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Role of gender in predicting correlation between promotion systems and motivation among Lebanese employees

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Abstract

This research aimed at investigating gender differences in motivation, in relation to existing promotion systems in the Lebanese workplaces. A survey design method using an online administered questionnaire was used for a sample of Lebanese respondents working at Family Businesses. Significant differences were noticed in motivation between females and males. Females working in Lebanese family businesses are more motivated compared to males when the perceived equity and clarity of promotion systems are low to medium. However, as the equity and clarity of promotion system increase, males become more motivated. This study contributes to understanding gender differences in motivation within the Lebanese context and filled a gap in literature about such gender differences at the work place in the Middle East Region. This study approached employees` motivation in terms of content, process and job design dimensions.

Keywords: Compensation systems, employee motivation, gender differences, Lebanese employee, family business

1. Introduction

The era of gender differences at the workplace goes back to the date when working women and gender equality were uncommon thoughts. The 20th century was a turning point for women and demographic workforce in general. Regardless of the acts and intention to balance between men and women at the workplace, gender differences still exist ^[1]. Studies still show that men receive better rewards in terms of salaries, promotion and development ^[2]. Yet, it is crucial for organizations to consider the differences between men and women in order to lessen obstacles and challenges that hinder their behavior and motivation ^[3]. Motivation, irrespective of their gender; has a significant influence on employees behavior ^[1]. In fact, studies have proven that motivated employees contribute to the business overall success ^[4]. Work rewards are considered powerful tool that boosts employees` performance ^[5]. Reward systems have been studied enormously in correlation with motivation. Rewards are essential in motivating employees to achieve their targets and perform creatively. Ketut et al. had identified reward system as a set of organization`s policies, practices and processes used to reward employees for their contribution ^[6]. Barrington ^[7] also outlined the significant role of reward system in attracting, retaining and motivating employees; thus achieving the organization`s strategies and objectives. However, other studies had limited reward system to a "prize" given to an employee in return for his or her performance ^[8].

The argument on the importance and influence of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards on employees` motivation still exists. Some empirical studies support the notion that extrinsic rewards are low ranked. In other words, some employees do not view monetary rewards (money) as their priority or motive ^[9]. Another stream of studies ^[6] points out that rewards especially money play a significant role when it comes to motivating employees ^[10].

2. Problem Statement

Gender difference is a global problem, which almost every country has to deal with. It is a common issue where men seem to be paid more than women and have much more opportunities for promotions and development ^[3]. This is due to cultural, social, and economic factors that contributed for such differences ^[2]. Similarly, women being a significant element of the workforce, it is important to consider the factors that motivate those ^[3].

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Moreover, it is important to highlight the areas in which men and women differ such as their perceptions, commitment, motivation and managements styles ^[11] in order to establish an effective reward system. Despite that, many studies were conducted in the Middle East targeting gender differences and women at workplace in particular ^[2, 11, 12, 13, 14]; this plethora of literature is still perpetuated.

During the past years, the perception towards working women had changed ^[14]. Lebanon is considered the leading country in Arab Countries for allowing women to enter the workplace. This study tends to examine motivation in relation to job meaningfulness, existing promotion system, instrumentality expectancy, and perceived equity and compare motivation between men and women within the Lebanese Family Businesses.

3. Purpose of the Study

This paper aims to explore if there are gender differences between women motivation levels and men motivation levels in Lebanese Family Businesses. Motivation in this paper is studied against existing promotion system, instrumentality expectancy, perception of equity, and job meaningfulness. In order to examine gender differences in Lebanese Family Businesses, it is important to test correlations between each of existing promotion system, instrumentality expectancy, perception of equity, and job meaningfulness and employees` motivation.

4. Significance of the Study

Due to the scarcity of studies conducted in Lebanon related to the latter topic, this study attempts to extend the empirical studies to explore gender differences between women motivation levels and men motivation levels in Lebanese Family Businesses in terms of existing promotion system, instrumentality expectancy, perception of equity, and job meaningfulness.

This study is significant for determining if females find more meaningfulness and instrumentality expectancy in the family firm compared to males. Moreover, this study is significant for determining if females perceive more equity compared to males in the Lebanese Family Firms.

5. Research Questions

In order to answer the study main objective, whether there are gender differences in Lebanese Family Business, the following questions were investigated:

1. Do females find more meaningfulness in Lebanese Family Firms compared to males?
2. Do females perceive more equity in Lebanese Family Firms compared to males?
3. Do Females perceive promotion systems more motivating in Lebanese Family Firms compared to males?
4. Do females find more instrumentality expectancy in Lebanese Family Firms compared to males?

6. Hypotheses

H1: Existing promotion systems are positively correlated to employees` motivation.

