

RESEARCH ON EMOTION
IN ORGANIZATIONS

VOLUME 19



EMOTION IN
ORGANIZATIONS

A Coat of Many Colors

**NEAL M. ASHKANASY, ASHLEA C. TROTH,
AND RONALD H. HUMPHREY**

Editors

EMOTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The Editors would like to dedicate this Volume to three notable scholars who passed away between 2022 and 2023.

***Sigal Barsade** left us on February 07, 2022, aged 56. Sigal will be remembered especially for her work on emotional contagion in teams. Her brilliant contributions to the literature on emotion in organizations helped to shape the field.*

***Howard M. (Howie) Weiss** passed away on February 20, 2023, aged 80. He was one of the authors of *Affective Events Theory*, which features in this volume. His impact on the study of emotions in organizational settings cannot be overstated.*

***Cynthia (Cindy) Gallois** left us on June 08, 2023, aged 77. Cindy was Neal Ashkanasy's PhD Supervisor and Ashlea Troth's Associate PhD Supervisor. She is remembered for her work in developing *Communication Accommodation Theory*.*

We thank Cindy for her incisive brilliance and lifelong support and friendship.

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seminal articles on emotional labor and on emotions in the workplace, and his co-written research was cited by President Reagan during a State of the Union address. He has written, edited, or co-edited five books (one forthcoming), including *Effective Leadership* (Humphrey, 2013).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO A COAT OF MANY COLORS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: In this chapter, we outline the background to the present volume, including the history of the Emonet group and the origins of the book series. We argue that the volume subtitle “A coat of many colors” reflects the diversity of approaches to studying emotion in organizational settings. We then provide a summary of the 11 contributor chapters in the volume, which illustrates the wide range of emotion-related topics covered in the volume.

Study Design/Methodology/Approach: This chapter provides an overview of the chapters in the volume, and gives a brief summary of each chapter, explaining how each fits into the overall theme of the volume and listing the key contribution of each chapter.

Findings: The introduction concludes with a summary of main findings of the chapters, and how they shape the future of the field, concluding that, since emotion-related topics nowadays are so integrated into the mainstream literature in organizational behavior and organization theory, maybe there is no longer a need to address emotions as a stand-alone topic.

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Emotion in Organizations

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Origin/Value: The chapters in this volume address a wide range of emotion-related topics in the fields of organizational behavior and organization theory and point to the future of research in this field.

Keywords: Emotions; topic diversity; affective events theory; emotional intelligence; emotional labor; future research directions

The centrality of human emotions in organizational life is today well-established in the organizational behavior (OB) and organization theory (OT) literature. Defined by [Elfenbein \(2022\)](#) as, “a kind of sense-making process . . . that leads to subjective feeling states” (p. 492) and that govern every aspect of organizational life, the study of emotion in organizational settings is now entrenched in modern organizational scholarship, teaching, and research. Indeed, and as [Mastenbroek \(2000\)](#) pointed out more than 20 years ago, the study of emotion in organizational settings has a very long history, extending back to the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato. In recent history, however, this has not necessarily always been the case. Not so many years ago, the study of emotions in organizations was most definitely off the agenda, and this situation did not change until the 1980s, when [Hochschild \(1983\)](#) published her seminal book, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*.

A few years later, [Ashforth and Humphrey \(1995\)](#) published their seminal “reappraisal” of the field, which ultimately led to what [Barsade et al. \(2003\)](#) termed the “affective revolution.” At around the same time (1996), together with interested colleagues, Ashkanasy organized a symposium at the Academy of Management Conference in Cincinnati, USA, that led in 1997 to the creation of the Emonet Listserv and the establishment of the biannual conference series, “International Conference on Emotions and Organizational Life,” and the consequential annual book series, *Research on Emotion in Organizations*. In this introduction to the 19th volume in the series, we take a retrospective view of the field, as it has emerged following publication of Hochschild’s book, and the original conference and the resulting edited volumes (see [Table 1.1](#)). Finally, we review the chapters in this volume (that constitute the latest installment of the saga) and its emergence as a multifaceted and continuously evolving “Coat of many colors.”

