

# An Angry Face and a Guilty Conscience: The Intrapersonal Effects of Fake Anger in Negotiation

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## Abstract

Research on anger in negotiation suggests that expressing anger can have detrimental effects on the relationship between the parties but may also improve the expresser's economic outcomes, resulting in the use of fake anger (i.e., anger that is expressed but not felt) as a negotiation strategy. Based on research on moral emotions, we argue that fake anger in negotiation will lead to expressers' guilt, which in turn negatively impacts their self-perception and their overall subjective experience of the negotiation. Across three studies (two online and one face-to-face), we consistently demonstrate that fake anger lowers negotiators' feelings about themselves as well as their overall subjective value, and that guilt mediates this effect. We discuss implications of these findings for theory and practice of negotiation and propose an agenda for future research.

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.

—Mark Twain

In recent years, anger has become an ever more prevalent component of the public discourse in an increasingly polarized political environment (Desilver, 2022; Mounk, 2022). In the U.S. alone the last two decades have witnessed political and social movements including The Tea Party Movement, Occupy Wall Street, and Black Lives Matter in which individuals' expressions of anger have resulted in violence in some protests and inflamed the rhetoric of these important societal debates. However, it is worth noting that not all of the anger has been genuine. Public protests and debates can be—and have been—fueled by individuals or entities whose identities and interests lie outside of a given debate but who participate with an intent to disrupt genuine discourse around an issue (see D'Arcus, 2004; Shantz, 2020). For example, some companies openly advertise paid protesters, paparazzi, and publicity stunts for corporations and politicians (Koren, 2018). On a broader scale, there have been thousands of tweets and retweets by Russia-backed bots that, according to William Evanina, then-director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, worked to “inflammate social divisions, promote conspiracy theories and sow distrust” in U.S. elections (Strohm, 2020).

The words and actions of the individuals described above demonstrate the existence of expressions of inauthentic beliefs or emotions that can be used to achieve a particular goal in a contentious social context including a negotiation. Consistent with this notion, the expression of anger has been shown to be an effective tool for improving expressers' own economic outcomes in negotiation (e.g., Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2004). For example, expressing anger has been shown to motivate the recipients to make more concessions in negotiation (Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2010) as anger implies a threat (Sinaceur et al., 2011). On the other hand, research has also shown that experiencing anger tends to have the opposite effects. For instance, experiencing anger can distract negotiators, leading them to think less rationally (Parkinson, 2000) and less clearly (Buck, 1991; Daly, 1991). Furthermore, angry negotiators tend to make errors in perceiving their own interests because of these distractions (Lerner, 2005). As a result, negotiators who feel anger may achieve suboptimal economic outcomes in a negotiation.

Based on these findings in the negotiation literature, it may seem logical to suggest that to succeed in a negotiation, negotiators should simply express anger that they do not actually feel (i.e., fake anger). However, building on prior research on fake anger (e.g., Campagna et al., 2016; Côté et al., 2013; Hideg & Van Kleef, 2016) and moral emotions, especially guilt (e.g., Haidt, 2003; Tangney, 1991; Tangney et al., 2007), we argue that fake anger in negotiation will have detrimental, intrapersonal effects on the expressers because it can lead to expressers' guilt, which in turn will have a negative impact on their self-perception as well as their overall subjective experience of the negotiation.

### Anger in Negotiation

Negotiation is a give-and-take decision making process among two or more parties that is often fraught with negative emotions such as anger. A substantial amount of negotiation research has shown that anger can elicit concessions from the recipients and thus result in better economic outcomes for the expressers (e.g., Butt & Choi, 2006; Lelieveld et al., 2011; Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2012). For instance, Sinaceur and Tiedens (2006) found that negotiators who expressed anger were able to extract larger concessions from their counterparts because they were perceived as tough. Furthermore, Van Kleef et al. (2004) found that negotiators conceded more to an angry counterpart because they assumed that the anger expresser was reaching the limits of the bargaining range and that they needed to make more concessions to avoid an impasse.

Notably, the economic or monetary gains as a consequence of anger expression in negotiation are subject to some important boundary conditions. For instance, anger that is expressed toward the individual results in fewer concessions than anger expressed toward the behavior (Steinel et al., 2008). Moreover, the intensity of expressed anger can interact with the cultural value of power distance, such that high-intensity anger is less effective in eliciting concessions from high-power-distance service employees because of the perceived inappropriateness of the anger (Glikson et al., 2019). Similarly, workplace anger can backfire in the process of solving problems or improving situations when high-status supervisors express anger toward their low-status subordinates, who tend to be more sensitive to negative feedback due to a lack of status (Callister et al., 2017).

Although expressing anger in negotiation can generally help negotiators improve their economic outcomes through perceptions of toughness and narrowing bargaining range, doing so often brings a relational cost. Recipients of expressed anger tend to have less desire to work with the angry negotiator in the future (Allred et al., 1997) and are often motivated to seek retaliation when given the opportunity (Adam & Brett, 2015; Wang et al., 2012). In multiparty negotiations, anger expression can also cause the expresser to be left out of coalitions (Van Beest et al., 2008). Furthermore, negotiators who express anger are often perceived by their counterparts as selfish, motivating the counterparts to exit the negotiation without an agreement (Yip & Schweinsberg, 2017).

