Managing Gender Diversity in Top Management Teams

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues a case for challenging the customary emphasis on masculine values in top management teams (TMTs) as a means for making better use of gender diversity. We argue that conventional diversity management practices involve a narrow hegemonic masculine approach towards increasing women's (and men's) participation in employment. We suggest that TMTs benefit when learning to integrate skilled and talented women and men into a single, cohesive work culture that enhances teams' performing capacities. While seeking to avoid an essentialist discourse, the paper builds on the theory of diversity and 'difference' (instead of 'sameness') to demonstrate the relationship between feminine values, team member diversity, communication skills and representation. Multiple contextual factors are also recognised as influential better identified through a social constructionist approach to team development.

Keywords: diverse teams; diversity contexts; femininity, gender; leadership, masculinity.

INTRODUCTION

Men and women respond differently to gender discrimination, and marginalization on the basis of gender specific strategies (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). The negative effects are particularly visible for men, who display lower levels of satisfaction and commitment when in numerical minority. Men in female-dominated groups are generally more likely to be accepted, less likely to be treated with antagonism, and less likely to be stereotyped than females in male-dominated groups (p. 108). Ely (1994) emphasises that for interpretation purposes, research on gender diversity must pay close attention to the proportion of men and women in the group. An ad-hoc approach to diverse teams in particular has resulted in lower representation of women at senior decision-making positions, and in the increasing incidence (or perception) of sex and workplace discrimination.

The following discussion seeks to unravel the hegemonic masculine stereotypes at the workplace and examines specific feminine qualities that could potentially improve team processes in gender diverse contexts. While differences and preferences for workforce participation apply to all people, a number of learning differences relate to whether men learn and communicate in similar ways to women. We examine evidence relating to the communication patterns of women and how they relate to team building and team design. It may be noted that the definition of gender we use in this paper is based on the social construction of gender instead of the biological sexual differences. While seeking to avoid an essentialist discourse, we build on the theory of diversity and 'difference' (instead of 'sameness') to demonstrate that women in general are a key resource for improving the integrative and interpretive abilities of top management teams (TMTs) including the capacity of the team generally to deal with difficult and complex scenarios. We define top management teams as a group of people from diverse backgrounds, with relatively equal gender representation and association, who develop corporate level strategies in the

pursuit of organisational goals. This is in contrast to more traditional definitions where TMTs are defined as a team of managers that operates at the top decision-making tier of an organisation (Elron, 1997; Edmondson et. al., 2003).

This paper concentrates on the literature supporting the differences in values and styles of individuals pointing to the major differences in masculine and feminine communication style. Given the context that organisational and cultural values generally perpetuate the hegemony of masculine values in most organisations, the discussion in this paper may lead to thinking through how 'merit' (in its broadest sense of what is valued both formally and informally) is defined in TMTs, and to disentangling sex biases in the prevailing work routines and stereotypes. Robert Connell's (1995) work is quite illuminating in this area as to how men need to be involved in giving up the advantages that they experience for being part of the hegemony. Unless these underlying issues are addressed, education and training of managers of TMTs or the teams themselves will continue to perpetuate what already exists.

This paper has three aims. First, we argue that as a means for effective gender diversity management, it is mandatory to expand the prevailing masculine values to also include feminine values in organisational routines and structures. This will in turn help increase women's participation in TMTs. We argue that, traditionally, work participation for women has occurred in an ad-hoc highly structured approach. Second, we identify the key attributes of women lie generally not only in their 'sameness' but also in their 'difference' from the prevailing masculine stereotypes. Our discussion here examines how 'feminine values' intersect several contextual factors (e.g. leadership, demographic, language factors) that constrain diverse TMT performance. Feminine values here are not meant to essentialising the gender dichotomy. Indeed feminine as well as masculine values may be possessed or developed by women and men irrespective of their sex or gender identities. It is acknowledged that gender does not always represent sex, and that not all women and men share characteristics that differentiate them from the opposite gender. Yet, for practical purposes, the paper discusses the implications of gender diversity representation for diverse team efficiency. Third, the discussion suggests that new workplace structures are required to enable women to more easily integrate into TMTs. While highlighting the implications of masculine gender influences on TMT processes, the paper argues that the contributions of women as decision makers are often overlooked thus further perpetuating gender bias and segregation.

