

**FORMS OF SUPPORT AS KEY INFLUENCES ON THE ABILITY TO BE
EFFECTIVE AS A MANAGER**

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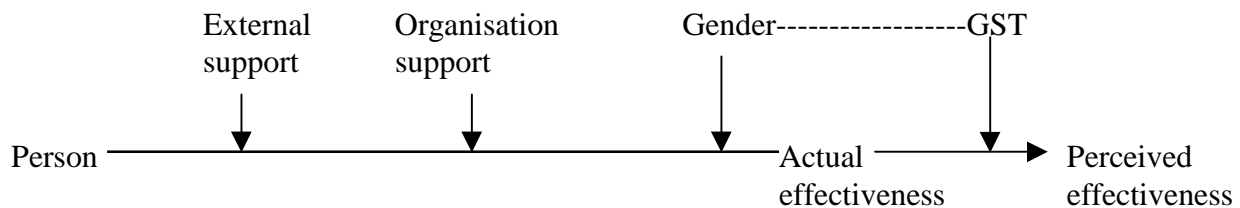
FORMS OF SUPPORT AS KEY INFLUENCES ON THE ABILITY TO BE EFFECTIVE AS A MANAGER

ABSTRACT

Most research in managerial effectiveness, or competence, focuses upon personal attributes of the individual. There are, however, additional influences operating on the ability to be effective. A national survey study assessed the impact of 28 variables as to whether they help or hinder the ability to be effective. Factor analysis revealed seven factors (Poor Organisation Support; Family Responsibilities; Poor Professional Support; Personal Skills/Education; External Support; Organisation Management; Personal Impact) which were then used as interval variables (as Bartlett factor scores) in One-Way ANOVAs to test for potential demographic differences. The results suggest that support in a variety of forms is a key influence, although different management perspectives were found (gender, position, role, company size).

INTRODUCTION

Influences on the ability to be effective as a manager were examined as a component of a larger research programme modelling managerial effectiveness. This component of study was included to address the observed focus on the human input of an individual in a management role, where the external influences that are operating on the individual to intervene or moderate in that overly simplistic person-effectiveness equation are not considered. In purely logical terms of reality, a more complete concept can be hypothesised to look more like:



“Person” represents the individual and the package of skills and personal characteristics they bring to the managerial role. There are external support influences to consider, such as the input of professional advisors and consultants, and the domestic circumstances of the manager. Organisation systems, structure, culture, and perceived strength of resources are also likely to impact on the ability to be effective, as are those the manager works with most closely. Gender issues also need to be considered, in relation to different management styles associated with perceptions of gender roles and stereotypical thinking (GST). This paper presents the findings of a study designed to explore forms of support perceived to help or hinder the ability to be effective as a manager, with gender issues also investigated.

There is a paucity of research on the work environment of managers and supervisors. Particularly in recent years, the focus has been on the skills, abilities and characteristics of “effective” managers at the level of the individual, the organisation, and the nation (see Page,

Wilson and Kolb, 1994, for a review of this literature). While businesses and educational institutions have sought to define and develop a skilled managerial population, considerably less attention has been afforded to the environment in which effective managers accomplish results. The emphasis on the characteristics of the manager rather than their environment seems a fundamental attribution error (Reeder, 1982) on a large scale.

Quality writers (e.g. Deming), in particular, as well as job design theorists within HRM, have emphasised the structural and cultural supports for work as key determinants of effectiveness. Researchers have also examined several facets of the environment of managerial work, including:

- management level (Arkin, 1992; Cammock, 1991; Rajah & Wallace, 1994);
- educational issues (Caird, 1990; Thorpe, 1990);
- industry and/or sector (Chaston, 1993; Sims & Guest, 1990);
- gender-related issues (Christie, 1994; Flynn, 1994; Tannen, 1995); and
- organisational size (Schwenk & Shrader, 1993).

