The Effect of Stereotype Threat on Decision-Making:
Comparing Male and Female Leaders and Followers

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Abstract

Stereotype threat affects members of almost every stereotyped group, yet only a select number of groups and outcomes have been examined in prior research. In the current study, we examined the effect of stereotype threat on decision-making by comparing male and female leaders and followers. Participants were primed with the role of leader or follower (or not primed with either role—the control condition) and either reported their gender at the beginning (i.e., gender primed) of the study or at the end (i.e., gender not primed). They then completed a series of tasks measuring various aspects of decision-making: risk-aversion, loss-aversion, accuracy, confidence, and overconfidence. Results suggest that men were more risk-averse when primed with the follower role than in the control condition. Similarly, women were less loss-averse when primed with the follower role than in the control condition. In all, we found support that role (i.e., leader, follower) and gender stereotypes affect decision-making. We discuss the implications of this research for improving decision-making among both male and female leaders and followers.

Keywords: Stereotype Threat, Leadership, Decision-Making, Risk-Aversion, Loss-Aversion
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As humans, we often use stereotypes (i.e., “cognitive shortcuts”) to make sense of the complex social world we live in (Catalyst, 2007). Consequently, social stereotypes significantly affect behavior, perceptions of others, and perceptions of the self (Shih, Ambady, Richeson, Gray & Fujita, 2002). Stereotype threat occurs when well-known stereotypes affect the behavior of individuals in the stereotyped groups. These groups include women (Shih et al., 2002) students of low socioeconomic background (Croizet & Claire, 1998), Latino students (Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998), and Asian Americans (Shih et al., 2002). For example, when women are primed with gender stereotypes, they perform worse on math-related tasks and in negotiations (Quinn & Spencer, 2001).

Gender stereotypes also affect the quality of people’s decisions. In one study, women made more cautious financial decisions (i.e., they were more likely to forgo lucrative opportunities so they could avoid risk and losses) when primed with their gender stereotype (Priyank & Claude, 2010). In addition, women are less loss-averse (i.e., preferring to avoid losses than acquire gains) and less risk-averse (i.e., preferring options of higher certainty when options similar expected payoffs) than men when making decisions. The current research seeks to examine the effect of gender stereotypes on decision-making by incorporating leadership stereotypes into the decision-making process.

In particular, we seek to examine how leader and follower stereotypes affect the risk and quality of decisions. Across most industries, men occupy more decision-making positions than do women (Catalyst, 2007). Women are also less likely to be executives in the largest corporations (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009), and only 16% of corporate officers and 15% of board
members in Fortune 500 companies are women. It is important to examine if the stereotypes that result from these inequalities affect how men and women make decisions.

In all, the current study seeks to understand whether people make different decisions when primed with the role of leader vs. the role of follower, and how gender stereotypes affect this relationship. Specifically, this study addresses two research questions: 1. Do individuals primed with the role of leader make different decisions than those primed with the role of follower (or those not primed with either role)? 2. Do men primed with their gender make different decisions that women primed with their gender (or individuals not primed with their gender)? This research may help to understand how one’s identity affects the business decisions they make.

**Theoretical Rational and Hypotheses**

**Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are defined as standardized and simplified conceptions of groups based on prior assumptions (Quinn & Spencer, 2001), and have a long history in psychology (Lippman, 1922). They can be classified into five dimensions: (1) Content, (2) Category, (3) Homogeneity, (4) Salience, and (5) Interpretation (Worchel & Rothgerber, 1997). The first dimension focuses on the specific trait or content of the stereotype (i.e., lazy, moody, or respectful). The second dimension relates to the nature of the group categorization. For example, when the target group of gay men was divided into subgroups, there were differences among subgroup stereotypes (Clausell & Fiske, 2005). The third dimension concerns the perceived homogeneity of the target category as it relates to the stereotype of the group. The stereotype might include all, most, or some members of the target group that hold that specific trait (Katz & Braly, 1935). The fourth dimension is the salience of the stereotype (i.e., how...
prominent each trait assigned to a group is). Finally, the interpretation dimension suggests that each trait involved in a stereotype possesses a certain interpretation of what the stereotype is or means (Troop, 2005).

