

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a summary of the study, a summary of the findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The 120-year-old Siriraj organization is classified as a professional and traditional organization which has a high proportion of women employees. Ignoring or mishandling gender differences can mean inability to retain or motivate employees, so this study was conducted to evaluate the gender-specific effects at work.

5.1.1 Objectives of the Study

Main objectives

- 1 To compare the importance of work-related goals by gender
- 2 To compare the preference for management styles by gender

Sub objectives

- 3 To investigate the importance of work-related goals
- 4 To investigate the preference and perception for management styles

5.1.2 Study Design

An exploratory survey was conducted by using self administered questionnaires. A randomized sampling technique was used. The questionnaires were mailed to staff via the organization mailing route. A cover letter described the purpose of the study and assured confidentiality of the respondents. The respondents who were willing to participate were asked to mail the completed questionnaires to the researcher.

5.1.3 Sample of the Study

The study population was current employees at the Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hoapital, Mahidol University. 287 of 360 questionnaires (78%) were sent back to the researcher. Male respondents were 106 (36.9%) and female respondents were 181 (63.1%).

5.1.4 Measurements

The questionnaire was modified from Hofstede's cultural questionnaire, 1980. It consisted of 3 parts; 21 items for work goals, 2 items for preference of management styles and 9 items for personal data. The respondents indicated how each work goal item was important to them on a five-point Likert scale.

5.1.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the data. The independent t-test was used to compare the quantitative data and Chi-square test was used to compare the qualitative data. The p value less than .05 was declared as statistical significance.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

5.2.1 General Information

The total respondents were 287 which 106 were male (36.9%) and 181 were female (63.1%). The average ages of male and female were 34.9 and 34.5 years respectively and the average terms of working experience of male and female were 9.1 and 11.1 years respectively. For men, the proportion of marital status was 55.7% in single and 40.3% were married. The current status of the men was 13.2% in management, 16.5% were in professional positions and 70.3% were in operational positions. For women, the proportion of marital status was 58% in single and 42% were married, and the current status of the women was 4.7% in management, 30.7% in professional positions and 64.6% in operational positions. Regarding men's supervisors, 29.5% of their supervisors were male and 70.6% were women, whereas women's supervisors were 24.7% male and 75.3% were women. 72.3% of men and 76.9 of women answered that they would continue to work for the organization more than five years or until retirement respectively.

5.2.2. Overall Work Goal and Gender Comparisons

The questionnaires examined the 21 work-related goals and it was found that all mean scores were higher than 3. The importance of work-related goals were ranged from the highest score to the lowest score: job security, time for personal time, co-operation, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, opportunity for high earnings, use of skills and abilities, training opportunities, relationships with manager,

challenge work, opportunity to help others, clear requirements, opportunity for advancement, contribution to the success of company, desirable living area, freedom (work autonomy), little job stress, be consulted, company, recognition and job variety.

The importance of the 21 work-related goals were compared between male and female respondents. The results show that there are statistically significant differences in 7 work-related goals where women scored more than men scored. They are little job stress, job security, co-operation, opportunity for high earnings, desirable living area, fringe benefits and training opportunities.

5.2.3 Management Style

According to the preference of management styles, there are statistically significant differences between genders. For men, they prefer 43.1% in authoritarian, 28.4% in consultative, 19.6% in mentor and 8.8% in collaborative styles, whereas for women, they prefer 50.8% in authoritarian, 26.3% in consultative, 21.2 % in mentor and 1.7% in collaborative. Both men and women favor authoritarian management.

According to the perceived management styles, men perceive their superior as mentor 25%, collaborative 23%, authoritarian 22% consultative 21% and none of the four styles 9%, whereas women perceive their superior as collaborative 27.1%, mentor 21.5%, consultative 19.8%, authoritarian 19.2% and none of the four styles 12.4%.

5.3 DISCUSSION

Using a survey questionnaire based upon the work of Hofstede, the researcher examined the effect of gender on the importance of work-related goals and the preference for management styles. The study was conducted in a specific organization, Siriraj hospital. It is a professional public organization with a high proportion of females. Its organization structure is a bureaucratic style.

From our study, men and women respondents were similar in age, marital status, education level, work experiences, supervisor, and willingness to continue for working for the organization. The results of the willingness to continue for working for the organization reveal the loyalty to the organization. 44.6% of respondents will continue to work more than 5 years and 30.7% of them will work until retirement.

