

REENTERING THE WORKFORCE AFTER A GAP IN EMPLOYMENT:
BIASES, STEREOTYPES, AND GENDER ROLES

by

Natalia Ramírez Campos

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Middle Tennessee State University

August 2018

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Richard G. Moffett III
Dr. Judith Van Hein
Dr. Patrick McCarthy

I would like to dedicate this research to my aunt *tía Nana*... for her unconditional love.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Rick Moffett for his constant support, dedication, and patience throughout this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Judy Van Hein and Dr. McCarthy for their wonderful ideas and feedback to improve my study in the best way possible. Thanks to my wonderful cohort who encouraged and supported me through happy and tough times. And lastly, to my friends and family, especially my mom and dad, for supporting my dreams with unconditional love.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the participants' likelihood of hiring an applicant who met the minimum qualifications for a Research Analyst position and who had taken time off from their job for a period of 5 years. The conditions varied in terms of gender (i.e., female or male applicant) and gap condition (i.e., applicants presented a gap in the resume for being a stay-at-home parent, did not provide an explanation for the gap in the resume, or did not have a gap in the resume). The Ambiguity Aversion Theory and Role Congruity Theory were two theories used to develop hypotheses about aversion to ambiguity and gender biases in relation to parenting and return to the workforce after a gap in employment. The study supported the Ambiguity Aversion Theory, suggesting that the absence of information was considered risky (i.e., no explanation for the gap in the resume). Consequently, participants were more likely to hire those applicants who provided an explanation for their gap or did not have a gap on their resumes. There were no significant findings for gender biases towards parenting and taking time off to raise children.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| LIST OF TABLES | vii |
| CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 1 |
| Ambiguity Aversion Theory | 2 |
| Role Congruity Theory..... | 5 |
| Stay-at-home parents | 7 |
| CHAPTER TWO: METHODS | 10 |
| Participants | 10 |
| Study Design | 12 |
| Materials..... | 12 |
| Consent Form..... | 12 |
| Instructions..... | 13 |
| Narrative | 13 |
| Measures..... | 14 |
| Dependent Measure | 14 |
| Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ)..... | 14 |
| Procedure..... | 15 |
| CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS | 17 |
| Hypothesis 1 | 18 |
| Hypothesis 2..... | 19 |
| Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ)..... | 19 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION..... | 23 |
| Ambiguity Aversion Theory | 23 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Role Congruity Theory..... | 24 |
| Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ)..... | 26 |
| Limitations and Future Studies | 27 |
| REFERENCES..... | 30 |
| APPENDICES | 33 |
| Appendix A: Consent Form | 34 |
| Appendix B: Narrative | 36 |
| Appendix C: Social Roles Questionnaire..... | 38 |
| Appendix D: Demographic Questions | 40 |
| Appendix E: Debrief | 42 |
| Appendix F: IRB Approval | 43 |
| Appendix G: IRB Amendment Approval..... | 46 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1. Means and standard deviations for gap condition and gender | 17 |
| Table 2. Tukey HSD comparisons for gap condition..... | 18 |
| Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for the interaction between gender of participant and the Social Roles Questionnaire, the Gender Transcendent Subscale, and the Gender Linked Subscale | 21 |

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are negative consequences for individuals who take time off from the workforce for a variety of reasons. In their absence, individuals may lose the ability to easily network with colleagues and remain current in the state-of-the-art information pertaining to their careers. Individuals may experience fewer job opportunities, and on their return, their job productivity may also suffer, translating into lower income (Drange & Rege, 2013). During the 2007-2009 historical recession in the United States a high percentage of individuals became unemployed (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). According to Furaker and Blomsterberg (2003), unemployed individuals were stigmatized. The researchers found that through society's lenses unemployed individuals were perceived to lack dispositional attributes such as low ability and motivation. Thus, the cause of their unemployment was perceived as their inability to keep a paid job.

Despite of the negative consequences associated with having a gap in the resume, some individuals voluntarily take time off from their jobs for a variety of reasons including taking care of a sick relative, travelling, volunteering, etc. However, one common reason is to raise their children (Hewlett, 2005). Reentering the workforce becomes challenging for most individuals as they experience barriers that affect their overall performance. However, men may experience additional barriers compared to women as they face gender roles issues for staying at home raising their children (Johnson, 2016).

Even when individuals get relevant exposure to their field during their years of absence, such as volunteering work, they still face the same barriers when reentering the

workforce just as if they had not volunteered (Maurath, Wright, Wittorp, & Hardtke, 2015). When individuals return to the workforce, some may feel the need to take a “step back” on the route that their career would have taken them if no gap would have existed. Therefore, they may take a different route and assume different responsibilities on their job (Johnson, 2016). For example, a professor whose career path would have been focused on research if she remained in the workforce, may be drastically changed to a teaching-only career path once she returns to academia. Therefore, individuals who take time off may find reentering the workforce extremely difficult because they are in a disadvantageous position in relation to other applicants.

Ambiguity Aversion Theory

The ambiguity aversion theory states that if given the opportunity to choose between two given options, one option providing thorough information and the other option providing little to no information, an individual will most likely choose the option that provides more information (Becker & Brownson, 1964; Hersch & Shinall, 2016; Lee, 2016). This type of behavior occurs due to individuals’ aversion to ambiguity. In other words, individuals prefer to choose the option that has known risks as opposed to unknown risks (Ellsberg, 1961). Thus, people try to avoid the option that exacerbates the unknown risks.

The ambiguity aversion theory can be directly applied to understanding why having a gap in the resume can become a barrier for an individual wanting to return to the workforce. From a selection point of view, when hiring managers evaluate candidates for a position, they base their judgment on the information provided by the candidate. For this reason, a gap on an applicant’s resume could be due to various such as taking time

off to raise their children, or because they were in jail due to a serious crime. Because of the lack of information, the hiring manager may not be able to predict whether or not the employee will be successful in the job. This may lead the hiring manager to be less likely to hire the individual with a gap than one without such gap, all other things being equal.

Hersch and Shinall (2016) investigated the application of the ambiguity aversion theory. In their experiment, they used narratives describing two female applicant finalists who were applying for a job after taking time off from the workforce for a period of 10 years. The narratives of the two applicants described women who possessed similar qualifications and experience. Their educational level was comparable and both had a successful career before taking time off from their jobs. Due to their past successful work experience, both women would have been overqualified for an entry level job. In the long run, an entry level job would have not been suitable for the applicants and they would have been more likely to quit (Hersch & Shinall, 2016). For this reason, the two finalists were applying for a non-entry level position as stated in the narrative.

