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The Impact Of Benevolent Sexism on Evaluations of Female Leaders

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THE IMPACT OF BENEVOLENT SEXISM ON EVALUATIONS OF FEMALE LEADERS

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

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In Partial Fulfillment

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in

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by

Daniella Lockhart

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of benevolent sexism beliefs on evaluations of female leadership candidates in hiring decisions, as well as the moderating effects of occupational gender composition and the gender of the comparison candidate. While seemingly positive, benevolent sexism subtly reinforces traditional gender roles by portraying women as warm but less competent, particularly in leadership roles where competence is crucial. The data in this study was collected from 146 participants via an online questionnaire using MTurk and snowball sampling. Aligning with previous research on gender bias, results indicated that benevolent sexism negatively impacts perceptions of competence and warmth, especially in male-dominated occupations. Contrary to the anticipated warmth-competence tradeoff, women were viewed as warmer when compared to male leader candidates. Furthermore, benevolent sexism was associated with higher salary recommendations for women, suggesting a nuanced relationship between sexism and compensation decisions. Overall, this study highlights how benevolent sexism subtly impedes women's career advancement. Although benevolent sexists may offer favorable assessments, such as higher compensation, to prospective female leaders, these gestures may obscure deeper gender biases as they may still uphold traditional gender norms through negative evaluations in other aspects of the selection process. These findings emphasize the responsibility of organizations to avoid equating well-

intentioned decisions or isolated positive outcomes with true gender equity, and to take proactive steps toward addressing gender discrimination in leadership.

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Throughout this journey, I have encountered moments of uncertainty and difficulty. Yet, I've come to realize that I am surrounded by an abundance of love, which is my greatest source of strength.

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You all have given me wings.

DEDICATION

As a multiracial, first-generation woman of color, I have sometimes struggled to feel seen in academia. Nevertheless, that experience shaped my purpose: to create spaces that are more equitable, inclusive, and just.

This thesis is dedicated to future students who may feel the same. I hope you take my words to heart:

- *Trust your experiences.* They are valid, even if they are not shared by the majority.
- *Start where you are.* Identify inequities as you see them, then imagine and put forth solutions.
- *Take up space*. Don't be afraid to be bold. Share your valuable insights and contribute to the collective knowledge.
- *Seek community*. You deserve support, care, and advocates.
- *Believe in yourself*. You are capable of so much more than you realize.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality in the workplace continues to pose a challenge across many occupations and industries. Despite advancements in recent years, women remain underrepresented in executive-level positions. According to a recent Women in the Workplace report (Krivkovich et al., 2022), for every 100 men promoted from entry-level to managerial positions, only 87 women receive similar promotions. Huang et al. (2019) argue that women are being held back by a "broken rung" at the first step up of the career ladder, which contributes to the presence of more men than women at the manager level. Consequently, the lack of women managers leads to a shortage of available women for promotion to senior leadership.

Gender disparities throughout the workplace are fueled by sexism. Sexism encompasses negative behaviors and attitudes towards women that impact all aspects of everyday life in and out of the workplace (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Sexist beliefs are ingrained notions about gender influenced by societal norms that affect everyone. As Abele (2003) posits, all sexist ideas perpetuate gender role stereotypes which, in turn, influence judgments about women. Despite the numerous efforts by various stakeholders, sexism remains a persistent obstacle to women's career advancement as it prioritizes role congruity over performance in evaluations of women (Koburtay, Syed, & Haloub, 2019).

Sexist attitudes may manifest overtly as negative stereotyping, discrimination, harassment, or violence against women. However, studies reveal that these hostile forms of sexism are easily recognizable and socially condemned (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Kark & Eagly, 2011). In fact, since the behaviors and consequences associated with hostile sexism are typically clear, most workplaces have formal policies in place to curb and report it (Jones et al., 2016). Unfortunately, these protocols do not account for other forms of sexism. Benevolent sexism is characterized by subjectively positive ideas about women that reinforce traditional gender role stereotypes by subtly asserting that women are weak and in need of protection and care (Glick & Fiske, 1996). These forms of sexism often go undetected because, on the surface, they may appear normal and flattering. Consequently, benevolent sexism may have a more significant detrimental effect on women's career progression than overt sexism due to its covert nature, which makes it easier to engage in and overlook, as well as more difficult to foresee its adverse consequences on women's career advancement (Jones et al., 2017). In essence, the path of benevolent sexism is paved with good intentions.

Although benevolent sexism is subtle, it can have substantial effects on perceptions of women in the workplace. One notable consequence is that individuals with strong benevolent sexism beliefs may feel inclined to "protect" women from "hard" tasks in the workplace (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This protective stance is problematic because it may lead to decisions restricting women's opportunities to demonstrate competence and establish themselves as capable

of assuming leadership positions. This, in turn, feeds gender stereotypes about women being perceived as less competent than men (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Although women may successfully challenge these stereotypes to be perceived as competent, their achievements are undermined by an additional stereotype that characterizes competent women as lacking warmth (Heilman et al., 2004). Benevolent sexism also exacerbates financial disparities between genders. Individuals who hold strong benevolent sexism beliefs may rationalize lower pay for women because they perceive women's work as inherently less valuable than men's (Glick & Raberg, 2018; Semali & Shakespeare, 2014; Spencer, 2016).

The influence of individual benevolent sexism beliefs on perceptions of women in the workplace can also be affected by various contextual factors, such as the gender composition of an occupation. Gendered occupations are jobs where most employees are of one gender, and the labor therein becomes associated with the gender of that majority (e.g., nurses are associated with feminine qualities; engineers are associated with masculine qualities) (Jacobs, 1989; Ridgeway, 2009; Rudman & Glick, 2008). Gendered labor perpetuates gender inequality by adding to the assumption that certain jobs are more suitable for men or women (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Ridgeway, 2009). Accordingly, women's competence and warmth are questioned more in masculine jobs. In contrast, women are more positively evaluated for the same qualities in feminine jobs (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2007; Ridgeway, 2009; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

The effects of benevolent sexism beliefs on shaping perceptions of women can also be moderated by the social comparison process (Biernat et al., 1994). The shifting standards effect, in the context of women in the workplace, refers to the phenomenon whereby the criteria for evaluating someone shifts depending on the gender stereotypes associated with the comparison group (Biernat, 2018). For example, women are stereotyped as less competent than men, leading to harsher evaluations of their perceived competence (Eagly & Karau, 2002). However, women's competence may be evaluated more positively compared to other women as the bar for expected competence has been lowered. Expanding on this concept, the gender of the leader comparison may also intensify the ways women are perceived in masculine or feminine-gendered occupations.

In addition to further illustrating circumstances in which women are positively or negatively evaluated, the shifting standards effect also sheds light on some of the mechanisms through which benevolent sexists impede the professional progression of women while projecting an image of progressivism (Cassidy & Krendl, 2019). Benevolent sexists have been shown to positively evaluate competent female leader candidates when they are being compared to other women (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). In this condition, benevolent sexists may acknowledge women's competence and even appoint her to the shortlist for a leadership position (Biernat & Fuegen, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 2002). However, this seemingly positive assessment is undermined because it is based on a belief system that undervalues women's skills. If a benevolent sexist evaluates two

female leader candidates, then the subsequent evaluation is predicated on the notion that the superior candidate is “competent for a woman” and not simply competent regardless of gender. This interaction allows benevolent sexists to maintain ideas about men’s superior competence and, ultimately, promote men all while appearing to support women’s progress.

Evidently, women continue to face significant barriers to career advancement in the workplace (Huang et al., 2019; Krivkovich et al., 2022). Eagly and Karau (2002) argue that a major obstacle is the sexist expectations women face to prioritize their gender role over their performance. These gender expectations inform individual benevolent sexism beliefs, which subtly distort evaluations of women and lower their perceived eligibility for promotions (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Therefore, understanding how benevolent sexism manifests and adversely impacts women is necessary for identifying strategies to combat it and increase women’s representation in senior management roles (Carli & Eagly, 2021). This study investigates the influence of benevolent sexism beliefs on women’s career advancement by analyzing evaluations of women seeking leadership roles.

The Roots of Sexism and its Impact on Female Leadership

Sexism is characterized by attitudes and behaviors that uphold a system of gender inequality (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This sex-based discrimination is rooted in traditional gender roles, which refer to “societal expectations regarding

the proper behaviors, attitudes, and activities of men and women, based on their sex, that have been historically reinforced and perpetuated through socialization, media, and other cultural factors" (Acker, 1990). Traditional gender role stereotypes for men and women are categorized as either communal or agentic behaviors (Bakan, 1966; Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Nater, & Eagly, 2019; Sczesny et al, 2019). Women are expected to display communal behaviors that prioritize the well-being of others. These characteristics demonstrate nurturing, empathy, and supportive qualities. In contrast, men are expected to show agentic behaviors that emphasize individual achievements. These behaviors may demonstrate assertiveness, competitiveness, and confidence (Gupta et al., 2018). While neither set of characteristics is inherently negative, the enforcement of these stereotypes can become especially problematic when women pursue roles that demand agentic behaviors not typically associated with their gender role stereotypes – such as those that are prevalent in the workplace (Abele, 2003; Agars, 2004; Eagly, 1987; Koch et al., 2015; Ridgeway, 2001). For instance, because women's gender stereotypes are communal, they are expected to take on caregiving and domestic roles in the home to a greater extent than men. This expectation reinforces the idea that women are less able to dedicate themselves to jobs outside the house (Williams, 2001). Moreover, women are not generally identified with traits like competence and capability, which are typically regarded as vital characteristics for "ideal workers" in any role (Heilman & Chen, 2005; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

The discrepancy between the gender role stereotypes assigned to women and the expectations for the 'ideal worker' is intensified in leadership roles. Historically, these positions have been closely linked to agentic behaviors and have been typically fulfilled by men that are perceived as powerful figures and decision-makers (Klenke, 1996). Previous research on implicit leadership theories (ILTs) suggests that cognitive frameworks shape perceptions of leader attributes and inferences about leader behaviors (Engle & Lord, 1997; Epitropaki et al., 2013). These frameworks suggest that ingrained beliefs about leadership can affect how both male and female leaders are evaluated, particularly in relation to communal or agentic traits.

Even though there is increasing evidence suggesting that communal traits, like emotional intelligence, agreeableness, and humility, contribute to effective leadership, societal perceptions of what constitutes a good leader remain slow to change (Dobbs & Babb, 2018; Gong et al., 2018; Kark & Eagly, 2011; Lytle & Hom, 2018). Regardless, even if women exhibit traits commonly associated with masculinity, they still might not be accepted or welcomed as leaders. Role congruity theory posits that men and women are judged based on how well their behaviors and traits align with the expectations of their gender role stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This theory suggests that women are perceived as less competent in roles that demand agentic traits, like leadership, because their gender expectations are incompatible with the presumed demands of those roles. Conversely, women are regarded as more competent in roles where

communal attributes are required for the same reason. Overall, the theory posits that men are perceived as inherently better suited for task-oriented (agentic) roles, while women are expected to suit people-oriented (communal) roles. Recent research indicates that men in senior leadership roles may reinforce the belief of male superiority in leadership by prioritizing the promotion and mentorship of male colleagues, regardless of credentials and performance (Helft et al., 2019; Jones & Pal, 2022; Vial, 2018). Furthermore, women who demonstrate competence and violate their gender role stereotypes often face the tradeoff of being perceived as less warm (Ramos et al., 2018). The perception that competent women lack warmth may be another significant barrier for women competing for upper-level leadership positions. Indeed, the tangible repercussions of these assessments on women's career outcomes are reflected in the ratio of women to men who are promoted in the workplace and in the enduring, relatively stable gender pay gap in the United States (Bisesti & Garcia, 2022; Krivkovich et al., 2022).

