

4

Emotions and Moods

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Differentiate between emotions and moods.
2. Identify the sources of emotions and moods.
3. Show the impact emotional labor has on employees.
4. Describe affective events theory.
5. Describe emotional intelligence.
6. Identify strategies for emotion regulation.
7. Apply concepts about emotions and moods to specific OB issues.

★ Chapter Warm-up

If your professor has chosen to assign this, go to the Assignments section of mymanagementlab.com to complete the chapter warm-up.

WHAT ARE EMOTIONS AND MOODS?

In our analysis of the role of emotions and moods in the workplace, we need three terms that are closely intertwined: *affect*, *emotions*, and *moods*. **Affect** is a generic term that covers a broad range of feelings, including both emotions and moods.¹ **Emotions** are intense feelings directed at someone or something.² **Moods** are less intense feelings than emotions and often arise without a specific event acting as a stimulus.³ Exhibit 4-1 shows the relationships among affect, emotions, and moods.

First, as the exhibit shows, *affect* is a broad term that encompasses emotions and moods. Second, there are differences between emotions and moods. Emotions are more

Affect

A broad range of feelings that people experience.

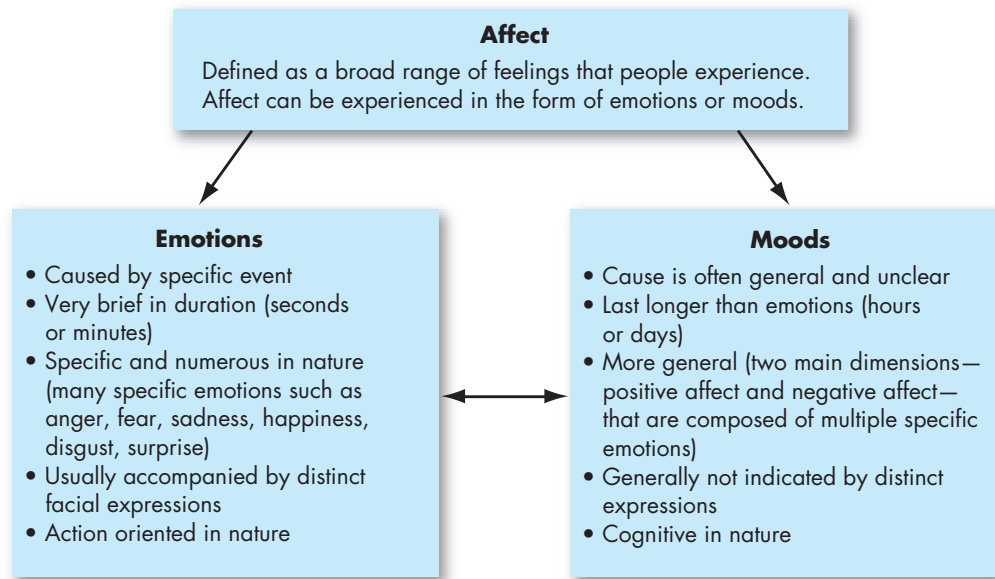
Emotions

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 4-1
Affect, Emotions,
and Moods



likely to be caused by a specific event and are more fleeting than moods. 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.⁴

Affect, emotions, and moods are separable in theory; in practice, the distinction isn't always defined. When we review the OB topics on emotions and moods, you may see more information about emotions in one area and more about moods in another. This is simply the state of the research. Let's start with a review of the basic emotions.

The Basic Emotions

How many emotions are there? There are dozens, including anger, contempt, enthusiasm, envy, fear, frustration, disappointment, embarrassment, disgust, happiness, hate, hope, jealousy, joy, love, pride, surprise, and sadness. Numerous researchers have tried to limit them to a fundamental set.⁵ Other scholars argue that it makes no sense to think in terms of “basic” emotions, because even emotions we rarely experience, such as shock, can have a powerful effect on us.⁶ It's unlikely psychologists or philosophers will ever completely agree on a set of basic emotions, or even on whether there is such a thing. Still, many researchers agree on six universal emotions—anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust, and surprise. We sometimes mistake happiness for surprise, but rarely do we confuse happiness and disgust.



Psychologists have tried to identify basic emotions by studying how we express them. Of our myriad ways of expressing emotions, facial expressions have proved one of the most difficult to interpret.⁷ One problem is that some emotions are too complex to be easily represented on our faces. Second, people may not interpret emotions from vocalizations (such as sighs or screams) the same way across cultures. One study found that while vocalizations conveyed meaning in all cultures, the specific emotions people

perceived varied. For example, Himba participants (from northwestern Namibia) did not agree with Western participants that crying meant sadness or a growl meant anger.⁸ Lastly, cultures have norms that govern emotional expression, so the way we *experience* an emotion isn't always the same as the way we *show* it. For example, people in the Middle East and the United States recognize a smile as indicating happiness, but in the Middle East, a smile is also often interpreted as a sign of sexual attraction, so women have learned not to smile at men.

Cultural differences regarding emotions can be apparent between countries that are individualistic and collectivistic—broad terms that describe the general outlook of people in a society. **Individualistic** countries are those in which people see themselves as independent and desire personal goals and personal control. Individualistic values are present in North America and Western Europe, for example. **Collectivistic** countries are those in which people see themselves as interdependent and seek community and group goals. Collectivistic values are found in Asia, Africa, and South America, for example.⁹ For this application, we find that in collectivist countries, people are more likely to believe another's emotional displays are connected to their personal relationship, while people in individualistic cultures don't think others' emotional expressions are directed at them.

Moral Emotions

Researchers have been studying what are called **moral emotions**; that is, emotions that have moral implications because of our instant judgment of the situation that evokes them. Examples of moral emotions include sympathy for the suffering of others, guilt about our own immoral behavior, anger about injustice done to others, and contempt for those who behave unethically.

