The Impact of Emotion on a Person's Temperament

Doctor Caxton Shonhiwa
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Commerce and Law, Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe

*Corresponding Author's Email: tshabalalathembinkosi@yahoo.com

Abstract: Emotion is much deeper and more pronounced than simple feelings associated with 'drives' since it involves environment, training and temperament, among other factors. Three responses occur with emotion: some physical or organic change, accompanied by an impulse to do something active about the situation, and a feeling which hastens the process of action. A person's temperament is recognisable from the way he or she controls emotions, moods and outbursts, and by his or her general emotional maturity.
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BASIC MENTAL PROCESSES

Basic mental processes help to explain why people sometimes behave in apparently illogical and unreasonable ways and how they are able to give meaning to their experiences and environment. Three important features are perception, mental levels and mental experience [1].

Perception

Perception creates for each individual a unique picture of the world, a picture which differs from the real world. In other words, a person interprets a situation or the environment; they do not have an exact recording or registration of it. Perception uses all the sensory inputs: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell, and feelings such as temperament change. According to Wisniewski [2], the ways people perceive themselves and the surrounding environment largely govern their behaviour. Consequently, it is essential to recognise the difference between a person's perceptual environment and the actual environment within the organisation. This difference or personal bias creates many emotional difficulties, personal problems and conflicts between supervisors and employees. Typical examples are communication breakdowns along with difficulties in judging, training, motivating and assessing the performance of employees.

People select, analyse and interpret sensory stimuli. The whole process is influenced by many factors, including their expectations, wants, background, experiences, values, beliefs, interests, attitudes, general views and the incentives they are offered. A compromise exists between what can be seen and what an individual is conditioned to see, will see, or will avoid seeing. Similarly, people hear what they want to hear, not the actual message, especially if it contains bad news or information that has a detrimental effect.

The following concepts should be related to this mental process ad used to understand more clearly the conditions under which behaviour appears illogical or irrational.

Perception and Sensation

All knowledge accumulated by a person depends upon the senses and their stimulation. These physical senses are hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, balance and tasting, plus so-called sixth senses such as extrasensory perception [3]. Perception is more complex and broader than sensation. The process involves an interaction of selection, organisation and interpretation. Consequently, perception (a cognitive process) may filter, modify or completely change raw data received through the senses.

To avoid overcrowding at any time, the attention process selects information through deliberate or involuntary processes and discards the rest. This system works in the following ways:

- Deliberate: irrelevant, distracting or unimportant information is rejected to allow important information access to the brain.
- Involuntary: the subject matter or the form of presentation forces the brain to pay attention to it.

These factors may be subjective or objective depending on whether they are influenced by the receiver's personality. Objective factors include high intensity (loudness, brightness, etc.), sudden movement or change, repetitive but not monotonous stimuli, systematic patterning (logical arrangement), and novelty. Both processes are extensively used in advertising and communication

Perceptual Organisation: Grouping

Stimuli are grouped together into a distinct pattern or framework by using the principles of similarity, proximity, continuity or closure.

- Similarity: If stimuli have something in common, they tend to link into a group. Typical examples are blue-collar workers (although each one is different); all shop stewards are categorised as a nuisance; and all sales representatives thought of as extroverts.
- Proximity: if members of a group are near to each other, they tend to be perceived as belonging together in terms of a characteristic. A group of sewing machinists in one room may be perceived

as all being antagonistic if some conditions; and a group of senior secretaries working together in one large office may all be considered as snooty although only two out of six actually are.

- Closure: This gestalt principle causes a person to perceive a whole when actually there are gaps fragmenting the whole. A supervisor may think he or she has complete agreement on a topic when in fact there is some opposition.

