

# The Individual and the Organization

# Module Learning Outcomes

Recognize how employee personality and attitude affect organizational fit

- 1.1: Recognize the role of personal values and personality at work
- 1.2: Explain common biases that can affect a manager's perception of employees

# Learning Outcomes: Personal Values and Personality at Work

1.1: Recognize the role of personal values and personality at work

1.1.1: Describe Goldberg's "Big Five" personality traits

1.1.2: Evaluate whether personality tests can predict performance

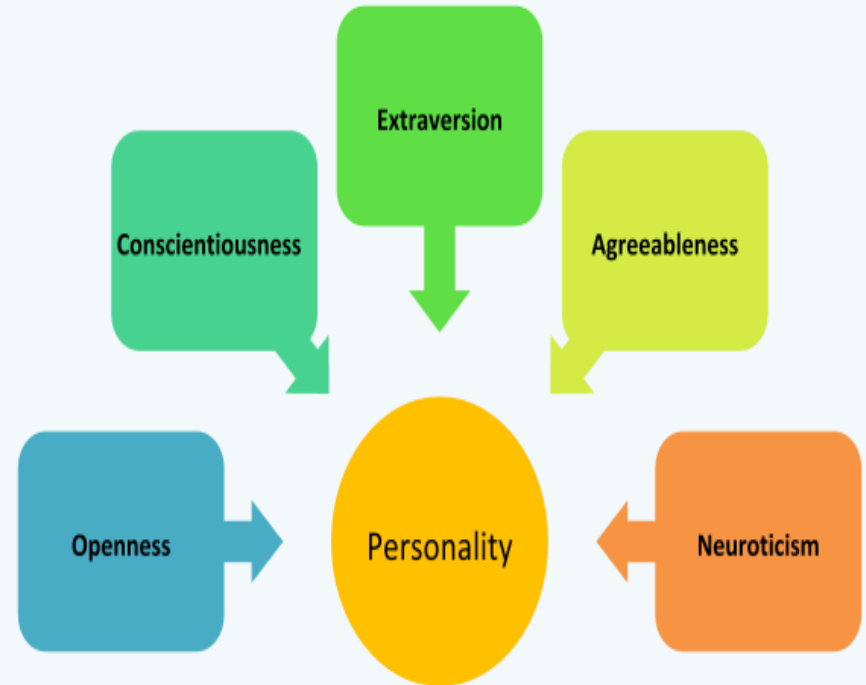
1.1.3: Explain how work expresses individual values

# Role of Personal Values and Personality

- Employees are unique individuals
- Several approaches to defining personality
- Most common approach is known as the “Big Five” personality traits

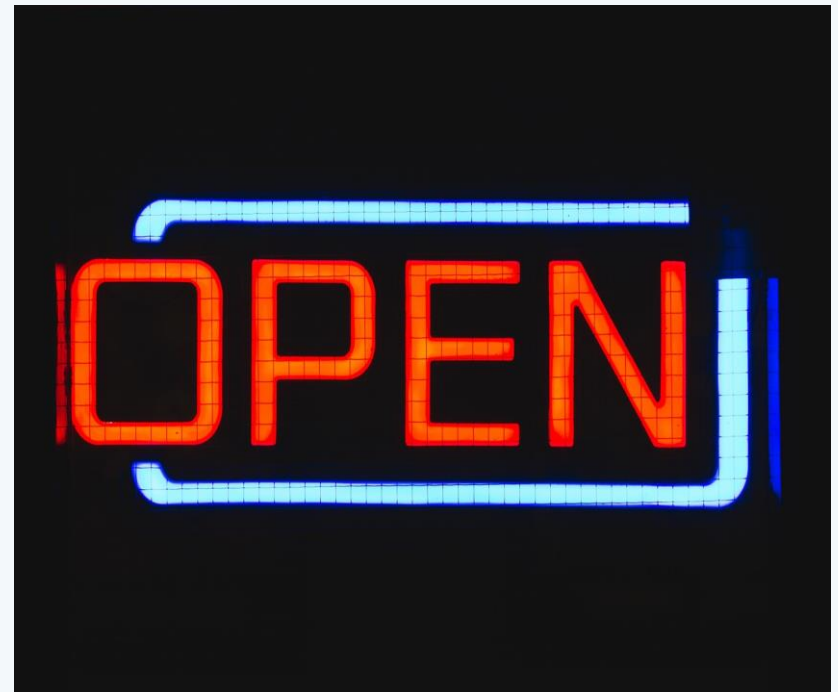
# Goldberg's "Big Five"