In conclusion, traditional gender role stereotypes influence sexist attitudes and behaviors that enable gender inequality in the workplace – particularly in leadership (Glick and Fiske, 1996). Given that sexism is a dynamic and evolving phenomenon, it is essential to recognize how it has transformed over time and identify the specific ways it manifests and functions in the present day. It may also be useful to examine how women's communal gender role stereotypes either conflict or harmonize with traits associated with different occupational

fields in order to identify environments where perceptions of female leader candidates are most affected by sexism (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Moreover, understanding how sexism alters the standards applied to competent leadership candidates may provide insight into its role in the underrepresentation of women in leadership (Cassidy & Krendl, 2019).

Evolution of Sexism

In the last half of the 20th century, sexist attitudes and behaviors that reinforce gender role stereotypes have evolved in the Western world. Historically, sexism has been hostile. Hostile sexism refers to an antagonistic attitude toward women grounded in the belief that they are inferior, incapable, or a threat to men's power and authority (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick & Fiske, 1997; Swim & Hyers, 1999). These beliefs may manifest as overt discriminatory behavior towards women. Such behaviors include harassment, violence, and other actions that undermine women's potential and limit their opportunities for advancement in the workplace. One study found that hostile sexism beliefs influenced lower ratings of female leaders in science, possibly stemming from the stereotype that women are less competent or less deserving of leadership roles (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). Another study found that hostile sexism beliefs may result in biased evaluations of female leaders because women might be penalized for performing behaviors deemed "inappropriate" or "unladylike" in leadership roles (Carli et al.,

1995). Due to its overt nature, hostile sexism is regarded as the more aggressive form of sex-based discrimination, which perpetuates the status quo (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Hostile sexism behaviors have become socially unacceptable due to historical pushes for a more egalitarian workplace (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Kark & Eagly, 2011; Parker & Funk, 2016). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 marked a significant step for workplace diversity initiatives in American society, as it specifically recognized “sex” as a protected class, among other achievements. This act led to the creation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which is responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination laws. It also preceded the implementation of formal measures to prevent and address explicit discrimination across organizations in the United States (Jones et al., 2016). These legislative actions have greatly decreased employment discrimination while promoting attitudes and behaviors that encourage workplace diversity. Today, many organizations recognize the benefits of promoting diversity in the workplace as it not only ensures legal compliance but can also cultivate innovation and creativity (Hewlett et al., 2013; Kochan et al., 2003; Marshall & Sherbin, 2013). Organizations intentionally discourage hostile sexism in the workplace, whether motivated by legal requirements, ethical considerations, or the desire to capitalize on diverse perspectives (Jones et al., 2016). As a result, its presence in the workplace has decreased significantly.

Benevolent Sexism: When Good Intentions Go Wrong

Following the decline in overt hostility towards women, some assumed that sexism was no longer a pressing social issue (Swim et al., 1995; Tougas et al., 1995). A substantial body of research, however, indicates sex-based discrimination lives on through a more subtle form – benevolent sexism. Benevolent sexism refers to a set of attitudes and beliefs towards women that appear well-intentioned but, ultimately, limiting (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Connely et al., 2011; Hideg & Ferris, 2016; Glick & Fiske, 1996). These beliefs emphasize positive gender stereotypes about women, such as the notion that they are empathetic or effective communicators. It is important to acknowledge, however, that not all women fit into these categories. Relying on stereotypes to understand or judge women can be harmful as it ignores the diversity of their experiences, skills, and abilities. In the workplace, strong benevolent sexism beliefs can influence how people assess women's competence, capabilities, and suitability for certain roles. Individuals with strong benevolent sexism beliefs may evaluate female candidates based on their conformity to traditional gender roles rather than objectively assessing whether they possess the explicit traits required for a given role. Subjective evaluations like this can unintentionally restrict women's career advancement opportunities.

In 1996, Glick and Fiske introduced terms to describe frequently observed forms of benevolent sexism: protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy. Among these, protective paternalism

and complementary gender differentiation are particularly relevant to evaluations of female leaders. Despite their positive connotations, such beliefs may influence contradictory assessments in the workplace. Therefore, it is critical for organizations to recognize and mitigate these biases to promote fair and equitable evaluations and decision-making processes.

Protective paternalism refers to chivalrous conduct towards women. This behavior can manifest as being excessively concerned about women's safety and welfare. For example, hiring managers who have strong benevolent sexism beliefs may think that promoting female candidates to leadership positions is a bad idea because women need to be shielded from difficult tasks and potentially stressful situations. The less clear assumption underlying this idea is that women are physically or emotionally too weak to manage agentic tasks, which influences evaluations of women's capability or lack thereof to perform leadership roles. In this situation, the hiring manager might justify passing over a female candidate for a leader role by reasoning that it is in the woman's best interest. However, they may neglect to consider and recognize whether their conclusion stems from personal bias or objective criteria. Research conducted in real-world settings demonstrates that protective paternalism can adversely affect perceptions of women in leader roles who must display agentic behavior (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Furthermore, the career advancement obstacles caused by protective paternalism may also influence

compensation decisions that contribute to ongoing gender-based pay and promotion disparities (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Glick & Raberg, 2018).

Complementary gender differentiation highlights the notion that men and women are fundamentally different and that these differences should be celebrated and upheld. It maintains the view that men and women have unique, complementary functions in society. In the workplace, hiring managers who have strong benevolent sexism beliefs may believe that men are naturally better suited for agentic, leadership, or technical roles due to their gender stereotypes and may, consequently, select a male over a female candidate for such roles. Conversely, hiring managers who hold strong benevolent sexism beliefs may perceive women as a more appropriate choice for communal, administrative, or supportive roles, thereby favoring a female over a male candidate. Hiring decisions of this nature often depend on gender role congruity rather than demonstrated abilities, with hiring managers justifying the confinement of men and women to specific roles based on personal biases rather than actual qualifications. These examples are supported by a 2010 study that showed that people with high benevolent sexism beliefs were more likely to assign women to supportive, nurturing roles rather than to leadership (Hekman et al., 2010). Engaging in such practices not only obstructs women from accessing roles like leadership positions but also undermines organizational innovation. This is especially poignant considering that firms demonstrating higher levels of gender

diversity within their Top Management Teams (TMT) and Board of Directors (BOD) are often among the most innovative (Wu et al., 2021).

It is essential to understand the different manifestations and classifications of benevolent sexism beliefs because they illustrate its insidious nature. Benevolent sexism beliefs function by upholding stereotypes about women that are supposedly chivalrous yet patronizing (Glick & Fiske, 1996). These stereotypes are couched in polite language and praises, making it difficult to connect them to negative outcomes immediately. Moreover, decisions that are influenced by benevolent sexism beliefs are ambivalent. They simultaneously praise women while confining them to their designated roles. This ambivalence might result in conflicting evaluations of women in the workplace, where they may be perceived as warm but incompetent for roles necessitating agency. The seemingly positive and normalized nature of benevolent sexism beliefs makes them easier to overlook and unconsciously perpetuate, potentially causing more harm than hostile sexism beliefs. It may not be surprising then that there are few formal or informal repercussions for such subtle discrimination, given its ambiguous nature (Glick et al., 2016; Jones et al., 2017). Consequently, the effect of benevolent sexism on women's perceived competence in the workplace and the ensuing impact on women's career advancement remains unchecked, underscoring the need for its investigation.

Gendered Occupations

Gendered occupations are professions historically shaped by a particular gender and commonly associated with the corresponding norms and stereotypes (Jacobs, 1989; Ridgeway, 2009; Rudman & Glick, 2008). Unsurprisingly, gendered occupations are a result of the overrepresentation of one gender within an occupation (Reskin & Padavic, 2002). For example, nursing has long been considered a feminine occupation because it requires traits like compassion, advocacy, and communication; in 2022, 86% of all nurses in the United States were women (Ridgeway, 2009; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). On the other hand, engineering has been historically viewed as a masculine occupation because it requires traits like self-efficacy, resilience, and perseverance; in 2022, 86.3% of all engineers were still men (Ridgeway, 2009; Zippia, 2023). While these roles are frequently categorized as people-oriented or task-oriented, the specific behaviors associated with them – such as caregiving in nursing or problem-solving in engineering – reinforce perceptions of gender congruence.

Across the workforce, occupations are largely segregated by gender (Blau, 2017). The noticeable absence of a particular gender within a field can contribute to the perception that certain roles align better with one gender due to role congruity (Gorman & Kmec, 2009). This assessment can reinforce gender stereotypes for people within gendered occupations, which can result in discriminatory practices (Acker, 1990). For instance, hiring managers who uphold gender stereotypes may unjustly discriminate against female candidates applying

for traditionally masculine-gendered occupations, while male candidates pursuing feminine-gendered occupations may also encounter bias. Consequently, these biases feed into a self-perpetuating cycle of gendered occupational segregation.

The ramifications of occupational gender segregation are clear. A study by Hideg and Ferris (2016) indicated that people with strong benevolent sexism beliefs are more inclined to hire women for “gender-appropriate” roles (i.e., feminine-gendered occupations, such as human resource management or customer service representation). Another 2016 study by King and Jones found that women working in male-dominated fields were more likely to receive negative evaluations generally. Women in masculine-gendered occupations are also more likely to be perceived as less competent than men in the same roles (Heilman et al., 2004). According to role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig et al., 2011), women who are successful in masculine-gendered occupations may be perceived as lacking warmth and other communal qualities (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Women are also typically paid less than men for the same work, which is one factor contributing to the gender pay gap across the United States (Blau & Kahn, 2017; Semali & Shakespeare, 2014; Spencer, 2016).

Gendered occupations are further segregated by organizational hierarchy, which limits women’s opportunities for advancement. While women are overrepresented in lower-paying, lower-level jobs (European Commission, 2015), research indicates that they are underrepresented in leadership across most

industries, including finance (Herring, 2009), law (McGinn & Milkman, 2012), medicine (Lyons et al., 2018), academia (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012), and technology (Crawford & Ozyurt, 2016). This imbalance is partly due to men's perceived alignment with the traits associated with leadership roles. Consequently, women face greater barriers to promotion (Eagly & Karau, 2002), and the adverse impact of stereotype incongruity is magnified within gendered occupations (Brescoll, 2016). Gender segregation within organizational hierarchies also contributes to the gender pay gap. Rudman and Phelan (2008) found that people who endorse gender stereotypes tend to primarily assess female leaders based on how well they demonstrate communal behaviors, such as warmth, leading to lower perceptions of competence compared to male leaders. This judgment directly influences decisions regarding lower pay for female leaders, as they were perceived as less valuable to the organization than their male counterparts. Ultimately, gendered occupations profoundly affect perceptions and evaluations of female leaders, which can expand or limit their career advancement opportunities.

Shifting Standards Model

The shifting standards model of judgments describes how evaluators adjust their evaluation standards based on the group they are assessing, especially in gender comparisons where stereotypes and personal beliefs may

lead to gender-biased evaluations (Biernat et al., 1994). This model offers another lens for understanding how established gender norms shape evaluations and uphold traditional gender stereotypes at the expense of objective assessments (Jost & Banaji, 1994). For example, when assessing candidates for leader roles, hiring managers who adhere to traditional gender role stereotypes may apply different evaluative standards depending on the gender of the candidate (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). Although competence is highly valued in leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2011), women face stereotypes that portray them as less competent than men (Eagly & Karau, 2002). As a result, a hiring manager may favor a male candidate due to a heightened sense of role congruity. However, when comparing two female candidates, the manager may appraise one more positively due to lowered competence expectations for both women.

