

Entrepreneurial Leadership & Organizational Behaviour

Prepared by Dr. Amany Ramadan

PMG 612

Lecture 9





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Entrepreneurial Leadership & Organizational Behaviour

Lecture 9

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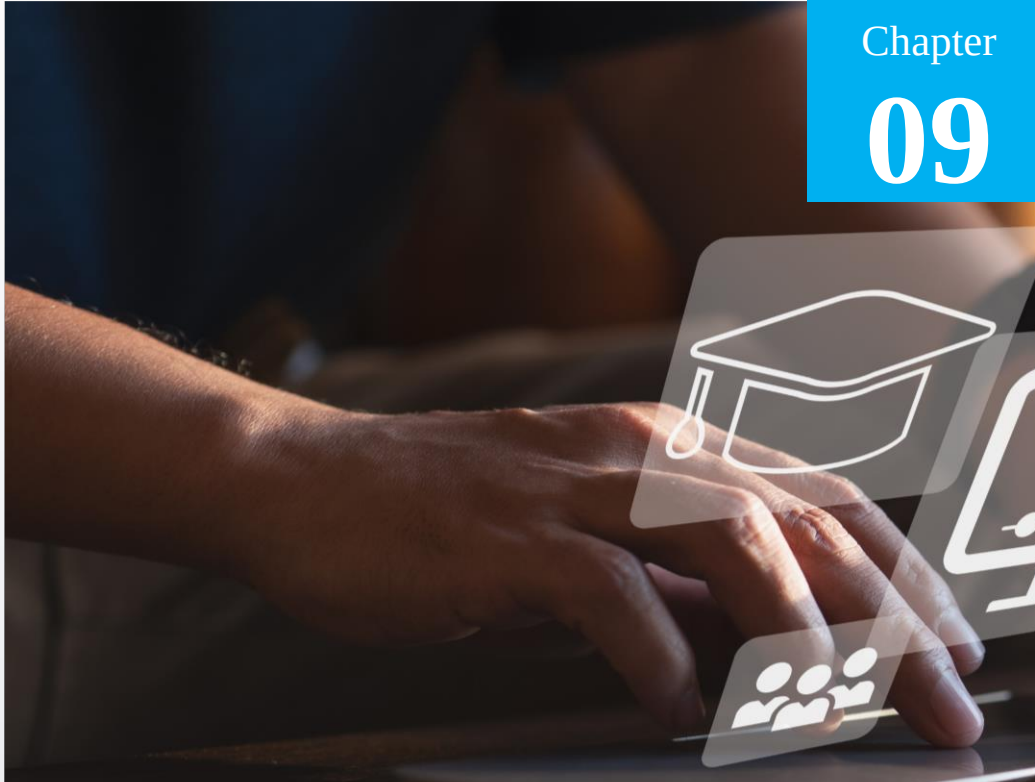
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Chapter

09

Organizational Behavior





The previous lecture covered the following topics

- Outcomes of Job Satisfaction
- The Impact of Job Dissatisfaction
- Understanding the Impact
- Implications for Managers
- Emotions and Moods



This lecture will cover the following topics

- Emotions and Moods
- Affective Events Theory
- Emotional Intelligence
- Emotion Regulation
- Organizational Behaviour Applications of Emotions and Moods
- Emotional contagion
- Personality and Values
- The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Personality and Situations
- Situation strength theory
- Trait Activation Theory
- Values
- Value system

Emotions and Moods

Affective Events Theory

We've seen that emotions and moods are an important part of our personal and work lives. But how do they influence our job performance and satisfaction? Affective events theory (AET) proposes that employees react emotionally to things that happen to them at work, and this reaction influences their job performance and satisfaction. Say you just found out your company is downsizing. You might experience a variety of negative emotions, causing you to worry that you'll lose your job. Because it is out of your hands, you may feel insecure and fearful, and spend much of your time worrying rather than working. Needless to say, your job satisfaction will also be down.

Affective events theory (AET)

A model that suggests that workplace events cause emotional reactions on the part of employees, which then influence workplace attitudes and behaviors.

