

WORKPLACE ANGER AS A PERSONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSE TO PSYCHOSOCIAL AND SITUATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF WORK ENVIRONMENT: AN APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationships between individual, psychosocial and situational factors and workplace anger of employees working in various sectors in Istanbul-Turkey. It is also aimed to understand how the employees' personality trait of emotional stability, psychosocial aspects and a situational characteristic of the work environment affect their anger behaviours at work. This study follows the implications of social cognitive theory, psychosocial resources theory, five factor personality theory, and social control theory for examining the proposed associations between the research variables. The findings of the study revealed that emotional stability as a personality trait, perceived social support and social integration had negative significant relationships with workplace anger. Besides, the results showed that perceived powerlessness as a situational factor of the work environment had positive significant relationship with workplace anger. Consistent with the literature evidences, the research findings have provided evidences that emotional stability, social support, social integration and perceived powerlessness have significantly explained the individuals' anger behaviors at work.

Keywords: Emotional Stability, Social Support, Social Integration, Powerlessness, Anger

JEL Classification: M19

İŞYERİNDEKİ PSİKOSOSYAL VE DURUMSAL ÖZELLİKLERE YÖNELİK BİR KİŞİSEL VE DAVRANIŞSAL TEPKİ OLARAK ÖFKE: SOSYAL BİLİŞ TEORİSİ İLE BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, bireysel, psikososyal ve durumsal faktörler ile işyerindeki bireylerin öfke davranışları arasındaki ilişkileri İstanbul'da çeşitli sektörlerde görev yapmakta olan çalışanlar üzerindeki bir araştırmayla incelemeye çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmada aynı zamanda, bir kişilik özelliği olarak duygusal dengelilik özelliğinin, işyerinde algılanan psikososyal özelliklerin ve iş çevresinde algılanan durumsal faktörlerin çalışanların işyerindeki öfke davranışlarını nasıl etkilediği anlaşılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, kavramlar arası ilişkiler sosyal biliş teorisine, psikososyal kaynaklar teorisine, beş faktörlü kişilik teorisine ve sosyal kontrol teorisine dayanarak incelenmektedir. Çalışmada elde edilen bulgular, bir kişilik tarzı olarak duygusal dengelilik özelliğinin, algılanan sosyal desteğin ve sosyal bağlılığın işyerinde öfke davranışları ile negatif ve anlamlı olarak ilişkisinin olduğunu göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, elde edilen sonuçlara göre, işyerinde durumsal bir faktör olarak ele alınmış olan algılanan güçsüzlük ile öfke davranışı arasında pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişkinin olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda, bireylerin duygusal dengelilik özelliğinin, algıladıkları sosyal desteğin, sosyal bağlılığın ve güçsüzlük algısının işyerinde öfke davranışlarını açıklayan birer kavram olduklarını gösteren bulgular ortaya konmuş ve bu bulguların alan yazındaki ilgili çalışmalar ile uyumlu oldukları görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duygusal Dengelilik, Sosyal Destek, Sosyal Bağlılık, Güçsüzlük, Öfke

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1. Introduction

Emotions are of sociological, psychological, and managerial concern in organizational life because “emotions are an important feature of human experience, represent a major source of human motivation, and have a significant effect on human behavior” (Rosenberg, 1991:124). Like all individuals, employees in working life experience their worlds physically, cognitively, and emotionally (Smith-Lovin, 1995). Among a large number of emotions, “anger” is of particular sociological significance as it is product of social life. It has been indicated that individuals get angry when treated unfairly or when others fail to fulfill a social contract or when they do not feel adequate social support and social integration (Hegtvædt and Markovsky 1995; Mabry, 1999; Klein, 2011).

The starting point of the current study is the observations of this study’s author and her approach to anger as a social problem. It is implied that all societies and organizations should control anger to make social life possible and to prevent the negative consequences of anger-related behaviors in the workplaces (Rosenberg, 1991; Coillie and Mechelen, 2006). Besides, it is suggested that anger has social costs as it increases negative work outcomes and buffering or tempering anger may contribute to the reproduction of the social structure. In this regard, the relevant literature displays various definitions of anger from different theoretical roots and reveals a number of studies on anger, anger-related behaviours, and related constructs (e.g. Berkowitz, 1990; Neighbors, Vietor, and Knee, 2002; Jacobson, 2007; Meier and Semmer, 2012).

Therefore, in this study, the concept of workplace anger receives a great deal of attention of the author in research on anger behaviours and anger-related antecedents. Despite its importance as an emotion of social cause and consequence in the organizations, we lack information about social patterns of the experience of anger in Turkey. It is supposed that anger is a transformation of a larger social order and social and individual factors into daily experience. The difficulties of socio-economic conditions and work environment may increase stress and frustration, thus may produce anger in the workplaces. During the mid-1970s, the scholars following the social cognitive approach have addressed that human behavior was dynamic and could be stimulated by an individual’s internal world (intrapersonal) as it could by external and internal factors. As such, the scholars began to offer new perspectives on explaining the human attitudes and behaviors with the —Social Cognitive Theory views (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986; Bassett-Jones and Lloyd, 2005). As being the pioneer of Social Cognitive Theory, Bandura (1977) implied that employee needs are a function of personality and behavior emerges as a result of the operation of cognitive processes in interaction with the environment and the environment creates external social stimuli that effects individuals and their responses. Thus, Social Cognitive Theory suggested that the organization provides such an environment with situational factors and the individuals enrage in behaviors as a result of their intrapersonal processing of cognitions in the workplace.

Theoretically then, because the individuals have to confront shortfall of psychosocial resources and socially disadvantaged work conditions more, they should experience more anger than socially advantaged groups. In the last decade, the accumulated literature findings have supported the knowledge about the effects of social structure and situational aspects on individuals' anger related behaviors. The field of industrial and organizational studies have revealed that social structure and situational characteristics in the organizations and the personality traits of individuals influence their attitudes and beliefs; and socialization and workorientation (e.g. Kiecolt, 1988; Kohn, Naoi, Schoenbach, Schooler, and Slomczynski, 1990; Wong and Lim, 2007; Shim, 2010, Pyc, 2011). It is clear that personality traits, social structural aspects, and psychosocial and situational characteristics of the work environment affect individuals' beliefs about their organizational environment and their resources for dealing with worklife's difficulties. These factors, in turn, influence individual outcomes, such as individuals' perceptions of equity and satisfaction, and experience of anger, depression, and distress.

