

The Criticality of Empathy on the Factory Floor:
Insights from Glassdoor about Front-line Leadership in Food and Beverage Manufacturing

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Insights from Glassdoor about Front-line Leadership in Food and Beverage Manufacturing

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Acknowledgments

In this short Life that only lasts an hour
How much – how little – is within our power.

— Emily Dickinson¹

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Abstract

Since its origins in the early 1900s, job satisfaction has been a challenge for factory floor workers in manufacturing environments. While schedule, pay, and benefits may improve individual job satisfaction and overall business performance, effective leadership has also been found to be crucial. Open-source content available via Glassdoor was used to validate the importance of leadership skills, and a literature review was used to suggest teaching strategies aimed at emerging leaders. A mixed-methods approach inspired by the qualitative methods of Brené Brown and the quantitative methods of Jim Collins was utilized to validate the drivers of job satisfaction specific to factory floor workers and better understand the intangible drivers possible through improved leadership engagement. The primary finding of this work was the importance of leadership demonstrating empathy for employees, including listening, showing respect, genuinely caring for their team, and creating a culture of meritocracy and balance between the workplace and life outside. Cultivating empathy in emerging leaders is becoming increasingly challenging as this skill has decreased by as much as fifty percent over the last two decades according to some estimates (Parker, 2023). Based on empathy being the key driver of increased workplace satisfaction, online courses from established organizations, such as EdX, could be easily utilized as an onboarding requirement for all new leaders and perhaps all professionals within the manufacturing industry. The goal of this thesis is to share the data and drive improvements in workplace culture for hardworking factory employees who literally work day and night to provide us with the food and beverages that we need to survive and enjoy life.

Key Works: manufacturing, empathy, soft skills, interpersonal skills, culture

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“We often miss opportunity because it's dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

— Thomas A. Edison²

Work: What Is It Good For?

Humans have a long and complex history with vocation. The origins of work were linked directly to survival as the earliest hunters and gatherers set out to meet their basic needs of food, water, and shelter. The nature of work further evolved with the establishment of interconnected agrarian systems and then accelerated into the industrial and capitalist revolutions. While work began, and is still required, as a method of basic survival, it has evolved into much more in our modern society. Humans look to their vocation to bring them a multitude of psychological and social rewards from power and influence to community and purpose. According to some estimates, the average working adult will spend 24% of their life at work, which makes an interesting comparison to an average of 4% of time spent vacationing (Campbell, 2017). Even amidst the massive technological advances and ongoing social evolution, adults in the United States are still investing a great deal of their limited lifespan working.

According to the *American Time Use Study* last completed in 2019, employees worked an average of eight hours and seven minutes per day including commuting time (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). This number saw a steady increase over the last two decades but has not been revised since the global pandemic which led to a major restructuring in how people work. However, initial estimates show that there was likely no significant change to the total duration of time spent working (Casselmann and Koeze, 2021) even though the entire world was significantly changed. This further points to the capitalist cultural norm glamorizing productivity (Cohen, 2022) and possibly going so far as to demonize leisure.

Within the professional world, one of the key factors predicting success remains interpersonal skills or *soft skills* (American Psychological Association, 2023). These are the manners in which we perceive situations, relate to one another, communicate, and react, and they are not necessarily taught in formalized educational settings. While the United States education system socializes children from a young age purely due to the structure of a classroom environment, the development of soft skills is a side product and not necessarily a measured outcome, which may institutionally create a long-term disadvantage. The need for professional skills beyond technical competencies is increasing while training and education in this area has remained largely informalized, resulting in a skills gap in employees (Akyazi et al, 2020) that can only continue to increase and have a negative impact on both employees and employers. A 2021 study that surveyed nearly 500 companies found that “soft skills were the key discriminators in the hiring process,” and entry-level engineers from Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) institutions were deficient in most of the desired soft skills, including leadership, communication, and initiative (Hirudayaraj et al, 2021, p. 23).

There is some speculation that soft skills will not be as critical in the future with factories becoming highly automated. The term *Industry 4.0* (i4.0) has been developed to describe the evolution of manufacturing towards being highly connected and automated, including the networking of resources, humans, and machines in real-time (Guzmán, 2020). As we move from our current state to this future, the knowledge economy may replace blue-collar roles. If this is truly the future, an investment in soft skills education may not be justified as leaders will manage robots and not humans. However, this future is likely a long way off given the investment that automation requires, the demand for technical resources to develop and deploy (Lunin, 223), the

lack of profitability for some operations, and the need for advanced technology that has not yet been developed (Küpper et al, 2022).

Beyond benefiting the employee in their personal success, interpersonal skills competency has been shown to drive a financial return on investment (ROI) for businesses. However, the specific skills needed are still up for debate. A 2016 study facilitated by Adobe found the soft skill of creativity drove improved innovation and competition, customer experience and satisfaction, and overall financial success (State of Create, 2016). Literature and database reviews point to similar conclusions. The work completed by Guzmán et al (2020) used databases to identify cognitive, business, interpersonal, and strategic skills as predictors of success that would still be needed in the era of i4.0. Thus, while the need for interpersonal skills in the workplace will remain critical, defining the skills needed can be complex in that it is dependent on a multitude of factors including culture, customs, industry, and others.

There may be a specific need for teaching interpersonal skills within the manufacturing sector, where engineers and technically degreed individuals are often slated into supervisory roles of factory floor workers with minimal training. By the very nature of their technical degrees, individuals may not have had many opportunities to learn interpersonal and leadership skills through their formal education as evidenced in the study above of ABET institutions. In addition, the culture on the factory floor could be a challenge to assimilate into after spending four years in academia. It is also a challenge to establish oneself as a respected leader, especially at a young age and/or low experience level. Given these challenges, it is surprising that there are only a few studies aimed at the leadership traits that are desired by factory floor workers.

While there are few research studies on this topic, there are many resources available on leadership in general. Many of these curricula are designed by traditional educators or thought

leaders. While their approach is well-meaning and may be rooted in solid research from the fields of psychology, sociology, biology, anthropology, and others, these programs may not be effective at teaching soft skills, according to a Harvard Business Review article (Moldoveanu and Narayandas, 2019). One current trend in styles is *servant leadership*. Although the origins of the concept date back to the Greek and Roman times (Valeri, 2007), the term was popularized in the business vernacular after the publishing of Robert Greenleaf's 2002 book that presented a management style that put the workers at the heart of leadership (Anderson, 2008). Creating a servant-leader narrative starts by understanding the culture of factory floor workers and their desired traits in a leader. It is not likely to be successful if a purely academic model is utilized. Instead, input directly from workers on what best meets their needs would be more relevant and impactful. The desire for direct input into leadership traits is at the center of this research.

Statement of Problem

The problem of this thesis was to define the key interpersonal skills desired by factory floor workers in their direct supervisors in United States food and beverage manufacturing environments.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this thesis was as follows:

1. Explore the unique aspects of the factory floor culture in food and beverage manufacturing environments within the United States and the correlations therein to desired leadership traits.
2. Provide a research-based case for interpersonal skills education for young professionals that ties directly back to these desired leadership traits.

3. Outline potential strategies for learning these skills, specifically aimed toward emerging leaders.

Statement of Need

The need for this thesis was based on the following:

1. Manufacturing represents 8.41% of jobs in America (National Association of Manufacturers, 2022) but little research has been done on factory floor culture and interpersonal skills desired in a leader, especially for factories within the United States. The information available has tended to be top-down oriented from academics and thought leaders versus a bottom-up approach where information is directly gathered from workers.
2. Due to the nature of global supply chains and the perishability of many food items, food and beverage manufacturing will likely remain a critical part of the United States manufacturing landscape for the foreseeable future.
3. Young professionals destined to be future manufacturing leaders are not necessarily provided with a formalized education on interpersonal skills (Society for Human Resource Management, 2019) and thus cannot be as effective as otherwise possible. Understanding the specific skills needed allows for a more targeted and efficient approach to preparing these emerging leaders.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this thesis:

1. What drives job satisfaction in factory floor workers?
2. Beyond pay, work schedule, and benefits, is leadership a key driver of job satisfaction?
3. What are the specific leadership attributes desired in a manufacturing leader?

4. How can these interpersonal skills best be learned by emerging leaders?

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this thesis:

1. The researcher is knowledgeable of manufacturing environments and leadership skills therein based on professional experience.
2. The data subset was sufficiently large to have application across most food and beverage manufacturing companies within the United States.
3. Employer reviews gathered from Glassdoor, an online employer review site, represent a balanced set of data that can be utilized to infer information both about factory floor culture and desired interpersonal characteristics in leaders.

Limitations

The following limitations may have impacted this thesis:

1. Data was gathered from open sources in 2023 and thus may only represent a snapshot of time.
2. Data was gathered and synthesized manually, so trending may have some human error components and inherent subjectivity.
3. Data was based on companies listed as food and beverage manufacturers as the Glassdoor industry designation.
4. Only companies with defined private or public ownership were considered.
5. Only reviews and resources in English were considered to prevent any loss of nuance in translation.

6. Literature review data was focused on the span of 2019 to the current date to adjust for the world event impacts, specifically the global pandemic and racial relations events specific to the United States.

Procedures

The following general procedures were used to conduct the research:

1. Gather demographic information for food and beverage manufacturing companies operating in the United States as provided by Glassdoor, including ownership type, company size and revenue and number of employees, year founded, and overall review rating from all employees.
2. Analyze factory floor-level employee reviews from Glassdoor to determine any difference in rating and identify the key interpersonal skills desired to infer information about factory floor culture.
3. Define potential methodologies for learning and utilizing this skill as applicable within a manufacturing environment based on existing research into effective teaching methods for the next generation of leaders.

Terminology

The following terms have been defined to clarify the thesis:

Factory Floor Workers – Also called production workers, machine operators, or assemblers.

Individuals that operate machines within a factory to make products (Indeed, 2021).

Specifically, occupations classified as 51-0000 Production Occupations by the U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook represent roughly 8.4 million workers with a median hourly wage of \$20.71 (2022).

Front-line Leader – Directly supervises production workers and is responsible for daily operations (Indeed, 2021).

Influence – Creating a desire in another person to act (Maxwell, 2023) using a set of techniques to achieve an effect (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Interpersonal Skills – Also called soft skills. Behaviors that allow you to interact well with others (Taylor, 2020) and develop social relationships (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Leadership – The ability to influence others (Bohns, 2022; Chance, 2022; Keltner, 2016; Maxwell, 2023; Nimon-Peters, 2022; Rodriguez, 2022; Spaulding, 2022; Wyatt, 2022)

Persuasion – Spurring compliance at one's request (Cialdini, 2021) or an active attempt to change another person (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Power – The capacity to influence (Bohn, 2022; Keltner, 2016; Nimon-Peters, 2022).

Chapter II: Literature Review

“No man needs sympathy because he has to work, because he has a burden to carry. Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”

— Theodore Roosevelt³

Introduction

As long as there have been factories, working in manufacturing provided a multitude of challenges beyond those of an office-based job. These may include the physical demands of the work, nontraditional work schedules, interaction with mechanical and electrical components and processes, and the high-speed nature of the industry. The basics such as schedule, pay, and benefits have historically been and continue to be key drivers of job satisfaction. However, there is a leadership component that is also important, including the interpersonal skills of leaders that drive a positive work environment and culture. As we consider the next generation of leaders, specifically Gen Z, the research suggests that there may be a substantial skill gap in the area of leadership. Before attempting to bridge this gap, the specific soft skills needed should be better defined. Most research into these skills has taken an academic or experience-based approach to define what is needed. With the development of sites such as Glassdoor, the key skills desired by factory workers themselves can now be further understood. Using this data, learning strategies can be more effectively developed for the next cohort of leaders.

Factory Origins and Evolution

The perils of working for a living are well summed up in the famous Dolly Parton song, *9 to 5*, including waking up early, the dreaded commute, low pay, no recognition, limited promotional opportunities, and bad bosses. “It’s enough to drive you crazy if you let it,” is a well-said summary (Parton, 1980) of an employee that does not enjoy their work, but it does not

necessarily have to be this way. Research into positive psychology has shown that communication, culture, security, leadership, opportunities, career development, working conditions, employee personality, pay and benefits, and rewards and recognition are the generalized drivers of job satisfaction (Bourne, 2020). However, it is important to understand that job satisfaction can be highly personalized and reflect personality, purpose, and intrinsic motivation (Conway, 2021). While these insights from the field of psychology are certainly applicable in manufacturing, some additional factors have been evident since the industry began.

Henry Ford's innovation of the moving assembly line in 1913 would forever change the face of the United States and the world in ways beyond the direct economic impacts of automotive production. The impacts would ultimately have global reach and boomerang effects over the next century. Production of the Model T led to the first factory to operate around the clock, thus creating a new working class of individuals that would become the future blue-collar middle class of the United States. The term *blue-collar* comes from the practicality of wearing dark-colored and durable clothing for manual work as compared to the white-collared shirts worn by office personnel (Gutoskey, 2021). Interestingly, the concerns of the first blue-collar employees continue to be the concerns of modern-day manufacturing workers.

Employee engagement and job satisfaction concerns were evident from the beginning as workers quit the Model T assembly line after being bored by only being assigned one to two repetitive tasks within the assembly line configuration. Ford used higher wages, profit sharing, and decreased work hours to get the workers back on the line (Ford Motor Company, n.d.). There were fears that this investment in the workforce would lead to bankruptcy, but the company has maintained strength including surviving the 2008 recession without taking a government bailout (Vlasic, 2009) and pulling through the supply chain and sales challenges linked to the 2020

global pandemic. While Ford Motor Company has bowed to globalization and has not had a perfect track record of employee relations, it continues to employ roughly 57,000 hourly workers, which it cites as more than any other automotive maker (Ford Motor Company, n.d.).

Many of the origin woes continue to be headwinds for companies and employees. It is interesting to consider the origins of the blue-collar working class and to reflect on the initial challenges of engagement due to task repetition. Pay and work hours were meant to distract from the monotonous nature of the work. Sociologist Max Weber proposed the metaphor of the *iron cage* in 1905, referring to the trappings of capitalist production systems that created social class hierarchies and would shape the life and worldview of the working class for generations (Cole, 2019). Perhaps due to this iron cage, workers and manufacturing companies continue to negotiate pay and benefits into the modern day that have little to do with modifying the nature of the boring work.

The battle for pay and benefits has played out across a multitude of manufacturing companies but has done nothing to address the intrinsic unsatisfying nature of the work. Consider the 2021 strike at Kellogg cereal factories by the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers (BCTGM) International Union that spanned four states over a bitter disagreement on wages and healthcare benefits. Kellogg ultimately yielded to the union promising no plant shutdowns through 2026, continued cost of living increases, and increases in employee pensions (Thorbecke, 2021). However, Machine Operators at the company still only rate the company as 2.9 stars out of 5 versus the overall rating of 4.0 stars when white-collar employees and executives are included (Glassdoor, 2023). It appears that pay has not offset the other undesirable aspects of the work.

Globalization has further eroded the wages and job availability of blue-collar workers in the United States without addressing the fundamental work design problems. The Netflix documentary *American Factory* shows the conflicting perspectives of Chinese management and United States factory workers when Fuyao Auto Glass reopened a defunct General Motors (GM) factory in central Ohio (Reichert & Bognar, 2019). After the GM plant closed in 2008, the local economy struggled tremendously until the purchase by Fuyao in 2014. As the largest auto glass manufacturer in China, Fuyao's leadership was accustomed to a culture of dedicated workers willing to work 12-hour days with only one day off per month while paying less than half of GM's former hourly wages (Powers, 2019). Local workers were happy to have jobs again but also felt a nostalgia for the middle-class work life that they once had as GM employees. In the documentary, workers feel disconnected from leadership and explore unionization while Chinese leadership focuses fully on ensuring the achievement of the efficiency needed to ensure factory profitability. It is a clash that often surfaces at the direct supervisor level as these leaders are tasked with maintaining the productivity drumbeat of the corporation but also empathizing with the factory floor workforce. It can be a difficult balance that can leave leaders frustrated and disengaged.

After the introspection period resulting from the global pandemic quarantines, the United States was hit with the Great Resignation of 2021 as employees were no longer willing to work at unfulfilling jobs (Kelly, 2021). The manufacturing industry was the top sector in which quitting occurred with 58% quit levels versus pre-pandemic times, outpacing the healthcare, retail, and education fields. The primary reasons for leaving were cited as long hours and average pay (Long, 2022) as this sector does not lend itself to flexible work arrangements and did not see a lot of closings during the pandemic. As was seen with the Model T assembly line, pay and

benefits are the drivers of employee retention, and without these levers, manufacturing roles are no longer desirable.

Beyond work-task engagement, work-life balance has also continued to be a challenge due to the high-speed, nonstop nature of the work that is necessary to maintain efficiencies. The nonstop nature of the work can lead to a variety of shift schedules, such as a 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. first shift, a 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. second shift, and an 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. third shift. There is also the possibility of 10- or 12-hour shifts, weekend work, mandatory overtime, and rotating schedules. These nontraditional schedules can be a challenge based on current societal norms and may lead to undesirable outcomes such as decreased workplace productivity and stresses on an individual's personal life. The key may be finding the right "person-schedule fit" to meet both individual needs and the needs of the business according to a Harvard Business Review study (Bolino, Kelemen, & Matthews, 2020), but these employees can be difficult to find and retain due to the toll that alternate shift schedules can take on the individual.

It is estimated that 25% of employees or 8.6 million people perform shift work including those in manufacturing, healthcare, emergency services, and hospitality. Shift work can have a negative impact on sleep, increase occurrences of depression and anxiety, impair cognition, lower quality of life, and even lead to thoughts of suicide (Brown et al, 2020). There are also increased physical risks such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, chronic heartburn, peptic ulcers, problems with fertility and pregnancy, breast cancer, high blood pressure, and increased risk of accidents and injuries (Griffin, 2010). However, shift work is not comprised purely of downsides. One of the major benefits of working in the off hours is the flexibility to both work and pursue other activities, such as caring for children or aging relatives or pursuing higher education. The hours also lend themselves to being more focused on the job, offer less

congested commutes, and enable running errands during nonpeak times (Herrity, 2022). Given the upsides and downsides, work schedules continue to be of great concern to factory floor workers as they have since the time of the Model T.

Manufacturing jobs in the United States still produce many of the goods that have come to be synonymous with the *American Dream*. Consumables from Snickers candy bars to Listerine mouthwash are produced day in and day out by workers in the United States. Manufacturing is as much a part of the United States' national heritage as apple pie and is “a matter of our national identity” according to Mike Rowe of the popular show *Dirty Jobs* (Dokoupil, 2023). Although Rowe was enthusiastic about the number of job prospects in the manufacturing sector, there is still an opportunity to build meaning and satisfaction into these roles to evolve them beyond being considered a dirty job.

Gen Z Emerging Leaders

Building a more desirable work environment is particularly meaningful to the generation poised to enter the workforce and destined become the next set of leaders. This generation is uniquely different from previous generations, which offers benefits and opportunities for leading in a manufacturing setting. This generation has been coined Generation Z, or Gen Z, but is also known as post-millennials, iGen, and Zoomers (Katz et al, 2022). These individuals are digital natives born roughly between 1995 and 2015 (Pueschel, Johnson, & Dhanani, 2020) whose dependence on the internet was only strengthened by the global pandemic. From what is currently being observed in academic settings, this generation willingly spends about half of their waking hours in front of a screen and will likely only read 25% of an academic assignment (Sweet, Blythe, & Carpenter, 2019). The acceleration of online technology as well as the global pandemic flipped the traditional in-person lecture style of higher education with hybrid options

(Weber and Keim, 2021) ranging from fully online and asynchronous courses to the rise of MOOCs (massive open online courses). This shift in learning preferences combined with the availability of technology-driven education methods should be considered as this generation enters the workforce and needs on-the-job training.

Gen Z may require new models for onboarding success due to their significant divergence from previous generations as a function of the current sociopolitical environment. They are starting their careers in a strong economy with low unemployment, which is the reverse of the Millennial generation experience; however, both generations generally share socially progressive and pro-government ideals. Gen Z is more highly educated than all previous generations, readily embraces diversity (Packer & Igielnik, 2020), and seeks to define a unique identity for themselves (De Witte, 2022). They are self-professed intense realists, highly competitive, and goal-oriented, which leads to a fear of missing out (FOMO) and a struggle to slow down due to the speed of technology. This has likely led to the incredible anxiety that plagues this generation (Sinek, 2023). Conceivably driven by their lifelong interactions with technology, this generation is also thought to have a desire for instantaneous gratification, a shortened attention span, and a need to rapidly switch between tasks (Weber and Keim, 2020; Atchley, 2010).

As this generation has come of age, the cultural shift has rippled strongly into academia and is beginning to influence the corporate environment as well. College-level research has found that Gen Z possesses strong emotional intelligence, especially in the areas of empathy, sensitivity, and self-encouragement. This aligns with this generation's embrace of diversity and mental health awareness. The areas of interpersonal opportunity have been generalized to include self-awareness and self-control (Magano et al, 2020). Without these two areas of soft skills, the

potential exists for the next wave of the workforce to be unable to meet employers' needs, such as teamwork, communication, and leadership (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2021). Gen Z is ready to leverage their tech savvy, but some worry that this strength may result in a weakness of the interpersonal skills needed to be successful.

Self-awareness and self-control are components of self-regulation that set the stage for interpersonal awareness and effectiveness. Cultivated by self-reflection (Raypole, 2020), self-awareness has been linked to effective communication through knowing how to be an excellent listener (Civico, 2014), beginning with listening to their inner monologue. This personal awareness of one's own emotions allows for the recognition of personal strengths and opportunities, a more effective understanding of the "actions, moods, and emotions" of others, and being more open to new information and interactions (Cherry, 2022, 1). While Gen Z is instinctively wired towards empathy, the development of self-awareness is a critical precursor to empathic interactions. Attempting empathy without self-awareness can result in misses such as sympathy, shaming, disappointment, judgment, and one-upmanship that damage a relationship (Brown, 2020).

Learning self-awareness is a natural part of the human developmental process. Initial cognitive self-awareness comes in the form of developing a self-concept and has been observed to develop in children between ages one and three where the child begins to learn their name, recognize themselves in a mirror, have an awareness of their likes and dislikes, and communicate via language (Hollneger, 2012). Self-awareness levels progress throughout the lifespan and influence the development of healthy and balanced self-esteem. Research suggests that increased self-awareness allows individuals to understand and appreciate their unique selves and be able to act in an intentional way rather than passively or defensively (Williams, 2021). Self-aware

individuals are more proactive, have instinctive empathy, make better decisions, communicate more effectively, and are more successful in the workplace (Ackerman, 2020).

From a psychology perspective, self-awareness is typically taught through activities that allow individuals to become aware of their inner thoughts. Common activities include meditation, journaling, and talk therapy (Cherry, 2022). These time-tested methods from the field of psychology continue to evolve, and some additional activities more targeted towards Gen Z include mindfulness through yoga practice, seeking an outside perspective from a friend, requesting feedback from subordinates, utilizing a quiz such as the Self-Consciousness Scale or Situational Self-Awareness Scale, further understanding one's strengths and personality, practicing awareness in new social situations, writing a regret letter or imaginary eulogy, using tools such as the Self-Awareness Wheel, and participating in group activities such as sharing circles to practice deep listening and better understand body language (Miller, 2020). Understanding both the mindset of the generation and interpersonal skills are the first steps toward paving a path forward. However, this path is only possible with the right teaching methods as research has shown that targeted content and methodology developed with the learner in mind increase effectiveness (Pueschel, Johnson, & Dhanani, 2020).

Perhaps because they are digital natives that have likely had the power of the internet in their pockets since their first memory, this generation has had fewer face-to-face interactions than previous generations (Riley & Nicewicz, 2022). Gen Z was labeled as the loneliest generation even before the quarantines of the global pandemic (Gilbert, 2021), and these converging sources of isolation have created a strong desire within this generation to personally connect. Teaching methodologies that are personalized and use built-in informal accountability are effective as well as developing genuine relationships between students and faculty through

interactions outside of the traditional classroom (Weber & Keim, 2021). The traditional student and teacher nomenclature may be undesirable to Gen Z due to their preference for networked structures over conventional hierarchies (Pueschel, Johnson, & Dhanani, 2020). The roles of learner and facilitator or guide may be more desirable. Taken a step further, the facilitator may be considered a co-learner rather than an authority figure (CohenMiller, 2019) as this terminology emphasizes the significance of the learner's contribution further driving engagement. The facilitator should aim to build relationships with the learners and consistently check in on their progress, using this knowledge to clarify and update information as frequently as possible (Mellman, 2021).

Learning methods that are effective with Gen Z also typically contain an interactive component, such as hands-on projects, simulations, role-playing (Magano et al, 2020), or improvisation games (Riley & Nicewicz, 2022). This generation prefers highly visual and fast-paced content (Sweet, Blythe, & Carpenter, 2019) that mimics social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. They prefer immersive and experiential learning that combines technical and interpersonal skills in an atmosphere of data-based observation and individualized feedback (Pueschel, Johnson, & Dhanani, 2020). This feedback and connection can provide a significant confidence boost, creates a sense of collaboration, and role model real-world interpersonal skills (Weber & Keim, 2021) that allows the learner to overcome anxiety and achieve their goals.

Their competitive natures and desire for instant satisfaction create an appeal for gamification within the education environment. Gamification has been shown to drive not only knowledge acquisition but also support motivation and satisfaction in learning environments (Inangil, Dincer, & Kabuk, 2022). Gamification can tap into the intrinsic motivation that inspires

the learner to carry the learning beyond the classroom (Jawad & Tout, 2021). Research points to several game-based elements that drive educational success when pointedly designed for the learner, specifically interactive activities including sorting, ordering, or storytelling as well as points-based reward systems such as levels, leader boards, badges (Kalogiannakis, Papadakis, & Zourmpakis, 2021), and daily streak records of learning.

The distinctiveness of this generation has several significant impacts on the world of work. This generation has very different interpersonal skill gaps than previous eras and learns in new and novel ways. Further understanding of the social constructs of Gen Z and associated potential interpersonal skill gaps is needed to develop educational methods to ensure their future success within the workplace. In addition, it should be acknowledged that the educational tools available now are remarkably different than what was available just a decade prior. Thus, it is important to not only understand the current state but also design learning systems to effectively engage Gen Z. Once the best methods are identified, they can be utilized to train this generation on the drivers of job satisfaction to ensure continued or improved workplace engagement across generations that can be sustained into the future.

Drivers of Job Satisfaction

There is an adage that people don't quit their jobs but rather quit their bosses, which is captured in pop culture films like *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Bad Bosses* (Reed, 2018), where employees are driven to extreme action by bad managers. While it may seem intuitive, the impact of a poorly skilled manager can have an extreme effect on job satisfaction. Pay, schedule, and career advancement may be the primary keys to driving job satisfaction, which, in turn, drives organizational performance (Jadhav et al, 2021), but job satisfaction is more complex than these factors alone.

Many studies point to the importance of influential leadership as the key intangible driver of employee satisfaction and retention. The definition of leadership often diverges into the desired characteristics of a good leader, and while there is certainly a strong case for what internal characteristics make up a good leader, their interpersonal abilities may be more important. Most basically, a leader is someone that others follow. In that vein, a leader is a person with influence, which motivates others to follow their lead. Influence can be gained through many avenues, but the days of authoritarian leadership largely disintegrated within this decade as evidenced by the bankruptcy, acquisition, and closure of 52% of Fortune 500 companies over the last 20 years (Mollor, 2020). As coined by presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns and further researched by Bernard M. Bass, the altruistic and collaborative style of Transformational Leadership has largely replaced the old models and has been linked to improved performance and well-being of team members (Cherry, 2022).

The concept of influence, rather than direct authority, has a long history within the forum of leadership skills in U.S. culture reaching back to the era of The Great Depression through to the modern day. It would be impossible to discuss influence without including Dale Carnegie's heralded book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, originally published in 1936. Of no relation to the industrialist Andrew Carnegie (Pollak, 2012), Dale Carnegie was a 20-plus year veteran of teaching public speaking when he decided to write a book on practical human relations. He set about defining the key skills needed through voracious reading and celebrity case studies about people such as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Benjamin Franklin, and Clark Gable. The culmination of his learnings was captured in his book, where Carnegie boiled leadership down to the ability to influence. To this end, he wrote, "In a nutshell, a leader's job often includes changing your people's attitudes and behavior (p.274)," which is included in the

definition of influence according to the traditional Oxford Dictionary (2023). From there, Carnegie developed 30 principles that lean deeply into “the fine art of getting along with people (p. xvi).” These principles continue to be taught today in the namesake Institute on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and encompass the vastness of what makes a person likable from optimism to emotional intelligence (Weisberg, 2018). While likeability is still a key leadership skill, sociological and psychological studies since Carnegie’s time have developed a more nuanced understanding of this trait in driving influential leadership in a business context.

