EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT VIA THE EMPOWERING WOMEN WORKSHOP SERIES

A Thesis

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Education

(Behavioral Sciences, Gender Equity)

by

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EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT VIA THE EMPOWERING WOMEN WORKSHOP SERIES

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Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract

of

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT VIA THE EMPOWERING WOMEN WORKSHOP SERIES

by

Nancie Piette McLaughlin

This study examined the effectiveness of the Empowering Women Workshop Series program on higher education employees in Northern California. The workshop series focused on its effects on females in the areas of self-confidence building, value and goal setting, assertiveness, leadership, networking skills and integration of work/life balance skills to improve motivation and self-reliance in work and personal life. The four eight-hour day workshops were facilitated over a three month period of time to one employee group at the community college level and one employee group at the university level. Thirty-one higher education employees participated in the study in the Spring of 2014. Data sources for the study included a pre and post survey consisting of Likert scale questionnaire. The post survey also included quantitative data in the form of three open-ended questions on the post survey. Study results show significant improvement between the pre and post survey results in all areas studied. Most notable results indicate that 90%
of participants feel they have increased their effectiveness at work, 90% of participants feel more optimistic and positive and 94% of participants have improved their communication skills as a result of participation in the workshop series. These findings imply that the Empowering Women Workshop Series was beneficial to participants and further workshops are necessary to evaluate the diverse populations among women in California.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Sherrie Carinci, Ed.D.

_______________________
Date
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

While women are climbing the ladder, men continue to retain the majority of top management positions in the workplace. This inconsistency holds true even when the organization employs a majority of female workers (Powell, 2010). Despite the inequities of the glass ceiling phenomenon, and the pay gap between men and women over the past 40 years, women continue their relentless push into the workforce. Powell (2010) states that, “despite trends, female managers are concentrated in the lower management levels and hold positions with less authority than men” (p. 3). He goes on to state, that “the higher the level of the organization, the fewer women are found” (Powell, 2010, p. 3). In addition to variations in management in the workplace, women’s economic status remains below that of men. The glass ceiling phenomenon is a worldwide issue for women. Research suggests that regardless of a woman’s success in attaining advanced degrees, societal norms and perceptions contribute to limiting the success of women in the workforce (National Equity Pay Task Force, 2013; Powell, 2010; Powell & Graves; 2003).

Since the years of WWII, women have surpassed the expectations of the nation with their ability to learn trade skills in record time, accomplish factory work with incredible accuracy, and prove their commitment in the workforce. However, the nation as a whole was not behind women’s efforts. Women were expected to maintain their duties in the household and in the area of childcare, despite the fact that they were working outside of the home for eight hours or more each day. Working women found
themselves without support when it came to childcare and domestic household chores. They were hailed by society and the nation for participating in the war effort, but not released from “the cult of domesticity” (O’Kelly & Carney, 1986, p. 149). Women who found success as entrepreneurs and executives in early and mid-20th century America served to inspire many women in the 1940s and 1950s to move beyond the front door and into economic prospects, which created educational and social acceptance of the true capabilities and talents of women. Breaking down the cultural stereotypes and bias in the workforce remains a strong focus for many women in the U.S. One way to achieve gender equality in a patriarchal society is to build a community committed to achieving gender equality in the workforce and personal life.

This study explores women’s professional and personal development programs and facilitates a women’s development program modeled after Springboard Women’s Development Program (Appendix A). Springboard is a unique program engaging women in non-management employment, higher education students, and women who may be experiencing a work or personal life transition, such as a new job, marriage or baby, with the opportunity to identify their work and personal goals and self-confidence and networking skills to help achieve work and personal life goals. The program is designed to empower women with the skills they will need to be successful in their chosen field, and to provide models designed to help women balance their work and personal life to allow for continued success. Springboard offers a strong support system around the participant in order to build confidence when facing current and future challenges in the workplace and at home. The program has been successful in 33
countries and shows encouraging signs of success in the United States (Willis & Daisley, 2006). This study will facilitate four eight-hour workshops over a three month period at each approved institution entitled Empowering Women Workshop Series with female employees from two higher education institutions in Northern California to ascertain the relevance of the program in the U.S. higher education market. Research exists showing the success of the program in Great Britain, however this will be the first research based study in the United States (Willis & Daisley, 2006).

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this work is to measure the effectiveness of The Springboard Professional and Personal Women’s Development Training Program in workshops at selected post-secondary educational institutions in the U.S. The second aspect of this study is to measure its effects on females in the areas of self-confidence building, value and goal setting, assertiveness, leadership, networking skills and integration of life/work balance skills to improve motivation and self-reliance in work and personal life.

**Significance of the Study**

Fifty years after the passing of the milestone Equal Pay Act of 1963, women in America are still fighting to achieve gender equality in the workplace. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 “was designed to prohibit wage discrimination between male and female employees performing work requiring equal skill, effort, and responsibility under similar conditions” (Houghton, 1999 p. 156). As of 2013, our national workforce is comprised of nearly 50% women, and statistics consistently show that women earn 77 cents on the dollar when compared to male salaries (National Equity Pay, 2013). Many
women are the primary income earners in the household. When their wages are short changed, it affects not only the woman’s quality of life, but also has a negative effect on our national economy. The pay gap in America affects a woman’s ability to attain personal financial stability, afford childcare, clothing, food and other essentials (National Equity Pay, 2013).

Beginning in the 1970s, women began to enter college and professional schools in large numbers. Significant increases in the enrollment of women in institutions such as medical schools, law schools, and business colleges were common. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), the educational attainment of women aged 25 to 64 in the labor force has risen substantially over the past 40 years. In 2010, 36 percent of these women held college degrees, compared with 11 percent in 1970. Only 7 percent of women were high school dropouts in 2010, down from 34 percent in 1970. (Hall & Solis, 2011. p. 3)

Armed with the same knowledge and degrees as their male counterparts, women were on track to equal the playing field in the workplace (Rosin, 2012). It is true that since the 1980s there has been an increase of women in management and professional occupations. However, equity is not apparent throughout the workforce. According to Powell and Graves (2003) “despite trends female managers are concentrated in the lower management levels and hold positions with less authority than men…the higher the level of the organization, the fewer women are found” (p. 3). This trend is exacerbated as women reach up into corporate management positions.
Women currently constitute only 2.2 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs, 15 percent of board seats and corporate officer positions and the gap widens for women of color, who account for about 12 percent of the managerial and professional labor force. (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011, p. 3)

Women today fighting for equality in the workforce are reminiscent of women’s determination and struggle throughout history. Although the fight today is now concentrated inside the workforce as opposed to the outside looking in.

Organizational research has shown the widespread institutionalization of so-called “second generation forms of gender bias, the powerful yet often invisible barriers to women’s advancement that arise from cultural beliefs about gender, as well as workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favor men” (Ely et al., 2011, p. 4). There is a call for a “new developmental agenda” for women’s professional and personal development training workshops “to ensure that their best and brightest are reaching their potential” (Ely et al., 2011, p. 4). There is a clear need for women’s development programs in the U.S. This study provides for a pre and post survey of the Springboard women’s professional and personal development program to assess its relevance in helping women to achieve their goals in higher education and in the workforce in America.

**Methodology**

The mixed methods approach chosen for this study allows for analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. By recognizing that both quantitative and qualitative methods have limitations, the researcher felt by triangulating data sources this study
could serve a larger, transformative purpose. Creswell (2003), states, “recognizing [that] all methods have limitations...biases inherent in any single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods” (p. 15). The researcher developed a pre and post survey composed of both Likert scale quantitative questions and open-ended qualitative questions (Appendix C & D). The mixed methods study enabled the researcher to simultaneously collect data to best understand and analyze the research problems. This approach answered the predetermined quantitative data as well as fostered the personal values of the participants to validate the importance of women’s professional and personal development (Creswell, 2003).

The pre and post survey design was based on the Great Britain Springboard research study. The pre-survey consisted of 37 predetermined closed-ended Likert scale questions. When using a Likert scale, studies have shown that an increase in reliability can be obtained through an increase in the number of categories used on the scale (Masters, 1974). With the Masters (1974) study results in mind, the researcher scaled the Likert survey with seven categories to increase reliability. The post-survey design consisted of the identical 37 predetermined closed ended Likert Scale questions and four predetermined open-ended questions. In addition, the pre and post surveys included demographic information to further delineate the findings of the study. The survey was administered before and after the Springboard training was facilitated for the purpose of assessing the relevance of this program in the United States. In addition to the pre and post surveys, each participate in the women’s development workshop was
given an Informed Consent for Participation form prior to the start of the workshop series (Appendix B).

The researcher used purposeful sampling strategies to recruit participants through personal and professional contacts in higher education institutions within Northern California. Participants included community college and university non-management employees from across the Sacramento Valley. The Human Resource departments of each participating institution were an integral part of recruiting participants for this study.

**Limitations**

The pre-limitations of the study include access to Sacramento area participants. A lack of participation could adversely affect the return rate of the surveys. Not all college and university staff participated in the study and the sample size could have an adverse effect on the validity of the study. In addition, the work limitations of college and university staff could affect the attendance of participants. Retention rate of workshop attendance could affect the outcome of the surveys if absences occur during the four day workshop series. Prior experience of participants, both positive and negative, within the workplace also could affect the participants perceptions that could potentially bias their answers to questions posed on the pre and post surveys. Lack of understanding of the meaning or content of the workshop curriculum could unfavorably affect the participant’s outcomes. Taking into account that each and every participant is a unique individual, the outcome may vary due to personal experience of workshop
material, and finally participants could elect to refuse to participate in the study all together.

**Theoretical Basis for Study**

Women’s personal and professional development training can provide a strong base of skills that not only enhance a woman’s sense of pride and confidence, but also help propel her to become successful in the workplace and in her personal life. To achieve these goals, the training must be based in a proven adult learning method.

**Andragogy Theory**

Malcolm S. Knowles (1980) has dedicated his life to growing and developing the educational theory of andragogy. Andragogy is a learning theory that Knowles developed to address the specific learning needs of adults. In his theory, Knowles emphasizes the need for adults to be self-directed, and requires that adult learners take responsibility for decisions. In *The Leader Looks at Self-Development* (1961) Knowles declared that learning was “an active process of translating new knowledge’s, insights, attitudes, skills and values into one’s conduct” (as cited in Henry, 2011, p. 3). He understood the discomfort that adults go through when they give up their accustomed daily routines and ways of thinking and believed that the “serious learner needed to be both sufficiently dissatisfied with present performance and accepting of the fact of the difficulty of change” (Henry, 2011, p. 51). In addition, Knowles felt that “a degree of self-analysis was required in order to ensure honesty in overcoming resistance” (Henry, 2011, p. 51). Adults who are self-directed, take responsibility for their actions and
decisions undoubtedly contribute to the successful outcomes of their educational goals and future successes.

Andragogy theory emphasizes that to be successful in the field of adult education, all adult learning programs must accommodate this essential truth (Adams, 2013). Knowles’ key factors to a successful adult learning program are:

- an environment where faculty treats adult students as peers—accepted and respected as intelligent experienced adults whose opinions are listened to, honored, appreciated
- Self-directed learning, where students take responsibility for their own learning;
- Active involvement in learning, as opposed to passively listening to lectures;
- An environment where students feel safe and supported, where individual needs and uniqueness are honored, where abilities and life achievements are acknowledged and respected;
- An environment that fosters intellectual freedom and encourages experimentation and creativity;
- Regular feedback mechanisms for students to tell faculty what works best for them and what they need to learn. (Adams, 2013, p. 3)

The design of learning in the Andragogy model assumes that “1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something. 2) Adults need to learn experientially. 3) Adults approach learning as problem solving. 4) Adults learn best when the topic is of
immediate value” (Adams, 2013, “Andragogy makes,” para. 1). Henry (2011) in his assessment of andragogy notes that “Feedback through shared group experience would support the learning process and give an indication of progress” (p. 3). Henry (2011) states that, “Knowles insisted that the group was “an important resource, if not a necessity, for leadership self-development (p. 3). The group would contribute to the learner’s self-evaluation which, in turn, would contribute to ongoing self-development” (Henry, 2011, p. 51). This design provides the seamless adult learning theory necessary to implement The Springboard Professional and Personal Development Training Program with clarity and success.

**Gender Equity Theory**

As a pioneer of gender studies, Anna Julia Cooper believed that humanity followed a “universal law of development” toward a potential of perfection (Pitts, 1999, p. 82). This potential was an inherent right for all races and gender. In her book, *A Voice From the South*, Cooper (1892) believed “the inherent right of every soul is to its own highest development” (p. 82). It was her belief that both genders need to be educated in order for “equality to shine on all facets of civilization” (Cooper, 1892, p. 82). In her book, Cooper “takes on the specific issues of race, gender, and class in a progressive way” (Pitts, 1999, p. 79). Her philosophy of education begins with the individual and moves outward. Cooper believed that creating an educational blueprint for each individual based on their interests and talents would help contribute to their best efforts towards elevating their specific race and or gender.
Cooper embraced academic as well as industrial educational philosophies, recognizing the individual’s talents and goals. Her views also emphasized the importance of promoting religion, morals, and manners as sources of racial elevation. To Cooper, actions speak louder than words. She states, “It isn’t what we say about ourselves, it’s what our life stands for” (Cooper, 1988, p. 91). Her life was dedicated to the education of the underprivileged, and the advancement of social, political and educational equality (Pitts, 1999). Cooper was years ahead of her time with regards to racial and gender equality.

Social Role Theory

The ways in which the social behavior of men and women differ are deeply embedded in societal norms, reflected by long standing gender roles typically encountered in our daily work and home life. Social Role Theory examines the influences that arise from adult social roles and the relevance to gender stereotyping in home and work life. Research conducted by Eagly (2013) concludes that “social roles are regarded as the proximal predictors of adult sex differences” (p. 8). In other words, it is social behavior more so than biology that determines societal roles of males and female in society. The implications of this theory are that people can be held back from achieving their fullest potential because society dictates that they are not meant to perform that task, or take on a particular responsibility. Eagly (2013) considers the following in her research: First social role “type involves conformity to gender roles,” and second, social role “involves the transmission to individuals of skills relevant to social behaviors and beliefs, which affect behavior and are indirect manifestations of social roles because they are acquired through prior participation in roles” (p. 12).
Trotter-Hamilton (2010) elaborates on Eagly’s (2001) social role theory by suggesting that, “In current American society, men’s social roles include a position of power where males are labeled as providers. Women, on the other hand, occupy a domestic social role where females are responsible for childrearing” (p. 9). Societal norms that reflect social and gender roles can be changed through education. Bringing issues of home and work life balance to the forefront can have an important impact on societal beliefs regarding gender stereotypes in America.

**Definition of Terms**

*Gender equity* is the act of “employing cooperative instructional practices in the classroom” and where “all students will feel they have an opportunity to learn” (Noddings, 1992; as cited in Carinci, 2007, p. 71).

*Gender equitable instructional methods* are specific methods which incorporate gender in the classroom through foundations, skills, methods and strategies across the curriculum. For example, the professor choosing specific content creates student connectivity to the material (female historical figures) (Sadker & Silber, 2007).

*Gender roles* are shared expectations about behavior that apply to people on the basis of their socially identified sex (Eagly, 2001, p. 1071).

*Glass ceiling phenomenon* was introduced in a 1986 Wall Street Journal report on corporate women by Hymowitz and Schellhardt. The glass ceiling is a theory that is used to describe the barriers that women encounter in the workplace when they aspire to attain senior management positions in corporations, public and private sector organizations, as well as government appointments. It refers to barriers to advancement as well as higher salary levels (Lockwood, 2004).
Second generation gender bias is the powerful yet often invisible barriers to women’s advancement that arises from cultural beliefs about gender as well as workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favor men (Ely et al., 2011).

Springboard is a three month professional and personal women’s development program for non-management women. The objective of the program is to enable women to identify their work and personal goals and then to equip them with the confidence and skills to achieve these goals (Willis & Daisley, 2011).

Organization of the Thesis

The organization of this thesis is as follows. Chapter 1 outlines the overall organization of the thesis. Chapter 2 consists of a review of relevant and related literature on the topics of gender, education, and the workforce in the U.S. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology of the study explaining the mixed method procedures utilized during the study. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and findings of this study including the qualitative and quantitative data. Chapter 5 focuses on the conclusions drawn from the study and denotes areas of further study relevant to the thesis topic.

Background of the Researcher

Nancie McLaughlin has served more than two decades as an entrepreneur and educator in Placer County. As owner and managing director of McLaughlin Studios, a music, dance and theatre arts facility, she has been instrumental in the success of the studio since 1993. Her passion for education and the pursuit of excellence has made her an educational leader in arts education and business management. A native of
California, and a proud wife and mother, she has devoted her career to ensuring greater opportunities for her colleagues, staff, students and family.

