The Role of Gender Interactions, Company Tenure and Job Tenure in Upward Feedback Ratings

Vanessa Johnson
Western Kentucky University

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THE ROLE OF GENDER INTERACTIONS, COMPANY TENURE, AND JOB TENURE IN UPWARD FEEDBACK RATINGS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Psychology

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Vanessa Flora Marie Johnson

December 2000
THE ROLE OF GENDER INTERACTIONS, COMPANY TENURE, AND JOB TENURE IN UPWARD FEEDBACK

Date Recommended September 12, 2000
Elizabeth L. Shneurk
Director of Thesis

Dean, Graduate Studies and Research

Date

11-17-00

John O'Connor
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Using feedback scores from an established upward feedback program, the role of
gender interactions, company tenure, and job tenure on leadership ratings of managers by
subordinates were examined. Four separate analyses were conducted: a 2 X 2 ANOVA, a
2 X 6 ANOVA, and two Aptitude-Treatment Interaction (ATI) regression analyses in
accordance with the procedure set forth in Pedhazur (1997). No significant main effects
or interactions were found for manager gender and subordinate gender on ratings of
managers. Manager company tenure had a significant effect on ratings of managers, \( R^2 = .002, F (1, 168) = .53, p < .05 \), but manager job tenure was not found to have a significant
effect on manager ratings.

Subordinate company tenure also had a significant effect on manager ratings, \( F (5, 3973) = 5.95, p < .01 \). A post-hoc Scheffe’s test indicated significant differences were
shown between subordinates whose tenure was 6 months to 1 year and 1 to 3 years versus
subordinates whose tenure was greater than 10 years, \( p < .05 \). The need for further
research of factors that may influence upward feedback ratings was emphasized;
limitations of the study were also discussed.
Introduction

Managerial behavior has traditionally been evaluated through the use of performance appraisals. In conventional performance appraisals, the supervisor rates the job performance of the subordinate. However, a new trend in organizational development is feedback from other sources (Carless, Mann, & Wearing, 1998; London & Smither, 1995). Employers are constantly searching for effective ways of providing feedback to employees, who can then use the information as an indication of how behavior can be improved on the job (Wilson, 1995). The logic of using alternate sources of feedback stems from the premise that observations of performance from several perspectives depict a more accurate assessment of that performance than do ratings by only the supervisor (Borman, 1974). The present study will focus on upward feedback, an alternate form of feedback also known as subordinate appraisals, where subordinates rate their managers.

Traditional performance appraisal, whether formal or informal, is part of virtually every organization. The purposes for which performance appraisal is conducted fall into three general categories: administrative, developmental, and research (Muchinsky, 1987). Information gathered for administrative purposes is distinct from that gathered for development purposes. Data gathered for administrative purposes are used for decision-making involving personnel actions, typically being used to answer yes/no questions regarding issues such as salary, promotion, transfer, or dismissal. Appraisals whose objective is developmental, on the other hand, are based on the use of multiple criteria to address more open-ended questions concerning potential strengths and weaknesses in
performance. Developmental purposes include using appraisal information to identify needs for training or the development of career path plans.

The use of performance appraisal data for administrative decisions and as performance feedback requires a thorough evaluation of potential threats to the accuracy and defensibility of performance ratings. Ratings of performance are subjective and are susceptible to bias. Bias indicates systematic criteria contamination. Bias may be associated with raters, ratees, the interaction of raters and ratees, or various organizational characteristics. Bias can result from inadequate observation by the rater, unequal opportunity to demonstrate job performance, either overt or unintentional prejudice on the part of the rater, or the inability of the rater to distinguish different levels or dimensions of job performance (Cascio, 1991). Bias is any differential treatment that results in different outcomes for equally qualified people (Harris, 1985), regardless of the form the treatment may take or the group the treatment affects. Gender differences between the rater and ratee are a potential source of bias. Identification of the presence of gender bias in the form of an interaction between manager and subordinate gender on performance ratings is important in the prevention of inadvertent gender discrimination by organizations.

Gender bias is defined as differential treatment of equally qualified persons on the basis of gender (Harris, 1985). Studies of gender bias investigate whether male and female employees are evaluated in an equivalent manner and what, if any, factors related to gender contribute to systematic differences in ratings. Nieva and Gutek (1980) identified three such factors to account for differences in the amount of gender bias. The first factor was the amount of ambiguity in the rating of the employee. Gender bias
against females is more likely to occur when there is too little information available to judge performance accurately. The second factor is the congruency of the gender role associated with the job and the gender of the employee. When an individual is in or is applying for a job that is traditionally perceived as appropriate for the opposite gender, bias is more likely to occur. The third factor contributing to gender bias is the level of performance of the ratee. Nieva and Gutek suggested that competent females are rated less favorably than competent males, but that incompetent males are rated less favorably than incompetent females. The explanation for this bias is again related to the congruency of the employee’s gender and the gender role associated with the job. Specifically, when an individual performs well in a job whose gender role matches his/her own, performance is graded higher. However, when poor performance occurs in an inconsistent gender role, ratings are not as harsh. Harris’s (1985) interpretation of the impact of this factor in gender bias was that the ratings of female employees are less extreme than the ratings of male employees.

A number of theories have been proposed to explain the underlying dynamics of gender bias. Several of these are based on cognitive social research (Harris, 1985). For example, one theory suggested that raters grade in-group members higher than out-group members (Brewer, 1979), where in- and out-group status refers to the congruence between the gender of the rater and the gender of the ratee. The discounting principle (Kelley, 1971; Harris, 1985) suggested that the role of any given cause (e.g., competence of an employee) in an outcome such as above-average performance is discounted to the degree to which other explanations for the job success (e.g., focused recruiting of women) are present. In other words, the rater judges performance inaccurately because of
a belief that the employee is in the position due to his/her gender or some other factor unrelated to his/her qualifications for the job. This background in the theoretical foundation of gender bias is relevant to the understanding of the implications of a gender effect in performance appraisal systems. Potential ramifications of a gender bias in performance appraisal might include vulnerability to lawsuits, lack of confidence in the rating system by employees and upper management, and a need for rater training. The advantages of eliminating the possibility of a gender bias in an upward feedback program are described next.

