

Title: Men and Women at Work: Emotional Display Norms in Organizational Settings

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Abstract (50 words; Currently: 50)

The current study examines display rules across different workplace targets and evaluates strategies across target gender and age for male and female employees. Females are more expressive when interacting with coworkers and subordinates; however male participants were more likely to have a lower expressivity score for females and older targets.

Supporting Summary (500 words; Currently: 499)

Display rules are an important and often overlooked aspect of emotional labour, a process which occurs when *how* we regulate and display our emotion is based on rules created by the organization. Research has examined how employees may choose to display their emotion across different workplace targets (i.e., customer, coworker, subordinate, supervisor). However, demographic aspects of the target may also influence the display rules that dictate emotional displays within the workplace. For example, gender stereotypes imply that female employees experience emotions more frequently and also have a lower capacity for controlling emotional expression (Fabes & Martin, 1991; Shields, 1987, 2000). In contrast, men are more likely to constrain their emotional expressivity in a process called “restrictive emotionality” (Jansz, 2000).

Furthermore, the appropriateness of emotional displays in the workplace may also be influenced by the power dynamics within an interaction. Researchers found that gender and age are key status characteristics within the workplace. Studies show that men and older workers tend to possess greater job authority than women and younger workers (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Smith, 2002) and are also considered more legitimate holders of authority in hierarchical settings (Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Because they possess

the characteristics of being older and/or male, their deployment of authority is perceived as being more valid and acceptable. Consequently, researchers proposed that individuals in positions of high authority (i.e., men and older adults) should be exposed to fewer interpersonal conflicts and negative emotional displays within the workplace (Schieman & Reid, 2008). Additionally, it is thought that men with power enjoy greater freedom to engage in potentially confrontational exchanges with others than individuals who occupy less powerful organizational positions (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986).

The current study therefore examines not only display rules across different workplace specific targets (each with varying levels of power), but also evaluates different strategies across target gender and age for both male and female employees. It was predicted that 1) males would be less expressive in general than females in the workplace and 2) female employees would display greater expressivity than males, especially in situations where they occupy a position that holds greater or equal power (i.e., when interacting with subordinates or coworkers).

Overall, 215 employed students (50% female, average age of 23) completed the Display Rule Assessment Inventory (Matsumoto, Yoo, Hirayama, & Petrova, 2005), which was adapted for the workplace. A groups by trials ANOVA was performed with target power (customer, coworker, subordinate, supervisor), target gender (male, female), and target age (30-40s, 50-60s) as within subject factors and gender of the participant (male, female) as the between subjects factor on the dependent variable of expressivity of anger. Results revealed that females are more expressive when interacting with coworkers and subordinates, as compared to males. Further, it was found that for females, expressivity does not change across target gender and age, however male participants were more likely to have a lower expressivity score for both females and older targets. Implications of research findings are discussed.

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