

GENDER AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

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Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex, sex-based social structures, or gender identity. **Leadership** is both a research area and a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to "lead" or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations. This paper is based on Gender and Leadership Roles, we will seek to understand the tacit gender prejudices inherent in organizational practices and the embodied effects of such prejudices for the individuals involved. We will find that despite an overt acknowledgement of equal rights and opportunities, many women and men still experience very real barriers in terms of their access to leadership opportunities, in many cases, the so-called "glass ceiling". We will investigate the subtle gendered prejudices and expectations about how women and men lead lie at the heart of the challenges many individuals face in finding their leadership role in organizations.

In the leadership realm, the "equality" discourse often confronted women with the challenge to "do as men have always done," or better. As such, they had to adopt leadership practices that existed within the patriarchal organizations in which they found themselves. In the process these female pioneers often unwittingly perpetuated predominantly "male" leadership stereotypes.

An unfortunate consequence of gender discrimination this is that women are always associated with the inferior characteristic of the binary opposition: women are emotional, not rational, women are impulsive, not goal-directed, etc. Let us now move forward to understanding the definitions of Gender and Leadership.

Definition of Gender:

"Gender" is the result of early childhood experiences, societal dynamics, power interests, organizational politics and the social constructions that are inevitably part of all these spheres of life. Gender is therefore not a mere linguistic term that denotes social and cultural perceptions; instead, it is enacted within real-life practices, and as such, physical changes and adjustments in bodily comportment occur incrementally over time. "Gender" is a conceptual tool that allows us to describe and diagnose the way in which the differences between men and women, and their relationships with one another, are institutionalized. As such, it also creates the conceptual space from within which these stereotypes can be challenged.

The fact that many individuals are born "female" does not necessarily mean that they will necessarily conform to stereotypically feminine ways of being and operating in the world.

Definition of Leadership:

Leadership is the process of influencing an organized group towards accomplishing a goal. Thus, leaders are those people in groups who are perceived most frequently to perform roles that initiate or direct the behavior of other towards the attainment of their goals. Leadership is about how one person can influence others to do what is required for the achievement of goals.

Leadership is a process by which an executive can direct, guide and influence the behavior and work of others towards accomplishment of specific goals in a given situation. Leadership is the ability of a manager to induce the subordinates to work with confidence and zeal.

Leadership is the potential to influence behavior of others. It is also defined as the capacity to influence a group towards the realization of a goal. Leaders are required to develop future visions, and to motivate the organizational members to want to achieve the visions.

Gender discrimination and Prejudices:

As we can see that the roots of gender discrimination run deep in our society, there are problems faced by women due to the stereotypes that have been associated to the roles that these genders play. For example women are more emotional, gentle, submissive, sentimental, understanding etc whereas men are more dominant, aggressive, analytical, competitive, independent etc. Due to this women are associated with inferior characteristic of binary opposition.

One of the central assumptions that have become institutionalized within many organizational practices is the notion that women are society's care-takers. Since there is general acceptance that leadership positions within organizations typically go beyond care-taking towards roles that require strong direction, control and agency, women may often be excluded from consideration for such opportunities. Also when we talk about managerial roles, it is seen that due to the subordinate status of women in the society, people are often reluctant to have a female supervisor and think that women are somewhat less qualified for leadership and think that female managers would have negative effects on morale.

In one of the recent studies it has been mentioned that women lack the aspect of "vision". It states that they are less prone to the formulation of lofty ideals and "big ideas," or experiments with "big, hairy audacious goals," as Collins and Porras (2002) refer to it. This may be explained by the fact that many women have a fear of over-promising and under-delivering, whereas men tend not to have the same reservations.

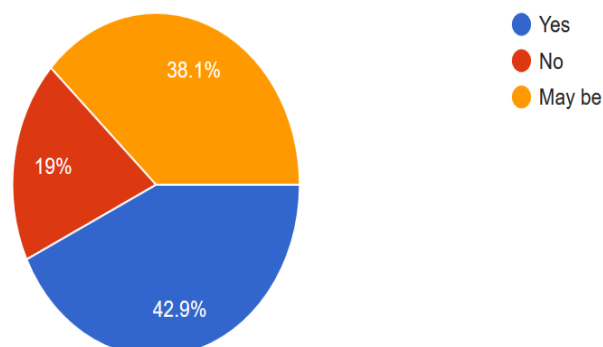
Methodology:

The findings of the research are based on the information that has been collected from the survey done by us and also based on the information that we could find. The target population for this study were students that are currently studying or those who have done various courses. The data collected was analyzed qualitatively using coding method. After the above discussion we shall now move towards the findings of the survey taken.