**Gender**

Gender stereotypes often reflect what others use to prescribe how men and women should, or ought to think and behave. For example, men are stereotyped with agentic characteristics like confidence, control, and assertiveness, whereas women are stereotyped with communal characteristics such as a concern for others (Heilman, 2001). In addition, gender roles often contain expectations about how men and women should behave in terms of agency and communion (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Communion (i.e., the motive to form social relationships and get along with others) emphasizes harmony and affiliation and is often associated with women. In contrast, agency (i.e., the motivation to obtain power and control over others) emphasizes assertiveness, efficacy, and mastery and is most often associated with men (Bakan, 1973). In all, social role theory suggests that women are expected to be communal while men are expected to be agentic and when one behaves inconsistently with his or her sex role, he or she is evaluated negatively (Eagly, 1987; Johnson, 2007). For example, men are perceived more favorably when they exhibit agentic traits while women are perceived more favorably when they exhibit communal traits.

Social roles held by women and men often account for the content of gender stereotypes. Historically, women have cared for the home and family, while men have provided for the family. Such role information can override sex in determining the personality characteristics of men and women (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). In addition, when people repeatedly observe men and women in these roles, they assume men and women are characterized by the personality traits
associated with the roles (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). In all, gender stereotypes are prevalent, powerful, and often based on actual gender differences.

**Leadership**

The role of leader in a group often involves making risky decisions that affect the payoffs of all members of the group (Gurdal, 2007). These types of decisions can range from choosing a restaurant for dinner with your friends to making an important investment decision for your organization. In addition, many economic decisions are made in group contexts, where the choices of an individual determine the payoffs of everyone in the group. These decisions often involve a risk component, with gains and losses possible for everyone including the decision-maker. In many cases, taking on the responsibility of such decision-making is at least partially voluntary, with some people being more willing to make or influence the group decision (Eagly & Johnson, 2007). This, to some extent, affects the stereotypes of leaders versus followers. Just as individuals have expectations regarding how men and women should behave, they have expectations of how leaders and followers should act. Leaders are often expected to be assertive and influential, while followers are expected to be accommodating and responsive (Bass, 1973). When a leader behaves consistently with an individual’s leadership prototype, he or she is seen as an effective leader by that individual (Eagly & Johnson, 2007).

**Leader and Gender**

Top management positions and executive level jobs are almost always thought to require an achievement-oriented aggressiveness and an emotional toughness that is antithetical to the female gender stereotype. When gender and leadership roles are combined, stereotypes may become especially detrimental. For example, problems arise for female leaders because expectations for how women should behave are often inconsistent with the expectations of how
leaders should behave (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Considerable research has focused on how perceived sex differences prevent women from being viewed as suitable leaders (Heilman, 1983). In particular, role congruity theory suggests that agentic characteristics are necessary in the leadership role, yet communal characteristics are mainly associated with women and are incompatible with the role of a leader (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Consequently, stereotypically male qualities are necessary for successful leaders, and good leaders are described mostly by these masculine attributes (Schein, 1973).

Overall, men are perceived as having higher status than women (Unger, 1976) and leaders as having higher status than followers (Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch, 1972). Meanwhile, higher status individuals often hold more powerful roles and higher decision-making authority than lower status individuals (Sampson, 1969). As a result, role and gender stereotypes can cause individuals to be more risk averse or loss averse in decision-making, and women often are more risk-averse than men (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer, 1999). Even in investment decisions, women allocate less wealth to risky assets than men of equal economic status (40% versus 46%; Jianakoplos & Bernasek, 1998). Clearly, role and gender stereotypes can cause men and women to behave differently, and men are more willing to take risks than women (Byrnes et al., 1999).

**Stereotype Threat**

Stereotype threat refers to the potential impact that stereotypes have on individual behaviors (Steele & Aronson, 1995). For example, people tend to perform worse on evaluative tasks when primed with a negative stereotype than when they are not primed with the stereotype (Steele, 1997). In one study, African American college students indicated their race prior to taking a standardized test (Steele & Aronson, 1995). As a result, their exam score decreased compared to when they did not indicate their race. Indicating their race activated negative
academic stereotypes relevant to African Americans and led to poor academic performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995). That is, participants unconsciously confirmed stereotypes that African Americans are intellectually inferior. Similar effects exist for other stereotyped groups, including women (Shih, Ambady, Richeson, Gray & Fujita, 2002), students of low socioeconomic background (Crozet & Claire, 1998), Latinos (Aronson et al., 1998), and Asian Americans (Shih et al., 2002).

