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2

Perception, Personality, and Emotions

Can a company win best employer in Canada awards and also be regarded as the worst employer in Canada?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1 What is perception?
- 2 What is personality and how does it affect behaviour?
- 3 Can emotions help or get in the way when we are dealing with others?

Walmart Canada.¹ Just the thought of the retailer being in Canada upsets some people. There was strong resistance when Walmart first announced it was coming to Canada in 1994, and a belief that the retailer would somehow destroy the fabric of Canadian society. Eighteen years after its arrival, Mississauga, Ontario-based Walmart Canada serves more than 1 million Canadians each day, employs more than 85 000 Canadians in 325 stores across Canada, and is Canada's third-largest employer. The company was ranked as one of Canada's best employers on the Hewitt Associates survey of Canada's Best Employers five times between 2001 and 2007. It has also appeared on KPMG's list of Canada's 25 Most Admired Corporate Cultures, most recently in 2009. It was one of Workplace Institute's winners in 2011 for Best



Employers Award for 50-Plus Canadians, which it's won several times previously. In

presenting the award, Workplace Institute noted, "Wal-Mart has exceptional hiring and recognition programs and a workplace culture that supports diversity." With all of these positive statements about Walmart Canada, customers are not necessarily convinced of Walmart's greatness.

When asked in a 2011 survey how likely they would be to change their shopping habits once Target opens stores in Canada, 57 percent of Walmart shoppers indicated a willingness to shop at Target. Less than 20 percent of Canadian Tire, Shoppers Drug Mart, and Costco customers indicated a willingness to shop at Target. How can the perception of the company be so negative for some individuals?

All of our behaviour is somewhat shaped by our perceptions, personalities, emotions, and experiences. In this chapter, we consider the role that perception plays in affecting the way we see the world and the people around us. We also consider how personality characteristics affect our attitudes toward people and situations. We then consider how emotions shape many of our work-related behaviours.

OB IS FOR EVERYONE

- What causes people to have different perceptions of the same situation?
- Can people be mistaken in their perceptions?
- Who do you tend to blame when someone makes a mistake? Ever wonder why?
- Have you ever misjudged a person? Do you know why?
- Can perception really affect outcomes?
- Are people born with their personalities?
- Do you think it is better to be a Type A or a Type B personality?
- Ever wonder why the grocery clerk is always smiling?

THE BIG IDEA

To Come

To Come

SELF-ASSESSMENT LIBRARY

LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

- Gender Role Perceptions
- Machiavellianism
- Narcissism
- Self-Monitoring
- Risk-Taking
- Personality Type
- Feelings
- Emotional Intelligence

1 What is perception?



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Perception

Perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret their impressions to give meaning to their environment. However, what we perceive can be substantially different from objective reality. We often disagree about what is real. As we have seen, Walmart Canada has won many awards, but not every Canadian respects the retailer.

Why is perception important in the study of organizational behaviour (OB)? Simply because people's behaviour is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself. *The world as it is perceived is the world that is behaviourally important.* A 2010 study of political behaviour suggests that once individuals hold particular perceptions, it can be quite difficult to change their minds, even if they are shown contrary evidence.²

Factors Influencing Perception

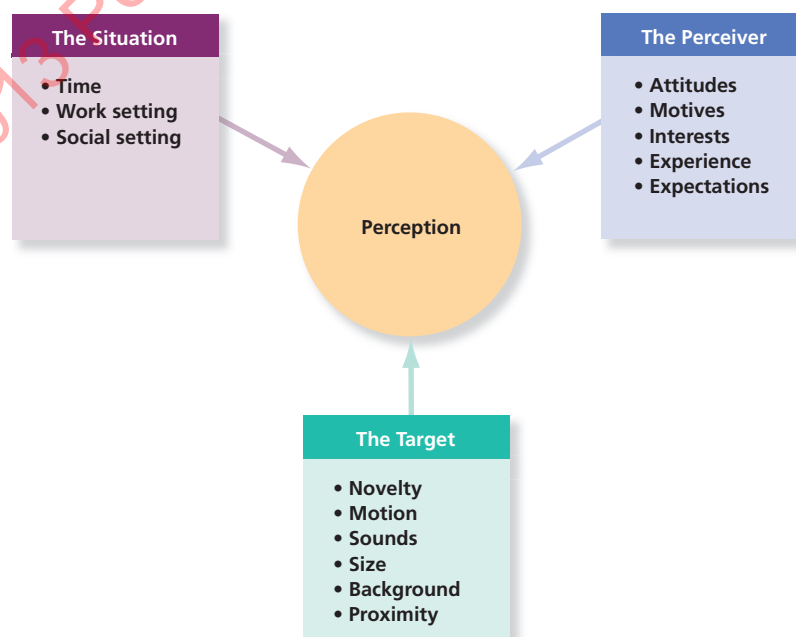
How do we explain that individuals may look at the same thing, yet perceive it differently, and both be right? A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. These factors can reside in the *perceiver*; in the object, or *target*, being perceived; or in the context of the *situation* in which the perception is made. Exhibit 2-1 summarizes the factors that influence perception. This chapter's *Working with Others Exercise* on page 42 will help you understand how your perceptions affect your evaluation of others.

What causes people to have different perceptions of the same situation?

The Perceiver

When you ("the perceiver") look at a target and attempt to interpret what you see, that interpretation is heavily influenced by your personal characteristics. Characteristics that affect perception include your attitudes, personality, motives, interests, past experiences, and expectations. For instance, if you expect police officers to be authoritative, young people to be lazy, or individuals holding public office to be corrupt, you may perceive

EXHIBIT 2-1 Factors That Influence Perception



them as such, regardless of their actual traits. A 2010 study found that one's perceptions of others reveals a lot about the person themselves.³ People with positive perceptions of others tended to describe themselves (and be described by others) as "enthusiastic, happy, kind-hearted, courteous, emotionally stable and capable." Negative perceptions of others were related to increased narcissism and antisocial behaviour.

The Target

A target's characteristics also affect what we perceive. Loud people are more likely to be noticed in a group than are quiet ones. So too are extremely attractive or unattractive individuals. Novelty, motion, sounds, size, and other characteristics of a target shape the way we see it.

Because we don't look at targets in isolation, the relationship of a target to its background influences perception. For instance, we often perceive women, First Nations, Asians, or members of any other group that has clearly distinguishable characteristics as alike in other, unrelated ways as well.

The Situation

The situation or context is also important. The time at which we see an object or event can influence attention, as can location, light, heat, or any number of situational factors. For example, at a nightclub on Saturday night, you may not notice a young guest "dressed to the nines." Yet that same person so attired for your Monday morning management class would certainly catch your attention (and that of the rest of the class). Neither the perceiver nor the target changed between Saturday night and Monday morning, but the situation is different.

Perceptual Errors

Perceiving and interpreting why others do what they do takes time. As a result, we develop techniques to make this task more manageable. These techniques are frequently valuable—they allow us to make accurate perceptions rapidly and provide valid data for making predictions. However, they are not foolproof. They can and do get us into trouble. Some of the errors that distort the perception process are attribution theory, selective perception, halo effect, contrast effects, projection, and stereotyping.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory tries to explain the ways we judge people differently, depending on the meaning we attribute to a given behaviour.⁴ Basically, the theory suggests that when we observe what seems like atypical behaviour by an individual, we try to make sense of it. We consider whether the individual is responsible for the behaviour (the cause is internal), or whether something outside the individual caused the behaviour (the cause is external). *Internally* caused behaviour is believed to be under the personal control of the individual. *Externally* caused behaviour is believed to result from outside causes; we see the person as having been forced into the behaviour by the situation. For example, if a student is late for class, the instructor might attribute his lateness to partying into the wee hours of the morning and then oversleeping. This would be an internal attribution. But if the instructor assumes a major automobile accident tied up traffic on the student's regular route to school, that is making an external attribution. In trying to determine whether behaviour is internally or externally caused, we rely on three rules about the behaviour: (1) distinctiveness, (2) consensus, and (3) consistency. Let's discuss each of these in turn.

Can people be mistaken in their perceptions?

Who do you tend to blame when someone makes a mistake? Ever wonder why?

perception The process by which individuals organize and interpret their impressions in order to give meaning to their environment.

attribution theory The theory that when we observe what seems like atypical behaviour by an individual, we attempt to determine whether it is internally or externally caused.

Distinctiveness **Distinctiveness** refers to whether an individual acts similarly across a variety of situations. Is the student who arrives late for class today also the one who is always goofing off in team meetings, and not answering urgent emails? What we want to know is whether this behaviour is unusual. If it is, we are likely to give it an external attribution. If it's not, we will probably judge the behaviour to be internal.

Consensus If everyone who is faced with a similar situation responds in the same way, we can say the behaviour shows **consensus**. The tardy student's behaviour would meet this criterion if all students who took the same route to school were also late. From an attribution perspective, if consensus is high, you would probably give an external attribution to the student's tardiness. But if other students who took the same route made it to class on time, you would attribute the cause of lateness for the student in question to an internal cause.

Consistency Finally, an observer looks for **consistency** in a person's actions. Does the person respond the same way over time? If a student is usually on time for class, being 10 minutes late will be perceived differently from the student who is late almost every class. The more consistent the behaviour, the more we are inclined to attribute it to internal causes.

Exhibit 2-2 summarizes the key elements in attribution theory. It illustrates, for instance, how to evaluate an employee's behaviour on a new task. To do this, you might note that employee Kim Randolph generally performs at about the same level on other related tasks as she does on her current task (low distinctiveness). You see that other employees frequently perform differently—better or worse—than Kim does on that current task (low consensus). Finally, if Kim's performance on this current task is consistent over time (high consistency), you or anyone else who is judging Kim's work is likely to hold her primarily responsible for her task performance (internal attribution).

How Attributions Get Distorted One of the more interesting findings from attribution theory is that there are errors or biases that distort attributions. When we judge the behaviour of other people, we tend to underestimate the influence of external factors and

EXHIBIT 2-2 Attribution Theory

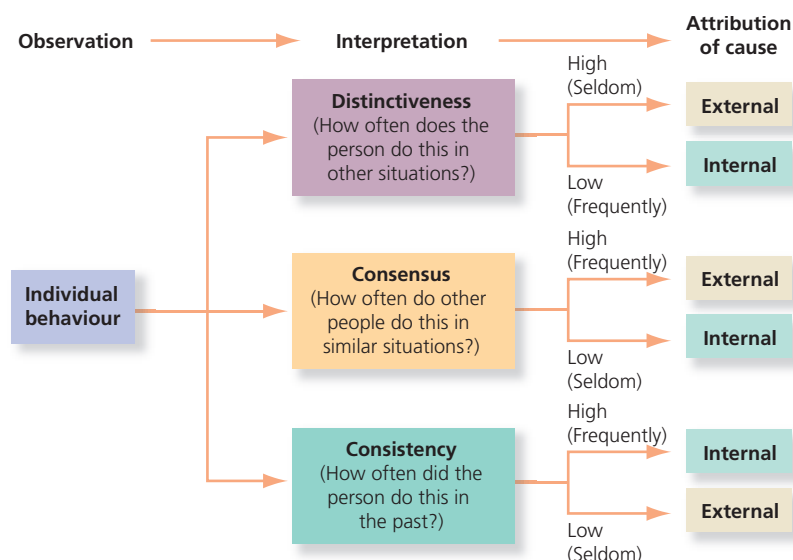
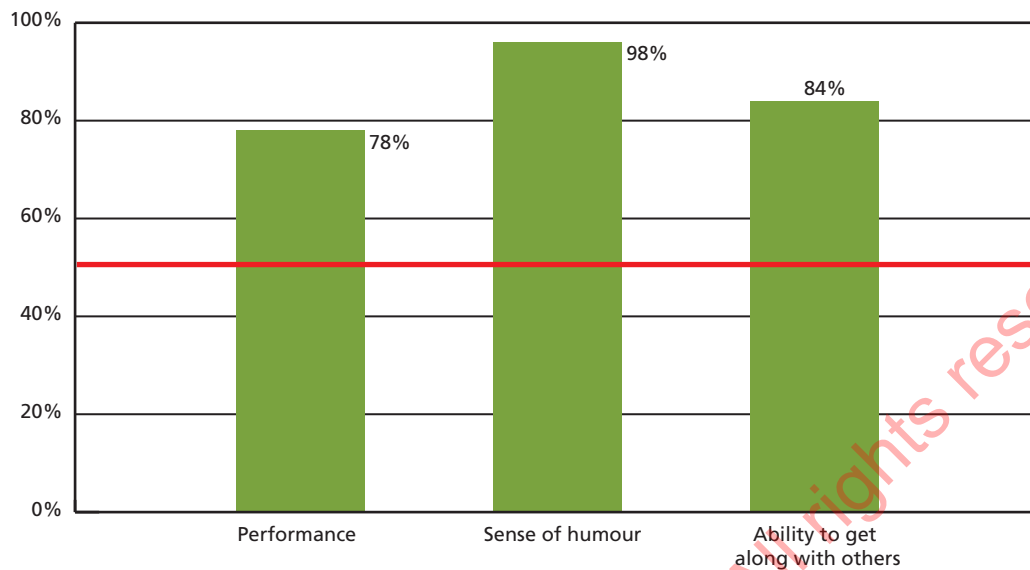


EXHIBIT 2-3 Percentage of Individuals Rating Themselves Above Average on Each Attribute

Source: Based on C. Merkle and M. Weber, *True Overconfidence—The Inability of Rational Information Processing to Account for Overconfidence* (March 2009). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1373675>

overestimate the influence of internal, or personal, factors.⁵ This **fundamental attribution error** can explain why a sales manager attributes the poor performance of his or her sales agents to laziness rather than acknowledging the impact of the innovative product line introduced by a competitor. A 2011 study suggests this same error occurs when we judge leaders to be charismatic, based on limited information.⁶ For instance, Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple, gives spellbinding presentations that have led him to be considered a charismatic visionary. What the audience does not see is “the ten hours of practice Jobs commits to every ten minute pitch,” which might make him look less charismatic.⁷

We use **self-serving bias** when we judge ourselves, however. This means that when we are successful, we are more likely to believe it was because of internal factors, such as ability or effort. When we fail, however, we blame external factors, such as luck. In general, people tend to believe that their own behaviour is more positive than the behaviour of those around them. Research suggests, however, that individuals tend to overestimate their own good behaviour, and underestimate the good behaviour of others.⁸ Exhibit 2-3 illustrates this point.