What has been notably missing in the growing literature on anger in negotiation is an examination of the *intrapersonal* effects of anger on the expressers, as opposed to the *interpersonal* effects on the recipients and the relationship between the parties. This is an important omission because we know that the subjective or psychological experience of a negotiation matters to negotiators (Curhan et al., 2006; Curhan et al., 2009; Curhan et al., 2010). In other words, while they value the economic outcomes, negotiators care equally about their relationship with the counterparts, the fairness of the negotiation process, and the feelings about themselves after a negotiation (Curhan et al., 2006). Importantly, these dimensions of subjective value have implications not just in the current negotiation, but for future negotiations as well (Curhan et al., 2009; Curhan et al., 2010). For instance, in a two-round negotiation, negotiators who experienced higher subjective value in the first round of the negotiation were able to achieve better economic outcomes in the second round of that negotiation (Curhan et al., 2010).

### **Fake Anger, Guilt, and Subjective Value**

Similar to the work on anger in negotiations, research on *fake anger*, or expressed anger that negotiators do not feel, has demonstrated a variety of negative consequences for negotiators (Campagna et al., 2016; Côté et al., 2013; Hideg & Van Kleef, 2016). For example, fake anger led recipients to ask for more from their counterpart during a negotiation (Côté et al., 2013; Hideg & Van Kleef, 2016). Similarly, Campagna et al. (2016) found that fake anger hurt trust between parties and negatively affected deal implementation. In addition to these interpersonal drawbacks, we argue that expressing fake anger in negotiation can have negative intrapersonal outcomes as well, including feelings of guilt and a more negative self-perception (and a more negative subjective experience of the negotiation) for the expressers. When they do not actually feel angry, expressers of anger are intentionally taking advantage of their counterparts in an effort to reap the economic benefits of anger expression. Thus, expressing fake anger is likely to raise ethical concerns in the minds of the expressers about their own behavior (Campagna et al., 2019; Lewicki et al., 2016) and result in a feeling of guilt, which is one of the moral emotions—or emotions that result from the successful or failed enactment of a group norm or standard that is valued by an individual (Haidt, 2003; Tangney et al., 2007).

As a self-conscious moral emotion, guilt is conceptualized as “an affective state associated with a focus on specific behaviors – behaviors that often involve harm to someone or something” (Tangney, 1991, p. 599). Because expressing fake anger can lead a counterpart to make more concessions and therefore suffer economically, expressers of fake anger may perceive that this behavior (i.e., expressing fake anger) has caused harm to their counterparts’ economic interests. Causing harm to others has been shown to elicit guilt in an

individual whose behavior is responsible for others' suffering (Baumeister et al., 1994; Haidt, 2003; Hoffman, 1982). In addition to causing harm to the counterpart's economic interests, expressing fake anger can also damage the relationship between the parties and cause relational harm. Indeed, research has shown that expressing anger in negotiation is detrimental to the relationship between the parties (Campagna et al., 2016; Pietroni et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2012). Because of the economic harm to the counterpart and the relational harm to the parties, we hypothesize that negotiators who express fake anger are likely to experience guilt. Furthermore, because guilt typically evokes a negative evaluation of the self (as opposed to others) and provides crucial feedback on the unacceptability of one's own behavior (Tangney et al., 1996; Tangney et al., 2007), we hypothesize that it will result in the expressers' negative self-perception as well as negative subjective experience of the negotiation. In other words, we hypothesize that expressing fake anger in negotiation will be negatively associated with expressers' self-perception and subjective experience of the negotiation, and that these effects will be mediated by expresser guilt.

### Overview of Studies

We tested our hypotheses in three studies. Study 1 examined the proposed main effect – the negative relationship between fake anger and expressers' self-perception and subjective experience of the negotiation. Study 2 aimed to replicate the findings of Study 1 and test the proposed mediating effects of expresser guilt. Both Studies 1 and 2 used online samples and provided conservative tests of our hypotheses, because participants knew that their negotiation was hypothetical and that they would simply type an angry message to their counterparts. Study 3 used a face-to-face sample in a laboratory setting to replicate the findings of the first two studies and to increase the generalizability of our findings.

### Study 1

#### Method

#### *Participants*

We recruited 133 working adults from the Amazon Mechanical Turk (M-Turk) labor marketplace to participate in an online negotiation study. Of the participants, 39% were female, 65.2% were White or European American, 14.9% were Asian or Asian American, 9.2% were Black or African American, 6.4% were Latino or Hispanic, and 1.4% self-identified as Other. Participants had a mean of 35 years of age ( $SD = 12.15$ ). The sample size was based on an *a priori* power analysis for a two-condition (i.e., fake anger vs. control) experimental design, where power is 80%,  $\alpha = .05$ , and Cohen's  $f$  effect size is estimated at 0.25.

#### *Procedure*

After providing their consent, participants were asked to read a scenario about a negotiation regarding the purchase of a used armchair. They were asked to imagine that they would be the seller. They were also instructed to imagine that their asking price for the chair was \$90, that their reservation price was \$60, and that the buyer had offered to purchase the chair for \$50.

To manipulate fake anger, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: fake anger and control (no anger), and asked to type in a counteroffer to the buyer. In the fake anger condition, participants were presented with information about how expressing anger in negotiation is useful for gaining concessions and asked to send an angry message with their counteroffer. Suggestions for angry messages were offered (e.g., "Are you kidding me?? That offer makes me REALLY angry"). This manipulation was adapted from previous work

in the literature (e.g., Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006). In the control condition, participants were simply asked to send a message and a counteroffer to the buyer.

All participants were told to imagine that their counterpart (i.e., the buyer) had accepted their counteroffer. Throughout the study, it was clear to participants that they were only part of a hypothetical negotiation scenario. Finally, participants completed a questionnaire with dependent measures and demographic questions.