Ms. McLaughlin is pursuing a Master’s in Education, Behavioral Science, Gender Equity (2015) at CSU Sacramento. She received her Bachelors of Science in Career Technical Education at CSU, Sacramento with honors and was elected to the Golden Key International Honor Society. She also spent time at Sierra College completing her AS degree in Business Administration. In her current pursuit of a Master’s in Education at CSUS, Ms. McLaughlin’s desire as an educator is to help students grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, and socially by providing an environment that is safe, supports risk-taking, and invites a sharing of ideas. She feels there is a need for compassionate, strong, and dedicated individuals who are excited about working with adult learners.

Ms. McLaughlin recently traveled to England to become a licensed Springboard Women’s Development Trainer. The Springboard program embodies her core values and goals as a woman in business, a student, wife and mother. It offers tools for women to engage themselves in a journey of self-discovery, of values and goal setting, balancing of work life and home life, and the importance of networking, image and assertiveness.

Upon completion of her Master’s in Education, Ms. McLaughlin’s goal is to create a U.S. version of the Springboard Women’s Development Program and deliver the program to women in personal and professional transition within our community and across the state of California. In the future, Nancie will be creating additional
personal and professional development programs to further her passion as an educator and to engage others to succeed in their personal and professional endeavors.
Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The key areas of literature guiding this work include three major sections: (a) historical perspective of women in education and the workplace; (b) established women’s development programs within higher education in the United States; (c) curriculum used inside women’s development programs and their purposes. The literature pertaining to these topics provides a rich and diverse history of women in education and the workplace, and includes several pertinent rationales. While there is limited research on the topics of curriculum used within women’s development programs, there are several studies that discuss at length the benefits of women’s development programs, and several more which discuss the benefit of gender equitable education that propels women to succeed in the workplace.

Historical Perspective of Women in Education and the Workplace

History of Gender Challenges in Education

Gender challenges occur on a daily basis within our educational institutions in America (Carinci, 2007). Biased cultural and societal norms, present in everyday life, often become transparent to the untrained eye. In fact, most educators are not aware that it is even happening (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009). Students, however, are cognizant of gender bias in the classroom. It is a silent and real threat to women’s educational advancement and personal development (Carinci, 2007). In addition, the inequalities of a biased education translate into a gender bias workforce that hinders the opportunities
for women in the workplace. This recklessness affects all American schools and challenges all educators (Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). Bringing awareness into the classroom is the key to true equality in education and emerging opportunities for women in the workforce.

While there have been strivings toward gender balance within education settings, there remains evidence of gender bias in the provision of education opportunities. Educators—teachers and parents—are continually challenged by deeply ingrained prejudices that are expressed in gendered terms. (Raftery & Valiulis, 2008, p. 304)

Students are conditioned on a daily basis to conform to the societal construct of sexism to the detriment of their own future aspirations. For centuries, women have been fighting for the right of inclusion in education. According to Sadker and Zittleman (2010), women in colonial America were not allowed into the classroom, and “less than one-third of the women could not even sign their names” (p. 138). The authors explain that, in colonial New England, even though it was a woman who donated the first plot of land for a free school, “female children were not allowed to attend the school” (Sadker 7 Zittleman, 2010, p. 138). Women’s perseverance for equality began as a journey toward equitable education that persists today.

Women have been fighting for equality in the schools for centuries. When history is recorded, the increase in education attainment for women throughout the 19th and 20th century will document the struggle and momentous achievements (Smeal, 2014). Women’s movements for equality opened the door for female education, as
women began participating in segregated classes, as well as teaching in our nation’s schools. However, even into the 1970s, gender-restricted programs were still the norm (Domenico & Jones, 2006, p. 3). In the career and technical classes, females were “channeled into secretarial, cosmetology and other low-paying occupations” (Sadker, & Zittleman, 2010, p. 139). With the passage of the Education Amendment Act (Title IX) in 1972, women pushed closer to equality in the classroom. Although Title IX is a federally mandated amendment, it did not have the power to change the biased cultural and societal norms that are present in everyday life in our public schools. The first paragraph in Title IX (1998) states: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (U.S. Department of Education, 1998, para. 1). Title IX is a leap forward for gender equality in education, however, the reality is that since 1992 the increases in girl’s participation have been unexceptional (AAUW, 1998).

Inclusion and participation in educational programs and activities is one piece of the puzzle. Creating inclusion and participation without inequity is the challenge. In the AAUW report (1998) it is stated that “Achievement of equity - the erasure of differences in educational quality and outcome by social factors such as race, class, or in this case, gender – is a necessary and clear precondition for the achievement of high standards for all students” (p. 43). The report goes on to argue, that “what it actually takes for the undifferentiated population for “all students” to achieve the same outcomes will probably vary depending on gender and class differences, ignoring these
differences means forfeiting excellence” (AAUW, 1998, p. 43). Equality in education will take training and inclusion of administrators, teachers, parents, students and the community.

**Gender Fair Teaching Practices**

Teaching in the classroom without gender bias is a challenging proposition. Teachers with the best intentions fall into the gender trap on a daily basis. Research suggests the commonality that more attention is paid to boys in the classroom than girls (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009). Sadker & Zittleman (2009) found that boys are more verbal in the classroom, interrupt more and are more demanding of the teacher’s time. Girls on the other hand exhibit the traits of “good” students in the classroom. Expectations of girls include; good behavior, raising their hand before speaking, sitting quietly, and staying on task (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, pp. 176-177). In addition, teachers inadvertently give boys more time to answer questions in the classroom than they give girls. These events make girls feel that they are not as smart as boys, and begin to undermine their self-confidence (AAUW, 1998, p. 48). Undermining the self-esteem of students through “curricular omission and bias” delivers the message that “women’s lives count for less than men’s” (AAUW, 1992, p. 117). When self-confidence is undermined, issues of self-esteem come into play. Sadker & Sadker (1995) state that, “Self-esteem is not only a vital sign of fundamental health, it is also a connection to academic achievement and a direct link to career goals and hopes for the future” (p. 77). Self-esteem is a crucial component of success for all students.
In the classroom setting, there is a direct link between the attention that boys maintain with their teachers and their sense of self-reliance and self-esteem. According to Sadker & Sadker (1995),

In elementary school, 55 percent of boys said they were always ‘good at a lot of things.’ This declined to 42 percent in high school.” As for the girls, “45 percent of girls in elementary school said they were always “good at a lot of things.” However, between elementary and middle school the “girl’s belief in their ability to do things” plummeted 16 points and then “another 6 points to 23 percent in high school. (p. 80)

Girls self-censoring in school is a direct result of low self-esteem and inadequacy they feel in the classroom. When girls silence themselves in the classroom, they learn to undervalue their abilities. In addition, teachers and parents begin to underestimate the intelligence of girls. It is clear that in the areas of math, science and technology “teachers beliefs that boys are smarter begin in the earliest school years” (Sadker & Zittleman, 2009, p. 95). This belief coupled with the low self-conception that girls have of themselves hold many students back from achieving in the dominant technological fields in the workforce of the 21st century. A disturbing quote from Girls, Inc. (2006) reveals that more than 50% of students in grades 3-12 hold the view that “people think that the most important thing for girls is to get married and have children” (p. 4). Girls receive mixed messages from school, home and community that can hinder their success in the future.
Gender, Schooling and Career Choice

Gender bias in school is influencing the career choices made by women by holding them to traditional women dominated fields. As stated in Gender Gaps, “Left to their own devices, girls and boys tend to self-select into fields traditional for their gender: girls cluster in social sciences, health services, and education; boys gravitate disproportionately toward engineering and business” (AAUW, 1998, p. 90). In a study by Correll (2001), the author finds that “widely shared cultural beliefs about gender and task competence bias actors’ perceptions of their competence at various skills” (p. 3). Correll (2001) believes that both male and female students have the cognitive ability to succeed in the field of math and technology, but it is cultural perceptions that hinder female students from pursuing careers that are based in math and technology.

Empowering girls and boys to defy their notions of gender appropriate fields of study will help to balance the indifference of learning new skills and working in nontraditional fields. The National Science Foundation (2012) states that “in the United States workforce in 2008, only 13% of all engineers and 26% of all computer and mathematical scientists were female” (p. 41). AAUW (2010) argues that lack of early exposure to academic argument and challenge translates into later difficulties in self-assessment, both in school and work settings, as girls and women anticipate “ready acceptance” rather than criticism of their work (p. 48). In short, girls are not exceeding in the fields of math and technology because our societies cultural norms are hindering their beliefs in themselves. Correll (2001) found that many women have difficulty “giving themselves permission” to excel in math, science and engineering (p. 1696).
The women of the study could not explain why they felt this way, but it is the reason why many did not pursue a career path that entailed math or technology training.

**Gender Equity Teacher Preparation**

Research suggests education should not only concentrate on the teaching of our students, it should extend to the preparation of our teachers as well. In a national survey conducted to study current teacher training programs, AAUW (2010) found that “72% of professors included training in gender equity” (p. 56). The survey went on to state, however, that most professors spent only about two hours discussing the topic of gender equity in education per semester. Even more alarming is the fact that after surveying 50 colleges in our nation, not one offered a course in gender equity as a part of their teacher training program (AAUW, 2010). Olivieri (2011) contends, “The amount and quality of gender equity training college educators receive affects the classroom environment and the learning experience of students” (p. 19). There are differences of opinion in how to deal with gender bias in schools. Houston (2004) argues for a gender sensitive approach verses a gender free approach to eradicate gender bias in the classroom. In a gender-sensitive approach, it is suggested that “we pay attention to gender when it can prevent sex bias or further sex equality” (Houston, 2004, p. 131).

For teachers, training in gender equity can help erase many of the perceived differences between male and female students and create an equal playing field in education. Understanding and recognizing unequitable gender disparities in schools is the first step to embracing change in our institutions. Yet, Stromquist and Fischman (2009) state that,
avoidance of deep gender issues is a persistent practice among state institutions, including schools…it sees the problem as one of equal access to education for both girls and boys, and of questions of women’s underrepresentation within certain fields of study. (p. 472)

Olivieri (2011) sees “gender-specific patterns of behavior occur at all levels of education and contribute to gender-role-socialization pressure as soon as children enter the educational system” (p. 42). Societal pressures are placed upon teachers, students and community to conform. Educational institutions, and specifically teachers, have the opportunity educate themselves in gender equitable practices and to model gender equity within the classroom to encourage social change.

**Self-Development and Career Goals of Women**

It is hard to believe that just 150 years ago women were fighting for equal rights in education. A mere 90 years ago women were fighting for the right to vote. Women have been breaking down barriers one small step at a time on the road towards equality. According to the Susan B. Anthony Center for Women’s Leadership US Suffrage Movement Timeline (2006), 1792 to 1992, women have made many monumental strides in the workplace.

Prior to WWII society placed limits on the kind of work deemed appropriate for women. Single women holding menial feminine jobs in order to support themselves prior to marriage were generally accepted. However, for lower class and minority woman, work was not a new phenomenon. These women had always worked outside of the home to support their families. Upper and middle class married women found
heavy social pressures to remain in the home to provide “free” labor in domesticity and childrearing. According to O’Kelly and Carney (1986) “Public attitudes appeared to change during the war years. Opinion polls found a widespread acceptance of the woman worker, whereas the majority of the population had rejected her during the thirties” (p. 149). Women were brought to the forefront of the labor market during the war because of the need to increase the labor force, not to create gender equality. According to Sorensen (2004), “Companies saw women’s needs and desires on the job as secondary to men’s, so they were not taken seriously or given much attention. In addition, employers denied women positions of power, excluding them from the decision-making process of the company” (p. 1).

In the years immediately following WWII, women were asked to step aside and relinquish their new found jobs for the returning veterans (Michals, 1997). Many women wanted to remain employed, however society pushed the working woman back into the home to continue her societal role as housewife and mother. At the end of the war, many women found themselves without income to support their families (Michals, 1997). Nonetheless, a glimmer of hope came to those who lost jobs at the end of the war.

Since the years of WWII, women have surpassed the expectations of the nation with their ability to learn trade skills in record time, accomplish factory work with incredible accuracy, and prove their commitment in the workforce (O’Kelly & Carney, 1986). However, the nation as a whole was not behind women’s efforts (Michals, 2001). Women were expected to maintain their duties in the household and in the area
of childcare, despite the fact that they were working outside of the home for eight hours or more each day (O’Kelly & Carney, 1986). Working women found themselves without support when it came to childcare and domestic household chores. They were hailed by society and the nation for participating in the war effort, but not released from “the cult of domesticity” (O’Kelly & Carney, 1986, p. 149). Women who found success as entrepreneurs and executives in early and mid-20th century America served to inspire women in the 1940s and 1950s to move beyond the front door and into economic prospects, which created educational and social acceptance of the true capabilities and talents of women.

In 1945, New York governor Thomas Dewey “implemented an inventive strategy for economic recovery and postwar reconversion” (Michals, 1997, p. 45). Dewey’s (1948, as cited in Michals, 1997) program focused on small business as the key to New York State’s future prosperity. He believed by offering a variety of training and counseling services to people who aspired to become entrepreneurs, he could reenergize the economy through entrepreneurial spirit and ingenuity (Michals, 1997). What made Governor Dewey’s plan so unique was the fact that Dewey offered his program to women as well as men (Michals, 1997).

Dewey established a Women’s program and Women’s council within the commerce department with the task of “encouraging and assisting would-be female business owners in launching independent enterprises” (Michals, 1997, p. 45). Governor Thomas Dewey’s landmark decision to include women in his strategy of economic recovery and postwar reconversion plan paved the way for a new wave of
female entrepreneurs in America. The [State of New York] Women’s program offered a series of small business workshops throughout the state from the late 1940s and 1950s. Aspiring entrepreneurs could bring business proposals or product samples for review by business experts. The experts provided insight into marketability, supply chains, media and marketing strategies. In addition, the program provided counseling by phone and mail, produced printed material on how to start a business, and showcased successful women in business (Michals, 1997, p. 45). Dewey hoped to resolve several pressing issues through his women’s program.

- Small business ownership could aid in clearing women wartime workers from jobs for returning soldiers.
- Small or home-based businesses would address the joint economic and familial burdens of married women whose husband either did not return from battle or returned too injured to work.
- In seeking to reestablish the 100,000 small businesses that were lost during the war, the state looked to women for assistance. (Michals, 1997, p. 45)

Thomas Dewey chose Jane Todd as the director of the Women’s Program. Todd, a New York State legislature, was well known for the “important social legislation she sponsored, including her Equal Pay Law which prohibits discrimination against women in the pay envelope” (Clapper, 1948, p. 65).

Todd became the first woman in the state of New York to hold the post of Deputy Commerce Commissioner. Todd’s mission was clear from the start. She projected 25,000 women would open small businesses within the next 10 years.
Governments in Texas, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, California and Maine quickly joined forces with Todd’s commission to support women small business start-ups. In fact, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women began to run “small business clinics” nationwide (Michals, 2001, p. 1). As a result of these post war time efforts, “the number of women business owners shot up from 600,000 in 1945 to almost a million just five years later” (Michals, 2001, p. 1).

Dewey and Todd’s progressive business program was a great victory for women wishing to branch out into the world of free enterprise. What the program did not do was change the social constructs of American society, and the female role of domesticity. Women were encouraged to develop products and services that could be produced in the home and enhance the living environment. As Michals (1997) points out, emphasis was placed on “baby-sitting services or home baked food production” (p. 48). Industrious women were busy creating products and services to strengthen the economy and improve a woman’s life. By the end of WWII American women found they were equally capable to do a “man’s” job and participate in the working man’s world.

The move toward female entrepreneurship in America brought more middle class women into the business world than ever before (Michals, 2001). They were able to work from home and remain loyal to their children and husbands while exercising their desire to participate in the economic prosperity of the country. Many found their business thrive and moved them out of the home and into manufacturing facilities.
By the 1970s women began to enter college and professional schools in large numbers (Hall & Solis, 2011). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), the educational attainment of women aged 25 to 64 in the labor force has risen substantially over the past 40 years. In 2010, 36 percent of these women held college degrees, compared with 11 percent in 1970. Only 7 percent of women were high school dropouts in 2010, down from 34 percent in 1970. (Hall & Solis, 2011, p. 4)

Armed with the same knowledge and degrees as their male counterparts, women were on track to equal the playing field in the workplace (Rosin, 2012). It is true that since the 1980s there has been an increase of women in management and professional occupations. However, according to Powell (2010) in his book *Women and Men in Management,* “despite trends, female managers are concentrated in the lower management levels and hold positions with less authority than men” (p. 3). He goes on to state, “the higher the level of the organization, the fewer women are found” (Powell, 2010, p. 3). In addition to variations in management in the workplace, women’s economic status remains below that of men.

