

Issues of Anger in the Workplace: Do Gender and Gender Role Matter?

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To examine the influence of gender and gender role on anger experiences in the workplace, 257 adult students completed narratives describing their anger-provoking issues and anger expression. Seven issues were identified: work performance of coworkers, work performance of supervisors, relationships with coworkers, relationships with supervisors, dealing with the public, work performance of subordinates, and work context issues. Analyses revealed that gender did not influence the types of issues cited or workers' anger expressions. Although gender role did not influence anger expression, androgynous and feminine persons were more likely to cite relationships with coworkers as anger provoking than were undifferentiated persons.

Anger has been defined as "a strong emotion or experiential state occurring in response to a real or imagined frustration, threat, or injustice and . . . the desire to terminate the negative stimulus" (Biaggio & Maiuro, as cited in Fine & Olson, 1997, p. 326). Over the past 2,300 years, Western culture has considered anger an undesirable emotion, symptomatic of irrationality, and has advocated the use of will to control its expression (Kemp & Strongman, 1994). Perhaps this view accounts for the relative dearth of research specifically pertaining to anger; far more attention has been devoted to the broad study of aggression or stress, and researchers such as Kassinove (1995) have suggested that anger remains neither well understood nor sufficiently researched.

According to contemporary statistics, one topic in need of research is anger that occurs in the context of work. A September 2000 PsycINFO literature search yielded only six citations; yet data indicate that most employees experience annoyances in the workplace at least 10 times each day and that 25% of workers experience anger in the workplace (Bensimon, 1997). Often-cited reasons for such anger include a lack of employment security, salary inequities, poor working conditions, low job control, interpersonal conflicts, worker alienation, and work harassment by supervisors and coworkers (Bensimon, 1997; Narayanan, Menon, & Spector, 1999; Neuman & Baron, 1997). Because these aversive conditions trigger physiological arousal and hostile thoughts (Neuman & Baron, 1997), frequent

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anger can have a deleterious effect on both physiological and psychological well-being (Clay, Anderson, & Dixon, 1993; Diong & Bishop, 1999; Fine & Olson, 1997; Martin & Watson, 1997).

Although there are more women in the workforce than formerly, few studies have examined whether gender might influence a worker's experiences with work-related anger. Historical reviews by Kemp and Strongman (1994) have found that alleged gender differences in anger are a recent phenomenon, arising from socialization practices in the 1940s and 1950s in which males were taught to express anger and females were taught to suppress it. Some contemporary research indicates this differential socialization had its impact. Among samples of school-aged children (Cox, Stabb, & Hulges, 2000) and adults ages 19-92 years (McConatha, Leone, & Armstrong, 1997), girls and women scored significantly higher in anger suppression and control, whereas boys and men scored significantly higher in anger expression. Overall, women are expected to feel comfort in expressing happiness, sadness, and fear and to feel reluctance in exhibiting anger and pride; men are expected to display the obverse pattern (Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999; Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000).

These gender differences are attributed to differential motivations. A woman's reluctance to express anger is associated with the expectation that negative consequences to interpersonal relationships will occur (Piltch, Walsh, Mangione, & Jennings, 1994; Timmers, Fischer, & Manstead, 1998). However, a man's expression of anger is associated with the expectation that status and power are important to maintain, and there is less concern with the consequences to relationships (Piltch et al., 1994; Timmers et al., 1998). Eckhardt and Deffenbacher (1995) concluded that men's anger was more likely when recognition was not forthcoming and that women's anger was more likely when receiving criticism in front of others. Perhaps this anger is linked to feelings of shame arising from "unwanted identities" (Ferguson, Eyre, & Ashbaker, 2000); most women express shame when expected to act dominant and insensitive, whereas most men express shame when expected to exhibit incompetence and low control. The increased shame incited by these undesirable qualities leads to anger, which then spirals into further shame due to loss of control over one's feelings and the situation (Ferguson et al., 2000).

However, other studies have found no gender differences in anger. Averill's (1983) studies, based on undergraduate students and community residents, found that women and men did not differ either in issues that provoked anger or in the level, frequency, intensity, and open expression of their anger. The only difference noted was that women were 4 times more likely to cry when angry than were men. Although Ferguson et al. (2000) found that men and women differed in the "unwanted identities" that prompted shame and anger, these researchers found no gender differences in the expression or suppression of anger. Furthermore, Fine and Olson (1997) found that men and women did not differ in their anger reactions to various provocations. Sharkin's (1993) review found little empirical support for gender differences in anger; any alleged differences were more often found among clinical samples that linked women's mental health issues (e.g., depression) with anger suppression and men's mental health issues (e.g., aggression) with anger expression. Problematic measures of anger reactions, which usually dichotomize non-overt expres-

sions as *anger-in* and behavioral displays as *anger-out* (Martin & Watson, 1997), may also account for discrepant findings. Yet, Bartz, Blume, and Rose (1996) reported that gender accounted for less than 1% of the variance in self-report measures of anger experiences, expressions, and control.

