
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Expressions of Anger in Israeli Workplaces:**

**The Special Place of Customer Interactions**

**Shy Ravid**
Technion-Israel Institute of Technology Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Management Haifa 32000, ISRAEL Tel.: +972-4-8292021
_E-mail: shyravid@tx.technion.ac.il_

**Anat Rafaeli**
Technion-Israel Institute of Technology Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Management Haifa 32000, ISRAEL Tel.: +972-4-8294421 Fax: +972-4-8295688
_E-mail: anatr@ie.technion.ac.il_

**Alicia Grandey**
Department of Psychology Pennsylvania State University University Park, PA 16802
Tel.: 814-863-1867 Email: aag6@psu.edu
Expressions of Anger in Israeli Workplaces:
The Special Place of Customer Interactions

Abstract
We examine norms regarding displays of anger in interactions with different target persons in Israeli organizations. Israeli university students who had been employed in the last year were asked about displaying anger to managers, subordinates, coworkers, customers and customer service representatives. For comparison, data about displays of another negative emotion – fear – were also collected. Our predictions – that anger expression is influenced by the power of the target person – were supported. There was stronger agreement that anger should be suppressed with managers than with coworkers and subordinates. Agreement that anger should be suppressed was also stronger regarding displays toward customers than toward coworkers, subordinates and managers. Norms of suppressing anger were particularly strong for displays toward customers, and far stronger than the parallel of customers’ displays toward customer service representatives. These finding are suggested to imply the penetration of global customer service norms to the Israeli economy.
Introduction

Socially learned norms inform individuals whether and how to express emotions in social interactions (Ekman, 1972; Ekman & Oster, 1979). These norms, sometimes referred to as "display rules", vary by the type of emotion, as well as to whom and when the emotion is felt (Ekman, 1993, p. 384; Matsumoto, Takeuchi, Andayani, Kouznetsova & Krupp, 1998; Matsumoto, Yoo, Hirayama & Petrova, 2005). Norms are also culture-specific, since they are learned in the early stages of childhood socialization (Buss & Kiel, 2004; Saarni, 1979). Particularly important are norms about the expression or control of felt anger, because of the possible negative social implications of anger expressions (Saarni & von Salisch, 1993; Underwood, 1997; von Salisch & Vogelgesang, 2005).

Display rules are also relevant to organizational interactions (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; 1989), since norms for emotion displays are connected to organizational values and goals (Martin, Knopoff & Beckman, 1998; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Both in organizations and at the culture level, not all participants necessarily agree about emotion display rules, suggesting a need to talk about norm strength, or “the degree to which a norm is widely shared (consensus) and deeply internalized (potency) among a given aggregate of people” (cf. Jackson, 1965, cited in Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993: 91).

Research on organizational emotion rules has focused on the effects and
consequences of expectations regarding displayed emotion in work roles (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Elfenbein, 2008; Grandey & Brauburger, 2002; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Van Maanen, 1992; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989) and has presented display rules as a function of societal norms, occupational norms, and organizational norms (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). A separate but complementary stream considers emotion displays as elements of a culture (Kupperbusch et al., 1999). This line of work attempts to identify explanations for cultural differences and similarities in emotional displays (Ekman, 1972; Friesen, 1972; Matsumoto, 1993; Matsumoto, Yoo, & Fontaine, 2008; Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998).

The present paper, consistent with the focus of this special issue, reports on emotion display rules in the unique culture of Israel, with a further special focus on anger display rules. Below, we first review the merit of a focus on the display rules regarding the specific emotion of anger. We then describe the pertinence of hierarchical power structures in organizations to norms of anger expression, and connect the relative power of different organizational target persons with anger display rules. In an empirical study we then compare the perceptions of Israeli college students who had recent or current employment experience regarding anger display rules toward different organizational target persons. Our survey asked participants to indicate whether they felt they should express or suppress anger in interactions with different target persons in the work context, where the target persons varied in the status they held in the organizational setting. Our analysis of these data identifies similarities and differences in norms regarding anger expressions to target persons of
different work status in Israel.

