Articles

Gender Equity in the Leisure Services Field

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Given the reported benefits of gender diversity in the workplace, the homo-
geneity of the leisure services field is worrisome. While women represent the
majority of the field's new entrants, they remain under-represented in the up-
per levels of most leisure service agencies. The purpose of this study was to gain
insight into why women are not advancing to upper administrative positions,
and to compare the results of this study to the studies conducted over a decade
ago. The equity theory and two explanations of attitudinal commitment guided
the study's research questions: the gender and job models. The findings indi-
cated that women reported greater feelings of discrimination and perceived
inequity, more gender-related obstacles toward promotion, and had lower ca-
reer aspirations than did their male counterparts. However, the frequency and
strength of women's attitudes towards some of these issues were less intense
than expected.

KEYWORDS: *Gender, diversity, equity, discrimination*

Introduction

The organizational benefits of gender diversity in the workplace have
been documented in the literature. Employee gender diversity has been pos-
itively associated with decision quality, creativity, time on task, and produc-
tivity (Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, & Neale, 1996; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox,
1996; Rogelberg & Rumery, 1996). Further, a recent theme in the literature
is that companies that actually encourage gender diversity in the workplace
have a "competitive advantage" (McLeod et al., 1996). This premise is based
on the findings that gender diversity has a tangible, positive effect on orga-
nizational outcomes.

Given the reported benefits of gender diversity, the homogeneity of the
workforce in upper administrative positions in leisure services is trouble-
some. Although women represent the majority of new entrants into the lei-
sure services field, they remain under represented in upper management
positions. As an example, a recent study in a midwestern state found that
only 11% of the executive level positions in public leisure service agencies

were held by women (Arnold & Shinew, 1996). This situation, however, is not limited to the leisure field. Using the accounting profession as an example, a recent study found that 12% of the partners of smaller firms were women, and only 5% of the partners of larger firms were women (AICPA, 1994). Similarly, the Glass Ceiling Commission established by Congress found that although women and minorities make up 57% of the work force, 97% of the senior managers at the largest service and industrial firms are white, and roughly the same percentage are male (Parshall, 1995).

Several explanations have been given to explain female underrepresentation in upper management positions. Two explanations that have been explored in the literature are: 1) feelings of workplace inequity among women lead to lower retention rates, and 2) the gender socialization process affects one's promotion aspirations. As an example, Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996) investigated the relationship between gender socialization, attitudinal commitment, and promotion aspirations among professional men and women. They investigated whether women's lower attitudinal commitment was due to gender-related socialization factors (i.e., choices women make in prioritizing work and family) or to job-related factors (i.e., feelings of unfair treatment, lack of appreciation, etc.). The results suggested that women's lower attitudinal commitment was a result of work-related issues and further, the authors concluded that women's under-representation in upper management ranks could be decreased by altering factors within the organization's control, factors that shape the job experience.

The purpose of the present study was to build upon the research that examines female under-representation in upper management positions and apply the findings to leisure service organizations. More specifically, this study investigated feelings of gender discrimination, perceptions of inequity, recognition of career obstacles, and aspirations for promotions among male and female middle managers of public leisure service agencies. The relevance of the study lies in gaining a greater understanding of the issue so strategies to improve gender diversity in the leisure services field can be developed. Equity theory and two possible explanations of attitudinal commitment, the gender model and the job model, provided the theoretical rationale for the study.

The Issue of Gender Equity

The growth of females employed in leisure services that began in the 1970s (Godbey & Henkel, 1976) continues yet today (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1995). Further, the number of female students majoring in recreation curricula has continued to increase for nearly two decades (Bialeschki, 1992). Given these two trends, we would expect to see more equal gender representation among senior management positions within the leisure services field by the 1980s and 1990s. However, recent studies have shown that women continue to remain under-represented in administrative and mana-

gerial positions (Arnold & Shinew, 1996; Cousineau & Bolla, 1989; Smale & Frisby, 1989).

