



The role of career history in gender based biases in job selection decisions

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the present research is to test the hypothesis that hiring decisions are influenced by the perceived femininity and masculinity of candidates as inferred from their career history.

Design/methodology/approach – Two job selection simulation studies were conducted in which students with and without personnel selection experience assessed the suitability of male and female job candidates for male and female sex-typed jobs. The candidate's CVs varied with regard to the gender typicality of the candidate's career history.

Findings – As predicted, when they previously had occupied another gender atypical job, both men and women were perceived as more suitable for a job that is more typical of the opposite gender. These decisions were mediated fully for women and partially for men by the impact of the gender typicality of the candidate's career on their perceived masculinity or femininity. In addition, men who had a gender atypical career history were perceived as less suitable for gender typical jobs. Thus, for men a gender atypical career history can serve as a "double edged sword." Importantly, experienced and inexperienced decision makers were equally subject to this effect.

Originality/value – Career history provides individuating information about a candidate over and above the skills and experiences they are likely to have. Gender type is one such information that is pertinent in a job market that divides jobs into male and female typical and makes hiring decisions on this basis. Previous research has largely ignored this aspect of career history.

Keywords Careers, Career development, Gender, Recruitment

Paper type Research paper

Careers can be best conceived of as a history of experiences and jobs in one or more organizations (Baruch and Rosenstein, 1992). This means that the experiences and the development at each stage of the career path can have important implications for the next step of a person's career and can serve an important role in hiring decisions (Heneman *et al.*, 1999). Thus, a person's career, as documented in their work history, provides important information about a given candidate such as level and quality of



experience in a particular occupation or continuity of employment in the past (Bills, 1990, 1999). This type of information contributes to a candidate's prospects of being hired for a future job.

A person's career development, however, may also determine in less obvious ways the chances of a given candidate to be hired. Specifically, we suggest that a person's career development provides information about a person that may affect the individual's susceptibility to sexual discrimination when applying for a new job. In particular, previously held jobs may influence perceptions of a candidate's femininity and masculinity respectively and thus make them appear more or less suited for sex-typed jobs. This rarely studied potential consequence of a person's career development is the focus of the present paper.

Below we first outline the rationale underlying the prediction that early career choices can lead to sex-based discrimination in later hiring decisions. We then report the results of two studies that examined how information concerning the jobs that a candidate occupied during his/her army service affects hiring decisions regarding future sex-typed jobs. The implications of the findings for career theory are then discussed.

Many jobs are perceived as gendered, that is, men and women are perceived as differentially likely to perform well in a given job (Burke and Vinnicombe, 2005). Consequently, hiring decisions are partially based on whether the job in question is considered more suitable for men or women (Cohen and Bunker, 1975; Heilman, 1983; Jawahar and Mattsson, 2005; Perry *et al.*, 1994), thereby leading to gender-based discrimination in hiring decisions (Brehm and Kassin, 1996; Glick *et al.*, 1988; Kalin and Hodgins, 1984; Kottke and Agars, 2005; Uhlmann and Cohen, 2005). In this sense, an extensive review by Davison and Burke (2000) examining evidence regarding gender-based discrimination in job selection, suggests that stereotypes concerning the "masculinity" or "femininity" of a given job, what is termed occupational "sex-type," contribute to this discrimination. Further, gender-based personnel selection is not simply grounded on the biological sex of the candidate but rather on his/her perceived masculinity and femininity (Davison and Burke, 2000; Davidson and Burke, 2004). This suggests that any information available to the decision maker that reflects on the perceived masculinity/femininity of the candidate can influence the decision about that candidate's suitability for a given job (Feldman, 1981; Fiske *et al.*, 1987). The importance of stereotypes about jobs and their suitability based on the gender of the applicant is one of the processes emphasized by Kottke and Agars (2005) in their theoretical analysis of women's career development.

Overall, gender stereotypes tend to be not only strong and persistent, but also to disadvantage women when it comes to hiring decisions (Swim *et al.*, 1989; Heilman, 2001). Thus, the sex-typedness of a job should have particularly negative effects on women who apply for male sex-typed jobs. Conversely, a woman who is perceived as more masculine than the "typical woman" is also perceived as more likely to succeed in male sex-typed jobs than a more feminine woman (Deaux *et al.*, 1985). Accordingly, the risk of gender-based discrimination in such a case should be lower (Braithwaite *et al.*, 1986). In line with this reasoning, research on how individuating information affects the use of gender stereotypes in selection decisions, views such information as a bias reducing mechanism, as it lowers the chances that decisions are based on gender

stereotypes (e.g. Fiske and Neuberg, 1990; Heilman, 1983; Heilman and Martell, 1986; Kunda and Thagard, 1996; Paulhus *et al.*, 1992).

