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Incongruity between Work and Gender Roles: The Effects of Gender Stereotype Deviation on Job Satisfaction**

Abstract

We analyze the effects of deviation from gender stereotypes on job satisfaction for male and female employees in general and for employees in leadership positions. Based on social role theory, backlash mechanisms owing to the violation of gender norms and role incongruity theory, we expect that deviating from gender stereotypes negatively affects job satisfaction. We test our hypotheses by hierarchically applying multiple linear regressions to German employee data. Results show a stable negative effect of deviation from gender stereotypes on job satisfaction for women only. Our findings are consistent with recent studies that confirm traditional gender structures on the labor market and expand our knowledge about backlash effects, since they indicate that deviation from gender norms not only affects objective career indicators but also subjective ones. As job satisfaction is a predictor of organizational success, we discuss ways for organizations to reduce the harmful effects of persistent traditional gender stereotypes in workplaces.

Keywords: gender stereotypes; job satisfaction; role incongruity; backlash
(JEL: J16, J28, M12, M54)

Introduction

Gender aspects are still important for the labor market as gender stereotypes may act as a barrier or springboard to specific positions or occupations for individual employees and may have many interfaces with work roles and job satisfaction. Understanding the interfaces between gender roles and work roles is crucial for employers and employees, since they can shape employment performance, engagement, wellbeing, and organizations' ability to attract, retain, and satisfy good workers (e.g. Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Rothbard, 2001).

Recent studies have sought to better understand potential tensions between gender roles and work roles. They provided evidence that, for both men and women, behavior that deviates from gender stereotypes elicits negative counter-reactions (e.g. Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman et al., 2012) – sometimes called *backlash* (Rudman & Glick, 2001). While a number of studies analyzed the effects of devia-

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tion from gender stereotypes on indicators of objective career success, e.g. on income, promotion, rewards and recommendations (for an overview, see the meta-analyses of Browne & Misra, 2003), research on effects regarding subjective career success, for example on job satisfaction, is still lacking. However, such research is important: Job satisfaction is not only a predictor of organizational success (Akerlof et al., 1988; Freeman, 1977) but also of employee well-being (for an overview, see van de Voorde, K., Paauwe, J. & van Veldhoven, M., 2012). Understanding the effect of gender stereotype deviation on job satisfaction may thus help us in understanding how gender stereotypes effect organizational success and employee well-being.

We assume that gender stereotype deviation negatively affects job satisfaction. If individuals deviate in behavior from what is prescribed by their gender stereotype, they disappoint perceiver's expectations concerning gender-typical and gender-appropriate behavior and may contribute to their feelings of uneasiness and insecurity. Such perceivers are all people an individual interacts with – in the working context for example colleagues, supervisors, team members or customers. We focus on all types of co-workers and expect that if employees deviate from gender stereotypes, negative reactions of co-workers will result in backlash and thus reduced job satisfaction.

Additionally, the number of women in leadership positions in Germany is still small and rises only slowly (Holst & Friedrich, 2016; Holst & Wrohlich, 2019). The prevalence of traditional gender stereotypes and the related expectations of men and women might be one explanation for this phenomenon. Therefore, it is especially interesting to differentiate between employees in general and employees in leadership position in our analysis. Role incongruity theory argues that the typical leadership role is incongruent with the female gender role but congruent with the male gender role. Thus, the interface between gender roles and work roles differs for female and male employees in leadership positions – and may influence job satisfaction differently for male and female employees. Since the typical leadership role and the male gender role are congruent, we expect strong backlash reactions and resulting negative repercussions on job satisfaction especially for male leaders who deviate from their gender stereotypes, since they simultaneously offend against their gender role and their professional role as leader. We thus expect strong negative effects on job satisfaction of men if they deviate from the male gender stereotype. However, for women, with incongruence between the leadership role and the female gender stereotype, a women in a leadership position can either fulfill the leadership role and deviate from the gender stereotype, or fulfill the gender role and deviate from the leadership role. In both cases, she violates one of the two roles – and backlash by co-workers with negative effects on job satisfaction may occur whatever she does.

These effects are important since job satisfaction is a predictor of corporate success and employee well-being. A reduction in the harmful backlash effects resulting from

gender stereotypes – or a weakening of normative gender-specific expectations – may contribute to an increase in job satisfaction and thus increase corporate success as well as employee well-being.

In the following, we develop our hypotheses about the influence of deviating from gender stereotype on job satisfaction in the workplace in more detail. We then introduce our dataset and how we measure our focal variables. Third, we test our hypotheses with hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models. Finally, we discuss our results, implications, limitations, and avenues for further research.

Gender Stereotypes

According to social role theory (Eagly, 1987), our societal history of gender-based role divisions into male breadwinners and female homemakers still drives current expectations of the social roles men and women (should) hold and how they (should) behave in these roles. Researchers define and empirically identify gender stereotypes as bundles of attitudes, traits, and behavior that characterize men and women and their behaviors (Abele, 2003). Men are characterized by agentic attitudes, traits, and behavior, and women by communal ones. Communality includes concern for others (e.g. kindness, care, consideration), affiliative tendencies (e.g. warmth, friendliness, collaboration), deference (e.g. obedience, respect, self-effacement), and emotional sensitivity (e.g. perceptiveness, intuitiveness, understanding). Agency includes achievement orientation (e.g. competence, ambition, a task focus), an inclination to take charge (e.g. assertion, dominance, forcefulness), autonomy (e.g. independence, self-reliance, decisiveness), and rationality (e.g. analytical qualities, logic, objectivity) (Heilman, 2012).

