Who is a Good Organizational Citizen? Social Perception of Male and Female Employees Who Use Family Leave

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In this study, we examined perceptions of the citizenship behaviors of male and female employees who took leave to care for a newborn, a sick child, a sick parent, or who did not take leave. In a 2 (employee gender) \times 4 (reason for leave) \times 2 (participant gender) experimental design, 242 undergraduate students read a mock personnel file and rated the employee on altruism and generalized compliance. Female employees were not rated differently whether they took leave or not. Male employees who took leave for birth or eldercare were rated less likely to be altruistic at work than their male counterparts who did not take leave and their female counterparts who took leave. There was also a bias against male leave takers for generalized compliance ratings, especially by male evaluators. Future research ideas and implications for organizational practice are discussed.

KEY WORDS: family leave; organizational citizenship; gender role stereotypes.

In recent years, the interplay between work and family has become a larger focus in most organizations, and many now offer "family friendly" benefits such as flextime, day care, or telecommuting. Legislative efforts have also focused on helping employees manage their work and family lives. In particular, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA, 1993) allowes men and women to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave because of personal illness, the birth or adoption of a child, or the serious illness of a parent, child, or spouse. Despite the availability of family leave benefits, however, many employees, especially men, do not utilize them (Israeloff, 1995; Levine, 1993, 1997; Miller & Tsiantar, 1991) because they fear they will be viewed as less serious about their careers and will suffer negative career consequences (Hall, 1989; Israeloff, 1995; Levine, 1993, 1997; Norman & Tedeschi, 1984). Providing family friendly benefits that employees do not use costs organizations money

There has been little empirical research to determine whether employees' concerns about using family leave are justified, and the findings of the few studies that have been conducted are mixed. Landau and Arthur (1992) failed to find a relationship between pregnancy leave and salary in a sample of managers and professionals. In the first experimental investigation of the effects of family leave on managerial decision making, Allen and colleagues asked participants to evaluate a mock personnel file and found that taking parental leave did not affect reward recommendations for a high performing employee (Allen, Russell, & Rush, 1994). In a more recent study, they found detrimental effects of leave, but only for male employees (Allen & Russell, 1999). Judiesch and Lyness (1999) investigated the career consequences of leaves of absence in a field setting. They found that employees who take leave for personal illness or family reasons received fewer rewards than employees who did not take leave. Men who took leave were not at a disadvantage relative to women; however, the authors suggested that this could be because of small sample sizes for testing these effects.

and does little to reduce the work-family stress of employees.

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The limited evidence is mixed, but overall, it suggests that using family leave may be harmful, and perhaps more so to the careers of men than women. Although the FMLA guarantees a job upon return from leave, the law cannot control others' perception of the employee upon his or her return. The fear of negative perceptions (perhaps as much as negative actions) may prevent employees from using family leave. The primary purposes of this study, therefore, were to investigate experimentally (i) whether use of FMLA for various reasons negatively affects perceptions of leave takers' citizenship behaviors and (ii) whether men and women who take family leave are viewed differently.

Employees can use the FMLA to take leave for six reasons. Previous researchers have experimentally investigated the effects of employees' "parental" or "medical" leave on student participants' decisions in a managerial context (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Allen & Russell, 1999). Under the FMLA, "parental leave" includes leave for the birth, adoption, or serious illness of a child, and each reason could affect perceptions differently. The FMLA also allows employees to take leave due to the illness of a parent, and a survey conducted by the Department of Labor (Commission on Family and Medical Leave, 1996) found that employees reported that the reason they would most likely need to use the FMLA in the next 5 years was to care for a seriously ill parent. Employers assume that elder caregiving negatively affects employee productivity (Wagner & Neal, 1994), but no one has yet investigated whether using leave for eldercare causes employees to be perceived negatively. Because perceptions of employees may differ depending upon the specific family-related reason for leave, in this study, we expand the reasons for taking family leave to include birth, illness of a child, and eldercare.

The effects of taking leave have been studied on a number of work outcomes including salary increases (Allen & Russell, 1999; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999; Landau & Arthur, 1992), promotions (Judiesch & Lyness, 1999), reward recommendations such as overseas assignments and high profile projects (Allen et al., 1994; Allen & Russell, 1999), causal attributions of performance (Allen et al., 1994), and perceptions of organizational (Allen et al., 1994; Allen & Russell, 1999) and family commitment (Allen & Russell, 1999). These are important outcomes, but the impact of utilizing the FMLA may manifest itself in other ways as well. For example, employees who take family leave are unlikely to be perceived as going the extra mile for the organization (i.e., being good

organizational citizens). Thus, the primary outcomes of interest in this study are perceptions of FMLA users' organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB).

Including citizenship behaviors as outcomes contributes to the OCB literature as well as to the leavetaking literature. Of the nearly 200 OCB publications, only five experimental studies have been conducted (see review by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). In these studies, researchers manipulated in-role and contextual performance and examined their impact on performance evaluations (Allen & Rush, 1998; Park & Sims, 1989; Werner, 1994), reward recommendations (Allen & Rush, 1998; Kiker & Motowidlo, 1999; Park & Sims, 1989), promotion recommendations (Park & Sims, 1989), and estimates of the standard deviation of performance (Orr, Sackett, & Mercer, 1989). On the basis of Podsakoff et al.'s review (Podsakoff et al., 2000), however, it appears that little experimental research has examined the perceptions of others' OCBs as dependent variables (for an exception see Bachrach, Bendoly, and Podsakoff, 2001). It is possible that irrelevant (i.e., nonjobrelated) factors may bias perceptions of organizational citizenship. As such, we investigate the influence of employee gender and reason for family leave on evaluators' perceptions of citizenship behaviors.