However, this same process may also lead to a different bias in selection decisions. The information that reflects on the perceived masculinity or femininity of a given candidate (e.g. previous occupation) – while reducing reliance on gender stereotypes – may bias selection decisions in the opposite direction to the bias caused by gender stereotypes. For example, gender stereotypes suggest that men are more assertive than women (Uhlmann and Cohen, 2005). Individuating information to the effect that a specific woman is quite assertive may make her appear more suitable for jobs that require assertiveness and that are more often occupied by men (e.g. production line manager). Conversely, however, this same information can also make her appear less suitable for jobs that are stereotypically considered to be women’s jobs (e.g. a nurse). Women whose career is marked by success in male sex-typed jobs tend to be evaluated more negatively and disliked more with the consequent negative effects for reward allocation (Heilman *et al.*, 2004). We predict a similar effect for hiring decisions.

In sum, a work history documenting a career in jobs that are atypical of one’s gender may be a “double edged sword.” Even though a wider range of non gender stereotypical jobs may open up for a given candidate, he/she may also now be perceived as lacking characteristics that are typical for his or her sex, thereby closing other job opportunities.

The goal of the present research was to examine how information concerning the type of army career that men and women pursued during their service affects their chances of being selected for jobs that are gender sex-typed. This approach is grounded in the social cognition theory of career development that emphasizes the role of norms and belief relevant information specifically for women’s career advances (see Lent and Brown, 1996). Thus, we predict that hiring decisions will be based on the perceived femininity and masculinity of candidates as documented by their individual work history over and above biological sex.

The present research takes advantage of the fact that in Israel mandatory military service extends to both men and women and about 90 percent of jobs in the Israeli Armed Forces are open to women. Consequently, the Israeli Armed Forces are considerably less male dominated than many others, with a full 33 percent of the draftees being women. Thus, the Israeli Armed Forces have opened opportunities for women to serve in positions that traditionally were occupied only by man (Sasson-Levy, 2002). We are therefore in the unique situation of being able to create career histories that are relevant to almost all job candidates by using the job employed by a potential candidate while in the army to create individuating work history information. Study 1 focused on female candidates and study 2 focused on male candidates[1].

Study 1

The goal of study 1 was to determine the extent to which the perceived gender stereotypicality of a women’s career during her army service affects her prospects of being selected for a new job in the future. Participants were asked to assume the role of a personnel decision maker and were given a resume to evaluate. The candidate was described as either someone who had served in an army job typically occupied by women or one typically occupied by men. Based on the resume, participants were

asked to judge the suitability of the candidate for a series of jobs. Two of these jobs are stereotypically occupied by men whereas the two other jobs are stereotypically occupied by women. The perceived gender typicality of all jobs was verified in a pre-test. Participants were also asked to judge the femininity and masculinity of the candidate.

We expected that a woman who had occupied a stereotypically male job while in the army would be more likely considered to be suitable for a stereotypically male job, but also as less suitable for a stereotypically female job, than a woman who had served in a stereotypically female job. We further hypothesized that the effect of army service on judged job suitability would be mediated via the effect of army job type on the perceived masculinity and femininity of the candidate.

To assess the effect of prior experience in personnel decisions on potential biases, we included both participants who had prior experience with personnel selection and those who had not. Recruitment of participants from MBA classes as well as from undergraduate programs enabled us to have participants who varied in selection experience. All participants had Armed Forces service experience.

Method

Participants

The inexperienced group consisted of 45 (32 women, 13 men) students at the University of Haifa with a mean age of 23.6 years ($SD = 2.1$), none of whom reported having experience with screening job candidates.

The experienced group was comprised of 56 (30 women, 26 men) students at the University of Haifa with a mean age of 30.7 years ($SD = 7.4$), all of whom reported having experience with screening job candidates.

Materials and procedure

After completing the informed consent form, participants received written instructions explaining that the aim of the study was to assess how different styles of curriculum vitae writing affect selection decisions. Participants were instructed to assume the role of a recruiter in a manpower agency who has to find suitable employees for several available jobs. Each participant received one CV and was asked to make a hiring decision based on this CV. Four different CVs were prepared, two that described the candidate's army job as male sex-typed and two that described a female sex-typed job. The CV was accompanied by a short letter in which the candidate expressed her interest in finding a job and indicated that she thinks that her education and army career experience make her suitable for several of the jobs advertised by the agency.

The candidate was further described as an Israeli-born 22 year old unmarried woman with fully completed high school education in science-oriented studies. The CV also mentioned a pre-army four months job as an employee in a local burger chain. In addition, it described the candidate as fluent in Hebrew and English and gave as hobbies reading books, going to the cinema and doing sports. Finally, it was mentioned that recommendations can be provided on request.

