An Analysis of the Factors that Evoke Unjustified Hostile Aggression

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Abstract

Hostile (emotional) aggression, characterized as the behaviors with main intent to injure others, is often accompanied by strong negative emotional states. Anger is most thought of as a factor that instigates the hostile aggression and most of the time it is believed that unjustified misdeed is the cause of anger. The perception of the misdeed as being voluntary and unjustified are usually claimed to be necessary for anger and hostile aggression to arouse, and that demonstrates that complicated cognitive appraisals are required to make this happen. However, Berkowitz argued, to arouse anger or aggression, "unjustified" or "deliberate" misdeeds or complex cognitive appraisals are not always necessary. To understand the issue more clearly, it is necessary to explore this topic by critically reviewing and comparing the existing studies on this field so that the phenomenon of unjustified aggression can be better clarified. The aim of this article is to pursue a critical review of theoretical perspectives and research on the issues of anger and unjustified aggression. I will first provide the distinction between aggression, anger and hostility, and then talk about different perspectives on the causes of anger and aggression. Next, I will present the Berkowitz’s cognitive-neoassociationistic model to describe the processes of how anger and aggression are generated, and then review the empirical research related to the effects of aversive events on anger/aggression, including unpleasant environmental conditions, physical pain and negative mood. And then, the issue of self-focused attention on aggression will be discussed. Finally, I will propose some suggestions for future research on this topic.

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Aggression is a common problem in our society. To understand the nature and the causes of aggression, many psychologists have dedicated to the research on it.

Hostile (emotional) aggression, characterized as the behaviors with main intent to injure others, is often accompanied by strong negative emotional states. Anger is most thought of as a factor that instigates the hostile aggression (Geen, 2001) and most of the time it is believed that unjustified misdeed is the cause of anger. For example, in Averill's (1982, 1983) study on anger, most of their subjects perceived that the cause of their anger was due to others' voluntary and unjustified misconduct. Therefore, the perception of the misdeed as being voluntary and unjustified seems necessary to arouse anger and hostile aggression, and that demonstrates that complicated cognitive appraisals are required to make this happen. However, Berkowitz (1993a, 1993c, 1999; Berkowitz & Heimer, 1989) argued, to arouse anger or hostile aggression, "unjustified" or "deliberate" misdeeds or complex cognitive appraisals are not always necessary; rather, as long as someone recognizes the aversive stimulus and experiences the negative affect, aggression-related tendencies were generated. To understand this issue more clearly, it is necessary to explore this topic by critically reviewing and comparing the existing studies on this field so that the phenomenon of unjustified hostile aggression can be better clarified.

The aim of this article is to pursue a critical review of theoretical perspectives and research on the issues of anger and unjustified hostile aggression (i.e., people aggress against others accompanied with negative emotions and with main intent to harm others rather than as a step for attainment of other objectives). Therefore, aggression theories (e.g., social learning theory, excitation transfer theory, and social interaction theory) that do not particularly articulate the reasons of unjustified emotional aggression or theorize generally on the process of aggression rather than emotional aggression would be out of the scope of this review. Besides, emotional aggression resulting from cultural differences is also not the focus of this article because a seemingly unjustified reason of aggression is however deemed justified within the culture of harm-doer.

Therefore, in the review that follows, I will first provide the distinction between aggression, anger and hostility, and then talk about different perspectives on the causes of anger and aggression. Next, I will present the Berkowitz's cognitive-neoassociationistic model (1990, 1993a, 1993c, 1999) to describe the processes of how anger and aggression are generated, and then review the empirical research related to the effects of aversive events on anger/aggression, including unpleasant environmental conditions, physical pain and negative mood. And then, the issue of self-focused attention on aggression will be discussed. Finally, I will propose some suggestions for future research on this topic.
Unjustified Hostile Aggression