In an effort to understand this imbalance, Henderson and Bialeschki (1993) examined perceived inequity issues among female professionals in the leisure field. Over half (56%) of the respondents reported that they did not perceive as many opportunities for career advancement for themselves as they did for their male counterparts. Further, only 8% of the respondents agreed with the statement, "In time, women will move into senior management positions." In an earlier study, Bialeschki and Henderson (1984) found that female professionals in leisure services experienced many conflicts while balancing their personal and professional lives. For example, female respondents reported that low pay, inadequate childcare, and family conflicts made it difficult for them to compete for senior management positions.

Frisby and Brown (1991) conducted 30 in-depth interviews with women who occupied middle and upper management positions in public leisure service agencies. They found that women were less traditional in terms of their definition of success in the workplace. For example, many women did not want to achieve executive status, and further, women in the early stages of their career tended to put their career goals second to other aspects of their personal lives. Later, Frisby (1992) suggested that leisure service organizations should also make use of a woman's career model, rather than simply relying on the traditional models that typically reflect only the male experience.

Henderson and Bialeschki (1995) concluded that a number of factors affected the career development of women and offered several suggestions to help women achieve career advancement. Among their considerations were issues related to equity concerns. Further, they suggested that organizations strive for gender diversity, and like Frisby, encouraged organizations to recognize that women may have needs that differ from the traditional male work model. Toward this end, the present study applied the equity theory and the job and gender models as a means to a better understanding of how women view their workplace environment.

Theoretical Framework

The Equity Theory

Defined generally, equity theory (Adams, 1963; 1965) is a model of motivation that explains why people strive for fairness and justice is social exchanges or give-and-take relationships (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1989). The theory posits that individuals are motivated by perceptions of inequity, as measured by "input" and "outcome" ratios in comparison to a "referent individual". Adams defined inputs as the qualities and characteristics that an individual brings to a social exchange (i.e., age, social status, education, effort, ability, etc.), whereas outcomes are defined as the items or privileges received in the exchange (i.e., money, increased status, authority, enjoyable work, etc.).

Adams aptly termed the referent individual the "comparison other". When equity exists, the individual is content with the exchange and is not motivated to act. If the individual perceives that his or her outcome/input ratio is less than that of a referent individual, then perceived inequity exists, and the motivation to restore equity typically arises.

In the workplace, feelings of inequity revolve around a person's evaluation of whether he or she receives adequate rewards in comparison to his or her inputs. People perform these evaluations by comparing the perceived fairness of their employment exchange to that of relevant others. Three different equity situations can occur. *Equity* exists for an individual when his or her ratio of perceived outcomes to input is equal to a relevant other. However, if the comparison person enjoys greater outcomes for similar inputs, *negative inequity* will be perceived. On the other hand, a person will experience *positive inequity* when his or her outcome to input ratio is greater than that of a relevant other.

In most cases, negative inequity is less tolerable than positive inequity. Those who are shortchanged are more powerfully motivated to correct the situation than those who are excessively rewarded. Moreover, negative and positive inequity tends to produce different emotions. Anger often results when individuals believe they have received less than they deserve (negative inequity), whereas positive inequity is more likely to produce feelings of guilt.

Over the years there has been a tendency to generalize the equity theory to a universal perspective, and this generalization across different groups has occurred despite conflicting results (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1985; 1987). For example, research has suggested that women frequently do not conform to equity theory predictions (Bylsma, Major, & Cozzarelli, 1988). When given the task of allocating outcomes (i.e., money) between self and a coworker, women tended to allocate less reward to themselves and more to a coworker than did men under similar circumstances. Furthermore, when their inputs exceeded those inputs of a comparison other, unlike men, women often allocated rewards equally rather than equitably (Major & Deaux, 1982).

Major (1987) has suggested that such findings may be a result of women having a lower sense of personal entitlement than men, especially with regard to work-related outcomes such as money. In support of this argument, Major, McFarlin, and Gagnon (1984) found that women worked longer, did more work, completed more correct work, and worked more efficiently than did men for the same amount of pay. Women also paid themselves less than men did for the same amount of work in the absence of a comparison standard.

