

Women in Management

In this recording we summarise the content of chapter 14 Women in Management.

Studying this chapter should help you discuss attitudes to the role of women at work; identify how women may be discriminated against in the workplace; distinguish gender based role differences in the workplace; discuss the organisation consequences of discriminatory behaviours; explain, with reference to social identity theory, stereotyping, generalising, perception and attribution theory why some employees may be treated differently from others; .

Introducing the chapter, the authors start with 1. Globalisation, amongst other factors, is changing the nature of the workplace and as a result managers must constantly ask how they can make best (and fairest) use of human resources to meet organizational goals. Today's workforce is older, more racially diverse, and more female, more varied. Within such environments the management aim remains to maximize benefits and minimize costs and to enable all workers to achieve their full potential. Despite this there is still much progress to be made, especially in relation to the appointment of women and ethnic minorities to middle and senior management roles. This chapter examines some of the key issues involved in the employment of women as managers in the workplace against a backdrop of several diversity management challenges. The solution to these issues lies principally in bringing about cultural change (see previous chapter) in organisations in respect of most of the practices referred to elsewhere throughout this book, for there is hardly any aspect of management practice which could not benefit from a greater involvement by women and other non-white males. Organizations do not just face the problem of managing sex discrimination but discrimination of many types. Collectively, the contemporary problems of organizations centre on diversity in a more general sense. There is no question that today's workforce is more diverse. As with any social construct there are many definitions of diversity. It has been described as the heterogeneity of attitudes, perspectives and backgrounds amongst group members; valuing, respecting, and appreciating the differences (such as age, culture, education, ethnicity, experience, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation, amongst others) that make people unique or, more simply, as all the ways in which we differ.

2. Two general approaches to defining workforce diversity seem to dominate: the first, the narrow view, defines workforce diversity only as a term related to equal employment opportunity; the second argues that workforce diversity is a broader concept that includes all the ways in which people can be different. The narrow view typically adopts categories of race, colour, religion, sex and national origin whilst a broader definition makes use of additional categories such as teaching, education, sexual orientation and differences in values, abilities, organisational function, tenure and personality. Taking a broader view, diversity management initiatives attempt to maximise the potential of all employees in direct benefit to the organisation. Consequently, the best employees are recruited, resulting in greater profits and job security.

3. In this chapter we first draw on social identity to explain how we come to label groups and how people identify with them. We then consider how people from diverse groups perceive themselves and others and the implications of such thinking on their behaviour towards each other. Drawing on people perception theories, we discuss problems in generalisation and stereotyping. Next we focus on the specific problem of sex discrimination and consider the initiatives employed to encourage equal opportunity and manage diversity within organisations..

The key concepts discussed within this chapter are:

Diversity - All the ways in which we differ; Gender discrimination - Many countries, including all members of the EU, have sex discrimination and equal pay legislation. However, informal psychological and organizational barriers continue to bar the progress of women. The processes of occupational segregation and sex-typing of jobs continue so that women tend to be concentrated at the base of most organizational hierarchies in jobs which are less prestigious and lower paid than those favoured by men.; Glass Ceiling - Expression used to denote a subtle barrier to women's promotion to senior posts in an organisation, and usually implying that it is kept in place by men's

innate prejudice against women in senior management positions.; sex discrimination - Discriminatory or disparate treatment of an individual because of his or her sex; .

Other terms discussed include:

Gender; Gender legislation; Managing diversity; Prejudice; Sexism; Social identity; Social perception; Stereotypes; .

Summarising and concluding, the author(s) make the following comments - 16. In this chapter we considered the importance of treating employees fairly, focusing on sex discrimination in particular. We explained causes of the discriminatory behaviour with a reference to SIT, perception, stereotyping and other cognitive processes. Such theories help explain why minorities in the workplace (e.g. women) may operate under a glass ceiling which details their career progression and opportunities. Ideas at the strategic and tactical level were suggested to help organisations overcome such problems and embrace diversity. Ultimately, however, the problems highlighted are seen as cultural problems. As was noted in the previous chapter, culture change is far from simple and can take many years to accomplish..

We have now reached the end of the chapter 'Women in Management'.

There are a number of references for this chapter where further reading opportunities are identified for you.

Additionally, there are questions or activities to help develop and test your understanding of this chapter