Although the level of awareness of the role played by emotion in organizations was high in the 1930s (see [Weiss & Brief, 2001](#), for a historical review), interest waned post-WWII as researchers began to focus instead on “rational” and “scientific” explanations for organizational behavior (cf. [Muchinsky, 2000](#)). This state of affairs began, however, to change in the 1980s following the invention by [Hochschild \(1983\)](#) of the concept of “emotional labor,” which the author defined as a conscious process of emotion regulation undertaken as a part of the actor’s professional role. Among the first authors to begin to write about emotions in organizational settings in the 1980s included [Fineman \(1983\)](#) and [Rafaeli and Sutton \(1987, 1989; see also Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988\)](#). Fineman focused largely on the essential emotionality of organizations, while Sutton and Rafaeli researched the role played by emotional labor. Interest surged following publication of [Goleman’s \(1995, 1998\)](#) books on emotional intelligence (EI), however. Goleman even featured as a cover article in *Time Magazine* ([Gibbs, 1995](#)). This subsequently initiated the “great debate” over the

Table 1.1. List of Emonet Conferences and Proceedings.

Year	Location	Title Citation
1. 1998	San Diego, USA	<i>Emotions in the workplace: Theory, research, and practice.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2000).
2. 2000	Toronto, Canada	<i>Managing emotions in the workplace.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2002).
3. 2002	Gold Coast, Australia	<i>Emotions in organizational behavior.</i> Härtel et al. (2005).
4. 2004	London, UK	<i>The effect of affect in organizational settings.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2005). <i>Individual and organizational perspectives on emotion management and display.</i> Zerbe et al. (2006).
5. 2006	Atlanta, GA, USA	<i>Functionality, intentionality, and morality.</i> Härtel et al. (2007). <i>Emotions, ethics, and decision-making.</i> Zerbe et al. (2008).
6. 2008	Fontainebleau, France	<i>Emotions in groups, organizations, and cultures.</i> Härtel et al. (2009). <i>Emotions and organizational dynamism.</i> Zerbe et al. (2010).
7. 2010	Montréal, Canada	<i>What have we learned? Ten years on</i> Härtel et al. (2011). <i>Experiencing and managing emotions in the workplace.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2012).
8. 2012	Helsinki, Finland	<i>Individual sources, dynamics, and expressions of emotion.</i> Zerbe et al. (2013). <i>Emotions and the organizational fabric.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2014).
9. 2014	Philadelphia, USA	<i>New ways of studying emotions in organizations.</i> Härtel et al. (2015). <i>Emotions and organizational governance.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2016)
10. 2016	Rome, Italy	<i>Emotions and identity.</i> Zerbe et al. (2017). <i>Individual, relational, and contextual dynamics of emotions.</i> Petitta et al. (2018).
11. 2018	Chicago, USA	<i>Emotions and leadership.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2019). <i>Emotions and service in the digital age.</i> Härtel et al. (2020).
12. 2020	(Virtual)	<i>Emotions and negativity.</i> Humphrey et al. (2022).
13. 2022	Lancaster, UK	<i>Emotions during times of disruption.</i> Troth et al. (2023). <i>Emotion in Organizations: A coat of many colors.</i> Ashkanasy et al. (2024).

validity of the EI construct in organizational research (see [Daus & Ashkanasy, 2003](#)), which is still ongoing (see [Dasborough et al., 2022](#)).

As we noted earlier, and capitalizing on this upsurge of interest, [Ashforth and Humphrey \(1995\)](#) published their call for the reappraisal of the importance of emotions in organizations. Ashkanasy subsequently organized the first Academy of Management symposium on emotion in the workplace in 1996, and a “caucus” (an informal meeting of interested scholars) the following year (1997), which saw the genesis of the popular Emonet Listserv (which is still functioning today). The first of the Emonet Conferences (officially titled the “International Conference on Emotions and Worklife”) took place at San Diego State University in August 1998. This conference was attended by many of today’s leading scholars on emotions in organizations and resulted in the first of the Emonet volumes of collected papers (that subsequently led to this annual series).