The participants' task was to rate how suitable they considered the candidate to be for each of four different jobs; two of these were determined in a pre-test (detailed below) as male sex-typed the other two female sex-typed. Ratings were made on a 7-point scale ranging from -1 "not at all" to -7 "to a large extent." Participants were

then requested to report their impression of the femininity and masculinity of the candidate using two nine-item scales, which were designed based on items taken from the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ, see below). The scales are comprised of semantic-differential like items where one pole represents a given characteristic and the other its opposite (e.g. aggressiveness and lack of aggressiveness, respectively). Ratings ranged from 1 to 5[2].

Participants were further asked to rate the intelligence and motivation of the candidate (ranging from 1 – “very low” to 7 – “very high”) as well as to indicate their perception of the candidate’s contribution to the country and the IDF (ranging from 1 – “very small” to 7 – “very big”). The purpose of these questions was to assess the possibility that the effect that army career history has on selection decisions is the result of perceived differences between candidates in relation to their quality and contribution to the country and the IDF caused by type of army service in addition to or even instead of the way this history reflects on one’s perceived gender.

Pre-tests

A series of pre-tests served to validate the stimulus material and questionnaires for the study.

Army jobs

The goal of the first pre-test was to choose appropriate army jobs that differed in terms of perceived femininity and masculinity and at the same time were as similar as possible with regard to other relevant respects. We chose to categorize jobs as they are perceived and not based on objective criteria (such as occupational gender composition data), as many personnel officers may not be able to readily refer to this information when making hiring decisions. In order to keep most of the characteristics and demands of the job comparable only instruction jobs were included.

Seventeen undergraduate students at the University of Haifa (11 women and 6 men) with a mean age of 24 years ($SD = 1.8$) were asked to assess the extent to which each of 15 army instruction jobs appeared to be female or a male typical. Jobs were referred to both by title and description. Ratings were made on seven-point scales anchored with very male and very female. Anchor position was counterbalanced across participants. Similar to the method used by Davison and Burke (2000) we divided the ratings of the various jobs into three categories. Jobs that were rated between 1 and 3 were considered typical for women, those rated between 5 and 7, typical for men and those rated as 4 as gender neutral. To be included in the respective category, the job had to fall into the relevant category based on the ratings of at least 50 percent of the participants. According to this criterion, four jobs were chosen. The female jobs were Instructor of education and Israel’s geography (Planning and operation of educational activities in army units. Guiding unit excursions and arranging events in which the legacy and history of the army is discussed) and Hebrew instructor (Teaching newcomers Hebrew and completion of education for Israeli born problematic youth and preparing them for meaningful service in the army), the two male jobs were Engineering corps instructor (Professional training of combat soldiers in the use of explosives, mines and heavy mechanical equipment) and Artillery corps instructor (Professional training of commando unit soldiers in the artillery corps). The mean

female typicality was 2.88 (0.99) and 2.94 (1.3) for the two female jobs and 4.88 (0.78) and 5.06 (1.14) for the two male jobs.

Prospective jobs

A second pre-test served to validate the list of jobs for which the candidates were screened in the main experiment. The goal of this pre-test was to choose jobs that differ in perceived gender-typicality, yet require equal levels of ability, experience and training as well as are appropriate for newly released soldiers. A group of eight judges formed of organizational psychology MA students at the University of Haifa (5 women and 3 men) with a mean age of 27 years ($SD = 1.3$) was asked to generate a list of jobs that fit the above-mentioned criteria. This procedure yielded a list of 82 different jobs. Three additional judges (a woman and two men) with a BA degree in psychology and working in the field of human resources with a mean age of 26 years ($SD = 1.0$) were asked to reduce this list of jobs by applying the following additional criteria: the job is a minimum wage job, requires minimal training (no more than three months), involves regular working hours and can be found close to residential areas. This resulted in a list of 42 jobs. This reduced list was then given to the same group of judges who had assessed the gender typicality of the army jobs. The identical scale and selection criteria were used (see details above). The two female sex-typed jobs were office secretary ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.42$) and supermarket cashier ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.06$). The two male sex-types jobs were avocado picker ($M = 5.53$, $SD = 1.12$) and hardware store clerk ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 1.12$).

An additional pre-test was designed to assess whether any of the army jobs was perceived as equipping a candidate with any specific skills that could serve as an advantage when applying for one of these potential jobs. Ten graduate students at the University of Haifa (six women and four men) with a mean age of 26 years ($SD = 1.6$) were asked to assess for each of the army jobs the extent to which they might give a candidate that served in such a job in the army an advantage for each of the four selected potential jobs. Ratings were made on five-points scales in which 1 represented "totally irrelevant" and 5 – "very relevant." All army jobs were seen as having low relevance for the prospective jobs as no more than 1 judge ever rated a given job as highly relevant.

