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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



THESIS

GENDER INDUCED DIFFERENCES
IN NAVAL FITNESS REPORTS

by

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June 1991

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
1a REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3 DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		
2b DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4 PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5 MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School		6b OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) Code 36	7a NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School		
6c ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Monterey, California 93943-5000			7b ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Monterey, California 93943-5000		
8a NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9 PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10 SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
PROGRAM ELEMENT NO	PROJECT NO	TASK NO	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO		
11 TITLE (Include Security Classification) GENDER INDUCED DIFFERENCES IN NAVAL FITNESS REPORTS					
12 PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Davis, Barbara J. and Gutierrez, A. Renee					
13a TYPE OF REPORT Master's Thesis		13b TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____	14 DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1991, June		15 PAGE COUNT 78
16 SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION The views expressed in this thesis are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.					
17 COSATI CODES			18 SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Gender Differences; Navy Women; Performance Evaluation		
19 ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) This thesis replicated a 1983 study by Navy Personnel Research and Development Center reviewing the possible differences in the narrative portions of Naval Fitness Reports. The sample used in this study consisted of FitReps of Naval Postgraduate School students and those written by senior officers with both men and women in their commands. NPRDC discovered significant differences in the average number of descriptors used in FitReps written about women as opposed to those written about men. There were 16 different descriptors which showed a difference. The current study showed no differences in the mean number of descriptors used in FitReps in this sample. However, FitReps written by women showed differences in two descriptors, "Relations with Others" and "Recommendations." FitReps written on women received more recommendations than those written on men.					
20 DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT ☒ UNCLASSIFIED UNLIMITED ☐ SAVE AS RPT ☐ DTIC USERS			21 ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		
22a NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Prof. Alice Crawford			22b TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (408) 646-2481		22c OFFICE SYMBOL Code AS/Cr

DD Form 1473, JUN 86

Previous editions are obsolete

S/N 0102-LF-014-6603

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

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Gender Induced Differences
in Naval Fitness Reports

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

This thesis replicated a 1983 study by Navy Personnel Research and Development Center reviewing the possible differences in the narrative portions of Naval Fitness Reports. The sample used in this study consisted of FitReps of Naval Postgraduate School students and those written by senior officers with both men and women in their commands. NPRDC discovered significant differences in the average number of descriptors used in FitReps written about women as opposed to those written about men. There were 16 different descriptors which showed a difference. The current study showed no differences in the mean number of descriptors used in FitReps in this sample. However, FitReps written by women showed differences in two descriptors, "Relations with Others" and "Recommendations." FitReps written on women received more recommendations than those written on men.



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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

This thesis will investigate whether there are gender¹ induced differences in performance evaluations of Navy officers. The issue of language differences in fitness reports is about ten years old, but not extensively analyzed.

As the direct means by which officers are promoted, the officer fitness reports are critical in two ways. First, they allow officers to achieve personal goals of advancement to greater pay grades and responsibilities. They directly influence the career progression of an individual officer. Second, the fitness reports allow the Navy to select the most capable leaders for positions of power. The quality of Navy leadership is directly connected to the ability of promotion boards to discern a merely diligent officer from one who can truly take the Navy into the challenges of the future.

Quality fitness reports that truly represent the abilities of the officer are thus critical to the Navy's

¹gender: a social identification as masculine or feminine; sex: a biological identification as male or female.

Equal Opportunity (EO) goals and to its survival as an organization.

In 1983 the Navy Personnel Research and Development Center (NPRDC) performed a study that indicated women's fitness reports to be fundamentally different from men's fitness reports. The differences centered around the use of passive voice and thinking/feeling adjectives to describe women's performance, while active voice and acting/doing adjectives described the men's performance. The study further showed that these differences influenced how women were perceived by promotion boards. Feminine descriptors were discovered to be detrimental.

The study received widespread attention at the time. The information was used in training environments in the Navy to illustrate and presumably correct the fitness report biases.

B. OBJECTIVES

The primary focus of this thesis is to determine if the fitness report gender bias has, in fact, been eliminated. The thesis also investigates additional questions in an attempt to expand upon the research done in the initial studies mentioned above.

There are four questions this thesis will address:

- Are there content differences in fitness reports written on women when compared to those written on men?

- Are fitness reports written by women different in content from those written by men?
- If research reveals differences exist, why do they exist?
- If differences exist, what recommendations for decreasing this bias are dictated by theory and research?

C. SCOPE

We designed an analytical procedure to isolate the influence of gender in the fitness report narrative. We then obtained a small sample of reports and applied the procedure to them. Achieving unbiased results required that fitness reports be matched as much as possible in rank, designator, and time in service to ensure that any differences found were not the result of these factors.

The sample was limited by the quality of data available. Due to a shortage of manpower, the fitness report branch of the Naval Military Personnel Command (NMPC) was unable to assist with retrieval of a random selection of fitness reports. The thesis research had to therefore rely on a sample from two sources: the students of the Naval Postgraduate School, and fitness reports obtained from senior officers with extensive command experience over mixed gender commands, specifically tender class ships. Because fitness reports are not usually written by the senior officer who signs them, a survey was required to obtain the gender of the rater, the officer writing the

fitness report. The number of fitness reports for which that information was available was limited.

D. ASSUMPTION

This work assumes a basic familiarity with Navy rank structure and promotion guidelines.

E. PREVIEW OF THE THESIS

Chapter II reviews the literature associated with gender bias. Chapter III is an historical perspective of the area of gender and language differences. Chapter IV presents the methodology of this study and the statistical processes used. Chapter V gives the results and discusses the analyses of the sample of Fitness Reports used in this thesis. Chapter VI summarizes the thesis and presents the conclusions and recommendations of the authors based on the results of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The interest in differences between men and women is a sign of the times. The Civil Rights battles of the 1960's gave way to the women's rights skirmishes of the 1970's.

A. FUNDAMENTAL GENDER DIFFERENCES

1. Language

Language in particular was a productive start on the women's issues. In 1940 Whorf and Sapir theorized that linguistic differences correspond to cultural differences. The theory further postulated that language shapes how men think. [Ref. 1:p. 728]

Research shows that linguistic differences start with the unborn child. Pregnant women who learn the sex of their baby speak to the child differently depending on its sex. The male unborn is addressed in acting and doing terms; the female unborn is addressed in thinking and feeling terms [Ref. 2:p. 125]. Later on, mothers are more likely to have conversations with their daughters than their sons, even when the children are only two years old. Furthermore, girls' sex-typed toys encourage conversations. While the girls play with dolls, giving the dolls voices of their own, the boys are playing with trucks and fire

engines. Boys sex-typed toys encourage noises instead of conversation. [Ref. 3:p. 24]

Linguistic differences between men and women continue into adulthood. In the spoken word, women use more qualifiers. Where a man would say, "There are 11 books on that shelf," a woman would say, "There are around ten or so books on the shelf." [Ref. 4:p. 81] In the written word, women are not given agency; they're not assigned responsibility for acting and doing, except in very small spheres such as speaking. In a creative or professional act, the woman will be described in passive voice. A man will be described in active voice for the same event. [Ref. 3:p. 64] A simple example would be, "Charles wrote his novel in three years" as opposed to "The novel took three years to be written. She sat back, sighed and said, 'Thank God it's finished.'"

Evaluation of speech has often denigrated the female style solely for its use by women. The "tag question" is a good example. Tag questions are a grammatical style where the speaker will make an assertion, then qualify it with a question that seems to relay uncertainty about the truth of the statement. For instance, "The robber was about six foot tall, wasn't he?" Or "It rained all day yesterday, didn't it?" Research has shown that tag questions have an adverse effect only when they were used by women [Ref. 5:pp. 75-90]. The tag question was devalued because of the status of the

user, not because of any inherent flaw. Originally, researchers thought that women overwhelmingly used tag questions in their speech. They have since discovered that male speakers actually use them at least as often as do female speakers [Ref. 6:p. 83].

Differences are so pervasive in language that even our reference materials reflect the sexism of language. While Random House Dictionary is not responsible for the language, its definitions and examples conform to stereotype [Ref. 7]. Likewise, the Webster's Dictionary also uses stereotypical definitions [Ref. 8:p. 6]. For example, Random House has the following paragraph under synonyms for "scream":

SHRIEK usually refers to a sharper and briefer cry than SCREAM; when caused by fear or pain, it is indicative of more terror or distress. It is also used for the shrill half suppressed cries of giddy women or girls: "to shriek with laughter." SCREECH emphasizes the disagreeable shrillness and harshness of an outcry; the connotation is lack of dignity: "to screech like an old crone." [Ref. 9:p. 1183]

Under the definition for "cry," Random House contains this example:

9. to bring oneself to a specified state by weeping: "She cried herself to sleep." ... [under synonyms:] "He shouted back to his companions." ... "The speaker bellowed his answer." [Ref. 9:p. 332]

While some research has focussed on language differences, other researchers have examined differences in the socialization processes of men and women.

