

Peer Review

Review of: "A Somewhat Different Perspective on Occupational Prestige Ratings"

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The article reports three previously unpublished German surveys of occupational prestige from 1990, 1997, and 1999. The author analyses how individuals evaluate occupations in both absolute and relative terms. The German data are compared with prestige studies from other countries such as the USA, UK, Poland, Spain, South Korea, and others. Gender differences in prestige ratings in Germany are discussed (both between male and female raters and between male and female occupations), as well as differences over time and between East and West Germany.

This author offers a rich and well-written analysis of occupational prestige, including a comprehensive overview of the international literature. The empirical work is extensive, the methodological reflections are thoughtful, and the cross-national comparisons yield several interesting and at times provocative findings. The manuscript is also clearly written, with a coherent narrative that effectively links individual-level judgment patterns, subgroup comparisons, and long-term temporal trends. Overall, it represents a valuable contribution to the prestige research tradition.

While the manuscript is rich and informative, several aspects could be improved to enhance clarity, analytic precision, and overall readability.

- One sentence in the introduction (stating that men have “always performed a more diverse range of activities than women”) rests on a generalisation that is historically and anthropologically difficult to sustain. Given longstanding debates about the visibility and valuation of women’s labour across societies, the author may want to revise or contextualise.
- The manuscript is very long, with several digressions (e.g., on the Flynn Effect). While the journal format allows such breadth, some condensation (especially in sections where the main argument is

already clear) would improve flow for readers who may not be deeply embedded in prestige research. Even modest tightening would help foreground the core empirical contributions.

- The presentation of intraindividual rating clusters is intriguing, but the procedure for identifying the groups in Figures 2 and 3 is not sufficiently explained. There is a short explanation that the groups were formed by dividing raters into lower, middle, and upper quartiles based on their mean rating levels. This is helpful, but the underlying logic and implications would benefit from further clarification. Key clarifications that would help: The choice to form exactly three groups (lower, middle, upper) seems partly driven by the quartile structure of the sample. Yet quartiles naturally yield four groups, but here, three were chosen. Explaining why three is the most meaningful number (and why combining quartiles rather than keeping them separate improves interpretability) would strengthen the methodological logic. Moreover, the visual patterns in Figure 2 are compelling, but readers would benefit from a clearer explanation of how to read the curves and what specific behavioural tendencies they reflect (e.g., central tendency bias, avoidance of low values, ceiling avoidance).
- The author convincingly argues that levelling has both cognitive/moral and methodological components. But at several points, the distinction becomes blurred. A slightly clearer separation between (a) real-world changes in public perceptions of prestige and (b) changes in scale use or response behaviour would strengthen the analytical framework.
- Given the outlier status of the Polish study, a closer look at whether it had methodological issues or whether the differences are due to different perceptions in Poland would result in greater clarity.
- Finally, I thought the section comparing male and female occupational titles is one of the most interesting parts of the paper, with interesting empirical findings. However, for readers unfamiliar with the German language, the logic of the comparison may not be immediately clear. Because German uses gendered grammatical forms for many occupations (e.g., Pilot/Pilotin, Koch/Köchin), the distinction between male occupations and female occupations in the text may be confusing, especially since it does not refer to the gender distribution of occupation holders. A brief clarification early in the section, including an example or two, would help international readers understand that the analysis concerns linguistic variants of the same occupation, not different occupations or labour-market realities. This would also contextualise the subsequent result that prestige depends far more on the occupation itself than on the grammatical gender of the title, while still allowing room to discuss the small but relevant differences observed.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.