With that respect, the goals of this study are to briefly review the evolution of theoretical approaches to emotions and anger at work as emotional and behavioral concepts, and to evaluate the role of individual, psychosocial and situational factors as considered being the vital antecedents of workplace anger. As such, the research questions that guided this study can be stated as follows:

1. What is the relationship, if any, between the personality traits and workplace anger among employees?
2. What is the relationship, if any, between the social support and social integration as being the psychosocial characteristics and workplace anger among employees?
3. What is the relationship, if any, between the powerlessness as being a situational factor and workplace anger among employees?

Along with the presupposed relationships, for elaborating on the theoretical background a review of the literature for the concepts of the study, early theoretical perspectives of workplace anger, and an overview of the proposed research model are presented in the following parts.

2. Review Of The Literature

In Organizational Behavior and Management Sciences, it has been indicated that "emotions" motivate behavior and have a significant impact on psychological well-being, employee performance, and a variety of attitudinal behaviors at work. According to the World Health Organization (2006), "emotions such as anxiety, anger, pain or joy interact to motivate a person to a goal-directed action". Therefore, in organizations, manifestations of anxiety, anger, and depression are critical psycho-

logical vital signs that are strongly related to individual attitudinal and behavioral outcomes and organizational results. Variations in the intensity and duration of these emotions provide essential information about an individual's mental health that help to identify recent events and longstanding conflicts that have a significant impact on the individual's work setting (Spielberger and Reheiser, 2009:271). As such, assessing emotional vital signs and understanding the causes and antecedents of emotions such as anger can enhance awareness and understanding of an individual's feelings, and help individuals to recognize and cope more effectively with their emotions both in personal and organizational lives. It is therefore important to evaluate and monitor emotional states of working individuals in organizations. For that respect, it is found essential to define the concepts of emotion and anger conceptually and to provide insights for the relevant background theories underlining the context of this study.

2.1 The Concept of Emotion

With definitions of Schachter and Singer (1962), emotions are short-term states with both neurological and cognitive elements. Emotions are described as intense, short-term affective reactions directed toward a specific stimulus (Frijda, 1994). Emotions also demand attention, disrupt cognitive processes, and are tied to specific events, and as a result, they are particularly important to study in the context of organizations (Watson, Clark and Tellegen, 1988; Lazarus, 1991). The focus over understanding the relationship between emotion and cognition has always gained attention and brought a discussion of when and how affect and cognition influence one another. Specifically, the literature on emotion and cognition now suggests that affect influences cognition through both content (i.e. what we remember) and process (i.e. how we process information) (Forgas and George, 2001). In a text on emotion it was noted that there are over 30 theories of emotion (Plutchik, 2003). There is general consensus that emotions are products of biological, cognitive, and social elements (Kemper, 1990; Cornelius, 2000). Some emotions are believed to be universal: Anger, fear, sadness, and happiness have crosscultural human value, are universally recognized (Gordon, 1990; Spielberger and Reheiser, 2009), and each are differentially wired in the human autonomic nervous system (Kemper, 1990).

Many researchers see anger as a negative emotion (Kristjansson, 2003; Sirios and Burg, 2003) because of the undesirable feelings associated with it. Other emotions some considered negatively are anxiety and depression. As a negative emotion much, though not all, of the research in the field of psychology, organizational behavior, and management has focused on investigating the antecedents of anger and lessening the impact of anger in the workplace (e.g. Harmon-Jones and Sigelman, 2001; Harmon-Jones, Sigelman, Bohlig, Harmon-Jones, 2003).

2.2 Anger in the Workplace

Anger is a construct that most commonly is viewed as an emotion. According to Averill (1983), anger is elicited by the appraisal that one has been wronged inten-

tionally and unjustifiably by another person. Anger can be defined as a socially constituted syndrome, or a transitory social role (Plutchik, 2003; Averill, 1983). Anger, on this account, rests first and foremost on a moral judgment. Besides, anger, like other emotions, results from the complex interplay of social, psychological, and physiological factors (Cornelius, 2000). Anger-related terms signify a negative, active, and potent emotion. Among negative emotions, anger differs from sadness, which is inactive and impotent, and from fear, which is active but impotent (Morgan and Heise, 1988). Thus, as anger is a negative, potent, active emotion, this study is based on the negative feature of the concept.

According to the statements of Thoits (1989) and Klein (2011), emotions involve four key concepts; -appraisals of situational stimulus, changes in physiological sensation, free display of expressive gestures, and a cultural label applied to specific constellations of the previous three. Thus, it is addressed that emotions are a product of “social influences”. Anger has also been discussed as either a “state” or a “trait” (e.i. Spielberger and Sydeman, 1994; Forgays, Spielberger, Ottaway, and Forgays, 1998) suggesting that “personality factors” as well as temporary states are factors in anger (Klein, 2011).

The authors pointed out that anger is a discrete emotion with universally recognizable expressions with specific types of physiological reactions (Koç, 2008; Gibson and Callister, 2010). Anger was seen as a social emotion that is often generated in response to the actions of others and, as such, it is often directed at others (Averill, 1983; Gibson and Callister, 2010). Besides, it was indicated that anger serves a social function of signaling to the individual that a personal violation has occurred, and in this way, anger acts as a transaction between the individual and his or her environment. As further, it was stated that anger episodes usually begin with work-related events, which result with the primary causes of anger, such as; perceptions of organizational environment, fairness and justice, interpersonal states, and personality traits (Sloan, 2004; McCardle, 2007; Koç, 2008; Gibson and Callister, 2010; Tönge, 2011; Pyc, 2011; Meier and Semmer, 2012).

