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Reactions to men's and women's counterproductive work behavior

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to clarify the nature of counterproductive work behavior (CWB) gender stereotypicality, and to consider whether despite efforts to systematically evaluate employees through formalized performance appraisal processes, gender-stereotypic bias is likely to enter into performance management systems.

Design/methodology/approach – Study 1 used archival data from 197 federal employees to explore actual punishment recommendations allocated to men and women who engaged in a variety of CWBs. Study 2 tested the causal effect of gender stereotypicality on punishment recommendations with 47 EMBA students who participated in a laboratory study.

Findings – Study 1 revealed an interaction between appellant gender and CWB stereotypicality with regard to termination decisions suggesting that women who engage in stereotypical (i.e. feminine) CWBs and men who engage in stereotypical (i.e. masculine) CWBs are more likely to be terminated than women and men who engage in gender counter-stereotypic CWB. Study 2 revealed that women (not men) tended to receive harsher punishment recommendations for stereotypical (i.e. feminine) CWB than for counter-stereotypical (i.e. masculine) CWB.

Practical implications – Findings illustrate that punishments are not universally extreme, as men and women are denigrated differentially depending on the stereotypicality of their behavior. The current research affirms that there are social constructions for evaluating performance that may continue to confound evaluations of performance.

Originality/value – This is one of the first studies to explore the gendered nature of CWB and supports the argument that prescriptive gender stereotypes shape reactions to CWBs.

Keywords Employment, Counterproductive work behaviour, Deviance, Gender stereotypes

Paper type Research paper

There has been increased scholarly emphasis on understanding counterproductive work behavior (CWB) given the substantial negative consequences of these behaviors for individuals (e.g. decreased job satisfaction and increased negative emotions; Bowling and Beehr, 2006) as well as organizations (e.g. decreased business unit performance; Dunlop and Lee, 2004). CWB has been defined as "intentional behavior on the part of an organization member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests" (Sackett and DeVore, 2001, p. 145). CWBs are violations of organizational norms and harm organizational interests (Sackett, 2002). Much of extant research on CWB has focused on predicting CWB based on contextual influences (e.g. Priesemuth *et al.*, 2013; Reio and Ghosh, 2009) and individual differences (e.g. Ng *et al.*, 2016; Penney *et al.*, 2011; Sprung and Jex, 2012). Researchers have argued that CWB is an umbrella construct that captures and overlaps with related constructs such as immoral and deviant behaviors (Sackett and DeVore, 2001). Behaviors defined as CWB include theft, destruction of property, misuse of time and resources, poor attendance, alcohol/drug use and inappropriate verbal or physical actions (Gruys and Sackett, 2003). With few exceptions (see Brees *et al.*, 2012; Gruys *et al.*, 2010; Hershcovis and Barling, 2010; Montgomery and Vance, 2004), similar to existing research on

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deviant behavior, the CWB literature has largely presumed a socially shared standard distinguishing counterproductive from non-counterproductive behaviors exists (see Bennett and Robinson, 2003 for a discussion of this issue as it relates to deviance).

However, because CWB has been defined based upon a socially shared standard, what has been labeled workplace deviance (or CWB) depends on the perspective of the perceiver (Robinson and Bennett, 1995). As a result, researchers have argued that individual reactions to CWB are subjective in nature and likely varied across social groups and over time (Bennett and Robinson, 2003; Kaplan, 1975); not everyone is expected to react to the same behavior in the same way depending upon characteristics of the situation, actor and observer. Indeed, Bennett and Robinson (2003) argued that individuals likely perceived deviant behaviors quite differently, depending upon situational factors, including characteristics of the individual enacting the deviant behavior.

Two of the most significant demographic characteristics in terms of how individuals differentiate themselves from others are sex and race (Zhu *et al.*, 2014). In the USA, white men are generally considered as belonging to higher-status and higher-power social groups as compared to women and minorities (Berger *et al.*, 1977; see Hekman, Johnson, Foo, and Yang, 2017 for a more thorough discussion of the status and power gap that exists for females and ethnic minorities). Minority refers to groups that hold relatively few positions of social power (Schaefer, 1996). Despite organizational actions to promote diversity and help women and other minority groups obtain greater organizational status, power and influence, minority groups are still largely underrepresented at senior organizational levels (Leslie *et al.*, 2014). Perhaps most importantly, a recent meta-analysis indicated that sex differences in rewards such as salaries, bonuses and promotions was 14 times larger than differences in performance evaluations (Joshi *et al.*, 2015). As such, the focus of the current research was to take a critical management lens in order to explore people's reactions to CWB, specifically, how harshly individuals punish men and women who engage in CWB as influenced by gender stereotypes.

Just as it is important to consider sex differences in organizational rewards, it is important to understand sex differences in the application of organizational punishment as these decisions can have profound influence on the careers of individuals. Given that CWB, like organizational deviance, is socially constructed, targets' social identity categories including gender, race, socioeconomic status, age and intersectionality may influence people's reactions to CWB. The process of social categorization creates ingroups and outgroups whereby individuals are no longer perceived as unique, but as representative of their social category (Shields, 2008; Turner, 1978). Membership to social categories and/or the intersectionality of simultaneous identities (e.g. race, gender social class) may influence people's evaluation and judgment when CWB is observed. While individuals simultaneously hold any number of identities, one such social characteristic that affects behavioral judgments is gender (Heilman and Chen, 2005). We chose to focus on gender in the current research because of its salience compared to many other social identities that individuals may hold (Zhu *et al.*, 2014).

