Chapter Four – Individual Values, Perceptions, and Reactions

Overview

Chapter 3 introduced the concept of individual differences and explored personality, intelligence, and learning styles. This chapter continues our focus on individual behavior in organizations. We begin with a discussion of attitudes, examining how attitudes are formed and changed, cognitive dissonance, and three key work-related attitudes. Next we look at how values and emotions affect organizational behavior. The role of perception, especially as it relates to issues of fairness and trust, is then discussed. Finally, our chapter concludes with a section devoted to stress in organizations—its causes and consequences and how it can be managed.

Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:
1. Discuss how attitudes are formed, describe the meaning of cognitive dissonance, and identify and describe three important work-related attitudes.
2. Describe the role and importance of values and emotions in organizational behavior.
3. Describe basic perceptual processes and how perception affects fairness, justice, and trust in organizations.
4. Discuss the nature of stress, identify the basic causes and consequences of stress, and describe how stress can be managed.

Real World Challenge: Attitude is a Choice at Pike Place Fish Market

Summary: John Yokoyama did not plan on owning Seattle's Pike Place Fish Market. As a manager, he demanded results from his employees and came down hard on their mistakes. He emulated the previous owner's negative attitudes, anger, and fear-based management style. No one working there was having fun, including Yokoyama. As his business struggled, employee turnover was high and morale was low.

Real World Challenge: Yokoyama asks for advice on improving his employees' attitudes.

Real World Response: To revive his business, Yokohama decided to share his vision of being world famous with his employees, and empowered them to pursue this vision. He gave his employees permission to have fun with their jobs and to perform their best by bringing their whole selves to work every day. The market has been featured on numerous television shows, and was even named one of the most fun places to work in America by CNN.

Chapter Outline

I. **ATTITUDES IN ORGANIZATIONS**

People's attitudes obviously affect their behavior in organizations. ***Attitudes*** are complexes of beliefs and feelings that people have about specific ideas, situations, or other people.

A. How Attitudes Are Formed

Attitudes are formed by a variety of forces, including our personal values, our experiences, and our personalities. Any of the "Big Five" or individual personality traits discussed in Chapter 3 may also influence our attitudes.

Attitudes are usually viewed as stable dispositions to behave toward objects in a certain way.

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, attitudes contain three components: cognition, affect, and intention.

Cognition is the knowledge a person presumes to have about something.

This "knowledge" may be true, partially true, or totally false. Cognitions are based on perceptions of truth and reality, and, as we note later, perceptions agree with reality to varying degrees.

A person's ***affect*** is his or her feelings toward something. In many ways, affect is similar to emotion—it is something over which we have little or no conscious control.

Intention guides a person's behavior. Intentions are not always translated into actual behavior, however.

Some attitudes, and their corresponding intentions, are much more central and significant to an individual than others. You may intend to do one thing (take a particular class) but later alter your intentions because of a more significant and central attitude (fondness for sleeping late).

B. Cognitive Dissonance

Suppose that you strongly believe that all companies need to be both profitable and environmentally responsible, and that you are the new CEO of a company that is a terrible polluter. You learn that reducing your company's carbon emissions would be so expensive that the company would no longer be profitable. What would you do?

Cognitive dissonance is an incompatibility or conflict between behavior and an attitude or between two different attitudes

When people experience dissonance, they often use one of four approaches to cope with it. Using the scenario above, these would include:

1. You can change your behavior and reduce the company's carbon emissions.
2. You can reduce the felt dissonance by reasoning that the pollution is not so important when compared to the goal of running a profitable company.
3. You can change your attitude toward pollution to decrease your belief that pollution is bad.
4. You can seek additional information to better reason that the benefits to society of manufacturing the products outweigh the societal costs of polluting.

Interestingly, though, sometimes people are aware of their dissonance but make a conscious decision to not reduce it.
This decision would be influenced by these three things:

1. Your perception of the importance of the elements that are creating the dissonance. If the elements involved in the dissonance are less important to you, it is easier to ignore.
2. The amount of influence you feel you have over these elements. If the Board of Directors blocks your plans, it is easier to rationalize the dissonance and not take action.
3. The rewards involved in the dissonance. Rewards for dissonance tend to decrease our reactions to it.

C. Attitude Change

Attitudes are not as stable as personality attributes. For example, new information may change attitudes.

