Sample Answers to In-Text Questions

Note: Answers to Case Questions are available in the Case Notes.

Chapter 2: Personality and Person–Environment Fit

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Given the limited research support for the MBTI, what are the concerns regarding organizations continuing to use it?
Question Location: Limitations of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator

Ans: I would primarily be concerned on organizations relying solely on the MBTI for personnel decisions. It was developed on well people, and it is the most popular personality test in use for organizations with over 2 million people taking it every year. It is a popular approach with many organizations in their leadership training and development programs. There is 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 actually classifiable into the 16 categories is questionable. It has not been validated for selection purposes.

2. What are the fairness issues involved in using personality tests for selection of new employees?
Question Location: "The Big Five"

Ans: Oftentimes applicants will try to fake or invent a personality that they think the company is looking for. Also organizations may miss out on very qualified employees just because they don't fit into the personality box that the organization think would be best suited for a position. For example, introverted individuals may be excellent salespeople because of other aspects of their personality but may be overlooked because they lack extroversion.

3. 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?
Question Location: Personality Traits and Health Research

Ans: I would want to know the type of environment I was getting into if I had a Type A personality. Given a Type A personality, I may likely welcome the challenge that comes with a high-stress position as I think I would be able to handle it well given my hard work ethic and ability. As a Type A, I would be at risk for heart disease in a high-stress environment, but I could reduce this risk by expressing my emotions in a healthy manner, such as talking to another person about my job. I would also want to take proactive measures to offset the potential negative effects of my personality in the given work context.

4. Explain why you think high Mach and high self-monitoring behaviors good or bad for organizations? List some other positive and negative consequences of these traits.
Question Location: Self-Monitoring

Ans: Both high Mach and high self-monitoring personalities have a tendency toward unethical behaviors. High Mach behaviors may include bullying and amoral manipulation. High self-monitors may engage in counterproductive work behaviors. On the other hand, both pay attention to the behaviors of others and may adjust their behavior to suit the situation. The result could be more positive work behaviors over time.

5. 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 you might best fit with?
Question Location: Person-Job Fit

Ans: In many ways, Holland's theory explains the obvious--people are happiest in jobs that match their personality. In the hexagon, Holland provides a useful guide to matching personality types. For example, a social is adjacent to both enterprising and artistic. This explains how a social, or helper, is able to persuade others and is also able to work in unstructured or creative situations.

Research in Action

Leaders: Are They Born or Made?
1. In your opinion, is leadership born (hereditary) or learned (through training, for example)? Support your position.
Question Location: Research in Action

Ans: Short answer yes… both born and made. There are arguments on both sides of the issue. Research suggests genetic factors contribute as much as 40% to the explanation of transformational leadership (meaning 60%+ may come from other factors such as experience or training.) Many people believe that transformational leadership can be learned. Experimental research has shown that leaders can be trained to exhibit charismatic behaviors. The best thinking at present is that it is most likely a combination of inborn and learned behaviors.

2. If leadership is both born and made as some researchers believe, what do you think is the best way to identify leadership potential?
Question Location: Research in Action

Ans: I think the best way to identify leadership potential is to give individuals a chance to display their leadership qualities. Challenging employees with a dilemma or an unexpected problem can help determine who is a leader and who is a follower. Also simply observing individuals in a social environment can help you see who gravitates to whom and which individuals are displaying the leadership qualities you think are important. Prior experiences and training can give some insight but do not provide the full picture on who may or may not be an effective leader.

3. What type of leadership training would you recommend to complement the selection process?
Question Location: Research in Action

Ans: I would recommend diversity and ethics training for leaders. We cannot assume that people can deal with all types of people so diversity training is important. We should not take for granted the ethical makeup of others either, so training in ethical decision-making would also be recommended. In addition, ongoing functional and interpersonal training can help leaders fully develop their expertise and interpersonal skills in the workplace.

Best Practices

Can Psychological Capital Be Acquired Through Training?

1. Do you think that things such as hope and optimism can be increased through training?
Question Location: Best Practices

Ans: Maybe. Research by Luthans produced mixed results. His training program involved asking participants to anticipate obstacles and then to create alternative pathways to minimize these obstacles. Being prepared may be effective in some situations with some subjects.