Huseman et al. (1987) have proposed the concept of "equity sensitivity" to explain conflicting results regarding individuals' reactions to inequitable exchanges. This concept expands upon equity theory by hypothesizing that there are three types of individuals: 1) "equity sensitives"—individuals who follow the traditional equity theory model of behavior and sense equity when inputs equal outcomes; 2) "benevolents"—individuals who sense equity only

when their inputs exceed their outcomes; and 3) "entitled"—individual who sense equity only when their outcomes exceed their inputs. This concept attempts to explain why certain individuals do not behave as predicted when inequity exists, or more specifically, why they are not motivated to reestablish equity in certain inequitable situations.

Bylsma et al. (1988) conducted a study with men and women to examine equity sensitivity in both work and relationship domains. As predicted, women were significantly more benevolent than men in both domains, meaning they sensed equity when their inputs exceeded their outcomes. Also, as predicted, both sexes were more benevolent in the relationship domain than in the work domain. Further, men were significantly more entitled in the work domain than in the relationship domain, whereas women did not differ significantly in their orientations with respect to domain. A significant difference was found between the ratings of men and women in the work domain. They found that a greater proportion of men (22.1%) than women (6.7%) were classified as entitled and a greater proportion of women (22.0%) than men (10.1%) were classified as benevolent. The proportion of men (56.9%) and women (63.7%) in the equity sensitivity category was comparable.

However, recent studies have indicated that many women are becoming dissatisfied with the "benevolent" situation, both at home and at work. For example, Zhang and Farley (1995) reported that in the late 1970s and early 1980s professional women expressed little or no dissatisfaction with their husbands' contribution to housework. However, by the late 1980s, surveys showed a sharply heightened sense of dissatisfaction among women with their husbands' household contributions. In a 1990 survey, "how much my mate helps around the house" was the second biggest cause of resentment among married and cohabiting women, with 52% citing this as a problem (Townsend & O'Neil, 1990).

Similar feelings of frustration are evident in today's workplace, particularly related to pay and promotion inequity (Gibelman & Schervish, 1995). Women increasingly are disgruntled with salary inequity. The Population Reference Bureau recently reported that in 1995 women's earnings as a percentage of men's was 71%, compared to 64% in 1985 and 59% in 1975 (U.S. News & World Report, 1997). Thus, the chasm between the two is narrowing, but remains clear. Similarly, the U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that the average income of men with one to three years of college was higher than that of all groups of women, including women who had attended graduate school (Schiller, 1989). Pay and promotion inequity has several ramifications in the workplace, including an affect on the attitudinal commitment and retention of female employees.

The Gender Model versus the Job Model

Attitudinal commitment is positively associated with organizational involvement, attachment, and retention (Aven, Parker, & McEvoy, 1993). How-

ever, the research on the relationship between attitudinal commitment and gender is inconclusive. Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) observed that women, in general, were more attitudinally committed than men. However, other studies found that *professional* women were less attitudinally committed than men (Cohen, 1992; Gaddick & Farr, 1983), whereas *nonprofessional* women were more committed (Cohen, 1992). Two models offer explanations for understanding the inconclusive findings regarding gender and attitudinal commitment: the gender model and the job model (Aven et al., 1993; Feldman & Glenn, 1979).

The gender model contents that the different levels of organizational commitment between men and women are related to their gender socialization. Women, as a result of their socialization, place a greater emphasis on their family roles than do men, which results in a different work orientation and affects the importance they place on their work roles. This model contends women are socially predisposed to be less attitudinally committed to their organizations than men and is frequently cited by researchers and managers as support for women's under representation in upper management positions (Dodd-McCue & Wright, 1996). Further, the highly publicized claims that women desire a slower "mommy career path" are based on the assumptions of the gender model (Schwartz, 1990).

In contrast, the job model contends that attitudinal commitment is a function of the work environment (Aven et al., 1993). Building on the premise that attitude formation does not arise from gender socialization, the job model suggests that attitudinal commitment varies only when women and men have different organizational experiences. Therefore, the discrepancy in attitudinal commitment is a result of different organizational positions or different treatment within the organization and thus, may be related to the inequity issue discussed earlier. This model proposes that if women are treated similarly to their male counterparts, their commitment to the organization will be similar.

Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996) tested these two models in their investigation of women, men, and attitudinal commitment. A variety of measures were used to determine whether the gender or job model best explained attitudinal commitment. Variables representing the gender model were related to family issues including demographic variables (sex, marital status, responsibilities for children or elders, dual career family status) and work/family relationship variables (work/family interface, level of comfort with work/family responsibilities). The job model focused on factors of the job that were unrelated to gender stereotypes. Some examples are job selection characteristics (reward system, location, work environment), length of employment with the organization and the profession (organizational tenure, professional tenure), and career orientation (job achievement, dependency, work centrality). Although the results indicated that women were less committed than men to their organization, their findings "overwhelmingly" supported that the job model was the better predictor of attitudinal commitment. More specifically, comparisons of the stepwise regression models

revealed that all of the antecedents of attitudinal commitment were related to job-related factors. Thus, the results of their study indicated that women have lower attitudinal commitment to their organizations than do men, but the differences were related to organizational experiences and not gender socialization.

Research Expectations

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that may affect attitudinal commitment and retention. More specifically, the study examined feelings of gender discrimination, perceptions of inequity, recognition of career obstacles, and aspirations for promotions among male and female middle managers of public leisure service agencies. The specific research expectations for the study included the following:

Research Expectation 1: Women will be more likely to report feelings of workplace discrimination than will men

Research Expectation 2: Women will be more likely to report feelings of negative inequity than will men.

Research Expectation 3: Women will report more gender-related obstacles toward promotion than will men.

Research Expectation 4: As demonstrated by the job model, feelings of discrimination, negative inequity, and gender-related obstacles will lead to lower aspirations for promotion among women.

Methods

Sample

Questionnaires were mailed to male and female middle managers of public leisure service agencies in the state of Illinois. A purposeful sample was derived from a listing of employees in the membership directory of Illinois Park Districts. Individuals with the titles "recreation supervisor", "recreation manager", or "recreation coordinator" were selected to represent "middle managers". Middle managers were selected for this study because they are likely candidates for executive level positions in the future. A total population of 215 middle managers (n=113 females, n=102 males) was compiled. Cover letters accompanied questionnaires asking potential respondents to participate in the study. As an incentive, they were informed that returned surveys would qualify them for a $50.00 cash drawing. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were included and a reminder postcard was sent ten days after the initial mailing. A total of 148 completed and usable questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 69% (n=76 females; n= 72 males).

The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. Approximately 52% of the sample was female, and over 87% reported that their executive director was male. Most of the respondents (63.5%) were

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Demographic Characteristics	Percentages		
Gender			
Male	48.3		
Female	51.7		
	100.0		
	Total Sample	Female	Male
Marital Status			
Single	29.7	40.8	18.3
Married	63.5	51.3	76.1
Divorced	6.1	6.6	5.6
Other	0.7	1.3	0.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0
Race			
African American	2.7	1.3	4.2
White (non-Hispanic)	95.3	96.1	94.4
Hispanic	0.7	1.3	0.0
Asian	0.0	0.0	0.0
Native American	0.7	1.3	0.0
Mixed Race	0.7	0.0	1.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0
Annual Income			
$10,000-$19,999	5.4	7.9	2.8
$20,000-$29,999	27.7	26.3	29.6
$30,000-$39,999	23.6	27.6	18.3
$40,000-$49,999	18.9	19.7	18.3
$50,000-$59,999	10.8	13.2	8.5
$60,000-$69,999	7.4	2.6	12.7
$70,000 and above	6.2	2.7	9.8
	100.0	100.0	100.0
Highest Education Level			
High School	1.4	2.6	0.0
Junior College/Assoc Degree	1.4	2.6	0.0
Some College or Technical School	5.4	6.6	4.2
Completed Bachelor's Degree	47.3	52.6	40.8
Some Graduate Work	16.2	15.8	16.9
Completed Graduate Work	28.3	19.8	38.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0