H2: Instrumentality expectancy is positively correlated to employees` motivation.

H3: Perceived equity is positively correlated to employees` motivation.

H4: Job meaningfulness is positively correlated to

employees` motivation.

H5: Gender moderates the existing correlation between existing promotion systems and employees` motivation.

H6: Gender moderates the existing correlation between perceived equity and employees` motivation.

H7: Gender moderates the existing correlation between instrumentality expectancy and employees` motivation.

H8: Gender moderates the existing correlation between job meaningfulness and employees` motivation.

7. Literature Review

7.1 Lebanese Context

Women in the labor market in the Middle East Region face out obstacles at work place in term of equal recruitment, pay, and selection ^[2]. In reference to Afiouni ^[13], Arab culture does not align with the international principles of fairness, justices and ethics in management ^[12]. Nonetheless, Lebanon doesn't embrace necessarily all the cultural traits of other Arab countries. Various studies done in the region addressed the commonalities and differences between different Arab countries including gender issues, job attitude, and job values. Philippe Skaff mentioned that Lebanon shares some values with the Arab countries in one hand and with Europe and western countries on the other hand¹². In general, the Lebanese society is referred to it as "masculine". Success, hard work, accomplishment, and assertiveness fall under the umbrella of masculine traits. Moreover, Lebanon is notably different from other Arab regions in terms of gender issues. It is considered the leading country for widening the role of women gender issues. It is considered the leading country for widening the role of women beyond their "traditional mother-home roles" ^[12]. Compared to other Arab countries, Lebanese women encounter less restricted cultural barriers ^[2].

The shortage of male in the work force pushed women to break the cultural barrier and enter the workforce to fill the gap ^[11]. However, stereotyping and discrimination among gender still exists when it comes to equal pay, promotion and prestige ^[4]. The strong loyalty that the family commands in the Lebanese society has resulted in the dominance of family business in the country ^[12]. There are around 85% of the small to medium enterprises in Lebanon owned by families. The Lebanese economy highly depends on its private sector that consists mainly of SMEs ^[15]. Family Businesses in Lebanon are mainly small to medium size companies and international or multinational companies ^[16]. By definition, a family business is a business owned and managed at least by one member of the family ^[17]. Family businesses are the key drivers for the socioeconomic development and wealth of the country ^[18]. In Lebanon, they are the source for innovation opportunities and local development ^[17]. They are characterized by their unique way of management, structure and culture. These feature has a side effect on employees` performance as the promotion or high position is not based neither on merit nor on seniority systems ^[16]. In general, family businesses embrace an incentive plan to encourage a set of behaviors or attitudes that aligns with the organization strategy ^[15].

7.2 Theoretical Framework

A conceptual framework model is a representation of the system and hypotheses deduced above. It provided an understanding of how variables are connected to each other.

7.2.1 Content of Motivational Theories

Regardless of the arguments between the motivation theorists on what motivates employees, they all agreed that in order for an employee to be motivated, a desire is required^[19]. Maslow, the founder of the hierarchy of needs theory (1954) based his theory on individual needs. He considered that within any individual, a hierarchy of needs exists. Hence, in order for an employee to satisfy his or her need, he or she exerts the required effort to attain the goal^[20]. On the same side, Herzberg's theory is an extension for Maslow's theory. Herzberg had identified two factors that influence employee's work (hygiene and motivators factors). The presence of hygiene factors does not motivate employees yet their absence demotivates employees and influence their behavior and performance. McGregor two theories: theories X & Y explain two contradictory ideologies of labor and management style. Both theories held the management responsibility for organizing and directing humans to achieve their targets. McClelland^[21] had identified 3 intrinsic needs that drive an employee to perform better: Achievement need- the need to achieve the set goals; Power need – the desire to adjust and regulate others behaviors and Affiliation need: the need to build interpersonal relationships within the work place.

In reference to promotion systems, according to the Maslow Hierarchy of needs is a satisfaction of "safety needs" or attaining an achievement need based on McClelland Theory^[22]. Promotion systems are frequently used by most of the organizations to reward, retain and develop their human assets^[23]. They entitle promotion as a mean to provide career advancement opportunities for employees to develop and utilize their potential whenever possible^[24]. Promotion decisions are based on either abstract, concrete or both factors. Some managers rely on concrete factors such as seniority, educational level, performance, age and gender^[9]. However, others rely on abstract factors for instance personality, knowledge, experience, family background and interpersonal relationship^[25]. Regardless of the system used take a promotion decision, organizations adopt promotion systems for the following significant reasons: to match employees with jobs of greater responsibilities, reward them, achieve strategic goals, and motivate them to move upward for the next level^[5]. Furthermore, researches have shown that promotion systems are linked to positive organizational behavior and attitude such as commitment, low turnover and motivation^[26]. Based on the above discussion, the following was hypothesized:

H1: Employee Promotion System is positively correlated to motivation.