3. Theoretical Foundations Of Workplace Anger

A survey of contemporary theory and research on emotion in psychology and management studies reveals four different general theoretical perspectives about how to define, study, and explain emotion. Among those theories and approaches to emotions and aggression at work, we have derived and examined basic perspectives and called these the Darwinian-Freudian, behaviorist, cognitive, and social constructivist approaches in this study. Each of these perspectives has its own set of assumptions about the nature of workplace emotions, about how to construct theories about anger emotions, and about how to conduct research on anger emotions (Cornelius, 1996; Cornelius, 2000).

Anger behavior and aggression were considered by Freud (1933/1959 as Cited in Cornelius, 2000) to be an instinctual drive that motivated anger and aggressive behavior. When aggression cannot be directly expressed against external objects, it is turned back into the self, resulting in depression and other psychosomatic manifestations (Alexander and French, 1948 as Cited in Cornelius, 2000; Freud, 1936 as cited in Cornelius, 2000). (Spielberger and Reheiser, 2009) In summary, anger (hostility, rage) was considered by Darwin and Freud to be fundamental emotional states that had powerful effects on thoughts and behavior. Both Darwin and Freud also recognised that depression generally resulted from the interaction of anxiety and anger.

Since the emotional states and anger result with a wide range of behaviors, it is fould essential to assess intensity of these emotions, how frequently they are experienced, and the potential antecedents. In early studies of human emotions, introspective reports were used in efforts to discover and measure the qualitative feeling-states (“mental elements”) that were associated with different emotions (Titchener, 1897 and Wundt, 1896 as Cited in Cornelius, 2000). James-Lange theory assumed that a person first responded cognitively to a situation and then experienced the emotion, including physiological arousal followed by behavioral reactions. However, according to Wundt, introspection research demonstrated that the emotion comes first, followed by cognition, physiological arousal, and behavioral consequences.

With the advent of “behaviorism”, research on emotion shifted from the investigation of subjective feelings to the evaluation of physiological and behavioral variables that could be objectively measured. The methodology of behaviorism required investigators to assess the impact of carefully defined and/or manipulated antecedent conditions on cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses that could be objectively measured. Beginning in the 1960s, stimulated by a renaissance in cognitive psychology, the unique contributions of thoughts and feelings to emotional reactions was increasingly recognised. Emotions are now generally defined as complex psychobiological states, consisting of affective feelings, cognitions, and physiological arousal (Spielberger, 1966; Baldwin and Baldwin, 1986).

Furthermore, under the current evolutionary psychology, the theoretical perspectives on emotion were considerably dominated by “cognitive perspective”. The cognitive perspective has been incorporated so thoroughly into the other earlier perspectives. When the beginning of the modern cognitive approach to the study of emotions were examined, it is seen that the studies reach out to the work of Magda Arnold, but the origins of the perspective are much older, dating back to at least the Hellenistic philosophers (Nussbaum, 1994; Cornelius, 2000). The central assumption of the cognitive perspective and its associated tradition of research is that thought and emotions are inseparable. More specifically, all emotions are seen within this perspective as being dependent on what Arnold (1960 as Cited in Cornelius, 2000) called appraisal, the process by which events in the environment are judged as good or bad for an individual (Bandura, 1977; Cornelius, 2000). Every emotion is

associated with a specific and different pattern of appraisal. These patterns provide the link between particular characteristics of the person or organism, his or her learning history, temperament, personality, physiological state and particular characteristics of the situation in which the person or organism finds him or herself. (see, for example, Smith, Haynes, Lazarus, and Pope, 1993) .

“Social structural theories” of emotions, such as Kemper’s Social Relational Theory (1990), focus on dimensions of power and status. In developing a positivist approach, Kemper (1990) rejects the notion that norms determine emotions and looks to social structure, social relations, and emotional links to biology. Kemper (1990) offers structurallybased categories for defining situations and predicting emotions. Three theoretical propositions underlie Kemper’s (1990) structural approach; (1) power and status outcomes of social interaction produce emotions, (2) the basic emotions--fear, anger, depression, and happiness-- naturally result from power and status relations, (3) basic emotion outcomes of power and status relationships have pre-wired physiological correlates, thus the social, emotional, and physiological are interconnected. Kemper conceptualizes social structure as the stratification of actors according to power and status (1990), which produces recurring, predictable patterns of social relations (1990) and points out that the anger behaviors are a result of the effects of social structure within the organizations.

Thus, it is quite clear that the Darwinian, Freudian, behaviorist, cognitive, and social structural perspectives are already being integrated in the theories of study of anger emotion at work within each perspective. As it indicated with the review of the basic theories of emotions and anger, several theories of emotion are reasonably well-developed, and contemporary theories of anger emotion center on “the structural, situational and interactional sources of emotional responses” (Smith-Lovin, 1995:124). A brief review of each of these approaches can reveal similar predictions about when and why the individuals experience anger at work. As a result of the examination on theoretical foundations, to provide more insight into the individual differences in anger-related behaviour outcome expectancies, we investigated the relationship between these individual differences and a number of broad as well as narrow established personality dimensions, sociopsychological aspects, and organizational factors.

4. Development Of The Conceptual Framework And Hypotheses Of The Research

This subsection will describe the predictor variables used in this study; individual personality variable (emotional stability), psychosocial variables (social support and social integration), and situational variable (powerlessness). After giving the conceptual descriptions of the variables and their conceptual relationships with the workplace anger, the generated hypotheses for the aim of this study will be provided.

Workplace anger behaviors have been studied extensively with respect to antecedents or impact on the organization and coworkers (Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Coillie and Mechelen, 2006; Lawrence and Robinson, 2007; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, and Alberts, 2007; Newton, 2011). The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of the antecedents and reasons for employee anger within the organizational settings. The highest relationships between individual and personality variables, contextual, situational factors and employee anger behavior have been found when those factors are linked with theoretically relevant outcome variables.

For the knowledge of the author of this study, no study has investigated the roles of personality, contextual and situational variables together on the workplace anger. In this study, emotional stability as being under individual variables is a theoretically relevant independent variable related to workplace anger. Skarlicki, Folger and Tesluk (1999) found the moderating role of personality in the relationship between fairness and retaliation. Skarlicki et al. (1999) indicated that employees' perceptions of unfair treatment predict workplace retaliation, and individuals' personality trait was found to moderate this relationship. Shim (2010) revealed that personality traits had moderating roles on the relationship between workplace incivility and the intention to share knowledge.

