independent women'sforum ™
ALL ISSUES ARE WOMEN'S ISSUES

What do women want (in a workplace)?

The problem

What do women want? The Independent Women's Forum commissioned Evolving Strategies to implement a Causal Conjoint Optimization (C₂O) to discover what matters to women in a workplace — and what attracts female job candidates to and retains female employees at a company.

How much do women value salary, bonuses, or raises? Compared to vacation and sick days, medical leave, healthcare or telecommuting? And what about gender equality — does it matter whether their supervisor is a man or woman, whether there are many female executives or few? And what about economic equality — does it matter whether the CEO makes 10x or 1,000x what the lowest paid employee does?

Our Causal Conjoint Optimization (C₂O) tells employers what *causes* women to love or hate where they work — and how to recruit and retain female talent.

What's different about C₂O

Conjoint analysis is a core research approach in marketing which discovers what the optimum combination of features is for a product or policy— or in this case — workplace.

But Evolving Strategies's new tool — Causal Conjoint Optimization (C₂O) — takes this core marketing approach and elevates it to a new level, discovering not only which features *correlate* with the best combination of a product or policy, or workplace, but which features *cause* it.

Which features of a workplace *cause* women to love or hate where they work? C₂O quantifies *exactly* how much a particular job feature impacts the probability that women will choose one job over another, or how fair they think the workplace is.

Overview of the results

When we look at what really matters to women choosing a job, the results make a lot of intuitive sense.

And in the differences between mothers of younger children and ideological differences, we see distinctive aspects of a workplace environment jump out.

- Salary is of course the dominant attribute, but the impact of other job features is often surprisingly large.

- General job *flexibility* is highly valued by women; offering a combination of flexible schedules, telecommuting, and reduced hours is about equivalent to offering 10 paid vacation and sick days or between $5,000 to $10,000 in extra salary.

- Paid family and medical leave is a relatively small concern.

- Signals of company character — such as CEO pay, bonuses and raises, and the percentage of female executives — have a large collective impact.

- *Mothers* with young children value workplace *flexibility and* paid *sick & vacation days* much more than non-mothers.

- Women *without* young children value *salary* and *raises* far more than do mothers.

- *Liberal* women prefer jobs with a female supervisor and value *salary*, paid *vacation* and sick days, and generous family *medical leave* policies far more than do conservatives.

- *Conservative* women hold to type, with the average employee's *tenure* and *healthcare* package much more important to their job choice; a relatively secure and stable job prospect is very attractive to them.

- Ratings of workplace *fairness* closely track job choice effects.

What we do with C$_2$O

First, we drew a sample of 1,000 women from an opt-in, online panel that approximates the general U.S. population of adult women on major demographic characteristics and then asked them questions.

Afterward, respondents participated in a Causal Conjoint Optimization (C$_2$O) of job and workplace features. In doing so, we asked respondents to choose between two *completely randomly generated* jobs/workplaces, inducing a forced choice between job packages that varied randomly in terms of:

- annual salary, bonuses, raises;

- flexibility options (flexible schedules, reduced hours, telecommuting), paid vacation and sick days, family medical leave, healthcare packages; and

- supervisor gender, percent female executives, CEO's annual salary, average employee's tenure

At the same time, we asked to rate these same jobs/workplaces in terms of general fairness.

Each of the approximately 1,000 respondents performed this task six times, choosing between and rating six completely randomly generated pairs of jobs/workplaces.

C$_2$O shows precisely which job/workplace features matter most to women, both numerically and visually. It is a way for employers to sort through all the possibilities to make their jobs/workplaces more attractive to talented female job candidates and employees. It is a way finally find out what women want — in a job/workplace, at least!

Survey introduction to the C$_2$O questions :

"For the next few minutes, we are going to ask you to act *as if you were considering a new job*/workplace to be employed at. We will provide you with several pieces of information about pairs of jobs/workplaces. For each pair of jobs/workplaces, please indicate which of the two you would personally *prefer to be employed at and evaluate* each one on *fairness*. Even if you aren't entirely sure, please indicate which of the two you prefer."

Please carefully review the options detailed below, then please answer the questions.

	Job/Workplace 1	Job/Workplace 2
Percent Female Executives	Approximately 25% female	Approximately 0% female
Raises	Based on team's performance	Guaranteed every two years
Family Medical Leave	Half pay up to 12 weeks	Half pay up to 12 weeks
CEO's Annual Salary	100 x lowest paid employee's salary	10 x lowest paid employee's salary
Your Supervisor's Gender	Female	Male
Your Annual Salary	$95,000	$65,000
Workplace Flexibility Options	Flexible schedules, reduced hours, and telecommuting	No options
Healthcare Package	No costs covered for you or your dependents	Full costs covered for you and half costs covered for your dependents
Average Employee's Tenure	20 years	1 year
Bonuses	Based on team's performance	Based on individual's performance
Paid Vacation and Sick Days	10 days	30 days

If you had to choose between the two, which of these two jobs/workplaces would you prefer to be employed at?

Job/Workplace 1	Job/Workplace 2

Section I

Job Choice
All Respondents

How benefits & flexibility impact job choice.

The chart to the right shows the average impact that each workplace feature has on the probability that a woman will choose a job with *that* feature, relative to the lowest value workplace feature. This comparison is the average impact when it's seen in the context of many *other* job features and competing with the full range of *all other* job packages.

For instance, an employer offering 15 paid vacation and sick days makes it about 17 percentage points more likely on average that a woman will choose *that* job over one offering zero paid sick and vacation days.

This is the *average impact*, even counting those times when a respondent had to choose between a job with 15 paid days off, but a much lower salary, no flexibility, bonuses or raises and a job offering zero paid days off but a big salary, raises, bonuses, etc.

