Emotions and Organizational Behavior

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During the past two decades, substantial advances have been made in understanding the structure and role of affect and emotions in human behavior. Industrial/organizational (I/O) psychologists and other applied researchers have recognized the relevance of such advances for understanding workplace behavior, producing a number of recent articles, special issues (Deiner, 1999; Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000; Larsen, 2000; Rosenberg & Fredrickson, 1998; Weiss, 2001), and books (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Zerbe, 2000; Lewis & Haviland-Jones, 2000) on emotions and emotions at work. Building on this progress, a growing number of organizational researchers have begun to integrate these advances into theory and research pertaining to employee cognition, affect, and behavior. In some areas of I/O psychology, such as job satisfaction, new perspectives on affect have begun to reshape the domain (Fisher, 2000; Judge & Hulin, 1993; Weiss & Cropazano, 1996). In other areas, basic research on affect and emotions has been used as a foundation for new perspectives on established topics, such as leadership (Fitness, 2000; Glomb & Hulin, 1997; Lewis, 2000) or group processes (George, 1990). This research is also relevant to such timely issues as employee violence and employee reactions to organizational justice (Cropanzano, Weiss, Suckow, & Grandey, 2000). Concerns with emotions have spawned new areas of research, such as emotional labor in the workplace and its costs and

benefits (Grandey, 2000; Grandey and Brauburger, Chapter Eight, this volume).

Many researchers interested in this topic (and, we suspect, most applied readers of this literature) may not have been exposed to a comprehensive coverage of the scientific literature on emotional regulation. Along with others (Rosenberg & Fredrickson, 1998; Weiss, this volume), we believe there are many advantages to taking a broad perspective when trying to understand emotions, and such a perspective brings the need to cross specialization boundaries within psychology or organizational behavior. The purpose of this volume is twofold: to provide applied psychologists (1) a concise and state-of-the-art scholarly introduction to new developments in this area of inquiry and (2) an overview of how basic theory and research in affect and emotions can influence the science and practice of I/O psychology.

It is important to define emotions carefully and distinguish emotions from moods. Izard (1993) notes that defining emotions is a complex issue, but he stresses that the experiential component of emotions—the experience of pain, anger, and joy—is central and manifests itself as an action tendency, a biasing of perceptions, or a feeling state. He maintains that emotional experiences are activated by neural, sensorimotor, motivational, and cognitive systems, but he also notes that neural systems can activate emotions without cognitive mediation. Emotions are generally of short duration and are associated with a specific stimulus; mood, in contrast, is more enduring, more diffuse, and less related to specific stimuli (Frijda, 1993). Emotions also have a stronger linkage with specific behaviors than moods do. *Affect* is a more general term and can refer to either mood or emotions.

We should also stress at the outset that our focus is on emotions and emotional regulation in normal, healthy individuals. Clinical applications and pathological aspects of emotional regulation are beyond the scope of this book. Readers interested in such issues might consult excellent works by Keltner and Kring (1998) on psychopathology and the social aspects of emotions or work by Globus and Arpaia (1994), which explains emotion-based disorders from a neural network perspective.

Among the many reasons to be interested in human emotions in the workplace, foremost is that as applied scientists, one of our

aspirations is to increase human welfare. Rather than being objective, welfare is subjectively defined by people in terms of their affective reactions to organizational events. Consequently, if we can find ways to alter organizational practices, social processes, or task designs in ways that increase positive emotions and reduce negative emotions, the welfare of organizational members is directly increased.

Emotions are also central components of human reactions to many types of stimuli. Hence, they can directly cue specific behaviors, as well as indirectly influence behavior by their effect on physiological, cognitive, or social processes. For these reasons, attempts to change behaviors in organizations to more effective patterns may require that emotions also be changed, as is often the case with organizational interventions.

Emotions and Organizational Behavior

Emotions can influence organizational behavior in a number of ways, as we discuss in the following sections. Some of the ways are direct, such as the triggering of behavior by emotions, whereas other ways are indirect, such as emotions influencing behavior through mediating mechanisms like motivation or cognition.

