

A research investigation into how management practice in traditional male dominated industrial organizations in the UK will need to change as increasing numbers of women enter into professional management roles.

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1 Abstract

This paper details a research investigation into how traditional, male-dominated industrial organisations will need to change their management practices based on the supposition that increasing numbers of women will enter into professional management roles within such companies. This supposition is supported by evidence from a search of the available literature.

The literature search also led to the development of a number of ‘null and ‘alternative’ hypotheses that were tested using a detailed questionnaire survey that was developed by the researcher and completed by respondents at both management and non-management level in industrial and non-industrial organisations. The subsequent results were tabulated for analysis and the main discussion points have been summarized and compared to a recent review of the factors affecting the relative success of women entrepreneurs in both the USA and the UK.

Conclusions focus on how management practice will need to evolve and there is particular emphasis on both the behavioural and developmental aspects.

2 Introduction

In the USA during the 1970’s and 1980’s, the number of women in management positions quadrupled (Kirchmeyer) and in the UK, according to a Cabinet Office survey in 2000, the number of women occupying management roles had grown to 18% of the total (Wilson). The small reductions in the overall total of women in such roles during the second half of the last decade (Wilson) seems to imply that in spite of Government and social pressures there is still a ‘glass ceiling’ that prevents women from gaining true equality at work and in particular *equal* access to management positions. It has been postulated (Nutley, Perrott & Wilson) that from the male perspective the participation of women in management may not actually have increased, rather that this a perception derived from a modern tendency for men to share power more with female colleagues. There remains the unpalatable possibility that men are still “keeping women in their place at work through insulting behaviour, leers, sneers, jokes, patronage, bullying, vocal violence and sexual harassment,” (Wilson).

This research project makes the basic assumption that the number of women in management positions in traditional, (male dominated), industrial organizations will continue to grow as women become more socially enabled to focus on developing a career and in the process redress the current gender imbalance in such organisations. Furthermore, this growth will be determined in part by social pressures and by the way in which such organizations adapt and change themselves to dealing with the real issues that are preventing women from breaking through the ‘glass ceiling’.

Various researchers in organizational development have proposed that one of the key reasons that prevent women from being more successful in management is the ‘gendering’ of organizations. Wilson proposed that all organizations are

inherently masculine in their structure and organization. This is not a new concept; the standards and values associated with particular management roles have usually been defined by the previous (most likely male), post holders who in turn become the role stereotypes. ‘Lean, mean and macho’, (Nutley, Perrott & Wilson) are seen as the ‘de facto’ qualities for success in traditional organizations. Historical examples abound: British women during the two world wars, were, out of necessity to support the war effort, required to undertake a wide variety of traditional male occupations but on the cessation of hostilities, there was a rapid return to the pre-established gender role stereotypes.

Since those times, social changes in terms of the way in which women have more equal access to resources such as (quality of) education, political decision making, legislation and economic resources have been key to the slow but inexorable increase in the number of women managers (Win News Summer 2002). Gender pay gaps emerge early in women’s working lives irrespective of qualifications and social position (Wilson) yet still the question remains: what is needed (in an organizational context), to ensure that there is complete parity of pay, recognition and opportunity between the sexes in the future and in turn how might the changes that are necessary impact upon the current male majority ?

3 **Research Focus**

From a study of the references listed the provisional list of issues and questions that will be addressed are as follows:-

- Men and women are considered to have different social skills (Nutley, Perrott & Wilson): women are more relational, more open in their communications and capable of greater reciprocity: do women exhibit these differences in management roles and to what extent ?
- How does the burden and split of ‘work at home’ influence women’s ambitions and capability to progress into (more senior) management roles ?
- How do the things that women value in terms of their careers become balanced with their social lives and responsibilities ?
- Having children stabilizes men’s careers and is disruptive to women’s careers (Kirchmeyer). Does having children occur at times that are critical for women’s career development and how does this affect their dispositions towards their careers ?
- Why are there so few women in certain specific industrial or commercial sectors areas e.g. arms trading ?
- Is organizational research considered primarily through a ‘male lens’ and therefore does the accepted view of effective leadership consist of predominantly male / authoritarian attributes ?
- Who and what motivates women to work (i.e. what is perceived to be important in a work context)? How is this different to the equivalent answer(s) for men ?
- How do women think they are perceived in organizations by men and other women ? If there are differences between these two sets of perceptions why do these exist ?

- How is the ‘gendering’ of job roles influenced by biological differences, personality differences, life experiences, contexts and access to resources ?
- Are work at women more inclined to adopt masculine traits / management styles than men are inclined to adopt feminine ones ?
- Would the adoption of a coaching approach to the development of women managers lead to conflicts between an organization and those women managers who have learned to demonstrate abnormally assertive (i.e. male) behaviours in their careers to date ?
- Are successful women managers likely to display more masculine traits than their less successful female counterparts ?
- In comparative positions is there a natural tendency within organizations to overrate men and underrate women ?
- In the most traditional (male dominated) sectors e.g. engineering, is there a greater proportion of women who ‘drop out’ and if so why ?
- Does a management culture of working long hours discriminate against those who have family commitments - typically women who have an inequitable burden in the division of household chores between themselves and their (male) partners ?
- How many companies are active in considering how to deal with gender balance issues and in particular the different work/life balance between men and women ?
- For those women who have actually been successful in management, are the true underlying reasons why properly understood ?
- Are experience and education (i.e. human capital), going to weigh more heavily in favour of men than women in terms of eventual managerial success/career progression opportunities between equivalent candidates of different sexes ?
- Do women who exhibit stereotypically female behaviours find it harder to ‘fit in’ or be accepted in a male gendered organization ?
- Do the supportive formal and informal networks developed by women in a work context yield less influence than the networks set up by their male counterparts due to the fact that these networks are predominated by men ?
- Do women in organizations preferentially compare their comparative status against other women or men ?
- Is there a trend that successful women managers are frequently appointed to positions of responsibility early after commencing their careers i.e. more probably at an age before having any family commitments of their own ?

4 Research methodology

Following the development of the hypotheses in table 1 below, the researcher developed a questionnaire that could be sent either electronically or on paper to Fifteen Managers and ‘specialist staff’ of both sexes in the company run by the author together with a further six people (four women, two men) selected at random but known to the researcher.

4.1 Research Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire design is based upon the questions and issues derived from the literature search and to support the hypotheses proposed (see table 1). These questions form the basis of section three and are deliberately mixed-up to promote a considered response that still retains some level of instinctive reaction – one female respondent has indicated that she did just this !

The first two sections provide background data against which to interpret and sort the quantitative data from section three and the qualitative data (comments) given in section four.

In total, twenty-one questionnaires were issued of which fifteen were issued electronically through a third party, the Director of Human Resources of the company run by the researcher, to employees of her choice after a briefing that emphasized the need to ensure a mix of seniority, age, gender etc. None of these recipients was told whom the researcher was and in turn the researcher does not know the identity of the nine who responded from this particular group. The researcher considered this two-way anonymity essential in view of his position as Managing Director i.e. he wished to minimize the impact his relative seniority may have on the validity /truth behind the answers and the subsequent analysis. Inevitably, some of the respondents probably knew who the researcher was and this is considered in the evaluation and discussion of the results. A further six questionnaires were issued on paper by the researcher to individuals known to him, none of whom work at, nor have any direct experience of the company run by the researcher – this group were selected for their varied work experience and therefore are useful to the analysis as a comparative group which is covered in the discussion.

Of the fifteen issued electronically within the company run by the researcher, nine were returned, whereas all six of the questionnaires issued personally by the researcher were returned quickly, possibly indicating the impact of inter-personal relationships on research.

From the personal view of the researcher, the questionnaire process yielded numerical data, which, given the author's scientific background and personal comfort and skill level in developing and using spreadsheets, is more empathetic to his style of analysis and evaluation. The potential implications for the quality of the results and subsequent conclusions is also covered in the discussion.

At the onset of the project's design, it was envisaged that the data obtained from the questionnaire would be supported and corroborated by a limited number of structured interviews. However, after increasing the number of questionnaires issued from an original number of fifteen to twenty one and reviewing the sixteen responses received it was decided to use the data from these questionnaires exclusively as the basis for subsequent evaluation and the determination of conclusions. This data has been used

to test hypotheses developed after a method described by Trochim and which are shown in Table 1 below.