Stereotypes dictate not only behaviors that are expected for a given individual, but also behaviors that should not be enacted. Consequently, prescriptive norms regarding how one should behave cues outsiders to expect certain behaviors from men vs women (Heilman, 1983; Heilman and Parks-Stamm, 2007); as such, these prescriptions should influence expectations regarding CWBs and some CWBs are likely to be associated with men (and thus expected from and considered more likely from men) while others are likely to be associated with women (and thus expected from and considered more likely from women). Drawing upon expectancy–confirmation (Neuberg, 1994) and expectancy–violation theories (Burgoon, 1978), we explored through competing hypotheses whether gender consistent or inconsistent CWB are viewed more harshly. In other words, we examined whether

individuals were punished more harshly for engaging in CWBs associated with gender stereotypes or CWBs associated with gender stereotypes that are contrary to gender stereotypes for both men and women. Specifically, across two studies we tested the influence of gender role prescriptions on reactions to men and women engaging in CWBs that were considered to be consistent and inconsistent with stereotypical gender roles. The purpose of this research was to clarify the nature of CWB gender stereotypicality, and to consider, whether despite efforts to systematically evaluate employees through formalized performance appraisal processes, gender-stereotypic bias entered into performance evaluations and associated reward/punishment decisions. Two competing theories informing how gender stereotypes influence judgments of behavior were considered. We reviewed each of these literatures to describe two competing hypotheses.

Gender-stereotypic expectations for CWBs

Social-cognitive research provided the foundation for understanding how stereotype activation led to biased interpretation and oftentimes discriminatory behavior (Bodenhausen and Macare, 2013). Scholars of social perception (e.g. Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Tajfel, 1969) agreed that after an individual has been categorized as a member of a group, a stereotypic response follows, which subsequently guides how the individual is then perceived and treated (see Amodio and Devine, 2006; Chen and Bargh, 1997). Fiske and Neuberg (2013) outlined two approaches to impression formation: category-based processes and individuating processes. Category-based processing typically occurs first as it is efficient (see Tajfel, 1969), whereby the perceiver evaluates the target as a member of a social category and does not move on to attempt to explore individuating information that may disconfirm the social categorization (i.e. stereotype). Therefore, it is important to understand how men and women have been categorized in the workplace.

Social role theory offered that the historical division of men and women into "breadwinner" and "homemaker" roles, respectively, which provided the foundation for how men and women are categorized in the workplace (Eagly, 1987). For example, Kim and Shim (2003) showed that women are perceived as "mentors" (e.g. encouraging people) and "brokers" (e.g. being persuasive) in the workplace more than men. These social roles translated into expectations that men are (and should be) agentic (i.e. authoritative, competent and assertive as compared to being persuasive) and that women are (and should be) communal (i.e. kind, sensitive, caring). But how do such gender role descriptions relate to perceptions of CWBs in the modern workplace as well? According to a survey of Americans, business women were viewed as "honest and ethical," "providing fair pay/benefits" and "mentoring employees" whereas men were viewed as "being willing to take risks" and "negotiating profitable deals" (Pew Research Center, 2015). Although this was not an exhaustive list of the characteristics of men and women in the workplace, it reinforced the notion that there were behaviors that were generally agreed upon as characteristically male or female.

If there are characteristics and behaviors that are generally understand as characteristically male or female, then it stands to reason that different forms of CWB would be associated with male and female stereotypes. In line with social role theory, research generally has indicated that men are more aggressive (e.g. Rutter and Hine, 2005) than women in the workplace. Such stereotypically masculine behavior may be viewed as a demonstration of interpersonal dominance. Women, on the other hand, may be expected to engage in indirect forms of aggression such as gossiping and social undermining (Farley *et al.*, 2010). That is, some CWBs are more stereotypically feminine in nature and some are more masculine. Such widely held beliefs about the characteristics and behaviors of men and women facilitate the formation of stereotypes which serve as drivers of expectations for how men and women should behave (i.e. prescriptive behaviors) in the workplace.

Thus, some CWBs may align more closely with female stereotypes while other CWBs may align more closely with male stereotypes.

Indeed, these widely held gender stereotypes can facilitate expectancy–confirmation processes (Neuberg, 1994). Fiske and Neuberg (1990) suggested that expectancy-consistent information was easier to cognitively process than expectancy-inconsistent information, and therefore perceivers look for, and use, expectancy-consistent information to preserve their cognitive resources when making assessments of others (see also Bodenhausen, 1988; Heilman, 2012; Johnson and Judd, 1983). As a result, individuals may be more likely to attune to CWB that aligns with gender–role prescriptions than CWB that does not; it requires less cognitive resources to process behavior that aligns with expectations. As such, based upon expectancy–confirmation theory (Neuberg, 1994), individuals could be expected to simply ignore CWB that is not expected. Recently, Heilman *et al.* (2015) clarified the nature in which performance expectations can affect information processing (i.e. attention, information interpretation and recall information). Attention was most relevant to the current research in that perceivers were likely to not attend to or ignore inconsistent information (see Plaks *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, in situations where men and women engage in stereotypical behaviors, perceivers will readily attend to, integrate, and recall information that is consistent with their expectancies for the respective gender role (Heilman, 2012). Similarly, individuals are expected to ignore behaviors that are non-stereotypical of men and women.