Selective Perception

Because it's impossible for us to see everything, any characteristic that makes a person, object, or event stand out will increase the probability that it will be perceived. This tendency explains why you are more likely to notice cars that look like your own. It also explains why some people may be reprimanded by their manager for doing something that goes unnoticed when other employees do it. Since we cannot observe everything going on about us, we engage in **selective perception**.

But how does selectivity work as a shortcut in judging other people? Since we cannot take in all that we observe, we take in bits and pieces. But we do not choose randomly; rather, we select according to our interests, background, experience, and attitudes. Selective perception allows us to speed-read others, but not without the risk of coming to an inaccurate conclusion. Because we see what we want to see, we can draw unwarranted conclusions from an ambiguous situation. Selective perception led the Law Society of BC to discriminate against lawyers who suffer from a mental illness, as *Focus on Diversity* shows.

distinctiveness A behavioural rule that considers whether an individual acts similarly across a variety of situations.

consensus A behavioural rule that considers if everyone faced with a similar situation responds in the same way.

consistency A behavioural rule that considers whether the individual has been acting in the same way over time.

fundamental attribution error

The tendency to underestimate the influence of external factors and overestimate the influence of internal factors when making judgments about the behaviour of others.

self-serving bias The tendency for individuals to attribute their own successes to internal factors while putting the blame for failures on external factors.

selective perception People's selective interpretation of what they see based on their interests, background, experience, and attitudes.

FOCUS ON DIVERSITY



Law Society's Question About Mental Health Challenged

Should employees be required to reveal that they have a mental illness? In July 2011, the BC Human Rights Tribunal ruled that the Law Society of BC had discriminated against a lawyer with a mental disability.⁹ The lawyer, Peter Mokua

Gichuru, was awarded almost \$100 000 by the tribunal.

Gichuru's problems started when he began applying for work as an articling student and had to fill out a law society admission program form with the following question: "Have you ever been treated for schizophrenia, paranoia, or a mood disorder described as a major affective illness, bipolar mood disorder, or manic depressive illness?" He answered "yes."

Gichuru had been suffering from bouts of depression for almost five years and was on antidepressants when he was faced with the law society's question. He felt that his articles were delayed because he answered truthfully about his mental health. He also felt that his difficulties in keeping his articling positions and finding others were a result of his answer to the question.

In making its determination, the tribunal found that the law society, while acting in good faith, went beyond what was necessary to determine the fitness of someone to practise law. The law society changed the question related to mental health history on the admission form as a result of Gichuru's appeal. It now reads:

Based upon your personal history, your current circumstances or any professional opinion or advice you have received, do you have any existing condition that is reasonably likely to impair your ability to function as a lawyer or articled student? If the answer is "yes" to the question above, please provide a general description of the impairment.

Those who answer "yes" to this new question are followed on a case-by-case basis, but the information is kept confidential and is not disclosed to potential employers. While Gichuru still has some concerns about the use of the information, he testified that it "is a dramatic improvement... and that on its face it does not discriminate between so-called physical and mental illnesses."



The behaviours that both women and men engage in can affect the perceptions that others have about their ability to become senior managers. A 2010 study found that assertiveness and independence were top qualities to exhibit, and individuals who did not do so were deemed less suited to be CEOs.¹⁰ Those judging the suitability were engaging in selective perception.

Halo Effect

When we draw a general impression of an individual on the basis of a single characteristic, such as intelligence, likeability, or appearance, a **halo effect** operates.¹¹ If you are a critic of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, try listing 10 things you admire about him. If you are an admirer, try listing 10 things you dislike about him. No matter which group describes you, odds are that you will not find this an easy exercise! That is the halo effect: Our general views contaminate our specific ones.

The reality of the halo effect was confirmed in a classic study. Subjects were given a list of traits and asked to evaluate the person to whom those traits applied.¹² When traits such as intelligent, skillful, practical, industrious, determined, and warm were used, the person was judged to be wise, humorous, popular, and imaginative. When cold was substituted for warm, a completely different set of perceptions was obtained, though otherwise the list was identical. Clearly, the subjects were allowing a single trait to influence their overall impression of the person being judged.

Contrast Effects

There is an old saying among entertainers: “Never follow an act that has children or animals in it.” Why? Audiences love children and animals so much that you will look bad in comparison.

This example demonstrates how **contrast effects** can distort perceptions. We don’t evaluate a person in isolation. Our reaction to one person is often influenced by other people we have recently encountered.

In a series of job interviews, for instance, interviewers can make distortions in any given candidate’s evaluation as a result of his or her place in the interview schedule. The candidate is likely to receive a more favourable evaluation if preceded by mediocre applicants, and a less favourable evaluation if preceded by strong applicants.

Projection

It’s easy to judge others if we assume that they are similar to us. For instance, if you want challenge and responsibility in your job, you assume that others want the same. Or you are honest and trustworthy, so you take it for granted that other people are



Jin, an Asian American rapper, performs at the Garden of Eden in Hollywood, hoping for a hit song in an industry that lacks Asian American pop stars. But Asian North American artists and scholars argue that racial stereotyping inaccurately generalizes Asian North Americans as studious geeks and that someone who looks Asian must be a foreigner. This stereotyping does not fit the “cool” image and born-in-North-America authenticity required for musicians like Jin who aspire to become North American pop stars.

halo effect Drawing a general impression of an individual on the basis of a single characteristic.

contrast effects The concept that our reaction to one person is often influenced by other people we have recently encountered.

equally reliable. This tendency to attribute our own characteristics to other people is called **projection**.

People who engage in projection tend to perceive others according to what they themselves are like, rather than perceiving others as they really are. Because they always judge people as being similar to themselves, when they observe someone who is actually like them, their perceptions are naturally correct. But when they observe others who are not like them, their perceptions are not as accurate. Managers who engage in projection compromise their ability to respond to individual differences. They tend to see people as more homogeneous than they really are.

Stereotyping

When we judge someone on the basis of our perception of the group to which he or she belongs, we are using the shortcut called **stereotyping**.

We rely on generalizations every day because they help us make decisions quickly. They are a means of simplifying a complex world. It's less difficult to deal with an unmanageable number of stimuli if we use **heuristics** (judgment shortcuts in decision making) or stereotypes. For example, it does make sense to assume that Tre, the new employee from accounting, is going to know something about budgeting, or that Allie from finance will be able to help you figure out a forecasting problem. The problem occurs, of course, when we generalize inaccurately or too much. In organizations, we frequently hear comments that represent stereotypes based on gender, age, race, religion, ethnicity, and even weight:¹³ "Women will not relocate for a promotion," "men are not interested in child care," "older workers cannot learn new skills," "Asian immigrants are hard-working and conscientious," "overweight people lack discipline." Stereotypes can be so deeply ingrained and powerful that they influence life-and-death decisions. One study showed that, controlling for a wide array of factors (such as aggravating or mitigating circumstances), the degree to which black defendants in murder trials looked "stereotypically black" essentially doubled their odds of receiving a death sentence if convicted.¹⁴

One of the problems of stereotypes is that they *are* widespread and often useful generalizations, despite the fact that they may not contain a shred of truth when applied



Muslim women in Canada often experience discrimination in being hired, or how their co-workers treat them, when they wear a hijab. Some co-workers of nurse practitioner Sharon Hoosein, shown here, were surprised that she returned to work following her maternity leave. They assumed that because of her religion she would be expected to stay at home to raise children rather than work.

to a particular person or situation. So we constantly have to check ourselves to make sure we are not unfairly or inaccurately applying a stereotype in our evaluations and decisions. Stereotypes are an example of the warning, “The more useful, the more danger from misuse.” Stereotypes can lead to strong negative reactions, such as prejudice, which we describe below.

Prejudice **Prejudice** is an unfounded dislike of a person or group based on their belonging to a particular stereotyped group. For instance, an individual may dislike people of a particular religion, or state that they do not want to work with someone of a particular ethnicity. Prejudice can lead to negative consequences in the workplace and, in particular, to discrimination. For instance, an individual of a particular ethnic group might be passed over for a management position because of the belief that employees might not see that person as a good manager. In another instance, an individual in his 50s who is looking for work but cannot find a job may be discriminated against because of the belief that younger workers are more appealing than older workers. Prejudice generally starts with stereotypes and then has negative emotional content added. Prejudice is harmful to the person who is the target of the behaviour. A 2011 study by researchers from the University of Toronto found that Asian women are more likely to take racism than sexism personally and were more negatively affected by racism.¹⁵

Why Do Perception and Judgment Matter?

People in organizations are always judging one another. Managers must appraise their employees’ performances. We evaluate how much effort our co-workers are putting into their jobs. When a new person joins a work team, the other members immediately “size her up.” Individuals even make judgments about people’s virtues based on whether they exercise, as a recent study by McMaster University professor Kathleen Martin Ginis showed.¹⁶ In many cases, judgments have important consequences for the organization. A 2010 study found that in organizations that did not seem to value innovation, employees who wanted to see change were often afraid to speak out, due to fear of negative perceptions from co-workers who valued the status quo.¹⁷ Another 2010 study found that positive employee perceptions of an organization have a positive impact on retention, customer loyalty and financial outcomes.¹⁸ A 2011 study noted that individuals who misperceive how well they have done on a task (positively or negatively), tended to prepare less and to perform poorly in subsequent tasks.¹⁹

Let’s briefly look at a few of the most obvious applications of judgment shortcuts in the workplace: employment interviews, performance expectations, and performance evaluations.

Employment Interviews

It’s fair to say that few people are hired without undergoing an interview. But interviewers make perceptual judgments that are often inaccurate²⁰ and draw early impressions that quickly become entrenched. Research shows we form impressions of others within a tenth of a second, based on our first glance.²¹ If these first impressions are negative, they tend to be more heavily weighted in the interview than if that same information came out later.²² Most interviewers’ decisions change very little after the first four or five minutes of an interview. As a result, information that comes out early in the interview carries greater weight than information that comes out later, and a “good applicant” is probably characterized more by the absence of unfavourable characteristics than by the presence of favourable ones. This chapter’s *Ethical Dilemma* Exercise on page 43 illustrates how the perception of people with tattoos affects hiring practices.

Can perception really affect outcomes?

projection Attributing one’s own characteristics to other people.

stereotyping Judging someone on the basis of one’s perception of the group to which that person belongs.

heuristics Judgment shortcuts in decision making.

prejudice An unfounded dislike of a person or group based on their belonging to a particular stereotyped group.

Performance Expectations

People attempt to validate their perceptions of reality even when they are faulty.²³ The terms **self-fulfilling prophecy** and *Pygmalion effect* describe how an individual's behaviour is determined by others' expectations. If a manager expects big things from her people, they are not likely to let her down. Similarly, if she expects only minimal performance, they will likely meet those low expectations. Expectations become reality. The self-fulfilling prophecy has been found to affect the performance of students, soldiers, and even accountants.²⁴

Performance Evaluations

Performance evaluations very much depend on the perceptual process.²⁵ An employee's future is closely tied to the appraisal—promotion, pay raises, and continuation of employment are among the most obvious outcomes. Although the appraisal can be objective (for example, a salesperson is appraised on how many dollars of sales he generates in his territory), many jobs are evaluated in subjective terms. Subjective evaluations, though often necessary, are problematic because all the errors we have discussed thus far—selective perception, contrast effects, halo effect, and so on—affect them. Ironically, sometimes performance ratings say as much about the evaluator as they do about the employee!

As you can see, perception plays a large role in how people are evaluated. Personality, which we review next, is another major factor affecting how people relate to and evaluate one another in the workplace.

Personality

- 2 What is personality and how does it affect behaviour?

Walmart faced great outrage from Canadians when it first entered Canada in 1994.²⁶ Target will arrive in Canada in 2013, taking over more than 130 Zellers locations. Walmart and Target have different personalities. "Target stocks its shelves with low-cost bedspreads, shower curtains, and clothes with bright colors and funky designs. Walmart is for the necessities: cheap Cheerios, laundry detergent, bulk meat, paper plates."

The image of Target is fun, while Walmart's image is frugal. In other words, they have different personalities.

Organizational personalities can be interesting, but even more interesting is the impact of individual personalities on organizational behaviour. Why are some people quiet and passive, while others are loud and aggressive? Are certain personality types better adapted for certain job types? Before we can answer these questions, we need to address a more basic one: What is personality?

What Is Personality?

When we talk of personality, we don't mean that a person has charm, a positive attitude toward life, a smiling face, or is a finalist for "Happiest and Friendliest." When psychologists talk of personality, they mean a dynamic concept describing the growth and development of a person's whole psychological system.

Gordon Allport produced the most frequently used definition of *personality* more than 70 years ago. He said personality is "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment."²⁷ For our purposes, you should think of **personality** as the stable patterns of behaviour and consistent internal states that determine how an individual reacts to and interacts with others. It's most often described in terms of measurable traits that a person exhibits.

Measuring Personality

The most important reason managers need to know how to measure personality is that research has shown that personality tests are useful in hiring decisions. Scores on personality tests help managers forecast who is the best fit for a job.²⁸ Some managers use personality tests to better understand and more effectively manage the people who work for them. The most common means of measuring personality is through self-report surveys, with which individuals evaluate themselves on a series of factors, such as “I worry a lot about the future.” Though self-report measures work well when well constructed, one weakness of these measures is that the respondent might lie or practise impression management—that is, the person could “fake it” on the test to create a good impression. Evidence shows that when people know that 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 just to learn more about themselves.²⁹ Another problem is accuracy. A perfectly good candidate could have just been in a bad mood when the survey was taken.

Observer ratings provide an independent assessment of personality. Here, a co-worker or another observer does the rating (sometimes with the subject’s knowledge and sometimes without). Though the results of self-reports and observer ratings are strongly correlated, research suggests that observer ratings are a better predictor of success on the job.³⁰ However, each can tell us something unique about an individual’s behaviour in the workplace.

Personality Determinants


An early argument in personality research centred on whether an individual’s personality was predetermined at birth or the result of the individual’s interaction with his or her environment. Clearly, there is no simple answer. Personality appears to be a result of both influences. In addition, today we recognize a third factor—the situation. Thus, an adult’s personality is now generally considered to be made up of both hereditary and environmental factors, moderated by situational conditions.

Heredity

Heredity refers to those factors that were determined at conception. 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 your parents’ biological, physiological, and inherent psychological makeup. The heredity approach argues that the ultimate explanation of an individual’s personality is a person’s genes.

If heredity played little or no part in determining personality, you would expect to find few similarities between identical twins who were separated at birth and raised separately. But researchers who looked at more than 100 sets of separated twins found a lot in common.³¹ For almost every behavioural trait, a significant part of the variation between the twins turned out to be associated with genetic factors. For instance, one set of twins, who had been separated for 39 years and raised 70 kilometres apart, were found to drive the same model and colour car, chain-smoke the same brand of cigarette, own dogs with the same name, and regularly vacation within three blocks of each other in a beach community 2000 kilometres away.

