How Do Female and Male Faculty Members Construct Job Satisfaction? The Roles of Perceived Institutional Leadership and Mentoring and their Mediating Processes

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ABSTRACT. In this study we examine how a sample of 248 male and female professors at a Midwestern private research university construct their academic job satisfaction. Our findings indicate that both women and men perceive that their job satisfaction is influenced by the institutional leadership and mentoring they receive, but only as mediated by the two key academic processes of access to internal academic resources (including research-supportive workloads) and internal relational supports from a collegial and inclusive immediate work environment. Gender differences emerged in the strengths of the perceived paths leading to satisfaction: women's job satisfaction derived more from their perceptions of the internal relational supports than the academic resources they received, whereas men's job satisfaction resulted equally from their perceptions of internal academic resources and internal relational supports received. Implications for leadership and institutional practices are drawn from the findings.

Key Words: academic job satisfaction, women faculty, academic climate

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1. Introduction

What contributes to the job satisfaction of male and female faculty in a research university? What are the effects of perceptions of institutional leadership (i.e., departmental chairs, school/college deans) and mentoring (from senior colleagues within and outside the university) on job satisfaction? Through what academic processes do these experiences of institutional characteristics influence job satisfaction, and does the perception of these processes vary by faculty gender? We conducted a study to answer these questions using a sample of faculty members and data from a larger study of campus climate and community conducted at a Midwestern private research university.

Our main purpose in the current investigation was to expose the pathways leading from perceived institutional characteristics (the experience of leadership and mentoring) to the job satisfaction of faculty members, and to investigate likely differences in the strengths of these paths for women and men in academic career tracks. In this research report we show that two key academic processes occurring within a faculty member's primary unit (department or school/college) mediate the perceived relationships between institutional characteristics and job satisfaction for both female and male academics: internal academic resources (including research-supportive workloads) and internal relational supports. However, gender-based differences emerged in the relative strengths of the mediating paths, indicating that the perceived means to job satisfaction differ for women and men faculty members. These findings indicate that for

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greater effectiveness, institutional practices must be tailored to examine and suit the different motivational needs of male and female faculty members.

In the following sections, we first describe our hypothesized model indicating the paths expected between the experience of institutional characteristics (leadership and mentoring), internal academic processes (academic resources and relational supports) and job satisfaction. Next we describe the methods used and the results obtained. We conclude this report with a discussion of the implications for institutional practices.

2. Conceptual framework and hypothesized model

In this section, we describe the relationships in our proposed model of academic job satisfaction (see Figure 1). In the conceptualized model, we propose that perceptions of institutional characteristics have direct impact on perceptions of academic career success. This direct impact might also be mediated by the perception of internal academic processes within the primary unit (department or school/college), which help the realization of institutional characteristics such as leadership and mentoring. These internal academic processes include factors that could be expected to affect job satisfaction: access to academic resources (the tools that enable a faculty member to do his or her job) and relational supports (the environment and network within which the job is performed)

Career success is typically presented in the literature as consisting of two components, objective and subjective career success. Objective career success is measured by outwardly observable variables such as salary, promotion, task performance, and peer or supervisor evaluations, while intrinsic career success consists of one's feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with job and career (Greenhaus *et al*., 1990; Peluchette, 1993; Orpen, 1994; Wayne *et al*., 1999; O'Neil *et al*., 2004). In addition to concern for general employee well-being, measures of subjective success are important because individuals who feel satisfied are happier and more motivated, and can potentially have their performance enhanced by such feelings as a result (de Janasz *et al*., 2003). In the current investigation, we choose to focus only on subjective career success, in the form of job satisfaction, in academic careers.

Internal academic resources

For a faculty member in a research university, access to scarce academic resources and a research-supportive workload contributes to research outcomes and success, and ultimately job satisfaction. Academic resources in the primary

