Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin

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What is This?

Gender Differences in Motives for Regulating Emotions

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The present study was designed to test the assumption that gender differences in emotion expression are based on differences in the motives held by men and women in social interactions. Three hundred and fourteen students participated in this study by completing a questionnaire. Each questionnaire contained two vignettes that varied with respect to type of emotion (anger, disappointment, fear or sadness), sex of target, and object-target relationship. Dependent variables included measures of emotion expression and of motives for regulating one's emotions. The results support the general hypothesis that women are more concerned with relationships and less reluctant to express powerless emotions, whereas men are more motivated to stay in control and tend to express emotions that reflect their power.

Gender differences in emotion expressions have consistently been found to be larger than gender differences in emotional experience (e.g., LaFrance & Banaji, 1992). Women are generally more emotionally expressive than men. For example, compared with men, women disclose their feelings to a greater extent (Dindia & Allen, 1992); report expressing negative emotions such as shame, sadness, and fear to a greater extent (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Brody & Hall, 1993; Cornelius & Averill, 1983); cry more often (e.g., Lombardo, Cretser, Lombardo, & Mathis, 1983; van den Berg, Kortekaas, & Vingerhoets, 1992); and show more nonverbal expressions (Hall, 1984). However, not all emotions are expressed to a greater extent by women. There is some evidence that men express their anger more often and with greater intensity, at least when the more aggressive form of this emotion is considered; by contrast, women cry more when they experience anger (Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Frodi, Macaulay, & Thome, 1977; Van den Berg et al., 1992). Men have also been found to express pride more than women do (Brody & Hall, 1993). Finally, developmental studies have also shown that boys express more disappointment than girls do when receiving a gift they do not like (e.g., Davis, 1995).

Gender differences in emotion expression can be seen as relating to the extent to which specific emotions display either power or powerlessness. Although not all expressions of emotion can be interpreted as reflecting power or powerlessness, some emotions are characterized by specific appraisals and action tendencies (e.g., Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989; Roseman, 1984; Manstead & Tetlock, 1989) that are related to power, control, or vulnerability. For example, if a negative event is appraised as caused by unknown factors, as being out of the individual's control, and as exceeding his or her coping resources, the experienced emotion is likely to be one of sadness or fear; in this sense, expressions of these emotions display powerlessness and vulnerability. By contrast, if a negative event is appraised as caused by external factors, as being within the individual's control, and as one that he or she can change, the experienced emotion is likely to be anger or contempt; expressions of these emotions therefore display power. Following this line of reasoning, observed gender differences in emotion expression can be described in terms of men being less inclined than women to express "powerless" emotions, such as fear and sadness (see also Brody, Lovas, & Hay, 1995); women, on the other hand, are more hesitant about expressing "powerful" emotions, such as anger and pride (Brody & Hall, 1993; Fischer, 1993; Helgeson & Gollob, 1992).

Explanations for this greater female expressivity have been sought in the early differentiation of gendered cultures (e.g., Maccoby, 1988, 1990), encouraging women and men to engage in different emotion regulation strategies. Emotion regulation serves to channel emotional responses in a way that is appropriate within a particular emotion culture (Saarni, 1984). Emotions

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shape patterns of interaction, for example, by establishing, maintaining, or ending relationships; by regulating the balance of power; by threatening retaliation in the case of anger; or by signaling submission or conformity in the case of shame and guilt (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1994). In short, emotions serve crucial functions in social life: They signal social needs and communicate social intentions (cf. Fridlund, 1994) and interpersonal goals. Emotion regulation is an intricate part of this process and refers to any kind of modification of one's emotions or emotional expressions (Frijda, 1986; Thompson, 1994). Often, regulation does not alter the discrete quality of the emotional experience but rather affects the duration and extent of an emotion and/or its expression, for example, by decreasing or enhancing the intensity of the emotion; by retarding or accelerating the onset of emotion expression; or by masking, enhancing, or modifying the way in which the emotion is expressed. Some form of awareness of one's emotional state is necessary for emotion regulation to occur: One must like or dislike one's emotions or emotion expressions to undertake regulatory action (Frijda, 1986). This monitoring and evaluation of one's emotions takes place in the context of the goals one wants to achieve in a particular situation.

Because emotion regulation should be regarded as functional in terms of the regulator's goals in a particular situation (Thompson, 1994), and because men and women are expected to have different goals in interactional contexts (cf. Deaux & Major, 1987; Maccoby, 1990), we can expect gender differences in the degree and way in which emotions are regulated. To explain gender differences in emotional expressiveness, it should therefore be useful to focus on emotion regulation processes and to elucidate their functional significance in terms of gender-specific motives. Although social psychological accounts of gender differences in emotion expression tend to imply that women and men regulate their emotions differently, there is scant empirical evidence for the fact that women regulate their emotions in different ways, or in different contexts, than men do. In the present study, we make a start on this task by investigating the self-reported motives men and women have for regulating their emotions and how these motives may affect emotion expression in different contexts.

Building on the theoretical arguments of Frijda (1986) and Thompson (1994), we draw a global distinction between two types of motive for the regulation of emotion expressions: The first relates to the nature of the emotion expression involved and is concerned with the effects of emotion expression for oneself, whereas the second concerns the consequences or outcomes of the emotion expression in relation to others. The first motive includes the expected *cathartic effects* of the emo-

tion expression. For example, crying may be experienced as a relief (irrespective of the reactions it may evoke from the social environment); as a consequence of this belief, one may cry one's heart out in specific situations. In a similar way, slamming a door in anger may be experienced as intrinsically satisfying or relieving (cf. Tavris, 1984).

