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WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO BETTER OVERALL EVALUATIONS WHEN APPLYING FOR A JOB? SOCIABILITY OR COMPETENCE? THE ROLES OF TRAIT AND WORK SETTING IN GAINING POSITIVE OVERALL EVALUATIONS.

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Job candidate evaluation is relevant for any organization, however the factors which lead to positive evaluations have been argued upon by researchers, mainly stating their differing opinions on the context of the job and the climate of the organization. This paper investigates whether trait and setting have an impact on candidate evaluation, and if they do, which factor has the most influence. The study used a 2x2 experimental between-subjects design, with overall evaluation as the measured variable. Trait was measured through sociability and competence. Setting was defined as either working from home or at the company office. The hypotheses of the paper were the following; Candidates scoring higher on sociability will receive more positive overall evaluations, this relationship will be stronger for those candidates who are expected to work physically from the office. 267 participants completed a questionnaire assessing their decision in hiring a candidate who is high in sociability or competence, while also including the job setting as an influencing factor in this model. After analyzing the data, it was found that sociability does in fact lead to more positive overall evaluations. The results led to the conclusion, that the candidate who was more sociable rather than competent was chosen by raters. Setting did not have a significant interaction effect with trait, concluding that working remotely, or at the company office does not affect the respondent's choice on preferring sociability over competence in a potential candidate.

Keywords: *Job candidate evaluation, trait, setting, sociability, competence, positive evaluations*

Introduction

Gaining positive impressions and opinions, is something most employees would strive for when applying for a new job vacancy, but what exactly contributes to the desired evaluation from employers? Two traits – warmth and competence – govern social judgments of individuals and groups, and these judgments shape people's emotions and behaviors¹. The primary interest of research observing these two traits, is the following; Which trait and in which context contributes to positive impression formation, and overall evaluation more than the other? The relationship that warmth and competence possess, allow for focused and extensive research of such an interaction, however to investigate the interaction more deeply, instead of warmth, its subfactor of sociability will be the trait of interest along with competence. When looking for these traits in candidates, it is possible that at times, one might lack in either sociability or competence, in that case a compensation occurs, where the more prevalent trait comes to the forefront². This 'compensation effect' emerges in group and person perception³. With that said, it is important to be aware of all phenomena which these two traits can cause in a candidate, in order to be able to distinguish which trait specifically is more dominant in certain job settings. Hence, it is important to note, that the context in which these traits interact could potentially have an effect on the outcome of their interaction. With that said, the work setting will be an important factor in this model, as it is essential to understand whether candidates with a given high trait (sociability or competence) differ when the job requires them to work remotely rather than physically at the office, and vice versa. Ultimately, the model is established, and the research question is clear; Which trait, sociability or competence, influences overall evaluation of candidates, and does the work setting play a role in this exchange or not?

Methods, Participants

An a-priori power analysis revealed that 269 participants were required to achieve 80% power to detect a medium effect size ($f = .25$). Effect size is based on van der Lee et al., (2017) and Brambilla et al., (2012) using their most conservative effect size ($n_2 = .06$, $f = .25$). We thus aimed at recruiting 300 participants using

¹ Cuddy, Amy J.C., et al. "The Dynamics of Warmth and Competence Judgments, and Their Outcomes in Organizations." *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Elsevier, 8 Nov. 2011,

² Terache, Julie, et al. "Warmth and Competence in Interpersonal Comparisons: The Quiz Master Paradigm through the Lens of Compensation." *International Review of Social Psychology*, Ubiquity Press, 28 Feb. 2020,

³ Terache, "Warmth and Competence in Interpersonal Comparisons", 3.

convenient sampling. A survey was given out electronically, by spreading it through social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, and WhatsApp. Data collection started in the middle of April, and ended during the first week of May. The survey had two prerequisites, participants had to be over the age of 18, and were expected to have good English language skills in order to understand the content of the survey, since the survey was conducted in English. After cleaning out 512 responses from the survey, the usable data ended up consisting of 267 participant responses. Out of 267 participants, 3 people did not indicate their gender, 165 (61.8%) were female, and 97 (36.3%) were male. The average age of the participants was 27.96 years old (SD = 11.15). Regarding nationality, 109 respondents indicated that they were Dutch, 10 were British, 30 were German, and 118 indicated that they were of other nationality. The Ethical Review Board of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam approved the Study under file No. VCWE-2022-037. The study was preregistered in OSF (Open Science Framework).