In summary, there are three contributions of this study. First, this study contributes to the limited research on leave by experimentally investigating whether male and female employees are perceived differently when they use the FMLA. As with most of the existing research (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Allen & Russell, 1999), student participants serve as evaluators and review a mock personnel file, adopt the role of manager, and rate a hypothetical employee. Second, we examine previously unstudied reasons for taking leave by including eldercare and distinguishing between two possible reasons for parental leave (i.e., birth and caring for an ill child). Third, in this study, we examine the effect of employee gender and use of the FMLA on the perception of citizenship behaviors. By combining these features into a single study, we aim to advance research on leave taking and organizational citizenship.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Organizational citizenship behaviors are extrarole behaviors that extend beyond the required job duties, are discretionary in nature, are not formally recognized by the appraisal or reward system, and facilitate organizational functioning (Organ, 1988). Employees who are perceived as displaying more citizenship behaviors typically receive higher performance appraisals (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991) and rewards (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Ratings of OCB have been found to be as important to performance ratings as objective indicators of performance (MacKenzie et al., 1991); thus, it is important to investigate whether using family leave causes biased perceptions of OCB.

Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) initially identified two distinct OCB dimensions: altruism and generalized compliance. Since their initial conceptualization of this construct, there has been much debate as to the number of OCB dimensions, and estimates range from one (LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002) to seven (Podsakoff et al., 2000). However, the majority of OCB studies, including recent OCB research (e.g., Hui, Lam, & Law, 2000), have used a variation of the Smith et al. (1983) measure and reported the same two component factors (Organ & Ryan, 1995). We focus on these two types of OCB because (i) they have been the most commonly used dimensions in the literature (Organ & Ryan, 1995) and (ii) theoretically, we expect that they are likely to be affected by employee gender and family leave. In our study, altruism refers to directly helping specific others with an organizationally relevant task or problem such as orienting coworkers, providing support, or helping them with aspects of their jobs (Smith et al., 1983). By generalized compliance, we refer to an impersonal form of conscientiousness that indirectly helps others within the organization; this includes behaviors that define what a good employee ought to do, such as attendance, punctuality, working overtime, and not spending time on personal telephone calls (Smith et al., 1983). In the following section, we review theory and research that suggest the effect that employee gender and family leave may have on perceptions of altruism and generalized compliance.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Does employee gender affect perceptions of OCBs? Job-irrelevant characteristics such as gender can cue stereotypes and assumptions that affect judgments of employees (Motowidlo, 1986). Gender-trait stereotyping research suggests ways in which men and women may be viewed differently on citizenship behaviors (Kidder & Parks, 2001). That is, some OCBs are consistent with behaviors stereotypically associ-

ated with women, whereas others are consistent with behaviors stereotypically associated with men. It is possible that, when evaluating citizenship behaviors of employees, evaluators rely on gender stereotypes which results in biased perceptions of OCBs.

Women are believed to have expressive skills, and to be emotional, helpful to others, and aware of other's feelings (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975). They are also believed to be more kind, considerate, and understanding than are men (Ruble, 1983). Because of these stereotypes, women may be perceived as more readily engaging in behaviors that help others and that develop and sustain relationships at work (Kerpelman & Schvanavedlt, 1999), such as altruism. In general, women are also viewed as home-oriented (Spence et al., 1975), and, thus, may be perceived as likely to be less punctual, absent more, and to waste more time at work than men do because of interference from family duties. In contrast, men are stereotyped as having instrumental skills and being independent, assertive, skilled in business, and competitive (Spence et al., 1975). They are also believed to be highly committed to their work (Norman & Tedeschi, 1984), and, therefore, may be expected to be punctual, rarely absent, and to engage in other compliant behaviors. Although some researchers have investigated whether men and women differ in their actual display of OCBs and found no gender differences (Kidder & Parks, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2000), in this study we focus on whether men and women are perceived to differ in OCBs when their actual behavior is identical. Only an experimental study can provide the degree of control necessary to demonstrate if gender biases exist in OCB ratings. Based on gender stereotypes, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. When leave is not taken, (a) female employees will be more likely than male employees to be perceived as engaging in altruistic behaviors and (b) male employees will be more likely than female employees to be perceived as engaging in compliant behaviors.

Does using FMLA for childcare affect perceptions of OCBs? Does the effect differ for male and female employees? The traditional model of work includes the belief that the ideal employee will work full-time without interruption from the end of education to retirement without making compromises for family or personal needs (Lewis, 1996). Many organizational cultures define productivity in terms of hours spent at the office (Lewis & Taylor, 1996) or "face time" (Berry & Rao, 1997). Employees who do not work beyond

9–5 or who work reduced hours are presumed to be less productive and less committed than other employees (Lewis & Taylor, 1996). Moreover, employment gaps are viewed as indicating a lack of organizational commitment (Miller & Tsiantar, 1991), which often translates into lower salaries, fewer promotion opportunities (Judiesch & Lyness, 1999), and other negative career outcomes (Schneer & Reitman, 1990). A leave of absence for family reasons may signal the advent of parenthood as well as a gap in employment (Allen & Russell, 1999) and foster assumptions that the employee is more dedicated to family than career (Levine, 1993; Morris, 1997). Consequently, employees who use family leave may be presumed by managers to be unwilling to expend additional time and effort to exceed the minimal job requirements (i.e., to engage in OCBs).

