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THE EXPRESSION OF ANGER
AS A FUNCTION OF SELF-ESTEEM

BY

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B.M.T., Florida State University, 1979

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between level of self-esteem and anger expression. Fifty female and 36 male university students completed the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and the Anger Self-Report. A 3 x 2 ANOVA showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and the ASR scales of Anger Awareness, Guilt, Mistrust, and Total Anger. In addition, women were found to experience significantly more anger-related guilt than men, while verbal and physical anger expression were both characteristic of men. The results further indicate that men experience greater mistrust and suspicion of others. These findings suggest that low self-esteem individuals report more anger, but have fewer expressive outlets than do individuals with more favorable self-concepts. Furthermore, low self-esteem females tend to internalize their angry feelings, while low self-esteem males convert their anger into outer-directed hostility. Treatment implications and future research directions were discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Human emotion is a phenomenon whose experiential qualities remain constant across a wide range of cultures. In his extensive research of human emotional expression, Izard (1977) found that certain "fundamental emotions" such as joy, rage, disgust and fear share the same subjective experience and quality of facial expression is vastly different countries around the world. Of these universal emotions, one of the most psychologically powerful is anger.

Bach and Wyden (1969) defined anger as the "basic emotional and physiological reaction against interference with the pursuit of a desired goal" (p. 6). Foster and Lomas (1978) support this notion in viewing anger as "the response, mostly somatic, to the perception of oneself as helpless with regard to achieving a goal with another person" (p. 231). While the latter definition is somewhat limiting in its emphasis on interpersonal components, both definitions acknowledge the role of frustration as a primary causal factor in the etiology of anger.

Danesh (1977) suggested that anger is one of two "immediate and automatic" responses to a perceived threat, the other being fear. Three stages of arousal were identified

as leading to these emotional responses; the first is the alerting stage, in which an individual becomes aware of the "presence or possibility of threat." This is followed by a state of anxiety which "mobilizes one's needed defensive energy." A third stage is either anger or fear, the "desire to attack and eliminate the source of threat" or "escape and withdraw" (p. 1110). While this final state is identified as the point at which either anger or fear occurs, the factors involved in determining the specific emotional response are unclear.

Anger can be conceptualized as an emotional state which serves several important functions:

Energizing - anger invigorates and energizes behavior, provides "driving force"

Disruptive - can interfere with "efficient task performance"

Expressive - allows individuals to express negative feelings and resolve conflict

Self-Promotional - serves to define oneself, protects self-image

Defensive - "externalizes conflict" and protects against feelings of vulnerability and anxiety

Instigative - provides "stimulus for aggressive behavior"

Potentiating - "induces a sense of potency," restores feeling of control over one's life

Discriminative - can provide cue to elicit effective coping strategies to resolve conflict (Novaco, 1976, pp. 1125-1126)

Anger, then, is a powerful affective state which is both "satisfying and frightening" (Novaco, 1976), and which can

serve as both a damaging, destructive force as well as an effective means of defending against anxiety and coping with stress.

The various theoretical considerations of emotion present a relatively unified picture of both its experiential and expressive qualities, acknowledging cognitions and sensori-motor processes as providing emotion with content. The greatest source of dissension arises from the question of origin.

The behavioral perspective views emotion as an "hypothetical state" (Wolman, 1973) in which individuals have learned to respond in a particular manner through past experience. This stance presents the etiology of emotion as evolving from contingencies of reinforcement which over time shape an individual's response to the environment. Skinner (1974) scoffs at the tendency to attribute emotional behavior to forces which "dwell in our depth," stating,

In its search for internal explanation, supported by the false sense of cause associated with feelings and introspective observations, mentalism has obscured the environmental antecedents which would have led to a much more effective analysis (p. 165).

Emotion within the behavioral framework, therefore, is conceptualized as a learned response to schedules of reinforcement, and its intensity and form of expression can be traced to environmental contingencies.

Affect from psychoanalytic perspective can be viewed as occurring on two levels of consciousness. The first involves both "sensation and idea" (Brenner, 1970). Brenner proposed that affective development begins in early childhood, when sensations of "pleasure and displeasure" are first associated with ideas. These ideas, defined by Brenner as "thoughts, memories, and wishes" which may be "wholly or partly unconscious," are dependent upon an individual's level of "psychic maturity and functioning" (p. 341).

Freud (1920/1943) acknowledged the role of "motor inner-ventions" and the perception of sensation in giving form to affective experience. However, he moved beyond the conscious awareness to a second level, describing the essence of affect as

...of the nature of a repetition of some particular very significant previous experience. This experience could only have been an exceedingly early impression of a universal type, to be found in the previous history of the species rather than of the individual...(p. 344).

Affect is the result of a reminiscence, an experience so much like another as to be regarded as an unconscious repetition of it. The reminiscence becomes a prototype of affective experience which is aroused on all other occasions which are analogous to the original. This instinctual drive represents the tension experienced by the individual, and subsequent affective discharge eliminates the tension and allows the individual to return to a homeostatic state.