Another example is the disgust we feel about violations of moral norms, called *moral disgust*. Moral disgust is different from disgust. Say you stepped in cow dung by mistake—you might feel disgusted by it, but not moral disgust—you probably wouldn't make a moral judgment. In contrast, say you watched a video of a police officer making a sexist or racist slur. You might feel disgusted in a different way because it offends your sense of right and wrong. In fact, you might feel a variety of emotions based on your moral judgment of the situation.¹⁰

The Basic Moods: Positive and Negative Affect

Emotions can be fleeting, but moods can endure... for quite a while. As a first step toward studying the effect of moods and emotions in the workplace, we classify emotions into two categories: positive and negative. Positive emotions—such as joy and gratitude—express a favorable evaluation or feeling. Negative emotions—such as anger and guilt—express the opposite. Keep in mind that emotions can't be neutral. Being neutral is being nonemotional.¹¹

The two categories of emotions represent overall mood states, known as positive and negative affect (see Exhibit 4-2). We can think of **positive affect** as a mood dimension consisting of positive emotions such as excitement, enthusiasm, and elation at the high end (high positive affect) and boredom, depression, and fatigue at the low end (low positive affect, or lack of positive affect). **Negative affect** is a mood dimension consisting of nervousness, stress, and anxiety at the high end (high negative affect) and contentedness, calmness, and serenity at the low end (low negative affect, or lack of negative affect).



Individualistic

Countries/cultures in which people see themselves as independent and desire personal goals and personal control. Individualistic values are present in North America and Western Europe, for example.

Collectivistic

Cultural difference regarding emotions can be apparent between countries that are individualistic and collectivistic—broad terms that describe the general outlook of people in a society (which are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, Chapter 5).

Moral emotions

Emotions that have moral implications because of our instant judgment of the situation that evokes them.

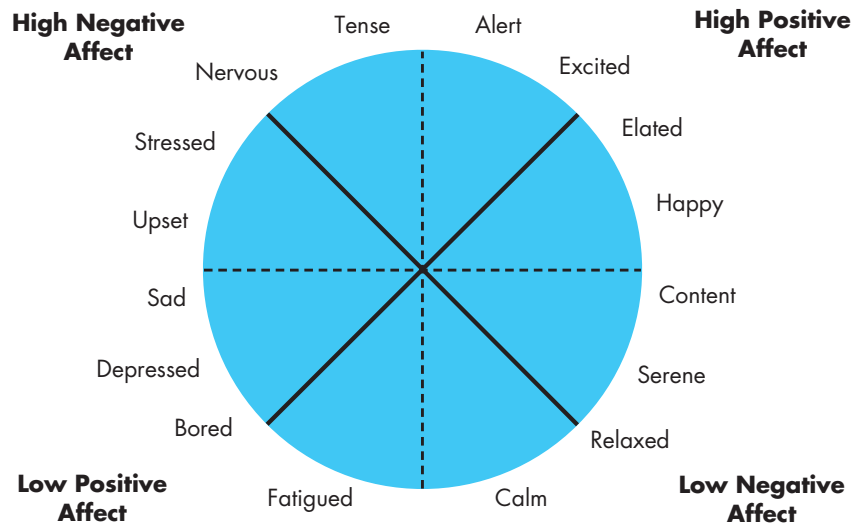
Positive affect

A mood dimension that consists of specific positive emotions such as excitement, self-assurance, and cheerfulness at the high end and boredom, sluggishness, and tiredness at the low end.

Negative affect

A mood dimension that consists of emotions such as nervousness, stress, and anxiety at the high end and relaxation, tranquility, and poise at the low end.

EXHIBIT 4-2
The Affective Circumplex



While we rarely experience both positive and negative affect at the same time, over time people do differ in how much they experience of each. Some people (we might call them emotional or intense) may experience quite a bit of high positive and high negative affect over, say, a week’s time. Others (we might call them unemotional or phlegmatic) experience little of either. And still others may experience one much more predominately than the other.

Experiencing Moods and Emotions



Positivity offset
 The tendency of most individuals to experience a mildly positive mood at zero input (when nothing in particular is going on).

As if it weren’t complex enough to consider the many distinct emotions and moods a person might identify, the reality is that we each experience moods and emotions differently. For most people, positive moods are somewhat more common than negative moods. Indeed, research finds a **positivity offset**, meaning that at zero input (when nothing in particular is going on), most individuals experience a mildly positive mood.¹² This appears to be true for employees in a wide range of job settings. For example, one study of customer-service representatives in a British call center revealed that people reported experiencing positive moods 58 percent of the time, despite the stressful environment.¹³ Another research finding is that negative emotions lead to negative moods.



There is much to be learned in exploring cultural differences. Some cultures embrace negative emotions, such as Japan and Russia, while others emphasize positive emotions and expressions, such as Mexico and Brazil.¹⁴ There may also be a difference in the value of negative emotions between collectivist and individualist countries, and this difference may be the reason negative emotions are less detrimental to the health of Japanese than Americans.¹⁵ For example, the Chinese consider negative emotions—while not always pleasant—as potentially more useful and constructive than do Americans.

The Function of Emotions

Emotions may be a mystery, but they can be critical to an effectively functioning workplace. For example, employees with more positive emotions demonstrate higher

performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; see Chapter 1), less turnover and counterproductive work behavior (CWB; see Chapter 3), particularly when they feel supported by their organizations in their effort to do well in their jobs.¹⁶ Gratefulness and awe have also been shown to positively predict OCB,¹⁷ which in turn increases trust and emotional expressions of concern.¹⁸ Let's discuss two critical areas—rationality and ethicality—in which emotions can enhance performance.

