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ENGLISH SUMMARY

The expression of behavior is usually considered to be the product of situational characteristics and individual differences. While both are important in determining behavior, the present dissertation focuses on the utility of individual differences for explaining heterogeneity in behavior between individuals. Hence, the aim of the present dissertation is to contribute to a deeper understanding about the effects of individual differences on three outcomes crucial for social and organizational functioning – cooperation, deviance, and performance. Chapter 1 describes the use of individual differences in predicting these behaviors in more detail, explains the most important individual difference (i.e., personality) and its common conceptualization and measurement, and provides an overview of the remaining chapters included in this dissertation.

In Chapter 2, the relations between the narrow personality facet social value orientation (SVO), expectations of other's cooperation, and cooperative behavior in social dilemmas are examined. More specifically, by meta-analytically integrating research from more than half a century, findings of this chapter demonstrate that individuals with social dispositions (i.e., prosocials) expect more cooperation from others in social dilemmas than individuals with selfish dispositions (i.e., individualists and competitors = proselves). Highlighting the importance of these expectations for the decision-making process, it is shown that expected partner cooperation partially mediates the relation between SVO and cooperation in social dilemmas. Importantly, expectations are positively related to cooperative behavior for prosocials and for proselves, emphasizing a valuable opportunity to advance cooperative behavior between individuals and groups through eliciting the expectation that others are cooperating as well.

In Chapter 3, the focus shifts from using SVO to predict cooperative behavior in social dilemmas to using SVO to predict norm-violating deviant behavior. Across three studies that were conducted online and in the lab, proselves consistently reported to behave more deviantly at work than prosocials. Importantly, these findings were corroborated by showing that proselves also behaved more deviantly when deviant behavior was operationalized as the disobedience to instructions or as the overrepresentation of own performance. These findings emphasize the selfish aspect underlying deviant behavior and highlight the usefulness of narrow personality facets in the prediction of deviant behavior.

Yet, broad personality domain scales are useful in predicting behavior as well, and in Chapter 4 the relations between the two most common broad personality models (i.e., the Big Five and the HEXACO) and workplace deviance are meta-analytically examined. Results based on 460 effect sizes indicate that HEXACO Honesty-Humility is the strongest predictor of workplace deviance out of all eleven broad personality domain scales that were examined.

Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism (for the Big Five) or Emotionality (for the HEXACO), and Big Five Openness to Experience also significantly correlated with workplace deviance. Overall, the HEXACO personality model explained more variance in workplace deviance than the Big Five personality model, suggesting that researchers and practitioners might want to prioritize the HEXACO when aiming to predict levels of workplace deviance.

Building on the finding that personality strongly predicts levels of workplace deviance, Chapter 5 examines the relation between age and workplace deviance, and especially tests if personality and negative affect mediate this relationship. Age and workplace deviance correlate negatively with each other, and this relation is partially mediated by age-related changes in Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism as hypothesized based on the neo-socioanalytical model of personality change. In addition, based on the socio-emotional selectivity theory we hypothesized that age-related decreases in experienced negative affect also mediate the relation between age and workplace deviance and found evidence of a partial mediation. As such, findings of this chapter for the first time test the mechanisms underlying the negative relation between age and workplace deviance.

The last empirical chapter of this dissertation examines how another important demographic characteristic – gender – relates to firm financial performance. More specifically, by meta-analytically summarizing all studies published on this relation, results indicate that no relation between female representation on corporate boards and firm financial performance exists. Thus, findings did not provide evidence for a business case of diversity, which suggests that increased diversity results in performance benefits. However, the results suggest that organizations should prioritize females, and therefore increase gender diversity, in promotion decisions on corporate boards for ethical reasons when female candidates are equally qualified as male candidates.

Together, these five empirical chapters provide valuable new insights into the study of individual differences as predictors of behaviors that crucially determine social and organizational functioning. Chapter 7 summarizes the main findings, discusses theoretical and practical implications, and deduces directions for future research from the current findings. As such, this last chapter integrates findings from the five empirical chapters included in this dissertation.