

Emotional influence at work: Take it EASI

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Abstract

Research on emotions in organizations has traditionally taken an intrapersonal approach, examining how an organization member's emotions influence his or her own cognitions, attitudes, and behavior. We argue that a full understanding of the role of emotions in organizations requires a complementary focus on their interpersonal effects—that is, how one worker's emotions influence the feelings, cognitions, attitudes, and behavior of others. We advance Emotions as Social Information (EASI) theory, which posits that emotional expressions exert interpersonal effects by triggering affective reactions and/or inferential processes in targets, depending on the target's information processing and the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression. We review evidence from four domains of organizational behavior: customer service, group decision making, negotiation, and leadership. We call for new research that examines emotions in greater detail (discrete emotions, intensity, authenticity), studies different settings (organizational change, personnel selection), and considers temporal dynamics (frequency, long-term outcomes).

Keywords

conflict and negotiation, customer service, emotions and moods, groups/teams, leadership

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Human life is saturated with emotion, and the workplace is no exception. Emotions may arise from various events, including work outcomes (e.g., success vs. failure), interactions with customers (e.g., lack of respect, aggression), actions of colleagues (e.g., bullying, social support), stressful situations (e.g., deadlines, organizational change), and supervisor behavior (e.g., positive vs. negative feedback, fair vs. unfair treatment; Brief & Weiss, 2002). Such “affective events” influence the emotional state of organization members, which in turn shapes their behavior (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In recent years, research on emotions in organizations has started to flourish (Côté & Hideg, 2011; Elfenbein, 2007; George, 2011; Grandey, Diefendorff, & Rupp, 2012). Scholarly attention to emotions at work has taken such a flight that Barsade, Brief, and Spataro (2003) even referred to an “affective revolution.” We welcome this development wholeheartedly, but we also feel that the time has come to take the revolution in new directions.

Research on the consequences of emotions in the workplace has long been dominated by a focus on intrapersonal effects—that is, how an organization member’s emotional state influences his or her own attitudes, cognitions, and behavior. For instance, scholars have studied how workers’ affective states influence their job satisfaction (Brief, Butcher, & Roberson, 1995), judgment/decision making (Forgas, 1995), creativity (Baas, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2008), organizational citizenship behavior (George & Brief, 1992), negotiation strategies (Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Pillutla & Murnighan, 1996), absenteeism and turnover (George, 1990; Pelled & Xin, 1999), and job performance (Cropanzano, James, & Konovsky, 1993; Staw & Barsade, 1993). A lot of ground has been covered by this research, which has put the study of emotion in the workplace at center stage in organization science.

Here we wish to move beyond the intrapersonal effects paradigm. This is not because

we believe that intrapersonal effects are not important—quite the contrary—but because we feel that they do not paint a complete picture of the role of emotions in organizational life. Organization members do not just experience their emotions; they also express them to others. Thus, if we are to develop a comprehensive understanding of how emotions shape organizational behavior, we need to also consider their interpersonal effects, that is, the way in which one worker’s emotional expressions influence the feelings, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors of one or more *others*.

Before moving on, let us consider some definitional issues. Various terms are used in reference to emotional phenomena, the most common being affect, mood, and emotion (see, e.g., Ekman & Davidson, 1994). Affect is the most general term, referring to a subjective feeling state that can range from diffuse moods such as cheerfulness or depression to specific and acute emotions such as happiness or anger. The word affect is also used to refer to relatively stable individual dispositions (i.e., trait positive and negative affect; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Emotion and mood are generally seen as subtypes of affect. They are differentiated by the degree to which they are directed toward a specific stimulus—be it a person, an object, or an event (Ekman & Davidson, 1994). Most emotion theories hold that discrete emotions arise as a result of an individual’s conscious or unconscious evaluation (appraisal) of some event as positively or negatively relevant to a particular concern or goal (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991). Accordingly, emotions are directed toward something, or, more typically, someone (e.g., a colleague, a customer, the boss), whereas moods are not directed at anything in particular. Emotions are also comparatively short-lived and intense, whereas moods tend to be more enduring and mild. Furthermore, unlike moods, emotions are characterized by distinct subjective experiences, physiological reactions, expressions, and action tendencies (Ekman & Davidson, 1994).

Here we build on the social-functional approach to emotion, which holds that emotions do not only influence those who experience them, but also those who observe them (e.g., Côté, 2005; Elfenbein, 2007; Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Oatley & Jenkins, 1992; Parkinson, 1996; Van Kleef, 2009). A team member's level of cooperation on a joint task may be affected by the emotions of the other team members (Barsade, 2002). A customer's satisfaction and purchase intentions may be influenced by the emotions of a service provider (Pugh, 2001). A business representative's negotiation behavior may be shaped by the emotions of the other party (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007). An employee's job performance may be influenced by the emotional style of the boss (George & Bettenhausen, 1990).

People appear to be aware that their emotional expressions can influence others. There is abundant evidence that people sometimes purposefully express happiness to get others to like them, or express sadness to solicit help (Clark, Pataki, & Carver, 1996). Moreover, managers have been reported to deliberately feign anger to influence their subordinates (Fitness, 2000). Clearly, then, there is much more to emotion than its private experience: emotional expressions are a potential source of influence (Côté & Hideg, 2011; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Van Kleef, Van Doorn, Heerdink, & Koning, 2011). Surprisingly, however, although research on emotions in organizations is burgeoning, relatively few studies have addressed the interpersonal consequences of emotional expressions in the workplace. Moreover, there is no theoretical framework to guide such research. This is a rather problematic state of affairs, especially if we consider how much time people spend at work.

In this article we propose a comprehensive theoretical framework that we hope will provide an impetus for the study of the interpersonal effects of emotions in the

workplace. The paper unfolds as follows. First, we apply a recent theory of the interpersonal effects of emotions to the organizational setting. We derive several propositions from the theory that inform understanding of when and how emotional expressions influence work outcomes and that help to reconcile seemingly inconsistent findings that have been obtained in past research. Then we discuss emerging empirical evidence from four organizational domains, namely customer service, group decision making, negotiation, and leadership. We close by providing directions for future research.

Emotions as Social Information (EASI) theory

Emotions as Social Information (EASI) theory (Van Kleef, 2009; see also, Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010; Van Kleef et al., 2011) is rooted in the aforementioned social-functional approach to emotion. A basic premise of this perspective is that, just as emotions provide information to the self (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), emotional expressions provide information to observers (Keltner & Haidt, 1999), which may influence their cognitions, attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, a basic building block of the current analysis is the idea that emotions do not merely have intrapersonal effects on those who experience them, but also interpersonal effects on those who observe them.

Proposition 1: Emotional expressions in organizations shape the judgments, decisions, and actions of those who observe them.

If we accept that emotional expressions may have interpersonal consequences, then the next question is how these consequences come about. EASI theory specifies two processes through which observers may be influenced by others' emotional expressions: affective

reactions and inferential processes. To illustrate, imagine that, due to circumstances, you show up 30 minutes late for a meeting with a colleague. Your colleague expresses anger regarding your tardiness. On the one hand, your colleague's anger may upset you and make you dislike your colleague (affective reactions), and possibly lead you to decide not to meet again. On the other hand, your colleague's anger could also lead you to realize that s/he is upset with you and that you have been late before (inferential processes), which may motivate you to be punctual next time. EASI theory posits that all interpersonal emotion effects are shaped by these two processes, which we describe in greater detail below.