2. Socialization

Men and women are socialized differently, again from a very young age. Dr. Deborah Tannen suggests that females of any age establish friendships by talking [Ref. 10:pp. 134-135]. It seems the early verbal experiences of girls are carried through into their adult lives. Males of any age, on the other hand, establish friendships by doing things together [Ref. 10:p. 43]. Male bonding through sports participation is a good example.

Different means of socialization lead to questions about the interaction of adults between sexes. Tannen focusses her work largely on personal relationships. We will proceed by discussing the large body of works that examine the differences between men and women in their professional relationships.

B. PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT: WOMEN ON THE JCB

1. Theories of Leadership

The initial theories of management were framed around the "Great Man" concept. Leadership experts studied the likes of Alexander the Great and Winston Churchill. Great female leaders such as Catherine the Great and Joan of Arc were ignored--even though they had profound influence on Western Civilization. As the study of leadership progressed, experts discarded the Great Man theory in favor of trait theory. [Ref. 11:p. 166]

Trait theory proposed that leaders came with a ready-made set of traits that made them good leaders. Anyone without the requisite traits would not succeed at leading. Unfortunately, the specific traits could never be agreed upon, and this theory too fell in disfavor. [Ref. 11:p. 166]

Behavioral theories were next in the limelight. Behavioral theories examined the behaviors of leaders; namely, what they did that worked. Because a vast majority of the leaders were male, it was assumed that male behavior was the standard to meet. Early studies simply did not include women, as if women "were less real, or less worthy of observation." [Ref. 11:p. 144]

A more recent approach, situational leadership, implies that the leader should use whatever sort of leadership style fits the occasion. That definition finally gave credence to the concept that men and women could both make use of masculine and feminine styles of leadership. Women's styles were finally given validity.

The evolution from Great Man to situational leadership parallels the perceptions of women's contributions to leadership. We will discuss these in four subsections:

- Perceptions of the Past.
- Perceptions of the 1980's.
- Perceptions of Transformational Leadership.
- Perceptions of the 1990's.

2. Perceptions of the Past

Women did eventually enter the managerial job market in large numbers. By 1977, that proportion reached 22 percent. Powell conducted a study at that time to gauge if the changing face of management had exerted a similar change in the perception of the ideal leader. His research showed that the masculine model was still considered to be the one to emulate. A full 70 percent of the study's subjects endorsed the masculine ideal manager. [Ref. 11:p. 146] (Note: The reference does not indicate the gender of the respondents.)

By 1984, the percent of women in the work force had risen to 34 percent. Powell again repeated the study, improving on the quality of data gathered. In the repeat study, 66 percent of the subjects endorsed the masculine leadership model. [Ref. 11:p. 148]

The socialization of women was seen as deficient to the male norm. Women's management style was both different from men's style and inadequate to the task. Re-socialization was required for women to be good managers: they were given, for example, assertiveness training. [Ref. 12:p. 58] Value was placed on socialization through team sports--a socialization women did not generally receive as children [Ref. 11:p. 151].

The perception of defective socialization was seen in the way women handled power. Women turned information

into power by sharing it. Powell suggests that women did this to gain access to power bases otherwise inaccessible to them [Ref. 13:p. 28]. The "Old Boy" network was closed to the "New Girls." To the masculine model, sharing power was tantamount to giving your playbook to the opposing team. Information to the male was power only when it was hoarded. The sharing socialization looked foolish to the majority of the leaders at the time.

3. Perceptions of the 1980's

By 1988, articles began to reflect the idea that perhaps the different leadership women offered had possibilities, that perhaps women could use their special strengths [Ref. 12:p. 62]. The idea of women's style as superior does not seem to have been used in practice. Junior women in business adopted the male manager style for about the first five years of their careers [Ref. 13:p. 27]. Theoretically, they reintegrated the feminine style after that because they were in positions high enough to protect themselves from reprisal.

The most up-to-date articles to appear in the mainstream journals of leadership had turned full circle. The latest group of writings insisted that the feminine style of leadership is superior and that it closely resembles the very positive model of transformational leadership. [Ref. 14:p. 120]

4. Perceptions of Transformational Leadership

Bernard Bass postulated the concept of transformational leadership, based on work by James McGregor Burns. It examined leaders who seemed extraordinary or charismatic. These leaders placed a very high premium on including all subordinates as important, and on enhancing the self worth of their followers. [Ref. 15:pp. 15,30] These two qualities are precisely those that women are perceived as more likely to use. For example, women do not typically seek to show their positional superiority with perks; they are more concerned with not emphasizing the inferiority of their subordinates [Ref. 14:p. 123].

This participative leadership is touted as the future route for the flattened command structure of the 1990's company [Ref. 16:p. 115]. Rigid hierarchy and command-and-control management is not required where the pyramid shape is missing.

When transformational leadership appeared to be exemplified by superior masculine examples, it became a coveted goal. Seen through the lens of it being a natural feminine model, it takes on other colors:

For interactive leadership to take root more broadly however, organizations must be willing to question the notion that the traditional command-and-control that has brought success in earlier decades is the only way to get results....The fact that women are more likely than men to be interactive leaders raises the risk that these companies will perceive interactive leadership as "feminine" and automatically resist it. [Ref. 14:p. 125]

5. Perceptions of the 1990's

The changed perception of feminine leadership as a "warm fuzzy" and a desirable one has had the effect of creating new stereotypes. For example, Helgersen refers to women as "the new Japanese." [Ref. 16:p. 115] Schwartz advocated a special track for women in business to accommodate the higher family commitment. [Ref. 17] Her article was published in the Harvard Business Review, and her idea was promptly labelled "the Mommy Track." Women are measured as being at least as committed as men to their jobs. Schwartz set a new stereotype for all mothers in business while ignoring the fact that fathers also might want to devote time to their newborn children.

The stereotype of women as "naturally gifted" at participative leadership threatens to exile the female manager to the non-line functions of consumer affairs, public affairs, and human resources management. The stereotype would have women serve in the same "velvet ghettos" [Ref. 18] they had previously been stalled in, but for a different reason. In other words, it used to be that female leaders worked in non-line staff positions because their leadership style wasn't good enough for line functions. Now, they might be forced into staff positions because their leadership style is so good that they should be working in tough, people oriented jobs.

It is also interesting to note that authors who attribute women managers' participative leadership to their socialization might neglect a far more critical factor. For example, Judy Rosener mentions that the participative female leaders who answered her survey managed professionals who traditionally do not work effectively under command-and-control management. That alone might be enough to explain why these women developed a nurturing style; their attempts at authoritarian leadership had not succeeded, so they tried a different tack [Ref. 19:p. 158]. As further evidence that participative style might not be gender given:

I do agree that this participative style comes more naturally to women because winning through helping others is a central theme for little girls. But the Japanese, a very male oriented culture, seem to have perfected the art of participatory management as a critical feature in their highly productive corporations. [Ref. 19:p. 160]

C. STEREOTYPES: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

1. Information Grouping: Categories

As early as the Whorf-Sapir theory, linguists have understood the possibility that the way we use language can determine what people remember [Ref. 1:p. 337]. Stereotyping is a function of how people group information. To lessen the burden of remembering the myriad of details human minds are presented with daily, the thought processes put information into categories. Categories are large groups of similar information. [Ref. 18:p. 20]

These categories or schema are made more accessible by two functions: recency and frequency. The more recent the exposure to the category, the more likely it is to be referenced again. Likewise, if a category is constantly accessed it requires less and less energy to access it anew. [Ref. 20] Studies have shown that which category is accessed matters in how well and how accurately we remember information. If an inappropriate category is accessed, judgments and recollections can be influenced. [Ref. 21:p. 151]

2. Recognizing Stereotyping

Research demonstrates that people cannot identify when they use stereotypes. In an attempt to be unbiased, people will label a perfectly fair assessment as stereotypical. Hepburn and Locksley showed this by presenting individuals with stereotype consistent examples; for example, an athletically talented black person described as having scored 20 points at a basketball game. People who then labeled the individual described as an athletically talented black person assumed their own evaluation to be biased when it was, in fact, accurate. [Ref. 22]

Other studies have shown that giving the subjects longer to respond to a stimuli may give them time to consider the fact that their answer might be viewed as stereotypical. The subjects might then change their answer in an effort to appear unbiased. [Ref. 23:p. 20] This sort

of concern for appearance reveals the need for careful research and for disguising the real topic of an experiment.