These mixed findings may arise from focusing on physical sex as the critical variable, rather than focusing on gender roles in which gender derives its psychological meaning from sociocultural structures (e.g., Greenglass, 1995). On the basis of persons' self-endorsement of gender-related traits, Bem (1974) specified four gender roles: Masculine persons define themselves in instrumental, agentic terms; feminine persons endorse expressive, communal traits; androgynous persons report both agentic and communal qualities indicative of flexibility; and undifferentiated persons report low endorsement of instrumental and expressive traits, suggestive of poorer socialization and limited flexibility. Perhaps gender role socialization better accounts for the previously reported gender differences in anger, particularly in the workplace where issues of interpersonal relationships and autonomy are continuously present and have been linked, respectively, to the workplace distress experienced by women and men (Pitich et al., 1994).

Although scant in number, empirical studies have indicated that gender roles are significant influences on both work-related behavior and anger proneness. In the workplace, traditional-typed women receive approval from others and experience less interpersonal strain (Long, 1989), but this traditionalism may undermine career success (Bhatnagar, 1988). Feminine women leaders have reported the need to control anger because they believed displays of anger would be costly to their interpersonal relationships (Payne & Cangemi, 1997). In coping with work-related stress, in which anger is a common reaction (Narayanan et al., 1999), femininity is related to support seeking among women (Eichinger, Heifetz, & Ingraham, 1991) and is predictive of control-related coping in both men and women (Gianakos, 2000). Among undergraduates, higher femininity is significantly related to higher anger suppression and lower anger expression (Kopper & Epperson, 1991).

Masculine persons as leaders tend to be aggressive and use counterarguments as strategies to protect their positions (Payne & Cangemi, 1997). Masculinity in female workers is associated with higher attainments in occupational status, higher reported levels of personal accomplishments (e.g., Eichinger et al., 1991), greater problem-solving coping, and lowered levels of anxiety and strain (Long, 1989). Masculinity in men is related to less stress, less perceived isolation, and more adaptive coping in dealing with work-related stress (Krausz, Kedem, Tal, & Amir, 1992). Masculinity in both women and men significantly predicts the use of help seeking and positive thinking in coping with work stress (Gianakos, 2000). Among undergraduates, higher masculinity is associated with greater anger proneness, greater anger expression, and lower anger control (Kopper & Epperson, 1991).

Androgynous persons report the highest levels of job satisfaction, self-esteem, and adaptation to workplace stressors (e.g., Eichinger et al., 1991). Among undergraduate students, androgyny is associated with lower degrees of anger proneness, fewer anger responses, less anger suppression, and greater anger control (Kopper & Epperson, 1991). Persons with undifferentiated gender roles report significantly low levels of job satisfaction and self-esteem concurrently with low levels of job stress (e.g.,

Chow, 1987; Krausz et al., 1992). Among undergraduate students, undifferentiation is linked to greater anger suppression and lower anger expression (Kopper & Epperson, 1991). Undifferentiated individuals, compared with androgynous individuals, are significantly less likely to use control-related coping styles in dealing with work stress (Gianakos, 2000).

Few systematic studies have examined the thesis that gender and/or gender role influence the experiences and expressions of anger, and still fewer have specified the context in which these emotional phenomena occur, even though this context likely influences the types of expressions construed as socially appropriate. To address these deficits, this study examined the influence of both gender and gender role on the experiences and expressions of anger in the workplace. Because anger is a subjective experience, questionnaires are necessarily limited in their ability to fully cover the domain of anger-provoking issues and reactions. Thus, in this study, I have analyzed written narratives of participants to clarify the anger-provoking events unique to their jobs and to provide an open-ended method for reporting anger expressions. Because the literature reports mixed results, no specific hypotheses are forwarded, but it is expected that gender role, rather than gender, will better account for any differences in work-related anger.

Method

Participants

Completed questionnaires were received from 257 undergraduate students (183 women, 74 men) enrolled in psychology courses at a regional campus of a large midwestern university. Students received extra credit toward their course grade in exchange for participating in the study. On average, participants were 27.33 years of age ($SD = 10.18$) and in their second year of college study ($M = 2.10$ years, $SD = 1.12$). Ethnic identifications were as follows: 228 (88.7%) Caucasian, 22 (8.6%) African American, 1 (0.4%) Hispanic, and 6 (2.3%) did not respond to this item. Participants' gender (71.2% female) and ethnic ratios were representative of the student body completing academic degrees at the campus.

