

2011

# Differential Reactions to Men's and Women's Counterproductive Work Behavior

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Differential Reactions to Men's and Women's Counterproductive Work Behavior

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
Department of Psychology  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval:  
August 29, 2011

Keywords: Stereotypes, Aggression, Performance  
Evaluation, Gender Differences, Multivariate

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### **Abstract**

This purpose of this study was to examine the effect that employee gender might have on performance ratings. Specifically, it was thought that negative performance episodes, such as aggressive behavior, might have less of an effect on performance ratings for males compared to females because males have a stereotype of being more aggressive. Additional hypotheses examined how different types of negative performance affected perceptions that the employee was behaving according to their gender ideal, and whether people judged male and female aggressiveness differently. To this end, 134 undergraduate students participated in a 2 x 3 design experiment where they read about a hypothetical server in a restaurant who had committed various negative behaviors at work. The results were, for the most part, not significant. The exception was that there were some slight group differences in how well the employees in the various conditions fit their gender ideal.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Stereotypes have long been a popular topic of study in social psychology. They are considered by some to play a critical component in determining one's attitudes. One model of attitudes, the tripartite model, posits that stereotypes are the cognitive component that contributes to prejudicial attitudes (Devine, 1989). Recently, researchers studying organizations have begun to study stereotypes and their effects in the workplace. These stereotypes have included attitudes related to age (e.g. Henkens, 2005; Posthuma & Campion, 2009), ethnicity (e.g. Cocchiara & Quick, 2004), and gender (e.g. Gorman, 2005; Heilman & Chen, 2005).

By their nature, stereotypes can have a profound effect on a person's beliefs and interpretations of what they see around them. Heilman and her colleagues have examined the effects of gender stereotypes in terms of workers being penalized for success on gender-inconsistent tasks, both for men (Heilman & Wallen, 2010) and women (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004). They have also examined how specific gender stereotypes can influence perceptions of employee behavior at work, finding that women who performed discretionary, altruistic behaviors at work were rewarded less than men due to a stereotype that women are expected to be helpful, whereas men are not (Heilman & Chen, 2005).

These lines of research have examined several areas of performance, yet have failed to examine the influence of gender stereotypes on the interpretation of negative or deviant behaviors in the workplace. If we consider job performance in terms of Rotundo and Sackett's (2002) conceptualization, then these behaviors would be the last type that needs to be examined in relation to gender stereotypes. Their model states that job performance is made up of three components: task performance, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Organ, 1988), and counterproductive work behavior (CWB; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). The research cited above has addressed the effects of gender stereotypes in the perception of the first two components of job performance; however, attention to their effect on the perception of counterproductive work behaviors has been lacking.

The purpose of this proposed study is to fill the gap in the existing research by examining how gender stereotypes might influence perceptions of counterproductive work behaviors in the context of a hypothetical performance appraisal task. Given that performance appraisal can be seen as person perception or judgment in a specific context (i.e. at work), it seems reasonable that stereotypes, with their effect on attitude formation (Devine, 1989), would influence appraisal judgments. In order to develop the specific hypotheses for the proposed study, the literature on gender stereotypes relevant to common counterproductive work behaviors will be examined below, followed by a more detailed discussion of the counterproductive work behavior construct.

### **Gender and Aggression**

Males are commonly associated with the trait of aggressiveness. It is a central feature of the male stereotype that shows up both in American society (Frodi, Macaulay,

& Thome, 1977; Kaukiainen et al., 2001; Oswald & Lindstedt 2006; Williams & Bennett, 1975), as well as other cultures around the world (Gilmore, 1990). Stereotypes occasionally have the stigma of being too broadly applied and over-generalizing to a demographic. However, in this case, there is an abundance of research that supports the idea that males are generally more aggressive than females (e.g. Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Lindeman, Harakka, & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 1997). These studies examine reports of actual aggressive behavior rather than attitudes or perceptions about men and aggressiveness. This difference in aggressive behavior has also been found in organizational contexts (e.g. Hershcovis et al., 2007). However, this will be discussed further in a later section.

The link between gender and aggression has been examined within several different domains. In meta-analyses of the developmental literature addressing reports of aggression in children, boys have been found to engage in more verbal and physical aggression than girls, although there is a tendency for girls to engage in slightly more indirect aggression (Archer, 2004; Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008). However, some authors have noted that not all of the studies in these meta-analyses may be using the same operationalization for some of the types of aggression (e.g. Spector, in press). As mentioned above, Eagly and Steffen (1986) showed that for adults in non-work settings, men tended to act more aggressively than women, especially for physical forms of aggression and situations where aggression is required. However, it is not the case that men are always more aggressive than women, in contrast to the popular stereotype about male aggression. As suggested by previous authors (e.g. Spector, in press), it is more likely the case that the context of aggression must be taken into account when drawing

conclusions about the aggressiveness of men versus women. For example, in the domain of intimate partner violence (IPV; violence within intimate relationships), O'Leary et al., (1989) followed a sample of newlywed couples for the first 30 months of marriage, and found that the incidence of engaging in this particular type of violence was much higher for women than for men.

Importantly for the current study, Felson and Feld (2009) conducted a laboratory study where participants read reports of physical aggression in which the level of aggression was held constant across conditions, and the gender of both the aggressor and victim and their relationship (either spouses or acquaintances) was manipulated between conditions. The authors found that male on female violence was more likely to be condemned, considered serious, and judged worthy of calling the police to report the act, especially when they are described as being married. Conditions where the male was attacked by the female were judged as less serious, and resulted in less agreement that the incident should be reported to the police, showing that people will interpret the same act differently depending on whether it is a man or women performing the action. This is particularly relevant to the current study, as it is also examining whether or not people will judge the same aggressive act differently depending on the gender of the employee performing the behavior.