3. Perception of Jobholders

Sex association to a particular job affects the perception of the individuals who hold those jobs. For example:

The sex of the jobholder also had an effect, with males in a feminine field (such as male nurse, male secretary) being considered as having the fewest leadership qualities, being the least active, least well-adjusted and least likeable compared to females in a feminine field and with both males and females in masculine fields. [Ref. 24:p. 204]

In this case it seems opinion and perception penalized men more harshly for being in the "wrong" field than they do women.

4. Barriers to Change in Stereotypes

Three major barriers perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes: the media, cognitive processing that affects how people evaluate themselves and others, and social pressures to conform to expectations.

a. Media

First, media portrayal is overwhelmingly stereotype consistent. Lead characters are male, and those males are aggressive and autonomous while the females are deferential and defined by their relationships to other characters. Print, television, and magazines images have remained the same in spite of the huge changes in women's roles over the past 30 years. [Ref. 24:p. 229]

b. Cognitive Processing

The second barrier is the cognitive process that influences an individual's achievement attainment. For example, males have greater expectations for success and rate their abilities higher than do women. These self-perceptions become self-fulfilling prophecy with an actual higher level of success. That, in turn, continues the trend of male success and female failure that confirms the stereotypes. [Ref. 24:p. 231]

c. Social Pressure to Conform

The third and final barrier to the change of stereotypes is social pressure to conform. The "fear of success" argument for women who fail is an example of how a woman might avoid success in a masculine playing field because she perceives a penalty for sex inappropriate behavior. [Ref. 24:p. 231]

Current research indicates that men and women will stereotype their own behavior to fit the conforming image. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein cites an example from her research where a female lawyer typified her own style as caring, but a male lawyer who worked with her described her as a barracuda [Ref. 19:p. 150]. Fuchs Epstein goes on to add that even people who use both caring and barracuda styles would very likely describe themselves as one or the other. People like to give a coherent picture of their own behavior, so they simply delete inconsistent behavior.

[Ref. 19:p. 150] The behavior they tend to delete is the sex role incongruent one.

D. PERCEPTION VERSUS ACTUALITY

The above paragraphs discussed the perception of women as leaders. Leadership was perceived to entail different actions, depending on the sex of the leader. The most current studies reveal that this is simply untrue. Only a few small differences exist between male and female leaders. A recent article noted that research into gender based differences in leadership might be misplaced:

The differences between men and women may be much smaller than the differences between managers of small and large companies or old and new companies...old and young managers, Eastern and Midwestern managers, or managers with professional parents and managers with working-class parents. But most of these studies do not make such comparisons. Gender differences are sexy, in part because sex is sexy, so we notice them more than other, larger differences. [Ref. 19:pp. 155-156]

In other words, objective fact does not confirm the prevailing perceptions of differences between male and female leaders.

1. Laboratory Versus Field Results

In laboratory studies, male leaders were usually rated more effective than female leaders. [Ref. 18] The subjects who rated men more effective and women less so were relying on their stereotypes, without any additional information. For example, the laboratory study would offer a gender consistent description of a man and a woman in

similar circumstances. The subjects would receive only a single sentence or a single paragraph. These two-dimensional representations of leaders triggered a stereotypical response in the subjects. When studies on leadership styles and effectiveness were performed in field settings, the subjects were subordinates who had weeks to become acquainted with their leader (male or female). The subordinates had a wealth of information; that knowledge negated the stereotypical response. Field studies revealed no preference for masculine or feminine effectiveness or style. [Ref. 25:p. 642]

2. Legitimate Differences

Research has revealed only a few differences that can be quantified. Men do not use more initiating structure than women; neither sex is more prone to setting goals, calling meetings, and using standardized procedures. Women do not use more consideration behavior than men; neither sex is more likely to solicit input from subordinates, organize office social events and accommodate personal schedules. [Ref. 26:pp. 448-449] What they do might be perceived differently depending on their gender, but the behavior is fundamentally the same. There are two legitimate, documented differences: Equity versus equality and accessibility.

a. Equity versus Equality

When a male leader has a poorly performing subordinate, his actions to change performance depend on why the employee is doing substandard work. The male leader will punish for lack of effort, and train for lack of ability. This is labelled equity. The female leader, however, is just as likely to punish or train regardless of the reason for the substandard performance. The female leader's response to the subordinate might not address the cause of the problem. This is referred to as equality.

[Ref. 11:p. 154]

b. Accessibility

Male managers will close the door to their office when they need to work. Female managers will leave their doors open regardless. Access to the female leader's time is rarely denied. Powell attributes this to a lack of confidence or self esteem. [Ref. 11:p. 155] The open door policy of female leaders might, however, reflect the difference in the way women use power. An open door would encourage information sharing.

E. ANDROGYNY

The theory of situational leadership suggests that masculine or feminine leadership should be used as appropriate by leaders of either sex: "The most likely to succeed are not necessarily women but those of either gender

best able to adapt to the tribe's custom." [Ref. 16:p. 16]
It's the "do what works" theory. If there are actually no differences between how men and women lead, there must be differences in how they are evaluated. Dobbins and Platz synthesized the results from 17 leadership studies. This process is called meta-analysis. Conclusions based on meta-analysis eliminate the biases that can creep into narrative review. These are very accurate studies allowing a "quantitative cumulation of results across studies, even when the construct of interest is assessed with different measures." [Ref. 27:p. 119]

Dobbins and Platz initially surveyed 45 studies. They selected 17 that could be used to evaluate four factors: leader initiating structure, leader consideration, subordinate satisfaction, and leader effectiveness. From these 17 studies they concluded that there are no sex differences in leadership.

Given the findings of the meta-analyses, the present authors urge a moratorium on research that simply compares male and female leaders on measures of initiating structure, consideration, and effectiveness. Future research should, instead, investigate the processes through which sex stereotypes and implicit sex theories bias raters' evaluations of men and women leaders. [Ref. 27:p. 125]

It seems, then, that evaluation of the leaders may be the key.

F. EVALUATION

Studies have shown in the past that work written by women is received negatively simply because it is written by women. Studies as early as 1969 revealed that if an article was circulated separately under a masculine and a feminine name, the feminine version was graded very critically, in the pejorative sense. [Ref. 25]

Evaluation is a fairly complex task, influenced at every step by beliefs of an evaluator and expectations based on sex stereotypes. Ruble and Ruble offer the Process Model of Performance Evaluation shown in Figure 1. The prior beliefs are based on sex stereotypes and occupational stereotypes, (i.e., which sex one "expects" to find working in a particular field). Observed performance is the second step in the model, but does not directly affect the decisions made until after the evaluator gives causal explanations to the picture. [Ref. 24:pp. 211-212]

1. Attributions

Another issue is the attribution of a leader's success. For example, "male successes tend to be attributed to stable, personal qualities of the actor (that is, ability), while female successes tend to be attributed to unstable causes such as effort or luck." [Ref. 24:p. 12] In other words, the assumptions of the reason for a leader's success differs. Men are expected to be competent. When they show themselves to be capable, it is attributed to

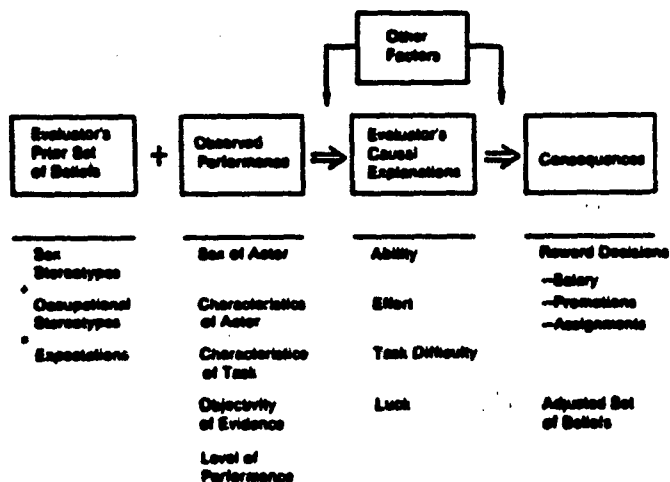


Figure 1. A "Process" Model of Performance Evaluation

something essential within them. Women, on the other hand, are not expected to be competent in a man's field. When a woman is expected to show a lack of competence, and then succeeds anyway, "her success is attributed to a temporary cause, such as unusual effort, thereby leading to uncertainties about her future promise." Ruble and Ruble further suggest that this subtle cognitive difference might be a part of the reason why women have not advanced into the very top ranks of leadership. [Ref. 24:p. 121]

Attribution can lead to a double error where women are overvalued and men undervalued for the same action. When asked to make causal attribution for the success of a physician portrayed as male in one example and female in the

other, female subjects seemed to over-evaluate the female physician's performance because they saw her tasks as more difficult. The male subjects on the other hand, did not see the task the female doctor performed as being a barrier, so they might have underevaluated the female's performance.