The questions asked in the survey and the responses obtained from the people are as follows:

Many businesses aren't ready to hire women for top executive positions.

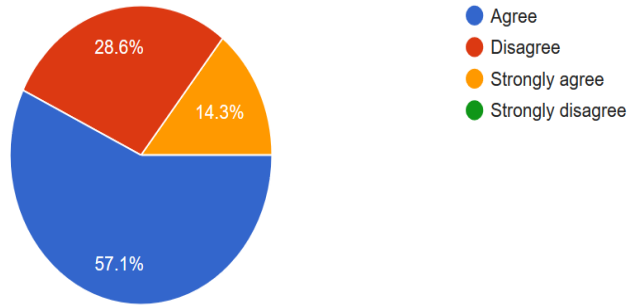
21 responses



Thus from the responses we see that almost 50% of people agree that women are not hired for top executive jobs whereas there are a few that state that it may be the case.

Women mostly face the glass ceiling barrier in the work place

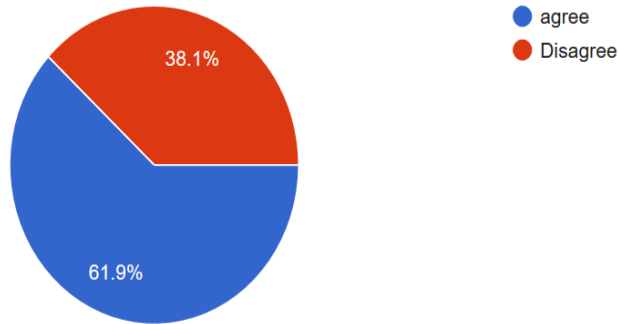
21 responses



In this question we come to know that more than 50% of people agree that women face barriers in their work places.

Women are less likely to ask for promotion or raise .

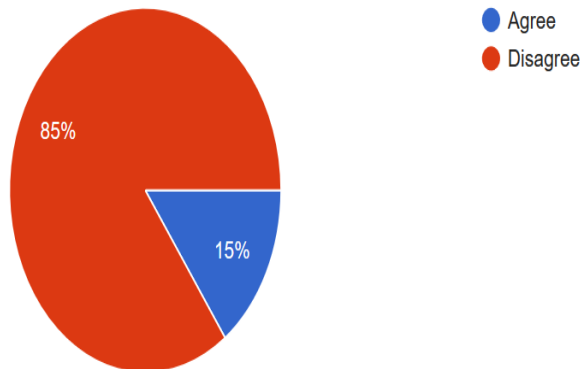
21 responses



Here we see that more than 50% of respondents have stated that women very rarely ask for promotions or raises either in their salary or in their work positions.

Women aren't tough enough for business as men.

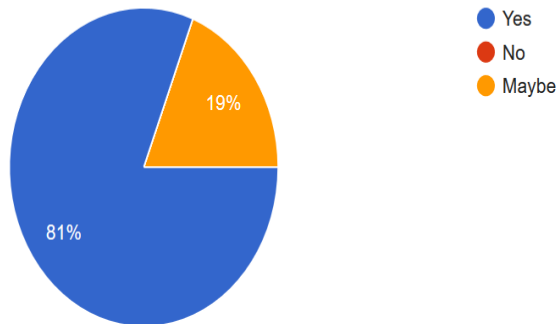
20 responses



Through this diagram we see that 85% of the respondents state that women are very much tough enough for businesses. They can equally become successful in business that they may be owning.

Do women make as good managers as men ?