Likewise, if the object of an attitude changes, a person's attitude toward that object may also change.

Attitudes can also change when the object of the attitude becomes less important or less relevant to the person.

Finally, as noted earlier, individuals may change their attitudes as a way to reduce cognitive dissonance.

Deeply rooted attitudes that have a long history are, of course, resistant to change.

D. Key Work-Related Attitudes

People in an organization form attitudes about many different things. Of course, some of these attitudes are more important than others.

Especially important attitudes are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement.

1. Job Satisfaction

Our *job satisfaction* reflects our attitudes and feelings about our job.

As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the factors that have the greatest influence on job satisfaction are the work itself, attitudes, values, and personality.

Satisfaction with the nature of the work itself is the largest influence on job satisfaction. Challenging work, autonomy, variety, and job scope also increase job satisfaction. As a manager, if you want to increase your subordinates' job satisfaction, focus first on improving the nature of the work they do.

Our attitudes and values about work also influence our job satisfaction.
Someone with a negative attitude toward work is less likely to be satisfied with any job than someone with a positive attitude toward work.

Interestingly, our job satisfaction is somewhat stable over time, even when we change jobs or employers.

Research evidence suggests that differences in job satisfaction are due in part to differences in employees' genetics and personality. In particular, core self-evaluation,

extroversion, and conscientiousness influence job satisfaction.

Are happy employees really more productive employees? The answer is yes. And the positive relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is even stronger for complex, professional jobs.

Job satisfaction positively influences employees' attitudes and organizational citizenship behaviors. Conversely, job dissatisfaction is related to higher absenteeism and turnover, as well as to other withdrawal behaviors such as lateness, drug abuse, grievances, and retirement decisions.

2. **Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment reflects the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and its goals and wants to stay with the organization.
There are three ways we can feel committed to an employer:

a. **Affective commitment**
Is a positive emotional attachment to the organization and strong identification with its values and goals. Affective commitment leads employees to stay with an organization because they want to, and is related to higher performance.

b. **Normative commitment**
Occurs when an employee feels obliged to stay with an organization for moral or ethical reasons. Normative commitment is related to higher performance and leads employees to stay with an organization because they feel they should.

c. **Continuance commitment**
Refers to an employee staying with an organization because of the perceived high economic and/or social costs involved with leaving. Continuance commitment leads employees to stay with an organization because they feel that they have to.

3. **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is "a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or coworkers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work."

Engaged employees give their full effort to their jobs, often going beyond what is required because they are passionate about the firm and about doing their jobs well.

Rather than wanting to do the work and wanting to do their best, disengaged workers feel they have to do the work, and generally do only what they have to do as a result.

High employee engagement is related to superior business performance.

As a manager, remember that the drivers of employee engagement can differ from the drivers of employee attraction and retention—what gets employees into an organization is not the same as what keeps them engaged and keeps them from leaving.

Engagement is enhanced when employees:
- Have clear goals and roles
- Have the resources needed to do a good job

- Get meaningful feedback on their performance
- Are able to use their talents
- Are recognized for doing a good job
- Have positive relationships with coworkers
- Have opportunities to learn and grow
- Have supportive leadership

II. VALUES AND EMOTIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Values are ways of behaving or end-states that are desirable to a person or to a group. Values can be conscious or unconscious.

Work values influence important individual and organizational outcomes including performance and retention, and are often considered to be important work outcomes in themselves.

A company leader's personal values affect the firm's business strategy and all aspects of organizational behavior including staffing, reward systems, manager–subordinate relationships, communication, conflict management styles, and negotiation approaches. Personal values also influence ethical choices.

A. Types of Values

Values can be described as terminal or instrumental, and as intrinsic or extrinsic.

1. Terminal and Instrumental Values

Terminal values reflect our long-term life goals, and may include prosperity, happiness, a secure family, and a sense of accomplishment. Terminal values can change over time depending on our experiences and accomplishments.

Instrumental values are our preferred means of achieving our terminal values or our preferred ways of behaving. Terminal values influence what we want to accomplish; instrumental values influence how we get there. The stronger an instrumental value is, the more we act on it.

2. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Work Values

Intrinsic work values relate to the work itself. Most people need to find some personal intrinsic value in their work to feel truly satisfied with it.

