Male Allyship

RESEARCH SUMMARY

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 element that affects all 18 areas of focus is male allyship, and this summary shares findings that highlight present perspectives and establishes a baseline to track progress in key areas.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, the UWLP conducted primary research and published "Strategies that Male Allies Use to Advance Women in the Workplace," and the findings are applicable to all settings, including religious and community. At that time, we found that Utah women and men had significant differences in their perceptions of male allyship, with gaps between women's and men's beliefs that "men care about advancing women" and "men are supportive of women in workplace settings." New data are critical to enhancing our understanding. The current survey's four related items provide insight that can guide changes and highlight opportunities for men to more actively embrace their role as allies.

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), 2,402 Utahns responded to these four questions, and for Sample 2 (representative), there were 650 participants (Total=3,052).

1. Supportive: The first survey item was "Men in Utah are supportive of women becoming leaders." The statistical mean was 3.53 (SD 1.75) for the non-probability sample and 4.23 (SD 1.68) for the representative sample. There was a significant difference between the statistical means of the samples, with Sample 1 somewhat disagreeing (but with a wide standard deviation). Overall, 62.9% of respondents disagreed at some level or were neutral. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Gender: Women's agreement levels were significantly lower than men's (3.72 and 4.56, resp.).

Age: There were no significant differences among age categories.

Education: The higher the educational attainment, the lower the level of agreement.

Marital Status: The lowest agreement came from respondents who were divorced or living with partner/co-habitating, with the strongest agreement from respondents who were married or married but separated.

Income: There were no significant differences among categories.

Children: There were no significant differences between parents and non-parents, but parents with multiple teenagers had expressed stronger agreement than parents with no teenagers or only one.

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

Religion: The strongest disagreement came from respondents who were agnostic and atheist, while Latter-day Saints had the strongest agreement. Also, the more the religiously active, the stronger the agreement.

Employment: Full-time homemakers and retirees had the strongest agreement, while full-time students had the least.

Residency: Respondents who had lived in Utah between 2–5 years had the lowest agreement, followed the "fewer than 2 years" category.

Counties: The lowest agreement came from residents of Summit/Wasatch, the 10 rural eastern counties, Salt Lake, Weber, and Box Elder counties.

2. Leadership Roles: The second survey item was "Men in Utah are engaged in efforts to have more women in leadership roles." The statistical mean was 3.26 (SD 1.63) for the non-probability sample and 4.03 (SD 1.63) for the representative sample. With both samples combined, only 28.5% agreed at any level with this statement, and only 9.9% of Sample 1 responding that they agreed or strongly agreed. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Gender: Women's agreement levels were significantly lower than men's (3.39 and 4.29, resp.).

Age: Those aged 55–59 had the lowest agreement, with 70 and older having the strongest.

Education: The higher the educational attainment, the lower the agreement.

Marital Status: Respondents who were divorced were significantly more likely to disagree.

Income: There were no significant differences among income categories.

Children: Parents were more likely to agree than nonparents. Among parents, the more teenagers they had living in the home, the more agreement with the statement.

Race & Ethnicity: There were no significant differences by category.

*Denotes statistically significant differences within the demographic categories.

Religion: Agnostics and atheists had the weakest agreement, while Latter-day Saints and Catholics had the strongest. The more active a respondent was in their religion, had the strongest agreement.

Employment: Retirees and homemakers had the stronger the agreement.

Residency: There were no significant differences among categories.

Counties: The counties with respondents who expressed the strongest levels of agreement included the Millard, Sevier, Juab, Beaver, and Piute grouping; Iron; Washington; the Tooele, Morgan, and Rich grouping; Davis; and Utah.

3. Men's Interest: The third survey item was "Utah men are interested in supporting women." The statistical mean was 3.66 (SD 1.73) for Sample 1 and 4.29 (SD 1.65) for Sample 2. With the combined samples, 61.1% were neutral while 20.4% somewhat agreed, 13.1% agreed, and 5.4% strongly agreed. In the representative sample specifically, 54.2% were neutral while 45.9% agreed. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Gender: Women's agreement was significantly lower than men's (3.77 and 4.71, resp.).

Age: There were no significant differences among age categories.

Education: The higher the educational level, the lower the agreement.

Marital Status: Respondents with the lowest agreement were divorcees, while the respondents with the highest were married.

Income: There were no significant differences among income categories.

Children: Parents had higher agreement than nonparents, and parents with more children had higher agreement than parents with fewer children.

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

Religion: Latter-day Saints had stronger agreement than all other religious affiliations, and the more active respondents were in any religious affiliation, the stronger the agreement.

Employment: There were no significant differences among categories.

Residency: Respondents who had lived in Utah more than six years had stronger agreement than those who had lived fewer years in Utah.

Counties: The counties with residents who disagreed the strongest included Summit/Wasatch, Weber, the 10 eastern rural counties grouping, and Salt Lake.

4. Male Ally Resources: The final survey item was "There are opportunities and resources available to help Utah men become better allies for women." The statistical mean was 3.76 (SD 1.73) for Sample 1 (non-probability) and 4.45 (SD 1.47) for Sample 2 (representative). For Sample 1, 69.2% of respondents either disagreed at some level or selected neither agree nor disagree, while only 4.1% strongly agreed. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Gender: Women's agreement levels were statistically lower than men's (3.93 and 4.58, resp.).

Age: Respondents in the 60–64 and over 70 age ranges had stronger agreement than other age ranges.

Education: The higher the educational level, the lower the agreement.

Marital Status: Respondents who were divorced were significantly less likely to agree, while those who were widowed had the strongest agreement level.

Income: There were no significant differences among income categories.

Children: Parents and nonparents had stronger agreement, and parents with three or more children in the 0–5 age range had stronger agreement than those with fewer children.

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

Religion: Although still in the "neither agree nor disagree" range, affiliations with the strongest agreement included Protestant, Latter-day Saint, all others, and Catholic. Those who selected "not at all" religious activity had the lowest agreement.

Employment: Retirees had the strongest agreement while full-time students the least.

Residency: There were no significant differences among categories.

Counties: There were no significant differences among counties, but the statistical means ranged from 3.84 (Box Elder) to 4.71 (the Tooele, Morgan, and Rich grouping).

CONCLUSION

This summary highlights key findings related to four male allyship questions. Respondents from across the state participated in the study (see Background & Methods for the demographic details of both samples). Each sample is useful in understanding the perceptions and attitudes of Utahns on this topic; however, Sample 2 (representative sample) may provide a better understanding of the perspectives of Utahns more generally.

In sum, the responses for most participants across either sample hovered between "neither agree nor disagree" and "somewhat disagree," whether the statements related to Utah men being supportive or engaged in efforts related to women in leadership, their interest in supporting women more generally, or the belief that there were available opportunities and resources to help men become allies. Thus, the need to implement strategies that create and strengthen male allies is vital. A Bolder Way Forward aims to make Utah a place where more women and girls can thrive in any setting, and developing male allies is a critical component.

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