### Measures

**Feelings about the Self.** We used the 4-item Feelings about the Self subscale of the Subjective Value Inventory (SVI) (Curhan et al., 2006) to measure negotiators' self-perception after the negotiation. Participants answered the following four questions: "Did you behave according to your own principles and values?", "Did this negotiation make you feel more or less competent as a negotiator?", "Did you "lose face" (i.e., damage your sense of pride) in the negotiation?", and "Did this negotiation positively or negatively impact your self-image or your impression of yourself?". Responses were on a 7-point scale with varied anchors appropriately matched to each question (e.g., 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *perfectly*, and 1 = *it negatively impacted my self-image*, 7 = *it positively impacted my self-image*). These items were then averaged together to form a composite score of Feelings about the Self ( $\alpha = .51$ ).<sup>1</sup>

**Overall Subjective Value.** We used the entire SVI (Curhan et al., 2006) to measure negotiators' overall subjective experience of the negotiation. Specifically, we took the mean of all four subscales of the SVI – Feelings about the Self, Feelings about the Relationship, Feelings about the Process, and Feelings about the Instrumental Outcome. Two questions from the Feelings about the Process subscale were removed because they did not make sense in the context of a hypothetical negotiation scenario: "Do you feel your counterpart(s) listened to your concerns?" and "Did your counterpart(s) consider your wishes, opinions, or needs?". Similarly, responses were on a 7-point scale, and the items were then averaged together to form a composite score of the SVI ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Other Measures.** To check the effectiveness of the manipulation, participants responded to the question, "Were you asked to express anger in this negotiation?" (yes/no/not sure). As a control measure, participants were also asked, "How angry did you actually feel during the negotiation?" (1 = *not at all angry*, 7 = *very angry*).<sup>2</sup>

### Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables are presented in Table 1. To check the effectiveness of our manipulation, we examined participants' responses to the question, "Were you asked to express anger in this negotiation?" (yes/no/not sure). A chi-square analysis was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(2, N = 133) = 118.63, p < .001$ , indicating that the manipulation was successful. The "not sure" option was included to capture any uncertainty in the manipulation, and only three participants selected this option.

<sup>1</sup> In their original work, Curhan et al. (2006) acknowledged that "the Self factor appears to have the least internal cohesion among items—suggesting, perhaps, a more multifaceted nature—and the lowest level of association with other scale factors." Therefore, this lower reliability score was not a complete surprise. In Studies 2 and 3, the reliability scores for this scale improved to  $\alpha = .71$  and  $\alpha = .76$ , respectively.

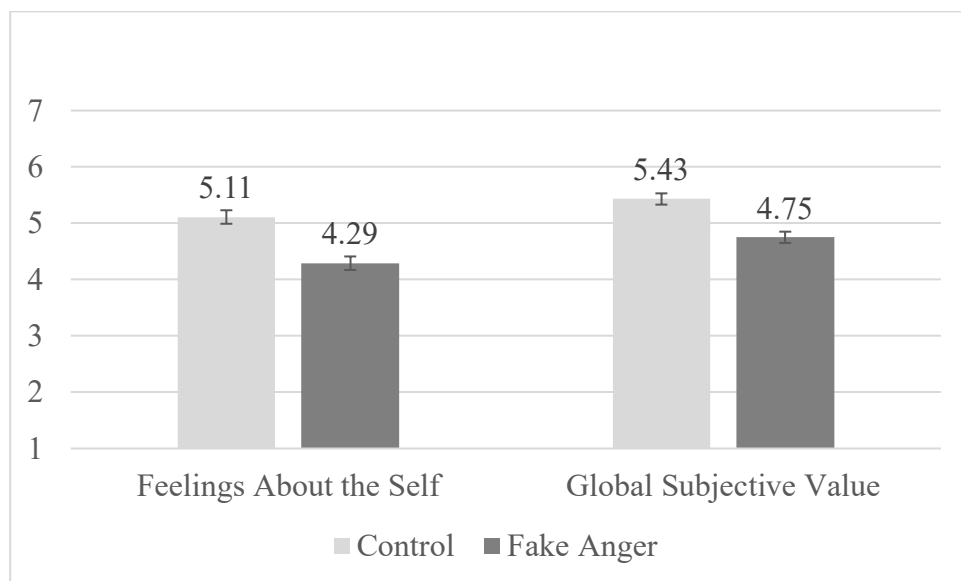
<sup>2</sup> In anticipation of potential mediators of the main effect, we also included several exploratory variables, none of which were included in our hypotheses. These variables were moral self-image, emotional dissonance, guilt and shame proneness, importance of displaying authentic emotions, and moral identity.

**Table 1***Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
1. Felt anger	2.56	1.81		
2. Feelings About the Self	4.69	1.05	-.16	
3. Global Subjective Value	5.08	.88	-.75*	.82**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

We ran a series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to test our hypothesis that negotiators who express fake anger will have more negative self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation than those who express no anger. Results showed a statistically significant effect of fake anger on Feelings about the Self across conditions,  $F(1, 130) = 24.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$ . As hypothesized, negotiators in the fake anger condition ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ) had significantly lower feelings about themselves after the negotiation than those in the control (no anger) condition ( $M = 5.11$ ,  $SD = .94$ ),  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$  (Figure 1). Similarly, results also showed a statistically significant effect of fake anger on overall subjective value across conditions,  $F(1, 130) = 23.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$ . As hypothesized, negotiators in the fake anger condition ( $M = 4.75$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) had significantly lower overall subjective value after the negotiation than those in the control (no anger) condition ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ),  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$ .