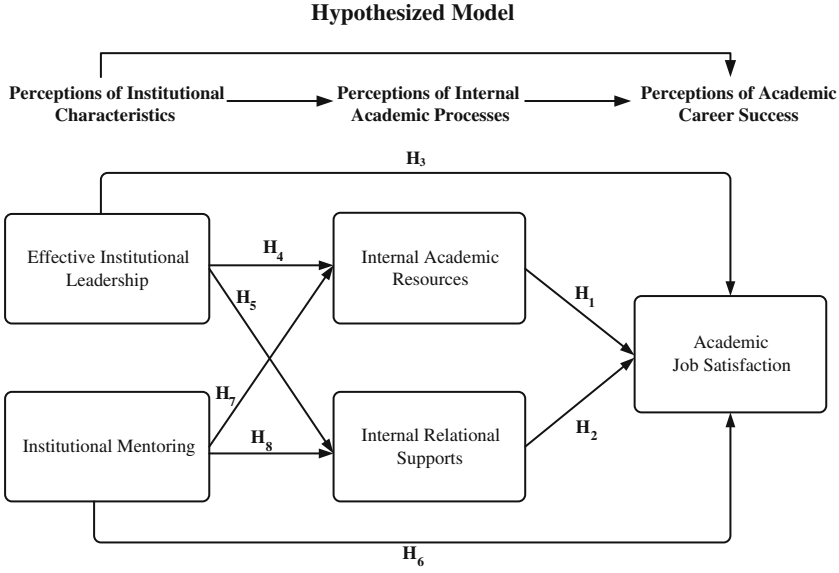

Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

unit (department or school/college) generally include research equipment, office and laboratory space, research and teaching assistance, and technical and administrative support. A research-supportive workload consists of protected time for research, and entails limits on the non-research activities undertaken, such as teaching, student advising, and committee service.

Peluchette (1993) found that the experience of resource availability, measured in survey items that asked things such as "To what extent is computer support available at your institutions?" (p. 203) contributed significantly to subjective feelings of career success in a sample of 424 faculty from two research institutions, after controlling for rank and tenure. Feelings of career success included scale items on work role, interpersonal, financial, hierarchical, and life success. Similarly, the experience of a research-supportive workload is likely to be facilitative of a faculty member's academic performance and feelings of satisfaction. Previous research has indicated that non-research workload responsibilities are detrimental to faculty members' perceptions of career success in research environments: faculty members were found to be resentful of the fact that academic work is not shared equitably and that service is minimally rewarded in salary increases or promotion and tenure decisions (Blackmore *et al.*, 1997), and that teaching is generally given very low priority in the established system of academic values (Stenstrom, 1991) and counts significantly less than does research in tenure and promotion decisions (Schultz *et al.*, 1989). For these reasons, we hypothesize that:

> $\mathbf{H}_1$ Perception of internal academic resources will be positively related to ratings of academic job satisfaction.

Internal relational supports

Relational supports obtained through a collegial, inclusive, and respectful immediate work environment are beneficial to career development in academic settings. Having trustworthy colleagues provides a faculty member a positive and supportive work environment that is conducive to academic performance. In a recent faculty survey, network connections contributed significantly to feelings of career success regardless of rank or tenure status (Peluchette, 1993). Internal collegial support provides information and supports to a faculty member about how to conduct their work, improve performance, and understand the political workings of the university system, in addition to providing opportunities for collaboration, generative professional relationships, and greater involvement and visibility in their professional discipline (c.f., Higgins, 2000; Higgins and Kram, 2001; de Janasz *et al.*, 2003). These positive career development outcomes are likely to result in enhanced perceptions of satisfaction:

> $\mathbf{H}_2$ Perception of internal relational supports will be positively related to ratings of academic job satisfaction.

Institutional leadership

The immediate institutional leader (usually a department chair or school/college dean) is key to creating the internal academic climate (Bensimon *et al.*, 2000; Lucas, 2000) and facilitating access to scarce resources (Hill and French, 1967; Rowley and Sherman, 2003) that impact the career satisfaction of faculty members. Hill and French (1967) found that professors' satisfaction is positively correlated with the experienced power of their chair. They explain "it is the power of the chairman to speak effectively on behalf of the faculty that explains the positive association between the chairman's power and the satisfaction of professors" (Hill and French, 1967: p. 537). The implication from this statement is that the chair can influence the distribution of academic resources and workload responsibilities, and help faculty members experience positive internal and external connections that advance their careers and provide satisfaction.

The department chair has the power to distribute faculty workload, to establish contacts with higher administrators, to form committees and make committee assignments, to access the inner workings of the internal political system, to provide research assistants, technologies, and supplies, to acquire funds for faculty research, and to maintain good contacts with the community (Hill and French, 1967: p. 553). As pointed out by Rowley and Sherman (2003: p. 1060), "At its best, administration facilitates the teaching and research processes by providing the resources, facilities, and technologies necessary to achieve academic excellence."