[Ref. 19:p. 210]

2. Navy Evaluations

The U.S. Navy first became cognizant of bias in its evaluations in 1981. A study by NPRDC confirmed that while information between male and female applications for Chief Petty Officer (E-7) was the same in content, that information was used differently by promotion board members. Women with more comments than the norm in the block for motivation and personality were not selected for advancement to Chief. The board discounted this information because it was atypical for females: aggressive, ambitious, etc. On the other hand, men with more comments in the appearance, honors and communications skills block were not selected for promotion to Chief either. Apparently, entries in this block made women look better because the board perceived honors as harder for women to achieve, therefore more deserving of advancement. For men, the board looked more toward other blocks for indications of leadership potential; honors were perceived as not difficult to attain. [Ref. 28:p. 13]

The next time that the Navy examined evaluation bias was in 1983. The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) had changed the way officers were selected for promotion. Under DOPMA, all fitness reports for line officers were now considered together by the same board. Up until then, General Unrestricted Line (mostly women) had gone to a separate board. The Navy was concerned that differences between male and female officer's fitness reports could prove detrimental to the women. This study revealed that not only did the type and quantity of descriptor vary, but that the male style was overwhelmingly preferred for promotion. [Ref. 29:p. vii] Navy-wide recommendations were made by the study. An article in Proceedings neatly summed up the differences: men were described in acting/doing terms, women were described in thinking/feeling terms. The men had longer fitness reports and more of the recommendations critical to promotion. [Ref. 30]

G. THESIS RESEARCH

With the problem identified by NPRDC in 1983, the Navy attempted to solve the evaluation disparity between its male and female officer fitness reports. The authors of this thesis will attempt to examine if the solution was effective, and address the additional issue of what differences

might be generated by the gender of the individual writing
the fitness report.

III. NPRDC STUDIES

In 1983 NPRDC performed two studies comparing the narrative portions of male and female fitness reports. A follow-on study was conducted that addressed the impact of fitness report narrative differences on promotion opportunities. These reports are the starting point for this thesis; their methodology and lexicon serve as its foundation. The NPRDC research efforts are reviewed in this chapter.

A. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE EVALUATIONS OF NARRATIVES IN OFFICER PERFORMANCE RATINGS [Ref. 26]

1. Problem and Background

NPRDC performed the initial study as a response to a change in how promotion boards reviewed officer records for promotion. The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) directed the new protocol in 1981. Prior to the passage of DOPMA, male and female officer records were screened for promotion by two different boards. The Navy at that time believed the female officer would not stand well in competition with male officers because they had radically different career paths and because U.S. Code denied female officers billets aboard Navy combatants. These billets were considered crucial to male officer professional development. Once DOPMA changed the procedure, Navy management became

concerned that equal opportunity would not be served by the combined promotion board. [Ref. 29:p. 1]

The study began by reviewing other research that indicated a potential for bias in the officer narratives. There was evidence of pro-male bias, penalty for sex inappropriate behavior, and a notable difference in the types of adjectives used to describe men and women. The results of this research pointed to a potential problem. The study noted that:

Behavior and personality traits considered appropriate for women, however, are sometimes incongruent with success in an organizational setting, particularly one in which male behavior has become the norm. [Ref. 28:pp. 1-2]

At the time of the study, little had been done to review Armed Forces specific gender bias. In fact, only two studies were on record. The results of one of the studies was inconclusive because of data standards. All tests had been normed on male officers. The other showed bias against men for one type of descriptor on an evaluation, and bias against women for another type of descriptor. [Ref. 28:p. 2] Thus bias in the subjective portion of evaluations and fitness reports did exist.

Familiarization with the form NAVPERS 1611/1, Report on Fitness of Officers, leads to seniors rating all officers high on the objective measures [Ref. 29:p. 2]. (See Appendix B for an example for the NAVPERS 1611/1.) Rate inflation is a common phenomenon; the Navy periodically

revises the form to combat the slide to all excellent ratings. When a promotion board is confronted with all upper one percent officers to chose from for promotion, the board perforce must rely on the second half of the fitness report, a totally subjective narrative describing the officer's overall leadership ability, personal traits and other factors which may be important to career development. [Ref. 28:p. 2] When critical decisions are based on subjective material, which is inherently vulnerable to stereotypical bias, there is a potential for real discrimination in promotions.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the NPRDC study was to determine if there was a gender bias in the narrative portion of the officers' fitness reports. The statement of purpose concluded with the following:

Moreover, Nieva and Gutek (1981), in their review of the civilian literature, demonstrated that "sex-related evaluation bias presents the greatest problem for successful or competent women, in situations where there is considerable ambiguity, and which involve sex-inappropriate situations or require sex-role-incongruent behaviors" (p. 81). The narrative material in the FitReps of women naval officers who are in zone for promotion to lieutenant commander (LCDR) fulfills all three of these conditions. [Ref. 28:p. 3]

The study established three hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 was that there would be no difference in the number of personality traits used to describe men or women, but that the traits used to describe men would be different from

those used to describe women. Hypothesis 2 was that there would be no difference in the number and nature of descriptions of job-related skills, professional performance, or recommendations. Hypothesis 3 was that leadership skills would more often be used in the male narratives; management and administrative skills would be used more often in the female narratives. [Ref. 28:p. 3]

3. Procedure

A fitness report sample was taken from the fitness reports reviewed for selection to Lieutenant Commander in the year prior to the enactment of DOPMA. All of the female fitness reports were included, but only one in 30 of the men's fitness reports were included. [Ref. 28:p. 3]

Three sections comprised the data analysis: content analysis, statistical analysis, and practical application assessment.

a. Content Analysis

Seven categories of descriptors were anticipated from the instructions available to fitness report writer at the time. BUPERSINST 1611.12E suggested the following categories: manner of performance, personality traits, self-expression, combat performance, leadership, impact on Navy/command, and recommendations for the future. Content analysis of ten fitness reports showed that two additional categories were required: relations to others and Navy variables. These ten fitness reports also provided an

opportunity for the two NPRDC researchers to practice identifying descriptor units and for them to become accustomed to the rules established for coding. Twenty more fitness reports were used to amplify the list of descriptors and to provide practice to the researchers actually performing the coding. [Ref. 28:p. 4]

Each of the nine categories listed above contained from one to 21 descriptors. Each descriptor was assigned a list of synonyms, derived from words that appeared in the fitness reports. The Random House Dictionary was used to determine appropriate categories for any new words the researchers initially encountered. For example, the "confident" category included "poised" and "calm." These two words would also be coded identically as "confident." [Ref. 28:p. 4]

The researchers supervising the coding of the narratives established three rules: 1) A descriptor can describe how the work is performed but not the work itself; 2) When a statement or phrase includes more than one descriptor, all should be counted; and 3) Descriptors that are repeated will only be counted once. [Ref. 28:p. 4]

Eventually the word list was complete enough that no new words were found. Likewise, the individuals doing the actual coding developed very high reliability; with practice, they obtained a unitizing reliability (difference between coders in recognizing a unit of material

to be coded) of .001, and their consistency in assigning the categories rose to .981.

b. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were performed to compare the number of descriptors, the clusters of traits used to describe each sex and the frequency of the leadership and management descriptors for each gender. [Ref. 28:p. 6]

c. Practical Application Assessment

The experimental design included a test of whether or not differences found really mattered in the real world. Two artificial fitness reports were developed that reflected differences derived in the earlier phases of the research. These two fitness reports avoided any mention of gender; they did not use "he" and "she." The fitness reports were then presented to a group of officers of enough seniority to be eligible to sit on a promotion board. These officers were required to "promote" one or the other of the individuals represented in the artificial fitness reports. The artificial fitness reports used the writing style of actual narratives, making changes mostly by paraphrasing. [Ref. 28:p. 6]