**Figure 1***Mean of Subjective Value Measures by Condition (Study 1)*

Note. Error bars represent the standard error.

An alternative explanation for our results might be that asking negotiators to express anger could lead them to actually feel angry. This felt anger might in turn be responsible for their negative self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation. To rule out this possibility, we also ran our analyses after controlling for felt anger in the models, and our findings remained the same. Specifically, after controlling for felt anger, negotiators in the fake anger condition still reported lower feelings about themselves,  $F(1, 130) = 20.46$ ,

$p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$  and lower overall subjective value,  $F(1, 130) = 18.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .13$  than those in the control (no anger) condition.

### Discussion

Study 1 provided initial empirical support for our hypothesis that fake anger will have negative intrapersonal effects on expressers' self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation. Compared with those who did not express fake anger, negotiators who did had lower feelings about themselves and lower overall subjective value after the negotiation. In Study 2, we sought to replicate the findings in Study 1 and test our hypothesis that the negative effects of fake anger on expressers' self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation are mediated by expresser guilt.

## Study 2

### Method

#### Participants

We recruited 185 working adults from Prolific Academic, an online participant pool, to participate in a negotiation scenario study in exchange for monetary payment. In accordance with our *a priori* exclusion criteria, seven participants were excluded for failing one or both attention checks embedded in our questionnaire, resulting in a final sample size of  $N = 178$ . Of these participants, 49.4% were female, 65.7% were White or European American, 13.5% were Asian or Asian American, 11.2% were Latino or Hispanic, 10.7% were Black or African American, and 2.8% self-identified as Other. Participants had a mean of 31.3 years of age ( $SD = 11.81$ ). Sample size, exclusion criteria, hypotheses, and all study materials were preregistered on the Open Science Framework at <https://osf.io/yv4uh>.<sup>3</sup>

#### Procedure

Study 2 was identical to Study 1, with the exception that after going through the hypothetical negotiation scenario, participants answered questions about their feelings of guilt before completing the dependent measures and demographic questions.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For exploratory purposes, we also included a "fake happiness" condition in this study but did not make any hypotheses about its effects. This was explicitly stated in the preregistration. As a point of information for the reader, when compared to the control condition, fake happiness did not have a significant effect on feelings of guilt, shame, or subjective value. With the "fake happiness" condition, the sample size is  $N = 280$ .

<sup>4</sup> We included a few exploratory variables in our questionnaire. All were included in the preregistration, and none of them were included in our hypotheses. These included emotional dissonance, desire for future interaction, state shame, and the importance of displaying authentic emotions. Full materials and hypotheses are available at the preregistration link provided in the text above.



## Measures

**Feelings about the Self.** We used the same subscale of SVI (Curhan et al., 2006) as in Study 1 to measure negotiators' self-perception after the negotiation. The items were averaged together to form a composite score of Feelings about the Self ( $\alpha = .71$ ).

**Overall Subjective Value.** We used the same SVI (Curhan et al., 2006) as in Study 1 to measure negotiators' overall subjective experience of the negotiation. The items were averaged together to form a composite score of SVI ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

**Guilt.** We used the State Shame and Guilt Scale to measure participants' feelings of guilt after the negotiation (Marschall et al., 1994). Participants answered the following five questions based on a 5-point scale (1 = *not feeling this way at all*, 5 = *feeling this way very strongly*): "I feel remorse, regret;" "I feel tension about something I have done;" "I cannot stop thinking about something bad I have done;" "I feel like apologizing, confessing;" and "I feel bad about something I have done." These items were averaged together to form a composite score of guilt ( $\alpha = .94$ ).

**Other Measures.** We used the same items as in Study 1 to measure participants' felt anger and check the effectiveness of the manipulation of fake anger.

## Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables are presented in Table 2. To check the effectiveness of our manipulation, we examined participants' responses to the question, "Were you asked to express anger in this negotiation?" (yes/no/not sure). A chi-square analysis was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(2, N = 178) = 160.36, p < .001$ , suggesting that the manipulation of fake anger was successful.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Felt anger	1.98	1.43			
2. Guilt	1.89	1.13	.21**		
3. Feelings About the Self	4.71	1.28	-.16*	-.65**	
4. Global Subjective Value	4.89	1.09	-.18*	-.64**	.86**

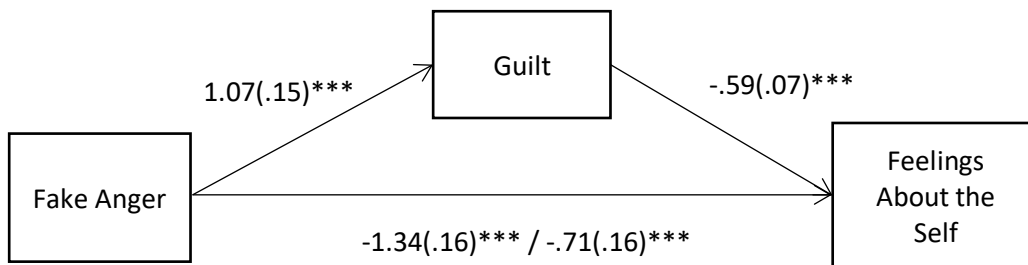
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