The list of issues and authors above is indicative rather than exhaustive. It serves to illustrate, however, that research to date has tackled facets of the organisational environment, but not yet assessed the interplay of factors which effect managerial effectiveness at work. With the exception of educational level, this exploratory study uses the factors listed above as quasi-independent predictor variables, to investigate predicted influences on the ability to be effective.

More specifically, it can be hypothesised that gender will have a significant influence on responses, where it may be specifically predicted that women as a group will find home, family and associated domestic duties more of a hindrance to their effectiveness than men report these factors to be. It may also be that a manager's position in a management hierarchy (see above) may influence a manager's perceptions of the factors measured in this study, as the task requirements are different, so it is likely that their perceptions of factors that help or hinder them in their tasks will also be different. In addition, management level, role and position have previously been shown to be associated with differing perceptions of what constitutes effectiveness (Page, Wilson & Kolb, 1994). Organisation size is a potential influence, simply by virtue of managers operating under completely different circumstances. In large organisations there is likely to be a number of managers, which spreads the load of responsibility and permits specialisation (technical or functional), and there may be political power plays affecting perceptions of organisation culture. Large organisations tend to be older and have a larger resource base. Small organisations, in contrast, tend to be younger, have a small resource base, and only one or two managers, who require a broad set of skills. Industry (e.g., manufacturing, service) and sector (e.g. commercial, not - for - profit) have also been shown to alter what a manager needs to do in order to be effective, so it may be that these factors will influence perceptions of what helps and hinders in these, and other, contexts.

Previous work by Page (1998), and Scott and van der Walt (1995) has established that managers have clear perceptions of the advisors and consultants they use in terms of the criteria used to select them, and judging their value. It is from this research that it can be hypothesised that categories of professional support will be perceived to be more of a help or more of a

hindrance, and it is likely that gender will have an effect, where the different perceptions of power/status relationships of men and women (e.g. Tannen, 1995) will be demonstrated by significant differences for the items relating to categories of support. In particular, it can be hypothesised that men will feel less hindered than women by poor subordinates and poor superiors, and less helped by good superiors and subordinates. This is because, according to the literature (Fishman, 1983; Le Vay, 1993; Santrock, 1983), men (and boys) seek to establish dominance in all relationships, and as a result have a more self-reliant and individualistic approach to life in general.

Contextual influences relating to the organisation a manager works in were also included for study. These are strength and weakness of the resource base, working in positive and negative organisation cultures, and the organisations structure and systems. These were included on the grounds that the relative strength of the resource base available must influence a manager's ability to be effective, no matter how effective they have the potential to be, and it is well accepted that organisation culture, structure and systems influence organisation member behaviour and perceptions (Rambo, 1983).

The final batch of factors to be included were those relating to general perceptions of how individual characteristics, what a manager brings to the job, are perceived to help or hinder a manager. These were: learned life skills; learned management skills; on-the-job training; outside skills development programs; higher education; and the innate characteristics of an individual.

In summary, the present study assesses the relative contributions of a broad range of factors relating to the home and work environment for managers, particularly in aspects of support. Another key aspect investigated was a range of personal skills and characteristics a manager may bring to the job, and to what extent these factors were perceived to be a help or a hindrance. Drawing largely from the existing findings on supporting and impeding factors for managerial work, the present study integrates distinct elements of the work environment into a multifaceted model of the environment of managerial work.

The study took the form of a survey of practising managers using single item Likert scales, with 28 items representing the supporting and impeding factors identified from the published literature. A range of demographic data was sought to allow comparisons of contextual determinants across a wide range of managerial circumstances.

METHOD

A mail survey was conducted as an insert to a national management magazine with just under 2,000 subscribers. This population served as the sample frame, on the understanding that not all individuals receiving the magazine would be managers (e.g. librarians, management students). Additionally, it could be expected that a number of questionnaires would have fallen out during transit, and could also have been thrown out as an advertising insert. The questionnaire was set up so that the respondent folded and taped/stapled it and posted it back free.

