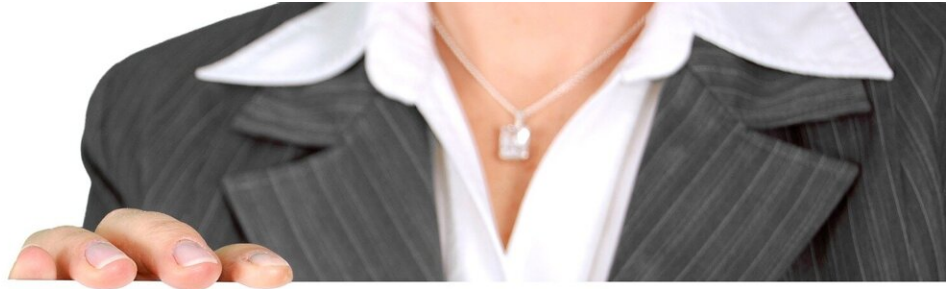
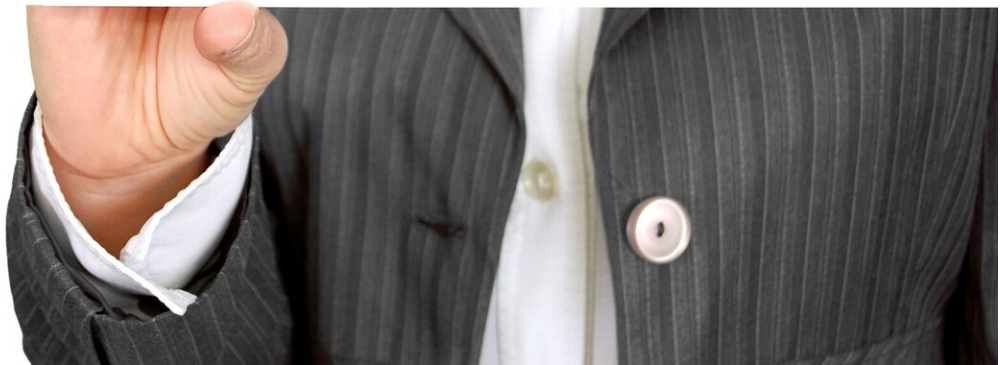


Women in high-status positions not trusted by colleagues

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Women in high-status, senior positions aren't trusted by the people they work with, according to a new study from The Australian National University (ANU).

Lead author Dr. Eun Young Song said this can have a damaging impact on both individuals and organizations.

"It's great to help women move up the ladder, but this study shows even when they do succeed, women aren't likely to be trusted by the people around them," Dr. Song said.

"We found despite the fact these women are often in supervisory roles, and are well connected, their high status doesn't benefit them.

"It's less of an issue for women in junior positions.

"It's also the opposite for men. When they occupy these senior positions, people tend to trust them more than junior male colleagues, or women in senior positions.

"This could actually discourage women from taking up high-status positions in the first place."

Dr. Song said a lack of trust hinders the flow of information within an organization.

"Trust among members of a professional network makes the network effective. It makes sharing information easier, which in turn helps with achieving common goals," Dr. Song said.

The study looked at responses from two surveys of employees who worked on the major London underground project in 2014 and 2015.

Dr. Song said more data and education could be key to finding a solution.

"The importance of networks in business is much talked about, but we

need to consider how widely held beliefs about women's competence and [social status](#) might impact those networks," Dr. Song said.

"Efforts to achieve gender equality should be paired with a society-wide push to break down these gender-status beliefs.

"Without this, promoting more women to more senior positions won't solve the problem—and may even exacerbate it. We need to move beyond simply telling individual women to improve their [communication skills](#)."

The research has been published in *Gender & Society*.

More information: Eun Young Song et al, In Women we Trust? Gender-Status Mismatch and Trust in Professional Networks, *Gender & Society* (2022). [DOI: 10.1177/08912432221128548](https://doi.org/10.1177/08912432221128548)

Provided by Australian National University

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