4. Results

Hypothesis 1 was supported. There was no difference in the number of personality traits mentioned, but there were differences in the nature of the descriptors [Ref. 28:p. 11]. The number of descriptors used were about the

same between the sexes in the categories of performance, personality, relations with others, self-expression, Navy variables, and leadership and management. Differences were seen in the combat performance, recommendations and impact on Navy categories. The overall number of descriptors used differed: the overall average was 15 for female fitness reports and 20 for the male fitness reports. [Ref. 28:p. 7] The nature of the descriptors did vary somewhat with gender. For example, men were more likely to have Navy characteristics, a supportive spouse, to be physically fit and to have a positive impact on readiness, safety, and material conditions. Women were more likely to be described as supporting equal opportunity, being well-groomed, and being a valuable asset to the command. [Ref. 28:p. 8] The cluster analysis revealed that in general, male officers do and female officers think. Men's descriptors were action-doing and women's were thinking-feeling. [Ref. 28:p. 10]

Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. Frequency of performance, relations to others, self-expression and Navy variables did not differ. Male narratives did provide more information on their expected performance in combat and on their impact on the Navy. Recommendations, however, differed radically. In the men's narrative the recommendations were far more specific and were made far more often than in women's fitness reports [Ref. 28:p. 12].

There were by far more recommendations of the males for command billets [Ref. 24:p. 9].

Hypothesis 3 was also supported. The major difference here was that leadership was mentioned more often in the men's narratives. While management is mentioned more often in the women's narratives, the difference was smaller. [Ref. 28:p. 12]

The real world impact trial showed that the male archetype fitness report was vastly preferred to the female archetype. Fifty-eight out of 67 reviewers would have chosen to promote the officer who's fitness report had all of the "male" hallmarks. [Ref. 28:p. 13] Sixty-one of the reviewers were male and six were female.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The NPRDC researchers noted that it is hard to justify most of the differences found in the study:

Are women really less competent, logical and mature, yet more valuable to their commands than are men? Is their personal appearance in uniform more impeccable, while they exhibit less pride in the Navy than do the men? Does their performance warrant few recommendations and only nebulous praise? [Ref. 28:p. 14]

The study noted that the inferences were disturbing. Once specified quotas of female promotions were met, women would be passed over in favor of their male counterparts who had narratives that were perceived as stronger.

The individuals who made up the "promotion board" were briefed afterwards on the results and the purpose of

the board. They were genuinely concerned, and stated that the phrases in the female narrative were the ones they themselves used. The researchers concluded that the male reviewers had intended no malice, and were using generic phrases. Those questioned afterward had little idea of what the female officer's career path should be; few could identify which billets would have enhanced her career.

[Ref. 28:p. 14]

The NPRDC discussion concluded with:

Women are unlikely to be penalized by the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act during these first few years of its existence, because careful attention is paid to the proportions of each gender promoted under the new system. However, it is just a matter of time before such concern wanes and the full impact of differential evaluation is felt--unless remedial steps are taken to ensure that naval officers are evaluated on their performance, not on their gender. [Ref. 28:p. 15]

The study listed five recommendations. First, include information about fitness report biases in all officer accession schools. Examples are Officer Candidate School and Naval Reserve Officer Training Commands. Second, include this in the curricula of Navy schools that train officers in personnel management such as Surface Warfare Officers School and Leadership, Management, Education and Training School. Third, short articles should be prepared for Navy publications like Proceedings and Defense Management Journal, to reach officers who have passed through the schooling process already. Fourth, the study recommended that the Navy do a better job of informing all

officers of the female's career path. Fifth, selection boards should be advised of gender differences. [Ref. 28:p. 15]

B. THE EFFECTS OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION NARRATIVES ON THE PROMOTION OF MALE AND FEMALE UNRESTRICTED LINE OFFICERS [Ref. 31]

NPRDC performed a follow-on study to the one described in the preceding section. The original study checked to see if gender differences were significant by creating an archetypical male and female narrative and presenting them to officers for promotion. The narratives carefully avoided any reference to gender. The follow-on study investigated whether or not a priori knowledge of gender influenced selection rates. For this study, four LT fitness reports were designed. One used the male archetype with male gender references. Another used male archetype, but paired it with female gender references. A similar pair was made using the female archetype with male gender markers in one narrative and female markers in the other. [Ref. 31:p. 3]

Thirty-five unrestricted line officers including both general and warfare specialists were arbitrarily selected for the review board. Several were female and only one was not a lieutenant.

The results showed that the male archetype was preferred for promotion regardless of whether or not it was written on a male or a female officer. In this case: "when words like

"aggressive," "forceful," and "logical reasoning" are used in a woman's FitRep, they affect her chances for selection positively." [Ref. 31:p. 5] Action verbs in the male archetypes were associated with good performance regardless of the gender associated with it. Sex inappropriate actions (a woman's name with the male archetype) were not penalized for that incongruity.

The study concluded that the problem was not gender bias on selection boards, but gender bias written into the narratives before they ever reach the board [Ref. 31:p. 6].

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. SAMPLE

The Fitness Reports (FitReps) used in this study were acquired from two sources. The majority were obtained from various senior officers who had been in command of tender class vessels in which both men and women had been embarked. The remaining were received from students at the Naval Postgraduate School. These were the result of a request for FitReps sent to all Navy students at the school (see Appendix A). All FitReps received had the gender of the writer annotated on it.

The FitReps were divided into four groups: group one, men writing about men; group two, men writing about women; group three, women writing about women; and group four, women writing about men. Due to the sources of the FitReps, the men writing about men group had the most responses. However, not all the FitReps submitted in that group were used. Care was taken to evaluate only those that had the best chance of having a match of paygrade and designator in one or more of the other groups. This decreased potential differences in the Fitness Reports due to such factors as experience and warfare specialty. One of a kind FitReps were not evaluated. The final sample sizes were 47 for

group one, 38 for group two, 30 for group three and 24 for group four.

B. PROCEDURE

The authors identified each descriptor in the FitReps and then coded them using the lexicon generated by NPRDC for use in the previous study (see Appendix B).

There are 81 descriptor thematic units in the lexicon. These themes include the primary descriptor and all synonyms used to identify that theme. Specific rules were adopted by NPRDC and used by the authors in this study for identifying themes and using the lexicon (see Appendix C).

When an agreement could not be reached as to the correct descriptor coding, a note was made and that descriptor was not counted. This was an attempt to avert the subjectivity inherent in the coding process. The rate of agreement between the authors was 99.4%. The list of categories and descriptors is shown in Table 1.

After coding, a computerized list of descriptor codes was constructed for each FitRep in the sample. The FitReps were then compiled into four different combinations of the original four groups. These were: reports written on men, reports written on women, reports written by men and reports written by women. Statistical analyses were run to identify significant differences in the number and type of descriptors for all four combinations. Two-tailed t tests

TABLE 1

CODED INFORMATION CATEGORIES
AND COMPONENT DESCRIPTORS

Category/Descriptors

100 Manner of Performance

- 101 Outstanding performer
- 102 Competent/knowledgeable
- 103 Accomplished goals
- 104 Exercised sound judgment
- 105 Effective/productive
- 106 Professional
- 107 Completed tasks ahead of time
- 108 Contributed meaningfully
- 109 Showed satisfactory growth
- 110 Praiseworthy

200 Personality Traits

- 201 Intelligent
- 202 Thorough
- 203 Organized/sets priorities
- 204 Flexible
- 205 Motivated/dedicated
- 206 Dependable/responsible
- 207 Displays initiative
- 208 Perceptive
- 209 Prompt
- 210 Logical/displays common sense
- 211 Honest
- 212 Dynamic
- 213 Sociable/good-natured
- 214 Energetic
- 215 Assertive/persuasive
- 216 Mature/stable
- 217 Confident

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

- 218 Creative
- 219 Aggressive
- 220 Positive/optimistic
- 221 Tactful

300 Relations with Others

- 301 Instructive
- 302 Attentive to needs of others
- 303 Unbiased/fair
- 304 Assists others
- 305 Displays good counseling skills
- 306 Demanding
- 307 Developmental
- 308 Displays team building skills
- 309 Motivating

