

Organizational Strategies & Workplace Culture

RESEARCH SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

During the fall of 2023, Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP) researchers conducted a statewide study to establish a baseline for public perceptions related to the awareness, understanding, and attitudes about challenges that Utah women and girls face (see [Background & Methods](#) for details). The study was created to support the work of 18 areas of focus (spokes) within the movement called [A Bolder Way Forward](#), which is dedicated to helping more Utah girls and women thrive. One of the 18 areas of focus is organizational strategies and workplace culture, and this summary shares findings that illuminate present circumstances and establishes a baseline to track progress in a few areas.

BACKGROUND

According to a 2023 UWLP report titled [“100 Companies Championing Women: An Analysis of Best Practices for Utah Companies.”](#) many forward-thinking companies are implementing flexible and family-friendly policies, programs, and practices in workplaces around the state. Yet, tens of thousands of companies have not done so. Although there are many efforts to help motivate and educate Utah employers, data that measures progress toward the goal of improving workplaces has been difficult to obtain and track. Fortunately, four survey items from this study provide helpful insights. Although these items focus on Utahns’ understanding and perceptions, the findings may also guide far-reaching strategies for societal change.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Participants responded to each survey item using a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neither disagree nor agree, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, 7=strongly agree). For Sample 1 (non-probability), 2,242 Utahns responded to these four questions, and for Sample 2 (representative), there were 531 participants (Total=2,773).

1. Offerings: The first survey item was “My organization offers family-friendly policies to meet my needs.” The statistical mean was 5.31 (SD 1.59) for the non-probability sample and 4.77 (SD 1.58) for the representative sample. For the latter, 46.7% of respondents selected either unsure or that they disagreed at some level, while 53.3% agreed (from somewhat to strongly). See combined the demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Gender: There were no significant agreement differences between women (5.20) and men (5.29).

Age: There were no significant differences of agreement among age categories.

**Education:* The higher the educational level, the more the agreement.

Marital Status: Agreement levels were similar in all status categories.

**Income:* Higher annual household incomes had higher agreement.

**Children:* Respondents with children agreed significantly more than those without children, and parents with more children had increased agreement.

**Race & Ethnicity:* Hispanic and White respondents had higher agreement.

**Religion:* There were no significant differences among religious affiliations, but the most religiously active respondents more strongly agreed.

**Employment:* As expected, full-time employees were more likely to agree.

Residency: There were no significant differences among categories.

Counties: There were no statistically significant differences by county; however, the statistical means ranged from 4.92 (Washington) to 5.61 (the Millard, Sevier, Juab, Beaver, and Piute region).

**Denotes statistically significant differences within the demographic categories.*

2. Opportunities: The second survey item was “In my organization, I have opportunities for advancement.” The statistical mean was 5.13 (SD 1.66) for the non-probability sample and 4.82 (SD 1.65) for the representative sample. For the latter, 56.7% of the participants agreed at some level, while 43.3% were unsure or disagreed. Interestingly, 47.4% somewhat agreed, disagreed, or were unsure. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

**Gender:* Women’s agreement levels were lower than men’s (5.04 and 5.19, resp.).

Age: There were no significant agreement differences by age.

**Education:* The lowest agreeability was with those with associate degrees, and the highest category was those with graduate degrees.

**Marital Status:* Widowed and divorced Utahns had less agreement than all others.

**Income:* The higher the income level, the stronger the agreement.

Children: There were no significant differences between those who had children or not, and there were also no differences among parents who had more children or had children of different ages.

Race & Ethnicity: There were no significant differences among race/ethnicity categories.

**Religion:* There were no significant differences among religious affiliations, but those who selected “very active” had higher agreement.

**Employment:* As expected, full-time employees had significantly higher agreement levels than others.

Residency: There were no significant differences among categories.

**Counties:* The highest agreement levels came from the Tooele, Morgan, and Rich grouping, plus Iron, Salt Lake, and Davis counties. Counties with the lowest agreement included Weber, the 10 rural eastern counties region, Summit/Wasatch, and Box Elder.