Affective reactions

Emotional expressions can evoke affective reactions in observers, which may subsequently influence their behavior. One type of affective reaction is produced by emotional contagion, the tendency to "catch" other people's emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). One form of emotional contagion occurs when individuals are exposed to others' nonverbal displays of emotion (e.g., facial, vocal, and postural expressions), which may be mimicked and produce congruent emotional states via afferent feedback (i.e., physiological feedback from facial, vocal, and postural movements; e.g., Hawk, Fischer, & Van Kleef, 2012; Hess & Blairy, 2001; Neumann & Strack, 2000). This mimicry-based type of emotional contagion is referred to as "primitive emotional contagion" (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1992).

Hatfield and colleagues (1992) proposed that emotional contagion can also occur via processes that do *not* require mimicry, such as classical conditioning and perspective taking. Although these "non-primitive" forms of emotional contagion have received less research attention, there is accumulating evidence that emotional contagion can indeed occur even in the absence of face-to-face

interaction and mimicry, for instance, through computer-mediated interaction (e.g., Cheshin, Rafaeli, & Bos, 2011; Friedman et al., 2004; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004a), perspective taking (Hawk, Fischer, & Van Kleef, 2011), or social appraisal processes (Parkinson & Simons, 2009). As a result of these processes, individuals tend to catch others' emotions on a moment-to-moment basis, not just from their facial displays, but also from vocal, postural, and verbal expressions.

In addition to the reciprocal emotional experiences that may come about via emotional contagion, emotional expressions may also arouse *complementary* emotional experiences in observers (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). For instance, expressions of sadness and distress may elicit sympathy (Eisenberg, 2000) or compassion (Van Kleef et al., 2008) in targets, and expressions of anger may elicit fear (Dimberg & Öhman, 1996). The resulting emotional states in turn fuel behaviors that may have adaptive functionality in social relationships, such as avoidance, helping, affiliation, and soothing (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Such emotional complementarity bears resemblance to other forms of nonverbal complementarity, as when dominant postures of one person are matched with submissive postures of an interaction partner and vice versa. Presumably, such complementarity facilitates social coordination. Tiedens and Fragale (2003) showed that individuals whose dominant or submissive nonverbal behavior was complemented felt more comfortable and liked their partner better than did those whose behavior was mimicked. This suggests that emotional complementarity may contribute to well-coordinated work relationships.

The feeling states that result from exposure to other people's emotions in turn influence judgments and decisions via various types of "affect infusion" (Forgas, 1995). First, individuals may (mis)attribute the affective state to the situation at hand, using their feelings as input to their judgments (i.e., affect-as-

information; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). Thus, if an employee catches a colleague's happiness, she may judge the situation as benign, which may promote cooperation. Second, the emerging affective state may selectively prime related ideas and memories that are part of an associative network (i.e., affect priming; Bower, 1981; Isen, Shalke, Clark, & Karp, 1978). Thus, if a worker catches a colleague's anger, he may selectively focus on negative characteristics of the colleague and/or the task at hand, which may undermine the motivation to work together on the task.

In addition to emotional contagion, affective reactions may take the form of favorable or unfavorable impressions. Expressions of positive emotions tend to inspire positive impressions, and negative emotions negative impressions (Clark & Taraban, 1991). Such impressions may in turn shape behavior. For instance, individuals tend to help others whom they like and to deny help to others whom they do not like (Clark et al., 1996). These effects are more motivational than the effects of emotions on judgments and behavior discussed above, which are mediated by cognitive processes such as affect-as-information and affect-priming. Despite these differences, both types of affective reactions shape organizational behavior.

Proposition 2: Emotional expressions at the workplace trigger affective reactions in observers, which in turn shape their behavior.

Inferential processes

Another way in which emotional expressions exert interpersonal effects in organizations is by triggering inferential processes in observers. Specific emotions arise in response to appraisals (interpretations) of specific situations (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991). For instance, sadness arises when one faces irrevocable loss and experiences low coping potential, and guilt arises when one feels that one has transgressed

some social norm or moral imperative (Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001; Smith, Haynes, Lazarus, & Pope, 1993).

Because discrete emotions have such distinct appraisal patterns, they provide a wealth of information to observers (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Van Kleef, 2009). For instance, emotional expressions convey information about the expresser's feelings (Ekman, 1993), social intentions (Fridlund, 1994), and orientation toward other people (Knutson, 1996). In addition, emotional expressions inform observers about the expresser's appraisal of the situation (Manstead & Fischer, 2001; Van Doorn, Heerdink, & Van Kleef, 2012). This is illustrated by classic work on social referencing, which revealed that infants are more likely to cross a visual cliff when their mother smiles at them than when she looks fearful (e.g., Klinnert, Campos, Sorce, Emde, & Svejda, 1983). Presumably the mother's emotional display signals that the environment is safe (happiness) or unsafe (fear), which informs the infant's behavior.

Individuals may thus distill useful pieces of information from others' emotional expressions (Van Kleef, 2009). For instance, when an organization member is confronted with a co-worker's sadness, he might infer that the other faces some hardship, which may lead him to offer help or consolation. When confronted with a colleague's guilt, he may infer that the colleague feels bad about a transgression and is willing to make up for it (for a detailed account of the inferences people may draw from others' emotions, see, Van Kleef, De Dreu et al., 2010). In short, inferential processes are a second mechanism underlying the interpersonal effects of emotions in organizations.

Proposition 3: Emotional expressions at the workplace trigger inferential processes in observers, which in turn shape their behavior.

Both affective reactions and inferential processes may influence organizational behavior,

with outcomes depending on the relative strength of the two processes. In some cases inferences and affective reactions lead to the same behavior. For example, the distress of a colleague signals that help is required (inference) but also triggers negative feelings in the observer (affective reaction), both of which foster supportive behavior (Clark et al., 1996). In other cases, however, inferences and affective reactions motivate opposite behaviors. For instance, when faced with an angry opponent in conflict, one's own reciprocal anger may provoke competition and retaliation, but one's inference that the other is upset because his or her limits have been reached may encourage strategic cooperation (Van Kleef et al., 2004a). Which process takes relative precedence in guiding organizational behavior depends on two classes of moderators: factors that influence the observer's information processing depth and factors that determine the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression.

Information processing

Building on the idea that emotional expressions provide information about the expresser, EASI theory posits that the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in work settings depend on the observer's motivation and ability to process the information conveyed by these expressions; the deeper the information processing, the more likely individuals are to draw inferences based on other people's emotions (Van Kleef, 2009).

Such information processing motivation—or epistemic motivation—is partly rooted in personality. For instance, individuals with higher need for cognition, lower need for cognitive closure, lower personal need for structure, and higher openness to experience have chronically higher epistemic motivation than those who score on the opposite poles of these continua, and as a result they engage in more deliberate information processing (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). These individuals, we argue, are more

likely to reflect on other people's emotions, and therefore the effects of others' emotional expressions are more likely to be mediated by deliberate inferential processes than by affective reactions.

Epistemic motivation may also vary as a function of the situation. It is increased, for instance, when a task is perceived as attractive or personally involving and when one is held accountable for one's judgments. Conversely, epistemic motivation is undermined by factors such as environmental noise, fatigue, time pressure, and power (e.g., Fiske & Dépret, 1996; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). By influencing epistemic motivation, these factors influence the relative predictive strength of affective reactions and inferential processes.

