Chapter 2: Personality and Person–Environment Fit

# Case 2.1: Who Would You Hire?

## Case Description

A manufacturing company received intense scrutiny after it was investigated and fined for violations of improper chemical storage and waste disposal. To prevent further issues in the future with EPA, OHSA, and other regulatory agencies, the company has decided to add a compliance department. You are looking to hire several new members of the compliance department including a compliance manager. The questions get students thinking about how personality characteristics and other individual differences can help in making hiring decisions.

## Learning Objective:

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.

2-6: Summarize the elements of psychological capital.

2-8: Compare and contrast person–organization fit and person–job fit.

## Question Answers

1. Identify each candidate’s personality characteristics using the Big Five and the Myers–Briggs typology.

Assessment of each of the two candidates’ personalities using the evidence-based *Big Five Personality Factors* would most likely show the following:

* *Song*: Low-to-Moderate Openness to Experience, High Conscientiousness, Moderate Extraversion, Low Agreeableness, and Low Neuroticism
* *Simmonnee*: High Openness to Experience, Moderate Conscientiousness, Low-to-Moderate Extraversion, High Agreeableness, and Low Neuroticism

Although the *Myers–Briggs type indicator (MBTI)* has not been validated for personnel selection, the profiles for the two candidates would most likely be:

* *Song*: **ISTJ** (Introversion, Sensing, Thinking, and Judging)
* *Simmonnee*: **IIFP** (Introversion, Intuitive, Feeling, and Perceiving)

*Note*: Since we did not actually use the assessment instruments to obtain the personality dimensions in the case above, it would be important to engage the students in their thinking as to how they arrived at the dimensions selected for each of the candidates.

1. Based on personality, is there a candidate that you think would fit the position better?

From looking at personality, defined as those enduring characteristics of a person that affects action, thinking, and feeling, Aarya Song would fit the position of compliance manager better. In reviewing the Big Five factors, Aarya’s (a) low-to-moderate score on openness to experience, (b) high score on conscientiousness, and (c) low score on agreeableness contrast greatly with Francis Simmonne’s (a) high score on openness to experience, (b) moderate score on conscientiousness, and (c) high score on agreeableness. Aarya would be less likely to be open to difference ways of doing things and new ideas (openness to experience), more likely to follow through on a set course of action (conscientiousness), and less likely to be swayed by others (agreeableness). These are important personality traits for a person who is the compliance manager. Francis tends to be the opposite on the above-noted factors. Francis’ high scores on both openness to experience and agreeableness may lead to actions in the role of compliance manager to accept solutions harmful to the organization such as in the case of using “defeat device” software by Volkswagen to meet EPA standards for diesel engine emissions.

From looking at the two candidates MBTI profiles, Aarya’s **ISTJ** profile is consistent with the Big Five factors, and similarly, Francis’s **IIFP** profile is consistent with his Big Five factors as well. Aarya would be more practical (sensing), logical (thinking), and quick to act (judging), whereas Francis would be more an “idea” person (intuitive), emotional (feeling), and flexible to new ideas (perceiving). Aarya’s MBTI profile would be helpful in developing future training and support for Aarya in the position of Compliance Manager in case there were issues about Aarya being too rigid for the organizational culture, although Aarya’s idea for building interorganizational teams to ensure companywide compliance shows a degree of self-monitoring and flexibility important for this position to ensure a good person–job fit.

1. Why is it important to consider personality in hiring? What other individual differences should you consider in hiring?

Since personality and other individual differences are relatively stable over the life span, it is important to consider these characteristics in hiring. As an example, since research in transformation leadership showed that heredity factors contribute as much as 40% to this kind of leadership as an inborn trait, hiring decisions need to know which aspects of the person–job fit and person–organization fit are characteristics important from a *selection perspective* and other aspects of the person who may be added from a *training perspective*. Other important individual differences to be considered in hiring would include some of the following: motivation, self-monitoring, risk-taking, and psychological capital (efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency).

### Note

In this guide, some suggested answers are provided. Most of these questions are there to make students think and interrelate concepts from the current and previous chapters and, hopefully, to generate a more integrated understanding of organizational behavior. However, some responses will be a matter of opinion or are used to assess critical and creative thinking and one's ability to justify one's decision. Thus, the answers for the case questions are not the only right answer and so at times we don't provide an in-depth sample answer.