The James-Lange theory of emotions challenged the sequence in which affective experience occurs, presenting it as a cognitive perception in response to organic processes (Plutchick, 1970). This view maintains that it is individual sensation and association of physiological stimulation that defines emotion, and without these bodily changes, emotion has no form (Cannon, 1927; James, 1890). James theorized that sensations from the viscera were responsible for felt emotion, while Lange specified the vasomotor center as the primary source of emotional experience, postulating that its stimulation by sensory impressions creates emotion.

The theoretical framework within which this current study of anger response can best be conceptualized is Ellis' A-B-C theory of emotional disturbance, the "essence of rational-emotive therapy" (Ellis, 1976). Ellis defines emotion as a "complex mode of behavior which is integrally related to the other sensing and response processes," citing the autonomic nervous system, sensori-motor processes and cognitive thinking processes as the "three main pathways or origins" (1962, p. 39).

It is the cognitive aspect of emotion which provides the foundation for Ellis' theory. He proposed that an emotion (Consequence) is the indirect result of a particular Activating Event or Experience. Point A, the Activating

Event, is responded to by B, which is an "individual's Belief System, or what he/she strongly concludes or interprets about A" (Ellis, 1976, p. 247). It is this cognitive mediating process which determines the form and intensity of C, the emotional response (or Consequence). Ellis suggested that these beliefs are all too often irrational ones, stating

...virtually everytime an individual feels intensely anxious, depressed, guilty, or hostile, he or she is devoutly believing in some nonveridical and utterly unprovable should, ought, or must (1976, p. 250).

It is clear that most theorists agree in construing anger as resulting from the interaction of both cognitive and physiological components. Tavris (1982) noted that "most social psychologists define anger as a temporary combination of both arousal (physical excitement) and the perceptions and awareness of feeling angry" (p. 89). The physical manifestations of anger have been studied by numerous researchers; one of the earliest was the 1899 survey conducted by G. Stanley Hall. In it, Hall asked 2184 participants to describe their physiological reactions to anger. The respondents described a variety of physical reactions, including such vaso-motor disturbances as flushing, pallor, "painful cardiac sensations" and headaches; mammary secretions, tears, constipation and diarrhea; changes in respiration through gasping and panting; increased salivation and swallowing, lump in throat and nausea. Some less frequently reported bodily responses to anger included

frothing at the mouth, vocal paralysis, biting one's lip, kicking and scratching (Hall, 1899).

In a similar study of fifty-one female college students, Gates (1926) found rapid breathing, flushing, accelerated heartbeat and feeling hot as the most frequently reported physiological responses to anger. Thurman (1978) described an explosive release of suppressed anger which resulted in uncontrollable shaking and vomiting.

While the specific physical manifestations of anger may vary, they are linked by a common denominator, a sense of tension and discomfort which seeks release. This expression varies from individual to individual in both form and intensity, with diverse consequences. Madow (1972) conceptualized anger as a

...force which can be used constructively or destructively. If it is used constructively, we call it healthy aggression, ambitious drives, the wish to succeed, goal-oriented behavior, and other terms indicating that the activities are socially acceptable...If...used destructively, it leads to all the manifestations of anger from open violence to self-annihilation (p. 35).

The positive aspects of constructive anger expression have been outlined by numerous authors in the psychological literature. Berkowitz (1973) conceptualized constructive anger expression as offering "cognitive feedback" which may serve to facilitate change. Rothenberg (1971) also acknowledged the important communicative properties afforded by

anger, describing it as an "assertive, alerted...state" which provides a "basis for communication."

Bach and Wyden (1969) suggest that angry feelings are inevitable within a relationship, and expressing them is necessary for intimacy. They proposed a model of anger and conflict which is constructively used for change, resulting in an interpersonal transaction which leaves both individuals "winners." Holt (1970) also endorsed this two-winner set, stating that an "important underlying assumption and wish of the constructively angry person is to establish, restore, or maintain a positive relationship with the other" (p. 8).

Anger is rarely addressed in the psychological literature as an independent emotion; instead, it is generally regarded as a "manifestation of aggression," as observed by Rothenberg (1971). Aggression, however, is defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1974) as "hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior" (p. 23), while anger "names the reaction but in itself conveys nothing about intensity or justification of the emotional state" (p. 44). To equate anger with aggression, therefore, incorrectly implies an innate destructiveness.

The destructive quality of aggression is further illustrated by Bateson (1941), who suggested that aggressive behavior is a series of actions which has as its reinforcing goal "injury to some other organism or organism surrogate" (p.352).

This does not discount anger's role in aggression, however; Kaplan (1975) proposed that anger is the emotional state which can serve to energize aggressive behavior. Rimm, Hill, Brown, and Stuart (1974) support this relationship in defining aggressive behavior as expressing anger "in a manner which is unduly threatening or belligerent," while Zillman and Bryant (1974) view aggression as a drive which is formed during a state of "intense emotional anger."

It can be concluded, then, that while anger is the affective state which can mobilize aggressive behavior, the two terms are not synonymous. As Mandler (1980) points out, "people do not feel aggression; they feel anger" (p. 232).