The second type of motive is assumed to include a range of motives for emotion regulation because the anticipated consequences of emotion expression may be desirable or undesirable for various reasons. Drawing on the literature on emotion regulation and on self-presentation and impression formation (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Leary et al., 1994; Schlenker, 1980), we can identify a motive to *avoid gender-inappropriate emotional impressions.* The expectation of making gender-inappropriate impressions results from the breaching of gender-specific norms in emotional interactions (Ekman & Friesen, 1969; Goffman, 1961; Hochschild, 1983) and relates to perceptions of how one will be evaluated by others when expressing specific emotions (e.g., expressing sadness makes one look vulnerable) (e.g., Labott, Martin, Eason, & Berkey, 1991). The presumably prevailing norm governing the emotional expressions of men and women is that men should suppress most of their emotions, whereas women are permitted to be more emotionally expressive. There is some evidence for the existence of this norm, although it has to date not been studied in relation to emotion expression. For example, Grossman and Wood (1993) showed that there are normative beliefs that a typical woman experiences more intense emotions than a typical man does, anger being an exception. Experimentally manipulating the normative pressure to enhance or attenuate one's emotions resulted in the disappearance of gender differences in the intensity of self-reported emotions. Grossman and Wood's finding that anger is not judged to be a typically female emotion is, of course, consistent with the fact that anger is one of the exceptions to the general rule of greater emotional expressiveness on the part of women. However, this suggests that, rather than there being a general norm that men should suppress their emotions, the norm is that men should avoid displaying emotions signaling powerlessness. The motive to avoid the impression of being emotional should therefore be of greater concern to men, especially in situations in which they anticipate that their emotion expressions may be judged as inappropriate because they signal powerlessness. We expect this to be the case in fearful or sad situations. For women, this motive should be less salient because emotionality and powerlessness are among the core characteristics of the female stereotype.

The two remaining motives relate to the interpersonal goals people want to achieve in specific contexts. There is some research (e.g., Clark, Pataki, & Carver, 1995; Frijda, 1986; Oatley, 1992; Saarni, 1984; Zammuner & Fischer, 1995) on people's goals in emotional interactions. The findings show that people not only know that expressing happiness increases the chance of being liked, that expressing anger increases the chance of being disliked, and that expressing sadness increases one's perceived neediness and dependency on others, but that they also anticipate these social consequences and present their emotions to others to accomplish specific social goals. As a result of socialization processes and past experiences, men and women may have different expectations concerning what their emotion expressions will achieve, leading to different interpersonal goals and different motives for regulating their emotions. At the risk of oversimplification, women can be said to be socialized to encourage warm and smooth interaction more than men are (cf. Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Maccoby, 1988; Tannen, 1990), whereas men have more socialization experience than women in hierarchical, status-oriented, and competitive relationships. One result of these differential social experiences is that women expect negative consequences for themselves if they fail to express positive emotions directed toward others (Stoppard & Gunn Gruchy, 1993) and that they are more anxious about the possible negative consequences for others when expressing negative emotions such as anger and rage (Eagly & Steffen, 1986).

Because women are more focused on the relational consequences of emotion expression—that is, they are more motivated to keep others happy and to maintain close relationships with others—we assume that, relative to men, women's motives for regulating emotions are more *relationship oriented*. Emotion regulation motives are referred to as relationship oriented when people think that expressing their emotions will be beneficial to, or troublesome for, their relationships with others. For example, sharing one's love or happiness generally adds to the positive quality of one's relationship with another person, whereas showing one's irritation, anger, or envy is to damage the relationship between two persons. Seeking support is also an example of a relationship-oriented motive because it is based on the help or comfort one expects from friends in times of distress. For example, when someone who has just lost an important contest expresses disappointment to a friend, he or she probably expects to receive some comforting words.

Men, on the other hand, seem to be less concerned with the negative consequences of failing to express positive emotions toward someone else (Stoppard & Gunn Gruchy, 1993) and to expect more positive consequences of expressing powerful emotions, such as anger and pride, than women do (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Men want to achieve changes in the situation and to present themselves as being in control more than women do. As a result, we expect men to be more concerned than women with *power-based motives* for regulating emotions, that is, trying to regain control over themselves, over situations, or over others. An example of a power-based motive is trying to change the behavior of others (e.g., Fiske, Morlin, & Stevens, 1996), for example, by expressing anger or disappointment to someone who has just insulted them. Such expressions presumably have the objective of stopping or changing the behavior of the insulter. Furthermore, the goal of the expression might be to show that one is not the kind of person who can be mocked.

The salience of a particular motive for regulating one's emotions in a specific direction is dependent not only on one's gender but also on context-specific features, such as the relationship between the object and the target of the emotion (Graham, Gentry, & Green, 1981; Stoppard & Gunn Gruchy, 1993). The *target* is the person to whom the emotion expression is addressed, whereas the *object* of the emotion is the thing about which, or the person about whom, the emotion is expressed. When a negative emotion is expressed toward someone who is also the object of the expression (i.e., the object and target of the emotion are the same), the expression is likely to have different goals than when object and target are different because the potential consequences of the expression vary between the two cases. For example, if a person finds out that he or she is not selected for a job and then expresses his or her disappointment to a friend (i.e., object and target are different), a likely goal of this expression is to recruit support. However, if someone exhibits his or her disappointment to a friend after the latter cancels an appointment (i.e., object and target are the same), the expression is more likely to serve the goal of trying to change the target's behavior.

