

EVERYDAY BEHAVIOUR PROJECT

JOINTLY LAUNCHED BY:

MAYER | BROWN



UNDERSTANDING
EVERYDAY
BEHAVIOUR
& GENDER
EQUALITY
ISSUES

IN HONG KONG'S
LEGAL SECTOR

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing body of research worldwide that highlights the gender inequality faced by women in the workplace. This can take the form of everything from subtle biases through to outright sexism. For example, Women in the Workplace 2018, the largest comprehensive study of the state of women in corporate America, found that two-thirds of women face microaggressions in the workplace. First coined by Harvard University psychiatrist Chester Pierce and popularised by Columbia University psychologist Derald Wing Sue, microaggressions are "everyday verbal, non-verbal and environmental slights, snubs or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to target persons based solely on their marginalised group members".



In Hong Kong, a membership survey conducted by the Law Society in 2019 found gender discrimination the most prevalent form of discrimination, followed by family status discrimination. The survey found that while women make up 65% of trainees, only 30% of partners are women, and we suspect that a key reason why the proportion of female lawyers decreases as they become more senior might be due to the negative everyday experiences faced by female lawyers and potentially business support staff as well.

Despite the speculation, there is an acute lack of data around issues relating to microaggressions in Hong Kong and specific to the legal profession which makes it challenging for such issues to be substantiated by statistical evidence and formally addressed. This inspired us to want to find out exactly what types of behaviour women in Hong Kong's legal sector are facing and how they are reacting to it. With this data, the Hong Kong legal sector can work towards addressing subtle discriminatory behaviour, closing gender gaps in career advancement and promoting a fair working environment.

Under this premise, **Mayer Brown** and **Women in Law Hong Kong (WILHK)** joined forces to conduct the first of its kind research survey that aims to uncover the range of behaviours that women in the Hong Kong legal sector have to deal with every day. **Accenture Greater China** supported this initiative by advising on the data collection, the analytics and deriving key takeaways from the insights generated.

This report lists out the key findings of our survey, which was conducted earlier in 2022 and drew responses from more than 360 women and men who are currently working or have worked in the Hong Kong legal sector. The findings confirm and back up anecdotal evidence of gender disparity.

According to survey respondents, gender bias is a key contributing factor leading to the exit of women from the legal profession. Gender bias also creates a gender imbalance at senior levels in private practice law firms, barristers' chambers and in-house teams. Every day, women have to contend with barriers, ranging from unwanted comments about their appearance, overt and covert displays of bias to active discrimination and exclusion – simply because of their gender. The bias is widespread and prevalent at all levels, from the most senior to those starting out in the profession. When compared to their male colleagues, half of the female respondents in our survey feel they have been treated differently in their workplace to their disadvantage as a result of their gender. The gender bias is holding many women back in their careers or even compelling many women to leave their legal careers entirely.

In addition to setting out our key findings, this report sets out a list of recommended actions that law firms, barristers' chambers and in-house legal functions could take in order to redress the gender inequality. We hope our list of recommended actions will be top priority for those in authority in the legal sector to embrace diversity so that each individual has equal opportunities and access to support and resources to thrive. The legal sector has to act quickly if it wants to retain and advance women and achieve gender equality in the workplace.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





The findings of the survey highlight five key obstacles that women face

1. WOMEN ARE OFTEN “ADVISED” TO CHANGE CAREER PATHS OR TO TAKE UP A DIFFERENT SPECIALTY BASED ON THEIR GENDER

While capability and ambition are not determined by gender, the career choices of a significant number of women in the legal profession are questioned based on gender norms. If they are in private practice, they receive suggestions to move in-house, whereby it is perceived to have greater likelihood of more regular hours or greater flexibility at work.

Some survey respondents who continue to stay in private practice noted that they have received suggestions to consider exploring different legal specialities. The assumption is that women would be better suited to the “softer” side of law, and thus are often recommended to move into areas such as family law, rather than the areas of practice which are perceived to require more aggressive or confrontational representation, such as criminal law or commercial law.

Whilst it may be easy to dismiss and reject these suggestions, the lasting impact is that women have their confidence, either in continuing their career path or in maintaining their chosen practice area, undermined. This may be leading to a higher attrition rate among female lawyers in the legal sector than should be the case.

2. CAREGIVERS ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

Based on the survey, women with caregiving responsibilities are noticeably disadvantaged when they seek to develop their careers. They consistently face false assumptions that just because they are now caregivers, they are no longer committed to work or are not in a position to take up new challenges.

Another obstacle many of those surveyed spoke about is the “Boys’ Club” culture in many workplaces, whereby men of all seniority levels group and bond together and consciously or unconsciously exclude women from that club. Women then feel a distance that discourages them from continuing to seek support for the next promotion and/or seeking to break into the “Club”.



3. WOMEN SUFFER FROM BIASES AND FACE LOW AWARENESS OF THEIR PRESENCE IN KEY SETTINGS

Many women in the Hong Kong legal sector reported that they are sometimes overlooked or discredited in meetings as a result of either lack of awareness of biased behaviours such as “mansplaining” or biases that people hold such as women being less able than men. Women say they are too often ignored, interrupted or undermined in workplace settings because of those biases.

