Reading list on 'Gender and Feminism in Organizational Studies'

Management Learning resources

> Gray, D. E., & Goregaokar, H. (2010). Choosing an executive coach: The influence of gender on the coach-coachee matching process. *Management Learning*, 41(5), 525-544.

Coaching has enjoyed substantial commercial growth, but empirical support for its effectiveness is limited. Nowhere is this more so than in the matching process between coach and coachee. This study describes the results from a coaching programme in which coachees were asked to reflect on and justify their choice of coach. Initial, qualitative results suggested that female coachees favoured the choice of female coaches, partly as a role model of business success. Male coachees tended to justify the selection of a female coach as more approachable for the discussion of sensitive, personal issues. A minority of male respondents also displayed sexist attitudes in their comments on the selection process. Subsequent quantitative analysis of the data, however, revealed no bias towards the choice of either female or male coaches. While the results show no statistical significance in gender choices, for a minority of coachees, gender is a rather surprising factor in the selection process.

> Kelan, E. K. (2013). The becoming of business bodies: Gender, appearance, and leadership development. *Management Learning*, 44(1), 45-61.

The article uses media images of businesswomen to explore how Master of Business Administration students position themselves in relation to the businesswomen. Following feminist media studies, the article argues that subjects are "becoming" through media images. In order to explore subject formation processes through images, a business school setting, as a place that develops future leaders and that is dominated by men and masculinity, was chosen. The analysis of the interviews indicates that Master of Business Administration students position themselves in relation to the images of businesswomen by commenting on the appropriateness of dress based on the industry and by discussing that being sexually attractive is deemed unprofessional for women. While the subject positions that the Master of Business Administration students occupied were rather normative in nature, the article argues that images can be used as a helpful tool to allow reflection on normativity in relation to gender in leadership development. It is thereby possible to think about a displacement of norms by facilitating the use of alternative subject positions.

Stead, V. (2013). [Learning to deploy (in) visibility: An examination of women leaders' lived experiences](). *Management Learning*, 44(1), 63-79.

This article focuses on women's learning from their lived experiences of leadership. In an examination of how six women leaders at a UK University learn to deploy (in)visibility, I draw on conceptualisations of (in)visibility more commonly found in feminist research. These include surface ideas of (in)visibility as states of exclusion or difference due to a lack of women in leadership roles, and deeper ideas of how states of visibility and invisibility are maintained through power relations. I also refer to ideas on how (in)visibility operates and is produced and reproduced through organisational processes and practices. This analysis extends critical perspectives of leadership learning and development. Specifically, it adds to understandings of the tacit nature of social and situated learning through an articulation of the ways in which gender and power operate in women's learning of leadership from experiences of (in)visibility. This article concludes by indicating further areas for research, including more developed understandings of women's learning to think strategically from experience, examining the role of management educators in revealing women's leadership learning and identifying methodologies to examine women leaders' learning experiences.

Panayiotou, A. (2015). [Spacing gender, gendering space: A radical "strong plot" in film](). *Management Learning*, 46(4), 427-443.

This article seeks to contribute to the discussion on organizational space and gender by focusing on a powerful tool for management learning—popular culture and, in particular, Hollywood films. Taking a performative practice approach to the study of both gender and space and working with films featuring women in the central organizational role, this study explores the protagonists' spatial practices as these are used to subvert, intentionally or unintentionally, organizational patriarchal structures. In this context, the study traces both how space is gendered through particular situated social practices and how gender is spaced, or how gender performativity is materialized in and through organizational space. Findings show that although on surface organizational spaces marginalize women, certain spatial practices can hybridize the workspace and transform the "margin" into a "space of radical openness." This new space can also aid in subverting the traditional "strong plot" of the career woman, thus transforming both what we know and how we know in organizations.

Mughal, F., Gatrell, C., & Stead, V. (2018). [Cultural politics and the role of the action learning facilitator: Analysing the negotiation of critical action learning in the Pakistani MBA through a Bourdieusian lens](). *Management Learning*, 49(1), 69-85.

This empirical study contributes to critical action learning research by theorizing the role of an action learning facilitator from a cultural perspective. Our article adds to critical action learning by

conceptualizing the dynamics of facilitation in managing interpersonal politics within action learning sets. Employing Bourdieu's notion of habitus as a theoretical lens, we explore both participant and facilitator accounts of action learning at three Pakistani business schools, shedding light on the culturally influenced social practices that shape their learning interactions. Through a critical interpretation of our data, we illuminate the challenges of facilitation by revealing how deeply ingrained power relations, within the context of gender and asymmetric relationships, influence participants' ability to organize reflection. We contribute to critical action learning by theorizing the critical role of facilitator mediation in managing interpersonal and intra-group relations within the Pakistani MBA context, outlining the implications for the dynamics and facilitation of action learning.