Although past stereotype threat research focused mostly on academic performance (e.g., verbal or math SAT scores), recent research has focused on other stereotype relevant outcomes, such as women's entrepreneurial intentions (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007), leadership aspirations (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005), leniency for male-dominated vocations (Davies, P. G., Spencer, S. J., Quinn, D. M., & Gerhard stein, R., 2002), and leadership self-efficacy (Eagly & Johnson, 2007). For example, stereotype threat influences expectancy of performance on an upcoming task (Stangor, Carr, & Kiang, 1998). Women who were told that men do better on a task showed low levels of expectancy, even if they previously had done well. Decision-making is another possible outcome of stereotype threat, and is the focus of the current study.

**Gender**

When women are made implicitly aware of traditional gender stereotypes, they behave in ways that confirm the female stereotype. It is under these conditions that women are most susceptible to stereotype threat (Schmader, 2002). For example, when women are primed with negative gender stereotypes, they suffer from negative arousal and fear of confirming the stereotype, which influences domains such as negotiation (Steele, 1997). The effects of stereotype threat on decision-making have been relatively unstudied. In the current study, we examine if men and women make different decisions when their gender stereotype is activated.
Stereotype threat leads to increased risk-seeking behavior and decreased loss-aversion behavior in men (Carr & Steele, 2010). The "Risk as Value" hypothesis suggests that risk taking is a highly valued masculine tendency and leads to high levels of risk taking in men (Kelling, Zirkes & Myerowitz, 1976). In addition, women compared to men are more cautious, less confident and aggressive, and have inferior leadership and problem solving abilities when making risky decisions compared to men (Johnson & Powell, 1994). Moreover, some studies of financial decision-making have also identified a lower degree of confidence, lower risk preference and a higher degree of anxiety among women in their ability to make decisions.

The existence of gender differences in risk-taking has been well documented (Powell & Ansic, 1997). Byrnes et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 16 types of risk taking (from raising one’s hand in class to sexual behavior). Men exhibited significantly greater risk taking than women on 14 of the 16 types of risk taking (1999). In addition, Weber, Blais, and Betz assessed risk-taking among men and women in five different content domains (i.e., financial, health/safety, recreational, ethical, and social (2002). Gender differences existed in four of the five domains. Similar gender differences exist in other countries (Johnson, Wilke, & Weber, 2004). Therefore, we believe that, consistent with past research, women will be more risk-averse in their decision-making than men. Because this is also consistent with stereotypes of men and women, we expect to find similar differences when participants are primed with their gender stereotypes.

Hypothesis 1. When no stereotypes are activated, men will make riskier decisions than women.

Hypothesis 2. When only gender stereotypes are activated, men will make riskier decisions than women.
Leader

In this study we seek to examine if leader stereotypes affect decision-making. Due to the lack of research in the area of leader stereotype threat, the methodology of the present study was modeled after that of Davies et al. (2005), who examined the effect of stereotype threat on women's leadership aspirations. Leadership aspiration was operationalized as the degree of preference for the leader role (as opposed to problem-solver role) in an ostensibly unrelated leadership task. In general, women in the stereotype threat condition showed a stronger preference for the problem-solver role than for the leader role, whereas women in the neutral condition (and men in both conditions) showed no role preference. Consistent with the stereotype of a leader versus a follower, we expected participants primed with a leader stereotype would make riskier decisions than those primed with a follower stereotype.

*Hypothesis 3.* When gender stereotypes are not activated, participants primed with the leader role will make riskier decisions than participants primed with the follower role.

*Hypothesis 4.* When gender stereotypes are not activated, participants primed with the leader role will make riskier decisions than participants not primed with a role (i.e., the control group).

*Hypothesis 5.* When gender stereotypes are not activated, participants primed with the follower role will make less risky decisions than participants not primed with a role (i.e., the control group).

