

Is there a Gender Bias in Self-Rated Performance?

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INTRODUCTION. Self-perceptions of performance drive learning and are essential for progress. The accuracy of such perceptions and their valid measurements provide high value interventions at all levels of society. Misapplying either element may reduce the career satisfaction for many employees, and blight the prosperity of their organisations. Recognising that employees hold their futures, many organisations are designing success pathways that integrate work that is both meaningful to employees and which meets the organisations' needs.

The primary goals of this study were to investigate whether or not females would rate themselves more highly on feminine tasks than would males on feminine tasks, and to measure participants' self-ratings with gender-free judge-creativity ratings. Creativity was a proxy for self-rating.

- 'Creativity' is a quality that experts recognise and generally agree on in their independent judgements (Amabile, 2010).
- Previous studies examining gender-bias in self-rating have utilised tasks that were either exclusively masculine; included masculine and feminine features in the same task.

The notion of self was understood within this study as based on self-perception theory (Sedikides, Gaertner & Toguchi, 2003).

This study is novel because for the first time, self-ratings of creativity were in explicitly masculine and feminine task-gender variables utilising the consensual assessment technique (Amabile, 1982); and secondly, because judges in this study were unknown to participants. These refinements clarify what task-genders have been studied and add to the body of knowledge available in social psychology.

Based on these refinements, this study hypothesised that females will rate themselves as less creative on masculine tasks, and males will rate themselves as less creative on feminine tasks.

METHODS. This was a 2 x 2 mixed quasi-experimental design with Creativity as the dependent variable, participant Sex the between-subjects' factor, and Task-gender as the within-subjects' factor. Control variables were age, masculinity, femininity, and task familiarity.

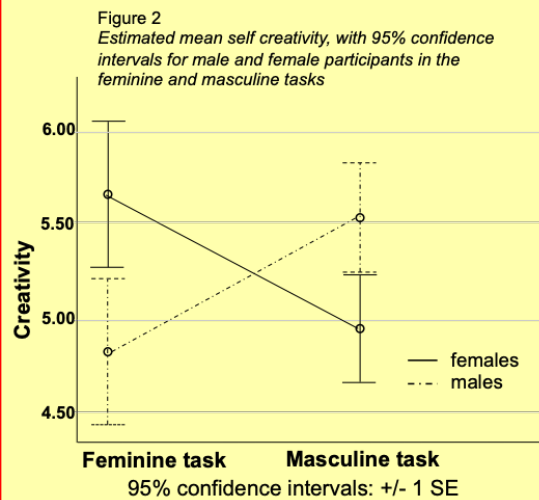
17 males and 17 females each created a masculine (helicopter) and a feminine product (flower arrangement) with the order counterbalanced. Post-task, each provided their age, and answered two familiarity-with-task questions developed for this study.

Creativity in the products was measured first as a post-task self-rating by participants, and secondly, by judges rating creativity from the 68 product photographs, see Fig. 1. Judges applied the Consensual Assessment Technique (Amabile, 2010) and were blind to the participants' genders and identities. Masculinity and femininity were measured with the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence and Helmreich, 1978). The hypothesis was tested using two-way ANCOVA with four cells.



RESULTS. Hypothesis testing on Self-Rated Creativity.

Model-1 was an ANCOVA where the dependent variable was participants' self-rated creativity. Initial analysis without covariates showed no main effects of sex, or of task-gender. There was an interaction of sex and task-gender, $F(1, 32) = 5.160$, $p = .030$, $\eta_p^2 = .139$, which remained significant after controlling for Age, Masculinity, Femininity, and Familiarity-with-task, Fig 2.



Hypothesis Testing on Judge-Rated Creativity. Model-2 was the basic mixed ANOVA without covariates.

The dependent variable was judge-rated creativity. Model-2 showed a main effect for task-gender only, $F(1, 32) = 4.572$, $p = .040$, $\eta_p^2 = .125$, and no interaction of sex and task-gender.

DISCUSSION. Judge-rated creativity showed no difference between male and female creativity, regardless of the masculinity or femininity of a task. However participant males and females enhanced their creativity ratings, in almost equal measure, in gender-matched tasks. Results signal two things: First, that controlling for covariates (and in particular masculinity and femininity) did not change the core results. Secondly, that even masculine women will super-enhance their creativity in feminine tasks, and feminine males will still super-enhance their creativity in masculine tasks, consistent with the hypothesis.

CONCLUSION. This study unearthed a full gender bias in self-ratings by men and women on task performance, which is consistent with its hypothesis. Future investigations and replicating research should overcome the limitations of this study by increasing sample sizes to improve statistical power; increasing number of tasks, and number of levels of personal attributes.

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