

The Effect of Gender & Ethnicity on the Assessment of Management & Leadership Effectiveness

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ACSG Conference
Protea Hotel, Stellenbosch
South Africa
March 14th 2007

Why so few women in top leadership positions?



Content

- *Why so few women in top positions?*
 - *Are they bad for organisations?*
 - *Do they lead differently to men?*
 - *Whose style is more effective?*
 - *What needs to change?*
- *Also the effect of Race/Ethnicity*

Problems faced by South African females

- Despite being talented, educated, & committed
- Misconceptions & stereotyping hindered women's upwards mobility
- Women perceived as not having leadership potential, and that their behaviours differed from men's
- Gender differences compounded by race

Source: Littrell, R.F. & Nkomo, S.M. (2005). 'Gender & race differences in leader behaviour preferences in South Africa', *Women in Management Review*, 20, 8, 562-580

Stages in the Assessment Process

- **Identifying the criteria**
- **Designing the assessment process**
- **Assessors evaluate candidates**

The History of Leadership Research

- The *'old paradigm' models*
- The *'new paradigm' models*
- *(old paradigm now referred to as 'management/transactional leadership')*

Gender & Leadership Style

- *no major differences found pre-1990*
- *occasional studies suggesting women more participative*
- *then Rosener's study*

What do the findings reveal?



What are the implications?

- *For selection?*
- *For appraisal & performance evaluation?*
 - *For promotion decisions?*
 - *For identifying potential?*

A New Inclusive Model of 'Engaging' Transformational Leadership

Alimo-Metcalfe, B. & Alban-Metcalfe, J. (2001). 'The development of a new transformational leadership questionnaire'. *Journal of Occupational & Organisational Psychology*, 74, 1-27.

US and UK models of Transformational Leadership

US Visionary- Charismatic model: leader as ‘hero’

UK Genuine concern for others: *leader as servant and partner*

UK: sense of *openness, humility and engagement* of the leader

UK: strong themes of *‘connectedness’, inclusion, & partnership*

*Are there gender differences in ‘engaging’
styles of leadership?*

An Investigation of Gender & Ethnicity & 360-feedback

Prospects & Perceptions

Alban-Metcalfe, Juliette. (2004). *'Prospects - Diversity & the Career Progression of Local Government Managers'*. London: Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) & Leadership Research & Development Ltd (Real World Group).

Alban-Metcalfe, Juliette. (2004). *'Perceptions - 360 Degree Feedback: An Analysis of its Differential Effect on Black and Minority Ethnic & White, Male & Female Managers in Local Government'*. London: IDeA & Leadership Research & Development Ltd (Real World Group).

The first study - Prospects

The participants were:

- From over 75 local authorities across the country
- At all levels of management
- 1,968 managers
- 408 from Black and Minority Ethnic groups
- Approx 50:50 male and female
- All ages

First findings

Compared with white managers:

- BME managers at a significantly **lower** level of management
- Significantly **less** satisfied with their careers in terms of:
 - goals reached for income
 - success achieved overall
 - goals reached for advancement
 - development of new skills

Barriers to career progression

Major barriers for BME managers include:

- Lack of support from line managers
- Lack of feedback
- Lack of training and development opportunities
- Being excluded
- Less constructive appraisal discussions

The second study *'Perceptions'*

- One of the 'myths' has been that BME managers are less effective as managers and leaders, than White managers. However:
 - Many research studies have suggested that there is negative bias in appraisal of BME staff by White managers

Data set

- Collected in real settings from IDeA/LGMB programmes
- Participation was voluntary and for developmental purposes only
- Ratings were given anonymously by bosses, peers and direct reports

Data set

- **Total data set – 3,001 managers**
- **210 Black and Minority Ethnic managers**
- **210 randomly selected White managers**
- **Middle to senior level**
- **Approx 50:50 gender distribution**

Boss' vs. Peers' ratings

Boss' ratings were lower than peers' ratings for:

- All 8 scales for Black and Minority Ethnic male managers
- 6/8 scales for Black and Minority Ethnic female managers
- 6/8 scales for White female managers
- Only 2/8 scales for White male managers

Boss' vs. Direct reports' ratings

Boss' ratings were lower than direct reports' ratings for:

- All eight scales for White female managers
- 6/8 scales for Black and Minority Ethnic female managers
- 6/8 scales for Black and Minority Ethnic male managers
- Only 3 scales for White male managers

Observations (1)

The pattern that appears to be emerging from the findings is that:

- For White male managers
boss' ratings = peers'/direct reports'
- For female and Black and Minority Ethnic managers
boss' ratings < peers'/direct reports'

Whose ratings are more valid?

(1)

**Effectiveness is typically judged by one's boss,
yet...**

- **Bosses' appraisal ratings have been found to be invalid alone**

Whose ratings are more valid?

(2)

- **Peers' ratings are more valid than bosses' (Fletcher & Baldry, 1996)**
- **Direct reports' ratings have been found to be more valid than ratings from ACs (McEvoy & Beatty, 1989)**

Gender & ACs (UK Army Selection) (1)

Sample:

1,594 (85.8%) male; 263 (14.2% female)

- all university graduates
- pre-screened on school results at age 18, expected degree classification, leadership roles, extra curricular activities
- various psychometric tests
- no differences found on age, cognitive ability, ed. attainment

Anderson, N. , Lievens, F., van dam, K. & Born, M. (2006). A construct-driven investigation of gender differences in leadership-role assessment centres. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, **91**, 555-566.

Gender & ACs (UK Army Selection) (2)

AC design:

- 3.5 days, 8 candidates x 250 ACs over 5-year period
- *“to select those with the potential qualities of character, ability, & leadership who...will lead a platoon or troop in battle”* (p.558)
- Predictive validity for training & job performance in the .30s (Dobson & Williams, 1989)
- 6 exercises; 6 sub-dimensions (based on officer job analyses)
- 3-day assessor training – “experienced officers”

Gender & ACs (UK Army Selection) (5)

Findings:

1. Re Exercises: Men rated higher on 2 exercises
(Others Command, & Planning exercise)
2. Re Dimensions: Women rated higher on 3
(Communication, Interaction, Drive & Determination)
3. Re OAR: (Women 45.9%; Men 31.9%)

Gender & ACs (UK Army Selection) (6)

**Possible reasons for women's higher ratings on
'Drive & Determination' (inconsistent with role
congruity theory)**

- 1. Women were more effective**
- 2. Leniency Bias by assessors (relating to the women)**
- 3. Women received 'preferential selection' treatment**

Reasons to hope

- *Notions of leadership are changing*
- *Spectacular Corporate Governance failures*
- *Increasing recognition of the association between proportions of women in top positions & organisational performance*
- *The call for ethical leadership is increasing*

What are the Implications for the Assessment of Leadership?

- ***How valid are existing dominant models of leadership*** for South African organisations, given their cultural provenance & white male bias?
- To what extent are our current practices in relation to ***identifying the criteria*** for our assessment processes (viz asking current senior managers) creating bias in our assessment processes?
- ***Are AC data alone sufficient*** for making decisions regarding the identification of potential? (based on observations of ‘strangers’; using existing senior managers; excluding observations of direct reports, peers & other important stakeholders)? (the dilemma of using 360 data)
- Given the continued prevalence of ***‘think manager, think (white) male’***, how can we reduce group characteristic bias in assessment decisions?

Final Questions

- How potentially pervasive is gender & race/ethnic bias in our organisation's assessment & performance management processes?

Getting Senior Managers on-board

- What would be the benefit to our organisation of bias-free assessment processes?
- How can we build the business case for reducing bias?
- What can we do now??

Additional References

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