Null Hypotheses 'H0'	Alternative Hypotheses 'HA'
<u>H01</u> The attributes of an Organization that attract women into management roles are various and independent of any gendering	<u>HA1</u> To attract, retain & develop women managers into fulfilling & meaningful roles, organizations and their management practices will need to become more 'asexual' (less gendered)
<u>H02</u> Opportunities for women managers to develop their careers within an organization are conditional upon factors other than their age	<u>HA2</u> In the future, organizations will need to adapt to the development of women managers who may be starting their careers after commencing a family and who may therefore be, older than the 'current norm' (i.e. women in similar positions of seniority/responsibility at the current time)
<u>H03</u> Organizations successfully develop the careers of women managers through a variety of different approaches	<u>HA3</u> Organizations will in future need to adopt a coaching based approach for the successful development of women manager's careers

Table 1: Hypotheses for evaluation through research

The supporting relationship between the specific questions in section 3 of the questionnaire and the hypotheses above is shown in table 2 overleaf; an asterisk denotes where answers test the relevant hypotheses.

		Hypotheses					
		The attributes of an Organization that attract women into management roles are various and independent of any gendering	Opportunities for women managers to develop their careers within an organization are conditional upon factors other than their age	Organizations successfully develop the careers of women managers through a variety of different approaches	To attract, retain & develop women managers into fulfilling & meaningful roles, organizations and their management practices will need to become more 'asexual' (less gendered)	In the future, organizations will need to adapt to the development of women managers who may be starting their careers after commencing a family and who may therefore be, older than the 'current norm' (i.e. women in similar positions of seniority/responsibility at the current time	Organizations will in future need to adopt a coaching based approach for the successful development of women manager's careers
Question		H01	H02	H03	HA1	HA2	HA3
'In the future, industrial organisations will employ more women in management positions than they do currently'	3.1	*			*	*	
'Industrial organisations have historically had a masculine management culture'	3.2		*		*		*
'Having a family is a disadvantage to developing a management career'	3.3		*			*	
'Age is not a factor when deciding if someone is suitable for a management position'	3.4		*			*	
'Coaching & mentoring are very useful tools in the development of managers and their careers'	3.5	*	*			*	*
'Industrial organisations will in the future have a management culture that is neither masculine nor feminine'	3.6	*		*	*		
'A varied approach to the development of management careers works best'	3.7			*			
'Life experience is a very important factor when selecting someone for a management position'	3.8	*	*			*	
'Achieving a balance between home life and work is essential for people in management positions'	3.9				*	*	
'People in management positions predominantly work most effectively when they are with people of the same gender'	3.10	*			*		
'Female managers are better communicators than their male counterparts'	3.11		*				
'Those who work for managers respect them for what they do and how they manage irrespective of the manager's gender'	3.12	*			*		
'There is a tendency to overrate male managers and underrate female managers'	3.13	*	*				
'Having a family stabilizes people in management positions giving them an advantage for developing their careers'	3.14					*	
'I do not have a preference to work with or work for someone of a particular gender'	3.15	*			*		

Table 2: The relationship between questions in section 3 of the questionnaire and the Hypotheses

4.2 Relationship between Hypotheses and Questionnaire

The development of the questions in section 3 of the questionnaire was based on the need to support the developed hypotheses with data. To interpret the results, the explanations in the table below were developed to provide a cross-reference between respondent's answers and the hypotheses. In some cases, an answer indicating agreement or disagreement supports an hypothesis directly, in other cases the relationship has required a degree of interpretation by the researcher, which has been complex and is therefore prone to some error.

Table 3: Relationship – Hypotheses / Responses

Question/ Hypothesis	Relationship
3.1/H01	Disagreement implies that organisations are gendered / need to change
3.1/HA1	Agreement supports that management practice will become less gendered
3.1/HA2	Agreement supports that more women will start careers after having commenced raising a family
3.2/H02 3.2/HA1	Agreement supports one of the factors that women have not been as successful as men in developing management careers is the traditional 'masculine' gendering of organisations
3.2/HA3	Historically masculine gendered organisations have tended not to employ women nor value coaching as useful and relevant management development tool – therefore agreement implies there will be a need to employ such an approach in order to attract/retain women managers
3.3/H02	Agreement supports that having a family is a disadvantage to developing a management career. Disagreement supports that organisations have no need to change to cater for women who may wish to start a management career later than the 'norm'
3.4/H02	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly
3.4/HA2	Disagreement revokes the hypothesis (assuming on average women have families earlier rather than later in life)
3.5/H01	Agreement supports a non-gendered approach to management development such as 'coaching / mentoring' is preferred by and attractive to women managers
3.5/H02	Agreement implies that a coaching and mentoring approach to management development could be a factor in providing opportunities for women to develop their management careers
3.5/HA3	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly
3.6/H01	Agreement indicates that by removing 'gendered' aspects of an organisation's culture/processes they may become more attractive to potential women managers
3.6/H03	Agreement supports a non-gendered organisation will adopt a more varied approach to management career development
3.6/HA1	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly
3.7/H03	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly
3.8/H01	Agreement implies that organisations will use a varied and broad approach in determining selection criteria for management recruitment
3.8/H02	Disagreement supports the hypothesis directly if age is proportional to 'life experience'
3.9/HA1	Agreement implies that male-gendered organisations tend to have a work-life imbalance which needs to be altered
3.9/HA2	Agreement infers that women managers will/do need time for meeting commitments to their families
3.10/H01	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly if gender is not an issue within a particular organisation
3.10/HA1	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly
3.11/H02	Agreement implies communication skills are a preferential success factor in management careers
3.12/H01	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly
3.12/HA1	Agreement supports the concept: being judged on performance (a non-gendered management practice), is already a hallmark of the respondent's organisation
3.13/H01	Agreement infers that there is gendering in the respondent's organisation
3.13/H02	Agreement implies that opportunities for women managers to develop their careers are limited
3.14/HA2	Disagreement confirms the hypothesis implying that organisations already see 'the value' in stability which comes from having a family

3.15/H01	Agreement supports the hypothesis directly
3.15/HA1	Agreement supports that there is already a less gendered working environment/culture in the respondent's organisation

5 Results

5.1 Questionnaire Respondent Profile

Sixteen questionnaires from a total of twenty-one issued, were received and evaluated, giving a response success rate of 76%. The reasons for the non-return of the other five questionnaires have not been investigated and are not covered in this project expect to say that the time allowed for their return was confined to one week to provoke responses from those most strongly attuned the underlying propositions of this research project. The short time interval for completing the questionnaires also helped to protect the anonymity of the researcher although this may have been compromised and therefore may have affected the respondents' desire to participate in the research.

- 69% of the respondents currently work for an industrial employer, (71% of the male respondents, 67% of the female respondents).
- 50% of the respondents have worked for their current employer for less than 5 years (which may be an indication of increasing fluidity in the market for management positions).
- 89% of the female respondents have worked in non-industrial sectors, whereas only three of the seven male respondents (43%) have any experience of a non-industrial employer; an indication perhaps of the historical gendering in UK employment. None of the male respondents stated a preference to work for a non-industrial employer; whereas the majority of female respondents indicated they had no preference between either industrial and non-industrial employers.
- Of the respondents who currently work for a non-industrial employer (31%), there was no clear preference in which sector they preferred to work in.
- Over two thirds of the respondents (69%) have worked for more than one employer providing a reasonable basis on which to draw comparisons and conclusions.
- The majority of male respondents (57%) classified themselves as 'senior managers', whereas there was an almost equal spread from non-manager to senior manager amongst the female respondents. Again, this reflects historical gendering in organisations.