DO EMOTIONS MAKE US IRRATIONAL? How often have you heard someone say, “Oh, you’re just being emotional?” You might have been offended. Observations like this suggest that rationality and emotion are in conflict, and by exhibiting emotion, you are acting irrationally. The perceived association between the two is so strong that some researchers argue displaying emotions such as sadness to the point of crying is so toxic to a career that we should leave the room rather than allow others to witness it.¹⁹ This perspective suggests the demonstration or even experience of emotions can make us seem weak, brittle, or irrational. However, this is wrong.

Research increasingly indicates that emotions are critical to rational thinking. Brain injury studies in particular suggest we must have the ability to experience emotions to be rational. Why? Because our emotions provide a context for how we understand the world around us. For instance, a recent study indicated that individuals in a negative mood are better able to discern truthful information than people in a happy mood.²⁰ Therefore, if we have a concern about someone telling the truth, shouldn't we conduct an inquiry while we are actively concerned, rather than wait until we cheer up? There may be benefits to this, or maybe not, depending on all the factors including the range of our emotions. The keys are to acknowledge the effect that emotions and moods are having on us, and to not discount our emotional responses as irrational or invalid.

DO EMOTIONS MAKE US ETHICAL? A growing body of research has begun to examine the relationship between emotions and moral attitudes.²¹ It was previously believed that, like decision making in general, most ethical decision making was based on higher-order cognitive processes, but the research on moral emotions increasingly questions this perspective. Numerous studies suggest that moral judgments are largely based on feelings rather than on cognition, even though we tend to see our moral boundaries as logical and reasonable, not as emotional.

To some degree, our beliefs are shaped by our peer, interest, and work groups which influence our perceptions of others, resulting in unconscious responses and a feeling that our shared emotions are “right.” Unfortunately, this feeling sometimes allows us to justify purely emotional reactions as rationally “ethical.”²² We also tend to judge out-group members (anyone who is not in our group) more harshly for moral transgressions than in-group members, even when we are trying to be objective.²³ In addition, perhaps to restore an emotional sense of fair play, we are likely to spitefully want outgroup members to be punished.²⁴

SOURCES OF EMOTIONS AND MOODS

Have you ever said, “I got up on the wrong side of the bed today.” Have you ever snapped at a coworker or family member for no reason? If you have, you probably wonder where those emotions and moods originated. Here we discuss some of the most commonly accepted influences.

Affect intensity

Individual differences in the strength with which individuals experience their emotions.



Personality

Moods and emotions have a personality trait component, meaning that some people have built-in, natural tendencies to experience certain moods and emotions more frequently than others do. People also experience the same emotions with different intensities; the degree to which they experience them is called their **affect intensity**.²⁵ Affectively intense people experience both positive and negative emotions deeply: when they're sad, they're really sad, and when they're happy, they're really happy.

Time of Day

Moods vary by the time of day. A fascinating study assessed patterns by analyzing millions of Twitter messages from across the globe.²⁶ The researchers noted the presence of words connoting positive affect (happy, enthused, excited) and negative affect (sad, angry, anxious). You can see the trends they observed in the positive affect part of Exhibit 4-3. Daily fluctuations in mood followed a similar pattern in most countries. These results are comparable to previous research. A major difference, though, happens in the evening. Whereas most research suggests that positive affect tends to drop after 7 P.M., this study suggests that it *increases* before the midnight decline. We have to wait for further research to see which description is accurate. The negative affect trends in this study were more consistent with past research, showing that negative affect is lowest in the morning and tends to increase over the course of the day and evening.



Day of the Week

Are people in their best moods on the weekends? In most cultures that is true—for example, U.S. adults tend to experience their highest positive affect on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and their lowest on Monday.²⁷ As shown in Exhibit 4-3, again based on the study of Twitter messages, that tends to be true in several other cultures as well. For Germans and Chinese, positive affect is highest from Friday to Sunday and lowest on Monday. This isn't the case in all cultures, however. As the exhibit shows, in Japan positive affect is higher on Monday than on either Friday or Saturday.

As for negative affect, Monday is the highest negative-affect day across most cultures. However, in some countries, negative affect is lower on Friday and Saturday than on Sunday. It may be that while Sunday is enjoyable as a day off (and thus we have higher positive affect), we also get a bit stressed about the week ahead (which is why negative affect is higher).



Weather

When do you think you would be in a better mood—when it's 70 degrees and sunny, or on a gloomy, cold, rainy day? Many people believe their mood is tied to the weather. However, a fairly large and detailed body of evidence suggests weather has little effect on mood, at least for most people.²⁸ **Illusory correlation**, which occurs when we associate two events that in reality have no connection, explains why people tend to *think* weather influences them. For example, employees may be more productive on bad weather days, a study in Japan and the United States recently indicated, but not because of mood—instead, the worse weather removed some work distractions.²⁹

Illusory correlation

The tendency of people to associate two events when in reality there is no connection.