Because we presume that men are more concerned with power-based motives and that women are more concerned with relationship-oriented motives, we assume that the similarity or dissimilarity of target and object will affect their motives for emotion regulation and, as a consequence, their regulatory activities (cf. Stoppard & Gunn Gruchy, 1993). In an anger-evoking context where object and target are different, for example, expressing anger has no consequences for the target, and women should therefore be more motivated to seek support, compared with a context where the target and object are similar. As a consequence, it is more likely that women will express powerful emotions in contexts where object and target are not the same. For men, on the other hand, the opposite pattern is expected: Their

motive to achieve control or restore the balance of power will be more salient in situations where this is actually possible, that is, where the object of their anger is present.

Furthermore, the sex of the other person may also be important. Studies of nonverbal behavior, for example, have shown that gender differences are more pronounced in same-sex settings compared with cross-sex contexts (Ariès, 1984; Hall, 1984). Studies of anger and aggression have also shown that women are less often the target of angry or aggressive behavior than are men (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Finally, studies of social sharing have shown that men are much more likely to talk to women (typically their partners) about their feelings, whereas women share their emotions with a wider range of persons, both male and female (Rimé, Mesquita, Philippot, & Boca, 1991).

The consequences of these differential expectations of women and men concerning the outcomes of emotion expression for their motives for emotion regulation may be summarized as follows. In the service of protecting or enhancing their male identity, men should be more motivated to express their emotions in such a way as to achieve or retain power and control, and thereby avoid displaying powerlessness. In keeping with their female identity, women should be more motivated to maintain close relationships. This would explain why men are more inclined to express their anger and disappointment (if it is about the other person), and to avoid expressing fear and sadness; for women, the reverse applies.

We can summarize our arguments in terms of two sets of hypotheses. The first set relates to our basic assumption concerning the way in which men and women differ in their emotion expressions. We chose to study the emotions anger, fear, and sadness because they clearly differ with respect to the powerful-powerless dimension. Because disappointment is either powerful or powerless, depending on the relationship between object and target, we also included this emotion. We hypothesized that

1. women would express sadness and fear more overtly than men;
2. men would express anger and disappointment more overtly than women when these emotions were about the target and when the target was male; and
3. women would express disappointment and anger more overtly than men when this emotion was not about the target.

The second set of hypotheses concerns gender differences in self-reported motives for emotion regulation. Above, we distinguished four motives for emotion regulation: the expected cathartic effects of the emotion expression, avoidance of gender-inappropriate impressions, power-based motives, and relationship-oriented motives. We hypothesized that

1. men and women would not differ in self-reported motives concerning the cathartic effects of emotion expression;
2. men would be more concerned to avoid being judged as emotional, especially when expressing fear, sadness, or disappointment (when object and target were different);
3. women would be more inclined than men to report relationship-oriented motives;
4. men would be more inclined than women to report power-based motives; and
5. the differences predicted in Hypotheses 2 to 4 (in this set) would be stronger in same-sex than in cross-sex interactions.

METHOD

Participants

Three hundred and fourteen Dutch students (average age 21 years, 188 females, 126 males) at two further-education colleges participated in this study by completing a questionnaire. The students were recruited from six different majors (design and communication, business, laboratory technician, librarian, logistics, and social work). These majors were chosen because the proportions of female and male students were similar and because the professions for which students were training are not (in the Netherlands at least) traditionally feminine or masculine.

Design

In a pilot study, 16 vignettes were pretested to establish whether they elicited one of the four intended emotions: anger, disappointment, fear, or sadness. Respondents completed a written questionnaire with situation descriptions, followed by an open question asking, "Which emotion would you feel in such a situation?" The eight vignettes that elicited the target emotions most clearly were selected for inclusion in the main study. These vignettes are shown (translated from the original Dutch) in the appendix. It can be seen that there are two vignettes per emotion, one depicting a situation in which object and target are the same, the other a situation in which object and target are different.[1] As well as object-target relationship, sex of target (i.e., the sex of the person to whom the emotion is expressed) was also varied between participants (as shown by the variations in parentheses in the appendix). In short, the main study employed a 2 (sex of respondent) × 2 (sex of target) × 2 (object-target relationship: same vs. different) design. Each respondent completed a questionnaire containing two vignettes that varied with respect to type of emotion, object-target relationship, and sex of target. To avoid order effects, each respondent received a different combination of two of the four types of emotion. Statistical analyses were performed for each emotion separately.

Procedure

Eight questionnaires with different combinations of the vignettes were devised with a view to minimizing order effects. Participants completed the questionnaire in a classroom setting, in groups of about 20 persons. Respondents were asked to imagine themselves as the main character in the situation described. The events described in the vignettes all took place between friends. After reading each vignette, respondents were asked to answer different kinds of questions.

Dependent measures

Intensity of emotion. As a manipulation check, the first question was "Would you experience the emotion in question in the situation as described in the vignette?" The answers were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very strongly*).

Expression of emotion. Two questions measured whether and how overtly respondents would express their emotions. One was "How strongly would you express this emotion in the situation as described in the vignette?" Answers were given on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very strongly*). The other question was "What would you do if you were the main character in a situation as described in the vignette?" A number of options followed, each of which was rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all applicable*) to 7 (*very applicable*). The options were the following: I would say to my friend that I am (angry, afraid, sad, disappointed), I would want to walk away, I would cry, I would not show anything at all, I would or could not do anything, I would be silent, I would freeze, I would yell or call names, and I would panic and want to scream.

Self-reported motives for regulation. Motives for regulating one's emotion expression were measured by asking the respondents to indicate to what extent each of a set of statements would be applicable to them in the context of the vignette. Each statement referred to a motive for expressing an emotion and started with the phrase "I would express my (anger, fear, sadness, disappointment), because." We also asked a question concerning one's expected evaluation after having expressed an emotion: "How do you think your friend would think about you if you expressed this emotion?" Answers to the latter question were ratings on the following scales: secure or insecure, balanced or not balanced, weak or strong, emotional or nonemotional, sensitive or not sensitive, nice or not nice, honest or not honest, cold or warm.[2] Each statement was rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all applicable*) to 7 (*very applicable*).

