

# USING THE GENDER LENS TO UNDERSTAND THE RESULTS OF THE 1999 JCSA MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

CHARLES AUERBACH, PH.D.

*Professor, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University, New York*

SUSAN E. MASON, PH.D.

*Associate Professor, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University, New York*

AUDREY S. WEINER, D.S.W.

*Executive Vice President/COO, Jewish Home and Hospital, New York*

SHELDON R. GELMAN

*Dean, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University, New York*

DAVID J. SCHNALL, PH.D.

*Professor, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University, New York*

and

JAY SWEIFACH, M.S.W.

*Instructor, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University, New York*

*This article explores the incongruity between the high level of job satisfaction reported by women and the inequities in the workforce faced by them ranging from salary to position title. The authors draw conclusions about the collective responsibility of the organized Jewish community and the individual Jewish professional for this gender gap.*

The JCSA 1999 Membership Survey included a "gender lens" focusing on the dynamics of career advancement, salary history, educational priorities, and values for the almost 50 percent of Jewish communal professionals who are women. Through the lens, we found a set of seemingly incongruent facts and beliefs. Women in top positions earn less than men, by an average of \$20,000, yet report high levels of career satisfaction. Most of the professionals who responded to the survey believe that there is gender discrimination and that it is more difficult for women to move into top positions. At the same time, the majority of women believe there has been progress in the last few years in promoting women to more responsible and higher-paying positions. Women are equally optimistic about advances within their own agencies. These incongruent facts and beliefs led us to undertake a more detailed analysis of the JCSA data.

This article reports on the key work and

career-related data obtained in the 1999 JCSA Survey using the gender lens. It focuses on these three questions:

1. What is the nature of the gender gap for professional women in the JCSA workforce?
2. What influences women's careers?
3. Why do women report high levels of career satisfaction when they are earning lower salaries than men?

Finally, we draw conclusions about the collective responsibility held by the organized Jewish community as well as the individual Jewish communal professional for the gender gap.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Jewish community organizations are struggling with the challenge of harnessing the talents of women in leadership (Bronznick, 1999). Attaining the goal of workforce equity

continues to elude Jewish organizations in North America and indeed throughout the world (National Commission on American Jewish Women, 1995; Salguero, 1998; Weiner, 1999; Weiner & Wartenberg, 1997-98). While this journal has been very generous in its support of this issue through the inclusion of related articles, the gender gap is not generally given priority in the organized Jewish world. Bronznick (1999) suggests that women avoid raising the issue for fear they will lose status in their organizations.

The literature on the gender gap is fairly consistent in noting differential earning levels for men and women and in calling for more assertive action for change. Despite numerous governmental efforts to bring about such change (Glass Ceiling Act, 1991) and sharp criticism from experts in management, women earn approximately 75 percent of the salaries of men. Driscoll and Goldberg (1993, p. 327) suggest, "Corporations can be both profitable and moral when their leaders make moral and ethical decisions. The human capital that corporations are amassing to lead and grow has taken on new importance." They challenge corporate executives to search both their hearts and minds to understand why women have not yet advanced in greater numbers. They further suggest that the natural flow of demography or a strong economy will not be sufficient to move women along in the pipeline to senior positions.

Weiner (1999) reported in this journal that men occupy the majority of CEO positions in affiliated agencies, but women make up 60 percent of the labor force. The gaps are greatest in the large cities and in agencies with the biggest budgets. In the UJA-Federation agencies in New York City, the percentage of women CEOs rose from 20 percent in 1994 to 30 percent in 1999, but mostly in the smaller, lower-budget agencies. Still, women's commitment to Jewish communal service remains high, and agencies continue to attract women with high levels of education (Isserman & Holstein, 1994; Weiner & Wartenberg, 1997/8).

In general, the situation for women is about the same in non-sectarian, non-profit agen-

cies. Gibelman (in press) writes, "The underlying values of the nonprofit sector, which include humanitarianism, charity, human rights, and human well-being, suggest that representative organizations would voluntarily and systematically seek to adhere to principles of affirmative action and non-discrimination in their labor force practices." Yet, women, who make up close to 70 percent of the labor force in non-profit organizations, are mostly represented in the lower-paying direct-service jobs. Although the majority of female employees were college educated and a substantial number (46 percent) had masters degrees or more, at all but the lowest levels, men's salaries were substantially higher than women's, and men held 22 percent of the upper-management level jobs compared to 11 percent of women. If this study is a fair representation of the non-profit sector, women in non-sectarian agencies are experiencing the same structural barriers to promotion and salary equity as in Jewish communal service.