This has obvious implications for organizational behavior. Many of the factors that are studied in organization science have a direct bearing on the relative influence of inferential processes and affective reactions that arise in response to the emotional expressions of organization members. For instance, EASI theory predicts that employees who are under a lot of stress (e.g., due to a reorganization), who experience a pressing deadline, who are tired, or who are distracted by noise or uncomfortable temperatures are more likely to respond to a manager's emotional expressions based on their affective reactions than based on inferential processes. This means that they should respond more favorably to positive emotional expressions (e.g., happiness, pride) on the part of the manager than to negative emotional expressions (e.g., anger, disappointment). Conversely, employees who are highly motivated to perform well, who have ample cognitive resources available, and who have the time to consider the implications of the emotions of the manager should be more likely to respond based on the inferences they draw from the manager's emotions (e.g., regarding their level of performance) than based on their

affective reactions to the manager's emotions. As a result, they may put in more effort and perform better when the manager expresses anger or disappointment (which may be interpreted as a sign of substandard performance), rather than happiness or pride (which may be interpreted as an indication of good performance). Thus, to the degree that organization members are more motivated to engage in thorough information processing, their responses to the emotional expressions of others are more likely to be driven by inferential processes.

Proposition 4: Responses to others' emotional expressions in the workplace are more likely to be driven by inferential processes (relative to affective reactions) to the degree that organization members engage in more thorough information processing.

Perceived appropriateness

The relative predictive strength of inferential processes and affective reactions also depends on social-contextual factors that influence the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression (Van Kleef, 2009). Perceptions of inappropriateness arise when individuals feel that another person's emotional expression is somehow inconsistent with normative expectations. Research on expectancy violations indicates that even though unanticipated events can trigger increased information processing (Hamilton & Sherman, 1996), negative affective reactions to expectancy violations tend to be primary (Bartholow, Fabiani, Gratton, & Bettencourt, 2001). Moreover, there is evidence that emotional displays that are perceived as inappropriate for the circumstances evoke negative emotions in perceivers (Bucy, 2000).

In addition, a large body of research on interactional injustice (Bies & Moag, 1986) shows that individuals who feel unjustly treated tend to experience strong negative emotions, hostility, and retaliatory desires (e.g., Barclay,

Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005; Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999). Accordingly, appraisal theories of emotion have identified perceived injustice as one of the most potent antecedents of anger and hostility (Smith et al., 1993). Inappropriate expressions of emotion may trigger such feelings of interactional injustice because they may be seen as violating the norms of appropriate conduct, respect, and interpersonal sensitivity (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007).

One factor that influences the perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions in work settings is culture. For example, in individualistic cultures, expressions of anger tend to be relatively acceptable, whereas in collectivistic cultures such expressions are perceived as highly inappropriate because they pose a threat to group harmony (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006). Such "display rules" also vary across organizations. For instance, some organizations have explicit guidelines regarding emotional expressions (e.g., service with a smile; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), whereas others do not. To the degree that a company attaches more value to positive emotional expressions, displays of negative emotions such as anger may be perceived as more inappropriate and may have detrimental consequences because they elicit negative affective reactions.

The perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions also depends on their intensity and authenticity. For instance, according to Geddes and Callister's (2007) Dual-Threshold Model of Anger, overly intense expressions of anger backfire because they are perceived as inappropriate, which elicits negative responses. Furthermore, emotional expressions may be perceived as inappropriate when they appear inauthentic (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). Inauthentic emotional expressions may be perceived as dishonest, unethical, or manipulative attempts to influence the target (Côté, Hideg, & Van Kleef, 2012), which in turn elicits negative

affective reactions. Thus, a negotiator who senses that the anger of her opponent is part of a tactical ploy aimed at gaining an edge can be expected to experience more negative affective reactions, which may in turn fuel competitive negotiation behavior. Likewise, a customer who is confronted with an excessively enthusiastic car salesman may experience distrust and negative affect that may prevent him from buying a car in that shop.

Personality factors also influence to what extent emotional expressions are perceived as appropriate. For instance, some people have a strong desire for social harmony (e.g., individuals who score high on agreeableness; McCrae & Costa, 1987), whereas others have less of such a desire. Individuals with a strong desire for social harmony are more likely to perceive expressions of anger as inappropriate and to respond negatively to such expressions because they may create hostility and conflict and thus undermine social harmony (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996). Thus, a highly agreeable service provider who is confronted with a customer's anger may be more likely to develop negative affective reactions to the customer's anger and respond with unhelpful behavior than a service worker who is less preoccupied with social harmony and courtesy.

In addition, the perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions depends on characteristics of the interactants that may be unrelated to personality, such as status. People tend to accept more from high-status others than from low-status others (Porath, Overbeck, & Pearson, 2008), and therefore expressions of anger from low-status others are more likely to arouse negative affective reactions than expressions of anger from high-status others. Thus, people are more likely to develop strong negative affective reactions when a lower-level employee expresses anger at them than when a top manager expresses anger at them.

Proposition 5: Responses to others' emotional expressions in the workplace are more likely

to be driven by negative affective reactions (relative to inferential processes) to the degree that organization members perceive the emotional expressions as inappropriate.

Note that both Propositions 4 and 5 are phrased in relative terms. This is because emotional expressions can trigger both affective reactions and inferential processes at the same time. The question is, which of the two processes is more predictive of behavior? Combining Propositions 4 and 5, we argue that the relative predictive strength of inferential processes (compared to affective reactions) increases to the extent that the focal person is motivated and able to engage in thorough information processing and/or perceives the emotional expression as appropriate; the predictive strength of affective reactions (compared to inferential processes) increases to the extent that the focal person's information processing is reduced and/or s/he perceives the emotional expression as inappropriate.

Differentiating discrete emotional expressions

EASI theory posits that discrete emotional expressions have distinct effects on behavior (Van Kleef, De Dreu et al., 2010). This follows directly from the processes involved in the affective reactions pathway and the inferential processes pathway. Affective reactions to the emotions of others involve reciprocal emotions and/or complementary emotions (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). This implies that each emotional expression can potentially trigger a unique emotional response. For instance, the anger of a customer may trigger reciprocal anger or complementary fear in a service worker, and the distress of a colleague may trigger reciprocal distress or complementary compassion.

The inferences that people draw from others' emotional expressions also vary across discrete emotions. This follows from

appraisal theories, which hold that each specific emotion arises from a unique combination of appraisals of a particular event (e.g., appraisals of relevance to one's goals, favorability, agency, stability; Scherer et al., 2001). Because each emotion arises from a different combination of appraisals, other people's emotions provide detailed information about how they perceive and evaluate the situation (e.g., whether the situation is relevant to their goals, whether it is favorable, and who is to credit or blame for the situation). Positive emotions arise when a person judges a situation as relevant and favorable, whereas negative emotions arise when a person judges a situation as relevant and unfavorable. However, discrete emotions differ with regard to more specific (secondary) appraisals. For instance, the "core relational themes" of anger and guilt are other-blame and self-blame, respectively (Smith et al., 1993), and as such expressions of anger versus guilt provide information about whom the expresser blames for the unfavorable state of affairs. (Note that such specific information is not provided by positive or negative moods, which only indicate whether things are generally going well or not.)

A considerable body of research on the intrapersonal effects of emotions indicates that discrete emotional experiences have differential effects on judgments and behavior (e.g., Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer, 1994; DeSteno, Petty, Wegener, & Rucker, 2000; Keltner, Ellsworth, & Edwards, 1993; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Tiedens & Linton, 2001). Based on the abovementioned considerations, we argue that the notion of differential effects of discrete emotions can be extrapolated to the interpersonal level of analysis. Thus, we propose:

Proposition 6: Discrete emotional expressions have distinct effects on the organizational behavior of observers, which cannot be accounted for solely in terms of valence.