The criticality of likeability continued to be emphasized in the work of social scientist Dr. Robert Cialdini, who went undercover into a multitude of sales industries to better understand the levers of persuasion. He captured his learnings in his book *Influence* (1984), and identified six levers of influence, including reciprocation; liking; social proof; authority; scarcity; and commitment and consistency. In his 2021 update of the book, however, he identified a seventh lever of unity, which is a desire for group belonging. This newly defined level bares a strong similarity to empathy. This common thread of the importance of empathy as an influential leader is evident in the research on the topic through the lenses of pop psychology, business, and academia. For example, in *Influence Is Your Superpower*, author Zoe Chance, who has a Doctor of Business Administration from Harvard Business School and is currently a professor at the Yale School of Management, explains an activity she facilitates called *The Empathy Challenge* where students practice listening to other students’ perspectives on sensitive topics, such as racism, abortion, and gun control. Chance defines this ability to actively listen and empathize as key to “open hearts and minds--including our own--to influence (p. 149).” In *You Have More Influence Than You Think* (2021), written by Vanessa Bohns who holds a Ph.D. in psychology from Columbia University and currently teaches organizational behavior at Cornell University,

delves into the power of simply asking for what you want as a means of influence, which people tend to want to help with “out of genuine empathy and a desire to do something good (p.66).”

This underlying influence of empathy on leadership has also been studied by behavioral scientists as it relates to individual psychology in addition to group sociology. Often called emotional intelligence and quantified by psychologists as an emotional quotient (EQ), this skill set provides a critical balance to the traditional leadership models. Beyond raw intelligence or intellectual quotient (IQ), EQ encompasses important leadership skills such as effective conflict management and collaborative problem-solving (Cherry, 2022).

The work of thought leaders from Cialdini to Chance creates a clear link between influential leadership and empathy, but this research does not shed direct light on the specific drivers of job satisfaction in a manufacturing environment. Several global studies have attempted to quantify factory culture further and identify what attributes are desired in leadership therein. Based on these studies, empathy is the key influential leadership that is further substantiated in this industry specifically. Research has reinforced the need for leadership to possess the skill of influencing. Leadership was found to be a strong driver of employee performance based on a questionnaire of 148 furniture factory workers in Indonesia that identified the primary drivers of success as work environment, motivation, and leadership (Ingsih, Wuryani, & Suhana, 2021). A survey of 200 manufacturing and service organization employees in Kosovo found empirical evidence that key leadership skills created an organizational climate that positively impacted employee job satisfaction, specifically performance feedback, managerial support, and effective communication (Osmani, Sejdiu, & Jusufi, 2022). This study was especially interesting given the sociopolitical challenges in Kosovo external to work functions. A similar study of 70 apparel manufacturing employees in Sri Lanka found a positive correlation to elements of

transformational leadership in driving employee job satisfaction, specifically “idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration” (Chandrasekara, 2019, p. 387). Influencing skills of leaders or psychological capital was also found to have a significant effect on engagement, satisfaction, and performance in a study of 257 manufacturing employees in Zimbabwe (Ngwenya & Pelsler, 2020). The global findings of the impact of influential leadership were reinforced in the United States manufacturing industry by several studies including a study aimed at understanding turnover causes in factories in the southeastern area of the country (Skelton, Nattress, & Dwyer, 2020) and the Midwest (Kirchner & Stull, 2022). Based on this research, having influential leaders is key to driving employee job satisfaction.

The emphasis on both the workers and the leaders being committed to the organization was also a common theme in many of the studies. Consider a survey of 410 employees at manufacturing facilities in Bangladesh that found that operational performance was driven by both employee engagement (or self-awareness) and management commitment, where these elements encompassed the communication of goals and values that drove a desire to maintain group membership (Karim & Qamruzzaman, 2020). This was reinforced in a survey of a mix of 259 blue- and white-collar employees at a gun manufacturing facility in Turkey to better understand the drivers of safety culture, which were found to be employee engagement and management commitment (Çiftçioğlu, Kadirgan, & Eşiyok, 2021). Finally, a survey of 475 factory workers in Malaysia found that job satisfaction was driven by the employee’s perception of fair pay, work-life balance, and being part of a positive culture, which significantly outpaced the impacts of company tenure or being provided with education on the job (Manaf, Azzman, &

Idid, 2021). Throughout these studies, there is a desire for mutuality and fairness, which are traits often linked to empathy.

Creating a climate of fairness in a manufacturing facility can be tough due to the work schedule. Nurturing a positive culture can be difficult in any organization but is a specific challenge of manufacturing environments due to the non-stop production model, which necessitates shift work to ensure efficient production. Off-cycle shift work is a detriment to employee health and well-being, but several surveys found that a positive work culture served to mitigate the negative effects. A study focused on the impact of shift work on employee well-being across four major manufacturing facilities in the United States found that there was one perceived exception to the detriment of shift work, which was workplace policies and culture linked to a common belief that the schedule was “necessary, fair, and financially beneficial” (McHugh, Farley, & Rivera, 2020, p. 303). A shared belief system that is perceived as just and implemented by effective leadership can often contribute to a sense of belonging within an organization. For example, a survey of 302 Iranian industrial employees found the key drivers to achieving an engaging culture were predictability, rewards, and leadership, where leadership is specifically described as supervisors caring and listening (Mahmoudi et al, 2019). While predictability and rewards are commonly desired by most employees to meet their basic material needs, the emphasis on leadership skills speaks to their psychosocial needs as well.

Based on the literature from thought leaders and studies from manufacturing, there emerges a shared importance from both workers and management of being committed to the success of the organization and each other and creating a welcoming culture of belonging and meritocracy. Effective leadership has the power to create a positive culture that allows for both company performance and individual employee engagement via a sense of achievement and

camaraderie. One commonality in the literature reviewed was that this culture is created through the act of empathy. However, a significant amount of this data was gathered through surveys and questionnaires, which is not a foolproof methodology. According to Survey Monkey, which is utilized by 95% of Fortune 500 companies (Parker, 2022), surveys and questionnaires can contain inherent bias (Zong, n.d.) in how they are worded, the ordering of the questions, and when and why they are solicited. Thus, it was interesting to understand if this correlation could also be observed in direct data.

Open-Source Data from Glassdoor

In the age of social media, open-source information can be gathered to offer insight into all manner of research hypotheses. For this thesis, the company review site Glassdoor was used to better understand the perspectives of factory floor employees and provided a credible and accessible data supply to prove out the importance of empathy as a critical leadership soft skill. Glassdoor offers the opportunity for any registered user to post a company review, which can be done anonymously. The site originated in 2008 and has gathered millions of reviews. This website also provides salary data and job listings (Clifford, 2018), and this information aligns with the site's tagline that "you deserve a job that loves you back" to create an environment to share candid feedback. The reviews can be sorted by job role to allow for gathering ex post facto data to develop statistically validated insight into what factory floor workers want and do not want from their workplace culture.

Glassdoor has already been used widely since its inception by academia and beyond to gain a variety of insights. In fact, many academic and professional studies have utilized this source to study a diversity of industrial psychology topics. For instance, a 2022 study of Riot Games employees uncovered a problematic work culture (Bergstrom, 2022). Another study from

2020 used over 650,000 reviews to provide insight into organizational culture across multiple job sectors (Das Swain et al, 2020). A 2019 study found that wages, co-worker interactions, company atmosphere, and opportunities for advancement led to favorable company ratings by hotel/casino employees in Las Vegas (Coaley, 2019). The data was taken a step further when MIT Sloan Management Review, Glassdoor, and CultureX, an artificial intelligence (AI) development company that now provides custom analytics to their corporate clients, collaborated to develop the Culture 500 database. This database uses AI to analyze free text and correct for abbreviations, misspellings, jargon, acronyms, and pop culture references to provide insight into nine key values for the world's largest companies using over a million Glassdoor reviews (Sull, Sull, & Chamberlain, 2019). These values include agility, collaboration, customer, diversity, execution, innovation, integrity, performance, and respect.

This data set has been powerful enough that Glassdoor has developed an Economic Research department that regularly publishes insights gathered from data analysis of site content. Company culture continues to play a critical factor in their findings, such as a workplace trend analysis in 2023 that found company culture “is valuable in both attracting and retaining employees, [and] as a way for employers to further distinguish themselves from their competitors (Terrazas, 2022, p. 6).” This data was applied to the mass exodus of individuals from the workforce in 2021 following the global pandemic, which has been termed the Great Resignation. This resignation movement was thought to be driven by worker self-reflection and a new emphasis on work-life balance combined with outdated employer practices (Morgan, 2021). Glassdoor research found that even a one-star increase in employee reviews resulted in improved employee retention as measured by those specific employees not applying for any jobs on the site for the next week in both the United States (Dueholm, 2022) and Europe (Thomas, 2022).

Another 2022 analysis of over 300,000 ratings found that companies with the highest senior leadership ratings in Europe had positive management practices, specifically highlighting the terms “courageous, flexible, autonomy, supportive and approachable” (Thomas, 2022, 5). Glassdoor also utilized its annual Best Places to Work survey data combined with U.S. stock market trending to further confirm the positive correlation between company culture and business performance as measured from the survey’s inception in 2009 through 2019 data (Chamberlain & Munyikwa, 2020).

The analytics from Glassdoor data have provided insight into a multitude of diverse areas. However, there has not been a specific analysis done at the factory floor worker level within the manufacturing sector, including industries such as building materials, food and beverage manufacturing, and consumer packaged goods (CPG). This thesis aims to better understand job satisfaction drivers specific to management techniques from the specific lens of factory floor workers in the food and beverage manufacturing sector, which represents a slice of the data that has not yet been tackled.

Summary

The United States has a long history of hard-working blue-collar factory employees working around the clock, but only a few studies have aimed to understand this important work culture and define the interpersonal skills of leaders to help create a satisfying work environment. However, ex post facto data from social media provides the opportunity to dive deeper into the candid feedback of factory floor workers. This data in tandem with insights into the interpersonal strengths and opportunities of the coming generation of leaders can pivot their style to provide a more satisfying and engaging workplace culture within the manufacturing sector.

Chapter 3: Methodology

“Data are just summaries of thousands of stories—tell a few of those stories to help make the data meaningful.”

— Dan Heath⁴

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was utilized for ex post facto data collected from Glassdoor on food and beverage manufacturing companies operating within the United States. This approach is inspired by the qualitative methods employed in the work of Brené Brown and the quantitative methods utilized by Jim Collins. Brené Brown uses grounded theory methodology to guide her research (Brown, 2012). This qualitative method uses line-by-line data review, transcription, and coding to allow for insights to emerge based on the data. Once data is qualitatively obtained and coded, the coded data can be quantitatively analyzed using traditional statistical methods. After obtaining a carefully selected dataset, Jim Collins uses historical data and employs a comparison method that seeks insights by comparing successful versus unsuccessful results (Collins, n.d.). Collins focuses on drivers of company profitability, providing insight into correlations but not necessarily causation.

To this end, the research for this thesis was completed in two main parts:

1. Trending by Company Ratings – The food and beverage manufacturing industry was considered with eight variables therein. This was a quantitative data collection and analysis comparable to Collins’ methods.
2. Trending of Keywords – The data gathered in the trending of company reviews was utilized in addition to the manual review and synthesis of individual reviews along with six additional variables as available within the dataset. This analysis combined

qualitative methods for categorization and synthesis with quantitative methods of keyword and category counts along with analysis of additional variables. This methodology mimics Brown's methods.

Data Collection

Due to the cost-prohibitive nature of accessing the Culture 500 database along with the primary goal of ensuring that data reflected insights from factory floor workers, reviews were manually gathered by accessing and printing each review. From there, all data was input and coded manually in Microsoft Excel. Individual employee reviews were accepted or rejected based on the position title, which required an individualized evaluation by a knowledgeable party. As much data as possible was gathered within the defined research window. However, due to the manual nature of this process, some datasets were limited. Any trends identified were verified to have a sufficient dataset to be valid. Any instance of a limited data subset that may call the overall validity of a finding into question is appropriately called out. Once the dataset was created within Microsoft Excel, it was statistically analyzed using Minitab.

Company Ratings Data: Selection and Coding

Companies were selected based on their Glassdoor classification as food and beverage manufacturers. A first cut of the data documented the following information based on the company details provided by the Glassdoor overview and overall average ratings. It should be noted that companies missing any of this information were excluded from data collection.

- Ownership Type – Public or Private
- Company Size – Assessed according to the estimated annual revenue and number of employees. This information was coded into categories for ease of analysis.

- Company Age – This data was coded into three categories for ease of data analysis. Historic companies were defined as those established in 1929 or prior, which is linked to the era before the Great Depression (Amadeo, 2022). Modern companies were classified as those established in 1975 to the present day, which is correlated with the digital technology boom as defined by the launch of the Apple 1 personal computer in 1976 (Bellis, 2019).
- Reviews and Ratings – The overall quantity of available employee reviews and ratings on a scale of 1.0 to 5.0 stars was recorded with the caveat that this data includes all available date ranges and was not further stratified. This data was then filtered by the job function of Skilled Labor & Manufacturing to determine the applicable numbers of possible reviews and ratings available.

Keyword Data: Reviews by Factory Floor Workers

Reviews were selected for inclusion based on job titles specific to factory floor workers. All leadership and management containing titles were excluded as well as those titles that reflect a skilled role, such as mechanic or technician. Reviews from January 1, 2022, to the present were manually reviewed and assessed for keywords regardless of whether the keyword was referenced with a positive or negative connotation. Some keywords were grouped into categories based on commonalities. For instance, the comments linked to pension, retirement funding, and healthcare were classified as Benefits. In addition to the variables recorded in the company selection, the following variables were recorded:

- Date of Review
- Job Title, such as Machine Operator
- Employee-specific Rating

- Employment Status – Former or Current (as available)
- Length of Employment (as available)
- State of Employment, such as Pennsylvania

Data Analysis

All data was manually entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then analyzed using Minitab statistical software. Basic statistics, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and multiple regression analysis were utilized for trend evaluations. Statistical significance was defined as $p \leq 0.05$ using one-way ANOVA and multi-regression analysis.

Company Rating: Trends

The response variable for analysis was company rating, which was based on a subjective value of one to five stars and analyzed at two significant digits, i.e., one decimal place. The overall company rating including all employee ratings was compared to the calculated factory floor worker rating determined by the manual data collection. These response variables were compared to each other to understand how the overall company rating is impacted as the data is further drilled down to the factory floor. It was hypothesized that factory floor ratings would score lower than the overall company rating based on the inherent undesirable nature of the type of work. The response variable was also analyzed by ownership type, revenue, number of employees, and company age for statistically significant trends. For instance, private companies may have more favorable ratings than those that are publicly owned or older companies may have less favorable ratings than those that were more recently founded.

Synthesis and Trending of Keywords

Individual reviews were considered in addition to the overall company rating. The ratings were used as response variables to determine any statistically significant trends regarding

employment status (e.g., currently or formerly employed), length of employment in years, and state of residence within the United States where the individual writing the review was employed. Data was coded as needed into categories to enable ease of analysis and not all variables had sufficient data available for a full analysis.

Individual reviews were also evaluated for keyword trends. The values identified by Culture 500 database (Sull, Sull, & Chamberlain, 2019) were used as a starting point for categorization. Targeted keyword categories of pay, benefits, work schedule, and leadership were the initial categories evaluated, but additional categories were identified through the data analysis. Synonyms within a category were considered for keyword affinity, such as:

- Pay may also include wages, money, and hourly rate.
- Benefits may also include healthcare, retirement, and life insurance.
- Work Schedules may also include flexible work hours, work-life balance, and night shift.
- Leadership may also include management and supervision.

If You Build It, They Will Come⁵

Once the data was coded and counted, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis was utilized for trend evaluations to determine statistical significance.

The anticipated primary outputs from data analysis were:

- Determining the potential significance of the difference between the overall company rating and rating specific to factory floor workers and any interrelation therein linked to ownership type, size, and age.
- Confirmation of the importance of pay, benefits, and schedule as key drivers of job satisfaction and engagement.

- Confirmation of leadership and management practices as a key driver of job satisfaction engagement and the specific categorical factors linked to these practices.

Summary

Factory work can be challenging on many levels but is also very necessary for our society to continue to thrive. The manufacturing industry has been part of the professional landscape for generations and will likely continue to be for many more years. Even at the rapid rate of technological development, we still need operators to oversee production at all hours of the day and night. The hard work of factory employees literally provides us with the food and beverages that we need to survive and enjoy life, and the challenging all-hours schedules allow for these products to be made efficiently to keep prices affordable. However, additional research could be done to better understand what these hard-working individuals desire in leadership to drive improved job satisfaction. Leadership can often be confused with managerial skills in corporate environments, which are largely taught from a historical, academic, or theoretical perspective. Often, new leaders are left to struggle through on their own. Anonymous employer reviews available from Glassdoor were utilized to identify several important leadership elements desired by factory floor workers beyond the tangible items of pay, benefits, and schedule.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

“Without ambition one starts nothing. Without work one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson⁶

Evaluation of Ratings as a Function of Company Attribute

Negativity Bias

Given the nature of anonymous company reviews, most reviews skewed towards the negative and acted as a warning to future employees. This naturally occurring negativity bias is a product of our biological evolution and is not necessarily a bad trait with some studies suggesting that the experience of negative situations increases neural processing (Cherry, 2022). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the majority of data analyzed showed that there was a reduction in rating as a function of a keyword being mentioned and not the reverse. Thus, a focus on improving the negative areas found to be significant may not necessarily drive improved ratings but rather may reduce the overall negativity.

Lower Ratings Found in Operations

The overall company rating was statistically higher than the ratings provided by operator-level employees by an average of 0.6 points and a $p=0.000$. This suggests that operational employees have less job satisfaction than employees in other business segments of the same company, such as marketing, sales, and finance. Operational employees face very different challenges from their 9-to-5 colleagues in other functions from long and/or rotating shifts to physical labor in hot and cold environmental conditions. A machine operator at Ventura Foods noted that “12-hour shifts make for a very long night (Glassdoor, 2022).” A general production worker at Nestle commented, “You’ll be on your feet all day working, and by the end of the day,

you'll be exhausted (Glassdoor, 2022).” Several reviews, such as one from a former production employee for ConAgra Brands mentioned a “disregard for safety,” and suggested that management “get your cabooses out of your air-conditioned offices and walk the extremely hot floor and check on your peasants from time to time (Glassdoor, 2022).” These sorts of issues are not typically faced by employees working in a traditional or remote office setting.

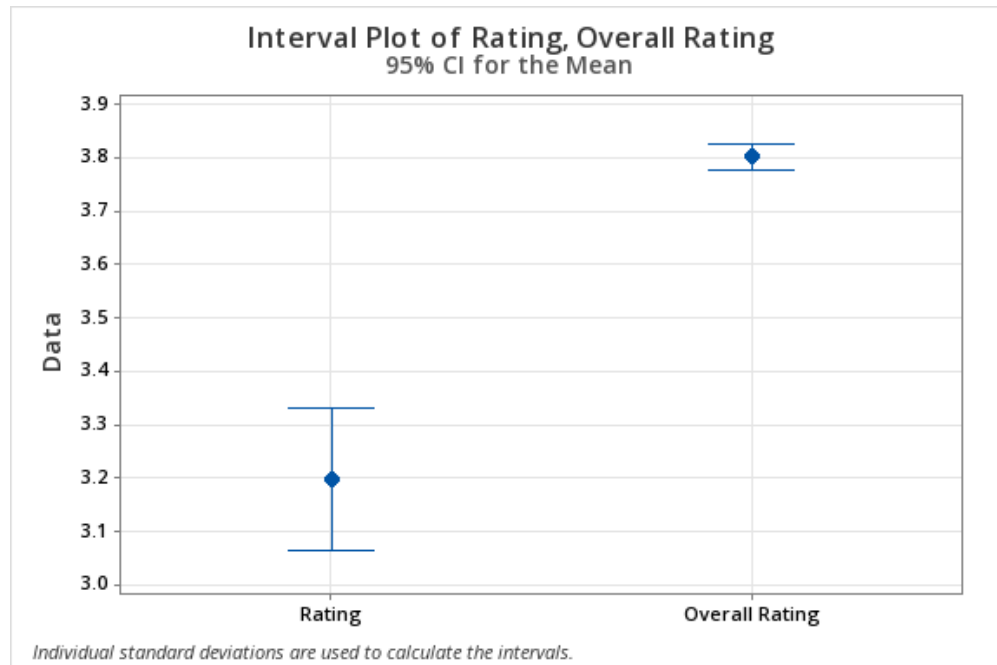


Figure 1. Interval Plot of Operator versus Overall Company Rating

Lower Ratings Found in Former Employees

Statistical evaluation of current versus former employment status on subjective company rating was found to be significant, where $p=0.000$ using a One-Way ANOVA analysis. Not surprisingly, current employees rated companies higher than former employees by an average of 0.6 points, which suggests that employees did not typically leave companies that they gave a high rating. For example, a former machine operator for Russell Stover commented, “There is a reason we are leaving like rats from a sinking ship (Glassdoor, 2022).” A former packaging operator for Mars in Mattoon, IL commented that “Management is a joke. They seem to think

that it is the only place to work in the area. So the arrogance is strong, thus it is driving people away (Glassdoor, 2022).” A former machine operator for The Coca-Cola Company said, “I was treated unfairly... and I’m disgusted (Glassdoor, 2023).” It should be noted, however, that 246 of the total 421 reviews, or roughly 58%, were provided by current employees. Thus, while former employee reviews may skew negative, there is an opportunity for current employee reviews to balance this out through a higher percentage of overall ratings.

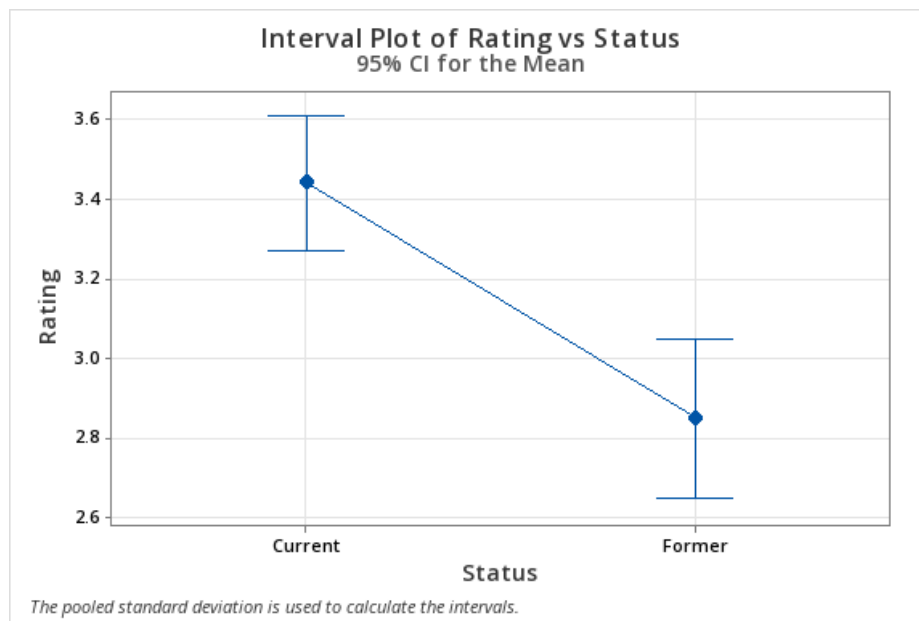


Figure 2. Interval Plot of Company Rating by Employment Status

Higher Ratings Seen in Private versus Public Companies

Ratings for private companies averaged 0.3 points higher than publicly held companies, where $p=0.028$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Some of the major privately held companies included Mars, Anheuser-Busch, Idohoan, McCain Foods, and Butterball. Some of the major public companies included PepsiCo, Kraft Heinz, Campbell’s, Kellogg, and General Mills.

Although private companies scored better overall, several reviews mentioned the challenges of a privately held company. For example, a tenured machine operator for E. & J. Gallo Winery said, “They say they are a family company but it’s THEIR family and they don’t care about yours

(Glassdoor, 2022).” However, it should be noted that roughly 34% of the total reviews were provided by employees of privately held companies; thus, there may be some bias to the data not captured in this study due to the lower total percent.

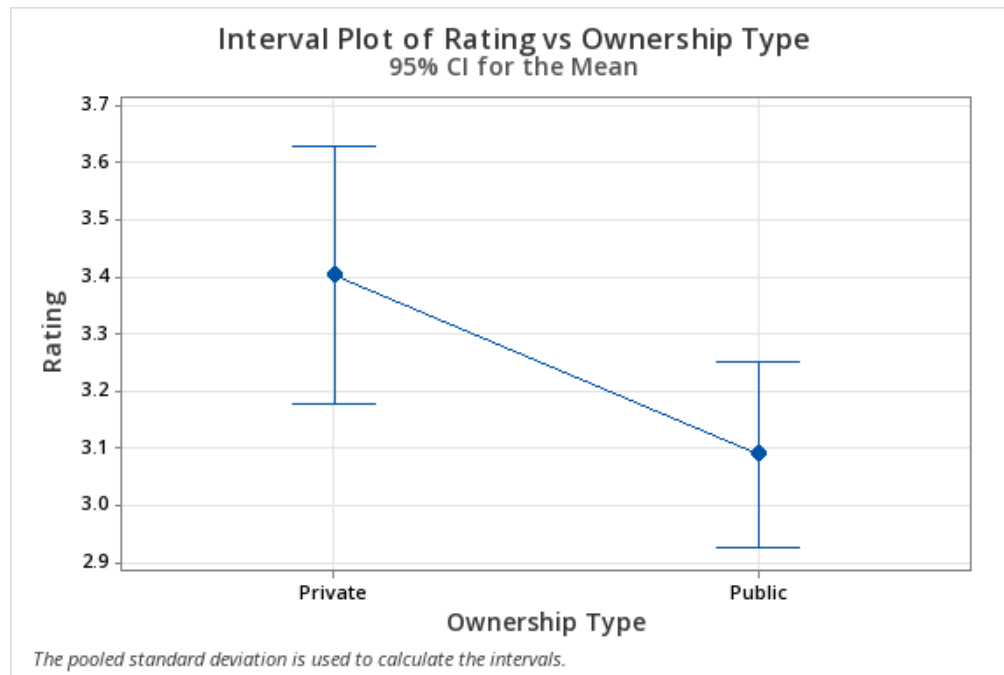


Figure 3. Interval Plot of Company Rating by Ownership Type

Factors with No Statistical Significance

As further detailed in Appendix 1, the evaluation of the following factors found no statistical significance:

- Time in a role for both current and former employment status.
- Company size as measured in revenue and number of employees.
- Geographic area, specifically the mid-west, northeast, southeast, and west regions.
- Industry types, such as alcohol, confectionary, dairy, and meat.
- Timing of the rating both in the month of the year and on the day of the week that the rating was provided.

Multivariant Analysis of Coded Keywords

Beyond the comparison of company-based factors influencing the subjective rating, individual comments from each rating were reviewed and analyzed for evidence of keyword trends.

Statistically Significant Leadership Attributes

As further detailed in Appendix 2, a General Linear Model analysis found that the following variables statistically impacted the rating when mentioned in a review out of 23 keyword categories analyzed:

1. Empathy with $p=0.000$
2. Favoritism with $p=0.000$
3. Culture with $p=0.022$
4. Work-Life Balance with $p=0.026$

Of additional note, the impact of coworkers was found to be significant in the General Linear Model but not significant in a One-Way ANOVA analysis, and thus appears to have a mediating rather than a direct effect on the overall rating. Thus, it was excluded from further analysis.

Benefits and pay were also found to be significant in the General Linear Model but were not found to be statistically significant in a One-Way ANOVA analysis. Further analysis of these factors was excluded both based on the ANOVA results and the thesis aim to focus on leadership attributes specifically. However, it is interesting to note that the leadership-based factors had a stronger impact on rating than tangible factors such as benefits and pay.