married and 50.7% indicated that they had children. The average age of the sample was 36.3 and the majority (95.3%) indicated that they were "White (non-Hispanic)." Over half of the respondents (51.3%) reported that their annual income was between $20,000 and $39,999. Over 47% indicated that their highest education level was a completed bachelor's degree, however 16.2% reported that they had completed some graduate work and 28.3% had a graduate degree. The average number of hours worked per week was 47.7 hours, and the average "expected" overtime was 6 hours. The average number of years worked in the recreation profession was 12.2 years (SD=7.5); however, the average number of years worked in their current position was 5.3 years (SD=5.0). The average number of employees for whom they were responsible was 5.6 (SD= 8.1) full-time employees and 69.7 (SD=135.7) part-time employees.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire items were developed based on the earlier work of Bialeschki and Henderson (1984), Henderson and Bialeschki (1993; 1995) and Frisby and Brown (1991). Additionally, questionnaire items were adapted from a similar study conducted with architects (Anthony, 1996). The dependent variables included in the questionnaire were perceptions of gender discrimination, perceptions of gender inequity, recognition of career obstacles, and aspirations for promotions. The questionnaire was pilot tested by public recreation middle managers to assess its face validity. Several questions were modified based on their suggestions.

Respondents were asked to answer a set of questions that were designed to obtain general information about perceived discriminatory practices in the workplace. Response options ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The six items centered around promotion opportunities. The items included: a) Men are given fewer opportunities than women to be promoted; b) Women are given few opportunities than men to be promoted; c) There are adequate efforts made by the profession to promote women; d) Taking maternity leave will slow down or damage a career; e) A male employee who has his own family will be on a lower career track; and f) A female employee who has her own family will be on a slower career track. Respondents were also asked, "Do you believe that your organization is gender or racially discriminatory in any of the following: recruitment practices, selection practices, task assignments, performance evaluation, salary levels, and promotion decisions." Response options included "gender discrimination", "racial discrimination", "neither", and "both". Given the focus of the present study, only the gender discriminatory items will be reported.

Two of the questionnaire items were related to respondents' perceptions of a glass ceiling in the recreation and parks profession. The respondents were given the U.S. Department of Labor's definition of a glass ceiling which is "artificial barriers, based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevents women and minorities from advancing within their organization and reach-

ing their full potential". After being given the definition, respondents were asked, "Have you ever seen a 'glass ceiling' during your career in recreation and parks?" A second question asked, "Based on your experiences and personal observations, are top management positions equally represented by gender throughout Illinois public recreation agencies". The respondents were asked to respond either "yes" or "no" to each question.

Perceived gender inequity was evaluated by asking, "Indicate how you compare to members of the opposite sex in similar positions. Comparisons may be made with individuals in your agency or at another recreation and park agency." The eleven factors included in this question were opportunities for advancement, amount of encouragement received from superiors, extent of participation in management decision, amount of respect from clients, amount of respect from co-workers, amount of respect from subordinates, performance expectations, desirable work assignment, salary, and employee benefits. Response options were "much less", "the same", and "much more".

To assess obstacles toward career advancement, respondents were asked "To what extent do you perceive any of the following to be obstacles toward the advancement of your career?". Three categories of responses were included: individual factors (i.e., education level, lack of ability, lack of experience, gender, age), organizational factors (i.e., exclusion from social/informal networks, no promotions available at top level, unsupportive boss/supervisor), and family factors (i.e., marital status, child care responsibilities, household responsibilities). Respondents were asked to check all that applied.

To measure respondents' promotional aspirations, managers were asked, "Do you desire another promotion during your career in the recreation and parks field? If you check no, please check all that apply." Options included: too much family stress; lack of support from family; too much of a time commitment; lack of self-confidence; lack of energy; lack of support from friends; too much work stress; poor health; satisfied with current position.

An initial multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if women and men differed on the items. Following significant multivariate effects, univariate analysis to variance (ANOVA) tests were used to determine the items that differed significantly between the two groups. Sex was the independent variable and the items for each question served as the dependent variables. Chi-square analyses were used for the questions that had a dichotomous response format. The alpha level was adjusted for the number of comparisons conducted; the Bonferroni correction was used to correct for inflated type I error.