Additionally, leaders foster interactions that often involve "a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of group members" (Bass, 1990: p. 19). As leaders of their faculty groups, department chairs and school/college deans can serve as mentors and role models, provide vocational and psychological support, and professional network connections to their faculty. They can facilitate workplace environments that are supportive, collegial, respectful, and inclusive of all faculty members. The combination of resources and relational supports from the department chair or dean facilitate both increased job competency and the building of networks (de Janasz *et al*., 2003). In summary, the chair influences and controls key components that contribute to job satisfaction: academic resources and workload allocation, as well as the provision of relational supports through a collegial work environment. Therefore, we hypothesize perceived direct and indirect effects of effective leadership on job satisfaction as follows:

> $\mathbf{H}_3$, $\mathbf{H}_4$, and $\mathbf{H}_5$ Perception of institutional leadership will be positively related to ratings of academic job satisfaction ($\mathbf{H}_3$), internal academic resources ($\mathbf{H}_4$), and internal relational supports ($\mathbf{H}_5$).

Institutional mentoring

Mentoring is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced organization member helps a less experienced organization member to improve career opportunities and growth, through both career development and psychosocial support (Kram, 1985). The presence of a mentor, amount of mentoring, and satisfaction with the mentor relationship all relate to career satisfaction (Fagenson, 1989; Turban and Dougherty, 1994; Higgins, 2000; Ragins *et al*., 2000: cited in de Janasz *et al*., 2003). Formal mentoring programs, in which mentors are assigned, trained, and supported, as well as informal mentoring, where protégés choose their own mentors, lead to increased satisfaction (Ragins *et al*., 2000: cited in de Janasz *et al*., 2003).

Seibert *et al*. (2001b) found for a variety of occupations that the number of contacts at higher organizational levels positively relates to access to organizational information, which results in greater access to resources. In academic settings, relationships with other faculty help junior faculty make valuable and needed connections, expanding their number of developmental relationships and providing needed information on political and organizational structure (Higgins, 2000; Higgins and Kram, 2001). Mentoring facilitates socialization, increases political allies, and helps build reputation, increase visibility, and gain access to opportunities (de Janasz *et al*., 2003). Thus, we hypothesize perceived direct and indirect effects of mentoring on job satisfaction as follows:

> $\mathbf{H}_6$, $\mathbf{H}_7$, and $\mathbf{H}_8$ Perception of institutional mentoring will be positively related to ratings of academic job satisfaction ($\mathbf{H}_6$), internal academic resources ($\mathbf{H}_7$), and internal relational supports ($\mathbf{H}_8$).

Gender differences

The literature on the academic career success of women faculty suggests that gender differences abound in the paths investigated in this study (see Bilimoria *et al*., 2005 for a review). We focus here on gender differences in two major paths of the ratings of academic job satisfaction: first, from perceptions of institutional leadership through internal academic resources to job satisfaction ($\mathbf{H}_4$, $\mathbf{H}_1$) and second, from perceptions of institutional leadership and institutional mentoring through internal relational supports to job satisfaction ($\mathbf{H}_5$, $\mathbf{H}_8$, $\mathbf{H}_2$).

Multiple dimensions of gender-based resource inequity in academia can be found (Long, 1990; Evetts, 1996; Preston, 2004; Valian, 2004). Women receive less office and lab space, have less access to graduate student assistance, and get fewer services from support staff (Park, 1996). Driscoll (1978) found that women themselves showed less trust in organizational decision makers (with no other group differences for age, rank, and salary). Due to their proportional rarity, women are often subjected to treatments as tokens within their workplaces (Kanter, 1977; Yoder, 1991); they may not receive the benefits of inclusion in the inner circles of power from (predominantly) male department chairs, and accordingly their perceived job satisfaction from

this path may be compromised. In contrast, male faculty members, to whom male departmental leaders may have a natural affinity, may receive greater access to academic resources and research-enhancing workloads, enhancing the likelihood of satisfaction emerging from this path.

$\mathbf{H}_9$ The path coefficients between perceptions of institutional leadership, internal academic resources, and academic job satisfaction ($\mathbf{H}_4$ and $\mathbf{H}_1$) will be smaller for female faculty than for male faculty.