Situational factors refer to characteristics of the social framework that are perceived by workers and are fundamentally influenced by other members of the organization (Hershcovis, Turnver, Barling, Arnold, Dupre, and Inness, 2007). When situational factors are the antecedents of workplace anger, the aggressive act is considered to be a form of retaliation by the worker or as reactive anger behavior. This definition implies that workplace anger is a reaction to a situation (Hershcovis et al., 2007), yet some researchers have argued that, despite these findings, the results can still be traced back to individual traits because the manner in which an individual interprets a situation can vary as a result of their personality and cognitive abilities (Skarlicki et al., 1999).

4.1 Individual Variable: Personality Trait-Emotional Stability

The studies of personality factors as influences on anger can be found as far back as the 1950s (Bettencourt, Talley, Benjamin and Valentine, 2006). Most of these studies have examined personality factors that may affect the degree of anger behaviors both provoked and unprovoked or in neutral situations (Bushman, 1995; Parrott and Zeichner, 2002), however, certain studies showed that personality influences anger only in provoked situations (Carver and Glass, 1978; Phil, Lau, and Assaad, 1997).

Given that personality appears to have some impact on anger behaviors, researchers explored personality factors and their impact on patterns of anger. Caprara, Perugini, and Barbaranelli (1994) stated that personality factors influence two patterns of aggression: the first being the impulsive, affective dimension of aggression and the second being the social-cognitive and instrumental dimension of

aggression. In their research study, Şahin, Basım and Akkoyun (2011:31) have concluded that Type-A individuals' high in anger, had significantly higher perceived stress scores and reported to use significantly more ineffective coping styles (helpless and submissive approaches), compared the other groups. With that respect, individual differences, such as an individual's personality, have been central to the research interest of researchers in organizations because of the previously studied relationship between individual differences and organizational outcomes, such as job performance, training success, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction (Barrick, Mount, and Judge, 2001). The previous studies show that personality plays an important role for anger at work. Different personality factors have been linked to workplace anger (e.g., Douglas and Martinko, 2001) and counterproductive work behaviors (see for example Hershcovis et al., 2007; Spector, 2011; Terlecki, 2011). These results indicate that some individuals show more negative behaviour than others, irrespective of the stressfulness of their work situation. The Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality has been used frequently in the area of management and psychology to examine the relationship between personality and employee behavior. The FFM proposes that personality may be described in terms of five higher order factors: Neuroticism, or Emotional Stability; Extraversion; Openness to Experience; Agreeableness; and Conscientiousness (e.g. McCrae and John, 1990; Barrick, Steward and Piotrowski, 2002; Bettencourt, Talley, Benjamin and Vaentine 2006).

In the current study, one possible trait of personality is emotional stability, which refers to the tendency to be confident, secure, and steady. The six facets for this domain include anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability (Costa and McCrae, 1992). People with low emotional stability tend to be anxious, depressed, insecure, and fearful. Theoretically, when people with low emotional stability experience depression or despair, they are more likely to lack the energy needed to do their jobs; thus, they avoid exerting effort and have dysfunctional thought processes (Shim, 2010). Based on this theory, it has been found that emotionally stable people are less likely to experience diversions, are less likely to withdrawal efforts on the job, and less likely to exhibit anger behaviors at work (Shim, 2010). Emotional stability is included in the present study because previous literature has concentrated on neuroticism or the lack of emotional stability as an antecedent for experienced workplace incivility (Milam, Spitzmueller and Penney, 2009). Specifically, Milam et al. (2009) revealed that neurotic individuals were more susceptible to experiencing uncivil behaviors because they generally perceive their surroundings as negative and find it difficult to handle conflict with others since they do not display the correct emotions in a given situation. Thus, it is expected that when emotionally stable people experience negative acts or conditions at work, their tendency to exhibit anger is low compared to the tendency of emotionally unstable people (Shim, 2010).

Based on this rationale, the following hypotheses is suggested:

H1: There will be a negative relationship between emotional stability and workplace anger.

4.2 Psychosocial Characteristics of Work Environment: Social Support and Social Integration

It is supposed that the primary social psychological factors in distress are social resources, such as support and ties with others. Social resources include dimensions of integration, relation networks, and support systems which address “whether a person’s basic social needs -affection, esteem, approval, belonging, identity and security- are satisfied through interaction with others” (Aneshensel, 1992:17). In the present study, two psychosocial characteristics of the work environment were considered: social support and social integration.

Research has shown the links between positive social characteristics in work and employees’ job satisfaction, well-being, and perceptions of meaningful work (Morgeson and Humphrey, 2006). Therefore, social characteristics are important to explore as antecedents of workplace anger because anger is social in nature (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). However, since little research has examined social characteristics as antecedents of experienced workplace anger, relevant background material to support hypotheses would come from the literature involving other incivil or deviant behaviors. For example, Agervold and Mikkelsen (2004) examined perceived psychosocial work environment and bullying.

“Social support” in organizations is defined as an employee’s perception of the concern an organization shows for his or her well-being (Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-LaMastro, 1990). Perceived social support includes discretionary practices available to employees within the organization. Adopting a social exchange framework, Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997) found that a high level of perceived social support creates a feeling of commitment, satisfaction, and well-being. Social support is the level of support provided from peers and supervisors at all levels within the organization as well as the ability and opportunity to make friends on the job (Terlecki, 2011). Ryan and Deci (2001) found that individuals who interacted with others on a regular basis at work were more satisfied with their jobs and had more positive moods. Loscocco and Spitze (1990) examined social support among blue collar employees and found that work related social support contributed to employee well-being. Social support, interdependence, and feedback from others have been shown to reduce the amount of job-related stress (Cohen and Willis, 1985; Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson, 2007) and increase organizational commitment. As further, the researches have shown that perceived social support is positively related to positive employee behaviors and attitudes at work (Chow, Lo, Sha and Hong, 2006).