The issue of manager-subordinate gender interaction on ratings may be of interest to practitioners for at least two reasons. First, eliminating the possibility of a gender interaction in performance ratings will strengthen the credibility of appraisal feedback. Second, increased confidence in performance feedback will facilitate organizational use of the feedback results to address performance and leadership deficits through the identification of target areas for training programs.

Extensive research has evaluated the impact of gender effects on both traditional performance appraisal ratings (e.g., Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Butterfield & Powell, 1981; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Izraeli & Izraeli, 1985; Mobley, 1982; Peters et al., 1984; Rinehart & Young, 1996; Robbins & DeNisi, 1993; Schmitt & Lappin, 1980) and upward feedback ratings (e.g., Bartol & Wortman, 1975; Haccoun, Haccoun, & Sallay, 1978; Jacobson & Effertz, 1974; Lee & Alvares, 1977; Ragins, 1991; Rosen & Jerdee, 1973; Walker & Walker, 1998; Wexley & Pulakos, 1982, 1983a, 1983b). These studies have characteristics that may limit their generalizability. None of the studies were conducted using an established upward feedback program. The studies were conducted in lab
settings, by mail with organizational members, or as part of a one-time research endeavor. Thus, to this author's knowledge, potential gender interactions have not been studied in an established upward feedback program. The present study will address gender bias in upward feedback by utilizing data from an established upward feedback program. The generalizability of the findings of this study should be greater than those of other research on gender effects in upward feedback conducted in contrived settings.

Upward feedback is a relatively new form of performance appraisal. Consequently, there is far more research on traditional performance appraisal (Walker & Frietze, 1999). Initially, this related literature on gender bias in conventional performance appraisal will be examined. Lab and field studies that have investigated gender bias in traditional performance appraisal will be reviewed first. Lab and field studies that have investigated gender interactions in upward feedback will then be reviewed. Finally, the importance of investigating the effect of a gender interaction in upward feedback ratings will be discussed in the context of the reviewed research.

Gender Effects in Traditional Performance Appraisal

The results of performance appraisal have implications for both employees and employers. The livelihood of workers and their career advancement is affected by performance evaluations. Employers must maintain certain standards of performance in order to successfully compete with other organizations. Good personnel practice and compliance with EEO laws require a performance appraisal to be reliable and valid; more specifically, it must be free from bias. While bias may include discrimination based on gender, race, age, or disability, this study will focus on the issue of gender bias in upward feedback programs. To identify and/or prevent gender discrimination, both gender effects
and the interaction of rater and ratee gender on performance ratings have been thoroughly examined (e.g., Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Butterfield & Powell, 1981; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Izraeli & Izraeli, 1985; Mobley, 1982; Peters et al., 1984; Rinehart & Young, 1996; Robbins & DeNisi, 1993; Schmitt & Lappin, 1980). In this section, the findings of gender effects in traditional performance appraisals in lab and field studies will be discussed.

**Lab Studies**

Consistently lab studies have failed to find a significant interaction of rater and ratee gender on performance ratings (e.g., Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Butterfield & Powell, 1981; Deaux & Taynor, 1973; Izraeli & Izraeli, 1985; Robbins & DeNisi, 1993; Schmitt & Lappin, 1980). However, both demographic differences between lab subjects (i.e., students) and organizational members and the use of unrepresentative appraisal methods in the lab studies may reduce the generalizability of these findings to organizational settings. Izraeli and Izraeli (1985) used actual supervisors and subordinates; however, the generalizability of their results to American organizations may be reduced by the location of the study. Izraeli and Izraeli noted that the Israeli culture differed from that of the United States in the extent to which both gender differences are socialized and the extent to which people are expected or permitted to be sensitive to different gender roles in business.

**Field Studies**

Consistent with the lab findings reviewed above, field studies have also failed to demonstrate any significant interaction of manager and subordinate gender on performance ratings (Mobley, 1982; Peters et al., 1984; Rinehart & Young, 1996). Mobley (1982) found no significant interaction of manager and subordinate gender on

In summary, none of the studies reviewed found any evidence for a gender interaction in traditional performance appraisals. However, the generalizability of the studies may be limited due to the use of unrepresentative appraisal situations and subjects dissimilar to actual organizational members. Both upward feedback and traditional appraisals by supervisors are evaluations of performance. Thus the literature on gender effects in traditional performance ratings is at least somewhat relevant to upward feedback. However, upward feedback is founded on the premise that subordinates witness different aspects of behavior than do supervisors (Borman, 1974), thus implying that upward feedback is likely to be different from traditional performance appraisal in some aspects. Although useful as a starting point for understanding the dynamics of upward feedback, traditional performance appraisal research cannot provide definitive answers to questions about upward feedback.

The following section will outline applications of upward feedback and the empirical support for its use. This context information will be followed by the results of lab studies and field investigations of gender interactions in upward feedback. Finally, to provide the reader with an overall perspective on the literature, the rationale for investigating the effect of a gender interaction on subordinate appraisal ratings within an established upward feedback program will be presented.
Upward Feedback

Upward feedback is defined as the evaluation of a manager's performance by immediate subordinates (Smither et al., 1995). Upward feedback can be useful as part of a 360-degree feedback program for administrative or developmental purposes (Carless, Mann, & Wearing, 1998; Smither et al., 1995; Walker & Smither, 1999). Improvements in manager performance following the receipt of upward feedback have been demonstrated (Reilly, Smither, & Vasilopoulos, 1996; Smither et al., 1995), as have sustained improvements in manager performance (Walker & Frietze, 1999).

