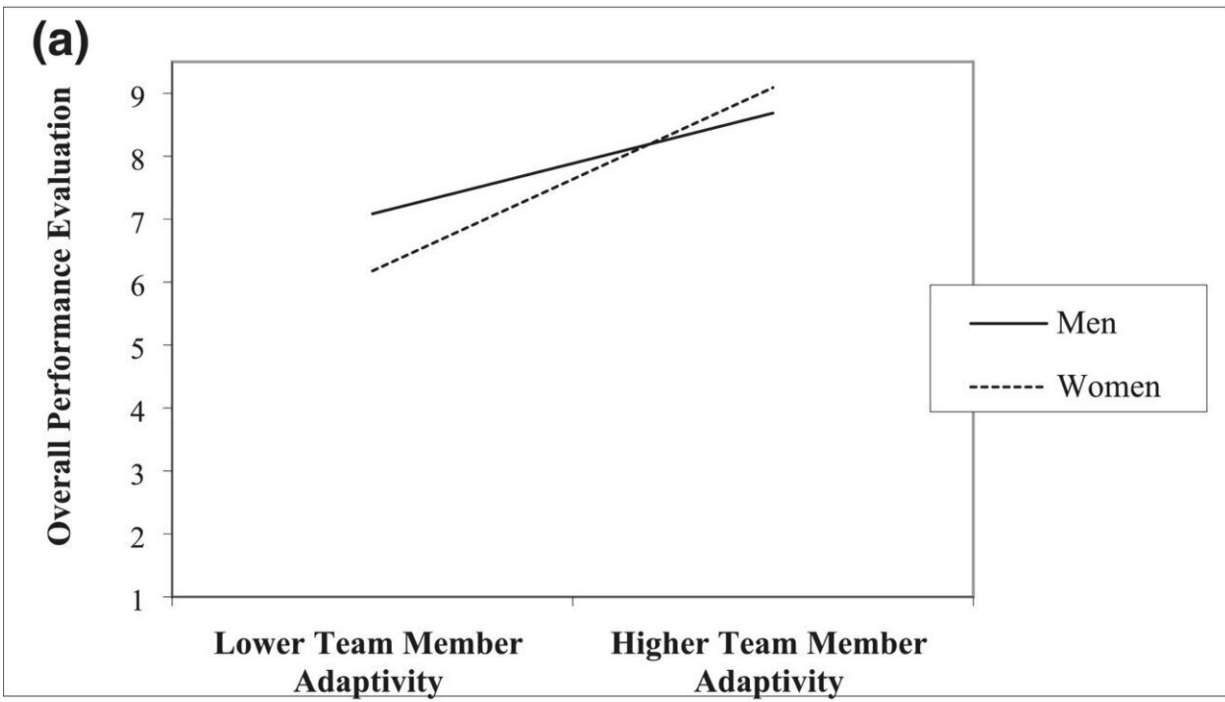


# Being adaptive at work may be the golden ticket to combat gender equalities

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(a) Interactive effects of team member adaptivity and gender on overall performance evaluation (Study 2). (b) Interactive effects of team member adaptivity and gender on overall performance evaluation (Study 3). Credit: *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (2023). DOI: 10.1002/job.2702

A study from The University of Western Australia's Business School has

revealed that women who adapt to changes in their work teams are recognized more than their male counterparts.

In a paper published in the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, UWA co-authors Dr. Joseph Carpini and Associate Professor Alex Luksyte, in collaboration with Professor Sharon Parker (Curtin University) and Associate Professor Catherin Collins (The University of New South Wales) found that being an adaptive team member was one way [women](#) could address ongoing gender inequities in the workplace.

"While women are a vital segment of the workforce, it's well-recognized that their performance at work is often underappreciated," Dr. Carpini said.

"We know that [gender stereotypes](#) interfere with how work behaviors are perceived and valued and stereotypes help explain why women's work contributions might be taken for granted.

"Research shows that this is the opposite for men, who are noticed and rewarded for demonstrating stereotypical masculine behaviors."

Dr. Luksyte said the differences underpinned how the work-related behaviors of women and men were perceived and evaluated and how they contributed to ongoing workplace inequalities.

The research team wanted to understand if adapting to changes might be a unique type of work behavior for which women were not only recognized but also rewarded; a significant shift in research on the gendered nature of work.

"Team member adaptivity is a unique type of work behavior because it encompasses stereotype-consistent elements for women, such as being collaborative and cooperative, while doing so to achieve organisationally

functional goals like effectiveness," Dr. Carpini said.

"To respond to rapid changes during COVID, organizations had to rely on their employees' adaptive performance when working interdependently, something known as team member adaptivity, with things like adapting to new virtual team processes, dynamic team structures and evolving team goals."

The researchers concluded that women who engaged in team adaptivity were recognized more than men, a finding they substantiated across three studies. The findings were novel, they said, because women were generally ignored and went unrecognized for their work-related behaviors.

"The research has practical implications for performance appraisal systems that might integrate recognition for being adaptive to change," Dr. Carpini said.

"Employees, and in particular women, should be encouraged to be flexible when working with others as they may benefit. Even though we found women were recognized more, men weren't punished or ignored, so they shouldn't be discouraged from being adaptive when working with others."

**More information:** Joseph A. Carpini et al, Can a familiar gender stereotype create a not-so-familiar benefit for women? Evidence of gendered differences in ascribed stereotypes and effects of team member adaptivity on performance evaluations, *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/job.2702](https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2702)

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