Based upon expectancy–confirmation theory (Neuberg, 1994), within the context of CWB, when a female (or male) target engages in stereotypically feminine (or masculine) behavior, the perceiver looks for information that confirms the expectancy, and therefore feels justified in delivering punishment (including terminating an employee). Based upon expectancy–confirmation theory and what we understand about performance expectations and information processing (Heilman *et al.*, 2015), individuals are expected to ignore or fail to notice CWB that does not match gender role prescriptions. For example, CWB that is consistent with male stereotypes is more likely to be noticed when engaged in by males as compared to females; CWB that is consistent with female stereotypes is more likely to be noticed when engaged in by females than males. Individuals are then only likely to punish individuals for CWB that they attune to in the first place; if an individual does not attend to a CWB, then they cannot really punish someone for engaging in a behavior that they did not attend to in the first place; individuals are thus expected to punish CWBs that they are most attuned to (those CWB that align with gender–role prescriptions).

In sum, expectancy–confirmation theory (Neuberg, 1994) suggested that perceivers would be led to more harshly punish individuals engaging in gender or stereotype-consistent rather than inconsistent CWB. Thus, the following is hypothesized:

H1. The influence of gender on the harshness of CWB punishment recommendations will be moderated by gender stereotypicality such that men (women) are terminated for engaging in stereotypically masculine (feminine) CWB more so than for engaging in stereotypically feminine (masculine) CWB.

Gender stereotypic expectations for CWBs

The second area of literature we reviewed suggests an alternative influence of gender stereotypes on how judgments of punishment were made for engaging in CWB. In contrast to expectancy–confirmation theory (Neuberg, 1994), a plausible and alternative theoretical explanation is supported by expectancy–violation theory, which suggests that perceivers react negatively to behaviors that are inconsistent with expectations (Burgoon, 1978). Violations were experienced when targets were perceived as engaging in behavior that

deviated from what was expected or anticipated (Afifi and Metts, 1998). In other words, perceivers had expectations for certain behavior, and when an expectation was violated, the perceiver experienced surprise and disappointment that ultimately resulted in negative evaluations of the target. Individuals were perceived more negatively when they did not behave in line with relevant stereotypes. Consistent with this, research has demonstrated that people react negatively when women violate expectations. A significant amount of research on how gender influences perceptions of leader behavior, focused on how a lack of fit between female gender stereotypes and expectations of leader behavior (Heilman, 1983), has used this theoretical framework. For example, Eagly and Karau (2002) observed that female leaders who in engaged in unexpected masculine behaviors for what would be stereotypically expected from a female were more likely to receive negative reactions than men who engaged in the same masculine behaviors (but that were in line with male gender stereotypes). There is, in effect, a mismatch between what a perceiver expects and what they observe or experience, and this leads to harsh judgments as a result. Similarly, recent empirical research demonstrated that a poor, or arguably unexpected match, between implicit leadership theory and a subordinate's leader resulted in a more negative appraisal (i.e. decreased promotion beliefs) than when there was alignment between subordinate and leader (Schyns, 2006).

In other domains beyond leadership, researchers have used expectancy–violation theory to investigate how violations of expected behavior negatively influence perceptions of those behaviors. For example, expectancy–violation theory has been applied to interpersonal relationships via Facebook (Bevan *et al.*, 2014). Specifically, the researchers showed that when participants experienced unexpected "unfriending" it constituted a violation, particularly for individuals who used Facebook more extensively. Similarly, expectancy–violation theory has been explored in relation to perceptions of swearing in the workplace (Johnson and Lewis, 2010). The authors revealed perceived violations were experienced when swearing occurred in formal (e.g. meeting) vs informal (e.g. water cooler conversation) workplace settings. When swearing was unexpected (and thus an expectancy violation) such as in formal settings, the surprise was associated with perceptions of speaker incompetence.

Extending these ideas to the context of performance appraisal, Heilman and Chen (2005) manipulated gender and altruistic behavior to examine participants' evaluations of and reward recommendations for ostensible employees. They predicted that based upon gender stereotypes for women dictating that women should be nurturing and helping by nature (Eagly, 1987), that women would be expected to be helpful and thus punished for not being helpful, to a greater degree than men. Results supported their argument; engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) enhanced performance evaluations for men but not women, and failing to perform these behaviors diminished reward recommendations for women, but not for men who were not expected to align their behavior with this same stereotype. This work provided a foundation for exploring the role of gender in the evaluation of a variety of behaviors, including CWBs.

It follows from this perspective and evidence that men and women who behave in an inconsistent manner with their gender role will encounter negative reactions, as they have been seen as acting "out of line" with prescriptive gender stereotypes (e.g. Heilman and Haynes, 2005; Heilman *et al.*, 2004; Rink and Ellemers, 2006). For example, if women were expected to nurture others, then engaging in interpersonally harmful behaviors would be viewed as inconsistent. As such, women who engaged in CWB that were stereotypically masculine would be denigrated to a greater extent for enacting behavior inconsistent with gender role expectations than for engaging in CWB that was stereotypically feminine. Similarly, applying expectancy–violation theory (Burgoon, 1978) to a masculine gender role, we anticipated that men who engaged in stereotypically feminine CWB behavior (e.g. gossiping, spreading rumors) would be viewed as violating the expectations of their

gender role, and thus may have received more negative reactions from observers for engaging in these behaviors than for CWB that conforms to male gender role expectations.