Multiple studies have shown that men report engaging in more workplace aggression than women (e.g. Baron et al., 1999; Hershcovis et al., 2007; McFarlin, Fals-Stewart, Major, & Justice, 2001), providing at least some justification for the aggressive stereotype discussed above. For example, Hershcovis et al.'s (2007) workplace aggression meta-analysis found that gender was a stronger predictor of interpersonal-

directed aggression than organizational-directed aggression, although gender predicted both types in a path analysis model based on their meta-analytic results. Additionally, Spector (in press) reports data from an unpublished study that sought to address this relationship using a further differentiated typology of CWB. Males reported performing more overall CWB, interpersonal CWB, abuse, and relational aggression, while there were no gender differences for more organizationally directed CWBs such as sabotage or theft, as well as for physical aggression, although the author notes this could have been due to the low incidence of this type of aggression reported in the sample.

One stream of research has examined aggression as a method to reassert manhood after being faced with a gender threat to one's masculinity (Bosson et al., 2009; Vandello et al., 2008; Weaver, Vandello, Bosson, and Burnaford, 2010). These authors consider manhood to be both an elusive and tenuous concept, such that it is both difficult to attain, and difficult to maintain (Vandello et al., 2008). Again, this concept seems to be universal, in that it is present across a wide array of cultures around the world (Gilmore, 1990). Their research demonstrated that men whose manhood had been threatened were more likely to have aggression on their mind (using implicit word completion tasks; Vandello et al., 2008) and be more likely to engage in physically aggressive behavior (punching a pad; Bosson et al., 2009). Thus, it appears that aggression is a universal, implicit, and deeply ingrained component of masculine identity, above and beyond the stereotypes that people associate to male proclivities for aggression.

### **Aggression at Work**

Aggression in the workplace has been studied in several contexts, both by itself, and as an example of a specific type of counterproductive work behavior. Researchers

studying work aggression have been careful to differentiate it from physical violence at work. Events of physical violence at work, such as shootings or hostage taking, are often given wide coverage by the media, and as such are assumed to be more common than they actually are. However, it is likely that aggression at work more often takes the form of minor, verbal, or indirect confrontations. Supporting this idea, Baron and Neuman (1996) examined what types of aggressive behaviors were reported most often by employees in organizations. They hypothesized that since aggressive behaviors at work would both take place in front of an audience and open up the actor to retaliation, covert aggression that disguised the identity of the aggressor was likely to be more common. They found that verbal, passive (causing harm via withholding an action) aggressive behaviors were reported at much higher frequencies than physical, active aggressive behaviors.

These authors later proposed a model that sought to differentiate between different types of work aggression, which they defined as “efforts by individuals to harm others with whom they work, or have worked, or the organizations in which they were previously employed” (Neuman & Baron, 1998, p.395). Using exploratory factor analysis to analyze aggressive behaviors previously identified in the literature, they found that three factors seemed to emerge: expressions of hostility (e.g. ridicule, harassment, obscene gestures), obstructionism (e.g. causing delays, interfering with work), and overt aggression (e.g. theft, threats, physical violence). The first two factors seem to mostly represent verbal and passive aggressive behaviors, respectively, while the last consists mostly of physical, active forms of aggression. In accordance with the research cited above, the prevalence data they report show that the first two types of aggressive

behavior in the model are more common occurrences than the behaviors in the overt aggression factor (Neuman & Baron, 1998).

The definition of work aggression above is very similar to definitions of similar constructs including workplace deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995), retaliation (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), and counterproductive work behavior (Sackett, 2002; Spector et al., 2006). These definitions all stress that the behaviors are intentional, voluntary, and cause harm to the organization and/or its members. Some definitions of work aggression are somewhat broader, including such concepts as abusive supervision (e.g. Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), while some conceptualizations of counterproductive work behavior have been expanded to include sabotage, withdrawal, and theft behaviors (e.g. Spector et al., 2006). However, aggression remains a key aspect of most theories about counterproductive work behavior. The next section will discuss several models of counterproductive work behavior that emphasize aggressive behaviors.

### **Models of CWB**

There have been several models of counterproductive work behavior that include aggression as a central component. One of the most popular is Robinson and Bennett's model of workplace deviance (1995). They used multidimensional scaling techniques to develop a typology of what they termed workplace deviant behavior. According to their analysis, deviant workplace behavior varies along two dimensions and can be classified into four categories. The first dimension reflects the seriousness or harmfulness of the behavior, and was termed the minor vs. serious dimension. The second dimension reflects whether the behavior is targeted towards and harmful to individuals or targeted towards and harmful to the organization. Thus, this dimension was labeled interpersonal

vs. organizational deviance. Crossing these two dimensions resulted in four categories of deviant workplace behavior. The minor organizational category was labeled production deviance, and included such behaviors as leaving early and intentionally working slow. The serious organizational category was labeled property deviance, and included such behaviors as sabotaging equipment and stealing from the company. The minor interpersonal category was labeled political deviance, and included such behaviors as showing favoritism and gossiping about coworkers. Finally, the serious interpersonal category was labeled personal aggression, and included such behaviors as verbal abuse and stealing from coworkers.

Another popular model of counterproductive work behavior that focuses on aggression is the frustration-aggression model (Fox & Spector, 1999). In this model, a frustrating event occurs when one's goal-directed work behavior is interrupted, and there is no opportunity to achieve that goal through a different set of behaviors. Once this happens, there is a chance that the employee will respond behaviorally with some form of aggression. However, there are several affective responses that mediate the relationship between the occurrence of a frustrating event and negative behavioral reactions, such as frustration and job dissatisfaction. These affective responses are influenced by several individual difference variables, including locus of control, trait anxiety, and trait anger. The model hypothesizes that those individuals who have an external locus of control and high levels of trait anxiety and anger are more likely to have negative behavioral reactions to frustrating events at work.