Offering paid days off has a big impact even compared with salary increases, which we show on the next pages. But the impact of paid days off levels around the 15-day mark, and there is little or no benefit to offering employees more paid days off beyond that point.
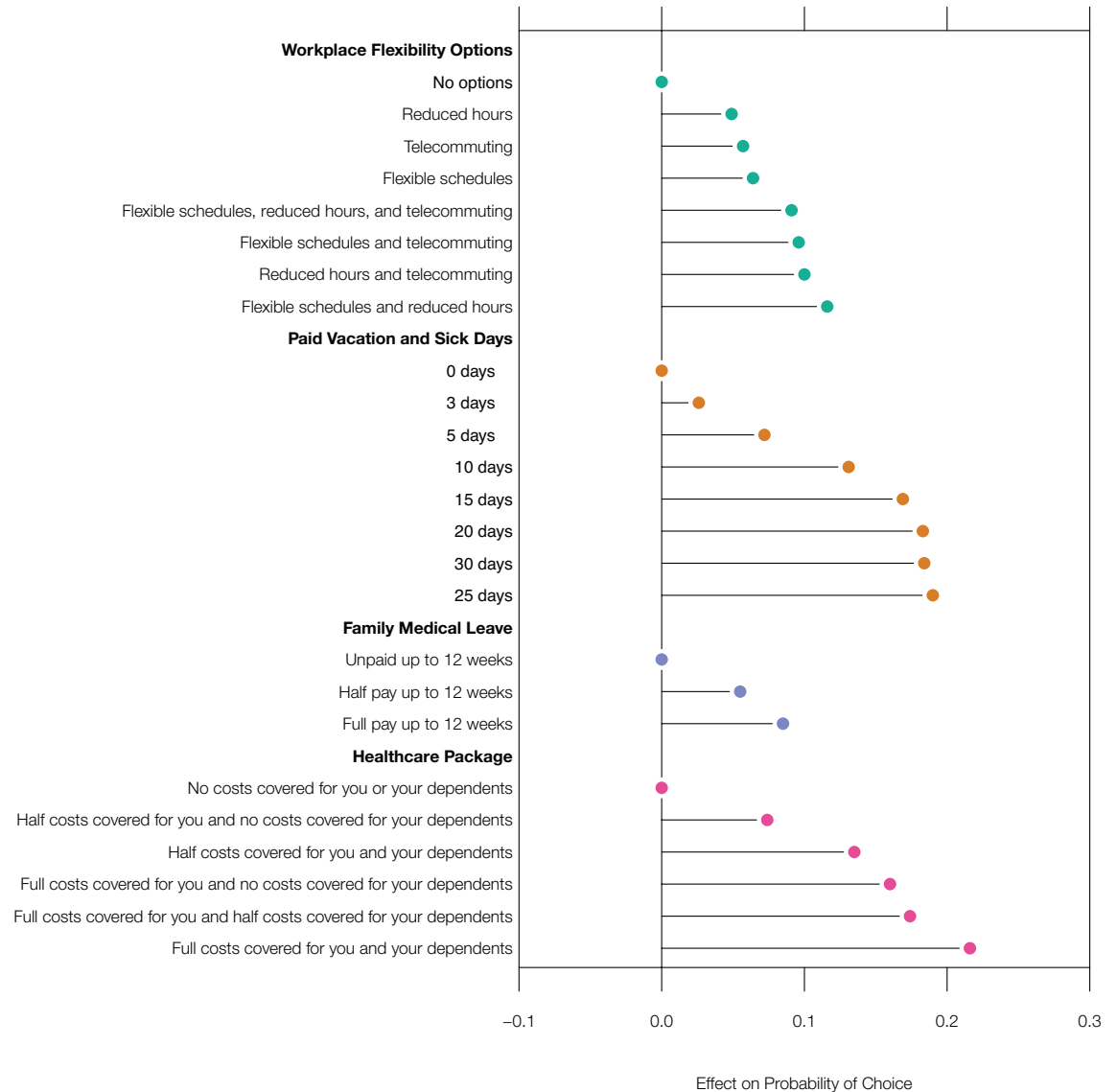
Unsurprisingly, healthcare benefits, also have a big impact. The surprise here is that the boost to a job's attractiveness is so similar to that of paid days off.

Offering some forms of flexibility like options for flexible schedules, reduced hours, or telecommuting makes a workplace popular, boosting its attractiveness by 6 to 11 points, with a preference for more options.

Finally, offering generous paid family medical leave has an equivalent impact to offering a flexible work environment; between 5 and 9 points.

Impact of Workplace Features on Job Choice
All Respondents - Benefits & Flexibility

Effect on Probability of Choice

How company attributes impact job choice.

The chart to the right shows the average impact that each workplace feature has on the probability that a woman will choose a job with *that* feature, relative to the lowest value workplace feature. This comparison is the average impact when it's seen in the context of many *other* job features and competing with the full range of *all other* job packages.

For instance, a company where 50 percent of its executives are female makes it about 8 percentage points more likely on average that a woman will choose *that* job over one at a company that has no female executives at all.

This is the *average impact*, even counting those times when a respondent had to choose between a job with 50 percent female executives, but zero paid days off, a much lower salary, no flexibility, bonuses or raises and a job with no female executives but twenty days off, a big salary, raises, bonuses, etc.
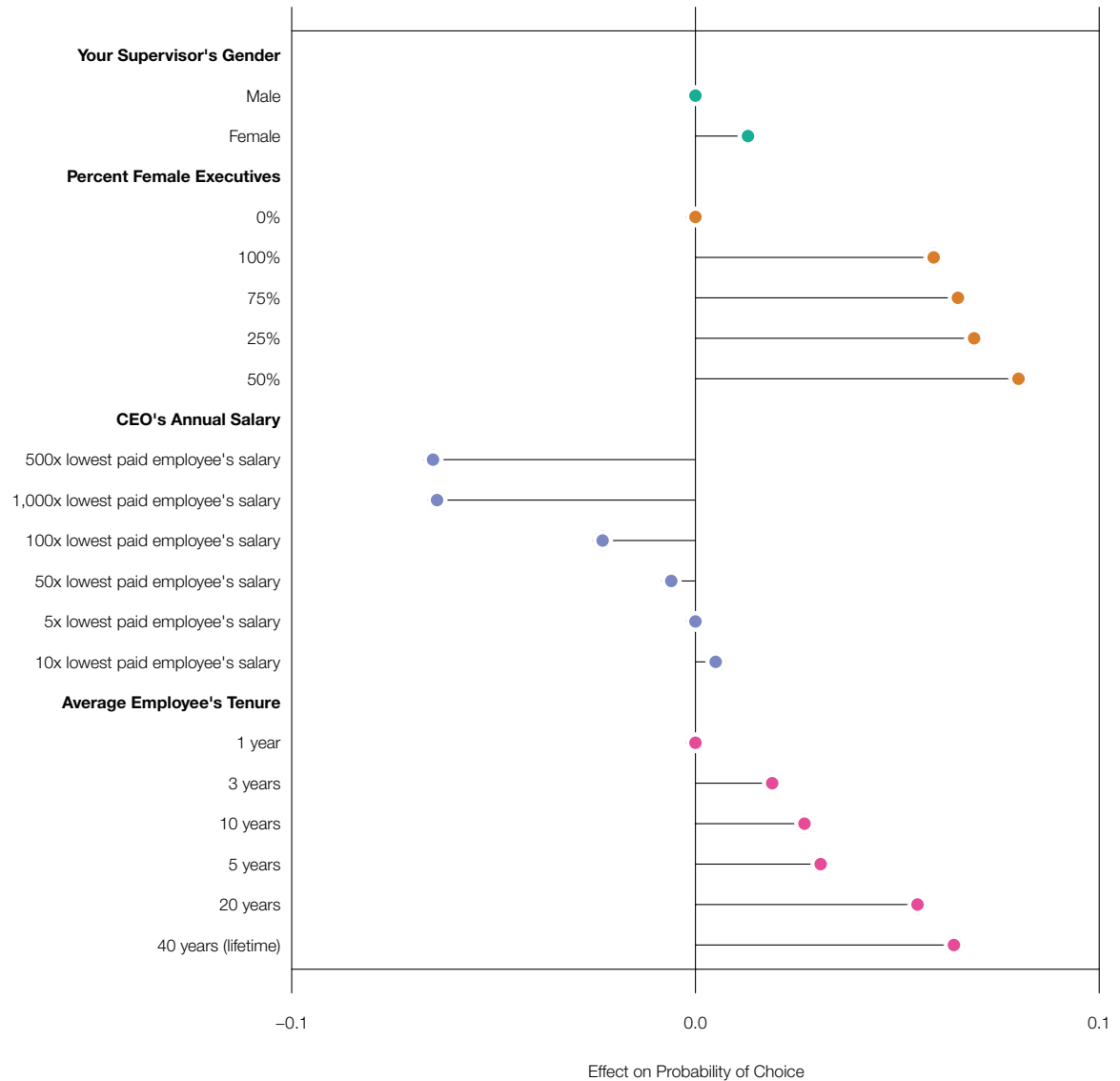
That said, there is little difference in impact between 25, 50, 75, or 100 percent female executives. Women, in other words, highly value working at a company that has at least some female leadership. In addition, we find a slight, 1-point preference for jobs that are supervised by a fellow woman.

