., the “well population”).⁶ The publishers of the MBTI, Consulting Psychologists Press, report that over 2 million people take the MBTI every year, including employees in 89 of the Fortune 100 companies.⁷ Because it was developed and normed on “well people,” it has been a popular approach with organizations and is used by Hallmark, GE, and many other large organizations in their leadership training and development programs. A study found that managers recognize the MBTI as a brand and trust it.⁸

The MBTI was developed by a mother and daughter team, Katherine Briggs and Isabel Myers-Briggs, following World War II and is based upon the personality theories of Carl Jung.⁹ The MBTI is based upon four general personality preferences:

- **Introversion (I) vs. extraversion (E):** Extraverts tend to be outgoing; introverts tend to be shy.
- **Sensing (S) vs. intuition (N):** Sensing types tend to be practical; intuitive people tend to be “idea people.”
- **Thinking (T) vs. feeling (F):** Thinking types tend to use logic; feeling types tend to use emotion.
- **Judging (J) vs. perceiving (P):** Judging types tend to make quick decisions; perceiving types tend to be more flexible.

People who take the MBTI are grouped into 16 personality types based on these characteristics. For example, an ENTP would be extraverted, intuitive, thinking, and perceiving. This person might be attracted to starting their own business, for example. In contrast, an INTJ is introverted, intuitive, thinking, and judging and may be attracted to a scientific career. ISTJs are detail-oriented and practical, whereas ESTJs are organizers and may be comfortable in managerial roles.

Critical Thinking Question:
Given the limited research support for the MBTI, what are the concerns regarding organizations continuing to use it?

Limitations of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

There has been limited research support for the reliability and validity of the MBTI. If you take the test again, you may not receive the same score, and the matter of whether people are classifiable into the 16 categories is questionable.^{10,11} However, the MBTI remains the most popular personality test in organizations. Also, it is important to note that the MBTI has not been validated for selection; in other words, its publisher

makes it clear that you should not use the MBTI to hire people for particular jobs in an organization.¹²

How the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Is Used in Organizations

The best uses for the MBTI appear to be for conflict resolution and team building, and this is where it is most often used in management training programs and classrooms. The value of the MBTI is that it enables people in organizations to discuss personality differences in their approach to work in a nonjudgmental way. The Myers & Briggs Foundation states that the test may not be a measure of personality, but it does help its users.¹³ All the labels in the MBTI are neutral; it is not better or worse to be judging or perceiving, for example. Briggs and Myers-Briggs titled their book *Gifts Differing*, and this captures the essence of their approach. At the workplace, everyone has something to offer, and it takes all types of people for teams and organizations to be effective. For a leader, this underscores the importance of understanding personality because to build effective teams, everyone needs to feel valued to be engaged. The MBTI is, of course, not the only

personality assessment available; next, we discuss another personality theory that has had more research support (although it is currently not as well known as the MBTI to most practicing managers and the general population). This personality assessment is known as the Big Five personality theory.

THE BIG FIVE

Learning Objective 2.3: List and explain the five factors in the Big Five theory of personality.

After much research examining personality inventories, the developers of the Big Five theory of personality concluded that personality could be summarized using five factors: **openness**, **conscientiousness**, **extraversion**, **agreeableness**, and **neuroticism**.¹⁴ These factors and their definitions are summarized in Table 2.1. Note that the table is organized such that the first letters of these personality traits are an acronym that spells *OCEAN*, and this will help you to remember them.

Openness is a person's willingness to embrace new ideas and new situations. *Conscientiousness* represents the characteristic of being a person who follows through and gets things done. *Extraversion* is a trait of a person who is outgoing, talkative, and sociable as well as enjoys social situations. *Agreeableness* is being a nice person in general. Finally, *neuroticism* represents a tendency to be anxious or moody (this trait is often referred to in terms of its opposite: emotional stability). There has been a good deal of research on whether these five traits predict job performance, and results indicate that the conscientiousness dimension best predicts performance on the job (it makes sense that people who are achievement-oriented and dependable would be better employees and also better leaders).¹⁵ This translates into success; conscientiousness is related to job satisfaction, income, and higher occupational status (e.g., being an executive, business owner, or professional).¹⁶ While conscientiousness is the big one in terms of job performance, extraversion also

Table 2.1 The Big Five Personality Characteristics

Trait	Description
Openness	Being curious, original, intellectual, creative, and open to new ideas
Conscientiousness	Being organized, systematic, punctual, achievement-oriented, and dependable
Extraversion	Being outgoing, talkative, sociable, and enjoying social situations
Agreeableness	Being affable, tolerant, sensitive, trusting, kind, and warm
Neuroticism	Being anxious, irritable, temperamental, and moody

Source: Barrick, M. R. & Mount, M. K. (2005). Yes, personality matters: Moving on to more important matters. *Human Performance*, 18, 359–372.

Critical Thinking Question:
Do some research and locate another personality test that is used for hiring decisions. Do you believe the use of these tests is fair for the selection of new employees.

has a moderate but significant relationship to performance, particularly in sales.¹⁷

Other Big Five traits relate to other positive work outcomes. Research has also shown that emotional stability relates to the ability to cope with stress, and those with higher openness adjust better to organizational change.¹⁸ Given the strong research support for the relationships of the Big Five personality variables to relevant performance and career outcomes, leaders need to know that instruments such as the Big Five inventories successfully predict performance and can be used as one component in making hiring

decisions. For this reason, personality research has a great deal of practical utility for organizations. A survey of 755 human resource managers and executives reported that 84.5% of the respondents said their organization employed personality tests for selection of new employees.¹⁹

What personality traits predict academic success in college? A study of 875 students conducted in two universities found that conscientiousness and emotional stability were predictive of students' belief in their ability to succeed and getting good grades.²⁰

WHAT'S #TRENDING IN OB?