4. WOMEN OFTEN RECEIVE UNWANTED COMMENTS ABOUT THEIR DRESS/ APPEARANCE OR BEHAVIOUR

Female respondents reported that they continue to receive unwanted comments about their dress/appearance or behaviour. At worst, these comments are offensive and, even if they are not offensive, they are uncalled-for. What women wear or whether they conform to gendered societal expectations of behaviour is irrelevant to their professional capability, yet stereotypes persist.

5. MICROAGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AGAINST WOMEN INCREASES AS THEY BECOME MORE SENIOR

Sadly, senior female respondents reported that those who do advance in their career are subject to more, rather than fewer, incidents of microaggressive behaviour. Some reported that they are allocated assignments of a lesser status or given more menial administrative tasks than their male counterparts. Such differential treatment becomes more pronounced as female lawyers rise through the ranks and together with the compound effect of all the other microaggressions identified above is, we believe, a key reason why leadership across the legal profession remains male-dominated.

Recommendations



1. PEOPLE: START FROM THE TOP

- » Hold senior leadership accountable for workplace experience
- » Toxic leaders should not be rewarded and their behaviour should be addressed
- » A holistic approach with both meaningful gender targets and enablers to better attract, retain and promote females

2. SYSTEM: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

- » Improving HR systems and talent management practices with a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lens
- » Impactful DEI trainings instead of tick-the-box exercises
- » Billable system of including work on DEI to be recognised and rewarded to incentivise DEI involvement
- » Have systems in place to intervene when non-inclusive behaviours happen





23.7%

A donut chart with a light orange outer ring and a white inner circle. A small segment of the outer ring is highlighted in a darker orange color, representing 23.7% of the total.

of **female** respondents
have been told to change
their specialty in law or
career paths because
of their gender



5.1%

A donut chart with a light orange outer ring and a white inner circle. A small segment of the outer ring is highlighted in a darker orange color, representing 5.1% of the total.

of **male** respondents have
been told to change their
specialty in law or
career paths because
of their gender



Women are often “advised” to change career paths or to take up a different specialty based on their gender

Women are as ambitious as men, but their career choices are often questioned

Five times more female respondents than male respondents have been told to change their specialty in law or to change their career path purely due to their gender. In some cases, they have been told to consider leaving private practice altogether and to go into academia.

Women also received significantly more advice than men, either solicited or unsolicited, regarding the practice of an area of law that people thought was more suited to their gender. One respondent reflected that female lawyers are assumed to be more suitable to practise family law as they tend to be better at it. Another respondent claimed that she was advised to focus on her family because her husband could support her and her family financially. What emerged from the survey was the underlying presumption that women are or should be more family-oriented.

While ambition is not gender-specific, many female respondents have had their choice of career questioned. As women, the inference is that they are not suited to leadership or more senior roles in the legal profession or to certain practice areas. The bias against women pursuing a career in law may be unintentional, in some cases, but the consequence is that women are discouraged from pursuing a legal career. Even where women are encouraged to continue as lawyers they are often advised to consider switching to a different, “softer” practice area, so some then feel that legal practice is not for them. That leads to a higher attrition rate among female legal workers than should otherwise happen.



[A] partner at a very reputed law firm told me ‘why don’t you try academia - it will be easier working in this industry when you decide to have a family’.

– Junior Female Practising Lawyer



I was advised to not be an investigations lawyer because I am a woman and thus have no authority when interviewing witnesses.

– Senior Female Practising Lawyer

38.2%

of female respondents felt they have been left out of career-building opportunities because of their gender or care-giving responsibilities

18%

of male respondents felt they have been left out of career-building opportunities because of their gender or care-giving responsibilities



Twice as many women as men say they are not able to progress their careers either because of the male-dominated environment in which they work or because family or care commitments lead to them being overlooked for advancement.



Caregivers are discriminated against

Boys' Club culture is discouraging female lawyers to stay in their workplaces

Many women say that they are at a significant disadvantage because of the "Boys' Club" culture that exists in many workplaces. These "Boys' Clubs" involve men grouping together to the exclusion of women. The culture helps men promote themselves ahead of potential female peers, marginalises women and, at worst, excludes women from developing their practices. What makes such culture difficult to address is that the "Boys' Club" culture may be deeply engrained in workplaces but yet often goes unnoticed and certainly not addressed.

One respondent said, "male colleagues bonded over rugby and football. I couldn't develop as good a relationship as my male counterparts. This impacted my visibility and the type of work I got". In other words, a corporate culture that fosters male-dominated social networks is likely to hinder the advancement of women.

The existence of "Boys' Clubs" can act as a de-motivator for women and is therefore likely to have an adverse effect on the retention of female lawyers.



I worked at [a] law firm.
It was an old boy's club.
Male associates would go
to golf and dinners while the
women would do the actual
work. I left.

– Mid-level Female Practising Lawyer



Don't fit into the 'Club'. I have not been
invited to work drinks, late nights out and
other lads-style get-togethers whereby
inevitably deeper bonds are created.
There also seems to be a preference to
introduce male colleagues to clients.

– Senior Female Practising Lawyer



Women are disadvantaged if they have caregiving responsibilities

Female respondents indicated they have often been left out of opportunities and even asked to switch to a part-time role due to caregiving responsibilities.