Masculinity/femininity

Finally, two scales were created to assess masculinity and femininity respectively. The scales were created using items from the PAQ (Spence and Helmreich, 1978). Given that classification of gender-specific characteristics is bound to vary as a function of culture (Spence *et al.*, 1975), this stage further enabled us to ensure that the items used in the scales were relevant to Israeli participants.

The 18 items for the two scales were chosen from a Hebrew version of the original 55 items of the PAQ (Chemi-Hoffman, 2001). A group of 40 (35 women and 5 men) undergraduate students from the Jordan Valley College with a mean age of 23 years ($SD = 2.1$) were asked to think of the typical man and the typical woman and rate each of them separately on the Hebrew version of the PAQ (Chemi-Hoffman, 2001). Order of rating was counterbalanced across participants.

Mean ratings on each characteristic for the typical man and the typical woman were compared using a series of paired-sample t-tests. A total of 11 items emerged as not

significantly different and thus were excluded from further analysis. The remaining items were determined as reflecting characteristics typical of a man if participants rated the typical male as high on this characteristic (four or five on the rating scale) and the typical woman as low on this characteristic (three or lower). Similarly, items were determined as reflecting characteristics typical of a woman if participants rated the typical woman as high on this characteristic (four or five on the rating scale) and the typical man as low on this characteristic (three or lower). The nine typical male characteristics and nine typical female characteristics that differentiated best between the sexes and that fitted the above criterion were retained[3].

Results and discussion

Influence of participants' experience and sex

We first assessed the influence of participants' sex and level of experience in personnel selection on perceived job suitability. For this, a mixed-factor ANOVA was conducted with army job type, sex and experience level as between-subjects variables and potential job type as the within-subjects variable. No main effect of sex or experience level or any interaction between these variables and army job type on perceptions of suitability emerged (all F 's > 0.14). Hence, neither level of experience in recruiting employees nor sex affected selection decisions in the present context. These factors were therefore excluded from further analyses.

Army job type

To assess the effect of army job type on the candidate's perceived suitability for the prospective jobs, a mixed factor ANOVA with army job type as the between-subjects variable and prospective job type as the within-subjects variable was conducted. A significant main effect emerged for prospective job type, $F(1, 99) = 4.66$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta = 0.05$, such that male sex-typed jobs ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.54$) were perceived as overall less suitable for the female candidate than female sex-typed jobs ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 1.32$).

As predicted, a significant army job type by prospective job type interaction emerged, $F(1, 99) = 16.02$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta = 0.14$. The female candidate who had served in a male sex-typed job in the army was perceived as more suitable for a male sex-typed prospective job ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.52$) than a female candidate who had served in a female sex-typed army job ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.37$). Conversely, the candidate who had served in a female sex-typed job in the army was perceived as more suitable for a female sex-typed job ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.25$) than the candidate who had served in a male sex-typed job ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.42$).

Even though women who had served in a male sex-typed job were perceived as somewhat less appropriate candidates for the female prospective jobs than were women who had served in a female sex-typed job, this difference did not reach significance, $t(99) = 1.12$, $p > 0.05$. Thus, the advantage with regard to chances of obtaining a gender atypical job did not come at the price of being disadvantaged with regard to a gender typical job. Table I shows the mean ratings for each prospective job as a function of the specific army job history and the participant's level of experience in selection. As this table indicates, the above-mentioned pattern of results is generally maintained within each specific experimental condition, despite some idiosyncratic differences.

	Participants experienced in selection of job candidates				Participants inexperienced in selection of job candidates				
	Female Army job		Male Army job		Female Army job		Male Army job		
	Edu/geo	Heb	Eng. corps	Arti corps	Edu/geo	Heb	Eng. corps	Arti corps	
Female Pros. job	Office secretary	5.14 (1.83)	4.44 (1.50)	4.67 (1.59)	4.64 (1.75)	5.00 (1.61)	5.77 (1.30)	4.50 (1.72)	4.73 (1.42)
	Supermarket cashier	3.93 (1.98)	3.88 (1.67)	4.07 (1.90)	4.09 (1.70)	5.73 (1.20)	4.38 (1.76)	4.10 (1.52)	4.55 (2.25)
Male Pros. job	Avocado picker	2.57 (1.51)	4.06 (1.73)	4.86 (1.41)	5.09 (1.87)	3.36 (1.36)	3.92 (2.06)	3.80 (1.69)	4.09 (2.47)
	Hardware store clerk	3.21 (1.58)	3.87 (1.64)	5.53 (1.06)	4.64 (1.50)	3.82 (1.94)	4.00 (1.29)	4.50 (2.07)	5.18 (1.78)

Notes: Edu/geo – Instructor of education and Israel's geography; Heb – Hebrew instructor; Eng. corps – Engineering corps instructor; Arti corps – Artillery corps instructor; Female Pros. Job – Female prospective job; Male Pros. Job – Male prospective job; In parentheses are SD's of means