Personality Traits and Social Media Addiction

Do you constantly check your SnapChat? Instagram? You are not alone if you do. The Pew Research Center reports that 95% of young people have a smartphone, and 45% say they are online "almost constantly." This has given rise to concerns about the overuse of social media. In fact, research shows that social media addiction may be occurring in some users.

Over the past 5 years, there have been a lot of studies assessing how excessive social media use can impact negatively on health. Fortunately, only a small number of people are truly addicted to social media. That said, overuse is associated with a few psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. Most young people access social media through their smartphones, so its use is related to the "fear of missing out" (FOMO) on what's happening in their social circles. Your personality may determine why you become so tied to social media.

One study had 275 social networking site users who were students at a large North American university. First, they completed the Big Five personality test. Four weeks later, researchers assessed their level of addiction to their favorite social media site. To assess social media addiction, they had students rate statements like "I sometimes neglect important things because of my interest in this social networking website." The study found that three personality traits were associated with social media addiction: neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness. Neuroticism was positively related to addiction to social media, while conscientiousness and agreeableness were negatively related.

One study with a large sample (23,532 Norwegians) found that narcissism was positively related to addictive use of social media

and appeared to have a moderate effect after considering factors such as age. Social media outlets such as Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat are the perfect venues for people who need to boost their egos. They seem to thrive on the number of “likes” they receive.

Social media addiction has also been related to the Type D personality. You will learn more about this personality type in the next section. People who are Type D are more likely to experience increased negative emotions and tend not to express their emotions to others.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the pros and cons of using social media networking sites. Do you feel that the benefits outweigh the costs? Explain your position.
2. Reflect on your personality characteristics discussed in this chapter. Do you feel that you may tend to overuse social media? Which personality traits explain this?
3. Research shows that women use social media more than men (but men tend to play online video games more than women). Explain this difference.

Sources: Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018). Teens, social media & technology 2018. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>; Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between addictive use of social media, narcissism, and self-esteem: Findings from a large national survey. *Addictive Behaviors*, 64, 287–293; Ghose, T. (2015). What Facebook addiction looks like in the brain. <https://www.livescience.com/49585-facebook-addiction-viewed-brain.html>; Griffiths, M. D. (2018). Addicted to social media? What can we do about its problematic, excessive use? <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-excess/201805/addicted-social-media>; Nie, J., Li, W., Wang, P., Wang, X., Wang, Y., & Lei, L. (2019). Adolescent type D personality and social networking sites addiction: A moderated mediation model of restorative outcomes and affective relationships. *Psychiatry Research*, 271, 96–104. Rettner, R. (2018). These personality traits could put you at risk for social media addiction. <https://www.livescience.com/61996-personality-social-media-addiction.html>; Vaghefi, I., & Qahri-Saremi, H. (2018, January). Personality predictors of IT addiction. In *Proceedings of the 51st Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, pp. 5274–5283. <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/50546/1/paper0659.pdf>

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND HEALTH RESEARCH

Learning Objective 2.4: Compare and contrast the Type A and Type B behavior patterns.

We have heard the phrase “stress kills,” but is there any truth to this? Some years ago, cardiologists showed a link between a personality trait called Type A behavior and cardiovascular disease. Their theory was based on observing patients in their waiting room. Some sat patiently reading a magazine, for example, while others sat on the edge of their seats and got up frequently (they literally wore out the edges of the chairs and

armrests)! The doctors conducted a study over several weeks and asked questions such as the following:

- Do you feel guilty if you use spare time to relax?
- Do you need to win in order to derive enjoyment from games and sports?
- Do you generally move, walk, and eat rapidly?
- Do you often try to do more than one thing at a time?

Study respondents were then classified into one of three groups: **Type A** (competitive, aggressive), **Type B** (relaxed, easygoing), or **Type C** (nice, hardworking people who try to appease others). By the end of this long-term study, 70% of the men who were classified as Type A had coronary heart disease. This study had several limitations, including that it was only conducted on men who were middle-aged, and the researchers didn't take into account other factors such as the dietary habits of the study participants. However, this study generated media interest and led to additional research. A review of this research indicated that there is an association between Type A behavior (particularly hostility) and heart disease.²¹ Examples of hostility-related questions are "Do you get irritated easily?" and "Are you bossy and domineering?"²² Research has also shown that the Type A behavior pattern (i.e., "stress energized") is exhibited in samples of women as well.²³

More recently, researchers have discussed an additional personality type and its relationship to health risks: the **Type D** personality. The Type D, also called *the distressed personality*, is a combination of negative affect ("I feel unhappy") and social inhibition ("I am unable to express myself"). Research has indicated that the rates of recovery were lower for coronary heart disease patients with Type D personality.²⁴ A review of 10 studies of Type D personality have concluded that "Type D patients are also at increased risk for psychological distress, psychosocial risk factors, impaired quality of life, and seem to benefit less from medical and invasive treatment."²⁵ Thus, while research on personality and health risk continues, there seems to be a clear association between certain personality traits and higher risk of disease, suppressed immune system functioning, and slower recovery from illnesses.

Critical Thinking Questions: How might knowledge of whether you have the Type A personality affect your decision about taking a job in a high-stress environment? If you were to accept such a position, how would you plan to cope with the stress?