Hersch and Shinall were interested in introducing the gap in the resume using different conditions in their experiment. The conditions in the study varied in regards to the applicants' reason for returning to work as well as the applicants' marital status. Reasons for reentering the workforce were for economic reasons or family reasons (e.g., children entered school). Hersch and Shinall were interested in exploring the issue of gap in the resume in relation to the ambiguity aversion. Therefore, they created a condition in which the applicant in the narrative did not provide a reason for returning to the workforce. In order to study the application of the ambiguity aversion theory in regards to having a gap in the resume, it was necessary to not have enough information on why the

applicant did not work for 10 years. Narratives for both applicants included positive information from references and strong interview ratings.

In Hersch and Shinall's (2016) study, participants chose one of the two finalist applicants to hire for a job. Their decision was based on the information provided in the narrative of each applicant. In most cases, the narratives explained the reason why the applicant took time off and the reason why they were reentering the workforce. If the applicant did not provide a reason for their 10-year gap on their resume, that narrative was considered to have very limited information. This condition gave the researchers the opportunity to hypothesize that individuals with a lack of information (gap in the resume) were less likely to be chosen over the other applicant who did not have a gap. The results in the study suggested that due to the ambiguity aversion theory, people chose the candidate who provided the most amount of information (e.g., reasons for gap: raising children) because it decreased the probability of risk.

The ambiguity aversion theory suggests that a hiring manager will most likely hire a candidate who provides enough information to explain the gap in the resume. One difference between my study and Hersch and Shinall's study is that I will examine the participants' likelihood of hiring one candidate instead of comparing two candidates for a position.

Hypothesis 1. Individuals will be more likely to hire an applicant with a reason given for the gap in the resume as compared to an applicant who has an unexplained gap in the resume.

In their study, Hersch and Shinall did not use narratives that contained a pool of male applicants. Consequently, the researchers could not generalize their findings to

situations in which applicants were male. For my study, I will use a method which will include a male pool of applicants in addition to a female pool of applicants. In the case when a gap in the resume is explained, I will introduce the concept of stay-at-home parents.

Role Congruity Theory

Previous research has shown that individuals' social behaviors are a product of, and commonly associated with, pre-established gender differences (Eagly, 1987). In other words, based on an individual's gender, there are social behaviors that are already expected and assigned to their particular gender. Eagly suggests women are traditionally associated with a *communal dimension of behavior* including care for others, nurturing qualities, interpersonal sensitivity, and emotional connection. On the other hand, Eagly noted that men are traditionally associated with an *agentic dimension of behavior* such as assertiveness, controlling, strong, and independent.

However, expanding the view of traditional gender roles, Bem (1974) introduced the concept of *androgyny*, stating that individuals can engage in both female and male behaviors (Bem, 1974). That is, "depending on the situation, androgyny can be both assertive and yielding and both instrumental and expressing" (p. 155). More than just dimensions of behavior associated with one gender or another, the prescribed qualities of each dimension of behavior are associated with desirable qualities and tendencies of each gender (Eagly, 1987). The role congruity theory suggests that there should be a match between the social behavior (i.e., communal or agentic dimensions of behavior) and the gender of the individual (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

When there is incongruence between the expected behavior and the gender of the individual, negative consequences are a possibility. An example of this is when women leaders engage in agentic dimensions of behavior while leading (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The term *role incongruence* suggests that individuals disrupt or do not adhere to the pre-established roles associated to their gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002). As a consequence of role incongruence, Eagly and Karau (2002) found that women leaders were forced into one of two options: conform to the role associated with their gender and not succeed as leaders, or fail to meet the role expectations associated to their gender and succeed as leaders in organizations. Another study showed that women who did not adhere to the gender roles established in society decreased their motivation and engagement in their job as a consequence of the stereotype threat (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). This meant that because of their lack of congruency with the female gender role, women experienced negative consequences.

Women leaders may experience barriers in the workplace because they do not adhere to their prescribed gender roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Sandberg, 2013). For example, Heilman and Okimoto (2007) found that there were negative ratings associated to women performing traditionally male roles. The researchers suggested that the main reason for the negative ratings in categories such as likeability and interpersonal hostility were rooted in the idea that women leaders were not nurturing. Therefore, when researchers included implicit nurturing qualities as well as explicit qualities such as childbirth for women leaders in the company, the negative ratings were either mitigated or averted. This finding, however, showed that there was negativity associated with women leaders who were violating the prescribed gender roles (Heilman & Okimoto,

2007). In other words, those individuals who were seen as violating the role congruity. So far, I have discussed how women who are viewed as acting in role incongruent ways as leaders can experience negative consequences. Next, I will discuss how men may experience negative consequences when they are viewed acting in role incongruent ways such as in the role of stay-at-home parent.

Stay-at-home parents. Parallel to the significant increase from 23% to 29% for stay-at-home mothers between the years 1999 to 2012 (Cohn, Livingston, & Wang, 2014), the percentage of stay-at-home fathers has increased from 10% to 16% between 1991 and 2014 (Livingston, 2014). Such rapid increase may have been a consequence of the biggest recession in the United States between 2007-2009 and the increasing the levels of unemployment nationwide (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

Kramer and Kramer (2016) showed that even though the topic of stay-at-home fathers has become more accepted in society increasing in the last couple decades in the United States, stay-at-home fathers can be viewed as a reflection of gender role incongruence. Consequently, being a stay-at-home father may be associated with negative attitudes (Kramer & Kramer, 2016). As previously suggested, when women engage in agentic dimensions of behavior as a result of their work role, they may be seen as disrupting role congruity; therefore, allowing for prejudice and negativity to emerge (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Similarly, when males engage in communal behaviors as stay-at-home fathers, they may be viewed as a reflection of role incongruence as they are not adhering to gender role expectations. According to Wayne and Cordeiro (2003), when men take time off from their jobs to raise their children (i.e., communal behavior), they

are disconnecting from their assumed gender role and disengaging in good organizational citizenship within their jobs.

Additionally, men may be judged as not possessing the appropriate characteristics to raise children, as this role is traditionally associated with a woman's role (Fischer & Anderson, 2012). Consequently, when men take time off to raise children, they could be negatively judged on factors such as their lack of organizational citizenship and their supposed "lack of ability" to provide the appropriate care for their children. Contrary, and supporting the role congruity theory, male leaders do not disrupt society's gender roles in their jobs when they engage in agentic behaviors. This is because they are engaging in the dimension of behavior expected from their gender (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Thus, this issue suggests a gender bias regarding societal expectations of parenthood responsibilities, specifically in raising children.

In conclusion, when women and men do not adhere to their expected gender roles according to the role congruity theory, they may experience some sort of prejudice within their occupation. In her book, *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg (2013) talked about equality between men and women suggesting that "[a] truly equal world would be one where women ran half our countries and companies and men ran half our homes" (p. 7). However, achieving equality between genders in occupations may be difficult when there are potential biases in selection when applicants do not adhere to their expected gender role (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016).