Instrument:

Most research (quite sensibly) tends to address a limited range of factors in any one study. This study took a different approach, exploring a diverse range of factors. The objective of including a wide range of factors was to assess whether these factors were perceived to be more of a help or hindrance, depending upon the perspective from which the judgement is made. It is important to

note, therefore, that there is no category provided for the influence of neutral or average organisation culture, resource base, superiors, subordinates, professional services, or management consultants, as it was assumed that these would have a neutral influence on the ability to be effective. It was considered to be more useful to create dichotomous categories representing the extremes (most likely to have a perceived influence on effectiveness), where all would be perceived in the same way (for example, it is difficult to imagine poor professional service being a help to anyone), but would be more or less of a hindrance depending upon the perspective.

Instrument development consisted of drawing together the factors posited in the literature to influence management practice. This resulted in 28 items representing the factors described in the introduction, using a five point Likert scale (1 = can help a lot, 5 = can hinder a lot).

Demographic data included management level, industry and sector, organisation size, management role, management position, number of years experience, and gender. The instrument was pre-tested on a convenience sample of eight practising managers and four management educators and developers.

Sample:

After discarding questionnaires with double responses and other invalidating errors, the useable response rate was 29% (437). This compares well with other surveys conducted in Australasia using more conventional means of administration (Frater, Stuart, Rose & Andrews, 1995; Smith & Still, 1996).

Sales and service managers (42%), Government Department (24%), manufacturing (19%), not-for-profit organisations (10%) and local government managers (5%) were represented by the sample. They were primarily top (34%) or senior (30%) managers. Eighteen percent were middle managers, 10% were sole owners, and 7.5% were categorised as 'other'. More than half were in a general management role (56%), with functional (e.g., HRM, marketing) managers (27%), and managers with technical expertise (16%) also represented. The number of years experience reported by the sample was fairly evenly spread, with 1-5 years (16%), 6-10 years (24%), 11-15 years (22%), 16-20 years (16%) and 21+ years (21%). The size of organisation tended to be large by New Zealand standards, with 53% being from organisations with over 101 employees. The remainder were from organisations with <10 (15%), 11-25 (11%), 51-100 (11%), 26-50 (9.5%) employees. There were 317 (72%) male and 112 (26%) female respondents. Since this is exploratory research primarily intended to investigate whether this is a plausible and fruitful avenue of research, there is no need to test whether the sample is representative, as there is no intention of generalising the results. However, it must be borne in mind that the discussion pertains mostly to the perceptions of the sample, which is biased toward male top/senior managers in large sales/service companies, in a general management role. Having said that, it must also be remembered that this is a large random sample, implying that there can be confidence in the value of the findings in regard to the sample frame used.

Data analysis

As an exploratory study, data analysis was limited to revealing key factors for further research. The first procedure performed was a simple ranking exercise to indicate general perceptions of which study factors most help or hinder managerial effectiveness. This was followed by a correlational analysis to identify the strength of relations between the factors. An exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation was then used to reveal the underpinning constructs. The

final procedure compared demographic and contextual perspectives using Bartlett factor scores in One-way ANOVAs.

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics are provided in Table 1 below. Being an ordinal scale, the means are presented as a ranking to explore directions, rather than representing absolute metric terms; it is a perceptual ranking of degrees of influence. The first point of note is that organisation culture is distinguished by representing the extreme ends of the distribution, in being perceived to be the most help to, or the most hindrance to, being effective as a manager.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and ranking of items from most helpful to most hindrance