**Emotion Display Rules and Specific Emotions**

The display of emotion in the workplace follows organizational display rules that are manipulated through organizational selection, socialization and control processes (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; 1989). Thus, emotion display in organizations is subject to simultaneous and potentially competing effects of social-cultural norms and organizational norms (Rafaeli & Sutton; 1987; 1989). In fact, display rules tend to be stronger in work contexts than in general social or home interactions (Bongard & al'Absi, 2003; Lively & Powell, 2006).

Importantly, little is known about how displays of specific emotions vary between specific people and specific times. Presumably, people adjust their emotion displays to the context, or as Ekman (1972) put it, they determine *which* emotions may be displayed *when* and to *whom*. But research on organizational display rules has not specifically explored displays of discrete emotions in the workplace, instead referring to generally “negative” or “positive” emotions (Barsade, Brief & Spataro, 2003; Brief & Weiss, 2002). Anger is a specific negative emotion that is known to occur in the workplace (Fitness, 2000; Glomb, 2002; Grandey et al., 2002) and that may involve a tendency to harm or strike out at others. Anger display rules are likely to differ from display rules for other emotions; anger expression is known to be bounded by thresholds of legitimate expression (Geddes & Callister, 2007), probably because of the potential harm that anger expressions can have on relationships (Averill, 1982).

An analysis of anger cannot be complete without some comparison to another discrete negative emotion. As a frame of comparison we therefore examine display rules
for fear. Fear is similar to anger in having a high arousal response with unpleasant associations and causes. However, anger implies social stratification more than fear (Tiedens, 2001), and angry agents stand out as powerful while fearful agents are viewed as weak (Hess, Blairy & Kleck, 2000; Marsh, Adams & Kleck, 2005). From an employment perspective, where one may want to show dominance and competence, expressing both fear and anger may result in negative outcomes, but anger expressions create power differences, while fear expressions convey weakness. Therefore, appearing anxious and incompetent may be less acceptable in organizational settings than expressing the negative yet dominant emotion of anger, consistent with Tiedens's (2001) work.

In fact, some research has suggested that avoiding the appearance of weakness is central to Israeli identity (Roniger & Feige, 1993). Seeming weak is often referred to as being a “freier” (a huge insult, meaning a "sucker" in Hebrew slang); as Roniger and Feige (1993) note, Israelis invest heavily in not looking like a “freier”. Thus, it can be predicted:

Hypothesis 1: Stronger norms will dictate suppressing displays of fear than displays of anger, regardless of the person to whom the emotion is expressed.

Hypothesis 1 distinguishes between displays of fear and anger, but does not differentiate between the targets to whom the emotion is expressed. However, expressions of anger are likely to be considered more appropriate when they are directed by a high-status group member toward a low-status member (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Geddes & Callister, 2007) – for instance, by supervisors wishing to
motivate or discipline lower-status employees (Glomb & Hulin, 1997). Next, we suggest that the power of the target is likely to determine the extent to which expressing anger is viewed as legitimate.

**Anger Displays toward Different Organizational Target Persons**

Research on emotion displays in organizations has focused primarily on displays required from customer service representatives in their interactions with customers (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003; Grandey, Dickter & Sin 2004; Grandey, Fisk & Steiner, 2005; Hochschild, 1983). But some research suggests that display norms govern emotion displays in various organizational interactions, not only those between customer service providers and customers. A second goal of this effort, therefore, is to understand whether in Israel there is a difference between display rules governing interactions toward customers versus other work targets.