The distribution of salaries within a company also has a significant impact on job choice. Prospective employees pay little attention to small disparities between the lowest and highest paid workers, but begin to seriously penalize workplaces where the CEO makes 500 or 100 times what the lowest paid employee earns.

Finally, perceptions of stability in terms of the average employee tenure substantially increase the attractiveness of a job, particularly when it reaches 20 years or more. There is little difference between 3, 5 and 10 years, but indications that a job is essentially life-long increase the probability of being chosen by nearly 6 points.

Impact of Workplace Features on Job Choice
All Respondents - Company Attributes

How monetary compensation impacts job choice.

The chart to the right shows the average impact that each workplace feature has on the probability that a woman will choose a job with *that* feature, relative to the lowest value workplace feature. This comparison is the average impact when it's seen in the context of many *other* job features and competing with the full range of *all other* job packages.

For instance, an employer offering a $35,000 salary makes it about 10 percentage points more likely on average that a woman will choose *that* job over one offering $25,000 (in the context of a range of other attributes). Moving from the bottom to the top salary increases job attractiveness by about 45 points.

Presumably, if the jobs were otherwise equal in all other respects, everyone would just choose the higher salary. But what we're showing here is the *average impact*, even counting those times when a respondent had to choose between a job with $35,000 salary, but no vacation or sick days, no flexibility, bonuses or raises and a job offering only $25,000 but plentiful vacation time, raises, bonuses, etc.
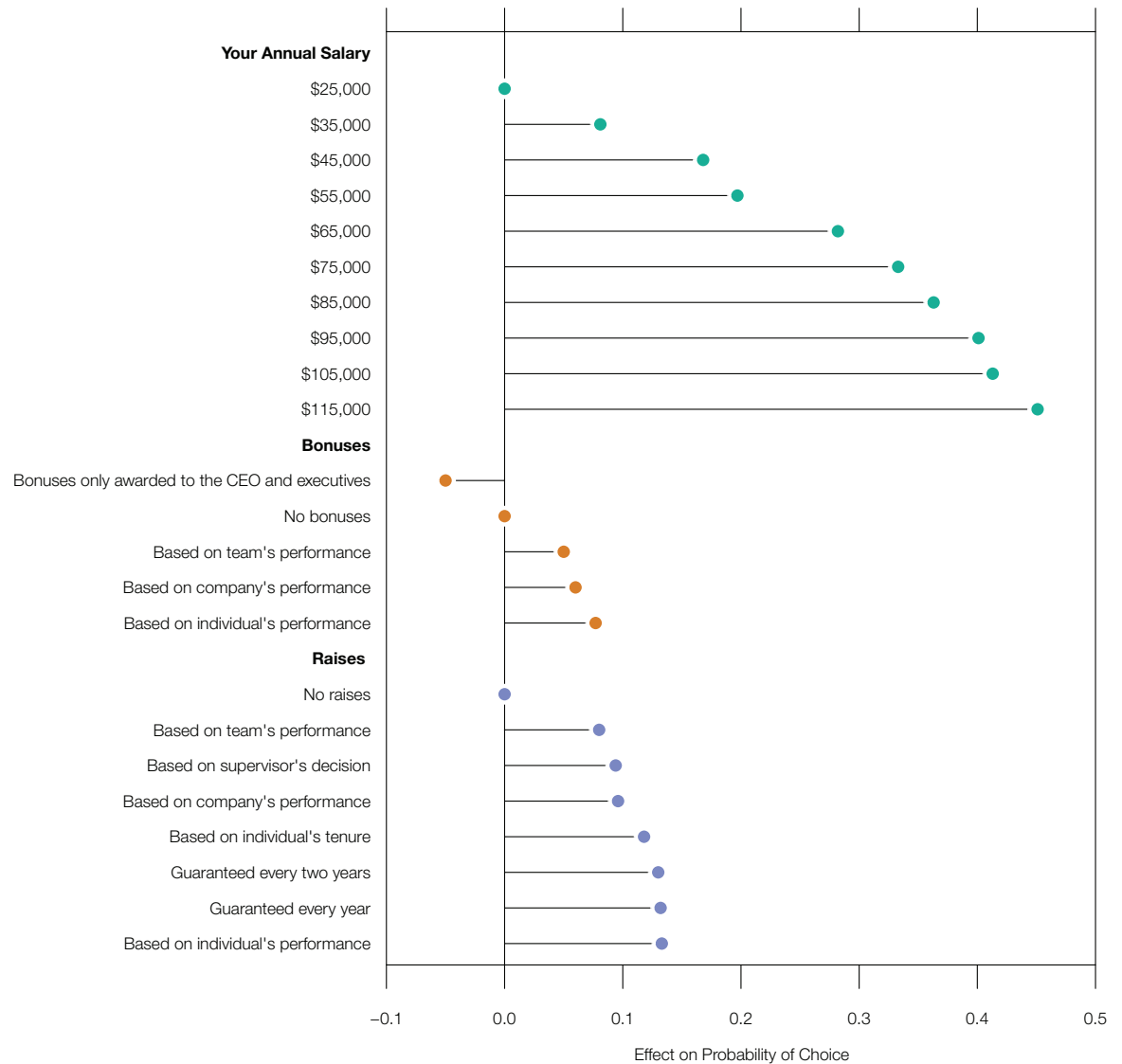
As you can see, salary has a huge impact on job choice, but other forms of compensation matter as well.

