

Summary of Paper: [It's Complicated: How a Subordinate's Gender Influences Supervisors' Use of Past Performance Information When Appraising Potential](#)

What is this Study About?

Within industries perceived as being male-dominated, researchers explore whether supervisors appraise a female subordinate's past performance and future potential differently than a male subordinate's. They address whether workplace diversity initiatives have lessened the effects of gender stereotypes on how supervisors interpret performance information and evaluate employees.

What are the major findings of the study?

Despite having the same records of strong past performance, females were seen as having lower ability than males, but surprisingly, were appraised as having higher potential. The study's results suggest that diversity initiatives have done little to reduce long-held stereotypes about the drivers of strong performance for male (ability) and female (luck) candidates, and that organizational diversity efforts may inadvertently pressure supervisors to label females as high-potential in order to reach diversity goals, rather than because they believe females have high ability.

Why is the study important?

This research sheds light on the complex effects of gender on appraisals of employees' past performance and future potential. It underscores the persistent role of gender stereotypes in evaluating employees and suggests a shift towards valuing employees' gender to help advance organizational diversity efforts. These insights call for a critical reevaluation of appraisal processes and diversity strategies, with an aim to genuinely value factors that drive performance and potential without reinforcing stereotypes.