Finally, a more recent model of workplace aggression is the channeling hypothesis of aggression (Frost, Ko, & James, 2007). This model focuses purely on

aggressive forms of counterproductive work behavior, and predicts that explicit personal beliefs about one's aggressiveness interact with one's implicit aggressiveness to influence aggressive behavior. According to the authors, even people who are aggressive by nature have a desire to adhere to the moral standards of society and maintain a favorable view of themselves as moral, responsible members of society. However, this discrepancy between their aggressive motives and self-perception motives creates a conflict which must be dealt with when the person acts aggressively. This model posits that this conflict is dealt with through the use of defense mechanisms, specifically rationalization, in order to justify aggressive behavior while still maintaining a positive sense of self. Rationalization allows the person to conceal from themselves their desire to inflict harm, thereby sparing the person from the negative emotions (e.g. anxiety, guilt) that would result from seeing oneself as an aggressive person (p. 1301).

These models of counterproductive work behavior all include aggressiveness as a key construct, highlighting its importance as a workplace phenomenon. Although a great deal of research has been devoted to identifying the antecedents of workplace aggression and counterproductive work behavior, these constructs are usually treated as final outcomes. Studies examining the reactions to and consequences of such behavior in the workplace have been lacking, and the proposed study here is designed to address this issue. However, first it is important to provide a brief review of some of the antecedents of aggressive and counterproductive work behavior that have been previously identified in the literature on this topic.

## **Antecedents of CWB**

There have been several different categorizations of these variables in the literature (e.g. Neuman & Baron, 1998). One of the simplest typologies is to separate them into situational and individual antecedents, a method used in a recent meta-analysis of workplace aggression (Hershcovis et al., 2007)

**Situational.** One of the most popular situational antecedents of counterproductive work behavior examined in the literature is perceived unfairness. It is often studied in the context of equity theory (Adams, 1965) and organizational justice (Greenberg, 1990). If an employee perceives a difference in how rewards or punishments are distributed (distributive justice), how decisions about company policies are made or enacted (procedural justice), or in how employees are treated by the organization (interactional justice), then it is possible that they may react by engaging in counterproductive work behavior. Indeed, several studies have shown that perceived unfairness on the part of the employee will lead to greater workplace aggression (e.g. Baron, Neuman, & Geddes, 1999; Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001). Several studies in the area of retaliation at work have shown similar effects of perceived injustice at work (e.g. Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Several other situational antecedents are worth mentioning in relation to counterproductive work behavior. The first is the occurrence of frustrating events in the workplace, as discussed in the previous section. To reiterate, frustration resulting from interference with goal-directed behavior that precludes the goal being accomplished some other way has been shown to lead to workplace aggression (Fox & Spector, 1999; Spector, 1975). Interestingly, diversity in the workforce has been hypothesized to lead to

greater workplace aggression, for several reasons. These hypotheses include the fact that having more people in the workforce who differ widely in demographics could lead to greater negative emotions due to decreased interpersonal attraction and increased difficulties in interpersonal communication, leading to greater mistrust, interpersonal conflict, and aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1998). Some support for these hypotheses has been demonstrated in the past; increased diversity in the workforce was positively correlated with both experienced and witnessed workplace aggression (Baron & Neuman, 1996). Finally, Neuman and Baron (1998) provide a discussion of how social norms could affect aggression in the workplace. For example, there may be a norm of aggressive behavior in the workplace, a norm that encourages competition between employees, or the violation of important social norms could lead to retaliatory behavior (p. 403).

**Individual.** In addition to the situational antecedents discussed above, multiple individual level variables have been examined as antecedents to counterproductive work behavior and workplace aggression. Some of these variables are dispositional, stable personality variables. For example, trait anger and trait anxiety have been found to have positive effects on aggression in tests of the frustration-aggression model (Fox & Spector, 1999), and other research has shown that individuals with high levels of trait anger are more likely to exhibit workplace aggressive behaviors than those with low levels of trait anger (e.g. Douglas & Martinko, 2001). However, one study found only weak support for trait anger and trait anxiety moderating between job stressors and CWB (Fox et al., 2001), although the authors noted that this could have been due to the conservative alpha level used in the significance tests. The strongest support for the importance of these two

variables comes from a recent meta-analysis of work aggression which showed moderate positive correlations between these traits and both interpersonal and organizational aggression (Hershcovis et al., 2007). People characterized by the Type A behavior pattern are also more likely to report having engaged in workplace aggression against others (Baron et al., 1999). Similarly, Fox and colleagues have shown that transient negative emotions, which are less stable than dispositions, mediate the relationship between organizational constraints and behavioral responses of counterproductive work behavior (Fox & Spector, 1999; Fox et al., 2001).

Demographic variables have also been linked to counterproductive work behaviors. Age has been found to negatively correlate with workplace aggression (Baron et al., 1999) and counterproductive work behaviors (Berry, Ones, & Sackett, 2007). Additionally, gender has repeatedly been shown to be related to workplace aggression, as discussed above.

### **Proposed Study**

The goal of the proposed study is to incorporate research on gender stereotypes into the literature regarding counterproductive work behavior by examining whether the cultural stereotype of male aggressiveness will influence the perceptions of and reactions to interpersonal aggressive behaviors performed by men. Although physically aggressive behavior is less common in the workplace than other forms of aggression, the male stereotype and idea of masculinity is more often associated with physical forms of aggression (see discussion above). Thus, these aggressive behaviors will be the focus of this study. While these behaviors are things that should be avoided, it could be the case that men who engage in such behaviors are simply following the stereotype of what men

typically do, i.e. behaving aggressively. Thus, men's ratings of performance may suffer less for exhibiting such behaviors compared to women who engage in such behaviors. Women would not be expected to behave in such ways toward other employees, and in fact, women who do may even be violating norm prescriptions that they are supposed to be friendly and helpful toward others. Such violations are typically penalized (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Heilman & Chen, 2005), giving further weight to the idea that there will be a differential reaction to aggressive, interpersonal types of CWB depending on whether the behavior is being performed by a man or a woman, in line with previous findings showing that identical aggressive acts are judged differently depending on the gender of the actor (Felson & Feld, 2009). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 1:** Engaging in interpersonal, aggressive CWB will result in lower ratings on performance evaluations and reward recommendations for women compared to men.

