

# ***Perception and Expression of Anger and Shame: Genders and Occupational Differences***

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**Abstract:** In this article, the authors analyzed previous research about differences in emotion perception and expression and found out that gender and occupation are two important contributors in shaping emotion perception and expression. Previous studies suggested that females have a great ability to distinguish and avoid anger, while males show great frequency in expressing anger. At the same time, individuals who are at the top or the bottom of society are more inclined to get angry, while the middle classes are more likely to feel shame. To get a deeper insight into the impact of gender and occupation on emotions—anger, and shame, the authors designed an experiment that needs respondents to finish two sets of questionnaires—one is aimed to show anger frequency, the other one is used to show shame frequency. Results will be analyzed based on participants' gender and occupation, which enables the authors to clarify the relationships between emotions—anger and shame—and differences in gender and occupation.

**Keywords:** Emotions, Gender Differences, Occupational Differences, Health Psychology

## **1. Introduction**

Emotions are a valuable wealth of human beings. Different people have different subjective experiences of different things, which creates intriguing societies and relationships. Human needs emotions to communicate with others and get support from each other [1]. Emotional perceptions and expressions help to recognize people's identities in a group, identify which behaviors are appropriate, and be smooth in social relationships [2]. Interestingly, sometimes the emotions that people express may not be the emotions that the surroundings may perceive [2]. Emotional perception and expression are influenced by cultural background, family values, and many other factors [3]. Emotions play an influential role in perception, attention, memory, and decision-making [4]. Scientists have paid attention to the differences in emotional perception and expression abilities of different groups of people and have done related experiments [5]. This essay stands on the shoulders of giants to explore the impact of gender differences and occupational differences on two specific emotions- anger and shame.

## 2. Literature Review

An influential factor that affects people's perception and expression of emotions is gender. Although the results of testing emotional perception and expression are various and debatable, scientists always found out that females have more advantages in emotional expression and perception. Agneta H. Fischer and her teammates tested 5,000 people on the emotional sensitivity hypothesis to validate the differences between females and males [6]. They tested six emotions, including disgust, anger, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise with high and low insensitivity. Surprisingly, the results didn't support the hypothesis. The results showed that females and males have the same level of emotional perception of target emotions, but males have a slightly stronger sensitivity to non-targeted emotions. On the other hand, they also found out that males are less confident than women in their emotional sensitivity. In the end, they pointed out that the differences they found were small and contained limitations since they did an online questionnaire, to which people may not pay sufficient attention on it.

Previous research has provided evidence of the differences in emotional perception and expression between males and females. Antonella Gasbarri and her research team conducted a study to improve the identification of emotions displayed by individuals of the same gender or those with gender incongruence [6]. They utilized event-related potentials (ERPs) to examine how fear and anger body expressions are recognized between females and males. Their study involved 40 graduate students aged between 18 and 26. The findings revealed that male observers exhibited higher levels of arousal in angry body expressions displayed by females than males compared to females. The ERP data showed that female observers had greater P1 for male bodies than female observers and male observers had greater P3 for female bodies than male bodies while identifying angry body expressions. These results are highly related and respond to the natural selection theory that women are primarily caring for offspring, while men are primarily family guardians and protectors. Furthermore, the study found that male observers exhibited greater N170 of the male body than the N170 of the female body, and female observers exhibited greater N170 of the female body than the N170 of the male body, in the context of anger and fear. The gender-incongruent effect observed during the structural encoding processing phase may be interpreted by participants' familiarity with physical features typically associated with individuals of their own gender.

Factors that influence emotions are complex and various. Besides gender differences, psychologists keep exploring other perspectives on this issue. In the report *Gender and Culture Differences in Emotion* [7], Agneta H. Fischer and faculties of the University of Amsterdam and University of Cambridge, aiming to examine the role both gender and culture play in affecting emotions, took a secondary analysis of an existing dataset, which includes participants across 37 countries all over the world. In order to show the cultural variable clearly and precisely, Fischer introduced the Gender-Empowerment Measure (GEM) value, an index developed by the United Nations Development Programme. The GEM considers basically three aspects: economic participation in economy and making decisions, participation in politics and making decisions, and power over economic resources. In short, the higher the GEM value is the more active women in a specific region are in engaging in public life. Fischer and other researchers compare the frequency of respondents reporting antagonism—showing opposition or hostility—among different nations, and they found out that in nations with low GEM values, the females reported less expression of antagonism than men did; in contrast, in nations with high GEM values, frequencies of tow genders are not distinctly varied. Thus the involvement of society indeed influences the expression of anger to some degree; however, the GEM score is only able to give a general pattern and status of women and men in a region and tells little about specific social roles of respondents when they reflect emotions.

To obtain a more manifest picture of social roles and emotions, occupation—one of the most basic social roles a citizen takes in a society—is a perspective that is worth further study. According to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupation (ASCO), occupations could be divided into nine groups: managers and administrators; professionals; associate professionals; tradespersons and related workers; advanced clerical and service workers; intermediate clerical, sales and service workers; intermediate production and transport workers; elementary clerical, sales and service workers; labor and related workers. In faculty of Central Queensland University R Steele and K Mummery's research paper Occupational Physical Activity across Occupational Categories [8], nine groups of occupation were further categorized into three main categories: (a) Professionals, which includes managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals; (b) White-collar workers, which includes elementary clerical, sales and service workers, advanced clerical, sales and service workers, intermediate clerical, sales and service workers; (c) Blue-collar workers, which includes tradespersons and related workers, intermediate production and transport workers, laborers and related workers. Professionals are the most skill-needed type of occupation, according to the skill level information provided by ASCO, while blue-collar workers are the least skill-needed type of occupation. By using questionnaires about occupational physical activity and analyzing data from pedometers, Steele and Mummery discovered that blue-collar workers participate in much more occupational physical activity than the other two types of occupation do, while professionals are involved in occupational physical activity the least.