Some even faced delayed promotions, were given lower-quality assignments or cases, were demoted, or paid less as a direct result of looking after others outside work.

In several cases, respondents reported their commitment or competence was questioned as a result of being a parent. Law firms and other employers in the legal sector are still resistant to the idea of flexible working that necessarily comes from having families.

As part of this report, we thought it would be useful to consolidate the responses to create a word cloud. A word cloud is a graphical representation of word frequency to give prominence to words that appear more frequently in a passage. After consolidating all the open-ended responses into a word cloud (*refer illustration*), we can see that most responses contained the words 'child' and 'leave', which we interpret as meaning that many respondents felt a strain in maintaining their careers while becoming a mother (or father). Often, this was due to the ways they were treated in the workplace. This adds a further pressure on women to alter their career paths or exit their legal careers altogether.



I was disinclined to a work event on account of being pregnant. The assumption was made that a pregnant person would not want to attend.

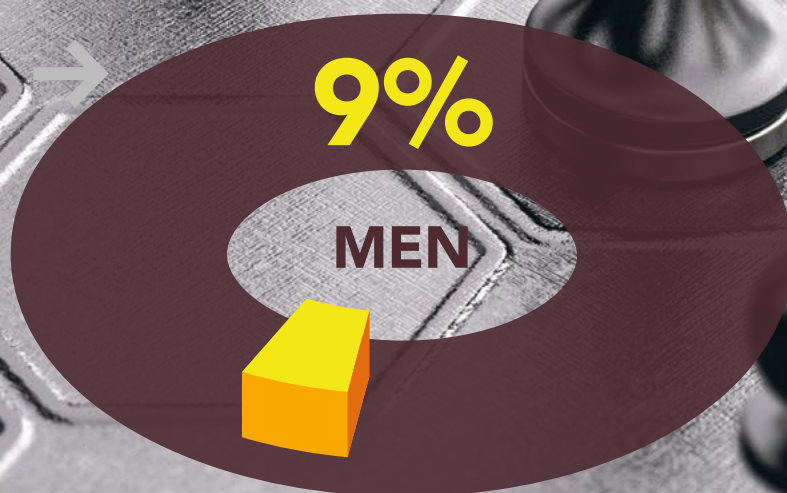
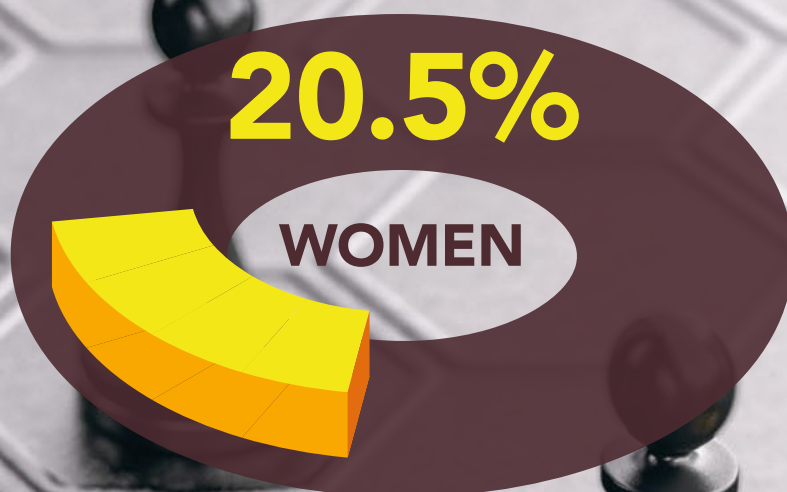
– Senior Female Practising Lawyer



It is unfair – women must work twice as hard to prove they are committed and even that is not enough. We expect women to work as though they have no families and raise a family as if they have no career.

– Senior Female Practising Lawyer

Negative experiences of clients directing questions or queries to a more junior colleague of a different gender



Women suffer from biases and face low awareness of their presence in key settings

Women are being silenced

Women report that they are often the subject of “mansplaining” behaviour, whereby men talk down to women. This can take many forms. Women respondents say that they feel particularly aggrieved in meetings when it is assumed that only men will be able to explain something complicated. Around a fifth of women respondents say that clients direct questions to junior male colleagues during meetings instead of someone who is more senior and of a different gender. Whether or not this is conscious or unconscious, the effect is to undermine the position of women.

One female respondent noted that “until the voice of a male colleague is added”, their opinion would not be registered within the group. Another respondent observed instances whereby male colleagues with the same level of experience would always “get the questions or the eye contact”.

Many female lawyers have expressed their struggle to call out any “mansplaining” behaviour without being seen as “villains”, “difficult” or not “part of the team”.

“

It’s extremely frustrating to be in a situation such as this. You really need an ally in the room to call it out.

– Female Lawyer

“

Constantly interrupted by male colleagues during meetings and conversations.

– Mid-level Female Practising Lawyer

“

The male colleague that made the same point as [female respondent] was given the credit and recognised for that point.

– Mid-level Female Non-lawyer

“

Sometimes, clients assume that the junior male lawyers are more senior than me. There have been instances where the client gave my junior male colleagues his business card and completely bypassed me.