We begin the analysis of anger display rules toward different targets by examining expressions of anger toward managers. Managers are critical to the hierarchical foundation of organizations (Astley & Sachdeva, 1984; Brass, 1984; Pfeffer, 1981; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). Managers typically have more power than their subordinates, which means that they control key resources such as supplies, information, and pay (Pfeffer, 1981; Ulrich & Barney, 1984). In comparison, coworkers generally hold equivalent organizational power (French & Raven, 1959). Emotional expressions are related to social power or status (Allan & Gilbert, 2002; Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Hecht & LaFrance, 1998; Keltner, Gruenfeld & Anderson, 2003; Tiedens, 2000), and people with higher power are generally more at liberty to express their anger as a way to
assert their rank, authority, and control (Allan & Gilbert, 2002: 552; Gibson & Schroeder, 2002: 198; Hochschild, 1983; Scott, 1990). Thus, it can be predicted that expressing anger will be perceived as more acceptable toward a lower-power individual than toward a higher-power individual (e.g., from a supervisor rather than toward a supervisor). Many authors have provided evidence to support this status-driven prediction about anger display rules or actual expressions, in the workplace as well as other settings (Allan & Gilbert, 2002; Grandey et al., 2002; Gross & John, 2003; Keltner et al., 2003; Lively & Powell, 2006; Pearson & Porath, 2005; Ridgeway & Johnson, 1990; Spratlen, 1995; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000; Tiedens, 2001; but note that Gibson’s 1997 findings seem to challenge this prediction).

These dynamics may be overpowered by the low power distance that Israel is known to hold (Hofstede, 1991; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). A cultural value of low power distance suggests that cultural norms would not distinguish between managers and other targets in terms of anger expression. However, since the work culture in Israel has internalized many global values (e.g., Frenkel, 2008; Shokef & Erez, 2006), we similarly expect managers in Israel to be perceived as high-power targets, and therefore expect to find norms of anger suppression with managers more than with other targets.

Hypothesis 2: Norms dictating suppression of anger will be stronger in interactions with managers than in interactions with other organizational members.

Anger Display Rules: Employees to Customers

Customers are rarely compared to organizational members in organizational
research, but the heavy focus on customer service in research on emotion display rules demands an inclusion of customers in analyses of organizational emotion display rules. In Israel as elsewhere customers can be critical for employees’ rewards and punishments (e.g., tips and complaints). Customers evaluate employees in customer service follow-ups (Bitner, Booms & Tetreault 1990), and such ratings may be used in deciding on promotions or raises (Fuller & Smith, 1996). Customers are also often a source of commissions or sales bonuses in Israel as elsewhere (Tidd & Lockard, 1978). As such, customers may be viewed as having power over employees’ resources. However, the North American mantra “the customer is always right” (Harris & Reynolds, 2003: 145) may be less prevalent in Israel. It is therefore unclear how employees in Israel would feel about expressing their felt negative emotions to customers.

If Israel has accepted North American customer service norms, whereby customers are considered higher in power than employees, then Israelis should also have adopted norms regarding suppression of anger toward customers. In fact, we might expect norms vis-à-vis customers to be similar to those vis-à-vis the other high-status target, managers. Such norms would follow the US “service with a smile” premise where any negative emotion toward customers should be suppressed (Fisk & Grandey, 2003; Mattila, Grandey, & Fisk, 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). Very limited work has examined Israel’s customer service culture, and several of the few existing studies from over 15 years ago suggested that customer service employees were indeed willing to express negative emotions toward customers (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1990, and Rafaeli, 1989). We suggest that since that work was conducted, customer service norms have penetrated Israel's economy, such that display rules prohibiting displays of
anger will be stronger with regard to customers than with regard to equal or lower-status organizational members:

Hypothesis 3: Norms dictating suppression of anger will be stronger in interactions with customers than with equal or lower-status organizational members, but similar to norms vis-à-vis other high status members.

**Anger Display Rules: Customers to Customer Service Reps**

The relatively high power of customers is paralleled by the relatively low power of customer service employees (Rafaeli, 1993). The people who hold these entry-level, boundary-spanning positions are often viewed as lower in status than other organizational members, as well as lower in status than the customers they are serving. The low status of customer service representatives is taken for granted in organizational research. For example, researchers wishing to test the effect of power and status unquestioningly create low status in a vignette study by referring to a “sales clerk in a retail store” (Cote & Moskowitz, 2002). The “service with a smile” maxim conveys expectations regarding acceptable customer service, but also communicates the deference and submission expected from customer service personnel as lower-status individuals (Hecht & LaFrance, 1998; LaFrance & Hecht, 1999; Tiedens et al., 2000). As Shamir (1980) noted, service is close to servility. Given that ‘the customer is king’, the customer has the power to act angrily, and the employee does not (Hochschild 1983). Presumably, the wages paid to service personnel are a mechanism for balancing out this uneven exchange, so that employees will be willing to take whatever the customer doles out. This status differential suggests that anger expression toward customer service representatives is
much more likely than the reverse.