2. Which of the four PsyCap variables do you think accounted for the results the most (hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and/or resiliency)? Explain your choice(s).
Question Location: Best Practices

Ans: I would argue that self-efficacy and resiliency are more situation specific while hope and optimism are more related to an individual's personality. The research indicated that self-efficacy and resiliency can be affected through training--setting goals, identifying setbacks, discussing risk factors.

3. Why do you think that the results for the high-tech manufacturing firm were slightly lower than the student and manager groups?
Question Location: Best Practices

Ans: High-tech manufacturing firms tend to attract a specific personality type--perhaps Realistic and Investigative, preferring to work independently in unstructured situations. Students and managers may be more social and enterprising and are more dependent on others.

Lecture Notes

Chapter 2: Personality and Person–Environment Fit

Slide 1
Title Slide

Learning Objective 2-1: Define *personality*, and discuss the role of heredity.

Slide 2
What Is Personality?
Personality has been defined as "regularities in feeling, thought and action that are characteristic of an individual." (Snyder, 1998)

Slide 3
What Is Personality? (Cont.)
- Understanding your own personality and the personalities of others is critical
- Personality and other individual differences are relatively stable over the life course

Slide 4
What Is Personality? (Cont.)
Personality is linked to social behavior in organizations
- Personality may affect our work habits and how we interact with our coworkers
- Personality and most individual differences aren't like other areas of organizational behavior

Slide 5
What Is Personality? (Cont.)
- Individual differences must be understood, and leaders must work with them rather than try to change people
- "Personality Clash"

Slide 6
What Is Personality? (Cont.)
Role of Heredity
- Can a brilliant engineer who is introverted change his personality and become an extraverted visionary leader?
- Are personality traits inborn or learned?

Slide 7
What Is Personality? (Cont.)
Minnesota Twin Studies
- These twins tell us a great deal about the contribution of heredity

- About 50% of the variation in occupational choice is due to heredity
- About 40% of the variance in values related to work motivation attributed to heredity
- About 60% of the variance was due to the environment

Slide 8
What Is Personality? (Cont.)
Implications for a leader
- Most psychologists believe that personality is a relatively stable individual difference
- Instead of trying to change a coworker's personality, learn about personality differences
- Understand how different personalities operate at work, and work effectively with different types

Slide 9
What Is Personality? (Cont.)
Leaders: Are They Born or Made?
- One question that arises is whether leaders are born to greatness or if leadership can be acquired by anyone
- Leadership is most likely a combination of inborn traits and learned behavior

Learning Objective 2-2: Discuss the benefits and limitations of using the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator in organizations.

Slide 10
Myers–Briggs Type Indicator
- The Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the most often administered personality test
- A popular approach with organizations and is used by Hallmark, GE, and many other large organizations in their leadership training and development programs

Slide 11
Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (Cont.)
- The MBTI is based upon four general personality preferences:
- **Introversion (I) versus extraversion (E):** Extraverts tend to be outgoing; introverts tend to be shy
- **Sensing (S) versus intuition (N):** Sensing types tend to be practical; intuitive people tend to be "idea people"
- **Thinking (T) versus feeling (F):** Thinking types tend to use logic; feeling types tend to use emotion
- **Judging (J) versus perceiving (P):** Judging types tend to make quick decisions; perceiving types tend to be more flexible

Slide 12
Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (Cont.)

Limitations of the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator
- If you take the test again, you may not receive the same score
- Whether people are actually classifiable into the 16 categories is questionable

Slide 13
Myers–Briggs Type Indicator (Cont.)
- How the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator Is Used in Organizations
  - For conflict resolution and team building
  - In management training programs and classrooms
  - It takes all types of people for teams and organizations to be effective

Learning Objective 2-3: List and explain the five factors in the Big Five theory of personality.

Slide 14
The Big Five
1. Openness
2. Conscientiousness
3. Extraversion
4. Agreeableness
5. Neuroticism

Slide 15
The Big Five (Cont.)
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

Learning Objective 2-4: Compare and contrast the Type A and Type B behavior pattern.

