

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Gender competence bias communication at work: Exploring mansplaining, voice nonrecognition, and interruption behaviors

Catlin Q. Briggs
briggs25@msu.edu

Danielle Gardner
gardn333@msu.edu

Ann Marie Ryan
Michigan State University, ryanan@msu.edu

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Abstract

Gender, competence perceptions, and communication at work can impact the way women perceive the workplace, and oftentimes not in the best way. As discrimination shifts from overt to subtle, it is important to examine how these factors affect women who are striving to succeed at work. This study was a critical incidents survey focused on mansplaining, voice nonrecognition, and interruption behaviors as perpetrated by men toward women employees in the workplace. The women workers we surveyed provided rich accounts of these behaviors and indicated negative emotional reactions; however, half of these women chose not to do anything in response to these incidents. Moreover, women did not necessarily see these incidents as sexist or gender-biased. Regression analyses indicated that there were differences across incident types, such that status of the respondent and the extent to which the workplace was male-dominated emerged as important predictors of reactions and responses. Going forward, we plan to use the preliminary findings garnered from these critical incident survey responses to conduct an experimental study.

Keywords: gender, competence, communication at work, mansplaining, employee voice, voice nonrecognition, interruption behavior