In sum, contrary to *H1*, expectancy–violation theory (Burgoon, 1978) suggested that perceivers would be led to more harshly punish individuals engaging in gender or stereotype-inconsistent CWB rather than gender or stereotype-consistent CWB. Thus, the following is hypothesized:

H2. The influence of gender on the harshness of CWB punishment recommendations is moderated by gender counter-stereotypicality such that men (women) are more likely to be terminated for engaging in stereotypically feminine (masculine) CWB more than for engaging in stereotypically masculine (feminine) CWB.

Method

The following research tested these competing hypotheses in two studies. Study 1 was correlational in nature, drawing upon archival data to test through a χ^2 distribution the likelihood that men (women) were more likely to be terminated for engaging in stereotypically feminine (masculine) CWB more than for engaging in stereotypically masculine (feminine) CWB. Study 2 employed an experimental design using a policy-capturing methodology to test the causal effect of gender stereotypicality on punishment recommendations.

Study 1: method

Participants

The final sample included 197 federal employees who filed formal appeals in response to being punished for enacting a CWB. Appellant names were coded for gender, reflecting a sample of 113 men and 84 women. Over a quarter of the participants (28.9 percent) held a supervisory role. Data regarding appellant ages and ethnicities were not publically available.

Procedure

To explore actual punishment recommendations allocated to men and women who engaged in a variety of CWBs, we examined publicly available archived appeal decisions issued by the US Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), "an independent, quasi-judicial agency in the Executive branch that serves as the guardian of Federal merit systems" (www.mspb.gov, 2014). From January 1, 2014 to August 22, 2014, the MSPB issued 765 decisions. Of the197 cases that involved instances of CWB, 90 were identified as stereotypically male or female.

Public appeals decisions contain relevant case details, and therefore are not uniformly constructed. However, in all cases considered here, we were able to collect and code information regarding appellant gender and position. In addition, we coded the descriptions of CWBs performed, as well as the punishments issued. Specifically, to determine if employee gender expectations affected punishment type or severity, two independent coders with in-depth knowledge of CWBs (i.e. subject matter experts (SMEs)) assessed descriptions of all the CWBs and punishments that were applied in response.

Using a predetermined coding scheme, the coders first evaluated whether each CWB was an action that would be stereotypically performed by a man, a woman, or if the act could have been performed by a man or woman with equal likelihood based upon gender stereotypes. Drawing upon social role theory, which suggests that men are stereotypically expected to be agentic and includes behaviors associated with assertiveness, authoritarianism and competence (Eagly, 1987), coders identified CWBs associated with an agentic role as stereotypically masculine. Examples of CWBs that were judged to be masculine included sending inappropriate work emails of a sexual nature, creating a hostile

work environment by threatening others, intimidating and coercing subordinate employees and disrespectful and abusive behavior. In contrast, social role theory indicates that women are stereotypically expected to be communal, engaging in behaviors such as showing kindness and sensitivity, and not as directly focused on performance outcomes. As a result, CWBs judged to be feminine included accessing private medical records without authorization, repeatedly being unavailable for work, the misuse of equipment and engaging in inappropriate patient relationships. Initially, coders reported 98 percent agreement in ratings of the gender stereotypicality of the punished behavior (CWBs). Upon discussion, complete consensus was achieved. Next, one coder rated the nature of the punishment that was allocated to appellants (1 = informal reprimand, 2 = formal reprimand, 3 = removed from position or lost privileges including GS level (i.e. probation), 4 = received another position, demotion/transfer, or lost privilege, including GS level, permanently and 5 = terminated). The distribution of responses indicated that the meaningful difference in punishments was primarily due to whether or not the appellant's employment was terminated. Thus, the punishment variable was recoded to represent termination (1 = fired, 0 = other punishment; $n = 115$, and $n = 82$, respectively).

Study 1: results

To determine whether appellant gender and CWB gender stereotypicality influenced punishment recommendations, we conducted multiway frequency analysis. This analytic strategy was chosen because it uniquely enables prediction of a categorical dependent variable from categorical independent variables. The results of this analysis support *H1*: an interaction emerged between appellant gender and CWB stereotypicality with regard to termination decisions (Estimate $= -1.47$, $p < 0.01$). Indeed, a significant χ^2 was observed ($\chi^2 = 22.15$, $p < 0.01$); a greater proportion of men (38/52) were terminated for stereotypically masculine CWB than for stereotypically feminine CWB (4/52). This relationship was consistent for women; a greater proportion of women (19/38) were terminated for stereotypically feminine CWB than for stereotypically masculine CWB (12/38). Together, these results suggest that women who engage in stereotypical (i.e. feminine) CWBs and men who engage in stereotypical (i.e. masculine) CWBs are more likely to be terminated (in support of *H1*) than women and men who engage in gender counter-stereotypic CWB (contrary to *H2*) (see Figure 1).

One possible moderator of the relationship observed in this study was the severity of CWB enacted. As was the case for gender stereotypicality, we used a pre-determined coding scheme to evaluate severity. This coding scheme was based upon the typology of deviant