All respondents were employed and reported an average work schedule of 32.63 hours per week ($SD = 11.30$) and average job tenure of 3.89 years ($SD = 5.66$). Overall, participants' occupations ranged from part-time jobs to pay for college expenses to managerial positions with more than 20 years of experience. Their jobs represented 12 broad occupational fields, with service ($n = 64$), sales ($n = 32$), medical ($n = 32$), clerical ($n = 30$), education ($n = 25$), and trades and crafts ($n = 22$) more commonly reported. Participants reported 30 majors, with education ($n = 37$), business ($n = 29$), nursing ($n = 22$), psychology ($n = 22$), and computer science ($n = 17$) more commonly reported.

Instrumentation

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) is a 60-item measure that treats masculinity and femininity as independent dimensions. Participants respond to each item according to how well it is self-descriptive; response choices range from *never or almost never true* (1) to *always or*

almost always true (7). Selected on the basis of gender-related desirability, 20 items (e.g., forceful) constitute the Masculinity (M) scale, 20 items (e.g., compassionate) constitute the Femininity (F) scale, and 20 items (e.g., truthful, inefficient) constitute the Social Desirability (SD) scale. Median M and F scale scores determine gender role; above-median scores define androgyny, whereas below-median scores indicate undifferentiation. Gender typing occurs when only one of these two scores exceeds the respective median (Bem, 1977).

Bem's (1974) psychometric analyses found that the M and F scales were empirically independent ($r = -.03$). Internal consistency estimates of the masculine, feminine, androgyny, and social desirability scores were .86, .80, .85, and .75, respectively. Four-week test-retest reliability estimates were as follows: masculine = .90, feminine = .90, androgyny = .93, and social desirability = .89.

Procedure

Respondents first completed demographic items, including age, ethnicity, year of college study, marital status, and declared college major. They also completed items pertaining to their jobs, such as their occupational fields, weekly work schedule, job tenure, supervisor gender, and the ratios of men and women among their coworkers. After completing the BSRI, participants wrote narratives describing their experiences with and expressions of work-related anger. The following instruction was provided to participants:

Anger is usually defined as a negative, internal feeling that can range in intensity from mild (i.e., annoyance) to strong (i.e., rage). I am interested in researching what prompts persons to experience anger while at work. Please discuss the specific issues and/or situations associated with your own work that have prompted angry feelings. Then indicate the specific actions, if any, you took to resolve these angry feelings. (In this listing, please do not specify the names of persons or places of employment.)

Using Bem's (1977) scoring procedure, gender role classification was based on a median score on the M scale of 4.65 and a median score on the F scale of 4.70. Sixty-three persons (46 women, 17 men) were classified as androgynous, 69 persons (34 women, 35 men) as masculine, 66 persons (63 women, 3 men) as feminine, and 59 persons (40 women, 19 men) as undifferentiated. A chi-square analysis revealed a significant gender effect, with men more likely to be classified as masculine and women more likely to be classified as feminine, $\chi^2(3) = 35.55, p < .001$.

Four undergraduate psychology research students served as readers of participants' narratives regarding their workplace issues that involved anger responses. The readers read each assigned narrative and briefly summarized each issue mentioned. They then exchanged narratives to determine interrater consistency estimates of their summaries; the agreement rate was 98%. The creation of an exhaustive set of categories was then undertaken in a two-stage process. First, I compiled a list of all the summaries, and the four readers were asked to cluster the 403 issues identified into meaningful categories based on common themes. These initial categories ranged in number from 17 to 28, with the number of responses in each category ranging from 1 to 68. In the second stage, I

classified these initial categories into larger groupings on the basis of the reported instigator involved. This broader classification system was both more amenable for subsequent analyses and was in keeping with the premise that anger occurs when persons perceive an instigator's behavior as unjustified and intentional (e.g., Averill, 1983). Five types of instigators were identified: coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, customers/public, and the organization itself (i.e., work context factors). Given the numerous times that various issues with coworkers and supervisors were cited, these categories were each divided into work performance issues and relationship issues. Using this seven-category system, the four research students were unanimous in classifying approximately 93% ($n = 374$) of the issues; classifications of the other 29 issues were reached by consensus (i.e., 75% agreement).

I classified the respondents' reported styles of expressing anger as either *control-related* or *escape-related*, according to the broad typology proposed by Latack and Havlovic (1992). This classification was deemed preferable to anger-in/anger-out measures, because anger-in scales often tap other negative emotional states such as neuroticism and daily negative affect, whereas anger-out scales tend to assess only behavioral expressions of anger (Martin & Watson, 1997). Control-related coping, which is linked to better health, involves taking action to manage either the situation or one's cognitions to reduce distress, whereas escape-related coping, which is linked to greater illness and job dissatisfaction, involves behavioral or cognitive avoidance of the situation. Control-related coping styles include direct action, help seeking, and positive thinking, whereas escape-related styles include avoidance/resignation and alcohol use (Havlovic & Keenan, 1995; Latack & Havlovic, 1992).