Researchers have found that genetics can explain about 50 percent of the personality differences and more than 30 percent of the variation in occupational and leisure interests found in individuals. In other words, blood-related siblings are likely to have more similar personalities, occupations, and leisure interests than unrelated people.



Are people born with their personalities?

self-fulfilling prophecy A concept that proposes a person will behave in ways consistent with how he or she is perceived by others.

personality The stable patterns of behaviour and consistent internal states that determine how an individual reacts to and interacts with others.

EXHIBIT 2-4



Does personality change over one's lifetime? Most research in this area suggests that while some aspects of our personalities do change over time, the rank orderings do not change very much. For example, people's scores on measures of conscientiousness tend to increase as they get older. However, there are still strong individual differences in conscientiousness, and despite the fact that most of us become more responsible over time, people tend to change by about the same amount, so that the rank order stays roughly the same.³² For instance, if you are more conscientious than your sibling now, that is likely to be true in 20 years, even though you both should become more conscientiousness over time. Consistent with the notion that the teenage years are periods of great exploration and change, research has shown that personality is more changeable in adolescence and more stable among adults.³³

Personality Traits

The early work in the structure of personality revolved around attempts to identify and label enduring characteristics that describe an individual's behaviour. Popular characteristics include shy, aggressive, submissive, lazy, ambitious, loyal, and timid. Those characteristics, when they are exhibited in a large number of situations, are called **personality traits**.³⁴ The more consistent the characteristic and the more frequently it occurs in diverse situations, the more important that trait is in describing the individual.

A number of early research efforts tried to identify the *primary* traits that govern behaviour.³⁵ However, for the most part, they resulted in long lists of traits that were difficult to generalize from and provided little practical guidance to organizational decision makers. Two exceptions are the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Big Five Personality Model, the dominant frameworks for identifying and classifying traits.

Keep in mind that each of us reacts differently to personality traits. This is partially a function of how we perceive those traits. In Exhibit 2-4, you will note that Lucy tells Linus a few things about his personality.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

The **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)** is the most widely used personality-assessment instrument in the world.³⁶ It's a 100-question personality test that asks people how they usually feel or act in particular situations. On the basis of their answers, individuals 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). These terms are defined as follows:

- *Extraverted/introverted.* Extraverted individuals are outgoing, sociable, and assertive. Introverts are quiet and shy. E/I measures where we direct our energy when dealing with people and things.
- *Sensing/intuitive.* Sensing types are practical and prefer routine and order. They focus on details. Intuitives rely on unconscious processes and look at the "big picture." This dimension looks at how we process information.

- *Thinking/feeling.* Thinking types use reason and logic to handle problems. Feeling types rely on their personal values and emotions.
- *Judging/perceiving.* Judging types want control and prefer their world to be ordered and structured. Perceiving types are flexible and spontaneous.

These classifications together describe 16 personality types. To illustrate, let's look at three examples:

- *INTJs are visionaries.* They usually have original minds and great drive for their own ideas and purposes. They are skeptical, critical, independent, determined, and often stubborn.
- *ESTJs are organizers.* They are realistic, logical, analytical, decisive, and have a natural head for business or mechanics. They like to organize and run activities.
- *ENTPs are conceptualizers.* They are innovative, individualistic, versatile, and attracted to entrepreneurial ideas. They tend to be resourceful in solving challenging problems, but may neglect routine assignments.

A book profiling 13 contemporary businesspeople who created super-successful firms including Apple Computer, FedEx, Honda Motor, Microsoft, and Sony found that all are intuitive thinkers (NTs).³⁷ This result is particularly interesting because intuitive thinkers represent only about 5 percent of the population.

The MBTI is widely used by organizations including Apple Computer, AT&T, Citigroup, GE, 3M, many hospitals and educational institutions, and even the US Armed Forces. In spite of its popularity, the evidence is mixed as to whether the MBTI is a valid measure of personality—with most of the evidence suggesting that it is not.³⁸ One problem is that it forces a person into either one type or another (that is, you are either introverted or extraverted). There is no in-between, though people can be both extraverted and introverted to some degree. The best we can say is that the MBTI can be a valuable tool for increasing self-awareness and providing career guidance. But because results tend to be unrelated to job performance, managers probably should not use it as a selection test for job candidates.

The Big Five Personality Model

The MBTI may lack valid supporting evidence, but that cannot be said for the **Big Five Personality Model**. An impressive body of research supports the notion that five basic personality dimensions underlie all others and encompass most of the significant variation in human personality.³⁹ The Big Five personality factors are as follows:

- **Extraversion.** This dimension captures a person's comfort level with relationships. Extraverts tend to be gregarious, assertive, and sociable. Introverts tend to be reserved, timid, and quiet.
- **Agreeableness.** This dimension refers to a person's propensity to defer to others. Highly agreeable people are cooperative, warm, and trusting. People who score low on agreeableness are cold, disagreeable, and antagonistic.
- **Conscientiousness.** This dimension is a measure of reliability. A highly conscientious person is responsible, organized, dependable, and persistent. Those who score low on this dimension are easily distracted, disorganized, and unreliable.
- **Emotional stability.** This dimension—often labelled by its converse, *neuroticism*—taps into a person's ability to withstand stress. People with positive emotional stability tend to be calm, self-confident, and secure. Those with high negative scores tend to be nervous, anxious, depressed, and insecure.

personality traits Enduring characteristics that describe an individual's behaviour.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) A personality test that taps four characteristics and classifies people into 1 of 16 personality types.

Big Five Personality Model A personality assessment model that taps five basic dimensions.

extraversion A personality factor that describes the degree to which a person is sociable, talkative, and assertive.

agreeableness A personality factor that describes the degree to which a person is good-natured, cooperative, and trusting.

conscientiousness A personality factor that describes the degree to which a person is responsible, dependable, persistent, and achievement-oriented.

emotional stability A personality dimension that characterizes someone as calm, self-confident, secure (positive) vs. nervous, depressed, and insecure (negative).

- **Openness to experience.** The final dimension addresses a person's range of interests and fascination with novelty. Extremely open people are creative, curious, and artistically sensitive. Those at the other end of the openness category are conventional and find comfort in the familiar.

Researchers at the University of Toronto have recently created a "fake proof" personality test to measure the Big Five factors.⁴⁰ Professor Jordan Peterson, one of the researchers, noted that it is common for people to try to "make themselves look better than they actually are on these questionnaires.... This sort of faking can distort the predictive validity of these tests, with significant negative economic consequences. We wanted to develop a measure that could predict real-world performance even in the absence of completely honest responding."⁴¹

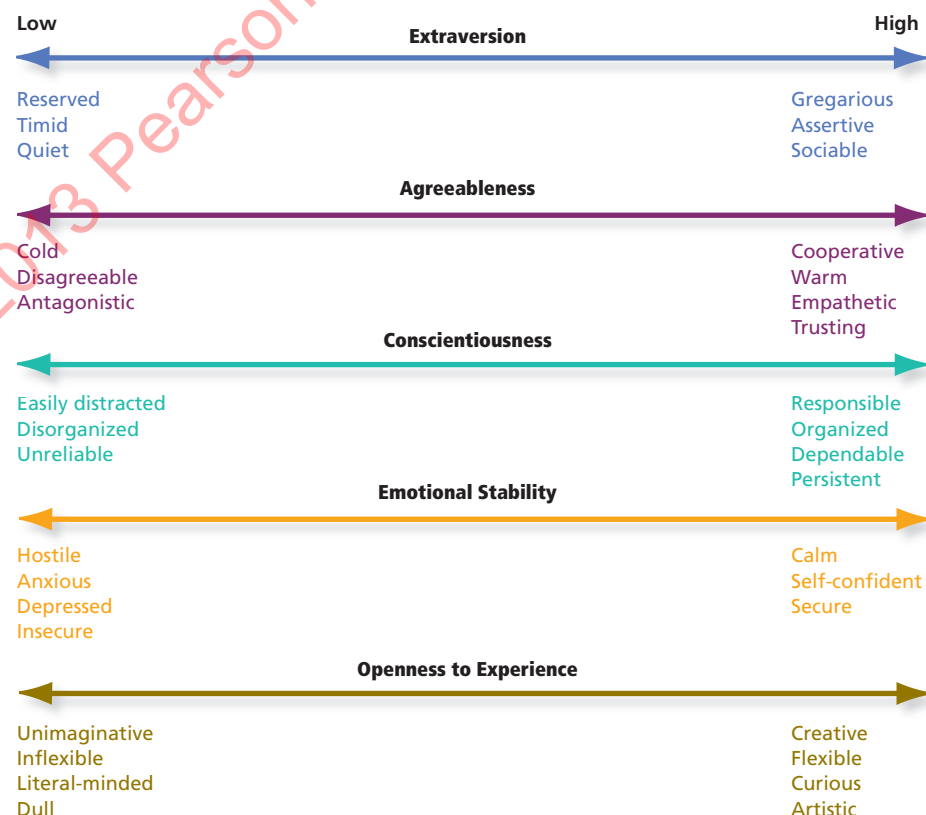
Exhibit 2-5 shows the characteristics for the high and low dimensions of each Big Five personality factor.



RESEARCH FINDINGS: The Big Five

Research on the Big Five has found a relationship between the personality dimensions and job performance.⁴² As the authors of the most-cited review put it, "The preponderance of evidence shows that individuals who are dependable, reliable, careful, thorough, able to plan, organized, hardworking, persistent, and achievement-oriented tend to have higher job performance in most if not all occupations."⁴³ In addition, employees who score higher in conscientiousness develop higher levels of job knowledge, probably because highly conscientious people learn more (a review of 138 studies revealed conscientiousness was rather strongly related to grade

EXHIBIT 2-5 Big Five Personality Factors





Indra Nooyi, CEO and chair of PepsiCo, scores high on all personality dimensions of the Big Five Model. She is described as sociable, agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable, and open to experiences. These personality traits have contributed to Nooyi's high job performance and career success at PepsiCo and are the reason she landed the CEO position.

point average).⁴⁴ Higher levels of job knowledge then contribute to higher levels of job performance.⁴⁵

Although conscientiousness is the Big Five trait most consistently related to job performance, the other traits are related to aspects of performance in some situations. All five traits also have other implications for work and for life. Let's look at the implications of these traits, one at a time. (Exhibit 2-6 summarizes the discussion.)

EXHIBIT 2-6 How the Big Five Traits Influence OB

BIG FIVE TRAIT	WHY IS IT RELEVANT?	WHAT DOES IT AFFECT?
Emotional stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less negative thinking and fewer negative emotions • Less hyper-vigilant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher job and life satisfaction • Lower stress levels
Extraversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better interpersonal skills • Greater social dominance • More emotionally expressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher performance* • Enhanced leadership • Higher job and life satisfaction
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased learning • More creative • More flexible and autonomous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training performance • Enhanced leadership • More adaptable to change
Agreeableness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better liked • More compliant and conforming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher performance* • Lower levels of deviant behaviour
Conscientiousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater effort and persistence • More drive and discipline • Better organized and planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher performance • Enhanced leadership • Greater longevity

openness to experience A personality factor that describes the degree to which a person is imaginative, artistically sensitive, and curious.

Emotional stability. People who score high on emotional stability are happier than those who score low. Of the Big Five traits, emotional stability is most strongly related to life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and low stress levels. This is probably true because high scorers are more likely to be positive and optimistic in their thinking and experience fewer negative emotions. People low on emotional stability are hyper-vigilant (looking for problems or impending signs of danger), and are especially vulnerable to the physical and psychological effects of stress.

Extraversion. Extraverts tend to be happier in their jobs and in their lives as a whole. They experience more positive emotions than do introverts, and they more freely express these feelings. They also tend to perform better in jobs that require significant interpersonal interaction, perhaps because they have more social skills—they usually have more friends and spend more time in social situations than introverts. Finally, extraversion is a relatively strong predictor of leadership emergence in groups; extraverts are more socially dominant, “take charge” sorts of people, and they are generally more assertive than introverts.⁴⁶ One downside of extraversion is that extraverts are more impulsive than introverts; they are more likely to be absent from work and engage in risky behaviour such as unprotected sex, drinking, and other impulsive or sensation-seeking acts.⁴⁷ One study also found that extraverts were more likely to lie during job interviews than introverts.⁴⁸

Openness to experience. Individuals who score high on openness to experience are more creative in science and in art than those who score low. Because creativity is important to leadership, open people are more likely to be effective leaders. They also are more comfortable with ambiguity and change than are those who score lower on this trait. As a result, open people cope better with organizational change and are more adaptable in changing contexts.⁴⁹ Recent evidence also suggests, however, that they are especially susceptible to workplace accidents.⁵⁰

Agreeableness. You might expect agreeable people to be happier than disagreeable people, and they are, but only slightly. When people choose romantic partners, friends, or organizational team members, agreeable individuals are usually their first choice. Thus, agreeable individuals are better liked than disagreeable people, which explains why they tend to do better in interpersonally oriented jobs such as customer service.



It is unusual for two people to share the CEO role, but Ronen Harary (left) and Anton Rabie (right), co-CEOs of Toronto-based toy company Spin Master (pictured with executive vice-president Ben Varadi), like the arrangement. Rabie is an extrovert, while Harary is an introvert. The childhood friends feel their personalities complement each other, making an ideal management team.

They also are more compliant and rule abiding and less likely to get into accidents as a result. Agreeable children do better in school and as adults are less likely to get involved in drugs or excessive drinking.⁵¹ They also are less likely to engage in organizational deviance. One downside of agreeableness is that it is associated with lower levels of career success (especially earnings). Agreeable individuals may be poorer negotiators; they are so concerned with pleasing others that they often don't negotiate as much for themselves as they might.⁵² For an interesting look at the upside and downside of agreeableness in the workplace, read this chapter's *Case Incident—The Nice Trap?* on page 45.

Conscientiousness. Conscientious people live longer than less conscientious people because they tend to take better care of themselves (eat better, exercise more) and engage in fewer risky behaviours (smoking, drinking/drugs, risky sexual or driving behaviour).⁵³ Still, probably because they are so organized and structured, conscientious people don't adapt as well to changing contexts. They are generally performance-oriented and have more trouble learning complex skills early in the training process because their focus is on performing well rather than on learning. Finally, they are often less creative than less conscientious people, especially artistically.⁵⁴

Other Personality Attributes Influencing OB

Although the Big Five traits have proven highly relevant to OB, they don't exhaust the range of traits that can describe someone's personality. Now we will look at other, more specific, attributes that are powerful predictors of behaviour in organizations. The first relates to one's core self-evaluation. The others are Machiavellianism, narcissism, self-monitoring, propensity for risk-taking, and Type A and B and proactive personalities. We shall briefly introduce these attributes and summarize what we know about their ability to explain and predict employee behaviour.