### Emotions as an Environment-Behavior Interface

Scherer (1994) provides a compelling reason for concern with emotions. He maintains that emotions are an interface that mediates between environmental input and behavioral output. This interface has strong ties to motivational-implementation systems and helps ensure that the central needs of an organism (or social system) are met. In lower-level organisms, such needs are generally met by hard-wired responses, producing a rigid link between specific releaser stimuli and behavioral responses. In human beings, the emotional interface decouples stimuli and responses, allowing for much greater flexibility in adjusting to environmental differences. Scherer argues that flexibility accrues from the combination of two processes. First, while emotions prepare and energize appropriate action tendencies, responses are not immediately released, providing a latency period in which additional information

can be processed and alternative responses considered. Second, this latency period is shorter for stronger emotions. Thus, in critical situations, which produce strong emotional responses, pre-programmed responses can be reliably executed, but in less critical situations, continuous evaluation and more thoughtful choice of behavior can occur. Importantly, this continuous evaluation often takes into account the reactions of others.

Scherer's perspective helps us understand why the basis for emotions and related responses can change with emotional intensity. Figure 1.1 shows this relation graphically, emphasizing that as the latency between the triggering stimulus and responses increases, there is wider participation of cognitive and social processes in emotional responses, and consequently, the range of potential affective and behavioral reactions increases. As Scherer notes, intense emotions produce behavior reliably and rapidly; less intense emotions result in more variable, delayed behavior. This functional principle is important for understanding how cognitive and social-organizational processes influence emotions and behavior. Cognitive processes, which are the focus of Chapter Four, are often effective in modulating emotional responses, but when individuals are under cognitive load, attempts at emotional regulation are often ineffective (Wegner, 1994). The modulation of emotions and behavioral responses by social and organizational processes is also important, but it may be overlooked because social communications regarding emotions are often implicit. This topic is briefly addressed in this section as well as in separate chapters by Pugh and George (respectively, Chapters Five and Six).

The modulation of emotional responses to potentially threatening situations by social processes is an important issue for I/O psychologists to understand. This social component of emotions is often automatic and unrecognized, and as a result, it may cause difficulty in many organizational processes. Emotional responses can be intensified by reactions such as panic in others, or they can be reduced by the reassuring calm responses of others, particularly formal leaders. Modulation of emotional reactions by social cues would need to operate reliably and quickly to complement the emotional interface that Scherer discusses; hence, it is likely to be produced by relatively automatic reactions to the nonverbal signals of others. Such reactions tend to be learned through socialization

**Figure 1.1. Increased Behavioral Variability as
Greater Latency Between Stimulus and Response
Permits More Cognitive Processing.**
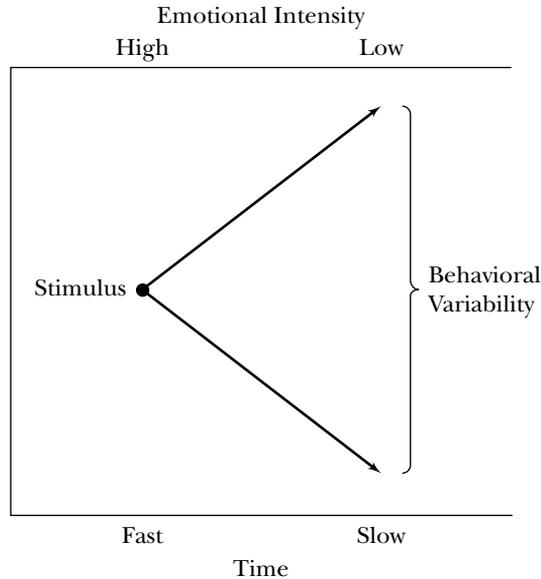
to a particular culture, although some have argued that there are universal aspects to facial expressions of emotions (Keltner & Ekman, 2000). Because such responses are relatively automatic, they are rarely part of formal organizational training processes. Instead, a worker's implicit understanding of how to use social cues to modulate emotions is likely to predominate, and that understanding may have been learned in different situations where emotional expression was more common (such as family or social situations) than in typical work situations.