Since 1998, the Emonet Group has sponsored 13 conferences at different locations around the world and published 19 volumes of collected papers ([Table 1.1](#)). Each volume is based, in part, on the papers presented at these conferences, but contains a selection of invited chapters by leading scholars. As can be seen in the table, the conference organizers gave each volume a title that reflected the general theme of the chapters chosen for the volume. In the end, the chapters encompass a wide gamut of topics covering every conceivable aspect and level of organizational functioning. It should, therefore, come as little surprise that we have chosen “Coat of Many Colors” as the title of the present volume. Readers will recall that this is what (Biblical Patriarch) Jacob gave to his prodigal son, Joseph. The coat was supposed to express the love Jacob felt for his youngest son, who was born late in his father’s life. As the youngest son, Joseph was bullied by his (elder) brothers, who eventually sold him to the Midianites who carried him off to ancient Egypt, and where Joseph eventually obtained a high rank that enabled his father’s descendants (the Israelites) to prosper in Egypt.

The coat of many colors thus represents a symbol of love and hope. We chose this as the title of the present volume on the basis that emotions, while extremely varied in their manifestation and effects in organizational settings, nonetheless represent the essence of organizational life. Thus, while the study of emotions in organizations was for so long ignored because of its assumed “irrational” nature, it has now proven to be a source of inspiration for modern scholars of OB and OT.

More recently, the study of emotions in organizations has become mainstream and is now seen to apply at all levels of organizational analysis (see [Ashkanasy, 2003](#); [Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017](#)). To see if we could quantify this movement, we conducted a Google® search of the literature for “emotion” and “organizations” – which resulted in over three million hits (see Chapter 12, Fig. 1). No longer is it necessary for scholars to complain that the topic has been “neglected” in the OB and OT literature ([Ashkanasy & Ashton-James, 2005](#)).

If anything, the pendulum has swung even farther, to the point that emotions seem to be taken for granted in modern OB and OT research. To exemplify this, consider the poster program at the annual meetings of Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP), one of the leading international conferences in the field. In the days prior to the publication of [Ashforth and Humphrey \(1995\)](#), posters outlining studies of emotion were practically nonexistent in the

SIOP program. This all changed dramatically in the early years of the 21st century with the appearance in the SIOP program of multiple poster sessions dedicated to emotion-related topics. At the 2023 SIOP conference, however, there was only one such session. Instead, emotion-related variables were conspicuously present across most of the poster sessions at the conference, viewed as integral to understanding a broad church of organizational topics rather than considered as a standalone topic.

The chapters in this volume reflect this trend. While some of the chapters are focused on emotions and their role in organizational settings, others deal with topics (e.g., such as abusive supervision) that belong in the mainstream of organizational behavior research.

THE CHAPTERS IN THIS VOLUME

Chapter 2 is the opening substantive chapter of this volume, and focuses on the role emotions in a learning environment. Specifically, author Benjamin Apelojg draws on [Damasio and Carvalho's \(2013\)](#) evolutionary concept of emotions, feelings, and drives to advocate a “body-based” perspective of learning – that ultimately pays greater attention to physiological needs in learning contexts. Apelojg thus aims to increase knowledge about student teachers’ physiological and psychological needs, and their interrelationships in learning settings. The author employed experience sampling methodology (ESM) using responses of a sample of 65 German student teachers. The student teachers used the “Felix-App” (a digital research and feedback tool) to capture their feelings, needs, and motivation in real time in one of three different types of learning environments (or courses) for the duration of a semester. Two of the courses were traditional lecture-like learning contexts, while the third was designed to be integrative and to be applied to real life school contexts. Apelojg contends his findings show the importance of considering students’ physiological needs and the mutual exchange between body and mind in learning contexts (as an alternative to the traditional focus on cognition and cognitive skills in most learning research). He further argues that being able to change body states to elicit positive feelings and balanced homeostasis can offer the students new possibilities to solve challenging problems. As such, this chapter represents a new and exciting example of how emotions play a central role in determining motivations and behavior in an organizational context.