The shifting standards model demonstrates the conditions under which benevolent sexists are inclined to evaluate a proficient woman as especially competent, particularly when she is compared with other women who also have lower perceived competence. This process can mask the biased reasoning behind seemingly fair decisions. Understanding this is critical because, without careful scrutiny, a single positive outcome may obscure ongoing gender biases in other key decisions. Cassidy and Krendl (2019) provide evidence of this phenomenon, showing that while benevolent sexists may evaluate a female leader’s competence positively relative to other women, they still hold lower expectations for her success compared to men. In workplaces, this may manifest

as benevolent sexist hiring managers shortlisting competent women for leadership roles, yet ultimately favoring men, as the belief that men are inherently better leaders persists (Biernat & Fuegen, 2001; Eagly & Karau, 2002). This subtle process exemplifies the insidious nature of benevolent sexism, allowing individuals to appear supportive of women while maintaining biases that restrict their career advancement.

In addition to competency assessments, biased evaluative norms affect compensation determinations. A study by Weeks et al. (2021) discovered an interesting trend in compensation decisions within the human resources field. In their study, experienced HR professionals were tasked with determining salaries for either White or Black employees. The study found that HR professionals with strong explicit racism beliefs perceived a pay raise for a Black employee as more meaningful, even if the raise was identical to that given to a White employee, exhibiting how racial biases can distort seemingly equitable decisions. This underscores how biases that distort competence assessments can also impact salary outcomes, further entrenching gendered disparities in the workplace. In the study, the HR professionals also had preconceived notions about what salary a Black employee should receive and considered lower pay as “good enough” for a Black individual, even when qualifications were equal or superior to those of their White counterparts. Considering the lack of research on the influence of benevolent sexism beliefs on compensation decisions, it would be beneficial to replicate this study with an emphasis on how gender comparisons attenuate this association. Expanding beyond competence evaluations, future studies could

investigate how gendered biases impact leadership prospects and the financial advancement of women in the workplace.

In conclusion, the shifting standards model offers another insightful framework for comprehending how gender biases, particularly benevolent sexism, subtly permeate workplace evaluations and decisions. While these biases may appear to benefit women through conditionally favorable competence assessments, they mask larger imbalances in critical areas like leadership promotions. The same mechanisms that distort competence assessments can also influence pay outcomes, demonstrating the far-reaching effects of these biases. Despite the insights offered by current research, understanding of how benevolent sexism and shifting evaluative standards impede women's career progression remains limited. The role of perceived warmth, an important factor in evaluations of assessing women for leader roles, has been scarcely explored. Women face the expectation to display warmth alongside competence, resulting in a 'double bind' where the demonstration of competence may result in lower warmth evaluations (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Further investigation into the relationship among these constructs, especially within gendered occupations, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how biases of competence, warmth, and salary judgments shape workplace decisions, highlighting a promising area for gender equity research.

Current Study

The current study aimed to examine how sexism beliefs influence judgments of women during hiring decisions. Specifically, we looked at the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and perceived competence, warmth, and suggested pay for female leader candidates. Additionally, this study examined how the gender dominance of an occupation and the gender of the ideal leader comparison modified these relationships. To account for other factors influencing leader evaluations, the study controlled for participants' implicit leadership beliefs, allowing us to isolate the unique impact of benevolent sexism beliefs beyond general leadership stereotypes. A model of all proposed relationships is presented in Figure 1.

Benevolent sexism is characterized by seemingly positive yet patronizing attitudes and behaviors that restrict women's opportunities, especially for female leaders (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Connely et al., 2011; Hideg & Ferris, 2016; Glick & Fiske, 1996). These beliefs manifest as protectiveness, chivalry, and paternalism, contributing to workplace perceptions of women as less competent overall, warm but not capable, or deserving of lower pay than men. Such perceptions create conflict between women's gender role stereotypes and the traits associated with leadership. The effect of benevolent sexism beliefs on evaluations of women is amplified in professions dominated by one gender (Jacobs, 1989; Ridgeway, 2009; Rudman & Glick, 2008). In some cases, however, female leaders may be seen as suitable for traditionally masculine

occupations, depending on the evaluative standards being referenced to influence perceptions of gender (Cassidy & Krendl, 2019). Although prior research has investigated the impact of benevolent sexism beliefs on women's perceived competence and warmth, its influence on proposed pay, particularly for leaders, remains largely unexplored. This study seeks to identify the subtle manifestations of discrimination in the hiring process to help inform potential solutions. In doing so, we propose the following hypotheses:

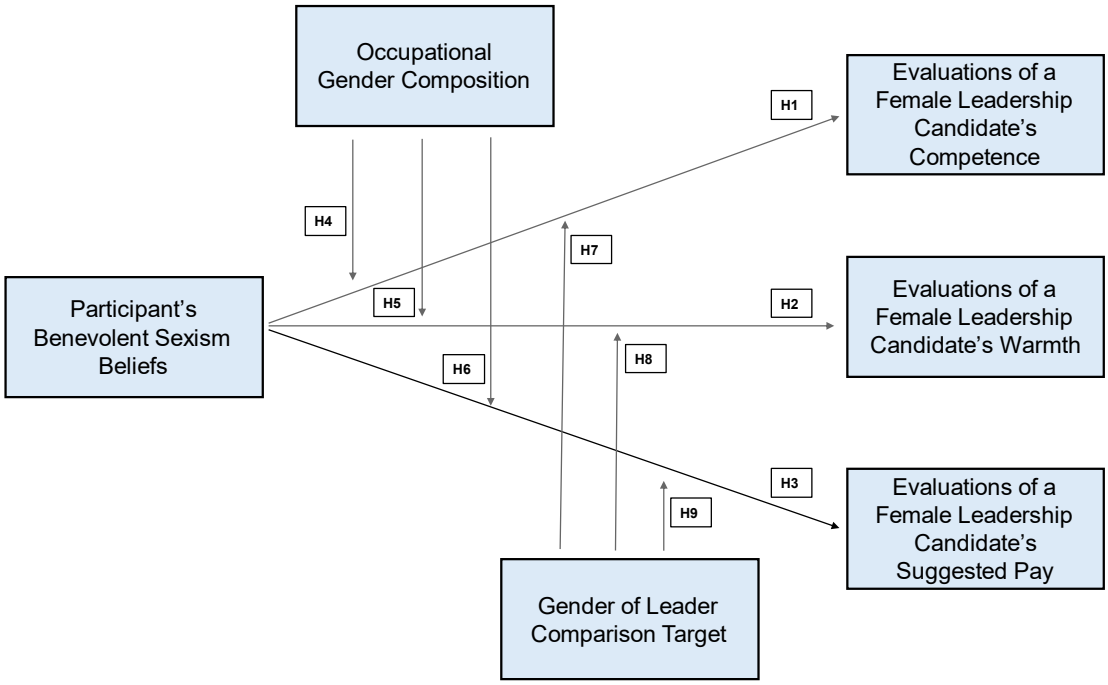

Figure 1. The Proposed Model.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a negative relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived competence.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a negative relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived warmth.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a negative relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and suggested pay for a female leadership candidate.

Hypothesis 4: Occupational gender composition will moderate the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived competence. Specifically, we predict that the negative association between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived competence will be stronger when the leadership role is within a masculine-gendered occupation than within a feminine-gendered occupation.

Hypothesis 5: Occupational gender composition will moderate the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived warmth. Specifically, we predict that the negative association between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived warmth will be stronger when the leadership role is within a masculine-gendered occupation than within a feminine-gendered occupation.

Hypothesis 6: Occupational gender composition will moderate the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and suggested pay for a female leadership candidate. Specifically, we predict that the negative association between

benevolent sexism beliefs and suggested pay for a female leadership candidate will be stronger when the leadership role is within a masculine-gendered occupation than within a feminine-gendered occupation.

Hypothesis 7: Gender of the ideal leader comparison will moderate the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived competence. Specifically, we predict that the negative association between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived competence will be stronger when the ideal leader comparison is male than when the ideal leader comparison is female.

Hypothesis 8: Gender of the ideal leader comparison will moderate the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived warmth. Specifically, we predict that the negative association between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leadership candidate's perceived warmth will be stronger when the ideal leader comparison is male than when the ideal leader comparison is female.

Hypothesis 9: Gender of the ideal leader comparison will moderate the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and suggested pay for a female leadership candidate. Specifically, we predict that the negative association between benevolent sexism beliefs and suggested pay for a female leadership

candidate will be stronger when the ideal leader comparison is male than when the ideal leader comparison is female.

CHAPTER TWO:

METHODS

Participants

The final sample size was comprised of 151 full-time employees, with a mean age of 32.6 years (SD = 8.13). The majority of participants were male (64.9%), while 35.1% were female. The predominant demographic identified as White (76.8%), followed by Asian (9.9%), Native American (9.3%), Hispanic (3.3%), and Black (0.7%) persons. On average, participants had been with their current organization for 5.89 years (SD = 4.86) and worked approximately 40 hours per week (M = 39.93, SD = 9.11). Regarding relationship status, 78.1% were married or in a relationship, and 19.9% were single. Most participants held a bachelor's degree (66.9%), while 28.5% had earned a master's degree. All participants reported having evaluation experience, and many had prior exposure to training on hiring (95.4%) and evaluation (95.4%) processes. Additionally, 96.7% of participants had worked under a female supervisor, with 51% indicating that this experience lasted for at least one year.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook) and Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). They completed the survey at their convenience using a link that directed them to the Qualtrics survey platform. Both MTurk and Qualtrics employed screening methods to verify that

participants met the study's criteria, particularly that they possessed experience in hiring or promoting employees in the workplace. The survey comprised 47 items and took approximately 15 – 20 minutes to complete. Participants were first provided with a consent form detailing their rights, including the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Upon providing consent, they completed a demographic and employment status questionnaire. Subsequently, participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions, as shown in Figure 2.

Condition	Leadership Occupation
Condition 1	Male Gendered
Condition 2	Female Gendered

Figure 2. Experimental Conditions for Assessing Female Leader Candidates by Gendered Leadership Occupation.

Participants in the first condition evaluated a female leader candidate for a masculine-gendered leadership occupation (Construction Project Manager), while those in the second condition evaluated a female leader candidate for a feminine-gendered occupation (Charge Nurse). All participants watched a three-minute job description video for the role the candidate was applying for. After viewing the video, participants reviewed the applicant materials, which included a cover letter and resume for the corresponding job.

Participants then evaluated the candidate on perceived competence, warmth, and suggested salary. They were presented with two manipulation check questions to confirm that they accurately observed the applicant's occupation and gender. Participants were requested to reflect on the typical attributes of a successful individual in the evaluated role (either Construction Project Manager or Charge Nurse) and specify whether they envisioned this individual as male or female. Subsequently, participants completed two surveys that measured their implicit leadership beliefs and benevolent sexism beliefs. Finally, they were debriefed about the study's objectives and provided with the primary investigator's contact information for any follow-up questions.

Stimulus Materials

See Appendix A for all stimulus materials used in study.

The job descriptions, cover letters, and resumes given to participants contained the experimental manipulations. The job description videos for the Construction Project Manager and Charge Nurse roles were designed to elicit ideas of masculine and feminine-gendered behaviors respectively. These roles were chosen as representatives of gendered positions because of their pronounced gender disparities in 2023, with Construction Project Managers comprising 95% male and 5% female, and Charge Nurses consisting of 12% male and 88% female (Zippia; Zippia 2023).

A bachelor's degree, at least one certification, technical capabilities, and leadership ability are prerequisites for both positions. They both include

supervising employees, delegating tasks, managing budgets, and solving problems. However, the gendered differences of each role are most noticeable in the exact duties of each profession. Compared to the Construction Project Manager role, the Charge Nurse role places a greater emphasis on communal behaviors including patient care, empathy, and communication. Furthermore, the pay ranges for the two roles overlap significantly despite a potential $10,000 difference in the average salary. Finally, both roles include a comparable number of hours worked per week.