On the basis of a factor analysis with varimax rotation, we constructed scales by combining items that loaded higher than .75 on the following two factors: self-confidence (secure, strong, balanced) and emotionality (emotional, sensitive). Scores on the self-confidence scale were combined with the responses to one of the motive statements to create a single measure (see below).

Self-reported motives for expressing an emotion. The four motives for emotion expression were measured by the following items (some items were combined to create a single measure; in all these cases, the items were significantly correlated, all $ps < .01$). The expected cathartic effects of the emotion expression were measured by "It is a relief to express it" and "It just happens." *Avoiding a gender-inappropriate emotional impression* was measured by the expectation that one would be seen as emotional (see above). With respect to *relationship-oriented motives*, we distinguished a motive to maintain one's relationship, measured by "It is better for our friendship," and a motive to seek comfort, measured by "I would be comforted if I expressed it." With respect to *power-based motives*, we distinguished a power motive, measured by "I want to change the behavior of my friend," and a control motive, measured by "I want to be seen as self-confident," together with the expectation that one would be seen as self-confident (see above).

Self-reported motives for not expressing an emotion. Because the respondents could answer the question on emotion expression by saying that they would not show their emotions, and because the motives for suppressing an emotion may be different from those for expressing an emotion, responses to additional statements (all of which were preceded by the phrase "I would not express my (anger, fear, sadness, disappointment), because") were asked. For obvious reasons, the expected cathartic effects of expressing emotions cannot be reformulated as a question about the cathartic effects of suppressing emotions. Three motives were assessed. Motives that can be regarded as *contracathartic* were measured by "I find it hard to express myself" and "I do not like to let myself go," a *power-based* motive was measured by "I want to be seen as someone who can control him/herself," and a *relationship-oriented* motive was measured by "I do not want to hurt my friend."

RESULTS

Each emotion was analyzed separately. Data were entered into a 2 (sex of respondent: male vs. female) × 2 (sex of target: male vs. female) × 2 (object-target relationship: same vs. different) analysis of variance. Preliminary analyses had established that there were no significant order effects.

Manipulation Check: Intensity of Emotion

The first issue to be addressed is whether respondents would have experienced the intended emotion in the

TABLE 1: Means (standard deviations in parentheses) for Specific Emotional Expressions in Four Emotional Contexts by Men and Women

Emotional Expression	Anger n = 150		Disappointment n = 149		Fear n = 152		Sadness n = 161	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Crying	1.26_a	2.12_b	1.22_a	1.78_b	1.09_a	1.33_b	2.54_a	4.45_b
	(0.83)	(1.29)	(0.63)	(1.25)	(0.26)	(0.67)	(1.65)	(1.79)
Not showing anything	1.81	2.26	3.22_a	2.36_b	3.92_a	3.26_b	2.71_a	2.09_b
	(1.30)	(1.72)	(1.86)	(1.37)	(1.75)	(1.66)	(1.45)	(1.47)
Saying I am	5.28	5.40	4.47_a	5.04_b	3.24_a	3.98_b	4.64_a	5.53_b
(disappointed, afraid, sad)	(1.64)	(1.29)	(1.85)	(1.48)	(1.74)	(1.68)	(1.51)	(1.59)
Freezing	—	—[a]	—	—[a]	1.54_a	2.03_b	—	—[a]
					(0.93)	(1.32)		

NOTE: Means within emotions with different subscripts differ significantly $(p < .05)$ by analysis of variance (i.e., univariate main effect of sex of respondent).
a. These reactions are not applicable to the emotion concerned and were therefore omitted from the questionnaire for this emotion.

situation described in the vignette. A t test was used to compare the mean ratings of the respondents with the midpoint (i.e., 4) on the 7-point scale. Significant t values were found for all four emotions.

Analyzing the responses of male and female respondents separately showed that in the case of anger, significant t values for both men, $M = 5.57$, $t(62) = 8.99$, $p < .001$, and women, $M = 5.89$, $t(92) = 16.05$, $p < .001$, were found. This was also the case for disappointment, $M_m = 5.03$, $t(58) = 5.48$, $p < .001$; $M_w = 5.65$, $t(92) = 13.71$, $p < .001$, and for sadness, $M_m = 5.04$, $t(66) = 5.19$, $p < .001$; $M_w = 5.92$, $t(93) = 14.98$, $p < .001$. In the case of fear, the male mean $(M = 4.15)$ did not differ significantly from the midpoint, although the mean rating was higher than the midpoint of the scale. However, the difference between the female mean $(M = 5.22)$ and the midpoint was significant, $t(22) = 9.38$, $p < .001$. Thus, both male and female respondents reported experiencing the "target" emotion in the situations as described in the vignettes and the intensity of this emotion was, except for male respondents in the case of fear, significantly greater than the midpoint of the scale.

A further manipulation check involved comparing the two versions of each vignette (i.e., one with a male target, the other with a female target). When the mean emotional ratings for these two situations were compared using t tests, no significant differences were found. Whereas the two versions of each vignette differed with respect to the sex of the target of the expression, this variation did not give rise to unintended differences in strength of emotional experience to that situation.

Differences in Emotional Expression:
Sex of Respondent Main Effects

Respondents were asked how they would express the emotion in the situation as intended by the vignette. Responses were entered into three-way multivariate

analyses of variance (MANOVAs) with sex of respondent, object-target relationship (same vs. different), and sex of target as the factors. We first report significant main effects of sex of respondent separately for each emotion.

