Final Project: Analysis on STEM Position Salaries

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1.1 Introduction

Many International students leave their countries to pursue careers in a STEM-related field, including positions like software engineers, business analysts, and data scientists. There's no current research paper on what influences the salary of STEM-related positions, yet there are some news articles that have performed analysis on the salary for STEM-related positions. The articles focus on comparing the salary difference between each year, providing a general overview of the industry but not insights for individual companies.

In this analysis, we want to understand what possible factors that might influence the total yearly compensation for STEM-related positions. The analysis is split into two parts. In the first part, we aim to analyze whether companies have different standards for salary across the same position. In addition, we want to examine whether the location has an impact on the compensation. A hierarchical model will be used to evaluate the variances across different companies and countries. In the second part, we want to see if other demographic features will have an impact on the compensation. This analysis fits two different hierarchical models to compare whether taking account of personal background explains the salary more than the candidate's working experience.

1.2 Summary

The analysis examines how different factors might influence the total yearly compensation and specifically focuses on how the salaries vary from location and company. Our model indicates that around 71% of the variation in total compensation can be explained by countries and companies. The analysis of the model showed that the salaries are different from countries by title and different from companies. The model indicates interesting interactions like title and experience. In addition, both years of experience and years at the company increase the salary slightly regardless of location and title.

1.3 Data

This dataset comes from Kaggle where the author scraped the CSV file from level.fyi, which is an online platform where users can report their salaries in US dollars. In this analysis, there are two possible columns for the response variable, one of them is total yearly compensation. The other option is the base salary variable. However, after examining the data, there are a lot of 0's filled in and it's counter-intuitive. The total yearly compensation data is more consistent and is one of the mandatory columns. Since the distribution of the total yearly compensation is skewed, a log transformation is used for modeling. The distribution after log transformation resembles the normal distribution and we proceed with log-transformed salary.

In addition to salaries, there are variables that we can use as predictors. This includes company, level, job title, office location, years of experience and years at the company. The office location is aggregated into a single column. To process the data, we have to split the data into

city, state, and country. The data consists of users around the globe, and some countries have less than 10 data points. Since we're interested in examining the variance across different countries, we will filter out countries with less than 10 data points. In addition, we're interested in the variance across different companies, so we will filter out companies with less than 100 data points. This reduces our data to 45 thousand entries.

Some columns are optional personal information, including gender, education level. The user is not required to fill in this information when reporting their salary. Out of the 65 thousand entries, only 14 thousand have complete personal information. Therefore the research will be split into two parts. In the first part, we will focus on all of the data without using personal information. In the second part, we will add personal information and compare the two models.

1.4 EDA

In order to answer our research questions, we examine the relationship between the company and salary distribution. We see a clear difference in the total compensation in different companies. We also checked the relationship between salary and countries. The distribution of the salary varies across different countries.

For the non-hierarchical terms, including title, years-at-company, and years-of-experience, we are also interested in the interaction terms between them. The slopes of years at the company versus salary are obviously different across titles. While the slopes of years of experience versus salary are only slightly different across titles. We will pass both interaction terms to the stepwise model selection process and determine whether we should include them in our final model.

For hierarchical terms, we first examine the company-wise effects. The slope of years of experience versus salary in each company is almost the same. Therefore, we will not consider using varying slopes for years of experience variables. The slope of years at a company versus salary in each company is different, and thus we will consider doing a varying slopes model for this predictor. Most of the companies have similar trends in the relationship between salary versus title. In addition, not all of the companies have all the titles. We will consider using varying intercepts instead of varying slopes. (Appendix 1.a)

Last, we examine the country-wise effect. We sample 16 countries from countries that have more than 10 data points. The slope of years of experience versus salary in each country is different. We will consider using varying slopes for years of experience by different countries. The slope of years at a company versus salary in each company is also different, and thus we will consider doing a varying slopes model for this predictor on country. All the countries have different trends of the relationship between salary versus title. Therefore, we will consider using varying slope models on country. (Appendix 1.b)