Focus group research on professional women working in human service organizations revealed concerns about a glass ceiling (Gibelman, 1998). Women acknowledged the lack of sufficient role models and the male-dominated management styles that contributed to keeping them out of senior management positions. They also cited such personal factors as their responsibilities as family caretakers, a lack of physical and emotional support from their families, and a different definition and importance of power held by women.

Some have argued that having children adversely affects women's career advancement. However, the story is usually more complicated. Organizations play important roles in how women with children are career-tracked. Policies on work schedules, staffing, assignments and promotions affect women's status. Mentoring and networking also play important roles in career advancement. Powell and Mainiero (1992) acknowledge the importance of these structural barriers to women's success in the workplace and add a subjective experiential element. They posit that women make choices about work based more on how

they feel about their jobs than on such objective measures as salary and promotions. If this is true, it may explain why women in the JCSA Survey expressed high levels of satisfaction and commitment and, more importantly, stayed on the job. It could be that women view Jewish communal service agencies as good places to work, even though salaries are not equitable.

Researchers have looked for explanations for career commitment and development. In one study of 118 married nurses, three variables positively influenced women's career advancement decisions: financial insecurity, coping behaviors, and marital satisfaction (Steffy & Jones, 1998). Coping behaviors included household management skills such as engaging babysitters and arranging family chore schedules, skills that easily translate into job skills. Women in dual-career marriages who were happily married and earned more than their husbands were firmly committed to career advancement. The authors conclude that more attention needs to be focused on extra-work factors to explain women's attitudes toward work and their career advancement behavior.

Researchers have examined the emotional well-being of managerial and professional women and how it is related to the work environment (Burke & McKeen, 1995). They found that workload and conflict between the demands of job and home have the most severe negative impact on emotional well-being. This finding may explain why some women may try to avoid jobs that are stressful and involve long hours away from home and families.

Personal attitudes, most notably self-efficacy, has an effect on career choices. Phillips and Imhoff (1997) report that how women view their abilities may be more important than past achievements and experiences. They suggest that individual psychological and sociocultural factors may play a crucial role in career decisions and work advancement. If this is true, then mentoring and modeling become important factors. If women are not mentored properly and if they have few role models along the way, it is less likely they will view themselves as potential senior managers.

How do these findings relate to the attitudes and decisions of women in Jewish communal service agencies? While they may provide some valuable clues, they cannot tell us why women in these agencies remain loyal and satisfied with their jobs in the light of persistent inequities. Further in-depth examination of the JCSA survey data may supply some important insights.

## METHODS AND FINDINGS

The first report of the Survey findings appeared in the Fall 1999 issue of this journal (Sweifach et al., 1999). As noted:

An anonymous nine-page questionnaire was mailed in May 1999 to a random sample of 1960 of the 2522 Association members. In order to ensure a 95 percent confidence interval of + or -5 percent, a minimum of 500 responses were required. . . . At times respondents were requested to fill in their answer, such as age and the number of times they had visited Israel. Other times, as in attitudes about the Jewish community, respondents were requested to rank order their choices from most important to least important.

The questionnaire was developed using three primary resources: a 1982 survey of the JCSA membership, an instrument used by Urbont in his study of the Jewish Center movement, and Banchefsky's study of the training of workers in the Center field.

At the time of the writing of the original article, 565 responses had been received. A total of 11 responses were received after the completion of the original article, bringing the total sample size for this article to 576 responses, yielding a 30 percent response rate.