Slide 16
Personality Traits and Health Research
- Type A--aggressive, competitive, may have more health problems such as cardiovascular disease

- Type B--relaxed, easy going, not likely to have as many health problems

Slide 17
Personality Traits and Health Research (Cont.)
Study respondents were classified into Type A and Type B personalities based on the following questions:
1. Do you feel guilty if you use spare time to relax?
2. Do you need to win in order to derive enjoyment from games and sports?
3. Do you generally move, walk, and eat rapidly?
4. Do you often try to do more than one thing at a time?

Slide 18
Personality Traits and Health Research (Cont.)
Figure 2.1. Personality Types A, B, C, and D.

TYPE A	TYPE B
___ Thrives on change and fears routine	___ Loves to have a good time
___ Has an entrepreneurial streak	___ Likes being the center of attention
___ Enjoys taking risks and is driven to succeed	___ Needs to be liked by others
___ Is competitive and aggressive	___ Tends to be talkative and outgoing
___ Is impatient and is not a good listener	___ Is relaxed and laid back
___ Is persistent in getting what he/she wants	___ Is not competitive and aggressive

TYPE C	TYPE D
___ Takes everything seriously	___ Doesn't like to take charge
___ Thrives on details and accuracy	___ Prefers a set of guidelines that he/she can follow
___ Is predictable and dependable	___ Is supportive of others
___ Is loyal and patient	___ Is punctual and consistent
___ Is thoughtful and sensitive	___ Is content and happy with life and himself/herself
___ Likes facts	___ Doesn't mind doing repetitive tasks

Learning Objective 2-5: Develop an example of a job that would benefit from risk taking.
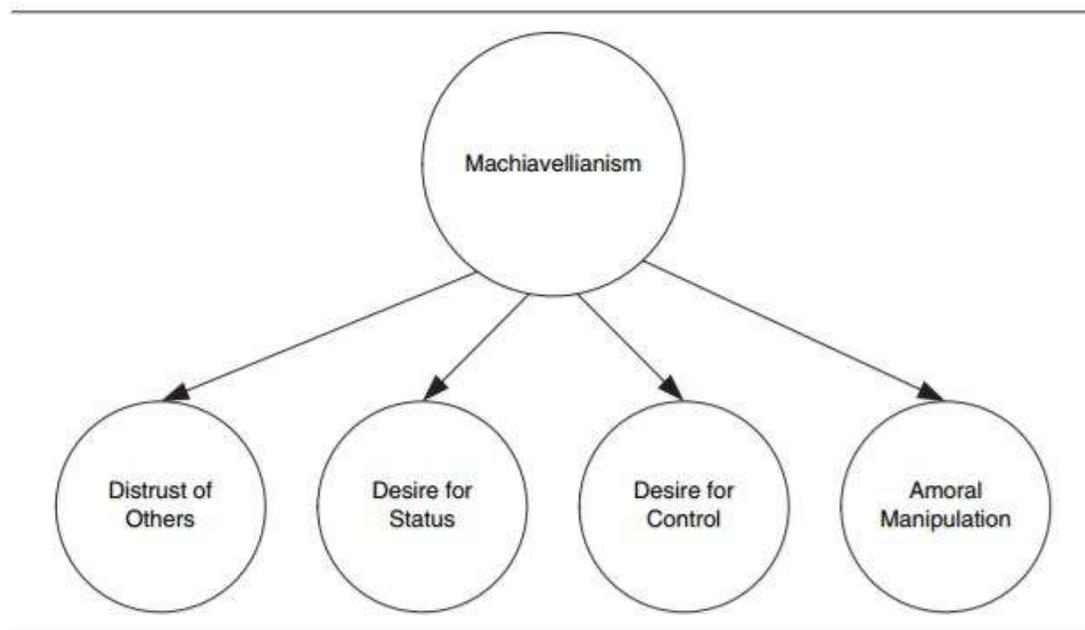
Slide 19
Other Relevant Personality Traits
- Machiavellianism
  - Ends justifies the means
  - Pragmatic
  - Emotional dissonance

Slide 20
Other Relevant Personality Traits (Cont.)
Figure 2.2. The Structure of Machiavellianism.