– Mid-level Female Practising Lawyer



26.1%

of **female** respondents have negative experiences of receiving comments or advice on their clothing choices at work



14.1%

of **male** respondents have negative experiences of receiving comments or advice on their clothing choices at work



Women often receive unwanted comments about their dress, appearance or behaviour

Persisting stereotypes

Unwanted remarks about appearances and behaviours are hindering individual lawyers' ability to carry out day-to-day work duties. One female respondent noted that the colour of her jacket was commented on by a judge, which clearly had nothing to do with her professionalism. "My age, height, gender, and pitch of my voice led clients to say that I don't look like a lawyer," another female respondent reported.

Apart from comments on their appearance, many female lawyers have received patronising remarks about how they should behave. Some reported that they have been told to "smile more" or to be "less confrontational", otherwise they might be viewed as being too aggressive and assertive.

Whereby certain behaviour such as being direct or aggressive is regarded as normal and perceived positively when conducted by men, when women exhibit similar traits, they are penalised. This double standard – that it is OK for men to behave in a certain way, but not women – are commented on frequently in our survey.

There continues to be stereotypes and behavioural judgment towards women in law, our survey has found, even if these may not be readily apparent.



It made me feel like he [the judge] wasn't concentrating on the content of what I was saying, and rather focused on my dress. It made me feel enraged.

– Senior Female Practising Lawyer



Oh, you're a lawyer?
You don't look like one.

– An individual who prefers
not to be identified



Microaggressive behaviour against women increases as they become more senior

Gender bias experiences do not improve with seniority

Our research found that microaggressive patterns tend to increase as women advance to higher-level positions (*refer figure 2.5a to 2.5c*). This was measurable across categories of opportunities, assignments, networking and performance recognition. These findings show that women in leadership face more, and not fewer, instances of microaggression as they become more senior, and female lawyers experience more pronounced differential treatment as they rise through the ranks.

Some female lawyers reported that despite their seniority, they are still being relegated to performing what they considered to be non-career-enhancing 'office housework' – work that is often outside the scope of their job description, but has been seen as necessary for the overall well-being of a team of the organisation, or administrative tasks, whereas their male counterparts were assigned high-profile assignments, which are perceived to be more challenging or interesting. Women also tend to spend more time on DEI work or promoting colleagues' well-being. Yet, relatively few companies formally recognise employees that go above and beyond in these areas.

The tendency to not give DEI and wellbeing-related work sufficient credit potentially reduces the amount of billable time that lawyers can report, which can also impact their compensation and career progression. We are of the view that the compound effect of the microaggressions that women face throughout their entire career path as demonstrated by the report findings, together with the lack of formal recognition of women's additional contributions to the workplace can be a powerful explanation of why leadership across the legal profession is still male dominated.

FELT LEFT OUT ON OPPORTUNITIES BECAUSE OF YOUR GENDER
(e.g. business development, business trips, after-work client networking,
opportunities that may increase your visibility at work)