Emotion-Behavior Linkages

Most theories of emotions recognize the linkage between specific emotions and specific types of behaviors (Fredrickson, 1998; Levenson, 1994). Indeed, this linkage is so reliable that Russell and Barrett (1999) propose that there are prototypical emotional events

that follow specific emotions (*core affects,* in their terms), and Lazarus (1999) develops a complementary view maintaining that proto-typical events lead to specific emotions. For example, in the Russell and Barrett (1999) theory, emotions like fear, anger, love, or pity may each trigger a unique prototypical sequence of events involving core affect, appropriate overt behavior with respect to the emotional stimuli, attention toward and appraisal of the emotional stimuli, emotional experience, and neurochemical changes. The emotion-behavior linkage also depends on whether emotions are positive or negative (Fossum & Barrett, 2000), with positive emotions being associated with slower and more variable responses than negative emotions (Fredrickson, 1998).

Negative emotions often have strong associations with specific types of behavior, and strong negative emotions are likely to produce such behaviors with minimal guidance from concomitant cognitive processing because responses occur too fast for much processing to occur. For this reason, regulating the experience of strong negative emotions is an important aspect of behavioral regulation. Lord and Harvey (Chapter Four, this volume) address this issue from an information processing perspective, building on an emotional regulation framework that Gross (1998) suggested. Grandey (2000; Grandey and Brauburger, Chapter Eight, this volume) addresses this issue in the context of emotional labor, but it may be equally relevant to many other applied issues, such as workplace aggression. The important point for application is that many work behaviors may have strong and consistent linkages to negative emotions. In such cases, attempts to change behavioral patterns without first changing associated emotions are likely to be unsuccessful.

Positive emotions have garnered less attention than negative emotions, for several reasons: they are less differentiated, they are not associated with specific problems needing solutions, and they are not associated with specific action tendencies thought to be necessary for survival (Fredrickson, 1998). Nevertheless, positive emotions may have critical functions that are necessary for the survival of species or the effective functioning of organizations, although intense positive affect may have psychic costs as well (Diener, Colvin, Pavot, & Allman, 1991). Fredrickson (1998) has developed a "broaden-and-build" perspective on the value of positive emotions. She maintains that positive emotions are important in that they broaden attention and create

situations where cognitive, physical, and social resources can be built. For example, she maintains that joy promotes play, which helps to build physical, social, and intellectual skills. Similarly, contentment broadens the self and worldview and creates the urge to integrate; love triggers other positive emotions and solidifies individual and social resources.

Generalizing from Fredrickson's perspective, positive emotions should promote a number of important organizational processes, such as skill building, creativity, effective social relations, organizational commitment, collective orientations, and prosocial behaviors. Fredrickson also notes that positive emotions serve as an antidote to the harmful physiological and cognitive effects of negative emotions. Consistent with such arguments, recent organization research has again raised the issue of whether happier workers are more productive. Wright and Staw (1999) suggest that they might be, but only when happiness is defined in enduring dispositional rather than more variable state terms. Dispositional positive affect may be required to build individual and social resources.

Emotions and Motivation

Emotions play an integral role in motivation. Individual differences in emotional tendencies interact with organizational events and social interactions to yield emotional reactions that importantly shape an individual's goals and the persistence of effort in the face of obstacles. The influence of emotional reactions to organizational events, such as downsizing, may seriously weaken personal commitment to organizationally desired goals and, in turn, job performance.

Emotional processes are also implicated in the accomplishment of complex and longer-term goals. Individual differences in the regulation of different emotions, such as anger and boredom, play a central role in the effective pursuit of goals that involve sustained attentional effort. In organizational contexts, such individual differences may be particularly important in the prediction of training outcomes and performance in jobs that involve substantial autonomous functioning.

Motivational processes also play an important role in the elicitation and expression of emotions. Theories of cognitive appraisal, for example, posit the critical importance of appraisals of personal

significance for the elicitation of emotional responses. As such, the emotional significance of an event depends on the extent to which the event is appraised as relevant to the individual's goal concerns.

Implications of the interplay of motivation and emotion for organizations are discussed in several chapters in this book. For example, Kanfer and Kantrowitz (Chapter Thirteen) address motivation-emotion relations in the context of maturation and skill training. Worline, Wrzesniewski, and Rafaeli (Chapter Nine) and MacDermid, Seery, and Weiss (Chapter Twelve) discuss the role of emotions from the perspective of an individual's motives in achievement and balancing work-family demands, respectively.