The additional keywords analyzed that were found to not be statistically significant were: having long work hours, availability of breaks, offering of perks, interactions with coworkers, staffing levels (specifically being short-staffed), easy/boring work, work environment (hot, cold, etc.), the physicality of work, equipment maintenance practices, organization and planned

coordination of staffing, training availability and effectiveness, recognition, communication, and opportunities for advancement.

Findings Linked to Empathy

Empathy and related terms were mentioned in 81 of the 421 data points, and employee reviews that mentioned this term had statistically significant lower ratings by an average of 0.9 points than those where the term was not mentioned. As detailed in Appendix 3, none of the sub-category keywords considered had a significant impact on this correlation. The key terms mentioned in reviews relating to empathy were linked to having a feeling that their employer genuinely cared about the employee (“care”), feeling respected and treated like humans and not robots (“respect”), and leadership listening to employee concerns (“listen”). On an individual basis, none of these factors impacted the company rating in a statistically significant way.

Employee verbatims stressed the need for respecting their work contribution and authentically caring for employees as individuals. In a review titled “You are just a number,” a Machine Operator at Perdue offered the following advice to management, “Treat people like human beings (Glassdoor, 2022).” A machine operator for Ghirardelli Chocolate said, “My suggestion to management is to check up on your employees. We deserve rest time. We are human beings not robots (Glassdoor, 2022).” A machine operator for Mission Foods advised management to, “Treat people like adults, not children [and] lead by example (Glassdoor, 2022).” A Sensient Technologies employee pointed out, “They will fire you for small mistakes (Glassdoor, 2022).” A PepsiCo machine operator echoed this sentiment by saying “Provide better leadership and that your actions reflect what the company preaches, don’t just fake it (Glassdoor, 2022).” A production operator for McKee Foods said, “A majority of management does not care about employees and is very transparent about it (Glassdoor, 2022).” In one of the

very few positive reviews, a machine operator for Johnsonville with more than five years at the company gave a five-star rating and said that the company “supports their employees to become the best they can be (Glassdoor, 2022).” Whether positive or negative in nature, employee reviews linked to empathy were high impassioned.

Findings Linked to Favoritism

Favoritism and related terms, such as nepotism, were mentioned in 81 of the 421 data points, and employee reviews that mentioned this term had lower ratings by an average of 1.1 points than those where the term was not mentioned. As detailed in Appendix 4, none of the covariates considered had a significant impact on this correlation. Favoritism was manifested in a few different ways, from leadership picking individual favorites to nepotism to bias based on shift. A machine operator for PepsiCo shared that, “Not all crews are held to the same standard (Glassdoor, 2023).” A machine operator for Mars commented that “Management teams are hyper competitive and play favorites. They screw over the person in the middle with their emotional decisions (Glassdoor, 2022).” A former production worker for Tyson Foods shared that there is “too much favoritism; management applies personal problem issues when making judgment calls (Glassdoor, 2022).” A production operator for General Mills commented that their factory is a “Stereotypical boys club. TPTB [the powers that be] turn a blind eye to a lot and will pressure you to take the fall to protect suck ups (Glassdoor, 2022).” A former machine operator who had more than eight years with ConAgra noted that “Favoritism is big at Vlasic.” The feeling of being treated unfairly comes in many forms from textbook discrimination to nepotism to valuing specific individuals over others. This practice can lead to ‘malicious envy’ amongst employees, and some research suggests that this can be best managed and eliminated through emotional intelligence training (Xu, Pan, and Zheng, 2022).

Findings Linked to Culture

Workplace culture was mentioned in 58 of the 421 data points, and employee reviews that mentioned this term had lower ratings by an average of 0.5 points than those where the term was not mentioned. This keyword was found to be statistically significant with a p-value = 0.022, but none of the covariates considered had a significant impact on this factor as detailed in Appendix 5. Workplace culture speaks to the psychological work environment, such as a production associate at Rich's Products offering this advice to management, "Get rid of the hostile work environment and stop allow[ing] discrimination (Glassdoor, 2022)." A machine operator for Pinnacle Foods said that "They hammer rules on you. You get yelled at constantly (Glassdoor, 2022)." A former production worker for Hormel commented about the company has a "disrespectful environment and no values are present (Glassdoor, 2023)." A general production worker for Butterball commented that their facility is a "big high school and everybody wants to be the supervisor (Glassdoor, 2022)." Positive notes were seen however by several operators within the dataset, including a machine operator for Saputo who praised the company for acting "with family values (Glassdoor, 2022)," and a fairly positive review from a production worker for JBS advised that management should "Continue trying to make it a better place for the workers (Glassdoor, 2022)."

Findings Linked to Work-Life Balance

Work-Life Balance and similar terms and phrases were mentioned in 57 of the 421 data points, and employee reviews that mentioned this term had lower ratings by an average of 0.2 points than those where the term was not mentioned. A production worker for Hershey's shared their frustration with this area specifically, saying "Good luck getting time off or having any social life (Glassdoor, 2022)." A machine operator at Leprino Foods said, "You have no life and

are always away from your family (Glassdoor, 2023).” A similar comment was given by a machine operator at Kellogg’s who said that they work “way too many hours [and have] no time for life (Glassdoor, 2022).” A former machine operator for Kraft Heinz commented that “Your life, family, and home is irrelevant (Glassdoor, 2023).” As detailed in Appendix 6, none of the covariates considered had a significant impact on this. While often thought of as a new concept, the idea of work-life balance originated in the 1970s with Baby Boomers looking to shift their lifestyle, and this trend has continued through into Gen Z professionals who often choose jobs specifically because they support their lifestyle (Hall, 2022).

Summary

The differences in companies such as size and age did not produce much of a difference except that private companies have higher ratings than public companies within the field of food and beverage manufacturing as measured by company rating. However, the interpersonal mediators of empathy, favoritism, culture, and work-life balance were found to be statistically significant. Diving deeper into understanding empathy shows that favoritism, culture, and work-life balance may be considered sub-components of this factor. Empathy can be defined as “the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place (Cherry, 2023).” When considering this definition, empathy from leadership can be seen as the single biggest factor in predicting job satisfaction.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

“I only know that I know nothing.”

— Socrates⁷

Discussion

Factory culture was borne into existence in America in 1913, and while volumes of research have been written on workplace culture, factory floor operators in the food and beverage industry are still unsatisfied with their jobs. Beyond the job basics of pay, benefits, and schedule, there is an opportunity to improve the interpersonal skills of their leadership, specifically in the area of empathy.

Problem of Study

The problem of this thesis was to define the key interpersonal skills desired by factory floor workers in their direct supervisors in food and beverage manufacturing environments operating in the United States.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was that leadership characteristics, specifically the ability to influence others, would be a key driver toward the job satisfaction of employees on the factory floor. This was partially true in that influence is important in leadership, but this study showed that empathy is the specific vehicle that enables this. Related, creating a culture of equality and meritocracy was also important.

Literature Review

The review of the literature investigated several studies targeted at factory floor operators and identified the importance of a mutual commitment to the success of the organization and creating a welcoming culture of belonging. According to Harvard Business Review, leadership is

essential in creating an organization's culture (Cote, 2023). The traits of a leader who can effectively influence an organization's culture are defined by modern thought leaders as cultivating a likable personality, engaging with employees through asking clarity-seeking questions, and maintaining an altruistic and collaborative mindset. These traits are encompassed in the term emotional intelligence, which is also referred to as EQ, and contains five primary components: 1) Self-awareness, 2) Self-regulation, 3) Social Skills, 4) Empathy, and 5) Motivation (Cherry, 2022).

Review of Methodology and Results

Based on the statistical keyword analysis, empathy was found to be the key interpersonal skill driver for improved job satisfaction. However, one important understanding in utilizing this data is that improving the factors that are linked to negative ratings may not improve the company's overall rating. Ratings are highly personal and capture a moment in time, typically from former employees who had their reasons for leaving their employer. There is a definite sense of externalization of blame in the reviews, which Freud would call a Projection defense mechanism used to protect one's ego (McLeod, 2023). There is no guarantee that reviewers have invested the time and energy to self-reflect to better understand how their behaviors and preferences may have influenced their perception. This 'blame game' can cloud one's judgment (Flaxington, 2016) and repress underlying reasons for dissatisfaction. Thus, even improving the conditions linked to job dissatisfaction may not result in a guaranteed net improvement in ratings. However, while it may not be a panacea, additional soft skill education for emerging and new leaders is not likely to have any negative impact.

Limitations

It should be noted that all data was gathered from self-reported anonymous reviews. This ex post facto dataset does not allow for further verification of trends and results, which may be impacted by external factors and bias. Targeted questionnaires and other data-gathering techniques allow for data verification that is not possible within this dataset. However, it should be noted that internal engagement surveys and exit interviews have some of the same limitations (Davis, 2023).

Conclusions

Empathy is a core component of emotional intelligence, which can be learned through cost-effective online courses on platforms such as EdX and Udemy. These new ways of learning specifically meet the learning preferences of Gen Z, including driving personal accountability, the inclusion of interactive and/or feedback components, integral rewards through certification or gamification elements, and a lower level of hierarchy. Thus, it is recommended that all new leaders complete a similar course as part of their onboarding process as these skills were likely not to have been formally learned through their education or previous work experience. It may also be beneficial for more experienced colleagues to also complete this course to help to provide a common language and understanding of the new world of leadership.

Recommendations for Future Research

The next step for this research would be to pressure test the hypotheses in a corporate setting. It would be interesting to gather before and after ratings for emerging leaders that take targeted coursework to enhance their empathy skills. Rating information could be gathered through targeted questions in employee engagement surveys, which have become commonplace for corporations to complete on an annual basis, or through 360-degree surveys, which collect leadership impressions from an individual's direct reports, peers, and leadership as a way to

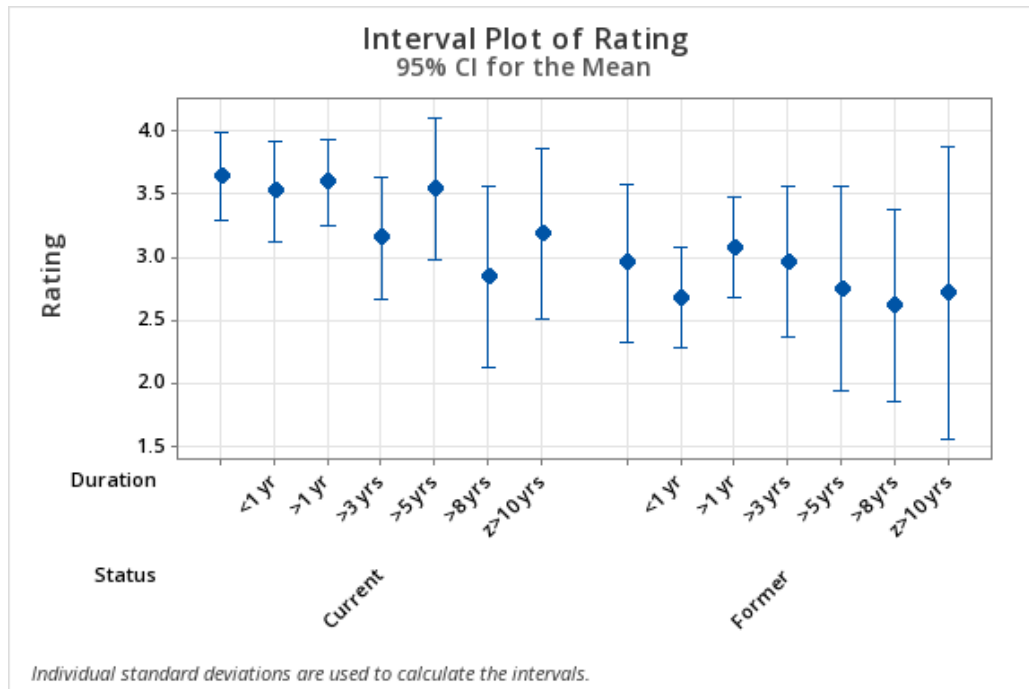
provide a balanced perspective on performance. It should be noted that this data is typically highly sensitive and confidential, and thus would not be readily available to external stakeholders. If this data could somehow be obtained, it would need to be managed in such a manner to protect the reputation of the individual and the corporation.

Beyond a true evaluation before and after coursework, another interesting covariant that was not available in this data set was the age of the reviewer. It would be interesting to understand if there is a correlation between generations as our social norms evolve. It is hypothesized that Millennials and Gen Z value work-life balance more than previous generations (Hoffower, 2021), but it would be interesting to better understand if this assumption is backed by data in this field. Variables that could be added to the dataset with minimal effort might also provide more insight. It would be interesting to add additional company covariates, such as the overall CEO rating and the country in which the company headquarters is based. It would also be interesting to collect the same data and compare therein with a larger diversity of manufacturing industries, such as pharmaceuticals and building materials.

Appendix 1: Initial data review

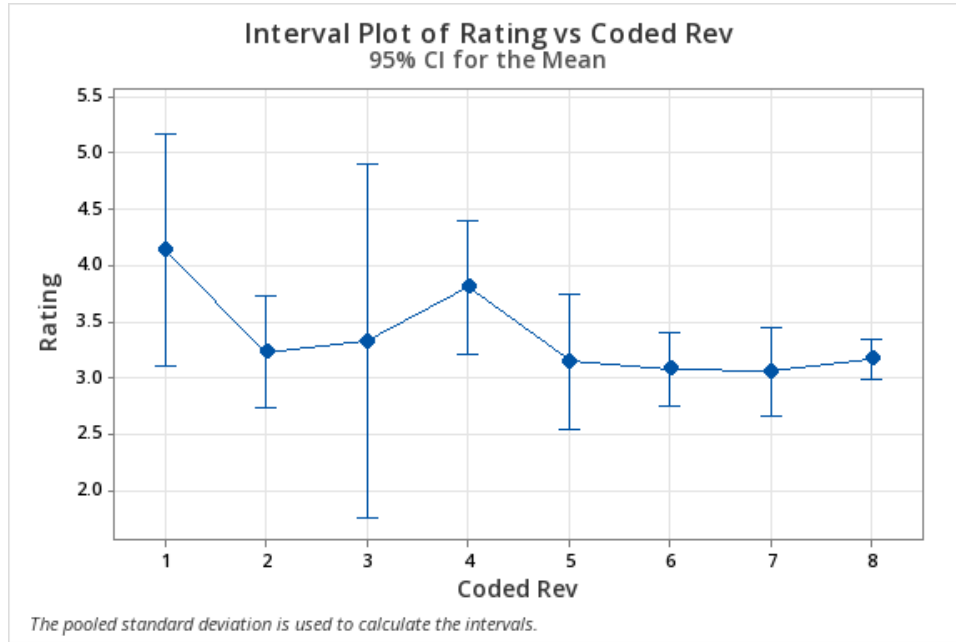
RATING BY DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

No statistical difference was observed in either current or former employees based on the duration of employment, where $p=0.311$ using a General Linear Model analysis.



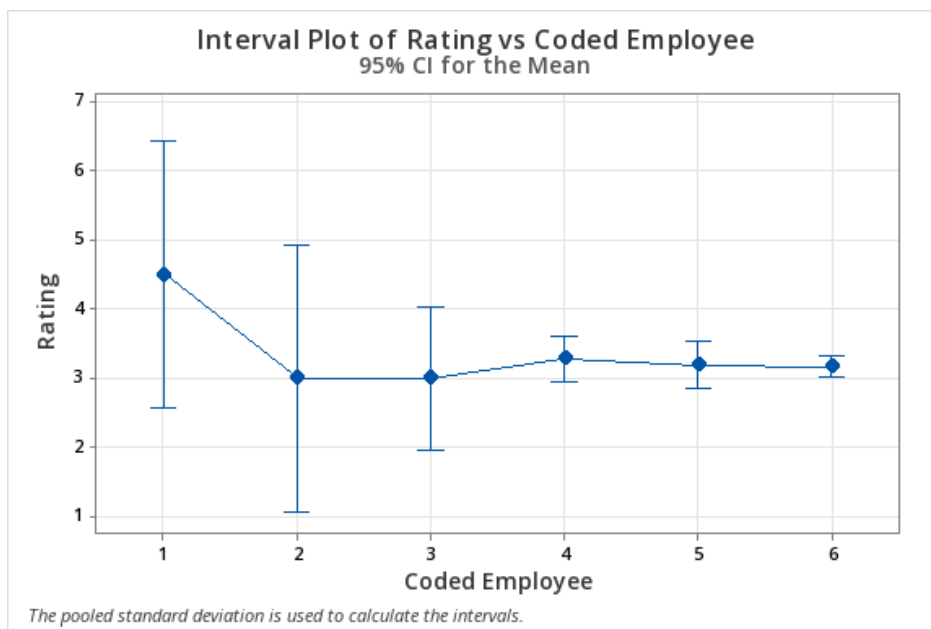
RATINGS BY COMPANY SIZE

No statistical difference in rating was seen between revenue levels, where $p=0.295$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis and revenue is coded into ascending categories. It should be noted that the lowest standard deviation was seen at larger companies but also had the most data points at 221, which was more than all other categories combined.



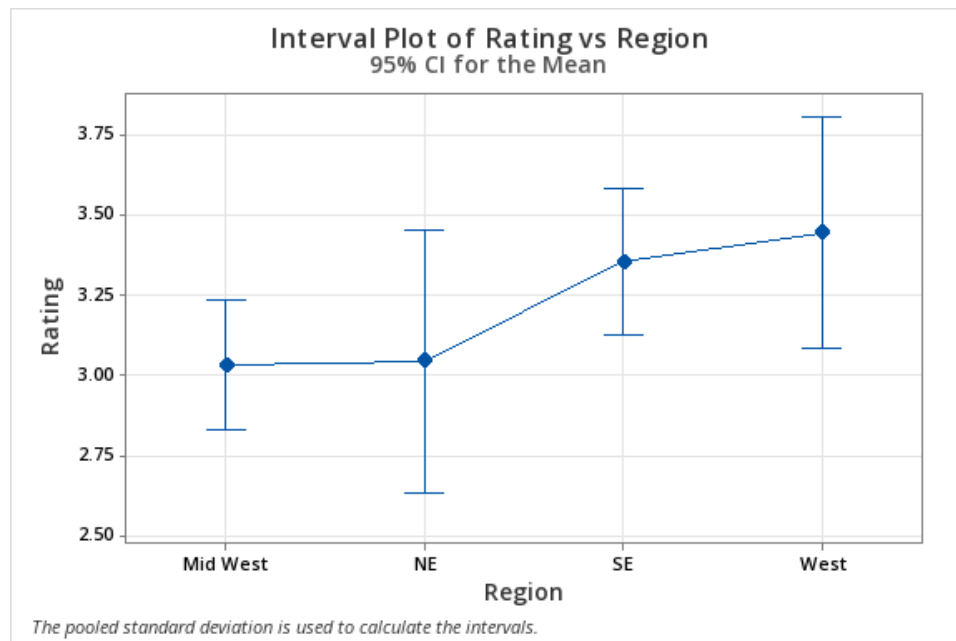
RATINGS BY OVERALL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

No statistical difference in rating was seen between the number of employees, where $p=0.808$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis, and the data is coded into ascending categories. It should be noted that the lowest standard deviation was seen at larger companies but also had the most data points at 277, which was more than all other categories combined.



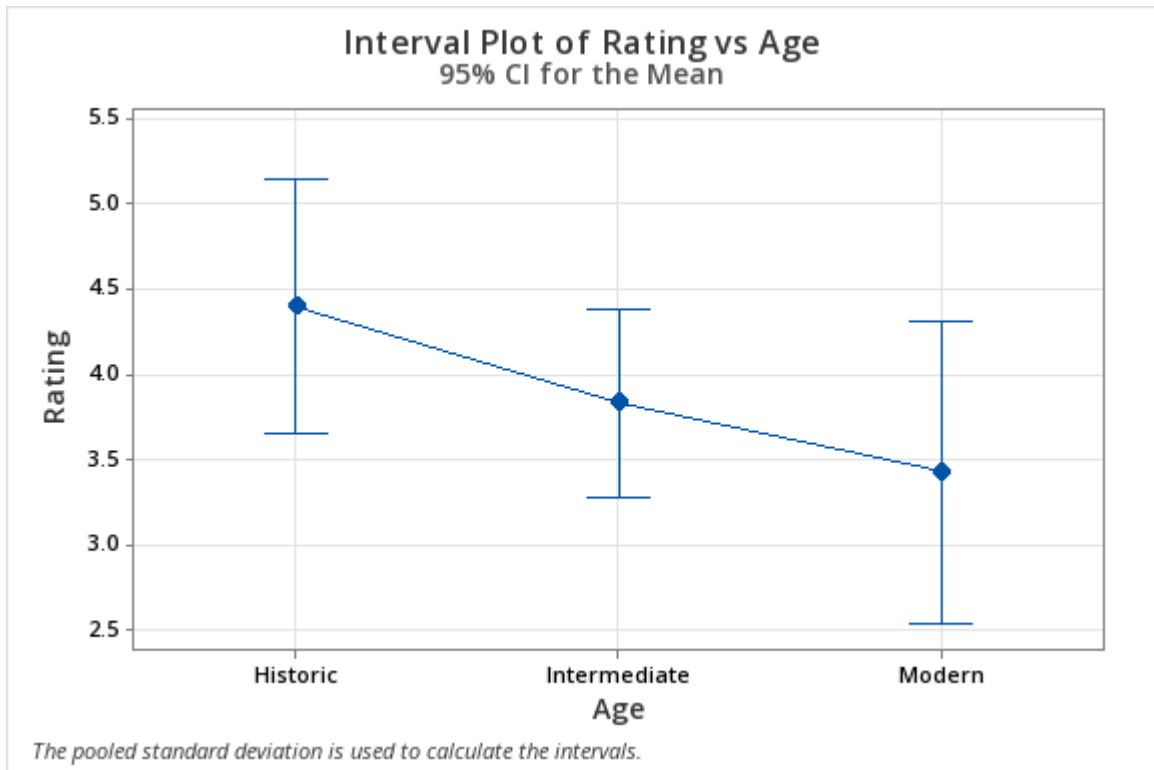
RATINGS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

No statistical difference was seen between ratings according to state or when coded into geographical regions, where $p=0.082$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis.



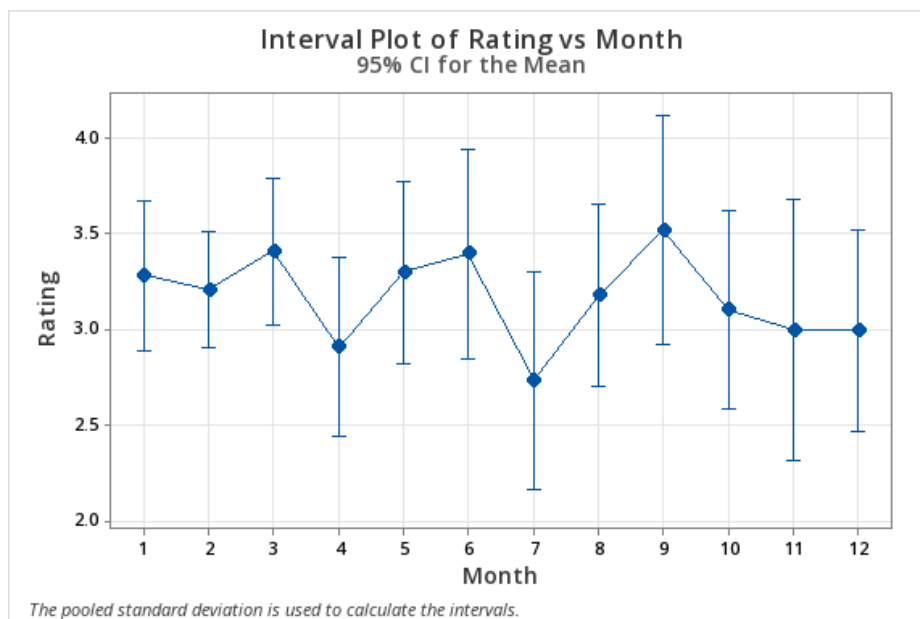
RATINGS BY COMPANY AGE

Company age showed no statistical correlation with rating, where $p=0.228$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis.

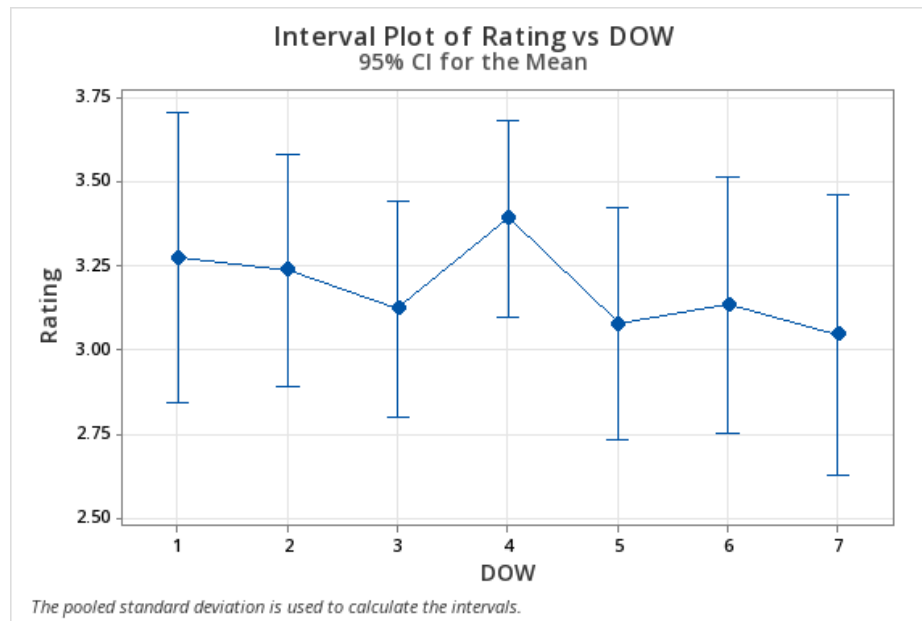


RATINGS BY TIMING OF THE RATING

The timing was defined by the date that the review was recorded on Glassdoor, and no statistical difference was seen between the rating and the month of the year that the rating was recorded, where $p=0.691$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis.

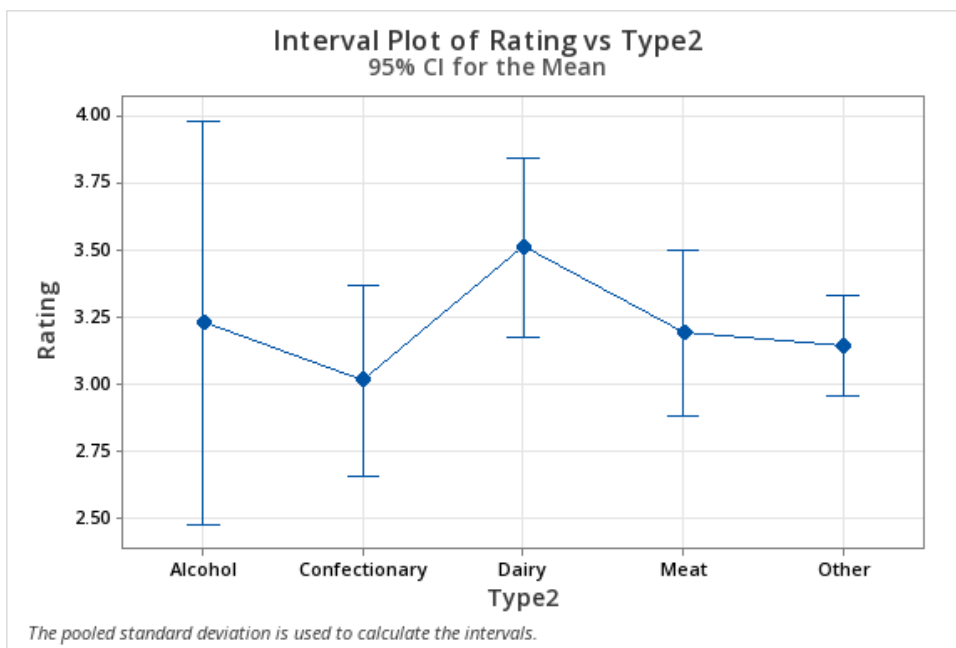
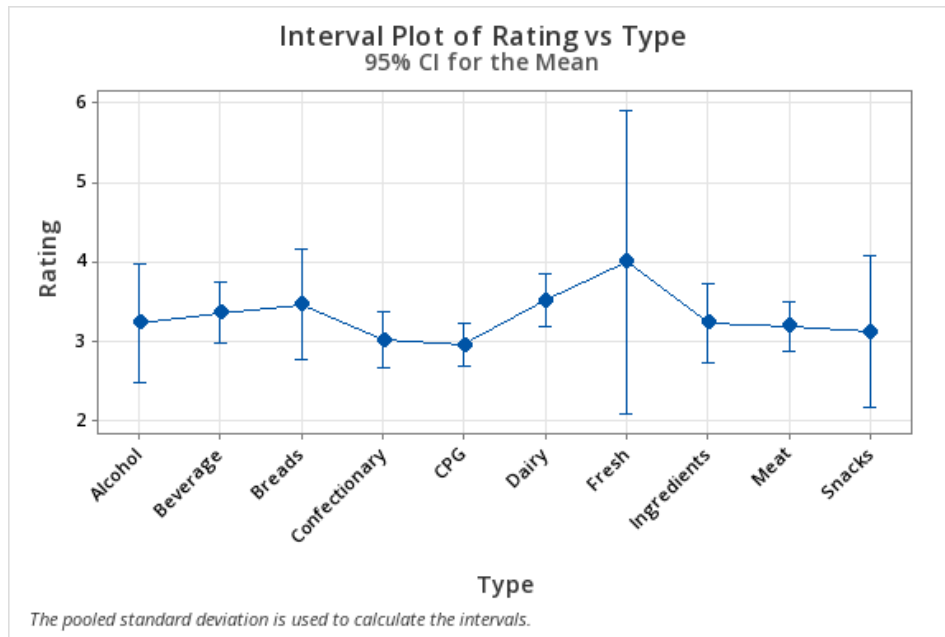


No statistical difference was seen between the rating and the day of the week that the rating was recorded, where $p=0.790$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis.



