

generation neXXt



Cambia
INFORMATION GROUP

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the data to drive change

GENERATION-NEXXT.COM

generation neXXt is a research initiative looking at the attitudes and concerns of young women at universities around the world as they approach the workplace and the beginning of their careers. It aims to provide employers, universities and policymakers with data and insights about what drives the career decisions of talented, high-potential young women and their view on the state of gender equality.

Perceptions matter

3,000+ student voices at leading universities around the world.

50%

Young women see gender bias as an impediment to higher pay and promotion – men don't. 48% of female respondents say that their gender will negatively impact their promotion prospects and 50% say it will negatively impact their pay. Men do not see their gender affecting their careers in the same way. In fact, just 11% of male respondents say their gender will negatively impact their pay and promotion prospects. More telling still, 44% of men believe gender will be an advantage in terms of career advancement – just 23% of women see things this way.

Among UK responses, 60% of women feel that their gender will have a negative impact on their career progress, and 62% say it will hold back their pay.

62%

OF FEMALE STUDENTS BELIEVE THAT WOMEN HAVE TO TRY HARDER TO ACHIEVE THE SAME SUCCESS AS THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS. ONLY 33% OF MEN DISAGREE.

IN THE UK, FIGURES ARE EVEN MORE STARTLING: 70% OF WOMEN BELIEVE THEY WILL HAVE TO TRY HARDER THAN THEIR MALE PEERS, AND 47% OF MALE RESPONDENTS AGREE.

39%

OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS IN THE UK SAY THAT GENDER WILL NEGATIVELY IMPACT THEIR CHOICE OF CAREERS, WHEREAS JUST 13% OF MEN DO.

58%

OF FEMALE STUDENTS THINK EMPLOYERS NEED TO DO MORE TO ADDRESS GENDER INEQUALITY. 31% OF MALE STUDENTS AGREE.

IN THE UK, 70% OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS FEEL THAT EMPLOYERS AREN'T DOING ENOUGH, AND 42% OF THEIR MALE PEERS AGREE.

44%

Gender bias is not a pre-millennial issue, set to 'wash through' as sexist men give way to a more enlightened generation. Young women believe that their male counterparts are set to perpetuate the gender bias that they see today – and many men agree with them. 44% of female respondents disagreed with the statement that men of their age are gender neutral, and 32% of male respondents share that view.

Among UK students, 52% of women believe that their male peers are not gender neutral in their perception of careers, with 39% of male respondents endorsing this view.

The same but different

Ambition

Women are every bit as ambitious as men – arguably slightly more so. 79% of female respondents want to get to the top of their career with 23% saying this is an essential goal.

This finding is actually slightly higher than the comparable figure for male respondents – 75% of men want to get to the top and only 19% see it as an essential goal. Men and women have roughly the same financial ambitions, though women place a slightly higher importance on high earnings in the long term over men with 53% versus 47% seeing this as a high priority or an essential goal. Men, by contrast, place a slightly higher value on a high starting salary – 32% versus 28%, although if the figures are extended to include those who see it as a moderate priority, the gap closes – 65% men vs. 67% women.

Travel

Women want to travel – more than men do.

44% of female respondents see being able to travel and see the world through their job as a high priority or an essential goal – and a further 29% see this as ‘moderately’ important. Men also want to travel, but they put a little less emphasis on this with 35% seeing it as a high priority or essential goal.

People

Women place a higher value on the nature of their working relationships than men do and they express a desire to ‘contribute’ to society more than men do.

66% of female respondents see working with people they respect and whose company they enjoy as either a high priority or an essential goal. 48% of male respondents share this view.

58% of female respondents indicate that giving back to society in a meaningful way through their work is either a high priority or an essential goal; just 41% of men take this view.

Family

Even for young women, the potential to fit family commitments into a working life is a live issue and one that is likely to drive their choice of careers and employers.

48% of female respondents said that having a flexible work schedule that enables them to balance family commitments is either a high priority or an essential goal. Interestingly, this does not necessarily mean remote working; just 27% see this as high priority or essential. Male respondents prioritise these goals slightly less: 39% valuing flexible work schedules and 25% valuing remote working.

The usual suspects

Some sectors are perceived to be more gender biased against women (towards men) than others. Figures indicate the percentage of female respondents who believe the sector is biased towards men, while figures in brackets show the percentage of male respondents who agree.