Functional equivalence of expressive channels

A final tenet of EASI theory that is of relevance here is the notion of functional equivalence of expressive channels (Van Kleef et al., 2011). EASI maintains that emotions have evolved in part because of their communicative functions (see also, Fridlund, 1994). From this perspective it seems logical that emotions provide similar information, and therefore have similar interpersonal effects, regardless of whether they are expressed through the face, in the voice, through bodily postures, or with words. The magnitude of the interpersonal effects of various forms of emotional expressions may vary due to differences in the relative strength of expressions, but the *direction* of the effects should be the same irrespective of the expressive channel. The only boundary condition is that the emotional expression must be perceived for it to have an effect. Thus, at longer distances vocal expressions may be more effective than facial expressions, and when no face-to-face contact is possible, emotions can be most effectively expressed with words (e.g., via text messages, email, or social media). Assuming that the emotional expression is perceived, we propose:

Proposition 7: The direction of the interpersonal effects of emotions is identical across expressive channels (i.e., face, voice, body, words).

In sum, EASI theory provides a social account of emotion by focusing on the interpersonal consequences of emotional expressions. As such, it complements existing models that attempt to explain the *intrapersonal* effects of emotions on cognition, judgment, and behavior (e.g., Forgas, 1995; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). EASI theory moves beyond the valence approach that characterizes many other theories, and posits

that each discrete emotion conveys specific social information. The theory specifies two processes through which emotional expressions exert interpersonal influence (inferences vs. affective reactions), and it identifies two classes of moderators (information processing and appropriateness) that determine which of these processes takes precedence. By incorporating these two classes of moderators, EASI helps to understand mixed findings that have been obtained in research on the interpersonal effects of emotions at work, as we will see below.

Emotional influence at work: Emerging evidence

In this section we review emerging empirical evidence for our theory and propositions from four domains of organizational behavior: customer service, group decision making, negotiation, and leadership. Illustrative findings are summarized in Table 1.

Customer service

Organization scholars have long been interested in the role of emotion in customer service. The concept of emotional labor—the management of feelings and expressions of emotions to increase the quality of customer service (Hochschild, 1983)—is a prime example. It has been suggested that, without altering the actual service delivery process, service providers can influence customer perceptions through their emotional displays (Hoffman, 1992), and, vice versa, that the emotions of customers can serve as cues about their satisfaction (Mattila & Enz, 2002). Moreover, product evaluations and perceptions may be influenced by the emotions of other evaluators. Howard and Gengler (2001) showed that people who were exposed to the positive mood of another person while evaluating a product caught the other person's positive mood, and as a result felt more positively about the product.

The idea that service providers' emotional expressions may influence the judgments and behaviors of their customers has been present in the literature for quite a while (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; 1989). Most research to date has focused on positive emotional displays of service providers. For instance, Pugh (2001) examined the effects of bank tellers' positive emotional displays (e.g., smiling) on customers' emotions and judgments. He found that customers who observed positive emotions reported more positive affect and more favorable evaluations of service quality. Similarly, Tsai and colleagues (Tsai, 2001; Tsai & Huang, 2002), who examined the retail shoe business, found that when salespeople displayed positive emotions, customers reported a higher likelihood of revisiting the store and spreading positive word of mouth. Tsai and Huang (2002) further demonstrated that customers who observed salespeople's positive emotional displays had more positive in-store moods themselves and perceived the salesperson as friendlier, which contributed to customers' positive behavioral intentions. Similarly, Barger and Grandey (2006) demonstrated that a brief encounter with a smiling food service provider was related to higher perceptions of service quality and greater satisfaction.

These findings partially support Propositions 2 and 3 of EASI theory by showing that emotional displays of customer service employees influence both affective and cognitive responses of customers. With respect to actual behavioral responses the evidence is less clear-cut, because research in this literature typically involves measures of behavioral intentions rather than actual behavior. However, based on this work, there is some preliminary support for the idea that the emotional displays of service workers influence customer behaviors via affective reactions and inferential processes (Tsai & Huang, 2002).

In line with our proposition that the effects of emotional expressions depend on their perceived appropriateness (as shaped in part by the

Table 1. Summary of propositions and representative studies on customer service, group decision making, negotiation, and leadership.

	Customer service	Group decision making	Negotiation	Leadership
Proposition 1: Emotional expressions shape the judgments, decisions, and actions of those who observe them	Tsai & Haug (2002) Glikson et al. (2012)	Barsade (2002) Klep et al. (2011)	Van Kleef et al. (2004a) Sinaceur & Tiedens (2006)	George & Bettenhausen (1990) Gaddis et al. (2004)
Proposition 2: Emotional expressions elicit affective reactions in observers	Howard & Gengler (2001) Pugh (2001)	Barsade (2002) Cheshin et al. (2011)	Friedman et al. (2004) Van Kleef et al. (2004b)	Lewis (2000) Sy et al. (2005)
Proposition 3: Emotional expressions trigger inferential processes in observers	Barger & Grandey (2006)* Groth et al. (2009)*	Magee & Tiedens (2006) Heerdink et al. (2012)	Van Kleef et al. (2004a) Sinaceur & Tiedens (2006)	Van Kleef et al. (2009)
Proposition 4: Inferential processes become more predictive of behavior to the extent that the observer of emotional expressions engages in thorough information processing	no studies available	Heerdink et al. (2012)	Van Kleef et al. (2004b) Van Dijk et al. (2008)	Van Kleef et al. (2009)
Proposition 5: Affective reactions become more predictive of behavior to the extent that the target perceives an emotional expression as inappropriate	Glikson et al. (2012)	no studies available	Van Kleef & Côté (2007) Adam et al. (2010)	Van Kleef et al. (2010)
Proposition 6: Discrete emotional expressions have distinct effects on organizational behavior (beyond valence)	Hareli et al. (2009)	no studies available	Van Kleef et al. (2006)	Lewis (2000)
Proposition 7: The effects of emotional expressions are similar across expressive channels	Grandey et al. (2005) Hareli et al. (2009) Heerdink et al. (2012)	Barsade (2002) Magee & Tiedens (2006) Pietroni et al. (2008)	Van Kleef et al. (2004a) Sinaceur & Tiedens (2006)	Sy et al. (2005) Van Kleef et al. (2010)

Note: For Propositions 1-6, each sample study listed in the table provides support for the respective idea. For Proposition 7, support does not come from the separate studies but from their combination. These studies each used different method(s) to measure or manipulate emotional expressions (see text for details).

* The two studies that are listed as providing support for the role of inferential processes in customer-service settings are not unequivocal in that the measures they employed also contain an affective component (see text for details).

authenticity of the display), Grandey and colleagues found that the perceived authenticity of emotional displays was positively associated with customers' satisfaction and liking of the employee (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005). Another study revealed that customers perceived service employees who displayed authentic positive emotions as having a stronger customer orientation, rated the quality of service more positively, and showed higher loyalty intentions (Groth, Hennig-Thurau, & Walsh, 2009). These studies are consistent with Proposition 5 of EASI theory in that emotional displays that are perceived as authentic are more likely to have a positive impact on customers, whereas emotional displays that are perceived as inauthentic are more likely to have a negative impact on customers. It is not clear from this literature, however, whether these effects are primarily affective or inferential in nature, and the relative importance of the two pathways on actual customer behavior has yet to be examined.

The other way around, the emotions of customers may also influence service providers. The moods and emotions of customers have been linked to their assessments of service encounters, with positive affect being associated with favorable assessments and negative affect with negative assessments (Gardner, 1985; Mattila & Enz, 2002). Thus, customers' emotional expressions may provide useful information about how they evaluate the service. Accordingly, Mattila and Enz (2002) proposed that "a customer's displayed emotions might be one of those discriminating cues that enable contact employees to enhance their own performance" (p. 274).