Results

Perceptions of Gender Discrimination

The MANOVA results indicated a significant difference between men and women in their perceptions of discrimination ($F = 7.69$; $p < .01$). Uni-

variate analyses of variances were performed to determine the specific items on which the groups differed. Women were more likely to *disagree* with the statement that men are given fewer opportunities than women to be promoted (F = 12.79; p < .001); however, women were more likely to *agree* that they are given fewer opportunities than men to be promoted (F = 28.79; p < .001). Although not statistically significant after the Bonferroni correction, women also had a tendency to disagree that adequate efforts were made by the profession to promote women. Men and women also differed in their perceptions of whether a family influences one's career track. Women were more likely to disagree with the statement that males who have a family will be on a slower career track (F = 8.62; p < .004), whereas the women agreed that women with families will be on a slower career track (F = 10.45; p < .002). The two groups did not differ in their responses regarding the impact maternity leave has on a career track. Table 2 presents a summary of the results regarding perceptions of gender discrimination.

The results also suggested that women were more likely to believe that their organization is gender discriminatory regarding salary levels (χ^2 = 34.84; p <. 001) and promotion decisions (χ^2 = 12.89; p < .004). Although not statistically significant, a greater percentage of women indicated that

TABLE 2

Gender Comparisons on Statements Regarding Perceived Discriminatory Practices in the Recreation and Parks Profession

	Means (Standard Deviations)		
Statement	Females (n=76)	Males (n=72)	F-Value
Men are given fewer opportunities than females to be promoted.	4.30 (.67)	3.80 (.97)	12.79*
Women are given fewer opportunities than males to be promoted.	2.48 (.88)	3.42 (1.02)	28.79*
There are adequate efforts made by the profession to promote women.	2.95 (.99)	2.53 (.97)	6.38
Taking maternity leave will slow down or damage a career.	3.23 (.87)	3.48 (1.04)	2.00
A male employee who has his own family will be on a slower career track.	4.07 (.66)	3.65 (1.03)	8.62*
A female employee who has her own family will be on a slower career track.	2.61 (.87)	3.23 (1.20)	10.45*

Note: Mean scores are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).
*After Bonferroni correction the significance level is p < .008.

their organization is gender discriminatory in performance evaluations and task assignments. The results indicated relatively no differences between women and men on their responses regarding recruitment and selection practices. Table 3 illustrates these findings.

Women were significantly more likely than men to report that they had seen a glass ceiling during their career. Almost 40% of the women indicated that they had seen a glass ceiling compared to only 13% of the men (χ^2 = 15.00; p < .01). However, men and women did not differ in their reaction to the gender imbalance of females in top management positions within the state's public recreation agencies. When asked if top management positions are equally represented by gender throughout the state, 75.6% of the women and 66.7% of the men indicated "no".

Perceptions of Gender Inequity

The MANOVA results indicated a significant variation existed between men and women regarding their perceptions of perceived gender inequity (F = 3.17; p < .01). Univariate analyses indicated that women felt that they received less salary (F = 12.15; p < .001) compared to their male counterparts. The other issues in which the responses by men and women were notably different were that women felt that the expectations were higher for them and that they were less involved in management decisions when compared to their male counterparts. See Table 4 for a summary of the results.

Recognition of Career Obstacles

In terms of perceived obstacles toward promotion, 17 factors were listed under individual factors, and men and women rated two significantly differ-

TABLE 3
Gender Discrimination on Employment Issues

	Percentage Indicating Their Organization is Gender Discriminatory on Employment Issues		
Employment Issue	Females (n=76)	Males (n=72)	χ^2
Recruitment Practices	6.58	4.35	.64
Selection Practices	9.21	4.35	3.07
Task Assignments	25.00	14.29	6.78
Performance Evaluations	12.00	1.45	9.23
Salary Levels	46.67	4.35	34.84*
Promotion Decisions	21.33	4.48	12.89*

*After Bonferroni correction the significance level is p < .008.