Job Description Videos

The script and storyboard for the job description videos for the Construction Project Manager and Charge Nurse roles were crafted to emphasize the similarities between them. Both videos followed an identical structured format that featured a company overview, employment objective, list of duties and responsibilities, requisite skills and credentials for the job, details about the work setting, as well as hours worked per week. Significant distinctions were also highlighted. The Construction Project Manager video touched on the technical, logistical, and contractual aspects of the role, whereas the Charge Nurse video described the duties as being more clinical, patient-centered, and healthcare-focused. Other distinctions included job site locations, levels of personal interaction, and shift work obligations. Finally, to accentuate the visual effect of gendered occupations, the Construction Project Manager video showed

more male employees, while the Charge Nurse video displayed more female employees.

Cover Letters and Resumes

The cover letters and resumes were carefully developed to correspond with the job description videos for each position. While the materials were relevant to the specific gendered job roles, they were largely similar in all other respects to maintain consistency across conditions. Gender was made salient through these materials by including a female name in the applicant's contact information, and the candidate's name was repeated throughout the measures to further emphasize this.

In both conditions, the cover letters highlighted the applicant's keen interest in the role, their educational background, and specific examples of work experience and achievements, along with a commitment to organizational success. The key distinction lay in the content related to the respective occupation: the Charge Nurse cover letter emphasized nursing experience and used communal language, while the Construction Project Manager letter focused on relevant construction project management experience and employed more agentic language. These thematic and linguistic differences were also reflected in the resumes.

Measures

See Appendix B for all scales used in study.

Demographics

The demographic section included 13 questions covering age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, and education. Occupation-related questions addressed position status, hours worked per week, tenure at the current organization, experience supporting the hiring or promotion process, and experience working under a female supervisor.

Applicant Competence and Warmth

Displaying behaviors that show competence and warmth is important for fulfilling the technical and leadership requirements of both the Construction Project Manager and Charge Nurse roles. To assess these qualities, an adapted version of the Applicant Competence and Warmth Scale (Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) was used. This scale includes 12 questions evaluated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely), indicating both competence and warmth. Participants used this scale to evaluate leadership applicants for their respective roles. The reliability for the competence scale was $\alpha = .94$, and for the warmth scale it was $\alpha = .90$.

Suggested Salary

To get at the perceived value placed on the applicants, an adapted version of the Suggested Salary Scale (Weeks, Weeks, & Watkins, 2021) was employed. This scale consists of a single item asking participants to suggest a specific salary for the applicant using a sliding scale. Participants used this item to indicate the perceived value of female leader candidates applying to both the Construction Project Manager and Charge Nurse roles.

Perception of Target Comparison

Individuals often judge others based on the expectations of the group they are comparing them to. This can lead to favoring men over women in the workplace due to sexist stereotypes that imply men are more competent. The shifting standards effect suggests that women may benefit from diminished expectations in specific circumstances where they may be occasionally evaluated as highly competent relative to other women. This underscores the need to carefully examine evaluations of women in the workplace to detect biased logic, even amidst otherwise positive assessments. The Perception of Target Comparisons Scale (Cassidy & Krendl, 2019) was modified to determine whether participants had elevated or diminished expectations for the female leader candidate being evaluated. This scale comprises a singular item with two multiple-choice alternatives: "male" or "female." Participants indicated the gender they envisioned when picturing the ideal Construction Project Manager or Charge Nurse.

Manipulation Checks

To confirm participants were fully aware of the job they were evaluating as well the gender of the applicant, manipulation checks were included in the survey. These checks consisted of two questions: “What position is the applicant applying for?” and “Indicate the gender of the applicant you reviewed for this role.” These questions were critical for verifying whether participants observed the key variables in the study. A pilot test of the manipulation checks was conducted to ensure their effectiveness in capturing participants' attention and comprehension.

Implicit Leadership Beliefs Scale

Implicit leadership beliefs denote the unconscious assumptions and preconceptions people possess regarding the qualities that make an effective leader. These ideas can affect assessments of leadership applicants by shaping judgments about their appropriateness for leader roles. The Implicit Leadership Beliefs (ILB) measure (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004) was utilized to account for participants' intrinsic assumptions regarding leadership. This measure comprises 21 questions evaluated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This study aimed to show that benevolent sexism beliefs influenced participant judgments of female leader candidates, independent of the influence of implicit leadership stereotypes. The ILB scale was used to measure this control predictor. The reliability of this scale was α = .866.

Benevolent Sexism in the Workplace (BSW) Scale

Benevolent sexism refers to behaviors that appear to be chivalrous and supportive of women but ultimately undermine their work and career advancement opportunities (Agars, 2020). The Benevolent Sexism in the Workplace (BSW) measure (Warren et al., 2013) was employed to evaluate participants' benevolent sexism beliefs. This measure consists of 19 items evaluated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The reliability of this scale was α = .95.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESULTS

Data Screening

Participants were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and snowball sampling, and they completed the survey via Qualtrics. A total of 578 participants started the survey. Approximately 521 participants were sourced from MTurk while the remaining participants were recruited from social media sites, such as LinkedIn. After data collection was finalized, 262 cases were removed for failing to meet the study criteria. Participants were screened for their prior involvement in hiring, promotion, or employee performance assessments to ensure the sample encompassed individuals with applicable workplace evaluation experience. As a result, 27 participants were excluded for being unemployed or lacking evaluation experience. Moreover, 91 participants were removed for failing manipulation checks, 51 due to insufficient CAPTCHA scores, 10 for incomplete responses, and 2 for submitting duplicate entries. There were also 80 participants that were excluded from the final dataset for failing to meet the 5-minute minimum time requirement to complete the study. The 5-minute minimum time requirement was established to ensure that participants spent a reasonable amount of time processing the survey content and providing thoughtful responses, as the survey was estimated to take approximately 15 – 20 minutes in total. The exclusions reduced the sample size to 316 participants. Half of the participants had been previously assigned to conditions featuring male

candidates. However, the present study focused exclusively on female candidates. Therefore, participants who assessed male candidates were excluded and the final sample size was reduced to 151 participants.

Skewness and kurtosis were calculated for the key variables in the study to check for violations of normality. The benevolent sexism beliefs scale exhibited a negative skew (Z = -10.66) and was leptokurtic (Z = 15.28). The implicit leadership beliefs scale was similarly negatively skewed (Z = -7.03) and leptokurtic (Z = 12.02). Both scales displayed some degree of non-normality. However, perceived competence of the female leader candidate showed minimal skew (Z = -0.44) and kurtosis (Z = -0.65), as did perceived warmth (Z = -1.68 and Z = -0.69, respectively) and suggested salary (Z = -1.05 and Z = -1.52, respectively). No transformations were applied to preserve interpretability. Two univariate outliers (Z = -4.58 and Z = -4.17) were excluded from the benevolent sexism beliefs scale due to their lack of continuity with surrounding data. All data points for demographic variables were retained as they reflect real-world distributions. Following the removal of univariate outliers, the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed using plots of standardized residuals against standardized predicted values. No major violations were noted**,** indicating that the assumptions were met. Two multivariate outliers were identified through Mahalanobis Distance (df = 5, χ^2 = 20.52, p < .001) and subsequently filtered out of the dataset. Following the screening for both univariate and multivariate outliers, the sample size was n = 146. Multicollinearity was evaluated through the Variance Inflation Factor (*VIF*) and Tolerance values.

All *VIF* values were below 10 and tolerance values were above 0.1, suggesting the absence of significant multicollinearity among the predictors.

Table 1. Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Benevolent Sexism Beliefs	5.55	.60					
2. Occupational Gender Composition	.57	.50	-.045				
3. Gender of Leader Comparison	.87	.34	.123	.321**			
4. Perceived Competence	4.00	.39	.241**	.031	-.058		
5. Perceived Warmth	3.93	.37	.337**	.034	-.049	.614**	
6. Suggested Salary	$104,328.67	$5,610.66	-.084	-.049	.002	-.060	-.118

*$p < .05$, $N = 146$

Primary Analysis

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for all study variables are presented in Table 1. A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS to test the study's hypotheses. Separate analyses were performed to examine the effects of benevolent sexism beliefs, implicit leadership beliefs, occupational gender composition, and gender

of the leader comparison on each of the three outcomes: perceived competence, perceived warmth, and suggested salary. The interaction terms were calculated by multiplying the mean-centered benevolent sexism beliefs variable with each of the moderators (i.e., occupational gender composition and gender of the leader comparison). Mean-centered versions of both benevolent sexism beliefs and implicit leadership beliefs were used in all analyses.

Table 2. Regression Results for Perceived Competence of a Female Leader Candidate

Independent Variables	*B*	*SE β*	*β*
Step 1			
Implicit Leadership Beliefs	-.114	-.058	-.162
Step 2			
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs	-.150	-.068	-.229*
Step 3			
Occupational Gender Composition	-.066	-.068	-.084
Gender of Leader Comparison	.135	-.100	.117
Step 4			
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs x Occupational Gender Composition	.331	-.108	.391*
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs x Gender of Leader Comparison	-.224	-.136	-.305

Note: R^2 = .026 for Step 1 (p = .051); Δ R^2 = .032 for Step 2 (p < .05). Δ R^2 = .014 for Step 3 (p = .348). Δ R^2 = .065 for Step 4 (p < .05). N = 146
*p < .05

Perceived Competence

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs, occupational gender composition, and the gender of the leader comparison on the perceived competence of a female leader candidate (see Table 2). The control variable, implicit leadership beliefs (β = -.162, p = .051), was entered first and did not significantly predict perceived competence, Multiple R = .162, $F(1, 144) = 3.865$, p = .051.

In the second step, the main predictor, benevolent sexism beliefs, was added to the model to assess direct effects on perceived competence. Benevolent sexism beliefs significantly explained variance over and above implicit leadership beliefs, R^2 change = .032, $F(1, 143) = 4.901$, p = .028. In support of Hypothesis 1, strong benevolent sexism beliefs (β = -.229, $p < .05$) significantly predicted lower perceived competence for a female leader candidate and explained an additional 3.2% of the variance. This result suggests that individuals with stronger benevolent sexism beliefs are more likely to evaluate women applying to leader roles as less competent.

In the third step, the moderators – occupational gender composition and gender of the leader comparison – were added to determine their direct effects on perceived competence. However, these moderators did not significantly

improve the prediction of perceived competence in this model, R^2 change = .014, $F(2, 141) = 1.064$, $p = .348$.

In the fourth step, the interaction terms between benevolent sexism beliefs and occupational gender composition, as well as between benevolent sexism beliefs and gender of the leader comparison, were added, significantly improving the overall model, R^2 change = .065, $F(2, 139) = 5.197$, $p = .007$, and explaining an additional 6.5% of the variance. Consistent with Hypothesis 4, occupational gender composition ($\beta = .391$, $p < .05$) significantly moderated the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and perceived competence, such that the relationship was stronger when the female leader candidate was considered for a role in a masculine-gendered occupation (see Table 2). This suggests that individuals with stronger benevolent sexism beliefs are more likely to view women as even less competent when they are applying to leader roles within a masculine-gendered occupation. However, no support was found for Hypothesis 7, as gender of the ideal leader comparison ($\beta = -.305$, $p = .102$) was not a significant moderator between benevolent sexism beliefs and perceived competence.

Table 3. Regression Results for Perceived Warmth of a Female Leader Candidate

Independent Variables	*B*	*SE β*	*β*
Step 1			
Implicit Leadership Beliefs	-.118	-.054	-.281*
Step 2			
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs	-.165	-.062	-.265*
Step 3			
Occupational Gender Composition	-.078	-.062	-.105
Gender of Leader Comparison	.140	-.091	.128
Step 4			
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs x Occupational Gender Composition	.306	-.098	.381*
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs x Gender of Leader Comparison	-.252	-.124	-.361*

Note: R^2 = .079 for Step 1 (p < .05); Δ R^2 = .043 for Step 2 (p < .05). Δ R^2 = .018 for Step 3 (p = .231). Δ R^2 = .066 for Step 4 (p < .05). N = 146
*p < .05

Perceived Warmth

A similar hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to see the relationship benevolent sexism beliefs, occupational gender composition, and gender of the leader comparison on the perceived warmth of a female leader candidate (see Table 3). The control variable, implicit leadership beliefs, was entered first and was identified as a significant predictor, Multiple R = .281, F(1, 144) = 12.342, p < .001. Implicit leadership beliefs (β = -.281, p < .05) explained 7.9% of the variance in perceived warmth (R^2 = .079), indicating that higher

implicit leadership belief scores were associated with lower ratings of perceived warmth.

