

The Center for Organization Research & Design Lecture Series Presents:



Leisha DeHart-Davis

Friday, April 22, 2016

UCENT 480a

Downtown Phoenix campus

11:00-12:00 pm

Gender and Unethical Leader Behavior: An Experiment, with Sheela and Sanjay Pandey

Abstract

Women are largely regarded, by conventional wisdom and empirical evidence, as tending to behave more ethically (Betz et al 1989). The most common explanation for gender differences in ethicality is that women are socialized to conform more closely to societal norms, lowering the likelihood that women will engage in unethical behavior (Jaffee and Hyde 2000). But an alternative explanation— one that received relatively little attention – is that society has a lower tolerance for unethical behavior from women than men. This study tests this expectation in an experiment involving city manager and department heads, with city manager playing the leader role and department heads cast as followers in a series of study vignettes. The study uses a 2X2 factorial design in which one factor is gender and the other is a type of unethical behavior. Followers will be exposed to the unethical behavior of a city manager (bribery and harassment) and then choose from a set of potential behavioral responses. These responses are mapped according to Hirschman's exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect framework and draw upon Rusbult's measurement instruments (Rusbult et al. 1982). Salient follower attributes will be controlled across vignettes, e.g., job satisfaction, tenure, status. Leader attributes such as tenure and success record will also be held constant across vignettes. Follow-up questions include the extent of implicit and explicit gender bias held by survey participants (Rudman & Kilianski (2000). The expectation is that there will be lower incidence of acquiescence behaviors and higher incidence of protest behaviors directed at women leaders' unethical behavior, and that implicit and explicit bias will be the primary drivers of these reactions. If valid, different responses to gendered leader behavior casts a different theoretical spin: it may not be that women are inherently more ethical, but that they have less latitude for engaging in unethical behavior. The results will inform a discussion of the implications of gendered career paths in Public Service.