RATINGS BY INDUSTRY TYPE

Categories were manually classified, and no statistical difference was seen between specific industry types and ratings, where $p=0.379$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Upon further classification in broader categories, still, no statistical difference was seen between specific industry types and ratings, where $p=0.313$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. In general, industries producing dairy ingredients had the highest rating at 3.5 and confectionary had the lowest rating at 3.0.



Means

Type2	N	Mean	StDev	95% CI
Alcohol	13	3.231	1.235	(2.477, 3.985)
Confectionary	58	3.017	1.420	(2.660, 3.374)

Dairy	66	3.515	1.438	(3.181, 3.850)
Meat	77	3.195	1.415	(2.885, 3.505)
Other	207	3.1449	1.3504	(2.9560, 3.3339)

Pooled StDev = 1.38285

Appendix 2: Overall Multivariate Analysis

The multivariate analysis combined with one-way ANOVA found five coded terms to have a significant impact on overall rating, including empathy, favoritism, benefits, culture, and work-life balance, where all of the terms except for benefits resulted in a lower overall rating.

General Linear Model analysis found that the following variables statistically impacted the rating when mentioned in a review out of 23 categories analyzed, which are listed in order of significance:

1. Empathy with $p=0.000$
2. Favoritism with $p=0.000$
3. Benefits with $p=0.003$
4. Culture with $p=0.022$
5. Work-Life with $p=0.026$
6. Coworkers with $p=0.033$ but were not found to be statically significant in a One-Way ANOVA analysis
7. Pay with $p=0.041$ but was not found to be statically significant in a One-Way ANOVA analysis

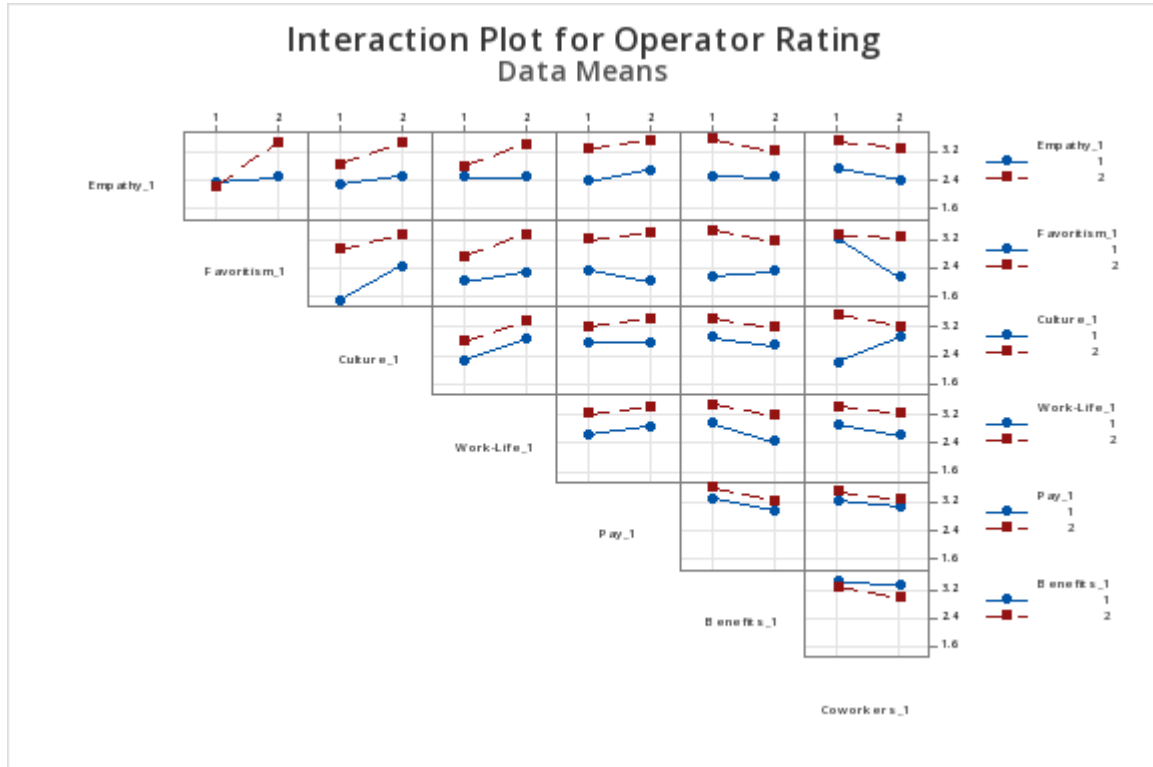
Analysis of Variance

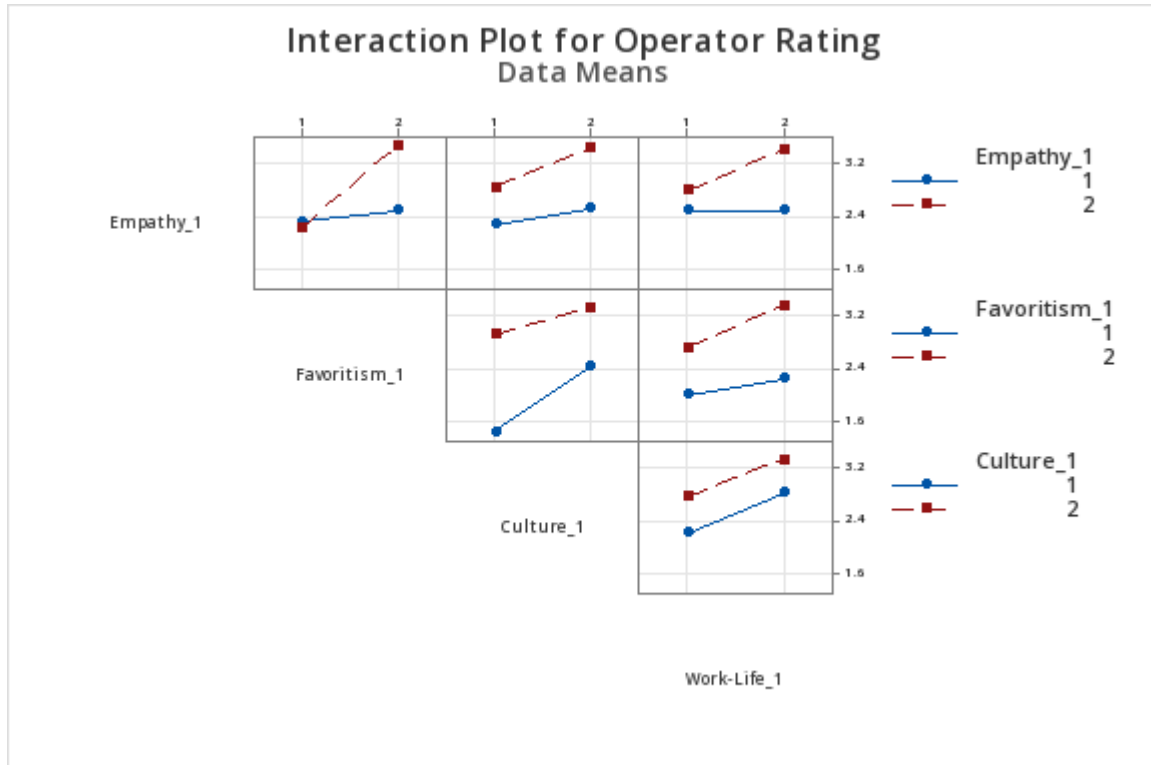
Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Pay_1	1	6.437	6.4368	4.21	0.041
OT_1	1	0.579	0.5795	0.38	0.538
Work-Life_1	1	7.657	7.6567	5.01	0.026
Long Hrs_1	1	5.266	5.2663	3.45	0.064
Breaks_1	1	0.024	0.0238	0.02	0.901

Schedule_1	1	0.243	0.2429	0.16	0.690
Benefits_1	1	13.515	13.5155	8.85	0.003
Perks_1	1	0.763	0.7635	0.50	0.480
Favoritism_1	1	29.575	29.5750	19.36	0.000
Culture_1	1	8.116	8.1164	5.31	0.022
Coworkers_1	1	6.962	6.9616	4.56	0.033
Staffing_1	1	2.860	2.8597	1.87	0.172
Easy_1	1	1.513	1.5129	0.99	0.320
Environmt_1	1	0.320	0.3201	0.21	0.647
Physical_1	1	0.390	0.3900	0.26	0.614
Maint_1	1	0.059	0.0587	0.04	0.845
Mgmt_1	1	39.389	39.3892	25.79	0.000
Org_1	1	0.134	0.1341	0.09	0.767
Recog_1	1	4.887	4.8874	3.20	0.074
Training_1	1	2.885	2.8846	1.89	0.170
Listen_1	1	0.107	0.1075	0.07	0.791
Advance_1	1	7.000	6.9999	4.58	0.033
Comm_1	1	0.447	0.4473	0.29	0.589
Empathy_1	1	25.333	25.3334	16.59	0.000
Error	396	604.812	1.5273		
Lack-of-Fit	309	458.527	1.4839	0.88	0.779

Pure Error 87 146.286 1.6814

Total 420 804.637

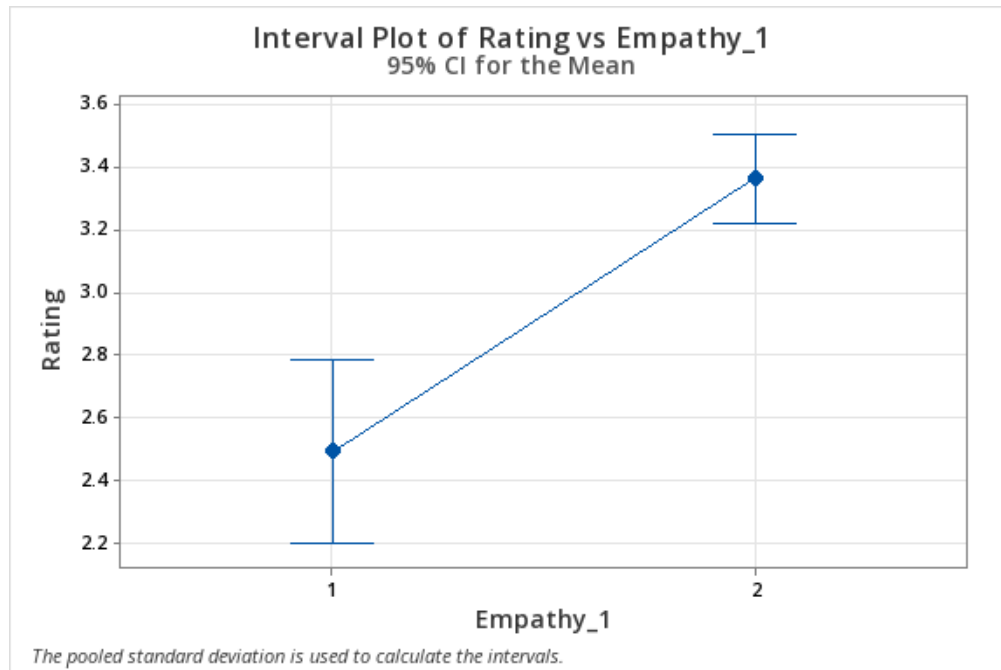




The interaction exists between Empathy and Favoritism

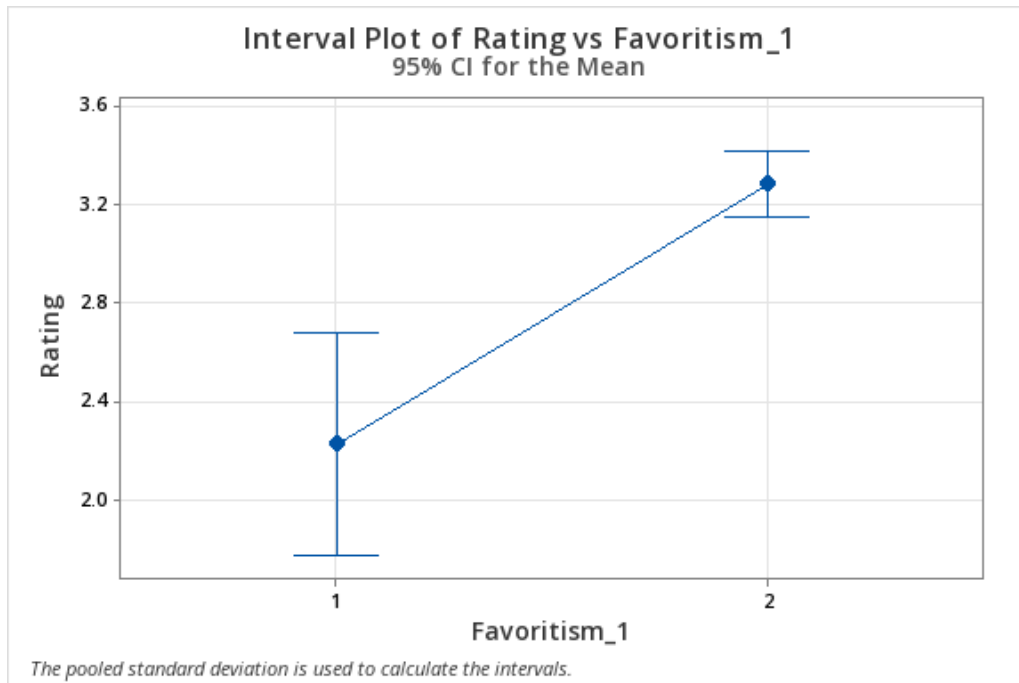
EMPATHY

Employee reviews that mentioned empathy or similar terms, such as care, had statistically significantly lower ratings by an average of 0.9 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.000$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Empathy was mentioned in 81 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable.



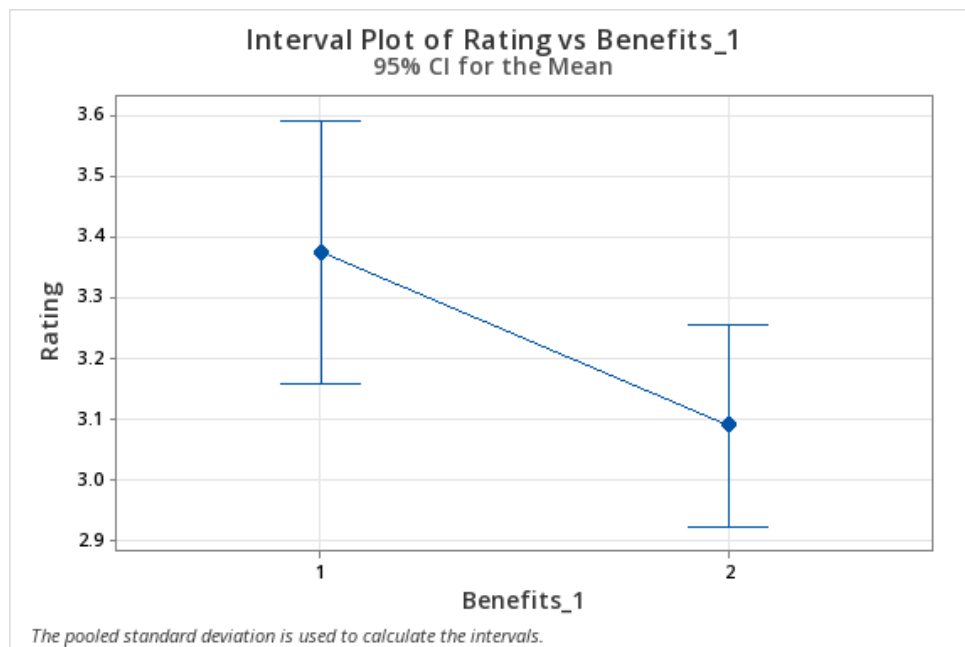
FAVORITISM

Employees that mentioned favoritism or similar terms, such as nepotism, tended to have statistically significantly lower ratings by an average of 1.1 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.000$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Empathy was mentioned in 81 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable.



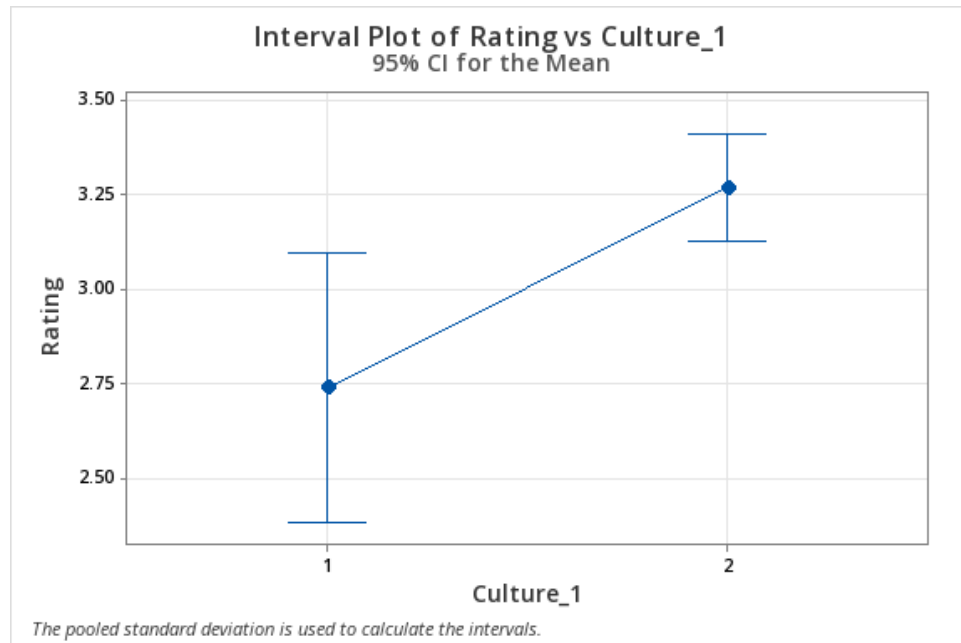
BENEFITS

Employees that mentioned benefits or similar terms, such as medical, retirement, and vacation, tended to have higher ratings by an average of 0.3 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.041$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Benefits were mentioned in 157 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable.



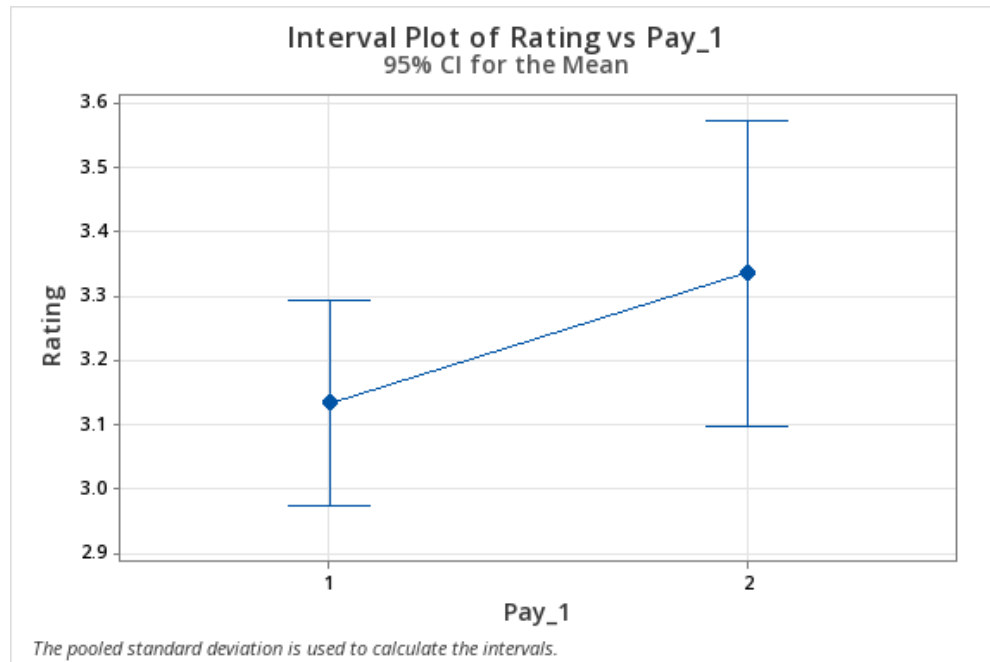
CULTURE

Employees that mentioned culture or similar terms tended to have statically significantly lower ratings by an average of 0.5 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.007$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. The topic of culture was mentioned in 58 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable.



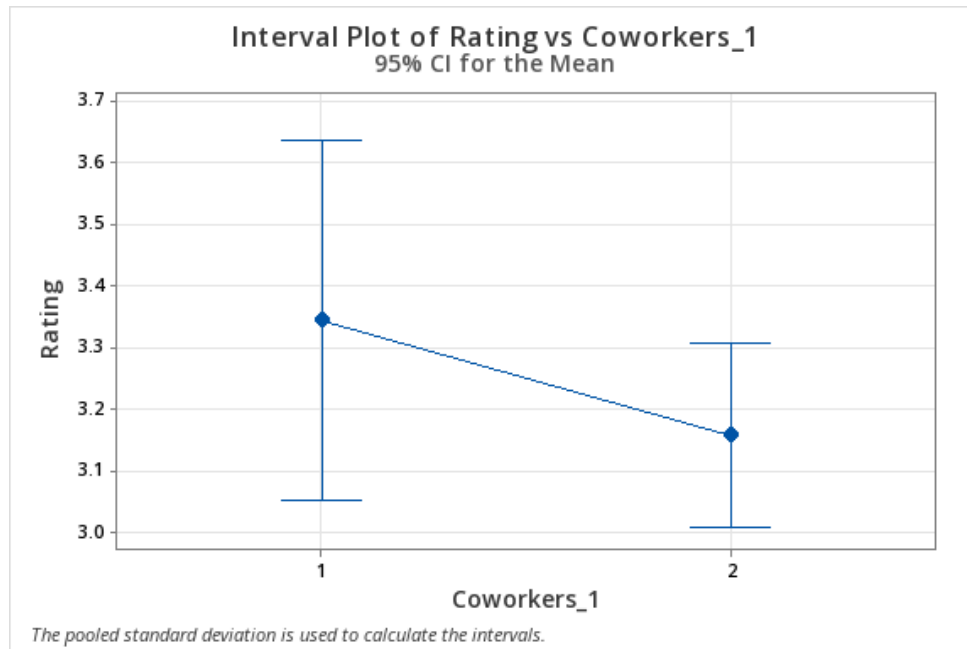
WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Employees that mentioned work-life balance or similar terms tended to have statistically significantly lower ratings by an average of 0.2 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.003$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Benefits were mentioned in 57 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable.



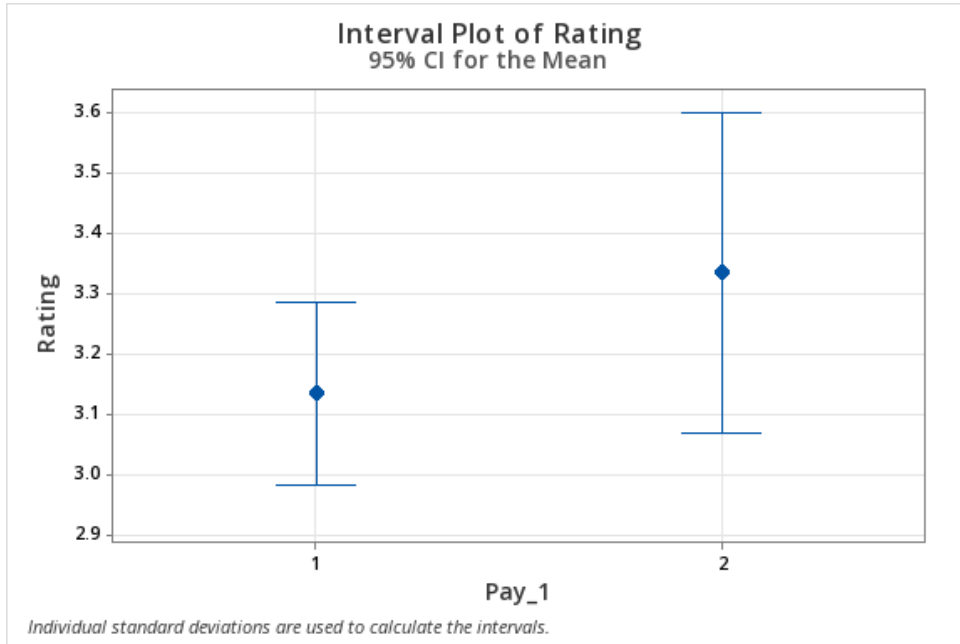
CO-WORKERS

Employees that mentioned co-workers or similar references to their peer group tended to have higher ratings by an average of 0.2 points than those where the term was not mentioned but was not statically significant, where $p=0.264$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Coworkers were mentioned in 87 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable.



