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Abstract:

Very few women have reached the highest echelons of corporate America, perhaps because gender stereotypes, including perceptions of women that vary from those of successful executives, block their promotion and advancement. In the current study, differences in how participants perceive similarities in characteristics of successful executives and those of both men and women were studied. The scope of the extant program of research is also extended upward in the organizational hierarchy with the operationalization of executive as "CEO" (Chief Executive Officer) rather than as "manager" or "middle-manager." While men in general continue to be likened more to successful executives than do women in general, the gaps between male and female CEOs' similarities and between successful male and female CEOs' similarities to prototypically successful executives were smaller than reported in the 1970s. Noteworthy trends regarding 92 characteristics from Schein's Descriptive Index are also discussed.