The Cycles

Figure 1 below shows the operation of two cycles associated with the perceptual process and external observable processes. The first cycle shows the internal data processing activity (perception). The second cycle includes perception and external observable processes; it begins with stimuli and cycles through the perceptual process, resultant behaviour and outcomes, before returning to stimuli. Note the way perception eventually changes stimuli when outcomes impinge on them, consequently presenting a new situation for the perceptual process. A complex series of cause-effect relationships exists.
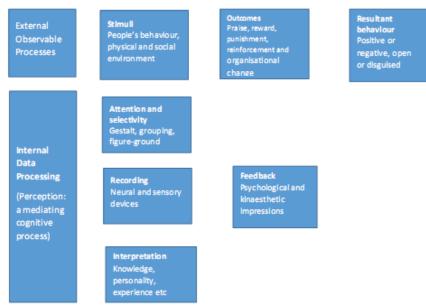
The Perceptual Process

Fig-1: The perceptual process and external effects [4]

There are two cycles: (1) an internal mediating cognitive process (perception) and (2) an external process starting with stimuli, using perception, continuing with behaviour and outcomes, and returning to stimuli.

The perceptual process may be divided into four components which form a cycle: attention and selectivity, recording, interpretation and feedback to clarify and assist perception. Attention and selectivity: initially the person is surrounded by stimuli, probably including people and many environmental conditions. Examples are (a) an argument develops between a supervisor and an employee outside a manager's office, forcing the manager to intervene; (b) the internal phone rings during a discussion with an employee.

- Recording: Sensory and neural devices register the data in preparation for analysis and interpretation.
- Interpretation: Neural mechanisms interpret the situation. These are biased by many personal characteristics, e.g. personality, knowledge, intelligence, experience and motivation.
- Feedback: links between this and the first component allow for corrections to first

impressions and feedback stimuli which are of use to the perceptual process relating to reality. Kinaesthetic mechanisms help to perceive dynamic situations that require rapid adjustment; psychological mechanisms help to determine people's intentions. Examples are judging the speed of an oncoming car when deciding to overtake; assessing a manager's mood; or sensing when he or she is joking.

External Observable Processes

Surrounding the perceptual process is external reality, which for this purpose consists of three processes. The first is when stimuli enter the perceptual process and attract attention. The second s behaviour resulting from the perceptual process. The third is the outcome of the behaviour.

- Stimuli: These originate from people's actions and physical and sociological situations.
- Resultant behaviour: Typical examples are when positive forms of behaviour generate helpful actions, and when negative forms cause unpleasant reactions. Changes in attitude may also occur, which could be identified or interpreted as

favourable or unfavourable. Recognising this change is a controversial aspect and it depends upon a personal assessment of future behaviour if the related stimuli are identifiable and capable of assessment.

- Outcomes: These are the consequences of resultant behaviour such as praise and reward if behaviour suits the recipient, and punishment if behaviour displeases. Reinforcement may occur if the recipient encourages the behaviour pattern.

Perceptual Selectivity

An internal filtering process gives priority to vital stimuli. Selection depends upon its appeal to, and compatibility with, the individual's mental make-up, including values, needs and experience. External factors draw attention by means of size, intensity, contrast, movement, repetition and novelty of the stimuli. Thus, the whole process focuses attention on particular stimuli and allows for constant changes in attention as desired.

Social Perception

Social perception plays a vital role in interviewing and in the employment situation since it attempts to explain how one person perceives another. Here are some of the major aspects.

Profiles

Perception is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the perceiver and the person perceived. For example, if a manager feels pleased with life, possible a more favourable impression will be created of someone who is averagely pleasant and attractive; whereas a manager who is displeased might be more than usually unimpressed by an arrogant and unattractive person.

- The perceiver's profile: The perceiver's characteristics affect those likely to be recognised in others. Therefore, endeavouring to form an unbiased picture of oneself makes it easier to see others more clearly.
- The perceived person: the person being perceived also has an effect on the perceiver. Examples are the person's status, stereotyping by status or role, and noticeable traits.

Perceptual context

The overall environment in the concern that is created by management also biases particular meanings and values to the employee. Thus communications from managers and supervisors are distorted to some extent by the views employees have about them. Therefore, great care is needed when wording memos and notices, when speaking to employees, and when gesturing to make a point.

Attribution

How people explain the cause of their, or another's behaviour is called attribution. The attendance is to search for causes of behaviour and, when located to the satisfaction of the searcher, these causal attributions strongly affect perception. A typical example is to attribute a new sales representative's performance to the particular territory that was allocated, rather than to that person's ability and energy.