“Social integration” refers to individuals’ social embeddedness according to the number of their relationships and frequency of contact with others (Thoits, 1995). Most people’s social networks include formal and informal relationships, ties of varying strengths and amounts of interaction. People potentially get support through relationships “in virtually all institutional and social contexts: religion, occupation, family, neighborhood, voluntary associations, the medical care system, and elsewhere” (Pearlin, 1989:251). While relationships may frequently be sources of stressors or strains, ties with friends, neighbors, relatives, and religious and social groups may buffer people from the effects of stress and enhance psychological and physical well-being (Kessler, Price and Wortman 1985; Aneshensel 1992; Uzun, 2008; Klemens, 2008).

Moreover, as social integration is a key element of social support, it is expected that individuals with greater social integration will experience less workplace anger because of the buffering effect of this social resource. Research on distress indicates that perceived social support is more important than number of social contacts in buffering people from the effects of stress. Therefore, the nature and quality of the relationships, not simply the number, likely plays an important role in determining whether social contacts contribute to more or less frequent anger. Accordingly, employees seek a balance in their exchange relationships with work environment, tending to have attitudes and behaviors commensurate with the degree of support the organization gives them as individuals and the social integration that the employees engage in.

With this review of literature, the following hypothesized relationships including psychosocial work environment factors are suggested.

H2: There will be a negative relationship between social support at work and workplace anger.

H3: There will be a negative relationship between social integration at work and workplace anger.

4.3 Situational Factor: Powerlessness

“Perceived powerlessness” refers to the lack of work control and job autonomy. It shares a common theoretical background with perceived control. Even though perceived powerlessness may have been referred to as a similar term with “learned helplessness” and “learned resourcefulness”, the concept is differentiated with its fundamental need of self-control over the environment or the outcomes. There is strong evidence suggesting that learned helplessness is generated by generalizing from one uncontrollable situation to believing that situations are uncontrollable in general (Maier and Seligman, 1976:4; Lieder, Goodman and Huys, 2013:1). Being the introducer of the theory of learned helplessness, Seligman and Maier (1967:8) concluded that “learned helplessness” is indicated by an explanation of interference with escape responding. In learned helplessness, the person gives up fac-

ing the environmental problems and escapes from coping. It is indicated that hopelessness, helplessness and haplessness are important predicted of psychopathology symptoms (Vatan and Dağ, 2009:187). Conversely, learned resourcefulness is described as behavioral and cognitive skills with which the person is able to regulate internal events such as emotions and cognitions and these behaviors are used in order to face everyday problems (Rosenbaum, 1990:xiv). Thus, contrary to powerlessness, high resourceful individuals, using their self-control skills can minimize the negative effects of stressful conditions and less respond with negative acts (Dağ, 1991:269; Akgun and Ciarrochi, 2003:288).

Previous research has reported a positive association between lack of control and destructive behaviors (Allen and Greenberger, 1980; Storms and Spector, 1987; Bennett, 1998; Ambrose and Schminke, 2003). The perception of powerlessness is related to the concepts of power and perceived control and are suggested to be antecedents of deviance and anger at work (Bennett, 1998; Ambrose, Seabright and Schminke, 2002). Theories in powerlessness literature explore, explain, and predict human activities that are motivated by the fundamental need of people to control and to influence their social environment as well as the process through which their desired outcomes are attained and maintained. (McCardle, 2007)

Research in the sociology, psychology, and organizational behavior has long been interested in individuals' perception of powerlessness and its effect on social and work anger. Literature indicates that employees' perceptions of powerlessness emanate from a lack of control over the work environment (Ashforth, 1989) and implies a sense of low self-efficacy (Seeman, 1959; Kohn, 1976), low self-esteem, and a diminished sense of autonomy and responsibility (Umiker, 1992). Black (1984) stated that such a situation can instigate aggressive acts at work. As Bennett and Robinson (2003:257) note, powerless employees may engage in aggressive acts as a -corrective means to restoring control over his or her environment. The idea that deviance and anger are behavioral attempts to secure power and control is captured by reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) in psychology and the general theory of social control in sociology (Baumgartner, 1984; Black, 1984). Reactance theory proposes that people value the freedom of choice of their actions. When facing a threat of loss of control, people react with attempts to regain control. As the threat of loss of control becomes severe, the threatened freedom becomes more valuable (McCardle, 2007).

With that respect, the experience of powerlessness has been examined empirically as an antecedent of workplace anger, deviance, and workplace aggressive behaviors. Bennett (1998) proposes that autocratic or punitive management styles are closely related to workplace deviance due to their influence over employees' low sense of self efficacy and personal control.

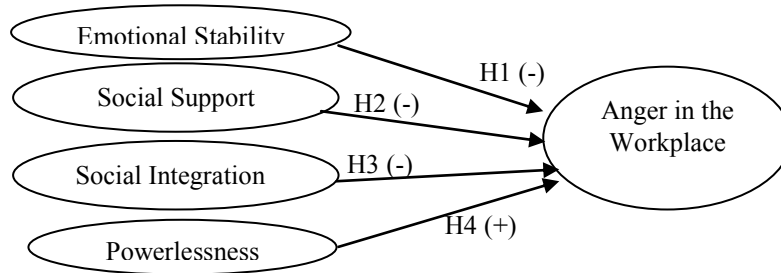
Thus, together, both theories and empirical studies point to the fact that powerlessness can predict workplace anger. Based on the theoretical implications, powerlessness can intensify feelings of lack of control and in this study it is suggested that

powerlessness can be a potential predictor of workplace anger. Individuals who perceive powerlessness feel that they have little legitimate power to acquire and influence the processes and results in the workplace. Therefore, it is proposed that when employees perceive they are powerless at work, they are likely to engage in anger behaviors at work. The following hypothesis is generated for proposing this relationship.

H4: There will be a positive relationship between powerlessness at work and workplace anger.