GENDER DIVERSITY IN WORK TEAMS

In an increasingly dynamic and diverse environment, organisations are engaged in an ongoing battle to remain competitive. Many organisations are deploying work teams as fundamental structure to meet strategic objectives (Elsass & Graves, 1997; Kirkman & Rosen, 2000), and to enhance individual capabilities over time (Murray & Moses, 2005). Pressures related to increasing diversity representation

are consistent with the number of women entering the labour market. The increasing need for gender diversity however does not mean that organisations fully utilise gender practices particularly in the case of team diversity. We use the term 'gender' to refer to socially constructed categories reflecting the different experiences of individuals based upon their biological sex (Lorber & Farrell, 1991). Given our interest in women as the 'out-group' in organisations, we have restricted our discussion to gender diverse teams. Previous research suggests that women encounter negative team dynamics particularly when they have less representation (Konrad et al., 1992). In diverse decision-making groups, members have different cognitive approaches, experiences, attitudes, and values; consequently, they bring divergent perspectives to the group's problem. Ideally, divergent resources lead to the identification and critical examination of diverse decision alternatives that result in increased efficiencies (Elsass & Graves, 1997).

Consistent with the aims of the paper, the following sections examine how feminine values influence diverse teams. The first section unravels the masculine hegemony and the gendered nature of work and work roles. The second section explores feminine attributes that are useful in this pursuit. The third examines several contextual influences that represent multiple contingent factors influencing team efficiency. We argue that within certain contexts, multiple causal relationships can be found that challenge traditional studies of diversity. We suggest a possible pathway using subjective time and a socially constructed approach to the development of diverse teams. Our central thesis (the fourth stage of the paper) is that new workplace structures are required to address the predominance of masculine cultures.

Masculine hegemony

The theory of hegemonic masculinity has laid bare the predominant masculine stereotypes in employment and other societal contexts, and also highlighted the difficulties in attaining gender equality. Connell (1995: 229) notes that "[p]ursuing social justice does not mean pursuing uniformity." Gender equality and integration is not on equal terms, it rather "occurs in a context of patriarchal institutions where the 'male is norm', or the masculine is authoritative" (p. 231). This view is shared by Trigiani (1998) who argues that if hegemonic masculinity undergirds the division of labour, it's only 'natural' that in the social organization of sexuality, the man has the last word.

The literature suggests that sex refers to immutable biological traits while gender is the social meaning given to sex differences. "Gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does not determine the social" (Connell, 1995: 71). However, issues of sex and gender are perhaps more complex than such description. Trigiani (1998) acknowledges the difficulty in determining where 'sex' ends and 'gender' begins; yet an understanding of biological and sociological differences is valuable to appreciate how society constructs and reproduces masculinity and femininity.

Remingler (1999) notes that cultural practice-oriented analyses of gender do not take into account the dynamic constructions of sexuality, and how complex sexual identities and relationships are interdependent with gendered notions of 'women' and 'men'. The view is shared by Butler (1993) who thus problematises the absence of sexuality in practice theory research:

> "If gender consists of the social meanings that sex assumes, then sex does not accrue social meanings as additive properties, but, rather, is replaced by the social meanings it takes on; sex is relinquished in the course of that assumption, and gender emerges, not as a term in a continued relationship of opposition to sex, but as the term which absorbs and displaces sex…" (1993: 5).

The literature also suggests that gender and sexuality are theoretically interconnected (Nicholson, 1994). In practice, ways of being women and men are determined by a person's everyday activities and cultural meanings used to make sense of such activities (Butler, 1990; 1993). In particular, ideas about being women and men are created, reinforced, and challenged through linguistic interaction (Bing & Bergvall, 1997; Remlinger, 1997).

Arnot's (1982) study explains how women and men become gendered, and identifies several characteristics of the gender production theory such as the perspective that social categories like gender are imposed and static structures, and the presumption of gender as a dichotomous grouping. Men and women tend to externalise their gendered identities through their language and behaviour:

> "In the process of producing classed and gendered subjects who unconsciously recognise and realise the principles of social organization, the reproduction of such power relations are ensured. Thus individuals internalise the objective and external structures and externalise them, albeit transformed but not radically changed" (Arnot, 1982: 84).

