

Appraisal-Tendency Framework and Gender: A  
Moderator in the Emotions and Judgement Process

Sarah Tucker  
Middle Tennessee State University

Alexander T. Jackson, Ph.D.  
Middle Tennessee State University

Satoris S. Howes, Ph.D.  
Oregon State University

Kaitlyn Berry  
Middle Tennessee State University

## **Abstract**

The study aims to clarify and understand the role that gender has on perceptions of justice through placement of blame and emotion. The Appraisal Tendency Framework explains how emotion impacts judgements, and the fairness theory explores how blame placement affects perceptions of justice. This research explores the impact of gender on both models. This study will utilize a 2 (emotional induction) x 2 (gender of actor) design. In the emotional induction portion, participants will view clips from movies to induce either sadness or anger. Following the video clip, all participants will be asked to write about a time they either experienced sadness or anger for their respective conditions. All participants will then take the PANAS-X to evaluate the effectiveness of the emotion inductions. In the gender of actor portion of the study, participants will view a short clip of either a male or female professor signing student scholarship checks. It will be clear that one student is under rewarded and one student is over rewarded; although, it is unclear if this difference was intentional. Participants will then rate the degree of blame attributed to the professor and their perception of fairness of the events in the video. Understanding how gender impacts perceptions of justice may help organizations understand how to better ensure perceived justice in the workplace.

## Summary

### Background

In the workplace, a sense of fairness and justice is vital to smooth operations. Perceived injustices are associated with negative outcomes such as counterproductive work behaviors, lower work performance, and turnover intention (Bakhshi et al., 2009; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). The perception of unfairness in decision making, or injustice, can also be impacted by emotions and this relationship is further mediated by placement of blame (Kausel et al., 2016). The appraisal tendency framework explains this premise that emotions are involved with judgements and perceptions of justice (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). Fairness theory also explains justice as a function of attributing blame (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

Research on factors affecting justice has shown differing effects for gender. Studies have shown two schools of thought regarding gender's effect on justice: one school of thought supporting a difference perspective while others arguing for similarity (Matlin, 2008; Hyde 2004). Laufer & Gillespie (2004) found that gender differences affect empathy which may alter blame attribution. There has been conflicting work finding no differences in emotion across gender that would lead to differing justice perceptions (Brody & Hall, 1993). These findings show that gender may have a larger impact on justice and should be further elucidated. Based on this information, I formulated the following competing hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1 – The relationship between anger and blame will be stronger for men (a) while the relationship between sadness and blame (b) and the relationship between blame and perceived injustice (c) will be stronger for women.*

*Hypothesis 2 – Gender will not have a significant effect on the relationship between emotion (anger vs. sadness) and blame (a), and gender will not have a significant effect on the relationship between blame and fairness perceptions (b).*

### Participants

Undergraduate students will be recruited from a southeastern university.

### Materials and Procedure

Part one of the study will assess individual differences on affectivity, equity sensitivity, trait morality and anger, and the Big Five characteristics. This section goes beyond the scope of the current project. Part two of the study includes an emotion induction. This study will utilize a 2 (emotional induction) x 2 (gender of actor) design. In the emotional induction portion, participants will view clips either from the movie *My Bodyguard* (Gino & Schweitzer, 2008) for the anger condition or the movie *The Champ* (Lerner et al., 2004) for the sadness condition. Following the video clip, all participants will be asked to write about a time they either experienced sadness or anger for their respective conditions. All participants will then take the PANAS-X, a survey to measure emotion and the effectiveness of the emotional induction.

In the gender of actor portion of the study, participants will view a short clip of either a male or female professor signing student scholarship checks. Each video is identical in behaviors, setting, length, and script. The participant will view the video twice. In these videos, it will be clear that one student is under rewarded and one student is over rewarded; although, it is unclear if this difference was intentional. Participants will then rate the degree of blame attributed to the professor and their perception of fairness of the events in the video (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Choi, 2008; Hirschberger, 2006).

Participants complete the study with a survey providing demographic information, followed by study debriefing. Participants will be compensated with class credit. To analyze the data for this study, Hayes' (2012) process model will be applied using SPSS.

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