## Demographics

There are a number of significant demographic differences between men and women in the sample. Women were younger than men (48 versus 54 years old;  $t=5.6$ ;  $df=557$ ;  $p=.000$ ). Men were in the field longer (25 versus 15 years;  $t=10.3$ ;  $df=537$ ;  $p=.000$ ). A larger proportion of men (92%) than women (81%)

earned advanced degrees ( $X^2 = 15.8$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Almost 18 percent of men earned doctorates as compared to only 5 percent of women. As Figure 1 displays, 10.5 percent of women indicated that they had no formal Jewish education as compared to only 1.7 percent of men. A larger proportion of men attended graduate school or rabbinic seminary and belonged to synagogues (93%) than of women (86%;  $X^2 = 8.1$ ;  $p = .004$ ). More men identified themselves as Orthodox (21% versus 11%;  $X^2 = 12.9$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .012$ ).

#### **Factors Influencing Women to Enter Jewish Communal Service**

Several factors influence women to enter the field of Jewish communal service. As compared to men, salary was not as strong an influence for women. Over one-third (35%) of women indicated that salary was not at all a factor in their decision to enter the field ( $X^2 = 23.9$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

This was the only reason for entering the field in which the difference between men's and women's responses was statistically significant. Other factors, such as opportunity to use professional knowledge, prestige of the field, working conditions, working in a Jewish agency, and the like, were equally important to both men and women.

#### **Factors Influencing Women to Accept Their Current Position**

The majority of men (54.5%) indicated that salary was extremely important or very important in their decision to accept their current position. In contrast, only 26.4 percent of women indicated it was extremely or very important ( $X^2 = 54.8$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ). A larger proportion of men than women indicated that job title was extremely or very important (55.5% versus 44.9%;  $X^2 = 10.5$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ). A larger number of male respondents also indicated that the size of the agency was an important factor in accepting their current position (12.3% versus 4.7%;  $X^2 = 23.9$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

Two factors were more important motivators for women than men: personal relationships with staff members (47.3% versus 33.2%;

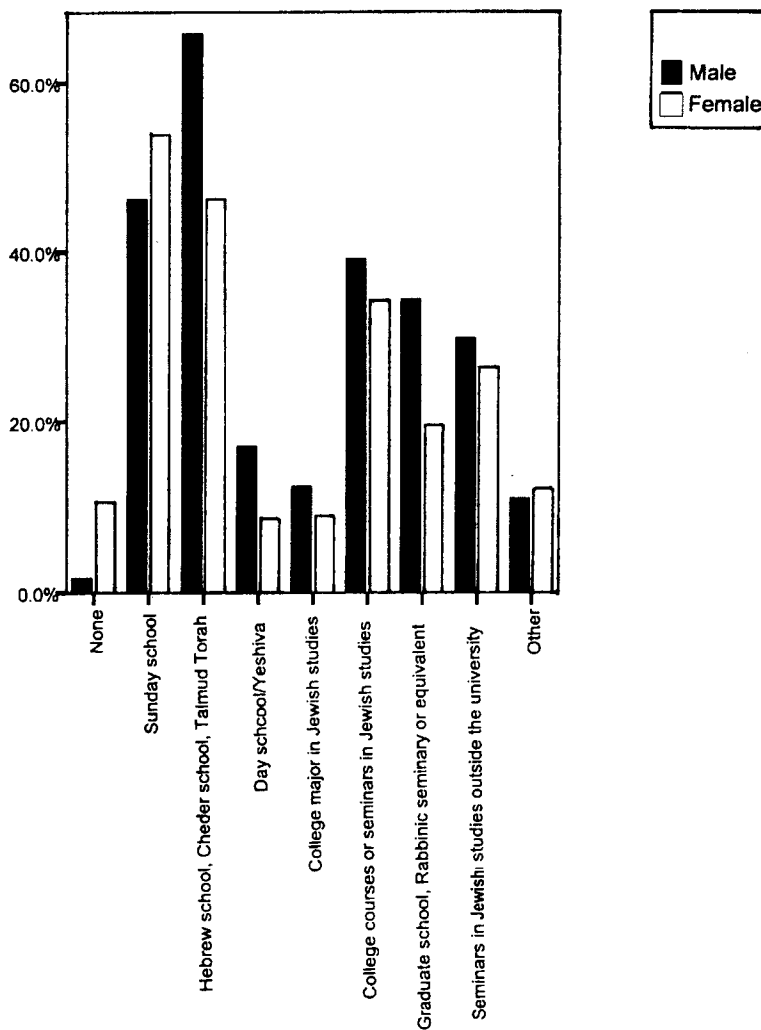
$X^2 = 16.1$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ) and the quality of supervision (34.8% versus 22.6%;  $X^2 = 2.12$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Both men and women found such issues as Jewish content of the agency's program, opportunities for direct contact with clients/members, and personal or family reasons as important in accepting their current position.

