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THE EFFECTS OF SUPERVISOR-SUBORDINATE GENDERS ON SUBORDINATES' INVOLVEMENT ACROSS MANAGERIAL FUNCTIONS

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Abstract

One of the renowned agendas' of the management study around the globe encircles the gender-biasness or non-biasness in performing the basic managerial functions. Pertaining to the factual studies, mixed views have been brought to light that whether male supervisors have a good relationship with male subordinates or female subordinates and whether female supervisors have good relationship with female subordinates or male subordinates. It is often assumed that cross gender supervisor subordinate relationships are better than same gender supervisor subordinate relationships. The involvement of subordinates in the four managerial functions namely planning, organizing, controlling and motivating are investigated to conclude the effects of gender on subordinate involvement in management functions by the supervisors. A sample of 1000 respondents were specifically chosen from banking sector to identify if gender of supervisor and subordinate has any effect on subordinates' involvement across managerial functions. To achieve this, firstly, mean of male supervisor with same and cross gender subordinates is compared on the basis of their involvement in managerial functions through applying the split analysis. Results revealed that male supervisors involve male subordinates more in managerial functions than female subordinates. As for female supervisors they have the same level of involvement of both the genders across managerial functions but somehow these involvements are more towards the male subordinates.

Keywords: Supervisor, Subordinate, Gender, Managerial functions.

1. Introduction

Gender in an institutionalized system of social practices consists of males and females who are different in socially significant ways and they arrange inequalities in terms of those differences (Ridgeway & Loven, 1999). Also, the gender is one of the most important components in a supervisor-subordinate relationship (Ragins, 1999). The supervisor's relationship with the subordinate is not only important for the subordinate but for the organization as a whole. It is the most important relationship expressed in an organization

(Shockley-Zalabak, 1988). The immediate supervisor is the most important person to a subordinate as he/she is the primary source of receiving information (Foehrenback & Goldfarb, 1990). According to Sias (2008) and several other studies, supervisor and subordinates are physical objects and physical characteristics like gender, age and race that have an impact on their relationship.

The gender of subordinates may also influence supervisory ratings. Shockley-Zalabak (1988) found that females subordinates are not thought to be successful than male subordinates by their supervisors as well as by themselves. A few studies showed that supervisors evaluate males more highly than females (Rosen & Jerdee, 1974). Other studies have shown biasness that females get favored in evaluations (Bigoness, 1976). Frank and Drucker(1977) showed no differences in evaluations of males and females. All these studies inform one about the inconsistency in the findings.

More prominence is required to actually explore the involvement of subordinate in management functions by the supervisor in same and cross gender supervisor- subordinate relationships. The fundamental management functions, which are planning, organizing, controlling and motivating involvement was used to determine the gender biasness faced by the subordinate. Various research studies marked that if subordinates are allowed to participate in decision making, it would increase their motivation and satisfaction (Locke & Latham, 1990).

Furthermore, the same and cross gender combinations (male-male, male-female, female-male and female-female) are highlighted and to study, which gender combination has the best relationship (Fix & Sias, 2006). Goh (1991) has the viewpoint that male supervisors prefer male subordinates rather than female subordinates. It has been seen that there are more male supervisor and female subordinates rather than female supervisor and male subordinates. The literature has witnessed the same and cross gender associations. Based on theses This research is based on the findings found in the extant literature. The research questions directing the investigation are:

Do female supervisors involve male subordinates more in the management functions and male supervisors involve female subordinates more in management functions?

Therefore, the propositions tested were:

P1: Male supervisors involve female subordinates more in the managerial functions rather than male subordinates.

P2: Female supervisors involve male subordinates more in the managerial functions rather than female subordinates.

2. Literature review

2.1 Gender

Gender of a person has been conceptualized in two ways: One is the physiological gender and the other is the social gender (Scott, 1986). Physiological gender considers biological sex that is whether an individual is a male or a female as for social gender of a person is the personality characteristic of an individual that is masculine, feminine, or androgynous (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975). A few studies have found that social gender that are the personality characteristics like masculine, feminine are more important than the biological gender in predicting the likelihood of having a mentor and the functions of the relationship for both male and female subordinates (Scandura & Ragins, 1993). A person having a high score on

masculinity and low score on femaleness is known to have a masculine gender role and one being low in masculinity and high of femaleness are known as having a feminine gender role. Undifferentiated are those who are low in maleness as well as femaleness. As for a person high on both is an androgynous (Bem, 1974). Behavior should be similar to the gender of the supervisor as it is perceived favorably by the subordinates. If a female starts to behave like a male does so therefore she won't be evaluated favorably (Gutek, 1988).