Service providers are frequent targets of the anger of complaining customers (Miron-Spektor & Rafaeli, 2009). Hareli et al. (2009) examined how emotional expressions of customers influence service representatives' inferences regarding the credibility of a complaint. They found that when a situation was ambiguous and the complaint left room for doubt,

displays of anger (compared to sadness) on the part of the customer bolstered perceptions of injustice and enhanced credibility of the complaint. This research supports our proposition that emotional expressions provide information to observers, which is especially important when more direct information is lacking (e.g., in ambiguous situations; Van Kleef, De Dreu et al., 2010).

Recently, Glikson, Rafaeli, and Wirtz (2012) examined the combined effects of the intensity of anger displays and culture on customer service representatives' reactions. In a lab simulation conducted in Israel (individualistic culture) and Singapore (collectivistic culture), they found that perceptions of appropriateness of anger displays (based on the intensity of the anger) differed between the two cultures, and that responses to the anger differed accordingly. Students acting as service representatives had the option of replying to an angry customer's message immediately or putting it off until later, and of offering monetary compensation to the customer. Israeli participants handled the complaints of customers who showed high-intensity anger more quickly than those of customers who showed low-intensity anger, whereas Singaporean participants did not differ in this respect. Moreover, Israelis offered higher compensation to customers emitting high-rather than low-intensity anger displays, whereas Singaporeans gave less compensation to customers showing high-intensity anger.

This literature supports EASI's assertion that emotional expressions can exert interpersonal effects in organizational settings by triggering affective reactions (demonstrated mostly from employee to customer) and/or eliciting inferential processes (demonstrated mostly from customer to employee). In addition, this work supports our proposition that the interpersonal effects of emotional displays are shaped by factors that influence the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression, such as authenticity, intensity, and culture.

Group decision making

Organizational groups are characterized by interdependence and cooperation towards common goals (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). It is therefore not surprising that individuals across all kinds of teams (e.g., in sports, accountancy, hospitals, and sales) tend to match and converge in their affect (George, 1990; Totterdell, 2000; Totterdell, Kellett, Teuchmann, & Briner, 1998). Thus, in line with EASI theory, it has been shown that affective displays by one team member may elicit affective reactions in other team members. Interestingly, some people are more influenced by their team members' emotions than others. For instance, team members who are older, who have higher team commitment (Totterdell, 2000; Totterdell et al., 1998), who are dispositionally more susceptible to emotional contagion, and who have stronger collectivistic (vs. individualistic) tendencies (Ilies, Wagner, & Morgeson, 2007) show more emotional convergence over time. Additionally, situational characteristics such as team membership stability and interdependence have been found to positively influence emotional convergence in teams (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000; Totterdell, 2000).

In a seminal lab study on emotional contagion, Barsade (2002) demonstrated how moods spread in teams. Using a confederate who displayed moods varying in pleasantness and energy (depression, serenity, hostility, cheerfulness), she demonstrated that teammates mimicked the nonverbal affective display of the confederate, which led to spreading of the affect across the members of the group. Interestingly, Cheshin et al. (2011) recently demonstrated that the emotions of one team member can even spread to the rest of the group in situations where nonverbal cues are impossible to perceive, such as in virtual teams. When confronted with a confederate who expressed anger or happiness via text messages, other team members caught the emotion and in turn displayed that emotion via text messages to other teammates.

Importantly, the collective feelings that group members come to share have been found to influence group functioning and performance. For instance, George (1990) found that positive "group affective tone" was negatively related to absence, while negative group affective tone was negatively associated with pro-social behavior. Similarly, Barsade (2002) found that contagion of positive affect led to greater cooperation, less conflict, and higher perceived task performance. In another study, group affect (which was induced by letting teams watch emotionally evocative videos together) improved information sharing and feelings of group belongingness (Klep, Wisse, & Van der Flier, 2011). Interestingly, positive affect led to better performance on creative tasks, and negative affect to better performance on analytical tasks. These studies support EASI's notion that emotional expressions in organizations trigger affective reactions in others, which in turn shape behavior.

There is also emerging support from group studies for the inferential route of EASI theory. Cheshin, Israely, and Rafaeli (2012) demonstrated that anger (compared to happiness) displayed by the confederate in their computer-mediated interaction study reduced the self-efficacy of the other teammates, which in turn lowered performance. The authors suggested that targets inferred from the confederate's anger that their performance was inadequate, which undermined their self-efficacy.

Furthermore, Magee and Tiedens (2006) demonstrated that individuals inferred group characteristics based on the emotions displayed by the group members and on the consistency of these emotions. Participants perceived a team to have a common fate when all team members on a picture displayed either positive or negative emotions, but not when the team members displayed different emotions. Teams were perceived as more cohesive when the team members all displayed happiness than when they displayed sadness or showed variance in their emotions. Accordingly, the authors

concluded that “information about the feelings of group members could be a preferred basis for judgments about group characteristics” (Magee & Tiedens, 2006, p. 1705).

Finally, a recent study on group decision making explored how group members who had expressed a deviant opinion responded to the emotional reactions of their fellow group members (Heerdink, Van Kleef, Homan, & Fischer, 2012). Deviants who received angry messages from the other group members inferred from the anger that their opinion was not well received and that their inclusion in the group was threatened. Individuals who received happy messages, in contrast, inferred that their opinion was accepted and their status in the group secure. As a result, people who received angry messages were more likely to change their opinion to conform to the majority position than were those who received happy messages. Interestingly, however, and in line with our Proposition 4, this effect was only found among participants who were motivated to think about the emotions of their fellow group members.

Negotiation

Negotiation can be defined as a discussion between two or more parties aimed at solving a (perceived) divergence of interests (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). As a primary means of conflict resolution, negotiations are inherently emotional. As such, they provide an interesting context for the study of the interpersonal effects of emotions in organizations.

In a first study of the interpersonal effects of emotions in negotiation, Van Kleef et al. (2004a) investigated the effects of anger and happiness using a computer-mediated negotiation task. In the course of the negotiation, participants received emotional messages from their (simulated) opponent (e.g., “This negotiation pisses me off;” “I feel good about this negotiation.”). Negotiators who received angry messages inferred that the opponent’s

limit was high, and to avoid costly impasse they made relatively large concessions. Conversely, negotiators who received happy messages inferred that the opponent’s limit was low, felt no need to concede to avoid impasse, and therefore made smaller concessions. Interestingly, Sinaceur and Tiedens (2006) independently found compatible effects using a face-to-face interaction paradigm. Participants perceived angry negotiation partners as tougher than emotionally neutral counterparts, and in turn made larger concessions to angry counterparts.

Another study revealed that the inferences that negotiators draw from their counterpart’s emotions can result in better joint outcomes in an integrative negotiation task. Negotiators inferred from their counterpart’s verbal and nonverbal expressions of happiness (versus anger) that the other attached relatively low (rather than high) value to a particular issue. These inferences led them to stand firm on their own high-value issue and to give in on the issue that appeared more important for the counterpart, thereby exploiting the integrative potential of the task (Pietroni, Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Pagliaro, 2008). In keeping with EASI theory, these studies indicate that negotiators draw inferences from opponents’ emotional expressions, which in turn shape their behavior.

There is also evidence for our proposition that responses to emotional expressions are more likely to be driven by inferential processes to the degree that observers are motivated to engage in thorough information processing. In a series of studies, negotiators with a low need for cognitive closure, those who were under low time pressure, and those who depended strongly on their counterpart were more likely to infer from their counterpart’s expressions of anger versus happiness that the counterpart was tough or lenient, respectively, and to adjust their behavior accordingly by making larger or smaller concessions. In contrast, negotiators with a high need for closure, those who were under high time pressure, and those who did not

depend on their counterpart did not draw such inferences and were therefore uninfluenced by the counterpart's emotional expressions (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004b). Other studies showed that the interpersonal effects of anger and happiness are similarly moderated by power, with low-power negotiators being more strongly affected by their counterpart's emotions than high-power negotiators (e.g., Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Dijk, Van Kleef, Steinel, & Van Beest, 2008; Van Kleef, De Dreu, Pietroni, & Manstead, 2006; see also, Friedman et al., 2004).

