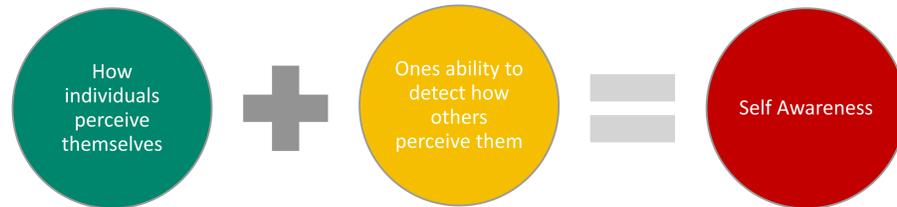


Gender and Self-Other Agreement

by Lauren Hauser, Dr. Leanne Atwater,
Management Department

Background



- Leadership is a relational process, and leaders must be aware of their influence on others in order to be effective.
- Self-other agreement refers to the similarity between descriptions of ones performance by the self and by others.
- Research of female leaders' predicted-other ratings may highlight an important link between lower predicted boss ratings and barriers to women's advancement to senior-level leadership positions.
- Women may be unknowingly inhibiting their professional advancement.
- Developmental practices to improve predicted-other ratings could help women reach their full leadership potential.

Hypotheses and Methodology

Hypothesis 1: Women's predicted boss ratings will be lower than boss' actual ratings.

Hypothesis 2: Women leaders' predicted ratings of their bosses' ratings of their leadership will be lower when the women leaders' workgroup is predominantly male.

- 137 leaders and their bosses submitted online surveys through the Center for Creative Leadership.
- The survey included measures of leadership effectiveness and the gender composition in work groups. Leaders also predicted boss ratings.
- Participants were asked whether they perceived that they rated themselves **lower than, higher than, or the same** as their bosses had rated their leadership effectiveness.
- Participants were then asked to explain their answer in a free response format.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Supported.

Gender	Predicted	Actual
Female	3.84	4.06
Male	3.96	3.95

*T-test; $p < .05$ not significant

Results

Hypothesis 2: Not supported.

- There were no significant differences in predicted boss ratings when the work group was predominantly male versus predominantly female or roughly homogenous.

Data from free response question:

Gender	Self-Rating*	Top reasons by frequency
Female	Higher	High standards for self, humility, past ratings
Female	Lower	Recent change in management, lack of positive feedback, struggles to meet standards
Female	Same	Effective communication and feedback, boss and employee are similar
Male	Higher	High standards for self, boss acknowledges successes, humility
Male	Lower	Management has high expectations, recent change in management, vague expectations
Male	Same	Effective communication, self-confidence

Top reasons for predicted boss-rating in comparison to self-rating were roughly uniform across genders.

*Self-ratings in comparison to predicted boss ratings

Conclusions

- Women may be inhibiting their own professional advancement due to an inaccurate understanding of how others see them.
- The quantitative data in this study revealed that women's predicted ratings were lower than boss' actual ratings of them. It also revealed that there were no significant differences in women leader's predicted ratings when the women's workgroup was predominantly male as opposed to equal in terms of gender.
- Women's under-prediction compared to men suggests that this could limit their attempts to ask for raises, promotions, or plum assignments.
- Further research should include studies on the effects of under-prediction on employee performance and retention, as well as ways to mitigate under-prediction, such as improved communication.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Dr. Atwater for her insight and mentorship on this project, and to my loved ones for their steadfast encouragement and support.