Differences may also exist in the paths involving internal relational supports. Relational supports are particularly important to women as these reflect various emotional and psycho-social benefits (Kram, 1985), necessary for career development and a strong sense of self and satisfaction. Professional and peer network connections provide women faculty members, in particular, with career development assistance including enhancement of research and teaching performance, reputation and visibility in the discipline, and access to opportunities. Reskin (1978, 1979) has argued that collegial exchange, a likely by-product of a mentoring relationship, may be even more important for women than men since it may relieve the stresses of role conflicts. Thus, we posit that:

$\mathbf{H}_{10}$ The path coefficients between perceptions of institutional characteristics (leadership and mentoring), internal relational supports, and academic job satisfaction ($\mathbf{H}_5$, $\mathbf{H}_8$, and $\mathbf{H}_2$) will be larger for female faculty than for male faculty.

3. Methodology

In order to test these hypotheses, data were used from a university-wide survey at a private, Midwestern research university, conducted in 2004, which examined faculty engagement, access to academic resources, departmental and school leadership, career satisfaction, and other academic career development issues. The constructs discussed here are based on a subset of questionnaire items that are a part of this larger study.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was modeled after several existing public-domain faculty climate surveys from Purdue University, University of Kansas, The Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey, University of Arizona School of Medicine, and the University of Michigan. Questionnaire items were also based in part on the results of an earlier focus-group investigation of faculty members conducted at the university (see Higgins *et al.*, 2005). These focus groups yielded findings concerning faculty members' experiences and perceptions of the culture and academic resources at the university. Global satisfaction items were also constructed, along with demographic questions about professional and tenure status.

Measures

All scale items that were used in the current investigation appear in Table I, along with the associated Cronbach's alpha for each construct. Responses were given on a four point Likert scale. Respondents also provided their *gender* and *academic rank* when filling out their surveys. Since we did not predict how rank influences the hypothesized relationships and since our sample consisted of many fewer women in higher academic ranks, we only included rank as a control variable in our analysis.

Participants

An invitation to participate in an online survey was emailed to all full- and part-time faculty, for a total of 3,699. This total was made up of 2,233 full-time faculty (at least a 51% appointment) and 1,466 part-time faculty. A total of 579 faculty members completed the survey. Of these 579 faculty members, 508 were full-time and 71 were part-time. Due to the low response rates of part-time faculty, all part-time faculty responses were dropped. The response rate from the School of Medicine, which has 1,729 faculty members, was also very low at 217 (13%). Unlike the other schools/colleges, full-time faculty members in the School of Medicine do not necessarily teach or practice on campus; hence it was considered appropriate to leave this subgroup out of the

Table I
Questionnaires and items used in the measurement of constructs

Academic job satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.85$)
Please indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following dimensions of your professional life (1 Strongly dissatisfied 2 Somewhat dissatisfied 3 Somewhat satisfied 4 Strongly satisfied).
- Overall experience of community at this university
- Overall experience of collegiality in your primary unit
- Overall experience of being a faculty member in your primary unit
- Teaching and service load
- Teaching and research balance

Effective institutional leadership ($\alpha = 0.91$)
Please rate the following statements regarding the head (chair/dean) of your primary unit (department/school) (1 Strongly dissatisfied 2 Somewhat dissatisfied 3 Somewhat satisfied 4 Strongly satisfied).
- Is an effective administrator
- Helps me obtain the resources I need
- Articulates a clear vision
- Provides teaching development opportunities
- Shares resources/opportunities fairly
- Involves me in important decision-making processes

Institutional mentoring ($\alpha = 0.76$)
Please rate the following regarding mentoring you receive, which is defined as advice or counsel on scholarly or career issues, or sponsorship or advocacy on your behalf (1 None 2 To some extent 3 To a moderate extent 4 To a great extent).
- To what extent do you receive formal mentoring within your primary unit?
- To what extent do you receive informal mentoring within your primary unit?
- To what extent do you receive formal mentoring outside your primary unit, but within the University?
- To what extent do you receive informal mentoring outside your primary unit, but within the University?
- To what extent do you receive formal mentoring outside of the University?
- To what extent do you receive informal mentoring outside of the University?