**Current Career Trends Effecting Women**

The glass-ceiling phenomenon is a worldwide issue for women. Lockwood (2004) states, the term “glass ceiling” was introduced in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* report on corporate women by Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986). The glass ceiling is a theory that is used to describe the barriers that women encounter in the workplace when they aspire to attain senior management positions in corporations, public, and private
sector organizations, as well as government appointments. It refers to barriers to advancement as well as higher salary levels (Lockwood, 2004).

Trends in the 21st workforce suggest improved equitable opportunity for women. For example, Rosin (2012) explains,

In 2009, for the first time in American history, the balance of the workforce tipped toward women, who continue to hover around 50 percent. About 80 percent of women aged twenty-five to fifty-four years old work for pay, and an even higher percentage of female college graduates do. In the UK, women are poised to outnumber their male counterparts by 2017, prompting a national debate about whether medicine is becoming “over feminized.” In France, women make up 58 percent of doctors under age thirty-five, and in Spain, it’s 64 percent. (p. 1659)

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), in 2010, 51.4% of managerial and professional jobs were held by women. The percentage increase is substantial since 1980, when managerial and professional jobs held by women accounted for a mere 26.1% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). In 2010 women made up 61.3% of all accountants in the workforce, and have attained employment in approximately half of the varied banking and insurance related jobs. In addition, America’s physicians are now 33% women, and women account for 45% of associates in law firms (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). The statistics continue to show a trend toward growth in women’s success in the workforce.
The empowerment of women over the past forty years has led to more female college graduates, more career oriented women, and a workforce environment that hires on the basis of teamwork, problem solving and creativity, not on the basis of gender. Rivers and Chait Barnett (2006) contend that the notion of a boy crisis has been an ongoing contention since the early 1900s when it was argued that, “the constant interaction with women was robbing them (boys) of their manhood” (p. 1). In the early 1900s, a congressman “urged young men to “avoid books and in fact avoid all artificial learning, for the forefathers put America on the right path by learning completely from natural experience” (Rivers & Barnett, 2006, p. 1). Fast forward 100 years and today boys are struggling to maintain the high standards set by young girls.

**Equity Issues in Relationships at Work and Personal Life**

Even with the drive to succeed, women still face bias in education as well as the workforce. For women conquering the 21st century work force, it is imperative for their social and mental wellbeing to use this drive to succeed. Adams, King and King (1996) found that support, coming from “both work and non-work sources” in the form of emotional or instrumental support can be a strong indicator in an individual’s ability to balance work and personal life (p. 2). Work life balance is a challenge that women are embracing whole heartedly. Bussey (2012, May 4) highlights the clash in the changing face of the American workforce. In a speech given by Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, he suggested that the need for developing strategies for diversity in the workplace is unnecessary, and further stated that there is “no such thing as work-life balance” (Bussey, 2012, May 4, p. 1). Instead, Welch (2012) said, “there are work life
choices, and you make them, and they have consequences” (p. 1). The group of executives Walsh was addressing attended the conference to tackle “cultural devising strategies to get more high-performing women to the top, keep women on track during childbearing years, address bias, and make the goals of diversity motivation to employees” (Bussey, 2012, May 4, p. 1).

Equity issues are very relevant in today’s workplace. As women strive to break the glass-ceiling, they are wise to comingle and elicit advice from those who have succeeded in the business world. Bussey (2012, May 18) elicits advice from several female CEOs at the Women in the Economy conference. Angela Braly, CEO of WellPoint says it best,

The most important factor in determining whether you will succeed isn’t your gender, it’s you…Be open to opportunity, and take risks. In fact, take the worst, the messiest, the most challenging assignment you can find, and then take control. (Bussey, 2012, May 18, p. 1)

While the glass ceiling is a wide spread allegory used to describe the workforce challenges women have faced the last two decades, today the lack of access to leadership roles is “taking the form of a labyrinth or maze consisting of many barriers that they must negotiate” (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, p. 1). There are varying models of leadership, and they are “largely founded on the assumption that leadership and its effectiveness are universal” (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, p. 1).
Roles of Leadership and Gender

The United States business traditions dictate leadership qualities within our society that constrains individuals who do not fit within the mold of the traditional American leader, a white male. Women and minorities wishing to gain acceptance in leadership positions are often forced to hide their female or cultural qualities to maintain traditional leadership appearances within the business environment for fear of losing control and respect (de la Rey, 2005). Many leadership books, guides and programs are delivered as a one size fits all approach within a traditional leadership model. Ely et al. (2011) state that, “This approach assumes that gender either does not or should not matter for leadership development” (p. 6). There are still others that examine the issue of gender in leadership and assume that women are not well adapted to perform successfully in the leadership role and steps must be taken to “correct” or “fix” women to become competent leaders (Ely et al., 2011, p. 6).

Whether male or female, the key to success in the 21st century is hard work, focus, and teamwork. Ely et al. (2011) created a framework of training for women that takes into account success in leadership and work life balance. Their model takes into account “how gender shapes a woman’s path to leadership without either victimizing or blaming” her, “while at the same time cultivating in women a sense of agency” (Ely et al., 2011, p. 6). Empowering women to achieve success while maintaining balance in her many life roles is the framework for the research teams model (Ely et al., 2011, p. 6). As society moves through the second decade of the new millennium, it should not
be about female or male dominance in the workplace, but rather how equality in the workplace can foster shared governance in leadership and success.

**Women’s Development Programs**

There is limited research on personal and professional women’s development programs incorporating gender equitable methods, hence the purpose of this study. The literature does, however, describe the validity of the integration of women’s development programs into the workplace as an important step towards equality in the workforce in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

Nationally, the researcher has found that there are only seven higher education institutions offering women development programs. They are Charter Oak State College, New Britain, CT; Community College of Spokane, WA; College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, ID; Skagit Valley College (mixed gender program), Mount Vernon WA; Skyline College, San Bruno, CA; Lane Community College, Eugene; and Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, OH. Typically, the programs focus on career and job readiness skills such as academic business courses, career directions, (Community College of Spokane 2013), technical education CSI programs (College of Southern Idaho, 2013) and counseling in academic and career planning, study skills, tutoring (Skyline College, 2013).

**Cuyahoga Community College**

The current development program offered at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland Ohio is a good example of a successful women in transition program. Celebrating its 35\textsuperscript{th} anniversary in the field of women’s development, the program is
designed for “women in any stage of transition” (Cuyahoga Community College, 2013, p.1). Cuyahoga’s program is a free eight week noncredit program that addresses personal development, career exploration, self-esteem, assertiveness, health, safety, job readiness, time management, and tools to deal with life’s changes. This program focuses not only on the job readiness skills needed in today’s global economy, but also on the significant challenges women face in education and the workforce (Cuyahoga Community College, 2013).

**Charter Oak State College**

Charter Oak State College in New Britain, CT offers a women in transition program described as, “moving women to self-sufficiency” (Charter Oak State College, 2013, p. 1). The program helps working single mothers earn an AA or BA degree coupled with financial aid. Established in 1999, the Women in Transition program applicants must fulfill all of the following qualifications to be eligible for participation. All applicants must be a single mother with dependent children, have a minimum of 21 college credits from an accredited institution, have a minimum 2.3 GPA and meet the eligibility requirements for federal financial aid (Charter Oak State College, 2013). In addition, the applicants must be employed in a low paying job, and be willing to take at least two or three courses per semester. The scope of women helped by the Charter Oak State College is narrow and does not allow help for women without children or women who are not working. The program does not attract current employees wishing to work towards independence through personal and professional development. The program is
funded by donations and grants as well as through the Charter Oak State College Foundation (Charter Oak State College, 2013).

**Community College of Spokane**

The Life Transition Center at Community College of Spokane, WA is a co-educational program that focuses on new career paths. The topics include career directions, MS office, business writing and math, quick books and office skills. While the program offers many needed workforce development courses, the personal development aspect seems to be missing within the program. The centers program qualifications reach a broad category of potential students. Target populations include, new career seekers, recently unemployed, those facing major transitions in life, such as divorce, or widowhood, as well as homemakers moving into the workforce and planning next career steps (Community College of Spokane, 2013). This is a stage funded program based on career transitions without a clear focus on personal development.

**College of Southern Idaho**

The College of Southern Idaho’s Center for New Directions program mission is “To provide technical education students who are single parents or those enrolled in Non-traditional occupations for their gender with resources for retention and completion of CSI programs and placement in related employment” (College of Southern Idaho, 2013, p. 1). Participants are required to be enrolled in a CSI program leading to an AAS, technical certificate or postsecondary certificate. Participants must be a single parent, unemployed or underemployed or a displaced homemaker. In addition,
nontraditional occupation students whose gender represents 25% or less in the field are admitted to the program. Bonnel (2010) found that the program “provides educational support services to a minimum of 100 displaced homemakers per year” (p. 74). New Directions is a broad based program that focuses on personal and family development. Established in 1980, the Center for New Directions program offers free/cheap family fun, courses in family teamwork, managing time, financial tips, relaxation/stress, management, family fitness, parenting tips and nutrition (College of Southern Idaho, 2013).

**Skagit Valley College**

Skagit Valley College Life Transitions program engages students who are in a life transition. Their program challenges individuals to identify strengths and gives students the tools and resources they need to make a positive change in their life. Free mixed gender turning point classes and workshops along with intensive career exploration and job search services are offered at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon, WA (Skagit Valley College, 2013). The program assists individuals who need or want to make major changes in their lives. It is for anyone who seeks new opportunities for education, training or employment. Classes and workshops are not defined (Skagit Valley College, 2013).

**Skyline College**

In California, the Skyline College in San Bruno’s Women in Transition program established in 1975 serves all women in transition with counseling in academic and career planning, study skills training, tutoring and registration assistance (Skyline
College, 2013). In addition, they offer courses in reading, writing, math and history. Unfortunately, no further information is available. Classes were suspended as of fall 2013 (Skyline College, 2013).

**Lane Community College**

Lane Community College in Eugene Oregon offers an entry program to assist single parents, and other women in transition. This program, Women in Transition, focuses on self-sufficiency through access to education, training and employment. They have two required core classes: Life Transitions and Career and Life Planning. Many electives are available as well, and women can choose what they feel is best for their life and circumstances (Lane Community College, 2013). Courses offered in the Women in Transition program at Lane Community College cover both personal and professional development (Lane Community College, 2013).

**Women’s Development Curriculum and Programs**

Ely et al. (2011) provide a framework for a women’s leadership development program and reveal the gender dynamics involved in becoming a leader in the 21st century. The authors explain that leadership training should be reframed as identity work, and reinterpret the traditional rationales and approaches of standard leadership topics. Topics focus on standard leadership skills such as negotiations, leading change, 360 feedback, networking, second generation forms of gender bias, invisible barriers, workplace structures, and patterns and practices. In the Ely et al. (2011) study, evidence was found showing “second generation” forms of gender bias, including “invisible barriers such as cultural beliefs, workplace structures, practices, and patterns
of interaction inadvertently favoring men” (p. 4). Revealing the gender dynamics involved in becoming a leader can help to reframe leadership and personal development training for women in the future and break down the patterns and practices in leadership that unintentionally favor men.

The concept of identity work is of upmost importance for women entering the workforce and aspiring to leadership roles. Women face many challenges in our society including the lack of role models in leadership, a lack of access to networks and sponsors, and a cultural bias of a woman’s place in society. Aronson (2008) conducted in depth interviews with forty-two young women in their early twenties from diverse backgrounds and found three themes that dominated “young women’s understandings of their own lives” (p. 7). They included uncertainty in the areas of work and college completion, self-reliance/independence, and self-development as “markers” that they associate with being an adult. The study showed that young women today embody some of the key elements of feminism in prior generations yet they “lack social and political support to act on their increased opportunities” (p. 4). The study concluded that although contemporary young women think in terms of the “Have it all” approach to work and family, most workplaces and work-family policies do not sufficiently accommodate an adequate work-life balance philosophy (Aronson, 2008). This sentiment is echoed in the Bailyn (2006) study where it points out that many companies’ organizational rules and practices have not changed to accommodate the growing number of mothers in the workforce (Bailyn, 2006).
Issues that are important to the career and personal development of women are outlined by Killy and Borgen (2000). Their research discusses the findings in literature that speak to the experience of North American re-entry women in regards to seven themes that emerge. They are transitions in adulthood, self-confidence, sex-role stereotyping, discrimination, diverse career patterns, multiple roles, and the ongoing search for meaning (Killy & Borgen, 2000).

Personal and Professional development are often subjects that are missed in the higher education system of classes. Hazen, Cavanagh, and Bossman (2004) found a way to incorporate personal and professional development within the Harvard MBA curriculum with a gateway course in service learning. The goal of the course is to “provide students with an opportunity to work together as a team; raise student awareness of community needs; and link their personal experiences to course concepts” (Hazen et al., 2004, p. 377). As part of the curriculum, students are asked to “examine, formulate and articulate their own personal goals and values,” adhere to ethical procedures in evaluations and strategize the issues of social responsibility within the context of their service learning assignment (Hazen et al., 2004, p. 377). The gateway service-learning course of study is rooted in Personal Development, Self-Knowledge, and Social Responsibility (Hazen et al., 2004). The course was evaluated with a pre and post survey to assess the key growth components of the class. The study showed a marked improvement in students “personal mission, values and goals, ethical, and social knowledge as well as team and diversity skills” (Hazen et al., 2004, p. 383). These key components of organizational leadership will encourage change in the stratified
business hierarchies within institutions clinging to masculine cultural perspectives in management and leadership in our society. Courses of study that bring awareness to the importance of personal development into the mainstream of higher education can help to break down the “labyrinth or maze consisting of many barriers that [women] “must negotiate” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 62).

Conclusion

The American “cult of domesticity” left a lasting legacy for women of all socio-economic backgrounds (O’Kelly & Carney, 1986, p. 149). Blaszczynk (2002) points out how this phenomenon helped to define a women’s place in “management of the home and attention to women’s personal appearance” (p. 3). It created an obstacle which each woman must still carefully and strategically traverse. Today’s economic climate continues to challenge women pursuing a career and family. According to Pew Research (2009),

although there are now a growing number of positive societal views of women in the workforce; women who are working and raising young children are still considered better off as stay at home moms or should only work part time. (Pew, “Public Views,” para. 3)

In the 21st century, the female population currently represents over 50% of our workforce. However, only 3% of our Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs (Bussey, 2012, May 4). The low number of women in high power positions is not directly related to child-rearing, as many would like to believe, it is predominantly a reflection of quality of life values important to women (Bussey, 2012, May 4, p. 1).
This societal pressure puts an extra burden on single and low socio-economic women trying to provide for their families.

After years of social conditioning in our cultural and education systems of higher learning, many women have grown to be more passive, polite and non-confrontational at home, in college, and in the workforce setting. Although women are leading the way in college degrees, men are still earning more in weekly wages according to the U.S. Department of Labor (2011). Professional and personal development programs offer women a non-bias opportunity to build confidence, generate clear objectives and goals, and propel women forward in society and the workforce. By reinterpreting the traditional rationales and approaches of standard leadership topics in development training, female only training programs allow women to see themselves in the curriculum (Ely et al., 2011). Breaking down the invisible barriers such as cultural beliefs, workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favor men, women will see themselves as viable candidates in top management positions (Ely et al., 2011). Research shows that by incorporating personal and professional development programs at the college and workforce level, women develop models for personal growth by building confidence, value and goal setting, assertiveness, networking skills, and problem solving (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hazen et al., 2004; Willis & Daisley, 2006).
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology utilized in this study. It includes the design of the study, the participants, as well as the analysis. The study data results are based on a pre-survey and a post-survey that were completed by participants who attended one of two Empowering Women Workshops. The study focuses solely on female employees at two higher education institutions in northern California. This study utilized mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative methodology includes survey analysis and comparison to relevant survey data from the Springboard Consultancy workshops based in England. The qualitative methodology incorporates the analysis of open-ended survey questions.

The sample study included 31 female higher education employees in Northern California from two higher education institutions. Each institution gave approval for all workshops held for their employees. Participants from each institution engaged in four eight-hour workshops that took place over a three month period using the Empowering Women Professional and Personal Development program as modeled by the Springboard Personal Development program from the Springboard Consultancy. Prior to the initial workshop session, each participant was asked for their consent to participate in the study (Appendix B).

Study Design and Data Collection

This is a mixed methods study applying both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Creswell (2003) describes the mixed methods approach as “the
inquiry on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of a research problem” (p. 21). The study began with a consent letter followed by a pre-survey to enable the researcher to “generalize” the results to a larger population (Appendix B & C). The research design was a pre-post survey using Likert scales and open-ended questions (Appendix C & D). The qualitative and quantitative data collection was completed simultaneously.

**Quantitative**

Quantitative research does not lend itself to the study of opinions and experiences. Quinn (2002) indicated that the multiple methods approach, including varying combinations of qualitative and quantitative data, is on the rise, and is a valid method for conducting research. There are advantages and disadvantages to both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. By incorporating both methods into a research study, the researcher can minimize the disadvantages of the methods while benefiting from the increased advantages (Cowan, 2000).