Emotions and Social Processes

An important characteristic of emotion-evoking stimuli and emotional reactions is that they are often very fast, frequently producing initial effects before conscious, symbolic-level processing can occur. This aspect may have had critical survival value when fast reactions were needed to avoid threats, but it also has an important social consequence. That is, it allows emotions to serve as a rapid, and ubiquitous guide to social interactions. As Levenson (1994) noted, facial expressions, voice tone, and posture communicate how we feel to others and can draw us to or repel us from others. This argument has been developed into a social-functional approach to emotions, which posits that emotions coordinate interactions related to formation and maintenance of social relationships (Keltner & Kring, 1998). Three assumptions underlie this theory: (1) expression of emotions signals socially relevant information, (2) evoked responses in others are associated with benefits, and (3) emotions serve as incentives for other people's actions. For example, Keltner and Kring note that the experience and expression of embarrassment evoke forgiveness in others and produce reconciliation after social transgressions.

Because emotions are communicated and perceived rapidly, such processes often occur outside awareness, but they can still have an impact on important social processes, such as trust in others, perceptions of honesty, interpersonal attraction, and group commitment. The capacity to read and display emotions can be learned explicitly (emotional labor is a good example), but nor-

mally such learning may be largely implicit, reflecting regularities in family, ethnic, organizational, or national cultures. To the extent that rules for displaying and reading emotions are hard-wired, they reflect a repository for the influences of evolution, as Levenson (1994) notes. However, to the extent that they are learned, they provide a means of transmitting a culturally based structure for social interactions or organizational processes (see Ashforth and Saks, Chapter Ten, this volume). To be effective, applied efforts at understanding or changing social interactions at work need to be attuned to this continuous, often implicit emotional structure.

Emotions and Information Processing

Emotions are both bodily states and mental states, and they are also part of a larger information processing system (Clore, 1994; Isen, 2000). Considerable research shows that styles of information processing are influenced by both moods and emotions. Strong emotions can short-circuit cognitive processing, which can often be too cumbersome, too excessive, and too inconclusive for action (Levenson, 1994). Moods, in contrast, often have more subtle effects on information processing. For example, positive moods have been associated with tendencies toward heuristic processing (but see Isen, 2000), and negative moods are associated with more careful, systematic processing. Positive mood elicits the use of stereotypes, scripts, and categorical social information processing, whereas negative mood increases the use of individuating information (Gohm & Clore, 2000). Positive mood also elicits more exploration and enjoyment of new ideas and can enhance creativity (Isen, 2000).

Such general relations between mood and the extent of conscious processing are common (Isen & Baron, 1991; Gohm & Clore, 2000); however, others have made the argument that we need to describe specific processes to understand the relationship of cognitions and emotions (LeDoux, 1994; LeDoux & Phelps, 2000). That is, it is more useful to examine how specific emotions (fear, anger, pleasure) and specific types of cognitive processes (object perceptions, memory) interact than to make general arguments regarding the nature of cognitive-emotional interactions. One good starting point for developing greater specificity would be the circumplex model of Russell and Barrett (1999), which links core

affect (basic emotional categories) to prototypical emotional episodes and specific cognitive and behavioral processes.

To understand the interaction of emotions and cognitions, it also helps to think of the mind as a "wet computer"—that is, a spongelike mass of neurons in a constantly changing and locally differentiated chemical medium. In such computational hardware, information processing properties change as different chemicals are supplied to or depleted from physically distinct subsystems. Thus, processing networks can be broadened or narrowed and made more or less sensitive by neurochemical changes associated with hormones involved in emotional reactions (Globus & Arpaia, 1994). For example, fear releases stress-related hormones (glucocorticoids and epinephrine). When glucocorticoids reach the brain, they inhibit the hippocampal-dependent (conscious or declarative) memory but enhance the amygdala-dependent (emotional) memory. Consequently, intense stress impairs the ability to form conscious memories but enhances the capacity for emotional memories. Such chemical modulation by emotions shows why the "wet computer" metaphor is more useful for seeing emotion-cognitive interactions than using the typical modern computer as a model of the human mind.