Item No.	Items	Mean (Range 1 -5)	S.D.	S.E.	Valid n
1	Positive organisation culture	1.24	.52	.03	423
2	Good superiors	1.30	.54	.03	433
3	Good subordinates	1.40	.63	.03	433
4	Learned life skills	1.40	.55	.03	428
5	Learned management skills	1.50	.63	.03	434
6	On-the-job training/learning	1.57	.67	.03	434
7	Strong organisation resource base	1.60	.69	.03	434
8	Innate characteristics of a person	1.71	1.10	.05	407
9	Outside skills development programmes	1.92	.60	.03	430
10	Tertiary education	1.94	.74	.04	431
11	Having a spouse as domestic support	1.95	.92	.04	432
12	Good professional services (e.g. legal)	2.12	.83	.04	433
13	Management level senior	2.25	.93	.05	416
14	Organisation size small - medium	2.58	.73	.04	429
15	Good management consultant	2.58	.92	.04	431
16	Management level lower	2.71	.90	.04	413
17	Organisation structure/systems	2.75	1.38	.07	426
18	Management level middle	2.90	.93	.05	419
19	Balancing needs of home and career	3.08	1.09	.05	430
20	Household responsibilities & duties	3.24	.88	.04	433
21	Organisation size large	3.30	.87	.04	431
22	Family responsibilities & commitments	3.43	.86	.04	429
23	Poor management consultant	4.18	.83	.04	431
24	Poor professional services	4.24	.71	.03	431
25	Poor subordinates	4.45	.77	.04	430
26	Weak organisation resource base	4.53	.63	.03	432
27	Poor superiors	4.70	.61	.03	431
28	Negative organisation culture	4.80	.48	.02	429

It would seem that out of many possibilities, a positive organisation culture is of *the* most help to most managers. This is an interesting finding, as it supports the increasing attention being paid to organisation culture as a major influence on individual's attitudes and behaviour (Chen, Chen & Meindl, 1998; Shepard & Kolb, 1994). Since the respondents were not provided with a definition of what was meant by this item (or the item relating to negative culture) it can be said that each would have had their own perception of what these things mean. However, while this is true, it is also true that within the bounds of this exploratory study, it does not matter at this stage what defines positive and negative organisation cultures. What does matter is that organisation culture has been shown to have a powerful influence on the ability to be effective as a manager. Later analysis investigates this issue further.

Positive organisation culture is closely followed by receiving support from good superiors and subordinates, respectively, where it is clear that those one works with is also perceived to have a strong influence on one's ability to be effective. Table 1 indicates that, as can be expected, if they are good they help a lot, and if they are poor they hinder a lot. Personal skills and characteristics of the manager (learned life skills, learned management skills, innate characteristics of a person) are also perceived to be amongst the most helpful influences on ability to be effective. This follows previous findings from the U.K. (Cockerill, 1989; Collin, 1989), the U.S. (Hamel & Prahalad, 1996); Hinterhuber & Popp, 1992) and New Zealand (Page, Wilson & Kolb, 1994; Page 1996; Rippin, 1996).

The sample has also made a very clear statement on which factors hinder them most, almost as a bipolar contrast to the most helpful factors just discussed. Without the personal influences, it is a complete reversal. In addition to organisational culture, organisation resource strength or weakness also appears to be a critical influence on the ability to be effective. Even at this early stage in the analysis, the importance of organisational support, and organisation culture in particular, is starting to emerge. Note also that items relating to family/domestic issues are clearly considered to be more of a hindrance than a help to being effective as a manager.

A simple correlation analysis performed using Spearman correlation coefficients confirmed the dataset did not represent a particularly homogeneous construct, and revealed the key associations between all variables. As expected for a set of such diverse items, the majority of the correlations were very weak ($< .10$) or weak ($> .10 - .30$). In circumstances such as this, variables which have a relatively strong relationship are all the more notable, and if they have transparent validity, serve to strengthen confidence in the findings.