TABLE 4
Comparisons Between Males' and Females' Perceptions Regarding Positions

Statement	Means (Standard Deviations)		F-Value
	Females (n=76)	Males (n=72)	
Opportunities for advancement	1.82 (.63)	1.94 (.59)	1.36
Amount of encouragement received from superiors	1.89 (.63)	1.91 (.68)	.01
Extent of participation in management decisions	1.79 (.68)	2.03 (.72)	5.36
Amount of respect from superiors	1.93 (.55)	1.99 (.63)	.30
Amount of respect from clients	2.02 (.50)	2.07 (.71)	.01
Amount of respect from co-workers	2.07 (.47)	1.96 (.63)	1.94
Amount of respect from subordinates	2.05 (.57)	1.97 (.69)	1.54
Performance expectations	2.23 (.48)	2.00 (.62)	5.00
Desirable work assignments	1.92 (.54)	1.99 (.68)	.18
Salary	1.55 (.60)	1.91 (.54)	12.15*
Employee benefits	1.99 (.26)	1.92 (.46)	.88

Note: Mean scores are based on a 3-point Likert-type scale of 1 (much less), 2 (the same), and 3 (much more).
*After Bonferroni correction the significance level is $p < .004$.

ent. Women perceived that "gender" ($\chi^2 = 22.89$; $p < .01$) and "lack of role models" ($\chi^2 = 3.63$; $p < .05$) were obstacles more often than did men. In terms of organizational factors, men and women rated two of the eleven factors significantly different. Female respondents perceived "gender discrimination" ($\chi^2 = 11.59$; $p < .01$) and "gender differences in management style" ($\chi^2 = 7.17$; $p < .01$) as greater obstacles toward promotion than did men. Men and women did not rate the five family factors significantly different.

Aspirations for Promotion

Men were more likely than women to indicate that they desired another promotion during their career in the recreation and parks field ($\chi^2 = 5.14$; $p <. 05$). Of the female respondents, 33.8% indicated that they did not want a promotion, whereas only 17.1% of the men reported that they did not want a promotion. Those who indicated that they did not desire another promotion were asked to react to nine factors to help explain their response. The results are displayed in Table 5. Women were more likely than men to indicate that "too much family stress" ($\chi^2 = 5.59$; $p < .002$), "too much of a time commitment" ($\chi^2 = 9.66$; $p < .001$), "too much work stress" ($\chi^2 = 4.20$; $p < .006$), and "satisfied with current position" ($\chi^2 = 4.50$; $p < .004$) were reasons for not wanting a promotion.

TABLE 5
Gender Comparison on Reasons for Not Wanting A Promotion

	Percentage Indicating Item is an Issue		
Promotion Issue	Females (n=76)	Males (n=72)	χ^2
Too much family stress	18.42	5.63	5.59*
Lack of support from family	3.95	0.00	2.86
Too much of a time commitment	26.32	7.04	9.66*
Lack of self-confidence	2.63	1.41	0.28
Lack of energy	3.95	0.00	2.86
Lack of support from friends	1.31	0.00	0.94
Too much work stress	22.37	9.86	4.20*
Satisfied with current position	30.26	15.49	4.50*

*After Bonferroni correction the significance level is p < .006.

Discussion

When asked a series of questions regarding feelings of discrimination in the workplace, women were more likely to report discrimination than were men. In general, women felt that they were given fewer opportunities than men were to be promoted and that women with families were on a slower track. However, in both of these cases, the reported means were not as strong as expected, and in fact, were fairly close to the neutral range. Women perceived their organizations to be gender discriminatory in two areas: salary levels and promotion decisions but again, less than half of the women indicated that this was an issue in their organization.

In terms of perceived inequity, women indicated that they received "much less" salary compared to their male counterparts. The research expectation was that women would perceive negative inequity, and as it relates to salary, this was the case. However, men and women did not statistically differ in their perceptions regarding the remaining factors.

Men and women responded similarly regarding most of the obstacles toward promotion. However, their responses differed with respect to gender-related obstacles. As expected, women were more likely to report that factors such as gender discrimination and gender differences in management style were obstacles toward their promotion.

As anticipated, men were more likely than women to desire another promotion during their career. Women were more likely than men to indicate a promotion would entail too much of a time commitment, add more stress related to family and work, and would be unnecessary since they were satisfied with their current positions.