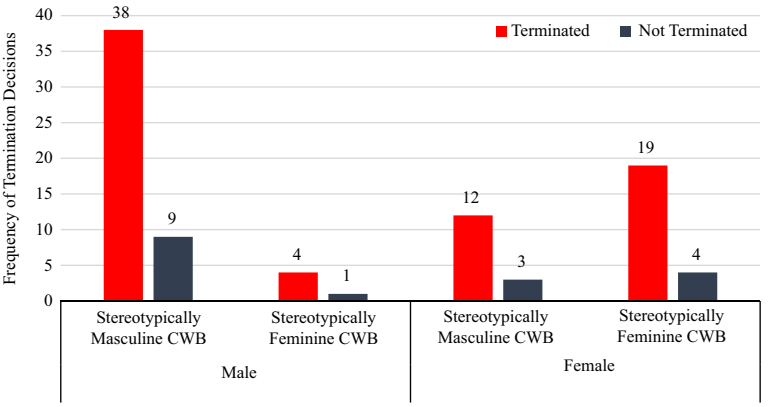


Figure 1.
Interactions of gender and CWB stereotypicality on termination decisions

behavior developed by Robinson and Bennett (1995). For example, lying about hours worked was rated as "serious" while intentionally working slow was rated as "minor." Similarly, sexual harassment was rated as "serious" while showing favoritism was rated as "minor." To examine whether CBW severity influenced our observations, we correlated severity with stereotyped behavior (−0.02) and punishment (−0.03). Based on severity not having a significant relationship with either of these variables, in order to preserve a parsimonious model, we decided not to include severity in our hypothesis test.

Study 1: discussion

The current results suggest that performance appraisal systems are influenced by gender stereotypes. Specifically, in line with a stereotype–confirmation perspective (and contrary to a stereotype–violation perspective), gender-stereotypic CWB results in harsher punishment recommendations than counter-stereotypic CWB was supported. In effect, as perceivers we attune to those behaviors that align with our existing stereotype and appear to dismiss or ignore incidents (i.e. counter-stereotypic CWB) that do not fit within our schemas, as they require additional cognitive resources (Bodenhausen, 1988; Heilman, 2012; Johnson and Judd, 1983; Sherman *et al.*, 2000). This finding clarifies the theoretical nature of gender stereotyping in the context of CWB and illustrates the power of expectancies. This finding is particularly powerful in light of the fact that the perceivers in the MSPB cases sole purpose is to fairly evaluate all appeals, and yet there were differences in reactions to men and women's CWB. In effect, gender stereotypes influenced how individuals charged with being impartial decision makers evaluated men and women who engaged in CWB.

Study 2: introduction

We further evaluated these initial findings by examining punishment recommendations for men and women engaging in stereotypic and counter-stereotypic CWB in an experimental context. Most importantly, Study 2 seeks to test the causal effect of gender stereotypicality on punishment recommendations. An experimental design also allowed for a greater examination of specific types of CWB since the CWB used as stimuli could be carefully controlled. Based on the findings from Study 1, supporting *H1* that consistent with expectancy–confirmation theory (Neuberg, 1994), that individuals would be more attuned to and thus likely to punish CWB consistent with gender-stereotypic behavior. Thus, consistent with expectancy–confirmation theory (as supported by the findings from Study 1), we hypothesized that when examining CWB, gender-stereotypic behavior would be rated more harshly than gender counter-stereotypic behavior. Specifically, we hypothesized similar to *H1*:

H3. The influence of gender on the harshness of CWB punishment recommendations is moderated by gender stereotypicality such that men (women) who engage in stereotypically masculine (feminine) CWB will receive harsher punishments than those who engage in stereotypically feminine (masculine) CWB.

Study 2: method

Study 2 used a policy-capturing approach. In behavioral research, social scientists often must rely on self-report ratings or rankings to determine what factors contribute to individual attitudes. A more sophisticated experimental methodology known as policy capturing allows researchers to infer the importance of factors from actual decisions (Aiman-Smith *et al.*, 2002). The purpose of policy-capturing methodology is to determine individuals' decision-making policies by utilizing a within-subjects design in which participants' responses to multiple decision paradigms are considered. Participants in typical survey research often overestimate the importance of irrelevant or minor factors due

to a lack of self-insight, meta-cognitive ability or the influence of pressures to respond in a socially desirable manner (Zedeck, 1977). Policy-capturing methodology allows researchers to experimentally manipulate cue values (i.e. variable levels) and to overcome problems with self-insight and social desirability (Karren and Barringer, 2002). Such an approach has been useful in investigating other CWB research questions such as the relative influence of CWB and OCB on overall performance evaluations (Rotundo and Sackett, 2002).

Participants

The final sample included 47 executive MBA students (29 males, 15 females) with significant work experience (median = 15.5 years). Their median age was 37.5 years. The majority of participants were Caucasian (60 percent), African–American (9 percent) or Asian–American (9 percent).

Procedure

The study was a 2 (Target gender: male, female) × 2 (Form of CWB: stereotypically masculine, feminine) within-subjects factorial design. Following similar procedures as Rotundo and Sackett (2002), we used a three-step process in the development of the hypothetical employee job performance profiles: the validation of stereotypically masculine and feminine CWB behaviors, the compilation of the gender-stereotypic CWBs to ensure that they were manipulated with equivalent severity and representation of directed at an individual (CWB-I) and directed at an organization (CWB-O) and the creation of the profiles.

Step 1. To identify the gender-stereotypic CWBs for each profile, trained SMEs who consisted of 15 (five male, ten female) graduate students with expertise in research on CWB, identified stereotypically masculine and feminine CWBs. SMEs were presented with the 28 items included in the Bennett and Robinson (2000) measure of workplace deviance (i.e. CWB), and asked to clarify whether each item was considered to be stereotypically masculine, feminine, neither, or both. SMEs were told that "we are not interested in what you personally believe, but rather in the expectations you think that most people in our society have of men and women. That is, we are interested in whether each of the following behaviors would be consistent with social norms regarding behaviors that would be more or less appropriate for men and women." SMEs were then asked to "indicate whether MOST PEOPLE would consider each of the following statements to be consistent with stereotypes for men or women, equally applicable, or applicable to neither stereotype." SMEs responded using one of the following options: 1 (consistent with stereotypes of men), 2 (consistent with stereotypes of women), 3 (equally consistent with stereotypes of men and women) and 4 (not consistent with stereotypes of men and women). Only those CWBs identified as clearly (~70 percent consensus) stereotypically masculine (e.g. damage equipment or property) or feminine (e.g. made fun of someone at work) were included.