Figure 2.1 summarizes the four personality types, and you can reflect on the checklists in each cell to get a sense of whether you may fall into Type A, B, C, or D. This may be scary news if you think you may have Type A or D personality characteristics. However, there is some good news. First, being able to express your emotions may also reflect a "healthy" Type A pattern.²⁶ It is important for people with a Type A personality to be able to talk to another person about the stress they are experiencing. Second, research has shown that having a "hardy" personality (e.g., letting stress roll off your back rather than ruminating on your problems) has been shown to reduce the potential for personality type to affect health.^{27,28} Also, social support from family, friends, and coworkers can alleviate some of the detrimental effects of personality traits on health.²⁹

Figure 2.1 Personality Types A, B, C, and D

<p>TYPE A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">___ Hard-driving___ Competitive___ Status-conscious___ Driven to succeed___ Seemingly achievement-addicted___ Can be hostile	<p>TYPE B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">___ Enjoys the moment___ Relaxed___ Laid back___ Patient___ Not competitive___ Not aggressive
<p>TYPE C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">___ Cooperative___ Not assertive___ Predictable and dependable___ Loyal___ Suppresses negative emotions___ Complies with authority	<p>TYPE D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">___ Feels unhappy___ Tends to worry___ Easily irritated___ Finds it hard to express opinions___ Reserved___ Doesn't like many people around

Sources: Adapted from Denollet, J. (1998). "Personality and risk of cancer in men with coronary heart disease." *Psychological Medicine*, 28(4), 991–995; Denollet, J. (2000). "Type D personality: A potential risk factor refined." *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 49(4), 255–266; Riggio, R. E. (2012). "Are you a Type A or Type B personality? Cutting edge leadership."

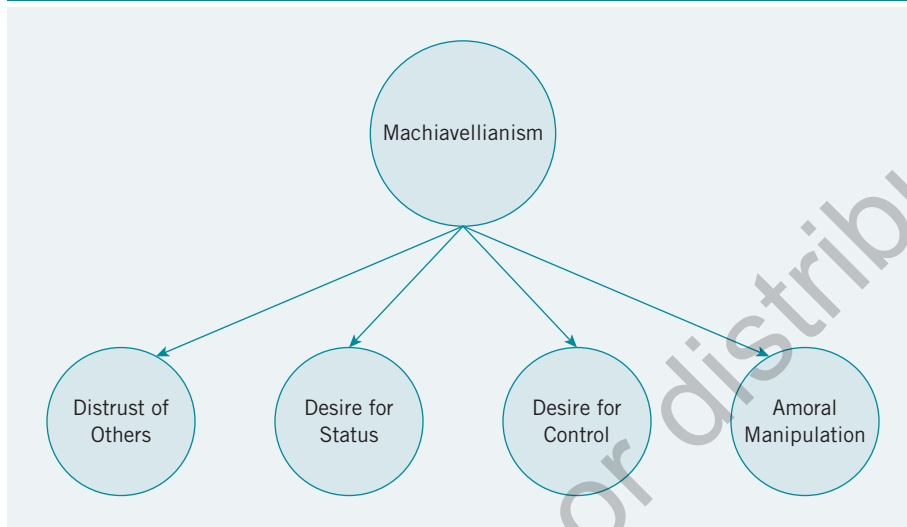
OTHER RELEVANT PERSONALITY TRAITS

Learning Objective 2.5: Develop an example of a job that would benefit from risk-taking.

Machiavellianism

Machiavellianism (sometimes abbreviated Mach) is a personality trait describing a person who believes that the end justifies the means. In other words, such a person will do whatever it takes to win. The trait is named for Niccolo Machiavelli, author of *The Prince*,³⁰ which detailed his strategies for gaining and holding onto power in the 16th century. High-Mach individuals believe that other people can be manipulated and that it is permissible to do so to realize their goals. Research has conceptualized Mach as being composed of a complex set of characteristics: a tendency to distrust others, a willingness to engage in amoral manipulation, a desire to accumulate status for oneself, and a desire to maintain interpersonal control (see Figure 2.2). Thus, Mach appears to involve behaviors as well as internal beliefs and motivations.³¹ This research also found that high-Mach employees

Figure 2.2 The Structure of Machiavellianism



Source: Dahling, Whitaker, & Levy (2009).

engage in counterproductive work behaviors (for example, purposely wasting office supplies). However, they reported lower job satisfaction and experienced more stress on the job. The relationship of Mach and performance was interesting: High-Mach employees' performance improved over time, suggesting that they learn the organization's political system and work themselves into power networks.

Despite the positive long-term relationship with performance, Mach has been related to negative outcomes for others. High-Mach behavior has been linked to workplace bullying³² and abusive supervision.³³ Experiments show that when individuals perceive that they are in a rivalry situation, their high-Mach behavior increased and they falsely inflated their own performance and even deceived their rival for self-gain.³⁴ Thus, the high-Mach personality may engage in unethical behavior to achieve goals. Remember, they believe that the end justifies the means, even if it involves lying to manipulate others.

