


Student Ratings of Women Faculty: Research Summary

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Do students rate
female and male
faculty differently?

What we are told about student ratings: “No Gender Bias”

Studies of large samples across many disciplines consistently find no significant difference in student ratings of male and female faculty.

What women faculty perceive: Gender Bias

Many women faculty,
particularly in STEM disciplines,
report that students view and
interact with them differently
than with male faculty.

Objectives

- Review purposes and typical uses of student ratings
- Review current research on interactions between gender and student ratings
- Discuss possible responses to suspicions of gender bias

Student Ratings Research

- Large-samples best reflect majority responses
- SRs typically used to identify common teaching behaviors
- SRs not used to identify student expectations
- SRs not designed to detect gender bias
- Statistical variance generally not explored by SR researchers

Gender Effects Research

Researchers analyze data from two primary sources:

- Field experiments (actual student ratings data)
- Laboratory experiments (simulated ratings contexts)

Gender Effects Research

When gender-effects are present, research indicates:

Male faculty are rated

- the same by male & female students

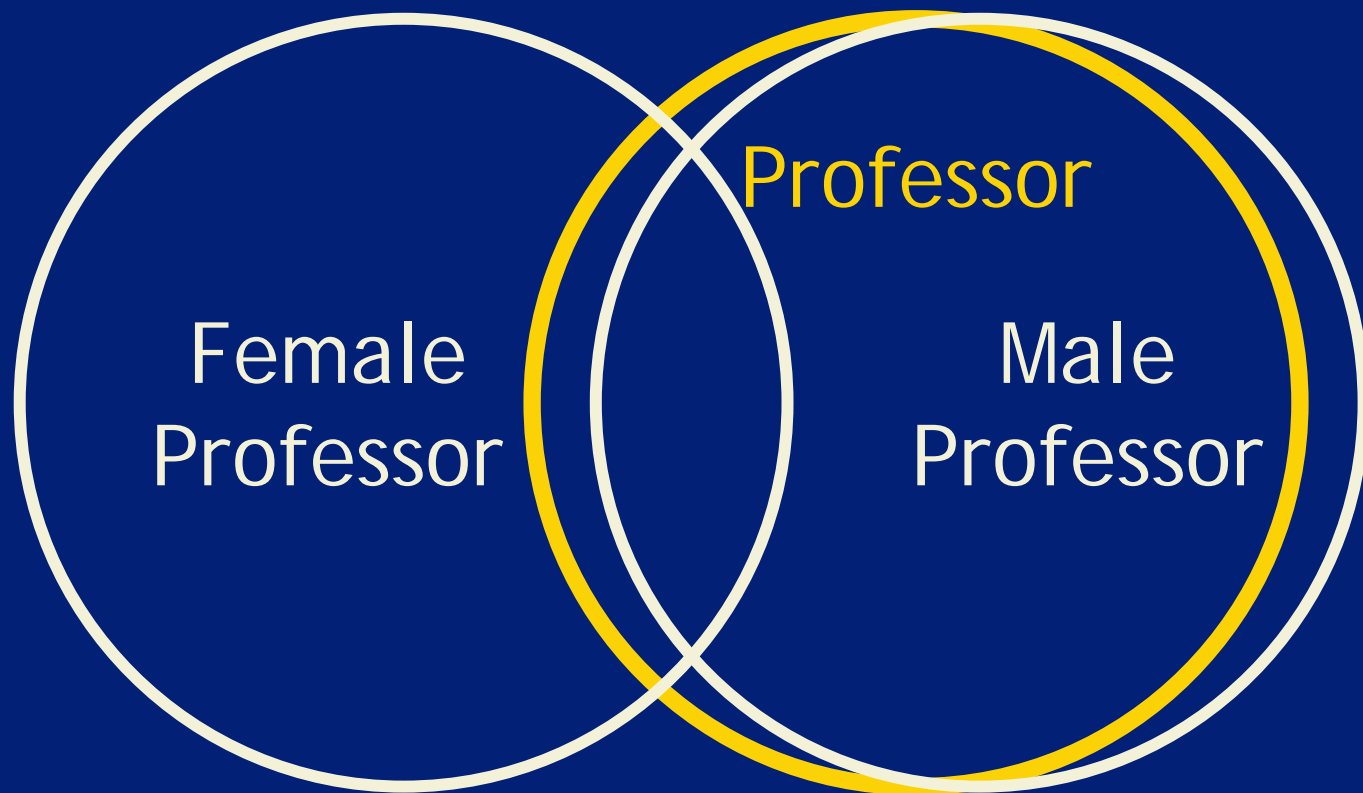
Female faculty are rated

- lower by male students
- higher by female students

Why might male students rate female faculty lower?

- A possible mismatch in gender-related expectations
- A possible match between learning preferences and teaching styles used by male faculty (predominantly traditional lecture)

Professor Prototype and Student Expectations



Why might female students rate female faculty higher?

- A possible match between learning preferences & the teaching methods used by female faculty (typically more interactive)
- A possible response to positive role models

What could explain lower ratings for women faculty?

- Instructor's teaching effectiveness
- Gender-based student expectations
- Contextual factors (which may be correlated with gender)

Recommendations for Administrators

- Avoid cross-gender comparisons
- Use multiple sources of data on teaching quality
- Use qualitative data to interpret quantitative data
- Base decisions on trends/patterns through time
- Provide faculty development support

Recommendations for Women Faculty

- Use multiple methods to collect data on student learning
- Choose appropriate ratings forms
- Annotate & interpret your own ratings
- Seek guidance from women faculty
- Identify & align expectations on the first day of class
- Work with teaching consultants