In the second step, benevolent sexism beliefs were added, further improving the model. Benevolent sexism beliefs demonstrated a unique contribution to the prediction of perceived warmth, R^2 change = .043, $F(1, 143) = 7.067$, $p = .009$. In support of Hypothesis 2, strong benevolent sexism beliefs ($\beta = -.265$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted lower perceived warmth for a female leader candidate, explaining an additional 4.3% of the variance beyond implicit leadership beliefs. This result suggests that individuals with stronger benevolent sexism beliefs are also more likely to evaluate women applying to leader roles as less warm, in addition to evaluating them as less competent.

In the third step, occupational gender composition and gender of the leader comparison were added to assess their direct effects on perceived warmth. However, these moderators did not significantly improve the prediction of perceived warmth, R^2 change = .018, $F(2, 141) = 1.483$, $p = .231$.

In the fourth step, the interaction terms between benevolent sexism beliefs and occupational gender composition, as well as between benevolent sexism beliefs and gender of the leader comparison, were included. The addition of these interaction terms significantly improved the model, R^2 change = .066, $F(2, 139) = 5.809$, $p = .004$, explaining an additional 6.6% of the variance. Consistent with Hypothesis 5 occupational gender composition ($\beta = .381$, $p < .05$)

significantly moderated the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and perceived warmth, with a stronger effect observed when the female leader candidate was considered for a role in a masculine-gendered occupation (see Figure 4). This suggests that individuals with stronger benevolent sexism beliefs are more likely to view women as even less warm when they are applying to leader roles within a masculine-gendered occupation. While Hypothesis 8 was not supported, the gender of the ideal leader comparison (β = -.361, p < .05) significantly moderated the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and perceived warmth. However, the effect was in the opposite direction of the prediction, with strong benevolent sexism beliefs associated with higher warmth ratings for the female candidate when compared to a male candidate (see Table 3). This indicates that individuals with stronger benevolent sexism beliefs are more likely to evaluate women applying to leader roles as warmer when they are being compared next to a male candidate.

Table 4. Regression Results for Suggested Salary of a Female Leader Candidate

Independent Variables	*B*	*SE β*	*β*
Step 1			
Implicit Leadership Beliefs	-914.209	-845.748	-.090
Step 2			
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs	2129.161	-984.521	.226*
Step 3			
Occupational Gender Composition	421.619	-997.552	.037
Gender of Leader Comparison	-385.957	-1464.876	-.023
Step 4			
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs x Occupational Gender Composition	-1685.611	-1633.054	-.138
Benevolent Sexism Beliefs x Gender of Leader Comparison	2108.573	-2061.012	.199

Note: R^2 = .008 for Step 1 (p = .282); Δ R^2 = .031 for Step 2 (p < .032). Δ R^2 = .001 for Step 3 (p = .907). Δ R^2 = .012 for Step 4 (p = .421). N = 146
*p < .05

Suggested Salary

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs, occupational gender composition, and gender of the leader comparison on suggested salary for a female leader candidate (see Table 4). The control variable, implicit leadership beliefs (β = -.090, p = .282), was entered first and did not significantly predict suggested salary, Multiple R = .090, $F(1, 144) = 1.168$, p = .282.

In the second step, the main predictor, benevolent sexism beliefs were added to assess direct effects on suggested salary. This significantly improved the model, R^2 change = .031, $F(1, 143) = 4.677$, $p = .032$, accounting for an additional 3.1% of the variance. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, stronger benevolent sexism beliefs ($\beta = .226$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted higher suggested salary for a female leader candidate. This surprising result suggests that individuals with stronger benevolent sexism beliefs are more likely to recommend a higher salary for women applying to leader roles.

In the third step, occupational gender composition and gender of the leader comparison were added to determine their direct effects on suggested salary. Adding these moderators did not significantly improve the prediction of suggested salary, R^2 change = .001, $F(2, 141) = .098$, $p = .907$.

Finally, in the fourth step, the interaction terms between benevolent sexism beliefs and occupational gender composition, as well as between benevolent sexism beliefs and gender of the leader comparison, were included. These terms did not significantly improve the model, R^2 change = .012, $F(2, 139) = .870$, $p = .421$. No support was found for Hypothesis 6. Occupational gender composition ($\beta = -.138$, $p = .304$) was not a significant moderator of the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and suggested salary. Similarly, Hypothesis 9 was not supported, as gender of the leader comparison ($\beta = .199$, $p = .308$) was not a significant moderator.

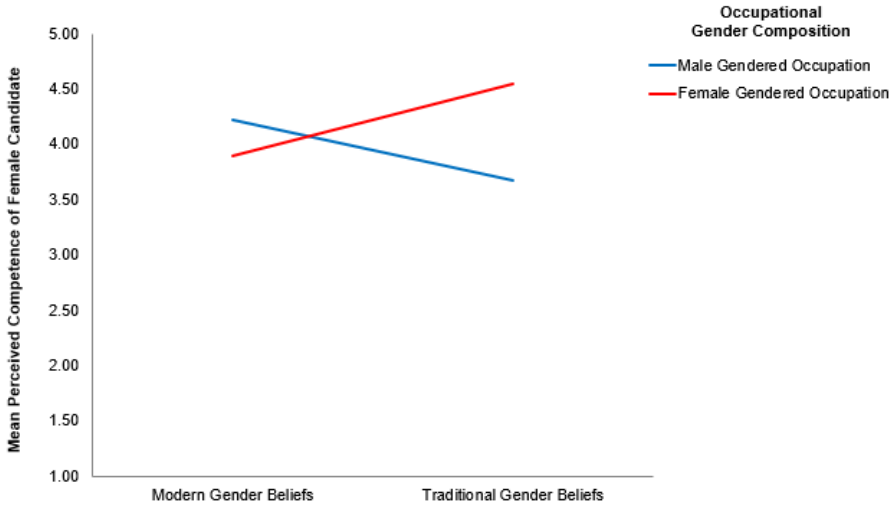

Figure 3. Occupational Gender Composition as a Moderator between Individual Gender Beliefs and Perceived Competence of a Female Candidate.

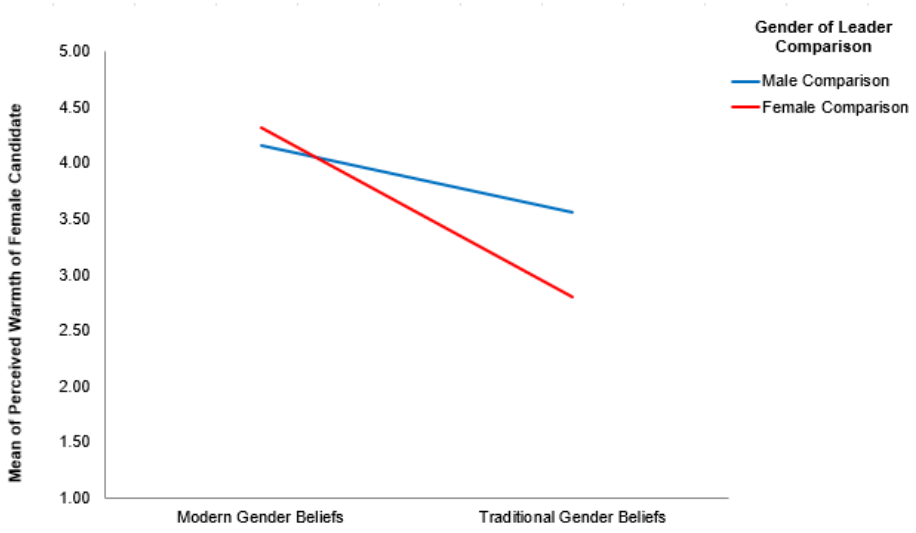

Figure 4. Occupational Gender Composition as a Moderator between Individual Gender Beliefs and Perceived Warmth of a Female Candidate.

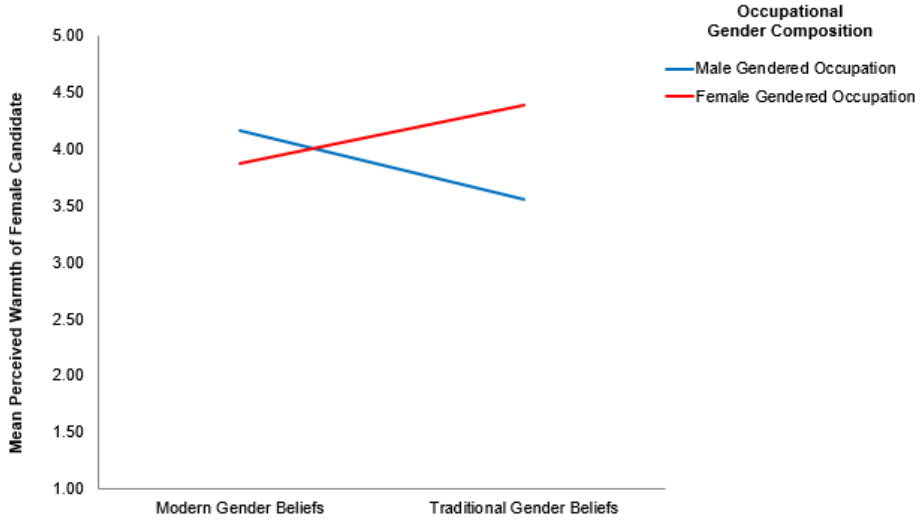

Figure 5. Gender of Ideal Leader Comparison as a Moderator between Individual Gender Beliefs and Perceived Warmth of a Female Candidate.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of benevolent sexism beliefs on the evaluations of female leadership candidates, specifically in hiring decisions. Benevolent sexism, while seemingly positive, reinforces traditional gender roles by portraying women as caring but less competent, a bias that is especially pronounced in leadership evaluations (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Cheryan & Markus, 2020). The normative nature of benevolent sexism allows it to go unchecked, making it pervasive in workplace settings. Prior research shows that these beliefs limit women's career opportunities by negatively affecting assessments of their leadership potential (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Hekman et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2021). This study also explored the moderating roles of occupational gender composition – where women are judged more harshly in male-dominated fields (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ridgeway, 2009). Gender of the comparison candidate served as another key moderator, which may help explain how benevolent sexists can appear progressive while negatively impacting evaluations of women (Biernat et al., 1994; Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997; Cassidy & Krendl, 2019). In line with prior research, the present study confirms that strong benevolent sexism beliefs predict negative evaluations of female leader candidates, and that some of these relationships are moderated by occupational gender composition and the gender of the leader comparison.

General Discussion

Hypothesis 1, which predicted a negative relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leader candidate's competence, was supported. This finding aligns with previous research, indicating that individuals with strong benevolent sexism beliefs typically judge female candidates based on traditional gender roles instead of their leadership ability (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Hideg & Ferris, 2016). Women seeking leadership positions – roles which generally require assertiveness, decision-making, and technical proficiency – are often perceived as violating the communal traits attributed to their gender. This may result in diminished competence evaluations (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Protective paternalism, an essential characteristic of benevolent sexism, reinforces the notion that women are too physically or emotionally fragile for challenging roles (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Eagly & Carli, 2007). This protective stance justifies the exclusion of women from leadership roles, leading to lower competence evaluations. Moreover, complementary gender differentiation maintains the belief that men are more apt for leadership or technical positions, while women are viewed as better suited for supportive, communal positions (Hekman et al., 2010).