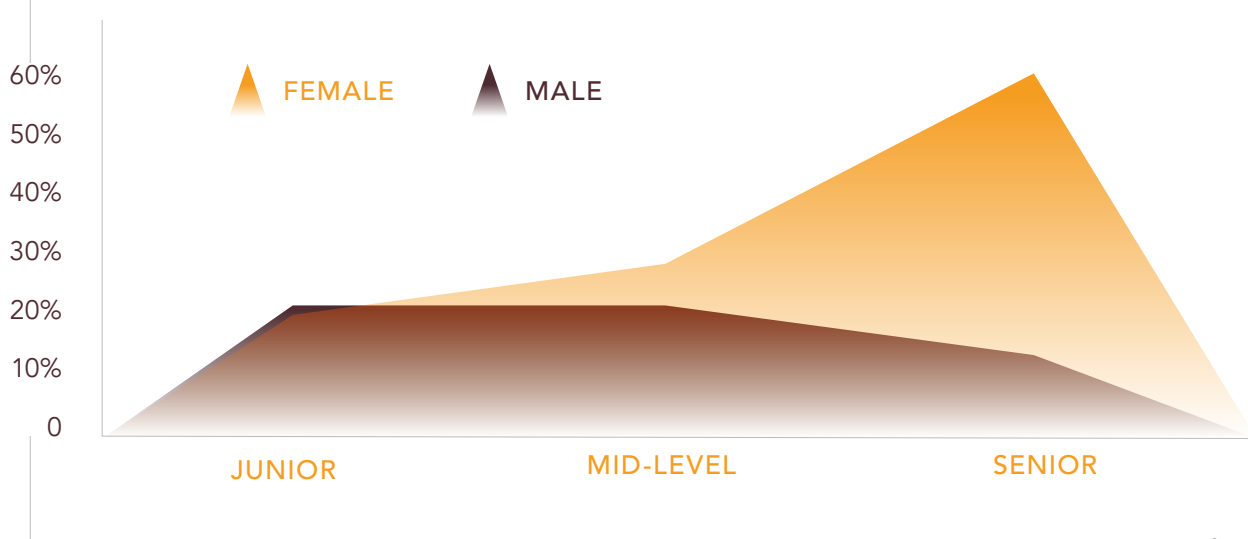


Figure 2.5a

FELT DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT DUE TO YOUR GENDER

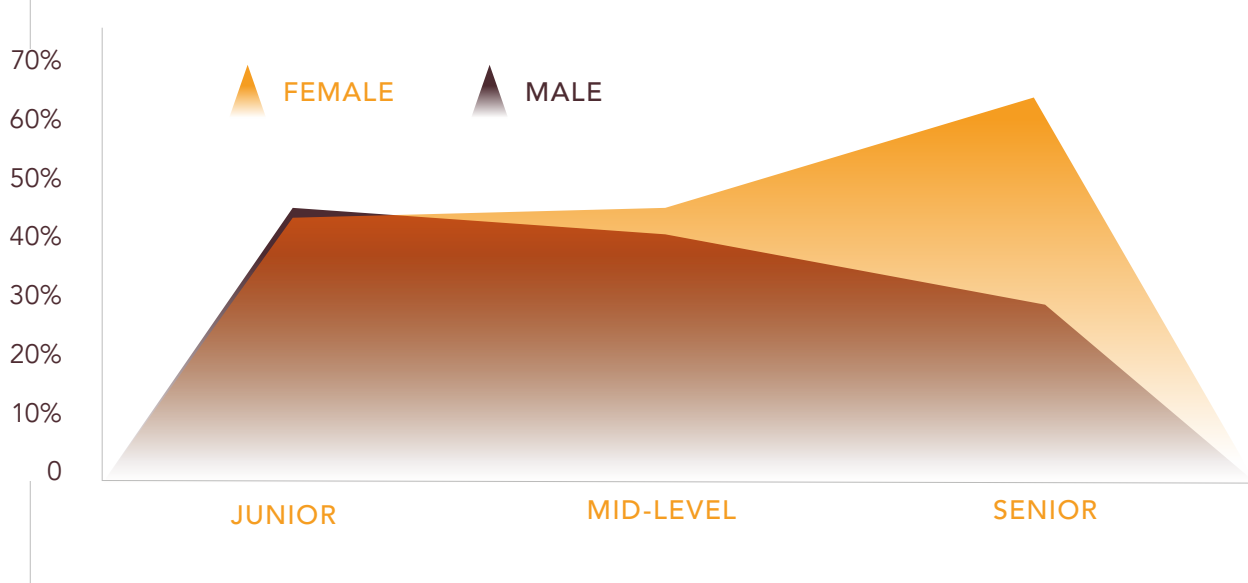


Figure 2.5b

RECEIVED SOLICITED OR UNSOLICITED ADVICE REGARDING
THE PRACTICE OF AN AREA OF LAW IN RELATION TO GENDER

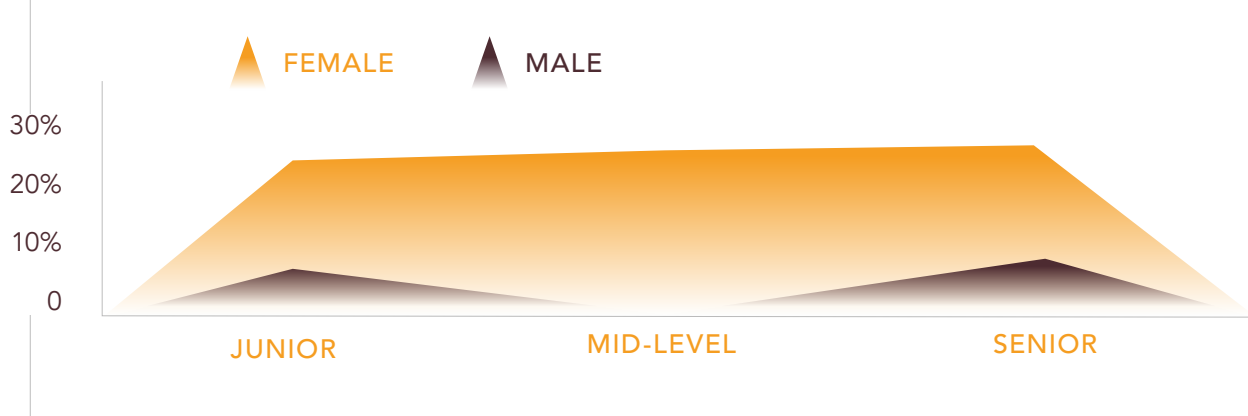


Figure 2.5c

An aerial photograph of a busy city street with many blurred pedestrians moving in various directions. In the center, there is a large circular graphic with an orange and dark red border. Inside the circle, the text "CALL FOR ACTION" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the circle, there is a white upward-pointing arrow. Below the circle, two people are standing and talking. At the bottom center, there is a thick dark red vertical bar.

CALL FOR ACTION



What you and your firm can do to address gender inequality

From having the right policy in place, as a minimum, to ensuring that the policy is actually put into practice, law firms, barristers' chambers and companies can introduce several measures that help to address gender bias and make a real difference to achieving gender equality in the workplace.

The success of having policies come to life needs a company culture where all employees feel psychologically safe. Psychological safety is defined by Harvard Business School Professor Amy Edmondson as a *"shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking"*. Psychological safety means an absence of interpersonal fear. When psychological safety is present, people are able to speak up and openly. Psychological safety is crucial to the recommendations we discuss below as it entails having an environment whereby colleagues from all seniority levels are comfortable to give and receive feedback, raise issues and concerns, disagree respectfully, admit errors and ask for help.