For the purposes of this paper, it is equally important to examine the alternate discourses on gender and sex research. According to cultural feminist perspective, women value intimacy and develop an ethic of care for the 'other' with which they are connected. Cultural feminism describes the potential for nurturing as core elements of the female experience and psychology. This perspective acknowledges the existence but not the inferiority of difference, thus arguing for an equality of quality, not of sameness to men. Accordingly, cultural feminism treats women's unique traits and abilities such as art, craft, and narrative capacity, critical eye, caring heart and ways of knowing, as things to celebrate. Intimacy or connectedness is treated as a precious contribution of the female members of the society; women's core, biological, and

social dissimilarities from men are proudly identified (West, 1988). The assumption is that equality would arise when society accepts and respects the feminine differences.

In contrast to the cultural feminist celebration of male and female differences, Butler (1990) treats sex and gender as discursive constructs and sexuality as a matter of performance. Skidmore (1999) argues that sex, gender and sexuality emerge as a product of power relations at the workplace. The configuration of power relations in organisations is particularly complex, confirming its pre-eminent position for theorising issues of gender and sexuality (Collins, 1986). Skidmore suggests that the extent to which power relations in organisations not only produce patterns of gender and sexuality but also depend upon them merits in-depth inquiry. Though feminist scholars have sought to problematise the gendering of jobs which leads to occupational segregation (Walby, 1988), only recently have the organisational dynamics of the workplace been revealed as gendered (Cockburn 1991) and sexualised (Hearn & Parkin, 1995). For instance, Acker (1990) notes that the very notions of 'job' and 'hierarchy' are gendered constructs. Organisations thus serve as structures favouring predominant masculine stereotypes while feminine values are frequently ignored or downplayed.

Feminine values

Geert Hofstede's (1980) study identifies similarities - on five cultural dimensions - in the underlying value dimensions of employees. One of these dimensions is related to masculine and feminine values (later renamed as achievement/ nurturing dimension), which describes the extent to which values such as assertiveness, performance, success and competition, hold sway over tenderness, quality of life, and warm personal relationships. Within the context of standardised organisational practices, masculine values are generally more dominant. For some scholars, masculine characteristics demonstrate the 'normal' dominant or assertive aspects of behaviour and downplay the team and cooperative behaviours more readily associated with feminine qualities (Claes, 1991).

Though, Hofstede's work has been criticised on the grounds that each nation has its own internal diversity (Voronov and Singer, 2002), Hofstede (1991) acknowledges that almost every culture and every individual can be located on a continuum between the two extremes of cultural dimension. No culture and by extension no individual is either entirely feminine or entirely masculine. Accordingly, each individual's expectations vary from one culture to the other, from one person to the other.

Feminine styles can be considered as social-expressive because of the personal attention that women give to their subordinates, colleagues, and the workplace (Claes, 1991). In contrast, masculine style is described as instrumental and instruction giving. Helgesen (1990) discovered an interesting observation by repeating Minzberg's (1973) diary study examining managerial behaviour. Helgesen

contrasted the managerial behaviour of women and men recorded by Minzberg. Table 1 illustrates the differences.

Table 1. *A typical day in the office: Male managers versus female managers*

Male managers	Female managers
The executives worked at an unrelenting pace, and took no breaks in activity during the day	They worked at a steady pace, but with small breaks scheduled throughout the day.
They described their days as characterised by interruption, discontinuity and fragmentation.	They did not view unscheduled tasks and encounters as interruptions.
They separated little time for activities not directly related to their work	They made time for activities not directly related to their work
They exhibited a preference for live encounters	They preferred live encounters but scheduled time to attend to mail
They maintained a complex network of relationships with people outside their organisations	They maintained a complex network of relationships with people outside their organisations
Immersed in the day-to-day need to keep the company going, they lacked time for reflection	They focused on the ecology of leadership
They identified with their jobs	They saw their own identities as complex and multifaceted
They had difficulty sharing information	They scheduled time for sharing information

(Source: Based on Helgesen, 1990)