This research includes quantitative data collection. The study compared pre and post survey data completed by participants. The completed pre surveys were analyzed quantitatively to determine the students’ views of the Empowering Women Workshop prior to completing the training (Appendix C). A posttest set of surveys were analyzed at the end of the training to determine if the students’ views on the Empowering Women Workshop were affected positively through their involvement in the training (Appendix D). Quantitative data was collected because of its emphasis on facts and
numbers (Thompson, 2012, p. 11). The survey tool used was easily quantifiable and supported statistical analysis.

The main advantage of sample survey research, according to Rea and Parker (2005), is “the ability to generalize about an entire population by drawing inferences based on data drawn from a small portion of that population” (p. 7). In addition, one can implement a survey in a short amount of time, thereby creating a “snapshot of the population” (Rea & Parker, 2005, p. 7). The questions included in the pre and post surveys (Appendix C & D), are modeled after the Personal development has legs research survey published by Willis & Daisley (2006) and the Springboard Women’s Development Program Trainer’s Manual survey tools (Willis & Daisley, 2011). Thompson (2012) states, “The survey consists of a Likert scale that will allow for the results from the pre survey to be compared to those of the posttest” (p. 10).

**Qualitative**

Qualitative research methods were use when considering the open-ended survey questions in this study. Qualitative research, according to Quinn (2002), is used to “inform action, enhance decision making and apply knowledge to solve human and societal problems” (p. 12). In contrast to the quantitative analysis, a focused thematic analysis utilizing open-ended survey questions were included in order to collect the “detailed views” from the study participants. Enquiry of this nature enables the researcher to assess explicit issues in depth and detail. Qualitative methodologies “produce a wealth of detailed information about people or small groups of people” (Trotter-Hamilton, 2010, p. 51). Through thematic analysis of open-ended questions in
the pre and post survey (Appendix C & D), the researcher will “construct categories or themes that capture some recurring patterns… of the data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). By creating categories to guide the analysis of the data, the researcher will be able to systematically target the study’s purpose through the answers the participants give in the open-ended survey questions (Merriam, 2009). Quinn (2002) states that through qualitative inquiry, participants reveal their “depth of emotion, the ways they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences and their basic perceptions” (p. 24).

**Quantitative Survey Design**

The independent variables are:

1. training the employees received prior to attending the Empowering Women Workshop;
2. confidence levels, relationships, self-development, genuine interactions, career goals and personal objectives at work and in personal life prior to attending the Empowering Women Workshop.

The Empowering Women Workshop model utilizes a combination of four sessions once a month, and pre workshop document analyses for the purpose of establishing a baseline at the beginning of the sessions, and then again at the end of the four workshop sessions. The researcher questioned if workshop participants experience a heightened awareness of their current confidence levels, their relationships, self-development, genuine interactions, career goals and personal objectives related to their work and personal lives.
Specifically, the first tool used for this study was a pre survey using Likert scales measuring (a) confidence at work and personal life; (b) relationships at work and personal life; (c) self-development; (d) genuine work and personal interactions; (e) career goals; (f) objectives for participation (Appendix C). The pre surveys were completed by the participants prior to the first workshop and returned to the researcher for later analysis.

The second tool used for this study was a post survey of the Empowering Women Workshop (Appendix D). Participants completed the post survey at the end of the fourth workshop, which ended the three month workshop series, and returned the surveys to the researcher for later analysis.

Qualitative Survey Design

The qualitative data for the study came from two sources: (a) the reflective open-ended questions at the end of the “Pre Survey Self-Assessment,” and (b) the reflective narrative from the open-ended questions at the end of the “Post Survey Self-Assessment” (Appendix C & D). The pre and post survey tools formed a rich qualitative database from which to draw themes related to the Empowering Women’s Development Program Workshops.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of the Empowering Women’s Professional and Personal Development Training Program on participant’s self-confidence levels and self-empowerment?
2. What impact does the Empowering Women’s Professional and Personal Development Training Program have on empowering participants in communication skills and assertiveness?

3. How effective is the training on the participants understanding of work life balance and practical steps to achieve their career goals?

**Research Instruments**

An informed consent form was created and used that allowed the participants the opportunity to opt out of the study (Appendix B). In addition, participants were asked to fill out a four by six index card with an explanation of their job title and duties.

Pre and post surveys were created and modeled on the “Personal Development has Legs” research survey (Willis & Daisley, 2006) published by The Springboard Consultancy Ltd (2006), and the Springboard Women’s Development program Trainer’s Manual survey tools (Willis & Daisley, 2011) (Appendix C & D). Survey topics included questions pertaining to confidence at work and personal life, relationships at work and personal life, and self-development and career. In addition, participants were asked to list the main results they would like to get from participation in the Empowering Women Workshop.

**Participants**

The design of the Empowering Women Workshop is relevant to any woman, employed or not, who is in transition in her life, or who seeks to improve her current situation. Participants for this study were selected from employees at two higher education institutions in Northern California. Institution A was a California
Community College with approximately 1,500 employees and 20,000 students’ district wide. Institution B was a California University with approximately 2,520 employees and 28,000 students. In both institutions, the human resource departments were an integral part in gaining access to campus employees for this study.

Thirty-one employees from Northern California Colleges were recruited for the study. The participants range from part-time to full-time faculty as well as classified employees from various departments throughout the campuses. Participants were randomly selected by a participant self-nomination process. The workshop series was presented to all female employees. Those who had a desire to define their values and goals, and improve their confidence, relationships, self-development, and career and work life balance, signed up for the workshop series. In both institutions, the human resources department emailed employees about the Empowering Women Workshop. Employees interested in the workshop series signed up through their human resources department.

**Years at Job**

Data from 31 pre and 31 post surveys was included in this study. The workshop participant data shows that 45.2% of women have been in their current job for 0-5 years, 25.8% for 6-10 years, 12.0% for 11-15 years and 16.1% have been in their current job for 25 years or longer (Table 1).
Table 1

*Years at Job*

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<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11-15 Years</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Age of Participants

Table 2 shows the participants range in age and the frequency of each age range. Forty-five percent of participants were in the 25-40 age range and 41.9% were in the 41-55 age range. The smallest percentage came from the 56+ age range with 12.9% of participants (Table 2).

Table 2

*Age of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Participants</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-55 years</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethnicity

Participants came from varied ethnic backgrounds with the largest sample population being Caucasian/White at 48.4% with the second largest being of mixed race at 19.4% (Table 3).

Table 3

Ethnicity of Participants

<table>
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<th>Ethnicity of Participants</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Setting

The study took place at two locations. The first setting was a Northern California community college. The workshop series was held in the human resources conference room on the main campus of the community college. The community college provided the conference table and chairs, whiteboards, and television monitor and computer to help facilitate the workshop series. The researcher provided the flipchart paper, markers, and additional training supplies. In addition, the researcher provided the participant workbooks. Community college employees participating in the workshop series were encouraged to participate in a potluck lunch during each of the four eight-hour day workshops.
The second setting was a Northern California university. The workshop series was held in two of the university union conference and training rooms provided on the second and third floors. The university provided the tables and chairs, whiteboards, projector and screen, flipchart paper, easels and the participant workbooks to help facilitate the workshop series. The researcher provided the computer, markers, and additional training supplies. The university provided morning and afternoon snacks as well as a catered lunch for each of the participants during the workshop series.

The study was analyzed at the researcher’s office. Data was stored in a locked safe in the researcher’s office to maintain privacy of participants and security of materials. All data was coded to maintain participant confidentiality. Data has only been seen by the researcher and the research assistants. The final written study results were shared with all data being anonymous.

**Procedures**

Preparation for the Empowering Women Workshop Series took place over a 12 month period prior to the beginning of the workshops. The researcher applied and attended the Springboard License Training Program in Devon, England. After obtaining the Springboard Trainer License agreement, the researcher engaged in many conversations between the Springboard Consultancy to solidify the terms of use of the Springboard Professional and Personal Women’s Development Training Program materials and research. Additional workshop materials were gathered by the researcher, which included U.S. statistics and examples, to add interest and relevance to the U.S. participant’s experience. The researcher restructured the resource chapter in the
participant’s Springboard workbook to include support groups available to women living in California and the U.S. The restructuring of the resource chapter created relevance for Northern California participants using the Springboard workbook during the Empowering Women Workshop Series.

In order to offer the workshop series, the researcher had to obtain permission from a community college and university to participate in the research study. Multiple meetings were set up with the institutions human resources department, and in the case of the community college, an additional meeting was arranged with the vice president of instruction. After gaining approval from the institutions, an opt-out informed consent form was created and submitted to the institutions for approval (Appendix B). Upon approval, the researcher created Empowering Women Workshop marketing materials for the community college and university human resource departments to publicize the workshop series to their employees. Self-nominated participants signed up to attend the Empowering Women Workshop Series through their human resources department.

To obtain pre and post survey data, the researcher created a pre and post survey based on the Great Britain Springboard pre and post surveys (Appendix C &D). The surveys were submitted to both the community college office of instruction and the university human resources department for approval. Once approval was granted by the community college and university human resources departments, the pre survey was distributed to participants prior to the beginning of the first workshop.

During the workshop series, four eight-hour workshops occurred over a three month period at each approved institution. Each workshop concentrated on specific
topics relevant to the participant workshop materials. Workshop day 1: concentrated on setting goals, taking clear, practical, realistic steps to gain more control over life, finding values, making decisions and taking action based on values. Workshop day 2: clarifying values, identifying beliefs, and managing emotions. In addition, the workshop touched on understanding networks - working a network of influence and clarifying expectations and setting goals. Workshop day 3: began a journey outward using assertiveness positively, improving listening and communication, increasing self-confidence, gaining more control over life and positive role models. Workshop day 4: concentrated on taking control of future aspirations, promoting a positive image, creating a network of support directed on performance, image and exposure.

Objectives for participants were to 1) Take clear and practical realistic steps to take more control over your life. 2) Find out what you value. 3) Make decisions and take action based on your values. The program featured a 300 page workbook, four one day workshops over three months, a support system, networking, and role models. The program was set up for each woman to personalize her own agenda, take a holistic approach to work and personal life, and provide a wealth of material in one place.

**Workshop Day 1**

Participants were registered, and introduced to the Empowering Women Workshop Series program. At the beginning of the day, participants were introduced to the workbook, listened to a guest speaker, participated in a group discussion about what they wanted to gain from participating in the program, found ideas and support from
each other, organized themselves and their resources and created action points to work on prior to the next workshop day.

**Workshop Day 2**

Workshop 2 commenced with a progress update between group members of the workshop series. They talked about their experiences with the workbook pages and exchanged hints, tips and advice from one another. The workshop moved onto a session called “choosing to change” and participants reflected on the choices that they need to make to create change in their lives. Values were discussed next before moving on to the guest speaker of the day. The afternoon brought session about managing you, setting proprieties and goals and reflecting on your positive future self. The day ended with a summary and action point session to create a base from which to work on the workbook during the break before the third session began.

**Workshop Day 3**

Workshop 3 dove into goal setting and assertiveness. Participants worked in groups on the “five ingredients, why bother, and choosing to be assertive” prior to the guest speaker session. The afternoon session focused on listening, body language and space before returning to practice on real situation assertiveness. The day concluded with compliments, summary and action steps. Participants received homework assignments and were required to meet in their groups prior to the fourth and final session.
Workshop Day 4

Workshop 4 focused on review of progress, celebration and presenting successes. Facilitation concentrated on taking the next steps, networking and image. An inspirational guest speaker was brought in to reenergize the participants prior to the group presentations. Each group presented their successes with the larger group to showcase what they had learned and achieved throughout the workshop series. The workshop series was recapped, a summary stated and final action plans were created by all participants.

The researcher obtained data from the participants in the study by administering the approved pre and post quantitative and qualitative surveys that was created for this study. The pre survey was delivered within the first hour of workshop one, and the post survey was delivered in the last hour of the fourth and final workshop in the series.

The Likert scale survey data was processed through Excel and SPSS to determine any statistical trends among the participants of women’s development program. The narrative portions of the surveys were analyzed using thematic analysis. Insights gained from this study will be used to develop further recommendations of addressing personal development teaching methods and professional women’s development trainings programs. The final product will be used to develop curriculum, and incorporate recommendations designed to enhance women’s development programs in California and the U.S. The results of this study will be shared with the participating institutions to enforce the benefit of professional and personal development and emphasize the areas for continued growth to empower female employees.
Summary

Employing survey research methods incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher aimed to understand the role that women’s development programs have to empower women in reaching their full potential in the workforce. The goal of this study was to focus on the Empowering Women Workshop Series to assess its validity in helping women increase confidence, achieve their goals and objectives and help to create work life balance. The researcher’s intent was to gain awareness of participants’ perspectives on the Empowering Women Workshop Series to enable further research into the field of women’s development.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

This study examined 31 women employed in California at public institutions of higher learning. It explored the professional and personal development desires of working women and examined the outcomes of participation in the Empowering Women Workshop Series. In order to ascertain outcomes of this study, data was obtained from pre and post surveys and distributed to Empowering Women Workshop Series participants at the community college and university in Northern California where the study took place. The analysis of the pre and post surveys was delineated into five sections: Confidence, Relationships, Self-Development, Being Myself, and Career. In addition, the post survey included an additional Likert survey data section to specifically determine the relevance of the Empowering Women Workshop Series as a women’s development program. The post survey concluded with three open-ended questions to assess the participant’s genuine reactions for the four-day workshop series.

Survey

Demographic Information of Participants

The workshop participant data shows that 45% of women have been in their current job for 0-5 years, 26% for 6-10 years, 12% for 11-15 years and 16% have been in their current job for 25 years or longer. The participants range in age and the frequency of each age range. Forty-Five point two percent of Participants were in the 25-40 age range and 42% were in the 41-55 age range. The smallest percentage came from the 56+ age range with 13% of participants (Table 2). The participants came from
varied ethnic backgrounds with the largest sample population being Caucasian/White at 48% with the second largest being of mixed race at 19% (Table 3).

The quantitative data from the pre and post survey posed a series of questions categorized and designed on a Likert scale of zero to seven. The Likert scale depicted confidence level as

0. Don’t know
1. not at all confident
2. not confident
3. not very confident
4. neutral
5. somewhat confident
6. confident
7. very confident

The agreement levels are delineated as 1) disagree very strongly, 2) strongly disagree, 3) somewhat disagree, 4) somewhat agree, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree, 7) agree very strongly. When the survey asked about the usefulness of tools and techniques the Likert scale described usefulness as 1) not useful at all, 2) not useful, 3) not very useful, 4) neutral, 5) useful, 6) very useful, 7) extremely useful. Placing a “don’t know” column, 0, on the Likert scale greatly reduced the number of unanswered questions on the survey.
Quantitative Results

Confidence at Work

The first series of questions dealt with the subject of confidence, asking the question; how confident are you at work and in your personal life? The following questions were explored in section one: How confident are you at work;

1. In meetings
2. Dealing with customers
3. Dealing with my manager
4. Dealing with staff
5. Voicing my opinions
6. Dealing with other colleagues
7. Setting myself career goals

Section two questions pertained to personal life and originated from the initial question; how confident are you in your personal life;

1. In situations with a group of people
2. Dealing with family
3. Dealing with tradesmen/women
4. Dealing with my children’s teachers
5. Dealing with professionals e.g. doctors, lawyers, etc.
6. Voicing my opinions
7. Getting time to myself, setting personal goals
In response to the pre survey question *how confident are you at work, in meetings*, 1 (3%) participant responded that they were not confident in meetings, 1 (3%) was not very confident, 5 (16%) felt neutral about their confidence level in meetings, 8 (26%) were somewhat confident, 11 (35%) felt confident and 5 (16%) were very confident. The post survey showed 0% of participants not confident or not very confident, 3 (10%) neutral, 5 (16%) somewhat confident, 17 (55%) felt confident, and 6 (19%) felt very confident in meetings after their participation in the Empowering Women Workshop Series (Figure 1).

*Figure 1. Confidence at Work – in Meetings.*
In response to the pre survey question *how confident are you at work, in meetings*, the participant’s data shows a significant shift from the pre survey to the post survey. The confident column rose from 11 (35%) participants who felt confident at work in meetings in the pre survey to 17 (55%) participants who felt confident in the post survey. In addition, the 7 (23%) participants who did not feel confident, not very confident and neutral in the pre survey, decreased to 0 participants who were not confident and not very confident in the post survey, and 3 (10%) participants who felt neutral about their confidence level at work in meetings in the post survey. The Empowering Women Workshop Series engaged the participants in a series of confidence building activities designed to enhance their confidence levels at work in meetings. The data confirms that the confidence building activities produced a positive impact, with an overall 35% increase in participant confidence at work in meetings.