Additionally, participants' perceptions of the employee's competence and interpersonal incivility will be measured to control for any possible effects on the performance variables.

Because men who engage in aggressive behavior are more closely following the male stereotype, they may be perceived as more masculine than men who don't engage in these behaviors when given the opportunity. Additionally, women who do not perform aggressive behavior when given the opportunity, and instead exhibit a more stereotypically feminine response such as quickly withdrawing from the situation, may be perceived as more feminine because they are more closely following a female stereotype.

Thus:

**Hypothesis 2:** Men who engage in interpersonal, aggressive CWB will be seen as more masculine than men who do not engage in these behaviors, whereas women who do not aggress but choose to leave the situation will be seen as more feminine than females who do engage in aggressive CWB.

One theory that has previously linked stereotypes with people's judgments of others is the shifting standards model (Biernat & Manis, 1994; Biernat, Manis, & Nelson, 1991). This model states that people will use different standards to judge members of stereotyped groups on stereotyped dimensions based on the individual's group membership. For example, when judging athletic ability, a woman would be compared to the (presumably lower) stereotyped standards of women, whereas men would be compared to the (presumably higher) stereotyped standards of men, even when their athletic ability was identically described.

Biernat and her colleagues have found this effect across a variety of domains and stereotyped groups, including in a study that focused on athletic ability that demonstrated the effect just described (Biernat & Vescio, 2002). This study found that male and female athletes who were described as having the same level of athletic ability were still judged differently, with the women judged as exhibiting poorer athletic performance. Also, these effects have been found in situations where participants are judging the competence of applicants, resulting in participants using lower standards when judging female or Black applicants compared to male or White applicants (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). Finally, in the parenting domain, research has shown that when mothers and father are described as being "very good" parents, the women were judged

to have performed more parenting behaviors, indicating that men have lower standards for what makes them good parents than women (Kobrynowicz & Biernat, 1997). Being a parent has also been found to interact with gender when making employment decisions, such that fathers are held to lower standards for good performance compared to mothers or men without children (Fuegen, Biernat, Haines, & Deaux, 2004).

Based on the research in support of this model and the fact that this study involves the effect of stereotypes on performance, it is reasonable to expect that because there is a stereotype for male aggressiveness, this might have an effect on the standards that participants use when judging the aggressiveness of men versus women who perform the same aggressive action. Thus, men may be judged as less aggressive than women who perform the same action, because it is more “out of character” for a woman to behave aggressively. However, previous research has noted that shifting standards tends to have a larger effect when objective judgments are used rather than subjective judgments (Biernat & Manis, 1994; Kobrynowicz & Biernat, 1997). This is because people can interpret the subjective anchors on subjective scales like Likert scales according to the differing standards for different subgroups, while objective anchors on objective scales (such as behavioral anchored rating scales) have grounding in external reality, and provide less room for individual interpretation of their meaning. Since the Likert responses used in this study are subjective based scales, the shifting standards effect could be attenuated. In spite of this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 3:** Males who act aggressively will be judged as less aggressive than females who act aggressively, even when they are exhibiting identical behavior.

**Design**

This study is a 2 x 3 factorial between-subjects design, with the independent variables being the performance of CWB (control/no incident, leaving early, aggression) and sex of the target being rated. Participants will be randomly assigned to each of the 6 conditions.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Participants were recruited from an undergraduate introductory to psychology course at a large southeastern university. The students were offered a point of extra credit added to their overall course grade in exchange for participation in the study. The initial sample was 140 students, but after accounting for missing data in some of the surveys, the final sample was 134 students (52 male, 82 female). The average age was 19.57 years ( $SD = 1.65$ ), and the average amount of work experience was 2.87 years ( $SD = 2.22$ ). Forty-eight point nine percent of the participants classified themselves as Caucasian, 6.7 percent African American, 29.6 percent Hispanic or Latino, 11.1 percent as Asian, and 3.7 percent as Other.

#### **Procedure**

Each participant was given a packet containing the research materials for the study. The packet contained the information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, supervisor comments about the employee's performance, a warning letter about the employee repeatedly being tardy for shifts, and finally the study questionnaires asking participants to evaluate the employee on job performance, make recommendations for organizational rewards, give attribute ratings for the employee, rate their gender ideal match, and finally report some demographic information about themselves. Employees

in the leaving and aggression conditions received additional information about the employee, described below.

### **Independent Variable Manipulation**

**Sex of target employee.** The sex of the employee to be rated were varied by the name and personal pronouns in the performance episodes and employee information sheet.

**CWB.** All conditions included basic information about the employee, supervisor comments about performance, and the warning letter about the employee's tardiness. In the control condition, this was all the information the participants received. In the other two CWB conditions, there was also an employee incident report describing how the employee was faced with some critical comments about their state of dress from a coworker, and the employee's reaction to those comments. In the leaving condition, the employee abruptly left work without telling their supervisor and did not return that evening. In the aggression condition, the employee shoved the coworker against a wall and stormed off into the kitchen.

**Manipulation Checks.** Three questions serves as manipulation checks for the study. They were "Has James ever behaved aggressively at work?", "Has James ever arrived late for work?", and "Has James ever left work in the middle of a shift?". Participants responded either "Yes", "No", or "Don't Know". They were instructed to select the third option if no information about that behavior was presented. The purpose of these was to make sure the participants were paying attention to the various types of information about the employee presented in the study.

## Dependent Variables

**Performance evaluation.** Performance was measured with the three items used by Heilman and Chen (2005). These items are: “Overall, how would you rate this employee’s performance over the past year?”, “In your opinion, how likely is it that this employee will advance in the company?”, and “Give your assessment of the individual’s likelihood of success.” Each item was measured on a 7 point Likert scale with 1 indicating either poor (first item) or very unlikely, and 7 indicating either excellent (first item) or very likely. The reliability for this scale was  $\alpha = .84$ .