Extrinsic work values are related to the outcomes of doing work. Employees who work to earn money or to have health benefits are satisfying extrinsic work values.

B. Conflicts among Values

Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and individual-organization value conflicts all influence employee attitudes, retention, job satisfaction, and job performance.

At some point in their career, many managers experience an ***intrapersonal value conflict*** between the instrumental value of ambition and the terminal value of happiness. People are generally happier and less stressed when their instrumental and terminal values are aligned.

Unlike intrapersonal value conflicts, which are internal to an individual, *interpersonal value conflicts* occur when two different people hold conflicting values. Interpersonal value conflicts are often the cause of personality clashes and other disagreements.

As a manager, it is important to remember that people's constellations of instrumental and terminal values differ. These differences can lead to differences in work styles, work preferences, and reactions to announcements or events.

Finally, just as two different employees' values can conflict, an employee's values can conflict with the values of the organization, creating *individual-organization value conflict*. Lower individual-organization value conflict leads to greater job satisfaction, higher performance, lower stress, and greater job commitment.

C. How Values Differ around the World

Global differences in values can also lead to different managerial behaviors. For example, Latin Americans tend to hire competent family members whenever possible. Managers in the U.S. tend to strongly value individual achievement rather than family ties.

Values are influenced by culture. Research has found that a large number of basic values can be condensed into two major dimensions that vary across cultures:

(1) traditional/secular-rational values reflect the contrast between societies in which religion is very important and those in which it is not.
(2) survival/self-expression values. emphasize economic and physical security.

Figure 4.3 illustrates how these two major dimensions of values differ in a variety of countries.

D. The Role of Emotions in Behavior

Emotions also play an important role in organizations. Employees who effectively manage their emotions and moods can create a competitive advantage for a company.

We all experience emotions at work. Our behaviors are not guided solely by conscious, rational thought. In fact, emotion often plays a larger role in our behaviors than does conscious reasoning.

Emotions are intense, short-term physiological, behavioral, and psychological reactions to a specific object, person, or event that prepare us to respond to it.

Let's break this definition down into its four important elements:

1. Emotions are short events or episodes and relatively short-lived.
2. Emotions are directed at something or someone; differentiating them from moods.
3. Emotions are experienced; we *feel* emotion.
4. Emotions create a state of physical readiness through physiological reactions.

Why is understanding the role of emotions important to organizations?
First, because emotions are malleable, effective employees and managers know how to positively influence their own emotions and the emotions of others.

Second, emotions influence both the creation and maintenance of our motivation to engage or to not engage in certain behaviors.

Third, research has found that emotion can influence turnover, decision making, leadership, helping behaviors, and teamwork behaviors. Effective leaders use emotion to generate positive follower behaviors.

E. Affect and Mood

Although the cause of emotions tends be obvious, the cause of mood tends to be more unfocused and diffused.

Moods are short-term emotional states that are not directed toward anything in particular. Our mood at the start of a workday influences how we see and react to work events, which influences our performance.

Our moods can be influenced by others. Workgroups tend to experience shared group moods when they can display mood information to each other through facial, vocal, and behavioral cues. Changing group membership in a way that changes the manner in which coworkers interact can change the amount and type of mood information members get from each other and influence employees' moods.

Affectivity represents our tendency to experience a particular mood or to react to things with certain emotions

The two dominant dimensions of mood are ***positive affect***, which reflects a combination of high energy and positive evaluation characterized by emotions like elation, and ***negative affect***, which comprises feelings of being upset, fearful, and distressed.

As shown in Figure 4.4, positive and negative affect are not opposites, but are two distinct dimensions. Affect tends to be somewhat dispositional and fairly stable over time.

Negative affect is related to lower organizational citizenship behaviors, greater withdrawal and counterproductive work behaviors, lower job satisfaction, and greater injuries.

Higher positive affect is related to increased creativity, openness to new information, and efficient decision making. Positive affectivity also increases the likelihood of cooperation strategies in negotiations, improving the results.

III. PERCEPTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Perception is the set of processes by which an individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment

People perceive the same things in very different ways. Moreover, people often assume that reality is objective and that we all perceive the same things in the same way.