Gender stereotypes have descriptive and prescriptive aspects. The descriptive aspect describes how men and women *are*. It provides heuristics or shortcuts while building impressions about people swiftly, thus allowing perceivers to react quickly. In other words, descriptive gender stereotypes improve predictability in a multifaceted and shared world, reduce intricacy and thereby save energy (Macrae et al., 1994). However, they support gendered expectations, which might be the basis of biased evaluation decisions. Empirical findings show that perceived descriptive gender differences, for example concerning ambition, intelligence, and assertiveness, undermine women's career success because under such perceived differences women are evaluated as inappropriately qualified for traditionally male positions and domains (e.g. Hoyt & Murphy, 2016) or react strongly by lower interest in or lower self-ascribed fit with career demands (Hentschel et al., 2018).

The prescriptive aspect of gender stereotypes declares how men and women *should be*. Prescriptive aspects of gender stereotypes result in normative behavioral expectations and function as injunctive norms (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). They thus define which attitudes, traits, and behavior are appropriate or inappropriate for men and women. Hence, women are not only *thought* to be communal, they also *should be*

communal. Accordingly, men are not only *thought* to be agentic, there is a normative expectation that they *should be* agentic. If these normative expectations are disappointed, and women and men do not behave according to what is socially appropriate for their gender, penalties due to perceived inappropriate attitudes, traits or behavior may follow (Rudman, 1998).

Research shows that women who are perceived to be less female are rated as psychologically more unhealthy than women perceived to be more female (Costrich et al., 1975). Women evaluated as deviating from the stereotype trigger disapproval by being perceived as cold, interpersonally hostile, as undesirable colleagues, unlikable, and as persons who lack good character (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Deviations from gender-related prescriptions also result in punishments in working contexts, for instance, lower pay (Brett & Stroh, 1997), lower employer intention to hire and promote (Rudman, 1998), lower performance evaluations (Yang et al., 2013), and fewer recommendations for organizational rewards (Heilman & Chen, 2005).

There is a similar effect for men: Agreeable and kind men earn significantly less than disagreeable and more stereotypic men, even while controlling for human capital, age, marital status, and occupation (Judge et al., 2012). Men who deviate from traditional masculinity are labelled wimpy and girlie (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), are assigned lower status and lower respect than other men (Vandello et al., 2008), and are accepted less as leaders (Heilman & Wallen, 2010) than men whose attitudes, traits and behaviors conform with these stereotypes.

Backlash may explain such negative effects of deviating from the stereotype. If persons deviate from gender stereotypes and thus do not fulfill the prescriptive and descriptive aspects of stereotypes, perceivers of this deviating behavior may feel uneasy and insecure with deviators, whom they perceive as behaving inappropriately and unexpectedly. Perceivers may thus react with backlashes, i.e. reduced frequency or reduced intensity of cooperation, less exchange of information or negative feedback. Thus, we expect strains in the relationships between deviating employees and their colleagues. However, co-workers – with both their potential support and potential antagonism – have an important influence on employees' subjective well-being, as Chiaburu & Harrison (2008) show in their meta-analysis of co-worker effects.

Accordingly, we assume that men and women trigger negative reactions and evaluations if they deviate from their gender stereotypes and receive social affirmation if they conform. We thus expect that men with perceived low masculinity and women with perceived low femininity contradict perceivers' gendered expectations. Such deviations cause negative reactions from interaction partners, resulting in negative impacts on job satisfaction in the workplace.

Hypothesis 1a: The more women deviate from female gender stereotypes in their behaviors, traits, and attitudes, the lower their job satisfaction will be.

Hypothesis 1b: The more men deviate from male gender stereotypes in their behaviors, traits, and attitudes, the lower their job satisfaction will be.

Role Incongruity Theory

Role incongruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) focuses on leaders as a special group of employees. We base our second set of hypotheses on this theory. At the core of role incongruity theory is the argument that female gender stereotypes are incongruent with the typical traditional leadership role, while male gender stereotypes are much more congruent with this leadership role. Traditional leadership is associated with many agentic characteristics, which belong to the male gender role, too. In contrast, typical female characteristics of communality are not included in the assumed prototypical leadership role. Thus, women in leadership positions face two impacts. First, based on the descriptive aspect of gender stereotypes, decision makers will expect women to have lower leadership qualities than men and to be less competent and less qualified for managerial positions.

Second, resulting from the prescriptive aspect of gender stereotypes, women in managerial positions face a goal conflict: Pursuing the demands of their gender role, they fail in the leadership role; pursuing the demands of the leadership role, they fail in their gender role. Thus, women in traditional male-dominated positions find themselves in a double bind situation in which they are expected to live up to the male gendered expectations of the work role as well as to preserve their distinctively female qualities (Gherardi & Poggio, 2001). For example, a female manager may receive credit for her aggressive and successful strategy, but simultaneously, her femaleness may be questioned (Katila & Eriksson, 2013). Therefore, no matter what they may do or how hard they may try, they can never do it right – they are caught in a dilemma.

Results of Brescoll (2016) demonstrate that such role conflicts may constrain women's leader behavior: Women who are viewed as a representative of the more emotional gender show constrained leader behaviors and display emotions either too intensely or too controlled.

