

ABSTRACT

At the moment the factors of psycho-social risk are acquiring great relevance, understanding them as those qualities of the individual and the labour or extra labour environment, that under certain conditions, generate negative effects in the workers and the organization. Numerous studies show the unequal situation of the woman in the labour market in relation to the man (Brunel et al., 2004). The objective of the present study is to know the gender differences in relation to some factors of psycho-social risk in workers of convenience stores. In the sample have participated 110 employees of convenience stores in Elche, that voluntarily filled in the Questionnaire of Psycho-social Factors of the National Institute of Security and Hygiene in the Work (I.N.S.H.T.) (adapted by Solanes et al., 2004). The results show that there are significant gender differences in different factors of psycho-social risk in convenience stores.

Key words: Psycho-social factors, convenience stores, gender.

THEORY

The present western society is being subjected to important transformations in the socioeconomic setting and in the labour market. As a result of these changes, the situation that woman is going through has special relevance because is not always analogous to the man situation and it is being usually unequal (Agut & Salanova, 1998; Burke & McKeen, 1992; Davidson, 1991; Gutek, 1998; Gutek et al., 1986; Poal, 1993; Saints, 1995).

Due to it, differences in factors of psycho-social risk based on gender should be expected.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

110 workers pertaining to 24 of the 35 located convenience stores in Elche, which supposes 68.57% of the total of convenience stores of this population. **Sex:** 43% men and 56% women. **Age:** 30.3 years DT: 8,8. **Marital Status:** 62% unmarried, 32% married and 6% separated or divorced. **Studies Level:** 8% school-leaving certificate; 40% primary education; 35% secondary education; 9% higher education and 8% university studies.

Variables and Instruments

Survey of the *Evaluation method of the psycho-social factors of the National Institute of Security and Hygiene at Work* (Martín & Pérez, 1997), adapted by Solanes, Tirado, Serrano, Núñez & Cañadas (2004). The instrument consists of 63 items that are grouped according to 18 dimensions, among which It can be found Capacity for Adaptation to new situations derived from the labour setting, Intrinsic Motivation at Work, Capacity to take decisions at work and Participation Channels.

Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ-GS) by Karasek & Theorell (1990) consists of 15 items. From the questionnaire four subscales are extracted: Demands at work, Perceived Control, Use of Abilities and Social Support.

The data were analyzed with SPSS 13.0 using like statistical the t test for independent samples.

RESULTS

The statistical analyses show the following results

Social Support	$t_{108,99} = 5,976$	$P(a)=0,027$
Low capacity for Adaptation to new situations derived from the labour setting	$t_{108,99} = 0,042$	$P(a)=0,007$
Low Intrinsic Motivation at Work	$t_{108,99} = 2,390$	$p(a)=0,022$
Low capacity to take decisions at work	$t_{91,99} = 0,167$	$p(a)=0,005$
Few Participation Channels	$t_{108,99} = 2,254$	$p(a)=0,016$

The results obtained show that women (m) have greater levels of social support ($M_m = 3,19$; $DT = 0,31$; $M_h = 2,99$; $DT = 0,54$) and greater capacity for adaptation to new situations derived from the labour setting ($M_m = 2,87$; $DT = 1,33$; $M_h = 3,55$; $DT = 1,22$).

On the contrary, men (h) show a greater capacity to take decisions at work ($M_h = 2,43$; $DT = 1,09$; $M_m = 3,08$; $DT = 1,07$), a greater use of the participation channels ($M_h = 3,14$; $DT = 1,36$; $M_m = 3,74$; $DT = 1,19$) and greater intrinsic motivation than women ($M_h = 3,24$; $DT = 1,32$; $M_m = 3,79$; $DT = 1,16$).

CONCLUSIONS

The results show significant differences between men and women in the use of the participation channels in the organization; being women the ones who make greater use of these channels. These results agree with Martínez & Moreno (2001), who state that women prefer acting her role in taking care of the family and they understand the labour activity as a simple source of income, not contributing to achieve personal fulfilment (what they call circumstantial speech). This would explain the lower participation and the lower intrinsic motivation that women who work in the convenience stores have in relation to their partners. However, it is necessary to consider the lack of new studies in which we could state that our sample is identified with this proposal.

Unlike the study of Liceras (1995) we have found significant differences not only in the use of participation channels but also in the adaptability to new situations derived from the labour setting, being women the ones who better adapt to the organizational changes.

The investigation results also reflect that men have greater capacity to take decisions than women. In the same way, García-Honrubia, Solanes & Serrano (2004) also finds significant differences based on gender, stating that probably it could be because the channels of participation and the information that the organization provides are perceived unequal by women.

In the social support variable, we obtain significant differences that indicate that women have greater social support than men. This result could be explained, on the one hand, because of differences in the socialization and the different roles assigned to women and men (Mataud et al, 2002) and, on the other hand, because women are more prepared to recognize the difficulties and to look for the aid of others (Vaux, 1995).