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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

When observing unexpected or deviant behavior, individuals have a tendency to immediately search for an explanation of this behavior. For example, when a colleague comes too late to work, two obvious reasons that readily come to mind are that this individual is someone who is late quite regularly or that external factors influenced this individual's late arrival. Just like when it comes to being late, behavior in various areas of life is a product of individual differences and situational characteristics (Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Although situational characteristics are certainly important determinants of behavior, the present dissertation will focus on individual differences as predictors of behavior crucial for social and organizational functioning (i.e., cooperation, deviance, and performance). This introductory chapter will provide an overview of the overarching topic of this dissertation and will outline the purpose of the chapters included in this dissertation. First, individual differences and their importance will be briefly explained. Second, the most important individual difference, personality, will be defined and recent research on the conceptualization and measurement of personality will be presented. Third, research on the predictive validity of individual differences, and especially of personality, for cooperative and deviant behaviors will be reviewed. Fourth, the relationship between the three main outcome variables of this dissertation will be highlighted. The present chapter will conclude with a brief overview of the further chapters included in this dissertation.

Individual Differences

Whenever a certain behavior is assessed or measured, heterogeneity in responses between individuals exists. For example, if two individuals are asked how often they come too late to work, one might say '*never*', whereas the other might say '*at least once a week*'. Some of this heterogeneity in responses can be explained by differing characteristics of respondents, which are called individual differences. For the example above, these two individuals might differ on personality traits that determine punctuality, such as Conscientiousness or Agreeableness (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2006). A wide variety of scientific disciplines, such as medicine, economics, sociology, and especially psychology, utilize individual differences to predict behavior. In business administration and in organizational psychology, individual differences have received widespread attention in predicting behavior as well. For example, gender, age, or personality are used to predict various behaviors and behavioral outcomes, such as leadership behavior (Bono & Judge, 2004), commitment (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002), organizational citizenship behaviors (Ng, Lam, & Feldman, 2016), or performance at work (Barrick & Mount, 1991; O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2011; Tett, Jackson, Rothstein, & Rothstein, 1991; Waldman & Avolio, 1986). Although all

individual differences are potentially important and interesting, the most commonly studied individual difference in the prediction of behavior is personality.

Personality

While no universally accepted definition of personality exists, researchers generally agree that personality is a relatively stable trait. One definition describes personality as “the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influence his or her interactions with, and adaptations to, the intrapsychic, physical, and social environments” (Larsen & Buss, 2005; p. 4). Modern trait-based personality research is largely build on the lexical approach, reflecting the idea that important personality characteristics are part of human language. Using this lexical approach, personality is described in terms of broad domain scales that comprise narrower facets, and it is most commonly assessed with the Big Five personality domain scales (Goldberg, 1982; Goldberg, 1990; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr, 2003; John & Srivastava, 1999). While some differences in the conceptualization and measurement of the Big Five exist between different approaches (i.e., Big Five by Goldberg, 1990, versus Five-Factor Model of Personality by Digman, 1990), general scientific consensus exists that the five domain scales and their associated facets are (Soto & John, 2017):

- Openness to Experience: Intellectual Curiosity, Aesthetic Sensitivity, Creative Imagination
- Conscientiousness: Organization, Productiveness, Responsibility
- Extraversion: Sociability, Assertiveness, Energy Level
- Agreeableness: Compassion, Respectfulness, Trust
- Neuroticism: Anxiety, Depression, Emotional Volatility

Although the Big Five domain scales represent the most common conceptualization of personality and have been the dominating personality model over the past decades, recent re-analyses of lexical data that have become available from more than ten different countries indicate that a six-factor structure of personality more accurately represents the human personality (Ashton, Lee, & De Vries, 2014; De Raad et al., 2014; Saucier, 2009). This new six-factor structure of personality has been termed the HEXACO model, and the six domain scales and associated facets are:

- Honesty-Humility: Sincerity, Fairness, Greed Avoidance, Modesty
- Emotionality: Fearfulness, Anxiety, Dependence, Sentimentality
- eXtraversion: Social Self-Esteem, Social Boldness, Sociability, Liveliness
- Agreeableness: Forgiveness, Gentleness, Flexibility, Patience

- Conscientiousness: Organization, Diligence, Perfectionism, Prudence
- Openness to Experience: Aesthetic Appreciation, Inquisitiveness, Creativity, Unconventionality

