

Women's leadership potential for top jobs overlooked in favor of men

May 14 2019



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

The potential of women for leadership roles is being overlooked, while men benefit from the perception that they will grow into the role, new research from the University of Kent shows.

Researchers at the University's School of Psychology carried out two experimental studies that suggest that women have to demonstrate [high performance](#) in order to be hired to senior roles. By contrast, the study found that having potential was valued more highly than performance in men.

Nearly 300 participants took part in two studies. In an organisation hiring simulation, participants were asked to view and rank the CVs of female and male candidates for a [leadership role](#) in a hypothetical organisation. The candidates were either described as having high potential or high past performance.

The study demonstrated that when faced with a choice, people consistently ranked male candidates with [leadership](#) potential as their first choice. Furthermore, while leadership potential was preferred in male candidates, participants preferred past performance over potential in [female candidates](#).

The findings suggest that whilst women's past performance has to be at least as good as men's, women might be held to [higher standards](#) in selection processes because their leadership potential might be less likely to be recognised than men's.

One of the research team, Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura of the University's School of Psychology, said: 'There is much evidence that women are under-represented in leadership roles and this has social, cultural and organisational impact. Our research revealed an overlooked potential effect that exclusively benefits men and hinders women who pursue leadership positions.'

The research, entitled Overlooked Leadership Potential: The preference for leadership potential in job candidates who are men vs. [women](#) (Abigail Player, Georgina Randsley de Moura, Ana C. Leite, Dominic

Abrams and Fatima Tresh) is published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*.

More information: Abigail Player et al, Overlooked Leadership Potential: The Preference for Leadership Potential in Job Candidates Who Are Men vs. Women, *Frontiers in Psychology* (2019). [DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00755](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00755)

Provided by University of Kent

Citation: Women's leadership potential for top jobs overlooked in favor of men (2019, May 14) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2019-05-women-leadership-potential-jobs-overlooked.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.