If we now ask what the effects of deviation from gender stereotypes on job satisfaction are for employees with leadership roles, the hypothesis is clear for men. If men in managerial positions deviate from the male gender stereotypes, they deviate simultaneously from perceivers' role expectations concerning the gender role and the leader role. We therefore expect negative backlash and negative repercussion on job satisfaction for male leaders whose behavior deviates from male gender stereotypes.

However, for women, fulfilling the gender role expectations contradicts the leadership role, and fulfilling the leadership role contradicts the gender role. Thus, female leaders are caught in a dilemma: Whether they deviate from their female gender stereotype or not, they always contradict some expectations of colleagues or supervi-

sors, and hence they will always experience backlash and thus negative effects on job satisfaction. However, formulating it the other way round, for female leaders the costs of deviating from the gender role may be compensated by the benefit of work role congruence – and vice versa. The negative effect of gender role incongruence could as well be weaker for female leaders than for female employees in general or be non-existent because gender role incongruence tends to imply work role congruence for female leaders. Thus, we are not sure what to expect for job satisfaction without analyzing the strength of the prescriptive elements of work roles and gender roles and the resulting specific backlashes. Thus, we cannot derive a testable hypothesis which direction the effect on job satisfaction goes. However, as the direction of the effect is of interest for us, we nevertheless formulate an open expectation.

Hypothesis 2a: The more men in managerial positions deviate from male gender stereotypes in their behaviors, traits, and attitudes, the lower their job satisfaction will be.

[Expectation/"Hypothesis" 2b: If women in managerial positions deviate from female gender stereotypes in their behaviors, traits, and attitudes, the effect on their job satisfaction is not clear – it may be positive or negative or zero.]

Survey

We collected the data via a German language online survey. We shared the survey link in public professional networks and distributed it through our predominantly German professional, personal, and social networks. Participants had the opportunity to take part in a lottery and to opt to get informed about the research results. For our present investigation, we selected all employed individuals (including self-employed) aged 18 and older. The sample contains 423 individuals, of which 59 % are women; the average age is 38 years. 59 % do not have children, and 89 % have completed vocational training or study, 11 % work in jobs with no education beyond completing school. Working hours per week are between 1 and 20 hours (7 %), 21 and 40 hours (34 %), and more than 40 hours (59 %). Of all respondents, 78 % (69 % of the women) work full-time and 34 % of the respondents (29 % of the women) are in a leadership position. Table 1 and 2 give a more detailed description of the variables and summary statistics of men and women. Our final sample for regression analyses is restricted to only those who answered all questions (119 men and 157 women).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Women

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
1. Age	37.17	10.26																
2. Children	.38	.49	.53**															
3. Education	1.68	.66	-.76*	-.08*														
4. Working hours	1.40	.67	-.15**	-.41**	.06*													
5. Job context	.86	.88	-.10*	-.06*	-.16**	.04												
6. Position	.45	.61	.23**	.14**	.03	.06*	-.10*											
7. Income	7.05	4.47	.17**	-.12**	.15**	.52**	-.16**	.18**										
8. New job	5.05	3.45	-.38**	-.22**	.14**	.02	.11*	-.17**	-.16**									
9. Job satisfaction	4.96	1.46	.05	.00	.08*	.06*	-.15**	.13**	.12**	.33**								
10. Female index	2.60	.62	-.14**	-.12**	-.01	.07*	-.05	-.04	.14**	.01	-.11*	(.88)						
11. Conscientiousness	5.95	1.02	.03	.03	-.02	.02	.18**	-.04	.01	.01	.03	-.15**						
12. Agreeableness	5.10	1.16	.08*	.12*	.15**	-.05*	.04	-.08*	.00	-.09*	.03	-.42**	.14**					
13. Neuroticism	4.01	1.31	.01	-.02	-.01	-.07*	-.09*	.00	.01	.03	-.32**	.13**	-.12**	-.15**				
14. Openness	5.01	1.30	-.03	-.04	.03	.16**	.03	.03	.04	.01	.07*	-.17**	.13**	.00	-.02			
15. Extraversion	5.54	1.27	-.06*	-.07*	-.02	.06*	.02	.04	-.10*	.08*	.04	-.11*	.30**	-.02	-.06*	.43**		
16. Locus of control	2.79	.74	.07*	.10*	-.11*	-.11*	.08*	.02	-.08*	.10*	-.30**	.12**	-.20**	-.08*	.40**	-.04	.10*	(.64)

Notes: N= 157. Significance is denoted as *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01. Numbers in brackets represent Cronbach's alpha.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Men