The strongest relationship was between the influence of a poor management consultant and poor professional services ($r = .68, p < .0001$), which presumably indicates that a similar negative (in real terms, not statistical) impact on effectiveness is perceived for both. Poor superiors and poor subordinates are related ($r = .60, p < .0001$), probably as being those working closest to the manager. Family commitments and balancing needs of home and career also showed a fairly strong relationship. ($r = .53, p < .0001$), as would be expected. That is, one must have family responsibilities and commitments before balancing home and career can become a problem. Household responsibilities and duties was also correlated with family responsibilities and commitments ($r = .48, p < .0001$) for equally obvious reasons.

An exploratory factor analysis was performed using varimax rotation. In view of the weak association between the variables seven factors explained only 58.1% of the variation in these data. However, the factors were obviously meaningful and succeeded in explaining at least 40% of the variation in all items (i.e. communalities > 0.4). The most important loadings for these factors appear in Table 2. Appropriate names for these factors are:

Factor	
1	Poor organisation support
2	Family responsibilities
3	Poor professional support
4	Personal skills/education
5	External support
6	Organisational context
7	Personal impact

Table 2: Factor Loadings

	Factors							Commun
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Poor subordinates	.822							0.72
Poor superiors	.779							0.64
Weak organisation resource base	.652							0.49
Negative organisation culture	.576							0.41
Good subordinates	-.567				.399			0.54
Family responsibilities & commitments		.836						0.73
Balancing needs of home and career		.737						0.56
Household responsibilities & duties		.736						0.56
Poor management consultant			.873					0.80
Poor professional services			.851					0.81
Tertiary education				.721				0.62
Learned management skills				.687				0.54
Outside skills development programmes				.670				0.56
Good professional services (e.g. legal)					.743			0.66
Good management consultant					.735			0.59
Having a spouse as domestic support					.485			0.44
Management level senior						.810		0.67
Management level lower						.687		0.53
Organisation size small - medium						.431		0.43
Innate characteristics of a person							.652	0.44
Learned life skills							.602	0.46
% variation	11.9	9.3	8.3	7.8	7.8	6.9	6.0	0.58

The factors shown in Table 2 are not a complete reflection of the loose groupings discussed in the introduction, but are fairly close. The family/domestic factor emerged, as did organisation context-specific influences, external support, and the particular attributes brought to the job by individuals. However, the items were distributed somewhat differently from that expected.

It is of particular interest that the variable ‘good subordinates’ should load negatively on factor 1 (poor organisational support) and positively on factor 5 (external support). A positive loading on factor 5 indicates that good subordinates are grouped along with other forms of

positive support. Loading negatively, and reasonably strongly, on factor 1 suggests that perhaps good subordinates may counteract the negative impacts of otherwise poor organisational support mechanisms. An implication here is that future research must account for interactions such as this.

Bartlett factor scores were calculated and compared for the various demographic variables using a One-Way Analysis of Variance. Only those effects which were significant at a 5% significance level were analysed further. The second factor (Family responsibility) was the most interesting in terms of the effect of company size, management position, gender and years of experience. As indicated by Table 3 family responsibility is perceived to be more of a hindrance to managerial effectiveness when a manager

- a) works in a medium-sized company (11-50 employees)
- b) is a female
- c) has a top management position
- d) has no experience or more than 21 years experience

No significant interactions between these factors were found.

It is not immediately clear why medium-sized companies with 11 - 50 employees (i.e. two categories of size were significantly different from the others) should find family responsibilities that much more a hindrance than large or small companies. It can be speculated that perhaps because larger companies are moving toward being more family-orientated (providing child care facilities and male parental leave, subsidising external child care costs), these managers would not have found child care such a burden. This does not, however, explain why managers in small companies also find family responsibilities less of a hindrance. Future research in this area needs to address this apparent difference in perception according to company size, to establish the dynamics of the relationship between company size and family responsibilities.