7.2.2 Process Motivational Theories

The process motivational theories are concerned with the process of motivation; how does an employee get motivated. Such theories are concerned with motivation instrumentally rather than with the content and needs of the employees^[22]. Vroom's Expectancy theory and Adam's Equity theory are typical examples of the process theories. According to Vroom's expectancy theory, employees motivation is the product of his or her perception in performing a particular task, the reward resulting from the latter and the value of the reward. Hence, employee's motivation is associated with three beliefs. The expectancy which is employee's capability to perform, instrumentality which is the reward linked to the task and valence of rewards which is the

perceived value of the reward^[27].

Previous studied questioned the influence of employees' judgment of equity on motivation^[28]. The Equity theory of motivation or Adam's theory is one of the process motivational theories that postulates how employees are motivated^[29]. Similarly to Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Equity Theory is also influenced by the employees' perceptions^[30]. Adam's theory covers five aspects upon which social comparison is deduced. These aspects are as follows: 1- employees have beliefs about their inputs & outputs; 2- employees tend to compare themselves; 3- employees predict inputs & outputs of others; 4- employees tend to compare their own input/output ratios with others ratios; 5- motive to restore equity among employees^[29]. Hence, the belief in the existence of equity in the reward system among their coworkers motivates them.

In conclusion, the process motivational theories are an extension for the content motivational theories. They clarified that needs and rewards are not directly translated into motivation or an additional effort. Employees' perception plays a significant role in determining the level of motivation and effort to be utilized^[22]. Employees predicting rewards and perceiving fairness and equity tend to utilize their capabilities and skills to achieve the target^[25]. Therefore, the following hypotheses are deduced:

H2: Instrumentality expectations are positively correlated to employees' motivation.

H3: Employees perception of fairness is positively correlated to employees'

7.2.3 Job Design Motivational Theories

Job Design Motivational theorists based their theories on the assumption that the job itself is a vital determinant of employees' motivation^[19]. The most known and classical job design model is the Job Characteristic Model established by Richard Hackman and Greg Oldham in 1980. According to Hackman and Oldham Job Characteristics Model, the employee gets motivated when the job satisfies three significant psychological needs^[19]: Meaningfulness of the work, Autonomy or the responsibility for the task outcome, and Feedback or the knowledge of results of the work activities. Hackman and Oldham also identified the characteristics that add the sense of meaningfulness to the job. The core features for job meaningfulness is a synergy of skills variety, task identity and task significance. Thomas and Velthouse had built their theory on Hackman and Oldham Job Characteristics Model. They condensed the three significant psychological needs of the Job Characteristics Model into two intrinsically rewarding states and added 2 missing activity related rewards. Therefore, their model consists of the following 4 intrinsic rewards^[31]: Sense of Meaningfulness, Sense of Choice, Sense of Competence, and Sense of Progress.

Job meaningfulness is a key contributing factor for employees' motivation. For instance, if the employee is being bored at his or her job, this concludes that either the employee has more capabilities from which the organization is not getting benefit or even not aware of. Hence, such sense of boredom influences employees' behavior and attitude such as poor attendance, low level of satisfaction and poor motivation^[32].

Therefore, the below hypothesis is concluded:

H4: Job Meaningfulness is positively correlated to employees' motivation.

Perception of equity, job meaningfulness, existing promotion system, and instrumentality expectancy are all independent variables that predict employees` motivation. Gender in this study is a moderator that might influence the

correlation between each of the independent variables and employees` motivation. Based on the literature review and deduced hypotheses, the following conceptual framework for this study is framed:

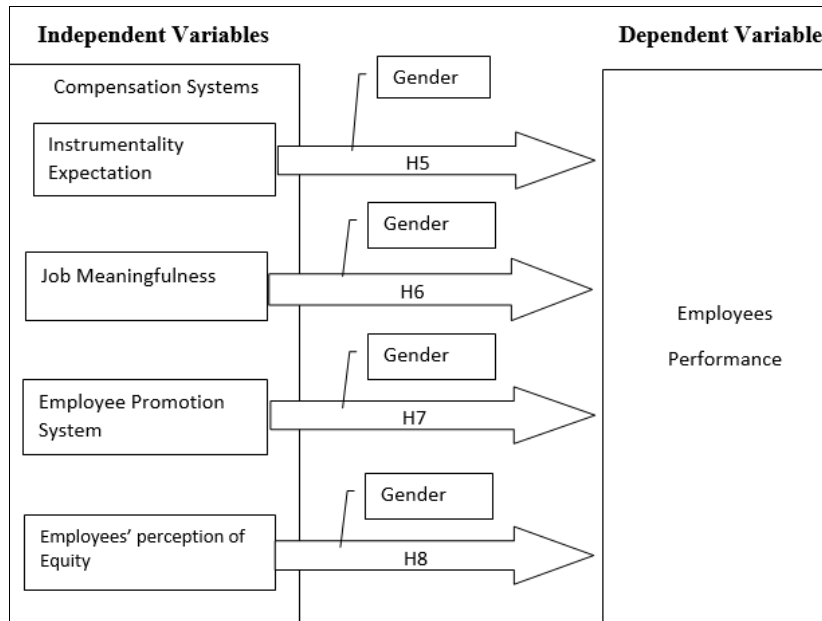


Fig 1: Theoretical Framework

The population of interest for this study is all non-family employees working at family businesses in the Lebanese private sector. In particular, the survey was circulated among employees working at SMEs in the Beirut region, Lebanon. The companies selected for this study were selected based on the accessibility and willingness to participate. Furthermore, the selected companies are family

businesses located in Beirut and having at least 15 non-family employees working at. Out of the 255 surveys distributed among the non-family employees of the selected companies, the participants in this study were 107 employees working in Family Businesses across Beirut Region. The sample demographic and personal variables are summarized in Table.1.

Table 1: Participant Demographics (N = 107)

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	66	61.7
Male	41	38.3
Marital Status		
Married	39	36.4
Single	60	56.1
Other	8	7.5
Number of Children		
0-2	99	92.5
3-5	7	6.5
Equal or more than 6	1	0.9
Age		
20-28	42	39.3
29-39	50	46.7
40-49	13	12.1
Equal or Above 50	2	1.9
Total Years of Experience		
1-5	39	36.4
6-11	40	37.4
12-17	15	14.0
More than 17	13	12.1
Education Background		
High School Degree	11	10.3
Undergraduate Degree	19	17.8
Graduate Degree	71	66.4
Technical Degree	6	5.6
Managerial Level		
Top Management	10	9.3

Middle Management	33	30.8
Supervisory Management	19	17.8
Non-managerial/Employee	45	42.1

8. Research Methodology

Given the research objective and based on the literature review, this paper adopts a quantitative approach. The study empirically tests its hypotheses by collecting primary data through a self-administered questionnaire. In order to keep the participant anonymous, the data were collected online using Lime Survey. The questionnaire used for this study is structured from three sections.

The demographic data collected in the initial part of the questionnaire includes but not limited to the following: age range, gender, marital status and years of experience. However, the non-demographic section was divided into five measures in which each measure assesses a variable. These variables were rated on a five- point Likert-Scale (1: Strongly Disagree and 5: Strongly Agree). The non-demographic section by its turn was divided into two sections assessing the Dependent and Independent Variables.

The independent variables of this study are existing promotion system, perceived equity of the promotion system, employee’s expectation of promotion and job meaningfulness in reference to his or her own organization and community.

Existing Promotion System was measured using a questionnaire composed of five items. Equity Perception was assessed using Kim and Leung’s seven items questionnaire [33].

The employees` expectation of the promotion was measured using different survey [34, 35, 36]. The Cronbach’s Alphas for previous studies was 0.9 for the equity and expectation variables. Finally, the perception of the job meaningfulness was measured using Appelbaum six items questionnaire [37]. Nonetheless, the dependent variable for this study is employees` motivation. Motivation was then measured using a Antonison questionnaire composed of seven items [38].

In respect to the moderator variable in this study, which is “Gender”, this was asked in the demographic section of the questionnaire. The respondent had only to determine and tick the respective box of his or her gender (female or male).

8.1 Data Collection and Analysis

A recruitment letter was addressed to different family businesses in Beirut asking to grant us access to their employees through emails.

To avoid any pressure or employer influence, the email was sent directly from the co- investigator email to the employees ensuring that if the employee is not willing to be a part in the study, this will not affect his or her job or

relationship with the employer. Organizations and participants assured that participation is anonymous and voluntary.

Once the data were gathered, they were analyzed using the statistical analysis program of SPSS and consequently appropriate conclusions and implications were derived. Factor analysis, regression, and moderation were used to test the correlation between employees` motivation and the independent variables and to investigate for moderation. Moreover, descriptive analysis and cross tabs were used to identify any relation between gender and employees` motivation.