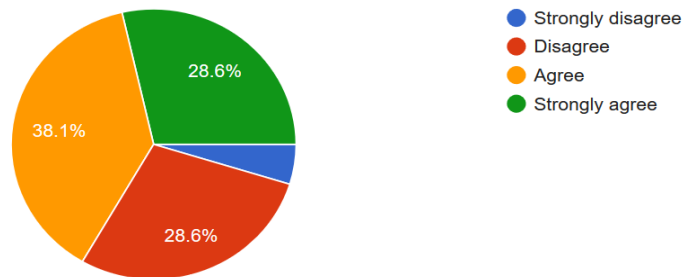
21 responses



Here it is clearly stated that women can also be as good managers as men and that they can handle their work efficiently.

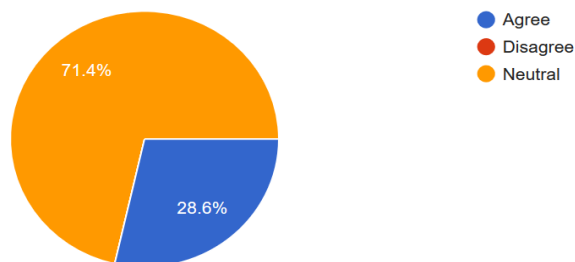
Women have to do more to prove themselves than men

21 responses



Are women better at working out compromises than men?

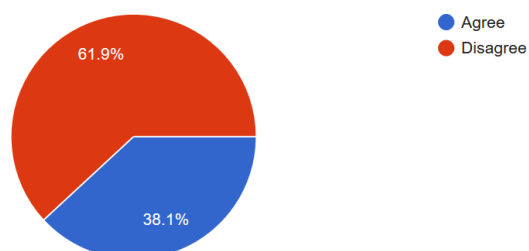
21 responses



Here more than 50% people agree that women are better at making compromises than men. This is a very essential quality that is needed while conducting a business.

Men are more willing to take risks in business as compared to women

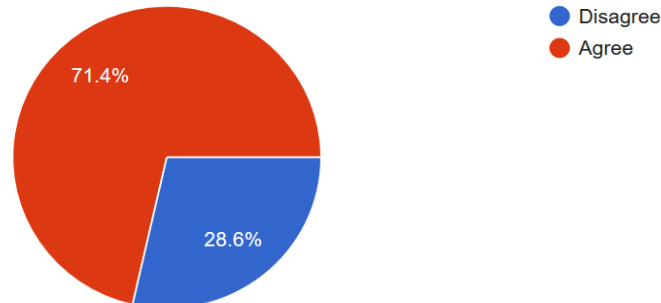
21 responses



Here we see than more 50% of people agree that women can also take risks in businesses and that they are not afraid in doing so if it will be beneficial in the long run.

Women face gender discrimination at work

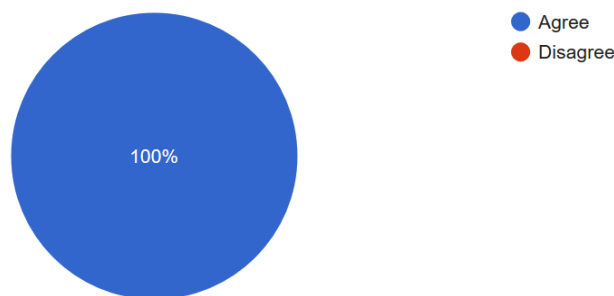
21 responses



In this question more than 50% of people agree that there is gender discrimination that takes place in work places that is against women and that they face various challenges due to it.

Women face sexual harassment at their work place more than men

21 responses



Through this question we see that 100% everyone agrees that women do ace sexual harassment in their work place.

Conclusion:

The topic of gender and leadership deserves serious and thoughtful consideration and discussion because of professional, political, social, and personal realities of the twenty-first century. Science and society have come to appreciate that, women and men cannot simply be classified and distinguished based on biological sex. Instead, gender is a more complex. We believe that it is important to understand and appreciate how gender may contribute to self-perception and perception by others and that this understanding has the potential to help optimize leadership effectiveness. Through the findings of the survey we come to know that there are various discriminations that are taking place against women that that they are not given opportunities to have higher positions due to their gender. Also as the status of women is considered inferior to men, they face sexual as well as other forms of harassment in their work places. These problems that are faced by the women can only be removed completely when the mindset of the society as a whole will change. Only stating that women are equal to men on paper is not enough it must also be put in practice and in reality.