Having a bonus system in place for all employees makes a job more attractive; an individual, performance-based bonus system increases the desirability of that job by about 8 points, or a little less than the impact of moving from a $25,000 to a $35,000 salary. And prospective employees actively penalize job prospects where only executives receive bonuses.

In terms of a company's policy on raises, there is little differentiation between various systems; as long as there is a mechanism for getting a raise, that seems to be the most important factor. And there seems to be a slight but generalized preference for raises being tied to the employees themselves, either through their performance or tenure.

Impact of Workplace Features on Job Choice
All Respondents - Monetary Compensation

Effect on Probability of Choice

Section II

Job Choice

Conditioned by Motherhood & Ideology

How motherhood conditions job choice impacts.

The chart to the right shows how motherhood conditions the impact of workplace features by category (recall that the impact is on the probability that a woman will choose a job). Here, a mother is a woman with children under the age of 18, and a non-mother is everyone else.

Specifically, each graphed point is the *difference* between mothers and non-mothers in the average impact of features in a particular category compared to that category's least attractive feature.

For example, for the category "Workplace Flexibility Options," the difference between mothers and non-mothers in the average impact of features in that category compared to the category's least attractive feature, "No Options," is about 6 points.

Essentially, points graphed to the *right* indicate that the category has a *greater* impact on *mothers* compared to non-mothers; conversely, points graphed to the left indicate that the category has a greater impact on non-mothers compared to mothers.

What categories of workplace features do mothers value more than non-mothers? In fact, only two, and both are standouts: workplace *flexibility* options and paid *sick and vacation days*.

Intuitively, this makes sense: since mothers have greater time constraints as a result of having children to care for, they should value more workplace features that either allow them to use their time more flexibly or that give them more time—which features in these two categories do.
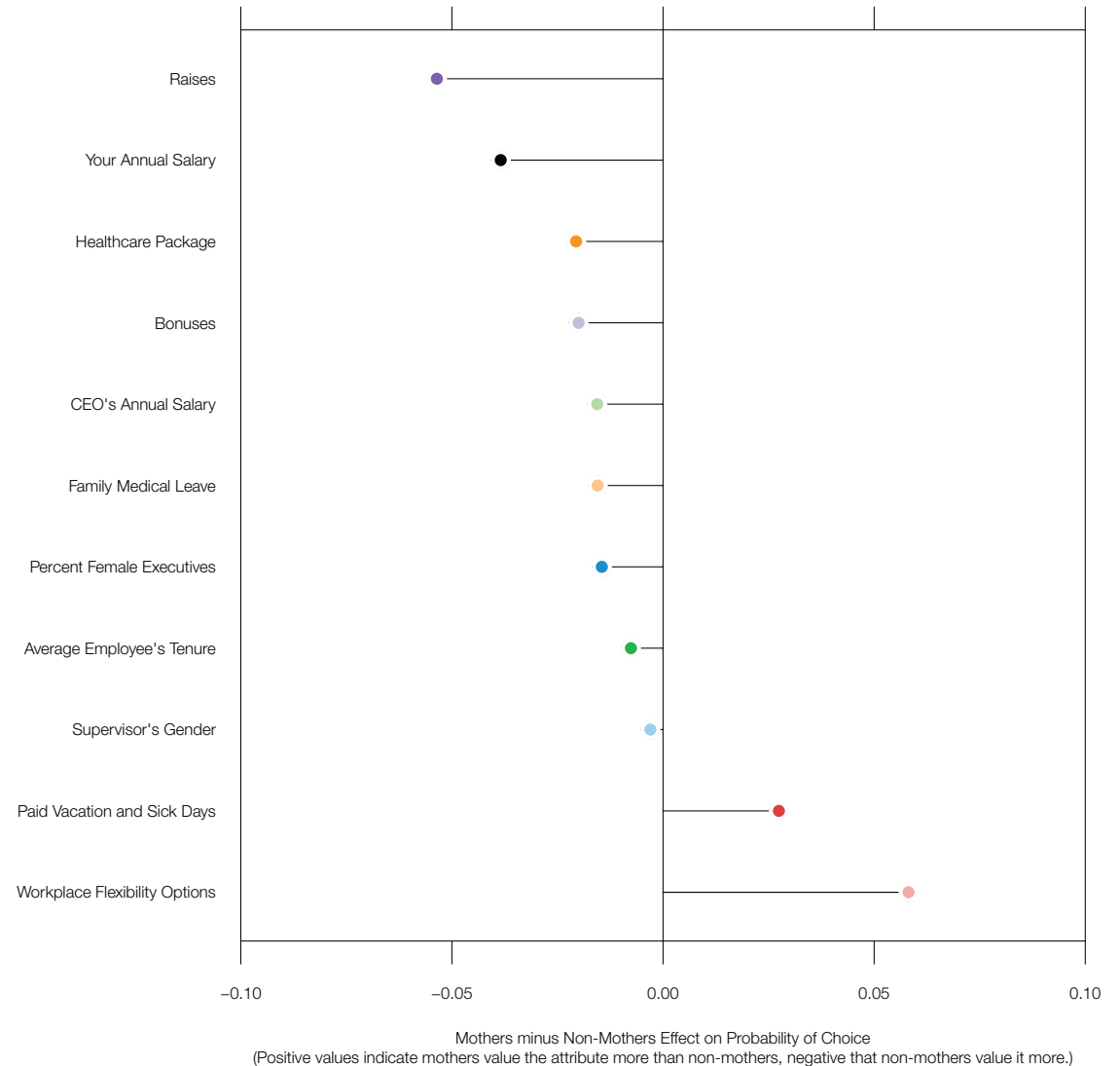
What categories of workplace features do non-mothers value more than mothers? As the discussion above hinted, everything but workplace flexibility options and paid sick and vacation days! However, there are two standouts: annual *salary* and *raises*.