Lab Studies

Several lab studies (Haccoun, Haccoun, & Sallay, 1978; Jacobson & Effertz, 1974; Lee & Alvares, 1977; Rosen & Jerdee, 1973) have investigated gender interactions in some form of subordinate appraisal. In each of these studies, no evidence was found for an interaction of supervisor/leader and subordinate gender on performance ratings. However, the applicability of these findings is limited by the dissimilarity of the participants and the procedures to those of an actual upward feedback program. The Rosen and Jerdee (1973) and Jacobson and Effertz (1974) participants rated only one example of supervisory behavior. Upward feedback programs generally sample several different dimensions of supervisory behavior.

Haccoun et al. (1978) studied sex differences in the appropriateness of supervisory styles and found no gender interaction on ratings of supervisor performance. However, subjects rated descriptions of only one situation faced by a supervisor, and ratings were based upon a description of the situation in a booklet—not actual performance. Lee and Alvares (1977) found no gender interaction in ratings when they
had undergraduate students rate other undergraduate students who were posing as leaders in a simulated industrial task. However, the findings may have been the result of a confound in the nature of the sample. The researchers argued that since the participants were politically sensitive college-students, they might have actively overcompensated for any gender stereotypes of which they were aware. Although the findings of the study do not support the existence of a gender effect due to sex bias, the explanation for the lack of a gender effect requires further investigation to rule out the confound. In sum, none of the lab studies of subordinate appraisal found evidence of a gender interaction. However, the studies were limited by the use of unrepresentative appraisal situations and subjects dissimilar to organizational members. The next section will review the research of subordinate appraisals in field settings.

**Field Studies**

Several field studies (Bartol & Wortman, 1975; Ragins, 1991; Wexley & Pulakos, 1982, 1983a, 1983b) have tested for an interaction of leader and subordinate gender in upward feedback ratings. These studies may, however, have some limitations. Two of the studies by Wexley and Pulakos (1982, 1983a) examined the effects of perceived similarity (between subordinates and supervisors) and gender on ratings made by subordinates. Wexley and Pulakos (1983) investigated the effects of subordinates’ perceptual congruence, the extent to which subordinates accurately perceive their managers’ work related attitudes, and gender on subordinate ratings of managers. None of the three studies showed evidence of a gender interaction on subordinate ratings of managers. However, since manager participation was voluntary, a potential confound may have existed in the characteristics of managers who chose to participate in the study.
Also, subordinates providing upward feedback in an actual organization would not be chosen by the manager or ratee. Thus, there are factors that may limit the applicability of the study’s findings to actual upward feedback programs.

Ragins (1991) also failed to find evidence of a gender interaction. However, Ragins matched managers on gender, then chose one subordinate to rate each manager to control for differences in leaders’ positional power. This selection procedure may have reduced the likelihood of a gender interaction surfacing in the analyses for two reasons. First, supervisors might have chosen individuals of the same gender as themselves. Second, managers might have chosen subordinates whom they felt would rate them favorably. Such a preference might have been indicative of familiarity and/or friendship with the subordinate, awareness of a subordinate’s tendency to try to curry favor with the boss, or awareness (albeit, unconsciously) that the subordinate shared certain gender-role biases described earlier in this paper. Such factors could, according to some theories of gender bias, serve to lower the degree of bias demonstrated in the ratings (Nieva & Gutek, 1980). In addition, to reduce the effect of potential gender role stereotypes present in typical leadership measures, Ragins (1991) created and used a new leadership measure. Although the correlation between the new measure and specific measures tapping consideration and structure behaviors was high [.65 (p < .001)], failure to measure behaviors that are present in most appraisals of leadership may have reduced the usefulness of the findings to practitioners. Research results concerning an atypical measure of leadership are less applicable to most organizations. In sum, none of the studies reviewed on upward feedback found evidence of a gender interaction in subordinate ratings of managers. However, none of these studies were conducted within
an ongoing upward feedback program. Limitations in the reviewed studies may limit the
generalizability of these findings to actual organizations.

The Present Study

The literature on both upward feedback (Bartol & Wortman, 1975; Haccoun et al.,
1978; Jacobson & Effertz, 1974; Lee & Alvares, 1977; Ragins, 1991; Rosen & Jerdee,
1973; Wexley & Pulakos, 1982, 1983a, 1983b) and gender effects in performance
appraisals (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Butterfield & Powell, 1981; Deaux & Taynor,
1973; Izraeli & Izraeli, 1985; Mobley, 1982; Peters et al., 1984; Rinehart & Young, 1996;
Robbins & DeNisi, 1993; Schmitt & Lappin, 1980) has provided strong evidence that an
interaction of manager/ratee gender and subordinate/rater gender does not significantly
influence ratings of performance. However, the generalizability of most of the studies is
limited by either the rating process or the subjects used. A study utilizing ratings from an
actual upward feedback program would further substantiate that upward feedback ratings
show no evidence of sex bias in the form of a gender interaction. A finding of no
interaction of manager-subordinate gender will further support the use of upward
feedback as a method of appraisal.

The present study will address whether or not manager gender and subordinate
gender significantly interact to influence ratings of managers. Based on the reviewed
research, the following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 1: No interaction will be found between manager gender and
subordinate gender on upward feedback ratings of managers.
To further investigate gender differences in ratings, the present study will also examine whether male and female subordinates agree in their ratings of their manager. The following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 2: No significant differences will be found between the average ratings of male and female subordinates of each manager. In other words, there will be no main effect for the gender of subordinates.