5.2 Questionnaire Section 3: Summary of Average Responses by gender

The overall combined average scores in answer to questions 3.1 to 3.15 together with the average scores for both male and female respondents are summarized in charts 1 & 2 below. (Note: ‘not relevant’ scores of zero were ignored)

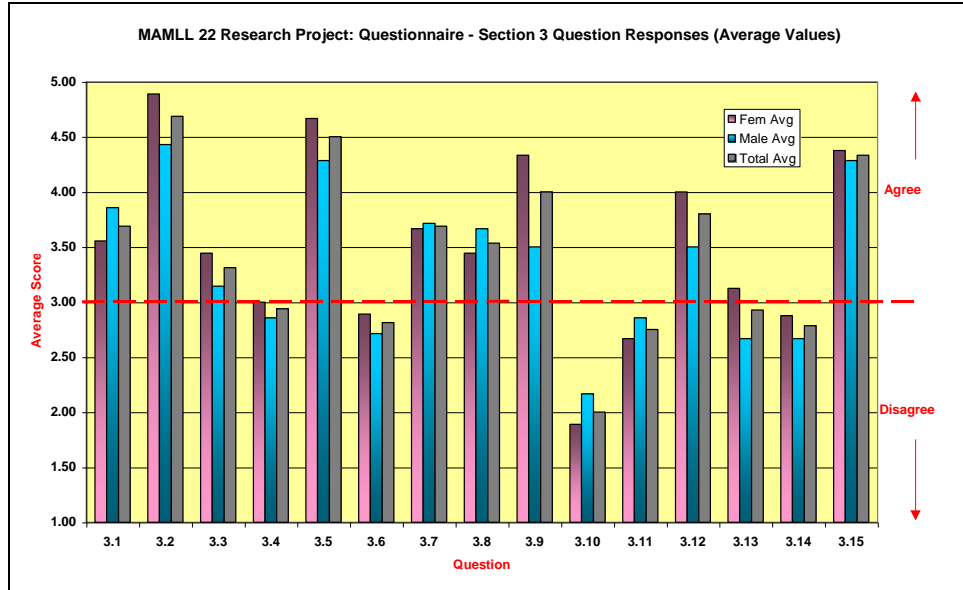


Chart 1: Questionnaire responses - Average Values

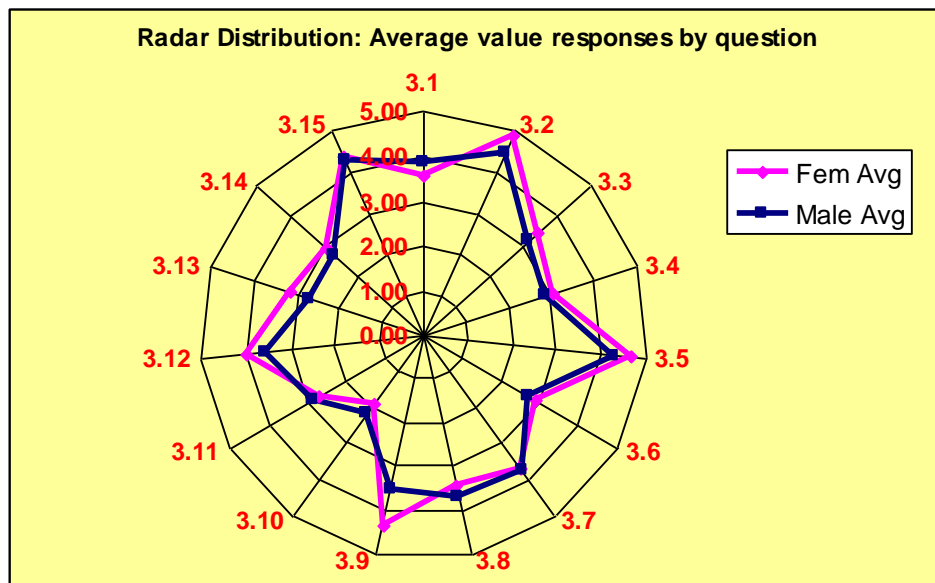


Chart 2: Questionnaire responses - Average Values Radar Distribution

The above charts show there is a good correlation between the average results for both the female and the male respondents to each question. A more detailed analysis against the specific distribution of responses against each question is included in section 5.3 below and in section 5.5 where the data has been adjusted to identify specific levels of agreement and disagreement.

5.3 Questionnaire section 3: response distribution profiles

Question 3.1: ‘In the future, industrial organisations will employ more women in management positions than they do currently’

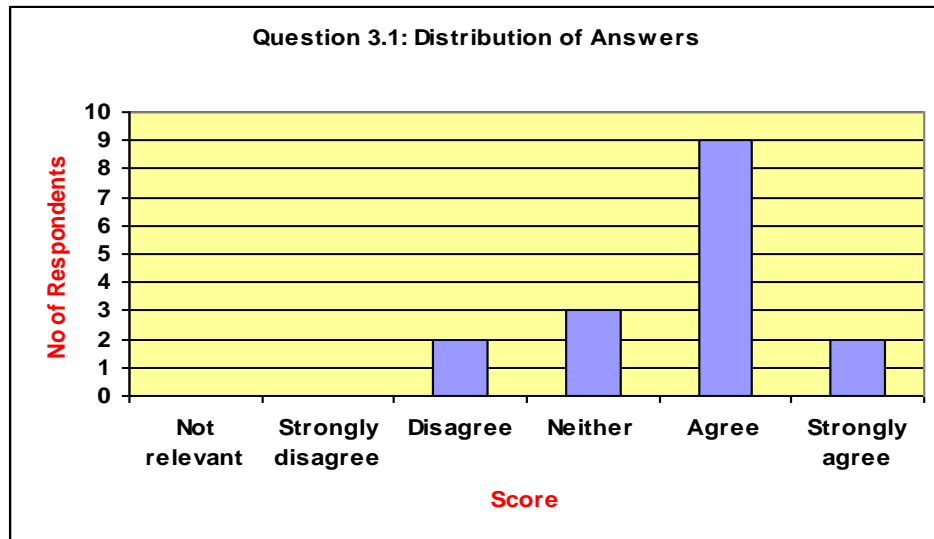


Chart 3

Both male and female respondents agreed on average that in future there will be a tendency for organizations to employ more women; on average, male respondents agreeing slightly more than their female counterparts.

Question 3.2: ‘Industrial organisations have historically had a masculine management culture’

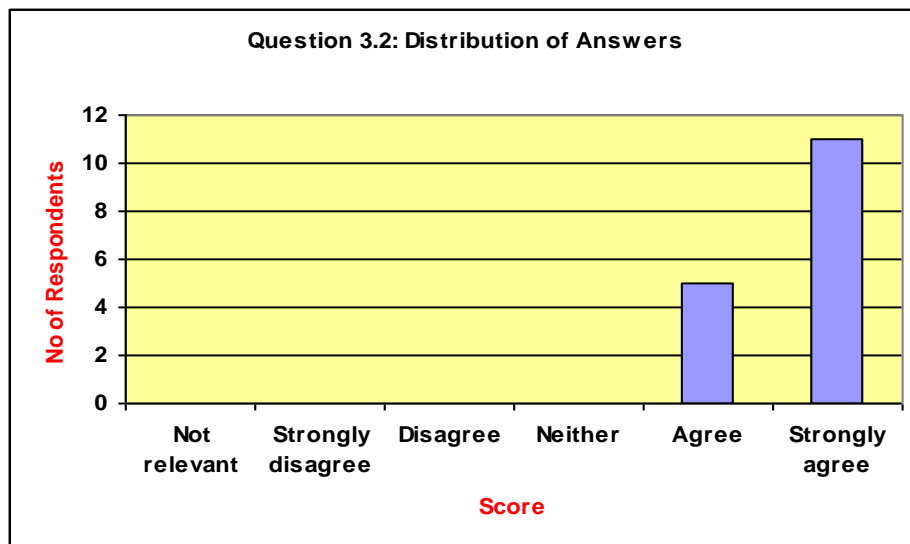


Chart 4

Both male and female respondents agree (tending towards strong agreement) that on average historically organizations have tended to have a masculine culture; female respondents agreeing on average more strongly than their male counterparts.