All analyses were conducted using SPSS for Windows (Version 9). Gender effects were examined by independent sample t tests and chi-square analyses, and gender role effects were examined by univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) and chi-square analyses. In all cases, the Bonferroni correction to alpha was used to control for Type I (experiment-wide) error rates.

Results

The narratives averaged 107.68 words in length ($SD = 99.48$) because many participants provided detailed information about their workplace anger. In total, 403 issues, or an average of 1.57 issues per person ($SD = 0.72$), were reported. As previously stated, these issues were classified into one of seven categories: work performance of coworker(s), relationships with coworker(s), work performance of supervisor(s), relationships with supervisor(s), dealing with the public (i.e., customers, patients, and clients), work performance of subordinate(s), and work context factors (i.e., pay, benefits, work schedules, opportunities for promotions, physical work conditions, and administrative policies). Table 1 provides a description of each category and its reported frequency by women and men according to gender role type. The Appendix provides illustrative examples of each category culled from participants' narratives.

The first series of analyses addressed the influence of gender on respondents' workplace experiences with anger. Men reported an average weekly work schedule of 35.88 hours ($SD = 12.03$) and an average job tenure of

TABLE 1

Frequencies of Workplace Issues Classified by Gender and Gender Role

Issue	Gender Role Classification							
	Androg.		Feminine		Masculine		Undiff.	
	W ^a	M ^b	W ^c	M ^d	W ^e	M ^f	W ^g	M ^h
Work performance of coworkers (not doing share, laziness, frequent absences, incompetence, theft)	13	7	20	1	11	13	14	5
Relationships with coworkers (gossip, spreading rumors, jealous, unpleasant, rude/arrogant)	21	3	23	3	9	13	8	0
Work performance of supervisors (incompetent, unqualified, will not assist or provide feedback)	11	1	14	0	11	7	9	6
Relationships with supervisors (demeaning/rude, unprofessional, shows favoritism, untruthful)	12	3	20	1	8	8	7	4
Dealing with the public (rudeness, noncompliance)	5	3	10	0	7	5	7	2
Work performance of subordinates (laziness, incompetence)	1	1	2	0	3	1	4	2
Work context factors (pay scales, benefits, promotion opportunities, work schedules, physical working conditions, administrative policies)	10	6	15	0	9	10	11	3

Note. Androg. = androgynous; Undiff. = undifferentiated; W = women; M = men. Total number of issues was 403. The number of issues cited by participants ranged from 1 to 5, with an average of 1.57 issues ($SD = 0.72$) cited per person.

^a $n = 46$. ^b $n = 17$. ^c $n = 63$. ^d $n = 3$. ^e $n = 34$. ^f $n = 35$. ^g $n = 40$. ^h $n = 19$.

3.53 years ($SD = 5.37$), whereas women averaged 31.32 work hours per week ($SD = 10.75$) and had been in their occupations an average of 4.04 years ($SD = 5.79$). No significant gender difference was noted for job tenure but was found for weekly work schedules, with men working significantly more hours per week, $t(255) = -2.98$, $p = .003$.

Significant gender differences were also noted in the gender compositions of participants' workplaces. Whereas women were equally likely to have a female or male supervisor, men were significantly more likely to have a male, rather than female, supervisor, $\chi^2(2) = 19.59$, $p < .001$. Women were significantly more likely to work in female-dominant workplaces, and men were significantly more likely to have mostly male colleagues, $\chi^2(5) = 58.69$, $p < .001$.

In their narratives, women and men did not differ in the number of workplace issues they cited, $t(255) = 1.61$, $p = .109$, but they did differ in the

length of their narratives, with women using significantly more words to describe their experiences with workplace anger, $t(255) = 2.71, p = .007$. No significant gender differences were noted among the seven categories of issues used in this study. Women and men were equally likely to report experiencing anger with the work performance of their coworkers or supervisors, their relationships with their coworkers or supervisors, their interactions with the public or subordinates, and work context factors. Furthermore, women and men did not significantly differ in their use of control-related or escape-related coping when experiencing anger; all probabilities reported by the chi-square analyses exceeded .100.

Because men and women reported various gender compositions in their work environments, a series of chi-square analyses examined whether gender differences in anger issues would be found when these various work environments were concurrently considered. Regardless of the gender of the supervisor, women and men did not significantly differ in the types of issues they reported; all chi-square probabilities exceeded .05. Furthermore, men and women did not differ in the types of issues they reported when the gender composition of their coworkers was considered; again all chi-square probabilities exceeded .040.