To test our main effect and mediation hypotheses, we used the Preacher and Hayes (2004) bootstrapping method, with 10,000 iterations. As in Study 1, the results showed a statistically significant effect of fake anger on Feelings about the Self,  $b = -1.34, SE = .16, p < .001, 95\% CI[-1.66, -1.02]$ , such that negotiators in the fake anger condition had lower feelings about themselves than those in the control (no anger) condition. The analysis also revealed a significant, positive effect of fake anger on guilt,  $b = 1.07, SE = .15, p < .001, 95\% CI[.78, 1.37]$ . Negotiators in the fake anger condition experienced a higher level of guilt than those in the control (no anger) condition. In addition, there was a significant, negative effect of guilt on Feelings about the Self,  $b = -.59, SE = .07, p < .001, 95\% CI[-.72, -.45]$ . When both fake anger and guilt were added to the model as predictors of Feelings about the Self, fake anger remained significant,  $b = -.71, SE = .16, p < .001, 95\% CI[-1.03, -.40]$ , indicating partial mediation (Figure 2). The indirect effect of the model was significant,  $effect = -.63, 95\% BCCI[-.93, -.35]$  because zero is not included in the confidence interval. Therefore, our hypotheses that fake anger is negatively associated with expressers' self-perception and that this effect is mediated by expresser guilt were supported.



**Figure 2**

*Mediation Model with Feelings About the Self as the Dependent Variable (Study 2)*



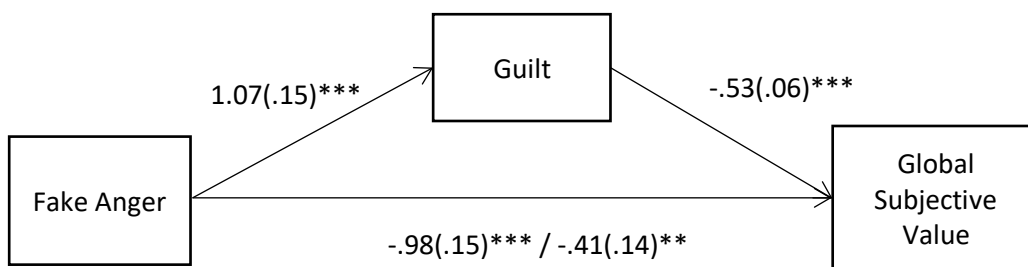
*Note.* Standard errors are included in brackets next to regression coefficients.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Similarly, results also showed a statistically significant effect of fake anger on overall subjective value,  $b = -.98$ ,  $SE = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI[-1.26, -.69]. Specifically, negotiators in the fake anger condition had lower overall subjective value than those in the control (no anger) condition. The mediation analysis revealed a significant, negative effect of guilt on overall subjective value,  $b = -.53$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI[-.65, -.41]. When both fake anger and guilt were added to the model as predictors of overall subjective value, fake anger remained significant,  $b = -.41$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $p = .004$ , 95% CI[-.69, -.13], indicating partial mediation (Figure 3). The indirect effect of the model was again significant, effect =  $-.57$ , 95% BCCI [-.82, -.33] because zero is not included in the confidence interval. Therefore, our hypotheses that fake anger is negatively associated with expressers' overall subjective experience of the negotiation and that this effect is mediated by expresser guilt were supported.

**Figure 3**

*Mediation Model with Global Subjective Value as the Dependent Variable (Study 2)*



*Note.* Standard errors are included in brackets next to regression coefficients.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Discussion**

The results of Study 2 again offered empirical support for our hypotheses that fake anger in negotiation will result in expressers' negative self-evaluation and overall subjective experience of the negotiation, and that these effects are mediated by expresser guilt. Despite the converging empirical evidence in Studies 1 and 2, both

studies were scenario-based experiments that were conducted with online participants. Although they provided a conservative test of our hypotheses because participants in both studies merely typed an angry message in a hypothetical negotiation scenario, it was unclear whether our findings would also be observed in a face-to-face setting. Thus, in Study 3, we sought to replicate the findings from the first two studies in a face-to-face negotiation in which participants could use the full range of verbal and nonverbal cues to express fake anger.

### Study 3

#### Method

##### *Participants*

We recruited 198 undergraduate students from a large university in the western United States to participate in a face-to-face negotiation study in exchange for course credit. The sample size was determined by an *a priori* power analysis using G Power. In total, 99 dyads were formed. Three dyads were excluded from the analysis because the negotiators in those dyads incorrectly indicated the same negotiation role, and we were unable to determine which participant was the recipient of anger-related instructions in those dyads. An additional five dyads were excluded because the anger expressers in those dyads reported that they had not expressed any anger during the negotiation, despite being instructed to do so. This led to a final sample size of 182 participants (or 91 dyads). Of these participants, 30.8% were female, 84.6% were White or European American, 9.9% were Latino or Hispanic, 6.6% were Asian or Asian American, 2.2% were Black or African American, and 3.3% self-identified as Other. Participants had a mean of 23.0 years of age ( $SD = 3.32$ ).

##### *Procedure*

Participants were invited into the laboratory and randomly assigned to one of two roles in a three-issue, integrative negotiation between a homeowner and a contractor over the construction of an outdoor deck. To manipulate fake anger, participants in the role of homeowners were randomly assigned to one of two conditions – fake anger or control (no anger). In the fake anger (vs. control) condition, homeowners were instructed to express anger (vs. no emotion) during the negotiation because expressing anger (vs. no emotion) would help them get a better deal. Furthermore, they were instructed to consider using facial expressions such as frowning (vs. keeping a poker face), physical expressions such as banging a fist on the table (vs. staying calm), and vocal cues such as using aggressive sentences (vs. keeping their voice steady). These instructions were adapted from previous research on anger in negotiation (e.g., Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006). Participants in the role of contractors received no instruction about using anger (vs. no emotion).