Male respondents' status is more in the level of management than female respondents while female respondents' status is more in professional status than male respondents.

5.3.1 Gender Roles

Gender roles are different for males and females in all cultures. Some stereotypes seem to be universal across cultures such as aggression, strength and lack of emotional for males and weakness, submissiveness and emotionally for females. Although women are becoming accepted in work outside the home, the constraints in Thai society preventing women from leadership role are family and traditions. As a group they are forced into a passive role in society rather than being active. According to the traditional role, women had to stay at home and participate only in household activities. Men do not realize the value of women's social role. Some factors such as family financial condition, family role commitment and maternal status also are main barriers for women to full participate in the work force outside the home. This has also echoed the findings that the gender inequality has resulted in a low proportion of women climbing up to take the lead in high ranking positions (Premrudee Charmpoonod, 2001).

The Global Gender Gap Report 2006 measures the size of the gender gap in four critical areas of inequality between men and women. For Thailand, it was found that found the female to male ratio on Professional and technical workers was 1.08. For Educational Attainment the score was 0.973.

From Koch, Luft, and Kruse, 2005, the replication of the 1986 study of Kruse and Wintermantel, they found a considerable progressive change– more gender equality. There is considerable evidence for a shift to more gender egalitarian representations among men as well as woman.

The trend shows that the gender gap in Siriraj organization is not far apart. Women to some extent, factors such as education and professional work are accepted well in the organization.

5.3.2 Work Goal Importance

Men are perceived to be strong, active, assertive, competitive and tough, and are characterized by focusing on dominance, autonomy, aggression and economic achievements. Men consider challenge, earnings, advancement, recognition,

training, work autonomy and the use of their skills to be more important work goals than do women.

Women are best suited for tender roles; for example, to tend to the care of the home, to children and to people in general. Then, women are more concerned with nurturance, affiliation, deference and the quality of family life. Women consider co-operation, relationship with immediate managers, a desirable living area, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, job security and personal time to be more important work goals than do men (Hofstede, 2001, Konrad, Coorgall, Lieb, and Ritchie, 2000).

The researcher studied the importance scores given for 21 work related goals categorized by gender to examine which of these profiles are consistent with our hypotheses. The hypotheses were set up as:

H1 = the importance scores of working-related goals of male employees would be different from the importance scores of work-related goals of female employees according to 21 items; time for personal time, challenge work, little job stress, physical working conditions, relationships with manager, job security, freedom (work autonomy), co-operation, be consulted, contribution to the success of company, opportunity for high earnings, desirable living area, opportunity for advancement, job variety, company, opportunity to help others, clear requirements, fringe benefits, use of skills and abilities, recognition, and training opportunities.

The results of our study are shown in Table 3. All work goals have average scores more than 3 which means they are important goals in working life. The female respondents place no different scores on 14 work goals compared to male respondents but place more scores on 7 work goals out of 21 work goals than do the male counterparts. These are: little job stress, job security, co-operation, opportunity for high earnings, desirable living area, fringe benefits and training opportunities. These findings are consistent with the results of previous surveys. Konrad, Coorgall, Lieb, and Ritchie (2000) report that women consider job security, good co-workers, good supervisors and the physical work environment to be more important than men do. The results also show that women rate the importance of work goals quite similarly to men in items that related to male stereotypes. This reflects that attitudes of women have shifted into the modern trend.

According to the Two Factor Theory of Frederick Herzberg, 1959, people are influenced by two factors. Satisfaction and psychological growth is a factor of motivation factors. Dissatisfaction is a result of hygiene factors. Satisfiers or motivation factors consist of achievement, recognition, advancement, and responsibility. Herzberg states that when a lot of motivation factors are provided, employees' degree of job satisfaction will be increased; however, when these motivation factors are absent, employees will feel neutral or indifferent.

Dissatisfiers or hygiene factors consist of company policy, salary, supervision, and working conditions. Herzberg states that when a lot of context factors are provided such as good salary or pleasant working conditions, employees will feel neutral or indifferent about the job. However, when these factors are absent, a degree of dissatisfaction will be increased. (Muchinsky, 1993)

Now people tend to spend at least one-third of their time in daily life on work. As a result, work becomes the important indicator of life quality. Davis and Newstrom (1985) point out that job satisfaction influences individual's life satisfaction as it is a significant part of life satisfaction. People who are satisfied with their jobs are likely to be satisfied with their life.

