

# Display of Anger at Workplace: Comparative Study between Men and Women Leaders



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**G. Ramasundaram**

PSG Institute of Management Studies  
(ramasundaram@gmail.com)

**B. Aiswarya**

Loyola College  
(aiswarya.b@liba.edu)

*Leader follower behaviour has always been a subject of interest. Leader behaviour and its influence on the follower's perception has been proposed in this article. Leader who demonstrates emotions appropriately are argued to be perceived by followers as effective leader (Conger & Kanungo, 1987,1994, 1998; House et al, 1991). The emotional display of leaders specifically negative emotional expression namely anger by the leader and its direct consequence on the follower evaluation of the leader's effectiveness is explored in the study. In addition, an outcome of the study is, how does it really vary depending upon the gender of the leader. The difference in the perception of employees on the effectiveness of the leader when he/she displays negative emotion is the outcome of the study. The research was conducted among the IT employees on their leaders. Tested statements were used to study the anger emotion and effectiveness of leaders. The perception of subordinate employees was collected using questionnaire. Statistical tools were applied to study the outcome and differentiate the male and female leaders. It has been demonstrated that male leaders were effective when displaying emotional anger and considered less effective by women leaders.*

**Keywords:** Anger, Emotional Display, Women, Men, Leadership, Effectiveness

## 1. Introduction

Leaders use emotion appropriately to communicate and demonstrate effectiveness in performance are better known to perform at a higher level (Goleman, 1998). They may also express emotions to make the followers and subordinates feel the reality of any situation. However, the image of the leaders when they express anger is generally believed to make the employees perform better. There is a little research done to understand the impact of the expressions of anger on the effectiveness of the leaders as perceived by the subordinates. This paper attempts to explore the relationship between the emotional display of anger at workplace by the leaders and how it is being perceived by the employees on performance effectiveness.

The purpose of this study is to extend our knowledge of leadership and emotional display by looking specifically at the consequences of negative emotional expressions of leaders specifically anger.

Leaders experience anger at work due to several reasons. (Fitness, 2000; Glomb & Hulin, 1997). This can be the case when followers perform poorly (Fitness, 2000), obstruct leaders' goals by missing important deadlines (Clare & Ortony, 1991), or behave offensively by ignoring leaders' instructions (Solomon, 1983). However, whatever might be the cause of the anger, if the leader is not able to handle professionally that only reflects upon the performance and leadership effectiveness.

When leaders express their anger toward followers in these situations, their anger expressions can vary widely, from slight irritation to intense rage (Glomb, 2002). The more intensely leaders express their anger toward followers, the more followers can be expected to judge the effectiveness of the leaders (Gibson & Callister, 2010).

Leadership is, essentially, a process of social influence (Yukl, 2012). As anger occurs in social situations in which one considers the display of emotions is a characteristic of the personality of the leader that determines his work effectiveness.

Empirical research has proved that anger displays are likely to provoke deviant reactions and impair workplace relationships (Geddes & Stickney, 2011; Gibson, Schweitzer, Callister, & Gray, 2009). Recently, however, research has started to question the assumption that anger displays lead only to detrimental consequences for leaders (Gibson & Callister, 2010). In contrast, it has been suggested that anger displays may also lead to followers' perception on the effectiveness of the leadership behavior (Lindebaum, Jordan, & Morris, 2016).

Earlier research has focused on the outcomes of anger display of leaders (Geddes & Callister, 2007; Lindebaum et al., 2016), in this article we attempt to study the impact on leadership effectiveness.

Based on emotions (Keltner & Kring, 1998; Van Kleef, 2009), we assume there might be some trigger that the anger display could have on the followers. That has been studied to find out the perception of leader effectiveness (Friedman, Anderson, Brett, Olekalns, Goates, & Lisco, 2004). So far it was an assumption that leader anger is to only increase the follower's performance, research proves that leadership effectiveness is follower centric and is directed from the bottom up.

With this background, this paper contributes to the outcome of anger has an emotional display of the leader have on the perception of followers on the leader effectiveness. (Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, Van Knippenberg, Van Knippenberg, & Damen, 2009; Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, & Van Knippenberg, 2010). We introduce the followers' responses for the anger

displays of leader on the effectiveness of leadership and thus integrate both perspectives resulting behavioral reactions (Geddes & Callister, 2007; Gibson & Callister, 2010).