9. Discussion of Results

Means, standard deviations and range for each of the measures included in this study are displayed in Table (2). All measures attained a good internal consistency ranging: motivation $\alpha=.877$, clarity of promotion system $\alpha=.86$, perception of equity $\alpha=0.9$ and job meaningfulness $\alpha=0.872$.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Motivation	3.5514	.89352	107
Gender	1.38	.488	107
Clarity of Promotion System	2.7508	1.18082	107
Perception of Equity	2.9034	1.01251	107
Job Meaningfulness	3.7430	.90950	107

A correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between employees` motivation and various potential predictors. The correlation analysis was first conducted to investigate for existing correlations between the variables. The correlation coefficients determine the extent to which two variables move together. The correlations amongst all the study variables are presented in table (3).

In reference to this study, a number of significant relationships were observed between the variables included in this study. It is deduced that each of the independent variables: clarity of the existing promotion system, perceived equity, and job meaningfulness is significantly and positively correlated to the employees` motivation with $p=.000$ & $r=.388$, $p=.000$ & $r=.568$, and $p=.000$ & $r=.703$ respectively. The results concluded from the correlation analysis provided support for the positive relationship between each of the independent variables and employees` motivations. Therefore, the hypotheses of this study were supported by the results.

Table 3: Overall Correlations

		Motivation	Gender	Clarity of Promotion	Perception of Equity	Job Meaningfulness
Pearson Correlation	Motivation	1.000	-.156	.388	.568	0.703
	Gender	-.156	1.000	-.018	-.068	-.095
	Clarity of Promotion	.388	-.018	1.000	.765	.285
	Perception of Equity	.568	-.068	.765	1.000	.460
	Job Meaningfulness	.703	-.095	.285	.460	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Motivation	.	.055	.000	.000	.000
	Gender	.055	.	.426	.245	.166
	Clarity of promotion	.000	.426	.	.000	.001

	Perception of Equity	.000	.245	.000	.	.000
	Job Meaningfulness	.000	.166	.001	.000	.
N	Motivation	107	107	107	107	107
	Gender	107	107	107	107	107
	Clarity of Promotion	107	107	107	107	107
	Perception of Equity	107	107	107	107	107
	Job Meaningfulness	107	107	107	107	107

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to answer the research’s question a T-Test Analysis was used to identify any difference between genders’ motivation. The t-test (Table4) revealed a statistically significant differences (i.e. correlation is significant at the 0.05 level) between the means of female and that the means of male is relative to employee motivation ($\alpha=.000$), job meaningfulness ($\alpha =.0047$) and perception of equity ($\alpha =.029$). In relative to the employees’ motivation, the mean of the female (M=3.66) is greater than the mean of the male

(M=3.37). Similarly, concerning the mean of each of the job meaningfulness and perception of equity, the females’ mean (M=3.81; M=2.95) is greater than males’ mean (M=3.36; M=2.81). However, the results revealed no significant differences between the means of female and of male in perception of the clarity of promotion system ($\alpha =.749$). The later results give a broad image of gender differences in motivation within the Lebanese Context.

Table 4: T-Test for Gender Differences

	Gender	Sig. <=0.05	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Motivation	Female	.000	66	3.6606	.66469	.08182
	Male		41	3.3756	1.16034	.18121
Clarity of Promotion System	Female	.749	66	2.7677	1.20819	.14872
	Male		41	2.7236	1.14964	.17954
Perception of Equity	Female	.029	66	2.9571	.94792	.11668
	Male		41	2.8171	1.11543	.17420
Job Meaningfulness	Female	.047	66	3.8106	.80987	.09969
	Male		41	3.6341	1.05193	.16428

In order to dig deeper and identify the influence of gender on motivation, a moderation analysis was conducted. The following section outlines the results. To test for the moderating effect of gender on each of the relationship between clarity of promotion system, perception of equity, and job meaningfulness (independent variables) and employees’ motivation (dependent variable), the dependent variable was regressed onto: (1) each of the independent variable, (2) the predicted moderator (gender), and (3) the product of these two variables (gender and clarity of promotion system, or gender and perception of equity or gender and job meaningfulness). Evidence of moderation is indicated when the beta-weight associated with the product

term is significant, while controlling the individual effects of the independent and moderator variables. It was assumed that the effect of each clarity of existing promotion system, perception of equity, and job meaningful of job on employees’ motivation would change linearly with respect to the moderator (gender).

Hypothesis 5 predicted that gender would moderate the relationship between clarity of promotion system and motivation. Significant interactions were graphed by using values 1 standard deviation above and below the mean. Figure 2 displays the significant interaction found between clarity of promotion system and gender (Table 5) ($\beta = -.596$, $p < .05$, $p = .021$).

