

Enabling Gender Equality in Leadership: An Exploration of Leadership and Self-Awareness, Using Community Participatory Action Research Methods

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Abstract : This research explores the characterization of leadership, self-awareness, and gender identity within a higher educational institution. This is in response to the widely researched area of gender in relation to senior management levels and the contemporary reflection of this issue in leadership, where gender diversity is lacking. Through organizational platforms, the University has self-identified issues relating to gender, equality, and representation. With equality being central to the core of the project, a Community Participatory Action Research approach was implemented. This approach was chosen as it is recognized for facilitating change within community contexts which complements the University Campus culture. Seventeen semi-structured interviews gave qualitative insight into working habitus (from both professional and academic services), leadership attributions and qualities and gender significance within the workplace. The research team (cross-disciplinary) used framework analysis to code and categorized the data. Key findings presented categories in gender significance to personal/work identity, organizational change and positive reflections on leadership characteristics and roles. This research has helped support the creation of tools to better assist the organization in gender equality, inclusion, and leadership development.

Keywords : gendered work, gender equality, leadership, university organization

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