Step 2. Drawing upon the typology of deviant workplace behaviors (Robinson and Bennett, 1995), these validated stereotypically masculine or feminine CWBs were compiled so they were directed toward both individuals (CWB-I) and organizations (CWB-O) as well as both minor and serious in nature so that a wide range of CWBs could be considered. Decisions related to whether a CWB was directed at an organization or individual, and whether it should be considered minor or serious, was based upon the typology of deviant workplace behaviors developed by Robinson and Bennett (1995). For example, sharing company secrets with individuals outside the organization was classified as CWB-O and serious. To further validate that a similar range of CWBs was provided in terms of severity, SMEs rated the severity of CWBs as either minor or serious. Only those CWBs identified as clearly (~70 percent consensus) minor or serious were included. In total, there were 16 CWBs (eight stereotypically masculine and eight stereotypically feminine; eight CWB-I and

CWB-O, and eight minor and eight serious) that appeared in the employee job performance profiles with either a masculine (e.g. Dustin, Lucas, Scott, Jacob, Bradley) or feminine (e.g. Holly, Abigal, Molly, Heather, Kaitlyn, Allison) name for a total of 32 profiles.

Step 3. The final step was the creation of the hypothetical employee job performance profile. Each participant received brief descriptions of actions engaged in by a number of male and female hypothetical employees. Profiles described intentional CWBs engaged in by fictitious employees. Participants were told the hypothetical employees held a variety of job titles and worked in a variety of organizations across a variety of industries. Participants were also told that all employees had been with their current employer for approximately one year and had similar work experience. No employees were presented as having a supervisory role. Participants attended to each profile independent of all other profiles and asked to make a decision regarding the need for the employee to receive some form of punishment as a result of their described action engaging in a CWB.

Measures

Punishment recommendations. Punishment recommendations were comprised of recommended punishments for CWB. Similar to other research on punishment recommendations as a dependent variable (e.g. Podsakoff *et al.,* 1984), participants gave their recommendations on three organizational punishment items for each employee profile. The following items reflect these recommendations: "should this employee be punished"; "should this employee be penalized"; "should this employee be reprimanded." Participants responded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much), which had an acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.86$).

Study 2: results

Repeated-measures ANOVA was used to test study hypotheses. A significant two-way interaction between stereotyped CWB and gender emerged, $F(1, 46) = 6.43$, $p < 0.05$ (see Figure 2)[1]. Consistent with findings in Study 1, women tended to receive harsher punishment recommendations for stereotypical (i.e. feminine) CWB ($M = 2.71$, SD $= 0.52$) than for counter-stereotypical (i.e. masculine) CWB ($M = 2.59$, SD $= 0.42$), $t(46) = 2.00$, $p = 0.05$. However, opposite from *H3* and Study 1 findings, men received harsher punishment recommendations for counter-stereotypical (i.e. feminine) CWB ($M = 2.73$, SD $= 0.46$) than for stereotypical (i.e. masculine) CWB ($M = 2.60$, SD $= 0.50$), $t(46) = 2.18$, $p < 0.05$. This unexpected finding for males may suggest that there is greater complexity to gendered reactions to CWBs than originally anticipated, and perhaps there are different drivers of reactions to men vs women who engage in CWB in the workplace.

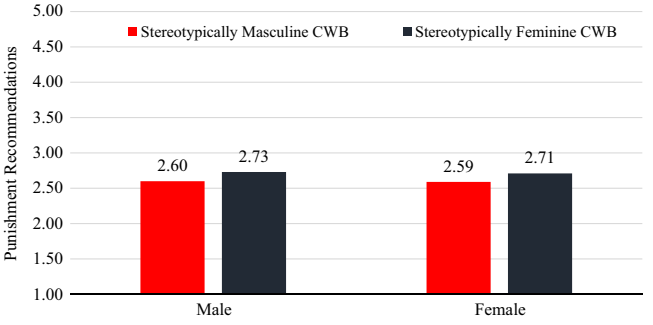


Figure 2.
Interaction of gender and stereotypically masculine and feminine CWB

Study 2: discussion

This study demonstrates that the same CWB can result in different reactions depending upon the perceived gender of the person enacting CWB. Consistent with our hypothesis and the results of Study 1, gender consistent CWB, or behavior consistent with the feminine stereotypes, was evaluated more harshly than gender-inconsistent behaviors. That is, female targets engaging in gender consistent (i.e. stereotypically feminine) CWB were more likely to experience harsh punishment than when engaging in gender inconsistent (i.e. stereotypically masculine) CWB.