Question 3.3: ‘Having a family is a disadvantage to developing a management career’

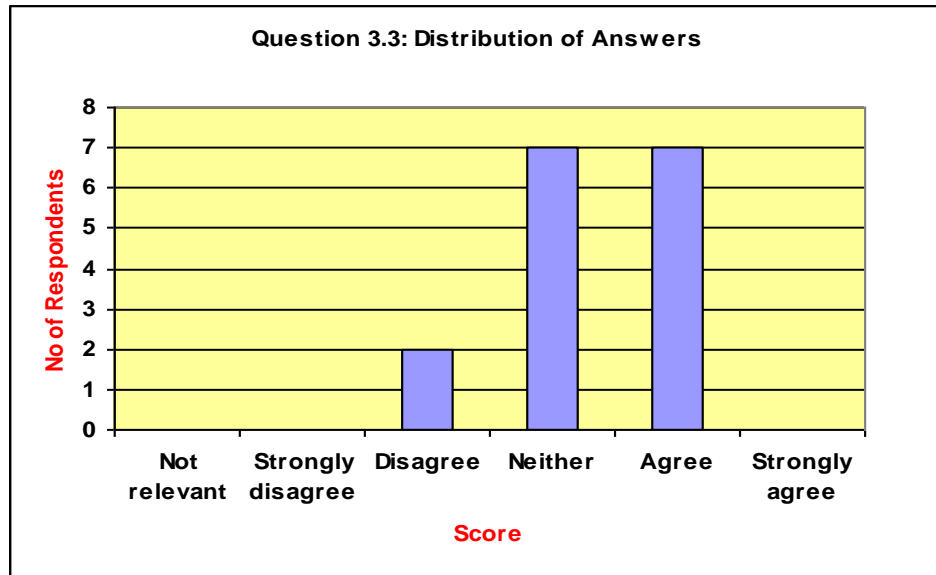


Chart 5

The average results from all respondents indicated agreement – tending towards neutrality.

Question 3.4: ‘Age is not a factor when deciding if someone is suitable for a management position’

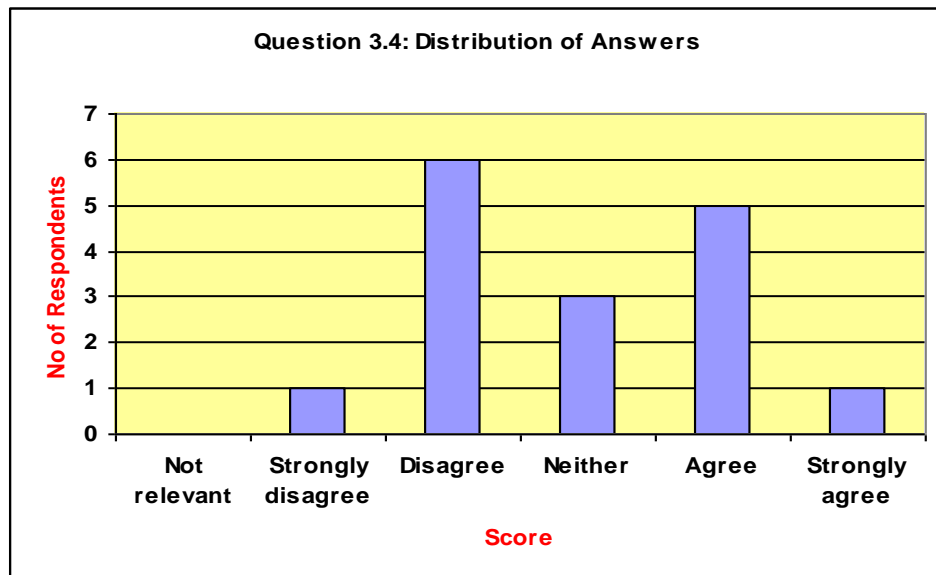


Chart 6

The average results from all respondents indicated slight disagreement – tending towards neutrality.

Question 3.5: ‘Coaching & mentoring are very useful tools in the development of managers and their careers’

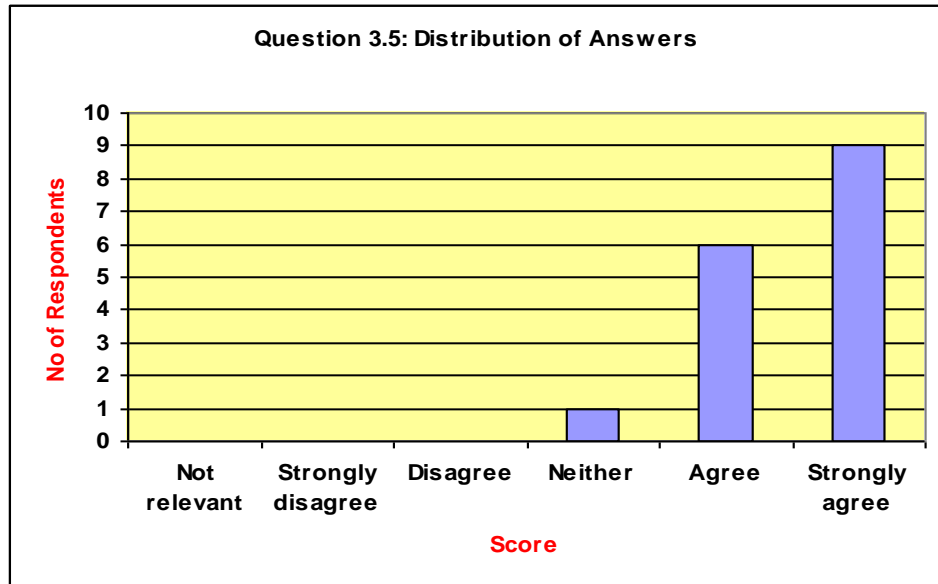


Chart 7

Both male and female respondents agreed/strongly agreed that coaching and mentoring are very useful tools in the development of managers and their careers; female respondents agreeing on average more strongly than their male counterparts.

Question 3.6: ‘Industrial organisations will in the future have a management culture that is neither masculine nor feminine’

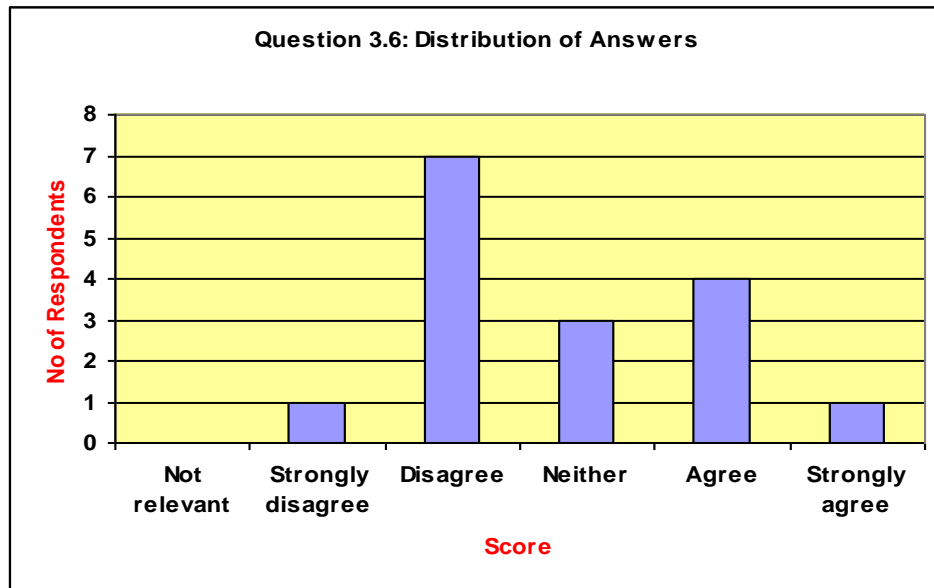


Chart 8

The average results from all respondents indicated slight disagreement – tending towards neutrality.

Question 3.7: ‘A varied approach to the development of management careers works best’

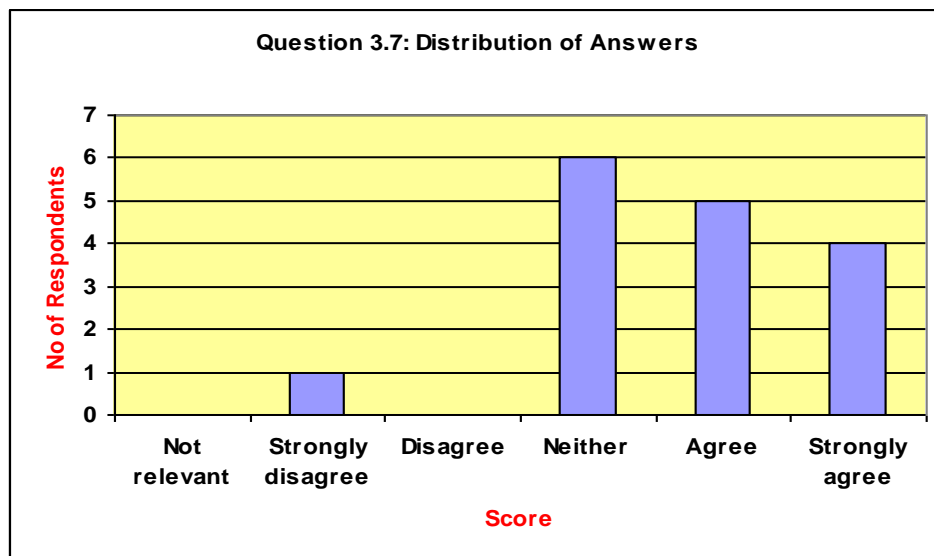


Chart 9

On average, both male and female respondents tended to agree that a varied approach to management career development worked best; there was almost equal agreement between both sexes.