Researchers have added to our understanding of high-Mach behavior by articulating a combination of personality traits known as the Dark Triad. The **Dark Triad** is composed of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy.³⁵ **Narcissism** is the expression of grandiosity, entitlement, dominance, and superiority.³⁶ Narcissists can therefore appear charming or pleasant in the short term but in the long term, they have difficulty trusting others and fail to develop effective working relationships.³⁷ **Psychopathy** has been described as impulsivity and thrill seeking combined with low empathy and anxiety.³⁸ Such individuals lack feelings of guilt, are impulsive, and seek immediate gratification of their needs.³⁹ A study of Dark Triad personality traits and the exercise of power at work found that psychopathy and Machiavellianism were associated with the use of hard tactics such as threats and manipulation. However, Machiavellianism and narcissism were related to reliance on soft

tactics such as charm, ingratiation, and giving compliments. This study also found that the Dark Triad pattern results in men using hard tactics (being forceful) more than women.⁴⁰ You might be wondering if such toxic employees or “bad guys” win at work. A study of 793 employees in their early careers found that narcissism was positively related to salary, and Machiavellianism was positively related to leadership position and career satisfaction; however, psychopathy was negatively related to all career outcomes. Thus, the Dark Triad as a combination did not predict career satisfaction and success, but individual traits may have a relationship to higher salary.⁴¹

Self-Monitoring

Have you ever known someone who had a chameleon-like personality and adapted to any situation they were in? Such individuals are keenly sensitive to the cues they see in every situation and adapt their behavior to fit in. This is known as **self-monitoring**, defined as “self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness.”⁴² One of the items from the measure of self-monitoring is “I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.”⁴³ High self-monitors are very adaptable to situations, and low self-monitors are not able to pretend that they are someone they are not. In other words, low self-monitors are true to themselves and don’t take cues to change their behavior from social situations. They are consistent in their display of feelings and attitudes regardless of the situation. For example, a person may give others honest feedback, even if it is hurtful. High self-monitors pay more attention to the actions of others and adjust to fit the situation.⁴⁴ For example, this type of person will withhold negative feedback to allow the other person to “save face.” In the workplace, high self-monitors receive higher performance ratings and become leaders but have lower organizational commitment.⁴⁵ They do, however, develop better working relationships with bosses than low self-monitors, and this helps explain the higher performance ratings they receive.⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, they achieve more rapid career mobility since they are able to attain central positions in the powerful networks in the organization.⁴⁷

Despite the positive outcomes associated with self-monitoring behavior, there may be a downside to this trait. A research study found that high self-monitors may engage in counterproductive work behavior toward the organization (e.g., falsifying a receipt to get reimbursed for more money or taking an additional or longer break than is acceptable). They may reach their goals by doing whatever it takes to win (like high-Mach employees). A research study found that the relationship of self-monitoring to counterproductive work behaviors was especially the case in private settings where the behavior was not visible to others.⁴⁸ In other words, they behaved unethically after reading the situation and determined that they could get away with it. High self-monitors may also engage in deception and faking during interviews.⁴⁹

Critical Thinking Questions: Explain why you think high-Mach and high self-monitoring behaviors are good or bad for organizations. List some other positive and negative consequences of these traits.

Resilience

As many as 90% of us will experience at least one serious traumatic event during our lives.⁵⁰ Examples include being the victim of a violent crime, a serious automobile accident, or

death of a loved one. How quickly do you rebound after you have experienced such an event? Some people bounce back and adjust well. They are not paralyzed by anxiety and function in a healthy way. This trait is known as **resilience**, which is the degree of positive adaptation when faced with adversity.⁵¹

Like other personality traits, resilience is considered to be a relatively stable characteristic that enables people to face, overcome, and adjust to extreme difficulties.⁵² Resilience appears to be complex and includes both personality traits and behaviors that are related to recovery from a significant adverse event.⁵³ Resilience is thought to have three components:⁵⁴

- Sense of Mastery—a person’s optimism, self-efficacy, and adaptability, which are key protective resources;
- Sense of Relatedness—a person’s ability to develop and rely on relationships, which provides access to support, and comfort, which is also a protective resource;
- Emotional Reactivity—the speed and strength of a person’s negative emotional response. This affects the level to which the event results in impaired or disrupted functioning in life. This is different from mastery and relatedness, since emotional reactivity is a vulnerability factor rather than a protective resource.

Resilience influences the negative effects of stress after adversity and makes it easier for the person to adapt. A review of 30 studies with a total sample size of 15,609 individuals found that resilience relates to all the Big Five personality characteristics, with the strongest relationships being for emotional stability, extraversion, and conscientiousness.⁵⁵ A study of workers faced with job insecurity found that resilience reduced emotional exhaustion and interpersonal counterproductive work behavior.⁵⁶ Thus, resilience acts as a buffer when employees experience stressful events at work.

There is some evidence that resilience can be learned. A review of resilience training programs at work found that there is a modest but positive increase in well-being and job performance and a modest decrease in anxiety and stress that can be attributed to training.⁵⁷

University students experience many challenges due to academic workloads, having to both work and attend school, and social pressures from peers. English as a second language may represent a significant challenge for international students.⁵⁸ Resilience represents a critical life skill that is essential for students to succeed and experience well-being both at school and in other areas of their lives.⁵⁹

Risk-Taking

Some people are naturally prone to taking risks, and others are risk averse. **Risk-taking** is defined as “any purposive activity that entails novelty or danger sufficient to create anxiety in most people. Risk-taking can be either physical or social, or a combination of the two.”⁶⁰ Rock climbers are an example of people who assume the physical aspect of risk-taking. Firefighters take risks that are both social and physical; they risk physical harm, but they also help others, which is social. Entrepreneurs can be considered social risk-takers but not physical. Entrepreneurs have been found to have a higher risk-taking propensity than general managers. Moreover, there are larger differences between entrepreneurs whose primary goal is venture growth versus those who focus on producing family income.⁶¹

A study of the personality traits of entrepreneurs found that they have a high tolerance for risk, even in small gambles.⁶²