Other studies lend support to our proposition that affective reactions can shape behavioral responses to a counterpart's emotional expressions. In several studies, negotiators who were confronted with an angry opponent developed a negative impression of the opponent (Van Kleef et al., 2004a; Van Beest, Van Kleef, & Van Dijk, 2008), became angry themselves (Friedman et al., 2004; Van Dijk et al., 2008; Van Kleef et al., 2004a), and were unwilling to interact with the opponent again (Kopelman, Rosette, & Thompson, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2004b). In some studies these negative affective reactions also fueled competitive behavior. For instance, two studies yielded evidence that expressions of anger elicited competitive behavior and reduced the likelihood of settlement of a dispute (Friedman et al., 2004; Kopelman et al., 2006). Another study revealed that angry negotiators stand a greater risk of being excluded from a profitable coalition due to the unfavorable impressions that they make (Van Beest et al., 2008). Finally, a recent study showed that even if negotiators give in to an angry opponent during the negotiation, they may still get back at their opponent after the negotiation, for instance, by assigning him or her unattractive tasks (Wang, Northcraft, & Van Kleef, 2012).

These seemingly inconsistent effects of anger expressions (sometimes they elicit cooperation, sometimes they trigger competition) can be reconciled by considering EASI

Proposition 5, which states that the relative predictive power of inferential processes and affective reactions depends on the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression. Several studies support this idea. Steinel, Van Kleef, and Harinck (2008) differentiated between emotions that are directed toward a negotiator's offer and emotions that are directed toward the negotiator as a person. When emotional statements were directed at the participant's offer, participants used the opponent's emotion to assess his or her limits, and consequently they conceded more to an angry opponent than to a happy one. In other words, participants' behavior in this condition was mediated by inferential processes. However, when the emotions were directed at the negotiator as a person (and anger was therefore presumably perceived as less appropriate), negotiators conceded *less* to an angry opponent than to a happy one. In this case, participants did not find useful information in their opponent's emotions, but instead felt affronted by the opponent's inappropriate angry remarks.

Research by Van Kleef and Côté (2007) provides further support for the role of appropriateness. They examined the effects of anger in the presence or absence of an explicit display rule that prohibited expressions of anger. When there was an explicit norm prohibiting expressions of anger, high-power negotiators made *smaller* concessions to an angry counterpart than to a neutral one. Low-power negotiators, in contrast, always conceded to an angry opponent regardless of appropriateness, because they did not experience the behavioral leeway to retaliate. Additional measures revealed that participants in the display rule condition developed strong negative affective reactions (i.e., feelings of revenge) in response to the opponent's anger because they perceived the anger as inappropriate, and this in turn fueled competitive behavior among participants who felt sufficiently powerful to act on their retaliatory desire.

Compatible evidence comes from a study by Adam, Shirako, and Maddux (2010), who examined the effects of verbal expressions of anger across cultures. They found that European American participants conceded more to angry than to neutral opponents, whereas Asian American participants conceded *less* to angry than to neutral opponents. Asian American participants deemed expressions of anger inappropriate, and this explained why they responded negatively to such expressions.

Other work indicates that expressions of anger that are perceived as overly intense and therefore inappropriate trigger negative affective reactions and undermine negotiation success (Gibson, Schweitzer, Callister, & Gray, 2009). In a field study, the authors examined anger episodes across different organizations. They found that organizational norms regarding anger expression played a significant role in determining the perceived appropriateness of anger expressions and their subsequent outcomes. Anger could have positive or negative consequences based on the intensity with which it was displayed and the appropriateness of such a display in light of organizational norms. These studies point to the important role of appropriateness of emotional displays, as postulated in Proposition 5.

Few studies have addressed the interpersonal effects of emotions other than anger and happiness. In one such study, Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead (2006) found that participants whose opponents expressed guilt or regret developed a positive impression of their opponents but were non-conciliatory in their demands. By contrast, participants whose opponents expressed disappointment or worry rated their opponents less positively, but they made larger concessions. Additional experiments revealed that another's expressions of guilt were interpreted as a sign that the other had claimed too much, whereas disappointment was taken as a signal that the other had received too little. These studies support our proposition that discrete emotional expressions have differential effects on behavior.

Leadership

Leadership refers to the process of influencing others to accomplish a goal (Yukl, 2010). As influential agents in organizations, leaders play a crucial role in promoting, managing, supporting, and developing individual and team effectiveness (Yukl, 2010). The idea that emotions play a role in this process is most manifest in research on charismatic and transformational leadership (e.g., Bass, 1985). Pointing to the crucial role of emotions in leadership, Côté, Lopes, Salovey, and Miners (2010) found that people who are capable of accurately perceiving, using, understanding, and managing their own and others' emotions (i.e., who score high on emotional intelligence; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) are more likely to attain a leadership position in small groups. Moreover, Newcombe and Ashkanasy (2002) demonstrated that leaders' emotions may have a bigger impact on followers than the content of their communications.

Research on emotion in leadership has further shown that positive emotional expressions of leaders result in higher follower ratings of leadership quality (Glomb & Hulin, 1997; Lewis, 2000) and charisma (Bono & Ilies, 2006). In line with EASI theory, leader emotional displays have been found to trigger affective reactions in followers, which in turn influence responses to the leader (Bono & Ilies, 2006). George and Bettenhausen (1990) focused on actual follower behavior as a function of leaders' affective states. They found that service workers were more likely to engage in customer helping, sold more products, and were less likely to leave the organization when their leader scored higher on state positive affectivity. They proposed that these effects might be due to emotional contagion between leader and followers, such that subordinates take over the positive mood of the leader and therefore perform better.

Other studies compared the effects of leaders' positive and negative affective displays on

follower affect, perceptions, and behavior. For instance, Gaddis, Connelly, and Mumford (2004) showed that leaders who delivered failure feedback in a positive tone were perceived as more effective and instigated better team performance than leaders who displayed negative affect. In another study, Sy, Côté, and Saavedra (2005) invited groups of participants to the lab, and randomly selected one of them to play the role of leader. This person watched a film clip that induced either a positive or a negative mood. The leader then joined the rest of the group and coached them as they built up a tent together while blindfolded. Teams that were exposed to a leader in a positive mood developed a positive mood themselves, and as a result they exhibited better coordination than teams with a leader in a negative mood. Teams with a leader in a negative mood expended more effort, presumably because they inferred from the leader's negative mood that their performance was unsatisfactory.

At first blush these findings appear to be inconsistent. Why do some followers perform better when the leader expresses positive emotions, whereas others perform better when the leader expresses negative emotions? Based on EASI theory, we would conjecture that the former group responded based on their affective reactions, whereas the latter group responded based on the inferences they drew from the leader's emotions. Obviously, more direct evidence is needed to support such an interpretation in terms of multiple underlying mechanisms. Moreover, it is important to establish when one process takes precedence over the other, and vice versa.