While the domain scales of Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience are conceptually similar to their Big Five counterparts, the other three domain scales – Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, and Agreeableness – differ substantially from their Big Five counterparts (please see Chapter 4 for an elaborate discussion of these differences). Although the Big Five and the HEXACO are the most important and most often studied broad personality frameworks, other personality facets that are not directly part of these broad frameworks also exist and have been extensively studied. One such narrow personality facet is social value orientation (SVO), which describes the weights individuals attach to their own and to other's outcomes in interdependent situations (McClintock, 1972; Van Lange, 1999), and which essentially measures someone's cooperative preferences. While SVO can be measured continuously, individuals are commonly classified either as prosocials (who want to maximize equality or mutual outcomes), individualists (who want to maximize their own outcome in an absolute sense), or competitors (who want to maximize their own outcome in a relative sense). Mapping SVO onto the broader personality frameworks demonstrates that it shares significant overlap with HEXACO Honesty-Humility and with Big Five Agreeableness (Hilbig, Glöckner, & Zettler, 2014).

Personality as a Predictor of Behavior

Independently of whether the Big Five or the HEXACO is being used, broad personality domain scales have proven useful in the prediction of various social and organizational behaviors, such as human cooperation (Hilbig, Thielmann, Klein, & Henninger, 2016; Hilbig, Zettler, Leist, & Heydasch, 2013), leadership style (Bono & Judge, 2004), organizational citizenship behavior (Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, & Gardner, 2011), and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Tett et al., 1991). However, only relying on broad personality domain scales might not always be optimal for several reasons. First, the criterion-related validity of narrow personality facets can be better (Ashton, Paunonen, & Lee, 2014; Hastings & O'Neill, 2009; Pomerance & Converse, 2014). Second, the effects of individual facets in explaining a criterion might suppress each other (e.g., Hastings & O'Neill, 2009). And third, there can be a higher conceptual resemblance between narrow facets and the predicted behavior (Ashton et al., 2014), which is especially important when the test-takers need to perceive that the test is relevant to the tested behavior (i.e., in job selection settings; Hastings & O'Neill, 2009). To balance the benefits and limitations of the two approaches, the present dissertation will focus on the effects

of both broad personality constructs (Big Five and HEXACO) and narrow personality facets (SVO) in predicting behavior. In addition, two important and universal demographic characteristics – age and gender – will be examined as predictors of behavior.

Cooperation, Deviance, and Performance

The effect of individual differences in personality and in these demographic characteristics on behaviors and behavioral outcomes crucial for social and organizational functioning will be examined. As such, this dissertation will focus on three important behaviors and behavioral outcomes – cooperation in interdependent situations, workplace deviance, and organizational performance. While these three constructs are not directly related at face value, they share significant overlap: the occurrence of workplace deviance can be conceptualized as the absence of cooperative behavior between employees or between employees and their organization. In addition, the occurrence of workplace deviance is defined as a violation of norms (Bennett & Robinson, 2000), whereas cooperative behavior is often a result of the enforcement of norms (Fehr, Fischbacher, & Gächter, 2002), and the absence of cooperative behavior (i.e., defection) usually violates social norms. Ultimately, organizational performance might be the result of the adherence to norms, of cooperative behavior between employees, and of the absence of deviant behavior at work.

Previous research has also shown that these three outcome variables are caused by similar antecedents. To explain why individuals cooperate with each other and do not act strictly according to their self-interest has been a major puzzle in a wide variety of scientific disciplines. Research has focused on situational characteristics that increase cooperation between individuals, such as punishment (Balliet, Mulder, & Van Lange, 2011), reciprocity (Romano & Balliet, 2017), or reputation (Balliet, Wu, & De Dreu, 2014), but individual differences, such as gender (Balliet, Li, Macfarlan, & Van Vugt, 2011) and personality (Hilbig et al., 2013; Koole, Jager, van den Berg, Vlek, & Hofstee, 2001; Volk, Thöni, & Ruigrok, 2011; Zhao & Smillie, 2015) have also received widespread attention as predictors of human cooperation. Similarly, the occurrence of workplace deviance has been explained by using situational characteristics, such as abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2009; Wang, Mao, Wu, & Liu, 2012), stress (Chiu, Yeh, & Huang, 2015; Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001), or perceptions of injustice (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007; Henle, 2005; O’Neill, Lewis, Carswell, & O’Neill, 2011). However, individual differences, such as gender (Ng et al., 2016) and personality (Berry, Carpenter, & Barratt, 2012; Berry et al., 2007; Salgado, 2002), have also been examined as predictors of workplace deviance. Lastly, organizational performance is also the result of situational characteristics, such as politics and national governance (Yoshikawa, Zhu, & Wang,