1.5 Model Selection

In the first part of the project, we focus on the variables with no missing data at all. A stepwise model selection is used for selecting the fixed terms. Forward direction selection returns the same result as using both directions, while the backward selection returns the null model. Then we

use the ANOVA test to compare against the AIC and BIC models. The p-value for the AIC model is significant. Before proceeding to add the hierarchical terms, we did a model assessment on the fixed terms linear regression model. Since the AIC model includes all the interaction terms, including the three-way interaction between title, years-of-experience and years-at-company, it makes the multicollinearity score higher than 8. We take out the three-way interaction and the interaction between years-of-experience and years-at-company to avoid high multicollinearity. Our fixed terms that will be included in the final model will be years-of-experience, title, years-at-company, the interaction between years-of-experience and title, and the interaction between years-at-company and title.

Then we proceed with the hierarchical model. We fit several different hierarchical models with the same fixed terms. This includes varying intercept with countries, varying intercept with companies, and varying intercept with both companies and countries. In order to evaluate the models, we compare their AIC values. We also try to compare the varying slopes for companies and countries. However, a lot of companies don't have sufficient data points for each title, making the model fail to converge. Therefore, we can only focus on comparing the varying intercept models with the varying slope model using title and countries. The model using the combination of varying intercept with companies and varying slope with title and countries has the smallest AIC value, and we will use this as our final model. Our final model will be:

$$log(salary_i) = \beta_0 + \gamma_{0,company_j} + (\beta_1 + \gamma_{1,country_j}) \text{title}_{ij}$$

$$+ \beta_2 \text{experience}_i + \beta_3 \text{companyExp}_i + \beta_4 \text{experience}_i : \text{title}_i$$

$$+ \beta_5 \text{companyExp}_i : \text{title}_i + \epsilon_{ij}$$

$$(1)$$

where
$$\epsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma^2), \gamma_{0,company} \sim N(0, \tau_0^2), \gamma_{1,country} \sim N(0, \tau_1^2).$$

For the second part of the project, we focus on the complete set of data, which reduces the number of observations to 14 thousand entries. The final model from the previous section is used to perform another stepwise model selection in both directions with three extra variables: gender, education and race. We examined the VIF score and removed two interaction terms with high VIF scores from the AIC model. Our model for the second part will be:

$$log(salary_{i}) = \beta_{0} + \gamma_{0,company_{j}} + (\beta_{1} + \gamma_{1,country_{j}}) \text{title}_{ij}$$

$$+ \beta_{2} \text{experience}_{i} + \beta_{3} \text{companyExp}_{i} + \beta_{4} \text{experience}_{i} : \text{title}_{i}$$

$$+ \beta_{5} \text{companyExp}_{i} : \text{title}_{i} + \beta_{6} \text{education}_{i} + \beta_{7} \text{race}_{i} + \beta_{8} \text{gender}_{i}$$

$$+ \beta_{9} \text{education}_{i} : \text{race}_{i} + \beta_{10} \text{education}_{i} : \text{gender}_{i}$$

$$+ \beta_{11} \text{race}_{i} : \text{gender}_{i} + \beta_{12} \text{companyExp}_{i} : \text{gender}_{i} + \epsilon_{ij}$$

