



Exploring masculinity and femininity in the workplace

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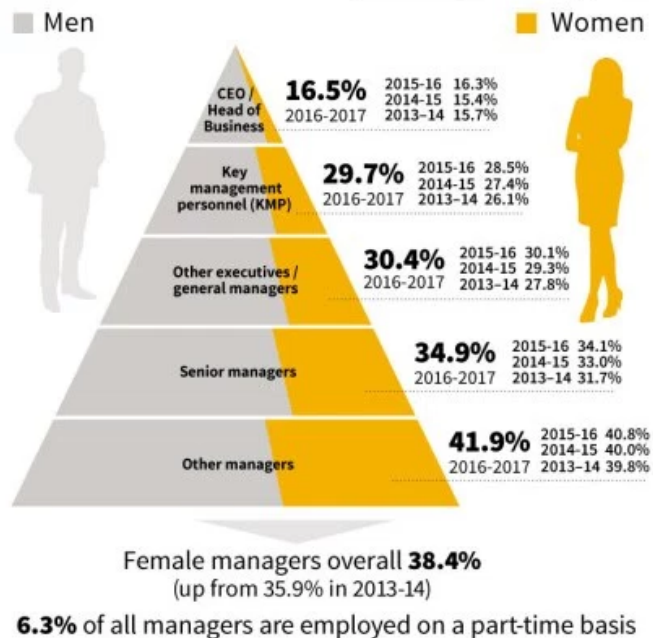
Glass ceiling

“Glass ceiling is the phenomenon in which women disappear as one looks up through the levels of the organisational hierarchy” (Fernandez, R & Campero, S. 2016). Glass ceiling is seen to be more severe at the top of the reward distribution (Cotter, David, Joan, Hermsen, Seth Ovadia and Reeve Vanneman, 2001).

Government statistics show that women only represent 15.4% of CEOs in Australia with 25.1% of organisations having no key female managers at all (Working Gender Equality Agency, 2016).

Fortune Magazine released its 2017 Fortune 500 list, which ranks major U.S. companies by their fiscal 2016 revenues, and 32 of the companies, or 6.4 percent, were run by female CEO's.

Proportion of women by manager category



SOURCE: WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY AGENCY

The increased efforts organisations take to promote diversity and inclusion within organisations does not seem to fix the problem of the lack of female leaders. Managers often learn about managing from literature which disdains gender, are hence are unaware of the inherent issues arising from gendered differences within an organisation. Organisational theories pose an idealistic image of the “ideal workers” as presented in the movie “The Intern”. There is a continued masculine outlook dominating contemporary mainstream theory, which then results in lack of female leaders in senior management positions (Mavin, Brians and Waring, 2004). Study conducted by Smith, R, A (2011) hypothesises that there are two different concepts to be taken into consideration that barriers women from progressing in the organisational ladder; which are glass ceiling and glass escalator. It was concluded from his study that the concept of glass escalator is more predominant in the organisations than glass ceilings, due to quotas for women in the workplace, there are women in lower and higher levels of management. However, the proportion of women being hired for the next level of management is much fewer in comparison to the progress men are able to make in their career ladder.

When two different gendered candidates attend an interview with the same qualifications, why does one candidate get a biological advantage over the other

just based on their gender? Kanter's theory highlights that male tokens working in female dominated jobs do not experience the same kind of discrimination women face when they are tokens working in male dominated jobs (Williams, C, 1995). After the screening process in "The Intern", they hire four candidates of which three are male and one is female. This highlights that slowly women are making progress into the organisations, but the glass escalator concept continues to retain the disproportionate numbers of males and females within an organisation. Nevertheless, women are breaking the traditional ceiling and reaching their desired destinations with due sacrifices, but once they reach their destination, do they reinforce the glass ceiling themselves?

Jules, who has broken out of the shell of glass ceiling, underestimates the effort of junior women within her organisation. Becky who has been her personal assistant for nine months and has been working for extended hours to keep up to Jules' schedule does not get appreciated or noticed. Hence, the opportunity to grow is very stagnant for Becky and she does not seem to have any progress in her career direction.

In a study conducted by Faniko, K., Ellemers, N., Derks, B., and Lorenzi-Cioldi, F (2017), a female senior manager stated her opinion regarding gender quotas.

"I'm against gender quotas. I can't understand why we need to roll out the red carpet for young women and to make their life easy while I made a lot of sacrifices for my career success and I didn't have such a privilege." Their study revealed that women make ample of personal sacrifices in order to climb the organisational hierarchy, hence, do not sustain the ease other women receive at present from gender equality schemes (Faniko et al. 2017).

Her personal assistant Becky who has graduated from Penn and has a business degree is never appreciated or "never noticed" by Jules Ostin despite all the relentless efforts she puts in working for "14 hours a day" for the past nine months (Refer to Video 2)

The Intern Movie CLIP - Don't Worry Becky (2015) - Anne Hathaway, Robert De Niro Movi...



Video 2: Ben asked by Jules to assist Becky in managing her work

Those women who break the gender barriers posed by our society and organisations tend to reinforce the same for the junior women.

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Pooja Sivakumar (28805925)

Blog at WordPress.com.