**Reward recommendations.** This variable was also measured with items used by Heilman and Chen (2005). Participants were asked to give their recommendations for three types of common organizational rewards (salary increase, promotion, and bonus pay). They were assessed on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*would definitely not recommend*) to 7 (*would definitely recommend*). The reliability for this scale was  $\alpha = .86$ .

**Attribute ratings.** Participants also rated how well two adjective attribute scales described the employee: competence and interpersonal incivility. The adjectives for competence were competent, productive, effective, and decisive, and the adjectives for interpersonal incivility were nasty, selfish, and manipulative. They were assessed on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*to a small extent*) to 7 (*to a large extent*). The reliabilities for these scales were  $\alpha = .80$  (competence), and  $\alpha = .30$  (interpersonal incivility).

**Aggressiveness.** An adjective measure of the employee’s aggressiveness was used to measure the aggressiveness of the employee. The adjectives were aggressive,

mean, and rude. They were assessed on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*to a small extent*) to 7 (*to a large extent*). The reliability for this scale was  $\alpha = .86$ .

**Gender ideal.** The extent to which the employee was congruent with their gender ideal (i.e. how masculine the males are/how feminine the females are) was measured with items created for this study. Issues have been brought up with popular existing scales that measure gender identity (Palan, Areni, & Kiecker, 1999). Additionally, most existing scales measure attitudes towards men, roles, or norms for men rather than the congruence of a specific individual's behavior with their gender ideal (Thompson, Pleck, & Ferrera, 1992). Thus, gender ideal was measured with three items: "How masculine did James/Sarah seem to you?", "How feminine did James/Sarah seem to you?", and "To what extent did James/Sarah conform to the cultural ideals of his/her gender?". In the female employee conditions, the masculine item was reverse scored before the average scale score was calculated, and in the male employee conditions, the feminine item was reverse scored before the average score was calculated. These items were assessed on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very*). The reliability for this scale was  $\alpha = .39$ .

## **Chapter Three**

### **Results**

#### **Tests of Statistical Assumptions**

The first step in any statistical analysis is to examine whether or not the data meets the assumptions of independence of observations, normality, and homogeneity of variance. As described in the procedure above, each participant responded to their own survey without any interaction with any other participant who was completing a survey at the same time. Thus, there is no reason to expect that the assumption of independence was violated for this data. This is generally considered the assumption whose violation has the most serious consequences for the analysis (Stevens, 2009), so it is important that this assumption should hold.

Because the tests for Hypothesis 1 were multivariate in nature, it was necessary to consider the multivariate aspects of the assumptions for normality and homogeneity of variance. Generally, if variables do not exhibit univariate normality, then they won't exhibit multivariate normality, although the existence of univariate normality is not sufficient evidence by itself to conclude multivariate normality (Stevens, 2009). PROC UNIVARIATE NORMAL tests were conducted in SAS 9.2 to test univariate normality using the Shapiro-Wilk statistic. The two dependent variables of performance evaluation and reward recommendation were examined within each of the 6 study conditions (2 employee gender x 3 performance). The reward recommendation variable showed

evidence of non-normality in the condition where a male employee left a confrontational situation ( $W = 0.90, p < .05$ ). However, the performance evaluation variable did not exhibit evidence of non-normality in this condition. The performance evaluation variable did show evidence of non-normality in the condition where a female employee left a confrontational situation ( $W = 0.90, p < .05$ ). However, the reward recommendation variable did not exhibit evidence of non-normality in this condition. None of the other conditions showed evidence of non-normality in either of the two dependent variables. As mentioned above, these small instances of non-normality indicate that multivariate normality does not exist.

Similar univariate normality analyses were performed on the attribute ratings of competence and interpersonal incivility, gender ideal, and perceived aggressiveness. All of these variables were analyzed by group using the procedure outlined above. Competence showed no deviations from normality, and gender ideal only exhibited evidence of non-normality in the condition where a female employee left a confrontational situation ( $W = 0.85, p < .05$ ). However, interpersonal incivility and perceived aggressiveness exhibited substantial evidence of non-normality across most of the study conditions. Interpersonal incivility exhibited non-normality in the male control ( $W = 0.84, p < .05$ ) and leave conditions ( $W = 0.89, p < .05$ ), and in the female control ( $W = 0.91, p < .05$ ) and leave conditions ( $W = 0.90, p < .05$ ). Perceived aggressiveness also exhibited non-normality in the male control ( $W = 0.52, p < .05$ ) and leave conditions ( $W = 0.82, p < .05$ ), and across all of the female conditions (control  $W = 0.46, p < .05$ ; leave  $W = 0.68, p < .05$ ; aggress  $W = 0.91, p < .05$ ). These multiple violations of normality raise some potential concern for the conclusions that can be

drawn from analyses on these variables. However, given that these departures from normality are minor and moderately non-normal distributions can approximate a normal distribution in groups as small as 10 to 20 (Stevens, 2009, p.221), these minor violations of the normality assumption should not have a large effect on the following analyses considering the group sizes in this study are all above 20.

Because multivariate analyses are based on covariance matrices rather than just variances, the multivariate analogue of the homogeneity of variance assumption is that the covariance matrices should be homogeneous. Box's M Test is a commonly used test that examines this assumption by converting the M test statistic into either a chi-square or F test. For this test, the null hypothesis is that the covariance matrices are equal. Using SAS 9.2, this test for equality in covariance matrices of performance evaluation and reward recommendation resulted in a test statistic of  $\chi^2 = 24.27, p > .05$ , indicating that the covariance matrices are likely equal (or at least, the null hypothesis of non-equality cannot be rejected). Additionally, the test for competence and interpersonal incivility resulted in a test statistic of  $\chi^2 = 22.46, p > .05$ , allowing a similar conclusion for these two variables. The variables of gender ideal and perceived aggressiveness were examined for the univariate assumption of homogeneity of variance, because these variables have separate hypotheses pertaining to them and the analyses concerning them will be univariate in nature. A Levene's test for gender ideal resulted in a statistic of  $F(5, 129) = 0.50, p > .05$ . This test examines the null hypothesis that the error variances are equal across groups, so this result indicates that this cannot be rejected. In the case of perceived aggressiveness, the test result was  $F(5, 129) = 13.38, p < .05$ , indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance does not hold for this variable. However, if

the number of participants in each condition are approximately the same (largest/smallest  $< 1.5$ ), the statistical analyses are robust to violations of this assumption (Stevens, 2009, p.227). The group sizes for each condition in the current study range from 21 to 24, so it is very likely that the violation of this assumption will not have a large effect on the results. However, these minor violations of normality and homogeneity must be considered when interpreting the results.