The second series of analyses addressed the influence of gender role on workers' reports of anger experiences in the workplace. Androgynous persons reported an average weekly work schedule of 32.56 hours ($SD = 11.02$) and an average job tenure of 3.48 years ($SD = 4.89$), feminine persons averaged 29.79 hours of work each week ($SD = 9.47$) and had an average length of employment of 3.21 years ($SD = 5.62$), masculine persons reported working an average of 34.30 hours each week ($SD = 11.32$) and had an average job tenure of 3.97 years ($SD = 5.95$), and undifferentiated persons averaged 33.93 weekly hours of work ($SD = 12.98$) and had an average job tenure of 5.03 years ($SD = 6.11$). ANOVAs indicated no significant gender role differences regarding weekly work schedules or job tenure.

Significant gender role differences were noted regarding the gender compositions of respondents' workplaces. Feminine persons were significantly more likely to be supervised by women and significantly less likely to be supervised by men, whereas masculine persons were significantly more likely to report the opposite pattern, $\chi^2(6) = 18.776, p = .005$. Regarding coworkers, masculine persons were significantly more likely to be employed in male-dominant environments, and feminine persons significantly less likely to be so employed, $\chi^2(15) = 29.818, p = .013$.

In the narratives, no significant gender role differences were noted in the number of issues cited or in their word length. A significant difference was found in participants' citations of coworker relationships; feminine and androgynous persons were significantly more likely to cite this issue, and undifferentiated persons were significantly less likely to do so, $\chi^2(3) = 12.043, p = .007$. No gender role differences were found in respondents' citations of the work performance of their coworkers or supervisors, their relationships with supervisors, their dealings with the public or subordinates, or work context factors. Furthermore, the gender role groups did not differ significantly in their reported methods of coping for any of the workplace issues; all chi-square analyses yielded probabilities that exceeded .10.

To examine whether the gender role differences in coworker relationships were affected by participants' work environments, additional chi-square analyses were conducted. Neither supervisor gender nor predominant coworker gender influenced respondents' citations of coworker relationships as sources of workplace anger.

Although neither gender nor gender role influenced the method of anger coping used by participants, both the number of weekly work hours, $t(255) = -3.48, p = .001$, and job tenure, $t(255) = -2.68, p = .004$, influenced the coping styles used. Individuals with longer tenure and greater numbers of work hours were significantly more likely to report using control-related, as opposed to escape-related, coping.

Discussion

Consistent with Averill's (1983) findings reported nearly two decades ago, the present study found no gender differences in either the number and types of issues prompting anger or in the methods of coping with anger reported by workers. Women and men were equally likely to report anger with their coworkers' work performance and/or relationships with their coworkers; the work performance of and/or relationship with their supervisor; dealing with the public; the work performance of subordinates; and work context factors, including pay, benefits, promotion opportunities, work schedules, physical working conditions, and administrative policies. Furthermore, men and women were equally likely to report using control-related styles of coping to dissipate their anger as they were to report using escape-related coping styles to suppress their anger. These findings depart from the studies that have reported that men's anger was more likely provoked when recognition was not received and women's anger was more likely provoked when relationships with others might be diminished (Eckhardt & Deffenbacher, 1995) and that men were more likely to outwardly express anger whereas women were more likely to suppress anger (Cox et al., 2000; McConatha et al., 1997). These discrepant results may be due to the different methodologies used in these studies; the studies finding gender differences used questionnaires that tended to limit participants' range of response options and thus might have prompted individuals to respond to items about anger in socially condoned fashion. When response options are not limited, as in Averill's (1983) study that analyzed diary entries and in the present study that analyzed written narratives, gender differences in anger do not emerge.

Furthermore, this similarity between the genders in terms of reported issues of workplace anger remains even when the different work environments of women and men are considered. The men in this study were significantly more likely to report working for male supervisors and/or with male coworkers than for female supervisors and/or with female coworkers, whereas women significantly more often reported a majority of female rather than male coworkers. Despite this gendered nature of the organizations for which participants worked, workers' reports of anger-provoking issues seemed independent of this organizational feature.

Two significant gender differences, perhaps stemming from differential socialization, were noted regarding the number of hours worked each

week and in the word count of participants' narratives. Men in this study reported significantly more working hours per week than did women, which is perhaps reflective of societal expectations that work should occupy a more central role in men's, as opposed to women's, lives. Women in this study wrote significantly longer narratives than did men, which is perhaps reflective of societal expectations that women be more verbose, particularly when explaining their feelings.

In a finding that is also consistent with gender role expectations, feminine and androgynous persons were significantly more likely to report anger arising in their relationships with coworkers than were undifferentiated persons. By definition, feminine and androgynous persons comfortably display communal, expressive qualities, whereas undifferentiated persons report low endorsement of such attributes (Bem, 1974). In the workplace, interpersonal relationships with coworkers provide the most opportune avenue for persons high in femininity to receive approval (e.g., Long, 1989); anger may very well result when these desired relationships are strained or not forthcoming. Androgynous and feminine persons' citations of coworker relationship issues were not influenced by either supervisor gender or the ratios of men and women in the coworker groups. Gender role identity did not otherwise influence the number or types of participants' citations of anger-provoking issues; no differences were found for the work performance of coworkers or supervisors, relationships with supervisors, dealing with the public, subordinates' work performances, and work context factors. Furthermore, gender role was not an influence in the length of the narratives nor in the type of anger-coping styles reported by participants.