Table 5 : Gender–Promotion Interaction Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.743	.204		13.475	.000
	Clarity of Promotion System	.294	.068	.388	4.319	.000
2	(Constant)	2.581	.224		11.518	.000
	Clarity of Promotion System	.292	.067	.386	4.324	.000
	Gender	.272	.163	.149	1.668	.098
3	(Constant)	2.016	.326		6.185	.000
	Clarity of Promotion System	.499	.110	.660	4.519	.000
	Gender	1.157	.410	.632	2.821	.006
	Clarity of Promotion System X Gender	-.323	.138	-.596	-2.342	.021

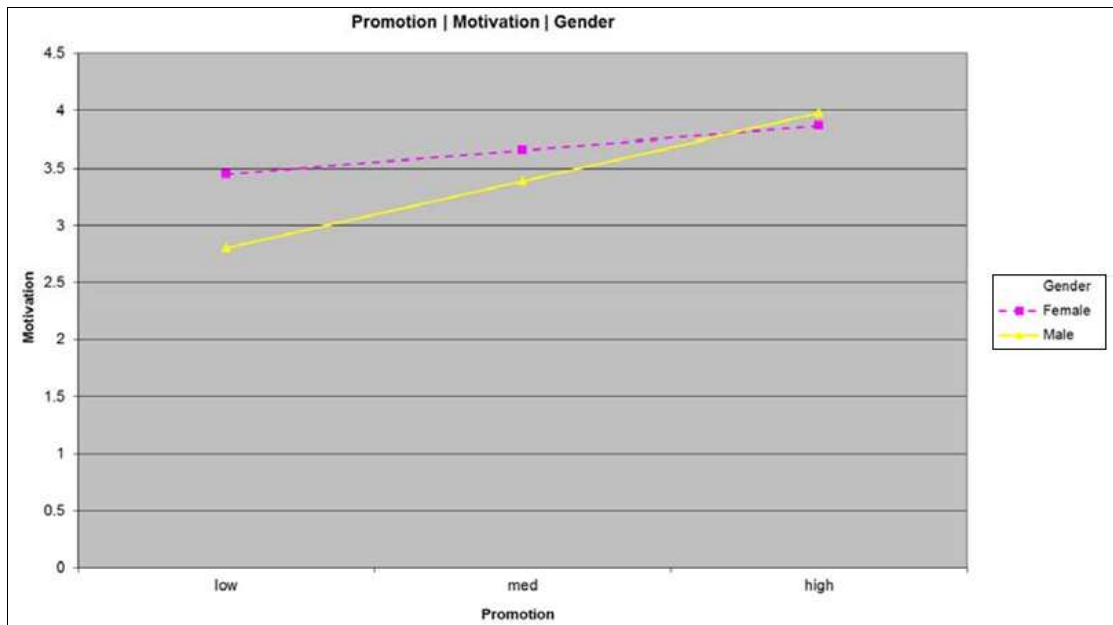


Fig 2: Interaction between Perception of Promotion and Motivation and Gender

In reference to the given results and graph, it is noticed that the females are more motivated than males when the clarity of the existing promotion is low. However, when the existing promotion system becomes clearer, males become more motivated compared to females.

Similarly, hypothesis 6 predicted that gender would moderate the correlation between perception of equity and motivation. Figure five presents significant interaction found between perception of equity and gender (Table 6) ($\beta = -.636, p < .05, p = .013$).

Table 6: Gender–equity interaction coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.095	.218		9.621	.000
	Perception of Equity	.502	.071	.568	7.077	.000
2	(Constant)	1.983	.230		8.632	.000
	Perception of Equity	.494	.071	.560	7.001	.000
	Gender	.216	.146	.118	1.474	.144
3	(Constant)	1.450	.307		4.722	.000
	Perception of Equity	.684	.102	.775	6.733	.000
	Gender	1.225	.423	.669	2.896	.005
	Perception of Equity X Gender	-.350	.138	-.636	-2.534	.013

The negative sign showed beside the Beta Value aligns with the linear lines in Figure 5. Figure 4 shows that females are more motivated compared to males when the equity levels

are low. Yet, with the increase in the perceived equity, males surpass females in the motivation.