Question 3.8: ‘Life experience is a very important factor when selecting someone for a management position’

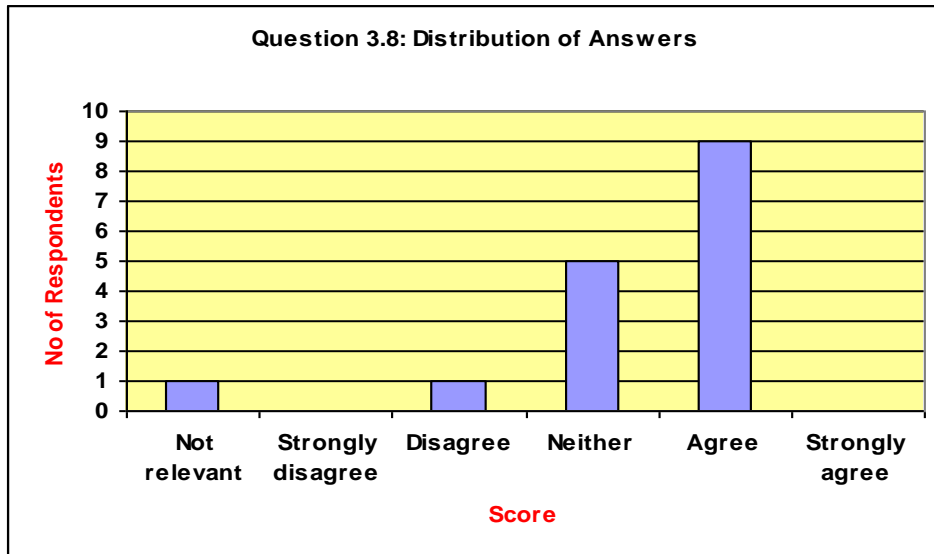


Chart 10

On average respondents of both sexes considered life experience was a very important factor when being considered for selection to a management position.

Question 3.9: ‘Achieving a balance between home life and work is essential for people in management positions’

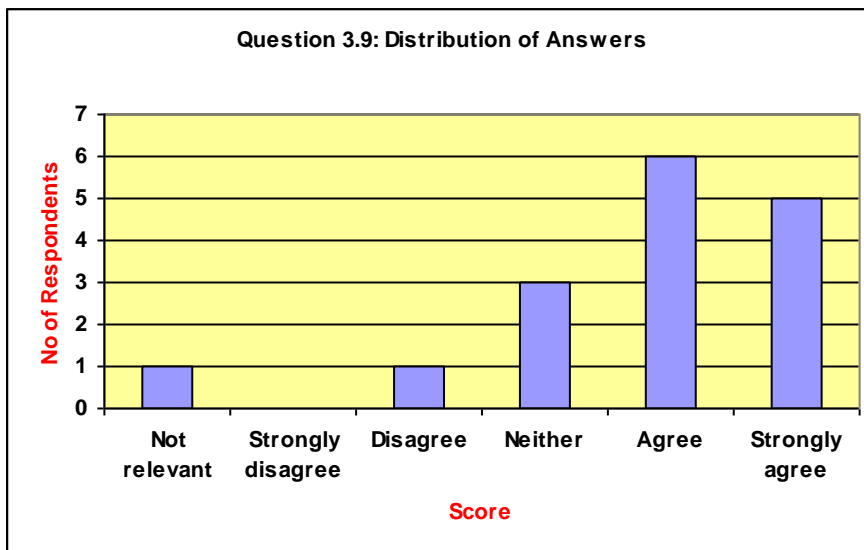


Chart 11

Female respondents agreed more consistently and strongly than male counterparts that on average, the achievement of a work/life balance is essential for managers, whereas male respondents tended towards neutrality/agreement. Male respondents comfort with / acceptance of

gendering in both family roles and organisational roles may account for the varied responses from within the male respondent group

Question 3.10: ‘People in management positions predominantly work most effectively when they are with people of the same gender’

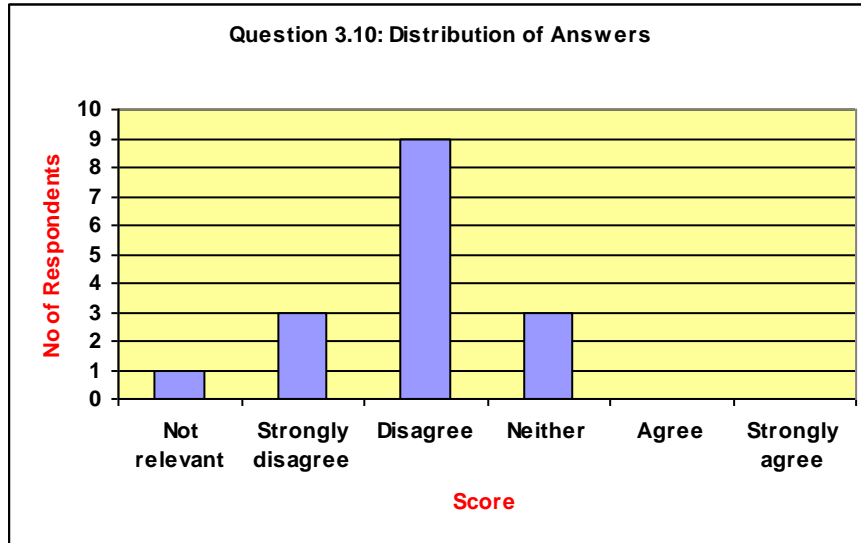


Chart 12

Male and female respondents disagreed that managers work most effectively with people of the same gender. Female respondents, on average, tended to have a stronger opinion on this than men, perhaps indicating the relative importance of this issue to both sexes.

Question 3.11: ‘Female managers are better communicators than their male counterparts’

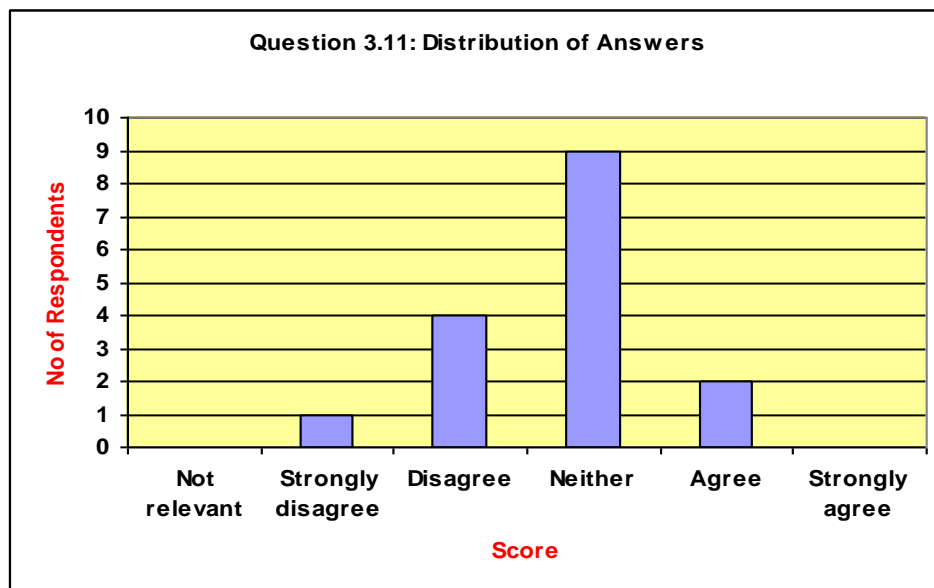


Chart 13

On average respondents of both sexes indicated mild disagreement to the statement that ‘women managers are better communicators’. Whilst both sexes tended towards neutrality, there was, on average, slightly greater disagreement to this statement amongst the female respondents.