Hypothesis 2: In the condition in which the gap in the resume is explained by being a stay-at-home parent, there will be a significant difference in the likelihood of being hired. That is the female applicant will be more likely to be hired than the male applicant.

CHAPTER TWO: METHOD

Participants

A total of 182 participants were recruited through the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) SONA System and Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a crowdsourcing internet marketplace. Participants who completed the experiment through the MTSU SONA system received one (1) research credit for their participation in the study; participants who completed the experiment through Mturk received \$1 as an incentive for completing the online survey. All participants were randomly assigned to one of six different conditions using the Qualtrics software's randomization tool.

In order to ensure that the data collected were adequate for analysis in the study, I conducted manipulation checks and quality control items throughout the experiment. Participants were asked to answer three different multiple-choice questions: (1) *“Based on the minimum years of experience required by the Research Analyst Position, was the applicant qualified for the job?”*, (2) *“Based on the minimum educational level required by the Research Analyst Position, was the applicant qualified for the job?”*, and (3) *“For what position is this applicant applying for?”*. Participants should have answered “yes” to the first two questions and “Research Analyst” to the third question. In the demographics questionnaire, participants were instructed to select “likely” on a multiple-choice question that was used for quality control. And lastly, for question 5 in the Social Roles Questionnaire, participants were instructed to select number 3 for quality control. All manipulation checks and quality control questions were comparative in level of difficulty. Consequently, participants were required to pass 4 out of the 5 manipulation checks to

not be ruled out of the experiment. There were nine participants who did not meet this requirement and were removed from further analyses.

Listwise deletion was used when dealing with missing data; participants with missing data were eliminated from the sample ($n = 8$ were removed). After screening out unqualified participants, $n = 165$ were used for the analysis (i.e., 49% males, 48% females, 3% preferred not to answer). From the sample of participants, a total of $n = 64$ participants (39%) were gathered from MTSU SONA system and $n = 101$ were gathered from Mturk. Around 31% of the participants reported being 18-21 years of age, 19% reported between 22-25 years of age, 21% reported between 26-30 years of age, 26% of the participants reported being over the age of 30, and lastly, 3% of the reported participants did not answer the question about their age. From the reported participants, the ethnicity distribution included: 56% White, 13% Black or African American, 9% Hispanic/Latino, 1% Native American/American Indian, 15% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Other, and 3% did not answer the question about their ethnicity. In terms of highest level of education attained for the reported participants, 37% of the participants indicated a High School Diploma, 1% Technical/Vocational Training, 11% Associate's degree, 40% Bachelor's degree, 6% Master's degree, 1% Doctoral degree, and 3% of the reported participants did not answer the question about highest level of education.

Participants were asked about whether they had been stay-at-home parents at any point in their lives. To this question, 18% of the participants responded "yes" to being a stay-at-home parent at any point during their lives and the rest responded "no". From participants who responded "yes" to being a stay-at-home parent, 51% were females and the rest males. The majority of participants spent less than 2 years at home. That is, 10%

stayed at home between 0-6 months, 21% stayed at home between 7-12 months, 21% stayed at home between 13-24 months, 14% stayed at home between 25-36 months, and 35% stayed at home for more than 3 years. From the “yes” group, 93% indicated that their experience as stay-at-home parents had been positive, 7% indicated it had been indifferent, and none indicated they had a negative experience.

In the demographics questionnaire, participants were also asked whether their parents had been stay-at-home parents in the past, to which 57% responded “yes” and the rest responded “no”. From the participant who responded “yes” to the question about their parents being stay-at-home parents, 98% indicated that their experience had been positive and the rest indicated it had been a negative experience.

Study Design

The study was comprised of a 3 (gap in the resume with no explanation, gap in the resume for being a stay-at-home parent, or no gap in the resume) X 2 (gender of the applicant: female, male) between-subjects factorial ANOVA design. The dependent variable (DV) in the study was the applicant’s likelihood of being hired for a job.

Materials

Consent form. Participants recruited from both MTSU SONA System and Mturk were redirected to the online survey using the Qualtrics questionnaire survey software. Once redirected to Qualtrics, the consent form was presented providing all information about the study including contact information for the primary investigator, advisor, and institution (Middle Tennessee State University). After presented with the consent form, participants were asked for their agreement to participate in the study in order to proceed to the next page of the study (see Appendix A for the consent form). Next, participants

were randomly assigned to one of six conditions. Completion time of the online survey was 8.5 minutes on average.

Instructions. After participants had agreed to participate in the study and had proceeded to the next page of the study, instructions for the study were presented. The study asked participants to act as recruiters at a medium-sized consulting firm during the experiment. Due to a job opening for a position for a Research Analyst, participants were instructed to select the likelihood of hiring an applicant for the position as well as briefly explain their hiring decision for that particular applicant. From all six conditions in the study, all applicants held a bachelor's degree in psychology, had strong references, and a minimum of 10 years of experience on the job. All of these aspects were considered minimum qualifications for the role of Research Analyst. After participants had answered the question about the likelihood of hiring an applicant as well as explaining the hiring decision, they were asked quality control questions.

Narrative. The participants were presented with information in a narrative about the applicant. The conditions for the 3x2 between-subjects factorial ANOVA analysis included: (1) male applicant who did not have a gap in the resume (2) male applicant with a gap in the resume without an explanation (3) male applicant who had a gap in the resume because he was a stay-at-home parent (4) female applicant who did not have a gap in the resume (5) female applicant with a gap in the resume without an explanation (6) female applicant who had a gap in the resume because she was a stay-at-home parent. As mentioned before, the applicant's education and experience were considered minimum qualifications to perform the job effectively. Therefore, in all six conditions applicants were competent enough to perform the job because they met the minimum

qualifications. Subsequently, depending on the condition assigned to each participant, the applicant in the narrative had a gap in the resume with an explanation for being a stay-at-home parent, a gap in the resume without an explanation, or no gap in the resume. See Appendix B.

Measures

Dependent measure. The dependent variable (DV) in the study was the applicant's likelihood of being hired for a job. Participants in the study indicated the likelihood of hiring an applicant on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "very unlikely" (1) to "very likely" (5).

Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ). The use of this scale was to assess participants' perceptions towards social roles in society (Baber & Tucker, 2006). The SRQ included two subscales: Gender Transcendent subscale and Gender-linked subscale. The two subscales combined created a total of 13 items that made the SRQ. The Gender Transcendent subscale (items 1-5 of the SRQ) measured gender in a non-dichotomous manner (i.e., expanding on the female/male gender spectrum). Higher scores indicated that individuals were more likely to not reflect traditional gender roles beliefs. Subsequently, the items in this subscale were reverse coded. The Gender-linked attitudes subscale (items 7-14 of the SRQ) measured whether the participant agreed gender was associated with a role (e.g., women should take care of the children; men should provide financially). As a result, higher scores indicated that individuals were more likely to reflect traditional gender roles beliefs. Item 6 was used as a quality control item, which increased the scale to a 14-point item scale. Even though the Gender-linked attitudes subscale fitted best for the purposes of the study, both subscales were used to avoid

shortening the number of items included in the SRQ. This measure was used to assess the sample of participants' perceptions towards social roles in society and could be used to help explain the results pertaining to Hypothesis 2.