2.1.1 Same Gender Relationship

A few studies have shown that the same gender supervisors and subordinates enjoy higher quality relationships as compared to opposite gender (Fix & Sias, 2006; Varma & Stroh, 2001). Tsui and O'Reilly (1989) even found that gender similarity is the best predictor of subordinates' performance. Pelled (1999) found that subordinates have difficulties in identifying themselves with supervisors of different gender and age. Vecchio and Bullis (2001) studied the supervisor-subordinate relationship within the US Army and found that gender dissimilarity lead to subordinates being dissatisfied. In contrast, Orbell, Dawes and Schwartz-Shea (1994) found that neither male nor females used gender to predict who could be trusted to cooperate.

2.1.1.1 Female- Female relationship

It has been viewed in many researches that females are more likely to prefer working for a man (Liden, 1985). Based on Terborg's (1977) study, one explanation of female preferences for male managers may be that the male managers have more influence than female managers. Restraints like personnel policies and lack of authority appeared to be restricting female managers which makes them unable to provide support to subordinates. A few researches show that female supervisors mentor females more than males (Ragins & Scandura, 1994) and females subordinates also give preference to female supervisors (Kram, 1985).

2.1.1.2 Male –Male relationship

There are the evidences and numerous investigations in different researches, it has already been revealed that the male supervisors involve rigorously huskier to their male subordinates in comparison of the female staff as Goh(1991) found in his study that male supervisors' always tend to involve male subordinates to handle the managerial functions .

2.1.2 Cross Gender Relationship

2.1.2.1 Female-Male relationship

In the research conducted by Williams (1999) on effect of gender of supervisor and subordinate on perceived mentoring, it was concluded that female subordinates would receive the least mentoring behavior from female supervisors. As for male subordinates, they receive the greatest mentoring from female supervisor. O'Neill and Blake-Beard (2002) explored that relationship between female supervisor-male subordinate is affected by physiological as well as social gender. The factors affecting the relationship are gender stereotypes regarding females, power perspective that male mentors are more influential and have more power, organizational demographics that there are few women in upper management, relational demography that

people are more drawn towards those similar in demographics, sexual liaisons and gender behavior.

2.1.2.2 Male-Female relationship

An interesting study by Goh (1991) showed that male supervisors provide less supervisory mentoring to female subordinates as compared to males and women are not as assertive as men and they place greater emphasis on their home life. Biasness towards women by male supervisors is really common which has been noted in the literature. If a female performs well on their job so it is taken as good luck or extraordinary effort rather than appreciating their talent, which does affect the supervisor's future behavior towards the subordinate (Heilman, 1983). As for male it has been observed that male's success is attributed to his ability specially when being evaluated by a male supervisor (Kaufman & Shikiar, 1985).

Other works showed that female subordinates preferred male supervisors and this preference was situational rather than due to gender difference as they thought of male supervisors to have more influence in an organization. The differences were not based on individual characteristics rather were based on experience and restraints (Liden, 1985; Terborg, 1977). Female subordinates perceive more barriers in acquiring a mentor/supervisor than males as they think that mentor would be unwilling to form a relationship with them and people would misunderstand their relation as being sexual rather than professional (Ragins & Cotton, 1991). According to the research conducted by Varma and Stroh (2001) females have low quality relationship with male supervisor.

2.1.3 Supervisory behavior of male and female

Powell (1990) found in his study that male and females are similar as supervisors. There is no difference in their management style. The supervisory as well as task and people oriented behavior was the same with no gender differences. In another research done by Trempe, Rigny, and Haccoun (1985), it was concluded that even in the blue collar workers, the gender of the supervisor and subordinate is less important to the perception and satisfaction of the subordinate where as upward influence (doing something for the workers) is important to the subordinate's perception and satisfaction. Neither the interaction nor the stereotyping affected the subordinates.

Found were also the differences between male and female supervisors. Witherspoon (1997) showed key differences between male and female supervisors. Men are more argumentative, give their opinions and don't share any personal information. They tend to take over decision-making discussions and are critical towards ideas of other people. They follow an autocratic style.

As for females, they believe in nurturing roles, they interrupt for explanation, and more supportive towards other speakers. They also try to avoid conflict by compromising and talking through problem. These qualities are in favor of females as young girls are socialized to be cooperative, understanding, supportive, interpersonally sensitive and flexible, they are more inclined to develop different managerial styles when they grow up and assume leadership positions in organizations. These qualities are more in line with organizations which value information sharing, participative decision making, developing relationships, and resolving conflict in non confrontational ways. Another point of view by Donnell and Hall (1980) regarding men and women managerial work styles is that females don't share relevant data with colleagues and don't provide feedback to subordinates. According to Baird and Bradley (1979), female supervisors communicate differently than male supervisors. They provide information to their subordinates; they are more open to ideas, form interpersonal relationships with employees,

encourage effort by subordinates, monitor employees and are more concerned about their morale. As for male supervisors, they show more of a dominant behavior. They are more relationship oriented (Fairhurst, 1993). Another point of view of a research by Maier (1992) is that to be the best supervisor men should learn good qualities of women and vice versa.