Aggression, Anger, and Hostility

These three terms, aggression, anger, and hostility, are commonly seen in the literatures of aggression and anger. It seems necessary to distinguish the meanings of them. For aggression, most researchers agree with Feshbach's (1964) distinction between instrumental and hostile (emotional) aggression. Instrumental aggression refers to the aggressive behaviors which are carried out mainly to achieve the other extrinsic purposes whereas hostile (emotional) aggression refers to the aggressive acts which are carried out by the individuals who are unpleasantly aroused and motivated by a strong urge to injure the target. Therefore, hostile aggression is usually accompanied by strong emotions (Berkowitz, 1993a). Anger was defined by Spielberger, Jacobs, Russell and Crane (1983) as "an emotional state that consists of feelings that vary in intensity, from mild irritation or annoyance to intense fury and rage" (p. 16). The distinction between anger and hostile aggression is that hostile aggression is goal-directed, with an aim to injure another person while anger doesn't have anything to do with one's goal to harm others but just refers to a particular set of feelings (Berkowitz, 1993a, p. 20).

Regarding the definition of hostility, according to Buss (1961), hostility is an attitudinal response, which refers to "an implicit verbal response involving negative evaluations of people and events...the negative evaluations have no impact on others unless they are verbalized (p.12). For Spielberger et al. (1983), hostility connotes "a complex set of attitudes that motivate aggressive behaviors directed toward destroying objects or injuring other people" (p. 16). In Finman and Berkowitz's (1989) definition, hostility refers to the negative attitude or unfavorable judgment toward others, and it often stems from the negative ideas, memories and aggressive instigation that are evoked from the unpleasant affect. Though the hostile person holds the negative judgment toward others, he/she is not necessarily assaultive or to attack others. Taken together, anger refers to a set of feelings; hostility refers to attitudes whereas hostile aggression refers to punitive or destructive behaviors.

In the analysis that follows, the term "aggression" would only stand for "hostile (emotional) aggression". "Instrumental aggression" is not the concern in this article. In addition, although anger, hostility and hostile aggression seem to be manifested in different forms and scopes, they are usually believed to share the common roots and appear simultaneously. Thus in order to gain a more thorough understandings on "unjustified aggression", my discussions on the related theories and empirical studies would not be constrained to unjustified "hostile (emotional) aggression". In addition, unjustified anger and unjustified hostility would also be incorporated.

What Causes Anger and Unjustified Aggression?

The most frequently cited cause of anger is the misdeed perceived as unjustified and deliberate (Averill, 1982, 1983;
Berkowitz, 1989; Kassinove & Sukhodolsky, 1995; Russell & Fehr, 1994; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987; Smith & Lazarus, 1993). In Averill's (1982, 1983) well-known study on anger, over half (59%) of the angry subjects mentioned that voluntary and unjustified act caused their anger. Similarly, in Shaver et al. (Shaver et al., 1987) study on people's knowledge about emotions, 78% of the subjects mentioned that the situation perceived as illegitimate, wrong and unfair made them feel angry. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the scholars of emotion contend that the perception of misdeed as being unjustified and voluntary is the main and necessary component that causes anger in people.

For example, Averill (1982) maintained, "Anger ensues primarily when the frustration is occasioned by the actions of another person, actions which are appraised by the angry individual as unjustified or at least avoidable. Experimental research has also demonstrated that it is primarily arbitrary (unwarranted) frustrations that arouse subjects to anger and/or aggression" (Averill, 1982, p.129). Therefore he concluded, "the typical instigation to anger is a value judgment. More than anything else, anger is an attribution of blame" (Averill, 1983, p.1150). This notion just resonated with what Smith and Lazarus (1993) proposed in that anger arises from one's appraisal of the encounters as being "other-blame". Besides, Clore and Ortony (1991) maintained that the "perception of some kind of injustice of blameworthy act is not only a typical feature of anger, it is a necessary feature of anger" (p. 50). Therefore it appears that many psychologists of emotion agreed that the main cause of anger originates from one's perception of others' misdeeds as being unjustified and voluntary and some of them even contended that only unjustified misconduct could make people feel angry.