However, the extent to which this assumption is valid in Israel has not been tested. Do people in Israel believe they are free to express anger to service representatives? And do they believe that employees will not express anger back toward customers? Since we believe that global economic norms and practices have been integrated into the Israeli economy, we believe this duality of norms will be apparent with Israeli service employees and customers as well. Hence our next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Norms regarding anger displays will allow expression of anger by customers to customer service representatives, but not by customer service reps to customers.

Methods

To measure perceptions of emotion display norms we adapted a tool described by Matsumoto et al. (2005; 1998), which was developed to examine norms of emotion expression in general social interactions. Our adaptation created a tool that assesses norms regarding displays of emotions by employees to co-workers, supervisors or customers and by customers to customer service representatives. Our study is a first attempt to document norms for displaying emotion toward work targets in Israeli organizations.

Context: Norms of Emotion Expression in Israel

Emotion display rules and in particular anger display rules are a cultural attribute (Ekman, 1972; Friesen, 1972; Matsumoto et al., 2005; 1998), and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) found Israeli employees to be more
emotionally expressive at work than employees in other countries (e.g., the USA, UK, Canada, Japan, and China). A majority of Israeli respondents told Trompenaars and Hanmpden-Turner (1998) that they would express emotions they felt at work. This finding is consistent with other descriptions of Israeli culture. Mayseless and Salomon (2003) as well as Katriel (1986) mention "frankness" as a unique character of Israeli behavior.

"Dugri" in Israeli slang is a popular descriptor of Israelis, conveying people as frank and direct in social interactions. This cultural tendency legitimates open communication and places particular value on the open expression of anger (Margalit & Mauger, 1984). In a similar vein, Israel has been described as having weak "expressive boundaries" (Shamir & Melnik, 2002), meaning that people easily carry over their thoughts and feelings into their overt behavior. Shamir and Melnik (2002) describe Israelis as open, candid and direct, freely disclosing their opinions and emotions. Accordingly, North Americans who work with Israelis are argued by Shamir and Melnik (2002) to characterize Israelis as genuine and transparent, so that "what you see is what you get".

In short, social expectations in Israel do not assume high levels of politeness. However, it is unclear whether or how this norm manifests in interactions with authority figures. In this culture noted for frankness, we are looking specifically at norms for open expression of anger toward people of higher organizational status, and toward customers.

Participants
A sample of 108 undergraduate and graduate business and engineering students completed the survey in return for partial course credit. Table 1 reports the demographic profile of the sample, which included 51 males, and had an average age of 24.84, (SD=2.54). All respondents were at least 18 years old, most (79%) had held a steady job during the past year, and a large number had experience in customer service positions (65.7%). Some of the participants had previous managerial experience (52.8%). This sample was selected to represent the future workforce of Israeli businesses. Their perceptions were presumed to represent a desirable combination of some work experience (which would often involve customers) and observations of the work environments through their own experience as customers.

In completing the survey, participants were asked to focus on their most recent job experience. Participants without experience with a particular target person were asked for their understanding of what they thought they should do with such a target person.

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited through class lists, asked to read and sign a consent form and then given a copy of a 4-page survey. They were told that the purpose of the study was to identify perceptions of acceptable emotional displays in organizations, and were promised that all responses would remain anonymous and confidential and would be used only for research purposes. Survey completion took approximately 20 minutes.
Control Variables

**Employment experience:** Three experience indicators were collected at the end of the survey: (1) whether respondents had held a paid job during the past year; (2) whether they had ever worked or currently worked in a service job; (3) whether they had ever held or currently held a managerial position.