400 Self-expression

- 401 Written
- 402 Oral
- 403 Command of language

500 Combat Performance

- 501 Would perform capably

600 Recommendations (For Promotion or Future Assignment)

- 601 Shows potential for growth
- 602 Shows unlimited potential
- 603 Recommended for promotion ahead of contemporaries
- 604 Ready for LCDR/increased responsibility
- 605 Recommended for specific assignment
- 606 Recommended for demanding assignment
- 607 Recommended for immediate promotion
- 608 Highly recommended for promotion

700 Navy Variables

- 701 Possesses Navy characteristics

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)

- 702 Follows rules/supports policies
- 703 Keeps physically fit
- 704 Well-groomed
- 705 Safety conscious
- 706 Valuable asset
- 707 Has supportive spouse
- 708 Active in community
- 709 Active in Navy social events, functions
- 710 Actively supports equal opportunity programs
- 711 Displays military bearing
- 712 Enhances camaraderie
- 713 Enhances national or international relations

800 Leadership and Management/Administration

- 801 Capable leader
- 802 Capable manager/administrator

900 Impact on Navy/Command

- 901 On unit readiness
- 902 On performance of wing, ship, command
- 903 On retention
- 904 On savings of time, money
- 905 On recruiting
- 906 On equal opportunity
- 907 On special programs
- 908 On material facilities/environment
- 909 On inspection conditions
- 910 On safety
- 911 On systems
- 912 On training

at the 95% level of significance were used to test the hypothesis that there were no differences between genders in FitReps, either in those written by men and women or those written for men and women.

The authors assumed the underlying populations were normally distributed. The samples were independent and the population standard deviations were unknown.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. NUMBER OF DESCRIPTORS IN FITNESS REPORTS

The number of descriptors used in each FitRep was totalled and the average for each of the four groups was calculated. The results of t-tests run on these means indicated no significant differences between the number of descriptors used in reports written on men as compared to those written on women. Further, the mean number of descriptors used in reports written by men was not statistically different from those written by women. These data are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
TOTAL OVERALL MEAN

ON			By		
Men	Women	t	Men	Women	t
20.52	21.31	-1.00	20.46	21.61	-1.46

B. CATEGORIES OF FITNESS REPORT DESCRIPTORS

Additional t-tests were run to determine if the groups differed in the mean number of FitRep descriptors within specific categories. These data are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

TABLE 3
ON MEN AND WOMEN

	Men	Women	t
General Performance	4.79	4.81	-0.08
Personality Variables	5.30	5.24	0.15
Relations with Others	1.93	1.82	0.47
Self-Expression	0.366	0.279	0.79
Recommendations	3.20	3.65	-2.17
Navy Variables	1.51	1.60	-0.42
Leadership/Management/ Administration	1.465	1.588	-1.10
Positive Impact	1.96	2.34	-1.72

df = 135, $n_1 = 71$, $n_2 = 68$

TABLE 4
FITNESS REPORTS BY MEN AND WOMEN

	Men	Women	t
General Performance	4.78	4.83	-0.22
Personality Variables	5.22	5.08	0.39
Relations with Others	1.65	2.24	-2.46
Self-Expression	0.365	0.259	1.02
Recommendations	3.24	3.70	-2.21
Navy Variables	1.58	1.52	0.25
Leadership/Management/ Administration	1.518	1.593	-0.67
Positive Impact	2.14	2.15	-0.03

df = 110, $n_1 = 85$, $n_2 = 54$

Table 3 shows only one statistically significant difference between the mean number of descriptors in FitReps written on men as compared to those written on women. That category was "Recommendations." This would indicate that the majority of Fitness Reports have essentially the same content.

In the category of "Recommendations" the data show that women received more recommendations on their fitness reports than did men. These recommendations include such things as early promotion, demanding or specific assignments and promotion ahead of peers. This category shows more for women possibly due to the fact that General Unrestricted Line Officers (GURL), mostly women, have a less straightforward career path than warfare specialists. Warfare specialists know exactly what each step in their career should be to stay competitive for promotion. Therefore, recommendations are used to guide the GURL officer into the next assignment and further promotions.

Table 4 indicates significant results on two of the t-tests run to compare the descriptors within categories of fitness reports written by men as compared to reports written by women, "Relations with Others" and "Recommendations." "Relations with Others" included such themes as "demanding," "developmental," "instructive" and "motivation." Women writers comment more often on these factors than men possibly due to the perception by the women

of a participative leadership style. Women may perceive this style of leadership whether or not it is really in use because they have been raised to look for it.

"Recommendations" had a significant difference also. Women again commented on this factor more often than men. If a woman has always received several recommendations, she would naturally assume that that is the correct way to write a FitRep when she became senior enough to do so.

The category "combat performance" was noted in only one of the 139 fitness reports in the sample. Therefore, no analysis was done on this category.

C. THEMATIC UNITS OF DESCRIPTOR CATEGORIES ON FITNESS REPORTS

The final phase of the analysis explored the thematic units within categories of fitness reports. Only those categories that produced statistically significant differences between men and women (as shown in Tables 3 and 4) were addressed. This analysis was run to discover if a single descriptor was driving the difference in the category.

Table 5 shows the differences in reports written on men compared to reports written on women in the two pertinent categories. Women receive more recommendations than men for specific assignments such as postgraduate education or department head. Again, this could be attributed to the lack of a clear career path for non-warfare women officers.

TABLE 5

THEMATIC UNITS OF CATEGORIES SHOWING SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCES. FITNESS REPORTS ON MEN AND WOMEN

	Men	Women	t
Relations with Others			
Instructive	0.310	0.250	0.78
Attentive to the Needs of Others	0.282	0.265	0.22
Unbiased/Fair	0.028	0.074	-1.21
Assists Others	0.310	0.206	1.40
Displays Good Counseling Skills	0.028	0.059	-0.67
Demanding	0.254	0.206	0.66
Developmental	0.254	0.294	-0.53
Displays Teambuilding Skills	0.394	0.294	1.24
Motivation	0.197	0.103	1.56
Recommendations			
Shows Potential for Growth	0.141	0.162	-0.34
Shows Unlimited Potential	0.310	0.338	-0.35
Recommended for Promotion	0.394	0.492	-1.25
Recommended for Specific Assignment	0.563	0.809	-3.22
Recommended for Demanding Assignment	0.408	0.338	0.85
Immediate Promotion	0.155	0.118	0.64
Highly Recommended for Promotion	0.746	0.706	0.53

In Table 6, FitReps written by men compared to those written by women, "Relations with Others" shows two descriptors with significant differences. Women writers use the themes of "Developmental" and "Displays Teambuilding Skills" more frequently than men. This may be because these traits are two clear examples of the participative style of leadership for which the women writers think they should be looking.

There are no significant differences in any of the distinct themes attached to the "Recommendations" category, but most (six) of the eight themes showed higher averages for women. The sum of these means forces the category mean into the significant range.

In summation, women write and receive more recommendations than men and women write more comments about the ratee's relations with others.

The sample used in this study was not a true random sample. The authors were limited by availability of Fitness Reports for which information about the writer was available. Sample sizes were also smaller than desired because of this constraint. Despite these constraints, the analysis showed that women and men appear to be moving closer to equity in the area of Fitness Reports.

TABLE 6

THEMATIC UNITS OF CATEGORIES SHOWING SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCES. FITNESS REPORTS BY MEN AND WOMEN

	Men	Women	t
Relations with Others			
Instructive	0.235	0.352	-1.45
Attentive to the Needs of Others	0.271	0.278	-0.09
Unbiased/Fair	0.035	0.074	-0.94
Assists Others	0.238	0.296	-0.74
Displays Good Counseling Skills	0.059	0.019	1.02
Demanding	0.212	0.259	-0.63
Developmental	0.212	0.370	-1.98
Displays Teambuilding Skills	0.329	0.500	-1.99
Motivation	0.188	0.093	1.64
Recommendations			
Shows Potential for Growth	0.129	0.185	-0.86
Shows Unlimited Potential	0.282	0.389	-1.28
Recommended for Promotion Ahead of Peers	0.612	0.667	-0.66
Ready for Promotion	0.471	0.407	0.73
Recommended for Specific Assignment	0.635	0.759	-1.57
Recommended for Demanding Assignment	0.341	0.426	-0.99
Immediate Promotion	0.129	0.148	-0.31
Highly Recommended for Promotion	0.447	0.452	0.09

VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY

A study conducted in 1983 by the Naval Personnel Research and Development Center (NPRDC) showed that men and women were evaluated differently in the narrative portion of Fitness Reports (FitReps). In particular, the number and types of descriptors were different. These differences were seen at the time to be detrimental to women officers. The study ended with recommendations for training to be given and journal articles to be written to recognize and decrease these differences.