Such evidence was obtained in a study by Van Kleef et al. (2009), who examined how the effects of leader emotional displays on team performance are shaped by followers' information processing. Four-person teams collaborated on a task, during which they received standardized feedback from their leader. The feedback was either delivered in an angry tone or in a happy tone, by means of facial

expressions, vocal intonation, and bodily postures. Teams consisting of members with low information processing motivation performed better when the leader expressed happiness, whereas teams consisting of members with high information processing motivation performed better when the leader expressed anger. In line with EASI theory, inferential processes (i.e., inferences about performance quality) mediated behavioral responses to the leader's emotional expressions among followers with high information processing motivation. In contrast, affective reactions (i.e., positive vs. negative emotions and liking of the leader) mediated responses to the leader's emotions among followers with low information processing motivation.

Other work has addressed the role of appropriateness of leaders' emotional displays. Emotional displays may be perceived as inappropriate when they do not match stereotypical gender roles. Accordingly, Lewis (2000) found that leaders are rated more positively when their emotional displays are congruent with gender stereotypes. More specifically, female leaders who expressed anger were evaluated more negatively than male leaders who expressed anger, highlighting the importance of the perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions.

Another study addressed the effects of (in)congruence between leader emotional expressions and follower trait affectivity on follower performance and extra-role compliance (Damen, van Knippenberg, & van Knippenberg, 2008). Low positive affectivity followers functioned better under an angry leader, whereas high positive affectivity followers functioned better under an enthusiastic leader. Although not examined in this study, it is conceivable that these effects are driven by differences in the perceived appropriateness of the leader's emotional expressions, as shaped by the follower's affective tendencies.

Further support for this interpretation comes from a study that examined how followers'

reactions to a leader's emotional displays are shaped by their desire for social harmony, as operationalized in terms of individual differences in agreeableness (Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, & van Knippenberg, 2010). The authors argued that agreeable individuals are more likely to perceive expressions of anger as inappropriate, because anger threatens the social harmony that they value. In a first experiment, participants read a scenario about a leader who expressed anger or no emotion about their performance, with emotion being manipulated via pictures of facial expressions. Participants high on agreeableness reported lower motivation in the anger condition compared to the neutral condition, while those low on agreeableness reported higher motivation in the anger condition than in the neutral condition. In a second experiment, four-person teams received angry or happy feedback from their leader via a video setup. Teams consisting of high-agreeable followers performed better when the leader expressed happiness, whereas teams of low-agreeable followers performed better when the leader expressed anger. These findings lend support to Proposition 5 by showing that emotions that are perceived as less appropriate render affective reactions relatively more predictive of behavior than inferential processes.

Critical review of empirical support for EASI's propositions

Together, the literatures on customer service, group decision making, negotiation, and leadership provide converging evidence for the propositions of EASI theory. Table 1 summarizes these propositions and lists representative studies in each of the four domains that support them. It is immediately clear from the table that research in all four domains corroborates the basic idea that emotional expressions shape organizational behavior (Proposition 1), which attests to the importance of studying the interpersonal effects of

emotions in the workplace. Furthermore, research in all four domains supports the notion that emotional expressions elicit both affective reactions (Proposition 2) and inferential processes (Proposition 3) in observers, thus providing support for the key processes of emotional influence identified in EASI theory. One caveat that should be noted here concerns the role of affective and inferential processes in customer service settings. Due to the nature of the measures that are commonly used in this literature (e.g., measures of customer satisfaction), it is not always clear whether effects are primarily driven by affective or inferential responses. More research is needed to test the relative importance of affective reactions and inferential processes in this context.

The idea that the relative predictive power of inferential processes depends on the information processing depth of the target of the emotional expression (Proposition 4) receives support from studies on group decision making, negotiation, and leadership. We are not aware of studies on customer service that speak to this proposition. The idea that the relative predictive strength of affective reactions depends on the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression (Proposition 5) is supported by research on customer service, negotiation, and leadership, but not (yet) by research on group decision making.

Although scholarly interest in discrete emotions is growing, the notion of distinct effects of discrete emotional expressions (Proposition 6) has so far only received modest support. Clearly, more research is needed to firmly establish that discrete emotional expressions have distinct effects that cannot be accounted for simply in terms of valence (see below). Finally, the studies reviewed here do offer considerable support for our claim that the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions are similar across expressive channels (Proposition 7). In other words, different ways of measuring or manipulating emotional expressions (e.g., through peer reports, via verbal expressions in text messages,

via pictures of facial displays, via video clips showing facial, vocal, and bodily emotional expressions, or by instructing naive participants or training confederates to express emotions) have comparable effects on the judgments and behaviors of targets.

Implications and future directions

Research from a variety of domains of organizational behavior provides support for the key propositions of EASI theory, indicating that the theory can be fruitfully applied to shed light on the interpersonal effects of emotions in organizations. Nevertheless, more research is needed to further substantiate our propositions. We highlight three avenues for future research that we see as especially promising.

We need to go (further) beyond valence

There is still a pervasive tendency in the literature to conceptualize emotions mainly in terms of their positive or negative valence. Our review challenges this practice. Together with a considerable body of research on the intrapersonal effects of emotions on judgment and behavior (e.g., Bodenhausen et al., 1994; DeSteno et al., 2000; Keltner et al., 1993; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Tiedens & Linton, 2001), our theory and review suggest that there is more promise in conceptualizing emotions in terms of their unique appraisal patterns and action tendencies than in terms of their valence. Failing to do so will result in an overly simplistic picture of the role of emotions in organizational life. One question that could be addressed in future research is whether expressions of different positive emotions (e.g., happiness, pride, gratitude, relief, hope, surprise, awe) or negative emotions (e.g., anger, disappointment, sadness, guilt, anxiety) have differential effects on targets, as we would predict.

Relatedly, it is clear from our review that most studies have focused on the effects of

anger and/or happiness. A few studies have addressed other discrete emotions, such as sadness, disappointment, guilt, and regret. Several other relevant emotions have been neglected altogether. Future research could address, for instance, the effects of envy of co-workers on cooperation in work teams; how admiration and gratitude towards one's supervisor influence loyalty towards the organization; whether leader displays of hope have an effect on the resilience of subordinates; and how anxiety of subordinates affects leaders' confidence.

Despite the promise in further differentiation of the effects of discrete emotions, this is not an easy task. Although several discrete emotions have clearly distinguishable facial expressions and bodily postures (e.g., anger, happiness, disgust, sadness, fear, pride, embarrassment, contempt, surprise), the nonverbal behavioral patterns of other emotions are less clear (e.g., guilt, regret, gratitude, disappointment, hope). This makes studying the interpersonal effects of such emotions a challenging enterprise. One way around this problem is to use verbal manipulations of emotional expressions, as has been done for instance in research on the interpersonal effects of guilt and disappointment in negotiations (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2006). However, there are limits to this method, especially in terms of lack of social richness. Another solution is to use correlational designs, in which self-reported emotions of one organization member are used to predict the behaviors of another organization member. However, this method is limited by the fact that not all experienced emotions are expressed, and even if they are expressed they may not be recognized as such. A third option could be to ask organization members which emotions they perceived in another organization member and how they responded to those emotions, but this introduces the problem of common-source bias. In the long run, we see most promise in studying the interpersonal effects of combinations of objectively determined verbal and nonverbal expressions of emotions. Such studies will

require ground work in the form of basic research into the nonverbal expressive displays of several discrete emotions whose expressive patterns are as yet unmapped.