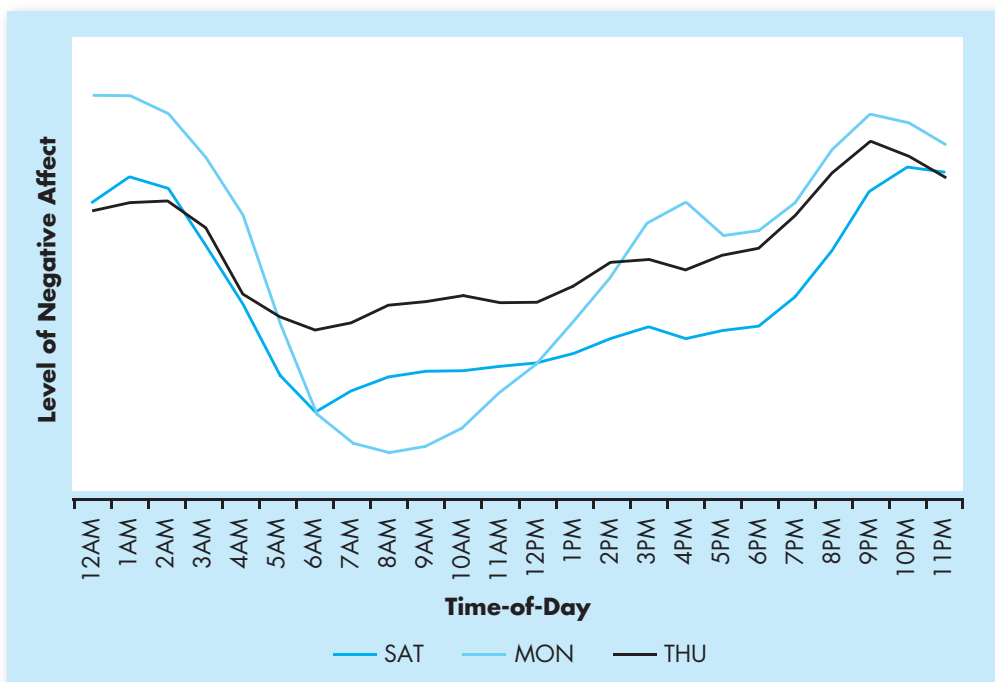
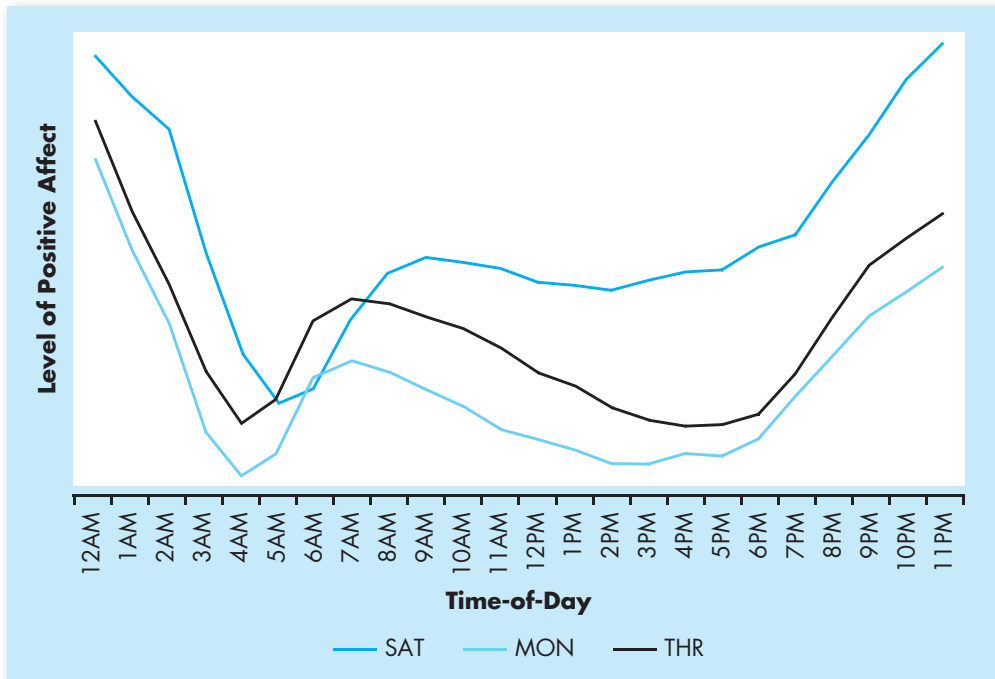


EXHIBIT 4-3

Time-of-Day Effects on Mood of U.S. Adults as Rated from Twitter Postings

Sources: Based on S. A. Golder and M. W. Macy, "Diurnal and Seasonal Mood Vary with Work, Sleep, and Daylength Across Diverse Cultures," *Science* 333 (2011), 1878–1881; A. Elejalde-Ruiz, "Seize the day," *Chicago Tribune* (September 5, 2012), downloaded June 20, 2013 from <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/>.

Note: Based on analysis of U.S. Twitter postings and coding of words that represent positive feelings (delight, enthusiasm) and negative feelings (fear, guilt). Lines represent percent of total words in Twitter post that convey these moods.

Stress

As you might imagine, stressful events at work (a nasty e-mail, impending deadline, loss of a big sale, reprimand from the boss, etc.) can negatively affect moods. The effects of stress also build over time. As the authors of one study noted, “A constant diet of even low-level stressful events has the potential to cause workers to experience gradually increasing levels of strain over time.”³⁰ Mounting levels of stress can worsen our moods, as we experience more negative emotions. Although sometimes we thrive on it, most of us find stress usually takes a toll on our mood. In fact, when situations are overly emotionally charged and stressful, we have a natural response to disengage, to literally look away.³¹

Sleep

U.S. adults report sleeping less than adults did a generation ago.³² According to researchers and public health specialists, 41 million U.S. workers sleep less than six hours per night and suffer from sleep deprivation. Sleep quality affects moods and decision making, and increased fatigue puts workers at risk of disease, injury, and depression.³³ Poor or reduced sleep also makes it difficult to control emotions. Even one bad night’s sleep makes us more angry and risk-prone.³⁴ Poor sleep impairs job satisfaction³⁵ and makes us less able to make ethical judgments.³⁶ On the positive side, increased regular sleep enhances creativity, performance, and career success.