This thesis followed the approach of the NPRDC study and also reviewed the narrative section of Fitness Reports. FitReps written by men and women and FitReps written for men and women. Descriptors found in the narratives were categorized, coded and statistically analyzed to find any differences in the number and kinds of descriptors used. Results of this analysis showed no differences in the mean number of total descriptors used in the FitReps of the sample. Differences did appear in the categories of "Relations with Others" and "Recommendations." Women writers of FitReps made more recommendations than did men writers. Women also commented more frequently on the

relations of the ratee with others. Finally, women received more recommendations than men.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The thesis research suggests that substantial improvements have been made in eliminating the differences between men's and women's Fitness Reports. The initial study by NPRDC in 1983 showed clear differences; even in the number of descriptors used in the FitReps. Men's FitReps contained more descriptors than women's. This difference in the number of descriptors used per FitRep appears to have been completely eliminated. Some of the other descriptors but had significant differences in the earlier study which did not show any differences in the current study were "Competent/knowledgeable," "Logical/displays common sense," "Valuable Asset to Command" and "Possesses Navy Characteristics."

The 1983 NPRDC study showed 16 descriptors with significant differences. The current study found only one descriptor showing a difference. This descriptor, "Recommended for Specific Assignment," was one which showed a difference in the 1983 study. However, in that study, men received more recommendations than women.

The thesis results showed that the only difference in content of Fitness Reports written on men compared to those

written on women appeared in the "Recommendations" category with women receiving more recommendations than men.

FitReps written by men compared to those written by women showed a difference in two categories, "Relations with Others" and "Recommendations." This may, in part, be due to the fact that in 1983 there were few women in warfare specialties, most were General Unrestricted Line Officers, usually holding administrative positions. Since then, opportunities for women as Surface Warfare Officers and Aviators have dramatically increased. About 50 percent of the women's Fitness Reports used in the current study were from warfare specialists.

Another consideration is the current spotlight on women as participants in the Armed Forces. The conflicts in Panama and the Middle East proved that women can do the job as equal partners in times of need. Sexual Harassment Training has also focused attention on women's issues in the military.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the few differences, discussed above, which still exist, the accession commands, Naval Academy, Reserve Officer Training Corp and Officer Candidate School need to add awareness of the importance of Fitness Report content to their training syllabuses. Currently, they all have some form of indoctrination to the process, explaining the format

and importance to the individual's career, and some experience in the mechanics of writing an evaluation, but none address the significance of the subjective evaluation and the possible biases which can creep into the evaluation process. This awareness must be provided to the lowest levels so the raters can not only recognize their personal biases, but also see it in Fitness Reports written on them.

Senior women officers writing Fitness Reports must also be made aware that possible biases still exist. Articles in professional journals and guidance from the highest levels can aid in the re-education process.

The authors recommend two further studies be performed. Another study replicating the 1983 NPRDC study, using Fitness Reports acquired from NMPC, should be made. Although the gender of the writer is not available for these reports, using NMPC data would ensure like FitReps were used to measure men and women. This would completely eliminate outside influences such as seniority and experience. The second study should involve measuring differences based on the job of the ratee and the writer as opposed to the gender. For example, do women write differences into FitReps because they more often are evaluating administrative as opposed to operational work?

As women become more senior in the warfare specialties and take command, will the differences currently seen in FitReps written by women go away? There is no way of

knowing. This study of job verses gender could provide additional information to address this issue.

APPENDIX A

SURVEYS

Dear NPS Student,

We are looking for raw data for our thesis. We need copies of two types of fitness reports: ones written on you and ones written by you.

We would appreciate it if you can send us any or all of your lieutenant fitness reports. Please black out your name and your social security number anywhere they appear; we're only interested in the narrative and some of the general identifying information on the front. (For example, community type and years in service.)

The thesis follows up a study done in 1983 that showed significant and detrimental differences between men's and women's fitness reports. We would like to explore any changes in these differences since that study was first performed.

Please help us--we want to graduate! Mail your sanitized fitness reports and the enclosed forms to

LT Renee Gutierrez
SMC BOX 2478

There is no need for postage if you use the SMC. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

BARBARA DAVIS
LT, USN

RENEE GUTIERREZ
LT, USN

FOR ALL FITNESS REPORTS: Please take a moment to fill out this additional information.

___ I have sanitized the fitness reports myself.

___ I would prefer your sanitize the fitness reports. I understand that no name nor social security number will be used or recorded for the purpose of this study.

___ I wrote my fitness report myself and it remained basically unchanged from my draft in its final form. Please identify which fitness reports this statement applies to if you are sending several. This is true for the fitreps dated: _____

___ The person who actually wrote the fitness report (as opposed to the senior officer who signed the fitrep) was male. This applies to the fitness reports dated: _____

___ The person who actually wrote the fitness report (as opposed to the senior officer who signed the fitrep) was female. This applies to the fitness reports dated: _____

APPENDIX B

LEXICON

GENERAL PERFORMANCE 100

<u>TERM</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
101 <u>Outstanding</u>	superb, flawless, top of class, exemplary, excellent, front-runner, extremely high level of performance, extraordinary, impressive, enviable, model, epitome, exceptional (used in reference to general performance. If used to modify a specific category, then this category is not appropriate.)
102 <u>Skillful</u>	knowledgeable in a specific area, expertise, technical ability, proficient, talented, qualified, competent, capable, utilizes experience, knows his job, gifted
103 <u>Accomplished Goals</u>	meets goals, superb task accomplishment, successful in operations, pride in meeting deadlines, meets challenges, follows through on assignments, accomplishes tasks with ease, timely
104 <u>Exercised Sound Judgment</u>	mature judgement, decisive, problem solver, masters problems quickly, prudent
105 <u>Effective/Productive</u>	(If specified, refer to 108, 300, 400, 700 or 800 category.) efficiently employs system to fullest, resourceful, productive, industrious, concise in performance
106 <u>Professional</u>	

- 107 Prepared displays readiness or forethought, prepared, foresight, completes tasks ahead of time
- 108 Contributed Meaningfully (Prior to coding a theme 108, check the 900 category to make sure the theme does not represent an impact variable significant to the Navy. If no appropriate category exists under the 900's, the unit may be considered for this category.) Improvement oriented, imaginative, in making improvements, constructive, effective in developing programs (unspecified)
- 109 Shows Satisfactory Growth increases skills, shows satisfactory development, increases professional growth, gains knowledge and experience, growth oriented (by example)
- 110 Praiseworthy earning respect or appreciation, "has my confidence," receives award or commendation

PERSONALITY VARIABLES 200

- 201 Intelligent bright, brilliant, knowledgeable, widely read, versed, active mind
- 202 Thorough meticulous, attention to detail, fulfills tedious requirements, precise, accurate, persistent
- 203 Organized/Set Priorities systematic, methodical, able to coordinate, planning ability
- 204 Flexible adaptive, can function under stress, quick to assimilate, versatile, well-rounded
- 205 Motivated/Dedicated ambitious, zealous, self-demanding, eager to learn, diligent, committed, involved, devoted naval officer, determined, perseverance, inquisitive, "can-do," hard charging, industrious, eagerly

206 <u>Dependable/</u> <u>Responsible</u>	loyal, conscientious, reliable, unfailing, constant, tireless, consistent, faithful
207 <u>Displays</u> <u>Initiative</u>	self-starter, sets own goals, seeks challenge, instrumental, productive attitude, goal oriented, seeks responsibility
208 <u>Perceptive</u>	keen insight, aware, cognizant, thoughtful, watchful
209 <u>Prompt</u>	responsive, quick to act
210 <u>Logical/</u> <u>Displays Common</u> <u>Sense</u>	rational, sensible, analytical thinker, sound reasoning ability, practical, no- nonsense
211 <u>Honest</u>	forthright, trustworthy, displays integrity, standards, direct, personal standards, sincere
212 <u>Dynamic</u>	charismatic
213 <u>Sociable/Good</u> <u>Natured</u>	amiable, gregarious, engaging, people oriented, friendly, warm, sense of humor, witty, personable, congenial
214 <u>Energetic</u>	active, vigorous, enthusiastic
215 <u>Assertive/</u> <u>Persuasive</u>	courage of convictions, forcefully expresses ideas, tenacious (regarding verbal rather than physical)
216 <u>Mature/Stable</u>	
217 <u>Confident</u>	self-assured, aplomb, poised, composed, independent, calm
218 <u>Creative</u>	innovative, imaginative, ingenuity
219 <u>Aggressive</u>	forceful (regarding physical or behavioral)
220 <u>Positive/</u> <u>Optimistic</u>	uncomplaining
221 <u>Tactful</u>	diplomatic
222 <u>Cautious</u>	prudent

