

Study shows exposure to female managers increases their popularity

March 22 2011

Do common stereotypes about female characteristics keep the number of women in management roles low? This is the question posed by Janka Stoker and her colleagues from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands in their study looking at the factors which relate to managerial stereotypes. Their findings, published online in Springer's *Journal of Business and Psychology*, suggest that increasing the proportion of female managers is an effective way to overcome managerial stereotyping.

The conception that a 'good' manager is male and has [masculine characteristics](#), such as being strong, result-orientated and willing to take risks still exists. Reasons for this could be that women are expected to engender characteristics such as warmth, modesty and sensitivity; characteristics which are not seen as consistent with being a 'good' leader. These [stereotypes](#) have important implications as they may bias against selecting and promoting women to management positions.

The researchers asked over 3,000 employees of different companies to complete an electronic questionnaire. Results showed that masculine leadership characteristics were found to be more attractive by both male and female respondents. However, male employees and employees with a male manager found feminine characteristics less attractive than female employees did, and [employees](#) who already had a female manager. Those with a female manager also showed less preference for a male leader.

The authors suggest that increasing the number of female managers lessens men's strong preferences for male leaders but does not affect women's preferences. The preference for male managers is reduced significantly when the employee is female, has a female manager or if the ratio of females in the management is high.

The authors conclude that "increasing the number of women in organizations is not the only way to improve the image of female management. There is a need to create awareness of role models who contradict the stereotype. Organizations and managers can try to reduce the impact of stereotypes by acknowledging the fact that stereotypes do exist."

More information: Stoker J I et al. Factors relating to managerial stereotypes: the role of gender of the employee and the manager and management gender ratio. Journal of Business and Psychology [DOI 10.1007/s10869-011-9210-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-011-9210-0)

Provided by Springer

Citation: Study shows exposure to female managers increases their popularity (2011, March 22) retrieved 4 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-03-exposure-female-popularity.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.