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Work events trigger positive or negative emotional reactions, to which employees' personalities and moods predispose them to respond with greater or lesser intensity. People who score low on emotional stability are more likely to react strongly to negative events, and emotional response to a given event can depend on mood. Finally, emotions influence a number of performance and satisfaction variables, such as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), organizational commitment, level of effort, intention to quit, and workplace deviance.

In sum, affective events theory (AET) offers two important messages. **First**, emotions provide valuable insights into how workplace events influence employee performance and satisfaction. **Second**, employees and managers shouldn't ignore emotions or the events that cause them, even when they appear minor, because they accumulate. The (AET) framework highlights the emotionality of the workplace and its real outcomes. Emotional intelligence is another framework that may help us understand the impact of emotions on job performance.

Emotional Intelligence

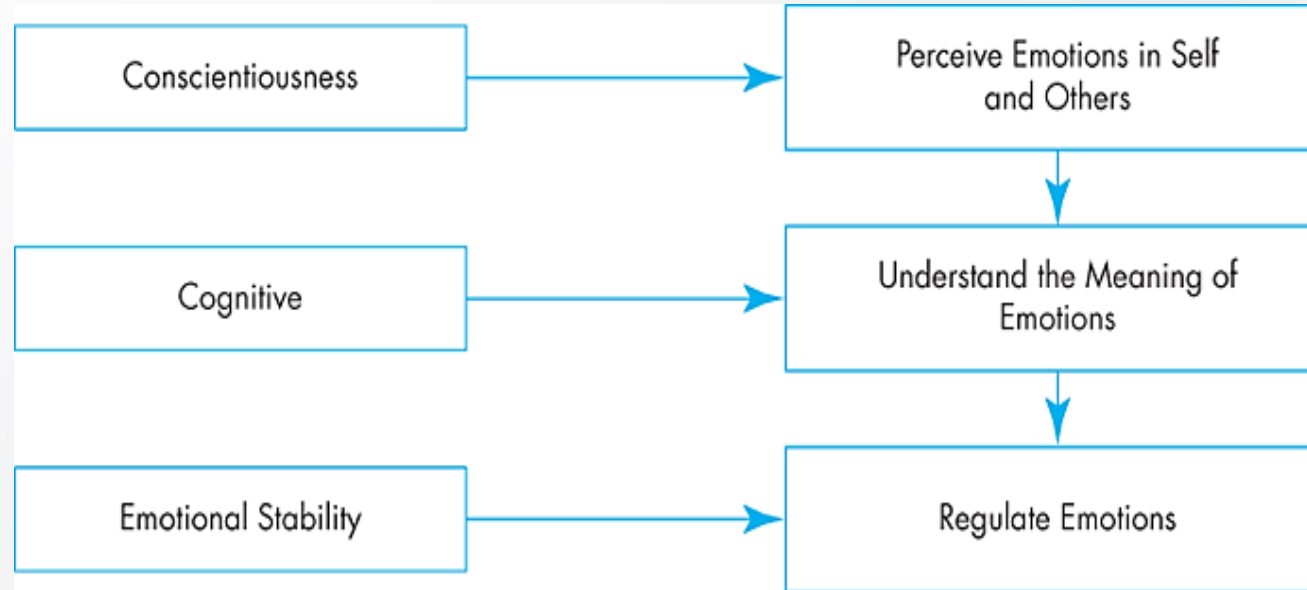
As the CEO of an international talent company, Terrie Upshur-Lupberger was at a career pinnacle. So why was she resentful and unhappy? A close friend observed, “Terrie, you were out on the skinny branch—you know, the one that breaks easily in a strong wind. You were so busy and overwhelmed and out of touch with your own values, cares, and guiding beliefs that you failed to pay attention to the branch that was about to break.” According to Upshur-Lupberger, she had failed to notice that her moods constantly swung toward frustration and exhaustion. Her job satisfaction, productivity, relationships, and results suffered. Worst, she was too busy to realize the deficiencies until she was completely depleted. She said, “I learned that, as a leader, you either pay attention to and manage the moods (including your own) in the organization, or . . . you ignore them and pay the price.” Upshur-Lupberger learned the value of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a person’s ability to: **(1)** perceive emotions in him or herself and others; **(2)** understand the meaning of these emotions; and **(3)** regulate his or her own emotions accordingly, as shown in Exhibit 4-4. People who know their own emotions and are good at reading emotional cues—for instance, knowing why they’re angry and how to express themselves without violating norms—are most likely to have high EI.