However, Dill and Anderson's (1995) study about the effects of justification on aggression seemed to challenge this notion. In their study, the subjects were either in justified, unjustified or no frustration condition and then they were given an opportunity to give the evaluation that supposedly could harm the people who just frustrated them if the evaluation is negative. The results indicated that the subjects under unjustified frustration condition exhibited the highest level of aggression among the three groups. However the subjects under justified frustration condition still showed the higher level of aggression than did the control group. Therefore, it implied that not only the unjustified frustration could produce aggression but even the justified frustration could also evoke aggression, though this effect might be smaller than that of the former.

There are also some psychologists who hold the view along with this line. For example, after analyzing the subjects' ratings on the subcategories of anger, Russell and Fehr (1994) concluded, "We suggest that perception of blameworthiness is not a necessary feature in any of these concepts, and yet we
know that some subjects and some experts do believe that some of them are subcategories of anger" (p. 200) Berkowitz (1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c, 1999; Berkowitz & Heimer, 1989) also contended that sometimes aversive events could directly evoke people's anger and emotional (hostile) aggression without the intervention of complicated cognitive appraisals or attribution processes by which others' misdeeds were perceived as unjustified or voluntary. He maintained, in the early stages of emotion generation, if there any cognitive process involves, that would never go beyond the initial appraisal of the event as aversive (Berkowitz, 1989, p. 69). To support his arguments, he conducted a series of studies to investigate the effects of aversive stimulation on people's anger and aggression and mostly gained the support to his assumption (Berkowitz, 1982, 1993b; Berkowitz, Cochran, & Embree, 1981; Berkowitz & Heimer, 1989). Therefore he proposed the "cognitive-neoassociationistic model" to describe why people's anger and aggression could be evoked either with or without intervention of the complicated appraisal processes.

Cognitive-Neoassociationistic Model

Based on the theories proposed by other psychologists (Bower, 1981; Leventhal, 1980), cognitive-neoassociationistic model (CNA model) (Berkowitz, 1990, 1993a, 1993c, 1999) contended that "any given emotional state is best regarded as an associative network in which specific types of feelings, physiological reactions, motor responses, thoughts and memories are all interconnected" (Berkowitz, 1993c, p. 9), therefore activating any one component in the emotional network tends to activate other components to which it is linked.

When people encounter an aversive event, the negative affect would be aroused. Due to the "built-in" linkages (Berkowitz, 1993c, p. 10), this unpleasant feeling would then automatically activate a variety of somatic, expressive-motor reactions, feelings, cognitive reactions, and memories that are associated with both fight and flight tendencies (Berkowitz & Heimer, 1989, p. 7). The relative strengths of these two tendencies are determined by a variety of factors, such as genetic, learning, and situational influences. Therefore, in these early stages, as long as people are feeling bad, their anger/aggression tendencies would be activated, and they "are theoretically apt to feel angry, have hostile thoughts, and be disposed to attack a suitable available target" (Berkowitz, 1993c, p.10) However, after these rudimentary anger and fear were aroused, higher-order cognitive processing may come into play if people start paying attention to their feelings. People in this stage may make causal attribution to their unpleasant experiences, try to understand the nature of their sensations, consider the social norm or personal beliefs regarding the appropriateness of these emotions, and probably try to regulate their emotions or aggressive tendencies. At this point, the initial emotions are differentiated, enriched,
elaborated, intensified or suppressed (Berkowitz, 1989, p.69). However, this higher-order cognitive processing does not necessarily go into full operation. The extent to which it goes into operation depends on how much attention and thought people put into their emotional experiences (Berkowitz, 1993c, p.13). So there might be some cases in which people do not pay attention or put much thought into their unpleasant feelings and then express more hostility or act more aggressively to others.