**Demographic attributes:** Respondents were also asked to indicate their sex and age.

Dependent Variables

**Perceived norms of emotional display** were assessed through an adapted version of Matsumoto et al.'s (2005) DRAI (Display Rules Assessment Inventory). The original measure addressed six social targets (e.g., parent, older sibling, close friend) and 7 emotions (anger, contempt, disgust, sadness, fear, happiness, surprise). We adapted the measure to include five organizational targets (manager, co-worker, subordinate, customer, customer service representative) and two emotions (anger and fear). To avoid confusion each of the emotions and each of the targets were defined in the survey, as summarized in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

The survey included separate sections for each target person, and each section opened with instructions for the relevant target person. For example, the section assessing displays with customer service representatives opened as follows:
Please think of a specific CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE that you have interacted with as a customer ...[definition of Customer Service Representative as in Table 2...]. What do you believe you should do if you are interacting with a customer service representative and you feel each of the emotions listed below?

For each pair (target person and emotion) participants were asked to choose one of the following responses: (A) Show it more than I feel it; (B) Show it as I feel it; (C) Show it less than I feel it; (D) Show it but with another expression; (E) Hide it by showing nothing (F) Hide it by showing something else; (G) Other. These responses indicate five expressive modes: expression, de-amplification, amplification, qualification, and masking of emotion. Participants also indicated the gender of the person they thought of while responding, and the frequency of the interactions they had with this person, except for the case of a customer service representative where the frequency question was worded: "How often do you interact with customer service reps in general?"

Findings

Data Coding: Emotion Suppression vs. Emotion Expression

Analyzing the full set of responses with the five targets and two emotions created too much complexity, making it difficult to test our hypotheses. The responses to the survey were categorical in nature, and therefore could not be averaged. (i.e., it does not make sense to average “Show it more than I feel it, Show it as I feel it and Show it but with another expression.”) We therefore recoded the responses into two categories that made it possible to address our primary research questions. We created a dichotomous dependent variable, whereby responses were coded either as suppression or as genuine
expression of the emotion. Suppressing the emotion (coded 1) included responses C, D, E or F in the original scale; expressing the emotion (coded 0) included responses A and B in the original scale. This recode process means that our findings describe norms regarding the extent to which anger and fear should be suppressed or expressed.

Insert Table 3 about here

**Descriptive Statistics**

Table 3 summarizes the reported frequency of suppressing anger and fear in interactions with customers, customer service reps, managers, subordinates and coworkers. The pattern of frequencies shows that suppressing anger varied widely across targets, ranging from 30.56% to 95.37%, while suppression of fear was quite uniform, ranging only between 87.85% and 99.07%.

**Data Analysis**

We used a generalized linear model with the Logit link function to test the distribution of the dichotomous dependent variable. Each participant provided responses regarding more than one target person, so we applied a model based on the GEE (Generalized Estimating Equations) methodology, which fits an analysis of correlated observations (Liang & Zeger, 1986). The demographic variables listed in Table 1 were included as control variables in all of the analyses.

---

1 A potential concern of this recode is that the aggregation of four categories into a value of 1 and only two categories to value of 0 would create unbalanced results, and more responses would fall into the "suppression norms" value that represents four original categories. However, the frequencies reported in Table 3 rule out this bias since the aggregated variable varied widely across targets. It is clear from Table 3 that the recode process did not create a systematic bias in the results.
Anger Displays to Different Target Persons

A first set of analyses tested whether suppression norms varied between interaction targets. Emotion suppression was the dependent variable regressed on target person as the independent (dummy) variable. Score statistics for type 3 GEE analysis are presented in Table 4, and show a significant effect of type of emotion ($\chi^2(X)=5.01$, $p<.01$), meaning that suppression rules differentiate between the emotions. Target person also had a significant effect ($\chi^2(X)=23.79$, $p<.0001$), indicating differences in the suppression norms with different target persons. The interaction of emotion and target person was also significant ($\chi^2(X)=10.13$, $p<.05$), suggesting differences in suppression norms for different emotions with different target persons.