Similarly, Hypothesis 2, which posited that benevolent sexism beliefs would adversely affect evaluations of a female leader candidate's warmth, was supported. This result aligns with previous research indicating that women in leadership experience a tradeoff between competence and warmth, particularly when expressing traits such as assertiveness and decision-making typically

associated with masculine-gendered occupations (Ramos et al., 2018). These behaviors that are necessary for demonstrating leadership capability may conflict with the communal traits expected of women, such as empathy and nurturing, leading to lower warmth ratings. When women violate traditional gender norms by stepping into leadership roles, they may be perceived as less warm, reinforcing the idea of gender role incongruity. These findings confirm prior research on benevolent sexism beliefs but also expand upon it by highlighting how warmth perceptions may not always benefit women. Together, they emphasize that breaking gender norms can lead to penalties in both competence and warmth evaluations, further reinforcing gender role incongruity in leadership contexts (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that individuals with benevolent sexism beliefs would recommend lower salaries for female leader candidates, however, this was not the case. This hypothesis was unsupported. While the relationship was significant, the effect was in the opposite direction: those with strong benevolent sexism beliefs suggested higher salaries for female leader candidates. This finding contradicts prior research, which has shown that traditional gender beliefs are typically associated with a devaluation of women's contributions and justifies lower compensation based on perceptions of lesser value (Glick & Raberg, 2018; Semali & Shakespeare, 2014; Spencer, 2016). However, this unexpected result may reflect the complex and ambivalent nature of benevolent sexism in professional settings, where leadership roles – associated with agentic behaviors such as decision-making and problem-solving – are perceived as inherently more

valuable. Instead of reducing women's pay, benevolent sexists may "reward" women for taking on leadership roles. Though seemingly supportive at first glance, this reaction is still rooted in traditional gender biases that reinforce stereotypes and quietly hinder women's career growth (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The findings challenge existing ideas about how benevolent sexism affects pay decisions, suggesting that salary decisions may be influenced more by perceived role value than by a direct devaluation of women's work.

Hypothesis 4, which predicted that occupational gender composition would moderate the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and evaluations of a female leader candidate's perceived competence, was supported. The negative relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and competence evaluations was stronger when the leadership role was within a male-dominated occupation, confirming the expectation that women in traditionally masculine fields are judged more harshly (Heilman et al., 2004; Hideg & Ferris, 2016). This aligns with role congruity theory, which explains that individuals are judged based on how well they conform to the gendered expectations for a given position (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The lack of women in male-dominated occupations strengthens the assumption that men are a better fit for these roles, leading to biased evaluations of prospective female leaders (Gorman & Kmec, 2009; Acker, 1990).

Hypothesis 5, which predicted that occupational gender composition would influence the relationship between benevolent sexism and warmth evaluations, was supported. The negative effect of benevolent sexism on warmth ratings was more pronounced when the female leader candidate's role was in a male-

dominated occupation. This finding supports role congruity theory and demonstrates how women in male-dominated professions face disadvantages in both competence and warmth evaluations, which makes the pursuit of leadership roles more challenging. This result illustrates how workplace gender norms exacerbate the impact of benevolent sexism and hurts women's career advancement opportunities in these environments (Blau & Kahn, 2017; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Hypothesis 6 predicted that occupational gender composition would affect the relationship between benevolent sexism beliefs and suggested salary for a female leader candidate. This was not supported. It was expected that the negative impact of benevolent sexism on salary would be stronger in the male-dominated occupation, where traditional gender roles are more salient. Previous research shows that women in male-dominated occupations are often seen as less competent and are paid less than men (Heilman et al., 2004; Blau & Kahn, 2017). However, the data did not show this moderating effect. One possible explanation is that benevolent sexism influences pay decisions in more nuanced ways, possibly rewarding traditionally male roles equally, regardless of the candidate's gender. This challenges the assumption that gender norms in male-dominated occupations always increase pay disparities. It suggests that factors like industry pay standards, or the specifics of leadership roles may have a stronger effect on salary. These findings challenge prior literature that focused on occupational gender segregation as the main driver of gender pay disparities (Blau, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman et al., 2004). They also highlight the

need for further research into how job characteristics and other factors shape the relationship between sexism and salary decisions (Hideg & Ferris, 2016; Ridgeway, 2009).

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the gender of the leader comparison would influence how benevolent sexism affects evaluations of a female leader candidate's competence. However, this was not supported. It was expected that female candidates would be judged more harshly when compared to male leaders. This expectation, based on the shifting standards model, assumed that men, whose gender stereotypes align more closely with that of leaders, would lead evaluators to apply stricter standards of competence to women (Biernat et al., 1994; Eagly & Karau, 2002). No moderating effect was found, which suggests that direct gender comparisons didn't significantly affect how potential female leaders were rated on competence. One possible explanation for this finding lies in role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This theory posits that people are judged by how well their behaviors align with gendered expectations for roles. Instead of directly comparing the female to a male leader candidate, perhaps evaluators might have focused on how well she fit the high-status, male-dominated leadership role.

Hypothesis 8 predicted that the gender of the leader comparison would influence how benevolent sexism affects evaluations of a potential female leader's warmth, but this was not supported. While the moderator was significant, the effect was opposite to what was anticipated. It was expected that individuals with strong benevolent sexism beliefs would evaluate the female leader

candidate as less warm when compared to a male candidate. This expectation was based on the assumption that men, whose gender role stereotypes align with that of a leader, would increase the likelihood of the warmth-competence tradeoff typically observed in female leaders occupying male-dominated roles (Biernat et al., 1994; Eagly & Karau, 2002). This tradeoff posits that when women show competence in leadership, they are seen as less warm, especially compared to men. However, instead of being seen as less warm, female candidates were rated as warmer than their male counterparts. Although unexpected, this finding is logical within the context of the shifting standards model, which explains how evaluators adjust their judgments based on stereotypes of the comparison group (Biernat et al., 1994). Since women are typically seen as warmer than men, comparing a female leader candidate to a male, who is stereotypically less warm, may lead to the female candidate being rated much warmer by contrast (Cassidy & Krendl, 2019). While this may seem to benefit women, it may still reinforce traditional gender roles by stressing warmth as a defining trait for women, potentially overshadowing their competence (Glick & Fiske, 1996). These findings build on previous research by demonstrating how gender-based standards can influence warmth perceptions in unexpected ways, even when the comparison is to an idealized male leader candidate (Biernat & Fuegen, 2001; Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). Overall, this suggests that gender-based evaluative standards influence assessments of competence and warmth differently, complicating how gender comparisons shape leader evaluations (Cassidy & Krendl, 2019; Biernat et al., 1994).

Hypothesis 9 posited that the gender of the leader comparison would impact how benevolent sexism affects the suggested pay for prospective female leaders. However, this prediction was not supported. It was anticipated that benevolent sexism would have a stronger negative impact on suggested pay when the gender comparison was male, given the common perception that male leaders are more deserving of higher pay (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This expectation was rooted in the shifting standards model, which proposes that judgments are influenced by the group being compared, leading to lower pay and competence expectations for women compared to men (Biernat et al., 1994). The absence of a moderating effect challenges this idea in terms of salary recommendations. It suggests that direct gender comparisons may not be the most critical factor in compensation decisions as previously assumed. This discovery contradicts previous research, which indicated that shifting standards could lead to biased compensation assessments (Weeks et al., 2021). One potential explanation for this disparity is that additional factors, such as gendered job characteristics, may play a bigger role in compensation decisions than direct gender comparisons (Jost & Banaji, 1994).

Although not all hypotheses were supported, the findings in this study are generally consistent with previous research. The overall pattern demonstrates that benevolent sexism continues to undermine evaluations of female leaders. This subtle form of sexism quietly constrains women's advancement opportunities. While some anticipated effects, such as the influence of benevolent sexism on suggested salary, were unsupported, this study highlights

the subtle and pervasive nature of benevolent sexism and its effects on workplace decisions. These findings contribute to prior research and underscore the necessity of addressing the influence of benevolent sexism on potential female leaders in the workplace. However, given the complexity of these results, further investigation is required to fully understand these dynamics.

Theoretical Implications

Future research should look deeper into how benevolent sexism shapes leadership evaluations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its impact on prospective female leaders. This study found that benevolent sexism harms evaluations of competence and warmth, especially in male-dominated settings. This is consistent with earlier work on gender bias in leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Heilman, 2004). However, unexpected findings, such as the positive relationship between benevolent sexism and suggested salary, suggest that additional factors may influence salary decisions. Economic uncertainty may lead evaluators to recommend higher salaries as a means to attract or retain talent, regardless of gender. This may help explain why individuals with benevolent sexism beliefs, despite their traditional biases, advocated for greater compensation for female candidates seeking leader roles in the masculine-gendered occupation. Future research could explore how economic factors influence compensation decisions and whether these pressures exacerbate or mitigate gender biases in pay. Furthermore, integrating elements

such as perceived role value into these analyses may provide deeper insight into how sexism affects salary recommendations.

This study indicates that occupational gender composition plays a significant role in how prospective female leaders are evaluated. Women employed in masculine-genderd occupations are often perceived as less competent and warm, highlighting the need to contextualize job environments when examining gender bias (Heilman, 2004). Future research could delve into how workplace culture and other organizational factors might worsen or alleviate these biases, providing a clearer picture of the barriers women face in career advancement.

The lack of support for hypotheses related to gender comparisons suggests that direct comparisons between men and women might not always be a significant factor in evaluations of female leader candidates. One reason for these results, however, could be the way these comparisons were measured. In this study, participants were asked to imagine comparing the female leader candidate's application to an ideal male or female candidate. This might not have fully captured the complexity of the comparison process. Future studies could benefit from utilizing more detailed comparison methodologies. For example, other studies have used side-by-side application comparisons or more controlled experimental designs that enable participants to evaluate and directly compare male and female candidates simultaneously (Weeks, Weeks, & Watkins, 2021). By refining the operationalization of gender comparisons, future research may

reveal more nuanced effects of benevolent sexism on leadership evaluations that simpler measures may overlook.

It is important to note that the mean scores for benevolent sexism beliefs and perceived competence were relatively high. A high mean for benevolent sexism beliefs suggests that a majority of the study sample held strong benevolent sexism beliefs, which may have exaggerated the observed negative influence of benevolent sexism beliefs on evaluations of female leaders. This may indicate that the effects of benevolent sexism on evaluations of women applying to leader roles is exacerbated in a sample with higher sexism beliefs. High mean scores for the Perceived Competence scale may reflect the study sample's beliefs about leadership in general. Future investigation could explore how competence ratings change when more varied candidate profiles are being evaluated. To enhance the generalizability of these findings, subsequent research should examine whether results vary when the sample is comprised of different demographics.

Practical Implications

The present study reinforces prior research by demonstrating that benevolent sexism negatively impacts evaluations of potential female leaders' competence and warmth (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Glick & Fiske, 1996) and emphasizes how workplace context – such as the gender composition of the job

– shapes these biases (Heilman, 2004). Considering this, the finding that benevolent sexists suggested higher salaries for female leader candidates may seem contradictory. However, it reflects the subtle and insidious nature of benevolent sexism, which operates under the radar and manifests in ways that may appear supportive but ultimately reinforce gendered norms (Glick & Fiske, 1996). While offering higher salaries to female leaders may seem progressive, it can conceal underlying biases rather that negatively impact gender equity. For example, higher pay may reflect the desire to preserve the perceived value of roles traditionally viewed as more suitable for men. Additionally, even if hiring managers offer higher salaries to women, they may still reinforce biases in other areas, such as competence evaluations. This dynamic can contribute to women being shortlisted for leadership roles but ultimately passed over for men. Therefore, decision-makers, such as hiring managers, should assess their reasoning behind judgements holistically rather than focusing on isolated actions. To promote true gender equity in leadership, organizations must proactively address how benevolent sexism influences hiring, promotion, and compensation decisions. The findings from this study highlight a critical need for targeted interventions that counteract gender biases.