Risk-taking has been examined in the general population and across cultures. Survey data from 77 countries (147,118 respondents) suggests that risk-taking declines across the life span—as we get older, we take fewer risks. However, there are differences across countries. In countries in which much hardship (e.g., social unrest and economic strife) exists, risk does not decline as the people get older. When resources are scarce, people must continue to assume risk to compete for resources, so risk-taking does not decline as they age.⁶³

Research on risk-taking has found that there are some changes over the life span (from age 15 to 85). So, this does suggest that some personality traits may change or be malleable over a long time. You may be wondering if there is any theory or research in OB that suggests that personality traits can change. Some scholars believe that certain personality characteristics are state-like instead of trait-like. **Trait-like** implies that the personality characteristic is relatively stable over time. **State-like**, on the other hand, refers to personality characteristics that are relatively changeable, and a person can develop (or reduce) them through either self-awareness or training. New research suggests that **psychological capital (PsyCap)** characteristics are more stable than fleeting states of mind, but they are open to change. This is an emerging area of study within the movement called positive psychology, and research is showing promising results.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Learning Objective 2.6: Summarize the elements of psychological capital.

Positive organizational behavior (POB), borrowed from positive organizational scholarship, is an emerging field. POB is “the study and application of positive-oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace.”⁶⁴

In POB, only positive psychological capacities are included. Being state-like versus trait-like, these positive aspects could be developed through performance improvement solutions such as training programs and other engagement interventions (see boxed insert for an example of a training program to increase PsyCap). PsyCap has been shown to be positively related to employee empowerment and engagement.⁶⁵ In addition, PsyCap improves proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity at work.⁶⁶

Fred Luthans and his colleagues have articulated a four-part explanation of PsyCap. Just like we have financial capital, these state-like qualities represent the *value of individual differences* at the workplace. In other words, PsyCap is more than “what you know” or “who you know.” It is focused on “who you are” and “who you are becoming.”⁶⁷ These four characteristics are as follows:

- **Efficacy:** a person’s belief that they have the ability to execute a specific task in a given context
- **Optimism:** a positive-outcome outlook or attribution of events, which includes positive emotions and motivation

- **Hope:** the *will* to succeed and the ability to identify and pursue the *path* to success
- **Resiliency:** coping in the face of risk or adversity; the ability to “bounce back” after a setback⁶⁸

An experimental study asked employees to wear devices that recorded their communication with others at work.⁶⁹ The results indicated that employees with higher PsyCap talked with a lot of different people and held long face-to-face conversations. This increased their own feelings of credibility, and their team saw them as more credible as well. Face-to-face conversations were also related to employee well-being.

The four elements of PsyCap predict job performance and satisfaction.⁷⁰ Some might argue that high performance causes people to be more optimistic, hopeful, and resilient and to believe more in their own abilities, but a longitudinal study found that PsyCap predicts performance but not the other way around.⁷¹ Training interventions may increase PsyCap.⁷² Thus, PsyCap is important for human development, but it is also related to an organization’s competitive advantage due to its impact on job performance.⁷³

A study of PsyCap and organizational change showed that efficacy, hope, optimism, and resiliency were related to positive emotions at work, which in turn affected the acceptance of organizational change.⁷⁴ Experiencing positive emotions enhanced the role of PsyCap in explaining *why* employees were less cynical and showed more citizenship during the change.

PERSON–ENVIRONMENT FIT

Learning Objective 2.7: Compare and contrast person–organization fit and person–job fit.

Research on **person–environment (PE) fit** has shown that when an individual’s personality is aligned with their environment, it results in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and better performance on the job. Research on PE fit supports the idea that people strive toward fit, and fit is associated with positive individual outcomes such as job satisfaction.⁷⁵ Also, employees that fit their work environment are less likely to quit.⁷⁶ Leaders can have a positive influence on PE fit by inspiring employees and providing individual support.⁷⁷

There are different forms of how a person fits into their work environment, and two types of PE fit are important: person–organization (PO) fit, which is the match between the person and the organization, and person–job (PJ) fit, which is the match between the person and the job.⁷⁸

Person–Organization Fit

Person–organization (PO) fit is viewed as the match between a person’s individual values and those of the organization they work for. PO fit is often considered in the context of recruiting employees who will “fit in” with the organizational culture.⁷⁹ Organizations seek applicants that embrace their organizational culture and values.

Job candidates are interested in working for an organization that has values similar to their own. This is because people are attracted to and trust others that they view as being similar to themselves.⁸⁰ Good fit is the result of better communication among employees, increased predictability, interpersonal attraction, and trust in the organization, with trust being the key component that explains the positive outcomes of PO fit.⁸¹ Research evidence shows that good PO fit is positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance. Employees feel a sense of psychological ownership for their work because they feel a sense of belonging and experience the organization as a place that makes them feel comfortable, positive, and safe.^{82,83} When the fit is right, employees are more engaged with their work.⁸⁴ Also, employees that feel they fit well with the values of the organization are also less likely to quit.⁸⁵ In addition to PO fit, employees want to feel that they have a job that fits their personality. This is known as person–job (PJ) fit.