$$(2)$$

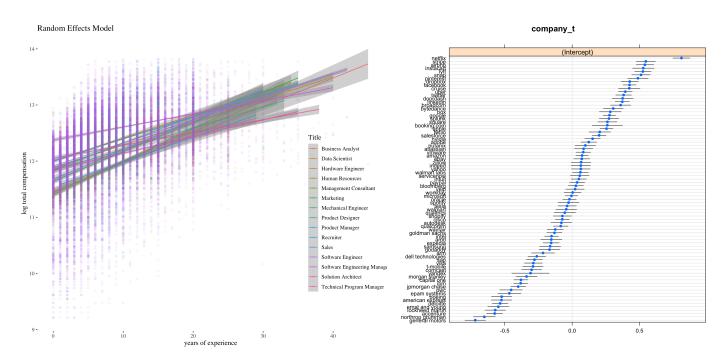
1.6 Model Assessment

We checked the cook's distance before adding the hierarchical terms. All the cook's distances are within 0.05. The multicollinearity issue is resolved by removing the interaction terms. There are two continuous predictors in our model, years-at-company and years-of-experience. The linearity assumption is met since there's no obvious pattern in the residual versus continuous predictor plot(Appendix 1.e and 1.f). The independence and constant variance assumptions are met since there's no obvious pattern in the residual plot(Appendix 1.d). For the normality assumption,

even though most of the points fall on the 45-degree line in the QQplot, there are some points on the tails that are deviating from the line(Appendix 1.c). However, there isn't much room for improvement as the response variable has already been log-transformed.

1.7 Model Result

Since we're using a combination of a random intercept and random slope model, we expect to see different intercepts and slopes across the titles. We use the years-of-experience versus log total compensation graph to visualize the slopes (Figure 1). Software engineers have the largest intercept. The slopes are also different from each title. We also visualize the random effects on intercepts by each company using dotplot (Figure 2). The coefficients from the model are shown in the table (Appendix 2).



(a) Figure 1: Random Slope Model using Title

(b) Figure 2: Random Effect of Company

Our baseline model is the total yearly compensation for business analysts around the globe, with 0 experience and 0 years at their company. Most of the titles are significant, including Software engineer manager, data scientist, and recruiter. In order to interpret our results, we select some countries and titles as examples. For the fixed effect, with all the conditions held baseline, changing the title from business analyst to software engineer manager is expected to increase the compensation by a multiplicative effect of 2.34. On the contrary, with all the conditions held at baseline, changing the title from a business analyst to a recruiter is expected to decrease the compensation by a multiplicative effect of 0.8. If the recruiter has one year of experience at the company, the compensation is expected to decrease by a multiplicative effect of 0.82. If the re-

cruiter has one year of experience outside the company, the compensation is expected to decrease by a multiplicative effect of 0.8.

As for the random effects of companies, Netflix has the most positive intercept. If the candidate works in Netflix, it increases their baseline salary by a multiplicative effect of 2.03. On the contrary, General Motors has the most negative intercept. If the candidate works in General Motors, it decreases their baseline salary by a multiplicative effect of 0.53.

As for the random effects of the countries, the United States has the most positive intercept. If the candidate works in the States, it increases their baseline salary by a multiplicative effect of 2.07. If the candidate is a software engineer manager working in the United States, their salary is expected to increase by 2.12 compared to the baseline salary in the States. On the contrary, Mexico has the most negative intercept. If the candidate works in Mexico, it decreases their baseline salary by a multiplicative effect of 0.38. If the candidate is a software engineer manager working in Mexico, their salary is expected to increase by 2.61 compared to the baseline salary in Mexico.

For the second part of the analysis, we add in gender, education, and race for the 14 thousand complete data. The coefficients from the model are shown in the table (Appendix 3). The baseline is the total yearly compensation for business analysts around the globe, female, Asian, who had their Bachelor's Degree, with 0 experience and 0 years at their company. Most titles remain significant. In addition, male, being white, education level of master degree and Ph.D. are also significant predictors. Given other conditions held baseline, if the candidate is male, their salary is expected to increase by 7%. If the candidate is white, their salary is expected to increase by 4%. For the education levels, given other conditions held baseline, if the candidate's highest education is Master's, their salary is expected to increase by 11%. If the candidate has a Ph.D. degree, their salary is expected to increase by 29%.