Exercise

You often hear that people should exercise to improve their mood. Does “sweat therapy” really work? It appears so. Research consistently shows exercise enhances people’s positive moods.³⁷ While not terribly strong overall, the effects are strongest for those who are depressed.

Age

Do young people experience more extreme positive emotions (so-called youthful exuberance) than older people? Surprisingly, no. What about age and satisfaction? Regarding life satisfaction, there is a cultural assumption that older people are more prone to depression and loneliness. Actually, a study of adults ages 18 to 94 found that positive moods increased with age. “Contrary to the popular view that youth is the best time of life, the peak of emotional life may not occur until well into the seventh decade,” researcher Laura Carstensen said.³⁸

Sex



Many people believe women are more emotional than men. Is there any truth to this? Evidence does confirm women experience emotions more intensely, tend to “hold onto” emotions longer than men, and display more frequent expressions of both positive and negative emotions, except anger.³⁹ One study of participants from 37 different countries found that men consistently reported higher levels of powerful emotions like anger, whereas women reported more powerless emotions like sadness and fear. Thus, there are some sex differences in the experience and expression of emotions.⁴⁰

Let's put together what we've learned about emotions and moods with workplace coping strategies, beginning with emotional labor.

EMOTIONAL LABOR

Employees expend physical and mental labor by putting body and mind, respectively, into their jobs. But jobs also require **emotional labor**, an employee's expression of organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions at work. Emotional labor is a key component of effective job performance. We expect flight attendants to be cheerful, funeral directors to be sad, and doctors to be emotionally neutral. At the least, your managers expect you to be courteous, not hostile, in your interactions with coworkers.

Emotional labor

A situation in which an employee expresses organizationally desired emotions during interpersonal transactions at work.

Controlling Emotional Displays

The way we experience an emotion is obviously not always the same as the way we show it. To analyze emotional labor, we divide emotions into *felt* or *displayed emotions*.⁴¹

Felt emotions are our actual emotions. In contrast, **displayed emotions** are those the organization requires workers to show and considers appropriate in a given job. They're not innate; they're learned, and they may or may not coincide with felt emotions. For instance, research suggests that in U.S. workplaces, it is expected that employees should typically display positive emotions like happiness and excitement, and suppress negative emotions like fear, anger, disgust, and contempt.⁴²

Felt emotions

An individual's actual emotions.

Displayed emotions

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

Displaying fake emotions requires us to suppress real ones. **Surface acting** is hiding inner feelings and emotional expressions in response to display rules. Surface acting is literally "putting on a face" of appropriate response to a given situation, like smiling at a customer when you don't feel like it. Surface acting on a daily basis can also lead to emotional exhaustion at home, work-family conflict, and insomnia.⁴³ In the workplace, daily surface acting leads to exhaustion, fewer OCBs,⁴⁴ increased stress, and decreased job satisfaction.⁴⁵ Perhaps due to the costs of creatively expressing what we don't feel, individuals who *vary* their surface-acting responses may have lower job satisfaction and higher levels of work withdrawal than those who consistently give the same responses.⁴⁶ Employees who engage in surface displays should be given a chance to relax and recharge. For example, a study that looked at how cheerleading instructors spent their breaks from teaching found those who used the time to rest and relax were more effective after their breaks than those who did chores during their breaks.⁴⁷

Surface acting

Hiding one's inner feelings and forgoing emotional expressions in response to display rules.

Deep acting is trying to modify our true inner feelings based on display rules. Surface acting deals with *displayed* emotions, and deep acting deals with *felt* emotions. Deep acting is less psychologically costly than surface acting because we are actually trying to experience the emotion, so we experience less emotional exhaustion. In the workplace, deep acting can have a positive impact. For example, one study in the Netherlands and Germany found that individuals in service jobs earned significantly more direct pay (tips) after they received training in deep acting.⁴⁸ Deep acting has a positive relationship with job satisfaction and job performance.⁴⁹ Employees who can depersonalize or standardize their work interactions that require emotional labor may be able to successfully carry on their acting while thinking of other tasks, thus bypassing the emotional impact.⁵⁰

Deep acting

Trying to modify one's true inner feelings based on display rules.

Emotional dissonance
Inconsistencies between the emotions people feel and the emotions they project.

Mindfulness
Objectively and deliberately evaluating the emotional situation in the moment.



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

Emotional Dissonance and Mindfulness

When employees have to project one emotion *while feeling another*, this disparity is called **emotional dissonance**. Bottled-up feelings of frustration, anger, and resentment can lead to emotional exhaustion. Long-term emotional dissonance is a predictor for job burnout, declines in job performance, and lower job satisfaction.⁵¹

It is important to counteract the effects of emotional labor and emotional dissonance. Research in the Netherlands and Belgium indicates that while surface acting was stressful to employees, **mindfulness**—objectively and deliberately evaluating our emotional situation in the moment—was negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion and positively affected job satisfaction.⁵² When people become non-judgmentally aware of the emotions they are experiencing, they are better able to look at situations more clearly. Mindfulness has been shown to increase the ability to shape our behavioral responses to emotions.⁵³

The concepts within emotional labor make intuitive and organizational sense. Affective events theory, discussed next, fits a job’s emotional labor requirements into a construct with implications for work events, emotional reactions, job satisfaction, and job performance.

AFFECTIVE EVENTS THEORY

We’ve seen that emotions and moods are an important part of our personal and work lives. But how do they influence our job performance and satisfaction? **Affective events theory (AET)** proposes that employees react emotionally to things that happen to them at work, and this reaction influences their job performance and satisfaction.⁵⁴ Say you just found out your company is downsizing. You might experience a variety of negative emotions, causing you to worry that you’ll lose your job. Because it is out of your hands, you may feel insecure and fearful, and spend much of your time worrying rather than working. Needless to say, your job satisfaction will also be down.