In the next chapter (Chapter 3), Kirsi Snellman, Henri Hakala, and Katja Upadaya switch the attention to the context of investment decision-making. While this is a vastly different context to the one outlined in Chapter 2, the lesson is similar: that emotions lie at the center of human decision-making and functioning. Drawing on the principles of Affective Events Theory (AET: [Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996](#)), the authors build a five-step model and develop a set of propositions that considers how angel investors’ affective experiences, when seeing an entrepreneurial pitch, influences their continued interest in the

investment proposal. Snellman and her co-authors focus in their analysis on the first impression at the selection stage, where information processing is more rapid and emotional and culminates in the decision to continue screening. In essence, their model conceptualizes the entrepreneur's pitch as an affective event. How this affective event is perceived by so-called "angel investors" is reasoned to elicit a range of physiological responses that, when considered with personality traits and dispositional affectivity, lead to positive, mixed, or negative emotional responses. Depending upon the valence of the emotion elicited, Snellman and her associates propose different first impressions are created about the pitch that are more or less likely to lead to a willingness or unwillingness to continue investment screening. The authors' work thus broadens traditional (i.e., rational) views of good investment decision-making, whereby angel investment is associated with rational analysis, the use of hard criteria, a negative mindset, and searching for flaws to justify decisions (i.e., to reject a proposal to quickly reduce the number of opportunities to a more manageable size, see [Maxwell et al., 2011](#)).

In the following chapter (Chapter 4), Hieu Nguyen, Neal M. Ashkanasy, and Stacey L. Parker switch to a different emotion-invoking context: workgroup supervision and the prevalence of supervisory abuse. As in Chapter 3, the authors of this chapter again seek to apply the principles of AET. In particular, what happens when some members of a workgroup believe they are being abused, while others do not. This leads to the situation of "abusive supervision dispersion." The authors explore this phenomenon in detail, noting that it is often overlooked in studies of abusive supervision. In this regard, most studies of abusive supervision have implicitly assumed that subordinates share a common view of their supervisors. As the empirical results presented in this chapter demonstrate, however, that is not necessarily the case. Some employees may regard a supervisor as abusive, but other subordinates might disagree. In their study, the authors demonstrate that the amount of "dispersion" of subordinate perceptions has a profound impact on subgroup formation and conflict among the subordinates, leading to a variety of different emotional, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes. Their intriguing results are in some ways paradoxical and should stimulate future research in this area.

Continuing the topic of abusive supervision, the author of Chapter 5, David Hampton-Musseau, proposes that EI abilities moderate the effects on employees of abusive supervisory responses, namely revenge and forgiveness. Referring once again to AET, Hampton-Musseau hypothesizes that (negative) affective states mediate the relationship between employees' experience of abusive supervision and their proclivity (intentions) (1) to engage in revenge and (2) to forgive their abuser. More specifically, high EI links to (1) lower levels of revenge proclivity and (2) higher levels of forgiveness. The author tested these hypotheses in a between-person scenario-based experiment involving 366 participants, who were randomly assigned to assess hypothetical situations involving regular or abusive supervision. Employees were recruited via an online panel from North, Central, and South America. He measured EI using two different ability measures of EI: the STEU-B ([Allen et al., 2014](#)) and the STEM-B ([Allen et al., 2015](#)). Results showed that high EI participants were less inclined to seek revenge than their

low-EI colleagues but, counter to the hypothesized effect, they were also less inclined to forgive. The authors discuss how this counterintuitive finding reflects the complexity of high EI individuals' responses to negative affective events. Again, this chapter would appear to generate additional ideas for future research in this field.

The authors of Chapter 6, Hamidreza Harati, Neal M. Ashkanasy, and Mahsa Amirzadeh, also address the topic of negative performance feedback, this time addressing the findings found in the literature regarding the effect of negative performance feedback on performance outcomes. Negative feedback is an inherent aspect of many workplaces, and the way individuals react to and process such feedback can have important implications for their performance and well-being. To explain these mixed findings, Harati and his co-authors present a model which proposes that the individual differences (task vs relational orientation) of feedback recipients partly determines the way employees perceive their feedback and regulate their emotions. The authors contend that this process then determines whether the consequences for subsequent task performance are positive or negative. More specifically, they contend that employees with higher task orientation are more likely than individuals with higher relational orientation to regulate their emotions after receiving negative feedback. Finally, Harati and his team also propose that greater emotion regulation leads to task performance improvement.