Internal academic resources ($\alpha = 0.76$)
Please indicate your level of agreement for the following resources available through your primary unit (department/school).
- Support for professional development/travel funds
- Computers/equipment and technical support
- Clerical, secretarial support
- Teaching load
- Student advising responsibilities
- Service/committee assignments

Internal relational supports ($\alpha = 0.90$)
Please rate the following statements about your primary unit. Please consider your department as your primary unit; otherwise refer to your school as your primary unit (1 Strongly dissatisfied 2 Somewhat dissatisfied 3 Somewhat satisfied 4 Strongly satisfied).
- Colleagues in my primary unit value my work
- Colleagues in my primary unit can be trusted
- Colleagues in my primary unit provide me feedback about research/scholarly issues
- Colleagues in my primary unit solicit my opinions about scholarly issues
- Colleagues in my primary unit solicit my opinions about professional/clinical activities
- I feel professionally welcome and included by colleagues in my primary unit

Rank
What is your current rank?
1. Lecturer
2. Instructor
3. Assistant professor
4. Associate professor
5. Professor
6. Adjunct faculty
7. Visiting faculty
8. Research faculty
9. Other

Table I
(Continued)

Gender
What is your gender?
1. Female
2. Male

current analyses. Thus, the results reported in the current investigation pertain only to the university's full-time, non-medical school faculty, for an overall response rate of 39%. After dropping poor responses (less than 92% complete) and responses not indicating gender, the final sample size was 248. The female faculty sub-sample consisted of 100 respondents (17 professors, 31 associate professors, 30 assistant professors, 18 instructors and 4 lecturers); the male faculty sub-sample consisted of 148 respondents (79 professors, 33 associate professors, 28 assistant professors, 5 instructors, and 3 lecturers). These distributions indicate fairly large (although representative) proportional differences in rank between the genders.

Data analysis

We used a path analytic approach to test the intervening model (James *et al*., 1984). Path analysis examines the hypothesized relationships simultaneously and provides an overall assessment of the fit of a hypothesized model.

The proposed model was evaluated with Amos, a structural equation modeling package (Arbuckle, 1997, Version 4.0). We used multiple indices to evaluate model fit, including the chi-square statistic, the ratio of chi-square divided by degree of freedom, the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and the normed fit index (NFI) and RMSEA (Carmines and McIver, 1981; Bollen, 1990).

We also assessed the discriminant validity of the constructs by conducting chi-square difference tests. For each pair of factor correlations, we compared the chi-square value of the unconstrained model with the value of the constrained model (in which the correlation of two factors is fixed at 1.0; see Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). All between-model chi-square differences were highly significant, indicating the presence of discriminant validity.

To test the gender-related hypotheses ($\mathbf{H}_9$ and $\mathbf{H}_{10}$) that the strengths of the paths among the constructs differ, we separately tested path analysis models for female and male faculty. The results are presented below.

4. Results

The correlation matrix used in the analyses is presented in Table II, along with the means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients of the scales. Since we were most interested in gender

Table II
Descriptive statistics, correlations, and Cronbach's alpha

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Effective institutional leadership	3.05	0.77	**0.91**					
2. Institutional mentoring	1.91	0.62	0.11^{+}	**0.76**				
3. Internal academic resources	2.90	0.61	0.34***	0.06	**0.76**			
4. Internal relational supports	3.13	0.70	0.43***	0.18**	0.26***	**0.90**		
5. Academic job satisfaction	3.01	0.70	0.44***	0.17**	0.50***	0.61***	**0.85**	
6. Current academic rank	3.88	1.11	0.05	−0.22***	0.09	0.23***	0.16*	
7. Gender	1.60	0.49	0.19**	−0.23***	0.06	0.25***	0.22***	0.37***

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, $^{+}p < 0.10$; $N = 248$; Cronbach's alpha is shown in bold.

Table III
Tests of significance of gender differences

Variables	Female		Male		*t*-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. Effective institutional leadership	2.88	0.80	3.17	0.72	−3.00**
2. Institutional mentoring	2.08	0.65	1.80	0.58	3.61***
3. Internal academic resources	2.58	0.60	2.93	0.61	−0.96
4. Internal relational support	2.92	0.74	3.27	0.63	−3.85***
5. Academic job satisfaction	2.83	0.71	3.14	0.66	−3.55***

Note: $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$.

differences in the ways job satisfaction is constructed by men and women professors, we conducted tests of the gender differences in the ratings of the main variables of the study. These *t*-tests are reported in Table III, and indicate that all constructs except internal academic resources are significantly different for female and male professors. Interestingly, female professors rate the effectiveness of their institutional leadership, internal relational supports, and academic job