### **Manipulation Checks**

The three questions that served as manipulation checks were intended to determine if the participants noted the instances of behavior that were presented in each condition. Across all conditions, the employee was described as having a history of arriving late to work. Accordingly, 131 out of the 134 participants correctly reported that the employee had previously arrived late to work. In the male and female leave conditions, the employee was described as leaving work abruptly in the middle of the shift, and 38 out of 45 participants (male and female conditions combined) correctly reported that the employee had done so. Finally, in the male and female aggress conditions, the employee was described as acting aggressively towards a coworker, and 39 out of 45 participants (male and female conditions combined) correctly reported that the employee had done so. These results raise some concerns regarding the quality of responses from those participants who did not answer the manipulation checks correctly. In order to examine this issue, all of the analyses described below were repeated after removing any participant who failed to respond correctly to any of the three manipulation check questions. The pattern of results was exactly the same for all of the statistical tests in the study, so the full sample was maintained in the analyses described below.

## Demographic Effects

Because this study is concerned with gender effects, preliminary analyses were conducted with participant gender as an additional independent variable in order to determine if there are differences between men and women in their reactions to the vignettes. Some previous research has shown that men were more likely to attribute other men's physical aggression to situational factors (e.g. Weaver et al., 2010), so it is important to determine if participant gender should be included as an additional factor in this study. In three way ANOVAs that included participant gender as a third variable (along with employee gender and performance condition), participant gender had no main effect or interaction effects on either the performance evaluation or reward recommendation variables. Additionally, all of the demographic variables were entered into a correlation matrix with all of the study variables (performance evaluation, reward recommendation, competence, interpersonal incivility, gender ideal, perceived aggressiveness). The only significant correlation in the matrix was that gender was weakly related to competence ( $r = -.18, p < .05$ ), such females gave slightly lower ratings of competence than males. To further examine any possible participant gender effects,  $t$ -tests were conducted on all of the study variables with participant gender as the independent variable. Similar to the results of the correlational analysis, competence was the only variable to show an effect ( $t(132) = 2.1, p < .05$ ), in the same direction as described above. Given these minor results, none of the demographic variables were entered as control variables or additional independent variables in the following analyses.

## Tests of Study Hypotheses

**Performance rating variables.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 1. To examine Hypothesis 1, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to test for effects of employee gender and CWB performance on the combination of the two dependent variables (performance evaluations and reward recommendations). The Wilks' Lambda test statistic was not significant for either employee gender ( $\Lambda = 0.99$ ,  $F(1, 128) = 0.53$ ,  $p > .05$ ), or the employee gender x CWB performance interaction ( $\Lambda = 0.99$ ,  $F(4, 256) = 0.36$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However, the test statistic was significant for CWB performance ( $\Lambda = 0.86$ ,  $F(4, 256) = 5.01$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Because employee gender had neither a main or interactive effect on the two dependent variables, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Dependent Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Performance Evaluation	3.95	1.14	(.84)					
2. Reward Recommendation	3.25	1.26	.75*	(.86)				
3. Competence	5.15	1.11	.50*	.45*	(.86)			
4. Interpersonal Incivility	1.96	0.79	-.09	.04	-.07	(.80)		
5. Gender Ideal	4.71	1.06	.18*	.23**	.18*	.03	(.30)	
6. Perceived Aggressiveness	2.00	1.32	-.30**	-.23**	-.21*	.62**	.04	(.39)

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . Values along the diagonal are reliability scores for that scale.

In spite of the lack of support for the first hypothesis, additional univariate ANOVAs were conducted on each dependent variable separately in order to determine the nature of the multivariate main effect of performance. A 2 x 3 ANOVA on the performance evaluation variable resulted in an identical pattern of results, such that employee gender did not have a significant main effect ( $F(1, 129) = 1.04, p > .05$ ) or interaction effect ( $F(2, 129) = 0.53, p > .05$ ). However, CWB performance still had a significant main effect ( $F(2, 129) = 8.00, p < .05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests for the performance conditions revealed that the control groups had higher ratings of performance evaluation than either of the two CWB performance groups (leave, aggress; see Table 2). A 2 x 3 ANOVA on the reward recommendation variable also exhibited an identical pattern of results, such that employee gender did not have a significant main effect ( $F(1, 129) = 0.43, p > .05$ ) or interaction effect ( $F(2, 129) = 0.53, p > .05$ ). However, CWB performance again had a significant main effect ( $F(2, 129) = 9.53, p < .05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests for the performance conditions revealed that the control groups had higher ratings of reward recommendations than either of the two CWB performance groups (leave, aggress; see Table 2).