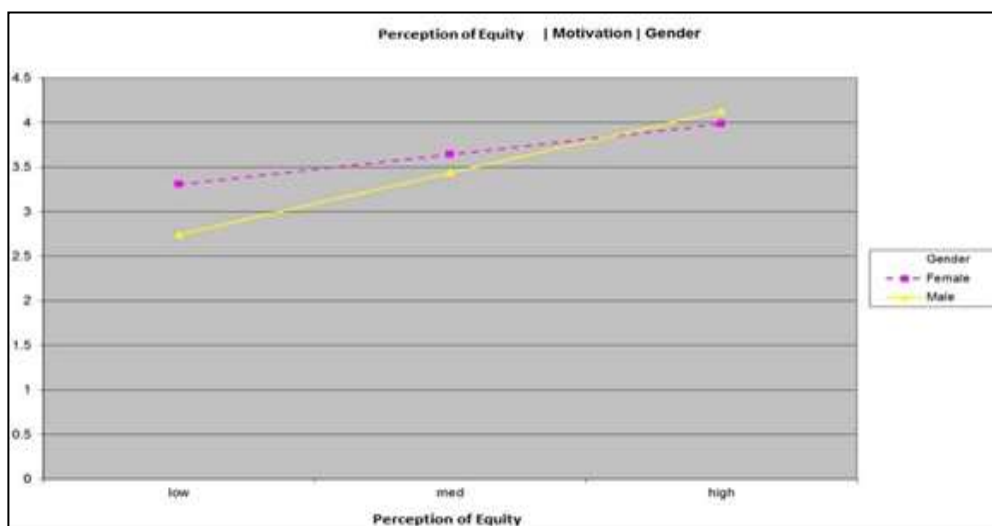


Fig 4: Interaction between Perception of Equity and Motivation and Gender

Finally, hypothesis 8 predicted that gender would moderate the correlation between job meaningfulness and motivation. Figure six displays the significant interaction found between

job meaningfulness and gender (Table 7) ($\beta = -1.052, p < .05, p = .000$).

Table 7: Gender –Job Meaningfulness Interaction Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.966	.263		3.680	.000
	Job Meaningfulness	.691	.068	.703	10.131	.000
2	(Constant)	.896	.267		3.352	.001
	Job Meaningfulness	.682	.068	.695	9.995	.000
	Gender	.165	.127	.090	1.295	.198
3	(Constant)	.043	.341		.127	.899
	Job Meaningfulness	.917	.090	.933	10.157	.000
	Gender	1.945	.495	1.063	3.932	.000
	Job Meaningfulness X Gender	-.478	.129	-1.052	-3.710	.000

The results drawn from the interaction along with those presented in Figure 5 show that females are more motivated compared to males when the job meaningfulness is low.

Similarly, with the increase in the job meaningfulness, females stay more motivated compared to males.

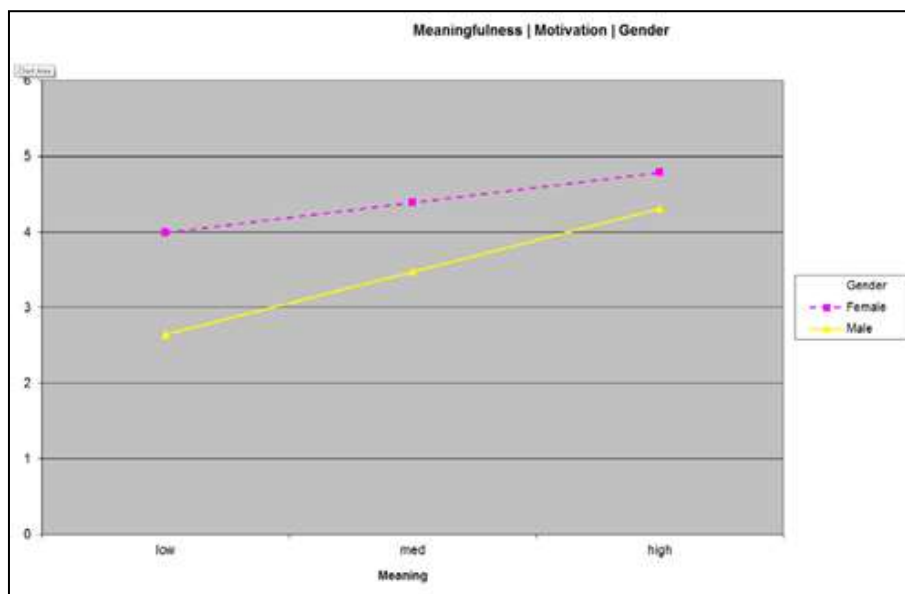


Fig 5: Interaction between Job Meaningfulness and Motivation and Gender

10. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate a possible gender difference in employees` motivation in terms of existing promotion system, perception of equity, and job meaningfulness in Lebanese Family Businesses. Prior to highlighting any differences, it is notable to investigate possible correlations between the independent variables: existing promotion system, perception of equity, and job meaningfulness and employees` motivation. The results regarding the pattern of relationship among the study variables were consistent with previous studies, which showed that each of the independent variables was expected to positively correlate to employees` motivation levels.