Insert Table 4 about here

Displays of Anger versus Displays of Fear

Hypothesis 1, based on the premise that people want to avoid an appearance of weakness, predicted that expressions of fear will be viewed as less acceptable than expressions of anger, regardless of the target to whom the emotion is expressed. Tables 3 and 5 show that this prediction was largely supported. It was supported with customer service representative (CSR) ($P_{anger}=30.56\%$, $P_{fear}=95.24\%$, OR=48.85, $\chi^2(1)=51.67$, $p<.0001$), manager ($P_{anger}=82.41\%$, $P_{fear}=99.07\%$, OR=23.07, $\chi^2(1)=10.15$, $p<.01$), subordinate ($P_{anger}=42.59\%$, $P_{fear}=98.10\%$, OR=73.74, $\chi^2(1)=33.06$, $p<.0001$) and coworker ($P_{anger}=39.81\%$, $P_{fear}=87.85\%$, OR=11.57, $\chi^2(1)=45.94$, $p<.0001$). Only the results regarding expressions of anger and fear toward customers did not show a significant difference ($P_{anger}=95.37\%$, $P_{fear}=99.07\%$, OR=5.17, $\chi^2(1)=2.17$, $p>.10$). Thus,
Hypothesis 1 was largely supported.

Insert Table 5 about here

Displays of Anger to Managers versus Subordinates and Coworkers

Hypothesis 2 recognized differences in expressions of anger toward different targets, and suggested that stronger norms would compel suppressing anger toward managers than toward other organizational targets. To test this prediction we contrasted anger suppression toward managers and toward subordinates and coworkers. As presented in Tables 3 and 6, Hypothesis 2 was supported: 82.41% of the respondents indicated that they would suppress anger toward managers – significantly more than toward subordinates ($P_{sub}=42.59\%, \ OR=.15, \ \chi^2(1)=37.54, \ p<.0001$) and coworkers ($P_{co}=39.81\%, \ OR=.13, \ \chi^2(1)=45.75, \ p<.0001$).

These findings thus suggest that Israeli norms indeed dictate greater suppression of anger expressions toward people with greater power (i.e., managers) than toward people with less power (i.e., subordinates) or equal power (i.e., coworkers). The alternative, that Israel’s low power distance would reduce this effect, was not found. Anger suppression in Israel appears in our data to follow a norm of suppression with higher power targets (managers) to a greater degree than with lower power targets (subordinates), fully supporting our Hypothesis 2.

Displays of Anger to Customers versus Subordinates and Coworkers

Hypothesis 3 predicted greater suppression of anger toward customers relative to equal or lower-status organizational members. As presented in Tables 3 and 6, Hypothesis 3 was fully supported: 95.37 % of respondents reported that anger toward a
customer should be suppressed, a proportion significantly higher than that calling for suppression of anger toward a subordinate (P_{sub}=42.59\%, \text{OR}=0.03, \chi^2(1)=49.61, p<0.0001) and a coworker (P_{co}=39.81\%, \text{OR}=0.03, \chi^2(1)=56.59, p<0.0001). Indeed, the proportion of respondents reporting that anger toward a customer should be suppressed was even greater than that calling for suppression of anger toward a manager (P_{mgr}=82.41\%, \text{OR}=0.22, \chi^2(1)=9.07, p<0.01). Thus, our data suggest that customers in Israel can expect to be treated with greater politeness and fewer anger displays than all other targets.

Insert Table 6 about here

**Displays of Anger by Employees to Customers versus by Customers to Customer Service Reps.**

Hypothesis 4 suggested an inequality regarding expressions of anger, predicting that employees are more limited in how they may express felt anger toward customers than the reverse. The results of this analysis, as summarized in Tables 3 and 6, clearly support Hypothesis 4. The proportion of people who indicated that a CSR should suppress anger toward a customer was significantly greater than the proportion saying that a customer should suppress anger toward a CSR (P_{cust}=95.37\% , P_{csr}=30.56\%, \text{OR}=0.02, \chi^2(1)=67.20, p<0.0001). Indeed, almost all participants (95\%) noted that CSRs need to avoid expressing anger toward customers, while only 30\% of our respondents thought that customers should suppress anger toward CSRs.
Our data confirmed that people in Israel are generally more reluctant to express fear than to express anger (Hypothesis 1). The results also suggest that Israelis view the suppression of anger as more important with higher-status individuals (managers) than with lower or equal status individuals (co-workers or subordinates) (Hypothesis 2). One particular group to which Israelis do not believe that anger should be displayed is customers (Hypothesis 3), and Israeli norms prescribe suppression of anger by employees toward customers significantly more than by customers toward employees (Hypothesis 4).