The traditional model of work suggests that organizations are "gendered" and that they adhere to masculine values (e.g., Acker, 1990) which dictate that workers will not interrupt their careers for family reasons. Gendered organizational culture theory (Acker, 1990) suggests that all leave takers will be penalized, regardless of their gender. In contrast, according to gender role theory (Eagly, 1987; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991), men and women may be evaluated differently when they take leave to care for children. The culture of fatherhood (Berry & Rao, 1997) suggests that the father's primary role is that of breadwinner and that commitment to work should be his primary concern. Traditionally, a "good father" works long hours even if he must sacrifice time with his family so that he can provide for them financially. The "motherhood mandate" (Russo, 1976) dictates that a woman's priority is expected to be caregiving for her children and commitment to her job should be secondary. Traditionally, the definition of a "good mother" is incompatible with that of a "good worker" because a good mother must be physically available to meet her child's every need (Etaugh & Study, 1989). People are penalized when their behavior violates stereotypes or expected gender roles (Lovell et al., 1999). Thus, taking into account gender roles suggests that the traditional model of continuous work may apply more to men than to women (Schneer & Reitman, 1990).

Empirical research supports the theoretical propositions of gender role theory. Lobel and St. Clair (1992) found that family-oriented mothers with preschool age children earned more merit increases than did family-oriented fathers. Also, in their experimental investigation, Allen and Russell (1999) found

that men who had taken parental leave were seen as less committed to the organization and were less likely than women to receive reward recommendations. Thus, we expect that utilizing the FMLA for childcare reasons affects evaluators' perceptions of OCBs differently for male and female employees. We predict an interaction between employee gender and type of leave as specified in the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 2. When they take FMLA leave for child-care (i.e., birth and child illness), female employees will be rated as more likely to engage in (a) altruistic and (b) generalized compliance behaviors than will male employees.

Hypothesis 3. Because caregiving for children is defined as a woman's domain, women will not be devalued on altruism and generalized compliance when they take leave for birth and child illness compared to when they do not take leave. In contrast, because men are expected to place work before family, men will be rated lower on altruism and generalized compliance when they take leave for birth and child illness compared to when they do not take leave.

Do male and female raters view leave takers differently? The gender of the evaluator may play an important role when evaluating men and women who take family leave. In particular, we have explained that gender role stereotyping may underlie the effects that we expect. That is, men and women who use family leave are evaluated according to their socially prescribed roles; therefore, men are likely to be perceived more negatively than are women. Attitudes and beliefs that men tend to hold might result in this bias being stronger for male than female evaluators. Men are less likely than women to endorse egalitarian views (Kaufman, 2000); thus, female evaluators may be more likely to treat men and women who use leave equally. Also, compared to women, men are less likely to believe that gender discrimination exists, more likely to hold traditional attitudes toward women (Kaufman, 2000; Konrad & Hartmann, 2001), and, as such, are more likely to endorse gendered roles for women (e.g., involvement in childcare and housekeeping) and for men (e.g., involvement in the workplace) (Kaufman, 2000). Because of these attitudes and beliefs that men and women generally hold, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4. Participant gender will moderate the relationship between employee gender and leave

on (a) altruism and (b) compliance ratings such that bias against male leave takers will be stronger for male than female raters.

Does the reason for using FMLA matter? There are reasons to expect that certain types of family leave may be more acceptable than others. For example, it may be more acceptable to take leave to care for one's children than one's parents. In the United States, family is generally defined as the nuclear or legal family that includes one's spouse and children but neglects one's extended family, such as elderly parents (Rothausen, 1999). The earliest and most established human resource policies for families targeted employed parents to assist with childcare, whereas eldercare is a relatively new area of concern (Galinsky & Stein, 1990). Employees who use eldercare programs may be stigmatized (Wells, 2000). Also, it may be acceptable, or even expected, that a caregiver solicits help to care for an elderly parent so that the employee can continue to work. However, there are social taboos related to parents, particularly mothers, enrolling their children in full-time day care in order to pursue a career (Scarr & Eisenberg, 1993).

For the above reasons, we expect evaluators to perceive employees more negatively on OCBs when they use the FMLA to care for their parents rather than their children. It is also possible that these effects may differ for male and female employees. Because empirical research on eldercare is lacking, we examine the following research questions: (1) Are employees who use FMLA for parent illness perceived more negatively on OCBs than those who use it for childcare (i.e., birth and child illness) or those who do not use leave? (2) Are male and female employees perceived differently when they take leave for parent illness?

In addition to different perceptions of eldercare and childcare, it is possible that taking leave for birth is perceived differently than taking leave to care for a sick child, at least for male employees. That is, people may perceive that men have no physical need to take leave for birth, or they may assume that the mother is home caring for the newborn. Because women are expected to care for their children regardless of age or reason, they are likely to be viewed similarly when they take leave for birth or to care for a sick child. The final research question we examine is whether men are perceived more negatively on OCBs when they take leave for birth relative to child illness.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 242 introductory psychology students from a southeastern liberal arts university. Data were excluded for 5% (n=11) of the participants who did not respond correctly to the manipulation check (described later), which resulted in 114 male and 117 female participants who were an average age of 18.97 years with 2.38 years of work experience. The majority (88.7%) of the sample was European American; 7.4% was African American; 1.7% was Asian American, and 2.2% indicated another racial category. All participated in partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Design

The experiment used a 2 (employee gender: man, woman) \times 4 (reason for leave: birth of child, illness of child, illness of parent, no leave/control) \times 2 (participant gender: man, woman) between-subjects design with two OCBs (altruism and generalized compliance) as the dependent variables. Male and female participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight experimental conditions.