Global sectors

- 1 Construction and extractive industries 63.3 (37.6)
- 2 Agriculture 58.8 (30.8)
- 3 Engineering 58.7 (31.6)
- 4 Sports 55.6 (36.5)
- 5 Technology and IT 55.4 (27.6)
- 6 Investment banking and financial markets 52.7 (26.3)
- 7 Government and policy 51.8 (28.2)
- 8 Banking and financial services 47 (23.9)
- 9 Management consultancy 38.2 (24.3)
- 10 Law 37.9 (21.1)
- 11 Further education and research 27.3 (18.1)
- 12 Entertainment 25.4 (21.9)
- 13 Medicine and healthcare 24.5 (15.7)
- 14 Marketing, advertising and PR 22.4 (15.2)
- 15 Media and communications 22.3 (15.5)
- 16 Education and library services 12.5 (13)
- 17 Hotel, catering and hospitality 12.5 (12.9)
- 18 Community and social care 11.9 (13)

UK sectors

While the pattern is broadly the same, focusing on the UK only suggests a significantly greater perception or awareness of gender bias in major industry sectors. However, major sectors are perceived to be gender biased by a greater proportion of our survey than they are globally – i.e. the effect is more acute. This is especially true in Engineering, IT and Tech, Investment Banking, and Government and policy.

- 1 Construction and extractive industries 74 (56)
- 2 Engineering 73 (55)
- 3 Investment banking and financial markets 71 (49)
Technology and IT 71 (49)
- 4 Government and policy 69 (49)
- 5 Agriculture, fishing and forestry 68 (46)
- 6 Sports 67 (52)
- 7 Banking and financial services 64 (45)
- 8 Law 49 (29)
Management consultancy 49 (35)
- 9 Further education/research 34 (22)
- 10 Medicine and healthcare (inc. Pharma) 31 (15)
- 11 Entertainment 29 (14)
- 12 Marketing, advertising and public relations 27 (18)
- 13 Media and communications 26 (15)
- 14 Hotel, catering and hospitality 10 (10)
Education and library services 10 (11)
- 15 Community and social care 8 (9)

The sample:

- 3,000+ students at leading universities around the world
- 1,100 responses from UK
- 2:1 female to male (9:2 in UK)
- 47 countries

- 75% bachelor/undergraduate degrees, 25% postgraduate
- Even split across year groups
- Broad range of subjects/disciplines
- Participation in survey confidential and unpaid

Commentary

generation neXXt's preliminary findings give a number of clear messages, none of which are likely to surprise women in the corporate world, but which should make employers and policymakers take note.

Ambitious women

The statistics relating to women getting to senior positions in all walks of life are damning. What generation neXXt confirms is that they are not the result of a lack of ambition on the part of the young women entering the talent pipeline. Neither can they be attributed to any unwillingness to travel for work. The young women hitting the careers market today are ambitious for success, for status and for high earnings – just like men. But when only 42% of graduate hires are women, despite women making up 59% of UK graduates, it is clear that there are obstacles to their progress – real or perceived – and that these are impacting the decisions young women make. Half of the young women we surveyed believe that simply being a woman will hold back their pay and promotion. And who is to argue when the gender pay gap in the UK stands at 19%*?

There are also messages for employers. When 66% of young women – nearly a fifth higher than their male peers – place a high priority on working with people who they respect and whose company they enjoy, employers need to consider making workplace diversity and the 'flavour' of their culture more in their attraction strategies. When young women say they want to be respected and admired for the status and prestige of their role,

and that they want to 'give back' to society through their work, employers can respond by clearly communicating the value of their activities and the way that individual roles contribute to the success of the wider enterprise.

Data to drive action

What generation neXXt does, more than anything else, is to transform anecdote into data. generation neXXt didn't invent the idea that women have to try harder and do more just to stay level with their male peers – but the fact that 62% of young women recognise it, and that 36% of men agree, says employers have to more clearly communicate their own programmes and initiatives and come together to change perceptions. And when 31% of the female talent coming out of university says that gender will negatively affect their career choices, that imperative becomes even more pressing. Are employers doing enough to tackle gender inequality? 58% of young women don't think so – and over 30% of men agree. Many employers are working hard and innovatively to better support women's career progression but is there more that can be done to engage young women earlier and help to overturn longstanding gender-related preconceptions? Young women certainly seem to think so when 58% of the those surveyed say that employers are not doing enough to tackle gender inequality. But it is not just about employers – when so many of young women say that their male peers – the men with whom they are competing for roles now and promotions in the future – see careers through gender-biased eyes, we must all acknowledge that there is work to be done.

*Fawcett Society 2014

Who is behind generation neXXt?

generation neXXt is a joint-enterprise initiative between London-based employer branding agency ThisCity, and Texas-based Cambia Information Group, a market research consultancy.

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