There are many researches on mentorship provided by the supervisor to the subordinate in relation with gender but there is no specific research to date that has explored the involvement of subordinate in managerial functions by the supervisor in same and cross gender supervisor-subordinate relationships. Therefore, this study has enlighten to investigate supervisor-subordinate relationship by looking at the involvement of subordinates into the managerial functions i.e. planning, organizing, controlling and motivating by the supervisor.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

The personal survey method was used to collect data where respondent personally visited the respondents to get the questionnaire filled.

3.1 Sampling technique and Sample size

Quota sampling technique was used to ensure that each type of relationship under study must be given equal representation. It was also ensured that respondents are at the similar designation level across categories to avoid any hierarchical effect.

1000 subordinates of banking sector participated in this research out of which 500 were male and 500 were female with the following distribution:

250 male subordinates with male supervisor

250 male subordinates with female supervisor

250 female subordinates with male supervisor

250 female subordinates with female supervisor

The reason for selecting banking industry was the availability of female subordinates and female supervisors.

3.2 Instrument of data collection

To test the impact of gender on supervisor-subordinate relationship, the instrument of data collection was established based on involvement of subordinates in the management functions by the supervisor.

A five point Likert item was used in the questionnaire ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) As for in the reverse statements strongly agree (1) and strongly disagree (5). 5 depicted strong supervisor-subordinate relationship and 1 depicted weak supervisor -subordinate relationship.

3.3 Content Validity:

The various items of the managerial functions of planning, organizing, motivating and controlling were established using various established instruments and the contents were shared with various subject experts from academia and industry.

3.4 Reliability:

The reliability of the instrument was tested by measuring cronbach's alpha for each item. The overall cronbach's alpha of the instrument was 0.92. The four same and cross gender supervisor- subordinate relationships were studied namely male supervisor with male subordinate , male supervisor with female subordinate, female supervisor with male subordinate and female supervisor with female subordinate.

4. Econometrical Technique and Research Findings

Keeping in view the propositions, comparison of mean technique was applied through split analysis after transforming the non parametric data into parametric one.

As one can see in Table 1, the findings revealed that male supervisors involve more to male subordinates than the female ones in all planning, organizing, controlling and motivating functions, while female supervisors on the other hand involve somehow also more to male subordinate than the female ones in all stated functions.

Thus, the proposition that male supervisor involves female subordinates more in managerial functions than male subordinates failed to be accepted. Similarly, proposition that female supervisors involve male subordinates more in managerial functions than female subordinates failed to be rejected.

Both the findings concluded the same investigations that it is the male subordinates which are preferred to be involved by the supervisors in the managerial functions no matters if they are male or female.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This test verifies and concludes that male supervisors involve male subordinates more in management functions. Male supervisor's relationship with male subordinate is much stronger and better than male supervisor's relationship with female subordinate while female supervisor relations hip with male subordinates is also found somehow better.

The results of this study identified that out of the two gender combinations of supervisor and subordinates that are male supervisors with male and female subordinates and female supervisors with male and female subordinates; male supervisors involve male subordinates more in planning function than female subordinates. Similarly, the male supervisors involve male subordinates also in organizing, controlling and motivating functions more than female subordinates.

The same finding were revealed in case of female supervisors with male subordinates that the female supervisors tend to involve male subordinates more in all management functions than female subordinates.

The findings regarding male supervisors involving male subordinate's more than female subordinates is in accordance with the study by Goh (1991) in which male supervisors preferred male subordinates rather than female subordinates. The findings for the female supervisors where they involve male subordinates somehow the same way as the male supervisors do, is also in accordance with the research by William (1999) where he concluded that female supervisors/mentor prefer male subordinates much more than female subordinates. Since, there is the preference for male subordinates as revealed by both the male and female supervisors hence, this investigation shows the importance of the gender difference and that it does have an impact on the involvement of subordinates in the managerial functions in the banking field.

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Annexure

Table 1. Split Analysis for measuring subordinates involvements by same gender and cross gender Supervisors

Relations		Planning Functions	Organizing Functions	Controlling Functions	Motivating Functions
Male - Male	Mean	3.7109	3.2940	3.3544	3.8552
	SD	0.50344	0.59586	0.29854	0.58345
Male- Female	N	250	250	250	250
	Mean	3.3538	3.2359	3.1401	3.3900
Female- Male	SD	0.53508	0.36582	0.42549	0.59501
	N	250	250	250	250
Female- Female	Mean	3.3946	3.3435	3.2994	3.5000
	SD	0.4311	0.43532	0.35825	0.70794
Female-Female	N	250	250	250	250
	Mean	3.4291	3.3333	3.2902	3.4955
	SD	.43387	.47936	.36771	.66938
	N	250	250	250	250
Where, SD = Standard Deviation N = Sample Size Male- Male = Male Supervisor- Male Subordinate Male- Female = Female Supervisor – Female Subordinate Female- Male = Female Supervisor – Male Subordinate Female- Female = Female Supervisor – Female Subordinate					