Stereotyping

Perceiving another person as belonging to a single class or category is known as stereotyping. This means attributing favourable or unfavourable traits to the individual on that basis rather than on information about the person. Also, it implies general agreement on the attributed traits and existence of a discrepancy between these and the actual traits. Common stereotyped groups are managers, supervisors, trade union members, nationals and minorities. Here are some examples: managers are status conscious, the Germans are industrious, the French are great lovers, and the British are conventional.

The halo effect

The halo effect is when a person's judgment of another is based upon one trait only, not a category as in stereotyping. Examples of these traits are ability, attractiveness, dependability and loyalty. An error will be compounded if a person allows the single trait to override all other traits in his or her perception of the individual. Typically, a supervisor may perceive a very good worker as being un-cooperative because he or she happens to be reserved; or a manager thinks the secretary is lazy because he or she will not type the manager's private letters.

Perceptual barriers

A defence mechanism operates when a person is confronted with a situation that does not accord with a preconceived idea. This applies when a fear or an event is presented that is unacceptable or perhaps threatening in an obscure way. Typical cases would be agreement between a manager and trade union representative, or a confrontation between a supervisor and employee's spouse when the accusation of favouritism is out to the supervisor who is convinced that he or she treats everyone equally.

Mental levels

There are assumed to be there mental levels. The supervisor should have some knowledge of how they work. He or she may then show a sympathetic understanding towards subordinates in certain situations, such as the examples given below.

The Conscious Level

Consciousness may be described as knowing what is happening around us and being aware of our actions. Being able to concentrate on a particular task means a person can successfully block out all those distractions that are happening all the time. If concentration is disturbed by a passing van, a whistle

blast, or any unusual noise, train of thought is lost and an error may occur. Some people find concentration more difficult than others; the slightest unidentifiable noise upsets them, or even a familiar sound may disrupt their train of thought. Their work capacity may be excellent, but unless there is low distraction in the immediate environment, productivity and quality will be poor.

The Subconscious Level

All instructions and information flow into the subconscious mind, which retains the messages for recall at any time. Recent messages, which include information and experiences, are easily recalled within days, weeks or months, depending upon the individual. Some people have difficulty in remembering an event after a few weeks, whereas others find it easy. Failing to remember is not a crime; it is both thoughtless and inefficient to ignore the handicap when it is known, instead of making due allowances. The sensible supervisor will avoid placing people with poor memories in situations that call for a good memory as they are likely to fail.

The Unconscious Level

Maslow [5] posits that the subconscious connects with the unconscious mind and passes all information and experiences for permanent storage. Although all experiences are stored, it seems that automatic recollection at any time is not possible. Recalling an event at will does not seem to work; often there is a time lag and suddenly, without any apparent effort, it springs into the conscious mind. Furthermore, a difficult problem may be put to one side and then, without warning, the answer presents itself. Similarly, all manner of information will appear without any conscious effort. An unfortunate effect occurs when a person takes an instant dislike to another for no obvious reason. Psychologists say this is due to an unconscious connection of the person with someone who causes unhappiness in the past. The danger of allowing first impressions to affect one's judgment is plan.

Mental experience

The actual mental experience associated with awareness involves at any time the interaction of closely knit processes: feeling, willing and thinking. These are often called affective, conative and cognitive, respectively. Generally, one overrides the other two, although they are also activated. For example, an employee notices a mistake in a colleague's work; the first person may feel the right course of action is to report it, but might will himself or herself to take no action, reasoning (or thinking) the mistake will be spotted by the usual procedures.

The subject of mental experience can only be glanced at, considering the complexity of other factors that are strongly connected such as the control feature known as sentiments, the influential feature known as

disposition and the complexes associated with them. There is an extensive amount of material under this heading, but condensed it means people cannot be held responsible for their nature or temperament. With help, however, certain problems can be overcome if people learn to adjust and become more acceptable citizens and employees to seek specialist help when the need is obvious.

Sociology of work

Orientations to work may be classified according to the two extremes: the instrumentally oriented employee and the expressively oriented employee. One is more interested in financial reward while the other is more concerned with job satisfaction. Within this simple continuum framework (between the two extremes) various schools of thought have developed about human nature and work behaviour [3].

The Scientific Management / Human Relations School

If management relates to each employee and satisfies his or her self-interest, then full co-operation will be achieved. How individuals relate to each other is vital in this psychologist style, therefore the key features are participation, participative leadership and development of supervisory skills.