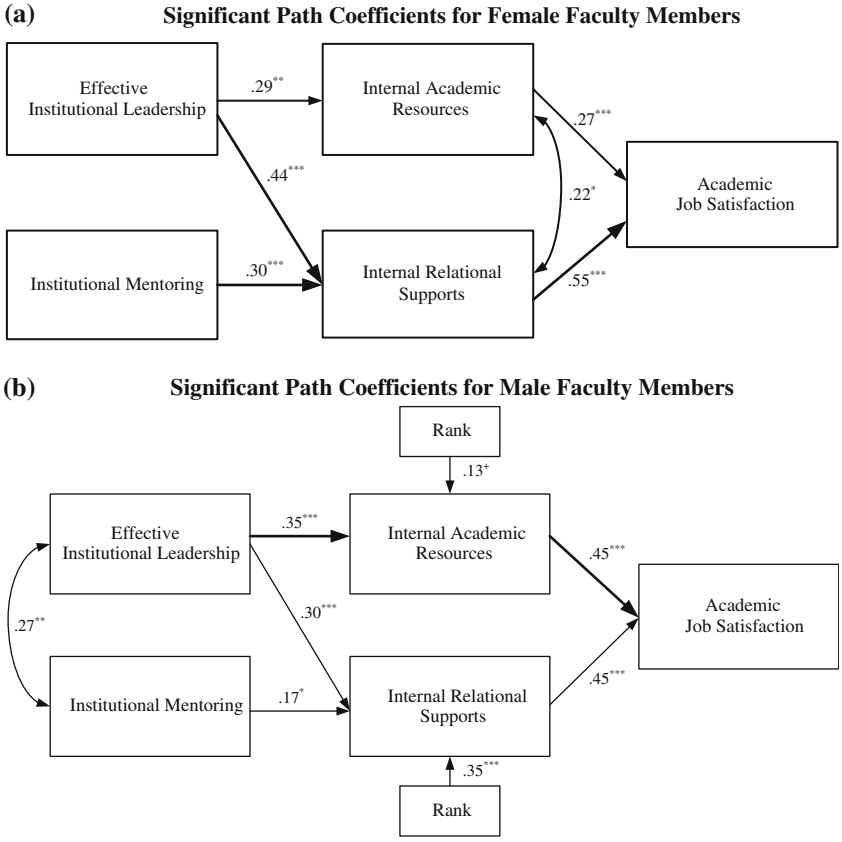

Figure 2. (a) Significant path coefficients for female faculty members. Notes: $^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{+}p < 0.10$. The paths in bold represent $\mathbf{H}_{10}$. Rank effects are not presented since they were not significant. Double-headed arrow shows a significant association between two constructs. Fit statistics for the model (Model for female faculty) are: $\chi^2 = 7.662$; df = 4; $\chi^2/\text{df} = 1.915$; RMR = 0.027; GFI = 0.971; IFI = 0.968; NFI = 0.936; CFI = 0.967; RMSEA = 0.096. (b) Significant path coefficients for male faculty members. Notes: $^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{+}p < 0.10$. The paths in bold represent $\mathbf{H}_{9}$. Fit statistics for the model (Model for male faculty) are: $\chi^2 = 9.965$; df = 6; $\chi^2/\text{df} = 1.661$; RMR = 0.028; GFI = 0.978; IFI = 0.978; NFI = 0.946; CFI = 0.977; RMSEA = 0.067.

satisfaction lower than do males, but men's rating of the extent of institutional mentoring experienced is lower than women's. This latter finding may be explained by the predominance of full professors in the male faculty sub-sample (79 out of 148); it is reasonable that male full professors receive less mentoring than their more junior male and female colleagues do.

Figure 2a and b indicate the final path analysis models for female and male faculty members, respectively (after non-significant paths have been removed). Due to space restrictions we could not also present the results for the total sample. The final models presented demonstrate good fit indices for both sub-samples investigated (see Figure 2a and b).