In sum, Berkowitz's CNA model proposed, the aversive events or states will at first arouse negative affect and then this negative affect will automatically activate both flight and fight tendencies and the associated feelings, thoughts and memories. To this point, the rudimentary anger and fear are aroused. If people pay attention to their feelings, they will start engaging in higher-order cognitive processing such as making causal attributions and thinking about the appropriateness of their feelings and behavioral tendencies. Eventually, their initial feelings are differentiated, elaborated, intensified or inhibited. Their behavioral tendencies might be strengthened or regulated.

Berkowitz's CNA model is a comprehensive model in the sense that it combines the Darwinian, Jamesian, cognitive and social-constructive perspectives of emotions in it. For example, it emphasizes the role of genetically built-in tendencies, recognizes the contribution of motor-expression and physiological reactions in emotional experiences (Berkowitz, 1993c, p.30) and it also points out the importance of cognition, learning and social norm in the elaboration and regulation of one's emotions and behavioral tendencies. Overall, the model integrates the genetic, bodily, cognitive, and social-cultural components in the way that these components are linked with one another and are activated simultaneously and sequentially.

Though the model seems comprehensive and reasonable, it still needs to be examined by empirical research. In the following section, I will review the empirical studies that investigated the effects of aversive events on anger and aggression, to see if the empirical results fit with this model.

**Aversive Events and Aggression**

There were some studies that investigated the effects of the aversive stimulation on animals' aggressive reactions. Those studies demonstrated that, when two animals (rats or squirrel monkeys) were caged in the same chamber and received the electric shocks, they would start fighting (Azrin, Hutchinson, & Hake, 1967; Hutchinson, Renfrew, & Young, 1971; Ulrich & Azrin, 1962). It appeared that their aggressive behaviors could not help them escape from the aversive stimulation, or lessen their pain. Therefore it could not be explained by the theory that suggested that "the occurrence of any act of aggression is assumed to reduce the instigation to aggression" (Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939, p. 50) or by the
theory that contended the aggressive behaviors are learned directly or vicariously and maintained through the reinforcement process (Bandura, 1973). The results of these studies seemed to support the notion that aggression could be evoked directly by the aversive events. However, since the results were obtained from the studies on the animals, there must be some limitations to generalize the results to human's behaviors. Therefore in the following sections, I will emphasize on the studies which investigated the relationship of aversive events and human anger or aggression.

Heat, Air Pollution, and Noise. In Anderson and Anderson's (Anderson & Anderson, 1984) field studies on the relationship between the temperature and the violent crimes, it was found that temperature was linearly correlated with the aggressive crimes. When the temperature increased, the aggressive crimes climbed. However, the temperature was not found to be related to non-aggressive crimes. From these results, it may imply that temperature might be causally related to aggression. Another study also obtained the similar results. In Rotton and Frey's (1985) archival research, it was found that the family disturbances and the assaults were positively correlated with the daily temperatures. Given the fact that the high temperature usually preceded the complaints about the family disturbances, they suggested that temperature might be one of the factors that cause violent crimes. Anderson, Deuser, and DeNeve's (1995) lab study also obtained the results along with this line. Their study showed that subjects in the high-temperature room reported more hostile feelings, hostile attitudes, and had higher heart rate. From these results, it may indicate that hot temperature could increase aggression-related affect, cognition, and arousal.

In fact, not only heat can facilitate aggression, cold can also evoke anger or aggression in people. This notion was confirmed by the Berkowitz's studies (Berkowitz et al., 1981; Berkowitz & Heimer, 1989) in that subjects who immersed their hands in the cold water exhibited more hostility and aggression than those with hands in the warm water. These studies will be reviewed later in the section of physical pain.

