Confronting Sexist Remarks in Job Interviews

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Results

A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to compare the likelihood of women confronting sexist remarks made in an employment interview. The women were placed into three interview groups: high-cost charity, low-cost charity, and low-cost non-charity. A covariate was included to partial out the effects of sex-role identification.

No outliers were removed from the data. Examination of the Shapiro-Wilk statistics revealed a deviation from normality for all three groups; however, visual inspection of the histograms suggested that the data approximate a normal distribution and it was decided that the ANCOVA would be robust enough to overcome this deviation. Scatterplots revealed that the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable was linear.

The assumptions of homogeneity of regression slopes was supported by the absence of a significant IV by covariance interaction ($F[2, 128] = 1.37, p = .259$). Finally, a Levene’s test revealed that the homogeneity of variance assumption had been met.

The ANCOVA indicated that, after accounting for the effect of sex-role identification, there was a statistically significant effect of interview type on confrontation, ($F[2, 128] = 51.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .447$). This was consistent with the hypothesis that there would be a difference between the three interview groups. As expected, the likelihood of confronting sexist remarks in an employment interview was lower for the high-cost charity group ($M = 2.16, SD = 1.57$) than the low-cost charity group ($M = 5.93, SD = 2.29$).

Contrary to expectations, the pairwise comparisons revealed that the low-cost charity group ($M = 5.93, SD = 2.29$) did not exhibit a significant difference from the low-cost non-charity group ($M = 5.64, SD = 1.86$).
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Discussion

The current study investigated if there was a difference in the likelihood of confrontation by women who experience sexist remarks during an employment interview based on different interview groups. It was hypothesised that the women in the low-cost charity interviews would be more likely to speak out against sexist remarks than the women in the high-cost charity interviews. The results of this study supported the hypothesis. It was also hypothesised that there would be a difference when the women believed they were applying for a job with a charity. The results did not support this hypothesis.

As expected, the results show that the likelihood of a woman speaking out against sexist remarks is dependent on the perception of the social cost of the situation. Women who perceived that the interview was high risk, with competition among candidates, were less likely to speak out than those who perceived that the interview was low risk with little competition among candidates. However, there was little difference in the likelihood of confrontation based on whether the company organisation the women were applying to was a charitable organisation or not.

This study complements previous research regarding women’s perceptions regarding confrontation of sexism and social costs. The decision to confront sexist remarks is dependent on the perceived negative consequences of doing so (Shelton & Stewart, 2004). Research has suggested that some strong factors in the decision-making process include wanting to avoid tension and conflict, as well as being uncooperative, and being either willing to appear to violate or validate expectations of gender roles. Women who speak out against sexism are often disliked and can be considered too assertive or oversensitive (Good, Moss-Racusin, & Sanchez, 2012; Hyers, 2007). For anyone engaging in impression management, such as the woman in an employment interview, these sorts of such impressions would be
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considered undesirable and detrimental to their chances of gaining employment (Good et al., 2012).

Charity organisations, whether local or global, rely on favourable public opinions in order to gain support and donations to continue in business. Charities are seen to deal with difficult social and humanitarian issues, leading many to believe that they have their business is run upon high moral principles to which the business is run (Seu, Flanagan, & Orgad, 2015). Due to this Therefore, the public tends to hold these organisations to high ethical standards and any actions that breach these morals can have a great impact on public opinion (Bennett & Savani, 2013). With these public perspectives in mind, this study also looked at examined the possible potential differences between the likelihood of women confronting sexist behaviour in an interview based on whether the hiring company was a charity or not, however but the results did not show a significant difference for this hypothesis. One reason for this may be a result of that the public being is aware of the modernisation of charities, namely operating which now operate as a business with commercial practices in order to meet their goals, therefore thus, candidates applying for a job may treat the company the same regardless of its corporate or charitable status (Seu et al., 2015).

The implications of this study are instrumental to understanding the concerns that women have regarding their hesitation why women might hesitate to speak out against sexism. The study highlighted the uncertainty women have in the presence of high-cost situations and that, as the decision to the choice between confronting sexist behaviour can be in detrimental to personal gain, as noted in other studies (e.g. Good et al., 2012; Shelton & Stewart, 2004).

A limitation of this study could be the perceptions the subjects’ perceptions of held about charitable organisations. In order to gain a deeper perspective on this, a questionnaire...
regarding on people’s opinions of charities, charities as businesses, or charities as a workplace may be useful.

The results of this study are in line with previous research in regards to predicting women’s likelihood to confront sexism. The decision to speak out against sexism is weighted by the perceived social and personal consequences that a confrontation can bring. When the positive outcome outweighs the possible negative outcome, or when the cost is low, it is more likely that women will address the sexist remark. When the cost is high, the likelihood of that women will address sexism decreases. This was true for this study regardless of the interviewing company’s organisation’s status as a charitable or non-charitable organisation; charity or a non-charity.
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No outliers were removed from the data. Examination of the Shapiro-Wilk statistics revealed a deviation from normality for all three groups; however, visual inspection of the histograms suggested that the data approximate a normal distribution and it was decided that the ANCOVA would be robust enough to overcome this deviation. Scatterplots revealed that the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable was linear. The assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was supported by the absence of a significant IV by covariance interaction ($F[2, 128] = 1.37, p = .259$). Finally, a Levene’s test revealed that the homogeneity of variance assumption had been met.

The ANCOVA indicated that, after accounting for the effect of sex-role identification, there was a statistically significant effect of interview type on confrontation ($F[2, 128] = 51.75, p > .001, \eta^2 = .447$). This was consistent with the hypothesis that there would be a difference between the three interview groups. As expected, the likelihood of confronting sexist remarks in an employment interview was lower for the high-cost charity group ($M = 2.16, SD = 1.57$) than the low-cost charity group ($M = 5.93, SD = 2.29$). Contrary to expectations, the pairwise comparisons revealed that the low-cost charity group ($M = 5.93, SD = 2.29$) did not exhibit a significant difference from the low-cost non-charity group ($M = 5.64, SD = 1.86$).
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This study complements previous research on women’s perceptions regarding confrontation of sexism and social costs. The decision to confront sexist remarks is dependent on the perceived negative consequences of doing so (Shelton & Stewart, 2004). Research has suggested that some strong factors in the decision-making process include wanting to avoid tension and conflict, as well as being unwilling to appear to violate or validate expectations of gender roles. Women who speak out against sexism are often disliked and can be considered too assertive or oversensitive (Good, Moss-Racusin & Sanchez, 2012; Hyers, 2007). For anyone engaging in impression management, such as a woman in an employment interview, such impressions would be considered undesirable and detrimental to their chances of gaining employment (Good et al., 2012).
Charity organisations, whether local or global, rely on favourable public opinions in order to gain support and donations to continue in business. Charities are seen to deal with difficult social and humanitarian issues, leading many to believe that their business is run upon high moral principles (Seu, Flanagan & Orgad, 2015). Therefore, the public tends to hold these organisations to high ethical standards and any actions that breach these morals can have a great impact on public opinion (Bennett & Savani, 2003). With these perspectives in mind, this study also examined potential differences between the likelihood of women confronting sexist behaviour in an interview based on whether the hiring company was a charity or not, but the results did not show a significant difference. One reason for this may be that the public is aware of the modernisation of charities, which now operate as a business with commercial practices in order to meet their goals; thus, candidates applying for a job may treat the company the same regardless of its corporate or charitable status (Seu et al., 2015).

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