And this also makes sense intuitively: since non-mothers have lesser time constraints as a result of not having children to care for, they should place greater value on workplace features that allow them to use that extra time. Features in these two categories do just that, as jobs with higher annual salaries often require greater numbers of working hours, while raises are often earned by spending more hours working.

Essentially, this data suggest that mothers are flexibility-maximizers while non-mothers are earnings-maximizers.

Relative Impact of Workplace Features on Job Choice
Difference Between Mothers and Non-Mothers

Mothers minus Non-Mothers Effect on Probability of Choice
(Positive values indicate mothers value the attribute more than non-mothers, negative that non-mothers value it more.)

How ideology conditions job choice impacts.

The chart to the right shows how ideology conditions the impact of workplace features by category (recall that the impact is on the probability that a woman will choose a job). Specifically, each graphed point is the *difference* between conservatives and liberals in the average impact of features in a particular category compared to that category's least attractive feature.

For example, for the category "Average Employee's Tenure," the difference between conservatives and liberals in the average impact of features in that category compared to the category's least attractive feature, "1 year," is about 6 points.

Essentially, points graphed to the *right* indicate that the category has a *greater* impact on conservatives compared to liberals; conversely, points graphed to the *left* indicate that the category has a *greater* impact on liberals compared to conservatives.

What categories of workplace features do conservatives value more than liberals? There are two standouts which we speculate about: average employee's *tenure* and *healthcare* package.
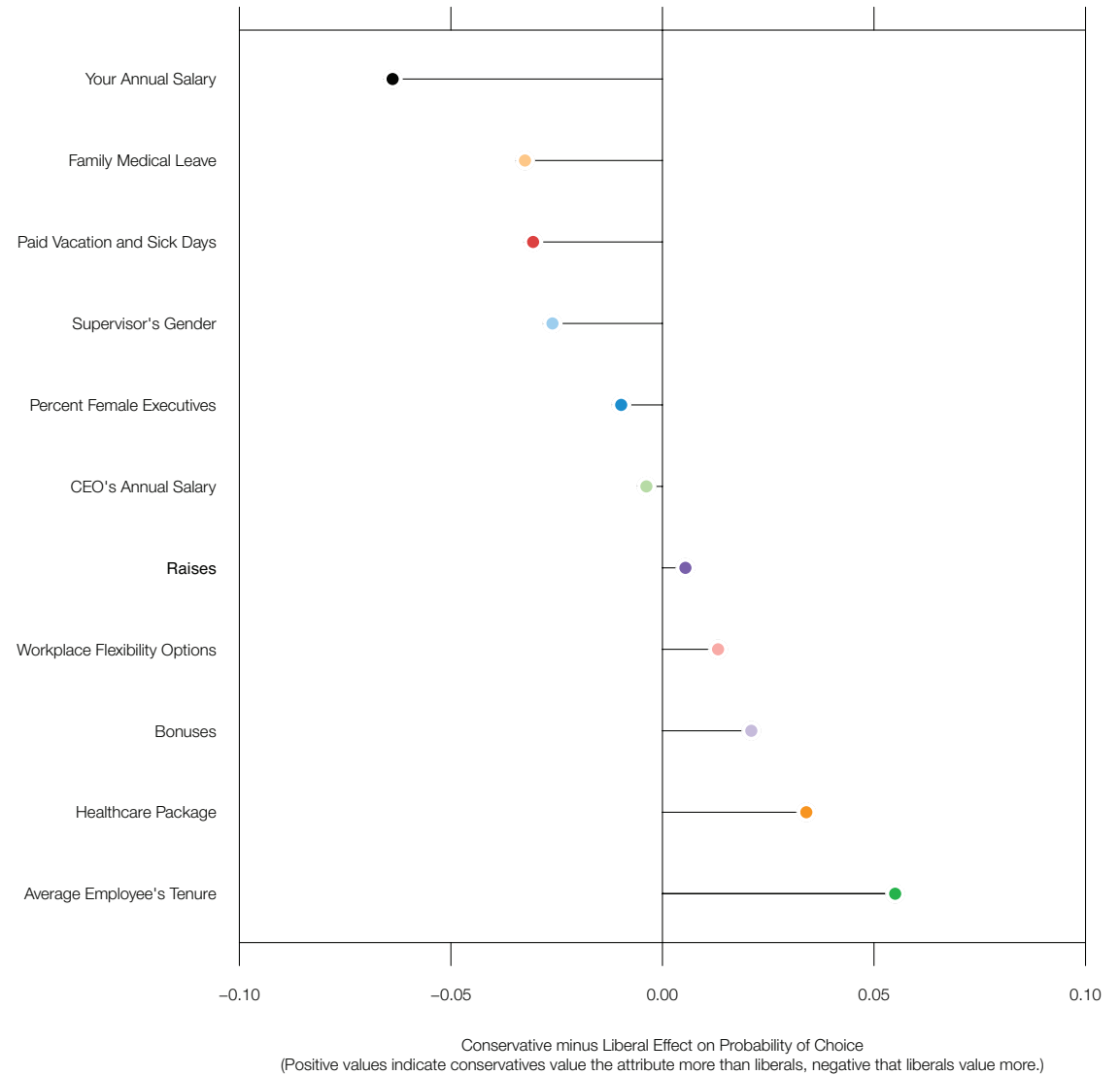
Since the ideology of conservatives favors continuity and tradition—even loyalty to one thing at the expense of diversity—it makes sense that conservatives value more average employee's tenure. Also, interpreting the advent of Obamacare as an event counter to the ideology of conservatives and making the issue of healthcare more salient to them than liberals in the aftermath, it makes sense that conservatives value more healthcare package as a category.

What categories of workplace features do liberals value more than conservatives? There are many standouts, but consider the top two which we discuss: annual *salary* and family *medical leave*.

The first of these is interesting because it is counterintuitive: since the ideology of liberals does not favor material wealth, it does not make sense that liberals value more annual salary, and by so much! The second of these is much more intuitive, especially in the context of this study: the ideology of liberals favors protecting workers from employers by law, and the current liberal-backed HFA will in fact augment family medical leave, doing just that—so it makes sense that liberals value more family medical leave as a category.

Relative Impact of Workplace Features on Job Choice
Difference Between Conservative and Liberal Respondents

Conservative minus Liberal Effect on Probability of Choice
(Positive values indicate conservatives value the attribute more than liberals, negative that liberals value more.)

Section III

Workplace Fairness Ratings
All Respondents

How benefits & flexibility impact fairness rating.

The chart to the right shows the average impact that each workplace feature has on the "fairness rating" of a workplace, how fair a woman thinks a particular job package is with *that* feature, relative to the lowest value workplace feature. This comparison is the average impact when it's seen in the context of many *other* job features and competing with the full range of *all other* job packages.