Design

Our study used a 2x2 experimental between-subjects design. Trait was the independent variable of our study, while work setting was the moderator in our model. Our dependent variable was the overall evaluation of the candidate. Trait had two levels, sociability and competence. Work setting also had two levels, working from the office and working from home. Trait and work setting were manipulated between respondents. Some respondents would randomly get a description of De Vries which described him as more competent rather than sociable, and others would get a description of De Vries which described him as more sociable than competent. Work setting was manipulated in a similar way. Some respondents would be told that the candidate needs to work from home, and others would be told that the candidate needs to work from the office. The allocation of participants in each of these conditions was random.

Measures

Our study consisted of many different variables, however the focus of this study, was overall evaluation of the candidate, which was our dependent variable. A scale measuring our dependent variable was based on research done by⁴. The overall evaluation scale consisted of the following item “Qualifications based on the requirements for this position”. Participants answered this item, by grading the candidate. The grading was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = low overall evaluation, 7 = high overall evaluation). The manipulation check items within the questionnaire

⁴ Santuzzi, A. M. “Body Image and Expected Future Interaction.” *American Psychological Association, American Psychological Association, 2006, psycnet.apa.org/record/2007-00645-001.*

consisted of two scales within the warmth dimension, which were sociability and competence. Sociability consisted of 3 items; Sociable, Friendly, and Supportive. Competence also consisted of 3 items; Competent, Intelligent, and Skilled. Participants had to rate candidates on a 7-point Likert scale on all items of Sociability and Competence. The internal reliability of sociability ($\alpha = .897$) and competence ($\alpha = .857$) were mutually very strong. The study consisted of other scales for different measured variables, these scales were the following; Global Impression (Bramilla et al., 2012), Ingroup Belongingness (van der Lee et al, 2017), Perceived threat to the group (van der Lee et al, 2017). These scales however, were not relevant for the goal of this study. The study was done using a statistical software called SPSS, with its newest version SPSS 28.

Procedure

In order to investigate the effect of our independent variables, which are warmth and competence, on the overall evaluation of the ingroup member, which was our dependent variable, and the interaction with the work setting (physical vs. telecommunicating) which was our moderating variable, a survey was used, based on research done by Fernandez-Lozando et al. (2020). We asked participants to put themselves in the shoes of an HR (Human Resources) manager in a big company located in Amsterdam, where a new job vacancy was opened. The survey then asked the respondents to choose the most appropriate person for the newly opened job vacancy. Respondents received an overview of what the candidate is required to do, and which skills he is required to possess, for instance the person which they hire, will need to coordinate of group of ten to twenty people, additionally, the potential employee will have to be a “decisive person” with “analytical ability” who will be attentive to the needs and requirements of the team itself, and of course, the potential employee would have to display and develop healthy and “good” relationships with the members of their and the potential customers of the company. Respondents were randomly allocated to one of the two available conditions. In one condition, trait was manipulated, where the candidate was described as being more sociable than competent, and in the other, more competent than sociable. An additional manipulation was placed, regarding the work setting. Respondents were informed that the potential employee will have to work physically in the office, while other respondents were told that the potential employee will have to work online.

After the respondents were presented with what is required to obtain the job, the candidates themselves were presented. Mr. Jan de Vries and Mr. Pieter van Someren were the given candidates in this experiment. The main difference between the two candidates, is that Mr. Pieter van Someren is used solely as an anchor in this scenario, meaning that his traits remained constant throughout all conditions., while Mr. Jan de Vries' descriptions were manipulated. Mr. Jan de Vries in one case is described to possess moderate competence, while being a sociable person, and in

the other case he is described to possess high competence while being not very sociable. In order to prevent order biases, the descriptions of Mr. Jan de Vries are counterbalanced, meaning that the descriptions of the two traits are placed in different places throughout the overall (general) description of Mr. Jan de Vries. Before the respondent is asked to rate how favorable each candidate will be for the position, a manipulation check is done to make sure that the descriptions of both candidates are understood thoroughly, and to prevent confusion with which description fits which candidate. One of the dimensions in which respondents' rate both candidates, is the overall evaluation, which is the dependent variable we wanted to measure in this study.