Table 1 demonstrates that women's work routines are generally more flexible, less mechanical and complex, and include an interpersonal or humane orientation. In contrast, male routines are generally more demanding, quite mechanical, motivated more by tasks than personal relationships. It is important to note however the unique contributions of both male and female workers. Other researchers confirmed the findings offered by Helgesen. For instance, Claes (1991) describes flexibility and teamwork among feminine qualities. Colwill and Townsend (1999) suggest that many differences can be found in the masculine and feminine communication patterns. Other scholars have reached similar conclusions (Tannen, 1990; Gray, 1992). Males place a greater emphasis on power, competency, efficiency and achievement, and fear not being 'good enough'. The positive side of masculinity striving to achieve can be balanced however by a negative side that fear of making mistakes can lead to risk-averse and conservative behaviour (Tannen, 1990; Gray, 1992). While it is too ambitious to suggest males lack the capacity for superior understanding and communication, females appear to naturally value communication and building relationships. Working together towards a common purpose and understanding others also appears to be a natural trait (Helgesen, 1990; Claes, 1991).

Demographic and organisational contexts

In practice, diverse decision-making groups may fail to realise their potential. Diverse groups appear to marginalise some members on the basis of their demographic attributes (Tsui and O'Reilly, 1989; Hood and Koberg, 1994). A variety of decision-making perspectives available to the group will then be reduced negating the very benefits of diversity. Women are chiefly marginalized on the basis of socio-cultural stereotypes embedded in the structures and practices of many societies (Konrad, Winter, and Gutek, 1992; Ibarra, 1993). Societal norms, together with gender differences in the distribution of resources, have created a hierarchy of roles that awards status and authority to men (Ridgeway, 1991; Ibarra, 1993). Within an employment context, organisational norms generally reflect masculine values, and reinforce the status of male workers (Pettigrew & Martin, 1987). In TMTs, interactions between members may reflect existing norms creating barriers to the full participation of women (Hood & Koberg, 1994).

Peters (2002) suggests that to many women, the corporate culture represents the micro-political processes at work, which block career progress. Women experience political game playing, unwritten rules, gate keeping, the exclusiveness of the men's club and hierarchical organisational and team structure. Women recognise that withholding information and keeping people in the dark is a very effective marginalizing tool (Kirner & Rayner, 1999). A masculine style of informal decision-making place feminine style at a disadvantage due to a 'men's club' mentality in TMTs. Constant change and restructuring are often used as a strategy to keep men in power. Organisational environments frequently characterised by cloning processes which arise from an executive culture: "a masculine domain, not just comprising men, but dominated by values, norms, symbols and ways of operating that are oriented to men" (Sinclair, 1994: ix), are not conducive to real change.

Martell and DeSmet (2001) suggest that gender stereotypes have a potential effect on how women are treated. Scholars provide much evidence of gender discrimination against women in hiring decisions (Perry et al., 1994; Davison and Burke, 2000), and in the evaluations of women's performance (Martell, 1996; Bartol, 1999; Bowen et al., 2000). Female managers are frequently accorded less authority than male managers, (Reskin & Ross, 1995) and are presented with fewer challenging tasks and lower levels of responsibility (Lyness & Thompson, 1997). We argue in this discussion that all group members in TMTs should have equal opportunity to participate in high quality task and social interactions regardless of demographic features.

Work team participation

Boiney (2001) surveyed 245 work team members to explore men's and women's experiences and perspectives as part of a work team. The study revealed that women in general attribute perceived higher

performance to the level of participation. Overall, a higher percentage of women (77 per cent of women in the sample studied) reported higher levels of perceived team performance than men (55 per cent), on the basis of their opportunity to participate. Poor sharing of information was the top reported problem for females and severe team problems were perceived to be less of a problem for women than men. For instance, Edmondson and colleagues note the effects of poor information sharing in TMTs that: "overlook plausible options"…[and]…"members' awareness that relevant information did not surface is likely to erode commitment to implementing the team's decision" (2003: 305). By contrast, men identified "unclear or inappropriate expectations" as the most pervasive problem. Boiney's findings appear to support gender theorists' claim that women value relationships based on communication and understanding, while men's roles are defined more by task and status. While the former is consistent with gender studies (Grant, 1988; Hall, 1996), the latter connections between roles and task are superficial and mostly require further research.