- OCEAN
  - Openness- how willing and eager individual is to try new experiences
  - Conscientiousness- how concerned an individual is to be organized/reliable
  - Extraversion- how eager individual is to be outgoing and have social interaction
  - Agreeableness- how desirous an individual is to please others and be friendly, sensitive and kind
  - Neuroticism- how negative, moody, and emotionally unstable an individual is



# Openness

- Advantages
  - Excel when flexibility is required
  - Do well in training
  - Adapt well to unexpected changes
- Disadvantages
  - Can become bored with routine jobs



# Conscientiousness

- Advantages
  - High levels of effort and motivation
  - Low levels of absenteeism and turnover
  - Only personality trait that is consistently linked to career success over time
- Disadvantage
  - Can become consumed with details and miss the big picture

# Extraversion

- Advantages
  - Can be successful managers who motivate employees
  - Often successful in jobs involving sales
- Disadvantage
  - Can be poor fit for jobs that do not provide sufficient social interaction





# Agreeableness

- Advantages
  - Often display high willingness to help others at work and display good organizational citizenship behaviors
  - Create fair environments when in management positions
  - Work well in team settings
- Disadvantage
  - Might be hesitant to engage in constructive criticism and encourage change, even when it is needed

# Neuroticism

- Advantages
  - Might be hesitant to engage in constructive criticism and encourage change, even when it is needed
  - Tendency to analyze self and world more realistically
  - High tendencies towards job dissatisfaction and intention to leave their jobs
- Disadvantage
  - Tend to create unfair environments when in leadership positions

# Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

- Common tool designed for use in identifying an individual's personality type—relies on psychological theories of Carl Jung
- Basic assumption that individuals fall into fairly distinct classes or types
- Individuals characterized by:
  - Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I)
  - Sensing (S) or Intuition (N)
  - Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)
  - Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)



# MBTI: Disadvantages

- Lack of scientific evidence
- Divides individuals into different classes for each category, not indicating how strong an individual's preference is towards that end of the spectrum
- Reliability and stability- as much as 50% of individual's MBTI classification will change from test to test
- Warn strongly against use for purposes of hiring or promoting employees- intended as a learning tool and to help better understand oneself

# Values

- Terminal values: End goals that people hope to reach in life
- Instrumental values: Modes of conduct considered appropriate and right (honesty, integrity, ambition)
- Businesses use attributes to identify the best fit for employees and potential future employees
- Wise business practice: To try to match individuals with optimum role in light of their personality and values



# Learning Outcomes: Common Management Biases

1.2: Explain common biases that can affect a manager's perception of employees

1.2.1: Explain some of the biases that affect a manager's perception of employees

# Perception and Attribution

- **Perception:** Process through which we take in and process information from our surroundings: what we see, hear, feel, etc.
  - Example: studies have shown that people who are afraid of spiders tend to exaggerate their size- allow our minds to alter objective stimuli we perceive with our senses
- **Attribution:** We look for the unseen cause behind what we see
  - Example: if a co-worker is late, we might make an assumption to why they are late (poor character or lack of responsibility) when really something unavoidable and unexpected delayed him

# Common Biases Affecting Manager's Perception

- Stereotypes
- Selective Perception and Confirmation Bias
- First Impression Bias
- Recency Bias
- Spillover Bias
- Negativity Bias
- Ingroup Bias
- Similarity Bias