Materials and Procedure

After participants gave informed consent, they were told that the researchers were interested in differences in decision making between trained and untrained evaluators. They were asked to assume the role of a manager within a fictitious organization and to review the personnel record of an employee to make decisions that would be compared to those of trained managers. Participants were then given materials similar to those maintained in an employee's personnel file (Allen et al., 1994), which were presented in the following order: a job description, job application, resume, and performance appraisal, followed by a letter from the employee that requested FMLA leave, an official US Department of Labor FMLA request form, and a letter from the employer that granted FMLA leave. To familiarize all participants with the basic elements of the Act, the FMLA materials stated the six possible reasons and maximum duration (12 weeks) for which unpaid leave could be taken. Participants in the control condition did not receive any of the FMLA materials.

The independent variables were manipulated within the personnel file such that the employee was described as either male (Scott Myers) or female (Sara Myers) and as requesting leave because of the birth of a child, serious illness of a child, serious illness of a parent, or not requesting leave. Employee sex was given on the job application as either male or female and was manipulated through the use of names on the materials. The reason for leave was stated in the employee's letter that requested leave, in the letter from the employer that granted leave, and was checked on the official FMLA request form. In all leave conditions, the employee was described as having taken 12 weeks of unpaid leave from May 1 to August 1, 1996; the employee had returned to work and the "most recent" performance appraisal was dated August 4, 1999. We described the target employee as having returned to work in order to prevent participants from assuming that the leave takers (e.g., women who took leave for birth) would not return. Thus, we assessed perceptions of leave takers 3 years following the leave period rather than during it. This is similar to the time period used by Judiesch and Lyness (1999) in their field study where they examined rewards up to 5 years postleave in order to allow ample time to offset the effects that occur immediately after returning to work.

Other materials were included to make the task more realistic or to hold relevant factors constant. The effects of taking leave may vary as a function of the gender-type of the job and the employee's job performance (Allen et al., 1994). Therefore, a gender neutral position, pharmaceutical sales representative, was described in the job description (US Census Bureau, 1999). In all cases, the job application described the employee as White and married with children and an employed spouse. A resume described an average job applicant, and the most recent performance appraisal described an average performer. After reading the file, participants rated the overall job performance of the employee on a scale of (1) poor to (5) excellent. Then, they rated perceptions of the employee on the dependent measures.

Dependent Measures

Participants rated how likely they thought the employee was to engage in a number of behaviors on a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) extremely unlikely to (7) extremely likely. Items to measure altruism and generalized compliance were adapted from an existing OCB measure (Smith et al., 1983) or

developed using the conceptual definition of each dimension provided earlier. For the altruism dimension, six items were used including "How likely is Sara/Scott Myers to": "help a coworker with a difficult project" and "help orient new workers even though it is not required." These items pertain to helping specific coworkers with an organizational task as defined by Smith et al. (1983). We did not include two items from Smith et al. (i.e., "volunteers for things that are not required" and "makes innovative suggestions to improve department") because these items do not involve helping a specific person and may correspond more closely with other types of OCB (e.g., civic virtue). Examples of the seven items that measured generalized compliance include "be punctual to work" and "have better attendance than most employees." Our compliance measure focuses on the extent to which an employee is likely to be punctual to work, have above-average attendance, work overtime when necessary, and avoid time on personal phone calls. This scale is similar to Smith et al.'s measure (1983) with the exception that our scale did not include items regarding taking too many breaks. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine that the items loaded on each of the factors appropriately, and these results are presented in Table I.

LePine et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis in which they concluded that OCB may be a latent construct and that its proposed dimensions should be thought of as indicators of the same underlying construct. That is, they suggested that OCB may be unidimensional rather than multidimensional. They urged researchers to articulate their definition of OCB and ensure that their measurement is consistent with their definition. As already discussed, we adapted or developed items that closely matched the conceptual definitions of the two dimensions (Smith et al., 1983). The next step, then, was to confirm that our OCB scale is better conceptualized as a two-dimensional rather than a unidimensional measure. To do so, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) using AMOS 4.01 (Larbuckle, 2002) on the items provided in Table I. We initially analyzed a two-factor model, and then, to assess the discriminability of the factors, we examined whether a single-factor model provided a better fit to the data than did the two-factor model. We evaluated the difference in chi squares between the two models. Also, to evaluate the overall model fit, we examined the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990).

Table I. Results of Principal Component Analysis With Varimax Rotation

Items ^a		2 Generalized compliance	
Help a coworker with a difficult project	.80	.18	
2. Always be available to help others in his/her team do their jobs more effectively	.60	.23	
3. Help orient new coworkers even though it is not required	.75	.21	
4. Help other coworkers who have been absent	.78	.18	
5. Offer emotional support to coworkers in times of trouble	.72	.00	
6. Make him/herself available to coworkers to discuss any personal or professional problems	.72	.12	
7. Never miss a day of work	12	.72	
8. Be punctual to work	.34	.58	
9. Have better attendance than most employees	.30	.71	
10. Come to work early if needed	.43	.60	
11. Be absent more than most employees (R)	.21	.72	
12. Work overtime when it is necessary	.39	.58	
13. Not spend time on personal calls	.00	.55	

^aItems 1–6 were intended to measure altruism; items 7–13 were intended to measure generalized compliance. Items 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, and 13 were adapted from the Smith et al. (1983) measure. Other items were created on the basis of the conceptual definitions of the OCBs.

