Introduction

- Women make up over half of all law students, but only 36% of practicing legal professionals. Women are also less likely to hold leadership positions both inside and outside the courtroom.
- The Stereotype Content Model (SCM) and Behaviors from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes (BIAS) model predict that people's emotions and behaviors toward ambivalent groups – such as women in male-dominated roles – are based on their perceived warmth and competence.
- Female lawyers' perceived warmth and competence may provide insight into the type of prejudice they receive.

Research Questions

- How are female lawyers perceived in terms of warmth and competence?
- How do their ratings compare to those of their male counterparts?

Procedure

- Complete questionnaire based on Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick (2007).
- 24-items evaluating 8 groups on social structure, stereotypes, and emotional and behavioral tendencies.
- Fill out demographic information:
  - N = 160
  - 55% Male
  - M_age = 35.66
  - Age Range: 20-73

Results

Figure 1. A two-step method (Hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward’s method and k-means cluster analysis) suggested three clusters.

Table 1. Comparing Competence and Warmth Ratings by Cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>M Competence</th>
<th>M Warmth</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 1</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>-13.94</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female lawyers</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>-6.18</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male lawyers</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>-6.66</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 2</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>-4.03</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 3</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>-0.98</td>
<td>.328</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Female lawyers are located in a high competence, middle warmth cluster (C > W).

Figure 2. People saw female and male lawyers as equally competent, but viewed female lawyers as being warmer.

Table 2. Correlations of Female Lawyer Warmth and Competence with Emotional and Behavioral Intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Contempt</th>
<th>Envy</th>
<th>Admiration</th>
<th>Pity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>-0.24*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
<td>0.40*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>-0.32*</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>-0.30*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Female lawyers’ warmth and competence predicted reduced contempt, increased admiration, and increased passive facilitation. Warmth also predicted increased pity and active facilitation, while competence separately predicted decreased pity and reduced active and passive harm.

Conclusions

- As expected, female lawyers’ perceived competency is higher than their warmth; however, their higher than expected warmth predicted aid rather than harm. It is unclear if the higher warmth ratings were due to the type of groups they were rated alongside, as higher competency groups can sometimes vary in their rated warmth depending on context.
- Although male and female lawyers were seen as equally competent, future research is necessary to examine if this pattern remains when other factors are controlled, as some areas of practice may be viewed as more compatible with women, e.g., family law.

Sources


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