Ultimately, respondents were asked some demographic questions, including their age and gender. Before the survey comes to its end, additional questions regarding the effect of COVID-19 on the respondents are asked. By the end the participants are debriefed, meaning that they are given thorough information about the research, to make sure full transparency is kept, after which contacts of the researchers are given to the respondents for any questions that they may have.

Statistical Analyses

In this study, we will have a moderation model, consisting of the trait of the participant (competence and warmth), which will be our independent variable, the work setting (physically at the office and telecommunication) which will be our moderating variable, and the overall evaluation of the ingroup member, which will be our dependent variable in this study. IBM SPSS 28 will be used for this study, which is a statistical software used to conduct analysis on available data. The data gathered in Qualtrics will be transformed to an SPSS file, where it will be cleaned and made fit to run analyses on. Initially descriptive statistics will be investigated, such as the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values etc. Most importantly, outliers will be identified using box plots, and will be dealt with accordingly before starting statistical analysis.

For our moderation model, a Factorial ANOVA will be used, to investigate our main effect and interaction effect, main effect being the strength of trait on overall evaluation, and the interaction effect being the strength of the relationship between trait and work setting and their effect on overall evaluation of the ingroup member. However, before we can conduct a factorial ANOVA, some assumptions need to be tested and met first. The first assumption of normality will be checked using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and by additionally plotting graphs. The second assumption of homogeneity of variances will be tested using the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. Finally, we will check the assumption of orthogonality, to make sure that our independent variable and moderating variable are not correlated, this will be done using the Pearson Chi-Square test.

After all the assumptions are tested and met, the Factorial ANOVA will be run, and based on the outcome of the analyses our findings will be investigated and interpreted.

Results

The initial data set contained 517 responses. After removing participants responses which did not fit with the goal of this research, the usable data contained 267 responses. Participant responses were removed for various reasons, for instance if a participant did not complete the survey fully, their responses were removed. Responses were also removed if the participant indicated that they did not understand the content of the study at the last debriefing section of the questionnaire, or if the participant indicated to not being truthful throughout the survey. We also removed responses from participants if they indicated to have a beginner's English level. After removing responses, a box plot was constructed to observe whether certain outliers in the data set were present or not. Although some outliers were indeed present, excluding the outliers did not hold any significantly different results, therefore no outliers were removed from the dataset and were kept as they were. An independent sample t-test was conducted for the manipulation checks of both scales (sociability and competence), to make sure that manipulations on both scales were successful. Regarding the setting condition, people who were assigned to the condition "working remotely from home", did in fact state that the candidate had to work remotely from home ($M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.664$), while individuals who were assigned to the condition "working from the office" stated that the candidate had to work from the office ($M = 6.34$, $SD = 1.406$). When analyzing the manipulation check for the work setting condition using an independent samples t-test the results were significant $t(265) = -23.626$, $p = 0.012$, $t(265) = 22.881$, $p = 0.012$, indicating that our manipulation was successful. Regarding the trait condition, people who were assigned to the high sociability condition, did in fact state that the candidate was more sociable than competent ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 0.882$), while individuals who were assigned to the high competence condition stated that the candidate was more competent than sociable ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 0.925$). The manipulation check done through an independent samples t-test for the trait condition also showed significant results $t(265) = -15.373$, $p = 0.001$, $t(265) = 15.154$, $p = 0.012$, indicating that our manipulation in regards to the trait condition was also successful. A Factorial ANOVA was conducted, with trait being our independent variable, setting being a moderating variable, and the overall evaluation of the candidate being our dependent variable. Before conducting the Factorial ANOVA, certain assumptions had to be met. To ensure the orthogonality of our factors, a Chi-Square test was conducted. The Chi-Square results had non-significant results, $\chi^2(1, N = 267) = 0.663$, $p = 0.416$, which means that our assumption of orthogonality was met. The second assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested using Levene's test, the results were insignificant $F(3, 267) =$