Question 3.12: ‘Those who work for managers respect them for what they do and how they manage irrespective of the manager’s gender’

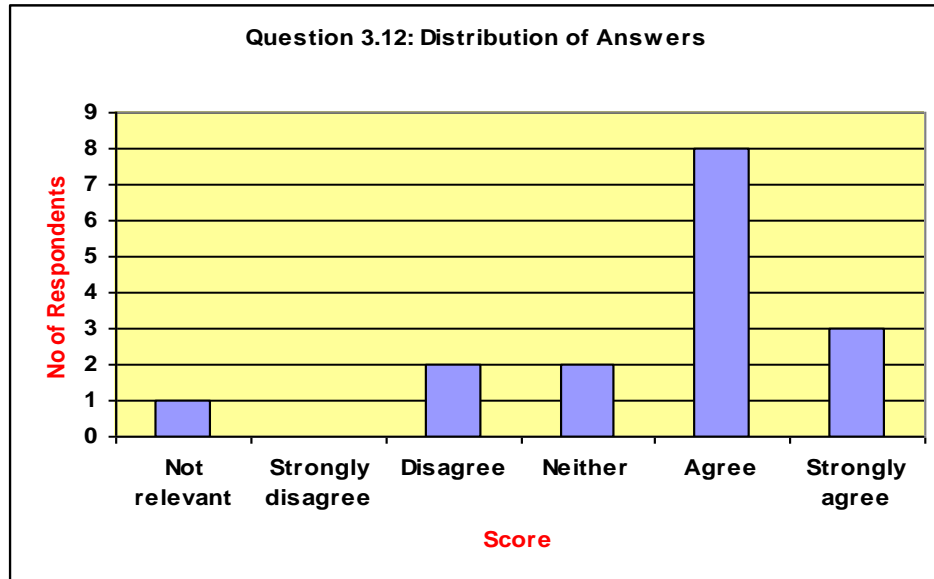


Chart 14

There was an equal tendency amongst both sexes that managers are respected for what they do and how they manage irrespective of gender. However, one female and one male respondent did disagree and one male respondent indicated that this was not a relevant statement. The male respondent who disagreed is a serving police officer, which may be an indication of some misgivings amongst a ‘traditionalist’ element to changes now taking place in UK police forces under the banner of ‘modernisation’.

Question 3.13: ‘There is a tendency to overrate male managers and underrate female managers’

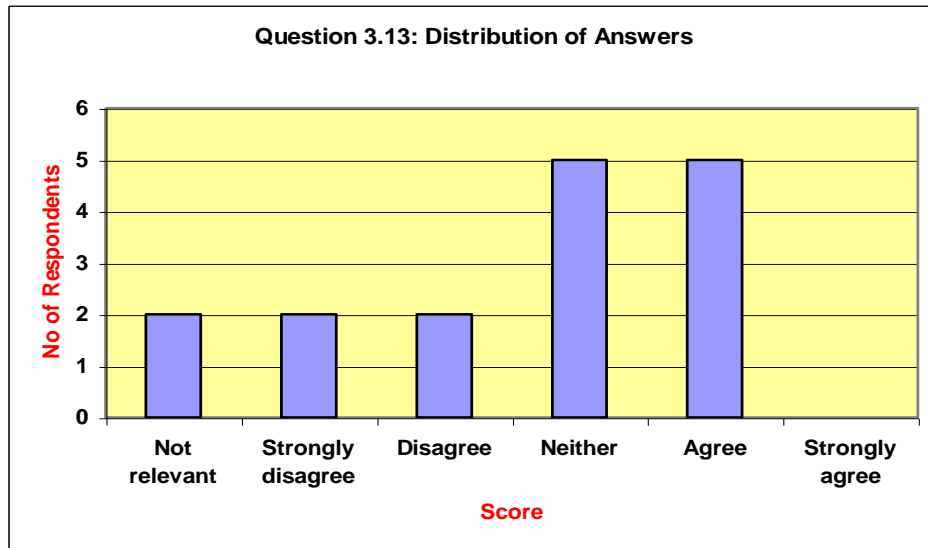


Chart 15

On average respondents of both sexes tended towards neutrality to the statement that male managers are overrated and women managers underrated; there was a slightly stronger agreement from the female respondents to this statement.

Question 3.14: ‘Having a family stabilizes people in management positions giving them an advantage for developing their careers’

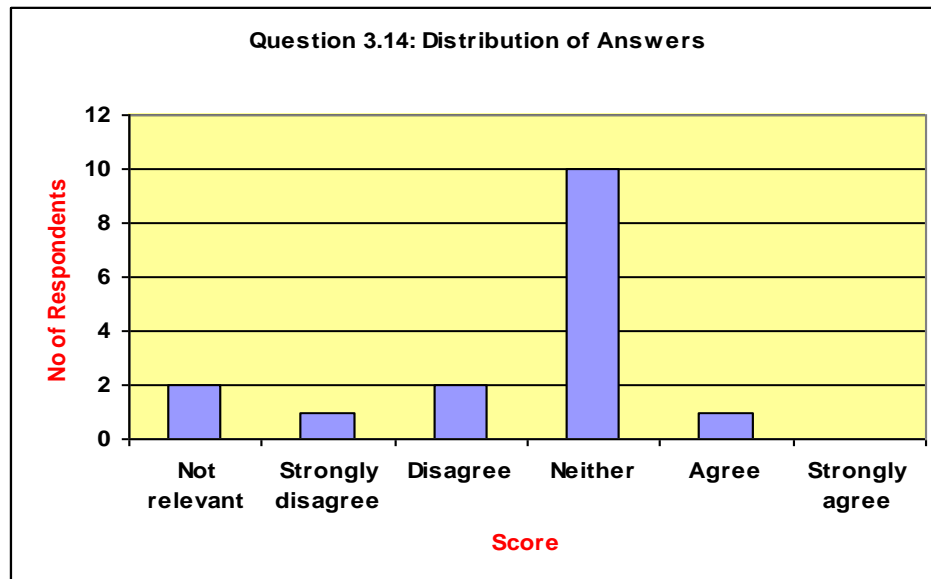


Chart 16

On average respondents of both sexes tended towards neutrality/slight disagreement that having a family stabilizes people in management positions, thus giving them an advantage for developing their careers. On average, female respondents agreed slightly more than their male counterparts, which perhaps reflects the traditional gendering of roles in the family.

Question 3.15: ‘I do not have a preference to work with or work for someone of a particular gender’

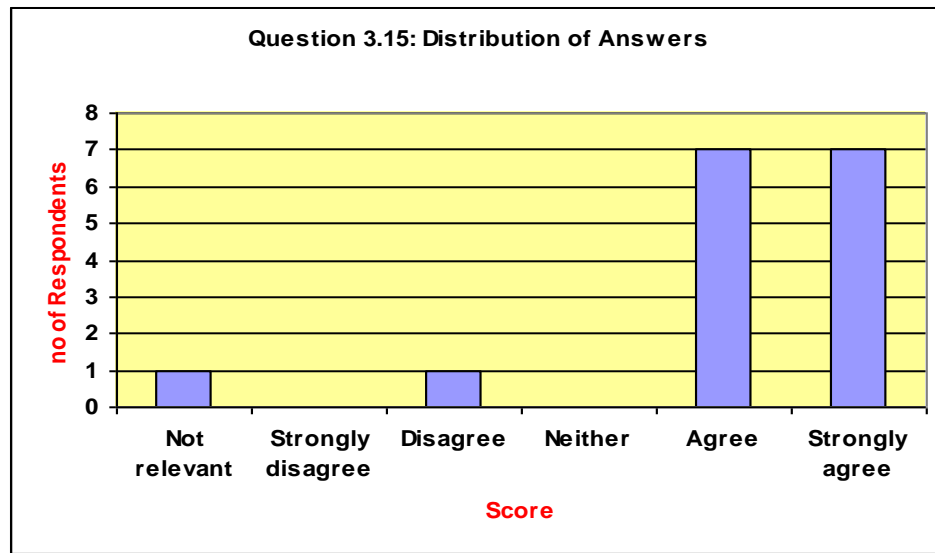


Chart 17

Respondents of both sexes agreed with this statement strongly indicating they had no preference for working with people of a particular gender.