Anger is also casually interchanged in the literature with hostility. As with aggression, hostility is a manifestation of anger. Rothenberg (1971) stressed the destructive quality of hostility, which results from unexpressed anger. Coleman (1976), too, emphasized that hostility is a more enduring emotion, the consequence of continued frustration and unresolved anger. Hostility is usually expressed indirectly in the form of gossip, sarcasm, or even violent revenge, and is "aimed at the integrity of the individual rather than the specific threat or obstruction he produces" (Rothenberg, 1971, p. 90).

In his analysis of the etymology of anger, Stearns (1972) determined that "anger is a well-delimited concept and response

to an offending stimulus" (p. 5). He found that in none of the languages from which the term is derived is it "associated with hostility, aggression, or rage." Anger, then is a pure emotional state, and its physical and psychological manifestations vary in both intensity and form of expression.

This does not suggest that anger is not manifest as a destructive force; on the contrary, the destructively angry person expresses himself in a manner which is physically and/or emotionally damaging to himself or others. In a study of anger arousal and personality characteristics, Biaggio (1980) described two types of individuals who have difficulty in appropriate, constructive anger expression: the anger-prone and the anger-inhibited. The anger-prone individual typically displays unmanaged anger, and is less sensitive to the social consequences of his angry outburst. Holt (1970) concurs, observing that this type of destructively angry person is determined to win, regardless of the cost.

Conditions of anger-inhibition have been found to be equally destructive, with the object of wrath being the angry individual himself. The physical manifestations of unexpressed rage are discussed by Holt (1970), who notes:

Problems of...inhibited rage...have been implicated in the etiology of rheumatoid arthritis, hives, acne vulgaris, psoriasis, peptic ulcer, epilepsy, migraine, Raynaud's disease, and essential hypertension (p. 9).

Another frequently acknowledged manifestation of suppressed anger is depression. Although ardently disputed by Tavris (1982), the conceptualization of depression as anger turned inward is widely accepted, particularly in psychoanalytic theory. Becker and Lesiak (1977) found that depressives not only experience self-directed hostility, but the more severely depressed individuals feel outer-directed hostility which is expressed covertly through resentment, suspicion or guilt. Plutchik (1970) speculated that the depressed individual admits to feeling angry, but views the source of anger as within himself.

Inhibited anger expression has been implicated in the etiology of other psychological disturbances, as well. Berkowitz (1973) cites Palmer's survey of over five hundred hospitalized psychiatric and non-psychiatric patients which determined the most characteristic feature of the psychiatric population to be conflict "involving a fear and inhibition of angry feelings" (p. 30).

Having identified the various modes of anger expression - construction assertion, aggressive over-expression, and anger inhibition - researchers are thus presented with the task of accounting for individual differences in expressive style. Tavris (1982) notes:

Anger is generated and reduced by how we interpret the world and the events that happen to us....We learn not only how to label arousal, but also what to do with it - express it, deny it, defy it, transform it (p. 94).

Whereas the environment provides anger-inducing stimuli, it is the interpretation of events which determines individual response. Interpretation is the result of the many personality factors through which stimuli are filtered and responded to accordingly. This process of cognitive mediation, previously outlined in Ellis' theoretical paradigm, is particularly influenced by individual self-esteem.

Self-esteem is used interchangeably in the literature with such terms as self-worth, self-regard, and self-concept, all referring to an individual's perception of himself and how highly he values that self. This perception and evaluation can be traced to various points of reference. Burns (1979) identified a primary source of self-esteem as an individual's perception of himself as compared to his "ideal self-image." James (1890) proposed that "self-feeling...is determined by the ratio of which our pretensions are the denominator and the numerator our success" (p. 310). The greater the pretensions, the greater the discrepancy between self and ideal self, and it is this discrepancy which determines one's level of self-esteem.

The concept of self versus ideal self is also addressed by Rogers (1961), who found that a frequent outcome of client-centered therapy is increased acceptance of the self. This movement towards resolution of the discrepancy in one's self-picture results in improved emotional adjustment as the self

becomes more highly valued, and the ideal self more achievable.

Ziller, Hagey, Smith and Long (1969) present self-esteem as evolving within what they term a "social reality," which is a combination of social-acceptance and self-acceptance. Zimbardo (1977), too, noted the important social aspect of self-esteem, viewing the evaluation of one's self-worth as based on "an individual's perception of how [he] compares to others" (p. 154).

Self-esteem plays an important role in assertive communication, which can be defined as expressing both positive and negative feelings in a socially approved manner, while at the same time acknowledging the rights of others. Alberti and Emmons (1970) proposed that a positive correlation exists between assertiveness and self-esteem. This relationship was demonstrated by Percell, Berwick and Beigel (1974), who found that assertive individuals exhibited a higher level of self-acceptance, and that after assertiveness training, all subjects showed a significant increase of self-acceptance measures. The authors obtained statistically significant correlations of .51 for females and .49 for males between scores on the Lawrence Interpersonal Behavior Test, an assertiveness measure, and the Self-Acceptance Scale of the California Psychological Inventory.