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Exhibit 4-4, A Cascading Model of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI):
The ability to detect and to manage emotional cues and information.



Several studies suggest EI plays an important role in job performance. One study that used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology found that executive MBA students who performed best on a strategic decision-making task were more likely to incorporate emotion centers of the brain into their choice processes. One simulation study showed that students who were good at identifying and distinguishing among their own feelings were able to make more profitable investment decisions.

Emotion Regulation

Have you ever tried to cheer yourself up when you're feeling down, or calm yourself when you're feeling angry? If so, you have engaged in emotion regulation. The central idea behind emotion regulation is to identify and modify the emotions you feel. Recent research suggests that emotion management ability is a strong predictor of task performance for some jobs and for OCB. Therefore, in our study of OB, we are interested in whether and how emotion regulation should be used in the workplace. We begin by identifying which individuals might naturally employ it.

Emotion regulation

The process of identifying and modifying felt emotions.

Emotion Regulation Influences and Outcomes

As you might suspect, not everyone is equally good at regulating emotions. Individuals who are higher in the personality trait of neuroticism have more trouble doing so and often find their moods are beyond their ability to control. Individuals who have lower levels of self-esteem are also less likely to try to improve their sad moods, perhaps because they are less likely than others to feel they deserve to be in a good mood.

The workplace environment has an effect on an individual's tendency to employ emotion regulation. In general, diversity in work groups increases the likelihood that you will regulate your emotions. For example, younger employees are likely to regulate their emotions when their work groups include older members. Racial diversity also has an effect: if diversity is low, the minority may engage in emotion regulation, perhaps to “fit in” with the majority race as much as possible; if diversity is high and many different races are represented, the majority race will employ emotion regulation, perhaps to integrate themselves with the whole group. These findings suggest a beneficial outcome of diversity—it may cause us to regulate our emotions more consciously and effectively

While regulating your emotions might seem beneficial, research suggests there is a downside to trying to change the way you feel. Changing your emotions takes effort, and as we noted when discussing emotional labor, this effort can be exhausting. Sometimes attempts to change an emotion actually make the emotion stronger; for example, trying to talk yourself out of being afraid can make you focus more on what scares you, which makes you more afraid. From another perspective, research suggests that avoiding negative emotional experiences is less likely to lead to positive moods than does seeking out positive emotional experiences. For example, you're more likely to experience a positive mood if you have a pleasant conversation with a friend than if you avoid an unpleasant conversation with a hostile coworker.

Emotion Regulation Techniques

Researchers of emotion regulation often study the strategies people employ to change their emotions. One related technique of emotion regulation is emotional suppression, literally suppressing—blocking or ignoring—initial emotional responses to situations. This response seems to facilitate practical thinking in the short term. However, it appears to be helpful only when a strongly negative event would elicit a distressed emotional reaction in a crisis situation. For example, a portfolio manager might suppress an emotional reaction to a sudden drop in the value of a stock and therefore be able to clearly decide how to plan. Suppression used in crisis situations appears to help an individual recover from the event emotionally, while suppression used as an everyday emotion regulation technique can take a toll on mental ability, emotional ability, health, and relationships.

While emotion regulation techniques can help us cope with difficult workplace situations, research indicates that the effect varies. For example, one study in Taiwan found that all participants who worked for abusive supervisors reported emotional exhaustion and work withdrawal tendencies, but to different degrees based on the emotion regulation strategies they employed. Thus, while there is much promise in emotion regulation techniques, the best route to a positive workplace is to recruit positive-minded individuals and train leaders to manage their moods, job attitudes, and performance. The best leaders manage emotions as much as they do tasks and activities. The best employees can use their knowledge of emotion regulation to decide when to speak up and how to express themselves effectively.

OB Applications of Emotions and Moods

Our understanding of emotions and moods can affect many aspects of OB. Let's think through some of them.

