

Business Administration

Gender-specific aspects of business administration, including in particular organisation, HR, marketing, controlling and feminist epistemologies

Course: Business Administration

Group of courses: Law, Economics and Social Sciences

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Table of contents

Course objectives	2
Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content	2
Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum	2
Degree Stage	5
Basic Literature/Recommended Reading	5
Journals	5

Course objectives:

Objective:

- Questioning the alleged gender-neutrality of the discipline of business administration and locating feminist business administration
- Analysis of the (re)production processes of genders and gender relations in business administration and selected sub-disciplines (such as Organisation, HR, Marketing), with reference to relevant approaches of feminist epistemologies and diversity approaches
- Methodological critique of hegemonic masculinity in microeconomic theories
- Analysis of constructions of gender dichotomies in (business) organisations
- Origins and functional equivalents of discriminatory structures and functions

Skills to be gained:

- Ability to analyse microeconomic theory and practice regarding performance/practice of gender
- Gender competence in business administration instruments for creating equal opportunities

Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

Starting with the various feminist epistemologies (gender as a variable, feminist standpoint theory, feminist postmodernism/post-structuralism and feminist post-colonialism), students should investigate the conditions of construction and the reproduction processes of gender and gender relations in the discipline of business administration.

In concrete terms, this means using deconstruction to reveal the binary gender logic of business administration and thus make visible the marginalisation and centralisation and the inclusion and exclusion of certain gender constructions. It also means opening up the discourse space and the possibility of introducing gender representations above and beyond binary gender logic into the discourse of microeconomics.

Although such a deconstructive approach takes place according to the same pattern in all sub-disciplines of business administration, there are differences between the disciplines that require particular attention. Due to limited time resources in this degree, these areas are limited to Organisation, HR, Marketing and Controlling, although there are also gender-relevant aspects in other sub-disciplines such as Insurance, Banking and Finance.

Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

A "general" gender module, which is assumed to be appropriate, should analyse and criticise processes of gendering in capitalist market-economy companies. To do so, students should either have previous knowledge of, or be taught about, women's "double societalisation" (R. Becker-Schmid) and its effects on work structures (M. Goldmann, B. Aulenbacher, K. Gottschall), theories of gender politics within market-economic processes (H. Nickel) and professionalisation processes (A. Wetterer), and the symbolic-cultural construction and critique of binary gender relations (S. Gherardi).

There are numerous studies and recommendations on the sub-disciplines of

1. Organisation Theory
2. HR Management
3. Marketing
4. Controlling

which can be integrated into a Gender & Business Administration curriculum. On a further 5 methodological level, epistemological questions of (de)construction of binary gender models are relevant in microeconomic theory. This division into partial modules corresponds to the disciplinary structure of many business administration degree courses.

The sub-modules should analyse and critique the processes of gendering and reproduction of gender-typifying structures with reference to gender theories on the deconstruction of gender dichotomies and to theories from the critique of hegemonic masculinity.

Organisation Theory

- The aim of this sub-module is to reveal the binary structure of organisation theory and organisations and to make the conditions of their construction visible. The prerequisites for such analyses are basic feminist epistemologies (Harding) and a basic knowledge of deconstruction (Derrida) and discourse analysis (Foucault). Initially, students look at central texts from organisation theory in detail from a gender and diversity perspective. Basic organisational texts are investigated for their implicit gender constructions, with discussion of the resulting implications for theory and practice. The texts include historical organisational approaches (e. g. Weber, Taylor, Barnard, Simon, etc.). Recent approaches (e. g. Weick) are also used to show the persistence of gender and diversity subtexts in organisation theory and recent management literature (R. Bendl, E. Kelan, J. Martin, M. Calas/L. Smircich). On the methodological level, lecturers can work with deconstruction (overturning and metaphorisation) and discourse analysis to show the discursive reproduction of power relations between the various social groups in the organisational texts (I. Koall, R. Bendl). The following sessions deal with the reproduction of hegemonic male power in organisational practice. The focus is on closed male-dominated structures of organisations (D. Raststetter) and the effects of career patterns on gender-constituting mechanisms in organisations (A. Hofmann). Another topic addressed is how the production of hegemonic male power can be continued even under new career paradigms in (postmodern) organisations ('boundaryless career paradigm', Ellig/Thantchenkery).

