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## Can Rewards Obviate Stereotype Threat Effects on Mental Rotation Tasks?

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### ABSTRACT

We examined whether sex-linked performance differences in Mental Rotation (MR) were obviated by rewards for performing the tasks. MR is typically seen as the domain of men, and therefore women completing the MR tasks likely worked under conditions of stereotype threat, which meant that their performance could vary according to situational variables. Men and women (n = 33 each) performed rotations and provided several self-reflective reports on their performances and background information about their experiences. Half of the participants (within sex) were rewarded for their participation with a gift card. Women's MR performance was lower than men's when no reward was given, but equaled it when they were rewarded. The finding was not a function of skill and self-reported effort, and emerged even when a stringent scoring technique was employed. The results suggest that rewards, even if they are not large, may nullify stereotype threat effects on women's MR.

### KEYWORDS

Stereotype Threat; Mental Rotation; Sex Differences

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