Table I.
Mean and standard deviation of ratings of individual prospective jobs as a function of Army job history and participant's experience in selection of job candidates – study 1

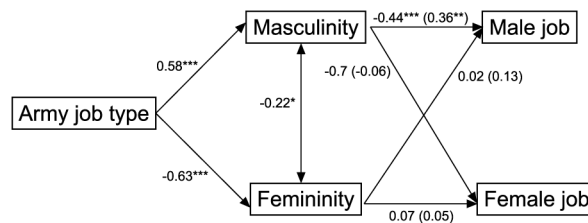
Finally, we conducted separate *t* tests to explore whether the type of army career differentially affects perceptions of the quality of the candidate and her contribution to the IDF and the country. Neither comparison reached significance ($p > 0.47$) supporting the assumption that the selection decisions were indeed based on the way army career history reflects on one's perceived gender. A mediation analysis was conducted to more specifically test this prediction.

For this, structural equation modeling was used, with the gender typicality of the army job as the exogenous variable, perceived masculinity and femininity of the candidate as mediators, and perceived job suitability as outcome. The model was found to have adequate fit, $\chi^2_{(3)} = 7.24, p = 0.065, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.119$. As shown in Figure 1, a candidate who had pursued an army career in a male sex-typed job was perceived as more masculine and less feminine than one who had pursued a female sex-typed job. Perceived masculinity in turn had a positive and significant relation with prospective male sex-typed jobs but no relation with prospective female sex-typed jobs. That is, a woman who had a male sex-typed army job appeared more masculine but not less feminine as a result. The perceived femininity of the female candidate was not related to either prospective job type.

To further substantiate the mediating role of perceived masculinity, we tested a saturated model in which direct links between army job and prospective jobs were added. Army job had no significant relation with female sex-typed jobs ($\beta = -0.05$). Although, a significant direct effect on male jobs ($\beta = 0.25; p = 0.051$) was found, this link did not reduce the link between perceived masculinity and the male sex-typed prospective jobs (see numbers in parentheses in Figure 1).

Overall, these results support our assumption that information concerning a female candidate's army career affects her perceived suitability for a new job. This effect is mediated via the effect of the perceived gender typicality of the army job on the perceived masculinity of the candidate such that perceived suitability for a male sex-typed job is influenced by the fact that having pursued a male typical career in the army makes a woman appear more masculine (but not less feminine).

In sum, the present study confirmed the hypothesis that career choices with regard to the gender typicality of the jobs she has occupied in her past, affects a woman's suitability for both male and female typical jobs in the future. Specifically, a woman with a work history of male typical jobs is perceived as more suitable for a male typical job than a woman who had pursued a career in a female typical job. The converse was



* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 1.
Path model study 1

Note: Numbers in the model represent Beta coefficients; in parentheses are coefficients of the saturated model

true for her suitability for a female typical job. These outcomes were largely mediated by the way that work history affects the perceived masculinity of the job candidate. Neither the sex nor the level of personnel selection experience of participant affected the decisions and judgments in question.

Study 1 confirmed our hypotheses that work history as it relates to the gender typicality of a previous occupation affects hiring decisions for women. However, men may be just as susceptible to biases in job hiring decisions that are related to their career development as women are. Study 2 was conducted to test this hypothesis. In line with our discussion above, we expected that a man who had a male typical job in the army would be perceived as more suitable for a male sex-typed job than a man who had pursued an army career in a female typical job. We further predicted that having a history of army service in a male sex-typed job would also make a man appear less suitable for a female sex-typed job. We again hypothesized that effects of army service on judged suitability for a certain job would be mediated via the effect that army service has on the perceived masculinity and femininity of the candidate. For this, the identical methods, procedures and materials as in Study 1 were employed with the sole difference that the sex of the candidate was described as male.

Method

Participants

As in study 1 we recruited two groups of participants with different levels of personnel selection experience. The inexperienced group consisted of 76 (57 women, 19 men) undergraduate and MBA students at the University of Haifa and the Izreal Valley college with a mean age of 27.5 years ($SD = 7.1$). The experienced group was comprised of 34 (19 women, 15 men) from the same institutes and programs with a mean age of 32.8 years ($SD = 10.7$). None of the participants in study 2 had participated in study 1.

Results and discussion

Influence of participants' experience and sex

We first assessed the influence of participants' sex and level of experience in personnel selection on perceived job suitability. For this, a mixed-factor ANOVA was conducted with army job type, sex and experience level as between-subjects variables and potential job type as the within-subjects variable. No main effect of sex or any interaction between this variable and the other variables on perceptions of suitability emerged (all F 's > 0.12). Hence, sex did not affect selection decisions in the present context. This factor was therefore excluded from further analyses. In contrast to study 1, a significant main effect for level of experience in personnel selection emerged, $F(1, 100) = 4.02$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta = 0.04$, such that participants with personnel selection experience judged the candidate as overall less suitable for the prospective jobs ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.02$) than did the inexperienced ones ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.15$). However, experience did not interact with job type; thus this factor was also excluded from further analyses.