Gender role analyses further clarified the previously reported gendered nature of participants' work environments. Regardless of gender, feminine persons were more likely to be supervised by female rather than male supervisors, whereas masculine persons were more likely to report male rather than female supervisors. Masculine persons were also more likely to report working with predominantly male colleagues, whereas feminine persons were less likely to do so. This finding is consistent with the findings of previous research that feminine women tend to select traditionally female-dominant career fields, often offering limited status and pay, whereas masculine men tend to select traditionally male-dominant career fields offering independent achievement and intellectual challenge (Gianakos & Subich, 1988). No work environment differences were noted for androgynous or undifferentiated persons. It would therefore seem that persons are more likely to seek work environments congruent with their gender roles rather than with their physical sex.

Overall, these findings indicate that gender role, and not gender, may be better considered in future research on anger in the workplace. Although gender was not related to any category of anger issue, gender-role femininity did influence participants' citations of coworker relationships. Although gender role expectations would suggest that masculine persons are more sensitized to work context issues, such as pay and advancement opportunities, the present study's findings were not significant. It may be that the great variety of jobs and work motivations among participants in this study masked particular gender role issues related to anger in the workplace. For example, participants' work activities ranged from part-

time jobs to pay for college expenses to managerial positions held by employees with more than 20 years of experience. For some participants, it may be that their current employment is temporary, and thus the possibility of pay raises and advancements are not salient issues for them. This variety of jobs may also account for the nonsignificant gender role effects regarding anger-coping styles. Because the majority of participants were employed in nonmanagerial and possibly short-term positions, they may not have had as many socially condoned options for dealing with their anger in the workplace as would individuals in managerial or permanent positions. Support for this notion is the present finding that workers with greater job tenure and greater numbers of weekly work hours were significantly more likely to report using control-related, as opposed to escape-related, coping.

Future research might address the limitations in this study. The majority of participants were Caucasians from working-class backgrounds who were concurrently attending college while employed either on a part-time or full-time basis. Replicating this study with individuals who are fully employed may better clarify the influence of gender role on issues of workplace anger, because work concerns would be more central to these individuals. Second, it may be instructive to specify various job levels (i.e., entry level vs. managerial), as was done in the Narayanan et al. (1999) study on workplace stressors, not only to examine the universality of anger-provoking incidents among employees but to clarify whether or not gender role influences differ according to job status. Third, the limited number of feminine men ($n = 3$) identified in this study precluded higher order analyses of the interactive influence of gender and gender role. Fourth, use of the BSRI in specifying gender roles has recently been questioned, primarily because it presumes that sex-typed scores are predictive of other gender-related attributes, attitudes, and behaviors even though independent research has found otherwise (Spence & Buckner, 2000). Using a multifactorial approach to classify gender identity (Spence & Buckner, 2000) may better clarify the unique contributions of gender and gender role in understanding employee anger.

Despite these limitations, it is clear that workers are angry about a number of issues. In this study, 257 participants reported 403 anger-provoking incidents, the majority of which involved coworkers ($n = 146$) and supervisors ($n = 123$). Because anger has been linked to poorer physical and psychological health (e.g., Clay et al., 1993), it is not unreasonable to propose that unresolved anger may be an important factor in both higher absentee rates and lowered productivity among employees. Furthermore, given the current economic recession in the United States, employee anger will likely increase as organizations continue to reduce their workforces, thus violating an implicit contract that the loyalty of employees is rewarded by job security, and as remaining employees experience pressures to increase productivity to improve the organizations' financial well-being (Neuman & Baron, 1997).

It would be in the best interests of any organization to identify anger-provoking incidents that are unique to their workplace and to design interventions particularly suited to address these situations. In general, organizations might first consider improving communication about job requirements at the onset so that potential employees, if hired, would

experience greater numbers of confirmed, rather than disconfirmed, expectations. As found by West and Rushton (1989), greater mismatches between an employee's needs and expectations and job requirements and structure provoke more negative emotional effects, including anger and the intention to leave.