Tolor, Kelly and Stebbins (1976) investigated the relationship between assertiveness and sex-role stereotyping on

self concept. Using the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule, the College Expression Scale, the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and a list of stereotypic personality characteristics, Tolor et al. determined that both male and female college students (N = 134) who were highly assertive had significantly more favorable self-concepts than individuals lower in assertive behavior. Additionally, the researchers were surprised to find that not only was their female sample more assertive than the sample of men, but the females demonstrated more favorable self-concepts, as well.

Pachman and Foy (1978) employed Barksdale's Self-Esteem Index, an affect adjective checklist, and a modified version of the Behavioral Assertion Test in a study of 55 male alcoholics in an inpatient setting. Depression was found to be significantly negatively correlated with self-esteem ($r = -.38$, $p < .01$) and overall assertiveness ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$). In viewing these findings in light of the aforementioned hypothesis that depression is essentially anger turned inward, a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and constructive anger expression can be predicted.

In looking specifically at the assertion of angry feelings, Doyle and Biaggio (1981) found that low asserters experienced a significantly greater degree of covert anger (e.g., guilt, mistrust, and suspicion) than do high asserters, whereas high asserters expressed significantly more verbal hostility. The

College Self-Expression Scale was used to measure assertiveness, while the Anger Self-Report measured anger expression. The Buss Durkee Hostility Inventory was employed as a measure of aggression/hostility. This study identified differences between individuals who constructively assert angry feelings and those who suppress them, but found no significant correlation between assertion level and aggressive acting-out or assaultive behavior.

In another study, Biaggio (1980) investigated the influence of personality characteristics on anger arousal. Using the Novaco Anger Inventory and the Anger Self-Report to measure awareness and expression of angry feelings, Biaggio determined that low anger-arousal subjects scored significantly lower on self-acceptance as measured by the California Psychological Inventory than did medium-arousal or high-arousal subjects (N = 150). However, this study did not distinguish between repressors and those who simply experienced little anger. High-arousal subjects scored lower on self-control, tolerance, psychological-mindedness, and flexibility. They tended to project blame onto others and exhibit lower sociability. High-arousal subjects also scored lower on self-acceptance than medium-arousal subjects, but not significantly so.

Given the previous findings, it was predicted that a direct relationship would exist between self-esteem and the expression of anger. This relationship was explored in the present study in a number of dimension, including level of self-esteem, anger-awareness, anger expression and gender.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study investigated the relationship between level of self-esteem and anger expression. It was predicted that individual self-esteem directly influences the manner in which anger-inducing stimuli are processed and to which they are subsequently responded. Using the categories outlined in the Anger Self-Report, the following hypotheses were studied:

1. Awareness of Anger. Since denial and suppression have been identified as characteristic of individuals with anger difficulties, it was hypothesized that individuals with low self-esteem would demonstrate significantly lower levels of anger awareness.

2. Expression of Anger.

a. General. It was predicted that low self-esteem individuals are less likely to express angry feelings than are individuals with higher self-esteem, and would thus score lower on a measure of general anger expression.

b. Verbal. It was hypothesized that individuals with high self-esteem verbally express anger more readily than those with lower levels of self-esteem.

c. Physical. Individuals with low self-esteem were predicted to demonstrate significantly higher rates of physical anger expression. This more destructive means of aggressive

acting-out was believed to be characteristic of low self-esteem individuals, who typically experience more unresolved anger which they are unable to effectively express in a more direct, constructive manner.

3. Guilt. It was predicted that low self-esteem individuals would experience high levels of guilt and condemnation of anger, reflecting their feelings of worthlessness and self-disdain.

4. Mistrust or suspicion. Low self-esteem individuals have more difficulty coping with angry feelings, and therefore project those feelings onto others. It was predicted that these individuals would display higher levels of mistrust and suspicion.

5. Total Anger. It was predicted that low-self esteem individuals would demonstrate greater Total Anger than high self-esteem individuals.

Another area of investigation was the influence of gender on the expression of anger. Although no specific predictions were generated, the effect of gender was studied for future research implications.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects in this study were 86 university students enrolled in upper level undergraduate psychology courses at the University of Central Florida. Participation was voluntary. The subjects ranged in age from 18 to 45 years old, with a mean age of 22.9. Thirty-six males (mean age = 23.2) and fifty females (mean age = 22.1) participated in the study.

Measures

The Anger Self-Report (ASR) (Zelin, Adler & Myerson, 1972) was used to assess anger expression. This Likert-type questionnaire (Appendix A) differentiates between subjective awareness of angry feelings and individual expression of anger, yielding separate scores for: (a) anger awareness; (b) anger expression (with subscales to distinguish between general, verbal, and physical expression); (c) guilt and condemnation of anger; and (d) mistrust or suspicion. A total anger score is obtained by adding the subscale scores.

Several of the ASR subscales have been found to correlate with those of the Problem Appraisal Scales, demonstrating concurrent validity. The ASR Physical Expression scale was significantly correlated (.41) with the Assaultive Acts rating of the PAS. The Verbal Expression scale was negatively correlated

with Dependency (-.36), as well as Anger, Belligerence-Negativism. The ASR Guilt scale was found to correlate significantly with PAS Suicidal Thoughts (.48) and Depression-Inferiority (.33). Split-half reliabilities on the ASR range from .64 to .83.