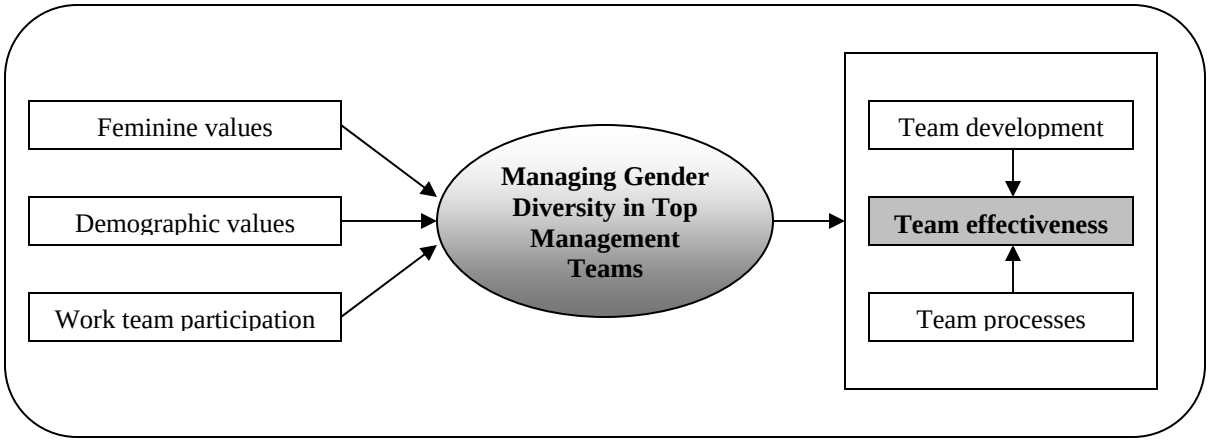


Figure 1. *Demographic values and work team participation in top management teams*

Managing gender diversity participation in teams poses an important managerial challenge. For instance, male participants tend to be most comfortable when a team's objectives are clarified to the greatest extent possible and individual roles of team members defined. Women, on the other hand, favour communication and other group maintenance activities clearly valued with task activities (Boiney, 2001). These findings highlight important differentiators for managing effective team processes. Managers might choose to discuss common gender differences with their teams to raise awareness and understanding in a similar way that teambuilding exercises include discussions of differences in personality types or in conflict resolution styles. Moreover, managers might emphasise the dual relationship between both clear objectives on the one hand and effective maintenance activities on the other. Linking both variables to team processes (among other things), might lead to greater team success and enhance participation rates.

Figure 1 describes the role of feminine and demographic values and work team participation in top management teams.

Leadership

Pounder and Coleman (2002) suggest that complementing the socialisation argument, a number of studies argue for significant differences in the practice of leadership between men and women. Rosener (1990) for example, in a survey of male and female executives with similar jobs and education and of a similar age, found that women are more transformational oriented than men. Rigg and Sparrow (1994) concluded that female leaders emphasised the team approach more than men and were regarded as more people oriented than their male counterparts, while male leaders were considered more paternalistic and authoritarian than female leaders. Kousez and Posner (1990), using their version of the transformational leadership model, found that female leaders were more likely than male leaders to practice "modelling the way" (walking the talk) and "encouraging the heart" (giving positive feedback to individuals and teams). While future research is needed to ascertain the specific leader characteristics of women, some recent research supports the notion of 'transformational-like' qualities. For instance, Kabacoff's (1998) study found that women are rated higher on people skills including sensitivity to others, ability to listen, and developing effective relationships with peers/managers. Women rated higher on excitement (energy and enthusiasm), communication (keeping people informed), feedback (detailing performed), and production (they set high standards). Similarly, women rated higher on empathy (active concern for others, forming close supportive networks) than their male counterparts. Kabacoff (1998) found that women rated higher on people-oriented skills, men on business-oriented leadership skills (cited in Claes, 1991: 442).

In building on the work of Pounder and Coleman (2002) and Rigg and Sparrow (1994), an emphasis placed on a team approach by female executives is consistent with recent studies of Australian leaders by Hubbard et al (2002) of TMTs. The latter study found that Australian workers prefer 'low-key' leaders who are not particularly charismatic but skilled in developing teams and building strong relationships. Similarly, a 'leader-as-coach' philosophy was a useful metaphor for describing leaders prepared to offer consistent guidance and encouragement similar to facilitative leaders (Whiteley & Hessan, 1996). The latter study of 100 successful leaders and 500 of their peers support the previous findings of female leader characteristics oriented more towards a passionate connectedness to others, a deep commitment to creating meaning, and a capacity to inspire and develop (Whiteley &d Hessan, 1996: 197). While much further research is needed to empirical validate the link between facilitative leader characteristics and female managers, it is possible that a greater evidence of feminine values improves the leadership capacity of TMTs over time.