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
1. Age	38.08	10.00																
2. Children	.46	.50	.47**															
3. Education	1.69	.66	.03	-.10*														
4. Working hours	1.70	.51	.01	-.06*	.17**													
5. Job context	.64	.62	-.23**	-.15**	.01	.01												
6. Position	.51	.54	.33**	.28**	.07*	.11*	.11*											
7. Income	12.24	6.15	.46**	.26**	.12*	.35**	-.01	.42**										
8. New job	4.63	3.24	-.35**	-.23**	.04	.11*	.19**	-.16**	-.05									
9. Job satisfaction	5.10	1.32	.06*	.05	.04	-.07*	-.06*	.11*	-.08*	-.41**								
10. Male index	2.89	.61	-.05	-.06*	-.04	-.11*	-.14**	-.08*	-.17**	.08*	-.10*	(.86)						
11. Conscientious-ness	5.60	1.16	-.04	.00	-.09*	.12*	.13*	-.02	.02	.08*	.07*	-.39**						
12. Agreeableness	4.79	1.14	.06	-.11*	-.22**	.16**	-.09*	-.02	.00	.03	-.01	.16**	.22**					
13. Neuroticism	3.52	1.18	.05	-.14*	.04	.06*	-.05	-.07*	-.05	.04	-.13*	.50**	-.23**	-.06*				
14. Openness	5.01	1.21	-.10*	-.20**	-.09*	.07*	.11*	-.01	-.01	.18**	-.05	-.18**	.23**	.03	-.15**			
15. Extraversion	5.02	1.28	-.16**	-.16**	-.03	.21**	.20**	.16**	.12*	.05	-.19**	-.22**	.34**	.04	-.14*	.42**		
16. Locus of con-trol	2.80	.73	.14**	.01	-.04	-.11*	-.12*	-.07*	-.14*	.05	-.07*	.48**	-.23**	.04	.34**	-.14**	.24**	(.62)

Notes: N= 119. Significance is denoted as *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01. Numbers in brackets represent Cronbach's alpha.

Measures

We now present our variables and give information on measurement and operationalization. We use a variety of sociodemographic, human capital, personality-related, organizational, and occupational variables as statistical controls.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is our dependent variable. We measure it with the question: 'How satisfied are you with your job, all in all?' Answers are given on a 7-point scale (from absolutely dissatisfied to absolutely satisfied). We perform a log transformation on job satisfaction data because the frequency distribution is skewed.

Gender stereotype deviation index. We measure our most important explanatory variable on an index that reveals the extent to which the surveyed individuals deviate from the stereotypical behavior, attitudes, and traits expected for their gender. Therefore, we need to apply a norm for gender-typical behavior. For this, we use Born's (1992) gender stereotype scale, which has 22 items that characterize typical and normatively expected male behavior, attitudes, and traits, and 22 items for typical and normatively expected female behavior, attitudes, and traits. This implies that we treat masculinity and femininity as two dimensions rather than as two opposing ends of a one-dimensional scale. This operationalization allows independent measurement of masculinity and femininity (see Appendix table A1). We test and confirm the classification in typically male and typically female behavior, attitudes, and traits and thus replicate Born's (1992) results in our sample (results are available upon request). We further ask participating men (women) to indicate, on a 7-point scale, which of the 22 socially desirable stereotypical male (female) behaviors, attitudes, and traits apply to themselves. With these self-description data, we built two indices, one for men and one for women. The index values range from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating that a respondent's self-descriptive behaviors, traits, and attitudes match the gender stereotype perfectly, and the larger the index value, the more an individual deviates from the gender stereotype. Cronbach's alphas for these scales are.88 for the female index and.86 for the male index. This procedure allows us to empirically approximate deviation from gender stereotypes, instead of just using deviation as an ex post explanation of certain phenomena. Because the frequency distribution is skewed, we perform a log transformation on the gender stereotypes deviation index.

Managerial position. We asked participants to characterize their current occupational position. The position types include (a) established entrepreneur, (b) upper-level or board-level managerial occupation, (c) intermediate-level managerial occupation (e.g. head of department), (d) lower-level managerial occupation (e.g. head of a group, project, or team), (e) expert without executive functions but with high subject responsibility, (f) employee without executive functions, and (g) (skilled) worker without executive functions. Besides, we asked for the number of subordinate employees. We coded employed leaders (positions b, c, and d above) as 1, and em-

ployed non-leaders (positions e, f, and g) as 0. Further, we coded established entrepreneurs with at least one subordinate employee as leaders and other established entrepreneurs as 2.

Controls. Due to ongoing social processes of change in the binding character of gender norms, owing to their socialization and education, younger people may be more likely to deviate from gender stereotypes than older people (Brewster & Padavic, 2000). Thus, we control for age as a continuous variable. We also control for whether a person has children (1 = children, 0 = no children) because motherhood may emphasize femininity, making gender stereotypes more salient (motherhood penalty) and because fathers are assigned higher competency than non-fathers (fatherhood benefit) (Williams et al., 2013), which might positively affect job satisfaction.

As human capital accumulation may influence job satisfaction (Ng et al., 2005), we control for education, treating the variable categorically (1 = low education, i.e. persons without completed study or vocational training, 2 = medium education, i.e. persons who had completed vocational training, 3 = high education, i.e. persons with an academic degree or above) (for a similar coding, see Janssen & Backes-Gellner, 2016). We control for working hours as a categorical variable (0 = 1 to 20 hours per week; 1 = 21 to 40 hours per week; 2 = more than 40 hours per week) since there are many gender effects behind working time.

Stereotypical expectations and behavior may in part depend on a male or female job context. To ascertain potential gender aspects of the job context, we ask whether colleagues who perform similar tasks are (a) predominantly women, (b) predominantly men, or (c) both men and women. A predominately female job context is coded with 2, a predominately male one with 1, and a mixed one with 0. Since a self-initiated job change might indicate dissatisfaction for various reasons (van Dick et al., 2004), we control for the perceived likelihood that the respondent will find a new job in the next two years, measured by a 10-point-scale (1 = very unlikely, 10 = very likely).