Army job type

As for study 1, a mixed factor ANOVA was conducted, with army job type as the between-subjects variable and prospective job type as the within-subjects variable, to

assess the extent to which the candidate was rated as suitable for the male and female sex-typed prospective jobs. This analysis yielded a significant main effect of prospective job type, $F(1, 106) = 60.51$, $p = 0.0001$, $\eta = 0.36$, such that male sex-typed jobs ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.39$) were perceived as more suitable for a man than were female sex-typed jobs ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.48$).

The expected interaction between type of army job and type of prospective job was also significant, $F(1, 106) = 36.60$, $p < 0.0001$, $\eta = 0.26$. Men whose army job was male typical were perceived as more suitable for a male sex-typed job ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 1.11$) than those who had pursued a female typical army job ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.44$). Conversely, men whose army job was male typical were perceived as less suitable for a female sex-typed job ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.47$) than were men whose army job was female typical ($M = 3.93$,).

It is noteworthy that for men, having an army career in a female typical job did in fact reduce suitability for a male sex-typed job, $t(108) = 4.32$, $p < 0.0001$. That is, men who have a career history in jobs that are more typical for women were “punished” when applying for a male typical job later on. Table II shows the mean ratings for each prospective job as a function of the specific army job history and the participant’s level of experience in selection. As this table indicates, the above-mentioned pattern of results is nicely maintained within each specific condition in the study, despite some idiosyncratic differences.

In sum, when the candidate had served in a male typical job in the army, he was seen as more suitable for a male than a female sex-typed job and the converse with regard to female typical army jobs. These findings again suggest that serving in a job atypical of one’s gender has advantages in so far as it increases one’s chances to get yet another gender atypical job. However, for men this advantage comes at a price, as at the same time the candidate is perceived as less suitable for a job typical for his gender. That is, for men career history of gender atypical jobs can operate as a “double edged sword.” Experience in selection of personnel had again little impact on decisions, especially in relation with the extent to which army career history affected the decisions in question.

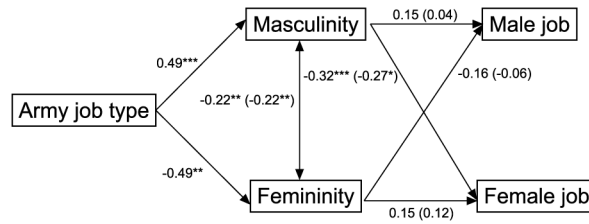
As for study 1, we tested the extent to which type of army career differentially affected perceptions of the quality of the candidate and his contribution to the IDF and the country. No significant effect of army job type on the perceived quality of the candidate, $t(99) = 0.72$, $p > 0.47$, emerged, however, a significant effect on perceived contribution to the country and the IDF, $t(110) = 4.32$, $p < 0.0001$ was found, such that a man serving in a male army job ($M = 6.06$; $SD = 0.96$) was seen as contributing more than a man serving in a female typical job ($M = 5.20$; $SD = 1.15$). We therefore included this factor in the mediation analyses below.

We first conducted a mediation analysis that assessed the hypothesis that the effects on selection decisions are due to the effect of army job type on perceived femininity and masculinity. The same model as for Study 1 was assessed and was found to have marginally acceptable fit, $\chi^2_{(3)} = 12.80$, $p = 0.005$, $CFI = 0.91$, $RMSEA = 0.173$. As can be seen in Figure 2, a candidate who had a male sex-typed army job was perceived as more masculine and less feminine and vice versa. In turn, perceived masculinity was positively related to suitability for male sex-typed jobs. Perceived femininity, on the other hand, was positively related to suitability for female

	Participants experienced in selection of job candidates				Participants inexperienced in selection of job candidates			
	Female Army job		Male Army job		Female Army job		Male Army job	
	Edu/geo	Heb	Eng. corps	Arti corps	Edu/geo	Heb	Eng. corps	Arti corps
Female Pros. job	3.25 (1.16)	3.80 (2.04)	2.89 (1.54)	2.42 (1.62)	4.55 (1.76)	4.00 (2.11)	3.00 (1.50)	2.86 (1.88)
Office secretary	3.67 (1.80)	3.50 (1.65)	2.44 (1.42)	2.86 (1.46)	4.00 (1.89)	4.05 (2.04)	3.50 (1.58)	3.19 (1.86)
Supermarket cashier	3.78 (1.78)	3.90 (1.91)	5.00 (1.65)	5.00 (1.15)	3.90 (2.00)	4.21 (1.92)	5.44 (1.46)	4.62 (1.69)
Male Pros. job	4.44 (1.74)	4.30 (1.57)	5.33 (1.22)	5.85 (1.07)	4.90 (1.65)	4.42 (1.92)	5.61 (1.29)	5.76 (1.22)
Hardware store clerk								

