Public Abstract

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Women dominate public relations, making up 70 percent of its work force; however, women only fill 20 percent of the top leadership roles in major agencies. The issue of gender and leadership in public relations needs to shift toward those women who are leaders, examining the factors that make them successful (Aldoory, 2005). To better understand how gender affects leadership within public relations, this research applies feminist theory to a case study at an international public relations firm located in the Midwest, MW. Twelve in-depth interviews with subordinates and managers yielded thick descriptions regarding gender's influence on leadership styles, personnel decisions, mentoring abilities, work-life balance perceptions and thoughts on equality in the work place. Findings show that the many factors of the employee's overall social location (class, race, etc) trumps gender when it comes to leadership styles, mentoring relationships, gender disparity, work-life balance and hiring/promoting. Thus, according to the feminist theory of intersectionality, gender is just part of the domination matrix that contributes to a lack of women in public relations leadership.