The next question asked was *how confident are you dealing with your manager*. The pre survey results showed 1 (3%) was not confident, 1 (3%) was not very confident, 3 (10%) were neutral, 8 (26%) felt somewhat confident, 10 (32%) were confident, and 8 (26%) were very confident when dealing with their manager. On the post survey 7 (23%) felt somewhat confident, 15 (48%) were confident, and 9 (29%) were very confident (Figure 2).
Participants were asked to rate their confidence level in regards to how confident they are dealing with their manager. Notable changes were found in this category regarding the pre and post participant survey responses. Two (6%) pre survey participants felt not confident and not very confident in regards to dealing with their manager, however, after participation in the workshop series each woman responded on the post survey that they now feel somewhat confident when dealing with their manager at work. Another impressive increase in confidence came in the confident category with a rise of 5 (16%) women responding in the post survey that they are confident dealing with their manager at work. This increased the post survey confident category from 10 (32%) to 15 (48%) participants. By the end of the workshop series all

Figure 2. Confidence at Work – Dealing with My Manager.
participants reported some level of confidence when dealing with their manager at work. One important note is that 6 (19%) participants reported a slight decrease in confidence in the post survey. Participants reporting a decrease in their ability to deal with their managers at work reported confident, and very confident in their pre survey. The decrease noted on the post survey was one category lower than their pre survey answers (Figure 2).

Responding to the question *how confident are you when voicing your own opinions at work*, the pre survey showed 1 (3%) were not very confident, 2 (6%) were neutral, 15 (48%) were somewhat confident, 8 (26%) felt confident, and 5 (16%) were very confident. The post survey results revealed that 4 (13%) of respondents were neutral, 7 (23%) were somewhat confident, 15 (48%) were confident, and 5 (16%) remained very confident (Figure 3).
The pre and post survey results for confidence voicing my opinions did not see a change in the very confident category. The largest swing in this section arose from the shift of 15 (48%) participants reporting confident in the pre survey shifting to 15 (48%) participants reporting very confident in the post survey. Overall, the data shows a 39% increase in participant confidence levels as a result of the Empowering Women Workshop Series (Figure 3).

When participants were asked about their confidence levels when dealing with other colleagues the pre survey showed; 1 (3%) was not confident, 1 (3%) was neutral, 10 (32%) were somewhat confident, 12 (39%) were confident, and 7 (23%) were very
confident. The post survey showed 1 (3%) was neutral, 4 (13%) were somewhat confident, 19 (61%) were confident, and 7 (23%) were very confident (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Confidence at Work – Dealing with Other Colleagues.

In the confidence dealing with other colleagues question, pre and post survey data shows the majority of movement can be seen in the somewhat confident and confident categories. Ten (32%) of participants chose the somewhat confident category in the pre-survey, however in the post survey only 4 (13%) participants chose the somewhat confident category. Of the 10 (32%) of participants who chose the somewhat confident category in the pre survey, all but 2 (6%) shifted their response to the confident category in the post survey (Figure 4).
Confidence in Personal Life

When asked *how confident are you in your personal life* in situations with a group of people, 2 (6%) of participants were not very confident, 4 (13%) were neutral, 7 (23%) felt somewhat confident, 11 (35%) were confident, 6 (19%) felt very confident and 1 (3%) answered don’t know in the pre survey. The post survey reported 2 (6%) neutral, 9 (29%) somewhat confident, 11 (35%) confident and 9 (29%) very confident (Figure 5).

![Confidence within a group of people](image)

*Figure 5. Confidence Within a group of people*

The data shows some movement with participants who were not very confident in the pre survey when compared with the post survey. Two (6%) of participants in the
pre survey reported that they were not very confident within a group of people in their personal life. When asked the same question in the post survey, the participants who were not very confident revealed that after participation in the Empowering Women Workshop Series the participants noted that they were now somewhat confident. It is interesting to note that there was no change in the confident category between the pre and post surveys in regards to numbers, however the movement increased for 3 (10%) participants noted confident in the pre survey to very confident in the post survey. In addition, 2 (6%) participants noted feeling neutral in the pre survey had increased their category to confident in the post survey.

When responding to the question, *how confident in your personal life are you when dealing with tradesmen/women*, participants responded 1 (3%) participant was neutral, 10 (32%) somewhat confident, 11 (35%) confident, 7 (23%) very confident, with 2 (6%) marking don’t know in the pre survey. Post survey shows, 7 (23%) somewhat confident, an increase to 14 (45%) in confident, 8 (26%) very confident with the remaining 2 (6%) who don’t know (Figure 6).
Figure 6. Confidence Dealing With Tradesmen/Women.

Noteworthy movement was shown in the somewhat confident and confident categories in the confidence dealing with tradesmen/women question. Fifty percent of the 10 participants who rated somewhat confident in the pre survey increased their confidence level to confident or very confident after their participation in the workshop series as revealed in the post survey. Surprisingly, 2 (6%) participants who rated somewhat confident, and confident in the pre survey noted don’t know in the post survey. Overall, 9 (29%) participants increased their confidence in dealing with tradesmen/women as a result of participation.

Confidence dealing with professional’s pre survey responses remained in the neutral and confident range with 4 (13%) neutral, 8 (24%) somewhat confident, 13
(42%) confident, and 6 (19%) who felt very confident. The post survey showed 1 (3%) neutral, 6 (19%) somewhat confident, 15 (48%) confident and 9 (29%) very confident (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Confidence Dealing With Professionals.

Sixteen (50%) participants showed no movement between the pre and post surveys in regards to their confidence levels when dealing with professionals. Ten (32%) participants increased their confidence level by one category between the pre and post surveys. Two (6%) participants decreased their confidence level from the beginning to the end of the workshop each decreasing from very confident to confident. The remaining 2 (6%) of participants jumped two categories from the pre survey to the
post survey revealing the validity of the confidence building activities contained within the Empowering Women Workshop Series.

When asked about voicing their opinion, one participant (3%) was neutral, 13 (42%) felt somewhat confident, 12 (23%) were confident and 5 (16%) felt very confident. In the post survey, confidence increased with 1 (3%) neutral, 6 (19%) somewhat confident, 16 (50%) confident, and 8 (26%) very confident (Figure 8).

![Confidence voicing my opinions](image)

**Figure 8.** Confidence Voicing My Opinions.

Substantial movement was seen with participants voicing their opinions in their personal lives when comparing the pre and post surveys. Several sessions in the Empowering Women Workshop Series concentrated on assertiveness. Fifteen (48%)
participants showed an increase in their confidence level in this area after attending the workshop series.

Responding to the question regarding confidence in setting aside time for myself, 6 participants (19%) felt neutral, 11 (35%) somewhat confident, 9 (28%) were confident, 3 (10%) felt very confident, and 1 (3%) did not know if they felt confident taking some time for themselves. The post survey showed a reduction in confidence with 1 (3%) reporting not very confident, 5 (16%) neutral, 8 (26%) somewhat confident, the same 9 (28%) confident, and increased with 7 (23%) were very confident. One (3%) remained in the didn’t know column in the post survey (Figure 9).

![Confidence in setting aside time to myself](image)

**Figure 9.** Confidence in Setting Aside Time to Myself.
Workshop participants were encouraged throughout the workshop series to set aside time for themselves as part of their development strategy. Concerning the concept of setting aside time for myself 15 (48%) of participants either lowered their category or remained static between the pre and post survey data. The largest leap was in the very confident category, with 3 (10%) of participants responding that they were very confident in the pre survey and a total of 7 (23%) of participants stating that they were very confident in the post survey. The confident category remained static. Overall movement between the pre and post surveys revealed that 42% of participants did in fact increase their confidence levels in being able to set aside time for themselves.

*Setting myself personal goals* pre survey question revealed 5 (16%) participants felt neutral, 10 (32%) were somewhat confident, 7 (23%) felt confident, and 5 (16%) felt very confident. Post survey data showed a decrease to 4 (13%) of those feeling neutral, and 9 (29%) somewhat confident, whereas the movement of 11 participants (35%) to the confident column was reflected in the data, and an increase of 6 (19%) participants who moved to were very confident (Figure 10).
Figure 10. Confidence in Setting Personal Goals.

Goal setting was a key component of the Empowering Women Workshop Series. Several sessions were dedicated to setting goals. This work showed that the participants increased their confidence level overall by 45% when I came to goal setting. The most notable change happening in the confident category, noting 7 (23%) of participants were confident in the pre survey and 11 (35%) of participants were confident in the post survey in setting their personal goals. It should be noted that 3 (10%) of participants reduced their confidence level of setting personal goals and 8 (26%) remained static between the pre and post survey.
**Relationships**

The second series of questions focused on relationships. Participants responded to a series of questions revolving around their relationships at work and in their personal lives. Participants were asked to comment on how they view their relationships at work:

1. They are harmonious
2. There are one or two people I find challenging (difficult)
3. I feel supported
4. I contribute well to the effectiveness of the team
5. I want to stay with this team
6. I am assertive

In regards to personal life, participants were asked to comment on how they view their relationships

1. I relate well to most people
2. I think I would like more close friends

**Relationships at work.** In response to the pre survey question *how do you view your relationships at work, do you feel supported*, 2 (6%) participants strongly disagree about feeling supported, 1 (31%) somewhat disagree that they are supported, 5 (16%) somewhat agree, 5 (16%) agree, 13 (42%) strongly agree and 5 (16%) very strongly agree. The post survey reported 2 (6%) somewhat disagree, 2 (6%) somewhat agree, 8 (26%) agree, 13 (42%) strongly agree, and 7 (23%) very strongly agree (Figure 11).
Figure 11. I Feel Supported at Work.

The data shows a 26% increase in participant agreement between the pre and post surveys. Four (13%) participants increased their agreement substantially with leaps of two and three categories. However, there were 3 (10%) participants who decreased or declined their agreement levels between the pre and post survey in regards to feeling supported. Support at work is an important indicator of employee satisfaction. Employers engaging in ongoing training opportunities can increase their employee satisfaction incrementally as seen here with the 26% increase of feelings of support at work as a result of just one workshop series.

Participants were asked if they want to stay with their current team at work. The pre survey results were 1 (3%) very strongly disagree, 2 (6%) strongly disagree, 1 (3%)
somewhat disagree, 1 (3%) somewhat agree, 6 (19%) agree, 8 (26%) strongly agree, and 12 (39%) very strongly agree. In the post survey participants shifted to the agreement side of the scale with 9 (19%) somewhat agree, 3 (10%) agree, 9 (29%) strongly agree and 11 (35%) very strongly agree (Figure 12).

![Bar Chart: I Want to Stay with this Team](chart.png)

**Figure 12.** I Want to Stay with this Team.

Participants increased their desire to stay with their current team by a full 35%. All movement between the pre and post surveys yielded 0 participants in the disagree very strongly, strongly disagree and somewhat disagree categories after the end of the workshop series. Only 3 (10%) of participants decreased their desire to stay with their current team.
The next statement on the survey that participants responded to was, *I am assertive in my relationships at work*. Respondents in the pre survey noted 1 (3%) strongly disagree, 5 (16%) somewhat agree, 12 (39%) agree, 10 (32%) strongly agree, and 2 (6%) very strongly agree. The post survey revealed that 6 (19%) somewhat agree, 6 (19%) agree, 12 (39%) strongly agree, 5 (16%) very strongly agree, with 2 (6%) who don’t know (Figure 13).

![I am assertive at work](image)

**Figure 13.** I am Assertive at Work.

Workshop participants took great strides in their ability to be assertive at work. The post surveys revealed that 45% of participants increased their assertiveness. Three (10%) of participants revealed a decline in one agreement level on their post survey as
related to their pre survey. In addition, 2 (6%) of participants neglected to answer this question in the post survey. Great strides were seen in the agree very strongly category, noting 2 (6%) of participants agreed very strongly that they were assertive at work in the pre survey with an increase to 5 (16%) of participants agreed very strongly that they were assertive at work in the post survey.

Relationships in personal life. In regards to how they view their relationships in their personal lives, participants were asked if they feel they relate well to most people. Participants responses in the pre survey showed 3 (10%) somewhat agree, 8 (26%) agree, 14 (45%) strongly agree, and 5 (16%) very strongly agree. Post survey responses indicated an increase in agreement with 1 (3%) somewhat agree, 6 (19%) agree, 10 (32%) strongly agree, and 13 (42%) very strongly agree (Figure 14).

Figure 14. I Relate Well to Most People.
The figure reveals the most significant shift in the agree very strongly category. A total of 5 (16%) of participants agreed very strongly that they relate well to most people in their personal life in the pre survey. That number grew to an impressive 13 (42%) of participants who agreed very strongly that they relate well to most people in their personal life in the post survey. There were no noted declines in agreement categories between the pre and post surveys for this question.

**Self-Development**

The third series of questions were concerned with self-development in the workplace as well as in the participant’s personal life. Participants responded to the question, How well are you doing?

1. I’m making the best of myself
2. My work helps me develop as a person
3. My development comes from my personal life
4. I feel held back at work in relation to my self-development
5. I feel held back at home in relation to my self-development

**Self-development at work.** Responding to the statement *my work helps me develop as a person*, participant’s pre survey results indicated that 2 (6%) strongly disagree, 3 (10%) somewhat disagree, 6 (19%) somewhat agree, 10 (32%) agree, 7 (23%) strongly agree, and 3 (10%) very strongly agree. In the post survey results were 1 (3%) strongly disagree, 3 (10%) somewhat agree, 13 (42%) agree, 9 (29%) strongly agree and 4 (13%) very strongly agree (Figure 15).
Professional development is one key aspect of development as a person. When asked in the pre survey 5 (16%) of participants strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed that their work helped them to develop as a person. Of the same 5 (16%) participants, all but one increased their agreement that work helps them to development as a person on the post survey. The post survey reveals that the agree, strongly agree, and agree very strongly categories increased incrementally, agree increasing from 10 (32%) to 13 (42%), strongly agree increasing from 7 (23%) to 9 (29%), and agree very strongly increasing from 3 (10%) to 4 (14%). An overall increase in agreement came from 11 (35%) participants stating that work does help them with their development as a person.

Figure 15. My Work Helps Me Develop as a Person.
Self-development in personal life. Participants were asked if their development comes from their personal life. The pre survey showed 1 (3%) somewhat disagree, 4 (13%) somewhat agree, 7 (23%) agree, 14 (45%) strongly agree and 5 (16%) very strongly agree. The post survey results were as follows; 3 (10%) somewhat agree, 10 (32%) agree, 5 (16%) strongly agree, and 12 (39%) very strongly agree (Figure 16).

![My development comes from my personal life](image)

**Figure 16.** My Development Comes From My Personal Life.

The figure shows that 14 (45%) of participants strongly agreed that their development comes from their personal life in the pre survey. After taking part in the workshop, participants who strongly agreed that their development comes from their personal life plunged to 5 (16%). The shift was a blend of 5 (16%) decreasing their belief that their development comes from their personal life, 7 (23%) increasing to the
agree very strongly category, and 2 (6%) remaining unchanged in their belief that their
development comes from their personal life. The second category with a significant
increase came from the agree very strongly category, which jumped from 5 (16%) in the
pre survey to 12 (39%) in the post survey. This increase was a direct result of the 7
(23%) participants who increased their strongly agree response in the pre survey to
agree very strongly in the post survey.

*I feel held back at work in relation to my self-development* statement on the pre
survey revealed that 2 (6%) very strongly disagree, 4 (13%) strongly disagree, 5 (16%)
somewhat disagree, 8 (26%) somewhat agree, 3 (10%) agree, 7 (23%) strongly agree,
and 2 (6%) very strongly agree. Post survey data showed a change in participant’s
agreement with 2 (6%) very strongly disagree, 5 (16%) strongly disagree, 5 (16%)
somewhat disagree, 5 (16%) somewhat agree, 8 (26%) agree, 4 (13%) strongly agree
and 1 (3%) very strongly agree (Figure 17).
The results in the table yield an interesting array of changes in agreement between the pre and post surveys. Two (6%) participants who disagreed very strongly in the pre survey shifted their category to 1 (3%) strongly disagree and 1 (3%) somewhat disagree in the post survey. However, the post survey shows 2 (6%) remain in the disagree very strongly category. One (3%) participant shifted down from the strongly disagree category in the pre survey to the disagree very strongly category in the post survey. Another participant 1 (3%) swung from strongly agree in the pre survey to disagree very strongly in the post survey. In total 11 (35%) participants increased their level of agreement that they feel held back at work in relation to their self-development, 14 (45%) participants decreased their level of agreement that they feel held back at

Figure 17. I Feel Held Back at Work in Relation to my Self-Development.
work in relation to their self-development and 6 (19%) participants remained unchanged between the pre and post survey.