0.415, $p = 0.742$, and therefore the assumption of equal variances was also met. Finally, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check for the assumption of normality. The results were significant $D(267) = 0.194$, $p = 0.001$, indicating that the assumption of normality was violated. Although the assumption of normality was violated, this did not hinder us proceeding with our planned analysis. The reason for continuing the ANOVA analysis even after the assumption of normality was violated, is because due to ANOVA's robustness towards this violation, especially considering how large our sample size was, and the fact that all the other assumptions were met, it was decided to ignore this violation and to keep going with our planned analysis (Blanca et al., 2017). The Factorial ANOVA analysis itself, showed there to be a significant main effect for our trait variable, while having no significant main effect for our setting variable, along with no significant interaction effect between those two. With these results, we can conclude that participants would rather employ somebody who is more sociable than competent, and that the setting of the required job did not influence this decision due to our non-significant interaction and main effects of trait setting.

After all the assumptions were tested, the Factorial ANOVA was run. The goal of our analysis was to investigate whether Trait had a significant main effect on our dependent variable (overall evaluation) and additionally, if Trait and Setting will also have a significant interaction effect or not. Table 1 shows a plot of our estimated marginal means, along with showing the main effect of Trait, and lack of an interaction effect between Trait and Setting.

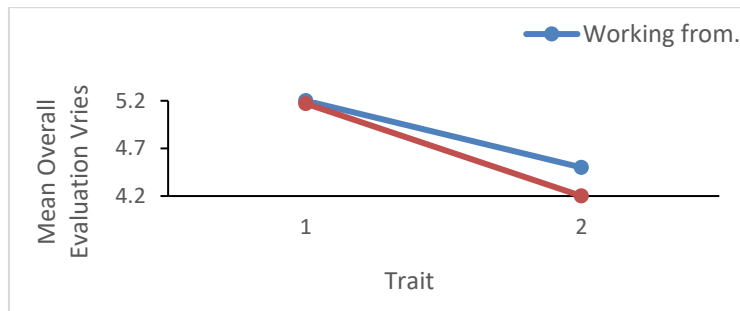


Figure 1: Estimated Marginal Means. Dependent Variable: Overall evaluation Vries

Note: Trait (1 = Sociability, 2 = Competence)

Our results did indeed show a significant main effect for the Trait factor ($F(1, 267) = 39.459$, $p = .001$) with a medium to large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.130$) indicating that the Trait condition had a main effect on overall evaluation of our candidate. Participants in the high sociability condition ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.107$), gave the

candidate higher overall evaluation scores than participants in the high competence condition ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.120$).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Trait, Setting. Dependent Variable: Overall evaluation of Vries

Trait	Setting	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	1.00	5.17	1.069	71
	2.00	5.12	1.153	68
	Total	5.14	1.107	139
2	1.00	4.46	1.119	59
	2.00	4.12	1.105	69
	Total	4.27	1.120	128
Total	1.00	4.85	1.144	130
	2.00	4.61	1.232	137
	Total	4.73	1.194	267

Note: Setting (1 = Office, 2 = Telecommunicating), Trait (1 = Sociability, 2 = Competence)

Our results did not find any significant main effect of setting ($F(1, 267) = 2.077$, $p = .151$). Additionally, there was also no statistically significant interaction effect found between Trait and Setting ($F(1, 267) = 1.133$, $p = .288$) indicating that our moderator (setting) did not have an interactional effect with our independent variable (trait) on our dependent variable (overall evaluation of our candidate).