The CFA results supported a two-factor measurement model for the OCB scale in that the two factor model better fit the data than did the singlefactor model, $\Delta \chi^2 = 169.6$, 1 df; p < .05. Although the chi square was statistically significant for the two-factor model, $\chi^2 = 136.59, 64 \, df, p < .05$, the fit indices were acceptable (CFI = .93; GFI = .91) and the RMSEA was .07. Both of the fit indices were lower for the single-factor model (CFI = .77; GFI = .77), and the RMSEA was .13 As further evidence of the psychometric properties of the scales, reliability analyses indicated that the altruism ($\alpha = .85$) and generalized compliance ($\alpha = .80$) scales exceeded minimal standards established by Nunnally (1978). Finally, although the dimensions were understandably related, the intercorrelation was sufficiently low (r = .47) to justify separate interpretations of the dimensions. Because our analyses supported the empirical distinction between altruism and generalized compliance, participants' responses were averaged for each scale, and the scaled scores were used as dependent variables in the analyses.

Background Data and Manipulation Checks

After participants returned their personnel packets, they completed a manipulation check and demographic questionnaire. Participants indicated their gender, age, race, and employment history. They also reported the employee's gender, the type of job or industry the employee worked in, the percentage of women in the job/industry, and whether the employee had taken leave, and, if so, whether it was for birth, child illness, or parent illness. All of the participants correctly recalled the gender of the employee, and

95% correctly identified the type of leave. Respondents who responded incorrectly to the type of leave were removed from further analyses. Participants perceived pharmaceutical sales as approximately gender balanced (i.e., 40% female). Descriptive statistics revealed that job performance was perceived as almost average (M = 2.85).

RESULTS

Hypothesis Testing

Because of the relationship between the two dependent variables (r=.47), a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with employee gender, reason for leave, and participant gender as the independent variables and the two OCB scales as the dependent variables. As measured by the Wilks' Lambda criterion, results indicated a significant main effect of employee gender, an interaction between employee gender and leave, and an interaction of employee gender, leave, and participant gender on the set of dependent variables. After we established these overall effects, univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted on each dependent measure, followed by comparisons as specified by our hypotheses.

As reported in Table II, for altruism, there was a significant univariate main effect of employee gender and an interaction between employee gender and leave. For the compliance ratings, there was a marginally significant interaction between employee gender and leave (p = .06) and a significant three-way interaction of employee gender, leave, and participant

	Altruism			Generalized compliance			
Source	F	<i>df</i> s	η^2	F	df s	η^2	
Employee Gender	15.74**	1,212	.07	.03	1,210	.00	
Leave	1.33	3,212	.02	1.60	3,210	.02	
Participant gender	.51	1,212	.00	.34	1,210	.00	
Employee gender × leave	3.85**	3,212	.05	2.55^{+}	3,210	.04	
Employee gender × Participant gender	.01	1,212	.00	.23	1,210	.00	
Leave × Participant gender	.40	3,212	.01	.78	3,210	.01	
Employee gender × Leave × Participant gender	2.10	3,212	.03	3.42*	3, 210	.05	

Table II. Results of Three-Way ANOVAs (Employee Gender, Leave, Participant Gender) on Altruism and Generalized Compliance

Note. $^{+}p < .10. ^{*}p < .05. ^{**}p < .01.$

gender. To test the hypotheses, simple effect analyses and planned comparisons were conducted as described below. Cell means are provided for altruism in Table III and for generalized compliance in Table IV.

Simple effect analyses indicated that, although means were in the predicted direction, women who did not take leave were not viewed as significantly more altruistic than were men, F(1,222) = 2.28, p > .05. Thus, hypothesis 1a was not supported. The presence of the three-way interaction on generalized compliance suggested that the two-way interaction (employee gender \times leave) differed as a function of the gender of the participant. Further analyses indicated that hypothesis 1b was partially supported. When leave was not taken, men were viewed as significantly more likely to be compliant than were women but only by male participants, F(1,210) = 4.97, p < .05.

To test Hypothesis 2, simple effect analyses were conducted to determine if male and female employees were rated differently on altruism and compliance within each type of parental leave. Women were rated as significantly more likely to engage in altruistic behaviors than were men when they took leave for birth, F(1, 222) = 12.04, p < .01, but not for child illness, F(1, 222) = .30, p > .05, which partially supported hypothesis 2a. Because of the three-way interaction on compliance, we tested hypothesis 2b separately

Table III. Mean Altruism Ratings as a Function of Employee Gender and Type of Leave

	Fema	Female employee			Male employee			
	M	SE	n	M	SE	n		
Birth	4.42	.15	29	3.74	.14	29		
Child illness	4.22	.14	30	4.34	.15	28		
Parent illness	4.41	.15	26	3.63	.15	26		
None	4.39	.15	27	4.07	.15	28		

for female and male participants. Simple effect analyses indicated that female participants rated women who took leave for birth as more likely to be compliant than men who took leave for birth, although this finding was only marginally significant, F(1, 210) =3.19, p = .08. They also rated men and women differently in the child illness condition, but the direction was opposite to that predicted. Specifically, female participants perceived men who took leave for child illness as more likely to be compliant than women who took leave for child illness, F(1, 210) = 3.75, p < .05. Male participants, however, did not differ significantly in their generalized compliance ratings of men and women who took leave for birth, F(1, 210) = .51, p >.05. They differed as predicted in their ratings in the child illness condition, F(1, 210) = 2.72, p < .10, although this difference was only marginally significant. In summary, women who took leave for birth were rated as more likely to be altruistic at work than men who took leave for birth. Marginally significant findings suggested that women who took leave for birth were rated by female participants as more likely to be compliant than men who took leave for birth. Women who took leave for child illness were rated by male