How is a leader perceived when he expresses anger as an emotion by his followers.?

Does the perception vary depending upon the gender of the leaders? An effort is made to study the impact of anger display of men and women leaders at a higher level in organizations. Through this examination, the effect of expression on the perception of effectiveness could be isolated for the study.

### **Leader traits and Behaviors Related to Emotional Expression**

Leadership traits and skill was originally thought to be inherent. it was initially thought to be a talent inborn. (Bass, 1990). Traits like intelligence, self-confidence, integrity were associated with effective leaders (Kenny and Zaccaro, 1983). These attributes question the leadership traits to be effective (Kenny and Zaccaro, 1983). Certain traits like emotional balance, emotional intelligence is related to emotions of leaders (Bass, 1990). These expressions therefore impact the perceptions of followers on the leadership effectiveness. The focus of this research paper is on the display of anger as an emotion by the leaders. Though it is negative emotion it has been proved that the followers frame perceptions on the effectiveness of leaders who display anger. Sometimes negative emotions are also having positive outcomes, like anger against the outside group develops ingroup cohesion (Conger and Kanungo, 1994).

The theory-based concept underlies that the emotional expression of leaders is contagious (Hatfield et al., 1994). The ways could be through cognitive process, (Davis, 1996). conditioned process and feedback (Arnold, 1970; Izard, 1977; Schachter, 1970). Followers associate emotions expressed by leaders as desirable or undesirable for leaders. For instance, when a leader express sadness he/she may be perceived as poor self-confidence (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991). Therefore, emotions act as indicators of traits of leader's behavior (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987, 1989, 1990; Sutton, 1991; Sutton and Rafaeli, 1988).

For instance, anger is associated with a string and confident leadership (Bass, 1990). At the same time anger is perceived as poor self-control and linked with leadership effectiveness (Goleman (1998). This specific consequence of anger as a negative emotion on evaluation of leadership effectiveness is explored in this study.

### **Emotional Displays by Male and Female Leaders**

A lot of research has proved the emotions of leaders shape the perceptions of followers on their leadership effectiveness (Gooty et al., 2010; Humphrey, 2002). Various other emotions are happiness, sadness etc. (Gaddis, Connelly, & Mumford, 2004; Madera & Smith, 2009; Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2002; Tiedens, 2001).

Anger is an active emotion that showcases status, and confidence (Lewis, 2000; Tiedens, 2001). But there is also a possibility that an angry person is emotionally unstable (Gibson, Schweitzer, Callister, & Gray, 2009). There are researches available that proved that how the anger is perceived depending upon the gender of the leader who displays. Particularly women who displays emotion are perceived to be less favorable in effectiveness than a woman who displays no emotion. When compared to men, they do not face this negative consequence when voicing anger (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Lewis, 2000). In a similar context, in a group, men have an increasing social influence when expressing anger than women here it diminishes.

Some studies have shown that there is no effect on the effectiveness that depend on the gender (Zawadzki, Warner, & Shields, 2013). Studies have shown that expression of anger focus on the harmful effects, and some other emphasize on the functional and positive outcome of anger (Geddes & Callister, 2007). Thus, anger as an emotion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon encompassing both positive and negative aspects (Gibson & Callister, 2010).

Anger is triggered from various sources either from individual itself or the acts of other individuals (Batson et al., 2007). Although anger is studied from different dimensions, anger as an emotional expression and its relevance with behavior and its perceived notion to frame the leadership effectiveness is an area to be closed in this study (Lim & Cortina, 2005). Several other emotions have also been explored in the research like sadness which is a passive emotion. This has been proved as weakness and uncertainty (Madera & Smith, 2009). s some studies show that anger displays the desire to help followers (Gummerum, Van Dillen, Van Dijk, & Lopez-P erez, 2016; van Doorn, Zeelenberg, Breugelmans, Berger, & Okimoto, 2018; Vitaglione & Barnett, 2003).