Anger. The multivariate main effect of sex of respondent was significant, $F(6, 142) = 4.03$, $p < .01$. Univariate analyses revealed that women were more likely than men to report that they would cry when angry, $F(1, 147) = 20.19$, $p < .001$, and that they would not show anything, $F(1, 147) = 3.03$, $p < .10$ (see Table 1 for means).

Disappointment. A significant multivariate main effect of sex of respondent was found, $F(5, 139) = 4.14$, $p < .01$. Women were more likely than men to report that they would say that they felt disappointed, $F(1, 143) = 4.23$, $p < .05$, and that they would cry, $F(1, 143) = 9.52$, $p < .01$. Men, on the other hand, were more inclined than women to report that they would not show anything at all when disappointed, $F(1, 143) = 10.42$, $p < .01$ (see Table 1 for means).

Sadness. The multivariate main effect of sex of respondent was significant, $F(6, 146) = 9.58$, $p < .001$. Women were more likely than men to report that they would say that they felt sad, $F(1, 151) = 8.23$, $p < .01$, and that they would cry, $F(1, 151) = 45.59$, $p < .001$. Men, on the other hand, were more inclined than women to report that they would not show anything at all when sad, $F(1, 151) = 5.53$, $p < .05$ (see Table 1 for means).

Fear. There was a multivariate main effect for sex of respondent, $F(5, 140) = 2.55$, $p < .05$. Women were more likely than men to report that they would say that they felt afraid, $F(1, 145) = 6.54$, $p < .05$, that they would cry, $F(1, 145) = 4.48$, $p < .05$, and that they would freeze, $F(1, 145) = 6.10$, $p < .05$. Men, on the other hand, were more inclined than women to report that they would not show anything at all when afraid, $F(1, 145) = 5.07$, $p < .05$ (see Table 1 for means).

TABLE 2:   Means (standard deviations in parentheses) for Men and Women Expressing Anger in Different Contexts

| | Type of Expression | | | |
| | Yelling/Calling Names n = 150 | | Crying n = 150 | |
Object-Target Relationship	Men	Women	Men	Women
Same	2.42_a	1.74_b	1.32_a	1.87_a
	(1.67)	(1.16)	(1.10)	(1.18)
Different	1.83_b	2.66_a	1.18_a	2.36_b
	(1.17)	(1.72)	(0.55)	(1.41)

NOTE: Means within expressions with different subscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$) by the Student-Newman-Keuls test.

Gender Differences in Emotional Expression: Context Effects

Anger. There was a significant multivariate interaction between sex of respondent and object-target relationship, $F(6, 142) = 2.43$, $p < .05$. Univariate analyses indicated that this was due to the fact that men were more inclined to report that they would yell or call names if the object and target of the anger were the same rather than different, whereas women indicated that they were more likely to yell or call names if the object and target of the anger were different rather than the same, $F(1, 147) = 9.69$, $p < .01$. Furthermore, women were more likely to report they would cry if the object and target were different, as compared to when the object and target were the same, $F(1, 147) = 2.80$, $p < .10$. For men, this object-target relationship did not make a difference (see Table 2 for means).

In sum, anger was, as expected, the only emotion for which women were more likely than men to report that they would not show their emotion. The reverse was the case for fear, sadness, and disappointment: Men were more likely than women to report that they would not show these emotions, whereas women were more likely than men to report that they would overtly express these emotions. In line with our expectations, the relationship between object and target had different effects on male and female emotional behavior in the case of anger.

Differences in Self-Reported Motives for Expressing Emotions: Sex of Respondent Main Effects

Measures of motives for expressing an emotion were entered into a 3-way MANOVA, with sex of respondent, sex of target, and object-target relationship (same vs. different) as the three factors. First we report the significant main effects due to sex of respondent.

Anger. The multivariate main effect of sex of respondent was significant, $F(5, 135) = 4.58$, $p < .001$. Univariate analyses showed that women were more likely than men to say that they would express their anger because of the cathartic effects of the emotion expression, $F(1, 138) =$ 10.96, $p < .001$. Men, on the other hand, were more likely than women to report that they would express their anger because they wanted to be seen as in control, $F(1, 138) = 4.05$, $p < .05$ (see Table 3 for means).

Disappointment. There was a multivariate main effect of sex of respondent, $F(6, 132) = 5.46$, $p < .001$. Compared with men, women reported more often that they would express their disappointment because of the cathartic effects of the emotion expression, $F(1, 137) =$ 22.58, $p < .001$, and because they wanted to receive comfort, $F(1, 137) = 7.02$, $p < .01$ (see Table 3 for means).

Fear. There was a significant multivariate main effect of sex of respondent, $F(1, 134) = 4.45$, $p < .001$. Women were more likely than men to report that they would express their fear because of the cathartic effects of the emotion expression, $F(1, 139) = 21.49$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3 for means).

Sadness. The multivariate main effect of sex of respondent was significant, $F(6, 145) = 3.21$, $p < .01$. Women were more likely than men to report that they would express their sadness because of the cathartic effects of the emotion expression, $F(1, 150) = 9.76$, $p < .01$. Women were also more likely than men to report a comfort-seeking motive for expressing sadness, $F(1, 150) = 11.94$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3 for means).

Motives for Expressing: Context Effects

Anger. A significant multivariate interaction effect was found between sex of respondent and object-target relationship, $F(5, 134) = 2.78$, $p < .05$. Univariate analyses showed that this interaction was significant for the emotionality impression, $F(1, 138) = 8.78$, $p < .01$. When object and target of the anger expression were different, men ($M = 4.01$) reported expecting to be evaluated as more emotional, compared to when object and target were the same ($M = 3.23$). For women, this pattern was reversed: When the object and target of the anger were different, women ($M = 3.47$) expected to be evaluated as less emotional, as compared to when object and target were the same ($M = 3.67$).