Further, we control for income, using a categorical variable[1], since a significant positive relationship between income and job satisfaction is shown in the literature (e.g. Judge et al., 2010). Since job satisfaction may be driven by one's enduring attitudes and behaviors (Ng et al., 2005), we also include personal traits as control variables (namely big five and locus of control). These personal traits are measured with 7-

1 In euro: 1 = > 0 to 12,000; 2 = > 12,000 to 18,000; 3 = > 18,000 to 24,000; 4 = > 24,000 to 30,000; 5 = > 30,000 to 36,000; 6 = > 36,000 to 42,000; 7 = > 42,000 to 48,000; 8 = > 48,000 to 54,000; 9 = > 54,000 to 60,000; 10 = > 60,000 to 66,000; 11 = > 66,000 to 72,000; 12 = > 72,000 to 78,000; 13 = > 78,000 to 84,000; 14 = > 84,000 to 90,000; 15 = > 90,000 to 96,000; 16 = > 96,000 to 102,000; 17 = > 102,000 to 108,000; 18 = > 108,000 to 114,000; 19 = > 114,000 to 120,000; 20 = > 120,000 to 126,000; 21 = > 126,000 to 132,000; 22 = > 132,000 to 138,000; 23 = > 138,000 to 146,000; 24 = > 146,000.

point-scales, whereby the higher the scores, the higher the manifestation of the respective trait and the more internal the locus of control respectively.

Method

We test our hypotheses separately with hierarchical OLS regressions and enter control variables gradually in order to define and differentiate the explanatory power of multiple sets of variables. Thus, we estimate the bivariate effect of deviation from gender stereotypes on job satisfaction in a first step (model i) and then add sociodemographic and human capital variables (model ii), organizational and occupational variables (model iii), and personality-related variables (i.e. big five traits and locus of control) (model iv). We use robust standard errors to rule out problems with heteroscedasticity.

Owing to our relatively small sample size and to check our results' robustness concerning missing values, we perform a multiple imputation (MI) procedure. In MI, multiple values for each missing data point are imputed from relevant information about the observed data, resulting in the creation of multiple "completed" datasets. We choose Monte Carlo Markov Chain (MCMC) (Schafer, 1997) as our imputation method and set the de facto number of imputations with reference to Bodner (2008), who recommends having as many imputations as the percentage of missing data. The results we obtain via the MI approach differ only minimally from results without MI approach.

Results

Our results fully support hypothesis 1a, but do not support hypothesis 1b: Table 3 indicates that the gender stereotype deviation index for women has a stable, significantly negative effect on job satisfaction throughout all steps. In the full model deviations of 10 % from the female gender stereotype result in a 2.7 % lower job satisfaction, all else being equal. A comparison of different goodness of fit measures (R^2, AIC, and BIC) shows that the full model explains 32 % of the variance and is the best of the models. Moreover, we find that both increasing neuroticism and a stronger internal locus of control have (relatively small) significantly negative effects on women's job satisfaction.

However, we do not find the same clear and stable effect of deviation from gender stereotypes on job satisfaction for men. If men deviate from their gender stereotype, they show a 3.6 % lower job satisfaction than men who do not deviate, independent of big five or locus of control characteristics. However, this effect is not statistically significant (p-value: 0.17). Additionally, we find that inhibiting a leadership position has a significantly positive and extraversion a significantly negative effect on men's job satisfaction.

Table 3. Hierarchical OLS Regression Results for Job Satisfaction of Women and Men

Variable	Women (N=157)				Men (N=119)			
	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Gender stereotype deviation index	-.25* (.12)	-.27* (.13)	-.31** (.12)	-.27* (.12)	-.21 (.16)	-.22 (.18)	-.25 (.20)	-.36 (.26)
Age		.00 (.00)	-.01 (.00)	-.01 (.00)		.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Children (reference: no children)		-.03 (.09)	-.05 (.09)	-.04 (.08)		.01 (.07)	.00 (.07)	-.02 (.06)
Education (reference: neither apprenticeship nor study) Completed apprenticeship		-.04 (.19)	-.05 (.18)	-.02 (.17)		.12 (.12)	.19 (.12)	.10 (.12)
Completed (doctoral) study or habilitation		.08 (.14)	.10 (.13)	.10 (.09)		.02 (.09)	.05 (.09)	.02 (.09)
Income		.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)		-.01 (.01)	.00 .01)	.00 (.01)
Position (reference: no leadership position) Leadership position			.00 (.06)	.01 (.06)			.09 (.06)	.14* (.07)
Self-employed without subordinate employees			.14+ (.08)	.03 (.09)			.18 (.14)	.13 (.15)
Job context (reference: a mixed context) Predominantly men			-.08 (.08)	-.11 (.08)			-.01 (.07)	.01 (.07)
Predominantly women			-.09 (.06)	-.09 (.07)			-.17 (.22)	-.12 (.21)
Working hours (reference: 0 to 20 hours) 21 to 40 hours			.07 (.09)	-.03 (.09)			.22 (.18)	.29 (.20)
> 40 hours			.03 (.09)	-.05 (.09)			.11 (.18)	.19 (.19)

Variable	Women (N=157)				Men (N=119)			
	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
New job			-.04*** (.01)	-.04*** (.01)			-.03** (.01)	-.03* (.01)*
Conscientiousness				-.01 (.04)				.02 (.04)
Agreeableness				-.03 (.02)				.01 (.03)
Neuroticism				-.07* (.03)				.00 (.03)
Openness				.00 (.02)				.01 (.02)
Extraversion				.00 (.03)				-.08** (.03)
Locus of control index				-.10* (.05)				.02 (.05)
R^2	.03	.06	.22	.32	.02	.03	.18	.25
Delta R^2		.03	.16***	.10**		.01	.15**	.07
AIC	.88	.94	.88	.81	.71	.81	.81	.82
BIC	-649.24	-619.37	-597.46	-589.85	-479.24	-447.52	-419.60	-401.17

Notes: Significance is denoted as +p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

We now turn to the second group of hypotheses and expectations. Looking at the subgroup of male leaders only and controlling for big five and locus of control increases the effect size substantially: A 10 % deviation from gender stereotypes leads to a 5.4 % lower job satisfaction for male leaders. However, these results are not statistically significant (p-value: 0.19).