In this context, based on a comprehensive literature review, this study selected a set of the following constructs: emotional stability, social support, social integration, powerlessness, and workplace anger. The hypothesized model for this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model of the Study



5. Methodology

This study concentrated on anger in the workplace and its antecedents of employees' individual factor, psychosocial characteristics in the work environment and situational factor of the organizational context. Specifically, this study is designed in order to understand whether (i) emotional stability of personality trait, (ii) social support, (iii) social integration, and (iv) powerlessness are related with individuals' experiences of anger behaviors in the workplace. These aspects were examined by performing a questionnaire survey. Thereby, this section will provide the method and research design of the study by providing information about the sample and research instruments.

5.1 Sample

This study's sample consisted of employees (from managerial levels and nonmanagerial levels) of all departments in private owned organizations from several sectors such as banking, insurance, education, health, food-drink service, and retail shops in Istanbul-Turkey. As it was aimed to obtain data from individuals working in various sectors and departments, a mixed sampling method was used. Anger is supposed to be an emotion of every individual in every type of organization and

having prevalence, therefore, such a sampling method was found to be appropriate in this research study. Additionally, for identifying the respondents there was not an age or position limitation for the sample. As such, the level of analysis is individuals, the study setting is non-contrived and time horizon of the study is cross-sectional.

5.2 Research Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study was developed by utilizing scales for each of the variables of the research model with a double-check evaluation to provide the most accurate and understandable items. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section was composed of demographic questions related to the participants' personal characteristics. This section requested the participants' demographic profile such as gender, age, and marital status, number of children, tenure in the current job, and tenure in the work field. The second section was composed of five subsections measuring "emotional stability", "social support", "social integration", "powerlessness", and "anger" with totally 69 items. The subsections asked the participants to respond to items related to the variables with their self assessment of perceptions.

Emotional Stability. To measure an individual's personality, the NEO-FFI (Five-Factor Inventory) developed by Costa and McCrae (1992) was used. The NEO-FFI is a shortened version of the NEO-PI-R, which was developed by the same authors and is considered as the most standard measurement of the Big Five' personality. The NEO-PI-R has 240 items, and 60 of the 240 items of the NEO-FFI were taken via a factor analysis. Each trait contained 12 questions measuring the traits within this scale. Among the five traits, emotional stability was selected for this study. This 12 items scale of emotional stability was recently used by Shim (2010) and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .72 in Shim's (2010) study. This coefficient was relatively lower, compared to the other instruments' coefficients included in this study; however, statistically, a Cronbach's alpha higher than .70 is considered to be acceptable. Sample items included "I am not a worrier," "I often feel helpless and want someone else to solve my problems", and "I often get angry at the way people treat me" in order to measure emotional stability. The ratings were given on a 5-point itemized rating scale, where 1= totally disagree and 5= totally agree.

Social Support. To measure social support, the scale including a total of eight items were used after a review of House (1981), Torun (1995), Özcan (1997), Güngör (1997), Yıldırımbulut (2006) and four functional (instrumental, emotional, informational, appraisal) items of co-worker support and similarly, four items of supervisor support were constructed. Within those previous studies Cronbach's alpha coefficient for social support was revealed as .79; .77; .82; .88; and .91, respectively. The participants were asked to rate the frequency with which their supervisors and co-workers provided each type of support. The ratings were given

on a 5-point itemized rating scale, where 1= never and 5= always. Sample items included in this instrument were such as “To what extent do your supervisors share your problem and offer you support?”, “To what extent do your co-workers share your problem and offer you support?”, and “To what extent do your supervisors make you feel they value and support you?”.

Social Integration. To measure social integration, the scale including four items were adapted from the study of Mabry (1999). Mabry (1999) asked these items among 934 respondents and the items revealed .82 of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. However, the original items were reviewed with a double assesment and adapted to ask with six items. As a result, a scale of social integration consists of six items asking participants how often they (a) spend a social evening or event with colleagues; (b) spend a social evening or event with relatives; (c) spend a social evening with someone who lives in your neighborhood; (d) spend a social time with a friend working in your organization; (e) spend a social time with friends who are outside your organization; and (f) go to a cafe, bar or tavern alone for spending social time. Seven response categories ranging from “never” (0) to “almost every day” (6) were coded so that the more one socializes the higher their score. Because these items measure different types of socializing rather than different aspects of socializing, they are not highly correlated and do not form a single dimension. Thus, the six items were summed into a simple social integration score.

Powerlessness. Ashford, Lee, and Bobko’s (1989) three-item scale of powerlessness to measure the lack of control toward one’s work process, work situation, and work outcome along a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) was adapted in this study. The items included in this instrument were: (1) “I have enough power in this workplace to control events that might affect my job” (2) “In this workplace, I can prevent negative things from affecting my work situation”, and (3) “I understand this workplace well enough to be able to control things that affect me”. This instrument was used by McCardle (2007) recently and revealed Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .83.

Anger. The Self-Expression and Control scale (SECS) of Van Elderen, Maes, Komproe, and Van der Kamp (1997) is a 40-item self-report instrument consisting of four subscales: anger-in, anger-out, anger-in-control, and anger-out-control. Each scale consists of ten items. The SECS is a Dutch extension of the widely used Anger-Expression scale (Spielberger, Krasner and Solomon, 1988). In this study, level of anger was measured by 40 items asked with the questions about participants’ emotions during the previous week. The participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they generally experience each of the items, using a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from (1) ‘almost never’ to (4) ‘almost always’. Responses were averaged to create an anger scale (alpha = .85) which ranges from 0 to 4. On average, respondents reported being angry 2.26 days per week.

5.3 Procedure

All of the questionnaires were distributed by author and the participants were given some information about the procedure of the study. Questionnaires were answered and returned directly to the authors by hand. The participants were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on the spot or to return the questionnaire after 1-5 days. The questionnaires were hand-collected by the author as a result of 30 days work. Totally 412 questionnaires were successfully completed and collected.

5.4 Analyses

Data analysis was conducted in three phases. First, factor analysis was conducted on all items from “emotional stability”, “social support”, “social integration”, “powerlessness”, and “anger”. Second, all scales and subscales were subjected to reliability analysis. Third, correlation and regression analysis were also performed to test the hypothesis.