HR Management

- This sub-module reveals the professional parameters for women within gender-differentiated hierarchies, income structures, working conditions and areas of activity. It is assumed that equal opportunity programmes (Total E-Quality, Gender Mainstreaming, Managing Diversity) can serve a primary corporate interest in staff loyalty. The process of change of gender hierarchies and barriers investigated with reference to women in management positions. In this area, research findings and recommendations for career development, HR development, HR selection, HR marketing, career concepts and paths of dual career couples, and work abroad for female management staff are relevant (Ch. Autenrieth, M. Domsch, A. Hadler, K. Hansen, E. Regnet). In contrast, empirical studies on women in management positions illustrate the marginal effects of these corporate initiatives for change in traditional corporate structures based on gender hierarchies, and point out the efficiency, flexibility and career benefits that women can develop in their own, independently run companies (S. Bischoff). This emphasis on the future of female entrepreneurship analyses and discusses images of entrepreneurs, based

on empirical studies on changes in traditional, organisation-centred professional and career developments (A. Bührmann/K.Hansen), with the goal of developing new discursive, gender-empowering strategies for women starting out in their careers. A more HR policy-oriented perspective focusing on micropolitical processes in corporate arenas illustrates the need for integration of equal opportunities into all principles, procedures, instruments and practices of HR policy (G. Krell). This approach addresses equality policy as a superordinate management task, the movement of female staff through the enterprise (recruiting, introduction, personnel evaluation, qualification, work-life regulations, work abroad), and areas of work organisation (gender-typical division and valuation of labour, working time regulations), differing pay, corporate social policy, leadership behaviour and team development. In contrast, economic HR concepts generating economic behaviour models on the basis of methodological individualism or behaviour-based empirical analyses tend to perpetuate gender dichotomies, but can vary in their political implications (Alewell). The link to further-reaching concepts of anti-discrimination such as Managing Diversity (including social criteria such as age, race, social origin, religion) can be taught with reference to established inclusive concepts, e. g. the anti-discriminatory instruments of Human Resource Management (R. Bendl, R. Ely, K. Hansen, I. Koall, G. Krell). The aim of this module is to teach understanding for gendered processes, instructions and recommendations for the development of anti-discriminatory and sustainable corporate measures, and to integrate women's potential in a more effective way.

Marketing

- The marketing industry is very resistant in its reproduction of traditional gender stereotypes (Catterall, Miriam/McLaran, Pauline/Stevens, Lorna). The thesis of "gender-sensitive" marketing studies can also be criticised (Hansen). The prerequisites for such analyses are basic feminist epistemologies (Harding) and a basic knowledge of deconstruction (Derrida) and discourse analysis (Foucault). Revealing mechanisms of gender reproduction takes place on several levels:
1. Reproduction of gender relations in marketing texts: students investigate which gender relations are reflected in textbooks on marketing and consumer behaviour (Meffert, Becker, etc.). Older and new marketing literature can be used for this analysis
 2. Consumer behaviour, gender-relevant product, price, sales and communication policy
 3. Gender-specific market segmentation, study of target group definitions for conditions of construction, 'new' marketing target groups, diversity marketing
 4. Reproduction of gender stereotypes in advertising (analysis of current TV ads for gender stereotypes)
 5. Marketing as a closed male society analysis of women's and men's positions in the industry

Gender Controlling/Gender Budgeting

- The implementation of gender perspectives in business takes place as part of microeconomic "objectifying" discursive strategies of gender controlling. This exclusive rationality is discriminatory as regards gender, class and race. "Accounting for Gender" analyses the production and reproduction of gender stereotypes and binary gender relations in representations of financial accounting (Becker). In contrast, controlling on the basis of clearly defined targets with measurable indicators offers a good opportunity to integrate "soft" social targets into "hard" microeconomic facts. The social indicators on equality (e. g. percentages in certain hierarchical areas) are linked with the corporate targets or previous corporate policies, enabling the calculation of social realities. One controlling instrument is the "Balance Score