The results of this study supported the hypothesis that purports that existing promotion system is positively correlated to employees` motivation. However, the correlation between those two variables in this study was low compared to the other predicted independent variables ($r = .388$). A likely explanation for the low correlation is the lack of clear promotion system in Family Businesses. In reference to the survey conducted for this study, most of the participants agreed that there was an absence of clear

criteria and practices to identify the best candidate for promotion. The employees` perception of the existing promotion system is elucidated by the nature of the promotions. Promotions are considered explicit incentives by nature in which managers are not committed to specific promotion criteria [39]. Therefore, the inconsistency in the promotion criteria creates the misperception of the existing promotion system among the employees. Furthermore, the low correlation between the two variables in this study can be also interpreted by the limited promotion opportunities in SMEs. When considering promotions, organizations do not only rely on employees` outstanding performance but they also consider the given organizational chart. Promotion opportunities arise when there is a need for promotion in a condition that this need aligns with the organizational chart at one hand and with employee`s career development on the other hand. Hence, the firm`s chart influences the decision and the frequency of the promotion opportunities [40]. Similarly, the predicted correlation between perception of equity and employees` motivation was also supported in this study. The significant positive correlation between perceived equity and employees` motivation falls in support

with previous studies ^[41]. This indicates that if employees perceive fair treatment and justice in rewards distribution, positive attitudes and work behaviors such as commitment and motivation are attained. Otherwise, the employee will tend to reduce his or her input to achieve equity.

Finally, a significant high correlation was highlighted between job meaningfulness and employees' motivation. Lebanese employees in particular, surpassed the regional average in which 72% of the respondents were motivated by the work itself. Baily & Madden ^[42] had identified the characteristics that make the work meaningful. Accordingly, experiencing a variety of job tasks within one's role will decrease his or her sense of boredom and increase one's sense of job meaningfulness ^[42]. Hence, if employees perceive their jobs as meaningful and contribute to the success of the overall organizational performance, they will be motivated to invest additional effort in the organization. This view was reflected in the study in which most of the participants viewed their job as meaningful (mean = 3.5810) and the significant high correlation between job meaningfulness and employees' motivation.

In conclusion, job meaningfulness emerged to be a significant predictor for employees' motivation in this model whereas, the existing promotion system predicts employees' motivation the least in Lebanese family Businesses.

In general, the findings reveal gender difference in motivation, which contradicts the results; drawn from previous studies done in Lebanese firms and abroad. However, according to the t-test conducted, females are significantly more motivated (M=3.66) compared to males (M=3.37). In order to dig deeper and investigate the impact of gender on the predicted correlation hypotheses, moderation analysis was conducted. The results align with the t-test analysis in which females are more motivated compared to males. However, the moderation had resulted in notable patterns that reflect each of female and male motivation in terms of perception of equity, clarity of existing promotion system, and job meaningfulness.

At lower levels of perceived equity, females are more motivated compared to males. However, as the perception of equity increases, males' motivation levels exceed females' motivation level. One indication for such a trend is that females are more tolerant to inequity while males are more sensitive to inequity barriers and obstacles at work place in terms of promotion, equal pay, training and development, they still perceive equity.

On the contrary, males are sensitive to inequity due to the Lebanese masculine society. In a masculine society, males tend to expect more compared to females in the workplace ^[2]. In reference to the Islamic values and "patriarchal structure", males are always expected to be placed ahead in the society and family ^[11]. Therefore, in Lebanese context, men expect more in terms of rewards, positions, promotion compared to females. Hence, when males start fulfilling their expectations and meeting the expected level of equity, they become more motivated.

Furthermore, this explains why pay discrepancies exist in Lebanese Family Businesses. In order for males to restore equity, either they decrease their input and effort or they ask for increase in their output, they mainly ask for a pay increase. Hence, the organization is left with one solution which is to provide this increase to meet their expectations, retain them, and motivate them to give the same effort. On

the other hand, females are tolerant to inequity and more motivated even when equity is at its lowest level. Similarly, gender had influenced the correlation between the clarity of the existing promotion system and employees' motivation in the same pattern of perceived equity. Hence, the clearer the existing promotion system is the more the females are motivated compared to males. However, the clearer the promotion system is the more males are motivated compared to females. Which indicates, when the promotion systems become clearer, males are able then to relate and compare their effort exerted to the outcome received. Consequently, males will be more motivated to receive the promotion opportunity. However, females are motivated regardless of the clarity of the promotion systems. Finally, females find their job more meaningful at Lebanese family industry compared to males. In reference to previous results, females score a higher level in specific dimensions of job meaningfulness. In general, perceiving one's job meaningful is associated with positive behavior such as increase in motivation and organization citizenship ^[43]. The latter is highlighted in the results of this study, which appear to explain the difference in motivation between the two genders. Females in Lebanese Family Businesses find their job more meaningful compared to males, which is reflected in a higher motivation.

11. References

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