Besides heat and cold, foul odor or air pollution can also enhance people's aggression or hostility. For example, in Rotton, Frey, Barry, Milligan and Fitzpatrick's (1979) study, they found that subjects in moderately foul odor condition were more aggressive than were other subjects in unpolluted condition. Another study (Rotton, Barry, Frey, & Soler, 1978) showed that people in the foul odor-filled room reported more aggression, anxiety, fatigue, and sadness on the self-rating measurement. Another study [Alaoui-Ismailili, 1997 #302] studied the effects of odors on people's emotions and autonomic responses. It was found that subjects who were under the pleasant odor condition reported feeling more happiness and surprise. This result was also confirmed by the autonomic measures. On the other hand, the subjects under the unpleasant odor
condition reported feeling more disgust. However, the measures of their autonomic responses mainly showed that they had "anger" reaction. This seems to imply that in some occasions, even people might actually feel angry, they might not consciously sense it. The reasons that cause this discrepancy are probably due to the condition in which one's emotional experience does not correspond to their existent emotion schemata or scripts in which certain emotions should be aroused by certain causes. For example, anger should be aroused by other-blame events and unjustified misdeeds. Because of this habitual thinking, it makes people less likely to sense or correctly report their emotions. Another study by Zillmann & Baron (1981) investigated the effects of tobacco smoke on people's hostility. It was found that tobacco smoke could actually enhance people's hostile behaviors regardless who (provoker vs. neutral person) produced the smoke or whether they had been provoked or not. In addition, in the Rotton and Frey's (1985) study, they found ozone/oxidant levels were positively correlated with the numbers of family disturbances. The family disturbances occurred more frequently when ozone/oxidant levels were high. Taken together, it appears that the foul odor and air pollution generally could induce people's hostility, anger and aggression.

Besides the heat and odor, noise also has similar effects on aggression. In the Donnerstein and Wilson (1976) research, they found the high-intensity noise could enhance people's aggression when those people were provoked earlier. However, the effect was eliminated when those people were not provoked or when people perceived some control on the noise. In another study by Pahlavan & Bonnet (2000) on the effects of aversive acoustic stimulus on aggressive tendency, subjects who received aversive acoustic stimulus were shown to increase the speed of fist clenching, an index of the people's aggressive tendency. Therefore, it demonstrates that aversive acoustic stimulus might enhance aggression in people.

In sum, aversive environmental conditions such as heat, air pollution, foul odor, smoke and noise induce hostility or aggression in people. This result seems to lend support to Berkowitz' notion in that any aversive event which produces negative affects could automatically activate people's anger and aggressive tendencies. In the following section, a review of the studies investigating the effects of physical pain on aggression will be presented.

Physical Pain. In Lindsay and Anderson's (2000) study investigating the effects of pain and the primes on hostility and aggression, subjects were primed with gun pictures while extending their arms under pain and prime conditions. One of experiments in the study showed that when subjects were primed with gun pictures under pain condition, they exhibited more aggression toward others than those primed with the neutral pictures. However, without pain, the gun prime did not have effects on aggression. The other two
experiments showed that pain could increase hostile affects and the gun primes could facilitate the access of aggressive thoughts. Taken together, it seems that both pain and gun primes could facilitate or evoke aggression, however probably via different routes—pain increases aggression by eliciting hostile affects whereas the gun prime facilitates aggression by activating the aggressive thoughts. Besides, the gun-prime might facilitate aggression only when other aversive events (e.g., pain) are present. The gun prime alone does not seem to be able to evoke aggression. It should be noted that these causal relationships (e.g., pain-hostile affects-aggression; gun prime-hostile thoughts-aggression) could not exactly be determined from this study since those results were obtained from separate experiments. One does not know if those measures are taken in the same experiment, pain or prime which induces or facilitates aggression might at the same time induces hostile affect and aggressive thoughts respectively.

In a research conducted by Berkowitz, Cochran and Embree (1981), some of the subjects immersed their hands in the cold water (6°C) while others put their hands in the less cold water (18°C). At the same time the subjects were provided with either "punishment-help" or "punishment-hurt" information, and then they were asked to evaluate the target person's performance and delivered the rewards or punishment to that person. The results indicated that people in the cold-water condition were generally more punitive than people in the less cold condition. Moreover, the most punitive group were those who put their hands in cold water while receiving punishment-hurt information. These results demonstrated that aversive cold water might enhance people's aggression and implied that subjects' acts to deliver punishments were driven by their intention to harm (aggressive tendencies) since the information they received was that punishment would hurt people's performance.