Discussion

Our study examines norms about expressing anger and fear in organizational interactions in Israel. Our findings show that in Israel, norms against displaying feelings of anger are weaker than norms against displaying fear. However, norms regarding anger suppression differentiate between targets. In Israel, anger display norms strongly prohibit expressing anger toward managers, far more so than toward subordinates, and the greatest suppression appears to be toward customers. Expressing anger toward customers is far less normative than toward coworkers, subordinates and even managers.

We also show that uneven norms govern anger expressions in interactions between customers and customer service representatives. In Israel, customer service employees are very limited in their ability to display their genuine feelings toward customers as has been shown to be the case in other countries (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989), while customers are free to express their anger toward customer service employees. These expectations from customer service employees are however unique for
the expression of anger, and do not hold for the other negative emotion we examined – fear.

Our data are of course somewhat limited, in that they reflect only self-reported perceptions of students. However, our participants were working in a wide range of organizations, and they represent the forthcoming community of organizational employees. So we presume these responses to be indicative of the Israeli workforce.

It is also problematic that we could not assess the intensity of the anger imagined by the participants. For example, if the intensity of anger imagined in interactions with managers was lower than with other target persons, it might be less necessary to suppress its display. Reported observations of real-life customer service interactions seem consistent with our analysis (cf. Rafaeli, 1989), so our findings do seem to capture the real nature of emotion displays in Israel. But self-reports may differ from actual behavior, so additional observation studies such as Rafaeli (1989) may be an appropriate complement to the picture that we have drawn.

Theoretical Contributions

Our analyses connect two broad streams of research: research on emotion and emotion displays in organizations (Ashforth and Humphry, 1993; Grandey et al., 2005; Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989), and research on status and power relations in organizations (French & Raven, 1959; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). This connection is tested in light of the unique Israeli culture and context, where open communication (“Dugri”) and the avoidance of weakness (“Freier”) are key values
By focusing on two specific emotions in a specific culture and with specific target persons we offer a novel direction for research on emotion in organizations. In a way, our findings refine former claims about Israel as being affectively expressive, as proposed by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), by showing that there is no overarching norm of emotion expression. Rather, norms seem to vary in the extent to which they restrict the expression of certain emotions toward certain target persons.

Few researchers have looked at norms of emotion display outside the customer service setting (Tschan, Rochat & Zapf, 2005). We show this idea to be important in the diverse and emotionally “open” culture of Israel. By distinguishing between different target persons we implicitly distinguish between different roles that individuals may hold in organizations. By focusing on emotion suppression we also offer a novel direction, since previous empirical research has primarily focused on the idea of "service with a smile" or “manufactured emotion” (Grandey & Brauburger, 2002; Grandey et al., 2005; Hochschild, 1983; Pugh, 2001; Van Maanen, 1992). We suggest that it is also important to look at norms for “service without a frown” as a form of emotion display rules.

**Customers as High-Status Organizational Members**

Our findings can be argued to suggest that customers have become high-status targets of Israeli organizations, since we show that employees are expected to restrain themselves from showing anger to customers. It appears that people in Israel perceive that "the customer is always right", inasmuch as expressing anger is a form of telling
someone they are wrong. The anger suppression norms of employees toward customers may help explain the high burnout rate of service employees in Israel (Rafaeli, 2004), and is consistent with high burnout rates for service employees elsewhere (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002; Dormann, Zapf, & Isic, 2002; Grandey et al., 2004). Israeli customer service representatives are shown here to be targets of customer anger but to be unable to show their own anger, and this combination is likely to create high stress and burnout (Grandey et al., 2004).