Since perception plays a role in a variety of workplace behaviors, managers should understand basic perceptual processes. Through perceptual processes, the receiver assimilates the varied types of incoming information for the purpose of interpreting it.

A. Basic Perceptual Processes

Two basic perceptual processes are particularly relevant to managers—selective perception and stereotyping.

1. **Selective Perception**

   Selective perception is the process of screening out information that we are uncomfortable with or that contradicts our beliefs.

2. **Stereotyping**

   Stereotyping is categorizing or labeling people on the basis of a single attribute. Certain forms of stereotyping can be useful and efficient.

   Common attributes from which people often stereotype are race and sex. Of course, stereotypes along these lines are inaccurate and can be harmful.

B. Errors in Perception

As you might expect, errors may creep into how we interpret the things we perceive. Stereotyping and selection perception are often the underlying causes of these errors, but other factors may also come into play. Perception shortcuts, for example, may play a role.

One perception shortcut is categorization, which reflects our tendency to put things into groups or categories. We then exaggerate the similarities within and the differences between the groups.

After we put people into categories, selective perception leads to selectively interpreting what we see based on our interests, expectations, experience, and attitudes. Selective perception reinforces stereotypes as the perceiver focuses on information and behaviors that confirm rather than negate the assigned stereotype.

Managers need to be aware of this bias in order to evaluate subordinates more objectively and accurately.

The *halo effect* is when we form a general impression about something or someone based on a single (typically good) characteristic.

The *contrast effect* occurs when we evaluate our own or another person's characteristics through comparisons with other people we have recently encountered who rank higher or lower on the same characteristics.

Projection occurs when we project our own characteristics onto other people.

First impression bias may also be relevant. Research has found that not only do we tend to avoid people after we have had a negative reaction to, but also negative impressions are harder to change than positive ones. First impressions are formed quickly. Once we form wrong impressions, they are likely to persist.

Our impressions and expectations of others also can become *self-fulfilling prophecies*. If we categorize a person as untrustworthy, we are likely to treat that individual with suspicion and distrust. These actions then evoke appropriate guarded reactions from the other person, whose reactions serve to confirm our initial impressions.

C. Perception and Attribution

Attribution refers to the way we explain the causes of our own as well as other people's behaviors and achievements, and understand why people do what they do.

As shown in Figure 4.5, we rely on three rules to evaluate whether to assign an internal or an external attribution to someone's behavior or outcome:

1. *Consistency* – leads to internal attributions
2. *Distinctiveness* – low distinctiveness leads to internal attributions
3. *Consensus* – a low consensus points to internal attributions

A related aspect of attribution is self-handicapping. *Self-handicapping* occurs when people create obstacles for themselves that make success less likely. Examples include using drugs and alcohol, refusing to practice, and reducing effort.

These behaviors may sound silly, but they are very real and serve to protect the person's sense of self-competence. Focusing on effort attributions and developing feelings of self-efficacy help overcome this behavior.

Attributing success to internal causes builds self-efficacy and increases the motivation to try hard and persist in the face of failure.

D. **Perception and Fairness, Justice, and Trust**

Perception and perceptual processes play a major role in how people feel about fairness, justice, and trust.

In organizations, perceptions of unfairness (also referred to as injustice) can exist in numerous situations such as layoffs and downsizings, hiring and promotion decisions, union negotiations, and even simple organizational change.

The term **organizational fairness** refers to employees' perceptions of organizational events, policies, and practices as being fair or not fair.

Why should you care about fairness? You should care because perceptions of fairness affect a wide variety of employee attitudes and behaviors including satisfaction, commitment, trust, and turnover.

A number of negative behaviors can result from perceptions of unfairness, including theft, sabotage, and other unethical behaviors. Perceived unfairness also increases the chances that employees will file lawsuits against their employers.

As a manager, it is critical to remember that it is insufficient to just *be* fair; you must also be *perceived* as fair by your subordinates.

Understanding fairness is important for ethical reasons as well. Failure to meet employees' fairness expectations can lead them to engage in unethical behavior

Global Issues: How Culture Can Influence Attributions

Summary: In intercultural interactions, the interpretations of behaviors are often more important than the actual behaviors. Because Western cultures emphasize individualism, people prefer dispositional explanations, whereas people from collectivist cultures prefer situational explanations. One study showed American and Chinese participants a picture of a fish swimming in front of a group of fish. More American than Chinese participants attributed the cause to be internal rather than external. This shows

how people with different cultural orientations perceive themselves in their environment. Westerners see themselves as independent entities and therefore notice individual objects more than contextual details. Understanding coworkers' behaviors requires understanding of one's subjective culture. Attributional training can help us understand the appropriate attributions for the behaviors of diverse coworkers.

