The Impact of Supervisor Gender on Employee's Job Satisfaction

Cody Brumbelow, Erin Cook, Janeli Becerra, Caroline Wilson & Jonathan P. Gulledge
Dalton State College

ABSTRACT

- It is a commonly held notion that there is gender inequality throughout the workforce. There is factual evidence such as salary differences between men and women that supports this claim. In the past, a misconception that men are better in executive, leading roles offered an explanation to the differences in wages. More recently, such explanations have not held up under scientific scrutiny. Our purpose was to continue to dispel the myth that men are better suited for power positions in the workforce and push for further progress in the fight for gender equality. We questioned workers in the Northwest Georgia area regarding their job satisfaction as well as their satisfaction with their supervisor. Our results indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female supervisors in relation to their subordinates' satisfaction scores.

INTRODUCTION

- While researching job satisfaction, we found it to be the most heavily researched topic in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. In all of the studies we examined, we found many articles discussing various elements of management such as communication or style, but none looking at the differences between the sexes of the actual managers themselves. This is a relevant topic considering the clear inequality between men and women in the workforce, particularly in positions of power as noted by Huffman (1995). We found it important that empirical data should support gender equality or equality of the sexes, not just assumptions, thus showing our confidence in the potential outcome of our research. We expect to find that females are as capable as males in supervisory roles based on how the employees they supervised rated their job satisfaction.

METHOD

- Our quasi-experimental design included utilizing the gender of the employee's supervisor and measuring the job satisfaction score of each participant. We obtained our job satisfaction scores in the form of questionnaires previously assessed by Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek, & Frings-Dresen, (2003). These researchers assessed the reliability and validity of instruments measuring job satisfaction. Out of the 29 instruments reviewed, they chose the Measure of Job Satisfaction, or MJS, as the most reliable and valid instrument scoring the highest on internal consistency and test-retest values. The MJS was developed in the United Kingdom for nursing applications. Although it does have some nursing specific questions, the majority are generalizable to any occupation. The nursing specific questions were grouped into their own subscale, and we simply omitted that subscale from our test instrument. Considering we are comparing only subscales and not an overall composite score, we felt that the omission would not affect the validity of the instrument. Our version consists of 38 questions along with 6 demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, gender of the supervisor, job type, education level, and time at the job). The 38 questions in the inventory are reported on a Likert scale ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. The questions are divided into 6 subscales and one overall score. These subscales include personal satisfaction, satisfaction with the workload, satisfaction with professional support, satisfaction with training, satisfaction with pay, and satisfaction with prospects. We focused on the subscale of satisfaction with professional support to obtain scores, which asks questions directly about the supervisor, and compared those scores between male and female supervisors. We sampled 118 people in the North Georgia area.

RESULTS

- The mean score of job satisfaction for people with male supervisors was 3.6888 (SD = 0.79941) and for people with female supervisors was 3.6882 (SD = 0.76559). The results of an independent samples t-test indicated that for our sample the sex of the supervisor has no impact on job satisfaction $t(117) = -0.04$, $p = 0.669$.

RESULTS

Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	1	51	3.6882	.79941	.11194
	2	67	3.6888	.76559	.09353

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	.183	.669	-.004	116	.997	-.00057	.14501	-.28779	.28665
	Equal variances not assumed			-.004	105.302	.997	-.00057	.14587	-.28980	.28866

DISCUSSION

- What is the real reason for the disproportion of males and females in power positions?
- What are the real differences between males and females?
- How big of a role does tradition and stigma have?
- Will this inequality vanish on its own as we progress as a society?
- How can we make a difference?

REFERENCES

- Huffman, M. (1995). Organizations, internal labor market policies, and gender inequality in workplace supervisory authority. *Sociological Perspectives, Vol. 38, pp. 381-397* .
- Saane, N. V., Sluiter, J.K., Verbeek, J. H. , and Frings-Dresen, M. H. (2003). Reliability and validity of instruments measuring job satisfaction—a systematic review. *Occupational Medicine, Vol. 53, pp. 192-200.*