The ASR consists of 89 items, 25 of which are buffer items. The remaining 64 items are scored on a scale from -3 to +3, with no neutral response. Scoring of the ASR was completed using a key developed by Zelin et al. (1972). Since the lowest score on any of the subscales was -31, a constant of 32 was added to the results to transform each scale score into a positive whole number, thus facilitating the statistical process.

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) is a self-esteem measure which consists of 100 self-descriptive items, fifty of which are phrased negatively to discourage acquiescence. It utilizes a five-point rating scale (1 to 5) with responses ranging from "Completely false" to "Completely true." The Counseling Form yields scores in various areas of self-concept; however, only the Self-Criticism (SC) and Total Positive (P) scores were used in this study. The Total P score reflects the overall level of self-esteem; the higher the score, the more positive the self-evaluation. The Self-Criticism score is comprised of ten items which measure the degree to which an individual is trying to present himself in a favorable light. Extremely low SC scores indicate a high level of defensiveness and suggest that the Total P may be elevated; consequently,

scores below the tenth percentile were excluded.

Test-retest reliability of the Self-Criticism scale is .75 over a two-week period; .92 was obtained for the Total P score for the same time period. Satisfactory construct and discriminant validity have been demonstrated.

Procedures

Subjects were administered both the ASR and TSCS in one session. Order of administration was counterbalanced, with one-half of the subjects completing the ASR while the rest completed the TSCS; administration was then reversed. Total length of administration ranged between 10 and 50 minutes. All participants completed a permission form (Appendix B), which was collected prior to beginning the questionnaires. Subjects were then instructed to record their age and sex only on each of the two pre-coded answer sheets, thus assuring anonymity.

RESULTS

The following correlations were obtained between self-esteem as measured by the TSCS Total P score and specific ASR scales: Self-esteem correlated significantly with anger awareness, [$r(84) = -.475, p < .01$]; guilt, [$r(84) = -.705, p < .01$]; mistrust, [$r(84) = -.431, p < .01$]; and total anger, [$r(84) = -.513, p < .01$]. No significant correlations were found between level of self-esteem and general anger expression or condemnation of anger.

A 3x2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine significant differences in anger awareness/expression in relation to the independent variables of self-esteem and sex. Results show significant main effects of self-esteem in the areas of anger awareness, guilt, mistrust, and total anger. The specific results are as follows, presented in order of hypothesis:

1. Anger Awareness. It was predicted that individuals low in self-esteem would report less subjective awareness of anger than those higher in self-esteem. Table 1 illustrates that a main effect was found for self-esteem, $F(2,80)=9.97, p < .01$; however, a protected t -test for mean comparisons revealed that subjects low in self-esteem reported significantly more awareness of angry feelings ($M=46.41$) than those

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Anger Awareness as
a Function of Self-Esteem and Sex

Source	SS	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Self-Esteem	2402.99	2	9.97*
Sex	55.16	1	.458
Self-Exteem X Sex	226.11	2	.938

*p <.01

with medium or high self-esteem (ASR means=36.97 and 33.18, respectively). Both comparisons were significant at the .01 level. Compared means and levels of significance for all scales are presented in Table 2.

2. Anger Expression.

a. General expression. No significant main effects of sex or level of self-esteem were obtained for general expression of anger.

b. Physical expression. The predicted differences in physical expression of anger were not obtained. A significant main effect was determined for sex [$F(1,80)=12.48$, $p < .01$], with males expressing significantly more physical anger ($M=26.90$), $t(84) = 3.5$, $p < .01$. See Table 3 for specific data. This finding holds true for both low and medium self-esteem males vs. females; however, there was no significant difference in physical expression between high self-esteem males and females.

c. Verbal expression. There were no significant differences in verbal expression of anger between levels of self-esteem. However, a main effect of sex was found, $F(1,80)=8.04$, $p < .01$. Comparison of the means for males ($M=38.22$) and females ($M=32.54$) resulted in $t(84)=2.94$, $p < .01$, and can be seen in Table 3.

Table 2

Means and Levels of Significance for ASR Scales

ASR Scale	Self-Esteem		
	High (<u>n</u> = 28)	Medium (<u>n</u> = 29)	Low (<u>n</u> = 29)
Awareness	33.18 _a	36.97 _a	46.41 _b
General	26.68	30.66	31.52
Physical	27.86	28.93	29.90
Verbal	35.71	33.66	35.41
Guilt	14.29 _a	22.90 _b	27.14 _c
Condemnation	21.46	24.52	20.14
Mistrust	15.68 _a	22.55 _b	25.72 _b
Total	177.14 _a	199.52 _b	216.93 _b

Note. Means with common subscripts do not differ significantly at the .05 level.