Slide 21
Other Relevant Personality Traits (Cont.)
- Self-Monitoring
  - "Self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness" (Snyder, 1974)
  - Ability to adjust his/her behavior to external situational factors
  - Consistent, displaying their feelings and attitudes regardless of situation

Slide 22
Other Relevant Personality Traits (Cont.)
- Self-Monitoring

- High self-monitors receive higher performance ratings and become leaders, but have lower organizational commitment
- High self-monitors develop better working relationships with bosses than low self-monitors
- High self-monitors achieve more rapid career mobility since they are able to attain central positions in the powerful networks in the organization

Slide 23
Other Relevant Personality Traits (Cont.)
Risk-Taking
- "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." (Levenson, 1990)

Slide 24
Other Relevant Personality Traits (Cont.)
Risk-Taking (Cont.)
- Taking a chance on the unknown
- Examples: rock climbers, firemen, entrepreneurs
- Risk-taking declines across the life span
- When resources are scarce, people continue to assume risk to compete for resources

Learning Objective 2-6: Summarize the elements of psychological capital.

Slide 25
Psychological Capital
- Positive organizational behavior (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." (Luthans, 2002, p. 59)

Slide 26
Psychological Capital (Cont.)
- Psychological capital (PsyCap) has been shown to be positively related to employee empowerment and engagement
- PsyCap is more than "what you know" or "who you know." It is focused on "who you are" and "who you are becoming"
- Just like we have financial capital, these state-like qualities represent the *value of individual differences* at the workplace
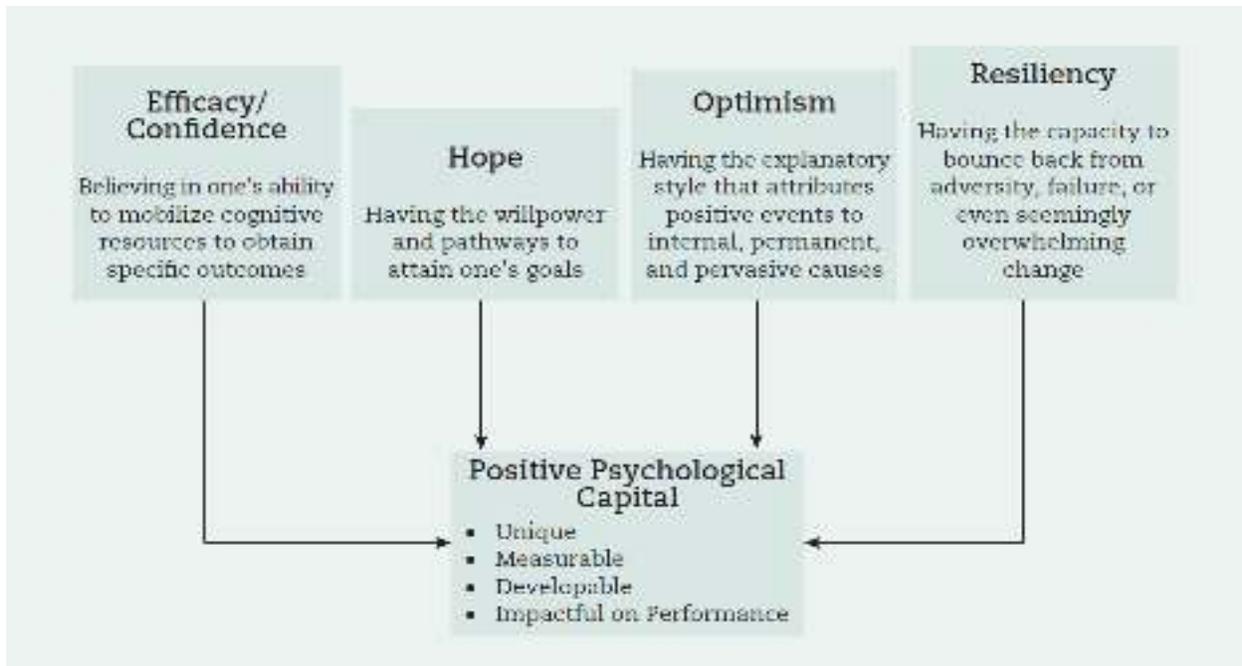
Slide 27
Psychological Capital (Cont.)
- Efficacy--belief in oneself

- Optimism--being positive
- Hope--seeing the pathways to the future
- Resiliency--ability to "bounce back"

Slide 28
Psychological Capital (Cont.)
Figure 2.3. Dimensions of Positive Psychological Capital.