Once anger occurs, offering cognitive interventions to employees may help them identify and develop alternate coping styles for those attributions that fuel further anger: inflammatory thinking, catastrophizing, misattributions of blame, overgeneralization, and overestimating the probability of future negative events (Deffenbacher, 1995). It seems important that such interventions occur when anger is first identified, given the negative sequelae of unresolved anger, such as hypervigilance of perceived injustices and dysphoric rumination that can lead to fatigue, unproductive venting, or revenge seeking (Bias, Tripp, & Kramer, 1997). Yet another beneficial, and low-cost, intervention for angry employees involves the expression of their feelings in written form. Pennebaker's (1997) study of laid-off engineers found that the individuals who were encouraged to keep journals detailing their deepest feelings about their job situation were more than twice as likely to have secured another position 8 months later than were individuals who had not done so, even though the groups did not differ in the number of job interviews that individuals had had. It seems that persons who had not resolved their anger spent some time in the job interviews discussing how they had been mistreated by their former employer, and this may have been a factor in whether a job offer was forthcoming. In the present study, several participants mentioned in their narratives that they found the process of writing about their anger helpful.

Because anger is more likely in situations when individuals perceive the instigator's behavior as unjustified, intentional, and preventable (e.g., Kassirer, 1995), organizations should ideally maintain open communication and seek consensus with employees and provide justification of the organizations' policies, procedures, and goals, thus lowering the incidence of anger. Given that over two thirds of participants' anger issues in the present study involved other employees, organizations may also wish to consider on-site workshops that address relationship building, leadership training, and anger management skills for all employees.

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Appendix

The following are examples of the participants' narrative responses to work-related issues involving anger.

Work Performance of Coworker(s)

When I'm working like crazy and other workers are sitting or standing around doing nothing at all or are talking to other coworkers about nothing pertaining to the job. When I ask a person for help and the reply is "I'm busy" or "find someone else" or they don't show up to help at all. When there is still work to be done and the others leave for break, leaving me to finish the work. . . . Sometimes I will go to the supervisor and explain what is happening, in return very little gets done. Most of the time, I just hold in the anger. At times I fake sick and leave for home, sometimes in tears by the time I get to my car. On occasion, I have spoken to the other persons, then in return they get mad, it just makes matters worse.

When working with lazy coworkers, I often get mad about doing all their work. Usually I either tell them to start working or I slow down so they have to start pulling their own weight. Sometimes this is not enough to resolve the anger and many times I have broken down and cried from the stress and anger.

Relationships With Coworker(s)

There's this one very masculine woman I work with who is consistently compelled to complain about her other coworkers behind their backs, although she herself possesses more faults than any of my other coworkers. She exhibits strong feelings of animosity over even the most trivial of circumstances. For instance, once I needed a roll of tape that was located right in front of her. When I asked her to hand me the tape, she met my request with a tirade

of angry remarks, proclaiming that SHE did not need the tape, so why should she reach in front of her to get it for me? . . . Every single inconsequential mistake sets off a great deal of complaints, regardless of whether she is affected or not. To each of these instances, I reacted with jokes and laughter to my other coworkers, although I must admit she often makes me very angry, and increases the difficulty of going to work eight hours a day.

What angers me most at work is when a person who has obviously (to their peers) mastered the art of ingratiation. The butt kisser who does only the little bit of work that interests that person and pawing off all the other work by convincing the supervisor that they are too busy. Then while the others pick up the slack and are busy doing the work the butt kisser should be doing, the kissers are freed up to sit on their butt and play around, then jump at any opportunity to do "favors" for the supervisor. Everyone else is busy getting the job done. This person takes others' ideas and presents them as their own. To add insult to injury, butt kissers have been given two promotions and pay raises with less job-related abilities, by climbing on the backs of coworkers. . . . How can they (supervisor and above) be so blind? Why can't they see kissers for what kissers are, or do they choose to ignore it for their own self-serving reasons? I could go on, but I think it's clear what angers me at work.

Work Performance of Supervisor(s)

Working with supervisors who don't care about you and your job performance. It's hard to accept bosses who have less experience and less education than me, but they're my supervisors. Also, they stress team management, but when working short staffed all the time, it's hard to accept when they are never around or sit around and watch tv during these times. I've sought out and complained to CEOs and executive directors—nothing gets resolved. Also, I've gone to counseling to talk about how to handle my feelings.

Many times it seems that supervision is only playing mind games. If production is the top priority, why do they constantly engage in posturing like little children? Their agenda is clearly personal advancement and trying to show they are in charge, not in a healthy way but in a sick way. I feel that the qualities that are looked for when hiring supervisors have ruled out the truly qualified and left a void that results in incompetent bosses who cannot advance by their own merit. I cope by ignoring them and doing what is best for the company. I think the main stressors are bosses who try to overmanage. Another cause of anger on my part is when a supervisor asks me to do what he thinks should be a simple fix (actually doesn't know his ass from a hole in the ground). I may or may not react with anger depending on how much stress I have already dealt with that day.

Relationship With Supervisor(s)

In my position, I had a female supervisor with a bad attitude toward the company based on her perceptions of "wrongs" done to her over the past twenty years. Anyone who works for her must ride her "bandwagon" or she will take issue with anything you do. . . . I refused to take part in her negative campaign against the company and every day there was an issue to be dealt with causing me to become angry. My job performance was and still is outstanding. I moved out of her section and now work with a wonderful group of people and my new supervisor is the best.