How many of these suggestions apply may also depend on the size of the workplace and we recognise the need to be flexible because there is no "one size fits all" approach. However, many of these steps are easy to take without the need for major investment. Ultimately, it has been shown beyond doubt that it makes for good business and good corporate governance for firms to embrace DEI in all its manifestations, not just gender equality.

- This report provides statistics to appeal to the rational **mind** with the use of data and statistics to demonstrate the negative experience of women in the industry. This impacts hiring and retention, which is a cost to business. We encourage businesses to conduct the survey and release the results internally to understand the experience in individual organisations. Care must be taken to ensure full anonymity. Mayer Brown or WILHK can be contacted for the survey questions.
- **Heart** – The adoption of real experiences in the report is an appeal to the conscience of the legal sector to address the concerns. Communication surrounding the issue of gender inequality should arouse empathy. Leadership tends to be more successful when anecdotes and statistics support each other.
- **Hands** – tangible actions and execution.

Prior to the publication of the research report, Mayer Brown and WILHK organised a legal sector roundtable with representatives from private practice law firms, barristers' chambers and in-house teams to develop the list of recommendations below, for the wider industry. The recommendations target the people of the organisation, as well as the system within the organisation.

People: Start from the top

Organisations need to start from the top in order to move the needle in a workplace setting. The status quo is largely due to the fact that while some law firms and international companies in Hong Kong have DEI policies in place, the effectiveness varies, and data shows that there is tremendous room for improvement. If senior leadership is not walking the talk, these policies are just a piece of paper. The feedback seems to be that senior leadership can see DEI is good for organisational culture but cannot see how the impact of DEI on the lower rungs to proactively change behaviour and culture.

Without senior leadership of law firms, chambers and companies giving DEI its due importance, microaggression will not stop.

Accountability

Despite DEI training and employee resource groups, senior leaderships are not held accountable for workplace experience. A culture of zero tolerance towards gender inequality, and opportunity to raise concerns (anonymously, if required) will promote accountability for behaviour. Another way to create accountability is by reporting the achievement of gender diversity targets just as law firms and businesses publish profits and financials.

- Leaders should have a KPI on workplace experience - these can be both individual (based on reporting team feedback) and collective (for board/senior management). Measure it by 360-degree feedback and internal colleague engagement surveys.
- Toxic leaders should not be rewarded and their behaviour should be addressed. It is not uncommon for non-inclusive behaviour of leaders who are rainmakers to be widely known in the workplace but tolerated or not proactively addressed. This creates a culture whereby colleagues believe that toxic behaviour is acceptable.
- Set meaningful gender diversity targets – a number of law firms have adopted gender diversity targets in partnership and have seen real progression. However, when gender diversity targets are implemented in the absence of a broader cultural programme of inclusivity, their effectiveness may be significantly limited. Without a cultural change that ensures inclusive leadership is valued or addressed, the underpinning gender stereotypes and barriers that hinder women's progression mean that gender diversity targets may become tokenistic. Our recommendation is a holistic approach with both meaningful targets and enablers to better attract, retain and promote females.

Disruptor for change

- Leaders need to disrupt – Is there a culture whereby leaders challenge each other respectfully on gender bias issues? For instance, during hiring and promotional decisions. Are there opportunities whereby leaders can intervene if they sense biases in these decisions? This also links to the point below on systemic changes whereby leaders need to be behind these changes and agree with them. Otherwise, even if firms roll out DEI policies but in practice leaders implicitly do not allow/role model these behaviours, it will be seen as hypocritical, e.g. whereby there is a flexi-agile policy but leaders make it known they are proud to NEVER take advantage of that policy themselves, or are resistant when colleagues request flexibility.
- Non-inclusive client events and meetings – It is important that managers and those in leadership positions recognise when client meetings and other social events that edge towards excluding diversity. In addition to identification, timely redressal of behaviour that excludes or is microaggressive is required. To that end, leaders should be made accountable for bringing about change. One way to achieve this is DEI in routine matters should be discussed in partner meetings. An exchange of ideas would instil awareness and inculcate change.

System: A multidisciplinary approach

Human Resources (HR) - Improving current HR systems and talent management practices with a DEI lens, including:

- Education on biases in the talent lifecycle (which includes talent acquisition, performance management and succession planning).
- Evolving leadership competency models and challenging traditional views on meritocracy, e.g. moving away from a “military dictatorship” style of leadership and focusing more on inclusive leadership qualities.
- Revise ways of involvement in business opportunities within the office, e.g. open invitation on secondments instead of inviting people based on gender, age or other untested assumptions.
- Policies and systems in place such as interview panels being diverse (it is currently quite common for just one partner to interview a candidate), blind CVs, and ensuring structured interview questions to avoid personal biases.

Learning and Development – Training needs to be impactful and not just a ‘tick-the-box’ exercise. More thought should be put into the content of the training and ensuring it is relevant and relatable for the audience. For example, combine storytelling from colleagues with data for firm management and wider staff population to understand real life case scenarios and incorporating that into the training.