This gap between norms governing customer behavior and norms governing the behavior of service reps joins emerging criticism regarding blind global adoption of service management practices (Strudy, 2000). The problem may be particularly acute in Israel, where people expect relative freedom of emotional expression (Shamir and Melnik, 2002). Nevertheless our findings nicely illustrate anger suppression norms as elements of a customer service culture. We describe this role of anger suppression in Israel, and report it here in a special issue dedicated to understanding unique HR issues in Israel. It seems that Israel has absorbed the competitive conditions characterizing the global – in the words of Thomas Friedman, the "flat" – economy (Friedman, 2005) – and embraced customer service norms regarding the expression of anger.
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Percentage (N)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Held paid job during last year or currently holds paid job</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ever held or currently holds a service job</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ever held or currently holds managerial position</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>(51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
<td>(57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>24.84 (2.54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grad MA</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grad Ph.D.</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israeli</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Former USSR</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ever lived outside of Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent lived outside Israel</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of months (for those who did)</td>
<td>77.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Definitions of target persons and emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manager</strong></td>
<td>A person with whom you interact regularly at your place of employment and who is responsible for supervising or evaluating your work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colleague</strong></td>
<td>A person with whom you interact regularly and who is similar to you in status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subordinate</strong></td>
<td>Someone with whom you interact regularly at work and whose work you are responsible for supervising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer</strong></td>
<td>A person with whom you might interact if you worked as a customer service representative; for example, a customer in a cell phone company or a retail store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer service representative</strong></td>
<td>An employee with whom you interact when you need services – such as a cell phone assistant, or sales – such as a retail clerk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Emotion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anger</strong></td>
<td>A feeling of displeasure caused by injury, mistreatment, opposition and usually manifesting itself in a desire to fight back the cause of the displeasure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fear</strong></td>
<td>A feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the presence or nearness of danger, evil or pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target person</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>95.37 (103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>30.56 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>82.41 (89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>42.59 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker</td>
<td>39.81 (43)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers in parentheses are actual frequencies.
Table 4: Score statistics for type 3 GEE analysis of emotion expression toward different target persons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subj. is working</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subj. is/was service employee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subj. is/ was supervisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.95*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target person</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.79***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion X Target person</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.13*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.0001
Table 5: Anger versus fear: Least square means analysis of differences in emotion suppression toward different target persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>CSR</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Subordinate</th>
<th>Coworker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>48.85***</td>
<td>23.07**</td>
<td>73.74***</td>
<td>11.57***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.17)</td>
<td>(51.67)</td>
<td>(10.15)</td>
<td>(33.06)</td>
<td>(45.94)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01  ***p<.0001

Values are odds ratios. An odds ratio of 1 indicates that suppression is equally likely with both anger and fear. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that suppression is more likely with fear; an odds ratio less than 1 indicates that suppression is more likely with anger. Significance was examined by chi-square test. Values in parentheses are chi-square values with 1 df.
Table 6: Least square means analysis of differences in emotion suppression toward different target persons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Customer</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CSR</td>
<td>.02***</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(67.20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Manager</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>11.32***</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9.07)</td>
<td>(60.42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Subordinate</td>
<td>.03***</td>
<td>1.71*</td>
<td>.15***</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(49.61)</td>
<td>(4.62)</td>
<td>(37.54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coworker</td>
<td>.03***</td>
<td>1.52+</td>
<td>.13***</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(56.59)</td>
<td>(2.79)</td>
<td>(45.75)</td>
<td>(0.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Customer</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CSR</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Manager</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0)</td>
<td>(2.30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Subordinate</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.34)</td>
<td>(1.70)</td>
<td>(.34)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Coworker</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>.36+</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7.72)</td>
<td>(3.63)</td>
<td>(6.48)</td>
<td>(7.28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+p<.1  *p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001

Values are odds ratios. An odds ratio of 1 indicates that emotion suppression is equally likely with both row and column targets. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that emotion suppression is more likely with the row target. An odds ratio less than 1 indicates that emotion suppression is more likely with the column target. Significance was examined by chi-square test. Values in parentheses are chi-square values with 1 df.