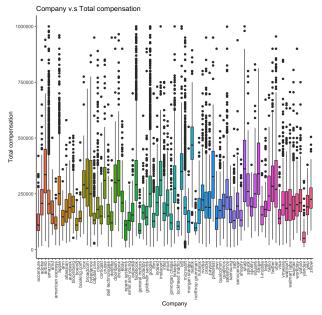
1.8 Conclusion

Overall, the hierarchical model provides insights into heterogeneity in the compensation of by country and company. Most of the variance in the dataset is explained with this hierarchical model, as the residual variance is only 0.29. The response variable is not only influenced by predictors that represent the working experience of the candidate but also shows discrepancy across different location groups and companies. After adding in personal background information, the model improved by having a smaller AIC and less residual variance. This means adding in personal information does help explain the salary better.

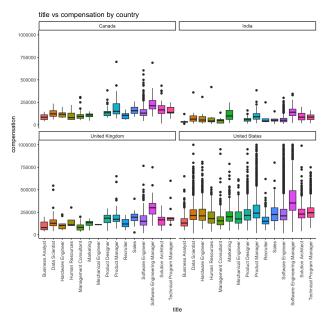
However, there are several limitations in this analysis. The normality assumption of the hierarchical linear regression model is not met. The data is imbalanced as most of the data come from the United States and software engineers. These limitations are probably due to the fact that we are using unverified data inputs from internet users. In all, the hierarchical model does help us study country-wise and company-wise random effects on the compensation and can be used for future studies on the same topic.