1. **Distributive Fairness**

   Distributive fairness refers to the perceived fairness of the outcome received, including resource distributions, promotions, hiring and layoff decisions, and raises. Distributive fairness relates only to the outcome received, not to the fairness of the process that generated the decision.

2. **Procedural Fairness**

   Procedural fairness addresses the fairness of the procedures used to generate the outcome.

   Why does procedural fairness matter so much?
   There are two reasons.
   First, employees use perceptions of the current decision-making procedures to predict how they will likely fare in the organization in the future.
   Second, fair procedures signal that employees are valued and accepted by the organization.

3. **Interactional Fairness**

   Interactional fairness is whether the amount of information about the decision and the process was adequate, and the perceived fairness of the interpersonal treatment and explanations received during the decision-making process. Deception or abusive words or actions can be seen as having low interactional fairness.

   Interactional fairness describes two specific types of interpersonal treatment.

   The first type is interpersonal fairness, which reflects the degree to which people are treated with politeness, dignity, and respect by authorities or third parties involved in executing procedures or determining outcomes.

   The second type is informational fairness, which focuses on the extent to which employees receive adequate information and explanations about decisions affecting their working lives.

   It is important that a high degree of interactional fairness exist in the relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate. Low interactional fairness can lead to feelings of resentment toward either the supervisor or the organization.

4. **Perception and Trust**

   Trust is the expectation that another person will not act to take advantage of us regardless of our ability to monitor or control them. Trust is critical to long-term relationships and is positively related to job performance.

   Trusting work relationships enable employees to focus on their work and not waste time and energy "watching their backs." Trust is particularly important to the developmental stages of relationships, and is positively related to a company's financial performance.

CASE STUDY: What to Do When the Boss Releases His Inner Toddler

Summary: The case begins by outlining a scenario of VPs reporting monthly sales when the president of the company throws a chair at a VP reporting low monthly sales results, stating: 'Next time, I won't miss.' Consultant Lynn Taylor calls bosses like this *Terrible Office Tyrants*, or *TOTs*. Managers who can't control their power when they're placed under stress. Taylor provides 20 common traits characterizing TOTs, including bragging and bullying. Taylor offers some concrete coping techniques for subordinates of TOTS including putting everything in writing and be a star performer.

1. **According to some experts, the sort of behavior recorded here is more prevalent in the business world than in the rest of society. Assuming that this is true, why do you suppose that's the case?**

   Answers will vary but some possible arguments are that persons exhibiting this behavior likely would exhibit the same behaviors in their private lives but are forced into unwanted confrontations in a business setting that they could easily avoid in private. If this is happening more in business settings than in other industries, it could be that other industries have stricter controls to keep persons exhibiting these behaviors from climbing to positions with much authority. A teacher, for example, would not hold their position for very long if they threw a chair at a student. There are many other possible answers.

2. **Are you something of a perfectionist? Are you easily frustrated? How well suited are you – at this point in your life – to the task of managing other people?**

   Answers will vary of course but there should be some recognition that easily frustrated perfectionists are not (yet) managerial material. Although, that does not mean the same student could not control these attributes and become a better suited manager in the future.

3. **How might attitudes, values, and perceptions affect the behaviors illustrated in this case?**

   Attitudes are formed by a variety of forces, including the Big Five personality traits. The chair throwing president likely is highly disagreeable and highly neurotic. The leader is letting emotions dictate his actions. The observers, and/or recipients of this behavior are likely to develop negative attitudes toward the president and depending on the strength of the conflict with their values, may choose to leave the company. The president was viewing low sales results from one perspective, much different than the VP presenting the results. Fellow VPs are not perceiving any fairness and likely losing trust in the president.

4. **How would stress come into play?**

   The president is obviously under stress and may be in the phase of burnout, hence the chair throwing. The person is likely dealing with role demands beyond his capabilities. This person is not showing effective coping mechanisms.