For instance, an employer offering 15 paid vacation and sick days increases a job's fairness rating by about 6.5 percentage points over one offering zero paid sick and vacation days.

This is the *average impact*, even counting those times when a respondent was rating a job with 15 paid days off, but a much lower salary, no flexibility, bonuses or raises.

Although the impacts are much smaller (the choice impacts are about 2-3 times as large as the fairness impacts on average), the general pattern of results remains remarkably consistent across the different job and workplace attributes, as we can see here and in the additional charts on the following pages.
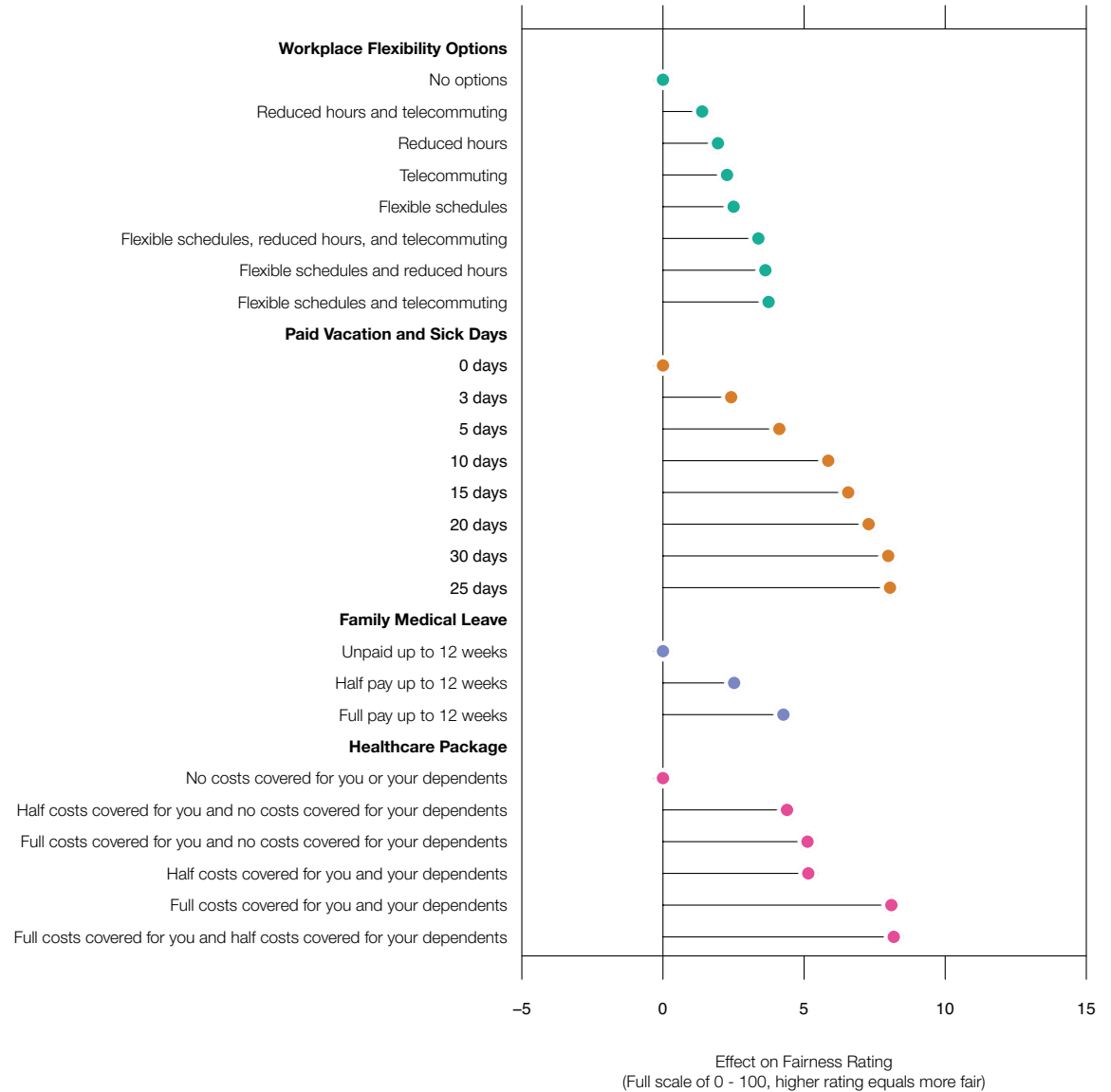
In other words, women are rating the fairness of a workplace on the basis of what they prefer in a job themselves.

Although this makes intuitive sense, it is stunning how closely the pattern of results adheres to one's purely personal preferences.

For women, what's fair in *general* is what one wants in a job personally . . . one could call it the "golden rule" of fairness perceptions.

Impact of Workplace Features on Workplace Fairness Rating

All Respondents - Benefits & Flexibility

Effect on Fairness Rating
(Full scale of 0 - 100, higher rating equals more fair)

How company attributes impact fairness rating.

The chart to the right shows the average impact that each workplace feature has on the "fairness rating" of a workplace, how fair a woman thinks a particular job package is with *that* feature, relative to the lowest value workplace feature. This comparison is the average impact when it's seen in the context of many *other* job features and competing with the full range of *all other* job packages.

For instance, a company where 50 percent of its executives are female increases a job's fairness rating by about 4 percentage points over one at a company that has no female executives at all.

That said, there is little difference in impact between 25, 50, 75, or 100 percent female executives. Women, in other words, think a company that has at least some female leadership is more fair.

This is the *average impact*, even counting those times when a respondent was rating a job with 50 percent female executives, but zero paid days off, a much lower salary, no flexibility, bonuses or raises.