Table 3

ASR Means by Level of Self-Esteem and Sex

		Self-Esteem					
		High		Medium		Low	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
	N=13	N=15	N=9	N=20	N=14	N=15	
Awareness	36.15	30.60	38.33	36.35	45.07	47.67	
General	28.85	28.60	29.22	31.30	33.00	30.13	
Physical	29.62	26.30	32.60	27.25	33.00	27.00	
Verbal	38.38	33.40	37.80	31.80	38.36	32.67	
Guilt	15.15	13.53	21.10	23.75	23.36	30.67	
Condemnation	20.54	22.27	23.00	24.20	20.86	19.47	
Mistrust	20.31	12.27	26.10	20.95	28.93	22.73	
Total	188.54	167.27	208.22	195.60	220.86	213.27	

3. Guilt.

a. Guilt. The hypothesis that significant differences exist in the experience of guilt according to level of self-esteem was confirmed. An ANOVA yielded an $F(2,80)=28.05$, $p < .01$. These results are presented in Table 4. A post-hoc protected t -test showed significant differences at all levels of self-esteem.

A significant main effect was also found for the factor of sex, $F(1,80)=3.94$, $p < .05$. Comparison of means reveals that females ($M=22.65$) experience more guilt than males ($M=19.87$), with $t(84)=2.01$, $p < .05$. This also can be seen in Table 3. This was particularly evidenced in the comparison of low self-esteem females and their male counterparts.

An additional find was the significant interaction between the factors of self-esteem and sex in determining level of guilt, $F(2,80)=3.4$, $p < .05$.

b. Condemnation of anger. The hypothesis that subjects low in self-esteem would report more condemnation of anger was not confirmed. No significant main effects or interactions were found for either factor.

c. Mistrust. Results of the ANOVA with mistrust as the dependent variable revealed significant main effects of both level of self-esteem [$F(2,80)=4.53$, $p < .05$] and sex [$F(1,80)=5.72$, $p < .05$]. These results are presented in Table 5. Comparison of means resulted in significant differences in

Table 4

Analysis of Variance of Guilt as a Function of
Self-Esteem and Sex

Source	SS	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Self-Esteem	2230.14	2	28.05**
Sex	156.63	1	3.94*
Self-Esteem X Sex	270.33	2	3.40*

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 5

Analysis of Variance of Mistrust as a Function
of Self-Esteem and Sex

Source	SS	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Self-Esteem	1344.56	2	4.53*
Sex	849.73	1	5.72*
Self-Esteem X Sex	28.84	2	.097

* $p < .05$

mistrust between medium ($\underline{M}=22.55$) and high ($\underline{M}=15.68$) levels of self-esteem [$\underline{t}(84)=2.13$, $\underline{p} < .05$], and between low ($\underline{M}=25.72$) and high ($\underline{M}=15.68$) levels of self-esteem [$\underline{t}(84)=3.12$, $\underline{p} < .01$], as presented in Table 3.

4. Total anger. As predicted, total anger scores were significantly different between levels of self-esteem. An ANOVA yielded an $\underline{F}(2,80)=9.09$ ($\underline{p} < .01$) (Table 6). Comparison of the means showed that individuals with high self-esteem scored significantly lower in total anger ($\underline{M}=177.14$) than either medium [$\underline{M}=199.52$, $\underline{t}(84)=2.48$, $\underline{p} < .05$] or low [$\underline{M}=216.93$, $\underline{t}(84)=4.41$, $\underline{p} < .01$] self-esteem-subjects.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance of Total Anger as a
Function of Self-Esteem and Sex

Source	SS	<u>df</u>	<u>F</u>
Self-Esteem	21133.08	2	9.09*
Sex	3886.58	1	3.34
Self-Esteem x Sex	648.85	2	.279

* $p < .01$

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and anger expression. Results of the study clearly demonstrate the existence of a significant relationship between these two factors.

The first hypothesis addressed the relationship between self-esteem and subjective awareness of anger. It was predicted that individuals high in self-esteem would report greater anger awareness, as they would be more apt to acknowledge angry feelings. On the contrary, however, it was found that both males and females who experienced negative feelings about themselves actually report more awareness of anger. This finding does not support the original premise on which Zelin et al. (1972) based this first segment of the ASR. They hypothesized that denial and suppression would have an inhibitory effect on subjective anger awareness in individuals with anger difficulties. Plutchik's (1970) contention regarding depression may help explain this finding; that is, that depressed individuals do admit to feeling angry. However, these low self-esteem individuals view themselves as the source of their negative feelings, a factor which was not addressed in this study. The use of a college population rather than a clinical one in which anger difficulties are more pronounced may have influenced this finding, as well.

A second finding helps to more clearly define the relationship between anger and self-esteem. It was predicted that significant differences in anger expression exist relative to level of self-esteem, but this was not demonstrated in the present study. Although males consistently expressed more physical and verbal anger than females, there were no significant differences in general, physical, or verbal expression with regard to level of self-esteem. When viewed in conjunction with the previous finding concerning anger awareness, it can be said that while low self-esteem individuals do experience more anger than those with more positive self-feelings, they do not necessarily have adequate expressive outlets. This supports Doyle and Biaggio's (1981) finding that anger inhibitors experience more covert anger than those who can directly express negative feelings. This continued frustration and unresolved anger are manifest in destructive, indirect forms of anger expression such as hostility, depression and mistrust of others.

