

Effects of Communication and Negotiation Training on Women's Entrance into the Workforce

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Abstract

The purpose of the project is to determine if administering a communication training program to women, with an emphasis on negotiation skills, will influence their starting salaries. More specifically, this project proposes to develop and deliver a communication and negotiation skills training workshop to all of the women in a sorority at a South-Eastern university. The project involves conducting a needs analysis to determine the participant's current level of communication knowledge and negotiation skills. Once the results of the needs analysis are analyzed, the training program will be formally developed and administered. This study proposes that once women have higher knowledge on workplace communication and negotiation skills, their salary will increase. While no men will be included in this study, the ultimate aim is to lessen the pay gap.

Summary

Background

Research has consistently shown the incongruence of starting salaries between men and women. In the United States, women on average earned \$0.80 to every \$1.00 earned by men in 2015 (Catalyst, 2016). The continuation of lower salaries for women has led to a current pay gap of approximately 18%. All women despite their age, race, ethnicity, occupation, or education, will be affected and begin jobs with lower starting salaries than men (Catalyst, 2016). One conceptual reason for this is that men have higher expectations than women for salaries, which leads to better salary outcomes (Bowles & Babcock, 2013).

Previous studies suggest that women can increase their immediate salary by negotiating more (Bowles & Babcock, 2013). However, it has also revealed that women are less likely to use negotiation tactics for several reasons. One study revealed that if the situation is congruent with a specific gender, women are less likely to attempt negotiation or negotiate poorly (Bear & Babcock, 2017). Research done by Bowles and Babcock (2013) also emphasizes that women who negotiate for salaries are perceived as less agreeable and more demanding. One way to combat these issues is to create a negotiation training program.

Research has also identified that communicating organizational concern when negotiating for pay helps improve women's social outcomes (Bowles & Babcock, 2013). This proposal argues that by learning to use specialized negotiation tactics and effective communication skills, women can be more prepared to participate in negotiations as well as succeed. As such, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: Training will lead to higher initial salary for women.

Hypothesis 2: Training will lead to quicker acquisition of a professional job.

Participants

Approximately 100 participants will be recruited from a sorority at a South-Eastern university. Their ages will range from 18-22 years old. Due to the age differences, emergence into the professional workforce will occur at varying dates.

Materials and Procedure

Before the training can be developed, a needs analysis must be conducted to determine participant's current level of communication and negotiation skills. The training program will then be developed. It will be administered in early Spring of 2018. The training will be conducted in two or three sessions, dependent on the needs analysis. It will include presentations, group discussions, assessments, and simulations. Outcomes will be measured by sending a survey to all participants six months post training. The survey will ask about current job status, speed of job acquisition, and initial salary.

Results

To test the hypotheses, an analysis of variance will be conducted comparing starting salaries and how fast was the job was attained post-graduation of the women who participate to the women who do not participate in the training program.