Person–Job Fit

One study found that the lack of fit between the person and the job they do significantly relates to higher job burnout and physical symptoms. Thus, poor fit may be detrimental to employee well-being. The authors offer the following scenarios:

Imagine an accountant who is an outgoing person, enjoys being in company and seeks closeness in their social relationships. However, at their workplace, they most of the time work on their own with hardly any contact with colleagues or clients. Thus, their job does not offer many opportunities to socialize and to be in a trusting mutual exchange with other people. And now imagine another employee, a mid-level manager, who is expected to take on responsibility for their team, motivate and supervise their staff members, find compromises between conflicting interests, make personnel decisions, in short, to influence on other people. When at their workplace, though, they are out of their element as they do not like to take center stage and feel awkward in their role as a leader. As different, at first sight, the situation of these two employees might seem, there is one commonality between them: their motivational propensities with respect to the two social motives, namely affiliation and power, do not match with the demands and opportunities their job offers them, that is, a motivational person–environment misfit exists.⁸⁶

The preceding examples demonstrate poor person–job fit. Good **person–job (PJ) fit** occurs when job characteristics are aligned with employees’ personalities, motivations, and abilities. The concept of PJ fit also includes the fit with the work group and the supervisor.⁸⁷

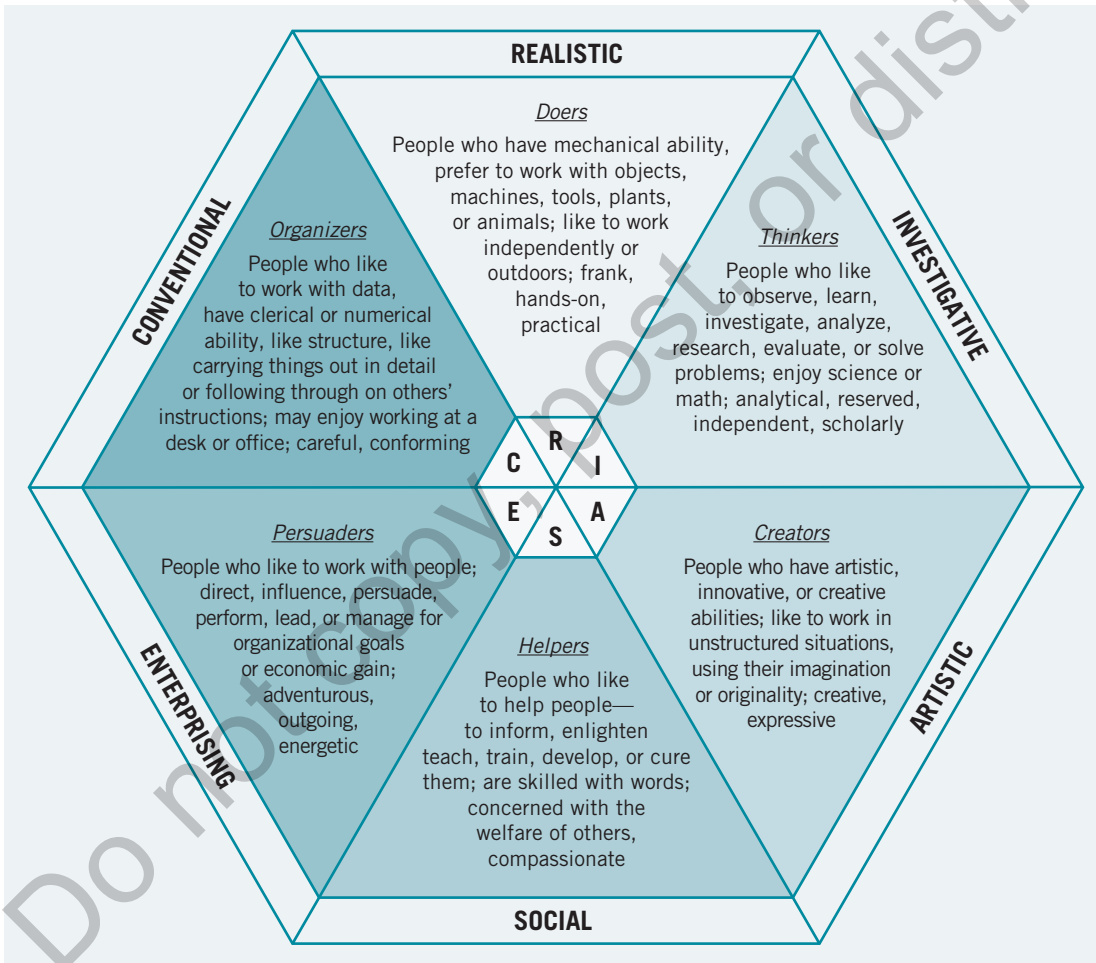
PJ fit is composed of two forms. The first is **demands–abilities (DA) fit**, which refers to the compatibility between the employee’s knowledge, skills, and abilities and the demands of the job. In other words, the job characteristics are neither too easy nor too difficult for the abilities of the employee; they match. The second type of fit refers to the extent to which the job supplies the employee’s needs and is therefore called **needs–supplies (NS) fit**.⁸⁸ This form of PJ fit addresses whether the job fulfills the employee’s needs for interesting work and a sense of meaning in their work. A study of 8,458 employees found that a match between the personality traits needed and those supplied

by the employees predicted income.⁸⁹ In other words, it may pay to find out whether your personality matches your job choice.

Personality–Job Fit Theory

One of the best researched theories of PJ fit is John Holland’s **personality–job fit theory**. He discovered six different personality types and examined occupations that match these types. As shown in Figure 2.3 the personality types are Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C). This is sometimes referred

Figure 2.3 Personality–Job Fit Theory



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to as the RIASEC model, and this acronym is helpful in remembering these personality types. Holland developed a questionnaire known as the Vocational Preference Inventory to assess these personality types and their match to 160 occupational titles. Research evidence supports these six personality types.⁹⁰ Personality types that are closer to one another on the hexagon shown in the figure are more similar. Types that are opposite are most dissimilar. For example, realistic people may be more introverted, and they are practical people that get things done. Investigative people are analytical and may enjoy research work. Artistic types are imaginative and may best match with being a musician or writer. Social individuals are more extroverted and may enjoy teaching or social work. Enterprising people are confident and energetic and may match with being a lawyer or owning a small business. Conventional people are conforming and might best match with accounting or corporate management.