If you want to know more about your own personality attributes, this chapter's *Learning About Yourself Exercises* on pages 36–41 present you with a variety of personality measures to explore.

Core Self-Evaluation

People who have positive **core self-evaluations** like themselves and see themselves as effective, capable, and in control of their environment. Those with negative core self-evaluations tend to dislike themselves, question their capabilities, and view themselves as powerless over their environment.⁵⁵

People with positive core self-evaluations perform better than others because they set more ambitious goals, are more committed to their goals, and persist longer at attempting to reach these goals. For example, one study of life-insurance agents found that core self-evaluations were critical predictors of performance. In life-insurance sales, 90 percent of sales calls end in rejection, so an agent has to believe in him- or herself to persist. In fact, this study showed that the majority of successful salespersons had positive core self-evaluations.⁵⁶ Such people also provide better customer service, are more popular co-workers, and have careers that both begin on better footing and ascend more rapidly over time.⁵⁷

You might wonder whether someone can be too positive. What happens when someone thinks he is capable, but he is actually incompetent? One study of *Fortune* 500 CEOs, for example, showed that many are overconfident, and their perceived infallibility often causes them to make bad decisions.⁵⁸ While many people are overconfident, just as many people sell themselves short and are less happy and effective than they could be because of lack of confidence. If we decide we cannot do something, for example, we won't try, and not doing it only reinforces our self-doubts.

core self-evaluation The degree to which an individual likes or dislikes himself or herself, whether the person sees himself or herself as capable and effective, and whether the person feels in control of his or her environment or powerless over the environment.

Machiavellianism

The personality characteristic of **Machiavellianism** (Mach) is named after Niccolò Machiavelli, who wrote in the sixteenth century on how to gain and use power. An individual high in Machiavellianism is pragmatic, maintains emotional distance, and believes that ends can justify means. “If it works, use it” is consistent with a high-Mach perspective.

A considerable amount of research has related high- and low-Mach personalities to certain behavioural outcomes.⁵⁹ High Machs manipulate more, win more, are persuaded less, and persuade others more than do low Machs.⁶⁰ They like their jobs less, are more stressed by their work, and engage in more deviant work behaviours.⁶¹ Yet high-Mach outcomes are moderated by situational factors. It has been found that high Machs do better (1) when they interact face to face with others rather than indirectly; (2) when the situation has a minimum number of rules and regulations, thus allowing room for improvising; and (3) when emotional involvement with details irrelevant to winning distracts low Machs.⁶²

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. In jobs that require bargaining skills (such as labour negotiation) or that offer substantial rewards for winning (as in commissioned sales), high Machs will be productive. But if the ends cannot justify the means, if there are absolute standards of behaviour, or if the three situational factors noted in the preceding paragraph are not in evidence, our ability to predict a high Mach's performance will be severely limited.

If you are interested in determining your level of Machiavellianism, you might want to complete *Learning About Yourself Exercise #1* on page 36.

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LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

1. How Machiavellian Are You?
(page 36)

Narcissism

Hans likes to be the centre of attention. He likes to look at himself in the mirror a lot. He has extravagant dreams and seems to consider himself a person of many talents. Hans is a narcissist. The term is from the Greek myth of Narcissus, the story of a man so vain and proud that he fell in love with his own image. In psychology, **narcissism** describes a person who has a grandiose sense of self-importance, requires excessive admiration, has a sense of entitlement, and is arrogant.⁶³ Are today's youth narcissistic? Despite claims to that effect, the evidence is unclear. High school seniors in 2006 were more likely than in 1975 to agree they would be “very good” spouses (56 percent of 2006 seniors, compared with 37 percent in 1975), parents (54 percent of 2006 seniors, 36 percent in 1975), and workers (65 percent of 2006 seniors, 49 percent in 1975). On the other hand, scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory—the most common measure of narcissism—have not increased since 1982.⁶⁴

Whether it is increasing or not, narcissism can have pretty toxic consequences. A 2011 study found that narcissists were more likely to cheat on exams than others, in part because they did not feel guilty doing so.⁶⁵ A study found that while narcissists thought they were *better* leaders than their colleagues, their supervisors actually rated them as *worse*. For example, an Oracle executive described that company's CEO, Larry Ellison, as follows: “The difference between God and Larry is that God does not believe he is Larry.”⁶⁶ Because narcissists often want to gain the admiration of others and receive affirmation of their superiority, they tend to “talk down” to those who threaten them, treating others as if they were inferior. Narcissists also tend to be selfish and exploitive, and they often carry the attitude that others exist for their benefit.⁶⁷ Studies indicate that narcissists are rated by their bosses as less effective at their jobs than others, particularly when it comes to helping other people.⁶⁸ Despite these negative outcomes, one 2011 study found that having two or more narcissists on a team can lead to more creativity.⁶⁹ Because narcissists want admiration from their peers, they will attempt to outdo one another, raising the competitiveness within the team.

Self-Monitoring

Self-monitoring refers to an individual's ability to adjust his or her behaviour to external, situational factors.⁷⁰ Individuals high in self-monitoring show considerable adaptability in adjusting their behaviour to external situational factors. 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 personae and their private selves. Low self-monitors cannot disguise themselves in the same way. They tend to display their true dispositions and attitudes in every situation. There is high behavioural consistency between who they are and what they do.

Research suggests that high self-monitors tend to pay closer attention to the behaviour of others and are more capable of conforming than are low self-monitors.⁷¹ High self-monitoring managers tend to be more mobile in their careers and receive more promotions (both internal and cross-organizational) and are more likely to occupy central positions in an organization.⁷² High self-monitors also receive better performance ratings, are more likely to emerge as leaders, and show less commitment to their organizations.⁷³

If you are interested in determining whether you are a high or low self-monitor, you might want to complete *Learning About Yourself Exercise #2* on page 37.

Risk-Taking

People differ in their willingness to take chances, a quality that affects how much time and information managers require before they make a decision. In one study, 79 managers worked on simulated exercises that required them to make hiring decisions.⁷⁴ 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.

Although previous studies have shown managers in large organizations to be more risk averse than are growth-oriented entrepreneurs who actively manage small businesses, recent findings suggest that managers in large organizations may actually be more willing to take risks than entrepreneurs.⁷⁵ The work population as a whole also differs in risk propensity.⁷⁶ It makes sense to recognize these differences and even to consider aligning risk-taking propensity with specific job demands. A high risk-taking propensity may lead to more effective performance for a stock trader in a brokerage firm because that type of job demands rapid decision making. On the other hand, a willingness to take risks might prove a major obstacle to an accountant who performs auditing activities. The latter job might be better filled by someone with a low risk-taking propensity. If you are interested in determining where you stand on risk-taking, you might want to complete *Learning About Yourself Exercise #3* on page 38.

Type A and Type B Personalities

Do you know people who are excessively competitive and always seem to be chronically pushed for time? If you do, it's a good bet that those people have a Type A personality. A person with a **Type A personality** is "aggressively involved in a chronic, incessant struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time, and, if required to do so, against the opposing efforts of other things or other persons."⁷⁷ In North American culture, such characteristics tend to be highly prized and positively associated with ambition and the successful acquisition of material goods.

Type As tend to have the following characteristics:

- Are always moving, walking, and eating rapidly
- Feel impatient with the rate at which most events take place
- Strive to think or do two or more things at once

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LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

2. Are You a High Self-Monitor?
(page 37)

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LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

3. Are You a Risk-Taker?
(page 38)

Machiavellianism The degree to which an individual is pragmatic, maintains emotional distance, and believes that ends can justify means.

narcissism The tendency to be arrogant, have a grandiose sense of self-importance, require excessive admiration, and have a sense of entitlement.

self-monitoring A personality trait that measures an individual's ability to adjust behaviour to external, situational factors.

risk-taking A person's willingness to take chances or risks.

Type A personality A personality with aggressive involvement in a chronic, incessant struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time and, if necessary, against the opposing efforts of other things or other people.

- Cannot cope with leisure time
- Are obsessed with numbers, measuring their success in terms of how many or how much of everything they acquire

A person with a **Type B personality** is exactly the opposite of a Type A, “rarely harried by the desire to obtain a wildly increasing number of things or participate in an endless growing series of events in an ever-decreasing amount of time.”⁷⁸

Type Bs tend to have the following characteristics:

- Never suffer from a sense of time urgency, with its accompanying impatience
- Feel no need to display or discuss either their achievements or accomplishments unless such exposure is demanded by the situation
- Play for fun and relaxation, rather than to exhibit their superiority at any cost
- Can relax without guilt

Type As operate under moderate to high levels of stress. They subject themselves to more or less continuous time pressure, creating a life of deadlines. These characteristics result in some rather specific behavioural outcomes. Type As are fast workers because they emphasize quantity over quality. In managerial positions, Type As demonstrate their competitiveness by working long hours and, not infrequently, making poor decisions because they make them too fast.

Stressed Type As are also rarely creative. Because of their concern with quantity and speed, they rely on past experiences when faced with problems. They will not take the time that is necessary to develop unique solutions to new problems. They rarely vary in their responses to specific challenges in their environment. As a result, their behaviour is easier to predict than that of Type Bs.

Are Type As or Type Bs more successful in organizations? Type As do better than Type Bs in job interviews because they are more likely to be judged as having desirable traits such as high drive, competence, aggressiveness, and success motivation.⁷⁹ Despite the hard work of Type As, Type Bs are the ones who appear to make it to the top. Great salespeople are usually Type As; senior executives are usually Type Bs. Why? The answer lies in the tendency of Type As to trade off quality of effort for quantity. Promotions in corporate and professional organizations “usually go to those who are wise rather than to those who are merely hasty, to those who are tactful rather than to those who are hostile, and to those who are creative rather than to those who are merely agile in competitive strife.”⁸⁰

If you are interested in determining whether you have a Type A or Type B personality, you might want to complete *Learning About Yourself Exercise #4* on page 40.

Proactive Personality

Did you ever notice that some people actively take the initiative to improve their current circumstances or create new ones? These are people with a proactive personality.⁸¹ People with a **proactive personality** identify opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until meaningful change occurs. They create positive change in their environment, regardless or even in spite of constraints or obstacles.⁸² Not surprisingly, proactives have many behaviours that organizations desire. They are more likely to be seen as leaders and more likely to act as change agents within the organization.⁸³

Other actions of proactives can be positive or negative, depending on the organization and the situation. Proactives are more likely to challenge the status quo or voice their displeasure when situations are not to their liking.⁸⁴ If an organization requires

Do you think it is better to be a Type A or a Type B personality?

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LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

4. Are You a Type A? (page 40)

people with entrepreneurial initiative, proactives make good candidates; however, they are also more likely to leave an organization to start their own business.⁸⁵ As individuals, proactives are more likely to achieve career success.⁸⁶ They select, create, and influence work situations in their favour. Proactives are more likely to seek out job and organizational information, develop contacts in high places, engage in career planning, and demonstrate persistence in the face of career obstacles.

Emotions

Despite the fact that Walmart Canada has won numerous “Best Employer” and “Best Culture” awards, which are based partly on responses of employees, not all Walmart employees agree with those findings.⁸⁷ Comments from Walmart employees at RateMyEmployer.ca show a range of emotions from “love it” to “hate it.” Over the past 10 years, at least 20 different groups of Walmart employees across the country have tried to unionize. A recent drive in Trail, BC, told fellow employees that unionizing would be “making Walmart an even BETTER place to work.” Obviously there are strong feelings about the employer. Could emotions affect how individual employees perceive Walmart?

- 3 Can emotions help or get in the way when we are dealing with others?

Each of us has a range of personality characteristics, but we also bring with us a range of 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 was given little or no attention within the field of OB.⁸⁸ Why? We offer two possible explanations.

First is the *myth of rationality*.⁸⁹ Until very recently, the protocol of the work world kept a damper on emotions. A well-run organization did not allow employees to express frustration, fear, anger, love, hate, joy, grief, or similar feelings thought to be the antithesis of rationality. Though researchers and managers knew emotions were an inseparable part of everyday life, they tried to create organizations that were emotion-free. Of course, that was not possible.

The second explanation is that many believed emotions of any kind were disruptive.⁹⁰ Researchers looked at strong negative emotions—especially anger—that interfered with an employee’s ability to work effectively. They rarely viewed emotions as constructive or contributing to enhanced performance.

Certainly some emotions, particularly when exhibited at the wrong time, can reduce employee performance. But employees do bring their emotions to work every day, and no study of OB would be complete without considering their role in workplace behaviour.

What Are Emotions and Moods?

Let’s look at three terms that are closely intertwined: *affect*, *emotions*, and *moods*. **Affect** is a generic term that covers a broad range of feelings people experience, including both emotions and moods.⁹¹ **Emotions** are intense feelings that are directed at someone or something.⁹² **Moods** are feelings that are less intense than emotions and that lack a contextual stimulus.⁹³

Most experts believe emotions are more fleeting than moods.⁹⁴ For example, if someone is rude to you, you would likely feel angry. That intense feeling probably comes and goes fairly quickly, maybe even in a matter of seconds. When you are in a bad mood, though, you can feel bad for several hours.

Emotions are reactions to a person (seeing a friend at work may make you feel glad) or an event (dealing with a rude client may make you feel angry). You show your emotions when you are “happy about something, angry at someone, afraid of something.”⁹⁵ Moods, in contrast, are not usually directed at a person or an event. But emotions can turn into moods when you lose focus on the event or object that started the feeling. And, by the same token, good or bad moods can make you more emotional in response

Type B personality A personality that is described as easy-going, relaxed, and patient.