It is important to consider that 65 percent of men versus 51 percent of women indicated that they "feel the opportunities for advancement in the Jewish Communal field to be" excellent or good ( $X^2 = 30.3$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = .000$ ). A slightly larger proportion of women (42% as compared to 39% of men) felt that their chances for advancement in their agency were excellent or good ( $X^2 = 7.8$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p = .051$ ).

#### **The Perception of Treatment that Women Receive in Jewish Communal Service**

There are strong differences between men and women in how they perceive the treatment of females in the Jewish communal field. When women were asked about "the importance of sexism for advancement in Jewish communal agencies," 19.1 percent indicated it was not an issue, in contrast to 34 percent of men ( $X^2 = 31.0$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ). However, more than twice the percentage of women (12.1%) than men (5.1%) indicated sexism was very important. A similar pattern was observed in response to a question about the importance of the Old Boys networks for advancement in Jewish agencies. Once again, more men (23%) than women (14%) felt it was not an issue ( $X^2 = 19.1$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .001$ ). A larger proportion of males (53% versus 38%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "Women have the same opportunities as men in the field of Jewish communal service" ( $X^2 = 24.2$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ). When asked if women have the same opportunity as men in their agency, 82% of the men strongly agreed or agreed with this statement as compared to 69 percent of women ( $X^2 = 14.6$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ). In response to the question, "In general, women in the Jewish communal service have the same opportunities for advancement as in other fields," 59.5 percent of men strongly agreed as compared to only 49 percent of women ( $X^2 =$

Figure 1. Jewish Education by Gender.



22.9;  $df=4$ ;  $p=.000$ ). A larger proportion of women (64% versus 56%) strongly agreed or agreed that “the career ladder in the Jewish communal service is tougher for women” ( $X^2=14.0$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p=.007$ ). Similar proportions of men (83%) and women (81%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “Executive/CEO positions in Jewish communal service are heavily dominated by men.” A larger proportion of women (71% versus 85% of men) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “In Jewish communal service women are generally offered lower salaries than men for the same job.”

### Job Satisfaction and Stress

A majority (84% for each) of both men and women indicated that they derive a great deal of satisfaction from their work. Men and women also indicated similar levels of stress on the job. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 equaling very stressful and 10 equaling not stressful, men scored an average of 4.2 as compared to women who scored 4.1. Men and women also indicated similar levels of health. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 equaling very healthy and 10 equaling not healthy, the mean for men was 3.5 and 3.4 for women. Men on average indicated that they plan to remain at their present job for

Table 1. Current Salary by Gender.

Current Salary	Male				Female			
	Advanced Degree		Advanced Degree		Advanced Degree		Advanced Degree	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Under \$20,000			2.2	5	6.3	3	5.9	12
\$20,000-\$39,000	15.0	3	4.4	10	43.8	21	23.6	48
\$40,000-\$60,000	30.0	6	18.6	42	29.2	14	25.6	52
\$61,000-\$80,000	15.0	3	18.1	41	8.3	4	26.6	54
\$81,000-\$100,000	20.0	4	18.6	42	6.3	3	8.4	17
\$101,000-\$120,000	5.0	1	14.6	33	2.1	1	5.4	11
Over \$120,000	15.0	3	23.5	53	4.2	2	4.4	9

9 years as compared to 8 years for women ( $t = 1.6$ ;  $df = 407$ ;  $p = .09$ ).

### Salary

As Table 1 shows, men and women with similar degrees earn different salaries. When men and women with advanced degrees are compared, 38 percent of men are earning more than \$100,000, in comparison to only 10 percent of women ( $X^2 = 84.4$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = .000$ ). When asked what they felt their maximum salary to be, 46 percent of males versus 14 percent of women indicated "over \$120,000" ( $X^2 = 104.4$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .000$ ). As Table 2 indicates, there are statistically significant differences in salary level between men and women with similar job titles. When male and female CEOs are compared, 51.3 percent of the males earn over \$100,000 or more versus only 23.5 percent of female CEOs ( $X^2 = 25.2$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = .000$ ). A greater proportion of male directors (49% versus 20.6% of females) earn \$80,000 or more ( $X^2 = 47.3$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = .000$ ).