Additional Research Question

At the request of the host organization, the effect of subordinate and manager tenure on subordinate ratings will also be investigated. In this organization, the administration of this leadership survey in recent years has yielded subordinate ratings that are significantly lower for lower-level managers than for upper-level managers. The present study will test whether a significant relationship exists between manager tenure on the job and with the company and leadership ratings by subordinates. The present study will also investigate whether a significant relationship exists between subordinate tenure with the company and leadership ratings by subordinates.

A review of the published literature revealed no articles concerning the relationship of tenure with subordinate appraisal of managers. However, studies on rater accuracy for traditional performance appraisal have indicated that familiarity of the rater with the performance being rated and rater knowledge of the critical job dimensions are positively related to accurate performance ratings (Landy & Farr, 1980; Kozlowski, Kirsch, & Chao, 1986). Tenure on the job or with the company would likely increase this familiarity. In other words, the accuracy of leadership ratings of supervisors should be positively related to both the rater and the ratee’s time on the job or with the company.
There are several implications of finding a significant relationship between manager tenure with the company and subordinate ratings. One primary organizational concern is that employees are being promoted to management positions before acquiring the sufficient experience and interpersonal skills needed for effectively interacting with subordinates. A significant correlation would offer evidence to support this concern. This correlation would indicate that ratings of the supervisor’s leadership behavior correspond to some factor that changes as a result of more time with the company. Two such possible factors are experience within the organization and improved interpersonal skills.

A second implication addresses a concern that the selection procedure for lower level managers is deficient. A positive relationship between manager time on the job in question and subordinate ratings may indicate that managers are unaware of specific responsibilities of the position. New managers may still be in the process of learning their job responsibilities, especially more ambiguous ones such as providing leadership for subordinates. Extensive orientation programs for new managers might then be useful. Finally, a positive relationship between subordinate tenure with the company and ratings of managers might indicate that employees in a new position have unrealistic expectations of a supervisor. As experience on the job increases, so does the subordinate’s grasp of what level of leadership behavior should be expected from his/her supervisor. Based upon these tenets, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 3: Manager gender will not account for a significant amount of the variance in subordinate ratings.

Hypothesis 4: Manager tenure with the company will not account for a significant amount of the variance in subordinate ratings.
Hypothesis 5: Manager tenure in the present position will not account for a significant amount of the variance in subordinate ratings.

Hypothesis 6: Subordinate gender will not account for a significant amount of the variance in subordinate ratings.

Hypothesis 7: Subordinate tenure with the company will not account for a significant amount of the variance in subordinate ratings.
Method

Background Information

Data used in this study were gathered as part of the 1998 Leadership Survey for a large financial institution. The organization is located primarily in one southeastern state and employs approximately 7,000 employees. The survey was constructed from the results of several employee and management focus groups. Participants in these groups identified key behaviors related to productivity, leadership, and implementation of future, strategic business goals. Survey items were developed to assess the key behaviors identified by the focus groups. The survey was used for upward feedback to managers for developmental purposes only. The survey was conducted to evaluate leadership performance of managers and supervisors from the perspective of their immediate subordinates.

Sample

Managers. The sample consisted of 171 managers, 32.2% of whom were female, 67.8% male. Each manager included in the sample had at least two female and two male subordinates.

Subordinates. The sample consisted of 3,985 subordinates, 76.3% of whom were female, 23.7% male.
Leadership Survey Instrument

Data in the present study were taken from employees who completed the company's 1998 Leadership Survey (see Appendix A for complete survey). The survey was designed to measure key behaviors related to leadership, productivity, and implementation of future, strategic business goals. The instrument contained 33 items total, with 31 behaviorally-based items utilizing a five-point Likert-scale format [i.e., response options ranged from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree)]. The remaining test item was used to determine whether managers conducted a group feedback session concerning the 1997 Leadership Survey results. Since the organization did not use this item when calculating the total average rating of the managers, it was omitted from any of the analyses in this research. The instrument was revised at the end of each administrative year in an effort to improve the quality of the leadership measure. Twelve of the items had been used consistently in each survey administration. The remaining eighteen items were revised or new items resulting from the changes made following the 1997 administration.

Procedure

The survey had been administered annually for seven years prior to this administration. The survey was administered to approximately 5,000 employees. Only managers who supervised three or more subordinates were evaluated by their employees. A personnel representative within the organization administered the survey, which was completed anonymously.
Analysis

Three different statistical methods have been used to test for gender bias: correlation analysis, regression analysis, or multivariate analyses of variance. For example, in an attempt to establish gender effects as artifacts in subordinate evaluations, Ragins (1991) calculated the correlation between perceived leader power by subordinates and ratings of leader effectiveness by subordinates. Ragins also regressed leader evaluations on perceived leader power and leader gender to test which independent variable accounted for more of the incremental variance in the leader evaluations. A hierarchical regression analysis was used to investigate if the order in which the independent variables were entered resulting in different $R^2$ changes for each independent variable. The analysis of variance statistic has been used to test for gender bias by identifying mean differences in ratings of males and females. Several authors (Bartol & Wortman, 1975; Harris, 1985; Lee & Alvares, 1977; Rosen & Jerdee, 1973) have used analyses of variance to test for gender effects in studies of subordinate appraisals. Gender bias can also be detected by checking for interactions between manager and subordinate gender on performance ratings. The present study used the analysis of variance approach to test for a gender interaction and a main effect due to the gender of subordinates.

