

# Gender bias in evaluation and promotion <sup>\*</sup>

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## Abstract

Women continue to lag behind pay and promotions compared with their male counterparts, contributing to the gender wage gap. We investigate whether these gender gaps can, to some extent, be explained by gender differences in self-promotion and supervisors' evaluations. We examine the employment records from a large business solutions firm in Japan. These records contain objective measures of ability (university rank and English proficiency test scores) and a subjective measure of productivity (tasks completed) that are linked to the subjective skills evaluations that supervisors use to assign roles and tasks. The skills evaluations consist of two parts: a self-rating component and a rating by a supervisor. We begin by documenting a large gender gap in self-evaluations as well as supervisor evaluations. Conditional on observable human capital measures, women tend to evaluate themselves lower than their male peers. Supervisors use these self-evaluations as inputs, and as a result are more likely to provide women lower evaluations than men. The gender gap is particularly pronounced in the evaluation of skills traditionally associated with masculinity, which are more highly valued in departments with a higher concentration of male employees. Additionally, we find that women face penalties in supervisor evaluations if they are married, have a preschool-aged child, or work fewer hours.

*Keywords:* Performance, Gender gap, Self-promotion

*JEL:* J01, J16

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