- Dedicated coaching at the senior level and training session on how to encourage inclusive meetings to speak up, step up, to be more involved at conferences.
- Targeted training for junior colleagues with content that’s more relatable to them, e.g. active bystander training. We have seen some impactful training that combines dramatic immersion into the training so that participants will have to role play and be part of a hypothetical scenario. We have heard particularly good feedback on this type of training which is highly interactive and impactful.

Incentive System – Billable system of including work on DEI to be recognised and rewarded to incentivise DEI involvement.

- Including hours devoted to DEI as billable hours, and have specific guidance on what counts as DEI involvement, and what does not.
- Take DEI work involvement into partnership promotion consideration.

Systems in place to intervene – e.g. DEI officer, anonymous feedback. Empowering the HR or DEI Officer to intervene and disrupt when they see non-inclusive behaviour/decisions even if it comes from someone in a leadership position.

- Rotating chairpersons in meetings to ensure everyone gets a chance to take the lead.
- Use of inclusive language – see WILHK’s gender-neutral language guidance for the legal sector.
- Engagement surveys to check in with people from time to time.



WHAT YOU
AND YOUR
FIRM CAN DO
TO ADDRESS
GENDER
INEQUALITY



Appendix

Table 1. Survey questions and results on % of "Yes"

	Survey Question	Statistically significant (Yes/ No)	Female respondents who answered "yes"	Male respondents who answered "yes"
1	Have you ever felt that you were treated differently in the Hong Kong legal sector due to your gender?	Yes	50.5%	33.3%
2	Have you ever received advice (solicited or unsolicited) regarding the practice of an area of law relating to your gender?	Yes	26.9%	11.5%
3	When specialising in your area of law, was sexism or perceived risk of sexism a factor in your decision making? (e.g. not wanting to specialise in certain practice because of limited opportunities constrained by familial obligations)	No	24.4%	15.4%
4	Have you ever been told to change your specialty in law (e.g. from criminal to matrimonial) or change career paths (e.g. move in-house) because of your gender and potential caregiving responsibilities?	Yes	23.7%	5.1%
5	Do you feel that you have ever missed/been left out of an opportunity (e.g. business trips, client meetings, business development, other opportunities that increase visibility at work) because of your gender or caregiving responsibilities?	Yes	38.2%	18.0%
6	Have you ever experienced clients directing questions or queries to a more junior colleague of a different gender, rather than yourself?	No	23.0%	19.2%
7	Have you ever been called "bossy", "difficult", "aggressive" or "obstructive"?	No	29.0%	34.6%
8	Have you ever been asked in a work context about whether you are married or your relationship status?	No	55.1%	68.0%
9	Have you ever been asked by a colleague or senior regarding plans for family life / parental leave?	No	46.3%	43.6%
10	Have you ever experienced comments or advice on your clothing choices at work?	No	42.8%	55.1%
11	Have you ever been told you don't look like a lawyer?	No	34.3%	33.3%
12	Have you ever witnessed or been aware of colleagues experiencing sexism?	No	53.7%	56.4%
13	Have you ever experienced sexism in the workplace?	No	47.4%	43.6%

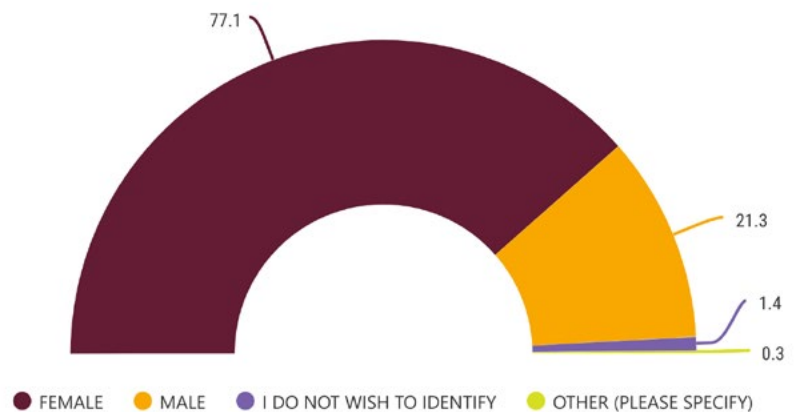
Table 2. Survey questions and results on % of “Yes” and “Felt Negative About it”

	Survey Question	Statistically significant (Yes/ No)	Female respondents who answered “Yes” and “Felt Negative About it”	Male respondents who answered “Yes” and “Felt Negative About it”
1	Have you ever felt that you were treated differently in the Hong Kong legal sector due to your gender?	No	35.3%	23.1%
2	Have you ever received advice (solicited or unsolicited) regarding the practice of an area of law in relation to your gender?	No	14.5%	7.7%
3	When specialising in your area of law, was sexism or perceived risk of sexism a factor in your decision making? E.g. not wanting to specialize in certain practice because of limited opportunities constrained by familial obligations.	No	15.2%	9.0%
4	Have you ever been told to change your specialty in law (for e.g. from criminal law to matrimonial) or change career paths (e.g. move in-house) because of your gender and potential caregiving responsibilities?	Yes	15.5%	3.8%
5	Do you feel that you have ever missed/been left out of an opportunity at work because of your gender or caregiving opportunities (e.g. business development, business trips, meeting clients after work, opportunities that may increase your visibility at work)	Yes	34.6%	16.7%
6	Have you ever experienced clients directing questions or queries to a more junior colleague of a different gender, rather than yourself?	Yes	20.5%	9.0%
7	Have you ever been called “bossy”, “difficult”, “aggressive” or “obstructive”?	No	18.7%	16.7%
8	Have you ever been asked in a work context about whether you are married or your relationship status?	No	20.1%	10.3%
9	Have you ever been asked by a colleague or senior regarding plans for family life/ parental leave?	Yes	16.6%	6.4%
10	Have you ever experienced comments or advice on your clothing choices at work?	Yes	26.1%	14.1%
11	Have you ever been told you don’t look like a lawyer?	No	15.9%	7.7%
12	Have you ever witnessed or been aware of colleagues experiencing sexism?	No	51.2%	59.0%
13	Have you ever experienced sexism in the workplace?	No	41.7%	44.9%