The original data file consisted of 4,758 subordinate ratings of 767 supervisors. Cases were dropped in which supervisor gender, subordinate gender, or performance ratings were missing. The raw scores for each item were summed to form a subordinate rating for each supervisor. Supervisors lacking ratings by at least two male subordinates and ratings by at least two female subordinates were dropped from the data set. Valid data remained for 173 supervisors. Two performance scores were computed for each
supervisor. An average of all male subordinate ratings was computed, and an average of all female subordinate ratings was computed. The dependent variables were the average rating for each manager by all male subordinates and the average rating for each manager by all female subordinates. The independent variables were the gender of the supervisor and the gender of the subordinates.
Results

Factor Structure of DV

Prior to testing the hypotheses, a factor analysis was performed using items 1 through 8, 10 through 23, and 25 through 29. The purpose of the factor analysis was to determine whether all the items were measuring the same construct. If all of these test items loaded on the same factor and the resulting coefficient alpha was high, all 26 items would be used to calculate the dependent variables. However, if the test items loaded on more than one factor, all analyses would be conducted once for each factor.

Items 9, 24, 30, 31, and 32 were used by the host organization to gather information only in reference to sales employees, and as such were not applicable to the majority of the sample. Item 33 was used by the organization to determine whether or not the manager held a feedback meeting the previous year regarding the results of the leadership survey. Since the organization did not use these items to calculate the total average rating for a manager, these items were also omitted from the analyses in this study.

The factor analysis indicated that all remaining test items loaded on one factor. This factor accounted for 65.06% of the variance, with an Eigenvalue of 17.56. An estimate of Chronbach’s alpha was also calculated for the 1998 Leadership Survey. With \( n = 3119 \), the alpha for the 1998 Leadership Survey was \( \alpha = .98 \). Thus, all 26 items were used to compute the dependent variable.
Tests of Hypotheses

In order to test Hypotheses 1 through 7, four separate analyses were conducted.

Hypotheses 1 and 2

First, a 2 (supervisor gender: male, female) X 2 (subordinate gender: male, female) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the data to determine whether an interaction of supervisor and subordinate gender on subordinate ratings of supervisors (Hypothesis 1) or a main effect due to subordinate gender (Hypothesis 2) was present. For the dependent variable (subordinate ratings), mean scores and standard deviations are reported for the total sample, male subordinates, and female subordinates in Table 1. The results of the ANOVA are reported in Table 2. Results indicated no main effect for subordinate gender, F(1, 338) = .57, n.s., and no significant interaction of supervisor and subordinate gender on subordinate ratings of supervisors, F(1, 338) = 2.06, n.s.

Table 1

Mean Scores for All Subordinates, Male Subordinates, and Female Subordinates

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<tr>
<td>Female Subordinates</td>
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<td>All Subordinates</td>
<td>1.86</td>
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Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Gender Interaction

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<td>Manager Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subordinate Gender</td>
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<td>Manager Gender * Subordinate Gender</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>83.79</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>84.65</td>
<td>341</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses 3 and 4

The second analysis conducted was an Aptitude-Treatment Interaction (ATI) regression analysis utilizing the procedure set forth in Pedhazur (1997). The 8-step process for conducting the ATI regression analysis is summarized as follows. In Step 1 of the ATI, the categorical independent variable (IV) is dummy coded, and the values for the continuous independent variable (CV) and the dependent variables (DV) are simply listed. An interaction variable is created by multiplying the CV and the IV. In Step 2 of the ATI, the question is addressed of whether the proportion of variance accounted for by all the variables and their interactions is significant. This step is accomplished by entering all the variables at once and conducting a regression analysis. If the $R^2$ is not significant,
the analysis is complete due to a lack of relationship between either gender or tenure and
the subordinate ratings. If the \( R^2 \) is significant, the researcher continues to Step 3.

Step 3 of the ATI addresses the question of whether there is a significant
interaction between or joint effect of the independent variables. The CV and IV are
entered under one block in the regression procedure. The interaction variable is entered in
the second block of the regression procedure. If the presence of an interaction between
the two independent variables is established, the researcher goes directly to Step 8. At
this point, the separate regression lines for the two variables are calculated, along with the
regions of non-significance. The calculation of the separate regression equations, the
point of intersection and the regions of non-significance are conducted in accordance
with the formulas and instructions provided by Pedhazur (1997).

If a significant interaction is not demonstrated between the independent variables
in Step 3 of the ATI, the researcher continues to Step 4. One then determines if the CV
accounts for a significant increase in \( R^2 \) after the effects of the IV have been taken into
account. This determination is made by blocking first the IV and next blocking the CV in
the regression analysis. Depending on whether or not the \( R^2 \) change is significant, the
researcher continues to either Step 5 or Step 6.

If the \( R^2 \) change is not significant, in Step 5 one determines if the levels of the IV
(gender) differ from each other. This determination is made by conducting an analysis of
variance between the different IV groups and the DV. Thus, if males and females differ
significantly the analysis is complete; that is, there is no relationship between the CV and
the DV, but there is a main effect due to the IV. If males and females do not differ
significantly, the researcher continues to Step 7 and the regression line is calculated using the CV.

If the $R^2$ change is significant, in Step 6 one addresses the question of whether the IV accounts for a significant increase in $R^2$ after the effects of the CV have been taken into account. This determination is made by blocking first the CV and next blocking the IV in the regression analysis. If the $R^2$ change is not significant, then one continues to Step 7 and calculates a single regression line using the CV. However, if the $R^2$ change is significant, then the researcher calculates the separate regression equations in which the intercepts differ but all have the same slope. The calculation of the separate regression equations, the point of intersection and the regions of non-significance are conducted in accordance with the formulas and instructions provided by Pedhazur (1997).

The purpose of this ATI analysis in the present study was to examine the effect of manager gender (Hypothesis 3) and manager company tenure (Hypothesis 4) on the average ratings for each manager. This particular analysis was chosen because of the nature of the independent variables being tested; one independent variable was categorical (i.e., gender) and the other was continuous (i.e., tenure). Although the primary purpose of these two analyses was to examine the relationship of manager company tenure and manager job tenure to the leadership ratings, the possible influence of gender in the relationship could not be ignored. The dependent variable, the total average rating for each manager, was calculated by averaging the average male subordinate rating and the average female subordinate rating for each manager.