Table IV. Mean Generalized Compliance Ratings as a Function of Employee Gender, Type of Leave, and Participant Gender

		Employee Gender						
		Woman			Man			
Participant gender	Type of leave	M	SE	n	M	SE	n	
Women	Birth	3.74	.22	15	3.20	.22	15	
	Child illness	3.38	.22	15	3.98	.22	14	
	Parent illness	3.76	.22	13	3.65	.22	13	
	None	3.52	.24	12	3.85	.22	14	
Men	Birth	3.36	.22	14	3.58	.22	14	
	Child illness	4.01	.22	15	3.50	.22	14	
	Parent illness	3.85	.23	13	3.15	.23	13	
	None	3.65	.22	15	4.34	.22	14	

participants as more likely to be compliant than men who took leave for child illness.

In Hypothesis 3, we expected an interaction between employee gender and leave. More specifically, we hypothesized that female employees would not be evaluated more negatively on OCBs when they took leave for birth and child illness compared to when they did not take leave, but that male employees would be. Simple effect analyses indicated that female employees were not rated differently across the types of leave on altruism, F(3, 220) = .36, p > .05, or generalized compliance by either male, F(3, 210) = 1.64, p > .05, or female participants, F(3, 210) = .69, p > .05. Men were rated differently on altruism across the leave conditions, F(3, 220) = 4.59, p < .01. Planned comparisons indicated that men were rated as less likely to be altruistic when they took leave for birth compared to no leave, t(106) = -1.71, p < .05, one-tailed, but that the difference between the child illness and no leave condition was not significant, t(106) = 1.41, p >.05, one-tailed. Analyses were then conducted for generalized compliance. As can be seen in Table IV, men were perceived by male participants as significantly more likely to engage in compliant behaviors when they did not take leave compared to when they took leave for birth, t(51) = -2.66, p < .05, onetailed, and to care for an ill child, t(51) = -2.93, p <.01, one-tailed. Female participants perceived men who did not take leave as more likely to engage in generalized compliance behaviors than they did men who took leave for birth, t(53) = 2.05, p < .05, one-tailed, but not child illness, t(53) = .42, p > .05, one-tailed. In sum, women were not evaluated differently when they took leave or not. Men were devalued when they took leave for birth (but not child illness) relative to when they did not take leave.

In Hypothesis 4, we predicted that the bias against men who took family leave would be stronger for male than female participants. This prediction was not supported for altruism in that the three-way interaction was nonsignificant. For generalized compliance, female participants were relatively consistent in their evaluations of men, regardless of leave condition. The exceptions were that they devalued men who took leave for birth relative to men who did not take leave and relative to women who took leave for birth. On the other hand, male participants devalued men who took leave for birth, child illness, and parent illness relative to men who did not take leave. Moreover, male participants evaluated men who took leave for child illness and parent illness more negatively

than they did women who took leave for these same reasons. Thus, for compliance ratings, there was greater evidence of bias against male leave takers by male than female participants, as we predicted in Hypothesis 4.

Finally, exploratory analyses were conducted to address three research questions. These research questions were first examined for altruism. First, men who took leave for eldercare were viewed as less likely to engage in altruism than men who did not take leave, t(106) = 2.20, p < .05, or who took leave to care for a sick child, t(106) = 3.59, p < .01, but not men who took leave for the birth of a child. Women who took leave to care for a sick parent were not perceived more negatively on altruism than women who did not take leave or who took leave for birth or child illness. Second, men who took leave to care for a sick parent were rated as less likely to engage in altruism than women who took leave for the same reason, F(1, 222) = 13.22, p < .01. Finally, men were rated as more likely to engage in altruistic behavior at work when they had taken leave to care for a sick child compared to leave for birth, t(109) = 3.38, p < .01.

Then, we investigated the same research questions for generalized compliance. Because of the three-way interaction on generalized compliance, Tukey HSDs were conducted for male participants. The only comparison that was significant indicated that male participants rated men who took leave for parent illness to be less compliant than men who did not take leave. Male participants did not differ in their compliance ratings of women who took leave for parent illness relative to each of the other types of leave. Tukeys were also conducted for female participants; however, female participants did not differ in their ratings of men or women who took leave for parent illness relative to each of the other leave conditions. In addressing the second research question, we found that male participants rated men who took leave for parent illness as less likely than women to engage in compliant behaviors, F(1, 210) = 4.68, p < .05. Female participants, however, did not differ in their generalized compliance ratings of men and women who took leave for parent illness, F(1, 210) = .11, p >.05. Finally, we examined whether men were perceived more negatively on generalized compliance when they took leave for child illness relative to birth. Female participants perceived men as less compliant when they took leave for birth relative to child illness, t(53) = 2.15, p > .05, one-tailed; however, male participants did not devalue men who took

leave for birth relative to child illness, t(50) = 1.04, p > .05.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate evaluators' perceptions of the citizenship behaviors of men and women who used the FMLA to care for a newborn, a sick child, or a sick parent relative to those who did not use leave. Overall, results indicated that female employees were not perceived negatively on citizenship behaviors when they took leave for any reason compared to when they did not take leave. However, male employees who took leave for birth and eldercare were perceived as less altruistic at work than men who did not take leave or women who took leave for the same reason. There was also evidence of bias by male raters on compliance ratings against men who took leave for birth, to care for a sick child, or a sick parent. Each of these findings is discussed later.