Language and communication

Despite popular belief that feminine language generally lacks power and strength (Lakoff, 1975), feminine language can be redefined as a valuable interactional skill. Claes (1991) proposes that women's talk could be described as 'feminine' but not without value. In feminine language, workers are requested, not commanded, to perform tasks. In such conversations, aggressive behaviour and rude directness is avoided. Instead, women prefer to use indirect manners, with rising intonations, in order to preserve good relations within and outside the workplace. Indeed, women's converging conversational styles (Giles and Coupland 1991) make interaction easier by diminishing felt differences between conversational partners.

A recent conceptual model developed by Murray and Syed (in press) provides a basis by which to identify essential team learning domains that lead to increased team effectiveness. One of the domains (the enlightened domain) referred to "dynamic listening and talking skills that expose and highlight organisational issues through any medium or forum designed to maximise the quality of free-flowing interactions" (p. 12). Enlightened behaviours accordingly involve both interpersonal and interactive skills; scholars generally support the view that women rate highly on both (Claes, 1991; Kabacoff, 1998; Kousez & Posner, 1990). Organisations create interactive domains (e.g. meetings, socialisation), as a way to enhance and maximise the need for free-flowing talk whereas the benefits of interpersonal skills are well known. Claes (1991) argues that women are concerned not just with content however, relationships are equally important. Feminine communication goals are generally different than masculine, as are the modes and strategies adopted. The conventional rules of conversation for women must include the principle of collaboration for relations to remain strong (Claes, 1991). Collectively, listening and talking skills, free-flowing interactions, and collaboration, appear to be common norms for building productive relationships among female TMT executives.

Women and men have generally (though not always) different communication strategies, which can also reflect differences across group behaviour. Fischer and Gleijm (1992) describe communication strategies as the 'pecking order' for men and the 'crab basket' for women. In the pecking order it is important that hierarchical position is clear to everyone. The hierarchy has precedence over content in the pecking order. In the crab basket by contrast, the group is important so everyone is involved. As a result of these differences in communication strategies, women expect to 'wait' their turn and see a fair outcome, whereas men compete for the floor in order to establish a winner. Claes (1991) suggests that men's and women's public discourses are visibly different. For instance, men talk more often in meetings, and are more likely to determine the agenda for conversation. Power over speech however is more about powerful participants controlling the contribution of those with less power (Fairclough, 1989: 46). Consequently, female voices in TMTs are marginalized and communication styles remain undervalued in

organisational and group interactions. Claes (1991: 444) concludes that organisations will remain impoverished in managing the change process unless the structures and networks for mediating and diffusing knowledge, values and experiences, are expanded to include both women's and men's unique potential.

There is evidence that feminine conversational qualities are discounted in organisations. A number of reasons relating more to the way women act and react hamper women's participation in top management teams. Women tend to: (1) use imperatives in communication; tasks become requests, (2) avoid conflicts and aggression, (3) frequently say 'sorry' and feel responsible, (3) follow an open door policy, (4) give importance to personal relationships, and (5) seek approval. Similarly, women use indirect intonations in their speech, fear the abuse of power preferring to be 'nice' and attribute their success to others (Kanter, 1977 cited in Claes, 1991: 438).

Diversity representation

Teamwork and gender representation has been the focus of a number of recent studies. Koch and colleagues (2005) have investigated the differences in communication patterns of men and women on the basis of representation in organisations. For their study, they used Kanter's (1977) concept of *gender token*, which describes persons constituting less than 15 per cent of the entire group composition. It is however acknowledged that token can refer to any historically disadvantaged social identity group not just gender. Studies of gender token suggest that gender is more salient in team composition since gender-role behaviour is more pronounced than in teams with a balanced gender ratio. The concept also has implications for self-image and role-expectations. Kanter reported that token women are more likely to have their mistakes amplified, to be socially isolated, and to be found in roles that undermine their status. Gender differences on the basis of token women were more likely to be experienced by police officers, construction workers, fire fighters, military cadets, and law students (McDonald et al., 2004). It is well known however that gender token is widely practised in top management teams as well (De Cieri and Kramar, 2003).