Mean scores and standard deviations are reported for the dependent variable (subordinate ratings) and the continuous independent variable (manager company tenure)
in Table 3. The results of the ATI regression analysis were as follows. In Step 2 of the ATI, the proportion of variance accounted for by all the variables and their interactions was significant, $R^2 = .079$, $F (3, 167) = 4.79$, $p < .01$. In Step 3 of the ATI, a significant interaction was not demonstrated, $R^2 = .03$, $F (1, 167) = 5.55$, n.s. In Step 4 of the ATI, it was determined that the CV (manager company tenure) accounted for a significant increase in $R^2$ after the effects of the IV (manager gender) had been taken into account, $R^2 = .05$, $F (1, 168) = 8.22$, $p < .01$. In Step 6 of the ATI, manager gender did not account for a significant increase in $R^2$ after the effects of manager company tenure had been taken into account, $R^2 = .002$, $F (1, 168) = .53$, n.s. In Step 7 of the ATI, the regression equation, $Y^1 = 2.013 - .00077X$, was determined using the continuous independent variable; that is, only manager company tenure had a main effect on the average ratings of each manager. As company tenure of managers increased, the ratings of managers improved. No other main effects or interactions were present.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Ratings</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager Company Tenure</td>
<td>163.76</td>
<td>114.70</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 5

The third analysis was also an ATI regression analysis (Pedhazur, 1997). The purpose of the analysis was to examine manager job tenure, the continuous independent variable, (Hypothesis 5) on the average ratings for each manager. This analysis was used
again due to the nature of the independent variables being tested. Mean scores and standard deviations are reported for the dependent variable (subordinate ratings) and the continuous independent variable (manager job tenure) in Table 4. The results of the ATI regression analysis were as follows. In Step 2 of the ATI, the proportion of variance accounted for by all the variables and their interactions was non-significant, $R^2 = .006$, $F(3, 166) = .34$, n.s., indicating that no main effects or interactions were present.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Ratings</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager Job Tenure</td>
<td>29.51</td>
<td>28.56</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypotheses 6 and 7

In the fourth analysis, a 2 (subordinate gender: male, female) X 6 (subordinate tenure: less than 6 months, 6 months to 1 year, 1 to 3 years, 3 to 5 years, 5 to 10 years, and more than 10 years) ANOVA was conducted to determine whether either a main effect for subordinate gender (Hypothesis 6) or a main effect for subordinate tenure (Hypothesis 7) on subordinate ratings of supervisors was present. The dependent variable was calculated by averaging all of the subordinate ratings available for each manager, regardless of the number of male or female subordinates for each manager. It should be noted that since manager gender was not a criterion for inclusion of a subordinate rating in this analysis, a much larger data set was available for use.
Mean scores and standard deviations for the dependent variable (subordinate ratings) and the independent variable (subordinate tenure) are reported in Table 5. The subordinate sample consisted of 3,985 subordinates, 76.3% of whom were female, 23.7% male. The results of the ANOVA are reported in Table 6. No significant interactions were present. No main effect was found for subordinate gender. However, a main effect was found for subordinate tenure, $F(5, 3973) = 5.95, p < .001$. A graphic illustration of the relationship between subordinate tenure and subordinate ratings is shown in Figure 1. The most favorable ratings of managers were given by subordinates who had been with the company for less than 6 months or more than 10 years. Subordinates who had been with the company for 6 months to 3 years gave the least favorable ratings of managers. A post-hoc Scheffe’s test was conducted to determine which subordinate tenure levels were significantly different from one another. The results of the Scheffe’s analysis indicated that ratings by subordinates whose tenure was greater than 10 years were significantly different from those by subordinates whose tenure was 6 months to 1 year and 1 to 3 years ($p < .05$). Differences between ratings for all other subordinate tenure comparisons were nonsignificant.
Table 5

Means for Subordinate Tenure and Subordinate Ratings for Each Level of Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Ratings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 Months</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Months – 1 Year</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 3 Years</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 Years</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10 Years</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>3985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These ratings were made on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Sometimes Agree / Sometimes Disagree, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree. The lower the ratings, the more positive the evaluation of the manager.
Table 6

Analysis of Variance for Subordinate Tenure and Subordinate Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Tenure</td>
<td>14.51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>5.95**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Gender</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate Tenure X Subordinate Gender</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1938.97</td>
<td>3973</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>1959.10</td>
<td>3984</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01
Figure 1

Subordinate Ratings of Managers Grouped by Subordinate Tenure Levels

*Lower ratings indicate more favorable evaluations by subordinates.
Discussion

Consistent with the reviewed literature (Haccoun, Haccoun, & Sallay, 1978; Jacobson & Effertz, 1974; Lee & Alvares, 1977; Rosen & Jerdee, 1973), no interaction of subordinate and manager gender was found for the ratings of managers. Neither manager gender nor subordinate gender significantly influenced the ratings. These results supported Hypothesis 1.

No published literature was found in which the role of either manager or subordinate tenure was examined in relation to upward feedback ratings. However, findings from rater accuracy studies (Landy & Farr, 1980; Kozlowski, Kirsch, & Chao, 1986) suggested that tenure on the job or with the company should improve the accuracy of ratings through increased familiarity of the rater with both the critical job dimensions and the performance of the individual being rated. Manager tenure with the company did influence the ratings of managers; that is, the managers with longer company tenure received more favorable leadership ratings than did managers with shorter company tenure. However, the tenure of managers in the job for which they were being rated did not have an effect on manager ratings; that is, ratings of managers who were newer to the job were not significantly different from ratings of managers who had been in the position for a longer period of time.