However, men tended to receive more severe reactions when engaging in gender inconsistent (i.e. stereotypically feminine) forms of CWB as compared to gender consistent (i.e. stereotypically masculine) forms of CWB. This finding is similar to the results of an experimental study (Heilman and Wallen, 2010) that showed that men were perceived as more ineffectual (i.e. weak, wimpy) and given less respect when engaging in gender-inconsistent behavior than women engaging in the same behavior or women engaging in gender-inconsistent behavior. Recent research also reveals that men experience biased evaluations when they violate gender expectations (i.e. cry in response to negative performance feedback; see Motro and Ellis, 2016). There are two different conclusions that could be drawn from the data as a result. One is that individuals were simply punished to a greater degree for stereotypically feminine CWB. However, it is also plausible that there are different consequences for men and women who engage in gender-inconsistent behaviors because of strong gender norms for men to be agentic or organizational advocates. In other words, when men's behavior violates expectations of masculinity it may invoke negative consequences for their performance. This finding is interesting in light of the growing debate and encouragement for men to "lean out" and to seek work-life balance (see Kolhatkar, 2013), as such encouragement violates norms for the "ideal worker" (see Williams, 2000), which may result in negative consequences for men. This may have emerged differently in the laboratory study than in the field study because of the limited information available to experimental participants, which increase reliance on stereotypes (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990).

Overall discussion

Consistent punishment of undesirable behavior is recognized as an important means for deterring CWB (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2006). Inconsistent punishment resulting from varied reactions to behavior has a number of organizational implications, including making the use of punishment less effective (Whitson *et al.*, 2015). The current research examined the relationship between gender stereotypes of individuals engaging in CWB and punishment decisions. Specifically, this research examined whether expectancy–confirmation theory led perceivers to more harshly punish individuals engaging in gender or stereotype-consistent rather than inconsistent CWB, or in contrast, expectancy–violation theory leads perceivers to react negatively to behaviors that are inconsistent with expectations. The results of this research indicated reactions to CWB appear to differ based upon whether CWB is perceived as stereotypically masculine or feminine and whether enacted by a male or female. Overall, our findings across studies reveal that when female targets engage in gender consistent (i.e. stereotypically feminine) CWB they are more likely to experience harsh punishment than when engaging in gender inconsistent (i.e. stereotypically masculine) CWB. This finding clarifies the theoretical nature of gender stereotyping in the context of CWB by affirming the power of expectancies or fit with existing schemas (Bodenhausen, 1988; Heilman, 2012; Johnson and Judd, 1983; Sherman *et al.*, 2000). This is consistent with the findings of Heilman and Chen (2005) examining how gender stereotypes influence perceptions of OCBs, adding support to the notion of "same behavior, different consequences."

However, findings for male targets in Study 2 revealed that men tended to receive more severe reactions when engaging in gender inconsistent (i.e. stereotypically feminine) forms of

CWB as compared to gender consistent (i.e. stereotypically masculine) forms of CWB. As previously discussed, it is unclear as to why this was observed. We suggest that it could be due to the fact that in general, feminine CWB were punished more harshly, or perhaps because there are strong norms for men to be agentic in organizations. We are unable to explain this one finding with the current research, and encourage future research to clarify the nature of how punishment decisions are influenced by gender stereotypes for men who engage in CWB.

Despite this one unclear finding, across two studies our findings suggest the division of social roles and prescriptive norms for individuals based upon their gender continues to drive performance evaluations related to punishment and reward recommendations. Given that CWBs are related to overall ratings of job performance (Rotundo and Sackett, 2002), biases may continue to confound evaluations of performance. Perhaps more importantly, bias may influence punishment recommendations, which can have profound influences on the careers of individuals. Interestingly, our research demonstrates that CWB punishments are not universally extreme, as men and women are denigrated differentially depending on the stereotypicality of their behavior.

Limitations

Although two studies were conducted, neither is without limitation. Study 1's context, MSPB cases, is unique and may not be representative of the range of CWBs experienced in varied private-sector workplaces. Second, we were only able to review those cases where a formal appeal had been filed. Third, the field data may lack the internal control necessary to clarify the causal nature of the phenomenon. Study 2's approach, experimental policy capturing, addresses Study 1's third limitation by maximizing internal validity. However, a limitation of Study 2 is that participants were presented with a predetermined number of profiles restricting the range of behaviors that were evaluated, and therefore not fully reflecting the full range of CWBs exhibited in actual organizations. Moreover, both Studies 1 and 2 assume the social identity category of gender (male vs female) is singular in nature when in reality people's social identities intersect creation more complex evaluation than captured in this research. As we noted in our introduction, individuals can identify as members or numerous social categories simultaneously. While gender is recognized as a particularly salient and influential social identity (Heilman and Chen, 2005; Zhu *et al.*, 2014), one important limitation of this research is a focus on only one single social identity category. It is also possible that other social identities and their associated stereotypes influence punishment recommendations as well. However, we believe our findings shed light on this phenomenon because we used methodologies that allowed for us to maximize external (Study 1) and internal (Study 2) validity.

Implications and future research

The results of the current research have important implications for future research and practice. The current research affirms that, indeed, there are social constructions for evaluating performance. However, given our findings, it is likely that there are other factors that shape perceptions of the appropriateness of various forms of CWB that need to be considered. Social identities do not simply focus on one aspect such as gender, but instead, involve the intersection of a number of identities being held simultaneously. In this research, we focused on gender. While gender is an important aspect of social identity, it is just one single aspect of social identity. It is likely that other social identity categories such as race, age, social class and organizational status would also influence how individuals respond to someone engaging in CWB. For example, what are expectations for visibly diverse individuals representing varied racial-ethnic or age identity groups in terms of engaging in CWB? How do these expectations influence reactions and punishment decisions related to engaging in CWB? It is plausible that stereotypic expectations for visibly diverse individuals shape our evaluations of behavior. For example, research suggests that black