Does Employee Gender Affect Perceptions of OCBs?

In this study, we examined whether men and women were *perceived* to differ in OCBs when, in fact, their actual behaviors were the same. When leave was not taken (as is the case with most employees), male participants rated men as more likely to engage in generalized compliance behaviors than they did women. If these findings generalize to supervisors' appraisals, they suggest that male managers may hold the stereotype that men are more likely to have better attendance, be punctual, work overtime, and spend less time on personal phone calls than are women. Female managers, however, may not hold this stereotype. Contrary to our predictions, when leave was not taken, women were not perceived as more altruistic at work than were men.

Although previous research has focused on whether men and women differ on OCBs (Podsakoff et al., 2000), our results suggest that, to some extent, rather than employees objectively differing in their display of OCBs, evaluators (particularly men) may perceive that they differ based on irrelevant factors such as gender. These results have implications for studies of gender differences in OCBs. Especially in studies where managers rate employees on OCBs, if gender differences are found, steps must be taken to ensure that this difference is not due to biased perceptions of the manager based on gender stereotypes.

Does Using FMLA for Various Reasons Affect Perceptions of OCBs? Does the Effect Differ for Male and Female Employees?

As a whole, the results of this study are consistent with anecdotal reports and gender role theory (Gutek et al., 1991). We found that using the FMLA did affect perceptions of OCBs, and that male and female employees were viewed quite differently. Taking a 3-month unpaid leave of absence for birth or to care for a sick child or a sick parent did not negatively influence perceptions of altruism or generalized compliance for a female employee relative to her not taking leave.4 The picture was quite different for men because they were perceived as being poorer organizational citizens when they took leave. Specifically, men who took leave for birth were perceived as less likely to help their coworkers, work overtime, be punctual, etc., than men who did not take leave—even though their job performance ratings were identical. These findings support anecdotal and empirical evidence that suggest a bias against men who take parental leave (Allen & Russell, 1999). It is important to note, though, that not all reasons for parental leave evoked negative perceptions of men. In general, men were not penalized when they took leave to care for a sick child. This finding might represent good news for men because they may be able to use the FMLA to care for a sick child and be perceived no differently than if they had not taken leave at all. One possible explanation for the different results for these two types of parental leave (i.e., birth and child illness) may be that participants think that men and women are equally likely to care for a sick child, in contrast, they may assume that men do not need to recover physically from childbirth or that the mother is more likely than the father to be the primary caregiver. Alternatively, having a sick child may evoke sympathy from participants such that they are less willing to evaluate the father negatively. More research is needed to better understand under what circumstances and why the bias against male

⁴Of course, lack of differences across conditions (i.e., null results) cannot be interpreted to mean that no differences exist. We interpret our results as we do for several reasons: (i) the omnibus effect (i.e., interaction) was significant, (ii) the findings are consistent with our conceptual rationale and hypotheses about which cell means would differ (for men) and which would not (for women), (iii) we had ample power to find bias against men, and (iv) the pattern of results for women (lack of difference) was consistent across all conditions for both outcomes.

leave takers exists so that potential remedies may be developed.

Men were also penalized by evaluators when they took leave to care for an elderly parent compared to when they did not take leave and compared to women who took leave for the same reason. This bias in compliance ratings was found only for male evaluators. Together, the results across the two outcomes generally suggest that for male employees, taking leave to care for a sick parent may not be as socially acceptable as taking leave to care for a sick child and that it is more acceptable for a woman to care for her extended family than it is for a man to do so, especially in the opinion of male evaluators. Perhaps the fact that 70-80% of adult child caregivers are daughters (Levande, Herrick, & Sung, 2000) excuses women who take leave to care for their sick parents. It seems that women are expected to juggle responsibilities of work and family, even if family responsibilities extend beyond the nuclear family, whereas men are not. When men do, they may be subject to negative evaluations at work. These findings should be replicated in a field setting; however, because men are reluctant to use family leave, small sample sizes may preclude sufficient power to test these effects in field settings. Though less than perfect, experimental studies such as this one may be necessary to test perceptions of men who use leave. Men report negative attitudes and resistance to making their family a priority (Berry & Rao, 1997), and our experimental findings suggest that men may be perceived negatively when they use FMLA leave for birth or eldercare.

Is the Gender of the Evaluator Important?

We also found that the bias against men who took family leave on generalized compliance ratings was stronger for men than women raters. Specifically, male participants devalued men who took family leave for any reason relative to men who did not take leave. Female raters demonstrated bias against men only when men took leave for birth (but not parent or child illness). These findings regarding the gender of the evaluator are not surprising. Women are more supportive of parental leave (Hyde, Essex, & Horton, 1993) and are more likely to use family benefits than are men (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999), and, thus, women may respond more positively than men to those who use family leave. Also, participant gender may be a proxy for underlying differences between men and women in egalitarianism or gender role stereotypes, where men more strongly endorse the breadwinner role for men and the caregiver role for women. More work is needed to uncover explanations for the participant gender effect. But, if these findings generalize, male managers may more strongly adhere to the traditional masculine stereotype and may be less accepting of men who take family leave than of women who do so. Female managers may react similarly to men and women who use family leave to care for a sick parent or a sick child. It is important to note that both male and female raters devalued men who took leave to care for a newborn.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