2014) or market pressures (Nickell, Nicolitsas, & Dryden, 1997). Yet, similar to cooperation and workplace deviance, various individual differences have been used to predict organizational performance as well (Joecks, Pull, & Vetter, 2012; Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003; Van Ness, Miesing, & Kang, 2010).

The aim of the current dissertation is to use three important individual differences – personality, age, and gender – to contribute to the facilitation and prediction of human cooperation, to the prevention and prediction of workplace deviance in organizations, and lastly to the better understanding of the drivers of organizational performance. On the following pages, each chapter of this dissertation will be briefly outlined.

Overview of the Chapters

Chapter 2 examines how individual differences in the narrow personality facet SVO predict expectations of cooperation in social dilemmas. Specifically, differences in expectations have not been previously compared between prosocials, individualists, and competitors (i.e., the three primary SVOs), and these expectations about others' behavior are fundamental building blocks of social cognition (Holmes, 2002). Hence, expectations determine behavior (Balliet & Van Lange, 2012), but it has not yet been examined if these expectations mediate the well-established relationship between SVO and cooperation in social dilemmas (Balliet, Parks, & Joireman, 2009), and if a possible mediation holds for both prosocials and proselves (i.e., individualists and competitors). Results of this study will provide important insights for the study of human cooperation.

To connect the first chapter about the narrow personality facet SVO with the following chapters about the prediction of workplace deviance, **Chapter 3** investigates the predictive validity of SVO for workplace deviance. The hypothesis that selfish individuals are more prone to act deviantly than prosocials is tested using three studies. In addition to contributing to the prediction and prevention of workplace deviance, the studies in this chapter will also examine the usefulness of relying on narrow personality facets as predictors of workplace deviance.

Whereas the third chapter examines the predictive validity of a narrow personality facet for workplace deviance, **Chapter 4** investigates how and which broad personality domain scales explain and predict levels of workplace deviance. A few previous meta-analyses have already examined the relations between the Big Five personality dimensions and workplace deviance as a byproduct of larger investigations into the causes of workplace deviance (Berry et al., 2012, 2007; Salgado, 2002), but a comprehensive overview is still missing from the literature. In addition, the six-factor HEXACO personality model has received increased interest among researchers and practitioners in recent years but has not been meta-analytically

examined as a predictor of workplace deviance. Therefore, this chapter will meta-analytically compare the Big Five and the HEXACO model in their predictive validity for workplace deviance. In addition, several methodologically, theoretically, and practically relevant moderators are examined.

Chapter 5 builds on the fourth chapter by investigating the relation between age and workplace deviance, and by examining which underlying age-related changes are responsible for the negative relation between age and workplace deviance. Based on socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1992), it is hypothesized that individuals experience less negative affect with increasing age, which subsequently is associated with decreased levels of workplace deviance. An additional hypothesis, which is based on the neo-socioanalytical model of personality change (Roberts & Wood, 2006), is that changes in personality across the lifespan can explain the negative relation between age and workplace deviance. As such, this paper integrates research on two individual differences in the prediction of workplace deviance, age and personality, and thereby extends findings from the fourth chapter.

Chapter 6 examines how another individual difference, namely gender, predicts financial performance of organizations. More specifically, it is examined how the percentage of females on corporate boards relates to the financial performance of organizations. By meta-analytically integrating results from studies conducted in different countries, findings of this study will provide insights about the business case of (gender) diversity and introduce another important individual difference as a predictor of a crucial behavioral outcome – organizational performance.

Together, these five empirical chapters will advance both theory and practice by strengthening the understanding of individual differences as a predictor of cooperation, workplace deviance, and ultimately of organizational performance. The last chapter of this dissertation (**Chapter 7**) will summarize and integrate research findings from these five chapters and will discuss theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations and ideas for future research.