**Being Myself**

The fifth series of questions inquires were focused on being myself at work and in my personal life. Participants responded to a series of statements regarding being myself; at work and in personal life. The statements were;

1. I mainly do things I really want to do
2. I have control over events which affect me
3. I believe I’m being myself

**Begin myself at work.** Responding to the statement, *I have control over events that affect me at work*, the pre survey results reflected 2 (6%) strongly disagree, 11 (35%) somewhat agree, 7 (23%) agree, 7 (23%) strongly agree and 1 (3%) very strongly agree. The post survey results showed a positive movement to the agreement columns with 1 (3%) strongly disagree, 2 (6%) somewhat disagree, 11 (35%) somewhat agree, 9 (29%) agree, 3 (10%) strongly agree, and 5 (16%) very strongly agree (Figure 18).
Figure 18. I have Control Over Events that Affect me at Work.

Data shows that 12 (39%) participants increased their belief that they have control over events that affect them at work. Most notable changes show an increase in the post survey of 2 (6%) participants who feel somewhat confident, 2 (6%) who increased from confident to very confident, and another 3 (10%) who increased from somewhat confident to very confident. Workshop sessions that focused on assertiveness training most likely facilitated the increase of participant’s feeling of control over events that affect them in the workplace.

**Being myself in personal life.** The participants were asked to answer the same statement, I have control over events that affect me, but apply it to their personal life. When responding to the statement, *I have control over events that affect me in my*
personal life, respondents stated in the pre survey as follows; 1 (3%) somewhat disagree, 4 (13%) somewhat agree, 8 (26%) agree, 10 (32%) strongly agree and 3 (10%) very strongly agree. The post survey answers were 4 (13%) somewhat agree, 7 (23%) agree, 14 (45%) strongly agree, with 6 (19%) very strongly agreeing (Figure 19).

![Graph showing confidence levels before and after the workshop](image)

**Figure 19.** I have Control Over Events that Affect me in my Personal Life.

In regards to having control over events that affect individuals in their personal life participants showed some movement between the pre and post survey. Three (10%) shifted from very confident to confident and 1 (3%) moved from very confident to somewhat confident. The data revealed that the workshop materials on control and change affects participants understanding of internal and external locus of control.
Eight (26%) participants revealed increased confidence in the ability to control the events that affect them in their personal lives. In addition, 12 (39%) participants showed no movement between the pre and post survey, and 11 (35%) decreased their confidence level in regards to having control over events that affect them in their personal life.

**Career**

The final series of questions asked participants about their career. The following statements were included in the survey:

1. I am clear about my career goals
2. I am serious about having a career
3. I am sure I don’t want a career

When examining the statement, *I am clear about my career goals* the pre survey results show that 2 (6%) strongly disagree, 3 (10%) somewhat disagree, 9 (29%) somewhat agree, 5 (16%) agree, 6 (19%) strongly agree, and 5 (16%) very strongly agree. The post survey revealed that 1 (3%) strongly disagree, 9 (29%) somewhat agree, 7 (23%) agree, 12 (29%) strongly agree and 2 (6%) very strongly agree (Figure 20).
The Empowering Women Workshop Series is a professional and personal development program designed to facilitate confidence building, gain assertiveness skills, define values and goals to prepare participants for their future career and personal goals. The pre and post survey showed significant movement in regards to clarity of career goals before and after the workshop series. The most notable shift comes from the strongly agree category. During the pre survey 6 (19%) participants strongly agreed that they were clear about their career goals. After attending the series of four Empowering Women Workshops participants increased their belief that they were clear about their career goals. The strongly agree category rose to 12 (39%) participants who

Figure 20. I’m Clear About my Career Goals.
were clear about their career goals as a result of the workshops. Overall results revealed 12 (39%) participants increased their level of agreement, 8 (26%) remained static, and 11 (35%) decreased their agreement in regards to clarity of career goals.

Post workshop feedback. As a result of involvement in this study, participants were asked to indicate whether they agree, or disagree in response to a series of eighteen questions. The post survey Likert scale used for question ten included seven categories and a don’t know category to reduce the number of unanswered questions. The categories included 1) disagree very strongly, 2) strongly disagree, 3) somewhat disagree, 4) somewhat agree, 5) agree, 6) strongly agree, 7) agree very strongly. For the following chart the researcher grouped the categories as follows: categories 1-3 = disagree, category 4 = neutral, and categories 5-7 = agree. The table below outlines the results of the percentage of participants who agreed with the statements (Figure 21).

![Figure 21. Post Workshop Feedback.](image-url)
Figure 21 reveals the three statements that scored the lowest in questions ten are 1) *I now feel more confident at work*, 2) *I have clear work goals*, and 3) *I am prepared to accept more responsibility at work*. When asked to rate the statement *I now feel more confident at work*, 25 (81%) participants now feel more confident at work as a result of participation in the Empowering Women Workshops Series, 5 (16%) of participants somewhat agree (neutral), and 1 (3%) participant did not know if she felt more confident. The statement *I have clear work goals* revealed 25 (81%) participants agree, 2 (6%) participants somewhat agree (neutral) and 2 (6%) participants disagree with 1 (3%) who don’t know if they agree or not about the statement, *I now feel more confident at work*. The highest rated statement was, *I have improved my communication skills*. The data showed that 29 (94%) participants feel that they have improved their communication skills. One (3%) participant indicated somewhat agree (neutral), and 1 (3%) who marked don’t know.

The remainder of the quantitative survey consisted of questions related to the tools and techniques presented in the workshop series. Participants were asked to rate how useful they found the tools and techniques in the workshop series. The Likert scale used for question eleven in the post survey included seven categories and a don’t know category to reduce the number of unanswered questions. The categories included 1) not useful at all, 2) not useful, 3) not very useful, 4) neutral, 5) useful, 6) very useful, 7) extremely useful. For the following chart the researcher grouped the categories as follows: categories 1-3 = not useful, category 4 = neutral, and categories 5-7 = useful. The following table represents the percentage of participants who found the tools and
techniques useful with regards to the following statements after participating in the program (Figure 22).

![Graph showing workshop tools and techniques](image)

**Figure 22. Workshop Tools and Techniques.**

The data shows a significant benefit for 30 (97%) participants with regards to the session tools and techniques that concentrated on the concept of 10% performance/30% image/60% exposure. There was 1 (3%) participant who did not find this workshop session useful. Another top rated technique was networking. The networking sessions revealed an impressive 30 (97%) participants who found the networking tools useful. Networking data also indicated 1 (3%) participant who felt neutral about the marketing sessions. In addition, the tools and techniques used in sessions regarding putting oneself across positively and getting feedback yielded 30
(97%) participants feeling that the sessions were useful. The data also showed 1 (3%) participant who was neutral in this regard. The lowest rated result in the tools and techniques segment of the survey derived from the categories of “me time and reducing stress. Twenty six (84%) participants found the techniques offered in the workshop series revolving around “me” time and reducing stress were beneficial. However, in each category 4 (13%) participants were neutral on the subject and 1 (3%) did not find the techniques useful. Overall the tools and techniques used in the Empowering Women Workshop Series benefited the overwhelming majority of participants and the research indicates these tools and techniques are effective in empowering women with the skills needed to be successful in their personal and professional development.

**Qualitative Results**

**Open-ended Questions**

Three open-ended questions were included on the post survey to assess the participant’s genuine reactions to the four-day workshop series. Twenty-nine of thirty-one participates responded to the open-ended questions in the post survey.

*Question 1: What were your objectives for participating in the Empowering Women’s Development Training?* Ten participants stated that their objective for attending the Empowering Women Workshop Series was to empower themselves. One participant stated that she wanted to “empower myself to find balance in my life.” Work life balance was mentioned by three participants as their main goal and finding a better job was important to four participants. Nine participants attended for professional development and eight were there to gain confidence and clarify career
goals. One participant mentioned that she wanted to “develop her assertiveness and career development skills.” A total of seven participants mentioned assertiveness skills as an objective of participation. One participant mentioned that working on strengths and weaknesses was a main goal and one participant stated that networking was an important objective.

**Question 2: What have you accomplished so far as a result from participating in the Empowering Women’s Development Program?** Participant responses included:

- “more assertive in personal and professional life,”
- “becoming more certain of career direction,”
- “allowed me to re-evaluate my goals and make more time for myself,”
- “learn to say no.”

Over 50% of the participants stated that they have learned more about themselves and now feel more empowered. Eight have clarified their career goals and six participants feel more assertive. Two feel that they are better able to map out their next steps and follow through with their goals and five have learned to set goals. Two participants have enrolled in school to further their career and three mentioned that they have improved their image. They went on to state that by improving their image they have gained confidence and are better able to network. Two participants shared their new promotions and two mentioned gaining new friendships within the training group.

**Question 3: How has this program helped you to voice your opinions at work and personal life?** Participants mentioned assertiveness, confidence, and voicing opinions as three aspects of the workshop that have helped them work and in their
personal lives. Fifteen participants stated that learning how to be assertive has helped them the most from the workshop. Sixteen participants announced that they are more confident and are able to effectively voice their opinions. One participant mentioned that she has improved her image and that has helped with her communication skills.

**Workshop Design**

The four, eight-hour day workshops were designed to facilitate a progression of activities to guide participants in developing skills in work and personal life. The workshop modules were targeted to improve motivation and self-reliance in self-confidence building, value and goal setting, equity, action, assertiveness, leadership, networking skills and integration of life/work balance skills. The workshop series was designed to be a three month personal and professional development program specifically developed and written for women.

**Conclusion**

The Empowering Women’s Workshop provided an opportunity for participants to take time to further develop their personal and professional goals, create work/life balance and set themselves on a path of success. They had an opportunity to engage with other women within their work environment and learn from each other. Participants were asked to revisit their values, ascertain their personal and professional goals and look at assertiveness to enhance their ability to communicate at work as well as at home. They also looked at the power of image and body language to increase their effectiveness in professional and personal situations.
Pre and post survey results acquired from quantitative Likert scale and qualitative open-ended questions indicate that participants benefited from attending the workshop series. The workshop series results have shown that participants 1) are more open to change, 2) have a more positive attitude, 3) are more effective at work, 4) have better customer relations, 5) are better at problem solving, and 6) now take more responsibility for own development. As a result of involvement in this study workshop, 90% of participants indicated that they now feel more optimistic and positive, 94% have improved their communications skills, and 81% now feel more confident at work. The post workshop participation survey also revealed that 87% of participants feel that this program will enable them to make the best of themselves. When asked about how this program has helped them at work, 90% stated that this program will improve their effectiveness at work. Regarding communicating with other coworkers, 87% feel they are better able to deal with other staff members than prior to taking the workshop series.

Participants were also asked about the effectiveness of the tools and techniques used in the Empowering Women Workshop Series program. Ninety-seven percent of participants agreed that networking, evoking a positive image, getting feedback and remembering the 10% performance / 30% image / 60% exposure training was invaluable. In addition, 94% found training in self-management, assertiveness, understanding strengths and weaknesses an important component of the training series.

The open-ended questions in the post survey concentrated on three key areas, objectives, accomplishments, and help. The sessions on learning how to be more assertive and more confident were the most helpful according to the majority of
participants. Participants stated that they learned “it’s ok to say no and not feel bad” and “I feel more confident in being able to voice my opinions.” Over half of the participants also feel that they know more about themselves and feel empowered because of this workshop.
Chapter 5
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to measure the effectiveness of The Empowering Women’s Development Training Program on women in transition in higher education. The study evaluated the Great Britain based Springboard Professional and Personal Women’s Development Training program and measured its effects in the areas of self-confidence building, value and goal setting, assertiveness, leadership, networking skills and integration of life/work balance skills to improve motivation and self-reliance in work and personal life.

Discussion

Pre and post survey analysis

The quantitative Likert scale survey data was processed through Excel to determine statistical trends among the participants of the Empowering Women Workshop Series. The dependent measures in this study were gathered by the pre and post surveys in February, 2014, and in May, 2014 (Appendix C & D). The pre and post survey tools were utilized to measure the quality of the educational program being provided to the participants and the changes that occurred within the participants over a three month workshop series period. Data collected included participant pre and post surveys (conducted in the morning of the first workshop and at the afternoon of the fourth workshop).
Quantitative Results

The analyses of the quantitative results distributed into five categories: Confidence, Relationships, Self-Development, Being Myself, and Career. Sub categories for work and personal life are included for the first four sections. Quantitative results include post workshop reflections from participants.

Confidence at Work

Studies show that many women would greatly benefit from personal and professional development training to boost confidence and skills to compete in today’s fast paced competitive workforce (Ely et al., 2011; Killy & Borgen 2000). The Empowering Women Workshop Series results coincide with the notion that women’s development is a great benefit to participants. Many women lack a sense of confidence that hinders their development and self-worth in the workforce. Correll (2001), finds that “widely shared cultural beliefs about gender and task competencies [in school] bias actors’ perceptions of their competence at various skills” (p. 1692). Women face many challenges in our society including the lack of role models in leadership, a lack of access to networks and sponsors, and a cultural bias of a woman’s place in society. Many women today are still struggling to break the “cult of domesticity” so prevalent in mid-20th century America (O’Kelly & Carney, 1986, p. 149). The Empowering Women Workshop Series shows promise as a tool to guide women in the workforce by facilitating confidence building and improving their lives in the process. According to Ely et al. (2011), women need gender specific leadership training programs to help advance them in more senior leadership roles.
**In meetings.** Results from this study show 11 (35%) participants increased their confidence level at work in meetings after their participation in the Empowering Women Workshop Series. There was a substantial increase in movement with participants being neutral and somewhat confident in the pre survey to confident in the post survey. Participants mentioned that they were reminded that what they have to say is just as important as what others have to say, and realized that they have valuable contributions to make.

**Dealing with my manager.** Confidence at work with managers is an important element of success in the workplace. Fourteen (45%) participants increased their level of confidence when approaching their manager/supervisor as a result of the workshop. One participant stated that, “I went to my supervisor for the first time to ask for help with my workload, she helped me to delegate some of the work to others.” Another participant who is a manager stated, “I am the only female manager in my group, and this program has helped me to demonstrate confidence in a predominantly male environment.”

**Voicing your own opinion.** Several participants commented on the increased confidence in voicing their own opinion at work as a result of the workshop series. The data shows 12 (39%) participants with an increase in confidence in this area. Comments by participants indicate that this is one area where they feel they have made great strides, stating, “It has made me more aware of opportunities to voice my opinion,” and “I am becoming better at voicing my opinions.”
Dealing with other colleagues. Results suggest that 14 (45%) participants agree that they are more confident at work dealing with other colleagues. The researcher noticed a marked increase in participation within groups throughout the workshop series. Participants remarked that they are more confident when it comes to talking with and dealing with other colleagues within the college or university setting.

Confidence in Personal Life

The survey results show that many women in the higher education workforce mirror many women in U.S. society when it comes to confidence in their personal life. Research shows that “long-term conditioning of women through sex stereotyping frequently produces a response set to consider only traditional roles as career options” (Killy & Borgen, 2000, p. 123). Empowering women and increasing confidence in their personal lives can create new work opportunities and possibly help to change the gender stereotype restrictions, real or perceived, in generations to come. Research suggests that both male and female students have the cognitive ability to succeed, but it is cultural perceptions that hinder female students (Correll, 2001; Eagly, 2013). Social role theory supports the research, implying that people can be held back from achieving their fullest potential because society dictates that they are not meant to perform specific tasks, or take on particular responsibilities (Eagley, 2001; Trotter-Hamilton, 2010). The post survey results in the Empowering Women Workshop Series reveal a marked increase in self-confidence among participants. These finding support the recent research in women’s personal and professional development that conceptualized leadership development as identity work (Ely et al., 2011).
**Within a group of people.** Within the Empowering Women Workshop Series, participants work in small and medium groups on a daily basis. Knowles (1980) insisted that adult education include group work as an essential component of learning. It is within the group that the learner’s self-evaluation “would contribute to ongoing self-development” (Henry, 2011, p. 51). When participants in the Empowering Women Workshop Series were asked about their confidence level within a group of people participants increased their confidence level by 39% with the completion of the workshop.

**Dealing with tradesmen/women.** Responding to the question, *how confident in your personal life are you in dealing with tradesmen/women*, 9 (29%) participants increased their confidence levels between the pre and post survey. Learning to gain confidence when dealing with tradespeople can ultimately increase one’s effectiveness in personal life by improving negotiating skills and perhaps decreasing expenses.

**Dealing with professionals.** Participants confidence levels increased with the post survey as a result of involvement in the workshop series. Confidence dealing with professionals rose by 12 (39%) participants.

**Voicing your opinion.** Participants mentioned an increase in the ability to voice their own opinions in their personal life. The results show that 15 (48%) participants were more confident in voicing their opinion by the end of the workshop. Some participants stated that voicing their own opinions was one of the greatest benefits of participating in the workshop series.
Getting time to myself. Thirteen (42%) participants increased their ability to make time for themselves. One participant described it as stress management, another is more confident about asking for things that she would like to have happen in her personal life.