Results of this study suggest that one strong inhibiting factor in anger expression is guilt. An inverse relationship between guilt and self-esteem was expected and demonstrated, thus indicating that there is a greater tendency to internalize angry feelings by individuals low in self-esteem. This supports the findings of Percell, Berwick and Beigel (1974), who found a positive relationship between assertiveness and

self-acceptance. While condemnation of anger was not found to be characteristic of low self-esteem as expected, it is clear that these individuals are less accepting of their own angry feelings. Subsequently, low self-esteem individuals feel guilty when they do attempt to express anger, which only serves to exacerbate their already strong feelings of inadequacy.

It was further determined that females experience significantly more guilt than males. This conflicts with Doyle and Biaggio's (1981) finding that males experience more anger-related guilt than females, and may support their contention that the particular demographics of their sample population influenced the results.

The experience of guilt was found to be related to the interaction of self-esteem and sex. Specifically, as self-esteem decreases the experience of guilt becomes far more powerful for females. While guilt is greater for low self-esteem men, as well, it is not as strongly influenced by level of self-esteem and thus increases proportionately.

Mistrust was found to be higher for both males and females with low self-esteem. This implies that projection and suspicion of others are characteristic of individuals who experience negative self-feelings. This is especially true for males, who were found to experience significantly more mistrust than females at all levels of self-esteem.

The Total Anger score, derived by summing the ASR scales, reflects the overall trend of the relationship between anger and self-esteem. As predicted, low self-esteem individuals were higher in total anger. This finding is consistent with those previously discussed.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this investigation. It is evident that one's self-esteem is directly related to the interpretation and expression of anger. Individuals with positive self-concepts are better able to directly express negative feelings; those lower in self-esteem report more anger but experience considerably more difficulty in its expression. While guilt seems to be a primary mediating factor among low self-esteem individuals, its manifestations among the sexes are quite different. Both males and females are inhibited in anger expression by guilt; however, it may be that males convert their unresolved anger into hostility, mistrust and suspicion, while females tend to internalize anger and blame themselves. The significantly higher physical expression of anger by males can be attributed to this finding, as they would thus be more prone to act out aggressively against others.

Although Averill (1983) did not find differences in anger arousal between males and females in a recent survey, he cites the feminist perspective on sex differences in anger expression:

Feminists argue that women are quite capable of experiencing anger...but that they are inhibited from doing so by power inequities within our patriarchal society. A woman's anger, therefore, tends to be experienced and expressed in indirect and often self-defeating ways, including lethargy, depression, and so on. (p. 1152)

This argument is useful in conceptualizing the differences which exist in this study. That is, that men have traditionally been given societal permission to act out angry impulses, while women are encouraged to suppress anger. Averill's finding that women cry when angry four times more often than men further supports this notion.

Additional research in the area of anger expression is indicated. Investigation of a more varied age and educational range would provide further information from which to draw conclusions concerning self-esteem and anger expression. Research using a clinical population would allow a closer look at the variables involved in more serious anger difficulties. Furthermore, Averill's (1983) point concerning the reliability of self-report is well taken. That is, factors such as desirability to conform to social norms and expectations may influence an individual's ability to accurately describe his/her anger response.

The experience of anger-related guilt bears further investigation. Exploration of specific factors in such guilt would include looking at its source, as well as the self-messages which inhibit anger expression, e.g., not having the right to be angry, fear of the power which is

afforded by anger, and the unquestioning acceptance of blame. While clinicians have developed a "package" of skills to teach direct expression of emotions, it would seem that for some the skills are of little practical value if not dispensed with an understanding of the factors which hindered emotional expression in the first place. It is clear that these issues must be addressed before an individual can learn to express anger in a direct, constructive manner.

APPENDIX A

Put answers on this test sheet.

_____ age

_____ sex

We would like you to consider carefully the following statements and indicate as accurately as you can how it applies to you. There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know how you feel.

Please mark next to each statement according to the amount of your agreement or disagreement by using the following scales:

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | slight agreement | -1 | slight disagreement |
| 2 | moderate agreement | -2 | moderate disagreement |
| 3 | strong agreement | -3 | strong disagreement |

Mark all statements!

If a statement is unclear to you, place an "X" next to it in the margin, but mark it anyway.

Please begin.

- _____ 1. I get mad easily.
- _____ 2. I am often inclined to go out of my way to win a point with someone who has opposed me.
- _____ 3. It makes me annoyed to have people ask my advice or otherwise interrupt me when I am working on something important.
- _____ 4. People are only interested in you for what they can get.
- _____ 5. I seldom strike back, even if someone hits me first.
- _____ 6. People will hurt you if you don't watch out.
- _____ 7. I would be pleased if I never got angry.
- _____ 8. Students are justified in feeling angry about conditions in universities.
- _____ 9. I never feel hate towards members of my family.
- _____ 10. Often people are friendly when they want something but drop you when they no longer need you.
- _____ 11. No one wants to hurt me.
- _____ 12. People should never get angry.
- _____ 13. Some of the people closest to me take secret satisfaction in my misfortunes.
- _____ 14. It's right for people to express themselves when they are mad.
- _____ 15. Some of my family have habits that bother and annoy me very much.
- _____ 16. When I get mad, I say nasty things.
- _____ 17. I felt angry when I felt my folks were unreasonable about making me obey.
- _____ 18. If I do something mean to somebody, I can't stop thinking about it for days.

