

High sensitivity at work: the reason why it should be on an employer's agenda

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STRUCTURE

BACKGROUND OF ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE and/or? SENSITIVE EMPLOYEE

THE AREAS RELATING TO PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION OF HSP

SENSITIVITY AS A SIGNATURE ASSET

RECOMENDATIONS & EMPLOYER'S AGENDA



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THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

WHAT IS THIS HIGH SENSITIVITY ABOUT?





BACKGROUND

- **Environmental Sensitivity** – a meta-approach for theories explaining individual differences in the ability to **perceive and process** environmental stimuli (Pluess, 2015).
- Genetic factors involved in sensitivity, and temperament traits in general, interact with environmental factors to determine developmental trajectories that organize the brain and lead to individual differences in:
 - socio-emotional,
 - behavioral and
 - cognitive adaptation.

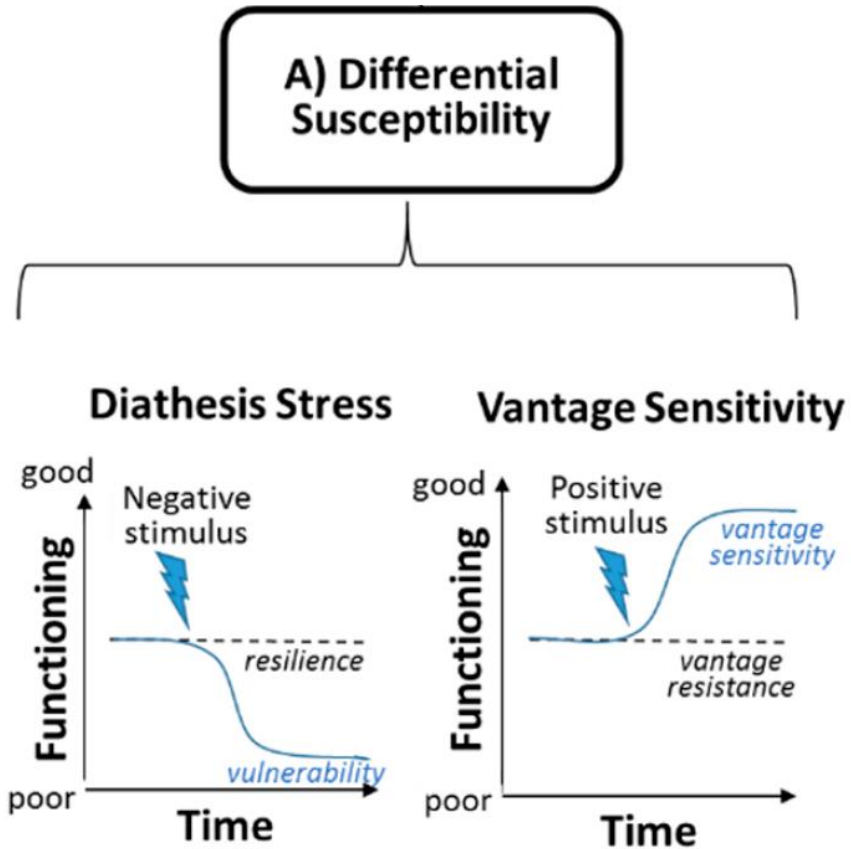
(Aron & Aron, 1997; Jagiellowicz et al., 2012; Pluess, 2015, 2017; Acevedo et al., 20178; Acevedo et al., 2018; Pluess et al., 2018; Weyn et al., 2019)





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Two sides of the same coin....



Source: Greven, C.U.; Lionetti, F.; Booth, C.; Aron, E.; Fox, E.; Schendan, H.E.; Pluess, M.; Bruining, H.; Acevedo, B.; Bijttebier, P.; Homberg, J. (2019), Sensory Processing Sensitivity in the Context of Environmental Sensitivity: A Critical Review and Development of Research Agenda.



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BACKGROUND



- **Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS)** is a characteristic that describes interpersonal differences to environmental stimuli.
- **SPS** is a phenotypic trait that is characterized by deep information processing of the environment at cognitive, sensory, and emotional levels
- Thus, SPS has a great influence on **different life areas**.
- One of these areas is **professional work**.

- **People who are characterized by a high level of this trait are referred to as Highly Sensitive People (HSP).**

(Acevedo et al., 2014; Aron & Aron, 1997; Greven et al., 2019; Pluess, 2015).



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High sensitivity is rarely mentioned among the characteristics of an effective employee or an effective leader....

- Highly sensitive people are commonly thought of as tearful, worrying, not brave and not very go-getting.
- They certainly don't "push with their elbows" and don't claim what they want.

Does this mean that sensitive people are not good employees?



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IDEAS

- What comes to the fore is often confusing and shows only one side of the coin.....
- What about the other side?
- What are highly sensitive employees like?
- What is their strong point?
- How to manage and support them?
- Can such individuals become effective leaders?

Among other things, we will try to answer these questions

The areas relating to professional satisfaction of HSP – the perspective of the employee and the employer



Employee

The beliefs of high sensitivity

The importance of sensitivity for the work performed

Management

Relations

Conditions

Practical implications for management

Employer

The beliefs of high sensitivity

Targeting management style

Motivating

Relations

Physical working conditions

Implications for employee management



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Some results from the focus groups....

strong
emotionality

supportive climate

need to structure
the tasks
performed

searching for
external sources of
confirmation

need for
independence and
autonomy

need for
transparent
communication

ease of overload

feeling of
loneliness and
misunderstanding

importance of
communication

high social
competences

conflicts
avoidance

the dissemination
of reliable and in-
depth knowledge
of high sensitivity



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Sensitivity as a signature asset

1. **They care!** Highly sensitive people will make every effort to perform the task entrusted to them very well, and preferably flawlessly.
2. They **make decisions carefully.**
3. They are **innovative and creative!**
4. **They know people!** They are empathetic and attentive to others. The ability to empathize favors the development of the so-called soft skills.
5. They are **development oriented.**
6. They can be **effective leaders.**



Sensitivity as a signature asset

- **So, what can be effective?**
- Our research confirmed that the features essential for highly sensitive people, such as emotional reaction, empathy, the danger of overloading, strongly affect them in their professional work.
- The analysis of the content of the interviews with highly sensitive employees allows for the initial formulation of **key areas of recommendation that can be introduced in the workplace.**





Recomendation

1. First is an element of job design. For these **autonomous, independent and responsible** employees, it is especially important to clearly define and prioritize the tasks they are supposed to perform.
2. They should be treated as partners and not just recipients of orders, despite the differences in the official relationship. Open discussion and systematic exchange of **feedback** can be the basis of their success.
3. The **well-being** of the workforce has an impact on employee and organizational performance.





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Thank you for attention!

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High Sensitivity EUROPE



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