Learning Objective 2-7: Explain the effects of positive and negative core self-evaluations.

Slide 29
Core Self-Evaluations
- **Core self-evaluations (CSE)** are defined as "fundamental premises that individuals hold about themselves and their functioning in the world." (Judge, 1998)

Slide 30
Core Self-Evaluations (Cont.)
- Core self-evaluations relate to job satisfaction and job performance
- Positive core self-evaluations predict employee voice
- Positive relationships exist between core self-evaluations and higher salaries
- Higher core self-evaluations are associated with early job success
- Core self-evaluations show concept of self-worth translate into net worth

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

Slide 31
Person–Environment Fit
- Person–environment (PE) fit--when an individual's personality is aligned with their environment, it results in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and better performance on the job
- Two types of person–environment fit:
  1. Person–organization (PO) fit
  2. Person–job (PJ) fit

Slide 32
Person–Environment Fit (Cont.)
- Person–organization (PO) fit
  - Match between a person's individual values and those of the organization they work for
  - Employees who will "fit in" with the organizational culture
  - Employees feel a sense of psychological ownership for their work
  - Good fit is the result of better communication, increased productivity, interpersonal attraction, and trust in the organization
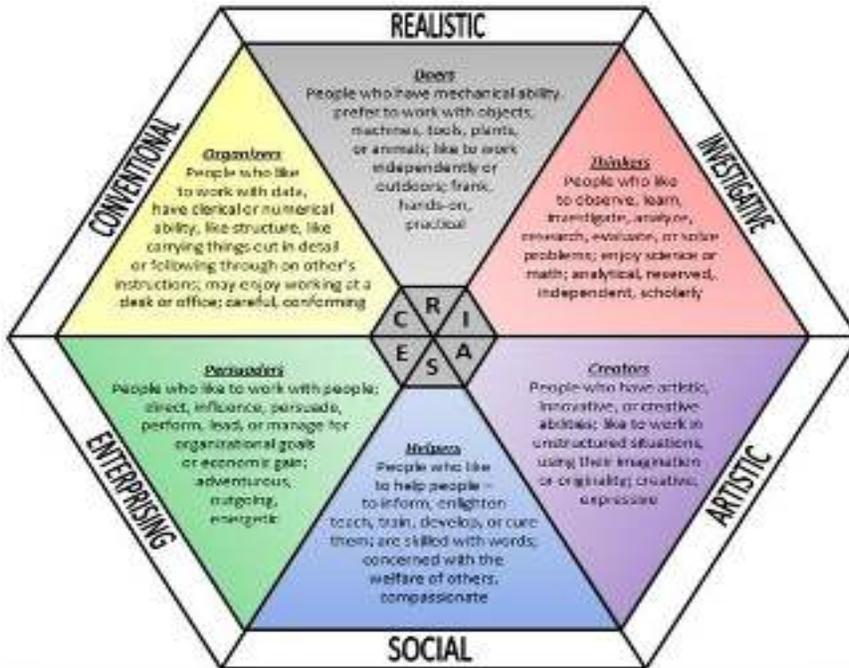
Slide 33
Person–Environment Fit (Cont.)
- Person–job (PJ) fit
  - Job characteristics are aligned with employees' personality, motivations, and abilities
  - PJ fit is comprised of two forms:
    1. Demands-abilities (DA) fit
    2. Needs-supplies (NS) fit

Slide 34
Person–Environment Fit (Cont.)
Figure 2.4. Personality–Job Fit Theory.

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.

2. 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.

3. 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).

Scandura, *Essentials of Organizational Behavior 2e*

SAGE Publishing, 2019

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.