Leader and Gender

Although most research focuses on one set of stereotypes at a time (e.g., gender, race), the current research sought to examine the combined effects of two important organizational stereotypes—leader and gender. Echiejile (1995) categorized leadership styles into those that
were more masculine and those that were more feminine. Masculine styles include instrumental traits, agentic qualities, and a more autocratic and task-oriented set of leadership behaviors, whereas feminine styles include expressive traits, communal qualities, and a more interpersonally oriented and participative set of leadership behaviors. Other research has also found significant differences between men and women in their respective leadership styles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Consistent with the characterization of these leadership styles as masculine and feminine, one meta-analysis concluded that men are more likely to use task-oriented and autocratic leadership styles than women, whereas women are more likely than men to use interpersonally oriented and democratic leadership styles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

Research also suggests that transactional and transformational leadership behaviors may be correlated with gender (2009). Powell, Butterfield, Alves, and Bartol found that male leaders were described as more transactional than women and female leaders were viewed as being more transformational than men (2004). In addition, a meta-analysis of transactional and transformational leadership studies concluded that men are more typically associated with transactional leadership than women, whereas women tend to use transformational leadership more often than men (Eagly and Karau, 2002). In all, we expect that gender stereotypes may be more prevalent and powerful than leader stereotypes. Therefore, we anticipate that, when gender stereotypes are activated, men will make riskier decisions than women regardless of the role stereotypes activated (e.g., leader, follower).

Hypothesis 6. When role and gender stereotypes are activated, men primed with the leader role will make riskier decisions than women primed with the leader role.

Hypothesis 7. When role and gender stereotypes are activated, men primed with the follower role will make riskier decisions than women primed with the follower role.
Method

Participants

Eight hundred and six students from the University of Florida (48% female and 48% male) completed an online questionnaire as part of a course extra credit assignment. The sample was diverse in both classification (8% freshman, 38% sophomore, 36% junior, 14% senior, 1% graduate) and ethnicity (65% White, 14% Latino/Hispanic, 7% Asian American or Pacific Islander, 6% African American, 1% Native American, 3% Multiethnic).

Materials and Procedure

Participants completed an online questionnaire. They were informed that the study was designed to measure “individualized team decision-making”. Specifically, we told participants that we sought to examine how well teams made decisions when all members made separate decisions that were then compiled without discussion. Depending on the condition, participants reported a past subordinate (i.e., leader role primed), superior (i.e., follower role primed), and/or their gender (i.e., gender primed) at the beginning of the study. Participants then completed various decision-making tasks designed to measure loss-aversion, risk-aversion, accuracy, and overconfidence. Participants believed that we would combine their responses with the other members of their team to see how effectively teams can make decisions without ever interacting with each other. Finally, participants completed demographic questions and were debriefed.

Measures

Stereotype Priming

At the beginning of the experiment, participants were either asked to name a past subordinate, supervisor, or were not asked this question. This question served to prime the role of a leader, follower, or neither and bring about the stereotypes attached to those roles. In addition,
we either asked participants’ gender after this question or at the end of the questionnaire. Reporting their gender before completing the task additionally served to prime their gender and to bring about the stereotypes attached to that gender.

**Risk-Aversion**

We administered the lottery choice task to measure risky-aversion (Thaler & Johnson, 1990). Participants were presented with ten questions requiring them to choose one of two lotteries (Inzlicht & Kang, 2010). The price of a ticket for each lottery was $5, and participants were able to pick only one of the two lotteries. We assigned each lottery a different percentage of winning either a $20 prize or a $250 prize. That is, participants chose either the lottery with a high likelihood of winning a small prize (high-expected-value) or a low likelihood of winning a large prize (low-expected-value). For example, Lottery A, the low-risk choice, presented a 70% chance of winning a $20 prize while Lottery B, the riskier choice, presented a 4% chance of winning a $250 prize. We totaled the number of high likelihood choices participants made to indicate their risk-aversion.

**Loss-Aversion**

We adapted a coin-toss lottery task used to assess loss-aversion behavior in past research (Tom, Trepel & Poldrack, 2007). Participants were presented with a series of ten coin-toss lotteries and had the option of participating or not participating in each of the coin-tosses. All ten lotteries offered a 50% chance of winning $6 and a 50% chance of losing an amount of money that varied between $1 and $6. We measured loss-aversion by examining the number of lotteries each participant rejected.
Accuracy and Overconfidence

As in past research, participants chose the best answer to a series of factual questions (Windschitl, Smith, Rose & Krizan, 2010). Following their guess, they reported their confidence in each answer. We used participants’ responses to measure three variables. First, we measured accuracy as the percentage of questions they answered correctly. Next we measured participants’ confidence by using the average percentage of confidence they reported across all ten questions. Finally, we measured overconfidence by subtracting participants’ accuracy from their reported confidence.