The results indicate that most of the hypotheses tested were supported. As expected, we found that perceptions of internal academic resources ($\mathbf{H}_1$) and internal relational supports ($\mathbf{H}_2$) were positively related to the job satisfaction ratings of both male and female faculty. For both sub-samples, the perception of institutional leadership was positively related to internal academic resources ($\mathbf{H}_4$), and internal relational supports ($\mathbf{H}_5$). The perception of formal and informal mentoring received was not significantly related to perceptions of internal academic resources for either male or female faculty ($\mathbf{H}_7$) but was positively related to perceptions of internal relational supports for both sub-samples ($\mathbf{H}_8$). The direct paths from institutional characteristics (i.e., the perceptions of leadership and mentoring) to job satisfaction were not significant for either the male or female subsamples. Hence, hypotheses $\mathbf{H}_3$ and $\mathbf{H}_6$ were not supported by the data, and nor was $\mathbf{H}_7$.

The results further show support for the proposed gender-specific hypotheses of $\mathbf{H}_9$ and $\mathbf{H}_{10}$. The path coefficients through internal academic resources ($\mathbf{H}_9$) were larger for male faculty members than for female faculty members, suggesting that men derive greater academic job satisfaction from the receipt of internal academic resources (including research-supportive workloads) than do women. The path coefficients through internal relational supports ($\mathbf{H}_{10}$) were consistently larger for female than male faculty members, suggesting that women appear to derive greater career supports and satisfaction than men from an inclusive and respectful internal work environment consisting of colleagues who value their contributions.

The path results also indicate that women faculty members perceive that their institutional leadership is more strongly related to the provision of internal relational supports ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$) than internal academic resources ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$). The path from institutional mentoring to relational supports was significant for both men and women in our sample, but the strength of the relationship was almost double for women ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$) than for men ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$). This latter path emphasizes the importance of mentoring relationships for women faculty: women appear to gain almost twice as much more relational supports from mentors within and outside their universities than do men. Interestingly, while job satisfaction for male faculty arises equally from internal academic resources and relational supports, job satisfaction for female faculty derives twice as much from internal relational supports ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$) as it does from internal academic resources ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$).

Academic rank did not significantly affect job satisfaction for either male or female faculty. However, rank had a marginally positive relationship with internal academic resources ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.10$), and a positive relationship with internal relational supports ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$) for men. Not unexpectedly, this indicates that senior male professors experience the most academic resources and relational supports.

5. Conclusions, implications, and limitations

This study illustrates the ways by which faculty members at a research university construct their academic job satisfaction. We provide empirical evidence to support the notion that both male and female faculty members believe that leadership and mentoring influence their job satisfaction but only through the mediating processes of internal academic resources and internal relational supports. However, women and men appear to weight the paths to their job satisfaction differently, and these suggest the following implications for leadership, departmental, and women faculty members' practices.

Perceptions of internal relational supports appear to be much more important for women's academic job satisfaction than for men's. While the receipt of academic resources and research-supportive workloads is a significant factor, the quality of the interactions with immediate colleagues is a critically significant path to how women construct their academic job satisfaction. Both effective leadership and mentoring (within and outside the immediate workplace) are thus important for women faculty members because these factors are constructed to result in enhanced relational supports for them, which in turn is strongly related to their job satisfaction. Department chairs and senior faculty members should pay particular attention to the importance of establishing strong mentoring relationships as well as collegial and respectful interactions with women faculty. Likewise, women faculty members should recognize the importance of internal relational supports for their own job satisfaction, and should proactively initiate and maintain positive relations with departmental chairs and senior faculty mentors within and outside their departments.

Contrary to previous research findings, and possibly due to the private research nature of the university studied in this study, we did not find significant direct influences of the perceptions of effective leadership and institutional mentoring on ratings of academic job satisfaction. Our findings indicate the existence of a fully-mediated model, showcasing the importance of key academic processes as influences on faculty members' perceptions of job satisfaction. University leadership that is interested in fostering the enhanced job satisfaction of professors would do well to focus on the perceptions faculty members hold about their access to academic resources and research-supportive workload responsibilities, as well as the quality of the relational supports they experience in their immediate workplace environments.

There are some methodological limitations to the current study, primarily related to the data site and sample. First, the data were collected from within one private research university. Thus, while our findings may be generalizable to other private research universities only, the results may be informative for other institutions as well. A second limitation refers to the small sample size employed in the study, and the large (although representative) differences observed in the rank distributions of male and female respondents. Future research should examine these relationships in other higher education settings, using larger sample sizes, and more equally distributed ranks of female and male faculty respondents.

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