Participants were given five minutes to read their role information and prepare for the negotiation – homeowners in one room and contractors in another. Participants were then randomly paired up with someone in the opposite role and given ten minutes to negotiate. If participants failed to reach an agreement by the end of ten minutes, their negotiation was considered an impasse. Following their negotiation in separate rooms, participants returned to their assigned rooms (i.e., homeowners vs. contractors) prior to the negotiation and completed a survey questionnaire on a computer, which included the manipulation check, dependent measures, and demographic questions. They were then debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

## Measures

**Feelings about the Self.** We used the same subscale of SVI (Curhan et al., 2006) as in Studies 1 and 2 to measure negotiators' self-perception after the negotiation. The items were averaged together to form a composite score of Feelings about the Self ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

**Overall Subjective Value.** We used the same SVI (Curhan et al., 2006) as in Studies 1 and 2 to measure negotiators' subjective experience about the negotiation. The only exception was that this time we included the two items that were removed in the first two studies because participants in this study conducted the negotiation. The items were averaged together to form a composite score of the SVI ( $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Guilt.** We used the same scale (Marschall et al., 1994) as in Study 2 to measure participants' feelings of guilt after the negotiation. These items were averaged together to form a composite score of expresser guilt ( $\alpha = .91$ ).<sup>5</sup>

**Other Measures.** We used the same item as in Studies 1 and 2 to check the effectiveness of the manipulation. Moreover, because not all participants in the fake anger condition might be able to easily express anger by following the instructions, we also measured self-reported anger and counterpart-reported anger. Specifically, we asked participants to respond to two items on a 7-point scale, "To what extent did YOU express anger in this negotiation?" and "To what extent did YOUR PARTNER express anger in this negotiation?" (1 = *none at all*, 7 = *a lot*).<sup>6</sup>

## Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables are presented in Table 3. To check the effectiveness of our manipulation, we examined participants' responses to the question, "Were you asked to express anger in this negotiation?" (yes/no/not sure). A chi-square analysis was again statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 248.92, p < .001$ , indicating that the manipulation of fake anger was successful.

**Table 3**

### *Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Expressed anger	2.35	1.67			
2. Guilt	1.58	.84	.37**		
3. Feelings About the Self	5.14	1.16	-.44**	-.53**	
4. Global Subjective Value	4.97	1.05	-.43**	-.44**	.79**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

To test our main effect and mediation hypotheses, we again used the Preacher and Hayes (2004) bootstrapping method, with 10,000 iterations. As in Studies 1 and 2, the results showed a statistically significant effect of fake anger on Feelings about the Self,  $b = -.87, SE = .24, p < .001, 95\% CI[-1.34, -.40]$ , such that negotiators (i.e., homeowners) in the fake anger condition had lower feelings about themselves than those in the control (no anger) condition. Similarly, the analysis also revealed a significant, positive effect of fake anger on guilt,  $b = .35,$

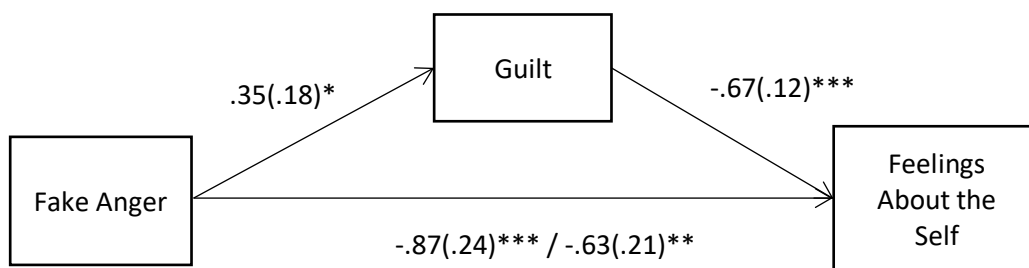
<sup>5</sup> State shame was also measured as part of this scale.

<sup>6</sup> The study also included two exploratory variables which were not included in our hypotheses—importance of displaying authentic emotions and desire for future interaction.

$SE = .18, p = .049, 95\% CI [.001, .70]$ . Negotiators in the fake anger condition experienced a higher level of guilt after the negotiation than those in the control (no anger) condition. In addition, guilt had a significant, negative effect on Feelings about the Self,  $b = -.67, SE = .12, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.92, -.43]$ . When both fake anger and guilt were added to the model as predictors of Feelings about the Self, fake anger remained significant,  $b = -.63, SE = .21, p = .003, 95\% CI [-1.05, -.22]$ , indicating partial mediation (Figure 4). The indirect effect of the model was significant,  $effect = -.24, 95\% BCCI [-.56, -.01]$  because zero is not included in the confidence interval. Therefore, our hypotheses that fake anger is negatively associated with expressers' self-perception and that this effect is mediated by expresser guilt were again supported.

**Figure 4**

*Mediation Model with Feelings About the Self as the Dependent Variable (Study 3)*



*Note.* Standard errors are included in brackets next to regression coefficients.