**Attribute ratings.** The attributes of competence and interpersonal incivility were included in the study in order to act as covariates in the analyses. Assuming that employee gender had had an effect, these variables would have subsequently been included as covariates in order to remove the possibility that any employee gender effects were rooted in differences in perceived competence or interpersonal incivility. However, since employee gender had neither main nor interactive effects on the main dependent variables, this step was unnecessary. However, it is still important to note what effects

the independent variables might have had on these attribute ratings. To this end, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to test for effects of employee gender and CWB performance on the combination of the two attribute ratings (competence and interpersonal incivility). The Wilks' Lambda test statistic was not significant for either employee gender ( $\Lambda = 0.99$ ,  $F(2, 128) = 0.63$ ,  $p > .05$ ), or the employee gender x CWB performance interaction ( $\Lambda = 0.98$ ,  $F(4, 256) = 0.66$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However, the test statistic was significant for CWB performance ( $\Lambda = 0.83$ ,  $F(4, 256) = 6.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Additional univariate ANOVAs were conducted on each attribute variable separately in order to determine the nature of the multivariate main effect of performance. A 2 x 3 ANOVA on the competence variable resulted in the same pattern described above, such that employee gender did not have a significant main effect ( $F(1, 129) = 0.87$ ,  $p > .05$ ) or interaction effect ( $F(2, 129) = 0.06$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However, CWB performance still had a significant main effect ( $F(2, 129) = 6.06$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests for the performance conditions revealed that the control groups had higher ratings of competence than either of the two CWB performance groups (leave, aggress; see Table 2). A 2 x 3 ANOVA on the interpersonal incivility variable resulted in a similar pattern of results, such that employee gender did not have a significant main effect ( $F(1, 129) = 0.42$ ,  $p > .05$ ) or interaction effect ( $F(2, 129) = 1.28$ ,  $p > .05$ ). However, CWB performance again had a significant main effect ( $F(2, 129) = 6.78$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests for the performance conditions revealed that the aggress groups had higher ratings of interpersonal incivility than either the control groups or the leave groups (see Table 2).

**Gender ideal match.** The second hypothesis was that male and female employees would be rated as fitting more to the ideals of their gender depending on the type of CWB that they engage in. In order to test this, a 2 x 3 ANOVA was performed on the gender ideal variable. There were no significant main effects for employee gender ( $F(1, 129) = 1.54, p > .05$ ) or CWB performance ( $F(2, 129) = 1.28, p > .05$ ). However, the interaction effect was significant ( $F(2, 129) = 5.67, p < .05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests to clarify the nature of the interaction revealed that the males who chose to leave the conflict situation were rated as conforming less to their gender ideal compared to the other conditions, and that the females in the control group were rated as conforming more to their gender ideal compared to the other conditions. None of the other four conditions differed from each other (see Table 2). Thus, although Hypothesis 2 was not supported, this is an interesting pattern of results that will be addressed further in the discussion.

**Perceived aggressiveness.** In order to test the shifting standards hypothesis that males who aggressed would be perceived as less aggressive than females who aggressed, a *t*-test was conducted to compare the perceived aggressiveness scores between male and female employees in the aggress conditions. The test showed that there was no significant difference in perceived aggressiveness between male and female employees who aggressed ( $t(43) = 0.80, p > .05$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Additionally, a 2 x 3 ANOVA was performed on the perceived aggressiveness variable to examine any larger effects that the independent variables might have had on perceived aggressiveness. These analyses resulted in a similar pattern of results as the main dependent and attribute variables, such that employee gender did not have a significant main effect ( $F(1, 129) = 2.34, p > .05$ ) or interaction effect ( $F(2, 129) = 0.10, p > .05$ ).

However, CWB performance again had a significant main effect ( $F(2, 129) = 36.32, p < .05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests for the performance conditions revealed unsurprisingly that the aggress groups had higher ratings of perceived aggressiveness than either the control groups or the leave groups (see Table 2).

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables by Condition

Condition		Performance Evaluation			Reward Recommendation		Competence	
Employee Gender	CWB Performance	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	Control	23	4.35 <sub>a</sub>	1.11	3.72 <sub>a</sub>	1.18	5.52 <sub>a</sub>	0.97
	Leave	24	3.53 <sub>b</sub>	0.55	2.78 <sub>b</sub>	0.77	4.73 <sub>b</sub>	0.97
	Aggress	22	3.71 <sub>b</sub>	0.90	3.06 <sub>b</sub>	1.12	4.94 <sub>b</sub>	1.05
Female	Control	22	4.62 <sub>a</sub>	1.17	4.05 <sub>a</sub>	1.36	5.68 <sub>a</sub>	0.92
	Leave	21	3.90 <sub>b</sub>	1.27	3.02 <sub>b</sub>	1.42	4.99 <sub>b</sub>	1.29
	Aggress	23	3.63 <sub>b</sub>	1.36	2.90 <sub>b</sub>	1.23	5.04 <sub>b</sub>	1.23

Condition		Interpersonal Incivility			Gender Ideal		Perceived Aggressiveness	
Employee Gender	CWB Performance	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	Control	23	1.78 <sub>a</sub>	0.78	4.70 <sub>a</sub>	1.09	1.30 <sub>a</sub>	0.68
	Leave	24	2.00 <sub>a</sub>	0.88	4.19 <sub>b</sub>	1.02	1.86 <sub>a</sub>	1.00
	Aggress	22	2.20 <sub>b</sub>	0.83	4.94 <sub>a</sub>	1.11	3.26 <sub>b</sub>	1.57
Female	Control	22	1.68 <sub>a</sub>	0.49	5.14 <sub>c</sub>	0.88	1.14 <sub>a</sub>	0.35
	Leave	21	1.67 <sub>a</sub>	0.59	5.00 <sub>a</sub>	1.03	1.54 <sub>a</sub>	0.87
	Aggress	23	2.38 <sub>b</sub>	0.88	4.35 <sub>a</sub>	0.98	2.90 <sub>b</sub>	1.44

*Note.* Higher means indicate higher scores on each of the study variables. Ratings were done on 7-point Likert scales. Means within a column with different subscripts differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

## **Chapter Four**

### **Discussion**

This study attempted primarily to show that the gender of an employee would influence that employee's performance ratings. Specifically, it was hypothesized that male employees would be rated better than female employees when both committed a physically aggressive act at work, due to the stereotype that males are generally more aggressive than women. Thus, this sort of behavior would be seen as more "typical" of men, and their ratings would likewise suffer less from performing these behaviors. However, the results did not support this hypothesis. The gender of the employee did not have any effect on the performance evaluation or reward recommendation ratings, either by itself or through an interaction with the level of CWB. There were two CWB conditions in addition to the control condition: one in which the employee abruptly left work after being criticized by a coworker, and one in which the employee shoved the coworker in response to the (identical) criticism. There was a main effect for the CWB conditions, such that the employees in the two CWB conditions received lower ratings on the performance variables than the employees in the control condition, although the two CWB conditions were not significantly different from each other. This indicates that the participants in these conditions were taking the additional information into account when making their performance ratings, and that the manipulations between conditions did

have some effect on the performance ratings, such that employees who performed more CWB were rated lower on the performance variables.