6. The Results

6.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities

6.1.1 Descriptive Analysis of Demographics

The demographic variables of the study are gender and the age of the employee, education level, experience in work life and in the current workplace. It was revealed that, percentage of female and male employees participated in the study are approximately the same (50,7% female and 49,3% male) and most of the employees (60,2 % of the total sample) have bachelor degree. 23% of the sample consists of first line, 60% of the sample consists of middle level and 17% of them consists of upper level employees.

6.1.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables in the Research Model

This section presents the descriptive statistics of “emotional stability”, “social support”, “social integration”, “powerlessness”, and “anger”. The results are shown in Table 1. The results show the mean score for “anger at work” is 3.1497. The results indicate that most respondents have high perceptions of anger behaviors and perceptions in their workplaces.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables in the Research Model

Variable	Mean Score
Anger Behaviors	3.1497
Anger-In	3.5771
Anger-Out	3.2125
Anger-In Control	3.1171
Anger-Out Control	2.9905
Emotional Stability	3.9423
Social Support	4.8387
Social Integration	4.7335
Powerlessness	5.6320

Table 3 also shows that the respondents provided the mean score for “emotional stability” (3.9423), for “social support” (4.8387), for “social integration” (4.7335) and for “powerlessness” (5.6320).

In Table 1, it is also seen that the mean score for “anger at work” is 3.1497. The results indicate that most respondents have high anger behaviors in the workplace. It is also seen that the respondents provide the highest mean score for “anger-in” (3.5771) followed by “anger-out” (3.2125), “anger-in control” (3.1171), and “anger-out control” (2.9905). Series of factors and reliability tests were performed before testing the hypotheses and performing regression analysis. The results showed that the reliability for total anger is 0.85. Besides, the reliability for anger-in is 0.84, for anger-out is 0.88, for anger-in control is 0.89, and for anger-out control is 0.77 as being the components of anger behaviors at work. The results also showed that the reliability for emotional stability based on 11 items is 0.80, reliability for social support based on 8 items is 0.88, reliability for social integration based on 6 items is 0.86, and reliability for powerlessness with 3 items is 0.81. The results indicate that all variables in this study have revealed adequate reliability.

6.2 The Relations of Individual, Psychosocial and Situational Factors with Anger Behaviors

6.2.1 The Relation between Emotional Stability and Anger Behaviors

Hypothesis 1 states that “a negative, direct relationship is expected between individuals’ personality trait of emotional stability and anger behaviors at work”. Table 2 presents the results of testing hypothesis 1. The results show that there is a significantly negative and moderate relationship between emotional stability trait of personality and anger behavior ($p=0.000$; $r=-0.547$). Such results are consistent with Skarticki et al.’s (1999) and Parrott and Zeichner’s (2002) results and the results indicate that personality trait is important in employees’ anger behaviours at work. This finding is also consistent with Shim (2010), Spektor (2011), and Newton (2011). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Table 2. Emotional Stability and Anger Behaviors

		Emotional Stability	Anger
Emotional Stability	<i>r</i>	1	-0.547
	<i>p</i>		0.000
	N	412	412
Anger	<i>r</i>	-0.547	1
	<i>p</i>	0.000	
	N	412	412

6.2.2 The Relation between Social Support and Anger Behaviors

Hypothesis 2 states that “a negative, direct relationship is expected between individuals’ perception of social support and anger behaviors at work”. Table 3 presents the results of testing hypothesis 2.

Table 3. Social Support and Anger Behaviors

		Social Support	Anger
Social Support	<i>r</i>	1	-0.569
	<i>p</i>		0.000
	N	412	412
Anger	<i>r</i>	-0.569	1
	<i>p</i>	0.000	
	N	412	412

Table 3 presents the results of testing hypothesis 2. The results show that there is a significantly negative and moderate relationship between perceived social support and anger behavior ($p=0.000$; $r=-0.569$). The findings are consistent with the evidences of previous studies (Wayne et al., 1997; Chow et al., 2006; Terlecki, 2011) which have indicated that perceived social support enhances individuals to feel encouraged and increases their well being and commitment at work. Thus, according to the results, it can be suggested that the organization which provides social support to their employees would lead to lower anger behaviors at work. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

6.2.3 The Relation between Social Integration and Anger Behaviors

Hypothesis 3 states that “a negative, direct relationship is expected between individuals’ perception of social integration and anger behaviors at work”. Table 4 presents the results of testing hypothesis 3. The results of Table 4 show that there is a significantly negative and strong relationship between social integration and anger behavior ($p=0.000$; $r=-0.746$). The results indicate that social integration is a strong aspect of psychosocial factors that is in relation to individuals’ anger behaviors. Such result is consistent with Aneshensel (1992); Kessler et al. (1985); Mirowsky and Ross (1989). This finding is also consistent with Mabry’s (1999) study which has demonstrated a significant relationship between individuals’ social integration and anger behaviors at work. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 4. Social Integration and Anger Behaviors

		Social Integration	Anger
Social Integration	<i>r</i>	1	-0.746
	<i>p</i>		0.000
	N	412	412
Anger	<i>r</i>	-0.746	1
	<i>p</i>	0.000	
	N	412	412

6.2.4 The Relation between Powerlessness and Anger Behaviors

Hypothesis 4 states that “a positive, direct relationship is expected between individuals’ perception of powerlessness and anger behaviors at work”. Table 5 presents the results of testing hypothesis 4.

Table 5. Powerlessness and Anger Behavior

		Powerlessness	Anger
Powerlessness	<i>r</i>	1	0.693
	<i>p</i>		0.000
	N	412	412
Anger	<i>r</i>	0.693	1
	<i>p</i>	0.000	
	N	412	412

The results of Table 5 show that there is a significantly positive and moderate relationship between individuals' perceived powerlessness and anger behaviors ($p=0.000$; $r=0.693$). The results indicate that powerlessness is an important aspect of situational factors in the organizations that is in relation to individuals' anger behaviors specific to the current research sample. The previous results imply that perceived powerlessness have important roles in decreasing employees' motivation at work and results with negative work behaviours and attitudes such as incivility, counterproductive work behaviors and anger behaviours. Thus, this result is consistent with Ashforth (1989), Bennett (1998), and Ambrose and Schminke (2003) who implied that perceived powerlessness and lack of control within an organizational environment would have a negative effect on employees' commitment towards their work, result with low self-efficacy, and increase aggressive acts at work. Black (1984) stated that such a perception of powerlessness can influence aggressive behaviours at work. Additionally, such finding is consistent with McCardle's (2007) study which has indicated the significant association between loss of control and powerlessness and workplace deviance. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is accepted.