We have formulated no clear expectation which direction the effect for female leaders has ("hypothesis" 2b). Results show that a 10 % deviation from gender stereotypes leads to a 3 % lower job satisfaction in the third model (at a 10 percent significance level) and to a 3.9 % lower job satisfaction in the fourth model (at a 5 percent significance level).

Since the sample sizes for male (N = 62) and female (N = 52) leaders for hypotheses 2 is relatively small, we perform several sensitivity analyses for our estimations besides multiple imputation (e.g. owing to a relatively high correlation between children and age, we estimate our model without controlling for children in order to not unnecessarily reduce degrees of freedom). The results are almost the same.

In sum, our main results are as follows. There is a stable and negative effect of deviating from the female gender stereotypes on job satisfaction for all women and for the subgroup of female leaders. In contrast, the expected negative effect of deviation from gender stereotypes on job satisfaction for all men and for the subgroup of male leaders is not supported by our data as the respective results are not statistically significant. However, the effect size strongly increases if we add big five and locus of control variables as statistical controls.

Thus, deviations from gender stereotypes have more detrimental consequences for the job satisfaction of women than of men. We now discuss the impacts and the relevance of these results.

Table 4. Hierarchical OLS Regression Results for the Job Satisfaction of Male and Female Leaders

	Male leaders (N=62)				Female Leaders (N=52)			
Variables	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Gender stereotype deviation index	-.40 (.27)	-.39 (.28)	-.43 (.34)	-.54 (.41)	-.19 (.14)	-.15 (.15)	-.30+ (.16)	-.39* (.19)
Age		.01 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)		-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Children (reference: no children)		.05 (.10)	.07 (.11)	.10 (.12)		-.14 (.14)	-.03 (.14)	-.02 (.12)
Education (reference: neither apprenticeshipnor study) Completed apprenticeship		.24+ (.14)	.18 (.15)	.14 (.20)		-.29 (.19)	-.56* (.24)	-.52* (.22)
Completed (doctoral) study or habilitation		.04 (.14)	.00 (.15)	.02 (.18)		-.03 (.14)	-.27 (.25)	-.17 (.22)
Income		-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)		.01 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Job context (reference: a mixed context) Predominantly men			-.06 (.10)	-.05 (.09)			-.19 (.21)	-.31 (.19)
Predominantly women			-.12 (.10)	-.12 (.09)			-.02 (.10)	-.08 (.11)
Working hours (Reference: 0 to 20 hours) 21 to 40 hours			.14 (.16)	.17 (.21)			.69** (.21)	.41* (.17)
> 40 hours			.17 (.13)	.22 (.16)			.59*** (.17)	.45*** (.12)
New job			.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)			-.01 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Conscientiousness				-.02 (.04)				-.14** (.05)

	Male leaders (N=62)				Female Leaders (N=52)			
Variables	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)	Model (i)	Model (ii)	Model (iii)	Model (iv)
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Agreeableness				.04 (.04)				-.07+ (.04)
Neuroticism				.01 (.04)				-.14** (.05)
Openness				.03 (.03)				.08* (.03)
Extraversion				-.06 (.05)				-.04 (.04)
Locus of control index				-.02 (.07)				-.05 (.06)
R^2	.08	.14	.16	.21	.02	.14	.29	.50
Delta R^2		.06	.02	.05		1.27	1.69	2.33*
AIC	.43	.58	.78	.92	.92	1.05	1.13	1.02
BIC	-225.16	-200.73	-173.41	-152.29	-153.88	-133.07	-115.36	-109.58

Notes: Significance is denoted as +p < 0.1; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Discussion

We empirically analyze whether working men and women who deviate from gender stereotypes experience lower job satisfaction than men and women who do not deviate from gender stereotypes. We differentiate between employees in general and the subgroups of male and female leaders. Our hypotheses are supported for working women only: The more women deviate from female gender stereotypes, the lower is their job satisfaction. This holds regardless of sociodemographic, human capital, organizational, occupational, and personality-related aspects. This result is as expected for the total group of female workers. However, we could not formulate a clear expectation for the subgroup of female leaders. With regard to this subgroup, the result is surprisingly clear-cut negative – and thus partially unexpected.

These results show that even in a professional and working context, women workers in general and, more specifically, female leaders who deviate from the female gender stereotype experience a decrease in job satisfaction, with job satisfaction being a measure of subjective well-being and subjective utility of work (Clark, 1997). We assume – but cannot directly measure or prove – backlash and co-worker effects behind this effect. Other research findings support our interpretation: Women receive greater social affirmation for identifying with non-working roles than men do (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007) and have lower expectations regarding career opportunities and promotion than men (Judge et al., 1995). In contrast, men are encouraged to identify with their careers (Reid, 2015).