Selection

One implication from the evidence on EI is that employers should consider it a factor in hiring employees, especially for jobs that demand a high degree of social interaction. In fact, more employers are starting to use EI measures to hire people. For example, a study of U.S. Air Force recruiters showed that top-performing recruiters exhibited high levels of EI. Using these findings, the Air Force revamped its selection criteria. A follow-up investigation found hires who had high EI scores became 2.6 times more successful than those with lower scores.

Decision Making

Moods and emotions have effects on decision-making that managers should understand. Positive emotions and moods seem to help people make sound decisions. Positive emotions also enhance problem-solving skills, so positive people find better solutions.

OB researchers continue to debate the role of negative emotions and moods in decision-making. One recent study suggested that people who are saddened by events may make the same decisions as they would have, absent those events, while people who are angered by events might make stronger (though not necessarily better) choices. Another study found that participants made choices reflecting more original thinking when in a negative mood. Still other research indicated that individuals in a negative mood may take higher risks than when in a positive mood. Taken together, these and other studies suggest negative (and positive) emotions impact decision making.

Creativity

As we see throughout this text, one goal of leadership is to maximize employee productivity through creativity. Creativity is influenced by emotions and moods. Much research suggests that people in good moods tend to be more creative than people in bad moods. People in good moods produce more ideas and more options, and others find their ideas original. It seems that people experiencing positive moods or emotions are more flexible and open in their thinking, which may explain why they're more creative. All the activating moods, whether positive or negative, seem to lead to more creativity, whereas deactivating moods lead to less. For example, we discussed earlier that other factors such as fatigue may boost creativity.

Motivation

Several studies have highlighted the importance of moods and emotions on motivation. Giving people performance feedback—whether real or fake—influences their mood, which then influences their motivation. For example, one study looked at the moods of insurance sales agents in Taiwan. Agents in a good mood were found to be more helpful toward their coworkers and also felt better about themselves. These factors in turn led to superior performance in the form of higher sales and better supervisor reports of performance.

Customer Service

Workers' emotional states influence the level of customer service they give, which in turn influences levels of repeat business and customer satisfaction. This result is primarily due to emotional contagion—the “catching” of emotions from others. When someone experiences positive emotions and laughs and smiles at you, you tend to respond positively. Of course, the opposite is true as well.

Leadership

Research indicates that putting people in a good mood makes good sense. Leaders who focus on inspirational goals generate greater optimism, cooperation, and enthusiasm in employees, leading to more positive social interactions with coworkers and customers. A study with Taiwanese military participants indicated that by sharing emotions, transformational leaders inspire positive emotions in their followers that lead to higher task performance.

Leaders are perceived as more effective when they share positive emotions, and followers are more creative in a positive emotional environment. What about when leaders are sad? Research found that leader displays of sadness increased the analytic performance of followers, perhaps because followers attended more closely to tasks to help the leaders.

Emotional contagion

The process by which people's emotions are caused by the emotions of others.

Studies indicate a matching effect between employee and customer emotions. In the employee-to-customer direction, research finds that customers who catch the positive moods or emotions of employees shop longer. In the other direction, when an employee feels unfairly treated by a customer, it's harder for the employee to display the positive emotions the organization expects. High-quality customer service places demands on employees because it often puts them in a state of emotional dissonance, which can be damaging to the employee and the organization. Managers can interrupt negative contagion by fostering positive moods.

Job Attitudes

Ever hear the advice “Never take your work home with you,” meaning you should forget about work once you go home? That’s easier said than done. The good news is that it appears a positive mood at work can spill over to your off-work hours, and a negative mood at work can be restored to a positive mood after a break. Several studies have shown people who had a good day at work tend to be in a better mood at home that evening, and vice versa. Other research has found that although people do emotionally take their work home with them, by the next day the effect is usually gone. The bad news is that the moods of the people in your household may affect yours. As you might expect, one study found if one member of a couple was in a negative mood during the workday, the negative mood spilled over to the spouse at night. The relationship between moods and job attitudes is reciprocal—the way our workday goes colors our moods, but our moods also affect the way we see our jobs.