The results indicate that the contribution of tenure to the ratings of managers stems from long-term experience with the company, not just specific job knowledge. One explanation for this finding is that individuals who have been with the company for
longer periods of time have become more adept at maneuvering within the organization and recognizing those behaviors considered valuable by the organization (for example, the behaviors evaluated by the leadership questionnaire) than have individuals with less company tenure.

One might argue that the results of the present study also provide support for the theory of practical intelligence (Sternberg & Wagner, 1993). Sternberg and his colleagues have argued (Sternberg & Wagner, 1993; Sternberg, Wagner, Williams, & Horvath, 1995) that there are different types of intelligence, one of which is practical intelligence. There is no one operational definition of practical intelligence. However, one working definition is that individuals with practical intelligence have an understanding or knowledge of norms. This information is informal or tacit, and is purportedly learned through observation and modeling (Sternberg & Wagner, 1993). In the present study, individuals who had managed to remain with the organization for longer periods of time may have thrived due to their ability to identify corporate norms and behave in accordance with these norms. Such individuals might have been new to the particular position for which they are being rated, but they were familiar with the organization and the informal expectations that were prevalent across different positions in the organization. In contrast, individuals who had been in their position longer than others, but not necessarily with the company for as long a period, may have had less detailed knowledge of the company norms. In turn, their leadership ratings might have reflected a more shallow understanding of the organization’s expectations.

The amount of time a subordinate had been with the company had an effect on the ratings of managers. The most favorable managerial ratings were given by subordinates
who had been with the company for less than 6 months or more than 10 years.

Subordinates who had been with the company for 6 months to 3 years gave the least favorable ratings of managers. As illustrated in Figure 1, there is a noticeable difference between ratings by employees who have the shortest and longest company tenure and the ratings of all other subordinates. This finding may indicate a need for training or goal setting for managers with 1 to 10 years company tenure. The possibility exists that managers with less than 6 months company tenure exert more effort on the job than do managers who have been with the company for a longer period. They may be more eager to perform to the best of their ability, perhaps because they are still excited about a new job environment or they may be trying to make a good first impression. Managers who have been with the organization for 1 to 10 years may suffer burnout or feel that their efforts are unrecognized, leading to less job commitment. On the other hand, managers who have been with the company for more than 10 years may be rated higher than other managers for several reasons. Managers who have been with the company more than 10 years of company tenure may be perceived by subordinates as more dedicated to the organization, and are rated higher accordingly. Such managers may also have adopted a policy of catering to their subordinates in order to manipulate the appraisal system.

Finally, over the years, less effective leaders may simply leave the company, voluntarily or involuntarily, once either the organization or the manager recognizes a deficiency in performance.

However, one should note that subordinate tenure accounted for less than 1% of the variance of subordinate ratings of managers. Although the results of the analysis were statistically significant, the results may have no practical significance for the host
organization. The difference in the ratings for the different tenure groups was less than three tenths of a rating point. It is unlikely that the host organization would implement any changes with the purpose of effecting such a small change in performance.

**Limitations of Present Study**

The data collection process may have limited the analysis. For the Subordinate tenure X Subordinate gender ANOVA, the inconsistent pattern of results may have been a result of the way in which subordinate tenure data was collected. Although tenure is a continuous variable (time), employees were asked to define their tenure in groupings of tenure periods, rather than just providing their date of hire. The distinction of levels of tenure was arbitrarily defined, and may have obscured a more meaningful data pattern.

Another potentially limiting factor in the present study was the gender composition of the sample. The Leadership Survey had been administered for several years prior to the 1998 administration, allowing the majority of employees to become familiar with both the measure and the reason for its use. The sample itself was very representative of the organization's population. The sample may also be similar to other financial institutions of the same size, but no data is available to make this comparison. However, the number of male managers far exceeded that of female managers, while the number of female subordinates far exceeds that of male subordinates. This same ratio may also exist in other finance organizations. However, an increased number of female managers and male subordinates would have been preferable in the present study in order to rule out the possibility that the results were an artifact of the gender composition of the sample. One advantage was that the sample size itself was large, providing sufficient statistical power to identify significant effects.
Summary and Conclusion

This study addressed two basic questions concerning upward feedback. The study first examined whether upward feedback ratings were subject to gender bias in the form of gender interactions or main effects of manager or subordinate gender. The results indicated that upward feedback ratings were not vulnerable to gender bias in any of these forms. These results are beneficial to practitioners in two ways. First, this study strengthens the credibility of upward feedback as an appraisal tool. Evidence that upward feedback results are not susceptible to gender bias should help to increase confidence in upward feedback results. Second, since practitioners may hesitate to use untested appraisal methods in the corporate environment, the increased confidence in upward feedback results may facilitate increased organizational approval and use of this appraisal system. Since upward feedback results can be used to address performance and leadership deficits, evidence supporting the objectivity of upward feedback provides human resource specialists with increased flexibility in the form of a wider selection of appraisal tools that may be utilized to improve job performance.

This study’s importance to practitioners lies in the use of data from an established upward feedback program. The generalizability of the results should be greater than the findings of previous upward feedback studies that used contrived settings to examine gender bias. Based on the present findings and their consistency with previous performance appraisal and upward feedback research, the question of gender bias may be secondary in relation to other factors that may influence subordinate appraisals of
managers, such as manager and subordinate tenure. The question of gender bias is an important one, but lacking any evidence for its presence in upward feedback ratings, other potentially significant variables (e.g., tenure, age, or race) should be evaluated in order to improve the accuracy of upward feedback ratings. The improvement of subordinate appraisal tools will benefit both organizations and their employees.