In Chapter 7, Christophe Haag and Marion Wolff explore emotions in a broader context: the rhetoric of emotionally (un)intelligent CEOs within the boardroom during a crisis. In their investigation of what underlies the powerful rhetoric of CEOs, Haag and Wolff draw on previous research showing that a speech becomes charismatic and effective when it produces strong emotional effects on followers especially during times of crisis (Shamir et al., 1994) and the central role of EI in the leadership process to obtain these positive effects (Tse et al., 2018). Specifically, Haag and Wolff seek to address the question of whether the rhetoric content of CEOs differs between emotionally intelligent and emotionally unintelligent CEOs in closed-door crisis communication speeches. The researchers conducted an experiment with 40 CEOs of large French (or France-based) corporations and ask them to deliver a verbal address to their board members in reaction to a vignette about a critical situation (i.e., major affective event) pertaining to their company. Haag and Wolff use *Tropes* software (Ghiglione et al., 1998) to conduct a semantic analysis and to identify the different discursive styles used by the speakers. Their results show CEOs with higher EI are more cooperative in strategic decision-making than those with lower EI who focus more on competition, often blame board members while praising competitors, and evoke more negative emotions through their discourse. Interestingly, CEOs who have medium levels of EI use the largest number of themes related to positive emotions. The authors suggest this cohort could be excessively optimistic in trying to motivate their colleagues with overly positive speech and might be misusing positive emotions in the boardroom context where there are likely to be norms of subtle emotional expressivity.

In the next chapter (Chapter 8), authors Ronald H. Humphrey, Chao Miao, and Anthony Silard also deal with emotional labor, but in a different context altogether. They present a literature review on work-to-family and family-to-work enrichment (WFE and FWE), “the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role” (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006, p. 73). As far as we can ascertain, theirs is the first review to summarize the existing meta-analytical research in this area, capturing the shift in the last decade in research from conflict to how work and family roles can be mutually enriching (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Importantly, the authors’ review identifies where there are gaps in the literature and specifies opportunities for future research. Moreover, they provide a comprehensive and insightful analysis to identify a range of outcomes (e.g., job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behavior) and antecedents (e.g., leadership, emotional labor, EI, social support, gender, and cross-cultural variables) that are ripe for more research regarding WFE and FWE. Emotional labor is proposed as one of the newer topic areas within WFE and FWE, with the authors arguing in line with the “bright side” of emotional labor (Humphrey et al., 2015), that surface acting has detrimental effects on WFE and FWE, while deep acting and genuine emotional labor will have positive effects. They propose further that EI is an affective construct that the authors argue would be fruitful for investigating in terms of the linkages with WFE and FWE. The authors end by advocating for more research to capture the dynamic nature and interplay between WFE and FWE.

In Chapter 9, Rebecca Dickason continues the focus on emotional labor, this time in the form of a “fluoroscopy” (i.e., looking under the surface) of emotional labor, noting that this “comes with the territory.” As this suggests, this creative chapter looks at the role space plays in employees’ performance of emotional labor. As such, this chapter represents an original contribution to the study of emotions in organizations. This is because space has been largely neglected in this field. Dickason takes a theatrical approach to studying space and emotional labor. In addition to the original theory development, she uses both observation and interviews to help her explore this intriguing topic. In addition, because the author’s data comes from three geriatric long-term care units, she is able to comment on the humanization/dehumanization of elderly people who are receiving care. Thus, this chapter makes contributions on multiple fronts.

In Chapter 10, authors Katie McIntyre, Wayne Graham, Rory Mulcahy, and Meredith Lawley switch away from the tone addressed so far in this volume, which focuses on the negative effects of emotion in organizations, and address the refreshing and positive idea of “joyful leadership.” As McIntyre and her co-authors observe, joyful leadership is today receiving considerable attention in the popular press, which suggests it resonates in some way with people. Nonetheless, there seems to be scant academic literature on it. The authors explore joyful leadership by integrating ideas from academic research on emotion, positive effect, and leadership. This has allowed McIntyre and her team to identify patterns of behavior that should be linked to joyful leadership. We observe that, in view of the widespread lack of employee engagement many authors report, joyful leadership may certainly be needed in contemporary organizations to reverse this trend.