She likes to demand things to amuse herself. She talks to everyone like they are children. She likes to use her higher authority towards everyone. . . . If she

works on the floor with us and the auditor finds something wrong with something SHE did, she'll blame one of the employees and not take the blame herself. I haven't truly resolved these issues but when I quit, I'm going to tell her exactly how I feel about her and her "bipolar" personality. She's a very sick person with the motive of making everyone's life a living hell. The list can go on.

My present supervisor does not have a degree in the field in which we are both working. He is a self-taught systems manager. My anger results from his . . . disrespect; for instance, in explaining his responsibilities at his previous employer to another individual, *in my presence*, he went on to say that he had worked with college graduates (same degree as mine) that were hardly able to find the restroom on their own, much less able to do the job. His words, "They were worthless, just like (my name) here." My reaction to the above comments is silence. I do, however, "vent" to my friends and spouse.

Issues With Subordinates

I am a manager and employees purposely not following procedures and disrupting processes angers me. I have "written up" employees and have fired one employee. Only on one incident did I yell and have resolved not to do this again. In the write up, I explain proper procedures, the improper procedure, state expectations that the improper procedures is not to happen again, and the consequences.

I am in management, and lack of respect has made me angry at times. In one situation, I asked one of my employees to please get off the phone (it was a personal call), which should be limited to three minutes, which she had well exhausted. When I asked her, she hung up and yelled, "I don't have to take this shit." I was so angry I almost punched her in the face, but instead I took 10 minutes and calmed down. Then I told her calmly how I felt about her way of speaking to me.

Dealing With the Public

I am a manager in a financial institution. I become very angry when customers try to take advantage of my tellers by vulgarity and unruly behavior. I approach the window and talk quietly to the customer and, if that is ineffective, I raise my voice to keep control of the situation. On a few occasions, I told the customers to close their account and leave my office. I informed them that they are not welcome in our office and that their checks would not be honored in the future.

When customers don't listen. There's something they don't understand, so you explain it to them but they still only want to see it their way. When our sales counselors explain things to the customers to make a sale and when it doesn't work the way they said it would, the customer gets upset with us (customer service). I feel I could go on and on, but I'm getting a little upset just thinking about it.

Work Context Factors

I process payroll. It is one job where what you don't know cannot hurt you. It's hard not to expect more from people after you know how much they make. I have changed my way of thinking. I now look at the amounts only in terms of numbers, even if my numbers are lower than the others. I feel that I do a great job at work. And my bosses agree. They have added many extra duties to my workload. I enjoy doing them, because I gain knowledge and

experience. However, I feel overworked and underpaid. I have talked to management, and some changes are in the works (i.e., raises and promotion).

Reverse discrimination isn't any better than discrimination—why is reverse discrimination okay? I am a white-european american, and I have been turned away from numerous upper-level work even though I am very motivated and skilled.

Even though I believe that I am in control of my experiences/fate, there was an instance when I was up for a promotion (that my supervisor very much led me to believe was mine until the very last second), which I worked very hard for. . . . However, the job was given to someone else. My anger on this issue really turned into disgust for the company's bad choices (these bad choices are also noted in the fact that we *lose* money yearly—\$80,000). However, I did not quit—even though I have lost all interest in my job. I have thought this over and decided to bite the bone for another year. I know—it is a bit pathetic.

Management has a tendency to pull my help for their department, thus leaving me without the proper coverage. We have gone round and round that if they are going to continue "stealing" help, they need to let me/my supervisor know. Why? Some workers are not allowed to do certain jobs because of their labor contracts. And I need to know where my associates are.

Repairing equipment without access to the proper parts, because boss is too cheap to buy what is needed to do it right. Stated objection to the supervisor and did the best I could with what I had to work with.

Management takes on a workload that is not possible to be covered, not asking workers' input on ability to do load of work. In the lab, the technicians and chemists can only run the amount of samples that time permits. I went to the President of our company to let him know that the workload was impossible and explained why. He later let the customers know that there was a limit and work would be done as soon as possible (if needed before guaranteed time).

Top down communication is poor—unclear directives. Times occur, which cause anger, when I am the last to know that I am responsible for a project or process. All decisions have been made with no input from me. Resolutions: Voiced my opinion to my immediate supervisor on lack of communication in company. She tries, but workload and various responsibilities leave little time for management. Being self-sufficient, I do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, and work around the lack of communication and cooperation but it leaves me feeling frustrated and sometimes angry a great deal of the time. Personally, I vent my frustrations through positive outlets—exercise, keeping a journal and being with family and friends, setting personal goals for myself, such as education, reading, and by trying to leave work at work.

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