A review of 92 studies found that the match between personality traits and job demands significantly predicts job performance.⁹¹ In addition, the research evidence found that PJ fit job knowledge relates to lower turnover intentions.⁹² When personality is aligned with the work that we do, it increases our goal direction, vigor, and persistence, resulting in high motivation—this is true for both academic and job performance.⁹³ The “Fitting in Somewhere Great!” activity (Toolkit Activity 2.1) gives you an opportunity to locate an organization and job, and then reflect on your personality traits and how well you will experience PO fit and PJ fit.

Critical Thinking Questions: Evaluate the personality–fit theory by explaining why you think the personalities adjacent to one another in the hexagon are most similar. Which personality type is most like you? Does this provide insight into which occupations with which you might best fit?

LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS: UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

In this chapter, you have learned about several different personality characteristics. You also learned that personality is something that is relatively stable over the life course (the exception might be PsyCap, since research has shown that these personality characteristics are state-like and may be changed through training). As a leader, you may not be able to change the personalities of your boss, your followers, or your peers. Since some of the research evidence (recall the Minnesota twin studies) suggests that personality may be in part hereditary or innate, trying to change another person’s personality traits might be a futile effort. Thus, it is important for leaders to understand others and work effectively with different personality types. Leaders can do two important things. One is to examine each applicant’s personality type and vocational interests when making hiring decisions. The robust research program on Holland’s personality–job fit theory has demonstrated that congruence between the person and the job predicts job performance and reduces the chances that the person will quit. Paying attention to the RIASEC traits during the interview process may help a leader select the applicant that best fits the demands of the job. The second thing that leaders can do is to assess personality characteristics of their team members. There are many self-assessments of personality available at no charge on the Internet, however, and there are others that can be purchased and administered by an industrial/organizational psychologist. For example, the MBTI is often used by organizations for conflict resolution and team building.

All leaders want followers who are agreeable and conscientious. However, this chapter has revealed that there are some personality traits that are challenging for a leader to work with on a day-to-day basis. Difficult personality traits are Machiavellianism, narcissism, and perhaps the Type A behavior pattern when taken to an extreme. These types may engage in bullying, explode at work, throw tantrums, and yell. Here is some advice for disarming these difficult personalities at work:⁹⁴

1. Adopt a neutral stance. Picture an inflated balloon that you just let go. Make the sound “fssuuuu” all around the room. Do not interrupt or touch the person.
2. Rise slowly if you are seated; make eye contact, cross your arms, or make a “stop sign” gesture.
3. Snap them out of it by saying their name.
4. Ask for a solution. Say, “Al, I can see this is a big problem for you. What can we do together to help solve it?”
5. Ask them to leave. Say, “I feel overwhelmed right now. I would like you to come back when you’re less angry.”
6. Leave. Say, “I’m going to leave now, and I’ll come back when we can talk about this in a more productive way.”

Connie Merritt, in *Disarming Difficult Personalities at Work*, cites a book by Jim Grigsby, *Don’t Tick Off the Gators*, who suggests that after you have addressed the outburst from a difficult personality, ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I cause or contribute to the problem by not knowing enough about the other person?
- Did I create the environment that allowed the situation to flourish by ignoring it or hoping it would go away?
- Was the cause of the problem a lack of communication or bad information?
- How did I respond to each event? Did I know “when to hold ’em and when to fold ’em”?
- Can this situation be prevented in the future? What can I learn from this experience?

As a leader, you’ll encounter difficult personalities sooner or later. By taking the actions above, you should be able to diffuse the situation. Asking the questions listed and thinking critically about the answers may help you to avoid negative encounters with difficult personality types in the future. It’s important to own your contributions to the negative behaviors of a person that exhibits the dark side of personality at work.

Personality has the potential for both positive and negative contributions to the workplace. Understanding personality differences is thus essential for leader effectiveness. Personality is like a diamond and has many facets. This chapter has reviewed the personality traits that are most relevant to the workplace. As a leader, you may not be able

to change personality, but it is important to assess personality traits of your followers, coworkers, and boss. Then, be ready to act and develop an individualized relationship with them that is based upon their unique personality. If the follower has a difficult personality, be ready to disarm it using the steps above. Difficult personalities may have negative moods and engage in emotional outbursts. The next chapter (Chapter 3) discusses the role that emotions and moods play in the workplace.

KEY TERMS

agreeableness, 35	openness, 35	resilience, 42
conscientiousness, 35	person–environment (PE) fit, 44	risk-taking, 42
Dark Triad, 40	person–job (PJ) fit, 45	self-monitoring, 41
demands–abilities (DA) fit, 45	person–organization (PO) fit, 44	state-like, 43
extraversion, 35	personality, 31	trait-like, 43
Machiavellianism, 39	personality–job fit theory, 46	Type A behavior, 38
Minnesota twin studies, 33	Positive organizational	Type B behavior, 38
narcissism, 40	behavior (POB), 43	Type C behavior, 38
needs–supplies (NS) fit, 45	psychological capital (PsyCap), 43	Type D behavior, 38
neuroticism, 35	psychopathy, 40	

TOOLKIT ACTIVITY 2.1: FITTING IN SOMEWHERE GREAT!