Evolution and Emotions

Much of the literature on emotions has strong ties to evolutionary psychology; thus, understanding emotions helps us grasp the way that evolution has shaped and continues to limit human behavior. Cosmides and Tooby (2000) stress that cognitive, behavioral, and emotional systems were all haphazardly but exquisitely designed by adding specific components that dealt effectively with long-enduring, ancestral adaptive problems. Yet in modern humans, many of these components are co-opted and interact to produce emotions and behavior. The interaction of emotional and cognitive systems is a good example of how specific components can interact.

The interaction of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional systems often underlies many other human phenomena, and adopting an evolutionary perspective helps to bring such interactions into focus. For example, one argument that evolutionary psychologists and emotional researchers often make is that strong negative emo-

tions arise from the type of events that had important survival value for earlier humans. Emotions can then serve as a trigger for the type of behaviors that would have had adaptive value to ancient humans. However, this does not mean that the same emotions or emotion-related behaviors are instrumental in contemporary life or modern organizations. Hence, cultural, social and intraindividual processes are needed to regulate negative emotions and associated behavior. Appropriate socialization of emotional regulation and emotional displays may therefore be necessary for the effective functioning of organizations (Ashforth and Saks, Chapter Ten, this volume). Consistent with this argument, Mastenbroek (2000) views such socialization procedures as an important development that predates industrial organizations.

Another important point related to an evolutionary perspective is to recognize that the ability to work as a group and manage social processes was pivotal in human evolution. Consequently, emotions have a fundamental linkage with social capacities, providing a nonverbal means to communicate emotions through facial expressions, body posture, and voice tone. This heritage is ubiquitous in contemporary human interaction, and it provides an underlying structure for many social processes. When we overlook such processes in investigating organizational phenomena, we miss an important component of the processes we are studying. For example, studies of social processes such as charismatic or transformational leadership have often focused on abstract properties such as a leader's vision, while ignoring the effects of a leader's nonverbal behavior. Yet recent work shows that nonverbal behavior explains much more variance in perceptions of charismatic leadership than does visionary content (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999), which is not surprising when we think in terms of the nonverbal, emotional structure for social interactions shaped by evolutionary processes.

Objectives and Plan of This Book

Clearly, there are many theoretical and practical reasons for being interested in emotions at work. In this book, we seek a middle ground between the scientific literature on this topic and the desire of many practice-oriented individuals to apply thinking and findings on emotions in real-world situations. Thus, in Parts One

and Two, we develop the scientific and methodological framework needed to address the applied issues covered in Part Three.

This book is divided into four parts that address the major themes: foundations, regulatory processes, applications to work situations, and issues and future directions. Part One consists of the first three chapters that, in addition to this introductory chapter, cover the historical and conceptual foundations in the emotions literature (Chapter Two) as well as methodological techniques and concerns (Chapter Three).

Processes related to emotional regulation and level of analysis concerns are examined in Chapters Four through Six in Part Two. Chapter Four maintains that information processing is guided by an emotional architecture that complements the neural network and symbolic architectures that underlie most popular information processing models. Chapters Five and Six illustrate that emotions unfold differently as the complexity of the social context increases. Chapter Five examines effects associated with individual differences, as well as constraints from dyadic interaction partners, and Chapter Six examines group and organizational constraints on emotions and emotion-related behaviors. In combination, these three chapters provide a basis for understanding how cognitive, personality, and social processes affect emotional regulation and expression and how these processes, in turn, affect organizational behavior.

Part Three turns to more specific applied issues, such as aggression and workplace violence, recruitment and selection, customer service, cross-cultural differences, performance in challenging situations, and work-family conflict. That emotions are central to such a wide range of applied topics illustrates the need for scholars and practitioners interested in organizational behavior to understand emotions at work better.

The past several years have been characterized by a renewed scholarly and practical interest in emotion. Although the chapters in this book show that much progress has been made, they also identify many unresolved issues and areas needing research. The two chapters in Part Four thus describe and catalogue such issues and propose future research agendas for understanding emotions and organizational behavior. Both chapters also provide integrative frameworks to guide future research and practice.

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