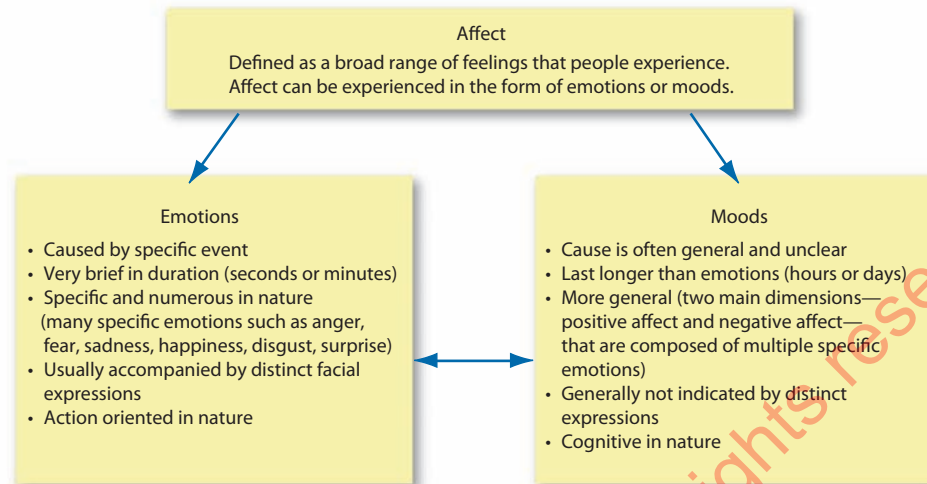
proactive personality A person who identifies opportunities, shows initiative, takes action, and perseveres until meaningful change occurs.

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.

EXHIBIT 2-7 Affect, Emotions, and Moods



to an event. So when a colleague criticizes how you spoke to a client, you might show emotion (anger) toward a specific object (your colleague). But as the specific emotion starts to go away, you might just feel generally dispirited. You cannot attribute this feeling to any single event; you are just not your normal self. You might then overreact to other events. This affect state describes a mood. Exhibit 2-7 shows the relationships among affect, emotions, and mood.

First, as the exhibit shows, *affect* is a broad term that encompasses emotions and moods. Second, there are differences between emotions and moods. Some of these differences—that emotions are more likely to be caused by a specific event, and emotions are more fleeting than moods—we just discussed. Other differences are subtler. For example, unlike moods, emotions like anger and disgust tend to be more clearly revealed by facial expressions. Also, some researchers speculate that emotions may be more action oriented—they may lead us to some immediate action—while moods may be more cognitive, meaning they may cause us to think or brood for a while.⁹⁶

Finally, the exhibit shows that emotions and moods are closely connected and can influence each other. Getting your dream job may generate the emotion of joy, which can put you in a good mood for several days. Similarly, if you are in a good or bad mood, it might make you experience a more intense positive or negative emotion than otherwise. In a bad mood, you might blow up in response to a co-worker's comment that would normally have generated only a mild reaction.

Affect, emotions, and moods are separable in theory; in practice the distinction isn't always crystal clear. In some areas, researchers have studied mostly moods, in other areas mainly emotions. So, when we review the OB topics on emotions and moods, you may see more information on emotions in one area and on moods in another. This is simply the state of the research. *OB in the Street* discusses how our perception of emotions can affect our romantic relationships.



How Perception Causes Fights in Relationships

What happens if you think your partner is neglecting you? A 2011 study found that how people perceive the emotions of their romantic partner during a conflict affected their overall view of and reactions to the conflict.⁹⁷ The researchers studied the arguments that 105 university students had during an eight-week period. They looked at two types of emotions: “hard” (asserting power) and “soft” (expressing vulnerability). They also looked at two types of perceptions: “perceived threat” (perception that the partner is being hostile, critical, blaming, or controlling); and “perceived neglect” (perception that the partner does not seem committed to or invested in the relationship).

The researchers found that when a person sees his or her partner react with hard emotion, that person perceives a threat to control, power, and status in the relationship. When a person sees his or her partner show little emotion, or less soft emotion than desired, that person perceives partner neglect. The perceived threat and neglect increase the person’s own hard and soft emotions.

One of the study’s co-authors explained the results as follows: “[W]hat you perceive your partner to be feeling influences different types of thoughts, feelings and reactions in yourself, whether what you perceive is actually correct.... If a person perceives the other as angry, they will perceive a threat so they will respond with a hard emotion like anger or blame. Likewise, if a person is perceived to be sad or vulnerable, they will perceive a neglect and will respond [with] either flat or soft [emotions].”⁹⁸

Choosing Emotions: Emotional Labour

If you have ever had a job working in retail sales or waiting on tables in a restaurant, you know the importance of projecting a friendly demeanour and smiling. Even though there were days when you did not feel cheerful, you knew management expected you to be upbeat when dealing with customers. So you faked it. Every employee expends physical and mental labour by putting body and mind into the job. But jobs also require **emotional labour**, an employee’s expression of organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions at work.⁹⁹

The concept of emotional labour emerged from studies of service jobs. Airlines expect their flight attendants, for instance, to be cheerful; we expect funeral directors to be sad; and we expect doctors to be emotionally neutral. But really, emotional labour is relevant to almost every job. Your managers expect you, for example, to be courteous, not hostile, in interactions with co-workers. The true challenge arises when employees have to project one emotion while simultaneously feeling another.¹⁰⁰ This difference is **emotional dissonance**, and it can take a heavy toll on employees. Bottled-up feelings of frustration, anger, and resentment can eventually lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout.¹⁰¹ It is because of emotional labour’s increasing importance in effective job performance that an understanding of emotion has gained heightened relevance within the field of OB.

Emotional labour creates dilemmas for employees. There are people with whom you have to work that you just don’t like. Maybe you consider their personality abrasive. Maybe you know they have said negative things about you behind your back. Regardless, your job requires you to interact with these people on a regular basis. So you are forced to pretend to be friendly.

Ever wonder why the grocery clerk is always smiling?

emotional labour When an employee expresses organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal interactions.

emotional dissonance Inconsistencies between the emotions people feel and the emotions they show.

It can help you, on the job especially, if you separate emotions into *felt* or *displayed* emotions.¹⁰² **Felt emotions** are an individual's actual emotions. In contrast, **displayed emotions** are those that the organization requires employees to show and considers appropriate in a given job. They are not natural; they are learned. "The ritual look of delight on the face of the first runner-up as the [winner] is announced is a product of the display rule that losers should mask their sadness with an expression of joy for the winner."¹⁰³ Similarly, most of us know that we are expected to act sad at funerals, regardless of whether we consider the person's death to be a loss, and to pretend to be happy at weddings, even if we don't feel like celebrating.¹⁰⁴

Effective managers have learned to be serious when giving an employee a negative performance evaluation and to hide their anger when they have been passed over for promotion. A salesperson who has not learned to smile and appear friendly, regardless of his true feelings at the moment, is not typically going to last long on most sales jobs. How we *experience* an emotion is not always the same as how we *show* it.¹⁰⁵

Displaying fake emotions requires us to suppress real ones. **Surface acting** is hiding one's inner feelings and hiding emotional expressions in response to display rules. For example, when an employee smiles at a customer even when he does not feel like it, he is surface acting. **Deep acting** is trying to modify one's true inner feelings based on display rules. A health care provider trying to genuinely feel more empathy for her patients is deep acting.¹⁰⁶ Surface acting deals with one's *displayed* emotions, and deep acting deals with one's *felt* emotions. Research shows that surface acting is more stressful to employees than deep acting because it entails faking one's true emotions.¹⁰⁷ Displaying emotions we don't really feel is exhausting, so it is important to give employees who engage in surface displays a chance to relax and recharge. A study that looked at how cheerleading instructors spent their breaks from teaching found those who used their breaks to rest and relax were more effective instructors after their breaks.¹⁰⁸ Instructors who did chores during their breaks were only about as effective after their break as they were before. Though much of the research on emotional labour shows negative consequences for those displaying false positive emotions, a 2011 study suggests that as people age, engaging in positive emotions and attitudes, even when the circumstances warrant otherwise, actually enhances emotional well-being.¹⁰⁹ For further discussion on the costs and benefits of emotional display rules in organizations, read this chapter's *Point/Counterpoint* on page 35 and *Case Incident—The Upside of Anger?* on page 44.

Why Should We Care About Emotions in the Workplace?

Research is increasingly showing that emotions are actually critical to rational thinking.¹¹⁰ We must have the ability to experience emotions to be rational. Why? Because our emotions provide important information about how we understand the world around us. Would we really want a manager to make a decision about firing an employee without regarding either his or the employee's emotions? The key to good decision making is to employ both thinking *and* feeling in our decisions.

There are other reasons to be concerned about understanding emotions in the workplace.¹¹¹ 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 contemporary research on emotional intelligence. The entire workplace can be affected by positive or negative workplace emotions, another issue we consider below. Finally, we consider affective events theory, which has increased our understanding of emotions at work.

Emotional Intelligence

Diane Marshall is an office manager. Her awareness of her own and others' emotions is almost zero. She is moody and unable to generate much enthusiasm or interest in her employees. She does not understand why employees get upset with her. She often

overreacts to problems and chooses the most ineffectual responses to emotional situations.¹¹² Diane Marshall has low emotional intelligence. **Emotional intelligence (EI)** is a person's ability to (1) be self-aware (to recognize one's own emotions when one experiences them), (2) detect emotions in others, and (3) manage emotional cues and information. People who know their own emotions and are good at reading emotional cues—for instance, knowing why they are angry and how to express themselves without violating norms—are most likely to be effective.¹¹³ One simulation study showed that students who were good at identifying and distinguishing among their feelings were able to make more profitable investment decisions.¹¹⁴

The most recent study on EI (2011) reviewed and analyzed most of the previous studies on EI and concluded that EI is strongly and positively correlated with job performance—emotionally intelligent people are better workers.¹¹⁵ Another illuminating study looked at the successes and failures of 11 American presidents—from Franklin Roosevelt to Bill Clinton. They were evaluated on six qualities—communication, organization, political skill, vision, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence. It was found that the key quality that differentiated the successful (such as Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Reagan) from the unsuccessful (such as Johnson, Carter, and Nixon) was EI.¹¹⁶ Some researchers argue that EI is particularly important for leaders.¹¹⁷

EI has been a controversial concept in OB. It has supporters and detractors. In the following sections, we review the arguments for and against the effectiveness of EI in OB. If you are interested in determining your EI, you might want to complete *Learning About Yourself Exercise #5* on page 41. This chapter's *From Concepts to Skills* on pages 46–47 gives you some insight into reading the emotions of others.

The Case for EI

The arguments in favour of EI include its intuitive appeal, the fact that EI predicts criteria that matter, and the idea that EI is biologically based.

Intuitive Appeal There is a lot of intuitive appeal to the EI concept. Almost everyone would agree that it is good to possess street smarts and social intelligence. People who can detect emotions in others, control their own emotions, and handle social interactions well will have a powerful leg up in the business world, so the thinking goes.¹¹⁸ As just one example, partners in a multinational consulting firm who scored above the median on an EI measure delivered \$1.2 million more in business than did the other partners.¹¹⁹

EI Predicts Criteria That Matter More and more evidence suggests that a high level of EI means a person will perform well on the job. One study found that EI predicted the performance of employees in a cigarette factory in China.¹²⁰ Another study found that being able to recognize emotions in others' facial expressions and to emotionally "eavesdrop" (that is, pick up subtle signals about peoples' emotions) predicted peer ratings of how valuable those people were to their organization.¹²¹ Finally, a review of 59 studies indicated that, overall, EI correlated moderately with job performance.¹²²

EI Is Biologically Based One study has shown that people with damage to the part of the brain that governs emotional processing (lesions in an area of the prefrontal cortex) score significantly lower than others on EI tests. Even though these brain-damaged people scored no lower on standard measures of intelligence than people without similar brain damage, they were still impaired in normal decision making. But they scored significantly lower on EI tests and were impaired in normal decision making, as demonstrated by their poor performance in a card game with monetary rewards. This study suggests that EI is neurologically based in a way that is unrelated to standard measures of intelligence.¹²³ There is also evidence EI is genetically influenced, further supporting the idea that it measures a real underlying biological factor.¹²⁴

SELF-ASSESSMENT LIBRARY

LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

5. What's Your EI at Work?

(page 41)

felt emotions An individual's actual emotions.

displayed emotions Emotions that are organizationally required and considered appropriate in a given job.

surface acting Hiding one's inner feelings to display what is expected.

deep acting Trying to modify one's true inner feelings to match what is expected.

emotional intelligence (EI) An assortment of noncognitive skills, capabilities, and competencies that influence a person's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures.

The Case Against EI

For all its supporters, EI has just as many critics. Its critics say that EI is vague and impossible to measure, and they question its validity.

EI Is Too Vague a Concept To many researchers, it's not clear what EI is. Is it a form of intelligence? Most of us would not think that being self-aware or self-motivated or having empathy is a matter of intellect. Moreover, different researchers often focus on different skills, making it difficult to get a definition of EI. One researcher may study self-discipline, another empathy, another self-awareness. As one reviewer noted, "The concept of EI has now become so broad and the components so variegated that... it is no longer even an intelligible concept."¹²⁵

EI Cannot Be Measured Many critics have raised questions about measuring EI. Because EI is a form of intelligence, they argue, there must be right and wrong answers about it on tests, they argue. Some tests do have right and wrong answers, although the validity of some questions is doubtful. One measure asks you to associate particular feelings with specific colours, as if purple always makes us feel cool and not warm. Other measures are self-reported, meaning that there is no right or wrong answer. For example, an EI test question might ask you to respond to the statement "I'm good at 'reading' other people," and have no right or wrong answers. The measures of EI are diverse, and researchers have not subjected them to as much rigorous study as they have measures of personality and general intelligence.¹²⁶

The Validity of EI Is Suspect Some critics argue that because EI is so closely related to intelligence and personality, once you control for these factors, EI has nothing unique to offer. There is some foundation to this argument. EI appears to be highly correlated with measures of personality, especially emotional stability.¹²⁷ If this is true, then the evidence for a biological component to EI is not valid, and biological markers such as brain activity and heritability are attributable to other well known and much more researched psychological variables. But there has not been enough research on whether EI adds insight beyond measures of personality and general intelligence in predicting job performance. Still, EI is wildly popular among consulting firms and in the popular press. One company's promotional materials for an EI measure claimed, "EI accounts for more than 85 percent of star performance in top leaders." To say the least, it's difficult to validate this statement with the research literature.

Weighing the arguments for and against EI, it's still too early to tell whether the concept is useful. It is clear, though, that the concept is here to stay.