Card" (Kaplan/Norton), which systematically works towards social targets by defining indicators, timeframes, strategies, operative implementation steps, evaluation of steps and processes on the basis of systematic actual/target comparisons. Process observation and control can be discussed on the basis of objectifying data and are more difficult to block and devalue on the level of micropolitical activities. Gender controlling can be understood as a gender analysis (Faulstich-Wieland), a process evaluation (Ulshöfer), a gender consequences assessment (GenderkompetenzZentrum) or a strategic-integrative concept (Wiltzius) of controlling, in which all areas of planning, analysis and control are enriched by the gender aspect. We also recommend integrating the experiences and results of gender mainstreaming processes with the subject of gender budgeting into students' regular teaching on controlling. Although initially used in the public sector, we can assume that gender budgeting will be transferred to the private sector when it comes to a gender-comparative calculation of gendered flows of money, for example in HR (ROI - Return on Human Investment), i.e. the balance of costs (recruiting costs, investments in wages and further training) and added value generated by the work of men/women. This shows, for example, the concealed costs of non-updated HR potential as a negative factor in the analysis of human capital, and contrasts gender-differentiated corporate expenditure on wages and salaries (15-20%) with the benefits of women's and men's work (Domsch/Ladwig). This method shows that discrimination of women in companies has a cost-benefit side, which can be made public in gender budgeting & controlling. The gender budgeting analysis illustrates how cashflow can be diverted and transformed into resources for specific areas with significant connotations, and used for the reproduction of discursive and material "meaning" in companies. Social inequalities are manifested in the parameters of cashflow. This requires "supplementary logics" (Derrida) to cover extra work done by women on behalf of men. The aim of the sub-module is to liberate the "rationality" of business administration thought and behaviour from the discriminatory connotations of gender difference and to reveal and make use of the power-orientation of microeconomic indicators. This implies addressing discursive practices and strategies of the construction of binary gender models in microeconomics, which is outlined in the next module.

Philosophy of Economics

- This sub-module analyses epistemological issues of the construction of microeconomic statements and criticises them with relation to their tendency to produce binary gender categories. Students analyse the basic assumptions of microeconomic theories based on cross-disciplinary epistemological models for the description of corporate and social facts (Osterloh/Grand). The objects of feminist epistemological critique are: dichotomous images of people in microeconomics, inclusion/exclusion of issues in microeconomic research on the basis of scientific policy, prescription of classifications, devaluating processes for the reduction of social complexity, etc. These can be evaluated using the above deconstructive procedures (Bendl, Koall).

Degree Stage:

Master's programme

Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

Bendl, Regine (2006a, Hrsg.): Betriebswirtschaftslehre und Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. Teil 1: Verortung geschlechterkonstituierender Reproduktionsprozesse. Peter Lang Verlag, Frankfurt/Main-Wien-New York

Bendl, Regine (2006b, Hrsg.): Betriebswirtschaftslehre und Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. Teil 2: Empirische Ergebnisse zur Standortbestimmung. Peter Lang Verlag, Frankfurt/Main-Wien-New York

Bendl, Regine/Hanappi-Egger, Edeltraud/Hofmann, Roswitha (2004): Interdisziplinäres Gender- und Diversitätsmanagement. Eine Einführung in Theorie und Praxis. Linde Verlag, Wien

Catterall, Miriam/McLaran, Pauline/Stevens, Lorna (2000, Hrsg.): Marketing and Feminism. Current Issues and Research. Routledge, London

Domsch Michel E./Hadler, Antje & Krüger, Detlev (1994): Personalmanagement & Chancengleichheit. Betriebliche Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung beruflicher Chancen von Frauen in Hamburg, München und Mering

Koall, Iris (2001): Managing Gender & Diversity - von der Homogenität zur Heterogenität der Organisation der Unternehmung, LIT, Hamburg

Konrad, Alison M./Prasad, Pushkala/Pringle, Judith K.(2006): Handbook of Workplace Diversity.SAGE Publications, Newbury Park, London, New Delhi

Krell, Gertraude (1997; Hrsg.): Chancengleichheit durch Personalpolitik. Gabler Verlag, Wiesbaden

Krell, Gertraude (2005; Hrsg.): Betriebswirtschaftslehre und Gender Studies. Gabler Verlag, Wiesbaden

Lange, Ralf (1998): Geschlechterverhältnisse im Management von Organisationen. Rainer Hampp Verlag. München und Mering

Maier, Friederike/Regenhard, Ulla/Carl, Andrea Hilla (1994, Hrsg): Ökonomische Theorien und Geschlechterverhältnis - Der männliche Blick der Wirtschaftswissenschaft, edition sigma, Reihe FHW Forschung Band 23/24, Berlin

Mills, Albert J./Tancred, Peta (1991): Gendering Organizational Analysis, SAGE Publications, Newbury Park, London, New Delhi

Powell, Gary N. (1999): Handbook of gender and work.SAGE Publications, Newbury Park, London, New Delhi

Journals:

EFAS-Netzwerk Ökonominnen[br]Gender, Work and Organization; Feminist Theory; European Journal of Women's Studies[br]Organization; Organization Studies; Journal of the Academy of Management