One way organizations can raise awareness of gender bias and encourage behavior change is through implementing targeted training programs that expose how sexism shapes evaluations of potential female leaders (Fritz & Knippenberg, 2019). A meta-analysis by Forscher et al. (2019), however, found

that unconscious bias training on its own does not effectively change biased behaviors. Diversity, equity, and inclusion experts have combined consulting examples and organizational science to determine how to improve the effectiveness of bias training initiatives (Mattingly, Grice, & Goldstein, 2022). First, it is important that top management not only supports bias training initiatives but also demonstrates that backing through participating in the training themselves, openly communicating their support, as well as modeling the desired behaviors. Second, bias training needs to be tailored to a specific group and their learning needs. If targeted employees lack basic awareness of discriminatory and inclusive attitudes and behaviors, this foundational knowledge must be addressed first. It is essential to meet people where they are. Additionally, employees benefit from more opportunities to practice learned attitudes and skills. Instead of a single training session, learning can be dispersed over time through brief moments, such as “microlearning”, or via longer sessions. In order to help employees with different learning preferences retain information, training can also be administered through different delivery methods (e.g., role playing, live discussions, interactive technology, etc.). To validate the effectiveness of any training, it is best to conduct pre- and post- assessments. Finally, to hold employees accountable, organizations can tie training outcomes to performance.

Mattingly, Grice, & Goldstein (2022) have also discussed the positive effects of linking diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes to leader compensation. They noted that, in 2022, National Grid directly tied its diversity,

equity, and inclusion metrics to the compensation of its top three tiers of leadership. This initiative successfully strengthened National Grid's business case for promoting an inclusive workplace and their efforts were recognized internationally for their efficacy. In 2022, they ranked 3rd for gender equality in Equileap's assessment of nearly 4,000 companies. In 2023, they were listed in The Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality which is a list that highlights organizations addressing the pay gap, supporting flexible work, and normalizing caring responsibilities. Additionally, they were included in the 2023 Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index, which tracks the performance of public companies committed to transparency in gender-data reporting.

Finally, organizations should foster environments that actively reduce gender biases and address the specific challenges posed by benevolent sexism in the workplace, especially in male-dominated fields. A strong Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) – which prioritizes workers' well-being and fosters supportive practices – can serve as the foundation for ushering in gender bias interventions (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Establishing a PSC can encourage employees to feel psychologically safe to express concerns, ask questions, and challenge biases without fear of negative consequences. Normalizing these behaviors within workplace culture can promote gender-neutral assessments based on performance rather than stereotypes. Moreover, cultivating an environment that supports questioning the status quo can encourage diverse

leadership styles by shifting the association between leadership traits and traditionally male ones.

Limitations

The limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, due to the relatively small sample size, the results may not be as widely applicable. A larger sample size might have provided a broader range of participant viewpoints, which might have generated higher-quality results. It would be advantageous for future studies to collect a larger sample to ensure more representative data.

Additionally, the sample size was greatly diminished due to preliminary reductions intended to enhance data quality. Nearly half of the cases initially collected were removed due to factors such as failing attention checks, inadequate CAPTCHA scores, extremely rapid survey completion, or the submission of incomplete or duplicate responses. Although these exclusions were necessary to assure the reliability of the data, they were significant. This decrease may indicate a general constraint of using MTurk as a recruitment platform, as some argue that MTurk workers often expedite task completion to optimize hourly earnings (Aguinis, Villamor & Ramani; 2021). This may have resulted in an uptick in negligent responses, perhaps causing measurement complications and constraining the generalizability of the results. Future research could utilize alternative recruiting platforms that emphasize quality over speed or incorporate additional screening techniques such as improved attention checks

or participant verification measures to minimize careless responding. Furthermore, providing task-related incentives instead of pay-per-task models may promote more thoughtful and precise responses.

APPENDIX A

STIMULUS MATERIALS

JOB DESCRIPTION VIDEO:

MASCULINE-GENDERED LEADERSHIP OCCUPATION CONDITION

Imagine that you are a hiring manager at your company. Your task is to assess candidates for a leadership position.

Please watch the following brief job description video to get a better understanding of the company you are hiring for and the type of candidate you are looking to hire.

Would you like to watch the job description video *with* or *without* subtitles?

Please pay attention, as you will be asked specific questions about the job later.

Feel free to adjust the volume as needed or to expand the video to Fullscreen.

(Video *without* subtitles.)

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/zn3dkz94or1v1eno9mwdj/CPM-JD-Video-Final-1-no-subtitles.mp4?rlkey=hfw4qexpa6on3bnhucrccuf19&st=f1pmiarb&dl=0

(Video *with* subtitles.)

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/fq30ya5n2gt3x7h04krsm/CPM-JD-Video-Final-1-WITH-subtitles.mp4?rlkey=samu18ge30whb2nj3mupgb5q3&st=znx7fets&dl=0

Citation: Created by Daniella Lockhart

COVER LETTER & RESUME:

MASCULINE-GENDERED LEADERSHIP OCCUPATION CONDITION

You should now have a clearer understanding of the qualifications required for eligible applicants for the **Construction Project Manager** position. As the hiring manager, please carefully review the provided cover letter and resume to assess the candidate's suitability.

Pay close attention to key details, like the applicant's name and the job they are applying for.

Following your review, you will be asked to evaluate how well the candidate meets the requirements for the role.

Note that it may be easier to view these materials on a desktop.

Emily Wilson

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the open Construction Project Manager position at City Heights Construction. With my Bachelor of Science in Construction Management and a proven track record in project management, I am eager to bring my expertise to your esteemed team and contribute to the success of your projects.

During my time as a Junior Project Manager at GSF Construction Services Inc., I completed several high-profile projects, including the renovation of Willowbrook Elementary School. This project involved coordinating with multiple stakeholders, managing a tight budget, and ensuring strict compliance with safety regulations. Through effective communication and meticulous planning, we delivered it ahead of schedule and within budget, earning client accolades. "She has an exceptional ability to lead complex projects and deliver results," said my former supervisor at GSF Construction Services Inc.

Building on this experience, as an Assistant Project Manager at Apex BuildWorks Construction, I spearheaded the redevelopment of City Heights' downtown commercial district, overseeing a team of subcontractors and managing all aspects of the project lifecycle. One notable achievement was negotiating a cost-saving agreement with a key supplier, resulting in significant savings without compromising quality. Additionally, I implemented innovative quality control measures, resulting in a reduction in rework and a notable increase in client satisfaction.

I am drawn to City Heights Construction's reputation as an industry trailblazer, renowned for its unwavering commitment to excellence, safety, and sustainability. Your dedication to delivering cutting-edge projects and exceeding client expectations resonates with my professional values and aspirations. I am eager to contribute to projects that embody these core values while upholding your commitment to quality and client satisfaction.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of discussing how I can add value to your team.

Sincerely,

Ms. Emily Wilson

Citation: Created by Daniella Lockhart

Emily Wilson

555-987-6543 · emily.wilson@gmail.com

WORK EXPERIENCE

Z&A Quality Construction **November 2016 - December 2017**
Project Management Intern

- Assisted in project planning and coordination, gaining practical experience in construction project management.
- Supported senior project managers with various tasks, including scheduling, budget tracking, and subcontractor coordination.
- Contributed to the procurement process by assisting in material and equipment sourcing, ensuring timely delivery to project sites.
- Participated in site visits to monitor progress and compliance with building codes, gaining firsthand experience in on-site management.
- Developed strong organizational and communication skills through regular interaction with project team members and stakeholders.

GSF Construction Services Inc. **January 2018 - January 2021**
Junior Project Manager

- Managed project components under supervision, including scheduling, resource allocation, and subcontractor coordination.
- Assisted in project budget management, tracking expenses, and ensuring financial accountability throughout the project lifecycle.
- Collaborated with architects, engineers, and subcontractors to ensure project feasibility and success, fostering strong working relationships.
- Conducted regular site visits to monitor progress, quality, and compliance with safety regulations, addressing issues proactively to minimize delays.
- Played a key role in resolving project-related conflicts and issues, demonstrating strong problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

Apex BuildWorks Construction **February 2021 - Present**
Assistant Project Manager

- Directly involved in managing project components, overseeing project planning, execution, and closeout phases.
- Managed project budgets, tracking expenses, and ensuring cost control measures were implemented to meet financial goals.
- Led contract negotiations with clients and suppliers, ensuring favorable terms and agreements that align with project objectives.
- Implemented quality control measures and risk management practices to ensure project success and compliance with industry standards.
- Mentored and developed junior project team members, fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth within the team.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Construction Management **December 2017**
Evergreen Valley University

CERTIFICATIONS

- Project Management Professional (PMP), 2021

SKILLS

- Project Management and Scheduling
- Budget Management and Cost Control
- Team Leadership and Development
- Proficient in MS Project and AutoCAD
- Strong Negotiation and Communication Skills
- Valid Driver's License

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Recognized as 'Employee of the Year' at GSF Construction Services Inc., 2022

REFERENCES

- Available upon request.

Citation: Created by Daniella Lockhart

JOB DESCRIPTION VIDEO:

FEMININE-GENDERED LEADERSHIP OCCUPATION CONDITION

Imagine that you are a hiring manager at your company. Your task is to assess candidates for a leadership position.

Please watch the following brief job description video to get a better understanding of the company you are hiring for and the type of candidate you are looking to hire.

Would you like to watch the job description video *with* or *without* subtitles?

Please pay attention, as you will be asked specific questions about the job later.

Feel free to adjust the volume as needed or to expand the video to Fullscreen.

(Video *without* subtitles.)

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/cjs1qwlnfbdwpqlkrzssi/CN-JD-Final-Video-no-subtitles.mp4?rlkey=hjizt4ym3is1nn9zy8vn5ft4x&st=1k3uy7rr&dl=0

(Video *with* subtitles.)

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/fho91qqnhunquydnkvock/CN-JD-Video-WITH-subtitles.mp4?rlkey=416n3du284wqevnuh63q5xtj0&st=kdkwwg3e&dl=0

Citation: Created by Daniella Lockhart

COVER LETTER & RESUME:

FEMININE-GENDERED LEADERSHIP OCCUPATION CONDITION

You should now have a clearer understanding of the qualifications required for eligible applicants for the **Charge Nurse** position. As the hiring manager, please carefully review the provided cover letter and resume to assess the candidate's suitability.

Pay close attention to key details, like the applicant's name and the job they are applying for.

Following your review, you will be asked to evaluate how well the candidate meets the requirements for the role.

Note that it may be easier to view these materials on a desktop.

Emily Wilson

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the open Charge Nurse (RN) position at City Heights Hospital. With my Bachelor of Science in Nursing and extensive experience in patient care and leadership roles, I am eager for the opportunity to contribute to your esteemed institution's commitment to excellence in healthcare.

During my tenure as a Registered Nurse at Maplewood General Hospital, I had provided high quality care to a diverse patient population, managing complex care plans with precision. My dedication to each individual's well-being was recognized with the 'Patient Advocate Award' in 2020. My ability to collaborate seamlessly with interdisciplinary teams allowed me to optimize patient outcomes through communication and coordination. "She has an exceptional ability to provide compassionate and effective patient care," said my former supervisor at Maplewood General Hospital.

Building on this experience, in my current role as a Senior Staff Nurse at Horizon Health Hospital, I've developed leadership skills by supervising staff and coordinating shift activities. Through my efforts, I enhanced compliance with healthcare standards by streamlining documentation processes, performing regular audits, and conducting regular staff training sessions. One notable achievement was initiating a mentorship program where experienced nurses provided guidance and support to newer staff members, fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development.

