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Society appreciates powerful individuals' effort -- even although they fail

November 30th, 2010

Society appreciates powerful individuals' efforts, regardless of them having success or failing. Conversely, when someone without such power fails, their failure is attributed to their "unability to carry out their tasks", and their efforts are not appreciated. In other words: individuals' personal power clearly affects how others perceive their success or failures.

That is the conclusion drawn from a research conducted by professors **Rocío Martínez Gutiérrez**, **Rosa Rodríguez Bailón** and **Miguel Moya**, of the Department of Social Psychology of the University of Granada, recently published in the journal *Universitas Psicológica* of the University of Bogotá (Colombia).

The main goal of this study was to analyse how power affects individuals' perception of events within work environment. For the purpose of this study, the researchers worked with a sample composed of 142 first-year students at the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Granada. Of this sample, 17.6% were men and 82.4% were women.

A 4-Scenario Test

The participants were asked to answer a test where 4 work environments were presented. To control the potential influence of gender, all the characters were women. Once the situation was presented, participants were asked to point out what cause -from among 4- might have led the characters to their achievements or failures at work.

Rocío Martínez concluded that "further research should be conducted on the effects of power in other environments, as in companies or organizations where real interaction between leaders and subordinates could be observed".

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