### IMPLICATIONS FOR JEWISH COMMUNAL SERVICE

Although the inequities faced by women in Jewish communal service range from salary to position title on most levels, women express the same high level of job satisfaction as men—about 84 percent. Women place a high value on personal relations with staff and

quality of supervision and a lesser value on salary as reasons for entering the field. From this data, one could conclude that women's values for career development differ from those of men. However, there may be other explanations.

Stress is reported at a moderate range for both men and women. We know from the literature that for women, stress on the job is just one of a number of potential stressors, the others coming from their roles as family caretakers and home managers (Gibelman, 1998; Powell & Mainiero, 1992). In addition, women have fewer advanced degrees, including doctorates, and lower levels of Jewish education, a factor that may play an important role in advancement in some Jewish agencies. The combination of the desire to avoid additional stressors, with a self-selection toward lower entry positions and salaries and the lack of Jewish and advanced education may be sufficient to explain career inequities in Jewish agencies. The women working in Jewish communal agencies who reported that initially salaries were not a major concern may have self-selected to jobs that they viewed as only moderately competitive and instead sought comradery and nurturance. An alternative theory may have to do with women's perceived lack of confidence, lower feelings of self-worth, and the unwillingness to "demand" equitable salaries. It may also be true that women do not relate the level of their starting

salaries to later compensation packages.

Yet, this still may be only part of the explanation. The survey did not address a host of other possible explanatory factors including the culture of agencies, availability of support services, flexible work schedules, and, most important, a system of mentoring conducive to women's advancement. Several authors have suggested that even in a vigorous economy, women will not be able to advance without the help of high-level senior management (Driscoll & Goldberg, 1993; Weiner, 1999). If women at all levels are to move up, then the agency culture at every level must be supportive and encouraging. This means that middle management as well as senior executives may need direction on how to identify and promote talented women. If agencies are truly committed to promoting women, interventions must be pervasive and consistent. Indeed, Meyerson and Fletcher suggest that the glass ceiling will be shattered only through a strategy of incremental changes aimed at gender biases deeply entrenched within corporate culture and systems.

Flexibility and support services that are helpful to women with families are typically not found in most social service agencies including Jewish agencies. One reason is the expense involved. Also the labor-intensive nature of agencies and the large amount of direct services conducted by women are important considerations. Gibelman and Schervish (1993)

show that in social work, men move out of direct service positions earlier in their careers than women. This trend continues as more men move into supervisory and management positions. Jobs that involve direct service are by their nature tied to the schedules and availability of clients, not necessarily to those of the workers. Logistically, agencies may not be able to allow women to work from their homes or vary schedules according to their families' needs.

Mentoring systems that include women as role models are essential for helping women advance. The extent to which they are available in Jewish communal service is not known. The workings of both the formal and informal mentoring systems in smaller agencies warrant further investigation, as more progress in the promotion of women has been made there. We need to learn more about the concrete steps that smaller agencies are taking to elevate women to CEO and other high-level positions. This will require a careful look at agency culture including values, human resource policies and practices, and a commitment to outcomes.

Finally, we recognize the continued progress in rewarding the talents of the many hard-working and dedicated women in Jewish communal services. The fact that there is more to be done does not in any way detract from the considerable accomplishments to date. Ultimately, Jewish communal service agencies will need the most talented workers available, both

Table 2. Salary by Gender and Job Title.

Current Salary	Male				Female			
	CEO / VP		Director		CEO / VP		Director	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under \$20,000			2	4.1	1	1.2	6	6.9
\$20,000-\$39,000	4	3.4	1	2.0			30	34.5
\$40,000-\$60,000	10	8.4	13	26.5	12	14.8	34	39.1
\$61,000-\$80,000	22	18.5	9	18.4	34	42.0	13	14.9
\$81,000-\$100,000	22	18.5	14	28.6	15	18.5	2	2.3
\$101,000-\$120,000	20	16.8	6	12.2	8	9.9	2	2.3
Over \$120,000	41	34.5	4	8.2	11	13.6		

men and women, to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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