Notes: Edu/geo – Instructor of education and Israel's geography; Heb – Hebrew instructor; Eng. corps – Engineering corps instructor; Arti corps – Artillery corps instructor; Female Pros. Job – Female prospective job; Male Pros. Job – Male prospective job; In parentheses are SD's of means

Table II.
Mean and standard deviation of ratings of individual prospective jobs as a function of Army job history and participant's experience in selection of job candidates – study 2



* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Numbers in the model represent Beta coefficients; in parentheses are coefficients of the saturated model

Figure 2.
Path model study 2

jobs. However, neither of these links was significant. Masculinity also had a negative and significant relation with suitability for female sex-typed job.

To further substantiate the mediating role of perceived femininity and masculinity, we tested a saturated model in which direct links between army job and prospective job were added. A significant link emerged between the type of Army job the candidate had and his perceived suitability for a prospective male job ($\beta = -0.38$; $p < 0.001$). This link reflected the fact that if the candidate had a female-sexed type job in the army, he was seen as less suitable for a prospective male job. The direct link between Army type job and prospective female job was not significant ($\beta = 0.11$). The link between masculinity and female job remained significant. When including contribution to the country and the IDF in the model a small but significant indirect link from army job type through contribution to masculinity ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = 0.012$) suggests that being perceived as contributing more to his country and the IDF increases perceptions of masculinity. In addition, a significant direct effect on prospective female job ($\beta = 0.19$, $p = 0.047$) suggests that a man who is considered to contribute to the country and the IDF may not be considered well suited for a female job. However, these links did not reduce the other reported links between job type, perceived gender, and suitability for male and female prospective jobs.

Overall, these results suggest that for men, as for women, the sexed-type of one's army career affected their perceived suitability for sexed-types jobs in the future. However, these effects are only partly mediated by the way the army career history reflects on perceived gender. That is, whereas army job type lowers suitability for a female job via its effect on perceived masculinity, it increases perceived suitability for a male job directly, independent of its effects on perceived masculinity and contribution to the country and the IDF. That is, men are not "compensated" for their service in a male-typical army job when applying for a male job. However, they seem to be considered less well placed in a prospective female job. The relatively weaker fit of the model in this study relative to study 1, suggests that in the case of males, there are potentially additional factors mediating the impact of army career history on selection decisions concerning sexed-typed prospective jobs.

Yet overall, the results of study 2 corroborate our assumption that information concerning men's career choices in the army with regard to the sex-typedness of the job affects their perceived suitability for a new job. This effect is partly mediated by the effect of having occupied a specific army job on the perceived masculinity of the

candidate. Consequently, one's history of army service impinges on one's perceived gender as well as on one's prospects of being suitable for a gendered-typed job. Part of the effect of army service on job suitability is mediated by perceived gender, and suitability for a female prospective job is in addition mediated by contribution to the country, but there is also a direct effect that is not mediated by these factors.

In general, study 2 replicated the central findings from study 1. That is, both men and women were perceived as more suitable for a new job that matches their career history in terms of sex-typedness than for one which does not. However, for men but not for women, this comes at the cost of being perceived as less suitable for a gender typical job when their previous job was not gender typical. These effects seem to be partly mediated by the effect that sex-typedness of the previous job has on perceptions of a candidate's femininity and masculinity.

General discussion

The present research examined the possibility that a job candidate's career development as reflected in their work history (in this case, army service) can serve as individuating information that affects his/her perceived femininity and masculinity and thereby can pave the way for gender based discrimination in future hiring decisions. Two separate studies, one with female and one with male candidates, supported this hypothesis. For both men and women, service in a gender atypical army job increased their perceived suitability for future gender atypical jobs. This effect of previous career choices on future career options was fully mediated by the effect of the previous job on the perceived masculinity and femininity of the candidate in the case of a woman, but only partly mediated in the case of a man. These results stand in accord with previous research pointing to the importance of individuating information in reducing the weight of gender stereotypes in job selection decisions (e.g. Glick *et al.*, 1988). These findings are also congruent with the social cognition theory of career development that emphasizes the role of norms and belief relevant information specifically for women's career advances (see Lent and Brown, 1996) and on a more general level underline the importance of social cognitions as one process that underlies career development and advancement (Kottke and Agars, 2005).