The SRQ presented high face validity, content validity, convergent validity, discriminate validity, and reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$) (Baber & Tucker, 2006). The original SRQ used percentages from 0%-100% (i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree) with increments of 10% (Baber & Tucker, 2006). However, for my study, participants answered to their level of agreement to the statement described in the item by selecting a number on a 5-point scale (i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree). Participants had to select a whole number for each statement in the scale (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) as there was not an option to select half numbers as a response, for example. Consequently, the selection of a 5-point Likert scale allowed to assign one statement with each number in the scale (i.e., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). See Appendix C.

Procedures

Participants were presented with a short narrative (one paragraph) that provided information about a medium-sized company that was looking to hire a Research Analyst. The paragraph presented information describing a finalist applicant for the position. Information about the finalist applicant in the narrative included gender of the applicant (male or female), level of education (bachelor's degree in psychology), years of experience (10 years minimum), child rearing as a reason for having a gap in the resume, no reason for their gap, or in some conditions, the applicant did not have a gap in the resume. After reading the narrative, participants were asked to select the applicant's

likelihood of being hired for the position of Research Analyst. Participants selected a response in a 1-5 point Likert scale that ranged from “*Very likely to hire the individual for the position*” to “*Not likely to hire the individual for the position*”. See Appendix B.

Based on the condition randomly assigned to the participant, participants either judged an applicant who had an explanation for their gap in the resume (for being a stay-at-home-parent), an applicant who did not provide an explanation for their gap in the resume, or an applicant who did not have a gap in the resume. After participants completed the hiring task, they continued to the next section of the study in which participants were asked to complete the SRQ and the PAQ (see Appendices C and D). Finally, participants answered demographics questions including questions relating to their experience with stay-at-home parenting (see Appendix E) and were debriefed online (see Appendix F) and thanked for their participation in the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

There were two main interests in the present study: to examine the ambiguity aversion theory and the role congruity theory in relation to gender and explanation about a gap in the resume. Before conducting the analysis, the data were cleaned by eliminating those participants who did not meet the criteria. That is, the data of participants who did not meet the minimum quality control questions were removed from the analysis (see “Participants” in the Method section). A total of 165 participants were used in the analysis. The means and standard deviations for each condition of the study are presented below:

Table 1

Means and standard deviations of likelihood of hiring the applicant by condition

| Condition | Gender of the applicant | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>n</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| No gap | Female | 4.42 | 0.66 | 34 |
| | Male | 4.27 | 0.81 | 22 |
| Gap without a reason | Female | 3.55 | 0.91 | 29 |
| | Male | 3.30 | 1.18 | 30 |
| Gap with a reason | Female | 4.21 | 0.74 | 28 |
| | Male | 4.05 | 0.90 | 22 |

To test hypotheses 1 and 2, a 3 X 2 between-subjects factorial ANOVA research design was conducted. The purpose of conducting this type of analysis was to look at the main effect of gender and gap as well as the interaction between all six conditions in order to draw inferences about the Ambiguity Aversion Theory and the Role Congruity Theory.

Hypothesis 1

The analyses supported hypothesis 1. That is, the 2 x 3 ANOVA indicated a main effect for the *gap condition* $F(2, 159) = 16.17, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .17$. Participants perceived those applicants without a gap in the resume ($M = 4.32, SD = .12$) as more likely to get hired than those applicants without an explanation for the gap ($M = 3.42, SD = .12$). Participants also perceived those applicants with an explanation for the gap ($M = 4.13, SD = .13$) as more likely to get hired than those applicants without an explanation for the gap ($M = 3.42, SD = .12$). Post Hoc test is presented below.

Table 2

Tukey HSD comparisons of likelihood of hiring an applicant by condition

| (I) | (J) | Mean Difference (I-J) | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| No gap | Gap no reason | .916* | 0.52 | 1.30 |
| Gap reason | Gap no reason | .716* | 0.32 | 1.12 |

*Note, *significant at the .001 level.*

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 of the study was not supported by the findings. The analysis revealed that in the condition in which the gap in the resume would be explained for being a stay-at-home parent, there was not a significant difference in the likelihood of being hired for females ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .09$) and males ($M = 3.86$, $SD = .10$): $F(1, 159) = 2.11$, $p = .148$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. The analysis suggested that there was not an interaction between gap condition and gender of the applicant $F(2, 159) = .04$, $p = .966$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, nor between gap condition and gender of the participant $F(2, 159) = 1.96$, $p = .163$, $\eta_p^2 = .012$. That is, there were no significant differences by participant gender.

Social Roles Questionnaire

By including the Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ) scale as part of my experiment, I was able to assess whether participants' social roles' perceptions adhered to the traditionally established gender roles (i.e., agentic-male, communal-female). One reason for the selection this scale as opposed to other scales measuring gender roles was because this scale did not measure gender in a dichotomous approach assuming that men and women were in opposition from one another in terms of roles and responsibilities (Baber & Tucker, 2006). Instead, it allowed individuals the possibility to explore both roles and not necessarily link a man and a woman with predetermined role.

The number of options for each item in the SRQ ranged from 1-5 on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The selection of numbers 1 and 2 in the scale indicated that participants did not reflect more traditional gender roles beliefs. The selection of number 3 in the scale indicated that participants did not reflect agreement nor disagreement to traditional

gender roles. And lastly, the selection of numbers 4 and 5 in the scale indicated that participants reflected traditional gender role beliefs (Baber & Tucker, 2006). All items in the scale were analyzed at the item-level to look at whether specific items were more skewed towards pre-established gender roles. Due to the lack of skewness of items, the reported data was of the total items of the SRQ and its two subscales separately.

As previously mentioned, hypothesis 2 suggested that “[i]n the condition in which the gap in the resume [was] explained by being a stay-at-home parent, there w[ould] be a significant difference in the likelihood of being hired. That is the female applicant w[ould] be more likely to be hired than the male applicant”. Another reason for the selection of this scale was to help support the hypothesis 2. For example, if hypothesis 2 of the experiment was supported, it was expected for the SRQ to suggest that participants reflected traditional gender roles beliefs. In this particular case in which the hypothesis 2 was not supported, the SRQ was expected to suggest that participants did not reflect traditional gender roles beliefs, which confirmed the suggested linkage between the scale and the hypothesis 2 in this particular experiment.