Deviant Workplace Behaviors

Anyone who has spent much time in an organization realizes people can behave in ways that violate established norms and threaten the organization, its members, or both. These counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) can be traced to negative emotions and can take many forms. People who feel negative emotions are more likely than others to engage in short-term deviant behavior at work, such as gossiping or surfing the Internet, though negative emotions can also lead to more serious forms of CWB.

For instance, envy is an emotion that occurs when you resent someone for having something you don't have but strongly desire—such as a better work assignment, larger office, or higher salary. It can lead to malicious deviant behaviors. An envious employee could undermine other employees and take all the credit for things others accomplished. Angry people look for other people to blame for their bad mood, interpret other people's behavior as hostile, and have trouble considering others' points of view. It's not hard to see how these thought processes can lead directly to verbal or physical aggression.

Safety and Injury at Work

Research relating negative affectivity to increased injuries at work suggests employers might improve health and safety (and reduce costs) by ensuring workers aren't engaged in potentially dangerous activities when they're in a bad mood. Bad moods can contribute to injury at work in several ways. Individuals in negative moods tend to be more anxious, which can make them less able to cope effectively with hazards. A person who is always fearful will be more pessimistic about the effectiveness of safety precautions because she feels she'll just get hurt anyway, or she might panic or freeze up when confronted with a threatening situation. Negative moods also make people more distractable, and distractions can obviously lead to careless behaviors.

Selecting positive team members can contribute towards a positive work environment because positive moods transmit from team member to team member. One study of 130 leaders and their followers found that leaders who are charismatic transfer their positive emotions to their followers through a contagion effect. It makes sense, then, to choose team members predisposed to positive moods.

Implications for Managers

Recognize that emotions are a natural part of the workplace and good management does not mean creating an emotion-free environment.

To foster effective decision making, creativity, and motivation in employees, model positive emotions and moods as much as is authentically possible.

Provide positive feedback to increase the positivity of employees. Of course, it also helps to hire people who are predisposed to positive moods.

In the service sector, encourage positive displays of emotion, which make customers feel more positive and thus improve customer service interactions and negotiations.

Understand the role of emotions and moods to significantly improve your ability to explain and predict your coworkers' and others' behavior.

Personality and Values

Personality and Values

Personality

Why are some people quiet and passive, while others are loud and aggressive? Are certain personality types better adapted than others for certain jobs? Before we can answer these questions, we need to address a more basic one: what is personality?

What Is Personality?

When we speak of someone's personality, we use many adjectives to describe how they act and seem to think; in fact, research participants used 624 distinct adjectives to describe people they knew. As organizational behaviorists, however, we organize characteristics by overall traits describing the growth and development of a person's personality.

Defining Personality

For our purposes, think of personality as the sum of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts with others. We most often describe personality in terms of the measurable traits a person exhibits.

Personality and Values

Personality

The sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interacts with others.

Early work on personality tried to identify and label enduring characteristics that describe an individual's behavior including shy, aggressive, submissive, lazy, ambitious, loyal, and timid. When someone exhibits these characteristics in a large number of situations and they are relatively enduring over time, we call them personality traits. The more consistent the characteristic over time and the more frequently it occurs in diverse situations, the more important the trait is in describing the individual.

Personality traits

Enduring characteristics that describe an individual's behavior.

Assessing Personality

Personality assessments have been increasingly used in diverse organizational settings. In fact, of the top 10 U.S. private companies and 57 percent of all large U.S. companies use them, including Xerox, McDonald's, and Lowe's. Schools such as DePaul University have also begun to use personality tests in their admissions process. Personality tests are useful in hiring decisions and help managers forecast who is best for a job.

Measuring Results

The most common means of measuring personality is through self-report surveys in which individuals evaluate themselves on a series of factors, such as “I worry a lot about the future.” In general, when people know their personality scores are going to be used for hiring decisions, they rate themselves as about half a standard deviation more conscientious and emotionally stable than if they are taking the test to learn more about themselves. Another problem is accuracy; for example, a candidate who is in a bad mood when taking a survey may very well receive inaccurate scores.