IV. **STRESS IN ORGANIZATIONS**

   The finally element of individual behavior we will discuss in this chapter is stress. Many people think of stress as a simple problem. In reality, however, stress is complex and often misunderstood.

   A. **The Nature of Stress**

The text define *stress* as a person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive psychological or physical demands on him or her.

Given the underlying complexities of this definition, we need to examine its components carefully.

First is the notion of adaptation. People may adapt to stressful circumstances in any of several ways.

Second is the role of the stimulus. This stimulus, generally called a stressor, is anything that induces stress.

Third, stressors can be either psychological or physical.

Finally, the demands the stressor places on the individual must be excessive for stress to actually result.

1. **The Stress Process**

   Much of what we know about stress today can be traced to the pioneering work of Hans Selye whose most important contributions were his identification of the general adaptation syndrome and the concepts of eustress and distress.

   Figure 4.6 offers a graphical representation of the ***general adaptation syndrome (GAS)*** which identifies three stages of response to a stressor: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion.

   The first stage is called "alarm." At this point, the person may feel some degree of panic and begin to wonder how to cope.

   If the stressor is too extreme, the person may simply be unable to cope with it. In most cases, however, the individual gathers his or her strength (physical or emotional) and begins to resist the negative effects of the stressor, stage two.

   Prolonged exposure to a stressor without resolution may bring on phase three of the GAS: exhaustion. At this stage, the person literally gives up and can no longer fight the stressor.

2. **Distress and Eustress**

   One type of stress, ***eustress***, is the pleasurable stress that accompanies position events, such as a bonus or a promotion.

   Of course, there is also negative stress. Called ***distress***, the unpleasant stress that accompanies negative events, what most people think of when they hear the word *stress*.

   Remember that stress can be either good or bad. It can motivate and stimulate us, or it can lead to any number of dangerous side effects.

B. **Common Causes of Stress**

Many things can cause stress. Figure 4.7 shows two broad categories: organizational stressors and life stressors. It also shows three categories of stress consequences: individual consequences, organizational consequences, and burnout.

1. **Organizational Stressors**

Organizational stressors are various factors in the workplace that can cause stress.

Four general sets of organizational stressors are task demands, physical demands, role demands, and interpersonal demands.

Task demands are stressors associated with the specific job a person performs. Some occupations are by nature more stressful than others, or have unhealthy conditions, lack of job security, or even job overload.
We should note that the opposite of overload may also be undesirable. As Figure 4.8 shows, low task demands can result in boredom and apathy just as overload can cause tension and anxiety.

The *physical demands* of a job are its physical requirements on the worker; these demands are a function of the physical characteristics of the setting and the physical tasks the job involves. One important element is temperature. Others include whether the job requires strenuous labor, the design of the office, amount of social interaction, poor lighting, or shift work.

Role demands can also be stressful to people in organizations. A role is a set of expected behaviors associated with a particular position in a group or organization. As such, it has both formal (i.e., job-related and explicit) and informal (i.e., social and implicit) requirements. Individuals perceive role expectations with varying degrees of accuracy and then attempt to enact that role.

A final set of organizational stressors consists of three *interpersonal demands*: group pressures, leadership, and interpersonal conflict. Group pressures may include pressure to restrict output, pressure to conform to the group's norms, and so forth.

Leadership style also may cause stress. Suppose an employee needs a great deal of social support from his leader. The leader, however, is quite brusque and shows no concern or compassion for him. This employee will probably feel stressed.

Conflicting personalities and behaviors may also cause stress. Conflict can occur when two or more people must work together even though their personalities, attitudes, and behaviors differ.

Finally, we should also note that in today's world many job holders experience stress from a variety of sources simultaneously. It is also the case that stress in organizational settings can be influenced by events that take place outside the organization. An individual dealing with financial problems, a sick child, or the death of a close family member will undoubtedly experience stress from those events.

C. Consequences of Stress

Referring back to Figure 4.7, stress can produce individual consequences, organizational consequences, and burnout. The authors note that many of the factors listed are obviously interrelated.

1. Individual Consequences

The individual consequences of stress, then, are the outcomes that mainly affect the individual, and may produce behavioral, psychological, and medical consequences.

The *behavioral consequences* of stress may harm the person under stress or others. One such behavior is smoking.