From the results of the current study, it is recommended that an organization designed for a favorable work environment should incorporate 21 work goals. For women, the significant issues that should be considered are low job stress, job security, co-operation, opportunity for high earnings, desirable living area, fringe benefits, and training opportunities. Creation of favorable circumstances for women in Siriraj will be beneficial because this organization has a high proportion of female employees.

5.3.3 Management Style

Another dimension that this study revealed is the difference in management style between male and female employees. Regarding the decision making style of managers, the result shows the most preferable styles for both men and women is authoritarian; this is based on the percentage of employees who responded to this issue. Men prefer collaborative style more than women. These results are contradictory to that of Yukongdi's study (2004) who examined the perceived and preferred style of managers among employees in Thai organizations.

Yukongdi's results showed that the most preferred style of managers for employees was the consultative manager, followed by participative, paternalistic, while the smallest proportion of employees preferred an autocratic manager. According to Hofstede's study of cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980), Thailand is culturally different from western countries and is designated a high power distance country. The concept of power distance can be applied to organization settings because it is related to the degree of centralization and autocratic leadership.

Siriraj is an old public organization and its organizational structure is traditional or bureaucratic. The structure of organization is divided into 3 sections which are firstly, the Office of the Dean, secondly, Departments and lastly, Siriraj Hospital. The Office of the Dean comprises 11 units, Departments comprises 29 units and Siriraj comprises 21 units. The structure is quite rigid and currently the organization has 12,000 employees with a clear division of labor and chain of command and control through top down structure. There are many written rules and policies such as job descriptions, job specifications, manuals and standards of practices. Directing or reporting systems normally should be written documents. The vertical formal networks are used to communicate top down from executive level to departmental level. Figure 1 of the organization chart shows the hierarchy and chains of command. It has been reported that under such kind of administration the employees in the traditional organization are comfortable with the authoritarian style as there is the likelihood of their superiors to umbrella them once mistakes or errors occur in the line of their work (Hamilton & Parket, 1997).

Komin (1990) suggests Thai employees might feel uncomfortable working in a participative work setting as participative management may be incompatible with Thai culture norms where seniority or hierarchy is strongly respected. Therefore it may be logical to argue that working under a participative leader might not necessarily lead to a high level of working satisfaction or satisfaction among Thai employees. According to Komin's study, Thai culture is characterized by a tight hierarchical social system "accepted existential inequality" and a strong value of relationships. She stated that Thai employees would be devoted to work for a leader they like and respect. A benevolent, paternalistic leadership style will be more effective than "an impersonal, cut- and -dry" managerial style.

However, the gap between preferred and perceived management style is demonstrated in this study and could possibly lead to dissatisfaction of employees in working conditions. For the issue of autonomy of university or organization, the design of organization should be given heavy focus and concern. If possible, the traditional style should be avoided because, currently, the trend of managerial styles has been moving away from the autocratic to the new widely practiced, democratic style.

5.3.4 Limitation of the study

As the study population was specific to the particular organization, the generalization of the result is limited to organizations which have similar patterns.

5.4 CONCLUSION

From 21 work-related goals, the 7 work-related goals about little job stress, job security, co-operation, opportunity for high earnings, desirable living area, fringe benefits and training opportunities are valued more by female.

According to the preference of management styles, men preferred the most authoritarian, the second consultative, the third mentor and the last collaborative, whereas women preferred authoritarian the most, the second consultative, the third mentor and the last collaborative.

5.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

- 1 The organization design for a favorable work environment should incorporate 21 working goals. Especially for women, the significant matters are low job stress, job security, co-operation, opportunity for high earnings, desirable living area, fringe benefits, and training opportunities.

- 2 Further studies should be conducted to design the appropriate career path, compensation and benefit for the organization with regard to the gender effect.

3 Similar studies should be conducted in time series or different settings to evaluate and monitor the change of gender effect on work goals and management preference.

4. Further studies should be conducted to investigate the gap of preference and perceived management style in terms of employee's satisfaction.