Culture and Ratings

Research indicates our culture influences the way we rate ourselves. People in individualistic countries like the United States and Australia trend toward self-enhancement, while people in collectivistic countries like Taiwan, China, and South Korea trend toward self-diminishment. Self-enhancement does not appear to harm a person’s career in individualistic countries, but it does in collectivist countries, where humility is valued. Interestingly, underrating (self-diminishment) may harm a person’s career in both collectivistic and individualistic communities.

Self-Reports and Observer-Ratings

Observer-ratings surveys provide an independent assessment of personality. Here, a coworker or another observer does the rating. Though the results of self-reports and observer-ratings surveys are strongly correlated, research suggests observer-ratings surveys predict job success more than self-ratings alone. However, each can tell us something unique about an individual's behavior, so a combination of self-reports and observer-ratings predicts performance better than any one type of information. The implication is clear: Use both self-reports and observers-ratings (per SS) of personality when making important employment decisions.

Personality Determinants

An early debate centered on whether an individual's personality is the result of heredity or environment. Personality appears to be a result of both; however, research tends to support the importance of heredity over environment. Heredity refers to factors determined at conception. Physical stature, facial features, gender, temperament, muscle composition and reflexes, energy level, and biological rhythms are either completely or substantially influenced by parentage—by your biological parents' genetic, 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 on the chromosomes. This is not to suggest that personality never changes. For example, people's scores on dependability tend to increase over time, as when young adults start families and establish careers. Personality is also more changeable in adolescence and more stable among adults. However, strong individual differences in dependability remain; everyone tends to change by about the same amount, so their rank order stays roughly the same.

Heredity: Factors determined at conception; one's biological, physiological, and inherent psychological makeup.

Personality Frameworks: Throughout history, people have sought to understand what makes individuals behave in myriad ways. Many of our behaviors stem from our personalities, so understanding the components of personality helps us predict behavior.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is the most widely used personality-assessment instrument in the world.¹² It is a 100-question personality test that asks people how they usually feel or act in situations. Respondents are classified as extraverted or introverted (E or I), sensing or intuitive (S or N), thinking or feeling (T or F), and judging or perceiving (J or P):

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

A personality test that taps 4 characteristics and classifies people into 1 of 16 personality types.

- Extraverted (E) versus Introverted (I). Extraverted individuals are outgoing, sociable, and assertive. Introverts are quiet and shy.
- Sensing (s) versus Intuitive (N). Sensing types are practical and prefer routine and order, and they focus on details. Intuitives rely on unconscious processes and look at the “big picture.”
- Thinking (T) versus Feeling (F). Thinking types use reason and logic to handle problems. Feeling types rely on their personal values and emotions.
- Judging (J) versus Perceiving (P). Judging types want control and prefer order and structure. Perceiving types are flexible and spontaneous.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The MBTI describes personality types by identifying one trait from each of the four pairs. For example, Introverted/Intuitive/Thinking/Judging people (INTJs) are visionaries with original minds and great drive. They are skeptical, critical, independent, determined, and often stubborn. ENFJs are natural teachers and leaders. They are relational, motivational, intuitive, idealistic, ethical, and kind. ESTJs are organizers. They are realistic, logical, analytical, and decisive, perfect for business or mechanics. The ENTP type is innovative, individualistic, versatile, and attracted to entrepreneurial ideas. This person tends to be resourceful in solving challenging problems but may neglect routine assignments.

One problem with the MBTI is that the model forces a person into one type or another; that is, you're either introverted or extraverted. There is no in-between. Another problem is with the reliability of the measure: When people retake the assessment, they often receive different results. An additional problem is in the difficulty of interpretation. There are levels of importance for each of the MBTI facets, and separate meanings for certain combinations of facets, all of which require trained interpretation that can leave room for error. Finally, results from the MBTI tend to be unrelated to job performance.

Personality and Situations

Earlier we discussed how research shows heredity is more important than the environment in developing our personalities. The environment is not irrelevant, though. Some personality traits tend to be effective in almost any environment or situation. However, we are learning that the effect of particular traits on behavior depends on the situation. Two theoretical frameworks, situation strength and trait activation, help explain how this works.