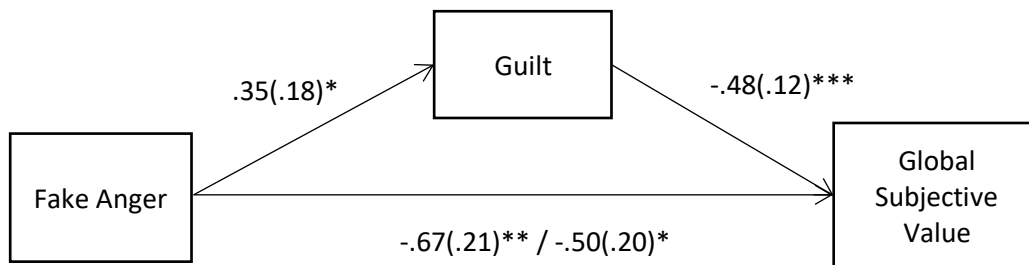
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Similarly, results showed a statistically significant effect of fake anger on overall subjective value,  $b = -.67, SE = .21, p = .002, 95\% CI [-1.09, -.25]$ , such that negotiators in the fake anger condition had lower overall subjective value than those in the control (no anger) condition. In addition, the mediation analysis also revealed a significant, negative effect of guilt on overall subjective value,  $b = -.48, SE = .12, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.71, -.24]$ . When both fake anger and guilt were added to the model as predictors of overall subjective value, fake anger remained significant,  $b = -.50, SE = .20, p = .01, 95\% CI [-.90, -.10]$ , indicating partial mediation (Figure 5). The indirect effect of the model was significant,  $effect = -.17, 95\% BCCI [-.40, -.01]$  because zero is not included in the confidence interval. Therefore, our hypotheses that fake anger is negatively associated with expressers' overall subjective experience of the negotiation and that this effect is mediated by expresser guilt were again supported.

As an exploratory analysis, we also ran an additional mediation model using self-reported fake anger as the predictor, Feelings of the Self as the outcome, and guilt as the mediator. Using the same bootstrapping method with 10,000 iterations (Preacher & Hayes, 2004), we found that negotiators who expressed higher levels of fake anger had lower feelings about themselves,  $b = -.32, SE = .07, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.45, -.18]$ , as well as higher levels of guilt,  $b = .18, SE = .05, p < .001, 95\% CI [.09, .28]$ . Guilt also had a significant, negative effect on Feelings about the Self,  $b = -.60, SE = .13, p < .001, 95\% CI [-.86, -.35]$ . When both self-reported fake anger and guilt were added in the model, self-reported fake anger remained significant,  $b = -.20, SE = .06, p = .002, 95\% CI [-.33, -.08]$ , indicating partial mediation. The indirect effect of the model was significant,  $effect = -.11, 95\% BCCI [-.22, -.03]$ , because zero was not included in the confidence interval.

Figure 5

Mediation Model with Global Subjective Value as the Dependent Variable (Study 3)



Note. Standard errors are included in brackets next to regression coefficients.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Similarly, we also ran the same exploratory analysis with self-reported fake anger as the predictor, overall subjective value as the outcome, and guilt as the mediator. Again, we found that negotiators who expressed higher levels of fake anger had lower overall subjective value,  $b = -.26$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI[-.38, -.14]. Guilt had a significant, negative effect on overall subjective value,  $b = -.40$ ,  $SE = .12$ ,  $p = .002$ , 95% CI[-.64, -.16]. When both self-reported fake anger and guilt were added in the model, self-reported fake anger remained significant,  $b = -.19$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p = .003$ , 95% CI[-.31, -.07], again indicating partial mediation. The indirect effect of the model was significant, effect =  $-.07$ , 95% BCCI [-.16, -.02], because zero was not included in the confidence interval.

These exploratory analyses added empirical support to the statistically significant findings in our original mediation analyses and were also consistent with our findings in Study 2, suggesting that expresser guilt mediates the effects of fake anger on expressers' Feelings about the Self and overall subjective value.

## Discussion

In Study 3, we tested our hypotheses in a face-to-face negotiation. The results of this study again provided empirical evidence that fake anger in negotiation has a negative impact on the expresser's self-perception and this effect is due to an increased feeling of guilt. However, our results also suggested that it was more difficult to express fake anger in a face-to-face setting, resulting in a weaker effect than what we had observed in earlier online negotiation studies. In other words, some participants restrained their expression of fake anger in a face-to-face setting, suggesting possibly that fake anger is aversive to people, especially when they need to express it to their counterpart's face. Alternatively, it could be because negative emotions such as anger might generally be more difficult to feign (Kopelman et al., 2006). To alleviate the concern with the difficulty in expressing fake anger in a face-to-face negotiation, we conducted a series of exploratory analyses with self-reported fake anger as the predictor and observed similar patterns of results.

## General Discussion

In this research, we examined the intrapersonal effects of fake anger in the context of negotiation. Specifically, we found converging empirical evidence across three studies that fake anger in negotiation had negative effects on expressers' self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation due to expresser guilt. Study 1 provided initial empirical evidence that negotiators who expressed fake anger in a hypothetical online negotiation had worse feelings about themselves and lower overall subjective value. Study

2 expanded our research by testing our proposed mechanism for these effects and found that expresser guilt mediated the negative effects of fake anger on expressers' self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation in an online negotiation. Study 3 provided further empirical support for our hypotheses by demonstrating that negotiators who expressed fake anger in a face-to-face negotiation also had worse feelings about themselves and lower overall subjective value due to a feeling of guilt. Together, these findings demonstrate a real risk with expressing fake anger in negotiation from an intrapersonal (vs. interpersonal) perspective in that it can negatively impact expressers' self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation.

### Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Our research makes several contributions to the growing literature on fake anger in negotiation. First, our research adopts an intrapersonal perspective and represents one of the first to explore negotiators' self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation after expressing fake anger in a negotiation. While previous research on fake anger examined its *interpersonal* effects (Campagna et al., 2016; Côté et al., 2013; Hideg & Van Kleef, 2016), and recent negotiation research started to pay more attention to the expresser's perspective more generally (e.g., Jang & Bottom, 2021), negotiation scholars have yet to directly examine the *intrapersonal* effects of fake anger in negotiation. This introspective process is especially important for negotiators because how negotiators feel about themselves after a negotiation can affect their future motivation to work toward agreements with others (Curhan et al., 2006), and any perceived threats to the self can have a negative impact on their economic outcomes in future negotiations as well (Curhan et al., 2009; Curhan, et al., 2010; White et al., 2004). Furthermore, our focus on the intrapersonal effects of fake anger aligns the work on fake anger in negotiation with the research on emotional labor, which has convincingly indicated that inconsistencies between a person's experienced and expressed emotions result in negative employee and organizational well-being (for a review, see Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). Our work brings this broader literature into focus for negotiators by specifically demonstrating how fake anger affects negotiators' self-perception and subjective value.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, we build on research on moral emotions to investigate the role of guilt in the connection between the expression of fake anger and negative self-perception and subjective experience of the negotiation. We found that guilt is an important mechanism through which fake anger leads to both lower feelings about the self and lower overall subjective value in a negotiation. Although researchers have studied guilt in the negotiation context (e.g., Campagna et al., 2019; Cohen, 2010; Van Kleef et al., 2006), our research on guilt as a self-condemning moral emotion offers a relevant explanation for why fake anger leads to a negative self-assessment. Therefore, our work also contributes to the broader research on moral emotions by showing that a moral emotion (i.e., guilt) may be triggered when individuals express a different emotion (i.e., anger) that they do not feel.

Our research also contributes to the practice of negotiation in that we have shown that it is important for negotiators to pay attention to the intrapersonal (vs. interpersonal) effects of fake anger expression in negotiation. While expressing anger that one does not feel has well-documented economic benefits in negotiation (e.g., Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Kleef et al., 2004), our research suggests that negotiators ought to carefully weigh these immediate economic benefits against the potential long-term psychological costs of such behavior. Given the importance of negotiators' psychological experience in determining their long-term success in negotiation (e.g., Curhan et al., 2009; Curhan et al., 2010), it is in negotiators' best long-term interest to avoid expressing fake anger in negotiation and instead remain true to their feelings by displaying authentic emotions.

Finally, our findings may also add to a broader discussion about societal discord as a whole, especially when the political environment has become increasingly polarized in a society (Desilver, 2022; Mounk, 2022). As some organizations and entities seek to use inauthentic emotions such as fake anger to inflame public discourse

and further polarize public opinion, it is helpful to acknowledge the detrimental effects of such inauthentic emotional expressions not just on society as a whole but on the expressers themselves.

### Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this research enhances our understanding of the intrapersonal effects of fake anger on expressers' self-perception and subjective experience of the negotiation, our studies have several limitations and thus introduce some avenues for future research. First, building on the connection between emotion expression in negotiation and moral emotions, our research examined a self-conscious moral emotion – guilt. Future research could expand this line of inquiry by investigating other self-conscious moral emotions, such as embarrassment (Tangney et al., 2007), and whether and how they may also be elicited by the expression of fake emotions, such as anger.

Second, while our research focused on understanding how the expression of fake anger affected self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation, the broader work on subjective value in negotiation has shown that subjective value can also influence the economic outcomes of a negotiation (Curhan et al., 2010). Thus, it would be fruitful for future research to explore how fake anger, and the resulting guilt, may impact expressers' economic outcomes in future negotiations. For example, do negotiators who express fake anger in an initial negotiation tend to make more concessions in subsequent negotiations because they feel guilty? Questions like these can add to our understanding of the relationships between fake emotions, subjective value, and economic outcomes of a negotiation.

Third, our findings related to lower subjective value may offer some insight into why violent protests—in which negative emotions run high and escalate the conflicts between groups—often lead to individuals feeling negatively toward those with whom they disagree. More broadly, our work may offer a key individual contributor to how hostile organizational climates are initiated or sustained. Indeed, Curhan et al. (2010) have suggested that subjective value tends to have a trickle-down effect that impacts future negotiations and relationships. Furthermore, work on emotional contagion has suggested that negative emotions in particular can spread to others, causing elevated emotions among the groups (Barsade, 2002). Therefore, future research could build on our work, which was focused on the negotiation context, and examine the intrapersonal effects of fake anger in other contexts including the organizational context. Additional research in this area can help to increase the generalizability of our findings and shed more light on how fake anger influences the expressers across different situations.

Finally, future research can also explore important boundary conditions that may allow fake anger to have more or less of an impact on expressers. An interesting question may focus on the differing levels of guilt that could result from expressing fake anger across different cultures. Individual differences such as power, gender, and personality may also have a similar impact. For example, because of their overemphasis on their personal goals (Smith & Galinsky, 2010), do individuals with high power feel less guilty about expressing fake anger? Or, because power allows for greater authenticity (Kifer et al., 2013), are powerful individuals less likely to express fake anger overall? Although our studies did not investigate the effects of variables such as power due to the focus of our research, the potential influence of these variables creates another avenue to explore the intrapersonal effects of fake anger in future research.

### Conclusion

As asserted by Mark Twain in the opening quote, anger is often more destructive to the individuals expressing it than to those receiving it. Our research demonstrated that expressing anger that one does not feel in negotiation is psychologically detrimental to the expressers, as it makes them feel guilty and, as a result, experience a more negative self-perception and overall subjective experience of the negotiation. While the interpersonal effects of fake anger in negotiation rightfully deserve scholarly attention, our findings suggest that



its intrapersonal effects cannot be ignored because negotiators' psychological wellbeing (and likely long-term economic success) is at stake.

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