It would seem that when in a top management position, family responsibilities are perceived to be quite a hindrance to effectiveness. This is an interesting finding, for two reasons. First of all, it needs to be remembered that this 'top manager' position was distinguished from both 'sole owner' and 'senior positions'. This, then, is the group who perceive themselves to be taking the most responsibility for the state of an organisation, on behalf of another person or group of other people. In contrast, the sole owner is caring care of his or her own business, and a senior manager (in a team of three or more) has correspondingly diluted responsibility. It may be going a little far, yet it is tempting to speculate that the top management group is significantly more hindered by family responsibilities because they are under more pressure to 'perform' according to the expectations and demands of others. Put another way, these managers are likely to be highly visible and accountable to others (who employ the manager) - the buck stops with them, in the eyes of the employer. Viewed as time taken away from performing according to employer expectations and demands, family responsibilities could well be construed as being more of a hindrance in comparison to the sole owner who is their own 'boss', or the more diluted responsibility taken as a senior manager. The position a manager holds in an organisation clearly has an impact on perceptions, enough to produce a significant difference in thinking for managers in various positions. In this study, it was clear that family responsibilities are more of a hindrance in a top management position, compared to five other managerial positions.

This finding has clear implications for management research, where further refinements in common measures of managerial level need to be made, to account for the subtleties encountered in this study.

The finding that family responsibilities are more of a hindrance to effectiveness of women managers is not surprising. This scenario echoes previous research (Berg & Hunter, 1990; Cahoon & Rowney, 1991; Doyle, 1988; Erlich, 1989; Murray, 1987) where family responsibility and commitments, household responsibilities and duties, along with balancing the needs of home and career are in general terms a bigger problem for women, and moderate their ability to be perceived effective as managers.

Table 3 Mean values for family responsibilities

Demographic Variable	Category	N	Mean Values for Factor 2 (Family Responsibility)
Company Size (p=0.01)	51-100	43	-0.25
	<10	57	-0.04
	101+	189	-0.03
	26-50	36	0.34
	11-25	43	0.47
Management Position (p=0.02)	Middle	62	-0.20
	Other	18	-0.20
	Senior	113	-0.13
	Sole Owner	41	0.10
	Supervisor	6	0.14
	Top	126	0.24
Gender (p=0.02)	Male	276	-0.06
	Female	85	0.23
Years Experience (p=0.04)	11-15	76	-0.14
	1-5	56	-0.08
	6-10	92	-0.05
	16-20	60	0.01
	None	3	0.30
	21+	79	0.33

Management role had an effect on the seventh factor (Personal impact) and years of experience had an effect on the fourth factor (Personal skills/education). As shown by tables 4 and 5 below, managers with little experience are more likely to find that personal skills and lack of education (factor 4) hinder their effectiveness as a manager, while general managers find their personal impact (factor 7) less of a hindrance than do managers in a technical role. While it is clear that less experience would predict relatively less education and less developed skills, it is less clear why it can be predicted that technical managers as a group may find their personal impact to be more of a hindrance than a help. There is, however, evidence that making the transition from a technical role or supervisory position to a management role is particularly problematic (Feur, 1988), as technical expertise and people supervision does not equip the individual with the skills required in a managerial role.

Table 4: Mean values for personal skills and education

Demographic Variable	Category	N	Mean Values for Factor 4 (Personal Skills and Education)
Years Experience (p=0.00)	16-20	60	-0.23
	21+	79	-0.09
	11-15	76	-0.07
	6-10	92	0.08
	1-5	56	0.32
	None	3	1.81

Table 5: Mean values for personal impact

Demographic Variable	Category	N	Mean Values for Factor 7 (Personal impact)
Management Role (p=0.047)	General management	213	-0.13
	Functional	95	0.09
	Technical expertise	50	0.20

For the remaining four factors, namely organisational support, professional support, external support and organisational context, demographic factors did not have an influence, suggesting that these factors have a universal effect on management effectiveness. Put another way, these factors were perceived to be a help or a hindrance in approximately the same way by all managers in the sample. This is another interesting finding, because it indicates that while the factors above are perceived differently for some groups, these four factors are perceived to have a similar degree of help or hindrance, despite the perspective judged from. This would indicate that no matter what perspective was taken, poor organisational support, poor professional support, good external support, and organisational context have a similar influence in terms of helping or hindering the ability to be effective.