Disappointment. There was a multivariate main effect for sex of target, $F(6, 132) = 2.68$, $p < .05$. Respondents more often reported a comfort motive when expressing disappointment to a female target ($M = 3.47$) than to a male target ($M = 2.57$), $F(1, 137) = 10.66$, $p < .01$. A significant multivariate three-way interaction effect was also found, $F(6, 132) = 2.38$, $p < .05$. Univariate analyses showed that this interaction was significant for the control motive, $F(1, 137) = 8.78$, $p < .01$, and expected emotionality, $F(1, 137) = 6.00$, $p < .05$. When object and target were different, men expected to be seen as less in control by a female target ($M = 3.51$) than by a male target ($M = 3.94$). By contrast, women expected to be

TABLE 3:   Means (standard deviations in parentheses) for Motives for Expressing Emotions by Men and Women

Type of Motive	Anger n = 150		Disappointment n = 149		Fear n = 152		Sadness n = 161	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Cathartic effects	4.40$_a$	5.15$_b$	3.95$_a$	4.92$_b$	3.03$_a$	4.08$_b$	4.18$_a$	5.02$_b$
	(1.24)	(1.17)	(1.26)	(1.26)	(1.25)	(1.22)	(1.71)	(1.45)
Seeking comfort	—^{a}	—^{a}	2.68$_a$	3.37$_b$	2.52	2.67	3.25$_a$	4.25$_b$
			(1.63)	(1.55)	(1.16)	(1.18)	(1.83)	(1.68)
Control	4.14$_a$	3.90$_b$	3.80	3.60	—^{a}	—^{a}	—^{a}	—^{a}
	(0.74)	(0.63)	(0.77)	(0.61)				

NOTE: Means within emotions with different subscripts differ significantly ($p < .05$) by analysis of variance (i.e., univariate main effect of sex of respondent).
a. These motives are not applicable to the emotion concerned and were therefore omitted from the questionnaire for this emotion.

judged as more in control by a female target ($M = 3.70$) than by a male target ($M = 3.35$). When object and target were the same, men expected to be judged as more in control by a female target ($M = 4.20$) than by a male target ($M = 3.55$); for women, sex of target did not make a difference ($M_m = 3.69$; $M_f = 3.70$).

In the case of expected emotionality, larger differences as a function of sex of target were found when object and target were different. Men expected to be seen as more emotional by women ($M = 4.46$) than by men ($M = 3.73$), whereas women expected to be seen as more emotional by men ($M = 4.31$) than by women ($M = 3.68$). When object and target were similar, in other words, if disappointment was expressed directly to the person in whom one was disappointed, men expected to be seen as somewhat more emotional by men ($M = 3.89$) than by women ($M = 3.68$), whereas for women sex of target made little difference ($M_m = 3.88$, $M_f = 3.96$).

Fear. The multivariate three-way interaction effect was significant, $F(6, 134) = 2.63$, $p < .05$. Univariate analyses showed that this effect was significant for the impression of emotionality, $F(1, 139) = 7.87$, $p < .01$. When object and target of the fear were different, men thought they would be evaluated as more emotional by a female ($M = 4.15$) than by a male target ($M = 3.50$). For women, the reverse applied. They thought they would be evaluated as more emotional by a male ($M = 3.67$) than by a female target ($M = 3.47$). When object and target were the same, men expected to be seen as more emotional by a male ($M = 4.23$) than by a female target ($M = 3.56$). For women, sex of target had less impact ($M_m = 3.72$, $M_f = 3.79$).

Self-Reported Motives for Not Expressing Emotion

Some questions concerning the motives for not having expressed an emotion did not apply to the situation were the object and target of the emotion were different (e.g., "I did not express my anger [to A] because I did not want to hurt my friend [B]"). Thus, in the following

analyses, we only analyzed the questionnaires in which the object and target of the emotion were similar. Responses were entered into a three-way MANOVA, using the same factors as in previous analyses. We found a main effect for sex of respondent for anger, $F(1, 75) = 9.22$, $p < .01$, and for disappointment, $F(1, 73) = 7.22$, $p < .01$: Women ($M = 3.44$) were more likely than men ($M = 2.16$) to report a relationship-oriented motive for not expressing anger. The same was true for disappointment ($M_w = 3.13$, $M_m = 2.33$).

DISCUSSION

The general hypothesis tested in the present research was that men and women differ in the way in which they express specific emotions and that these differences may be explained in terms of the different motives held by the two sexes with regard to emotion expression. The first set of hypotheses concerning the way in which men and women express their emotions was largely confirmed. Women expressed more overt sadness, fear, and disappointment, in the sense that they reported that they would explicitly verbalize their anxiety, sadness, or disappointment; that they would freeze; or that they would cry. In these emotional situations, men, by contrast, were significantly more inclined than women to report that they would not show their fear, sadness, or disappointment. In addition, men expressed significantly more anger than women when object and target were the same, for example, by yelling or calling names. However, when object and target were different, women expressed significantly more anger by yelling or calling names, or by crying.

These results support the assumption that women tend to display more powerlessness when expressing their emotions, whereas men tend to display more power. Openly admitting one's sadness, fear, and disappointment, and openly crying can be seen as clear signs of powerlessness, whereas yelling or calling names is assumed to reflect a motive to maintain or regain power.