The scale was analyzed as a whole as well as on its two subscales. The means and standard deviations for the interaction between gender of participant and the Social Roles Questionnaire, the gender of participant and the Gender Transcendent Subscale, and the gender of participant and the Gender Linked Subscale are reported below. See Table 3.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for the interaction between gender of participant and the Social Roles Questionnaire, the Gender Transcendent Subscale, and the Gender Linked Subscale.

| Measure | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|
| Social Roles Questionnaire (items 1-5 and 7-14) | | | |
| Female | 80 | 2.52 | 0.58 |
| Male | 80 | 2.72 | 0.67 |
| Total | 160 | 2.62 | 0.63 |
| Gender Transcendent Subscale (items 1-5) | | | |
| Female | 80 | 2.60 | 0.29 |
| Male | 80 | 2.71 | 0.36 |
| Total | 160 | 2.66 | 0.33 |
| Gender Linked-Subscale (items 7-14) | | | |
| Female | 80 | 2.47 | 0.90 |
| Male | 80 | 2.72 | 0.99 |
| Total | 160 | 2.59 | 0.95 |

Note. Item 6 was used as a quality control question. Consequently, it was not included in the analysis.

The results suggested that the sample of participants in the study did not engage in biases in regards to gender roles at both item-level and when looking at the full scale. As previously mentioned, depending on the total scores of each participant, their social roles beliefs could be assumed. That is, overall scores for individuals on or below number 3 did not reflect traditional gender roles as suggested by the SRQ. On the other hand, individuals with scores higher than number 3 indicated a that they reflected traditional gender roles as suggested by the SRQ (Baber & Tucker, 2006). The results were not skewed to demonstrate biases in the perception of gender roles in the scale.

To conduct a Post Hoc analysis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the SRQ scores for female participants and male participants. There was a significant difference between female participants ($M = 2.52, SD = .58$) and male participants ($M = 2.71, SD = .67$); $t(158) = 1.97, p < .05$. The same analysis was conducted to compare the scores of the two subscales separately. For the Gender Transcendent Subscale, there was a significant difference between female participants ($M = 2.60, SD = .29$) and male participants ($M = 2.71, SD = .36$); $t(158) = 2.12, p < .05$. On the other hand, for the Gender-Linked Subscale, there was not a significant difference between female participants ($M = 2.47, SD = .90$) and male participants ($M = 2.71, SD = .98$); $t(158) = 1.66, p = .099$.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

Ambiguity Aversion Theory

As previously mentioned in the literature, individuals prefer to choose the option that has known risks as opposed to unknown risks (Ellsberg, 1961). In the case of a gap in the resume with an explanation for being a stay-at-home parent, the absence from work was explained by being a stay-at-home parent. The condition of gap without an explanation was an example of a *risky* situation for the participants making the hiring decision about the applicant. That is, without thorough information about the reason for the gap on the applicant's resume, the hiring manager may not be able to predict whether or not the employee will be successful in the job. A variety of assumptions could be inferred due to the lack of information including, for example, an applicant's time spent in jail due to a serious crime as a reason for the gap.

As suggested by the Ambiguity Aversion Theory and supported by the results, participants stated that they would more likely hire an applicant without a gap in the resume than an applicant with a gap in the resume with an explanation for being a stay-at-home parent. Additionally, participants also stated that they would more likely hire an applicant with an explanation for the gap in the resume for being a stay-at-home parent as opposed to an applicant without an explanation for the gap in their resume. This finding suggested that the lack of information from the applicant's 5-year-workforce-absence translated into uncertainty to the participants making the hiring decisions in the study. Consequently, the study's data supported the Ambiguity Aversion Theory, suggesting that if given the opportunity to choose between two given options, one option providing thorough information and the other option with little to no information, an individual will

more likely choose the option that provides more information (Becker & Brownson, 1964; Hersch & Shinall, 2016; Lee, 2016). Explanation for the gap in the resume was enough information for the participant to decide to hire an applicant for the position of Research Analyst. Based on the data, participants tried to avoid the option that exacerbated the unknown risks, that is, the gap in the resume without an explanation.

Role Congruity Theory

As previously stated in the literature, there are social behaviors established and assigned in society to individuals based on their gender. Traditionally, women are associated with a *communal dimension of behavior* that include care for others, nurturing qualities, interpersonal sensitivity, and emotional connection. On the other hand, men are traditionally associated with an *agentic dimension of behavior* including behaviors such as assertiveness, controlling, strong, and independent (Eagly, 1987).

When individuals do not engage in their pre-established gender dimensions of behavior as established by society, they may be seen as disrupting the role congruity; therefore, individuals are seen as a reflection of role incongruence as they are not adhering to gender role expectations (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In the current study, there was an interest in looking at the variable of gender in relation to the topic of stay-at-home parents and their likelihood of being hired for a position after taking time off to raise children.

When researching the literature about stay-at-home parents, an interesting finding in the literature was that the small percentage of men who stayed home to raise children said that their actions redefined masculinity (Lee & Lee, 2016). This indicated that the generation of stay-at-home fathers perceived raising children a masculine quality and

were disrupting the established role associated to their gender (Fischer & Anderson, 2012).

When participants were presented with the conditions that explained the gap because the applicant was a stay-at-home parent, the expectation was to see if the gender of the applicant affected the participants' likelihood of hiring an individual or not as suggested by the Role Congruity Theory in hypothesis 2 and suggested by the literature (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Specifically, if a participant was judging a male applicant for taking time off to raise children, based on the Role Congruity Theory, the male applicant was disrupting his role congruity by performing a role commonly assumed by women (i.e., stay-at-home mothers) (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Therefore, the male applicant would not have been recommended for hiring. Nevertheless, if the participant was judging a female applicant in the same condition, I expected for the participant to select the applicant as suitable for hiring, because the female applicant would be adhering to her pre-established gender role (i.e., communal behavior) by being a stay-home-mother (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The information gathered about stay-at-home parents in the demographics questionnaire was intended to be used as a potential means to explain the support of hypothesis 2 for the explanation on gender biases for stay-at-home parents at the design stage of the study. However, since hypothesis 2 was not supported, the information about stay-at-home parents was not useful thus not used to help explain the lack of support for hypothesis 2.

Social Roles Questionnaire

The main purpose of utilizing the Social Roles Questionnaire (SRQ) as a scale in the study was to look at the participants' perceptions towards social roles in society (Barber & Tucker, 2006). With the SRQ data gathered from the sample of participants, the information would be used to explain specific patterns of behavior for potential biased results, if any in terms of gender roles associated with the topic of stay-at-home parents. However, the SRQ data collected suggested that participants were not reflecting traditional gender roles beliefs for individuals staying at home to raise children. Even when looking at the scale at the item-level, the data gathered were not skewed suggesting biases in terms of gender roles. The findings as suggested by the SRQ data suggested that the sample of participants who participated in the study did not engage in gender biases towards stay-at-home parents.