5.4 Results of Questionnaire Section 4: ‘Comments’

- 81% of respondents commented about the questionnaire; 100% of the male respondents and 66% of the female respondents.
- 63% of respondents commented about the basic assumption behind this project; 86% of the male respondents and 56% of the female respondents.
- 38% made other comments; 43% of the male respondents and 33% of the female respondents.

5.4.1 Comments Regarding Ease of Questionnaire

All of the female respondents who made comments about the ease of the questionnaire indicated that it was generally ‘easy’ to complete. One respondent indicated that there were other categories of management other than just the junior and senior given in the questionnaire, section 2, implying that there could be

misinterpretation or misunderstanding in how to categorize the respondent's own employment. One female respondent indicated that she had tried to give a 'gut reaction' believing this was the best way in which to complete the questionnaire. *Why when this was not asked for?*

The male respondents all found the questionnaire easy, but approximately two thirds engaged in a critique of the questions in Section 3, citing for example that:-

- 15 questions was too small a number
- that the grouping of questions could have demonstrated a better methodology i.e. a flow to follow,

One senior male manager, (the eldest respondent), stated that the questions were insufficiently 'specific' except for Question 3.15, which he defined as the only question in which his opinion had been requested indicating that the description of how to fill in the questionnaire did not stand out clearly enough. Another male respondent indicated that some of the questions could be interpreted in different ways although no other respondents made the same observation.

It is interesting to note that male respondents focussed on the process and content more than the female respondents, which in itself may indicate some examples of gendering such as:-

- Specific detail is attractive to the male mind,
- A demonstration of 'instinctive patronage' to provide advice based on a real or perceived ability to know what works better
- A level of competitiveness - finding fault (with the author) who had been described as a 'male researcher' by the third party who actually issued the majority of the questionnaires, (the other respondents knew the researcher personally).

5.4.2 Comments Regarding the Basic Assumption behind this project

One female respondent who currently works in a non-managerial position, indicated that the number of women in management positions, 'surely depended upon' the availability of sufficiently talented females to carry out 'the jobs in question'.

Another female respondent indicated that 'demographic changes and skill shortages would force increased diversity in organisations and that disability and race, as well as gender, would be factors in this increased diversity'.

A male respondent also recognised and supported the assumption because of ‘demographic changes’. However, the same respondent stated that ‘women will be employed in senior management positions that they may not have been considered for previously’.

Another male respondent reaffirmed his (ambiguous?) belief that there are ‘differences in the social and intellectual development of children of both sexes’ and that he was also aware ‘that there have been, and still are, prejudices against women in many walks of life.’ (He acknowledged existing legislation against such prejudice in the UK). The same respondent stated that he wanted the underlying assumption to be true but also that he did not know the underlying reason for the disparity in representation of the two sexes in industry. He went on to question if this was due to prejudice or the (lack of) level of interest amongst young people (in pursuing a career in industry).

A further male respondent endorsed the basic assumption but stated that some form of ‘external reference’ may have been useful.

Only one male respondent indicated that the basic assumption may be incorrect by stating that there was current research (no particular reference given) showing ‘a decline in (the number of) engineering graduates and, specifically, the recruitment of women into engineering roles’.

5.4.3 Analysis of Other Comments

One female respondent indicated that she did not ‘believe that men alone are given opportunities to progress’ and ‘subscribed to the belief that the best person should get the job irrespective of gender’. She went on to state that the ‘glass ceiling’ may still exist in some companies but believed that this was less in evidence today than before and certainly not in the Company she currently works for, which is the same as the author.

Another female respondent stated that ‘lessons can be learned from North America’ where diversity is valued due to a (commonplace) variety in ethnic and female faces she has observed at business conferences.

A male respondent stated that ‘having worked with a number of lady engineers during his career, he has found them in general to be better organised and more creative than many of their male counterparts’. He went on to pose the question as to why there are so few women (in industry), and further qualified this with references to ‘the nurture/nature debate’ and ‘the added question of prejudice’. Another male respondent suggested that culture might be of relevance to the overall research objective as well as (the

need to) consider ‘family, gender and age’. *Perhaps the basic assumption written on the front page of the questionnaire wasn’t clear enough or did not stand out sufficiently. Its location in the questionnaire should perhaps have been referenced in Section 4.*

A further male respondent, who contributed the largest comment under Question 4.3, stated that ‘there is a current bias and prejudice within industrial sectors (to select managers) from related disciplines or areas’. He went on to say that ‘there isn’t a focus within the UK on good managers with the right management skills’, whereas (in comparison) he states that ‘in the USA there is a greater emphasis on management skills’. He believed that such shortfalls in UK management were ‘common to both sexes and would become more evident in the future’. He concluded his comment with the statement that ‘if there was a need to recruit managers from outside industrial sectors (into industry) there would be more female managers within industry’. *Perhaps a structured interview with this respondent would clarify the comments he made and add to the research.*

5.5 Impact of respondent’s gender on responses and the comparative group

In order to provide a clearer view of the relevant agreement and disagreement between respondents who provided answers to section 3 of the questionnaire, the data was modified to exclude all ‘not relevant’ or neutral answers. Chart 18 below separates the responses from male and female respondents on this basis:-

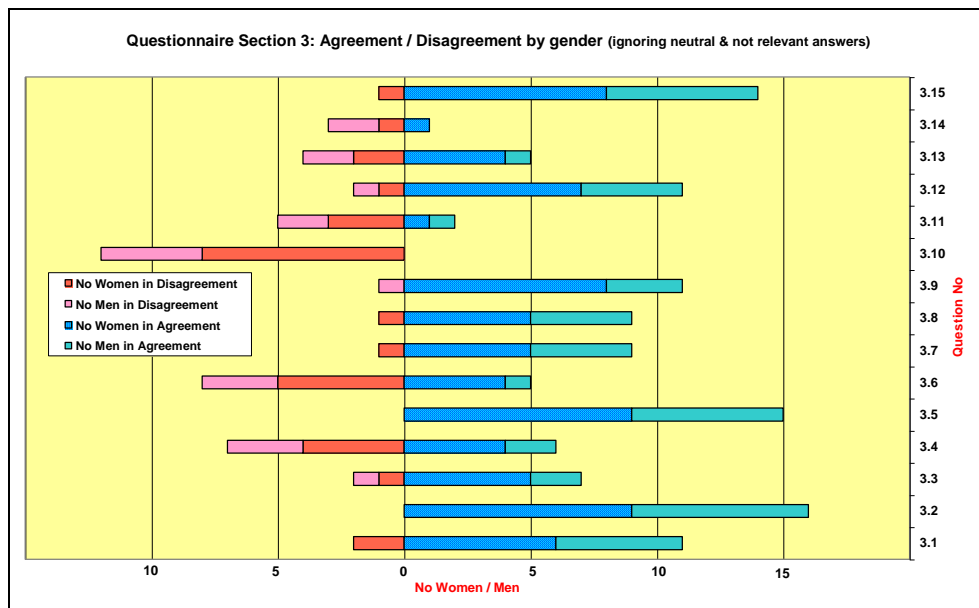


Chart 18

It is particularly interesting to note that the ‘comparative group’ of respondents who knew and are known to the researcher, were significantly

more decisive in either agreeing or disagreeing with the questions (and the inferred assumptions behind them) in section 3 of the questionnaire.

This comparative group also unanimously disagreed with question 3.10 and in so doing indicated that the same gender is *not* a factor that determines how best people work with each other.

6 Discussion

6.1 Female entrepreneurs: barriers to success – a relevance ?

A comparison between the USA and UK re statistics on women entrepreneurs (Heffernan) has a direct relevance when considering how to alter management practice in traditional industrial organisations:-

- There is no data available in the UK although the DTI programme launched in 2003 through the small business service called ‘A Strategic Framework For Women Enterprise’, is seeking to develop some data through working with the UK Regional Development Agencies, The Women and Equality Unit, Business Link and The Treasury. Data is essential in order to support the economic case for government investment in female entrepreneurship. At the present time, no-one knows how many women-owned businesses there are in the UK, what their revenues are and how success rates compare with men-owned businesses.
- The UK probably lags the USA by 10 – 15 years in terms of success trends for women entrepreneurs. The gap is not attributable to a lack of education, competence or ambition, just an inherently sexist attitude in traditionally male dominated institutions and organisations which manifests itself most clearly in making access to capital far more difficult than for male counterparts. Heffernan refers to this as ‘barriers of prejudice, exclusion and ignorance’ backed up by ‘the social justice argument trivializing women, casting them as helpless maidens in distress’. British female entrepreneurs see the problem of obtaining equality of support for funding ventures as the most important hurdle to overcome.
- In comparison, according to Heffernan, in the USA statistics show that:-
 - The number of self-employed women has increased by 77% since 1983 compared to 6% in the number of self-employed men – this is undoubtedly because there were many more male entrepreneurs in 1983. The number of women owned businesses has grown by 11% compared to 6% for men
 - Women owned businesses represent half of all privately held firms employing 52% of the private sector workforce and

generating \$2.32 Trillion in sales. Thus, women in business are seen as vital contributors to the US economy and are treated as such.