In addition, men's greater inclination to hide their sadness, fear, and disappointment can be seen as a reluctance to display signs of powerlessness. This difference was especially apparent in the case of anger. In contexts where object and target are the same, the expression of anger is direct and is more readily interpreted as a display of power than is expressing one's anger to a third party (i.e., when object and target are different). Women more often reported expressing their anger in the latter case. This contextual difference may explain some of the inconsistencies in the findings of previous studies of gender differences in anger expression. Even in the case of a potentially powerful emotion such as anger, women do not display power by directly criticizing or rebuking others but rather vent their anger to a third person. This indirect power display seems more characteristic of women. However, our hypothesis that the expression of disappointment would also be affected by the relationship between object and target was not confirmed. We will return to this issue below.

Another finding conflicting with our expectations was that sex of target proved to be a relatively unimportant determinant of the way in which emotions were expressed. The fact that no sex-of-target effects on emotion expression were found is difficult to attribute to some feature of our methodology because sex-of-target effects were found with respect to regulation motives. However, it is possible that when answering questions about their emotional expressions, respondents focused more on the emotional antecedents, whereas in answering questions about their goals and motives, they focused to a greater extent on the potential consequences, which may have rendered sex of target more salient.

Our second set of predictions concerned the different motives as reported by men and women for expressing or not expressing their emotions. Again, our hypotheses were largely confirmed. The prediction that women would report more relationship-oriented motives was supported. Women were more likely to report seeking comfort when expressing disappointment and sadness and to report concern for their relationship as a motive for suppressing anger and disappointment when object and target were similar. In other words, they were more worried about the effects on the relationship with the other person if they expressed their disappointment or anger directly. Thus, it can be argued that women's self-reported motives for regulating emotions differ from those of men in being more relational: Women empathize more with other persons, and they expect others to show empathy in return.

Men, on the other hand, reported significantly more power-based motives in relation to the anger situations, although this was only true of the control motive. The fact that no difference was found with respect to the power motive (i.e., changing the other's behavior) may be due to the specific content of the vignettes. In both anger vignettes, the offensive behavior of the object of the anger was something that could not be undone (e.g., a jacket had been ruined); trying to change the other's behavior in such a situation would not make much sense. The only change that could have been brought about was an explicit excuse by the other. The inclusion of a different measure of the power motive, such as "I would express my anger because I want the other to apologize," would have been more likely to result in gender differences in this power motive. Nevertheless, the presence of a gender difference in the control motive suggests that power-based motives are more important for men than they are for women. This greater prevalence of men's power-based motives versus women's relationship-oriented motives for regulating anger therefore helps to explain why men express their anger and disappointment more directly and overtly, that is, by yelling at and calling names to the object of their anger, whereas women tend to express their anger only indirectly, that is, to a third person who is not the object of their anger.

Men also reported more power-based motives in relation to disappointment, albeit only when object and target were similar and when expressing their disappointment to a female friend. This effect of situational context is in line with our predictions: The motive to restore power is only functional if the person who is the source of the disappointment is actually present. The fact that men more frequently mentioned power-based motives when their disappointment was directed at women may be attributable to women's lower status, making the restoration of power easier to accomplish.

In fear and disappointment contexts, men and women differed in the extent to which they expected to be judged by others as emotional. Men expected to be judged as more emotional when expressing fear or disappointment to a female friend who was not the object of their emotion expression. Because men also reported avoiding showing their fear and disappointment, it can be inferred that men are motivated to avoid being judged as emotional, resulting in the suppression of these emotions. This appears to be especially the case in reaction to women. Women also expected to be judged as emotional, but for them the pattern was reversed: They expected to be judged as more emotional by a male friend, albeit only in the disappointment situation. Inspection of the specific content of the fear and disappointment vignettes where object and target were different suggests a possible explanation for these effects. The disappointment vignette describes disappointment at the presumed break-off of a new romance, whereas the fear vignette describes fear of a potential attack by three men at night. These contexts may have made gender

identity salient because the relationship between men and women is at stake here, albeit in very different ways. Sharing one's disappointment about a failed romance with a member of the opposite sex may typecast one as an emotional person, whereas this would less be the case when talking to a member of one's own sex. Both men and women expected to be seen more as emotional persons by members of the other sex. In the fear situation, male gender identity is at stake because sharing one's fear about the potential threat of other men with a woman is expected to be judged as an emotional reaction, the norm being that men should act heroically in defense of women in such situations.

Finally, in contrast with our expectations, the expected cathartic effects appeared to be an important self-reported motive for women in the case of all four emotions. This may be because femininity is traditionally associated with emotionality (Fischer, 1993; Shields, 1987). According to everyday knowledge in Western culture, emotional expressions are irrational and hard to control (Fischer & Jansz, 1995; Fischer & Mesquita, 1988; Kövecses, 1990), leading people to think about their emotions in terms of inner states that are vented spontaneously. Following the principle of a self-fulfilling prophecy, one could argue that because others expect women to display their emotions spontaneously, women act accordingly. Women may have internalized these ideas and thereby learned to interpret their own emotion expressions in terms of spontaneous displays over which they have relatively little control. In addition, women may have less trouble with the idea of appearing emotional than men have, especially in the case of the more "feminine" emotions. They may not find it necessary or useful to try to control their emotions in the way men do. This reproduces emotionality and powerlessness as core characteristics of femininity (Shields, 1987).

The context-specific gender differences we found in the present study lead us to argue that the methodology used in the present study is useful. Although some general objections can be raised against the use of vignettes (cf. Parkinson & Manstead, 1992), we believe that this methodology is adequate for our present purposes. Measuring people's beliefs about their motives for expressing or not expressing certain emotions is an important first step in studying emotion regulatory behavior because such beliefs are assumed to work as self-fulfilling prophecies (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977). For example, the fact that women, more than men, believed that the expression of their emotions is cathartic not only functions as a rationale for not suppressing emotions but is also assumed to influence the actual experience of emotion expression as a relief.