Another research carried out by Berkowitz and Heimer (1989) also confirmed the effects of physical pain on facilitating aggression. In one of the experiments, the same cold-water paradigm, and performance evaluation procedure were used except that subjects were asked to write an essay either defending the use of punishment or irrelevant to this issue. The results indicated that people with hands in the cold water punished more than did people in warm water. Those painful subjects who had written an essay supporting the punishment wrote longer statements favoring punishment and they were more punitive than any other groups. Therefore, it seemed that combining the pain and the priming task (writing punishment-help essay) had the greatest effects on enhancing aggression in people. However, the reason why this priming task could facilitate aggression is not really clear. Compared with the study (Berkowitz et al., 1981) I mentioned previously in which the most punitive subjects were those who immersed their hands in the
cold water while receiving punishment-hurt information, this result seemed to be inconsistent. The authors explained, the reasons that writing the punishment-support essay could facilitate aggression were because it could trigger writers' negative thoughts such as memories associated with improper conducts or misdeeds, thus the negative affects were aroused accompanying these thoughts and memories and then intensified the unpleasant feelings caused by cold water, thereby strengthened people's aggressive tendencies. However, one may argue that the reason that caused this result was probably because after writing an essay to support the punishment, subjects had moved their original con-opinion to more pro-direction for punishment since people have the tendency to act consistently. Therefore, they delivered more punishments in accord with their beliefs. If this is the case, then people's acts to deliver punishment could not be deemed as aggressive, since they deliver punishment probably because they wanted to help.

Another study by Berkowitz and Heimer (1989) examining the effects of physical pain and priming task on anger and aggression yielded the mixed results. In this study, the same cold water paradigm was used and the people were asked to read a card describing a situation either about an annoying incident or a neutral incident, and then imagined that incidents and spoke their thought out loud. Results indicated that people in the cold-water condition while thinking the annoying incidents reported most unpleasant feelings and rated themselves as more annoyed, irritated, angry and distressed. However, people imagining the annoying incident with their hands in the cold water were generally more rewarding and less punitive than were their counterparts in the warm water condition. The authors suggested that this may be due to the fact that painful subjects had attended to their own unpleasant feelings in the middle of the study, thus "leaned over backwards" (p. 27) and reacted more leniently toward others, which means that higher order cognitive processing had come into play and intervened people's thought and behaviors in line with social rules and personal beliefs, according to Berkowitz's CNA model. This issue regarding the effects of self-focused attention on aggression will be discussed in the later section.

Negative mood. In Fogas and Bower (1987) study on the effects of moods on people's perception and the moods, subjects were asked to read the descriptions of the target persons and then made a judgment about their personalities while in good mood or in bad mood. The results showed that subjects in bad mood assigned more negative judgments toward the target persons than did subjects in good mood.

Similarly, a study by Hynan and Grush (1986) found that depression could enhance people's aggressive tendencies in that the depressed subjects administered more intense shock when they were impulsive-prone. In another study by Finman & Berkowitz (1989) on depression and aggression, it has been
shown that when subjects were depressive (induced by Velten mood induction procedure) and were asked to give quick responses, those who were characterized as repressors (people who have the tendency to avoid thinking about their unpleasant feelings) expressed less liking for the target person. Therefore, it appears that negative moods could enhance hostility especially in people with certain types of personalities (e.g., impulsivity, repressor) or when they did not have time to think about their feelings.

After reviewing the studies that explored the factors that caused the unjustified aggression, now I turn into the studies that investigated the factors that might inhibit the unjustified aggression and make people more rational. Specifically, I will focus on the effects of self-focused attention on aggression.