There could be a couple of suggestions as to why the data did not suggest gender biases. First, the sample of participants may have just not been biased in relation to gender roles in the first place. Second, the sample of participants was small and may not be a good representation of the whole population. There is a possibility that the population is still biased in terms of gender roles but the sample gathered for the study was not biased. Consequently, to rule out such possibility, it may be recommended to replicate the study using a bigger and more diverse sample of participants. Second, there could be a generational change in terms of gender roles' perceptions. That is, a newer generation of individuals may see women and men as equal in terms of household responsibilities such as raising children. Such assumption may be drawn due to the high

percentage of participants (i.e., 70.89%) whose age was below 30 years in the current sample.

The SRQ was chosen to evaluate gender roles in participants' data mainly because of its high face validity, content validity, convergent validity, discriminate validity, and reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$) (Barber & Tucker, 2006). Consequently, there is a strong support on the inferences drawn from the data gathered through the SRQ.

Limitations and Future Studies

The first limitation in the study was the participation of younger individuals in the sample. That is, younger individuals tend to not have as much social exposure to gender roles as an older individual may have experienced outside of their immediate circle. Younger individuals, if given the choice of attending college are usually exposed to individuals of their similar age, who may have been raised similarly. Unless younger individuals may have work experience and opportunity to meet individuals from different social contexts and ages, their gender roles perception may be skewed according to how they were raised in their households. That is, younger adults' responses may not be a good representation of society's perception of gender roles. The perception of stereotypical gender roles may not be as prominent in a college campus as opposed to the work environment.

For future studies and the replication of this study, it is recommended to establish the pre-requisite of job experience. In the context of a job, individuals have the exposure to meeting and working with their coworkers of a variety of ages. Individuals who may have held a job in the past may have a better understanding of hiring processes as well as gender roles attached to certain types of jobs. The sample in the study did not suggest

gender biases. However, based on the literature about the Role Congruity Theory, it may be interesting to replicate the study to look at whether or not gender biases have changed in the new generations, or if the lack of exposure of the participants in the sample was the main reason to suggest such results as shown by the SRQ.

Additionally, increasing the number of participants in the sample may have also generated diverse findings. However, the replication of the study utilizing a different sample excluding college students and increasing the number of participants may draw different results supporting hypothesis 2 of the study. A bigger sample of individuals who may have hiring experience and exposure to gender roles in society may be a better representation of what society understands to be gender roles associated with parenting.

Lastly, the current study was based on Hersch and Shinall's (2016) methodology and analysis. Hersch and Shinall's study compared two female applicants for a job and selected one of them for a position. The current study did not compare two applicants for a position. Instead, participants in the study were presented with one scenario which included information about an applicant applying for a job as a Research Analyst. Participants had to select the likelihood of hiring the applicant based on the qualifications described in the narrative.

Alternatively to Hersch and Shinall's study, the current study utilized a combination of a male and female set of applicants. In the current study, the gender of the applicant presented to the participants varied by conditions in the study. Consequently, for future studies I would like to test the variable of gender and the Ambiguity Aversion Theory when comparing two applicants for the job of Research Analyst. That is,

following the exact methodology used in Hersch and Shinall's study of comparing two applicants for a job.

As suggested by the current study, there was support on the Ambiguity Aversion Theory in terms of the gap condition. However, instead of asking participants to rate the likelihood of hiring an applicant when presenting one of six conditions (i.e., type of gap condition) it may be interesting to include the variable of gender when comparing two applicants for a job with the same qualifications. That is, include two applicants: a male and a female applicant with varying gap conditions. This could include asking participants to simultaneously compare male and female applicants for a position. With this design, one would be able to test gender biases when selecting individuals with the same qualifications. The suggested design of the future study would allow for the testing of an alternative version of hypothesis 1 to see if there are any gender biases when selecting an individual presenting the same conditions (i.e., no gap, gap explanation for being a stay-at-home parent, gap without an explanation) in the comparison of two applicants: a male and a female applicant.

REFERENCES

- Baber, K. M., & Tucker, C. J. (2006). The social roles questionnaire: A new approach to measuring attitudes toward gender. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 459-467.
- Becker, S. W., & Brownson, F. O. (1964). What Price Ambiguity? Or the role of ambiguity in decision-making. *Journal of Political Economy*, (1), 62-73.
- Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 42(2), 155-162.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012). BLS spotlight on statistics: The recession of 2007–2009. doi:10.1108/CDI-10-2012-0095
- Cohn, D., Livingston, G., & Wang, W. (2014, April 8). *After decades of decline, a rise in stay-at-home mothers*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/04/08/after-decades-of-decline-a-rise-in-stay-at-home-mothers/#fn-18853-1>
- Drange, N., & Rege, M. (2013). Trapped at home: The effect of mothers' temporary labor market exits on their subsequent work career. *Labour Economics*, 125-136.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum
- Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). Women and the labyrinth of leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(9), 63-71.
- Eagly, A. H., & Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, (2), 233-256.
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, (3), 573-598.

- Eagly, A. H., Karau, S. J., & Makhijani, M. G. (1995). Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, (1), 125-145.
- Ellsberg, D. (1961). Risk, ambiguity, and the savage axioms. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, (4), 643-669.
- Fischer, J., & Anderson, V. N. (2012). Gender role attitudes and characteristics of stay-at-home and employed fathers. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 13(1), 16-31.
- Furaker, B. & Blomsterberg, M. (2003). Attitudes towards the unemployed: An analysis of swedish survey data. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 12, 193-203.
doi:10.1111/1468-2397.t01-1-00005
- Heilman, M. E., & Okimoto, T. G. (2007). Why are women penalized for success at male tasks?: The implied communality deficit. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, (1), 81-92.
- Hersch, J., & Shinall, J. (2016). Something to talk about: Information exchange under employment law. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 165(1), 49-90.
- Hewlett, S. A. (2007). *Off-ramps and on-ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, c2007.
- Hoyt, C. L., & Murphy, S. E. (2016). Managing to clear the air: Stereotype threat, women, and leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27 (Special Issue: Gender and Leadership), 387-399.
- Johnson, W. (2016). What it's like when a stay-at-home dad goes back to work. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 2-5.

