

# CHAPTER 4

## PERSONALITY AND EMOTIONS

### WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

"When psychologists talk of personality, they mean a dynamic concept describing the growth and development of a person's whole psychological system. Rather than looking at parts of the person, personality looks at some aggregate whole that is greater than the sum of the parts" (p. 92).

## PERSONALITY DETERMINANTS

"... an adult's personality is now generally considered to be made up of both hereditary and environmental factors, moderated by situational conditions" (p. 92).

### *Heredity*

"Physical stature, facial attractiveness, gender, temperament, muscle composition and reflexes, energy level, and biological rhythms are characteristics that are generally considered to be either completely or substantially influenced by who your parents were, that is, by their biological, physiological, and inherent psychological makeup. The heredity approach argues that the ultimate explanation of an individual's personality is the molecular structure of the genes, located in the chromosomes" (p. 92).

"Recent studies of young children lend strong support to the power of heredity. Evidence demonstrates that traits such as shyness, fear, and distress are most likely caused by inherited genetic characteristics. This finding suggests that some personality traits may be built into the same genetic code that affects factors such as height and hair color" (p. 92).

distress = Schmerz, Leid, Kummer

"Further support for the importance of heredity can be found in studies of individual job satisfaction, which we discussed in the previous chapter. Individual job satisfaction is found to be remarkably stable over time. This result is consistent with what you would expect if satisfaction is determined by something inherent in the person rather than by external environmental factors" (p. 93).

## *Environment*

"Among the factors that exert pressures on our personality formation are the culture in which we are raised, our early conditioning, the norms among our family, friends, and social groups, and other influences that we experience. The environment to which we are exposed plays a substantial role in shaping our personalities" (p. 93).

to exert = ausüben

"North Americans, as a result, tend to be ambitious and aggressive relative to individuals raised in cultures that have emphasized getting along with others, cooperation, and the priority of family over work and career" (p. 93).

"Careful consideration of the arguments favoring either heredity or environment as the primary determinant of personality forces the conclusion that both are important. Heredity sets the parameters or outer limits, but an individual's full potential will be determined by how well he or she adjusts to the demands and requirements of the environment" (p. 93).

## *Situation*

"An individual's personality, although generally stable and consistent, does change in different situations. The varying demands of different situations call forth different aspects of one's personality" (p. 93).

*Personality Traits:* Enduring characteristics that describe an individual's behavior.

## *The Big Five Model*

"In recent years, an impressive body of research supports that five basic dimensions underlie all others and encompass most of the significant variation in human personality" (p. 95).

*Extraversion:*

gregarious = gesellig

A personality dimension describing someone who is sociable, gregarious, and assertive.  
assertive = durchsetzungsfähig

*Agreeableness:*

A personality dimension describing someone who is good-natured, cooperative, and trusting.

*Conscientiousness:*

dependable = zuverlässig

A personality dimension describing someone who is responsible, dependable, persistent, and organized.

*Emotional Stability:* A personality dimension that characterizes someone as calm, self-confident, secure (positive) versus nervous, depressed, and insecure (negative).

*Openness to Experience:* A personality dimension that characterizes someone in terms of imaginativeness, artistic, sensitivity, and intellectualism.

"... research on the Big Five also has found important relationships between these personality dimensions and job performance" (p. 96).

## MAJOR PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES INFLUENCING OB

*Locus of Control:* The degree to which people believe they are masters of their own fate.

"Some people believe that they are masters of their own fate. Other people see themselves as pawns of fate, believing that what happens to them in their lives is due to luck or chance. The first type, those who believe that they control their destinies, have been labeled **internals**, whereas the latter, who see their lives as being controlled by outside forces, have been called **externals**. A person's perception of the source of his or her fate is termed **locus of control**" (p. 96).



"A large amount of research comparing internals with externals has consistently shown that individuals who have high scores in externality are less satisfied with their jobs, have higher absenteeism rates, are more alienated from the work setting, and are less involved on their jobs than are internals" (p. 96).