Stead, V., & Elliott, C. (2019). [Pedagogies of power: Media artefacts as public pedagogy for women's leadership development](). *Management Learning*, 50(2), 171-188.
This article extends the idea of media artefacts as educational resources by examining web-based materials, specifically women's 'Power Lists', to deepen understandings regarding media artefacts' role in informing women's leadership learning and development. Women's underrepresentation in senior leadership roles places leadership development under scrutiny to develop theoretically informed frameworks that draw attention to gendered power relations in organisations. This article addresses this concern by drawing on cultural theory to theorise media artefacts as forms of public pedagogy. The pedagogic framework proposed presents a distinctive addition to leadership education methods that attend to the sociocultural and recognise the significance of informal learning to leadership learning. Recognising media artefacts' pedagogic role enables individuals to examine in more detail the gendered nature of the social values and norms that inform leadership discourse, and how these values and norms are promoted, reproduced and sustained through media artefacts.

Blithe, S. J. (2019) ["I Always Knew I was a Little Girly": The gendering of skills in management training](). *Management Learning*, 50(5), 517-533.
This article examines the ways in which popular management texts organize individual behavior in gendered ways at work. Taking the 'Strengths' program as an example of a popular management text that shapes action, the study finds that even though the text itself makes no explicit reference to gender, it (re)produces and encourages gendered behavior and perpetuates stereotypes about gender and skill. Based on textual analysis, auto-ethnographic accounts, and critical reflection of strengths-based corporate training sessions, the study concludes with a discussion about the ways that organizational texts are consumed through a gendered lens.

Mavin, S., & Yusupova, M. (2021). Competition and gender: Time's up on essentialist knowledge production. *Management Learning*, 52(1), 86-108.

This article is an intervention in current trends of thinking about competition and gender in essentialist and stereotypical ways. Such thinking has produced numerous comparative studies measuring competitiveness of women and men; 'proving' men as competitive and women as non-competitive. Based on experiments and written questionnaires, these studies reduce gender to perceived biological sex and treat competition as a 'self-evident', static and easily measurable phenomenon. To contribute new understandings and learning, we surface five fallacies of this comparative research, explaining why the approach is misleading, inequitable and socially harmful. Drawing upon gender as a social construction and women leaders' narratives, we offer a blueprint for democratising knowledge production. We write differently, choosing not to provide a 'balanced' view of the field and construct competition as a processual, complex and contextually specific phenomenon with underlying gender dynamics, rather than a discrete, observable and fixed in time event. The article provides learning: for leaders and managers to resist automatic categorisation on the basis of perceived biological sex; for management educators to challenge the ways that leadership and management are traditionally taught; and, for executive coaches to support changes in practice, by embracing complexity of the contemporary contexts in which leaders operate.

Talking About Organizations Podcast resources

Episode 17: Tokenism – Rosabeth Moss Kanter (With Special Guest Deborah Brewis)
Rosabeth Moss Kanter is the Ernest L. Arbuckle Professor of business at Harvard Business School. She is known for research on gender, strategy, leadership and innovation. Her book "Men and Women of the Corporation" (1977), arguably one of her most important work, is considered a seminal study on gender in the workplace and one of the richest case studies of a large industrial corporation in the field. It won the C. Wright Mills Award, fueled a stream of research on tokenism and the negative consequences of inequality and blocked opportunities for minorities, and had great impact on policymaking on affirmative action and related strategies.

In this episode, we read Kanter's paper "Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women" (1977) which features as a chapter in her classic book. In this article, Kanter explores how interactions within a group or an organization are affected by the different numbers of people from distinct social types. In particular, she focuses on groups with skewed gender ratios: a high proportion of men and a small number of women –

the tokens. The study is based on observations and interviews with sales team which had recently started to incorporate women in its workforce and shows how structural factors stifled their potential.

Kanter documents that because women were numerically few, they:

- experienced heightened visibility creating performance pressures,
- were isolated by the majority who exaggerated their differences in the face of women entry in the group, and
- were expected to act within pre-defined gender roles.