Situation Strength Theory

Imagine you are in a meeting with your department. How likely are you to walk out, shout at a colleague, or turn your back on everyone? Probably highly unlikely. Now imagine working from home. You might work in your pajamas, listen to loud music, or take a catnap.

Situation strength theory proposes that the way personality translates into behavior depends on the strength of the situation. By situation strength, we mean the degree to which norms, cues, or standards dictate appropriate behavior. Strong situations show us what the right behavior is, pressure us to exhibit it, and discourage the wrong behavior. In weak situations, conversely, “anything goes,” and thus we are freer to express our personality in behavior. Personality traits better predict behavior in weak situations than in strong ones.

Situation strength theory

Situation strength theory

A theory indicating that the way personality translates into behavior depends on the strength of the situation.

Components of Situation Strength

Researchers have analyzed situation strength in organizations in terms of four elements:

Clarity, or the degree to which cues about work duties and responsibilities are available and clear—jobs high in clarity produce strong situations because individuals can readily determine what to do. For example, the job of janitor probably provides higher clarity about each task than the job of nanny.

Consistency, or the extent to which cues regarding work duties and responsibilities are compatible with one another—jobs with high consistency represent strong situations because all the cues point toward the same desired behavior. The job of acute care nurse, for example, probably has higher consistency than the job of manager.

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Constraints, or the extent to which individuals' freedom to decide or act is limited by forces outside their control—jobs with many constraints represent strong situations because an individual has limited discretion. Bank examiner, for example, is probably a job with stronger constraints than forest ranger.

Consequences, or the degree to which decisions or actions have important implications for the organization or its members, clients, supplies, and so on—jobs with important consequences represent strong situations because the environment is probably heavily structured to guard against mistakes. A surgeon's job, for example, has higher consequences than a foreign-language teacher's.

Organizational Situation

The elements of situation strength are often determined by organizational rules and guidelines, which adds some objectivity to them. However, the perception of these rules influences how the person will respond to the situation's strength. For instance, a person who is usually self-directed may view step-by-step instructions (high clarity) for a simple task as a lack of faith in his ability. Another person who is a rule follower might appreciate the detailed instructions. Their responses (and work attitudes) will reflect their perception of the situation.

Creating strong rules to govern diverse systems might be not only difficult but also unwise. In sum, managers need to recognize the role of situation strength in the workplace and find the appropriate balance.

Trait Activation Theory

Another important theoretical framework toward understanding personality and situations is Trait Activation Theory (TAT). TAT predicts that some situations, events, or interventions “activate” a trait more than others. Using TAT, we can foresee which jobs suit certain personalities. For example, a commission-based compensation plan would likely activate individual differences because extraverts are more reward-sensitive, than, say, open people. Conversely, in jobs that encourage creativity, differences in openness may better predict desired behavior than differences in extraversion.

TAT also applies to personality tendencies. For example, a recent study found people learning online responded differently when their behavior was electronically monitored. Those who had a high fear of failure had higher apprehension from the monitoring than others, and consequently learned significantly less. In this case, a feature of the environment (electronic monitoring) activated a trait (fear of failing), and the combination of the two meant lowered job performance. TAT can also work in a positive way. One study found that, in a supportive environment, everyone behaved prosocially, but in a harsh environment, only people with prosocial tendencies exhibited them.

Together, situation strength and trait activation theories show that the debate over nature versus nurture might best be framed as nature and nurture. Not only do both affect behavior, but they interact with one another. Put another way, personality and the situation both affect work behavior, but when the situation is right, the power of personality to predict behavior is even higher.

Values

Having discussed personality traits, we now turn to values. Values are often very specific and describe belief systems rather than behavioral tendencies. Some beliefs or values reflect a person's personality, but we don't always act consistently with our values. Is capital punishment right or wrong? Is a desire for power good or bad? The answers to these questions are value-laden.