Discussion

The goal of this study, was to establish and observe a connection between trait and overall evaluation of the candidate, while checking if the work setting played a role in this exchange or not. The research question of interest was whether sociability and competence influence overall evaluations of a candidate, and the role of the work setting (physical vs. telecommunicating) in this model. Our first hypothesis stated that candidates who have higher sociability scores, will also receive higher overall evaluation ratings, furthermore, our second hypothesis stated that this relationship will be stronger if the candidate is expected to work physically at the office. All in all, we expected to find a significant main effect of trait, and a significant interaction effect of trait and setting. Our study revealed some key findings. Firstly, we found that trait did in fact have a significant main effect on overall evaluation of the candidate, and we also found that higher sociability scores attributed to higher overall evaluation ratings. Our first hypothesis was supported with our results. On the other hand, we found work setting to have no significant effect on overall evaluation, and also no significant interaction effect with trait, therefore our second hypothesis was not supported by our results, and is ultimately rejected in this study. Our findings

have several implications, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, most prior research supported the idea that individuals with high sociability gain more favorable overall impressions and evaluations than do people with high competence but moderate to low sociability⁵. Our study supported this idea, and strengthened the role of warmth, and more specifically of sociability on overall evaluations of candidates. Some studies have found that through nonverbal behaviors that subtly communicate warmth and competence information, people can manage the impressions they make on colleagues, potential employers, and possible investors⁶. Our study however is not flawless, and it did have certain limitations which should be paid attention to for future research in this area. The main limitation which our study had, was that it focused specifically on hiring a candidate who can work with teams. Although our findings are attributable to many organizations and job industries, it is important to note that if the requirements of the described job in our survey were different, for instance if the candidate was instead required to possess a high level of mathematics and have long experience in other organizations, then perhaps competence would be more preferable than sociability. Ultimately, future research should focus more heavily on other work fields, by measuring the same variables which were included in our study, trait and setting. The change of organizational climate and goals could impact the outcome of this study. An organization which prioritizes mastery and skills could potentially prefer more competent than sociable candidates, especially if social capital and social skills are not essential in a specific organization or a specific job position. For instance, in the construction industry, or the IT field, since both of these jobs are skill based. Our generated results will be useful in determining deciding factors in employer's choices when choosing employees in the HR field, and can be useful for other researchers, who want to investigate the topic using other niche organizational sectors. Evaluating the traits of the employer should be something that future research focuses on also, to understand both sides better, and to establish a stronger and more global model of employee evaluations. As a closing statement, our study supports the idea that sociability generates more positive evaluations than competence does, however for the future it is important to study these factors even more, and in a variety of contexts and organizations, to determine whether this trend is global, or if it only applies to specific contexts and sectors within the job industry.

⁵ Güntürkün, Pascal, et al. "Disentangling the Differential Roles of Warmth and Competence Judgments in Customer-Service Provider Relationships." *ResearchGate, SAGE Journals*, 1 June 2020,

⁶ Cuddy, "The Dynamics of Warmth and Competence Judgments", 76.

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ЧТО СПОСОБСТВУЕТ ЛУЧШЕНИЮ ОБЩИХ ОЦЕНОК ПРИ ПОСТУПЛЕНИИ НА РАБОТУ? СОЦИАБЕЛЬНОСТЬ ИЛИ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЬ? ОСОБЕННОСТИ РОЛИ И ОТНОШЕНИЯ К РАБОТЕ В ПОЛУЧЕНИИ ОБЩИХ ПОЛОЖИТЕЛЬНЫХ ОЦЕНОК

Оганес Джиджян (Амстердамский свободный университет, Нидерланды)

Оценка кандидатов на работу актуальна для любой организации, однако исследователи спорят о факторах, которые приводят к положительным оценкам, в основном выражая свои разные мнения о контексте работы и климате организации. В этой статье исследуется, влияют ли черты характера и обстановка на оценку кандидата, и если влияют, то какой фактор оказывает наибольшее влияние. В исследовании использовался экспериментальный план между субъектами 2x2 с общей оценкой в качестве измеряемой переменной. Характеристика измерялась через коммуникабельность и компетентность. Условия были определены как работа на дому или в офисе компании. Гипотезы статьи были следующими; Кандидаты, набравшие более высокие баллы по коммуникабельности, получают более положительные общие оценки; эта связь будет сильнее для тех кандидатов, от которых ожидается физическая работа в офисе. 267 участников заполнили анкету, оценивая свое решение о приеме на работу кандидата с высоким уровнем коммуникабельности или компетентности, а также включив условия работы в качестве влияющего фактора в этой модели. После анализа данных выяснилось, что коммуникабельность действительно приводит к более положительным общим оценкам. Результаты позволили сделать вывод, что оценщики выбрали кандидата, который был скорее общительным, чем компетентным. Обстановка не оказала значительного влияния на взаимодействие с чертой характера, и можно сделать вывод, что работа удаленно или в офисе компании не влияет на выбор респондента в отношении предпочтения коммуникабельности компетентности потенциального кандидата.