We control for the gender job context. However, the negative effect of gender stereotype deviation for women does not depend on the proportion of male or female colleagues: Even in a job context where many women work, the negative effect of gender stereotype deviation on job satisfaction exists. This is a plausible result if men and women share more or less the same stereotypes and these fulfill their social function of giving orientation of what to expect of a person for members of both sexes.

We may thus ask why gender stereotypes in the workplace are changing so slowly? Their persistence is a result not only of the rigidity of people's belief systems but also of the social position of women in society, which changes only slowly, too. According to Koenig and Eagly's (2014) findings, stereotypes of social groups reflect everyday observations of group members' behaviors in their typical roles. Stereotypical traits emerge by correspondent inference from observed role behaviors. Therefore, as long as women and men show an uneven distribution into social roles, gender stereotypes will continue to consolidate around the behaviors required for success in these male-typical and female-typical roles. For example, there is a continuing concentration of women in occupational roles that are perceived as communal but not as agentic. This illustrates the persistence of role segregation, despite women's strongly increased labor force participation. The same is true for the longstanding results on the proportion of women in top leadership positions (Holst &

Friedrich, 2016; Holst & Wohlrich, 2019). In addition, women still perform the majority of domestic work, even in dual-earner couples (Raley et al., 2012), and only few women claim an injustice due to this imbalance in the division of housework (Braun et al., 2008). Given such findings, it is not surprising that gender stereotypes have largely remained unchanged as role segregation in current environments continually reproduces stereotypical thinking.

However, contradicting our expectations, we did not find a significant negative relationship between deviation from gender stereotypes and job satisfaction for men – neither for all male workers in our sample nor for the subgroup of male leaders, all else being equal. Hence, backlash effects for men are seemingly non-existent or much weaker than for women. If so, men's job satisfaction is more or less independent of behavioral conformity with or deviation from gender stereotypes.

One explanation might be that men (still) are gatekeepers to key positions in organizations (see e.g. van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Gatekeepers and other influential groups have important norm-setting functions. These positions allow them to deviate from social norms without or with less negative reactions of perceivers than less influential groups. In other words, the degree of normativity or the strength of the binding character of stereotypes could be different for men and women – with a stronger and more restrictive effect of stereotypes for women as "non-gatekeepers" than for men as "gatekeepers". Thus, the male gender role – in contrast to the female gender role – may have already changed or be more flexible and less binding on a day to day basis.

With regard to the working context, the gatekeeper function may include that men – and more so than women – are allowed to deviate from the traditional male gender stereotype and to take on new attitudes, traits and behavior. This may especially be true for such attitudes, traits and behaviors that have long been discussed as enhancing leadership effectivity and quality of work life for employees (see, for example, Yukl (2010) for an overview of developments and discussions in leadership theory and organizational behavior). For example, men may stay free from sanctions via backlash if they show strongly cooperative elements in leadership styles and communal aspects of social skills because these behaviors are connected with expectations of positive leadership effects for all employees. If so, the development and change in gender stereotypes is different for women and men – there are broadening expectations and prescriptions regarding appropriate attitudes, traits and behavior for men as gatekeepers, but expectations sticking to a comparatively narrow set of attitudes, traits and behaviors prescribed as appropriate for women. To pursue this question regarding the strength and broadness of gender stereotypes and related potential differences between female and male gender stereotypes might be a fruitful approach to further research on gender stereotypes and subjective well-being outcomes for women and men.

Implications, Limitations, and Conclusions

Our results confirm that traditional gender stereotypes and gender norms persist on the labor market. They influence not only objective career indicators but subjective indicators, i.e. job satisfaction, too. Our results indicate a potentially important consequence of deviation from gender stereotypes and a key aspect of backlash: lower job satisfaction. However, these negative consequences only apply to women. This is consistent with evidence from literature, which shows that the impacts of gender behavior at work are more visibly negative for women than for men (e.g. Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). The stickiness of gender stereotypes harms organizational success since job satisfaction is a predictor of organizational performance. Firms who want to maximize and improve their performance should therefore be involved in reducing gender stereotypes, broadening behavioral prescriptions and softening backlash effects to fully utilize the organizational performance potential of their female workforce.

Institutional factors often confirm traditional gender norms (Pedulla & Thébaud, 2015). Thus, one implication might be that if one aims at more equal labor market outcomes for men and women, one could seek to reduce gender stereotypes in the workplace and to find ways how to change leadership and work roles to more gender-neutral ones. Presenting stereotype-inconsistent information as well as diverse and successful role models could help to soften the normative side of stereotypes. Moreover, equitable, objective, and transparent pay and progression policies as well as structured mentoring, sponsorship, and role modeling could soften drawbacks based on gender stereotypes.

Research on stereotype threat shows that stereotypes are activated by certain clues in the situation. The negative effects of gender stereotypes on job satisfaction decrease by non-activation of gender stereotypes in organizational contexts. Thus, the organizational design of hiring, performance evaluation, and promotion decisions and their stereotype threat activating characteristics should receive attention. Organizations can influence such activation or non-activation of stereotype threat by designing structural features of workplaces, for instance by re-designing job requirements and evaluation instruments with careful consideration of gender stereotypes. Hentschel et al. (2018) present positive examples of how to avoid stereotype threat and attract women for entrepreneurial careers by designing information and adds. Bohnet et al. (2016) show that joint-evaluative modes (instead of separate evaluations) for hiring, evaluation, and promotion decisions might overcome the activation of stereotypes. Brinck et al. (2019) argue that typical high performance work practices have a gendered character. Choosing specific bundles of high performance work practices may thus influence activation or non-activation of stereotypes in a specific organizational setting.