Negative Workplace Emotions

Negative emotions can lead to a number of deviant workplace behaviours. Anyone who has spent much time in an organization realizes that people often engage in voluntary actions that violate established norms and threaten the organization, its members, or both. These actions are called **employee deviance**.¹²⁸ Deviant actions fall into categories such as production (leaving early, intentionally working slowly); property (stealing, sabotage); political (gossiping, blaming co-workers); and personal aggression (sexual harassment, verbal abuse).¹²⁹

Many of these deviant behaviours can be traced to negative emotions. For instance, envy is an emotion that occurs when you resent someone for having something you don't, and strongly desire—such as a better work assignment, larger office, or higher salary.¹³⁰ It can lead to malicious deviant behaviours, such as hostility, "backstabbing," and other forms of political behaviour that negatively distort others' successes and positively distort your own accomplishments.¹³¹ Angry people look for other people

to blame for their bad mood, interpret other people's behaviour as hostile, and have trouble considering others' point of view.¹³² It's not hard to see how these thought processes, too, can lead directly to verbal or physical aggression. Evidence suggests that people who feel negative emotions, particularly those who feel angry or hostile, are more likely than others to engage in deviant behaviour at work.¹³³

Managing emotions in the workplace becomes important both to ward off negative behaviour and to encourage positive behaviour in those around us. *Focus on Research* looks at the issue of "catching" moods from others. You may be surprised to learn the extent to which your mood can affect the mood of others. Once aggression starts, it's likely that other people will become angry and aggressive, so the stage is set for a serious escalation of negative behaviour.

FOCUS ON RESEARCH



Moods Affect the Success of Groups

Can you catch moods from those around you? A study of 70 work groups sought to discover whether moods could be spread throughout the group.¹³⁴ There were four to eight members in each group. While performing tasks, each group was observed by two people, who tried to judge the mood

of the group from posture, facial expression, and vocal expression of group members. To assess the accuracy of the observations, group members filled out questionnaires that asked about their typical behaviour with members of their group, and their mood at the time of the observation.

The researchers found that members of groups do seem to adopt similar moods when the moods are "high-energy" (for example, cheerful enthusiasm, hostile irritability) rather than when they are "low-energy" (for example, serene warmth, depressed sluggishness). The entire group felt unpleasant moods the most strongly. Those who observed the work groups were able to accurately identify many of the moods the groups experienced, just by watching postures and the facial and vocal expressions of group members. The researchers also found that facial and postural cues were more likely to signal the mood of the group than vocal cues. They suggested that group members may feel it's inappropriate to express their moods verbally in some work settings, so that facial gestures become the more likely avenue of mood expression. ●

Affective Events Theory

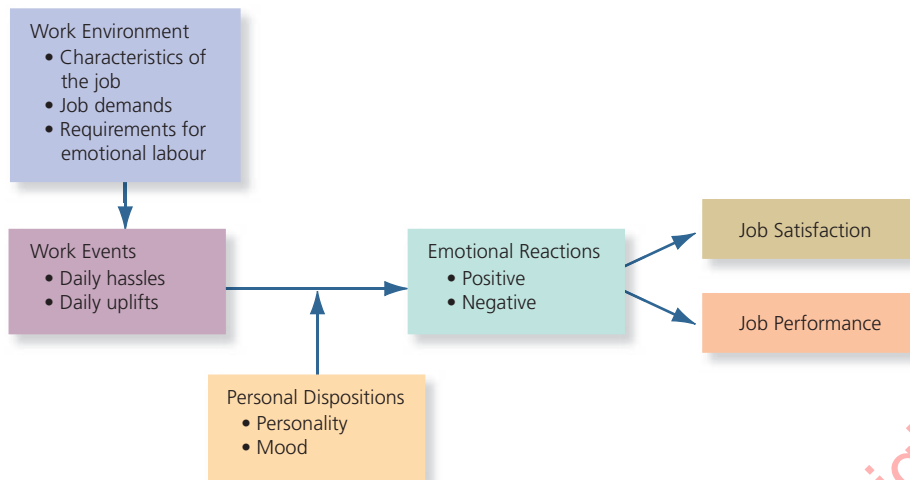
Understanding emotions at work has been significantly helped by a model called **affective events theory (AET)**.¹³⁵ AET demonstrates that employees react emotionally to things that happen to them at work, and that this emotional reaction influences their job performance and satisfaction.

Exhibit 2-8 summarizes AET. The theory begins by recognizing that emotions are a response to an event in the work environment. The work environment includes everything surrounding the job—characteristics of the job, such as the variety of tasks and degree of autonomy, job demands, and requirements for expressing emotional labour. This environment creates work events that can be hassles, uplifting events, or both. Examples of hassles are colleagues who refuse to carry their share of work, conflicting directions by different managers, and excessive time pressures. Uplifting events include meeting a goal, getting support from a colleague, and receiving recognition for an accomplishment.¹³⁶

These 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. In addition, a person's emotional response to a given event can change

employee deviance Voluntary actions that violate established norms and threaten the organization, its members, or both.

affective events theory (AET) The theory that employees react emotionally to things that happen to them at work and that this emotional reaction influences their job performance and satisfaction.

EXHIBIT 2-8 Affective Events Theory

Source: Based on N. M. Ashkanasy and C. S. Daus, "Emotion in the Workplace: The New Challenge for Managers," *Academy of Management Executive*, February 2002, p. 77.

depending on his or her mood. Finally, emotions influence a number of job performance and satisfaction variables, such as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), organizational commitment, intentions to quit, level of effort, and workplace deviance.

Tests of affective events theory suggest the following:¹³⁷

- An emotional episode is actually a series of emotional experiences, precipitated by a single event and containing elements of both emotions and mood cycles.
- Current emotions influence job satisfaction at any given time, along with the history of emotions surrounding the event.
- Because moods and emotions fluctuate over time, their effect on performance also fluctuates.
- Emotion-driven behaviours are typically short in duration and of high variability.
- Because emotions, even positive ones, tend to be incompatible with behaviours required to do a job, they typically have a negative influence on job performance.

An example might help better explain AET.¹³⁸ You work as an aeronautical engineer for Bombardier. Because of the downturn in the demand for commercial jets, you have just learned that the company is considering laying off several thousand employees. This could include you. This event is likely to elicit a negative emotional reaction: You are fearful that you might lose your job and primary source of income. Also, because you are prone to worry a lot and obsess about problems, your feelings of insecurity are increased. This event also puts into place a series of subevents that create an episode: You talk with your boss and he assures you that your job is safe; you hear rumours that your department is high on the list to be eliminated; you run into a former colleague who was laid off six months ago and still has not found work. These, in turn, create emotional ups and downs. One day, you are feeling more upbeat and sure that you will survive the cuts. The next day, you might be depressed and anxious, convinced that

your department will be eliminated. These swings in your emotions take your attention away from your work and result in reduced job performance and satisfaction. Finally, your response is magnified because this is the fourth large layoff that Bombardier has initiated in the past three years.

In summary, AET offers two important messages.¹³⁹ First, emotions provide valuable insights into how workplace hassles and uplifting events influence employee performance and satisfaction. Second, employees and managers should not ignore emotions or the events that cause them, even when they appear minor, because they accumulate.



GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

In considering potential global differences in this chapter's concepts, let's consider the four areas that have attracted the most research: (1) perception, (2) attributions, (3) personality, and (4) emotions.

Perception

Several studies have examined how people observe the world around them.¹⁴⁰ In one study, researchers showed East Asians and US subjects a photo with a focal object (like a train) with a busy background and tracked their eye movements. They found that the US subjects were more likely to look at the focal object, whereas the East Asian subjects were more likely to look at the background. Thus, the East Asians appeared to focus more on the context or environment than on the most important object in it. As one of the researchers concluded, "If people are seeing different things, it may be because they are looking differently at the world."¹⁴¹

Perceptual differences across cultures have been found to be rooted in the brain's architecture. Using a functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) device to scan subjects' brains, one researcher found that when Singaporeans were shown pictures where either the foreground or background was varied, their brains were less attuned to new foreground images and more attuned to new background images than those of US subjects.¹⁴² This finding suggests that perception is not universal, and that the cultural tendency to focus on either an object/person or a context is part of the "hard wiring" of our brains.

Finally, culture affects what we remember as well. When asked to remember events, US subjects recall more about personal details and their own personal characteristics, whereas Asians recall more about personal relationships and group activities.¹⁴³

As a set, these studies provide striking evidence that Eastern and Western cultures differ in one of the deepest aspects of organizational behaviour: how we see the world around us.

Attribution

The evidence on cultural differences in perception is mixed, but most studies suggest that there *are* differences across cultures in the attributions people make.¹⁴⁴

Asians overall are less likely to make the fundamental attribution error. The Japanese in particular are less likely to attribute a person's behaviour to internal factors than external or situational forces. A study also found Korean managers less likely to use the self-serving bias—they tended to accept responsibility for group failure "because I was not a capable leader" instead of attributing failure to group members.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Asian managers are more likely to lay blame on institutions or whole organizations, whereas Western observers are more likely to believe individual managers should be the focus of blame or praise.¹⁴⁶ That probably explains why US newspapers prominently report the names of individual executives when firms do poorly, whereas Asian media provide more coverage of how the firm as a whole has failed. This tendency

to make group-based attributions also explains why individuals from Asian cultures are more likely to make group-based stereotypes.¹⁴⁷ Attribution theory was developed largely based on experiments with US and Western European workers. But these studies suggest caution in making attribution theory predictions in non-Western societies, especially in countries with strong collectivistic traditions.

These differences in attribution tendencies don't mean that the basic concepts of attribution and blame completely differ across cultures, though. Recent studies suggest that Chinese managers assess blame for mistakes using the same distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency cues Western managers use.¹⁴⁸ Chinese managers also become angry and punish those who are deemed responsible for failure, a reaction shown in many studies of Western managers. This finding means that the basic process of attribution applies across cultures but that it takes more evidence for Asian managers to conclude someone else should be blamed.

Personality

The five personality factors identified in the Big Five model appear in almost all cross-cultural studies.¹⁴⁹ These studies have included a wide variety of diverse cultures—such as China, Israel, Germany, Japan, Spain, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, and the United States. Differences tend to be in the emphasis on particular dimensions and whether countries are predominantly individualist or collectivist. For example, Chinese managers use the dimension of conscientiousness more often and agreeableness less often than do US managers. The Big Five appear to predict behaviour more accurately in individualistic cultures than collectivistic cultures.¹⁵⁰ However, there is a surprisingly high amount of agreement that the Big Five variables are useful predictors, especially among individuals from developed countries. A comprehensive review of studies covering people from what was then the 15-nation European Community found conscientiousness to be a valid predictor of performance across jobs and occupational groups.¹⁵¹ US studies have reached the same conclusion.

Emotions

People vary in the degree to which they experience emotions. In China, for example, people report experiencing fewer positive and negative emotions than people in other cultures, and the emotions they experience are less intense than what other cultures report. Compared with mainland Chinese, Taiwanese are more like Canadian employees in their experience of emotions: On average, Taiwanese report more positive and fewer negative emotions than their Chinese counterparts.¹⁵² In general, people in most cultures appear to experience certain positive and negative emotions, but the frequency of their experience and their intensity varies to some degree.¹⁵³

In general, people from all over the world interpret negative and positive emotions the same way. We all view negative emotions, such as hate, terror, and rage, as dangerous and destructive. And we all desire positive emotions, such as joy, love, and happiness. However, some cultures value certain emotions more than others. For example, Americans value enthusiasm, while the Chinese consider negative emotions to be more useful and constructive. In general, pride is seen as a positive emotion in Western, individualistic cultures such as the United States, but Eastern cultures such as China and Japan tend to view pride as undesirable.¹⁵⁴

The norms for the expression of emotions vary by culture as well. For example, some fundamentalist Muslims see smiling as a sign of sexual attraction, so women have learned not to smile at men so as not to be misinterpreted.¹⁵⁵ And research has shown that in collectivistic countries, people are more likely to believe that the emotional displays of another have something to do with their own relationship with the person expressing the emotion, while people in individualistic cultures don't think that another's emotional expressions are directed at them. Evidence indicates that in Canada

a bias exists against expressing emotions, especially intense negative emotions. French retail clerks, in contrast, are infamous for being surly toward customers (a report from the French government itself confirmed this). Reports also indicate that serious German shoppers have been turned off by Walmart's friendly greeters and helpful personnel.¹⁵⁶

Summary and Implications

- 1 What is perception?** Perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret their impressions to give meaning to their environment. A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. The perceiver's attitudes, motives, interests, past experiences, and expectations all shape the way he or she sees an event. The target's characteristics also affect what is perceived; novelty, motion, sounds, size, and other characteristics of the target shape the way it is seen. The situation, or context, in which something or someone is perceived is also important.
- 2 What is personality and how does it affect behaviour?** Personality is the stable patterns of behaviour and consistent internal states that determine how an individual reacts to and interacts with others. A review of the personality literature offers general guidelines that can lead to effective job performance. As such, it can improve hiring, transfer, and promotion decisions. Personality attributes give us a framework for predicting behaviour. Personality affects how people react to others, and the types of jobs that they may desire. For example, individuals who are shy, introverted, and uncomfortable in social situations would probably make poor salespeople. Individuals who are submissive and conforming might not be effective as advertising "idea" people. Be aware, though, that measuring personality is not an exact science, and as you no doubt learned from the discussion of attribution theory, it's easy to attribute personality characteristics in error.
- 3 Can emotions help or get in the way when we are dealing with others?** Emotions are intense feelings that are directed at someone or something. Positive emotions can be motivating for everyone in the workplace. Negative emotions may make it difficult to get along with others. Can managers control the emotions of their colleagues and employees? No. Emotions are a natural part of an individual's makeup. At the same time, managers err if they ignore the emotional elements in OB and assess individual behaviour as if it were completely rational. Managers who understand the role of emotions will significantly improve their ability to explain and predict individual behaviour.

Do emotions affect job performance? Yes. Emotions, especially negative ones, can hinder performance. That is probably why organizations, for the most part, try to remove emotions from the workplace. But emotions can also enhance performance. How? Two ways.¹⁵⁷ First, emotions can increase arousal levels, thus acting as motivators to higher performance. Second, the concept of emotional labour recognizes that feelings can be part of a job's required behaviour. So, for instance, the ability to effectively manage emotions in leadership and sales positions may be critical to success in those positions. Research also indicates the importance of emotional intelligence, the assortment of noncognitive skills, capabilities, and competencies that influence a person's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures.

SNAPSHOT SUMMARY

- 1 Perception**
Factors Influencing Perception
Perceptual Errors
Why Do Perception and Judgment Matter?
- 2 Personality**
What Is Personality?
Measuring Personality
Personality Determinants
Personality Traits
Other Personality Attributes Influencing OB
- 3 Emotions**
What Are Emotions and Moods?
Choosing Emotions: Emotional Labour
Why Should We Care About Emotions in the Workplace?