The findings of this study, however, should be interpreted through the limitations imposed by survey research. Moreover, the sample size and the

restricted nature of the population were further limitations of the study. A larger population that would allow for a more generalizable sample of leisure service employees is necessary if we want to have a greater degree of confidence in our findings. The population for this study was limited to Illinois public recreation middle managers, and thus generalizations beyond this population are not warranted. Further, although the response rate was within the acceptable range, approximately 30% of the population did not respond. The respondents may have felt more strongly about the topic area than the non-respondents, which could have biased the findings.

Limitations notwithstanding, the findings from this study indicated that women still perceived gender discrimination, gender inequities, and gender-related obstacles within their leisure service organizations. Although laws have been passed and organizational policies have been implemented to alleviate or abate discrimination within organizations, these findings suggested that some problems still exist. Moreover, as it relates to the equity theory, these findings support recent research that has indicated that women are becoming less "benevolent" and are less tolerant of inequitable situations.

The findings supported the job model and the notion that men and women experienced somewhat different situations at work that may affect their attitudinal commitment. Only a third of the women in the study indicated that they wanted a promotion during their careers, which has obvious connections to the issue of female under-representation in upper management positions. However, the findings also provided some support for the gender model in that the women who did not desire a promotion indicated that it would cause too much family stress and would require too much time. Thus, the present study provided some insight into why some women did not desire a promotion, but additional research is needed to further elucidate the relationship between workplace treatment, gender socialization, and promotion aspirations. For example, studies that make comparisons between female respondents might provide additional information. Age, marital status, the presence or absence of children, and tenure with the organization are example of variables that might be examined.

Unfortunately in some ways the results of this study mirrored the results of those studies conducted over a decade ago. For example, Leigh (1982) interviewed 30 women in upper management positions in leisure services and found that over half of the women reported gender discrimination within their organization. Bialeschki and Henderson (1984) found that 40% of the women in their study claimed to have experienced some type of discrimination, and in a more recent study by Henderson and Bialeschki (1993), they found that women were skeptical of their opportunities to advance to senior management positions within leisure services. As mentioned earlier, only 8% agreed that in time, women would move into senior management positions. Similarly, Henderson and Bialeschki (1995) found that 63% of the women had experienced discrimination and 56% perceived that

they did not have as many opportunities for advancement as men did in the recreation profession.

Based on the results of this study, women still perceive and experience gender discrimination and gender inequities within leisure service organizations. However, areas where discrimination, inequity, and gender-differences were *not* found should be noted. A low percentage of both women and men felt that their organization gender discriminated in the areas of recruitment and selection practices. In terms of perceived obstacles toward career advancement, the responses of women and men differed on only a few issues. Gender differences were not found for most of the individual factors, such as lack of skill, lack of self-confidence, lack of experience, and sexual orientation. Further, gender differences were not detected regarding some key organizational issues, such as sexual harassment, exclusion from formal and informal networks, and inflexibility of work schedules. Family issues such as child care and household responsibilities did not appear to be more of an obstacle for women than for men. However, as mentioned earlier, contradictory information was received when women were more likely to report that they did not desire a promotion because it would cause too much family stress.

Thus, these findings are cause for concern, as well as some limited celebration. The central value of this research is in showing the continued prevalence of perceived inequity and discrimination in the leisure field. The differences in perceptions between the women and men in this study regarding such issues as discrimination, equity, and promotion suggest that although some progress has been made, additional work is needed. The findings indicated that women perceived that their input/outcome ratio was less than that of referent individuals (male counterparts), particularly as it related to salary. As demonstrated by Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996), workplace experiences affect attitudinal commitment. Therefore, organizational decisions makers should critically examine their agencies' structures to ensure that equal treatment and opportunities are available to both men and women. Organizations may receive increased commitment from women by rewarding them equitably and encouraging professional growth and development. This suggests more flexible career tracks with upward mobility as a method for retaining women in the workplace. The leisure services field will ultimately suffer if feelings of perceived inequity and gender discrimination continues among the female professionals in the field, and if the homogeneity of the workforce in upper administrative positions persists.

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