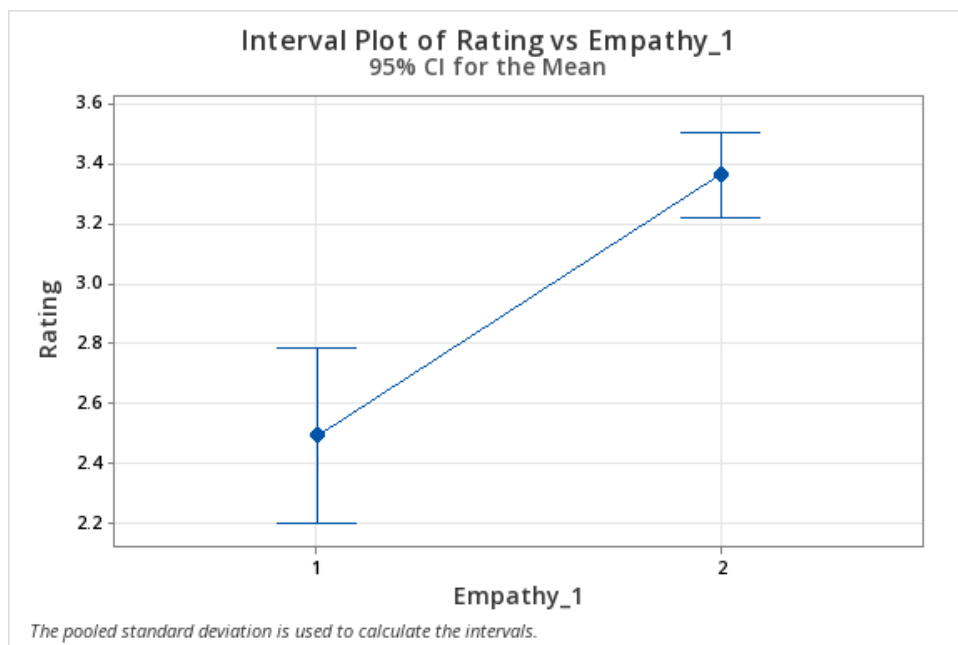
PAY

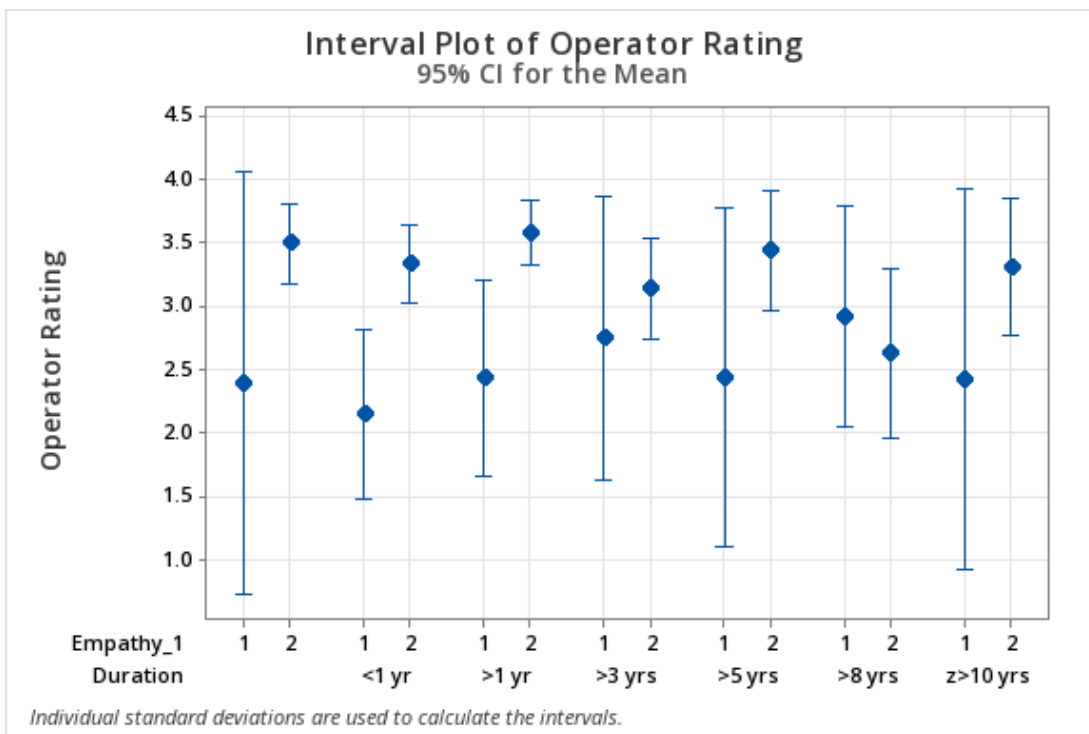
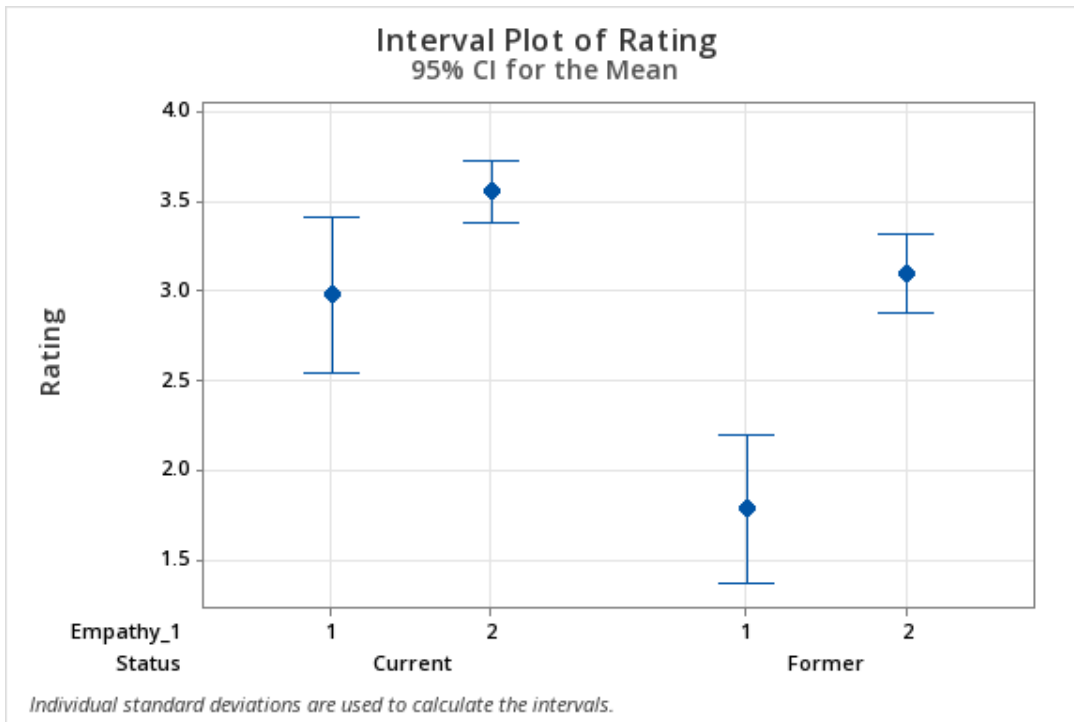
Employees that mentioned co-workers or similar references to their peer group tended to have lower ratings by an average of 0.2 points than those where the term was not mentioned but was not statically significant, where $p=0.167$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. References to pay were mentioned in 290 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable.

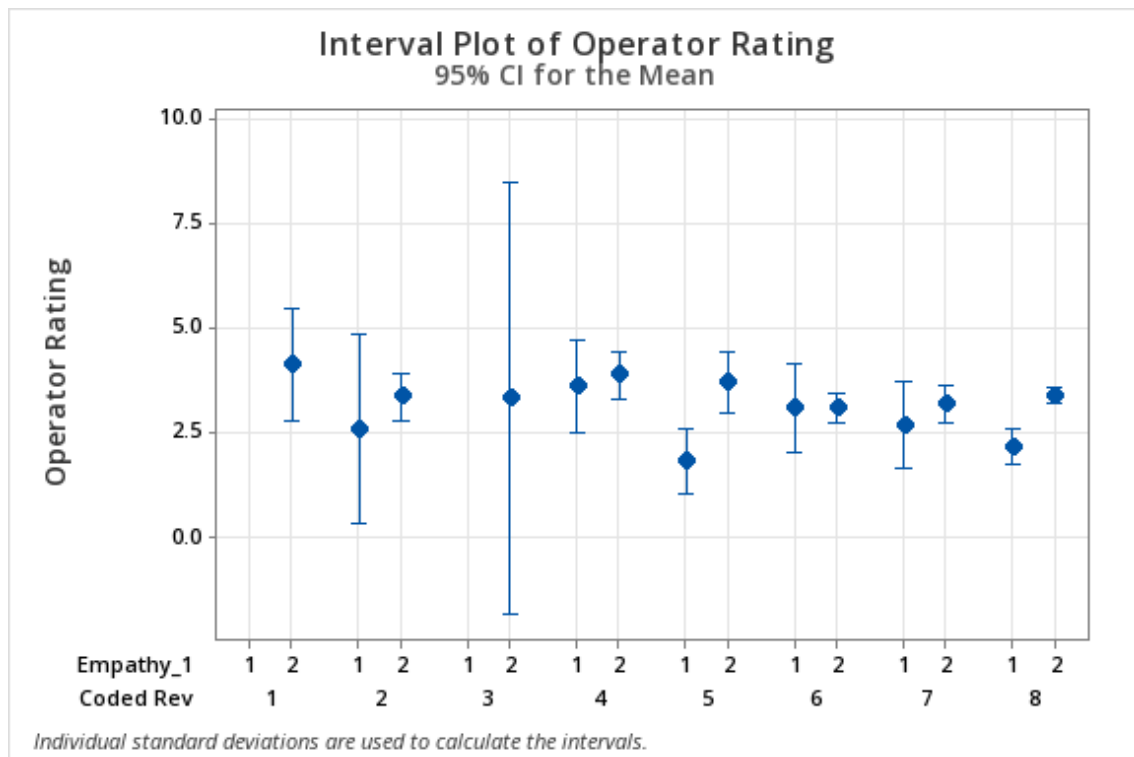
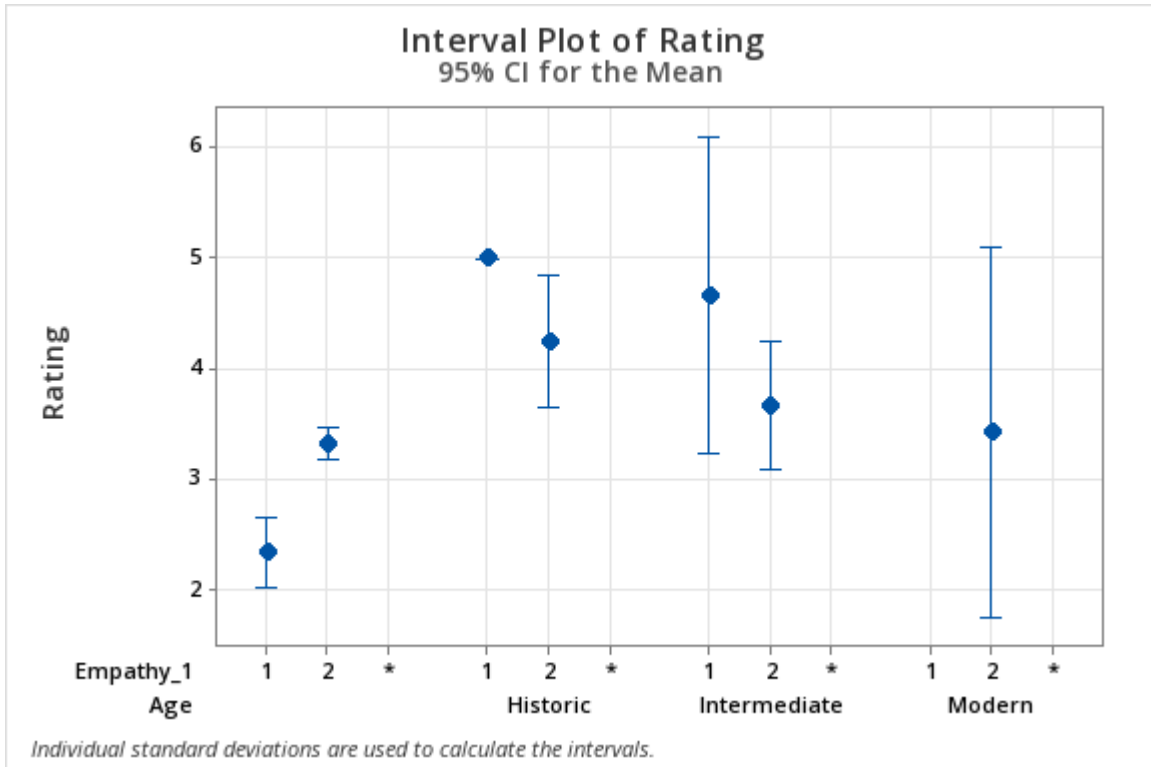


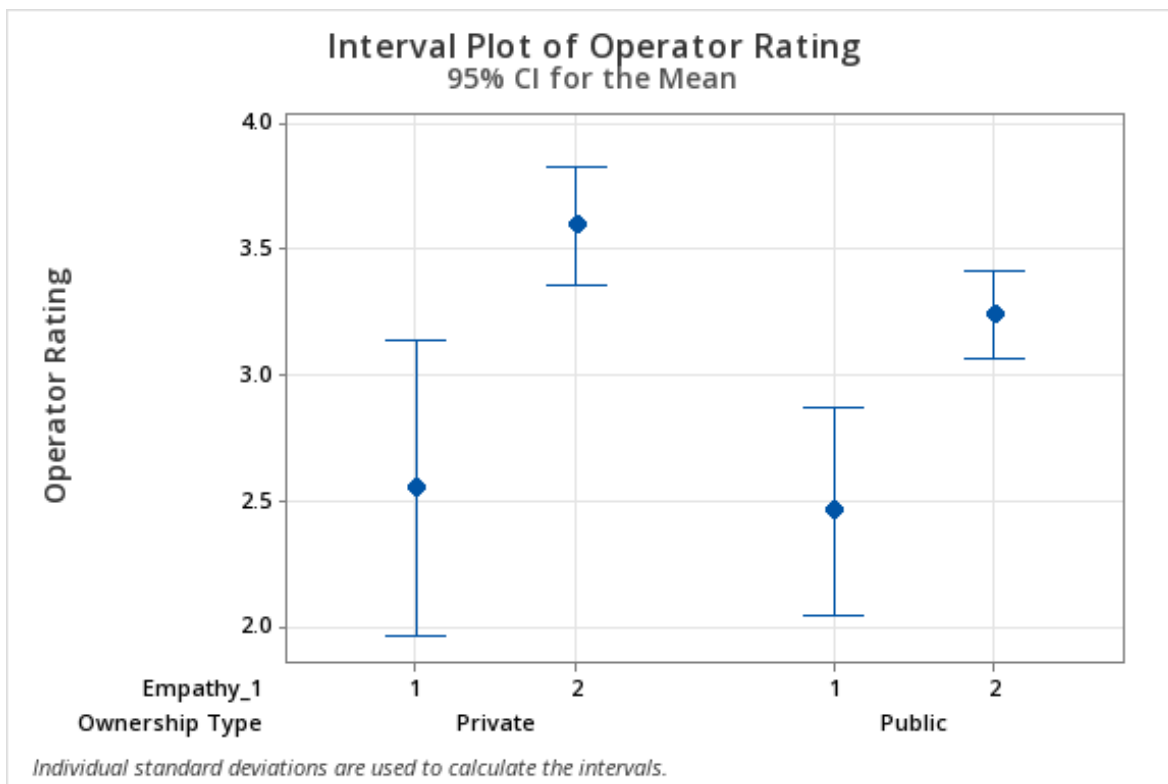
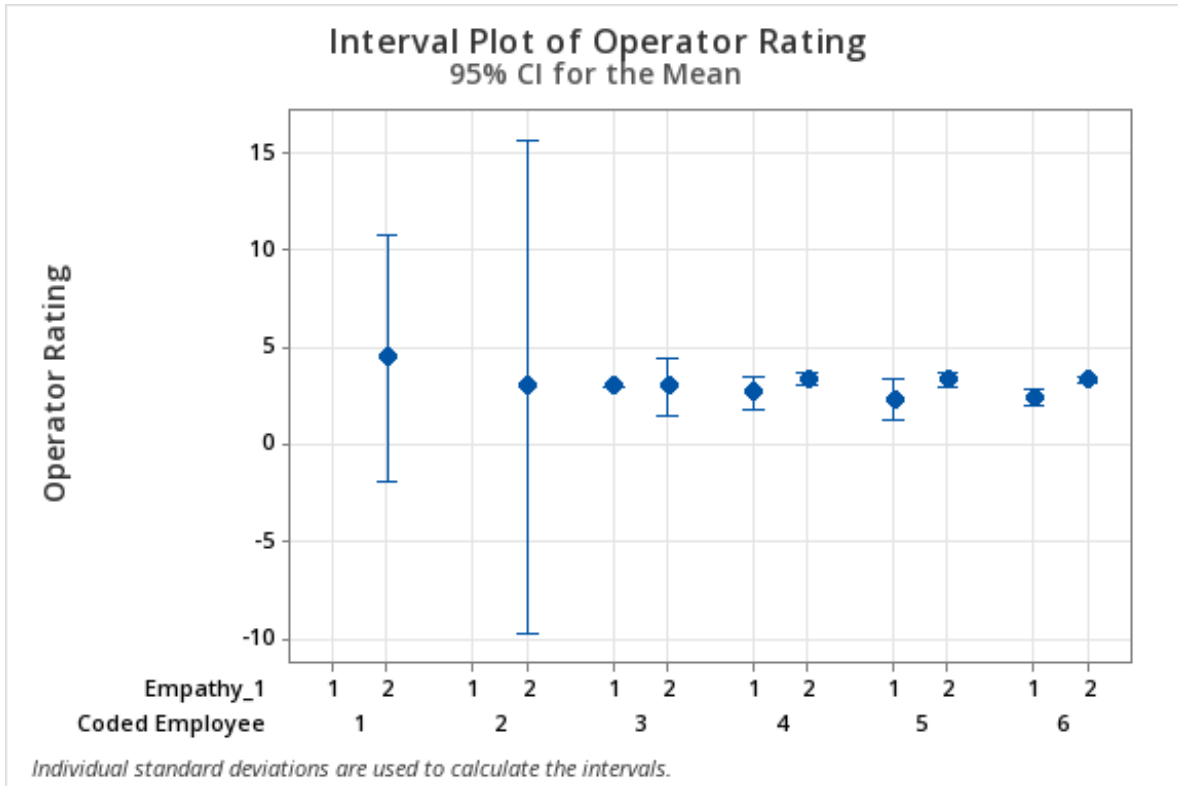
Appendix 3: Empathy Deep Dive

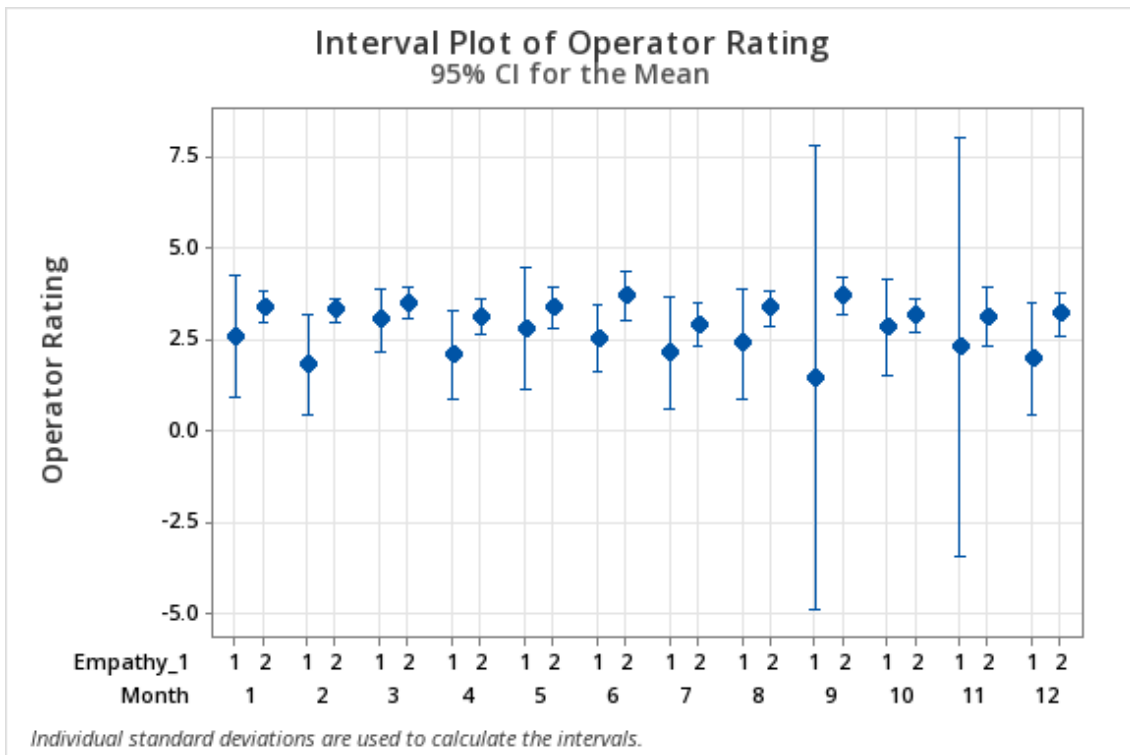
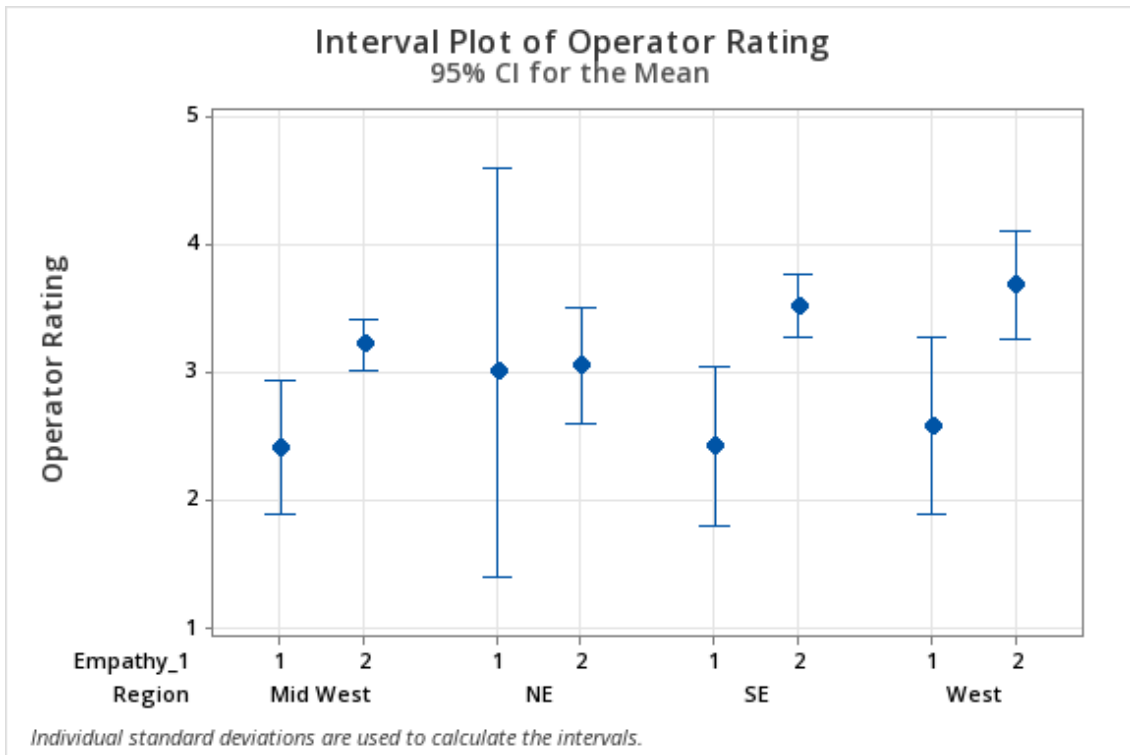
Employee reviews that mentioned empathy or similar terms, such as care, had statistically significantly lower ratings by an average of 0.9 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.000$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Empathy was mentioned in 81 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable. None of the covariates considered had a significant impact on this correlation, including employment status (current versus former), duration of employment, size of the company as measured in revenue, size of the company as measured by the number of employees, ownership type (public versus private), region of the country considered, or month of the year or day of the week that the review was written.

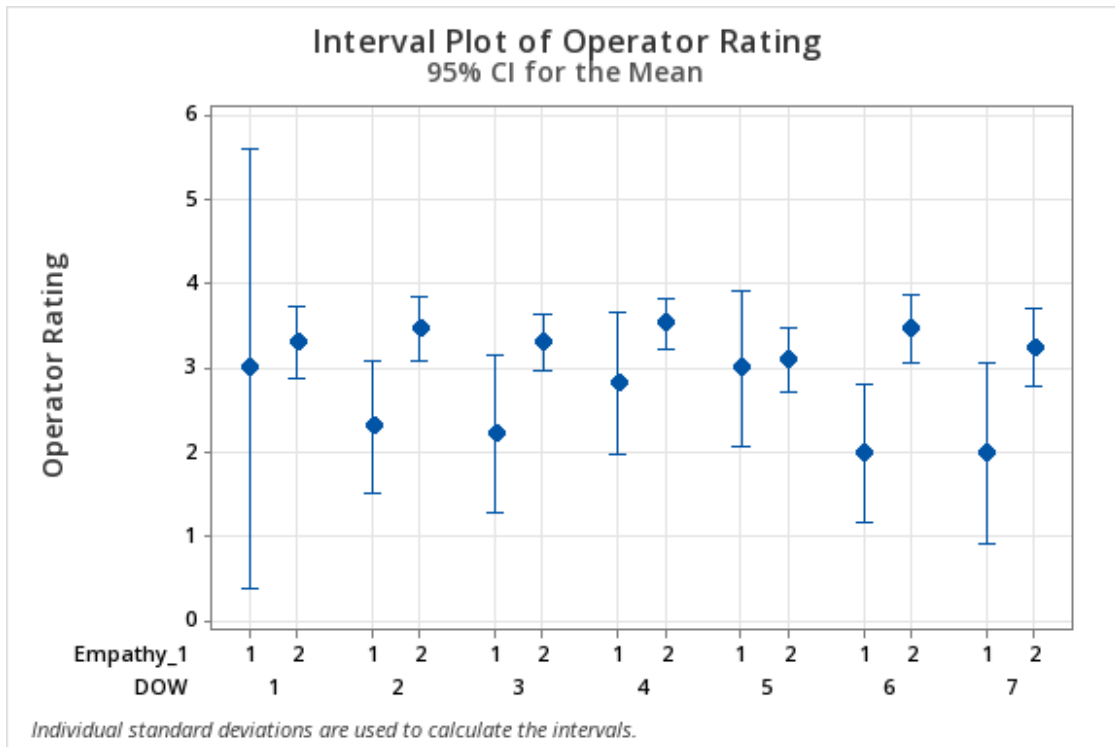




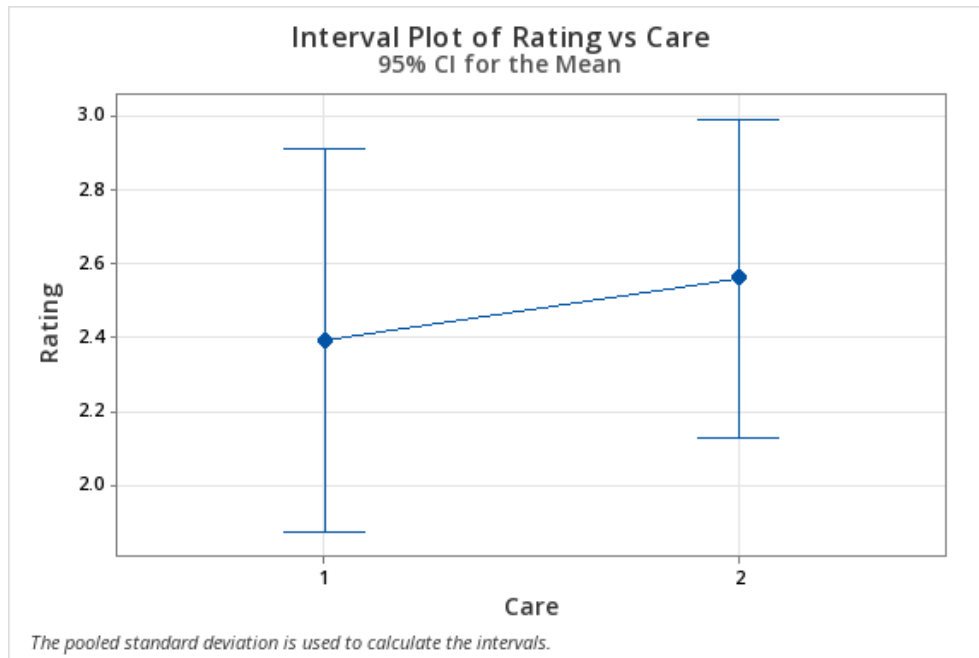






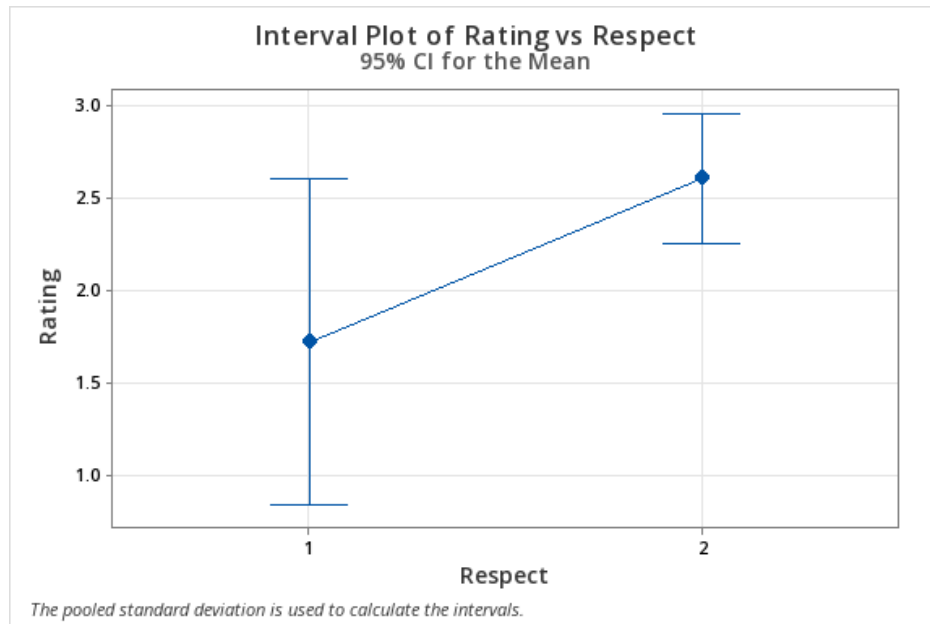


Some of the key terms mentioned in reviews relating to empathy were linked to having a feeling that their employer genuinely cares for them (“care”), feeling respected versus treated like humans and not robots (“respect”), and management listening to employees (“listen”). On an individual basis, none of these factors impacted the company rating in a statistically significant way.