Work events trigger positive or negative emotional reactions, to which employees’ personalities and moods predispose them to respond with greater or lesser intensity.⁵⁵ People who score low on emotional stability (see Chapter 5) are more likely to react strongly to negative events, and an emotional response to a given event can depend on mood. Finally, emotions influence a number of performance and satisfaction variables, such as OCB, organizational commitment, level of effort, intention to quit, and workplace deviance.

In sum, AET offers two important messages.⁵⁶ First, emotions provide valuable insights into how workplace events influence employee performance and satisfaction. Second, employees and managers shouldn’t ignore emotions or the events that cause them, even when they appear minor, because they accumulate. The AET framework highlights the emotionality of the workplace and its real outcomes. Emotional intelligence is another framework that may help us understand the impact of emotions on job performance, so we look at that next.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

As the CEO of an international talent company, Terrie Upshur-Lupberger was at a career pinnacle. So why was she resentful and unhappy? A close friend observed, “Terrie, you were out on the skinny branch—you know, the one that breaks easily in a strong wind. You

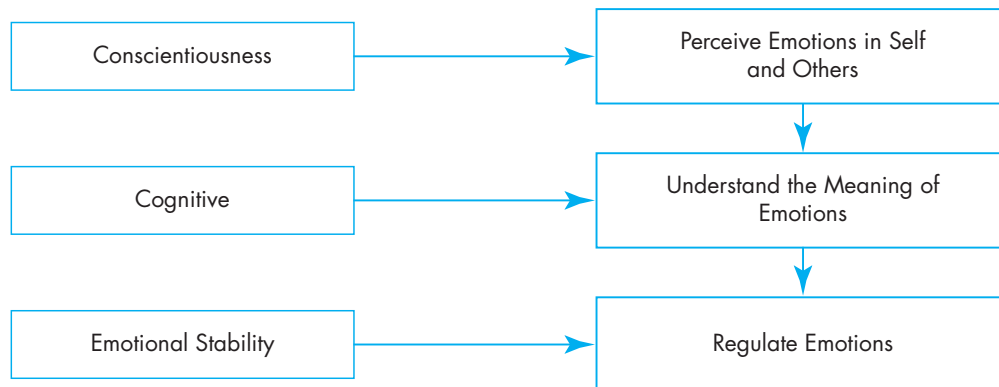


EXHIBIT 4-4
A Cascading Model of Emotional Intelligence

were so busy and overwhelmed and out of touch with your own values, cares, and guiding beliefs that you failed to pay attention to the branch that was about to break.”⁵⁷ According to Upshur-Lupberger, she had failed to notice that her moods constantly swung toward frustration and exhaustion. Her job satisfaction, productivity, relationships, and results suffered. Worst, she was too busy to realize the deficiencies until she was completely depleted. She said, “I learned that, as a leader, you either pay attention to and manage the moods (including your own) in the organization, or . . . you ignore them and pay the price.”⁵⁸ Upshur-Lupberger learned the value of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a person’s ability to: (1) perceive emotions in him or herself and others; (2) understand the meaning of these emotions; and (3) regulate his or her own emotions accordingly, as shown in Exhibit 4-4. People who know their own emotions and are good at reading emotional cues—for instance, knowing why they’re angry and how to express themselves without violating norms—are most likely to have high EI.⁵⁹

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

Several studies suggest EI plays an important role in job performance. One study that used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology found that executive MBA students who performed best on a strategic decision-making task were more likely to incorporate emotion centers of the brain into their choice processes.⁶⁰ One simulation study showed that students who were good at identifying and distinguishing among their own feelings were able to make more profitable investment decisions.⁶¹

Although organizational behavior (OB) is progressing in its understanding of EI, and several studies suggest it plays an important role in job performance, many questions remain unanswered. One relates to proving what EI may predict. For example, while evidence indicates that EI correlates with job performance, the correlation isn’t high and is explained to a large degree by traits such as emotional stability. A second question is about the reliability of EI testing. For example, part of the reason EI has only a modest correlation with job effectiveness is that it is hard to measure—mostly it is measured with self-report inventories, which of course are often far from objective!

All questions aside, EI is wildly popular among consulting firms and in the popular press, and it has accumulated some support in the research literature. Love it or hate it, one thing is for sure—EI is here to stay. So might be our next topic—emotion regulation—an independent concept from emotional labor and emotional intelligence, although they are related.⁶²

Emotion regulation
The process of identifying and modifying felt emotions.

EMOTION REGULATION

Have you ever tried to cheer yourself up when you're feeling down, or calm yourself when you're feeling angry? If so, you have engaged in **emotion regulation**. The central idea behind emotion regulation is to identify and modify the emotions you feel. Recent research suggests that emotion management ability is a strong predictor of task performance for some jobs and for OCB.⁶³ Therefore, in our study of OB, we are interested in *whether* and *how* emotion regulation should be used in the workplace. We begin by identifying which individuals might naturally employ it.

Emotion Regulation Influences and Outcomes

As you might suspect, not everyone is equally good at regulating emotions. Individuals who are higher in the personality trait of neuroticism (see Chapter 5) have more trouble doing so and often find their moods are beyond their ability to control. Individuals who have lower levels of self-esteem are also less likely to try to improve their sad moods, perhaps because they are less likely than others to feel they deserve to be in a good mood.⁶⁴

The workplace environment has an effect on an individual's tendency to employ emotion regulation. In general, diversity in work groups increases the likelihood that you will regulate your emotions. For example, younger employees are likely to regulate their emotions when their work groups include older members.⁶⁵ Racial diversity also has an effect: if diversity is low, the minority may engage in emotion regulation, perhaps to "fit in" with the majority race as much as possible; if diversity is high and many different races are represented, the majority race will employ emotion regulation, perhaps to integrate themselves with the whole group.⁶⁶ These findings suggest a beneficial outcome of diversity—it may cause us to regulate our emotions more consciously and effectively.