- Kramer, K. Z., & Kramer, A. (2016). At-home father families in the United States: Gender ideology, human capital, and unemployment. *Journal of Marriage And Family*, (5), 1315-1331.
- Lee, J. J. (2016). Ambiguity aversion: Theoretical advances and practical implications. *Journal of Marketing Thought*, 3(3), 11-17.
- Lee, J., & Lee, S. (2016). Caring is Masculine: Stay-at-home fathers and masculine identity. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, (1), 47-58.
- Livingston, G. (2014, June 5). *Growing number of dads home with the kids*. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/06/05/growing-number-of-dads-home-with-the-kids/>
- Maurath, D. T., Wright, C. W., Wittorp, D. E., & Hardtke, D. (2015). Volunteer experience may not bridge gaps in employment. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, (3), 284-294.
- Sandberg, S., & Scovell, N. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.
- Spence, J. T., Helmreich, R. L., & Holahan, C. K. (1979). Negative and positive components of psychological masculinity and femininity and their relationships to self-reports of neurotic and acting out behaviors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(10), 1673-1682.
- Wayne, J. H., & Cordeiro, B. L. (2003). Who is a good organizational citizen? Social perception of male and female employees who use family leave. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, (5-6), 233-246.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

CONSENT FORM

Principal investigator (PI): Natalia Ramirez Campos

Study Title: Should I hire this candidate? My role as a hiring manager.

Institution: Middle Tennessee State University

The following information is provided to inform you about the research project and your participation in it. Please read this information carefully. If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact me via nr3k@mtmail.mtsu.edu or my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Richard G. Moffett III at (615) 898-2686 or rick.moffett@mtsu.edu.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time. In the event new information becomes available that may affect the risks or benefits associated with this research study or your willingness to participate in it, you will be notified so that you can make an informed decision whether or not to continue your participation in this study.

For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact the MTSU Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

1. Abstract:

One aspect of being a manager in an organization is to make hiring decisions based on applicants' information. You will have an opportunity to do this in this study.

2. Description:

Based on information provided in a paragraph about a candidate applying for a job, you will be asked to act as a hiring manager and to select the likelihood of hiring one candidate for a position. You will be asked to provide your rationale for your response and answer other related questions.

3. How many times should I participate and for how long?

One time participation. No need to follow up.

4. What are the risks if I participate?

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study.

5. Anticipated benefits from this study:

The potential benefit to science and humankind that may result from this study is an increased understanding of stereotypes, biases, and gender issues that individuals face when reentering the workforce after a gap in employment. Additionally, participants will obtain a better understanding of hiring practices in the workplace.

6. Compensation in case of study-related injury:

MTSU will not provide compensation in the case of study-related injury.

7. Compensation for participation:

You will receive 1 SONA credit for participating in the study.

8. What will happen to the information I provide in this study?

All information will be kept confidential.

9. What will happen if I refuse to participate and can I withdraw if I change my mind in the middle?

There are no consequences for withdrawing from the study. Yes, participants are allowed to withdraw at any moment throughout the experiment.

10. Whom can I contact to report issues and share my concerns?

You can contact the researcher(s) by email or telephone (**PI: nr3k@mtmail.mtsu.edu; FA: rick.moffett@mtsu.edu, (615) 898-2686**). You can also contact the MTSU's Office of Research Compliance by email –irb_information@mtsu.edu . Report compliance breaches and adverse events by dialing (615) 898-2400 or by emailing compliance@mtsu.edu.

11. Confidentiality statement:

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised. For example, your information may be shared with the MTSU IRB. In the event of questions or difficulties of any kind during or following participation, you may contact the Principal Investigator (PI) as indicated above.

12. Statement by person agreeing to participate in this study:

By clicking “Yes, I agree to participate in this study”, it indicates that I have read this informed consent document. I understand each part of the document and I freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this study.

(If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by choosing “No, I do not agree to participate in this study”).

- A. Yes, I agree to participate in this study
- B. No, I do not agree to participate in this study.

Appendix B

The use of a narrative is based on the study by Hersch and Shinall (2016). It has been modified for the purpose of this study.

Instructions:

You work as a recruiter at a medium-sized consulting firm. There is currently a job opening for a Research Analyst position requiring a bachelor's degree in psychology, strong references, and a minimum of 10 years of experience. Below is information about the applicant. Based on the information just presented above you are asked to either hire them or not hire them.

Narrative A. Michael graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He has over 10 years of experience conducting research in the field. He has strong references and is qualified for the job. For over the last 5 years he reports a gap in his resume. He stated that during that time he was a stay-at-home father. Now his children are back in school so he wants to go back to work.

Narrative B. Lisa graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She has over 10 years of experience conducting research in the field. She has strong references and is qualified for the job. For over the last 5 years she presents a gap in her resume. She stated that during that time she was a stay-at-home mother. Now her children are back in school so she wants to go back to work.

Narrative C. Michael graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He has over 10 years of experience conducting research in the field. He has strong references and is qualified for the job. For over the last 5 years he reports a gap in his resume. He does not provide an explanation for his time off from work.

Narrative D. Lisa graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She has over 10 years of experience conducting research in the field. She has strong references and is qualified for the job. For over the last 5 years she presents a gap in her resume. She does not provide an explanation for her time off from work.

Narrative E. Michael graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology. He has over 10 years of experience conducting research in the field. He has strong references and is qualified for the job.

Narrative F. Lisa graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She has over 10 years of experience conducting research in the field. She has strong references and is qualified for the job.

1. How likely are you to hire this applicant?

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------|---------|--------|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very unlikely | Unlikely | Neutral | Likely | Very likely |

2. Please briefly explain your hiring decision.
_____.**3. Based on the minimum years of experience required by the Research Analyst Position, how qualified was the applicant for the job?**

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------|---------|--------|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very unlikely | Unlikely | Neutral | Likely | Very likely |

4. Based on the minimum educational level required by the Research Analyst Position, how qualified was the applicant for the job?

| | | | | |
|---------------|----------|---------|--------|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Very unlikely | Unlikely | Neutral | Likely | Very likely |

5. For what position is this applicant applying for?

- a. Director of research
- b. Research Analyst
- c. Secretary
- d. They are not applying for a job

Appendix C

Items taken from the Social Roles Questionnaire (Baber & Tucker, 2006).

1. People can be both aggressive and nurturing regardless of sex. ^a

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

2. People should be treated the same regardless of their sex. ^a

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

3. The freedom that children are given should be determined by their age and maturity level and not by their sex. ^a

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

4. Tasks around the house should not be assigned by sex. ^a

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

5. We should stop thinking about whether people are male or female and focus on other characteristics. ^a

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

6. For this question please select number 3 (neutral).

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

7. A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

8. Men are more sexual than women

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

9. Some types of work are just not appropriate for women.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

10. Mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

11. Mothers should work only if necessary.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

12. Girls should be protected and watched over more than boys.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

13. Only some types of work are appropriate for both men and women.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

14. For many important jobs, it is better to choose men instead of women.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |

Note. Items 1-5 form the Gender Transcendent subscale, and items 7-14 form the Gender-Linked subscale. Item 6 is used as a quality control item.

^a Items should be reverse coded.