However, the main manipulation that was hypothesized to have an effect but did not was employee gender. There are several reasons why this could have happened in this study. Although stereotypes have been found to have an effect in studies of task (e.g. Hielman & Wallen, 2010) and citizenship (e.g. Heilman & Chen, 2005) performance, it could be the case that stereotypes do not have an effect where negative work behaviors are concerned, such that employees are penalized equally regardless of their gender. However, this is unlikely, as Felson and Feld (2009) found significant gender differences in regard to how participants interpreted aggressive behavior coming from men compared to that coming from women, showing that stereotypes can indeed influence perceptions of negative behavior. It is more likely that the aggressive manipulation was not strong enough to produce the effect. In the descriptions of the incident in the aggress condition, the employee merely shoved the coworker who made the disparaging remark. However, stereotypes regarding men and physical aggression are more often associated with acts such as hitting or punching, and studies in which physical aggression was examined as a tool to regain perceived manhood use these sorts of stronger actions rather than shoving (e.g. Bosson et al., 2009). Thus, the hypothesized gender effects might require stronger aggressive actions in order to manifest than the actions described in this study.

The second hypothesis was that the fictional employees would be perceived as behaving more in accordance with the ideal for their gender based on which condition was being presented. Specifically, the male employees in the aggress condition should have been perceived as more masculine, and the female employees in the leave condition

should have been perceived as more feminine. However, this hypothesis was not supported. The men in the aggress condition were judged as more masculine than the other male conditions, and the women in the aggress condition were judged as less feminine than the other female conditions, but these differences were not significant. The only significant differences were that the male employees who chose to leave were rated lower on the gender ideal variable while the female employees in the control condition were rated higher on the gender ideal variable. Thus, the males who left were judged to be less masculine, and the females in the control condition were judged to be more feminine. In the first case, the fact that the male employees in the leave condition chose to leave rather than stay and confront an insulting coworker could have been seen as the man not acting in a masculine fashion, since the stereotypical response would be for him to get angry and confront the coworker in some way. Thus, avoiding the situation completely is seen as reflecting poorly on these employees' masculinity.

The second case is not as straightforward to interpret. In the control condition, the employees were presented as performing well, with the exception of a couple of late arrivals to work, an issue which had improved in the period before the evaluations were supposedly taking place. It is unclear why female employees in this condition should be rated as higher on gender ideal than any of the other conditions. The implication is that these women were judged as more feminine than women who performed additional CWBs at work (and also as conforming more to their gender ideal than any of the male employees). Perhaps because women are expected to be more cooperative and a team player than men (e.g. Heilman & Chen, 2005), the women who inconvenienced their

coworkers by either leaving in the middle of their shift or by shoving one of them were judged as conforming less to their gender ideal.

The final hypothesis was that the men in the aggress condition would be judged as less aggressive than the women in the aggress condition, because people hold different standards for this behavior due to the stereotype regarding male aggressiveness. However, this hypothesis was also not supported. While the participants did rate the employees in the aggress conditions as more aggressive than the other conditions, there was no significant difference in aggressiveness ratings between the male and female employees in the aggress conditions (although the mean for the male aggress condition was somewhat higher, counter to the shifting standards hypothesis). These results indicate that the aggress manipulation worked as intended. Given that the proponents of the shifting standards model have noted problems with detecting these effects while using subjective scales like the ones used here (Biernat & Manis, 1994; Kobrynowicz & Biernat, 1997), it is perhaps unsurprising that these effects failed to manifest in this study.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to be noted in this study. The first is that the participants rating the performance were college undergraduates, and are likely to have not had much experience rating other's work performance. However, previous studies have had success using student participants for these types of tasks (e.g. Heilman & Chen, 2005), so this may not be an issue of great concern. Also, the data were collected at the end of the last day of class for the semester, so it is possible that students were not devoting their full attention to the details of the scenarios presented in the materials. This could be an explanation for the low rate of agreement found in the manipulation checks,

although the fact that the analyses performed with the problematic participants (in terms of not noting the proper condition) removed resulted in an identical pattern of results seems to alleviate this concern. In addition, the reliabilities for a couple of the scales were relatively low, specifically for the interpersonal incivility and gender ideal scales. Since the interpersonal incivility was included for use as a covariate and this analysis proved unnecessary, this does not have a significant impact on the results. However, the gender ideal reliability is worrisome, particularly because the items in the scale were created for this study. In spite of the low reliability, this variable was the only one to show differential gender effects. These results should perhaps be interpreted with caution given the psychometric issues with the scale.

### **Future Research**

There are several avenues for future research that can be drawn from the limitations noted in this study. As suggested above, it is unlikely that stereotypes can have effects on judgments of some aspects of job performance and not others, so this topic warrants further study before any definitive conclusions should be drawn about the lack of influence of stereotypes on interpreting negative work behavior. As previously mentioned, using a stronger aggression manipulation might be necessary to elucidate the stereotype effect. Also, the shifting standards effect might be more pronounced if objective scales are used to measure the aggressiveness of the employees. Finally, a more reliable gender ideal scale should be created for use in future studies of this nature.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to expand previous research on the influence of stereotypes in interpreting task and citizenship performance into the domain of

counterproductive work behavior. Although the hypotheses of the study were not supported, there are still possible avenues for further research that might prove fruitful in demonstrating this effect. Further studies on this topic should focus on strengthening the experimental manipulations, and improving the scales used to measure the dependent variables.

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