OB *at* Work

for *Review*

1. Define *perception*.
2. What is attribution theory? What are its implications for explaining behaviour in organizations?
3. What is stereotyping? Give an example of how stereotyping can create perceptual distortion.
4. Give some positive results of using shortcuts when judging others.
5. Describe the factors in the Big Five Personality Model. Which factor shows the greatest value in predicting behaviour? Why does it?
6. What behavioural predictions might you make if you knew that an employee had (a) a negative core self-evaluation? (b) a low Mach score? (c) low self-monitoring? (d) a Type A personality?
7. To what extent do people's personalities affect how they are perceived?
8. What is emotional labour and why is it important to understanding OB?
9. What is emotional intelligence and why is it important?
10. Explain affective events theory. What are its implications for managing emotions?

for *Critical Thinking*

1. How might the differences in experience of students and instructors affect their perceptions of classroom behaviour (for example, students' written work and class comments)?
2. An employee does an unsatisfactory job on an assigned project. Explain the attribution process that this person's manager will use to form judgments about this employee's job performance.
3. One day your boss comes in and he is nervous, edgy, and argumentative. The next day he is calm and relaxed. Does this behaviour suggest that personality traits are not consistent from day to day?
4. What, if anything, can managers do to manage employees' emotions? Are there ethical implications in any of these actions? If so, what?
5. Give some examples of situations where expressing emotions might enhance job performance.

for *You*

- The discussion of perception might get you thinking about how you view the world. When we perceive someone as a troublemaker, for instance, this may be only a perception, and not a real characteristic of that person. It is always good to question your perceptions, just to be sure that you are not reading something into a situation that is not there.
- One important thing to consider when looking for a job is whether your personality will fit the organization to which you are applying. For instance, let's say that you are considering working for a highly structured company. If you, by nature, are much less formal, then that company may not be a good fit for you.
- Sometimes personalities get in the way when working in groups. You may want to see if you can figure out ways to get personality differences to work in favour of group goals.
- Emotions need not always be suppressed when working with others. While emotions can sometimes hinder performance, positive emotions can motivate you and those around you.

POINT



Display Rules Make Good Business Sense

Organizations today realize that good customer service means good business. After all, who wants to end a shopping trip at the grocery store with a surly cashier? Research clearly shows that organizations that provide good customer service have higher profits than those with poor customer service.¹⁵⁸ An integral part of customer-service training is to set forth display rules to teach employees to interact with customers in a friendly, helpful, professional way—and evidence indicates that such rules work: Having display rules increases the odds that employees will display the emotions expected of them.¹⁵⁹

As one Starbucks manager says, “What makes Starbucks different is our passion for what we do. We’re trying to provide a great experience for people, with a great product. That’s what we all care about.”¹⁶⁰ Starbucks may have good coffee, but a big part of the company’s growth has been the customer experience. For instance, the cashiers are friendly and will get to know you by name if you are a repeat customer.

Asking employees to act friendly is good for them, too. Research shows that employees of organizations that require them to display positive emotions actually feel better as a result.¹⁶¹ And if someone feels that being asked to smile is bad for him, that person does not belong in the service industry in the first place.

COUNTERPOINT



Display Rules Do Not Make Sense

Organizations have no business trying to regulate the emotions of their employees. Companies should not be “the thought police” and force employees to feel and act in ways that serve only organizational needs. Service employees should be professional and courteous, yes, but many companies expect them to take abuse and refrain from defending themselves. That’s wrong. As philosopher Jean Paul Sartre wrote, we have a responsibility to be authentic—true to ourselves—and within reasonable limits, organizations have no right to ask us to be otherwise.

Service industries have no business teaching their employees to be smiling punching bags. Most customers might even prefer that employees be themselves. Employees should not be openly nasty or hostile, of course, but who appreciates a fake smile? Think about trying on an outfit in a store and the clerk automatically says it looks “absolutely wonderful” when you know it does not and you sense that the clerk is lying. Most customers would rather talk with a “real” person than someone enslaved to an organization’s display rules. Furthermore, if an employee does not feel like slapping on an artificial smile, then it’s only going to create friction between her and her employer.¹⁶²

Finally, research shows that forcing display rules on employees takes a heavy emotional toll.¹⁶³ It’s unnatural to expect someone to smile all the time or to passively take abuse from customers, clients, or fellow employees. Organizations can improve their employees’ psychological health by encouraging them to be themselves, within reasonable limits.

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LEARNING ABOUT **YOURSELF** EXERCISE #1

How Machiavellian Are You?

For each statement, circle the number that most closely resembles your attitude.

Statement	Disagree			Agree	
	A Lot	A Little	Neutral	A Little	A Lot
1. The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When you ask someone to do something for you, it is best to give the real reason for wanting it rather than giving reasons that might carry more weight.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
4. It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak, and it will come out when they are given a chance.	1	2	3	4	5
6. One should take action only when it is morally right.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Most people are basically good and kind.	1	2	3	4	5
8. There is no excuse for lying to someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Most people more easily forget the death of their father than the loss of their property.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Generally speaking, people won't work hard unless they're forced to do so.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring Key:

To obtain your Mach score, add the number you have checked on questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, and 10. For the other 4 questions (2, 6, 7, and 8), reverse the numbers you have checked: 5 becomes 1, 4 is 2, 2 is 4, and 1 is 5. Total your 10 numbers to find your score. The higher your score, the more Machiavellian you are. Among a random sample of American adults, the national average was 25.

Source: R. Christie and F. L. Geis, *Studies in Machiavellianism* (New York: Academic Press, 1970). Reprinted by permission.

LEARNING ABOUT **YOURSELF** EXERCISE #2

Are You a High Self-Monitor?

Indicate the degree to which you think the following statements are true or false by circling the appropriate number. For example, if a statement is always true, circle the 5 next to that statement.

5 = Certainly, always true

4 = Generally true

3 = Somewhat true, but with exceptions

2 = Somewhat false, but with exceptions

1 = Generally false

0 = Certainly, always false

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behaviour if I feel that something else is called for. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expression of the person I'm conversing with. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I can usually tell when others consider a joke in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading the listener's eyes. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I have trouble changing my behaviour to suit different people and different situations. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I have found that I can adjust my behaviour to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Once I know what the situation calls for, it is easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Scoring Key:

To obtain your score, add up the numbers circled, except reverse scores for questions 9 and 12. On those, a circled 5 becomes a 0, 4 becomes 1, and so forth. High self-monitors are defined as those with scores of 53 or higher.

Source: R. D. Lennox and R. N. Wolfe, "Revision of the Self-Monitoring Scale," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, June 1984, p. 1361. Copyright © 1984 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted by permission.

LEARNING ABOUT **YOURSELF** EXERCISE #3

Are You a Risk-Taker?

For each of the following situations, indicate the minimum odds of success you would demand before recommending that one alternative be chosen over another. Try to place yourself in the position of the adviser to the central person in each of the situations.

1. Mr. B, a 45-year-old accountant, has recently been informed by his physician that he has developed a severe heart ailment. The disease will be sufficiently serious to force Mr. B to change many of his strongest life habits—reducing his workload, drastically changing his diet, giving up favourite leisure-time pursuits. The physician suggests that a delicate medical operation could be attempted. If successful, the operation would completely relieve the heart condition. But its success cannot be assured, and, in fact, the operation might prove fatal.

Imagine that you are advising Mr. B. Listed below are several probabilities or odds that the operation will prove successful. Check the *lowest probability* that you would consider acceptable for the operation to be performed.

- _____ Mr. B should not have the operation, no matter what the probabilities.
- _____ The chances are 9 in 10 that the operation will be a success.
- _____ The chances are 7 in 10 that the operation will be a success.
- _____ The chances are 5 in 10 that the operation will be a success.
- _____ The chances are 3 in 10 that the operation will be a success.
- _____ The chances are 1 in 10 that the operation will be a success.

2. Mr. D is the captain of University X's varsity football team. University X is playing its traditional rival, University Y, in the final game of the season. The game is in its final seconds, and Mr. D's team, University X, is behind in the score. University X has time to make one more play. Mr. D, the captain, must decide on a strategy. Would it be best to try a play that would be almost certain to work and try to settle for a tie score? Or, on the other hand, should he try a more complicated and risky play that would bring victory if it succeeded or defeat if it failed?

Imagine that you are advising Mr. D. Listed below are several probabilities or odds that the risky play will work. Check the *lowest probability* that you would consider acceptable for the risky play to be attempted.

- _____ Mr. D should not attempt the risky play, no matter what the probabilities.
- _____ The chances are 9 in 10 that the risky play will work.
- _____ The chances are 7 in 10 that the risky play will work.
- _____ The chances are 5 in 10 that the risky play will work.
- _____ The chances are 3 in 10 that the risky play will work.
- _____ The chances are 1 in 10 that the risky play will work.

LEARNING ABOUT **YOURSELF** EXERCISE #3 (Continued)

3. Ms. K is a successful businesswoman who has participated in a number of civic activities of considerable value to the community. Ms. K has been approached by the leaders of her political party as a possible candidate in the next provincial election. Ms. K's party is a minority party in the district, though the party has won occasional elections in the past. Ms. K would like to hold political office, but to do so would involve a serious financial sacrifice, since the party has insufficient campaign funds. She would also have to endure the attacks of her political opponents in a hot campaign.

Imagine that you are advising Ms. K. Listed below are several probabilities or odds of Ms. K's winning the election in her district. Check the *lowest probability* that you would consider acceptable to make it worthwhile for Ms. K to run for political office.

- _____ Ms. K should not run for political office, no matter what the probabilities.
- _____ The chances are 9 in 10 that Ms. K will win the election.
- _____ The chances are 7 in 10 that Ms. K will win the election.
- _____ The chances are 5 in 10 that Ms. K will win the election.
- _____ The chances are 3 in 10 that Ms. K will win the election.
- _____ The chances are 1 in 10 that Ms. K will win the election.

4. Ms. L, a 30-year-old research physicist, has been given a 5-year appointment by a major university laboratory. As she contemplates the next 5 years, she realizes that she might work on a difficult long-term problem. If a solution to the problem could be found, it would resolve basic scientific issues in the field and bring high scientific honours. If no solution were found, however, Ms. L would have little to show for her 5 years in the laboratory, and it would be hard for her to get a good job afterward. On the other hand, she could, as most of her professional associates are doing, work on a series of short-term problems for which solutions would be easier to find. Those solutions, though, would be of lesser scientific importance.

Imagine that you are advising Ms. L. Listed below are several probabilities or odds that a solution will be found to the difficult long-term problem that Ms. L has in mind. Check the *lowest probability* that you would consider acceptable to make it worthwhile for Ms. L to work on the more difficult long-term problem.

- _____ Ms. L should not choose the long-term, difficult problem, no matter what the probabilities.
- _____ The chances are 9 in 10 that Ms. L will solve the long-term problem.
- _____ The chances are 7 in 10 that Ms. L will solve the long-term problem.
- _____ The chances are 5 in 10 that Ms. L will solve the long-term problem.
- _____ The chances are 3 in 10 that Ms. L will solve the long-term problem.
- _____ The chances are 1 in 10 that Ms. L will solve the long-term problem.

Scoring Key:

These situations were based on a longer questionnaire. Your results are an indication of your general orientation toward risk rather than a precise measure. To calculate your risk-taking score, add up the chances you were willing to take and divide by 4. (For any of the situations in which you would not take the risk, regardless of the probabilities, give yourself a 10.) The lower your number, the more risk-taking you are.

Source: Adapted from N. Kogan and M. A. Wallach, *Risk Taking: A Study in Cognition and Personality* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 256–261. Reprinted with permission of Wadsworth, a division of Thompson Learning: www.thompsonrights.com. Fax 800-730-2215.

LEARNING ABOUT **YOURSELF** EXERCISE #4

Are You a Type A?

Circle the number on the scale below that best characterizes your behaviour for each trait.

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Casual about appointments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Never late |
| 2. Not competitive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Very competitive |
| 3. Never rushed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Always feel rushed |
| 4. Take things one at a time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Try to do many things at once |
| 5. Slow doing things | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Fast (eating, walking, etc.) |
| 6. Express feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | "Sit on" feelings |
| 7. Many interests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Few interests outside work |

Scoring Key:

Total your score on the 7 questions. Now multiply the total by 3. A total of 120 or more indicates that you are a hard-core Type A. Scores below 90 indicate that you are a hard-core Type B. The following gives you more specifics:

Points	Personality type
120 or more	A1
106–119	A
100–105	A2
90–99	B1
Less than 90	B

Source: Adapted from R. W. Bortner, "Short Rating Scale as a Potential Measure of Pattern A Behavior," *Journal of Chronic Diseases*, June 1969, pp. 87–91. With permission from Elsevier.

LEARNING ABOUT **YOURSELF** EXERCISE #5

What's Your EI at Work?

Evaluating the following 25 statements will allow you to rate your social skills and self-awareness, the components of emotional intelligence (EI).

EI, the social equivalent of IQ, is complex, in no small part because it depends on some pretty slippery variables—including your innate compatibility, or lack thereof, with the people who happen to be your co-workers. But if you want to get a rough idea of how your EI stacks up, this quiz will help.

As honestly as you can, estimate how you rate in the eyes of peers, bosses, and subordinates on each of the following traits, on a scale of 1–4, with 4 representing strong agreement, and 1 representing strong disagreement.

- _____ I usually stay composed, positive, and unflappable even in trying moments.
- _____ I can think clearly and stay focused on the task at hand under pressure.
- _____ I am able to admit my own mistakes.
- _____ I usually or always meet commitments and keep promises.
- _____ I hold myself accountable for meeting my goals.
- _____ I'm organized and careful in my work.
- _____ I regularly seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources.
- _____ I'm good at generating new ideas.
- _____ I can smoothly handle multiple demands and changing priorities.
- _____ I'm result-oriented, with a strong drive to meet my objectives.
- _____ I like to set challenging goals and take calculated risks to reach them.
- _____ I'm always trying to learn how to improve my performance, including asking advice from people younger than I am.
- _____ I readily make sacrifices to meet an important organizational goal.
- _____ The company's mission is something I understand and can identify with.
- _____ The values of my team—or of our division or department, or the company—influence my decisions and clarify the choices I make.
- _____ I actively seek out opportunities to further the overall goals of the organization and enlist others to help me.
- _____ I pursue goals beyond what's required or expected of me in my current job.
- _____ Obstacles and setbacks may delay me a little, but they don't stop me.
- _____ Cutting through red tape and bending outdated rules are sometimes necessary.
- _____ I seek fresh perspectives, even if that means trying something totally new.
- _____ My impulses or distressing emotions don't often get the best of me at work.
- _____ I can change tactics quickly when circumstances change.
- _____ Pursuing new information is my best bet for cutting down on uncertainty and finding ways to do things better.
- _____ I usually don't attribute setbacks to a personal flaw (mine or someone else's).
- _____ I operate from an expectation of success rather than a fear of failure.