RELATIONS WITH OTHERS 300

- 301 Instructive effective in training, directive
- 302 Attentive to Needs of Others shows regard for others, sensitive to other's needs, receptive, concerned, considerate, caring
- 303 Unbiased/Fair treats all equally, respects others right's
- 304 Assists Others volunteers assistance, cooperative
- 305 Displays Good Counseling Skills
- 306 Demanding demands top performance of others
- 307 Developmental develops skill on others, develops leadership qualities in others, builds confidence in others (apart from training or instructive)
- 308 Displays Team-building Skills enhances cooperation, builds and maintains high morale
- 309 Motivation encourages others

SELF-EXPRESSION 400

- 401 Written competent writer, writes clear and concise reports
- 402 Oral instructive briefer, articulate, gifted speaker
- 403 Command of Language good communication skills

COMBAT 500

- 501 Would Perform Capably leader in warfare specialty, capable of fighting on ship, performance in combat would be outstanding

RECOMMENDATION 600

- 601 Shows Potential for Growth continuing potential, great potential

- 602 Shows Unlimited Potential outstanding, unsurpassed or unquestionable potential
- 603 Recommended for early promotion or selection, Promotion Ahead accelerated of Contemporaries
- 604 Ready for Promotion ready for increased responsibility or authority
- 605 Recommended for Specific Assignment indicate what
- 606 Recommended for Demanding Assignment for command
- 607 Immediate Promotion now
- 608 Highly Recommended for Promotion strongly

NAVY VARIABLES 700

- 701 Possesses Navy Characteristics has Navy temperament, loyal to Navy, exhibits pride in Navy
- 702 Follows Rules/ Supports Policy adheres to orders and directives, supports COC
- 703 Keeps Physically Fit maintains physical fitness program, athletic, active in sports, outstanding on PFT
- 704 Well Groomed attractive in uniform, "spit and polish"
- 705 Safety Conscious committed to safety principles
- 706 Valuable Asset invaluable to command, Navy, unit
- 707 Has Supportive Spouse charming, asset to career

- 708 Active in Community service organizations, church, youth groups
- 709 Active in Navy Social Events, Functions
- 710 Actively Supports Equal Opportunity Program and Human Goals Affirmative Action
- 711 Displays Military Bearing outstanding representative of Navy, impressive demeanor, command presence, sense of decorum, respectful, proper
- 712 Enhances Camaraderie
- 713 Enhances National or International Relations

LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATION 800

- 801 Capable Leader exhibits qualities of a leader, sound leadership style, ability for leadership, takes charge, skillful, outstanding, exemplary, model, aggressive as a leader
- 802 Capable Manager/Administrator talented, effective, experienced, outstanding, aggressive as a manager or administrator

POSITIVE IMPACT OF NAVY 900 (Used when a specific result of effort is cited)

- 901 On Availability readiness
- 902 On Performance of Ship, Wing or Command, reliability
- 903 On Retention
- 904 On Savings of Time or Money
- 905 On Recruiting
- 906 On Equal Opportunity

907 On Special Programs

908 On Material Facilities, Equipment Development,
Maintenance

909 On Inspection Conditions

910 On Safety

911 On Systems

912 On Training

APPENDIX C

RULES FOR UTILIZING DICTIONARY AND IDENTIFYING THEMES AND UNITS

1. Each descriptor (whether word, phrase, subordinate clause, or sentence) is counted as one thematic unit. (Certain units other than descriptors are also counted due to the nature/hypothesis of the research design.)
2. In statements that include more than one descriptor, each is counted separately. The statement "LT Brown is a motivated officer who seeks out challenges at every opportunity" would consist of two units; Motivated/Dedicated (205) and Displays Initiative (207). The statement "LT Brown completed the task in an outstanding manner" constitutes only one unit, Outstanding (101), while the statement "LT Brown has remained consistently at an outstanding level throughout the reporting period" would include both the unit Outstanding (101) and Dependable/Responsible (206).
3. Mere mention or description of a candidate's work assignment does not constitute a theme. Description of duties do constitute a theme when adverbs or adjectives indicate how a job is done, or when the ratee performs above and beyond what is expected. For example, the statement "LT Brown was responsible for the training of 60 men" would not constitute a theme; the statement "LT Brown was quite effective in the training of 60 men" would, Instructive (301).
4. Themes that are either clearly/strongly inferred or indirectly mentioned are counted. For example, stating that a candidate has "career potential" would count as Possesses Navy Characteristics (701). A statement indicating that a task requires certain traits, followed or preceded by a comment to the effect that the incumbent performed that job well, implies that he/she possesses those traits. Such phrases qualify as units to be coded under an appropriate category. The statement "LT Brown has been responsible for directing the activities of two divisions engaged in operating systems software analyses and data base administration; duties that require extensive technical expertise and management skill" would imply (and be coded as) Skillful (102) and Capable Manager (802).

5. The frequency with which specific themes occur is not noted. Each thematic unit is counted only once, regardless of where it occurs in the evaluation. The only exception is in the area of recommendations where multiple different recommendations would appear. The statement "LT Brown is highly recommended for post graduate school, and accelerated promotion" would constitute three distinct units and be categorized separately (608, 605, and 603 respectively).
6. Statements referring to involvement in extracurricular activities outside the line of duty are counted (i.e., statements that would put the candidate in a better light; for example, "LT Brown maintains a physical fitness program" or "LT Brown is an outstanding representative of the Navy" would be categorized and counted as Keeps Physically Fit (703) and Displays Military Bearing (711).
7. Performance variables are those that describe a specific event or task accomplishment. In general, such units qualify how a candidate carries out duties. The use of past tense is a cue in discriminating between a description of an isolated event or single incident and a pervasive/enduring trait. The statement "LT Brown carried out the assignments in an industrious manner" would be considered a Performance variable and be categorized under Effective/Productive (105).
8. Personality variables are those descriptions used in direct reference to the candidate and that reflect more enduring qualities than do Performance variables. Generally, these traits tend to be in the present tense and have broader implications. The statement "LT Brown is a diligent officer in every way" would be categorized as a Motivated/Dedicated (205).
9. If used only once, statements concerning management or administration are not counted. It is apparent that these two, either as nouns or in their verbal forms, could too easily refer to the job assigned, i.e., "LT Brown managed the mess funds" would not constitute a theme. Repetition of these terms, in any grammatical form, is counted under the assumption that the writer actually wished to emphasize management or administrative abilities, Capable Manager/Administrator (802). For example, the statement "LT Brown did an outstanding job managing the mess funds" is counted under Outstanding (101) not Management/Administrative (801) unless it is preceded and/or followed by a similar statement somewhere in the evaluation such as, "LT Brown

demonstrated her administrative abilities during this reporting period."

10. Single references to leadership are counted as a theme because of the hypothesized importance of leadership skills and manifestations to the Navy (as indicated by the BUPERSINST 11611.12E).
11. Impact variables are the linkage of an individual's behavior or attributes to an outcome in his/her unit or upon an organizational goal (i.e., safety, economy, retention). Such variables specify the system impacted upon. When a beneficial outcome of the ratee's performance is unspecified, the unit of information is categorized as a Performance variable. The statement "LT Brown's efforts helped raise the unit's level of readiness" would be assigned a code of 901 (Impact on Availability). The statement "LT Brown developed new programs and made numerous improvements" would be assigned the code of 108 (Contributed Meaningfully).
12. When a word occurs that is not listed in the Fitness Report Dictionary but does meet all other specified criteria, then The Random House College Dictionary, 1980 e., will be used to place the unit in its proper place. The context of the word, phrase or unit, along with the guidelines set forth here will indicate into what category the theme shall fall. A finer distinction will be made in collaboration with the definitions and synonyms provided by The Random House Dictionary, 1980 ed.
13. Words used to qualify another are generally not essential as themes but serve to emphasize the subject, e.g., "LT Brown is an outstanding instructor" is counted under Instructive (301), not Outstanding (101); the statement "LT Brown is effective in developing programs" would be counted as Contributed Meaningfully (108) and not Effective/Productive (105).

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