The second research question, the role of tenure in relation to the ratings of managers, was investigated at the request of the host organization. Subordinate tenure was found to significantly influence the ratings of managers. The critical period for subordinates appears to be from 6 months to 3 years. The ratings of managers by subordinates at these tenure levels become increasingly unfavorable until subordinates have been with the company for approximately 3 to 5 years. During this period, subordinates' ratings of their managers become much more favorable. These results may be used by organizations to identify the time period during which subordinates may be more likely to voluntarily leave the company. Similarly, as the data is a reflection of subordinates' perceptions of manager performance, organizations might attempt to develop formal mentoring programs between managers and new subordinates. As such relationships are likely to increase the communication between the two parties, subordinates may become more willing to share dissatisfaction with their managers, thereby allowing the manager to deal with issues before a subordinate makes the decision to leave the company. Other efforts to empower employees and subsequently reduce voluntary turnover could include feedback meetings such as those used in 360-degree feedback programs to help managers improve their performance. Subordinates would
then have a structured forum for sharing (with their managers) their concerns about the manager’s performance.

Unfortunately, the way in which the subordinate tenure data was collected may have affected the nature of these results. The manager ratings across the different subordinate tenure groups show no meaningful pattern. The arbitrary definition of the continuous variable of tenure into specific tenure periods may have distorted the data, limiting the type of analysis that could be used, and impacting the ability to detect meaningful patterns in the data. It is recommended that future versions of the Leadership Survey record subordinate tenure data in a manner similar to the way manager tenure is gathered, that is, by date of hire. The data can then be reexamined to determine how subordinate tenure affects the ratings of managers on the Leadership Survey.

Manager tenure with the company and manager tenure in the job being rated were both studied to help illuminate why in recent years lower-level managers have been receiving much lower leadership ratings than upper-level managers. Typically, lower-level managers will have shorter tenure with the company than will upper-level managers. In the present study, manager tenure with the company had a significant effect on the ratings of managers. This finding, coupled with the finding that manager job tenure was unrelated to manager ratings, indicates that some factor other than job knowledge was driving the leadership ratings. One explanation is that managers with longer tenure with the company may have had more time to improve their interpersonal skills and acquire in-depth knowledge of the organization. The results may also provide support for the theory of practical intelligence.
In order to examine the question of practical intelligence further, one would need to conduct a longitudinal study of a group of new managers, testing their practical knowledge at the beginning of their managerial careers, and tracking their career progression in the company. If practical intelligence were the factor that differentiated between different levels of leadership performance, one would expect to see individuals who demonstrated higher levels of practical intelligence promoted more quickly and/or to higher levels in the organization. Individuals who initially demonstrated lower levels of practical intelligence would be expected to either leave the company (voluntarily or involuntarily) or remain at lower-level managerial positions.

In conclusion, the results of this study, consistent with the feedback literature, indicate that upward feedback results are not susceptible to gender bias in the form of an interaction of manager and subordinate gender on ratings of managers. The role of other factors, such as manager company tenure and the company tenure of subordinates, appears to be a more pressing concern for both researchers and practitioners. For the purpose of improving the selection of managers and potentially improving organizational performance, the relationship of practical intelligence and leadership performance may be relevant and should be explored in future research. The role of subordinate tenure in subordinate ratings of managers remains unclear, but improvements in data collection may help to clarify the relationship. It is expected that further research of upward feedback and how it operates should help to improve the quality of information used by managers to better their performance in the workplace.
References


1998 LEADERSHIP SURVEY

OVERVIEW – The purpose of this survey is to give you the opportunity to provide developmental feedback to your manager which will enable him/her to further develop his/her leadership skills. YOUR SURVEY WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. Personnel Planning and Development will summarize all individual responses into a statistical report. Only those managers having three or more surveys completed on them will receive a report.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS SURVEY.

1. My manager shares with me the information I need to do my job.  
2. When I need it, my manager provides information about how I'm performing my job.  
3. My manager empowers me to create value and build loyalty for my customers.  
4. My manager promotes teamwork within our work unit.  
5. My manager promotes teamwork between people in our work unit and people in other work units including those company-wide.  
6. My manager listens to my suggestions.  
7. My manager keeps me informed on what the company is trying to accomplish.  
8. My manager keeps me informed on what our work unit is trying to accomplish.  
9. My manager involves our work unit in continuously improving the way we sell to and service our customers.  
10. My manager encourages me to develop myself.  
11. My manager makes sure I am trained to do my job.  
12. My manager treats me with respect.  
13. My manager supports my career development even if it means my moving to another area of the company.  
14. My manager presents a positive attitude toward the company and company policy.  
15. My manager helps me to understand what FIRSTPOWER is and means in my day-to-day activities.  
16. My manager works with me to ensure I understand the standards/goals on which my performance review will be based.  
17. My manager is accessible for discussions.  
18. My manager and I have discussed the knowledge, skills, and abilities that could affect my progress at First Tennessee.  
19. I have confidence in the fairness of my manager.  
20. My manager makes sure that I present my views on my performance reviews.  
21. My manager helps me understand how my job contributes to the company's success.  
22. My manager makes sure that I get the recognition for my performance.  
23. My manager ensures our work unit has a customer service recovery plan in place.  
24. My manager motivates me to sell our products and services to the best of my ability.  
25. If I thought I needed to go out on a limb to deliver excellent service, I am confident my manager would support me.  
26. My manager works with me to help resolve conflicts between work and family/personal issues.  
27. My manager coaches me to meet the challenges of my job.  
28. My manager provides encouragement in a way that is meaningful to me.  
29. My manager communicates best sales practices.  
30. My manager encourages me to use proactive sales techniques.  
31. My manager has held a feedback session concerning last year's Leadership Survey with our work unit.

Appendix A