Kanter richly unravels the mechanisms underpinning these gender dynamics and the responses of these (token) women to such situations. The paper debunks a number of assumptions from previous literature on the behavior of women at work. It posits that hypotheses on the "fear of success of women" or "women-prejudice-against-women" have origins on structural conditions in which women are embedded in, not gender traits in themselves. The paper also makes a strong case for affirmative action and numerical balance as an instrument for gender equality. While many of these claims have been replicated in further research, gender scholars have also problematized some of its assumptions, insisting that gender is a matter of power and not only quantity; and that balancing numbers as a strategy for change may fall short in the face of resistance and the reproduction of inequality.

The challenges of gender integration, the theoretical underpinnings of Kanter's framework and the relevance of the concept of tokenism in contemporary research and practice are among the themes covered in this Episode.

Read with us:

- Kanter, R. M. (1977). Some effects of proportions on group life: Skewed sex ratios and responses to token women. *American Journal of Sociology*, 965-990.

Episode 35: The Managed Heart – Arlie Hochschild

In this episode, the podcasters tackle a seminal work on the uses of emotion as part and parcel of one's job, and the social and psychological implications this has on one's role as a producer of products or provider of services. The Managed Heart, originally published in 1983 by Dr. Arlie Hochschild, introduced the concept of emotional labour as a counterpart to the physical and mental labour performed in the scope of one's duties. The importance of emotional labour is made

clear in Dr. Hochschild's description of flight attendants, who regardless of the dispositions of airline passengers, turbulence in the flight, or personal stress is required to act and behave in ways that minimize passenger anxiety and encourage them to fly with that airline again.

This phenomenon extends to a wide range of professions and vocations. In the preface to the 2012 edition, Dr. Hochschild writes, "forms of emotional labor require that a person manage a wide range of feeling. The poor salesclerk working in an elite clothing boutique manages envy. The Wall Street stocktrader manages panic. The judge, as legal researcher Terry Maroney shows, is exposed to highly disturbing evidence of atrocities such as maiming, murder, dismemberment, and child rape." Later in the preface, she shows how changing the expectations of emotional management in an organization or industry leads to changes in the relationships between providers and clients, such as how the field of medicine moved from community-based, non-profit clinics and hospitals to an emerging system where care became more akin to business transactions and the emotional support once provided by professionals were shifted to lower-paid workers.

The book ran a gamut of implications of alignment and misalignment between persons and the emotional labour they perform in their work lives. Dr. Hochschild explores the challenges of stress, protecting one's personal identity and private life, differentiated (and often unfair) gender roles, miscommunication between supervisors and workers or workers and clients, and others. The final chapter describes the result, the increasing desire for authenticity in themselves and others.

Read with us:

- Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling.* Univ of California Press.

Episode 71: Managerial Behavior — Melville Dalton (With special guest Judy Wajcman from the London School of Economics)

This is a very exciting event for us — our first all-female episode cast! And what a terrific way to wrap-up 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in a full year of major change and renewed a lot of conversations about how we work, live, and cooperate in organizations and societies.

In this episode, we discuss a classic study of managerial behavior, Melville Dalton's "Men Who Manage: Fusions of Feeling and Theory in Administration" published in 1959. The book was the result of a ten-year study in the behaviors and social structures of managers at three firms. The study provided an intimate look at how men (as these were all men at the time) entered into the

managerial culture of a firm, how the separations between managers are workers were structured and maintained, and how managers felt about their standing — which ranged from secure to tenuous. Dalton's study was powerful because he succeeded in building trust with the managers and therefore earning access to their inner feelings and fears.

Despite being more than six decades old, the study is still very relevant not only for understanding what happens within the circle of managers but also how the boundaries can exclude others, particularly along gender lines. We therefore thought it was important to include a more contemporary feminist perspective on these issues, as the conversations about equality and fairness in the workplace are very active nowadays. For Part 2 of this episode, we welcome to the podcast special guest Judy Wajcman, author of many books on gender, work, organizations, and the impact of digital technologies on everyday life. In 1998, Judy published "Managing like a man: Women and men in corporate management," which provides an interesting contrast to the experiences expressed by the subjects of Dalton's study and whose evidence debunks many of the myths around possible gender differences in how men and women manage.

Together, we hope these two parts serve to further the conversations about management and how to remove gender barriers so we can have more inclusive and more successful organizations.

Read With Us:

- Dalton, M. (1959). *Men who manage: Fusions of feeling and theory in administration.* Wiley. Reprinted in 2013 by Routledge.
- Wajcman, J. (1998). *Managing like a man: women and men in corporate management.* University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.