Appendix

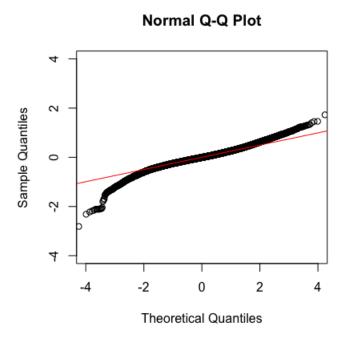
Appendix 1: Plots



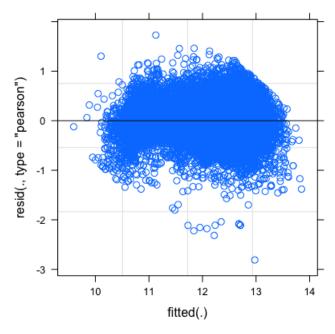
(a) Figure 1a: Company v.s Salary



(b) Figure 1b: Title v.s Salary by Country

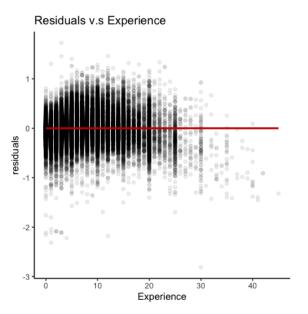


(c) Figure 1c: Normality Assumption

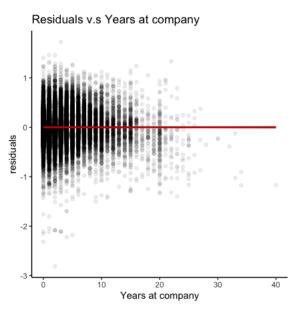


(d) Figure 1d: Independence Assumption

Appendix 1: Plots



(a) Figure 1.e: Linearity for Experience



(b) Figure 1.f: Linearity for Years at Company

Appendix 2: Model Outcome for First Model

		logtotalcomp		title [Product Designer]	0.02	0.01 - 0.04	<0.00
Predictors	Estimates	CI	p	* yearsatcompany			
(Intercept)	10.85	10.66 – 11.04	<0.001	title [Product Manager] *	-0.00	-0.01 - 0.01	0.884
yearsofexperience	0.05	0.04 - 0.05	<0.001	yearsatcompany	0.02	0.01 0.05	0.00
title [Data Scientist]	0.41	0.30 - 0.52	< 0.001	title [Recruiter] * yearsatcompany	0.03	0.01 - 0.05	0.001
title [Hardware Engineer]	0.38	0.30 - 0.45	< 0.001	title [Sales] *	0.02	0.01 - 0.04	0.003
title [Human Resources]	-0.22	-0.37 – -0.06	0.006	yearsatcompany			
title [Management Consultant]	0.46	0.24 - 0.68	<0.001	title [Software Engineer] * yearsatcompany	0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.545
title [Marketing]	0.06	-0.19 - 0.31	0.661	title [Software	-0.00	-0.01 - 0.01	0.471
title [Mechanical Engineer]	0.44	0.30 - 0.58	<0.001	Engineering Manager] * yearsatcompany title [Solution	0.01	-0.01 - 0.02	0.337
title [Product Designer]	0.33	0.17 - 0.49	< 0.001	Architect] *	0.01	-0.01 - 0.02	0.557
title [Product Manager]	0.44	0.35 - 0.53	< 0.001	yearsatcompany			
title [Recruiter]	-0.22	-0.340.10	< 0.001	title [Technical Program Manager] * yearsatcompany	0.01	-0.01 - 0.02	0.318
title [Sales]	0.21	0.10 - 0.31	<0.001				
				Random Effects σ^2	0.08		
title [Software Engineer]	0.31	0.24 – 0.39	<0.001	τ _{00 company_t}	0.11		
title [Software Engineering Manager]	0.85	0.72 - 0.97	< 0.001	τ ₀₀ company_t	0.22		
title [Solution	0.46	0.38 - 0.54	< 0.001	$ au_{11}$ country.titleData Scientist	0.04		
Architect]				τ ₁₁ country.titleHardware Engineer	0.02		
title [Technical Program	0.46	0.37 - 0.56	<0.001	τ ₁₁ country.titleHuman Resources	0.08		
Manager]	0.00	0.01 0.01	0.566	τ ₁₁ country.titleManagement Consultant	0.27		
yearsatcompany	0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.566	τ ₁₁ country.titleMarketing	0.32		
yearsofexperience * title [Data Scientist]		-0.01 - 0.00	0 0.124	τ ₁₁ country.titleMechanical Engineer	0.09		
yearsofexperience * title	-0.01	-0.020.00	0.010	τ ₁₁ country.titleProduct Designer	0.14		
[Hardware Engineer]				τ ₁₁ country.titleProduct Manager	0.03		
yearsofexperience * title	0.00	-0.01 - 0.01	0.428	τ ₁₁ country.titleRecruiter	0.03		
[Human Resources]			0.404	τ ₁₁ country.titleSales	0.04		
yearsofexperience * title [Management Consultant]	-0.00	-0.01 - 0.01	0.695	τ ₁₁ country.titleSoftware Engineer	0.02		
yearsofexperience * title	0.01	0.00 - 0.02	0.008	τ ₁₁ country.titleSoftware Engineering Manager	0.07		
[Marketing]				^T 11 country.titleSolution Architect	0.02		
yearsofexperience * title	-0.02	-0.030.01		τ ₁₁ country.titleTechnical Program Manager	0.04		
[Mechanical Engineer]				Q01 country.titleData Scientist	-0.69		
yearsofexperience * title [Product Designer]	-0.01	-0.01 – 0.00	0.105	Q01 country.titleHardware Engineer	-0.69		
yearsofexperience * title	-0.00	-0.01 - 0.00	0.311	901 country,titleHuman Resources	-0.55		
[Product Manager]				Q01 country.titleManagement Consultant	-0.30		
yearsofexperience * title [Recruiter]	-0.00	-0.01 - 0.01	0.722	Q01 country.titleMarketing	0.27		
	0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.515	Q01 country.titleMechanical Engineer	-0.78		
yearsofexperience * title [Sales]	0.00	-0.01 – 0.01	0.515	Q01 country.titleProduct Designer	-0.54		
yearsofexperience * title	-0.01	-0.01 - 0.00	0.056	Q01 country.titleProduct Manager	-0.70		
[Software Engineer]				Q01 country,titleRecruiter	-0.35		
yearsofexperience * title [Software Engineering	-0.02	-0.030.01	<0.001	Q01 country.titleSales	-0.42		
Manager]				Q01 country.titleSoftware Engineer	-0.54		
yearsofexperience * title	-0.02	-0.020.01	< 0.001	Q01 country.titleSoftware Engineering Manager	-0.61		
[Solution Architect]				Q01 country.titleSolution Architect	-0.85		
yearsofexperience * title [Technical Program Manager]	-0.02	-0.02 – -0.01	<0.001	Q ₀₁ country title Technical Program Manager	-0.78 79		
title [Data Scientist] *	0.01	0.00 - 0.03	0.022	N company_t			
yearsatcompany	0.01	0.00 - 0.03	0.022	N country	31		
title [Hardware Engineer]	0.01	-0.00 - 0.02	0.150	Observations	45455 0.492 / N	T.A.	
* yearsatcompany				Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.492 / N	A	