Demographics

After participants completed various decision-making tasks designed to measure decision-making accuracy and risk-taking, participants completed a series of demographic questions which included age, sex, year in school, ethnicity, the amount and duration of leadership positions held, and employment status.

Results

Gender Stereotype Threat

Unprimed Differences

Our first hypothesis was that when role and gender stereotypes are not activated, men will make riskier decisions than women. We analyzed the data using t-test analyses comparing men and women in the control groups. In support of our hypothesis, women ($M = 5.00, SD = 1.15$) were more loss-averse, on average, than men ($M = 3.43, SD = 1.47$), $t(26) = 2.57$, $p = .016$. No other effects emerged as significant.
Primed Differences

Our second hypothesis was that when role stereotypes are not activated, men primed with their gender will make riskier decisions than women primed with their gender. Contrary to our hypothesis, we found no differences in risk-aversion between men and women gender prime. However, when primed with their gender, women ($M = 57.83, SD = 22.51$) were more confident, on average, than men ($M = 45.33, SD = 15.84$), $t(42) = 2.16, p = .04$. Women ($M = -3.42, SD = 22.87$) were also more overconfident than men ($M = -19.67, SD = 19.75$), $t(39) = 2.42, p = .02$.

Role Stereotype Threat

Leader vs. Follower

Our next hypothesis was that when gender stereotypes are not activated, participants primed with the leader role will make riskier decisions than participants primed with the follower role. However, we did not find any significant differences between the two groups.

Leader vs. Control

Our forth hypothesis was that when gender stereotypes are not activated, participants primed with the leader role will make riskier decisions than participants not primed with a role (i.e., the control group). Contrary to our hypothesis, we found no differences in risk-aversion between the leader prime and control group. However, participants primed with the leader role ($M = 69.00, SD = 59.23$) were more accurate, on average, than the control group ($M = 59.23, SD = 12.62$), $t(44) = 2.54, p = .02$. In addition, the control group ($M = -12.73, SD = 20.54$) was more overconfident than the leader group ($M = -28.57, SD = 24.04$), $t(44) = 2.41, p = .02$.

Follower vs. Control

Our fifth hypothesis was that when gender stereotypes are not activated, participants primed with the follower role will make riskier decisions than participants not primed with a role
(i.e., the control group). In support of our hypothesis, participants primed with the follower role ($M = 4.03, SD = .86$) were more risk-averse, on average, than the control group ($M = 3.0, SD = 0.99$), $t(56) = 2.19$, $p = .03$. Participants did not differ significantly on any other outcomes.

**Role and Gender Stereotype Threat**

**Leader Role**

Our next hypothesis was that men primed with the leader role will make riskier decisions than women primed with the leader role. However, we did not find any significant differences between the two groups.

**Follower Role**

Our final hypothesis was that men primed with the follower role will make riskier decisions than women primed with the follower role. In support of our hypothesis, women ($M = 3.79, SD = 1.36$) were more loss-averse than men ($M = 2.69, SD = 1.25$), $t(30) = 2.32$, $p = .03$. In addition, men ($M = 52.81, SD = 17.22$) were more confident, on average, than women ($M = 38.91, SD = 15.36$), $t(23.63) = -2.36$, $p = .03$. No other significant differences emerged.

**Discussion**

The current study examined the effect of stereotype threat on decision-making. Specifically, we examined the effect of gender stereotype threat on decision-making. When not primed with role or gender, women were more loss-averse than male participants. In contrast, when primed with their gender, no differences in loss-aversion existed, yet women were more confident and overconfident than men. Overall, these results are consistent with past studies suggesting that stereotype threat increases risk-seeking behavior and decreases loss-aversion in men (Carr & Steele, 2010).
Moreover, we examined how leader and follower stereotypes affect decision quality and risk. In general, participants primed with the leader role answered more questions correctly and were less overconfident than the control group, while participants primed with the follower role were more risk-averse than the control group. However, no differences existed between those primed with the role of leader and those primed with the role of follower.

The lack of significance between participants primed with a leader versus follower role may be due to the strength of leadership stereotypes. Although plenty of research suggests that leaders make riskier decisions than followers (Davies et al., 2005), this may not have culminated into a strong leadership stereotype. Without strong stereotypes, stereotype threat is impossible. Future research should examine these stereotypes to determine if they exist and how strong they, in fact, are.

