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The media and communication industries: flexible friends or foes?

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Aim of Research

To explore equality policy and practice in companies in the Scottish creative sector, from the perspective of both employers and employees, and to identify examples of good practice that might be adopted throughout the creative sector.
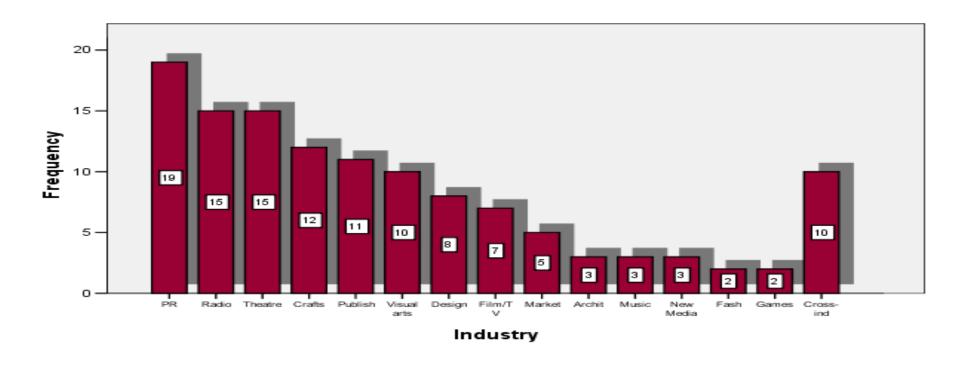
Methodology

- **Best practice case studies of Scottish creative businesses**
  - 51 case studies conducted, including 25 sole traders
  - 125 individuals interviewed (95 female, 30 male)

- **Focus groups held throughout Scotland**
  - 7 focus groups held
  - 18 participants in total (all female)

Best Practice Case Studies:
Participants by Industry

Case Study Interviewees: Employment Status

Employment Status	Female	Male	Total
Managing Director/Director	12	6	18
Middle Management	15	6	21
Other employees	47	14	61
Sole trader/Self-employed	21	4	25
Totals	**95**	**30**	**125**

Existence and Awareness of Gender-related Policies

- Only a minority of the case study companies (10) had formal gender-related policies

- Where policies did exist, employees were generally unaware of the type and extent

Informal, Flexible, Family-friendly Cultures

- **Instead of formal policies, many companies try to foster "informal", "flexible", "family-friendly" cultures in the workplace**

- **Employees generally speak positively of these informal approaches**

- **An important factor in the success of these informal approaches seemed to be whether or not employers had families**

Formal, Flexible Working

- **Flexible working methods had been introduced in 13 of the companies, but to a limited extent**

- **Flexible arrangements are considered on a case by case basis, and are dependant on resources, the role, and the impact on company performance**

Barriers to Introduction of Flexible Working Methods

- **Flexible working methods were regarded as more suitable for admin roles, or some industry-specific occupations**

- **It was felt that flexible working is difficult in:-**
    - **Client-focused roles**
    - **Deadline-orientated roles**
    - **Roles requiring constant interaction with subordinates/colleagues or long, unsociable hours**

- **A small number of employees felt that their employers could be doing more to experiment with flexible working**

- **Some evidence of flexible approaches creating resentment**

- **Some women, who had moved to a more flexible arrangement, had been disadvantaged for doing so**

Focus Group Participants

Focus Group (No. of Participants)	Occupation
Glasgow 1 (4)	ex-TV producer; ex-Musician; ex-Film/theatre props; Film/TV editor
Glasgow 2 (1)	Music editor
Glasgow 3 (2)	Advertising account directors (2)
Glasgow 4 (2)	Visual artist; Architect
Edinburgh (4)	MD publishing company; Illustrator; Council Arts Link Officer; PR consultant
Dundee (3)	Graphic designer; ex-Graphic designer; Cultural Enterprise officer
Inverness (2)	Arts officer; Glass artist/retired journalist

Focus Group Results

- **Long hours, work-related travel and entertaining clients are difficult for women with families**

- **Job share is not possible and indeed not encouraged in the creative industries**

- **Women working on either a part-time or job share basis are likely to work longer hours than contracted**

- **Additional implications of job sharing can include: duplication of work; problems in decision-making; and no single points of contact**

- **A need for reliable support networks consisting of professional carers, family and friends**

Conclusions

- **Lack of formal flexible working opportunities**

- **Reliance on informal approaches**

- **No real consensus on best practice**