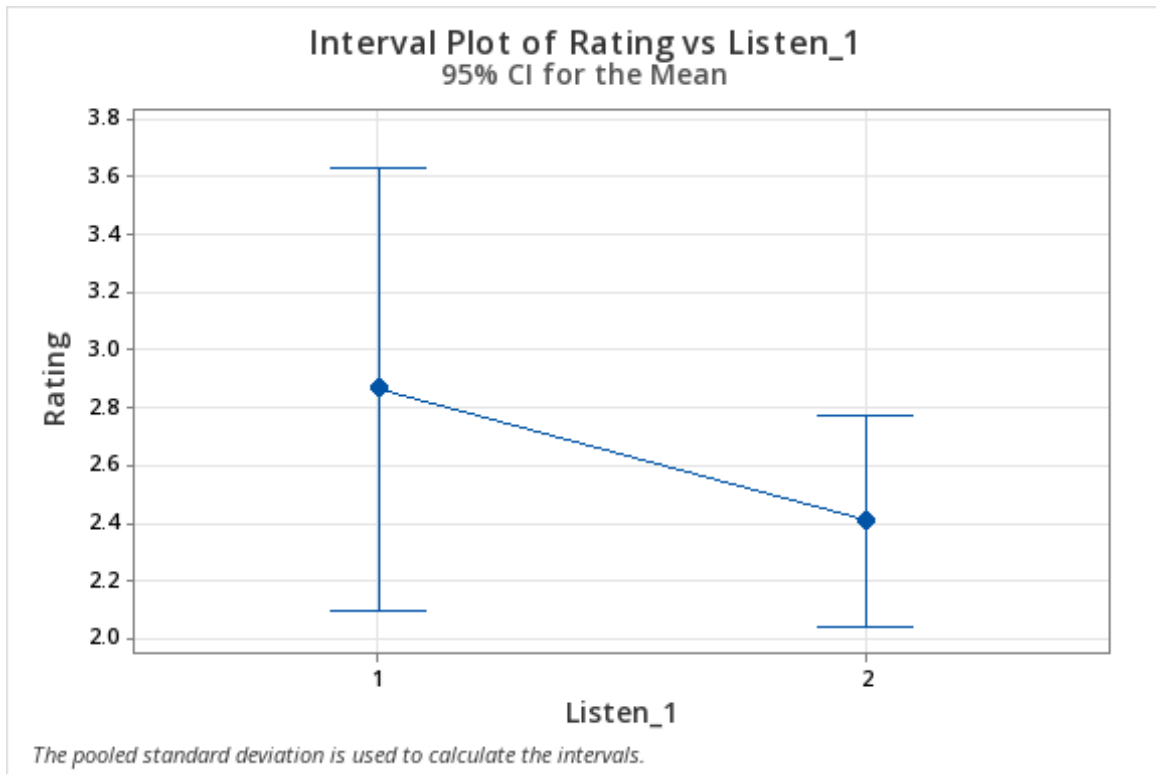
Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Care	1	0.556	0.5556	0.25	0.621
Error	79	177.691	2.2493		
Total	80	178.247			



Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Respect	1	7.479	7.479	3.46	0.067
Error	79	170.768	2.162		
Total	80	178.247			

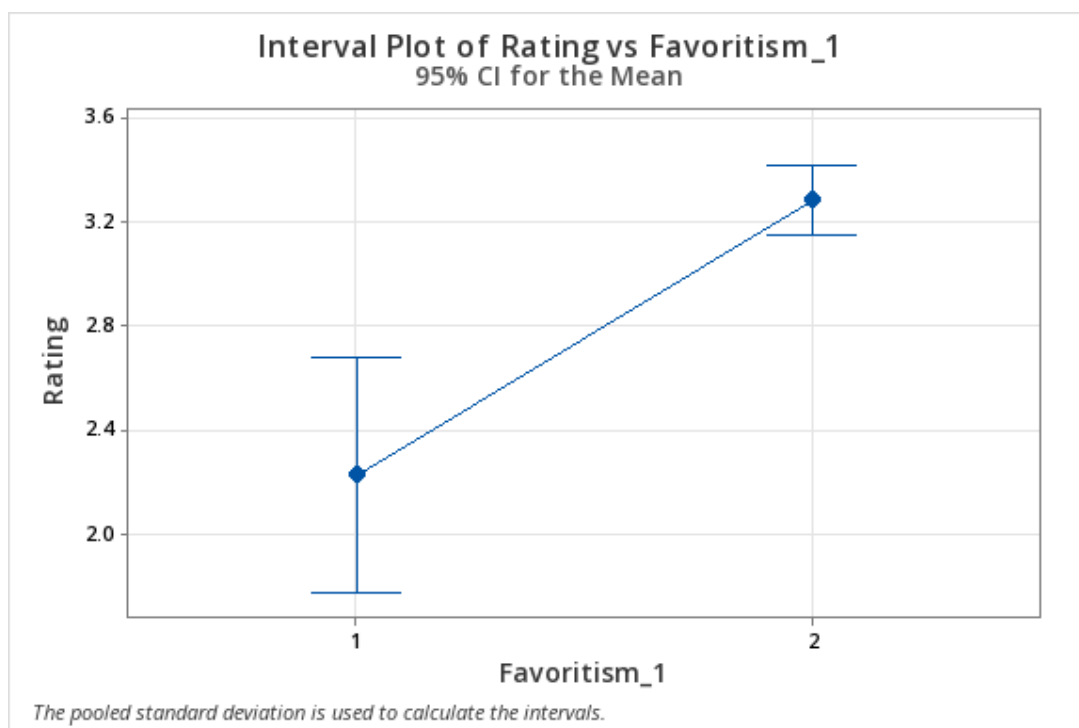


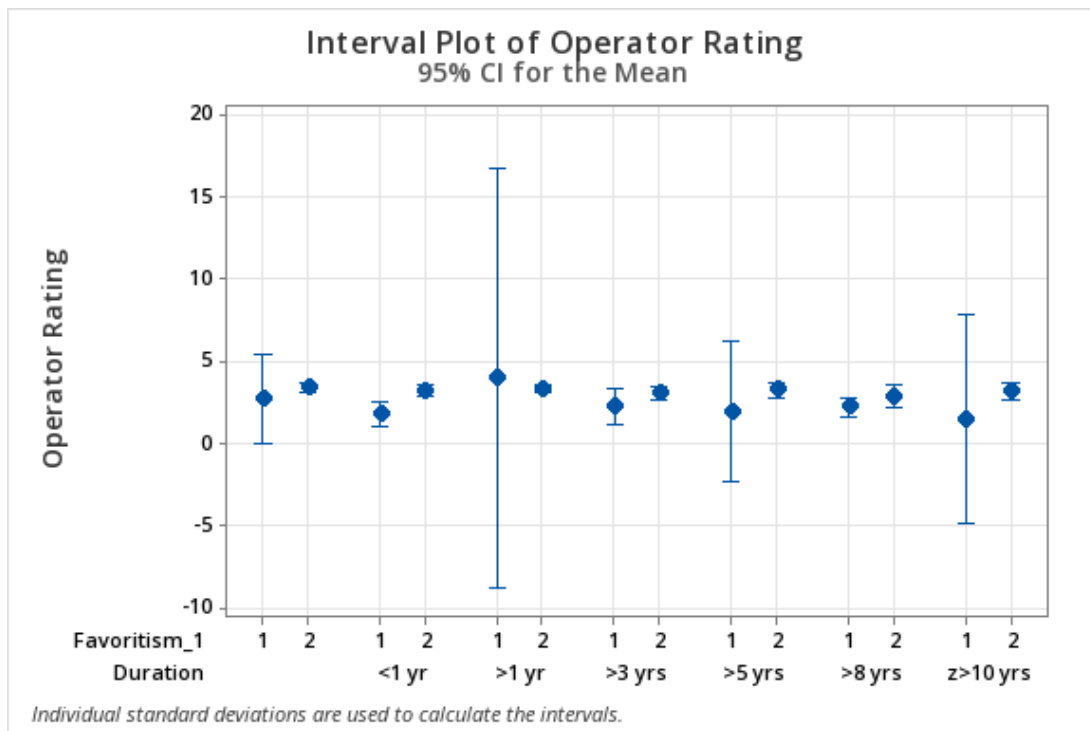
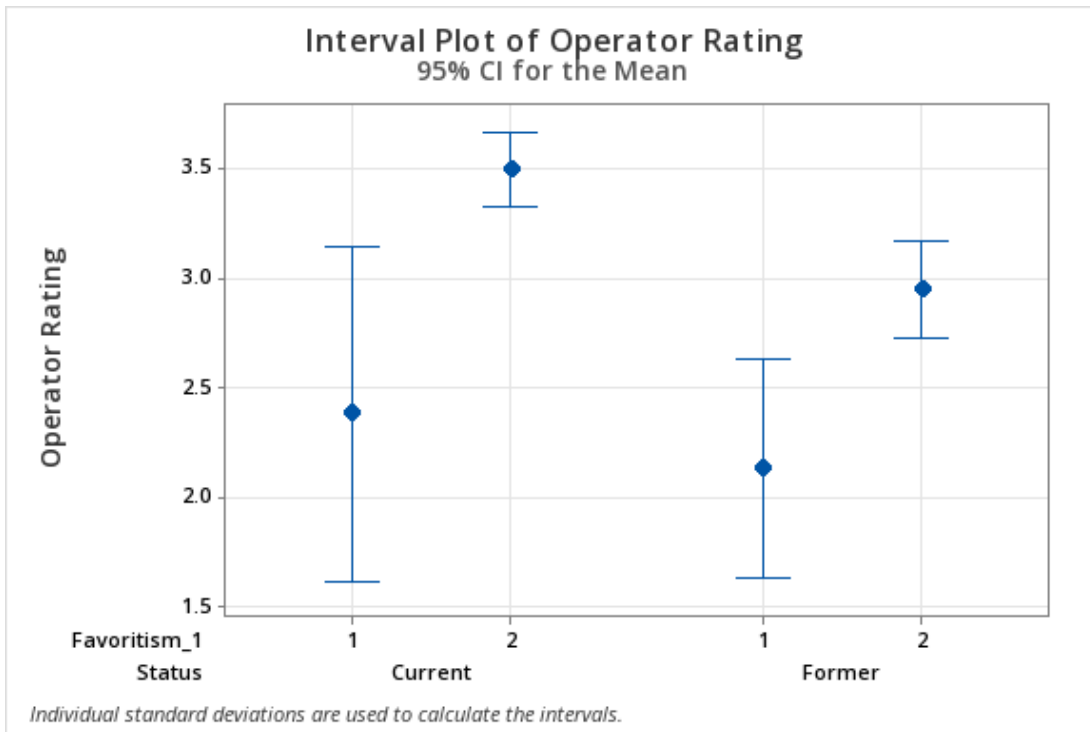
Analysis of Variance

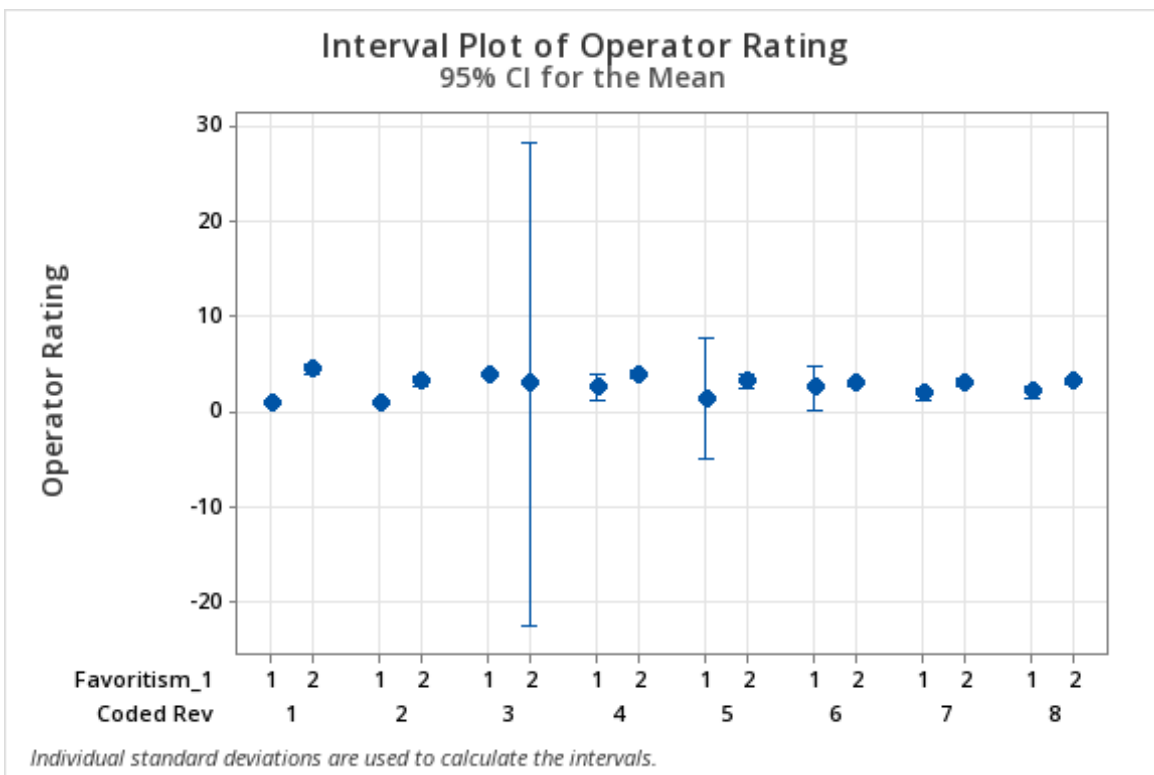
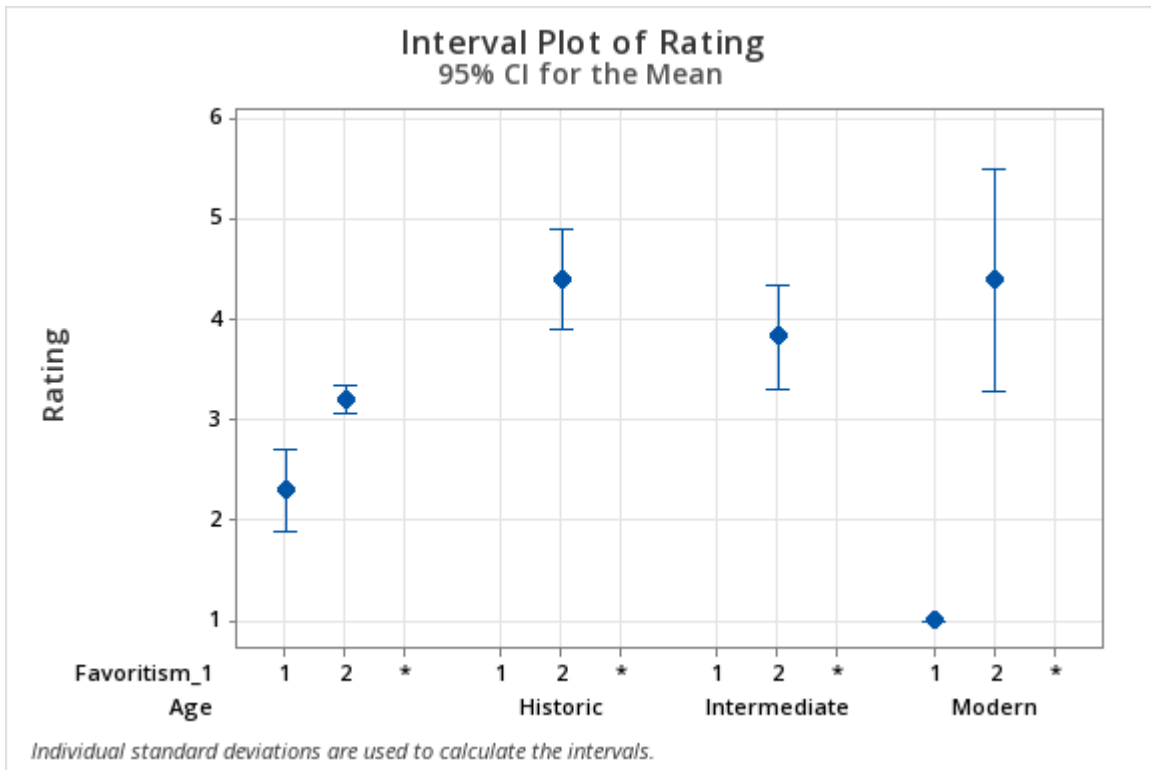
Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Listen_1	1	2.559	2.559	1.15	0.287
Error	79	175.688	2.224		
Total	80	178.247			

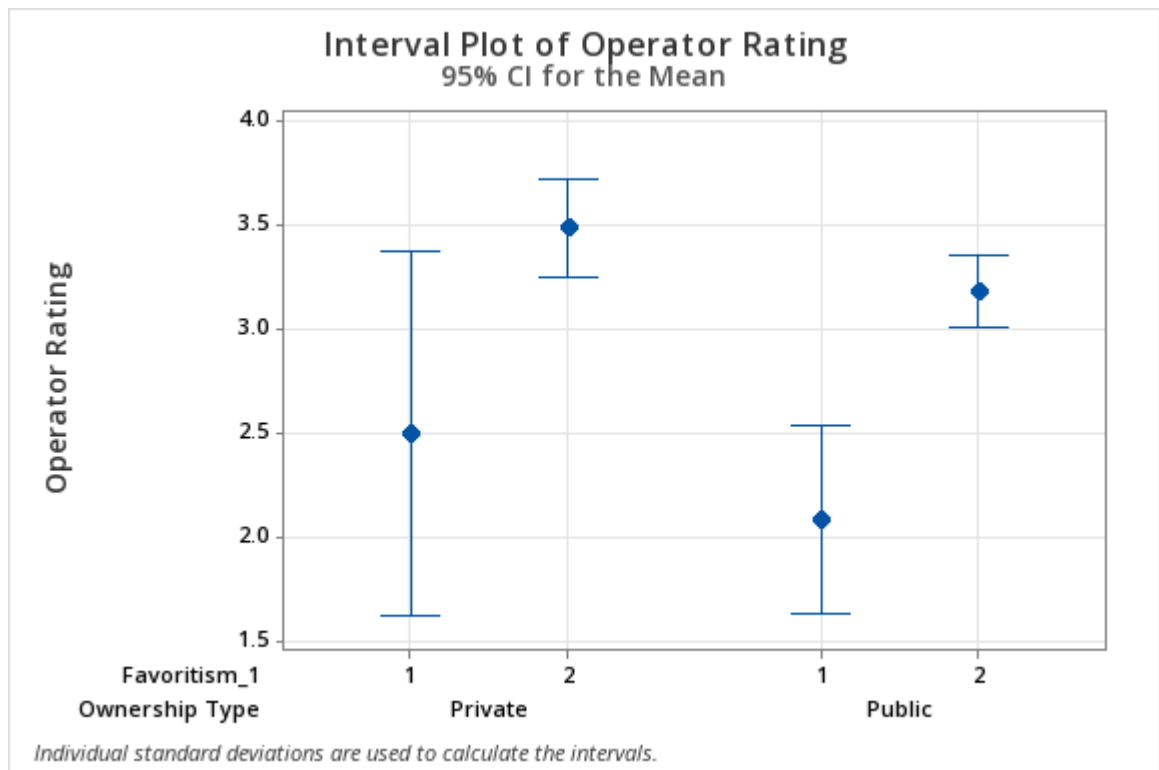
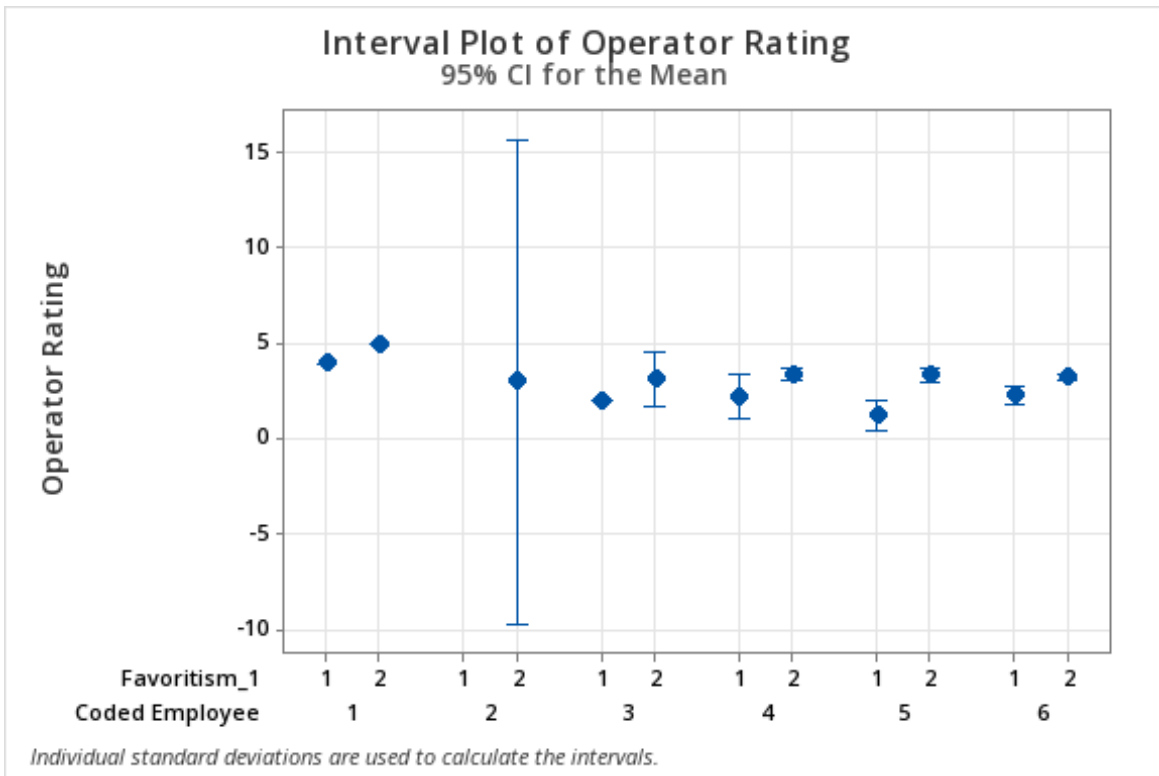
Appendix 4: Favoritism Deep Dive

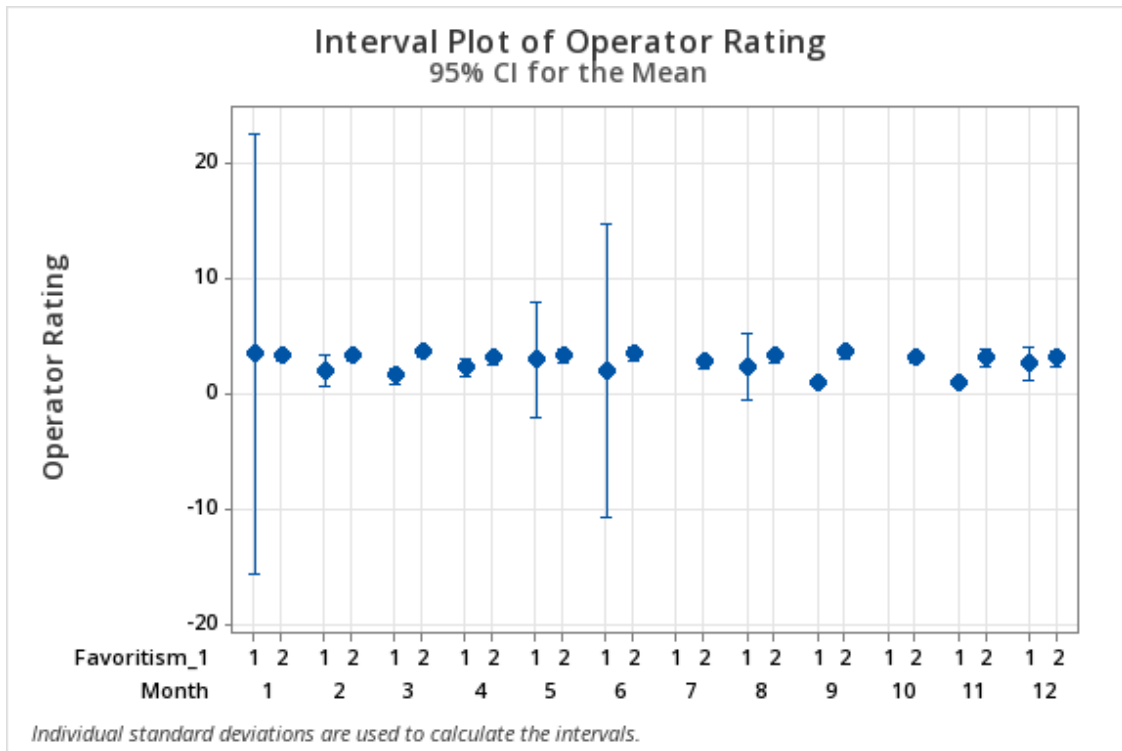
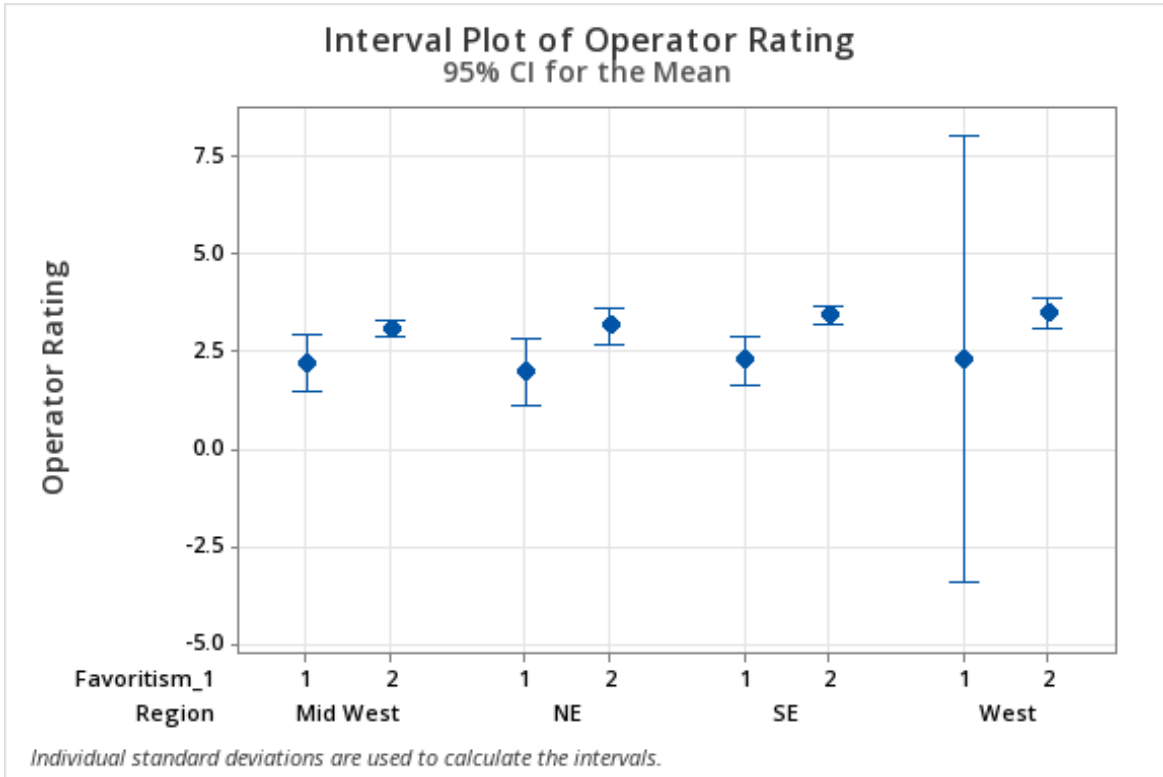
Employees that mentioned favoritism or similar terms, such as nepotism, tended to have statistically significantly lower ratings by an average of 1.1 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.000$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Empathy was mentioned in 81 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable. None of the covariates considered had a significant impact on this correlation, including employment status (current versus former), duration of employment, size of the company as measured in revenue, size of the company as measured by the number of employees, ownership type (public versus private), region of the country considered, or month of the year or day of the week that the review was written.