Most importantly, we examined the effect of the combination of role and gender stereotypes on decision-making. The only difference existed among those primed with the follower role. Among participants primed with gender stereotypes, women were more loss-averse and less confident than men. The reason for this difference may be attributable to the fact that women followers (compared to men) are more cautious and less confident when making decisions (Johnson & Powell, 1994).

Limitations

Although our research shed new light on the effect of stereotype threat in leadership, it does not do so without some limitations. First, we did not examine the strength of leadership or gender stereotypes in our sample. Although gender stereotypes are prevalent throughout the world, little research has examined the strength of various leadership stereotypes, and future research should include this as a first step in future stereotype threat research. In addition, we did
not take into account other variables likely to affect decision making. For example, race is an especially strong predictor of stereotype threat. An additional limitation of the current study was the sample. Although college students are the future leaders of the world, many of them do not currently work and may not represent how stereotype threat affects today’s organizations.

**Implications**

The effect of stereotype threat on decision-making when comparing male and female leaders and followers can be clearly observed in Fortune 500 companies. Although, women constitute almost half of the U.S. workforce and hold more than 50 percent of management and professional positions, they make up only 2 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs (Catalyst, 2007). The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions occurs across occupations and industries, and regardless of how many women occupy managerial decision-making positions within the organization. When women do make it to the top, their performance is especially scrutinized and is more likely to be criticized than male leaders’ performance (Quinn & Spencer, 2001).

Several strategies have been offered as potential ways to reduce the effects of stereotype threat including: 1. Rendering the stereotype incorrect, irrelevant, or non-applicable to the current situation (e.g., Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999), 2. Re-defining the situation as non-threatening (e.g., Steele & Aronson, 1995), 3. Through diffusion of responsibility (McIntyre, Paulson, & Lord, 2003) via misattribution processes (Stone, Lynch & Darley, 1999). For example, Spencer et al. effectively removed the effects of stereotype threat from women by rendering the female math inferiority stereotype irrelevant to the experimental context (2005). Across two studies, women presented with a quantitative exam described as having produced no gender differences in the past performed equally as well as their male counterparts. However,
when the same test was described as having produced gender differences, women performed worse than participants in all of the remaining experimental conditions.

Similarly, past research was able to remove the effects of stereotype threat in African Americans by redefining the situation as less threatening. These researchers found that African Americans confronted with an experimenter of the same ethnicity, who described the upcoming task as culturally unbiased, performed similarly with European American participants across conditions. Indeed, only African Americans confronted with a European American experimenter describing the task as a genuine test of intelligence performed significantly worse than all other groups combined on the task. Thus, by making it unlikely that an individual will be judged according to a negative group-based stereotype, the effects of stereotype threat are removed (Blascovich, J., Spencer, S. J., Quinn, D., & Steele, C., 2001).

In addition to highlighting the effects of stereotype threat on decision-making, we believe our results also suggest some considerations for alleviating the negative effects of role and gender stereotypes at work. In all, this research suggests that companies must learn to acknowledge and address the impact of role and gender stereotypes on decision-making. In addition to affecting the accuracy and confidence in decisions, stereotype threat can affect the riskiness of people’s decisions. In today’s competitive workplace, organizations must utilize organizational talent and avoid constraining the effectiveness of employees’ decision-making. To avoid these negative effects, companies must address stereotypes within their organizational culture. This begins by breaking down the existing stereotypes and creating new ones. We believe that through this cultural change, organizations can help change how women leaders are perceived and avoid negative stereotype threat effects.
Because stereotypes are largely subconscious, it can be difficult for companies to assess the impact that stereotype threat has especially for female employees (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). In addition to an extensive literature, this study suggests it is possible to identify specific processes that lead to stereotype threat. Organizations can use this research to gain insight into the negative outcomes of a variety of organizational stereotypes. The first step in building awareness is learning the extent to which an organization is at risk of letting stereotypes get in the way of opportunities. Companies can also implement strategies that help to minimize the effects of stereotype threat. To do so effectively, however, organizations need to first identify the stereotypes most common in the organization and develop a focused strategy to limit the effects of these for various organizational outcomes.
References


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