3. Advancing Women: The third survey item was “My organization has strategies that advance women in the workplace.” The statistical mean was 4.85 (SD 1.81) for Sample 1 and 4.71 (SD 1.65) for Sample 2. For this question, 32.1% in the representative sample selected “neither agree or disagree,” another 21.2% somewhat agreed or disagreed, and only 17.0% strongly agreed. Utah is most likely making progress since the pandemic forced workplaces to become more flexible, but the results show that there is opportunity for growth. See the combined demographic below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

**Gender:* Women’s agreement was significantly lower than men’s (4.75 and 5.14, resp.).

Age: There were no significant agreement differences by age.

Education: There were no significant differences among educational levels.

Marital Status: There was no significant difference among marital status categories.

**Income:* Respondents who had higher income levels had stronger agreement.

Children: There were no significant differences between parents and non-parents.

Race & Ethnicity: There were no significant differences when comparing race/ethnicity categories.

**Religion:* Those who selected agnostic had the lowest agreement with this item. The highest agreement came from “All Others,” Catholics, atheists, and Protestants. There were no significant differences by religious activity level.

**Employment:* As expected, respondents not employed (full-time homemakers, retired, and the unemployed) were significantly less likely to agree with this survey item.

Residency: There are no significant differences among agreement levels and length of time living in Utah.

**Counties:* The highest agreement came from the Iron, Cache, Salt Lake, and Utah counties. Counties with the lowest agreement included Weber; Tooele, Morgan, and Rich; Summit/ Wasatch; and Washington.

4. Belonging: The final survey item was “I feel a sense of belonging at work.” The statistical mean was 5.63 (SD 1.59) for Sample 1 (non-probability) and 4.96 (SD 1.67) for Sample 2 (representative). In the latter sample, 45.1% agreed or strongly agreed, while 39.4% were unsure or disagreed. In Sample 1, 66.3% agreed or strongly agreed. The demographic differences between samples can provide additional insights. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Gender: Women’s and men’s agreement levels were similar (5.52 and 5.42, resp.).

Age: There were no significant agreement differences by age.

**Education:* Respondents with some college, bachelor’s degrees, and graduate degrees had the strongest agreement.

**Marital Status:* Married respondents had significantly higher agreement that they experienced belonging at work.

**Income:* The higher the income level, the stronger the agreement.

**Children:* Parents were significantly more likely to agree that they belong compared to non parents; there were no differences among parents based on number and ages of their children.

**Race & Ethnicity:* Those who identified as Pacific Islanders had the highest agreement, followed by Whites. Blacks and American Indians agreed much less that they feel belonging in their work environments. Asians and Hispanics responded at the mid-point.

**Religion:* There were no significant differences among various religious affiliations, but there were differences among religious activity levels. The more active respondents were in their religions, the higher the agreement.

**Employment:* As expected, those who were employed and full-time students had the strongest agreement, and full-time homemakers, unemployed, and retired had the least.

**Residency:* The longer that respondents had lived in Utah, the more strongly they agreed with the statement.

Counties: There were no statistically significant differences by county; however, the statistical means ranged from 5.39 (Washington) to 5.82 (Iron), both in southern Utah.

CONCLUSION

This summary highlights some key findings related to four organizational strategies and workplace culture questions. Respondents from across the state participated in the study (see Background & Methods for the demographic details of both samples). The findings from both samples reflect Utahns’ current perceptions of workplace strategies and culture.

For the past few years, the topics of organizational strategies and workplace culture have been exploding in Utah. Utah lagged the nation until the pandemic, when more flexible workplaces became the norm. Now, with the talent shortage that most employers are facing, innovative flexible and family-friendly practices and policies are needed more than ever. From the “100 Companies Championing Women” to the ElevateHER Challenge, partners such as the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity and the Women’s Leadership Institute have engaged to lead change in Utah.

To continue Utah’s economic success, it is critical that more workplaces support employees in powerful ways. Utah must become a state known for family-friendly businesses.

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