Scoring Key:

Total your score. A score below 70 indicates very low EI. EI is not unimprovable. Says Dan Goleman, author of *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, "Emotional intelligence can be learned, and in fact we are each building it, in varying degrees, throughout life. It's sometimes called maturity. EI is nothing more or less than a collection of tools that we can sharpen to help ensure our own survival."

Source: A. Fisher, "Success Secret: A High Emotional IQ," *Fortune*, October 26, 1998, p. 298. Reprinted with the permission of Time Warner Inc. Quiz copyright Daniel Goleman.

SELF-ASSESSMENT LIBRARY

LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF

More Learning About Yourself Exercises

An additional self-assessment relevant to this chapter appears on MyOBLab (www.pearsoned.ca/myoblab).

IV.C.2. What Are My Gender Role Perceptions?**IV.A.1.** Am I a Narcissist?**IV.D.1.** How Are You Feeling Right Now?**I.E.1.** What's My Emotional Intelligence Score?

When you complete the additional assessments, consider the following:

1. Am I surprised about my score?
2. Would my friends evaluate me similarly?

BREAKOUT **GROUP** EXERCISES

Form small groups to discuss the following topics, as assigned by your instructor. Each person in the group should first identify 3–5 key personal values.

1. Think back to your perception of this course and your instructor on the first day of class. What factors might have affected your perceptions of what the rest of the term would be like?
2. Describe a situation where your perception turned out to be wrong. What perceptual errors did you make that might have caused this to happen?
3. Compare your scores on the Learning About Yourself Exercises at the end of the chapter. What conclusions could you draw about your group based on these scores?

WORKING WITH **OTHERS** EXERCISE

Evaluating Your Stereotypes

1. Your instructor will choose 4 volunteers willing to reveal an interesting true-life background fact about themselves. Examples of such background facts are as follows:
 - I can perform various dances, including polka, rumba, bossa nova, and salsa.
 - I am the youngest of 4 children and I attended Catholic high school.
 - Neither of my parents attended school beyond grade 8.
 - My mother is a homemaker and my father is an author.
2. The instructor will put the 4 facts on the board without revealing to which person each belongs, and the 4 students will remain in the front of the room for the first part of the group discussion below.
3. Students in the class should silently decide which person belongs to which fact.
4. Students should break into groups of about 5 or 6 and try to reach a consensus about which person belongs to which fact. Meanwhile, the 4 students can serve as observers to group discussions, listening in on rationales for how students decide to link the facts with the individuals.
5. After 15 minutes of group discussion, several groups will be asked to present their consensus to the class, with justifications.
6. The classroom discussion will focus on perceptions, assumptions, and stereotyping that led to the decisions made.
7. At the end of the discussion, the instructor will reveal which student belongs to each fact.

ETHICAL DILEMMA EXERCISE

Hiring Based on Body Art

When Christine Giacomoni applied for a job at the Sherwood Park (Alberta) location of the Real Canadian Superstore, she was wearing a nose stud.¹⁶⁴ She got the job. Six months later, however, she was told that she could no longer wear her small nose stud at work. The company had just recently decided to apply their policy for front-line workers about no nose studs to employees like Giacomoni, who worked in the deli.

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), Giacomoni's union, grieved this action for her. The complaint ended up in front of a labour arbitrator. The union argued that this company was out of touch with reality. The company argued that nose studs offended customers. They hired Ipsos Reid to survey shoppers, and the results of the poll indicated that "a significant portion" of shoppers would stop shopping at a store that allowed employee facial piercings.

Ultimately, a judge ruled against Real Canadian Superstore's policy. Meanwhile, Giacomoni left to take a job at TELUS, in part because of the store's policy against her piercing. TELUS does not mind that she has a nose stud.

Many employees are aware that tattoos and body piercings can hurt one's chances of being hired. Consider Russell Parrish, 29, who lives near Orlando, Florida, and has dozens of tattoos on his arms, hands, torso, and neck. In searching for a job, Parrish walked into 100 businesses, and in 60 cases, he was refused an application. "I want a career," Parrish says, "I want the same shot as everybody else."

Employers are mixed in their reactions to employees with tattoos or piercings. At Vancouver-based White Spot restaurants, employees cannot have visible tattoos (or pink or blue hair). They are allowed a small, simple nose stud. BC's Starbucks shops don't allow any pierced tongues or visible tattoos. Staff may not wear more than two reasonably sized earrings per ear. At Victoria-based Arq Salons, nearly everyone has a tattoo, "We work in an artistic

field," manager Yasmin Morris explains, then adds that staff cannot wear jeans. "We don't want people to look too casual."

A survey of employers revealed that 58 percent indicated that they would be less likely to hire someone with visible tattoos or body piercings. The career centre at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business advises students to "start out understated" when it comes to piercing. "We coach our students to be conservative, and if they do have any facial piercings, we suggest they remove them for the first interview until they find out what the culture's like in the organization," centre director Voula Cocolakis said. "We don't want them to be taken out of the 'yes' pile because of a facial piercing. We want them to interview and compete in the job market based on their qualifications."

In-house policies toward tattoos vary because, legally, employers can do as they wish. As long as the rule is applied equally to everyone (it would not be permissible to allow tattoos on men but not on women, for example), policies against tattoos are perfectly legal. Though not hiring people with tattoos is discrimination, it is not a form of discrimination that is covered by the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Thirty-six percent of those aged 18 to 25, and 40 percent of those aged 26 to 40, have at least one tattoo, whereas only 15 percent of those over 40 do, according to a fall 2006 survey by the Pew Research Center. One study in *American Demographics* suggested that 57 percent of senior citizens viewed visible tattoos as "freakish."

How does the matter of perception explain why some employers ban tattoos, while others don't mind them? Is it fair for employers to reject applicants who have tattoos? Is it fair to require employees, if hired, to conceal their tattoos? Should it be illegal to allow tattoos to be a factor at all in the hiring process?

CASE INCIDENTS

The Upside of Anger?

A researcher doing a case study on emotions in organizations interviewed Laura, a 22-year-old customer-service representative in Australia. The following is a summary of the interview (with some paraphrasing of the interviewer questions):¹⁶⁵

Interviewer: How would you describe your workplace?

Laura: Very cold, unproductive, [a] very, umm, cold environment, atmosphere.

Interviewer: What kinds of emotions are prevalent in your organization?

Laura: Anger, hatred toward other people, other staff members.

Interviewer: So it seems that managers keep employees in line using fear tactics?

Laura: Yeah. [The general manager's] favourite saying is, "Nobody's indispensable." So, it's like, "I can't do that because I'll get sacked!"

Interviewer: How do you survive in this situation?

Laura: You have to cater your emotions to the sort of situation, the specific situation... because it's just such a hostile environment, this is sort of the only way you can survive.

Interviewer: Are there emotions you have to hide?

Laura: Managers don't like you to show your emotions... They don't like to show that there is anything wrong or anything emotional in the working environment.

Interviewer: Why do you go along?

Laura: I feel I have to put on an act because... to show your true emotions, especially toward my managers [Laura names two of her senior managers], it would be hatred sometimes. So, you just can't afford to do that because it's your job and you need the money.

Interviewer: Do you ever rebel against this system?

Laura: You sort of put on a happy face just so you can annoy [the managers]. I find that they don't

like people being happy, so you just annoy them by being happy. So, yeah. It just makes you laugh. You just "put it on" just because you know it annoys [management]. It's pretty vindictive and manipulative, but you just need to do that.

Interviewer: Do you ever find that this gets to you?

Laura: I did care in the beginning, and I think it just got me into more trouble. So now I just tell myself, "I don't care." If you tell yourself something for long enough, eventually you believe it. Yeah, so now I just go "Oh well."

Interviewer: Do you intend to keep working here?

Laura: It's a means to an end now. So every time I go [to work] and every week I just go, "Well, one week down, one week less until I go away." But if I knew that I didn't have this goal, I don't know if I could handle it, or if I would even be there now.

Interviewer: Is there an upside to working here?

Laura: I'm so much better at telling people off now than I ever used to be. I can put people in place in about three sentences. Like, instead of, before I would walk away from it. But now I just stand there and fight.... I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

Questions

1. Do you think Laura is justified in her responses to her organization's culture? Why or why not?
2. Do you think Laura's strategic use and display of emotions serve to protect her?
3. Assuming that Laura's description is accurate, how would *you* react to the organization's culture?
4. Research shows that acts of co-workers (37 percent) and management (22 percent) cause more negative emotions for employees than do acts of customers (7 percent).¹³⁰ What can Laura's company do to change its emotional climate?

The Nice Trap?

In these pages we have already noted that one downside of agreeableness is that agreeable people tend to have lower levels of career success.¹⁶⁶ Though agreeableness does not appear to be related to job performance, agreeable people do earn less money. Though we are not sure why this is so, it may be that agreeable individuals are less aggressive in negotiating starting salaries and pay raises for themselves.

Yet there is clear evidence that agreeableness is something employers value. Recent books argue in favour of the “power of nice”¹⁶⁷ and “the kindness revolution.”¹⁶⁸ Articles in the business press have argued that the sensitive, agreeable CEO—as manifested in CEOs such as GE’s Jeff Immelt and Boeing’s Jim McNerney—signals a shift in business culture.¹⁶⁹ In many circles, individuals desiring success in their careers are exhorted to be “complimentary,” “kind,” and “good.”¹⁷⁰

Take the example of 500-employee Lindblad Expeditions. It emphasizes agreeableness in its hiring decisions. The VP of HR commented, “You can teach people any technical skill, but you can’t teach them how to be a kindhearted, generous-minded person with an open spirit.”

So, while employers want agreeable employees, agreeable employees are not better job performers, and they are *less* successful in their careers. One might explain this apparent contradiction by noting that employers value agreeable employees for other reasons: They are more pleasant to be around, and they may help others in ways that are not reflected in their job performance. While the former point seems fair enough—agreeable people are better liked—it’s not clear that agreeable individuals actually help people more. A review of the organizational citizenship literature revealed a pretty weak correlation between an employee’s agreeableness and how much he or she helped others.

Moreover, a recent study of CEOs and CEO candidates revealed that this contradiction applies to organizational leaders as well. Using ratings made of candidates from an executive search firm, the researchers studied the personalities and abilities of 316 CEO candidates for companies involved in buyout and venture capital transactions. They found that what gets a CEO candidate hired is not what makes him or her effective. Specifically, CEO candidates who were rated high on “nice” traits, such as respecting others, developing others, and teamwork, were more likely to be hired. However, these same characteristics—especially teamwork and respecting others for venture capital CEOs—made the organizations that the CEOs led less successful.

Questions

1. Do you think there is a contradiction between what employers want in employees (agreeableness) and what kinds of employees (those who are not agreeable) actually perform best? Why or why not?
2. Often, the effects of personality depend on the situation. Can you think of some job situations in which agreeableness is an important virtue? And in which it is harmful?
3. In research we conducted, we found that the negative effects of agreeableness on earnings is stronger for men than for women (that is, being agreeable hurt men’s earnings more than women’s). Why do you think this might be the case?



FROM CONCEPTS TO SKILLS



Reading Emotions

Understanding another person's felt emotions is very difficult. But we can learn to read others' displayed emotions.¹⁷¹ We do this by focusing on verbal, nonverbal, and paralanguage cues.



The easiest way to find out what someone is feeling is to ask them. Saying something as simple as "Are you okay? What's the problem?" can often provide you with the information to assess an individual's emotional state. But relying on a verbal response has two drawbacks. First, almost all of us conceal our emotions to some extent for privacy and to reflect social expectations. So we might be unwilling to share our true feelings. Second, even if we want to verbally convey our feelings, we may be unable to do so. As we noted earlier, some people have difficulty understanding their own emotions and, hence, are unable to express them verbally. So, at best, verbal responses provide only partial information.



Let's say you are talking with a co-worker. Does the fact that his back is rigid, his teeth clenched, and his facial muscles tight tell you something about his emotional state? It probably should. Facial expressions, gestures, body movements, and physical distance are nonverbal cues that can provide additional insights into what a person is feeling. The facial expressions shown in Exhibit 2-9, for instance, are a window into a person's feelings. Notice the difference in facial features: the height of the cheeks, the raising or lowering of the brow, the turn of the mouth, the positioning of the lips, and the configuration of muscles around the eyes. Even something as subtle as the distance someone chooses to position him- or herself from you can convey how much intimacy, aggressiveness, repugnance, or withdrawal that person feels.

EXHIBIT 2-9 Facial Expressions and Emotions



Source: S. E. Taylor, L. A. Peplan, and D. O. Sears, *Social Psychology*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 98; photographs by Paul Ekman, Ph.D. Used with permission.

When you speak with someone, you may notice a sharp change in the tone of her voice and the speed at which she speaks. You are tapping into the third source of information on a person's emotions—paralanguage. This is communication that goes beyond the specific spoken words. It includes pitch, amplitude, rate, and voice quality of speech. Paralanguage reminds us that people convey their feelings not only in what they say, but also in how they say it.

Part A. Form groups of 2. Each person is to spend a couple of minutes thinking of a time in the past when he or she was emotional about something. Examples might include being upset with a parent, sibling, or friend; being excited or disappointed about an academic or athletic achievement; being angry with someone over an insult or slight; being disgusted by something someone has said or done; or being happy because of something good that happened. Do not share this event with the other person in your group.

Part B. Now you will conduct 2 role plays. Each will be an interview. In the first, 1 person will play the interviewer and the other will play the job applicant. The job is for a summer management internship with a large retail chain. Each role play will last no longer than 10 minutes. The interviewer is to conduct a normal job interview, except you are to continually rethink the emotional episode you envisioned in part A. Try hard to convey this emotion while, at the same time, being professional in interviewing the job applicant.

Part C. Now reverse positions for the second role play. The interviewer becomes the job applicant and vice versa. The new interviewer will conduct a normal job interview, except that he or she will continually rethink the emotional episode chosen in part A.

Part D. Spend 10 minutes analyzing the interview, with specific attention focused on these questions: What emotion(s) do you think the other person was conveying? What cues did you pick up? How accurate were you in reading those cues?

1. Watch the actors in an emotion-laden film, such as *Death of a Salesman* or *12 Angry Men*, for clues to the emotions they are exhibiting. Try to determine the various emotions projected and explain how you arrived at your conclusion.
2. Spend a day specifically looking for emotional cues in the people with whom you interact. Did paying attention to emotional cues improve communication?

Practising Skills



Reinforcing Skills