A related challenge for future research will be to map out the differences in nonverbal expression between authentic and inauthentic emotions. The differences between authentic and inauthentic expressions of happiness are well documented. A “true” smile (also called Duchenne smile) involves contraction of both the *zygomatic major* muscle (which pulls the lip corners up) and the *orbicularis oculi* muscle (which raises the cheeks and orbits the eyes). A fake (or non-Duchenne) smile engages only the *zygomatic major* muscle (Ekman, Davidson, & Friesen, 1990). Unfortunately, differences between authentic and inauthentic displays of other emotions remain rather elusive. There is evidence, however, that inauthentic displays of emotions are less symmetrical than are authentic displays (Ekman, Hager, & Friesen, 1981; Hager & Ekman, 1985). To the extent that such patterns of (a)symmetry generalize across different discrete emotions they may be used to differentiate authentic expressions of emotion from inauthentic expressions. Nevertheless, more research is needed to pinpoint more precisely how authentic displays can be distinguished from inauthentic displays.

Another aspect that has been largely overlooked is the intensity of emotional expressions. The few studies that have addressed this issue found notable effects of varying levels of intensity of anger expressions (e.g., Glikson et al., 2012; see also, Gibson et al., 2009). It seems likely that variations in intensity also modulate the effects of other emotions. For instance, extreme happiness on the part of a salesperson might raise suspicions of insincerity in a customer, and disproportionate disappointment of a colleague after a minor mishap might be seen as inappropriate and unprofessional.

We need to examine different organizational settings

The interpersonal effects of emotions have (to the best of our knowledge) hardly been studied in several relevant organizational settings. For instance, the social aspects of emotions have been overlooked in the domain of organizational change, despite the fact that organizational change has a pervasive impact on individuals’ emotional states (Liu & Perrewé, 2005). Numerous questions await empirical scrutiny. How do workers respond to fear displays of colleagues when dealing with an upcoming merger? How does the excitement of a manager about a new product line affect her followers? How does the disappointment of employees regarding a structural change in an organization influence future decisions of the board of directors?

Another setting in which the interpersonal effects of emotions are likely to be important is personnel selection. Selection decisions may be shaped in part by the emotional displays of applicants, which may activate affective reactions and/or inferential processes in the members of the selection committee. Kristof-Brown, Barrick, and Franke (2002) showed that applicants who actively used nonverbal impression management, such as smiling, were more likely to be rated as similar to the interviewer. Smiles can be seen as indicating agreement and encouragement for the other person, making interviewers more likely to see the applicant as similar to themselves (see also, Wayne & Liden, 1995). Moreover, interviewees who smile and shake or nod their head tend to be liked more by interviewers and are therefore more likely to be offered a position (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Fox & Spector, 2000). Speaking to the influence of negative emotional expressions, Tiedens (2001) found that expressed anger (compared to sadness) by a job applicant in response to a previous unfavorable situation led participants to perceive the applicant as more competent, resulting in more

status conferral and a higher salary. This fits with EASI theory given that anger signals that the applicant has a strong action orientation and is motivated and willing to address problems. This is especially apparent in the comparison with sadness, which is a low-activation emotion associated with lack of coping potential—an unattractive characteristic for a potential hire. Moreover, the anger was directed at some situation outside of the job application, meaning that it was most likely perceived as relatively appropriate.

The sparse research that has been done in this area has mostly examined how emotional expressions of applicants affected their likability and job suitability. There is even less research focusing on the effects of emotional expressions of the interviewer. In this respect, there are a couple of topics that might be interesting to pursue in future research. Previous work has pointed to the importance of decent interpersonal treatment in selection procedures (Gililand, 1993). Future research could examine how displayed emotions are related to the perceived fairness of selection decisions. Second, it would be interesting to examine how power dynamics influence responses to interviewer emotions. Does having multiple job offers (and therefore a sense of power) affect responses to irritable interviewers? Finally, emotional expressions of interviewers might influence perceptions of person–job or person–organization fit (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). It is conceivable that positive emotional expressions by interviewers inspire more liking and similarity perceptions in interviewees, thus promoting perceptions of fit between the applicant and the job or the organization as a whole.

Another important issue to consider in future research is the cooperative or competitive nature of the setting. Some domains of organizational behavior are relatively competitive in nature (e.g., negotiation), whereas other domains are relatively cooperative (e.g., customer service). An extensive

review of research on the interpersonal effects of emotions in social decision making revealed that although affective reactions and inferential processes occur across settings, inferential processes are relatively more important in competitive situations, which are characterized by lower trust (Van Kleef, De Dreu et al., 2010). In such situations, emotional expressions provide important strategic information that helps observers better understand their counterpart's intentions and determine an adaptive course of action. Conversely, affective reactions (especially emotional contagion) are relatively more important in cooperative settings, in which individuals are more likely to converge emotionally. It is therefore conceivable that affective reactions are relatively more important than inferential processes in the customer service setting.

A final issue regarding the effects of emotions in different work settings relates to the dynamics of the situation. Except for research on customer service, most studies reviewed here have employed relatively confined laboratory situations to test the interpersonal effects of emotions in group decision making (e.g., Barsade, 2002; Cheshin et al., 2011), leadership (e.g., Sy et al., 2005; Van Kleef et al., 2009), and negotiation (Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2004a). What is needed is research in more natural settings, such as actual team decision making in organizations, business negotiations with high stakes, and real interactions between leaders and subordinates. Obviously, this is much easier said than done. Conducting such studies means sacrificing control over third variables, thus undermining the internal validity of any findings. Nevertheless, if such studies would produce findings that are compatible with those of the more controlled research reviewed here, this would boost confidence in the conclusions that are emerging from this literature.

We need to consider time

So far, research on the interpersonal effects of emotions in organizations has focused mostly on the immediate consequences of emotional expressions. As a result, we know little about how the effects of emotional expressions unfold over time. Existing research does offer some hints that the consequences of emotional expressions may extend beyond the immediate encounter. A negotiation study showed that the inferences that negotiators draw from their counterpart's emotions may continue to influence behavior in later interactions with the same person. In a second encounter with an opponent who had previously expressed anger, participants conceded again because they believed that the opponent had ambitious limits, even when that person expressed no emotion during the second encounter (Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2010). It seems likely that emotional expressions of service workers, team members, and leaders may also have longer-term consequences, but these consequences have yet to be explored. For instance, do the positive emotional displays of a salesperson only influence the short-term satisfaction and product evaluation of a customer, or will the customer keep coming back to the store and tell others about the positive experience? Does a leader's burst of anger only influence the immediate motivation and performance of a follower, or do such expressions have enduring effects?

It would also be interesting to examine how the effects of emotional expressions are shaped by the frequency with which they are expressed. Emotional expressions may be perceived as more diagnostic about the situation to the degree that they occur less frequently, and as more diagnostic about the expresser to the extent that they occur more frequently. Thus, if a leader gets angry once a year, followers may be more likely to infer that they did something wrong than if the leader expresses anger on a daily basis. In a related vein, we call for more research on the temporal development of emotions at work and

on the effects of such dynamics on organizational behavior. The social functionality of emotional expressions resides partly in the fact that emotions change—that is why they signal important information to observers. It is therefore critical to examine the effects of changing emotions on work outcomes. For instance, what happens if a leader first expresses disappointment regarding work progress and later expresses happiness, or vice versa? How do such emotional transitions influence followers' motivation and performance? Exploring such emotional changes over time may teach us a lot about the interpersonal effects of emotions in organizations.

Conclusion

Research on emotions in organizations is blossoming. We have argued that the dominant intrapersonal effects paradigm needs to be complemented with a focus on interpersonal effects. The behavior of organization members appears to be shaped as much by the emotions of others as it is by their own affective states. We have drawn on EASI theory to derive a number of testable propositions regarding the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in the workplace. Research on customer service, group decision making, negotiation, and leadership provides initial support for our propositions, but more work is needed. For now, we conclude that there is great potential in the interpersonal effects approach. We hope that the framework outlined here will inform future research, and we suggest to take it EASI.

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