However, there are also some limitations of our chosen method and design. First, the present study is concerned with self-reported motives and does not allow us to draw firm conclusions about the way in which various motives lead persons to regulate their emotions. An interesting possibility for future research on this issue would be to manipulate the different types of motives to study the influence on the expression of specific emotions. Second, because we manipulated the object-target relationship as a between-subjects factor and because there was only one vignette to represent each level of this factor for a given emotion, the object-target manipulation was confounded with the content of the vignette. It follows that we cannot completely rule out the possibility that effects ascribable to the object-target manipulation are to some degree due to variations in the content of the vignettes we used. Because of this, we did not report any main effects due to the object-target factor in the present study. Although the fact that this variable interacted with sex of respondent in the predicted way in the present study makes it less likely that such effects reflect the unwanted effects of situational content, it would clearly be desirable to replicate these effects by using different combinations of vignette content and object-target relationship. Note that it may be difficult to manipulate the object-target relationship without at the same time changing some other features of the situation (such as the appropriateness of the emotion) because these tend to be naturally confounded with the presence or absence of the object of the emotion. However, because these are natural confounds, in the sense that they reflect confounds that would also obtain in real settings, this does not strike us as a fatal problem.

In sum, the findings of this study suggest that men and women report different motives for either expressing or suppressing emotions. These different motives confirm the idea that women are less reluctant than men to display powerless emotions because they are more concerned than men with relationships with others and less concerned about being judged as emotional. Men, on the other hand, are more concerned with power-based motives, such as being seen to be in control over the situation, in the sense that they want to create a self-confident impression. These differences in motives for emotion regulation may be the result of two complementary processes. The first is that specific emotional situations may activate schemata or scripts about similar experiences that have actually happened in the past. These experiences are very likely to be different for men and women, given the different positions and roles men and women have in our society. Compared with men, women probably have more experience of receiving help and comfort from others when displaying powerless emotions, and they may have been confronted with more anger and hostility when directly displaying powerful emotions. These schemata are very likely to structure

men's and women's expectations about other people's reactions when expressing specific emotions.

A second process that could account for the differences in motives of men and women is that, as a result of different socialization practices, men and women develop different attitudes and beliefs concerning the expression of emotions. The development of women's identity is characterized by a continuous focus on being related to others, whereas men's development centers on issues of differentiation and individuation (Chodorow, 1978). This implies that sharing one's feelings would follow more logically from women's socialization and identity development than from men's. There is also evidence that conversations between parents and daughters have a more explicit emotional content than do conversations between parents and sons (Adams, Kuebli, Boyle, & Fivush, 1995). Thus, generally speaking, women seem more concerned about losing relationships, emotional support, and sympathy, whereas men seem more concerned about losing status and power. The gender differences in emotion expression and motives for regulating as observed in the present study can be interpreted in these terms. Women are less bothered by the admission that something has happened that makes one vulnerable, that one is out of control, or that one does not know what to do about the situation, as long as such an admission does not jeopardize their relationships.

APPENDIX

Anger

(Object is not target)
You have been to the cinema with a friend. When you and he (she) walk to your bicycles, you notice that your bicycle has been vandalized. The tires have been punctured, the front wheel has been bent, and the saddle has been removed. The sight of the vandalized bicycle makes you feel angry.

(Object is target)
A friend of yours has borrowed one of your jackets to wear at a party. You are very fond of the jacket and you ask him (her) to be careful with it. The next day, he (she) comes by to return the jacket. When he (she) hands it over, you straightaway see a wine spot on the right sleeve. The spot is very noticeable and you know your friend must have seen it, but he (she) does not mention it. The spoiled jacket and your friend's attitude make you angry.

Sadness

(Object is not target)
You go with a friend to take your cat to the vet. Your cat is very ill and the vet has advised you to have him put to sleep. You agree with the surgeon. Now you are sitting with your friend in the waiting room. No one else apart from him (her) is present. You are feeling sad.

(Object is target)
The parents of one of your friends live in New Zealand. The parents want your friend to move to New Zealand to work with them. One evening he (she) comes by to tell you that he (she) has decided to go and is soon going to leave for New-Zealand. You know that you will miss him (her) badly and you feel sad.

Fear

(Object is not target)
One day you go with a friend to a city that is unfamiliar to both of you. You are walking to the station to catch the train home. The city is pretty well deserted. Neither of you knows the way. You take a turning to the right and find yourselves in a dark alley. Suddenly you notice three men coming right toward to you. You feel afraid.

(Object is target)
A friend of yours has just got his (her) driver's license. He (she) has invited you to spend the day going for a drive in his (her) parent's car. Sitting in the passenger seat, you notice that he (she) is not a good driver. On leaving the city your friend begins to drive faster. It seems he (she) has confidence in his (her) driving ability, because he (she) overtakes many cars. When, for the second time, an overtaking maneuver nearly goes wrong, you feel afraid.

Disappointment

(Object is not target)
A while ago you met someone whom you find very attractive. You spend a pleasant evening with him (her) and he (she) said that he (she) would call you the following Wednesday evening to make a date. That evening a friend of yours is visiting and you tell him (her) about the important phone call you are expecting. However, when it turns midnight, you know this person will not call anymore. You feel disappointed.

(Object is target)
You and a friend of yours have reserved tickets for a concert. You are very much looking forward to the concert. Apart from the fact that the band playing that evening is one of your favorites, you know that you will enjoy spending the evening with your friend. But the day before the concert your friend comes by to tell you that he (she) will not be able to come because he (she) has to work on the evening of the concert. Your plans are ruined. You feel disappointed.

NOTES

1. The main effect of object-target relationship therefore varies with respect to the content of the vignette. We will therefore pay no attention to main effects of object-target relationship.
2. The last three items were used as fillers.

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