1. Explain the difference between person–job fit and person–organization fit.
2. Select a small, medium, or large organization you would like to work for and explain why you would be a good fit there (person–organization fit). For example, you can search for great organizations to work for using search engines or the [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com/best-places-to-work-list) best places to work list: https://www.glassdoor.com/Award/Best-Places-to-Work-LST_KQ0,19.htm
3. What would be your ideal position in this organization? Again, you can search jobs within the organization using search engines or the [glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com/best-places-to-work-list) list. Explain why this would be a good fit for you (person–job fit).
4. In your responses to questions 2 and 3, include a discussion of personality traits covered in this chapter, including things such as the following:
 - Big Five Personality Test
 - Type A/Type B behavior pattern
 - Risk-taking
 - Self-monitoring (managing your public image based on cues from others)
 - PsyCap (optimism, hope, self-efficacy, resiliency)
 - RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional)

For this activity, you will need a high level of self-awareness and some insightful research into the job and organization you select.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you want to work for the organization you selected? What factors did you consider after doing your research on what working there would be like?
2. Why do you want to hold the job you selected? Did you consider factors other than how you would fit in there such as location, pay, or benefits?
3. Which personality traits do you feel are most important regarding how well you would fit in with the organization and job you selected?

Source: Adapted from an exercise developed by Marie Dasborough, University of Miami.

CASE STUDY 2.1: WHOM WOULD YOU HIRE?

Worldwide Manufacturing Inc. has just weathered intense scrutiny after it was investigated and fined for improper chemical storage and waste disposal. Worldwide is a special-order manufacturer that makes plastic products in whatever shapes and sizes a customer specifies. In order to do so, it makes special molds for each project for pouring and shaping the plastic into the forms requested by customers. Each order takes retooling and reorganizing of the manufacturing floor. To help prevent further issues in the future, the company has decided to add a compliance department that will ensure that not only are EPA regulations followed but also other legal regulations, from proper accounting to ensuring everything is in compliance with OSHA. You have been promoted to be the firm's compliance officer and are now looking to hire several new members of the compliance department, including a compliance manager, a compliance analyst, and an auditor and inspector.

You decide to begin with filling the compliance manager position. A compliance manager is a professional that keeps the legal and ethical integrity of a company intact through policy enforcement and program planning. They make sure all departments of a business are complying with the rules and regulations the company is required to uphold and should regularly meet with managers in the areas of finance and accounting, cybersecurity, human resources, and operations. Compliance managers are responsible for keeping up-to-date with changing laws that affect the

corporate world and are responsible for preparing reports to present to their upper management detailing these laws and how the policies of the company are ensuring that employees are following them. After advertising for 2 weeks on indeed.com and Monster.com, you've begun to look through resumes. You have two promising candidates who have made it through initial phone interviews, and you have flown them out to meet with you and see the headquarters and manufacturing operations. Now you have to review what you have learned about each candidate and make your decision.

Aarya Song

Aarya Song grew up on military bases and joined the military after completing high school. Over a 15-year career, Aarya worked with base operations managers on a team that handled everything needed for running a base. She worked in supply chain management, both in procurement and disposal; in facilities planning; in inventory management; and even in operations planning for setting up new bases. All these positions required great organization and time-management skills. In addition, part of Aarya's job was to ensure everything was up to federal regulations and followed local regulations as well. While serving in the military, Aarya earned a bachelor's degree in logistics and later an MBA.

After leaving the military with highest honors, Aarya worked as the transportation manager for an

international manufacturer of wind turbines. However, after talking on the phone during the first round of interviews, you have learned that Arya is now looking for a new job that will provide new challenges.

During the onsite interview, Arya excitedly chatted with you about how Worldwide could ensure compliance and start building interorganizational teams to ensure companywide compliance. She shared the logic behind these ideas, which you found impressive and well thought out. Your only concern is that Arya seems to be very direct and no-nonsense, and while a zero-tolerance stance on policy violations is likely needed after the investigation, it may be too rigid for the organization's existing culture.

Francis Simmonne

Francis grew up in an industrial city and began working in manufacturing while in high school at a plant that made various rubber-based components for automobile assembly. After attending a regional university to learn about engineering for product design, Francis began working as a designer for a firm that designed and manufactured toys. However, Francis was better at helping the men and women on the manufacturing floor fix the problems that arose with making the first batches of new toys. After a few moderately successful products, Francis was promoted to production manager because of the skills he demonstrated on the shop

floor. Three years later, Francis started working on an MBA and ended up taking a materials manager position with a construction firm. It was very important in this position that all materials were up to code, and Francis took that responsibility very seriously. Five years later, he took a position as a work site inspector for the construction company, examining work sites and ensuring all health and safety policies as well as building codes were being followed. While these later positions had increasing responsibility, he did not have any direct reports.

Francis is getting married and is looking to move to the city Worldwide calls home, and so he has applied for the compliance manager position. When you spoke on the phone, Francis seemed practical yet reserved, a perception you had reinforced during the site interview. He relies on instinct more than evidence to make decisions, which helps to quickly provide a course of action. However, you have concerns that Francis might not be a firm-enough manager, as he likes to work with the production teams and crews and has done very little direct management of teams or departments.

So now you have a choice: Simmonne or Song? Both candidates have strong points and weak points, and both could do the job.

Discussion Questions

1. Identify each candidate's personality characteristics using the Big Five and the Myers-Briggs typology.
2. Based on personality, is there a candidate that you think would fit the position better?
3. Why is it important to consider personality in hiring? What other individual differences should you consider in hiring?