I am drawn to City Heights Hospital's reputation as a pioneer in healthcare, renowned for its dedication to exceptional patient care and medical innovation. Your commitment to fostering a culture of growth and excellence resonates with my professional values and aspirations. I am eager to contribute to the holistic care of patients while upholding the institution's unwavering standards of excellence.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of discussing how I can add value to your team.

Sincerely,

Ms. Emily Wilson

Citation: Created by Daniella Lockhart

Emily Wilson

555-987-6543 · emily.wilson@gmail.com

WORK EXPERIENCE

Crestview Community Medical Center **November 2016 - December 2018**
Student Nurse

- Provided direct patient care under the supervision of registered nurses and physicians, gaining valuable clinical experience.
- Assisted with patient assessments, medication administration, and treatment plans, ensuring adherence to healthcare protocols.
- Collaborated with healthcare team members to facilitate patient recovery and improve health outcomes.
- Participated in nursing education programs and clinical rotations to enhance clinical skills and knowledge.
- Contributed to patient documentation and charting, maintaining accurate records of patient care interventions and outcomes.

Maplewood General Hospital **January 2019 - January 2021**
Registered Nurse (RN)

- Delivered high-quality patient care in a fast-paced hospital environment, demonstrating strong clinical skills and knowledge.
- Managed patient care plans, including medication administration, wound care, and patient education, ensuring optimal recovery.
- Collaborated with interdisciplinary teams to develop and implement comprehensive care plans tailored to individual patient needs.
- Provided guidance and support to nursing staff, fostering a collaborative and supportive work environment.
- Acted as a resource for patients and their families, addressing concerns and providing emotional support throughout the healthcare journey.

Horizon Health Hospital **February 2021 - Present**
Senior Staff Nurse

- Supervised nursing staff and coordinated shift activities to ensure efficient delivery of patient care.
- Conducted staff evaluations and provided feedback and guidance to improve performance, contributing to staff development and satisfaction.
- Assisted in the development and implementation of nursing policies and procedures, ensuring adherence to healthcare standards.
- Facilitated communication between healthcare professionals, patients, and their families, promoting effective care coordination.
- Demonstrated leadership and organizational skills in managing patient records, ensuring accuracy and confidentiality.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Nursing **December 2018**
Evergreen Valley University

CERTIFICATIONS

- Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification - American Heart Association

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SKILLS

- Strong clinical skills and knowledge of healthcare protocols.
- Excellent leadership, communication, and organizational skills.
- Ability to work under pressure and respond effectively to emergency situations.
- Proficient in electronic health record (EHR) systems.
- Commitment to continuous professional growth and development.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Received 'Patient Advocate Award' at Maplewood General Hospital, 2020

REFERENCES

- Available upon request.

Citation: Created by Daniella Lockhart

APPENDIX B

SCALES

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please answer the following demographic questions about yourself.

1. What is your age:
    a. ____
2. What is your gender:
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Non-binary
    d. Transgender
    e. Prefer not to say
3. What is your ethnicity/race:
    a. Asian
    b. African American
    c. Native American
    d. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    e. Middle Eastern
    f. Hispanic / Latino
    g. White / Caucasian
    h. More than one
    i. Other: _____
4. What is your current relationship status?
    a. Married, domestic partnership, long-term committed relationship
    b. Widowed
    c. Divorced
    d. Separated
    e. Single
5. What is your highest level of education completed?
    a. Less than High School
    b. High School Diploma
    c. Some College
    d. Associates or Vocational Degree
    e. Bachelor's Degree
    f. Master's Degree (MA / MS)
    g. Professional Degree (MD, JD)
    h. Doctorate Degree (Ph.D., Ed.D.)

WORK DEMOGRAPHICS

Please answer the following demographic questions about yourself.

1. What is your current employment status?
    a. Employed full time
    b. Employed part time
    c. Unemployed
2. How many hours do you typically work per week?
    a. ____
3. How long have you been working with the same organization?
    a. ____

HIRING EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

Please answer the following demographic questions about yourself.

1. Do you have any experience hiring or promoting employees in the workplace?
    a. Yes
    b. No
2. Have you received any formal training in hiring practices?
    a. Yes
    b. No
3. Do you have any experience evaluating employee performance in the workplace?
    a. Yes
    b. No
4. Have you received any formal training in performance evaluation?
    a. Yes
    b. No

COMPETENCE AND WARMTH SCALES

Adapted from Fiske, S., Cuddy, A., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002)

The following statements pertain to the candidate whose cover letter and resume you have just reviewed. Remember, as hiring manager, you are tasked with selecting a candidate for a [*Construction Project Manager / Charge Nurse*] role.

Review the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale from “1 = Not at All” to “5 = Extremely”.

Competence-Related Traits

1. How competent did you perceive this candidate to be?
2. How confident did you perceive this candidate to be?
3. How capable did you perceive this candidate to be?
4. How efficient did you perceive this candidate to be?
5. How intelligent did you perceive this candidate to be?
6. How skillful did you perceive this candidate to be?

Warmth-Related Traits

1. How friendly did you perceive this candidate to be?
2. How well-intentioned did you perceive this candidate to be?
3. How trustworthy did you perceive this candidate to be?
4. How warm did you perceive this candidate to be?
5. How good-natured did you perceive this applicant to be?
6. How sincere did you perceive this applicant to be?

Citation:

Fiske, S., Cuddy, A., Glick, P. & Xu, J. (2002). A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow from Perceived Status and Competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 878–902. https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.82.6.878

SUGGESTED SALARY SCALE

Adapted from Weeks, M., Weeks, K.P., Watkins, E. (2021)

For the following set of questions, imagine again that you are a hiring manager tasked with selecting a candidate for a [*Construction Project Manager / Charge Nurse*] role. Below is a summary of information regarding the candidate you previously evaluated.

- Name of Applicant: Emily Wilson
- Current Title: [*Associate Project Manager / Senior Staff Nurse*]
- Years of experience: 8
- Previous position titles: [*Project Manager Intern and Junior Project Manager / Student Nurse and Registered Nurse (RN)*]

1. The average salary range for a [Construction Project Manager / Charge Nurse] role is $50,000 - $115,000 per year. Considering this information, enter the salary number you would consider appropriate for Emily Wilson in the box below if you were to hire her for this role.
    a. _____

Citation:

Weeks, M., Weeks, K.P., Watkins, E. (2021). Using the shifting standards model of stereotype-based judgments to examine the impact of race on compensation decisions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology. 2021; 51*:176–189. https://doi.org/10.1111/ jasp.12724

PERCEPTION OF TARGET COMPARISON SCALE

Adapted from Cassidy, B.S., & Krendl, A.C. (2019)

Think about a person who successfully works as a [Construction Project Manager / Charge Nurse].

1. When you imagine this person in your head, what is their gender?
    a. Male
    b. Female

Citation:

Cassidy, B. S., & Krendl, A. C. (2019). A Crisis of Competence: Benevolent Sexism Affects Evaluations of Women's Competence. *Sex Roles, 81*(7–8), 505–520. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-019-1011-3

MANIPULATION CHECK QUESTIONS

1. What position is the applicant applying for?
    a. *In masculine-gendered occupation condition, the options were:*
        i. Construction Project Manager
        ii. Nurse Manager

    b. *In feminine-gendered occupation condition, the options were:*
        i. Charge Nurse
        ii. Construction Manager

2. Indicate the gender of the applicant you reviewed for this role.
    a. Male
    b. Female

IMPLICIT LEADERSHIP THEORY

The following traits may or may not apply to being a leader. Review the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement on a scale from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “7 = Strongly agree”.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Leaders are:

1. _____ Understanding
2. _____ Sincere
3. _____ Helpful
4. _____ Intelligent
5. _____ Knowledgeable
6. _____ Educated
7. _____ Clever
8. _____ Motivated
9. _____ Dedicated
10. _____ Hard-working
11. _____ Energetic
12. _____ Strong
13. _____ Dynamic
14. _____ Domineering
15. _____ Pushy
16. _____ Manipulative
17. _____ Loud
18. _____ Conceited

19. _____ Selfish

20. _____ Masculine

21. _____ Male

Citation:

Epitropaki, O., & Martin, R. (2004). Implicit Leadership Theories in Applied Settings: Factor Structure, Generalizability, and Stability Over Time. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(2), 293–310. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.2.293

BENEVOLENT SEXISM IN THE WORKPLACE (BSW) SCALE

The following statements concern relationships in the workplace.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale from “1 = Strongly Disagree” to “7 = Strongly Agree.”

1. Women are more helpful than men in resolving conflicts between coworkers.
2. When things are tense in the workplace, women are better than men at making people smile.
3. In the workplace, women are more polite than men.
4. Compared with men, women are better at bringing people together at work.
5. Compared with men, women bring a calming presence in times of workplace conflict.
6. Women are better than men at listening without interrupting when a coworker is speaking.
7. At work, women are naturally warmer than men.
8. In times of workplace hardship, women have the gift of knowing what to say to make another coworker feel better.
9. Women are more likely to share office resources than men.
10. When employees have personal problems, they prefer to go to their female coworkers to get emotional support.
11. Simply having a woman in the office brightens up the workplace.
12. Men should be leaders at work because they should bear the burden of making difficult decisions.
13. Women should work less than men so they can serve as a caretaker for their families.
14. In the workplace, men should protect women from stressful situations.
15. If supervisors give a team a tight deadline, the men in the team should try to relieve their female teammates of as much stress as possible.
16. In the workplace, women should receive mentorship opportunities from men because men ‘know the ropes’.
17. When evaluating work performance, men handle negative feedback better than women.
18. When communicating feedback to a woman at work, the supervisor should be sensitive to her emotions.
19. In the case of an emergency at work, such as a fire, women should be the first to be evacuated.

Note: Scoring Instructions. The subscales of benevolent sexism should be weighted equally. First, average the score for CGD items (items 1–11). Then, the average score for PP items (12–19). Finally, average the two subscale

scores to find average overall benevolent sexism in the workplace.
Abbreviations: CDG, Complementary Gender

Citation:

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APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

IRB-FY2024-358 - Initial: Psych Reviewers Admin/Exempt Approval Letter

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com> Thu, Jun 27, 2024 at 2:09 PM
To: lockd301@coyote.csusb.edu, Mark.Agars@csusb.edu

June 27, 2024

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Administrative/Exempt Review Determination
Status: Exempt
IRB-FY2024-358

Mark Agars Daniella Lockhart
CSBS - Psychology
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Mark Agars Daniella Lockhart :

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Evaluations of Leadership Applicants in the Workplace" has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of California State University, San Bernardino under the federal regulations at 45 CFR 46. As the researcher under the exempt category, you do not have to follow the requirements under 45 CFR 46 which requires annual renewal and documentation of written informed consent which are not required for the exempt category. However, exempt status still requires you to attain consent from participants before conducting your research as needed.

Your IRB proposal is approved. This approval is valid from June 27, 2024.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance. See CSUSB's COVID-19 Prevention Plan for more information regarding campus requirements.

Your responsibilities as the investigator include reporting to the IRB Committee the following three requirements highlighted below. Please note, failure of the investigator to notify the IRB of the below requirements may result in disciplinary action.

- **Submit a protocol modification (change) form if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study to ensure the risk level to participants has not increased,**
- **Submit an unanticipated/adverse events form if harm is experienced by subjects during your research, and**

- **Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system when your study has ended.**
- **Ensure your CITI human subjects training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study for all investigators.**

The protocol modification, adverse/unanticipated event, and closure forms are located in the Cayuse Human Ethics (IRB) System. If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Dr. Jacob Jones, Assistant Professor of Psychology. Dr. Jones can be reached by email at Jacob.Jones@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Brian Heisterkamp

Brian Heisterkamp, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

BH/MG

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