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions:

1. Age: _____
2. Gender:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
3. Highest level of education
 - a. Some high school, no diploma
 - b. High School Diploma
 - c. Some college, no degree
 - d. Technical/vocational training
 - e. Associates Degree
 - f. Bachelor's Degree
 - g. Master's Degree
 - h. Doctoral Degree
4. Ethnicity
 - a. White
 - b. Hispanic/Latino
 - c. Black/African American
 - d. Native American/American Indian
 - e. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - f. Other
5. For this question please select "likely":
 - a. Unlikely
 - b. Somewhat likely
 - c. Likely
 - d. Very likely
6. Have you been a stay-at-home parent at any point in your life?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (*If participants select "no" for this question, they will skip question 7 and 8*).

7. How long were you/ have you been a stay-at-home parent?
 - a. 0-6 months
 - b. 7-12 months
 - c. 13-24 months
 - d. 25-36 months
 - e. More than 3 years

8. How would you rate your experience as a stay-at-home parent?
 - a. Positive
 - b. Negative
 - c. Indifferent

9. Have any of your parents been a stay-at-home parent at any point?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (*If participants select "no" for this question, they will skip question 10*).

10. Was having a stay-at-home parent a positive or negative experience?
 - a. Positive
 - b. Negative

11. Have you ever hired or have been part of the hiring team at your job in the past?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Appendix E

Debriefing Form

Thank you for your participation. The study seeks to investigate potential biases that individuals may experience when reentering the workforce after taking time off to raise children.

If you would like more information about the study or your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact me, Natalia Ramirez, at nr3k@mtmail.mtsu.edu or my faculty advisor, Dr. Richard G. Moffett III, at (615) 898-2686 or rick.moffett@mts.edu. The results from this study will not be immediately available. Thank you again for your time and patience in helping me with this project.

Natalia Ramirez Campos

Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU)

Graduate Student, Industrial & Organizational Psychology

nr3k@mtmail.mtsu.edu

Appendix F

IRB APPROVAL

IRB
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Office of Research
Compliance, 010A
Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle
Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN
37129



IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Monday, February 05, 2018

Investigator(s): Natalia Ramirez Campos; Richard G. Moffett III
Email(s): nr3k@mtmail.mtsu.edu; rick.moffett@mtsu.edu
Department: Psychology

Study Title: Reentering the workforce after a gap in employment: Biases, stereotypes, and gender roles.
Protocol ID: **18-1159**

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category (2) *Educational Tests*. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars in regard to this protocol application is tabulated as shown below:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| IRB Action | EXEMPT from further IRB review*** |
| Date of expiration | NOT APPLICABLE |
| Participant Size | 210 [Two Hundred Ten] |
| Participant Pool | Adults 18+ |
| Mandatory Restrictions | 1. Participants must be age 18+ 2. Informed consent must be obtained 3. Identifiable information may not be collected |
| Additional Restrictions | None at this time |
| Comments | None at this time |

| Amendments | Date | Post-Approval Amendments |
|------------|------|--------------------------|
| | | None at this time |

***This exemption determination only allows above defined protocol from further IRB review such as continuing review. However, the following post-approval requirements still apply:

- Addition/removal of subject population should not be implemented without IRB approval
- Change in investigators must be notified and approved
- Modifications to procedures must be clearly articulated in an addendum request and the proposed changes must not be incorporated without an approval
- Be advised that the proposed change must comply within the requirements for exemption
- Changes to the research location must be approved – appropriate permission letter(s) from external institutions must accompany the addendum request form
- Changes to funding source must be notified via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- The exemption does not expire as long as the protocol is in good standing
- Project completion must be reported via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- Research-related injuries to the participants and other events must be reported within 48 hours of such events to compliance@mtsu.edu

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to make the following types of changes to this protocol without the need to report to the Office of Compliance, as long as the proposed changes do not result in the cancellation of the protocols eligibility for exemption:

- Editorial and minor administrative revisions to the consent form or other study documents
- Increasing/decreasing the participant size

The investigator(s) indicated in this notification should read and abide by all applicable post- approval conditions imposed with this approval. [Refer to the post-approval guidelines posted in the MTSU IRB's website](#). Any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918 within 48 hours of the incident.

All of the research-related records, which include signed consent forms, current & past investigator information, training certificates, survey instruments and other documents related to the study, must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the sacure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data storage must be maintained for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

[Click here](#) for a detailed list of the post-approval responsibilities. More information on exempt procedures can be found [here](#).

Appendix G

IRB Amendment Approval

IRB
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Office of Research
Compliance, 010A
Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle
Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN
37129



IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

Investigator(s): Natalia Ramirez Campos; Richard G. Moffett III
Email(s): nr3k@mtmail.mtsu.edu; rick.moffett@mtsu.edu
Department: Psychology

Study Title: Reentering the workforce after a gap in employment: Biases, stereotypes, and gender roles.
Protocol ID: **18-1159**

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category (2) *Educational Tests*. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars in regard to this protocol application is tabulated as shown below:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| IRB Action | EXEMPT from further IRB review*** |
| Date of expiration | NOT APPLICABLE |
| Participant Size | 210 [Two Hundred Ten] |
| Participant Pool | Adults 18+ |
| Mandatory Restrictions | 1. Participants must be age 18+ 2. Informed consent must be obtained 3. Identifiable information may not be collected |
| Additional Restrictions | None at this time |
| Comments | None at this time |

| Amendments | Date | Post-Approval Amendments |
|------------|----------|---|
| | 03.13.18 | Approved to offer compensation of \$1 to Mechanical Turk participants Approved to add survey item: Mechanical Turk ID# |

***This exemption determination only allows above defined protocol from further IRB review such as continuing review. However, the following post-approval requirements still apply:

- Addition/removal of subject population should not be implemented without IRB approval
- Change in investigators must be notified and approved
- Modifications to procedures must be clearly articulated in an addendum request and the proposed changes must not be incorporated without an approval
- Be advised that the proposed change must comply within the requirements for exemption
- Changes to the research location must be approved – appropriate permission letter(s) from external institutions must accompany the addendum request form
- Changes to funding source must be notified via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- The exemption does not expire as long as the protocol is in good standing
- Project completion must be reported via email (irb_submissions@mtsu.edu)
- Research-related injuries to the participants and other events must be reported within 48 hours of such events to compliance@mtsu.edu

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to make the following types of changes to this protocol without the need to report to the Office of Compliance, as long as the proposed changes do not result in the cancellation of the protocols eligibility for exemption:

- Editorial and minor administrative revisions to the consent form or other study documents
- Increasing/decreasing the participant size

The investigator(s) indicated in this notification should read and abide by all applicable post- approval conditions imposed with this approval. [Refer to the post-approval guidelines posted in the MTSU IRB's website](#). Any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918 within 48 hours of the incident.

All of the research-related records, which include signed consent forms, current & past investigator information, training certificates, survey instruments and other documents related to the study, must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data storage must be maintained for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

[Click here](#) for a detailed list of the post-approval responsibilities. More information on exempt procedures can be found [here](#).