Increasing the awareness of how gender impacts on interactions between people and increasing employees' awareness of unconscious biases and unwarranted stereotypes

that affect their evaluations of others, their co-worker behavior and their readiness to support others or behave antagonistically may help them to reflect their own gendered behaviors. Training role flexibility and social skills for men and women broadens the experience people have with flexible behavior and might soften normative expectations of how men and women should behave. If people in organizations became more reflexive about their own gendered practices, they may change the way they practice gender and as a result may eventually reshape the image and culture of predominantly male coded positions and occupations. Thus, making the details of gendered interactions visible may help to reduce the legitimacy of gender inequality. But as Bohnet (2016) recently argued, individual awareness about biased perceptions due to gender stereotypes and prejudices might not be enough, but debiasing organizations instead of individuals is the more effective way to overcome unconscious biases. This can be done by structured interviews (instead of unstructured interviews) or by blind evaluations and application procedures without photos or names. According to Watts (2009), flexible work practices and the change of "long-hours culture" could help, too, since the German labor market is still dominated by values of availability and presenteeism – and, increasingly, of geographical mobility – values implicitly assuming a worker free of family and domestic obligations. And last but not least, using gender neutral or gender inclusive language might be a help in overcoming stereotypical thinking about occupations.

Our research has several limitations. First, our data are cross-sectional and self-reported and may to some extent reflect social desirability instead of de facto behaviors and traits. Moreover, for male leaders, our sample is very small. Despite the advantage of our index to measure individual deviation from gender stereotypes, there are also some disadvantages: Since traits and behaviors are unique for every individual and different for men and for women, we cannot directly compare index values for men and women. The content-related meaning of our index scores differs for men and women – and may interact with our control variables in different ways for men and women. Moreover, we assume but cannot show with our data that deviating from gender stereotypes produces backlash – disapproval and punishment from colleagues and supervisors. To measure backlash directly would be much preferable. Another limitation is that selectivity might drive the results for female leaders because female leaders might appear more "male" and might therefore have a better chance of being promoted to leadership positions. Taking biases through selectivity into account would be a fruitful approach for future research.

Our study provides insights into the general relationship between gender stereotype deviation and job satisfaction. The analysis of this relationship in the light of differing job contexts, typically male or female occupations, organizational cultures or branches, and for other specific subsamples we did not analyze is a fruitful approach for further research. Moreover, as mentioned above, holding personality-related variables constant results in much larger (but insignificant) effects for men and male leaders. We did not dig into the relationship between gender stereotypes and per-

sonality factors, for example the big five and locus of control. Further research could analyze and explain the relationship between gender, stereotypes, and big five respectively locus of control.

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Appendix

Table A1. Items That Born (1992) Characterized as Socially Desired Female and Male Stereotype Attributes (1 = Very Desirable for the Respective Gender; 7 = Not at All Desirable for the Respective Gender)

Socially desired female stereotype attributes			Socially desired male stereotype attributes		
Not aggressive at all	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very aggressive	Very realistic	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very unrealistic
Very grateful	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very ungrateful	Very difficult to influenced	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very easy to influence
Very quiet	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very loud	Is very fond of math and sciences	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Does not like math and sciences at all
Never sees himself or herself as a central character	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Always sees himself or herself as a central character	Very strong personality	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very weak personality
Much sympathy for others	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	No sympathy for others	Very active	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very passive
Very warm in relationships with others	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very cold relationships with others	Thinks very logically	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Thinks very illogically
Very fond of art and literature	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Does not like art and literature at all	Not vulnerable at all	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very vulnerable
Not at all uncomfortable if other persons show emotions	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very uncomfortable if other persons show emotions	Never worried	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Always worried
Not at all importunate	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very importunate	Capable to separate thoughts and emotions	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not capable to separate thoughts and emotions
Very affectionate	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not at all affectionate	Not at all dependent	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very dependent
Very strong conscience	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very weak conscience	Strong talent for technical affairs	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	No talent for technical affairs
Very considerate	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not considerate at all	Resists under pressure	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Does not resist under pressure
Shows much compassion	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Shows little compassion	Not anxious at all	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very anxious
Hardly ever swears	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Swears very often	Always defends own opinion	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Never defends own opinion
Almost always ready to comfort others	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Seldom ready to comfort others	Can analyze the circumstances of a case very well	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Cannot analyze the circumstances of a case at all

Socially desired female stereotype attributes			Socially desired male stereotype attributes		
Very faithful	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very unfaithful	Possesses leadership traits	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Possesses no leadership traits
Very sensitive to the needs of others	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not at all sensitive to the needs of others	Very self-confident	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not self-confident at all
Emanates much warmth	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Emanates no warmth	Ready to take chances	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not ready to take chances
Very adaptable	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not adaptable at all	Not credulous	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very credulous
Very hearty	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Hardly ever hearty	Very discrete	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very garrulous
Always assuages in conflicts	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Hardly ever assuages in conflicts	Very systematic	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Very unsystematic
Very sensitive to the emotions of others	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Not at all sensitive to the emotions of others	Always able to get his or her own way	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7	Hardly ever able to get his or her own way