# Stereotypes

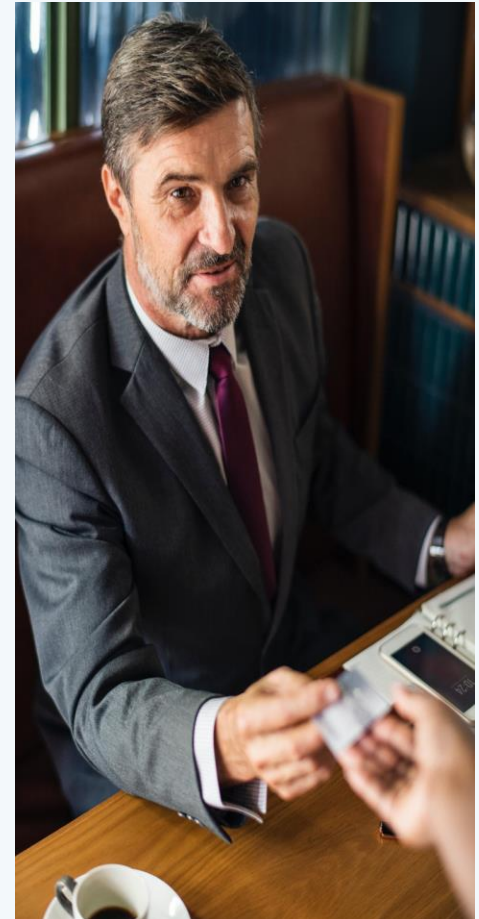
- General opinion or assumption about a class of individuals that share a particular trait
- General feelings or ideas based on gender, ethnic background, or age- from that we form opinions or make judgements about people
- Women have been negatively impacted- workplace is not an exception
- Age is another stereotype- believing potential employee isn't good enough because they are too young or old
- Studies show more attractive people tend to receive better grades in school, have higher likelihood of being hired for a job, and earn more \$\$

# Selective Perception and Confirmation Bias

- Bias by unknowingly paying attention to only a portion of the information available to them
- Reinforces other types of biases often; if manager has negative opinion of an individual, they might be prone to pay more attention to negative behaviors or actions
- When it is employed to confirm existing opinions, known as confirmation bias

# First Impressions Bias

- Giving too much prominence to first impression of an employee
- Initial judgements the manager makes about the employee, often with very limited information, shape and control how they interpret evidence
- Even when future information would seem to contradict initial picture, manager might be unwilling to change perspective



# Recency Bias

- Manager's focus is unduly balanced in favor of employee's most recent activities
- Often happens in cases of annual performance reviews
  - Difficult to keep entire year's activities in full view, and often employee's most recent activities are over-weighted
- If recent activities are negative, they can easily overshadow many months' worth of strong previous performance
- Poor performance might be mostly forgotten if employee has recently excelled

# Spillover Bias

- Can skew manager's perspective by paying too much attention to past information
- Usually relates to prominent episode in employee's past activities
- Example- employee played starring role in successful project and manager always thinks of employee in terms of success
  - Even if employee consistently underperforms after success
- Inversely- if employee is unfortunate to be guilty of major failure, might be difficult to change manager's opinion even if they do excellent work after

# Negativity Bias

- When we are presented with positive and negative information, we are prone to give more attention to negative information
- Negative information predominates thoughts and moves us to form imbalanced conclusions on negative side



# Ingroup Bias

- Managers might tend to show favoritism in judgement
- Those in manager's "in" circle receive special positive judgements while those not in do not
- Strength of this influence can dramatically vary and it may more may not be true actual negative perspective is displayed to those not in group

# Similarity Bias

- Reflects human tendency to focus on ourselves and prefer those who are like we are
- Leads managers to give special, positive attention, and judgements to those who remind manager of themselves- hobby, same hometown/college
- Manager might recognize similar personality traits in employee- can lead to preferential treatment



# Consequences of Biases

- Employees who forced to work extra hard to overcome bias can become to resentment
- Studies have shown that employees who labor under negative biases tend to underperform as a result
- Even positive biases can have negative impact; a manager might overlook faults and dangerous behaviors that need to be addressed
- If employee realizes they will be given special evaluations, it can lead to give less effort and show less commitment

# Practice Question 1

Jeffrie is a project manager at a large software development company. She has risen through the ranks through hard work and self-training. When it comes time to select the team for her project, Jeffrie selects engineers with limited formal training, preferring those who have learned their skills by doing. Jeffrie is displaying what common bias?

1. Ingroup bias.
2. Similarity bias.
3. Negativity bias.
4. Spillover bias.

# Class Activity: Bias in the Workplace

Break into small groups. You are leading a team of interviewers to screen candidates for upcoming openings for manufacturing jobs at your company. List the factors from the “Big Five” factors that you would be looking for from the candidate pool that would be most important for your search. What questions would you ask to ascertain if those factors are present in a candidate?