In 2010, Michelle R. Tuckey and Renae Hayward took a close look at the relationship between occupation and emotions [9]. Job demands are chronic stressors that demand continuous physical or psychological effort, and are therefore related to costs in physicality and psychology [10]. Being one of the job demands, emotional demand is the frequency of exposure to conditions that require emotions [11]. Corresponding to demands, there are also job resources—factors that enable workers to fit into work conditions; directly or indirectly buffer against job pressure and the following consequences in physicality and psychology; or promote growth and development [10]—and emotional resources—factors take buffering role against emotional demands. Meanwhile, job demands are divided into global (general) resources and occupational-specific resources. Tuckey and Hayward, in their paper Global and Occupation-Specific Emotional Resources as Buffers against the Emotional Demands of Fire-Fighting, using a questionnaire to fire-fighters, studied the mitigating effect of global and occupational-specific resources on emotional demands of fire-fighting, and concluded that global resources don't play a buffering role in the relation between emotional demands and psychological health [9]. Noticeably, the effectiveness of occupational-specific resources increases with an increase in the level of emotional demands, which means only occupational-specific resources have a consistent moderating effect on emotional demands. Therefore, occupations have the ability to ship people's emotions and make each job type of people cognate emotions differently in some way.

Anger and shame are two typical and common emotions, and there are a lot of theories proposed on them. According to Sloan [12], individuals with a high-status occupation are more inclined to show their anger directly. Meanwhile, Collett and Lizardo [13] examined the relationship between anger and occupational status, demonstrating that individuals with high status are not the only category of people — “Individuals located at the two opposite ends of the status and prestige hierarchy” are more inclined to undergo anger than “those of middle status”. At the same time, work is a significant source of respect and self-esteem for the middle and lower class. Individuals who find themselves not contributing to society and easy to be replaced may experience sham as a loss of respect and self-esteem.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

The target participants will be Chinese citizens who have been employed for at least 1 year in China between the age of 18 to 60.

- Chinese citizens
- Adults from 18 to 60 years of age
- Have been employed for at least 1 year

#### 3.2. Procedure

Researchers will go to Guangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Chengdu to collaborate with 4 different companies. The administration department of each company will ask their employees to do the questionnaire that researchers provide.

Hypothesis:

1. Among all occupation groups, females generally show a greater frequency of shame, while males show a greater frequency of anger.
2. Professionals and blue-collar workers show a greater frequency of anger, while white-collar workers show greater frequency of shame.

#### 3.3. Measures

This questionnaire will include a demographic questionnaire that asks for basic information about participants' ages, genders, and occupations. Then participants would need to rate their anger level from 0 to 4 for the questions in the Novaco anger scale [14]. The Novaco anger scale by Raymond W. Novaco, Ph.D. shows how particular individuals experience anger and what kind of situations provoke their anger at different levels based on an age-stratified sample of 1,546 individuals [15]. For the first edition of the NAS Total, it exhibited a high level of internal reliability, with a coefficient alpha of 0.95 [16]. In addition, in studies conducted with psychiatric patients in California State hospitals, the NAS Total demonstrated good test-retest reliability over a two weeks, with a coefficient of 0.84. The OAS (Other As Shamer) which was derived from Cook's Internalized Shame Scale [17], was modified by Allan, Gilbert, and Goss in 1994 and 1998 to assess "external shame". In the primary study, the scale demonstrated strong internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .92. Subsequent research has also indicated a high level of internal consistency with an alpha coefficient of 0.96.

#### 3.4. Additional Information

Since this is a planned research project, it does not include data collection and analysis.

### 4. Conclusion

By reviewing and analyzing several former studies, we found that gender and occupation are two significant factors in emotions. From an evolutionary perspective, the females need to distinguish and avoid anger because of their duty of caring for offspring, while the males have to express anger more frequently to compete for resources. In contemporary society, occupation plays a noticeable role in shaping individuals' emotional perception and expression. People who are on the top or the bottom of the community pyramid are more inclined to get angry. At the same time, citizens who are located in the middle of the spectrum are more likely to feel shame due to their occupations. Our study is aimed to further investigate the influence of contributors' gender and occupation on emotions,

specifically anger and shame. Based on previous research, we hypothesized that females show a greater frequency of shame, while males generally show a greater frequency of anger; professionals and blue-collar workers show a greater frequency of anger, and white-collar workers show a greater frequency of shame. To test our hypothesis, two sets of questions were selected; one is able to test an individual's anger frequency, and another is used to show shame frequency. Results will be categorized and analyzed by participants' gender and occupation. In this way, we will be able to compare data of different groups and see gender and occupational differences in anger and shame perception and expression.

However, our questionnaire is completed in a self-reported way, which is inevitably affected by positive and negative affectivity. Individuals with high positive affectivity regard themselves and their surrounding environment from overall positive perspectives; in contrast, individuals with high negative affectivity regard themselves and their surrounding environment from overall negative perspectives [18]. In addition, the categorization of occupations is based on existing work fields and jobs, which means it may not be appropriate and suitable for certain potential newly-developed occupations in the future. Future research and updated-keeping category methods are necessary to advance the results with time. Meanwhile, an objective measurement system is needed to make the theory more precise and accurate.

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Shuqi Lin, and Jiatang Li contributed equally to this work and should be considered co-first authors.

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