Appendix 3: Model Outcome for Second Model

Predictors	Estimates	logtotalcomp CI	p
(Intercept)	10.79	10.57 - 11.02	<0.001
yearsofexperience	0.04	0.03 - 0.05	<0.001
Education [Highschool]	0.07	-0.18 – 0.31	0.593
Education [Master's Degree]	0.10	0.08 - 0.13	<0.001
Education [PhD]	0.26	0.19 - 0.32	<0.001
Education [Some College]	-0.09	-0.25 - 0.08	0.318
title [Data Scientist]	0.36	0.21 - 0.51	< 0.001
title [Hardware Engineer]	0.37	0.27 - 0.47	< 0.001
title [Human Resources]	-0.09	-0.46 - 0.28	0.642
title [Management	0.44	0.31 - 0.57	< 0.001
Consultant]			
title [Marketing]	0.11	-0.14 – 0.37	0.386
title [Mechanical Engineer]	0.50	0.33 - 0.66	<0.001
title [Product Designer]	0.35	0.09 - 0.61	0.008
title [Product Manager]	0.54	0.39 - 0.68	< 0.001
title [Recruiter]	-0.18	-0.33 – -0.03	0.018
title [Sales]	0.18	-0.02 - 0.38	0.071
title [Software Engineer]	0.34	0.23 - 0.46	< 0.001
title [Software Engineering Manager]	0.89	0.74 - 1.04	< 0.001
title [Solution	0.49	0.36 - 0.62	< 0.001
Architect]			
title [Technical Program Manager]	0.45	0.31 - 0.59	< 0.001
Race [Black]	-0.03	-0.09 - 0.03	0.290
Race [Hispanic]	-0.02	-0.08 - 0.04	0.481
Race [Two Or More]	0.06	-0.00 - 0.12	0.051
Race [White]	0.04	0.01 - 0.07	0.005
yearsatcompany	0.00	-0.01 - 0.01	0.996
gender [Male]	0.07	0.05 - 0.09	<0.001
gender [Other]	0.06	-0.19 – 0.30	0.653
Education [Highschool] *	-0.06	-0.31 – 0.20	0.672
Race [Black] Education [Master's	-0.01	-0.06 – 0.05	0.821
Degree] * Race [Black]	-0.01	0.00 - 0.03	0.021
Education [PhD] * Race [Black]	-0.13	-0.30 - 0.05	0.157
Education [Some College]	-0.07	-0.26 - 0.12	0.477
* Race [Black]	0.07	0.20 0.12	0
Education [Highschool] * Race [Hispanic]	0.06	-0.12 - 0.24	0.528
Education [Master's	0.01	-0.04 - 0.06	0.745
Degree] * Race [Hispanic]			
Education [PhD] * Race [Hispanic]	-0.10	-0.20 - 0.01	0.067
Education [Some College]	-0.02	-0.21 – 0.17	0.857
* Race [Hispanic]			
Education [Highschool] * Race [Two Or More]	-0.04	-0.26 – 0.19	0.762