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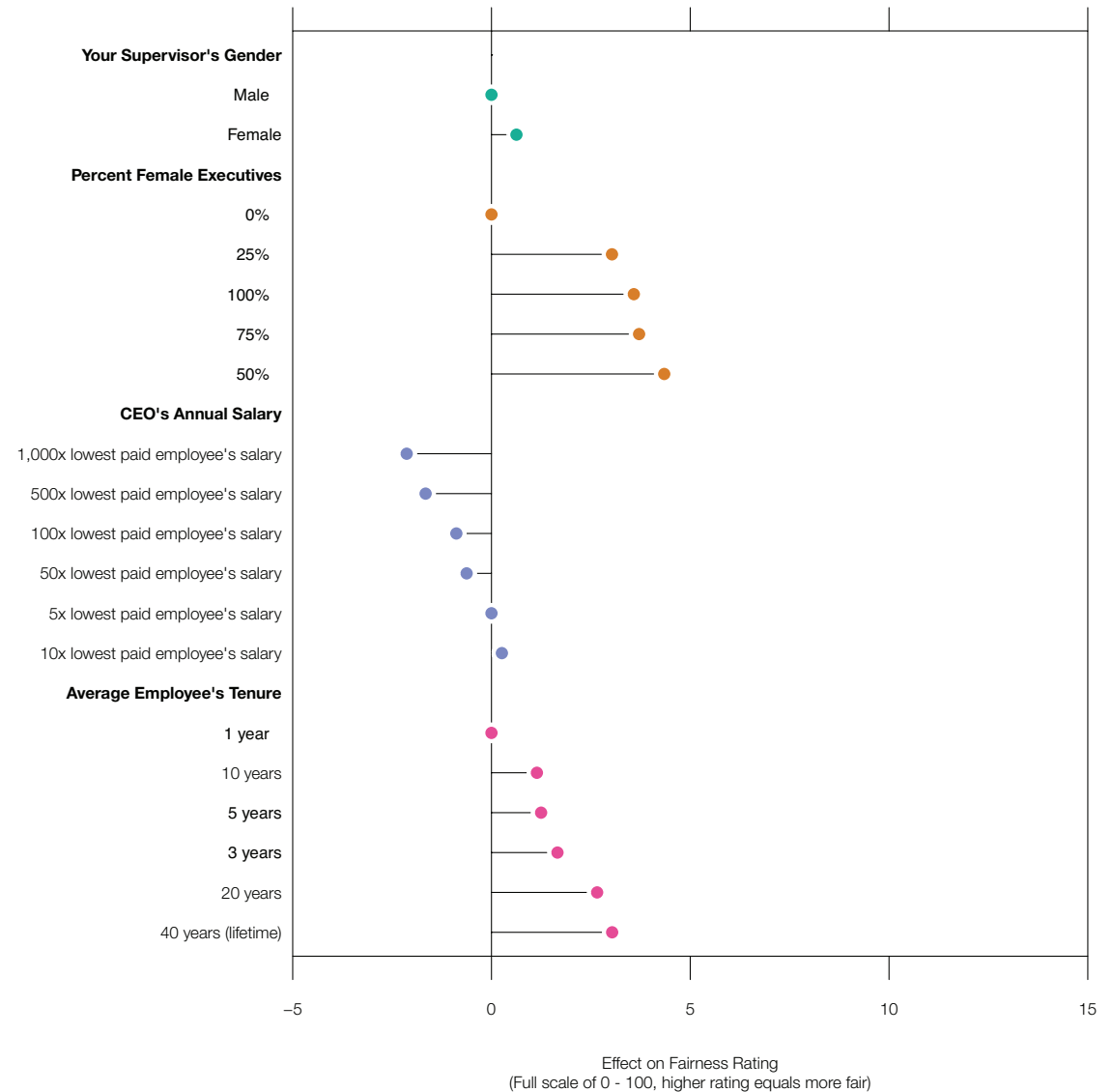
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Impact of Workplace Features on Workplace Fairness Rating
All Respondents - Company Attributes

Effect on Fairness Rating
(Full scale of 0 - 100, higher rating equals more fair)

How monetary compensation impacts fairness rating.

The chart to the right shows the average impact that each workplace feature has on the "fairness rating" of a workplace, how fair a woman thinks a particular job package is with *that* feature, relative to the lowest value workplace feature. This comparison is the average impact when it's seen in the context of many *other* job features and competing with the full range of *all other* job packages.

For instance, and employer offering a $35,000 salary increases the fairness rating of that job by about 3 percentage points over one offering $25,000 (in the context of a range of other attributes). Moving from the bottom to the top salary increases the fairness rating by about 12 points.

This is the *average impact*, even counting those times when a respondent was rating a job with $35,000 salary, but no vacation or sick days, no flexibility, bonuses or raises.

Once again, although the impacts are much smaller (the choice impacts are about 2-3 times as large as the fairness impacts on average), the general pattern of results remains remarkably consistent across the different job and workplace attributes, as we can see here and in the charts on the previous pages.
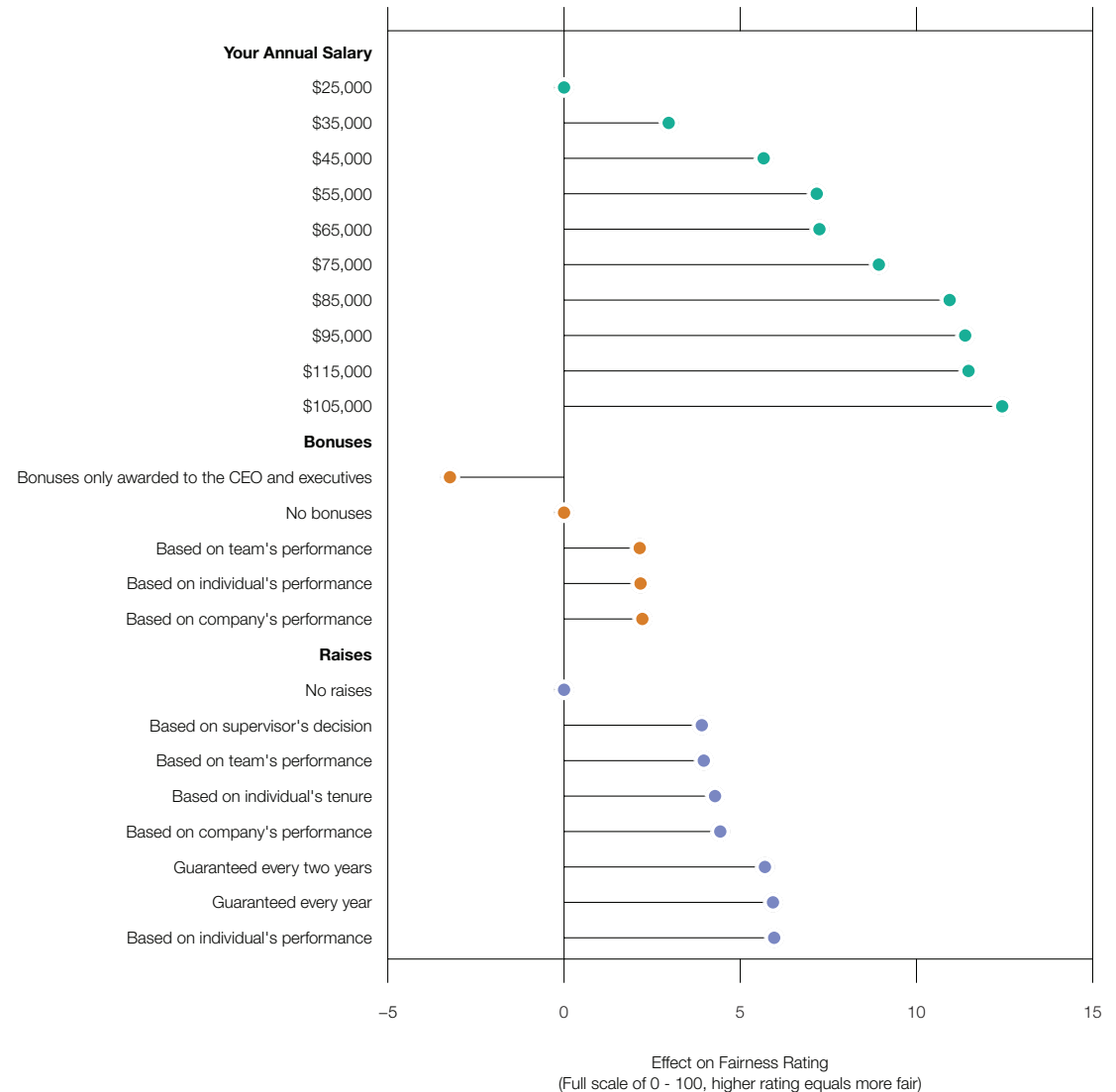
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Impact of Workplace Features on Workplace Fairness Rating
All Respondents - Monetary Compensation