While regulating your emotions might seem beneficial, research suggests there is a downside to trying to change the way you feel. Changing your emotions takes effort, and as we noted when discussing emotional labor, this effort can be exhausting. Sometimes attempts to change an emotion actually make the emotion stronger; for example, trying to talk yourself out of being afraid can make you focus more on what scares you, which makes you more afraid.⁶⁷ From another perspective, research suggests that avoiding negative emotional experiences is less likely to lead to positive moods than does seeking out positive emotional experiences.⁶⁸ For example, you're more likely to experience a positive mood if you have a pleasant conversation with a friend than if you avoid an unpleasant conversation with a hostile coworker.

Emotion Regulation Techniques

Researchers of emotion regulation often study the strategies people employ to change their emotions. One related technique of emotion regulation is *emotional suppression*, literally suppressing—blocking or ignoring—initial emotional responses to situations. This response seems to facilitate practical thinking in the short term. However, it appears to be helpful only when a strongly negative event would elicit a distressed emotional reaction in a crisis situation.⁶⁹ For example, a portfolio manager might suppress an emotional reaction to a sudden drop in the value of a stock and therefore be able to clearly decide how to plan. Suppression used in crisis situations appears to help an individual recover from the event emotionally, while suppression used as an everyday emotion regulation technique can take a toll on mental ability, emotional ability, health, and relationships.⁷⁰

While emotion regulation techniques can help us cope with difficult workplace situations, research indicates that the effect varies. For example, one study in Taiwan found that all participants who worked for abusive supervisors reported emotional exhaustion and work withdrawal tendencies, but to different degrees based on the emotion regulation strategies they employed. Thus, while there is much promise in emotion regulation techniques, the best route to a positive workplace is to recruit positive-minded individuals and train leaders to manage their moods, job attitudes, and performance.⁷¹ The best leaders manage emotions as much as they do tasks and activities. The best employees can use their knowledge of emotion regulation to decide when to speak up and how to express themselves effectively.⁷²



Ethics of Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation has important ethical implications. On one end of the continuum, some people might argue that controlling your emotions is unethical because it requires a degree of acting. On the other end, people might argue that all emotions should be controlled so you can take a dispassionate perspective. Both arguments—and all arguments in between—have ethical pros and cons you will have to decide for yourself. Consider the reasons for emotion regulation and the outcomes. Are you regulating your emotions so you don't react inappropriately, or are you regulating your emotions so no one knows what you are thinking? Finally, consider this: you may be able to “fake it 'til you make it.” Acting like you are in a good mood might *put* you in a good mood. In one study, a group of participants was asked to hold only a conversation with a barista serving them at Starbucks, while another group was asked to act happy. The happy actors reported later that they were in much better moods.⁷³

Now that we have studied the role of emotions and moods in OB, let's consider the opportunities for more specific applications that our understanding provides.

★ WATCH IT

If your professor has assigned this, go to the Assignments section of mymanagementlab.com to complete the video exercise titled **East Haven Fire Department: Emotions and Moods**.

OB APPLICATIONS OF EMOTIONS AND MOODS

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

Selection

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

Decision Making

Moods and emotions have effects on decision making that managers should understand. Positive emotions and moods seem to help people make sound decisions. Positive emotions also enhance problem-solving skills, so positive people find better solutions.⁷⁴

OB researchers continue to debate the role of negative emotions and moods in decision making. One recent study suggested that people who are saddened by events may make the same decisions as they would have, absent those events, while people who are angered by events might make stronger (though not necessarily better) choices.⁷⁵ Another study found that participants made choices reflecting more original thinking when in a negative mood.⁷⁶ Still other research indicated that individuals in a negative mood may take higher risks than when in a positive mood.⁷⁷ Taken together, these and other studies suggest negative (and positive) emotions impact decision making, but that there are other variables which require further research.⁷⁸

Creativity

As we see throughout this text, one goal of leadership is to maximize employee productivity through creativity. Creativity is influenced by emotions and moods, but there are two schools of thought on the relationship. Much research suggests that people in good moods tend to be more creative than people in bad moods.⁷⁹ People in good moods produce more ideas and more options, and others find their ideas original.⁸⁰ It seems that people experiencing positive moods or emotions are more flexible and open in their thinking, which may explain why they're more creative.⁸¹ All the activating moods, whether positive *or* negative, seem to lead to more creativity, whereas deactivating moods lead to less.⁸² For example, we discussed earlier that other factors such as fatigue may boost creativity. A study of 428 students found they performed best on a creative problem-solving task when they were fatigued, suggesting that tiredness may free the mind to consider novel solutions.⁸³

Motivation



Several studies have highlighted the importance of moods and emotions on motivation. Giving people performance feedback—whether real or fake—influences their mood, which then influences their motivation.⁸⁴ For example, one study looked at the moods of insurance sales agents in Taiwan.⁸⁵ Agents in a good mood were found to be more helpful toward their coworkers and also felt better about themselves. These factors in turn led to superior performance in the form of higher sales and better supervisor reports of performance.