Appendix 3: Model Outcome for Second Model, Continued

tid- [Dit] *	0.05	0.02 0.07	0.001		
title [Recruiter] * yearsatcompany	0.05	0.02 - 0.07	0.001	Random Effects	
title [Sales] * yearsatcompany	-0.00	-0.02 - 0.02	0.737	σ^2	0.08
title [Software Engineer] * yearsatcompany	-0.00	-0.02 - 0.01	0.716	τ _{00 company_t}	0.11
				τ _{00 country}	0.23
title [Software Engineering Manager] *	-0.01	-0.02 - 0.00	0.115	τ ₁₁ country.titleData Scientist	80.0
yearsatcompany				τ ₁₁ country.titleHardware Engineer	0.02
title [Solution	0.00	-0.01 - 0.02	0.879	τ ₁₁ country.titleHuman Resources	0.39
Architect] * yearsatcompany				τ ₁₁ country.titleManagement Consultant	0.03
title [Technical Program Manager] * yearsatcompany	0.00	-0.01 - 0.02	0.737	$ au_{11}$ country.titleMarketing	0.25
Education [Highschool] * gender [Male]	-0.06	-0.28 – 0.16	0.564	τ ₁₁ country.titleMechanical Engineer	0.08
				τ ₁₁ country.titleProduct Designer	0.26
Education [Master's Degree] * gender [Male]	-0.04	-0.06 – -0.01	0.005	τ ₁₁ country.titleProduct Manager	0.06
Education [PhD] * gender		-0.03 – 0.10	0.269	τ ₁₁ country.titleRecruiter	0.04
[Male]		-0.03 - 0.10	0.209	τ _{11 country.titleSales}	0.11
Education [Some College]	0.01	-0.11 – 0.13	0.866	τ _{11 country.title} Software Engineer	0.03
* gender [Male] Education [Highschool] *	-0.50	-0.88 – -0.13	0.008	τ_{11} country.titleSoftware Engineering Manager	0.06
gender [Other]	0.50	0.00		$ au_{11}$ country.titleSolution Architect	0.04
Education [Master's Degree] * gender [Other]	0.14	-0.03 - 0.31	0.118	$ au_{11}$ country.titleTechnical Program Manager	0.05
Education [PhD] * gender	-0.00	-0.36 – 0.36	0.990	Q ₀₁ country.titleData Scientist	-0.72
[Other]	on [This] gender			Q ₀₁ country.titleHardware Engineer	-0.84
Education [Some College] * gender [Other]	-0.11	-0.55 - 0.33	0.626	Q ₀₁ country.titleHuman Resources	-0.66
Race [Black] * gender	-0.02	-0.08 - 0.05	0.614	Q ₀₁ country.titleManagement Consultant	-0.38
[Male]				Q ₀₁ country.titleMarketing	0.06
Race [Hispanic] * gender [Male]	-0.03	-0.09 – 0.03	0.370	Q ₀₁ country.titleMechanical Engineer	-0.93
Race [Two Or More] *	[Two Or More] * -0.07	-0.130.00	0.047	Q ₀₁ country.titleProduct Designer	-0.57
gender [Male]		2.30		Q ₀₁ country.titleProduct Manager	-0.78
Race [White] * gender [Male]	-0.04	-0.07 – -0.01	0.004	Q ₀₁ country.titleRecruiter	-0.65
Race [Black] * gender	0.09	-0.39 – 0.56	0.722	Q ₀₁ country.titleSales	-0.43
[Other]				Q ₀₁ country.titleSoftware Engineer	-0.63
Race [Hispanic] * gender [Other]	0.19	-0.17 – 0.56	0.297	Q ₀₁ country.titleSoftware Engineering Manager	-0.80
Race [Two Or More] *	-0.13	-0.38 – 0.11	0.286	Q ₀₁ country.titleSolution Architect	-0.90
gender [Other]				Q ₀₁ country.titleTechnical Program Manager	-0.75
Race [White] * gender [Other]	-0.15	-0.40 – 0.09	0.214	N company_t	79
yearsatcompany * gender	0.01	0.00 - 0.01	<0.001	N country	24
[Male]				Observations	14756
yearsatcompany * gender [Other]	0.05	0.02 - 0.08	0.001	Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.528 / NA