Ключевые слова: оценка кандидата, черта характера, обстановка, коммуникабельность, компетентность, положительные оценки.

**ԻՆՉՆ Է ՆՊԱՍՏՈՒՄ ԱՇԽԱՏԱՆՔԻ ԴԻՄԵԼՈՒ ԸՆԴՀԱՆՈՒՐ ԱՎԵԼԻ ԼԱՎ
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ԿՈՄՊԵՏԵՆՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ: ԴԵՐԻ ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ ԵՎ
ԱՇԽԱՏԱՆՔԻ ՀԱՆԴԵՊ ՏՐԱՄԱԴՐՎԱԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ՝ ԴՐԱԿԱՆ
ԳՆԱՀԱՏԱԿԱՆՆԵՐԻ ՁԵՌՔԵՐՄԱՆ ԳՈՐԾԸՆԹԱՑՈՒՄ**

Հովհաննես Զիջյան (Ամստերդամի ազատ համալսարան, Նիդերլանդներ)

Աշխատանքի թեկնածուի գնահատումը տեղին է ցանկացած կազմակերպության համար, սակայն այն գործոնները, որոնք հանգեցնում են դրական գնահատականների, վիճարկվել են հետազոտողների կողմից՝ հիմնականում նշելով իրենց տարբեր կարծիքները աշխատանքի համատեքստի և կազմակերպության մթնոլորտի վերաբերյալ: Հոդվածում ուսումնասիրվում է, թե արդյոք հատկանիշը և դրվածքն ազդեցություն ունեն թեկնածուների գնահատման վրա, և եթե ազդում են, ո՞ր գործոնն է առավել մեծ ազդեցություն ունենում: Հետազոտությունն օգտագործել է 2x2 փորձարարական նախագծում՝ որպես չափված փոփոխական: Հատկանիշը չափվում էր մարդամոտության և իրավասության միջոցով: Կարգավորումը սահմանվեց որպես տնից կամ ընկերության գրասենյակում աշխատելը: Թղթի վարկածները հետևյալն էին. Այն թեկնածուները, ովքեր ավելի բարձր միավորներ են հավաքում մարդամոտության ոլորտում, կստանան ավելի դրական ընդհանուր գնահատականներ, այս հարաբերություններն ավելի ամուր կլինեն այն թեկնածուների համար, որոնցից ակնկալվում է, որ ֆիզիկապես կաշխատեն գրասենյակից: 267 մասնակից լրացրեցին հարցաթերթիկ, որը գնահատում էր իրենց որոշումը՝ աշխատանքի ընդունելու այնպիսի թեկնածուի, ով ունի բարձր մարդամոտություն կամ կոմպետենտություն, միևնույն ժամանակ ներառելով աշխատանքի կարգավորումը՝ որպես այս մոդելի վրա ազդող գործոն: Տվյալների վերլուծությունից հետո պարզվեց, որ մարդամոտությունն իրականում հանգեցնում է ավելի դրական ընդհանուր գնահատականների: Արդյունքները հանգեցրին այն եզրակացության, որ այն թեկնածուն, ով ավելի շատ մարդամոտ է, քան կոմպետենտ, ընտրվել է գնահատողների կողմից: Կարգավորումը զգալի փոխազդեցության ազդեցություն չի ունեցել հատկանիշի հետ՝ եզրակացնելով, որ հեռակա կամ ընկերության գրասենյակում աշխատելը չի ազդում պատասխանողի ընտրության վրա՝ պատենցիալ թեկնածուի համար կոմպետենտությունից գերադասելու հարցում:

Հանգուցային բառեր՝ աշխատանքի թեկնածուի գնահատում, հարկանիշ, միջավայր, մարդամոտություն, իրավասություն, դրական գնահատականներ:

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