

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Family-supportive supervisory behaviors: Does gender matter?

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Abstract

Family-Supportive Supervisory Behaviors: Does Gender Matter?

Prior research studies on family-supportive supervisory behaviors (FSSBs) have shown evidence that these managerial behaviors can be beneficial to organizations and to the managers' subordinates. The positive outcomes associated with FSSBs include: reduced work-to-family conflict, access to work-family initiatives, increased employee job satisfaction and reduced turnover. In this research, we explore if the gender of the manager displaying FSSBs impacts perceptions of this manager's effectiveness. Using an experimental vignette research design, we isolate the relationship between gender and display of FSSBs. While we predicted negative consequences on perceptions of leadership effectiveness for female managers who do and do not display FSSBs, our hypotheses were not empirically supported. Instead, we found that the display of FSSBs, at low and high levels, has a significant positive impact on perceptions of the manager's effectiveness, regardless of the manager's gender. We believe this finding contributes to an important conversation on FSSBs and gender, as well as practical implications for the use of FSSBs. In essence, FSSBs may be a win-win-win solution for subordinates, managers and organizations.

Key words: family-supportive supervision, work-life, gender, leadership