Koch and colleagues (2005) report that gender token plays an important role in team communication at the workplace. While early token research assumed that gender-tokens of both genders would experience negative consequences, recent results indicate that only women are affected by negative outcomes (McDonald et al., 2004). Yoder and Sinnett (1985) suggest that token women experience increased visibility, a sense of social distance and isolation from their co-workers, increased stereotypic self-perception and behaviour (assimilation into stereotypes), and heightened pressure to perform well when they are members of a male-dominated work group. Token men generally do not experience the same negative outcomes. On the contrary, they may benefit from their token status by being promoted

without actively pursuing promotion (pp. 415-416). Cohen and Swim (1995) found that token women (particularly those low in self-confidence) had more negative expectations about working in a male-dominated group than non-token women, whereas gender-token and non-token men differed little in their expectations. A study by Yoder, Schleicher, and McDonald's (1998) showed that increasing status appears to result in positive implications for token women.

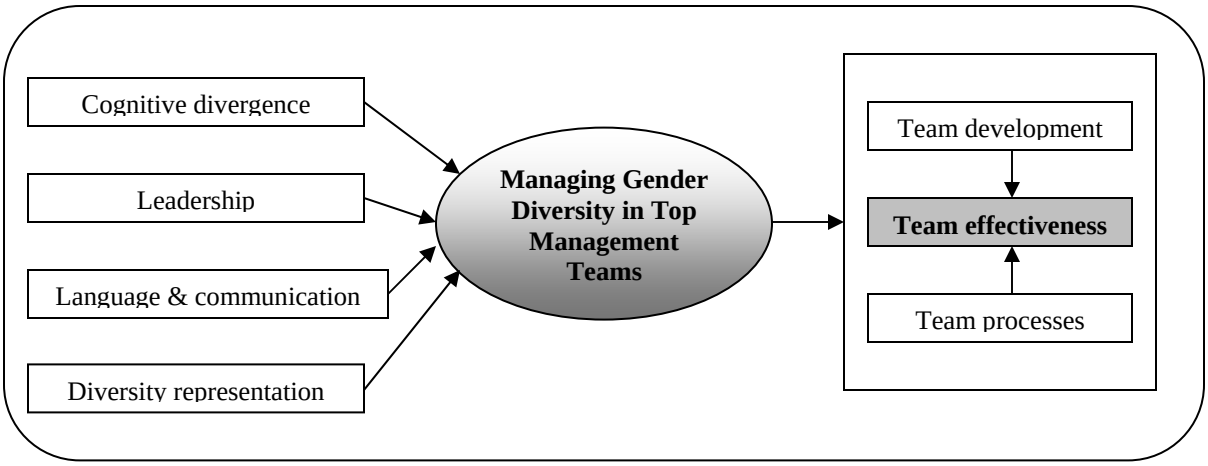


Figure 2. *Leadership values and diversity representation in top management teams*

The literature suggests that gender-tokens partially act more in line with gender-roles than across team members generally (Koch et al., 2005). The male token perception is communal and androgynous, dominant and competent compared to the token perception of women. The findings have implications for the construction of gender roles in top management teams. Gender-roles for instance are rather anchored in self-image and the image of other team members and not always observable from direct behaviour. In line with token research, attitudes to team gender appear to influence whether the token status opens or closes opportunities for women in TMTs. Experiences of gender token negatively affects the career-related consequences of women whereas there is little or no effect on men. Figure 2 describes the role of leadership values and diversity representation in top management teams.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper has demonstrated the need for expanding organisational routines and structures to include feminine values as a means for better managing gender diversity in the top management work teams. The discussion promotes the need to integrate skilled and talented women and men into a single, cohesive corporate culture that enables organisations to thrive in a global market (Weizmann & Weizmann, 2000). Women and men are increasingly being called upon to work together more effectively (Karakowsky &

Miller, 2002), and diverse TMTs provide additional challenges in the pursuit of effective performance. One such challenge involves a greater understanding of gender dynamics and its implications for group evolution and change. This will indeed involve highlighting and challenging the hegemonic masculine values and work routines in order to accommodate and value feminine values in organisations and teams. Karakowsky and Miller (2002) outlined three sources of influence on group responsiveness including gender roles, perceived expertise, and causal attribution patterns. While it is encouraging to see greater numbers of women entering the workplace, it is evident that gender differences and the sources of these differences must be understood. Simply de-segregating men and women into gender-mixed TMTs without knowledge of gender dynamics will result in a failure to exploit the abilities of all team members, potentially overlooking the potential strengths and weaknesses of team dynamics. Little evidence exists to support the claim that TMT composition reflects gender dynamics. In this paper, the latter has ranged from the need to recognise feminine qualities to a more collaborative free-flowing environment that reverses token representation.