## **2. Research Methodology**

The respondents identified were employees from a variety of organizations who are in the middle level management. The data were collected using questionnaires. The questionnaire contains a set of questions to measure the emotional display of anger by the leaders and the perceptions of employees on the effectiveness of leaders. 598 responses were received from the total 1000 circulated. The demographic profile of the respondents and the gender of the leader whom they are referring to were also included in the questionnaire. Fatot analysis was administered to test the reliability of the statements.

**Hypothesis a.** Female leaders who display anger will be rated as less effective than females who display no emotion

**Hypothesis b.** Male leaders who display anger (gender endorsed emotion) will be rated as less effective than male leaders who display no emotion.

The statements identified studying effectiveness

1. Inspires a shared vision and establishes standards that help the organization achieve its next stage of development.
2. Fosters unity, collaboration, and ownership, and recognizes individual and team contributions.
3. Exercises power effectively and empowers others to act.
4. Exerts influence outside of the organization to set the right context for the organization.

5. Overall, how effective is the leadership performance of the person you are rating?

**Anger Statements**

1. My boss always displays anger when meeting followers
2. My boss gets irritated at the slightest deviant behavior
3. My boss thinks that anger is the quality of effective leaders
4. My leader uses anger appropriately to instill work performance from the followers.
5. My boss sometimes becomes emotionally unstable when displaying anger.

**Research Analysis**

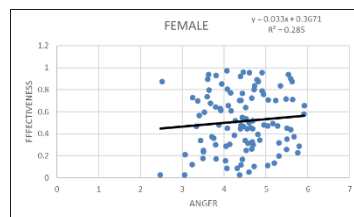
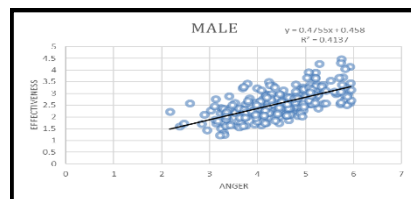
KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.831
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1567.462
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

The KMO test for the sample adequacy shows 83.1 percent which is more than the required standard. The obtained sample for the study is sufficient to prove the reliability of the outcome of the study.

Rotated Component Matrix			
	Component		Variance explained
	1	2	
Anger 1	.635		
Anger 2	.713		36.821
Anger 3	.707		
Anger 4	.668		
Anger 5	.752		
Effectiveness 1		.669	
Effectiveness 2		.804	34.682
Effectiveness 3		.681	
Effectiveness 4		.668	
Effectiveness 5		.537	

The tested statements of the study were subjected to factor analysis. The statements fall into two categories as anger and effectiveness. The above table shows high correlation among the statements with the variance explained.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	t- value	Sig
Anger	Female	258	2.8543	3.916	0.000
	Male	340	2.4465		
Effectiveness	Female	258	3.3984	-4.613	0.000
	Male	340	3.6671		



T-test was administered among the sample with two clusters as male leaders and female leaders. Women display anger more frequently when compared to men. And women are perceived to be less effective by their followers when they display anger compared with men

The above graphs show the regression line, the respondents have clearly fallen in the increasing mode for effectiveness of leaders when he is displaying anger at the workplace. Whereas for female the regression line is not increasing steeply on effectiveness. The square value is high for men than women. This study proves that the emotional display of anger by men is perceived by followers as more effective leadership rather than the same level of anger displayed by women at the workplace.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

The results of this study show that the emotional display of anger by the leader has a significant effect on the leader effectiveness as perceived by the followers. In addition, an additional effect is made depending on the leader's gender.

Women leaders were rated lower on leader effectiveness when expressing anger versus no emotion. However, men were rated slightly higher on leader effectiveness when expressing anger or no emotion.

Further studies could be on various other emotional displays like integrity, self-confidence, and other competencies of leaders at workplace. One possibility may be through influencing subordinate perceptions of important leader traits and qualities. The expectations are assertiveness of male leader is more effective when expressing anger rather than females. This could be studied for further scope.

The research could diversify into the different levels of leaders not just stop with the topmost leaders. The other dimension may be the relationship of the leader with the subordinates. Does anger display influence the well-known subordinates and unknown subordinates.

In this study, followers clearly observed negative emotions, but when given a variety of emotions to choose from, sometimes did not choose anger or sadness as the emotion they observed. In a more qualitative study or field experiment, participants could more clearly describe the emotion expressed by the leader, and why they perceived this expression to interpret various outcomes.

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