April 2015

What’s in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching

Lillian MacNell
North Carolina State University

Adam Driscoll
University of Wisconsin–La Crosse

Andrea N. Hunt
University of North Alabama

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba

Part of the Collective Bargaining Commons, and the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation
MacNell, Lillian; Driscoll, Adam; and Hunt, Andrea N. (2015) "What’s in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching," Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy: Vol. 0, Article 53.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.58188/1941-8043.1510
Available at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba/vol0/iss10/53

This Proceedings Material is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy by an authorized editor of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
What’s in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching
Lillian MacNell – North Carolina State University
Adam Driscoll – University of Wisconsin–La Crosse
Andrea N. Hunt – University of North Alabama

Study Design

- Students were randomly assigned to one of four work groups, which were divided between two instructors, one male and one female.
  - Unbeknownst to the students, each instructor interacted with one group under their own identity and a second under their fellow instructor’s identity (see table below).
- We created a survey asking students to rate their instructors on 12 measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Group</th>
<th>Instructor’s Perceived Gender</th>
<th>Instructor’s Actual Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group D</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

Figure 1- Comparison of the aggregate index of student ratings across perceived instructor gender (left two columns) and actual instructor gender. The difference on the left is significant to the 0.1 level.
Table 1- Comparison of means of student ratings of teaching across the actual gender of the assistant instructor and the perceived gender of the assistant instructor.

Note: Each cell contains the mean student response for the question with the standard deviations in parentheses. The cells in the Difference columns contain the difference between the means with the r-squared in italics and parentheses. Welch’s t-tests were used to establish the significance of the observed differences. † p <= 0.10. * p <= 0.05.

- There was no significant difference in the ratings of the actual male and actual female instructor.

- There was, however, a statistically significant difference in the ratings of the perceived male and perceived female instructor, with the perceived male receiving an average of 3/4 of a point higher than the perceived female.
  - The perceived male received higher ratings on all 12 metrics, six of which were significant differences.
  - For example, the same turnaround time for grades was rated as a 4.35/5 for the perceived male instructor, and a 3.55/5 for the perceived female.