6.3 Regression Analysis

Initially, to provide further understanding on the influence of the overall independent variables (individual, psychosocial and situational factors) of the research model on individuals' anger behaviors at work, a multiple regression analysis was performed. Table 8 presents the results. The aspects of personality, psychosocial and situational factors explain 62.5% of the variance in anger behaviors.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis for Individual, Psychosocial and Situational Factors and Anger Behaviors

Dependent Variable: Anger			
Independent Variables	Beta	t value	p value
Emotional Stability	-0.288	-5.077	0.000
Social Support	-0.374	-6.658	0.000
Social Integration	-0.455	-6.889	0.000
Powerlessness	0.348	1.355	0.175
R = 0.644; R ² = 0.625; F = 90.325; p = 0.000			

The results in Table 6 show that the four independent variables of the research model contribute 62.5% in influencing anger behaviors at work. Among the four aspects, social integration has the most important influence (negative) on anger behaviors ($p=0.000$; $\beta=-0.455$). Additionally, it can be seen that emotional stability have

negative relationship effects on the anger behaviors with a relatively lower explanatory power ($p=0.000$; $\beta=-0.288$).

7. Conclusion and Discussion

Anger in the workplace has been defined as a discrete emotion with universally recognizable expressions with specific types of physiological or cognitive reactions (Gibson and Callister, 2010). From the point of view of Organizational Behavior and Management Sciences, anger is seen as a social emotion that is generated in response to the other individuals and environmental factors. Sometimes, anger in the workplace results with the physical or psychological harm to co-workers, subordinates, or to social groups in which an individual is working. Therefore, anger is supposed to be an important subject of workplace behaviours to be investigated with several related concepts and variables in the organizational settings.

It was realized that previous research has uncovered a number of individual (e.g. personality, stress, demographics) and organizational (e.g. workforce diversity, work overload, unfair treatment, conflict) factors that interactively heighten anger and violence in the workplace (Leiter and Durup, 1996; Neuman and Baron, 1998; Douglas and Martinko, 2001). However, the attention in this study has also focused on the issue of “psychological” and “situational” aspects in which workplace attitudes and behaviors are influenced by non-work factors.

With that respect, this study examined the influence of individual personality factors, psychosocial characteristics of the work environment and situational factors on a specific employee behavioral outcome; “anger behaviours”. Specifically, this study examined four aspects of individual and organizational variables, namely emotional stability, social support, social integration, and powerlessness and their relationships with employees’ anger behaviors in their organization. The results show that all personality, psychosocial, and situational aspects chosen in this study had significant influences on the construct of anger behaviors. The results are consistent to the results of previous studies (such as Black, 1984; Kessler et al., 1985; Mirowsky and Ross, 1989; Aneshensel, 1992; Wayne et al., 1997; Bennett, 1998; Mabry 1999; Parrott and Zeichner, 2002; Ambrose and Schminke, 2003; Sloan, 2004; Chow et al., 2006; McCardle, 2007; Köksal ve Gençdoğan, 2007; Koç, 2008; Shim, 2010; Spektor, 2011; Terlecki, 2011) that signify the importance of these aspects on employees’ anger behaviors at work and aggression outcomes. It is seen that the aspects of emotional stability which has been considered as the personality factor and social support and social integration that were evaluated as the psychosocial characteristics of organizational environment had negative impact on anger behaviors and powerlessness which was the situational variable of the research model had positive impact on employees’ anger at work.

These results bring up the suggestion that the positive perceptions of social support and social integration would lead to lower the level of anger behaviours; this in turn would affect the well being of employees, groups and the organizations.

Therefore, it is proposed that the organizations should be encouraged to provide social support and enhance social integration practices in yielding better individual and organizational results in terms of negative workplace behaviours. Moreover, in this study, perceived powerlessness referred to the lack of work control and job autonomy and the concept was examined with the roots of the theory of perceived control. As a result of the current study, it is seen that the findings related to the relationship between anger and perceived powerlessness were consistent with the previous researches which have reported positive associations between lack of control and destructive behaviors at work (Allen and Greenberger, 1980; Storms and Spector, 1987; Bennett, 1998; Ambrose and Schminke, 2003). Due to the results of this study, it can be implied that the perception of powerlessness is related to the concepts of power and perceived control and can be suggested to be antecedents of anger at work. Thus, this finding supports the arguments of Bennett (1998) and Ambrose, Seabright and Schminke (2002) who have indicated that perceived powerlessness was an antecedent of deviant and aggressive behaviours at work. As further, the finding of this study related to powerlessness is also consistent with the study of Bennett and Robinson (2003) which has emphasized that powerless employees engaged in anger behaviors more due to their efforts of restoring control over their work environment.

Finally, considering overall findings of the current study, it has been identified some limitations. The limitations can be categorized as involving various sectors into the research sample, expanded research about causes of dependent variable of the study and sample size of the research. The current study was conducted to employees with managerial and non-managerial roles in the service sectors including organizations from health-care entities, educational institutions, banking and insurance organizations, food-drink service businesses locating in İstanbul. Thus, the study could be conducted to the limited sectors and it can be expanded by including the other sectors. The emotional stability of personality traits, social support, social integration and powerlessness perception have been discussed and analyzed as antecedents of dependent variable in the context of this study. However, there can be several other antecedents and determinants of employee anger at work. Thus, the study is restricted with independent variables. Other antecedents of employee anger could be investigated. The other limitation of the study is sample size. The research has been conducted to 412 employees who work in different sectors and organizations in İstanbul. In order to obtain more secure results, the study could be performed to the larger sample size. The measurement instruments used in the questionnaire survey of the current study have been developed for different cultures. Thus, since anger as an emotion and other independent variables are all individual perceptions, the questionnaire may not entirely represent the characteristics of the sample size.

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