"Internals search more actively for information before making a decision, are more motivated to achieve, and make a greater attempt to control their environment. Externals, however, are more compliant and willing to follow directions. Therefore, internals do well on sophisticated tasks – which include most managerial and professional jobs – that require complex information processing and learning. In addition, internals are more suited to jobs that require initiative and independence of action" (p. 97).

*Machiavellianism:* Degree to which an individual is pragmatic, maintains emotional distance, and believes that ends can justify means.

"High Machs manipulate more, win more, are persuaded less, and persuade others more than do low Machs" (p. 97).

"Should we conclude that high Machs make good employees? That answer depends on the type of job and whether you consider ethical implications in evaluating performance" (p. 97).

*Self-Esteem*: Individuals' degree of liking or disliking of themselves.

"... self-esteem is directly related to expectations for success. High SEs believe that they possess the ability they need in order to succeed at work.

Individuals with high self-esteem will take more risk in job selection and are more likely to choose unconventional jobs than people with low self-esteem.

The most generalizable finding on self-esteem is that low SEs are more susceptible to external influence than are high SEs... A number of studies confirm that high SEs are more satisfied with their jobs than are low SEs" (p. 98).

susceptible = empfänglich

*Self-Monitoring:* A personality trait that measures an individual's ability to adjust his or her behavior to external, situational factors.

"Individuals high in self-monitoring show considerable adaptability in adjusting their behavior to external situational factor. They are highly sensitive to external cues and can behave differently in different situations. High self-monitors are capable of presenting striking contradictions between their public persona and their private self" (p. 98).

"... high self-monitoring managers tend to be more mobile in their careers and receive more promotions (both internal and cross-organizational)" (p. 98).

## *Risk Taking*

"People differ in their willingness to take chances. This propensity to assume or avoid risk has been shown to have an impact on how long it takes managers to make a decision and how much information they require before making their choice... High risk-taking managers made more rapid decisions and used less information in making their choices than did the low risk-taking managers. Interestingly, the decision accuracy was the same for both groups" (p. 98/99).

## EMOTIONS

"Given the obvious role that emotions play in our everyday life, it might surprise you to learn that, until very recently, the topic of emotions had been given little or no attention within the field of OB. How could this be? We can offer two possible explanations. The first is the *myth of rationality*... The second factor that acted to keep emotions out of OB was the belief that *emotions of any kind were disruptive*. When emotions were considered, the discussion focused on strong negative emotions – especially anger – that interfered with an employee's ability to do his or her job effectively. Emotions were rather viewed as being constructive or able to stimulate performance-enhancing behaviors" (p. 103).

disruptive = störend

"... three terms that are closely intertwined. These are *affect*, *emotions*, and *moods*" (p. 104).

*Affect*: A broad range of feelings that people experience.

*Emotions*: Intense feelings that are directed at someone or something.

*Moods*: Feelings that tend to be less intense than emotions and that lack a contextual stimulus.

"A related term that is gaining increasing importance in organizational behavior is *emotional labor*. Every employee expends physical and mental labor when they put their bodies and cognitive capabilities, respectively, into their job. But most jobs also require **emotional labor**. This is when an employee expresses organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions" (p. 104).

## *Variety of Emotions*

"There have been numerous efforts to limit and define the fundamental or basic set of emotions. Research has identified six universal emotions: anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust, and surprise... Researchers tended to look for universally identified facial expressions and then convert them into categories" (p. 105).

disgust = Abscheu, Ekel

"Do these six basic emotions surface in the workplace? Absolutely. I get *angry* after receiving a poor performance appraisal. I *fear* that I could be laid off as a result of a company cutback. I'm *sad* about one of my co-workers leaving to take a new job in another city. I'm *happy* after being selected as employee-of-the-month. I'm *disgusted* with the way my supervisor treats the women on our team. And I'm *surprised* to find out that management plans a complete restructuring of the company's retirement program" (p. 106).