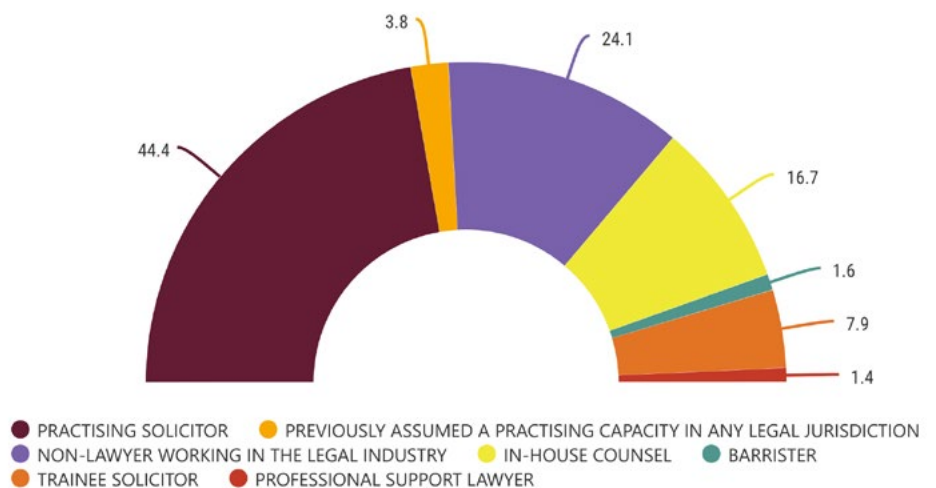
Demographic Information

Breakdown of more than 360 survey respondents by gender, roles within the legal sector, seniority, and years of experience in the legal sector.

In the survey, 77.1% of respondents are female and 21.3% are male.



Majority of respondents, 44.4%, are practising lawyers, 24.1% are non-lawyers in legal sector, 16.7% are in-house counsel, 7.9% are trainee lawyers, 1.6% are barristers.

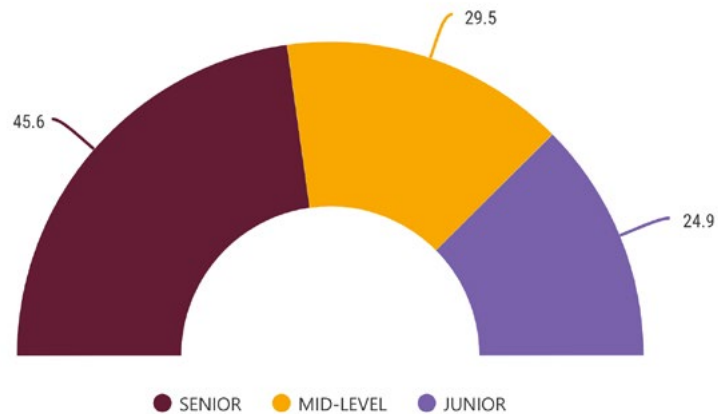


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF FIRST NAME) FOR:

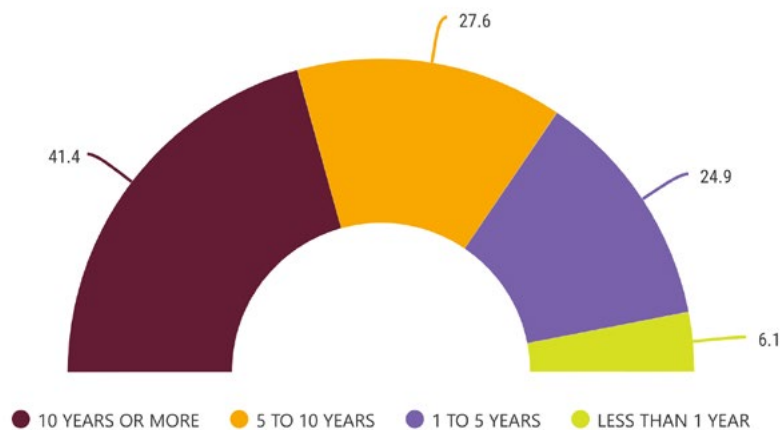
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45.6% are seniors, 29.5% are mid-level, and 24.9% are juniors.



41.4% have 10+ years of work experience, 27.6% have 5-10 years, 24.9% have 1-5 years, and 6.1% have less than 1 year.



CONTRIBUTION TO CALL FOR ACTION:

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