The *psychological consequences* of stress relate to a person's mental health and well-being. When people experience too much stress at work, they may become depressed or find themselves sleeping too much or not enough.

The *medical consequences* of stress affect a person's physical well-being. Heart disease and stroke, among other illnesses, have been linked to stress.

2. **Organizational Consequences**

Other results of stress have even more direct consequences for organizations. These include decline in performance, withdrawal, and negative changes in attitudes. Employee violence is a potential individual consequence of stress.

Another direct organizational consequence of employee stress relates to attitudes. As we just noted, job satisfaction, morale, and organizational commitment can all suffer, along with motivation to perform at high levels.

Burnout, another consequence of stress, has clear implications for both people and organizations. **Burnout** is a general feeling of exhaustion that develops when a person simultaneously experiences too much pressure and has too few sources of satisfaction.

D. **Managing and Controlling Stress**

Many strategies have been developed to help manage stress in the workplace. Some are for individuals, and others are geared toward organizations.

1. **Individual Coping Strategies**

Many strategies for helping individuals manage stress have been proposed. Exercise is one method of managing stress. A related method of managing stress is relaxation. Time management is often recommended for managing stress.

Somewhat related to time management is the idea of role management, in which the individual actively works to avoid overload, ambiguity, and conflict.

A final method for managing stress is to develop and maintain support groups. A support group is simply a group of family members or friends with whom a person can spend time.

2. **Organizational Coping Strategies**

Organizations are also increasingly realizing that they should be involved in managing their employees' stress.

Two basic organizational strategies for helping employees manage stress are institutional programs and collateral programs.

Institutional programs for managing stress are undertaken through established organizational mechanisms. The organization's culture also can be used to help manage stress. Finally, supervision can play an important institutional role in managing stress. A supervisor can be a major source of overload.

A collateral stress program is an organizational program specifically created to help employees deal with stress. More and more companies are developing their own programs or adopting existing programs of this type. These programs attack stress indirectly by encouraging employees to exercise, which is presumed to reduce stress. On the negative side, this kind of effort costs considerably more than stress management programs because the firm must invest in physical facilities.

Finally, organizations try to help employees cope with stress through other kinds of programs. For example, existing career development programs or programs promoting everything from humor to massage to yoga as antidotes for stress.

E. Work-Life Balance

1. Fundamental Work-Life Relationships

Work-life relationships can be characterized in any number of ways.

Common dimensions would include such things as an individual's current job (including working hours, job satisfaction, and so forth), his or her career goals (the person's aspirations, career trajectory, and so forth), interpersonal relations at work (with the supervisor, subordinates, coworkers, and others), and job security.

Work-life relationships, then, include any relationships between dimensions of the person's work life and the person's personal life.

Stress will occur when there is a basic inconsistency or incompatibility between a person's work and life dimensions.

2. Balancing Work-Life Linkages

Balancing work-life linkages is, of course, no easy thing to do. The important thing is to recognize the potential trade-offs in advance so that they can be carefully weighed and a comfortable decision made.

Individuals must also recognize the importance of long-term versus short-term perspectives in balancing their work and personal lives.

People also have to decide for themselves what they value and what tradeoffs they are willing to make.

Summary and Application

Attitudes, values and emotions, perception, and stress are all important factors that influence organizational behavior. The three most important job-related attitudes are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement.

There are many different kinds of values that can be held by people. Not surprisingly, then, it is somewhat common for an individual to have conflicting values. Values also differ across cultures in different parts of the globe. Emotions, affect, and mood are also important contributors to behavior.

Perception is the set of processes by which a person becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment. Basic perceptual processes include selective perception and stereotyping. Perception and attribution are also closely related. Internal attributions include ability and effort. External attributions include luck, not having sufficient resources, and the interference or help of other people.

Stress is an individual's response to a strong stimulus. Functional stress is the experience of a manageable level of stress for a reasonable period of time that generates positive emotions including satisfaction, excitement, and enjoyment. Dysfunctional stress is an overload of stress from a situation of either under- or over-arousal that continues for too long.

The General Adaptation Syndrome outlines the basic stress process. Stress can be caused by task, physical, role, and interpersonal demands. Consequences of stress include organizational and individual outcomes, as well as burnout. Several things can be done to manage stress.