Setting personal goals. The results show 14 (45%) participants increased their ability to set their own personal goals. One participant stated that, “I have become more conscious of immediate goals and how to plan for them.” In the workshops, participants worked on clarifying their expectations and setting their goals. One activity focused on defining values to ascertain what their individual goals were. Another activity utilized their peer coaching partnerships to work on prompts for goals and setting goals. An additional activity concentrated on goal setting to find ways to gain support at home. By engaging family members in the goal setting process many participants found the support they needed when striving to meet their new work and personal life goals. Others found support and strength in their peer coaching partnerships which reinvigorated their drive to succeed.

Relationships

In a study based on the relationships between work and family, researchers found that workers who lived with at least one relative experienced the following. Those with “higher levels of work interfering with family predicted lower levels of family emotional and instrumental support. In addition, higher levels of family emotional and instrumental support were associated with lower levels of family interfering with work” (Adams et al., 1996). This study illustrates the importance of
addressing direct and indirect conflicts that can arise in work and personal relationships when work/life balance is not attained. Participants in the Empowering Women Workshop Series post survey results revealed the benefits of the workshop sessions that focused on relationships and work/life balance.

At work.

*I feel supported at work.* There was a 26% increase (8 participants) in feelings of support at work. Many participants related the increase to their improved confidence level because of the Empowering Employees Workshop Series. One participant mentioned that they now communicate more with their boss than prior to the workshop series. As a result of the 8 (26%) participant increase who feel supported at work, many also expressed a desire to continue working within their current department.

*I want to stay with this team.* Outcomes show that a full 11 (35%) participants increased their willingness to stay with their current team at work. This willingness stems from building valuable relationship skills and collaboration skills as a result of participation in the workshop.

*I am assertive in my relationships at work.* When asked about their feelings of assertiveness in their relationships at work, 14 (45%) participants showed an increase in assertiveness that reveals a significant benefit was realized from the training throughout the workshop activities. Assertiveness was recognized by almost half of the participants as a key factor to the increase in relationships at work. Many said that learning to be assertive has opened more doors at work. One participant stated, “It has made me more aware of balancing being assertive.”
In personal life.

I relate well to most people. Seven (23%) participants feel an increase in their ability to relate well to most people. The development of new relationships was one key factor that helped to increase a feeling of relation in many participants. One participant mentioned her shyness in the pre survey and noted that it was difficult for her to relate to most people because of her introverted personality. The same participant remarked how much the workshop had helped her to meet new people. She also noted that by the end of the workshop she could relate to the other participants and found that they had more in common with her than she had originally realized. Bringing women together with activities from the workshop series was a powerful way to empower and encourage them to reach higher and gain new insight on their journey in life.

Self-Development

This study revealed a significant increase in women who believe that their self-development comes from their work as well as their personal life. The data also shows that although participants feel that they are gaining experience and development opportunities at work, participants still feel that their current position is holding them back. One study postulates that there are still subtle forms of gender bias toward women in the culture and in organizations (Ely et al., 2011). Women in leadership positions and those aspiring to leadership positions are disadvantaged by the fact that the subtle gender bias in organizations interferes with the identity work of women leaders. Women need gender specific leadership training programs to help advance
them into more senior leadership roles (Ely et al., 2011). This study exemplifies the need for women to engage in programs such as the Empowering Women Workshop Series to combat the subtle gender bias that is holding women back from advancing in leadership positions. Social role theory suggests that it is through education that gender roles and societal norms can be changed (Eagly, 2001; Trotter-Hamilton, 2010). Cooper (1892, in 1998) believed that creating an educational blueprint for each individual would help contribute to their best efforts towards elevating their specific goals in life. Developing oneself through “an environment where students feel safe and supported...fosters intellectual freedom and encourages experimentation and creativity” (Adams, 2013). As a result of participants enrolling in the Empowering Women Workshop Series, the women have shown an increase in confidence levels in their ability, and the willingness to take on new tasks and challenges. They have become change agents and leaders in their own right.

**At work.**

*My work helps me develop as a person.* Participants were asked in the pre and post survey if they feel their work helps them to develop as a person. Eleven (35%) participants increased their score by agreeing that work helps them develop as a person as a result of their participation in the workshop. Studies have shown that “workers who reported higher levels of job involvement also reported higher levels of job satisfaction” (Adams et al., p. 416).

*I feel held back at work in relation to my self-development.* Eleven (35%) participants increased their belief that they feel held back at work in relation to their
self-development. This increase coupled with the fact that 11 (35%) participants increased their willingness to stay with their current team at work shows that although they are happier at work as a result of participation in the workshop, they still feel held back. One participant stated that, “It helped me to realize where I need to focus if I want to advance.” Another remarked, “My coaching partners taught me to push forward and not be scared to apply to higher positions.”

**In personal life.**

**My development comes from my personal life.** Forty-five percent of participants increased their belief that their development comes from their personal life. One participant was clear in her statement that, “If I want change-create it, you cannot always change the situation, but you can change yourself!” Realizing that self-development takes place both at work and in one’s personal life is a powerful tool. This program allowed women to learn the skills to enhance their ability to cope with personal and work life.

**Being Myself**

Research shows that women often struggle with the behavioral norms that society prescribes for them and what they truly feel or believe (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Correll, 2001; Sandberg, 2013). For example, many have been taught throughout their lives the cultural beliefs that women should be quite, unselfish, friendly, emotional and caring towards others (AAUW, 1998; Carinci, 2007; O’Kelly & Carney, 1986; Sadker & Zittleman, 2010). These characteristics are often in direct conflict with the characteristics believed to be synonymous with leadership. Leadership traits are seen as
assertive, self-confident and entrepreneurial, traits that are traditionally associated as masculine (Eagly, 2013; Ely et. al., 2011; Sandberg, 2013). In the work setting, women are often criticized for being “abrasive instead of assertive, arrogant instead of self-confident, and self-promoting instead of entrepreneurial” (Starvish, 2012, p. 1). Women are often held back by these perceptions. For many women, gaining confidence in self-expression is a powerful tool towards combating gender stereotypes within the workforce and family life.

**At work.**

* I have control over events that affect me at work. The 39% of participants that showed an increase in acknowledging that they have control over events that affect them at work are revealed with comments such as, [I have] “submitted several job applications, interviewed for a promotional opportunity.,”, [I]”realized that I can create a support group.,”, and “I am less scared to ask for the things that I want or would like to see happen.”

**In personal life.**

* I have control over events that affect me in my personal life. In their personal life, 8 (26%) participants increased their ability to have more control over their lives. One university participant stated, “It’s given me clarity regarding my choice to accept or reject behavior without getting offended or feeling attacked. Someone else’s opinion of me is based on limited knowledge and their own perception of that knowledge.” Participants also stated that, “I have clarity and confidence in my personal abilities.” and “It makes you realize more about yourself.”
Career

According to a study conducted by Pew Research (2009) the U.S. labor force consists of an almost 50-50 split of men and women. Many changes have developed in the workforce over the past 40 or 50 years and women are an integral part of the successful evolving working population. However, many women are still torn between work and family (Sandberg, 2012). For many women “family responsibilities have a clear impact on the key life choices they make” (Pew Research, 2009, p. 1). In addition, research shows a continuation of the devastating pay inequities in America, indicating that women earn 77 cents on the dollar when compared to male’s salaries (National Equity Pay, 2013). Income barriers coupled with childcare responsibilities shortchange many women in society by affecting their ability to achieve personal financial stability (National Equity Pay, 2013). During the workshop series, women were able to take time to reflect and work through several exercises to help them to evaluate their values and goals to determine their priorities and balance their work and home life. The post survey showed that many women benefited from the career sessions and increased their confidence, clarity and drive towards bettering their education and career.

**I’m clear about my career goals.** When asked about career goals 12 (39%) participants showed an increase in their view about clarity in their career. Two participants have reentered school to advance their career, two received promotions during and after participation in the workshop series, and several remarked that they
have increased their career goals and will be taking action to move ahead in their current or new jobs.

**Post Workshop Feedback**

To gain further insight into the benefits of the Empowering Women Workshop Series, participants were asked to indicate whether they agree, disagree or feel neutral about several statements related to their experience following their participation. The outcomes for participants of the workshop series were to

1. take stock of strengths and achievements and build on them,
2. identify and manage weaknesses,
3. think about changing the impression you give,
4. learn more about opportunities at work,
5. develop the self-confidence and assertiveness to make things happen,
6. take clear practical realistic steps to gain more control over your life,
7. find out what you value,
8. make decisions and take action based on your values,
9. clarify values, identify beliefs, manage emotion,
10. understand networking and work your network of influence,
11. clarify your expectations and set your goals,
12. improve your listening and communication,
13. increase your self-confidence,
14. the assertive you- gain more control over your life,
15. experience positive role models,
16. promote a positive image,
17. Create a network of support, and
18. improve performance, image, and exposure.

During the course of the workshop series participants engaged in seven sessions that focused on support. When participants were asked if they feel more optimistic and positive as a result of participation, 90% stated that they feel more optimistic and positive. The researcher discovered that over the course of four full day sessions participants gained new connections, coaching opportunities and friendships that translated into 90% of participants feeling that the program will improve their overall effectiveness at work.

The highest level of improvement came from the statement, *I have improved my communication skills*. Several participants came to the program with the goal of increasing their communication skills and when asked in the post survey if they have improved their communication skills 29 (94%) participants stated yes. The researcher noted a pronounced increase in communication skills among participants as a result of the five sessions devoted to assertiveness, listening and managing feelings. As the course continued, participants gained confidence and entered the multiple communication activities with enthusiasm and excitement. By the fourth workshop participants were engaged in the activities and listened attentively to their peers. They were relaxed and having fun. Twenty eight (90%) participants commented that the program has exceeded their expectations and 28 (90%) participants now have more control over their future because of participation.
The lowest results came from the questions relating to clear work goals, confidence at work, and accepting more responsibility at work. Twenty-five (81%) participants agreed that they now feel more confident at work, have clear work goals and are prepared to accept more responsibility at work. During the workshop, two sessions were devoted to setting long and short-term goals. Future workshops could provide additional sessions on goal setting, confidence at work and more responsibility at work, however further analysis is necessary to understand the root cause of the 6 (19%) participants who do not feel that they have improved in the areas of work goals, confidence and more responsibility at work.

Questions related to the tools and techniques presented in the workshop series completed the quantitative survey. Participants were asked to rate how useful they found the tools and techniques in the workshop series. The researcher was pleased with the successful results of the Empowering Women Workshop Series. The highest marks came from sessions focused on 10% performance/30% image/60% exposure, networking, positivity and gaining feedback. In all four areas 30 (97%) participants found these tools extremely effective. Workshop three and four addressed the 10% performance/30% image/60% exposure sessions. Activities included the importance of body language and body space, image and what’s behind the image.

Additional activities that complimented the sessions included ideas about visibility and powerful words. Networking was an important part of the workshop series. Six sessions were devoted to networking and seven support sessions stressed the importance of networking. The workshop created many opportunities beyond the
workshop days for participants to engage in networking opportunities as well as coaching opportunities. In addition, the researcher organized peer support groups at the end of the fourth workshop to ensure participants were able to continue their development work beyond the program. Positivity and feedback were important components of the entire workshop series. The workshop ground rules were established at the beginning of the first workshop and reiterated throughout the workshop to ensure privacy and confidentiality among participants and researcher. Participant feedback was used as a tool in the majority of session activities as well as breakout sessions.

The lowest percentages were for “me” time and reducing stress. Twenty-six (84%) participants felt that sessions related to these two areas were beneficial. The workshop used a combination of relaxation techniques and activities to help broaden the participant’s view of the importance of spending quality time for one’s self and learning to reduce stress by relaxation. Another component of stress reduction can also be seen in the assertiveness training. According to the researcher, learning assertiveness skills can greatly reduce stress by allowing one to say no to additional work or opportunities that may arise beyond the scheduled workday or activities.

Open-Ended Questions

Qualitative Results

Three open-ended questions were placed on the post survey to assess the participant’s genuine reactions to the four-day workshop series. Twenty-nine of thirty-one participants responded to the open-ended questions in the post survey.
Question 1: What were your objectives for participating in the Empowering Women's Development Training? Ten participants stated that their objective for attending the Empowering Women Workshop Series was to empower themselves. A recent survey conducted by DDI, a Bridgeville-based consulting firm, reaffirmed previous studies that show that “women’s lack of confidence in their own leadership skills may be holding them back from top positions” (Gannon, 2014, p. 1). Participants showed an awareness that a lack of confidence and the need for empowerment are key elements that are holding them back from excelling in their work and personal lives. Gannon (2014) states, “women approach leadership roles with a little more trepidation and say, ‘Maybe I don’t deserve the fact that I’m a leader”’ (p. 1). Eagly (2013) suggests that this trepidation stems from the transmission of gender role stereotypes handed down through the generations, which may have a direct effect on current behavioral trends.

One participant stated that she wanted to “empower myself to find balance in my life.” Work life balance was mentioned by three participants as their main goal and finding a better job was important to four participants. Work life balance means something different to each participant in the workshop series. Allowing each participant to explore what is important to their individual needs is echoed in the research study by Darcy, McCarthy, Jill, and Grady (2012) which explores the real needs of employees based on their career stages as denoted by age. The study sheds light on the importance of employers to “foster a culture which values work-life balance across all career stages for all their employees” (Darcy et al., 2012, p. 1). Employers
who aim to enhance the employee experience of work and non-work domains will reap the rewards of well balanced, well-adjusted employees who will in turn increase productivity (Darcy et al., 2012).

Nine participants attended the workshop for professional development and eight were attending to gain confidence and clarify career goals. One participant mentioned that she wanted to “develop her assertiveness and career development skills.” A total of seven participants mentioned assertiveness skills as an objective of participation. One participant mentioned that working on strengths and weaknesses was a main goal and one participant stated that networking was an important objective. Participants commented on a variety of objectives from confidence building to career goals that showcase the benefits of development training to help employees gain skills and better their work and personal lives. This research shows that there is a need for Women’s Development Training programs to empower women to excel in their work and personal life.

Question 2: What have you accomplished so far as a result from participating in the Empowering Women’s Development Program? Participant responses varied with each individual, however many they are more assertive in their personal and professional life, and that they are “becoming more certain of career direction.” According to Knowles (1969) the design learning theory of Andragogy assumes that (a) adults approach learning as problem-solving, (b) adults need to learn experientially, (c) adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value (Adams, 2013). The Empowering Women Workshop Series was designed around the theory of Andragogy, a
learning theory that Knowles (1980) developed to address the specific learning needs of adults, and the Springboard Women’s Development program. Successful outcomes were due in part to the design structure of the workshop series, which allowed participants to work, learn, and grow at their own pace.

Many participants said that the workshop series “renewed their commitment in setting short and long range goals,” and they learned to say no. Over half the participants stated that they have learned more about themselves and now feel more empowered. From a young age, women are discouraged from showing assertive behavior (Sadker & Sadker, 1995). Gaining strength through participation in an empowering workshop can give many women the opportunity to regain their confidence and self-esteem to take on new challenges that they may face in the workforce and in their personal lives. By breaking down the gender bias that influences many women’s initial career choices participants are now able to clarify their career goals and feel more assertive. Further evaluation found that two participants feel that they are better able to map out their steps and follow through with their goals and five have learned to set goals. In addition, two other participants have gained the courage to enroll in school and further their career.

When it comes to image, the workshop series focused one session on the importance of image, performance and exposure. Three participants stated that they have improved their image and in the process, they have gained confidence and are better able to network. Adams et al. (1996) argue that support is another area that can be a strong indicator to an individual’s ability to successfully navigate a successful
career and family life. Participants mentioned the importance of gaining new friendships and support within the workshop series that encouraged them to apply for and receive new promotions within their organization.

**Question 3: How has this program helped you to voice your opinions at work and personal life?** Participants mentioned three things that have helped them to voice their opinions at work and in their personal lives. Fifteen stated that learning how to be assertive have helped them the most and sixteen participants announced that they are more confident and are able to effectively voice their opinions. One participant mentioned that she has improved her image and that has helped with her communication skills. One technique used in the workshop series to help women to find their voice was the use of guest speakers. Each day of the workshop series included an empowering woman speaker who shared her journey of success with the participants. Stories of struggle and pain, joy and achievement were powerful and uplifting for all of us. Seeing oneself in the curriculum is an important step to realizing your potential. Participants of the Empowering Women Workshop Series rated the use of guest speakers as extremely useful in the post survey. Participants noted that listening to speakers was inspirational, empowering, and a positive experience overall.

**Conclusion**

In a world where women are still “less likely than men to characterize themselves as leaders, visionaries, self-confident, and willing to take risks” each small step in empowerment is an important one (Sandberg, 2013, p.16). Well into the 21st century, assertiveness in women is still perceived as bossy in our society (Sandberg,
Learning to assert oneself in one’s work and personal life is just one step to increasing confidence and leadership qualities. Finding the voice that was lost for so many women during their early teens and young adulthood years in biased educational institutions will empower many women to find their values and create goals to succeed in their work and personal lives. This researcher believes it is possible to empower women with programs such as the Empowering Women Workshop Series to help women succeed in their lives no matter what success means to them.