Leadership



Research indicates that putting people in a good mood makes good sense. Leaders who focus on inspirational goals generate greater optimism, cooperation, and enthusiasm in employees, leading to more positive social interactions with coworkers and customers.⁸⁶ A study with Taiwanese military participants indicated that by sharing emotions, transformational leaders inspire positive emotions in their followers that lead to higher task performance.⁸⁷

Leaders are perceived as more effective when they share positive emotions, and followers are more creative in a positive emotional environment. What about when leaders are sad? Research found that leader displays of sadness increased the analytic performance of followers, perhaps because followers attended more closely to tasks to help the leaders.⁸⁸

Customer Service

Workers' emotional states influence the level of customer service they give, which in turn influences levels of repeat business and customer satisfaction.⁸⁹ This result is primarily due to **emotional contagion**—the “catching” of emotions from others.⁹⁰ When someone experiences positive emotions and laughs and smiles at you, you tend to respond positively. Of course, the opposite is true as well.

Studies indicate a matching effect between employee and customer emotions. In the employee-to-customer direction, research finds that customers who catch the positive moods or emotions of employees shop longer. In the other direction, when an employee feels unfairly treated by a customer, it's harder for the employee to display the positive emotions the organization expects.⁹¹ High-quality customer service places demands on employees because it often puts them in a state of emotional dissonance, which can be damaging to the employee and the organization. Managers can interrupt negative contagion by fostering positive moods.

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

Job Attitudes

Ever hear the advice “Never take your work home with you,” meaning you should forget about work once you go home? That's easier said than done. The good news is that it appears a positive mood at work can spill over to your off-work hours, and a negative mood at work can be restored to a positive mood after a break. Several studies have shown people who had a good day at work tend to be in a better mood at home that evening, and vice versa. Other research has found that although people do emotionally take their work home with them, by the next day the effect is usually gone.⁹² The bad news is that the moods of the people in your household may affect yours. As you might expect, one study found if one member of a couple was in a negative mood during the workday, the negative mood spilled over to the spouse at night.⁹³ The relationship between moods and job attitudes is reciprocal—the way our workday goes colors our moods, but our moods also affect the way we see our jobs.

Deviant Workplace Behaviors

Anyone who has spent much time in an organization realizes people can behave in ways that violate established norms and threaten the organization, its members, or both.⁹⁴ These counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs; see Chapter 3) can be traced to negative emotions and can take many forms. People who feel negative emotions are more likely than others to engage in short-term deviant behavior at work, such as gossiping or surfing the Internet,⁹⁵ though negative emotions can also lead to more serious forms of CWB.

For instance, envy is an emotion that occurs when you resent someone for having something you don't have but strongly desire—such as a better work assignment, larger office, or higher salary. It can lead to malicious deviant behaviors. An envious

employee could undermine other employees and take all the credit for things others accomplished. Angry people look for other people to blame for their bad mood, interpret other people's behavior as hostile, and have trouble considering others' points of view.⁹⁶ It's not hard to see how these thought processes can lead directly to verbal or physical aggression.



One study in Pakistan found that anger correlated with more aggressive CWBs such as abuse against others and production deviance, while sadness did not. Interestingly, neither anger nor sadness predicted workplace deviance, which suggests that managers need to take employee expressions of anger seriously; employees may stay with an organization and continue to act aggressively toward others.⁹⁷ 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 behavior. Managers therefore need to stay connected with their employees to gauge emotions and emotional intensity levels.

Safety and Injury at Work

Research relating negative affectivity to increased injuries at work suggests employers might improve health and safety (and reduce costs) by ensuring workers aren't engaged in potentially dangerous activities when they're in a bad mood. Bad moods can contribute to injury at work in several ways.⁹⁸ Individuals in negative moods tend to be more anxious, which can make them less able to cope effectively with hazards. A person who is always fearful will be more pessimistic about the effectiveness of safety precautions because she feels she'll just get hurt anyway, or she might panic or freeze up when confronted with a threatening situation. Negative moods also make people more distractible, and distractions can obviously lead to careless behaviors.

Selecting positive team members can contribute towards a positive work environment because positive moods transmit from team member to team member. One study of 130 leaders and their followers found that leaders who are charismatic transfer their positive emotions to their followers through a contagion effect.⁹⁹ It makes sense, then, to choose team members predisposed to positive moods.

SUMMARY

Emotions and moods are similar in that both are affective in nature. But they're also different—moods are more general and less contextual than emotions. The time of day, stressful events, and sleep patterns are some of the many factors that influence emotions and moods. OB research on emotional labor, affective events theory, emotional intelligence, and emotional regulation helps us understand how people deal with emotions. Emotions and moods have proven relevant for virtually every OB topic we study, with implications for managerial practices.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

- Recognize that emotions are a natural part of the workplace and good management does not mean creating an emotion-free environment.
- To foster effective decision making, creativity, and motivation in employees, model positive emotions and moods as much as is authentically possible.

- Provide positive feedback to increase the positivity of employees. Of course, it also helps to hire people who are predisposed to positive moods.
- In the service sector, encourage positive displays of emotion, which make customers feel more positive and thus improve customer service interactions and negotiations.
- Understand the role of emotions and moods to significantly improve your ability to explain and predict your coworkers' and others' behavior.

★ TRY IT!

If your professor has assigned this, go to the Assignments section of mymanagementlab.com to complete the **Simulation: Emotions & Moods**.

★ PERSONAL INVENTORY ASSESSMENTS

Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Have you always been able to “read” others well? Do people say you seem to have “the right thing to say” for every occasion? Complete this PIA to determine your emotional intelligence (EI).

Go to mymanagementlab.com for Auto-graded writing questions as well as the following Assisted-graded writing questions:

- 4-1. Do you think it is possible to reliably construct good emotions and moods in people? Why or why not?
- 4-2. **MyManagementLab Only**—comprehensive writing assignment for this chapter.



PERSONAL INVENTORY ASSESSMENTS

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