Effect on Fairness Rating
(Full scale of 0 - 100, higher rating equals more fair)

About the Researchers

Adam B. Schaeffer

Adam Schaeffer is founder and director of research for Evolving Strategies. He is consumed by an itch to understand what makes people tick, why they think and do the things they do.

Adam has spent the last ten years running sophisticated experiments in the field and in the "lab" to maximize the impact of advertising and optimize messaging tactics. He led the design, execution and analysis of the largest applied political science field experiment in history, involving more than half a million test subjects.

Adam's focus and passion is designing experiments that go beyond mundane A/B testing to get at bigger questions and much greater ROI for clients. He helps clients discover not just what works, but why it works, and that understanding provides hugely valuable strategic advantages.

Adam received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in political psychology and behavior. His dissertation assessed how different combinations of school choice policies and messages can expand and mobilize elite and mass support. He received his M.A. in Social Science from the University of Chicago, where his thesis integrated aspects of evolutionary theory and psychology with political theory and strategy.

Adam's academic research and teaching centered around social psychology and human behavior, and this emphasis continues to animate his applied research. He considers himself akin to a research biologist who happens to have the great privilege of studying the behavior of the most complex and fascinating animal on the planet; *Homo sapiens*.

Alexander J. Oliver

Alex Oliver is director of experimental research at Evolving Strategies. He tends to be a bit preoccupied — colleagues might say borderline obsessed — with precision and details: from the exotic ink in his fountain pen to managing public opinion during wars and natural disasters.

Over the last seven years in both academic and private sector contexts, he's executed survey and field experiments to gain global strategic insights about how people think and act during crises—from political campaigns to combat missions abroad—and how to respond to them.

Alex co-authored the definitive review article on the politics of disaster relief for the forthcoming *Emerging Trends* project, which New York Times bestselling author and neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin has called "an indispensable reference work for the 21st century" and the director of the Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science Gary King has called an "unconventional guide to the future."

He's held faculty positions at Brandeis University and Boston University where he taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in the use of force abroad, public opinion, voter behavior, congressional behavior, and campaign strategy. His research has been presented at both national and international conferences.

Alex received his MA in economics from Tufts University, where he received the department's most prestigious endowed scholarship, and his BA in mathematics and economics from Merrimack College. He will receive his PhD from Boston University in quantitative methods and public opinion in 2015.

The ES Network

Evolving Strategies taps a broad network of academics with a range of specialized skills and domain expertise – experimental designs, political behavior/psychology, statistics, etc. – across disciplines such as political science, psychology, economics, marketing, statistics and computer science. Every project is unique, and we bring the best set of people and skills together for each engagement.

About IWF

IWF's mission is to improve the lives of Americans by increasing the number of women who value free markets and personal liberty. By aggressively seeking earned media, providing easy-to-read, timely publications and commentary, and reaching out to the public, we seek to cultivate support for these important principles and encourage women to join us in working to return the country to limited, Constitutional government. IWF is a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) research and educational institution.

The current project touches three of IWF's six issue pillars.

Dollars and Sense Economics

IWF's Dollars and Sense Economic Project highlights the problems with costs of government overreach, including how government's overspending impacts the economy and taxpayers and how programs that sound compassionate, such as extended unemployment benefits and generous welfare programs, can discourage work and ultimately harm those they are intended to help.

IWF offers an alternative vision of how government can be scaled back, so that aid and intervention is targeted where it is really needed and a thriving private sector and civil society can emerge. IWF highlights ways that government could be cut (including reform of our entitlement programs) and how the tax code could be made fairer and less burdensome, and encourage greater growth and innovation. IWF also explains how regulations are strangling the private sector, preventing job creation, and needlessly constricting Americans' private life. IWF highlights how regulations in particular make the economy less dynamic and less flexible. IWF also analyzes other government attempts to micromanage the way Americans live (from the content of our food to the cars we drive) and highlights how these policies erode our freedom and quality of life.

Women at Work

Through IWF's Women at Work project, IWF helps shape conversations about women in the economy and particularly how government helps and hinders women's opportunities. IWF provides an important voice in explaining that the disproportionate number of women who take time out of the work place to raise children, care for elderly parents or opt for lower-paying, more-flexible and fulfilling jobs has more to do with preferences and choice than unequal opportunities.

Government efforts to close the wage gap by micromanaging wages or mandating benefits end up backfiring on women by diminishing choice and opportunity and creating a less flexible, dynamic workplace, which is what women really want and need. IWF is the leading group discrediting and explaining what Progressive proposals, such as the Paycheck Fairness Act and the FAMILY Act, would actually do and helping make the case for developing alternative, conservative solutions to give women greater economic opportunity.

Women and Politics

The role of women in the public and political sphere is also an increasingly important issue that influences Americans' support for different political philosophies. IWF encourages an appreciation for the unprecedented opportunities the United States provides women, as well as how we can continue to improve our society to help women reach their full potential.

IWF has a common sense approach to discussing natural differences between men and women, as well as society's role in encouraging both sexes to make the most of their talents. IWF is a leader in discussing how to engage women in conversations about politics and policy, and encouraging women not to see themselves as victims, but as empowered individuals with many options and opportunities.