GENDER JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS AND GENDER ROLE PERCEPTIONS: LOOK AT PRE AND POST 2008 RECESSION DATA

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Abstract - This study embarks on a study of job satisfaction levels. It examines job satisfaction for male and female employees who are former graduates of an undergraduate Liberal Arts college from a number of perspectives.

Index Terms - Compensation, education, gender, job satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade job satisfaction in various professions (de Graaf-Zijl, 2012; Lu et al, 2016; Mathieu et al, 2014; Shanafelt, 2012), across various demographic groups (Griffin, 2010; Hofmans, 2013; Judge et al, 2010; Klassen et al, 2010) and across various international sectors have been studied voraciously by a number of scholars. The key focus seems to lie in explaining how job satisfaction levels differ or can be explained for these various groups of employees, depending on differing factors.While receiving some exploration, research that focuses on job satisfaction levels across gender lines have received minimal coverage (Shooshtarian et al, 2013; Skaalvik et al, 2014; Zou, 2015). This minimal coverage has left a gap in understanding how job satisfaction levels differ for men and women and thus how to address these less than optimal job satisfaction levels for all employees.

Job satisfaction has been defined as a positive feeling about one's job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics (Shooshtarian et al, 2013; Skaalvik et al, 2014; Zou, 2015). The topic of job satisfaction is important because of its implications to other job related variables, such as job commitment, job performance, job involvement and motivation (de Graaf-Zijl, 2012; Lu et al, 2016; Mathieu et al, 2014; Shanafelt, 2012). Moreover, various studies have shown that job satisfaction is positively related to motivation, job involvement, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, life satisfaction, mental health and job performance (de Graaf-Zijl, 2012; Lu et al, 2016; Mathieu et al, 2014; Shanafelt, 2012) and negatively related to absenteeism, turnover and perceived stress (Griffin, 2010; Hofmans, 2013; Judge et al, 2010; Klassen et al, 2010).

The implication of these results are that job satisfaction cannot be studied in a vacuum but must be studied in relation to the previously related areas as stand-alone correlations, as well as from the perspective of possible permutations and computations of these job satisfaction related areas.

This study also embarks on a study of job satisfaction levels. It examines job satisfaction for male and female employees who are former graduates of an undergraduate Liberal Arts college from a number of perspectives. More specifically, the study involves four major questions. First, will the employees from the same graduating cohort express varying job satisfaction levels when viewed from a varying gender perspective? Second, will the women from the same cohort express varying job satisfaction with job advancement and compensation again when looked at from varying gender perspectives? Third, what will be the link between satisfaction with college education obtained and job satisfaction levels for the said group of women? Finally and most importantly, all of this is being done in the context of looking at two college graduate samples – pre the 2008 economic recession and post the 2008 economic recession.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the preceding detailed literature review, two primary hypotheses will be analyzed:

H1: Women who express higher levels for meaningful jobs are more likely to express higher satisfaction levels with their job advancement.

H2: Women who express higher levels for meaningful jobs are more likely to express higher satisfaction levels with their financial compensation.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology section of this paper is divided into the following sections: sample, and research instrument.

Sample

The sample for this study was derived from alumni women of a private, undergraduate college, located in upstate New York. The college was originally established as a male commuter school in 1937. It remained a single sex institution until 1969, when the first female students were admitted. By 2009, the female population at the institution had grown to

56%. The alumni that participated in this study graduated between 1984 and 1989. This specific cohort was chosen since it was felt that they would have participated in the mainstream labor market (worked for someone else) for some time before possibly embarking on an entrepreneurial venture. A total of 1836 female alumni were originally contacted. The overall response was 596 (32.5%). There were 445 (74.6%) of the females who worked in the mainstream labor market for someone else. The other 151 (25.4%) were entrepreneurs who operated their own business.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was mailed to the participants, soliciting their responses. It was designed to assess the perceptions of the female graduates as they related to the quality of their career experiences and whether they had a subsequent entrepreneurial engagement. In the questionnaire, participants were asked to respond with varying degrees of intensity in regards to their perception on the issues of: their human capital characteristics; their business related knowledge; and the difficulties they experienced. The former students were also asked to assess their satisfaction levels with their education at the college on a scale ranging from “very dissatisfied” to “very satisfied.” They were also asked to assess the perception of their satisfaction levels on their jobs in terms of its meaningfulness, advancement potential and financial compensation.

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