



Between You and Me: What Women Tell Women About Working in Communication



Samiyyah Black, Mirza Carolina de la Fuente, Sofia de la Vega,
Carolina Estrada, Ashley Orozco, Andrew Trabazo, Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver,
Lillian Abreu, Emily Devine, and Robert E. Gutsche, Jr.

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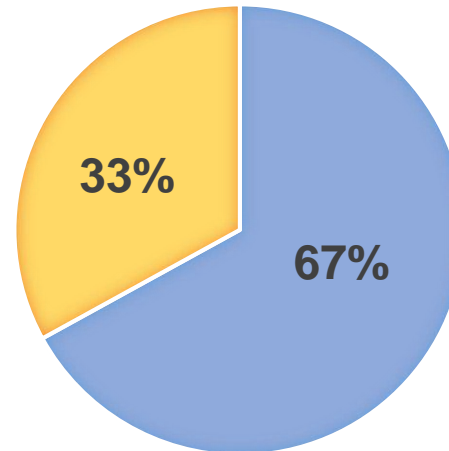
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Problem

Women make up a **larger part of the labor force** in communication fields, **but not** in terms of **high corporate positions**

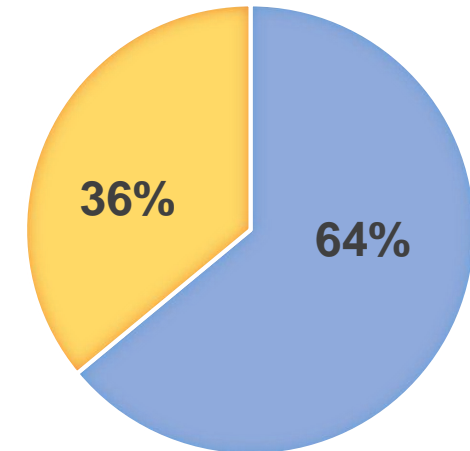
UNDERGRADUATE

■ Female ■ Male



GRADUATE

■ Female ■ Male



Research Questions

RQ 1: How do women in leadership positions in communication fields discuss issues of inequality of the sexes?

RQ 2: How do female communication leaders wish to prepare women to be leaders in these fields?

RQ 3: What solutions related to creating gender parity can be culled from these talks?



Methodology



Transcribe and analyze 13 talks by female communication leaders FIU's Lillian Lodge Kopenhagen Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication (kopenhagencenter.org)

Methodology

May 2013 to October 2015

Textual analysis of roughly 12 hours of video or audio; lecture notes; and presentations (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010)

Grounded approach in creating thematic analysis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Berkowitz & Eko, 2007)



Overarching Themes

Group Empowerment

Identity & Purpose in Field

Issues & Perceptions at Work

Taking Chances

Future Solutions



Group Empowerment

Group empowerment among women lacking in communication fields

Speakers said women tend to take on the burden of tasks alone

Speakers encouraged collaboration to empower women

“It’s my job as a leader is...to look at the people I have working with me now, not for me, with me. How do I get them to be creative and innovative and go in a direction they may not think they are even capable of going in- because that’s what [my mentor] did for me.”



Identity and Purpose

Speakers said women tend to compare their “truth and purpose” with others

Comparisons influenced by social norms in fields

Women then forced to make choices about “work/life balance”

“The reality is that overall a lot of the strengths of being a woman are all strengths in the workplace. We’re nurturers. We’re bridge builders. We’re problem solvers.”



Issues and Perception

Speakers said women face immense gender bias in the workplace

Women viewed as nuisance/aggressive v. Men viewed as self-assured/assertive

“...women who are in leadership positions are often labeled as demanding, bossy, domineering, arrogant, emotional, self-promoting. These are the same leadership behaviors [that] when practiced by a woman get one set of labels and when practiced by a man get another...”

Carolyn Bronstein, Associate Professor of Communication at DePaul University



Taking Chances

Speakers said that women traditionally not encouraged to “take chances”

Women forced to find opportunities to learn new technologies, be versatile

Women must “sit at the table”

“The potential is enormous. To me, the greater question is whether you feel three things. A: That change is really possible, B: Even more important, that it’s your responsibility to bring that change. ... and C: Those tools are available... I think great things are happening based on technology that enables civic participation.”

Geneva Overholser, Senior Fellow at the USC Annenberg Center for Communication Leadership and Policy



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Discussion

RQ 1: How do women in leadership positions in communication fields discuss issues of inequality of the sexes?

Systemic obstacles block women from advancing into leadership roles

RQ 2: How do female communication leaders wish to prepare women to be leaders in these fields?

Women are able to address power inequalities

RQ 3: What solutions related to creating gender parity can be culled from these talks?

Increase mentorship programs, integrate leadership skills into SJMC education, provide advanced technological training



Next Steps

Future research should examine differences between gender identities, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and age

Related whitepaper to be released at April 21 event

Feminist Media Studies submission



References

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Thank You & Questions



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