- _____ 19. Even when my anger is aroused, I don't use strong language.
- _____ 20. If I am mad, I really let people know it.
- _____ 21. Sometimes I feel that I could injure someone.
- _____ 22. I will criticize someone to his face if he deserves it.
- _____ 23. When someone plays a trick on me, I feel sorry and try to forgive him.
- _____ 24. I rarely hate myself.
- _____ 25. I get into fist fights about as often as the next person.
- _____ 26. People should never get irritated.
- _____ 27. I find that I cannot express anger at someone until they have really hurt me badly.
- _____ 28. I think I'm a pretty nice person.
- _____ 29. Even when someone yells at me, I don't yell back.
- _____ 30. The world is a dangerous place to live in.
- _____ 31. At times I have a strong urge to do something harmful or shocking.
- _____ 32. I have many quarrels with members of my family.
- _____ 33. I don't feel guilty when I swear under my breath.
- _____ 34. Often people who are really out to get you act as nice as can be on the outside.
- _____ 35. Too often I accept responsibilities for mistakes that are made.
- _____ 36. I hardly ever punish myself.
- _____ 37. Feeling angry is terrible.
- _____ 38. I wouldn't feel ashamed if people knew I was angry.

- _____ 39. I never do anything right.
- _____ 40. It doesn't make me angry to have people hurry me.
- _____ 41. If I don't like somebody, I will tell him so.
- _____ 42. I don't deserve the hardships I've had.
- _____ 43. I have physically hurt someone in a fight.
- _____ 44. At times I feel like smashing things.
- _____ 45. I wish I got angry less often.
- _____ 46. I don't regret feeling angry.
- _____ 47. Whatever else may be my faults, I never knowingly hurt another person's feelings.
- _____ 48. I really wish I could be a better person.
- _____ 49. It doesn't bother me very much when I hurt someone's feelings.
- _____ 50. I usually am satisfied with myself.
- _____ 51. I never feel like picking a fist fight with someone.
- _____ 52. I feel that it is certainly best to keep my mouth shut when I am angry.
- _____ 53. I find it easy to express anger at people.
- _____ 54. My parents never made me angry.
- _____ 55. I can depend on people when in trouble.
- _____ 56. I admire people who assert themselves.
- _____ 57. Even when someone does something mean to me, I don't let him know I'm upset.
- _____ 58. At times I hurt a person I love.
- _____ 59. People do not generally disappoint me.
- _____ 60. My conscience would punish me if I tried to exploit someone else.
- _____ 61. I hardly ever feel like swearing.

- _____ 62. I couldn't hit anyone even if I were extremely angry.
- _____ 63. I don't feel sorry for putting people in their place.
- _____ 64. I'm just no good.
- _____ 65. I would like myself better if I could get angry.
- _____ 66. I never think of killing myself.
- _____ 67. I hardly ever get angry.
- _____ 68. Even though I disapprove of my friends' behavior, I just can't let them know.
- _____ 69. I find it hard to think badly of anyone.
- _____ 70. I can think of no good reason for ever hitting someone.
- _____ 71. When people are angry, they should let it out.
- _____ 72. I blame myself if anything goes wrong.
- _____ 73. I am rarely cross and grouchy.
- _____ 74. I generally cover up my poor opinions of others.
- _____ 75. I look up to people who say what's on their mind even though it might hurt someone.
- _____ 76. In spite of how my parents treated me, I didn't get angry.
- _____ 77. I could not put someone in his place even if he needed it.
- _____ 78. When I really lose my temper, I am capable of slapping someone.
- _____ 79. It's easy for me not to fight with those I love.
- _____ 80. If someone annoys me, I am apt to tell him what I think of him.

- _____ 81. Our major institutions are falling apart.
- _____ 82. People are as thoughtful of my feelings as I am of theirs.
- _____ 83. It's useless to get angry.
- _____ 84. Generally you can depend on people to help you.
- _____ 85. If I dislike somebody, I let him know.
- _____ 86. If somebody crosses me, I tend to get back at him.
- _____ 87. I think little of people who get angry.
- _____ 88. I often feel disaster is just around the corner.
- _____ 89. Generally speaking, people aren't angry.

APPENDIX B

You are being asked to complete two questionnaires. The results of these surveys will be part of a personality study which is being conducted to fulfill the requirements for a Master's degree at the University of Central Florida by Kimberly M. Brooks, under the direct supervision of Burton I. Blau, Ph.D., Associate Professor.

By signing below, you signify that you will remain anonymous and that you agree to participate in this study. Your participation is appreciated.

Signature _____

Date _____

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