The Organic / Systems School

The organic/systems school emphasises the idea of society having an independent and determining effect on the individual. Thus the community, which is organic by nature and conforms to a social system, really decides how people behave.

The Interactionist School

The interactionist school views the individual and society as mutually interdependent, not a one-sided deterministic relationship. Consequently, human behaviour is not caused by internal or external forces, whereby a person constructs his or her own realities as a result of interaction with others.

The Social Action School

The social action school considers the meaningful activity of the person and the grand questions of political, social and cultural change. People are considered to be rational and pursuing certain ends but there is not necessarily a direct relationship between their work and the outcome in terms of social order. People's actions often have unintentional consequences and lead to fundamental conflicts of value, interest and perspective.

The Marxian School

The Marxian School proposes the idea that people achieve fullness of their humanity through their labour. The implication is that he conditions under which labour is performed are crucial. The argument that the worker is alienated is based upon three assumed

points. But there are strong economic and social counter-arguments against this line of reasoning.

- The owner of a business has sufficient means of subsistence, whereas employees are dependent.
- Employees have to put in extra work over and above what is required for their own needs.
- Employees are restricted in their striving to achieve creative fulfilment.

Class and Status

A general belief is that achievement in the job decides promotion prospects. In modern organisations, however, as Wood [6] states, apparently different skills are used in jobs as the hierarchy is ascended, which makes the belief suspect. Promotion prospects probably depend more on a willingness to fit into the power structure and on possessing appropriate cultural, class, status and background aspects that conform to the management pattern. Although there are examples of shop-floor employees making good, there is increasing evidence that class-related criteria are preferable to task-relevant criteria.

The class system may also be operating in trade unions where antiquated structures lead to competition among unions within companies and in industries. Furthermore, the tendency to emphasise class and status is openly displayed in companies (especially in factories) through the use of notices and rules: 'This door staff only', 'workers' canteen' and 'executive dining room'. Usually, workers clock on, staff book in, while managers simply arrive.

Employees also show concern for status. They may be sensitive to pay differences between jobs and, if they are transferred, the level of informal status of the new job. Commitment is more diffuse, there seems to be high trust, more discretion and more conception rather than execution of tasks.

Finally, sharp division are seen in the distribution of marketable wealth in the UK. According to Inland Revenue statistics for 1991, [4], the wealthiest 1 percent own 18 percent, 10 percent own 53 percent, and 50 percent own 94 percent. Moreover, three significant ranges of the distribution are #0-5000 = 31.8 percent, #50 000-100 000 = 8.9 percent, and #100 001 and over = 7.3 percent.

Breakdowns in relationships

Relationships may collapse or break down for many reasons. The important provided by Stewart [1] include the following:

- Unstable outlook: immaturity, varied social backgrounds, psychological problems\poor social skills: misinterpreting verbal and written messages, misunderstanding body language
- Breaking rules: standards are not taken seriously
- Boredom: lack of mutual interest, monotony in the group

- Dissonant relationships: different backgrounds involving religion, race and environment
- Inequity: negative feelings override positive ones, changes in pay and bonuses at higher levels which cause an increased organisational gap
- Deception disclosures: betrayal of trust
- Conflict: unacceptable levels of disagreement or disrespect
- Cultural changes: these include changes in interest, attitudes, education, training and job improvement
- Relocation: the distance between people or groups becomes too great for social activity

Social influences in general

Social influences in general are viewed as a complex network of continuing interrelationships that affect behaviour. Collectively they include some topics already mentioned namely roles, status, class, culture, group information, cohesiveness and norms. Also included is family influence. An advanced society is highly structured, with a specialised economic nature. Consequently, an isolated individual has difficulty in surviving and learns to behave or satisfy needs in an acceptable fashion that avoids unpleasantness.

Socialisation

An individual learns to adjust to the social environment through socialisation. The process is a continuous one, beginning shortly after birth, and involving complex learning theory. The main components are the family, schools, peers and the media. Socialisation prepares the individual for the roles to be played; habits, beliefs, values and skills are learned; and knowledge is acquired [4]. Many mechanisms come into play, such as imitation, identification, role playing, various mental processes and conditioning.