Although the survey items were biased (13 out of 28 items) toward producing a 'support' construct for helping or hindering managerial effectiveness, there was room for other factors to emerge. Even so, there is strong evidence that (for all managers) good support in the right quarters is a critical aid to effectiveness, and in contrast, poor support is a great hindrance. In particular, poor organisation support and poor support from professionals are particularly troublesome to managers trying to be effective. In contrast, good subordinates, good external support from providers of professional services, and good support in the domestic arena are of considerable help. It is interesting that the theme of support is so strong, as the literature on organisation commitment and socialisation (e.g. Taormina, 1997) indicates this being a strong factor for non-managerial employees as well.

This study began with what could be described as a hotch-potch of 28 variables drawn from the research literature, to end with seven distinct, and sensible, factors perceived to help or hinder the ability to be effective as a manager. The research was empirical and used a large random sample, which adds rigour to the methods used to derive these factors. Gender influenced the results in a very specific way, in that women perceive they have a reduced ability to be effective because of family/domestic responsibilities, in small to medium companies, where they are top managers, with a little or a lot of management experience.

In general, this study has shown that it is feasible to attempt to develop a multifaceted model of the factors perceived to influence the ability to be effective as a manager. Furthermore, it would appear that the identified forms of good and poor support, family responsibilities, the personal attributes of an individual, and organisation context have significant perceived or actual impacts on a manager's ability to be effective.

Future research can build upon these findings by developing items related to the seven factors revealed, and then refine these measures. It would seem that poor organisational support needs to be defined in terms of those working most closely with the manager, strength of organisation resource base, and the degree of negativity in organisation culture. Family and domestic responsibilities needs to be defined in terms of family and home circumstances, and the need to balance the demands of these influences with building a career as an effective manager. The poor professional support factor needs to be defined in terms of all the forms of professional services utilised by managers, and their relative (perceived) influence on effectiveness need to be assessed. The personal skills and education factor suggests that what a manager brings to the job will influence perceived ability to be effective, and it is therefore important to establish precisely what types of education and development/learning are perceived to be of most help. Support from outside the organisation seems to be a distinct factor perceived to influence effectiveness. This area of research would benefit from a broader set of measures in terms of where the support is coming from (e.g. outsourcing of marketing, personnel selection, and other functional needs; legal/other professional advice; different types of domestic support) and the manner in which each source influences the ability to be effective as a manager. As can be expected, the context within which a manager works also emerged as a factor influencing the ability to be effective, where management position and organisation size appear to have an impact. Once again, these influences need to be measured in more breadth and depth. The personal impact of a manager in this study was most strongly related to the innate characteristics of a person, and learned life skills. In essence, these two aspects of human behaviour (nature and nurture, respectively) neatly summarise what managers bring to the job. However, for research purposes it is necessary to properly define and develop measures for what is meant by 'innate characteristics' and 'learned life skills'. This is especially true in consideration of the distinction being made between innate personal characteristics and learnable skills (see 'A three domain, two dimension model of managerial effectiveness' also presented at this conference).

In conclusion, this study has explored the nature of the perceived impact of a diverse range of variables on managerial effectiveness, with seven underpinning factors found. Seven of the original 28 variables did not significantly contribute to the model, which suggests that these items could be revised or dropped in further research. However, as this is early research in this area, it may pay to include the complete set to avoid premature exclusion. The significant effects of organisation size, management position, years experience and gender on the family responsibility factor is a very strong reflection of some of the international literature on the problems women face as managers.

Overall, this study has served to clarify some of the key influences on the (perceived) ability to be effective as a manager, and confirms that attempting to model these influences is a useful avenue for research attention.

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