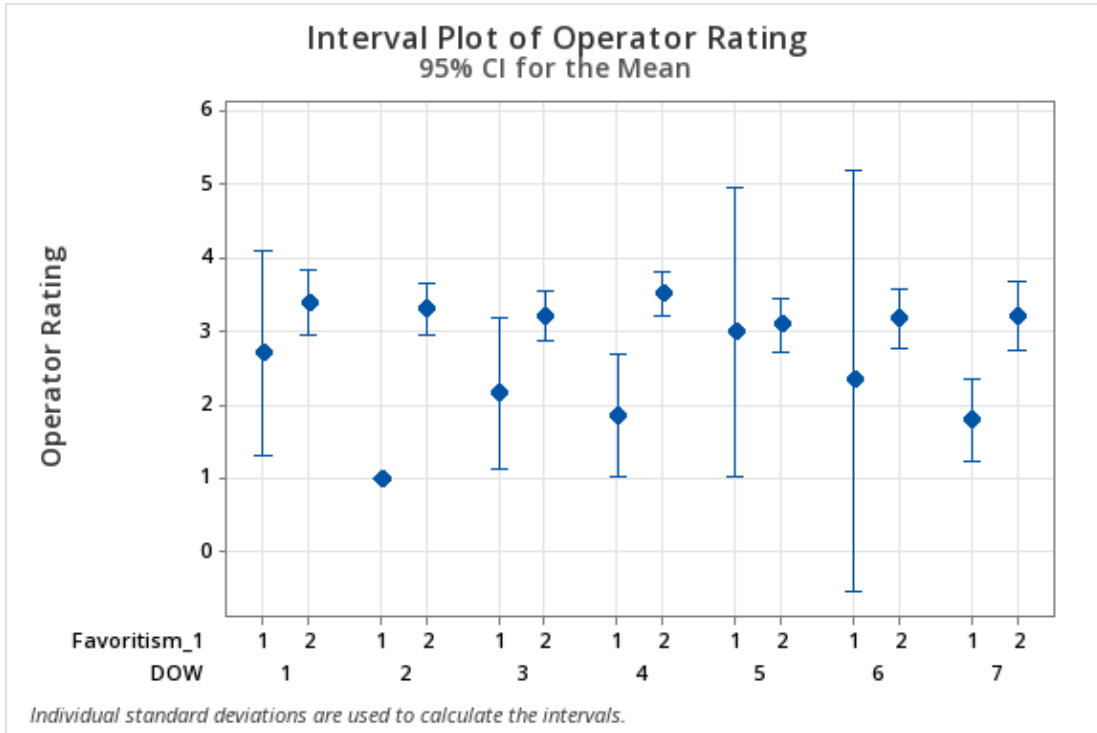






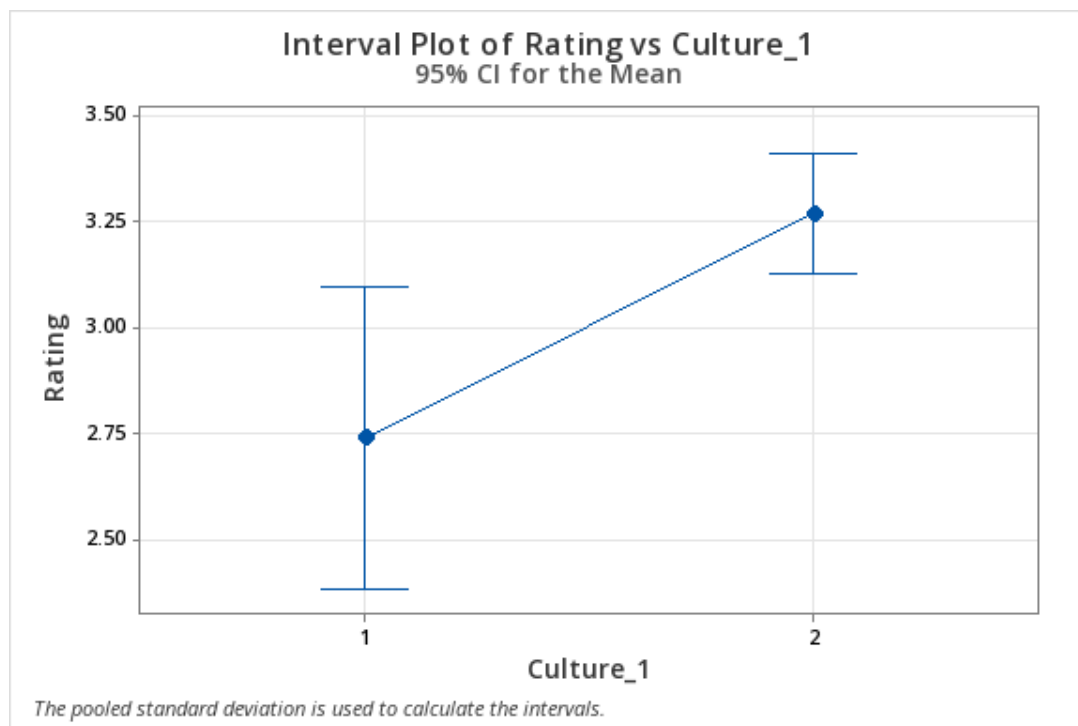


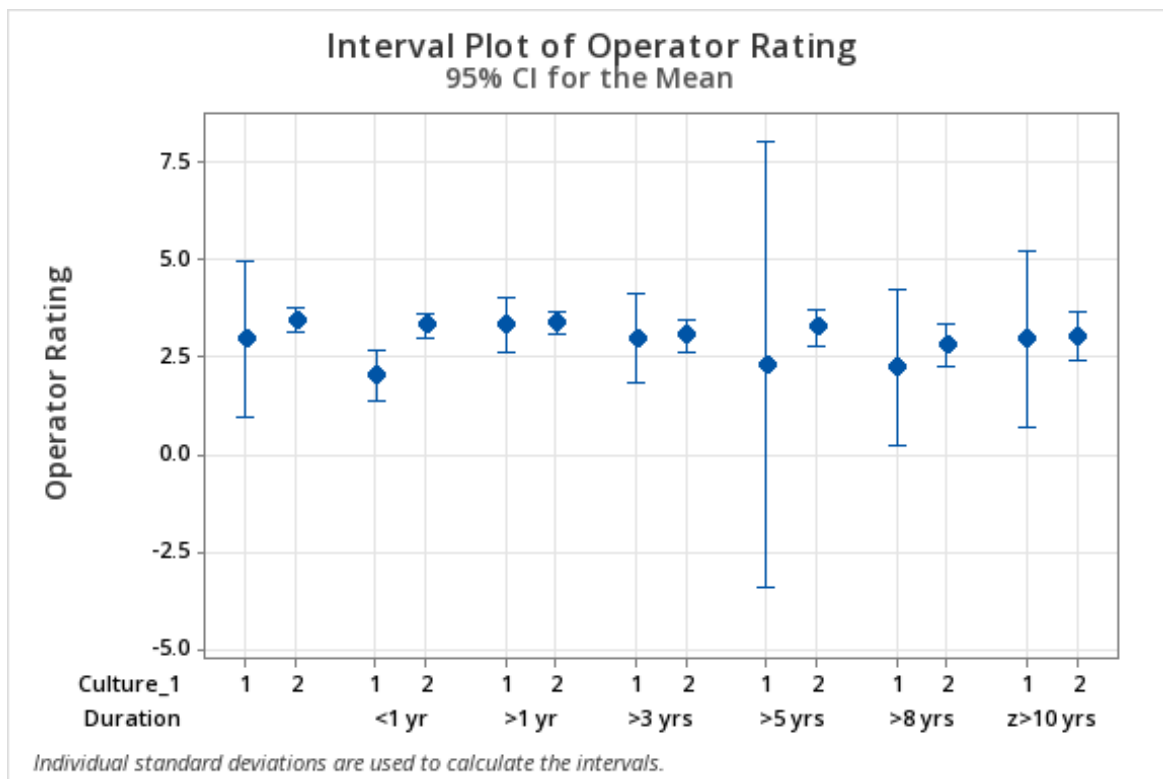
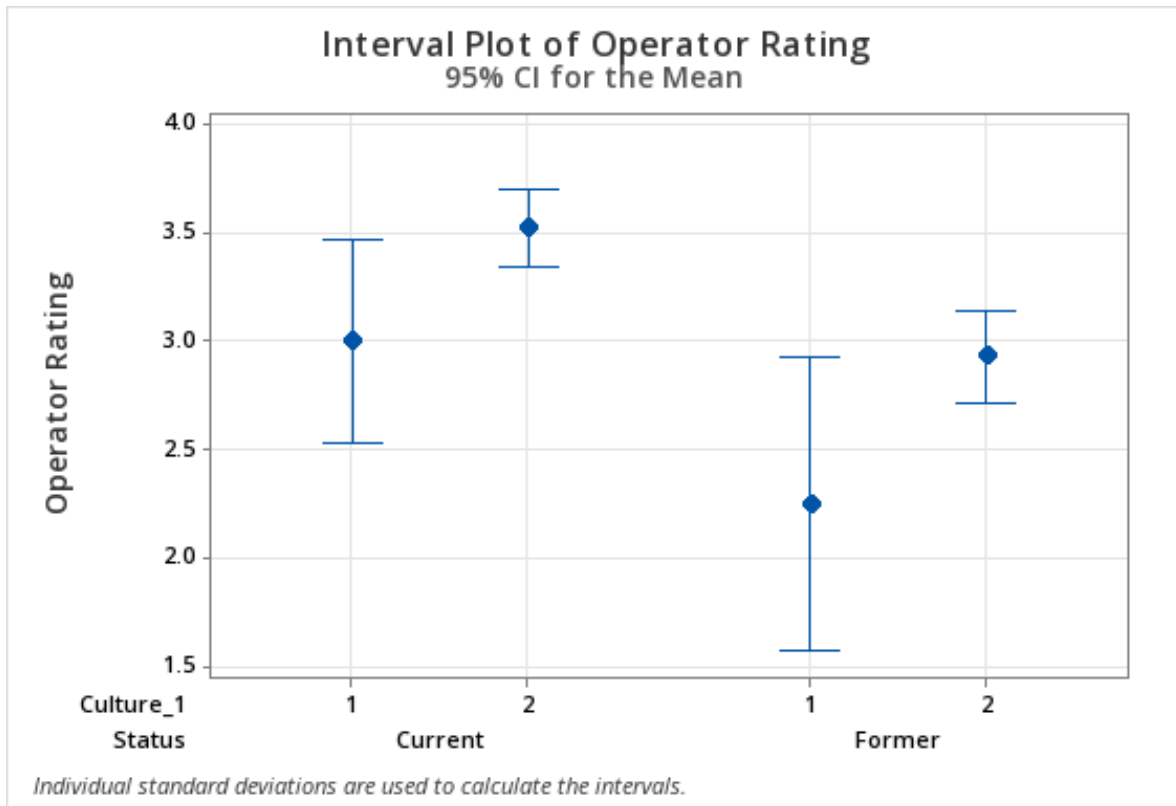


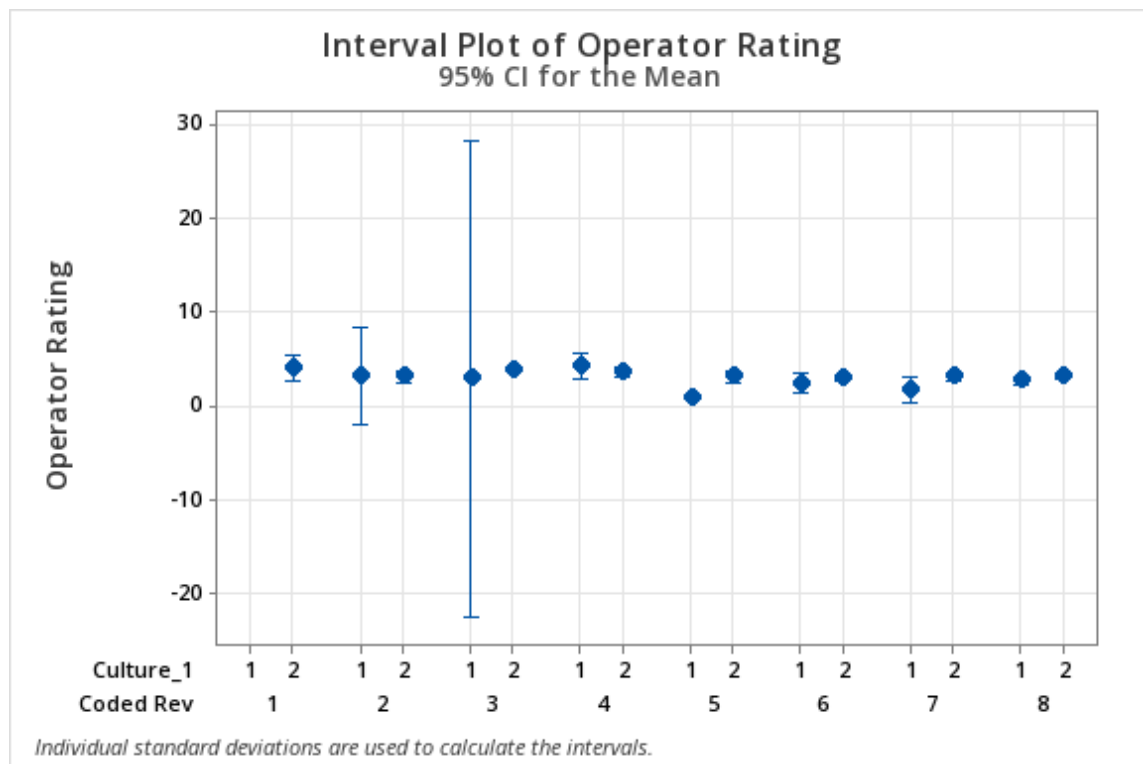
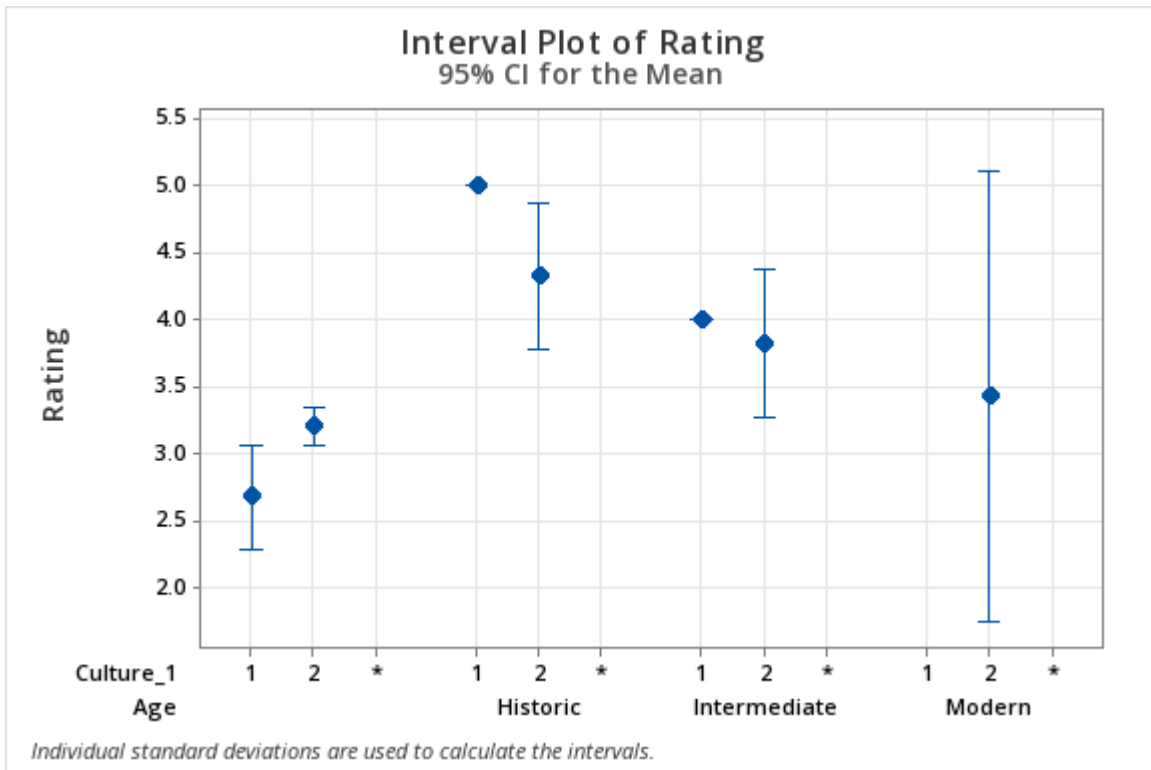


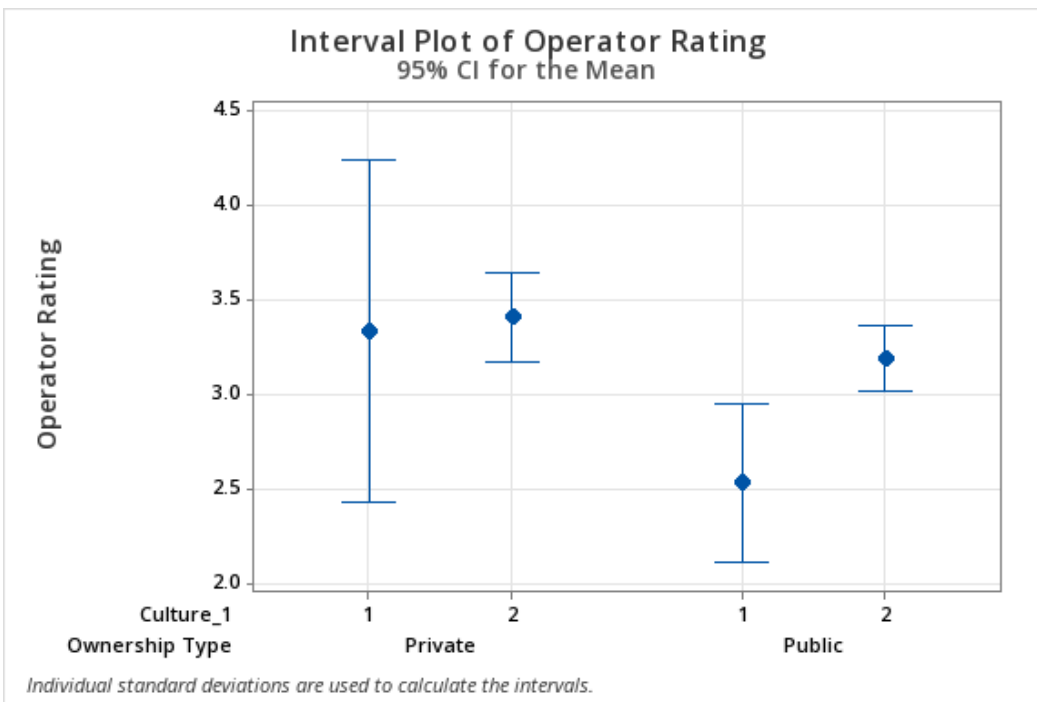
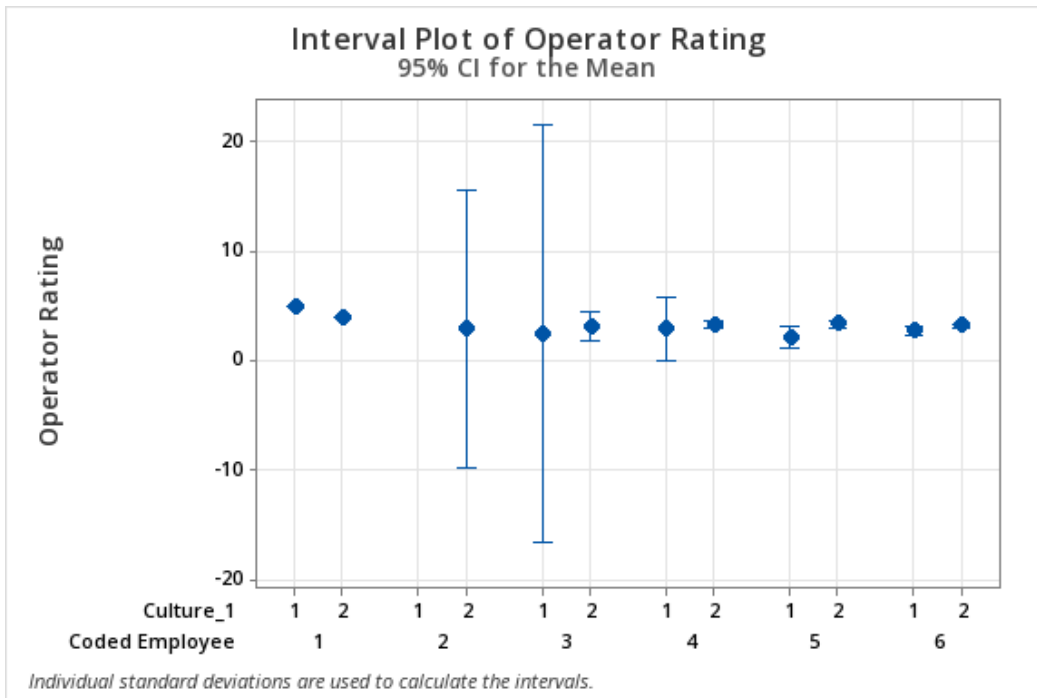
Appendix 5: Culture Deep Dive

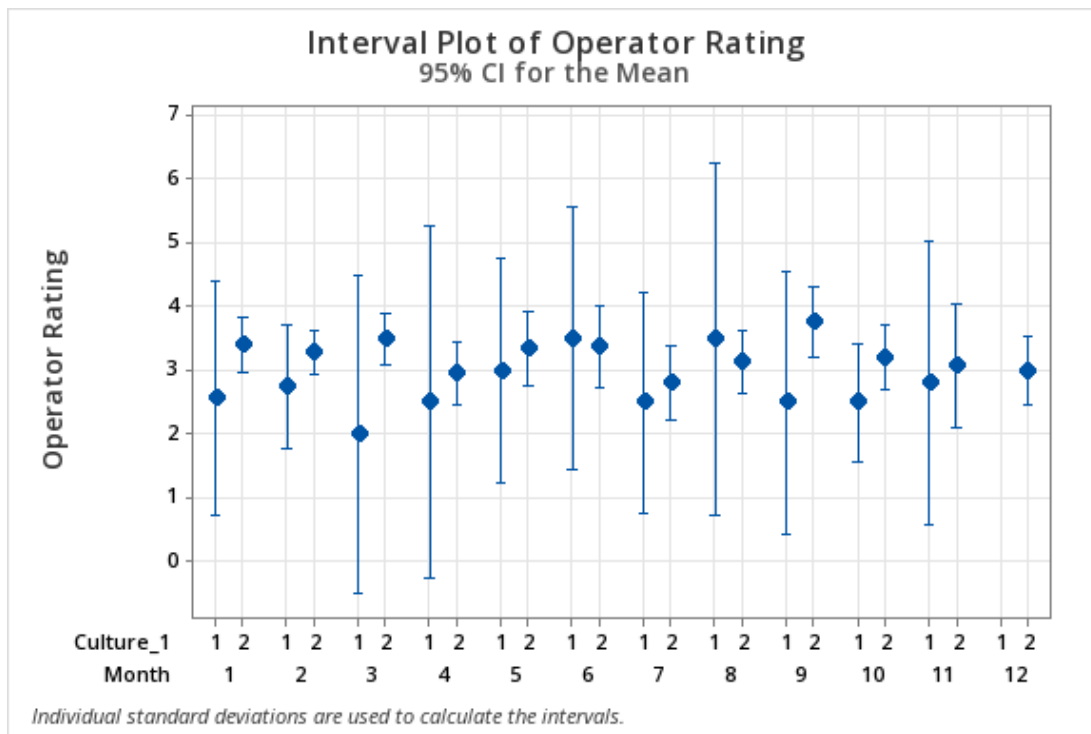
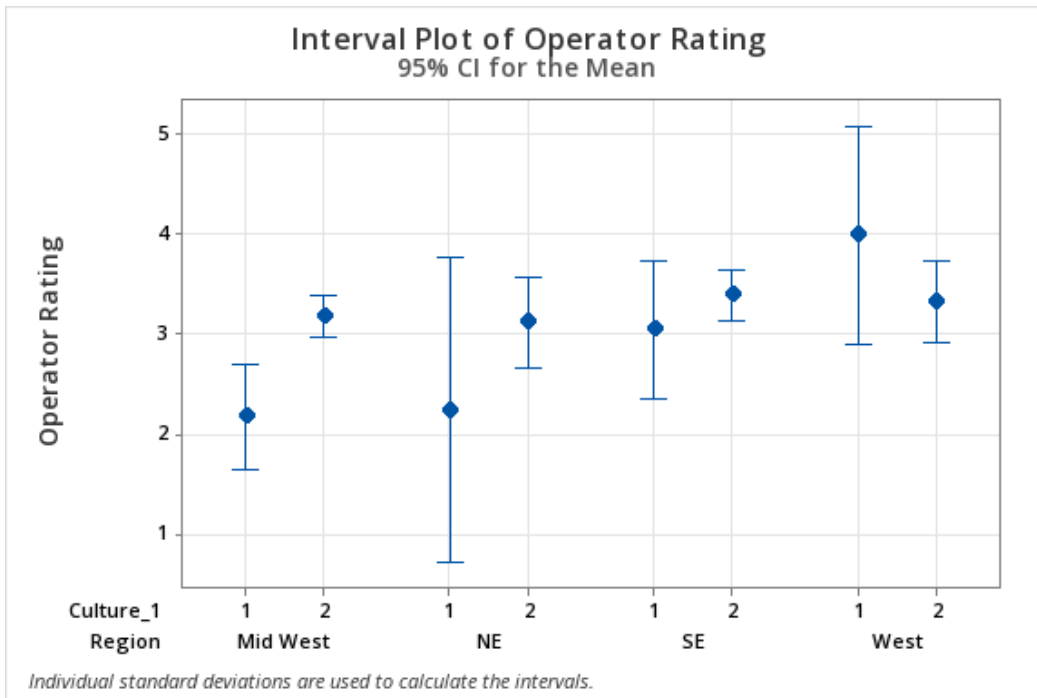
Employees that mentioned culture or similar terms tended to have statically significantly lower ratings by an average of 0.5 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.007$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Culture references were mentioned in 58 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable. None of the covariates considered had a significant impact on this correlation, including employment status (current versus former), duration of employment, size of the company as measured in revenue, size of the company as measured by the number of employees, ownership type (public versus private), region of the country considered, or month of the year or day of the week that the review was written.

