

Summary

Our studies show that **women prefer to lead smaller teams compared to men.**

In Study 1, a field study of public U.S. Congressional data, we find that, on average, **congresswomen chair smaller committees than congressmen.**

In Study 2, an online experiment, participants were asked to state their preferences when leading varying team sizes, and **women reported preferring to lead smaller teams and to have one-on-one conversations** over interacting with larger groups.

Discussion

Women choose to lead smaller teams.

Women expend more emotional labor when directly supervising their subordinates ¹ and **must be both warm and competent to be judged as good leaders**, whereas men have to only prove their competence ^{2,3}.

Higher emotional involvement in leadership for women could make managing large teams seem too extraneous and not worth the perceived pay-off of higher compensation and extra resources.

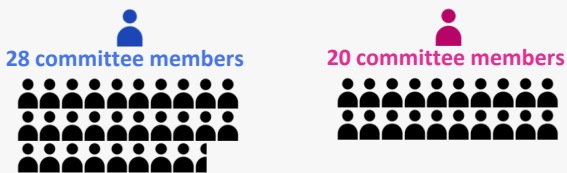
Study 1

Field Study:

Women's Congressional Teams Are Smaller

We examined archival data from 2011 to 2021 on **188 United States Congressional Committees.**

Committees chaired by men had significantly more members compared to committees chaired by women.



Men: $M = 28.41, SD = 14.95$ | Women: $M = 19.94, SD = 12.01$ | $t(186) = 3.05, p = 0.002, d = 0.58$

Of these **committee chairs, 155 were male** and only **33 were female.**

Committees chaired by men, with significantly more members, also had significantly higher budgets compared to committees chaired by women.



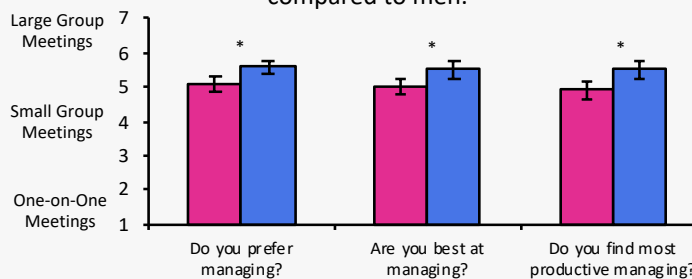
Men: $M = \$12,935,692, SD = \$4,879,720$ | Women: $M = \$10,203,304, SD = \$4,215,798$ | $t(186) = 2.99, p = 0.003, d = 0.57$

Study 2

Online Experiment:

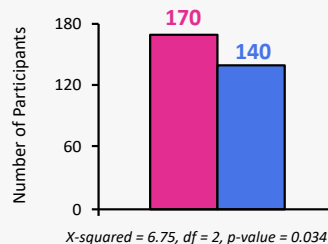
Women Prefer Leading Smaller Teams

This online study (N=499) shows **women prefer leading smaller teams** compared to men.



Prefer: $t = 2.15, df = 496.72, p\text{-value} = 0.031$ | Best At: $t = 2.00, df = 496.26, p\text{-value} = 0.045$ | Productive: $t = 2.52, df = 496.48, p\text{-value} = 0.011$

Women also reported significantly higher preferences for one-on-one conversations compared to men, an opportunity afforded by smaller teams.



X-squared = 6.75, df = 2, p-value = 0.034

Future Direction

Explore under which circumstances women lead large teams and enjoy the investments required to be successful.

Explore what incentivizes women in the workplace beyond pay and resources to encourage them to lead larger groups.

Explore how workplaces can improve leadership valuation on quality as opposed to quantity.

References

- Feldberg, A. (2018). Butchers, Bakers, and Barcodes: Demographic Diversity and Technology in a Grocery Chain. *Academy of Management Global Proceedings*, (2018), 78.
- Phelan, J. E., Moss-Racusin, C. A., & Rudman, L. A. (2008). Competent yet out in the cold: Shifting criteria for hiring reflect backlash toward agentic women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 32(4), 406-413.
- Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (2001). Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women. *Journal of social issues*, 57(4), 743-762.