
The authors conducted research to see how significant an impact “masculine culture” has in determining an individual’s motivation to move to upper level positions within an organization (315). Furthermore, van Vianen and Fisher hoped to base a conclusion from this data as to why women rarely hold such upper level positions. The authors pulled information from other researchers who still claim “the ‘glass ceiling’ effect” in today’s workplace (315). Those researchers claim the glass ceiling effect explains why a significant amount of women do not move into upper management type positions whereas their male counterparts tend to do so freely. In addition, van Vianen and Fisher identified traits common to masculine and feminine cultures to try and explain why men and women seem to lean towards one more than the other. The authors obtained information from another author that characterized the “masculine dimension” to consist of “the promotion of independence, autonomy, hierarchical relations, competition, task-orientation, and the establishment of status and authority” (316). On the other hand, that same author also described “femininity” as “the promotion of a relational self, maintaining balance in life activities, participation, and collaboration within the organization” (316). With the authors’ observation of more men in management positions than women, van Vianen and Fischer concluded that management positions typically consist of masculine rather than feminine cultures.

The authors conducted two studies in order to prove or disprove numerous hypotheses. The first study determined if a difference exists between “the types of organizational culture in which they [men and women] wish to work,” and whether or not their specific status within an organization had an affect on that choice (318). The authors conducted the second study to gain a better understanding of men and women with regards to “the relationships between culture preferences, career motives and ambition within one large governmental organization” (318).

The first study, conducted in the Netherlands, based conclusions on 327 questionnaire respondents from an initial 480 individuals. The authors then segregated the respondents into “74 career starters, 38 males and 36 females,” and “145 tenured employees, 104 male and 41 female,” and further into “108 middle-level managers, 95 males and 13 females” (319). The authors disclosed that few women in the Netherlands occupy the position of manager in organizations. The first hypothesis the authors studied proved “managers would have a stronger preference than non-managers for cultures that emphasize masculine values” (323). The results that helped to verify the second hypothesis showed men have a greater desire in comparison to women in an organization for “competition, effort, and work pressure” (323). The results also showed these separate male and female preferences lessened as employees moved higher up in the organization.

The second study, also conducted in the Netherlands, focused on one “governmental organization” (326). The authors used two groups of personnel, with the first group having 184 individuals out of a total of 430, and it “consisted of 83 men and 101 women” (326).
The authors then broke the group into “staff employees (in non-managerial positions) and middle managers” (326). The non-management position holders “consisted of 61 males and 81 females,” and the management position respondents “consisted of 22 males and 20 females” (326). The second group of 166 individuals came from a group of “245 ‘top managers’ ” comprised of “149 men and 17 women” (326). From the results of these groups, van Vianen and Fischer studied seven hypotheses. The hypotheses varied in their content, but overall, the study showed managers from “middle and higher levels, report stronger masculine culture preferences than do employees in non-managerial positions” (331). The results also identified a relationship between “managerial ambition” and “masculine culture preferences,” even among lower-level, non-management employees (331). Alternatively, women in various occupational levels demonstrate a lack of interest for masculine cultures. Furthermore, management position holders, in comparison to those occupying lower-level positions, displayed more motivation. Overall, women, regardless of their occupational status, “were shown to have weaker managerial ambitions than men” (331).

Taken as a whole, the authors explored various hypotheses with regards to why women and men differ in the amount of upper level positions each gender occupies, especially relating this information to the type of organizational culture each gender prefers. The authors, van Vianen and Fisher appear, for the most part, unbiased. Furthermore, the amount of females represented in the studies makes it difficult to gather an accurate representation of the characteristics attributable to men and women’s career decisions.

The authors, van Vianen and Fischer, explore the impact organizational culture has on individuals selecting a career at one organization or another. Alternatively, authors Liff and Ward, and the author Smith pursue how women’s careers are partially based on the structure of the organization. In addition, van Vianen and Fischer’s masculinity aspect parallels research done by the authors, Ledet and Henley. Ledet and Henley emphasized information gathered from another author that “masculinity was more about position within the organization than about gender” (Ledet 523-524). This coincides with van Vianen and Fischer’s data because they discussed that more men occupy upper level positions, and these men also favor more masculine cultures. Additionally, the concept of the glass ceiling, further supported in research by the authors Roth, and Liff and Ward, is the central topic for consideration by van Vianen and Fischer. Overall, the research done by van Vianen and Fischer relates to much of the data found already, and the authors make valuable ties amongst the research obtained.