- In the past five years the rate at which business run by women have failed is half of that for business run by men
- The number of people employed by businesses run by women has grown by 18% compared to 8% for businesses run by men
- The revenues from businesses run by women have increased over the last five years by 32% compared to 24% for those businesses run by men
- Only 2.2% of institutional and venture funding in the USA goes to female entrepreneurs

In the UK, female entrepreneurs get less respect than male counterparts, less encouragement and less financing, due to evident discrimination and a patronising attitude within the financial community. This discrimination comes from a traditional, cautioned (at times suspicious) approach from male dominated institutions not just in finance (banks, venture capitalists) but also in a more passive sense from other bodies and organisations such as the Institute of Directors and sections of the Business Press. These bodies display a ‘laddish’ culture (Heffernan) where for example the constitution of archetype panels at conferences is frequently exclusively male. This thinking is perhaps best exemplified by the quote: ‘Financial and Business institutions find it hard to imagine that women are *serious* about making money and building real businesses’, (Heffernan, emphasis added).

The inherent discriminatory attitudes towards female entrepreneurs are backed up by the statistic that men are two and a half times more likely to become entrepreneurs. This is an indication that men know fellow potential collaborators, see more opportunities and perhaps have a higher (misguided) perception of their own infallibility. When men seek external financial support for starting a business they will almost inevitably receive a more positive response and be taken more seriously than women in the same position. Male entrepreneurs are also considered ‘unempathetic’ towards women ‘starting out’ (Heffernan).

There continues to be discriminatory attitudes towards women who have families, in spite of the fact that half of Britain’s female entrepreneurs are mothers (Heffernan). According to one female entrepreneur, Penny Streeter (CEO of ‘Ambition24hours’ - a recruitment agency specialising in the education and healthcare sectors), “men still see motherhood as something that stands in the way of full time dedication to a business. It never occurs to them that it might be an asset...” In fact a common theme amongst the female entrepreneurs interviewed by Heffernan was that motherhood was good ‘management training’ in terms of communications, operating within time constraints, coaching and developing.

Streeter believes that parenting made her better at problem solving business problems whilst being, ‘more patient at work, calmer and less volatile’.

The combined results of studies conducted by the Hagberg Consulting Group, Management Research Group, Lawrence A. Pfaff, Personnel Decisions International Inc and Advanced Teamware Inc showed that in the key leadership/management attributes below, women were significantly better than men.

- Motivating others
- Fostering communication
- Producing high quality work
- Listening to others

In so far as an ability to analyze issues and strategic planning are concerned, men and women were rated as equal in the combined result. Heffernan indicates that the female entrepreneurs she interviewed all shared a common career background in sales and an obsessive passion for quality and *team building* (emphasis added). The inherently better communication skills of women are perhaps one reason why they find it easier and more comfortable to become the ‘servant of their clients and their businesses’.

These female strengths and their relativity in comparison with men therefore provide an indication of the way in which management practice more generally will need to change by answering the question; how will organisations (both industrial and non-industrial) need these skills in the future and why ?

One example of how some of these strengths can be leveraged has been the growth in the number of programmes that facilitate building business networks for women, for example ‘Women Into The Network’ (WIN), is an initiative designed to do this based at Durham Business School.

6.2 Outcomes from cross referencing the questionnaire responses and the hypotheses

Responses to question 3.1 indicate that management practices will become ‘less gendered’ and organisations can expect increasing numbers of women to attempt to develop management careers after starting and/or raising a family, (which is becoming less of a barrier to career development than hitherto – question 3.3). This will force traditional industrial organisations to consider more family friendly working policies, perhaps with more flexible hours, more acceptance of computer networked-enabled ‘home-working’, even the possible provision of child-care as part of remuneration and increased consideration of how to better facilitate improving the ‘work-life’ balance (question 3.9). Such organisations should be encouraged to conduct ‘current state’ audits to determine the gaps against a vision of how to cope with demographic changes and gender re-balancing in the future. In determining a vision, it will initially also be necessary to accept the negative impact of the current masculine gendering of industrial organisations (question 3.2) so commonplace in the UK and to develop specific strategies that build upon women’s superior communication and relational skills

(but which do not alienate male managers) to encourage more women into management positions. A more varied approach including the facilitation of networks to support women managers, backed up by carefully selected trainers/coaches/mentors focussed on management development is supported by the responses to questions 3.5 and 3.7. In turn, these echo the type of changes in approach required to allow women easier access to (human or financial) capital that are advocated by Heffernan above.

The data from the questionnaire is not conclusive on how age, (question 3.4), affects decisions in gendered organisations. Demographically, there will be pressure for ‘traditional’ organisations to consider this factor just as carefully as gender. The lack of clarity in the overall response may be accounted for by a more rounded and broader view being taken of the relative values of ‘track record’, capability and experience when recruiting for management roles, (question 3.8).

The data from question 3.10 indicates that working relationships between managers and subordinates is less affected by gender than would have been expected in traditional, stereotypically gendered organisations that are seen by the respondents as having masculine traits. However, the external evidence on pay differentials, access to capital and institutional sexism would seem to indicate that this still remains a significant barrier to women’s managerial development. It is possible the data has been corrupted by the respondents being aware of the researcher’s strong views on advocating positive discrimination in the workplace.

The medical proof supporting women’s superior communication skills and relational abilities is not evident to the respondents (question 3.11). This may be a result of employees tending to judge skills by ‘looking up’ at their superiors. As there are statistically still far fewer women in management positions it follows that this factor has yet to emerge clearly, although it contrasts sharply with the implied evidence from questions 3.2, 3.4 and 3.7 that women managers can make use of such superior skills through development strategies such as networking and coaching.

The task driven culture of traditional organisations for which many of the respondents work, perhaps explains the ‘idealism’ expressed in the responses to question 3.12 and 3.15 in which respect for managers and working preferences are separated from gender. Indeed the researcher believes that there is a level of gendering so ‘engrained’ in traditional organisations that it becomes almost invisible, rendering what might be otherwise unacceptable behaviours or considerations acceptable. This may also account for the results to question 3.13 that indicate only a slight agreement to the premise that male managers are comparatively ‘over-rated’.

Although results discussed above clearly indicate that consideration of how being a parent needs to balance better with careers, there is an indication in the responses to question 3.14 that parenthood does not confer stability in a professional sense. The researcher believes this is due to the respondents’ own (difficult) experiences in raising families most of which has presumably been in advance of the sort of flexible working practices introduced in recent years.

6.3 **Personal reflections / critique on the research methodology and results**

Although the research process yielded sufficient data on which to form some conclusions, the lack of structured interviews and grounded analysis detracts from the accuracy of the results.

There is also a high probability that some of the anonymous respondents were aware of the researcher's identity/ position and that this may have influenced their responses – any error introduced by this does not appear to be significant when comparing the overall results with the results for the group of respondents known to the researcher.

The questionnaire structure appeared to be easy to comprehend, but construction of the questions in section 3 could have been improved in terms of the clarity of the wording and a greater level of precision in linking these to the hypotheses.

7 **Conclusions**

In the course of this research project a number of hypotheses have been tested with the following conclusions:-

- Traditional industrial organisations are gendered and need to develop varied policies that audit, monitor and change behaviours and practices to encourage optimum performance from the increasing numbers of women going into management positions. Particular attention needs to be paid on how to adapt to increasing numbers of women commencing a management career after raising a family or delaying this until middle age.
- Such policies, (coaching, networking etc) need to recognise and make best use of women's better developed relational skills
- Industrial organisations can breed an intolerance of these better developed behaviours, expectations and practices that transfer with personnel (in particular women) from non-industrial organisations that are less gendered

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