## GENDER AND EMOTIONS

"Women show greater emotional expression than men and experience emotions more intensely" (p. 108).

"One explanation is the different ways men and women have been socialized. Men are taught to be tough and brave; and showing emotion is inconsistent with this image. Women, on the other hand, are socialized to be nurturing... A second explanation is that women may have more innate ability to read others and present their emotions than do men. Third, women may have a greater need for social approval and, thus, a higher propensity to show positive emotions such as happiness" (p. 108).

## EXTERNAL CONSTRAINTS ON EMOTIONS

### *a) Organizational Influences*

"There is no single emotional 'set' sought by all organizations. However, at least in the United States, the evidence indicates that there's a bias against negative and intense emotions. Expressions of negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, and anger tend to be unacceptable except under fairly specific conditions" (p. 108).

### *b) Cultural Influences*

"Cultural norms in the United States dictate that employees in service organizations should smile and act friendly when interacting with customers. But this norm doesn't apply worldwide... In Moslem cultures, smiling is frequently taken as a sign of sexual attraction, so women are socialized not to smile at men" (p. 108).

## OB APPLICATIONS

### *a) Ability and Selection*

"People who know their own emotions and are good at reading others' emotions may be more effective in their jobs. That, in essence, is the theme underlying recent research on *emotional intelligence*" (p. 109).

Five dimensions of emotional intelligence:

- Self-awareness:* The ability to be aware of what you're feeling.
- Self-management:* The ability to manage one's own emotions and impulses.
- Self-motivation:* The ability to persist in the face of setbacks and failures.
- Empathy:* The ability to sense how others are feeling.
- Social skills:* The ability to handle the emotions of others.

## *b) Decision Making*

"... it's naive to assume that decision choices aren't influenced by one's feelings at a particular moment" (p. 109).

"Negative emotions can result in a limited search for new alternatives and a less vigilant use of information. On the other hand, positive emotions can increase problem solving and facilitate the integration of information.

You can improve your understanding of decision making by considering 'the heart' as well as 'the head'. People use emotions as well as rational and intuitive processes in making decisions. Failure to incorporate emotions into the study of decision processes will result in an incomplete (and often inaccurate) view of the process" (p. 110).

vigilant = wachsam, aufmerksam

### *c) Motivation*

"... people aren't cold, unfeeling machines. Their perceptions and calculations of situations are filled with emotional content that significantly influences how much effort they exert. Moreover, when you see people who are highly motivated in their jobs, they're emotionally committed" (p. 110/111).

### *d) Leadership*

"Effective leaders almost all rely on the expression of feelings to help convey their messages. In fact, the expression of emotions in speeches is often the critical element that results in individuals accepting or rejecting a leader's message... By arousing emotions and linking them to an appealing vision, leaders increase the likelihood that managers and employees alike will accept change" (p. 111).

### *e) Interpersonal Conflict*

"Few issues are more intertwined with emotions than the topic of interpersonal conflict. Whenever conflicts arise, you can be fairly certain that emotions are also surfacing. A manager's success in trying to resolve conflicts, in fact, is often largely due to his or her ability to identify the emotional elements in the conflict and to get the conflicting parties to work through their emotions. And the manager who ignores the emotional elements in conflicts, focusing singularly on rational and task concerns, is unlikely to be very effective in resolving those conflicts" (p. 111).

## *f) Deviant Workplace Behavior*

"Negative emotions can lead to a number of deviant workplace behaviors" (p. 111).

deviant = (von der Norm) abweichend

*Employee Deviance:* Voluntary actions that violate established norms and that threaten the organization, its members, or both.

Examples:

leaving early, intentionally working slowly (production)

stealing, sabotage (property)

gossiping, blaming co-workers (political)

sexual harassment, verbal abuse (personal aggression)

"Many of these deviant behaviors can be traced to negative emotions" (p. 111).