Self-Focused Attention on Aggression

Self-awareness theory was proposed by Duval and Wicklund (1972) and was revised by Wicklund (1975). The theory suggested that self-awareness arises when a person focuses his attention on his feelings, thoughts or behaviors. Once attention is focused on the self, discrepancies between ideals or standards and actual behaviors would become more salient and self-criticism are more likely to occur. James Pennebaker (1982) also mentioned, when the individuals direct their attention to and become aware of any aspects of themselves, "they are more likely to behave in line with their ideal selves, to exhibit more extreme emotions, and to be more accurate about internal state" (p. 35). In addition, Berkowitz's CNA model (1990, 1993a, 1993c; Berkowitz & Troccoli, 1990) also proposed that once people pay attention to their feelings, they start engaging in the higher-order cognitive processing. People would make causal attributions to what has happened and think about the appropriateness of their emotions. Thus their initial feelings might be intensified or inhibited and their behaviors will be more in line with their personal beliefs or social rules.

Along with this line, the findings in Lanzetta, Biernat, and Kleck's (1982) study indicated that when subjects have chances to focus the attentions on themselves (by viewing the mirror), they reported less negative affects to the unpleasant pictures and demonstrated lower level of arousals than did the control group on the measures of autonomic arousal and facial expression. When they rated their feelings on the second presentation of the pictures, the levels of arousal induced from viewing the pictures decreased than when they viewed the pictures the first time without rating their feelings. This result might be due to the habituation effect. However it is still possible that it was the self-rating that triggered the self-focused attention and thus led to the regulatory effect on negative affects. In sum, these results demonstrated that self-focused attention might regulate the unpleasant feelings in people.

However, the results in Scheier's (1976) study seemed to contradict this conclusion. In his study, when subjects
were provoked and their attentions were directed to themselves (by viewing the mirror), they delivered more intense shocks to the provocator while doing the teaching-learning task. Scheier explained that was because when the affect (e.g., anger) is strong and the personal standards are weak, self-focused attention would lead people to attending to their affect and thus their affect is intensified and would be reflected in their behaviors. In contrast, when personal standards are strong and the affect is weak, self-focused attention lead people to attending to their standards, thereby people will be more likely to behave in accord with their beliefs. However, given the fact that most people become angry when they perceive others' behaviors as unjustified misdeeds, it is possible that the inconsistency between Lanzetta et al.'s and Scheier's studies is due to the subjects' perception of justification of their encounters. In Scheier's study, subjects became angry because they were harassed and annoyed by the target person. Therefore when their attentions were directed to themselves, their negative feelings might be intensified since they appraised the provocator's instigation as unjustified and thus they might feel that they had good reasons to become angry and to punish the provocator. So in this case the cognitive processing actually intensified their negative feelings and increased their aggression. By contrast, in Lanzetta et al.'s study, negative feelings induced from the unpleasant pictures had nothing to do with the issue of justification. Therefore when subjects directed the attentions to themselves, they were more likely to regulate their negative feelings due to the fact that there was no perception of unjustified misdeed that caused their unpleasant feelings.

The results in Froming, Walker, and Lopyan's (1982) study seemed to support this reasoning. In their study, when the subjects whose attitude did not favor punishment directed their attentions to themselves (by viewing the mirror), they delivered significantly less intense shock to others than those without self-focused attentions. This result could be explained by the issue of justification in that those subjects were not provoked thus delivery of punishments seemed less justified. Therefore self-focused attention appeared to trigger their regulatory mechanism so that they behaved more in line with their personal attitudes and beliefs.