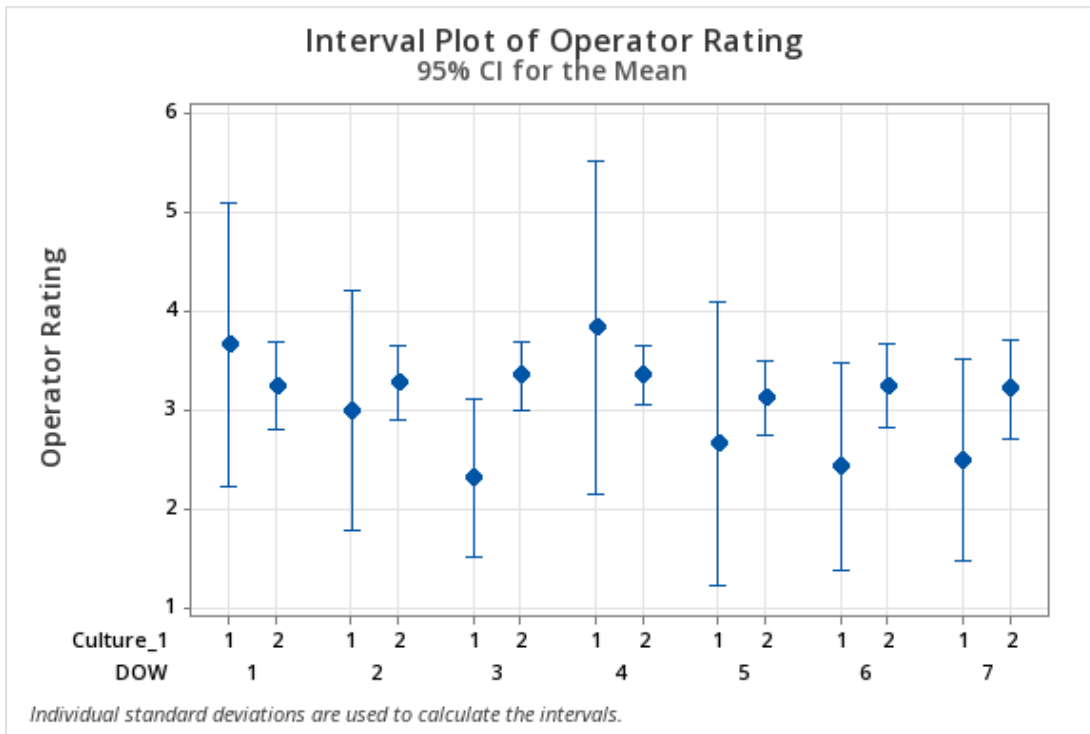






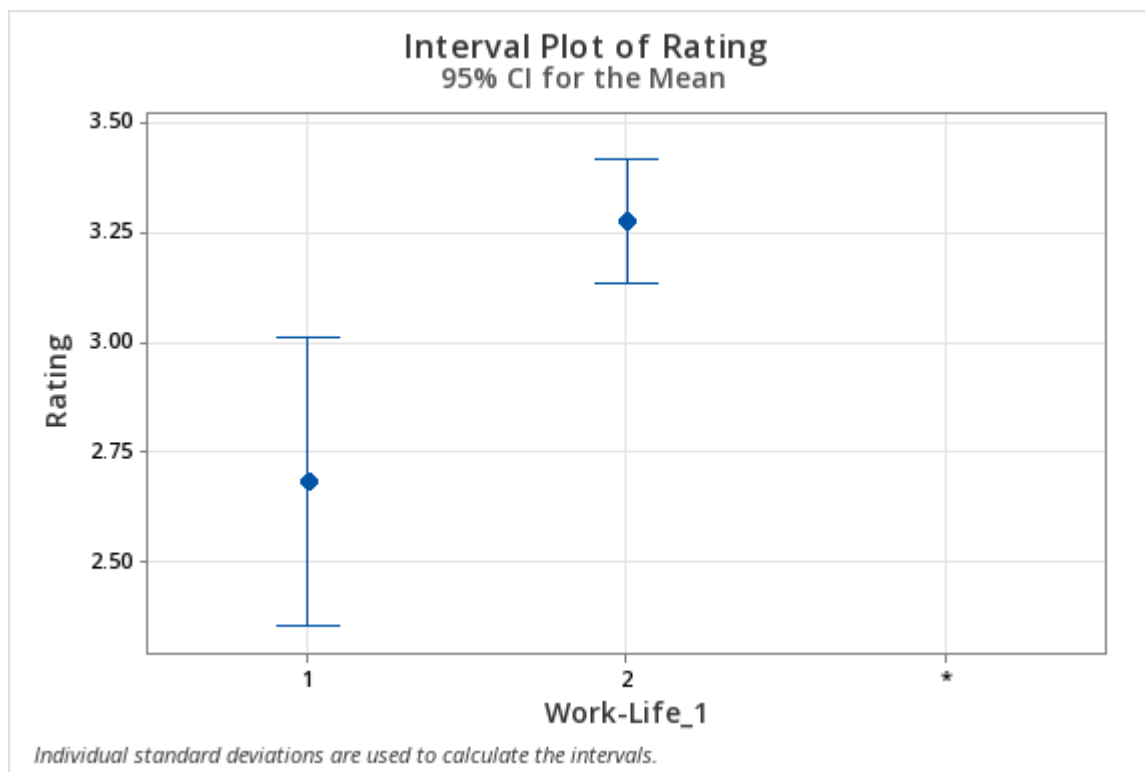


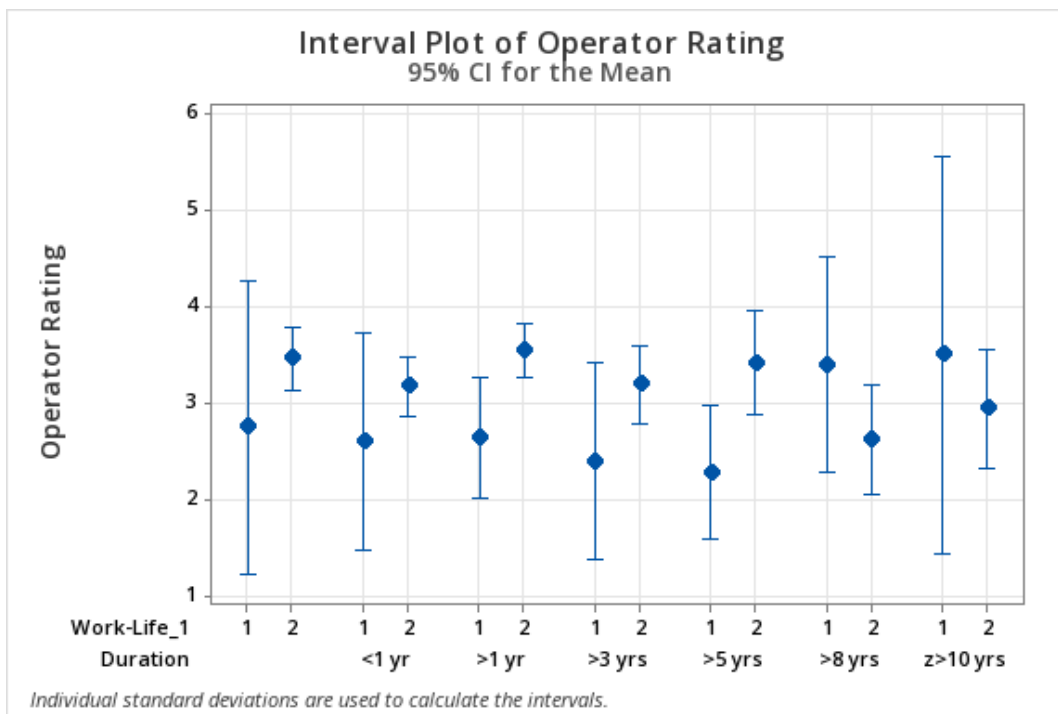
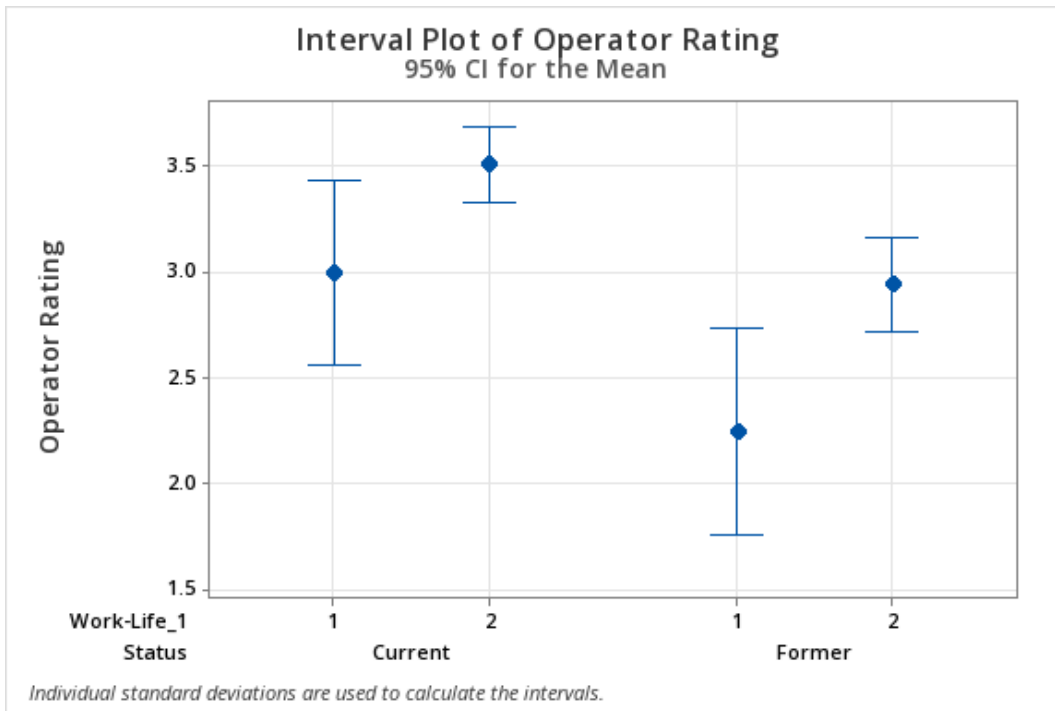


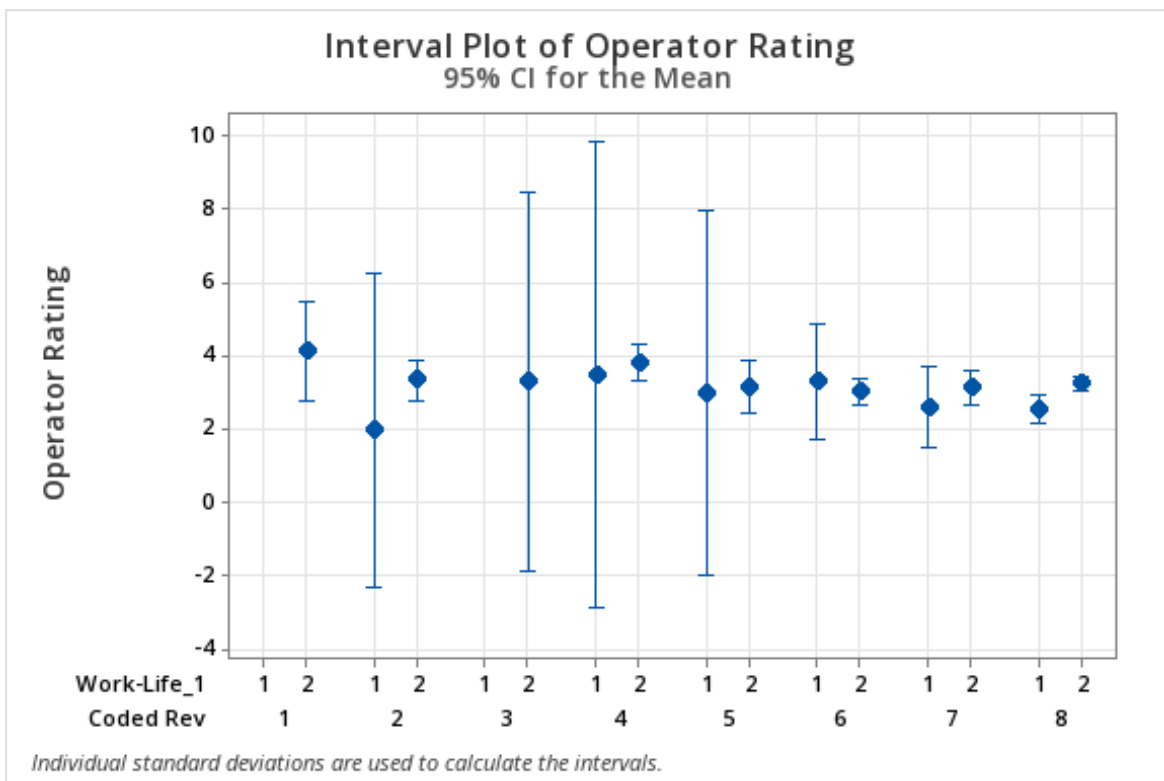
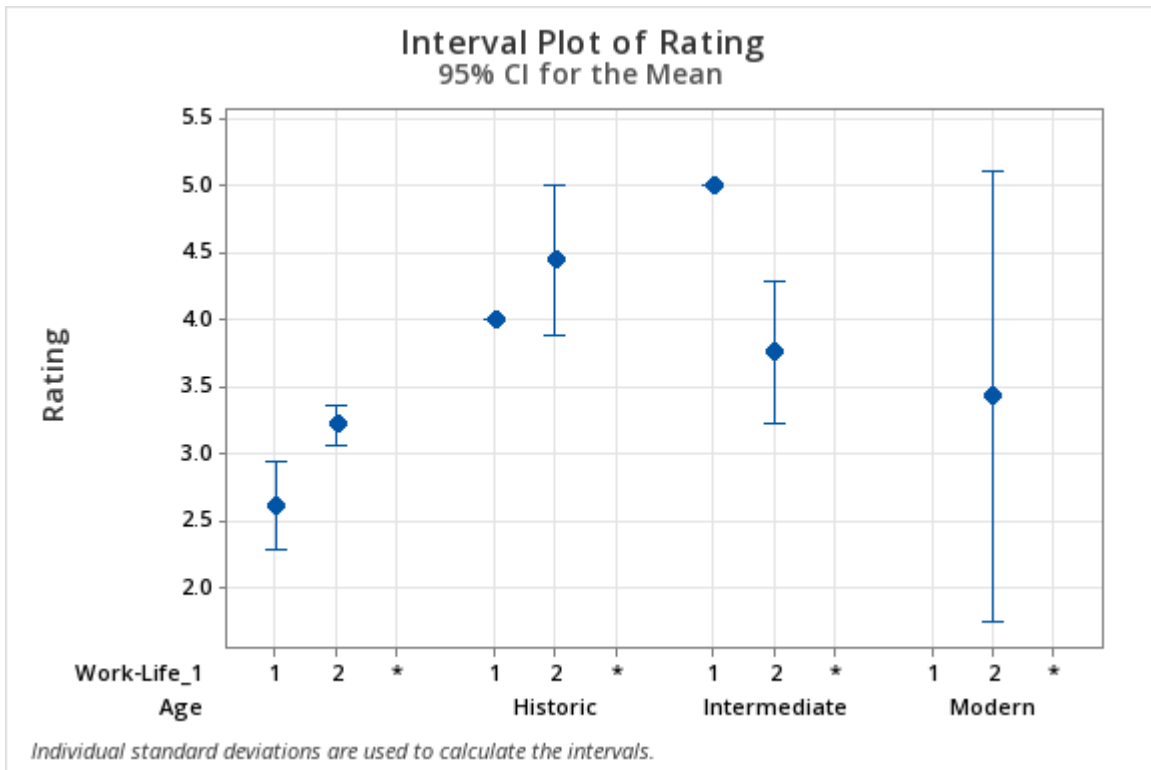


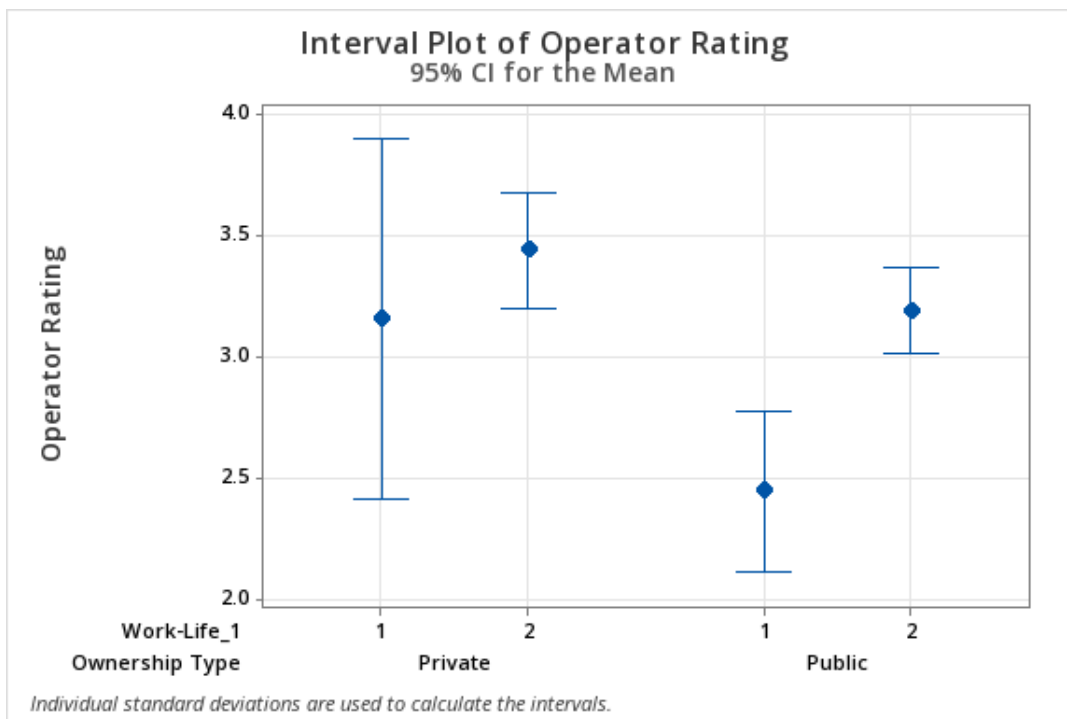
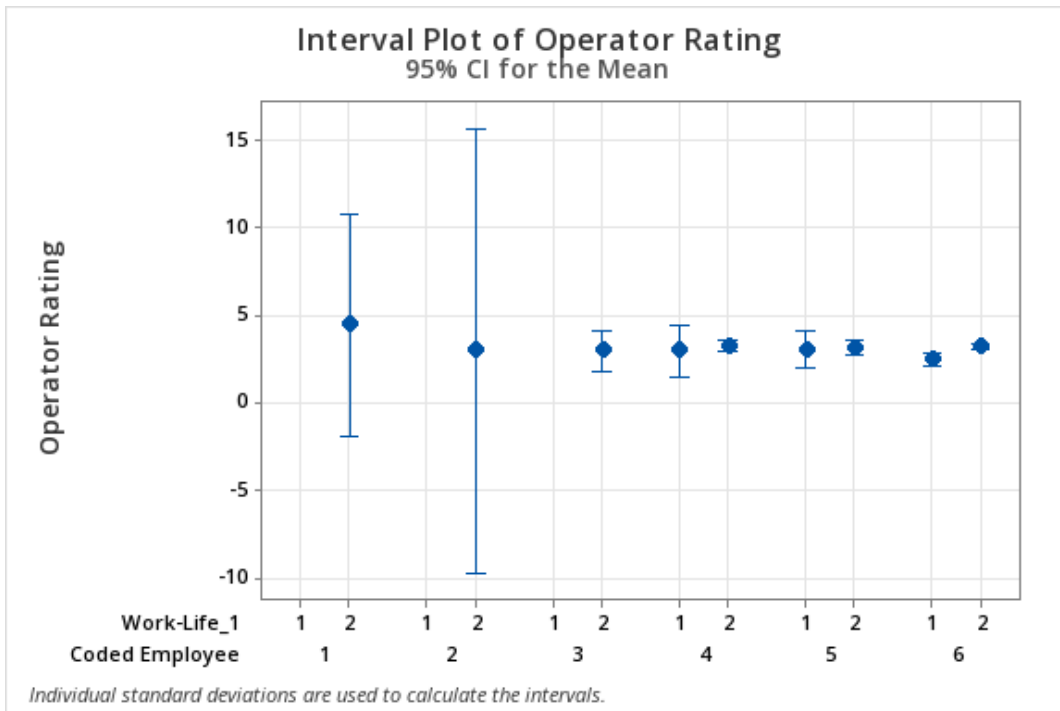
Appendix 6: Work-Life Balance Deep Dive

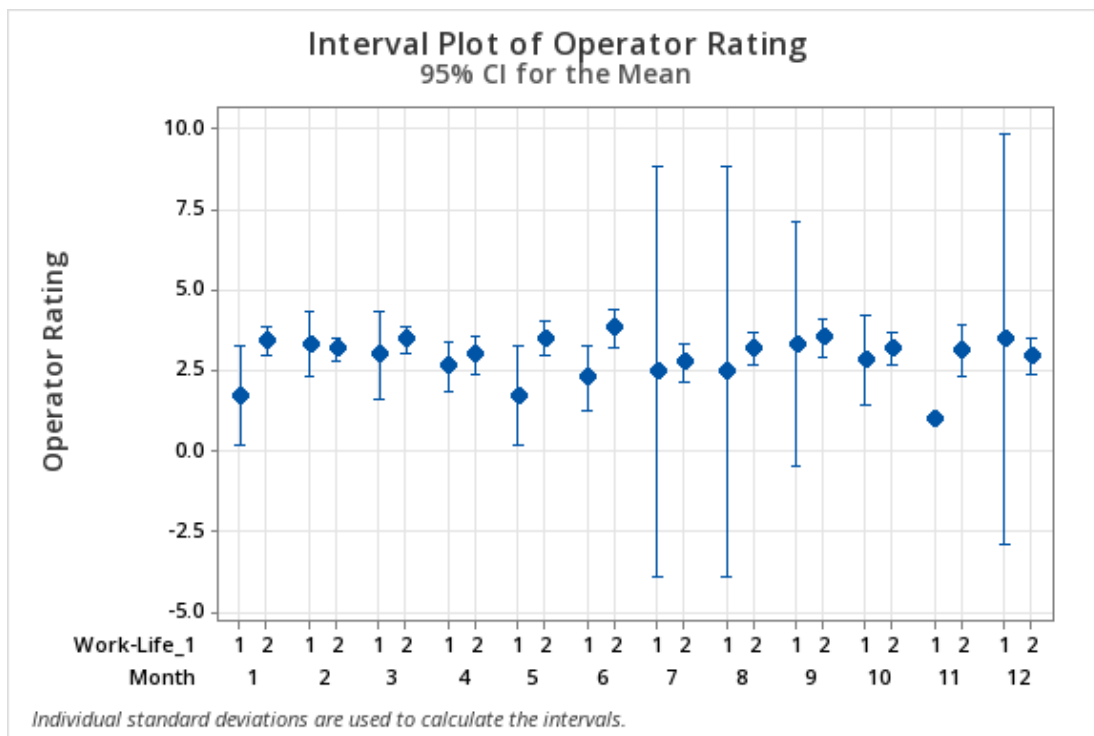
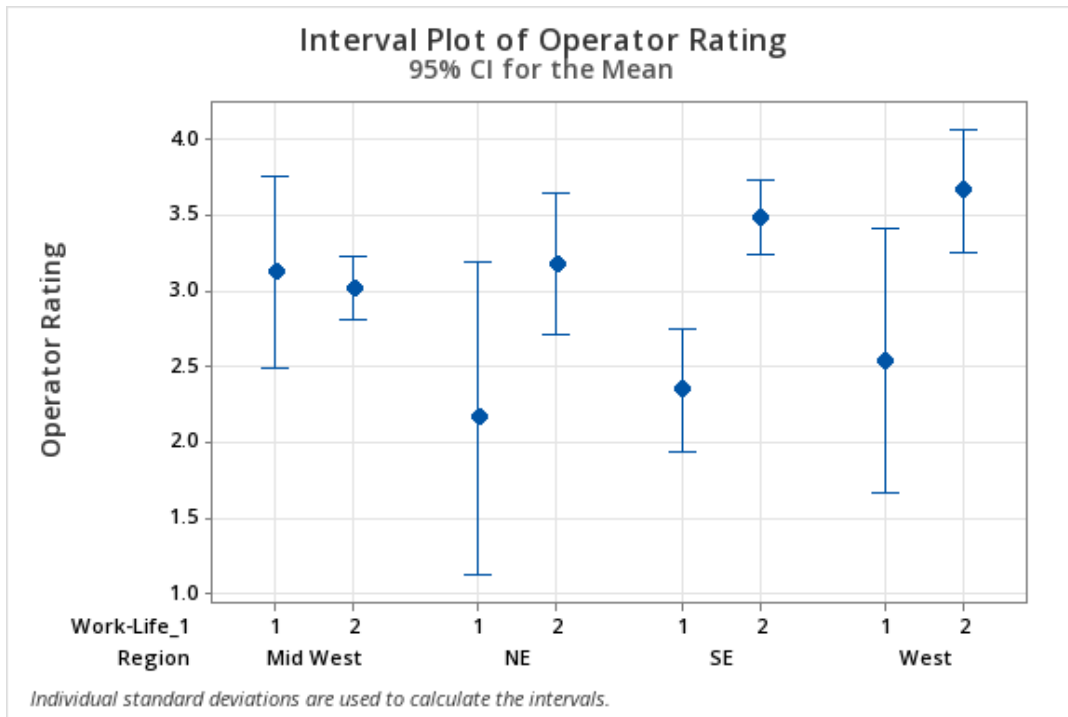
Employees that mentioned work-life balance or similar terms tended to have statistically significantly lower ratings by an average of 0.2 points than those where the term was not mentioned, where $p=0.003$ using One-Way ANOVA analysis. Work-Life was mentioned in 57 of the 421 data points, and this includes mentions that were both favorable and unfavorable. None of the covariates considered had a significant impact on this correlation, including employment status (current versus former), duration of employment, size of the company as measured in revenue, size of the company as measured by the number of employees, ownership type (public versus private), region of the country considered, or month of the year or day of the week that the review was written.

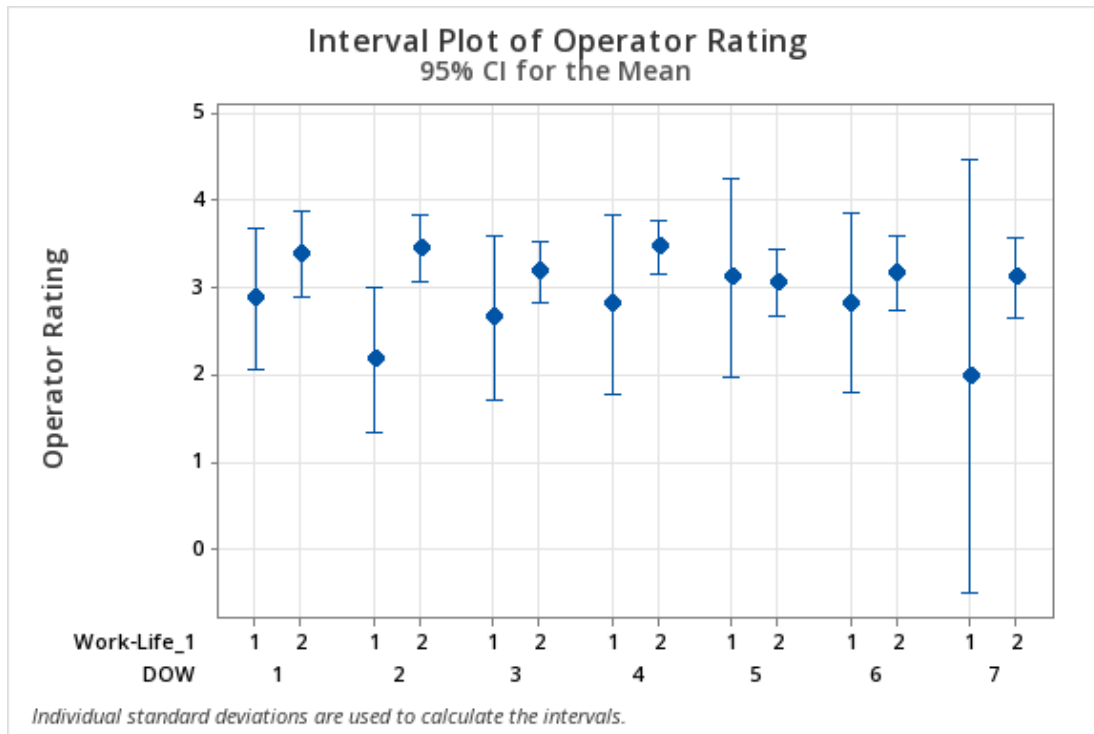












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[20less%20burnout%20and%20other%20performance%20problems](https://www.entrepreneur.com/growth-strategies/a-work-life-balance-will-help-you-keep-employees/431437#:~:text=Work-life%20balance%20can%20be%20supported%20by%20flexible%20work,balance%20have%20less%20burnout%20and%20other%20performance%20problems).

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