Values represent basic convictions that "a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence." Values contain a judgmental element because they carry an individual's ideas about what is right, good, or desirable. They have both content and intensity attributes. The content attribute says a mode of conduct or end-state of existence is important. The intensity attribute specifies how important it is. When we rank values in terms of intensity, we obtain that person's value system. We all have a hierarchy of values according to the relative importance we assign to values such as freedom, pleasure, self-respect, honesty, obedience, and equality. Values tend to be relatively stable and enduring.

Values

Basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.

Value system

A hierarchy based on a ranking of an individual's values in terms of their intensity.

Values lay the foundation for understanding attitudes and motivation, and they influence our perceptions. We enter an organization with preconceived notions of what “ought” and “ought not” to be. These notions contain our interpretations of right and wrong and our preferences for certain behaviors or outcomes. Regardless of whether they clarify or bias our judgment, our values influence our attitudes and behaviors at work.

While values can sometimes augment decision making, at times they can cloud objectivity and rationality. Suppose you enter an organization with the view that allocating pay on the basis of performance is right, while allocating pay on the basis of seniority is wrong. How will you react if you find the organization you've just joined rewards seniority and not performance? You're likely to be disappointed—this can lead to job dissatisfaction and a decision not to exert a high level of effort because “It's probably not going to lead to more money anyway.” Would your attitudes and behavior be different if your values aligned with the organization's pay policies? Most likely.

Linking an Individual'S Personality and Values to the Workplace

Linking an Individual'S Personality and Values to the Workplace

Thirty years ago, organizations were concerned with personality in order to match individuals to specific jobs. That concern has expanded to include how well the individual's personality and values match the organization. Why? Because managers today are less interested in an applicant's ability to perform a specific job than with his or her flexibility to meet changing situations and maintain commitment to the organization. Still, one of the first types of fit managers look for is person–job fit.

Person–Job Fit

The effort to match job requirements with personality characteristics is described by John Holland's personality–job fit theory, one of the more proven theories in use internationally. The Vocational Preference Inventory questionnaire contains 160 occupational titles. Respondents indicate which they like or dislike, and their answers form personality profiles. Holland presented six personality types and proposed that satisfaction and the propensity to leave a position depend on how well individuals match their personalities to a job. Exhibit 5-3 describes the six types, their personality characteristics, and examples of congruent occupations for each.

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Exhibit 5-3 Holland's Typology of Personality and Congruent Occupations

A theory that identifies six personality types and proposes that the fit between personality type and occupational environment determines satisfaction and turnover.

Type	Personality Characteristics	Congruent Occupations
<i>Realistic</i> : Prefers physical activities that require skill, strength, and coordination	Shy, genuine, persistent, stable, conforming, practical	Mechanic, drill press operator, assembly-line worker, farmer
<i>Investigative</i> : Prefers activities that involve thinking, organizing, and understanding	Analytical, original, curious, independent	Biologist, economist, mathematician, news reporter
<i>Social</i> : Prefers activities that involve helping and developing others	Sociable, friendly, cooperative, understanding	Social worker, teacher, counselor, clinical psychologist
<i>Conventional</i> : Prefers rule-regulated, orderly, and unambiguous activities	Conforming, efficient, practical, unimaginative, inflexible	Accountant, corporate manager, bank teller, file clerk
<i>Enterprising</i> : Prefers verbal activities in which there are opportunities to influence others and attain power	Self-confident, ambitious, energetic, domineering	Lawyer, real estate agent, public relations specialist, small business manager
<i>Artistic</i> : Prefers ambiguous and unsystematic activities that allow creative expression	Imaginative, disorderly, idealistic, emotional, impractical	Painter, musician, writer, interior decorator

There are cultural implications for person–job fit that speak to workers' expectations that jobs will be tailored to them. In individualistic countries where workers expect to be heard and respected by management, increasing person–job fit by tailoring the job to the person increases the individual's job satisfaction. However, in collectivistic countries, person–job fit is a weaker predictor of job satisfaction because people do not expect to have jobs tailored to them, so they value person–job fit efforts less. Therefore, managers in collectivistic cultures should not violate cultural norms by designing jobs for individuals; rather they should seek people who will likely thrive in jobs that have already been structured.

Organizational Behavior 14th Edition by
Stephen P Robbins and Timothy A Judge.

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References:





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Thank You