The present research also showed that whereas for women the sex-type of the previous job did not impinge on their suitability for gender typical jobs, for men a career in a gender atypical job reduced their perceived suitability for gender typical jobs. However, this effect was not caused by the way career history affected the man's perceived gender. It is possible that this difference is due to differences in gender role expectations. In recent years it has become a frequent phenomenon for women to push the boundaries of gender typical jobs and to push into work domains and positions previously reserved for men (see Kottke and Agars, 2005). In contrast, it is much less frequent for men to do the same. Thus, it may be perceived a more diagnostic for a man's abilities and interests to have chosen a female sex-typed job and hence he will be perceived as less suitable for future gender typical jobs.

What also seems apparent from our study is that work and job selection experience does not seem to change the extent to which perceivers rely on stereotypes when making selection decisions. Specifically, experienced and inexperienced participants reacted identically to the CVs except for the fact that in study 2 the experienced group was somewhat less inclined to view the candidate as suitable for any job irrespective of

its gender typicality. This finding further supports the contention that job selection simulation studies that use students as participants match “real world decisions” or decisions made by real decision makers (Campbell, 1986; Davison and Burke, 2000; Locke, 1986).

The fact that career history can serve as a gender bias reduction mechanism is particularly significant for women, because even though both sexes tend to suffer from gender-based discrimination in job selection, the undesirable consequences of such discrimination for women are generally far greater than for men (Swim *et al.*, 1989; Burke and Vinnicombe, 2005). This, because jobs that are perceived as suitable for women are also perceived as less prestigious and tend to pay less than jobs that are perceived as more suitable for men (Eagly and Steffen, 1984, 1986). For example, a gap in men’s and women’s annual pay has remained across the last 45 years (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1999). One reason for this gap is that gender based discrimination makes it difficult to enter or advance in jobs that are perceived as male typical and which in general are also better paid (Macpherson and Hirsch, 1995). Accordingly, if the above line of reasoning holds true, organizations that provide the opportunity for women to pursue careers that are traditionally occupied by men also lower the chances that these women will suffer from gender-based discrimination in future job searches. This may also be true for men who occupied in the past a job that is stereotypically female and who try to get a new gender atypical job.

On the practical level, this study suggests that both candidates and job selection decisions makers should consider how career history may affect a candidate’s likelihood of getting a certain job not only due to the “story it tells” about the candidate’s qualifications and experience but also due to how it reflects on the candidate’s gender typicality. In particular, when presented with an opportunity to get a certain job that is atypical of one’s gender, as is the case in the army, one has to take into account how this decision may impact on one’s future occupational opportunities. This is also true of decision makers who must make candidates aware of this aspect.

In sum, the present research shows that work history can serve as individuating information that affects a candidate’s likelihood to be subject to gender based discrimination during job selection. However, this research is also subject to some limitations and poses further questions that need to be explored.

First, we used army jobs that differ in gender typicality as the sole source of the candidate’s career history. However, it is possible that army jobs are perceived as less diagnostic of a person’s preferences than other jobs as draftees often have limited input into the jobs they get. Thus, by providing information on the candidate’s army career only, we may have underestimated the impact of career history on future jobs. Also, the prospective jobs were relatively simple jobs that did not require high qualifications and skills. Therefore it is unclear what would happen when the prospective jobs require training and skills. Future studies should explore these questions. Finally, we tested the impact of army career history of men and women separately. However, in reality there are often several candidates of both sexes for a job. That is, decision makers often have to simultaneously weigh the suitability of both men and women for a given prospective job. This may lead to some contrast effects that can also affect to some extent the decision in question. However, there are also job decisions – like the ones presented in the vignette – where the question is not so much whether to hire a specific person for a specific job, but rather which of several jobs may be given to a person in

the framework of an internal restructuring or, as in the present case, when an agency assigns potential workers for temporary jobs. Future research should explore the difference between these two types of selection decisions and how the availability of candidates of both sexes may affect selection decisions based on the sex-type of a candidate's previous jobs.

Notes

1. We examined this question in separate studies for each sex because of the assumption that jobs may vary in terms of how they are perceived as a function of the gender of the person that occupies that job. That is, a job that is stereotypically seen a typical occupation for a man may appear as more or less so if a woman occupies that job. Thus, although a woman may still be seen as more masculine if she worked in that job than in a woman's job, the effect would be different for a man. Consequently it is quite impossible to directly compare the effect of having occupied a specific job between sexes as effects may be due to variations in the way the job is perceived in addition to just the effect of the sex of the person occupying this job.
2. Items were randomly arranged so that for some characteristics a rating of 1 represented the characteristic that is more typical of women and 5 the characteristic that is more typical of men, and conversely for the other items.
3. Man typical characteristics: aggressiveness, domineeringness, technical skills, adventurousness, self-confidence, sense of superiority, assertiveness, not at all excisable in minor crises and never cries. Woman typical characteristics: sensitive, very excisable in a major crisis, consciousness, gentleness, awareness to other's feelings, organized behavior, warm in relationships with others and expressing emotions of tenderness.

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