The four, eight-hour day workshops were created to facilitate a progression of activities to guide participants in developing skills in self-confidence building, value and goal setting, equity, action, assertiveness, leadership, networking skills and integration of life/work balance skills to improve motivation and self-reliance in work and personal life. The workshop series was designed to be a three month personal and professional development program specifically developed and written for women. Objectives for participants were to (a) Take clear and practical realistic steps to take more control over your life. (b) Find out what you value. (c) Make decisions and take action based on your values. The program featured a 300 page workbook, four one day workshops over three months, a support system, networking, and role models. The program was set up for each woman to set her own agenda, take a holistic approach to work and personal life, and provide a wealth of material in one place.

Pitts (1999) describes Julia Cooper’s philosophy of education as beginning with the individual and moving outward. Cooper believed that creating an educational blueprint for each individual based on their interests and talents would help contribute
to their best efforts towards elevating their specific race and or gender (Pitts, 1999). The Empowering Women Workshop Series was designed to enhance personal and individual growth by providing participants an opportunity to concentrate on key features that would help them to succeed in their work and personal life. Professional and personal growth is an individual process and requires a desire to grow and a commitment to work towards ones goals. Participants worked diligently to increase their growth by committing to complete the required work during the workshops as well as the homework between the workshop sessions.

**Limitations**

The limitations of this study were varied and included a small sample size, limited marketing opportunities, and a lack of employee development support at the community college level. The sample size for this study was thirty-one full and part time university and community college employees from Northern California. The small sampling size did not permit generalizations toward the entire population of higher education employees in the state of California or the country. The limited marketing opportunities of the researcher also created a barrier to reach out to additional employees who might have benefited from participation within the university and community college setting. The researcher found strict controls placed on communication in regards to reaching out to employees prior to the start of the workshop series at both the university and community college level. At the community college level, participants were discouraged from participating in the Empowering Employees Workshop Series at the management level. Despite the fact that employees
were granted “flex” time to participate in professional development, many were forced to use vacation pay or receive no pay at all if they chose to participant in the workshop series. Many participants were forced to drop out of the workshop series as a result of the financial burden incurred. Additional limitations arose when confronted with two multi-day workshop series at the various locations. Although every attempt was made for consistency of delivery, it was difficult to maintain the exact presentation of materials for each group of participants.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The Empowering Women Workshop Series sought to establish the relevance and benefits of the four day three month workshop with higher education employees in Northern California and found that the program reached its goals of empowerment within the population studied. The researcher recommends that further study is needed with differing populations within the state and country. Recommended target populations include undergraduate and graduate level students preparing for the workforce, displaced homemakers entering the workforce for the first time or reentering the workforce after a substantial break, women in predominantly male occupations, and low income women striving to gain an education and/or employment.

This study included a pre and post survey to evaluate the workshop series. It is recommended that the addition of a third participant survey recorded six to twelve month after the completion of the fourth and final workshop could also strengthen the validity of the study by showing the long term effects of the program. The researcher met with participants one month after the completion of the program to celebrate and
casually talk about their successes and further ambitions, however, a formal survey was not circulated. The promising results of the Empowering Women Workshop Series show great potential in transforming women from all walks of life into successful, confident, and empowered women.

**Reflections**

Anticipating the future in education, the community must be cognizant of the important role our educators play in developing our young men and women for the workforce of the 21st century. Educators must strive to break down the barriers in school and society that create gender inequalities and provide an inclusive learning environment that showcases the accomplishments of everyone in our society. When parity is accomplished, an equitable educational system can be created that leads to equity in the workplace.

In the 21st century, the female population currently represents over 50% of our workforce. However, only 3% of our Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs (Bussey, 2012, May 4). The low number of women in high power positions is not directly related to child-rearing, as many would like to believe, it is predominantly a reflection of quality of life values important to women (Bussey, 2012, May 4).

This researcher set out to determine the relevance of the Empowering Women Workshop Series with women in California higher education institutions by facilitating the four eight hour day workshops over a three-month period in the spring semester of 2014. What the researcher found was that women of all levels of employment, all ages, all cultural backgrounds, and lifestyles at the university and college setting benefited
from the workshop series experience. The series of workshops were steeped in the traditions of andragogy theory, gender equity theory, and social role theory to ground the training program in proven methods of adult education learning. Each woman worked on her own mission within a supportive group of individuals all striving to improve their lives through empowerment. It was a joy to engage in the realization that all women desire success. Give each woman respect, opportunities, equality and encouragement and women will soar to new heights with new found values, goals, assertiveness, confidence and voice.
APPENDIX A

Springboard Women’s Development Program
Getting the most out of your staff has never been more important

The Springboard Women's Development Programme is the extraordinarily successful development course for women. Used by employers across the UK and overseas because it delivers results:

✓ Improved ability to deal with change
✓ Enthusiasm to take on more responsibilities
✓ A boost of positivity and confidence
✓ Improved problem solving
✓ Highly motivated and more focussed staff
✓ Improved customer service
✓ Hugely improved communications
✓ A vast contribution to Diversity objectives

the springboard consultancy

growing people and organisations
Winner of several awards for innovation and quality, the Springboard Women's Development Programme enables women to give more and get more out of their work. They identify where they are going, and then develop the skills, 'can-do' attitude and the confidence to get on with it. All useful assets at any time, but especially valuable to organisations dealing with change.

Who is it for?
For all employers who want to develop their staff to their fullest potential. Of course, developing people is good management practice anyway, but there are countless organisational benefits as well as having staff full of enthusiasm, ideas, skills and the energy to succeed — especially in difficult times.

Springboard is designed for women from all backgrounds, ages and stages of their lives. Although the programme was initially written and developed for women in non-management grades, over its life women from all levels have participated in and benefited from the programme.

"The Springboard programme is highly relevant to the NHS today, as it goes through a major period of change. The programme is cost effective and meets the organisation's needs by developing the individual who becomes more effective at work. I can thoroughly recommend it for any NHS Trust."

Rainy Faisey, Deputy Director of HR
Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust

What does it consist of?
Delivered over three months, it consists of five simple, and yet powerful, ingredients, all grounded in reality:

1. The superb Springboard workbook, regularly updated and covering all the material for the entire programme — there's no need for anything extra.

2. Four action-packed one-day workshops spread over three months. Staff are only out for one day a month.

3. Inspiring role models — people that staff can really relate to, and who will put a spring in their step.

4. The encouragement of effective networks within the group, so their progress becomes self-perpetuating.

5. A local support system to keep them going.

How do you access Springboard?
The Springboard programme is delivered exclusively by us, and by trainers who are especially trained and licensed by us. This means you get the best value from the programme. Contact us to deliver a programme for you, or to ask us about the trainer licensing process. Having your own internal trainers delivering the programme is bound to be a cost-effective option worth considering.

"I would recommend this course to anybody. It has already helped me immensely, with both work and personal subjects, in such a short space of time. It has kick-started my motivation and I will continue working towards my goals with help from the workbook."

Jacqui Stanley, National Grid
How do you know it works?

Results from participant evaluations are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding solutions rather than problems</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being more optimistic</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing better with other staff</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now have clear goals</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now more effective at work</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared to accept more responsibilities at work</td>
<td>86%</td>
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</table>

“What is perfect about the Springboard Programme is how well it fits in the organisation's structure. The results speak for themselves in the statistics: women in Royal Mail are gaining the confidence to shape their own futures and gain the promotions they deserve.”
Kay Clements, Inclusion and Project Manager, Royal Mail

What results can you expect?

After attending the Springboard Women's Development Programme, some women steam up their career ladder or gain new qualifications. Others stay in the same job, but with a new sense of purpose, an open approach to change, and a more positive attitude.

The managers of participants report being delighted with the changes in their staff. These changes have a knock-on effect, enabling the managers themselves to perform better. They say their staff are more focused and confident after attending Springboard.

Participants bring their managers solutions instead of problems, take on more responsibility, are more positive and have improved communication skills.

“Springboard is tried and tested in the police context, has an impact on women in the police and delivers results. It is a key component in achieving the Gender Agenda. I have no hesitation in recommending it throughout the police service.”
Julie Spence, Former Chief Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

What about a programme for men?

The Navigator Development programme for men does exactly the same job as Springboard —but for non-management men. For added benefit, run both programmes. Contact us for details.

As a direct result of the Springboard programme, I have got myself a spanking now job and virtually doubled my salary into the bargain! It was just the catalyst I needed. Thank you for pushing us to step outside our comfort zones.

I found Springboard to be exhilarating, energising and effective. It has helped me to clarify and achieve goals I never thought could be accomplished in this brief period of time.

The day before the course I was going to resign because of certain situations at work and even difficulties with family. Now I am managing to cope with all of this more assertively and change.
Client List

The Springboard Consultancy has been used by 240,000 women inside hundreds of organisations throughout the UK and worldwide. In the UK, they include:

- Cambridge Constabulary
- Derbyshire County Council
- Derbyshire NHS Trust
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Dorset Police
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Intellectual Property Office
- Learning and Skills Council
- London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
- MITIE Group
- National Grid
- NHS England
- Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust
- Rolls-Royce plc
- Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
- Royal Mail
- University of Cambridge
- University of Exeter
- University of Leeds
- University of Loughborough
- University of Manchester
- University of Oxford
- University of Warwick
- West Midlands Police
- William Hill

"The programmes were really well received by our staff, and made a huge difference to people at a time when it was opportune to evaluate where they were at, work, at home and in life."
Phil Quinn, Head of Learning and Development, Learning and Skills Council

The Springboard Consultancy

The Springboard Consultancy is the UK’s leading Women’s Development Consultancy and the Springboard Programme is our award-winning flagship programme. Our track record of designing innovative, pragmatic and cost-effective programmes means that we deliver a wealth of practical outcomes for a wide range of client organisations, their staff and students.

Although based in the UK, our process of training and licensing other trainers to deliver our programmes means that 230,000 people have used our programmes in 37 countries worldwide.

"Not only have the individuals benefited from gaining extra increments, upgrades and qualifications, but the University has benefitted, as can be seen by the wide range of additional responsibilities that the women have assumed since attending the programme."
Debbie Greenwood, University of Leeds

To find out more, contact:
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916-204-4085

or The Springboard Consultancy direct:
Tel: +44 (0)273856828
office@springboardconsultancy.com
www.springboardconsultancy.com
blog.springboardconsultancy.com
@springboardtrng

the springboard consultancy
APPENDIX B

Informed Consent for Participation Form
Informed Consent for Participation
CSUS: Sacramento Thesis Research Study

My name is Nancie McLaughlin and I am a current graduate student of the Master of Arts in Education program at California State University, Sacramento. You are being asked to participate in a study which will be analyzing the Empowering Women Professional and Personal Development Workshop as modeled by Springboard. Your participation involves filling out the attached pre course self-assessment, participation in four workshop sessions, followed by filling out a post workshop survey. The workshop series will require four days of your time over a three month period.

Your participation is voluntary. You may quit at any time without consequences. Although none of the questions are designed to cause you discomfort, you may leave any of the questions unanswered. For the purposes of this study, full and complete questionnaires will be useful to me. Providing your name is optional; your confidentiality is strictly protected.

The results of this research study will be available after December 1st, 2014. If you would like a copy of the results or have any questions, please contact:

Nancie McLaughlin

Thank you for your time and participation. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research. Please return this consent form and pre course self assessment prior to the start of our first workshop.

___________________________________________
Signature of Participant

___________________________________________
Date
APPENDIX C

Pre Survey
EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK ON THE COURSE IS IMPORTANT TO ME. PLEASE BE HONEST. Your participation is voluntary. You may quit at any time without consequences. Although none of the questions are designed to cause you discomfort, you may leave any of the questions unanswered. For the purposes of this study, full and complete questionnaires will be useful to me. Providing your name is optional; your confidentiality is strictly protected. I would like to conduct a final post survey three to six months after the workshop sessions as well as offer an empowering workshop reunion. Providing your contact information will make it possible to reconnect with you for the final post survey and empowering workshop reunion.

The results of this research study will be available after December 1st, 2014. If you would like a copy of the results or have any questions, please contact: Nancie McLaughlin.

PRE COURSE SELF ASSESSMENT

Code #: 

Name:

Contact address:

Email address: ............................................................Date of program:

Job title: ..................................................Date of program:

1. Confidence
   How confident are you:

   (a) At work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In meetings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting myself career goals</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.
(b) **In your personal life:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Not at all confident</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Dealing with professionals e.g. doctors, lawyers etc</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

2 **Relationships:**

Comment on how you view your relationships.

(a) **at work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Disagree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Very Strongly</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are harmonious</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to stay with this team</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am assertive</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range

(b) **In your personal life:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Disagree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Very Strongly</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.
3. **Self-Development**

How well are you doing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m making the best of myself</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work helps me develop as a person</td>
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<td>I feel held back at work in relation to my self-development</td>
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<td>I feel held back at home in relation to my self-development</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

4. **Being myself:**

(a) **at work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Very Strongly</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I mainly do things I really want to do</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have control over events which affect me</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe I’m being myself</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

(b) **In my personal life:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Very Strongly</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I mainly do things I want to do in my personal life</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.
5. **Career**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am clear about my career goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am serious about having a career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sure I don’t want a career</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

6. **Years at job:** □ 0-5 □ 6-10 □ 11-15 □ 16+

7. **Your age:** □ 25 or under □ 26-40 □ 41-55 □ 56 or older

6. **Objectives**

Please list the main results you would like to get from participating in the Springboard Program.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
APPENDIX D

Post Survey
EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK ON THE COURSE IS IMPORTANT TO ME. PLEASE BE HONEST. Your participation is voluntary. You may quit at any time without consequences. Although none of the questions are designed to cause you discomfort, you may leave any of the questions unanswered. For the purposes of this study, full and complete questionnaires will be useful to me. Providing your name is optional; your confidentiality is strictly protected. I would like to conduct a final post survey three to six months after the workshop sessions as well as offer an empowering workshop reunion. Providing your contact information will make it possible to reconnect with you for the final post survey and empowering workshop reunion. The results of this research study will be available after December 1st, 2014. If you would like a copy of the results or have any questions, please contact: Nancie McLaughlin.

POST COURSE SELF ASSESSMENT

Name:

Contact address:

Email address:

Job title: Date of program:

1. Confidence

How confident are you:

(a) At work:

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Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.
(b) **In your personal life:**

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Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

2 **Relationships:**

Comment on how you view your relationships.

(a) **at work**

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Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range

(b) **In your personal life:**

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Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range
3. **Self-Development**

How well are you doing?

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Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

4. **Being myself:**

(a) at work

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Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

(b) In my personal life:

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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I mainly do things I want to do in my personal life</td>
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Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.
5. **Career**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Strongly</td>
<td>Very Strongly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am clear about my career goals
I am serious about having a career
I'm sure I don't want a career

Comment if any of your answers are in 1 – 3 range.

6. **Ethnicity**

How would you classify yourself?
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Indigenous or Aboriginal
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ Multiracial
- ☐ Would rather not say
- ☐ Other

7. What were your objectives for participating in the Empowering Women’s Development Training?

8. What have you accomplished so far as a result from participating in the Empowering Women’s Development Program?

9. How has this program helped you to voice your opinions at work and personal life?
10. As a result of your participation in this study, please indicate whether you agree with the following statements, with 1 being ‘I disagree very strongly’ and 7 being ‘I agree very strongly’ and 4 being neutral:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Very Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I now feel more confident at work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now feel more confident at home</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have clear work goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have clear personal goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am managing change better</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. In what way are you better equipped to manage change in your life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more optimistic and positive</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program will improve my effectiveness at work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program will help me deal better with customers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program will help me deal better with other staff</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now feel better able to voice my opinions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have improved my communication skills</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now have more control over my future</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to find solutions rather than problems</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am prepared to accept more responsibility at work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program has exceeded my expectations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Springboard Workbook is excellent</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program will enable me to make the best of myself</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Of the tools and techniques that were presented, please rate how useful you found them, with 1 being ‘Not useful at all’ and 7 being ‘Extremely useful’ and 4 being neutral:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not useful at all</th>
<th>Extremely useful</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparing notes with the other women in my group</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guest Speakers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing yourself</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding what is going on around you</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% Performance / 30% Image / 60% Exposure</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying your values</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessing your skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
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<td>Image</td>
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<td>Practice in putting myself across positively</td>
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<td>Getting Feedback</td>
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12. Please give us your overall summary of the Empowering Women’s Development Program. (If you are willing to have your comments used for our external marketing purposes then please tick the box □).
Name: --------------------------------------------------- Code #: ____________________

Job Title:------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Organisation:------------------------------------------ Date --------------------------

Please provide us with your email address if you would like to receive our newsletters:

____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
REFERENCES


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