The stress factor

Most people recognise stress in materials and machines because they see a physical effect a rubber band will break if stretched too far; a fuse will blow if the load is too great. Indeed, stress is occurring long before the result is witnessed, but the cause is accepted only when something drastic happens.

With people, as Wood [6] argues, stress also occurs internally and is not recognisable immediately. Some outward signs may indicate problems, but when a breaking point occurs the cause is often not recognised or investigated. This difficulty could be due to two situations. First, people may suffer with under loading or overloading of work; both are stress conditions. Second, there is the duration of stress; stress is usually classified as short-term or long-term. Short-term stress is suffered by many employees through unavoidable circumstances such as sudden sickness or termination of another employee, excessive urgent orders, and disputes or strikes. Long-term stress is more serious and may mean disastrous consequences.

The Background

According to research, stress is viewed in many ways. Stress exists as a natural process when the body prepares itself for danger or attack; stress conforms to a natural cycle of body responses to fight or flight (termed distress) and when the fear or menace subsides it returns to normal; or the individual has feelings of stress which persist and cause comprehension and concentration difficulties (Wisniewski,2007). The latter view explains how ill-health develops and all activities appear to be threatening in some way.

As Stewart [1] states, several reasons for this form of mental behaviour are usually accepted. First, it is the outcome of primitive ancestors (hominids) who were prey for the wild beasts. Second, the primitive ancestors who followed (Homo sapiens), gradually developed weapons to defend themselves, and finally became hunters to kill for meat. In brief, ancestors were subjected to flight and fight, which meant the body, had to cope with excessive demands. These internal changes persist today and are called stress. They are recognised as internal sensations when people make a speech, fight or experience fear. Typical situations are criminal activities, feuds, wars, domestic life and business life.

Stress Levels

Maslow [5] posits that, if a job is enriched, there may be difficulty in recognising the point at which an excessive mental load is reached. Conversely, it is equally difficult to assess when a person is under loaded. For instance, working on a conveyor belt might easily cause mental underload. Both situations, it is claimed by neuropsychologists, have detrimental effects on health and performance. Indeed, stress can affect the state of mind of employees, making them more sensitive to feelings of social dissatisfaction. This complex subject is becoming increasingly important as more employers are realising it causes pathological, social and economic problems. Furthermore, stress levels depend upon the person; one type of stress may be good for one person but bad for another, and stress is often thought to be unquantifiable.

Display Screen Equipment

In recent years the extensive use of display screen equipment (DSE) has caused many stressful conditions.

Definitions of Stress

- An internal condition caused by a restraint of natural feeling, especially when compelled to behave against normal wishes.
- An excessive or in excessive demand upon physical or mental energy.
- A constraining or impelling force that adversely affects a person's state of mind.

Symptoms

To create a feeling of well-being, the nervous system has to function between particular limits of intensity. If these limits are exceeded, the person soon experiences unpleasant feelings, which eventually may lead to a variety of pathological effects such as dyspepsia, headaches, insomnia and exhaustion. In some cases, more serious illness may occur such as gastritis, ulcers and coronary disease [4].

Adam-Smith [3], states that, the immediate outward signs of stress may be unusual behaviour, suddenly losing control, excessive tiredness, low performance, blaming others without cause, a sudden reddening of the face, trembling, sweating, hesitant speech or overemphasis of a nervous habit. Inward effects are feeling irritated, a thumping heart, sweating uncomfortably, butterflies in the stomach, boredom, anxiety, unaccountable fatigue, loss of appetite, headaches, dizziness, breathing problems, grinding teeth, aches in the neck, shoulders and back, dryness of the mouth and throat, rashes and nail and lip biting.

The psychological effects are inability to relax and concentrate; feeling keyed up, drained, irritable, tense, anxious, pressurised, pessimistic or inadequate; avoiding people and situations; overindulging in eating, drinking and smoking, insomnia; nervous laughing; and being accident-prone.

CONCLUSIONS

People think, believe, understand and perceive differently since they have mainly been moulded by their previous environment. Therefore, temperament or nature is complex and causes many misunderstandings; although with training, social aspects may be controlled and modified. Managers tend to blame attitude when employees refuse to conform to their requirements, but attitude has many hidden components and there are many other pressures which need consideration.

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