In addition to a deeper understanding of the effects of family leave on perceptions of employees, this study expands our knowledge of OCB. First, these findings clearly demonstrate that ratings of OCB, like those of in-role performance, are subject to stereotypes and biases. Generalized compliance, for example, is defined as what a "good employee ought to do" (Smith et al., 1983), and our results suggest that male managers may more readily perceive men than women as engaging in these desired behaviors (based on the employee's gender rather than any objective difference in behavior). Because perceptions of OCB are related to performance appraisal ratings and salary recommendations (e.g., MacKenzie et al., 1991), researchers should continue to use OCBs as dependent variables and investigate how other extraneous factors, such as employee age and race, influence perceptions of OCBs. Researchers should also investigate whether biases on OCB ratings translate into biased decisions about salaries, promotions, or other organizational rewards. After researchers better understand the causes of the bias, they should concern themselves with how to reduce it. Also, evidence in this study suggests that OCB is multidimensional. Not only did our CFA indicate a two-factor structure consistent with previous research (e.g., Organ & Ryan, 1995), the pattern of results differed across the two outcomes, which suggests that altruism and generalized compliance were perceived as distinct OCB dimensions.

Future Research

Researchers should attempt to understand the processes by which biases occur when male employees

take leave. To do so, researchers should first measure individual stereotypes of the caregiving roles of men and women within their immediate and extended families. Descriptive studies could examine where differential stereotypes between the roles of men and women exist (e.g., in birth, childcare, or eldercare) and whether male and female participants differ in the extent to which they endorse these stereotypes. The results of this study suggest that the prescribed roles of men and women do not differ as much in caretaking for their sick children as for newborns or their parents and that men may hold more traditional stereotypes than do women. The extent to which participants endorse these stereotypes could be examined as a moderator. Also, researchers could ask participants to rate how "necessary" it was that the employee took leave and determine if the perceived necessity of the leave mediates the observed relationships.

Employees may also be concerned about the reactions of coworkers to their taking leave because coworkers are the ones who have to cover the workload in the employees' absence. Therefore, a study such as this one could be conducted to ask participants to report their reactions from the perspective of a coworker rather than a manager. Findings from this study indicated that, when investigating the effects of leaves of absence, different reasons for family leave should not be grouped together. Therefore, additional reasons for taking leave as specified by the FMLA (i.e., adoption, caring for a sick spouse, personal illness) should be investigated to determine if each has different effects on managers' perceptions and actions.

Finally, it is important to consider that these biases were found for an employee who was described as having returned from leave 3 years before the evaluation. It is possible that different results would be found if employees were described as applying for leave or as currently on-leave. For example, stereotypes and assumptions about women exiting the workforce during times of family need may become more of a factor and may negatively influence perceptions of women leave takers.

Limitations

Although experimental studies are beneficial in isolating cause–effect relationships, the inevitable limitation is that the external validity may be questionable. In this study, students with minimal work experience reviewed a mock personnel record, assumed

the role of manager, and made ratings of citizenship behaviors without meeting an actual employee. It may be that undergraduate students lack the necessary work (and family) experience to act adequately in the role of manager, and they differ from managers because there are no personal consequences associated with the employee taking leave (e.g., ensuring their work is covered during their absence). Our sample and methodology are similar to the few experimental studies on this topic (e.g., Allen et al., 1994; Allen & Russell, 1999), but whether such findings generalize to supervisors' appraisals of workers is an important empirical question that needs to be addressed. In one study on leave taking, however, there was no difference in responses between participants who had managerial experience and those who did not (Allen et al., 1994). Furthermore, few studies have shown differences between students' and managers' decisions when gender role stereotypes are the subject of study (Eby, Allen, & Douthitt, 1999). Although more research is needed with actual managers, this study does add to the scant extant literature by expanding the reasons for taking family leave and examining citizenship behaviors as the outcomes. Field research is important to test the boundaries of these observed relationships if sufficient numbers of men taking leave can be included.

Suggestions for Organizational Practice

Societal expectations regarding the roles of men and women at work and home will influence how employees are perceived when they enact these roles. The organization's culture may be critical in influencing the "acceptability" of participating in familyfriendly programs (Lyness, Thompson, Francesco, & Judiesch, 1999) such as family leave. If the climate is chilly and reinforces traditional masculine roles, the male leave taker may be evaluated negatively and treated harshly. Our results suggest that organizations need to be proactive to overcome perceptions that the family, and hence family benefits, are more appropriate for women than men. The FMLA ensures that men have equal access to family leave; however, it cannot ensure that men are perceived equally when they use it. Thus, in training programs as part of managing diversity efforts, organizations could inform managers of how gender stereotypes may influence how men are perceived when using family policies, particularly by male managers. Organizations could also develop explicit policies stating

that employees, male or female, who use family leave should not be discriminated against. A climate should be created such that all employees feel encouraged to strike a balance between their work and nonwork lives.

CONCLUSION

The gendered nature of work and family presently serves to block men's involvement in family; yet, previous studies have documented the benefits of paternal involvement in the family (Deutsch, Lussier, & Servis, 1993). For example, highly involved fathers report greater feelings of competence and satisfaction with parenting (Deutsch et al., 1993); their children adopt fewer gender-role stereotypes and show greater self-confidence and self-esteem, and their wives report enhanced professional identities and reduced depression (Deutsch et al., 1993). Working fathers may be faced with the choice of taking leave to become more involved with their families versus the costs of being perceived as poorer organizational citizens. Therefore, researchers and practitioners alike should be concerned with ensuring that working fathers as well as mothers can be involved with their families without undue penalties at work.

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