

Shiseido DE&I Lab Publishes Empirical Findings on Advancing True Gender Equality in Organizations Addressing Unconscious Bias as an Organizational Issue, Not Just an Individual One

The Shiseido DE&I Lab, which studies the relationship between diverse talent and corporate growth, has published on its website its findings for the theme of "From Women's Empowerment to Gender Equality."

Summary of Findings

Shiseido has long been committed to promoting women's empowerment through various initiatives, including raising the awareness of both supervisors and employees, reforming working styles, and changing employment practices. As a result, the percentage of female managers in Shiseido's domestic group has exceeded 40%¹ However, some departments still have a low percentage of female managers. In collaboration with Professor Shintaro Yamaguchi's team² from the University of Tokyo, Shiseido focused on these departments to statistically analyze the factors contributing to gender inequality.

In the first part of the study published in April 2024, it was found that while there was no gender difference in performance capabilities, men were more likely to be assigned more challenging roles. Additionally, it was revealed that in some positions (grades), male supervisors tended to give higher evaluations to male subordinates than to female subordinates. These findings led to the hypothesis that unconscious bias might be at play. The second part of the study focused on examining organizational biases.

The visualization of biases revealed that women had a higher awareness of gender equality but also exhibited higher levels of unconscious bias. This suggests that while women are more conscious of gender equality, they are also more likely to be constrained by traditional gender roles.

Furthermore, in terms of the relationship between organizational homogeneity and bias, it was observed that organizations with extremely low or high ratios of female managers tended to have stronger unconscious biases. This suggests that a lack of gender balance can amplify organizational biases. Therefore, achieving a balanced gender ratio among organizational leaders and enhancing diversity are considered crucial steps toward reducing bias. Contrary to initial assumptions, the hypothesis that supervisors held strong gender biases was not supported, highlighting the need to address bias as an organizational issue rather than an individual one. Based on this knowledge, the following approaches are considered effective for advancing true gender equality in organizations:

1. **Achieve Gender Balance:** Strive for gender balance to eliminate homogeneity among organizational leaders and incorporate diverse perspectives.
2. **Company-wide Approach:** Instead of targeting only specific groups, recognize the issue as an organizational one. And by providing opportunities for every member of the organization to confront their biases, foster a culture where preconceived notions and assumptions are questioned, and different perspectives are noticed and accepted.
3. **Continuous Evaluation:** Regularly measure organizational biases and develop responsive strategies based on the results.

These approaches are deeply connected to the principles of DE&I, emphasizing esteem for diversity, providing fair opportunities, and accepting different perspectives. It is crucial to embed these practices into the organizational culture and continuously evaluate and improve them. Shiseido DE&I Lab will continue its research to drive organizational transformation and achieve true gender equality, ensuring that all employees can demonstrate their full potential.

1. As of January 1, 2024

2. This research is being led by Professor Shintaro Yamaguchi, with Associate Professor Yoko Okuyama from the Department of Economics at Uppsala University and Visiting Researcher at the University of Tokyo's CREPE participating as a co-researcher.

About Shiseido DE&I Lab

Shiseido has a long history of promoting women's empowerment and has accumulated a wealth of case studies that provide insights into advancing DE&I. With the aim of contributing to the promotion of DE&I in Japanese society by publishing findings from Shiseido's experiences and data, as well as empirical research conducted in collaboration with Professor Shintaro Yamaguchi's team from the University of Tokyo, the Shiseido DE&I Lab was established in February 2023 with its website being launched in March 2024.

Shiseido DE&I Lab: <https://corp.shiseido.com/deilab/en/>

Outlook

The Shiseido DE&I Lab initially focused on the long-standing issue of "Gender Equality/Women's Empowerment" in Japan, examining the relationship between organizational bias and women's empowerment. Moving forward, the lab will continue to visualize and track changes in biases regularly. The next challenge will be to examine "Equity" (providing fair opportunities) and "Inclusion" (accepting different perspectives) once diversity is achieved. By quantifying the inclusive factors necessary for creating an organization that respects diverse opinions and differences, the lab aims to provide insights for achieving inclusive organizational management.

As the first step, an internal case study on how an organization composed of diverse backgrounds achieved innovation through inclusion will be published on the Shiseido DE&I Lab website in mid-November.

Shiseido's Commitment to DE&I

Shiseido positions Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) as a key management strategy to create an organizational culture where employees recognize and respect individual differences, regardless of gender, age, or nationality, and continuously generate innovation through these synergies. Leveraging the experience and knowledge accumulated through past initiatives, Shiseido has set strategic actions to achieve "Gender Equality" and "Empowerment through Beauty," aiming to support one million people by 2030. Shiseido will continue to focus on "Respect for the Human Rights of All Stakeholders" as the foundation for creating an inclusive society where everyone can be themselves, in collaboration with employees and other stakeholders.

Shiseido's Sustainability Society: <https://corp.shiseido.com/en/sustainability/society/>