Figure 3. *Managing gender diversity results in increased team effectiveness*

Every organisation benefits from maximising employee potential. Social constructs that tend to discount feminine qualities are detrimental to organisation's cumulative potential for productivity. An alternate focus that utilises feminine skills and talents is preferable. One paradigm shift that needs to occur in organisational routines can be achieved through a focus on training, teamwork, sharing of power and information, and networking. The importance of appreciating feminine traits is another. Kanter (1977) suggests that several barriers influence the success of women to break the "glass-ceiling" in TMTs. Structural and systemic barriers include unequal power and opportunity, a lack of mentors and sponsors, and a masculine, male-dominated corporate culture. Singh, Finn and Goulet (2004) suggest that organisational leaders must re-design jobs and work systems to make them amenable to the strengths of their employees, women and men, feminine and masculine. Other scholars have also suggested that job and work system re-design should include job enlargement, job enrichment, and more use of diverse

teams (Nahavandi & Aranda, 1994). Indeed, to better manage gender diversity, increased participation into line jobs will also help. Figure 3 highlights the significance of diverse contextual variables in achieving increased team effectiveness in gender diverse teams.

For gender diversity to be effectively managed, approaches to managing diverse TMTs we suggest should shift from the traditional functional structured approach based on traditional teams and their structured events to one based on partnership and collaboration. We have also argued that diverse skills are socially sustained and constructed in subjective time leading to greater team benefits. Measuring the effectiveness of TMTs may accordingly require more socially constructed measures (e.g. longitudinal studies), which are more responsive to multiple contexts. Organisations need to create a favourable climate allowing equal participation of women and men. We also note the need for masculine and feminine models to co-exist so that every organisation benefits from the best gender attributes offered. Given appropriate structures and workplace encouragement, talents geared towards empathy, communication and relationship building, and networking (amongst others) are unique attributes that benefit diverse TMTs. These talents need to be encouraged free of direct or indirect pressures to conform to the masculine rules of work. Collectively, it should be noted however that feminine values conform to male dominated managerial agenda's, which in no small measure accounts for workplace bias in favour of masculine values.

Organisational routines and team structures can be built in a manner that accommodates and combines masculine and feminine traits involving strategic thinking and communication skills. Both masculine and feminine values have a great deal to offer, and by extension, both women and men have something to learn from working together (Powell, 1988). In view of the current trends towards flatter organisations with lesser emphasis on bureaucratic hierarchies, organisations can no longer ignore feminine qualities. This reality is even more salient given the benefits of post-modern management's orientation towards open communication and open door policies, the emphasis on teamwork, increased training agendas, networking trends, and the equal sharing of power and information. While the paper has outlined the context-specific variables discussed, further research is needed to examine the variables highlighted through Figures 1 and 2 in the broad contexts. It is arguable that significant economic and workplace diversity gains cannot be made within the current functional-structured approach to managing top management teams. We suggest that a more socially constructed approach examining each context will more likely help to identify how such contexts become deeply embedded in diverse TMT behaviour.

There are already signs that the workplace of the future has to be different from the conventional Anglo-American capitalistic approach (Cameron, 1984). This will take the focus away from an aggressive, competitive and individualistic set of norms towards new organisational and team routines valuing flexibility, teamwork, and collaborative problem solving. In order to achieve this, there is a need

to challenge the masculine values embedded in commercial capitalism and the class struggles of the industrialised world. Indeed some scholars recognise that in today's most competitive global market, the cooperative behaviours more readily identified as feminine are increasingly important for organisations, and women's interactive style is valuable for problem solving (Hirsh & Jackson, 1989). Ideally, a dynamic and diverse workplace will reflect a move from the conventional masculine paradigms of work and management to more feminine core nurturing work styles. In fact, some scholars go so far as to suggest that in the new world of work, men's socialisation into the masculine traits of domination and control may become dysfunctional (Eisler, 1997: 107), since TMTs require a greater mix of cognitive and social skill.

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