men may be the most likely to be evaluated as aggressive toward individuals in the workplace (Correll *et al.,* 2007; Quillian and Pager, 2001). Are there consequences for visibly diverse individuals engaging in behaviors that are congruent (or incongruent) with expectations for behavior? Extant research on intersecting social identities (Cole, 2009) suggests that there can be meaningful consequences for individuals representing multiple social identities. Future research could consider how other visible characteristics (e.g. race/ethnicity, age, attractiveness) may influence evaluations of CWB. Additionally, this research focused on gender as a single dimension of social identity. Future research should examine additional aspects of social identity not only in isolation, but collectively as well. For example, how and when might expectations based on an actor's gender be altered depending upon an actor's age, social standing, and race as well? Only by researching aspects of social identity in concert can be truly understand their influence in the workplace and society. While this research examined one important facet of social identity, other aspects of social identity need to be considered both in isolation and collectively. Theoretical and empirical frameworks studying social differences and intersectionality such as that of Marfelt (2016) may provide guidance for future research.

In addition to examining additional aspects of social identity, it is important that future research consider organizational contextual moderators. For example, individuals making punishment recommendations in an organizational context are likely influenced by organizational culture. Other organizational aspects to consider in future research might be how punishment decisions following CWB are influenced not only by social identity characteristics, but types of diversity training and when that training has occurred. Given the mixed results of diversity training (Kulik and Roberson, 2008), it is possible that the presence of diversity training and/or organizational culture moderates the relationship between social identity perceptions and punishment decisions following CWB. Additionally, one additional moderator to consider in future research is the interpersonal power defined as the discretion "to asymmetrically enforce one's will over entities" (Sturm and Antonakis, 2015, p. 139) of both the actor and perceivers. Observers with more power may be harsher in their judgments and feel less constrained to rely on stereotypes. Punishment decisions regarding actors engaged in CWB with less power may be more influenced by associated stereotypes than when actors are perceived as having more power. While we examined punishment decisions within an organizational context in Study 2, we were unable to assess these decisions across different organizational contexts as measured by some of the factors we have described. Future research needs to explicitly examine how characteristics of the organizational context moderate relationships between punishment judgments and social identity characteristics.

It is also important for future research to consider a wider range of CWB, particularly in regards to severity. We ensured that minor and serious CWB were reflected across profiles in Study 2, but it would be beneficial to construct a study that directly assesses the implications of different levels of severity on punishment recommendations. Doing so would help address the limitation of Study 2 that participants were presented with a predetermined number of profiles where the range of behaviors were carefully restricted.

With regard to practical implications, this research informs efforts to proactively manage CWB in organizations. The use of rewards and punishment has been identified as an important tool in preventing CWB (Treviño and Ball, 1992). We argue that gender stereotypes influence reactions to CWB; leaders may be influenced by the gender of the individual engaging in CWB when making decisions related to the use of punishment. Our results indicate that individuals are likely to be treated more or less harshly in the application of punishment systems when they have engaged in CWB based upon their gender (as a result of assessments of behavior influenced by gender stereotypes). However, it is important to note that the current research considers CWB in isolation (i.e. punishment recommendation based upon one, or a few, critical incidents), when in

reality CWBs occur among a range of work behaviors (task and contextual) and over extended periods of time. Leaders likely evaluate a body of behaviors (some good, some bad) that may provide opportunity for certain positive behaviors to compensate for observed CWBs, and ultimately serve as a buffer to negative reactions. Moreover, it is important to understand not only how these behaviors are perceived, but also which behaviors are most likely to stand out in a manager's mind over time. It is possible that CWBs that do not align with gender role prescriptions are more likely to then be recalled or ignored than those that do align with gender role prescriptions. Future research should investigate how gender stereotypes influence which types of CWB are most likely to be identified and remembered for male and females engaging in those behaviors.

Punishment decisions have important consequences for not only the target of punishment, but also can have a powerful social effect upon the broader organization (Mayer *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, if leaders are more hesitant to use such tools for one population within the organization, they are essentially condoning particular CWBs for that group. For example, research shows that beliefs about supervisors' reputation for equity mitigates racially-driven microaggressions (Offermann *et al.*, 2013), and managers can influence minority employees' trust by ensuring fairness in organizational policies and procedures (Buttner and Lowe, 2015). This may have further implications for organizations' ethical climate (Peterson, 2002). Thus, for leaders to be perceived as ethical and to be effective in preventing CWB, they must avoid such bias in making reward system decisions. For example, Gupta and Kumar (2013) established a positive correlation between performance appraisal justice and engagement. If an employee sees such a reward or punishment recommendation as being unfair he or she may respond in a negative manner, perpetuating a culture of incivility and potentially creating a negative organizational climate. Thus, managerial training needs to help managers recognize the negative consequences of making unfair punishment decisions and to help them avoid the use of biases and stereotypes in making these judgments. Diversity training for all employees should address this issue as well.

In conclusion, the pattern of results observed is consistent with the argument that prescriptive gender stereotypes shape reactions to CWBs. This research suggests that despite efforts to broaden the criterion space by including measures of contextual performance (including CWB), gender-stereotypic expectations creep into socially constructed evaluations of behavior.

Note

1. Severity of CWB as well as CWB-I vs CWB-O were not significantly correlated with gender stereotypical CWB or punishment recommendations. Therefore, these variables were not included as controls, which is important to report for future research that seeks to replicate or extend study findings (Becker, 2005).

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