The results in Berkowitz and Troccoli study (cited in Berkowitz, 1993b) provided another evidence to support this notion. In their studies, highly uncomfortable subjects (with their hands in the cold water) made fewer unfavorable judgments and exhibited less aggression toward the target person when their attentions were directed to their feelings than did their counterparts whose attentions were distracted. In addition, other studies (Berkowitz, 1993a; Berkowitz & Troccoli, 1990) which used different pain-induced procedures (extending the arms) also demonstrated that once people focused the attentions on their feelings, they were more likely to regulate their
hostile and aggressive tendencies induced by pain since there were no unjustified misdeeds that caused their negative feelings and aggression. Therefore self-focused attention might lead to self-regulation of negative feelings or aggressive tendencies if people perceive that there are no unjustified events that caused their anger and aggression.

Conclusion

From the findings of the existing literature on unjustified aggression, it seems that in some occasions that aggression can be evoked without the perception of "unjustified" or "deliberate" misdeeds conducted by others. Besides, the complex cognitive appraisals are not always necessary for aggression to arise. However, it can be argued that a supposed "justified" condition that elicited more hostility or aggression in subjects might actually be perceived as being "unjustified" in subjects' viewpoints. For example, when subjects were participating an experiment in which they were put in a room with high temperature, foul odor or have to immerse their hands in cold water, those aversive feelings probably would make them felt terribly bad and thus blamed the experimenters because they did not expect such intolerable experiences at the time when they first agreed to participate. If it is the case, aggression and hostility observed in those studies cannot be claimed to arise without "unjustified misdeeds" or "wrong-doings" since subjects perceive them being "unjustified" during their participation in the experiments. So, in order to establish the validity of the research on unjustified aggression, one would better employ some measures or techniques, such as interviews or open-ended questions to understand how people actually feel and perceive about those experimental conditions.

Emotion experiences were influenced by the combination of genetic, personality, cognitive and social-cultural factors. Thus, future research may investigate the underlying process of emotion generation to examine how these factors are interrelated as well as how they mutually influence one another to form emotional experiences and produce behavioral reactions in people. Furthermore, it is important for future research to examine the variables associated with aggression-induced processes such as primes, personal beliefs, attitudes, prior experiences and memories as a means to comprehend their effects on unjustified aggression. Moreover, investigating under what conditions does self-attention inhibit or intensify one's negative affects and behavioral reactions can have very important implications for intervention on unjustified aggression. One of the limitations about the literatures I reviewed in this article was the limited generalizability of findings to other samples. Those literatures mostly used American college students as their subjects and therefore it is hard to know if the findings of the studies can be replicated with other ethnic populations or people with different cultures. Hence, it is necessary to call for future research to examine the cross-culture differences within the context of unjustified aggression.
References


引起非合理攻擊之因素分析

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摘要

敵對性（情緒性）攻擊之產生的原因主要是為了去傷害別人，它通常是伴隨著強烈的負面情緒狀態。而生氣是最常被認為引起敵對性攻擊的因素之一，而且在大部分的情況，他人不合理的錯誤行為主要是引發生氣的原因。如果「認為他人的錯誤行行為是蓄意且不合理」是引發敵對性暴力的必要條件，那顯示複雜的認知評鑑過程在引發敵對性攻擊是一項必要的中介過程。然而，Berkowitz 強調，要引起憤怒或敵對性攻擊，他人不合理的錯誤行為或複雜的認知評鑑並不一定總是需要，為了要更清楚的了解這個議題，仔細的比較與分析這領域已存的文獻是需要的。本文的主要目的是回顧與分析有關於「非合理性攻擊」的相關理論與研究。首先，我將辨別「攻擊」、「生氣」與「敵對」等三者在定義上的差異。然後，我將提出學者對於造成生氣與敵對性攻擊之原因的不同觀點；之後，我將提出 Berkowitz 的「認知－新聯結模式」來說明生氣與攻擊產生的過程，然後回顧與分析有關非合理性攻擊的實徵性研究，這些研究探討了包含惡劣的環境條件、生理上的痛苦與負面的情緒對暴力的影響；然後，我將討論自我注意對於緩和或強化暴力的影響；最後，我將對於未來研究提出一些建議。

關鍵詞：生氣 暴力 攻擊